Department of Public Policy
CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

# Sex and Gender Conformity Gaps in Political Attitudes Among Young People in Germany

By
**Chris Johannes Ahlfeld**

Submitted to Central European University Department of Public Policy

*In partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts in International Public Affairs*

Supervisor: **Evelyne Hübscher**

Vienna, Austria 2025

Department of Public Policy
CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

## Appendix VI:

## **Author's Declaration Form** (to be included in the final version of the thesis)

I, the undersigned, Chris Johannes Ahlfeld, candidate for Master of Arts in International Public Affairs, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research.

All sources have been properly credited in the text, notes, and the bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. Furthermore, I declare that no part of this thesis has been generated using artificial intelligence (ChatGPT).

I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form as coursework for credits or to another institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Date: _____

Name (printed): Chris Johannes Ahlfeld

Signature: _____

# COPYRIGHT NOTICE



# ABSTRACT

The present thesis examines sex and gender conformity gaps in political attitudes among young people in Germany. For this, the ideological left-right self-classification and the conflict dimensions of redistribution, migration, and civil liberties are considered. Using data from the European Social Survey (2002-2023), the thesis indicates that young women tend to place themselves to the left of men, especially concerning gender equality and homosexuality. Differences in attitudes towards redistribution and migration prove statistically insignificant.

To gain a broader understanding of gender differences, a gender conformity variable was introduced and subsequently analyzed. While there is no significant variation in migration attitudes, the results reveal substantial effects with non-conforming people holding more progressive attitudes toward redistribution and civil liberties. Especially along the issues of gender equality and homosexuality, the largest gap is found between gender-conforming men and gender-non-conforming women, demonstrating the necessity of more nuance in researching gender differences. Thus, this thesis emphasizes that measuring sex alone cannot adequately explain gender variation in political attitudes. Instead, subjective identity and conformity measures might prove more fruitful in understanding and observing political differences among young people in Germany and beyond.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF FIGURES



# LIST OF TABLES

# 1 INTRODUCTION

"A new global gender divide is emerging" – this 2024 headline from the Financial Times illustrates the significant public attention towards the political drifting apart of young women and men (Burn-Murdoch 2024). The message that echoes through numerous media outlets is of a significant ideological gap arising among the younger generation – young women are, on average, more progressive than young men (Burn-Murdoch 2024; Sherman 2024; The Economist 2024). Political science literature refers to this phenomenon as the modern gender gap. This seems to have emerged in many postindustrial societies during the 1990s, with women tending to vote more left-wing than men (Inglehart and Norris 2000). However, there are caveats to the claim of a universal gender gap, notably with regards to extreme differences between countries (Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014, 339; Dassonneville 2021, 235). It is therefore crucial to examine these trends within individual countries. Concerning Germany, Hudde (2023) showed that the modern gender gap in federal elections emerged comparatively late, first in 2017. However, he also emphasized that women and men have never been as politically divided as the youngest German voters in 2021 (Hudde 2023, 134).

This drastic shift was confirmed earlier this year. The 2025 German federal elections unveiled a stark contrast in the voting choice of the 18 to 24-year-olds: 59% of young women voted for left-of-center parties, whereas young men only returned 38% in support of the progressive spectrum (Billmayer 2025; Sonnenberg 2025). In contrast, 50% of young men voted for right-of-center parties, but only 27% of young women voted for such parties. This phenomenon is most striking at the political fringes. The Left (Die Linke) received more than twice as many votes from women (35%) as from men (16%), while this ratio was reversed for the AfD. Here, the percentage of young women (14%) was just over half that of men (27%). The general pattern

of women voting more progressively than men was evident across the electorate, although the differences were most decisive among the youth (Billmayer 2025).

These results align with the overarching theme of a modern gender gap. Some may conclude that observing differences in voting behavior suggests that there must also be ideological differences. This link is premature. Certainly, a person's ideology influences voting behavior. However, vote choice is an expression of multiple considerations – not just ideology (Kulachai, Lerdtomornsakul, and Homyamyen 2023). These considerations include, among other things: party identification, a candidate's personal characteristics, and punishing or rewarding an incumbent's past performance (Erikson and Tedin 2016, 275; Plescia and Kritzinger 2017). Moreover, first-time voters are known for indecisive and volatile voting, making it harder to link their vote to genuine attitudes in comparison with older citizens (Jennings and Markus 1984, 1009; Lisi 2022, 744). Consequently, detecting a gender gap based on behavior at the ballot box does not allow the automatic determination of a population's attitudes. The question of whether there are such ideological differences between young women and men is therefore not only justified but essential, as this is not guaranteed by simply looking at election results. While there is initial evidence from cross-country research for a small ideological gap in Germany (Nennstiel and Hudde 2025), there appear to be research gaps regarding detailed analyses of attitudinal divides in individual countries.

Focusing on the German youth is particularly interesting, as this age group shows the most pronounced differences in voting behavior (Hudde 2023, 134). This has recently sparked numerous journalistic contributions and public debates on the topic (Billmayer 2025; Deutschlandfunk 2024; Sonnenberg 2025; Steppat 2025). These discussions often highlight a politically polarized generation that will take on more social responsibility over time (The Economist 2024). Burn-Murdoch (2024), in his much-cited article on the emerging global gender divide, points to South Korea and its low fertility rate as a potential implication of this trend.

Understanding the younger generations' ideological tendencies is thus essential, as their beliefs and attitudes will shape the German political landscape and society for decades to come.

To provide more detail in the delicate field of gender differences, this thesis will use multidimensional measures of political attitude to detect and explain gender variation. Additionally, it aims to paint a more nuanced picture of gender. Instead of only examining the typical survey categories, male or female, a further variable integrating individual classifications of masculinity and femininity is used. Existing research predominantly circumvents discussion about the meaning of gender and equates sex with gender (Magliozzi, Saperstein, and Westbrook 2016). The separation of sex and gender for the purposes of this study is especially relevant when considering the younger generation, which increasingly identifies as gender non-conforming (Brown 2022; Twenge et al. 2024) and tends to view adjacent issues like gender equality as more salient than older people (Kantar 2021, 48)[1]. This will serve as an additional way of taking a differentiated approach to the overall topic.

This thesis uses statistical analysis of data from the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2002 to 2023, mainly focusing on its 2023 collection. In the first section of the paper, the theoretical background will be discussed. Political ideology will be defined, and its relation to political attitudes will be considered. Previous research on gender gaps will then be reviewed in detail, and three hypotheses will be suggested. Next, the data, methods, and operationalization of the statistical analysis are outlined. The results of the ideological gender gap in German adolescence and early adulthood are connected with a discussion, before a conclusion outlining the implications and limitations of the study.



[1] The cohort effects of the liberalisation of gender role attitudes in Germany seems to have plateaued with men born in the 1950s and women in the 1960s or even recently reversed in some instances (Lois 2020). However, period effects moving the whole society to adopt more egalitarian gender role attitudes still exist (Lois 2020, Menkhoff & Wrohlich 2024).

# 2 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

## 2.1 On political ideology

In his comprehensive book, Eagleton (2000, 1–2) states that ideology possesses a whole range of meanings, some of which partially exclude each other. This demonstrates the extent to which the term is a versatile concept and therefore demands detailed definitional examination. The word 'ideology' originates from the French Revolution and was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy, who worked at the Institut de France (Lichtheim 1965, 164–65). It did not carry the political connotations from the outset, since the enlightenment thinkers were more concerned about drawing up a science of ideas, and precursors of positivism (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2020, 293–94). Over time, ideology and its meaning evolved through politicization, democratization, and historicization (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2020, 316).

A helpful distinction can be made between critical and value-neutral approaches to ideology (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009, 309). The former is heavily influenced by Marx, who viewed ideology as a dangerous illusion attempting to conceal the reality of social relations. The latter views ideology more soberly as a belief system. According to Rothmund and Arzheimer (2022), the value-neutral understanding includes four characteristics. First, a normative character, providing convictions about how society should be organized. Second, structural coherence, meaning the internal structure of ideology is consistent with attitudes, beliefs, and values. Third, social sharing, which indicates that ideologies relate to social and political life. Fourth, intraindividual stability, implying that a change in a person's ideology is doubtful. A definition by Erikson and Tedin (2016, 70) summarizes: "In the broadest sense, a person's ideology is any set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved."

A standard critique of ideology is that these consistent belief structures do not appear in the mass public (Converse 2006). Certainly, analysis would be easier if ideology was a convenient

measurement of political values. Yet, in reality, results are mixed, with more sophisticated people appearing more consistent in their answers than less sophisticated ones (Erikson and Tedin 2016, 70). To be clear: the presence or absence of consistency should neither be interpreted as superior nor inferior political thinking. Instead, this suggests that the theorized assumptions concerning ideology may not accurately reflect how many people form political preferences. These contemplations are essential for an even more fundamental challenge: the complexity of reliably measuring ideology.

The most common way of classifying ideology is to use a single left-right dimension (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009, 310). In the U.S., this axis usually bears the labels liberal and conservative (Conover and Feldman 1981). In his work on this very distinction, Bobbio (1996, 60) illustrates that the primary criterion for distinguishing between left and right is the attitude towards the ideal of equality. Positions on the left are more egalitarian, while those on the right are less so (Bobbio 1996, 65). This stance on equality is also linked to the endorsement of or resistance to change (Jost, Fitzsimons, and Kay 2004). Evidently, the conservative spectrum favors holding on to traditions and is naturally skeptical of changing the status quo (Jost et al. 2003). Typically, this left-right dimension is measured using a self-assessment. The most important criticisms of this approach will now be briefly discussed. These include self-classification, terminology, and dimensionality.



Firstly, allowing respondents to rank themselves and the inclusion of a midpoint option leads to center bias. This means that more people identify as being in the middle category than would accurately reflect their position (Bishop 1987; Mellacher and Lechner 2023; Kalton, Roberts, and Holt 1980). On the one hand, this may reflect the tendency of fleeing into the mid-category when being unsure of what to choose or not making the effort to think through one's answer, called satisficing (Bogner and Landrock 2016; Menold and Bogner 2016). On the other hand, this may show social-desirability bias, where respondents moderate their scores to hide extreme

values (Hudde 2023; Stout, Baker, and Baker 2021). Mellacher and Lechner (2023, 1) further mention the influence of social networks on self-placement, as people are usually surrounded by (politically) like-minded people. This increases the likelihood of considering oneself as moderate or mainstream, in the sense of being in the middle of a spectrum.

Secondly, the wording of the dimension itself, whether left-right or liberal-conservative, could be seen as problematic. There is strong variation in what people associate with these terms, and their answers differ depending on their personal interpretation (Bauer et al. 2017, 565; Evans, Heath, and Lalljee 1996, 94). In their insightful article, Bauer et al. (2017, 562) further detect that a quarter of respondents refuse to answer or do not know what is meant by "left" and "right," indicating there may be a substantial portion for whom these labels may be too abstract. Similarly, the terms "liberal" and "conservative" seem not to fit well with individuals' belief systems (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder Jr 2008, 228).

Thirdly and most importantly, there is persistent criticism of this single dimension's inability to capture the complexities of societal issues and political positions (Evans, Heath, and Lalljee 1996, 94; Johnston and Ollerenshaw 2020, 97). Since the 1970s, the transition from materialist to post-materialist values has contributed to the formulation of a second dimension (Inglehart 1977). This socio-cultural axis includes increasingly important issues such as immigration, environmental protection, and identity (L. Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002), which are not adequately represented by an economic left-right distinction. Feldman and Johnston (2014, 353) summarize that "there is considerable evidence that this [single dimension] does not do justice to how people organize their political beliefs." The ensuing problem is that people holding left-wing positions in the economic policy field and right-wing positions on socio-cultural issues (and vice versa) are challenging to categorize. In turn, this can lead to these individuals being misplaced (Carmines, Ensley, and Wagner 2012).

Despite these difficulties, there is a consensus that the left-right classification is nevertheless valuable as a symbolic indicator (Rothmund and Arzheimer 2022, 153; Weber 2019). Therefore, movement on the left-right scale should be understood as shifts within the broad contexts of ideology, such as in the understanding of these terms, rather than necessarily in concrete issue orientations (Conover and Feldman 1981, 642). Based on this view, the one-dimensional ideological measurement of left- and right-wing is a solid departure point for this study. Still, due to the challenges identified, more differentiated ways of grasping and measuring ideology are employed.

## 2.2 On political attitudes

Using individual political attitudes to conclude people's ideology makes it imperative to mention that these two constructs are interrelated (Maio et al. 2006, 284). It is therefore expected that they influence each other. At the same time, much of the research has concentrated on how ideologies might affect attitudes, as this describes changes from a high level of abstraction in personal thinking down to a concrete level of positioning (Maio et al. 2006, 284). Their relationship becomes even more complicated when considering the compelling work of Lachat (2018), who explored how political issues relate to a broader left-right ideology. He found that while economic issues are strongly associated with the self-placement of left-wing citizens, immigration and cultural liberalism were more influential for the positioning of right-wing citizens (Lachat 2018, 431–32). This demonstrates that certain issues and attitudes are more salient for different ideological placements. Therefore, deriving issue preferences from ideological differences and inferring ideological placement from issue positions is more complicated (Lachat 2018, 432). As politics consists of many issues and topics, a focal point of this study determines which factors qualify for gaining insight into a population's political views. Here, Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) cleavage theory comes into play, as it aims to explain the origins of party systems by examining societal conflicts. A cleavage is thus a permanent political conflict,

anchored in the social structure and manifests itself in the party system (Pappi 1977, 195; Schmitt-Beck 2007, 252). The four original divides included the conflict between state and church, rural and urban, work and capital, and center and periphery (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 14–23). Over time, some of these original cleavages, particularly religion, seem to have lost explanatory power over current divisions within a country's population and its recent party system developments (L. Hooghe and Marks 2018, 126). At the same time, new lines of conflict have emerged. The most prominent recent dimension arose from the unprecedented changes brought about by globalization, which, according to some, divided people into two groups – those whose situations were improved by the opening of national borders and those whose situations worsened, as they were previously protected by those borders (Kriesi et al. 2008).

Articles on the current conflict structure in Germany usually refer to three dimensions: up-down, in-out, and us-them conflicts (Mau, Lux, and Gülzau 2020)[2]. The first dimension relates to material conditions within a society and resembles Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage of work vs. capital. Arguably, it represents one of the most perennial issues of politics: the question of whether, and to what extent, income or wealth should be redistributed (Mau, Lux, and Gülzau 2020, 323–24). Historically, this has been designated as a left-right dimension, since it represents what Bobbio (1996) theorized in his work on the left and right core. However, these labels do not claim to depict a person's complete ideology; they are used within a single, albeit essential, political attitude. The second dimension considers positions on migration and border openness (Mau, Lux, and Gülzau 2020, 324–25). This line of conflict dates back to the aforementioned globalization processes, in which borders opened step by step, thus creating not only questions of cultural inclusion and integration, but also economic consequences in terms of job market competition (Mau, Lux, and Gülzau 2020, 325; Schimank 2018). Thirdly, the us-them

[2] In a newer version, they added the today-tomorrow concerning ecological questions between generations (Lux, Mau, and Jacobi 2022). However, this dimension seems empirically tenuous (Teney and Rupieper 2023, 228).

dimension considers issues of what might be called identity politics (Mau, Lux, and Gülzau 2020, 325). Differentiating between people who are more libertarian or more traditional, this dimension may include themes of homosexuality, gender equality, abortion, or other questions of civil liberties (Buchmayr 2024, 18).

Similarly, Buchmayr's (2024) recent article uses these three conflict dimensions to examine if and how the German population became more sociostructurally polarized over the last 40 years. His results show little polarization, no change or even depolarization on some issues (Buchmayr 2024, 36). However, the characteristics he tests include education, income, and age; he does not explore gender effects. Interestingly, Buchmayr examines the socio-structural differences in Germany under the assumption of polarization and does not search for a gap. This begs the overarching question of why there is so much talk of a *gender gap* and less talk of *gender polarization*[3]. Generally, a gap between two groups fits into the empirical idea of polarization, which has several forms (see Lelkes 2016) and can be interpreted as a state and a process (Neubaum 2020, 3). However, the omnipresence in all debates makes the use of the word 'polarization' feel increasingly obscure (Schedler 2023, 336–37). This thesis therefore prefers to use the word 'gap' or simply 'differences', as they are less politicized and require less elaboration. Additionally, from the measurement of the three issue dimensions onwards, the term *attitudinal gap* rather than *ideological gap* is used. Journalistic and at times even academic pieces tend to utilize grandiose language too prematurely, without being able to explain this in theoretically conclusive terms. However, the change in terminology is by no means intended to imply that the study of attitudinal dimensions does not reveal much about the ideological thinking of the population – they do, they are simply not the same.



[3] Only recently Ansgar Hudde (2025), who had previously presented the most relevant article on gender differences in German voting behavior, has now spoken of gender polarization in Germany in an analysis of the recent 2025 federal elections.

## 2.3 Gender gaps

This final subchapter intentionally uses the plural form in its title to reflect the temporal development of first, the traditional gender gap, and later, the modern gender gap. The traditional gender gap describes the tendency of women to vote and think more conservatively than men (Dassonneville 2021; Inglehart and Norris 2000). This is mainly due to the greater religiosity of women, but with increasing secularization, the gender gap has narrowed increasingly (Shorrocks 2018, 137). With the beginning of the new millennium, the modern gender gap started to emerge, which was characterized by the fact that women tended to think and vote more progressively than men (Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014; Dassonneville 2021; Inglehart and Norris 2000). This female dealignment from right-wing parties was explained by advancing secularization, with Norris and Inglehart (2000, 459) claiming the central role of value change in postindustrial societies, particularly more egalitarian attitudes like postmaterialism and feminism. While Shorrock (2018, 137–38) also notes the more liberal female attitudes towards sexual liberation, she additionally emphasizes the left-wing economic preferences that exist across cohorts but which had been previously concealed by the conservative influence of religiosity. A crucial constraint to the aforementioned research on the modern gender gap is that they conduct cross-country analysis, which cannot fully capture variation between countries (Dassonneville 2021, 225; Harteveld et al. 2019, 1142). Commonly, some countries do not fit the pattern, again emphasizing the need for an in-depth examination of Germany.

Research specific to Germany states that the traditional gender gap has existed since the introduction of women's suffrage (Hudde 2023, 147). The modern gender gap was first identified in 2017, significantly later than in other democratic countries (Hudde 2023, 162). Importantly, Hudde (2023, 156) states that "the political division between women and men has never been as large as among young voters in 2021. As previously mentioned, in the 2025 election, the division increased significantly again (Hudde 2025, 9). This indicates that gender is a dividing

line between young people in Germany, with women being, on average, more progressive than men. However, it is worth noting that voting decisions in Germany have become much more volatile (Schmitt-Beck et al. 2022, 3), which makes them more dependent on singular issues or candidates and their campaigns (Dalton 2020, 198). In recent cross-country research, Nennstiel and Hudde (2025) found a stable small or moderate gender gap for Germany in left-right self-placement. In line with the cross-country trend, since the 1990s, women have placed themselves consistently to the left of men. For this, they used Eurobarometer data and analyzed young people between 20 and 29 (Nennstiel and Hudde 2025, 8–9). Following this evidence, young women were expected to categorize themselves as more progressive than young men.

***H1: Between 2002 and 2023, young women in Germany have, on average, placed themselves further to the left on the ideological spectrum than young men.***

While this first hypothesis will use the symbolic ideological measurement of left-right self-placement, the more sophisticated measurements of political attitudes will be used hereafter, as they allow for a separation between economic and cultural issues. Previous studies state that, on average, women lean further left than men when it comes to economic issues, such as social spending (Bittner and Goodyear-Grant 2017b, 1024; Caughey, O'Grady, and Warshaw 2019, 691). In their synthesis of relevant work, Gidengil et al. (2003) offer three explanations, including women's greater reliance on the welfare state, overall employment patterns, and differences in values and priorities in their childhood socialization. The first two arguments are linked, showing that women are more likely than men to work in the public sector and low-paid jobs, and are generally more likely to rely on social welfare at some point in their lives (Deitch 1988; Manza and Brooks 1998). Based on their life experiences, women may therefore prefer left-wing positions. Socio-psychological explanations highlight the role of socialization differences in moral reasoning. From her interviews, Gilligan (1982) inferred that women's moral orientation focuses more on care and responsibility for others, while men would prioritize individual

rights and autonomy. In her words, women often feel a "responsibility to discern and alleviate the 'real and recognizable trouble' of this world" (Gilligan 1982, 100). Applied to political contexts, this suggests that women, more so than men, may be more skeptical of market solutions and more in favor of government intervention to aid disadvantaged people (Gidengil et al. 2003, 143).

Contrastingly, recent evidence by Grasso and Shorrocks (2025, 21–22) has found that both genders have become increasingly less supportive of redistribution and state welfare. Still, this decline is weaker for women, as the gap between their economic attitudes has been relatively stable for generations. Consequently, the differences concerning economic issues seem unsuitable to explain the modern gender gap in voting and ideology (Grasso and Shorrocks 2025, 22). Altogether, although economic attitudes have long been regarded as stable ideological gender differences, these seem to have converged, especially among young people. This therefore calls for the need to investigate whether such attitudinal differences remain at all.

***H2a: In 2023, young women and young men in Germany did not differ in their attitudes toward economic redistribution.***

The first cultural dimension, the in-out dimension, examines attitudes towards migration. Research on voter ideology in Europe raised the point that men have only recently held more conservative attitudes on immigration issues than women (Caughey, O'Grady, and Warshaw 2019, 691). On the other hand, Kobayashi and Tanaka (2024, 2) note in their overview of the relevant arguments that the existing evidence on gender differences in migration attitudes is inconclusive. Interestingly, women and men tend to see the threat of immigration differently (Markaki and Longhi 2013, 317). Men are more likely to emphasize cultural threats, such as concerns about changes to national identity or social norms, while women tend to be more afraid of economic consequences, such as the increasing demand on social systems (Markaki

and Longhi 2013; Pichler 2010). This could be because women tend to exaggerate the number of immigrants and the economic benefits they receive from the state (Alesina, Miano, and Stantcheva 2023). Overall, however, it is quite plausible that these different views on immigration threats cancel each other out, resulting in no evident gap between women and men on migration attitudes (Pichler 2010, 453). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the salience of migration has increased in political attitudes (Buchmayr 2024, 36–37; Vries, Hakhverdian, and Lancee 2013). In these contexts, even minor attitudinal differences may carry significant political consequences (Buchmayr 2024, 36–37).

***H2b: In 2023, young women and young men in Germany did not differ in their attitudes toward migration.***

The most promising avenue for gender differences lies in the second social dimension, the us-them dimension of individual liberties, which includes issues of gender equality, sexual orientation, abortion, or drug use (Laméris, Jong-A-Pin, and Garretsen 2018). Journalists emphasize this dimension, with young women supporting feminist ideals (The Economist 2024), and the #MeToo movement as key triggers of the gender gap (Burn-Murdoch 2024). This is largely confirmed by academic research. Several authors point to the progressive effect of promoting gender equality and the egalitarian attitudes of feminism (Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Solevid et al. 2021).

On the other hand, an anti-feminist backlash among men is often discussed in the academic literature (Gidengil et al. 2003, 143). Research has found that "young men are most likely to perceive advances in women's rights as a threat to men's opportunities" (Off, Charron, and Alexander 2022, 12). Moreover, recent results from Norway suggest that teenage boys are increasingly skeptical of gender equality (Mathisen 2025). For 14-19 year olds, the anti-feminist stance of boys accounts for nearly half of the ideological gender gap (Mathisen 2025, 22). While

there is no conclusive evidence of such attitudinal gaps in Germany, there is little reason to believe that the German picture would significantly differ from these wider European trends. While there is uncertainty about gaps in economic or sociocultural attitudes regarding migration, the most significant divide is expected to lie within civil liberties.

***H2c: In 2023, young women in Germany expressed greater support for civil liberties than young men.***

Until this point, this thesis followed conventional lines of inquiry. Research on gender gaps has traditionally focused on the simple differences between women and men, but mostly ignores the differences among women and among men (Bittner and Goodyear-Grant 2017a, 559). This approach may be intrinsically flawed if we follow Athenstaedt and Alfermann (2011, 115), who contended that the inter-group variation significantly exceeds the intra-group differences between women and men. Therefore, the ensuing part of this thesis aims at more nuance in rethinking an integral aspect of gender gaps – gender itself.

Many times, sex and gender have been treated as the same thing – in political science research and beyond (Hatemi et al. 2012, 78). Commonly, sex describes the biological categories, while gender is culturally influenced and, therefore, constitutes more of an interpretative exercise (Bittner and Goodyear-Grant 2017b). Determining which differences have biological explanations and which are socially influenced remains a delicate matter, known as the nature-nurture debate (Eagly and Wood 2013). Both play a significant role, which is why modern approaches to the topic should arguably aim at capturing both aspects (Eagly and Wood 2013, 351). This thesis will therefore add a second measurement to the binary sex classification, grasping more of the social aspects of gender. In her book, McDermott (2016, 78) uses a measurement of feminine or masculine traits, showing that the more feminine an individual is, the more likely they are to be liberal. However, these gendered personalities only seem accurate for the more

politically knowledgeable half of the population. Moreover, measuring female and male characteristics is intricate and heavily context-dependent, as they are subject to cultural differences and temporal peculiarities. Instead of examining behavior to assess femininity or masculinity, this thesis relies on individuals' self-assessment. Gender identity refers to a person's self-concept, which is shaped by notions of femininity and masculinity (Wood and Eagly 2015). A widely used framework, gender self-categorization, captures the extent to which people self-identify with the social categories of woman (female) or man (male) (Wood and Eagly 2015, 464). In contrast to trait-based measures, this approach allows respondents to rank themselves according to what they believe female or male to be, without applying predetermined categories.

Turning to its empirical use, in their heavily debated article, Hatemi et al. (2012, 83) detect that the more feminine men are or the more masculine women are, the higher the probability they will support more left-leaning parties. Similarly, Solevid et al. (2021) found that gender-conforming women and men show tendencies to be more center-right, while gender-nonconforming women and men are more center-left. Interestingly, their measurement strategy employed self-attribution of feminine/masculine traits but deliberately omitted what they mean by feminine or masculine characteristics (Solevid et al. 2021, 100). Their article includes the analysis of a GAL-TAN axis,[4] where gender-nonconforming individuals scored higher than gender-conforming individuals (Solevid et al. 2021, 107). While they do not deny a gap between men's and women's positions, the study points out that the conformity gap is at least on par, if not larger than the original sex gap (Solevid et al. 2021, 108). Considering this, gender conformity



[4] The GAL-TAN axis describes a dimension of cultural political conflict with "GAL" (Green, Alternative, Left) representing positions such as environmentalism or individual liberties and diametrically opposed "TAN" (Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalist) orientations, including social order and national sovereignty (L. Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002).

appears not merely as a reflection of identity, but as a potentially more powerful predictor of political attitudes than traditional sex-based distinctions.

***H3a: In 2023, attitudinal differences regarding economic redistribution were more pronounced between gender-conforming and gender-nonconforming individuals than between young women and young men.***

***H3b: In 2023, attitudinal differences regarding migration were more pronounced between gender-conforming and gender-nonconforming individuals than between young women and young men.***

***H3c: In 2023, attitudinal differences regarding civil liberties were more pronounced between gender-conforming and gender-nonconforming individuals than between young women and young men.***

The following chapter will outline details of the ESS data, the operationalization, and the methods used for the subsequent analysis.

# 3 DATA, OPERATIONALIZATION, AND METHODS

Data from the European Social Survey (ESS) is used to test the hypotheses. This database includes 11 waves, starting from 2002 to 2023. For this analysis, the 2020 version is excluded due to the shift from face-to-face interviews to self-administered online and postal surveys in Round 10 in Germany (ESS 2022), causing substantial deviations in results and limiting data comparability. While the ESS collects information on various European countries, this thesis only analyses data from Germany. The 2023 sample, which will be the focus for answering the second and third hypotheses, also includes a dedicated set of questions on the theme "Gender in contemporary Europe."

As this thesis examines young people's attitudes, the dataset is limited to people between 15 and 35. The lower bound reflects the sampling design of the ESS, which starts at a minimum age of 15. Neither political socialization nor political participation constitutes a sound reason for using a different lower age limit. The impressionable years of political socialization are known to begin during teenage years but continue well into the mid-twenties (Smets 2021). Voting is often seen as the central act of political participation; however, the voting age of 18 for federal elections only determines eligibility. In some federal states, for example, the voting age for regional and state elections is 16. It would therefore be arbitrary to exclude people under 18 from analysis of political attitudes; neither political socialization nor participation provides a basis for this. The upper age limit follows the definition of the APA Dictionary of Psychology (2023), which denotes 35 as the end of "young adulthood." While further broadening of the age range would have diluted the focus on *young* women and men, further restrictions would have significantly reduced the sample size and thus limited statistical power.

The dependent variable examined to answer hypothesis 1 is *left-right self-placement*. It addresses the question of temporal trend development and is therefore used from the ten ESS

waves. The variable ranges from 0 to 10, with the lower end describing a left-wing positioning and the higher numbers representing a right-wing preference. The following more sophisticated measures of political attitudes include *redistribution*, *migration*, and *civil liberties*. The economic dimension relies solely on attitudes towards income *redistribution*, as the ESS does not ask about preferences concerning market intervention or (re-)distribution of wealth. These perennial issues would undoubtedly have increased the reliability of the economic scale. The stance on *migration* integrates three items addressing its cultural and economic implications and the overall quality-of-life impacts. The dimension on *civil liberties* includes two items on homosexuality through asking about same-sex adoption and whether homosexuals should be granted freedom in their way of live. In addition, it consists of two questions on gender equality, namely whether it is favorable to have an equal number of women represented in political leadership positions or corporate management. All of these attitudes are coded as binary variables, using a median split between those being on the supportive side of a dimension and those being rather dismissive or undecided. Since the indices formed before binarization are all left-skewed, care is taken in the following section to emphasize in the results that the negative half is not likely to be skeptical of an attitude dimension in absolute terms, but rather in relative terms.

The two major independent variables for this analysis are gender measurements. The ordinary variable of gender is recorded by the interviewer, who enters the *sex* of the respondent. While this may not be without errors, it is almost certain that they perceive the correct biological sex. Even if the variable is commonly referred to as gender, it will be referred to henceforth as sex, as this is precisely what is registered. For this, two things need to be addressed. Firstly, even if the differences observed between women and men are now referred to as sex gaps, this does not mean that they are due to biological factors alone, and a continuation of the nature-nurture debate is not within the scope of this thesis. Second, some participants may be called women or men who may not see themselves as such (anymore). The designation used in this thesis is

purely based on the phenotypical perception of the interviewer recording a person's sex, not on any personal choice of a person that might deviate from this, which should by no means be disrespected. In summary, these simplifications are necessary, since without them, this thesis and especially the discussion chapter would risk losing clarity of language and content.

A second measurement is introduced to examine H3a, H3b, and H3c. This is called *gender conformity* and is dichotomous. Inspired by the bidimensional gender scale of Gidengil and Stolle (2021, 38), it draws on two 7-point self-assessment scales of how masculine/feminine a respondent feels. Their nominal variable entails the categories: hypermasculine/hyperfeminine, strong sex-typical, weak sex-typical, undifferentiated, androgynous, and counter-typical. This thesis borrows only the first category. It contains all respondents whose biological sex is female and score highest on the femininity scale while ranking lowest on the masculinity scale, and vice versa for biological men. Therefore, this classification captures the people who, in their own view, seem to match their biological sex accurately. The other non-conformity category comprises all respondents who do not indicate this exclusive typical accordance. In other words, it represents a 'catch-all' category, encompassing all the categories apart from hypermasculinity/femininity.

Two critical considerations should be made regarding this binary variable. On the one hand, its use is a practical decision rather than a theoretically preferable categorization. Here, the original bidimensional scale from Gidengil and Stolle (2021) offers a more nuanced way of examining gender effects. Another possible measure, gender distance, also allows for a finer distinction by providing a metric variable that allows for a very detailed gradation between stereotypical gender identity and non-stereotypical identity (Mansell et al. 2022). However, in practical terms, the binary gender conformity trumps these two. Firstly, its interpretation is much easier to understand and more precise than a metric variable. Secondly, the binary variable divides the sample, like sex, into approximately a 50:50 split and thus provides the possibility of yielding

significant effects. If the bidimensional scale were used, the non-conforming categories would only have two-digit or even single-digit case numbers, invalidating any explanatory power. As a result, the conclusions from the binary gender conformity variable may be limited in their details by its use of a catch-all category. Since it includes individuals who identify as strongly gender-typical, the label "non-conforming" does not necessarily imply a lack of conformity in the subjective sense; rather, it should be understood in relation to the exclusively conforming category.

Next, a wording issue shall be addressed. From this point onwards, this thesis will not use the terms "hypermasculinity" and "hyperfemininity" and instead talk about (strong) gender conformity. Ultimately, the hyper-concepts have connotations such as the male desire to appear powerful and to behave dominantly towards women (Mosher 1991), while hyperfemininity often revolves around women's ability to maintain and sustain relationships with men, with attractiveness and sexuality as commodities within relationships (Murnen and Byrne 1991). Although it is plausible that these tendencies could be present in the respective respondents, it would be logically unfounded to justify the same for the gender conformity variable. This category is solely based on the perception and characteristics of the respondent's own gender, not on any beliefs about gender roles. Overall, conformity shall neither frame something as superior nor inferior but neutrally describe the (non-existent) coherence between biological sex and social gender.

With regards to the method, a linear multiple regression analysis (OLS) is carried out to test the first hypothesis, as the dependent variable – the self-assessment on the left-right scale – is metrically scaled. Logistic regression models are used for the second and third hypotheses, as the corresponding dependent variables are coded dichotomously. Robust standard errors are used in all models to correct possible distortions due to heteroscedasticity and increase the validity of the results. Average marginal effects are calculated for all models to improve the

comparability of the results and facilitate the interpretation of the effects. These quantify the average influence of an independent variable on the dependent variable, in logistic models concerning the probability of occurrence of an event, and in OLS regarding the expected value of the dependent variable. To account for the ESS sampling design and in accordance with the weighting guide (Kaminska 2020), analysis weights are used for the temporal analysis (H1) and the post-stratified design weight for the logistic regressions in 2023 (H2a-c, H3a-c)[5]. All models control for the respondents' level of education and religiosity; the exact coding of these variables is documented in Table 1 below.



[5] As Stata does not permit the use of analysis weights in logistic regression, post-stratified design weight were used for the logistic regressions in 2023 (H2a–c, H3a–c) but it gives the same estimates as the analysis weights.

Table 1: Variable Overview and Descriptive Statistics

| **Variable name** | **Range** | ***M*** | ***n of items*** | **α** | **Recoding** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Dependent variables* | | | | | |
| Left-right self-placement *(2002-2023)* | 0 = left<br>10 = right | 4.39 | 1 | | |
| Redistribution *(2023)* | 0 = against redistribution<br>1 = pro redistribution | 0.68 | 1 | | Original scale 1-5 (median split; 0 = 1-3, 1 = 4-5) |
| Migration *(2023)* | 0 = against migration<br>1 = pro migration | 0.48 | 3 | 0.8 | Original scales 0-10 (median split; 0 <= 6, 1 < 6) |
| Civil liberties *(2023)* | 0 = against civil liberties<br>1 = pro civil liberties | 0.5 | 4 | 0.76 | Original scales 1-6 / 1-7; standardized to 0-10 (median split; 0 < 8.75, 1 >= 8.75) |
| *Independent variables* | | | | | |
| Sex *(2002-2023)* | 0 = male<br>1 = female | 0.49 | | | |
| Gender Conformity *(2023)* | 0 = gender conform<br>1 = gender non-conforming | 0.55 | | | *See Chapter 3* |
| *Control variables* | | | | | |
| Education *(2002-2023)* | 0 = lower education<br>1 = higher education | 0.47 | | | Original variable *eisced* (0 = 1-4; 1 = 5-7) |
| Religiosity *(2002-2023)* | 0 = not religious<br>1 = religious | 0.45 | | | Original scale 0-10 (median split; 0 = 1-3; 1 = 4-10) |

*ESS 2002-2023 n = 6,896; ESS 2023 n = 626.*

# 4 Results & Discussion

Turning to the results of the analysis, the left-right self-placement is scrutinized over time. As expected, young women constantly place themselves on the left of young men, as shown in Figure 1 beneath.

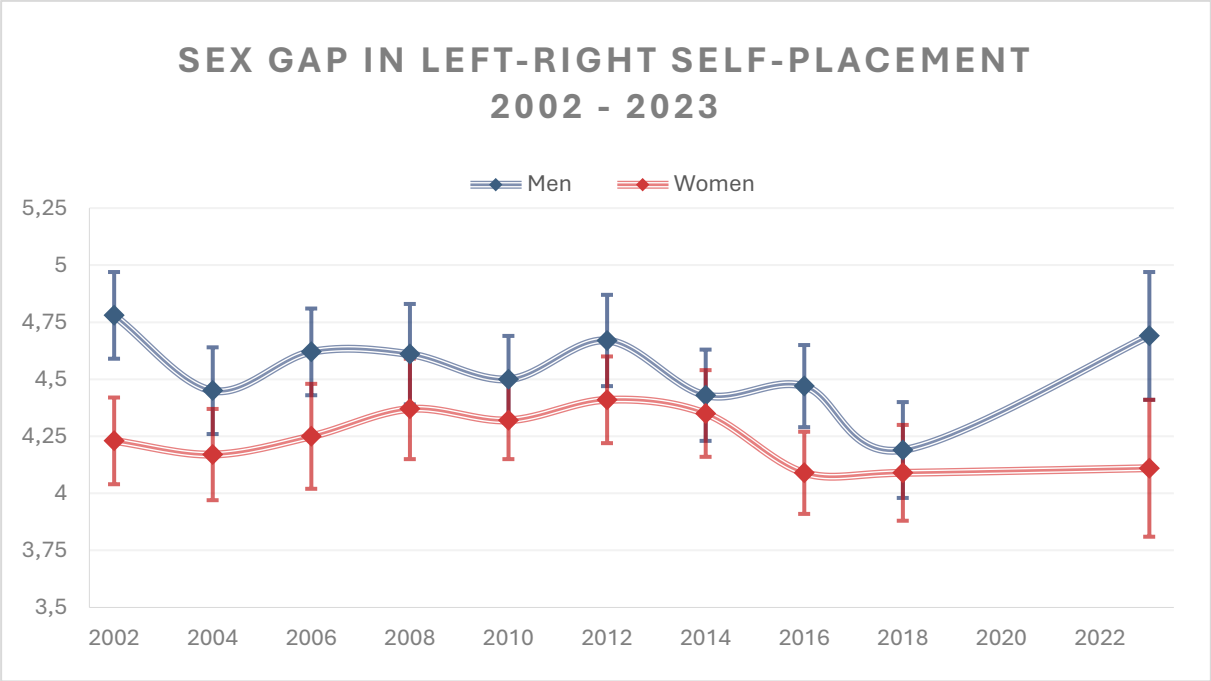


*Figure 1: Sex gap in predicted probabilities of left-right self-placement (2002-2023)*

The ESS data therefore reflects the same trend as Nennstiel and Hudde (2025, 8–9), who previously declared the existence of a stable and small gap. Moreover, no systematic change from 2002 to 2023 can be identified. Given the minor differences, one can hardly speak of an actual gap, which is reflected in the fact that they are only significant ($p < 0.05$) in six of the ten surveys (2002, 2004, 2006, 2012, 2016, 2023). However, their relationship to each other in terms of women classifying themselves as more left-wing than men is constant. The most pronounced differences can be found at the timeline's beginning and end, as young men have moved a considerable amount to the right in recent years. In this respect, it is regrettable that the data from 2020, which could shed light on this development, is not applicable. Overall, the

first hypothesis is confirmed. At the same time, a further explanation of the most considerable difference in 2023 is still required.

Three logistic regressions were conducted to test hypotheses H2a-c. These concentrate on the 2023 version and predict the support for the three attitude dimensions: redistribution, migration, and civil liberties. The predicted probabilities of the former indicate that young women are slightly more likely to support income redistribution than young men (71.4% vs. 63.9%). Figure 2 illustrates this relationship with the economic dimension highlighted by orange rhombuses. However, since the difference is insignificant ($p = 0.178$), this difference shall be seen as suggestive but inconclusive. Consequently, H2a – stating that there are no significant differences between the sexes – must be accepted. Similarly, the predicted probabilities for migration attitudes indicate that young women are marginally more supportive than young men, but this gap is insignificant ($p = 0.466$). In Figure 2, these values are depicted in turquoise.

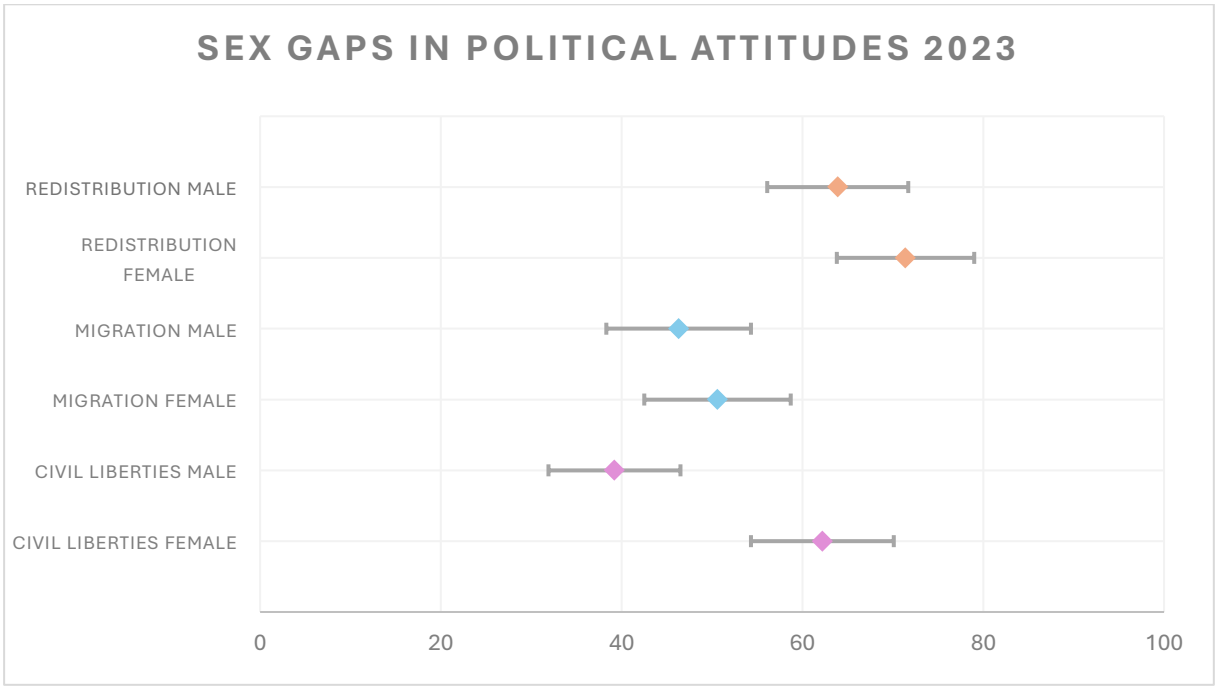


*Figure 2: Sex gaps in predicted probabilities of all three political attitudes (2023)*

The result for civil liberties demonstrates a large and statistically significant effect ($p < 0.001$). Marked with violet in Figure 2, 62.2% of young women, compared to 39.2% of young men, are

predicted to belong to the more supportive half of the distribution. That is a difference of 23 percentage points, which provides strong evidence for H2c. Thus, young women are more likely to support gender equality and same-sex relationships. These results also confirm the numerous articles that have pointed out the prominent role of the gender equality issue concerning a gender gap (Mathisen 2025; The Economist 2024). Overall, while the gap in economic and migration attitudes appears negligible, a significant divide is visible on the second socio-cultural dimension of civil liberties.

Turning to gender conformity, hypotheses 3a-c should provide further insights into the variety of gender differences. The predicted probabilities in Table 2 list the likelihood of who is more likely to be part of the distribution's upper half, which is being more supportive of government measures to reduce differences in income levels.

Table 2: Predicted probabilities for redistribution attitudes (2023)

| | **Margin** | **Std. Err.** | **95 % Conf. Interval** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male conforming | 0.578 | 0.063 | 0.453 | 0.702 |
| Female conforming | 0.632 | 0.061 | 0.512 | 0.753 |
| Male non-conforming | 0.679 | 0.051 | 0.578 | 0.78 |
| Female non-conforming | 0.796 | 0.043 | 0.712 | 0.88 |

The exact group differences are illustrated in Figure 3 below. There, each of the corners entails one of the four groups created by the combination of sex and gender conformity. Underneath each group's description is the predicted probability noted in percentages. This percentage indicates the probability of a member of this group to be in the more supportive half of the distribution of the respective attitude dimensions. The lines connecting these groups show significant differences ($p < 0{,}05$) in bold, while all others are marked in gray. For the redistribution

attitudes, it indicates that the only significant differences in predicted probability lie between conforming and non-conforming women ($p$ = 0.028) and between conforming men and non-conforming women ($p$ = 0.004). To correctly answer the expectation of more pronounced effects between conformity and sex, the differences running diagonally must be neglected. The conformity variable yields the larger probability differences (10.1 pp for men, 16.4 pp for women) and entails a statistically significant effect. The sex effects are overall more minor (5.4 pp between the conforming, 11.7 pp between the non-conforming). Therefore, hypothesis 3a is accepted as the results confirm the expectation that attitudinal differences on redistribution are more pronounced between conforming and non-conforming individuals than between young women and men.

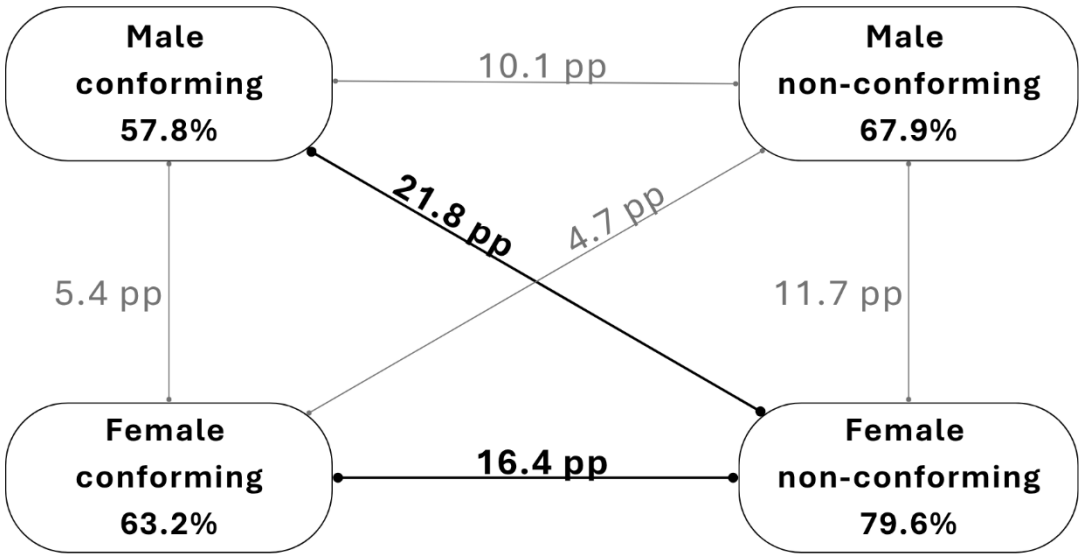


*Figure 3: Group differences in predicted probabilities for redistribution attitudes (2023)*

Looking at the migration dimension, the predicted probabilities for all four groups are displayed in Table 3 below. Surprisingly, the likelihood of being supportive of immigration sees conforming women as the group with the highest percentage at 53.4%. Since these results contradict the

expectation of the hypothesis, which would have assumed non-conformity to be more favorable to immigration, a detailed discussion of this finding will be provided later in this chapter.

Table 3: Predicted probabilities for migration attitudes (2023)

| | **Margin** | **Std. Err.** | **95 % Conf. Interval** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male conforming | 0.394 | 0.064 | 0.268 | 0.52 |
| Female conforming | 0.534 | 0.062 | 0.413 | 0.656 |
| Male non-conforming | 0.509 | 0.053 | 0.406 | 0.612 |
| Female non-conforming | 0.477 | 0.054 | 0.372 | 0.582 |

Figure 4 illustrates the intragroup differences, which yield no significant effects. The most considerable difference reports that conforming women have a 14 percentage points higher predicted probability of being supportive of migration than conforming men. However, this difference does not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.119$).

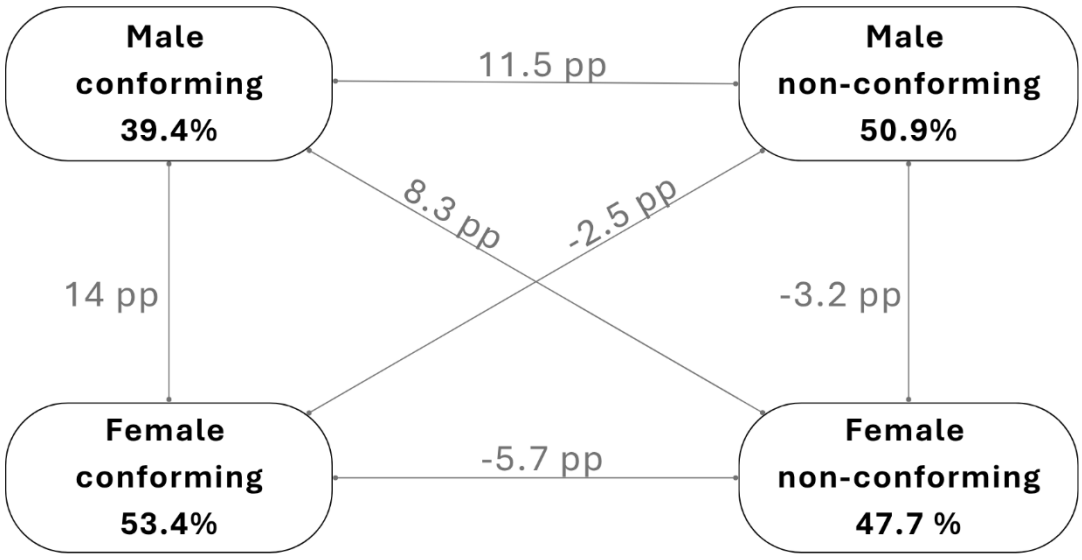


*Figure 4: Group differences in predicted probabilities for attitudes towards migration (2023)*

The negative values for the group differences are noteworthy because the original hypothesis's expectation is not met. Therefore, conformity does not lead to greater openness to migration compared to non-conformity, at least for women (-5.7 pp). Consequently, hypothesis 3b must be rejected.

Regarding hypothesis 3c, the results are especially intriguing because the civil liberty dimension is the only one with a significant sex gap prior to the addition of the conformity variable. As listed in Table 4 and displayed in Figure 5, the range of the predicted probabilities is considerably larger than that concerning redistribution or migration. This suggests that both sex and conformity thus have a more pronounced influence on attitudes than the other two dimensions.

Table 4: Predicted probabilities for attitudes towards civil liberties (2023)

| | **Contrast** | **Std. Err.** | **95 % Conf. Interval** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male conforming | 0.306 | 0.055 | 0.198 | 0.414 |
| Female conforming | 0.525 | 0.064 | 0.399 | 0.651 |
| Male non-conforming | 0.447 | 0.051 | 0.348 | 0.547 |
| Female non-conforming | 0.723 | 0.045 | 0.634 | 0.811 |

Strikingly, most differences are statistically significant, indicating that the stances on gender equality and same-sex relationships are the most divisive issue area among young people. In addition, it reports the largest difference (41.7 pp) across all three models. The fact that this effect cuts diagonally across the categories indicates that it is precisely the intersection of sex and gender conformity that produces a marked attitudinal divide.

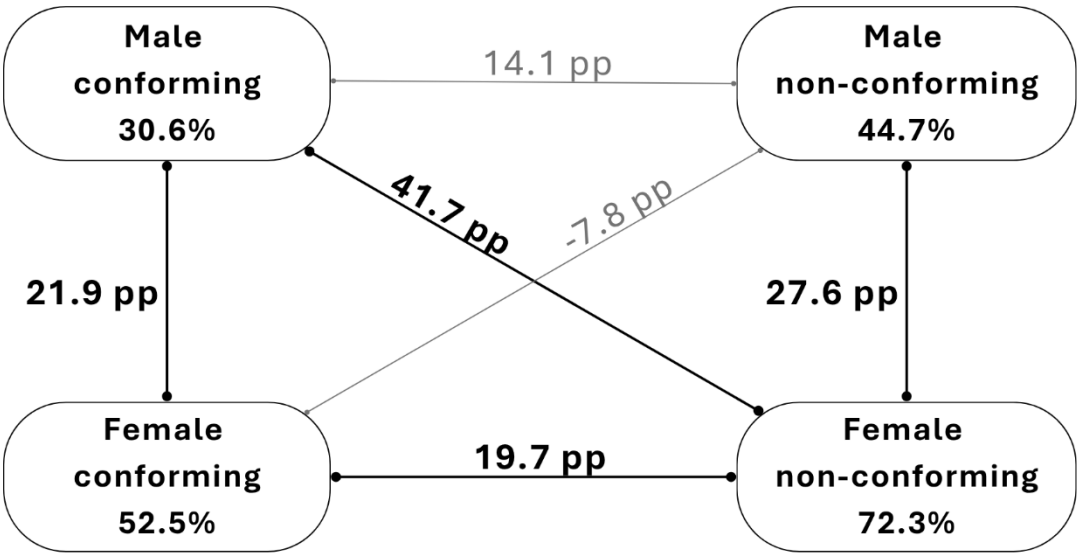


*Figure 5: Group differences in predicted probabilities for attitudes towards civil liberties (2023)*

Generally, nonconformity produces effects that align with prior research. The impact of non-conformists being substantially less supportive of traditional sex roles usually results in a favorable stance towards gender equality and same-sex relationships (Skewes, Fine, and Haslam 2018; McDermott 2016, 153–54). However, when comparing the magnitude of conforming and non-conforming individuals, as well as between women and men, the probability differences are larger between the sexes. Based on the results, H3c must subsequently be rejected. However, instead of overemphasizing this result, it should be evident that both aspects – the (non-)stereotypical interpretation of one's biological sex and sex itself – are crucial in positioning oneself concerning issues of cultural liberties. This is clarified in the overlapping example, as only close to one in three conforming young men tend to be supportive of gender equality and homosexuality, whereas nearly three of four non-conforming young women do.

All results concerning H3a-3c are also graphically displayed in Figures 6, 7, and 8 below.

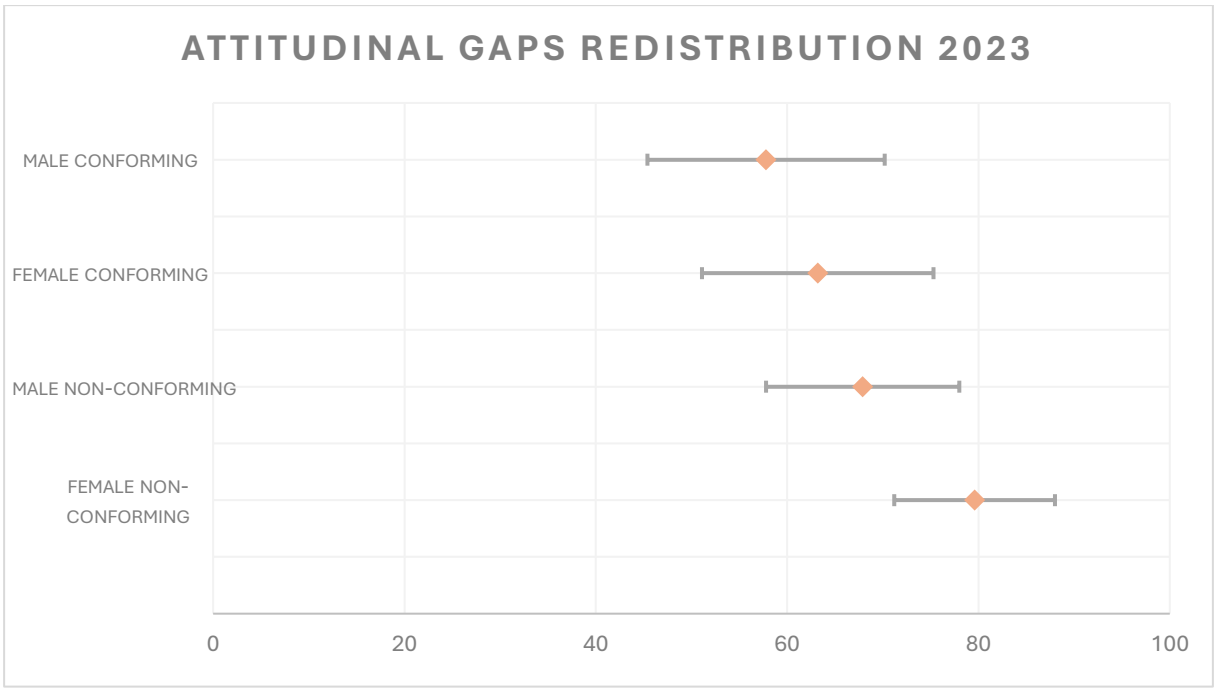


*Figure 6: Sex and conformity gaps in predicted probabilities for redistribution attitudes (2023)*

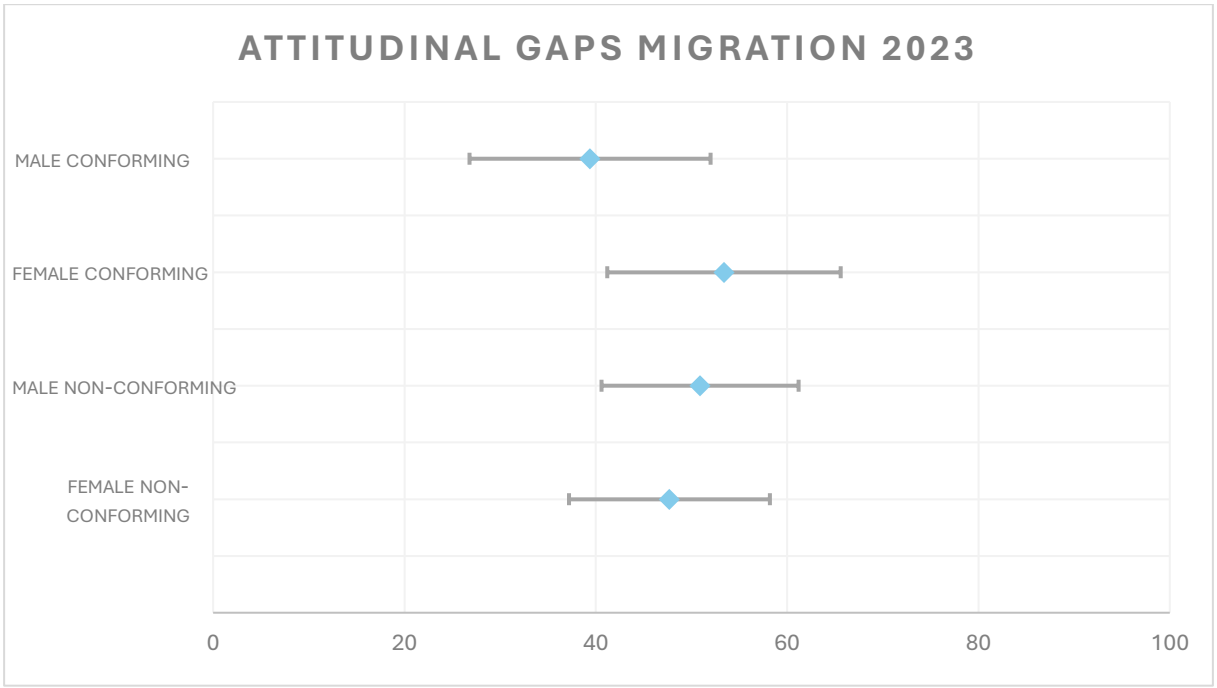


*Figure 7: Sex and conformity gaps in predicted probabilities for attitudes towards migration (2023)*

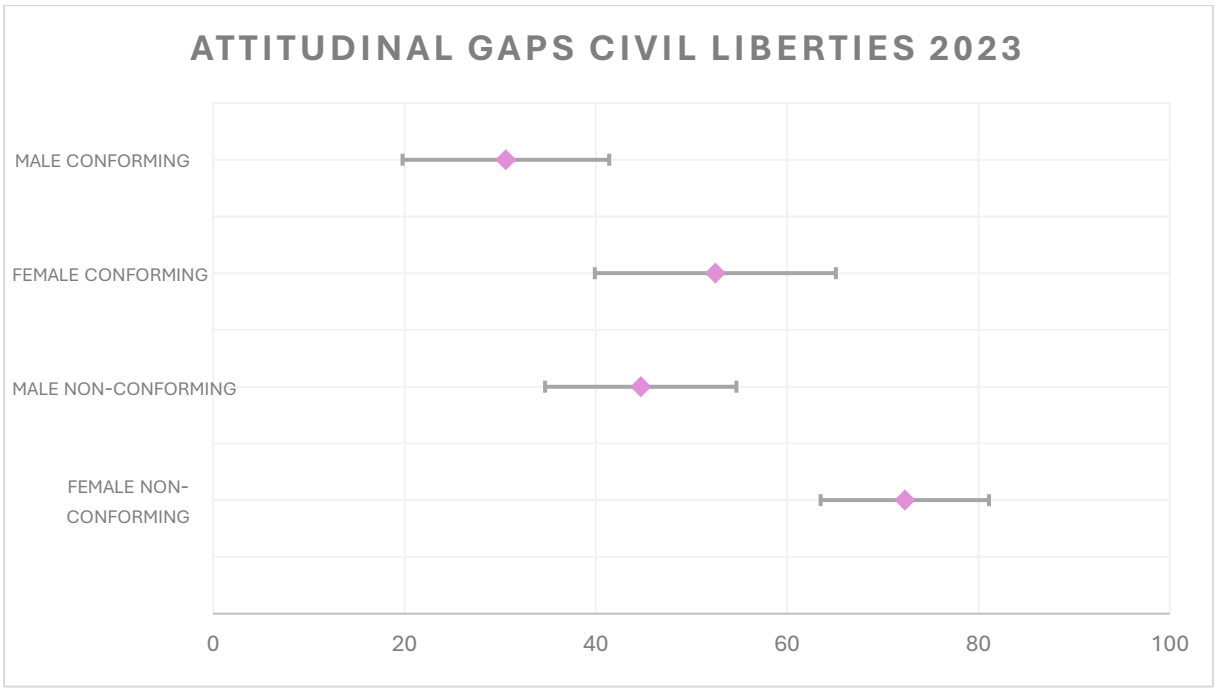


*Figure 8: Sex and conformity gaps in predicted probabilities for attitudes towards civil liberties (2023)*

The fact that nonconformity yields more progressive attitudes – except for migration attitudes – begs the question of why this is the case. After all, it is possible that progressive ideological attitudes lead to a particular view of one's own gender identity, and thus the effect would be reversed. Previous evidence on sexual minorities highlights the complex interplay between (non-)conformity and political ideology (Cravens 2020), with mutual influences. However, it could be reasonably argued that while these concepts are undeniably linked, gender socialization begins in early childhood (Leaper and Friedman 2007) and political socialization in the teenage years (Smets 2021). It is therefore plausible that early socialization into non-conforming gender roles encourages questioning of traditional institutions and norms, which in turn is associated with progressive positions. Hence, childhood negotiations and considerations of gender may lay certain ideological foundations, which may well be reflected as significant political differences during individuals' lives.

Further, the questions surrounding the results of the analysis of attitudes towards migration are also puzzling. Here, no significant effects are found. This is remarkable when considering the

issue's prominence in German politics over the last ten years, (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2025) and the utterly opposing positions taken by the parties that most young people voted for. This analysis suggests that young people might not differ in their views as strongly as expected. In part, this may be due to the multidimensionality of the migration issue itself. As Markaki and Longhi (2013) have argued, responses vary depending on the perception as an economic or cultural threat, and within this, gender conformity may not show uniform effects. This inherent issue structure of migration may also explain the apparent difference in the second socio-cultural dimension of civil liberties. While the former is more of a deliberate policy question that often seeks pragmatic solutions, the debate concerning issues of gender equality and homosexuality is a normative question with a strong influence of personal identity. The result of conforming women showing the highest probability of supporting migration might suggest that traditional feminine socialization, with women showing more empathy and harmony (Chaplin 2015), might encourage a more open view towards migration.

An overarching look at the hypotheses 3a-3c proposes revisiting the claim that conformity gaps are equal or even greater than the original sex gap (Solevid et al. 2021). While the statement holds true for the economic dimension, the socio-cultural dimensions of migration and civil liberties do not fully support it. The attitudes towards migration did not reveal any significant effects, and the picture for the issues of civil liberties tends to indicate more substantial effects for the sex gap. Overall, the analysis makes it unequivocally clear that it is essential to include a more nuanced and subjective measure of gender beyond a binary male-female indicator. It provides further nuance and sheds light on effects that might have been easily overlooked.

# 5 CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to examine the gender gaps in political attitudes between young women and men in Germany. Additionally, the introduction of a conformity variable enabled more nuanced analysis for identifying differences not only based on sex, but also on gender identity. In its first step, the study confirms that young women and men in Germany differ slightly in a broad left-right classification, with the most pronounced differences between their stances being civil liberties. More importantly, the thesis suggests that gender conformity adds value to considerations of gender differences. Significant effects are found between conforming and non-conforming individuals for two central German conflict dimensions – redistribution and civil liberties. This broadens the view of the often-cited "gender gaps" and underlines the multifaceted nature of the concept of gender, where much research has oversimplified. As there are no significant effects for attitudes towards migration, the thesis challenges the notion that those who do not see themselves as exclusively conforming to their sex are generally more progressive in their thinking. This is explained by the multidimensionality of the migration problem, but this finding offers potential for further research.

Overall, the statistical analysis would benefit from a larger sample. Future studies may use individual country or dedicated youth samples, showing greater nuance in the effects when keeping a metric scale level for the dependent variables. As a prerequisite for this, however, more surveys should consistently include self-assessment of masculinity and femininity or other alternative gender measurements. Furthermore, this would allow for a natural progression of this work by analyzing longitudinal developments of these trends.

Recently, German political discourse has been increasingly gripped by debates on the gender differences in voting behavior and the related ideological and attitudinal divides. This thesis reinforces that a seamless transfer of differences in voting behavior to political attitudes is

misguided. It may prove more fruitful to investigate factors such as party stigma, campaigns and rhetoric, individual candidates, or social media, which may produce substantial differences in voting behavior (Erikson and Tedin 2016, 275; Harteveld et al. 2015; 2019); rather than assuming that these are automatically due to attitudinal differences. This is not to suggest that gender differences in attitudes are entirely without influence, but rather that their connection to what happens at the ballot box is complex and warrants closer examination.

Future analyses should include the growing nuances of gender and the increasing role of non-conformity; otherwise, research may end up with a reduced understanding of what shapes the political landscape. This becomes most apparent when looking at the most decisive results on civil liberties, which includes items on gender equality and homosexuality. Prior research stated that young men hold more conservative positions due to feeling threatened by the efforts of gender equality and advancements of women's rights (Mathisen 2025; Off, Charron, and Alexander 2022). In this regard, this thesis contributes to understanding how this dynamic works in Germany. Considering 'young men' as a homogenous group severely dilutes the concrete effects. In Germany, it is not specifically young men, but instead young gender-conforming men, who are skeptical or even dismissive towards gender equality. Furthermore, this thesis offers a more profound insight, showing that young conformist men also appear to be the least supportive of same-sex relationships. Due to the stability of political orientations throughout a lifetime (Hooghe and Wilkenfeld 2008; Peterson, Smith, and Hibbing 2020), these results indicate that the number of divisive debates about the role of women and same-sex relationships is likely to increase rather than decrease. However, it would be a mistake to assume that these controversies are drawn along a simple male-female line – rather, it is the interaction of sex and (non)conformity that may shape them.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


Abendschön, Simone, and Stephanie Steinmetz. 2014. "The Gender Gap in Voting Revisited: Women's Party Preferences in a European Context." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 21 (2): 315–44. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxu009.

Alesina, Alberto, Armando Miano, and Stefanie Stantcheva. 2023. "Immigration and Redistribution." *The Review of Economic Studies* 90 (1): 1–39. https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdac011.

American Psychological Association. 2023. "APA Dictionary of Psychology." November 15, 2023. https://dictionary.apa.org/.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Jonathan Rodden, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2008. "The Strength of Issues: Using Multiple Measures to Gauge Preference Stability, Ideological Constraint, and Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* 102 (2): 215–32. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055408080210.

Athenstaedt, Ursula, and Dorothee Alfermann. 2011. *Geschlechterrollen und ihre Folgen: Eine sozialpsychologische Betrachtung*. 1st ed. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH. https://doi.org/10.17433/978-3-17-022703-3.

Bauer, Paul C., Pablo Barberá, Kathrin Ackermann, and Aaron Venetz. 2017. "Is the Left-Right Scale a Valid Measure of Ideology?" *Political Behavior* 39 (3): 553–83. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-016-9368-2.

Billmayer, Luisa. 2025. "Männer eher Rechts, Frauen eher Links: Woher kommt der Gender Gap bei der Bundestagswahl 2025?" ZDFheute. April 23, 2025. https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/deutschland/bundestagswahl-2025-gender-gap-maenner-rechts-frauen-links-100.html.

Bishop, George F. 1987. "Experiments with the Middle Response Alternative in Survey Questions." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51 (2): 220–32. https://doi.org/10.1086/269030.

Bittner, Amanda, and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant. 2017a. "Digging Deeper into the Gender Gap: Gender Salience as a Moderating Factor in Political Attitudes." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 50 (2): 559–78. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423917000270.

———. 2017b. "Sex Isn't Gender: Reforming Concepts and Measurements in the Study of Public Opinion." *Political Behavior* 39 (4): 1019–41. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-017-9391-y.

Bobbio, Norberto. 1996. *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Bogner, Kathrin, and Uta Landrock. 2016. "Response Biases in Standardised Surveys (GESIS Survey Guidelines)Response Biases in Standardised Surveys (GESIS Survey Guidelines)." GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences. https://doi.org/10.15465/GESIS-SG_EN_016.

Brown, Anna. 2022. “About 5% of Young Adults in the U.S. Say Their Gender Is Different from Their Sex Assigned at Birth.” *Pew Research Center* (blog). June 7, 2022. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/06/07/about-5-of-young-adults-in-the-u-s-say-their-gender-is-different-from-their-sex-assigned-at-birth/.

Buchmayr, Florian. 2024. “Politische Einstellungspolarisierung in Deutschland.” *Soziale Welt* 75 (1): 5–44. https://doi.org/10.5771/0038-6073-2024-1-5.

Burn-Murdoch, John. 2024. “A New Global Gender Divide Is Emerging.” *Financial Times*, January 26, 2024, sec. Data Points. https://www.ft.com/content/29fd9b5c-2f35-41bf-9d4c-994db4e12998.

Carmines, Edward G., Michael J. Ensley, and Michael W. Wagner. 2012. “Political Ideology in American Politics: One, Two, or None?” *The Forum* 10 (3). https://doi.org/10.1515/1540-8884.1526.

Caughey, Devin, Tom O’Grady, and Christopher Warshaw. 2019. “Policy Ideology in European Mass Publics, 1981–2016.” *American Political Science Review* 113 (3): 674–93. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000157.

Chaplin, Tara M. 2015. “Gender and Emotion Expression: A Developmental Contextual Perspective.” *Emotion Review: Journal of the International Society for Research on Emotion* 7 (1): 14–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073914544408.

Conover, Pamela Johnston, and Stanley Feldman. 1981. “The Origins and Meaning of Liberal/Conservative Self-Identifications.” *American Journal of Political Science* 25 (4): 617–45. https://doi.org/10.2307/2110756.

Converse, Philip E. 2006. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics (1964).” *Critical Review* 18 (1–3): 1–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/08913810608443650.

Cravens, Royal G. 2020. “Political Behavior of Sexual and Gender Minorities.” In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, by Royal G. Cravens. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1252.

Dalton, Russell J. 2020. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Seventh edition. Los Angeles London: Sage, CQ Press.

Dassonneville, Ruth. 2021. “Change and Continuity in the Ideological Gender Gap a Longitudinal Analysis of Left-Right Self-Placement in OECD Countries.” *European Journal of Political Research* 60 (1): 225–38. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12384.

Deitch, Cynthia. 1988. “Sex Differences in Support for Government Spending.” In *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, by Carol M. Mueller, 192–216. Sage Yearbooks in Women’s Policy Studies 12. Newbury Park Beverly Hills London [etc.]: Sage Publ.

Deutschlandfunk. 2024. “Gen Z: Driften Frauen und Männer politisch auseinander?” Deutschlandfunk. November 23, 2024. https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/gen-z-wahlverhalten-gender-gap-100.html.

Eagleton, Terry. 2000. *Ideologie: eine Einführung*. Translated by Anja Tippner. Metzler Reprint. Stuttgart Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-02761-0.

Eagly, Alice H., and Wendy Wood. 2013. "The Nature–Nurture Debates: 25 Years of Challenges in Understanding the Psychology of Gender." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 8 (3): 340–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691613484767.

Erikson, Robert S., and Kent L. Tedin. 2016. *American Public Opinion*. Ninth edition. London New York: Routledge.

ESS. 2022. "Second Release of Round 10 Data Now Available | European Social Survey." 2022. https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/news/article/second-release-round-10-data-now-available.

Evans, Geoffrey, Anthony Heath, and Mansur Lalljee. 1996. "Measuring Left-Right and Libertarian-Authoritarian Values in the British Electorate." *The British Journal of Sociology* 47 (1): 93–112. https://doi.org/10.2307/591118.

Feldman, Stanley, and Christopher Johnston. 2014. "Understanding the Determinants of Political Ideology: Implications of Structural Complexity." *Political Psychology* 35 (3): 337–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12055.

Forschungsgruppe Wahlen. 2025. "Politik II. Langzeitentwicklung Wichtiger Trends Aus Dem Politbarometer Zu Politischen Themen." 2025. https://www.forschungsgruppe.de/Umfragen/Politbarometer/Langzeitentwicklung_-_Themen_im_Ueberblick/Politik_II/.

Gidengil, Elisabeth, André Blais, Richard Nadeau, and Neil Nevitte. 2003. "Women to the Left? Gender Differences in Political Beliefs and Policy Preferences Women to the Left? Gender Differences in Political Beliefs and Policy Preferences." In *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada*, edited by Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble, 140–59. Don Mills: Oxford Univ. Press.

Gidengil, Elisabeth, and Dietlind Stolle. 2021. "Comparing Self-Categorisation Approaches to Measuring Gender Identity." *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 4 (1). https://doi.org/10.1332/251510820X15918093444206.

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Harvard University Press. https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb32978.0001.001.

Grasso, Maria, and Rosalind Shorrocks. 2025. "Are New Generations of Women More Left-Wing than Men? Generations and Gender Gaps in Attitudes to Inequality and Social Services." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2025.2490811.

Harteveld, Eelco, Stefan Dahlberg, Andrej Kokkonen, and Wouter Van Der Brug. 2019. "Gender Differences in Vote Choice: Social Cues and Social Harmony as Heuristics." *British Journal of Political Science* 49 (3): 1141–61. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123417000138.

Harteveld, Eelco, Wouter Van Der Brug, Stefan Dahlberg, and Andrej Kokkonen. 2015. "The Gender Gap in Populist Radical-Right Voting: Examining the Demand Side in Western

and Eastern Europe." *Patterns of Prejudice* 49 (1–2): 103–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2015.1024399.

Hatemi, Peter K., Rose McDermott, J.Michael Bailey, and Nicholas G. Martin. 2012. "The Different Effects of Gender and Sex on Vote Choice." *Political Research Quarterly* 65 (1): 76–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912910391475.

Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks. 2018. "Cleavage Theory Meets Europe's Crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the Transnational Cleavage." *Journal of European Public Policy* 25 (1): 109–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1310279.

Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks, and Carole J. Wilson. 2002. "Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?" *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (8): 965–89. https://doi.org/10.1177/001041402236310.

Hooghe, Marc, and Britt Wilkenfeld. 2008. "The Stability of Political Attitudes and Behaviors across Adolescence and Early Adulthood: A Comparison of Survey Data on Adolescents and Young Adults in Eight Countries." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 37 (2): 155–67. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-007-9199-x.

Hudde, Ansgar. 2023. "Seven Decades of Gender Differences in German Voting Behavior." *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift Für Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie* 75 (2): 143–70. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-023-00904-4.

———. 2025. "Die Polarisierung der Geschlechter." Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V.

Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*. Princeton University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x18ck.

Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2000. "The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women's and Men's Voting Behavior in Global Perspective." *International Political Science Review* 21 (4): 441–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512100214007.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Gregory B. Markus. 1984. "Partisan Orientations over the Long Haul: Results from the Three-Wave Political Socialization Panel Study." *The American Political Science Review* 78 (4): 1000–1018. https://doi.org/10.2307/1955804.

Johnston, Christopher D, and Trent Ollerenshaw. 2020. "How Different Are Cultural and Economic Ideology?" *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, Political Ideologies, 34 (August):94–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2020.01.008.

Jost, John T., Christopher M. Federico, and Jaime L. Napier. 2009. "Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities." *Annual Review of Psychology* 60 (1): 307–37. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163600.

Jost, John T., Gráinne Fitzsimons, and Aaron C. Kay. 2004. "The Ideological Animal. A System Justification View." In *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology*, by Jeff Greenberg, Sander Leon Koole, and Thomas A. Pyszczynski, 268–88. New York: Guilford Press.

Jost, John T., Jack Glaser, Arie W. Kruglanski, and Frank J. Sulloway. 2003. “Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition.” *Psychological Bulletin* 129 (3): 339–75. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.3.339.

Kalton, G., Julie Roberts, and D. Holt. 1980. “The Effects of Offering a Middle Response Option with Opinion Questions.” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series D (The Statistician)* 29 (1): 65–78. https://doi.org/10.2307/2987495.

Kaminska, Olena. 2020. “Guide to Using Weights and Sample Design Indicators with ESS Data.” https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/ESS_weighting_data_1_1.pdf.

Kantar. 2021. “Special Eurobarometer 509 – November - December 2020 ‘Social Issues’ Report.” LU: Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/14984.

Kobayashi, Yoshiharu, and Seiki Tanaka. 2024. “How Gender Shapes Attitudes and Concerns about Immigration.” *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2024.2378023.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, and Timotheos Frey. 2008. *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.

Kulachai, Waiphot, Unisa Lerdtomornsakul, and Patipol Homyamyen. 2023. “Factors Influencing Voting Decision: A Comprehensive Literature Review.” *Social Sciences* 12 (9): 469. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12090469.

Kurunmäki, Jussi, and Jani Marjanen. 2020. “15 How Ideology Became Isms: A History of a Conceptual Coupling.” In *Passions, Politics and the Limits of Society*, by Heikki Haara, Koen Stapelbroek, and Mikko Immanen, 291–318. De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110679861-017.

Lachat, Romain. 2018. “Which Way from Left to Right? On the Relation between Voters’ Issue Preferences and Left–Right Orientation in West European Democracies.” *International Political Science Review* 39 (4): 419–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512117692644.

Laméris, Maite D., Richard Jong-A-Pin, and Harry Garretsen. 2018. “On the Measurement of Voter Ideology.” *European Journal of Political Economy* 55 (December):417–32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2018.03.003.

Leaper, Campbell, and Carla Kay Friedman. 2007. “The Socialization of Gender.” In *Handbook of Socialization: Theory and Research*, 561–87. Handbook of Socialization: Theory and Research. New York, NY, US: The Guilford Press.

Lichtheim, George. 1965. “The Concept of Ideology.” *History and Theory* 4 (2): 164–95. https://doi.org/10.2307/2504150.

Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Stein Rokkan. 1967. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. Free Press.

Lisi, Marco. 2022. “Age, Period and Cohort Effects in a Dealigned Electorate: Comparing Late Deciders and Vote Switchers.” *Swiss Political Science Review* 28 (4): 728–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12534.

Lux, Thomas, Steffen Mau, and Aljoscha Jacobi. 2022. “Neue Ungleichheitsfragen, neue Cleavages? Ein internationaler Vergleich der Einstellungen in vier Ungleichheitsfeldern.” *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 32 (2): 173–212. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11609-021-00456-4.

Magliozzi, Devon, Aliya Saperstein, and Laurel Westbrook. 2016. “Scaling Up: Representing Gender Diversity in Survey Research.” *Socius* 2 (January):2378023116664352. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023116664352.

Maio, Gregory R., James M. Olson, Mark M. Bernard, and Michelle A. Luke. 2006. “Ideologies, Values, Attitudes, and Behavior.” In *Handbook of Social Psychology*, edited by John D. DeLamater, 283–308. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research. New York, NY Berlin: Springer.

Mansell, Jordan, Allison Harell, Melanee Thomas, and Tania Gosselin. 2022. “Competitive Loss, Gendered Backlash and Sexism in Politics.” *Political Behavior* 44 (1): 455–76. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-021-09724-8.

Manza, Jeff, and Clem Brooks. 1998. “The Gender Gap in U.S. Presidential Elections: When? Why? Implications?” *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (5): 1235–66. https://doi.org/10.1086/231352.

Markaki, Yvonni, and Simonetta Longhi. 2013. “What Determines Attitudes to Immigration in European Countries? An Analysis at the Regional Level.” *Migration Studies* 1 (3): 311–37. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnt015.

Mathisen, Ruben B. 2025. “Growing Apart: Ideological Polarization between Teenage Boys and Girls.”

Mau, Steffen, Thomas Lux, and Fabian Gülzau. 2020. “Die drei Arenen der neuen Ungleichheitskonflikte. Eine sozialstrukturelle Positionsbestimmung der Einstellungen zu Umverteilung, Migration und sexueller Diversität.” *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 30 (3): 317–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11609-020-00420-8.

McDermott, Monika L. 2016. *Masculinity, Femininity, and American Political Behavior*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190462802.001.0001.

Mellacher, Patrick, and Gernot Lechner. 2023. *Predicting Voter Ideology Using Machine Learning*. GSC Discussion Paper Series, Paper No. 29. Graz Schumpeter Centre. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368802682_Predicting_Voter_Ideology_Using_Machine_Learning.

Menold, Natalja, and Kathrin Bogner. 2016. “Design of Rating Scales in Questionnaires (GESIS Survey Guidelines)Design of Rating Scales in Questionnaires (GESIS Survey Guidelines).” GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences. https://doi.org/10.15465/GESIS-SG_EN_015.

Mosher, Donald L. 1991. "Macho Men, Machismo, and Sexuality." *Annual Review of Sex Research*, March. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10532528.1991.10559871.

Murnen, Sarah K., and Donn Byrne. 1991. "Hyperfeminity: Measurement and Initial Validation of the Construct." *The Journal of Sex Research* 28 (3): 479–89.

Nennstiel, Richard, and Ansgar Hudde. 2025. "A Growing Gender Divide among Young Adults in Ideological Left–Right Self-Placement? Evidence from 32 European Countries." OSF. https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/zude5.

Neubaum, German. 2020. "Polarisierung." In *Handbuch Politische Kommunikation*, edited by Isabelle Borucki, Katharina Kleinen-von Königslöw, Stefan Marschall, and Thomas Zerback, 1–16. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26242-6_57-1.

Off, Gefjon, Nicholas Charron, and Amy Alexander. 2022. "Who Perceives Women's Rights as Threatening to Men and Boys? Explaining Modern Sexism among Young Men in Europe." *Frontiers in Political Science* 4 (August). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2022.909811.

Pappi, Franz Urban. 1977. "SOZIALSTRUKTUR, GESELLSCHAFTLICHE WERTORIENTIERUNGEN UND WAHLABSICHT: Ergebnisse Eines Zeitvergleichs Des Deutschen Elektorats 1953 Und 1976." *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 18 (2/3): 195–229.

Peterson, Johnathan C., Kevin B. Smith, and John R. Hibbing. 2020. "Do People Really Become More Conservative as They Age?" *The Journal of Politics* 82 (2): 600–611. https://doi.org/10.1086/706889.

Pichler, Florian. 2010. "Foundations of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment: The Variable Nature of Perceived Group Threat across Changing European Societies, 2002-2006." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 51 (6): 445–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715210379456.

Plescia, Carolina, and Sylvia Kritzinger. 2017. "Retrospective Voting and Party Support at Elections: Credit and Blame for Government and Opposition." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 27 (2): 156–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2016.1243543.

Rothmund, Tobias, and Kai Arzheimer. 2022. "Politische Ideologien." In *Politische Psychologie: Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Studium*, edited by Sonja Zmerli and Ofer Feldman, 2. Auflage, 149–73. Politische Psychologie: Themen, Herausforderungen, Perspektiven/Political Psychology: Issues, Challenges, and Prospects 1. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG. https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748910121.

Schedler, Andreas. 2023. "Rethinking Political Polarization." *Political Science Quarterly* 138 (3): 335–59. https://doi.org/10.1093/psquar/qqad038.

Schimank, Uwe. 2018. "Rechtspopulistische Mittelschichten Als Gefährder Gesellschaftlicher Ordnung: Eine Theoretische Skizze." In *Die Mitte Als Kampfzone*, edited by Nadine M. Schöneck and Sabine Ritter, 217–40. transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839440346-014.

Schmitt-Beck, Rüdiger. 2007. “Seymour M. Lipset/Stein Rokkan (Hrsg.), Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives, New York/London 1967.” In *Schlüsselwerke der Politikwissenschaft*, edited by Steffen Kailitz, 251–55. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-90400-9_68.

Schmitt-Beck, Rüdiger, Sigrid Roßteutscher, Harald Schoen, Bernhard Weßels, and Christof Wolf, eds. 2022. *The Changing German Voter*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198847519.001.0001.

Sherman, Carter. 2024. “Young Women Are the Most Progressive Group in American History. Young Men Are Checked Out.” The Guardian. October 16, 2024. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2024/aug/07/gen-z-voters-political-ideology-gender-gap.

Shorrocks, Rosalind. 2018. “Cohort Change in Political Gender Gaps in Europe and Canada: The Role of Modernization.” *Politics & Society* 46 (2): 135–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329217751688.

Skewes, Lea, Cordelia Fine, and Nick Haslam. 2018. “Beyond Mars and Venus: The Role of Gender Essentialism in Support for Gender Inequality and Backlash.” *PLOS ONE* 13 (7): e0200921. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0200921.

Smets, Kaat. 2021. “Aging and Politics: Age Differences in Political Behavior in Comparative Perspective.” In *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 287–300. Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-815970-5.00018-8.

Solevid, Maria, Lena Wängnerud, Monika Djerf-Pierre, and Elias Markstedt. 2021. “Gender Gaps in Political Attitudes Revisited: The Conditional Influence of Non-Binary Gender on Left–Right Ideology and GAL-TAN Opinions,” February. https://doi.org/10.1332/251510820X15978604738684.

Sonnenberg, Peter. 2025. “Wodurch das Wahlverhalten junger Menschen beeinflusst wird.” tagesschau.de. February 25, 2025. https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/bundestagswahl/junge-waehler-motivation-100.html.

Steppat, Timo. 2025. “Junge Männer recht, junge Frauen links?” FAZ.NET. February 25, 2025. https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/bundestagswahl/die-linke-bei-dieser-waehlergruppe-haette-sie-eine-mehrheit-110319938.html.

Stout, Christopher T, Keith Baker, and Madelyn Baker. 2021. “How Social Desirability Response Bias May Lead to an Overestimation of Obama-Trump Voters.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 85 (2): 694–705. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfab033.

Teney, Céline, and Li Kathrin Rupieper. 2023. “A New Social Conflict on Globalisation-Related Issues in Germany? A Longitudinal Perspective.” *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift Für Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie* 75 (1): 205–34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-023-00884-5.

The Economist. 2024. “Why Young Men and Women Are Drifting Apart, Why Young Men and Women Are Drifting Apart.” *The Economist*, March 16, 2024. https://www.economist.com/international/2024/03/13/why-the-growing-gulf-between-young-men-and-women.

Twenge, Jean M., Brooke E. Wells, Jennifer Le, and G. Nic Rider. 2024. "Increases in Self-Identifying as Transgender Among US Adults, 2014–2022." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, July. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-024-01001-7.

Vries, Catherine E. de, Armen Hakhverdian, and Bram Lancee. 2013. "The Dynamics of Voters' Left/Right Identification: The Role of Economic and Cultural Attitudes." *Political Science Research and Methods* 1 (2): 223–38. https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2013.4.

Weber, Christopher. 2019. "Ideology and Values in Political Decision Making." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.998.

Wood, Wendy, and Alice H. Eagly. 2015. "Two Traditions of Research on Gender Identity." *Sex Roles* 73 (11): 461–73. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0480-2.