

**VOTING BY GENDER: EXPLAINING THE MODERN GENDER GAP
AMONG YOUNG GERMANS**

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ABSTRACT

While male and female voting behavior in Germany remained relatively balanced for decades, a significant modern gender gap emerged in 2017, with the youngest age group demonstrating the largest recorded political gender gap in the years that followed. The prominent explanations fall short of fully accounting for the rapid and pronounced emergence of this gap. This thesis contends that differing attitudes of young men and women toward gender equality, reflected by the attitude theory, may help explain the modern gender gap. Through a qualitative content analysis of electoral programmes (2013-2025), it examines how party positions on gender equality align with gendered attitudes and gendered voting behavior. The thesis finds that parties with stronger commitments to gender equality tend to attract more young female voters, while those with stronger opposition to gender equality tend to attract more young male voters. These findings suggest that differing attitudes of young men and women toward gender equality, paired with increased salience of gender issues, are a key factor in shaping different male and female voting preferences and contribute to the modern gender gap. This dynamic may influence party strategies and policy outcomes, as parties may target gendered attitudes to gain votes.

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Very importantly, I would like to dedicate this work to my mother and grandparents, who have unconditionally supported me throughout my academic career and life in general. I am endlessly grateful for their unwavering positive outlook on life, which has greatly shaped who I am.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, society has made significant progress toward gender equality - with formal legal equality, increased female representation, and a narrowing gender pay gap. Yet, as structural divisions between men and women diminish, a puzzling political divide has emerged: the *Modern Gender Gap*. The modern gender gap refers to the trend of young women favouring left-leaning parties, while young men gravitate toward right-leaning parties (Norris and Inglehart 2000; Giger 2009; Hudde 2023). This dynamic marks a reversal of the traditional gender gap that persisted until the 1970s, when women were more likely to support conservative parties than men.

This shift is puzzling: as gender roles and lifestyles converge, political behavior might be expected to follow. Instead, a political cleavage has appeared. A gender-based cleavage is especially significant, as gender intersects all demographics and is not confined to a specific class, religion, or region. The modern gender gap may thus extend politics into private life, polarizing relationships, families, and social cohesion (Chen and Rohla 2018). It also has electoral consequences when parties strategically mobilize votes by aligning with one gender, which can affect representation and legislation, as parties predominantly supported by one gender are more likely to advance policies that reflect that gender's issue priorities (Shorrocks 2018; Langsaether and Knutsen 2024). The case of South Korea illustrates how deep the modern gender gap can run, where gendered ideological divides over gender equality have translated into a divide in voting behavior (Mo and You 2025). Such ideological divides have extended into private life, even contributing to declining marriage and birth rates (Gong 2024). This shows how the modern gender gap may carry broader societal implications, making it a critical topic of study.

Germany's case illustrates the modern gender gap well, as it reflects general gendered voting patterns, while being unique in its comparatively late emergence and speed of growth from 2013 to 2025 (Hudde 2023). The significant emergence of the gender voting gap within the past 12 years raises a key question: Can differences in gendered attitudes toward gender equality explain the modern gender gap among young voters in Germany?

The Modern Gender Gap in Germany first appeared in the 2017 federal elections, when young women (18-24) favored the left-wing Greens, while young men preferred the liberal FDP. By 2021, this divide reached a postwar record and widened further in 2025, especially between the far-right AfD and the Left, parties with the largest gender gaps and at opposite sides of the political spectrum (Hudde 2025). Despite the persisting gap, the AfD also received increased electoral support from women. These recent, rapid shifts make Germany a particularly relevant case for exploring the modern gender gap.

This thesis explores whether differing gendered attitudes toward gender equality help explain the modern gender gap among young voters in Germany. Gender equality is commonly defined as the absence of gender-based discrimination in access to opportunities, resources, and services across various domains, including education, employment, family and caregiving, and the elimination of gender-based violence (OSCE 2006; Scambor et al. 2014). Feminism can be understood as the promotion of gender equality. This thesis offers a country-specific, context-sensitive case study. First, I present a brief overview of gendered voting differences historically and in Germany. Second, I review key explanations for the modern gender gap, focusing on the attitude theory for the German case. Then, through a qualitative content analysis of electoral programmes from 2013 to 2025, I will examine how party positions on gender equality align with gendered attitudes and voting behavior. The findings suggest that differing gendered attitudes toward gender equality, paired with increased salience, are a key factor in shaping different male and female voting preferences, contributing to the modern gender gap.

1. BACKGROUND: FROM ‘TRADITIONAL GENDER GAP’ TO ‘MODERN GENDER GAP’

1.1 Gendered Differences: Historically

The phenomenon of women voting more left than their male counterparts has not always been the case – rather, the opposite. For a long time, the common trend was for women to vote more right-wing and conservative than men (Inglehart and Norris 2000). In the 1950s and 1960s, women were faced with limited occupational opportunities and rigid traditional gender roles that made them more involved with religion. Thus, they saw their particular position represented more through the religious values of conservative Christian-Democrat parties than by center-left parties that addressed issues of the workforce that did not concern women’s realities (Giger 2009). This gap in political attitudes of women and men, reflected by different electoral choices, is called the ‘traditional gender gap’. With the decline of religion in society and the increase of women’s employment in the 1970s, many societies entered a phase of ‘gender dealignment’, which meant that women no longer voted more conservative or right-wing than men (Inglehart and Norris 2000). Soon, a ‘gender realignment’ followed - women began holding more left-wing positions than men. In 1980, in the United States, women shifted to increasingly voting for Democrats, while men voted for Republicans (Giger 2009). This process was not confined to the United States. Since the 1990s, no Western European country has demonstrated a traditional gender gap anymore (Giger 2009). By the late 1990s, the traditional gender gap reversed in most established democracies (Inglehart and Norris 2000). As women voted significantly more left-wing than men, the ‘modern gender gap’ emerged (Inglehart and Norris 2000).

1.2 Gendered Differences: Federal Republic of Germany

The electoral gender differences in Europe are less consistent and under-researched compared to the United States, as the gender gap has been inconsistent cross-nationally and nationally (Giger 2009). So, how did Germany reflect the global trend? In Germany, the ‘traditional gender gap’ first emerged with the introduction of women’s voting rights in 1918 (Hudde 2023). Until the 1970s, women tended to give their electoral support to conservative parties more than men. The Christian-Democratic party (CDU) was the most popular among women (Hudde 2023). This was in line with the general phenomenon of the traditional gender gap, where women prioritized religious and traditional values more than their male counterparts due to their structural constraints (Billmayer 2025). Within a short time, between 1969 and 1972, the traditional gender gap rapidly disappeared (Hudde 2023). A shift took place from women predominantly voting conservatively to women voting for left wing parties (Giger 2009). Since the 1990s, women in Germany have placed themselves on the left-spectrum more than men (Dassonneville 2021). Thus, in that time period, Germany aligns with the pattern of most OECD countries moving towards a modern gender gap (Hudde 2023). Yet, while there was a strong shift of women towards the left, the pace of the shift diminished in the early 2000s (Dassonneville 2021). Electoral choices of women and men converged rather. Overall, between 1980 and 2013, the gender gap value represented a balanced ratio between the genders (Billmayer 2024).

While in the German federal elections of 2013, signs of an emerging modern gender gap among the youngest voters (18-24) became visible, the final move to a modern gender gap only happened in 2017 (Hudde 2023). Compared to other Western European countries, this is quite a late observation (Hudde 2023). In 2017, the Greens received most of their electoral support from young women, while the liberal FDP received most of their electoral support from young men (Böckmann et al. 2018). In the succeeding election of 2021, the gap grew

substantially with the two most popular parties among young voters, the Greens and FDP (Billmayer 2025). Generally, young women voted more for the three (center-)left parties, whereas liberal and right-wing parties attracted more male voters (Bundeswahlleiter 2022). The election of 2021 is particularly significant as young people exhibited the largest recorded gender gap in any group or time (Hudde 2023). Thus, within the short time of 8 years (2013-2021), the gender gap went from almost nonexistent to a new record in the entire post-World-War-II era (Hudde 2023). The political gender gap reached a new peak in the 2025 elections (Billmayer 2025). The two parties at opposite ends of the political spectrum were each most popular among young women and men, respectively. The Left achieved a record high, receiving 35 percent of young women's votes, while the far-right AfD secured 27 percent of young men's votes. Yet, the far-right AfD also received increased electoral support from women, underlining the inconsistencies of gendered voting patterns.



Figure 1: Vote Distribution for the Federal Election 2013 of the voter cohort (18-24) by gender. Bundeswahlleiter (2014)

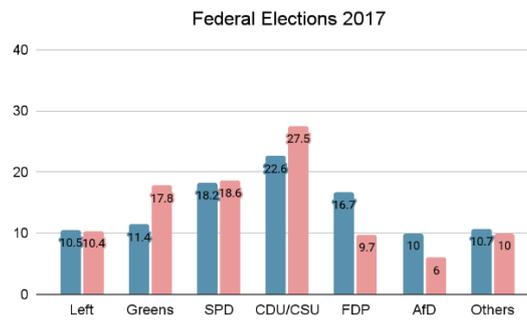


Figure 2: Vote Distribution for the Federal Election 2017 of the voter cohort (18-24) by gender. Bundeswahlleiter (2018)



Figure 3: Vote Distribution for the Federal Election 2021 of the voter cohort (18-24) by gender. Bundeswahlleiter (2022)



Figure 4: Vote Distribution for the Federal Election 2025 of the voter cohort (18-24) by gender. ARD infratest dimap Exit Poll (2025)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: EXPLANATIONS FOR A MOVE TOWARD THE MODERN GENDER GAP

Having given a historical overview of gendered voting patterns generally and in Germany, I will now present the existing explanations for a move toward the modern gender gap in the literature. While most literature agrees that limited female labor force participation and high salience of religion in society were driving factors of the traditional gender gap, there is no consensus on what factors cause the modern gender gap. The different explanations can be grouped into several categories.

Two of the most influential researchers on different voting preferences between women and men are Inglehart and Norris. Their ‘Developmental theory of gender realignment’ claims that the traditional gender gap reverses through modernization processes (Inglehart and Norris 2000). One of the main reasons identified by the theory as shaping women’s political behavior is **secularization**, defined as the decrease of religiosity (Lansaether and Knutsen 2024; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Shorrocks 2018). As societies secularize, women become less involved in religious institutions and seek less conformity, making them more likely to support left-leaning parties (Giger 2019). The theory assumes that traditional societies are characterized by rigidly defined gender roles, which discourage women from working outside the home. However, once society modernizes and secularizes, enabling increasing gender role convergence, increased female labor force participation, and upward mobility, political preferences shift. Thus, another explanation raised emphasizes **structural factors** that shape women’s experiences and voting behavior (Bergh 2007; Dassonneville 2021; Giger 2019; Hudde 2023; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Studlar et al. 1998). As women increasingly enter the workforce, they experience “horizontal and vertical occupational segregation” (Giger 2019). This means that women tend to be more represented in lower-paying jobs and the public sector

(Hudde 2023). As women face inequalities in their socioeconomic attainment, they are more confronted with gender inequalities (Dassonneville 2021; Studlar et al, 1998; Giger 2019). This realigns women towards parties on the left as they tend to advocate more for economic redistribution, public spending, and welfare policies (Hudde 2023). This trend is argued to be more pronounced among divorced, widowed or single women (Manza and Brooks 1988) who often have less financial stability and thus support economic redistribution and welfare policies (Giger 2019) Conversely, men's higher levels of educational and occupational attainment makes them vote more conservatively, since those parties tend to advocate for the preservation of the status quo (Studlar et al. 1998).

Another prominent explanation for the emergence of the modern gender gap focuses on cultural theories concerned with **attitudes and values** (Dassonneville 2021; Giger 2019; Hudde 2023; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Off et al. 2025; Studlar et al. 1998). According to this attitude theory, men and women hold systematically different attitudes that shape their political preferences. This attitudinal divide has also been linked to broader processes of secularization and modernization, which have reduced the focus on economic and physical security and given rise to postmaterialist values of “freedom, self-expression, and gender equality” (Dassonneville 2021; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Giger 2019). As a result, women have increasingly come to endorse more progressive and egalitarian values compared to men (Langsaether and Knutsen 2024). This pattern is especially evident in Germany, where women tend to reject traditional norms, advocate for gender equality, and favor progressive economic and environmental policies. (Langsaether and Knutsen 2024). The increased salience of gender equality topics, such as reproductive rights and equality of opportunities, has further increased this divide (Inglehart and Norris 2000). Thus, while this attitudinal gap can apply to several topics (Studlar et al. 1998), it is most pronounced in issues directly related to gender equality (Langsaether and Knutsen 2024; Off et al 2025). For example, Off et al (2025) find that there are no substantial

differing immigration attitudes between young men and women in Germany, whereas there is a significant gender divide on modern sexism, with the largest gap among the youngest category of voters. (Off et al. 2025). The attitude theory argues that this can translate into different voting behavior when left-wing parties pick up gender-equity related topics, attracting more women, and right-wing parties do not address these topics or even present a counter-position to them, attracting more men (Hudde 2025; Diabate et al. 2023). It follows that the modern gender gap becomes more pronounced as the divide between women's egalitarian and men's traditionalist attitudes widens, and as party positions on these issues become more polarized.

A recent explanation for the modern gender gap focuses on men's shift toward right-wing parties, challenging a majority of research that treats men as a stable baseline, while solely focusing on women's leftward shift (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Hudde 2023). This observation is often linked to theories of “**cultural backlash**” or “losers of modernization”, which posit that some men perceive women's advancements of increasing equal access to educational and occupational attainments as a loss of relative status and competition over opportunities (Off 2022). This reactionary sentiment is often picked up by right-wing parties that promise a return to “old times” of traditional gender roles, leading to a shift to the right for men (Hudde 2023).

Many studies on the modern gender gap rely on cross-national quantitative regression analyses, which successfully identify broad, generalizable patterns across countries (Studiar et al. 1998; Kedar et al. 2024; Giger 2009; Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014). However, these approaches often overlook the country-specific contextual dynamics that shape gendered voting behavior. In the German context, the most comprehensive study to date is by sociologist Dr. Hudde (2023), whose work provides exceptionally large and reliable data on the modern gender gap in Germany. Yet, his theoretical interpretations highlight the need for further in-depth, context-sensitive research. Additionally, most existing work focuses on long-term structural

factors, paying limited attention to the dynamic role of party positions and how they may interact with attitudes of male and female voters. Electoral programmes, reflecting parties' policy positions and ideological shifts throughout election years, are central for understanding these dynamics (Van der Brug 1999; Hofferbert and Klingemann 1990). Because party positions often align with the preferences of their supporters, these documents offer a valuable lens through which to explore the differing political motivations of male and female voters (Heidler). This thesis addresses the identified gap by examining the modern gender gap among young voters in Germany through a qualitative content analysis of electoral programmes, testing one specific explanation: attitude theory.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the presented theoretical explanations for differing electoral choices of women and men vary cross-nationally and across time, it is particularly interesting to examine what theories of the modern gender gap can explain the rise of the gendered political divide in Germany.

The structural theory, which links gender gaps to differences in education, occupation, and rigid gender roles, explains the traditional gender gap well but falls short in accounting for the modern gender gap in Germany. Socio-structural factors have affected the political behavior of older generations more than younger generations (Shorrocks 2018). This thesis focuses on the youngest voter group (18-24) that has already been born into a secular, increasingly liberal society. As the modern gender gap emerged in Germany in the short time span of eight years, other explanations play a bigger role in explaining the temporal shifts. How different cultural attitudes between men and women shape electoral choices is under-researched, yet significantly relevant.

Thus, the analysis will mainly focus on the attitude theory. The attitude theory claims that different cultural attitudes and values affect women's and men's political behavior (Inglehart and Norris 2000; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999). While gendered attitudes can differ on several topics, the attitudinal divide among the youngest voters in Germany is found to be largest on the topic of modern sexism (Langsaether and Knutsen 2024; Off et al. 2025). On average, women hold more egalitarian positions and men hold more traditionalist positions on gender equality. Yet, whether these attitudinal differences affect the voting behavior in Germany based on parties' positions on gender equality remains to be discovered. Specifically, in light of increased gender salience in the last decade, through the 2017 emergence of the

#MeToo movement, it is interesting to examine whether cultural attitudes influence voting behavior. In this context, whether men and women attribute equal salience to cultural and political topics also remains to be discovered. The attitude theory is even more appropriate in light of increasing female support for the far-right in the 2025 elections, to test not only whether there are differing cultural attitudes between men and women but also whether these have changed throughout the elections.

Operationalization

While this study does not directly measure individual-level attitudes, it builds on existing empirical findings that show women tend to hold more egalitarian views, and men more traditionalist views on gender equality (Off et al. 2025; Langsaether and Knutsen 2024). This assumption allows for testing the implications of the attitude theory by examining whether and how party positions on gender equality correlate differently with young male and female voting behavior. To operationalize this framework, two main components are analyzed:

1. Party positions on gender equality: Party positions are operationalized through a qualitative content analysis of the electoral programs of major German parties from four federal elections: 2013, 2017, 2021, and 2025. The analysis focuses on the presence, framing, and prominence of gender-related issues, including but not limited to: gender equality in the labor market, reproductive rights, gender quotas, and anti-discrimination policies. This will help determine the degree to which parties across the spectrum address (or ignore) gender-equality-related topics, and how these positions shift over time.
2. Gendered voting behavior: Voting behavior is examined by comparing these party positions to election outcomes of the youngest voter cohort (18-24) by gender during the same election years. The goal is to identify whether certain party positions on gender

equality receive more support from one gender than the other, and how this relationship evolves over time.

This design allows the study to test whether the alignment or misalignment between the assumed gendered attitudes and party positions influences voting behavior and helps explain the emergence and growth of the modern gender gap in Germany over the past decade.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Case Selection

Germany's case of the modern gender gap is particularly relevant due to its rapid emergence: within just eight years (2013–2021), the political divide between young men and women became the largest in the post-WWII period (Hudde 2023). In contrast to existing explanations that emphasize generational shifts over period effects and suggest that the gender gap among younger cohorts is stable and unlikely to grow significantly (Dassonneville 2021), the speed, scope, and recency of the German developments make the German case particularly relevant for research.

18-24 Voter Cohort Focus

Analyses that examine the aggregate-level gap between all men and women tend to obscure gender differences in left-right voting, since the traditional gender gap among older generations and the modern gender gap among younger generations can offset one another (Shorrocks 2018). Thus, this thesis focuses on the 18-24 year old voter cohort as the gender gap is most significant among this group (Inglehart and Norris 2000; Grasso and Shorrocks 2025; Hudde 2025). Moreover, not only is the gender voting gap more significant among the younger generation, as are the attitudinal differences (Langsaether and Knutsen 2024).

Left-Right Classification

For the classification of the German parties along the right-left spectrum, I have consulted a classification based on Hudde (2023) (See Appendix 1). The classification is based on two subdimensions: socio-cultural and economic. Considering the scope of this piece, I will use a general left-right categorization. Thus, in this thesis, the term '(centre-)left parties refers to the

Left, the Greens (Grüne), and the SPD (Social Democratic party), while '(centre-)right parties refers to the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union), FDP (Free Democratic Party), and AfD (Alternative for Germany). Although some of the parties' ideological positions have slightly shifted throughout the election years, their general position on the political spectrum has remained constant.

Data

This research uses election data and party electoral programmes from 2013, 2017, 2021, and 2025. All electoral programmes were sourced from Parliamentwatch (Abgeordnetenwatch), an independent, nonpartisan public database. Election data for 2013-2021 stems from the Bundeswahlleiter (Federal Returning Officer), which oversees federal electoral processes and provides precise electoral analyses based on large voting samples. As the evaluation 2025 Bundeswahlleiter evaluation is still pending, data from that year is drawn from ARD Infratest Dimap Exit Polls, which conducted a high number of surveys outside of the polling stations. Both sources provide an accurate depiction of the gender gap (Hudde 2025; Langsaether and Knutsen 2024).

Methodology

This study examines the modern gender gap in Germany through the lens of attitude theory to assess whether gendered attitudes help explain patterns of voting behavior. To do so, I will conduct a directed content analysis of electoral programs, using attitude theory as the guiding framework to identify key concepts and framings related to gender equality. This approach aims to conceptually validate or extend the framework of attitude theory by examining how stances on gender equality align with patterns of voter behavior (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). The analysis focuses on the six established political parties in the federal election years 2013, 2017, 2021, and 2025. For each year, I will first provide a descriptive overview of how each party

addresses gender equality, considering the presence, framing, and emphasis of topics such as labor market equality, gender quotas, reproductive rights, and anti-discrimination policies. Next, I will critically evaluate the parties' stances on gender equality and compare them to the gendered electoral results of the corresponding elections. By tracking the development of party positions and electoral results over time, the study aims to investigate whether a *correlation* exists between how, and to what extent, parties address gender equality topics and their gendered voter base. The purpose of this analysis is not to establish a direct causal link between party positions and voting behavior, nor to suggest that gender equality topics are the sole driver of gendered electoral choices. Rather, the study seeks to identify broader patterns of correlation that may offer insight into how gendered attitudes interact with party positioning and voting behavior over time, helping to explain the emergence of the modern gender gap, in line with the attitude theory.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1 Party Positions on Gender Equality

The following provides a brief overview of the parties' positions on gender equality as presented in their electoral programmes for the election years 2013, 2017, 2021, and 2025 (See Appendix 2-5).

Electoral Programmes 2013

In 2013, gender equality featured most prominently in the Left and Greens, opposed to the FDP and CDU/CSU. The Left and Greens explicitly advocate for emancipation and gender equality, while the FDP supported female employment and leadership representation as a means to boost economic performance and opposed gender quotas and, the CDU/CSU advocated for women's rights and traditional norms. The AfD made no mention of gender issues.

Electoral Programmes 2017

In the 2017 electoral programmes, the FDP promoted gender equality primarily through economic participation, opposing quotas and emphasizing individual choice, while the CDU/CSU supported women's leadership but omitted gender equality as a core theme. The AfD first addressed gender issues and strongly rejected gender equality policies, viewing them as discriminatory against men. In contrast, the Left, SPD, and Greens embraced structural approaches to gender equity, with the Left calling for a "care revolution" of equal care-work distribution, the SPD presenting a long-standing commitment through a detailed action plan, and the Greens framing feminist politics as central to their identity and policy agenda.

Electoral Programmes 2021

In the 2021 electoral programmes, the FDP addressed gender equality through an economic lens, promoting women's access to venture capital and leadership positions, but relied on voluntary commitments and avoided structural reforms. The AfD rejected gender equality reforms and instead emphasized traditional gender roles and criticized the oppression of Muslim women. In contrast, the CDU/CSU, SPD, Left, and Greens all actively addressed gender equality, with the SPD presenting a detailed action plan, the Left demanding structural transformation of the capitalist system, and the Greens framing gender justice and feminism as central to democracy and calling for a feminist government.

Electoral Programmes 2025

In the 2025 electoral programmes, the FDP promoted gender equality primarily through economic measures, such as tax reforms and venture capital access, aiming to improve work-family compatibility and boost economic performance. The AfD rejected gender-equal policies, opposing abortion rights and trans inclusion, and even demanding countermeasures. The CDU/CSU only addressed gender equality briefly, advocating for women's anti-discrimination. The SPD, Greens, and the Left positioned gender equality as a central political goal: the SPD declared itself a feminist party; the Greens emphasized intersectional women's rights and gender-equitable labor; and the Left called for structural redistribution of work and power through a national gender equality strategy.

5.2 Party Positions, Gendered Voting Behavior and Attitudes

Having established the party positions on gender equality using their electoral programmes, the following section will now examine how these positions correlate with gendered voting patterns and underlying attitudes. The section draws on attitude theory, which claims that different cultural attitudes and values affect women's and men's political behavior (Inglehart and Norris 2000; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999). On average, women hold more egalitarian positions, while men hold more traditional positions on gender equality (Off et al. 2025). I will critically evaluate the described stances on gender equality to identify whether certain stances have resonated more with gendered attitudes and whether this correlates with more votes from either men or women. The analysis will focus primarily on the parties most relevant to the gender voting gap, namely the FDP and AfD, as particularly popular among young men, and the Greens and Left, as particularly popular among young women.

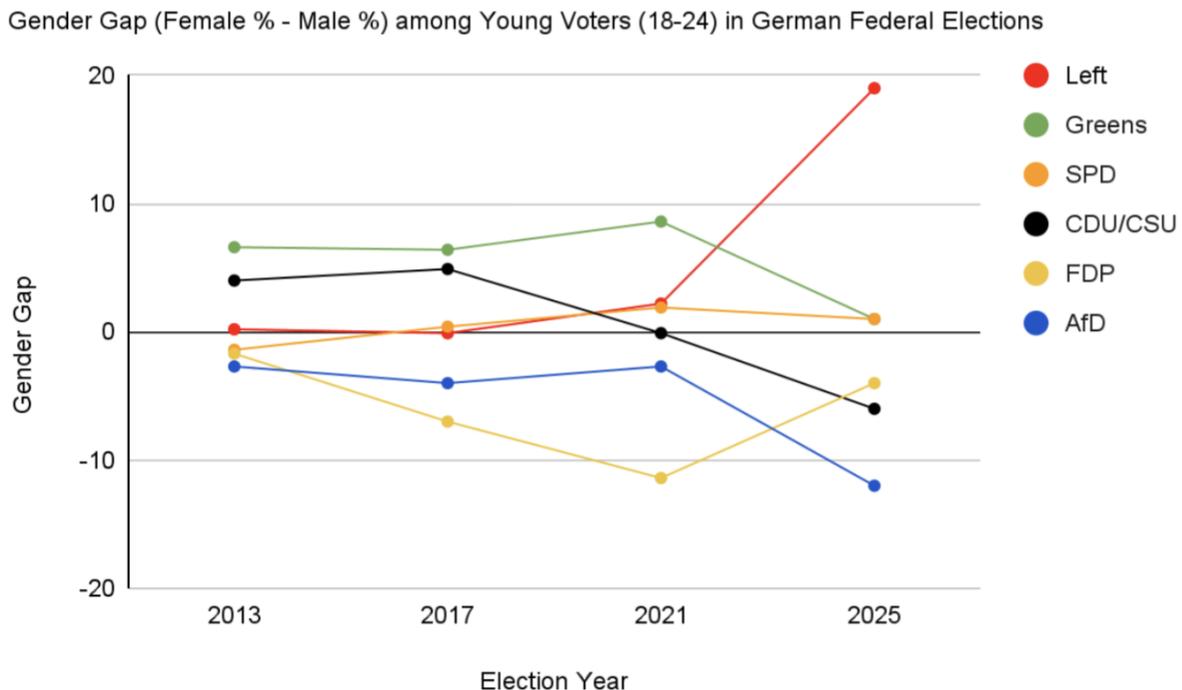


Figure 5: Gender Gap among Young Voters (18-24) in German Federal Elections

2013

While in the German federal elections of 2013, the electorate of the centre-left and centre-right parties was not divided by gender yet, signs of an emerging modern gender gap among the youngest voters (18-24 year olds) were visible. Young men were already more drawn to the FDP and AfD than women, while young women tended to vote more for the Greens. This may be explained by the parties' position on gender equality. The FDP's promotion of women's employment by arguing for improved economic performance and its opposition to gender quotas implies that the economy's needs dominate over structural equality. This creates the impression of gender equality as a means to economic performance, rather than an end in itself, aligning with more passive gender attitudes that may attract more male voters. The AfD first appeared on the political landscape in 2013, although not surpassing the five-percent-threshold to enter the federal parliament. It established itself primarily as a traditionally-oriented eurosceptic party with no particular connection to gender. Although it already attracted more male than female voters, its gender gap still remained comparatively small, consistent with the idea that, due to the party's omission of gender-related issues, gendered attitudes had not yet played a significant role. The Greens were strong advocates of gender equality, highlighting the indispensability of the topic for the party. Other than the FDP, it emphasized structural top-down change, rather than individual incentives, and combined each demand for gender equality with practical policy propositions. Its female-dominated voter base suggests that this stance resonates with women's generally more egalitarian attitudes toward gender equality. The correlation between the Greens' structural, feminist framing aligned with young female support, and the FDP's economically framed, individualist approach aligned with young male support, points to early signs of attitude-congruent voting behavior, as predicted by attitude theory. Although the Left became one of the main contributors to the pronounced modern gender gap in 2025, its electorate was still gender-balanced in 2013 and 2017. Despite already addressing

structural gender equality extensively in those earlier years, its increasingly female-dominated electorate from 2021 onward suggests that additional contextual factors interact with the attitude theory, beyond the correlation between gender attitudes and party positions, such as increased salience of gender topics and political instability with the governing parties.

2017

In 2017, the modern gender gap first emerged: the FDP gained most of its votes from young men, and the Greens gained most of their votes from young women (Böckmann et al. 2017). The Greens further promoted their feminist position on gender equality, paired with a growing female voter base. The FDP's gender voting gap grew significantly from -1.7 to -6. This aligns with the party's limited approach to gender equality. By promoting policies aimed at improving work-family compatibility for women, the FDP does not challenge the underlying gender norms that assign primary responsibility for child care to women, but rather seeks to adapt existing structures to accommodate those norms. The FDP suggests that the gender pay gap results from women choosing lower-paying careers on average, disregarding structural barriers that hinder women from entering better-paying professions and structural inequalities between men and women within the same professions. This places responsibility on women to individually dismantle their own discrimination and simply strive for better-paying professions. Additionally, by not addressing gender-equality-related topics beyond the labor force, the party does not address women who struggle to enter the labor force to begin with. Moreover, by only mentioning violence toward women in relation to religion, it frames domestic abuse as culturally-specific instead of a widespread societal issue. This position not only deters religious women and those outside of the labor force from voting for the party, but also conflicts with a more egalitarian attitude on gender equality among young women. This pattern illustrates how party framing that downplays structural inequality may resonate more with male voters who hold less egalitarian attitudes, consistent with the expectations of attitude theory. The AfD,

which entered the federal parliament for the first time in 2017, is a large contributor to the modern gender gap. The AfD positions itself strongly on gender topics, framing any attempt to question traditional gender differences as a violation of the constitution. It regards gender equality as already achieved and sees gender equity measures as a form of discrimination against men. Women's advancements, such as gender quotas, are regarded as a threat to men's equality, and the only explicit support of women is related to the traditional role of women as birth-givers. The shift from no reference to gender equality in 2013 to explicitly opposing gender equality in 2017 can be reflected in the shift of the AfD voter base. Its gender voting gap increased from -2.7 to -4. The AfD's increasingly anti-feminist rhetoric appears to mobilize young male voters whose attitudes are more traditional or opposed to gender equality, further validating the framework of attitude theory.

2021

In 2021, the modern gender gap grew. At that time, the youngest age group demonstrated the largest political gender gap recorded in a demographic in a German federal election, a record that continued to grow in subsequent years (Hudde 2023). The AfD further took a strong stance against gender equality by framing the consequences of it as a totalitarian regime. The only time it addressed women's discrimination is by advocating against muslim women's oppression, framing Islam as a misogynist religion, and contrasting it with the German-Christian majority society, which is portrayed as inherently gender-equal. The FDP further defended its individualist economy-focused stance as its gender gap increased from -7 to -11. While the FDP was the most popular party among young men, the Greens were most popular among young women. While the FDP followed an individualist approach confined to the economic sector, a sector that is male-dominated to begin with, the Greens followed a broad understanding of gender equality, advocating for women's advancement across multiple spheres. These contrasting approaches to gender equality suggest that the vote choice is linked

to differing attitudes. For the first time in the analysed years, the Left attracted more women than men with, a slightly increasing gender gap from -0.1 to 2. Its growing gender-unequal voter base, despite an unchanged position on gender equality, hints at additional contextual factors influencing vote choice, such as increased salience of gender issues.

2025

The 2025 election marked a new record for the political gender gap among young voters, with the Left and AfD, the two parties at opposite ends of the political spectrum, each most popular among young women and men, respectively (Billmayer 2025). The AfD received its best electoral result so far. It overtook the FDP as the most popular party among young men, increasing support significantly from 7.7% to 27% and widening its gender gap from -2.7 to -12. During this electoral campaign, it further promoted stances opposed to improving women's autonomy. Additionally, it opposed sex education by framing it as indoctrination of children, using child protection as a pretext to reject gender-equity efforts. Over the last four elections, the AfD became one of the biggest contributing parties to the modern gender gap, alongside the Left. In times when most discussions and demands surrounding gender equality focus on women, the AfD reversed the narrative by directly addressing men who may feel undermined in gender equality discourse and policy. The party's growing stance on the opposition of gender equality and the growing electorate of young men implies that men are more drawn to traditional gender roles that preserve traditional power structures. This reinforces the theoretical assumption that young men with more traditional gender attitudes gravitate toward parties that reject egalitarian policy frames. However, though the party's gender gap is significant, the party's female voter base also grew in 2025 (from 5% to 15%), challenging the theory of gendered attitudes. The Left, being the most feminist party, became the party most voted for by young women. Its rise as the most popular party among young women, despite already promoting feminist policies in previous years, highlights that political factors, such as the

failure of the governing coalition and increased salience of certain political issues, amplified this electoral shift. For the first time in the analysed elections, the Greens showcased an opposite development with reduced emphasis on gender equality and declining support among young women (from 28% to 11%). Emerging from a collapsed coalition, the party appeared to adopt a more pragmatic approach, potentially intending to appeal to a broader audience. Although its voter base was almost gender-equal, the most balanced across the four elections, the overall modern gender gap did not converge in 2025, but instead widened. Young women likely shifted their vote from the Greens to the Left, now making the party with the most feminist stance on gender equality most popular among young women². The Greens' loss in votes can be largely attributed to their perceived failure as a governing party (Handel 2025). Similarly, the FDP lost support and failed to enter parliament, likely due to dissatisfaction with its role in the previous government.

² According to Tagesschau (2025a), based on data from Infratest dimap, the biggest voter shift from the Greens was to the Left.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis examined the link between gendered attitudes and voting behavior by examining the evolution of party positions on gender equality alongside the development of the modern gender gap. In the following, I summarize the main findings and discuss their implications in light of attitude theory, and to some extent, salience theory.

The results indicate that gendered attitudes correlate with party position and vote choice over time, consistent with the core idea of attitude theory that cultural attitudes influence political behavior (Diabate et al. 2023; Hudde 2025; Inglehart and Norris 2000). Parties with stronger commitments to gender equality tend to attract more young female voters, while parties with stronger opposition to gender equality tend to attract more young male voters. The Greens' consistent feminist framing correlated with strong female support until 2021. By 2025, as the Greens reduced their focus on gender equality, the Left, maintaining a central feminist stance, replaced it as the most popular among young women. This shift supports the idea that egalitarian attitudes among women translate into votes for more feminist parties. However, since the Left held this feminist approach in earlier elections while attracting mostly male voters, additional factors, such as issue salience, political context, or competing parties' performance, likely influence how gender attitudes translate into votes. Conversely, the more a party positioned itself against gender equality, the more young men were found in its electorate. The AfD exemplifies this pattern: from no mention of gender in 2013 to an explicitly anti-feminist and traditionalist stance by 2025, it experienced a parallel increase in young male support, ultimately becoming the most popular party among that group. This reflects how traditional attitudes among young men align with parties that oppose progressive gender discourse. The FDP's consistent individualist and economically liberal framing of gender equality also aligns more with male voters across all years. While not anti-feminist, the party's

passive stance on structural reforms and its market-based approach resonate more with conservative or neoliberal attitudes, particularly among young men who might not view gender equality as a politically salient issue. Both the SPD and CDU/CSU experienced reversals in their gendered electorates: the SPD shifted from a slightly male- to a slightly female-dominated electorate, maintaining a consistent commitment to gender equality, while the CDU/CSU significantly shifted from female- to male-dominated support despite an unchanged conservative stance, suggesting that the rising salience of gender issues may have driven young women away from conservative toward left-leaning parties. Since the clear emergence of the modern gender gap in 2021, young women have consistently favored the three center-left parties, Greens, SPD, and Left, all of which maintained equality-centered positions. In contrast, young men have consistently gravitated toward the three center-right parties, CDU/CSU, FDP, and AfD, which either avoided a strong position on gender equality or opposed it directly.

At the same time, these findings hint at the limits of attitude theory alone: while it explains broad trends of gendered vote patterns, some observations, such as electoral shifts despite a consistent gender framing or increased female support for the AfD, point toward the importance of other explanatory factors. These complexities are explored further in the discussion that follows.

Most parties did not drastically change their positions on gender equality over time. Differences in gender equality positions among political parties have existed for a while. Yet, before 2017, they were not necessarily aligned with gendered voting differences. In 2013, there was no significant gender gap, even though left parties, such as the SPD and Left, already strongly advocated for gender equality and did not attract a disproportionately female electorate, suggesting that attitudinal differences did not significantly influence the electoral outcomes in 2013. Still, this observation does not rule out gendered attitudes as an explanation for voting behavior. Rather, it suggests that the salience of gender equality and how men and

women prioritize it shifted after 2013 due to increased cultural and political debate surrounding the topic. The salience theory claims that men and women not only have different political and cultural attitudes, but that they also attribute different importance to certain political and cultural issues, such as gender equality, and that this prioritization might vary over time depending on contextual factors (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999). Thus, what made gendered attitudes more election-decisive starting in 2017 was the increased salience of gender issues through the emergence of the #MeToo movement. The #MeToo movement powerfully revealed the persistence of discrimination against women in all areas and social classes, placing gender equality at the centre of public discourse and reaffirming the need for a comprehensive gender equality strategy at the policy level (Jaffe 2018). It (re)ignited a passion among women, especially young women, for feminism and women's rights. Thus, starting in 2017, gender issues became more salient in federal elections, likely increasing the influence of gendered attitudes on voting behavior (Off 2022). The rise of the #MeToo movement coincided with the rise of the modern gender gap in the 2017 and 2021 elections, which appears to have contributed to a pattern in which women were more likely to vote for left-wing parties that addressed structural gender inequalities, turning away from more traditional parties like the CDU/CSU, while men were more inclined to vote for right-wing parties that responded to these developments more passively or reactionary. This aligns with Inglehart and Norris (2000), who identify the rise of feminist identity and consciousness as a key driver of the modern gender gap. Before the 2025 federal elections, another salience-increasing debate took place, sparked by discussions surrounding a collaborative vote between the CDU/CSU and AfD. This caused widespread protest as it was widely perceived as a breach of the 'Cordon Sanitaire' aimed at politically isolating the far-right (Sabrow 2025). In response, the Left's top candidate, Heidi Reichinnek, held a widely circulated speech emphasising the importance of human rights (Peßler 2025). This moment likely increased the party's appeal among young voters,

particularly women, by resonating with a broad range of progressive attitudes, especially given that the growing threat posed by the far-right with its anti-feminist stance may particularly affect women (Hecht 2024). This debate likely contributed to the Left becoming the most popular party among young women in 2025 despite an unchanged gender position. This shows that period-specific effects in the form of increased cultural and political debate that increase the salience of gender topics can amplify the effect of attitudes on voting behavior.

The attitude theory, paired with the salience theory, also applies to the gender gap observed in the FDP. The FDP presented a rather neutral-passive stance on gender equality topics and mobilized with standard economically liberal, rather than socio-cultural positions. Its relatively minor focus on gender equality and its male-dominated electorate suggest that its male voters do not attribute equal salience to gender equality and prioritize other attitudes. In this context, neoliberalist attitudes might simply dominate as the primary influence on their vote choice.

So far, the discussion has shown how attitudes might influence voting behavior, especially when gender issues become more salient, and how this salience may differ between men and women, illustrated by the case of the FDP. Yet, for a large portion of male voters, specifically the AfD electorate, gender attitudes appear to be a key factor driving their vote choice. The AfD emerged in 2013 and had its biggest electoral success in 2017, contributing significantly to the emergence of the modern gender gap between 2013 and 2017. As the AfD actively mobilizes with an anti-feminist position, it most likely did not gain popularity with its young male electorate despite its stance, but precisely because of it, likely confirming a link between men's tendency for traditionalist attitudes and voting behavior. This observation aligns with the cultural backlash theory, which argues that young men are especially prone to opposing progress in women's rights and gender equality (Kim and Kweon 2022; Off et al. 2022; Off et al. 2025). Men are likely to perceive the advancements that increasingly enable women equal

access to educational and occupational attainments as a threat to their historically dominant position in society and as a perceived loss of relative status (Kim and Kweon 2022). Thus, increased salience of gender issues and developments of increasing gender equality are likely to be perceived as a competition over opportunities, from which they may lose out, leading to antagonism toward gender-inclusive policies, such as gender quotas (Kim and Kweon 2022). This sentiment is often picked up by right-wing parties, such as the AfD, which promise a return to “old times” and traditional gender roles, leading to a shift to the right for men (Hudde 2023). The AfD’s role as a strong contributor to the gender gap might also help explain the delayed emergence of the modern voting gap in Germany compared to other Western countries, where such right-wing parties have existed earlier (Hudde 2023).

While the theory of gendered attitudes as a driver for vote choice has so far accounted for women’s overrepresentation in left-wing party electorates and men’s overrepresentation in (far)right-wing party electorates, it appears to contradict the increased female electoral support for the far-right AfD (15% in 2025). This observation shows that attitudes are not absolutely divided along gendered lines and that women and men are heterogeneous groups in which attitudes can differ, meaning that some women are more likely to share attitudes with men who share a similar background than with other women (Yildirim 2024). An explanation for the increased female electoral support for the AfD in 2025 can be the decreasing stigmatization of the party (Hudde 2025). According to social norms, women experience more pressure to adhere to social acceptance and therefore do not want to be perceived as radical (Spierings and Zaslove 2017). Since the AfD received much public criticism and political exclusion from other parties for its extremism, it might have initially created reluctance amongst women to vote for the party. However, as the party increasingly became normalized by increasingly establishing itself in the political sphere and media, and no longer facing absolute expulsion by other parties³, it

³ January 2025: Collaborative vote between the CDU/CSU and AfD.

may have become generally more acceptable to vote for the AfD, also for women. An equivalent development is observable with Le Pen's Rassemblement National, which is being voted for more by women than by men (Mayer 2022).

Alternative Explanations

The analysed attitude theory does not claim a direct causal relationship with the gender gap, as other alternative explanations may also interact with gendered voting behavior. For one, the German government coalition collapsed in 2024, leading to a voter shift from the parties of the previous government (Greens, FDP, and SPD) toward the Left and the AfD in the 2025 federal elections (Billmeyer 2025). This increased the gender gap between the left and right-wing populist camps, due to political calculations besides gender attitude incentives. Furthermore, the candidate choice and leadership credibility of the parties might play a role in vote choice. For example, the Greens had a female party leader for the first time in 2021, potentially contributing to the party's success among young women that year (Decker 2023). Moreover, the Left's party leader, Heidi Reichinnek, in 2025 was particularly popular among young women due to her young appearance and social media presence (Fürstenau 2025). Generally, same-gender candidates might attract more voters of that same gender (Helimäk 2024).

CONCLUSION

This thesis explored whether different attitudes between men and women toward gender equality help explain the modern gender gap among young voters in Germany. Using a qualitative content analysis of electoral programmes from 2013 to 2025 through the lens of attitude theory, the findings show that different cultural attitudes of men and women, paired with increased salience of gender issues, closely align with voting behavior. Women's more egalitarian attitudes correlate with support for left-wing parties committed to gender equality, while men's more traditional or individualist attitudes align with right-leaning parties, especially those opposing feminist discourse. Notably, the Greens consistently attracted more young women until 2025, when their reduced focus on gender coincided with a shift toward the Left. The AfD's increasing anti-feminist positioning coincided with growing male support, and the FDP's individualist framing also consistently resonated more with male voters. These findings confirm the relevance of attitude theory, while also indicating its limits. Additional contextual factors, such as issue salience, party performance, and decreasing party stigmatization, shape how attitudes translate into votes. A key contribution of this thesis lies in pairing attitude theory with salience theory to explain not just why gendered voting differences exist, but why they intensified rapidly. Ultimately, it is the interaction between cultural attitudes and shifting salience of gender issues that best explains the timing, speed, and scope of the modern gender gap in Germany.

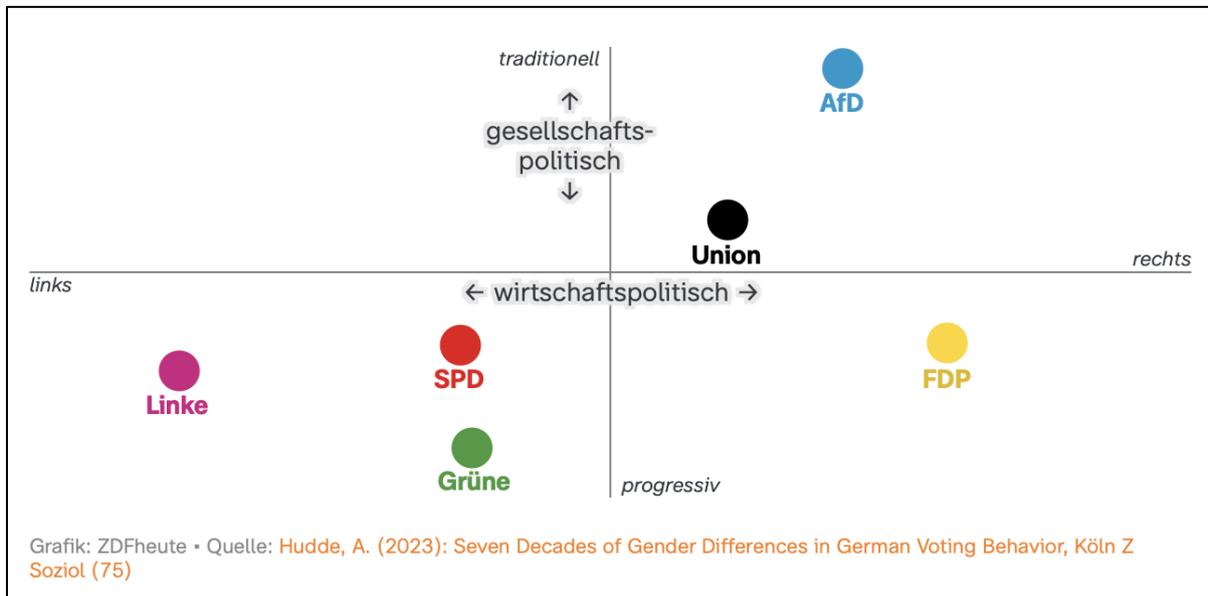
The results have broader implications: parties may increasingly mobilize voters through appeals to gendered attitudes, impacting representation and legislation by passing policies aligned more with male or female attitudes (Langsaether and Knutsen 2024). Gender-based attitude targeting could lead to performative strategies like "pinkwashing" to gain female votes rather than genuine commitments to equality. Whether this gender cleavage will persist and

contribute to further polarization remains uncertain, especially given how quickly electoral behavior can shift. Patterns can change as quickly as the FDP and Greens lost and the Left and AfD won votes (Hudde 2025).

This study is limited by its inability to determine causality. It remains unclear whether attitudes drive party support or whether partisan alignment shapes gender attitudes, suggesting a possible reverse causality (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Shorrocks 2018). Additionally, the analysis generalizes gendered attitudes, without accounting for intra-gender variation. Future research should explore the origin and direction of attitudinal divides and how parties may reinforce them.

Despite these limitations, this thesis contributes to explaining the modern gender gap. It extends previous research by using a recent, qualitative, and context-sensitive approach. It affirms that different gendered attitudes toward gender equality, paired with salience, are a key factor in shaping different male and female voting preferences.

APPENDIX



Appendix 1: Classification of German parties along right-left spectrum. Source: Hudde. 2023. *Seven Decades of Gender Differences in German Voting Behavior*. ZDFheute.

<https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/deutschland/politischer-gender-gap-100.html> (May 25, 2025).

Party	Gender Equality Position	Vote distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender						
FDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen female employment and leadership representation through economic performance Opposes gender quotas 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Vote Distribution (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>5.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Vote Distribution (%)	Male	5.7	Female	4
Gender	Vote Distribution (%)							
Male	5.7							
Female	4							
CDU/CSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subchapter “Women - strengthening skills and creating opportunities” Women’s participation in the labor market and male-dominated spheres Equal pay Increased representation in leadership Marriage and family as core of society 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Vote Distribution (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>29.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>33.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Vote Distribution (%)	Male	29.7	Female	33.7
Gender	Vote Distribution (%)							
Male	29.7							
Female	33.7							
AfD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mention of gender Upholding traditional societal norms by advocating for the family as the core of society 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Vote Distribution (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>5.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Vote Distribution (%)	Male	5.7	Female	3
Gender	Vote Distribution (%)							
Male	5.7							
Female	3							
Left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two chapters dedicated to women’s rights Calls for emancipation and gender equality Men entering female-dominated labor domains and vice versa Mandatory women quotas Educational training of state institutions on violence toward women Variety of female identities: employed, unemployed, lesbian, disabled 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Vote Distribution (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>7.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>7.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Vote Distribution (%)	Male	7.3	Female	7.5
Gender	Vote Distribution (%)							
Male	7.3							
Female	7.5							
SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preface: fundamental commitment to women’s rights and gender equality Changing gender norms and personal, societal, economic and political rights to self-determination Policies: law to combat structural pay disadvantage of women, women’s quota and action plan for countering violence toward women. 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Vote Distribution (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>25.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>23.8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Vote Distribution (%)	Male	25.2	Female	23.8
Gender	Vote Distribution (%)							
Male	25.2							
Female	23.8							
Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preface: self-perception as feminists Policies: Gleichstellungsgesetz, binding women quotas, full-day child care services, tax system reform, program supporting women re-entering the labor market, equal pay, guaranteed pension, free access to day-after-pill. Chapter dedicated to gender equality Goal of a gender-equal society and end to women’s discrimination Subchapter “Supporting men in new roles” 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Vote Distribution (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>8.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>15.3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Vote Distribution (%)	Male	8.7	Female	15.3
Gender	Vote Distribution (%)							
Male	8.7							
Female	15.3							

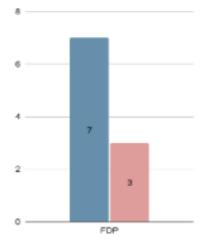
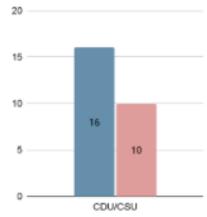
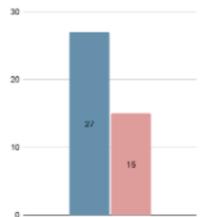
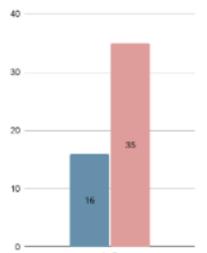
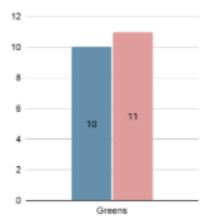
Appendix 2: Party Positions on Gender Equality based on the 2013 Electoral Programmes and Vote Distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender

Party	Gender Equality Position	Vote distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender						
FDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter “Equal chances for all - regardless of gender” • Flexible labor model for family-work compatibility • Women entering male-dominated job domains to counter the gender pay gap • Women in leadership positions • Opposes gender quota • Female autonomy in relation with religion 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>16.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>9.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	16.7	Women	9.7
Gender	Percentage							
Men	16.7							
Women	9.7							
CDU/CSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor market related reforms • More women in leadership positions • Equal pay for equitable work 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>22.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>27.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	22.6	Women	27.5
Gender	Percentage							
Men	22.6							
Women	27.5							
AfD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality as discrimination of men and violation of constitution • Natural gender differences and traditional gender norms • Abolish measures associated with gender equality • Traditional family structure 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	10	Women	6
Gender	Percentage							
Men	10							
Women	6							
Left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface: aim of countering misogyny • Chapter on left feminism • Policies: Equal pay for equitable labor, mandatory gender quota, accessible access to abortion services, training of state institutions on violence towards women • Chapter on queer rights: dismantling traditional marital gender norms • Opposes ban of religious headscarf 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>10.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>10.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	10.5	Women	10.4
Gender	Percentage							
Men	10.5							
Women	10.4							
SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality of women in all areas • Subchapter on equality: gender equality as central goal of the party's politics for over 150 years • Action plan for advancing gender equity 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>18.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>18.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	18.2	Women	18.6
Gender	Percentage							
Men	18.2							
Women	18.6							
Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface: strive for a gender equal society • Subchapter on self-determination and equality: party shaped by feminist women who fought for their rights - together with men when possible, and against them when necessary • Fair and just wages, bodily autonomy and against violence towards women • Strong commitment to feminist politics across all sectors 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>11.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>17.8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	11.4	Women	17.8
Gender	Percentage							
Men	11.4							
Women	17.8							

Appendix 3: Party Positions on Gender Equality based on the 2017 Electoral Programmes and Vote Distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender

Party	Gender Equality Position	Vote distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender						
FDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's access to venture capital • More women in leadership positions and equal pay through voluntary commitments 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>26.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>14.8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	26.2	Women	14.8
Gender	Percentage							
Men	26.2							
Women	14.8							
CDU/CSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two chapters on gender equality • More female labor market participation • Against violence • Integration of migrant women into labor market 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>10.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>10.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	10.8	Women	10.7
Gender	Percentage							
Men	10.8							
Women	10.7							
AfD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality reforms as unfair advantages for women and disadvantages to men • Respect for traditional lifestyles and women's roles in childbirth and care • Against muslim women's oppression 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>7.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	7.7	Women	5
Gender	Percentage							
Men	7.7							
Women	5							
Left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface: on women's structural inequalities • Gender equality in chapters on health, education and mobility • Chapter on diversity of genders: restructure current capitalist system to create gender equality 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>6.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>8.9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	6.7	Women	8.9
Gender	Percentage							
Men	6.7							
Women	8.9							
SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In first chapter: gender equality not fulfilled yet • More equal distribution of care work through tax reforms • Chapter on equity: action plan to create gender equity in all societal areas until 2030 • Abortion as basic right, free contraception access and male contraceptive research and inclusion of women's needs in international agreements 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>14.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>16.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	14.6	Women	16.5
Gender	Percentage							
Men	14.6							
Women	16.5							
Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface: goal of creating fully gender equal society • Subchapter on gender-justice • Value-increase of female-dominated job domains and equal pay for equitable labor • Women's financial independence • Subchapter on feminism, queer politics and gender-justice • Calls for men to support a society where sexism is dismantled and power shared justly • Time for feminist government 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>19.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>28.3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	19.7	Women	28.3
Gender	Percentage							
Men	19.7							
Women	28.3							

Appendix 4: Party Positions on Gender Equality based on the 2021 Electoral Programmes and Vote Distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender

Party	Gender Equality Position	Vote distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender						
FDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter on gender equality goals • Work-family compatibility to boost the economy • Protection of bodily autonomy through research on gender-specific health and improved abortion services • Women's financial autonomy through tax reform and venture capital access 	 <table border="1"> <caption>FDP Vote Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	7	Women	3
Gender	Percentage							
Men	7							
Women	3							
CDU/CSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For women's autonomy and against discrimination • Labor market reforms, counter violence, punish stalking more severely and tackle the gender health gap 	 <table border="1"> <caption>CDU/CSU Vote Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	16	Women	10
Gender	Percentage							
Men	16							
Women	10							
AfD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countermeasures for abortion • Binary understanding of sex • Opposes muslim women's oppression 	 <table border="1"> <caption>AfD Vote Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	27	Women	15
Gender	Percentage							
Men	27							
Women	15							
Left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface: commitment to equal pay and the fight against violence Chapter on gender Equality: self-perception as feminist party • Fair redistribution of domestic and professional labor and social, political, cultural, and economic power • Examination of all new laws in terms of their impact on gender equality 	 <table border="1"> <caption>Left Vote Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>35</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	16	Women	35
Gender	Percentage							
Men	16							
Women	35							
SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core principles: for equal rights and chances • Chapter on gender equality: self-understanding as feminist • Modern labor models, fair care work distribution and a parity law for parliament 	 <table border="1"> <caption>SPD Vote Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	12	Women	13
Gender	Percentage							
Men	12							
Women	13							
Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subchapter on equal employment of women and subchapter on women's rights • Just politics of gender-equity that also accounts for men's interests • Support programs for homeless women, refugee women, women in agriculture, sciences and sports • Equal pay for equitable labor, women quotas, protective measures for violence towards women, and support for abortion 	 <table border="1"> <caption>Greens Vote Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Men</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Percentage	Men	10	Women	11
Gender	Percentage							
Men	10							
Women	11							

Appendix 5: Party Positions on Gender Equality based on the 2021 Electoral Programmes and Vote Distribution of the Youngest Voter Cohort (18-24) by Gender

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