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Female Representation at the Federal Level in Post-Reunification German Political Parties

Melissa McElroy

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Post-Reunification German Political Parties

By

Melissa McElroy

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Melissa McElroy   Date

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Dr. Michele L. Crumley, Thesis Mentor   Date

_____
Dr. Raluca Negrisanu, Reader   Date

_____
Dr. Lon Felker, Reader   Date

Introduction

How do policies and ideologies affect representation of women in post-reunification German political parties? In this work, I will clarify why female representation in the German federal system is higher in parties with pro-woman policies, specifically platforms and legislation that benefit women and families.

This research is important because it adds to a larger body of work explaining political beliefs and behaviors. With this research, I hope to determine the types of political beliefs that draw German women to a political party. Analysis of these factors has applications in recruitment, maintaining party loyalty, and female voter turnout.

This work attempts to draw conclusions about female participation in the German federal government post-reunification, based on the gender ideologies of German political parties. I hypothesize that female representation in the German federal system is higher in parties with pro-woman policies, specifically platforms and legislation that benefit women and families. This research adds to the existing body of knowledge about how women vote, what draws women to parties, and what allows them to be successful once they have joined those parties. This is a qualitative analysis based on case studies, government reports, party resources, and social science texts. I use both primary and secondary sources to draw conclusions about the current status of women's political participation in Germany.

This work analyzes female representation in the post-reunification German federal government, and makes a case that it is based on the ideologies and policies of German political parties. By examining both historical and current German political culture, it clarifies what draws German women to membership in political parties and allows them to rise in their ranks

Background

Gender equality in Germany has institutional backing. Article III of the German constitution, the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, states:

> [Equality before the law]
> (1) All persons shall be equal before the law.
> (2) Men and women shall have equal rights. The state shall
> promote the actual implementation of equal rights for
> women and men and take steps to eliminate disadvantages
> that now exist.
> (3) No person shall be favoured or disfavoured because of
> sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith,
> or religious or political opinions. No person shall be disfavored because of
> disability.[1]

After the Second World War, Germany was divided into two parts: in the East, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and in the West, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). East Germany became part of the Soviet Union, and West Germany was under the direction of the former Allied Forces. Berlin, which became an international symbol of the Iron Curtain, was divided into halves.

The East German government began to weaken as the Soviet Union fractured in the late 1980s. As President Mikhail Gorbachev began to liberalize the Soviet Union, their strong hold in the GDR began to slip. By the summer of 1989 the Iron Curtain was being breached by Hungary, who was allowing East Germans to cross into Austria and escape into West Germany.[2] East Germans began pouring out of the country, seeking refuge in Prague and Warsaw's West German embassies.[3] Despite efforts from the East German government to slow the flow of refugees, they continued to appear throughout Eastern Europe.

Then, there was a watershed moment: "On the evening of November 9, Günter Schabowski, a communist functionary, mistakenly announced at a televised news

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[1] Federal Republic of Germany. *Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany*. Bundestag. Amended 1990. https://www.bundestag.de/blob/284870/ce0d03414872b427e57fccb703634dcd/basic_law-data.pdf.
[2] John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, William H. Berentsen. "Germany." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. March 20, 2017. https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany/The-reunification-of-Germany.
[3] Ibid.

conference that the government would allow East Germans unlimited passage to West Germany, effective immediately."[4] While the government meant that starting the next day citizens could apply for exit visas, to the people it meant that Berlin wall was opening at that very moment. Thousands of East Berliners crossed the border and rejoiced beside West Berliners. After the Berlin Wall was destroyed, the GDR was not far behind. The people demanded free elections, which were held in March of 1990. The communists were easily defeated, and replaced with an Eastern branch of the West German Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The new government began negotiations for a reunification treaty. Reunification took a further step in July of 1990, when Gorbachev was persuaded to allow a unified Germany during NATO negotiations. The reunification treaty was ratified by the Bundestag in the West and the People's Chamber in the East in September, and went into effect on October 3, 1990.[5]

Figure 1: Changes in German Territory Before and After Reunification

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica. "Bundestag." https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bundestag. December 12, 2011. Accessed April 15, 2017.

Conventional German culture was characterized by the tagline "Kinder, Kirche und Küche" or "Children, Church and Kitchen." These traditional gender roles are resilient, and embedded into German culture even after decades of the feminist

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[4] John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, William H. Berentsen. "Germany." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. March 20, 2017. https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany/The-reunification-of-Germany.
[5] Ibid.

movement.[6] German reunification challenged the gender relations status quo in both parts of reunified Germany. In the GDR, families were in more egalitarian partnerships. The government provided childcare, and it was common for women to work full-time. In West Germany it was less common for women to be in the workforce. Childcare was for the most part handled within families. There continue to be differences between former East and former West Germany, however women's choices are becoming more similar.[7]

Since reunification, women have continued to make their way through the German political system. Women's suffrage in Germany began in 1918, almost one hundred years ago.[8] German women began to make political progress after suffrage was established, and were elected to the Reichstag in the Weimar Republic.[9] However, Hitler's Third Reich put an end to this, and the Nazi period regressed human rights in all areas, including gender equality. The fascist Third Reich objectified and exploited ethnic German women, and murdered Jewish, Jehovah's Witness, and Roma women. Under Nazi rule "A good German woman was a mother of many; to emphasize the importance of this role Hitler awarded the Mother's Cross to those women who fulfilled their duty honorably."[10]

The increased participation of women in the national political decision-making process began again after the Second World War. In West Germany, women began to enter the post-war labor market. The post-war absence of men meant that women had less competition for higher-status roles in the public and private sector. German women literally rebuilt the country: the crews who hauled the rubble out of cities in Germany and Austria were primary composed of women.[11] Turkish women have lived in Germany in sizeable numbers since the 1950s, when they were encouraged to immigrate as "guest workers" that helped rebuild Germany.

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[6] Barbara Brennan. "Builders of a Nation: Women's Experiences in Postwar Germany." 2011. https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/13087/Brennan_jur11.pdf.
[7] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.
[8] Alex Seeland. "Women in Decision-Making Report from Germany." *European Database*. 2000. Accessed March 29, 2017. http://www.db-decision.de/CoRe/Germany.htm.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Barbara Brennan. "Builders of a Nation: Women's Experiences in Postwar Germany." 2011. https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/13087/Brennan_jur11.pdf.
[11] Ibid.

Despite the cultural shift back towards traditional gender roles during the 50s, the war and its aftermath permanently altered gender relations: "During this time both in West and East Germany, governments began to look seriously at women's issues and to start making adjustments to laws and social structures to included women's rights. This is a direct result of the challenges women overcame during the postwar years."[12]

The new single German government prioritized "securing equal access of women to decision-making positions at all levels of society."[13] This includes adherence to existing legal equality framework, social awareness campaigns, and increased research into women's political participation. Regionally, there are more women in power than ever before. Female governors now lead three of the sixteen Bundesländer, or German federal states: Hannelore Kraft in North Rhine-Westphalia, Malu Dreyer in Rhineland-Palatinate, and Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer in Saarland.[14] The increasing number of women in politics is changing Germany's male-dominated political culture.

In November 2016, Angela Merkel announced that she would run for Chancellor for the fourth time. Merkel has been in power since 2005, and is considered one of the most experienced leaders in the West. "I have spent an unending amount of time contemplating this, as to stand as a candidate for a fourth time after 11 years in power is anything other than a trivial decision, neither for the country, for the party, nor for me," Merkel said when announcing her candidacy during a press conference in Berlin.[15]

The announcement came at a critical time: the 2016 presidential election in the United States had just occurred, and the West was in a time of increasing political

[12] Barbara Brennan. "Builders of a Nation: Women's Experiences in Postwar Germany." 2011. https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/13087/Brennan_jur11.pdf.

[13] Alex Seeland. "Women in Decision-Making Report from Germany." *European Database*. 2000. Accessed March 29, 2017. http://www.db-decision.de/CoRe/Germany.htm.

[14] Siobhán Dowling. "Germany's New Generation of Female Political Leaders." *Der Spiegel*. January 25, 2011. Accessed March 29, 2017. http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/letter-from-berlin-germany-s-new-generation-of-female-political-leaders-a-741348.html.

[15] Kate Connolly. "Angela Merkel to stand for fourth term as chancellor in 2017," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/20/angela-merkel-expected-stand-for-re-election-germany.

polarization. Merkel was also faced with the rise of a populist right-wing political movement within Germany, led by the fledgling Alternative für Deutschland party, who is poised to enter the Bundestag for the first time in 2017.[16] Merkel's electoral opponent from the Social Democrats, Martin Schulz, is popular enough to increase the appeal of his opposition party. Schulz's "clear play" for female voters includes promising that half his cabinet will be female. Schulz has also said he would advocate for universal free kindergarten, a policy that would benefit working women and families.[17]

Germany has entered a new reality of female political leadership, with women in increasing roles in the major political parties. Angela Merkel is no longer the only high-profile woman in German public office. In Thuringia, Christine Lieberknecht of the Christian Democratic Union became *Ministerpräsidentin*, or "Minister-President."[18] Some have claimed the increasing status of women is due to the "Embarrassment Principle," where parties in crisis allow a woman to gain power so she can pick up the pieces left behind by a bad policy. For example, Angela Merkel was chosen as the CDU candidate for Chancellor after an embarrassing and politically unpopular coal donation scandal.[19] This is just a theory, and it is much more likely that after so many years of the women's rights movement, there is finally a "critical mass of well-educated women" that has the ability, the expertise, and the status to run for high-profile offices.[20]

Now that they are in some positions of power, are women changing the political system? It would be easy to assume that women in politics will follow their own self-interest and promote women's causes. However, it is fair to be skeptical of this assumption, because it relies on the cliché that women are naturally more caring and benevolent. Perhaps women simply establish new roles for themselves, which are

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[16] Kate Connolly. "Angela Merkel to stand for fourth term as chancellor in 2017," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/20/angela-merkel-expected-stand-for-re-election-germany.
[17] Alison Smale. "Angela Merkel's Re-election Bid Is Buoyed by Widely Watched State Election," *New York Times*, March 26, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/26/world/europe/angela-merkels-fate-may-be-reflected-in-vote-by-small-german-state.html?_r=1.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Karsten Polke-Majewski. "Wie Frauen die Politik verändern," *Die Zeit*. October 5, 2012. http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2012-10/politik-frauen-spitzen-amt.
[20] Ibid.

not necessarily more compassionate. There are certainly some irregularities, and women exist even in far-right parties that espouse traditional patriarchal values. They may be swept up into the "boy's club" of politics, and take on the traditionally masculine role of politician. It is possible that women's political roles are not typically feminine while still carving out a path for the emancipation of women.

The German Government

Germany is a federal parliamentary republic, and a democracy. The public elects the governors of the 16 Bundesländer. Germany has a bicameral system. The leaders of the 16 Bundesländer appoint the upper house, or Bundesrat. The people elect the lower house, the Bundestag. The representatives in the Bundestag elect the Chancellor, who appoints their cabinet. The Chancellor is the de facto leader of Germany, with major executive powers. There is also a President, who is elected by a convention of representatives from both the Bundestag and the state legislatures.[21]

Figure 2: The Legislative and Executive branches of the German Government

The Structure of Government
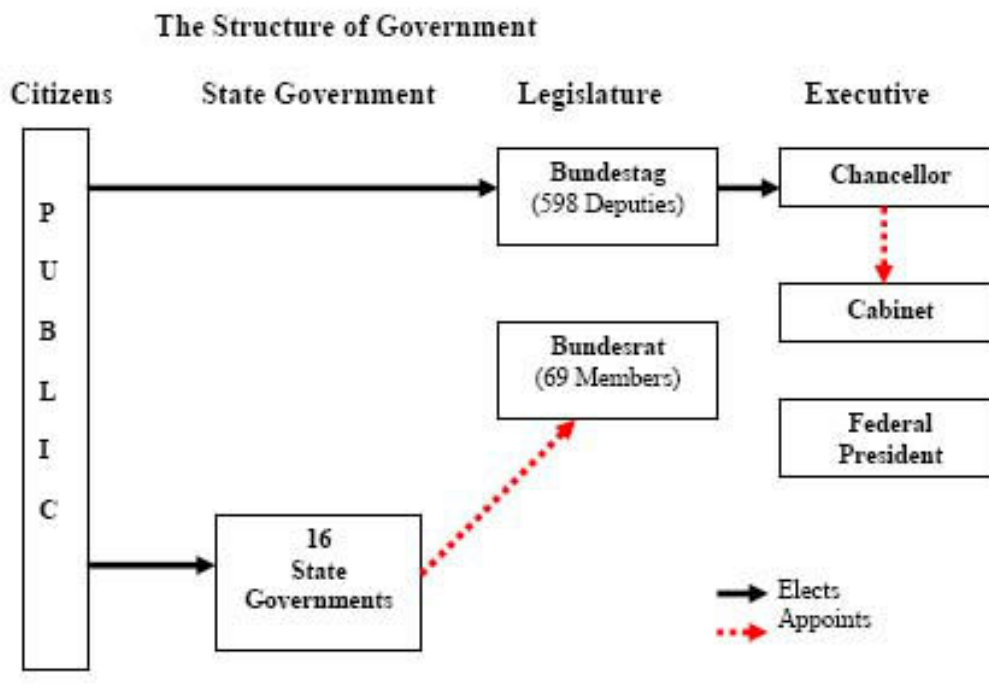
Source: "Structure of the German Government." http://new.hilineinc.com/wp-includes/js/the-federal-system-of-government-i0.jpg. Accessed April 1, 2017.

Members of the Bundestag are elected to four-year terms, and one of their major responsibilities is the election of Chancellor. The Bundestag meets in the Reichstag building in downtown Berlin.[22] The Bundestag calls themselves "Germany's most

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[21] Deutscher Bundestag. "Parliament: Function and Role." https://www.bundestag.de/en/parliament/function. Accessed March 30, 2017.
[22] Encyclopedia Britannica. "Bundestag." https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bundestag. December 12, 2011. Accessed April 1, 2017.

important democratic forum."[23] Both the executives and the Bundesrat have the ability to introduce bills into the Bundestag. It is very common for the federal government to introduce issues to the Bundestag. The procedure is a give and take between the federal government and the legislature: "If the Federal Government wishes to amend or introduce a law, the Federal Chancellor must initially transmit the bill to the Bundesrat."[24]

As a rule, the Bundesrat then has a period of six weeks in which to deliver its comments on the bill, to which the government may in turn respond with a written counterstatement. The Federal Chancellor then forwards the bill to the Bundestag with the Bundesrat's comments. One exception to this procedure is the draft Budget Act, which is transmitted simultaneously to the Bundesrat and the Bundestag.[25] Members of the Bundestag may also introduce legislation themselves, however "they must be supported by either at least one of the parliamentary groups or at least five percent – at present 31 – of the Members of the German Bundestag."[26] A proposed bill must be distributed to the members, and debated three times. After the Bundestag and the Bundesrat have approved a bill, it has to go through a legitimation process to become law. An act that has been passed is printed and transmitted to the Federal Chancellor and the competent federal minister, who countersign the act.

The Federal President is then sent the act to sign it into law. The president examines whether the act has been adopted in accordance with the constitution and ensures it does not contradict the Basic Law. Once it has been checked for errors, the Federal President signs the act and orders that it be published in the Federal Law Gazette. After this process, the act has been fully passed. If the act itself does not dictate when it should become official, it automatically becomes effective two weeks after its publication in the Federal Law Gazette.[27]

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[23] Deutscher Bundestag. "Passage of Legislation."
https://www.bundestag.de/en/parliament/function/legislation/passage/245704. Accessed April 1, 2017.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

Literature Review

In Lee Ann Banaszak's "The Gendering State and Citizens' Attitudes toward Women's Roles: State Policy, Employment, and Religion in Germany" she examines regional differences in attitudes towards women. She attempts to explain whether these differences are caused by "institutional learning" (socialization in the GDR or the FRG) or instead compositional effects (variation in women's employment or religious affiliation).[28] Banaszak's research suggests that even fifteen years after the reunification, women's employment and religiosity, factors that were both heavily influenced by GDR policies, have a big impact on gender role attitudes. Banaszak's research suggests that gendered state policies are "reflected in citizens' gender role attitudes both directly and through changes in the social characteristics of the population."[29]

Sabine Lang's "Gendering Federalism—Federalizing Gender: Women's Agencies and Policies in German Multilevel Governance" studies the effects of the restructuring of German federalism on gender equality policies. Particularly, the research focuses on three issues: transformation from cooperative to competitive federalism, the weakening of national politics through local reforms, and the lack of coherence in EU policy. Lang looks at how Germany's federalist structure has "informed German gender architecture" in the time after the reunification, before coming to conclusions about how recent changes in the federalist structure affect gender policy.[30] Germany's women's rights framework has historically been some of the strongest in Europe, with 1,900 women's equality offices around the country promoting gender equality policies in political parties, universities, and businesses.[31] These institutions matter, and they give women's positions in government a sense of legitimacy. However, many of these equality offices have been closed, and there has not been sufficient replacement.

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[28] Lee Ann Banaszak, "The Gendering State and Citizens' Attitudes toward Women's Roles: State Policy, Employment, and Religion in Germany," *Cambridge University Press*. 2006. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X06060016.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Sabine Lang, "Gendering Federalism—Federalizing Gender: Women's Agencies and Policies in German Multilevel Governance," *German Studies Review, The Johns Hopkins University Press*. 2010. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20787990.
[31] Ibid.

Germany's traditional system of cooperative federalism provided a good base for advancement of gender equality policy by distributing resources between Bundesländer. After reunification, and now with 16 Bundesländer, the federal system became increasingly competitive. The previous distribution of resources grinded to a halt as the Länder became more focused on their own interests. As federal reform has given Länder more freedom to adjust their own gender equality policies, which they have done to varying degrees. The increasing influence of the European Union on German politics - both the federal and state governments have both "delayed and undermined" gender regulations from the EU.[32] Implementation of EU gender equality directives can take years, as all levels of government drag their feet. Even policies that are implemented may be "watered down and subverted" in the process.[33] She concludes by explaining that the recent efforts to strengthen federalism by giving the Länder increasing autonomy have produced more losses than gains for gender equality in Germany. There is an increasing gap in gender equality legislation between left leaning but resource poor areas and more affluent and conservative areas.

"Comparing Gender, Institutions and Political Behavior: Toward an Integrated Theoretical Framework" by Miki Caul Kittilson argues that gender-based policies and outcomes are not merely outcomes of the political process, but that these policies and outcomes shape the interests and opinions of citizens. This creates a "policy feedback loop" that can benefit women's equality. Adoption of national policies on pay equality, childcare, parental leave, and violence against women "carry important messages to the electorate that women's issues are important national policy objectives."[34]

Caul describes this feedback loop of "gendered consequences" by using an "integrated theoretical framework combining behavioral and institutional

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[32] Sabine Lang, "Gendering Federalism—Federalizing Gender: Women's Agencies and Policies in German Multilevel Governance," *German Studies Review, The Johns Hopkins University Press*. 2010. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20787990.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Miki Caul Kittilson, "Comparing Gender, Institutions and Political Behavior: Toward an Integrated Theoretical Framework," *American Political Science Association*. 2010. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25698528.

approaches."[35] This analysis is not Germany-specific, and instead focuses on all industrialized democracies. Gaps persist between men and women in political engagement, although they change from election to election.

Figure 3: Analytical Framework Explaining Feedback Process Between Gender-Related Policies and Political Engagement Between Men and Women

Gender-related policies and political engagement

Source: Miki Caul Kittilson, "Comparing Gender, Institutions and Political Behavior: Toward an Integrated Theoretical Framework," page 218, *American Political Science Association*. 2010. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25698528.

Policy breakthroughs bring women together into a cohesive group, formed by achieving common goals. Shared interests between women create support for women's political advancement and participation. Gender policy itself changes common attitudes towards the role of women in politics, and adopting of new policy can change the "common perception of the types of issues and policies that constitute grounds for political debate."[36] Adoption of gender equality policy sends a message to the electorate about the role of women and men in the political arena. Policies meant to politically even the playing field send a message to the public that the field was never even in the first place. Policies that are designated as "women's policies" bring women into the political process while allowing female politicians to advocate for their constituents.

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[35] Miki Caul Kittilson, "Comparing Gender, Institutions and Political Behavior: Toward an Integrated Theoretical Framework," *American Political Science Association*. 2010. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25698528.
[36] Ibid.

The most important conclusion Kittilson draws is that the messages policy choices send influence the public's political engagement. Pro-woman policies "increase women's sense of connection to the political system" which leads to a greater public expectation of women's roles in political office.[37] This effect is likely greatest where the impact is more obvious: running for office. As more women run for office, and succeed, more qualified women will feel they have a path in politics. Parties and nominating institutions are then more likely to encourage female candidates or institute quotas, creating another "feedback loop" which boosts women's participation in political parties.[38]
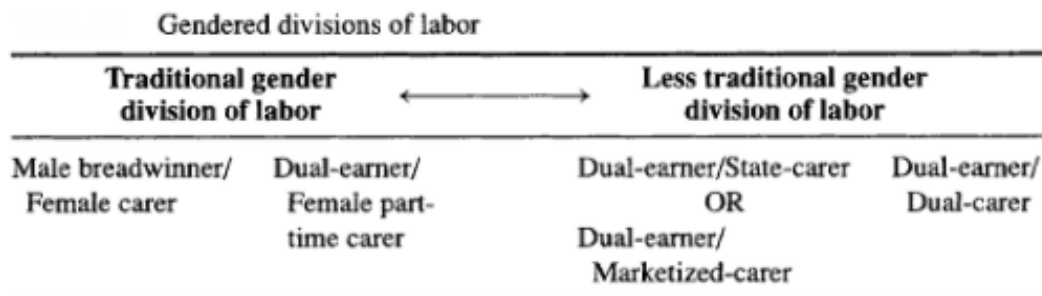
"Gender and Work in Germany: Before and after Reunification" by Rachel A. Rosenfeld, Heike Trappe and Janet C. Gornick addresses existing research on gender equality in East and West Germany before and after reunification by considering "five major dimensions of work: the prevalence of labor market attachment, time spent in paid work, wages, employment sector and occupation, and time spent in unpaid work in the home."[39] They found that post-reunification there was a trend towards a more traditional gender arrangement. Men were employed full-time, while women were more likely to have part-time employment.

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[37] Miki Caul Kittilson, "Comparing Gender, Institutions and Political Behavior: Toward an Integrated Theoretical Framework," page 218, *American Political Science Association.* 2010. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25698528.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Rachel A. Rosenfeld, Heike Trappe and Janet C. Gornick, "Gender and Work in Germany: Before and after Reunification," page 103, *Annual Review of Sociology.* 2004. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737687.

Figure 4: Gendered divisions of labor placed on a Continuum, with the first point on the left representing the traditional "nuclear family" and the final point on the right representing total gender equality.

Gendered divisions of labor

Traditional gender division of labor		Less traditional gender division of labor	
Male breadwinner/ Female carer	Dual-earner/ Female part-time carer	Dual-earner/State-carer OR Dual-earner/ Marketized-carer	Dual-earner/ Dual-carer

Source: Crompton 1999, p. 205.

Source: Rachel A. Rosenfeld, Heike Trappe and Janet C. Gornick, "Gender and Work in Germany: Before and after Reunification," page 103, *Annual Review of Sociology*. 2004. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737687.

This research is important because it shows the social attitudes towards women working outside the home around the time of reunification. It also shows social progression since that time: "Since reunification, the dominant arrangements in both East and West have shifted along this continuum--with some evidence of convergence--although both have established patterns on the more traditional end of the continuum."[40] What led to this arrangement in Germany? Most likely, it was due to a large variety of factors, which created a climate favorable to the more traditional male breadwinner model. Government family policies, economic necessities, and social pressures have combined to create a fairly traditional role for women, even in modern Germany.

This work goes further into gender equality in Germany before and after reunification, focusing on the five variables mentioned earlier. Post-reunification, female participation in the labor market declined in the east but increased in the west, although it is still 10% higher in former East Germany than in former West

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[40] Rachel A. Rosenfeld, Heike Trappe and Janet C. Gornick, "Gender and Work in Germany: Before and after Reunification," page 103, *Annual Review of Sociology*. 2004. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737687.

Germany.[41] After the reunification, average total working hours decreased all throughout Germany, and it became more common for women to work part-time. Thus, the dual earner/female part-time carer model became more prevalent. The gender wage gap, which was present in both East and West Germany, remained fairly stable in the West but decreased in the East.[42] Reunification also led to increased sex segregation in the workplace, especially in the East. Lastly, this work addresses gender division of unpaid work. In both former East and West Germany, women currently report doing more hours of housework per week than men do.[43] The labor market shifts that occurred after the reunification show a "weakening of women's labor force attachment."[44]

These same social factors that pull women into and out of the labor market cannot be ignored when analyzing politics. Traditional ideas of women's place in society underscore what kinds of careers women are encouraged to pursue, if they're encouraged to work at all. Politics, with its highly public nature, can be used as a litmus test for public support of female candidates. Women's status in the workplace is ripe for policy development. Politics is a reflection of society, and increased social status for women should cultivate more political participation. As German's birth rate falls, it may become more politically feasible to support policies that promote gender equality in the workplace and in childcare, in an effort to reconcile paid work and raising children.[45]

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[41] Rachel A. Rosenfeld, Heike Trappe and Janet C. Gornick, "Gender and Work in Germany: Before and after Reunification," *Annual Review of Sociology*. 2004. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737687.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

Limitations

Existing research into this topic is limited by several factors, namely a lack of existing Germany-specific studies, lack of pre-reunification era research, existing literature that largely ignores gender, and the poor availability of English-language sources. These severely limiting factors have led to a gap in significant research on this specific topic.

This study addresses women's electoral success within post-reunification German political parties, a topic that has infrequently been directly addressed. Existing literature on similar topics tends to be worldwide or address large regions - it is difficult, if not impossible, to find Germany-specific studies and research. Many studies on similar topics address the European Union as a whole. Because of the fragmented and turbulent political history of Germany, many previous studies have focused on pre-Nazi, Third Reich, or divided East and West Germany. There's less analysis of post-reunification German political culture, in all forms.

Even studies that address post-reunification German political parties often ignore the impact of gender, or are totally gender-blind. Many political scientists have taken a genderless approach to their analysis, making it difficult to draw gendered conclusions due to a lack of academic information. An analysis that ignores gender, or does not address it fully, cannot be complete.

Additionally, it can be difficult to find English sources on this topic. Many of the research, statistics, and official reports necessary to do this research are available only in German. The limited availability of English sources is a huge barrier to further English-language research on these topics.

This work attempts to fill this gap by directly addressing the effects of gender on women's electoral success in the German federal government. This research is important because it adds to a larger body of work explaining political beliefs and behaviors. With this research, I attempt to help clarify the factors that draw German women to a political party. Analysis of these factors has applications in recruitment,

maintaining party loyalty, and female voter turnout. I draw conclusions by comparing variables that indicate the level of ideological support for women within political parties with women's success in those respective parties.

Due to the lack of gendered studies on German political parties and their policies, this study is limited in its ability to conduct a thorough time series analysis. Time constraints limited the analysis as well. Additionally, access to official records such as party reports would provide a fuller analysis of the material. Future studies can address these limitations by including interviews about gender policy with female party members, leaders of NGOs, and interest groups that promote women's empowerment in Germany.

<center>Findings</center>

In terms of party membership, women's participation is low. Considering women make up half the population, they are drastically underrepresented in all mainstream parties. Left wing parties have the highest percentage of female members, while right wing parties have the lowest percentage.

Figure 5: Proportion of Women in German Political Parties, December 31, 2015 (Left axis reads "Portion of Women")
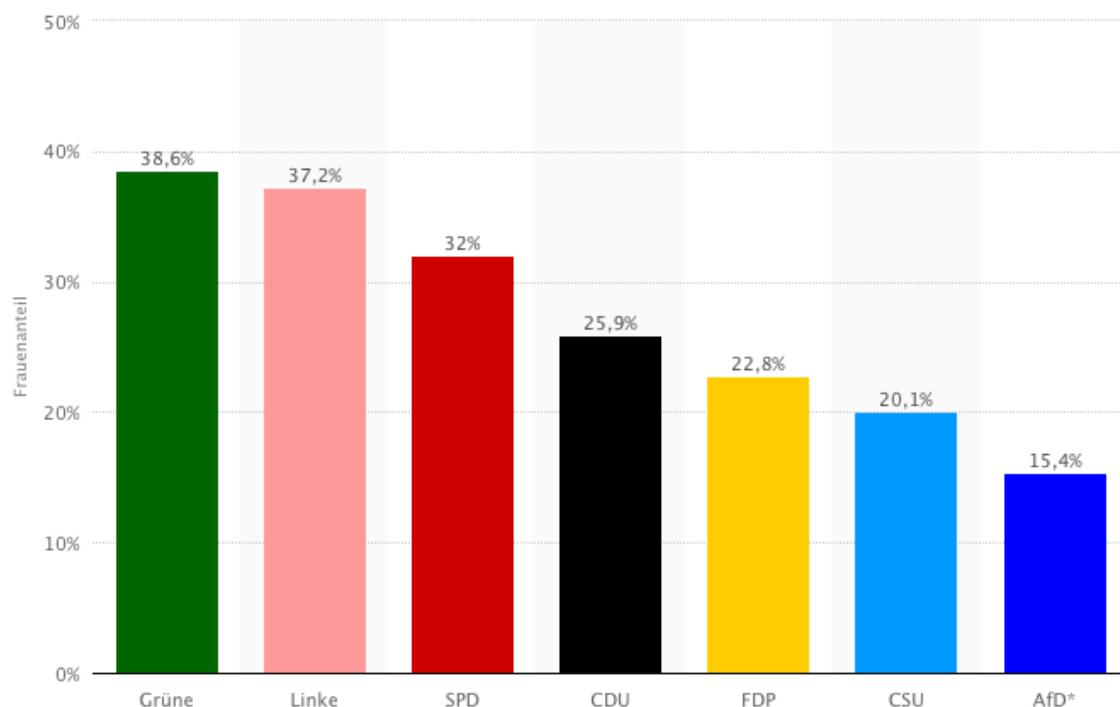
Source: Statista, "Anteil der Frauen an den Mitgliedern der politischen Parteien in Deutschland am 31. Dezember 2015."
https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/192247/umfrage/frauenanteil-in-den-politischen-parteien/.

In individual German federal states (Bundesländer)*,* women are beginning to gain power. In the Bundesländer "female politicians, long in the shadow of men...are now making their mark."[46] Their impact has been felt locally: the female leaders' more

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[46] Melissa Eddy, "Women Finding Their Way in German Politics," *New York Times*, March 7, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/08/world/europe/women-finding-their-way-in-german-politics.html.

consensus-oriented approach shows a change visible in the other Bundesländer where a new generation of women are now in positions of power. The first women to enter the top levels of politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s were thrust into the spotlight, but "female governors today have spent years building up credentials in less visible positions and developed their own leadership style in the meantime."[47] Despite this sense of legitimacy in the lower levels of government, female politicians in the federal government are faced with challenges to their authority. For example in 2013, the Social Democrats chose Peer Steinbrück as their candidate for chancellor, who caused controversy when he told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung that the current chancellor, Angela Merkel, was popular "because she gets a women's bonus."[48]

Currently, there is an ideological spread of mainstream political parties in Germany. The largest party is the Christian Democratic Union, currently led by Chancellor Angela Merkel. The CDU is composed of center-right Christian democrats who believe that "basic values of freedom, solidarity, and justice" come from the relationship between people and God.[49] The CDU supports "a free and constitutional democracy, a social and ecological market economy, Germany's inclusion in the Western values and defense community, and the unification of the nation, as well as a unified Europe."[50] The CDU has a "quorum" which mandates a female participation rate of one third in all party positions and public mandates. However, the CDU has reached their quorum in only 10 out of 15 electoral lists at Länder level.[51] The CDU's party platform, *Freedom and Security Principles for Germany*, says:

> "Gender equality is a basic human right. Our policies seek to create equal opportunities for women, men, girls and boys and to remove disadvantages in all areas. We stand up for a policy which gives men and women equal rights. In our view, such a system includes equal job opportunities, opportunities for career progression and equitable wages on the labour market, enhancing family labour and better compatibility between family and career. The various

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[47] Melissa Eddy, "Women Finding Their Way in German Politics," *New York Times*, March 7, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/08/world/europe/women-finding-their-way-in-german-politics.html.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands. https://www.cdu.de/artikel/overview. Accessed March 15, 2017.
[50] Ibid.
[51] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.

opinions and experiences that women contribute are of immense importance to our society. We promote the participation of women at all levels."[52]

However, the CDU does not support universal access to abortion, and they emphasize that measures to reduce the number of abortions must be prioritized. The platform is quick to state that there should be equal treatment of men and women, but there is no specific prioritization of women's needs.

The CDU and the regional-oriented, more conservative Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) form a coalition known as "die Union". Led by Horst Seehofer, the CSU has a 40 percent female quota for party positions, but has no specific measures in place to meet this number.[53] Their platform is carefully generic when it comes to women's advancement. Instead, there's a heavy emphasis on the family. The CSU says, "The family must stand front and center. We want to shape a family-friendly and child-friendly society."[54]

Next is the Social Democratic Party, or SPD, led by Martin Schulz. The SPD consists of center-left social democrats, and they have successfully put forth chancellors Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, and Gerhard Schroeder.[55] While they were traditionally a worker's party, they are now a more center-left people's party. Their party platform, *The Hamburg Programme*, has a specific gender equality subsection. They focus on specific government intervention to ensure gender equality, writing "Equality before the law as such does not mean factual equality. Therefore we need active Women [sic] promotion just like gender mainstreaming checking each political decision regarding its impact on the lives of women and men, girls and boys amending it where it is needed."[56] The SPD demands wage equality in the workplace between men and women, as well as "equal and fair participation of women and men in

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[52] Christian Democratic Union. "Freedom and Security Principles for Germany." 2007. http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_13533-544-2-30.pdf?110509134343.
[53] Christian Social Union. http://www.csu.de/. Accessed March 15, 2017.
[54] Christian Social Union. "Familie." http://www.csu.de/politik/themen-werte/familie/. Accessed May 1, 2017.
[55] "Political parties form colorful spectrum in Germany," *Deutsche Welle*, August 18, 2009. http://p.dw.com/p/J3Ls.
[56] Social Democratic Party. "The Hamburg Program." 2007. https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Beschluesse/Grundsatzprogramme/hamburger_programm_englisch.pdf.

reliable gainful employment."[57] They want to end the traditional separation between women's and men's occupations. They will do this by establishing legal measures for equal participation of women in leading positions of corporations, administration, science and research as well as in supervisory bodies.[58] The SPD has established a 40 percent quota for women at all party organizational levels. However in the 2013 Bundestag elections, only 9 out of 16 *Länder* had at least 40 percent female SPD candidates.[59]

Dissatisfied members of the SPD formed a splinter party, Die Linke (the left). Led by Katja Kipping and Bernd Riexinger, Die Linke is a Democratic Socialist, left-wing Populist party. They are the furthest left of all the mainstream German parties, and they champion social causes like environmental protection, feminism, and worker's rights.[60] Die Linke has a 50 percent female quota for their ticket. They have assigned the first or the second candidate list positions to women, when appropriate female candidates existed.[61] Die Linke's platform talks at length about the history of the feminist movement, but makes it clear that there are still patriarchal structures that need to be fought, saying, "from real emancipation we are far removed."[62] They want to strengthen anti-discrimination legislation to make women more powerful in the workforce and the government. Additionally, they want to protect families by maintaining high standards of paid parental leave and subsidized daycare and kindergartens.[63] They also make a point to say they will fight against sexual violence against women, including workplace harassment and sexual assault.

Alliance '90/The Greens entered the mainstream German political scene in the 1980s, after gaining support during the peace and anti-nuclear movements of the 1970s. The burgeoning women's movement added many followers as well, making

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[57] Social Democratic Party. "The Hamburg Program." 2007. https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Beschluesse/Grundsatzprogramme/hamburger_programm_englisch.pdf.
[58] Ibid.
[59] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Die Linke. "Programm." 2011. https://www.die-linke.de/fileadmin/download/dokumente/programm_der_partei_die_linke_erfurt2011.pdf.
[63] Ibid.

environmental and women's issues the primary agenda of the Greens, who are a left-wing environmental party.[64] They currently have two leaders, Simone Peter and Cem Özdemir. The Greens have a far-reaching women's statute in their platform and they have an internal female candidate quota of 50 percent.[65] In their *Party Program and Principles*, they place a heavy emphasis on children. They believe their environmental platform ensures a healthy future for the children of Germany, and that protecting the environment is a family value. The Greens say "we want to balance out the disadvantages generated by time spent caring for children."[66] They call for "working times suited to family needs, near-employer child-care facilities, opportunities for parents to reenter work after the child-caring phase, and a tax policy that does justice to the reality of work for women."[67]

Recently a right-wing populist party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), has gained popularity. Led by Frauke Petry and Jörg Meuthen, the AfD is a right-wing populist party that's become popular in recent years. National conservatives, anti-refugee, and Euroskeptics, the AfD has not yet surpassed the 5% threshold that would allow them into the Bundestag. They are expected to do so later this year, which will make them the first far-right party in the Bundestag.[68] AfD is certainly the most ring-wing of the mainstream parties, and their anti-refugee stance is at odds with Chancellor Merkel.[69] Their platform emphasizes commitment to the traditional model of a family, including the need for full-time mothers. They are anti-abortion, stating "The AfD opposes all attempts to downplay abortions, government support for abortions, or to declare abortions as a human right."[70] Their platform is explicitly anti-government intervention in gender equality policy of any type, and it states "Gender ideology, early sexualization, governmental funding of gender studies, quota systems and the deprivation of the German language with gender-conforming words have to be

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[64] Alliance '90/The Greens. https://www.gruene.de/startseite.html. Accessed March 15, 2017.
[65] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.
[66] Alliance '90/The Greens. "Party Program and Principles."
https://www.gruene.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/145643.green-party_program_and_principles.pdf.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Alternative for Germany. https://www.alternativefuer.de Accessed March 15, 2017.
[70] Alternative for Germany. "Manifesto for Germany." 2017. https://www.alternativefuer.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/04/2017-04-12_afd-grundsatzprogramm-englisch_web.pdf.

terminated. Equal rights should once again be regarded as equal opportunities."[71] Unlike every other party, they specifically reject gender quotas in the private or public sector because they believe quotas are "detrimental to performance, are unjust, and often create renewed and new discrimination."[72]

Women's party membership is not stagnant, and over time the SPD, CDU, CSU, and the Greens have all increased their female membership. Only Die Linke has seen a sharp decline in female membership, after a peak in 1998. The SPD and CSU both doubled their percentages of female members from 1946 to 2014. Though women have steadily become more politically engaged, there seem to have been no large membership shifts between parties since the end of the Second World War (see Figure 6).

Unlike American political parties, political parties in Germany have traditionally been *Weltanschauungsparteien* who saw their purpose as not only to govern, but also to fundamentally restructure society around their ideologies.[73] As the parties became more systematic, they had trouble appealing to politically active young people. Then, the Third Reich's totalitarian regime put a chokehold on political development inside Germany. No effective political resistance could be formed against them, and all growth was stunted by Nazi terror. After 1945, political parties were re-formed and began to grow in the post-war period. Parties in their current form probably would not exist without the influence of the allied forces, which rebuilt Germany after the Second World War. In many ways, the allies (particularly the Americans) built the new Germany in their image. Americans approved of the strong emphasis on states' rights that the new CDU supported.[74] After the Second World War, there was a "party spectrum" that grew in the new German Republic.[75] The CDU and the SPD were the most popular, and took their place as genuine *Volksparteien*. Current parties are the result of an existing political heritage in Germany, the impact of the Nazi era, and the political realities of the reunification.

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[71] Alternative for Germany. "Manifesto for Germany." 2017. https://www.alternativefuer.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/04/2017-04-12_afd-grundsatzprogramm-englisch_web.pdf.
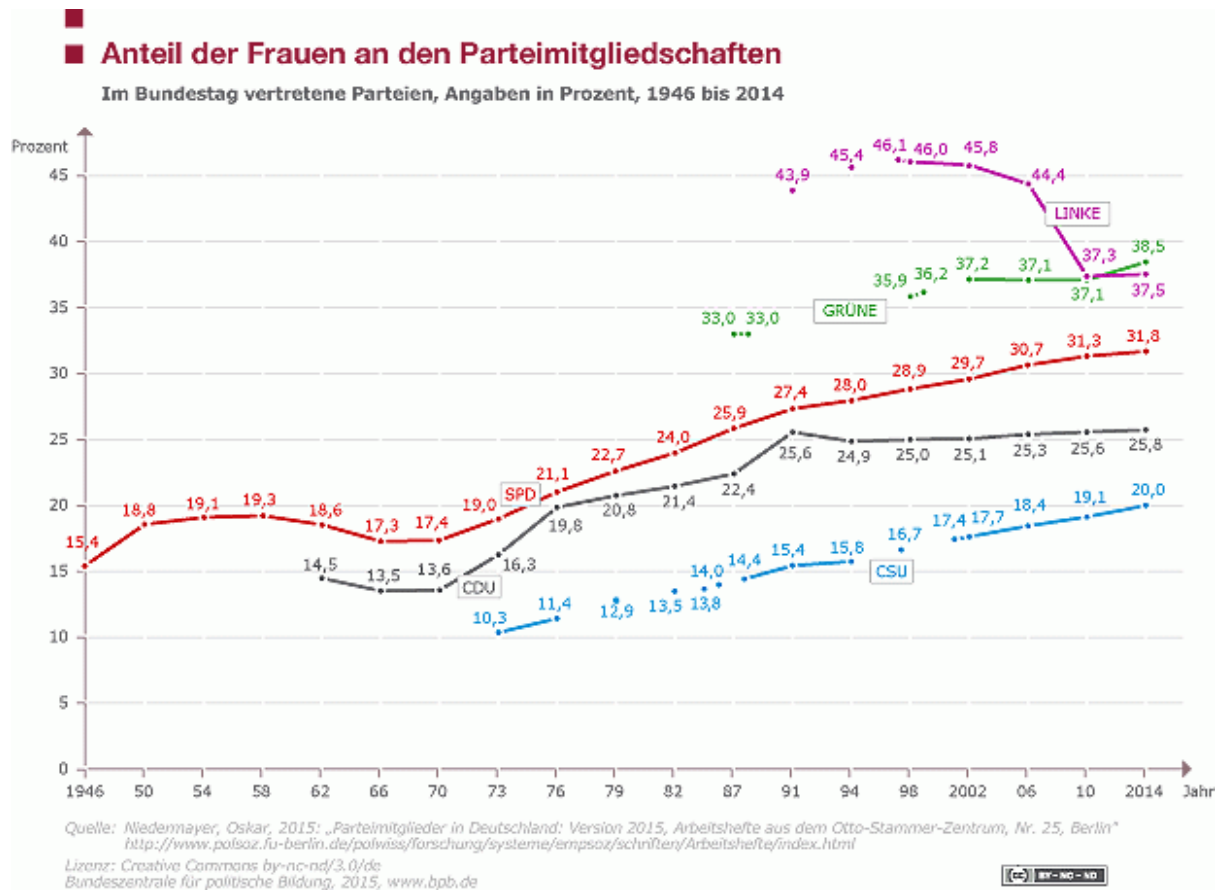[72] Ibid.
[73] Orlow, Dietrich. "West German Parties Since 1945: Continuity and Change." Central European History 18, no. 2 (1985): 188-201. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4546043.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

Figure 6: "Proportion of Women in Party Membership - In the *Bundestag* eligible parties, results in percent, 1946 to 2014"

(Left axis reads "Percent" and bottom axis reads "Year")

Source: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Anteil der Frauen an den Parteimitgliedschaften." 2015. https://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/parteien-in-deutschland/140358/anteil-frauen

Half of the Bundestag members are elected directly in a "first past the post" system, and the party votes in the second half. Parties who receive more than 5% of the vote are allocated seats in the Bundestag proportional to the amount of votes they receive.[76] The current Bundestag is an ideological spread, with five total parties represented. The CDU, CSU, and SPD form the government, while Die Linke and the Greens are opposition parties.

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[76] German Bundestag. "Distribution of seats in the 18th German Bundestag." https://www.bundestag.de/en/parliament/plenary/distributionofseats. Accessed March 30, 2017.

Figure 7: Chart from the Bundestag showing party representation in early 2017
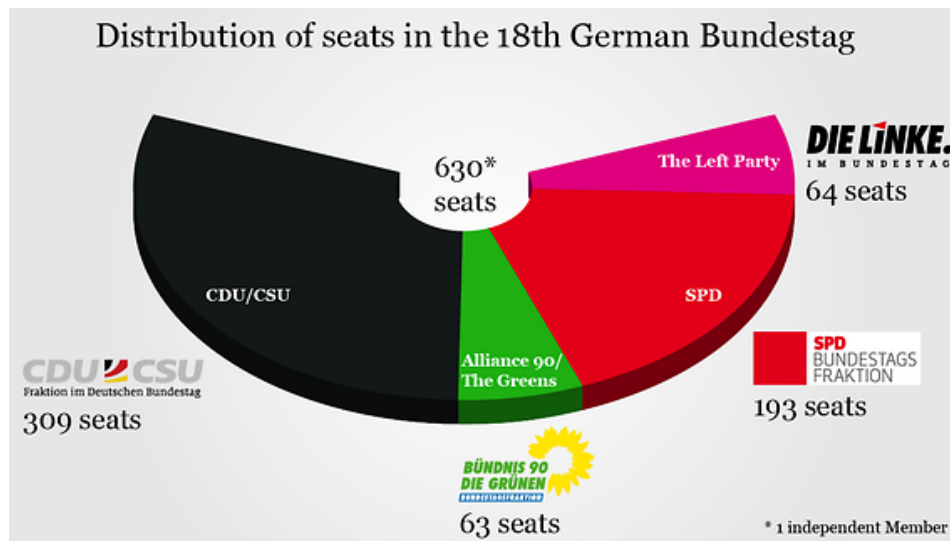
Source: German Bundestag. "Distribution of seats in the 18th German Bundestag." https://www.bundestag.de/en/parliament/plenary/distributionofseats. Accessed March 30, 2017.

Compared to their neighbors in the European Union, Germany is not performing well when it comes to women's equality. According to the European Gender Equality Index, Germany is below the EU average.[77] According to the European Parliament's report on gender equality in Germany, "the federal government has focused on family policies and little efforts have been made in promoting equality policies. In addition, family policy was not consistently equality-oriented and had a re-traditionalizing effect."[78]

The General Equal Treatment Act (2006) implemented four European Union directives: the Racial Equality Directive, the Employment Equality Directive, the Gender Equality Directive for goods and services and the Employment Gender Equality Directive.[79] This Act is far-reaching, aiming to protect European citizens from many types of discrimination. The AGG covers discrimination in employment and social legislation, private law and civil service law; it is not exclusively focused on gender equality by any means, although gender equality is woven into the Act. In

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[77] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

Germany, there's the Federal Equality Law, or *Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz* (2001). It mandates implementing gender equality in the federal public administration, federal courts and federal administration institutions, which fall under private law. The Länder established performance-related quotas to promote women working in local and federal government. It introduced the principles of "gender mainstreaming" into German public administration. The Federal Equality Law requires agencies to establish "equality plans" and to elect and appoint equality commissioners who ensure the equal status of women is maintained.[80] Although "gender mainstreaming" was pursued after reunification, commitment to the concept has begun to decline. There's no longer any official government agency tasked with pursuing this goal, which is a clear regression in gender equality policy.

Germany has focused heavily on institutional measures to advance women in government. One significant example is the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, which provides "unbiased support to persons who have experienced discrimination on grounds of racism or their ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, on grounds of disability, their age or their sexual orientation."[81] The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency exists mostly to give legal help to victims of discrimination, and to inform people of what their best course of action is if they experience discrimination.

In the German federal government, almost one third of all leading positions are occupied by women. However, there are considerable changes depending on the level of government. In federal agencies the average proportion of women is 40 percent.[82] "The proportion of elected women at the German Bundestag and at federal state level has remained about one third for over ten years (32 percent in 2010). The 30 percent mark is regarded as "critical mass" for influencing decision making effectively."[83]

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[80] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.
[81] Ibid.
[82] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.
[83] Ibid.

In terms of sexual and reproductive health rights, the German health system is supposed to provide equal access to women and men, but the services have been designed around male needs. Sexual and reproductive health rights address abortion, and prenatal diagnoses. Abortion is in fact illegal in Germany, but exempt from punishment under certain conditions. Abortion will not be punished if the pregnant woman respects the rules for counseling.[84]

Women are still underrepresented in both political and economic decision-making, even though "most of the political parties have introduced nomination procedures of candidates, in particular gender quotas and zipping systems."[85] However, the percentage of women in the Bundestag rose from 32.9 percent to 36.5 percent after the last federal elections in 2013.[86] Why the increase? More than likely, more women are being nominated by the major parties. Though women are underrepresented in the federal government, their membership in political parties has increased steadily since the Second World War, especially in the left wing parties with more comprehensive pro-female policies (see Figure 6). The only decline in female party membership since 1946 has been with Die Linke, but it is still higher with them than with the other four leading political parties. We can infer that Die Linke attracts female members due to their adoption of quotas for their tickets and strong anti-discrimination policies.

Regardless of any political progress made in gender equality since reunification, women are still underrepresented in politics: their party membership, electoral success, and policy protection are all lacking. Women in the German government do not hold decision-making positions at the rate of their male counterparts. In fact, European legislation has acted as the main driver for legal improvements in equal treatment and anti-discrimination, not domestic German policy-making from any party.[87]

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[84] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. "The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany." 2015.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf.

Conclusions

Female representation in the German federal system is higher in parties with pro-woman policies, specifically platforms and legislation that benefit women and families such as paid parental leave, subsidized daycare, pay equality, and prevention of violence against women. Equal participation in decision-making will continue to increase as women's priorities continue to be legislated. As more women are successful electorally, we will see continued prioritization of sexual and reproductive health rights, and access to maternal health care.

This invites further research because people are complicated, and politics is chaotic. Further study of German political culture is necessary, particularly English-language research. Particularly, there is need for analysis of women's current roles in the German political system at both the federal and state level. Further research on the social and political factors that lead women towards or away from politics is still necessary.

The face of Germany is changing. The country has accepted Syrian refugees, many of which are women. They have their own unique political needs, but find their voices totally unrepresented in the federal government. Female politicians will need to address the conditions of all their constituents, including the new migrants. This means there is still a lot of research to be done, particularly into the unique needs of refugee women in Germany. Syrian women, along with the Turkish women who already live in Germany, are beginning to form a sizeable minority of Muslim women in the country. There is still a need for research that explores the political preferences of young German women, who are coming of age in a globalized world. It's easy to write Germany off as an advanced and progressive country, which ignores its long patriarchal history.

German reunification presented unique political and social challenges, and political parties were forced to reimagine themselves. Since reunification, all parties have focused on family policies to some degree. However, these policies have not always been fully or consistently equality-oriented. Although the feminist movement has

continued to grow since the 1960s, there has not been a totally effective gender equality policy framework. Gender policy has been implemented at the state and federal level, but has not been fully pursued. The European Union has been a positive force for gender equality, but their priorities have not been fully realized in Germany. Germany has focused too heavily on general family policy, which has not effectively increased the status of women.

As a result, women's participation and electoral success is notably low. Women are drawn to parties that mirror their political and social needs; if no party can fully realize those needs women will separate from the electoral process. However, the continued integration of women into the German federal government points to a future influx of gender equality policies, which could in turn entice more women into politics. Whether or not this will be politically effective in advancing the general status of women in Germany remains to be seen. Things cannot remain stagnant in Germany. They must continue to follow European Union gender equality recommendations, which will lift the overall social status of women.

After evaluating the current status of German politics, it is clear that to attract women, German political parties must continue to aggressively prioritize them. This means maintaining the current level of protections for women, and working to increase it. It is easy for parties to claim that they have policies that are pro-female, but more difficult for them to follow through with their quotas and ideologies.

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