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Voter Reactions to Trajectories of Women's Representation

Magdalena Breyer*

Abstract

Existing research on the effects of women's descriptive representation on citizens' attitudes has mainly investigated potential positive effects, namely on the political engagement of women themselves or the perceived legitimacy of outcomes. However, long-term shifts in representation have rarely been theorized as potential causes of resentment. It is crucial to consider discontent, as perceptions of relative decline among men and unfulfilled expectations of reaching equality among women have been shown to be powerful sources of resentment in other contexts. This article brings together research on women's representation with a focus on discontent, social status and backlash. It asks about the consequences of perceived shifts in the gender composition of parliament for political behavior, including voting propensities. Using a survey experiment fielded in Germany, the results show that men do not lash back against women's representation, even if they realize that this means a slightly lower standing for themselves.

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1. Introduction

The representation of women compared to men has become much more equal in Western European parliaments in the past decades. Political science research has demonstrated the positive effects of a more representative gender composition of parliament on women's and men's political engagement, perceptions of legitimacy, and attitudes towards female politicians (Neundorf and Shorrocks 2021; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). However, studies of representation have rarely considered whether resentment may arise as a consequence of shifts in gender relations, as is evidenced in other contexts such as the labor market and education (Morgan and Buice 2013; Banaszak and Plutzer 1993). The reason for this potential resentment lies in the significance that women's representation has for the evaluation of the state of gender equality in a society. Progress towards equality can exacerbate feelings of resentment if it is perceived as going too far (Sanbonmatsu 2008; Gidron and Hall 2020), but also if it is seen as not going far enough (Newman 2016). It is important to study such sources of discontent, as they help to explain stagnating progress towards parity.

To explain when, why and for whom discontent might arise, this paper argues that it is crucial to consider *trajectories* of women's representation, moving beyond a focus on *levels* of it (Stauffer 2021). Varying perceptions of how descriptive representation came about and how it might evolve in the future can be attached to the same current level of the share of women in parliament. The trajectory should be more influential for political behavior because the past and expected future provide the reference points against which the current situation is evaluated. This determines whether a perception of relative decline or ascent arises. From recent research on social status, we know that relative trajectories and matter more strongly for resentment and radical right voting than absolute social positions (Kurer and van Staalduin 2022; Kurer 2020; Engler and

Weisstanner 2021). Thus, perceptions of women’s representation may affect attitudes differently, depending on which trajectory is salient.

This paper assesses the consequences of perceived shifts in women’s representation in terms of their effects on citizen’s political behavior. Unlike previous work investigating positive effects on political engagement or the perceived legitimacy of outcomes (Stauffer 2021; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Clayton et al. 2019), I consider that strong shifts, but also recent stagnation, have the potential to cause discontent. Importantly, women and men may react differently: women should be discontent with unfulfilled expectations of equality, while male resentment could be triggered by a strong challenge to male dominance. To theorize the effect on discontent, I connect the literature on symbolic representation, that is, the effects of descriptive representation on citizen attitudes, with insights from the literature on social status, backlash and deprivation (Gidron and Hall 2017; Gest et al. 2018). Thereby, I also contribute to the status literature by explicitly testing whether a progressive change towards gender equality leads to an individual-level backlash, which is often implied but rarely tested (for an exception see Anduiza and Rico 2022). An important part of the individual-level reactions by status losers (men) versus status winners (women) is to also consider downstream effects on support for parties characterized by markedly progressive or authoritarian sociocultural positions, namely green and radical right parties. Since gender relations are an important aspect of contention on the second dimension of political conflict, assessing this individual-level mechanism can thereby also contribute to our understanding of transforming electoral politics.

To address these questions, a survey experiment is used to manipulate perceptions of shifting gender relations in parliament. I present respondents with different trajectories of the descriptive representation of women, with treatment conditions showing either strong increases in the share of women MPs or stagnation on a lower level. The

treatment is adapted from Wetts and Willer (2018), who assess the impact of varying projections of the share of racial groups in the population on welfare attitudes. The preregistered experiment, which does not rely on deception but simply displays differing time windows, was fielded in an original survey in Germany in January 2022. An experimental setting allows to manipulate how fundamental or stable shifts in women’s representations appear to respondents. This is an advantage over observational data, as perceptions of the rate of change may differ drastically. Furthermore, different trends in women’s representation go along with and are affected by other developments, such as the spread of socially progressive values, which can be more easily controlled for using an experimental design. The case of Germany is useful to assess the political implications of a more general Western European trend, where gender equality and women’s representation have increased over the long run but stagnated in the last two decades.

The results show some symmetric and some asymmetric effects between men and women. While men perceive a lower social status when primed about women’s representation, there are no downstream effects on broader discontent or radical right voting propensities for them. Crucially, both women and men express concerns about boys’ opportunities when exposed to a scenario of future overrepresentation of women. However, not even this scenario triggers a backlash or discontent among men. The optimistic implications are that men, on average, do not resent women’s representation, even if they realize it means a relatively lower standing for themselves. Surprisingly, women are not especially dissatisfied with the current stagnation and the lower level of their descriptive representation. However, they are more likely to express support for the green party when exposed to the current stagnation of women’s representation, indicating a progressive mobilization effect.

I contribute to previous studies by first, conceptually highlighting the role of the perceived trajectory of women’s representation, going beyond levels of it. Second, my

results shed light on the consequences of the perceived representation of women for political behavior. I show that men do not react with a backlash, but that socioculturally progressive parties like the Greens might be able to mobilize women voters by highlighting current stagnation in women's advances in politics. These results are consequential for both the literature on descriptive and symbolic representation, as well as the literature on cultural backlash and the role of gender in it.

2. The implications of women's increasing representation for political behavior

The increasing participation of women in politics is an outstanding development in which a previously excluded group gained formal rights on a global scale and in a relatively short period of time. Within just one century, women gained the right to vote in most countries worldwide (Paxton and Hughes 2017). Furthermore, women started to be represented in parliaments and governments, giving them a political voice and the formal ability to influence outcomes in a variety of policy areas. There is a vast literature on the effect that the descriptive representation of women has on individual attitudes and political engagement, which is subsumed under the concept of symbolic representation or "the represented's feelings of being fairly and effectively represented" (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005, p. 407). Research in this strand theorizes and provides evidence of a positive effect on political attitudes first and foremost among women (Barnes and Burchard 2013). However, even for men, many studies detect an equally positive effect of women's presence in politics on efficacy and perceptions of legitimacy (Stauffer 2021; Clayton et al. 2019; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). The proposed mechanism for this is a general signal of openness that the political system sends by including women.

Despite the overall confidence in the positive effects of women's increasing representa-

tion, setbacks have also been considered (O'Brien and Piscopo 2019). Resistance to the inclusion of women in politics may explain why inequality and stereotypes against female politicians still persist (Anzia and Bernhard 2022; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). From this point of departure, Sanbonmatsu (2008) conceptualizes a backlash against women's representation as an attempt by men and socially conservative women to preserve their group status. In line with this argument, studies have found evidence for an attitudinal backlash against feminism and female politicians as a reaction to women's overall societal status gains (Morgan and Buice 2013; Banaszak and Plutzer 1993). More strikingly, research on the phenomenon of violence against women demonstrates the amount of resistance women politicians and activists still face. They are subjected to a specific and gendered form of abuse, harassment, and intimidation, which can be understood as one expression of a backlash against women's representation (Krook 2020; Collignon and Rüdiger 2021).

Recent literature on (anti)feminist attitudes, male resentment, and radical right voting even points to an increasing politicization of gender relations in the past years, indicating that resistance to gender equality has taken on a more organized shape. Although this research is not directly concerned with representation, it pays attention to broader structural and value changes in favor of gender equality. It indicates that sexism and male resentment are central to explaining current support for the radical right or, more generally, for a cultural backlash to progressive politics (Norris and Inglehart 2019). There is strong evidence supporting the importance of sexism in the context of the 2016 election of Donald Trump as US president (Knuckey 2019; Cassese and Holman 2019; Bracic et al. 2019; Valentino et al. 2018; Setzler and Yanus 2018; Schaffner et al. 2018). Furthermore, studies in the European context show that male resentment has played an important role in the case of Brexit (Green and Shorrocks 2021), for the rise of the far right party Vox in Spain (Anduiza and Rico 2022), and for radical right voting in

Sweden (Off [2022](#)).

Whereas we thus have some insights into why men might negatively react to shifts in women's representation, it is less clear whether effects for women can be expected to always be positive. However, an alternative, but equally accurate point of view to the optimistic story of increasing descriptive representation is to highlight the strong degree of underrepresentation of women that permeates politics in Western Europe and other regions to this day. There is reason to believe that discontent arises among a disadvantaged group as a reaction to unfulfilled promises, especially after some first steps have been made towards equality. Newman ([2016](#)) shows that women are more disillusioned and less likely to believe in meritocracy specifically where gender wage gaps are narrower. He explains this with rising expectations held by women, which cause discontent when not fulfilled, especially where equality seems in closer reach. I argue that this logic also applies to the realm of politics and representation. Being aware of the continued overrepresentation of men compared to women should increase discontent among women. We should expect this effect especially when advances towards the equal representation of men and women have been achieved, but stagnated.

3. Perceived trajectories of women's representation - a framework

To make sense of when and for which voter groups discontent may arise, I propose a framework centering around perceived *trajectories* instead of levels of women's representation. I argue that perceptions of the trajectory of women's representation should be central for political behavior for two reasons: First, the rate of change, or how many women entered parliament in which amount of time, influences whether this development is perceived as a threat or not (Sanbonmatsu [2008](#), p. 638), or alternatively as sufficient

or not. By contrast, the current absolute number of women and men in parliament is not indicative of how this ratio came about or how it might evolve in the future.

Second, the expected future trajectory should be especially influential for voters' reactions in terms of attitudes and vote choice. Insights from the literature on social status show that the future threat of relative economic decline drive resentment and radical right voting, more so than low absolute levels of economic resources (Kurer 2020; Engler and Weisstanner 2021; Häusermann et al. 2022; Steenvoorden and Harteveld 2018). Vice versa, though less acknowledged in this literature, expected future gains should increase satisfaction with the political system among low status groups. From theoretical and empirical research on representation, we know that the increasing descriptive representation of historically discriminated groups signals changing social norms about their competence to be politically active and increases the overall legitimacy of political outcomes (Mansbridge 1999; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005).

Crucially, this perspective implies paying attention to voters' *perceptions* of shifts in women's representation. How the same objective current level is evaluated and whether it causes satisfaction or discontent will be shaped by the trajectory that is subjectively perceived by individuals. This can be detached from the objective development, as individual knowledge on it may be limited and because perceptions of time and the speed of a process may vary. Previous research has shown that perceptions of the level of gender composition of parliament predict political efficacy, while their objective levels fail to do so (Stauffer 2021). Thus, perceptions should also play a decisive role when evaluating the effects of trajectories of women's descriptive representation.

I theorize that the perceived trajectory of women's representation should affect where individuals perceive to stand in society, how politically central they feel, as well as which parties they support. The expectation of being more or less represented in the future should affect individual's subjective social status (SSS), defined as the "level of social

respect or esteem people believe is accorded them within the social order” (Gidron and Hall 2017, p. S61). The reason for this is that people deduce where groups stands in society (among other signals) from their perceived closeness to political power and presence in politics (Mendelberg 2022, p. 63). Next to a more general perception of status, the sense of having a political voice should be affected. Political centrality captures how much power people perceive their own group to have and how much politicians care about people like them (Gest et al. 2018, pp. 1702–1703). Thus, it ranges from a group-based sense of political efficacy to one of political deprivation.

Regarding the downstream effects on electoral behavior, I argue that women’s representation trajectories primarily affect support for green and radical right parties, or more broadly stated, support for parties with marked positions on the second, socio-cultural dimension of politics (see Kriesi et al. 2008). This relation has an ideological and a descriptive representation component: Individuals can ideologically favor these parties that demonstrate support for (the Greens) or opposition against gender equality (the radical right) in terms of their program, but also in terms of the share of women politicians in their ranks. Radical right and green parties differ strongly regarding this aspect of descriptive representation within the party (Keith and Verge 2018; Weeks et al. 2022).

To make sense of how differently perceived trajectories of women’s representation affect these outcomes, I consider two distinct scenarios of fundamental change and stability. These reflect two ideal type interpretations of the trajectory of progress towards equal representation. One is the perspective of strong increase in the presence of women in parliament, entailing a strong challenge to male hegemony. Especially when taking into account that formal barriers to women’s political participation existed for hundreds of years, the increasing share of women MPs since the mid-20th century can seem quite remarkable. By contrast, the other interpretation relates to the stagnation towards gen-

Table 1: Theoretical framework on the effects of perceived representation trajectories

Gender	Perceived trajectory	Expected reaction	Specific outcomes
Men	Change	Backlash (H1)	a) SSS ↓ b) Political centrality ↓ c) PtV radical right ↑
	Stability	None (H2)	a) SSS → b) Political centrality → c) PtV radical right →
Women	Change	Satisfaction (H3)	a) SSS ↑ b) Political centrality ↑ PtV green?
	Stability	Discontent (H4)	a) SSS ↓ b) Political centrality ↓ PtV green?

der equality in many parts of the world, where progress has slowed down after initial advances, especially in recent years (Klasen 2020). Thus, a more short-term assessment of the trajectory points towards perceptions of stability and ongoing inequality in representation. The hypotheses¹ I derive in the following propose a reaction by both men and women to each scenario. This allows testing whether reactions differ between the high and low status groups. Table 1 presents the four resulting groups and their expected reactions to varying perceptions of the trajectory of gender relations in parliament.

As a reaction to the first scenario of strong change, men are expected to feel threatened in their subjective social status and political centrality (H1). They are likely to feel increasingly marginalized in a society that used to benefit men more, and where momentum is now shifting strongly in favor of women. As shown by Green and Shorrocks

¹The hypotheses and experimental design were preregistered with the OSF Registry under the following [URL](#). The detailed hypotheses are also included in Appendix A1. A minor deviation from the pre-analysis plan and full results are presented in Appendix A2.

(2021), perceptions of discrimination against men and nostalgia for times where unequal gender relations were not questioned are elements of a broader cultural backlash. As a consequence of these perceptions of threat, men may then react with a backlash in an attempt to curb the political power of the challenging group, leading to a higher propensity to vote for the radical right. Radical right parties are likely to profit from perceived status threats and male resentment, as individuals may vote for them to voice discontent with mainstream parties and support for anti-egalitarian rejections of progressive change (Gest et al. 2018; Gidron and Hall 2017). Furthermore, these parties campaign on and profit from gender-based resentment (Off 2022), i.e., about gender quotas, gender-inclusive language or gender studies (Abou-Chadi et al. 2021).

By contrast, the second scenario of stability is likely to affect men's attitudes less (H2), as it does not threaten their higher representation level and is likely perceived as 'politics as usual.' Thus, neither SSS nor political centrality or the propensity to vote radical right should be affected.

Turning to reactions by the status winners, women's attitudes are likely to be positively influenced by the change scenario, in terms of their perceived own standing and political centrality (H3). Being aware that more and more women are represented in parliament should signal to women voters that there is an overall societal norm that awards women political competence, and that the system is increasingly open to exclude historically discriminated groups (see also Neundorf and Shorrocks 2021).

In the second scenario of stability, if citizens perceive that women's and men's unequal access to politics has solidified, this might cause discontent especially among women (H4). A stable and lower level of descriptive representation is expected to signal marginalization and a lesser importance of their political voice to them. This should decrease their political centrality, as the system will not seem inclusive to their group. Discontent among women is likely to arise especially in countries where a certain level

of women's representation is reached but remains below 50%, like in many Western European countries. In a context like this, rising expectations (Newman 2016) of equal representation have remained unfulfilled.

Regarding women's reaction in terms of voting behavior, it is plausible that they increase their support for socioculturally progressive parties like the Greens in both scenarios. The somewhat competing mechanisms are the following: First, women with a boosted sense of status and political centrality in the change condition may reward the Greens for having promoted gender equality in the past.² However, they could also perceive a lower urgency to vote based on gender issues, as progress seems to run its due course without much more mobilization. Second, women who perceive to still be confined to a lower societal position and excluded from politics could be motivated to vote for a green party as a means to achieve more equality in the future. Green parties combine both feminist substantive and descriptive representation, making them an attractive choice for women who care about advances in, as well as dismantling remaining inequality in representation.

In sum, I do not have fixed expectations about how the effects on voting propensities among female respondents will differ between the scenarios, but I will assess them especially for Green parties (as described in the pre-analysis plan). In contexts where a radical left or social democratic party is most saliently connected to progressive gender positions, this mechanism should apply to these other new left parties as well. The Greens are the most opposing party to the radical right on sociocultural (Kriesi et al. 2008), and even on core economic issues (Attewell 2020), which is why they are of particular interest here.

²Wurthmann (2023) provides evidence for such a mechanism, showing that sexual minorities in Germany reward the green party electorally for their longstanding commitment to sociocultural equality.

4. Empirical strategy

4.1. Case selection and survey

To manipulate the perceived trajectories of women’s representation, I conducted a survey experiment. It was embedded in an original online survey and fielded in Germany in January and February 2022. Overall, the German case is a rather typical example for Western Europe: Gender equality has increased in the long run but has stagnated in the last two decades. The remaining inequalities in Germany are even slightly more pronounced than in other countries because the conservative welfare regime tends to preserve status differentials (Esping-Andersen 1990, pp. 26-28). Consequently, Germany scores relatively high on indicators of inequality, including gender inequality, for example in the workplace. It has one of the highest gender pay gaps in Europe (19 percent, see Eurostat 2020). Germany is also a typical example of a Western European party system, featuring an increasingly established radical right party. However, the AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*) is relatively strongly stigmatized compared to its other Western European counterparts. This may make it harder to experimentally induce a higher voting propensity for it. Nonetheless, the AfD still gained a substantial share of votes at the last parliamentary elections in September 2021 (10 percent).

Respondents were recruited by a social research company (Respondi) from its online panel and sampled via quota sampling, including quotas matching the German population on age, gender, education, and federate state (see Table B2 in the appendix for descriptives). Respondi reimbursed respondents according to the length of the survey. A total of 3015 respondents participated in the survey and passed the attention check.³ After excluding speeders (who took less than five minutes, with the median equal to 16

³For the attention check, I instructed respondents to select a specific value on a seven-point-scale within a battery of items on political preferences. This check was conducted towards the beginning of the survey.

minutes), this resulted in 2947 respondents. For this design interested in heterogeneous effects between men and women, nonbinary respondents were excluded, resulting in 2940 respondents. This sample size gives statistical power of 0.83 to detect small effects in male and female subgroups, assuming Cohen’s $f = 0.1$, (see Cohen 1992)) and a Type-I error rate of 0.05. A pre-test (n of about 300) was conducted beforehand.

4.2. Experimental treatment

The treatment is based on a design developed by Wetts and Willer (2018) to assess the impact of varying threats to white people’s racial standing on welfare attitudes in the US, but was adapted to display varying trajectories of women’s representation.

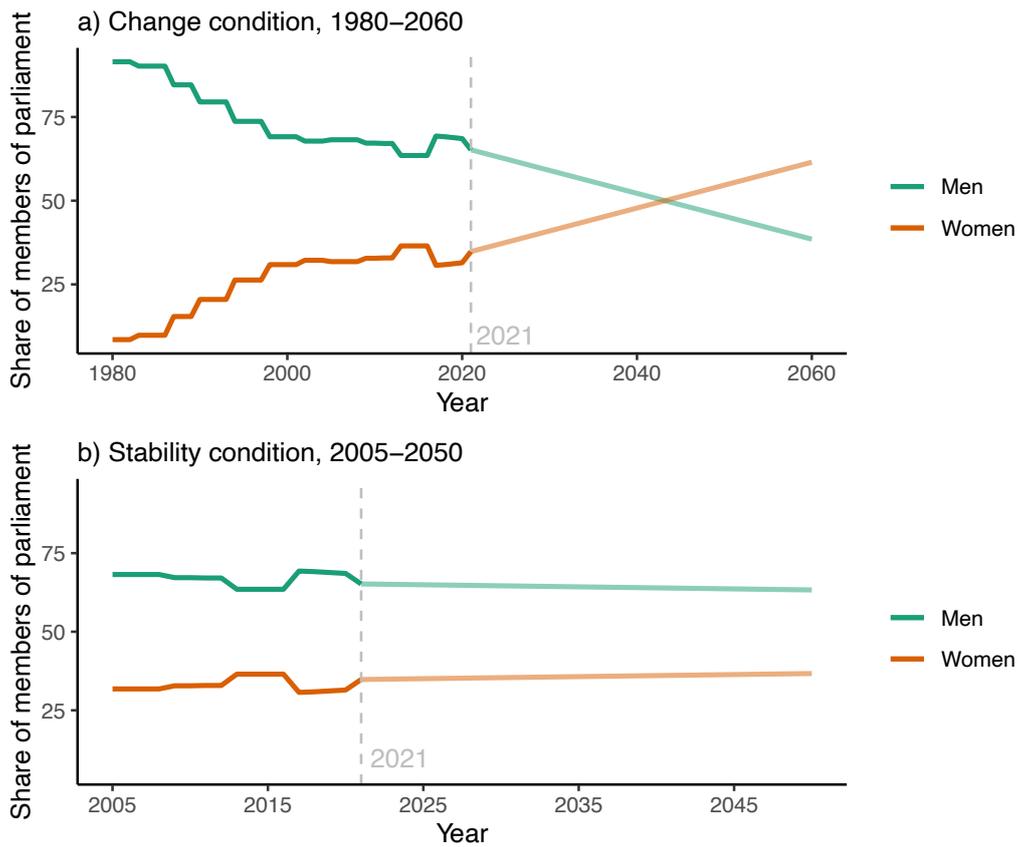
The sample was divided into a control group and two treatment groups, using a block randomization strategy to assign individuals to the groups.⁴ The two experimental groups saw a chart showing the historical and projected development of women’s political representation. The control group did not see a chart and received no prime on gender equality. One of the treatment conditions showed a strong change and overturn of men’s dominance, the other displayed relative stability (see Figure 1). The ratio of MPs of different genders is inherently zero sum (more women or nonbinary people in parliament mean fewer men, at least in relative terms), which means that the treatment should induce perceptions of women eventually politically *overtaking* men.

Crucially, the charts are based on the same data and indicator, only the time range on the x-axis and the slope of the projected development differ. Therefore, the experiment does not rely on deception, but displays the data in two different ways.⁵ Respondents in

⁴Blocking ensures covariate balance between the groups and thus reduces the estimation error (Gerber and Green 2012). As heterogeneous effects are expected by respondent gender, blocking was implemented on this covariate. Table B3 in the appendix shows that the three experimental groups are also balanced along other key sociodemographic characteristics.

⁵The historical data is accurate. The projection line is based on the previous trend (using an OLS regression) and thus presents a reasonable guess, although there is, of course, a mathematical and

Figure 1: Germany - Treatment conditions: Share of women and men in parliament



The lighter projection line shows how the share of women and men in parliament could evolve. Sources historical data: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020) and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (2017).

condition a) with the longer time scale saw the share of men drop strongly and the share of women increase strongly from the 1980s to today. They received further information from the projected development until 2060,⁶ which was displayed in a lighter color and continued at the rate of the previous change. These respondents saw the lines cross by 2045, indicating gender parity. For condition b), the projection was calculated based on the development since 2005. According to this trend, gender parity in the parliament is not expected to occur until the end of the shorter time scale.

Both treatment charts were accompanied by a short explanatory text (see Appendix B2) and a survey item to embed the treatment in a more subtle way. It asked respondents if they believe that the gender ratio in parliament makes a difference for the outcomes of political decision-making.

A manipulation check was included to test for the credibility of the treatment and for non-compliance: On the page directly after the treatment, respondents were asked to estimate the share of women in parliament in 2050. A t-test confirmed that respondents in the two treatment groups significantly differed in their estimate of women's representation in the year 2050 (change treatment: mean of 50 percent, stability treatment: 44 percent, see Appendix B3).

4.3. Outcome and covariate measures

The outcomes of interest are subjective social status, attitudes about the role of one's own group in politics (political centrality vs. deprivation), and voting propensities. Table 2 gives an overview of the items and answer scales. To measure SSS, I used the standard

societal limit to the ratio of men and women in parliament. Respondents who received a treatment were debriefed at the end of the survey. The study was approved by the responsible Ethics Board.

⁶The time scale was chosen so as to allow for a clearly visible crossing of projection lines. The beginning of the time scale for panel a) was chosen to be 1980, because the strongest increase in women's representation in the German Bundestag happened from then onward.

social ladder question (as i.e. Gidron and Hall 2017) for present, past, and future status perceptions. I expected an effect on present SSS as well as on individuals' perceptions of their status *trajectory* from past to future. To construct this variable, past SSS was subtracted from future SSS, so that positive values indicate expected status gains from the past to the future. Vice versa, negative values mean that losses are expected in the future, compared to respondents' past.

The items on political centrality (adapted from Gest et al. 2018) asked for perceptions about the future because the treatment primed a future development. Political centrality consists of two items, of which the mean was analyzed. Low values indicate perceptions of political deprivation, high values of political centrality.

The main covariate of interest is the gender of the respondent, as a heterogeneous effect is expected between men and women. It was surveyed pre-treatment.

4.4. Estimation

I modeled OLS regressions with robust standard errors (HC2, see Lin 2013) to estimate the treatment effect on each outcome variable. The models include the effect of the treatment assignment and its interaction with respondent gender. The resulting Conditional Average Treatment Effects (CATE) are reported using predicted values by experimental group and gender. I report 83.4 percent confidence intervals around the predicted values because the (lacking) overlap in these intervals indicates (lacking) statistical significance of a pairwise difference at the level of 95 percent under two assumptions (see Cohen 2022), which are both met here.⁷ Results with 95% confidence intervals and respective t-tests are reported in appendices C2 and C3.

⁷First, the covariance between group-specific estimates is zero because I interact the covariate gender with the treatment group indicator. Second, the variances of the outcome variables turned out to be similar across groups.

Table 2: Outcome items

Outcome	Item
SSS in Present, Past and Future	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are people at the top of society and people at the bottom. Where would you place yourself on this scale from “top” (10) to “bottom” (1)? 2. Now imagine that the scale from 1 to 10 represents the situation in Germany 30 years ago. Where do you think you and other people like you would have been 30 years ago, where 1 is the lowest and 10 the highest position? 3. Thinking about how society will change in the future, where do you think you and other people like you will be 30 years from now? Again, 1 is the lowest and 10 the highest position.
Political centrality /deprivation in the future	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How much do you think politicians will care about people like you in the future? Evaluated on a scale of 1-7, 1 being “will not care at all in the future” and 7 “will care a great deal in the future” 2. How much political power will people like you have in Germany in the future? Evaluated on a scale of 1-7, 1 being “no power at all in the future” and 7 “a lot of power in the future”
Voting propensities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How likely is it that you would vote for one of the following parties in the future? 0 means “I would never vote”, 10 means “I would certainly vote”. <p>Parties: SPD, CDU/CSU, Greens, FDP, AfD, LINKE</p>

5. Results

5.1. SSS and political centrality

The conditional average treatment effects on subjective social status are presented first. Figure 2 reports CATE for both present SSS (top) and the trajectory from past to expected future SSS (bottom).⁸ The results show that the current social status of men was affected by the treatment conditions, compared to the control group. As expected in H1b), men in the change condition reported significantly lower SSS.⁹ In terms of substantial magnitude, this effect amounts to a change of 0.24 on the scale of 1 to

⁸The underlying models interact treatment assignment with respondent gender, see Appendix C1 for regression tables with and without interaction effects.

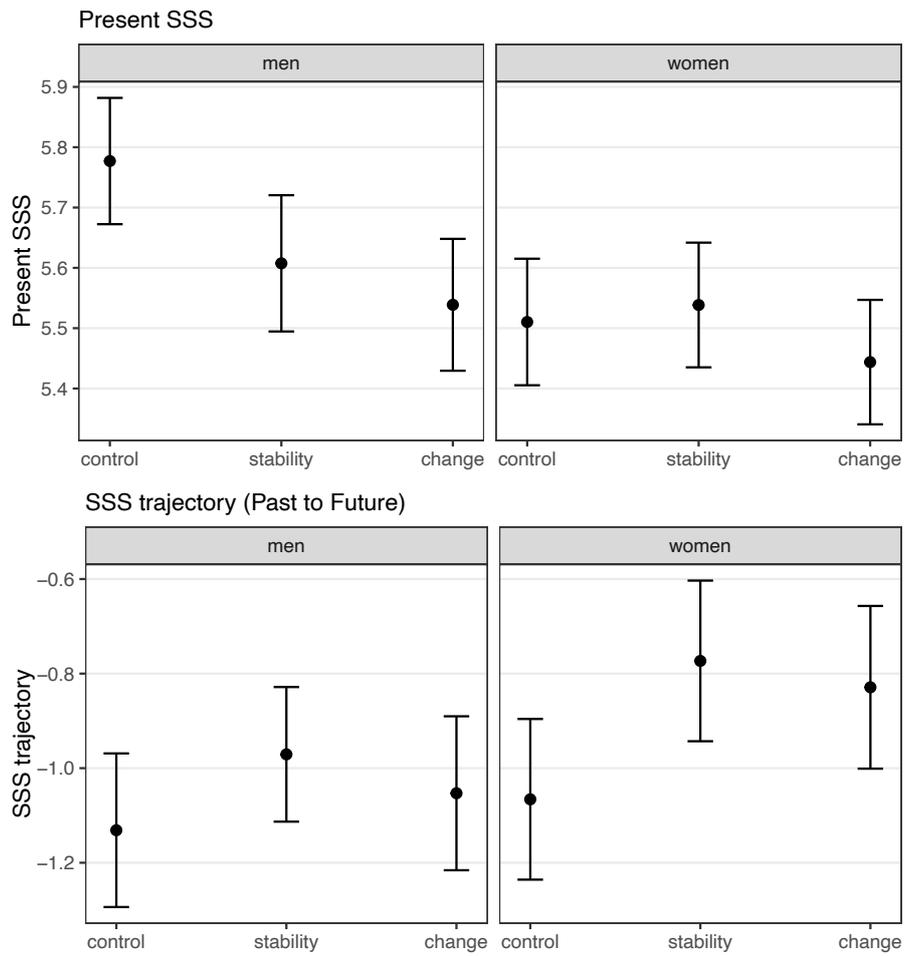
⁹To support interpretations of statistical significance beyond the 83% confidence intervals, t-test results for differences between the experimental conditions are included in Appendix C2.

10. This is a similar effect size as the effect of gender on SSS and is considerable for a survey experiment. Seeing the representation of women compared to men change substantially led to a lower perceived standing in the present among men. However, even the stability condition seemed to suppress the status of men, albeit in a weaker and insignificant way. In both treatment conditions, the otherwise significant gender gap in SSS became insignificant. This effect was driven by male respondents. It suggests that simply priming men about the presence of women in politics led them to perceive their societal standing as lower, underlining the implications that political representation has for status politics.

For women, no difference was detected between the control and the stability condition regarding present SSS. Stagnating progress on descriptive representation did not lower women's SSS, contrary to H4b). Interestingly, women in the change condition reported slightly lower SSS, although this difference was not significant. Either way, this contradicts H3b): A strongly increasing representation of female MPs did not lead to a higher subjective social status among women. This finding raises the question of whether women in the change condition perceived that likely future progress toward equal representations has not materialized in the present yet. The lower plot in Figure 2 suggests this. Women in both treatment conditions, compared to the control group, reported a somewhat more positive status trajectory, though both effects were only significant at the level of 90 percent. This finding indicates that it was again the overall prime of women's presence in parliament that made women's outlook on their status trajectory less negative.

In general, most of the respondents expected status losses in the future, as indicated by the negative values in the bottom plot. The SSS trajectory of men was not affected by the treatment conditions: the perceived decrease in standing appeared to be directly projected onto the present SSS.

Figure 2: CATE on subjective social status



Top: present SSS on scale of 1-10, bottom: future SSS minus past SSS (negative values: expected loss, positive values: expected gain). 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values. See OLS table C6 in the appendix.

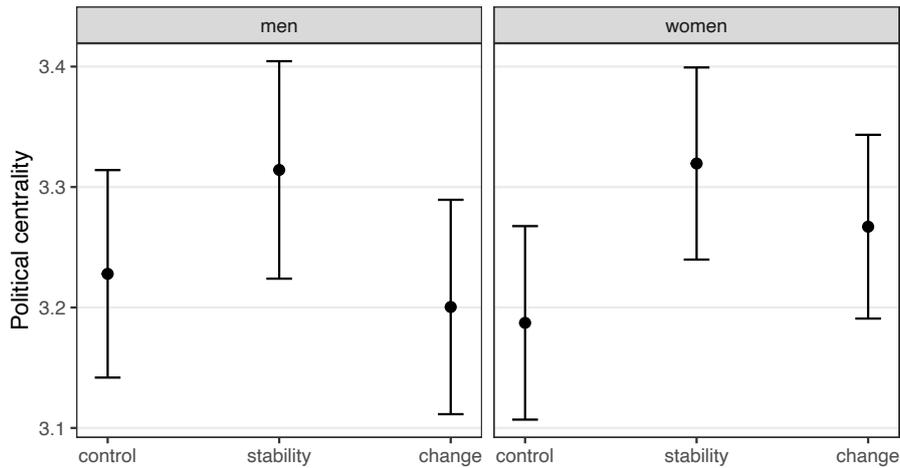
Moving on to the outcome of political centrality, Figure 3 shows that the treatment conditions did not significantly affect this outcome, among neither men nor women. For men, the tendency is that the prime of stable gender relations in parliament increased men's perceptions of their group's political standing, even though the effect is insignificant. This effect would be plausible in the sense that the stability treatment reassured men that their political status is not threatened. However, being presented with an overturning gender ratio in parliament did not change the baseline political centrality among men. This result goes against the expectations in H1a): Losing political status in the future did not lead to expectations of political deprivation among men.

For women, a surprising tendency was found in the stability condition, although it is not significant at the 95-percent level: Compared to women in the control group, women in the stability condition tended to perceive *higher* future political centrality. This was driven by a significantly higher perception that politicians will care for women in the future, one of the two items of this measure (see Figure D8 in the appendix for disaggregated results). However, the change condition did not have a significant effect on women's perception of their political standing, against the expectations. The trajectory of the overturning gender ratio did not lead to the expected boost in political efficacy for women (H3a).

5.2. Do voters care about descriptive representation?

Before moving on to effects on voting propensities, I first present some exploratory analyses to provide a better understanding of these partly puzzling results. The unexpected findings for political centrality could be due to substantial reasons, but also due to issues with the experimental treatment. First, the stability treatment was likely more credible to respondents. The change condition may have failed to convince women (and men) that the shift would really be so drastic and that more women than men would

Figure 3: CATE on political centrality



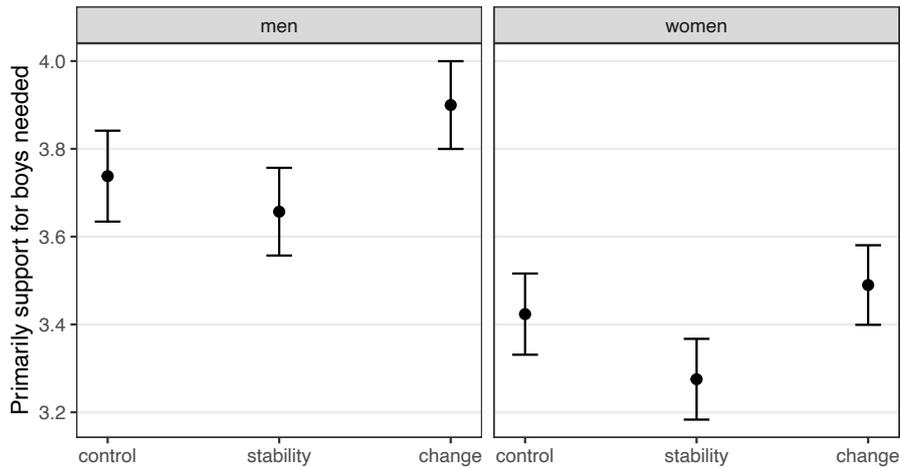
Scale goes from 1 to 7, where higher values indicate higher political centrality. 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values. See OLS table C6 in the appendix.

be represented in 2050. Although the manipulation check after the treatment indicated that men and women estimate a significantly higher share of women in parliament in 2050 when assigned to the change instead of the stability condition, the mean estimate did not exceed 50 percent of MPs (see Figure B2 in the appendix for the distribution of estimates).

Second, the similarity of the two treatment conditions could indicate that men and women do not strongly care about the specific trajectory of women's representation, beyond a certain baseline level. Although there were some significant differences between the control and both treatment groups, I did not detect significant differences between the change and stability conditions in the outcomes of interest. Thus, the prime of women's representation appeared to matter more than the specific trajectory.

To investigate these possible explanations, I conducted additional exploratory analyses that were not preregistered. These provide evidence of a crucial significant difference between the treatment conditions, which speaks for their (partial) credibility and the importance of descriptive representation trajectories for citizen attitudes. Specifically,

Figure 4: CATE on prioritizing support for boys



Higher values on the scale from 1 to 7 mean support for the statement "In the meantime, what is needed above all are measures that specifically strengthen the self-confidence of boys". 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values. See OLS table C8 in the appendix.

an attitude towards gender relations that focuses on boys' opportunities was affected by the treatments in a different way. This post-treatment item stated: "In the meantime, what is needed above all are measures that specifically strengthen the self-confidence of boys".

The change condition significantly increased both men's and women's concerns about boys' opportunities, compared to the stability condition (Figure 4, see also the OLS Table C8 in the appendix). This effect was similar in size for men (0.24 on a scale of 1 to 7) and women (0.21) and corresponds to 0.15 of a standard deviation. This has three implications. First, on a design level, it means that the respondents found the treatment credible to some extent, as the future *underrepresentation* of men went along with greater support for prioritizing measures for boys. Second, this result could explain why women were rather skeptical about the change treatment. The change condition did not increase their political satisfaction, possibly because they worried that boys would suffer as a result of women's advances beyond parity. Third, this means that men and women do care about descriptive representation and how it affects real life chances for

boys and girls. An increasing overrepresentation of a group, possibly any group, is not regarded positively.

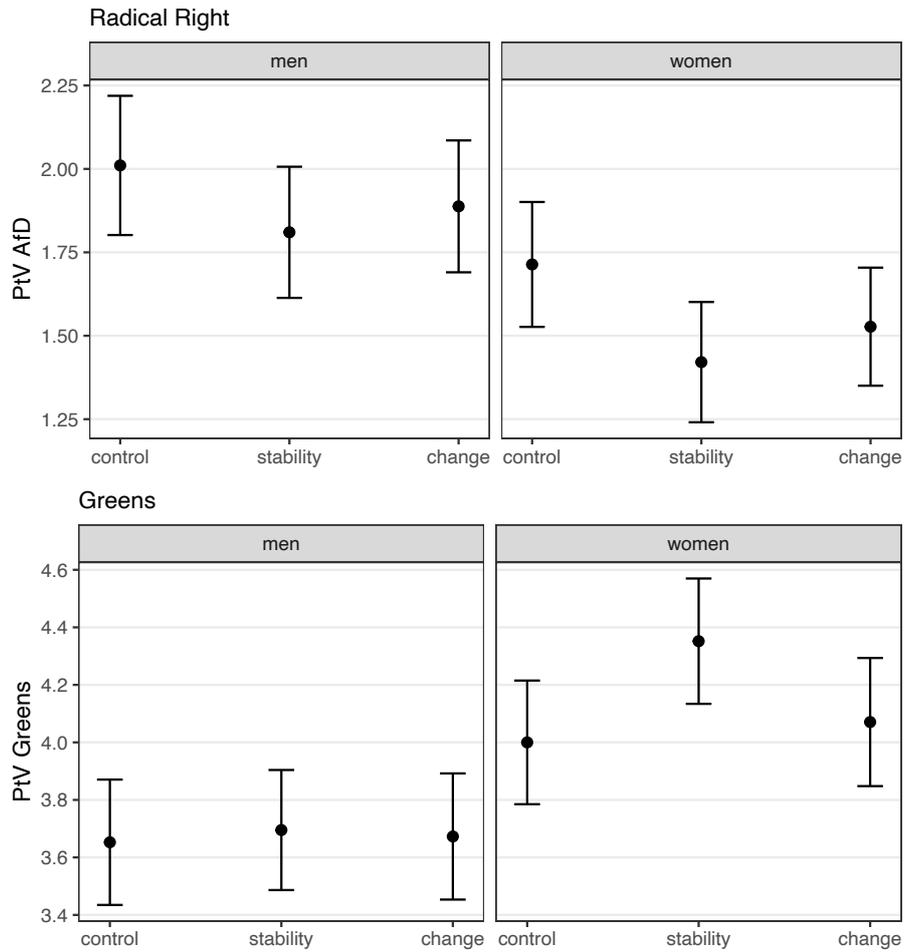
5.3. Voting propensities

After having established this foundational importance of different representation trajectories, I move on to the preregistered analyses of how party support is affected by the experimental conditions. The treatment effects on voting propensities reveal that the experiment did not induce a radical right backlash to women's increasing representation. The plot at the top of Figure 5 shows that contrary to H1c), the change condition did not increase men's propensity to vote for the radical right AfD. In contrast, for both treatment groups, it was even slightly lower than in the control group, although insignificantly. Connecting this with results from above, worrying about boys' self-confidence thus did not translate into a broader backlash in terms of radical right voting. The effect of the change condition remained at a social status and issue-specific level.

For women, the treatment conditions also tended to decrease their AfD endorsement, which was lower than men's to begin with. The difference between men and women was significant at 95 percent in the stability condition, but not in the control group (t-tests in Tables C16 and C17). Priming respondents, especially women, about gender and representation in politics seems to deter them from radical right parties. This is likely due to the fact that parties like the AfD are known for their reactionary gender positions and the dominance of male politicians within them.

Turning to the analysis of Green voting propensities, it becomes clear from Figure 5 that Green parties can profit from women's perception of stagnating progress towards more equal representation. In the stability condition, women reported a significantly higher propensity to vote Green than men. This was not the case for the change or

Figure 5: CATE on AfD and Green voting propensities



Scale goes from 0 to 10, where higher values indicate higher voting propensities. 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values. See OLS table C7 in the appendix.

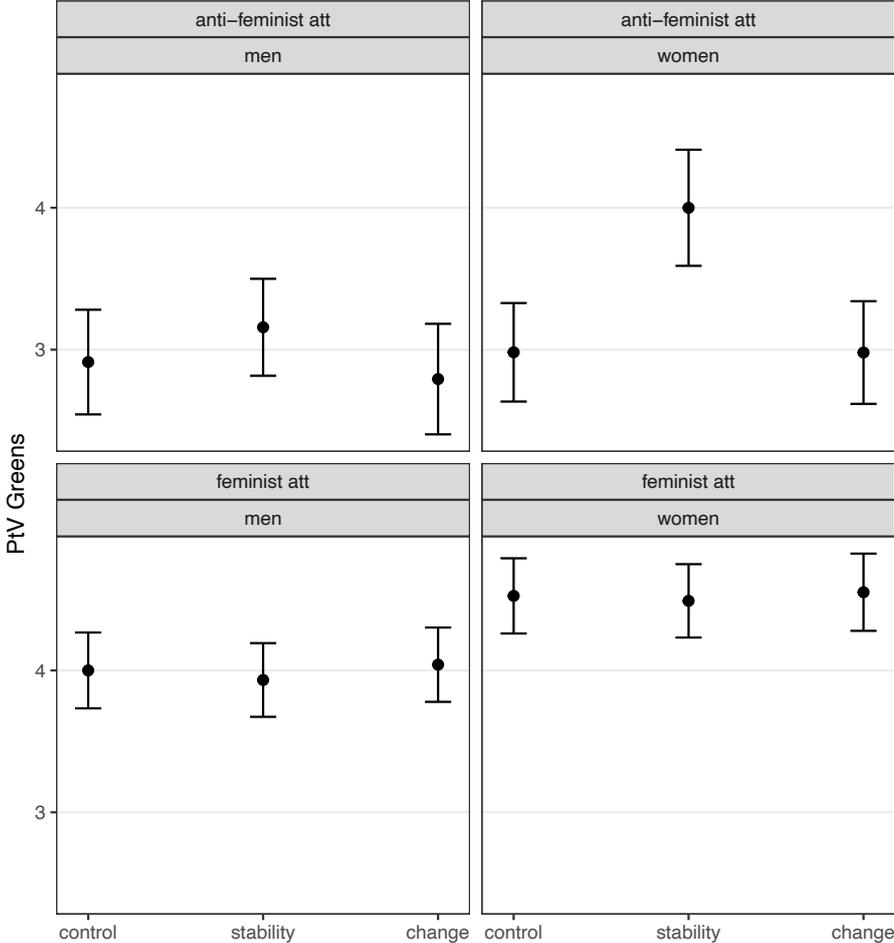
control condition. This finding indicates that women especially turn to Green parties as a means of further *increasing* women’s representation, as a reaction to stagnating progress towards equality. In contrast, when confronted with the information that the representation of women is already strongly increasing, women did not increase their propensity to vote Green as a reward. The fact that men’s support for the Greens was not affected by the treatments highlights that a gendered perspective is at play.

For women’s propensity to vote radical left (LINKE) or mainstream left (SPD), Figure D9 in the appendix shows that there were no substantial differences between men and women. Both groups were slightly more likely to vote for the SPD when assigned to the stability condition. Women were not more likely to vote radical left when exposed to either treatment. It is possible that the radical left would profit instead of the Greens in other countries. In Germany, the LINKE is often regarded as less socioculturally progressive than the Green party, or as less internally coherent on these questions. Therefore, it makes sense that it is the Green party to which women turn in this context.

To understand the increase in support for the Greens among women better, I further conducted an exploratory analysis to find out which women were most affected. This reveals an interesting pattern: Only women with conservative gender attitudes¹⁰ were affected by the stability treatment, revealing a strong and significant effect (top right panel in Figure 6). By contrast, women with feminist attitudes, who were already more likely to vote Green, were not affected (though this is not a ceiling effect, with predicted PtV values still far below the maximum value of 10). Thus, women’s descriptive representation is clearly not something that only feminists care about. Instead, highlighting stagnating progress motivates even anti-feminist women – who could be understood as ‘skeptical status winners’ – to support a progressive party like the Greens. The mobiliz-

¹⁰The item measuring (anti)feminist attitudes, namely about whether the family suffers when women work full time, was asked pre-treatment.

Figure 6: CATE on Green voting propensity, by gender and attitude towards gender equality



Scale goes from 0 to 10, where higher values indicate higher voting propensities. Attitudinal (pre-treatment) item reads: “The bottom line is that the family suffers when the woman works full time.”, on a scale of 1 to 7, where higher values indicate support. Those who tend to agree (values 5 to 7) are classified as having anti-feminist attitudes (n of 894), the rest as having feminist attitudes (n of 2034). 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values. See OLS table C9 and t-tests C19 and C20 in the appendix.

ing effect of the stability condition on anti-feminist respondents was confirmed for the outcome of political centrality (see Figures D10 and D11 in the appendix).

6. Conclusion

This paper relies on a survey experiment to assess reactions by men and women to trajectories of women's representation. Taking into account asymmetric reactions between men and women, it argues that different trajectories have the potential to cause discontent, depending on whether they are perceived as going too far or not far enough. The experiment, conducted in Germany, manipulated information on trajectories of the descriptive representation of women compared to men from past to future. The expectations from research on symbolic representation, as well as social status, were that men who are primed about the increasing representation of women in parliament would perceive a threat, leading to a backlash and increased radical right voting. The expectations for women were that representation shifts in their favor would improve their political and social standing. In contrast, women primed about the stagnation of their descriptive representation were expected to react with a sense of political deprivation. How this discontent translates into women's voting behavior is less established in existing research. This study paid special attention to the Green party, the most socioculturally progressive main party in the German context.

Overall, this study shows that increases in women's representation do not trigger a backlash. Both men and women seem to overwhelmingly value descriptive representation and gender equality. For men, this appreciation even holds at the cost of a lower social standing for themselves. Priming men about the presence of women in parliament decreased their subjective social status, especially when presented with an overturning gender ratio in favor of women. However, men's perception of a lower standing did not translate into other outcomes usually related to a backlash. Neither political deprivation nor their propensity to vote for the radical right AfD increased as a result of being exposed to the change treatment. If anything, their support for the AfD tended to decrease

when primed about the gender ratio in parliament.

These results speak to other recent studies questioning in how far the prototypical white male working class member has actually perceived status decline (Oesch and Vigna 2022). This study adds that even when perceptions of status decline can be experimentally induced, there does not seem to be a direct link to resentment and other backlash outcomes. Thus, as a broader implication, it is likely that political elites play a crucial factor in inducing gendered resentment in cases where this resentment has been linked to radical right support, like for the Spanish party Vox (Anduiza and Rico 2022), the Sweden Democrats (Off 2022), Brexit (Green and Shorrocks 2021) or Trump (Schaffner et al. 2018). It does not seem to be the case that there is a large demand-side backlash independent of this elite mobilization, at least in the case of Germany.

Furthermore, although women highly value gender equality, the stagnant representation trajectory did not cause discontent among them. Moreover, a potential overrepresentation of women in the future was not more positively evaluated than the stagnating development. This result can be partly explained by the fact that both women and men worry about boys' opportunities when exposed to a future overrepresentation of women. Together, these results point to a more complicated 'psychology of the winners' of structural shifts toward gender equality. Women, like men, seem to shy away from 'going too far' and do not view the underrepresentation of men positively. On a more abstract level, this confirms that voters value equal representation and worry about disadvantages to social groups that are less represented in parliament, even if these groups are still in an overall privileged position.

The results further indicate that while women were not too resentful about their unequal descriptive representation, they were still mobilized to vote for the Greens as a remedy against this stagnation. This pattern can be interpreted as a reaction by women to potentially increase their descriptive and substantive representation by supporting

parties that advocate progressive sociocultural policies and have a high share of women MPs. The broader implications of this result are that progressive parties can appeal to and mobilize groups with upward social status trajectories by politicizing remaining inequalities. Strikingly, this was the case mostly for women with anti-feminist attitudes, showing a certain persuasion possibility for feminist actors. However, it seems that women's potential mobilization is not rooted in discontent. A recent study by Clayton et al. (2023) can explain this by showing that being made aware of exclusion and its consequences can motivate women to develop political ambition themselves.

Another explanation of the findings could be traced back to the country context. It is possible that higher baseline levels of gender equality are necessary prerequisites for both discontent among women (Newman 2016) and perceived threats among men (Donovan 2022), as shown, for example, in the gender-equal context of Sweden (Off 2022). There, threats to men may be more believable and expectations by women even higher. Nonetheless, the results from Germany suggest that gendered resentment may not be so easily triggered in other Western European countries.

Finally, it is possible that discontent among both men and women is more likely to be induced by other gendered inequalities and varying perceptions of their trajectories. The results of this paper indicate that opportunities for children or educational discrepancies have this potential. In addition, increasing competition and remaining inequalities in the labor market may also be more contested (Newman 2016; Kim and Kweon 2022). Therefore, future research should assess how the trajectories of other structural shifts toward gender equality affect political behavior, both in experimental and observational studies.

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Appendix

A. Preregistration

A1. Hypotheses in detail

These hypotheses were preregistered with the [OSF Registry](#) and are summarized in the main text in Table 1.

Hypothesis 1: Perceiving a strong increase in women’s representation will lead to a status backlash among men, encompassing

- (a) lower political centrality and a lower SSS,
- (b) more negative evaluations of the future of society,
- (c) a higher propensity to vote for a radical right party.

Hypothesis 2: Perceiving a stable and low level of women’s representation will not affect men’s attitudes, encompassing

- (a) no effect on political centrality and SSS,
- (b) no effect on evaluations of the future of society,
- (c) no effect on the propensity to vote for a radical right party.

Hypothesis 3: Perceiving a strong increase in women’s representation will lead to a status gain among women, encompassing

- (a) higher political centrality and a higher SSS,
- (b) more positive evaluations of the future of society.

Hypothesis 4: Perceiving a stable and low level of women’s representation will cause status dissatisfaction among women, encompassing

- (a) lower political centrality and a lower SSS,
- (b) more negative evaluations of the future of society.

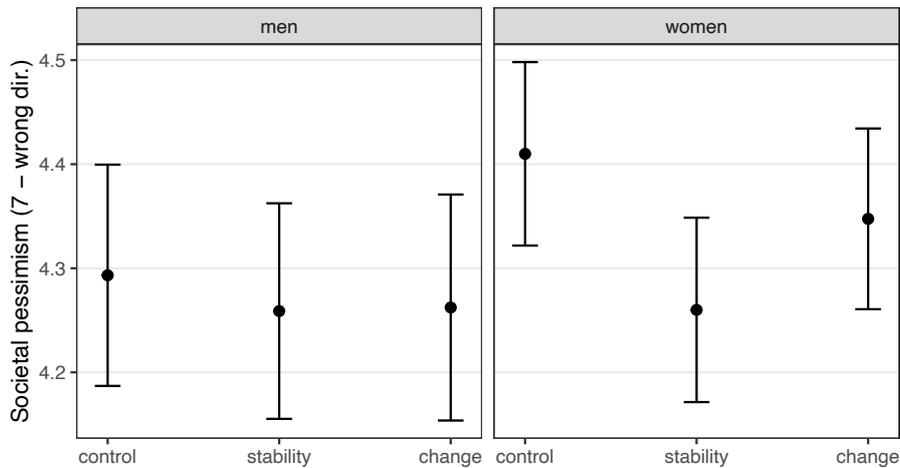
A2. Deviation from pre-analysis plan

The pre-analysis plan was preregistered with the [OSF Registry](#). There was only one deviation from this plan: Theoretical reasons led to the exclusion of the dimension of societal pessimism (Steenvoorden and Harteveld 2018) – or evaluations of the future of society – from the main text of the paper. The results made clear that effects on voting propensities are theoretically possible without societal pessimism being affected at the same time.

The item for societal pessimism read: “Do you think that Germany as a whole is moving in the wrong direction or in the right direction?” Respondents evaluated this statement on a scale of 1-7, 1 being “clearly in the right direction” and 7 “clearly in the wrong direction”.

The results (Figure A1 and Table A1) show no effects among men. For women, the tendency is similar to the outcome of political centrality, where the stability condition is evaluated somewhat more positively than the control and the change condition: Societal pessimism is slightly lower in the stability condition (not significant at 95% level).

Figure A1: CATE on societal pessimism



Scale goes from societal optimism (1 - society is moving in right direction) to pessimism (7 - society is moving in wrong direction). 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values. Based on Table C6.

Table A1: OLS results for societal pessimism

	Societal pessimism 1	Societal pessimism 2
(Intercept)	4.352*** (0.000)	4.293*** (0.000)
T1 (Stability)	-0.093 (0.185)	-0.034 (0.748)
T2 (Change)	-0.047 (0.506)	-0.031 (0.778)
Women		0.117 (0.242)
T1 (Stability) x women		-0.116 (0.409)
T2 (Change) x women		-0.032 (0.824)
Num.Obs.	2919	2919
R2	0.001	0.001
R2 Adj.	0.000	0.000
Std.Errors	HC2	HC2

P-values in parentheses. T1/T2 refers to treatment group assignment.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

B. Survey

B1. Sample descriptives and covariate balance

Table B2: Descriptives of the survey sample

		N	Percent
Gender	men	1449	49.2
	nonbinary	7	0.2
	women	1491	50.6
Income	low income	1146	38.9
	medium income	864	29.3
	high income	691	23.4
Education	low education	587	19.9
	medium education	1593	54.1
	high education	767	26.0
Age	18-39 years	1085	36.8
	40-59 years	1100	37.3
	above 60 years	761	25.8
Migration background	no	2527	85.7
	yes	416	14.1
Residence	countryside	725	24.6
	suburb/small city	1406	47.7
	big city	809	27.5
Treatment	control	968	32.8
	stability	989	33.6
	change	990	33.6
	All	2947	100.0

Quota sampling according to German population characteristics was implemented

Income: equivalized according to household size.

Migration background: respondent or at least one parent born abroad.

Residence: selfreported degree of urbanity/rurality

Table B3: Covariate balance in sample

		control (N=968)		stability (N=989)		change (N=990)	
		N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Gender	men	480	49.6	479	48.4	490	49.5
	nonbinary	2	0.2	3	0.3	2	0.2
	women	486	50.2	507	51.3	498	50.3
Income	low income	368	38.0	374	37.8	404	40.8
	medium income	293	30.3	288	29.1	283	28.6
	high income	231	23.9	242	24.5	218	22.0
Education	low education	178	18.4	202	20.4	207	20.9
	medium education	517	53.4	546	55.2	530	53.5
	high education	273	28.2	241	24.4	253	25.6
Age	18-39 years	358	37.0	352	35.6	375	37.9
	40-59 years	374	38.6	360	36.4	366	37.0
	above 60 years	235	24.3	277	28.0	249	25.2
Migration background	no	826	85.3	843	85.2	858	86.7
	yes	141	14.6	145	14.7	130	13.1
Residence	countryside	248	25.6	218	22.0	259	26.2
	suburb/small city	477	49.3	462	46.7	467	47.2
	big city	242	25.0	308	31.1	259	26.2

Income: equivalized according to household size.

Migration background: respondent or at least one parent born abroad.

Residence: selfreported degree of urbanity/rurality

B2. Treatment details

Change treatment explanatory text: Since the Bundestag elections in September 2021, more women have been represented in the Bundestag than before, at 35 percent. The following graph indicates that the proportion of women in the German Bundestag has risen sharply since the 1980s. If this trend continues, women would make up a majority of MPs from around 2045 (shown by the light lines).

Stability treatment explanatory text: After the Bundestag elections in September 2021, there is a similarly low number of women in the Bundestag as before, at 35 percent. The following chart indicates that the proportion of women in the German Bundestag has remained roughly constant since the 2000s. If this trend continues, women would not make up half of the members of parliament in the foreseeable future either (shown by the light lines).

B3. Manipulation check results

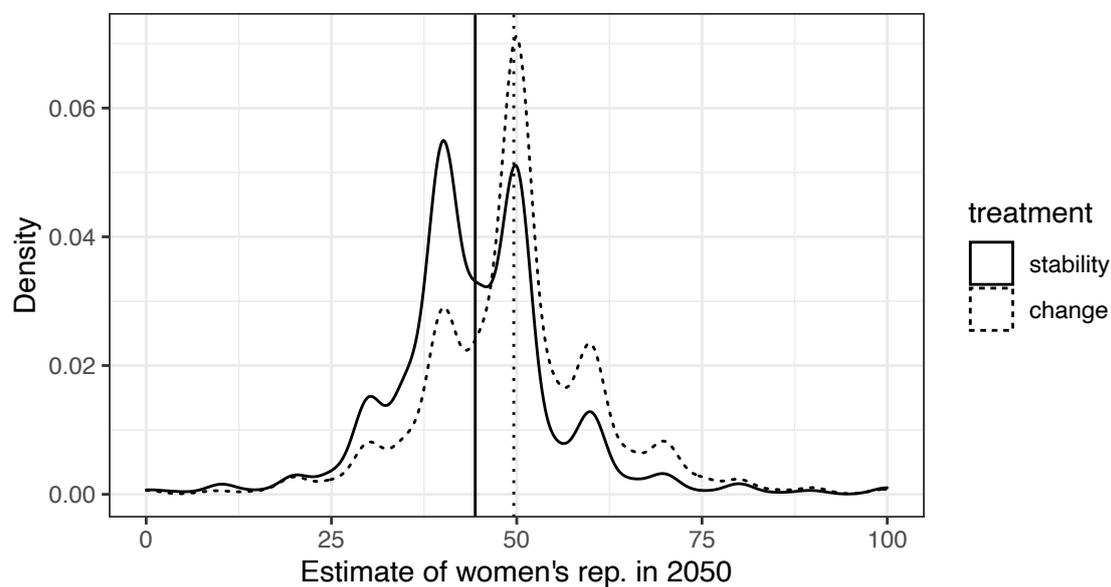
Table B4: Manipulation check: Mean estimates of women's representation in 2050

Gender	Treatment	Mean estimate (in %)
Men	Change	49.5
	Stability	44.2
Women	Change	49.7
	Stability	44.6
Total sample	Change	49.6
	Stability	44.4

Table B5: Welch Two Sample t-test for manipulation check

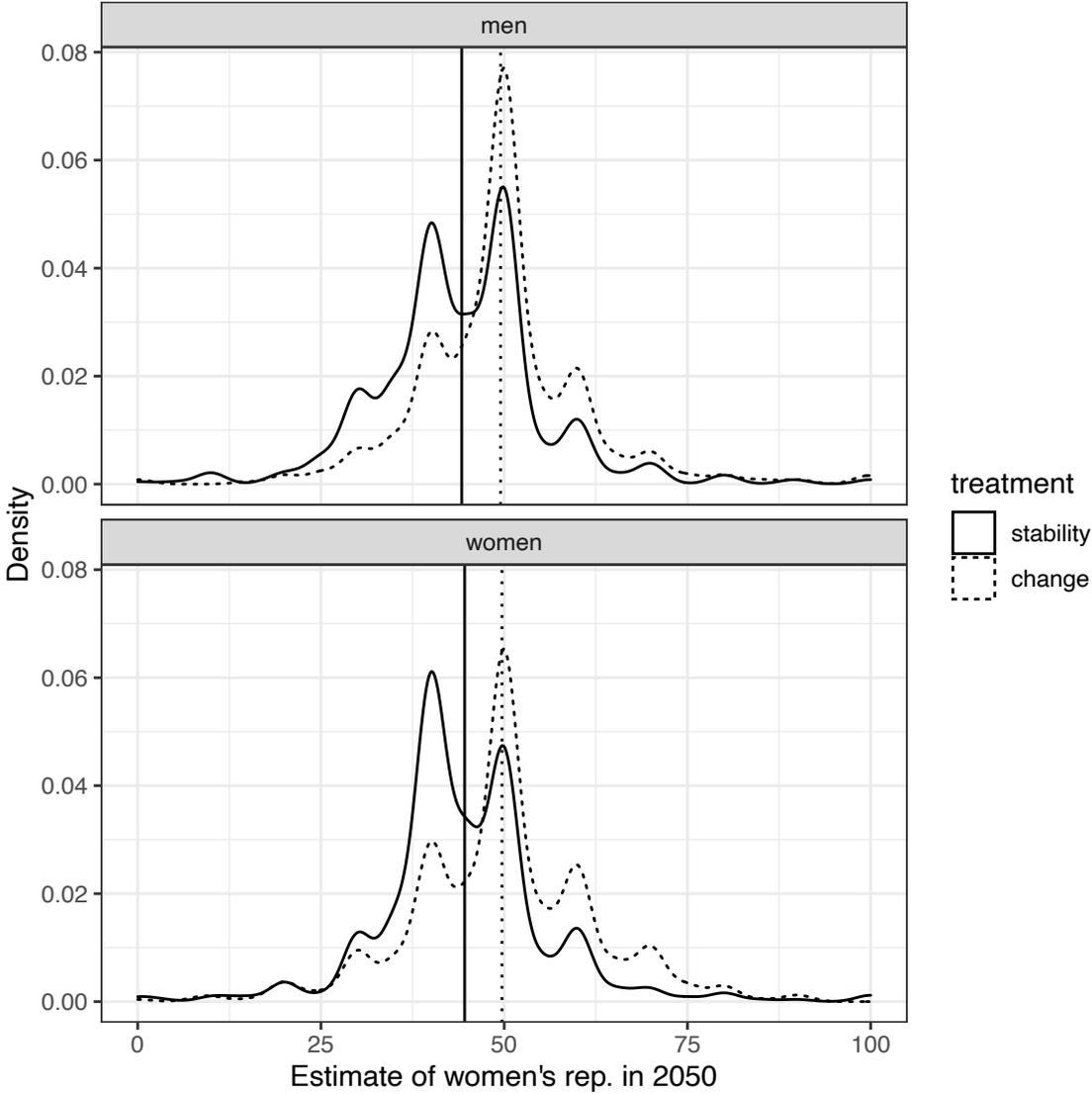
Difference	Mean T1	Mean T2	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
-5.17	44.4	49.6	-9.59	2.49e-21	1970	-6.23	-4.11

Figure B2: Manipulation check: Distribution of estimates by treatment condition



Estimates of women's representation in 2050. Lines display the mean in the respective condition.

Figure B3: Manipulation check: Distribution of estimates by respondent gender and treatment condition



Estimates of women's representation in 2050. Lines display the mean by gender in the respective condition.

C. Results in detail

C1. OLS tables

Table C6: OLS results for political centrality and status

	SSS 1	SSS 2	SSS trajectory 1	SSS trajectory 2	Pol. centrality 1	Pol. centrality 2
(Intercept)	5.643*** (0.000)	5.777*** (0.000)	-1.098*** (0.000)	-1.131*** (0.000)	3.207*** (0.000)	3.228*** (0.000)
T1 (Stability)	-0.071 (0.357)	-0.170 (0.127)	0.229+ (0.050)	0.160 (0.303)	0.110+ (0.071)	0.086 (0.338)
T2 (Change)	-0.152* (0.046)	-0.238* (0.029)	0.158 (0.190)	0.078 (0.638)	0.027 (0.656)	-0.028 (0.758)
Women		-0.267* (0.013)		0.065 (0.700)		-0.041 (0.632)
T1 (Stability) x women		0.198 (0.199)		0.132 (0.571)		0.046 (0.705)
T2 (Change) x women		0.172 (0.260)		0.159 (0.510)		0.107 (0.371)
Num.Obs.	2940	2940	2939	2939	2935	2935
R2	0.001	0.004	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.002
R2 Adj.	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.000
Std.Errors	HC2	HC2	HC2	HC2	HC2	HC2

P-values in parentheses. T1/T2 refers to treatment group assignment.

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C7: OLS results for voting propensities

	PtV AfD	PtV Greens	PtV SPD	PtV Linke
(Intercept)	2.010*** (0.000)	3.653*** (0.000)	4.594*** (0.000)	2.889*** (0.000)
T1 (Stability)	-0.200 (0.333)	0.042 (0.845)	0.226 (0.283)	-0.067 (0.742)
T2 (Change)	-0.123 (0.554)	0.020 (0.928)	0.079 (0.708)	-0.037 (0.856)
Female	-0.297 (0.143)	0.347 (0.116)	0.042 (0.837)	0.069 (0.726)
T1 (Stability) x Female	-0.092 (0.741)	0.309 (0.319)	0.082 (0.776)	0.126 (0.657)
T2 (Change) x Female	-0.064 (0.819)	0.051 (0.873)	-0.002 (0.993)	-0.019 (0.947)
Num.Obs.	2932	2925	2923	2924
R2	0.004	0.006	0.001	0.000
R2 Adj.	0.003	0.004	0.000	-0.001
Std.Errors	HC2	HC2	HC2	HC2

P-values in parentheses. T1/T2 refers to treatment group assignment.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table C8: OLS results for attitude on prioritizing support for boys

	Support for boys
(Intercept)	3.657*** (0.000)
T0 (Control)	0.081 (0.436)
T2 (Change)	0.243* (0.017)
Female	-0.382*** (0.000)
T0 (Control) x Female	0.067 (0.631)
T2 (Change) x Female	-0.028 (0.838)
Num.Obs.	2921
R2	0.018
R2 Adj.	0.017
Std.Errors	HC2

P-values in parentheses

Reference category for treatment assignment is the stability condition
to highlight difference to change condition

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table C9: OLS results for PtV Green by gender attitudes (and gender)

	PtV Greens	PtV Greens
(Intercept)	2.965***	2.913***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
T1 (Stability)	0.597*	0.245
	(0.024)	(0.499)
T2 (Change)	-0.075	-0.120
	(0.775)	(0.757)
Women		0.069
		(0.851)
Feminist att.	1.295***	1.087***
	(0.000)	(0.001)
T1 (Stability) x women		0.773
		(0.145)
T2 (Change) x women		0.118
		(0.823)
T1 x feminist att.	-0.616+	-0.313
	(0.059)	(0.489)
T2 x feminist att.	0.114	0.160
	(0.728)	(0.734)
T1 x women x feminist att.		-0.741
		(0.256)
T2 x women x feminist att.		-0.133
		(0.839)
Num.Obs.	2917	2910
R2	0.025	0.031
R2 Adj.	0.023	0.027
Std.Errors	HC2	HC2

P-values in parentheses. T1/T2 refers to treatment group assignment.

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

C2. T-test results

To assess whether the differences between experimental groups differ significantly from zero, I conduct Welch two sample t-tests. The following tables report t-test results for men and women, for comparisons between two conditions at a time. Additionally, t-tests were conducted for comparisons between men and women within each condition.

Table C10: Men: T-tests for differences between control and change conditions

DV	Diff.	Mean control	Mean change	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	0.0275	3.23	3.2	0.308	0.758	963	-0.148	0.203
SSS	0.238	5.78	5.54	2.18	0.0294**	967	0.0239	0.453
SSS traj.	-0.0782	-1.13	-1.05	-0.471	0.638	968	-0.404	0.248
Supp. boys	-0.162	3.74	3.9	-1.56	0.119	957	-0.366	0.0419
PtV AfD	0.123	2.01	1.89	0.591	0.554	962	-0.284	0.53
PtV Green	-0.0201	3.65	3.67	-0.09	0.928	965	-0.458	0.418

Table C11: Men: T-tests for differences between control and stability conditions

DV	Diff.	Mean control	Mean stability	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	-0.0863	3.23	3.31	-0.958	0.338	951	-0.263	0.0905
SSS	0.17	5.78	5.61	1.53	0.128	951	-0.0486	0.388
SSS traj.	-0.16	-1.13	-0.971	-1.03	0.304	941	-0.466	0.146
Supp. boys	0.0809	3.74	3.66	0.779	0.436	947	-0.123	0.285
PtV AfD	0.2	2.01	1.81	0.969	0.333	951	-0.206	0.607
PtV Green	-0.0425	3.65	3.7	-0.195	0.845	953	-0.47	0.385

Table C12: Men: T-tests for differences between stability and change conditions

DV	Diff.	Mean stability	Mean change	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	0.114	3.31	3.2	1.24	0.214	965	-0.0658	0.293
SSS	0.0687	5.61	5.54	0.606	0.545	965	-0.154	0.291
SSS traj.	0.0823	-0.971	-1.05	0.527	0.598	953	-0.224	0.389
Supp. boys	-0.243	3.66	3.9	-2.38	0.0175**	965	-0.443	-0.0427
PtV AfD	-0.0777	1.81	1.89	-0.386	0.699	967	-0.473	0.317
PtV Green	0.0224	3.7	3.67	0.102	0.918	965	-0.407	0.451

Table C13: Women: T-tests for differences between control and change conditions

DV	Diff.	Mean control	Mean change	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	-0.0798	3.19	3.27	-0.998	0.318	978	-0.237	0.0771
SSS	0.0665	5.51	5.44	0.626	0.531	981	-0.142	0.275
SSS traj.	-0.237	-1.07	-0.829	-1.36	0.175	981	-0.579	0.106
Supp. boys	-0.0663	3.42	3.49	-0.709	0.479	973	-0.25	0.117
PtV AfD	0.187	1.71	1.53	1	0.316	972	-0.178	0.551
PtV Green	-0.0707	4	4.07	-0.316	0.752	974	-0.509	0.368

Table C14: Women: T-tests for differences between control and stability conditions

DV	Diff.	Mean control	Mean stability	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	-0.132	3.19	3.32	-1.62	0.106	990	-0.293	0.0281
SSS	-0.0282	5.51	5.54	-0.265	0.791	990	-0.237	0.18
SSS traj.	-0.293	-1.07	-0.773	-1.69	0.0919*	991	-0.633	0.0477
Supp. boys	0.148	3.42	3.28	1.57	0.116	986	-0.0365	0.333
PtV AfD	0.293	1.71	1.42	1.56	0.119	982	-0.0753	0.661
PtV Green	-0.352	4	4.35	-1.59	0.112	982	-0.786	0.0818

Table C15: Women: T-tests for differences between stability and change conditions

DV	Diff.	Mean stability	Mean change	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	0.0525	3.32	3.27	0.658	0.51	1000	-0.104	0.209
SSS	0.0947	5.54	5.44	0.898	0.369	1000	-0.112	0.302
SSS traj.	0.0558	-0.773	-0.829	0.32	0.749	1000	-0.287	0.398
Supp. boys	-0.215	3.28	3.49	-2.3	0.0216**	995	-0.398	-0.0316
PtV AfD	-0.106	1.42	1.53	-0.583	0.56	1000	-0.464	0.252
PtV Green	0.281	4.35	4.07	1.25	0.212	995	-0.16	0.723

Table C16: Control condition: T-tests for differences between men and women

DV	Diff.	Mean men	Mean women	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	0.0407	3.23	3.19	0.479	0.632	954	-0.126	0.208
SSS	0.267	5.78	5.51	2.49	0.0128**	964	0.0569	0.477
SSS traj.	-0.0654	-1.13	-1.07	-0.385	0.7	963	-0.398	0.268
Supp. boys	0.314	3.74	3.42	3.14	0.00177***	941	0.118	0.511
PtV AfD	0.297	2.01	1.71	1.47	0.143	946	-0.1	0.694
PtV Green	-0.347	3.65	4	-1.57	0.116	957	-0.781	0.0864

Table C17: Stability condition: T-tests for differences between men and women

DV	Diff.	Mean men	Mean women	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	-0.00533	3.31	3.32	-0.0613	0.951	962	-0.176	0.165
SSS	0.0691	5.61	5.54	0.625	0.532	971	-0.148	0.286
SSS traj.	-0.198	-0.971	-0.773	-1.23	0.217	963	-0.512	0.116
Supp. boys	0.382	3.66	3.28	3.89	0.000106***	969	0.189	0.574
PtV AfD	0.389	1.81	1.42	2.02	0.0435**	970	0.0113	0.767
PtV Green	-0.657	3.7	4.35	-3.01	0.00264***	980	-1.08	-0.229

Table C18: Change condition: T-tests for differences between men and women

DV	Diff.	Mean men	Mean women	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
Pol. dep.	-0.0667	3.2	3.27	-0.788	0.431	960	-0.233	0.0994
SSS	0.095	5.54	5.44	0.876	0.381	982	-0.118	0.308
SSS traj.	-0.224	-1.05	-0.829	-1.31	0.19	983	-0.56	0.111
Supp. boys	0.41	3.9	3.49	4.21	2.81e-05***	969	0.219	0.601
PtV AfD	0.361	1.89	1.53	1.88	0.06*	972	-0.0152	0.736
PtV Green	-0.398	3.67	4.07	-1.76	0.0782*	982	-0.841	0.045

Table C19: Anti-feminist women: T-test for difference between stability and control condition

DV	Diff.	Mean control	Mean stability	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
PtV Green	-1.02	2.98	4	-2.63	0.00903***	284	-1.78	-0.256

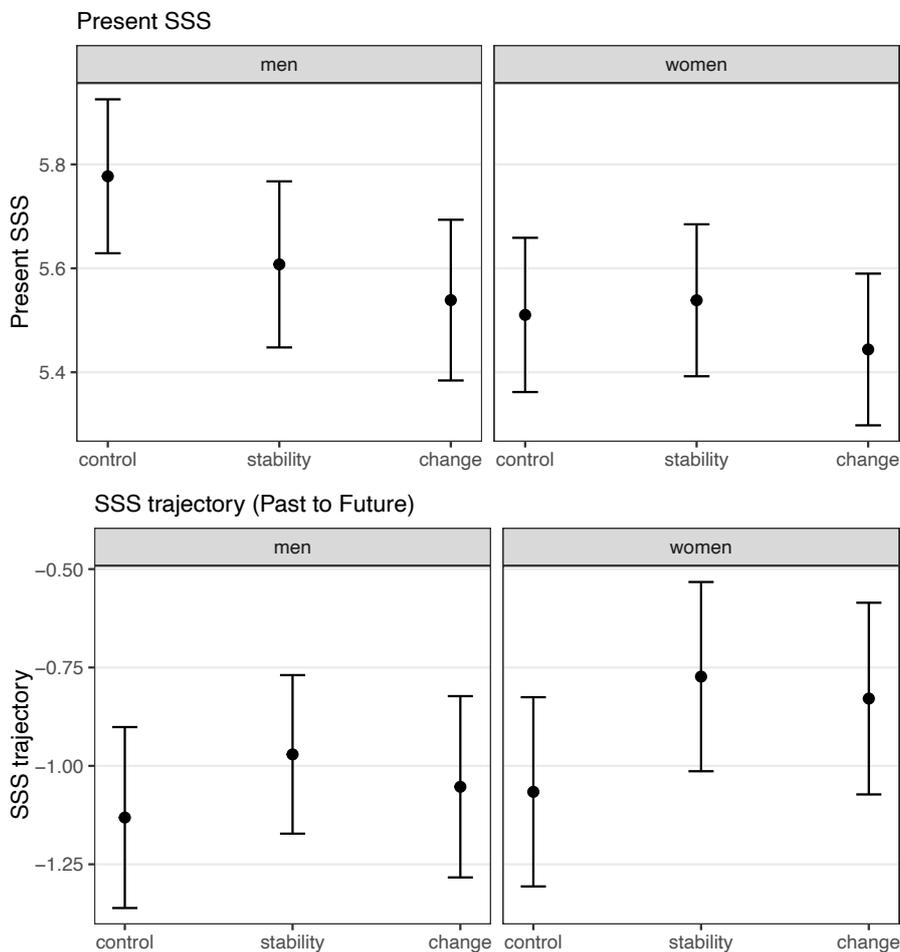
Table C20: Anti-feminist women: T-test for difference between stability and change condition

DV	Diff.	Mean stability	Mean change	t	p	df	Conf. low	Conf. high
PtV Green	1.02	4	2.98	2.59	0.0102**	280	0.244	1.8

C3. Plots with 95% confidence intervals

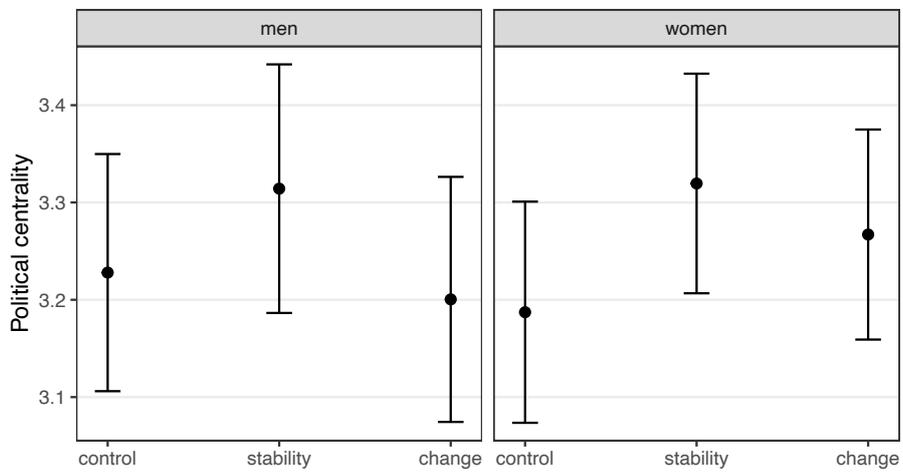
As explained in the main text, plots are displayed with 83.4% confidence intervals for ease of interpretation: For the Conditional Average Treatment Effects of interest here, the non-overlap in 83.4% confidence intervals signifies statistical significance of a pairwise difference at the level of 95 percent (Cohen 2022). The OLS tables in section C1 show the results and p-values of the treatment effects and the t-test tables in section C2 show the p-values for group difference tests. Further, I show the plots included in the main text with the alternative specification of 95% confidence intervals. Note that the overlapping intervals do not denote a lacking statistical significance here.

Figure C4: CATE on subjective social status



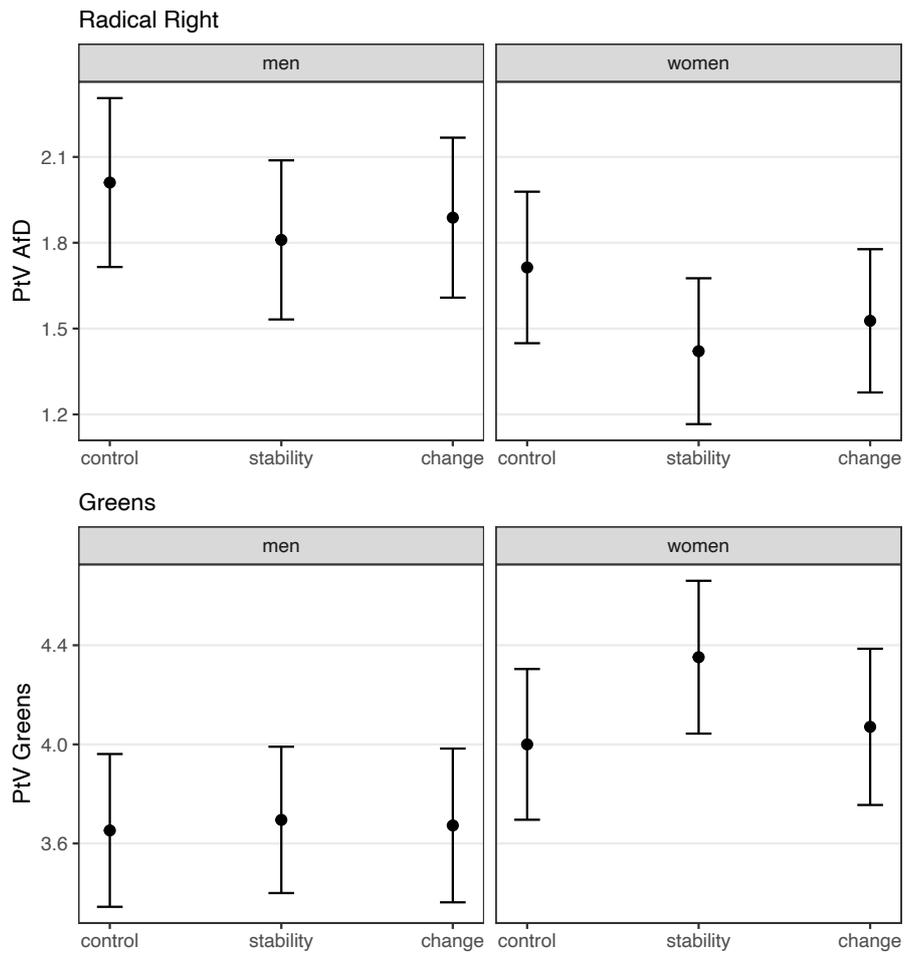
Top: present SSS on scale of 1-10, bottom: future SSS minus past SSS (negative values: expected loss, positive values: expected gain). 95% confidence intervals around predicted values. Based on Table C6 in the appendix.

Figure C5: CATE on political centrality



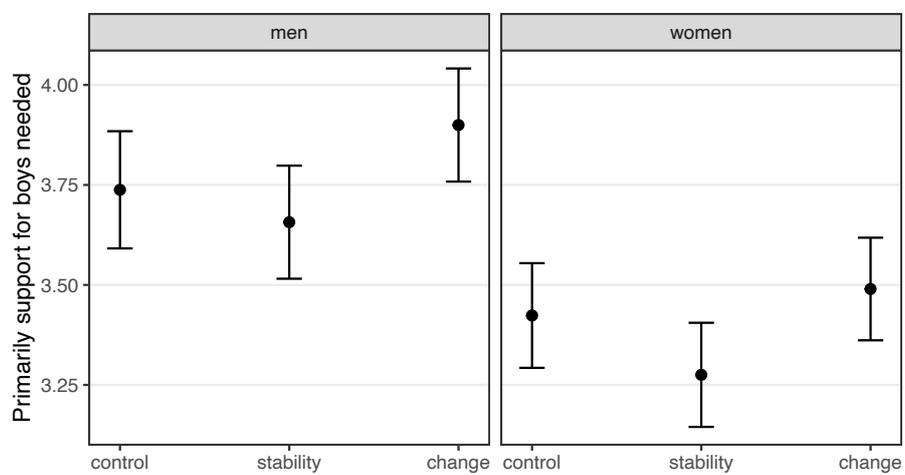
Scale goes from 1 to 7, where higher values indicate higher political centrality. 95% confidence intervals around predicted values. Based on Table C6 in the appendix.

Figure C6: CATE on AfD and Green voting propensities



Scale goes from 0 to 10, where higher values indicate higher voting propensities. 95% confidence intervals around predicted values. Based on Table C7 in the appendix.

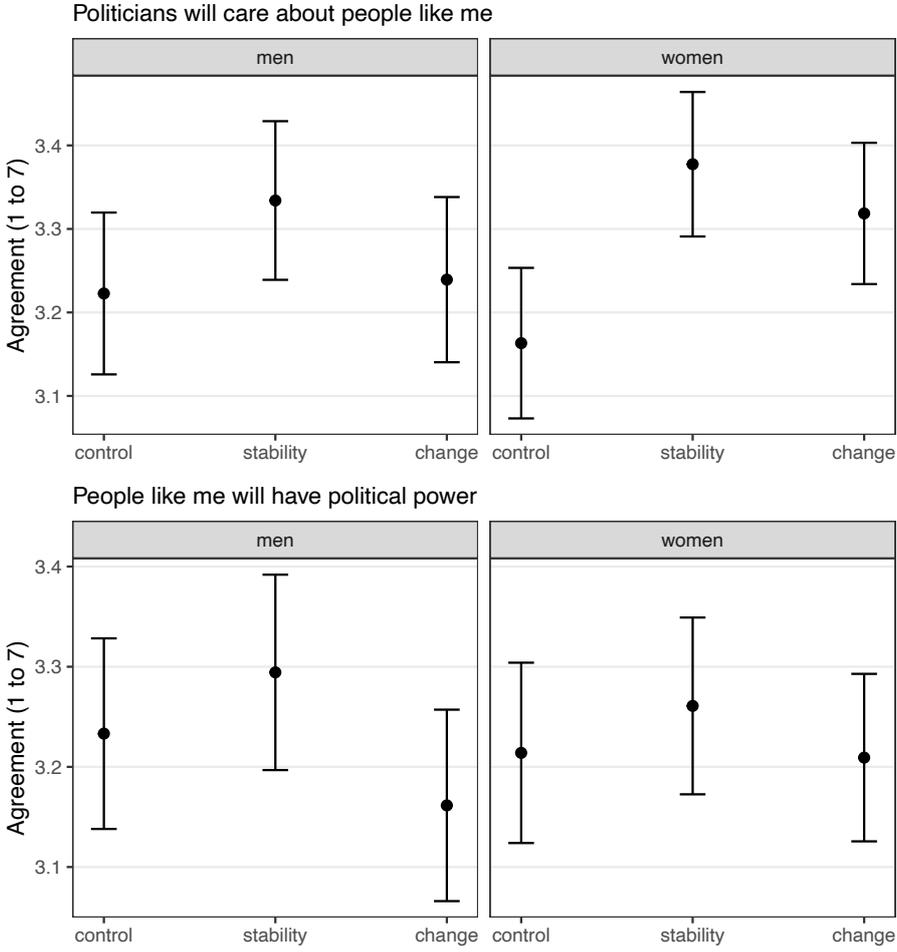
Figure C7: CATE on prioritizing support for boys



Higher values on the scale from 1 to 7 mean support for the statement "In the meantime, what is needed above all are measures that specifically strengthen the self-confidence of boys". 95% confidence intervals around predicted values. Based on Table C8 in the appendix.

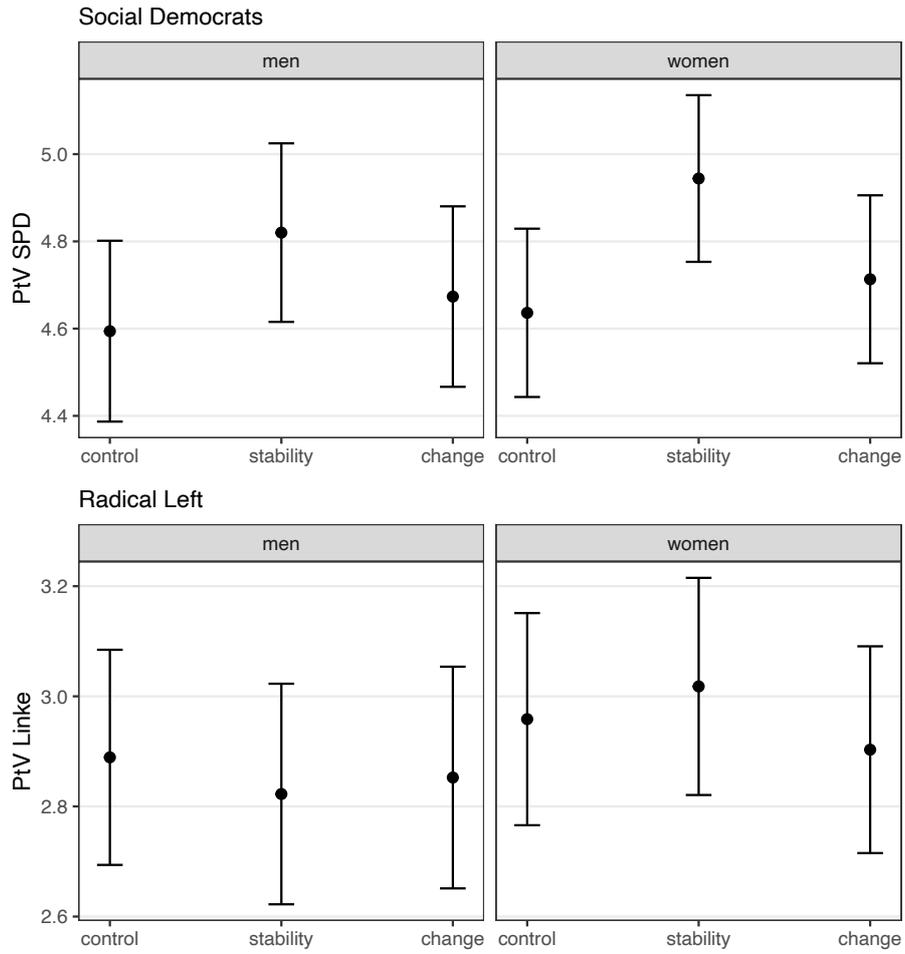
D. Additional results

Figure D8: CATE on individual political centrality items



Scale goes from 1 to 7, where higher values indicate higher political centrality. 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values.

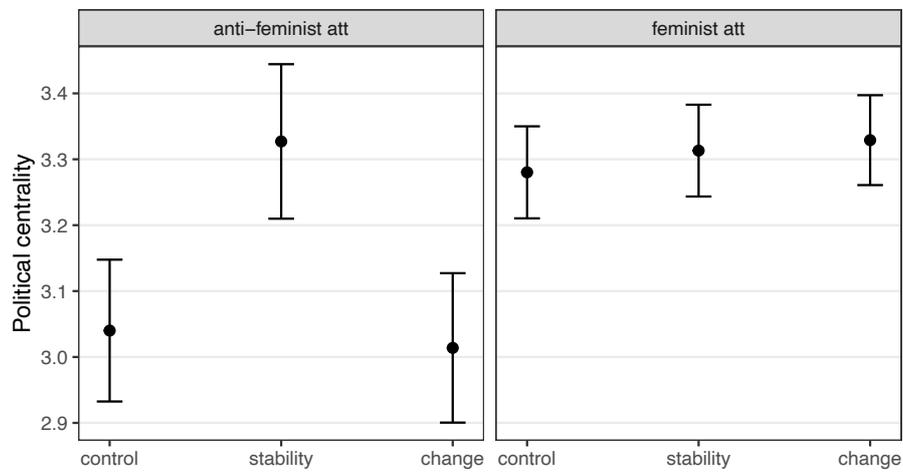
Figure D9: CATE on SPD and LINKE voting propensities



Scale goes from 0 to 10, where higher values indicate higher voting propensities. 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values.

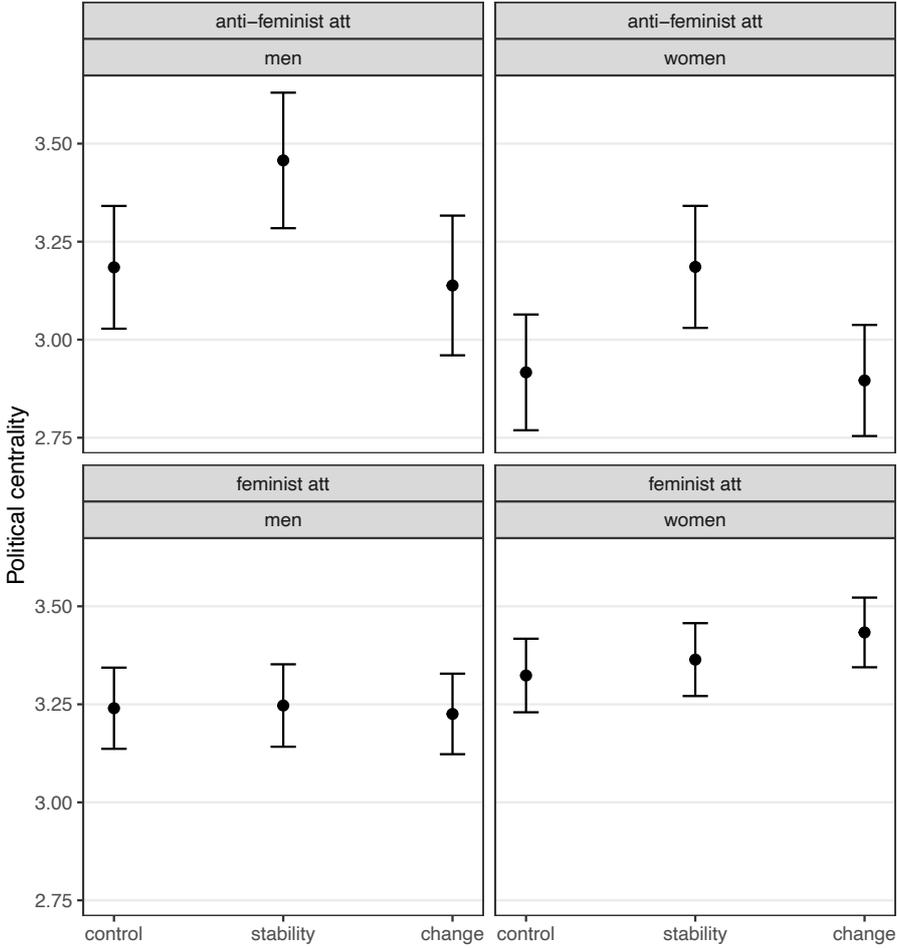
D1. Subgroup analyses by gender attitudes (and gender)

Figure D10: CATE on political centrality, by attitude towards gender equality



Scale goes from 1 to 7, where higher values indicate higher political centrality. Gender attitudinal item reads: “The bottom line is that the family suffers when the woman works full time.”, on a scale of 1 to 7, where higher values indicate support. Those who tend to agree (values 5 to 7) are classified as having anti-feminist attitudes (n of 894), the rest as having feminist attitudes (n of 2034). 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values.

Figure D11: CATE on political centrality, by gender and attitude towards gender equality



Scale goes from 1 to 7, where higher values indicate higher political centrality. Gender attitudinal item reads: “The bottom line is that the family suffers when the woman works full time.”, on a scale of 1 to 7, where higher values indicate support. Those who tend to agree (values 5 to 7) are classified as having anti-feminist attitudes (n of 894), the rest as having feminist attitudes (n of 2034). 83.4% confidence intervals around predicted values.