BACHELOR THESIS

Party positions in Voting Advice Applications and election manifestos:

An analysis of deviations and their influence on the party´s image among voters

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Abstract:

This thesis was conducted, to gain an insight on the influence of Voting Advice Applications (VAAs) on political party positioning. Therefore, this study deals with the issue of whether there are differences between the statements of parties in Voting Advice Applications and election programs. For this purpose, the statements, and answers in the German Voting Advice Application *Wahl-O-Mat* for the 2017 Bundestag elections were examined. It was found that each of the six parties analysed had deviations between the Voting Advice Application and their own election programme. However, these did not result in a more moderate party image in their Voting Advice Application statements, as had been hypothesized. By addressing aspects in the Wahl-O-Mat that were partly not thematized in the election programs, a stronger positioning of the parties could be observed in the Voting Advice Application than in their election manifestos.

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<u>Overview Figures and Tables:</u>

1. Introduction:

Making decisions is a process in which various possible options are available, from which the one that best suits you is selected (Furnham, 2010). In political elections as well, the electorate is often faced with such a situation, because of the difficult choice for a party, which represents their interests best. To counteract this problem, there have been several election-aid-tools since the end of the 20th century. They are so-called Voting Advice Applications (hereinafter referred to as VAAs), which were designed to make it easier for the electorate to choose a party that was in line with their own thoughts and ideas (Ladner, Fivaz & Pianzola, 2010). At first, they were printed on paper like the Dutch StemWijzer (StemWijzer, n.d.). With the popularity of the internet, those VAAs were then made available online (Ladner et al, 2010).

During the 2002 federal elections, the German Federal Government also decided to provide the German citizens, who are entitled to vote, with an election assistant for the first time. Above all, young people and first-time voters should be addressed (Haupt, 2017). The so-called *Wahl-O-Mat* should help to make it easier to choose one of the established parties in the federal election. It is by far the most frequently used voter aid in Germany. Other VAAs of this kind, such as the *Wahlswiper* or the *DeinWahl* application, experienced significantly less popularity. In comparison, the Wahlswiper achieved about 510.000 users in the 2017 Bundestag election (Wahlswiper, 2017) and the application DeinWal reached approximately 2 million users (Scharm, 2020), while the Wahl-O-Mat generated 15.7 million users (bpb, n.d.). Accordingly, a total of 26 percent of the 61.5 million voters, who were entitled to vote (Deutscher Bundestag, 2017), made use of the Wahl-O-Mat. This shows that the Wahl-O-Mat is not only well-known in Germany, but also used by many citizens. An analysis of this same VAA therefore represents an added value for German political research.

To find out the party statements for the Wahl-O-Mat, questions, which were developed by a team working for the VAA, are send directly to the parties. The parties will answer them in the spirit of their party`s values and send them back to the organisation of the application. The resulting answers then serve as the basis for the creation of the Wahl-O-Mat (bpb, n.d.). However, since the parties are free to answer the questions, their statements may not necessarily correspond to the actual statements of their election program.

This paper will deal with this very problem and work out to what extent the statements of the parties in the Wahl-O-Mat reflect their actual political position. Furthermore, in the case of a disagreement between the parties` statements compared to their election program, it should be determined whether they are doing so in order to appeal to a broader electorate by trying to disguise rather controversial attitudes through their responses in the Wahl-O-Mat. To this end, the theory of the "catch-all-party" of Otto Kirchheimer is consulted, on the basis of which the results of the research, conducted in the first part of the analysis, are to be investigated (Kirchheimer 1965). To narrow down the scope of the analysis somewhat, my research will be limited to the parties that moved into the Bundestag after the federal elections 2017.

In order to answer the above-mentioned problem, the following research question therefore arises: "To what extent do party positions in the German Wahl-O-Mat differ from their election programs and what influence does this have on how modest their political positioning appears?".

2. Theory and conceptualization:

Since the research question is a three-part analysis, the theoretical part is also divided into three blocks, which will be presented below.

To study the above-mentioned division of the analysis, it is first necessary to break down the basic subject matter. The overall topic of this research paper is Voting Advice Applications. As already described in the introduction, these serve to help voters to choose a party in elections. The development of such applications should not only help the electorate, but also prevent irrational elections in general, to achieve an election result which represents the true positions and values of the citizens (Cedroni & Garzia, 2010).

In their analysis "Voting Advice Applications in Europe; the state of the art", Lorella Cedroni and Diego Garzia however show what influence VAAs have and how important they have thus become not only for the voter but also for politics and the representing parties (Cedroni & Garzia, 2010). Since the VAAs can have a significant influence on the electorate and thus also co-determine the outcome of elections, the analysis of these is interesting and relevant for both parties and citizens. However, recent studies discussed a possible deviation of the answers in a VAA and the actual program of the party. This theory was supported and tested by the German VAA-researcher Jonas Israel, who did a study regarding this hypothesis in 2014 (Israel, 2014). The hypothesis that there might be a difference between the answers and the stance of the election programs refers in this case to the German Wahl-O-Mat. In contrast to other applications, the parties in Germany receive the conceived questions in advance, which can then be seen in the Wahl-O-Mat. They have the opportunity of answering the questions on their own (bpb, n.d.). A difference between the answers and the party program is thus not excluded.

In general parties have an interest in the application helping them to generate new voters. Whereas citizens, on the other hand, want a transparent tool that truthfully reflects the parties values and thus helps them to make an election decision. This could lead the voters to trust in the VAA when it comes to making electoral decisions because they might not trust their own political understanding or do not feel well enough informed in the field. The parties on the other side could try to use the VAAs to conceal stronger stances of themselves by positioning in the Wahl-O-Mat differently than they do in their election programmes. This thought resulted from the development structure of the German Wahl-O-Mat. A team of experts develops statements that deal with current political issues. These statements are then sent to the parties participating in the respective election and can be answered with "agree", "disagree" or "neutral" (bpb, n.d.). However, this may result in differences between the positions of the parties in the VAA and their election manifestos. And those deviations and their influence on the appearance of a party are to be explored in this analysis.

This leads to the following theoretical idea: *Parties are positioning themselves differently in the Wahl-O-Mat than their actual political stance, written down in their election manifesto, to appear more moderate and therefore gain more voters.* Three hypotheses can be derived from this theory:

> **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** The political parties of the German Bundestag show deviations between their answers regarding the statements in the German Voting Advice Application *Wahl-O-Mat* and their positions in their election manifestos.

> **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Deviations between the Wahl-O-Mat statements and the election manifestos are more likely to be found in those parties which, according to the political spectrum, can be described as further left and further right.

> **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** The parties of the German Bundestag, with deviations between the Voting Advice Application and the election program, answer controversial issues more modestly in the Wahl-O-Mat than in their manifesto, in order to appear more moderately.

The three hypotheses are based on each other and will be analysed accordingly in the above-mentioned order.

The first part of the analysis focuses on H1 and therefore on the differences between the election programs and the Wahl-O-Mat statements. The analysis of Jonas Israel is used as the scientific basis for this. In his analysis, he deals with the 2009 federal elections in Germany and the extent to which the party statements in the Wahl-O-Mat deviated from the election campaign programs (Israel, 2014). By coding the party´s statements and consulting the election manifestos, he filters out the inequalities which could be misleading for the voter. Even though his analysis did not reveal any major differences, his research showed that party statements did not always correspond one hundred percent with their election manifestos (Israel, 2014). Although the study of Jonas Israel serves as a theoretical basis, this analysis is structured differently. This is partly because in the 2017 elections a total of six parties entered the German Bundestag, whereas in the 2009 federal elections, which were analysed by Israel, there were only five parties (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017). The categorisation of the deviations is also different. Israel used three classifications; this analysis utilizes four categories in total (see Data and Methods).

However, to expand this study and to test H3, further research is to be conducted based on the first part of the analysis. This is to deal with the effect that the differences produce. It is assumed that the previous analysis was able to show such deviations. To explain the possible effects, a work by Silke I. Keil is used. In her analysis, she focuses on the party program in campaign announcements and election programs in Germany from 1957 to 2002. She notes that there is often a convergence of party ideas and positions among the parties. This leads to a policy without alternatives (Keil, 2004). Otto Kirchheimer can be applied as well in this context. He described as early as 1965 that the parties were increasingly becoming "catch-all-parties" to address a broader electorate with their party programmes (Kirchheimer, 1965). His analysis thus also showed that parties are becoming more and more moderate in their outward appearances and tend not to present their more controversial ideas to the public. This leads to a higher similarity between the parties (Kirchheimer, 1965). It thus shows the change in the party system. Through the cleavage theory of Lipset and Rokkan, we now know, that parties have developed out of various lines of conflicts, for example the social democrats out of the conflict between labour and capital (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). If these two theories are combined, it can be seen how the parties initially represented a strong position but now need to be more broadly based to generate enough voters. This is due, among other things, to the heterogeneity of society. Only with a concise thematic field cannot enough voters be won today (Kirchheimer, 1965). These theories should therefore be used to determine whether the parties appear more moderate through their statements in the Wahl-O-Mat. This could then be explained by the theories mentioned above.

Additionally, this research also studies the political spectrum of the named parties. In Germany, the political system is basically divided into left and right. This division originally stems from the distribution of seats in the French General Estate of 1789. Here the clergy, who wanted to maintain the monarchical structures, sat to the right of the king, while on the left the revolutionary forces, the so-called nobility, had their place (Schwartz, 1984). This order can also be transferred to the German Bundestag. From left to right, the parties sit there as follows: Die Linke, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, SPD, Union, FDP and AfD (Deutscher Bundestag, 2019). Lipset et. al. explained left-wing politics as the one who focuses on equality through social changes, whereas the right-wing tries to save traditional hierarchies (Lipset et. al., 1954). However, the categorisation into left and right leads to a simplification of the presentation of parties. While this can help to gain a general understanding of the parties´ positioning, it leaves out various aspects of content within the spectrum (Fuhse, 2004). For this reason, in addition to the left-right spectrum, a two-dimensional political spectrum is also included in this study for a more detailed analysis, especially regarding Hypothesis 3.

The classification of the German Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is used for this purpose. This divides the German political spectrum into four categories: libertarian, authoritarian, egalitarian, and elitist, which are represented in a two-dimensional coordinate system. Libertarian refers to the topics Europe, anarchy, advocates of modernisation and cosmopolitan. Authoritarianism, with its values such as tradition,

security state, hierarchy, and xenophobia, contrasts this. Both are located on the y-axis. On the x-axis, on the other hand, there is the egalitarian stance, which in this case is associated with socialist, redistributive state and solidarity. On the opposite side is the elitist point of view, which represents the political values neoliberalism, market economy and pro-capitalism (Saxer, 2017).

To be able to carry out the analysis, the Data and Methods are going to be explained in the following.

3. Data and Methods:

The data required to test the hypotheses were obtained primarily from two resources: on the one hand, by comparing the positions of the parties in the Wahl-O-Mat for the 2017 German federal election and, on the other hand, by the respective election programmes of the parties to be analysed, from the 2017 election year as well. The data of the mentioned position comparison are retrieved from the VAA Wahl-O-Mat.

The position comparison of the parties in the Wahl-O-Mat can be found on the website of the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (translates as Federal Agency for Civic Education), abbreviated in the following as bpb. Through its work for the German citizenship, bpb tries to answer questions around the topic of politics (bpb, n.d.). The archive of the bpb contains every Wahl-O-Mat, from the first (German federal election in 2002) to the most recent, which was the citizenship election in Hamburg in 2020 (bpb, 2020). The Wahl-O-Mat for the 2017 federal election could also be found in this archive and can still be used. After one has answered all questions and gets to the results, besides listing the parties that suit you best, you also get the opportunity to have a look at all answers of each party. This position comparison includes 32 parties and their responses to a total of 38 statements. In the 2017 federal election, a total of six parties entered the German Bundestag: the Union (a fraction consisting of the CDU and CSU), the SPD, die Linke, the Bündnis 90/die Grünen, the FDP and the AfD (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017).

The CDU/CSU is a faction of two parties in the German Bundestag. On the one hand it consists of the Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (short form CDU) and the Christlich Soziale Union Deutschlands (short form CSU). Both parties were founded in 1945. While the CSU is only eligible for election in Bavaria, the CDU is on the electoral list for the rest of Germany. The coalition of both parties is called *Union*. They represent liberal, above all Christian-social points of view and are therefore considered a conservative party (CDU/CSU Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag, n.d.). The CDU/CSU achieved a total of 32.9 percent in the 2017 German federal elections, making it the strongest force in the Bundestag (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017). Together with the SPD, it thus forms a grand coalition for the 2017-2021 legislative period (Schayan, 2018).

The abbreviation SPD stands for Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany). The party was founded in 1863 and thus represents the oldest party in the German Bundestag. Since 2007, they have been pursuing the Hamburg programme, which they adopted, as their basic programme. They deal with topics such as the future role of globalization. Its fundamental values, alongside social democracy, remain freedom, justice, and solidarity (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland, n.d.). In the 2017 federal elections the SPD achieved a result of 20.5% and thus became the second strongest force in the German Bundestag (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017). Together with the Union, they govern in a grand coalition in the 2017-2021 legislative period (Schayan, 2018).

Die Linke is a socialist-oriented party that stands up for the basic values of democracy. They exist in this composition only since the 16th of June 2007 and are thus the second youngest party in the German

Bundestag (Die Linke, n.d.). In the 2017 federal elections, die Linke received 9.2 percent of the votes, making a total of 69 members in the German parliament (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017).

The Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (hereinafter referred to as die Grünen) is an ecologically-oriented party. In addition to environmentally friendly policies, its core values are justice and democracy. They originated from the green movement at the end of the 1970s, which was particularly committed to issues such as the nuclear phase-out and peace (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, n.d.). Die Grünen won 8.9 percent of the vote in the 2017 federal elections and have since then provided 67 seats in the German Bundestag (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017).

The abbreviation FDP stands for Freie Demokratische Partei (translated to Free Democratic Party) and was founded in 1948. Their main concerns include education, freedom for all people and a stable economy. In doing so they pursue the policy of liberalism (FDP, n.d.). With the 2017 federal elections they moved into the German Bundestag. They received 10.9 percent of all votes and have since then provided 80 of the total 709 seats in the Bundestag (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017).

The Alternative für Deutschland (translated as Alternative for Germany, AfD for short) was found in 2013 and is thus the youngest party represented in the German Bundestag. Its basic principles are based on direct democracy, federalism, and the preservation of German culture. They are Eurosceptic and demand a sovereign position of Germany within the European Union (AfD, n.d.). With 12.6 percent of all votes, they entered the German Bundestag for the first time and represent the largest opposition in the legislative period 2017-2021 (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2017).

Each of these six parties took a stand on the 38 statements. This resulted in 228 statements, which had to be examined. The parties were able to reply to the statements in the Wahl-O-Mat with "agree", "neutral" or "do not agree". An overview of all statements and answers of the six parties can be found in Appendix A.

To be able to analyse these statements, the election programmes of the parties from the 2017 election year were used. They are named in the References and Appendix D, as well as in the attached zip-folder. To check the statements made in the Wahl-O-Mat for conformity with the statements of the election programs, a system of points from zero to three was used.

Zero stands for *no deviation*. The answer in the Wahl-O-Mat is completely in line with the statements in the election programme. This may be due to the same wording in both documents. On the other hand, different formulations in the electoral programme and the Wahl-O-Mat, which, however, ultimately are pointing out the exact same opinion, are also judged to be a zero. If a party answers neutrally in the Wahl-O-Mat and does not address the topic in their election manifesto, the case is also counted as a zero.

One is related to *weak deviation*. A party´s position in the Wahl-O-Mat is neither confirmed nor rejected by the election programme. However, the statements in the election programme would suggest a different answer.

Two means *strong deviation*. In the Wahl-O-Mat, the party has expressed itself completely contrary to its actual position in the election programme. This is also the case if the party has answered with a neutral answer in the Wahl-O-Mat but takes a position on the subject in its election programme.

Three represents *not present*. Although the party has opted for one of the three possible answers in the Wahl-O-Mat, this issue is not taken up in its election programme. This is not about exact formulations

of the Wahl-O-Mat statement, but the general topic, from which one could fathom the answer in the Wahl-O-Mat. For a three to be awarded, the topic is missing in the entire election manifesto.

This numbering has been carried out by me for all the 228 statements. The table with the individual classifications can be found in Appendix B. The results for each party are analysed in the next chapter and are visualized with a pie-chart for each finding. The pie-charts were created with an online tool (Zygomatic, 2020). The analysis of Hypothesis 2 is built on the results of this research.

In conjunction with the theories named in Chapter 2, the collected data is used to substantiate or refute Hypothesis 3. Furthermore, the hypothesis is going to be tested using the results of the first and the second hypotheses. This analysis is divided into two researches. On the one hand, the theories of Lipset & Rokkan, Kirchheimer and Keil serve as a base to explain certain examples, which arose during the deviation-analysis. On the other hand, a coordination system leads to an assumption regarding all analysed parties.

For this purpose, the 38 statements of the Wahl-O-Mat are first divided into four categories. These are based on the classification of parties in the two-dimensional political spectrum, provided by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, which was presented in the theoretical part for the German party system. The Wahl-O-Mat statements have accordingly been divided into Libertarian (1), Authoritarian (2), Egalitarian (3) and Elitist (4). The results can be found in Appendix C. For a better understanding, the statements were translated into English. Thereupon further tables were prepared for each of the six parties, which, in addition to the Wahl-O-Mat statements, contains a column for the statements in the VAA and one for the statements in the election programme. They can be found as well in Appendix C. In this table, a coordinate has been systematically assigned one after the other for each statement, according to the following system:

(0|1) corresponds to **libertarian**

(0|-1) stands for **authoritarian**

(-1|0) reflects an **egalitarian** point of view

(1|0) describes an **elitist** stance

Which coordinates the party receives in each case depends, on the one hand, on the classification of the Wahl-O-Mat statements regarding Hypothesis 1 and, on the other hand, on its reaction to them, both in the VAA and in the election programme. For example, if a statement in the Wahl-O-Mat has been classified as *libertarian* and the party responded with *agree* in the Wahl-O-Mat, it makes its response libertarian and is categorized accordingly with a (0|1). But if a statement in the election manifesto does not correspond to the statement in the Wahl-O-Mat, the party receives the opposite classification in the category "election program", which in this case is *authoritarian* and therefore receives the coordinate (0|-1).

An example: The AfD responded to the first statement in the Wahl-O-Mat with *do not agree*. The statement in the Wahl-O-Mat has been classified as *authoritarian*. Since they do not agree with the statement in the VAA, their answer in the Wahl-O-Mat is categorized with the opposite position, which in this case is libertarian and thus receives the coordinates (0|1). However, during the analysis of the discrepancies between the party statements in the VAA and the election program, a difference on the issue arose between the statements in the VAA and the election manifesto. This shows that the party expressed itself differently in the election program, which in turn means that the AfD receives the coordinates for

libertarian in the Wahl-O-Mat-column, but the coordinates (0|-1) in the Election-programme- column, since it was found that its answers in the VAA and the election programme are contradictory and thus the statements also have a controversial quality.

Another example can be found in the FDP: They took a position on point 2 in the Wahl-O-Mat by not agreeing to it. Since the point has been classified in advance as an egalitarian statement, and the FDP contradicts this, they receive the coordinates for an *elitist* point of view (1|0). However, the issue has not been addresses in their election manifesto. They are given a *not present* in the analysis of the deviations (category 3). Classifying them in the coordinate system, they do not receive a coordinate in the Election-Manifesto-column, since the statement is not addressed in their program.

If a party has positioned itself *neutrally* to a statement in the Wahl-O-Mat, it does not receive a coordinate in the Wahl-O-Mat-column, but can get one for its election program if the issue is nevertheless addressed in that same column (in the deviation analysis, this would also have been categorized as a difference). In order to determine the overall position of the party in the Wahl-O-Mat and in the election program, the coordinates of each column have been added together, which in turns is the coordinate for its positioning in both the VAA and the manifesto. These positions are visualized in three different coordinate systems. As a base was the graphic from desmos is used (Desmos, n.d.). The coordinates were inserted individually by me, regarding the findings of the previous analysis.

4. Analysis:

To create a clear structure for the analysis part, it is divided into three blocks. The first block deals with the results that were obtained from the analysis regarding the deviations between the Wahl-O-Mat statements and election programmes of the parties which were discussed in the Data and Methods Chapter. With this analysis, Hypothesis 1 is to be tested. The second part uses as a basis the findings that could be drawn from the deviation-analysis of Paragraph 4.1 and proves or disproves Hypothesis 2. Together with the theories mentioned in Chapter 2 and the Data collection regarding the coordinate system, H3 should be confirmed or rejected.

Since the first part refers to the parties and their positions, both in the Wahl-O-Mat and in the election program, it is divided into individual paragraphs, each of which examines one of the parties in more detail. All differences identified in the data collection are discussed. The statements are examined one after the other in the order in which they are listed in the Wahl-O-Mat. The focus relays mainly on the anomalies that have been discovered. These are analysed in chronological order according to the statement order of the Wahl-O-Mat.

In total there are six parties which were investigated and are now being analysed. The order is based in the listing in which they are also displayed in the position comparison of the Wahl-O-Mat. For an understandable listing, not only the analysis part follows this order, but also the table in which the overview of all results regarding this part of the analysis are listed. This can be found in Appendix B. After considering each party individually, a preliminary summary is given, followed by the second part of the analysis.

4.1 Deviations between the Wahl-O-Mat and election programs

4.1.1 The CDU/CSU:

The Union showed overall the most deviations from all analysed parties. They resulted in five strong deviations and two weak deviations. In addition to the differences categorized with a one or two, eight

statements were evaluated with a three. Among them, for example, the idea of an unconditional basic income (number 37 in the Wahl-O-Mat), which is not addressed in the government programme. In total, the CDU/CSU comes up with 23 zeros, 2 ones, 5 twos and 8 threes, as shown in Figure 1.

The first point to emphasize is statement 12 in the Wahl-O-Mat. This states that organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming (bpb, 2017). In this case, organic farming describes the type of agriculture which, for example, focuses on species-appropriate animal husbandry, pays attention to the preservation of biodiversity, and follows the German guidelines for organic farming. Conventional agriculture, on the other hand, is geared towards the highest possible yield (Feld&Stall, 2017). The Union replied to this statement with neutral. In their government programme, however, they clearly address this issue by writing that for them the two forms of agriculture do not contradict each other and that both should be promoted (CDU/CSU, 2017, p. 16). Therefore, the answer neutral differed from their position in the programme. However, this is only a weak deviation, as the statements do not collide, but differ from each other. This case is therefore classified with a one.

CDU/CSU

■ No deviation ■ Weak deviation ■ Strong deviation ■ Not present
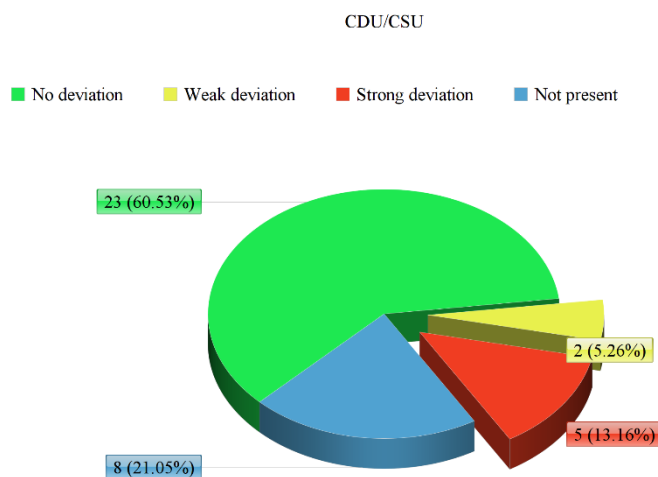
Figure 1: Overview of the results regarding the deviation analysis for the CDU/CSU.

The next anomaly is point 14 in the Wahl-O-Mat. This describes that employment contracts may be limited in time, even without giving reasons. The Union agreed with this statement (bpb, 2017). In their programme, however, they express themselves differently. On page 13 of their government programme, they explain that permanent contracts cannot simply be replaced by fixed-term contracts, and they want to put an end to any abuse in this respect. In addition, their statements make it clear that the protection of employees (especially those just starting their careers) is important to them and that they are committed to providing them with a reliable perspective (CDU/CSU, 2017, p. 13). The comparison of the two statements turns out to be controversial and is therefore assigned with a two.

Another noteworthy point relates again to the issue of agriculture. The Wahl-O-Mat states in its nineteenth place that a limit on the total number of farm animals should be possible for all farms in a municipality (bpb, 2017). The Union took a neutral position on this, but its government programme refers to a strategy for livestock farming. This should serve both animal welfare and planning security for agricultural holdings (CDU/CSU, 2017, p. 16). A neutral answer is therefore astonishing, even if not completely contrary. Therefore, this deviation is assigned a one.

Nor does the Union take a position on statement 20 in the Wahl-O-Mat. About lignite being allowed to be mined in Germany in the future as well, they answer with neutral (bpb, 2017). However, in their government programme they clearly speak of a long-term phase-out of lignite (CDU/CSU, 2017, p. 30).

It is therefore not understandable why the party expressed itself neutrally in the election decision assistant. This controversy is thus assigned a two.

A further controversial point can be found regarding the Wahl-O-Mat statement number 26. This states that high assets should be taxed. Here as well, the Union´s response is neutral (bpb, 2017). In its government programme, however, it clearly states that they exclude the possibility of reintroducing wealth tax (CDU/CSU, 2017, p. 26). According to the categorization used for this analysis, this represents a strong deviation and is therefore assigned the number two.

There are also differences in the Wahl-O-Mat statement 33. This states that the solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished at the end of 2019 (bpb, 2017). The solidarity surcharge is an additional levy, deducted from the monthly salary of every German employee (except for low-income earners); currently, this is 5.5 percent (Vereinigte Lohnsteuerhilfe e.V., 2020). Once again, the Union´s response states neutral (bpb, 2017). This is although they talk in their programme about the gradual abolition of the solidarity surcharge from 2020 onwards and as soon as possible (CDU/CSU, 2017, p. 33). There is a fundamental difference between the Wahl-O-Mat statement and the government´s programme because the Union has expressed itself neutrally, even though its programme clearly states its position. This case is therefore assigned a two.

Thirty-sixth in the Wahl-O-Mat is the statement that the reference to God should remain in the German Grundgesetz (the Basic Law). The CDU and CSU agreed to this (bpb, 2017). In their government programme they do not explicitly state this, but they affirm that freedom of religion is one of the most formative basic rights in the German constitution (CDU/CSU, 2017, p. 72). These two statements are not compliant, so here too is a two awarded.

4.1.2   The SPD:

The SPD had the second highest amount of weak and strong deviations. A total of two strong and four weak deviations could be examined from the study. There were also some points where a three was distributed. This includes, for example, statement 32 of the Wahl-O-Mat, which states that the regulated sale of cannabis should be allowed. The SPD denied this; their election program does not mention the topic cannabis at all. In summary, the SPD received 25 zeros, 2 ones, 4 twos and 7 threes in the analysis, as shown in Figure 2.

The first point that stood out during the analysis was the number six in the Wahl-O-Mat. This states that BAföG should be paid out generally and independently of the parents` income (bpb, 2017). BAföG refers to a grant, which students can apply for to cover their study costs. At present, the amount of BAföG still depends on the income of the parents (meinBAföG, n.d.). In the Wahl-O-Mat, the SPD expressed itself neutrally, although in its election programme it called for an expansion of subsidies, among other things by increasing the subsidy rates to cover demand (SPD, 2017, p, 21). Although the two positions are not fundamentally opposed, the argumentation in the election manifesto suggests a different position. It is therefore a weak deviation and is numbered with a one.

These same controversial opinions can also be found in point 10 of the Wahl-O-Mat. In its statement that Germany`s defence-spending is to be increased; the SPD again responded neutrally (bpb, 2017). However, this issue is being debated in their election manifesto. In their opinion, defence costs in Germany should rise. This is reflected in the fact that in their programme they are committed to efficient and modern armed forces, which among other things also includes the best possible equipment (SPD, 2017, p. 105). As they take a clear position on this issue, the choice of a neutral position is therefore controversial and is entitles a two in this respect.

Their statement is also contrary to point 26 in the Wahl-O-Mat, which states that high assets should be taxed. Once again, the SPD is adopting a neutral position (bpb, 2017). In their election manifesto, on the other hand, they speak of the responsibility of the wealthy and combine this with a tax on the rich (SPD, 2017, p. 52). The neutral position they have stated is therefore incomprehensible and contradicts their election programme. In this case, therefore, a two is assigned.
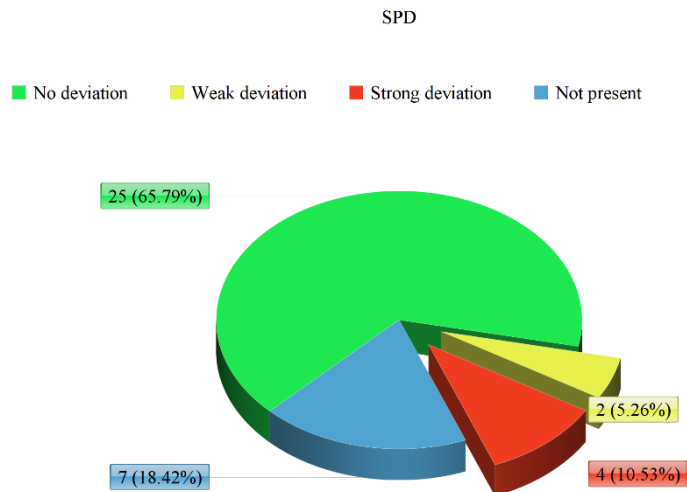
SPD

■ No deviation   ■ Weak deviation   ■ Strong deviation   ■ Not present

25 (65.79%)

2 (5.26%)

7 (18.42%)

4 (10.53%)

Figure 2: Overview of the results regarding the deviation analysis for the SPD.

Although they do not directly address the fact that, up to a certain amount, the purchase of owner-occupied housing should be tax-free, as described in the Wahl-O-Mat on position 30, their answer of disagreeing with it is still not completely consistent with their election program (bpb, 2017). Even though they do not explicitly talk about tax-free purchases in this report, they say that they want to encourage families to buy their own home, in the countryside as well as in the city (SPD, 2017, p. 55). Also, through the "Jung kauft Alt" (translated into "Young buys Old") programme, they want to make the purchase of owner-occupied housing more attractive to sell already existing and partly older buildings (SPD, 2017, p. 56). This consists of an annual subsidy and the financing of an old building survey (SPD Weißhorn, 2020). Although the statements in the Wahl-O-Mat an election manifesto do not fundamentally contradict each other, they represent a weak deviation and therefore receive a one.

Another conspicuous point was number 31. The Wahl-O-Mat states that arms exports from Germany should be banned without exception (bpb, 2017). The neutral position adopted by the SPD in this process does not correspond to its election program. For they make arms exports a subject of discussion and, according to their programme, want to see a mandatory curbing of these exports (SPD, 2017, p. 104). Since they are only talking about containment, the answer "do not agree" would have been best to represent their election program, since the Wahl-O-Mat explicitly talks about an absolute ban. However, since they have chosen the neutral variant, this suggests that they generally do not take a position on the topic ore are neutral towards it. Since this is contradictory, a two is assigned to the whole.

A controversy can also be found in point 36 of the Wahl-O-Mat, concerning the existence of the reference to God in the German constitution (bpb, 2017). As already stated with the CDU/CSU, the SPD also votes for the preservation of the reference to God, although they clearly state in their election manifesto that religious freedom is especially important to them (SPD, 2017, p. 78). Evaluated by the standards developed for this analysis, these are two contradictory statements, which is why this case also receives a two.

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4.1.3 Die Linke

The party "die Linke" ended up with just one weak deviation regarding the analysis and was therefore
the political party with the lowest amount of differences between the statements in the Wahl-O-Mat and
election manifesto. The remaining points could all be given a zero or three rating according to the anal-
ysis scheme of this thesis. For example, the second statement in the Wahl-O-Mat, that higher taxation
of diesel fuel for cars should be introduced, was not taken up in their election program. Since the topic
of diesel fuel does not appear at all in their election manifesto, but they nevertheless take a stand on it
in the Wahl-O-Mat, this case was assigned a three. In total, die Linke came up with 30 zeros in the 38
statements, 1 one, no two and 7 threes. These results are shown in Figure 3.
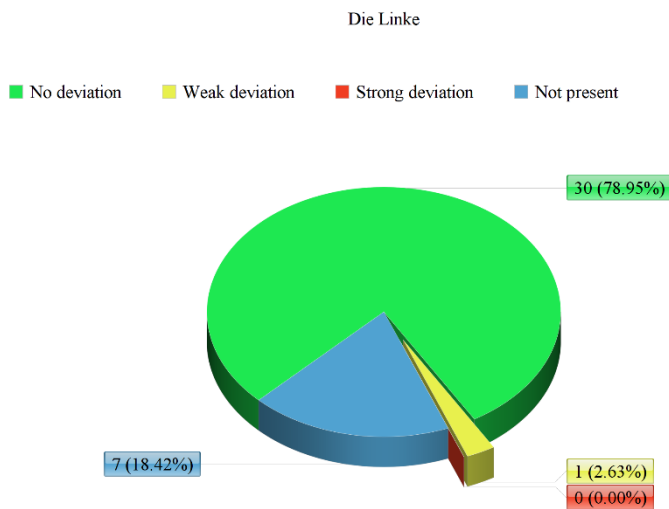
Figure 3: Overview of the results regarding the deviation analysis for die Linke.

In the analysis of die Linke, only one point could be found where its statement in the election manifesto
differed from that in the Wahl-O-Mat. This is statement 38 in the VAA, which speaks of increased
cooperation between the member states of the European Union. Die Linke was neutral on this point
(bpb, 2017). This would therefore mean that they would not comment on it in their programme. But in
their election manifesto they talk about the European Union. While it is true that they do not explicitly
address cooperation between the member states, they do call for a repositioned European Union, with
new treaties and revised structures that ensure solidarity within the Union (Die Linke, 2017, pp. 102,
103). This is not possible without strong cooperation between the Member States of the European Union.
Their statements are not completely controversial, but the neutral position of the party is not fully com-
prehensible, which is why this case can be classified as a weak deviation and therefore gets a one.

4.1.4 Bündnis 90/Die Grünen:

Since die Linke showed the least amount of deviations with just one weak deviation, the Grünen came
in second. The analysis revealed one weak and one strong deviation between their stance in the Wahl-
O-Mat and election manifesto. In addition to these two deviations, the remaining statements were given
a three or zero rating. It was often necessary to read between the lines. For example, the Wahl-O-Mat
discussed the introduction of an unconditional basic income in Germany. Die Grünen took a neutral
position, but in their election manifesto they addressed the issue. However, they described that they
would not be averse to an unconditional basic income from the outset, but they would first wan to test
the project and include as well experiences from other countries. In most of the statements that were

answered neutrally, the latter received a zero (no deviation), even though this was not addressed in the election program. In this case, they position themselves neutrally in their election program as well. This is because they do not rule out the introduction of the unconditional basic income, but they do not want to agree to it without a trial period. A zero was therefore awarded for this case. All in all, die Grünen come to a total of 32 zeros, 1 one, 1 two and 5 threes, illustrated in Figure 4.

Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

■ No deviation   ■ Weak deviation   ■ Strong deviation   ■ Not present

31 (81.58%)

5 (13.16%)

1 (2.63%)

1 (2.63%)
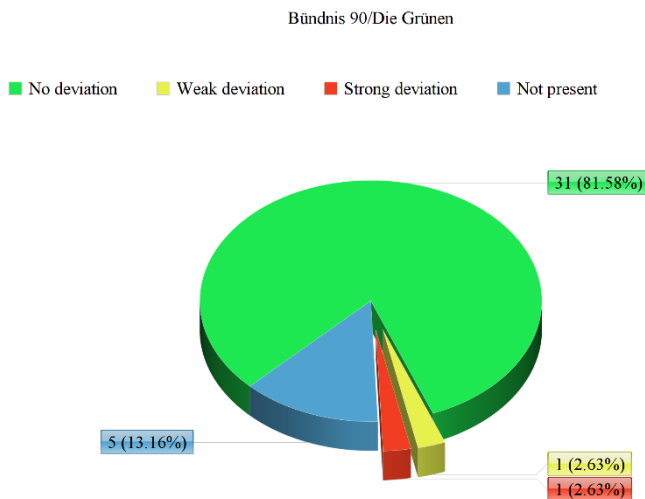
Figure 4: Overview of the results regarding the deviation analysis for the Bündnis 90/die Grünen.

A first conspicuous feature of the analysis was the Wahl-O-Mat statement 31. This speaks of an absolute ban on arms exports in Germany. Die Grünen voted against such a ban with their answer in the VAA (bpb, 2017). This, in turn, implies that the party is committed to arms exports, since they are not the ones who want to ban them. In their election manifesto, on the other hand, they speak in many places of the need for disarmament and the cessation of arms exports to create peace. In this context, for example, they deal with the stopping of arms deliveries to crisis regions (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2017, p. 83). They also argue that they are concerned about the general increase in readiness of countries to arm themselves (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2017, p. 66). In this analysis, it must be added that the election programme of die Grünen does not mention an unconditional ban. But that is precisely why their response differs from their election manifesto. For it is not said that they do not want a complete arms freeze, quite the contrary: their statements indicate that they are in favour of a similar ban. The case is assigned a one, as those are not completely controversial statements.

If the Wahl-O-Mat statement had not included the words without exception, this would be a strong deviation. In the given situation, this is a weak deviation, measured against the established basic rules of this analysis.

As was already the case with the CDU/CSU and the SPD, there was a further disagreement on statement 36 of the Wahl-O-Mat. Die Grünen agreed with the statement that the reference to God should remain in the German constitution (bpb, 2017). In their election manifesto they speak of the fact that the German Grundgesetz applies to everyone and they do not accept any intolerance (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2017, p. 10). But on the other hand, they also demand religious freedom for everyone (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2017, p. 117). According to the standards of this study, this is contrary and is therefore assessed with a two, a strong deviation.

4.1.5   The FDP:

While analysing the neoliberal party FDP, no weak deviation could be detected, but still two strong deviations could be detected. The remaining cases were categorised with a zero or three. Here it was striking that the FDP has a particularly high number of cases, which were assigned with the category "not present". A total of eleven times the judgment was passed on this. Issues such as the culture of remembrance in Germany with regard to the genocide of the European Jews, among others, were not addressed in the election program, although this is, for example, an important part of German politics, especially with regard to German history. In general, the FDP came to the following result: 25 zeros, 0 ones, 2 twos and 11 threes. This is illustrated in Figure 5.
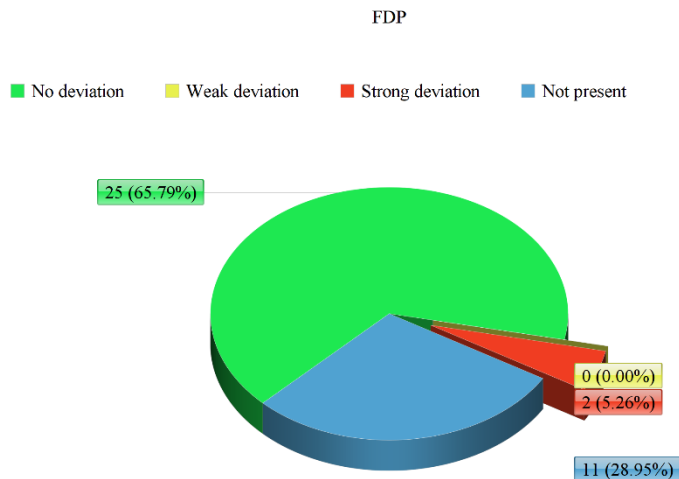
Figure 5: Overview of the results regarding the deviation analysis for the FDP.

The FDP responded neutrally when the Wahl-O-Mat was about expanding video surveillance in public spaces (bpb, 2017). In their election manifesto, however, they speak out against a nationwide expansion of such surveillance. Although they also state that they would agree to video surveillance in individual cases, they only do so after extensive research (FDP, 2017, p. 81). Nevertheless, the statement in the Wahl-O-Mat imples a general spread of video surveillance in public space. Since the FDP clearly opposes this in its election programme, this case is numbered with a two.

Deviations can also be found in relation to statement 23 in the Wahl-O-Mat. This describes that retirement should be possible without deductions after only 40 years in which a contribution has been paid into the pension fund. The FDP took a neutral position on this (bpb, 2017). In their election manifesto, on the other hand, they speak of neither a minimum age for retirement nor a minimum number of contribution years. They demand that everyone over 60 years of age should be able to decide for themselves whether they want to continue working or not. The consequence they draw from this is that those who retire earlier receive a lower pension, while those who work longer receive a higher pension (FDP, 2017, pp. 56-58). Their statement in the election manifesto is therefore contrary to their response in the Wahl-O-Mat, which leads to a classification as a strong deviation, numbered with a two.

4.1.6   The AfD:

Already the FDP showed a high number of topics, which were discussed in the Wahl-O-Mat but were not addressed in their election program. This is also the case regarding the AfD. With a total of 13 threes they have the greatest amount of the category "not present". Questions about right.wing extremism or

the legal right to full-time care during primary school are answered in the Wahl-O-Mat but are not to be found in their election programme. Besides this high amount of topics which were not thematized in their election manifesto, the AfD showed additionally two weak and two strong deviations. In summary, the AfD comes to 21 zeros, 2 ones, 2 twos and 13 threes. Figure 6 illustrates this.

Directly the first statement in the Wahl-O-Mat shows a deviation. When asked whether the German Bundeswehr could be deployed domestically against terrorism, the AfD did not agree (bpb, 2017). Although this issue is not explicitly addressed in its election manifesto, the AfD stresses that Germany must defend itself and should withdraw forces from other countries to do so. They also speak of a renewed build-up of homeland security forces, which would be provided by the Bundeswehr. Moreover, protection against terrorism also requires cooperation between civilian and military forces (AfD, 2017, p. 19). The two statements are therefore contradictory. However, as the answer in the Wahl-O-Mat is not completely controversial (as it is not explicitly mentioned in the program to the contrary), but nevertheless deviates from the positions in their election program, the case is classified as weak deviation and thus receives the number one.
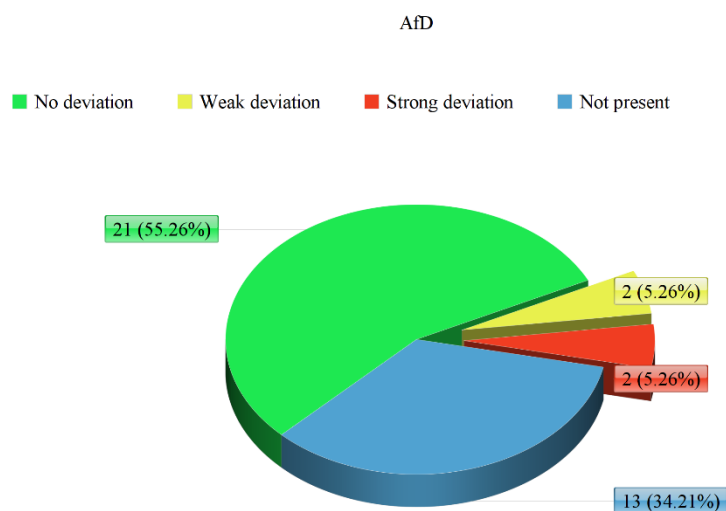
Figure 6: Overview of the results regarding the deviation analysis for the AfD.

Such a deviation is also found in statement 17. The Wahl-O-Mat thematized that the genocide of the European Jews should be a central part of the German culture of remembrance. In the VAA, the AfD agrees with this position (bpb, 2017). But in their election manifesto they speak of breaking up the view of history in favour of positive aspects that create identity (AfD, 2017, p. 48). But if this is to become part of the German culture of remembrance, the genocide of the European Jews can no longer be the central component, for they see the present presentation as a narrow view (AfD, 2017, p. 48). Nevertheless, this is a weak deviation, measured by the analytical standards of this research. They do not expressly contradict their own statement, but their election programme still deviates from their Wahl-O-Mat answer. Therefore, a one is assigned to this case.

Number 21 in the Wahl-O-Mat states that in the future companies can still employ temporary workers. The AfD took a neutral stance (bpb, 2017). The election programme, on the other hand, clearly addresses the issues of temporary work. They say that temporary work is to continue, but that it is to be converted into full employment after six months (AfD, 2017, p. 52). In doing so, it contradicts its statements in the Wahl-O-Mat, because a neutral answer is in direct contrast to its electoral programme. Therefore, this is a strong deviation, which is recorded as such with a two.

There is also a discrepancy on the issue of pensions. In the Wahl-O-Mat, the topic is discussed on the 23rd place. The point here is that, after 40 years in which a contribution has been paid into the retirement

fund, pension should be possible without deductions. The AfD was neutral on this (bpb, 2017). On page 57 of their election programme for the 2017 Bundestag election it can be read that they demand a pension entitlement for a worktime of up to 45 years without deductions (AfD, 2017, p. 57). This shows that they have a clear position on this topic in their electoral programme. A neutral opinion is therefore contrary, which is why the case is categorised with a two.

4.1.7 Preliminary results

In summary, there are some differences between the Wahl-O-Mat statements and the party programs. Nevertheless, the number of these cannot be generalized, but depend on the case. However, Hypothesis 1 can be confirmed by this analysis, because altogether each of the parties of the German Bundestag showed at least on deviation. The overall result of the analysed parties is visually represented by Figure 7.
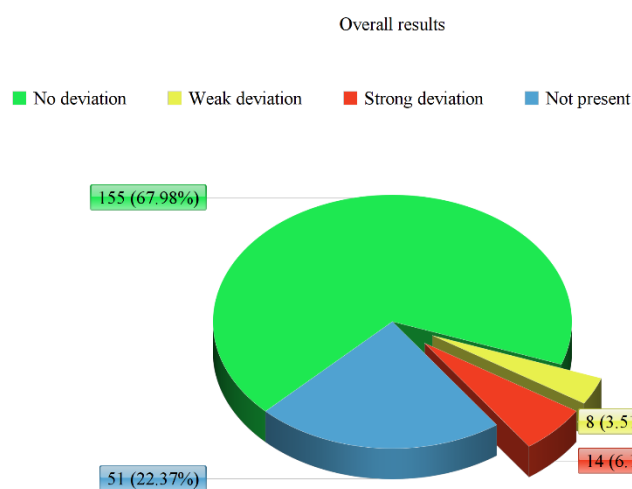
Figure 7: Overview of the results regarding the deviation analysis for all six parties.

4.2 Analysing the deviations

The second part of the analysis serves to confirm or reject Hypothesis 2. The findings of the previous study provide as a basis, which are presented below in tabular form.

From the results of the first part of the analysis, it is precisely those parties which have a very socialist or further conservative point of view that exhibit the least deviation. In this case, these are on the one hand die Linke and on the other hand the AfD. Die Linke represents the left-wing political side, the AfD the right-wing political side (Bube, 2018). The political spectrum used for this refers to the theory, already explained in the second chapter. Therefore, the parties are classified in far left (in this case die Linke) and far right (represented for this study by the AfD). According to Hypothesis 2, the greatest differences should be identified for these same parties. Yet, as the results of the previous analysis show, this is not the case.

These results are listed in Table 1. In this respect, the Union hast the most divergences. It has a total of seven weak and strong deviations, the SPD a total of six. The AfD lands in the middle with a total of four deviations. Die Grünen and the FDP both have a total number of deviations of two and die Linke

is with only one deviation (this is even only a weak one), the party that has achieved the least differences in the analysis. It can be clearly seen that the parties from the political centre show a significantly higher number of differences between the statements in the Wahl-O-Mat and their own election programme.

Table 1: *Results of the deviation analysis.*

	CDU/CSU	SPD	Die Linke	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	FDP	AfD	Total
No Deviation	23	25	30	31	25	21	155
Weak Deviation	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
Strong Deviation	5	4	0	1	2	2	14
Not Present	8	7	7	5	11	13	51
Total	38	38	38	38	38	38	228

However, this conclusion must also be taken into account, for example, although the AfD shows fewer deviations than the Union or the SPD, 13 topics, which are taken up in the Wahl-O-Mat, do not even deal with them in their election programme. Accordingly, it is not possible to determine for these points whether there would have been a difference if the party had taken a position on the subject in its election programme. This possibility also applies to all other parties, but the AfD serves as the best example, as they reached the highest number in the "not present"-category.

Nonetheless, this study is not intended to suggest the extent to which the parties have expressed their views in their electoral programme in subjects on which they have received a three. Therefore, the following part of the analysis will continue to be based on the results presented so far. Considering this, Hypothesis 2 can be rejected. In this case, it is not the further-right or further-left positioned parties, but the parties of the political middle, which show the most differences. Based on these statements, the third hypothesis will now be tested.

4.3 Analysing the party´s positions

The third part of the analysis attempts to investigate the influence of deviations between Wahl-O-Mat statements and election programs on the external impact of the respective party. On the one hand, theories that have already been mentioned in the second chapter are used for this purpose. On the other hand, the results of the previous investigation serve as a basis for confirming or rejecting Hypothesis 3.

The preceded analysis came to the conclusion that it is not the parties, which are strongly left and right in the German political spectrum, that were able to show the most deviations between the Wahl-O-Mat and their election manifesto. On the contrary, the greatest differences were found in the parties, which can be placed in the middle of the according left-right spectrum. Although this result contradicts the second hypothesis, Hypothesis 3 can be tested together with these findings. It states that parties answer controversial issues in the Wahl-O-Mat more moderately than they do in their election program. As a result, the party acts more modestly and thus appeals to a wider electorate.

For both the Union and the SPD, Lipset and Rokkan identify so-called conflict lines from which the parties have emerged, also titled as cleavages (see Chapter 2 for an explanation of this theory). In the Union, in this case the CDU, this originates from the conflict between church and state. The SPD, on the other hand, has emerged from the line of conflict between labour and capital. The parties are thus part of the four fundamental lines of conflict established by Lipset and Rokkan. Accordingly, when they were founded, they also addressed a specific electorate. These voters depend on the line of conflict, in case of the SPD, for example, it was the working class. This led to a core voter base that was secured by the conflict of values that the party represented. In this respect, the party took a stringent political stance since its position in at least one of the four lines of conflict appealed to a specific constituency. If one follows this theory, it would therefore not be necessary for a party to present itself differently in an electoral decision-making tool, such as the Wahl-O-Mat, than in its election program, since its positions were clear from the outset due to the line of conflict.

Otto Kirchheimer, on the other hand, described a weakening of these same cleavages as early as 1965. He explains that there is a socio-cultural as well as a socio-ecological change in society, which leads to a changing electorate. Here the statements of Lipset and Rokkan can be taken up. While the latter are dominated by a core voter who knows from the outset which party they will vote for, Kirchheimer assumes that the electorate will change their party affiliation depending on the election campaign. In conclusion, this means that the parties ask the voters in pre-election polls what is important to them about a party and what their values are. Accordingly, the parties are guided by the needs of their voters, who in Kirchheimer´s theory pursue individual interests and project these onto their election. There is a growth of the so-called *middle class*. Applying this to the previous analysis, both the CDU/CSU and the SPD have a wide range of issues on which they express views that were not originally part of their conflict line. This enables them to address a larger electorate, since the more you pick up on your election campaign, the greater the likelihood of representing individual points of view of the voter. Since each party has the goal of having as large an electoral community as possible, this leads in the reverse direction to a convergence of party content.

Silke I. Keil also takes up this idea and expands it. She adds that, measured by the Gaussian normal distribution, voters are mostly in the middle of the political spectrum. Accordingly, the parties are also moving their positions more towards the centre, with the aim of winning over as many voters as possible. This in turn is in line with Kirchheimer´s statements. The parties are thus trying to find a balance between their original basic values and the individual interests of the new centre. This in turn is an explanation for the discrepancies between the Wahl-O-Mat and the election programs.

The Union and the SPD offer confirmatory examples of this. The Union has been assigned a strong divergence about wealth tax. In the Wahl-O-Mat they answered neutrally, whereas in the government programme they ruled out the possibility of reintroducing a wealth tax. This enables them to address both target groups. On the one hand, they stick to their original values in their electoral programme, since they represent a conservative party, which keeps their core voters. On the other hand, the neutral stance in the Wahl-O-Mat does not make this directly visible, which means that they can positively influence a new electorate for themselves who are in favour of such a tax or who do not support the strict exclusion of wealth tax to the same extent. Such a case can also be found within the SPD, for example around defence spending. In its election program, the SPD expressed itself on this issue by calling for an increase in these very costs. This positioning is not clear in the Wahl-O-Mat, as they responded there to the statement with *neutral*. This neutral position, however, allows them not to make their actual position directly graspable and thus to win over potential voters who might enact against such an increase.

Thus, if just the examples mentioned and theories were used, Hypothesis 3 could be confirmed. The combination of the theories of Lipset & Rokkan, Kirchheimer and Keil in combination with the previous

results confirms that there are response from parties in the Wahl-O-Mat that do not agree with the election program and therefore make the party appear more moderate in the election decision-making process. According to Kirchheimer and Keil, this is understandable since it is the goal of each party to move further into the middle of the political spectrum and thus address more voters. While this statement can be supported by the examples of the SPD and CDU/CSU, it does not reflect the overall result of the first part of the analysis with regard to the deviations of the statements in the Wahl-O-Mat and election program.

Therefore, a further analysis has been carried out, which includes all the results (to be found in Appendix B). The implementation can be found in the methods chapter. The findings of this analysis can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: *Party positioning in the Wahl-O-Mat and Election Manifesto.*

	Wahl-O-Mat	Election manifesto
CDU/CSU	(7|-1)	(4|0)
SPD	(-5|8)	(-7|8)
Die Linke	(-15|19)	(-11|17)
Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	(-8|19)	(-9|18)
FDP	(12|2)	(10|1)
AfD	(9|-10)	(7|-15)

They represent the sum of all assigned coordinates, both for the Wahl-O-Mat and for their voting program. Due to the coordinate assignment, these can be inserted into a coordinate system and thus compared with each other. The closer the overall coordinate of the party is to the coordinate (0|0), the more moderate the party´s comments. For example, if a party has answered *neutral* in all statements, it will not take a position anywhere, will therefore not receive any coordinates and will end up at (0|0). With the results for the coordinate allocation of the Wahl-O-Mat it can be stated that the union of CDU and CSU is closest to the point (0|0) of all parties. Nevertheless, totality of their statements in the Wahl-O-Mat can be classified as elitist-authoritarian. The SPD, on the other hand, refers to the egalitarian-libertarian spectrum, as are die Linke and die Grünen. However, die Linke and die Grünen are far more egalitarian and libertarian in their approach. And in a comparison of the two parties, die Linke is even more egalitarian than die Grünen. The FDP is the only party in the elitist-libertarian spectrum. The AfD can be considered as a part of the elitist-authoritarian spectrum, but clearly takes more extreme positions than the Union. These results are shown visually in Figure 8.

The analysis of the election program coordinates revealed a similar picture. Once again, the Union was the party closest to the (0|0) point, but this time even closer than in the Wahl-O-Mat-Analysis. Moreover, in this analysis they were only in the elitist spectrum. The SPD remains in the egalitarian-libertarian spectrum. Die Grünen and die Linke can also be found in this area but are still stronger positioned than the SPD. The FDP is still the only one in the elitist-libertarian spectrum, but (like the CDU/CSU) is closer to the (0|0) point with their given coordinates than with those who were assigned for the Wahl-O-Mat analysis. The AfD remains in the elitist-authoritarian realm but shows clearly more authoritarian positions in the election program analysis. Figure 9 provides a graphical overview of those findings.
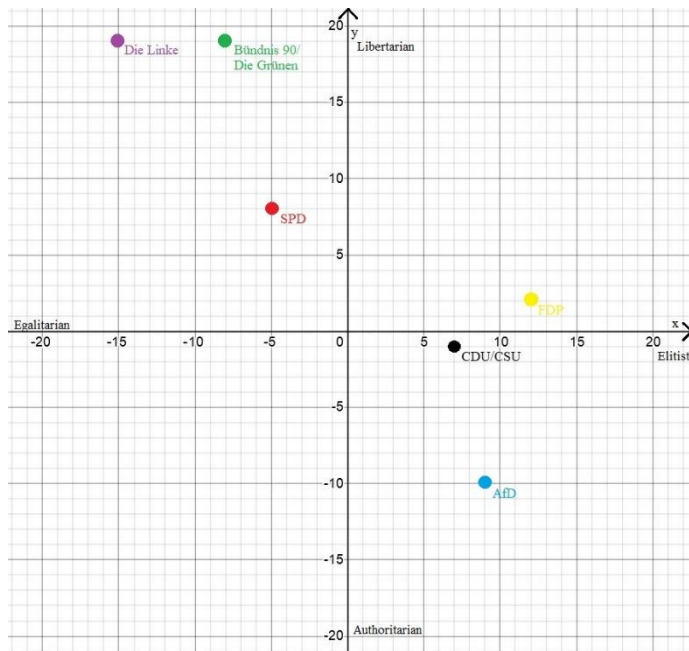
Figure 8: Party positioning regarding the Wahl-O-Mat statements.

If both results are compared with each other, no statement can be made that applies equally to all parties. The Union, the SPD, die Linke and the FDP showed significantly stronger positions in their Wahl-O-Mat statements than in their election manifestos. Die Grünen have achieved almost the same ranking (in the Wahl-O-Mat they merely expressed themselves in a slightly more libertarian but also less egalitarian way than in their election programme). Only in the case of the AfD can it be seen that they take up significantly more authoritarian positions in their election manifesto than in their Wahl-O-Mat statements. The differences are shown in Figure 10.
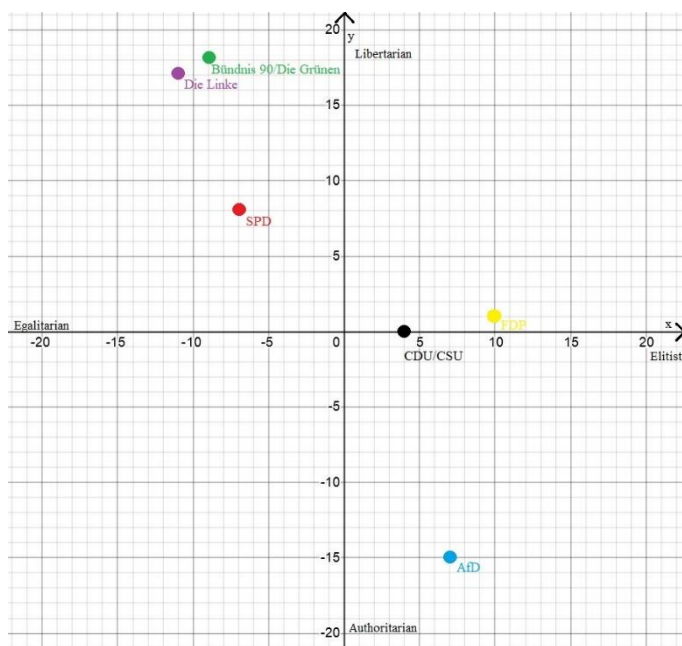
Figure 9: Party positioning regarding the statements in the election manifesto.

From these results it can be concluded that the parties as a whole take a clearer standpoint in the Wahl-O-Mat than in their electoral programme, which means that they seem, against the advanced expectations, more moderate in their electoral programmes than in the VAA. Only the AfD has stronger positions in its election programme than in its Wahl-O-Mat responses. However, this can be attributed to the fact that a large proportion of the responses in the Wahl-O-Mat, which make them appear less authoritarian, are not taken up in their election program (as a reminder: the AfD had the largest share of *not present* categorizations in the analysis section regarding the deviations between Wahl-O-Mat and election program). As a result, some statements in the "Electoral Program"-column of the AfD did not receive a coordinate that could have compensated for the other authoritarian coordinates.
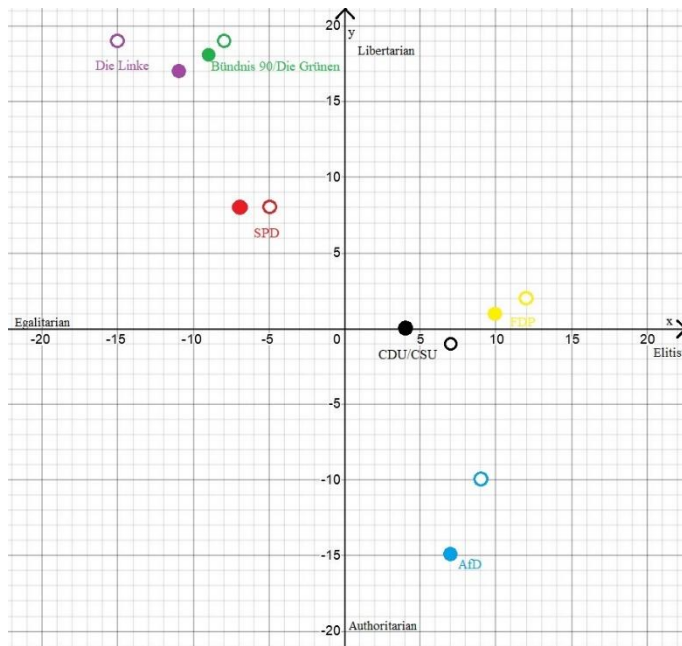
Figure 10: *Comparing the results of Figure 8 and Figure 9.*

Note: The Wahl-O-Mat findings are visualized by an unfilled circle, the election manifesto findings are marked with the filled circle.

In summary, Hypothesis 3 can therefore be rejected. Although the results of the evaluation of the theories of Lipset & Rokka, Kirchheimer and Keil show that there are sometimes individual statements which are not presented in the Wahl-O-Mat as strong as they are in the election program. However, this can only be referred to a part of the statements and does not include the results of all parties. In contrast, an analysis of the overall positions carried out that almost every analysed party appeared more moderate in their election program than in their Wahl-O-Mat statements. In the VAA, on the other hand, they took a clearer stance.

5. <u>Conclusion and Discussion:</u>

This study was primarily concerned with the investigation of party statements in the German VAA Wahl-O-Mat and the respective election programs. The study referred to the 2017 federal elections and analysed the parties that have entered the German Bundestag through this election. A total of three hypotheses have been put forward to test whether there are discrepancies between the Wahl-O-Mat and the party programmes and what effect these differences have.

The first hypothesis "The political parties of the German Bundestag show deviations between their answers to the statements in the German Voting Advice Application "Wahl-O-Mat" and their positions in their election manifesto." could be confirmed by the investigations. The comparison of the individual party statements both in the Wahl-O-Mat and in their election program showed at least one deviation for each party. The Union showed the greatest differences with seven deviations (weak and strong added together) out of a total of 38 statements. Followed by the SPD with six and the AfD with four deviations. The FDP and Grünen both came up with two differences each and die Linke was identified with just one deviation. It is also worth noting that in a total of 51, of 228 cases examined, could be assigned to the categorization *not present*. This means that almost a quarter of all answered Wahl-O-Mat statements are not addressed in the election programs.

The second hypothesis assumed that the most deviations are found in the parties that can be classified as further left or further right on the political left-right spectrum. However, the results of the previous analysis indicated that it was precisely the parties that could be decreed more in the middle of the political left-right spectrum that showed the greatest number of differences between their positions in the Wahl-O-Mat and their election programs. Hypothesis 2 therefore could be rejected.

The analysis carried out for the third hypothesis has been divided into two parts. First, the hypothesis was examined based on the theories of Lipset & Rokkan, Kirchheimer and Keil. According to them, it was understandable why Hypothesis 2 could be rejected. It turned out that especially parties such as the CDU/CSU and SPD are developing from a party with a certain voter circle to a so-called *catch-all-party* to generate as many voters as possible. This explained some cases where both the CDU/CSU and the SPD clearly took a stand on a topic in their election manifesto, but this was not reflected in their Wahl-O-Mat response. However, this part of the analysis only explained individual cases that had been identified in the investigation of Hypothesis 1.

A further investigation has been realized to obtain an answer concerning all parties. This categorized all Wahl-O-Mat statements into libertarian, authoritarian, egalitarian, and elitist. Likewise, all statements of the parties, both in the Wahl-O-Mat and in the election program, were classified according to this scheme. The total of 456 responses (six parties á 38 Wahl-O-Mat statements plus 38 statements in the election program) were coded according to coordinates and could be entered into a two-dimensional coordinate system for visualization.

The result was that five out of six parties expressed themselves more moderately in their election programs than in the Wahl-O-Mat. Only the AfD showed a more authoritarian positioning in its election manifesto than in the VAA statements. However, this could be explained by the fact that the AfD received a high number of *not present* during the analysis regarding Hypothesis 1. Accordingly, there were many issues which they answered in the Wahl-O-Mat but did not thematized them in their election programme. To this end, there were some statements on the election manifesto side that could not be coded to compensate for the more authoritarian positions.

Overall, Hypothesis 3 was rejected. Nevertheless, both parts of the analysis on Hypothesis 3 were important since the comparison of theories could explain individual cases in which the parties take a stronger standpoint in their election program but not in the VAA. On the other hand, the coding of all points of view allowed a summary statement to be made, which includes all parties under investigation.

The above-mentioned analyses have all been carried out by me personally. However, they are all based on theories or codes that have already found resonance in the scientific world. It should be noted that the fact, the analyses were performed by only one person, makes the whole study very biased, as they are based on the assessments of that same person. This should be considered when using the results of the study. Further studies should also take this into account and counteract this, for example by having a team of researchers, rather than an individual, carry out the analyses independently of each other and then compare the results.

This work provides information not only on the parties use of the Wahl-O-Mat, but also on the VAA itself. My hypothesis was that the Wahl-O-Mat would help to prevent parties from making controversial views visible in the Wahl-O-Mat, but the opposite was found by this study. It was considered that the parties do not show their controversial positions in the Wahl-O-Mat but are to be found in their election program. This was hypothesized since the parties in the German Wahl-O-Mat could respond to the statements themselves and these positions are not taken directly from their election program. The analysis showed, that the parties in the Wahl-O-Mat take a clearer position regarding the two-dimensional political spectrum used. This can be explained by the fact that the parties in the Wahl-O-Mat often deal with issues that are sometimes not covered in their election program.

This highlights a positive aspect of the Wahl-O-Mat: it encourages the parties to speak out publicly on issues on which they might otherwise not have been positioning themselves. Even if *neutral* can be selected as a possible answer, the analysis had made it clear that more diverse topics were generally addressed in the Wahl-O-Mat than in the election manifesto. Nevertheless, this study has also revealed points of criticism of the Wahl-O-Mat: On the one hand, the statements could be formulated more clearly in some cases. This has could be seen, for example in statement 10 in the Wahl-O-Mat, which deals with the topic that Germany´s defence spending should be increased. However, it is not explicitly specified whether this is defence expenditure within Germany or, for example, in the European Union. During the examination of the election manifestos, it became clear that some parties, such as the SPD, make a distinction between German defence spending within Germany and regarding the European Union, and take a different view on both. In this respect, such formulations are opaque not only for the party but also for the user of the VAA. On the other hand, some statements require a broader background knowledge, which is not given by the Wahl-O-Mat itself. A possible improvement would be to add a small information box to words such as *solidarity surcharge* (statement 33), which briefly explains such terms, so even voters who are not aware of these topics can understand immediately what is meant. This would also appeal to voters who are not familiar with the political jargon. All in all, the Wahl-O-Mat has turned out to be a VAA that reflects the positions of the parties and addresses issues that are otherwise not even themed in the election programs.

The research question "To what extent do party positions in the German Wahl-O-Mat differ from their election programs and what influence does this have on how modest their political positioning appears?" can be answered as follows: Each of the parties examined showed at least one deviation between the Wahl-O-Mat and their election program for the 2017 federal elections. However, the results in the Wahl-O-Mat led to a more precise positioning of the parties on the tow-dimensional political spectrum (consisting of the categories libertarian, authoritarian, egalitarian, and elitist) than through their respective election programs.

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Appendix A: Original comparing of the party positions in the Wahl-O-Mat

Wahl-O-Mat® Bundestagswahl 2017

Vergleich der **Positionen**

	CDU/CSU	SPD	DIE LINKE	BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN
1. Bei der Terrorismusbekämpfung soll die Bundeswehr im Inland eingesetzt werden dürfen.	✓	✗	✗	✗
2. Dieselkraftstoff für Pkw soll höher besteuert werden.	✗	✗	✓	✓
3. Für die Aufnahme von neuen Asylsuchenden soll eine jährliche Obergrenze gelten.	—	✗	✗	✗
4. Der Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien soll vom Bund dauerhaft finanziell gefördert werden.	✗	✓	✓	✓
5. Der Bund soll mehr Mittel für den sozialen Wohnungsbau bereitstellen.	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. BAföG soll generell unabhängig vom Einkommen der Eltern gezahlt werden.	✗	—	✓	✓
7. Die Videoüberwachung im öffentlichen Raum soll ausgeweitet werden.	✓	✓	✗	✗
8. Deutschland soll einem Schuldenschnitt für Griechenland zustimmen.	✗	—	✓	✓
9. Generelles Tempolimit auf Autobahnen!	✗	✗	✓	✓
10. Die Verteidigungsausgaben Deutschlands sollen erhöht werden.	✓	—	✗	✗
11. Betreiber von Internetseiten sollen gesetzlich dazu verpflichtet sein, Falschinformationen ("Fake News") zu löschen, auf die sie hingewiesen wurden.	✓	✓	✗	✓
12. Ökologische Landwirtschaft soll stärker gefördert werden als konventionelle Landwirtschaft.	—	✗	✓	✓
13. Kindergeld soll nur an deutsche Familien ausgezahlt werden.	✗	✗	✗	✗
14. Arbeitsverträge sollen weiterhin ohne Angabe von Gründen befristet sein dürfen.	✓	✗	✗	✗
15. Kinder sollen gegen ansteckende Krankheiten geimpft werden müssen.	✓	✗	✗	✗
16. Alle Banken sollen verstaatlicht werden.	✗	✗	✗	✗
17. Der Völkermord an den europäischen Juden soll weiterhin zentraler Bestandteil der deutschen Erinnerungskultur sein.	✓	✓	✓	✓
18. Haushaltsüberschüsse sollen überwiegend zum Abbau von Staatsschulden verwendet werden.	—	✗	✗	✗
19. Die Gesamtzahl der Nutztiere in den landwirtschaftlichen Betrieben einer Gemeinde soll begrenzt werden können.	—	✓	✓	✓
20. In Deutschland soll auch zukünftig Braunkohle abgebaut werden dürfen.	—	✓	✗	✗
21. Unternehmen sollen weiterhin Leiharbeiterinnen und Leiharbeiter beschäftigen dürfen.	✓	✓	✗	✓
22. In Deutschland geborene und aufgewachsene Kinder ausländischer Eltern sollen weiterhin neben der deutschen ihre zweite Staatsangehörigkeit behalten dürfen.	—	✓	✓	✓
23. Bereits nach 40 Beitragsjahren soll der Renteneintritt abschlagsfrei möglich sein.	✗	✗	✓	✗
24. Deutschland soll zu einer nationalen Währung zurückkehren.	✗	✗	✗	✗
25. Die Frauenquote für die Aufsichtsräte börsennotierter Unternehmen soll abgeschafft werden.	✗	✗	✗	✗
26. Hohe Vermögen sollen besteuert werden.	—	—	✓	✓
27. Für begangene Straftaten sollen auch Kinder unter 14 Jahren verurteilt werden können.	✗	✗	✗	✗
28. Alle Bürgerinnen und Bürger sollen bei gesetzlichen Krankenkassen versichert sein müssen.	✗	✓	✓	✓
29. Der Bund soll weiterhin Projekte gegen Rechtsextremismus fördern.	✓	✓	✓	✓
30. Der Erwerb von selbstgenutztem Wohneigentum soll bis zu einer bestimmten Höhe steuerfrei sein.	✓	✗	✗	✗
31. Rüstungsexporte aus Deutschland sollen ausnahmslos verboten werden.	✗	—	✓	✗
32. Der kontrollierte Verkauf von Cannabis soll generell erlaubt sein.	✗	✗	✓	✓
33. Der Solidaritätszuschlag soll Ende 2019 vollständig abgeschafft werden.	—	✗	✗	—
34. Anerkannten Flüchtlingen, die sich Integrationsmaßnahmen verweigern, sollen die Leistungen gekürzt werden können.	✓	✓	✗	—
35. Eltern sollen für ihre Kinder bis zum Ende der Grundschulzeit einen Rechtsanspruch auf Ganztagsbetreuung erhalten.	✓	✓	✓	✓
36. Der Gottesbezug im Grundgesetz soll bestehen bleiben.	✓	✓	✗	✓
37. In Deutschland soll es ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen geben.	✗	✗	—	—
38. Die Zusammenarbeit der Mitgliedstaaten in der Europäischen Union soll verstärkt werden.	✓	✓	—	✓

bpb: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung

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Source: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (2017): Vergleich der Positionen, Wahl-O-Mat Bundestagswahl 2017, retrieved from: https://www.wahl-o-mat.de/bundestagswahl2017/Positionsvergleich_Bundestagswahl2017.pdf, 26.05.2020, 15:30hs.

Vergleich der **Positionen**

	Freie Demokraten FDP	Alternative für Deutschland	Piratenpartei	NPD
1. Bei der Terrorismusbekämpfung soll die Bundeswehr im Inland eingesetzt werden dürfen.	✗	✗	✗	✓
2. Dieselkraftstoff für Pkw soll höher besteuert werden.	✗	✗	✓	✗
3. Für die Aufnahme von neuen Asylsuchenden soll eine jährliche Obergrenze gelten.	✗	✓	✗	✓
4. Der Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien soll vom Bund dauerhaft finanziell gefördert werden.	✗	✗	✗	✓
5. Der Bund soll mehr Mittel für den sozialen Wohnungsbau bereitstellen.	✗	✗	✓	✓
6. BAföG soll generell unabhängig vom Einkommen der Eltern gezahlt werden.	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Die Videoüberwachung im öffentlichen Raum soll ausgeweitet werden.	–	✓	✗	✓
8. Deutschland soll einem Schuldenschnitt für Griechenland zustimmen.	✗	✗	✓	✗
9. Generelles Tempolimit auf Autobahnen!	✗	✗	✗	✗
10. Die Verteidigungsausgaben Deutschlands sollen erhöht werden.	✓	✓	✗	–
11. Betreiber von Internetseiten sollen gesetzlich dazu verpflichtet sein, Falschinformationen ("Fake News") zu löschen, auf die sie hingewiesen wurden.	✗	✗	✗	✗
12. Ökologische Landwirtschaft soll stärker gefördert werden als konventionelle Landwirtschaft.	✗	✓	✓	✓
13. Kindergeld soll nur an deutsche Familien ausgezahlt werden.	✗	✗	✗	✓
14. Arbeitsverträge sollen weiterhin ohne Angabe von Gründen befristet sein dürfen.	✓	–	✗	✗
15. Kinder sollen gegen ansteckende Krankheiten geimpft werden müssen.	✓	✗	✗	–
16. Alle Banken sollen verstaatlicht werden.	✗	✗	✗	✗
17. Der Völkermord an den europäischen Juden soll weiterhin zentraler Bestandteil der deutschen Erinnerungskultur sein.	✓	✓	✓	✗
18. Haushaltsüberschüsse sollen überwiegend zum Abbau von Staatsschulden verwendet werden.	✓	✓	✗	✓
19. Die Gesamtzahl der Nutztiere in den landwirtschaftlichen Betrieben einer Gemeinde soll begrenzt werden können.	✗	✓	✓	–
20. In Deutschland soll auch zukünftig Braunkohle abgebaut werden dürfen.	✓	✓	✗	✗
21. Unternehmen sollen weiterhin Leiharbeiterinnen und Leiharbeiter beschäftigen dürfen.	✓	–	✓	✗
22. In Deutschland geborene und aufgewachsene Kinder ausländischer Eltern sollen weiterhin neben der deutschen ihre zweite Staatsangehörigkeit behalten dürfen.	✓	✗	✓	✗
23. Bereits nach 40 Beitragsjahren soll der Renteneintritt abschlagsfrei möglich sein.	–	–	✓	✓
24. Deutschland soll zu einer nationalen Währung zurückkehren.	✗	✓	✗	✓
25. Die Frauenquote für die Aufsichtsräte börsennotierter Unternehmen soll abgeschafft werden.	✓	✓	✓	✓
26. Hohe Vermögen sollen besteuert werden.	✗	✗	✓	✓
27. Für begangene Straftaten sollen auch Kinder unter 14 Jahren verurteilt werden können.	✗	✓	✗	✓
28. Alle Bürgerinnen und Bürger sollen bei gesetzlichen Krankenkassen versichert sein müssen.	✗	✗	✓	✓
29. Der Bund soll weiterhin Projekte gegen Rechtsextremismus fördern.	✓	✗	✓	✗
30. Der Erwerb von selbstgenutztem Wohneigentum soll bis zu einer bestimmten Höhe steuerfrei sein.	✓	✓	–	✓
31. Rüstungsexporte aus Deutschland sollen ausnahmslos verboten werden.	✗	✗	✓	–
32. Der kontrollierte Verkauf von Cannabis soll generell erlaubt sein.	✓	✗	✓	✗
33. Der Solidaritätszuschlag soll Ende 2019 vollständig abgeschafft werden.	✓	✓	✓	✗
34. Anerkannten Flüchtlingen, die sich Integrationsmaßnahmen verweigern, sollen die Leistungen gekürzt werden können.	✓	✓	✗	–
35. Eltern sollen für ihre Kinder bis zum Ende der Grundschulzeit einen Rechtsanspruch auf Ganztagsbetreuung erhalten.	–	✗	✓	✓
36. Der Gottesbezug im Grundgesetz soll bestehen bleiben.	–	✓	✗	✓
37. In Deutschland soll es ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen geben.	✗	✗	✓	✗
38. Die Zusammenarbeit der Mitgliedstaaten in der Europäischen Union soll verstärkt werden.	✓	✗	✓	✗

bpb Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung

Appendix B: Results of the deviation analysis

Statement number	CDU/CSU	SPD	Die Linke	Bündnis 90 /Die Grüne	FDP	AfD
1.	0	0	0	0	3	1
2.	0	3	3	3	3	0
3.	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.	0	0	0	0	0	0
5.	0	0	0	0	0	3
6.	3	1	0	0	0	3
7.	0	0	0	0	2	0
8.	3	0	0	3	0	0
9.	0	3	0	0	0	0
10.	0	2	0	0	0	0
11.	3	0	0	0	0	0
12.	1	0	0	0	3	0
13.	3	3	3	3	3	3
14.	2	0	0	0	3	0
15.	0	0	0	0	3	3
16.	3	0	0	0	3	3
17.	0	0	0	0	3	1
18.	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	1	0	0	0	0	3
20.	2	0	0	0	3	0
21.	0	0	0	0	0	2
22.	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	0	0	0	3	2	2
24.	0	0	0	0	0	0
25.	0	0	0	0	0	0
26.	2	2	0	0	0	0
27.	3	3	3	3	3	0
28.	0	0	0	0	0	3
29.	0	0	0	0	0	3
30.	0	1	3	0	0	0
31.	0	2	0	1	0	3
32.	3	3	0	0	0	0
33.	2	0	3	0	0	3
34.	0	3	3	0	3	3
35.	0	0	0	0	0	3
36.	2	2	0	2	0	0
37.	3	3	0	0	0	3
38.	0	0	1	0	0	0

Legend:

0 = no deviation   1 = weak deviation   2 = strong deviation   3 = not present

Appendix C: Classification of the (translated) Wahl-O-Mat statements

Wahl-O-Mat Statements (translated)	Category
1. The German Bundeswehr should be allowed to be deployed domestically in the fight against terrorism.	2
2. Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed more heavily.	3
3. The reception of asylum seekers would be subject to an annual ceiling.	2
4. The expansion of renewable energies is to be permanently financially supported by the federal government.	1
5. The federal government should provide more funds for social housing.	3
6. BAföG should generally be paid regardless of parents´ income.	3
7. Video surveillance in public places should be extended.	2
8. Germany should agree to a debt cut for Greece.	1
9. General speed limit on motorways!	1
10. Germany´s defence spending is to be increased.	2
11. Operators of websites should be legally obliged to delete false information ("Fake News") to which they have been referred.	1
12. Organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming.	1
13. Child support should only be paid to German families.	2
14. Employment contracts should continue to be allowed to be fixed-term without giving reasons.	4
15. Children must be vaccinated against infectious diseases.	4
16. All banks should be nationalized.	2
17. The genocide of the European Jews should continue to be an essential component of German remembrance culture.	1
18. Budget surpluses are to be used mainly to reduce government debt.	4
19. It should be possible to limit the total number of farm animals in agricultural operations in a municipality.	1
20. Lignite is to be allowed to be mined in the future in Germany.	2
21. Companies should continue to be allowed to employ temporary workers.	4
22. Children, who are born and raised in Germany by foreign parents, should continue to be allowed to retain their second citizenship in addition to the German citizenship.	1
23. After 40 years of contribution, retirement should be possible without deductions.	3
24. Germany should return to a national currency.	2
25. The quota for women on the supervisory board of listed companies is to be abolished.	4
26. High assets should be taxed.	3
27. Children under the age of 14 should also be able to be sentenced for offences committed.	2
28. All citizens should have to be insured with statutory health insurance funds.	3
29. The federal government should continue to promote projects against right-wing extremism.	1
30. The acquisition of owner-occupied residential property should be tax-free up to a certain amount.	4
31. Arms exports from Germany must be banned without exception.	3
32. The controlled sale of cannabis should be allowed.	1
33. The solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished by the end of 2019.	4
34. Benefits should be reduced for recognised refugees who refuse integration measures.	2
35. Parents should have a legal right to all-day care for their children until the end of primary schooling.	3
36. The reference to God in the German constitution should remain.	2
37. In Germany there is to be an unconditional basic income.	3
38. The cooperation between the member states in the European Union is to be strengthened.	1

Legend: 1 = Libertarian ‖ 2 = Authoritarian ‖ 3 = Egalitarian ‖ 4 = Elitist

Positioning CDU/CSU:

Wahl-O-Mat Statements (translated)	Wahl-O-Mat	Election manifesto
1. The German Bundeswehr should be allowed to be deployed domestically in the fight against terrorism.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
2. Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed more heavily.	(1|0)	(1|0)
3. The reception of asylum seekers would be subject to an annual ceiling.	-	-
4. The expansion of renewable energies is to be permanently financially supported by the federal government.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
5. The federal government should provide more funds for social housing.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
6. BAföG should generally be paid regardless of parents´ income.	(1|0)	-
7. Video surveillance in public places should be extended.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
8. Germany should agree to a debt cut for Greece.	(0|-1)	-
9. General speed limit on motorways!	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
10. Germany´s defence spending is to be increased.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
11. Operators of websites should be legally obliged to delete false information ("Fake News") to which they have been referred.	(0|1)	-
12. Organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming.	-	(0|-1)
13. Child support should only be paid to German families.	(0|1)	-
14. Employment contracts should continue to be allowed to be fixed-term without giving reasons.	(1|0)	(-1|0)
15. Children must be vaccinated against infectious diseases.	(1|0)	-
16. All banks should be nationalized.0)	(0|1)	-
17. The genocide of the European Jews should continue to be an essential component of German remembrance culture.	(0|1)	(0|1)
18. Budget surpluses are to be used mainly to reduce government debt.	-	-
19. It should be possible to limit the total number of farm animals in agricultural operations in a municipality.	-	(0|1)
20. Lignite is to be allowed to be mined in the future in Germany.	-	(0|1)
21. Companies should continue to be allowed to employ temporary workers.	(1|0)	(1|0)
22. Children, who are born and raised in Germany by foreign parents, should continue to be allowed to retain their second citizenship in addition to the German citizenship.	-	-
23. After 40 years of contribution, retirement should be possible without deductions.	(1|0)	(1|0)
24. Germany should return to a national currency.	(0|1)	(0|1)
25. The quota for women on the supervisory board of listed companies is to be abolished.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
26. High assets should be taxed.	-	(1|0)
27. Children under the age of 14 should also be able to be sentenced for offences committed.	(0|1)	-
28. All citizens should have to be insured with statutory health insurance funds.	(1|0)	(1|0)
29. The federal government should continue to promote projects against right-wing extremism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
30. The acquisition of owner-occupied residential property should be tax-free up to a certain amount.	(1|0)	(1|0)
31. Arms exports from Germany must be banned without exception.	(1|0)	(1|0)
32. The controlled sale of cannabis should be allowed.	(0|-1)	-
33. The solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished by the end of 2019.	-	(1|0)
34. Benefits should be reduced for recognised refugees who refuse integration measures.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
35. Parents should have a legal right to all-day care for their children until the end of primary schooling.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
36. The reference to God in the German constitution should remain.	(0|-1)	(0|1)
37. In Germany there is to be an unconditional basic income.	(1|0)	-
38. The cooperation between the member states in the European Union is to be strengthened.	(0|1)	(0|1)
Total:	(7|-1)	(4|0)

Legend:　　(0|1) = Libertarian　　　　　　　(0|-1) = Authoritarian
　　　　　　　(-1|0) = Egalitarian　　　　　　　(1|0) = Elitist

Positioning SPD:

Wahl-O-Mat Statements (translated)	Wahl-O-Mat	Election manifesto
1. The German Bundeswehr should be allowed to be deployed domestically in the fight against terrorism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
2. Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed more heavily.	(1|0)	-
3. The reception of asylum seekers would be subject to an annual ceiling.	(0|1)	(0|1)
4. The expansion of renewable energies is to be permanently financially supported by the federal government.	(0|1)	(0|1)
5. The federal government should provide more funds for social housing.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
6. BAföG should generally be paid regardless of parents´ income.	-	(-1|0)
7. Video surveillance in public places should be extended.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
8. Germany should agree to a debt cut for Greece.	-	-
9. General speed limit on motorways!	(0|1)	-
10. Germany´s defence spending is to be increased.	-	(0|-1)
11. Operators of websites should be legally obliged to delete false information ("Fake News") to which they have been referred.	(0|1)	(0|1)
12. Organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
13. Child support should only be paid to German families.	(0|1)	-
14. Employment contracts should continue to be allowed to be fixed-term without giving reasons.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
15. Children must be vaccinated against infectious diseases.	(-1|0)	-
16. All banks should be nationalized.	(0|1)	(0|1)
17. The genocide of the European Jews should continue to be an essential component of German remembrance culture.	(0|1)	(0|1)
18. Budget surpluses are to be used mainly to reduce government debt.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
19. It should be possible to limit the total number of farm animals in agricultural operations in a municipality.	(0|1)	(0|1)
20. Lignite is to be allowed to be mined in the future in Germany.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
21. Companies should continue to be allowed to employ temporary workers.	(1|0)	(1|0)
22. Children, who are born and raised in Germany by foreign parents, should continue to be allowed to retain their second citizenship in addition to the German citizenship.	(0|1)	(0|1)
23. After 40 years of contribution, retirement should be possible without deductions.	(1|0)	(1|0)
24. Germany should return to a national currency.	(0|1)	(0|1)
25. The quota for women on the supervisory board of listed companies is to be abolished.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
26. High assets should be taxed.	-	(-1|0)
27. Children under the age of 14 should also be able to be sentenced for offences committed.	(0|1)	-
28. All citizens should have to be insured with statutory health insurance funds.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
29. The federal government should continue to promote projects against right-wing extremism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
30. The acquisition of owner-occupied residential property should be tax-free up to a certain amount.	(-1|0)	(1|0)
31. Arms exports from Germany must be banned without exception.	-	(-1|0)
32. The controlled sale of cannabis should be allowed.	(0|-1)	-
33. The solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished by the end of 2019.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
34. Benefits should be reduced for recognised refugees who refuse integration measures.	(0|-1)	-
35. Parents should have a legal right to all-day care for their children until the end of primary schooling.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
36. The reference to God in the German constitution should remain.	(0|-1)	(0|1)
37. In Germany there is to be an unconditional basic income.	(1|0)	-
38. The cooperation between the member states in the European Union is to be strengthened.	(0|1)	(0|1)
Total:	(-5|8)	(-7|8)

Legend: (0\|1) = Libertarian   (0\|-1) = Authoritarian
(-1\|0) = Egalitarian   (1\|0) = Elitist

Positioning Die Linke:

Wahl-O-Mat Statements (translated)	Wahl-O-Mat	Election manifesto
1. The German Bundeswehr should be allowed to be deployed domestically in the fight against terrorism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
2. Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed more heavily.	(-1|0)	-
3. The reception of asylum seekers would be subject to an annual ceiling.	(0|1)	(0|1)
4. The expansion of renewable energies is to be permanently financially supported by the federal government.	(0|1)	(0|1)
5. The federal government should provide more funds for social housing.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
6. BAföG should generally be paid regardless of parents´ income.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
7. Video surveillance in public places should be extended.	(0|1)	(0|1)
8. Germany should agree to a debt cut for Greece.	(0|1)	(0|1)
9. General speed limit on motorways!	(0|1)	(0|1)
10. Germany´s defence spending is to be increased.	(0|1)	(0|1)
11. Operators of websites should be legally obliged to delete false information ("Fake News") to which they have been referred.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
12. Organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming.	(0|1)	(0|1)
13. Child support should only be paid to German families.	(0|1)	-
14. Employment contracts should continue to be allowed to be fixed-term without giving reasons.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
15. Children must be vaccinated against infectious diseases.	(-1|0)	-
16. All banks should be nationalized.	(0|1)	(0|1)
17. The genocide of the European Jews should continue to be an essential component of German remembrance culture.	(0|1)	(0|1)
18. Budget surpluses are to be used mainly to reduce government debt.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
19. It should be possible to limit the total number of farm animals in agricultural operations in a municipality.	(0|1)	(0|1)
20. Lignite is to be allowed to be mined in the future in Germany.	(0|1)	(0|1)
21. Companies should continue to be allowed to employ temporary workers.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
22. Children, who are born and raised in Germany by foreign parents, should continue to be allowed to retain their second citizenship in addition to the German citizenship.	(0|1)	(0|1)
23. After 40 years of contribution, retirement should be possible without deductions.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
24. Germany should return to a national currency.	(0|1)	(0|1)
25. The quota for women on the supervisory board of listed companies is to be abolished.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
26. High assets should be taxed.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
27. Children under the age of 14 should also be able to be sentenced for offences committed.	(0|1)	-
28. All citizens should have to be insured with statutory health insurance funds.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
29. The federal government should continue to promote projects against right-wing extremism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
30. The acquisition of owner-occupied residential property should be tax-free up to a certain amount.	(-1|0)	-
31. Arms exports from Germany must be banned without exception.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
32. The controlled sale of cannabis should be allowed.	(0|1)	(0|1)
33. The solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished by the end of 2019.	(-1|0)	-
34. Benefits should be reduced for recognised refugees who refuse integration measures.	(0|1)	-
35. Parents should have a legal right to all-day care for their children until the end of primary schooling.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
36. The reference to God in the German constitution should remain.	(0|1)	(0|1)
37. In Germany there is to be an unconditional basic income.	-	-
38. The cooperation between the member states in the European Union is to be strengthened.	-	(0|1)
Total:	(-15|19)	(-11|17)

Legend: (0|1) = Libertarian   (0|-1) = Authoritarian
(-1|0) = Egalitarian   (1|0) = Elitist

Positioning Bündnis 90/Die Grünen:

Wahl-O-Mat Statements (translated)	Wahl-O-Mat	Election manifesto
1. The German Bundeswehr should be allowed to be deployed domestically in the fight against terrorism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
2. Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed more heavily.	(-1|0)	-
3. The reception of asylum seekers would be subject to an annual ceiling.	(0|1)	(0|1)
4. The expansion of renewable energies is to be permanently financially supported by the federal government.	(0|1)	(0|1)
5. The federal government should provide more funds for social housing.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
6. BAföG should generally be paid regardless of parents´ income.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
7. Video surveillance in public places should be extended.	(0|1)	(0|1)
8. Germany should agree to a debt cut for Greece.	(0|1)	-
9. General speed limit on motorways!	(0|1)	(0|1)
10. Germany´s defence spending is to be increased.	(0|1)	(0|1)
11. Operators of websites should be legally obliged to delete false information ("Fake News") to which they have been referred.	(0|1)	(0|1)
12. Organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming.	(0|1)	(0|1)
13. Child support should only be paid to German families.	(0|1)	-
14. Employment contracts should continue to be allowed to be fixed-term without giving reasons.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
15. Children must be vaccinated against infectious diseases.	(-1|0)	-
16. All banks should be nationalized.	(0|1)	(0|1)
17. The genocide of the European Jews should continue to be an essential component of German remembrance culture.	(0|1)	(0|1)
18. Budget surpluses are to be used mainly to reduce government debt.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
19. It should be possible to limit the total number of farm animals in agricultural operations in a municipality.	(0|1)	(0|1)
20. Lignite is to be allowed to be mined in the future in Germany.	(0|1)	(0|1)
21. Companies should continue to be allowed to employ temporary workers.	(1|0)	(1|0)
22. Children, who are born and raised in Germany by foreign parents, should continue to be allowed to retain their second citizenship in addition to the German citizenship.	(0|1)	(0|1)
23. After 40 years of contribution, retirement should be possible without deductions.	(1|0)	-
24. Germany should return to a national currency.	(0|1)	(0|1)
25. The quota for women on the supervisory board of listed companies is to be abolished.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
26. High assets should be taxed.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
27. Children under the age of 14 should also be able to be sentenced for offences committed.	(0|1)	-
28. All citizens should have to be insured with statutory health insurance funds.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
29. The federal government should continue to promote projects against right-wing extremism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
30. The acquisition of owner-occupied residential property should be tax-free up to a certain amount.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
31. Arms exports from Germany must be banned without exception.	(1|0)	(-1|0)
32. The controlled sale of cannabis should be allowed.	(0|1)	(0|1)
33. The solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished by the end of 2019.	-	-
34. Benefits should be reduced for recognised refugees who refuse integration measures.	-	-
35. Parents should have a legal right to all-day care for their children until the end of primary schooling.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
36. The reference to God in the German constitution should remain.	(0|-1)	(0|1)
37. In Germany there is to be an unconditional basic income.	-	-
38. The cooperation between the member states in the European Union is to be strengthened.	(0|1)	(0|1)
Total:	(-8|19)	(-9|18)

Legend:

(0|1) = Libertarian	(0|-1) = Authoritarian
(-1|0) = Egalitarian	(1|0) = Elitist

Positioning FDP:

Wahl-O-Mat Statements (translated)	Wahl-O-Mat	Election manifesto
1. The German Bundeswehr should be allowed to be deployed domestically in the fight against terrorism.	(0|1)	-
2. Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed more heavily.	(1|0)	-
3. The reception of asylum seekers would be subject to an annual ceiling.	(0|1)	(0|1)
4. The expansion of renewable energies is to be permanently financially supported by the federal government.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
5. The federal government should provide more funds for social housing.	(1|0)	(1|0)
6. BAföG should generally be paid regardless of parents´ income.	(-1|0)	(-1|0)
7. Video surveillance in public places should be extended.	-	(0|1)
8. Germany should agree to a debt cut for Greece.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
9. General speed limit on motorways!	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
10. Germany´s defence spending is to be increased.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
11. Operators of websites should be legally obliged to delete false information ("Fake News") to which they have been referred.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
12. Organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming.	(0|-1)	-
13. Child support should only be paid to German families.	(0|1)	-
14. Employment contracts should continue to be allowed to be fixed-term without giving reasons.	(1|0)	-
15. Children must be vaccinated against infectious diseases.	(1|0)	-
16. All banks should be nationalized.	(0|1)	-
17. The genocide of the European Jews should continue to be an essential component of German remembrance culture.	(0|1)	-
18. Budget surpluses are to be used mainly to reduce government debt.	(1|0)	(1|0)
19. It should be possible to limit the total number of farm animals in agricultural operations in a municipality.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
20. Lignite is to be allowed to be mined in the future in Germany.	(0|-1)	-
21. Companies should continue to be allowed to employ temporary workers.	(1|0)	(1|0)
22. Children, who are born and raised in Germany by foreign parents, should continue to be allowed to retain their second citizenship in addition to the German citizenship.	(0|1)	(0|1)
23. After 40 years of contribution, retirement should be possible without deductions.	-	(1|0)
24. Germany should return to a national currency.	(0|1)	(0|1)
25. The quota for women on the supervisory board of listed companies is to be abolished.	(1|0)	(1|0)
26. High assets should be taxed.	(1|0)	(1|0)
27. Children under the age of 14 should also be able to be sentenced for offences committed.	(0|1)	-
28. All citizens should have to be insured with statutory health insurance funds.	(1|0)	(1|0)
29. The federal government should continue to promote projects against right-wing extremism.	(0|1)	(0|1)
30. The acquisition of owner-occupied residential property should be tax-free up to a certain amount.	(1|0)	(1|0)
31. Arms exports from Germany must be banned without exception.	(1|0)	(1|0)
32. The controlled sale of cannabis should be allowed.	(0|1)	(0|1)
33. The solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished by the end of 2019.	(1|0)	(1|0)
34. Benefits should be reduced for recognised refugees who refuse integration measures.	(0|-1)	-
35. Parents should have a legal right to all-day care for their children until the end of primary schooling.	-	-
36. The reference to God in the German constitution should remain.	-	-
37. In Germany there is to be an unconditional basic income.	(1|0)	(1|0)
38. The cooperation between the member states in the European Union is to be strengthened.	(0|1)	(0|1)
Total:	(12|2)	(10|1)

Legend: (0\|1) = Libertarian (0\|-1) = Authoritarian
(-1\|0) = Egalitarian (1\|0) = Elitist

Positioning AfD:

Wahl-O-Mat Statements (translated)	Wahl-O-Mat	Election manifesto
1. The German Bundeswehr should be allowed to be deployed domestically in the fight against terrorism.	(0|1)	(0|-1)
2. Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed more heavily.	(1|0)	(1|0)
3. The reception of asylum seekers would be subject to an annual ceiling.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
4. The expansion of renewable energies is to be permanently financially supported by the federal government.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
5. The federal government should provide more funds for social housing.	(1|0)	-
6. BAföG should generally be paid regardless of parents´ income.	(-1|0)	-
7. Video surveillance in public places should be extended.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
8. Germany should agree to a debt cut for Greece.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
9. General speed limit on motorways!	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
10. Germany´s defence spending is to be increased.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
11. Operators of websites should be legally obliged to delete false information ("Fake News") to which they have been referred.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
12. Organic farming should be promoted more strongly than conventional farming.	(0|1)	(0|1)
13. Child support should only be paid to German families.	(0|1)	-
14. Employment contracts should continue to be allowed to be fixed-term without giving reasons.	-	-
15. Children must be vaccinated against infectious diseases.	(-1|0)	-
16. All banks should be nationalized.	(0|1)	-
17. The genocide of the European Jews should continue to be an essential component of German remembrance culture.	(0|1)	(0|-1)
18. Budget surpluses are to be used mainly to reduce government debt.	(1|0)	(1|0)
19. It should be possible to limit the total number of farm animals in agricultural operations in a municipality.	(0|1)	-
20. Lignite is to be allowed to be mined in the future in Germany.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
21. Companies should continue to be allowed to employ temporary workers.	-	(1|0)
22. Children, who are born and raised in Germany by foreign parents, should continue to be allowed to retain their second citizenship in addition to the German citizenship.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
23. After 40 years of contribution, retirement should be possible without deductions.	-	(1|0)
24. Germany should return to a national currency.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
25. The quota for women on the supervisory board of listed companies is to be abolished.	(1|0)	(1|0)
26. High assets should be taxed.	(1|0)	(1|0)
27. Children under the age of 14 should also be able to be sentenced for offences committed.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
28. All citizens should have to be insured with statutory health insurance funds.	(1|0)	-
29. The federal government should continue to promote projects against right-wing extremism.	(0|-1)	-
30. The acquisition of owner-occupied residential property should be tax-free up to a certain amount.	(1|0)	(1|0)
31. Arms exports from Germany must be banned without exception.	(1|0)	-
32. The controlled sale of cannabis should be allowed.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
33. The solidarity surcharge is to be completely abolished by the end of 2019.	(1|0)	-
34. Benefits should be reduced for recognised refugees who refuse integration measures.	(0|-1)	-
35. Parents should have a legal right to all-day care for their children until the end of primary schooling.	(1|0)	-
36. The reference to God in the German constitution should remain.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
37. In Germany there is to be an unconditional basic income.	(1|0)	-
38. The cooperation between the member states in the European Union is to be strengthened.	(0|-1)	(0|-1)
Total:	(9|-10)	(7|-15)

Legend: (0\|1) = Libertarian   (0\|-1) = Authoritarian
              (-1\|0) = Egalitarian   (1\|0) = Elitist

Appendix D: List of consulted documents

Election manifestos of the German federal election 2017 of:
-   The Union (consisting of the Christlich-Demokratische Union, CDU, and the Christlich-Soziale Union, CSU), 2017: "Für ein Deutschland in dem wir gut und gerne leben. Regierungsprogramm 2017-2021."
-   The Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland (SPD), 2017: "Zeit für mehr Gerechtigkeit. Unser Regierungsprogramm für Deutschland."
-   Die Linke, 2017: "Sozial. Gerecht. Frieden. Für alle."
-   The Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2017: "Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht. Bundestagswahlprogramm 2017"
-   The Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP), 2017: "Denken wir neu. Das Programm der Freien Demokraten zur Bundestagswahl 2017. "Schauen wir nicht länger zu."."
-   The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), 2017: "PROGRAMM FÜR DEUTSCHLAND. Wahlprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland für die Wahl zum Deutschen Bundestag am 24. September 2017."

These documents can be found in an attached zip-folder.