

How do elites view ideology? Analysing candidates' associations of left and right

Lukas Warode 

University of Mannheim, MZES, Mannheim, Germany

ABSTRACT

Political ideology is a fundamental aspect of politics and a well-researched area of political science, but difficult to measure. By examining the sentiment of political elites' associations with 'left' and 'right', this study shows the direction and extent of elites' attitudes – measured by sentiment analysis – towards ideology by analysing three waves of German Bundestag election candidate surveys (2013, 2017 and 2021). The results show that there is an asymmetry in attitudes towards political ideology among German candidates. Centre-left and left-wing candidates consistently view left ideology positively and right ideology negatively. Compared to left-leaning candidates, right-leaning candidates, except the far-right AfD in 2017 and 2021, have less positive attitudes towards right ideology and less negative attitudes towards left ideology. A key implication is that the left–right continuum may need to be partially reconsidered or reconceptualised, as elite attitudes towards ideological poles can significantly shape political behaviour, communication, and representation.

KEYWORDS Political ideology; left and right; political elites; sentiment analysis; open-ended survey responses

Political ideology as a system or shared set of political ideas and norms (Knight 2006) is central to approaching the complexity of political dynamics for both researchers and participants in public discourse. The left–right dimension is central in the study of political ideology (Downs 1957). Previous research shows that the terms 'left' and 'right' have different understandings across countries (Beattie *et al.* 2022; Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020; Lachat 2018; Tavits and Letki 2009; Zuell and Scholz 2019), but also within countries (Bauer *et al.* 2017; Dinas 2012; Yeung and Quek 2025). The debate about the meaning and identification of left and right is a polarising issue. Just recently, there was a public

CONTACT Lukas Warode  lukas.warode@uni-mannheim.de

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outcry in Germany when the centre-right CDU was described by a public broadcasting service as a right-wing party.¹ Several CDU politicians had a problem with being placed in the same group – the political right – as the far-right AfD, while some CDU elites even questioned whether the CDU was a party of the political right, emphasising the party's position in the political centre – the CDU describes itself as 'die Mitte' ('the centre'). This incident raises several questions that are fundamental to the usage and measurement of political ideology, since research, e.g. Jolly *et al.* (2022), and much of the public would normally agree that the CDU qualifies as a centre-right party, especially from a historical perspective.

In this research note, I examine how political elites in Germany view ideology across the political spectrum, by proposing a framework for analysing the attitudes of German federal election candidates towards left and right. The case of Germany presents an interesting scenario with a far-right totalitarian political legacy – Nazism – and a rising far-right party – the AfD – from which other parties, including the centre-right CDU/CSU and FDP, try to demarcate themselves. My theoretical expectation incorporates these contemporary political circumstances and argues that while political positions matter for attitudes towards left and right, there is an asymmetry that is skewed towards the left. I expect candidates from left-leaning parties to view 'left' positively and 'right' negatively. For right-leaning, in particular centre-right, candidates, I expect them to view 'right' less positively (than left-leaning candidates view 'left' positively) and 'left' less negatively (than left-leaning candidates view 'right' negatively).

Empirically, I use three waves of GLES candidate surveys for the most recent federal elections 2013, 2017 and 2021 (GLES 2014, 2018, 2023). I use open-ended response associations with left and right (Bauer *et al.* 2017; Jankowski *et al.* 2023; Zollinger 2024) to measure attitudes towards ideology and party affiliation, as well as the left–right self-placement, as indications of political positions. Methodologically, I apply a validated sentiment analysis framework that incorporates dictionary (Rauh 2018) and transformer models (Guhr *et al.* 2020; Laurer *et al.* 2023).

The results confirm that (a) attitudes towards left and right are systematically associated by political position and (b) that the attitudes are asymmetrically skewed towards the left. The resulting 'left bias' is persistent across three waves and different model specifications. Candidates from left-wing and centre-left parties consistently view 'left' as positive and 'right' as negative, while the dynamic is less pronounced for centre-right candidates, who on average do not view the right as positive and the left as negative as their left-leaning counterparts. The AfD's move

to the far right in recent years is reflected in an increasingly positive (negative) attitude towards the right (left), leading to a clear demarcation from left and centre-right parties.

This article advances the study of left–right ideology through a novel focus on elite attitudes. The implications for research and the public are potentially manifold. Systematic attitude asymmetries could foster elite polarisation and have potential downstream effects on mass polarisation, while such asymmetries could also shape public discourse and political representation, especially if divergent attitudes between representatives and constituents extend to substantive policy issues.

Elite attitudes towards left–right ideology

Political ideology, often conceptualised as a latent variable, reflects the idea that political preferences are interconnected within a coherent and stable system, a perspective that has remained a consistent focus of political science research over time (Carmines and D’Amico 2015; Knight 2006). The left–right continuum, central to the study of ideology, functions as a single dimension to structure political competition (Downs 1957) and serves as an overarching ‘superissue’ (Arian and Shamir 1983). Left and right still serve as relevant foundational markers in political systems to simplify political dynamics (Cochrane 2015; Jost 2021).

Associations and understandings of ideology, such as ‘isms’ like conservatism, liberalism and socialism (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2018), carry certain attitudes towards left and right. While individuals position themselves on a left–right scale, they have certain ideas of related isms projected onto the left–right continuum. Individuals may also have different associations of what is left and right in terms of isms, e.g. some may see socialism as the most left-wing manifestation, while for others that place may be taken by communism (Bauer *et al.* 2017).

Political elites play a crucial role in this context. First, as elected representatives and central figures in public discourse, they play a crucial role in several aspects of politics, ranging from political representation and communication to policy-making and governing capabilities (Körösényi 2018). Second, their use of ideology is characterised by ‘political sophistication’, which translates into a more informed and accurate view of left and right compared to the average citizen (Gallina 2023; Lupton *et al.* 2015). However, most research deals with citizens’ (divergent) left–right associations (Bauer *et al.* 2017; Caprara and Vecchione 2018; Zuell and Scholz 2019; Zollinger 2024), while elites receive less emphasis (Jankowski *et al.* 2023), despite their stressed relevance for the political system. Attitudes towards ideology have not been studied in this context. This research note addresses this gap by examining elite attitudes

towards left and right, given the continuing relevance of left and right for political behaviour.

Asymmetrical left–right attitudes: the case of Germany

The German context provides an interesting scenario for studying elite attitudes towards left–right ideology. As outlined in the introduction, the German political and party system raises the question of how elites view ideological labels across the political spectrum. In a default scenario, both left and right elites should view ‘their’ ideology positively and the ‘opposing’ ideology negatively – referring to a symmetrical attitude regime – as shown in [Figure 1](#).

In Germany, attitudes towards the political right are influenced by its historical legacy (Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020; Sierp 2014) and efforts to distance itself from the far-right AfD (Arzheimer and Berning 2019). Sierp (2014) highlights how the atrocities of the Nazi regime have strongly stigmatised the label ‘right’, a distinction that is evident in cross-country comparisons. While direct causal links to Nazism are difficult to establish, contemporary political culture and discourse, shaped by this legacy, should influence attitudes towards the right.

While this should give left-leaning elites reasons to be even more negative towards the right, I also expect centre-right political actors to distance themselves from the label ‘right’. In terms of party politics, I assume that the Christian democratic conservative centre-right CDU/CSU and the liberal centre-right FDP do not want to be grouped together with the increasingly far-right AfD (see [Appendix A](#) in the [Online Appendix](#) for an elaboration). Hence, centre-right elites should have a less positive attitude (0 instead of +) towards right ideology. I expect elites from left parties (centre-left social democratic SPD, centre-left Greens, and left-wing Linke) to have a stable positive attitude towards the left and a strong negative attitude towards the right. Therefore, I formulate the asymmetry hypothesis, which states that right ideology is viewed more negatively (less positively) than left ideology, as depicted in [Figure 2](#).

The expectation regarding the far-right AfD candidates remains somewhat unclear. There is reason to believe that the party, especially after its

	Left Elite	Right Elite
Attitude towards Left	+	–
Attitude towards Right	–	+

Figure 1. Symmetrical attitudes of left and right elites towards left and right ideology.

	Left Elite	Right Elite
Attitude towards Left	+	-
Attitude towards Right	--	0

Figure 2. Expected (asymmetrical) attitudes of left and right elites towards left and right ideology.

move to the far right, should also represent a unique case in the attitude regime. Therefore, I expect that after 2013, AfD elites will be characterised by a distinctly positive attitude towards ‘right’ and a negative attitude towards ‘left’.

Germany’s political history includes both the far-right Nazi regime and the more recent, geographically limited, far-left German Democratic Republic in East Germany. Based on the post-authoritarian ideological bias mechanism (Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020) and the right-wing success in East Germany (Volk 2023), it is crucial to examine whether East German elites exhibit specific anti-left and pro-right attitudes. The empirical analysis (Figure A8 in the Online Appendix) includes robustness checks for this mechanism.

Research design and data

This study examines how political elites view left and right, taking into account their party affiliation and ideological position. Focusing on Germany, it examines differences in elite attitudes towards left–right ideology based on sentiment analysis of open-ended responses asking respondents how they would describe left and right (see Appendix F in the Online Appendix for survey item details) from the three most recent GLES candidate surveys (GLES 2014, 2018, 2023). I compare sentiments across parties and predict them using left–right self-placement.

Left–right attitude asymmetries can be measured by analysing the sentiment of associations across positions on the left–right continuum (see Figure A1 in the Online Appendix). Symmetry exists when individuals equidistant from the ideological centre (e.g. 5 and 7 on an 11-point scale from 1 to 11) have equally positive attitudes towards their own ideology and equally negative attitudes towards the opposing ideology. When this balance is absent, as argued earlier, there is an asymmetry or ‘bias’ (see Appendix B in the Online Appendix for an example-based discussion of semantic labels across parties).

Sentiment analysis is a valuable tool in political science for detecting positivity and negativity in political texts. Using validated sentiment dictionaries (Rauh 2018), researchers can comprehensively analyse textual

sources. I adopt an established operationalisation of sentiment that allows for the detection of sentiment asymmetry (Young and Soroka 2012: 215):

$$\textit{Sentiment Score} = \frac{N \textit{ positive terms} - N \textit{ negative terms}}{N \textit{ all terms}} \quad (1)$$

The formula for calculating the *sentiment score* is as follows: the difference between the number of positive terms and the number of negative terms is taken, and then the result is normalised by the total number of terms in the text. This is applicable on the individual (candidate) level, but also on the party level, where we would aggregate based on either detected terms (dictionary approach) or predicted labels (classification model – positive or negative class).

By validating a German sentiment dictionary, Rauh (2018) demonstrates the applicability of the sentiment score for German political texts. His ‘augmented approach’, which includes more dictionary words, proves to be more stable and valid than standard dictionaries. While sentiment analysis, especially using dictionaries, is often seen as a simple yet effective method (Rauh 2018; Schwalbach 2022), two key questions emerge: (1) Can dictionary methods reliably estimate ‘sentiment asymmetry’? and (2) Is sentiment analysis the appropriate tool for detecting ideological asymmetries?

For question (1), comparing dictionary results with transformer-based models and fine-tuned zero-shot classifiers is essential for validation.² While dictionaries provide interpretability, they lack the complexity of transformers in handling text beyond bag-of-words. Validation is crucial in text-based social science research (Grimmer and Stewart 2013). I therefore present results from three models: a sentiment dictionary (Rauh 2018), a sentiment transformer trained on German text (Guhr *et al.* 2020), and a fine-tuned zero-shot classifier for political text (Laurer *et al.* 2023).

In order to answer (2), it is important to define the objective of *sentiment analysis*, which is to assess a text’s ‘general polarity on a positive-negative scale’ (Bestvater and Monroe 2023: 234). A prominent related but distinct method is *stance detection*, which aims to indicate individual positions on concrete propositions (Burnham 2024). The analysis includes a stance detection model to validate the sentiment analysis (see [Appendix C](#) in the [Online Appendix](#) for a longer comparison of stance detection and sentiment analysis).

The GLES candidate surveys provide a valid representation of leading political elites, also partially including final elected representatives in parliament (see [Appendix D](#) in the [Online Appendix](#) for details on sample composition). After removing missing values, the dataset contains 900 respondents in 2013, 700 in 2017, and 735 in 2021.

Results

Figure 3 provides descriptive evidence that generally confirms the asymmetry hypothesis. The x-axis indicates the sentiment score from negative (left) to positive (right), while the y-axis presents the parties ordered by their sentiment score.

Left-leaning parties (SPD, Greens, The Left) consistently show positive sentiment towards ‘left’ and negative sentiment towards ‘right’ in all three waves of the survey. Right-leaning parties show mixed results: the CDU has positive sentiment for the left in 2013, but shifts slightly negative by 2017 and 2021, while maintaining limited positive sentiment for the right. The FDP’s results are mixed and largely negative for both sides, reflecting its centrist, liberal ideology, which opposes many typical left- and right-wing policies. Defining the FDP’s position in this binary left–right distinction is not easy, as its classical liberal legacy would categorise the party both as economically right and socio-culturally rather left. The AfD’s strong positivity towards the right and negativity towards the left in 2017 and 2021 underscores its far-right positioning and is in line with the radical right normalisation trend (Dinas *et al.* 2024; Valentim 2024), confirming its outlier status in the German party system (see Appendix E in the Online Appendix for an extensive discussion of the results).

Figure 4 shows the magnitude as the difference between left and right party sentiment scores (subtracting left from right scores to get an indication of overall attitudes). The magnitude confirms that candidates from left parties have a stronger sentiment towards ‘left’ than candidates from the centre-right CDU and FDP have towards ‘right’. Only the CSU in

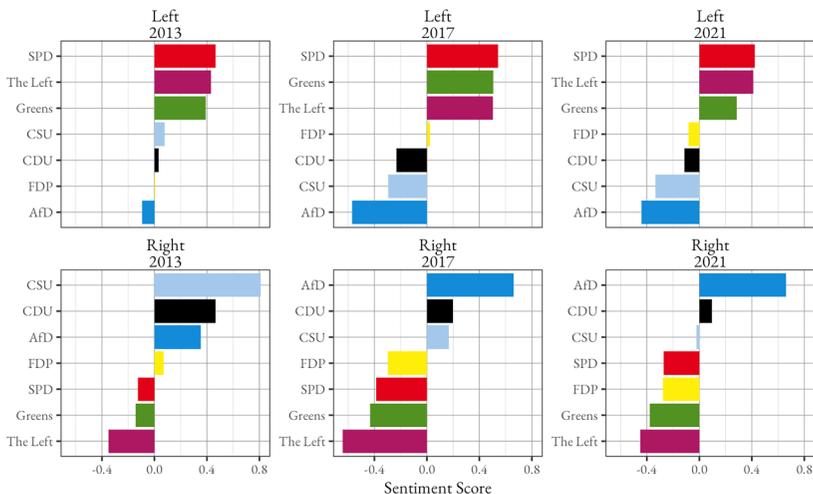


Figure 3. Sentiment dictionary (Rauh 2018): left and right sentiment scores by party. GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

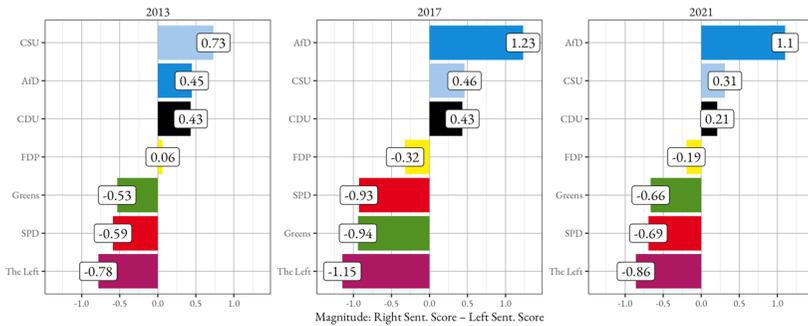


Figure 4. Sentiment dictionary (Rauh 2018): magnitude of left and right sentiment scores by party. GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

2013 has a higher magnitude in favour of the right than candidates from left parties, but this has limited inferential potential as they represent by far the smallest group of candidates. The magnitude allows us to analyse the ‘attitude strength’. Since 2017, the AfD is characterised by a particularly positive sentiment towards the right and a negative sentiment towards the left, which is slightly higher than The Left’s magnitude in favour of the left in 2017. In 2021, the AfD has the strongest magnitude by an even larger margin, surpassing The Left on the left side of the ideological continuum.

In order to validate the dictionary model, Figure 5 presents the party sentiment scores for the zero-shot model (in the same way as Figure 3), which classified open-ended survey responses as either ‘positiv’ (‘positive’) or ‘negativ’ (‘negative’). Figure A6 in the Online Appendix shows the absolute frequencies of predicted classes by the sentiment zero-shot model per year and party.

Comparing the two figures, it is clear that there is a strong association between both the sentiment dictionary application and the zero-shot classifier. Some patterns are even more pronounced. The centre-right liberal FDP elites oppose both left and right more strongly than in the sentiment dictionary model. The AfD’s shift to the right aligns with the sentiment dictionary model, while the ‘left bloc’ (SPD, Greens and The Left) consistently holds a positive attitude towards the left and a negative attitude towards the right. The CSU’s results are even slightly higher than those of the AfD in 2017. While it is to be expected that CSU candidates are on average more right-wing than CDU candidates, as was seen, for example, during the European migrant crisis in 2015, it is important to note that the CSU forms the smallest group of candidates, which makes the group more susceptible to inappropriate conclusions.

Figure 6 shows the magnitudes of party sentiment scores, while the heatmap appears in the Online Appendix (Figure A4). The magnitudes of

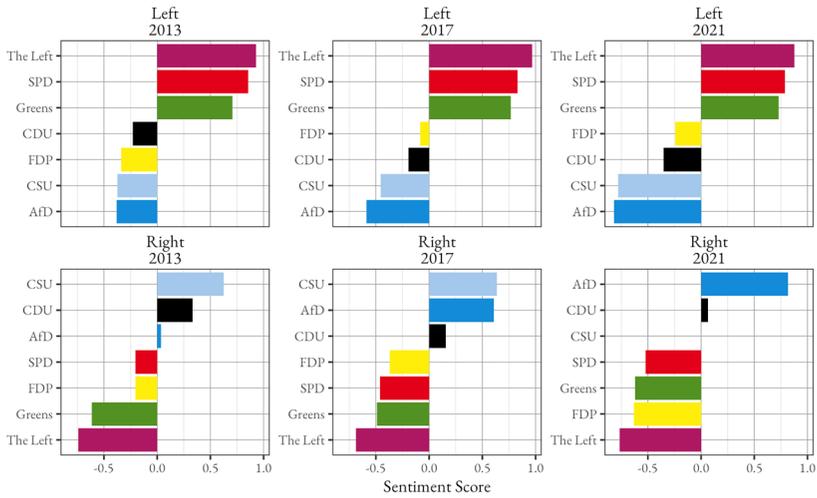


Figure 5. Zero-shot classification model (Laurer *et al.* 2023): left and right sentiment scores by party. GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

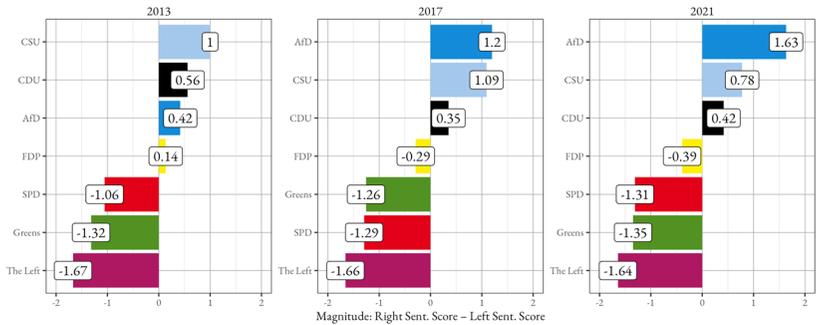


Figure 6. Zero-shot classification model (Laurer *et al.* 2023): magnitude of left and right sentiment scores by party. GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

the zero-shot sentiment model correspond to the magnitudes of the sentiment dictionary. There are some minor inconsistencies, for example the AfD has a stronger ‘right magnitude’ in 2021 than in 2017, while this is reversed in the dictionary model. The results for the CDU and FDP are even stronger in comparison to the dictionary model. The CDU always has a much weaker right-leaning magnitude compared to the strength of left-leaning magnitudes for parties on the left. While being slightly in favour of the right in 2013, the FDP has a small left-leaning magnitude in 2017 and 2021.

Figure 7 compares the correlations between the sentiment dictionary model, the fine-tuned zero-shot classifier (A) and the German sentiment classifier (B), restricted to ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ predictions for

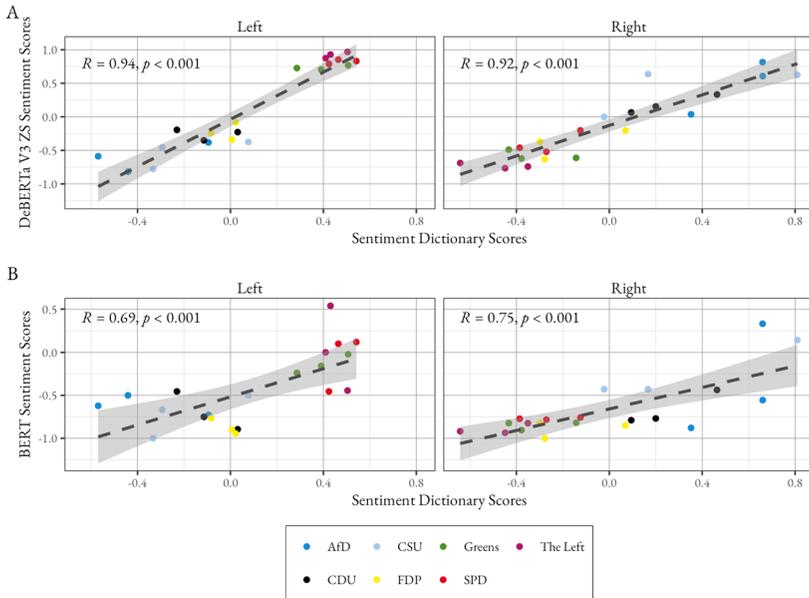


Figure 7. (A) Correlations between sentiment dictionary model (Rauh 2018) and zero-shot classification model (Laurer *et al.* 2023). (B) Correlations between sentiment dictionary model (Rauh 2018) and German sentiment model (Guhr *et al.* 2020). GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

comparability. Strong correlations ($R=0.68$ to $R=0.94$) validate the research design, especially the two-class zero-shot model. These results confirm the suitability of both dictionary-based and transformer models for analysing ideological attitudes at the party level.³

The analysis so far has focused on the aggregate party level. Figure 8 shows the predicted probabilities of a pooled individual-level logistic regression across the three waves of the left-right self-placement variable on positive attitudes towards left ideology (red) and right ideology (blue) from the zero-shot classification model. The expected relationship holds for both left and right responses, with left–right self-placement significantly predicting sentiment ($p < 0.001$). Higher right-leaning self-placement correlates with a lower probability of positive sentiment towards the left and a higher probability of positive sentiment towards the right.

Figure 9 shows multi-level logistic model predictions for left (top) and right (bottom) positive sentiment, including party affiliation, survey year and left-right self-placement. While party differences are not statistically significant, important trends emerge. The left–right self-placement is in line with expectations and the pooled logistic model. For the left item, the intercepts vary by party, with Green candidates showing the steepest negative slope, suggesting a possible ‘right faction’. Predictions for the

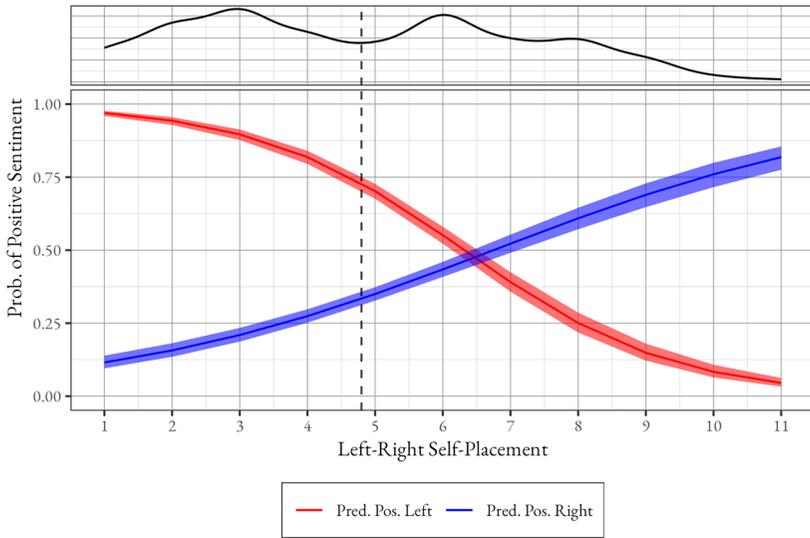


Figure 8. Pooled logistic regression on predicting positive sentiment of left and right. Predicted probabilities of positive sentiment for left and right open-ended survey responses based on left-right self-placement. Vertical dotted line indicates mean of left-right self-placement (4.7). GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

Greens with a self-placement above 7 are empirically meaningless, as Green candidates never have a score higher than 7. For the right item, AfD and CDU/CSU candidates show stronger positive views of the right as their self-placement shifts to the right, highlighting the greater impact of self-placement on the attitudes of right-wing candidates. Moderately right-wing candidates are less likely to view the right positively than their more right-wing counterparts.

The [Online Appendix](#) also includes a test of the East German anti-left assumption (Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020; Volk 2023). There are no significant results for East German candidates in any model specification (Figure A8 in the [Online Appendix](#)), while the insignificant trend is also contrary to what was expected. East German candidates are slightly less likely to have a positive attitude towards the right and slightly more likely to have a positive attitude towards the left.

Figure A9 in the [Online Appendix](#) uses the party sentiment score framework, but differentiates between candidates who were elected in the previous federal election and those who were not, and again finds no difference despite the skewed distribution of the variable (the majority of candidates were not elected in the last election).

Semantic validation is featured in Figure 10, which shows the most frequent left and right words associated with predicted sentiment, resulting in a 2×2 framework. Overall, it reflects that sentiment is associated

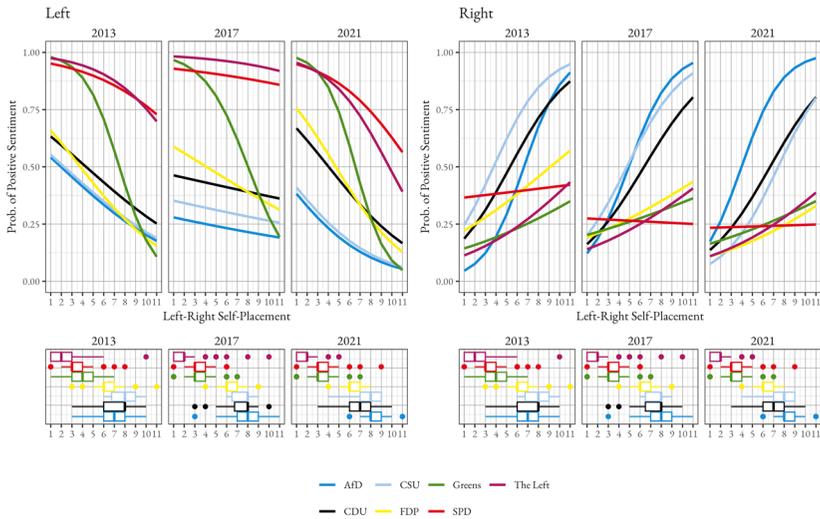


Figure 9. Multi-level logistic regression on predicting positive sentiment of left and right. Random intercepts and random slopes for left–right self-placement, party and survey year on the candidate level. GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

with distinct semantic associations. For example, left-leaning elites associate ‘Rassismus’ (‘racism’, negative) with the right and ‘Gerechtigkeit’ (‘justice’, positive) with the left, while right-leaning elites associate ‘Sicherheit’ (‘security’, positive) with the right and ‘Bevormundung’ (‘paternalism’, negative) with the left. The [Online Appendix](#) also features a comprehensive overview of the most frequent left and right word associations by party and year ([Figure A5](#)).

Discussion

In this research note, I analyse the attitudes of party elites towards left and right using open-ended survey responses from German Bundestag candidates (2013, 2017 and 2021). Left elites have a more positive view of left ideology than right elites have of right ideology. This asymmetry in attitudes is consistent across all three waves of the survey, with the AfD since 2017 standing out from this asymmetry with clear positive attitudes towards the right and negative attitudes towards the left. The results are stable across four model specifications and are consistent with left–right self-placement at the individual level.

The study of ideological associations in open-ended survey responses is becoming increasingly important (Bauer *et al.* 2017; Gidron and Tichelbaecker 2025; Jankowski *et al.* 2023; Zuell and Scholz 2019; Zollinger 2024), focusing primarily on citizens. My study advances this by (1) examining sentiment-based attitudes and (2) elite (candidate) instead of

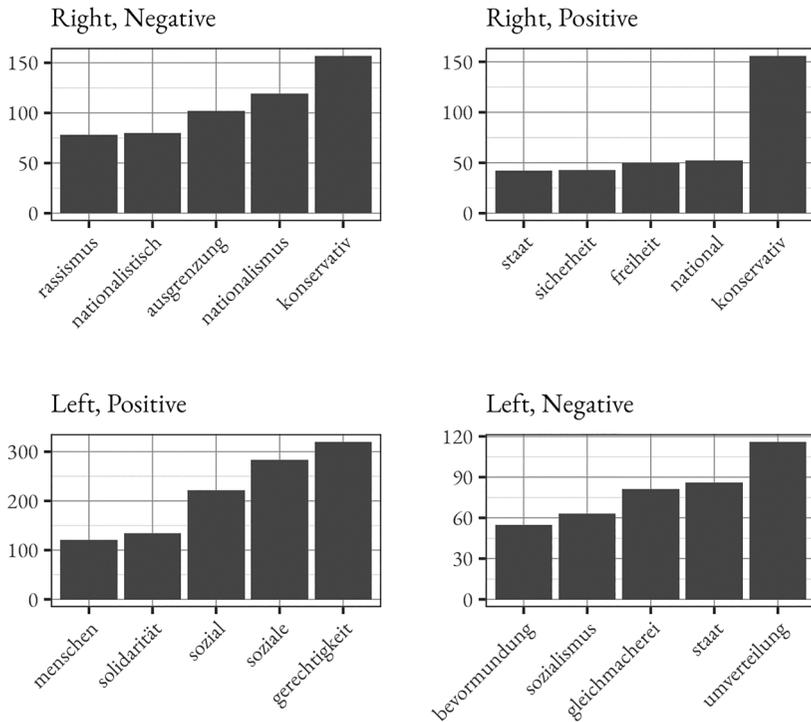


Figure 10. Semantic validity of zero-shot sentiment model. Top words per positive/negative and left/right categories. Top row indicates right semantics, bottom row left semantics. Left column indicates left-leaning position (negative attitude towards the right and positive attitude towards the left), right column indicates right-leaning positions (positive attitude towards the right and negative attitude towards the left). GLES candidate surveys 2013, 2017 and 2021.

citizen associations across three survey waves. Asymmetrical elite attitudes towards ideology have implications for political behaviour, communication, representation and ultimately democratic principles. The attitude asymmetry towards the left could impact political representation as citizens should expect their representatives to hold corresponding views towards ideology. While previous research identifies a ‘conservative bias’ among elites, with representatives overestimating the support for right-wing issue positions of their constituents (Broockman and Skovron 2018), my study suggests a ‘left bias’ in ideological attitudes. Future studies should explore vertical association and attitude differences in left–right ideology between citizens and elites, as perceptions and scale use differ significantly (Jessee 2016; Pietryka & MacIntosh 2022; Yeung and Quek 2025).

Elites can strategically emphasise certain ideological attitudes in public discourse. Distancing themselves from the label ‘right’ may reflect genuine disapproval or be strategic communication to attract voters and

gain office. There are potential downstream consequences that can affect how ideology is viewed and understood by citizens in both scenarios. Openly communicated negative attitudes towards right-wing ideology should influence the political behaviour of elites, but also of citizens, which can be normatively desired or rejected. Analysing attitudes towards left and right, rather than parties, extends the literature on affective polarisation (Iyengar *et al.* 2012; Wagner *et al.* 2023), by combining ideology and affect (sentiment). While it is expected that there will be some left–right polarisation of attitudes based on where individuals fall on the left–right continuum, the question is whether asymmetry in attitudes actually increases or decreases (affective) polarisation compared to symmetrically polarised attitudes (see Figures 1 and 2). Either way, elite left–right attitude polarisation has several potential consequences, as it can be equated with polarisation of preferences and issue positions, but also reflects different perceptions of left and right, both of which can exacerbate social tensions and political animosity.

The bipolar left–right conception of political conflict may need to be reconsidered in future research, as there is an increasing tripolar trend in political systems (Zollinger 2024) – left, centre-right and (far-)right parties – which corresponds to the results of this study. The far-right AfD increasingly represents a solitary pole alongside the left (SPD, Greens, The Left) and centre-right (CDU/CSU, FDP, though less consistently), which is also consistent with the overarching literature on radical right normalisation (Dinas *et al.* 2024; Valentim 2024).

Future research should examine elite left–right attitudes in (1) a multidimensional way (Carmines and D’Amico 2015; Kitschelt 1994; Kriesi *et al.* 2006), investigating whether (dis)like is driven by cultural or economic issues – or both – and how these vary across dimensions and groups; and (2) elite attitudes across countries, taking into account differences in how left and right are structured across political contexts (Beattie *et al.* 2022; Caprara and Vecchione 2018; Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020; Tavits and Letki 2009).

Upcoming methodological refinements should focus on studying semantic meaning and measuring ideological attitudes beyond sentiment, for example by incorporating emotions (Widmann and Wich 2023) and advancing stance detection (Bestvater and Monroe 2023; Burnham 2024). Frameworks using word embeddings offer promising avenues for analysing nuanced political semantics (Rheault and Cochrane 2020; Rodriguez and Spirling 2022; Rodriguez *et al.* 2023). The integration of transformers and large language models (Laurer *et al.* 2023), with a focus on semantic context, is crucial for deepening our understanding of ideology.

Notes

1. <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/nach-kritik-an-berichterstattung-ueber-rechte-parteien-funk-entschuldigt-sich-fuer-fehler-102.html>
2. I use the zero-shot model from Laurer *et al.* (2023) fine-tuned on political text by Michael Burnham: <https://huggingface.co/mlburnham/deberta-v3-base-polistance-affect-v1.0>
3. The Online Appendix provides a complete visualisation (Figure A7) of the correlations between all models, which further validates the overall agreement across model specifications at the party-year level. The validation (Figure A7) in the Online Appendix also includes the results of zero-shot stance detection models (Laurer *et al.* 2023), which are highly correlated ($R=0.71$ to $R=0.99$) with the other model results at the party level. For the stance detection model, I specified the German labels 'dafür' ('in favour') and 'dagegen' ('against').

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Notes on contributor

Lukas Warode is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Mannheim, MZES and member of the Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences (GESS). His doctoral research examines how political elites view the ideological labels 'left' and 'right' in different political contexts. [lukas.warode@uni-mannheim.de]

ORCID

Lukas Warode  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0557-0400>

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