

ONLINE PARTICIPATION PROCESSES IN THE GREEN PARTY GERMANY

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Questions



1. How do party members react to the introduction of new online participation processes and tools?
2. Does ideology influence the adoption of online participation tools? If so, how?
3. Are there differences in views and tool adoption between grass-roots members and party leaders?

Background: *Including everyone vs. including everyone*

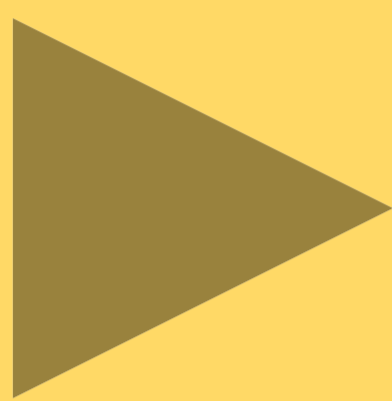
Democratic processes should allow for equal opportunities to participate, but use of and benefit derived from the internet are inherently unequal: They vary with socio-economic status. The Green Party wants to achieve equal and increased grass-roots participation through online tools. These goals are at odds, reflected in the digital divide.



Green Party Germany

- Founded in 1980, out of ecology, feminist and peace movements
- Committed to grass-roots participation, though success led to reduction of member influence
- Introducing online processes to enable more members to participate

Methods

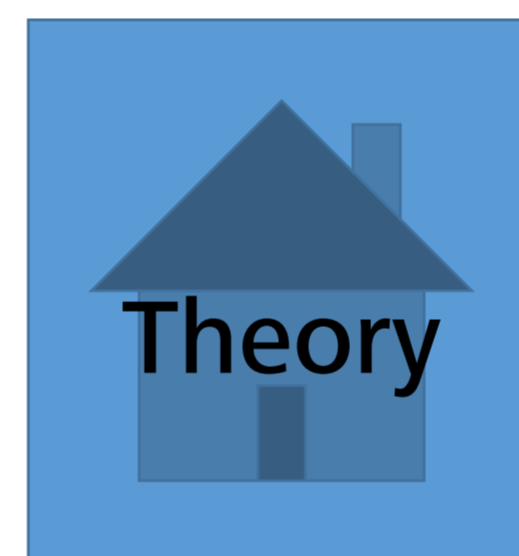


Observe & Interview	Discussion and decisions about participation Party members engaged in these discussions
Survey	Assess status quo and views
Observe & Interview	Discussion and decisions on implementation Party leaders, members, experts & staff
Survey	Re-assess status quo and views

Results

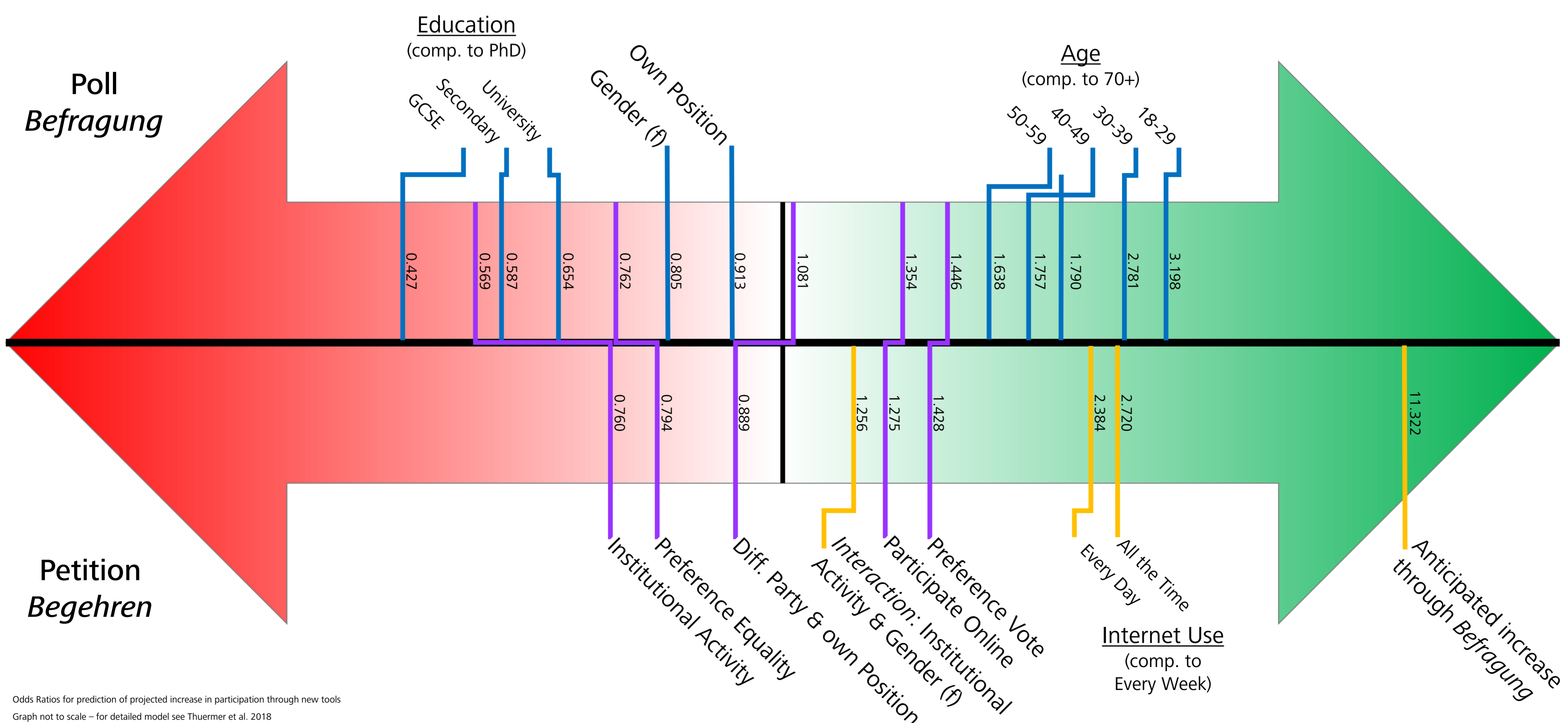


- Quite universal expectation that new tools will be beneficial, though mostly for 'others'
- Reinforcement: New tools increase participation of already active members
- Self-fulfilling prophecy: Higher rating of tools, and belief that they will empower participants, increase activity
- Ideology contributes to tool adoption



Mobilisation	Inactive members begin to participate
Reinforcement	Already active members participate more
Replacement	Online processes replace offline processes
Non-Use	No engagement with online processes

Factors for planned increase in participation



Odds Ratios for prediction of projected increase in participation through new tools
Graph not to scale – for detailed model see Thuermer et al. 2018