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The Gender Gap in Voting Behaviour

An Analysis Through the 2025 German Federal Election



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Introduction

In several Western democracies, including Germany, women voted more conservatively than men during much of the 20th century. This so-called Traditional Gender Gap – whereby women vote more conservatively than men – could already be observed in Germany's first nationwide election with universal suffrage in 1919. For example, a statistical report from 1927 states: "it becomes quite clear that women prefer the Centre and the Right, the more conservatively oriented parties and show increasing restraint the further to the Left the parties are, and women clearly reject radicals of all camps" (Hartwig 1927: 506). This pattern has reversed in recent decades (Hudde 2023) and transformed into a Modern Gender Gap: women now vote for left-leaning parties more than men.

With the 2025 federal election, this trend is consolidating into a clear pattern: gender differences in voting behaviour increasingly run along the political left-right axis. All major parties left of the centre are more frequently chosen by women than by men and all right of centre (at least slightly) are more frequently chosen by men. The polarisation is especially evident for the Left and the AfD, which are ideologically positioned at opposite ends of the party spectrum and exhibit the largest gender gap in their electorate.

When looking at all party- and age-specific trends, the 2025 federal election primarily continues developments that had already emerged in recent years, with some trends accelerating considerably. For instance, The Left is increasingly developing into the party of young women and the AfD gender gap is shrinking in the middle age groups while growing in the youngest age group. Already in 2021, the political gender gap was largest among the youngest voters. Since then, this gender gap in the under-25 age group has further spiked, with The Left being the most popular party among young women and the AfD the most popular party among young men.

This article presents trends in gender-specific voting behaviour in Germany – from the long-term patterns since the post-war period to current developments in the 2025 federal election across different age groups. The focus is on the situation in Germany as a whole, but I also compare the situation with the United States and France at various points and consider differences between German federal states. Let's begin with an overview of some factors and changes that could explain these gender patterns and their transformation.

1.

Which Factors Can Explain Trends in the Political Gender Gap?

Religion: the fact that women used to vote more for the conservative parties than men was often explained by women having a stronger religious orientation and therefore being particularly attached to Christian democratic parties (Emmenegger and Manow, 2014; Norris and Inglehart, 2000). With the general decline in religiosity, this attachment has decreased, and the effect is stronger for women than for men because their decline in religiosity started from a higher level. Still today, women of all age groups in Germany are more religious than men of the same age groups – albeit at a generally low level (GESIS Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences, 2025).

Labour Market Participation: an important and long-term change concerns labour market participation (e.g., Giger, 2009). During the Weimar Republic and the post-war period, the employment rate of women was low. Most men were employed, and many were trade union members, which made them lean towards social democracy. This rarely applied to women, which meant that religious and family-related motives played a comparatively greater role. Due to the narrowing of the gender gap in employment over recent decades, important differences in life realities and influences that may have contributed to the traditional gender gap have diminished.

Gender Differences in the Labour Market: despite largely converged employment rates between men and women, relevant gender differences on the labour market remain (Norris and Inglehart, 2000). Women are more often employed in lower-paid occupations – consider the gender pay gap of currently 16 percent – as well as in certain socio-cultural professions and in many parts of the public sector. Members of these professions have – independent of gender – a greater inclination towards parties to left-of-centre parties; this could be because these professional groups can benefit from more economic redistribution and a stronger and bigger state sector.

Education Level: formal level of education has possibly become the most important explanatory factor for voting behaviour in Western democracies, far more important than income, for example (Hooghe and Marks, 2025). People with a university degree – regardless of whether they are men or women – vote less often for right-wing parties and more often for green-left parties. Since younger women are more likely to have a university degree, this effect is stronger for women and contributes to the Modern Gender Gap.

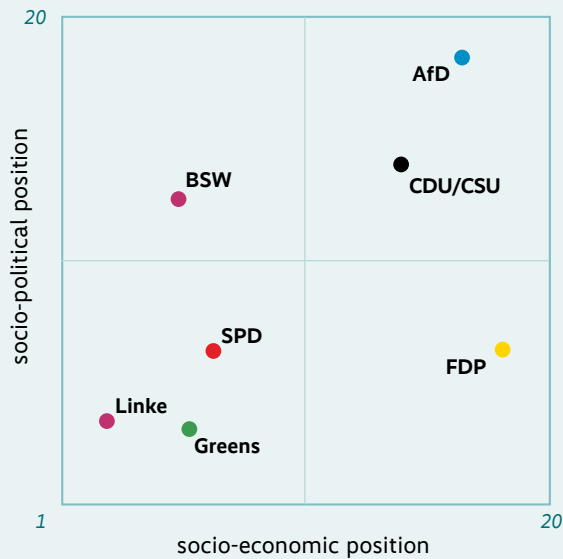
Gender Equality Issues: the gender gap in voting is also related to issues of gender equity more broadly (Abendschön and Steinmetz, 2014; Nennstiel and Hudde, 2025; Norris and Inglehart, 2000; Off, 2023). Generally, recent decades have witnessed party competition in Western democracies having shifted away from economic policy issues and towards socio-cultural issues – and this includes the topic of equality. Politically left-wing parties are more strongly in favour of feminism and an expansion of state equality measures.

Looking at developments over several decades, key indicators of gender equality show improvements, such as the gender pay gap, the division of housework and childcare, or the representation of women in leadership positions in business, administration, and politics. At the same time, ongoing inequalities have become more politicised and salient in public debates. This phenomenon is known as the Tocqueville paradox: while inequalities objectively decrease, the persisting inequalities are more strongly perceived as a problem. The reason for this is because societal awareness of inequalities has heightened, and those affected by inequalities have increased leverage to draw attention to remaining injustices. Another factor is that many inequalities are decreasing only very slowly and in some areas there are indications of stagnation or even trend reversals, such as the proportion of women in the Bundestag, which decreased with the last election. Thereby, developments on equality issues fall short of many women's expectations, leading to dissatisfaction and greater demand for more gender-equality policies, especially among young women.

It is hardly surprising that women and men differ in their perceptions and attitudes on the topic of equality. Current research further shows that the differences between genders are much greater in the younger age groups than in the middle or older age groups (Off et al., 2025). When asked whether discrimination against women is still a societal problem today, men of all age groups give similar answers. For women, however, the perception of discrimination is clearly related to age. Young women are particularly dissatisfied with the current state of equality; considerably more dissatisfied than women of their mothers' and grandmothers' age. In the political arena, left-wing parties tend to have stronger pro-gender-equity politics. That is why the attitudinal differences on equality issues can be a reason for the gender gap at the ballot box, especially for the gap between young women and men.

Party positions in the 2025 federal election

Fig. 1



Source: Open Expert Survey (Jankowski et al. 2025).

Stigmatisation and Normalisation of AfD: the Modern Gender Gap is particularly evident in the election of populist radical right parties. As a partial explanation, political science literature discusses the dynamics of social stigmatisation and societal normalisation of these parties (Harteveld et al., 2019, 2015).

In many Western democracies, right-wing parties are (or were) subject to strong social stigma: anyone who reveals that they voted for such a party to their personal circle must expect considerable negative reactions. This stigmatisation acts as a social barrier that prevents many voters from voting for right-wing parties, even if they share some of these parties' substantial positions. Research suggests that this stigmatisation effect is stronger among women than men. One explanation for this is societal role expectations: women are socially expected to behave in a way that is more focused on harmony and social balance than men and supporting strongly stigmatised parties contradicts these role expectations. According to this argument, the gender gap for right-wing parties would be strongest when these parties are most stigmatised.

However, in numerous countries, the stigmatisation of right-wing parties is giving way to increasing societal normalisation (see Valentim, 2024). The longer right-wing populist parties exist, their representatives are in parliament on talk shows and engage in local community life, the more they are perceived as normal by the public. Their rejection and stigmatisation decreases. Steffen Mau describes this process using the example of the AfD in large parts of eastern Germany as a "routinisation" ("Veralltägli-

chung" in German) (Mau, 2024, p. 119). If the stigmatisation of far-right parties has particularly deterred women from voting for them, the decline of this stigmatisation could lead to women catching up with men to some extent when it comes to voting for these parties, thus reducing the gender gap in radical-right voting.

Day-to-Day Politics: while the focus in this article is on structural societal trends, changes in the party landscape or individual candidates and campaigns can also play a role in the gender gap in single elections.

The German Party Landscape in 2025

To classify parties, researchers often distinguish between two left-right dimensions: an economic one and a socio-cultural one. The parties voted into the Bundestag in 2025 can be categorised unambiguously: AfD and the CDU/CSU are to the right of the centre both economically and socio-culturally; The Left, Greens, and SPD are to the Left of the centre in both dimensions (Michael Jankowski et al., 2025).

The two parties that more or less narrowly failed to meet the five percent threshold to enter the Bundestag – BSW and FDP – fall somewhat outside this pattern. The FDP is the party furthest to the right in economic policy, but in socio-cultural terms, it is classified as centre-left. The BSW is roughly the counterpart: economically, it is categorised similarly to the SPD and Greens, but socio-culturally, it is closer to the CDU/CSU. Of course, the BSW is not simply a mixture of SPD/Greens and CDU/CSU. In everything related to international politics, especially regarding Russia's war against Ukraine, the BSW represents positions that have nothing to do with the SPD and Greens or with CDU/CSU, but sometimes overlap with the AfD and The Left.

In the following, "left-of-centre-parties" includes the Left, Greens, and SPD; "right-of-centre-parties" refers to the CDU/CSU, FDP, and AfD.

Data Sources for Gender Differences in Voting Behaviour

For this report, I rely on data from the Representative Election Statistics. (Die Bundeswahlleiterin, 2025). This is a globally unique data source that counts actual voting behaviour. The gender and age group of the voters are printed on a sample of ballots – some 1.9 million in the last election. The election results are then published by demographic groups.

This data source has two key advantages. First, it measures how people actually vote and not what they say they vote. This is especially important due to social desirability: in surveys, people do not always admit when they vote for socially stigmatised parties. For example, they might indicate that they are not yet sure who they will vote for – although their decision to vote for the AfD has essentially been made. Research suggests that this

effect is greater for women than for men; in other words, women who vote for the AfD are less likely to admit to this voting decision in surveys compared to men who vote for the AfD. This implies that, when analysing surveys like the Politbarometer, the gender gap for the AfD is overestimated (Hudde, 2023). With the representative election statistics, such issues do not exist.

The second advantage of the representative election statistics is the huge sample. This facilitates much more precise estimations than surveys with a few thousand respondents. The sample size is particularly important when we look at individual age groups.

2.

The “Big Picture” and the Long Historical Line Since 1953

For Germany, gender differences in voting behaviour can be traced back to the 1953 federal election.

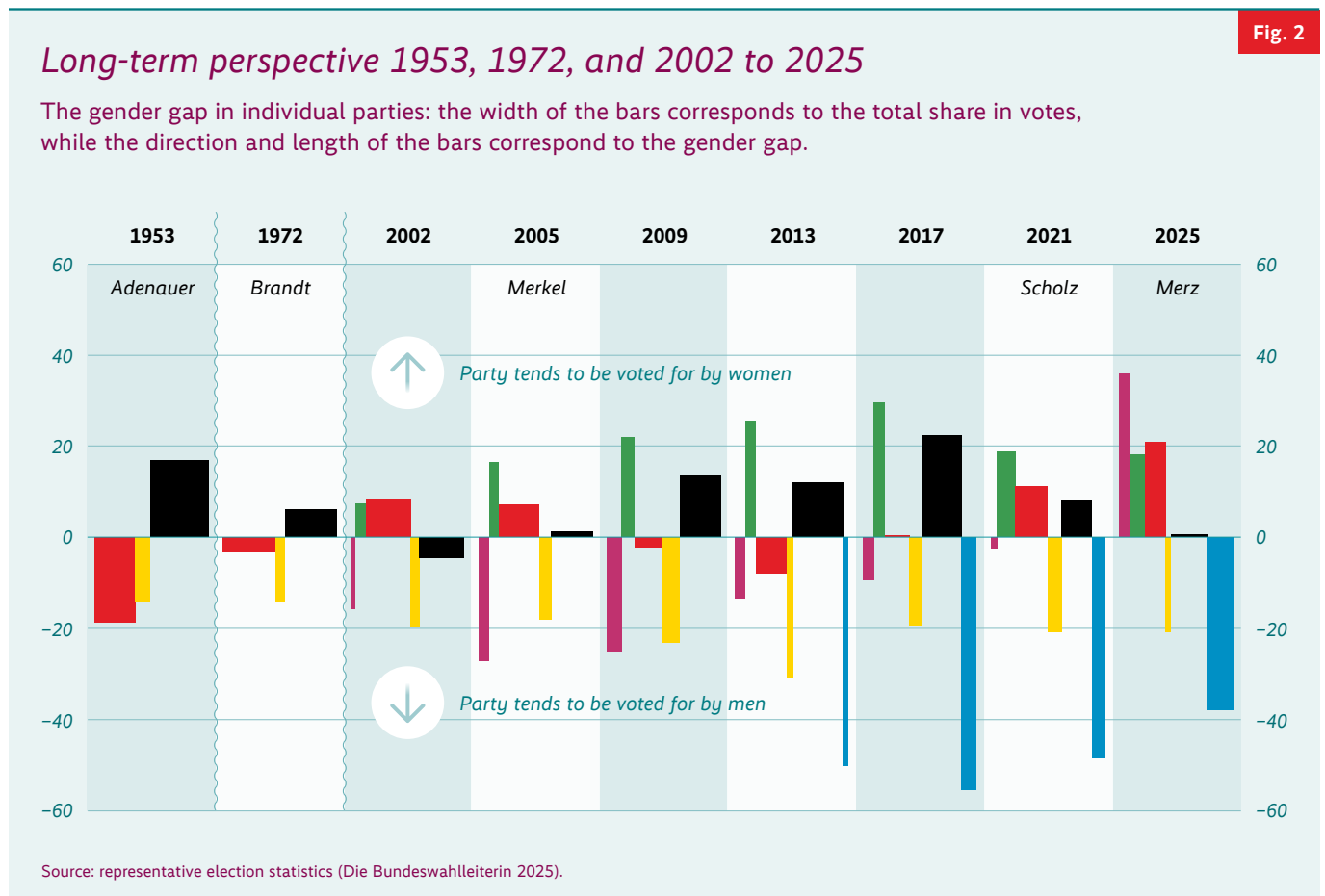
Figure 2 shows selected federal elections and all parties with their respective overall voting shares, and the gap in popularity between women and men. The parties are categorised according to their general political orientation from left to right. The width of the respective bars shows what share of the vote the party had overall – the greater the vote share, the wider. The direction and height of the bars show whether, in terms of the electorate, it was more of a women’s or a men’s party. If the bar goes up, the party was more often voted for by women; if it goes down, more often by men. The longer the bars, the greater the differences in the share of votes by gender.¹

Until the late 1960s, women tended to favour the conservative CDU/CSU, while men favoured the SPD and FDP. The graph shows this pattern for the example of the 1953 election and this pattern changed little up to and including 1969.

From the 1970s onwards, the differences in voting behaviour between women and men were rather negligible. This remained the case until about the turn of the millennium, ending a longer period of stability.

After the turn of the millennium, the picture begins to change. The differences according to gender slowly increase, but do not initially follow a strong or clear left-right pattern. Here are two examples: in the 2000s, the Left was

¹ The presented gender gap is calculated as the percentage difference between women’s and men’s vote shares, standardised by their average (Hudde, 2023). For example, if a party receives 30 percent of women’s votes and 20 percent of men’s votes, the standardised gap is +40 percent (the absolute gap of ten percent divided by the average between genders of 25 percent).



consistently a men's party, while the ideologically neighbouring Greens had increasingly developed into a women's party. On the other hand, the FDP was always a men's party, while the ideologically neighbouring CDU/CSU was a women's party in most elections – especially between 2009 and 2017. This means that, within ideological camps, there were parties more likely to be elected by women, and parties more likely to be elected by men.

In recent elections, there has been a trend towards gender differences increasingly aligning along the Left-right axis. With the 2025 federal elections, for the first time we see a

pattern of all parties left of centre being more frequently elected by women than by men, while all parties right of centre are (at least slightly) more frequently elected by men than by women. Today, the Left and the AfD are the two parties with the largest gender differences in the electorate – and they are the parties that are the most distant from each other on the Left-right scale.

However, analyses that aggregate all age groups hide relevant, current shifts and patterns. Therefore, Figure 3 shows the gender differences separately for all age groups and compares the elections of 2021 and 2025.

3.

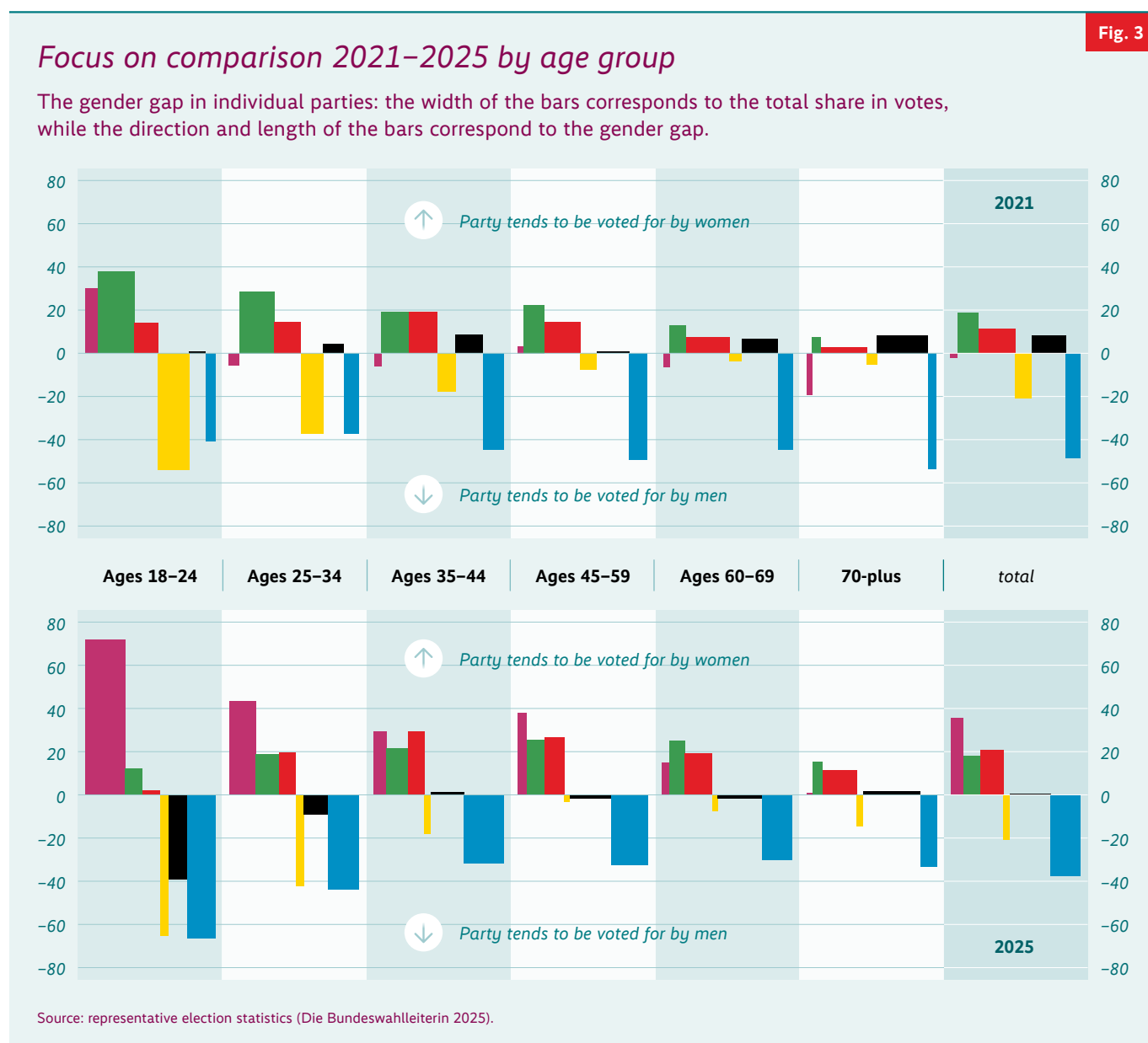
The Individual Parties and Age Groups in Focus

Younger Than 25 years: Off the Charts

The gender gap is largest among voters under 25 and it is “Off the Charts”: compared to the graphs I had created based on data up until 2021, I had to substantially expand the axis range to display the increased gender gaps. Already in the 2021 federal election, the gender gap among those under 25 years was the largest gap ever reported in an age group and any federal election – and with the 2025 election, the gender gap in this age group has increased

even further. In the middle and higher age groups, the gender gaps are noticeably smaller than among those under 25 years, and the increases between 2021 and 2025 are more moderate.

The picture in the youngest age group in 2021 was dominated by the colours green and yellow: the FDP and the Greens had large gender gaps (height of the bars) and the parties were strong in this age group overall (width of the bars). The FDP was voted by 26 percent of young men, but



only by 15 percent of young women. The Greens, on the other hand, were voted for by 28 percent of young women, but only by 20 percent of young men.

In the 2025 elections, the picture is now dominated by purple and light blue — the Green-FDP gap has mostly turned into a Left-AfD gap. The Left was voted for by 37 percent of women and 18 percent of men under 25; the AfD by 25 percent of men and 13 percent of women. With these numbers, the Left is the number one party for young women, and the AfD the number one party for young men. Both the Greens and the FDP now only play a minor role in the youngest group. For the Greens, the gender gap has also largely disappeared, with the party being voted for by 13 percent of women and eleven percent of men. The FDP still has a clear gender gap, but at a low level, with eight percent among young men and four percent among young women.

The Left: From Men's to Women's Party

For all age groups combined, as late as 2005 the Left was still the party with the most male electorate, but since then its electorate has continuously become more female. In the 2021 election, the party was voted for by men and women almost as often or as rarely. For the 2025 election, there was a rapid shift: for the first time, the party was voted for more often by women than by men and has even become the party with the most female electorate of all parties (ten percent of women voted for the Left compared to seven percent of men). Among those under 25, the difference is particularly significant, with 37 percent of women and 18 percent of men voting for the Left.

How surprising are these new patterns regarding the Left party? The trend for the Left to become the party of young women was already apparent in 2021, and became more so in the 2024 European elections. In the European elections, ten percent of women under 25 voted for the Left, compared to four percent of men of the same age. The gender ratio in the 2025 federal election is thus roughly similar to the 2024 European elections, but has risen to another level; as the Left was able to increase its share of votes in both gender groups by a factor of roughly four.

In the 2021 federal elections, the Left was only elected more often by women than by men in the youngest age group; in the other age groups, the gender differences were negligible, and in the 70+ group, it was more of a men's party. The trend towards becoming a women's party has now intensified in the youngest age group, and has also "spilled over" into all age groups under 70 years.

Possible explanations for the pull of young women toward the Left party, the general arguments for the general move toward the Modern Gender Gap apply. The most popular parties among young women in the elections of 2021 and 2025 – Greens and Left – are ideologically related on many

issues, with the important exception of foreign and defence policy. According to expert assessments, the Greens are the party with the strongest feminist profile that advocates most strongly for state equality measures, followed by The Left (Michael Jankowski et al., 2025). Hence, young women gravitate to the most gender-equity-oriented parties.

The patterns for the Left party are not a purely German phenomenon; there are comparable trends among our French neighbours. The far-left party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, La France Insoumise (LFI), was a men's party for a long time, yet today, it is voted for to a similar extent by both women and men. Looking at the situation by age, LFI, similar to the German Left party in 2025, is a young women's party in particular. In the 2024 European elections, 23 percent of women under 35 voted for LFI, but only 18 percent of men in the same age group did so. Compared to the German Left party, LFI is assessed by experts as further left and as more populist; moreover, LFI has a strong focus on pro-Palestine positions, and the party is repeatedly accused of antisemitism (Rovny et al., 2025; Sandrine Cassini, 2024).

The fact that parties like the German Left party or the French LFI used to be men's parties was partly explained by the idea that women generally lean less towards radical or populist parties, irrespective of whether they are right or left (Spierings and Zaslove, 2017). At least from today's perspective, this tendency no longer seems to exist: nowadays, younger women are a particularly important target group for far-left parties on a global scale.

The Greens: Party of Young Women? No More

In all elections between 2005 and 2021, the Greens were the party with the most female electorate, and it was the party of young women above all. Looking at the gender gap of the Greens for all age groups combined, the trend suggests stability. However, a disaggregation by age group reveals great change underneath the surface.

In the 2021 elections and several elections beforehand, the pattern was as follows: the younger the voter group, the greater the lead of the Greens among women compared to men. In the 2025 elections, the picture has transformed. Among those under 25 years of age, the Greens are voted for similarly often or similarly rarely by women and men; in the middle and higher age groups, the gender gap is larger.

SPD: Only Moderate Changes and Yet the Most Female Electorate of All Time

For the SPD, only moderate gender differences have generally emerged since the turn of the millennium. In four elections, the party was more popular among women, in one it was more popular among men, and in two elections, there

were virtually no gender differences. Finally, in the 2025 elections, the SPD had the most female electorate it has ever had in federal elections.

There are only moderate differences between the age groups. The SPD was chosen (somewhat) more frequently by women than by men in all age groups in both 2021 and 2025. The electorate of the SPD has become less female among the youngest age groups and more female in the middle and higher age groups. The gender gap is greatest in the 35 to 44 and 45 to 59 age groups.

The fact that the SPD as a centre-left party now receives more votes from women than men fits into the overall picture of the Modern Gender Gap.

FDP: The Only Constant in the Gender Gap

Looking at all age groups together, the FDP is the party with the most consistent gender gap: more men than women voted for it in almost all elections. Further and in all elections of the 21st century, the gender gap was similarly large. In the 2021 election, the FDP was primarily the party of young men. By the 2025 elections, the FDP has now shrunk overall and virtually imploded in the youngest age group, dropping from 26 percent to eight percent among young men and from 15 percent to four percent among young women.

CDU/CSU: On the Way to Becoming a Men's Party?

The CDU/CSU was elected substantially more often by women than by men between 2009 and 2021. With the 2025 election, this ended and the CDU/CSU was elected almost as much by men as by women (men: 28.8 percent, women: 28.2 percent). The gender gap is small in all age groups except for the youngest, where it was voted for by 16 percent of men and only ten percent of women. While the party came in the first position overall, it ranked third among the youngest men and only fifth among the youngest women. This implies that not only young men, but also young women, were less likely to vote for the centre-right CDU/CSU than for the radical-right AfD.

With the disappearance of the advantage among women, one wonders what role the top candidates, and especially Angela Merkel, play. When Merkel was the top candidate for the first time in 2005, the party was elected almost just as often by men and women. During Merkel's second, third, and fourth candidacies, the CDU/CSU was then noticeably elected more often by women – but in the first election after Merkel, with the male chancellor candidate Laschet, the party was still more popular among women than men. With the 2025 elections and male candidate Friedrich Merz, the CDU/CSU was elected (slightly) more often by

men than by women for the first time in over 20 years. According to polls, Merz as a candidate was particularly unpopular among women. In sum, these gender patterns in the electorate do not fully coincide with changes in the gender of the party's lead candidate.

The AfD: On the Path Towards Becoming Less of a Men's Party?

The emergence of the AfD in 2013 was one of the factors that contributed to the emergence of the Modern Gender Gap in Germany. From the outset, the party was voted for more often by men than by women and it has been the party with the most gender-imbalanced electorate in all elections since then. With the emergence of the AfD, Germany was a bit of a latecomer – in countries like France, the Netherlands, Austria, or Switzerland, parties roughly comparable to today's AfD emerged much earlier.

The AfD is still voted for more often by men, but the gender gap has decreased in recent elections. In the 2017 election, there were 56 female AfD voters for every 100 male AfD voters; in 2021, there were 60, and in 2025, 67. If this trend continues, the AfD will no longer be much of a men's party in future – at least in terms of its electorate.

However, opposing trends are emerging in the different age groups. In 2021, the gender gap was roughly the same size in all age groups – for every 100 men who voted for the AfD, there were about 60 women. In the 2025 elections, we now see a stronger age pattern: the younger the electorate, the greater the gender gap. For all those 35 and older, the gender gap has noticeably decreased from 2021 to 2025; for every 100 AfD voters, there are now some 70 female AfD voters. For younger voters, however, the development is quite different: in the group of 25 to 34 year olds, there is a moderate increase in the gap, and among those under 25, the gender gap has widened considerably. In 2025, for every 100 young male AfD voters, there are only 50 young female AfD voters, compared to 65 in the previous election. For the overall patterns across all age groups, the trends in the middle and higher age groups play a much greater role: after all, only eight percent of eligible voters are under 25 years old.

These opposing age trends in the election of right-wing populist and radical right parties were recently observed in the US, too. In the middle and higher age groups, the gender gap in the Trump election has shrunk; Trump has thus gained more votes among women than among men of the same age. Among younger voters, however, the gender gap has grown: Trump was only able to slightly improve his result among young women, but considerably among young men.

The convergence of AfD vote shares among women and men in the middle and higher age groups is a predictable

trend, and an element of the general societal normalisation of the party. The “model” for this trend could be France and Le Pen’s Rassemblement National (previously called Front National). This party already achieved double-digit election results in the late 1980s and has now established itself. In France, this process is also called the “de-demonisation” of this party (Mayer, 2018). Just like the German AfD, the French Rassemblement National was elected far more often by men than by women – whereas now it is actually women who vote for it slightly more often than men (Pratviel, 2024).

The AfD may follow a similar trajectory in the long term. However, the parties differ in substantive terms: while the Rassemblement National is disarming at least on a rhetorical level and becoming more moderate, the AfD is becoming more radical in content and rhetoric. In addition, the proportion of women among the Rassemblement National’s representatives is considerably higher than in the AfD.

Within Germany, the AfD is particularly strong and socially normalised in the Eastern part of the country and federal states such as Saxony and Thuringia. Here, the general rejection of the party is comparatively weak (Hudde, 2025: Chapter 8; Mau, 2024). In these federal states, the proportion of women in the AfD electorate is also larger than in all other federal states. In the federal elections of 2025 – as well as in the federal elections of 2021 or the European elections of 2024 – there are clear statistical connections in each case: the stronger the AfD’s overall election result, the greater the proportion of women in the AfD electorate. The

AfD gender gap is thus smaller where the party is more established and normalised overall – and an increasing normalisation could further reduce the gender gap.

There is still a great need for research and understanding when it comes to the opposing trends among younger voters. How was the AfD able to increase its share among young men from eight percent to 25 percent in only four years? Germany is not a special case with this trend; in many European countries, far-right parties have had strong gains among young men (Abou-Chadi, 2024). The role of social media and figures like Andrew Tate or Maximilian Krah is often centre-stage in the public discourse. Indeed, social media is an environment where women and men can be exposed to different content. There are systematic differences between the social media feeds of young men and young women, and this can also impact on voting behaviour. However, how strong their influence on the voting behaviour of young men really is, has not been sufficiently clarified and several experts point out the danger of overstating its effect.

With all of this, two patterns should not be forgotten. First, the AfD is far more popular among young men than young women – but even among young women, the AfD’s share of votes has more than doubled between 2021 and 2025: from five percent to 13 percent, and that spike needs to be explained as well. Second, while the AfD’s relative gains were greatest among the youngest, the AfD continue to receive the highest share of votes among 35 to 44 and 45 to 59 year olds.

4.

Is 2025 a Special Case or Another Point in a Pattern?

Overall, with the 2025 election, the Modern Gender Gap has grown moderately overall and rapidly in the youngest age group. Most of the developments we observe in 2025 have already been previously indicated, and at the latest with the 2024 European elections. This includes, for example, that the Left is increasingly developing into a party of young women and that the AfD gender gap is shrinking in the middle age groups, while growing in the youngest age group.

Even though the 2025 federal election primarily perpetuates developments that were already observed beforehand, there is a clear acceleration, a spike, in some of the trends. An example of this is the result of the Left. The fact that the Left would perform comparatively well among young women was already apparent in the 2024 European elections. However, the sheer size of the Left party's lead in this group — the party received more than three times as many votes as the Greens — may still be surprising.

The fact that some trends appear so accelerated in 2025 could be due to general, societal trends coinciding with ef-

fects of a single election in the same direction. The movement of young women towards the Left fits into the general pattern; and this trend could have been further strengthened by one of their lead candidates, Heidi Reichinnek. Heidi is a relatively young woman who is particularly successful on social media where she reaches a young target group. Similarly, the fact that the CDU/CSU is becoming more of a men's party corresponds with the general international developments. This general trend could have been strengthened by the fact, as a candidate, Friedrich Merz was better received by men than by women.

The gender gap in the group of those under 25 has risen considerably, despite its already high 2021-baseline. Should we expect the gender gap to remain this large or even grow? On the one hand, such a persistence or even growth would be plausible — but on the other hand, the weak party attachment and high volatility in young people's voting behaviour mean that trends could also shift quickly. In 2025, the Left and the AfD were the main beneficiaries of such a speedy change — in future elections, others may benefit.

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The Gender Gap in Voting Behaviour: An Analysis Through the 2025 German Federal Election

For a long time, it was believed that women voted more conservatively. This so-called traditional gender gap was already observed in the first Germany-wide election with universal suffrage in 1919.

This pattern has reversed and turned into a modern gender gap: women now tend to vote for left-wing parties more than men – a development that is particularly noticeable among young voters. As early as 2021, the political gender gap was greatest among the youngest voters. Since then, this clearly visible gender gap in the under-25 age cohorts has widened further and is now accompanied by strong polarisation – between high support for the Left Party among young women and increased support for the AfD among young men.

This article traces the development of gender-specific voting behaviour in Germany – from the post-war period to the 2025 federal election. It analyses long-term trends and also looks at developments in France and the US, as well as regional differences.