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WAHL- UND SOZIALFORSCHUNG

Bundestag Election in Germany Februar 23, 2025

Preliminary results

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- Only CDU/CSU (the Union parties) were able to make gains in this election as representatives of the political center, becoming the strongest force with 28.5%. The CDU/CSU benefited from its expertise in economic policy.
- The parties in the traffic light coalition have suffered considerable losses. The FDP fails to enter the Bundestag.
- The political fringes (AfD, Left Party, BSW) gain a total of 19.3 percentage points, of which around 5% are not represented in parliament. The AfD benefited considerably from the increased voter turnout.
- None of the leading candidates of the traffic light parties has an advantage of incumbency. Friedrich Merz distinguishes himself from the competitors through his leadership skills.
- The German electorate is significantly more fragmented and polarized compared to 2021.
- The political mood is characterized by uncertainty and dissatisfaction. This benefits the political fringes.
- The Left Party reaches 35 percent among younger women in cities; the AfD reaches 36 percent among younger men in rural areas.
- Contrary to expectations, the Left Party entered the Bundestag with 8.8 percent and became the strongest party in the state of Berlin by a narrow margin.
- Due to the new electoral law, the winners of the direct mandate in 23 constituencies cannot enter the Bundestag. The metropolitan region between Frankfurt and Stuttgart is particularly affected.

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The 2025 Bundestag Election[1]

1. The Election Results

Voter turnout in the early federal election on February 23, 2025, increased for the fourth time in a row. 82.5 percent of eligible voters took part in the election, the highest voter turnout since the German reunification.

The **Union parties** won with a combined 28.5% of the second votes. This is an increase of 4.4 percentage points. The CDU gained 3.6 points and achieved 22.6% of the second votes, while the CSU achieved 6.0% (+0.8 points). Despite the gains, the CDU/CSU achieved its second-worst result ever. The CDU and CSU also made gains in the first votes. The CDU received 25.5% of the first votes (+2.9 points), the CSU 6.6% (+0.6 points). The CDU will be represented in the Bundestag with 164 MPs (+12). In total, the CDU can win 143 constituencies directly, but only 128 direct candidates will enter the Bundestag due to the new electoral law. 15 CDU direct candidates will not receive a seat in the Bundestag despite winning constituencies. The CSU won 47 constituencies, 44 of which were also elected to the Bundestag, while 3 constituency winners were left without a seat. This means that the CDU is more affected by the change in electoral law than all other parties, especially in Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria. In Schleswig-Holstein, the CDU won Robert Habeck's constituency directly (Flensburg-Schleswig) without the CDU candidate entering the Bundestag. Overall, the CDU won 5 constituencies from the Greens, 3 of which remain unoccupied. The CSU also won one constituency from the Greens, which also remains unfilled. The CDU wins 49 constituencies from the SPD, 8 of which remain unfilled. In return, the CDU lost 9 constituencies to the AfD, 1 of which remains unfilled.

In western Germany, the CDU/CSU performed significantly better with 30.9% (+5.1 points) than in eastern Germany with 18.7% (+1.4 points). The CSU achieved the best second vote result for the CDU/CSU in Bavaria with 37.2%. The CDU achieved its best second vote result in Baden-Württemberg with 31.6%. The CDU performed worst in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania with only 17.8% of the second votes. At constituency level, the CDU achieved its best result in Hochsauerlandkreis, Friedrich Merz's constituency, with 43.6% of the second votes. This is also where the CDU recorded its highest increase (+10.2 points). Merz won his constituency directly with 47.7% of the first votes. The CDU achieved its worst result in Berlin-Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg-Prenzlauer Berg East, where it won only 9.3% of the first votes. Contrary to the national trend, the CDU suffered slight losses in twelve East German constituencies.

The **AfD** achieved 20.8% and becomes the second-largest parliamentary group. With an increase of 10.4 points, it doubled its second vote result compared to 2021. The AfD also gained 10.4 points in the first votes and achieved 20.6%. The AfD will be represented in the Bundestag with 152 MPs (+69). In total, the AfD won 46 constituencies directly, of which 42 candidates also entered the Bundestag directly. 4 AfD candidates remain without a mandate due to the new electoral law (Rostock-Landkreis Rostock II, Oberhavel-Havelland II, Halle, Leipzig I). In total, the AfD won 21 constituencies from the SPD (3 without a mandate) and 9 from the CDU (1 without a mandate). Alice Weidel lost her constituency of Bodensee to the CDU with 20.4 percent. Tino Chrupalla won his constituency of Görlitz directly with 48.9%.

The AfD performed significantly better in eastern Germany than in western Germany. In eastern Germany, the AfD is the strongest party with 32.0% (+12.7 points). In western Germany, it achieved 18.0% (+9.8 points). The AfD achieved its best result in Thuringia with 38.6% and its worst result in Hamburg with 10.9%. At constituency level, the AfD won over 40% of the second votes in several constituencies in eastern Germany. The results for the AfD were highest in the

constituencies of Görlitz (46.7 percent), Sächsische Schweiz-Osterzgebirge (46.5 percent), Erzgebirgskreis I (46.2 percent) and Bautzen I (46.0 percent). The AfD recorded the highest increases in the constituencies of Börde-Salzlandkreis (+19.9 points), Mecklenburgische Seenplatte I-Vorpommern-Greifswald II (+19.6 points) and Mansfeld (+19.5 points). The AfD achieved the lowest second vote results in Cologne II (6.3 percent) and Münster (6.9 percent).

The **SPD** lost 9.3 points and can only muster 16.4 percent of the second votes. This puts it in third place. This is the worst result ever for the SPD. The party also recorded losses in the first votes, albeit to a lesser extent than in the second votes. It achieved 20.1% of the first votes (-6.3 points). The SPD will send 120 representatives to the Bundestag (-86). In total, the SPD won 45 constituencies directly, of which 44 MPs entered the Bundestag. Although one candidate wins her constituency (Bremen I), she will not sit in parliament due to the new electoral law. Overall, the SPD lost 49 constituencies to the CDU (8 without a mandate), 21 to the AfD (3 without a mandate), 3 to the Greens, and 2 to the Left Party. In Brandenburg, the SPD only managed to win one constituency directly. Olaf Scholz won the Potsdam-Potsdam-Mittelmark II-Teltow-Fläming II constituency with 21.8 percent of the first votes.

The SPD performed better in West Germany with 17.6% (-8.5 points) than in East Germany with 11.6% (-12.3 points). The SPD achieved its best result in Bremen with 23.1 percent and its worst in Saxony with just 8.5 percent. In the constituencies, the SPD recorded its best second vote result in Aurich-Emden (28.6 percent). The SPD's worst second vote result was in Sächsische Schweiz-Osterzgebirge with only 6.0%. The SPD recorded the highest losses in one constituency in Brandenburg (Prignitz-Ostprignitz-Ruppin-Havelland I, -18.1 points) and two constituencies in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Ludwigslust-Parchim II-Nordwestmecklenburg II-Landkreis Rostock I, -18.3 points; Mecklenburgische Seenplatte II-Landkreis Rostock III, -18.5 points).

The **Greens** won 11.6% of the second votes. That is a drop of 3.1 points. Nevertheless, this is the second-best result in the history of the Greens. The Greens also lost slightly in the first votes. They achieved 11.0% of the first votes (-2.9 points). The Greens will be represented in the German Bundestag with 85 MPs (-33). The Greens were able to win 12 constituencies directly, and all 12 candidates will also enter the Bundestag. The Greens win 3 constituencies from the SPD but lose 5 constituencies to the CDU (3 of them without a mandate), 1 to the CSU (without a mandate), and 1 to the Left Party. Annalena Baerbock lost her constituency to Olaf Scholz with 15.9 percent of the first votes. Robert Habeck lost his constituency of Flensburg-Schleswig with 22.6% to the CDU, whose candidate cannot enter parliament.

With 12.5% (-3.2 points), the Greens achieved a significantly better second vote result in West Germany than in East Germany with 7.9% (-2.7 points). The Greens performed particularly well in Hamburg with 19.3%. The worst results for the Greens were in Thuringia (4.2 percent) and Saxony-Anhalt (4.4 percent). In the constituencies, the Greens achieved their best second vote results in Münster (26.6 percent) and Freiburg (26.6 percent). The worst result for the Greens was in Erzgebirgskreis I with just 2.2 percent.

The **Left Party**, which lost significantly in the East German state elections in autumn 2024, achieved 8.8% of the second votes in the federal election. Compared to 2021, this corresponds to an increase of 3.9 points. The Left Party thus achieved its third-best result in history. It won 7.9% of the first votes (+3.0 points) and will enter parliament with 64 MPs (+25). After the founding of the BSW, polls showed the Left Party below 5 percent. Therefore, the party was counting on winning at least three direct mandates to enter the Bundestag. In addition to the good second vote result, the Left Party has also won 6 direct mandates, all of which will also enter the Bundestag. Bodo Ramelow won his constituency from the SPD (Erfurt-Weimar-Weimarer Land II). Ferat Koçak also wins his constituency from the SPD (Berlin-Neukölln). Sören Pellmann defends his constituency (Leipzig II). Pascal Meiser won the Berlin-Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg-Prenzlauer Berg Ost

constituency from the Greens. Ines Schwerdtner defended Berlin-Lichtenberg, Gesine Lötzsch's former constituency, and Gregor Gysi won Berlin-Treptow-Köpenick again.

With 13.4% (+3.3 points) of the second votes, the Left Party achieved a better result in eastern Germany than in western Germany with 7.6% (+4.0 points). The party achieved its best result by far in the state of Berlin with 19.9%, thus winning there. The worst result for the Left Party was in Bavaria with 5.7%. At the constituency level, the Left Party performed best in Berlin-Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg-Prenzlauer Berg East, achieving 31.7%. In this area, it also made disproportionately high gains of +13.1 points. The Left Party also made above-average gains in Berlin-Neukölln (+13.4 points) and Berlin-Mitte (+13.0 points). The Left won the fewest second votes in the constituencies of Deggendorf (3.1 percent) and Schwandorf (3.3 percent).

The **FDP** can only muster 4.3% of the second votes. Compared to 2021, it lost 7.1 points. The FDP thus achieved its worst result ever and fell at the five percent hurdle for the second time after 2013. The FDP achieved 3.3% of the first votes (5.4 points).

In western Germany, the FDP performed slightly better with 4.6% (-7.3 points) than in eastern Germany with 3.3% (-6.2 points). Only in Baden-Württemberg (5.6 percent) and Hesse (5.0 percent) would the FDP make it over the five percent hurdle. The FDP performed worst in Thuringia with just 2.8%. In the constituencies, the FDP achieved its best result in the Düsseldorf I constituency (7.8 percent) and its worst result in the Berlin-Lichtenberg (2.5 percent) and Prignitz-Ostprignitz-Ruppin-Havelland I (2.5 percent) constituencies. The FDP recorded its biggest losses in Rottweil-Tuttlingen (-12.0 points).

The **BSW** was unable to build on its success in the 2024 European elections and fell just short of the five percent hurdle with 4.97 percent of the second votes. The BSW achieved 0.6 percent of the first votes.

In eastern Germany, the BSW performed significantly better with 9.3%. In western Germany, on the other hand, the BSW is well below the five percent threshold with 3.9 percent of the second votes. The BSW achieved its best second vote result in Saxony-Anhalt with 11.2 percent, the worst in Bavaria with 3.1 percent. In the constituencies, the BSW performed best in the Frankfurt (Oder)-Oder-Spree constituency with 12.6 percent and worst in the Schwandorf constituency (2.5 percent).

For the second time in a row, the **Südschleswigsche Wählerverband (SSW)** is represented in the Bundestag with 0.2 percent and 1 MP due to a special regulation. The SSW is only running in Schleswig-Holstein, where it achieved 4.0 percent.

Of the **other parties**, the Free Voters with 1.5 percent (-0.9 points) and the Animal Protection Party with 1.0 percent (-0.5 points) qualify for partial state funding for parties.

2. Key Determinants of the Election [2]

In view of complex domestic and foreign policy problems, the political mood is characterized by uncertainty and dissatisfaction. Whether future prospects, economic assessments, opinions about parties and leading politicians, disappointment with the traffic light coalition, attributions of competence to the parties, but also their own economic situation, opinions are more skeptical everywhere than in 2021, in some cases dominated by great dissatisfaction. This led to considerable losses for the parties of the traffic light coalition.

Just 16% of eligible voters rate the economic situation positively. The last time the figures were around the same level was in 2005. A majority of 57% believe that things are not fair in Germany. The last time there was a comparable political mood was in 2009. 12% rate the situation in Germany with confidence. This is also a long-term low. The general feeling of safety in public spaces has also fallen significantly. While around three quarters of eligible voters felt safe in 2017, the figure is 55% in 2025 (Infratest dimap). Confidence in the future has fallen from 52% in 2017 to 39% in 2021 and 11% in 2025. Before the election, 11% said that Germany was well prepared for the future. 53% rate their own economic situation positively. In 2021, 65% said this (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

The loss of trust in the coalition government during the legislative period is dramatic. Immediately before the general election, 82% were dissatisfied with the federal government in retrospect. However, the departure of the FDP from the coalition did not affect these figures. The coalition has lost trust more or less continuously since 2022. The ratings of the top candidates of the traffic light parties are similar. Satisfaction with Olaf Scholz, Robert Habeck, and Christian Lindner has fallen steadily among the population. None of them were able to counter this trend individually (Infratest dimap).

None of the leading candidates of the traffic light parties could benefit from an advantage of incumbency. This is a novelty.

The political public tends to be more fragmented. This is particularly evident in the assessment of the parties' top candidates. Beyond their own supporters, approval of politicians is low. This is particularly pronounced among the supporters of the AfD, the BSW, and the Greens. In the last "Politbarometer" before the election (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen February 2025), Sahra Wagenknecht, like Alice Weidel, received a score of 4.0 among her own supporters. On a scale of +5 to -5 a very high level of acceptance. On average, Weidel scored -2.5 and Wagenknecht -1.3, which can be seen as a sign of the high degree of unity that the two groups have in common, as well as the various deeply rooted dissatisfactions. There is a threefold fragmentation in the election result: The AfD dominates in the eastern German states, the CDU/CSU dominates (to a lesser extent) in the western German states, and the Left Party is narrowly the strongest force in the state of Berlin.

The motives for voting are heterogeneous. There is no issue that is rated similarly by large sections of the electorate. This new lack of clarity is also reflected in the number of leading candidates who have been labeled “Chancellor candidate” by the media (4 in total). The increasing fragmentation and the disintegration into particular interests were visually symbolized in panel discussions with all parties represented in the Bundestag. A total of eight party representatives took part.

Only the Union parties were able to make gains in this election as representatives of the political center. The parties of the traffic light coalition, which collapsed on November 6, 2024, suffered considerable losses, which in the case of the FDP led to its failure to make the five percent hurdle.

This means that the political center has shrunk considerably. The political fringes have a share of 34.6% (of which around 5% are not represented in parliament, as the BSW failed to reach the 5% threshold). The fringes have gained a total of 19.3 percentage points compared to 2021. The political center does not have a two-thirds majority for constitutional amendments in parliament.

Once again, the increased voter turnout benefited the political fringes. Especially the AfD benefited with an increase of 1,810,000 former non-voters. A total of 2.5 million votes from former non-voters benefited the parties on the political fringes. The parties of the political center were able to win over 1,260,000 former non-voters.

Compared to 2021, the German electorate is significantly more fragmented and polarized. There are growing distances between the different electorates when it comes to political issues (e.g. climate protection vs. the economy, a bigger or smaller welfare state, more or less immigration). At the same time, the parties' respective constituencies have become more homogeneous. The supporters of the Greens and the Left Party form the opposite pole to the supporters of the AfD in all substantive attitudes (Hirndorf 2024c).

Personal (affective) polarization is increasing. This affects different social groups. When asked who they personally do not want to have anything to do with, the overall social aversion to all groups surveyed has risen (mostly slightly). Dislike of Green voters has risen significantly. The dislike of AfD voters, on the other hand, is consistently high (KAS surveys. Publication forthcoming. Cf. Roose 2021). This is also reflected in trust in the media. In the meantime, fragmented public spheres have emerged, which can also be seen in the eroding trust in public broadcasters. AfD supporters in particular are predominantly distrustful (Hirndorf/Roose 2023).

Since today's parties are not essentially the same as the parties of the Weimar Republic and only the SPD already existed, no analogies to the election results are drawn here.

Since the European elections, a new social fault line has become visible. The AfD performs particularly well among men under 35 in rural areas (population under 20,000). This is also the case in the Bundestag elections: 36% of this voter group voted for the party. In contrast, the Left Party has become the party of younger, urban women, among whom it wins 35%.

Although 44% cite immigration/asylum/integration as the most important issue and a further 36% mention the economic situation (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen), these issues are not reflected in the substantive voting motives. When it comes to the reasons why individuals made their decision, there is a mix of topics that are on a par at a low level: internal security, social security, immigration, economic growth, environment, and peace. All of these issues receive mentions of between 18 and 13 percent. Among the supporters of the Left Party (51%) and the SPD (38%), the issue of social security is particularly important, while 31% of CDU/CSU supporters mention economic growth and the dominant issues for the Greens are environment and climate (62%). For AfD supporters, immigration is the number one issue with 38%, followed by 33% for whom internal security is personally most important (Infratest dimap). However, the figures from Forschungsgruppe Wahlen differ: 51% of all eligible voters cite peace/security, 40% the economy, 34% social justice, 29% refugees/asylum, 23% pensions/protection for the elderly, and 19% climate protection as the most important issue for their own voting decision (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

The **Union parties** won this election. The CDU/CSU and its candidate for chancellor, Friedrich Merz, receive very high approval ratings among their own voters. The other electorates are more reserved in their assessments. Over 90 percent of Union supporters name Merz when asked about their preferred candidate for chancellor, regardless of whether they compare him with Chancellor Olaf Scholz or Economics Minister Robert Habeck. Looking at all eligible voters, 53% prefer Merz to Habeck and 49% to Scholz. Beyond the supporters of the FDP, however, support among the SPD and Greens is restrained. Voters are also unsure as to whether Merz would be better as chancellor than Scholz. Here, 37% agree.

Election research shows that the “leadership” bundle of characteristics is important for the voting decision. Merz scored well against the field of candidates with leadership (“can lead through uncertain times worldwide”, “expertise”, and “can solve future problems”). Approximately one third of voters assigned him each of these qualities. Habeck is ahead of his competitors in terms of popularity. No clear profile is discernible for Scholz and Weidel (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

Compared to the previous election, the CDU/CSU has increased its competence in all problem areas surveyed. 32% believe that the most important tasks in Germany can be solved by the CDU/CSU. This is an increase of 6 points compared to 2021. All other parties are significantly less likely to be seen as having general problem-solving skills. The Social Democrats have halved their confidence compared to the previous election. The figure dropped from 28% to 15%. The AfD improved from 6% to 14% (Infratest dimap).

The greatest increase in competence is in economic policy. Here, 39% of eligible voters believe the CDU/CSU can advance the German economy (+7 points). When it comes to domestic security, 37% (+2 percentage points) and around a third of respondents in each of the areas of foreign and defense policy trust the CDU/CSU to solve the tasks. Compared to the previous election, the increase in tax and financial policy is above average at 6 points (overall, 27% believe the CDU/CSU is capable of solving these tasks, Infratest dimap).

The **AfD** benefits from fragmentation, polarization, and the associated mobilization. Many elections have shown that it is primarily the degree of polarization that has an impact on voter turnout. In this election, the AfD also benefited from the gains made by former non-voters, by far the most of all parties (+1,810,00 votes).

The AfD electorate is largely insulated from arguments in political discourse and strongly focused on the communication of the AfD itself. As a result, there is a strong bond with the AfD. Supporters are united in their rejection of other parties, massive dissatisfaction with politics and politicians, and a rejection of social change (cf. Werkmann/Frieß 2024). This isolation is reflected in the assessment of the AfD's lead candidate, Alice Weidel, who receives a score of 3.9 from Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (on a scale of +5 to -5).

AfD supporters are no longer protest voters. They also share the party's programmatic content (Werkmann/Frieß 2024) and the majority votes for the AfD out of conviction (Infratest dimap). This is also reflected in their perceived problem-solving skills. In the area of internal security, the AfD gained 10 points in the competence rating and achieves a share of 23%. Closely behind with 22% is the attribution of competence in asylum policy, an increase of 8 points. The AfD also gains 8 points in general problem-solving skills (14% overall; Infratest dimap).

The **SPD** is rated worse in all measurable areas than in the previous elections. In 2025, 19% would have preferred to see Olaf Scholz as Federal Chancellor. In 2021, the figure was 48% (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen). The party was unable to score points in any policy area compared to 2021. There were sharp losses everywhere. Only 26% of all respondents see the SPD as competent in social justice. This is a drop of 14 points. The SPD also loses 12 points on the issue of pensions compared to the previous election (2025: 24%). The dwindling confidence in the SPD's ability to solve Germany's most important tasks is particularly significant for the election result: 15 percent see the SPD as unable to do so. This is a drop of 13 points (Infratest dimap).

The **Greens'** losses are mainly the Left Party's wins. 700,000 voters went there. Although the Green's losses are smaller compared to their coalition partners, they are still suffering from the coalition's poor rating. Compared to 2021, the party's reputation fell from 0.4 to -0.8 (on a scale of +5 to -5). Robert Habeck is highly regarded within his own ranks and has a score of 3.7. Beyond his own supporters, he is met with disapproval, giving him a slightly negative score overall among all eligible voters (-0.6; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

In terms of competence, the Greens lose ground in particular in environment and climate policy (-6 points). Nevertheless, 42% of those surveyed believe they are competent in this area. There is no change (-1 point) in general problem-solving competence. 9 percent see the Greens as capable of solving the most important tasks in Germany (Infratest dimap).

The Greens had already suffered losses among younger women in the European elections. In this election, the Greens lose 15 points here (Infratest dimap).

Few would have expected the **Left Party**'s recent performance in the summer of 2024, when it had suffered significantly from the split of the BSW and got 2.7 percent in the European elections.

In this election, the Left Party has become the antipode of the AfD and is benefiting from polarization at the other end of the political spectrum. In mid-January, the Left was still at 4%. By the end of January, it had already reached 5% in the polls and was able to increase its share by 1 percentage point from week to week. In the last survey before the election, the polling group Forschungsgruppe Wahlen put it at 8%. So far, the Greens have benefited more from the strong polarization towards the AfD.

No poll results are available for the leading members of the Left Party. It gains 5 points in the competence area of social justice, with a result of 16%. Despite the long-lasting growth in the West, 15% believe it can represent the interests of the East (no comparative value). When it comes to solving the most important tasks in Germany, 5% see the party as competent (Infratest dimap).

The Left Party gains 26 points among younger women and achieved a share of 35 percent in this group (Infratest dimap).

The **BSW** can only be compared with the 2024 European elections, as this was the first time it ran in an election. Although the BSW lost ground compared to the European elections, it only just failed to pass the five percent hurdle. The importance of Sahra Wagenknecht in the European and Bundestag elections should not be underestimated. With 4.0 in June 2024 and 4.0 in the Bundestag election, she (alongside Alice Weidel) has the best rating of any politician among her own supporters. However, the issue of Ukraine/war/peace has lost importance compared to the European elections. In June 2024, 11% still mentioned the topic area, while in February, 5% mentioned the topic of defense/peace (Politbarometer of the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

There are only minor changes in the perceived party competencies of the BSW compared to the European elections, which are at a very low level. Three percent believe that the BSW has the competence to solve the most important tasks in Germany (Infratest dimap).

The **FDP** cannot return to the Bundestag. In the 2021 federal election (but also in 2017), it benefited from the popularity of its lead candidate Christian Lindner (Pokorny 2022). While Lindner achieves a good score of around 3 among his own supporters in 2021 and 2025, his reputation among the population has declined. In 2021, he achieved a score of 0.4 in the assessment of all eligible voters; in 2025, the score was -1.2. With the loss of respect for the Ampel, approval of his person and the party also fell, dropping from +0.3 (2021) to -1.0 in this election (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

Competence ratings are also falling. Compared to 2021, 7% of voters still believe the FDP is capable of advancing the economy in Germany (-9 points). 10 percent believe it has competence in tax policy (-4 points) and 2 percent believe it is capable of solving the most important tasks in Germany (Infratest dimap).

The FDP has lost support among younger men in particular (-20 points; Infratest dimap).

3. Social Structure and Voter Migration[3]

The **Union parties** gained votes primarily from the SPD and the FDP. 1,760,000 former SPD voters and 1,350,000 former FDP voters are now voting for the CDU/CSU. The CDU/CSU also benefited from the increased voter turnout: 900,000 former non-voters are now voting for the CDU/CSU. In addition, 460,000 voters switched from the Greens and 360,000 from other parties to the CDU and CSU. The CDU/CSU lost the most votes to the AfD, 1,010,000 voters. The Union also lost 220,000 votes to the BSW and 70,000 votes to the Left Party.

As in previous elections, CDU/CSU performed better among older voters and worse among younger voters. In the 45-59 age group, CDU/CSU made slightly above-average gains. Another well-known finding is that CDU/CSU performs better in rural areas than in large cities.

Of all the parties, the **AfD** benefited the most from the increased voter turnout. 1,810,000 former non-voters are now voting for the AfD. The AfD also gained from all political parties: 1,010,000 votes from the CDU/CSU, 890,000 from the FDP, 790,000 from the other parties and 720,000 from the SPD. The AfD's gains from the Left (+110,000) and the Greens (+100,000) were smaller. The AfD only lost some votes to the BSW (-60,000).

As in previous elections, the AfD performs particularly well in the middle-aged groups. This is true in both western and eastern Germany. However, it is now also making above-average gains among young men and therefore also achieving above-average results. In addition, the AfD performs better in rural areas than in large cities. The AfD's share is particularly high among young men in rural areas (36%) and young men without a high school diploma (44%; Infratest dimap). In addition, the AfD performs above average among people who describe their economic situation as less good or poor.

The **SPD** is losing in almost all directions. The party recorded its biggest losses to the CDU/CSU. 1,760,000 voters switched from the SPD to the CDU/CSU. In addition, the SPD lost 720,000 votes to the AfD, 560,000 to the Left Party, 440,000 to the BSW, and 100,000 to the Greens. The SPD only gained votes from the non-voter group (+250,000), the FDP (+120,000), and the other parties (+60,000).

As in previous elections, the SPD performs better among older voters than among younger voters. However, it also loses more votes among older voters than younger voters. The situation is similar in regard to the level of education: the SPD still performs better among voters with a low level of formal education but also loses more votes in this group.

The **Greens** are also losing votes across all groups. The Greens lost the most votes to the Left Party, 700,000 votes. However, the Greens also lost 460,000 voters to the CDU/CSU. The Greens only recorded slight losses to the BSW (-150,000) and the AfD (-100,000). In contrast, the Greens gained votes from the FDP (+140,000), from the non-voter camp (+110,000), and from the SPD (+100,000).

The Greens recorded above-average losses among younger voters, especially young women, meaning that they no longer have their strongest results there. Instead, they achieve their best results among the middle age groups. As in previous elections, the Greens achieve better results in large cities than in rural areas.

The **Left Party** is gaining voters from all directions. It achieved its greatest gains from the Greens (+700,000), the SPD (+560,000), and other parties (+310,000). However, the Left Party also benefited from former non-voters (+290,000) as well as former voters of the FDP (+100,000) and the

CDU/CSU (+70,000). The Left Party only lost votes to the BSW (-350,000) and the AfD (-110,000).

The Left Party performs better among women than men and better in large cities than in rural areas. The party performs particularly well among young women in cities with a high school diploma (38%; Infratest dimap).

The FDP is the only party unable to benefit from the increased voter turnout. It is the only party to even lose votes slightly to the non-voter camp (-40,000). Overall, the FDP is losing votes in all directions and has not made any gains. The FDP lost the most votes to the CDU/CSU, 1,350,000 voters. 890,000 former FDP voters also switched to the AfD. In addition, the FDP lost to a lesser extent to the BSW (-260,000), the Greens (-140,000), the other parties (-120,000), the SPD (-120,000), and the Left Party (-100,000).

Like the Greens, who have lost an above-average number of votes among young women, the FDP has lost a disproportionate number of votes among young men. As a result, there are no longer any age effects when voting for the FDP.

Although the BSW fell just short of the five percent hurdle, it was able to gain voters from all directions. The BSW made the biggest gains from the other parties (+500,000), the SPD (+440,000), and the Left Party (+350,000). The BSW also benefited from the increased voter turnout (+400,000). BSW also gained votes from the FDP (+260,000), the CDU/CSU (+220,000), the Greens (+150,000), and the AfD (+60,000).

The BSW performs slightly worse among older voters. Beyond that, there are no social structural peculiarities.

The **other parties** lose ground, particularly to the AfD (-790,000) and the BSW (-500,000), but also to the CDU/CSU (-360,000) and the Left Party (-310,000). The other parties recorded only slight losses to the SPD (-60,000) and the Greens (-20,000). Voters from the FDP (+120,000) and from the non-voter camp (+160,000) switched to the other parties.

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1 Sources: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen und Infratest dimap.

2 Several analyses are currently being published by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

3 The voter migration data refers exclusively to data from Infratest dimap. Due to deviations in the results on the social structure of the electorate from Infratest dimap and Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, only comparable results are reported.

Imprint

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