Female Enfranchisement and the Conservative Voting Gap: Evidence from Gender-Separated Precinct Returns*

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Abstract

Newly enfranchised German women in the 1920s consistently voted against the party that had secured their political rights. Despite being poorer and mobilized largely through the Social Democratic Party, they gave on average 10 percentage points more support to confessional center-right parties than men. We leverage a unique institutional feature of Munich's 1924 election: ballots counted separately by gender. This allows us to construct a rare precinct-level panel of male and female voting behavior which we link to newly digitized pre-suffrage data on occupations, socioeconomic status, and religion. While religious identity serves as a powerful predictor of female voting behavior, proxies for material self-interest have no explanatory power, suggesting that the 'identity payoff' dominated the 'redistributive payoff' for newly enfranchised women. Our findings demonstrate that cultural and religious identity, more than material self-interest, can structure the political behavior of disadvantaged groups.

Keywords: Female suffrage, Voting behavior, Religion, Cultural identity

JEL codes: D72, N42, J16

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1 Introduction

Female suffrage fundamentally reshaped political representation, public policy, and social inequalities (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000). Standard political economy models predict that extending the vote to poorer groups should shift governments leftward, increasing support for redistribution (Lott and Kenny, 1999; Edlund and Pande, 2002; Miller, 2008). Yet historical evidence reveals a puzzle: newly enfranchised women often favored tradition-based parties over the left (Ogburn and Goltra, 1919; Willey and Rice, 1924; Tingsten, 1937; Morgan-Collins, 2015). In Weimar Germany, for instance, women supported confessional center-right parties by a margin of ten percentage points over men—voting against both their economic class and the Social Democratic Party that had secured their rights.

Among the factors that could explain this divergence, cultural identity—and religion in particular—has long been recognized as a slow-moving determinant of political preferences (Bisin and Verdier, 2001; Alesina and Giuliano, 2015; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2010). In empirical research on interwar Germany, Catholic affiliation is consistently identified as a powerful determinant of voting behavior, often acting as a bulwark against the extreme right while mobilizing support for moderate confessional parties (Falter, 1991; King et al., 2008; Spenkuch and Tillmann, 2018; Becker and Voth, 2023). Given that women were disproportionately Catholic, we hypothesize that their support for confessional parties, which acted as a shield against both the socialist left and the nationalist right, was driven by traditional religious values rather than economic self-interest.

We address this puzzle using a newly constructed dataset that offers an unprecedented level of detail to test this hypothesis. We combine three distinct historical sources to reconstruct the political and economic landscape of 1924 Munich. First, we digitized gender-specific precinct returns, allowing us to observe the exact vote split between men and women within the same voting district. Second, we transcribed historical city directories to capture the occupation, socioeconomic status, and gender of every household head, creating precise micro-level controls. Third, we integrated address-level census data to measure religious affiliation by gender.

This granular data construction allows us to test our hypothesis with unusual precision. While 'macro' studies were necessarily limited to electoral districts aggregating hundreds of thousands of voters—where cultural factors are inevitably conflated with distinct regional economies—our

'micro' level analysis addresses these limitations by studying voting at the smallest possible level: the precinct, aggregating approximately 1,000 active voters. Crucially, we further subdivide this unit by observing men and women separately. By linking these gender-disaggregated returns to pre-suffrage individual data, we can isolate the specific interaction of gender, economic status, and identity within the same neighborhood, overcoming the unobserved heterogeneity inherent in cross-regional comparisons.

Economic differences provide only limited explanation for the observed gender gap. Drawing on rich, individual data from historical city directories, we generate precinct-level measures of occupational income scores and the presence of elite women. Occupational scores and elite female presence are statistically indistinguishable from zero. Despite controlling for these detailed socioeconomic indicators, we find that material conditions played no role in driving the gender gap. While the share of women in a precinct does exhibit predictive power, its effect is modest—about half the size of the religious channel. These findings suggest that material self-interest, while not irrelevant, was secondary to other forces in shaping women's alignment with the confessional center.

By contrast, religious identity emerges as the dominant factor. A large literature shows that Catholicism strongly shaped political preferences in interwar Germany, with Catholic areas resisting nationalist appeals more effectively than Protestant ones (Falter, 1991; King et al., 2008; Spenkuch and Tillmann, 2018; Becker and Voth, 2023). Our detailed precinct-level data allow us to examine these dynamics within a single city. The results show that precincts with more Catholic women relative to men display markedly higher female support for the confessional center. Crucially, this effect is distinct from a general conservative drift: our data reveal that Catholic identity mobilized women for the center-right while simultaneously dampening support for the nationalist extreme right. This robust association is far stronger than any economic or demographic effect and indicates that cultural identity systematically shaped women's political behavior.

Other mechanisms frequently emphasized in the historical literature also fail to account for the gender gap. Using highly granular precinct-level data, we construct proxies for local social networks and local human capital. While these factors clearly mattered for political participation overall, they do not explain the systematic divergence between women's and men's votes.

Finally, we complement our descriptive analysis by probing the sensitivity of our results to an

instrumental variable strategy based on historical church proximity. We interpret these estimates cautiously, acknowledging that historical proximity likely proxies for the intensity of religious integration, capturing access to church-based networks and services. The fact that the IV estimates remain large and significant suggests that our baseline findings are not an artifact of spurious correlation, but are driven by women deeply embedded in the Catholic social milieu: the 'compliers' for whom the identity payoff was most salient.

Our findings contribute to a longstanding debate in political economy over the political effects of franchise extensions. While models of redistribution predict leftward shifts, historical evidence from interwar Germany and the United States shows that newly enfranchised women often favored confessional center-right parties that had been ambivalent about their enfranchisement, challenging the standard prediction (Lott and Kenny, 1999; Edlund and Pande, 2002; Inglehart and Norris, 2000). We extend this literature by demonstrating that in Weimar Munich, cultural identity—specifically religious affiliation—systematically outweighed economic self-interest in shaping women's votes.

More broadly, our results connect to work on identity economics (Bénabou and Tirole, 2011; Shayo, 2009) and contemporary debates on franchise expansions. Theoretical models suggest that when social identity is highly salient, voters may sacrifice their material self-interest to align with cultural or religious values (Shayo, 2009). Our results provide granular historical evidence for this mechanism. Recent extensions of voting rights—to immigrants, naturalized citizens, or younger cohorts—often assume that new voters will align with economic interests (Hainmueller et al., 2017; Verbeek, 2021). Our evidence cautions that such expectations may be misleading if entrenched cultural identities structure political preferences independently of material incentives (Alesina et al., 2021; Tabellini, 2020).

The paper proceeds in four steps. After describing the historical background, we begin our analysis by descriptively documenting gendered voting gaps using precinct-level returns. We then examine whether economic differences explain these patterns and show they do not. Next, we turn to religion, finding it to be the dominant predictor of women's confessional voting, a result that is robust to an IV strategy exploiting church proximity. Finally, we test alternative mechanisms highlighted in the historical literature, such as local networks and human capital, and show that they play little role.

2 Conceptual Framework

To interpret the voting behavior of newly enfranchised women, we draw on two competing theoretical frameworks in political economy: standard redistributive models and identity economics.

Standard rational choice models, most notably Meltzer and Richard (1981), posit that voters support policies that maximize their material self-interest. A key prediction of these models is that franchise extensions to poorer segments of the population should shift the median voter to the left, increasing support for redistribution and social spending. In the context of Weimar Germany, women entered the electorate with significantly fewer assets and lower labor market earnings than men. Under the standard model, this economic disadvantage should have driven female voters toward the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which championed redistribution and social welfare.

Identity economics, however, suggests that political preferences are shaped not only by material consumption but also by adherence to social norms and group prescriptions (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bénabou and Tirole, 2011). Shayo (2009) formalizes this trade-off, proposing that voters maximize a utility function that weighs both economic payoff and "social distance" to their identified group. When the salience of a specific social identity (e.g., religion) is high, voters may derive greater utility from aligning with that group's prescribed political behavior, even if it contradicts their economic class interest.

The relevance of this framework extends well beyond the historical context. It applies to contemporary political puzzles where social groups, such as religious minorities or immigrant communities, prioritize cultural or religious values over class interests. In these cases, the "identity payoff" of supporting a party aligned with cultural values outweighs the material gains offered by a party aligned with their economic interests.

Weimar Munich provides a sharp test of these competing predictions. The Catholic Church maintained a dense network of social organizations that maintained the high salience of religious identity ("confessional milieu"). For Catholic women, the "identity payoff" of voting for the confessional center (Zentrum/BVP) potentially outweighed the "redistributive payoff" of voting for the socialist left. Furthermore, this framework helps explain the rejection of the nationalist right: if the relevant identity is defined by *confession* rather than *nation*, voters will reject parties that threaten the church's autonomy, even if those parties share other "conservative" social values.

3 Historical Background

At the onset of women's suffrage in 1918, German politics was commonly described as divided into three broad ideological blocs. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) supported suffrage and expected electoral returns for its redistributive platform. The Confessional Center, led by the Catholic Zentrum party, emphasized the protection of church interests and Christian social ethics. Parties on the Nationalist Right, by contrast, opposed the Weimar Constitution itself, advocating for a return to the monarchy and a pre-republican social order (Bielefeld, 2023).

3.1 Elections during the Weimar Republic: 1919–1933

World War I ended on November 9, 1918 with the proclamation of the German Republic (*Deutsche Republik*), later known as the Weimar Republic. Seeking to overcome a structural disadvantage from the Imperial run-off system—in which it often led in the first round but lost to a unified conservative in the second—the SPD backed a new electoral law signed on November 30 that granted the vote to all men and women over twenty and replaced run-offs with proportional representation (Winkler, 1993, p. 65). Less than two months later, the first election of the Weimar Republic formed the National Constitutional Assembly on January 19, 1919. The Assembly signed the Treaty of Versailles and drafted the Weimar Constitution. It dissolved on May 21, 1920, with regular Reichstag elections held on June 6, 1920 (Winkler, 1993).

The Weimar Republic is famous for its fragmented multi-party system (Kronenberg, 2007). In part because proportional representation lacked an electoral threshold, the number of parties competing in Reichstag elections rose from seven in 1920 to nineteen in 1932 (Kronenberg, 2007). Broadly speaking, these parties fell into three ideological blocs (Falter et al., 1986):

The Confessional Center The Catholic Zentrum party and its Bavarian counterpart, the Bavarian People's Party (BVP), represented the interests of the Catholic minority. While Zentrum accepted female suffrage as part of the Weimar constitutional framework, it framed women's political engagement strictly within the context of religious duty and the preservation of the Christian family.

The Centre Left: The Social Democratic Party (SPD) was the dominant center-left force, focused on workers rights, social welfare and redistribution, with the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) and the Communist Party (KPD) positioned further to the left. Crucially, the SPD was the driving force behind female suffrage and campaigned on themes of gender equality and women's political participation.

The Nationalist Bloc: The German Democratic Party (DDP) and German People's Party (DVP) both opposed the Weimar Republic and the broader societal changes it introduced, including expanded rights for women.[1] These parties instead advocated for nationalist values such as a return to the monarchy in addition to traditional gender roles.

3.2 Winning women's vote

Parties quickly targeted new female voters with distinct appeals. On the political left, the SPD campaigned on gender equality and female civic agency (Figure 1a), reflecting decades of activist organizing within the SPD (Sneeringer, 2002, p. 14). While both centrist and nationalist parties emphasized motherhood, social order, and traditional gender roles (Figures 1b–c), the values underpinning these appeals differed. For centrist parties, Christian faith provided the central frame — symbolized in Figure 1b by the cross around the woman's neck. For nationalist parties, by contrast, the nation-state was the primary reference point, conveyed in Figure 1c through the prominent flag and the absence of religious symbols. These campaign posters reflected the ideological visions on offer for the country: secular emancipation on the one hand or trandtional gender and family roles inspired by religion on the other (Sneeringer, 2002, p. 57).

Despite leading the fight for female suffrage, the SPD struggled to win women's votes. In a number of special election counts, women consistently supported parties other than the SPD, including in cities like Cologne, Munich, and other Bavarian towns (Sneeringer, 2002; Falter et al., 1986). Instead, female voters were more likely to support Zentrum or the BVP, reflecting the continued importance of religion and tradition in shaping women's political preferences.[2] Prom-

[1] The nationalist bloc also includes extreme far-right parties such as the German National People's Party (DNVP) as well as Hitler's National Socialist Freedom Movement (NSDAP).

[2] We confirm these accounts collecting extensive data on election counts by gender. Appendix Figure B.1 reports average vote shares for center-left parties (a) center (b) for 34 large cities separately by gender. In every city, center-left

inent suffrage activists—often independent, secular women—appear to have over-estimated the breadth of support for their agenda, under-weighting the pull of religion and family structures among the median female voter (Sandmann-Bremme, 1956; Sneeringer, 2002).

Taken together, the historical record points to a persistent pattern: women were less likely than men to support the party that secured their franchise. The irony of women's suffrage in the Weimar Republic is that confessional parties, which had historically viewed women's rights advocacy with suspicion, became the political home of large blocs of female voters. By effectively mobilizing women around religious identity, these parties successfully competed against the Socialist Left while simultaneously insulating Catholic women from the appeals of the Nationalist Right.

4 Data

Our analysis is based on a newly digitized data from historical sources. The unit of observation is the electoral precinct for the in 1924 Munich elections, which are separated by gender. This yields a precinct-by-gender panel, enabling us to exploit within-precinct variation.

Gender-separated election results: Our analysis is based on precinct-level election results for Munich in 1924, which were tabulated separately for women and men. A precinct is the smallest level of aggregation and on average aggregates the vote of 879 men and 1,056 women in 1924 (Table 1).

Two sets of documents survived in the archives: (1) the election results by precinct number and (2) a list of each address and the precinct to which it belongs. We use this mapping between addresses and election results to identify the exact households per voting district per election. We merge these election results to our directory data in 1924, effectively linking 219,087 households to one of the 175 voting precincts in which they were located.

City Directories (Address Bücher): We obtain pre-franchise covariates from the city directory in 1910. As noted in Bühler et al. (2024), city directories were the primary source to locate and contact people in a city. They contained the names of the heads of each household in the city, the exact address, occupation of the household head as well as an indicator for whether a woman leading

parties gained fewer votes from women, while center parties gained more.

a household was a widow. We obtain scanned copies of the 1910 directory from the Bavarian State Library and transcribe the entries with the help of a data entry company. Bühler et al. (2024) note that the transcription error is less than 0.1%. We use this data in order to generate precinct-level aggregates of occupational income scores by gender. Table 1 shows that as expected, women have a 10% lower occupational income score than men. This is likely an overestimate, as only non-widowed, independent women are observed in the directory but wives are subsumed under their husband. We use the number of observable women to create the share of households led by independent women.

There are two primary reasons why information from the Munich city directories is especially suitable for quantitative analysis. First, during the late 19^{th} and early 20^{th} century, Munich was a large, industrial and rapidly growing urban center in the country with active political participation across the spectrum. Second, the records are published by the police administration of the state of Bavaria and by the city of Munich and rely on resident registration records, making the data accurate and complete.

City Census: We collect data from the last pre-franchise census in 1910 to construct the 1912 voting precincts. These data come from the city archives and contain information at the address level (i.e., an apartment building, but not the specific unit within the building). In this census, enumerators recorded the exact number of men and women at every address. We thus use this data to calculate precinct level measures of the share of population that is male or female. This census also contains data at the level of *Stadtbezirk* (city district), which details the share of catholic inhabitants by gender.[3] Table 1 shows that in 1910, the average precinct contained 1,398 men and 1,595 women. In terms of religious composition, the share of Catholic women was 4.6 percentage points higher than that of men.

Linking procedure Starting from the city census in 1910, we start from a basis of 16,351 addresses in 961 streets in which on average 17 men and 19 women lived. We link 99.4% of these

[3]There are 26 city districts in Munich. Data available in 'Statistisches Amt der Stadt München (1912), Mitteilungen des Statistischen Amtes XXIV, Heft 1, 1. Teil, Page 25. This implies precincts lie within a city district. Aggregating to or clustering at the city district level does not quantitatively affect our results.

addresses to the 1910 directory and obtain pre-franchise covariates from more than 170,000 households. We then use the respective directory of 1910 and 1924 to identify the exact precinct of each address. In total 14,145 addresses in 906 streets can be linked to a precinct in 1924 and 1912. Relating the number of households per address to the number of households per precinct in 1924, we calculate the expected votes from each address for each party.[4] Finally, we aggregate these expected vote results for men and women to the precinct boundaries of 1912, and link the resulting precinct-by-gender results to the covariates established from the census and directory of 1910. While the analysis could be done using 1924 data alone, the inclusion of pre-franchise data alleviates concerns about endogenous covariates.

We summarize our data in Table A.1, highlighting differences between women and men per precinct in 1910. We acknowledge that directory-based occupational scores likely measure female socioeconomic status with greater noise than for men, as directories primarily recorded household heads and may omit informal female labor. This classical measurement error suggests our OLS estimates for economic controls may be attenuated. Yet, the census shows precincts did contain on average more 196 more women than man. Women are also 4.6% more likely to be catholic, and poorer on average.

5 Female Voting Gap

We begin by establishing our first contribution: documenting the distinct gender gap in the 1924 election. Exploiting the highly granular nature of our data, we investigate this descriptively in three ways.

First, Figure 2 provides a geographical visualization of both our data and spatial voting patterns in Munich. The maps show precinct-level vote shares for the **confessional center** parties (Zentrum and BVP), separately for men (Panel a) and women (Panel b). Several patterns emerge. While male support for these parties appears somewhat dispersed and weaker across the city, female support is notably more concentrated and intense, especially in the central and eastern districts. The darker areas on the right-hand map indicate precincts where over 35 percent of women voted

[4] In precinct 151, with 1,363 households in 135 addresses, the center party gained 138 votes from men and 324 from women. Thus, each household is expected to contribute 0.339 votes to the center party's total tally. That is, at the average address precinct 151, the center party gains 1 vote from men and 2.4 votes from women.

for confessional parties—substantially higher than the corresponding male support in the same locations. This spatial divergence provides early visual evidence of gendered voting behavior and highlights the granularity of our precinct-level dataset.

Second, in Figure 3 we plot the vote share for the confessional center by gender across all 175 precincts in Munich. Each vertical line connects the male (black square) and female (white square) vote shares within the same precinct, sorted in increasing order of the gender gap. The figure reveals a striking and consistent pattern: in every single precinct, women voted more for confessional parties than men. The gender gap is substantial, with virtually no overlap in the distributions. This pattern aligns with historical accounts emphasizing the role of religion and traditional values in anchoring women's political preferences.

Finally, Table 1 quantifies these distinct gender gaps across the political spectrum. Female voters significantly penalized the Left, recording an 8.6 percentage point deficit despite the bloc's redistributive platform. This political exit was almost entirely captured by the Confessional Center, which enjoyed a 10.1 percentage point surplus among women. By contrast, the aggregate vote share for the nationalist right remained largely unchanged, indicating that the gender gap was driven by a substitution from the Left to the Center rather than a rejection of the Right.[5] Regarding participation, although the female electorate was significantly larger, lower female turnout rates resulted in a negligible gap in total ballots cast (averaging just 13 additional female votes per precinct).

Crucially, this consolidation around the center did not imply a simple shift to the right. Greater female support for confessional parties came at the expense of *both* the socialist left (SPD) *and* the nationalist right. As we show later in our analysis, this implies that female enfranchisement in Munich strengthened the constitutional center against both political extremes, rather than fueling a uniform conservative drift.

6 Drivers of the Female Voting Gap

Having established the aggregate gender gap descriptively, we now turn to regression analysis to quantify its drivers. Descriptive evidence suggested a substitution from the Left to the Confes-

[5] Results by party are shown in Table A.1.

sional Center. We focus on the two dominant cleavages of Weimar politics to explain this voting pattern: religion and class.

A large body of work highlights the persistent role of religion and culture, particularly Catholic affiliation, in shaping political preferences (Falter, 1991; King et al., 2008; Spenkuch and Tillmann, 2018; Becker and Voth, 2023). By contrast, theories of enfranchisement in political economy emphasize that voting behavior, especially in cases of female suffrage, should primarily reflect underlying economic interests (Lott and Kenny, 1999; Miller, 2008; Meltzer and Richard, 1981). Our analysis therefore evaluates the relative importance of these two forces in explaining women's alignment with the confessional center. To do so, we leverage a newly digitized dataset linking over 200,000 individuals to precinct-level voting outcomes in post-suffrage Munich. While we do not observe individual voting behavior, the fine-grained nature of our data allows us to identify systematic gender differences with unusual precision.

6.1 Empirical Design

Our starting point is a unique precinct-by-gender panel from the 1924 election that records male and female votes separately. What makes our setting distinctive is that we are able to construct gender-specific measures of economic activity and religious affiliation, drawing on highly granular data from the 1910 city census and city directory. This combination allows us to examine, for the first time, how observable characteristics of individuals and neighborhoods shaped men's and women's voting behavior differently in the early years of universal suffrage. To this end, we estimate the parameters of the following empirical specification:

$$\begin{aligned} Center_{1924,p,g} = \beta_0 Female\ Vote_g + \Gamma_p \\ + \beta Share\ Catholic_{1910,p,g} \times Female\ Vote_g \\ + Econ_{1910,p,g} \times Female\ Vote_g \\ + \Theta_p \times Female\ Vote_g + \epsilon_{p,g} \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

Where $\text{Center}_{p,g}$ is the vote share for confessional parties in precinct p for gender g. Female Vote_g is a binary variable is set to 1 for female votes and 0 for male votes.

The constant β_0 captures the raw gender gap in support for these confessional parties. In other words, it measures the average difference in voting between women and men across all 175 precincts. Precinct fixed effects, denoted by Γ_p, absorb all characteristics common to both genders within a precinct, allowing us to interpret coefficients on interactions with the female indicator as differential effects on women, relative to men in the same precinct.

To explore cultural drivers of the voting gap, we include the share of Catholics (measured separately for men and women) in the precinct, Share Catholic$_{1910,p,g}$, and interact it with the female vote indicator. Since these measures are constant within a precinct, the interaction isolates the extent to which the presence of Catholic women (and men) explains why women in some precincts vote more strongly for confessional parties than their male counterparts.

To test the economic channel, we include gender-specific economic characteristics in our estimation. These include (i.) occupational scores (as proxies for income); (ii.) the relative size of the female/male population in the precinct; and (iii.) the share of independent women, all measured prior to female suffrage and collected from historical directories and census sources. We define independent women as non-widowed women who appear in the city directory as household heads (i.e., living without a husband).[6] Our data indicate that these women disproportionately belonged to the economic elite, with high representation among rentiers and business owners. These measures form the vector $Econ_{1910,p}$, which we interact with the female vote indicator to estimate how economic characteristics shaped women's voting behavior differently from men's.

Finally, we include a set of precinct-level controls, denoted by Θ_p, which capture additional dimensions of local economic and social activity that may affect male and female voters differently. Specifically, we measure the distance to the nearest school, as a proxy for access to human capital, and the distance to the nearest inn, as a proxy for information dissemination and social networks which have been shown to shape political participation (Satyanath et al., 2017). As with the cultural and economic measures, these controls are interacted with the female vote indicator to capture gender-specific effects.

[6]The share of independent women does not have a male counterpart because we cannot observe which male household heads are married, widowed or unmarried. Thus, the male residential density is a share of households headed by men, whereas the share of independent women is the share of unmarried and un-widowed women leading a household.

While our baseline specifications document robust gender-based differences in voting patterns after enfranchisement, the coefficient on the gender dummy (and its interactions) should be interpreted as descriptive rather than causal. It captures systematic differences in outcomes between women and men, net of precinct-level characteristics, but does not by itself establish a causal mechanism. To address concerns about sorting and omitted variables, we complement these descriptive results with an instrumental variables approach that leverages historical church locations. This strategy allows us to move beyond descriptive patterns and provide some evidence that support a more a causal interpretation between female Catholicism and confessional voting.

6.2 Baseline Results

Table 2 reports the results from estimating equation 1. We focus on the coefficients for the female-specific measures of our economic and religious variables; the corresponding male measures are included in all specifications but omitted from the table for brevity.[7] A central puzzle motivates this analysis: despite the SPD's role in securing women's suffrage, women did not reward the party at the ballot box. Instead, they disproportionately supported the confessional center (Zentrum and BVP). Our baseline results therefore ask whether economic or cultural factors account for this gendered shift toward confessionalism.

Female Voting Gap: In column 1 we estimate the coefficient on the gender dummy, providing a benchmark for the magnitude of the gender gap documented in Figures 2 and 3. Pooling across all 175 precincts, women vote 10 percentage points more for the confessional center than men. This difference is substantial, amounting to nearly a 63 percent increase relative to the mean dependent variable for men (i.e., the confessional center in 1924 won 16.4 percent of the male vote).

Religious Affiliation: A substantial literature has explored factors shaping voting behavior and political preferences in interwar Germany, ranging from economic hardship and social networks to wartime experiences and cultural attitudes. Following Becker and Voth (2023), religious affiliation consistently emerges as a crucial determinant of voters' susceptibility to confessional versus nationalist political appeals. Catholic areas tended to resist extremist and nationalist messages

[7] Full results for male coefficients can be found in Appendix Table A.2.

more effectively than Protestant regions, reflecting the shielding effect of confessional identity (Falter, 1991; King et al., 2008; Spenkuch and Tillmann, 2018). While previous evidence primarily relies on comparisons across cities or regions, our detailed precinct-level data uniquely allow us to test whether this confessional alignment shaped voting patterns within a single urban context.

In column 2 of Table 2, we investigate the influence of female Catholic affiliation on female voting behavior. The coefficient of interest suggests that a one percentage point increase in the share of catholic women in a precinct increases female voting for the confessional center by nearly 0.8 percentage points. The overall female voting gap now switches sign and is estimated with less precision, suggesting that religious affiliation is a significant driver of the overall voting gap.

Economic Drivers: The 1924 elections were the third held after female enfranchisement in 1918, an institutional change that reshaped political representation in Germany. More broadly, a large literature shows that extending the franchise can shift political outcomes, reshape public policy, and alter social inequalities (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000). Many studies find that enfranchisement pushed governments leftward, increasing social spending and liberal representation (Lott and Kenny, 1999; Edlund and Pande, 2002; Miller, 2008; Teele, 2018). At the same time, historical evidence shows that women often voted more conservatively than men (Ogburn and Goltra, 1919; Willey and Rice, 1924; Tingsten, 1937; Morgan-Collins, 2015). To disentangle these competing forces, column 3 introduces gender-specific measures of economic activity and explicitly contrasts economic explanations of voting behavior with religious and cultural ones. We use three indicators: occupational scores (as proxies for income), the share of the precinct population that is female, and the share of elite women (i.e., independent women).

Our results show little evidence that income-related measures significantly shaped women's voting behavior. We interpret these null results with caution, as our directory-based occupational proxies for women likely contain classical measurement error, which may attenuate the estimated coefficients. However, even allowing for potential attenuation, the stark contrast between the precise null effects of economic variables and the large, robust magnitude of the religious coefficient suggests that material factors were secondary to cultural identity. While economic theory predicts that newly enfranchised, lower-income women should lean left, our results suggest that religious integration severed this link, channeling female support into the confessional center in-

stead. While the size of the female population, does exhibit some predictive power, its coefficient is only about half the magnitude of the Catholic coefficient, and $t-$tests confirm that the two differ significantly. The inclusion of economic variables nearly triples the overall gender gap coefficient, which, as in column 2, remains negative marginally significant. Taken together, these findings suggest that the raw gender voting gap was primarily driven by religious affiliation and, to a lesser extent, demographic composition rather than economic characteristics.

Social Networks and Human Capital: Column 4 adds our interacted precinct-level controls: distance to the nearest school (as a proxy for human capital) and distance to the nearest inn (as a proxy for social networks and information exchange). Including these measures does not alter the overall patterns in the data. The share of Catholic women continues to be the dominant and most precisely estimated predictor of female support for the confessional center..

Overall, the inclusion of additional economic, demographic, and contextual controls does little to alter the core finding: female Catholic affiliation remains the dominant predictor of women's support for the confessional center. The estimated coefficient is remarkably stable across specifications, reinforcing the interpretation that religious identity, rather than material circumstances, drove the observed gender gap. While this stability suggests that unobserved heterogeneity is unlikely to fully explain our results, it does not eliminate the threat of omitted variable bias—a concern we address in the following robustness section.

6.3 Religion or Economics

Table 3 reports the specifications from Table 2, columns (4) and (6), augmented with the relative impact of a one-standard deviation change in female Catholic share and female population (reported in italics). This extension allows a direct comparison of the relative importance of religion and economic composition.

A one-standard deviation increase in female Catholic share (5.3%) raises confessional vote shares by 4.4 percentage points in OLS and 8.1 percentage points in 2SLS. By contrast, a one-standard deviation increase in female population (3.7%) raises support for the center by only 1.2-1.9 percentage points. Since the point estimates are also significantly different, this comparison highlights the outsized impact of religious factors over economic factors.

In columns 3 and 4, we repeat this for center-left parties. As shown, there is no gender voting gap for these parties, and female religious affiliation displays no predictive power on these vote shares. In columns 5 and 6, we examine nationalist parties on the far right. These parties combined traditional appeals to women's roles as mothers and caretakers with more extreme nationalist demands, including a return to the monarchy. In contrast to the confessional center, female Catholic affiliation predicts lower relative support for these parties. At the median level of female Catholicism in a precinct, the marginal effect of the female vote gap is significantly negative, suggesting that Catholic women, while more traditional than men in general, resisted the more extreme nationalist platform.

7 Robustness and Identification

Our main analysis establishes a robust correlation between Catholic identity and female support for the confessional center. In this section, we address threats to identification, specifically focusing on unobserved heterogeneity and measurement error.

7.1 Instrumental Variable Strategy

To assess whether these results depend on unobserved heterogeneity or measurement error we implement an instrumental variable strategy that uses the distance to the nearest Catholic church in 1910. We argue that sorting based on anticipated voting power is unlikely because suffrage was an unanticipated shock following the collapse of the Empire. Furthermore Munich's proportional representation system meant that relocating across precinct lines offered no advantage for representation as all precincts belonged to the same electoral district.

The identifying assumption requires that proximity to a church in 1910 influences voting behavior through religious exposure rather than secular economic channels. We acknowledge that proximity likely captures more than nominal affiliation. It proxies for integration into the social fabric of the church including attendance and access to church-run charity. These mechanisms remain distinct from the secular economic self-interest that standard models predict should drive voting. Even if proximity increases support for confessional parties by strengthening women's reliance on church services this validates our core argument. The church functioned as a cultural

institution that successfully competed with class-based political mobilization.

Table 1 reports the 2SLS estimates in Columns 5 and 6. The first stage is strong with an F-statistic of approximately 25. This indicates that historical church location is a powerful predictor of local Catholic density. The IV estimates confirm our baseline findings and show that precincts with higher religiously-driven female density exhibit significantly higher support for the confessional center. The magnitude of the IV coefficient is larger than the OLS estimate. This is consistent with measurement error in the directory data attenuating the OLS results or with the instrument isolating the behavior of the most socially integrated Catholic women.

7.2 Coefficient Stability and Measurement Error

The stability of the religious coefficient across specifications suggests that our results are not driven by selection on observables. Comparing the univariate results (Column 2) to the full specification with economic and precinct controls (Column 4), the coefficient on Catholic affiliation remains remarkably stable (moving from 0.834 to 1.431 in the IV specification). Following the logic of Altonji et al. (2005) and Oster (2019), this stability implies that unobserved confounders would need to be proportionally much larger than our observable controls to explain away the result.

Finally, we address the precise null result for our economic variables. A potential concern is that we fail to find an economic effect due to attenuation bias, as female occupational scores in city directories likely contain measurement error. While we acknowledge this limitation, the IV results provide a useful benchmark. The fact that instrumenting for religion *increases* the estimated effect suggests that measurement noise in the religious variable was indeed attenuating the OLS estimate. If economic factors were truly the dominant driver but masked by noise, we would expect the inclusion of better controls or instruments to destabilize the religious coefficient, which we do not observe.

7.3 Sample Sensitivity

Finally, we probe the sensitivity of our results to sample composition to ensure our findings are not driven by outliers or specific sub-regions. We replicate our baseline estimation while systematically dropping individual city districts and precincts. We further test robustness by excluding precincts in the top and bottom deciles of population size, as well as those with the historically

largest and smallest support for the confessional center. Across all subsamples, the estimated effect of Catholic affiliation remains positive, statistically significant, and quantitatively similar to our baseline estimates.

8 Conclusion

Our analysis of Munich's 1924 election provides rare, precinct-level evidence on the political preferences of newly enfranchised women. Despite being poorer and enfranchised largely through the efforts of the Social Democratic Party, women gave on average ten percentage points more of their vote share to *confessional center* parties than men. Socio-economic indicators such as occupational scores and elite female presence fail to explain this gap, while demographic measures like the female population share account for only a small fraction of it.

By contrast, Catholic affiliation is a strong and consistent predictor: precincts with more Catholic women relative to men display markedly higher female support for the confessional center. This result holds across specifications and remains robust when instrumenting Catholic affiliation with historical proximity to Catholic churches. Crucially, our analysis reveals that this religious alignment acted as a political firewall. Catholic women did not simply drift rightward; rather, their consolidation around the center came at the expense of *both* the socialist left and the nationalist right.

These findings shed light on a central assumption of standard models of redistribution: that voters primarily act on their economic self-interest. Such models predict that extending voting rights to poorer groups should increase support for redistribution. Yet our evidence shows that, at least in the case of newly enfranchised women in Weimar Munich, cultural and religious values weighed more heavily than economic position. Women's first electoral choices reflected a distinct confessional identity rather than material incentives. More broadly, our results provide empirical support for models of identity economics, demonstrating that when social identity is salient, it can override material incentives. This mechanism offers a generalizable explanation for why franchise expansions to lower-income groups do not uniformly generate leftward shifts, as voters frequently prioritize cultural alignment over redistributive gains.

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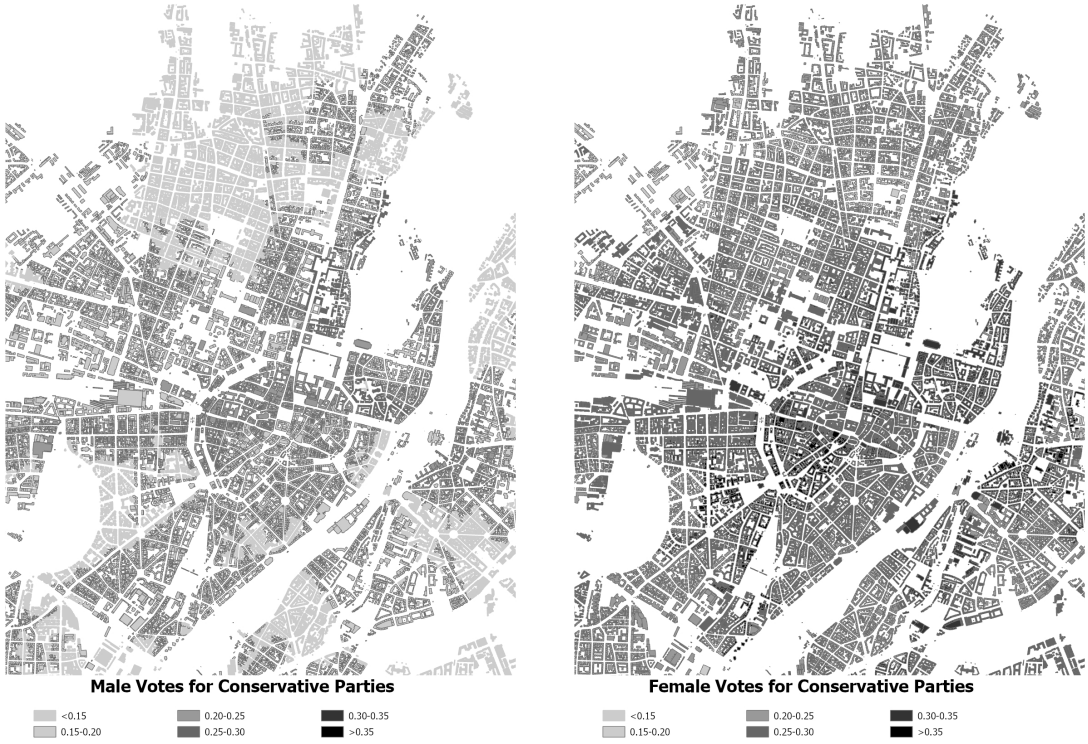
Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Selected election posters (1920)

(a) SPD **(b)** Zentrum **(c)** DVP

These election posters are from the 1920 election of the Weimar Republic. The left shows the poster of the SPD (social democratic party) promoting equality between men and women (*Same Rights=Same Duty*). The center poster shows the Zentrum (christian-conservative party) asking "*Who saves the Christian mothers children?*" The right shows a poster of the German People's Party (DVP) promoting women as mothers, saving the future of their children.

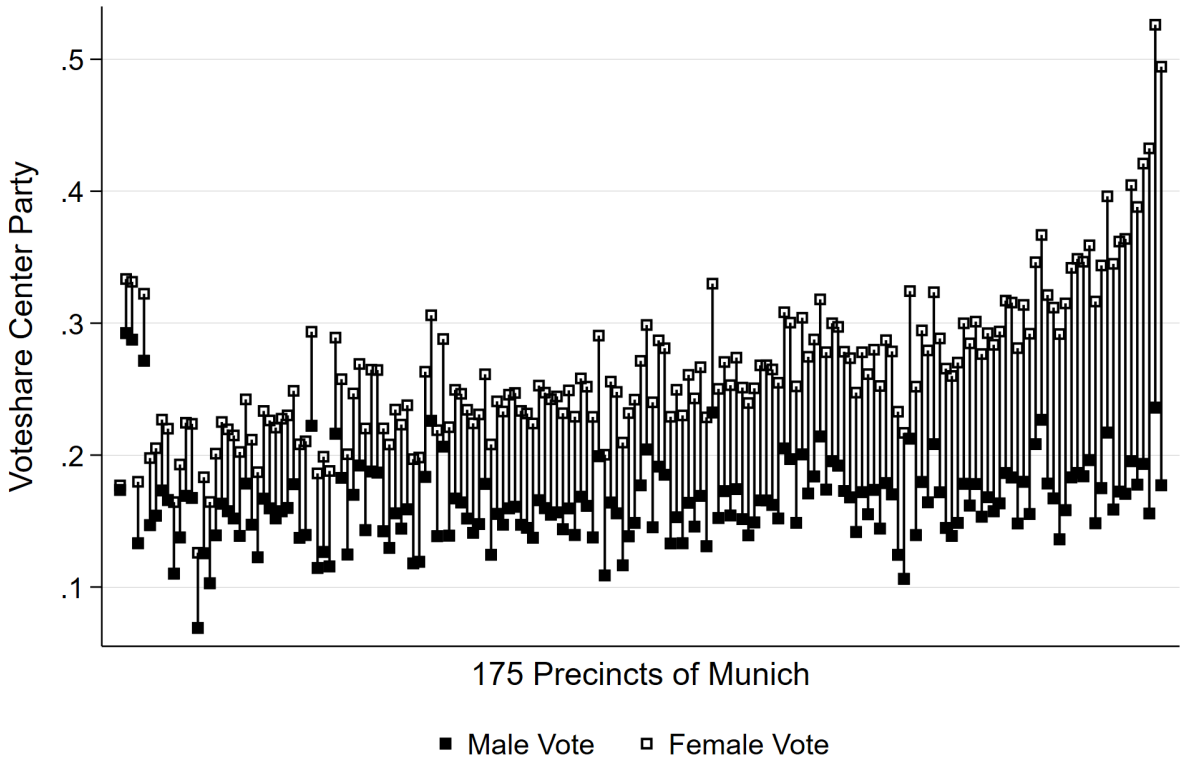
Figure 2: Spatial voting patterns in Munich



(a) **Male Votes** **(b)** **Female Votes**

This map assigns each address its exact precinct. Shades denote the vote share for conservative-center parties in 1924 for men (a) and women (b).

Figure 3: Voting patterns in Munich



This figure plots the votes of women and men in every precinct of Munich. No single precinct records more center votes from men than from women. Precincts sorted by the size of the conservative voting gap.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

By source and gender

	Men		Women		Difference		Source
Variable	Obs.	Average	Obs.	Average	Obs.	Average	
Voting outcomes:							
Center Left	175	0.369	175	0.283	175	-0.086	Election Archives
Center	175	0.164	175	0.265	175	0.101	Election Archives
Center Right	175	0.420	175	0.410	175	-0.010	Election Archives
Electorate	175	879	175	1,056	175	177	Election Archives
Votes	175	657	175	670	175	13.1	Election Archives
Turnout	175	0.749	175	0.633	175	-0.117	Election Archives
Religion:							
Share Catholics	175	0.796	175	0.843	175	0.046	Census 1910, city district
Economic:							
Population	175	1,398	175	1,595	175	197	Census 1910, address
Share Population	175	0.533	175	0.467	175	0.066	Census 1910, address
Occupation Score	175	4.618	175	4.575	175	-0.044	Directory 1910

The variables are constructed as follows from the indicated sources and averaged within the precinct. Results for all parties in Table A.1. *Share Catholic*: The Stadtbezirks representation of the 1910 census details the share catholic for each gender. *Population*, and *Share Population*: Using the address-level census in 1910 detailing the number of men and women per address. *Occupation Score*: following Bühler et al. (2024) and using the stated occupation in the directory to categorize occupational income score for each individual. Since only 11.2% of households are led by women, this variable likely suffers from measurement error.

Table 2: The Female Voting Gap

Conservative Center Parties

	(1) OLS	(2) OLS	(3) OLS	(4) OLS	(5) 2SLS	(6) 2SLS
Female Vote	0.101***	-0.100*	-0.273*	-0.254	-0.305**	-0.399*
	(0.003)	(0.054)	(0.159)	(0.163)	(0.153)	(0.210)
Share Female Catholic × Female Vote		0.763***	0.834***	0.823***	1.431***	1.517***
		(0.184)	(0.228)	(0.228)	(0.485)	(0.523)
Average Income of Women × Female Vote			-0.016	-0.016		-0.015
			(0.014)	(0.014)		(0.016)
Share Female Population × Female Vote			0.355**	0.330*		0.508**
			(0.176)	(0.181)		(0.218)
Share Independent Women × Female Vote			0.015	0.018		-0.162
			(0.181)	(0.183)		(0.230)
Distance to closest Pub × Female Vote				0.000		0.000
				(0.000)		(0.000)
Distance to closest School × Female Vote				-0.006		-0.003
				(0.024)		(0.025)
Observations	350	350	350	350	350	350
Precincts	175	175	175	175	175	175
First Stage F-Statistic					25.05	26.66
Male controls		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

This table establishes the female voting gap for conservative center parties. The unit of observation is a precinct by gender. Precincts are normalized to the 175 precincts of 1912. Precinct fixed effects included in all columns. *Female Vote* is a binary variable indicating the vote share of women voting for center parties. The coefficient in column (1) thus denotes the average voting gap between women and men for conservative parties. *Share Female Catholic* gives the average share of women reporting catholic as their religious affiliation (84.3%). We control for the male share of individuals reporting catholic as their religious affiliation in Male controls (79.6%). Variables constructed from the city-district census in 1910. *Average Income* denotes the average occupational score of women in a precinct (4.575, men: 4.618). Variable constructed from the directory in 1910. *Share Female Population* denotes the share women living in a district (53.3% or 1,595 women). Variable constructed from the address-level census in 1910. *Share Independent Women* denotes the share of women that are recorded as household heads in the directory of 1910, but are non-widowed (8.0%). *Distance to closest Pub* and *Distance to closest School* is the average distance to the closest pub (82m) or school (311m) in each precinct. Variables constructed from the directory in 1910. Full results, including the male variables reported in Table A.2. Standard errors clustered by precinct shown in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 3: The Female Voting Gap

Center-left and center-right parties

	Center		Center Left		Nationalist Bloc	
	(1) OLS	(2) 2SLS	(3) OLS	(4) 2SLS	(5) OLS	(6) 2SLS
Female Vote	-0.254	-0.399*	-0.174	-0.150	0.431***	0.549***
	(0.163)	(0.210)	(0.109)	(0.127)	(0.100)	(0.134)
Share Female Catholic × Female Vote	0.823***	1.517***	0.098	-0.014	-0.986***	-1.552***
	(0.228)	(0.523)	(0.127)	(0.303)	(0.155)	(0.395)
One SD change in Female Catholic:	*[0.044]*	*[0.081]*	*[0.005]*	*[-0.001]*	*[-0.052]*	*[-0.082]*
Share Female Population × Female Vote	0.330*	0.508**	0.170**	0.141	-0.396***	-0.541***
	(0.181)	(0.218)	(0.085)	(0.115)	(0.109)	(0.138)
One SD change in Female Population:	*[0.012]*	*[0.019]*	*[0.006]*	*[0.005]*	*[-0.015]*	*[-0.020]*
Observations	350	350	350	350	350	350
P-value: economic = religion	0.002	0.007	0.499	0.488	0.000	0.001
First Stage F-Statistic		26.66		26.66		26.66
Male controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Economic controls × Female Vote	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Precinct characteristics × Female Vote	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

This table establishes the female voting gap for all parties and contrasts the impact of religion to the impact of economic variables. The unit of observation is a precinct by gender. Precincts are normalized to the 175 precincts of 1912. Precinct fixed effects included in all columns. *Female Vote* is a binary variable indicating the vote share of women voting for either party. The coefficient in column (1) thus denotes the average voting gap between women and men for the respective party. *Share Female Catholic* gives the average share of women reporting catholic as their religious affiliation (84.3%). We control for the male share of individuals reporting catholic as their religious affiliation in Male controls (79.6%). Variables constructed from the city-district census in 1910. *Share Female Population* denotes the share women living in a district (53.3% or 1,595 women). Variable constructed from the address-level census in 1910. Below each variable, we report the estimated percentage point change in voting outcomes, if the dependent variable changes by one standard deviation. *P-value: economic = religion* reports the p-value from a test on whether the coefficients *Share Female Catholic* × *Female Vote* and *Share Female Population* × *Female Vote* are the same. Additional controls are reported in Table 2, columns (4) and (6). Standard errors clustered by precinct shown in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

For Online Publication: Appendix

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A Additional Tables

Table A.1: Summary Statistics

By source and gender

	Men		Women		Difference		Source
Variable	Obs.	Average	Obs.	Average	Obs.	Average	
Center-left:							
SPD	175	0.180	175	0.156	175	-0.025	Election Archives
USPD	175	0.005	175	0.004	175	0.000	Election Archives
KPD	175	0.184	175	0.123	175	-0.061	Election Archives
Confessional Center							
Zentrum	175	0.014	175	0.012	175	-0.002	Election Archives
BVP	175	0.150	175	0.253	175	0.103	Election Archives
Center-right:							
DVP	175	0.120	175	0.118	175	-0.002	Election Archives
DNVP	175	0.011	175	0.010	175	0.001	Election Archives
DVB	175	0.289	175	0.273	175	-0.002	Election Archives
Uncategorized							
BBMB	175	0.002	175	0.002	175	-0.000	Election Archives
BGG	175	0.002	175	0.002	175	0.001	Election Archives
BMG Südgau	175	0.005	175	0.005	175	0.000	Election Archives
Deutscher Block	175	0.029	175	0.024	175	0.004	Election Archives
FFF	175	0.001	175	0.001	175	0.000	Election Archives
Haeusserbund	175	0.001	175	0.001	175	-0.001	Election Archives
RPD	175	0.002	175	0.001	175	-0.001	Election Archives
Religion:							
Share Catholics	175	0.796	175	0.843	175	0.046	Census 1910, city district
Distance to closest Church					175	385m	Directory 1910
Economic:							
Share Population	175	0.533	175	0.467	175	0.066	Census 1910, address
Average Occupation Score	175	4.618	175	4.575	175	-0.044	Directory 1910
Share Independent Women					175	0.080	Directory 1910
Precinct characteristic:							
Distance to closest Pub					175	82m	Directory 1910
Distance to closest School					175	311m	Directory 1910

The variables are constructed as follows from the indicated sources and averaged within the precinct. *Share Catholic*: The Stadtbezirks representation of the 1910 census details the share catholic for each gender. *Share Population*: Using the address-level census in 1910 detailing the number of men and women per address. *Average Occupation Score*: following Bühler et al. (2024) and using the stated occupation in the directory to categorize occupational income score for each individual. *Share Independent Women*: Using the directory we relate the number of households headed by non-widowed women to the number of households in that precinct. *Share Household heads*: counting the number of female and male first names per address in the directory. *Distance to closest Church*: Using the directory we locate the exact geo coordinates of the closest church and calculate the distance to every address. *Distance to closest School*: Using the directory we locate the exact geo coordinates of the closest school and calculate the distance to every address. *Distance to closest Pub*: Using the directory we locate the exact geo coordinates of the closest Pub and calculate the distance to every address.

Table A.2: The Female Voting Gap

Full Results

	(1) OLS	(2) OLS	(3) OLS	(4) 2SLS	(5) OLS	(6) 2SLS
Female Vote	0.101***	-0.100*	-0.273*	-0.254	-0.305**	-0.399*
	(0.003)	(0.054)	(0.159)	(0.163)	(0.153)	(0.210)
Share Female Catholic × Female Vote		0.763***	0.834***	0.823***	1.431***	1.517***
		(0.184)	(0.228)	(0.228)	(0.485)	(0.523)
Share Male Catholic × Female Vote		-0.555***	-0.544***	-0.539***	-1.005***	-1.069***
		(0.142)	(0.191)	(0.191)	(0.329)	(0.406)
Average Income of Women × Female Vote			-0.016	-0.016		-0.015
			(0.014)	(0.014)		(0.016)
Average Income of Male × Female Vote			-0.003	-0.003		-0.025
			(0.021)	(0.021)		(0.023)
Share Female Population × Female Vote			0.355**	0.330*		0.508**
			(0.176)	(0.181)		(0.218)
Share Independent Women × Female Vote			0.015	0.018		-0.162
			(0.181)	(0.183)		(0.230)
Distance to closest Pub × Female Vote				0.000		0.000
				(0.000)		(0.000)
Distance to closest School × Female Vote				-0.006		-0.003
				(0.024)		(0.025)
Observations	350	350	350	350	350	350
Precincts	175	175	175	175	175	175
Adjusted R2	0.807	0.829	0.839	0.838	0.854	0.865
First Stage F-Statistic					25.05	26.66
Male controls		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

This table establishes the female voting gap for conservative center parties. The unit of observation is a precinct by gender. Precincts are normalized to the 175 precincts of 1912. Precinct fixed effects included in all columns. *Female Vote* is a binary variable indicating the vote share of women voting for center parties. The coefficient in column (1) thus denotes the average voting gap between women and men for conservative parties. *Share Female Catholic* gives the average share of women reporting catholic as their religious affiliation (84.3%). We control for the male share of individuals reporting catholic as their religious affiliation in Male controls (79.6%). Variables constructed from the city-district census in 1910. *Average Income* denotes the average occupational score of women in a precinct (4.575, men: 4.618). Variable constructed from the directory in 1910. *Share Female Population* denotes the share women living in a district (53.3% or 1,595 women). Variable constructed from the address-level census in 1910. *Share Independent Women* denotes the share of women that are recorded as household heads in the directory of 1910, but are non-widowed (8.0%). *Distance to closest Pub* and *Distance to closest School* is the average distance to the closest pub (82m) or school (311m) in each precinct. Variables constructed from the directory in 1910. Standard errors clustered by precinct shown in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

A.1 Within-precinct, differenced specification

Another way to assess the importance of religion in the voting gap is to regress the differences in voting preferences on the differences in religious affiliation. Our starting point is a conceptual decomposition, representing precinct-level vote shares as the sum of gender-specific factors, precinct-level influences, and observable characteristics:

$$Center_p^g = \beta_g + \delta \mathcal{X}_{p,g} + \Gamma_p + \epsilon_{p,g} \quad \forall g \in \{Women, Men\}. \tag{2}$$

Here, $Center_p^g$ denotes average precinct-level support for center parties from gender group g. Subtracting male from female vote shares within the same precinct yields:

$$\Delta Center_{j,p} = \beta_{Female\ Voting\ Gap,j} + \Delta \mathcal{X}_{p,g} + \varepsilon_{j,p}. \tag{A.1}$$

Equation (A.1) thus captures the precinct-level gender difference in vote shares, with male vote shares serving as the baseline.

Empirically, this design amounts to regressing precinct-level female–male differences in party support on differences in covariates, including measures of religious affiliation such as proximity to Catholic churches. Because both male and female outcomes are observed within the same precinct and election, the differenced formulation absorbs all common precinct-level characteristics. To ensure that covariates are unaffected by enfranchisement, we rely on pre-suffrage measures from the 1910 city directory.

While conceptually equivalent to the panel formulation used in the main text, this differenced regression offers a simpler way to quantify descriptive gender gaps net of observable characteristics. Table A.3 suggests that if women are as Catholic affiliated as men, the voting gap is 10.6% (or 6.1% in the IV). If, however, women are 5 percentage points more religious than men, the voting gap *increases* to 12.2% (or 14.3% in the IV). The relative magnitudes are large with 15% in the OLS and a doubling in the IV, underscoring the importance of Catholic affiliation for the voting decision of women.

Table A.3: The Female Voting Gap

Differenced Specification

	Center		Center Left		Center Right	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
Average Vote Gap	0.106***	0.061**	-0.123***	-0.114***	0.026**	0.065***
	(0.017)	(0.025)	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.019)
Share Catholic (1910)	0.312**	1.644***	0.137**	-0.136	-0.464***	-1.621***
	(0.149)	(0.541)	(0.068)	(0.283)	(0.110)	(0.440)
Economic Covariates (1910)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Precinct Covariates (1910)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Male Vote	0.164	0.164	0.369	0.369	0.420	0.420
Observations	175	175	175	175	175	175
Adjusted R2	0.863	0.766	0.929	0.922	0.354	-0.321
First Stage F-Stat		14.859		14.859		14.859

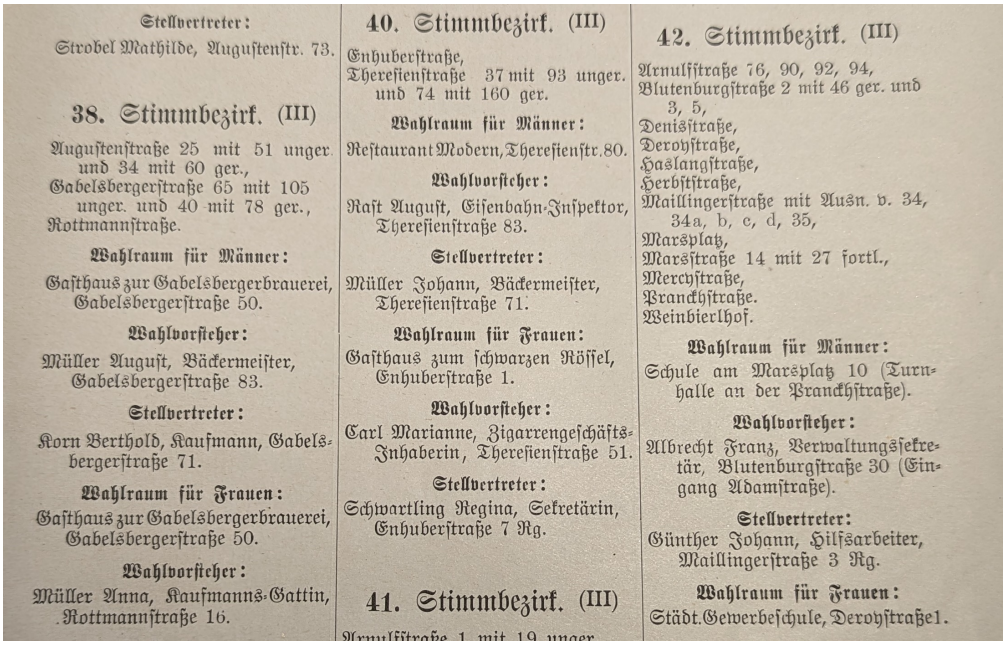
This table establishes the female voting gap for conservative center parties. The unit of observation is a precinct by gender. Precincts are normalized to the 175 precincts of 1912. Precinct fixed effects included in all columns. *Female Vote* is a binary variable indicating the vote share of women voting for center parties. The coefficient in column (1) thus denotes the average voting gap between women and men for conservative parties. *Share Female Catholic* gives the average share of women reporting catholic as their religious affiliation (84.3%). We control for the male share of individuals reporting catholic as their religious affiliation in Male controls (79.6%). Variables constructed from the city-district census in 1910. *Share Female Population* denotes the share women living in a district (53.3% or 1,595 women). Variable constructed from the address-level census in 1910. *Average Income* denotes the average occupational score of women in a precinct (4.575, men: 4.618). Variable constructed from the directory in 1910. *Share Independent Women* denotes the share of women, relative to the total female population, that are recorded as household heads in the directory of 1910, but are non-widowed (4.4%). Standard errors clustered by precinct shown in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

B Historical Background and Data

Figure B.1: The Conservative Voting Gap across German Cities

This figure plots average vote shares for the conservative center and the center-left, defined as SPD and KPD separately for women and men across 33 German cities between 1920 and 1930.

Figure B.2: Precinct division 1924



Stellvertreter:
Strobel Mathilde, Augustenstr. 73.

38. Stimmbezirk. (III)

Augustenstraße 25 mit 51 unger. und 34 mit 60 ger.,
Gabelsbergerstraße 65 mit 105 unger. und 40 mit 78 ger.,
Rottmannstraße.

Wahlraum für Männer:
Gasthaus zur Gabelsbergerbrauerei, Gabelsbergerstraße 50.

Wahlvorsteher:
Müller August, Bäckermeister, Gabelsbergerstraße 83.

Stellvertreter:
Korn Berthold, Kaufmann, Gabelsbergerstraße 71.

Wahlraum für Frauen:
Gasthaus zur Gabelsbergerbrauerei, Gabelsbergerstraße 50.

Wahlvorsteher:
Müller Anna, Kaufmanns-Gattin, Rottmannstraße 16.

40. Stimmbezirk. (III)

Enhuberstraße,
Theresienstraße 37 mit 93 unger. und 74 mit 160 ger.

Wahlraum für Männer:
Restaurant Modern, Theresienstr. 80.

Wahlvorsteher:
Rast August, Eisenbahn-Inspektor, Theresienstraße 83.

Stellvertreter:
Müller Johann, Bäckermeister, Theresienstraße 71.

Wahlraum für Frauen:
Gasthaus zum schwarzen Rössel, Enhuberstraße 1.

Wahlvorsteher:
Carl Marianne, Zigarrengeschäfts-Inhaberin, Theresienstraße 51.

Stellvertreter:
Schwartling Regina, Sekretärin, Enhuberstraße 7 Rg.

41. Stimmbezirk. (III)

42. Stimmbezirk. (III)

Arnulfstraße 76, 90, 92, 94,
Blutenburgstraße 2 mit 46 ger. und 3, 5,
Denisstraße,
Derovstraße,
Haslangstraße,
Herbststraße,
Maillingerstraße mit Ausn. v. 34, 34a, b, c, d, 35,
Marsplatz,
Marsstraße 14 mit 27 fortl.,
Mercystraße,
Pranckhstraße.
Weinbierlhof.

Wahlraum für Männer:
Schule am Marsplatz 10 (Turnhalle an der Pranckhstraße).

Wahlvorsteher:
Albrecht Franz, Verwaltungssekretär, Blutenburgstraße 30 (Eingang Adamstraße).

Stellvertreter:
Günther Johann, Hilfsarbeiter, Maillingerstraße 3 Rg.

Wahlraum für Frauen:
Städt. Gewerbeschule, Derovstraße 1.

This figure illustrates the assignment of streets and individual addresses (e.g. Arnulfstraße 76, 90, 92, 94 in precinct 42) to precincts in the May 1924 Munich election. The three voting precincts highlight the detail of our data: In precinct 38, men and women cast their votes at the same polling station, while in precinct 40, polling was gender-segregated, and the election officers were exclusively female.

To illustrate the precision of our spatial linking procedure and the heterogeneity in electoral arrangements, Figure B.2 maps address-to-precinct assignments for the May 1924 election. Each address in the city directories is matched to its corresponding precinct using administrative records listing which streets belonged to which precinct. Figure B.2 highlights two precincts to demonstrate variation in gendered polling practices: Precinct 38, where men and women voted at the same location, and Precinct 40, where polling was segregated by gender and female election officers administered the women's station. [8]

Figure B.3 uses the 1924 directory to find the poll station for precinct 40 (a), the election officer (b) and its substitute (c), from Figure B.2. While we can identify these individuals, there exist no individual-level census data for the period of interest that allow to geolocate individuals with their exact address, their full name, and occupation; especially not of women.

[8] This variation—visible in administrative forms and confirmed in archival notes—shows that precinct-level election records not only capture vote shares by gender but also reflect institutional variation in how newly enfranchised women were incorporated into the democratic process.

Figure B.3: Directory (Adressbuch) 1924

(a) Pollstation **(b)** Election Officer **(c)** 2nd. Election Officer

Locating poll station (a) and individuals (b-c) for precinct ("Stimmbezirk") 40 in the 1924 directory.