



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

The Gender Pension Gap

Developing an Indicator Measuring Fair Income
Opportunities for Women and Men

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Study by the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Information Technology (FIT) on behalf of the Federal German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

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I.

Research Question and Key Findings: An Overview

The life courses of women and men in Germany are notably different. Women take breaks from employment more frequently and for longer, they generally work fewer hours per week for lower wages, and many are employed in 'mini-jobs' that are not subject to mandatory contributions to the social insurance system. Given that the old-age pension system is reliant on employment, women thus end their working lives with a relatively low individual pension entitlement. This highlights how the differences between women's and men's incomes add up over the course of their working lives: the old-age pensions they receive on reaching retirement age are based on what they earned during the whole of their working lives.

Working lives are shaped by personal desires, by (jointly made) decisions reached by couples and by social conditions. In order to understand how these personal, family-related and policy-driven factors impact on the old-age pensions drawn by women and men, an indicator is needed which makes a gender-based pension comparison possible.

This study develops the Gender Pension Gap as a new indicator for gender inequitable income in the course of people's lifetimes. It describes the relation between women's average self-earned pensions compared to those of men. The Gender Pension Gap provides an insight into the individual financial returns from the different work biographies of women and men.

In Germany the Gender Pension Gap amounts to 59.6%.

This means that in Germany, women generally receive 59.6% less individual pension than men.

Germany's Gender Pension Gap is calculated using detailed data on old-age pensions taken from the studies on Old-Age Pension Schemes in Germany (ASID) which are conducted by TNS Infratest Sozialforschung on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs.

The sample is limited to persons who have reached the legal retirement age of 65.

The analysis takes into account incomes from all three pillars of the German old-age pension system. However, a comparison is only drawn between the *individual* pensions drawn by women and men and does not consider derived entitlements like survivor's pensions.

In this study, the Gender Pension Gap is further segregated by region, family status, qualification, year of birth and whether a recipient has children or not:

- When comparing eastern and western Germany, it is evident that the Gender Pension Gap in the east is lower than that in the west (36.7 percent and 63.8 percent respectively).
- The Gender Pension Gap for married or widowed persons is considerably higher (63.8 percent and 65.4 percent respectively) than that for divorced or single persons (18.8 percent and 9.0 percent respectively). In the case of divorced persons, it must be remembered that following divorce the pension entitlements accrued during the marriage are split between the ex-spouses. This has an impact on the amount of individual pension entitlements of divorced persons.
- The higher the level of academic or vocational qualification, the lower the Gender Pension Gap (university degree 35.6 percent, and no qualification 58.1 percent).
- For the younger age cohorts covered by the study, the figures are considerably lower than for the older cohorts (54.3 percent for the 65 - 70 cohort; 66.0 percent for those over 80).
- A couple's joint decision to marry and have children has a stronger impact on the gap between women's and men's pensions in western Germany. The Gender Pension Gap for married persons with children is 69.6 percent, while for married persons with no children it is narrower, at 51.6 percent. In eastern Germany, the gap is narrower again, at 39.6 and 34.3 percent respectively.

Following the study on Germany's Gender Pension Gap, women's and men's retirement pensions will be studied in a number of EU member states. However, there are no equally comprehensive and precise data sets for the EU member states like the German ASID data set that takes into account the various types of individual retirement pensions in the three pillars of the old-age pension system. Nonetheless, in terms of the EU-15 member states, it is evident that when comparing women's and men's pensions, Germany has the fourth biggest gap.

II.

Definition and Data

As an indicator, the Gender Pension Gap is to show the difference between women's and men's income over the life course which is reflected in their individual old-age pensions.

In calculating the Gender Pension Gap, the studies on Old-Age Pension Schemes in Germany (ASID) were used. They are available for the years 1986, 1992, 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007.¹

The ASID studies are conducted by TNS Infratest Sozialforschung (Munich) on behalf of the German Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs. Data has been collected for western and eastern Germany since 1992. The ASID studies provide information on the type and the amount of income earned by individuals and by married couples. The data also contains the determinants for old-age pensions. The findings are an important basis for regular pension reporting by the German government.

The Gender Pension Gap is designed to highlight the gap between women's and men's individual retirement pensions.

The Gender Pension Gap is defined as the percentage difference in the average individual retirement pension of all women covered in the study compared with the average individual retirement pension of the comparable group of men.

The Formula:

$$\text{Gender Pension Gap\%} = 100\% - \frac{\text{Women's average individual old-age income}}{\text{Men's average individual old-age income}} \%$$

The wider the Gender Pension Gap, the lower women's average individual old-age income is compared to that of men. For example: if women's average individual old-age income is €400 per month and men's average monthly individual old-age income is €1,000, the Gender Pension Gap is 60 percent. If the average amounts to €600 and €1,200 respectively, the Gender Pension Gap is 50 percent.

If the Gender Pension Gap turned negative, women's average individual old-age entitlements would exceed those of men.

¹ The ASID 2007 data have not yet been published. The ASID 2007 data used in this study were provided by TNS Infratest.

The Gender Pension Gap includes the different length of time worked (years of employment and average working hours per week) and the differences in the amount of income earned from paid employment. Women often earn less than men, partly because they are not represented in high income brackets and tend to work in lower paid sectors. However, the majority of women accrue special entitlements compensating for periods spent rearing their children, and these have a positive impact on the amount of their individual pension entitlements.

Apart from the different types of pension paid by the statutory pension scheme, the gender inequity in old-age pensions can also be due to lower occupational pensions and old-age income from private pension schemes. It is thus necessary not to limit the analysis to only one type of income, such as statutory pensions, but to include old-age incomes from all three pillars of the old-age pension scheme (statutory, occupational and private).

Table I shows the different types of old-age income as derived from the ASID data. These can be allocated to the statutory, the occupational or to individual private pension plans. Aggregation over these three categories yields the sum of the individual pensions which is used to calculate the Gender Pension Gap. All the figures for the individual components of that sum are available per person. They can thus be directly identified in the analysis of average old-age income segregated by gender.

Table I: Classification of the individual old-age incomes in the German old-age pension system

Statutory pensions schemes (1st pillar)	Individual pension under the statutory pension scheme (GRV)
	Individual civil service pension scheme (BV)
	Individual pension under pension scheme for farmers (AdL)
	Retirement settlement for farmers, individual pension under private sector pension scheme (BAV) for self-employed
	Individual pension under pension scheme for a professional group (BSV)
	Individual pension under statutory accident insurance (GUV)
	Individual pension under the compensation and assistance scheme for war victims (KOV)
Occupational pensions (2nd pillar)	Individual pension under private sector pension scheme (BAV)
	Individual occupational pension in public service (ZOED)
	Individual occupational and special pension provision (eastern Germany)
Individual supplementary provision* (3rd pillar)	Private pension scheme/life insurance (PRV/LV)
Unclassified	Other pensions (e.g. pensions from abroad)

* An individual supplementary pension (3rd pillar) can also include a voluntary contribution to the statutory pension insurance scheme. Because this cannot be separately identified in the ASID data, for the purposes of this study, each pension paid from the statutory pension scheme is classified as a regular state pension.)

Source: ASID income data by variable descriptions in the "Consolidated Code Plan". Fraunhofer FIT.

While all individual pensions are taken into account, derived entitlements to retirement pension (survivors' pensions) which depend on the spouse's employment are excluded.

The study looks at the individual level. In addition, as opposed to other studies of old-age income, it does not focus on the household as a financial unit. Therefore, conclusions regarding the actual economic situation of older women cannot be drawn using the Gender Pension Gap.²

The study takes in all persons who receive an individual old-age pension from at least one of the three pillars of the pension scheme and have reached the age of 65. Thus cases where an old-age pension is drawn while the recipient is still in (partial) employment are excluded. In such cases, the income resulting from that employment can lead to a deduction in the amount of pension received and thus distort the findings.

Table 2: Percentage of persons aged 65 and over who receive a retirement pension compared with all persons over the age of 65 (ASID 2007)

ASID Study	Men			Women		
	West	East	Germany	West	East	Germany
2007	97.9 %	99.2 %	98.18 %	89.1 %	99.3 %	91.13 %
1992	98.7 %	97.5 %	98.48 %	88.7 %	96.7 %	90.16 %

Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

At 89.1 percent, the share of women entitled to individual pensions in western Germany in 2007 was considerably lower than in eastern Germany. This means that in 2007, around 11 percent of women over the age of 65 in western Germany received no individual pension. The situation is different in eastern Germany: figures for 2007 show that almost all persons of pensionable age received individual pensions and indicate that there was no difference in the distribution of individual pensions between women and men.

² The overall pension situation of the elderly in a household context, which is in many cases composed of a married couple, is not taken into account when analysing the Gender Pension Gap. A comprehensive overview of the situation for women in old age in relation to household is contained in the English-language publication *Women's Biography Patterns and Pension Income Prospects. Executive Summary – Key results and equality policy conclusions*, which can be accessed on the internet: www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationsliste,did=173872.html.

III.

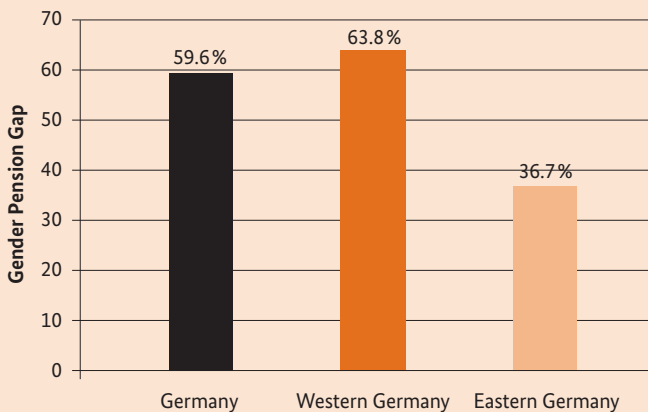
Findings on the Gender Pension Gap

3.1 The Gender Pension Gap by Region

Germany's Gender Pay Gap for 2007 is 59.6 percent. While men's average individual pension stands at € 1,595, that of women is € 645.

The Gender Pension Gap is considerably narrower in eastern Germany than in western Germany (36.7 percent and 63.8 percent respectively).

Figure 1: Gender Pension Gap by region, ASID 2007 (in percentages)



Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

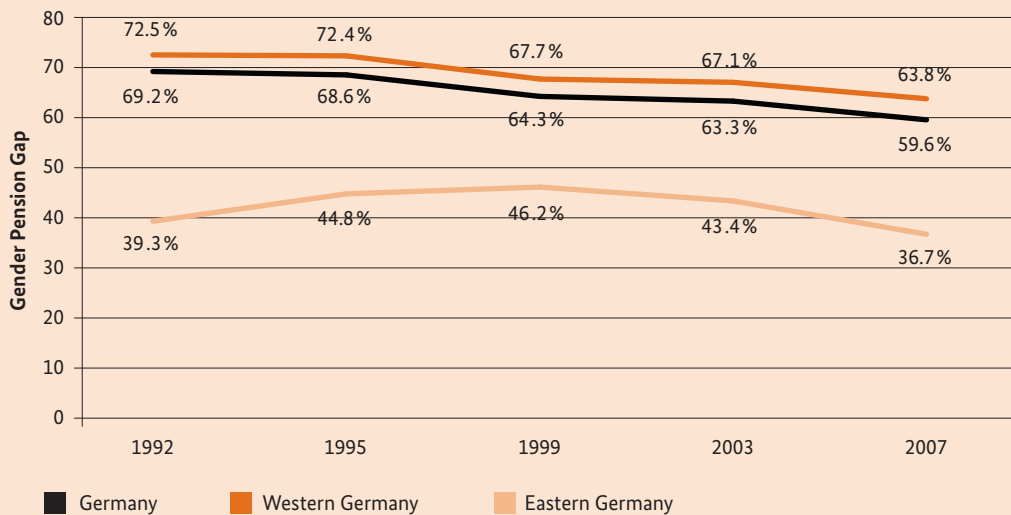
The sum of the average individual old-age pension from the three pillars of the pension scheme is € 645 per month for women and € 1,595 per month for men. The percentage gap, the Gender Pension Gap, is thus 59.6 percent.

As regards the Gender Pension Gap, there are clear differences between western and eastern Germany. The difference between the average pensions for women and men in the east is 36.7 percent, far from the gap of 63.8 percent calculated as the difference in average pensions for women and men in the west. The Gender Pension Gap of 59.6 percent for Germany is influenced by the considerably larger share of population in western Germany compared with that in eastern Germany and thus is close to the value observed for western Germany.

Germany's Gender Pension Gap has narrowed by 10 percentage points between 1992 and 2007. Trends differ between the west and the east.

Gender Pension Gap trends between 1992 and 2007 show that in eastern Germany the gap was considerably narrower across all reporting periods than in western Germany. Figure 2 shows that the figures over the entire period declined steadily in the west to 63.8 percent, almost 10 percentage points lower than at the starting point in 1992. In eastern Germany an initial rise is evident until 1999, whereafter the figures dropped. The 36.7 percent shown for 2007 is some 2.5 percentage points below the initial figure in 1992. Both for western and eastern Germany, a trend towards a narrowing gender pension gap is evident. And although the reduction is considerably smaller in the east it occurs at a far lower level to begin with.

Figure 2: Gender Pension Gap trends for all women and men by region, ASID data for selected years between 1992 and 2007 (in percentages)

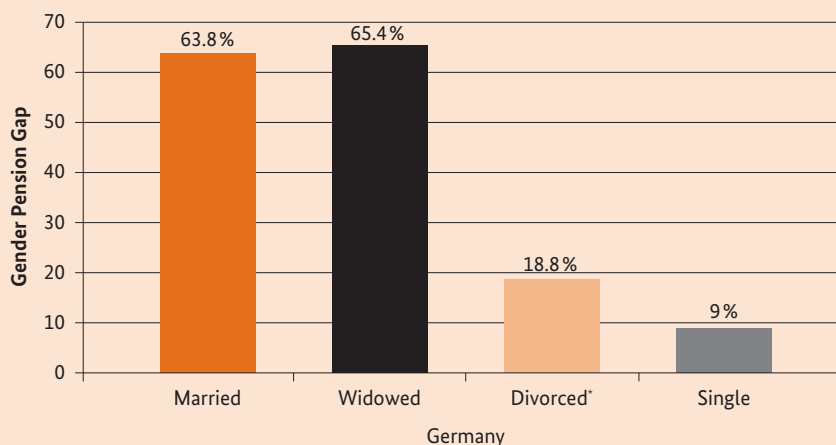


Source: ASID 1992 to 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

3.2 The Gender Pension Gap by Family Status

The Gender Pension Gap is considerably wider in case of married and widowed persons than in case of divorced and single persons.

Figure 3: Gender Pension Gap by family status based on ASID 2007, Germany (in percentages)



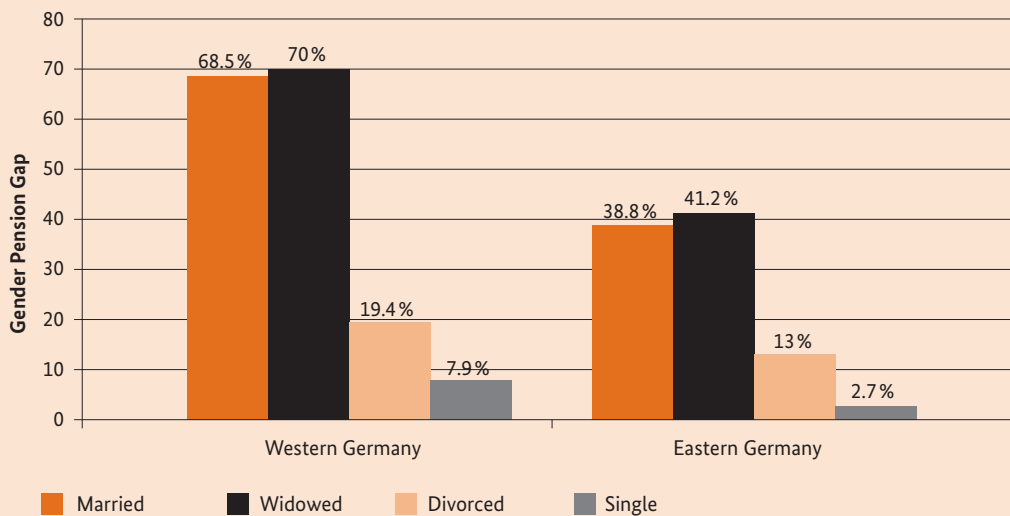
*It must be remembered that following divorce the pension entitlements accrued during the marriage are split between the ex-spouses. This has an impact on the amount of individual pension entitlements of divorced persons.

Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

In eastern Germany, the Gender Pension Gap is considerably narrower regardless of the marital status.

In 2007, the gap between the individual pensions of women and men as regards married and widowed persons in eastern Germany was about 40 percent, while in western Germany it was about 70 percent (about 60 percent for Germany as a whole). The gender-specific differences in the divorced group were considerably lower at 19.4 percent in western Germany and 13 percent in eastern Germany. The smallest differences are seen in the amount of pensions received by women compared with men for those who have never married. In this case the gap is below 10 percent in both eastern and western Germany.

Figure 4: Gender Pension Gap by family status in eastern and western Germany, ASID 2007 (in percent)



Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

The differences in the figures for the Gender Pension Gap for the married and widowed compared to the divorced stem from two sources. Firstly, they result from the higher level of individual pension entitlements accumulated by divorced women as opposed to married women. What must be taken into account here is that the pension settlement between the spouses if they divorce usually sees a portion of the man's pension entitlements being transferred to the woman's individual entitlements. Thus, the divorced man receives a reduced old-age pension upon reaching retirement age, while the woman's individual pension increases. Because the law provides for a portion of the man's pension entitlements to be transferred to the woman, these are treated as the woman's own contributions when calculating her pension.³ Secondly, neither in eastern nor western Germany do the pension contributions made by divorced men reach the level of those made by married men in the respective region. Both of these effects (higher individual entitlements by divorced woman compared to married women and lower entitlements by divorced men compared to married men) result in the low figures indicated for the Gender Pension Gap for the divorced.

3.3 The Gender Pension Gap by Qualification

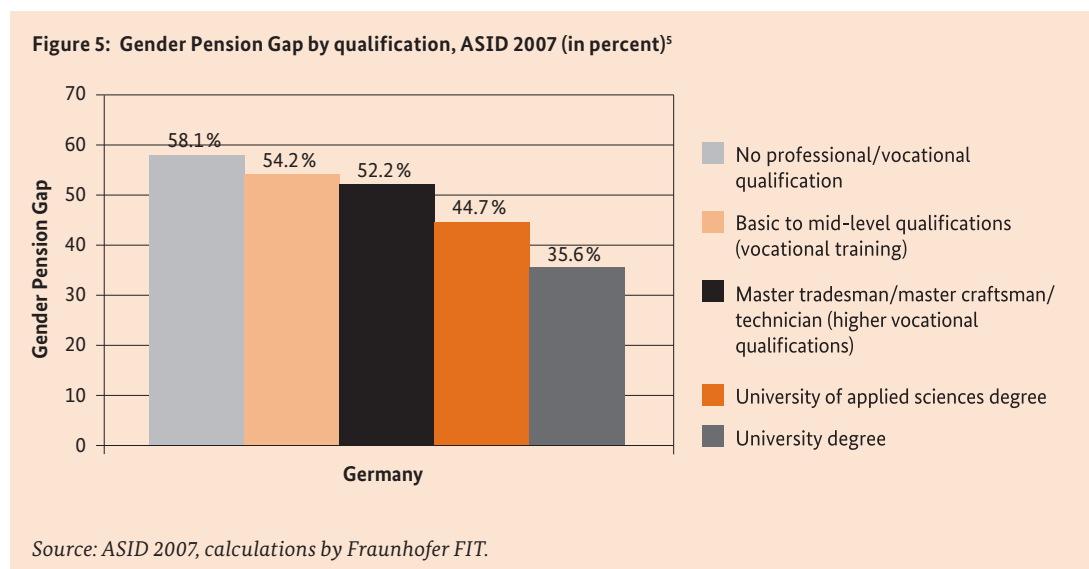
The Gender Pension Gap is more narrow for persons at higher levels of qualification.

³ Such entitlements from the pension settlements in the case of divorce cannot be identified using ASID data. It is thus not possible to identify which portion of divorced women's old-age pension results from the settlement. An estimate of the amount of income that stems from the settlement cannot be made using the available data.

The level of professional or vocational qualification is based on information concerning five categories of qualification, from the lowest to the highest level:⁴

- No professional or vocational qualification
- Basic to mid-level qualification (vocational training)
- Master tradesman/master craftsman/technician (higher vocational qualifications)
- University of applied sciences degree
- University degree

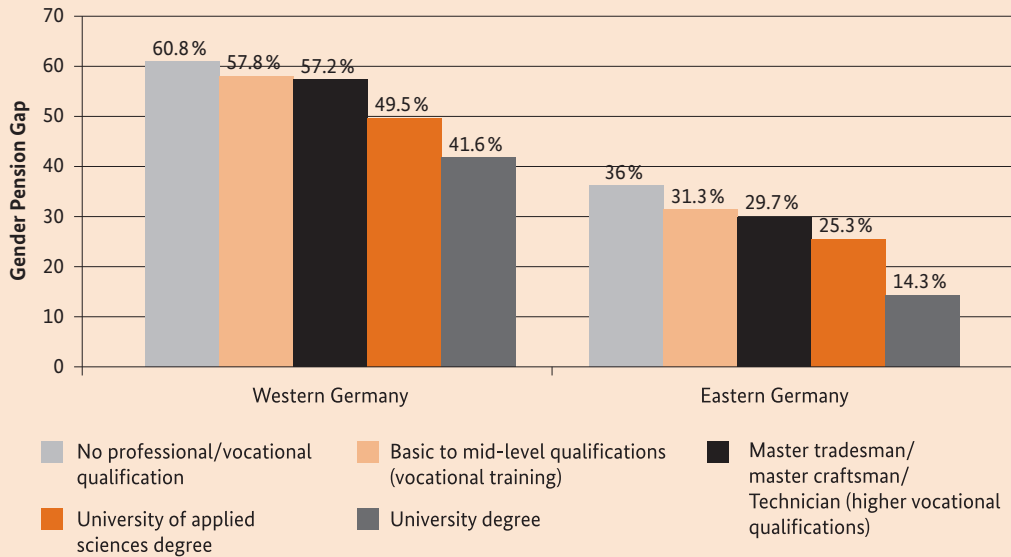
Figure 5 shows Germany's Gender Pension Gap for the five categories of qualification. The step-like descent in the bar chart, which runs from left to right for the five ascending qualification categories, shows that the higher the qualification the smaller the Gender Pension Gap. The Gender Pension Gap is 58.1 percent for the group with no qualifications, followed by 54.2 percent and 52.2 percent for the categories with basic or mid-level qualifications and for those with higher vocational qualifications. The two highest categories display a considerably narrower Gender Pension Gap, at 44.7 percent and 35.6 percent respectively.



- 4 The information taken from the nine ASID categories of qualification was combined into five categories. This consolidation serves better analysis. Without this, some groups would not contain enough cases for the indicator to be applied. The division of the five categories used in this study is based on the classification in ISCED levels. The group who did not respond to these questions is not included in the analysis because in some cases, it would contain too few cases to allow reliable analysis. An individual is assigned to the group that matches their highest qualification regardless of other qualifications that might be listed in their ASID responses.
- 5 The Gender Pension Gap figures shown in Figure 5 for the highest academic qualifications highlight the phenomenon that for each of these groups, the gap is narrower than that for Germany as a whole (59.6 percent). This rather confusing result can be explained by the type of cases and their respective numbers in the individual groups.

There is a step-like descent in the Gender Pension Gap from west to east, and from lower to higher qualifications.

Figure 6: Gender Pension Gap by qualification in eastern and western Germany, ASID 2007 (in percentages)



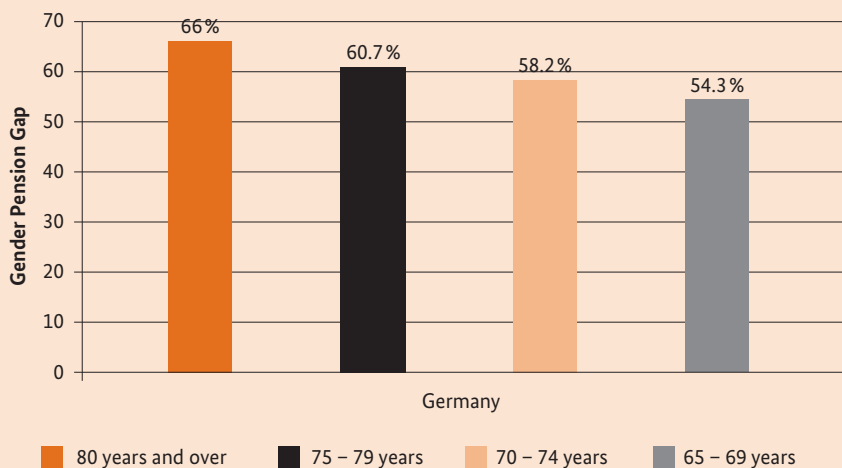
Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

In western Germany, the figures for the Gender Pension Gap for the five categories range from 68.8 percent for the group with no qualifications to 41.6 percent for those with university degrees. In eastern Germany, the gap is already considerably smaller than in the west, for the group with no qualifications at 36 percent. The group with the highest qualifications in eastern Germany shows the narrowest gap, with 14.2 percent.

3.4 The Gender Pension Gap by Age Cohort

The younger the age cohort, the smaller the Gender Pension Gap.

Figure 7: Gender Pension Gap by age cohort, ASID 2007 (in percentages)

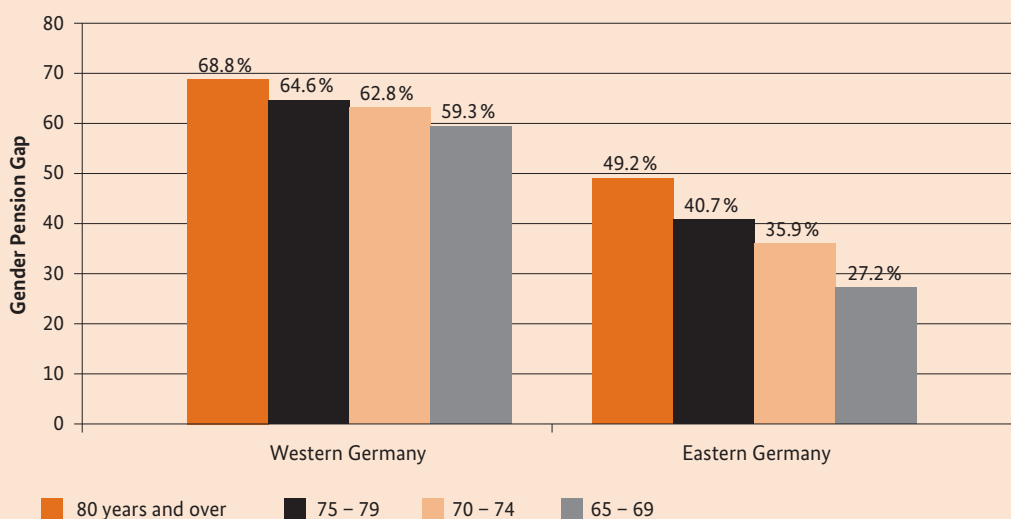


Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

Figure 7 shows the results of the analysis by age cohorts for the whole of Germany. From the diagram, it is clear that the Gender Pension Gap widens for older cohorts. The gap for the various cohorts rises from 54.3 percent for the youngest cohorts (65 – 69) to about 60 percent for the two middle cohorts. At 66 percent, the maximum gap occurs in the oldest cohort (the over 80s).

Even the youngest cohorts in western Germany show a wider Gender Pension Gap than the oldest cohort in the east.

Figure 8: Gender Pension Gap by cohort in eastern and western Germany, ASID 2007 (in percentages)

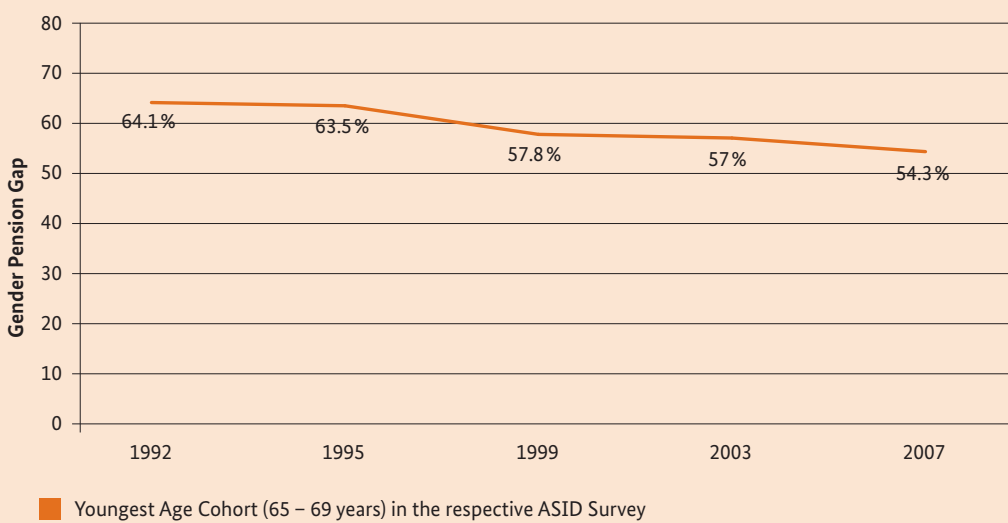


Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

Looking at the findings for the individual cohorts segregated by region, a narrowing of the Gender Pension Gap can also be observed for the youngest cohort. And for all cohorts in eastern Germany, repeatedly lower figures are evident when compared with the west. In eastern Germany, the range between the oldest and the youngest cohort amounts to a good 20 percentage points and shows a particularly strong reduction in the Gender Pension Gap over the generations.

In a comparison of the youngest age cohorts over the course of 15 years, a 10 percentage point reduction can be observed. This is due to a rise in women's individual old-age pensions.

Figure 9: Gender Pension Gap for the youngest age cohort over time, ASID 1992 to 2007 (in percentages)



Source: ASID 1992 to 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

Figure 9 shows the trends in the Gender Pension Gap of the youngest cohort (those aged between 65 and 69) at the time of a particular ASID survey as found on the x-axis. It indicates that from 1992 to 2007, the figures fell by around 10 percentage points. This closing of the gap for the cohort aged 65 to 69 can be explained by a stronger relative increase in women's individual pensions compared to those of men in the same period.

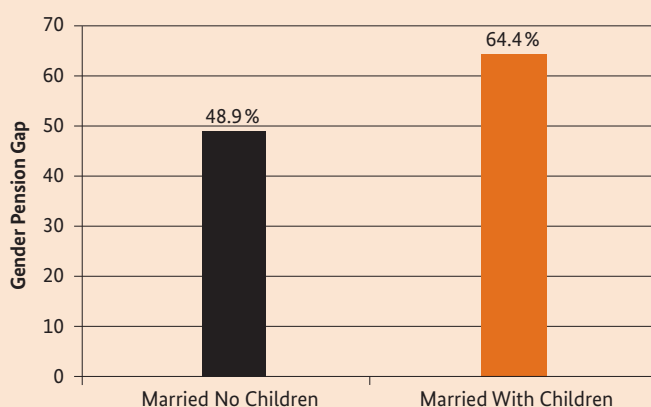
3.5 The Gender Pension Gap With and Without Children

In western Germany, the Gender Pension Gap for married men and women with children is 69.6 percent and 51.6 percent for married men and women without children. In eastern Germany, the figures are not only lower, but considerably closer, at 39.6 percent and 34.3 percent respectively.

In western Germany, the (joint) decision to have children has very different effects on women's and men's personal old-age pensions. In the east, this effect is marginal.

For men who are not married, no differentiation can be made according to offspring on basis of the ASID data.

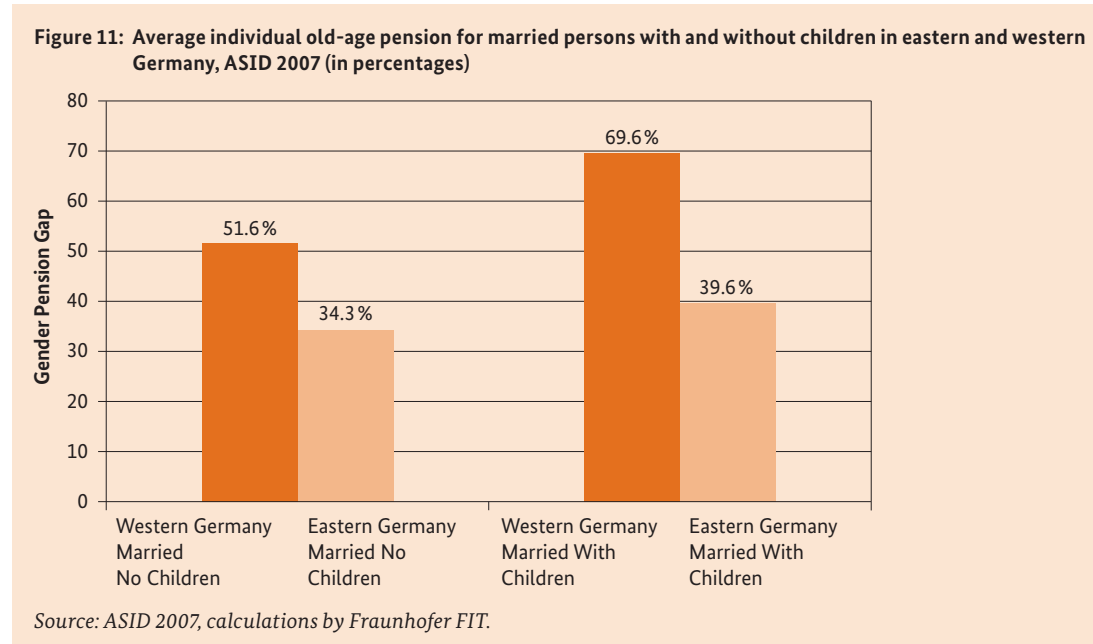
Figure 10: Gender Pension Gap for married persons with and without children in Germany, ASID 2007 (in percentages)



Source: ASID 2007, calculations by Fraunhofer FIT.

In western Germany, married men with children accrue relatively high individual old-age income entitlements. Due to breaks in their working lives and reductions in their working hours, married women with children accept not only the prospect of lower income while bringing up their children, but also face a later, lasting risk of receiving a lower individual pension when they reach retirement age. The Gender Pension Gap for married persons with children is 69.6 percent in western Germany, while in the east it is considerably lower at 39.6 percent and differs only marginally from that for married persons without children (34.3 percent).

In eastern Germany, having children plays hardly any role for of the Gender Pension Gap. This can be explained by the very different biographies of women in eastern and western Germany. The prevalent biography in the west, where women stay at home for long periods to look after the family, is practically non-existent in the east.⁶



⁶ See the English-language publication *Women's Biography Patterns and Pension Income Prospects. Executive Summary - Key results and equality policy conclusions*, which can be accessed on the internet: www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationsliste,did=173872.html.

IV.

Old-Age Income of Women and Men in the EU-15

Following the ASID-based analysis for Germany, the gender gap in old-age income is analysed for a number of other EU member states. For the purposes of comparison, the study will focus on the EU-15 states.⁷ The degree of comparability of the EU-27 is far lower because the various old-age pension systems have been subject to far-reaching changes over the years.

The old-age pension systems in the EU-15 have different structures. These range from the provision of a standard basic pension, as in the United Kingdom, to a more income-related pension scheme like Germany's contribution-based statutory pension insurance system. Against this backdrop, this international comparison serves as a first estimate of the scope of the relative differences in the overall pension situation for women and men in the EU-15 states regardless of their specific pension systems.

As a basis for the calculations, data will be taken from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). These will then be used to identify the gender gap in old-age income for the EU-15 states.

Using the EU-SILC data ensures that the data for the individual countries are subject to the same classification regarding pension types. The data contain two factors which can be used to calculate average old-age pensions:

- Information on old-age pensions from the statutory pensions scheme, and
- Information on the payments received from a private pension plan or life insurance policy.

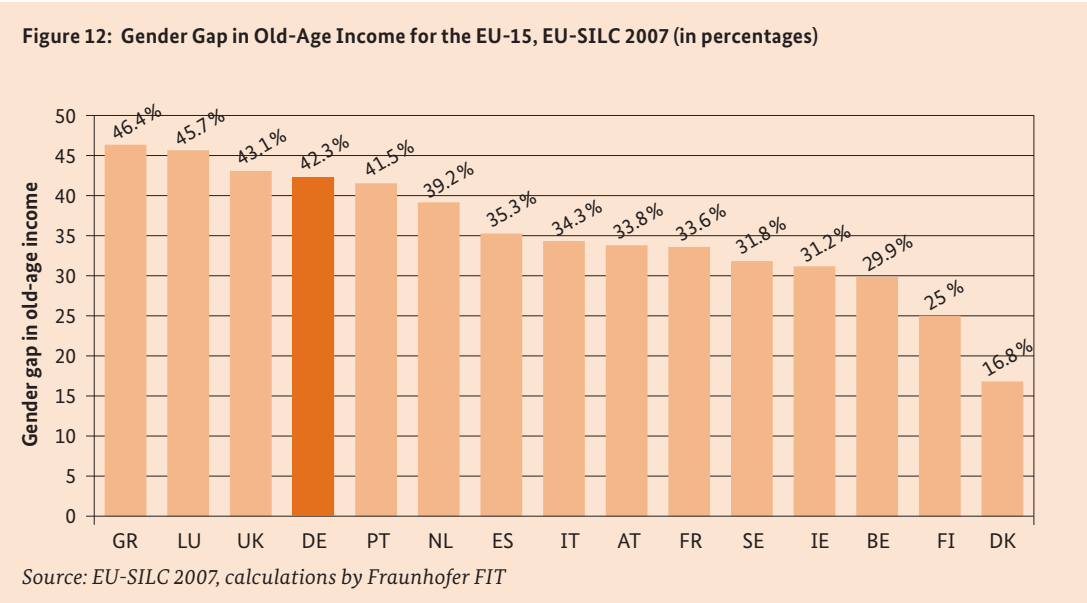
The calculation takes in all such pensions regardless of whether they are received on grounds of age, widowhood, loss of earning capacity, etc.

Based on the calculated gender differences in the old-age pensions identified in the EU-SILC, a first overview can be achieved on the gender gap in old-age income in Germany as compared to other EU states.

⁷ The EU-15 comprises Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom.

It is not possible to calculate a Gender Pension Gap for the EU-15 as has been done for Germany because the EU-SILC data does not allow for a differentiation between individual entitlements and derived ones. The European comparison is thus restricted to studying the relative difference in women's and men's pensions.

The gender gap in old-age income in the EU-15 - including derived entitlements – ranges from 46.4 percent to 16.8 percent, with Germany's comparatively wide gap of 42.3 percent.



The figure calculated for Germany as regards the gender gap in old-age income is around 20 percentage points lower than the figure for the Gender Pension Gap that illustrates the gap in individual entitlements calculated using the ASID data. It can be assumed that the information in the EU-SILC data, which cannot be differentiated between individual and derived entitlements, results in a smaller gap between the pensions received by women and men. This assumption is confirmed when the calculation based on ASID data also includes derived entitlements. The gender gap in old-age income then drops to just under 40 percent and is thus of a similar magnitude to the figure arrived at using the EU-SILC data.

V.

Outlook

The study introduces the Gender Pension Gap as an indicator that illustrates fair old-age income opportunities for women and men. The comparison of the different levels of women's individual old-age incomes in relation to those of men as based on ASID 2007 illustrates a Gender Pension Gap of 59.6 percent for Germany.

The Gender Pension Gap compares the individual pensions of women and men who are now 65 or older; it is thus an indicator both of inequitable individual pensions at present and the inequitable distribution of employment opportunities between women and men in the past.

The findings of the Gender Pension Gap study reveal three specific issues:⁸

Firstly, from a gender equality standpoint, a gap of 56.6 percent between women's and men's individual old-age income poses a challenge, because it highlights the considerably poorer employment opportunities for women when compared to those for men. Such one-sided distribution of capabilities – to use the wording of the German government's First Report on Gender Equality⁹ – illustrates the importance of fair opportunities in women's and men's working lives.

Secondly, it is evident that the joint decision made by couples to raise children has very different impacts on the parents' individual old-age incomes: it is the women who bear the long-term risk of receiving a lower individual pension on account of limited income perspectives over the life course due to family-related non-employment periods.

Thirdly, there obviously are signs of a positive trend. Since the beginning of the study period in 1992, the Gender Pension Gap has narrowed by 10 percentage points, from 69.2 percent to 59.6 percent in 2007 because women's individual old-age incomes have risen considerably.

8 It must be remembered that the Gender Pension Gap provides no findings on actual income in old age. This would require an analysis of other sources of income (e.g. old-age savings/assets, rental and leased properties). Secondly, the household's financial situation is not taken into account, i.e. the incomes of all other members of the household (particularly spouses). Thirdly, by definition, indirect pension entitlements (e.g. survivors' pensions) are not taken into account when calculating the Gender Pension Gap.

9 See Bundestag printed matter 17/6240 (<http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationsliste,did=174358.html>).

An English summary of the report of the expert commission is provided on www.gleichstellungsbericht.de.

To perpetuate this trend, it is necessary to identify the mechanisms leading to such a large Gender Pension Gap. Only then targeted policy measures can be designed to close the Gender Pension Gap.

A first step in this direction is being made with the study *Women's biographical patterns and pension income prospects*, commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, which analyses the effects of differing career patterns on the old-age pensions received by women in eastern and western Germany.¹⁰

A further step came in the form of the EU Peer Review Conference on the Effects of Life Courses on Women's Pensions, in November 2011.¹¹ The conference was jointly hosted by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund (German statutory pension insurance scheme). Its findings provide a starting point for dialogue on the causes of the Gender Pension Gap.

The findings available so far highlight unequal employment opportunities and structural disadvantages in returning to work after a family-related break. They also point to a lack of respect for family responsibilities at the working place. These are seen as the main causes of the Gender Pension Gap. In addition, the long-term income-related risks of combining family and working life are a one-sided burden when it comes to equal employment opportunities for women. These risks are mainly due to mothers opting for doing without a job that would earn them a living. The development of a consistent life course policy is needed here. Such a policy would create adequate conditions for women and men to leave and re-enter the labour market and to pursue responsibilities in both family and working life in different phases of their life courses. The great need for action on this issue is confirmed by a representative survey commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. According to the survey, 98 percent of the women and 95 percent of the men surveyed said it was important for women to receive the same old-age income as men.¹²

Overall, the considerable size of the Gender Pension Gap is one of the biggest gender equality policy challenges of our times. Given the long-term focus of the social insurance system and the rather slow development of any long-term perspectives for mothers in the labour market that offer adequate incomes, this challenge cannot be tackled overnight. The aim of creating a gender-equitable society for women and men calls for concerted effort to push forward and build on the positive outcomes seen in recent years.

10 See <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationen,did=173872.html>

11 See <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2011/effects-of-life-courses-on-women2019s-pensions>

12 See <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationsliste,did=175472.html>

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