

## The division of paid labor: A study of female same-sex and different-sex parents in Germany<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This study examines the division of paid labor in households with children by comparing female same-sex and different-sex couples in Germany. Although research indicates that same-sex couples tend to distribute labor more equitably, most studies have focused on unpaid work or income distribution, paying less attention to working hours. Furthermore, little is known about how regional gender norms and institutional contexts, such as those in East and West Germany, influence these patterns. Using ten years of data from the German Microcensus (2010-2019), this study analyzes a sample of 461 female same-sex couples and 363,192 different-sex couples to address these gaps. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression models are employed to examine variations in the division of paid work across these couple types and regional contexts. The findings reveal that mothers in female same-sex couples work more hours on average and share paid work more equally than mothers in different-sex couples. Regional analysis shows that in East Germany, both same-sex and different-sex couples exhibit similarly egalitarian work arrangements. In West Germany, however, different-sex couples are more specialized. These results highlight the importance of structural and cultural factors in shaping the division of paid labor in households with children.

**Keywords:** Same-sex couples, division of paid labor, paid work, parenthood

## Die Aufteilung der Erwerbsarbeit: Ein Vergleich weiblicher gleichgeschlechtlicher und verschiedengeschlechtlicher Paare

**Zusammenfassung:** Diese Studie untersucht die Aufteilung bezahlter Arbeit in Haushalten mit Kindern und vergleicht weibliche gleichgeschlechtliche und verschiedengeschlechtliche Paare in Deutschland. Während Forschungsergebnisse darauf hindeuten, dass gleichgeschlechtliche Paare die Arbeit gleichmäßiger aufteilen, konzentrieren sich die meisten Studien auf unbezahlte Arbeit oder Einkommensverteilung, während die tatsächlich geleisteten Arbeitsstunden weniger Beach-

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tung finden. Zudem ist wenig darüber bekannt, wie regionale Geschlechternormen und institutionelle Rahmenbedingungen – insbesondere in Ost- und Westdeutschland – diese Muster beeinflussen. Auf Basis von zehn Jahren Daten des deutschen Mikrozensus (2010-2019) analysiert diese Studie eine Stichprobe von 461 weiblichen gleichgeschlechtlichen und 363.192 verschiedengeschlechtlichen Paaren. Mittels deskriptiver Statistiken und multipler Regressionsmodelle werden Unterschiede in der Aufteilung der Erwerbsarbeit zwischen den Partnerschaftstypen sowie in regionalen Kontexten untersucht. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Mütter in weiblichen gleichgeschlechtlichen Partnerschaften im Durchschnitt mehr Stunden arbeiten und die Erwerbsarbeit gleichmäßiger aufteilen als verschiedengeschlechtliche Paare. Die regionale Analyse zeigt, dass in Ostdeutschland beide Partnerschaftstypen vergleichsweise egalitäre Arbeitsarrangements aufweisen, während in Westdeutschland verschiedengeschlechtliche Paare stärker spezialisiert sind. Diese Ergebnisse unterstreichen die Bedeutung struktureller und kultureller Faktoren für die Aufteilung bezahlter Arbeit in Haushalten mit Kindern.

**Stichworte:** Gleichgeschlechtliche Paare; Arbeitsteilung; Erwerbsarbeit; Elternschaft

## 1. Introduction

Gendered patterns in the division of labor remain pronounced among parents in Germany. While couples without children tend to share paid work more equally, the birth of a child often leads to a traditionalization of roles with mothers reducing their working hours or moving to part-time work, while fathers typically remain in full-time employment (Kühhirt 2012; Schober 2013; Zoch/Schober 2018). These dynamics are well documented in different-sex couples (DSCs), but there is limited research on how female same-sex couples (SSCs) with children divide paid labor. The introduction of same-sex marriage in Germany has not only expanded opportunities for family formation but has also raised important questions about how same-sex parents divide paid work, and whether their patterns differ from those of different-sex parents. As the number of SSCs with children continues to grow, understanding these dynamics is increasingly relevant (Lengerer/Bohr 2019).

This study contributes to existing research by analyzing how paid work is divided between female partners in SSCs and comparing these patterns to those observed in DSCs within the German context. Prior studies from countries such as the Netherlands and the United States have shown that SSCs tend to share unpaid work more equally (Goldberg 2013; Lazarus/Mandel 2023) and exhibit smaller income gaps (Andresen/Nix 2022; Antecol/Steinberger 2013; Jepsen/Jepsen 2015), which points to a more equal division of labor than their different-sex counterparts. These international findings suggest that SSCs are generally more egalitarian in how they organize both paid and unpaid labor (Jaspers/Verbakel 2013; van der Vleuten et al. 2021). For Germany, existing qualitative studies indicate a relatively equal

sharing of tasks (Peukert 2015; Schürmann 2005). However, quantitative research on the division of labor in SSCs is still lacking. Applying international insights to the German context therefore requires caution, as institutional and cultural conditions differ substantially across countries and shape family behaviors in distinct ways. Germany provides a unique context for examining these dynamics due to its post-World War II division into East and West, which led to two distinct gender role cultures (Pfau-Effinger/Smidt 2012). In West Germany, policies supported the male breadwinner model, encouraging women to focus on caregiving, while in East Germany, a dual breadwinner and state-supported model promoted full-time employment for women and greater gender equality in the workforce (Ostner 2010; Pfau-Effinger/Smidt 2012). Despite over 35 years of reunification, these cultural legacies persist, with East German mothers remaining more likely than their West German counterparts to work full-time (Barth et al. 2020; Kreyenfeld/Geisler 2006). Family policy shifts in Germany, such as expanded public childcare and parental leave reforms, have increasingly promoted gender equality, maternal employment, and fathers' involvement in caregiving (Bünning 2015; Geyer et al. 2015). Nevertheless, elements of the traditional male breadwinner model remain, including joint taxation and healthcare co-insurance for non-working spouses, particularly affecting West Germany (Daly 2011; Trappe et al. 2015). The ambiguity of family policies and the contrasting normative landscape within the same policy framework offer a valuable opportunity to examine whether SSCs and DSCs divide paid work similarly across these different contexts.

In addition to providing essential quantitative evidence on the division of paid work among SSCs in Germany, comparing SSCs and DSCs also offers valuable theoretical insights into how couples organize labor. SSCs are often treated as a kind of “natural experiment”, allowing researchers to investigate gender dynamics in family life without the confounding influence of sex differences. As such, they serve as a test case for theories. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the different mechanisms proposed by different theoretical frameworks. For example, economic theories suggest that the lack of comparative biological advantage in SSCs reduces the economic benefits of specialization within the couple (Badgett 1995; Giddings 2003). Conversely, cultural theories emphasize that SSCs may adhere more strongly to egalitarian norms and exhibit greater gender role similarity due to the absence of gender role polarization within the couple (Goldberg 2013; Oerton 1997). SSCs may thus challenge assumptions embedded in both perspectives.

The data used for the empirical analyses are drawn from the German Microcensus. Since the share of SSCs with children under 18 in the household is relatively low, a large sample size is needed to obtain robust estimates. Further, because the analysis examines the division of labor in couples, information from both partners is required. The German Microcensus is a household survey that annually collects information from 1% of the population in Germany. Combining Microcensus data from 2010 to 2019 provides a unique opportunity to examine the division of

paid labor among couples. This analysis assesses how paid work is divided between female SSCs and DSCs. Due to the low proportion of male SSCs with children in the household, it is not viable to include male SSCs in the analysis. In the first step, I examine the paid working hours of mothers, controlling for the household composition and educational attainment of mothers. The analysis then turns to the division of paid labor, which is operationalized by the working hours ratio. Using pooled linear regressions, I analyze the division of labor in female SSCs and DSCs, accounting for compositional differences. Finally, I examine differences in the regional context by incorporating an interaction term between region and type of union (SSC or DSC). The analysis presents predicted working hour ratios as outcomes, enabling an evaluation of work distribution within couples and the identification of patterns based on regional disparities and the gender composition of partnerships.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Theories explaining the division of labor, such as economic and cultural frameworks, are well established and widely studied. While these theories have primarily been applied to DSCs, this section explores how they can be adapted to SSCs. The focus lies on assessing whether these frameworks can explain differences in the division of labor between SSCs and DSCs and why such differences might exist.

### 2.1 Economic Explanations of the Division of Labor in Couples

Economic models of *household specialization* argue that couples allocate their time in ways that maximize overall household welfare. From this perspective, specialization occurs whenever it is expected to increase household utility, with one partner investing more in paid work and the other in unpaid work (Hadfield 1999). Even in the absence of a clear initial comparative advantage, couples may still organize their tasks in a specialized way if it serves to maximize the household's utility. For DSCs, it has often been assumed that women will specialize in domestic labor because of their biological ability to bear children (for a critical discussion, see, e.g., Bergmann (1995); Hadfield (1999)). In SSCs, potential "biological advantages" are less clear, as in principle both partners could bear a child. Economic models therefore predict that they will specialize less in paid and unpaid work, as they do not benefit from specialization to the same extent as DSCs (Badgett 1995; Giddings 2003). This model suggests that SSCs are likely to exhibit a more equal division of labor, both in paid work and domestic tasks, compared to DSCs.

The *bargaining perspective* incorporates the idea of power dynamics and different preferences within the couple (Blood/Wolfe 1960; England/Budig 1998; Lundberg/Pollak 1996). The division of labor within the couple results from the discrepancy in the partners' resources. According to their preferences, partners with higher relative resources bargain themselves out of the tasks they prefer less. Part-

ners rely on different resources, such as education and labor market income, but also love or commitment to the relationship (Lundberg/Pollak 1996). The relative resource theory is gender neutral as it assumes that the comparative advantage of each partner is key in determining the allocation of paid or unpaid work within a couple. As such, this model would predict differences in the division of paid work based on human capital endowment, but not between SSCs and DSCs.

Another explanation for why SSCs and DSCs differ is the former's lack of access to *legal and social institutions* (Badgett 1995: 131). Badgett (1995) emphasizes that because SSCs did not have access to legal marriage, they faced higher levels of uncertainty in their relationship regarding the pooling of assets. They did not benefit from tax relief through income splitting or the advantages of free coverage in health insurance that non-working spouses in Germany benefit from. Depending on the context and time, SSCs are also disadvantaged in terms of adoption rights or recognition of parental status. Badgett (1995) critically discusses two perspectives: the desire for legal recognition of same-sex marriage on the one hand, and the abolition of marriage as a heteronormative script on the other. Nevertheless, Badgett (1995) argues that differences in access to legal and social rights are essential factors in explaining the lower level of specialization among SSCs. Although some restrictions have been lifted and same-sex marriage now exists in Germany, the legacy of unequal treatment may still persist. For instance, married SSCs do not receive the same level of access to in-vitro fertilization (IVF) coverage as DSCs (see section 4.1 for further discussion).

## 2.2 Cultural Explanations of the Division of Labor in Couples

Cultural perspectives also provide explanations for why female SSCs and DSCs differ in their division of labor. The so-called "egalitarian ethic" idea suggests that SSCs follow more egalitarian norms than DSCs, and thus, divide paid and unpaid work more equally. However, this theory has often been criticized for implying that the division of labor in SSCs is "empty of gendering processes and practices" in contrast to the "gender-full" division of labor in DSCs (Goldberg 2013: 421; Oerton 1997).

Theories that incorporate the cultural context and emphasize the role of socialization as a life stage in which gender roles are transported and reinforced have gained prominence in explaining the division of labor in SSCs and DSCs. According to the *doing gender theory* (West/Zimmerman 1987), men and women demonstrate to themselves and others that they are competent members of their gender category by performing tasks appropriate to their gender role. Typically, domestic tasks are ascribed to women, whereas the role of the breadwinner is assigned to men (Brines 1993). These gender roles are taught during socialization to all girls and boys regardless of their sexual orientation (Bjarnason/Hjalmsdottir 2008). Because partners in SSCs share the same socially prescribed gender roles, they may be

more likely to distribute work equally simply as a result of the gender composition of the household. Due to similar gendered socialization, preferences for working hours may also be similar, leading to a more equal division of paid labor than in DSCs. Nevertheless, research provides evidence that gendered practices are also present in SSCs, with lesbian women tending to overreport and gay men tending to underreport their time spent in housework (Carrington 1999). It is also more common in male SSCs for both partners to work full-time and for female SSCs to work part-time (Jaspers/Verbakel 2013; van der Vleuten et al. 2021).

### **3. Previous Research on the Division of Labor in Same-Sex Couples with Children**

A substantial body of research indicates that SSCs distribute paid as well as unpaid work more equitably than DSCs across a variety of national contexts (Aldén et al. 2015; Bauer 2016; Goldberg/Perry-Jenkins 2007; Jaspers/Verbakel 2013; Jepsen/Jepsen 2015; Lazarus/Mandel 2023). When comparing male and female SSCs, van der Vleuten et al. (2021) show through a Europe-centered cross-country analysis that while female SSCs spend less time in paid work than male SSCs, both groups achieve equality in how paid work is distributed. Nevertheless, research that is explicitly focused on the division of paid work remains limited. For example, Jaspers and Verbakel (2013) demonstrate in the Dutch context, where part-time employment particularly among women is widespread, that both male and female SSCs divide paid work more equitably than DSCs. Using U.S. Census data, Jepsen and Jepsen (2015) similarly find that female SSCs exhibit smaller disparities in working hours compared to DSCs. Giddings et al. (2014) also show that SSCs in the U.S. are less likely than DSCs to specialize in paid and unpaid work. SSCs are generally more likely to have both partners in the labor force, with a higher likelihood that both partners work full-time and smaller differences in hours worked between partners (Giddings et al. 2014). Moreover, they show that this “specialization gap” between DSCs and SSCs narrows among younger cohorts (Giddings et al. 2014). Complementing this evidence, Hofmarcher and Plug (2022), using U.S. time-use data, show that SSCs overall specialize less than DSCs, but that much of this difference is driven by traditional DSCs with homemaker-breadwinner arrangements, when excluding such couples, SSCs and DSCs specialize to a similar extent.

Economic theories, such as the relative resource hypothesis, may explain the observed differences in the distribution of labor between SSCs and DSCs. These differences may stem from one couple type having a more equal distribution of resources within the partnership, leading to a more balanced distribution of bargaining power compared to the other. Some evidence indicates that relative resources such as occupational prestige and income levels are more evenly distributed within SSCs compared to DSCs. For example, Patterson et al. (2004) report such patterns for

the U.S., and Moberg (2016) finds similar results for Sweden. However, other studies report greater heterogeneity in education and age within SSCs compared to DSCs (Schwartz et al. 2009; Jaspers et al. 2013). In the German context, Lengerer et al. (2022) show larger age and educational differences within SSCs than in DSCs.

While research on the division of paid labor in particular remains limited, studies of the division of housework – another critical aspect of the division of labor – can provide valuable insights. Studies examining the impact of relative resources on the division of labor for SSCs and DSCs yield inconclusive results. Focusing on *educational differences*, Bauer (2016) uses cross-national data from GGS (covering Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Australia). The study finds that both male SSCs and DSCs with heterogamous educational backgrounds share housework less equally than homogamous couples (Bauer 2016). Interestingly, in female SSCs, greater divergence in partners' educational levels corresponds to a more equitable division of housework, challenging the predictive power of the relative resource theory (Bauer 2016). A similar pattern is observed with regard to *income contributions*. While DSCs with comparable earnings divide housework more equally, this association is weaker for male SSCs and even reverses for female SSCs (Bauer 2016). This contests the relative resource hypothesis. In contrast, the findings for the U.S. context based on time-use data by Lazarus and Mandel (2023) offer a somewhat different perspective. The study demonstrates that both male and female SSCs exhibit a pattern in which higher economic contributions are associated with lower levels of engagement in housework, aligning with economic theories. Similarly, Orefice (2011), also studying the U.S. context with census data, presents evidence indicating that shifts in bargaining power, linked to income differences, shape labor-sharing dynamics in SSCs. Fischer's (2024) findings point in a similar direction, showing that earnings are related to housework particularly among men in SSCs. However, Solomon et al. (2005), based on self-organized data collection in Vermont, posit that being in a same-sex union itself is a stronger predictor of equal labor division than income similarity, suggesting that relative resources are less powerful explanatory factors within SSCs. Recent evidence from Italy adds a somewhat different picture. Using survey data on co-residing SSCs, Geremia and Vitali (2025) find a general pattern of equal division of paid and unpaid labor, with domestic and childcare chores often shared equally even when paid labor is not equally shared. Additionally, for DSCs, economic theories often fall short. Even when women are the primary breadwinners, they continue to shoulder a considerable share of housework – far more than economic models predict (Lazarus/Mandel 2023). Although bargaining theories provide some explanatory power for SSCs, particularly for male couples, they remain insufficient to fully account for observed patterns in SSCs and DSCs alike (Lazarus/Mandel 2023). In addition to economic resources, cultural theories offer an explanation for the more equitable division of labor in SSCs compared to DSCs. For example, Patterson et al. (2004) find that

SSCs' stronger inclination toward egalitarian values is a stronger predictor of their equitable division of labor arrangements than for DSCs.

## 4. The German Context

### 4.1 Regulations Governing Same-Sex Relationships

In recent decades, the legal recognition of same-sex partnerships has changed fundamentally. The first country to legally formalize same-sex partnerships was Denmark in 1989. In 2001, Germany implemented the so-called Act on Registered Life Partnership (*Lebenspartnerschaftsgesetz*), taking a significant step towards legal equality between same-sex and different-sex marriages. Although the introduction of registered partnerships was an attempt to equalize different-sex marriages and same-sex unions, the legal status differed in many regards.

One option to form a family is adoption. In Germany, only in 2005 registered SSCs were granted the right to adopt their partner's biological child. Almost ten years later, successive adoption, meaning the adoption of the adopted child of the partner, was introduced. Only with the "Law introducing the right to marry people of the same sex" coming into force in 2017 were SSCs granted the right to enter into civil marriage and thus to joint adoption. Registered partnerships can be converted into marriage upon application, and registering new partnerships is no longer possible. Only since 2020 have non-married (same-sex and different-sex) partners been able to adopt their partner's child when they have been in a stable relationship for at least four years or lived together with the child, but they cannot jointly adopt a child. However, this new regulation does not affect the analysis as the last year observed is 2019.

Another way of family formation is medically assisted insemination. Medically assisted insemination or in vitro fertilization with sperm from a sperm bank is permitted for women regardless of their sexual orientation or partnership status. Although single women and women in SSCs in Germany are generally allowed to undergo medically assisted insemination, they face challenges in reality that different-sex couples do not. Depending on the type of treatment and the number of attempts, the costs amount to several thousand euros (LSVD 2023b). Costs for fertility treatments are generally not covered by statutory health insurance. Reimbursement is only provided under strict conditions, including a diagnosed fertility disorder, and only the eggs and sperm of the respective couple may be used (homologous insemination). By definition, female couples are excluded because they are generally dependent on sperm donations from others. Only some private health insurance companies and the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate, Berlin, Bremen, and Saarland provide subsidies for fertility treatments for SSCs. Quantitative studies show that the majority of SSCs want to have children with a mean of 1.6 children per person, which is only slightly below the desired number of children for DSCs (de Vries 2020).

Reliable data on the origins of children in same-sex families in Germany are scarce, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. However, a study by Rupp (2009) found that children in same-sex families have diverse biographies: 44% were born in previous heterosexual relationships, 45% into current same-sex relationships, 6% are foster children, and 2% are adopted (foreign child adoption). Existing official data sources on adoption and IVF do not distinguish between DSCs and SSCs, making it impossible to calculate the recent share of children born to SSCs through IVF, adoption, or a previous relationship.<sup>2</sup>

## 4.2 Reconciliation Policies of Paid and Unpaid Work

The division of labor in couples is impacted by the reconciliation policies, such as parental leave policies and public childcare services (Geist 2005; Grunow/Evertsson 2016). Germany has been classified as a conservative and familialistic welfare state regime, with a male breadwinner norm present (Esping-Andersen 1990). However, more recently, Germany has implemented major family reforms aimed at supporting a “dual-earner-carer model” (Fleckenstein 2011). Since 2005, regulations have been implemented to increase public childcare, particularly for children under three (Zoch/Hondralis 2017). The provision of public childcare enables women to participate in the labor market (Zoch 2020), thereby reducing the difference in the division of paid work within couples. An earnings-related parental leave scheme was introduced in 2007, under which parents are entitled to 67% of their previous earnings (65% as of 2011) for the first 12 months of parental leave. In addition, parents can receive 14 months of parental leave if the other parent, usually the father, takes two months of leave (Bünning 2015). Parental leave benefits are subject to certain criteria: eligible individuals must live in the same household as the child and personally care for and raise the child. Legal parents, spouses of legal parents, registered partners of legal parents, and unmarried partners of legal parents who are seeking to adopt a stepchild are eligible for parental leave benefits. Parents in SSCs are therefore also entitled to parental leave benefits, including the two additional months of parental leave if the second partner takes at least two months of leave (LSVD 2023a).

In addition, gendered caregiving patterns have shifted in recent years, with fathers taking on more childcare responsibilities than their counterparts in previous decades. Although the German welfare state is undergoing significant changes, the roots of the conservative and familialistic welfare state regime are deeply ingrained in the system. The legacy of the male breadwinner system can still be seen in Germany's

2 German Federal Statistical Office data for the total population indicate that 3,601 children were adopted in Germany in 2023, with almost three-quarters (73%) adopted by stepparents (Statistisches Bundesamt 2024). Similarly, about 3,800 children were born through IVF (Kuhnt/Trappe 2024). However, the exact proportion of these births among female same-sex couples remains unknown. In addition, IVF births are often followed by subsequent stepparent adoptions, further complicating efforts to accurately estimate family configurations.

income-splitting tax system and the country's public health insurance system, which co-insures the non-working spouse. As of 2013, tax benefits have also been available to SSCs as part of a civil union, which was incorporated into "marriage for all" in October 2017.

### 4.3 Differences between East and West Germany

Although regulations governing same-sex relationships and policies to reconcile paid and unpaid work apply equally to both regions, the division of Germany into East and West after World War II strongly influenced the development of gender norms and labor market dynamics. The Federal Republic of Germany (West) predominantly adhered to a male breadwinner model, whereas the German Democratic Republic (East) implemented a dual-breadwinner system supported by state-funded childcare (Ostner 2010; Pfau-Effinger/Smidt 2012). Despite the reunification of Germany over 35 years ago, regional differences in gender roles and the labor market continue to persist. Maternal employment rates serve to illustrate this divide. A comparison of maternal employment rates in the two German states reveals a significant discrepancy. While 71% of mothers in West Germany work part-time, this figure drops to 48% in East Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 2023).

Similarly, public attitudes toward maternal employment serve to underscore these disparities. In 1992, 69% of East German women and 64% of men supported working mothers, compared to only 49% of women and 38% of men in West Germany (Barth et al. 2020). By 2015-2018, there was a notable shift in attitudes across Germany towards greater egalitarianism (Barth et al. 2020). However, East Germans continued to demonstrate a more supportive stance towards maternal employment. In addition, children in East Germany are more likely to attend public daycare facilities than their counterparts in West Germany (Zoch/Schober 2018). Furthermore, there are notable differences in wage structures. West Germany features higher wages and broader collective bargaining coverage than East Germany (Schnabel 2016). Additionally, gender wage gaps are narrower in East compared to West Germany (Selezneva/Van Kerm 2016). Despite extensive knowledge about gender norms and labor markets in East and West Germany, the implications for SSCs remain underexplored. Only limited statistics exist on the regional distribution of SSCs with children. Data from the Federal Statistical Office indicate that both marriage and partnership rates among mothers in SSCs are higher in East than in West Germany, a pattern that contrasts with DSCs (Statistisches Bundesamt 2022). Among DSCs, marriage rates are higher in West Germany, whereas partnership rates are higher in East Germany.

Taken together, the discrepancies between the two regions persist. West Germany tends to reinforce a specialized division of labor, particularly among DSCs, due to the elevated gender wage gaps and lower childcare coverage. Conversely, the

structures in East Germany foster a greater tendency towards equal sharing arrangements, as childcare coverage facilitates them, and lower wages may necessitate them. In sum, the ambiguity in family policies and the contrasting normative landscape within the same policy framework provide a valuable opportunity to examine whether SSCs and DSCs divide paid work in a similar manner across these different cultural contexts.

## 5. Hypotheses

Economic and cultural theories converge on the idea that SSCs tend to exhibit a more equitable division of labor compared to DSCs. Following the “male chauvinist interpretation” of economic theories, which suggests that due to the absence of a clear biological advantage of childbearing within SSCs, these couples are less likely to specialize in paid or unpaid labor (Hadfield 1999). Unlike DSCs, SSCs derive fewer economic benefits from such specialization (Badgett 1995; Giddings 2003). Additionally, SSCs’ historically limited access to legal and social institutions offers another explanation for this trend. Cultural theories further support this prediction, suggesting that SSCs may adhere more strongly to egalitarian norms that promote a more equal division of labor. Furthermore, the absence of contrasting gender roles in SSCs may foster similar behaviors between partners, leading to less specialization in labor. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that being in a SSC itself fosters a more equal division of labor. While the proposed mechanisms vary, the theoretical consensus leads to the following hypothesis:

*H1: SSCs follow a more equitable division of labor compared to DSCs.*

Some mechanisms, such as the stronger adherence of SSCs to egalitarian norms, cannot be tested directly. However, other factors can be observed and controlled for, which may help to explain differences in labor division between SSCs and DSCs. For instance, relative resource theory suggests that when partners have similar resources, their bargaining power is equally distributed, resulting in a more equitable division of labor. Additionally, the need for a specialized division of labor often depends on family structure, particularly the number of children and the age of the youngest child. DSCs are more likely to have larger families, which may increase the demand for specialized roles to meet the obligations of unpaid labor. While household composition and the distribution of relative resources are likely to account for some differences between SSCs and DSCs, SSCs are still likely to share paid work more equally. Prior research indicates that even when SSCs differ more in their relative resources, they are likely to divide paid work more equitably than DSCs (Jaspers/Verbakel 2013). Based on these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H2: SSCs divide paid work more equally than DSCs, even after controlling for the educational constellation and the number of children.*

The German context offers a unique opportunity to study regional differences, particularly between East and West Germany. These regions differ substantially in public childcare provision and labor market structures. In West Germany, gender pay gaps are wider, and mothers' (full-time) labor market participation is lower compared to the East. Consequently, the distribution of relative resources within DSCs is, on average, more pronounced in the West. Thus, the differences in the division of paid labor between SSCs and DSCs are likely to be greater in West Germany. In contrast, East Germany's higher maternal labor force participation rates and more egalitarian labor market structures may lead to a less pronounced divergence between SSCs and DSCs. Based on these regional disparities, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H3: The difference in the division of paid work between SSCs and DSCs is smaller in East Germany than in West Germany.*

## 6. Data and Methods

### 6.1 Data

Given the small proportion of SSCs, especially those with children, a large sample size is essential to obtain robust estimates. In addition, the analysis of the division of labor requires data from both partners. The German Microcensus, an annual survey of 1% of the population residing in Germany, provides a suitable dataset for this analysis. I analyzed data from the Scientific Use Files, which are de facto anonymized, and comprise 70% subsamples of the original data (RDC of the Federal Statistical Office and Statistical Offices of the Federal States 2021). Since respondents are legally obliged to participate in the Microcensus, the unit nonresponse is very low (<3%). Combining waves from the 2010 to 2019 Microcensus offers a unique opportunity to study the division of paid labor in female SSCs and DSCs. Identifying SSCs and DSCs living together in the same household is a multi-step process. The first way to identify them is through marital status, which covers marriages and registered civil partnerships. As marriages are also available for SSCs since 2017, the sex of the partner is a key variable to identify whether both partners have the same sex or not. If the household members are not in a legally formalized union, they are asked about a partner in the household. As the question's wording is neutral, identification of SSCs and DSCs is only possible in combination with the sex of the partner. The question about a partner in the household is voluntary, resulting in an item nonresponse of around 4%, which is most likely selective, with respondents potentially co-residing with a same-sex partner being less likely to answer the question than those cohabiting with a different-sex partner (Lengerer 2022; Lengerer/Schroedter 2022). I followed the Microcensus team's recommendation and imputed the missing data using information on the household composition and age differences within the household. The imputation

increased the number of identified SSCs by 26. The results remained consistent even when these imputed couples were excluded from the analysis.

The sample was restricted to couples with at least one child under 18 in the household. The age of the respondents was limited to 20 to 55 years, covering the prime working and fertility years. Lastly, families with complex structures, such as co-residing grandparents or other members, were excluded as these arrangements could influence the division of labor in the household. The final sample consisted of 922 women in SSCs (461 couples) and 363,192 DSCs.

## 6.2 Analytical Strategy

The main focus of this analysis is the division of paid labor in female SSCs and DSCs. In the descriptive analysis, results for the weekly working hours of the partners, the division of paid work, and the sample characteristics are presented. The pooled multiple regression analysis consists of three parts. First, I examine the paid working hours of mothers as the dependent variable, controlling for household composition and educational attainment among mothers. For SSCs, both mothers enter the analysis separately, each with her own educational attainment. Second, regressions are presented for the division of paid work as a dependent variable. The models are estimated stepwise, with the first model only including the sex of the partner as an independent variable. The following model additionally includes the independent and control variables. Third, an interaction term for regional differences by the sex of the partner is added. Results are presented as average working hours ratios. To further examine differences between female SSCs and DSCs, I additionally run models separately for SSCs and DSCs (see Appendix Table 7 for mothers' working hours and Table 8 for the division of labor in couples). In a final step, the analyses further examine whether key family characteristics moderate the relationship between couple type and the division of paid labor. To this end, interaction terms between couple type and marital status, number of children, and age of the youngest child are estimated. The corresponding results are presented in Tables 5 and 6 in the Appendix.

## 6.3 Measurements

The weekly working hours are measured using the question, "How many hours did you actually work last week?" The weekly working hours are capped at 60 hours. The working hours ratio is calculated by dividing the couple's lowest number of working hours by the highest number. Couples with perfect equity in their paid working hours have a ratio of 1, while a ratio of 0 indicates a couple with one partner working and an inactive or unemployed counterpart. Note that in DSCs, it could also be the male partner who works less than the female partner, which is the case for just 8% of the DSCs. The working hours ratio measures the specialization

within the couple and does not necessarily capture the gendered division of labor in DSCs.

The sex of the partner identifies whether the couple is a female SSC or a DSC. A categorical variable indicates the number of children present in the household by differentiating between one child, two children, and three or more children. Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify the child's biological parent(s) in the Microcensus. The age of the youngest child is operationalized using a categorical variable with the age brackets of 0-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-11 years, and 12-17 years. Controlling for the age of the youngest child is particularly important, since pathways to parenthood differ between SSCs and DSCs, which may affect the timing of family formation and thus the division of paid work. On the individual level, education is measured based on the CASMIN scheme and summarized as low, medium, or high education. On the couple level, I distinguish between homogamous couples with the same education level, and heterogamous couples with different educational levels. Differences in educational levels are used as a measure of the distribution of relative resources in the household: Couples with a similar level of bargaining power are expected to divide paid work more equally compared to couples with an unequal distribution of educational levels.

To capture regional differences, a dummy variable indicates whether the couple lives in East Germany, including Berlin, at the time of the survey. The regression on mothers' working hours controls for women's age. The analysis of the division of paid labor contains the couples' mean age and the absolute difference in the age of the partners as controls. Further, I control for marital status by differentiating between cohabiting and married couples, while registered SSCs are categorized as married. Migration background is included in the analysis and distinguishes between individuals whose parents were born in Germany, those who migrated themselves, or those who have a parent born outside of Germany. In the analysis of the division of paid labor, I differentiate between couples with both partners having no migration background, one partner with a migration background, and both partners with a migration background. The year of the survey is entered as a continuous variable.

For the description of the sample, I include the employment status and the employment constellation of the couple. The employment status of the partners separately differentiates between "standard employment", which includes permanent full-time employment. "Non-standard employment" describes part-time, marginal, or employment with a limited work contract. Further, I differentiate between "self-employment", "unemployment", and "inactivity", which includes individuals who are not actively looking for employment. I also provide summary statistics of the couples' employment constellation. In "one-earner" couples, one partner works full-time, while the other partner reports zero working hours. Full-time employment is defined as 35 hours or more per week. The "one-and-a-half" model describes

couples with one full-time working partner and the other partner working part-time. Part-time employment consists of 1 to 34 weekly working hours. The other categories are “dual full-time”, “dual part-time”, and “dual non-employed”.

7. Results

7.1 Descriptive Results

**Table 1: Descriptive information on individuals in female SSCs and DSCs with children in the household**

|                         | Women in SSCs | Women in DSCs | Men in DSCs |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Mean (st. dev.)         |               |               |             |
| Actual working hours    | 24 (18)       | 15 (15)       | 35 (17)     |
| Age                     | 37 (7)        | 39 (7)        | 41 (7)      |
|                         | column %      |               |             |
| Level of education      |               |               |             |
| Low                     | 17%           | 24%           | 30%         |
| Medium                  | 50%           | 55%           | 44%         |
| High                    | 33%           | 21%           | 26%         |
| Migration status        |               |               |             |
| No migration background | 90%           | 73%           | 74%         |
| Migration background    | 10%           | 27%           | 26%         |
| Employment status       |               |               |             |
| Standard employment     | 63%           | 36%           | 74%         |
| Non-standard employment | 16%           | 33%           | 8%          |
| Self-employment         | 7%            | 5%            | 12%         |
| Unemployment            | 6%            | 3%            | 3%          |
| Inactivity              | 8%            | 23%           | 3%          |
| N (persons)             | 922           | 363,192       | 363,192     |

Source: Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

Table 1 provides descriptive information at the individual level for women in SSCs and men and women in DSCs. Men’s average working hours correspond to full-time employment (35 hours), while their female counterparts have the lowest average working hours at 15 hours. On average, women in SSCs work more (24 hours) than women in DSCs and less than men. Women in SSCs have, on average, a higher level of education and are slightly younger than women in DSCs (37 years versus 39 years). Men are, on average, 41 years old. The gendered division of labor in DSCs is apparent when comparing employment status: Men are mainly employed full-time (74%), while women are either in non-standard employment

**Table 2: Descriptive information on female SSCs and DSCs with children in the household**

|                                    | SSCs            | DSCs            |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                    | mean (st. dev.) | mean (st. dev.) |
| Working hours ratio                | 0.55 (0.41)     | 0.42 (0.38)     |
| Couples' mean age                  | 37 (6)          | 40 (7)          |
| Absolute age difference (in years) | 5 (4)           | 4 (3)           |
|                                    | column %        |                 |
| Marital status                     |                 |                 |
| Cohabiting                         | 42              | 13              |
| Married/civil union                | 58              | 87              |
| Number of children                 |                 |                 |
| 1 child                            | 61              | 37              |
| 2 children                         | 29              | 46              |
| 3+ children                        | 10              | 17              |
| Age youngest child                 |                 |                 |
| 0-2 years                          | 34              | 27              |
| 3-5 years                          | 15              | 18              |
| 6-11 years                         | 27              | 29              |
| 12-17 years                        | 24              | 26              |
| Educational homogamy               |                 |                 |
| Homogamous                         | 62              | 63              |
| Heterogamous                       | 38              | 37              |
| Region                             |                 |                 |
| West Germany                       | 73              | 83              |
| East Germany                       | 27              | 17              |
| Migration background               |                 |                 |
| No migration background            | 84              | 67              |
| One partner migration background   | 11              | 11              |
| Both partners migration background | 5               | 22              |
| Employment constellation           |                 |                 |
| One earner                         | 12              | 23              |
| One and a half                     | 43              | 51              |
| Dual full-time                     | 30              | 20              |
| Dual part-time                     | 8               | 2               |
| Dual non-employed                  | 7               | 4               |
| N (couples)                        | 461             | 363,192         |

Source: Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

(33%) or inactive (23%). On the other hand, women in SSCs are more often full-time employed (63%) than women in DSCs.

Table 2 presents a summary of couple characteristics. Equality in the division of paid labor, as measured by the working-time ratio, is higher for SSCs than for DSCs. On average, the working hours ratio is 0.55 for SSCs and 0.42 for DSCs. Consistent with Lengerer and Schroedter (2022), SSCs have higher age differences of 5 years compared to DSCs with a difference of 4 years. DSCs are more often married (87%) than SSCs (58%) and have more than one child (63%) than SSCs (39%). The age distribution of the youngest child in the household is similar for SSCs and DSCs, with most couples having a child aged 0-2 years (34% and 27%). Also, regarding educational homogamy, the analytical sample of SSCs and DSCs is similar, with around 62% of both partners having the same level of education.

Employment patterns differ between SSCs and DSCs. DSCs are more likely to have one earner (23%) and a one-and-a-half earner model (51%), while SSCs are more likely to have both partners employed full-time (30%) or to have a dual part-time earner model (8%). Dual non-employment is more common among SSCs (7%) than among DSCs (4%). Female SSCs with children are more likely to live in East Germany than DSCs, mainly driven by SSCs residing in Berlin.<sup>3</sup> This aligns with previous findings that gay or bisexual individuals more often live in large cities (Kroh et al. 2017).

## 7.2 Multiple regression results

As a first step, the pooled multiple regression results at the individual level are presented, where the sample consists of women living with their partners and having at least one child under 18 in the household. For SSCs, both mothers are included in the analysis separately. Figure 1 shows the beta coefficients obtained from linear regressions with mothers' working hours as the outcome variable. In the figure, the light grey dots represent Model 1, which includes only the independent variable of being in a SSC. The dark grey points represent Model 2, the full model, which includes all control variables. The bars around the points indicate the 95% confidence intervals. In Model 1 without controls, being in a SSC is associated with 9 additional hours of paid work per week. In contrast, the full model predicts a smaller but still substantial difference of 7 additional hours per week for mothers in SSCs compared to those in DSCs.

3 In contrast, Lengerer and Bohr (2019), using the 2013 Microcensus, report that SSCs are somewhat more prevalent in West Germany overall, a pattern they attribute to the concentration of SSCs in metropolitan areas. The divergence between the findings presented here and those of Lengerer and Bohr may partly stem from different classification rules for Berlin – while Berlin is treated as East Germany in this analysis, they may have categorized it as West Germany. In addition, they analyze the total SSC population, including male couples and couples without children, whereas the focus of this analysis is restricted to female SSCs with children.

**Figure 1: OLS regression coefficients for mothers' weekly working hours**

*Note:* Regressions with independent variables further control for women's age, year, and migration background.

*Source:* Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

Being married is related to lower weekly working hours. Also, the number of children is negatively associated with women's working hours in couple households. When the youngest child is older, mothers work more hours. Women with a medium or high level of education work more hours than women with a low level of education. To test how relative resources are associated with mothers' working hours, I use the educational differences within the couple as an independent variable. The findings, presented in Table 3 and Figure 4 in the Appendix, indicate that educational differences within couples are associated with mothers' working hours, although the pattern varies by couple type. In DSCs, mothers with a higher educational level than their partner work more hours, whereas mothers with a lower educational level work fewer hours than mothers in homogamous couples. In SSCs, in contrast, mothers in homogamous couples work the longest hours on average, while differences between the other two groups are relatively small. Residing in East Germany is also associated with higher weekly working hours for mothers, supporting previous findings on mothers' higher labor market participation in East Germany (Barth et al. 2020).

Figure 2: OLS regression coefficients for couples' working hours ratio

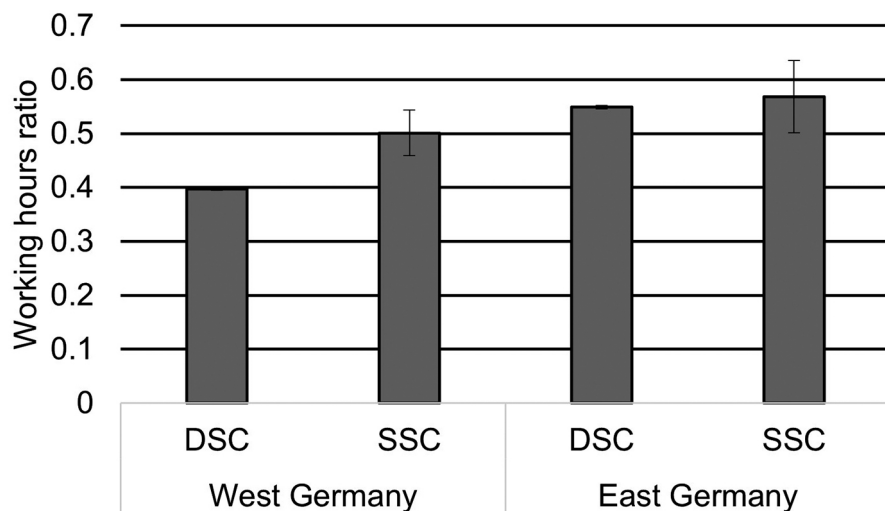


Note: Regressions with independent variables further control for couples' mean age and age differences, migration background, and year.

Source: Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

Figure 2 shows the results for the working hours ratio as the dependent variable, where the sample consists of couples with children in the household. The full regression table, including all controls, can be found in Table 4 in the Appendix. The dependent variable, working hours ratio, is constructed so that a ratio of 1 represents perfect equality, and a ratio of 0 represents maximum specialization. As in the previous figure, the light grey points represent Model 1, which excludes control variables, while the dark grey points represent Model 2, the full model that includes all control variables. Figure 2 supports the first hypothesis that female SSCs have a more equal division of paid work than DSCs. The second hypothesis stated that female SSCs divide paid work more equally than DSCs, even after controlling for the distribution of the relative resources in the couple. When control variables are added to the model, the coefficient of being in a SSC is smaller than in the baseline model. However, female SSCs still exhibit a more equal division of paid work, which is in line with H2. Results confirm that married couples divide paid work less equally than cohabiting couples, mirroring the German welfare state incentives for within-couple specialization, such as income taxation splitting. In line with previous research (Frenette 2011), couples with more children in the household follow

**Figure 3: Average predicted working hours ratio: Interaction between region and sex of partner**



*Note:* All regressions further control for couples' mean age and age differences, year, age of the youngest child, number of children, migration background, and marital status.

*Source:* Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

a more unequal division of paid work than couples with one child. Also, couples with young children have a lower working hours ratio, indicating a lower degree of equality in the division of labor, probably due to the increased need for care. In order to examine whether these associations differ by couple type, additional models were estimated including interaction terms between couple type and key family characteristics – marital status, number of children, and age of the youngest child (see Tables 5 and 6 in the Appendix). These models reveal similar gradients for both SSCs and DSCs: couples with more or younger children and those who are married tend to show greater specialization. The main difference between SSCs and DSCs therefore lies in their overall level of specialization rather than in the moderating effects of family characteristics. Educational differences within couples are associated with a less equal labor division. When partners diverge in their educational level, they follow a less equal division of labor than homogamous couples. This finding is in line with relative resource or bargaining theory. Further, couples residing in East Germany at the time of the interview divide paid work more equally than couples in West Germany.

To examine regional differences in the division of labor, I include an interaction between region and couple constellation (see Model 3 in Appendix Table 4). To

better illustrate how different types of couples share paid work in the two regional contexts, Figure 3 compares the predicted working hours ratio for SSCs and DSCs in East and West Germany. The predicted working hours ratio for DSCs in West Germany is 0.40, reflecting the highest degree of specialization, compared to 0.50 for SSCs. In East Germany, the differences are minimal, with predicted ratios of 0.57 for SSCs and 0.55 for DSCs, supporting hypothesis H3. The near parity between SSCs and DSCs in East Germany is particularly striking. In a context of extensive publicly funded childcare, high acceptance of maternal employment, and labor market structures with lower gender pay and employment gaps, both SSCs and DSCs show similar patterns of specialization. Conversely, the pronounced specialization of DSCs in West Germany warrants closer examination. The larger gender wage gap in West Germany may limit women's bargaining power, further reinforcing the traditional division of labor. This high degree of specialization among DSCs in the region may be partly explained by higher marriage rates, as marriage often provides financial incentives for specialization through benefits such as income tax splitting. Although the models include marital status as a control variable to account for differences in marriage rates, the interaction term between region and couple constellation remains significant. This suggests that factors other than marital status, such as cultural norms or region-specific labor market conditions, may also contribute to the observed patterns of specialization. These findings underline the importance of the regional context in shaping the division of labor within couples. In particular, the regional context appears to have a stronger influence on DSCs than on SSCs, highlighting the interplay between structural, cultural, and economic factors in determining patterns of the division of labor.

## 8. Discussion

This study examined the division of paid work in SSCs and DSCs with children in the household. The data source was the German Microcensus from 2010-2019, which provided a unique opportunity to study female SSCs with children in the household. To better understand the division of paid labor, I first presented evidence on the weekly working hours of mothers on the individual level. The findings from the multiple regression analysis showed that mothers in SSCs worked more hours than mothers in DSCs.

Examining the division of paid work in couples with children, this study found that SSCs shared paid labor more equally than DSCs. Even after controlling for various factors, the difference in labor division persisted. As expected, control variables followed established patterns: couples with more or younger children tended to adopt a more specialized division of labor, while those with fewer or older children shared paid work more equally. Consistent with bargaining theories, educational differences within couples were associated with a more specialized division of labor,

compared with homogamous couples. In line with previous research (Aldén et al. 2015; Bauer 2016; Goldberg/Perry-Jenkins 2007; Jaspers/Verbakel 2013; Jepsen/Jepsen 2015; Lazarus/Mandel 2023), this study confirmed that SSCs and DSCs differed in their division of labor. SSCs can also be viewed as a kind of “natural experiment” to examine couple dynamics without the confounding influence of sex differences. Put differently, how would the division of labor change if the father in a DSC were replaced by another mother (Evertsson/Boye 2018)? At the same time, it is important to note that SSCs with children may constitute a selective group (e.g., in terms of resources, employment, or pathways to parenthood), such that observed differences in working hours and their distribution may partly reflect selection into parenthood. Against this background, the fact that SSCs displayed a more balanced division of paid work, even after accounting for economic factors and childcare demands, suggests that gender composition itself may play a role in shaping work arrangements. This provides valuable theoretical leverage, as it indicates that explanations focusing solely on economic resources or structural constraints may not be sufficient. Cultural factors may also contribute to these differences between DSCs and SSCs. Thus, SSCs may be less strongly bound by traditional role assignments, making it more difficult to allocate paid and unpaid labor according to conventional gender roles.

To account for regional differences within Germany, an interaction term was included in the analysis to identify potential differences in the division of paid work between SSCs and DSCs in the two regions. The results illustrated how regional contexts influence the division of labor within couples. In East Germany, both SSCs and DSCs show similar and relatively egalitarian patterns of specialization, in line with prevailing dual-earner norms. In contrast, West Germany shows a strong divergence, with DSCs showing a much higher degree of labor specialization than SSCs. This pattern is likely to reflect entrenched male breadwinner norms in the West. These findings indicate the importance of structural and cultural contexts in shaping the division of paid work within couples.

This study has several limitations. Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify biological or stepparents or, in the case of SSCs, to determine whether the child was adopted or born within the partnership and, if so, to identify the birth mother. Identifying the birth mother would have been particularly important, as this has direct implications for maternity leave and subsequent employment patterns. Studies have shown that even in SSCs, birth mothers take more parental leave and invest slightly more in childcare than non-biological mothers (Evertsson/Boye 2018). Additionally, the sexual orientation of partners remains unclear as respondents were not asked about their self-identification. The question remains whether it is the sexual orientation or the gender composition within the couple that is associated with a more equal division of labor (Geist et al. 2017). Due to the small sample size of male SSCs with children in the household, I could not include them in the analysis.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes by examining the division of paid labor in households with children in Germany. Focusing on paid working hours has the advantage of being less prone to reporting errors, as opposed to measures of the division of childcare or housework (Bonke 2005). Moreover, studies from different country contexts often rely on earnings as a proxy for the division of labor when comparing DSC and SSC (see, for example: Moberg 2016: 4). While this approach assumes that differences in earnings reflect differences in paid hours worked, this is not always the case. Depending on the occupation or sector, high earnings can be achieved with relatively few hours of work, while low earnings may require longer hours in other contexts.

Reflecting on the country context, it is particularly remarkable to find such pronounced differences in the division of labor between SSCs and DSCs. Regarding the division of labor, the German welfare state sends mixed signals. On the one hand, the joint taxation of spouses creates incentives to specialize, but the parental leave reform also encourages men to participate in childcare. It seems that DSCs either benefit more from specialization than SSCs or are more reluctant to react to the changes in the welfare state. The division of labor of DSCs and SSCs in Germany is similar to that observed in the Netherlands (Jaspers/Verbakel 2013). Applying a cross-sectional perspective, van der Vleuten et al. (2021) suggest that the gender culture in a country might be important for how couples divide housework, but it remains unclear how it affects paid work. The results of this study and previous research indicate the importance of disentangling the mechanisms that drive couples' decisions on how to divide work. This study further emphasizes the necessity of assessing how welfare states shape the division of labor as a function of the sex composition of the couple.

When examining the division of paid work in SSCs, it is important to consider the legal and cultural constraints that these couples face. The lack of institutionalization of SSCs can make the risk of specialization too great, leading to differences in the division of labor between SSCs and DSCs (Giddings 2003). In addition, differential treatment of female SSCs in terms of cost coverage for insemination or IVF treatments may result in a selective group of SSCs with children who can afford such treatments. This could explain the higher share of highly educated women among SSCs, as high education is often associated with higher earnings. Future research should evaluate the impact of structural and legal changes on the family lives of SSCs to gain a better understanding of how external factors relate to internal family processes.

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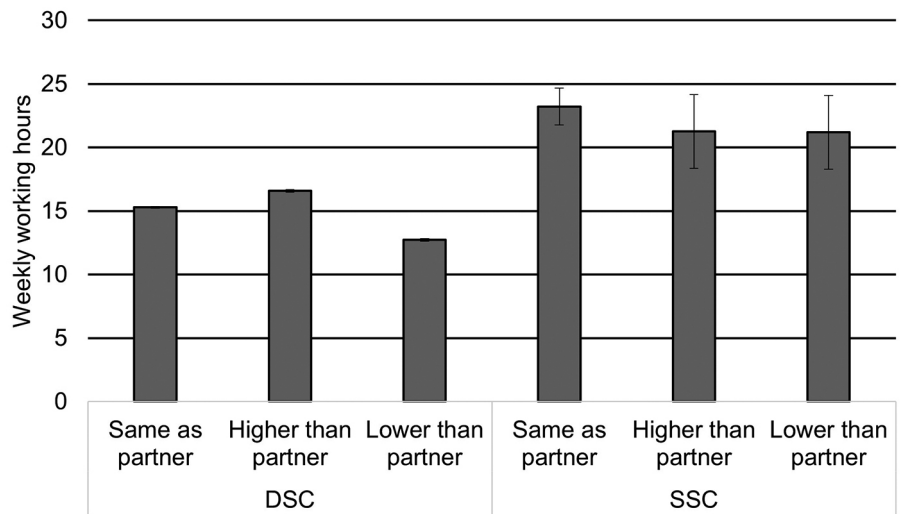
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Appendix

Figure 4: Average predicted mothers' working hours by educational differences and sex of partner



Note: All regressions further control for year, women's age, migration background, number of children, age of the youngest child, and region.

Source: Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

Table 3: Mothers' weekly working hours – individual perspective

|                                          | Model 1             | Model 2              | Model 3              | Model 4              |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Couple type (ref.: different-sex couple) |                     |                      |                      |                      |
| Same-sex couple                          | 9.348***<br>(0.605) | 6.902***<br>(0.602)  | 7.419***<br>(0.608)  | 7.929***<br>(0.736)  |
| Partnership status (ref.: cohabiting)    |                     |                      |                      |                      |
| Married/civil union                      |                     | -2.416***<br>(0.078) | -2.079***<br>(0.078) | -2.079***<br>(0.078) |
| Number of children (ref.: 1 child)       |                     |                      |                      |                      |
| 2 children                               |                     | -1.652***<br>(0.053) | -1.806***<br>(0.054) | -1.806***<br>(0.054) |

|                                             | Model 1              | Model 2                 | Model 3                 | Model 4                 |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3+ children                                 |                      | -4.337***<br>(0.070)    | -5.157***<br>(0.070)    | -5.157***<br>(0.070)    |
| Age of the youngest child (ref.: 0-2 years) |                      |                         |                         |                         |
| 3-5 years                                   |                      | 8.283***<br>(0.070)     | 7.722***<br>(0.071)     | 7.722***<br>(0.071)     |
| 6-11 years                                  |                      | 9.967***<br>(0.074)     | 8.744***<br>(0.074)     | 8.745***<br>(0.074)     |
| 12-17 years                                 |                      | 11.843***<br>(0.094)    | 9.712***<br>(0.092)     | 9.713***<br>(0.092)     |
| Educational level (ref.: low)               |                      |                         |                         |                         |
| Medium education                            |                      | 3.720***<br>(0.056)     |                         |                         |
| High education                              |                      | 7.008***<br>(0.075)     |                         |                         |
| Educational differences (ref.: homogamous)  |                      |                         |                         |                         |
| Higher than partner                         |                      |                         | 1.289***<br>(0.062)     | 1.297***<br>(0.062)     |
| Lower than partner                          |                      |                         | -2.559***<br>(0.060)    | -2.561***<br>(0.060)    |
| Same-sex couple x higher than partner       |                      |                         |                         | -3.252*<br>(1.659)      |
| Same-sex couple x lower than partner        |                      |                         |                         | 0.540<br>(1.655)        |
| Women's age                                 |                      | 0.042***<br>(0.005)     | 0.155***<br>(0.005)     | 0.155***<br>(0.005)     |
| Region (ref.: West Germany)                 |                      | Ref.                    | Ref.                    | Ref.                    |
| East Germany                                |                      | 6.257***<br>(0.072)     | 6.887***<br>(0.072)     | 6.887***<br>(0.072)     |
| Migration (ref.: no migration background)   |                      |                         |                         |                         |
| Migration background                        |                      | -2.509***<br>(0.055)    | -3.244***<br>(0.054)    | -3.244***<br>(0.054)    |
| Year                                        |                      | 0.182***<br>(0.008)     | 0.228***<br>(0.008)     | 0.228***<br>(0.008)     |
| Constant                                    | 15.079***<br>(0.026) | -360.086***<br>(16.210) | -453.602***<br>(16.308) | -453.534***<br>(16.308) |
| N                                           | 364114               | 364114                  | 364114                  | 364114                  |

Note: ref. = reference category. Pooled OLS regression with robust standard errors in parentheses; results not weighted. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

**Table 4: Working hours ratio – couple perspective**

|                                                  | Model 1             | Model 2               | Model 3               |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Couple type (ref.: different-sex couple)         |                     |                       |                       |
| Same-sex couple                                  | 0.124***<br>(0.019) | 0.081***<br>(0.018)   | 0.104***<br>(0.022)   |
| Partnership status (ref.: cohabiting)            |                     |                       |                       |
| Married/civil union                              |                     | -0.066***<br>(0.002)  | -0.066***<br>(0.002)  |
| Number of children (ref.: 1 child)               |                     |                       |                       |
| 2 children                                       |                     | -0.031***<br>(0.001)  | -0.031***<br>(0.001)  |
| 3+ children                                      |                     | -0.066***<br>(0.002)  | -0.066***<br>(0.002)  |
| Age of youngest child (ref.: 0-2 years)          |                     |                       |                       |
| 3-5 years                                        |                     | 0.130***<br>(0.002)   | 0.130***<br>(0.002)   |
| 6-11 years                                       |                     | 0.154***<br>(0.002)   | 0.154***<br>(0.002)   |
| 12-17 years                                      |                     | 0.183***<br>(0.002)   | 0.183***<br>(0.002)   |
| Educational differences (ref.: homogamous)       |                     |                       |                       |
| Heterogamous                                     |                     | -0.023***<br>(0.001)  | -0.023***<br>(0.001)  |
| Couples' mean age                                |                     | 0.000**<br>(0.000)    | 0.000**<br>(0.000)    |
| Couples' absolute age difference                 |                     | -0.000<br>(0.000)     | -0.000<br>(0.000)     |
| Region (ref.: West Germany)                      |                     |                       |                       |
| East Germany                                     |                     | 0.152***<br>(0.002)   | 0.152***<br>(0.002)   |
| Same-sex couple x East Germany                   |                     |                       | -0.085*<br>(0.040)    |
| Migration status (ref.: no migration background) |                     |                       |                       |
| One partner migration background                 |                     | -0.011***<br>(0.002)  | -0.011***<br>(0.002)  |
| Both partners migration background               |                     | -0.020***<br>(0.002)  | -0.020***<br>(0.002)  |
| Year                                             |                     | 0.008***<br>(0.000)   | 0.008***<br>(0.000)   |
| Constant                                         | 0.423***<br>(0.001) | -16.054***<br>(0.426) | -16.052***<br>(0.426) |
| N                                                | 363653              | 363653                | 363653                |

*Note:* ref. = reference category. Pooled OLS regression with robust standard errors in parentheses; results not weighted. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

*Source:* Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

**Table 5: Working hours ratio: Interactions between couple type and family characteristics**

|                                             | Couples' working hours ratio | Standard errors |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Couple type (ref.: different-sex couple)    | Ref.                         |                 |
| Same-sex couple                             | 0.149**                      | (0.053)         |
| Partnership status (ref.: cohabiting)       |                              |                 |
| Married/civil union                         | -0.066***                    | (0.002)         |
| Same-sex couple x Married/civil union       | -0.002                       | (0.040)         |
| Number of children (ref.: 1 child)          |                              |                 |
| 2 children                                  | -0.030***                    | (0.001)         |
| 3+ children                                 | -0.066***                    | (0.002)         |
| Same-sex couple x 2 children                | -0.079                       | (0.041)         |
| Same-sex couple x 3+ children               | -0.086                       | (0.064)         |
| Age of the youngest child (ref.: 0-2 years) |                              |                 |
| 3-5 years                                   | 0.130***                     | (0.002)         |
| 6-11 years                                  | 0.154***                     | (0.002)         |
| 12-17 years                                 | 0.183***                     | (0.002)         |
| Same-sex couple x 3-5 years                 | -0.024                       | (0.056)         |
| Same-sex couple x 6-11 years                | -0.002                       | (0.051)         |
| Same-sex couple x 12-17 years               | -0.018                       | (0.053)         |
| Educational differences (ref.: homogamous)  |                              |                 |
| Heterogamous                                | -0.023***                    | (0.001)         |
| Region (ref.: West Germany)                 |                              |                 |
| East Germany                                | 0.152***                     | (0.002)         |
| Same-sex couple x East                      | -0.101*                      | (0.041)         |
| Constant                                    | -16.053***                   | (0.426)         |
| N                                           | 363653                       |                 |

*Note:* ref. = reference category. Pooled OLS regression with robust standard errors in parentheses; results not weighted. Further controls: migration status, mean age and age differences and year. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

*Source:* Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

**Table 6: Predicted working-hours ratios (SSCs vs. DSCs) by marital status, number of children, and age of youngest child**

|                         | SSCs  | DSCs  |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Cohabiting, 1 child     | 0.628 | 0.505 |
| Cohabiting, 2 children  | 0.518 | 0.475 |
| Cohabiting, 3+ children | 0.476 | 0.440 |
| Married, 1 child        | 0.560 | 0.439 |
| Married, 2 children     | 0.451 | 0.409 |
| Married, 3+ children    | 0.408 | 0.374 |
| Cohabiting, 0-2 years   | 0.446 | 0.365 |
| Cohabiting, 3-5 years   | 0.552 | 0.495 |
| Cohabiting, 6-11 years  | 0.597 | 0.519 |
| Cohabiting, 12-17 years | 0.611 | 0.548 |
| Married, 0-2 years      | 0.378 | 0.299 |
| Married, 3-5 years      | 0.485 | 0.429 |
| Married, 6-11 years     | 0.530 | 0.453 |
| Married, 12-17 years    | 0.544 | 0.482 |

*Source:* Microcensus 2010-2019, own unweighted estimations.

**Table 7: Mothers' weekly working hours – individual perspective, by couple type**

|                                                  | Mothers in SSCs       | Mothers in DSCs         |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Partnership status (ref.: cohabiting)            |                       |                         |
| Married/civil union                              | 1.149<br>(1.324)      | -2.437***<br>(0.078)    |
| Number of children (ref.: 1 child)               |                       |                         |
| 2 children                                       | 2.253<br>(1.437)      | -1.659***<br>(0.054)    |
| 3+ children                                      | -2.874<br>(1.783)     | -4.335***<br>(0.070)    |
| Age of the youngest child (ref.: 0-2 years)      |                       |                         |
| 3-5 years                                        | 6.792***<br>(1.776)   | 8.298***<br>(0.070)     |
| 6-11 years                                       | 6.174***<br>(1.721)   | 9.995***<br>(0.074)     |
| 12-17 years                                      | 5.244***<br>(1.927)   | 11.882***<br>(0.094)    |
| Educational level (ref.: low)                    |                       |                         |
| Medium education                                 | 7.915***<br>(1.670)   | 3.713***<br>(0.056)     |
| High education                                   | 8.989***<br>(1.864)   | 7.007***<br>(0.075)     |
| Age                                              | 0.128<br>(0.100)      | 0.041***<br>(0.005)     |
| Region (ref.: West Germany)                      |                       |                         |
| East Germany                                     | 3.275*<br>(1.320)     | 6.262***<br>(0.072)     |
| Migration status (ref.: no migration background) |                       |                         |
| Migration background                             | 3.638<br>(2.041)      | -2.517***<br>(0.055)    |
| Year                                             | -0.491*<br>(0.227)    | 0.182***<br>(0.008)     |
| Constant                                         | 995.915*<br>(456.584) | -361.545***<br>(16.217) |
| N                                                | 922                   | 363,192                 |

*Note:* ref. = reference category. Pooled OLS regression with robust standard errors in parentheses; results not weighted. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

*Source:* Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.

**Table 8: Division of paid labor – couple perspective, by couple type**

|                                                  | SSCs                | DSCs                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Partnership status (ref.: cohabiting)            |                     |                       |
| Married/civil union                              | -0.056<br>(0.042)   | -0.066***<br>(0.002)  |
| Number of children (ref.: 1 child)               |                     |                       |
| 2 children                                       | -0.103*<br>(0.043)  | -0.030***<br>(0.001)  |
| 3+ children                                      | -0.147*<br>(0.066)  | -0.066***<br>(0.002)  |
| Age of youngest child (ref.: 0-2 years)          |                     |                       |
| 3-5 years                                        | 0.121*<br>(0.057)   | 0.130***<br>(0.002)   |
| 6-11 years                                       | 0.158**<br>(0.052)  | 0.154***<br>(0.002)   |
| 12-17 years                                      | 0.189**<br>(0.061)  | 0.183***<br>(0.002)   |
| Educational differences (ref.: homogamous)       |                     |                       |
| Heterogamous                                     | -0.068<br>(0.040)   | -0.023***<br>(0.001)  |
| Couples' mean age                                | -0.003<br>(0.003)   | 0.000**<br>(0.000)    |
| Couples' age differences                         | 0.002<br>(0.005)    | -0.000<br>(0.000)     |
| Region (ref.: West Germany)                      |                     |                       |
| East Germany                                     | 0.040<br>(0.043)    | 0.152***<br>(0.002)   |
| Migration status (ref.: no migration background) |                     |                       |
| One partner migration background                 | -0.057<br>(0.064)   | -0.011***<br>(0.002)  |
| Both partners migration background               | -0.074<br>(0.078)   | -0.020***<br>(0.002)  |
| Year                                             | 0.008<br>(0.007)    | 0.008***<br>(0.000)   |
| Constant                                         | -16.137<br>(15.065) | -16.050***<br>(0.426) |
| N                                                | 461                 | 363,192               |

*Note:* ref. = reference category. Pooled OLS regression with robust standard errors in parentheses; results not weighted. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

*Source:* Microcensus 2010-2019, own calculations.