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The Institutional determinants of having a first or second child in East and West Germany

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1. Introduction

Before German reunification fertility patterns in the former GDR and West Germany were quite different. As one major reason one can refer to the different institutional conditions of family life (support of employed mothers versus support of male breadwinner model for instance). After reunification the institutional structure has assimilated in both parts of Germany. This made many researchers hypothesize that fertility behaviour in both parts of Germany will converge, too. However, empirical findings still show dissimilar fertility patterns between East and West Germany. In our paper we will look for possible reasons for these different fertility patterns investigating differences in the wish for children and in the relevance of biographical preconditions for the intention to have a first and second child in East and West Germany. Doing this, we learn more about the impact of the different structural and institutional conditions of fertility decisions in the two parts of Germany. We use data from the first wave of a new panel study in Germany (Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics) which is collected in East and West Germany.

2. State of the Art

In the former GDR childlessness levels were very low and the birth of the first and second child happened much earlier in the life course than in West Germany (Huinink/Wagner 1995). For example, in 1990 the median age of having a first child was 28 in West Germany, while East German women typically had already born their second child by the age of 30 (Kreyenfeld 2004). After German reunification in 1990 the institutional arrangements of West Germany were transferred to East Germany. Shortly after reunification birth rates declined sharply in the newly integrated parts of Germany. This downward trend can be explained by biographical and economic insecurity (“shock”) related to the transformation of the East German society (Eberstadt 1994; Mau/Zapf 1998).

Although the age of East German women who have their first child has risen since reunification, it is still lower than in West Germany. The proportion of childless persons in East Germany has increased too, but is still on a lower level than in West Germany (Kreyenfeld/Huinink 2003; Huinink 2005). In the year 2006, in West Germany 21% of the birth cohorts 1952 to 1961 were childless, in East Germany the figure was only 7% (Statistisches Bundesamt 2008). However, the disposition to have a second child is lower in East Germany. Thus the proportion of one-child-families is higher than in West Germany. If we regard the wish for children, people in East Germany more often wish one child and rarely two and more children. According to the Population Policy Acceptance Study about 26% of individuals without children aged 20 – 39 years in East Germany, but nearly 40% of West Germans do not wish to have children at all (Klein 2006). Finally, in East Germany the rate of births out of wedlock has increased much more than in West Germany (Grünheid 2007). About 60% of all births happen outside marriage compared to 25% in West Germany.

Recent studies with panel and cross sectional data could not fully explain the differences between East and West Germany in regard to the wish for children (Ruckdeschel 2004; Klein 2006), family formation (Kreyenfeld 2003; Huinink/Kreyenfeld 2006; Konietzka/Kreyenfeld

2005; Mayer/Schulze 2008) and family enlargement (Dornseiff/Sackmann 2003; Kreyenfeld 2002, 2009). One reason might be that these studies focus on structural factors. However, current structural differences alone cannot explain the differences in family formation and enlargement in East and West Germany, since most structures have been equal for twenty years now. We have to take into account that the old institutional structures in East and West Germany continue to affect family formation today in the form of cultural traditions.

Employment of mothers is still much higher in East Germany than in West Germany, especially according to fulltime jobs (Kreyenfeld/Geisler 2006). The situation in East Germany can be characterized with the notion of „structural defamilialism“: The availability of child care facilities and the attitudes towards external child care differ between East and West Germany (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2008; Stöbel-Richter/Brähler 2005; Dorbritz et al. 2005). According to cultural values, in East Germany there is a stronger commitment to family and children than in West Germany: More than 70% of people in East Germany, but only about 50% in West Germany share the opinion that a woman needs children to have a fulfilled life (Boehnke 2007).

According to some other, mainly qualitative studies (Bernardi/Keim 2007; Bernardi et al. 2008) we can draw the conclusion that people in East and West Germany have different attitudes regarding life goals and the sequencing of life events. „In Western Germany, a relatively secure job career is expected to precede family formation, and this sequence of transitions is rather rigid, whereas in eastern Germany job security and family formation are thought of and practised as parallel investments“ (Bernardi et al. 2008: 287). Obviously, the consequences of biographical uncertainty for family formation are different in the eastern and western part of Germany. Women in East Germany, for whom motherhood is a natural part of life, decide to have a first child even in the case of biographical uncertainty. In contrast to West Germany unemployment did not lead to a postponement of family formation (Kreyenfeld 2001; Huinink/Kreyenfeld 2004). However, there is some evidence that this pattern is changing.

To sum up, at least up to now the institutional assimilation did not lead to a complete convergence in family related behaviour between East and Germany. We argue that there are still two different regimes of family development which can be explained by the institutional heritage of the GDR and continuing cultural and institutional differences between East and West Germany after reunification. However, whether the observed differences in the patterns of family development will be permanent is an open question.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The theoretical framework of our analyses follows the assumption that family formation and parenthood are particular goals of individual welfare production over the life course. The decision for or against children is influenced by subjective expectations about the welfare gains and losses of having children as compared to other options of welfare production (Ajzen 1991; Huinink/Schröder 2008; Liefbroer 2005; Trommsdorff/Nauck 2005). These expectations depend on social, economic, political, and institutional circumstances of the individual, the local, and the societal level as well as on the individual resources for parenting. They are moulded by the anticipated consequences of having children for other spheres of life, by personal attitudes, preferences, and dispositions related to family life and other life domains including the individuals' plans for the future life-course and the plans of their partners. Actors perceive that parenthood competes with activities in other life domains which also provide important means to achieve individual welfare.

Therefore, a man's or a woman's decision to have a child depends on their expectations to which degree it is possible to reconcile family activities with activities in any other life domain. An important question is, whether actors anticipate problems in combining parenthood with other domains of the life course. It is reasonable to assume that they take

account of having children only if they are sufficiently confident that the welfare production in other life domains does not fall below a minimum level depending on all goal specific aspirations. Therefore, actors want to have certain prerequisites met concerning other parts of their life course before they plan to become parents. Here one has to refer to a successfully completed education, a secure job situation, a sound economical basis, and a satisfying intimate relationship (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2004; Höhn et al. 2006; Huinink et al. 2008; Klein/Eckard 2008). If one of these goals can not be reached, plans to have a child will usually be dropped.

Different institutional arrangements and measures may facilitate or hamper the reconciliation of life course domains (e. g. work and family). They may be supportive or restrictive in regard to meet prerequisites of having a child. Institutional conditions thus influence the subjective-situational structure of motivations, the perceived and actual costs of children and the timing and spacing of childbearing during the life-course.

The situation in Germany is still well suited to study the influence of structural and institutional conditions of fertility decisions. Even though after reunification in 1990 the institutional arrangements of West Germany were applied to East Germany, there are still significant differences in regard to reconciliation of work and family and attitudes toward family life. The availability of child care facilities is much better in East Germany than in West Germany. In West Germany it has been difficult for women to reconcile work and family for decades. If they had to choose between children and work they often decided against children at all. Men and women in West Germany only take the first child into consideration if preconditions in other life domains are fulfilled, e.g. accomplishment of education, reconciliation with occupational situation, flexible child care, financial security. In East Germany, on the contrary, the cultural model of mothers working fulltime is still present and supported by the still better child care facilities. The attitudes towards institutional child care also differ in the two parts of Germany: In East Germany, people think that children could be cared for outside the family at a mean age of 1.6; in West Germany the mean age is 2.4 (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2008). Men and women in West Germany more often say that small children will suffer if the mother is employed (Stöbel-Richter/Brähler 2005).

Due to their socialisation and the cultural heritage of the former GDR, East-Germans see children as a “natural part of life”. This may lead East German men and women to have children even in the absence of job security (Bernardi/Klaerner 2008), to perceive fewer problems in reconciling work and family, and not to feel restricted as much by having a first child as their brothers and sisters in Western Germany. Therefore, men and women in East Germany should emphasize prerequisites for family formation (first child) not as strongly as their West German counterparts do.

However, the situation might change after the birth of the first child. In West Germany the institutional setting is perceived as being negative for having children at all. It should not be important for West Germans who already have a child since they are likely to have perceived the obstacles before having founded their family and have arranged with it already. Once women in West Germany have decided to have a first child and thus often opt against fulltime employment, the decision to have a second child is easier as the opportunity costs (e. g. giving up an occupational career) have already come into effect with the first child. This is discussed as the polarization hypothesis.¹ However, the fact that there is only one (male) earner can also mean a constraint for having a second child because of a high risk of poverty in case of

¹ Huinink (2002) describes a polarization of West-German women into one group focusing on the career and staying childless while the other group focuses on the family, has two or more children and reduces labor market participation.

unemployment. This means that financial security and a secure employment of the partner should be important conditions for the decision to have a second child.

East Germans will not take institutional difficulties into account when they plan their first child but experience them when they are parents. For this reason they might rather refrain from having another child. For women in East Germany the decision to have a second child might be more risky and demanding: Even if better child care facilities are available it is more difficult to combine two children with full time employment of two partners. One reason is that two children cause more work and more unforeseen events (e. g. illness) that have to be reconciled with work. If there is a second child the probability increases that one partner has to reduce employment hours to be able to cope with the demands of child care. This necessitates bargaining processes with the partner which in West Germany already have to take place before the first child will be taken into account. At the same time the financial burden for the couple increases and is not fully compensated by measures of family policy. Because of the difficult labour market conditions in East Germany there is a high risk of unemployment or low earnings which may also hamper the decision to have a second child.

Thus, incompatibility of work and family should be an important reason for East Germans not wanting a second child and for West Germans not having a first. It should not be important for West Germans who have more than one child since they are likely to have perceived the obstacles before having founded their family and have arranged with it already. In East and West Germany financial constraints should gain importance according to the transition to the second child.

These considerations lead us to our three groups of hypotheses. Because of systematic differences between men and women, in our poster we focus on women, in order to be not too complex. We think that preconditions which are related to the reconciliation of work and family are more relevant for the fertility decisions of women than of men.

H 1 The different institutional and cultural conditions in East and West Germany will result in a one-child-family-pattern in East Germany and a polarization between a childless-pattern and a two-children-family-pattern in West Germany.

H 1a: The proportion of childless women in East Germany is smaller and the proportion of women who have just one child is larger than in West Germany. The proportion of women in East Germany who have more than two children is smaller than in West Germany

H 1b: The proportion of women in East Germany who do not want to have children is lower than in West Germany. The proportion of West German women wishing just one child is smaller than the respective proportion of East Germans (polarization).

H 2: The relevance and impact of preconditions to have children are different in East and West Germany.

H 2a: As to the transition to the first child the fulfillment of preconditions plays a minor role in East Germany compared to West Germany. The proportion of women with an intention to have a first child thinking that preconditions of reconciling family and work and financial security are not fulfilled or are irrelevant is larger in East Germany than in West Germany.

H 2b: As to the transition to the second child the fulfillment of preconditions plays a minor role in West Germany compared to East Germany. The proportion of women intending to have a second child who think that preconditions of reconciling family and work and financial security are not fulfilled or are irrelevant is larger in West Germany than in East Germany.

H 3: In East and in West Germany the relevance and impact of the preconditions to have children are different in case of the first and the second child.

H 3a: In East Germany the fulfillment of preconditions is more important for the transition to the second child than for the transition to the first child. The proportion of East German

women intending to have a second child who think that the preconditions are fulfilled is higher than in the case of the first child. The proportion of East German women with an intention to have a second child who report only weak relevance of these preconditions is smaller.

H 3b: In West Germany the fulfillment of preconditions is more important for the transition to the first child than for the transition to the second child. The proportion of West German women with an intention to have a second child who think that preconditions for a second child are fulfilled is smaller than in the case of a first child. The proportion of West German women with an intention to have a second child who report only weak relevance of preconditions is larger.

4. Data Base and Methods

To validate the hypotheses we use the first wave of a new data set called *pairfam* (*Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics* (Huinink/Feldhaus 2009)). The study uses innovative instruments especially developed for family and partnership research and is collected in East and West Germany on a representative basis focusing on three age groups (15-17, 25-27, 35-37). The sample size of each age group is about 4.000 respondents. The data are weighted according to size of city, marital status etc. in order to adjust for sample selection bias.

To prove our first group of hypotheses we compare the number of children (born and adopted) people already have and the wish for children in East and West Germany. The wish for children is measured with two instruments: the ideal and the realistically expected number of children.² The ideal number of children is meant to detect the wish for children as a psychological disposition and the realistic number is meant to take the obstacles individuals face into account. These instruments have the advantage of being able to differentiate between the wish and the expectation, which often interferes with each other in other studies. We just present cross tables showing contrasts between East and West German women and test for their significance by logistic regression.

According to the second group of hypotheses we expect differences in the preconditions for parenthood women consider being important. The intention to have a first or second birth is measured by a question asking the respondent whether they planned to have a child or another child during the next two years. Concerning the preconditions in this paper we address the following issues: having enough financial resources, compatibility with job, availability of flexible childcare facilities. We asked the respondents how important it is for having a child that these preconditions are fulfilled in their life and whether they are currently fulfilled or not. Again we analyzed four dimensional contingency tables and tested proposed contrasts using log-linear models.

As we assume that cultural factors are important for fertility decisions which are transmitted by socialization processes we restrict our analysis to two homogeneous groups: people living and born in East Germany and people living and born in West Germany. That is we do not allow for people who are born outside of Germany and we do not allow for people who have migrated from the East to the West or vice versa. We only look on women of the age groups 25-27 and 35-37. In all analyses we use weighted data.

² The questions are: „Disregarding possible obstacles, how many children would you like to have ideally?“ and „If you think realistically about having children, how many children do you think you will have?“

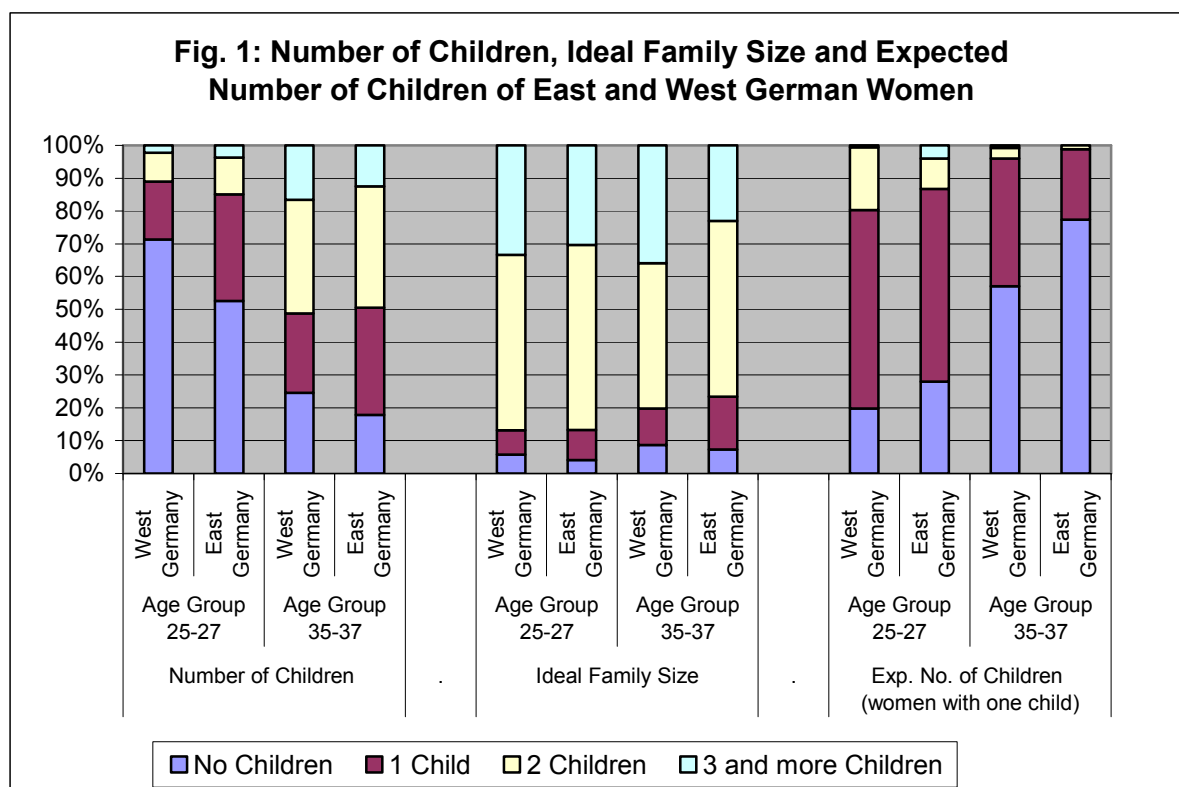
5. Empirical Results

5.1 Number of children born and ideal family size

In both age groups the proportion of childless women is higher in West Germany than in East Germany (see fig. 1). The proportion of women who have one child is higher in East Germany than in West Germany. The proportion of two-child-families again is higher in East Germany, while the proportion of respondents with three and more children in the older age group is higher in West Germany. These figures are fairly well in line with our hypothesis H 1a, particularly as the older age group is concerned. However, the polarization phenomenon among the West German women of this age group is not very strong. But the difference in the proportion of childless women and women with one child or three and more children between East and West Germany is significant in both age groups, except for three and more children in the younger age group (test by logistic regression; $p=0.1$).

All in all, the proportion of female respondents who do not want to have children (ideal family size = 0) is very small in East and West Germany. In both parts of Germany the majority of women think that a two-child-family is the ideal family type. However, even in the ideal case the proportion of women who want to have one child is higher in East Germany than in West Germany in the older age group. The reverse is true for the proportion of women wanting more than two children – as we expected in hypothesis H 1b - and respondents in East Germany also more often wish two children. These differences in the older age group are significant (test by logistic regression).

East and West German women of the younger age group show fairly similar figures. The differences in proportions are not significant (test by logistic regression). Whether this means that there is a trend to assimilation remains unclear, however.



Finally, also in accordance with our hypothesis H 1b women with one child in East Germany more seldom want to have another child than their sisters in West Germany. However, the difference between East and West Germany is only significant in the oldest age group (test by logistic regression).

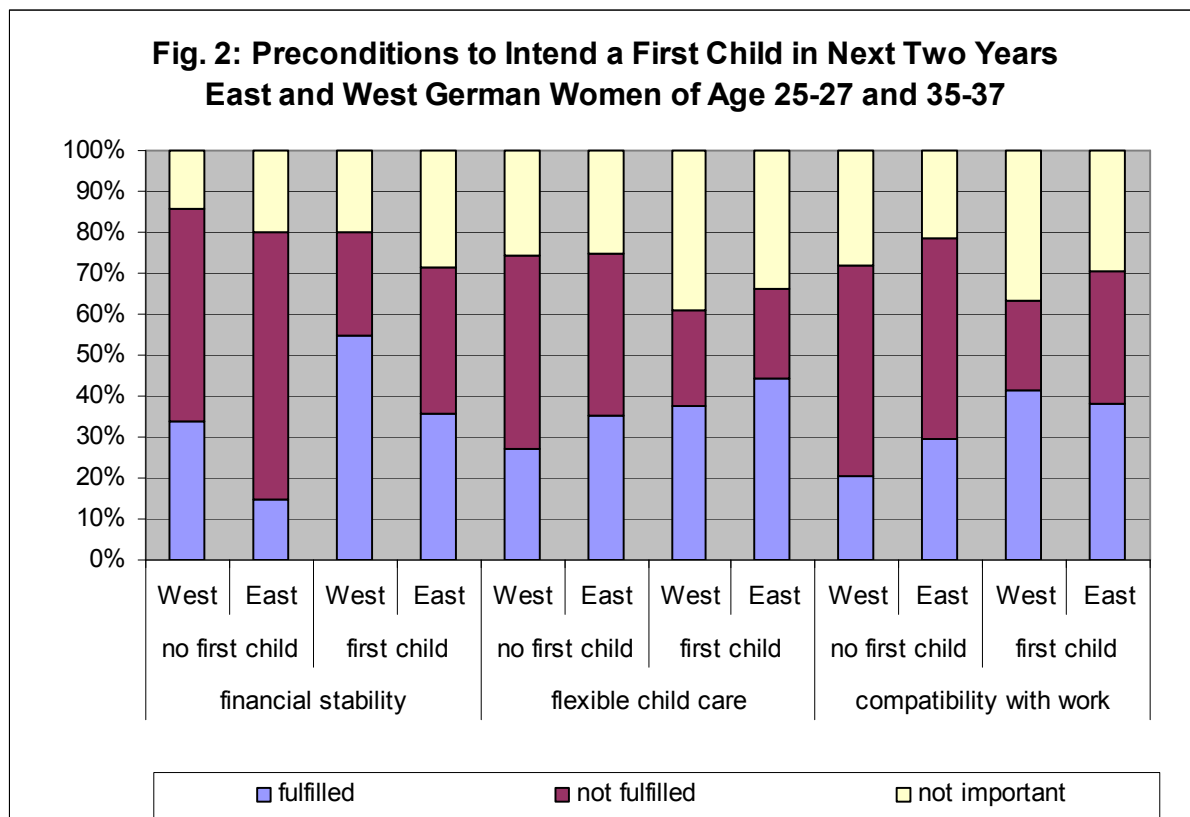
5.2 Preconditions

5.2.1 Transition to the first child

We look at three preconditions: financial situation, child care facilities, and reconciliation with occupational situation. For each precondition we have asked if the precondition is important and whether it is fulfilled. We begin with the transition to the first child, i.e. we firstly look at the group of women without children.³ All in all, about 40% of the childless women in West Germany and more than 50% in East Germany intend to have a first child in the next two years. This means that the intention for family formation generally is stronger among East German women.

a) Precondition financial stability

The percentage of childless female respondents, who report that the precondition of financial stability to have a first child is important and fulfilled is different between the two regions: 42% in West and 26% in East Germany report this. While 24% of the East Germans say that this precondition is not important, this holds only true for 16% of the West German women.



In regard to the effect of the precondition of financial stability on fertility intentions the data show no significant difference between East and West Germany (test by log-linear analysis⁴). In both parts of Germany the fact that the condition of financial security is fulfilled increases the probability to intend to have a first child in the next two years (see. fig. 2). The proportion of childless East German women intending to have a first child is larger in both groups – those with a favorable and those with unfavorable financial situation.

³ Women who are pregnant are excluded from the analysis.

⁴ The best fitting model includes all two-way interactions between the East-West-indicator, the precondition variable (financial stability is important and fulfilled, is important and not fulfilled or not important), and the intention variable (yes or no). The deviance is 0.8 and the degrees of freedom are 2.

This is not in accordance with our hypothesis H 2a. However, even though in East Germany the financial condition in general is evaluated being worse compared to West Germany we find a higher level of fertility intentions by childless women. In the intention group the proportion of childless women who say that the financial preconditions are not fulfilled is among the East German women higher than in West Germany (36% vs. 25%, see fig. 2). That is: Childless women in East Germany more often decide to have a first child despite unstable financial conditions than in West Germany.

b) Precondition availability of flexible child care

The proportion of childless women who report that the availability of flexible child care is important and existent is in East Germany 40 % and in West Germany only 31 %. Childless East German women report by 30% that this is not important. In West Germany this proportion is similar (31%).

Again we do not find a significant three-way interaction effect (test by log-linear analysis⁵). The fact that the condition of flexible child care is fulfilled increases the probability to have a child in the next two years by a similar rate among childless East and West German women. In East and West Germany the availability of child care facilities is equally important for the decision to have a first child.

However, child care facilities are better in East Germany than in West Germany. In East Germany, in the intention group (and in the non-intention group) the percentage of women who say that the precondition is fulfilled in East Germany is higher than in West Germany (44% vs. 38% and 35% vs. 27%). In West Germany, on the other hand, in the intention group the proportion of women for whom child care is not important is slightly higher than in East Germany (39% vs. 34%).

c) Compatibility with occupational situation

The proportion of childless women who report that the compatibility with their occupation is important and realized is in East Germany 34 % and in West Germany only 29 %. About 26% of childless East German women report that this is not important. In West Germany this proportion is higher (32 %).

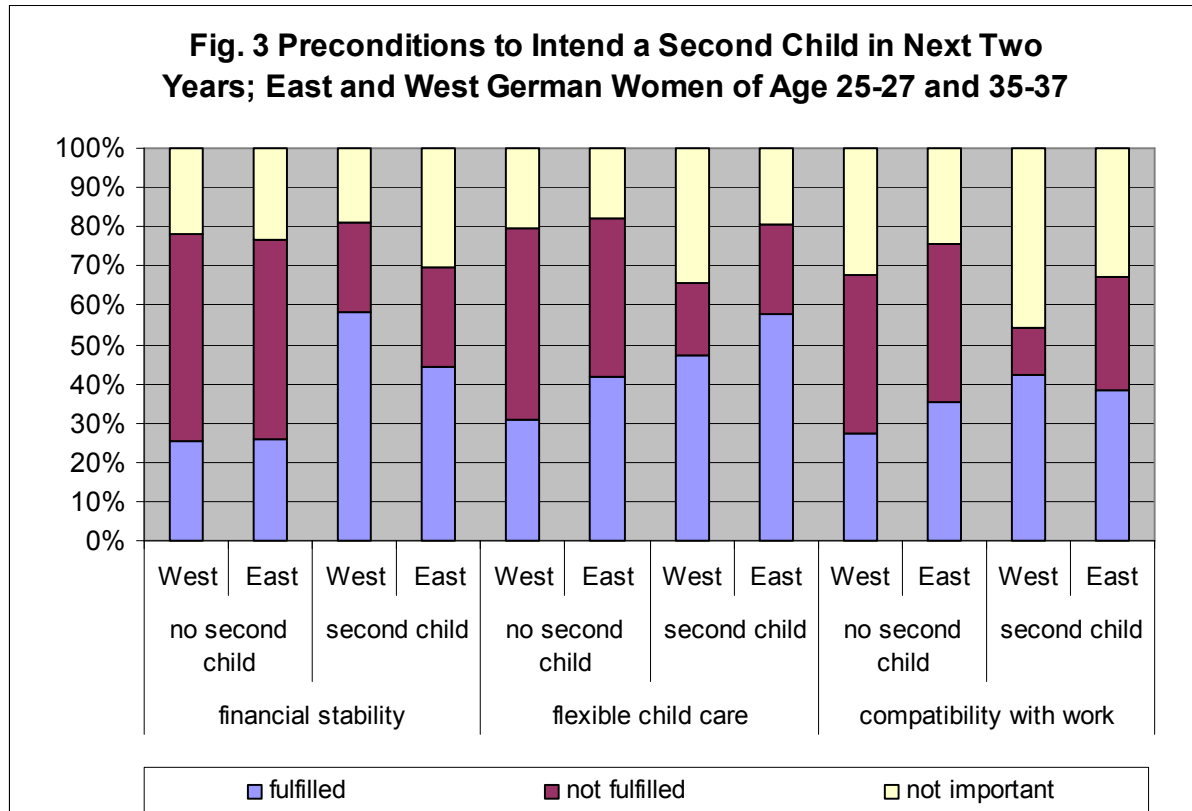
Here we find an interaction effect saying that childless East German women who rate the precondition as important but not fulfilled are overrepresented in the intention group. It is significant on the 0.1 level (test by log-linear analysis⁶). This corresponds to hypothesis H 2a. In the intention group the proportion of childless women for whom the precondition is not fulfilled is 32% in East Germany and 22% in West Germany. Furthermore we see that in West Germany the intention group is polarized: the proportion of the childless women who think that the precondition of compatibility with work is important and not fulfilled is quite small: it needs fulfillment or the denial of the importance of this precondition to intend a child. This polarization is in East Germany not so pronounced which is in accordance with our hypothesis H 2a.

⁵ The best fitting model includes the two-way interaction between the precondition variable (flexible childcare is important and fulfilled, is important and not fulfilled or not important), and the intention variable (yes vs. no) and between the East-West-indicator and the intention variable. The deviance is 0.87 and the degrees of freedom are 4.

⁶ Not all three-way interaction terms are significant, though. Including just the two-way interactions between the precondition variable (compatibility with occupation is important and fulfilled, is important and not fulfilled or not important), and the intention variable (yes vs. no) and between the East-West-indicator and the intention variable results in the deviance of 6.4 with 4 degrees of freedom.

5.2.2 Transition to the second child

We now turn to the transition to the second child. In general, the intention to have a second child in the next two years in West Germany is about 50% of women with one child. In East Germany the proportion is about 43%.⁷



a) Precondition financial stability

Like in the case of childless women, the percentage of women with one child in West Germany who say that this precondition is fulfilled is higher in West Germany (42%) than in East Germany (34%). The proportion of women who report that the condition is not fulfilled is quite similar, while more East German women think that it is not important.

In the intention group the proportion of women who say that the precondition is fulfilled is higher in West Germany than in East Germany (58% vs. 44%; see fig. 3). And, astonishingly, as in the childless group, in East Germany a higher percentage of women than in West Germany say that the precondition is not important (31% vs. 19%). However in our log-linear models the respective interaction effects are not significant.⁸ Therefore, we have to assume that the effect of the condition of financial stability on the intention to have a second child is quite similar in East and West Germany which contradicts our hypothesis H 2b. In both parts of Germany the fact that financial conditions are fulfilled increases the probability to have a second child in the next two years and the fact that the condition is not fulfilled decreases the probability.

Compared to the transition to the first child in East Germany the proportion of women in the intention group regarding a second one who say that the precondition is fulfilled is higher (44% vs. 36%) and the proportion who say that the precondition is not fulfilled is lower (25%

⁷ Women who are pregnant are excluded from the analysis.

⁸ The model including just the two-way interaction between the precondition variable (financial stability is important and fulfilled, is important and not fulfilled or not important) and intention to have a second child well fits data. The deviance is 6.25 and the degrees of freedom are 5

vs. 36%). This is in accordance with our hypothesis H 3a, but the respective three-way interaction is not significant.⁹ This means that the precondition of financial stability is at least as important in regard to the intention to have a second child as in regard to have a first child. In West Germany, however, we get a negative parameter in our saturated log-linear model saying that women with a first child compared to childless women less frequently intend to have a(nother) child if the precondition is important and not fulfilled (not significant) or not important (significant). This contradicts our hypothesis H 3b which states that in West Germany this precondition plays a minor role for the transition to the second child compared to the transition to the first child.

b) Precondition availability of flexible child care

In East Germany, in the intention group, the proportion of women who say that the precondition of flexible child care is available is higher than in West Germany (58% vs. 47%). On the other hand, in West Germany the percentage of women who say that child care is not important is much higher (34% vs. 19%; comp fig. 3). In West Germany it makes no difference for the fertility intention whether the condition is fulfilled or evaluated as not important: In both cases about 60% of women intend to have a child in the next two years.

This means that there is a similar pattern as in case of the decision for the first child. There is no significant difference between East and West Germany in regard to the effect of the condition of child care on the intention to have a second child.¹⁰

If we compare the transition to the first and the second child we find that in East Germany in the intention group the proportion of women with one child who say that the condition is fulfilled is higher (58% vs. 44%) and the proportion who judges the condition as not important is much lower (19% vs. 34%) which supports hypothesis 3a. But the respective interaction effect is not significant. Also in West Germany there is no significant difference between the transition to the first and to the second child.

c) Compatibility with occupational situation

If we regard the transition to the second child, in East Germany, in the intention group, the proportion of women who report the precondition being not fulfilled is higher than in West Germany (29% vs. 12%). In West Germany, in the intention group, the percentage of women who say that compatibility with work is not important is higher than in East Germany (46% vs. 33%). The log-linear model shows a significant three-way-interaction effect.¹¹ Women with one child in East Germany more often decide in favor of a (further) child even if they face unfavorable conditions, which is not in accordance with hypothesis H 2b.

Compared to the transition to the first child, in East Germany in the intention group the proportions of those who report that the condition is fulfilled, not fulfilled or not important are nearly identical. We do not find a significant interaction effect in our log-linear analysis. This means that in East Germany nearly the same pattern for the decision of the first and second child can be found, which contradicts our hypothesis H 3a.

In West Germany, in the intention group, the percentage of women who say that compatibility with work is not important is higher than in the group of childless women with fertility intentions (46% vs. 36%). West German women with one child for whom the compatibility

⁹ The model for East Germany including the two-way interaction between the precondition variable (financial stability is important and fulfilled, is important and not fulfilled or not important) with number of children and the interaction between the precondition financial stability and intention well fits data. The deviance is 4.14 and the degrees of freedom are 3. In West Germany the saturated model is applied.

¹⁰ The log-linear model including all two-way interactions between the precondition variable (flexible child care is important and fulfilled, is important and not fulfilled or not important), intention to have a second child and the East-West-indicator well fits data. The deviance is 2.78 and the degrees of freedom are 2.

¹¹ The model just including the two-way interactions is significantly worse than the saturated model (deviance = 6.15 with 5 degrees of freedom)

with work is not important more often decide to have another child than childless women which is in accordance with our hypothesis H 3b. However, the respective interaction effect is positive but not significant.

6. Conclusion

If we sum up our results in the light of our hypotheses we can state the following findings:

Our data support hypothesis H 1 that there are different family patterns in East and West Germany: East German women more often have or wish only one child and turn away from having two and more children. However, the differences in the proportion of women who ideally wish to remain childless are not as big as we have expected. This is especially true for the youngest cohort which might be an indication for an assimilation process between East and West Germany.

According to the preconditions for the birth of a first or a second child the picture is more complex. There are only few significant differences in effects of preconditions on fertility intentions between East and West Germany. This means that in both parts of Germany the preconditions we have analyzed influence fertility intentions in a similar way. Nevertheless, the data reveal some interesting differences between East and West Germany and between the transition to the first and second child. However, the three preconditions do not always point in the same direction.

We can approve hypothesis H 2a: Women in East Germany more often decide to have a first child even if the precondition of compatibility with work is not fulfilled. Astonishingly this holds also true for the transition to the second child which is not in accordance with our hypothesis H 2b. On the other hand, financial stability and availability of child care gain importance in the transition to the second child which supports the hypothesis. Hypothesis H 3a and H 3b are also not fully supported by our data as we often find similar patterns for the transition to the first and to the second child.

Now one can ask why fertility behaviour and wishes for children and the findings in regard to preconditions do not fit together in the way we expected. The answer to this question we must leave to further research.

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