

Living arrangements and the availability of intergenerational support – a comparison between Germany and France

Societies like Germany with an increasing number of elderly people, rising heterogeneity of living arrangements, low fertility and increasing childlessness face enormous challenges for social life and social security systems, especially concerning the care and support of elderly people. The role of the family is crucial for the quest for solutions of these problems. Younger family members, especially own children are most important to give support to the older generation. At the same time an increasing number of older people are confronted with the transition of living arrangements of their children. Aim of our paper is to study the impact of living arrangements on this availability.

Methods

Construction of the availability of support

1. Co-residence of children and their elderly parents (60+)
2. Distance of non-co-resident children to their elderly parents (60+)
3. Frequency of contact of non-co-resident elderly parents (60+)

Four groups with different chances for support:

- Good chance (co-residence or distance < 30 min., contacts at least once a week)
- Medium chance (distance > 30 min. and < 1 hour, contacts at least a few times per year)
- Low(er) chance (distance > 1 hour, contacts once a year or less)

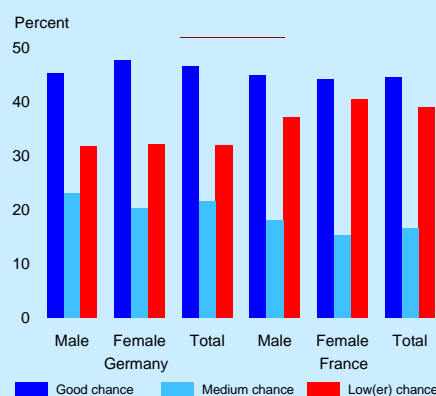
Concept of living arrangements

1. Partner situation, household situation, marital status
2. Having children or being childless

Eight groups of living arrangements:

Single, single parent, marriage/parenthood, marriage/childless, cohabitation/parenthood, cohabitation/childless, LAT/parenthood, LAT/childless

Respondents' chances for providing support to elderly parents 60 and older



Living arrangements of respondents with at least one parent 60 and older (in percent)

Living arrangements	Germany		France		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Parents	Married	56,0	63,3	61,5	58,5
	Cohabitation	5,1	5,6	12,6	11,3
	LAT	2,4	3,3	2,5	3,4
	Single parent	6,9	10,0	6,5	11,8
Childless	Married	9,2	7,5	4,1	4,0
	Cohabitation	4,3	3,1	3,5	3,3
	LAT	5,7	2,1	2,6	2,2
	Single	10,3	5,2	6,7	5,5

Support – perspective children to parents

1. Most important is the group with good chances for providing support in both countries
2. France has a higher proportion of low(er) chance

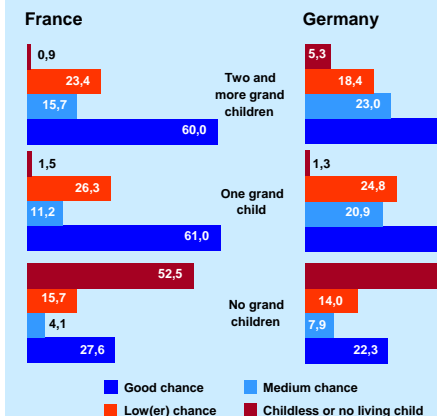
Living arrangements

1. Mainstream model: marriage with children in both countries,
2. In France higher share of parenthood within a cohabitation compared to Germany

Availability of support by living arrangements of child(ren)

Living Arrangements	Germany			France			
	Good chance	Medium chance	Low(er) chance	Good chance	Medium chance	Low(er) chance	
Parent-hood	Married	47,4	22,4	30,2	42,4	17,4	40,3
	Cohab.	45,2	18,6	36,2	41,7	16,1	42,3
	LAT	45,7	15,2	39,1	42,7	19,9	37,5
	Lone Par.	51,8	16,0	32,3	47,9	15,1	37,0
Child-less	Married	39,4	26,4	34,2	38,5	15,0	46,5
	Cohab.	28,2	35,0	36,8	45,4	18,5	36,1
	LAT	49,0	18,5	32,5	41,9	20,5	37,6
	Single	49,7	16,5	33,9	62,9	12,0	25,1

Chances for elderly respondents (60+) to receive support from own children by the existence of grand children (in percent)



Results - Conclusions

Different living arrangements in Germany and France

1. Higher childlessness in Germany, especially male childlessness
2. Higher proportion of married women in Germany
3. Higher proportion of parenthood within cohabitation in France
4. Special family building situation for men in Germany

Chances for providing support is slightly higher in Germany (perspective children to their parents)

The proportion of respondents having lower chances to provide support to their elderly parents (60+) is higher in France; reasons: longer distances and lower contact frequency

Chances for receiving support is higher in France (perspective parents to their children)

1. The children of elderly respondents are more often childless in Germany
2. The birth rate is lower and the share of one-child-families is higher in Germany
3. The existence of grand-children leads to better chances to receive support by own children; this result is independent from the number of grand children
4. Childlessness of the respondents' children is the main factor for reducing the chances of support in both countries

Effects by living arrangements of children

1. Single mothers or fathers seem to have closer relationships to their parents
2. Married or cohabiting respondents without own children have the lowest chance to provide support to their elderly parents
3. Living as single or in LAT without children leads to better chances to provide support to elderly parents
4. If respondents have children the differences of the share of good chances for providing support to elderly parents are low between France and Germany