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## Career, Private Life, and the Well-Being among College-educated West German Women

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# Career, Private Life, and the Well-Being among College-educated West German Women

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## Abstract

This paper describes to what extent college-educated West German women manage to reconcile a career and a private life. In addition, it explicitly investigates how the concurrence of career and cohabitation/family/motherhood is linked to women's life satisfaction. I attempt to overcome the difficulties associated with estimating this relation using fixed-effects models. The results suggest that only a small fraction of woman-year observations is categorised as having a career and cohabitation/family/children simultaneously. Considering different birth cohorts and generations of West German women, there are no significant improvements in the reconciliation between career and family. Further, while there are life-satisfaction gains related to both "career" and "cohabitation/family" separately, their interaction terms throughout are negative.

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*JEL classification:* D19, J17, J19

*Key words:* Career, Cohabitation, Family, College-educated women, Well-being

## 1. Introduction

Since 2005, women account for more than 50% of university graduates (including university of applied sciences degrees). The trend toward higher numbers of university entrance qualifications and higher education among women continues (Weishaupt et al. 2010, p. 10). Given this educational success, the question arises as to what extent women holding a college degree manage to combine a career and private life at the same time. Do college-educated women have to come to terms with "hard choices": Either to pursue a professional career or to establish a stable relationship or a family? The second question I address is whether achieving both is associated with superior life satisfaction.

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I am grateful to the participants at the internal workshops at the Chair of Health Economics and Management that took place between 2012-2014, the 2015 Annual Conference of the Verein für Socialpolitik, the European Society for Population Economics (ESPE) Annual Conference 2015, and the 71st Annual Congress of the International Institute of Public Finance (IIPF) for valuable comments and suggestions. I especially have benefitted from comments by Hendrik Jürges. The responsibility for any errors is my own. Note, my work on this study was completed in 2015. Accordingly, the literature research is based on search results obtained up to that point.

This study indeed finds that only about 18% of the observations are categorised as having a career and cohabitation simultaneously and about 5% of woman-year observations show a time-wise overlap of both career and family. Considering different birth cohorts and generations of West German women, there is no significant progress in the reconciliation between career and family.<sup>1</sup> These two phenomena – on the one hand, the increasing success in higher education and, on the other hand, the low compatibility of career and family – raise important questions which lawmakers and future research must address.

Estimating fixed-effects models, I find life satisfaction premiums related to both “career” and “cohabitation/ family” separately. However, their interaction terms throughout are negative. Women who “have it all” do not report superior life satisfaction premiums. This finding is opposite to the intuitive expectation that women, who can reconcile “full” professional and private lives, enjoy the highest well-being.<sup>2</sup> That is consistent with the results for US college-educated women (Bertrand 2013).

To the best of my knowledge, no study so far has examined the success rates of combining a career and a private life for German college-educated females. Furthermore, none has looked at the relationship between “having it all” and life satisfaction for these women. This paper tries to fill this gap.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In Section 2, I give a brief overview of the literature on college-educated women balancing career and family. In Section 3, theoretical concepts of the relationship between private life and career are presented. They are helpful to understand the empirical outcomes. Section 4 describes the data. Section 5 gives an overview of how many women have managed to have a career, a cohabitation and/or motherhood simultaneously. Because the dataset used covers nearly six birth decades, it is possible to ask whether the share of career-and-private-life women varies across birth cohorts or generations of college-educated women. Section 6 presents the empirical approach to address the question of how work-life reconciliation and life satisfaction are related. In Section 7, results of pooled OLS and fixed-effects models are estimated. As a robustness check, I split the sample into women older than 40 years of age, nearly all of whom have completed their fertility cycle. Section 8 summarizes and concludes.

## **2. Related literature**

In general, there is some evidence for women’s aspiration of “having it all” in the academic literature with the main focus on the U.S. setting (see, e.g., Ridgeway 1978, p. 282; Bronzaft 1991, p. 115; Bridges and Etaugh 1994, p. 430; Lovejoy and Stone 2012, p. 638). In the study conducted by Hoffnung in 1993 and 2000, for example, U.S. college

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<sup>1</sup> There is only a small improvement in combining a career and a cohabitation that can be observed in younger generations of women.

<sup>2</sup> This result applies to West German but not to the East German college-educated women.

women were asked during the senior year and seven years later about their expectations for career, marriage, and motherhood. The combination of wife-mother-career was always the most attractive role option (Hoffnung 2004, p. 719. 722).

Middendorff (2003) conducted an online survey in 2002 asking German students about their goals in their post-college lives. About 24% of college women gave equal value to all areas of life, 30% favored professional objectives, 27% private lives and about 20% had hedonistic approach to life (Middendorff 2003, p. 10). When students were asked to value factors that will determine their happiness in life, 95% of college women prioritized “interesting work”, 93% “fulfilling relationship”, 78% “solve task related problems”, 72% “demonstrate own performance capacity at work”, and 60% “having child(ren)”. In contrast, only 59% of college men agreed (fully) with the statement “demonstrate own performance capacity at work” and 51% with “having child(ren)”. There are only small gender differences in “achieving a career success” (35% of college wives, 38% of college men) and “having a high income” (31% vs. 37%). Overall, about 2/3 strive for attainment of private *and* professional goals (Middendorff 2003, p. 3).

Only a few studies have empirically investigated the relationship between life satisfaction and the concurrence of career and family targeting college-educated women. In addition, different definitions of family and career are applied in these studies.

Most closely related to my study is the work of Bertrand (2013), who measures life satisfaction and emotional well-being for groups of US college-educated women based on whether they have a family, a career, both, or neither (Bertrand 2013, p. 244). Two family definitions are applied in her study: Being currently married, or being currently married with children (ever having children/having children under 18 years old in the household). Career is constructed according to the approach of Goldin (2004): Reaching an annual or weekly income level greater than that achieved by a comparable college graduate man who was at the 25th percentile of the male income distribution (Goldin 2004, p. 31). Estimating pooled OLS models, Bertrand (2013) finds no greater life satisfaction among those who “have it all” in comparison to those who have either a career or a family. Furthermore, it appears that the interaction variable “career and family” tends to result in lower levels of happiness, and increased sadness, stress and tiredness during the day (Bertrand 2013, p. 248).

Another recent study of US college-educated women compares life satisfaction among full-time employed mothers, traditional mothers, and childless full-time working women. Traditional mothers are defined as mothers who work part time or not at all (Hoffnung and William 2013, p. 323). Career, defined as being fully employed, is highly valued, but it does not outweigh the benefits of motherhood. As a result, women combining both do not report the highest level of life satisfaction among all groups of women (Hoffnung and William 2013, p. 332).

In summary, the general message of these two articles is that career-and-family women fail to transform this double-

achievement into superior well-being. However, it should be stressed that this evidence is strictly descriptive.

### 3. Work-family conflict theory

As stated in the previous section, a superior life-satisfaction gain for those females who manage to combine a career and a family is not observed in the literature. In order to understand this phenomenon, a theoretical construct is borrowed from work-family literature: *Work-family conflict* (Staines 1980; Greenhaus and Beutell 1985; Lobel 1991; Edwards and Rothbard 2000). This concept emphasizes the mutual incompatibility of work and family demands.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) differentiate between three types of the work-life conflicts: Time-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflicts. The first type occurs when the transfer of limited personal resources from career to partner/child(ren), such as time or attention, leaves demands in the career domain unmet, and vice versa (Staines 1980; Edwards and Rothbard 2000, p. 182).<sup>3</sup> Secondly, strain from one domain – e.g. anxiety, tension, and fatigue – can reduce personal resources such as energy. This, in turn, makes it more difficult to meet requirements in the other domain (*strain-based conflict*). Finally, the same problem can occur in the case of conflicting domain-specific role demands. A transfer of behavior developed in one domain to the other inhibits role performance in the latter domain (*behavior-based conflict*). Note that role demands can be formed by women's own attitudes as well as by social norms.

In conclusion, meeting all demands while pursuing a career and establishing a partnership/family appears to be a balancing act rather than a simple task. Maintaining the role of nurturer at home and meeting standards at work might result in a double burden rather than a double achievement. Therefore, the concept of *career-life conflict* provides a plausible explanation why career-and-life women cannot transform their achievements into superior well-being.<sup>4</sup>

### 4. Data description

#### *Sources of data*

I use three sources of data in my analyses in order to enhance the sample size of college-educated women in the relevant age range: the German Socio-Economic Panel-Study *SOEP* (1984-2012), the German Family Panel *pairfam*

<sup>3</sup> Edwards and Rothbard (2000) argue that the concept of *time-based conflict* incorporates the concept of the *resource drain* (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, p. 182). “*Resource drain* refers to the transfer of finite personal resources, such as time, attention, and energy, from one domain to another” (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, p. 181). *Time-based conflict* additionally highlights that the transfer of time or attention “from a domain leaves demands in that domain unmet” (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, p. 182).

<sup>4</sup> However, other theoretical constructs for the relationship between work and family exist – (*active*) *segmentation*, *spillover*, and *congruence* – providing an alternative perspective on the linking mechanisms of the two domains. Career-to-life and life-to-career spillovers can occur when, for example, fatigue as a result of one domain inhibits the fulfillment in the other domain, generating similarities between the two domains career and private life, also in terms of mood and satisfaction (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, pp. 180, 186). The congruence is another concept that stands for similarity between career and private life, attributing these similarities to “a third variable that acts as a common cause” (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, p. 182), for example personality of women. The concept *segmentation* describes the independence or separateness of work and private life that would result in a lack of work-family linkage (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, pp. 181, 189).

(2008-2012) and the German Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998). The *SOEP* is a representative longitudinal study providing information on all household members, including information on the presence of minors and a partner in the household and on women's time-use in hours.<sup>5</sup> The German Family Panel is another longitudinal study from a nationwide random sample of the three birth cohorts 1971-73, 1981-83, 1991-93.<sup>6</sup> The Welfare Surveys are representative surveys providing information about German citizens living in private households (Glatzer et al. 1986; Glatzer et al. 1990; Zapf et al. 1996; Zapf et al. 2001). These samples are pooled and harmonized regarding the variables of interest, which are described below.

Furthermore, I restrict the samples in several ways. As the conditions for the supply of childcare-facilities and on the labor market are different between West and East Germany, I conduct the analysis separately for western Länder. Furthermore, these samples are restricted to non-self-employed women who have at least a bachelor's degree. Graduates from universities and also graduates from technical colleges are considered. The focus of this study is thus on high-ability women, who have at least a college degree and the potential to achieve a career. My focus is on females who are between 25 and 54 years of age. About 90% of the sample is based on the *SOEP*, about 9% on *pairfam* and 1% on Welfare Surveys. For each woman in the pooled dataset I determine whether she has a career, a private life, both or neither.

#### *Dependent variable*

Overall life satisfaction is the dependent variable, ranging from 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied). I interpret women's satisfaction with their life as a measure of their well-being.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Operationalization of career*

One of the key independent variables of interest is career. I employ a modified definition of career following Bertrand's approach, which was initially introduced by Goldin in 2004 (Goldin 2004; Bertrand 2013). In order to do so, I operationalize career on the basis of the monthly gross labor income of non-self-employed university graduates. Gross labor earnings reflect individuals' objective attainments and are proxies for performance in the labor market. Self-employed individuals are excluded because their remunerations are not verifiable by an impartial third party. These persons are very likely to be highly autonomous in deciding how much they want to work and earn. Therefore, I focus on academics who are employees in the private or public sector.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information see Wagner et al. 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Analyses are based on data from the first five waves of the German Family Panel, release 5.0 (Nauck et al. 2014). A detailed description of the study can be found in Huinink et al. (2011). The German Family Panel is funded as a long-term project by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

<sup>7</sup> On developments in the measurement of subjective well-being and the limitations of the concept of "overall life satisfaction" see Kahneman and Krueger (2006).

Using microdata from *SOEP*, I compute for each year and each age group (25-29, . . . , 50-54) the 25th percentile of the income distribution among college-educated men living in West Germany. Thus, I assume that these men are the relevant reference group for West German college-educated women. A given woman is defined as having a career if her monthly gross earnings are above the 25th percentile in the relevant year and age group.

“Career” is a difficult concept. There are different definitions and understandings of career. A clear and simple division of career into two categories – subjective and objective – is common (see, e.g., Poulsen 2006). A subjective career is only defined by an individual itself, while an objective career is an externally defined concept. The external signs of a career can be, for example, salaries, titles, and the position in the hierarchical ladder (Poulsen 2006, p. 251). Although a wide range of papers discusses the theoretical aspects of career or career success (see, e.g., Poulsen 2006; Gunz and Mayrhofer 2011; Grote and Hall 2013), only a few propose a concrete implementation or measurement of a career. Valcour and Ladge (2008), e.g., use self-reported incomes, career gaps, interorganizational mobility, and proportion of career spent in part-time employment as women’s career success and career path variables (Valcour and Ladge 2008, p. 305). Many studies use simply income as a measure for objective career (success), without any comparison to a reference group (Grote and Hall 2013, p. 265). Others include more variables besides women’s earnings to depict career or career success (see, e.g., Abele and Spurk 2009, p. 810; Volmer and Spurk 2011, p. 211). Vere (2007) uses, for example, working hours and real labor income to describe females’ careers (Vere 2007, p. 826). Here, career is related to the working aspects of an individuals life. It is measured by rewards, in the form of salary, that are granted to the employee by the organization or employer. One could argue that women’s career is likely to be hampered by family factors, such as childbearing or prioritization of the man’s career in couples decision-making, leading to employment gaps or part-time work (Lovejoy and Stone 2012, pp. 632 et seq.; for wage penalty for motherhood see, e.g., Waldfogel 1997; Gangl and Ziefle 2009). That is why college-educated men with a linear career progress seem to be an appropriate reference group.

As a robustness check, I use other thresholds to construct career: 50th and 75th percentiles of the male income distribution. There are no statistically significant interactions between cohabitation/family and career when career is defined differently than presented in the present study (see Appendix Table A.13).

#### *Cohabitation partner*

Taking into consideration that college graduates often postpone marriage or do not marry at all (Nazio and Blossfeld 2003, p. 56), it seems reasonable to focus on cohabitation rather than marriage. Besides that, German women vary the amount of time they spend on domestic labor depending on whether they live with a partner or alone, irrespective of the legal status of their relationship (see, e.g., Geist 2009).

Primarily, I am interested in the existence of stable relationships in general, whether or not they involve an official marriage. Therefore, I construct a dummy that equals one if a given women has a partner living in her household, and zero otherwise.

#### *Child(ren)*

This study includes all sorts of children - biological, adopted, a partner's children. A constructed dummy equals one if a given woman has at least one child under 18 years of age in her household, zero otherwise. Goldin (2004), for example, defines "family" as ever having a child, irrespective of being married. This understanding of a family includes two-parent and one-parent households. In my study, single mothers are considered as well. However, for the sake of convenience, I refer to two-parent households as "families".

#### *Family*

Family implies at least one minor and a partner in woman's household. A dummy equals one if both are present, zero otherwise. It should be noted that this study follows a fairly "modern" understanding of family – partners do not have to be married, child(ren) do not have to be biological. Thus, patchwork families as well as traditional families are included in the analyses.

Two-way interactions are operationalized on two dummies respectively: career and cohabitation; career and family; career and child(ren). I refer to the independent terms career and cohabitation, and the independent terms family or child(ren) as "simple terms" and to the product of these terms as the interaction term.

#### *Total working time*

As mentioned in Section 3, time pressure is one possible explanation for career and private life conflicts. Therefore, it should be controlled for. In order to measure the total workload women face every day, I create variables covering all non-leisure activities. Specifically, total working time includes the sum of hours spent in an average working day on caregiving (available for the period 2001-2012), child care, housework, repairs, running errands, job and further training (available for the period 1984-2012). Incomplete answers are excluded. Implausible values are recoded as missing. A categorical variable is constructed for each 4-hour bracket, ranging from "less than 4 hours" to "more than 16 hours". The information on activities in hours is only available in *SOEP*.

#### *Partner's employment and income situation*

I account for financial interdependence within the partnership using information on partnered men as control variables.



In order to do so, I construct a dummy that equals one if an employed partner lives in a woman's household, and zero otherwise. Additionally, I control for the partner's monthly salary before taxes with a categorical variable for each €1,000 step (in 11 steps from €0-999, and then in equal €1,000 steps to less than €10,000, and finally more than €10,000). Again, this variable can be constructed for the *SOEP* sample only.

## 5. Descriptive results

Based on the definitions in Section 4, approximately a quarter of all woman-year observations are in the state "career" and about 79% in the state "having a cohabitation partner". About 45% are coded as "having a family" and almost half of the observations as "having child(ren)".

Only about 18% of the observations are classified as having a career and cohabitation simultaneously (see Panel B of Appendix Table A.1). About 29% of the 3,012 women in the sample had both at least once. Moreover, about 62% of females who ever achieved both concurrently always stayed in this state during the time period covered by the panel (see Appendix Table A.2). Roughly 73% of career-and-cohabitation women in the data remained in the same state the following year; about 24% lost career but stayed in their relationships. On the other hand, women in cohabitations had only a 6% chance of achieving or returning to the career-and-cohabitation state (see Appendix Table A.3).

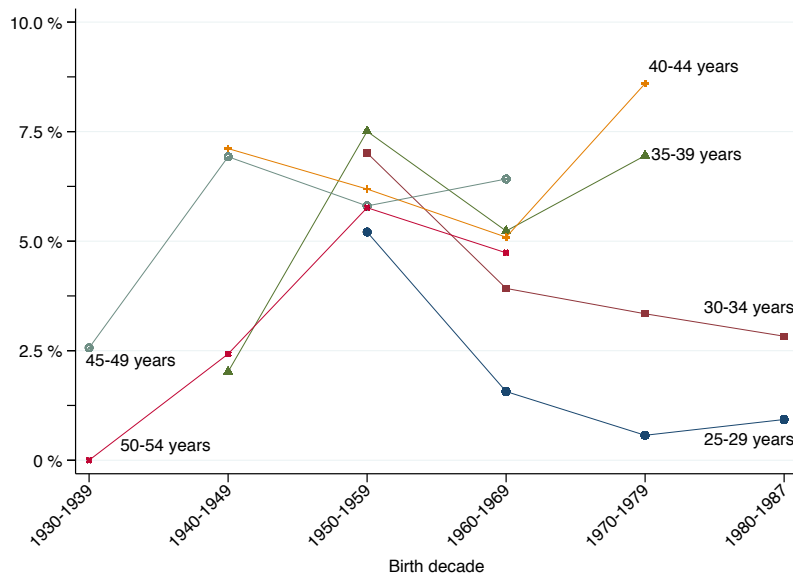
Furthermore, it is noteworthy that only about 5% of woman-year observations show a time-wise overlap of career and family (see Panel B of Appendix Table A.1). Of the 3,003 women, approximately 9% attained both at least once. About 53% of these always stayed career-and-family women during the time period covered by the dataset (see Appendix Table A.4). About 69% remained in this state the following period. Although the career-and-family woman had a 24% chance of keeping her family and getting off her career path, the woman with family had only a 3% chance of adding (or returning to) career (see Appendix Table A.5). A similar picture emerges for those who have a career and child(ren) concurrently (see Appendix Tables A.6 and A.7). Notably, roughly 6% of woman-year observations are coded as "career-and-child(ren)" (see Panel C of Appendix Table A.1).

### 5.1. Birth cohorts

The dataset used covers nearly six birth decades of women: Women who were born 1930-1939 (cohort 1), 1940-1949 (cohort 2), 1950-1959 (cohort 3), 1960-1969 (cohort 4), 1970-1979 (cohort 5). Cohort 6, born 1980-87, is the most recent one that can be studied. This wide range makes it possible to ask whether there is a development in attainments concerning career and private life. Appendix Figures B.7-B.12 illustrate success rates for these birth cohorts and six age groups (25-29, ..., 50-54).

In general, age effects reflect social and biological processes and represent changes across the life course. Cohort effects, on the other hand, reflect different social and historical conditions, i.e. shared life events, at various stages of

life course for a set of individuals (Yang and Land 2013, pp. 1 et seq.). Note that cohort 1 was born too early to track women younger than 45 years old in the dataset, and cohort 5 is too young to study women older than 35 years old. The whole age range, i.e. 25-54, is only available for women born between 1950 and 1969 (cohorts 3 and 4). The data on career women, given in Appendix Figure B.7, show for 35-54 year-olds a very low rate of having a career in the oldest available cohorts. Overall, the percentage of career-observations among those younger than 35 years old is higher than for women between 35 and 54 years old, in the corresponding cohorts 3 and 4. For 25-29 year-old college-graduate females a tendency towards living alone among younger birth cohorts is identifiable (see Appendix Figures B.8-B.10). For 35-44 year-old college-educated women one can observe the lowest rates of childlessness in comparison to other age groups across all birth cohorts (see Appendix Figure B.10). This suggests that nearly all college-educated women in this age range have completed their family planning.



Notes: Cohort 1: born 1930-1939; cohort 2: 1940-1949; cohort 3: 1950-1959; cohort 4: 1960-1969; cohort 5: 1970-1979; cohort 6: 1980-87. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure 1: Birth cohorts of West German college women: Percentage of woman-year observations classified as having a career and a family

A tendency towards increasing compatibility of career and cohabitation for those who are older than 30 is apparent in Appendix Figure B.11. However, there is no clear pattern for 25-29 year-old women across later cohorts. For 25-34 year-old women a convex pattern from cohort 3 to 6 reflects the decreasing share of career-and-family observations among younger cohorts (Figure 1). The percentages of woman-year observations with both family and career across all age groups are close for cohort 3, ranging from about 5.2% to 7.5%. In contrast, for cohort 5 the proportion of career-and-family observations differs clearly across age groups, declining from about 7.8% (40-44

year-olds) to 0.6% (25-29 year-olds). Focusing on the concurrence of career and motherhood, cohort 4 shows the highest success rates for 25-29 year-olds (see Appendix Figure B.12). Moving to the most recent cohorts, it can be seen that they drop behind 30-44 year-old women.

## 5.2. *Generations*

Although a birth cohort shares the initial event of birth and moves through life together as a group, it is worth to inspect specific generations of women as well. A generation shares in general a temporal, a historical and a socio-cultural location (Gilleard and Higgs 2002, p. 373). I follow Oertel's (2007) classification of West German employees into different generations, but pool post-war and war generation because of the small observation number in the latter group. The post-war generation, born between 1945 and 1955, grew up in the days of the Cold War, experienced an expanding welfare state, called for the emancipation of private lives and for changes in the stiff social structures (Klaffke 2014a, p. 11).

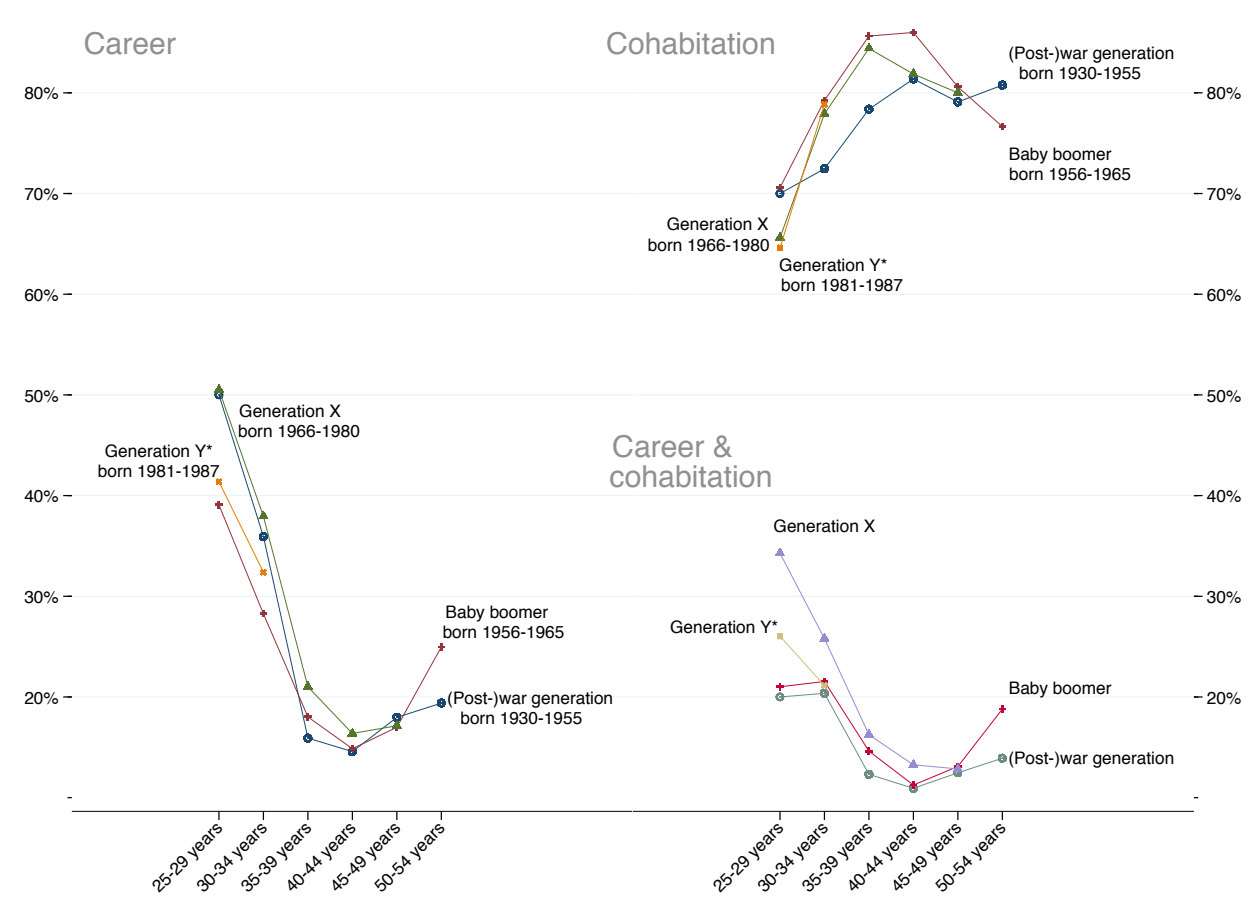
The baby boom generation, born between 1956 and 1965, is the biggest of the generations in numbers. This cohort grew up in a stable, non-authoritarian family context. A movement towards equal rights and humanization in the private sphere and corporate world took place in the 1970s' and 1980s' (Oertel 2014, p. 31). Baby boomers benefited from successful educational expansion, but witnesses also major crises such as rising unemployment rate, political arms race, and so-called oil crisis (Oertel 2014, p. 31, 33).

Girls of the X generation (born between 1966 and 1980) belong to the first generation which took gender equality for granted and which benefited from the greatly improved educational opportunities. Furthermore, children of generation X are typically planned children who were financially supported by their parents and grandparents and who partly experienced a "liberal" parenting style. This generation was also not spared by crises: These include environmental problems like Chernobyl (1986), war events, AIDS and drug-related problems (Oertel 2014, p. 46).

The generation Y, born between 1981 and 1995, is the youngest generation that is only partly included in my sample. This cohort grew up in a globalized world marked by growing uncertainty, but also by the increasing importance of the internet and digitalization. The terror attacks on September 11, 2001, form its collective memory (Klaffke 2014b, p. 60). The millennials associate enjoyment of life with intensive experience and tangible actions and less with material wealth. The work-life balance approach, i.e. the compatibility of work and family life, gained in importance (Klaffke 2014b, p. 66). Unfortunately, this cohort is incomplete in my sample: Women who were born between 1988 and 1995 are not in the dataset.

In Figure 2 we can see the above introduced generations of West German college women in different age categories who have a career, a cohabitation partner or both. The youngest available generation X seems to be more successful in combining a career and a cohabitation in comparison to the baby boom generation and (post-war) generation in all

age groups between 25 and 50 years of age. The baby boomer seem to be more successful in comparison to the older generation of college women. To conclude, there seems to be a small progress in attaining simultaneously a career and a marital or non-marital cohabitation in younger generations. The investigation of whether it happened because of the evolution in “attitude” or because of other reasons does not form part of the present study.



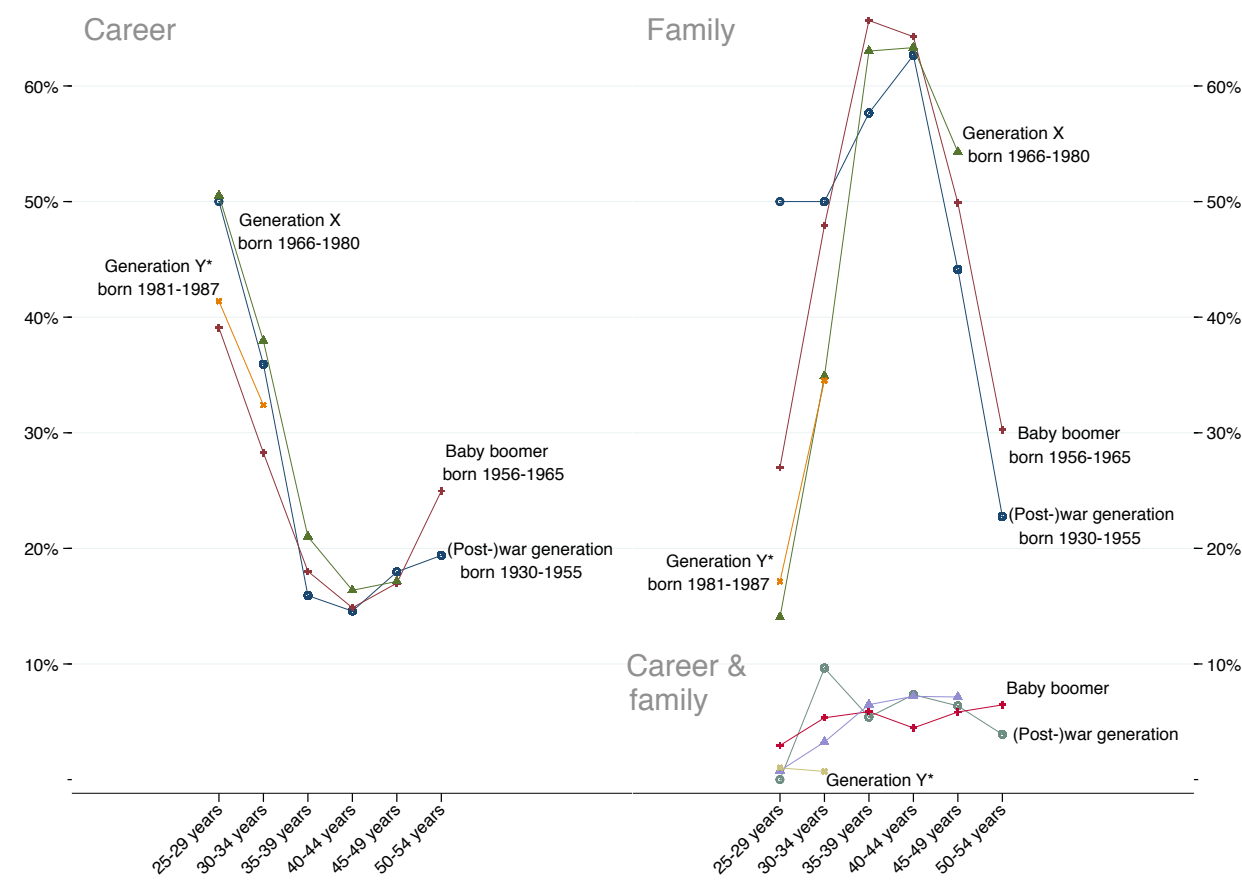
Notes: The generation Y\* is incomplete. Women who were born between 1988 and 1995 are not in the dataset.  
Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure 2: Generations of West German college women: Percentage of woman-year observations classified as having a career, a cohabitation partner or both

In terms of combining a family and a career, it seems to be very challenging for all generations of women (see Figure 3). No specific generation seems to be superior to others. For generation X we can see an increase in this double achievement as the observations age. There is a peak at age 30-34 years old in the (post-)war generation.

### 5.3. Evaluation of life

By including both career and non-career women in the analysis, I ask whether the effect of life satisfaction is the same for those who are in a cohabitation as for those who are not in a stable relationship (or family, child(ren)). One can get



Notes: The figure shows observations classified as having a career, a family or both. The generation Y\* is incomplete.  
Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure 3: Generations of West German college women: Percentage of woman-year observations classified as having a career, a family or both

a sense of whether such an interaction might exist by graphing the mean life satisfaction by career and life situation, as shown in Appendix Figures B.13-B.15. The mean-connecting line for women who live alone is steeper than the line for women who have a partner and/or child(ren) in the household. This implies that having a career could be more life-satisfying for those who live alone, and vice versa. The least satisfied group appears to be those college-educated women who have neither career nor partnership, family or child(ren) in the household.

## 6. Empirical approach

In order to capture a causal effect, in an ideal setting, one would like to compare the well-being of women randomly assigned to the states “career only”, “cohabitation only”, “career and cohabitation”, or “neither career nor cohabitation”. Obviously, women actively choose to be in one of these groups, trying to maximize their utility, i.e. enhance

their well-being. Thus, that choice is not random. There are unobserved factors that can lead to a woman's self-selecting into these different states. These factors in turn can have a direct effect on life satisfaction.

For example, some of the difference in life satisfaction between women with a partner and those without may reflect systematic group differences in unobservable personality traits. These traits, for example agreeableness, may also directly influence women's well-being. Taking another example, women with career-enhancing characteristics may be more likely to have a partner and child(ren), thereby leading to greater life satisfaction. On the other hand, it might be the case that career-women differ in career commitment or underlying productivity in comparison to non-career women. Thus, women with fewer career opportunities may be more likely to be in a cohabitation and/or have child(ren). That might influence their well-being as well. There is a possibility of negative selection into cohabitation and motherhood.

In pooled OLS models I accept the potential bias. Although noisily estimated, I compare my results with the results for US college-educated women (Bertrand 2013). To account for unobserved heterogeneity I use longitudinal evidence. Fixed-effects (FE) models allow for an individual specific constant, which will capture all time-constant observed and unobserved characteristics. Such characteristics can be personality traits, childhood experience or birth cohort. Boudreau et al. (1999), for example, point out that personality traits unlike motivation or human capital appear to be fairly stable over time (Boudreau et al. 1999, p. 7) and, thus, are controlled for in FE models.

When the source of endogeneity is time-constant or when the unobservable self-selection threshold is time-constant, FE models can be applied to deal with it. Consequently, in order to make a causal claim I would rely on the assumption that selection into different living conditions is based on unobserved but fixed individual characteristics. However, I cannot rule out time-varying unobserved heterogeneity. In particular, one could think that other events in women's lives can be associated with both – movement into “career” and into “family”, leading to different levels of life satisfaction. A changing company policy or corporate philosophy, for example, could promote the careers of its female employees and facilitate timing or provide childcare for its staffers. Thus, such actions could enhance a woman's motivation to pursue a career and reduce the costs of motherhood at the same time. As a result, family-friendly policies at firm level might reduce work-life conflict and enhance women's life satisfaction. Since such a time-varying unobserved heterogeneity cannot be addressed due to data constraints and study design, my results should be interpreted as correlational.

Comparing the coefficients of fixed-effects with pooled OLS models might help to identify whether or not selection plays a role in the impact of career, private life and its interaction on well-being. Thus, if selection plays a role, then the absolute values of coefficients should be reduced when controlling for the time-invariant characteristics.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Note that if the fixed-effects estimates are themselves downwardly biased by measurement error, the difference between the two estimates will be

Another issue I need to address is the influence of cohabitation on partnered women. The comparison of well-being between women in cohabitation and career-and-cohabitation women may mask differences in the partner's employment status and earnings level. Since that may systematically bias the results, I need to control for it.

As shown in Section 4, any economic fluctuations and changes on the labor market over time are indirectly captured by the conceptualization of career. I assume that such fluctuations are not gender-specific, i.e. they affect college-educated men and women in the same way.

A woman's total working time depends on her workload, i.e. having a career, a partner and/or child(ren). Therefore, this is another important control variable.<sup>9</sup>

Comparable evidence for East German women who have a college education is provided in the Appendix Tables A.11 and A.12. Estimation results for alternative career definitions are presented in Appendix Table A.13.

## 7. Results

### 7.1. Pooled OLS estimation results

I start by estimating pooled OLS regressions with robust standard errors clustered at the individual level (see Appendix Table A.8). In particular, all regressions control for woman's age as a second order polynomial, the migration background (dummy), the year fixed effects and the birth decade fixed effects (indicator variables).<sup>10</sup> While there are life-satisfaction gains for having a career and a cohabitation separately, there is a negative interaction term for having both concurrently. Furthermore, the same holds true for career-and-family or career-and-child(ren) (see Column 1 of Appendix Table A.8). These results are in line with those for US college-educated women (Bertrand 2013). Further, my pooled OLS estimation results confirm that "[t]he biggest premium to life satisfaction is associated with having a family" (Bertrand 2013, p. 244) or having a (marital) partner (Bertrand 2013, p. 247).

As can be seen in Appendix Table A.8 Column 2, the interaction of career and family/child(ren) for women over 40 years of age is not statistically significant anymore. However, in contrast to the findings of Bertrand (2013), there is a significant negative interaction term of career and cohabitation. Moreover, the simple effect of career remains statistically significant at 0.05 level. Hence, for women who have nearly completed their fertility cycle, career seems still to be life-satisfaction enhancing.

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exaggerated. As a result, conclusions concerning the degree of bias in OLS estimates will be inaccurate.

<sup>9</sup> Fixed-effects models are estimated partly using *SOEP* only, due to the absence of information on the partner's gross labor income and time use in the *pairfam* and *Welfare* Surveys.

<sup>10</sup> In Panel A of Table A.8, estimation results are presented for having a cohabitation partner, in Panel B for having a family, and in Panel C for having child(ren) in the household.

### *Dynamics*

Since the dataset used covers the period from 1984 to 2012, I can explore whether the influence of career and cohabitation on life satisfaction changed in the course of these years (see Appendix Figure B.16). Except for the years 1985, 1986 and 1988, one can see throughout a positive simple effect of having a career on life satisfaction. Clearly, the coefficients for cohabitation are pervasively positive. For the years 1984, 1985, 1986, 1988 and 1992 the interaction terms of career and cohabitation are positive, while insignificant at the 5% level, as shown in Appendix Figure B.16. However, for the remaining 24 years, a zero or negative interaction term between career and cohabitation is observable. Overall, there seems to be no clear time trend for the years 1984 to 2012, as there is with career and family or child(ren). Referring to Appendix Figures B.17 and B.18, the simple effects for having a family or child(ren) are consistently positive with the sole exception of 1999 for having child(ren). The simple effects of having a career are, again, positive, except for 1985, 1988 and 1991. The coefficients for the interaction of career and family or career and child(ren) are close to zero or negative for the vast majority of years. Again, there seems to be no clear time trend for the years 1984 to 2012.

### *7.2. Fixed-effects regression results*

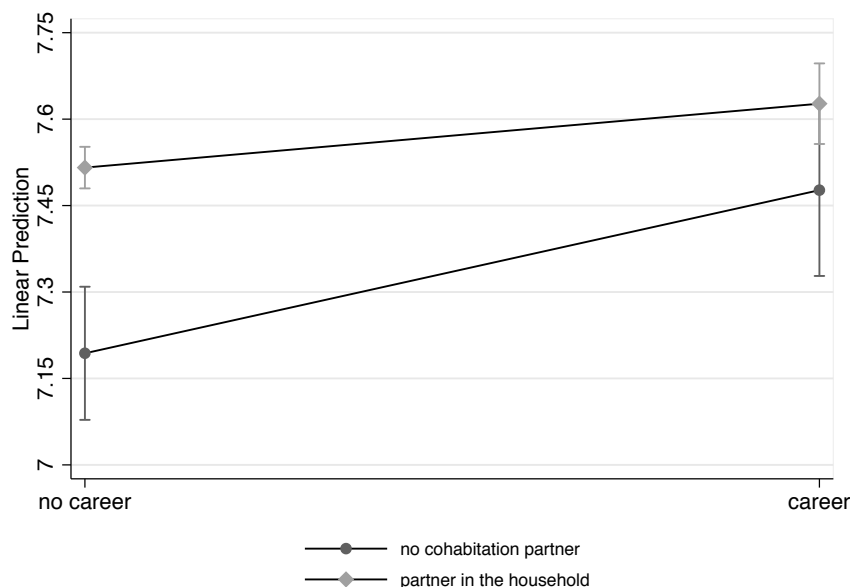
Two-by-two models are estimated using fixed-effects (FE) regressions. The control variables in all regressions are year fixed effects and woman's age as a second order polynomial. While there are life-satisfaction rewards for career and cohabitation/family individually, the interaction terms are consistently negative (see Appendix Table A.9). The worst-off living situation appears to be one without a career and without a cohabitation partner or a family.

Having a career and a cohabitation seems to result in superior life satisfaction, but only if I control for years fixed effects and age (and its square) solely (see Figure 4). When additionally including other controls or considering family instead of cohabitation it is not the case anymore (see Figure 5). Career women without a family seem not to report a lower level of well-being in comparison to women who have either family only or both. This is even more pronounced for women over 40 years of age. The point estimate of the career-and-family interaction is large enough to eliminate the positive simple effect of having a family or a career on life satisfaction (see Panel B of Appendix Table A.10).<sup>11</sup>

If women aged 40 and older are considered, also career women without a cohabitation partner seem to enjoy the highest level of well-being. Figure 6 clearly demonstrates that achieving a career appears to be life-satisfaction-enhancing only for women without a partner. Put differently, starting a cohabitation seems to result in increased satisfaction exclusively for non-career women. There is a statistically insignificant (negative) interaction term of career and child(ren). However, it seems to be more life-satisfying to have a career irrespective of the presence of underage child(ren) in the household (see Appendix Figures B.19 and B.21).

<sup>11</sup> Appendix Figures B.20 and B.21 illustrate the predictive margins reflecting this result.





Notes: Adjusted predictions of career#cohabitation (see fixed effects regression in Panel A Column (1) of Appendix Table A.9); predictive margins with 95% CIs

Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

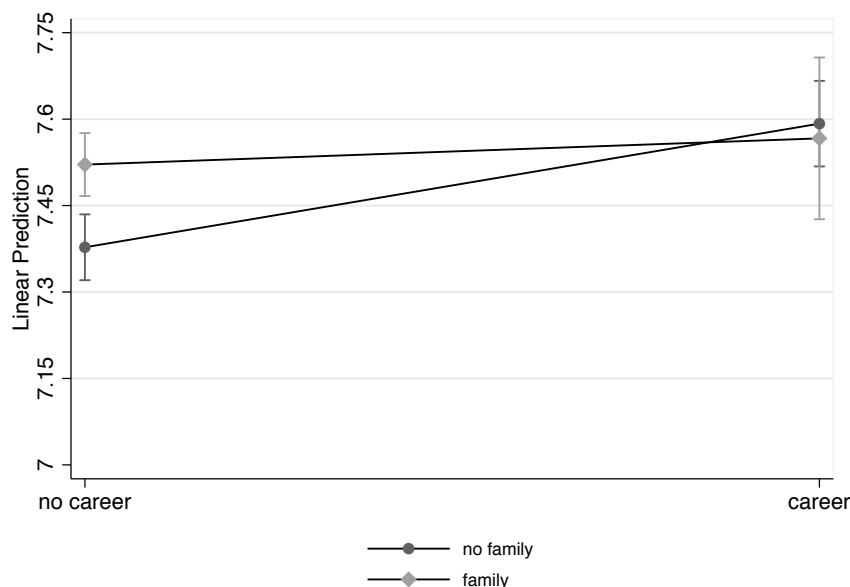
Figure 4: Life satisfaction by career and cohabitation status for women between 25 and 54 years of age

Including the control variables for a woman's total working time and her partner's income and employment situation leads to statistically insignificant partnership, family or child(ren) life satisfaction premiums (see Column (5) of Appendix Table A.9). Thus, these controls seem to explain primarily the simple effect of partnership/family/child(ren) on overall life satisfaction.<sup>12</sup> Importantly, the negative career-and-cohabitation interaction is statistically significant and robust to the inclusion of these covariates (see Panel A Column (5) of Table A.9). However, controlling for a partner's employment and income situation leads to statistically insignificant interaction between career and family on women's well-being (see Panel B Columns (2) and (3) of Appendix Table A.9).

A comparison of panel estimates in Appendix Table A.9 Column (1) with the OLS estimates in Appendix Table A.8 Column (1) appears to provide evidence that the OLS estimates are upwardly biased. Thus, suggesting that unobserved heterogeneity is positively correlated with career and cohabitation/family status. OLS estimates are approximately 1.5-3.5 times the fixed-effects estimates in absolute values.

In contrast to West Germans, for college-educated women who live in East Germany, we do not observe statistically significant negative interaction terms (see Appendix Tables A.11 and A.12). The reconciliation of work and family life was taken for granted, presented the normal way of life for the vast majority of women and was systematically

<sup>12</sup> The simple effect of "having a career" on the outcome variable remains statistically significant at 0.01 level irrespective of the included controls (see Appendix Table A.9).



Notes: Adjusted predictions of career#family (see fixed effects regression in Panel B Column (1) of Appendix Table A.9); predictive margins with 95% CIs.

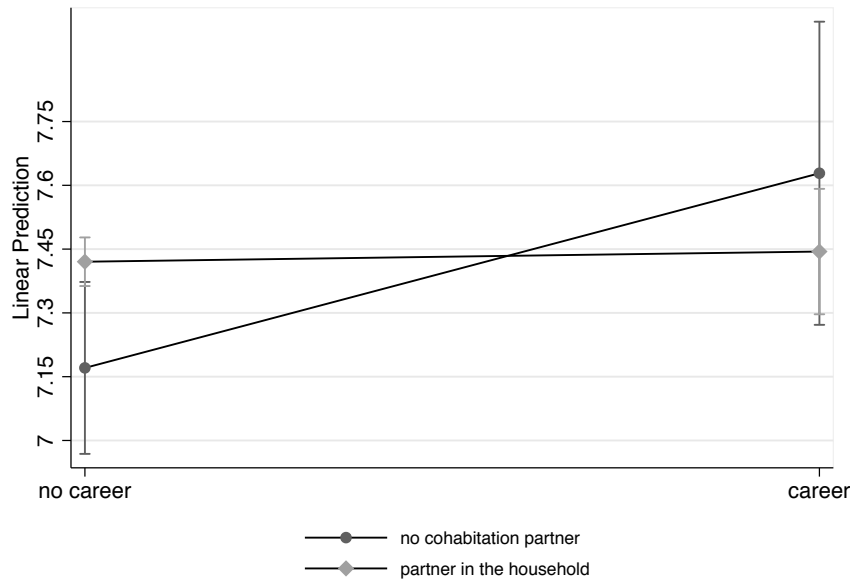
Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure 5: Life satisfaction by career and family status for women between 25 and 54 years of age

promoted in the former German Democratic Republic (Miethe et al. 1990, pp. 79 et seq.). For example, 91.2% of women worked in 1989, about 80% of 1-3 years old children were in a nursery, and 48.6% of college students were female (Lötsch and Falconere 1990, p. 42; Miethe et al. 1990, p. 63). Naturally, the reunification brought major changes, but as recognized by many researchers Germany is still one country with two worlds in respect to women's labor force participation, working hours, childcare, housework and many other aspects (see, e.g., Geist 2009; Krause and Ostner 2010). However, it is very arguable whether the career definition applied in this study fits college-educated women who were educated in the former German Democratic Republic.<sup>13</sup>

In the end, I define "career" alternatively as reaching an income level greater than that achieved by a comparable man who was at the 50th or 75th percentile of the male income distribution. Estimation results applying these alternative career definitions show no significant results for the interaction terms of "career" and "cohabitation" or "family" (see Appendix Table A.13).

<sup>13</sup> Applying alternative career definitions by using the 50th and 75th percentile of the male income distribution of comparable men provides also no meaningful results (see Panel B and C of Appendix Tables A.11 and of A.12). It is possible that East German college-educated men within the same age group are not an appropriate reference group for these women.



Notes: Adjusted predictions of career#cohabitation (see Panel A Column (1) in Appendix Table A.10); predictive margins with 95% CIs  
Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure 6: Life satisfaction by career and cohabitation status for women over 40 years of age

## 8. Summary and conclusions

In this study I pool three different data sources in order to investigate the concurrence of career and private life among female academics in West Germany. The data show a relatively small proportion of woman-year observations classified as having both. Furthermore, it seems to be easier to combine a career with a cohabitation than with a child or a family. Also, for females younger than 35 years old it seems to be challenging for younger birth cohorts to combine motherhood and a professional career. In contrast, for the same cohorts the proportion of career-and-cohabitation observations increases for women aged 30 and above.

A look at different generations of women reveals a small progress in the compatibility of career and cohabitation in younger generations. However, the reconcilability of a professional career with family life seems to be very challenging across all included generations.

To my knowledge, this study is the first to attempt to understand the relationship of “having it all” and women’s well-being within the German context. Using fixed effects models, I find consistent evidence that the interaction of career and private life on life satisfaction is negative. Remarkably, the interaction term for career and partnership remains statistically significant when controlling for a woman’s total working time and her partner’s income and employment situation. These negative interaction effects are, however, not observed for East German women.

My findings for West Germans are in line with Bertrand's (2013) conclusion for college-educated women in the US: While there are life-satisfaction gains when having a career and a family individually, there is no "no double up" on these gains (Bertrand 2013, p. 244). Unlike Bertrand (2013), I do not find that "[t]he biggest premium to life satisfaction is associated with having a family" (Bertrand 2013, p. 244).<sup>14</sup> When considering family and career, my fixed-effects models suggest that career is associated with a higher enhancement in women's well-being than family. There are several limitations of the present study that should be discussed. First, the data come from individual self-reports such as hours spent for different activities during a normal working day or labor income. Further, detailed information on the working and living environment, for example temporal flexibility or reward system at work, is absent. I.e., changing workplace policies remain a potential source of bias when exploring the relationship between career-and-life interaction and woman's life satisfaction. Another potential point for criticism is the definition of career. Here, following Goldin's (2004) and Bertrand's (2013) approach college-educated men are used as a reference group. However, men might be a less appropriate comparison group after all since their field of study and work differs on average.

A next step for research in this area might be to further examine the motivation for acquiring a college degree in the first place. Some individuals might see a degree just as an expedient to compete on the marriage market. Blakemore et al. (2005), for example, demonstrate that US college women had a higher "drive to marry" than their male counterparts (Blakemore et al. 2005, p. 327). A college degree does not necessary represent a commitment to an achievement-oriented life style or a career-orientation (Ridgeway 1978, p. 282). Thus, the expectations of German students and, especially, changes in attitudes in their post-college lives are worth exploring.

From a public policy standpoint, any policy that can reduce the double burden for individuals may lower the costs these individuals incur from investing in careers and private life. For example, childcare infrastructure could be improved or school schedules that match parents work schedules could be introduced. However, imbalances at work and at home may still remain despite these investments as shown in Section 3. Career-family conflicts and other psychological constructs on the relationships between career and family provide a plausible framework why it is challenging to combine a career and private life and meet the demands in both domains.

The Federal Ministry of Health, for example, identified a balanced work-life environment as an important factor for attracting professionals in the health care system. In order to find new avenues for the reconciliation of family and career meetings of the round table took place in 2010 and the subsequent years. It turns out that institutions with employee-oriented work organization are more successful in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. These employers have

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<sup>14</sup> Bertrand (2013) defines family as having a husband and children. She estimates multivariate regressions and controls for a woman's age as a second order polynomial, three race categories, and indicator variables for birth decade (Bertrand 2013, p. 247).

a family-friendly company philosophy that plays an important role in all organizational decisions (Widmann-Mauz 2012, pp. 4 et seq.). Thus, businesses should take into account that employees have family obligations (even without having children) and are advised to implement family friendly work practices. Measures like egg freezing or “social freezing” which is supported by tech companies like Apple, Google and Facebook in the US seem to encourage delaying childbirth and thus to support sequencing instead of having career and children at the same time. On the other hand, policies like flexibilization of working time, telecommuting or performance-linked rewarding system appear to be helpful instruments for this purpose (see, e.g., Federal Society of the German Employer Associations 2013, p. 6).

“Why is the reconcilability of family and working life so important? [...] Germany cannot afford not to use the workforce of highly qualified women. [...] The main objective has to be to increase women’s full-time employment and to avoid career breaks. This would not only be helpful in fighting skilled worker shortage, but also in women’s catching up with men’s careers and earning opportunities” (Federal Society of the German Employer Associations 2013, p. 5).

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## A. Appendix Tables

Table A.1: Summary Statistics, women between 25 and 54 years old

Variable	Obs	Mean	St. dev.	Min	Max
<b>Panel A: Career and cohabitation partner</b>					
Year	13,713	2003.24	7.10	1984	2012
Life satisfaction	13,713	7.48	1.55	0	10
Career	13,713	0.25	0.43	0	1
Cohabitation	13,713	0.79	0.41	0	1
Career and cohabitation	13,713	0.18	0.38	0	1
Age	13,713	39.35	8.05	25	54
Birth year	13,713	1963.84	10.29	1930	1987
Migration background	13,713	0.19	0.39	0	1
<b>Panel B: Career and family</b>					
Year	13,709	2003.24	7.10	1984	2012
Life satisfaction	13,709	7.48	1.55	0	10
Career	13,709	0.25	0.43	0	1
Family	13,709	0.45	0.50	0	1
Career and family	13,709	0.05	0.22	0	1
Age	13,709	39.35	8.05	25	54
Birth year	13,709	1963.83	10.29	1930	1987
Migration background	13,709	0.19	0.39	0	1
<b>Panel C: Career and child(ren) in the household</b>					
Year	13,789	2003.27	7.11	1984	2012
Life satisfaction	13,789	7.48	1.55	0	10
Career	13,789	0.25	0.43	0	1
Child(ren)	13,789	0.49	0.50	0	1
Career and child(ren)	13,789	0.06	0.23	0	1
Age	13,789	39.31	8.06	25	54
Birth year	13,789	1963.91	10.34	1930	1987
Migration background	13,789	0.19	0.40	0	1

Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.2: Panel tabulation for career and cohabitation

Interaction term	Overall		Between		Within
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Percent
0	11,406	82.25	2,697	89.54	91.42
1	2,461	17.75	881	29.25	62.03
$\Sigma$	13,867	100.00	3,578	118.79	84.18
			(n = 3,012)		

Notes: Interaction term equals one if a given woman has a career and a cohabitation concurrently, zero otherwise; 3,012 women between 25 and 54 years old; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.3: Transition probabilities from one period to the next for variables career and cohabitation

State	career & cohabitation	no career & cohabitation	career & no cohabitation	no career & no cohabitation	$\Sigma$
career & cohabitation	1,314 72.80	440 24.38	40 2.22	11 0.61	1,805 100.00
no career & cohabitation	391 6.17	5,850 92.26	10 0.16	90 1.42	6,341 100.00
career & no cohabitation	61 8.53	16 2.24	509 71.19	129 18.04	715 100.00
no career & no cohabitation	30 2.29	81 6.18	139 10.61	1,060 80.92	1,310 100.00
$\Sigma$	1,796 17.66	6,387 62.80	698 6.86	1,290 12.68	10,171 100.00

Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)



Table A.4: Panel tabulation for career and family

Interaction term	Overall		Between		Within Percent
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
0	13,180	95.13	2,924	97.37	97.76
1	674	4.87	270	8.99	53.49
$\Sigma$	13,854	100.00	3,194 (n = 3,003)	106.36	94.02

Notes: Interaction term equals one if a given woman has a career and a family concurrently, zero otherwise; 3,003 women between 25 and 54 years old; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.5: Transition probabilities from one period to the next for variables career and family

State	career & family	no career & family	career & no family	no career & no family	$\Sigma$
career & family	334 69.44	116 24.12	21 4.37	10 2.08	481 100.00
no career & family	145 3.48	3,808 91.43	11 0.26	201 4.83	4,165 100.00
career & no family	17 0.83	116 5.69	1,552 76.15	353 17.32	2,038 100.00
no career & no family	5 0.14	147 4.22	409 11.74	2,924 83.90	3,485 100.00
$\Sigma$	501 4.93	4,187 41.17	1,993 19.60	3,488 34.30	10,169 100.00

Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.6: Panel tabulation for career and child(ren)

Interaction term	Overall		Between		Within Percent
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
0	13,145	94.32	2,924	96.82	97.49
1	791	5.68	309	10.23	54.79
$\Sigma$	13,936	100.00	3,233 (n = 3,020)	107.05	93.41

Notes: Interaction term equals one if a given woman has a career and child(ren) concurrently, zero otherwise; 3,020 women between 25 and 54 years old; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.7: Transition probabilities for career and child(ren)

Interaction term	Interaction term		$\Sigma$
	0	1	
0	9,448 98.06	187 1.94	9,635 100.00
1	168 29.53	401 70.47	569 100.00
$\Sigma$	9,616 94.24	588 5.76	10,204 100.00

Notes: Interaction term equals one if a given woman has a career and child(ren) concurrently, zero otherwise; women between 25 and 54 years old; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.8: Pooled OLS regressions, women's life satisfaction

Sample Restriction	Dependent variable: life satisfaction	
	(1) none	(2) age $\geq 40$
<b>Panel A: Career and cohabitation partner</b>		
Career	0.420*** (0.092)	0.553*** (0.168)
Partner	0.730*** (0.078)	0.732*** (0.115)
Career and partner	-0.359*** (0.104)	-0.380** (0.187)
Obs	13,713	6,453
Women	2,872	1,345
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0407	0.0385
<b>Panel B: Career and family</b>		
Career	0.312*** (0.058)	0.365*** (0.101)
Family	0.537*** (0.061)	0.455*** (0.083)
Career and family	-0.281** (0.113)	-0.257 (0.163)
Obs	13,709	6,450
Women	2,872	1,342
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0345	0.0274
<b>Panel C: Career and child(ren) in the household</b>		
Career	0.266*** (0.060)	0.324*** (0.105)
Child(ren)	0.390*** (0.065)	0.282*** (0.087)
Career and child(ren)	-0.219** (0.108)	-0.181 (0.154)
Obs	13,789	6,456
Women	2,888	1,347
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0240	0.0174

Notes: The following controls are included in all regressions: age as a second order polynomial, migration background (dummy), year fixed effects, indicator variables for birth cohort. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at individual level. Significance levels: \* 10%; \*\* 5%; \*\*\* 1%; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.9: Fixed-effects regressions, women's life satisfaction

Sample Restriction	Dependent variable: life satisfaction				
	none	none	SOEP	SOEP	SOEP
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>Panel A: Career and cohabitation partner</b>					
Career	0.283*** (0.081)	0.291*** (0.083)	0.335*** (0.087)	0.391*** (0.095)	0.405*** (0.098)
Partner	0.322*** (0.073)	0.214** (0.104)	0.203* (0.110)	0.291*** (0.081)	0.181 (0.125)
Career and partner	-0.172* (0.089)	-0.205** (0.093)	-0.238** (0.098)	-0.302*** (0.103)	-0.329*** (0.109)
Working partner	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Partner's earnings	no	no	yes	no	yes
Total working time	no	no	no	yes	yes
Obs	13,867	12,837	11,388	10,039	9,204
Women	3,012	2,862	2,057	2,065	1,941
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0189	0.0188	0.0204	0.0230	0.0222
<b>Panel B: Career and family</b>					
Career	0.215*** (0.050)	0.200*** (0.052)	0.211*** (0.054)	0.208*** (0.057)	0.206*** (0.061)
Family	0.143*** (0.053)	0.131** (0.059)	0.108* (0.061)	0.094 (0.064)	0.085 (0.072)
Career and family	-0.169* (0.087)	-0.152 (0.095)	-0.145 (0.097)	-0.171* (0.099)	-0.153 (0.111)
Working partner	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Partner's earnings	no	no	yes	no	yes
Total working time	no	no	no	yes	yes
Obs	13,854	12,824	11,388	10,039	9,204
Women	3,003	2,853	2,057	2,065	1,941
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0171	0.0188	0.0199	0.0210	0.0210
<b>Panel C: Career and child(ren) in the household</b>					
Career	0.198*** (0.051)	0.188*** (0.052)	0.203*** (0.054)	0.178*** (0.057)	0.180*** (0.060)
Child(ren)	0.121** (0.059)	0.142** (0.061)	0.129** (0.063)	0.098 (0.070)	0.116 (0.073)
Career and child(ren)	-0.098 (0.082)	-0.072 (0.088)	-0.074 (0.091)	-0.012 (0.098)	0.009 (0.105)
Working partner	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Partner's earnings	no	no	yes	no	yes
Total working time	no	no	no	yes	yes
Obs	13,936	12,839	11,388	10,046	9,204
Women	3,020	2,856	2,057	2,067	1,941
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0164	0.0186	0.0200	0.0208	0.0212

Notes: The following controls are included in all regressions: age as a second order polynomial and year fixed effects. Singletons are not excluded. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at individual level. Significance levels: \* 10%; \*\* 5%; \*\*\* 1%; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.10: Fixed-effects regressions, life satisfaction of women past the age of 40

Sample Restriction	Dependent variable: life satisfaction				
	none	none	SOEP	SOEP	SOEP
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>Panel A: Career and cohabitation partner</b>					
Career	0.458*** (0.176)	0.457** (0.182)	0.458** (0.182)	0.521*** (0.180)	0.511*** (0.182)
Partner	0.250** (0.127)	0.159 (0.182)	0.152 (0.184)	0.089 (0.143)	-0.020 (0.204)
Career and partner	-0.434** (0.182)	-0.483** (0.198)	-0.488** (0.196)	-0.509*** (0.192)	-0.535*** (0.202)
Working partner	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Partner's earnings	no	no	yes	no	yes
Total working time	no	no	no	yes	yes
Obs	6,528	6,025	5,858	5,341	4,909
Women	1,419	1,320	1,192	1,207	1,117
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0164	0.0152	0.0159	0.0288	0.0245
<b>Panel B: Career and family</b>					
Career	0.209* (0.106)	0.185* (0.109)	0.187* (0.110)	0.182* (0.110)	0.170 (0.117)
Family	0.058 (0.077)	0.054 (0.083)	0.057 (0.084)	0.073 (0.082)	0.057 (0.090)
Career and family	-0.245* (0.134)	-0.247* (0.144)	-0.256* (0.144)	-0.159 (0.131)	-0.179 (0.146)
Working partner	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Partner's earnings	no	no	yes	no	yes
Total working time	no	no	no	yes	yes
Obs	6,519	6,016	5,858	5,341	4,909
Women	1,410	1,311	1,192	1,207	1,117
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0149	0.0137	0.0144	0.0268	0.0220
<b>Panel C: Career and child(ren) in the household</b>					
Career	0.181* (0.109)	0.166 (0.111)	0.169 (0.111)	0.133 (0.112)	0.130 (0.120)
Child(ren)	0.063 (0.078)	0.091 (0.082)	0.094 (0.082)	0.092 (0.083)	0.092 (0.087)
Career and child(ren)	-0.131 (0.139)	-0.148 (0.138)	-0.157 (0.138)	0.012 (0.135)	-0.030 (0.139)
Working partner	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Partner's earnings	no	no	yes	no	yes
Total working time	no	no	no	yes	yes
Obs	6,526	6,017	5,858	5,341	4,909
Women	1,416	1,312	1,192	1,207	1,117
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0144	0.0134	0.0141	0.0267	0.0219

Notes: The following controls are included in all regressions: age as a second order polynomial and year fixed effects. Singletons are not excluded. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at individual level.

Significance levels: \* 10%; \*\* 5%; \*\*\* 1%; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Table A.11: Fixed-effects regressions, life satisfaction of East German women

Dependent variable: life satisfaction					
Panel A: 25th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	-0.005 (0.130)	Career	0.076 (0.066)	Career	0.072 (0.068)
Partner	0.185 (0.144)	Family	0.139* (0.075)	Child(ren)	0.034 (0.077)
Career and partner	0.071 (0.140)	Career and family	-0.043 (0.087)	Career and child(ren)	-0.030 (0.084)
Obs	7,830	Obs	7,819	Obs	7,850
Women	1,251	Women	1,240	Women	1,252
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0077	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0073	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0064
Panel B: 50th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	-0.086 (0.148)	Career	0.047 (0.075)	Career	0.084 (0.077)
Partner	0.178 (0.131)	Family	0.119* (0.067)	Child(ren)	0.034 (0.068)
Career and partner	0.157 (0.163)	Career and family	0.001 (0.108)	Career and child(ren)	-0.076 (0.104)
Obs	7,830	Obs	7,819	Obs	7,850
Women	1,251	Women	1,240	Women	1,252
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0078	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0072	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0064
Panel C: 75th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	-0.206 (0.176)	Career	0.149 (0.110)	Career	0.178 (0.117)
Partner	0.183 (0.127)	Family	0.120* (0.064)	Child(ren)	0.025 (0.066)
Career and partner	0.423** (0.189)	Career and family	0.029 (0.133)	Career and child(ren)	-0.048 (0.140)
Obs	7,830	Obs	7,819	Obs	7,850
Women	1,251	Women	1,240	Women	1,252
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0086	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0077	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0067

Notes: In Panel A I define "career" as reaching an income level greater than that achieved by a East German man who was at the 25th percentile of the East German male income distribution. In Panel B I use the 50th percentile (median) of the male income distribution as the threshold for defining "career". In Panel C I use the 75th percentile. The following controls are included in all regressions: age as a second order polynomial and year fixed effects. Singletons are not excluded. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at individual level.

Significance levels: \* 10%; \*\* 5%; \*\*\* 1%; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1993, 1998)

Table A.12: Fixed-effects regressions, life satisfaction of East German women past the age of 40

Dependent variable: life satisfaction					
Panel A: 25th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	-0.057 (0.231)	Career	0.109 (0.087)	Career	0.105 (0.086)
Partner	0.255 (0.281)	Family	0.127 (0.116)	Child(ren)	0.012 (0.115)
Career and partner	0.195 (0.241)	Career and family	-0.003 (0.125)	Career and child(ren)	0.008 (0.121)
Obs	4,513	Obs	4,511	Obs	4,513
Women	721	Women	719	Women	720
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0101	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0085	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0076
Panel B: 50th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	0.232 (0.225)	Career	0.156* (0.094)	Career	0.192 (0.094)
Partner	0.362 (0.259)	Family	0.141 (0.098)	Child(ren)	0.046 (0.096)
Career and partner	-0.121 (0.248)	Career and family	-0.070 (0.153)	Career and child(ren)	-0.145 (0.139)
Obs	4,513	Obs	4,511	Obs	4,513
Women	721	Women	719	Women	720
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0098	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0086	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0081
Panel C: 75th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	-0.061 (0.328)	Career	0.196 (0.138)	Career	0.204 (0.145)
Partner	0.313 (0.256)	Family	0.128 (0.094)	Child(ren)	0.020 (0.093)
Career and partner	0.271 (0.339)	Career and family	-0.013 (0.188)	Career and child(ren)	-0.032 (0.194)
Obs	4,513	Obs	4,511	Obs	4,513
Women	721	Women	719	Women	720
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0097	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0084	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0076

Notes: In Panel A I define “career” as reaching an income level greater than that achieved by a East German man who was at the 25th percentile of the East German male income distribution. In Panel B I use the 50th percentile (median) of the male income distribution as the threshold for defining “career”. In Panel C I use the 75th percentile. The following controls are included in all regressions: age as a second order polynomial and year fixed effects. Singletons are not excluded. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at individual level.

Significance levels: \* 10%; \*\* 5%; \*\*\* 1%; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1993, 1998)

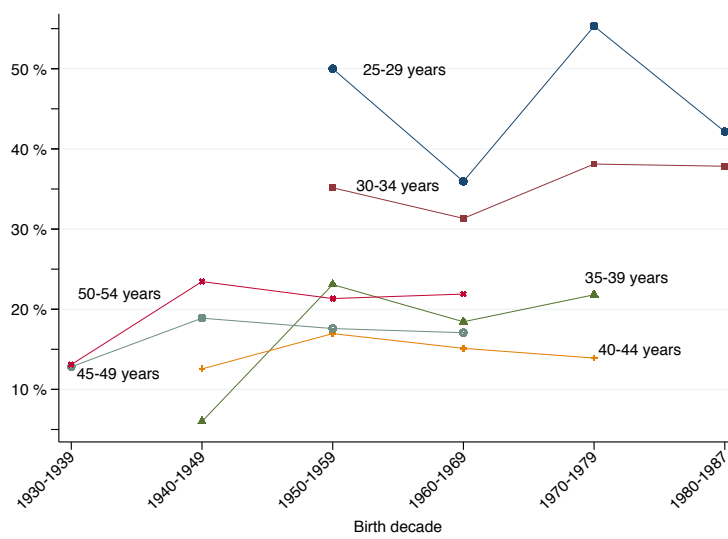
Table A.13: Fixed-effects regressions, alternative thresholds for career definition

Dependent variable: life satisfaction					
Panel A: 50th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	0.289** (0.117)	Career	0.211*** (0.067)	Career	0.200*** (0.066)
Partner	0.283*** (0.068)	Family	0.097* (0.050)	Child(ren)	0.081 (0.056)
Career and partner	-0.129 (0.128)	Career and family	-0.053 (0.108)	Career and child(ren)	-0.009 (0.111)
Obs	13,867	Obs	13,854	Obs	13,936
Women	3,012	Women	3,003	Women	3,020
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0182	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0162	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0157
Panel B: 75th percentile threshold for career definition					
Career	0.322* (0.188)	Career	0.186* (0.106)	Career	0.162 (0.106)
Partner	0.268*** (0.068)	Family	0.082* (0.049)	Child(ren)	0.066 (0.054)
Career and partner	-0.196 (0.204)	Career and family	-0.002 (0.187)	Career and child(ren)	0.057 (0.174)
Obs	13,867	Obs	13,854	Obs	13,936
Women	3,012	Women	3,003	Women	3,020
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0175	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0154	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.0149

Notes: In Panel A I define “career” as reaching an income level greater than that achieved by a man who was at the 50th percentile (median) of the male income distribution. In Panel B I use the the 75th percentile of the male income distribution as the threshold for defining “career”. The following controls are included in all regressions: age as a second order polynomial and year fixed effects. Singletons are not excluded. Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at individual level.

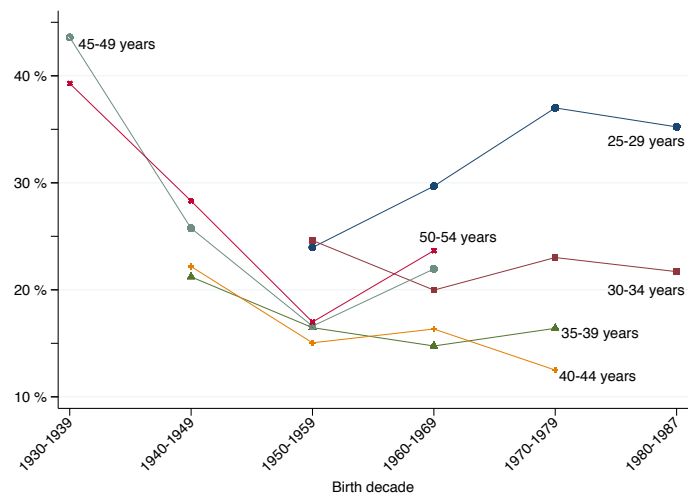
Significance levels: \* 10%; \*\* 5%; \*\*\* 1%; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

## B. Appendix Figures



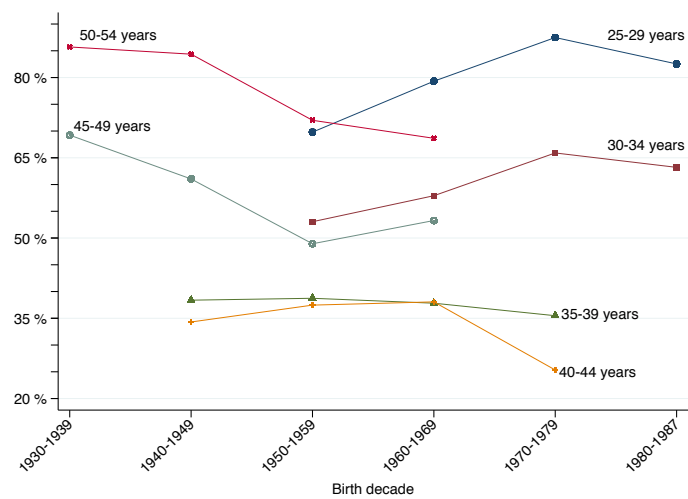
Notes: Cohort 1: born 1930-1939; cohort 2: 1940-1949; cohort 3: 1950-1959; cohort 4: 1960-1969; cohort 5: 1970-1979; cohort 6: 1980-87; 13,867 observations, 3,012 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.7: College-educated women: Percentage of observations classified as having a career



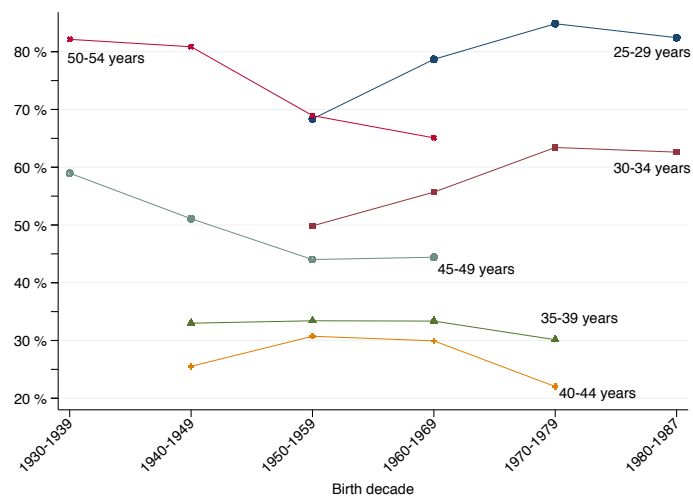
Notes: Cohort 1: born 1930-1939; cohort 2: 1940-1949; cohort 3: 1950-1959; cohort 4: 1960-1969; cohort 5: 1970-1979; cohort 6: 1980-87; 13,867 observations, 3,012 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.8: College-educated women: Percentage of observations without a cohabitation partner



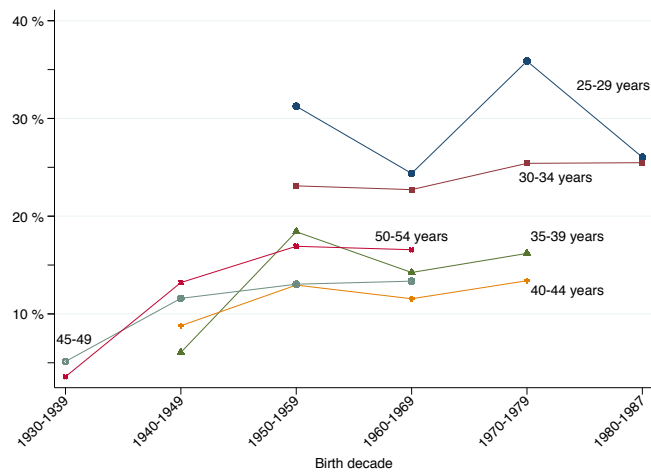
Notes: Cohort 1: born 1930-1939; cohort 2: 1940-1949; cohort 3: 1950-1959; cohort 4: 1960-1969; cohort 5: 1970-1979; cohort 6: 1980-87; 13,854 observations, 3,003 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.9: College-educated women: Percentage of observations without a family



Notes: Cohort 1: born 1930-1939; cohort 2: 1940-1949; cohort 3: 1950-1959; cohort 4: 1960-1969; cohort 5: 1970-1979; cohort 6: 1980-87; 13,936 observations, 3,020 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

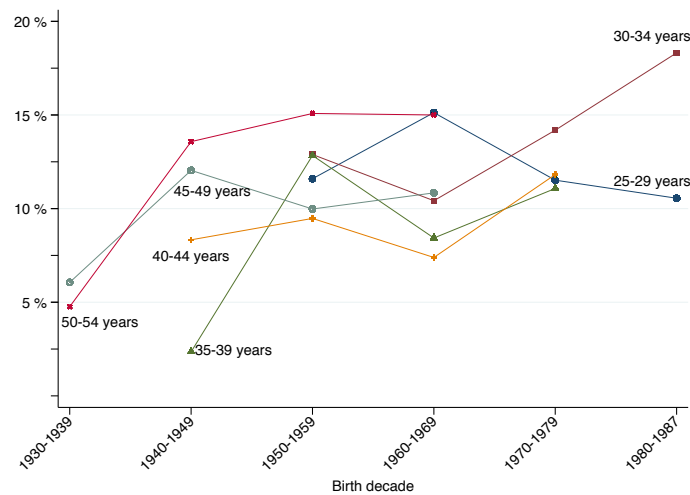
Figure B.10: College-educated women: Percentage of observations without minor child(ren) in the household



Notes: Cohort 1: born 1930-1939; cohort 2: 1940-1949; cohort 3: 1950-1959; cohort 4: 1960-1969; cohort 5: 1970-1979; cohort 6: 1980-87.

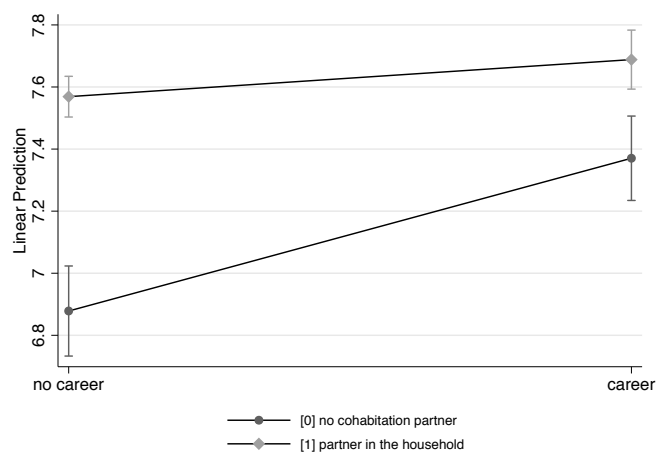
Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.11: Birth cohorts of West German college women: Percentage of woman-year observations classified as having a career and a cohabitation simultaneously



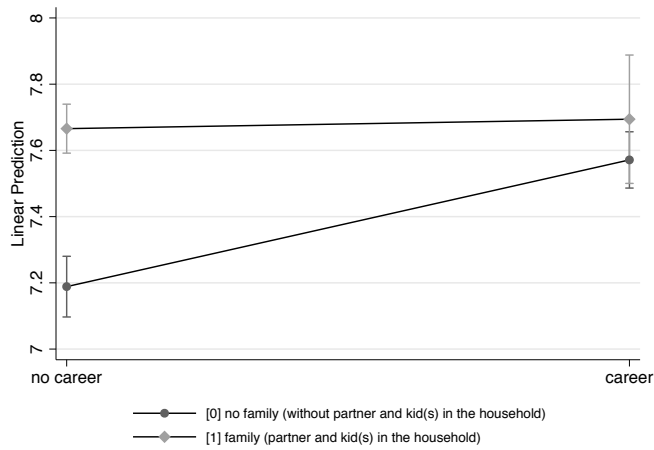
Notes: Cohort 1: born 1930-1939; cohort 2: 1940-1949; cohort 3: 1950-1959; cohort 4: 1960-1969; cohort 5: 1970-1979; cohort 6: 1980-87; 13,936 observations, 3,020 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.12: College-educated women: Percentage of observations classified as having a career and minor child(ren) in the household simultaneously



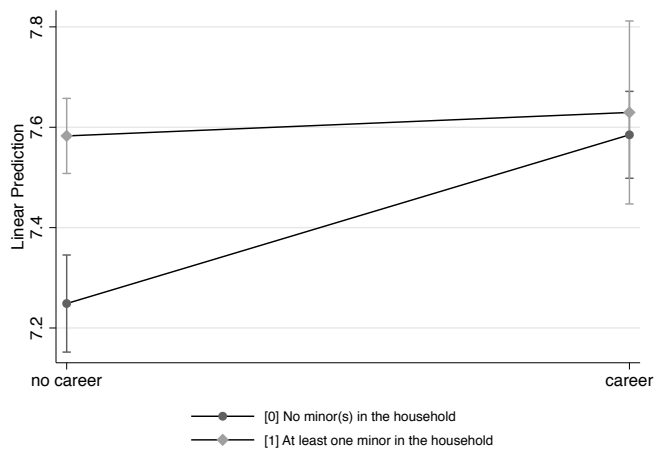
Notes: Predictive Margins with 95% CIs; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.13: Life satisfaction by career and cohabitation - graph of means



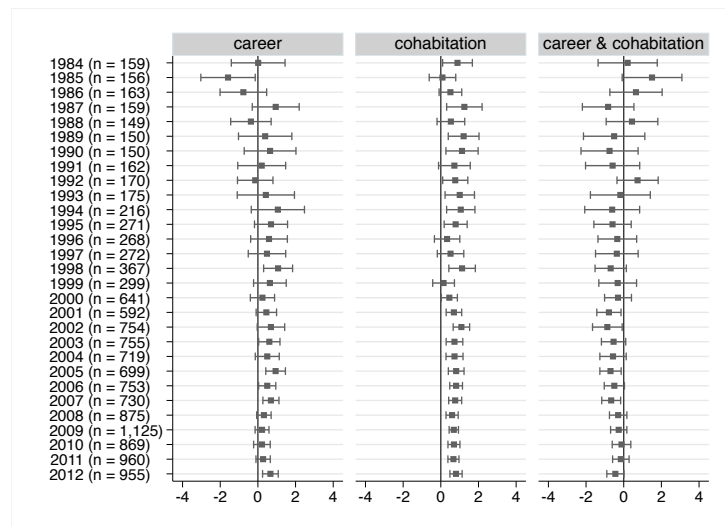
Notes: Predictive Margins with 95% CIs; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.14: Life satisfaction by career and family - graph of means



Notes: Predictive Margins with 95% CIs; Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

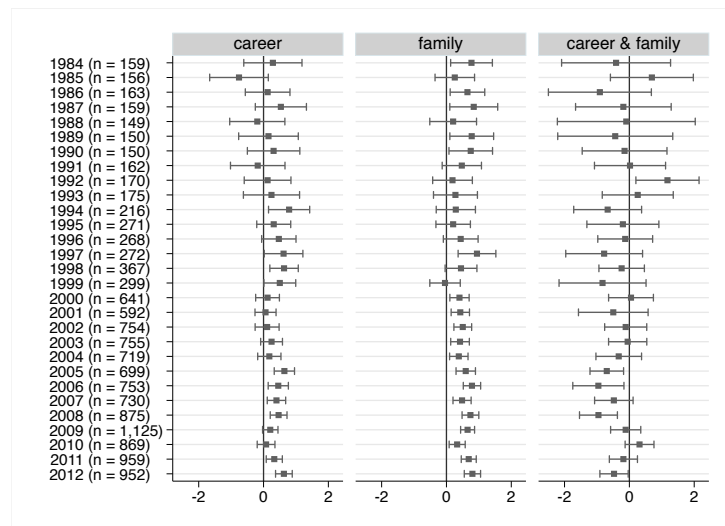
Figure B.15: Life satisfaction by career and minor child(ren) in the household - graph of means



Notes: OLS regressions are estimated for every year separately (with robust standard errors). The following control variables are included in all regressions: woman's age as a second order polynomial, migration background (dummy), indicator variables for birth cohort. Observation number in brackets; 95% CIs; 13,713 observations, 2,872 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

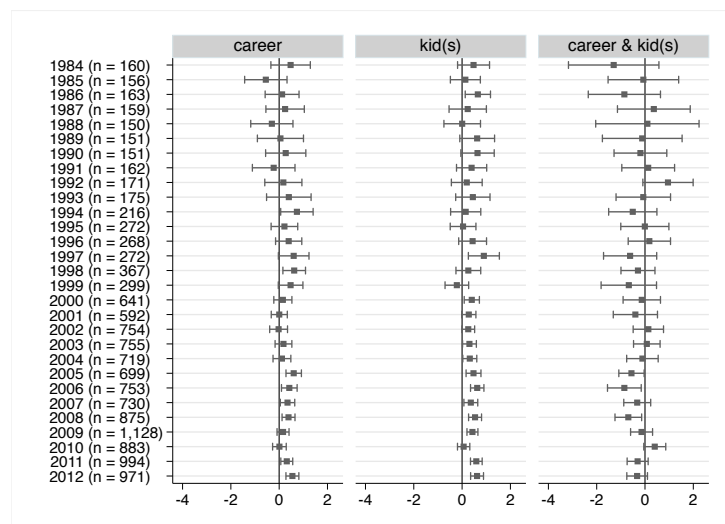
Figure B.16: Coefficients of career, cohabitation and the interaction term over time





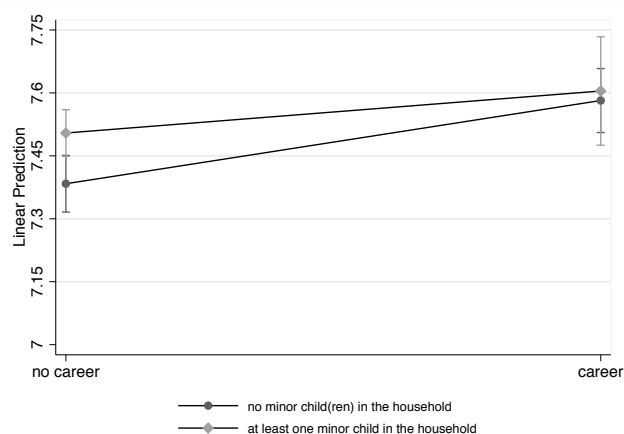
Notes: OLS regressions are estimated for every year separately (with robust standard errors). The following control variables are included in all regressions: woman's age as a second order polynomial, migration background (dummy), indicator variables for birth cohort. Observation number in brackets; 95% CIs; 13,709 observations, 2,872 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.17: Coefficients of career, family and the interaction term over time



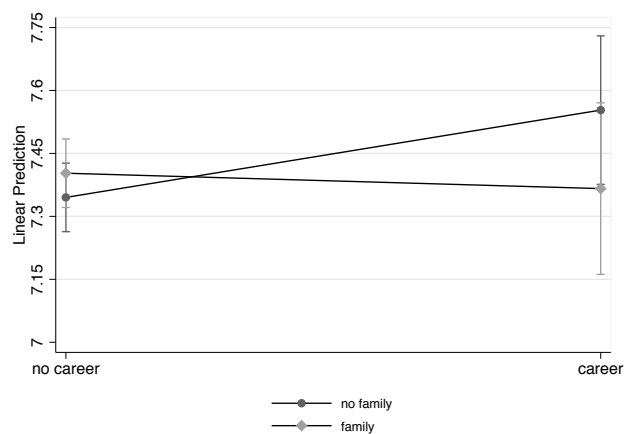
Notes: OLS regressions are estimated for every year separately (with robust standard errors). The following control variables are included in all regressions: woman's age as a second order polynomial, migration background (dummy), indicator variables for birth cohort. Observation number in brackets; 95% CIs; 13,789 observations, 2,888 women. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.18: Coefficients of career, minor child(ren) and the interaction term over time



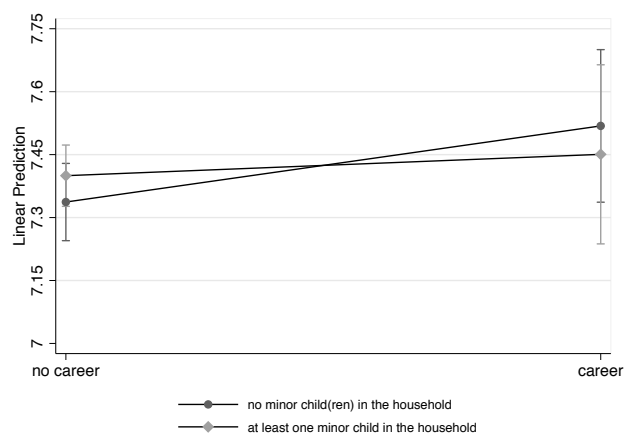
Notes: Adjusted predictions of career#child(ren) (see Panel C Column (1) of Appendix Table A.9 on page 25); predictive margins with 95% CIs. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.19: Life satisfaction by career and child(ren) in the household



Notes: Adjusted predictions of career#family (see Panel B Column (1) of Appendix Table A.10 on page 26); predictive margins with 95% CIs. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.20: Life satisfaction by career and family status for women over 40 years of age



Notes: Adjusted predictions of career#child(ren) (see Panel C Column (1) of Appendix Table A.10 on page 26); predictive margins with 95% CIs. Data: SOEPlong v29, pairfam 5.0, Welfare Surveys (1984, 1988, 1993, 1998)

Figure B.21: Life satisfaction by career and children for women over 40 years of age