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## Working Paper

# The survey on "Family Models in Germany" (FAMOD): A description of the data

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# The Survey on “Family Models in Germany” (FAMOD)

## A Description of the Data

Anja Steinbach,  
Sven A. Bocker and  
Lara Augustijn



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## Abstract

The FAMOD project, which is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), investigates the diversity of existing family models after separation or divorce in Germany. The project's aim is to provide detailed information about the living conditions of mothers, fathers, and children in different post-separation family configurations, namely in sole physical custody (SPC) and in joint physical custody (JPC) arrangements. Employing a multi-actor design, the survey closely examines the well-being of the individual family members in order to identify the potentials and challenges within a specific physical custody care arrangement. Because JPC families are still extremely rare in Germany (less than 1% of all families with minor children), this project is the first to collect data from a sufficient number of JPC families for detailed statistical analyses. Based on a quota sample, FAMOD provides data of 1,554 families in Germany (nuclear, SPC, and JPC families). This working paper contains a description of the sampling procedure, details about the process of data collection, and a benchmarking of selected core socio-demographic variables against the results from other German surveys.

**Keywords:** Data quality, FAMOD, joint physical custody, sampling, sole physical custody

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## 1 Introduction

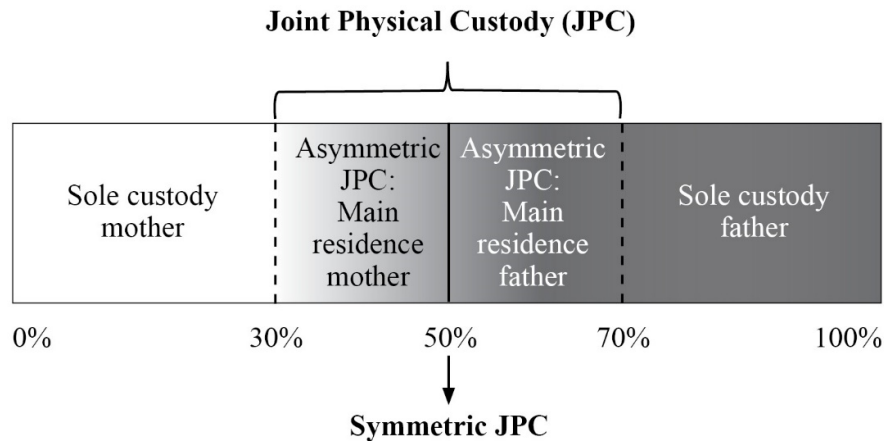
The main objective of the interdisciplinary research project “Family Models in Germany“ (FAMOD), which is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), is on the well-being of the individual family members living in different family models across Germany after a parental separation or divorce. Its special focus lies on joint physical custody (JPC) arrangements. Joint physical custody is a parental care arrangement in which children live with their biological parents about equally after separation or divorce. It is an increasingly common phenomenon in many Western countries, but not very widespread in Germany so far (Steinbach, 2019; Steinbach, Augustijn, & Corkadi, 2020). To account for the plurality of family forms, the study not only includes (formerly) married couples, but also (formerly) unmarried couples with minor children. In this respect, the survey closely examines the well-being of the individual family members (mothers, fathers, and children) in order to identify the specific potentials and challenges of a specific family form. The FAMOD study provides data on a total number of 1,554 families with children between the ages of 0 and 14 living in Germany. This working paper contains (1) a description of the sampling procedure, (2) details about the process of data collection, and (3) a benchmarking of selected key socio-demographic variables against the results from other surveys.

## 2 Design of the FAMOD Study and Sampling Procedure

FAMOD is the first German study that collected data from a substantial number of post-separation families practicing joint physical custody, therefore allowing a comparison of (symmetric and asymmetric) joint physical custody arrangements with both sole physical custody (SPC) arrangements and with nuclear families. Figure 1 gives an overview of the different types of physical custody arrangements in post-separation families, based on the percentage of time children spend in their father’s home. As represented in this figure, physical custody arrangements can be divided into five categories:

1. *Sole physical custody with the mother*: Children spend between 0 and 29% of their time in the father’s home.
2. *Asymmetric joint physical custody with the main residence at the mother’s home*: Children spend between 30 and 49% of their time in the father’s home.
3. *Symmetric joint physical custody*: Children spend 50% of their time in the mother’s home and 50% of their time in the father’s home.
4. *Asymmetric joint physical custody with the main residence at the father’s home*: Children spend between 51 and 70% of their time in the father’s home.
5. *Sole physical custody with the father*: Children spend between 71 and 100% of their time in the father’s home.



**Figure 1: Physical Custody Arrangements by Time Children Spend in their Fathers' Home**

Based on: Meyer, Cancian, and Cook (2017, p. 502)

The envisaged sample was to consist of a total of 1,500 families. With regard to family form, the sample was to include 600 families practicing sole physical custody (children spending less than 30% of their time with one of their parents), 600 families practicing joint physical custody (children spending between 30% and 50% percent of their time with each of their parents), and 300 nuclear families. Furthermore, the envisaged sample was to include families with children from two different age groups: 0 to 6 years and 7 to 14 years. Another eligibility requirement for inclusion in the study sample was that the children in post-separation families had to have contact with both of their biological parents. The study design, realized number and distribution of cases can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: FAMOD Study Design, Realized Numbers and Distribution of Cases**

	Child's Age	
	0-6 years	7-14 years
<b>Family Form</b>		
Sole physical custody	307	315
Joint physical custody	302	309
Nuclear family	161	160
<b>Sample (n)</b>	<b>1,554 families</b>	

Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD)

The FAMOD study was conceptualized as a multi-actor design that considered four groups of respondents:

1. *Anchor*: An individual was considered as an anchor respondent if he or she had at least one biological child under the age of 15 who was living in the same household as the anchor respondent and if this child was officially registered at the anchor respondent's household. The anchor was interviewed using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).
2. *Target child*: If the child who was selected during the anchor interview was older than 6 years, a child interview was conducted using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). If more than one child could have been selected as a target child, the selection of the target child was based on two criteria. First, children in joint physical custody were preferred to children in sole physical custody, and children in sole physical custody were preferred to children in nuclear families. Second, the interviewer was supposed to select the youngest child.
3. *Partner*: If the anchor had a partner who was living in the same household (i.e., the biological parent in case of nuclear families, or a stepparent in case of post-separation families), this person was interviewed by means of a paper-and-pencil questionnaire (PAPI).
4. *Ex-partner*: In the case of post-separation families, the other biological parent of the target child was interviewed using a paper-and-pencil questionnaire (PAPI).

The majority of the survey instruments (CAPI and PAPI) that have been employed in the FAMOD study were based on items and scales from other family-related surveys (e.g., pairfam, GGP, HBSC), in particular surveys with a focus on separated or divorced families (e.g., Divorce in Flanders, New Families in the Netherlands, Families in Norway). The following lists for anchor, child, partner, and ex-partner respondents give an overview of topics covered by the FAMOD study. However, for detailed information on all instruments, the wording of items, and answering scales see the data and codebooks of FAMOD on the GESIS website ([https://search.gesis.org/research\\_data/ZA6849](https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA6849)) (Steinbach & Helms, 2020).

1. *Anchor*: Physical, psychological, social, and cognitive well-being of the target child; attitudes and values; socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., age, employment, income); household structure; characteristics and arrangement of the current partnership or single life; own physical, psychological, and social well-being; separation/divorce and former partnership; legal and physical custody arrangements; contact and relationship quality with the other biological parent of the target child; relationships between different family members (mother, father, child, new partner); time use and division of household labor; life satisfaction.

2. *Target child*: School/education; subjective assessment of the financial situation of the family; parental separation/divorce; interparental conflicts (retrospective and current); participation in housework; relationship quality with both biological parents, with the parents' new partners (i.e., stepparents), and with biological, half-, and stepsiblings.
3. *Partner*: Attitudes and values; socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., age, employment, income); characteristics and arrangement of the current partnership; own physical, psychological, and social well-being; relationships between different family members (mother, father, child, new partner).
4. *Ex-partner*: Attitudes and values; socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., age, employment, income); own physical, psychological, and social well-being; separation/divorce and former partnership; contact and relationship quality with the other biological parent of the target child; characteristics and arrangement of the current partnership or single-life; relationships between different family members (mother, father, child, new partner).

In order to include a sufficient number of joint physical custody families in the study, a quota sampling method was used. A random sample based on the residents' registration offices was not possible because the need for screening interviews in the context of an extremely low prevalence of JPC families would have been much too expensive (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 10). Thus, access to the respondents was established through experienced interviewers who were working with the survey institute Kantar Public, Munich, and who were previously engaged in other German surveys collecting data from parents and children. Based on the quota requirements (see Table 1), interviewers of all ages and working all over Germany were asked to report suitable families. In total, 232 interviewers were working for the FAMOD study, with one interviewer conducting an average of 6 to 7 interviews (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 13). Data collection took place between July 2019 and January 2020.

To compensate the respondents for their participation in the survey, monetary incentives were used. For each interview, anchor respondents received 10 euros and children received 5 euros (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 12f.). For anchors, the average length of an interview was 56 minutes; for children, the average length was 32 minutes (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 20f.). The questionnaires for partners encompassed 14 pages, and the questionnaires for ex-partners encompassed 21 pages. Before the actual survey took place, all instruments were tested comprehensively by the FAMOD project team and by Kantar Public (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 12).

In addition to the anchor interviews (n=1,554), children between the ages of 7 and 14 were interviewed in order to gather information about the children's self-assessment of their living conditions. The participation of children was optional for the inclusion of a

family in the survey. Nevertheless, the participation rate was satisfactory. Of the 785 families with children aged between 7 and 14, a total number of 670 children (85%) were interviewed (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 17f.). Furthermore, out of the 951 anchors who reported to have a partner, 533 partners participated in the FAMOD study (56%) (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 18f.). Among those partners for whom anchor respondents gave Kantar Public permission to contact (70%), the participation rate was 81%. However, in the 1,234 post-separation families in which the target child did not live with both of his or her parents, many fewer anchors (n=436) consented to an interview of the target child's other biological parent (35%) (Brix & Wich, 2020, p. 19f.). Out of this pool of ex-partners that Kantar Public was allowed to contact, 279 persons participated in the survey (64%).

Table 2 compares the distribution of FAMOD respondents across German federal states with the geographic distribution of the population as reported by the Federal Statistical Office. Whereas most of the German federal states were adequately covered in the FAMOD sample, there were also some deviations. For example, residents from Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bavaria were somewhat underrepresented, whereas residents from North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony were slightly overrepresented in the sample.

**Table 2: Geographical Distribution of the Population Across German Federal States and in the FAMOD Sample**

	Proportion Destatis (%)	Proportion FAMOD (%)	Difference (%)
Baden-Wuerttemberg	13.3	8.6	-4.8
Bavaria	15.8	9.1	-6.7
Belin	4.4	5.5	0.8
Brandenburg	3.0	3.4	0.3
Bremen	0.8	0.6	-0.2
Hamburg	2.2	3.2	0.9
Hesse	7.6	4.9	-2.7
Mecklenburg Western Pomerania	1.9	3.2	1.3
Lower Saxony	9.6	10.8	1.1
North Rhine Westphalia	21.6	26.5	4.9
Rhineland Palatinate	4.9	3.0	-2.0
Saarland	1.2	1.1	-0.1
Saxony	4.9	9.1	4.2
Saxony-Anhalt	2.7	3.8	1.1
Schleswig-Holstein	2.5	4.4	0.9
Thuringa	2.6	3.5	0.9

Note: Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2020), December 31, 2018

### 3 Benchmarking FAMOD Data Against Other German Surveys

To assess the data quality of the FAMOD study, a comparison with three other German surveys was conducted. Due to the (non-random) sampling design of FAMOD, confidence intervals could not be used for comparisons. Thus, the distributions of selected key socio-demographic characteristics from the FAMOD study were compared with the distributions of the corresponding characteristics in other German surveys. Although there are many large-scale data sets available for Germany, very few surveys were suitable for comparison. Most surveys proved unsuitable because either they did not include sufficient case numbers in the specific subgroups under consideration (separated or divorced families with minor children) or they did not include the relevant characteristics.<sup>1</sup> Taken together, three recent German surveys were considered:

- The “ALLBUS 2016” (“Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften” [*German General Social Survey*]), a data set that is representative for the general population of Germany (Bauernschuster et al., 2018).
- The “AID:A I” study (“Aufwachsen in Deutschland: Alltagswelten I” [*Growing Up in Germany I*]), a survey that focuses on families with a sample that is representative for children, youths, and adults between the ages of 0 and 55. It therefore allows “for the analysis of social facts from the perspective of the respective age group” (Pötter, 2012, p. 1).
- A survey on separated and divorced parents in Germany of the Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research (“Getrennt gemeinsam erziehen” [*Raising Children Separately Together*]) that includes 603 mothers and fathers and is representative for separated or divorced parents with minor children in Germany (Allensbach, 2017).

The comparison of the FAMOD survey with these other three German data sets focused on the anchor respondents’ ages, their educational levels, their personal net income, their household net income, their self-rated health, and their number of children. As the anchor respondents in the FAMOD survey were defined as the parent to whom the child was officially registered, the anchor respondents were mostly mothers (86%). As a result, women were clearly overrepresented in the FAMOD sample.

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<sup>1</sup> There are various reasons why other German data sets could not be used for comparison. For instance, the data from the Generations and Gender Survey (GG5) was too old (Wave 1: 2005; Wave 2: 2008). The birth-cohort sample design of the German Family Panel (pairfam) made it impossible to compare the sample with the FAMOD sample. Additionally, panel attrition was a problem because the first wave was conducted in 2008/09 (<https://www.pairfam.de/en/data/samples/>). The same held true for the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP). It could not be used because of its longitudinal design and the associated problems of selection.

### 3.1 FAMOD vs. ALLBUS 2016 (German General Social Survey)

The German General Social Survey (ALLBUS) is a survey of the adult population of Germany over the age of 17 that is conducted every two years. Data is collected on a wide range of topics, including the respondents' attitudes, their behaviors, and their values. ALLBUS uses a two-staged and disproportionately stratified random sample. The data set for 2016 included 3,490 respondents (Bauernschuster et al., 2018). To maximize the comparability of the FAMOD sample and the ALLBUS sample, a subset was created for the ALLBUS 2016. All respondents who reported to have no children living in the same household were excluded from the sample. This reduced the sample to 807 respondents. Subsequently, respondents were excluded from the analysis if not at least one of the children in the household was under the age of 15. Thus, the final analytical ALLBUS sample included a total number of 614 respondents. We compared the FAMOD (n=1,554) and ALLBUS 2016 respondents' ages, their educational levels, their health, their personal net income, and their household net income.

#### 3.1.1 Age

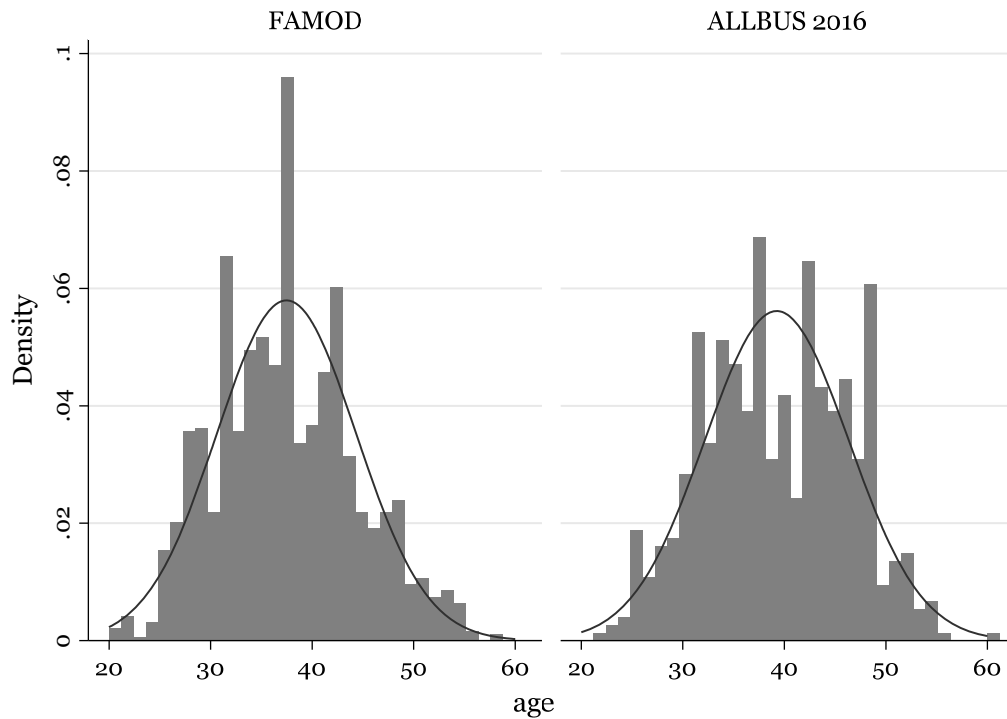
A comparison of the age distributions in FAMOD and ALLBUS 2016 revealed that both samples were more or less normally distributed. Figure 2 further suggests that both surveys were comparable in terms of age structure. Moreover, the mean values and standard deviations in both surveys were also very similar:

- Age ALLBUS 2016 (weighted) mean: 39.4; SD: 7.2
- Age ALLBUS 2016 (unweighted) mean: 39.3; SD: 7.2
- Age FAMOD mean: 37.5; SD: 7.0

The mean age in the FAMOD data was only about 2 years below the mean age of the ALLBUS, and the difference in the standard deviations was relatively small between the two surveys. Weighting the data of the ALLBUS did not lead to any significant changes with regard to the results for mean values and standard deviations. Consequently, the age distribution in the FAMOD study and ALLBUS study appeared very similar.



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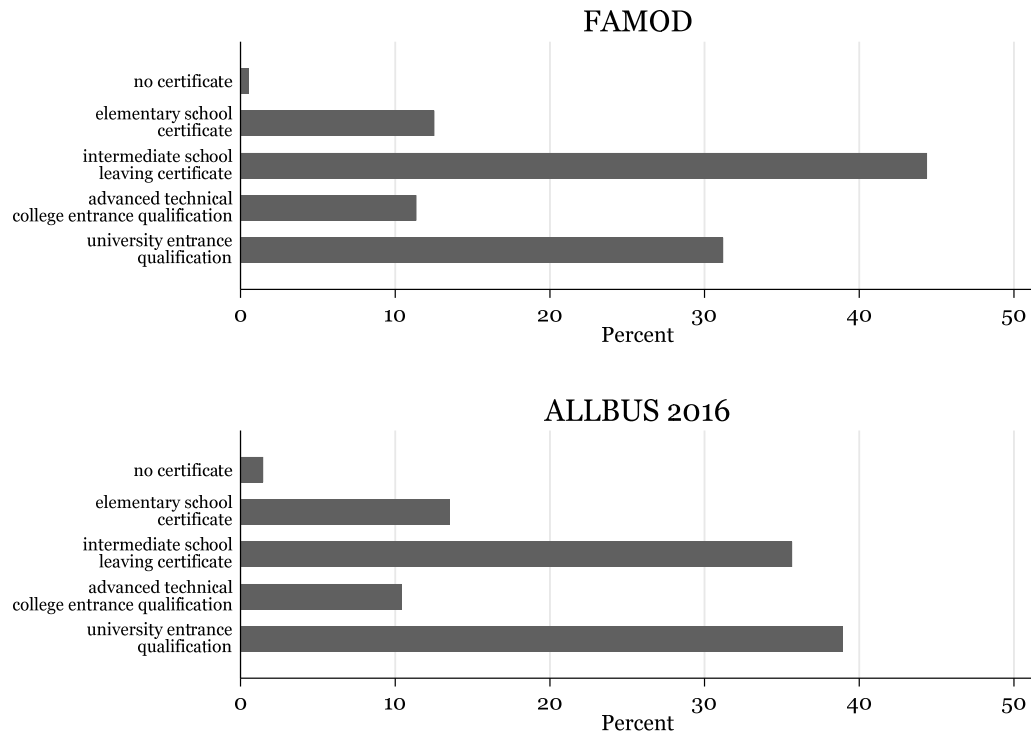
**Figure 2: The Distribution of Sample Population Age in FAMOD and ALLBUS 2016**



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**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and ALLBUS 2016**

### 3.1.2 Education

For a comparison of the respondents' educational levels, the highest general school leaving certificate was used (1 = "no certificate"; 2 = "elementary school certificate"; 3 = "intermediate school leaving certificate"; 4 = "advanced technical college entrance qualification"; and 5 = "university entrance qualification"). The results of the analysis showed that the respondents' educational levels in FAMOD and ALLBUS were very similar (see Figure 3). Overall, the frequencies were in a comparable range (except for smaller deviations regarding the intermediate school leaving certificate and the general qualification for university entrance).

**Figure 3: The Distribution of Education in FAMOD and ALLBUS 2016**

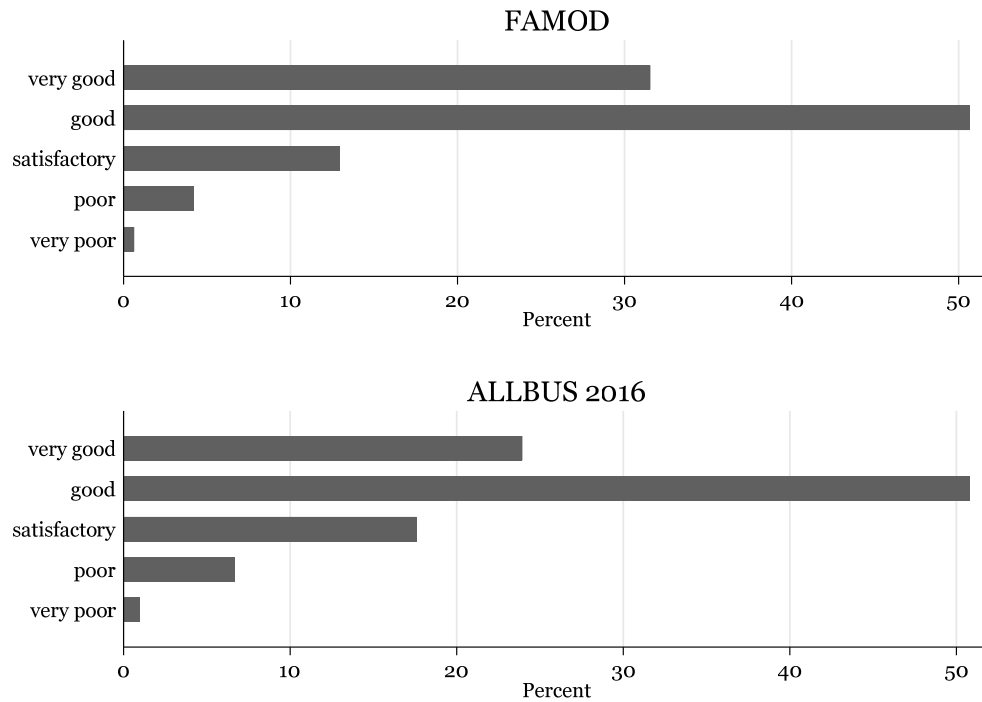
**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and ALLBUS 2016**

### 3.1.3 Health

The respondents' self-rated health was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "very good" to 5 = "very poor" in both surveys. The distribution differed only slightly between FAMOD and ALLBUS. The descriptive statistics indicated good comparability of both surveys with regard to the mean values and standard deviations:

- Health ALLBUS 2016 (weighted) mean: 2.1; SD: 0.9
- Health ALLBUS 2016 (unweighted) mean: 2.1; SD: 0.9
- Health FAMOD mean: 1.9; SD: 0.8

Figure 4 reveals that more than 90% of the respondents in both samples placed themselves in the top three categories, whereas the proportion of respondents who reported to feel "poor" or "very poor" in terms of health was overall low. However, in the FAMOD sample a significantly higher proportion of respondents (difference of about 7.5 percentage points) classified themselves in the top health category.

**Figure 4: The Distribution of Health in FAMOD and ALLBUS 2016**

**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and ALLBUS 2016**

### 3.1.4 Personal Net Income per Month

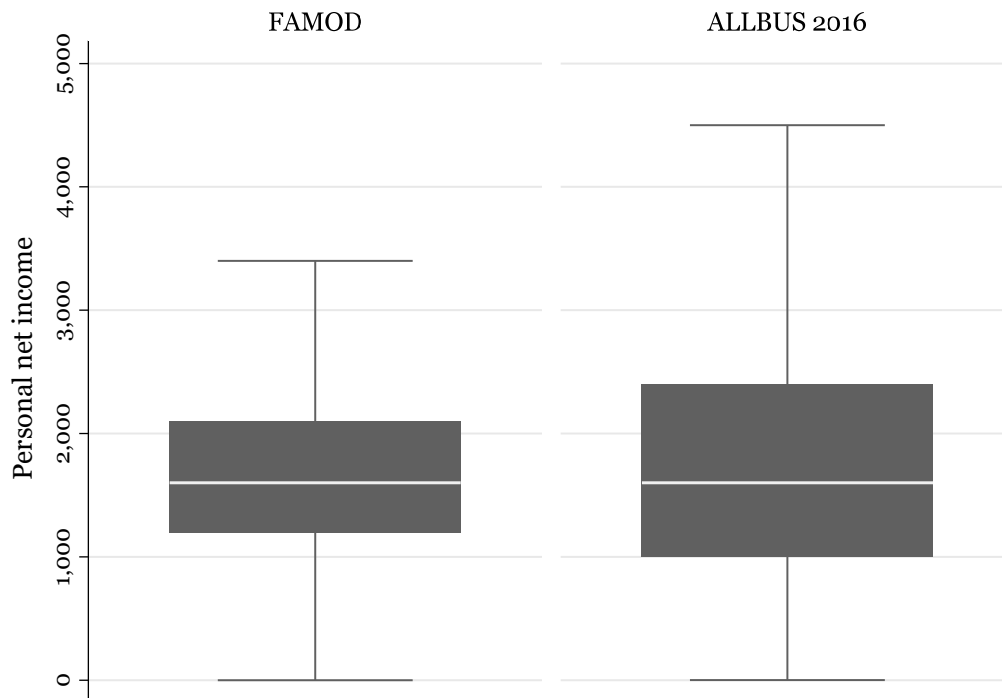
In a next step, the personal net income per month (after the deduction of taxes and social security contributions) of the respondents in FAMOD and ALLBUS was compared.

- Personal net income per month ALLBUS 2016 (weighted) mean: € 1995.3; SD: 1408,9
- Personal net income per month ALLBUS 2016 (unweighted) mean: € 1949.5; SD: 1359.7
- Personal net income per month FAMOD mean: € 1715.8; SD: 902.6

The descriptive results showed that the respondents' average personal net income was somewhat lower in the FAMOD sample than in the ALLBUS sample (both in the weighted and the unweighted sample). Furthermore, the boxplot displayed in Figure 5 for the personal net income shows that the dispersion was significantly lower in FAMOD. For example, the area of the first to third quartiles in the FAMOD study was considerably

narrower than in ALLBUS. At the same time, average personal net income was about 250 euros lower in the FAMOD study.

**Figure 5: Distribution of Personal Net Income per Month in FAMOD and ALLBUS 2016**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and ALLBUS 2016**

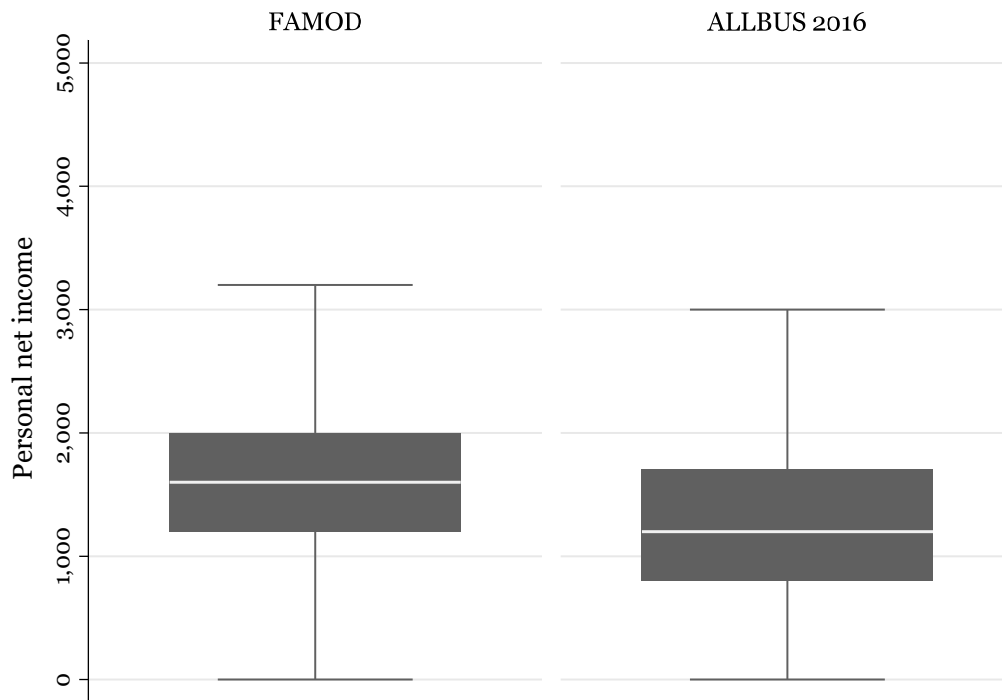
Because there was a significantly higher proportion of women in the FAMOD sample, and because it can be expected that the average personal income may differ between men and women, the analysis was repeated with two subsamples that consisted only of women:

- Personal net income per month (for women) ALLBUS 2016 (weighted) mean: € 1308.7; SD: 769.7
- Personal net income per month (for women) ALLBUS 2016 (unweighted) mean: € 1306.0; SD: 776.1
- Personal net income per month (for women) FAMOD mean: € 1653.6; SD: 895.2

After excluding men from the sample, the mean values for the personal net income per month changed noticeably in both surveys. A comparison of the descriptive statistics

showed that the personal net income of women in the FAMOD sample was in fact higher than in the ALLBUS sample. The boxplot in Figure 6 further demonstrates that the FAMOD sample included women with a significantly higher income compared to the women in the ALLBUS sample.

**Figure 6: Distribution of Personal Net Income per Month for Women in FAMOD and ALLBUS 2016**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and ALLBUS 2016**

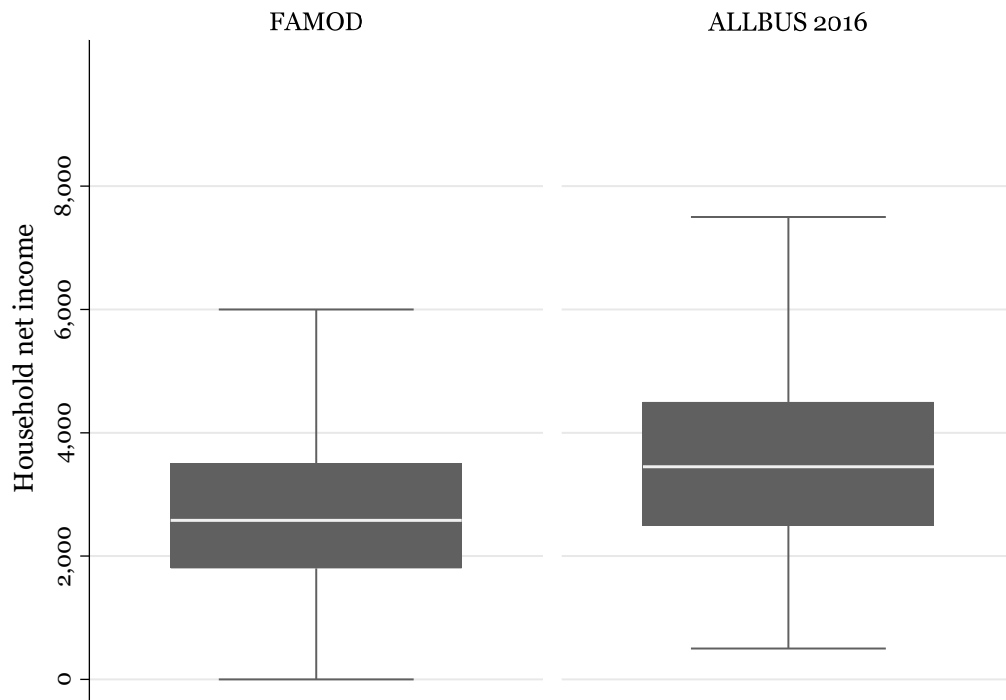
### 3.1.5 Household Net Income per Month

Like the personal net income per month, the average household net income per month was also significantly higher in the ALLBUS sample than in the FAMOD sample.

- Household net income per month ALLBUS 2016 (weighted) mean € 3653.0; SD: 1798.4
- Household net income per month ALLBUS 2016 (unweighted) mean € 3576.2; SD: 1754.2
- Household net income per month FAMOD mean: € 2828.1; SD: 1715.3

The difference between the two samples amounted to 700-800 euros. However, this disparity was relatively minor given the standard deviation of 1715 to 1798 euros (see Figure 7). Moreover, the mean values for the personal net income per month were much more heterogeneous than in the case of the other characteristics considered so far.

**Figure 7: Distribution of Household Net Income per Month in FAMOD and ALLBUS 2016**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and ALLBUS 2016**



## 3.2 FAMOD vs. AID:A I (Growing Up in Germany)

The “Growing up in Germany” (AID:A I) study of the German Youth Institute (Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V., DJI) is a survey that was conducted in 2009 with more than 25,000 respondents between the ages of 0 and 55 (Deutsches Jugendinstitut (DJI) & Bundesministerium für Familie, 2012). The random sample was stratified by age, mainly to obtain sufficient numbers of children, adolescents, and young adults. However, this approach implied that the households in the survey were not representative for the general German population. To correct these unequal selection probabilities, it is necessary to weight the sample with design weights, which were adjusted to the population projection of the Federal Statistical Office (Pötter, 2012). The disproportionate sample in AIDA I resulted in an overrepresentation of younger cohorts. For a better comparison of the FAMOD and the AID:A I study, all respondents aged between 0 and 17 were deleted from the AID:A I sample. Furthermore, respondents were excluded if they did not have at least one child under the age of 15 who was living in the same household. Additionally, 7 cases in the FAMOD sample were excluded because the respondents were older than 55 years so as to match the age structure of the AID:A I subset (18-55 years). Thus, the final analytical sample of FAMOD included 1,543 observations and the final analytical sample of AID:A I consisted of 2,949 observations. The socio-demographic characteristics that were compared between the two surveys are the respondents’ ages, their health, their personal net income, their household net income, and their number of children.

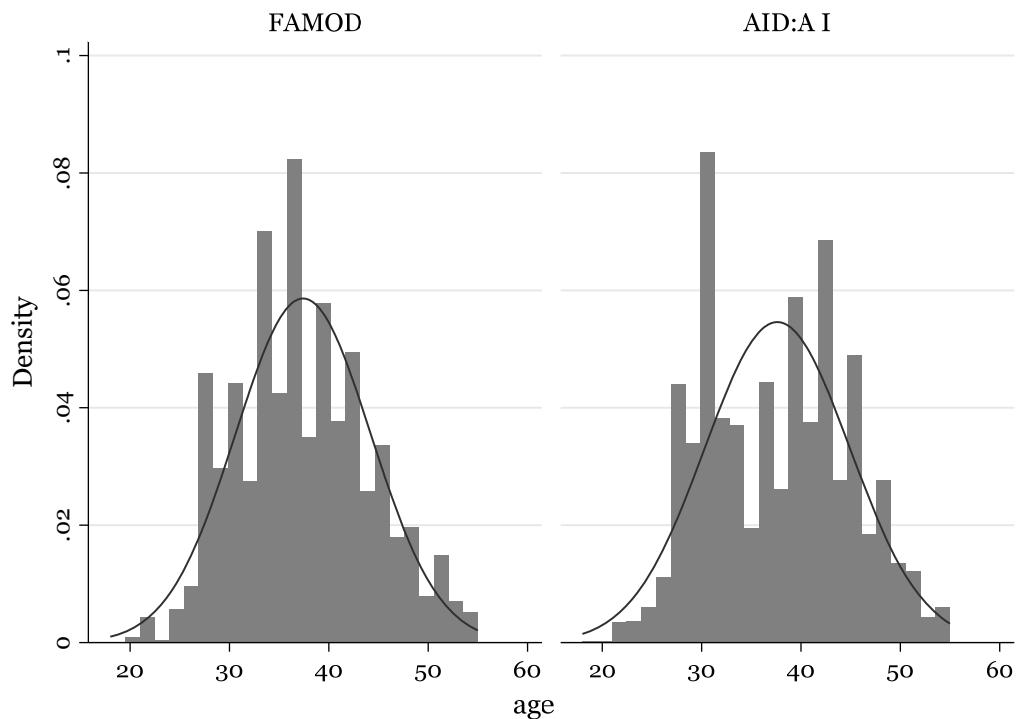
### 3.2.1 Age

The descriptive statistics for the respondents’ ages in the FAMOD sample and the AID:A I sample were:

- Age AID:A I (weighted) mean: 39.7; SD: 6.4
- Age AID:A I (unweighted) mean: 37.6; SD: 7.3
- Age FAMOD mean: 37.4; SD: 6.8

The mean age in the FAMOD study was slightly lower than the weighted mean age in AID:A I, whereas the standard deviations were quite similar. After the AID:A I data set was weighted, the mean values converged. A comparison of the age distribution between FAMOD and AID:A I in Figure 8 further indicates a basic similarity regarding the age distribution, with both surveys showing a relatively normal distribution.

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**Figure 8: The Distribution of Age in FAMOD and AID:A I**



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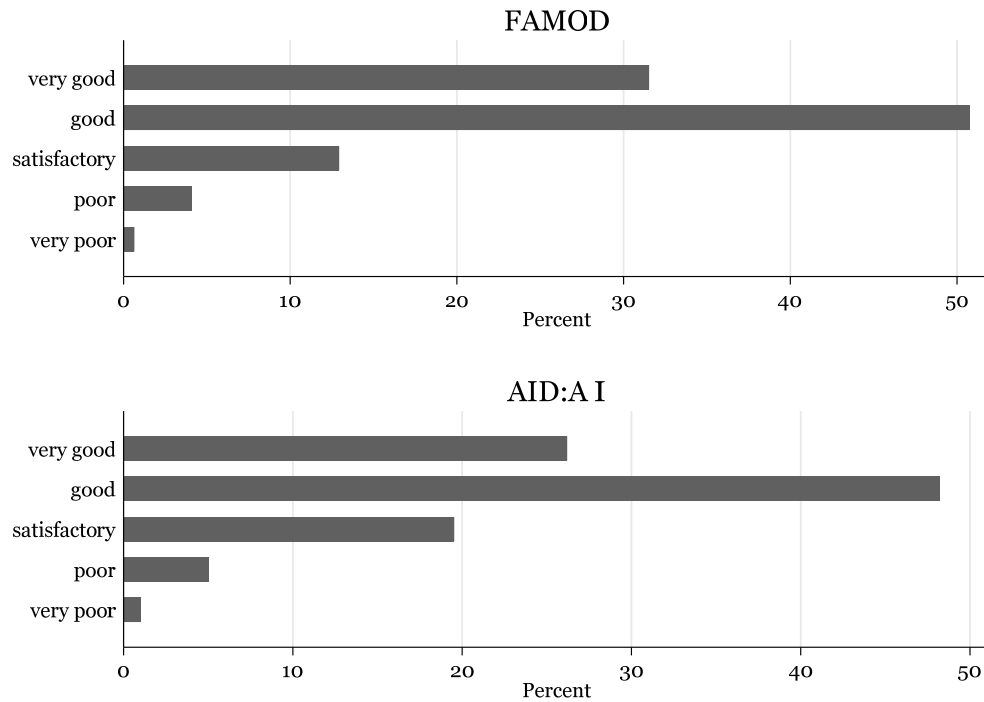
**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and AID:A I**

### 3.2.2 Health

A comparison of the distribution of health (1 = “very good” to 5 = “very poor”) between FAMOD and AID:A I showed great similarities between the two surveys:

- Health AID:A I (weighted) mean 2.1; SD: 0.9
- Health AID:A I (unweighted) mean: 2.1; SD: 0.9
- Health FAMOD mean: 1.9; SD: 0.8

Figure 9 demonstrates that the frequencies were almost identical in all response categories. However, in the FAMOD sample, a higher percentage of respondents described themselves as having “very good” health (difference of about 5 percentage points), whereas a higher percentage of the respondents in the AID:A I study reported that their health was merely “satisfactory” (difference of about 5 percentage points). Consequently, the health of the respondents in the FAMOD sample was slightly better than in the AID:A I sample.

**Figure 9: Distribution of Health in FAMOD and AID:A I**

**Note:** Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and AID:A I

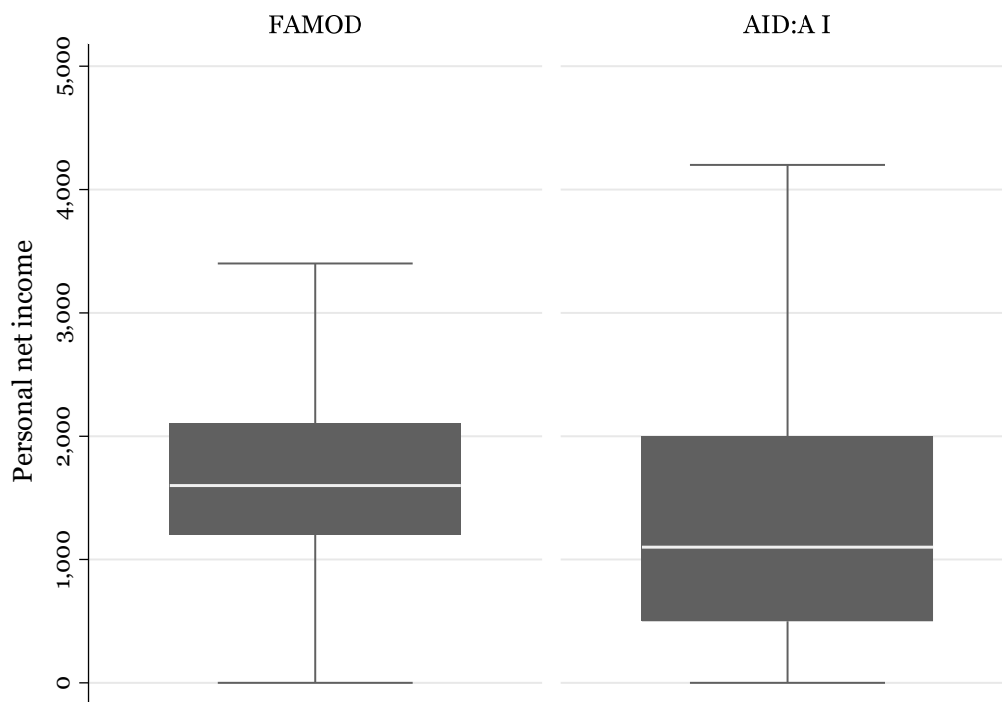
### 3.2.3 Personal Net Income per Month

Compared to the AID:A I sample, the average personal net income per month (after the deduction of taxes and including government transfers) in the FAMOD sample was noticeably higher, and the standard deviation in FAMOD was half as large as in AID:A I:

- Personal net income per month AID:A I (weighted) mean: € 1590.3; SD: 1704.5
- Personal net income per month AID:A I (unweighted) mean: € 1481.1; SD: 1617.2
- Personal net income per month FAMOD mean: € 1712.1; SD: 898.5

The weighting of the data in the AID:A I sample led to an increase in personal net income and in variance. However, the respondents' personal net income remained, on average, lower than the personal net income in FAMOD. This was also reflected by a graphical comparison of the income distributions. Figure 10 demonstrates that the box (Q25-Q75) for the FAMOD sample was significantly higher than for AID:A I, and that the FAMOD sample was more homogenous in terms of the respondents' personal net income per month.

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**Figure 10: Distribution of Personal Net Income per Month in FAMOD and AID:A I**


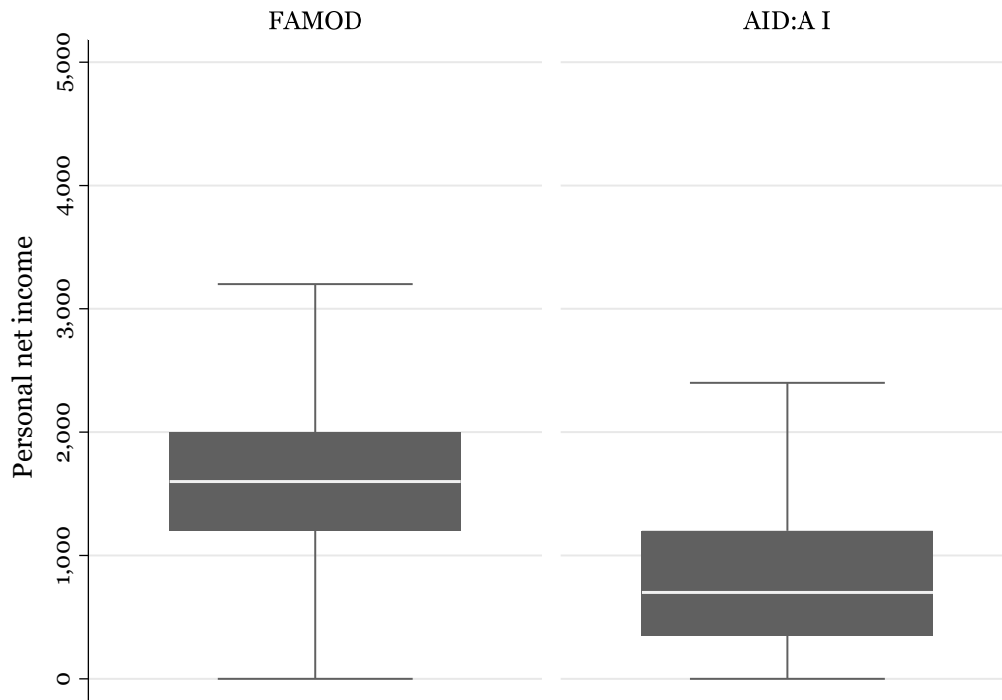

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**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and AID:A I**

As done in the comparison of the FAMOD and ALLBUS samples, the analysis for the personal net income per month was replicated for a subsample that consisted exclusively of women:

- Personal net income per month (for women) AID:A I (unweighted) mean: € 862.3; SD: 797.1
- Personal net income per month (for women) AID:A I (weighted) mean: € 904.4; SD: 819.0
- Personal net income per month (for women) FAMOD mean: € 1652.4; SD: 895.5

This approach led to an even larger difference in the personal net income between the respondents in FAMOD and AID:A. On average, women in the FAMOD sample were found to earn almost twice as much as the women in the AID:A sample. However, the standard deviations were more similar, which is plausible, considering that there were no income differences between men and women in the AID:A I sample.

**Figure 11: Distribution of Personal Net Income per Month for Women in FAMOD and AID:A I**

**Note:** Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and AID:A I

### 3.2.4 Household Net Income per Month

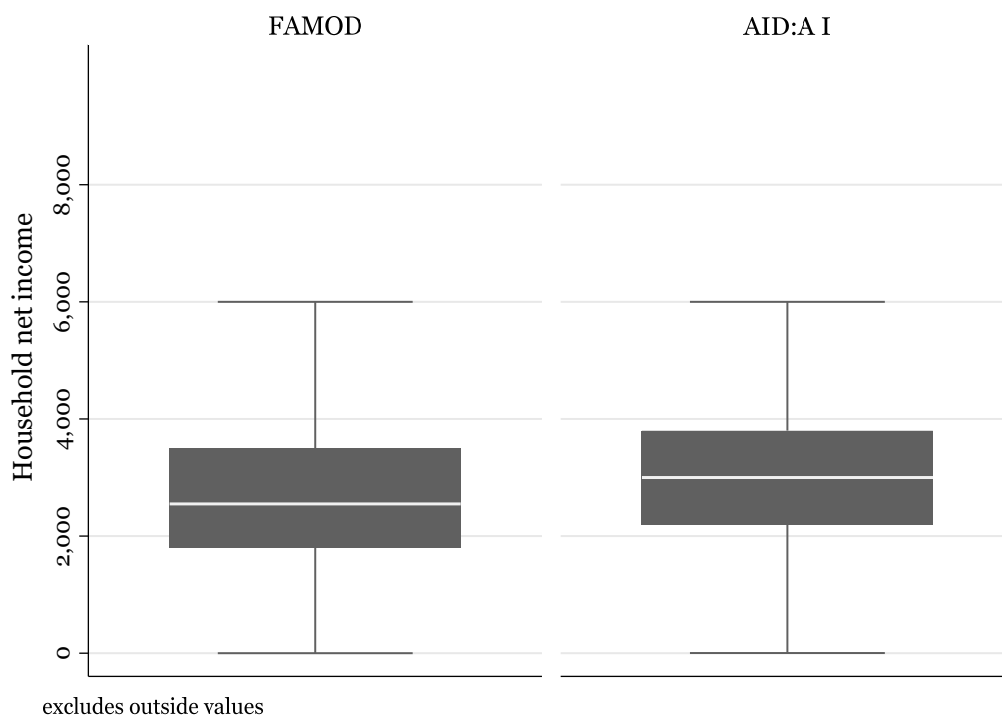
The results for the household net income per month (after the deduction of taxes and including government transfers) were comparable to the results for the personal net income per month.

- Household net income per month AID:A I (unweighted) mean: € 3246.4; SD: 2438.9
- Household net income per month AID:A I (weighted) mean: € 3407.6; SD: 2594.6
- Household net income per month FAMOD mean: € 2825.5; SD: 1715.7

According to the descriptive statistics, the respondents' average household net income per month in the AID:A I was noticeably higher than the monthly household net income in the FAMOD study. Figure 12 further shows that the overall dispersion was somewhat greater for the AID:A I sample (the box was primarily between 2200 and 4,000 euros;

the median was 3000 euros). In contrast, respondents in FAMOD had the first quartile at 1,800 euros and the third quartile at 3,500 euros.

**Figure 12: Distribution of Household Net Income per Month in FAMOD and AID:A I**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and AID:A I**

### 3.2.5 Number of Children per Parent

The descriptive statistics for the number of children per parent revealed small differences between the FAMOD sample and the AID:A I sample.

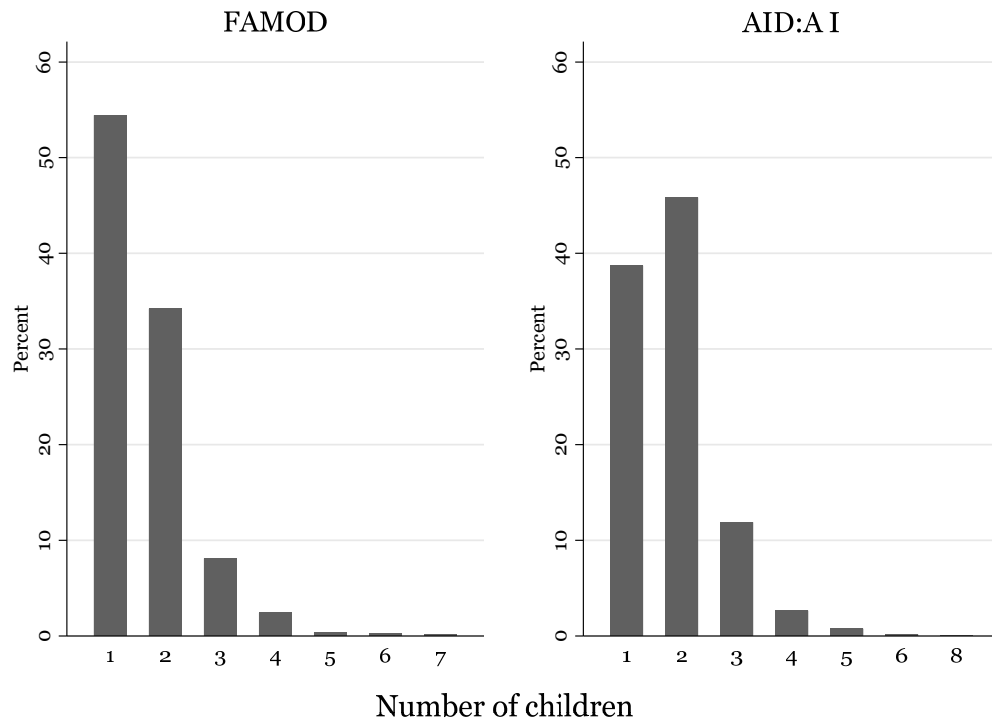
- Number of children AID:A I (weighted) mean: 1.9; SD: 0.8
- Number of children AID:A I (unweighted) mean: 1.8; SD: 0.8
- Number of children FAMOD mean 1.6; SD: 0.8

The average number of children per parent in FAMOD was slightly lower than in AID:A I, although the differences were not large. As displayed in Figure 13, 38% of the respondents in the AID:A I sample had one child, whereas 45% of the respondents had two children, and 12% had three children. In the FAMOD sample, the distribution differed noticeably, with 54% of the respondents having one child, 34% having two children, and



only 8% having three children. However, the results also showed that in both samples, approximately 95% of the respondents reported having not more than three children.

**Figure 13: Distribution of the Number of Children (per Parent) in FAMOD and AID:A I**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and AID:A I**

### 3.3 FAMOD vs. Allensbach Study (Raising Children Separately Together)

In 2017, the Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research (IfD) conducted the study “Getrennt gemeinsam erziehen” [*Raising Children Separately Together*] on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). The main objective was to examine how parenting is shared between mothers and fathers in post-separation families (Allensbach, 2017). Another focus of the survey was on the living conditions of parents after family dissolution. Sampling of the respondents took place in two stages. In a first step, 1,400 persons were interviewed as part of a multi-topic survey that was representative for the German resident population above the age of 15. Conducting a screening for separated or divorced parents, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they had ever separated or divorced from a partner with whom they had minor children at the time of the separation or divorce, and how old these children were at the time of the survey (Allensbach, 2017, p. 4). In a second step, 603 personal interviews with the selected respondents were conducted. Thus, the target population of the Allensbach study consisted of separated or divorced parents with minor children. For the present analysis, all respondents above the age of 55 were excluded from the analytical samples of both surveys. Furthermore, to be able to compare the FAMOD and the Allensbach sample, nuclear families in the FAMOD study were excluded from the sample. This approach reduced the FAMOD sample to 1,225 respondents in post-separation families. The Allensbach sample consisted of 585 respondents. Thus, it was possible to compare the respondents’ ages, their educational levels, their personal net income, and their number of children.

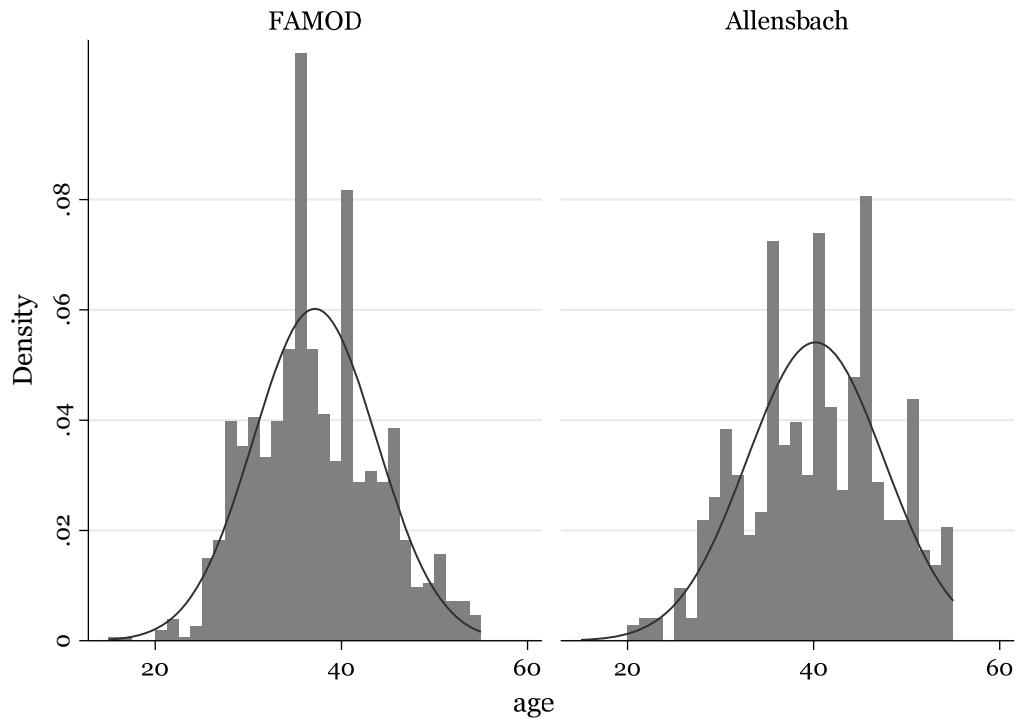
#### 3.3.1 Age

The descriptive statistics for the respondents’ ages showed that the mean value and the standard deviation in the Allensbach study were slightly higher than the corresponding descriptive statistics in the FAMOD study.

- Age Allensbach study mean: 40.6; SD: 7.4
- Age FAMOD mean: 37.2; SD: 6.6

Figure 14 further demonstrates that the respondents’ ages in both samples were relatively normally distributed, and that both samples were quite similar with respect to their age compositions.

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**Figure 14: Distribution of Age in FAMOD and Allensbach Study**


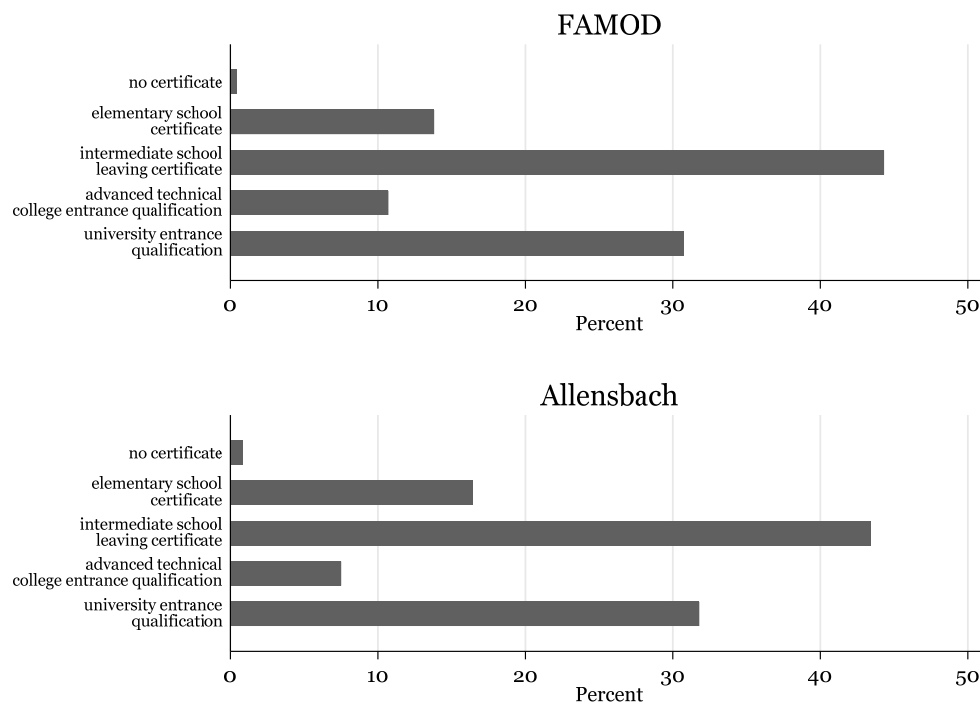

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**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and Allensbach Study**

### 3.3.2 Education

The respondents' educational levels (1 = "no degree"; 2 = "elementary school certificate"; 3 = "intermediate school leaving certificate"; 4 = "advanced technical college entrance qualification"; and 5 = "university entrance qualification") in the FAMOD survey were very similar to the respondents' educational levels in the Allensbach study. A comparison of the two distributions in Figure 15 shows that, in spite of small deviations, the ratios were approximately the same.

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**Figure 15: Distribution of Education in FAMOD and Allensbach Study**



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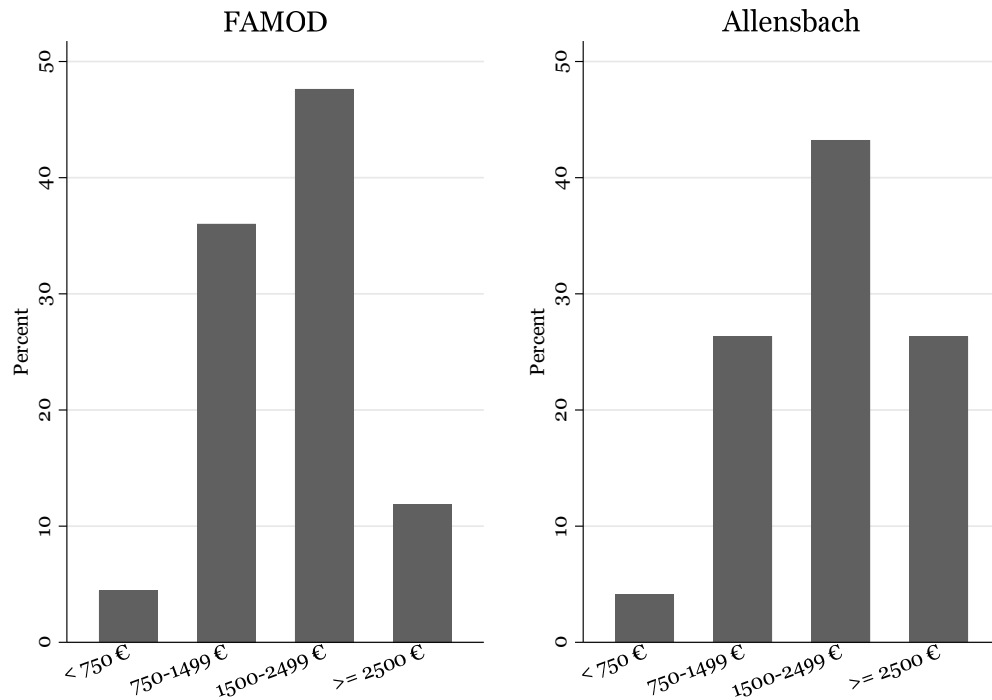
**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and Allensbach Study**

### 3.3.3 Personal Net Income per Month

Because the personal net income per month (including government transfers and parental support) was only available in aggregated categories in the Allensbach study, a categorization was carried out for FAMOD. Accordingly, four categories were computed, ranging from 1 = “< 750 euros” to 4 = “≥ 2,500 euros”.

The results in Figure 16 show that the distribution of personal net income per month differed noticeably between the FAMOD study and the Allensbach study. For instance, the proportion of respondents who earned less than 1,500 euros per month was higher in FAMOD, whereas the proportion of respondents who earned more than 2,500 euros was approximately twice as high in the Allensbach study.

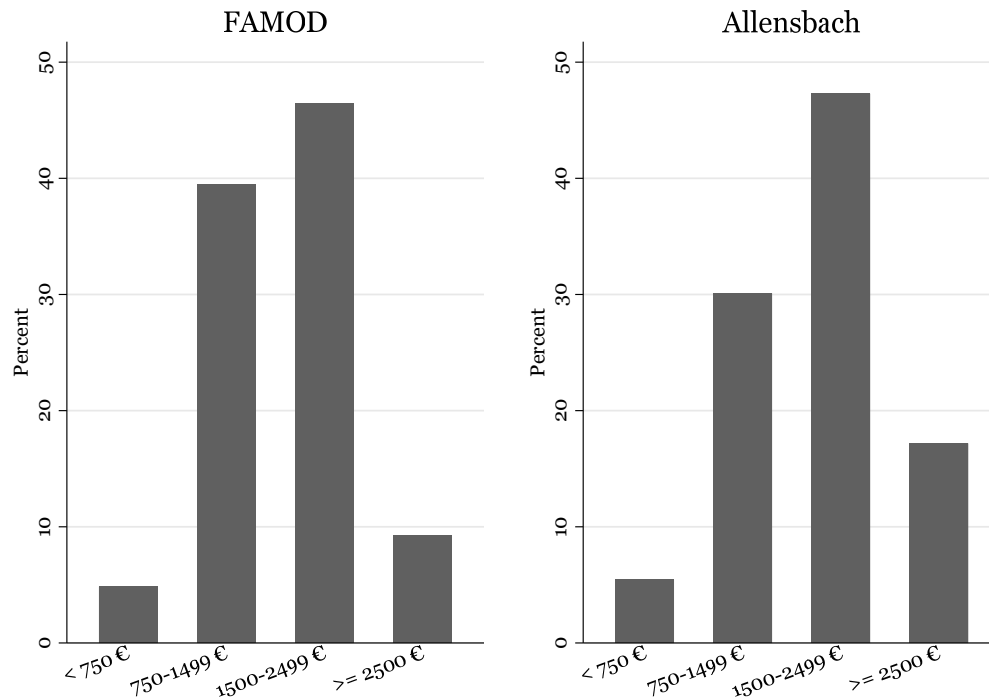
**Figure 16: Distribution of Personal Net Income per Month (Aggregated Categories) in FAMOD and Allensbach Study**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and Allensbach Study**

Again, the same comparison was carried out for a subsample that consisted exclusively of women. The results in Figure 17 show that the distribution of the personal net income per month did not change significantly after separated or divorced men were excluded from the analytical samples.

**Figure 17: Distribution of Personal Net Income per Month (Aggregated Categories) for Women in FAMOD and Allensbach Study**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and Allensbach Study**

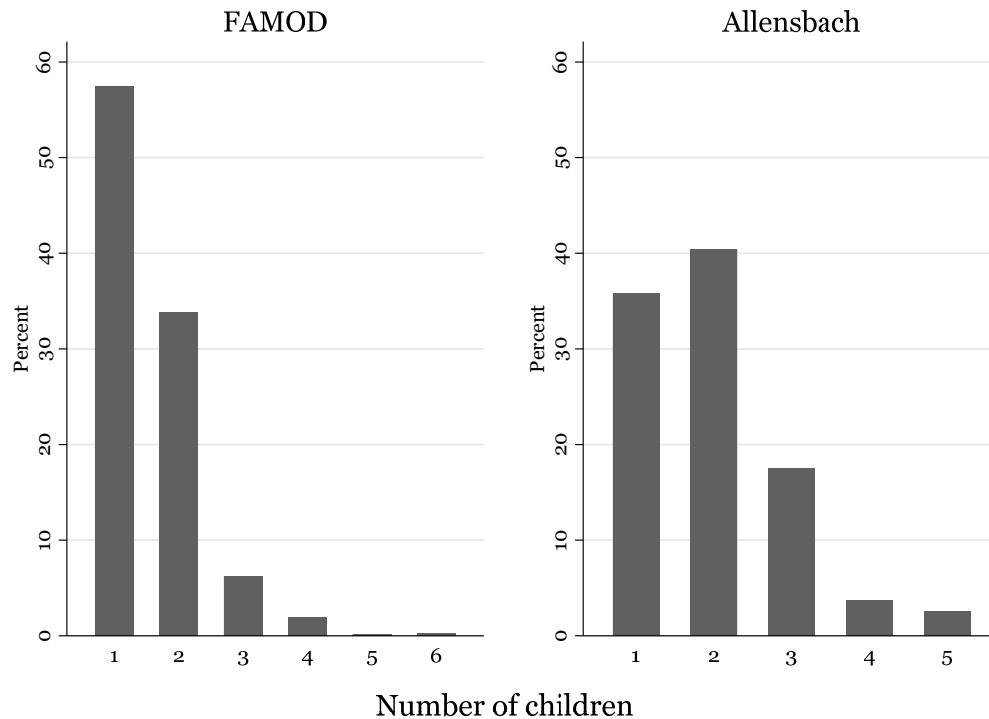
### 3.3.4 Number of Children per Parent

The average number of children per parent in FAMOD was slightly lower than the average number of children per parent in the Allensbach study:

- Number of children Allensbach study mean: 2.0; SD: 1.0
- Number of children FAMOD mean: 1.5; SD: 0.8

In accordance with this finding, Figure 18 indicates that the FAMOD sample contained a higher proportion of parents with only one child. A possible explanation for this finding is the high percentage of joint physical custody families in the FAMOD sample. As it is plausible that the probability of practicing joint physical custody decreases with the number of children (due to, for example, higher logistical demands), the average number of children should be lower in the FAMOD sample. A second explanation refers to the lower mean age of the respondents in the FAMOD study, which may indicate that the respondents in the FAMOD study may not have had all their children yet.

**Figure 18: Distribution of the Number of Children (per Parent) in FAMOD and Allensbach Study**



**Note: Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) and Allensbach Study**

## 4 Conclusion

The survey “Family Models in Germany” (FAMOD) is the first study that collected data of joint physical custody families with children between the ages of 0 and 14 living in Germany large enough for meaningful statistical analysis. Joint physical custody is a post-separation care arrangement in which children live with both their mother and their father for a substantial amount of time – usually between 30 and 50% of the time. Thus, this new post-separation care arrangement is characterized by much greater paternal involvement in the children’s upbringing compared to the traditional form of sole physical custody, in which mostly mothers take care of the children. Although joint physical custody is not widespread in Germany (only about 4 to 5% of all post-separation families with minor children practice JPC and, thus, less than 1% of all families), it can be assumed that the number of JPC families will increase in the near future. In some European countries, JPC families already make up about 30% of all separated or divorced

families (Steinbach, 2019; Steinbach et al., 2020). However, as long as the numbers in Germany are on such a low level, those families cannot be sampled randomly.

To solve this methodological problem, the FAMOD study employed a convenience sampling procedure based on a quota sample (family form and age of the child, see Table 1). By using such an approach, it was possible to collect data from a sufficient number of families practicing joint physical custody. In total, a satisfactory number of 611 JPC families were included in the study. Detailed information about the family life of nuclear and post-separation families were provided by an anchor parent (mostly the mothers). In addition to the anchor respondent, one of the anchors' children, the anchors' new partners, and the children's other biological parents participated in the study. Thus, a multi-actor design allows for comparing the different views of several family members.

Although a quota-sampling procedure was the only possible way to gather data on this rare new family form, a comparison of the FAMOD data with other German data sets (ALLBUS 2016, AID:A I, and the Allensbach study) revealed that the distributions of the respondents' key socio-demographic characteristics in the FAMOD study were similar to the corresponding distributions in other German datasets. All surveys showed a basic comparability for age, educational levels, and health. However, the FAMOD study varied significantly from the other three studies with regard to the respondents' income. For instance, women's personal net income per month appeared to be noticeably higher in FAMOD than in both ALLBUS 2016 and AID:A I. However, this finding did not apply to the Allensbach study (including only separated parents), where the average personal net income per month was actually higher than in FAMOD. Furthermore, the average number of children in both the AID:A I study and the Allensbach study was slightly higher than in the FAMOD study. In sum, after comparing the FAMOD data with other large-scale German data sets, we can conclude that the FAMOD data is of satisfactory quality, as the distributions of key socio-demographic variables were very similar among the compared studies.

Looking forward, we can report that first analyses of the data suggested very important insights into the life of post-separation families in Germany. With the help of a residential calendar, which provides detailed information about the days and nights that children spend with their mother and their father over a four-week period, it is possible to examine both the proportion of time that children live with each of their parents and the number of transitions the children make between the parental homes. Thus, further analyses of the FAMOD data will closely investigate the well-being of the individual family members in order to identify potentials and challenges that are associated with the specific post-separation family form. Besides detailed analysis on post-separation families in Germany, the FAMOD study also allows for international comparisons because the majority of survey instruments for the FAMOD survey were adopted from other (post-



separation) family studies, including studies from Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway (Steinbach & Helms, 2020). Thus, the FAMOD survey provides a rich data source not only for German researchers, but for international researchers as well.

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