

# **The Gender Gap in Social Transfer Receipt: Examining the Triple Bind of Lone Mothers in Germany**

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*Early draft – please do not circulate.*

## **Abstract**

Lone mothers often fare worse compared to lone fathers: they are more often affected by poverty, including in-work poverty, and three times more likely to receive social transfers compared to lone fathers. This article describes the differences in social transfer receipt among lone parents as the "*Gender Welfare Gap*". Using data from the German Microcensus that spans 20 years of data, this study employs logistic regression to examine the determinants of social transfer reliance among lone parents. Decomposition analysis is further applied to study the contribution of compositional differences to the gender gap. The study found lone mothers had 43 percent higher odds to rely on social transfers after controlling for all included socio-demographic characteristics (education, marital status, region, citizenship, age, number and age of children). Age differences among fathers and mothers and higher number of children among lone mothers explained half of the overall gender gap. Education did not appear as a gender equalizer, although high education acted as a strong protective factor against social transfer receipt among both lone mothers and lone fathers. While over time, the odds of receiving social transfers declined for lone parents in general, the gender gap between lone mothers and lone fathers did not decrease. The findings are interpreted through the lens of the triple bind theory, which emphasizes the interplay of inadequate resources, employment opportunities, and policy support in shaping lone parents' economic vulnerability.

**Keywords:** Social Transfers, Lone parenthood, Gender Gap, Employment, Child Care

# 1 Introduction

In 2024, 19 percent of all families with minor children in Germany were lone parent families (Statistisches Bundesamt 2025a). Lone parent families are defined as one parent who co-resides with her or his minor child or children, but does not have a partner who lives in the same household unit. Research on lone parenthood has highlighted the vulnerability and social policy relevance of this group, as lone parents are more affected by poverty than any other family form and more than one-third of lone parents in Germany are reliant on social transfers to secure their livelihood, rendering them vulnerable to the negative consequences of social transfer receipt (Hübgen 2019; Artmann 2024). In-work poverty is also highly elevated among lone parents as a considerable amount of lone parents receives social transfers despite being employed (Menne, Funcke 2024; Geisler, Kreyenfeld 2019). 82 percent of lone parents are women, making gender-sensitive research on this phenomenon necessary (Statistisches Bundesamt 2025c). Lone mothers often fare worse compared to lone fathers. They are more often affected by poverty and in-work poverty and three times more likely to receive social transfers compared to lone fathers (Hübgen 2019). Lone mothers fare worse in terms of social transfer receipt as they are more affected by the challenges of the “*triple bind*” of lone parents. The triple bind refers to a set of interconnected challenges that lone parents face in particular and that make it to reconcile work and care and to secure economic stability: challenges regarding inadequate resources, employment and social and family policies (Nieuwenhuis, Maldonado 2018). As a result, single parents face a heightened risk of poverty and social transfer receipt. Prior studies suggest that this gap can be attributed to a combination of socio-economic and educational differences, gendered employment disparities and caregiving responsibilities (Misra et al. 2012; Kramer et al. 2016; Nieuwenhuis, Maldonado 2018; Härkönen 2018). Research has also emphasized the role of the institutional contexts (including labour market policies, family policies and family law) for either mitigating or exacerbating

disparities between lone mothers, lone fathers, and other family forms (Scheiwe 1994; Christopher 2002; Klammer 2010; Hübgen 2019, 2020; Schäper, Schrenker, Wrohlich 2023).

Building on prior research from Geisler, Kreyenfeld (2019) on the gender gap in social transfer receipt among lone parents, this article describes the gender difference as the “*Gender Welfare Gap*”. Few studies have addressed the gender gap in social transfer receipt, making this analysis an important contribution to understanding how and why lone mothers and fathers differ in their reliance on social transfers. The motivation for this study is partly stemming from the negative consequences of social transfer receipt - although social transfers work as a social safety net, social transfer receipt in Germany entails barriers to social participation, psychological stress, health issues, and material deprivation, underscoring the relevance of this issue for this study and for social policy research (Seccombe, James, Walters 1998; Korteweg 2003; Caragata, Liegghio 2013; Promberger, Lobato 2016; Shahidi et al. 2020). Sanctions and cuts in benefits further elevates the negative impact of transfer reliance on recipients, especially for the wellbeing of children (Pattaro et al. 2022). Receipt of social transfers is also a highly politicized issue, with recipients regularly at the centre of public debate, often facing calls for intensified sanctions, stricter requirements, and more rigorous means-testing (Oschmiansky, Schmid, Kull 2003; Kaufmann 2013; Bella, Röhrer, Wolff 2025).

This article addresses the following research questions: What socio-demographic characteristics constitute the gender welfare gap in social transfer receipt among lone parents in Germany? Did the gender gap narrow over time? To examine the gender gap among lone parents in Germany, I use data from the SUF-file of the German microcensus from every fourth year between 1996-2021 which provide large sample sizes for transfer receiving lone parents. Using multiple survey years of the microcensus, this study captures periods before and after major family policy reforms and social transfer reforms. Logistic regression and decomposition analysis were employed. I found that compared to lone fathers, lone mothers had 43 percent

higher odds to rely on social transfers after controlling for all included socio-demographic characteristics (education, marital status, region, citizenship, age, number and age of children). The analysis found that the gender gap exists across all observed socio-demographic characteristics. Education did not appear as a gender equalizer, although it acted as a protective factor in general. Together with marital status, and the number and age of children – reflecting the care responsibilities of mothers and their different entry into lone parenthood – education and the differences in age of lone parents explained a large fraction of the differences in transfer receipt. Data showed that while social transfer receipt varied heavily over the years, the gap between mothers and fathers did not decrease substantially over time but was rather persistent. Compositional differences of lone parents in the sample explained nearly half of the gender gap in social transfer receipt. The unexplained part can be attributed to unobserved variables, such as employment trajectories and/or age at childbearing that were not part of the analysis, and structural and gender-based inequalities. The results are discussed with regard to the triple bind of lone parents and in the light of recent social and family policy reforms.

## **2 Background**

### **2.1 Institutional Background**

Social transfers refer to basic income support, a cash benefit provided by the welfare state to support households to secure a minimum subsistence level. In general, social transfers intend to provide basic financial security for people who are unable to ensure a living above the defined minimum subsistence level through employment or another person (Brülle, Gangl 2024). Over the period of this study (1996 - 2022), the social transfer system in Germany experienced several reforms and name changes, as illustrated in Table 1 (Beckmann 2023; Brülle, Gangl 2024).

Table 1: Changes in the Basis Income Support System in Germany

Period	Basic Income Support	Characteristics
Till 2005	Arbeitslosenhilfe ( <i>Unemployment Assistance</i> )	Insurance-based benefit for the longer-term unemployed who had exhausted their unemployment insurance. Level of benefits was tied to previous contributions from employment
	Sozialhilfe ( <i>Social Assistance</i> )	Tax-financed benefit for people with no or low income or insurance claims; based on the subsistence level
2005–2022 (Hartz IV Era)	Arbeitslosengeld II ( <i>Unemployment benefit</i> )	Tax-financed basic security benefit based on the subsistence level rather than prior income with new obligations for job-seeking activities and employment programs under the threat of sanctions Merged Arbeitslosenhilfe and Sozialhilfe for employable people > social assistance still existed, but was mainly reserved for the disabled and elderly people.
Since 2023 (Bürgergeld Reform)	Bürgergeld ( <i>Citizen's Income</i> )	Replaced Arbeitslosengeld II after a Constitutional Court ruling and major criticism with new regulations for the level of benefits, cooperation and sanctions

However, although the basic income support was renamed several times, its principle stayed relatively stable - it is a tax-financed and means-tested benefit calculated at the household level, designed for longer-term unemployed individuals, the working poor receiving social transfers as a top-up benefit, and individuals whose unemployment insurance benefits were lower than the subsistence level, with recipients obliged to participate in job search activities, labor market programs, and other obligations under the threat of sanctions (Hassel 2019; Brülle, Gangl 2024). The system of basic income support is highly fragmented, consisting of multiple overlapping policies and benefits to secure a minimum standard of living. Alongside social transfers, means-tested child supplement (*Kinderzuschlag*) and housing benefit (*Wohngeld*) play an increasingly important role in financial security, especially for lone-parent families, and helped some to exit social transfers (Menne, Funcke 2024). Both benefits are supplementary benefits that require the recipients to have their own income but aim to prevent low income households from receiving social transfers as top-up benefits (Bruckmeier, Mühlhan, Wiemers 2018). While these benefits can prevent low-income households from relying on social transfers, they also

contribute to the high complexity of the German welfare system, with each benefit has its own eligibility criteria, application procedures, and administrations.

The structure of social transfers is particularly important for lone parents, a group that is more dependent on social transfers than any other family form (Hübgen 2019). Their overrepresentation is rooted in the institutional design of the welfare state, with its employment-centred welfare system traditionally emphasizing a male breadwinner model, where full-time employment of men sustains the household. The underlying expectation is that women withdraw from the labour market temporarily, partly, or permanently when a child is born into the family, and are financially secured by a partner's income and support (Sainsbury 1997). This model is deeply embedded in Germany's social policies, through matrimonial tax splitting, premium-free health and long-term care insurance of non-employed spouses, widow pensions, and other regulations in tax, family, and social law (Klammer 2010; Zagel 2014). Lone parents are treated as an exception to the rule – although the number of lone parent families increased heavily over the past decades (Menne, Funcke 2024). Yet, the policy framework has been slow to adapt to the fact that the social and economic circumstances of the male-breadwinner model are in decline. Most family and social policies are employment-related, often providing neither adequate employment supports nor generous social transfers or family support policies for lone parents with higher caregiving responsibilities and lower employment opportunities, contributing to the vulnerability of lone parents (Christopher 2002; Hübgen 2019). Although originating from a male breadwinner model, a gradual policy shift has improved lone parents' ability to balance employment and caregiving since the beginning of the century. With policies promoting maternal part-time work, expanding childcare and parental leave options (*Elterngeld*), family policies slowly adapted 'optional familialism' and increased flexibility to combine work and care for families (Zoch, Heyne 2023). However, while all families profited from policies such as childcare expenditure, a lot of family benefits are not targeted at those with no or low income as most family-related benefits, such as parental leave or tax benefits,

are income- and employment-related. Child-related benefits like the child benefit (*Kindergeld*) or the education and participation benefit (*Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket*) are reserved for the child's needs and are not intended to cover the families basic living expenses. Furthermore, most child and family benefits are set off against social transfers because they are treated as an income, i.e., child benefit (*Kindergeld*).

Maintenance from the other parent is an important factor influencing the likelihood of receiving social transfers of lone parents (Hübgen 2020). Until 2008, German maintenance law let divorced parents get maintenance until the youngest child turned 16 with no expectation to work full-time for the caregiving parent. After a 2008 reform, "self-reliance" became a central principle in maintenance law, with lone parents were granted maintenance for the caregiving parent only if a child is under three years old if childcare is available. This reform aimed to activate parents to work sooner after divorce but also raised the likelihood of lone parents needing social transfers. However, research shows that more than one third of lone parents receive no or only partial maintenance from the other parent after separation, and in about half of these cases, no support is received at all (Hubert, Neuberger, Sommer 2020). Furthermore, only 20 percent of children of lone parents receiving social transfers receive child support payments from the other parent (Kasrin et al. 2025). Due to these issues, a substantial number of lone parents rely on social transfers or advance payments from the government. However, only a little more than one third of affected parents make use of these payments (Hubert et al 2020). Advance payments also do not affect the financial situation of social transfer receiving parents as they are fully deducted for recipients, but they can offer financial stability after exiting social transfer receipt (Hartmann 2014; Hubert, Neuberger, Sommer 2020; Kasrin et al. 2025).

Despite the diverse family-related benefits, lone parents rely more often on social transfers as basic income support, as the welfare benefit system is mainly designed around an employed

household and/or a two-parent household with little regard to lone parents' restricted employment options, loss in economies of scale, higher caregiving responsibilities or irregular maintenance payments.

## **2.2 Prior Research: Lone Parents' triple bind**

Lone parents face more often than other family types economic challenges with consequences for wellbeing, health, employment, housing, education, participation and social networks for parents and their children. According to Klammer (2010), their high poverty risk or high social transfer receipt can be explained by lack of public child care, unemployment levels, insufficient income from work, insufficient support from the other parent, and/or inadequate welfare benefits and support. Without a second caregiver and earner in the household, they often struggle to combine work with care responsibilities and thus take up more often part-time or marginal employment, or face unemployment, especially when childcare is not available. They face higher costs of living, higher care work intensiveness, lower opportunities for adequate employment and are missing or insufficient child support payments to secure living. These challenges are mediated by parental resources, their employment and the policy context. Nieuwenhuis, Maldonado (2018) coined the term "triple bind" to describe the multiple and interconnected challenges of lone parents: the triple interaction between inadequate resources, employment and policies.

A large fraction of the literature deals with the selection processes into lone parenthood to explain the higher economic insecurity of lone parents with regard to their inadequate resources. Educational attainment is one of the most studied resource deficits of lone parents, with lone parents being more often in lower educated due to selection processes into lone parenthood and the prevalence of early childbearing among lone parents (Härkönen 2018; Hübgen 2020). However, without regarding the employment and labour market conditions and the social policy context, lone parents' characteristics explain only a part of their vulnerability. Research

repeatedly showed that individual-level explanations regarding the social compositions of lone parents cannot fully explain the trends of economic insecurity of lone parent – without regarding the social policy context and policy changes, explanations remain insufficient (Brady, Burroway 2012; Härkönen 2018; Zagel, Hübgen, Nieuwenhuis 2021). The labour market is critical to lone parents economic and social wellbeing. Although employment rates of lone parents have increased over the past decade, the economic vulnerability of lone parents has remained relatively stable, partly due to wage inequalities, precarious, marginal or part-time employment. Employment policies focused solely on activation often further facilitate the marginal labour market participation of lone parents (Jaehrling, Kalina, Mesaros 2015; Esser, Olsen 2018). Thus, adequate employment, employment policies and the broader labour market situation plays an important role in explaining the economic security of lone parents. A lot of literature has dealt with the third tier of the triple bind – the social policy context. Policies can help to compensate for the risks and costs associated with being a lone parent. Research has identified that especially adequate high-quality childcare, generous and paid parental leave and family allowances contribute to economic security of lone parents (Misra et al. 2012; van Lancker 2018; Maldonado, Nieuwenhuis 2015; Misra, Budig, Moller 2007; Morissens 2018). The level of benefit, regulations on generosity, eligibility criteria, means-testing, and conditionality decide if a policy is favourable to lone parents or if it contributes to their higher vulnerability (Nieuwenhuis, Maldonado 2018). The literature also discusses if policies should follow a universal or a targeted approach to tackle lone parents' economic insecurity. Results for this are mixed – their effect depend heavily on policy design and country context (Brady, Burroway 2012; Morissens 2018). However, in Germany, a country with a high degree of universalism, family benefits only have a slight to moderate effect reducing economic insecurity among lone parents (Morissens 2018). Research on the only targeted family benefit in the German benefit system – the means-tested child supplement (*Kinderzuschlag*) - is mixed. Morissens (2018) finds that the supplement does not have an impact on alleviating poverty for

lone parents, while Menne, Funcke (2024) conclude that the child supplement plays an important role in lifting lone parents out of poverty and social transfer receipt. In Germany's highly fragmented benefits system, non-take-up of benefits is also a factor contributing to the economic vulnerability of lone parents, especially after the Hartz reform in 2005 (Kleven, Kopczuk 2011; Becker 2015; Baisch et al. 2023).

### **2.3 Why do Lone Mothers fare worse in lone parents' triple bind? Possible Mechanisms**

Every bind of the triple bind has elements that are deeply gendered and thus needs to be analysed in a gendered framework (Gornick 2018). Women not only make up the majority of lone parents, they also fare worse in the consequences of lone parenthood: they have largely higher childcare responsibilities than fathers, less resources and labour market opportunities, which limits their availability for quality employment and increases their reliance on social transfers. They are far more at risk of poverty and are three-times as likely to rely on social transfers compared to lone fathers. The triple bind – resource deficits such as educational attainment, labour market inadequacy, and gaps in the social protection system – thus explains some of the differences in social transfer receipt of lone parents.

Regarding inadequate resources, research emphasizes that lone mothers and lone fathers differ in their social composition and the pathways that select them into lone parenthood. Educational attainment plays an important role in explaining differences between lone parents, with lone fathers being more often higher educated while lone mothers often entering lone parenthood at an earlier age with lower educational attainment (Geisler, Kreyenfeld 2019; Hübgen 2020; Kramer et al. 2016). In Germany, lower education of mothers is associated with a higher risk of being a lone mother and a higher risk of poverty (Härkönen 2018). However, the effect of educational differences of lone motherhood on the poverty risk is somewhat modest, with other factors such as employment and childcare opportunities, the labour market situation and family

and social policy also playing important roles (ibid.). Lone fathers also predominantly live with children in their teenage years, while lone mothers live more often with younger children with higher caregiving responsibility and childcare intensity. Lone fathers are also more often a lone parent due to divorce or widowhood, while lone mothers being more often never-married, reflecting different socio-economic and legal circumstances and different selection processes into lone parenthood (Menne, Funcke 2024). Selection into marriage of higher educated parents may also contribute to possible gender gaps between married, widowed and never-married lone parents (Hübgen 2020). Furthermore, migration background plays an important factor influencing lone parenthood and their financial situation. Lone mothers are more likely to have a migration background than lone fathers (Statistisches Bundesamt 2024). Transfer reliance is generally higher for mothers with a migration background because their labour market participation is lower compared to native mothers and migrant fathers. Research suggest that this is due to challenges in the recognition of foreign qualifications and degrees, racist barriers in the labour market, lack of professional networks, and lower level of institutional child care use (Fernández-Reino, Di Stasio, Veit 2023; Koopmans, Veit, Yemane 2019; Boll et al. 2022). Despite seeking early childhood care, migrant families often are less likely to receive a childcare spot, similar to parents with lower educational attainment (Jessen et al. 2020). In general, research showed that even when they have medium or high educational qualifications, parents with a migration background face a higher risk of poverty or social transfer receipt (ibid.). Thus, research suggest that the gendered transfer receipt of lone parents can be partially explained by the different socio-demographic characteristics of lone mother and fathers (Geisler, Kreyenfeld 2019; Boll, Schüller, Birkeneder 2024; Klammer 2010; Menne, Funcke 2024).

Prior research suggests that higher levels of transfer receipt of lone mothers compared to lone fathers is also influenced by gendered differences in labour market participation and broader wage inequalities. The gender wage gap, shaped by occupational segregation, motherhood

penalties, fatherhood premiums and labour market discrimination, puts especially lone mothers at a risk of being unable to secure a living above the poverty line (Nieuwenhuis, Maldonado 2018; Halldén, Levanon, Kricheli-Katz 2016; Kramer et al. 2016). Lone fathers were on average better educated, reflecting stronger labour market opportunities (Artmann 2024). Labor market participation of lone mothers is also shaped by lower educational attainment and the early age at entering lone parenthood (Struffolino, Bernardi, Larenza 2020). Due to persistent traditional gender configurations after child birth, lone mothers often have been absent from the labour market for extended periods due to child care responsibilities, which often result in employment and income disadvantages for mothers later in life while fathers do not experience longer career breaks (Nieuwenhuis, Need, van der Kolk 2012). Lone mothers therefore face challenges in securing stable employment and more often rely on social transfers for financial security (Andreß et al. 2006; Bröckel & Andreß 2015, Hübgen 2020).

Additionally, historical policy legacies within Germany along the East/West divide plays an important role in shaping lone parents' employment situation. East Germany was historically shaped by a high level of maternal employment and public childcare due to the former gender model of the German Democratic Republic, while West Germany was more tied to the male breadwinner model. Post-reunification labour market instability and reduced childcare access affected the economic security of lone parents in the East, leading to more part-time and non-employment of mothers (Klammer 2010). However, till today, lone mothers in the East tend to be more often in employment, (Schäper, Schrenker, Wrohlich 2023; Menne, Funcke 2024; Achatz et al. 2013). However, economic insecurity of lone parents cannot be fully explained by lack of employment. Many lone mothers rely on social transfers not only due to unemployment, but due to low wages, part-time employment, marginal and precarious employment, making them more reliant on social transfers (Christopher 2002; Menna & Funcke 2024).

Crucial factors that shape lone mothers' labour market participation are care responsibilities and child care use. Studies suggest that lone mothers, who more often live with young children and more than one child, do not return to the labour market because of the high child care intensity and often the lack of adequate child care facilities (Schäper, Schrenker, Wrohlich 2023; Geisler, Kreyenfeld 2019). Lone mothers do substantially more unpaid care work compared to lone fathers due to differences in childcare intensity. Lone mothers pursue on average 19 hours per week in paid employment and perform 38 hours of care work, lone fathers work about 26.5 hours per week, but spend only around 22.5 hours on care work, constituting a gender care gap among lone parents (Statistisches Bundesamt 2022). Possible explanations for the differences in social transfer receipt also include the differences in childcare usage based educational levels, with mothers without a high school diploma being less likely to attend day care compared to highly educated mothers (Jessen et al. 2020). Research showed that lone mothers were more often exempt from job seek due to childcare responsibilities, whereas lone fathers pointed to health issues or job trainings, reflecting the higher child care responsibilities of mothers (Artmann 2024). Furthermore, lone parents (often mothers) with three or more children are subjected to two key economic risk factors: raising children alone and having a large family, resulting in nearly nine out of ten single parents with three or more children needing social transfers (Menne, Funcke 2023). These differences in both care intensity and employment opportunities partially explain why mothers remain more reliant on social transfers.

Mothers make up the vast majority of lone parents in Germany, meaning that the policies targeting lone parents de facto affect mothers, yet often fail to address their specific vulnerabilities. The policy context, as described in section 2.1, for lone parents is assumed to be gender neutral, however, policies often do not account for gendered employment patterns, caregiving needs, and wage inequalities. Research has emphasised the gendered impact of the Hartz reform in Germany on lone mothers (Rostock, Wersig, Künzel 2007; Betzelt 2007; Schwarzkopf 2009). Many social policies, such as childcare subsidies, parental leave, and

employment activation measures, either assume a two-parent or an earner household. Activation policies, especially introduced after the Hartz reform, prioritize fast labour market integration, resulting often in less-quality work, with mothers using social transfers as a top-up benefit (Jaehrling, Kalina, Mesaros 2015; Ehrich, Munasib, Roy 2018; Brülle, Gangl 2024). In contrast, lone fathers are fewer in number, and more likely to remain in stable employment, which reduces their reliance on transfers.

## **2.4 Hypotheses**

The legal and institutional context and prior literature shed light on the gender gap in social transfer receipt among lone parents. The question remains, if and how this gap has evolved over time. I propose two competing hypotheses regarding temporal changes in gender disparity. In light of ongoing policy reforms promoting gender equality, child care, and labour market integration and shifting gender norms, one could expect that the gender gap in social transfer receipt has decreased over time (Hypothesis 1a). However, despite normative advances, one could expect that the gender gap persists due differences in resources, gendered inequalities in the labour market and different pathways into lone parenthood (Hypothesis 1b). Regarding the social composition of lone parents, I expect that higher education work as a gender equalizer, with higher education narrowing the gender gap (Hypotheses 2). I expect sociodemographic differences in marital status, age, and age and number of children to explain a large fraction of the gender gap in social transfer receipt, pointing at selection effects of lone parenthood. (Hypotheses 3). Although the empirical part will not evaluate policies, the results will be discussed in light of major policy reforms in order to provide insights into the changes of social transfer receipt of lone parents over time.

## **3. Data and methods**

### **3.1 Data**

Data for this study comes from the SUF-file of the German microcensus, a representative, country-wide, annual survey conducted by the Federal Statistical Office, containing 1 percent of all households in Germany each year. The Scientific Use File contains a 70 percent subsample. This research used the microcensus as repeated cross-sectional data to examine patterns of change at the aggregate level and in order to control for period differences between years. Data from the years 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2021 were included in the analysis to cover a long time span and changes in patterns on the aggregate level over time.

The analytical sample included lone parents with at least one minor child living in the household. Only the working age population (aged 15-64) was included in the sample. I restricted the analysis to respondents with no missing observations for any of our variables of interest, thereby reducing the analytic sample to a total of 67,730 persons. Of the sample, 12.5 percent were men and 87.5 percent were women. For the analysis, descriptive statistics is used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of lone parenthood and social transfer receipt. In a second step, logistic regression and interaction models are used as the method of analysis to explore determinants of transfer receipt and the interaction of different socio-demographic determinants.

### **3.2 Measurement**

As this study uses data sets from different years, great importance has been put on making the variables and data as comparable as possible over time to ensure that the differences between years reflect actual variation and are not artifacts of changes in survey methodology, question design or variable coding. Differences between the survey years were documented in the appendix. Lone parents were identified through their residence without a partner (*Alleinerziehend*). The key dependent variable for this study is a binary variable of social

transfer receipt vs. no social transfer receipt. Before 2005, the variable social transfer receipt included items for the receipt of unemployment assistance and social assistance. After 2005, the variable includes only the receipt of unemployment assistance, as the Hartz reform transformed social assistance to a benefit for the disabled and the elderly. The independent variables were chosen based on previous research that indicated factors associated with transfer receipt. The central independent variable considered is gender (men/women). The variable education is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) and was transformed in three categories by final qualification attained with regard to temporal changes in the classification: lower level of education, vocational training and university degree. Survey year is included as a variable in the analysis to observe changes at the aggregate level. The empirical analysis includes control variables for region (East/West Germany), age of the parent (categorical), age of the youngest child (categorical) and number of children (One child/two children/three or more children) in the household. Citizenship (German/foreign citizenship) is included as a proxy for migration background as a variable for migration background has only been included in the microcensus since 2005 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2007). The variable marital status distinguishes between never married, divorced or separated, and widowed lone parents. For *employment*, a variable that measures no employment, part time employment and full-time employment was constructed across survey years. Part-time employment also includes marginal employment such as “mini jobs”. Because employment status and social transfer receipt are highly correlated, employment is not included in the analysis, since lack of sufficient and quality employment is itself the primary determinant of social transfer reliance. Employment status of social transfer receiving families is therefore addressed only descriptively

### 3.3 Sample Statistics

Table 1 illustrates the socio-demographic composition of the sample. Across all survey years, lone mothers make up the great majority of the sample. The sample shows steady increase of the share of lone fathers over the period. Overall, lone fathers represent 12.5 percent of the sample. Characteristics of lone fathers and lone mothers differed considerably. For both lone mothers and lone fathers, only a minority receives social transfers as the main source of livelihood. However, the share of transfer receipt differs between lone parents, with 13,9 percent of fathers and 23.9 percent of mothers reported that they were reliant on social transfers. The majority of both groups received a vocational training degree. A quarter of lone mothers in the sample hold no degree or lower educational degrees such as high school diplomas, while this was the case for 18 percent of lone fathers. On average, lone fathers in the sample reported higher levels of education compared to lone mothers, with 20.7 percent of lone fathers having a university degree, while this was the case for 14.2 percent of mothers. Regarding the marital status, divorce or separation was the most common marital status among both groups. A higher proportion of lone mothers have never been married. Widowhood was more common among lone fathers in the sample. In the sample, 24.7 percent of lone parents were located in East Germany, whereas East Germans represent approximately 17 percent of the total population. Therefore, the proportion of lone parents from East Germany in the sample was higher compared to their overall share of the population. 9,9 percent of lone parents in the sample hold a foreign citizenship, with little difference between lone mothers and lone fathers. On average, lone fathers were about five years older than lone mothers. Most lone parents were between 35 and 44 years old, with lone mothers being more often in younger age groups. Young lone parents (aged 15 to 24) are a small group in the sample overall, but lone mothers are nearly three times more common than lone fathers in this age group, while lone fathers were far more represented in the old age groups, especially aged 55 to 64 years old. Most lone parents lived with one child, especially lone fathers. Living with two children was slightly more common

among lone mothers. Families with three or more children were relatively rare in the sample, but this was slightly more common among mothers, too. Most lone parents lived with children aged between 10 and 14. Compared to lone fathers, lone mothers lived more often with younger children under 9 years old, and especially with children under age 3, while lone fathers lived more often with older children between 10-17 years old. The share of lone parents rose steadily in the observed time frame.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic Characteristics of Lone Parents by Gender

Variable	Lone Parent		Overall N = 65,551 <sup>1</sup>
	lone father N = 8,224 <sup>1</sup>	lone mother N = 57,327 <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Dependent variable: Social transfer reliance</b>			
no transfer receipt	86.09	76.13	77.38
transfer receipt	13.91	23.87	22.62
<b>Education</b>			
lower level	18.04	24.62	23.80
vocational training	61.27	61.16	61.17
university degree	20.68	14.22	15.03
<b>Marital status</b>			
divorced or separated	62.48	54.62	55.61
never married	26.23	39.82	38.11
widowed	11.30	5.56	6.28
<b>Employment status</b>			
full time employment	70.44	33.08	37.77
part time employment	9.57	36.16	32.82
not in employment	19.99	30.76	29.41
<b>Region</b>			
East Germany	22.86	24.94	24.68

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<b>Variable</b>	<b>Lone Parent</b>		<b>Overall</b> N = 65,551 <sup>1</sup>
	<b>lone father</b> N = 8,224 <sup>1</sup>	<b>lone mother</b> N = 57,327 <sup>1</sup>	
West Germany	77.14	75.06	75.32
<b>Citizenship</b>			
Foreign citizenship	9.40	10.01	9.94
German citizenship	90.60	89.99	90.06
<b>Age (Mean (SD))</b>	42.80	38.19	38.77
<b>Age category</b>			
15-24	2.38	5.36	4.98
25-34	14.51	27.80	26.13
35-44	39.74	43.58	43.10
45-54	34.42	21.20	22.86
55-65	8.95	2.07	2.93
<b>Number of children</b>			
One child	70.55	65.43	66.08
Two children	23.25	26.44	26.04
Three or more children	6.20	8.13	7.89
<b>Age of children</b>			
Child 0-2	6.75	11.25	10.69
Child 3-5	9.63	13.33	12.87
Child 6-9	16.48	20.30	19.82
Child 10-14	33.71	30.73	31.10
Child 15-17	33.44	24.39	25.52
<b>Survey year</b>			
1996	16.97	12.82	13.34
2000	12.84	12.29	12.36
2004	13.56	13.54	13.54

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic Characteristics of Lone Parents by Gender

Variable	Lone Parent		
	lone father N = 8,224 <sup>1</sup>	lone mother N = 57,327 <sup>1</sup>	Overall N = 65,551 <sup>1</sup>
2008	10.79	14.44	13.98
2012	11.60	15.00	14.57
2016	13.64	15.66	15.41
2021	20.60	16.26	16.80

<sup>1</sup> Values presented as proportions for categorical variables and as mean (SD) for age. Data: Scientific Use File of the German microcensus 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2021.

Regarding employment, the majority of both lone mothers and lone fathers in the sample were employed. Most of lone fathers worked full-time. Part-time employment was more common for women than for men. A smaller proportion of fathers were not in employment compared to lone mothers. Among transfer recipients, the majority of social transfer recipients were not in employment, as illustrated in Table 2. Overall, 16,7 percent of transfer receiving parents were employed, with lone mothers being more often in employment compared to lone fathers.

**Table 2.** Employment status of Social Transfer Receiving Lone Parents by Gender

	lone father N=1,114	lone mother N=13,685	Overall N=14,829
<b>Employment status</b>			
full time employment	1.6	2.2	2.2
part time employment	10.2	14.5	14.5
not in employment	88.2	83.3	83.3

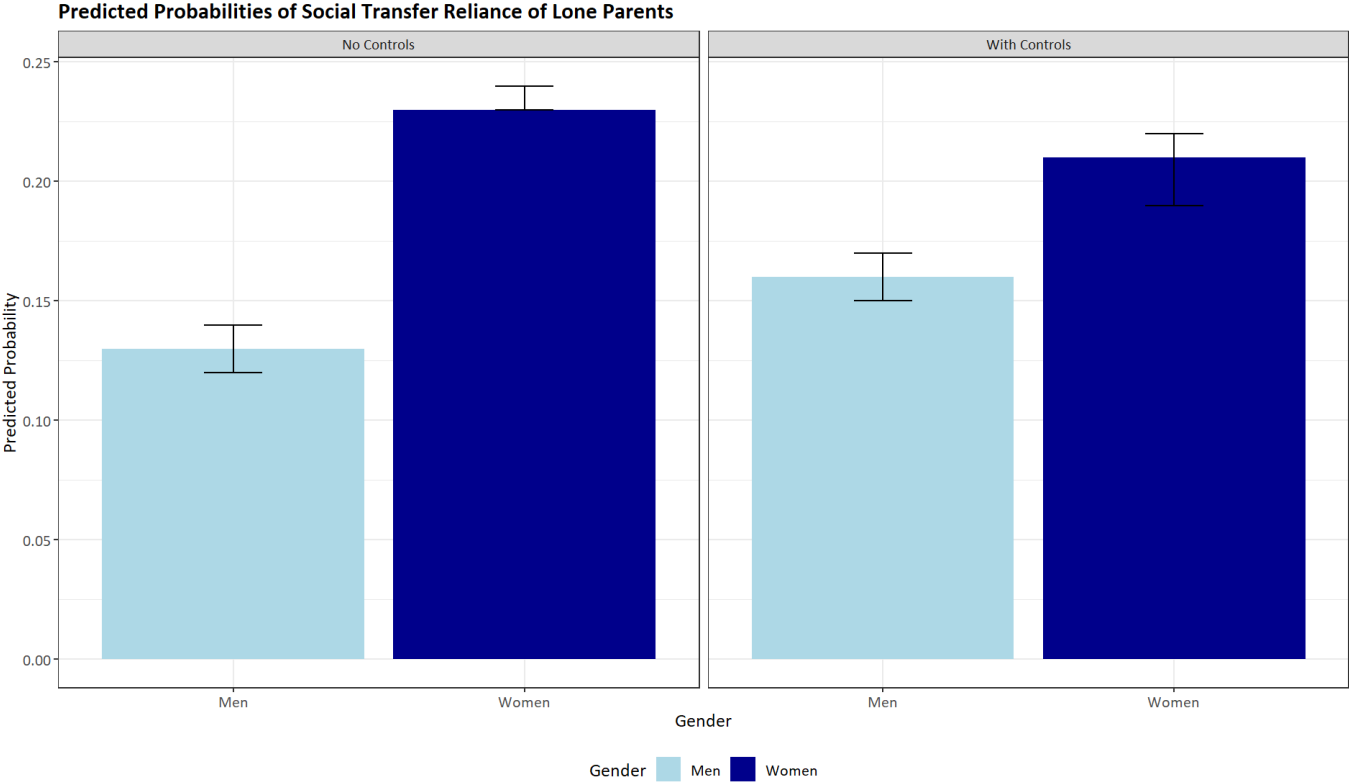
*Note: Values presented as proportions. Data: Scientific Use File of the German microcensus 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2021.*

## 4. Results

A stepwise modelling procedure with six different models was used to estimate odds ratios for socio-demographic characteristics of lone parents. The full model can be found in the appendix. Each model incorporates additional variables, refining the estimation. Variables are ordered to reflect a conceptual hierarchy: first, the key independent variables related to the hypotheses (gender, education, survey year), then basic demographics (age, citizenship, marital status, region), and finally household characteristics (number and age of children), pointing at differences in care responsibilities. Model 6 includes all independent variables and control variables. The baseline model confirms the descriptive finding that lone mothers are substantially more reliant on social transfers than lone fathers. After controlling for all variables included in the study, lone mothers had 43 percent higher odds of social transfer receipt. Including education (Model 00) reduced the gender gap considerably, indicating that a large part of the difference between lone parents can be explained by this variable. Adding survey years (Model 01) slightly reduced the gender gap. Age (Model 02) reduced the odds by 26 percent through including the age distribution of lone parents. Marital status (Model 03) slightly reduced the odds of lone mothers further. Adding citizenship (Model 04) did not affect the gap. Region (Model 05) slightly decreased the odds for lone mothers. Model 06 included the variables age of the youngest child and the number of children in the household, pointing at differences in care responsibilities. Including these variables lead to a decrease of the gender gap. When controlling for all socio-demographic variables, the gap between mothers and fathers narrows substantially, as illustrated in Figure 1. The final model suggests, that lone mothers had 43 percent higher odds to rely on social transfers when controlling for all socio-demographic characteristics compared to lone fathers. The pseudo-R squared showed that the

model fit increased especially when education and age were included in the model, underlining their explanatory value. The final model had the best fit overall.

**Figure 1: Gender Gap in Social Transfer Receipt**

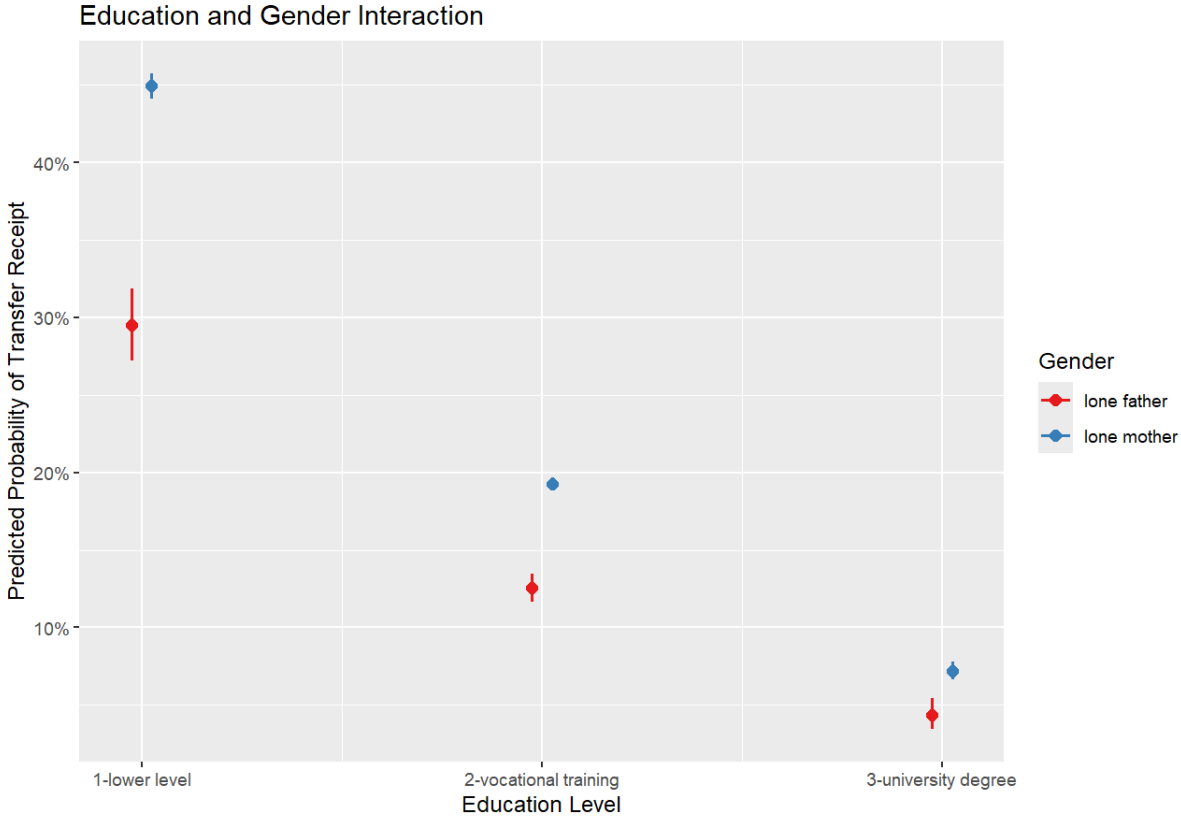


Note: Plot with controls includes all covariates that were included in the study. Data: Scientific Use File of the German microcensus 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2021.

The analysis revealed that social transfer receipt levels varied across various sociodemographic factors as illustrated in the appendix. Although the difference between lone parents narrowed after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics in the logistic regression model, the interaction models showed that the gender gap remained consistent across educational levels, but varied between different groups, as illustrated in Figure 2. Lone mothers with lower education had the highest odds for the outcome, and their chance to rely on social transfers were 61 higher than lone fathers with a similar educational level. Among lone parents with a vocational training, lone mothers had 34 higher odds to rely on social transfers compared to lone fathers in the same group. Higher educational levels were in general associated with low probabilities of receiving social transfers, but lone mothers with a university degree had 35 percent higher odds than lone fathers to be reliant on social transfers. The gender gap remained

present across all groups, although it narrowed with higher educational attainment. Although education acted as a protective factor, it did not work as a full gender equalizer.

**Figure 2: Interaction Model Gender and Education**

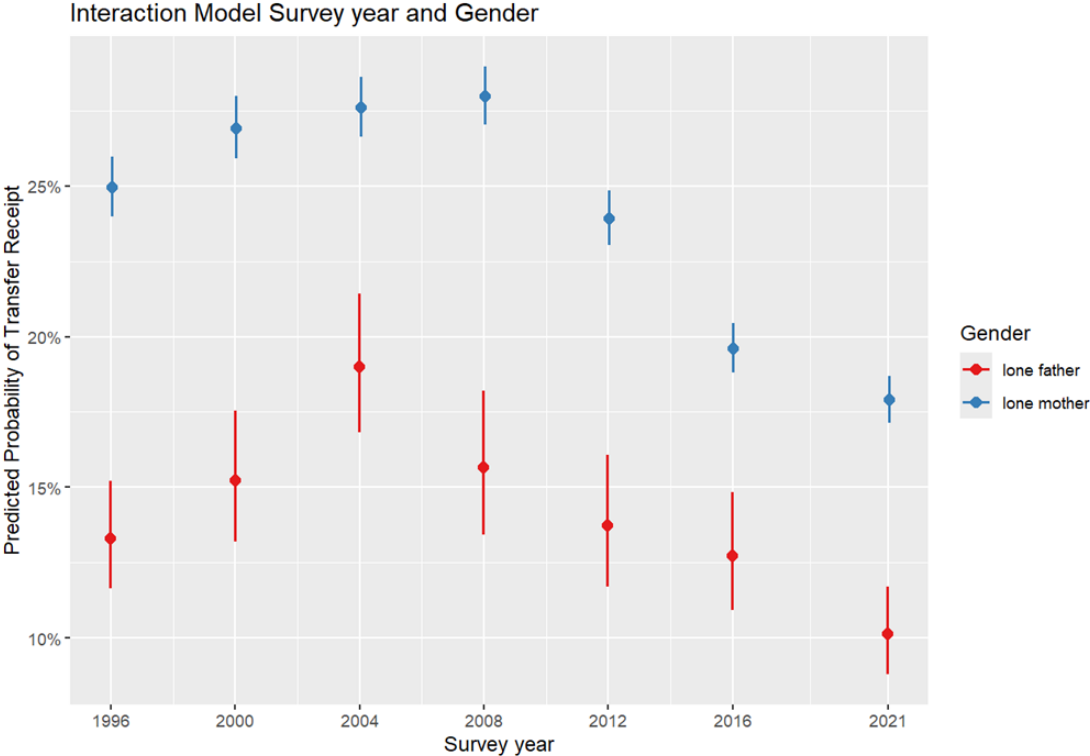


Data: Scientific Use File of the German microcensus 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2021.

Figure 3 illustrates the interaction model for survey year, and the adjusted interaction model, which indicated that the gender gap fluctuated but remained present across all survey years, with great variance for transfer receipt over time. From 1996 to 2021, lone fathers consistently had lower probabilities of receiving social transfers compared to lone mothers. The odds for transfer receipt declined for both groups after 2008. The smallest gap was in 2004, when probabilities of social transfer receipt were the highest for lone fathers, and in 2016. The gender gap narrowed over time, with a general decline since 1996. However, in 2008 and 2021 the gap widened slightly, indicating a quite uneven development of the gender gap. Fluctuations over

time could be attributed to different policy changes, but also to labour market trends, crises such as the pandemic, and other structural transformations.

**Figure 3: Interaction Model Gender and Survey Year**



Data: Scientific Use File of the German microcensus 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2021.

Matching-based decomposition revealed that the included variables explain 54 percent of the gender gap, with 46 percent of the total gap remained unexplained. This indicates that the difference in the social composition of lone parents explain a large part of the gap. Decomposing the gap revealed that the variables education (university degree) and age (older age groups) had the biggest explanatory power for the gender gap. This suggests that lone fathers are not only a small group but also compositionally a different group than lone mothers as fathers were mostly older aged with older children, slightly more often divorced and higher educated than lone mothers, suggesting different mechanisms in the selection into lone parenthood. The unexplained part can be attributed to unobserved variables, such as employment trajectories and/or age at childbearing that were not part of the analysis, and structural and gender-based inequalities.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The analysis showed that the gender gap was consistent across survey years, although the levels in social transfer receipt varied greatly over time. This variation between survey years are influenced by policy changes, the labour market situation and/or external crises over time, i.e., the higher odds of transfer receipt of lone fathers and the small gender gap during 2004 could be explained by to high unemployment rates during these years and the increase in the odds of transfer receipt in 2021 could be influenced by the tense labour market situation post-Covid 19. Numerous reforms aimed at improving lone parents' ability to balance work and caregiving implemented over the years could also explain part of the decrease in social transfer receipt. The starkest decline was observed between survey years 2008 and 2016. However, the gender gap did not shrink substantially across time, meaning policy changes and labour market situation did not influence the gender gap in its essence. This could be influenced by family policies that were implicitly built around the continuous assumption of the male-breadwinner/female-caregiver model, disadvantaging lone mothers (Zoch, Heyne 2023). Even as reforms progressed, many benefits remained income- or employment-based which affected lone mothers differently as they are more subjected by the triple bind of lone parenthood and often have of no or part-time employment. Lone fathers, on the other hand, are a fundamentally different group in its social composition, pointing to the fact that the gender gap is also explained by different selection processes into lone parenthood. The analysis therefore supports Hypotheses 1b: the gender gap persists regardless of policy changes and advances in gender issues.

The most notable differences between lone mothers and fathers that influenced social transfer receipt appeared to be the differences in levels of education. Results showed that educational attainment played a huge role in predicting social transfer receipt of lone parents, with higher education being associated with lower odds of transfer receipt. Higher education thus works as

a protective mechanism. However, education did not function as a gender equalizer, as the gender gap in transfer receipt did not shrink with higher educational levels. The gender gap was the smallest for parents with a vocational training, but differences were still persistent, disproving Hypothesis 2. Apart from education and age, care responsibilities associated with having younger children and more than one child, and differences in marital status explained an important part of the gender gap, pointing to the different selection processes and different care and household arrangements of lone parents. Socio-demographic characteristics explained more than half of the gender gap in social transfer receipt, pointing at the selection into lone parenthood and compositional differences among both groups. Although social composition explained 56 percent of the gender differences, unexplained factors playing an important role, too, supporting Hypothesis 3.

However, findings are heavily affected by the selection of variables and the nature of cross-sectional data, as important time-varying and longitudinal information could not be included in the analysis. Due to the limitations of microcensus data, it was not possible to include variables such as employment and earnings histories or changes in custody or parenting arrangements, reducing the explanatory power of the analysis. While this article used cross-sectional data to observe trends on the aggregate level, further studies could use longitudinal data to examine the gender welfare gap with regard to time-varying variables and causality. The dataset is also connected to another limitation: microcensus data are self-reported and could therefore be subjected to overreporting or underreporting. Studies suggest that fathers often overestimate their involvement in childcare (while mothers may underestimate fathers' involvement) (Pasley, Braver 2004; Wical, Doherty 2005; Kitterød, Lyngstad 2014; Charles et al. 2018). In Germany, 45 percent of separated mothers report that the father takes on little or none of the childcare, whereas only 14 percent of separated fathers describe their own involvement as low (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen, Jugend 2021). The microcensus also does not distinguish between lone and separated parents, as shared custody arrangements and joint

parenting are not recorded, which may affect the accuracy of the reported findings (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen, Jugend 2024).

This article shed light on the socio-demographic factors of the gender gap in social transfer receipt and changes in social transfer on the aggregate level. The gender welfare gap is connected to a range of gender-related inequalities such as the gender care gap, the gender pay gap and the poverty-gap between lone parents, but it has its own circumstances, mechanisms and consequences within the triple-bind of lone parents. For addressing the gender welfare gap, each part of the triple bind has to be addressed, as the interconnected binds affect mothers differently. Addressing gender disparities and the vulnerability of lone mothers thus needs both targeted support for lone mothers and universal support for families. Regarding parental resources, lone mothers' employability and educational attainment could be strengthened by programs designed for lone mothers joining a regular, sustainable and qualified employment, with programs promoting longer-term qualifications while taking care-responsibilities into account. The analysis highlighted the differences in educational attainment of lone parents. Although education did not act as a gender equalizer, it worked as a protective mechanism. . However, the opportunities of lone parents for initial or further education during social transfer receipt differ by gender: research showed that lone fathers were often offered further training, retraining, and integration or language courses by the administration during their social transfer receipt, while lone mothers often were more offered short-term programs with less promising progression pathways (Zabel 2011; Artmann 2024; Brussig et al. 2025). Especially because lone mothers enter lone parenthood with lower education and at a younger age, often before attaining a higher degree, programs such as part-time vocational trainings, counselling services, and specific training programs can help to reduce the vulnerability of lone mothers. Targeted time-flexible, tailored, and family-friendly programs for lone mothers in particular could therefore help to close this gap and strengthen lone mothers' resources.

Regarding employment, finding a way into stable and decent employment appears to be the most promising opportunity for lone mothers to avoid or exit social transfer receipt. The descriptive findings showed that a considerable number of lone parents who received social transfers were already in employment, reflecting the necessity to not only provide a job, but provide jobs that offer decent financial security and family-friendly, flexible working conditions to enable lone parents to sustain their livelihood through employment without using top-up benefits. For lone parents with no or marginal employment, the strongest barrier to employment is child care availability (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen, Jugend 2024). The qualitative and quantitative availability of day-care in schools and kindergartens would improve lone mothers' ability to integrate into the workforce and attain qualified employment. Jessen et al. (2020) suggest that a widespread quantitative expansion of day care places would reduce child care usage differences especially among lower educated mothers and mothers with a migration background and foster their employment opportunities. Differences in child care use would further decrease with better day care quality, intercultural inclusiveness, and easier registration procedures (ibid.).

Regarding social and family policy, lone parents are often disadvantaged when policies are employment- or income-related. It must be acknowledged that lone parents often cannot earn a sufficient income for various reasons, including the absence of a partner's income, general disadvantages in the labour market, lack of childcare, higher child care responsibilities, and reduced economies of scale. To ensure a decent standard of living for children regardless of their parents' income, it is crucial that the level of benefits is set appropriately, based on a realistically calculated child subsistence minimum. Current benefit levels are based on an underestimated child subsistence minimum, which does not reflect the real costs of raising children for lone parent families. Non take-up of benefits is also an issue in the family benefits system, as the highly fragmented benefit system may lead to non-utilization. In this context, reforms such as a basic child security (*Kindergrundsicherung*) could make a significant

contribution to reducing the poverty risk and the reliance on social transfers of lone parents, as the reform aimed to provide a universal minimum level benefit for every child within one policy framework irrespective of parental employment and income, reducing the economic risk of childbearing and the of the fragmented welfare benefit system (Plünnecke 2022). The analysis showed also the different selection into lone parenthood based on differences in marital status, with fathers tending to be more exposed to widowhood or divorce while lone mothers were more often than fathers never married, reflecting different legal and economic consequences both groups may face. Family law contains regulations are intended to compensate the economically weaker parent for taking on caregiving responsibilities and to mitigate the consequences of lone parenthood. However, regulations such as maintenance payments are highly fragmentary in Germany, leaving separated and divorced mothers often financially vulnerable. Advance maintenance payments from the government are also often non-utilized due to high administrative barriers. Reforms regarding child care and child maintenance post-separation would be an important factor to help lone mothers to overcome transfer reliance and poverty (Hakovirta, Jokela 2019; Hohnerlein 2019; Kasrin et al. 2025). Family law reforms addressing the legal regulations of non-married parents could further address the vulnerability of never-married mothers (Dutta 2016; Boele-Woelki et al. 2019; Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen, Jugend 2024). To reduce the vulnerability of lone parents receiving social transfers, it is essential to grant them a decent, accessible and subsistence-level welfare benefit while minimizing the negative consequences of social transfer receipt, thereby ensuring the well-being of parents and their children.

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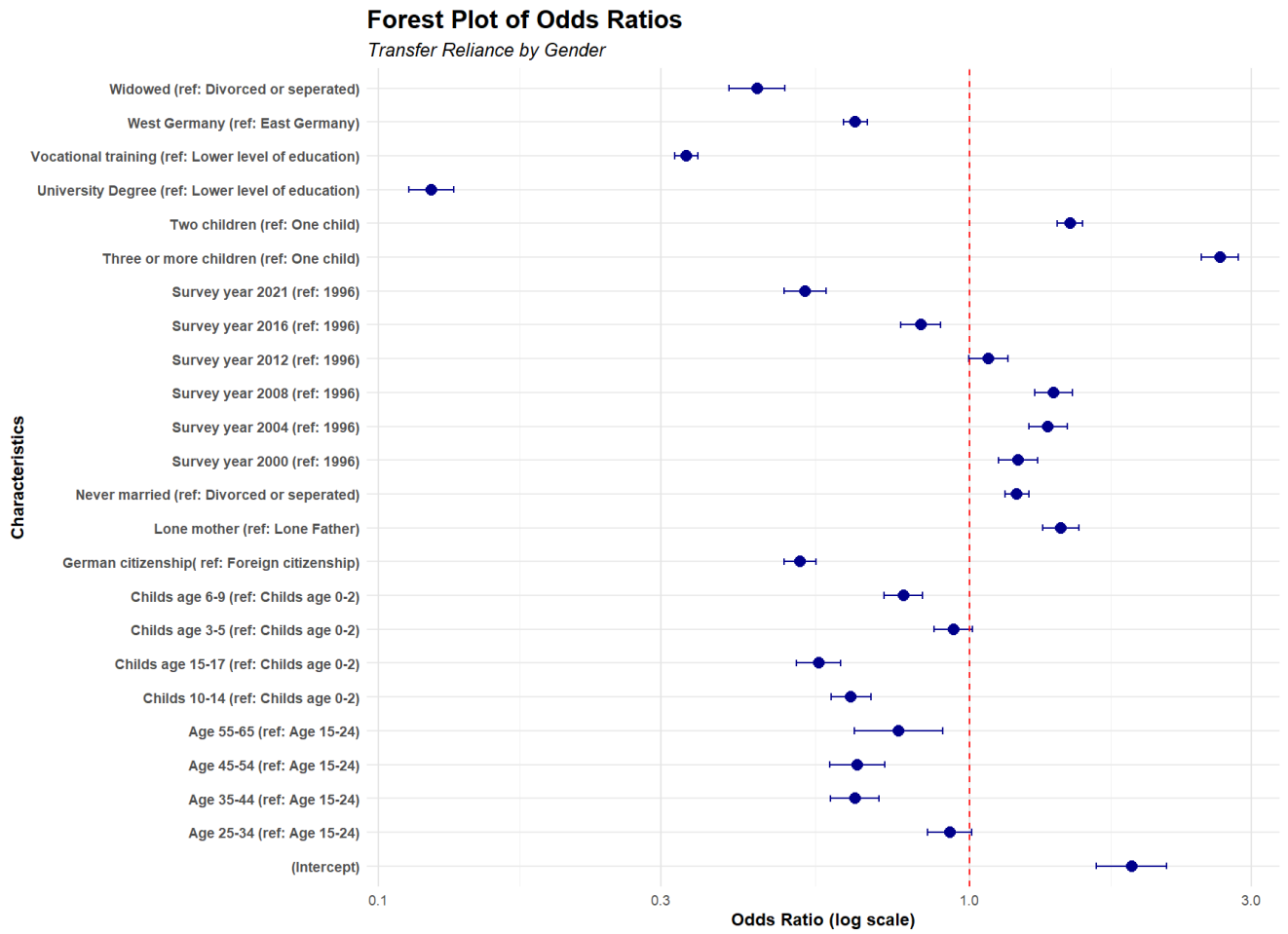
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# Appendix

Figure: Forest Plot of Odds Ratio





Characteristic	BASE Model			MODEL 0			MODEL 1			MODEL 2			MODEL 3			MODEL 4			MODEL 5			MODEL 6		
	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value
	OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI	
2000						1.09	1.02, 1.18	0.019	1.20	1.11, 1.29	<0.001	1.21	1.12, 1.30	<0.001	1.20	1.11, 1.29	<0.001	1.23	1.14, 1.33	<0.001	1.21	1.12, 1.30	<0.001	
2004						1.20	1.11, 1.29	<0.001	1.37	1.27, 1.47	<0.001	1.36	1.26, 1.46	<0.001	1.33	1.24, 1.44	<0.001	1.38	1.28, 1.48	<0.001	1.36	1.26, 1.46	<0.001	
2008						1.21	1.13, 1.30	<0.001	1.42	1.32, 1.52	<0.001	1.38	1.28, 1.48	<0.001	1.34	1.24, 1.44	<0.001	1.39	1.29, 1.50	<0.001	1.39	1.29, 1.49	<0.001	
2012						0.94	0.88, 1.01	0.11	1.10	1.02, 1.18	0.012	1.05	0.97, 1.13	0.2	1.01	0.93, 1.08	0.9	1.04	0.97, 1.12	0.3	1.08	1.00, 1.16	0.058	
2016						0.79	0.73, 0.85	<0.001	0.92	0.86, 0.99	0.035	0.87	0.81, 0.94	<0.001	0.82	0.76, 0.88	<0.001	0.85	0.79, 0.92	<0.001	0.83	0.77, 0.89	<0.001	
2021						0.67	0.62, 0.72	<0.001	0.82	0.76, 0.89	<0.001	0.77	0.71, 0.83	<0.001	0.70	0.65, 0.76	<0.001	0.72	0.67, 0.78	<0.001	0.53	0.49, 0.57	<0.001	

**Age of the Parent**

15-24

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Characteristic	BASE Model			MODEL 0			MODEL 1			MODEL 2			MODEL 3			MODEL 4			MODEL 5			MODEL 6				
	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value	95% CI		p-value		
	OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI		OR	CI			
25-34							0.85	0.78, 0.92	<0.001	0.91	0.84, 0.99	0.025	0.88	0.81, 0.95	0.002	0.89	0.82, 0.96	0.004	0.93	0.85, 1.01	0.079					
35-44							0.45	0.41, 0.49	<0.001	0.52	0.48, 0.56	<0.001	0.51	0.47, 0.55	<0.001	0.52	0.48, 0.56	<0.001	0.64	0.58, 0.70	<0.001					
45-54							0.34	0.31, 0.37	<0.001	0.42	0.38, 0.46	<0.001	0.41	0.38, 0.45	<0.001	0.43	0.39, 0.47	<0.001	0.65	0.58, 0.72	<0.001					
55-65							0.33	0.28, 0.39	<0.001	0.46	0.39, 0.54	<0.001	0.46	0.39, 0.54	<0.001	0.48	0.41, 0.57	<0.001	0.76	0.64, 0.90	0.002					
<b>Marital Status</b>																										
divorced or seperated																										
never married													1.18	1.13, 1.24	<0.001	1.24	1.18, 1.29	<0.001	1.18	1.13, 1.24	<0.001	1.20	1.15, 1.26	<0.001		
widowed													0.48	0.43, 0.53	<0.001	0.45	0.41, 0.51	<0.001	0.45	0.40, 0.50	<0.001	0.44	0.39, 0.49	<0.001		



Characteristic	BASE Model			MODEL 0			MODEL 1			MODEL 2			MODEL 3			MODEL 4			MODEL 5			MODEL 6		
	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value	95% CI <sup>1</sup>		p-value
	OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>		OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>		OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>		OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>		OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>		OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>		OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>		OR <sup>1</sup>	CI <sup>1</sup>	
Three or more children																						2.65	2.47, 2.85	<0.001
<b>Age of youngest Child</b>																								
Child 0-2																						—	—	
Child 3-5																						0.94	0.87, 1.01	0.10
Child 6-9																						0.77	0.72, 0.83	<0.001
Child 10-14																						0.63	0.58, 0.68	<0.001
Child 15-17																						0.56	0.51, 0.61	<0.001

<sup>1</sup> OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval

**Table 3: Adjusted Interaction Model Gender and Education**

Characteristic	OR <sup>1</sup>	95% CI <sup>1</sup>	p-value
Gender * Education			
lone father * 1-lower level	5.13	4.43, 5.93	<0.001
lone mother * 1-lower level	8.27	7.54, 9.09	<0.001
lone father * 2-vocational training	2.01	1.78, 2.27	<0.001
lone mother * 2-vocational training	2.70	2.47, 2.96	<0.001
lone father * 3-university degree	0.74	0.57, 0.94	0.017
lone mother * 3-university degree			

<sup>1</sup> OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval

**Table 4: Interaction Model Gender and Survey Year**

Characteristic	OR <sup>1</sup>	95% CI <sup>1</sup>	p-value
Gender * year			
lone father * 1996	1.05	0.88, 1.24	0.6
lone mother * 1996	1.94	1.78, 2.12	<0.001
lone father * 2000	1.46	1.20, 1.76	<0.001
lone mother * 2000	2.29	2.11, 2.50	<0.001
lone father * 2004	2.06	1.73, 2.44	<0.001

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>OR<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>95% CI<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>p-value</b>
lone mother * 2004	2.52	2.32, 2.74	<0.001
lone father * 2008	1.98	1.61, 2.41	<0.001
lone mother * 2008	2.60	2.40, 2.82	<0.001
lone father * 2012	1.57	1.27, 1.92	<0.001
lone mother * 2012	2.01	1.85, 2.19	<0.001
lone father * 2016	1.32	1.08, 1.60	0.006
lone mother * 2016	1.53	1.41, 1.67	<0.001
lone father * 2021	0.65	0.54, 0.78	<0.001
lone mother * 2021			

<sup>1</sup> OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval

Model Statistics:

Model Comparison Statistics

<b>Model</b>	<b>Log Likelihood</b>	<b>McFadden R<sup>2</sup></b>
Model 0	-35919.0689	0.0068
Model 1	-33071.7292	0.0856

Model Comparison Statistics

<b>Model</b>	<b>Log Likelihood</b>	<b>McFadden R<sup>2</sup></b>
Model 2	-32682.8394	0.0963
Model 3	-31838.6684	0.1197
Model 4	-31642.9997	0.1251
Model 5	-31441.3158	0.1307
Model 6	-31264.7072	0.1355
Model 7	-30951.4572	0.1442