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Adult Workers in Theory or Practice? Lone Mothers' Participation in Active Labour Market Programmes in Germany

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Abstract

This paper examines lone mothers' participation in active labour market programmes in Germany. Since the 2005 Hartz IV employment and welfare policy reforms, expectations that non-employed parents receiving means-tested benefits should be ready for employment or labour market programme participation have grown stronger. However, discretion for programme assignments is left to individual caseworkers. As a consequence, it is not clear to what extent the formal policy orientation towards an adult worker model of the family is reflected in practical policy implementations. Thus, lone mothers' participation in active labour market programmes is studied empirically here on the basis of large-scale administrative data, using event-history analysis. Findings are that lone mothers are treated as adult workers with respect to workfare and training programmes even when their children are still quite young. As soon as their youngest child is 3 - 5 years old, lone mothers' transition rates into these programmes are as high as for childless single women. In the case of programmes that provide more direct pathways into regular employment, like job subsidies and in-firm training programmes, however, participation rates for lone mothers of young children are substantially lower than for childless single women.

1. Introduction

This paper examines whether lone mothers in Germany participate in labour market integration programmes, such as workfare or training programmes, as frequently as do childless single women. Germany has traditionally been characterized as a male breadwinner country. More recently, however, it has followed other European countries in reorienting employment and family policies towards an adult worker model of the family, that is, a family model where all adult members are expected to be employed.

In 2005, a major policy reform, known as the Hartz IV reform, took place that combined the former welfare benefit and the former benefit for the long-term unemployed. Activation policies call for labour market integration of all recipients of the resulting new means-tested *Arbeitslosengeld II* (Unemployment Benefit II). Those caring for young children are not generally exempt. To what

extent these formal policy guidelines are implemented in practice however remains a question for empirical analysis, as caseworkers are left room for discretion in assigning benefit recipients to activation programmes.

This paper focuses on lone mothers, whose case is particularly interesting since their role is often ambivalent between being wage-earners and carers. Welfare state policies that over-emphasize lone mothers' role as carers can be problematic if this leads to their exclusion from paid employment. However, policies that assume that lone mothers are unconditionally available for employment can be just as problematic when realities of childcare constraints are not taken into account. In Germany, the reform in 2005 set the formal framework for strong activation requirements for lone mothers. Yet, it is unclear to what extent these activation policies are implemented in practice.

Practical implementations of activation policies may differ between eastern and western Germany. Culturally and institutionally, western Germany has a long male-breadwinner tradition. In eastern Germany, on the other hand, a dual-earner heritage is still evident even after unification. Childcare is still much more extensive in eastern Germany, and maternal employment rates also remain higher than in western Germany. Thus, this paper examines whether lone mothers are treated more similarly to childless single women in terms of assignments to labour market programmes in eastern Germany than in western Germany.

To investigate lone mothers' participation in labour market integration programmes, entry rates into these programmes are estimated on the basis of a unique large-scale administrative data set covering the entire population of unemployed means-tested benefit recipients. Further analyses look into the impact of the local childcare infrastructure on programme participation rates.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section discusses international developments of employment and welfare policies for lone parents. This includes a discussion of the Hartz IV employment and welfare policy reform in Germany in 2005, its implications for lone parents, and the employment

programmes introduced in the course of the reform. This is followed by a summary of lone mothers' socio-economic situation in Germany, as well as an overview of past and present differences in family policies between eastern and western Germany. After developing the research questions, the data and method of analysis is discussed. This is followed by a presentation of the empirical results. The main findings are summarized in the conclusion, and the last section indicates possible policy implications.

2. Employment Policy Reforms: Reorientation Towards the Adult Worker Model of the Family

Recent employment and family policy reforms in Germany encouraging all parents' employment follow developments in many other European and Anglo-Saxon countries. In a number of countries, social policy reforms took place in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st century, entailing a shift in the role lone mothers are assumed and encouraged to play. Prior to the reforms, lone mothers with young children receiving income support were largely exempt from work requirements.

Lewis (2001) identifies a shift in policy assumptions in Europe about how families organize paid and care work. For a large part of the 20th century, policy makers assumed a relatively strict gender division of labour, where men were primarily responsible for paid work, and women were responsible for child and elderly care. This family model has been termed the 'male breadwinner' model of the family (Lewis, 1992; Pfau-Effinger, 2004). Social policies provided support for male breadwinner families in the form of derived rights to social security and health insurance for non-working spouses of the employed (Orloff, 1993; Sainsbury, 1993). In many countries, lone mothers were eligible for income supports so that they did not have to take up paid work and could care for their children full-time. Since the 1990s, welfare states are now however increasingly assuming that families operate according to a different model, which Lewis (1992) calls the 'adult worker' model of the family. Policies based upon the adult worker model of the family assume and encourage participation in the labour market by all adults. In many European countries, this has become

evident in work requirements for lone parents with children of increasingly younger ages (Kennedy, 2010; Knijn, 2004; Mogstad & Pronzato, 2008). Tax credits and income supplements were also increased in several countries to make employment more attractive for lone parents (Francesconi & van der Klaauw, 2007; Giddings, Dingeldey & Ulbricht, 2004; Knijn, Martin & Millar, 2007).

2.1 The Hartz IV Employment and Welfare Policy Reform in Germany

In the course of the 2005 Hartz IV reforms in Germany, the former *Arbeitslosenhilfe* (Unemployment Assistance) for long-term unemployed persons and the *Sozialhilfe* (Welfare Benefit) were merged to form the new *Arbeitslosengeld II* (Unemployment Benefit II). *Arbeitslosengeld II* is a flat-rate household-level benefit and is means-tested. The objective of the reform was to reduce the generally high level of unemployment, especially long-term unemployment. The unemployment and welfare benefit systems in Germany were previously perceived to provide too few work incentives. Thus, since the Hartz IV reform in 2005, people who run out of their earnings-based Unemployment Insurance no longer have access for an unlimited duration of time to Unemployment Assistance, which was also earnings-related, albeit at a somewhat lower rate. Instead, after 6 - 24 months of Unemployment Insurance, depending on previous employment duration and age, people now directly switch to the new flat-rate *Arbeitslosengeld II* (ALG II), the same benefit paid to former welfare benefit recipients. In principle, there is no time limit to the receipt of ALG II. However, the level of payments is comparatively low and recipients are faced with intensive activity requirements, especially in the form of assignments to active labour market programmes. Thus, people who become unemployed are now under more pressure to search for a new job quickly. The goal for former welfare benefit recipients, who now also receive ALG II, is likewise to increase their chances of labour market integration via more intensive activation measures (Bruttel & Sol, 2006; Dingeldey, 2007; Eichhorst, Grienberger-Zingerle & Konle-Seidl, 2010; Jacobi & Kluge, 2007).

Lone mothers were previously overrepresented among welfare benefit recipients in western Germany and among unemployment benefit recipients in eastern Germany (Konietzka & Kreyenfeld, 2005). Now, they are

overrepresented among recipients of the new ALG II (Lietzmann, 2011). The aim of this study is to determine whether the intensive activity requirements attached to the new ALG II are implemented for lone mothers to the same extent as for childless singles.

ALG II benefit recipients are required to be available for any type of employment. Those with childcare responsibilities are not generally exempt. However, legislation regulating the terms of benefit receipt does stipulate that benefit recipients' employment should not endanger their children's upbringing. It is then stated that as a rule, children's upbringing is not endangered by their parents' employment if they are three years old or older and have access to adequate childcare arrangements (Social Code II 2003 s 10(1)(3)). This formulation is chosen in such a way as to remain inexplicit about the employability of parents of children under three years of age. Thus, much room is left for caseworkers' discretion concerning what constitutes adequate childcare and how those with children younger than three are to be treated.

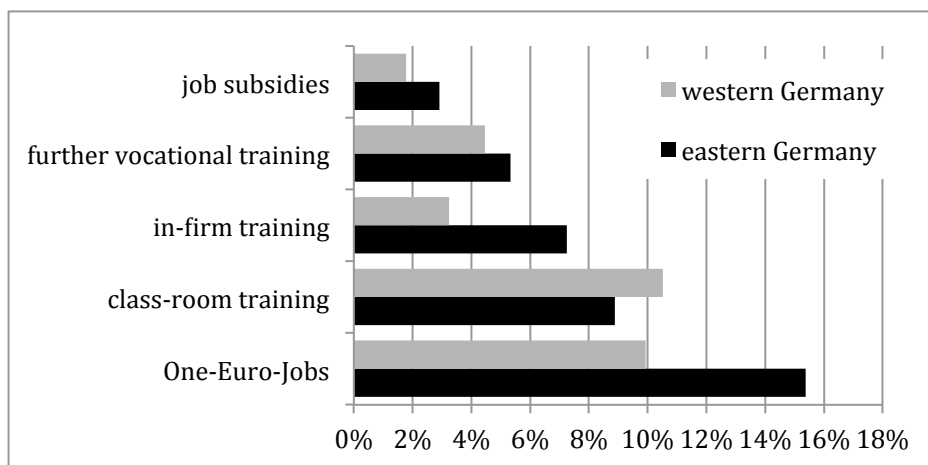
Before 2005, welfare benefit recipients in Germany responsible for caring for one child usually did not have to be available for employment until their child reached school age, or if they had more than one child, until their youngest child was 10 years old (Adema, Gray & Kahl, 2003). After the reform, however, stronger emphasis has been put on activation policies for former welfare benefit recipients, including parents of young children. Further changes brought about by the Hartz IV reform in 2005 affect the type of family model supported for couple households. All members of households receiving ALG II who are capable of working are now required to be available for job placement, not just the formerly employed (usually male) breadwinner of the household. These reforms reflect European Employment Strategy (EES) guidelines encouraging policies supporting an adult worker model of the family (Annesley, 2007; Giullari & Lewis, 2005).

2.2 Types of Labour Market Programmes for *Arbeitslosengeld II*

Recipients

In contrast to welfare reforms in other countries like the United States (Lower-Basch & Greenberg, 2009), no time limits for the flat-rate ALG II were set in Germany. Instead, the main means of activating non-employed recipients of ALG II is via assignments to labour market programmes. Lone mothers' participation in five different types of labour market programmes is studied here. Descriptive results for lone mothers' participation probabilities in each type of labour market programme are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Lone mothers' probability of taking part in a given type of labour market programme as a first programme within two years of *Arbeitslosengeld II* receipt while not employed*



*calculated from Kaplan-Meier estimates as cumulative probability of taking part in a given programme within each one-day time interval and not yet having taken part in any other programme

These programmes differ in the extent to which they can contribute to improving benefit recipients' skills, and in the extent to which they are used to exert pressure on benefit recipients to increase their job search efforts. Benefit recipients can be sanctioned by benefit cuts if they do not attend programmes to which they are assigned.

One-Euro-Jobs (*Ein-Euro-Jobs*) are a programme where participants receive 1 - 2 Euros an hour in addition to their regular benefit (Hohmeyer & Wolff, 2012). The work performed is usually quite low-skilled and is mostly located in the public or nonprofit sector. One-Euro-Jobs are intended to accustom people with little employment experience to a regular work schedule, but seldom provide a direct pathway into regular employment. This is because the work performed must be of public utility and may not replace regular jobs. Thus, the content of One-Euro-Jobs often differs strongly from that of regular jobs. An important function of One-Euro-Jobs is also to exert pressure on benefit recipients to increase their search effort for regular work. Being required to participate in a One-Euro-Job implies less leisure time, thus reducing the value of benefit receipt. One-Euro-Jobs have often been described as 'workfare'. Indeed, regulations for One-Euro-Jobs do seem to fit general definitions of workfare, such as presented in the internationally comparative volume on workfare by Lødemel and Trickey (2000). There, workfare is defined as "programmes or schemes that require people to work in return for social assistance benefits" (p.6). ALG II recipients are required to accept One-Euro-Jobs (officially called *Arbeitsgelegenheiten* (Work Opportunities)) if no regular employment can be found. This is explicitly stipulated in the Social Code II, which regulates the conditions for ALG II receipt (Social Code II 2003 s 2 (1)(3)).

Class-room training programmes (*schulische Trainingsmaßnahmen*) can more directly contribute to improving benefit recipients' skills. However, their potential for skill-enhancement is limited by their comparatively short duration of a few days to 12 weeks. Some class-room training programmes involve only application training, while others consist of skill training courses, aptitude tests, or work tests (Kopf, 2012). Besides serving to improve benefit recipients' skills, class-room training programmes can also be used to test their willingness to work and benefit recipients can be sanctioned if they are assigned to a course and do not attend.

Further vocational training programmes (*Förderung der beruflichen Weiterbildung*), by contrast, are longer and more varied in content (IZA, DIW & infas, 2005; Kruppe, 2009). They can provide benefit recipients with

opportunities to find courses that fit their specific needs. Benefit recipients receive a voucher that they can use to enrol in a class offered by an external, certified provider. Vocational training programmes run for a median duration of 3 months.

In-firm training programmes (*betriebliche Trainingsmaßnahmen*) offer direct pathways into regular employment by providing contacts to future potential employers. They usually take the form of short internships, lasting between four and twelve weeks, and provide skill training or aptitude tests. Evaluation studies have found in-firm training programmes to greatly increase benefit recipients' chances of subsequent employment (Kopf, 2012).

Job subsidies can either take the form of employer subsidies (*Eingliederungszuschuss*), or the form of income supplements paid directly to ALG II recipients when they take up low wage jobs (*Einstiegsgeld für abhängig Beschäftigte*). The goal of these subsidies is to enable benefit recipients to gain employment experience in order to eventually improve their opportunities for better paid employment. Indeed, job subsidies have been found to substantially increase participants' chances of subsequent unsubsidized employment (Bernhard, Gartner & Stephan, 2008).

3. Lone Mothers' Socio-Economic Characteristics in Germany

In order to later develop hypotheses on the implementation of activation programmes for lone mothers, it is first important to gain an impression of lone mothers' general situation in Germany, including their degree of labour force attachment and economic resources.

In Germany, the most common pathway into lone parenthood is divorce. If the couple previously practiced a traditional division of labour, divorce can easily imply serious economic problems for women, especially when they are the ones to obtain custody of the children. The great majority of lone parents in Germany (90%) are indeed women (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010). This is also the reason why this paper concentrates on lone mothers. Estimates for lone fathers

were run as well, as can be seen in Table A.1, but the sample sizes for lone fathers are small and the results are often not significant.

The overall employment rate for lone mothers (60%) is quite similar to that of mothers with a partner (58%). However, lone mothers in Germany are more likely to be working full-time than mothers with a partner, at 42% vs. 27% of the employed in 2009. Although they worked full-time at higher rates, 31% of lone mothers depended on transfer payments as their main source of income in 2009, compared to only 6% of mothers with a partner. A likely explanation is that mothers with a partner, even if they are not working or are working only part-time, are much better able to rely on support from the father's income than is the case for lone mothers (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010).

Lone mothers who are not working appear to be more interested in finding employment than is the case for mothers with a partner. Of all lone mothers who were not employed in 2009, 37% were actively looking for a job, compared to only 13% of mothers with a partner (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010). Lietzmann (2011) also finds that lone mothers receiving ALG II attribute more intrinsic value to employment than do mothers with a partner.

Altogether, lone mothers' comparatively high level of employment orientation may be expected to impact their rates of assignment to employment programmes in practice. If caseworkers in employment offices perceive lone mothers to be highly interested in improving their employment prospects, they might assign them to employment programmes more often than mothers with a partner. On the other hand, caseworkers as well as lone mothers could nevertheless consider incompatibilities with childcare as too large an obstacle to allow participation in employment programmes. Lone mothers' high level of dependence on transfer payments does seem to indicate that combining employment and childcare is still quite a challenge in Germany.

4. Family Policies - Past and Present Differences Between Eastern and Western Germany

The goal of this study is to determine to what extent activation policies are actually implemented for lone mothers in Germany. Family policies are likely to be especially influential in this respect. The childcare infrastructure should be particularly important for lone parents' possibilities to take part in labour market integration programmes. Furthermore, family policies may interact with and reinforce cultural ideals concerning the organization of family life, for instance whether the role as a full-time carer or as a wage-earner is considered to be most desirable for mothers (Pfau-Effinger, 2004). Role expectations based on these cultural ideals can in turn be expected to impact caseworkers' decisions about allocations to activation programmes.

Family policies passed in West Germany in the second half of the 20th century have tended to support the male breadwinner model of the family (Pfau-Effinger, 2004). For instance, one-earner married couples strongly benefit from the tax system in Germany (Schatzenstaller, 2002). In addition, health insurance is available free of additional costs for non-working spouses of the employed. Childcare provision rates in West Germany were quite low. In 1990, childcare spaces were available for only 2% of children aged 0 - 2 and 78% of children aged 3 - 6 (Table 1). Most kindergartens ran for only half the day, as was the case for schools. Accordingly, increases in women's employment since the 1960s were mainly in the form of part-time employment (Rosenfeld, Trappe & Gornick, 2004).

The institutional framework in East Germany, on the other hand, encouraged dual earner families. Childcare was provided extensively. As shown in Table 1, the childcare provision rate was 80% for children aged 0-2, and 95% for children aged 3 to school age near the end of the GDR in 1989, according to official GDR statistics. The wage level was set so as to make it difficult for families to live on only one income (Pfau-Effinger & Smidt, 2011). People generally worked long hours, given a legal standard work week of 43.75 hours, reduced to 40 hours for mothers of two or more children. In contrast to West Germany, part-time work was largely reserved for older persons as an entry

pathway into retirement. Thus, altogether, family and employment policies in East Germany can be described as enforcing, as well as supporting, an adult worker model of the family. The majority of men and women did in fact work full-time for the greatest part of their adult lives. Women's labour force participation rate in East Germany was the highest in the world in 1989, at 89% (Rosenfeld, Trappe & Gornick, 2004).

In the unified Germany, quite recently, family policy reforms have shown evidence of a reorientation in the direction of encouraging an adult worker model of the family (Lewis et al., 2008). This appears to have been motivated in part by concerns over low birth rates, and also reflects recommendations of European Employment Strategy (EES) guidelines (Annesley, 2007; Henninger, Wimbauer & Dombrowski, 2008). Rates of childcare provision have increased across the last decade, as can be seen in Table 1. Furthermore, up until 2007, parental leave benefits in Germany were paid at a low flat-rate level only, making it difficult to sustain economic independence during leave. Since 2007 though, parental leave benefits based on previous income have been made available for one year (Geisler & Kreyenfeld, 2011).

Despite these recent reforms, important differences remain between eastern and western Germany in areas affecting the relation between employment and family life even today. As can be seen in Table 1, there are still large differences in levels of childcare provision. Furthermore, mothers' full-time employment rates remain over twice as high in eastern as in western Germany (Kreyenfeld & Geisler, 2006; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010). Surveys also continue to reveal differences in people's attitudes towards maternal employment between eastern and western Germany. Scheuer and Dittmann (2007) show that in 2006, 60% of western Germans agreed with the statement that small children will suffer if their mother is working, while this was the case for only 23% of eastern Germans. Drasch (2011) likewise finds that eastern Germans are consistently more favourable of maternal employment, for the years 1990 through 2008.

Thus, it does seem that cultural adherence to the adult worker model of the family is still evident in eastern Germany, while support for the male

breadwinner model of the family remains stronger in western Germany. Along with differences in levels of childcare provision, this may very well be expected to lead to divergence in practical implementations of activation policies for mothers in eastern as compared to western Germany.

Table 1: Childcare provision rates in eastern and western Germany

	1989*	1990	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ages 0-2											
GDR/ e. Germany	80%		54%	42%	36%	37%	37%	41%	42%	46%	48%
FRG/ w. Germany		2%		2%	3%	3%	7%	10%	12%	14%	17%
Ages 3-6: overall											
GDR/ e. Germany	95%		114%	96%	112%	105%	92%	94%	95%	95%	95%
FRG/ w. Germany		78%		73%	87%	90%	86%	88%	90%	91%	92%
Ages 3-6: full-day											
GDR/ e. Germany								60%	62%	65%	68%
FRG/ w. Germany								17%	20%	23%	25%

* Figures for 1989 are official GDR statistics. Figures from 1990 onwards are figures of the German Federal Statistical Office.

Sources: Trappe (1995), Deutsches Jugendinstitut (1998), Statistisches Bundesamt (2004), Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011).

5. Research Questions

Unemployed means-tested benefit recipients responsible for caring for young children can be required to participate in activation programmes in Germany, just the same as childless benefit recipients, given that adequate childcare is available. This indicates a policy orientation towards an adult worker model of the family. However, caseworkers in employment offices are left room for

discretion over whom they assign to employment programmes. Thus, it is not clear to what extent this formal orientation towards an adult worker model of the family is reflected in practical policy implementations.

In the case of lone mothers, it is especially difficult to predict programme participation rates in practice. On the one hand, caseworkers may refrain from assigning lone mothers to labour market programmes due to their childcare constraints. On the other hand, they may regard lone mothers' programme participations to be especially important for improving their employment prospects and economic situation. In interactions with caseworkers, lone mothers might to some extent likewise influence whether and to which programmes they are assigned.

The strength of this study is to provide a representative analysis of lone mothers' actual programme participation rates, using a unique large-scale administrative data set. The results from this study give evidence of the overall level of lone mothers' programme participation rates compared to other population groups, controlling for a wide range of possibly confounding factors. This can show to what degree the formal policy orientation towards an adult worker model of the family is implemented in practice in the case of lone mothers. It is an endeavour for future research to conduct case studies investigating the relative importance for the outcomes presented here of caseworkers' attitudes towards lone mothers, lone mothers' own preferences, or of informal implementation routines at the level of employment offices. Case studies can provide insight into the pathways along which formal policies are translated into practical implementations, while this study provides representative results on the outcomes of those processes.

A first hypothesis for the empirical analyses is that lone mothers' participation rates in active labour market programmes are generally lower than for childless single women, despite the policy shift towards the adult worker model of the family. It is likely that lone mothers' childcare obligations are at least to some extent perceived as an obstacle to programme participations by caseworkers as well as by lone mothers themselves.

Secondly, it is likely that lone mothers' programme participation rates are influenced by the compatibility of programme schedules with childcare. Ideally, programmes should be chosen based on whether their content is suited to benefit recipients' needs. However, in practice, compatibility of childcare with programme schedules may have a greater impact on allocations to programmes than programme content. Class-room training programmes and vocational training programmes are available on a part-time basis. Work hours for One-Euro-Jobs vary. Most One-Euro-Jobs are designed for a working week of about 30 hours, but shorter work hours are available as well. Thus, these three programmes should be more compatible with childcare than other programmes. In-firm training programmes as well as job subsidies, on the other hand, involve working in firms at weekly hours and daily schedules determined by employers, which may be less flexible. Employers may also be reluctant to accept parents with childcare responsibilities for firm-based programmes, if they assume that they may be less reliable. Thus, it is likely that lone mothers' relative programme participation rates will be higher in the case of class-room training programmes, vocational training programmes, and perhaps also One-Euro-Jobs than for job subsidies or in-firm training programmes.

Furthermore, relative programme participation rates for lone mothers as well as mothers with a partner are likely to be lower in western than in eastern Germany. Western Germany has a long male-breadwinner tradition, and role expectations based on this family model are still widespread, as described earlier. Traditional maternal role expectations may be stronger for mothers with a partner than for lone mothers, since a male breadwinner model is potentially possible in the case of the former. In eastern Germany, the situation is likely to be different. As discussed earlier, family policies in socialist times supported an adult worker model of the family. Younger generations have come to value possibilities for mothers to be employed, and continue to aspire to a dual earner family model even today (Pfau-Effinger & Smidt, 2011). In addition, childcare is available at substantially higher rates in eastern Germany. Thus, programme participation rates for lone mothers, childless single women, and mothers with a partner should be more similar to each other in eastern Germany than is the case in western Germany.

Goals of integrating lone mothers into the labour market will be most in conflict with childcare constraints for those with very young children. Thus, programme participation rates can be expected to depend strongly on the age of the youngest child, particularly in western Germany.

Further analyses in this study investigate the impact of the local childcare infrastructure on programme participation rates, making use of district-level indicators of childcare availability. The research question in this context is whether programme assignments respond to childcare availability, or whether decisions on programme assignments are based on family status alone.

6. Data and Method

Analyses are conducted using administrative data from the Integrated Employment Biography¹ and Unemployment Benefit II History data sets. The data on unemployment, job search, programme participation, and benefit receipt originate from employment offices, while data on contributory employment originate from notifications sent by employers to health and pension insurance funds.

The method of analysis used is event-history analysis. The dependent variable is the risk of entering a given labour market programme. People are considered to be at risk of entering a labour market programme when they at the same time receive *Arbeitslosengeld II* (ALG II), are not employed, and not already participating in any type of labour market programme. For each individual, the first risk period starting between 1 October 2005 and 31 December 2007 is used for the analyses. The observation period ends in December 2008.

The sample consists of all persons who had at least one such risk period in this time span, were 15 - 64 years of age, and not incapable of working due to a disability or similar reasons. In total, the sample comprises 2,955,102 persons. Episodes are censored when individuals enter employment, no longer receive ALG II, enter a different programme, turn 65 years of age, are no longer

¹ Dorner et al. (2010) provide a description of a 2% public use version of this data set. The analyses in this

capable of working, or at the end of the observation window on the 31 December 2008².

Separate hazard models are estimated for entries into each of the labour market programmes studied here. The main independent variable of interest is an interaction between population group and age of the youngest child, for which results are shown in Figures 2 - 6. For transition rates into One-Euro-Jobs and in-firm training programmes, complete estimates are included in Table A.1 in the Appendix as an example³. Control variables used here are individuals' own age, their nationality, their level of education, whether they are disabled, the time period in which the episode started, previous cumulative duration of ALG II receipt without regular employment or programme participation, duration since the last unsubsidized contributory job, occupation in the last job, income in the last job, the duration since the last labour market programme, and the type of last labour market programme. A number of regional indicators were included as control variables as well. These include the district-level unemployment rate, proportion of the unemployed receiving ALG II, population density, GDP per capita, percentage of the population that is economically active, and percentages of the economically active that are working in different sectors⁴.

A second set of models includes an interaction between population group and the local childcare infrastructure⁵, as well as a number of further population group interaction effects, such as interactions with number of children, marital status, the partner's employment status, education, and current programme participation. Results from these models for the effect of the local childcare infrastructure are shown in Figures 7 - 8.

² The data excludes the districts in which ALG II is administered by local authorities alone. Due to data collection problems, no systematic information was available from these districts. Around 13% of unemployed ALG II recipients were clients of job centres in these districts, according to estimates of the Federal Employment Agency (Hohmeyer & Wolff, 2010)

³ To save space, complete estimates are not shown for the other programme types, but are available from the author.

⁴ The district-level indicators are based on data from the Federal Employment Agency (Statistics Department of the German Public Employment Service, 2010) as well as the Federal Statistical Office (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, 2010)

⁵ For sources of the childcare indicators see Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011) and Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland IVC/Statistik (2011).

7. Results

The results presented here aim to determine whether the orientation towards an adult worker model of the family inherent in the Hartz IV welfare and employment policy reform in 2005 is reflected in lone mothers' assignments to labour market integration programmes in practice. To gain insight into this question, lone mothers' programme participation rates are compared to those of other population groups, with a focus on comparisons to childless single women.

Figure 2 and Table A.1⁶ show results for transition rates into the workfare programme known as One-Euro-Jobs⁷. Single childless women are the reference category. As can be seen in Figure 2, for lone mothers in eastern Germany with children aged three or above, entry rates into One-Euro-Jobs are at least as high as for childless single women. In western Germany, lone mothers' entry rates are nearly as high as for childless single women. Thus, it seems that the formal policy orientation towards the adult worker model is indeed reflected in lone mothers' programme participations in practice. They do not appear to be treated any differently on the basis of their family status than childless singles. This is quite surprising, particularly for western Germany, where childcare constraints still provide substantial employment obstacles for mothers of young children. Findings are very similar for class-room training programmes, as well as for further vocational training programmes, as can be seen in Figures 3 - 4.

Mothers with a partner in western Germany by contrast have very low participation rates in each of these programmes. For instance, entry rates into One-Euro-Jobs for mothers with a partner whose youngest child is aged 3 - 5 are 56% lower than for single childless women (Figure 2 and Table A.1). Thus, for mothers with a partner in western Germany, the formal policy orientation towards an adult worker model of the family does not seem to translate into high levels of assignments to active labour market programmes in practice. It is likely

⁶ see footnote 3.

⁷ Further model specifications were also run controlling for unobserved heterogeneity on the individual level, and further models controlled for unobserved heterogeneity at the district level. This did not substantively alter the results.

that the strong male breadwinner tradition in western Germany continues to influence role expectations among caseworkers and benefit recipients alike. In eastern Germany, on the other hand, programme participation rates for mothers with a partner are much more similar to those of lone mothers. It is likely that due to the longer adult worker tradition in eastern Germany, caseworkers see mothers with a partner as wage earners, and not primarily as carers.

As can be seen in Figures 2 - 6, entry rates into labour market programmes are very low for mothers of children aged 0 - 2. In western Germany, this may be due to low availability of childcare for children in this age group. In eastern Germany, however, childcare for this age group is available at comparatively high rates. Nonetheless, programme participation rates are low. Thus, it seems that childcare availability is not the only criterion. The legislation which regulates conditions for the receipt of ALG II does not make any explicit statement about the employability of parents of children aged less than three. However, it does state that parents of children aged three or above should generally be considered to be employable as long as adequate childcare is available. It seems that employment offices use this statement as a general point of reference and begin assigning mothers to employment programmes as soon as their youngest child is aged three or above.

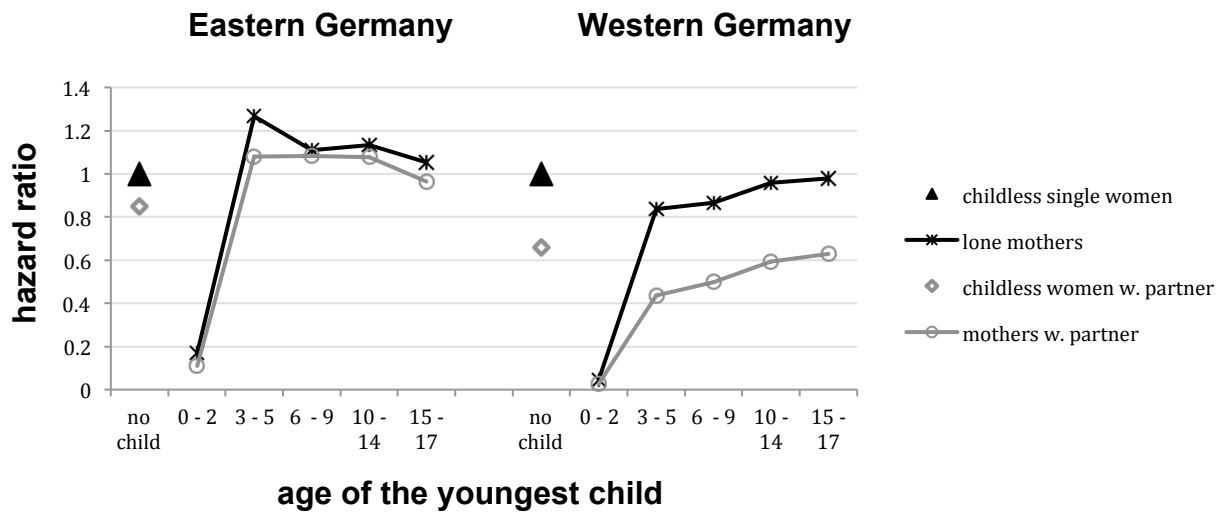
Figures 5 - 6 show relative entry rates into in-firm training programmes and job subsidies. Complete estimates for entries into in-firm training programmes are shown in Table A.1⁸. In contrast to the programmes discussed so far, entry rates into in-firm training programmes and job subsidies for lone mothers of young children are comparatively low. In-firm training programmes and job subsidies take place in firms and work hours are determined by employers. It is likely that incompatibilities with childcare obligations make it difficult for lone mothers to participate in these programmes. A further possibility might be that there is discrimination against people with childcare responsibilities, such that those with young children are excluded from these programmes on the basis of their family status alone. Previous research has found that in-firm training

⁸ see footnote 3.

programmes and job subsidies have the strongest positive effects of all programmes on participants' subsequent employment outcomes. Thus, lone mothers with young children are at a serious disadvantage if they are not able to participate in these programmes. Lone mothers with older children in western Germany however have especially high entry rates into job subsidies. Possibly, this programme is used to aid lone mothers with older children who have interrupted their employment to re-enter the labour market.

As can be seen in Table A.1, participation in labour market programmes is not only determined by family status, but also by factors such as qualification and employment experience. The estimation results show, for instance, that benefit recipients with lower educational degrees and lower incomes in their last job are more likely to participate in One-Euro-Jobs. Thus, it seems that One-Euro-Jobs are especially directed towards persons with greater difficulties of finding regular employment. In the case of in-firm training programmes, on the other hand, programme entry rates are higher for benefit recipients with higher earnings in their previous job and higher educational degrees. Thus, it seems that benefit recipients are expected to be quite well qualified already as a precondition to participate in in-firm training programmes. Qualification and last income, as well as many other control variables, were included in the estimations since lone mothers may differ from childless singles or mothers with a partner in these respects. The effects shown in Figures 2 - 6 below are effects of family status net of the influence of employment experience, qualification, as well as all the other variables shown in Table A.1. Thus, it seems that lower participation rates for lone mothers than childless singles in firm-based programmes, for instance, are not related to differences in qualification or employment experience. Rather, these differences must indeed be related to lone mothers' specific situation, either in terms of difficulties in finding sufficient childcare, or in terms of prejudices preventing them from being chosen for firm-based programmes.

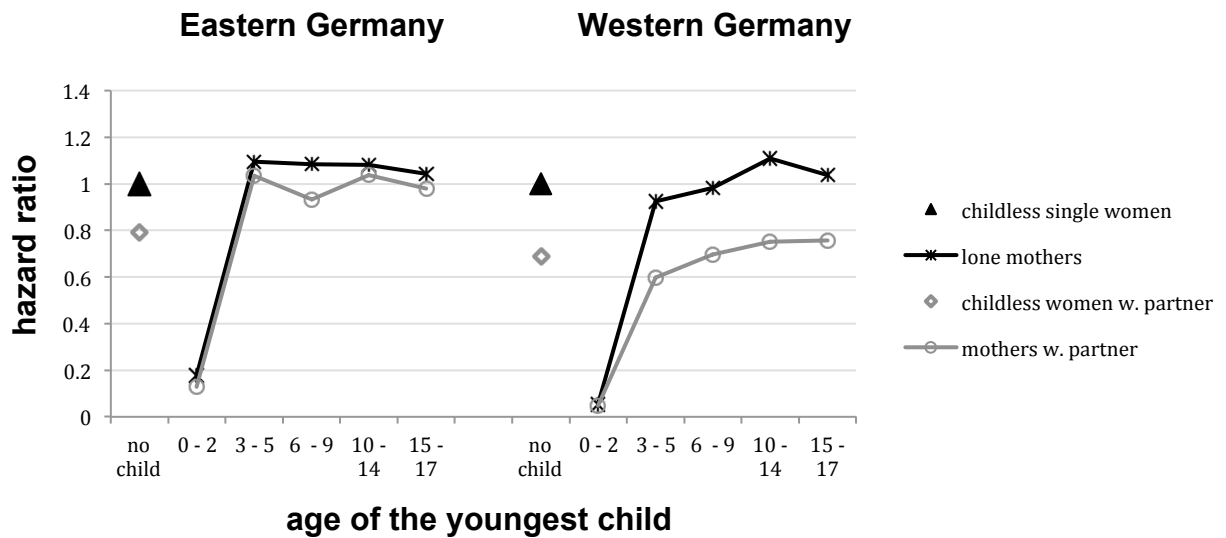
Figure 2: Transition rates into One-Euro-Jobs**



reference category: childless single women

** control variables: see Table A.1 and methods section

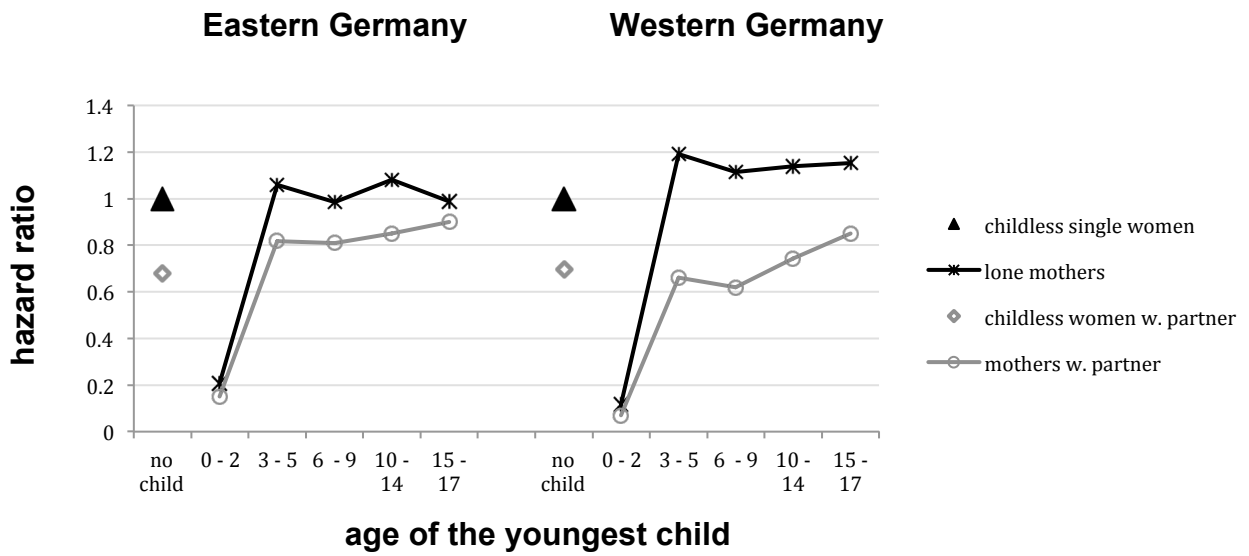
Figure 3: Transition rates into class-room training programmes**



reference category: childless single women

** control variables: see Table A.1 and methods section

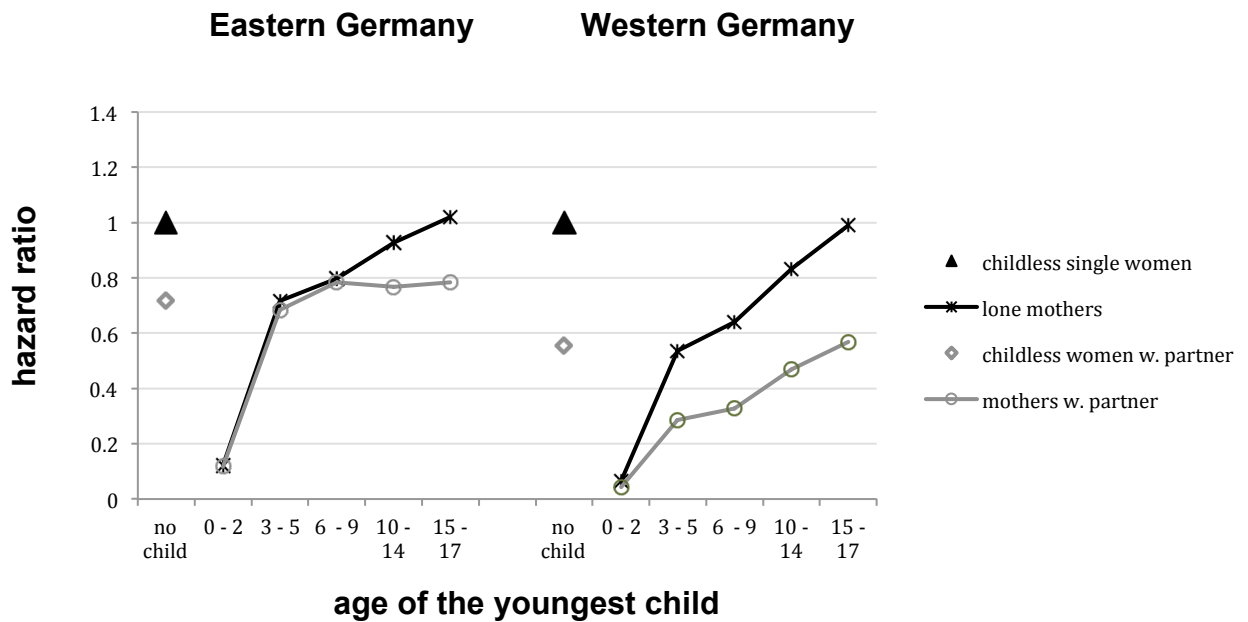
Figure 4: Transition rates into vocational training programmes**



reference category: childless single women

** control variables: see Table A.1 and methods section

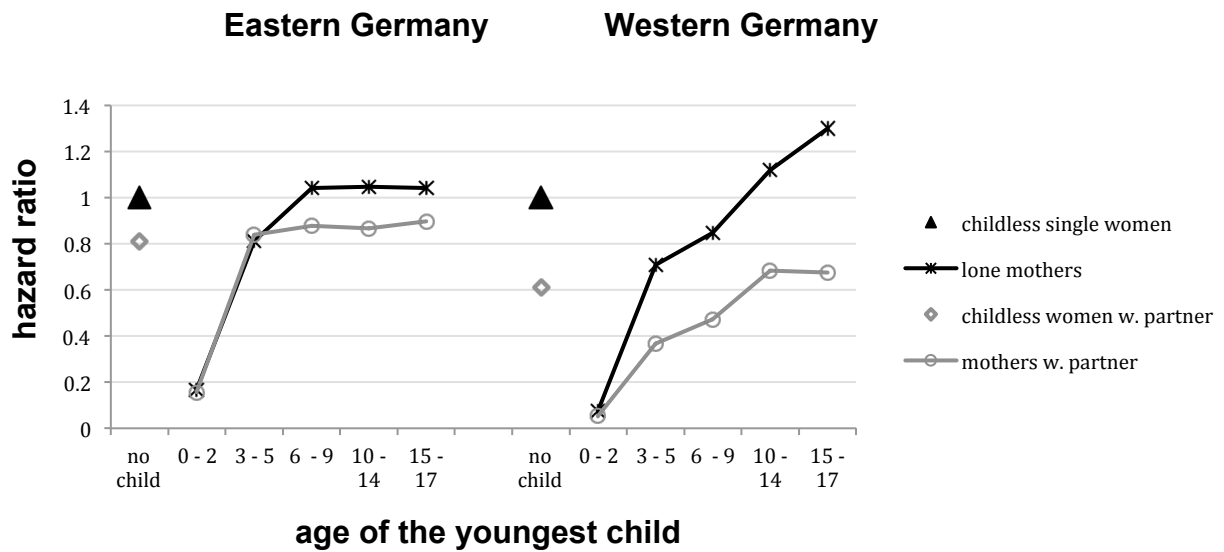
Figure 5: Transition rates into in-firm training**



reference category: childless single women

** control variables: see Table A.1 and methods section

Figure 6: Transition rates into job subsidies**



reference category: childless single women

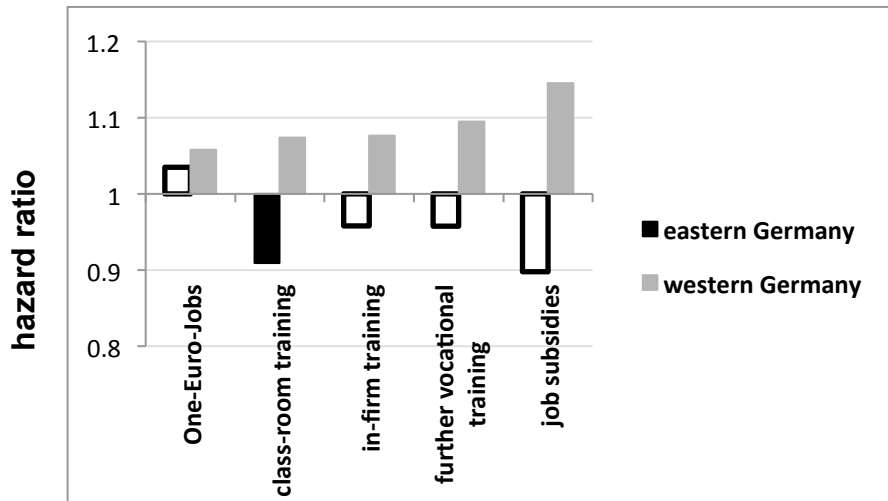
** control variables: see Table A.1 and methods section

Figures 7 - 8 show results for the effect of local childcare availability on lone mothers' participation rates in labour market programmes. This can indicate whether programme assignments are responsive to local childcare availability, or if instead people are assigned to programmes based on their family status alone. The availability of full-time childcare for children aged 3 - 5 has a clear positive effect on programme participation rates for lone mothers with children in this age group in western Germany. For class-room training programmes, in-firm training programmes, and further vocational training programmes, the effect of full-time childcare is greater than the effect of part-time care. Thus, programme assignments do seem to respond to actual childcare availability. In eastern Germany, effects are mostly non-significant. This is likely to be due to the generally high level of childcare availability in eastern Germany.

However, it is important to keep in mind that average levels of full-time kindergarten availability in western Germany are quite low. Despite these low levels of full-time kindergarten care, lone mothers generally participate in several labour market programmes at quite high rates, such as in One-Euro-Jobs or class-room training programmes, as shown above. It appears that

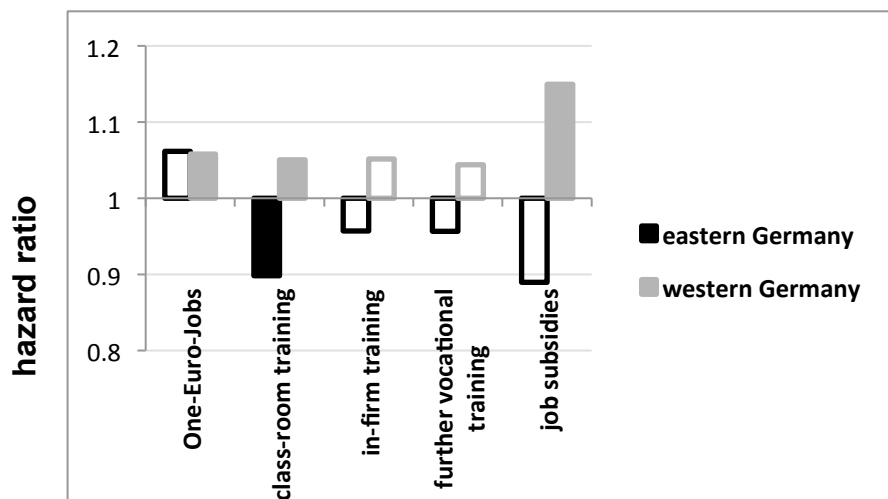
increasing full-time kindergarten provision would lead to yet higher programme participation rates by lone mothers.

Figure 7: Effect of district-level full-time childcare rate for 3 - 6 year olds for lone mothers with youngest child in this age group



The bars give the effect of a 5 percentage point increase in the district-level full-time childcare rate. Filled bars indicate significant effects at the 5% level, empty bars non-significant effects. For control variables, see the methods section.

Figure 8: Effect of district-level part-time childcare rate for 3 - 6 year olds for lone mothers with youngest child in this age group



The bars give the effect of a 5 percentage point increase in the district-level part-time childcare rate. Filled bars indicate significant effects at the 5% level, empty bars non-significant effects. For control variables, see the methods section.

8. Conclusion

The Hartz IV employment and welfare policy reform in 2005 in Germany has set a policy framework endorsing labour market integration of all adults receiving means-tested unemployment benefits, including those caring for young children. However, it is not clear to what extent this is reflected in practical policy implementations. This paper has focused on lone mothers, examining whether they are indeed treated the same as childless single women in the context of assignments to activation programmes in practice.

Findings in this study show that in the case of lone mothers, the formal policy orientation towards an adult worker model of the family is indeed reflected in practical policy implementations. Lone mothers with young children do participate in many types of labour market programmes as frequently as childless single women. Especially for western Germany, this is quite surprising, as important childcare constraints still exist.

The three programme types for which lone mothers' participation rates are as high as for childless single women are workfare programmes, class-room training programmes, and vocational training programmes. One aim of these programmes is to provide participants with skills that can enhance their employment chances. Workfare programmes and class-room training programmes, in particular, are however also used to exert pressure on participants to increase their job search efforts. For lone mothers of young children, it is questionable whether this strategy can be effective. Their main employment obstacle is likely not to be lack of motivation but lack of childcare.

While lone mothers of young children participate in workfare, class-room, and vocational training programmes as frequently as childless singles, their participation rates in firm-based programmes are substantially lower. A reason for lone mothers' low participation rates in these programmes may be that work hours are longer and less flexible.

In eastern Germany, programme participation rates for mothers with a partner are nearly as high as for lone mothers. This likely reflects the influence of an

adult worker tradition in eastern Germany. The institutional framework in the former East Germany strongly encouraged continuous full-time employment by both men and women, by providing extensive childcare and stipulating long work weeks even for those with children. Up until today, childcare provision rates remain much higher in eastern than in western Germany, and present-day surveys continue to show much more favourable attitudes towards maternal employment among eastern than among western Germans. This could be a reason why both mothers with a partner and lone mothers have quite high programme participation rates in eastern Germany.

Western German mothers with a partner, by contrast, do not generally seem to be treated as adult workers in terms of assignments to employment programmes. Their programme participation rates are substantially lower than for lone mothers or childless singles. Thus, it seems that caseworkers in western Germany have reservations towards implementing activation policies for mothers with a partner, but not for lone mothers. This suggests that lone mothers are not as strongly identified with the homemaker role as are mothers with a partner. Possibly, this is because welfare state institutions originating in the former West Germany have for a long time concentrated on supporting male breadwinner families. The tax system provides strong financial advantages for one-earner married couples, and non-employed spouses are covered by their partner's health insurance. Except for the option to apply for welfare, there has on the other hand not been much support directed explicitly towards lone mothers. It is possible that this welfare state tradition has reinforced a male breadwinner cultural ideal for mothers with a partner, while lone mothers' role is not so clear. This may be the reason why caseworkers are less hesitant to implement the new activation policies for lone mothers than for mothers with a partner, although formally, there is no reason why the two groups should be treated differently. Another reason may be that caseworkers see no other option for improving lone mothers' economic situation than to encourage their labour market integration. For mothers with a partner, they can always concentrate on improving the partner's employability, and are not forced to compromise the mother's carer role.

Altogether, the results from this study point to quite high participation rates by lone mothers of young children in many types of active labour market programmes. Future research could investigate the causes as well as the consequences of these high participation rates in more detail. Case studies could investigate the relative importance for programme assignments of role expectations towards lone mothers held by caseworkers as well as lone mothers themselves, or of implementation routines at the level of employment offices. Quantitative evaluation studies can investigate whether programme participations by lone mothers of young children are indeed beneficial in terms of employment outcomes. Qualitative as well as quantitative studies could investigate further implications of lone mothers' participation in activation programmes in terms of social integration, stress levels, as well as overall well-being of lone mothers and their children.

9. Policy Implications

The findings in this study have shown that lone mothers in western Germany receiving means-tested benefits participate in several labour market programmes at quite high rates. These are class-room and vocational training programmes as well as workfare programmes. However, their participation rates in firm-based training programmes are much lower than for childless single women. Given that firm-based programmes tend to substantially increase participants' subsequent chances of employment, a policy implication may be that these programmes should be made available on a part-time basis for persons with childcare responsibilities. Perhaps employers are also sometimes prejudiced against accepting parents with childcare responsibilities for firm-based training programmes. In this case, employment offices could use their contacts to employers towards reducing their reservations against accepting mothers as participants in training programmes.

Much of course depends on the availability of childcare. Full-time kindergarten provision is still quite low in western Germany, although there have been increases in recent years. It would be important to continue along this path of improving the availability of full-time and flexible kindergarten care. This would

enable many lone mothers not only to participate in firm-based training programmes with longer daily hours, but to take up regular employment as well.

Table A.1. Transition rates into One-Euro-Jobs and In-Firm training programmes:
Hazard ratios. Estimates used for Figures 2 and 5

	One-Euro-Jobs		In-firm training	
	eastern Germany	western Germany	eastern Germany	western Germany
constant	0.000075 ***	0.000176 ***	0.000455 ***	0.000061 ***
baseline (months)				
<i>0 - 2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
3 - 5	1.430 ***	1.005	0.914 ***	0.898 ***
6 - 11	1.345 ***	0.948 ***	0.706 ***	0.745 ***
12 - 17	1.267 ***	0.912 ***	0.565 ***	0.608 ***
18 - 23	1.220 ***	0.880 ***	0.534 ***	0.565 ***
24 - 29	1.202 ***	0.846 ***	0.475 ***	0.546 ***
30 - 35	1.232 ***	0.905 ***	0.539 ***	0.588 ***
36 +	0.761 **	0.691 ***	0.262 ***	0.329 ***
interaction population group/ age of the youngest child				
<i>single women</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
single men	1.040 ***	1.235 ***	0.933 ***	1.100 ***
childless women w. partner	0.850 ***	0.657 ***	0.719 ***	0.554 ***
childless men w. partner	0.839 ***	0.960 ***	1.086 ***	1.282 ***
women 15-24 in parent hh	0.506 ***	0.439 ***	0.844 ***	0.597 ***
men 15-24 in parent hh	0.727 ***	0.673 ***	0.779 ***	0.752 ***
others, women	0.603 ***	0.404 ***	0.378 ***	0.395 ***
others, men	0.807 **	0.878 **	0.793 *	0.966
lone mothers				
age of youngest child				
0 - 2	0.170 ***	0.043 ***	0.122 ***	0.066 ***
3 - 5	1.267 ***	0.838 ***	0.716 ***	0.537 ***
6 - 9	1.110 ***	0.867 ***	0.797 ***	0.641 ***
10 - 14	1.134 ***	0.958 *	0.929	0.832 ***
15 - 17	1.053	0.979	1.021	0.990
lone fathers				
age of youngest child				
0 - 2	0.522 ***	0.127 ***	0.205 ***	0.135 ***
3 - 5	0.975	0.875	0.520 ***	0.738 **
6 - 9	0.882	0.810 **	0.831	0.773 **
10 - 14	0.831 *	0.994	0.741 *	0.964
15 - 17	0.884	0.891	0.806	0.967
mothers with a partner				
age of youngest child				
0 - 2	0.109 ***	0.026 ***	0.116 ***	0.043 ***
3 - 5	1.080 ***	0.435 ***	0.685 ***	0.285 ***
6 - 9	1.083 **	0.499 ***	0.783 ***	0.328 ***
10 - 14	1.076 **	0.593 ***	0.767 ***	0.469 ***
15 - 17	0.965	0.628 ***	0.784 ***	0.569 ***

Table A.1 continued

	One-Euro-Jobs		In-firm training	
	eastern Germany	western Germany	eastern Germany	western Germany
fathers with a partner				
age of youngest child				
0 - 2	0.650 ***	0.820 ***	0.790 ***	1.123 ***
3 - 5	0.737 ***	0.788 ***	0.979	1.274 ***
6 - 9	0.721 ***	0.809 ***	1.005	1.337 ***
10 - 14	0.763 ***	0.837 ***	1.091 **	1.402 ***
15 - 17	0.834 ***	0.965	1.190 ***	1.405 ***
missing age of youngest child	0.188 *	0.300 *	1.474	0.392
age				
<=17	0.261 ***	0.277 ***	0.070 ***	0.174 ***
18 - 24	2.902 ***	2.027 ***	1.215 ***	1.256 ***
25 - 29	1	1	1	1 1
30 - 34	1.175 ***	1.040 ***	0.819 ***	0.869 ***
35 - 39	1.314 ***	1.098 ***	0.697 ***	0.775 ***
40 - 44	1.469 ***	1.166 ***	0.607 ***	0.684 ***
45 - 49	1.531 ***	1.201 ***	0.506 ***	0.555 ***
50 - 54	1.607 ***	1.111 ***	0.397 ***	0.431 ***
55 - 59	1.195 ***	0.693 ***	0.191 ***	0.197 ***
60 - 64	0.213 ***	0.119 ***	0.024 ***	0.040 ***
nationality				
German	1	1	1	1
not German	0.612 ***	0.629 ***	0.620 ***	0.771 ***
missing	0.488 ***	0.542 ***	0.747	0.571 **
start of episode				
oct-dec 2005	1	1	1	1
jan-jun 2006	0.980 *	0.967 ***	1.129 ***	1.167 ***
jul-dec 2006	0.979 *	1.001	1.282 ***	1.267 ***
jan-jun 2007	0.982	1.008	1.390 ***	1.486 ***
jul-dec 2007	0.992	0.995	1.432 ***	1.434 ***
cumulative previous ALG II without job or programme				
0 months	1	1	1	1
>0 - 3 months	1.158 ***	1.169 ***	0.947 ***	0.938 ***
>3-6 months	1.093 ***	1.134 ***	0.855 ***	0.898 ***
> 6-12 months	1.083 ***	1.158 ***	0.760 ***	0.821 ***
>12 months	1.054 ***	1.108 ***	0.642 ***	0.755 ***
duration since last unsubsidized job				
never employed	1	1	1	1
0 months	1.327 ***	1.050 ***	2.341 ***	2.326 ***
>0 - 6 months	1.265 ***	1.017	2.350 ***	2.242 ***
>6 - 12 months	1.504 ***	1.235 ***	1.931 ***	1.902 ***
>1 - 2 years	1.452 ***	1.278 ***	1.614 ***	1.532 ***
>2 - 5 years	1.445 ***	1.252 ***	1.400 ***	1.307 ***
>5 years	1.329 ***	1.131 ***	0.962	0.892 ***

Table A.1 continued

	One-Euro-Jobs		In-firm training	
	eastern Germany	western Germany	eastern Germany	western Germany
last occupation (isco)				
managers	1.051 *	1.001	1.043	0.919 ***
professionals	1.140 ***	1.067 ***	0.911 ***	0.905 ***
technicians and associate professionals	0.978	0.909 ***	1.174 ***	1.128 ***
clerical support workers	1.074 ***	0.931 ***	1.123 ***	1.026
<i>service and sales workers</i>	1	1	1	1
skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	1.345 ***	1.481 ***	0.786 ***	0.907 ***
craft and related trades workers plant and machine operators, and assemblers	1.087 ***	1.052 ***	1.077 ***	1.075 ***
elementary occupations	1.076 ***	1.028 **	1.156 ***	1.060 ***
handicapped, rehabilitating	1.225 ***	1.240 ***	0.888 ***	0.837 ***
missing or unclassified	1.097	1.369 ***	0.705 ***	0.909
	1.092 ***	1.104 ***	0.948 *	0.978
daily income in last unsub. job				
<i>0-<10</i>	1	1	1	1
10-<20	0.868 ***	0.914 ***	1.232 ***	1.195 ***
20-<30	0.880 ***	0.887 ***	1.252 ***	1.240 ***
30-<40	0.880 ***	0.895 ***	1.351 ***	1.320 ***
40-<50	0.840 ***	0.870 ***	1.454 ***	1.414 ***
50-<60	0.789 ***	0.846 ***	1.453 ***	1.538 ***
60-<70	0.796 ***	0.791 ***	1.522 ***	1.596 ***
>=70	0.728 ***	0.690 ***	1.415 ***	1.584 ***
missing	0.741 ***	0.701 ***	0.957	0.966
last programme				
<i>no last programme</i>	1	1	1	1
job creation programme	2.695 ***	2.864 ***	1.550 ***	1.666 ***
job subsidy	1.623 ***	1.662 ***	2.095 ***	2.095 ***
further vocational training	1.940 ***	1.873 ***	2.182 ***	2.155 ***
class-room training	2.129 ***	1.993 ***	1.731 ***	1.672 ***
in-firm training	1.802 ***	1.764 ***	2.874 ***	3.002 ***
start-up subsidy	0.702 ***	0.864 ***	1.207 ***	1.593 ***
One-Euro-Job	3.738 ***	3.522 ***	1.405 ***	1.380 ***
other programme	2.160 ***	1.973 ***	1.579 ***	1.625 ***
duration since last programme				
<i><0.5 year</i>	1	1	1	1
0.5 - 1 year	0.889 ***	0.879 ***	0.807 ***	0.814 ***
1 - 2 years	0.787 ***	0.811 ***	0.688 ***	0.737 ***
2 - 3 years	0.746 ***	0.749 ***	0.654 ***	0.675 ***
>3 years	0.712 ***	0.733 ***	0.587 ***	0.593 ***

Table A.1 continued

	One-Euro-Jobs		In-firm training	
	eastern Germany	western Germany	eastern Germany	western Germany
county level indicators				
local unemployment rate	0.995 ***	0.973 ***	0.980 ***	1.006 ***
local proportion ub2 (of unemployed)	0.988 ***	1.000	1.008 ***	1.004 ***
population density	1.000 ***	1.000	1.000 ***	1.000 ***
local gdp per capita	1.000	1.000 ***	1.000 ***	1.000 ***
% population economically active	1.021 ***	1.001	1.000	1.010 ***
% in agriculture of econ. active	1.041 ***	0.981 ***	1.001	1.005
% in construction of econ. active	0.961 ***	1.014 ***	0.947 ***	1.027 ***
% in commerce, hotel, rest., transp. of econ. act.	1.021 ***	1.013 ***	0.994 ***	1.008 ***
% in finance, rent, business services of econ. act.	0.942 ***	0.989 ***	1.010 ***	0.967 ***
% in public and private services of econ. act.	1.032 ***	1.011 ***	1.006 ***	1.008 ***
handicap				
no	1	1	1	1
yes	0.886 ***	0.786 ***	0.741 ***	0.961 *
education				
no degree	1.073 ***	1.074 ***	0.744 ***	0.700 ***
lower secondary degree	1	1	1	1
intermediate secondary degree	0.860 ***	0.877 ***	1.262 ***	1.188 ***
upper secondary degree (qual. for technical college)	0.701 ***	0.785 ***	1.386 ***	1.225 ***
upper secondary degree (qual. for university)	0.690 ***	0.766 ***	1.244 ***	1.179 ***
total time at risk (days)	255,347,163	551,640,853	255,347,163	551,640,853
failures	80611	127842	42,544	57,400
subjects	956,246	1,998,856	956,246	1,998,856

* p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

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