Chapter 13
Shared Physical Custody After Parental Separation: Evidence from Germany

Sabine Walper, Christine Entleitner-Phleps, and Alexandra N. Langmeyer

Abstract Multilocal, dual residence or shared parenting arrangements after parental separation are increasingly discussed in many countries because they seem best suited to allow for more equally shared parental roles and children's equal access to both (biological) parents. So far, there is little information about shared physical custody in Germany. The present research uses the second wave from a large German survey "Growing up in Germany" (2013–2015) to investigate the prevalence, preconditions, as well as possible outcomes of shared physical custody after separation. The sample comprises 1042 children (below age 18) with separated parents (maternal report). Measured by children's overnight stays with each parent, less than 5% of these children lived in a dual residence arrangement (50:50 up to 60:40% of time with either parent). Shared physical custody was more likely if maternal and paternal residence were in close proximity, and if the mother had higher levels of education. As expected, shared physical custody was more likely if the parents had a positive cooperative (co-parenting) relationship while co-parenting problems did not seem to have independent effects. The findings are discussed with respect to other research addressing issues of self-selection into different parenting arrangements and the still limited role of shared physical custody in Germany in facilitating more equal gender roles.

Keywords Shared Physical Custody · Legal Custody · Contact to Non-Resident Parent · Coparenting

S. Walper (✉) · C. Entleitner-Phleps · A. N. Langmeyer
German Youth Institute (DJI), Munich, Germany
e-mail: walper@dji.de; entleitner-phleps@dji.de; langmeyer@dji.de

L. Bernardi, D. Mortelmans (eds.), *Shared Physical Custody*, European Studies of Population 25, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68479-2_13

13.1 Introduction

During the past decades, most Western countries have seen considerable changes in family and gender roles, which are reflected not only in rising employment rates among mothers, but also in fathers‘ increasing involvement in child rearing (e.g., Hall 2005). This trend towards more engaged fathering has been pointed out for nuclear families but is also evident in separated and divorced families, indicated by an increase in non-resident fathers' contact to their children (Amato et al. 2009; Westphal et al. 2014). Fathers' overall higher involvement is likely to affect parents' decisions about the division of parenting time and children's physical custody after separation or divorce. In fact, parenting arrangements in separated families, as well as statutory rules in family law, are changing. In many countries, an increasing share of separated parents tends to choose a parenting arrangement with (almost) equal time and responsibility for children, and some countries even favor this solution in the legal system (Fehlberg et al. 2011).

Such dual-residence shared parenting or shared physical custody is strongly discussed in Germany, too. Its proponents view it as a better solution for separated parents and their children than the traditional preference for children's residence with one parent – typically the mother – who holds sole physical custody. In particular, shared physical custody has been proposed to provide a broad range of advantages, not only for the father-child relationship (Bjarnason and Arnarsson 2011), but also for separated mothers' employment opportunities (cf. Sünderhauf 2013), and particularly for children's well-being (e.g., Nielsen 2018b). However, there is also concern about the increased demands and potential stress placed on parents and children in organizing children's moves between households and making sure that the children feel at home in both households instead of feeling home in none (e.g., Kinderrechtekommission des Deutschen Familiengerichtstags e.V. 2014).

So far, the current family law in Germany is not yet adapted to this parenting arrangement. While joint legal custody has become the most common arrangement for divorced parents, decisions of the family court about physical custody strongly favor sole physical custody. Furthermore, rules for child alimony payments similarly reflect the traditional preference for children's residence with one parent holding sole physical custody (Schumann 2018). According to the German family law, child alimony is only reduced in cases with strictly equally shared physical custody time while asymmetrical types of shared physical custody are not considered in legal decisions about alimony payments. This issue clearly fuels public debates. While there is some agreement that adaptations in the complex legal system of German family and tax law are necessary, there is also a controversy about the appropriate scope of these changes. While some demand that shared physical custody should be the new norm for separated families, others favor a more cautious approach, which is sensitive to case-specific conditions and children's best interest when deciding about their physical custody (Kinderrechtekommission des Deutschen Familiengerichtstags e.V. 2014).

The situation of separated families in Germany is far from clear. Official statistics do not inform about post-separation parenting arrangements, and only very few survey data provide highly limited insight into shared physical custody (Bjarnason and Arnarsson 2011; Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2017; Kalmijn 2015). The present paper seeks to fill this gap. We present data on the distribution of different parenting arrangements among separated families with minor children in Germany and identify correlates which may reflect likely predictors. In the following, we discuss findings on shared physical custody as evident in international research and provide background information about separated families in Germany.

13.2 Shared Physical Custody in Separated Families: International Evidence

Shared physical custody among separated parents has become a major issue not only in family law but also in social science research in many countries (Fehlberg et al. 2011). Given the intensive debate about pros and cons of shared care, the large number of investigations focuses on outcomes of shared compared to sole physical custody, particularly children's well-being (Bauserman 2002; Bergström et al. 2015; Nielsen 2018a; Steinbach 2018). In comparison, the number of studies which address issues of selective access to and use of shared physical custody is more limited (e.g., Poortman and van Gaalen 2017; Sodermans et al. 2013). However, both lines of research are similarly important and in fact interdependent, even more so since questions about the role of physical custody for children's well-being cannot be properly addressed without paying attention to the selective use of these different parenting arrangements (Fehlberg et al. 2011).

13.2.1 Issues Related to the Definition and Changing Prevalence of Shared Physical Custody

Since national or state-specific family law varies in how shared parenting is defined, it is no surprise that related studies use different criteria with different cut-off points distinguishing shared and sole physical custody. The major focus is on children's overnight stays with each parent, since overnight stays are regarded as the key element of children's residence with parents (Baude et al. 2016). In contrast, seeing a parent only during daytime is viewed as visitation of the non-custodial parent, even if a child spends considerable number of hours with this parent. Definitions of shared physical custody mostly range between time splits of 50:50 (strictly equal shares of overnight stays) to more asymmetrical distributions of overnight stays between parents up to 70:30 (Baude et al. 2016; Sünderhauf 2013).

These variations make it difficult to compare rates, predictors, and outcomes of shared physical custody across countries and studies. Furthermore, comparisons of findings are complicated by variations in target populations and samples used in empirical research. While some studies consider only children from divorced families, others also include children of unmarried separated parents, and parents who never cohabited. Not the least, variations in the social and legal context have to be considered.

Comparative data suggests that shared physical custody is particularly prevalent in Sweden, which strongly supports egalitarian roles in the family system and allows family courts to order shared physical custody in cases of post-separation legal conflict. According to survey data from 2011, about 42% of all children between 4 and 18 years, who did not live in a nuclear family, were raised in shared physical custody (Hakovirta and Rantalaiho 2011). Reforms in family law in Australia (Fehlberg et al. 2011) and Belgium (Sodermans et al. 2013) in the first decade of the new millennium have also strengthened shared physical custody as the legal norm. This has contributed to an increase of shared physical custody, as well as changes in the conditions under which separated families realize shared physical custody. For example, while earlier divorce cohorts in Belgium more selectively chose shared physical custody under conditions of low conflict between parents, this advantage has vanished in more recent divorce cohorts (Sodermans et al. 2013).

However, the trend of shared physical custody is not always upwards. In the Netherlands, shared care increased prior to and shortly after a reform of family law in 2009 which strengthened shared physical custody. Starting from a low level of 5% in the 1980s and 1990s, shared physical custody increased among recently divorced couples to 20% in 2008 (prior to the reform) and up to 28% in 2010 (post reform), but decreased in the following years to 22% in 2013 (Poortman and van Gaalen 2017). Although the reasons for this change in trend are far from clear, it seems likely that parents' experiences in practicing shared physical custody may have revealed its challenges and demands which could have cautioned later divorcing parents to opt for shared care. In this context, it is interesting to note that shared physical custody appeared to be less stable across time than sole physical custody. About 20% of the children who were in shared care when their parents divorced changed to sole physical custody, mostly with the mother, while only 2% of those who started in maternal custody changed to shared physical custody. This likely reflects the challenges involved in shared physical custody for parents and children (Poortman and van Gaalen 2017).

13.2.2 Conditions Affecting the Choice of Shared Physical Custody

Even if parents and children evaluate shared physical custody as their best option, managing its logistics is likely to be demanding. Available evidence suggests that

separated parents' choice of parenting arrangement is linked to resources and barriers at the individual, family, and contextual level.

Conditions at the Individual Level: Age, Socio-Economic Condition and Level of Education

Many findings show that the *age of children* matters. Whereas parents of infants and toddlers are less likely to choose shared physical custody (Hyest and About 2007; Juby et al. 2005), this arrangement is most commonly used with children aged 3 to 12 years (Juby et al. 2005; Sodermans et al. 2013), especially in the primary-school age. For infants and toddlers, sole maternal custody may be preferred to allow for maternal breastfeeding and to meet very young children's higher need for stability in context. Furthermore, fathers may feel less competent and comfortable in taking care of infants, but become increasingly involved during the preschool and primary school age. In adolescence, the rate of children in shared physical custody declines (Spruijt and Duindam 2009), most likely because peer relations become more important. As young people like to spend more time with their friends, navigating between both parents' homes may be seen as hindrance to self-determined leisure time planning. However, age at parental separation may also matter with somewhat different effects. Evidence from Canada suggests that a divorce during children's adolescence is more likely to be followed by shared care, perhaps to preserve closeness to both parents in the direct aftermath of a divorce (Juby et al. 2005). This may indicate that the time since parental divorce plays an additional role. Young people may be more likely to opt out of shared physical custody after having practiced this arrangement for a while.

Across studies and countries, *parents' higher socio-economic resources*—education and income—have been found to increase the likelihood of shared physical custody (Juby et al. 2005; Spruijt and Duindam 2009; Kaspiew et al. 2009). This is likely to reflect the higher financial demands of shared physical custody which requires appropriate housing conditions and child-related equipment in both homes. At the same time, shared physical custody might not only depend on higher financial resources, but could also allow for higher earnings as it should be easier for mothers to combine family responsibilities and gainful employment. Better chances for maternal employment and financial independence are seen as core benefits of shared physical custody. However, similar to issues raised about income, the links between shared physical custody and maternal employment are far from clear. While shared physical custody could facilitate mothers' employment, it could also be more strongly favoured by working mothers when facing separation or divorce.

In this context, data about pre-divorce family conditions are of particular interest. A prospective study from the Netherlands found that only parents' level of education, but not their pre-divorce income was relevant for the choice of shared physical custody (Poortman and van Gaalen 2017). In addition, shared physical custody was more likely to be chosen if the mother worked more hours prior to the divorce, and if the father had a shorter way to work. Prospective data from Canada, however,

confirmed an independent effect of pre-divorce income with higher rates of shared physical custody among families with higher pre-divorce income (Juby et al. 2005). Interestingly, this latter study found higher rates of shared physical custody not only among parents with university education, but also among those without a high school diploma. Perhaps, these latter families used shared physical custody to compensate for difficulties in alimony payments. Furthermore, shared physical custody was more common if the father had higher educational resources than the mother compared to families with equal educational resources or higher maternal education. Employment conditions were also found to matter, independent of parental education and income. Poortman and van Galen (2017) reported higher rates of shared care among families with higher maternal working hours prior to parental separation. Other data similarly suggest that shared physical custody was more likely if the mother worked at least part-time prior to parental divorce and if the father did not work in the evenings or at weekends (Juby et al. 2005). In sum, parents' education and pre-divorce employment conditions seem to affect the choice of shared physical custody more consistently while findings on income differ.

Conditions at the Family Level

A *new partnership* also seems to change conditions for parenting arrangements. Data from Canada suggest that if the mother moves in with a new partner, shared physical custody is more likely than sole maternal care (Juby et al. 2005). Australian findings similarly support that shared physical custody is twice as prevalent if the mother lives with a new partner compared to mothers who live alone (Kaspiew et al. 2009). Exclusive time with the new partner may be seen as an advantage of shared physical custody, thus making it a more attractive option for repartnered mothers. However, data from Germany do not support this effect of maternal repartnering. In particular, previous analyses of the data used here did not show different rates of shared physical custody when comparing single and repartnered mothers (Walper 2016).

Some evidence points to the salience of *fathers' pre-divorce involvement in family work*. Juby et al. (2005) found that shared physical custody was more likely if the father's principal activity prior to divorce included caring for the family. Other data also indicate that fathers' pre-separation involvement in daily childcare is a particularly relevant factor (Fehlberg et al. 2011; Poortman and van Gaalen 2017). This continuity of fathers' involvement in the parenting role, even when the partnership ends, is quite in contrast to findings from earlier decades. In the past, fathers' active contribution to parenting more strongly depended on its framing by the partnership with the mother – as indicated by the notion of a "package deal" between paternal involvement and partnership (Amato et al. 2009).

Parents' willingness and ability to cooperate is of special interest, as it suggests itself that shared physical custody needs more parental coordination than sole physical custody. In line with this expectation, prospective findings from the Netherlands show that pre-divorce interparental conflict, as well as conflict during the divorce procedure, had negative effects on the choice for shared physical custody

(Poortman and van Gaalen 2017). Other studies also indicate that separated parents with shared care report less conflict, especially about parenting issues, than parents with children in sole physical custody (Cashmore et al. 2010).

However, findings regarding the link between interparental conflict and shared parenting are not consistent (Nielsen 2013) and parental communication is not guaranteed in shared care. According to data from Australia, the great majority of parents with shared physical custody reported at least weekly contact, but a minority of parents who practiced shared parenting communicated less than once a month or never (Kaspiew et al. 2009, p. 160). About one fifth of the parents with shared parenting reported that the relationship with the other parent was conflictual or even threatening.

Conditions at the Contextual Level

Contextual conditions shape options and preferences for parenting arrangements. For example, given the higher demands on balancing family tasks and employment for both parents, flexible and family friendly work conditions facilitate shared physical custody (Nielsen 2013). Furthermore, as mentioned above, changing legal conditions seem to affect who opts for shared physical custody. In Belgium, the court has to consider shared physical custody if parents disagree about their post-divorce parenting arrangement. When this was introduced in family law, the earlier advantages of lower conflict among parents with shared care faded (Sodermans et al. 2013). Australian researchers similarly warn that shared physical custody may increasingly become the compromise solution for highly conflicted parents who cannot settle the issue of physical custody (Fehlberg et al. 2011). Interestingly, a qualitative study from Sweden shows that parents with toddlers consider shared physical custody as beneficial for children's well-being, even if their relationship is conflicted (Fransson et al. 2016). This suggests that shared physical custody has become normative irrespective of the quality of the interparental relationships. Conditions in Germany, however, are likely to differ since shared physical custody is less widespread and less anchored in family law.

Finally, the *distance between both parents' homes* is likely to affect the logistics of shared care. A larger distance makes it more difficult to maintain shared physical custody and ensure that the child is involved in regular childcare, manages his or her way to school, and sees his/her friends when staying at either parents' home. Several studies show that shared physical custody is more likely if parents' homes are in close proximity (Kaspiew et al. 2009). Data from the first wave of the German survey „Growing Up In Germany" (AID:A) conducted in 2009 are in line with these findings, although they address the frequency of contact and not overnight stays. Frequent (at least weekly) contact to the non-residential father was considerably more likely if the child and the father lived in the same town or village while long distances were linked to a lack of contact (Schier and Hubert 2015).

13.3 Separated Families in Germany

13.3.1 Changing Family Forms and Labor Division

As many other European countries, Germany faces considerable instability of couple relationships. Every third marriage is estimated to end in divorce, and every second divorce involves children (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018c). In 2017, at least 124.000 minors experienced parental divorce. Although divorce rates are slightly declining, this trend does not indicate a higher stability of unions in general. Cohabitation has become increasingly common, not only among childless couples, but also among parents. In 2017, every third child (34.7%) was born to unmarried parents (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018b). The large majority of unmarried parents cohabits when a child is born (about 80%), but these unions are more likely to separate than married parents (Langmeyer 2015; Schnor 2012). In 2017, 11% of all households with minors were headed by two unmarried parents (Baumann et al. 2018, p. 59). Additional 19% were single parent households, mostly headed by the mother (88%; Baumann et al. 2018, p. 67). While stepfamilies cannot be identified by official statistics, survey data allow estimates ranging between 7 and 13% of all families (Bundesministerium für Familie Senioren Frauen und Jugend 2013).

Since 1998, joint legal custody is the default case when married parents get divorced. Most unmarried couples officially establish joint legal custody at the birth of their child, and as legal default this continues when they separate. Although custody can be changed by the family court, most separated parents hold joint legal custody. Physical custody, however, differs substantially from legal custody. Although the German family law does not preclude shared physical custody, sole physical custody held by one parent–typically the mother–was (and still is) viewed as the preferred arrangement because it seemed best suited to meet children's needs for continuity. In this line, the Commission on Children's Rights of the German Family Court Council cautioned: "Continuity of contact to both parents only comes at the expense of discontinuity in the child's living environment" (Kinderrechtekommission des Deutschen Familiengerichtstags e.V. 2014). Quite importantly, as indicated by the high share of single mothers compared to single fathers, sole physical custody (of the mother) is also most in line with traditional family roles with mothers taking the main responsibility for family work and child rearing.

Looking at the division of labour in families, the male-breadwinner-model and its modernized form are still widespread in Germany. Although 74% of all mothers were employed in 2016 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2017b), the majority of them works only part-time (69% in 2017), even more so, if they live in a partnership (Statistisches Bundesamt 2017a). In couple households with minors, 71% of the mothers were part-time employed, compared to only 6% of the fathers. This gender difference is only slightly lower in single-parent families, about 58% of all single mothers, but only 12% of the single fathers, were part-time employed (Statistisches Bundesamt 2017a). Looking at family work, women with partners still manage the

majority of family tasks including household choirs and childcare (Nitsche and Grunow 2016). Sharing household, child rearing duties, and gainful employment equally is still a rare exception. With regard to other European countries, Germany has the highest gender gap in employment hours (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2017). Only 1.2% of the parents are dual-earner couples who both work nearly full-time and share family and work duties almost equally. Although egalitarian gender role attitudes are wide-spread (Blohm and Walter 2018) and fathers strive try to be an active part of their children's life (Zerle-Elsäßer and Li 2017), family roles in Germany are far from egalitarian.

The more traditional division of labour as well as tax benefits for married couples make lone parenthood a major risk factor for poverty. German data from EU-SILC 2016 indicates that 32.6% of the single parent households were at risk of poverty (having less than 60% of the needs-weighted median income of the population), compared to only 11% of couples with children (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018a). Only every second non-resident parent seems to provide any financial child support and only one out of four pays more than the minimum (Lenze 2014). While some fathers may not be able to provide, this also indicates a wide-spread lack of commitment to the child among separated fathers in Germany.

13.3.2 Shared Physical Custody in Germany

The findings reported so far do not suggest beneficial conditions for shared physical custody in Germany. This is also reflected in data on post-divorce parenting arrangements. Kalmijn (2015) used data from CILS4EU (2010/2011) to compare 14-years old students' post-divorce contact and relationship with their father in Germany, the Netherlands, England, and Sweden. The findings revealed the highest rate of youth without contact to their father in Germany (20.7%). Conversely, the rate of shared physical custody was lowest in Germany (9.8%), followed by England (10.9%), while Sweden had the highest rate (36%). The relationship quality to their father, however, was quite good among German youth in separated families, 51.6% reported a "very good" relationship. Controlling for country differences, shared physical custody was more common among non-immigrants, families with higher SES, if the mother was employed, and for male children.

Further comparative data are available from the HBSC study (2005/06) which included more than 200,000 school-aged children (age 11, 13 and 15 year) from 36 western countries (Bjarnason and Arnarsson 2011). The aim of this study was to examine parenting arrangements in different countries, as well as parent-child communication patterns. Germany was found to belong to the countries with low rates of shared physical custody. Among youth from non-nuclear families in Germany, only 4.2% were raised in shared physical custody (own calculation). At the same time, German youth in shared physical custody seemed more advantaged in terms of communication with their father than the average of all children. In Germany, only 15% of the children in shared physical custody, but 35% of those

in nuclear families found it difficult to talk to their father about things that really bothered them. On average across countries, this difference was much less pronounced (29% vs. 32%). Interestingly, a similar advantage of shared physical custody was found for communication with the mother in Germany, while overall, there was no difference between nuclear families and those with shared physical custody. It is not clear whether these findings reflect positive effects of shared physical custody in Germany or a particularly selective use of this arrangement by well-functioning separated families.

A recent study tried to shed more light on shared physical custody in Germany (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2017). Of 603 separated mothers and fathers, only two thirds knew or had ever heard of shared physical custody. But different from the numbers reported so far, 22% of the separated parents indicated that they shared parenting almost equally. Even 41% reported almost equal shares of parenting prior to their separation. However, more specific questions about each parents' contribution revealed that only 15% confirmed shared physical custody ("Wechselmodell") and only half of these (7%) actually met the standard criteria of overnight stays in shared physical custody. This is more in line with expectable findings and data from the German family panel *pairfam* which revealed less than 5% of separated families with shared physical custody (Walper 2016).

Although parents' estimates of shared physical custody are obviously no objective criteria, further findings of this study suggest that parental cooperation facilitates shared care (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2017). Compared to the average of all separated parents, those who indicated almost equal shares of childcare reported twice as often to have a good or very good relationship with their child's other parent. Well working mutual agreements–indicating cooperative co-parenting–were substantially more prevalent among parents who shared childcare. The large majority of parents who shared child-related responsibilities explained that they wanted to give the child the opportunity to have both parents around. About half agreed that sharing childcare makes it easier for parents to work or have time for themselves. Only 11% saw shared physical custody as a chance to pay less child support to the former partner. Satisfaction with the current parenting arrangement was substantially higher among those parents who were involved in at least half of the child rearing tasks than among those who participated less. About 51% viewed an almost equal sharing of parenting tasks as ideal.

13.3.3 Research Questions

Despite these few findings, there is a clear lack of data on shared physical custody in Germany. Available evidence suggests that shared physical custody is still rare. In order to pay attention to the expectable heterogeneity of families without shared physical custody, we sought to also consider variations in contact to the non-residential parent (see e.g., Spruijt and Duindam 2009). Our analyses address the following research questions:

1. How many separated families in Germany use shared physical custody and how does their share compare to families with sole physical custody, but varying degrees of contact to the non-resident parent? We were interested in the distribution of four parenting arrangements: (1) shared physical custody, (2) sole physical custody with frequent contact to the non-resident parent, (3) sole physical custody with rare contact to non-resident parent, and (4) sole physical custody without contact to the non-resident parent.
2. Which factors are linked to separated parents' choice of shared physical custody? Considering the available international evidence, we expected that characteristics of the child (age and gender) and the mothers (level of education, employment status, new partnership), as well as the distance between both parents' homes are relevant factors. For separated parents who are still in contact, we expected that cooperative co-parenting is linked to higher rates of shared parenting while co-parenting conflict might impede shared parenting. Given the lack of legal institutionalization of shared physical custody in Germany, we assumed that less conflicted parents are more likely to opt for shared care, similar to earlier findings, e.g. for Belgium (Sodermans et al. 2013).

13.4 Method

13.4.1 Data and Sample

Our analyses are based on data from the second wave of a large representative German survey on children and youth ("Growing up in Germany"; AID:A, 2013–2015; Walper et al. 2015) with over 25,000 target subjects in the age range between birth and 32 years. The sample was drawn from nation-wide register data, and the participants were contacted and interviewed by professional interviewers. All interviews were conducted by telephone. In addition to the target participants who were interviewed from age nine onward, one parent – in most cases the mother – provided additional information on the minor children including socio-demographic and structural data. In this study we only focused on the parent's view in order to maximize the sample and include information on all minor children. The AID:A survey covers a broad range of information about the lives of children, teenagers, and young adults, including stressors and strains, family life, child care, schooling, occupational training and work, leisure time activities, socioeconomic conditions, and well-being.

In line with our research questions, we restricted the sample to target children up to age 17 with separated or divorced parents. Parents' marital status prior to separation was no selection criterion. Hence, the sample comprises previously married as well as unmarried parents. Based on these criteria, a subsample of 1090 target children could be identified which comprised 8% of all minors in the AID:A II sample. In the large majority of cases, the mother participated and provided information about family conditions and the child. In only 47 cases, household

information was provided by the father. These latter cases had to be excluded since our focus was on maternal conditions (reported by mothers). The final sample consisted of 1042 minor children with separated parents, including 53.4% boys and 46.6% girls. The children had an average age of 10.54 years (SD = 4.97). 20.2% of the children were below school age, 24.8% were elementary school age (6 to 10 years old), while more than half of the children were 11 to 17 years old (55.1%).

With respect to marital status, 31.8% of the mothers were never married, 38.3% were divorced, 16.4% were still married but permanently separated, and 13.5% were remarried. In two thirds of the cases (65.8%), the mother reported having joint legal custody with the father. Every fourth mother (25.7%) lived in a new partnership.

13.4.2 Indicators

The indicators used in our analyses rely on information provided by the target child's mother.

Shared Physical Custody was defined by children's overnight stays with each parent, allowing for minor asymmetries in the distribution of overnight stays (60:40). We chose to use this strict criterion since current German family law considers a share of overnight stays of 70:30 as sole physical custody with extended contact. However, it should be mentioned that our findings are quite robust, even when using the less strict criterion of overnight stays (up to 70:30, see discussion). Shared physical custody was coded (as 1), if the child or adolescent slept at least 12 nights (40%) at one parent's home and not more than 19 nights (60%) per month at the other parent's home. In sole physical custody (coded 0), the child slept more than 19 nights (>60%) at one parent's house and less than 12 nights (<40%) per month at the other parent's house. In the unweighted data, only 4.3% of the children were in shared physical custody.

For cases of sole physical custody, three *levels of children's contact with the non-residential parent* were distinguished. Contact between the non-resident parent and the child included personal contact, telephone calls, or other ways of contact (letters, mail, emails etc.). Given the many ways of contact with the child addressed by the related item, the frequency of children's contact with the non-resident parent as reported by mothers was quite high. Accordingly, we distinguished children with at least weekly contact to the father (frequent contact), those with less frequent contact, and those without contact to the non-resident father. More than half of the children had at least weekly contact to their non-resident father (unweighted data: 53.2%). Only one out of four children had less frequent contact (once or twice a month or even less: 25.0%). Finally, 17.5% of all children with separated parents had no contact to the father (unweighted data).

The *distance between both parental homes* was assessed by mothers' estimates using five categories: 1 = in the same house, in the same neighbourhood", 2 = in the same town or village, but more than 15 minutes away, 3 = in a different village, but

less than 1 h away, 4 = further away but in Germany, 5 = further away, in another country. Our analyses use this indicator as continuous variable.

Both biological parents' *legal custody* for the child was assessed by maternal self report (1 = no, 2 = yes). A *new maternal partnership* was taken into account if the new partner lived in the same household as mother and child (1 = no partner in the household, 2 = new partner in the household). Mothers also reported on *child age* and *gender*. The *region of maternal residence* (East- vs. West Germany) was coded from information provided by the interviewer. Region was included since considerably higher rates of children are born to unmarried parents in East than in West Germany suggesting less involvement among separated fathers in the East.

Mothers provided detailed information about household composition, net family income, their education, and employment situation. *Poverty risk* was based on the net per capita income weighted by household needs (indexed by household composition according to the new OECD scale). The threshold value for poverty risk was set by the EU, at 60% of the median needs-adjusted equivalence income, dividing the sample into two groups (0 = above poverty threshold, 1 = below poverty threshold). *Maternal employment* status was used as dichotomous indicator (1 = mother is not employed, including unemployment, being in school/university/further education, housewife, maternity protection/parental leave, or retirement, 2 = mother is employed). We classified *mother's level of education* by using the Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations (CASMIN) (Brauns et al. 2003), which takes in account the level of general school education as well as the occupational/academic training. Due to small sample sizes in some categories, we combined categories as follows: 1 = basic education (no school leaving certificate/school leaving certificate awarded after successful completion of eighth respective ninth grade and other school leaving certificates with and without job training); 2 = intermediate education (school leaving certificate awarded after 10 years of schooling (roughly comparable with US high school diploma) with and without job training); 3 = general qualification for university entrance (final exam at the end of secondary education, i.e. after 12 or 13 years of schooling with and without job training), 4 = higher tertiary education (vocational university or university degree). In a second step we reduced these four categories to two, defined by general qualification for university entrance (1 = no, 2 = yes). We also added *child gender* (1 = male, 2 = female). *Age of the child* was split in three age groups: 1 = 0–5 years, 2 = 6–10, 3 = 11–17 years) in order to test non-linear effects, expecting higher prevalence of shared physical custody in elementary school age.

Questions about the quality of separated parents' *co-parenting* were restricted to cases of contact between both parents, since the respective indicators require a minimum of contact and exchange between both parents. The items used in the AID:A survey were adapted from the German version of the Parent Problem Checklist (Dadds and Powell 1991). Two dimensions of co-parenting were measured: cooperation (2 item-scale, Cronbach's alpha = .81 e.g. "We are a good team as parents") and negative co-parenting (conflict, triangulation and differences, 7 item-scale, Cronbach's alpha = .87, e.g. "We have generally different views about parenting"). Both subscales were negatively correlated ($r = -.31$, $p < .001$).

For the present analysis, we dichotomized them by median-split because of the small group size of respondents who were practicing shared physical custody.

13.4.3 Analytic Strategy

We first present information about the distribution of shared parenting arrangements and father-child contact, using weighted data to compensate for the relatively small proportion of respondents with low education. Descriptive and multivariate analysis were calculated with unweighted data. We analysed bivariate links between parenting arrangements and the predictor variables (Chi^2- Tests) and inspected standardized residuals to identify local deviations between the observed and the expected cell frequencies. It is noted if the standardized residual value reached a minimum of 2.0 (or − 2.0 and lower), which indicates that the observed value differs more than two standard deviations from the expected value (Haberman 1973).

Secondly, we used logistic regressions to control for the mutual interdependence of the predictors and test their unique links to parenting arrangements. These analyses distinguish between shared and sole physical custody, but disregard variations in father-child contact. Three models were tested: (1) In order to provide information about factors relevant for the large sample, we initially restricted the analyses to predictors which were available for all cases, addressing child-related factors, socio-economic and regional factors, residential distance, and mothers' household structure (stepfamily formation). These analyses exclude co-parenting quality as predictor, since information on co-parenting quality was only available for cases with interparental contact. Adding this predictor would have excluded families without contact between parents. (2) Next, we restricted the same analysis to families with parents' joint legal custody. These analyses are of particular interest in the context of the current debate about how to regulate shared parenting legally, since it has been argued that a consistent legal reform would best construe shared parenting as arrangement based on and restricted to shared legal custody (Wissenschaftliche Dienste 2018). (3) The final analysis was restricted to families with contact between parents and included co-parenting quality as predictor. Note that even the latter two analyses cannot easily be compared since the sample size was reduced when focusing families with joint legal custody *and* contact between parents.

13.5 Results

13.5.1 Descriptive Results

As suggested above, only few families practiced shared physical custody. This is even more evident when using the weighted data: Only 3.3% of all children with separated parents lived in shared physical custody (60:40). Slightly less than half of

the children had at least weekly contact to their non-resident father (weighted data: 48.0%), while 27.4% had infrequent contact to the non-resident father and 21.3% had no contact.

Our first set of analyses addressed bivariate links between these parenting arrangements and their correlates considered as likely predictors. Table 13.1 shows these results. As expected, shared physical custody was significantly more likely if the father lived at short distance, but frequent contact also increased with shorter distance ($\chi^2 = 147.19$, df = 12, $p < .001$). If the father lived in the same house or in the same neighbourhood, shared physical custody was twice as likely (13.1%) than if he lived in the same town or village but more than 15 minutes away (7%). At a distance of more than 1 h, shared physical custody was not realized at all. As indicated by high positive standardized residuals in the case of highest proximity, the observed data for shared physical custody and frequent contact to the non-resident father exceeded the expected values significantly. In contrast, the standardized residuals for rare or no contact to father were negative, showing that these arrangements are unlikely in the case of high proximity. If the father lived more than 1 h away (in Germany or in another country), the child was significantly more likely to live with the mother and to have just infrequent or no contact to the non-residential father.

Legal and physical custody were also strongly linked ($\chi^2 = 194.948$, df = 3, $p < .001$). Shared physical custody as well as frequent contact to the non-residential father were both strongly associated with joint legal custody, whereas sole legal custody was more prevalent in families without contact to the non-residential father. With regard to socio-economic factors, maternal education ($\chi^2 = 50.15$, df = 9, $p < .001$), her employment status ($\chi^2 = 23.66$, df = 3, $p < .001$), and poverty risk ($\chi^2 = 8.74$, df = 3, $p < .05$) were also linked to the child's parenting arrangement. Children of mothers with basic education were significantly more likely to have no contact to the father. In contrast, the chances of shared physical custody were much higher if the mother had tertiary education. Interestingly, the chances of shared parenting were not affected by poverty and unemployment, while having no contact to the father was particularly more likely in cases of maternal unemployment and living in poverty risk.

Children's age also mattered for the choice of parenting arrangements ($\chi^2 = 21.59$, df = 6, $p < .001$). Shared physical custody was most likely during the elementary school years, while having no contact was significantly more prevalent among children below age six.

Finally, the quality of parents' co-parenting was also significantly associated with their parenting arrangement. If parental cooperation was high, shared physical custody, and frequent contact to the non-residential father were substantially more likely than at a low level of cooperation ($\chi^2 = 110.31$, df = 3, $p < .001$). Negative co-parenting, child gender, the region (East- vs. West-Germany), and mothers' co-residence with a new partner were not linked to the parenting arrangement.

Table 13.1 Bivariate links between predictor variables and arrangements of parental care in separated families

	Shared physical custody	Maternal residence, frequent contact to non-resident father	Maternal residence, infrequent contact to non-resident father	Maternal residence, no contact to non-resident father	Total
Distance to the non-resident father ***(N = 1022, Chi^2 = 147.19, df = 12, p < .001)***					
Same house/ same neighbourhood	13.1%[a]	72.3% [a]	11.7%[a]	2.9%[a]	100% (n = 137)
Same village, but >15 min away	7.0%	60.7%	21.8%	10.5%[a]	100% (n = 229)
Another village, <1 h away	2.5%	55.3%	27.4%	14.7%	100% (n = 441)
Further away but in Germany	0.0%[a]	33.9%[a]	35.2%[a]	30.9%[a]	100% (n = 165)
Further away, in another country	0.0%	30.0%[a]	30.0%	40.0%[a]	100% (n = 50)
Legal custody ***(N = 1021; Chi^2 = 194.948, df = 3, p < .001)***					
Sole legal custody	0.6%[a]	32.4%[a]	28.9%	38.1%[a]	100% (n = 349)
Joint legal custody	6.0%[a]	64.3%[a]	23.2%	6.5%[a]	100% (n = 672)
Maternal education ***(N = 1041; Chi^2 = 50.15, df = 9, p < .001)***					
Basic education	1.5%	41.2%	25.7%	31.6%[a]	100% (n = 136)
Intermediate education	2.1%[a]	50.4%	28.8%	18.7%	100% (n = 379)
Qualification for university entrance	5.2%	56.3%	23.1%	15.4%	100% (n = 229)
Higher tertiary education	7.7%[a]	59.9%	21.2%	11.1%[a]	100% (n = 297)
Employment status ***(N = 1041; Chi^2 = 23.66, df = 3; p < .001)***					
Mother is employed	4.6%	56.2%	24.2%	15.0%	100% (n = 833)
Mother is not employed	3.4%	40.9%[a]	28.4%	27.4%[a]	100% (n = 208)
Poverty risk ***(N = 1024; Chi^2 = 8.74, df = 3, p < .05)***					
Above poverty threshold	4.7%	54.9%	24.5%	15.9%	100% (n = 774)
Below poverty threshold	3.6%	46.8%	26.4%	23.2%[a]	100% (n = 250)

(continued)

Table 13.1 (continued)

	Shared physical custody	Maternal residence, frequent contact to non-resident father	Maternal residence, infrequent contact to non-resident father	Maternal residence, no contact to non-resident father	Total
Child age ***(N = 1042; Chi² = 21.59; df = 6, p < .001)***					
0–5 years	2.4%	50.5%	22.4%	24.8%[a]	100% (n = 210)
6–10 years	8.1%[a]	52.7%	24.0%	15.1%	100% (n = 258)
11–17 years	3.3%	54.4%	26.5%	15.9%	100% (n = 574)
Co-parenting: Cooperation ***(N = 714; Chi² = 110.31, df = 3, p < .001)***					
Low cooperation	2.2%[a]	56.3%[a]	35.9%[a]	5.6%[a]	100% (n = 359)
High cooperation	10.1%[a]	79.2%[a]	10.7%[a]	0.0%[a]	100% (n = 355)
Co-parenting: Negative co-parenting ***(N = 708; Chi² = 1.29, df = 3, n.s.)***					
Low negative co-parenting	5.6%	67.8%	23.4%	3.1%	100% (n = 354)
High negative co-parenting	6.8%	68.4%	22.9%	2.0%	100% (n = 354)
Child gender ***(N = 1042; Chi² = 1.00; df = 3, n.s.)***					
Male	4,9%	53,4%	24,5%	17,3%	100% (n = 556)
Female	3,7%	52,9%	25,7%	17,7%	100% (n = 486)
Region ***(N = 1042; Chi² = 0.60; df = 3, n.s.)***					
West-Germany	4,5%	53,3%	24,9%	17,3%	100% (n = 840)
East-Germany	3,5%	52,5%	25,7%	18,3%	100% (n = 202)
New partnership ***(N = 1038, Chi² = 6.041, df = 3, n.s.)***					
No partner in the household	4.5%	55.4%	23.9%	16.2%	100% (n = 771)
New partner in the household	3.7%	47.6%	28.8%	19.9%	100% (n = 267)

Note: [a]Standardized residuum SR < −2.0 or > +2.0

13.5.2 Multivariate Results

In a second step, we tested which factors proved more important if considered in the context of the other factors. We used logistic regression models with a dichotomous depended variable (1 = shared physical custody vs. 0 = all other forms) and nine predictors. The first logistic regression model integrates most factors from the descriptive results (see Table 13.1), except shared legal custody and poverty risk. We excluded shared legal custody because it is a legal pre-condition for shared parenting and may mediate–or in this case obscure–other effects which we are interested in. Poverty risk was excluded since it might not only affect the choice of parenting arrangement but could also be affected by it (e.g., via maternal employment). Hence, it seemed less clear whether poverty should be considered as predictor or outcome variable.

Table 13.2 Predictors of shared physical custody[a]: Findings from logistic regression analyses

		Odds ratio (OR)		
		(1)	(2)	(3)
Child age	6–10 years (ref.)			
	0–5 years	0.33*	0.37*	0.38
	11–17 years	0.46*	0.30**	0.33**
Child gender (female vs. male)		0.66	0.64	0.77
Maternal education (qualification for university entrance vs. basic/intermediate education)		3.31**	3.23**	3.19**
Mother employed		0.69	0.73	0.65
Distance to nonresident father		0.38***	0.44***	0.52**
New partner in household		1.31	1.74	1.85
Region (East vs. West-Germany)		0.74	0.94	0.81
Positive cooperation		–	–	4.92**
Negative co-parenting		–	–	2.01
N		1.017	666	521
Nagelkerke's R^2		.18	.18	.21

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

[a]1 = shared physical custody, 0 = all other arrangements; Model (1): all separated families included; Model (2): separated with joint legal custody of both parents; Model (3): separated families with joint legal custody and contact between both parents

As shown in Table 13.2, Model 1 yielded three significant predictors of shared physical custody: maternal education, distance to the non-resident father, and child age. In line with many findings, high maternal education was found to facilitate shared physical custody (OR = 3.31, $p < .01$). Furthermore, a long distance in commuting to the father reduced the likelihood of shared parenting (OR = 0.38, $p < .001$). Similar to bivariate findings for child age, shared physical custody was less likely for young children (below age 6: OR = 0.33, $p < .050$) and for older children (age 11 and older: OR = 0.46, $p < .050$) compared to elementary school age children (6–10 years old). Compared to bivariate descriptive findings, maternal employment was no longer linked to shared physical custody. Model 2, which was restricted to families with joint legal custody, revealed the same robust results as Model 1 (see Table 13.2).

The third logistic regression model was based on a further reduced sample of families with joint legal custody and contact between parents (see Column 3 in Table 13.2). It adds both dimensions of co-parenting (positive cooperation and negative co-parenting) to the picture. As expected, co-parenting quality matters because the chances of shared physical custody were almost five times higher if separated parents cooperated well in child rearing tasks. In addition, negative co-parenting had an unexpected marginally positive effect. Parents with above-average negative co-parenting tended to have a higher likelihood of shared physical custody than those with little negative co-parenting ($p = .07$). Young children (below age 6) were no longer less likely to experience shared physical custody,

most likely because the substantial share of young children without contact to their father was not included in these analyses. Independent of co-parenting quality, older children (11–17 years old) were less likely to live in shared physical custody than elementary school age children. Maternal education and distance to the father's home remained significantly linked to shared physical custody.

13.6 Discussion

The findings reported here provide important insight into shared physical custody and its predictors in Germany. Compared to findings which were based on a less thorough counting of children's overnight stays with each parent (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2017; Kalmijn 2015), we found considerably lower rates of shared physical custody. However, our data are well in line with findings from the German family panel *pairfam* which revealed less than 5% of separated families with shared physical custody (Walper 2016). Hence, we are led to conclude that shared physical custody is still the rare exception in Germany. Although a less restrictive criterion of overnight shares up to 70:30 doubles the rate of shared physical custody, its relative frequency is still very low (Walper, Langmeyer & Entleitner-Phleps in prep.).

This may not come as surprise given the rather traditional division of labor among couples in nuclear families. Since fathers' involvement in childcare prior to the separation has been pointed out as important predictor of shared physical custody, the little chances for such involvement could explain the low prevalence of shared physical custody. Unfortunately, the data used here do not provide information about fathers' pre-separation involvement in parenting and thus do not allow testing its predictive role in parents' choice of post-separation parenting arrangement. Future research should address these links between pre- and post-separation paternal involvement in Germany.

Overall, the descriptive results on bivariate links between parenting arrangements and their correlates, as well as the regression models, are in line with international findings. Parental socio-economic resources, particularly parental education, have consistently proven to be highly important (Fehlberg et al. 2011; Juby et al. 2005; Poortman and van Gaalen 2017). This is supported by the strong positive link between maternal education and shared physical custody in our data. Our analyses were restricted to educational resources, although finances have been hypothesized to also play a role because shared physical custody involves higher expenses. However, maternal income may not only affect the choice of shared physical custody but is also likely to be affected by it, thus obscuring the interpretation of findings. To some extent, this also holds true for maternal employment, since better chances for separated mothers to be gainfully employed should be a major important advantage of shared physical custody. However, prospective findings have shown that maternal employment prior to separation affects the choice of parenting model (Poortman and van Gaalen 2017). In our data, neither bivariate links nor the regression models

suggest a significant link between shared physical custody and maternal employment. Although maternal employment and parenting arrangement are significantly linked at a bivariate level, this is not due to higher employment rates in shared physical custody, but rather to high unemployment rates among mothers who have no contact to the child's father. Future research should monitor whether shared physical custody in Germany can eventually pave the way for single mothers' better chances on the labor market.

Residential proximity between both parents was a more important and robust factor in shared physical custody. In fact, short distances of up to 15 min seemed particularly suitable for shared physical custody. However, causal interpretations could be misled since separating parents might choose residential proximity if they plan to establish shared physical custody with the child. Prospective research would be most informative in this respect.

Finally, our analyses showed that co-parenting quality is an important factor in establishing shared parenting in Germany. Successful and reliable cooperation clearly increases the chances of shared physical custody. At the same time, however, there was an unexpected inverse link indicating (marginally) more co-parenting problems among parents with shared physical custody. Although this effect was only marginally significant and should not be overestimated unless replicated, it seems relevant to consider its interpretations. Conflicted parents could be prone to choose shared physical custody in order to minimize conflict by dividing the child most evenly. Alternatively, shared physical custody could also trigger more conflict because it demands more communication. Such issues need to be addressed in longitudinal research.

Overall, our findings seem highly robust against changing definitions of shared physical custody. Additional analyses (Walper et al. in prep.) indicate only very few minor changes in effects, e.g. increasing the significance of co-parenting problems as more prevalent in shared physical custody arrangements and decreasing age differences in the first decade of life. This suggests that the differences between parents who practice more or less symmetrical forms of shared parenting seem to be very limited. Nevertheless, specific comparisons would seem helpful in guiding lawmakers' decisions about when to advice which form of shared physical custody.

There are further factors which could not be explored in this paper. For example, migration background was not included in our analyses for several reasons. The share of (first and second generation) migrants in the sample was lower than expected by official statistics since participation in the interviews required mastery of the German language. The majority of migrants included in our sample has European background, so issues of cultural diversity would have to be neglected. Further studies, however, should address this factor in more detail.

We hope that these findings provide a starting point for more in-depth research on shared physical custody in Germany. In guiding the necessary legal reform, it will be important to provide further insight–particularly with respect to children's well-being, which should be the most important criterion for parents' choice of post-separation parenting arrangement.

Acknowledgement This chapter benefited from the support of the Centre for Population, Family and Health (CPFH) at the University of Antwerp which enabled Open Access.

References

Amato, P. R., Meyers, C. E., & Emery, R. E. (2009). Changes in nonresident father-child contact from 1976 to 2002. *Family Relations, 58*(1), 41–53.

Baude, A., Pearson, J., & Drapeau, S. (2016). Child adjustment in joint physical custody versus sole custody: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 57*(5), 338–360.

Baumann, T., Hochgürtel, T., & Sommer, B. (2018). Familie, Lebensformen & Kinder. In Statistisches Bundesamt & Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (Hrsg.), *Datenreport 2018: Ein Sozialbericht für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (S. 50–101).

Bauserman, R. (2002). Child adjustment in joint-custody versus sole-custody arrangements: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Family Psychology, 16*(1), 91–102.

Bergström, M., Fransson, E., Modin, B., Berlin, M., Gustafsson, P. A., & Hjern, A. (2015). Fifty moves a year: Is there an association between joint physical custody and psychosomatic problems in children? *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 69*(8), 769–774.

Bjarnason, T., & Arnarsson, A. M. (2011). Joint physical custody and communication with parents: A cross-national study of children in 36 Western countries. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 42*(6), 871–890.

Blohm, M., & Walter, J. (2018). Einstellungen zur Rolle der Frau und der des Mannes. In Statistisches Bundesamt & Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (Hrsg.), *Datenreport 2018*: *Ein Sozialbericht für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (S. 397–S. 402).

Brauns, H., Scherer, S., & Steinmann, S. (2003). The CASMIN educational classification in international comparative research. In J. H. P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik & C. Wolf (Eds.), *Advances in cross-national comparison: A European working book for demographic and socio-economic variables* (pp. 196–221). New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers.

Bundesministerium für Familie Senioren Frauen und Jugend. (2013). *Stief- und Patchworkfamilien in Deutschland.: Monitor Familienforschung 31*. Berlin.

Cashmore, J., Parkinson, P., Weston, R., Patulny, R., Redmond, G., Qu, L., et al. (2010). *Shared care parenting arrangements since the 2006 family law reforms: Report to the Australian government attorney-general's department*. University of New South Wales: Social Policy Research Centre.

Dadds, M. R., & Powell, M. B. (1991). The relationship of interparental conflict and global marital adjustment to aggression, anxiety, and immaturity in aggressive and nonclinic children. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 19*(5), 553–567.

Fehlberg, B., Smyth, B., Maclean, M., & Roberts, C. (2011). Legislating for shared time parenting after separation: A research review. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family, 25*(3), 318–337.

Fransson, E., Sarkadi, A., Hjern, A., & Bergström, M. (2016). Why should they live more with one of us when they are children to us both? Parents' motives for practicing equal joint physical custody for children aged 0–4. *Children and Youth Services Review, 66*, 154–160.

Haberman, S. J. (1973). The analysis of residuals in cross-classified tables. *Biometrics, 29*(1), 205–220.

Hakovirta, M., & Rantalaiho, M. (2011). Family policy and shared parenting in Nordic countries. *European Journal of Social Security, 13*(2), 247–266.

Hall, S. S. (2005). Change in paternal involvement from 1977 to 1997: A cohort analysis. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal, 34*(2), 127–139.

Hyest, J.-J., & About, N. (2007). *Rapport d' information No. 349 sur la résidence alternée*.

Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2017). *Getrennt gemeinsam erziehen: Befragung von Trennungseltern im Auftrag des BMFSFJ. Untersuchungsbericht*. Allensbach. https://www.ifd-allensbach.de/uploads/tx_studies/Abach_Trennungseltern_Bericht.pdf

Juby, H., Le Bourdais, C., & Marcil-Gratton, N. (2005). Sharing roles, sharing custody? Couples' characteristics and children's living arrangements at separation. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 67*(1), 157–172.

Kalmijn, M. (2015). Father-child relations after divorce in four European countries: Patterns and determinants. *Comparative Population Studies, 40*(3), 251–276.

Kaspiew, R., Gray, M., Weston, R., Moloney, L., Hand, K., Qu, L., et al. (2009). *Executive summary: Evaluation of the 2006 family law reforms*. Melbourne: Australien Institute of Family Studies.

Kinderrechtekommission des Deutschen Familiengerichtstags e.V. (2014). Das Wechselmodell im deutschen Familienrecht. *FamRZ, 14*, 1157–1166.

Langmeyer, A. (2015). *Sorgerecht, Coparenting und Kindeswohl: Eltern Sein in nichtehelichen Lebensgemeinschaften*. Wiesbaden: Springer.

Lenze, A. (2014). *Alleinerziehende unter Druck. Rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen, finanzielle Lage und Reformbedarf*. Bertelsmann Stiftung: Gütersloh.

Nielsen, L. (2013). Shared residential custody: Review of the research (part I of II). *American Journal of Family Law, 27*(1), 61–71.

Nielsen, L. (2018a). Joint versus sole physical custody: Outcomes for children independent of family income or parental conflict. *Journal of Child Custody, 15*(1), 35–54.

Nielsen, L. (2018b). Joint versus sole physical custody: Children's outcomes independent of parent–child relationships, income, and conflict in 60 studies. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 59*(4), 247–281.

Nitsche, N., & Grunow, D. (2016). Housework over the course of relationships: Gender ideology, resources, and the division of housework from a growth curve perspective. *Advances in Life Course Research, 29*, 80–94.

OECD. (2017). *Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf*. Paris: OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264263420-de

Poortman, A.-R., & van Gaalen, R. (2017). Shared residence after separation: A review and new findings from the Netherlands. *Family Court Review, 55*(4), 531–544.

Schier, M., & Hubert, S. (2015). Alles eine Frage der Opportunität, oder nicht? Multilokalität und Wohnentfernung nach Trennung und Scheidung. *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung, 1*, 3–31.

Schnor, C. (2012). Trennungsrisiko von Paaren mit Kindern: Der Einfluss der Religion in West- und Ostdeutschland. In J. Huinink, M. Kreyenfeld, & H. Trappe (Hrsg.), *Familie und Partnerschaft in Ost- und Westdeutschland: Ähnlich und doch immer noch anders* (S. 229–255). Leverkusen: Verlag Barbara Budrich.

Schumann, E. (2018). *Gemeinsam getragene Elternverantwortung nach Trennung und Scheidung – Reformbedarf im Sorge-, Umgangs- und Unterhaltsrecht? Gutachten B zum 72. Deutschen Juristentag*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck.

Sodermans, A. K., Matthijs, K., & Swicegood, G. (2013). Characteristics of joint physical custody families in Flanders. *Demographic Research, 28*, 821–848.

Spruijt, E., & Duindam, V. (2009). Joint physical custody in the Netherlands and the well-being of children. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 51*(1), 65–82.

Statistisches Bundesamt. (2017a). *69% der Mütter und 6% der Väter sind in Teilzeit tätig. Pressemitteilung Nr. 345*. Wiesbaden.

Statistisches Bundesamt. (2017b). *Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern: Deutschland über EU-Durchschnitt*. Wiesbaden.

Statistisches Bundesamt. (2018a). *Alleinerziehende in Deutschland 2017*. Begleitmaterial zur Pressekonferenz am 2. August 2018. Wiesbaden.

Statistisches Bundesamt. (2018b). *Bevölkerung: Eheschließungen, Geborene und Gestorbene 2017 nach Kreisen*. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Eheschliessungen-Ehescheidungen-Lebenspartnerschaften/Publikationen/Downloads-Eheschliessungen/eheschliessungen-geborene-gestorbene-5126001177004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=5

Statistisches Bundesamt. (2018c). *Deutlich weniger Ehescheidungen im Jahr 2017: Pressemitteilung Nr. 251 vom 10.07.2018.* Wiesbaden.

Steinbach, A. (2018). Children's and parents' Well-being in joint physical custody: A literature review. *Family Process, 58*(2), 353–369.

Sünderhauf, H. (2013). *Wechselmodell: Psychologie – Recht – Praxis: Abwechselnde Kinderbetreuung durch Eltern nach Trennung und Scheidung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien.

Walper, S. (2016). Arrangements elterlicher Fürsorge nach Trennung und Scheidung: Das Wechselmodell im Licht neuer Daten aus Deutschland. In Deutscher Familiengerichtstag e.v. (Hrsg.), *Brühler Schriften zum Familienrecht*: *21. Deutscher Familiengerichtstag* (S. 99–143). Bielefeld: Gieseking Verlag.

Walper, S., Bien, W., & Rauschenbach, T. (Hrsg.) (2015). *Aufwachsen in Deutschland heute: Erste Befunde aus dem AID:A-Survey 2015.* München: Deutsches Jugendinstitut.

Walper, S., Langmeyer, A., & Entleitner-Phleps, C. (in prep.). Shared physical custody among separated families in Germany: The role of gender attitudes.

Westphal, S. K., Poortman, A.-R., & van der Lippe, T. (2014). Non-resident father-child contact across divorce cohorts: The role of father involvement during marriage. *European Sociological Review, 30*(4), 444–456.

Wissenschaftliche Dienste. (2018). *Sachstand Fragen zum Wechselmodell*. Aktenzeichen WD 7–3000 – 056/18. Berlin.

Zerle-Elsäßer, C., & Li, X. (2017). Väter im Familienalltag – Determinanten einer aktiven Vaterschaft. *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung, 29*(1), 11–31.

Sabine Walper is Research Director at the German Youth Institute and Professor of Education and Youth Research at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, Germany. Her main field of research addresses issues of family diversity, family relationships, parenting, and children's and adolescents' development in different family contexts, focusing families in poverty and families with separated and repartnered parents. Trained as psychologist and psychological therapist, she developed and evaluated parenting programs. She is Co-Principle Investigator of the German Family Panel pairfam and supervises the large-scale national assessments "Growing up in Germany – Everday contexts" and the monitoring of the national program Early Prevention (Frühe Hilfen) conducted at the Germany Youth Institute. She is strongly involved in political consulting and currently chairs the expert committee of the Ninth National Report on Families in Germany.

Christine Entleitner-Phleps works in the team of Research Director Prof. Dr. Sabine Walper at the German Youth Institute (DJI) in Munich. She studied Education and Sociology at the University of Innsbruck and completed her Doctoral thesis at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. Her main research interest follows quantitative family research with a special focus on complex family structures after divorce/separation and their everyday family life practices.

Alexandra N. Langmeyer is head of the working group "Living Situation and Developmental Contexts of Children" at the German Youth Institute (DJI) in Munich. She studied education, psychology and law at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and received there her doctoral degree. Her doctoral thesis was about coparenting and physical custody in cohabiting families. Her quantitative research focuses practices of everyday life, development and well-being of children. This especially in the context of family and divorce research.