



Marriage Market or Labor Market?

- Cohabitation Histories and Working Decisions of Single Mothers -

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Structure

1. Research Interest
2. Theoretical Framework
3. Research Design
4. Empirical Results
5. Conclusion



(1) Research Interest

Household Dynamics of Single Mothers

- Approx. 20% of single mothers end single parenting with a transition into a cohabiting or marital union (Schneider 2003, Kortmann et al. 2002)
- This change into a partner household occurs within a time period of 2-5 years (Lankuttis/Blossfeld 2003)

Labor Market Participation of Single Mothers

- Single mothers are more than average level employed (approx. 2/3 employed, a majority works fulltime) (Ott/Strohmeier 2003, Schneider et al 2001, Engelbrech/Jungkunst 2001)
- Increase of employment at the beginning of single parenting (Andreß et al. 2003)

Research Desiderata:

Influence of labor market participation on household dynamics of single mothers



(2) Theoretical Framework I: Family Economics

Basic assumptions of mating and employment behavior of single mothers

- Utility maximization in households due to economies-of-scale, pooling of resources and labor division (Becker 1973, 1974, 1993)
 - Utility measured in marked goods and commodities
- Basis for the utility maximization is the household members' specialization into labor and housework based on different forms of human capital
 - Mating takes place in the marriage market orientated at the principle of *positive* and *negative assortative mating*

Conclusion:

- ⇒ People mate if they can maximize their utility
- ⇒ For single mothers a new partnership's utility is decreasing with the increase of their own income capacity and vice versa (Becker 1973, 1974)
- ⇒ The chances of single mothers in the marriage market should be contrariwise to those in the labor market (due to traditional gender roles and division of labor in the family)



(2) Theoretical Framework II: utility, resources and restrictions of single mothers in the marriage and the labor market

Individual and familial determinants

- Age
- Marital status
- Number of children and the children's age

Employment-related determinants

- Level of education
- Labor market participation



(3) Research Design

Data Base

- SOEP (German Socio Economic Panel)
- Timeframe: 1984 – 2006

Definitions

- Single mother: women who are living alone with their child/children in a household
 - Children's age restriction: youngest child up to the age of 16 or under the age of 24 but not employed

Method

- Event history analysis (Cox-Model)



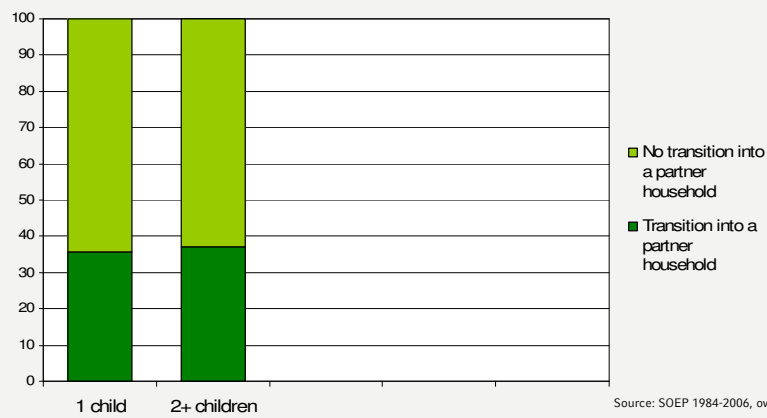
(4) Empirical Results I

| | Transition into a partner household | Staying single mother |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| N = 1066 | 36,1 % | 63,9 % |
| Survival time (median) | 69 months (~6 years) | |



(4) Empirical results II

Transition into a partner household by number and age of children

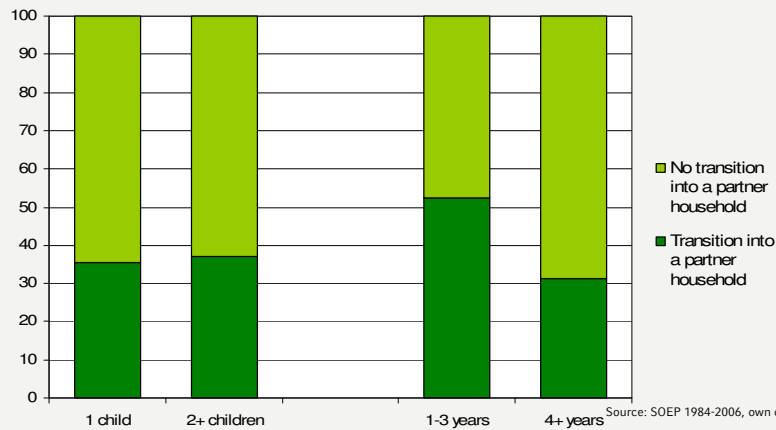


Source: SOEP 1984-2006, own calculations



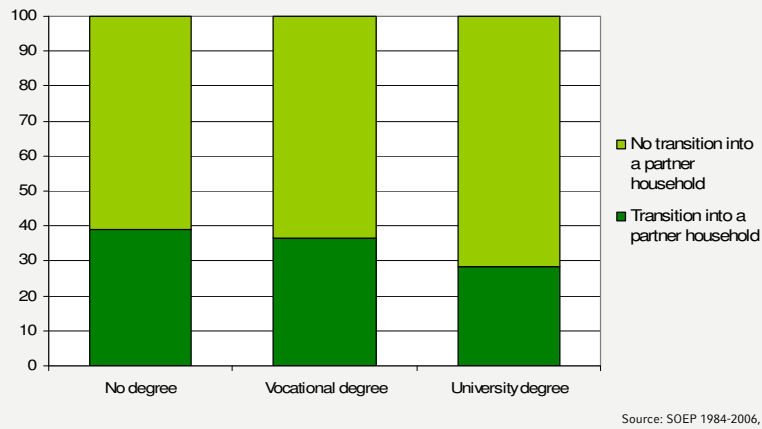
(4) Empirical results III

Transition into a partner household by number and age of children



(4) Empirical results IV

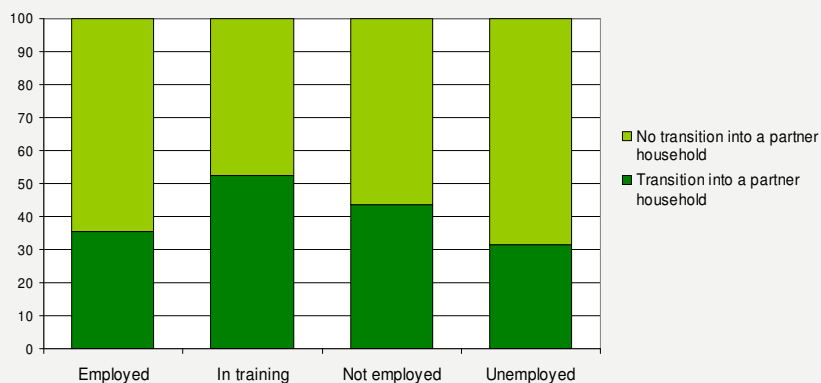
Transition into a partner household by vocational degree





(4) Empirical results VIII

Transition into a partner household by labor market behavior



Source: SOEP 1984-2006, own calculations



(4) Empirical Results IX: Cox models for the transition into a partner household

| Variables | Model 1 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Birth cohort 1960-1969 ¹ | .560*** |
| Birth cohorts since 1970 ¹ | .522*** |
| | |
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| | |
| N | 982 |
| LR-Significance | |
| df | |

¹Reference group „until 1959“
Levels of significance: *** 1%, ** 5%, * 10%

Source: SOEP 1984-2006, own calculations



(4) Empirical Results IX: Cox models for the transition into a partner household

| Variables | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| Birth cohort 1960-1969 ¹ | .560*** | -.065 |
| Birth cohorts since 1970 ¹ | .522*** | -.316*** |
| Age | | -.064*** |
| Number of children | | -.039 |
| Youngest child until 3 years | | -.046 |
| Single ² | | -.440*** |
| Widowed ² | | -.634*** |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| N | 982 | 887 |
| LR-Significance | | *** |
| df | | 5 |

¹Reference group „until 1959“

²Reference group „divorced“

Levels of significance: *** 1%, ** 5%, * 10%

Source: SOEP 1984-2006, own calculations



(4) Empirical Results IX: Cox models for the transition into a partner household

| Variables | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Birth cohort 1960-1969 ¹ | .560*** | -.065 | -.074 |
| Birth cohorts since 1970 ¹ | .522*** | -.316*** | -.292** |
| Age | | -.064*** | -.065*** |
| Number of children | | -.039 | -.019 |
| Youngest child until 3 years | | -.046 | -.105 |
| Single ² | | -.440*** | -.439*** |
| Widowed ² | | -.634*** | -.623*** |
| No degree ³ | | | -.310*** |
| Vocational degree ³ | | | -.119 |
| Not employed ⁴ | | | .162** |
| Unemployed ⁴ | | | .018 |
| N | 982 | 887 | 845 |
| LR-Significance | | *** | *** |
| df | | 5 | 4 |

¹Reference group „until 1959“

²Reference group „divorced“

³Reference group „university degree“ ; ⁴Reference group „employed“

Levels of significance: *** 1%, ** 5%, * 10%

Source: SOEP 1984-2006, own calculations



(5) Conclusion

- Chance of transition into a partner household is decreasing with the single mother's age increasing
- No effect of children's number and age
- Effect of education is ambiguous
- Affirmation of the family economics' assumptions of the relation between labor market behavior and household dynamics
 - ⇒ Single mothers with labor market participation are less often changing into a partner household
 - ⇒ No increase of utility through transition in a partner household for economic independent single mothers



Thank you very much for your attention!