

Dyadic employment biographies and within-couple wealth inequality in Britain and Western Germany

Theresa Nutz^{1,2}  | Davide Gritti³ 

¹GESIS—Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Mannheim, Germany

²Humboldt University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

³University of Trento, Trento, Italy

Correspondence

Theresa Nutz, GESIS—Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, B6, 4-5, 68159 Mannheim, Germany.

Email: theresa.nutz@gesis.org

Funding information

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Grant/Award Number: LE 3612/2-1; Università degli Studi di Trento

Abstract

Objective: This study examines how the interplay of both partners' employment biographies is associated with the within-couple gender wealth gap in later life in Britain and Western Germany, including married couples born between the 1920s and 1960s.

Background: Although it is well-known that women own less personal wealth than their male partners on average, variation in the gender wealth gap across partners' employment constellations and contexts remains unaddressed. Following the life course paradigm, this study theorizes how individual wealth accumulation, within-couple redistribution processes, and institutional arrangements shape the within-couple gender wealth gap in later life.

Method: The analyses rely on retrospective employment and prospective survey data from Britain (UKHLS; Wave 8; 2016–2018) and Germany (SOEP, 2017). Sequence and cluster analyses detect patterns of dyadic employment biographies (ages 20–55) among different-sex couples in their first marriage and OLS regressions associate them with the within-couple gender wealth gap.

Results: The within-couple gender wealth gap to the disadvantage of women existed in Britain and Western Germany, with considerably larger inequality in Germany. German male breadwinner couples, particularly those with longer periods of female homemaking and part-time employment, showed higher levels of wealth inequality. Whereas dyadic employment biographies were not clearly associated with the gender wealth gap in Britain, stable arrangements of female full-time employment reduced the gap in Germany.

Conclusion: A similar division of labor throughout the life course can result in different levels of the within-couple

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2021 The Authors. *Journal of Marriage and Family* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC on behalf of National Council on Family Relations.

gender wealth gap in later life across country contexts, particularly depending on the housing system.

KEYWORDS

economic well-being, employment, gender, inequalities, marriage

INTRODUCTION

In light of population aging, economic well-being in later life becomes a crucial topic of interest for policy and research. Due to the cumulative nature of wealth, particularly differences in individuals' biographies throughout working life generate marked inequality in wealth in later life (Denton & Boos, 2007; Nutz & Lersch, 2021). At retirement, personal wealth is important to ensure economic well-being after the loss of employment income. Whereas financial wealth might generate income through capital gains, housing wealth provides rent-free accommodation. Further, within-couple wealth inequality is likely to remain stable until the end of life, as retirees face limited opportunities to self-accumulate wealth via labor market participation. In many countries, including Britain, retirees have been mostly privately responsible for sustaining their living standards. In return, the re-marketization of pension systems since the early 2000s in Germany and other western countries has increased the need for private old-age provision (Ebbinghaus, 2015).

Within couples, women have been identified to hold lower average levels of personal wealth than their male partners across countries, including Britain (Kan & Laurie, 2014) and Germany (Grabka & Westermeier, 2015; Sierminska et al., 2018). Women have also been found to hold lower levels of pension wealth than their male partners at retirement (Denton & Boos, 2007). Against the common belief of marital sharing, however, spouses do not share their personal wealth and respective property rights per default in Britain and Germany. Although spouses might share wealth benefits, for instance by redistributing income or providing accommodation, they have no legal right to participate in the other's wealth management and have no say in major decisions, such as asset disposal. Thus, individuals benefit more strongly from their own than their spouses' wealth in their psychological and financial well-being (Kan & Laurie, 2014; Lersch, 2017a).

A large body of research has investigated the consequences of wealth inequality in society (for an overview, see Killewald et al., 2017). The within-couple wealth gap is a central dimension of overall wealth inequality that affects the lives of partnered women and men. Besides the ownership of individual resources, the relative standing of individuals compared with their partners affects various outcomes at both the personal and the couple level. Prior research has shown that mainly the relative and less the absolute economic standing in the society matters for the positive impact of wealth on individuals' subjective well-being (Rojas, 2019). Within couples, women's life satisfaction increases with their increasing relative wealth as they gain economic independence and bargaining power (Tisch, 2020).

Examining the sources of within-couple wealth disparities in later life, it is crucial to consider the interplay of both partners' employment biographies. However, little attention has been paid to the division of labor throughout their career paths. We therefore ask: *How are married partners' employment trajectories associated with the within-couple gender wealth gap in later life?* and *How does this association differ between Britain and Western Germany?*

This study's contributions to the existing literature are threefold, integrating a dyadic, a dynamic, and a comparative approach. First, many studies examining within-couple gender wealth disparities predominantly considered individual-level determinants separately by gender, neglecting that individuals' wealth accumulation processes might also be shaped by their partners (Sierminska et al., 2010; 2018). To better understand the predictors of within-couple wealth inequality, we examine individuals' wealth accumulation processes in interdependence with the partner. We extend prior research by incorporating dyadic employment biographies and

theorizing on the redistribution of economic resources within couples, which is related to their division of paid and unpaid labor.

Second, we integrate both partners' employment states and group them in meaningful clusters of employment biographies from ages 20 to 55. This allows the consideration of duration, frequency, and timing of certain employment constellations for the within-couple gender wealth gap in later life. The few studies that have taken a couple perspective on gender wealth inequality mostly combined both partners' short-term determinants with summary indicators (Frémeaux & Leturcq, 2020; Grabka & Westermeier, 2015). As wealth accumulation is a long-term process, short-term measures, such as current marital status, are not sufficient to explain wealth disparities in later life. Summary measures of isolated events, such as the number of years in full-time employment, can neither capture the stability nor the temporal dimension of the underlying life course processes.

Third, this study follows comparative life course research on economic well-being in later life (Fasang et al., 2013; Madero-Cabib & Fasang, 2016) by examining how the mix of policies and institutions shape within-couple wealth inequality. We extend comparative wealth research (e.g., Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein, 2013) by discussing how the British and Western German contexts shape the wealth accumulation processes throughout both partners' life courses. The British UKHLS and the German SOEP provide unique survey data with wealth measured at the personal level. We excluded Eastern Germany due to fundamental differences in the historical life course and welfare regime. We compared cohorts born between the 1920s and 1960s, covering post-war to baby boomer generations whose careers developed in increasingly egalitarian but predominantly traditional welfare states. Whereas Britain has experienced a rapid post-war expansion in women's labor force participation toward part-time employment, the change from a female homemaker to a part-time career model started moderately in Germany in the 1970s. Further, country differences in labor market, housing, and financial systems might shape the within-couple gender wealth gap.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Following the life course framework (Elder, 1994; Mayer, 2005), within-couple gender wealth disparities in later life can be understood as the outcome of both partners' prior life experiences. Its guiding principle of linked lives offers a perspective for exploring partners' interdependent employment biographies, stating that they mutually shape their life paths and respective wealth outcomes in later life. The interplay of both partners' employment biographies is further embedded in institutional and normative arrangements that shape their wealth accumulation processes throughout the life course.

This study takes a dyadic perspective to examine how individuals' employment and marriage paths shape within-couple gender wealth inequality in later life through different patterns of transitions over the life course. Besides the duration each partner spends in a certain employment status, also the stability of their constellation as well as the timing of certain events describe essential characteristics. Of particular relevance is the entry into marriage, which marks a turning point for individuals' wealth accumulation processes by changing economic and legal arrangements, particularly addressing the sharing and exchange of assets (Lersch, 2017b; Wilmoth & Koso, 2002).

The gendered accumulation of personal wealth

Personal wealth accumulation is a long-term process that takes place across the life course via three major pathways. First, individuals can self-accumulate wealth by saving or investing

surplus income. In addition, employment-related benefits that supplement earnings shape the accumulation of assets. Common benefits include voluntary retirement plans, stock options, life insurance, building loan contracts, and performance-related bonus payments (Chang, 2010, p. 41). Second, individuals accrue wealth by receiving financial transfers in the form of inheritances or inter vivos transfers. Third, wealth replicates itself exponentially through the mechanism of compound interest.

Women and men face unequal conditions when it comes to wealth accumulation. Whereas inheritances and inter vivos transfers are an important component of household wealth in Britain and Germany (Alvaredo et al., 2017), prior literature has shown that gender wealth disparities are primarily shaped by differences in women's and men's labor market participation (Grabka et al., 2015; Sierminska et al., 2018). Women's capacities to accumulate wealth are also restricted with similar career paths due to gender differentials in income and occupational classes (Chang, 2010).

The redistribution of economic resources within couples

Whereas prior research has addressed couples' decision-making regarding wealth (Rowlingson & Joseph, 2010), the way how partners mutually shape their wealth accumulation processes remains largely unclear. Prior research on money management has differentiated between three types of income redistribution (Bennett, 2013). First, spouses might redistribute money driven by norms of marital caring and togetherness. Second, spouses can be legally obliged to share money in times of need, such as unemployment. Third, income pooling might be applied in couples with an unequal division of labor to compensate the partner specializing in household production. In male breadwinner couples, for instance, women are likely to receive a housekeeping allowance by their partners (Vogler et al., 2006).

Extending literature on income within couples (Bennett, 2013), partners might use the money available in the household not only for consumption but also for personal wealth accumulation. Depending on their interests, they might use the redistributed income either partly or completely for savings or investments. Under a housekeeping allowance, women might thus use part of the received money to build up savings independent from the partner. Individuals might also receive money from the partner as a contribution to their personal wealth holdings, for instance as a gift or a private credit. As couples usually pool at least parts of their wealth (Rowlingson & Joseph, 2010), they are likely to redistribute money through investments in joint assets. Of particular relevance is housing wealth, which constitutes most couples' largest investment and is commonly jointly owned by both partners. If both partners share the legal ownership of an asset, one's financial contribution constitutes a half-sized investment in both partners' wealth portfolios. Therefore, joint investments constitute another way of compensating for economic imbalances resulting from an unequal division of labor (Nutz & Lersch, 2021). Although we cannot empirically observe the financial redistribution between partners throughout the life course, this framework provides theoretical guidance.

Couples' wealth accumulation processes are strongly impaired by union dissolution (Boertien & Lersch, 2020). The economic consequences of separation last several years and fundamentally disrupt investments in joint assets and respective redistribution processes within couples. Therefore, the present study exclusively considers couples in their first marriage to rule out the influence of former marriages on the association between partners' employment biographies and the within-couple gender wealth gap in later life. As men and women within stable marriage experience a wealth premium (Lersch, 2017b; Wilmoth & Koso, 2002), we expect to obtain conservative estimates of the wealth gap among first-married couples.

CONTEXT DIFFERENCES

Examining the way the macro-level contexts of Britain and Western Germany shape the association between partners' employment biographies and the within-couple gender wealth gap in later life, we follow a comparative life course perspective (Mayer, 2005). Thus, we do not examine the effects of specific institutional differences but consider the country-specific package of institutions and policies that shape partners' wealth accumulation processes throughout the life course (Aisenbrey & Fasang, 2017; for an overview, see Table A1). Both countries shared a history as strong male breadwinner states and experienced an increase in women's labor market participation throughout the second half of the 20th century (Trappe et al., 2015). Whereas female homemakers were more prevalent in Western Germany, Britain developed faster toward a male breadwinner/female part-timer model across cohorts (McMunn et al., 2015). Until the 21st century, Britain is characterized by these couples, whereas women in Western Germany are commonly part-time employed or homemaking. To capture these different convergence processes, we consider the employment constellations among couples whose birth cohorts ranged from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Both countries share similar marital property regimes during marriage, where spouses remain the sole owners of their wealth. Under Germany's community of accrued gains, wealth (including inheritances and transfers) accumulated before and during marriage remains in personal ownership. Upon divorce, the surplus gains of all assets accrued during marriage are split equally between both ex-spouses. In Britain, no statutory marital property regime exists and property rights (including inheritances and transfers) are maintained throughout marriage. At divorce, courts have wide discretion in determining the division of assets.

Historically grown policy differences between Britain and Western Germany have shaped the division of labor within couples across cohorts. Whereas married couples in Britain are taxed like single households, Germany upholds its joint taxation originally introduced in 1958, incentivizing a low labor force participation for women. Further, German women's ability to engage in employment has been impaired by the lower availability of public childcare compared with Britain. Despite increases in the enrollment rates in early childcare provision in both countries over time, they have remained considerably larger in Britain at 37% compared with 17% in Germany in 2005 (OECD, 2019).

Britain and Western Germany share similar trends in partnership stability in terms of marriage and divorce rates over the last 60 years and across the cohorts under study (Figure A1 and Table A2). Our underlying sample of couples in their first marriage can therefore be considered similar in their composition across both countries.

Societal characteristics fundamentally shape how and particularly through which assets individuals accumulate wealth. Within couples, wealth accumulation through homeownership is particularly relevant, as it constitutes most couples' largest joint investment (Joseph & Rowlingson, 2012). Whereas the German system can be characterized as static, Britain represents a dynamic housing system. Supported by a high degree of deregulation and sophisticated mortgage products, British couples are likely to repeatedly trade properties over the life course (Toussaint & Elsinga, 2009). In 1979, the British government introduced the Right to Buy scheme, which further strengthened the asset-based welfare through low-price sales of around two million social and public houses (Lowe et al., 2012). In Germany, high deposit requirements, transaction costs, and tax burdens characterize homeownership as a once-in-a-lifetime investment with restricted access. Consequently, wealth accumulation through joint investments in homeownership should play a larger role for couples in Britain. Due to the equalizing function of joint wealth holdings, we expect British women to benefit more strongly from joint homeownership as a means of economic compensation, resulting in a smaller gender wealth gap than in Germany.

The generosity of welfare spending sets different opportunity and need structures for individuals' wealth accumulation (Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein, 2013). Resulting from lower levels of welfare spending, employment should be more relevant for wealth accumulation in Britain to ensure their economic well-being compared with Germany. During unemployment, however, less generous benefits in Britain impair wealth accumulation. Both countries have comparable structures of unemployment benefits, with comprehensive contribution-based benefits for the first time in unemployment (Jobseeker's Allowance of 6 months in Britain [slightly longer before 1996] and 12 months of unemployment benefit I in Germany) being replaced by lower minimum income schemes. With the Hartz reforms in 2005, Germany has somewhat converged with Britain by reducing the benefits for the long-term unemployed. For the birth cohorts under study, however, unemployment is unlikely to be a mass phenomenon characterizing employment biographies due to a relatively stable economic climate.

Despite similar average working hours in part-time employment in both countries (see Table A1), Britons should be less likely to build up wealth through part-time employment. Many part-time positions in Germany have benefited from the EU Directive on Part-Time Work in 1997, making non-discrimination against part-time workers a legal principle (Gallie et al., 2016). In Britain, the growth of part-time employment has emerged earlier, resulting in stronger occupational segregation in part-time employment. In Germany, part-time positions are more likely to be covered by access to pension entitlements (Fasang et al., 2013), with access to occupational and private pension wealth being crucial for wealth accumulation. As women remain the prevalent group of part-timers in both contexts, we expect to observe a larger within-couple gender wealth gap in couples with female part-timers in Britain than in Germany.

DATA AND METHOD

Data

We used data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP; v35, doi: 10.5684/soep-core.v35; Goebel et al., 2019) and Understanding Society—The UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS; doi: 10.5255/UKDA-SN-6614-13; University of Essex, 2019). We drew on survey waves that took place in the same year—wave 2017 of the SOEP and wave 8 of the UKHLS—collecting information on wealth and debts of all adult household members, complemented by a rich set of socio-demographic characteristics. Both data sets included individuals' retrospective employment and marital biographies. For Britain, we integrated retrospective data from the UKHLS and its predecessor, the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), following Wright (2020).

For the analyses, we imputed missing values separately for Britain and Germany using chained equations with Stata's *mi* procedure (version 16.1) under the assumption of missing at random. For the SOEP, we relied on multiply imputed wealth measures by the SOEP team (Grabka & Westermeier, 2015). A total of five imputations was created. An overview of the analytical and auxiliary variables included in the imputation process and detailed information on the imputation procedure is provided in section "Multiple Imputation" of Appendix S1 and Tables A3 and A4.

Sample

This study focused on wealth inequality in later life among different-sex couples in their first marriage in Britain and Western Germany. We started from a sample of 8361 married couples in Britain and 6957 married couples in Germany, providing individual-level information on

wealth. The sample selection followed three steps separately for each country. First, we selected couples where both members were born in Britain or Western Germany, excluding 2148 couples in the UKHLS and 3486 couples in the SOEP. This selection is due to fundamental institutional differences between former East and West Germany as well as other countries.

Second, we selected couples in which the female partner is aged 55 or older, excluding 2904 couples in Britain and 1834 couples in Western Germany. In this age group, the wealth outcomes of prior employment biographies become present. Third, we selected couples in their first marriage, excluding 629 couples in Britain and 264 couples in Western Germany (see Figure A2 for a full account of the sample selection).

Our final analytical samples included 2649 couples in their first marriage in Britain, with women born between 1924 and 1962, and 1378 couples in their first marriage in Western Germany, with women born between 1925 and 1962. The sample and its marital characteristics are similarly distributed across cohorts for both countries (Table A2). We therefore assume that selectivity on the outcome will not majorly distort the results.

Measurement

Dependent variable

To measure wealth inequality, our dependent variable was the within-couple wealth gap, defined as the difference between the male and the female partner's personal net wealth (Grabka & Westermeier, 2015). A positive wealth gap indicates that the man has higher wealth than the woman. Personal net wealth measured the sum of all personally owned assets minus liabilities, which is either individually held by individuals or their share of jointly owned wealth. By harmonizing the wealth information available in the British and German data, we derived a comparable measure including owner-occupied housing, financial assets (such as savings, stocks, or bonds), life insurances, and private pension plans, whereas liabilities covered mortgages, consumer credits, and student loans. The SOEP wealth module also collected information on the values held in further real estate, business assets, and tangible assets (such as jewelry or gold), which we considered in supplementary analyses. Before calculating the gender wealth gap, we adjusted personal wealth measures for inflation using the consumer price index, transformed British Pounds into Euro, and top-coded and bottom-coded the extreme 0.1% of the reported values. In the multivariable analyses, we applied a rank transformation to express the proportion of couples having a smaller wealth gap than another couple. With a range from 0 to 1, the ranked wealth measure depicts the relative position of different couples in the within-couple wealth inequality distribution. Compared with the absolute wealth gap, the ranked measure reduces the influence of extreme wealth observations at both ends of the wealth gap distribution.

Independent variables

The main explanatory variable of dyadic employment biographies was built in three steps to leverage the dynamic interplay of employment constellations within couples. First, individual employment states with yearly observations from age 20 to 55 were constructed from the four self-reported states "full-time employed," "part-time employed," "parental leave," and "out of labor" (including unemployment, homemaking, and education). Second, we matched spouses and combined their individual employment states. This allowed us to define the couple's employment constellation in each year as the combination of both partners' employment states. The resulting alphabet included the 10 states: (1) dual earner, (2) male breadwinner/female

TABLE 1 Operationalization of individual and dyadic employment states

		Female partner			
		Full-time	Part-time	Out of labor	Parental leave
Male partner	Full-time	Dual earner	Male breadwinner female part-timer	Male breadwinner female homemaker	Parental leave couple
	Part-time	Female breadwinner	Low work intensity couple	Low work intensity couple	Parental leave couple
	Out of labor	Female breadwinner	Low work intensity couple	Low work intensity couple	Parental leave couple
	Parental leave	Parental leavecouple	Parental leave couple	Parental leave couple	Parental leave couple

Note: "Low work intensity couples" include couples in which both partners are not full-time employed. Due to sample size limitations, we do not further differentiate between individuals in part-time employment and those out of labor among low work intensity couples.

TABLE 2 Example of dyadic employment biography of a female and male partner, combining individual employment and marital status over time

	t1	t2	t3	t4	t5
Female employment status	Out of labor	Full-time	Part-time	Part-time	Out of labor
Male employment status	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time
Female marital status	Single	Married	Married	Married	Married
Male marital status	Single	Married	Married	Married	Married
Female dyadic employment biography	Out of labor	Dual earner	Male breadwinner female part- timer	Male breadwinner female part- timer	Male breadwinner female homemaker
Male dyadic employment biography	Full-time	Dual earner	Male breadwinner female part- timer	Male breadwinner female part- timer	Male breadwinner female homemaker

part-timer, (3) male breadwinner/female homemaker, (4) female breadwinner, (5) low work intensity couple, (6) parental leave couple as well as individuals' states before marriage in (7) full-time employment, (8) part-time employment, (9) out of labor, and (10) parental leave. See Table 1 for the operationalization of individual and dyadic employment states. Third, we combined employment and marital states to obtain dyadic employment biographies in the form of sequences, which capture the division of labor over time, including the duration, timing, and sequencing of employment constellations before the wealth measurement. In addition, by considering parental leaves, we captured changes in labor division due to childbearing. See Table 2 for a fictitious example of the construction of dyadic employment biographies in the form of sequences.

Control variables

We considered a rich set of control variables that preceded both the independent and the dependent variables. We controlled for both partners' birth cohorts (" <1943 ," "1943–1952," and

“1953–1952” for women; “<1943,” “1943–1952,” “1953–1952,” and “>1962” for men), respondents’ and their parents’ educational levels (“low” [primary or lower], “intermediate” [secondary], “high” [upper secondary]), and region type (“urban”/“rural,” derived from the Rural and Urban Classification of Output Areas from the Office for National Statistics in the BHPS and the spatial category by the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning in the SOEP). In addition, we controlled for both partners’ age, its squared transformation, and the household’s total net worth. To maximize the comparability of estimates, controls were identical for both Britain and Western Germany. As additional information on family characteristics and inheritances was available in the SOEP, we included both in supplementary analyses.

Analytical strategy

The analyses were conducted separately for each country and proceeded in three steps. First, we employed sequence and cluster analyses to group the dyadic employment biographies. Second, we provided descriptive statistics on the distribution of the within-couple gender wealth gap, overall, and across clusters. Third, we employed the clusters as categorical predictors of the rank-transformed gender wealth gap in a multivariable OLS regression framework. The coefficients in our analyses capture mean differences across the wealth gap distribution. As predictors, we included the clusters derived from females’ dyadic employment biographies, given that dyadic employment biographies are identical for married individuals by construction. Therefore, considering both partners in the regressions would have generated multicollinearity issues. We preferred using female over male dyadic biographies due to the larger heterogeneity in women’s employment biographies before marriage in the contexts under study. All analyses therefore included individual-level predictors, a couple-level dependent variable, and both partners’ control variables.

Sequence analysis of dyadic employment biographies

We employed sequence analysis, a class of techniques applied in social sciences to analyze categorical states’ trajectories, accounting for timing, sequencing, and duration. Sequence analysis is commonly used to quantify the distance between different work or family trajectories (Aisenbrey & Fasang, 2017). It fits well with our theoretical considerations on the relevance of the dynamic interplay of couples’ division of labor. To compute the distances between two sequences, we rely on optimal matching (OM), calculating the minimum cost of turning one sequence into another based on a set of transformation operations (substitution, insertion, and deletion). We chose OM due to its primary sensitivity to duration beyond sequencing and timing (Studer & Ritschard, 2016). In line with other studies on work–family trajectories (Aisenbrey & Fasang, 2017), we set the substitution cost equal to twice the cost of insertion and deletion. To summarize the distances between all possible pairs of individual sequences, we computed the full pairwise matrix across female dyadic employment biographies.

After identifying patterns with sequence analysis, we ran Ward’s cluster analysis to group the sequences into meaningful groups of internally homogeneous and externally heterogeneous clusters. Quality measures assessing the clustering capacity and coherence of assignment supported an eight-cluster solution for Britain and a seven-cluster solution for Western Germany (Figures A3 and A4). Theoretical and analytical reasons supported these decisions. In particular, we aimed to obtain a comparable set of clusters across countries that depicts the heterogeneity of couples’ dyadic employment biographies (focusing on their stability and on their timing of marriage) as well as two highly homogeneous and therefore comparable reference groups. The clusters and the resulting estimates were robust to the use of other dissimilarity

measures with a transition-based cost matrix, such as optimal matching of spell sequences (OMspell) and dynamic hamming distance (DHD; Table A5 and Figure A1). A cautionary note should be made: As every model of age-graded trajectories comes with uncertainty, the exact number of clusters obtained should not be reified (Warren et al., 2015).

RESULTS

Clusters of dyadic employment biographies

Figures 1 and 2 present relative frequency index plots, showing a set of 100 representative sequences (medoids) of female dyadic employment biographies from ages 20 to 55 for Britain and Western Germany (henceforth referred to as Germany; see Tables A6 and A7 for descriptive statistics). Each line depicts the dyadic employment biography of a representative woman from ages 20 to 55, sorted by age at marriage. The results reflect the institutional differences between both contexts. Women in Germany were more likely to take over the role as homemakers and British women as part-time employed secondary earners. Despite these differences, we obtained largely similar patterns of dyadic employment biographies—although with varying sample sizes.

First, we identified a cluster of stable dual earners in both countries (reference clusters), which was larger in Britain (19.5%) than in Germany (10.6%). In Britain, two additional dual earner clusters were characterized by women's employment disruptions either due to longer periods of homemaking (11.7%) or part-time employment (2.4%) before transitioning to full-time employment between ages 30 and 40. In Germany, one additional dual earner cluster consisted of couples with more volatile female employment. Second, male breadwinner/female part-timer couples formed another group of typical trajectories. In Britain, this was composed

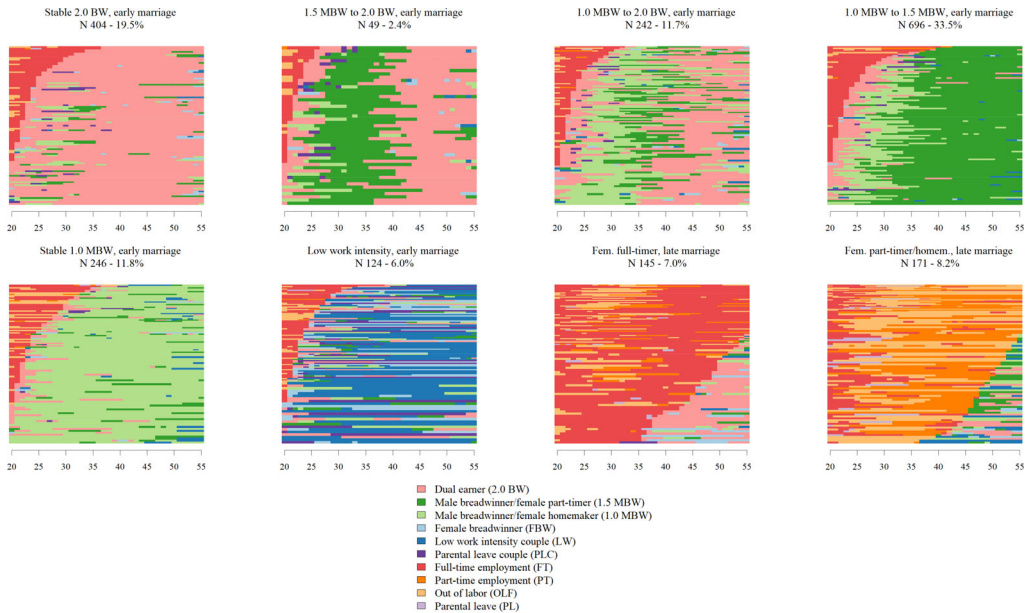


FIGURE 1 Relative frequency sequence plots across clusters of female dyadic employment trajectories in Britain. Medoid sequences displayed, sorted by age at marriage. Dissimilarities from medoids are shown in Figure A5. *Source:* UKHLS (2016–2018); weighted, non-imputed

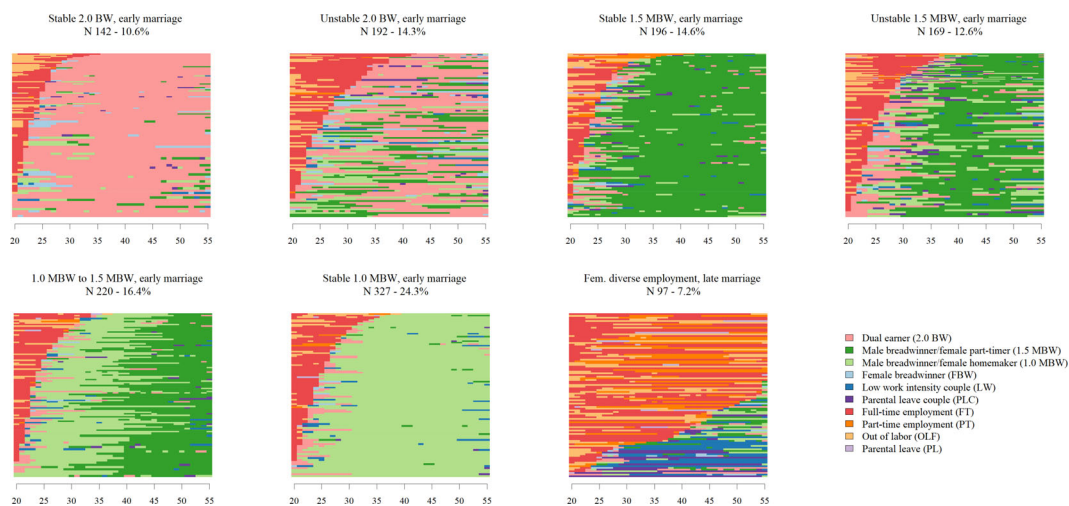


FIGURE 2 Relative frequency sequence plots across clusters of female dyadic employment trajectories in Western Germany. Medoid sequences displayed, sorted by age at marriage. Dissimilarities from medoids are shown in Figure A6. *Source:* SOEP (2017); weighted, non-imputed

of a large group of women transitioning from female homemaking to part-time employment around age 35 (33.5%). In Germany, this was composed of one cluster showing great duration in part-time employment (14.6%), one cluster with less stability (12.6%), and one cluster where a male breadwinner/female part-timer division of labor was preceded by female homemaking (16.4%). Third, whereas stable male breadwinner/female homemaker couples were present in Britain (11.8%), they were more widespread in Germany, accounting for one-fourth of the sample (24.3%). Fourth, in Britain, three marginal groups were composed of couples showing low work intensity (6.0%) and late married couples in which the female career was characterized either by a high (7.0%) or a low (8.2%) labor market participation. In Germany, we identified one marginal group of late-married couples with diverse female employment (7.2%).

Descriptive results

Figure 3 gives an overview of the distributive differences in the gender wealth gap and couples' average total net worth across dyadic employment clusters. Couples in Germany had higher levels of within-couple wealth inequality than British couples. The average within-couple wealth gap was about EUR 10,000 in Britain and EUR 30,000 in Germany. This gap amounted to 3% of couples' net worth in Britain and 9% in Germany, indicating that gender wealth inequality was considerably higher in Germany not only in absolute terms but also in relation to couples' levels of wealth holdings (see Tables A6 and A7). German couples had a median of about EUR 7000, whereas the median gap among British couples was EUR 0.

The lower levels of wealth inequality in Britain might be shaped by country differences in homeownership. In both countries, women owned around half of couples' housing wealth, indicating that joint homeownership might reduce economic imbalances within couples (see Table A8). In contrast, women held considerably lower shares of financial assets than their male partners. Whereas homeownership rates were considerably higher in Britain, we found no country differences in women's financial wealth holdings (see Table A1). Thus, housing wealth might shape British couples' higher average total net worth as well as their lower levels of gender wealth inequality compared with German couples.

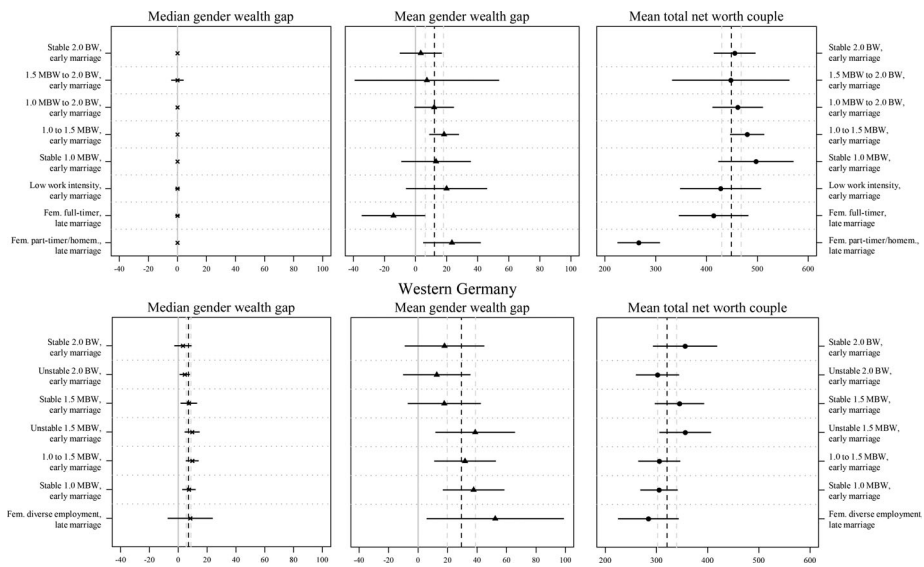


FIGURE 3 Median and mean gender wealth gap and total net worth across clusters for couples in Britain and Western Germany. Depicted on the x-axes is raw wealth in 1000 EUR. Whiskers indicate 95% confidence intervals. Solid gray lines indicate 0 wealth gap; black dashed lines indicate overall mean; gray dashed lines indicate 95% confidence intervals of the mean. (M)BW = (male) breadwinner; fem. = female; homem. = homemaker. *Source:* UKHLS (2016–2018) and SOEP (2017); weighted, multiply imputed

In Britain, couples with female part-timers or homemakers who married late had the highest average gender wealth gap of EUR 23,000. On average, the gap for this cluster amounted to 9% of couples' net worth, thus being the group with the largest wealth inequality in Britain.

Although not significantly different from 0, late-married couples with female full-timers were the only cluster with a negative wealth gap, with women owning around EUR 14,000 more than their male partners. In Germany, the median wealth gap was significantly higher than 0 for most couples, indicating a female wealth disadvantage. For stable dual earner couples with early marriage, the average gap of around EUR 3000 was not significantly different from 0. At the mean, traditional male breadwinner couples in Germany had particularly high levels of gender wealth inequality—for instance, EUR 38,000 for stable male breadwinner/female homemaker couples with early marriage. For these couples, the average proportion of the gender wealth gap of couples' total net worth was 12%, which was only exceeded by the late marriage cluster, whose gap amounted to 18% of their net worth and a total gap of EUR 52,000.

Multivariable results

Figure 4 shows the predicted rank of each dyadic employment cluster on the gender wealth gap distribution in Britain and Germany based on multivariable OLS regression models. Ranging from 0 to 1, the rank measure indicates the proportion of couples having a smaller wealth gap.

For Britain, regression results supported the descriptive findings indicating a relatively low level of gender wealth disparities, with all clusters spreading around the middle of the distribution. Against our expectations, stable dual earner couples in Britain had similar levels of wealth inequality than the other clusters, being located close to the middle of the wealth gap distribution at rank .52. Among German couples, we found a higher heterogeneity across dyadic employment clusters. As expected, we found a stronger gender wealth gap to the disadvantage of women in couples with a gender-traditional division of labor, whereas stable dual earner

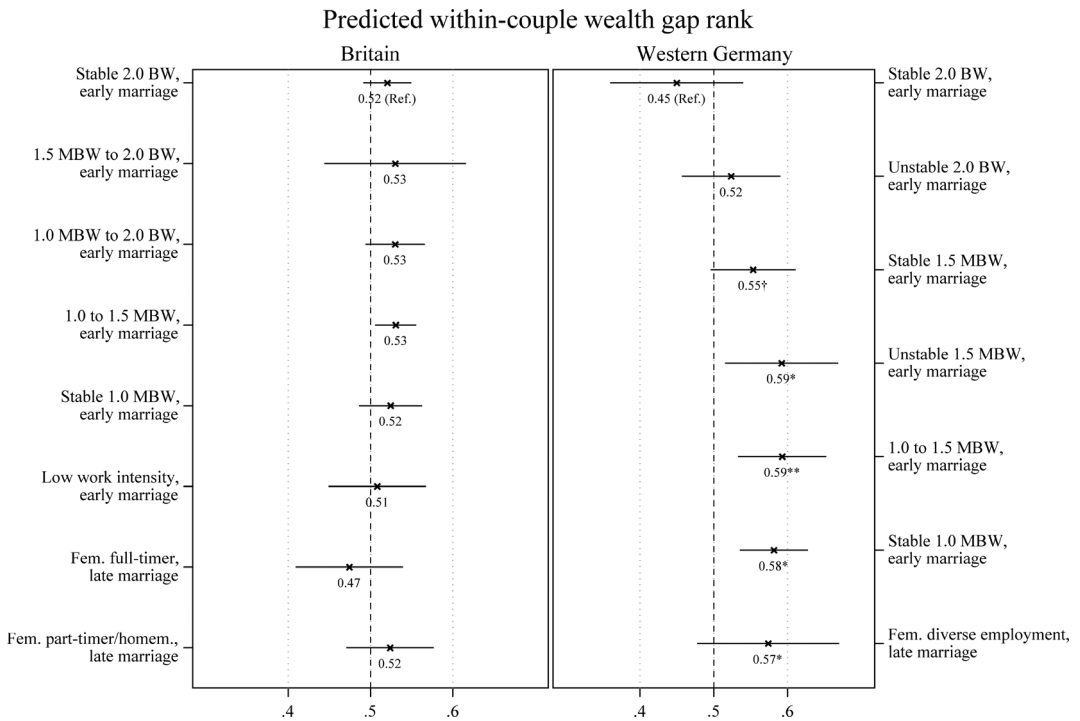


FIGURE 4 Multivariable OLS regression models of employment clusters on the rank-transformed gender wealth gap in later life for couples in Britain and Western Germany. Whiskers indicate 95% confidence intervals. Dashed lines indicate the middle of the rank gap distribution. The models also control for household net worth, both partners' age, education, parental education, and region type. Full model results in Tables A9 and A10. † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ indicate whether coefficient is significantly different to reference cluster in regression model. (M)BW = (male) breadwinner; fem. = female; homem. = homemaker. Source: UKHLS (2016–2018) and SOEP (2017); weighted, multiply imputed

couples had the lowest wealth gap across all clusters at rank .45. During phases of family formation and childcare in early-mid career stages, women in both countries tended to reduce their labor market participation, although some country-specific differences can be observed. Whereas most German women either left the labor market or remained in part-time employment in the long term, British women also took up full-time employment again after short periods of leave. Against our expectations, couples with women returning to full-time employment after short disruptions did not differ in their wealth inequality from those with long-term employment reductions in Britain. In Germany, both short and long periods of homemaking were strongly and significantly positively associated with gender wealth inequality. The wealth gap was 14 points higher ($p = .004$) in couples with homemaking women who returned to part-time employment between ages 35 and 45 and 13 points higher ($p = .023$) in couples with stable female homemakers than the reference cluster of stable dual earner couples. Also, both female short-term and long-term part-time employment was significantly associated with the gender wealth gap in Germany. Whereas the wealth gap was 10 points higher in stable male breadwinner/female part-timer couples ($p = .062$), the gap was 14 points higher in unstable male breadwinner/female part-timer couples ($p = .029$) compared with stable dual earner couples.

Comparing stable with unstable dual earner couples in Germany, the wealth gap was slightly higher for unstable dual earner couples, where women experienced disruptions in their full-time employment ($p = .152$). Similarly, stable male breadwinner/female part-timer couples had a slightly higher wealth gap of four points than unstable male breadwinner/female part-timer couples ($p = .454$). Although both differences were not statistically significant, the results

indicate that women who experienced disruptions in their full-time or part-time employment during early-mid career stages might be slightly more impaired in their wealth accumulation than their continuously employed counterparts.

Couples who married late in Germany had a significantly larger gender wealth gap of 12 points than the reference group ($p = .026$), which was in line with our expectation that early marriage reduces the gender wealth gap through joint investments. It remains, however, open whether primarily the marriage timing or the heterogeneous employment biographies of this cluster shaped the wealth gap. In Britain, both late marriage clusters were not clearly associated with the reference cluster of full-timers with early marriage. Female full-timers who married late had a slightly, although not significantly, smaller gender wealth gap than stable dual earner couples ($p = .913$), indicating that late marriage might potentially reverse the wealth gap for full-time employed women.

The results suggest, first, that female labor market participation is of different relevance to reduce the gender wealth gap across countries. In Germany, women were strongly economically disadvantaged compared with their partners in couples with a gender-traditional division of labor, whereas we found no comparable wealth disadvantage in Britain. Second, both short and long periods of homemaking among German women increase gender wealth inequality irrespective of the timing throughout the career. Taking up part-time employment after longer periods of homemaking did not reduce the gender wealth gap, indicating that particularly homemaking hinders wealth accumulation. In Britain, in contrast, we found no differences between employment constellations and the gender wealth gap. Third, stability in full-time or part-time employment seemed crucial for married women to reduce the gender wealth gap in Germany. This indicates that the access to employment-related benefits paired with joint investments throughout marriage is important to reduce the female wealth disadvantage in later life in Germany, whereas women in Britain might benefit from access to assets irrespective of their labor market participation.

Supplementary analyses

With several supplementary analyses, we tested the robustness of our findings. First, the results were robust to using IHS-transformed instead of rank-transformed wealth, although the results turned statistically insignificant, which is in line with prior research (Boertien & Lersch, 2020; Tables S1 and S2). Focusing on relative wealth disparities within couples, we relied on the rank transformation, which—unlike the IHS-transformation—does not consider absolute but relative differences in the wealth (gap) distribution. Differences in the association between employment clusters and the gender wealth gap across the wealth (gap) distribution might therefore explain the slightly different results produced under the IHS-transformation.

Second, we re-ran the analyses on the gross instead of the net gender wealth gap. Debts and liabilities might fundamentally shape the within-couple gender wealth gap, either by reducing or increasing the level of wealth inequality between partners. For instance, wealth inequality might remain hidden if one partner holds substantially larger assets and debts, which cancel out each other. Analyses with gross wealth however provided similar results for Britain and Germany (Tables S3 and S4), suggesting that debts do not substantially shape wealth disparities within couples in later life.

Third, whereas we captured all wealth components surveyed with the UKHLS, the SOEP additionally collected wealth information on respondents' further real estate, business assets, and tangible assets. Although respondents in the UKHLS were not asked to report these assets, they might add them to their responses. The main findings of the regression analysis conducted with the broader wealth measure for the SOEP provided similar results than the harmonized wealth measure (Table S5), strengthening the comparability of the wealth measurement in our main analyses.

Fourth, the results were robust to using a more comprehensive set of control variables for Germany (Table S6). The SOEP allowed the inclusion of additional information on the family background as well as gifts and inheritances, which were insufficiently measured in the UKHLS. Whereas the number of siblings might constrain the transmission of parental resources, parental birth years may shape their own and their children's access to wealth. Controlling for personal inheritances also ensured that the association between dyadic employment biographies and the gender wealth gap in later life was not driven by transferred wealth.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we examined the association between married partners' employment biographies and the within-couple gender wealth gap, defined as the difference between the male and the female partner's personal net wealth. To understand how the institutional setting shapes this relationship, we examined cohorts born between the 1920s and 1960s in Britain and Western Germany. Both countries share long histories as male breadwinner contexts, although with fundamentally different traditions and opportunities for wealth accumulation. With the British UKHLS (Wave 8) and the German SOEP (2017), we used comprehensively measured survey data on personal wealth paired with retrospective employment and marriage biographies.

Considering both partners' life course predictors, we contributed a dyadic perspective to recent literature on the explanation of the gender wealth gap (Frémeaux & Leturcq, 2020; Sierminska et al., 2018). Further, we extended research relying on short-term or summary measures by taking a dynamic perspective that depicts the long-term consequences of couples' underlying division of labor throughout working life (Sierminska et al., 2010). Hence, this study shed new light on the predictors of gender wealth inequality, paying particular attention to the role of women's in interdependence with their partners' labor market participation in reducing or even overturning the gender wealth gap to a female advantage.

We found evidence for a within-couple gender wealth gap to the disadvantage of women across countries. Despite higher average wealth holdings in Britain, the wealth gap to the disadvantage of women was larger in Western Germany, with a mean of EUR 30,000 (median: EUR 7000) compared with EUR 10,000 (median: EUR 0) in Britain. The median wealth gap of zero among British couples indicates that partners are likely to fully share their wealth portfolios, which might be driven by the high prevalence of jointly owned housing wealth in Britain.

In Germany, the gender wealth gap to the disadvantage of women was largest in couples with a gender-traditional division of labor. Particularly longer periods of female homemaking or part-time employment combined with homemaking were associated with increasing gender wealth inequality. Stable full-time employment, in return, was associated with a reduction of the within-couple gender wealth gap, whereas both stable and unstable part-time arrangements were disadvantageous for women's wealth holdings. The results indicate that women's access to surplus income and employment-related benefits, such as private pensions or life insurances, is crucial to reduce gender wealth disparities in Germany. Despite the broad coverage of employment-related benefits in part-time jobs in the German social system (Fasang et al., 2013), being a part-time employed secondary earner seems economically disadvantageous for women. Our results contradict the widespread assumption of marital sharing by showing that husbands might not share their legal wealth ownership equally with their wives with a reduced labor market attachment. Focusing on unpaid work throughout the career might thus create undesired economic dependencies and reduce women's bargaining power within marriage, potentially affecting their well-being far into later life (Tisch, 2020).

In Britain, we found a weaker association between couples' employment constellations and the within-couple gender wealth gap, with male breadwinner and dual earner couples being similarly associated with the gap. Hence, our results reveal country differences in the association between partner's division of labor and within-couple wealth inequality in later life. In line with

prior comparative wealth research, Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein (2013) found uniform associations between income, which can be seen as a proxy for employment, and household wealth across countries, whereas our study showed that it might require a within-household perspective to reveal country differences. The findings suggested that both women and men benefit from similar access to wealth, in particular through joint investments in the more comprehensive and accessible housing market (Toussaint & Elsinga, 2009). Although testing the underlying mechanisms exceeds the scope of our study, our comparative results suggest that the central role of homeownership in explaining cross-country differences in wealth might also work within couples (Pfeffer & Waitkus, 2021).

The findings of the current study should be interpreted in light of their limitations. First, the analyses have been based on two distinct surveys with limited comparability. The SOEP measured wealth exclusively at the personal level, whereas the UKHLS combined both an individual and a household level approach. For wealth measures at the household level, we can identify each owner but have to assume equal sharing in Britain. The SOEP provided more detailed information on the shares of each owner. Second, our study faced the usual limitations of wealth analyses, with large measurement error and lacking coverage of the top of the wealth distribution. Whereas most survey data are likely to underestimate wealth (Grabka & Westermeier, 2015), particularly the SOEP might underreport financial wealth due to the summarized measurement of multiple financial assets. Employing the rank transformation, we partly encountered this issue by examining a couple's relative position in the within-couple wealth gap distribution as the outcome measure. Third, retrospective employment biographies of both the SOEP and the UKHLS relied on self-reported information from respondents about their employment status. The surveys did not define the number of working hours that separate full-time and part-time employment.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study generated important insights into the wealth accumulation processes of partnered individuals. Whereas we addressed the role of the couple context through the division of labor, an important avenue for future research is the deeper consideration of family biographies (such as children, divorce, or cohabitation with current or former partners) to understand how the interplay of various life domains shapes the gender wealth gap. Further, our study covered nearly holistic employment biographies focusing on employment constellations defined by working hours. Future research should examine how partners' wealth accumulation processes are shaped by differences in further labor market characteristics, such as income or occupational class. In addition, as asset allocation also depends on attitudes and social norms (Rowlingson & Joseph, 2010), further research should aim to disentangle their roles for economic decision-making processes within couples. In particular, the ideal of an individualized marriage characterized by self-development and flexibility (Cherlin, 2004) could entail a greater accumulation of individually held assets throughout the life course. Further, comparative wealth research should move beyond the exclusive consideration of private pension wealth and consider public and occupational pension wealth estimates to fully assess retirees' economic well-being across countries. As our study examined mean differences, future research is needed to examine the association between employment constellations and wealth inequality across the wealth distribution.

Although we focused on older couples, the findings of this study are of relevance for younger generations. Germany develops toward the British liberal pension system with a reduced public pension pillar (Ebbinghaus, 2015), increasing the relevance of personal wealth to ensure retirees' economic well-being. Increasing marital instability might further reduce women's ability to rely on marriage as economic insurance. Despite increasing female labor market participation and declining numbers of male breadwinner couples, particularly women in Germany might be limited in their ability to self-accumulate wealth if the access to wealth-building tools remains bound to a stable labor market participation. In Britain, younger generations face restricted access to wealth accumulation through housing, which is accompanied by a shift toward less homeownership (Toussaint & Elsinga, 2009). Paired with raising marital instability, this development might also contribute to an increase in gender wealth inequality in Britain in the future by reducing the equalizing role of homeownership.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nutz's research is supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG), grant number LE 3612/2-1. Gritti's research is supported by the Doctoral School of Social Sciences, University of Trento. For helpful comments on earlier versions of the manuscript, the authors thank the Center for Social Inequality Studies at University of Trento, the research group "Sociology of Social Policy" at Humboldt University of Berlin, and participants of the "Social Policy and Inequality" writing workshop at WZB Berlin Social Center. Special thanks go to Stefani Scherer, Emanuela Struffolino, and Daria Tisch. The computer code for the analysis is available at <https://osf.io/ewr7p>. All errors remain our own.

ORCID

Theresa Nutz  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5803-6810>

Davide Gritti  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9505-6565>

REFERENCES

- Aisenbrey, S., & Fasang, A. E. (2017). The interplay of work and family trajectories over the life course: Germany and the United States in comparison. *American Journal of Sociology*, 122(5), 1448–1484. <https://doi.org/10.1086/691128>
- Alvaredo, F., Garbinti, B., & Piketty, T. (2017). On the share of inheritance in aggregate wealth: Europe and the US, 1900–2010. *Economica*, 84(334), 239–260. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecca.12233>
- Bennett, F. (2013). Researching within-household distribution: Overview, developments, debates, and methodological challenges. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 75(3), 582–597. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12020>
- Boertien, D., & Lersch, P. M. (2020). Gender and changes in household wealth after the dissolution of marriage and cohabitation in Germany. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 83(1), 228–242. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12705>
- Chang, M. L. (2010). *Shortchanged: Why women have less wealth and what can be done about it*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cherlin, A. J. (2004). The deinstitutionalization of American marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(4), 848–861. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00058.x>
- Denton, M., & Boos, L. (2007). The gender wealth gap: Structural and material constraints and implications for later life. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 19(3–4), 105–120. https://doi.org/10.1300/J074v19n03_08
- Ebbinghaus, B. (2015). The privatization and marketization of pensions in Europe: A double transformation facing the crisis. *European Policy Analysis*, 1(1), 56–73. <https://doi.org/10.18278/epa.1.1.5>
- Elder, G. H. (1994). Time, human agency, and social change: Perspectives on the life course. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 57, 4–15.
- Fasang, A. E., Aisenbrey, S., & Schomann, K. (2013). Women's retirement income in Germany and Britain. *European Sociological Review*, 29(5), 968–980. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcs075>
- Frémeaux, N., & Leturcq, M. (2020). Inequalities and the individualization of wealth. *Journal of Public Economics*, 184, 2–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104145>
- Gallie, D., Gebel, M., Giesecke, J., Halldén, K., Van der Meer, P., & Wielers, R. (2016). Quality of work and job satisfaction: Comparing female part-time work in four European countries. *International Review of Sociology*, 26(3), 457–481. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2016.1181839>
- Goebel, J., Grabka, M. M., Liebig, S., Kroh, M., Richter, D., Schröder, C., & Schupp, J. (2019). The German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP). *Journal of Economics and Statistics*, 239(2), 345–360. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jbnst-2018-0022>
- Grabka, M. M., Marcus, J., & Sierminska, E. (2015). Wealth distribution within couples. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 13(3), 459–486. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11150-013-9229-2>
- Grabka, M. M. & Westermeier, C. (2015). Editing and multiple imputation of item non-response in the wealth module of the German Socio-Economic Panel. In SOEP Survey Papers, No. 272 (Vol. 18).
- Joseph, R., & Rowlingson, K. (2012). Her house, his pension? The division of assets among (ex-) couples and the role of policy. *Social Policy and Society*, 11(1), 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s147474641100042x>
- Kan, M. Y., & Laurie, H. (2014). Changing patterns in the allocation of savings, investments and debts within couple relationships. *The Sociological Review*, 62(2), 335–358. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12120>
- Killewald, A., Pfeffer, F. T., & Schachner, J. N. (2017). Wealth inequality and accumulation. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43(1), 379–404. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053331>
- Lersch, P. M. (2017a). Individual wealth and subjective financial well-being in marriage: Resource integration or separation? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 79(5), 1211–1223. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12406>
- Lersch, P. M. (2017b). The marriage wealth premium revisited: Gender disparities and within-individual changes in personal wealth in Germany. *Demography*, 54(3), 961–983. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-017-0572-4>

- Lowe, S. G., Searle, B. A., & Smith, S. J. (2012). From housing wealth to mortgage debt: The emergence of Britain's asset-shaped welfare state. *Social Policy and Society*, 11(1), 105–116. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1474746411000455>
- Madero-Cabib, I., & Fasang, A. E. (2016). Gendered work-family life courses and financial well-being in retirement. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 27, 43–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2015.11.003>
- Mayer, K. U. (2005). Life courses and life chances in a comparative perspective. In S. Svallfors (Ed.), *Analyzing inequality: life chances and social mobility in comparative perspective (Issue March)* (pp. 17–55). Stanford University Press.
- McMunn, A., Lacey, R., Worts, D., McDonough, P., Stafford, M., Booker, C., Kumari, M., & Sacker, A. (2015). De-standardization and gender convergence in work–family life courses in Great Britain: A multi-channel sequence analysis. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 26(1), 60–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2015.06.002>
- Nutz, T., & Lersch, P. M. (2021). Gendered employment trajectories and individual wealth at older ages in Eastern and Western Germany. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 47, 100374. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2020.100374>
- OECD. (2019). *OECD family database*. OECD.
- Pfeffer, F. T., & Waitkus, N. (2021). The wealth inequality of nations. *American Sociological Review*, 86(4), 567–602. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224211027800>
- Rojas, M. (2019). Affluence: More relative than absolute. In G. Brulé & C. Suter (Eds.), *Wealth(s) and subjective well-being* (pp. 147–166). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05535-6_7
- Rowlingson, K., & Joseph, R. (2010). *Assets and debts within couples: ownership and decision-making*. Friends Provident Foundation.
- Semyonov, M., & Lewin-Epstein, N. (2013). Ways to richness: Determination of household wealth in 16 countries. *European Sociological Review*, 29(6), 1134–1148. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jct001>
- Sierminska, E., Frick, J. R., & Grabka, M. M. (2010). Examining the gender wealth gap. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 62(4), 669–690. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oepp/gpq007>
- Sierminska, E., Piazzalunga, D., & Grabka, M. M. (2018). Transitioning toward more equality? Wealth gender differences and the changing role of explanatory factors over time. GLO Discussion Paper.
- Studer, M., & Ritschard, G. (2016). What matters in differences between life trajectories: A comparative review of sequence dissimilarity measures. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A: Statistics in Society*, 179(2), 481–511. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rssa.12125>
- Tisch, D. (2020). My gain or your loss? Changes in within-couple relative wealth and partners' life satisfaction. *European Sociological Review*, 37(2), 271–286. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcaa052>
- Toussaint, J., & Elsinga, M. (2009). Exploring “housing asset-based welfare”. Can the UK be held up as an example for Europe? *Housing Studies*, 24(5), 669–692. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673030903083326>
- Trappe, H., Pollmann-Schult, M., & Schmitt, C. (2015). The rise and decline of the male breadwinner model: Institutional underpinnings and future expectations. *European Sociological Review*, 31(2), 230–242. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcv015>
- University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research, NatCen Social Research, & Kantar Public. (2019). *Understanding Society: waves 1–10, 2009–2019 and harmonised BHPS: waves 1–18, 1991–2009* (12th ed.). UK Data Service.
- Vogler, C., Brockmann, M., & Wiggins, R. D. (2006). Intimate relationships and changing patterns of money management at the beginning of the twenty-first century. *British Journal of Sociology*, 57(3), 455–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2006.00120.x>
- Warren, J. R., Luo, L., Halpern-Manners, A., Raymo, J. M., & Palloni, A. (2015). Do different methods for modeling age-graded trajectories yield consistent and valid results? *American Journal of Sociology*, 120(6), 1809–1856. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681962>
- Wilmoth, J., & Koso, G. (2002). Does marital history matter? Marital status and wealth outcomes among preretirement adults. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64(1), 254–268. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2002.00254.x>
- Wright, L. (2020). *Producing working-life histories in the BHPS and UKHLS*. UK Data Service. <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-854327>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of the article at the publisher's website.

How to cite this article: Nutz, T., & Gritti, D. (2021). Dyadic employment biographies and within-couple wealth inequality in Britain and Western Germany. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12811>