# Introduction (DRAFT)

The German labor market has undergone major structural changes as a result of an increase in women’s labor force participation, more flexible forms and contracts of work, and longer working lives. In this context, the discrepancy between actual and desired working hours has received increased attention in German and international research (Blick, 2018). Mismatches have been shown to be quite common (*include percentages of German workers wanting fewer/more hours at work*). This discrepancy has important social implications. Hour mismatches, for instance, are one of the factors contributing to work-family conflict (Reynolds & Aletraris, 2006), which has become increasingly ubiquitous in recent years (Girtz, 2020). Shorter working hours can facilitate to reconcile family and work, while the desire to extend working hours offers employment potential that can help secure the demand for labor (Weber & Zimmert, 2018). Hour mismatches have been shown to have an impact on psychological and physical well-being (*source*) and, worker safety (*source*), organizational performance, and gender inequality (Girtz, 2020; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Reynolds & Aletraris, 2006). The study of mismatches between actual and preferred work hours is also interesting for theoretical reasons because it highlights fundamental differences in the way sociologists and economists have traditionally viewed preferences and behaviors (Reynolds & Aletraris, 2006).

While there is a small body of research that describes the prevalence of hour mismatches, examines how working time mismatches are distributed across groups, and what characteristics might influence their chances of resolution, the existing research has not particularly focused on the effects that gender role attitudes might have on men’s work preferences and work time mismatches. This paper considers the influence of gender role attitudes on men’s work adjustments. Do gender role attitudes affect the number of hours men prefer to work? Do most men, and particularly fathers, end up working the hours they prefer, or can one observe a discrepancy? Do changes in men’s actual or preferred hours reflect their partner’s gender role attitudes and employment situation? Studying gender role attitudes in this regard is interesting since achieving gender equality on the labor market is a political goal. Whether this goal can be achieved depends not only on structural conditions, but also to a large extent on people's attitudes toward family and work (Lietzmann & Wenzig, 2017).

# The German context

Germany is an interesting country for studying the relationship between gender role attitudes and work hours due to the substantial changes that have occurred during the past few decades. Gender role attitudes of West German men changed dramatically in the mid 1980s (Lee et al., 2007). Lee et al. (2007) find that the proportion of men who rejected the male breadwinner model increased from 29 to 49 per cent between 1982 and 1991. For many years, labor market institutions and family policies in the western part of Germany supported the gendered division of labor (see Leitner et al., 2008; Rosenfeld et al., 2004). In particular, tax policy, the limited provision of public childcare, generous family allowances and long parental leaves for mothers provided incentives for the male-breadwinner family model. For males, preferences for longer working hours therefore appeared to be compatible with the institutional setting and the proposed gender ideology, since all of these factors provided financial incentives for fathers to work many hours and mothers to work part time or stay at home (see OECD, 2016; Pollmann-Schult & Reynolds, 2017).

In recent years, however, it has been observed that more German fathers want to be involved in childcare, even at the expense of their paid work (Zerle-Elsässer, 2014). In fact, the percentage of West German men who disagreed with the statement *"It is much better for everyone if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family"* increased from 29 percent in 1982 to 57 percent in 2004 (Lee et al., 2007).

Although assessing changes in gender role attitudes is complex, traditional gender role attitudes appear to have declined more sharply in Germany than in other Western European countries (Knight & Brinton, 2017). These changing norms may have created some social pressure for German fathers to reduce their working hours (Pollmann-Schult & Reynolds, 2017). In addition, since 2001, Germany has introduced policies that facilitate a more egalitarian division of paid and domestic work. These include the right of both parents to work part-time, the right for fathers and mothers to take parental leave simultaneously, paid parental leave of 14 months (since 2007) that encourages fathers to take parental leave through the so-called “daddy months” (for the effects of parental leave on fathers' employment, see Bünning, 2015), as well as the 2019 introduced right to return from part-time to full-time work.

# Literature review (not finished)

## **2.1 Actual working hours, preferred working hours and hour mismatches**

The mismatch between actual and desired working hours has received increased attention in German and international research. Mismatches have been shown to be quite common, with full-time workers being more likely to develop a desire for fewer hours than a desire for more hours (Merz, 2002; Rengers, 2015; Rengers et al., 2017; Weber & Zimmert, 2018). Previous research suggests that hour mismatches will vary as a function of work, family, and job characteristics. Weber & Zimmert (2018) find that higher educational attainment and greater occupational autonomy are associated with overemployment for both sexes in Germany. Girtz (2020) finds the same effects for Australia, yet outcomes are heavily influenced by the intersections of gender and occupation. Men and women experience different types of mismatches (Girtz, 2020; Reynolds, 2014; Weber & Zimmert, 2018). While underemployment among women in Germany is strongly associated with family work and preschool-age children being present in the household, this influence is not significant for men. Furthermore, family responsibilities inhibit the dissolution of under- or overemployment among women. In comparison, fathers adjust their preferences and/or actual working hours more easily, regardless of the age of their children (Weber & Zimmert, 2018). These results indicates that a traditional distribution of roles within couples may often prevent women from working suitable hours, while men’s working hours are less affected by family responsibilities. Reynolds (2014) finds that partners often disagree about the number of hours each should work, and that although men’s hours reflect their own and their partner’s preferences equally, women’s hours are more closely tied to their own preferences, however changes in actual hours are strongly influenced by factors that do not reflect their own or their partner’s preferences. Merz (2002) further showed that people with a desire for more hours are more likely to adjust their working hours in Germany. About 25% of workers who initially desired more hours had reconciled their actual and desired hours 10 years later, while only 18% of those who desired fewer hours had resolved their discrepancy.

## **2.2 Parenthood and work adjustments**

In recent years, the study of labor market outcomes of fathers has gained much attention, however with mixed evidence. The norms surrounding fatherhood have changed over time and are currently somewhat ambiguous (Gerson, 2010). On the one hand, there has long been an expectation that fathers will be breadwinners. Many men believe they best serve their families by working long hours for pay (Townsend, 2002). On the other hand, there is a growing expectation that fathers will take an active role in caring for their children (McGill, 2014; Pollmann-Schult & Reynolds, 2017). Bünning & Pollmann-Schult (2016) find that fathers work more hours than childless men in Europe, Glauber & Gozjolko (2011) find the same effect for the United States. There is little evidence however that men reduce their working hours after the transition to fatherhood. Previous studies showed that fatherhood has only a modest effect on men’s actual and preferred work hours, while the labor market often accommodates these changes, so that fatherhood is not strongly associated with over- or underemployment (Pollmann-Schult & Reynolds, 2017; Reynolds & Johnson, 2012). Pollmann-Schult & Reynolds (2017) also find that changes in work hours among German men reflect the paid work involvement of their partners. While not directly studying the effect of gender role attitudes on working hours, their findings reveal cohort differences. Men born in 1960 or earlier tend to increase their hours during fatherhood, while men born after 1960 tend to reduce them. These findings are somewhat at odds with evidence that the proportion of men with progressive gender role attitudes has increased substantially (Lee et al., 2007) and that fathers are increasingly willing to spend less time at work and more time with their children (Hobson & Fahlen, 2009; McGill, 2014; Pollmann-Schult & Reynolds, 2017).

## **2.3 Gender role attitudes and work adjustments**

A number of studies have confirmed associations between individual gender role attitudes and adjustment in work hours, particularly after the transition to parenthood. Studies indicating that gender role attitudes influence paid work hours for women, however, often find no comparable effects for men (Corrigall & Konrad, 2007). For example, Sanchez & Thomson (1997) find no effect of American men's pre-parenthood gender role attitudes on their husbands' employment. Similarly, Schober (2013) concludes that men's gender role attitudes are not an important factor when British families determine their work and family arrangements. This leads Corrigall & Konrad (2007) to suggest that women but not men use gender roles as part of their rational planning for combining work and family. On the other hand, Kaufman & Uhlenberg (2000) find a significant interaction between gender role attitudes and work hours for young American men. Among men with egalitarian attitudes, fatherhood was associated with a decrease in working hours, while traditional men work more hours when after their transition to parenthood. Stertz et al., (2017) find the same effects for dual-earner couples in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, with fathers' attitudes predicting their wives' work decisions, while the attitudes of mothers did not influence their husbands' behavior. Smith Koslowski (2011) further suggests that egalitarian attitudes, as enacted through paternal engagement, may also reduce fathers' work hours.

*(Bring in my research, greater focus on gaps in previous literature and how my research fits in)*

# Theoretical Framework

Balancing work with family responsibilities is a relevant issue for both men and women. When couples determine their arrangements for balancing these different responsibilities, many elements come into play, including the availability of resources and personal preferences, the cultural context, and the institutional environment, which help to establish individual work-family balance strategies and a gender contract[[1]](#footnote-1) between partners (Becker, 1981; Lomazzi et al., 2018; Olsson, 2012; Pfau-Effinger, 1994).

As dual-earning couples are becoming more common in Germany, developing various coping strategies to deal with the competing demands of work and family is necessary for most couples, especially after they become parents. Decisions regarding paid and unpaid work between mothers and fathers can be conceptualized from a role theory perspective. According to role theory (Kahn et al., 1964), individuals take on different social roles (e.g., worker, father, spouse) depending on the context in which they find themselves. In dual-earning couples, both spouses occupy the role of the worker. In the transition to parenthood, the mother or father roles are added. These roles involve specific expectations and require time and effort (Stertz et al., 2017). Thus, performing different roles with competing demands can lead to role conflict (e.g., work-family conflict) for both men and women. Especially with regard to roles in the professional and family domains, role expectations are clearly gendered and reflected in individual attitudes, which could be summarized under the term gender role attitudes.

Gender role attitudes are “beliefs about the appropriate role activities for women and men” in various life spheres (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Gender role attitudes represent an individual’s level of support for a division of paid work and family responsibilities that implicitly or explicitly signal what employment behavior is desirable for mothers and fathers. Previous research showed indeed that gender role attitudes predict behaviors in employment and the division of childcare and housework between partners (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Schober, 2013; Schober & Scott., 2012), showing that differences in gender role attitudes affect work-family balance and labor market outcomes. Davis & Greenstein (2009) further suggested that gender role attitudes act as a lens through which both men and women view their social world and upon which they make decisions. Hence, individual gender attitudes have an impact on work-related behaviors and are a key factor in the division of paid and unpaid work (Stertz et al., 2017).

In the following, this paper will draw on the *doing-gender* approach (West & Zimmerman, 1987), as well as conceptions of fathers as *good providers versus involved fathers* (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 2000) in considering men’s work adjustments and the influence of gender role attitudes on these adjustments. According to the doing gender approach, gender is viewed as something that people do, depending on the interactional context in which they are embedded. This means that individuals create gender roles through their daily interactions with others. By specifying what men and women should generally do, and by including expectations about how they should be and behave, gender role attitudes may guide the ideal involvement in work and family by men and women (Stertz et al., 2017). These interactions tend to encourage the domestic roles of women and men’s provider roles. However, changing gender roles not only mean women's entrance into the labor force - as mostly discussed in previous literature - but also men's increasing involvement in family life.

If many fathers are free to choose their working hours (talk about constraints neoclassic vs institutional lag?), two patterns seem likely. First, fathers may prefer and obtain an increase in working hours. Fathers with more traditional gender role attitudes might respond this way because they feel particularly responsible for the financial situation of their families (*good provider*). Overtime is one way to increase one's income, as about 80 percent of all workers in Germany are eligible for overtime pay and/or compensatory time off (Hunt 2013). Even if overtime is unpaid, workers may be willing to work additional hours in hopes of receiving a promotion (Pollmann-Schult & Reynolds, 2017). Second, fathers might prefer and obtain a reduction in work hours. Fathers with progressive gender role attitudes might prefer a reduction in work hours in order to be more involved in raising their children (*involved fathers)*.

**H1: Fathers with more traditional gender role attitudes increase their working hours after childbirth.**

**H2: Fathers with more progressive gender role attitudes decrease their working hours after childbirth.**

In considering the effect of men's gender role attitudes on their work behavior, men who identify with a more traditional view of gender may emphasize their work role over their family role, suggesting little or no change in their work behavior after childbirth (Kaufman & Bernhardt, 2015). In contrast, men with egalitarian attitudes are more likely to emphasize their family role as much as or even more than their work role, suggesting a greater possibility of work adjustments after the transition to parenthood. Since previous research found that men with a desire for fewer hours are less likely to adjust their working hours, one might expect a greater discrepancy of actual and preferred working hours by men with more egalitarian gender role attitudes.

**H3: The mismatch between actual and preferred working hours is greater among fathers with more egalitarian gender role attitudes than fathers with more traditional gender role attitudes.**

Greenhaus & Powell (2012) introduced the notion of "family-relatedness of work decisions," meaning that family situations are often taken into account in work decisions. Especially for dual-earner couples, whose work and family courses can be considered intertwined, the individual work decisions of both partners are influenced by family considerations. In this regard, a couple has to be regarded as a social unit in which the work-family decisions of both partners are interdependent. Consequently, in addition to one's own attitudes, meaningful attitudes and expectations of others (here: the partner) influence individual behavior. Gender role attitudes are likely to surface in parents' everyday interactions and signal directly or indirectly to one partner what the other partner considers desirable or undesirable (Stertz et al., 2017). Thus, one partner's gender role attitudes should influence the other partner's work-related behavior and must therefore be taken into account.

**H4: Influence of partner**

Open Question: Divide between East and West Germany

In line with recent research, gender role attitudes in this paper are not treated as unidimensional (e.g., linear egalitarian-traditional scale), but as multi-dimensional (Hudde, 2018, 2020).

*NOTE: include definitions for underemployment/overemployment (see ILO and Rengers, 2015)*

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1. According to Pfau-Effinger (1994), a gender contract encompasses task sharing in terms of participation in household income generation, childcare housework, and the possible externalization of some care tasks. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)