

Session: Poster session  
Title: **Marital Union Dissolution in East and West Germany: The Impact of Women's Labour Force Participation on Marital Stability**  
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### **Abstract**

This study aims at comparing the risk of a first marital union dissolution of East and West German women before re-unification in 1990. To what extent did women in both countries differ concerning the risk to experience a divorce and what factors caused these differences? Pertaining to the risk factors, we are especially interested in the effect of women's labour force participation on marital stability. East and West Germany were two countries that shared the same language and cultural background, but they displayed divergent political and economic systems. Among other aspects, the societies particularly differed in the integration of women into the labour market. While full-time employment of both partners was universal in East Germany, the traditional male breadwinner model prevailed in West Germany. This predominance of two conflictive role models gives us the opportunity to investigate whether the effect of women's labour force participation on marital stability differs between traditional and egalitarian societies. Data for this study come from the German Fertility and Family Survey (of the year 1992). For the empirical analysis we apply event history techniques.

We find significantly higher divorce risks for East than for West German women that are mainly caused by the smaller number of religious people, a higher share of women that experienced a parental divorce and an explicitly higher number of full-time employed women in East Germany. In both countries women's labour force participation lowered marital stability, but the effect is stronger for West than for East Germany. This result yields evidence for a weaker negative relationship between women's labour force participation and marital stability in an institutional framework which fosters egalitarian in comparison to traditional role models.