

Who do minors live with?

Cohabitation with minor children and their father's partnership context

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Children's living arrangements after parental separation

Background

- In Austria, one in five families with children is a single-parent family (21.3%), and 83.4% of these households are headed by mothers (Statistik Austria 2024).
 - More frequently associated with structural/financial disadvantages, smaller support networks, and fewer male role models for children (Frimmel et al. 2024).
- Previous research shows that parental separation has long-term consequences for children (Frimmel et al. 2024).
 - Living arrangements and family dynamics change for all family members → especially for children!
 - Higher likelihood of negative outcomes for children → e.g. educational and labor-market outcomes
- Parent-child contact as a key factor for children's well-being and development (Sobolewski & King 2005; Frimmel et al. 2024).
 - Shared custody arrangements may mitigate negative effects of parental separation (Frimmel et al. 2024).
 - Fathers particularly relevant in this context: substantially more likely to live apart from their children after separation (Sobolewski & King 2005).
 - Important research gap: factors influencing contact frequency between children and their separated fathers

Research Question:

- *“What are the factors that shape father-child contact after parental separation?”*

Repartnering and father-child contact after separation

Repartnering and father-child contact after separation

- Following parental separation, fathers often become non-residential parents, while children continue to live primarily with their mothers.
 - Result: fathers' involvement increasingly dependent on post-separation family dynamics and partnership contexts (Bundesministerium für Justiz 2024; Juby et al., 2007; Manning et al., 2003).
- New partnerships could serve as stabilizing contexts
 - Entering a new partnership may increase fathers' emotional and economic stability (Manning et al. 2003).
 - New partners can support father-child contact through emotional encouragement, family organization, and positive attitudes toward paternal involvement (Manning et al. 2003).
 - Previous research suggests that repartnered fathers may maintain more regular contact with children from previous unions (Juby et al. 2007; Buber-Ennser & Herbst 2023).
- However: family complexity and competing demands may also play an important role!
 - Competing demands on fathers' time, emotional attention, and financial resources due to birth of children in the current union (Manning et al. 2003).
 - Increasing family complexity/new family formation may therefore weaken ties between fathers and non-residential children.

Data and Methods



Data Source

- Austrian Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) Round 2/Wave 1 (Fieldwork: September 2022 - March 2023) (Neuwirth et al. 2023)
- Total sample: 6,303 respondents aged 18–50 years
 - 50% childless at the time of the survey ($n = 3,174$); 50% parents with at least one child ($n = 3,129$)
- Part of Generations and Gender Programme (GGP): investigates demographic change, family structures, intergenerational relationships + life courses.
 - Multiple countries + harmonized datasets, enabling robust cross-national comparisons.
 - Data access is provided via the international GGP platform (GGP-I) and national archives such as AUSSDA (scan QR-code!).

Analytical strategy

- Analysis restricted to:
 - Biological minor children (0–17 years)
- Final analytical sample:
 - 2,322 parents with at least one minor child from a current or previous partnership
 - 18% living in Vienna; 82% living in other Austrian federal states
- Total number of minor children: 3,913
 - 84% from the parents' current partnership; 16% from previous relationships
- Analyses: descriptive + bivariate analyses; multinomial logistic regressions → Dependent variable: father-child contact frequency

Sample

- The analytical sample consists of **663 minor children** from separated families.
- Information on children's living arrangements was reported by **370 respondents**.

Child-level sample

- 445 children (67%) were reported by mothers.
- 218 children (33%) were reported by fathers.

Respondent-level sample

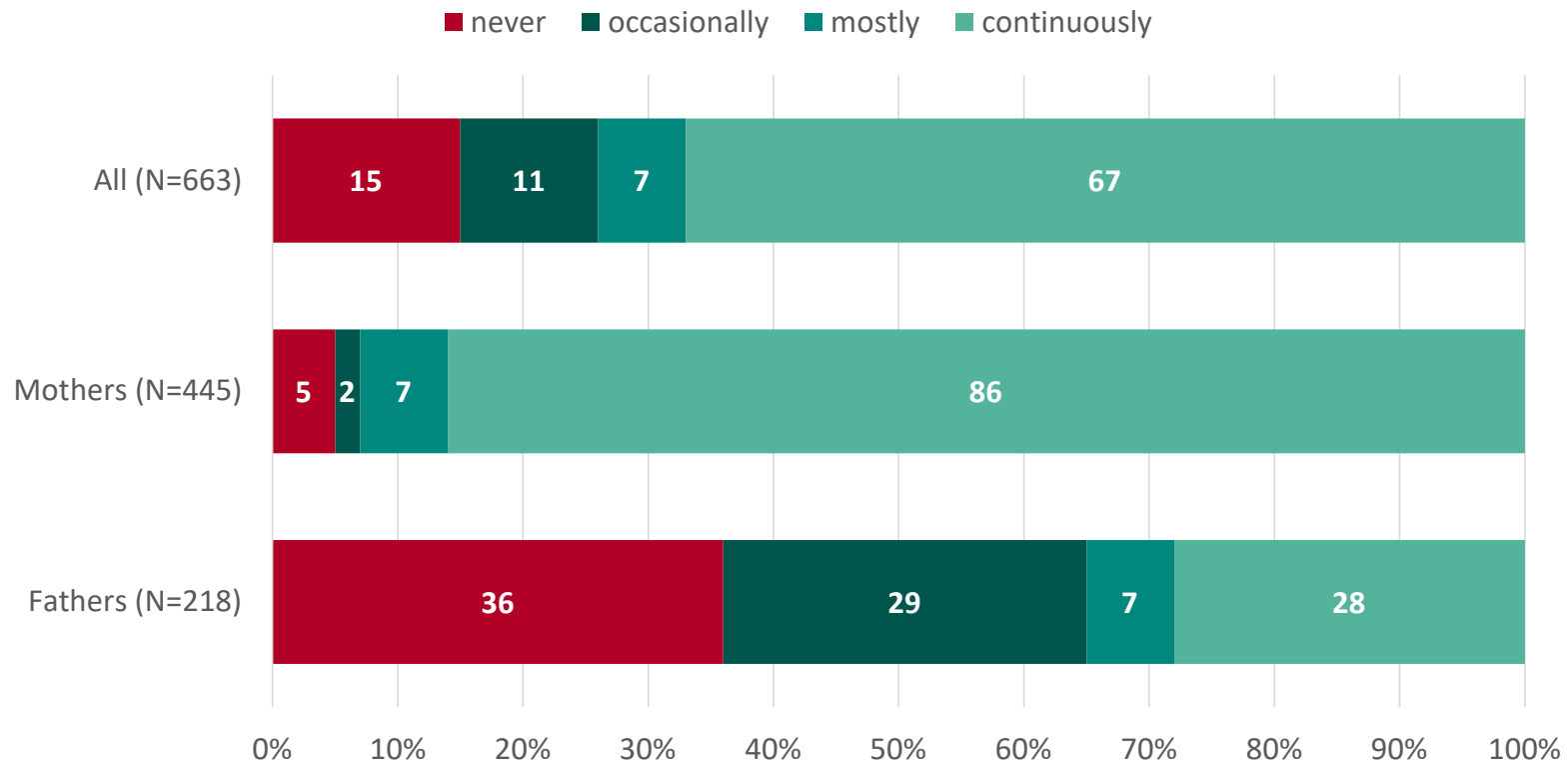
- 256 respondents (69%) were mothers.
- 114 respondents (31%) were fathers.

Methodological note

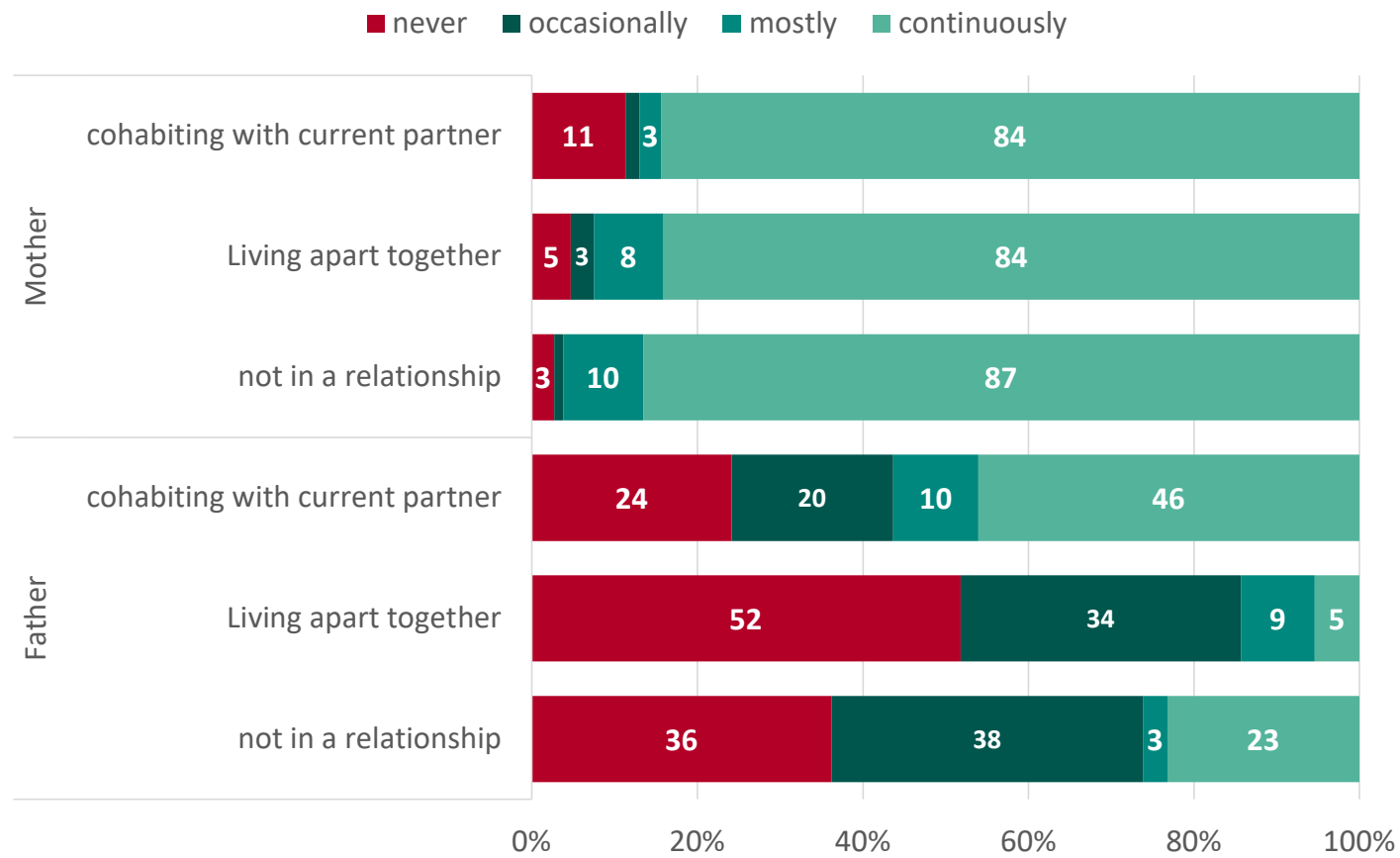
- The unit of analysis is the child, while information was provided by separated mothers and fathers. Multiple children may belong to the same respondent.
→ 53% of respondents reported information on one child, 33% on two children, and 14% on three or more children.

Child characteristics		Freq.	%
Child gender	Boys	323	49%
	Girls	340	51%
Child age at parental separation	0-9 years	296	45%
	10-17 years	68	10%
	(no information)	299	45%
Father's context			
Partnership status	No partner	69	32%
	Cohabiting	87	40%
	LAT relationship	56	26%
	(no information)	6	2%
Children in new union	Yes	82	38%
	No	136	62%
Mother's context			
Partnership status	No partner	186	42%
	Cohabiting	115	26%
	LAT relationship	107	24%
	(no information)	37	8%
Children in new union	Yes	143	32%
	No	302	68%
Socioeconomic characteristics of responding parent			
Education	Low	79	12%
	Medium	406	61%
	High	152	23%
	(no information)	26	4%
Employment status	Employed	457	69%
	Not employed	167	25%
	(no information)	39	6%
Financial difficulties	High financial difficulties	230	35%
	Some financial difficulties	131	20%
	No financial difficulties	239	36%
	(no information)	63	9%

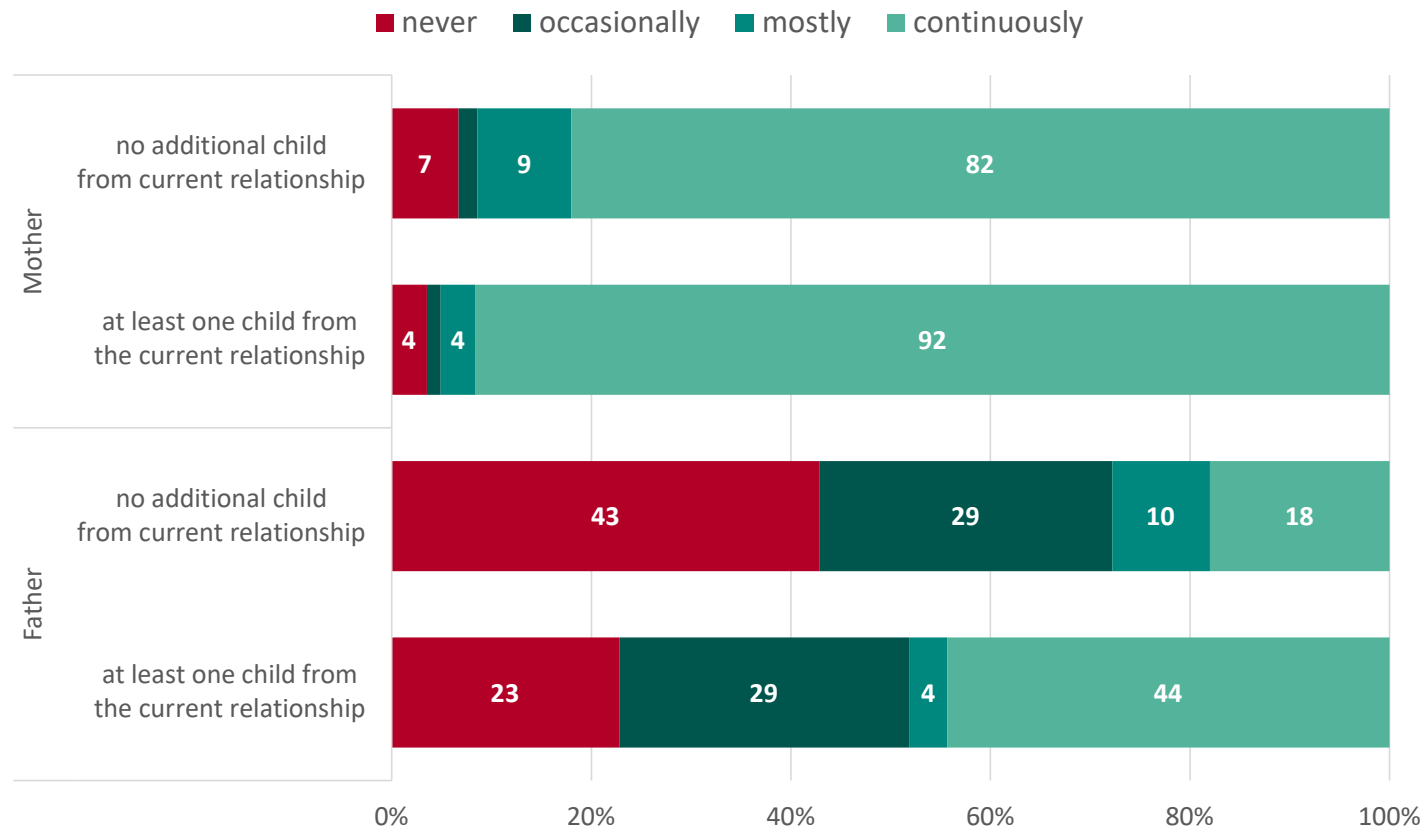
DV: Is [Name of Child] currently living in the same household with you?



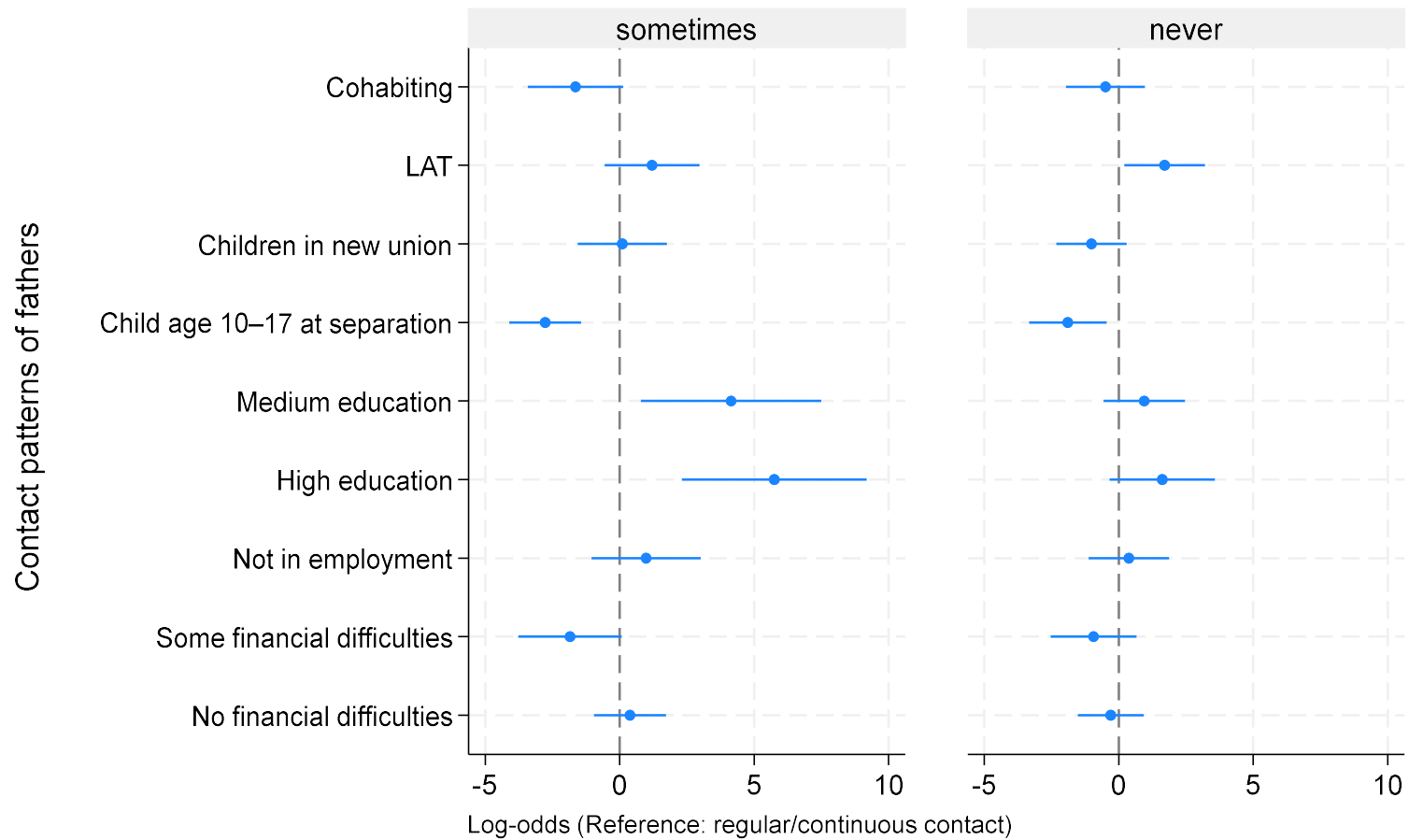
Childrens' living arrangements by parents' current relationship status



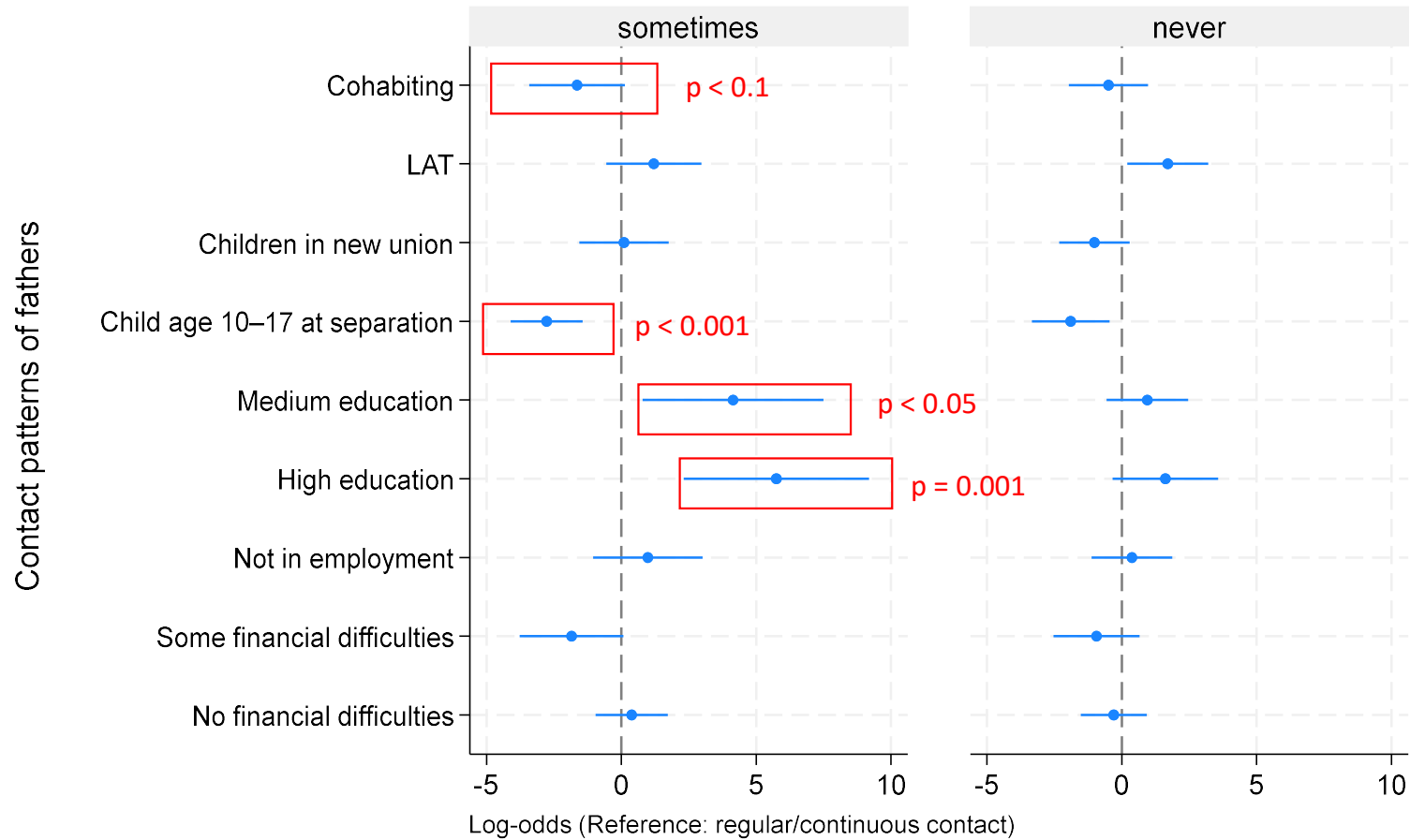
Childrens' living arrangements by new family formation



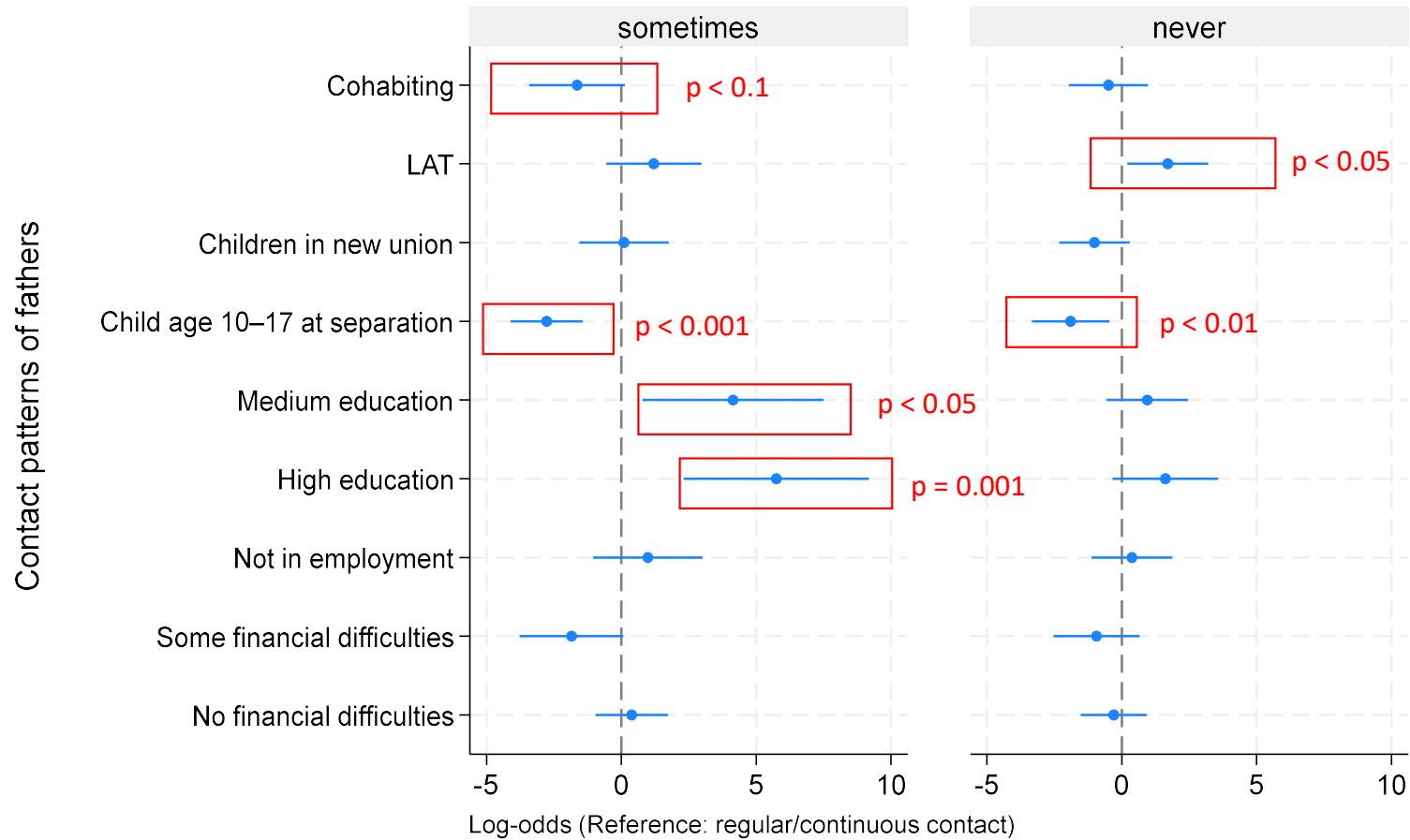
Multinomial Logistic Regression (N=218)



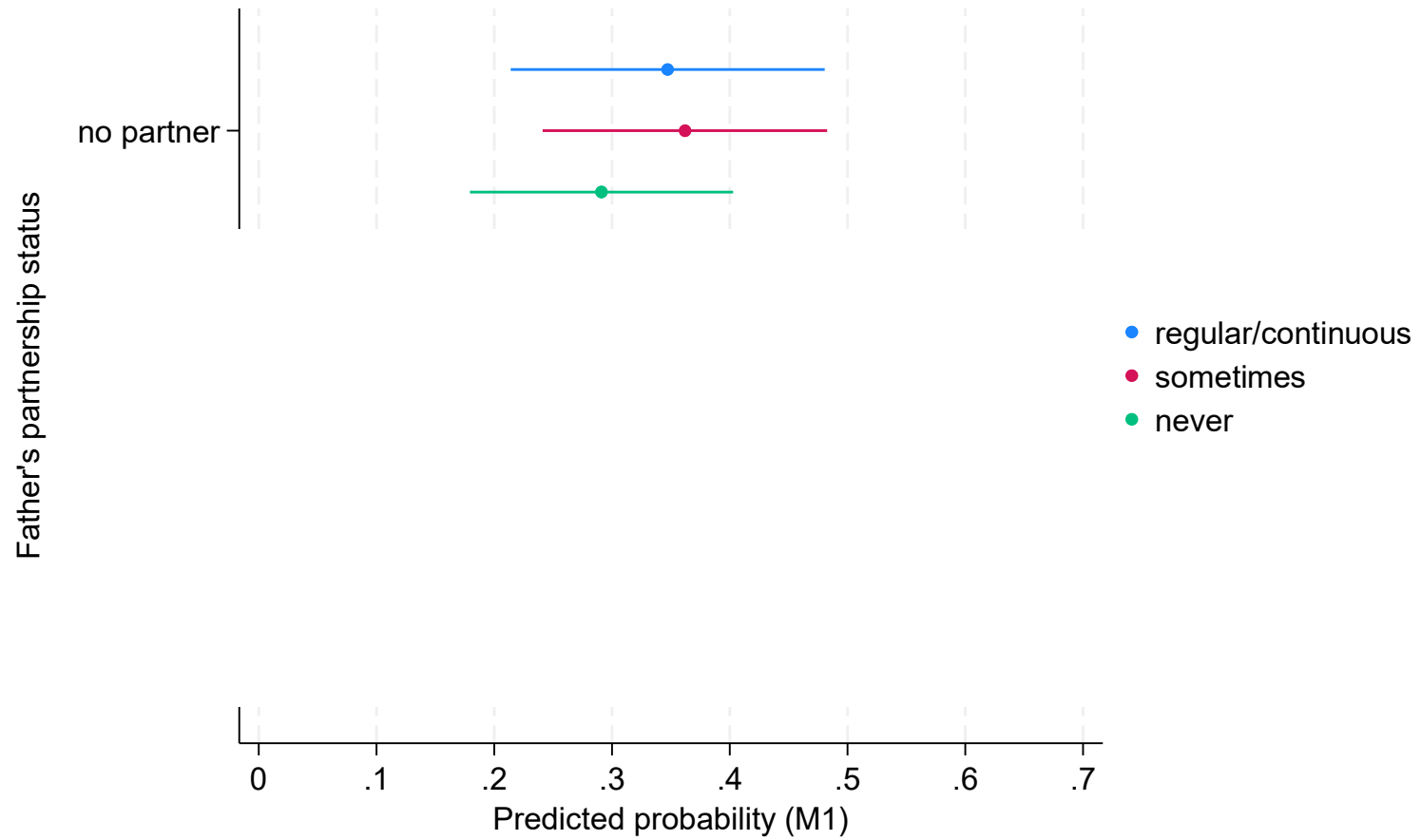
Multinomial Logistic Regression (N=218)



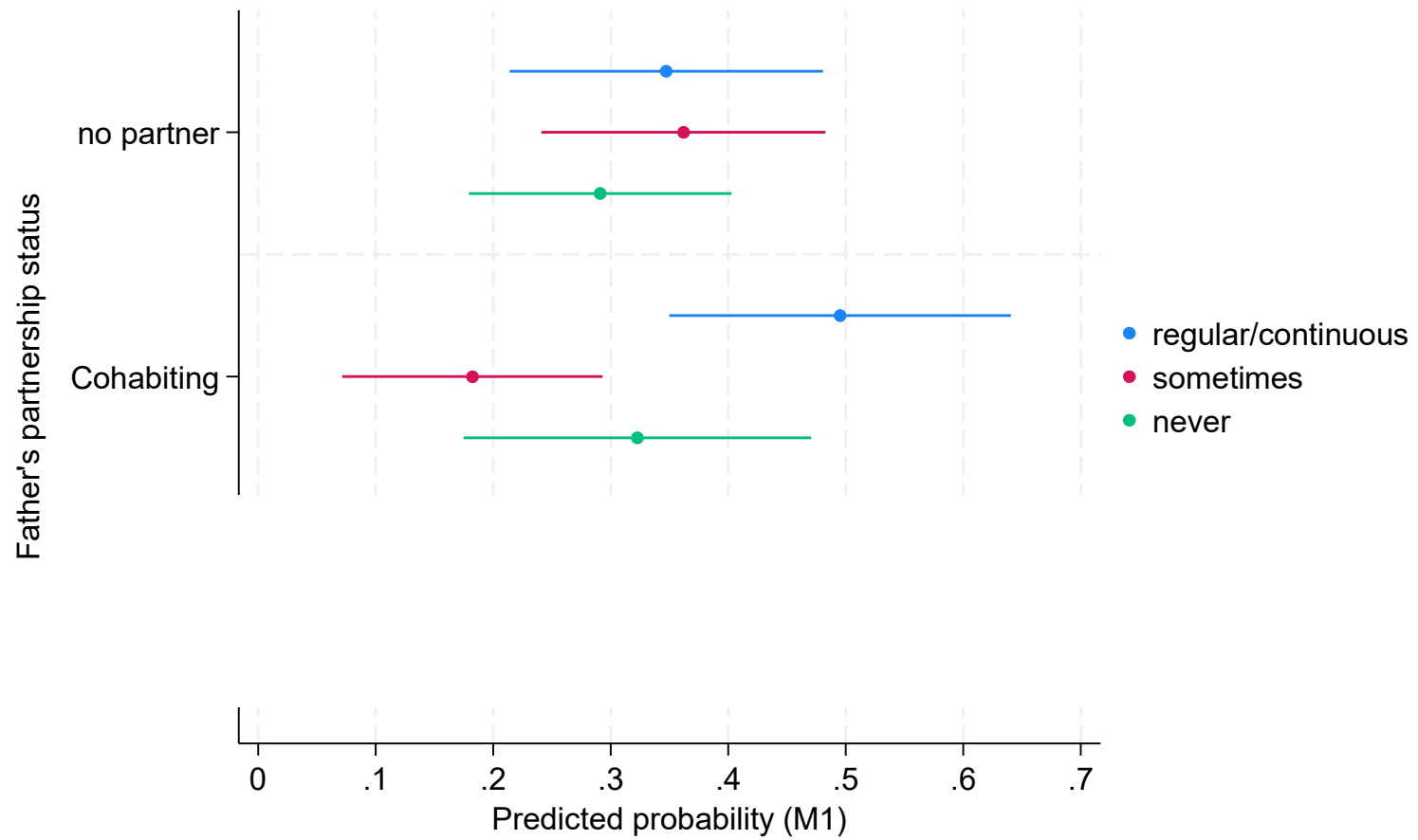
Multinomial Logistic Regression (N=218)



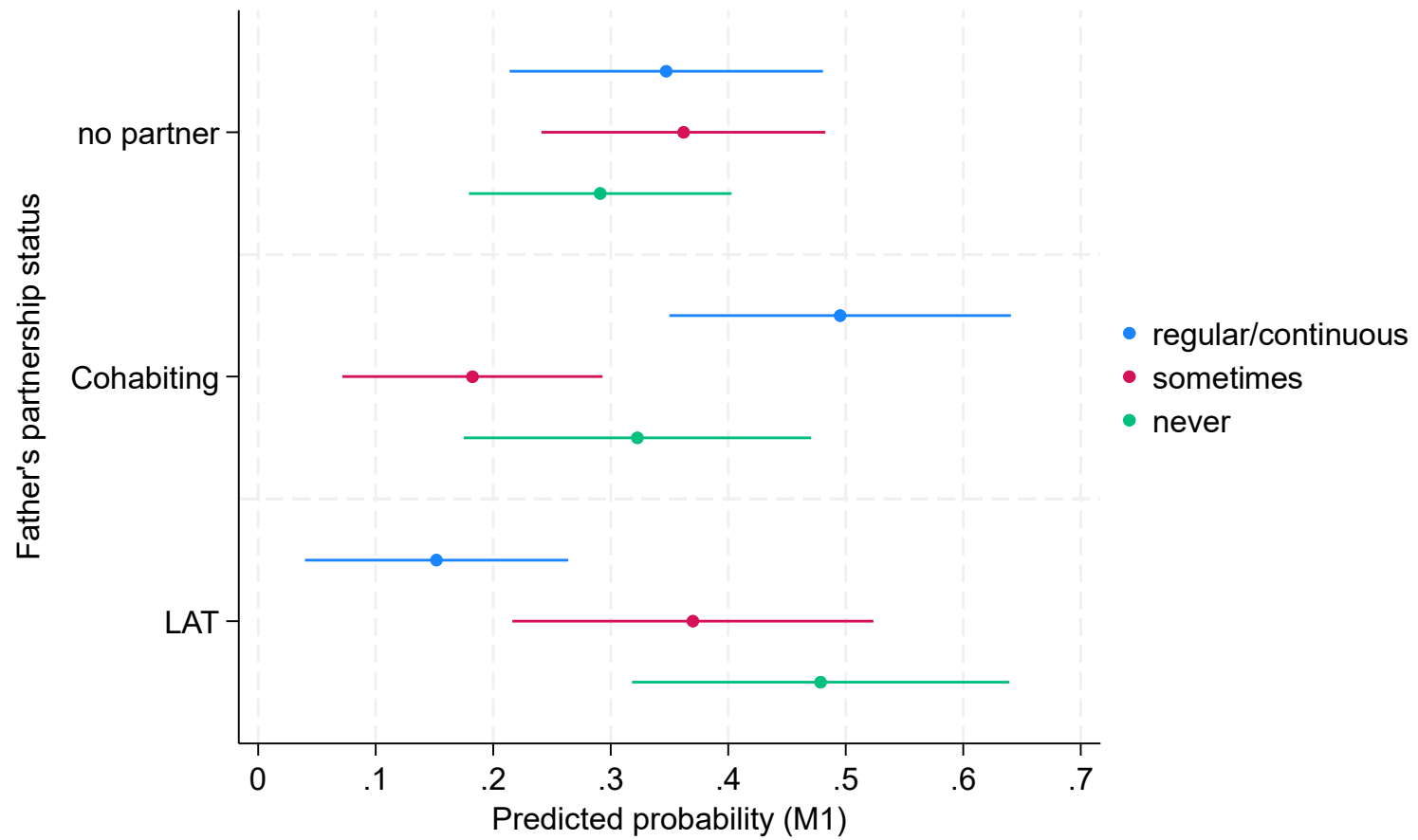
Multinomial Logistic Regression (N=218)



Multinomial Logistic Regression (N=218)



Multinomial Logistic Regression (N=218)



Take Home Messages

1. Children's living arrangements after separation remain strongly gendered

- Minor children continue to live primarily with their mothers after parental separation.

2. Fathers' partnership contexts matter for father-child contact

- Fathers' new partnerships are associated with children's living arrangements and contact patterns.
- Repartnering may stabilize father-child relationships and increase regular contact.

3. Residential arrangements are dynamic rather than fixed

- Children's contact patterns are shaped by post-separation family formation.
- Living arrangements should therefore be understood as evolving family practices.

4. Resources and child characteristics continue to matter

- Educational resources as well as children's age at parental separation are associated with post-separation contact arrangements.

Limitations

1. Cross-sectional data

- Causal relationships cannot be established → For example, fathers with stronger pre-separation involvement may also be more likely to maintain regular contact after separation.

2. Information reported by one parent only

- Information on children's living arrangements was reported by only one responding parent.

3. Small sample size for separated fathers

4. Limited information on relationship quality / conflict

- The data do not fully capture relationship quality, parental conflict, or the quality of father-child relationships before separation.

Generations and Gender Programme Austria Consortium (GGP.AT)

The GGP is a social science infrastructure for research on population and family dynamics and provides evidence for population policies.

Meet us at the GGP.AT poster!

www.ggp-austria.at/en

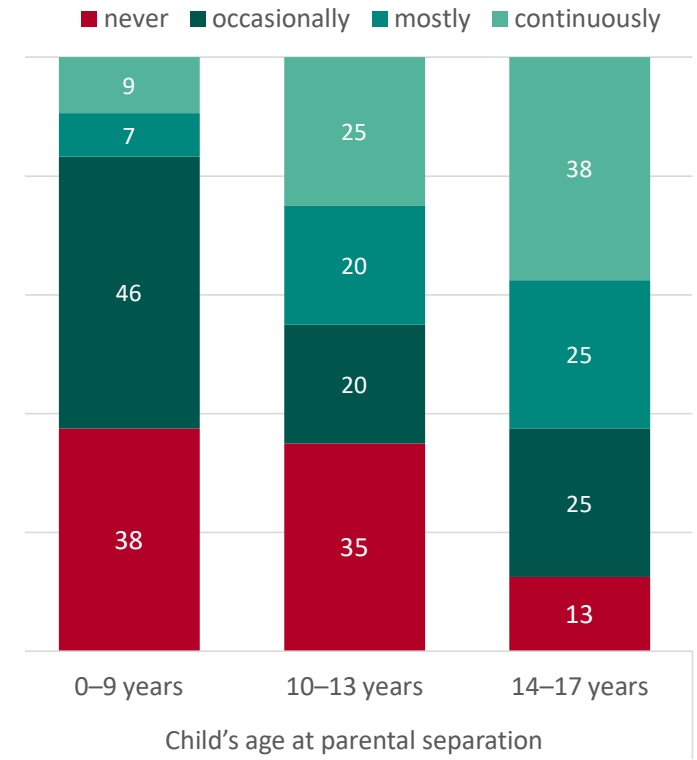
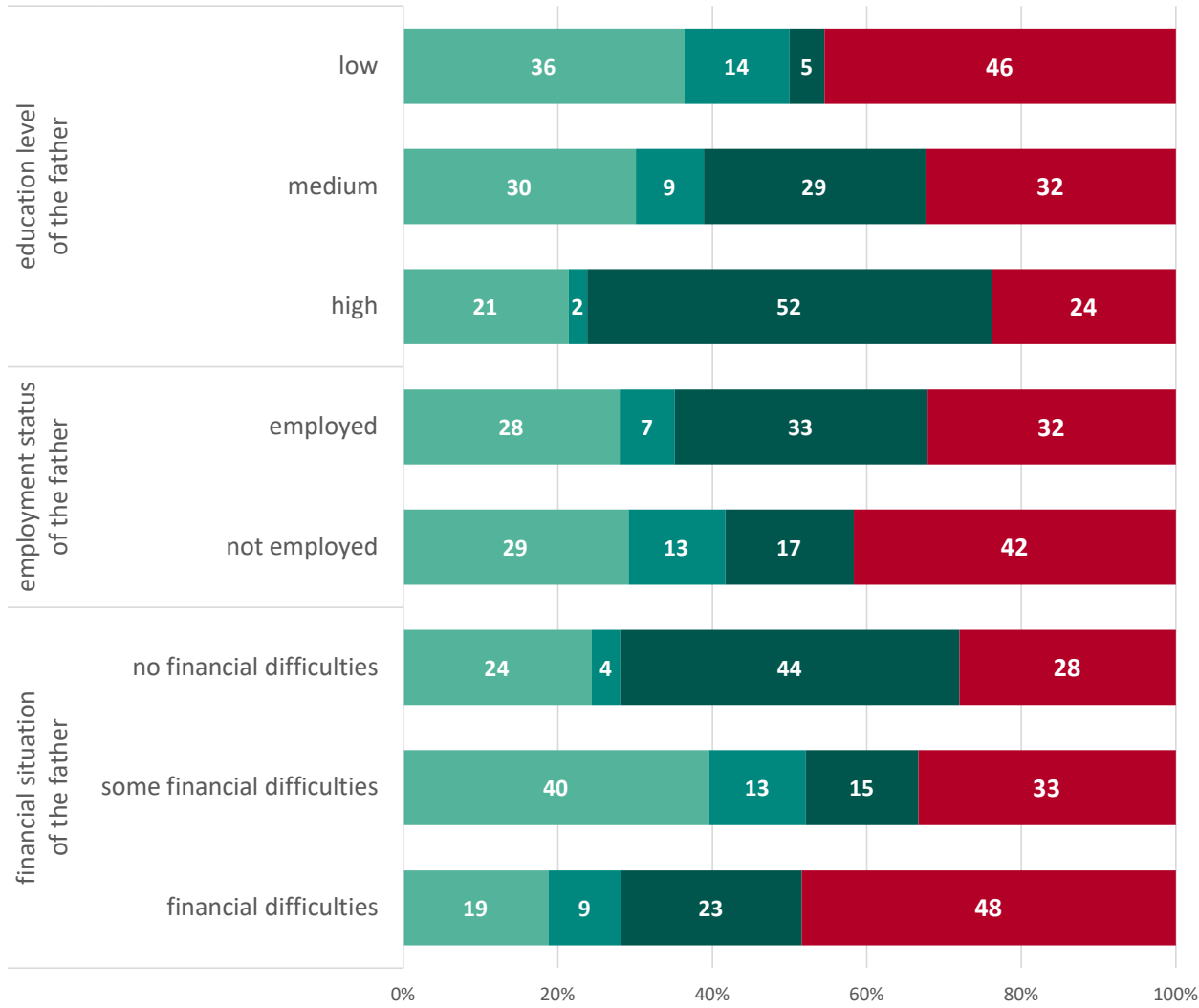


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Appendix

■ continuously ■ mostly ■ occasionally ■ never



Multinomial logistic regression

Number of obs = 218
 Wald chi2(28) = 446.86
 Prob > chi2 = 0.0000
 Pseudo R2 = 0.2928

Log pseudolikelihood = -168.81145

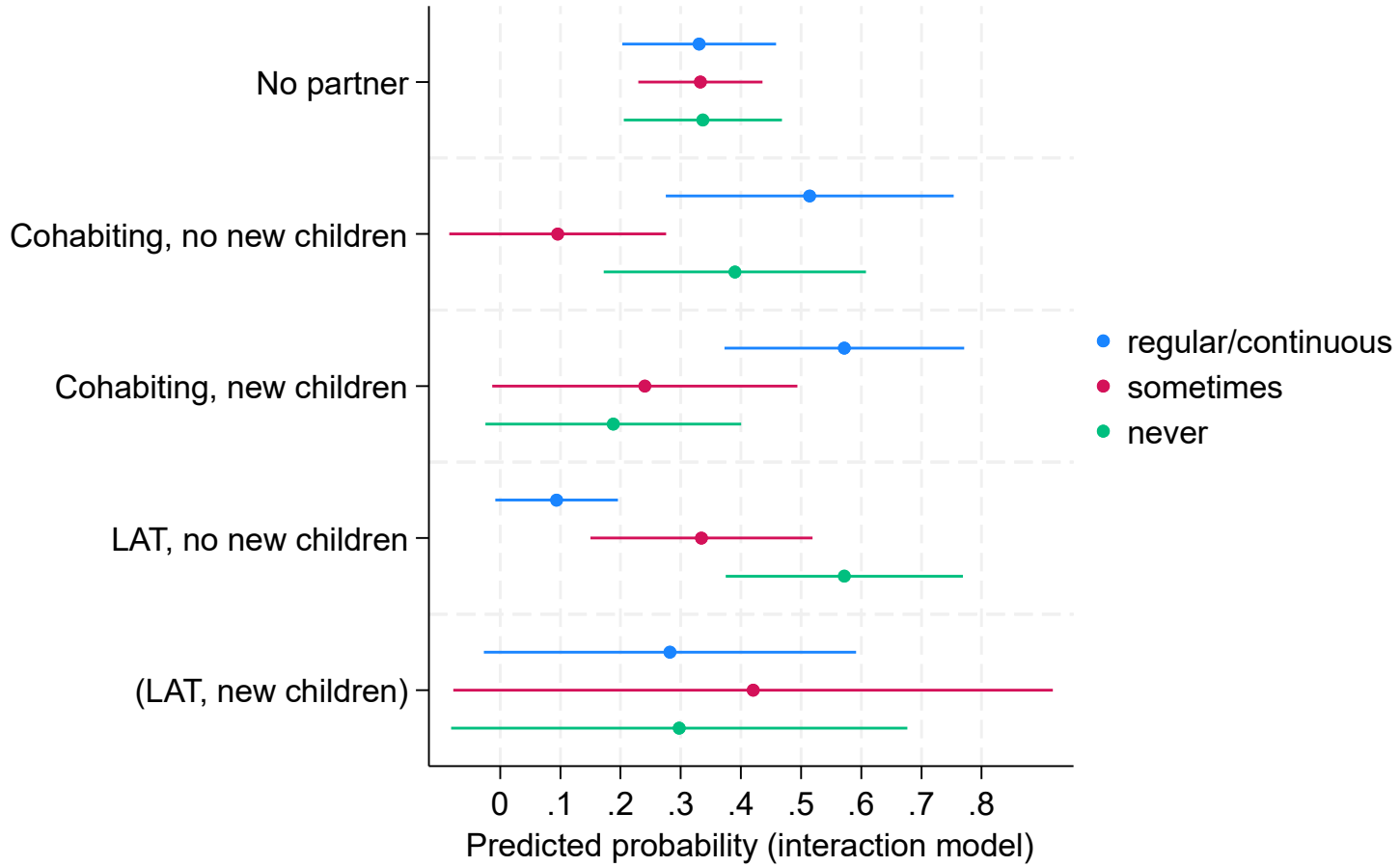
(Std. err. adjusted for 128 clusters in respid)

place_3	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	z	P> z	[95% conf. interval]	
durchgehen~d	(base outcome)					
teilweise						
partners_2						
partner, ..	-1.641692	.9041668	-1.82	0.069	-3.413826	.1304425
partner, ..	1.203181	.8972928	1.34	0.180	-.5554803	2.961843
no infoma..	4.175847	1.998602	2.09	0.037	.2586591	8.093036
sibtype_4	.098	.8464877	0.12	0.908	-1.561085	1.757085
childage_s~2						
10 bis 17..	-2.769901	.68293	-4.06	0.000	-4.108419	-1.431382
Missing	-2.833171	.7454213	-3.80	0.000	-4.29417	-1.372173
eduisced3						
Medium e..)	4.14303	1.709935	2.42	0.015	.7916196	7.494441
High edu..)	5.748232	1.754501	3.28	0.001	2.309472	9.186991
Education..	-11.05814	1.793218	-6.17	0.000	-14.57278	-7.543498
dem06_3						
Nicht erw..	.9836614	1.033801	0.95	0.341	-1.042551	3.009874
Sonstige/..	1.945938	1.299993	1.50	0.134	-.6020008	4.493878
inc03_gr						
mit gewis..	-1.845432	.9799672	-1.88	0.060	-3.766133	.0752681
mit keine..	.3842889	.6821085	0.56	0.573	-.9526193	1.721197
Missing	.0103531	1.024448	0.01	0.992	-1.997529	2.018235
_cons	-2.337296	2.037015	-1.15	0.251	-6.329771	1.655179

nie

partners_2						
partner, ..	-.4940851	.7486817	-0.66	0.509	-1.961474	.973304
partner, ..	1.704641	.766504	2.22	0.026	.2023209	3.206961
no infoma..	1.474379	1.051367	1.40	0.161	-.5862622	3.535021
sibtype_4	-1.014937	.6661059	-1.52	0.128	-2.32048	.2906067
childage_s~2						
10 bis 17..	-1.895929	.7327145	-2.59	0.010	-3.332023	-.4598349
Missing	-2.089983	.5515181	-3.79	0.000	-3.170939	-1.009027
eduisced3						
Medium e..)	.9471082	.77381	1.22	0.221	-.5695316	2.463748
High edu..)	1.615818	.9970339	1.62	0.105	-.3383327	3.569968
Education..	3.93165	1.292006	3.04	0.002	1.399365	6.463935
dem06_3						
Nicht erw..	.3756905	.7613209	0.49	0.622	-1.116471	1.867852
Sonstige/..	.0729251	1.06247	0.07	0.945	-2.009478	2.155328
inc03_gr						
mit gewis..	-.9381662	.8132237	-1.15	0.249	-2.532055	.655723
mit keine..	-.2980191	.6247304	-0.48	0.633	-1.522468	.92643
Missing	-.5680152	.7953237	-0.71	0.475	-2.126821	.9907906
_cons	.790168	.8351762	0.95	0.344	-.8467473	2.427083

Father's partnership status × children in new union



durchgehend zumeist ab und zu nie

