

Working Paper

Same-Sex Couples in Germany - Where do they live?

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Introduction

In the past one could observe that same-sex couples in Germany gradually obtained both social and legal attention. The couples are visible in a variety of societal areas like in politics, in media and partially even in sports. In the jurisdiction a lot happened in the recent years, for instance the allowance for successive adoption by the supreme court. Even though increasing societal visibility is observed research on this minority group is in deficit. This furthermore is, among other reasons, due to the existence of only one dataset that quantifies same-sex couples in Germany in a dimension that allows statistical analyzes. These data come from the Scientific Use File of the annual 1% Microcensus. Still there is some uncertainty as data on same-sex couples are firstly raised indirectly (since 1996) and secondly only couples in the same household can be detected. As very likely due to the commoner absence of children also the necessity to live together in a same-sex union is lower. This probably leads to a great underestimation of same-sex couples in the data. Overriding these challenges this paper pioneers in mapping the regional distribution of same-sex couples in Germany, distinguished by both male and female same-sex couples. Implications are for instance that health services can better focus on same-sex people. Also because same-sex couples have on average a higher income (double income, no kids - phenomenon) they are consequently desired customers for real estates, clothing, gastronomic business.

In this work we answer various questions. Are male and female same-sex couples regionally segregated and if yes to what extent? Are there changes in the regional distributional patterns in the course of time? Do these changes differ between male and female same-sex couples?

Methodology

The first part of this paper gives an overview on descriptive statistics, gay³ and lesbian couples among the Federal States but also within the aggregates made up of Federal States and Municipal Size Classes for the years 1996 to 2011 are quantified. Furthermore the share of same-sex couples on opposite-sex couples is calculated based on the same type of aggregate (as stated above). For showing results at a glance on the Federal State level maps are used. The second part concentrates on multilevel analysis (mla). We limit it to a first, the individual level, and the second the contextual respectively regional level⁴. The mla estimates, besides individual

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³ Even though one can translate ,gay' with ,generally homosexual' in this work ,gay' is only used for male same-sex couples.

⁴ Being strictly accurate using the term ,regional' isn't correct here but is used here for not anticipating the following explanations.

predictors, the influence of regional characteristics on spatial preferences of same-sex couples. Preparing the mla we made up aggregates out of the Federal States and a rough combination of the Municipal Size Classes (<20,000; 20,000-<500,000; >500,000 inhabitants). This was indispensable for counteracting the low number of completely regional aggregates (16 Federal States). Now this contextual variable is a combination of showing the region as well as urbanity.

Results

For the descriptives of the same-sex couples counts we use each available Microcensus Scientific Use File sample (1996 to 2011). For giving an impression on dimensions the file covers around 500,000 cases per survey year. Even though the analyses are finally making statements on couple level following numbers refer to individuals. Absolute numbers show that there is an overall increase of both gay and lesbian couples over time.

Table 1: Absolute numbers of same-sex couples by Federal State in 3-years distance:

	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011
Schleswig-Holstein	10	20	22	20	28	26
Hamburg	32	20	18	28	40	40
Lower Saxony	62	46	54	40	66	76
Bremen	0	0	16	2	0	8
Northrhine Westphalia	164	158	159	192	242	188
Hessian	26	38	40	44	54	76
Rhineland Palatinate	24	18	20	42	38	40
Baden Wurttemberg	20	22	58	58	70	60
Bavaria	48	40	76	78	84	88
Saarland	2	6	6	8	8	10
Berlin	48	36	82	70	78	86
Brandenburg	8	6	10	6	28	38
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	10	6	6	14	10	16
Saxony	2	12	14	24	20	14
Saxony-Anhalt	12	20	10	6	14	10
Thuringia	8	14	10	12	4	8
Total	476	462	600	644	784	784

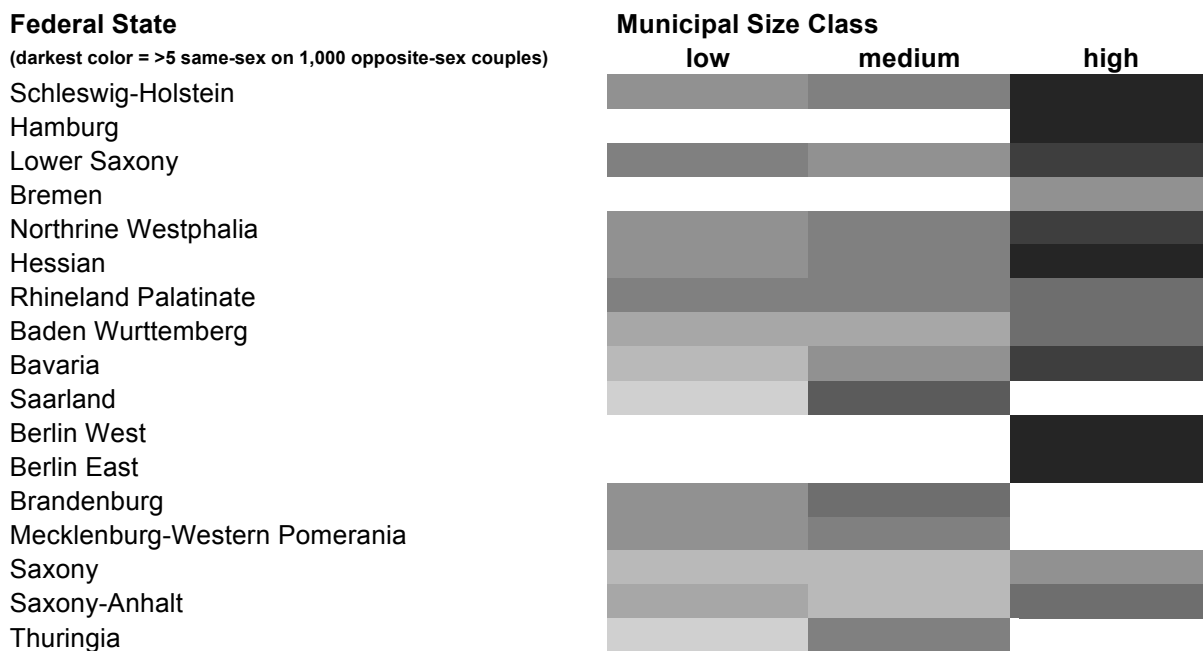
Source: German 1% Microcensus (Scientific Use File), own calculations

Table 1 shows, starting in 1996, that in sum there are 476 people living in a same-sex union - this count mostly rises and shows values of 462 (1999), 600 (2002), 644 (2005) and 784 for the years 2008 and the last year 2011. Generally the number of gays extends that of lesbians. There is a high fluctuation in absolute numbers of same-sex oriented individuals among the Federal States. As of course the population by Federal States is very diverse we estimated the number of same-sex couples on 1,000 opposite-sex couples to get an impression about potential concentration. Not surprising the highest shares are generally found for the city states Berlin and Hamburg. In almost all years between 1996 and 2011 the share for Berlin (up to 13 per 1,000; gays higher than lesbians) is higher than for Hamburg. The picture for lowest values is not that clear, for some years it is Thuringia, sometimes Baden Wurttemberg and others. Exemplifying see the maps 1 to 4 in the

appendix that show the relative presence of same-sex couples in 1996 and for comparison in 2011 for both gays and lesbians in union. The years in between show a quite steady increase of counts. The darker the mapped color the higher the share of same-sex on opposite-sex couples. By checking the maps visually the trajectory of the regional distribution of same-sex couples indicates an increasing segregation as adjacent areas in recent years more often show different relative presence. Using the dissimilarity index on the other hand clarifies that this picture is not that clear, there seem to be periods where same-sex couples are regionally increasingly segregated and periods where this development is the other way round.

Going into more detail we developed a graphic solution showing the relative values on 1,000 opposite-sex couples by each aggregate (made up of Federal State and Municipal Size Class). Exemplifying see figure 1 below for all individuals living in a same-sex couple:

Figure 1: Relative mean share of same-sex on 1,000 opposite sex-couples (1996, 2001, 2006, 2011)



Source: German 1% Microcensus (Scientific Use File), own calculations

The darker the grey the higher the share of all same-sex couples on opposite-sex couples for each unit. White cells mean that for this Federal State the unit of Municipal Size Class is absent.

As the second part isn't completely done by now we show preliminary results. E.g., they show that the homosexuality accepting level influences the decision for same-sex unions where to live.

Summary and limits

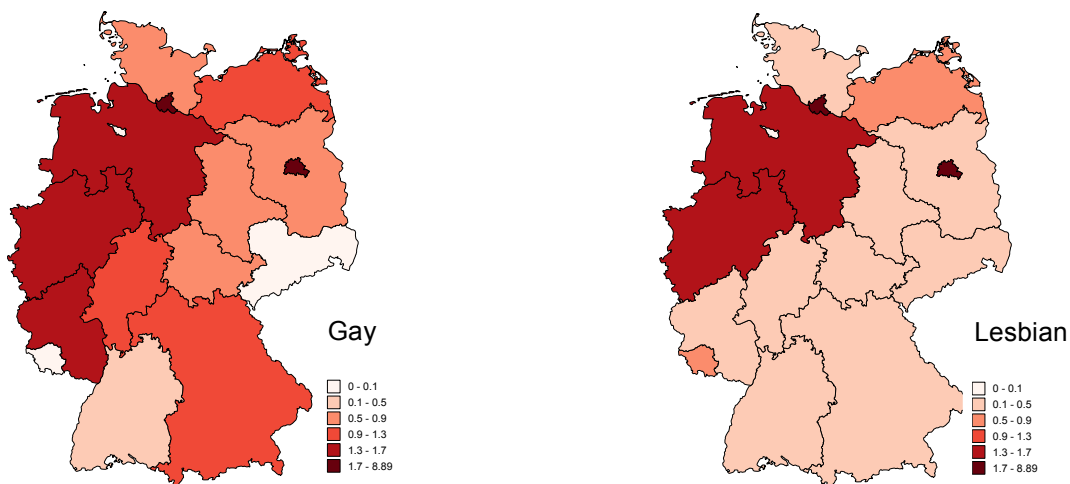
With our data we could give a good overview of Germany about the distribution of same-sex couples - do they prefer to settle in city or territorial states? Do they prefer to live in smaller or bigger Municipal Size Classes? We are able to answer these questions - same-sex couples mostly prefer to live in city states and in line with that in Municipal Size Classes with a relatively high

population. With a few exceptions we found higher numbers of gays in union than lesbians in union. Excluding a few years for this moment, the number respectively the visibility of same-sex couples steadily raises for each consecutive survey year. This is true for both gays and lesbians living in a couple. Highest ratios on opposite-sex couples we find in the city-states of Berlin and Hamburg where we partially see 10 same-sex couples on 1,000 opposite-sex couples.

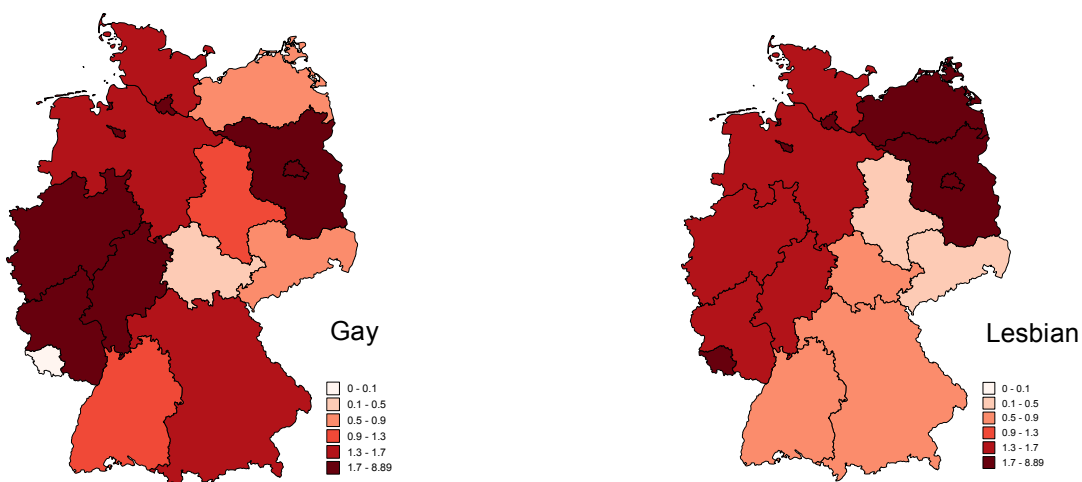
Analyses are limited insofar as you have to handle results with care because we assume an underestimation of same-sex couples that partially can influence some findings. Not for nothing we can find results not existing before. We pioneered on the one hand in mapping regional distributions of same-sex couples in Germany and on estimating absolute and relative counts for the extra made up aggregate. Further work should focus on a more accurate estimation of same-sex couples, how can we overcome the underestimation to some extent? Also it is interesting to look deeply behind potential segregation patterns and the reasons for it? Is it missing tolerance in the society that leads to that or is it something very different?

Appendix

Maps 1 & 2: Number of same-sex couples on 1,000 opposite-sex couples, 1996



Maps 3 & 4: Number of same-sex couples on 1,000 opposite-sex couples, 2011



Source: German 1% Microcensus (Scientific Use File), own calculations and presentation