

VIENNA INSTITUTE OF DEMOGRAPHY

WORKING PAPERS

02/2026

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF
SAME-SEX FAMILIES IN AUSTRIA

GWEN GÖRTL

ABSTRACT

Family and fertility research, which has long centred on heterosexual couples, is increasingly including LGBTIQ+ individuals and same-sex couples. Still, there is insufficient representative evidence on most countries' sexual minority populations. This working paper offers first exploratory, descriptive insights into the prevalence, demographic, and socio-economic profile of same-sex couples in Austria based on administrative register data made available via the Austria Micro Data Center (AMDC) since 2022. The family life of same-sex parent families and couples in Austria has been subject to major policy changes in registered partnership and marriage, fertility, reproductive technologies and adoption over the last 16 years. Marriage of same-sex couples was introduced in 2019, as was formal parenthood for female same-sex couples in 2015. Using administrative register data from 2010 onwards, this working paper examines similarities and differences in the characteristics of female and male same-sex couples as well as different-sex couples in marriage and registered partnership as well as births. The results show similarities between same- and different-sex couples, but also differences in age gaps, education, urban or rural residence, and income equality.

KEYWORDS

Same-sex, queer demography, register data

AUTHORS

Gwen Göttl, Vienna Institute of Demography at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, gwen.goetl@oeaw.ac.at

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is funded within the DOC program of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW).

This research project was conducted with data from the Austrian Micro Data Center (AMDC). The AMDC is a research data infrastructure facility of Statistics Austria that enables research on micro data processed in compliance with data protection regulations (Fuchs et al. 2023).

The author thanks Anna Karmann (University of Vienna) for methodological support and for valuable comments, and Nadia Steiber and Laura Zilian (University of Vienna) for use of their income tax register approach.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAME-SEX FAMILIES IN AUSTRIA

GWEN GÖTL

1 INTRODUCTION

Very little is known about the prevalence and characteristics of same-sex families in Austria.¹ Even though knowledge on same-sex families, as well as other sexual minority family types (including bisexual, trans, inter, or queer parents), is of high social and scientific relevance, for many countries, there is a dire lack of empirical evidence (Reczek, 2020). The main reason is that LGBTIQ+ people constitute a minority within populations.² Based on estimates from other European countries, the share of LGBT individuals in Austria is expected to be at least 1.2 percent (Buber-Ennser et al., 2021).³ Case numbers in social science surveys are usually too small to provide reliable and robust results (Kolk & Andersson, 2020). Existing research on same-sex couples (SSCs) is therefore often either qualitative or based on small or non-random samples. While these studies offer valuable insights into processes in same-sex relationships, such as pathways to parenthood (Patterson & Tornello, 2010; Teschlade et al., 2025) or divorce (Hoy, 2020), there is very little generalisable evidence based on representative samples. The existing quantitative research on the populations of SSCs are for the most part limited to studies from Nordic countries, which provide research access to register data collected by the state for every resident (Kolk & Andersson, 2020; Möllborn & Kolk, 2024; Ponkilainen, Einiö, Kolk, et al., 2026; Zahl-Olsen & Thuen, 2023).

This working paper offers exploratory, descriptive insights into the prevalence, demographic, and socio-economic profile of same-sex couples in Austria. It shares findings from the *Same-sex families in Austria* project (SAMFA), which is the first project on SSCs in Austria to use data from the Austria Micro Data Center (AMDC), established in 2022 (Fuchs et al., 2023).⁴ This new data source allows for more detailed and reliable analyses of same-sex families. The results focus on three topics: (1) The number and characteristics of same-sex marriages and registered partnerships (since 2010), (2) SSCs in shared households (in 2022), and (3) female same-sex parents at birth (in 2016–2023). For the third topic, characteristics focus on age profiles of the birth parent and second parent.

¹ The term *same-sex* is used when describing couples drawn from (register-based) household data. Where the sexuality of individuals is known, e.g., from survey questions, the terms *gay*, *lesbian*, or *bisexual* are used.

² The acronym *LGBTIQ+* is an umbrella term covering sexual and gender minority groups and stands for *lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual*, *trans*, *inter*, and *queer/questioning*. The plus sign is used to include additional groups not covered by the letters. In cases where not all groups represented by the *LGBTIQ+* acronym are included in data sources or studies, only the applicable letters are used.

³ By comparison, recent Gallup polls for the US show higher numbers of 9.3 percent of respondents identifying as *LGBTQ+*, including 23 percent among Generation Z (Jones, 2025).

⁴ For further project information, see: www.oew.ac.at/vid/research/research-projects/samfa

Compared to Nordic countries, the Austrian population tends to hold conservative views on same-sex relationships and parenting, even as SSCs have gained broad legal recognition in recent years (Eurobarometer, 2023). Adding results from Austria to the existing research from the Nordic countries provides insights into how living in a politically conservative country shapes same-sex families. In the Austrian context, family is still often seen exclusively as the union of a man and a woman and is characterised by a gendered division of labour in employment and family life (Beham-Rabanser et al., 2024; Göttl & Berghammer, 2024). A significant proportion of the population in Austria regards same- and different-sex relationships as unequal. This has been shown in several surveys over the last few years: Just over half of the respondents of the *European Values Study 2017* in Austria perceive SSCs as being equally good parents as different-sex couples (DSC) (54 percent (EVS, 2022)) and 37 percent are opposed to equal rights for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people (Eurobarometer, 2023).⁵ Additionally, the sexual and gender minority population in Austria experiences frequent discrimination in their daily life: 40 percent of LGB respondents reported discrimination in the last three years (Schönherr et al., 2019), 20 percent of LGBTI respondents in Austria reported discrimination in their work environment in the last year, and 11 percent experienced physical or sexual attacks aimed at sexual or gender minorities in the last five years (FRA, 2020). Close to four in five respondents reported avoiding holding a same-sex partner's hand in public at least in some instances because they fear assault, threats, or harassment (FRA, 2020).

Laws prohibiting homosexuality in Austria date back to 1852 (Schlagdenhauffen, 2018), and decriminalisation has only been enacted since the 1970s. Same-sex sexual acts were banned under punishment until 1971, and publicly “endorsing homosexuality” was banned under the penal code until the 1990s (HOSI Wien, 1992). Today, SSCs are legally recognised in registered partnerships (since 2010) and marriage (since 2019); however, progress in the recognition of same-sex partnership and parenthood did not arise from political will, but through constitutional court decisions (Beham-Rabanser et al., 2024). After same-sex registered partnerships were introduced in 2010, legal inequalities between these unions and heterosexual marriages were challenged in court and discriminatory legislation was gradually removed. Such legislation included SSCs initially being required to enter registered partnerships at the district administrative authority instead of holding a ceremony at a registry office, not being allowed to take a shared family name, and not receiving any parenthood rights upon registered partnership. These and subsequent legal battles had to reach the Austrian Constitutional Court, where rulings reduced the legal discrimination faced by SSCs. Further expansions of rights for SSCs in Austria include becoming eligible for stepchild adoption in 2013, following a Constitutional Court decision; extending reproductive technologies to lesbian couples in 2015, and overturning a ban on SSCs adopting children from outside of their families in 2016. In 2024, lesbian couples won the legal right to be recognised as parents when using private sperm donations, as opposed to previously only being eligible in the case of conceiving at a fertility clinic (Beham-Rabanser et al., 2024).

Chapter 2 summarises existing research, with a focus on Nordic countries, on sexual and gender minority families, legal recognition of SSCs, the formation and dissolution of marriage and registered partnership, parenthood in SSCs, and differences as well as similarities in these characteristics between SSCs and DSCs. Next, chapter 3 introduces the administrative registers and discusses available options as well as limitations for identifying SSCs in this data. In addition, it explains the variables, methods, and data limitations. Chapter 4 provides findings about SSCs and DSCs in marriages and registered partnerships as well as female SSCs with births and first findings from microcensus data on SSCs sharing a household. Finally, chapter 5 discusses the results and provides an outlook on further areas of research concerning SSCs.

⁵ EVS question: “Same-sex couples are just as good parents as other couples” on a five-point scale (agree strongly, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, disagree strongly). The number refers to those answering with “agree” or “agree strongly,” own computations (weighted). Eurobarometer question: “Lesbian, gay and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people (marriage, adoption, parental rights)” on a four-point scale (totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, totally disagree). Number refers to those answering with “tend to disagree” or “totally disagree.”

2 CONTEXT AND EXISTING RESEARCH

2.1 SEXUAL- AND GENDER-MINORITY FAMILIES

The rising visibility of same-sex families can be explained as part of the diversification of family forms, which is shifting norms away from a focus on partnerships defined by marriage and (marital) childbearing (Lesthaeghe, 2010). However, most family forms, such as step-families, lesbian and gay single parents as well as SSCs raising children, have existed historically and long before they were formally recognised by law (Beham-Rabanser et al., 2024). Recent changes in reproductive technologies and policy enable more people in same-sex family forms to fulfil their desire to have children (Teschlade et al., 2025). Changes in policies mostly benefit *cisgender* gay and lesbian couples, while recognition for gender diverse or multi-parent families lag behind.⁶ This has been explained through the concept of *homonormativity* (Duggan, 2002), in which gay and lesbian couples adhere to nuclear-family norms to gain access to institutions such as civil marriage. Before same-sex marriage was introduced, many countries did not provide SSCs with the option to adhere to norms about married family life.

Existing register-based research on SSCs and families often focuses on male and female SSCs in registered partnership and marriage, since these official forms of partnerships enable identifying couples with same-sex partners. It is important to note that information on SSCs do not cover the lesbian, gay, and bisexual population as a whole, many of whom will not be in a same-sex relationship at any given timepoint, but rather be either single or in different-sex relationships. Even increasing research on SSCs does not sufficiently cover the diversity of queer relationship practices and family types or sexuality and gender. These under-covered family forms include parenting in extended chosen families, such as a lesbian and a gay couple having children and parenting together (a family form called “four-leafed clover families” in Sweden (Eriksson Kirsch, 2025)), families including bisexual or pansexual, as well as trans or intersex individuals⁷, and non-monogamous or polyamorous couples, all of which are less clearly defined in most quantitative data available for research. Bisexual (attracted to two genders) and pansexual (attracted to all genders) individuals currently in different-sex relationships are not identifiable in household data. Administrative registers do not include data on sexual and gender identities and even large-scale surveys often lack questions that could identify LGBTIQ+ couples, reflecting how quantitative research often leaves out the most marginalised family types (Reczek, 2020).

Cohabiting couples are more difficult to identify in the data than married couples. The 1990 US Census was the first census to include the “unmarried partner” option, which respondents used to identify same-sex cohabitation. Without such options, censuses are limited in their ability to distinguish SSCs from other forms of cohabitation, such as sharing households with roommates, which could result in possible overcounts of non-partnered cohabitation as SSCs (Black et al., 2000). False identifications of roommates as SSCs can be assumed to be more likely in younger people under 30 years, who are more likely to live with roommates (Festy, 2007). Moreover, undercounts may occur when relationships are not reported or recognised. For example, surveys that ask about same-sex relationships may be prone to non-response given the sensitivity of questions about gender and sexual identity in historical marginalised groups (Yan, 2021). Furthermore, because younger people and those with higher educational attainment are more likely to state belonging to a sexual minority in surveys than older people or those with lower educational attainment, this can bias estimates of LGBTIQ+ people being young and highly educated. (Eggen & Rupp, 2010; Julian et al., 2024). Therefore, surveys alone are insufficient data sources for building reliable and representative datasets on (cohabiting) SSCs.

Despite the valuable insights offered by research on formally partnered SSCs, there are some limitations. First, because same-sex marriage has only been a legal option for a relatively short amount of time, marriage trends in SSCs and DSCs

⁶ *Cisgender* (or *cis*) individuals’ gender identity matches the gender assigned to them at birth.

⁷ Trans individuals’ gender identity does not match with the gender they were assigned at birth (trans women, trans men, and non-binary individuals). Intersex individuals were born with ambiguously gendered biological traits, and many to this day are subject to gender assignment surgery as infants, but do not always identify with their assigned gender later in life. Parents who are intersex or trans might contradict widespread expectations of gendered parenthood, e.g., trans fathers becoming pregnant or trans mothers providing sperm for their cis female partners.

might not be directly comparable; the EU countries with the oldest legislation are Denmark, where registered partnerships have been legal since 1989, and the Netherlands, where marriage has been legal for since 2001 (Pew Research Center, 2026). Second, the group of SSCs that choose to formalise their relationship cannot be taken to be representative of all SSCs. While it is true that not all DSCs enter into marriage, the question of marriage as an adaption to heteronormative relationship forms is at the forefront of the discussion on same-sex marriage (Ganz, 2007; Klesse, 2010; Rydström, 2011). The move towards marriage equality for same-sex partners is sometimes perceived by couples and in queer theory discourse as pressure to conform to heterosexual relationship patterns (Auchmuty, 2004; Klesse, 2010). Acknowledging these limitations, the following overview nevertheless focuses on formally partnered SSCs in Austria, since a quantitative analysis of this group currently offers the most reliable data and results.

2.2 LEGAL RECOGNITION OF SAME-SEX PARTNERSHIP AND FERTILITY

The legal recognition of diverse family forms supports LGBTIQ+ parent families in their everyday lives by reducing stigmatisation and legal vulnerability. This concerns, for example, access to parental leave, partner co-insurance, and reproductive technologies (Siegel et al., 2021; Kaufman et al., 2022). Legal recognition generally privileges family forms that are closest to heteronormative nuclear families, such as marriage and adoption rights for gay and lesbian (two-parent) couples (Garwood, 2016). Same-sex unions are legally recognised in many, but not all European countries. In Austria, the formal recognition of SSCs was introduced as registered partnerships in 2010. Nine years later, in 2019, marriage was opened to SSCs and registered partnerships to DSCs by a decision of the Austrian Constitutional Court (VfGh 05.12.2017, G 258/2017), meaning registered partnership is still available as an alternative to marriage to SSCs and DSCs. Legal recognition was realised relatively late in Austria compared to Nordic countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands.

By the end of 2025, marriage is available to couples irrespective of partners' gender in 39 countries, with recent additions of Estonia, Thailand, and Liechtenstein (Pew Research Center, 2026). In Europe, 19 countries offered marriage to SSCs by the end of 2025 (European Union, 2026). These are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Marriages of same-sex partners entered in an EU country are recognised in any other EU country, even if same-sex marriage is banned there. This means that an SSC that marries in Austria has all rights granted by EU laws, such as freedom of movement; for example, if one spouse moves to Poland for work, where same-sex marriage is banned, the second spouse has the right to live with her wife in Poland. However, this does not extend to rights granted to married couples by Polish national laws, such as inheritance and family allowances, which can exclude SSCs (European Union, 2026). Therefore the couple, though officially married, might not receive welfare transfers in Poland when they have a child or be both recognised as parents.

Even with marriage equality being extended to more European countries in recent years, SSCs still face stigmatisation and discrimination in many areas, including reproductive medicine, adoption, and the recognition of non-birthing parents (Bos & Gartrell, 2020). For LGBTQ+ parents in Europe, experiencing stigma and minority stress is associated with lower life satisfaction and higher symptoms of depression (Siegel et al., 2025). Societal ideals of families have historically seen different-sex parenthood as the norm, with children growing up with lesbian or gay parents perceived to have worse outcomes in health or education. Institutional discrimination against lesbian and gay parents went as far as custody being revoked for lesbian mothers or gay fathers after different-sex divorces, a widespread practise that was enforced until the 1990s in Germany (Bendiek, 2025).

Research on children of SSCs has therefore long focused on children's well-being and development, with the results refuting adverse effects of growing up with lesbian or gay parents (Reczek, 2020). From the beginning of the 21st century onward, research interests have shifted towards differences in parenting between SSCs and DSCs. The studies following this thematic shift show a strong dedication of same-sex parents towards parenting roles, such as the higher involvement of gay than heterosexual fathers, and high (but not full) equality in paid and unpaid work-sharing among lesbian mothers, but also social stigma and less social support for gay and lesbian parents (Biblarz & Savci, 2010; Reczek, 2020). Further, there is higher equality in the hours worked in employment and care work in female same-sex parent families, showing how lesbian parenting can be seen as a counterexample to widespread unequal gendered work-sharing in heterosexual parent families (Bendiek, 2025).

Children in same-sex families can broadly be differentiated into children from previous different-sex relationships living with the SSC as well as children born, adopted, or fostered into the SSC. Reproductive medicine as well as surrogacy can be very costly depending on institutional support, making it an economic barrier for prospective parents (Reczek, 2020). Access to reproductive medicine (artificial insemination, sperm donation, and, to a limited extent, egg donation) was opened to women in SSCs in Austria in 2015 without the previous requirement of a registered partnership (City of Vienna, n.d.; FMedRÄG, 2015). Insemination at home via private sperm donation has always been an option for female SSCs, though the non-birth mother of the child born would not have been officially recognised on the child's birth certificate before 2024 and instead had to adopt the child after birth.⁸ In Austria, the adoption of a partner's child by the second partner in an SSC has been legal since 2013 (VfGh 11.12.2014, G 119/2014), while adopting children from outside of the family was extended to SSCs in 2016 (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2024). Similar adoption legislation has been passed in many (European) countries in recent years, but same-sex parents continue to face barriers when institutions and case workers lack legal knowledge on adoption laws regarding lesbian and gay couples or are not willing to work with same-sex parents (Farr et al., 2020). Equal rights measures are fragile and, once achieved, might still be revoked, as can be seen in Europe from the example of Italy where the previous practise recognising same-sex mothers at birth was changed in 2023, removing non-birth mothers from their children's birth certificates (Kilbride, 2023; Teschlade et al., 2025). As reproductive medicine is gradually being extended to women in SSCs in Europe, there is a stark difference between the potential paths towards parenthood for female and male SSC couples, with options for men in SSCs to become parents far more limited. For example, children from a previous relationship of one male partner cannot be adopted by the second male partner unless the birth mother officially gives up parenthood. Men in SSCs can become parents by foster care and adoption, while surrogacy is banned in many countries including Austria (Schrupp, 2022).

2.3 MARRIAGE AND REGISTERED PARTNERSHIP

Recent survey-based analyses from the US shows that a smaller share of LGBTQ+ adults live in coresidential marriages than among non-LGBTQ+ adults, with higher shares in nonmarital cohabitation, in living-apart together (LAT) partnerships, living with unrelated roommates (possibly as families of choice), or living alone (Julian et al., 2026). It is estimated that less than 30 percent of SSCs in Germany chose to formally register their partnership between 2001 (when it was introduced) and 2008 (Eggen & Rupp, 2010), and about 50 percent of same-sex coresident couples in the US were married by 2016, compared to 90 percent of DSCs in the survey (S. K. Goldberg & Conron, 2018). The Nordic countries introduced same-sex partnership and marriage earlier than most other countries—Sweden introduced same-sex registered partnership in 1995 and marriage in 2009; Norway introduced registered partnership in 1993, marriage in 2009; Denmark introduced registered partnership in 1989 and marriage in 2012—and were the first to study these couples from around the mid-2000s. Early studies show more male than female SSCs entered registered partnerships and marriages in the first years after the introduction of these formal partnership forms for SSCs (Andersson et al., 2006; Andersson & Noack, 2011; Noack et al., 2005). This trend seems to have inverted in the subsequent years, with newer studies finding higher registered partnership and marriage numbers for female SSCs, possibly due to changes in legislation giving more rights to formally partnered couples in Nordic countries (Kolk and Andersson 2020 for Sweden, Zahl-Olsen and Thuen, 2023 for Norway). In Sweden, the trend in the number of female same-sex marriages has changed again in recent years, with fewer marriages amongst female SSCs following the adaptation of family policy in 2018 that allowed unmarried partners to adopt each other's children. The connection between marriage and parenthood is not as apparent for male SSCs (Möllborn & Kolk, 2024). This shows the influence of family policies on decisions to marry and the role of marriage as an enabling factor for childbearing for female SSCs (Möllborn & Kolk, 2024).

Notably, Nordic countries that were the first to offer registered partnership and marriage to SSCs do not offer tax reductions or joint health insurance to married couples, meaning lower economic incentives for marriages compared to other countries such as Germany or the US (Andersson et al., 2006; N. G. Goldberg & Badgett, 2009; Pollard & Lopez-Garcia, 2022). Since the introduction of registered partnership preceded the introduction of same-sex marriages in these countries, some couples

⁸ There are several terms used for same-sex female parents that did not birth the child, among which are *non-birth mother*, *second*, *co-*, and *social mother*. The term *second mother* will primarily be used in this text in accordance with usage by queer family advocates in Austria. The term *non-biological mother* is avoided since it is not always accurate, as in couples where one mother carries a fertilised egg harvested from the other mother or a trans mother contributes sperm.

were in registered partnerships for up to two decades when the option of marriage became available. Within the first seven to nine months of same-sex marriage being legalised, around 30 percent of registered Norwegian and 15 percent of Swedish SSCs converted their partnership to a marriage (Andersson & Noack, 2011). Where it is reported, the share of same-sex unions among all formal unions (registered partnership and marriage) ranges from 1.3 percent (US 2023 (Hays & Minkin, 2025)) or 1.6 to 2.1 percent (in the Nordic countries 2024 (Ponkilainen, Einiö, Kolk, et al., 2026)), and up to 2.5 percent (Germany 2024 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2025)).

An overview of existing data from the first years of registered partnership in Austria from 2010 to 2018 shows similar trends to early studies from Sweden and Norway, with more male than female SSCs registering their partnership (56 percent male, 44 percent female) and more female than male SSCs opting for a partnership dissolution (44 percent male, 56 percent female). Close to half of SSCs who entered a registered partnership in this timeframe did so in the capital city, Vienna (Buber-Ennser et al., 2021).

2.4 PARTNER SELECTION

Microcensus data for Germany shows a steady increase of SSCs living together (Eggen & Rupp, 2010; Lengerer & Bohr, 2019). Estimations on the share of couples living with a same-sex partner in Germany by Lengerer and Bohr (2019) range between 0.6 (lower limit estimation) and 1.1 percent (upper limit estimation) for 2019. Register data-based research on the partner characteristics at union formation (registered partnership and marriage) from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark have shown same-sex partners to be more socio-demographically heterogeneous than DSCs in partner selection. For example, partners in SSCs have higher mean ages and higher mean age gaps both at formation of registered partnership and marriage than DSC partners at the time of marriage (Andersson et al., 2006; Andersson & Noack, 2011; Wiik et al., 2014; Zahl-Olsen & Thuen, 2023). Additionally, a higher share of male SSCs do not share the same citizenship and include a migrant partner compared to female SSCs and DSCs (Andersson et al., 2006; Wiik et al., 2014). The higher mean age at marriage and registered partnership of SSCs can at least partially be attributed to SSCs being in cohabitation for longer periods before access to registered partnership or marriage was available for them. The differences in mean age at marriage formation between SSCs and DSCs remains visible in more recent studies in Nordic countries, but converges over time, partially because different-sex partners now marry at older ages (Möllborn & Kolk, 2024; Zahl-Olsen & Thuen, 2023). At formal partnership formation in Nordic countries, a similar share of same- and different-sex partners have a low educational level (primary education, around 20 percent), but there are fewer SSCs than DSCs in which both partners only have primary education. Same-sex partners, especially women, tend to have higher educational attainment than DSCs, and a higher share of both partners in female SSCs have tertiary education than male SSCs and DSCs (Andersson & Noack, 2011; Wiik et al., 2014).

2.5 PARTNERSHIP DISSOLUTION

Relationship stability for formally partnered couples can be measured by rates of registered partnership dissolutions and divorces. Dissolution rates in the Nordic countries have been higher in SSCs than among DSCs since the introduction of same-sex registered partnership and marriage. Recent studies show that this difference slightly declined in Sweden between 1995 to 2012 (Kolk & Andersson, 2020) as well as in urban Norway, while dissolution risks increased over time in rural areas in Norway between 1993 and 2014 (Zahl-Olsen & Thuen, 2023). Relationship stability also differs within SSCs in Nordic countries, with female couples showing higher rates of dissolution than male couples (Andersson et al., 2006; Andersson & Noack, 2011; Kolk & Andersson, 2020; Noack et al., 2005; Ponkilainen, Einiö, Kühn, et al., 2026; Wiik et al., 2014). Nevertheless, SSCs that share the household with children—who are more often female—are less likely to divorce or end their registered partnership than those without children (Wiik et al., 2014). Norwegian data from the first eight years of registered partnership following 1993 suggests few dissolutions occurring within the first two years after formal SSC union formation and lower risks overall for the first “pioneer” couples to enter registered partnership shortly after its introduction than for unions formed in later years (Noack et al., 2005).

2.6 PARENTHOOD

Pathways to parenthood for SSCs can be more complex than for the majority of DSCs. Female SSCs can conceive children through private sperm donation, fertility clinics, or via reproductive technologies. This includes the option where one mother carries the fertilised egg of her partner, which allows their children to have two biological mothers, but is currently prohibited in Austria. In many contexts—including Austria until 2024—children of female SSCs who were not conceived through a fertility clinic would only have both parents legally recognised after the second parent had gone through an adoption process. Other paths to same-sex parenthood include the stepparent adoption of the partner's children from previous partnerships, adoption from outside the family, surrogacy, and fostering.

Until the early 2000s, about 15 to 27 percent of registered same-sex partnerships in Nordic countries included at least one partner who had been previously married to a partner of a different sex (Andersson et al., 2006; Noack et al., 2005; Wiik et al., 2014). It is therefore not uncommon for same-sex partners to have children from previous, different-sex, relationships (Tasker & Lavender-Stott, 2020). The number of different-sex relationships among lesbian and gay individuals before coming out is expected to decrease over time with the rising acceptance of sexual minorities in society. Given the lower expected numbers of lesbian and gay individuals entering heterosexual relationships, and therefore less children born in these relationships, the number of children raised in SSCs may decline in coming years, especially if reproductive technologies and adoption are not available widely to SSCs due to financial or policy barriers (Eggen & Rupp, 2010). However, when same-sex parenthood is legal and accompanied by state financial support for accessing reproductive technology, an increase in same sex parenthood can be expected—especially among women.

German microcensus data from 2008 on SSCs in registered partnerships showed that 7 to 15 percent of couples were raising children, of whom nearly half were born in one partner's previous, different-sex relationship (47 percent), while 42 percent were born within the SSC, and 8 percent were fostered or adopted (Eggen & Rupp, 2010). Female same-sex families more frequently include children from previous partners than male same-sex families. The gender difference continues regarding children born into the same-sex relationship, which happens more frequently in female than male same-sex families (Andersson et al., 2006; Andersson & Noack, 2011; Noack et al., 2005), which reflects the legal and practical difficulties faced by male SSCs on the path to parenthood (Kolk & Andersson, 2020).

There are signs that a generational shift is affecting the pathways to parenthood for lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals: away from parenthood in heterosexual relationships, and moving towards use of reproductive technologies, adoption, or fostering in a same-sex relationship (Patterson & Tornello, 2010; Reczek, 2020; for men: Tasker & Lavender-Stott, 2020). According to a 2016 survey from the US, over two thirds of same-sex parent households were raising children born to one or both partners (68 percent), about one fifth lived with adopted children, and 3 percent with fostered children. The share of adoption and fostering is higher among SSCs than among DSCs families (S. K. Goldberg & Conron, 2018). In an analysis of female SSCs married in 2008 based on Swedish register data, Kolk and Andersson (2020) showed that in half of formally partnered or married female SSCs, one or both partners gave birth within the following five years, which is a similar share to married DSCs. A recent analysis by Ponkilainen et al. (2026) also showed that childbearing in female SSCs has considerably increased over time for Nordic countries. There, the probability of having a child has risen to a similar level for female SSCs as for DSCs in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. These numbers are now stagnating, while in Finland, the probability of a female SSCs having a child remains lower than for DSCs (Ponkilainen et al., 2026).

The average age at birth for mothers in same-sex families is higher than for mothers in different-sex families (Moberg, 2016). It generally takes a longer time for same-sex mothers to realise parenthood intentions because mothers might take more time making the decision to have children and experience a longer process towards pregnancy through steps such as finding a donor or in vitro fertilisation. It seems possible that the age of SSC mothers at first birth will become lower over time with further societal acceptance (Bos & Gartrell, 2020) and policy changes. While female SSCs have the option to alternate childbearing between both partners, this is not utilised very often (Bos & Gartrell, 2020; Kolk & Andersson, 2020). The decision of who will give birth is often based on partner's desire to experience pregnancy, with additional factors in the decision being one partner having problems conceiving, the mother's health, and age; for instance, the older mother might be chosen to have a first child before the younger mother or the younger mother might be perceived to have better chances at a successful pregnancy and be chosen to carry (A. E. Goldberg, 2006).

2.7 CONVERGENCE OF SAME-SEX AND DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLES

Recent results from Sweden about its 30 to 35 years of registered partnership show increasingly similar trends between SSCs and DSCs in formal partnership formation and dissolution. A possible convergence of partnership behaviour is reflected in slowly increasing numbers of same-sex marriages and registered partnerships, parallel to smaller but comparable increases in Swedish DSC marriages from the late 1990s to 2012 (Kolk & Andersson, 2020), as well as subsequent decreases in marriages for both SSCs and DSCs between 2016 to 2021 (Möllborn & Kolk, 2024). While patterns of divorce trends in SSCs and DSCs differ by year and country (Reczek, 2020), in Sweden, SSCs and DSCs divorces show similar trends with increases over time until 2019 (Möllborn & Kolk, 2024) and divorce risks for SSCs and DSCs have trended towards similar levels in recent years—though risks are still elevated for female SSCs (Kolk & Andersson, 2020). A decrease in marriage numbers for both SSCs and DSCs in 2020 coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating the importance of the marriage celebrations to both types of couples, with some having postponed or cancelled their marriages to avoid restrictions and infections (Möllborn & Kolk, 2024). Rather than an inherent difference between couple types, the differences observed between SSCs and DSCs in the early years after the legalisation of same-sex registered partnerships may show the effects that the introduction of marriage and/or registered partnership has on couples' choices and behaviour in the first years following these policy changes. For SSCs in the US, similar relationship stability in marriage and cohabitation was found for SSCs in comparison to DSCs (Manning et al., 2016). Approaches to explaining observed differences between same- and different-sex couples consider factors such as increased partnership stress due to discrimination and structural stigma in the form of minority stress as well as unequal access to parenthood between male SSCs and different-sex or female SSCs (Frost et al., 2017; Möllborn & Kolk, 2024; Reczek, 2020).

3 DATA AND METHODS

3.1 AUSTRIAN REGISTER DATA

This study uses Austrian register data, accessed via the Austrian Micro Data Center (AMDC), which Statistics Austria established in 2022 in compliance with data security and data protection regulations (Fuchs et al., 2023). These longitudinal register data provide an unprecedented level of detail by covering the entire resident and working population of Austria. The data is structured in registers connectable via administrative personal identification numbers assigned to every person living or working in Austria for census, insurance, and tax purposes.

The analysis covers men and women in SSCs in registered partnership and marriage, with and without children, in Austria from 2010 onwards as well as DSCs for comparisons. While some person-level data is retrospectively available for longer than the study period of 2010 onwards, family- and household level data only are available from 2011 or 2015 onwards and divorce data only from 2018 onwards (Table 1). Depending on the register, these data are available to this project for analysis until 2022 or 2023.

TABLE 1 REGISTERS USED IN THE STUDY, START YEAR, AND INFORMATION COVERED

Register abbreviation	Full name in German	Full name in English	Start year	Information covered
AEST-REGZ Pers	Abgestimmte Erwerbsstatistik und Registerzählung	Harmonised employment statistics and register-based census	2009	Person-level census data
AEST-REGZ Fam			2011	Family-level census data
STF	Statistik der Standesfälle einschließlich Todesursachen-statistik	Statistics on vital events, including statistics on causes of death	2015	Civil status including formation of marriages and registered partnerships, births and causes of deaths
SCHEI	Statistik der Ehescheidungen	Divorce statistics	2018	Divorces and dissolutions of registered partnerships
ERV	Registerbasierte Erwerbsverläufe	Register-based employment histories	2015	Household- or family-level data, employment histories
LUE	Integrierte Lohn- und Einkommensteuer-statistik	Integrated wage and income tax statistics	2000	Person-level; wage and income tax

Remark: Information on the registers and the variables included in each are available without registration at: <https://www.statistik.at/amdc-data/#/product>

Data from different registers were merged using personal identification numbers that Statistics Austria includes in the data. The analysis was conducted on Statistics Austria servers via personal remote access, securing data protection. Microcensus data, surveying about 20,000 households in Austria each quarter, are used for estimations of same-sex couples in shared households in Q1 2026, while freely available data from Statistics Austria was used to produce supplementary figures about union formation and dissolution over time, and was accessed via *STATcube*.

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF SAME-SEX COUPLES

The register data provided three ways to identify same-sex partners: (1) Through marriage or partnership registration in the STF register (2015–2023); (2) through parenthood at birth according to birth data (STF 2015–2023) merged with gender entries from the employment histories register (ERV) to identify same- and different-sex parents; and (3) through person-level census entries for 2022 with same gender⁹ and shared family and household-ID provided by Statistics Austria (AEST-REGZ 2022).

When identifying these three partially overlapping groups, the following points should be considered: First, marriage and registered partnership data in the STF register both include couples with Austrian personal identification numbers that have entered their formal union outside of Austria (and are included in the analysis) and couples that have entered their union in Austria, but do not have personal identification numbers, and therefore can be assumed to neither live nor work in Austria (such as couples marrying as tourists). The second group (couples without personal identification numbers) are not included in the analysis, as their characteristics could differ from SSCs in Austria. Couples with only one partner with an Austrian personal identification number are included in the analysis on marriages and registered partnerships, as at least one partner is living or working in Austria. When two same-sex partners have more than one common entry in the register, only the first same-sex marriage or registered partnership is included. This excludes conversions from registered partnership to marriage since 2019 as well as possible remarriages with the same partner.

Second, SSCs can only be identified in birth data in the STF register if both parents are recorded on the birth certificate. This has been possible since 2015 for mothers who have conceived via a fertility clinic, but not via a private sperm donor. Therefore, the number of births to same-sex parents is an undercount for all SSC births.

Third, yearly person-level household data in the AEST register includes *household-IDs*, which identify residential units (apartments, single-family houses, and institutions), as well as *family-IDs* for all families living in a shared households identified by Statistics Austria. This identification via *family-ID* includes couples in marriages and registered partnerships as well as cohabiting couples with and without children.¹⁰ Each person in the household is assigned a household member type. The current analysis uses the following *household types*: “married partners or in registered partnership without children” and “married partners or in registered partnership with children” when both partners have the same gender entry. In addition to these couples identified via *household types*, the group includes a small number of couples in a shared household who have married or entered a registered partnership in 2022—recently enough to still be identified as “cohabiting” in the dataset (28 male and 37 female couples).

Besides the three groups described above, married or formally partnered couples not living in the same household, i.e., LAT couples, are included in the analysis by combining marriage and registered partnership data with household data (Table 2). Of the 2,550 female and 2,445 male SSCs that can be observed to have entered a registered partnership from 2015 or a marriage from 2019, the majority still lives in a shared household in 2022 as a married or registered couple (2,185 female and 1,948 male SSCs). There is, however, a share of couples that are not living in a shared household in 2022 (365 female and 497 male SSCs). Of this group, the following two subgroups have been identified: (1) Couples where one partner is not included in the household register (and possibly not living in Austria), and (2) couples with a marriage or registered partnership in the observation period and for which separate household information is available for both partners. The latter subgroup includes (2a) couples that have divorced or dissolved their partnership (data available from 2018 onwards), (2b) couples in which both partners live in separate single-person households, (2c) couples that live in separate households with at least one partner living with parent(s), (2d) couples that live in separate households with at least one partner living with a child, and (2e) 117 unexplained cases. Couples from categories 2b, 2c, and 2d (living alone, with child(ren), or with parent(s)) that have not divorced, who comprise a total of 164 female and more than 199 male SSCs, are interpreted as potential LAT couples. However, this is expected to be an overcount because it includes both couples that have dissolved

⁹ Austrian birth certificates do not record the parents' gender. They include information about the “mother” and “father,” even when the child has two mothers, in which case the birth mother is entered as “mother” and the second mother as “father.” Therefore, additional data sources from other registers are required to identify same-sex parenthood.

¹⁰ Even though the definition of Statistics Austria's family-ID includes cohabitation, the data shows that no cohabiting same-sex couples were identified for the years 2011 to 2018.

a registered partnership in the years 2010 to 2017 and couples that have separated but not yet divorced or dissolved their registered partnership.

TABLE 2 NUMBER OF SAME-SEX MARRIED AND REGISTERED PARTNERSHIP COUPLES IN SHARED AND SEPARATE HOUSEHOLDS 2015–2022

	Female SSC	Male SSC
Couples entering marriage or registered partnership 2015–2022 (each couple only included once; excludes conversions to marriage and re-marriages)	2,550	2,445
By 2022 registered in shared household as married or partnered according to household data or newly married in 2022 and still coded as cohabiting	2,185	1,948
By 2022 not in a shared household as married or partnered	365	497
(1) One partner is not available in household data	103	190
(2a) Couple has divorced or dissolved partnership ¹	53	33
(2b) Not living together, both live alone (possible LAT)	91	149
(2c) Not living together, at least one partner lives with parent(s) (possible LAT)	33	50
(2d) Not living together, one or both partners live only with child(ren) as a parent (possible LAT)	40	***
(2e) Other, unexplained	45	72

Notes: ¹ Divorce data available from 2018 onwards. *** case numbers lower than 10 individuals or couples are not reported.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

Statistics Austria uses target record swapping to reduce the risk of individuals being identified in the register-based census data. Target record swapping is the process of switching single characteristics between individuals in the data to “muddy” the data before use. The focus lies on “risky records,” meaning individuals with unusual combinations of characteristics. Information about which characteristics are changed and the number of entries changed are not published, but sensitive characteristics are more likely to be changed (citizenship, employment status, education). Since characteristics are switched between individual entries, the overall numbers within these variables for the population stay the same, but individual combinations of characteristics are changed (Statistics Austria n.d.). This may have a greater impact on members of minority groups, who could be over-represented as risky records. When identifying SSCs, changes to the gender variable are especially relevant, since this could lead to cases of both the over-identification and under-identification of couples. To reduce the impact of target record swapping on the analysis, couples where at least one partner has a different gender entry in the AEST Pers and in the ERV register are not included within the couples created from AEST person-level data.¹¹

While identifying families where both partners are married, in a registered partnership, and/or have a child together from birth is rather straightforward, couples who are unmarried, not in a registered partnership, and have no children together, as well as those who adopted a child after birth or are fostering, are less clearly defined in the data (Rechta et al., 2014).¹² Statistics Austria identifies such couples by imputation of “plausible” couple relationships. These relationships are imputed using parent–child relationships, the age of each partner, their age when moving into the household (for SSCs, at least one partner must be 18 years at time of moving in, whereas the condition is 16 years for DSCs), co-insurance of partners, and child allowance data (Rechta et al., 2014). Members of a household who do not fall into a plausible relationship are categorised as “other household members.” This definition can be interpreted as the lower limit of SSCs in Austria, since it

¹¹ The AEST register is expected to be most affected by target record swapping, although there is no precise information about which data is changed. For same-sex marriages and registered partnerships, gender entries are expected to be accurate. The gender of birth parents is determined by combining the gender entries from the ERV register with birth data to identify same-sex parents.

¹² Comparing imputed family forms with the last full population census in Austria 2001, Rechta et al. (2014) state that 85 percent of (different-sex) partner unions without resident children and 78 percent of partner unions with the youngest resident child aged 25 or older are characterised correctly, compared to 96 percent of married couples without children. It can therefore be expected that same-sex partners and other diverse queer family forms are identified less accurately.

is expected to be less thorough in its coverage of same-sex and other queer relationships than heterosexual ones. This is supported by the data, where no same-sex cohabiting couples are identified before 2019, while the numbers from 2019 onwards are certainly an undercount (Table 3). The household data analysis focuses on SSCs in marriages and registered partnerships, because these couples could be identified most reliably.

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF COUPLES IN SAME-SEX UNMARRIED COHABITATION, BY YEAR IN AEST REGISTER

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male SSC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	462	515	711	708
Female SSC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	610	733	974	924

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

From the first quarter in 2026 onwards, data on same-sex couples is available in the Austrian microcensus. Before that, same-sex couples surveyed in the microcensus have been recoded as cohabitating non-family members due to low case numbers and anonymity concerns. Microcensus data is used for an estimate of the number and share of SSCs among married and registered partnership couples as well as cohabitation.

3.3 ADDITIONAL VARIABLES

Most variables were taken directly from the registers used in the analysis. This section describes variables that were recoded or otherwise edited. The AEST Fam register includes data on the *number of children in the household*. The total number of children as well as the number of children under 6, 15, 18, and 25 years of age are provided in the register. The variable *number of children* includes an option for “6 or more children.” Because of the very low number of same-sex parent families with a high number of children in any age group, observations in this category were interpreted as 6 children for calculations. All children living with the couple in a shared household were counted, independent of biological or legal relationships, except foster children, who are defined as “other family members” in the data. The exclusion of foster children likely contributes to an undercount of children, especially in male SSCs. As an upper estimate of the number of foster children in the home, the number of “other household members” under 15 years in same-sex parent households was used.

Education was recoded from ISCED 2011 codes to below secondary (ISCED 10, 24, 25), secondary (ISCED 34, 35, 45), and tertiary education (ISCED 55, 66, 76, 86). For *employment status*, information was recoded to being in active employment (full-time, part-time, employment of unknown extent, mandatory public or military service) or not in active employment (maternity and parental leave, temporary absence, unemployment, retirement, student).¹³ *Income* is taken from the LUE register as gross individual income, both including and excluding social welfare transfers. The income variables used in this analysis are: *Labour income* (kz0210 from AMDC), including all income from employment and self-employment; and total income (gesein1), including primary income (labour income from employment and self-employment as well as income and losses from agriculture, business operations, capital assets, and leases) as well as government transfers. Additionally, some comparisons are based on primary income (gesein2), equalling total income before government transfers. Total income can have negative values for individuals if losses from business operations or capital assets are higher than gains. Individuals without a connectable entry in the income register are assumed to have no taxable income in Austria. In these cases, yearly income without transfers (labour and primary) is set to €0, while the income including transfers is set to the

¹³ The data does not provide information on employment hours, and full- and part-time employment variables do not provide complete information, with a high share of individuals being coded as having “employment of unknown extent.” Therefore, the analysis does not differentiate by extent of employment.

yearly marginal earnings threshold, up to which no income tax is collected.¹⁴ Both median and 1 percent-trimmed means were calculated.

The *urban / rural* area of residence variable was separated into five groups: (1) Vienna, (2) main urban centres (cities with a population of at least 100,000, namely Graz, Linz, Salzburg, and Innsbruck), (3) smaller urban centres, (4) regional centres and regions surrounding urban centres, and (5) rural. *Citizenship* was recoded from country codes to the following three groups: (1) Austria, (2) EU, and (3) non-member states. In the ERV register, citizenships are included with start and end dates. For the analysis of couples in 2022, only citizenships that were valid at some point in the year were used. For individuals with more than one citizenship in 2022, Austrian citizenship was prioritised, followed by EU citizenship.

3.4 DATA LIMITATIONS

While register data has a number of advantages, it cannot provide information on a couple's subjective views on their partnership and family, or sexual identity. Additionally, the analysis relies on the legal sex as recorded in Austrian population registers. The data made available for research via the AMDC only provides male and female gender entries, while those who have a gender entry of "diverse," "inter," "open," or no gender marker are assigned a binary gender according to their odd or even birthdate to avoid disclosure due to the low case numbers (Schuster, 2025). This means that non-binary individuals in Austria cannot be identified in population registers.¹⁵

The main limitation lies in difficulties identifying same-sex cohabitation. Couples that are not married or in a registered partnership and who do not have children together are not assigned a family-ID by Statistics Austria to the same degree as different-sex cohabiting couples. Additionally, LAT couples, who are not sharing a household, will not appear in household-level data. LAT couples can only be estimated in cases where married/registered partners do not share a household, which however also includes couples in the process of divorce/dissolution. Neither adoption nor foster care are covered by AMDC register data for Austria: Rather, adopted children are identified as children in the household, while foster children are identified as "other household members" (Statistics Austria, 2015). Currently, no data on adoption and foster relationships connectable by personal identification numbers is available.

3.5 METHODS

This analysis provides results on the demographic and socio-economic profile of SSCs. The number of couples that chose to use new opportunities of registered partnership (since 2010) and marriage (since 2019) is covered for a 16-year period from 2010 to 2025. Further characteristics of same- and different-sex couples were analysed by merging data from administrative registers. Depending on data availability, the following characteristics are included for couples in registered partnership and marriage: gendered couple type, age, previous marriages, parenthood status, age group of children, urban/rural area of residence, education, and citizenship as well as active employment and income characteristics of each partner and the couple (individual labour and total income of lower and higher earning partner, income distribution between partners, income level of the couple. Data on couples in a shared household is shown for couples that live in the

¹⁴ For 2022, this income threshold was €485.85 per month, or €5830.20 per year. This approach was suggested by Laura Zilian and Nadia Steiber (University of Vienna) in March 2026.

¹⁵ Trans, non-binary, and intersex individuals might not have the correct gender entered into government registers. Changing gender markers is a lengthy process and not available for non-binary individuals. Only non-binary individuals medically identified as intersex or EU citizens with a non-binary gender marker registered in another EU country have other markers than male or female. A ban on non-binary people changing their gender entries to no gender marker has been overturned in Austria, but no new law has been implemented. Additionally, changes to the recorded gender over time cannot be identified with certainty as being voluntary changes by trans individuals, as such changes cannot be separated from data processing errors (Möllborn & Kolk, 2024) and target record swapping by Statistics Austria (Statistics Austria, n.d.).

same household and are married or in a registered partnership in the most recent year of household data, 2022. This is an exploratory analysis that uses descriptive methods (means, quantiles, cross tabulations) and graphs to gain first insights into SSCs in Austria. Results were examined and compared to DSCs. The data also enables some longitudinal analyses from 2010 onward (or the first available year when data for 2010 is not available) up to the most recent data year (2022/2023).

4 RESULTS

4.1 NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGES AND REGISTERED PARTNERSHIPS

By the end of 2025, a total of 10,377 formal unions has been entered into by SSCs in Austria, of which 5,425 were marriages and 4,952 were registered partnerships. These numbers include marriages and registered partnerships entered into in Austria by residents as well as tourists and a small number of conversions from registered partnership to marriages following the introduction of same-sex marriage in 2019 onwards. There is a gendered difference in the number of male and female SSCs choosing marriage and registered partnership: Registered partnerships have been entered by higher numbers of male than female SSCs, while more than half of SSCs choosing marriage have been female.

Since the introduction of registered partnership in 2010, more male than female couples chose to formalise their relationships (2,825 male and 2,127 female SSCs until 2025, Figure 1), which aligns with existing research from the Nordic countries (Andersson et al., 2006; Andersson & Noack, 2011; Noack et al., 2005). In 2010, close to two out of three registered partnerships were entered into by male couples (64 percent), which slowly evened out to 50 percent in 2017. By the year 2018, more male than female couples had entered a registered partnership overall (2,340 versus 1,847). In 2019, registered partnerships were opened to DSCs, and marriage was opened to SSCs. Since then, more SSCs married than entered into registered partnerships, and the number of new registered partnerships among SSCs dropped to under 150 couples each year. Until 2025, a higher proportion of yearly registered partnerships were of male SSCs. In SSC marriages, however, the majority of couples were female for each year (53 to 58 percent). There was a notably lower number of marriages at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and in 2021, when there were temporarily less options to celebrate formal union formations. During the 7-year observation period for marriages, in total 2,935 female and 2,490 male couples entered a marriage.

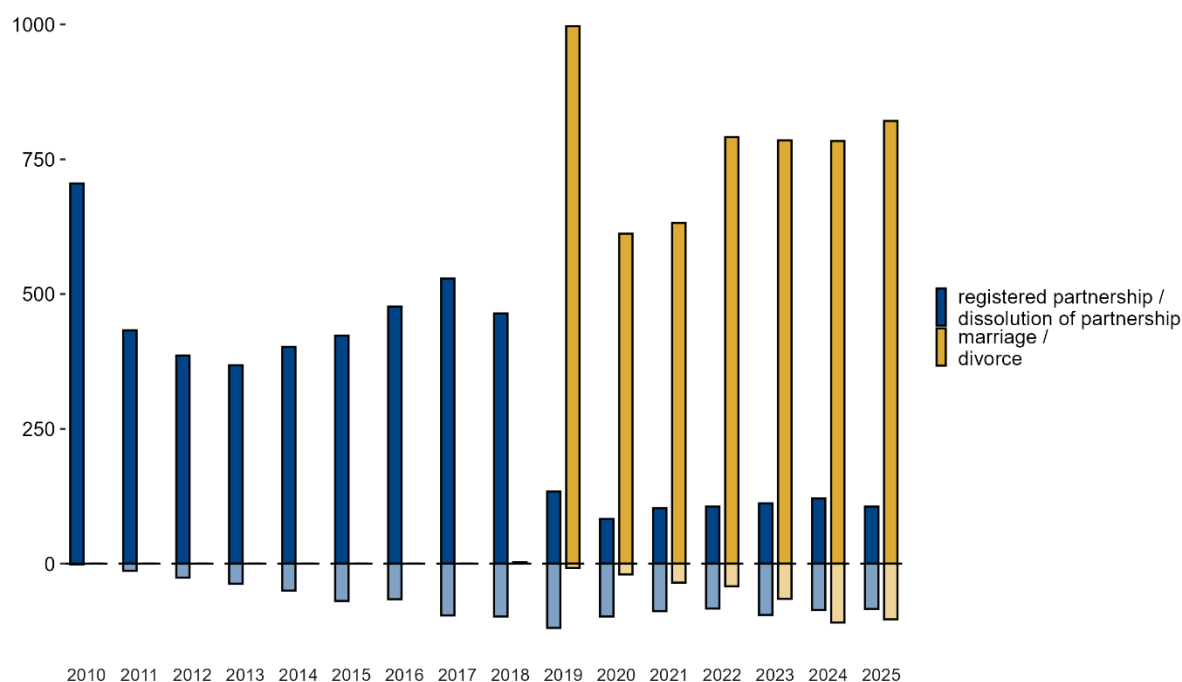
Registered partnership dissolution numbers were very low in the first two to three years after its introduction.¹⁶ Between 2010 and 2025, 28 percent of female and 18 percent of male registered partnerships were dissolved. Nevertheless, the absolute numbers of dissolutions were low, peaking in 2019 for female SSCs (n=73) and in 2023 for male SSCs (n=50). Since divorce has only been available for SSCs since 2019, there are currently few datapoints for analysis. The first visible trends seem to match observations from Nordic countries, where female couples divorce more often than male couples (f: 71 percent of same-sex divorces, n=272), while female couples were only a slight majority of SSC marriages (54 percent of same-sex marriages).

Couples who entered registered partnerships before 2019 were able to directly convert their union into a marriage. A majority of these conversions happened in 2019, when close to one in five same-sex marriages was a conversion from a registered partnership. Figure 2 shows the yearly shares of marriages of female and male same-sex couples that were conversions to marriage from registered partnerships. Although more male than female couples had previously entered a registered partnership, more female than male couples used this conversion option in the first seven years (f: 208, m: 187). With under 6 percent of registered partnerships of female couples and under 4 percent in male couples converted in 2019, the numbers in Austria are far lower than in the Nordic countries.

¹⁶ Dissolution numbers in the first 3 years of registered partnership for female couples: 0 dissolutions (2010), 9 (2011), 18 (2012); in male couples: 1 (2010), 4 (2011), 8 (2012).

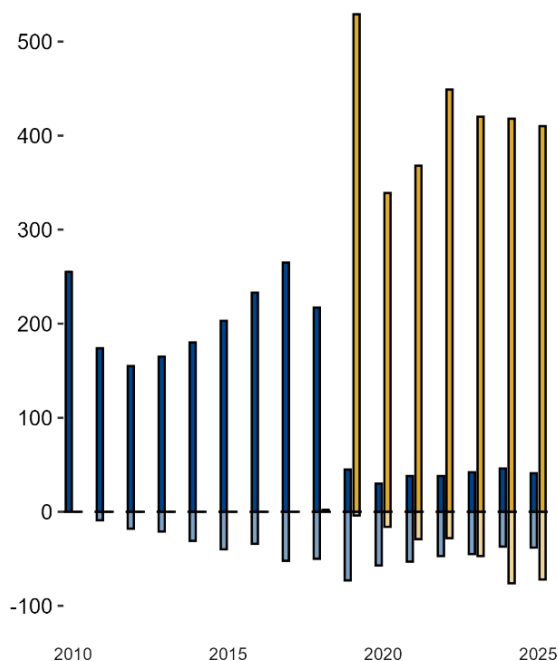
FIGURE 1: MARRIAGES AND REGISTERED PARTNERSHIPS, DIVORCES, AND DISSOLUTIONS OF FEMALE AND MALE SAME-SEX COUPLES, 2010–2025

(a) Total

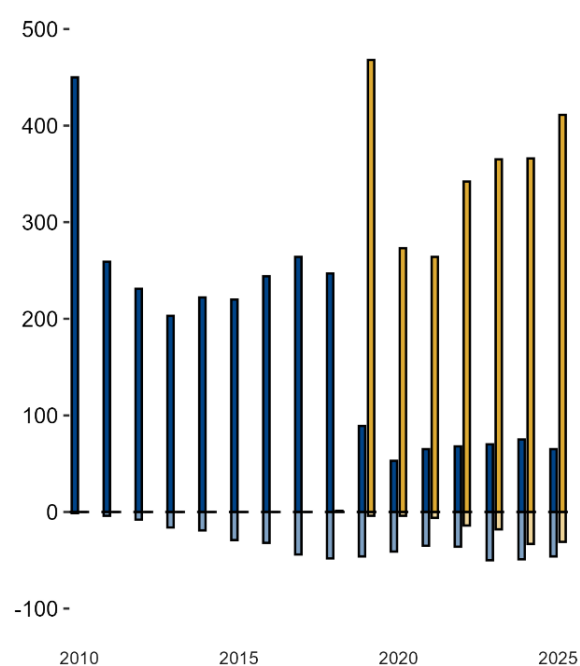


(b) By gender

female SSCs



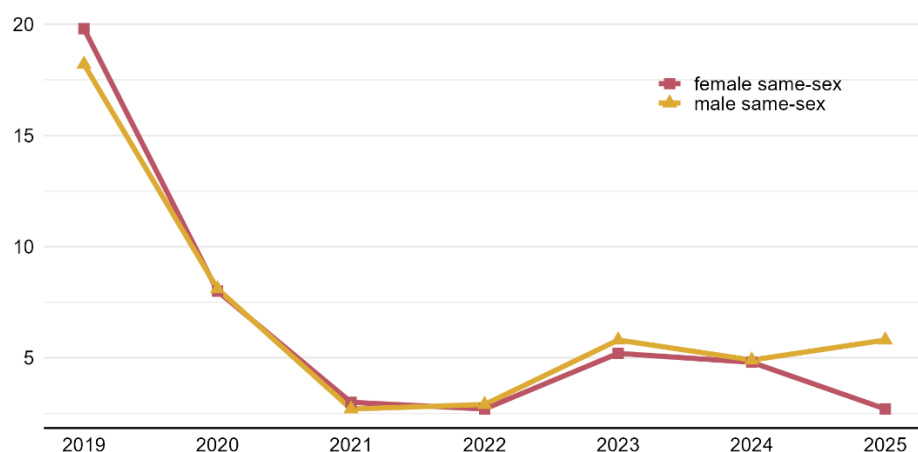
male SSCs



Note: New unions are shown as positive values, dissolution and divorce as negative values.

Source: STATcube, Statistics Austria.

FIGURE 2: REGISTERED PARTNERSHIPS CONVERTED TO MARRIAGES AS A SHARE OF YEARLY SAME-SEX MARRIAGES 2019–2025



Source: STATcube, Statistics Austria.

Table 4 shows characteristics of female and male SSCs and DSCs at time of formal union formation (marriage or entering a registered partnership) for three time periods. From 2015 to 2018 (the last four years of only registered partnership being available to SSCs), only registered partnership was available to SSCs and only marriage to DSCs. For the years 2019 (the first year of same-sex marriage in Austria) and 2023 (the most recent year available for analysis), characteristics at marriage are shown for all three couple types. Same-sex couples that married in 2019 can be considered “pioneers” of same-sex marriage. These couples were on average slightly older than those that entered registered unions between 2015 and 2018 or marriages in 2023, which can be explained by the fact that many of these couples had waited years or decades to legally marry each other. These pioneers also have the highest share of couples being parents at marriage, with 6 percent of female couples having one child, and 2.5 percent having two or more children (male parenthood at marriage cannot be meaningfully interpreted due to low case numbers). In pioneer couples married in 2019, a higher share of both male and female SSCs included two partners with Austrian citizenship than for 2015 to 2018 and 2023. While the majority of SSCs live in Vienna or other main urban centres when entering a registered partnership or marriage, in 2019 a comparably high share of one-fifth of female same-sex marriages were from regional centres, showing female couples in more rural areas choosing to formalise their unions.

TABLE 4 CHARACTERISTICS AT FORMAL UNION FORMATION (MARRIAGE OR ENTERING A REGISTERED PARTNERSHIP)

	Registered partnership or marriage			Marriage			Marriage		
	2015–2018			2019			2023		
	Female SSCs, registered partnership	Male SSCs, registered partnership	DSCs marriage	Female SSCs	Male SSCs	DSCs	Female SSCs	Male SSCs	DSCs
Number of registered partnerships or marriages n	919	973	180,683	528	468	45,013	420	365	45,057
At least one partner previously married %	26.3	17.9	30.9	19.7	16.0	30.8	21.2	14.0	28.8
Age									
Mean age at first marriage / registered partnership mean	34.8	38.5	32.5	36.1	39.2	33.0	35.4	38.7	33.9
Age of partners mean	36.4	39.7	35.9	38.1	42.0	36.6	37.13	40.4	37.4
Age of younger partner mean	33.8	35.5	f: 33.3	35.6	38.5	f: 34.0	34.89	37.2	f: 34.9
			m: 34.1			m: 34.7			m: 35.6
Age of older partner mean	39.0	43.8	f: 36.8	40.6	45.5	f: 37.4	39.4	43.7	f: 38.0
			m: 38.2			m: 38.8			m: 39.4
Age difference mean	5.7	8.8	5.2	5.6	7.5	5.1	5.0	7.0	4.8
Children									
Couples with no children %	99.6	100	71.5	91.5	99.4	71.2	96.4	99.7	70.0
Couples with 1 child %	***	0.0	17.7	6.1	***	17.6	3.1	***	17.7
Couples with 2+ children %	***	0.0	10.8	2.5	***	11.2	***	0.0	12.3
Urban/rural									
Partners living in the same municipality n	919	973	180,683	528	468	45,013	420	528	45,057
Vienna %	33.7	45.3	17.0	25.5	38.1	18.4	32.9	35.8	17.4

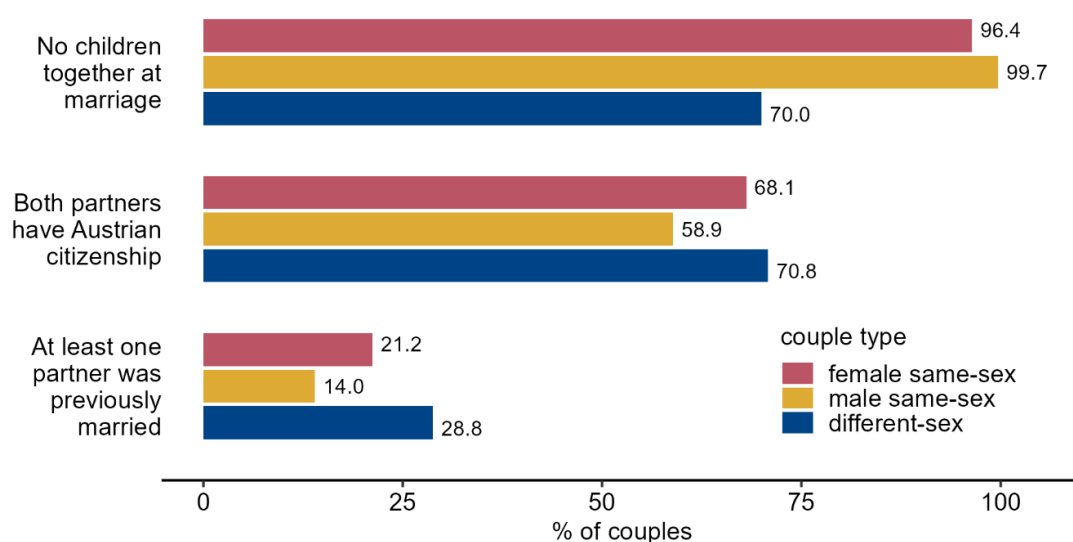
Main urban centres	%	25.4	23.1	19.0	25.7	23.5	19.3	27.5	25.0	19.8
Smaller urban centres	%	10.8	6.9	12.7	10.9	8.6	12.9	11.2	9.6	12.9
Regional centres	%	14.9	11.6	23.1	20.7	16.8	22.3	12.9	12.5	21.8
Rural	%	15.2	13.1	28.2	17.3	13.0	27.2	15.6	17.1	28.0
Partners not living in the same municipality	n	301	346	35,066	88	98	7,068	125	125	13,092
Citizenship										
Both AUT citizenship	%	66.1	48.6	70.1	79.9	69.2	69.5	68.1	58.9	70.8
One AUT, one other	%	27.0	39.6	22.3	17.6	26.7	22.8	23.6	33.4	22.3
Both non-AUT citizenship	%	7.0	11.8	7.5	2.5	4.1	7.7	8.3	7.7	7.0

Note: *** Case numbers below 10 individuals or couples are not specified for data protection reasons.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

Figure 3 provides a visual comparison of couples married in 2023, the most recent year available for this analysis; namely, whether they had children together at time of marriage, the share of couples where both partners had Austrian citizenship, or at least one partner was married previously. Among couples that married in 2023, SSCs were less likely than DSCs to already have children together at union formation. This is the case both for male SSCs, of which 99.7 percent entered marriage without children, and for female SSCs at just over 96 percent, which is lower, but still far from the 70.0 percent among DSCs. This reflects the more difficult paths towards parenthood in SSCs. Male same-sex partners marrying in 2023 were more likely to include at least one partner of non-Austrian citizenship than other couple types. Similarly, the share of couples in which at least one partner had been previously married was lower for SSCs, especially for male SSCs (14.0 percent), whereas remarriages were more common amongst DSCs (28.8 percent).

FIGURE 3: CHARACTERISTICS AT MARRIAGE IN 2023, BY COUPLE TYPE



Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

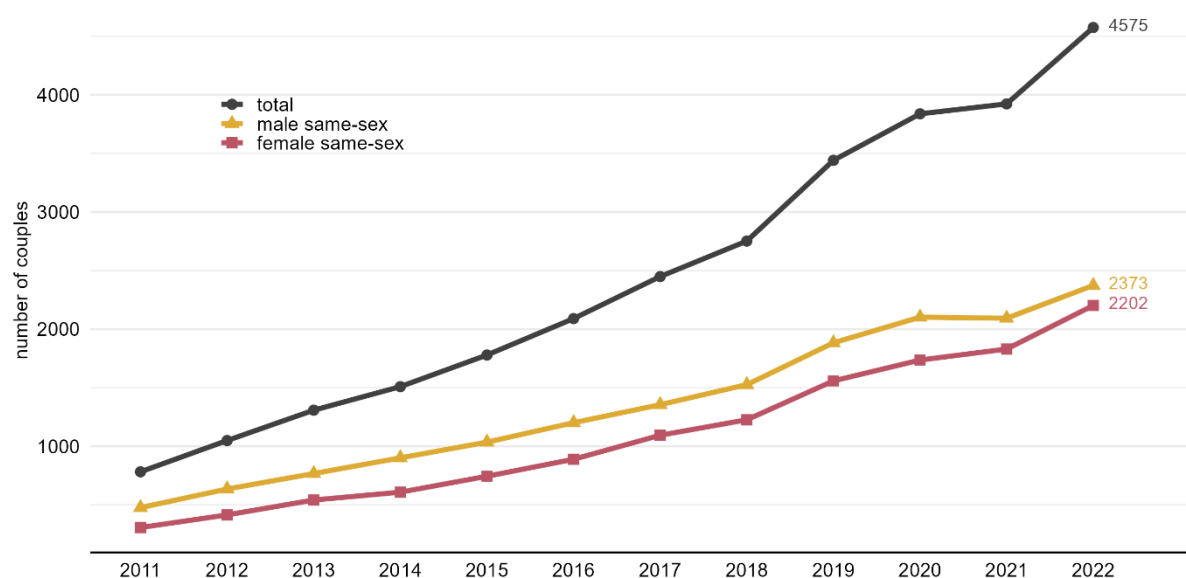
4.2 SAME-SEX COUPLES IN SHARED HOUSEHOLDS IN MARRIAGES AND REGISTERED PARTNERSHIPS

The following section presents results based on household level register data 2011 to 2022 as well as more in-depth characteristics of couples for the most recent datapoint for administrative household data in this project, the year 2022. These results are supplemented with data from the Austrian microcensus from Q1 2026 on married and unmarried cohabitation.

Household-level register data for Austria are available from 2011 onwards. Looking at same-sex partners in shared households who were married or in registered partnerships between 2011 to 2022 (Figure 4) reveals a steady increase in the number of couples over time. These couples shown do not include married couples living in separate households or unmarried cohabiting couples, because Statistics Austria's identification of same-sex cohabitation is assumed to be an undercount. As mentioned earlier, before 2019, Statistics Austria did not identify same-sex cohabiting couples (Table 3). Additionally, the couples depicted in this section exclude any couples where one or both partners had a different gender entry in the household data than in the employment data. Such differences might show mislabelled DSCs and were therefore excluded. Excluding LAT couples, same-sex cohabitation, and couples with mismatched gender entries means

that these results only represent a subset of all SSCs 2022 and likely undercount married couples and couples in registered partnerships. According to household data, a total of 4,575 SSCs in marriage or registered partnership shared a household in 2022. This number is higher than any year prior, and shows a steady increase in the number of couples from 2011 onwards, with numbers rising faster from the time of the introduction of same-sex marriage in 2019 to 2022 than in previous years. There were more male than female SSCs across all years—a gap that generally remained steady but, was smallest in 2011 and 2022. By 2022, 2,373 male and 2,202 female SSCs lived together as married or registered partners.

FIGURE 4: CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF (FEMALE AND MALE) SAME-SEX COUPLES



Note: Couples in marriage or registered partnership in shared household.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

Since household-level register data does not include reliable numbers for unmarried cohabitation, a share of SSCs is not covered in Figure 4. To estimate how big of a share is not covered when excluding unmarried cohabitation, additional data sources are needed. Austrian microcensus data from Q1 2026 (Table 5) provides first insights into the shares of married and unmarried cohabitation, even with the limitation of low case numbers and therefore a high estimated sampling error. In Q1 2026, there were a total of 80 male and 54 female partners living in a same-sex relationship in a shared household among the 43,630 individuals and 21,470 couples living in surveyed households. Of the SSCs seen in the first quarter of 2026, 40 percent were male SSCs, and 60 percent were female SSCs. In couples with mean ages between 20 and 59 years the ratio was 37 percent male to 63 percent female SSCs. Of all couples in the surveyed households in 2026, 0.6 percent are SSCs, with a clear difference between marriage or registered partnership and cohabitation: While only 0.4 percent of all couples in surveyed households in marriage or registered partnership are same-sex, the share for cohabiting couples is higher with 1.5 percent. In the younger group of couples with mean ages of 20 to 59 years, the share of SSCs is somewhat higher at 0.9 percent. Moreover, 0.6 percent of the younger couples in marriage and registered partnership and 1.7 percent of cohabiting couples in this age group are same-sex.

TABLE 5 SAME-SEX AND DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLES IN THE AUSTRIAN MICROCENSUS, FIRST QUARTER 2026

Couple Type	All identifiable couples			Couples with mean age 20-59 years		
	Married and in registered partnership	Cohabiting	Total	Married and in registered partnership	Cohabiting	Total
Different-sex	8,557	2,111	10,668	4,970	4,970	6,789
Female same-sex	23	17	40	20	17	37
Male same-sex	11	16	27	8	14	22
Total	8,591	2,144	10,735	4,998	1,850	6,848

Source: Microcensus Q1 2026, Statistics Austria.

Coming back to register data, the characteristics of couples in marriage or registered partnership in a shared household differ between SSCs and DSCs: Partners in DSCs have higher mean ages (54.8 years) than in SSCs (f: 41.7 years, m: 45.6 years, Table A1 in appendix), a higher share of DSCs includes two partners not in active employment (31.4 percent) than among SSCs (f: 7.3 percent, m: 8.7 percent), and DSCs have lower yearly labour and total income compared to female and male SSCs (Table A2 in appendix). Therefore, DSCs are on average older and more frequently in retirement age than SSCs, leading to less direct comparability of couple types. To enhance comparability, the following characteristics were shown only for couples with a mean age of both partners between 20 to 59 years, covering the childbearing and working-age population (Table 6). The analysis cannot be generalised to all SSCs in Austria, as unmarried cohabitation and couples not living in a shared household are excluded in the descriptions.

After restricting the sample to couples with a mean *age of partners* between 20 and 59 years, same-sex partners remain younger on average than different-sex partners. When comparing female same-sex partners to women in different-sex relationships, women in SSCs also tend to be younger, as is the case when comparing male same-sex partners to men in different-sex relationships. Age differences between partners are highest among male SSCs, averaging 7.2 years (female SSCs 4.5 years, DSCs 4.0 years). One fifth of female SSC and DSC partners are of the same age, compared to 12.8 percent of male SSCs. There is a stark difference between SSCs and DSCs in the share of couples (age 20 to 59 years) with *children in the household*. For 2022, only 31 percent of DSCs in marriage or registered partnership did not share their household with at least one child under 25 years old. By contrast, not living with children is the norm among SSCs, with 69 percent of female and 97 percent of male couples not sharing the household with a child under 25 years. Male SSCs with children in the household are a small minority, with only 2.3 percent living with a child below 15 years. While living with children is more common among female SSCs, most have young children below six years: 190 female SSCs lived with one or more children aged zero to five years in 2022, equalling close to one fifth of couples (18 percent), compared to 25 percent of DSCs. Since the first children conceived through fertility clinics by female SSCs were born no earlier than late 2015, it is unsurprising that the majority of children in female SSCs are relatively young. The register data records household members who do not belong to the nuclear family as “other household members.” This includes foster children who are living with families. Therefore, the number of children under 15 years who are categorised as “other household members” will include foster children. Foster parenthood is especially relevant for SSCs as a path towards parenthood, which is illustrated by the share of SSCs living with young household members recorded as “other household member” being over four times higher for 2022 than in DSCs (1.7 percent in SSCs and 0.4 percent in DSCs).

Two characteristics that distinguish SSCs from DSCs are *residential area* and *education*. A larger share of SSCs lives in urban areas than DSCs: 42 percent of male SSCs live in the capital, Vienna, while 64 percent live in any main urban area (including Vienna) with over 100,000 inhabitants. Just over one third of male SSCs live in smaller urban centres, regional centres, or rural areas (36 percent). Among female SSCs, 32 percent live in Vienna, over half (56 percent) live in main urban areas (including Vienna), and 44 percent in more rural areas. By comparison, this distribution is reversed for DSCs, with fewer couples living in Vienna or other main urban areas (including Vienna) (38 percent) than in more rural areas (combined 62 percent). After taking parenthood into account for female SSCs and DSCs, the shares only shift few percentage points

towards more rural residences, although there is a visibly pronounced change among the (few) male SSCs with children (Figure 6). Looking at *education of partners*, tertiary education is much more widespread among same- than different-sex couples. In close to 30 percent of female and male SSCs, but in only 8 percent of DSCs, both partners have a university education or similar. Secondary education of both partners is most common among DSCs (Figure 7).

Male SSCs have the highest share of partners with a non-Austrian *citizenship*. While couples comprising two Austrian citizens account for 72 percent of female SSCs and 69 percent of DSCs, they make up only 58 percent of male SSCs. Couples where one partner has Austrian citizenship and one partner has another citizenship make up close to 22 percent of female and 31 percent of male SSCs, whereas it is just under 16 percent for DSCs. Since marriages entered into within Austria are at least partially recognised by all EU countries, which therefore allows these couples to gain some form of recognition even in EU countries where same-sex marriage is banned, EU citizens living in Austria may be more likely to get married than other citizens. This is visible in marriages between Austrian and EU citizens, who make up double the share of female and male SSCs than of DSCs, but not among couples of two EU citizens. For *employment*, 70 percent of DSCs have two partners in active employment, while the number is 74 percent among female and 78 percent among male SSCs.

TABLE 6 CHARACTERISTICS OF SAME-SEX AND DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLES (MEAN AGE 20–59)

		2022		
		Female SSC	Male SSC	DSC
n (couples)		1,031	1,061	513,108
Age				
Mean age of partners	mean	39.8	43.1	f: 43.8 m: 46.6
Age of younger partner ¹	mean	37.5	39.3	f: 42.8 m: 43.5
Age of older partner	mean	43.2	47.6	f: 47.4 m: 48.0
Age difference	mean	4.5	7.2	4.0
Share of couples with same age (in years)	%	20.5	12.8	19.1
Children in the household ²				
Families without children (all ages, also over 25 years)	%	68.9	96.3	25.9
Families without children under 25	%	69.4	96.9	31.1
Families with children aged 18–25 years	%	4.0	***	21.2
Families with children aged 15–17 years	%	4.2	***	14.9
Families with children aged 0–14 years	%	26.1	2.3	49.1
Families with children aged 6–14 years	%	11.6	1.2	34.9
Families with children aged 0–5 years	%	18.4	1.4	24.6
Families living with “other household members” aged 0–14 years	%	1.7	1.7	0.4
	n	18	18	1,925
Education				
Both tertiary	%	29.5	29.2	8.3
One tertiary	%	29.6	35.5	20.3

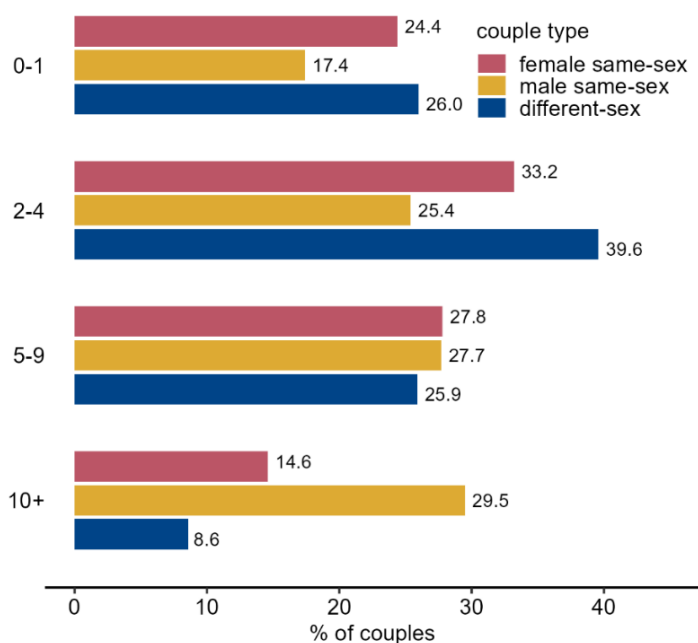
None tertiary	%	40.9	35.2	71.4
Urban/rural residential area				
Vienna	%	32.2	42.0	19.1
Urban centres	%	24.0	21.9	18.8
Smaller urban centres	%	11.1	9.1	12.8
Regional centres and areas surrounding urban centres	%	17.3	13.5	21.7
Rural	%	15.5	13.5	27.7
Citizenship ³				
Both Austria	%	71.82	58.1	68.56
One Austria, one EU	%	13.90	15.4	6.13
One Austria, one non-member state	%	7.68	15.5	9.44
Both EU	%	3.79	3.9	7.03
Other	%	2.82	7.2	8.85
Active employment				
Both	%	74.3	78.0	69.8
Only one	%	22.2	18.1	only m: 19.1 only f: 6.6
None	%	3.5	3.9	4.5

Note: Couples in marriage or registered partnership in shared household, 2022. ¹ Age of younger and older partner age are shown for DSCs with a female older/younger partner (f) and a male older/younger partner (m). ² Families may have children in different age categories; the percentage shares therefore do not add up to 100 percent. "Other household members" under 15 years include, among others, foster children. ³ Couples without citizenship information excluded (FSSC: 2, MSSC: 1, DSC: 4599 couples). *** Case numbers below 10 individuals or couples not shown.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

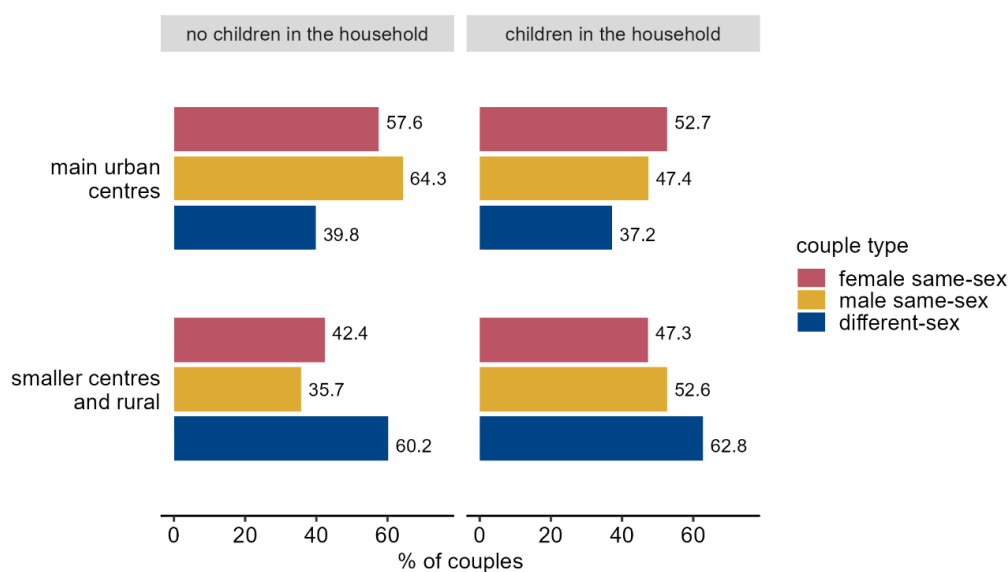
Figure 5 expands on the average age gaps between partners, as seen in Table 6, by showing age gaps of up to one year, two to four years, five to nine years, and ten years or more in couples (married or in registered partnership) independent of age in 2022. The shares of couples falling into these age group categories differ between female and male SSCs and DSCs, with close to 30 percent of male SSCs having a 10+ year age gap, while similar age gaps are only present in 15 percent of female SSCs and 9 percent of DSCs.

It is worth examining how much of the high shares of SSCs living in urban compared to rural residential areas (Table 6) is comprised of childless couples. Figure 6 shows residential area for couples with and without children. Because of the low numbers of male couples with children, the residential area variable is summarised as "main urban centres" and "smaller centres and rural" to achieve higher case numbers. No considerable differences towards rural residential area are visible for female SSCs and DSCs without children compared to couples with children in the household, but male SSCs show a change from 64 percent of couples without children living in urban areas down to 47 percent with children. However, as with any analysis of same-sex parenthood of men in Austria, the low case numbers have to be noted when interpreting results. 18 male couples live with children in urban areas, while 20 couples live in more rural areas.

FIGURE 5: AGE DIFFERENCE OF MARRIED OR PARTNERED COUPLES), BY COUPLE TYPE

Note: 2022

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

FIGURE 6: URBAN/RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREA OF COUPLES (MEAN AGE 20–59); BY PRESENCE OF CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD AND COUPLE TYPE

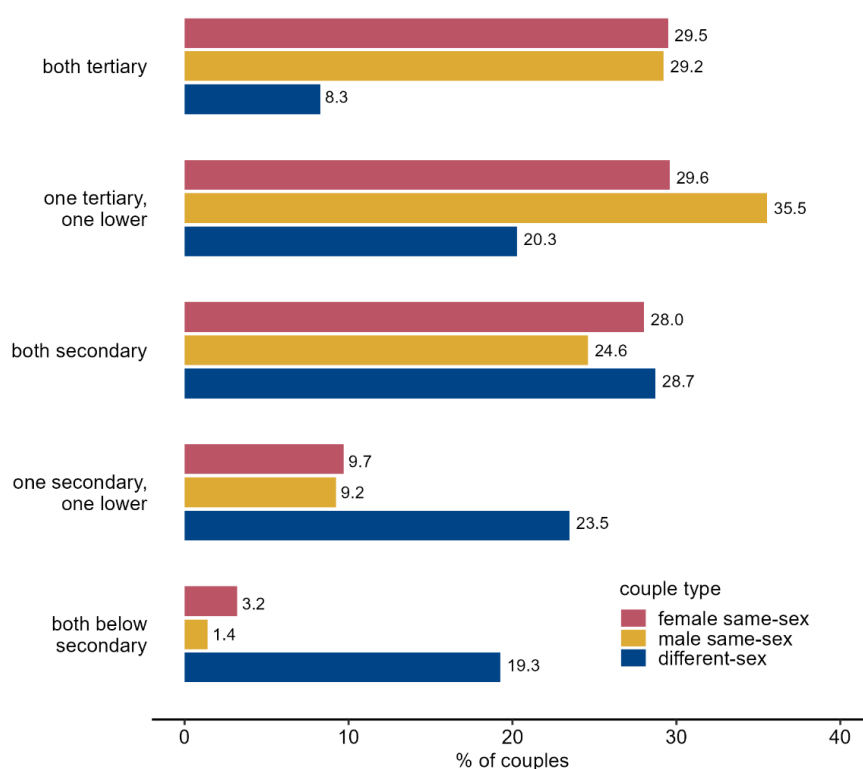
Note: Couples in marriage or registered partnership in shared household, 2022. "Main urban centres" includes Vienna and other cities with a population of 100,000 or more, "smaller centres and rural" includes smaller urban centres, regional centres, and rural areas.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

The differences between educational attainment in SSCs and DSCs seen in Table 6 are further examined in Figure 7. Not only do close to 30 percent of SSCs include two partners with tertiary education, but for female SSCs, similar shares have either one partner with tertiary education or two partners with secondary education. Only 3.2 percent of female SSCs consist of two partners without a secondary degree. Among male SSCs, the combination of one partner with tertiary education and one partner with non-tertiary education is most prevalent (35.5 percent) and only 1.4 percent of couples do not include a partner with a secondary degree. By contrast, among DSCs, the combination of two secondary degrees is most common (28.7 percent), and both the combination of one partner with a secondary degree and one partner without a secondary degree (23.5 percent) and two partners without secondary degrees (19.3 percent) are more prevalent than among SSCs.

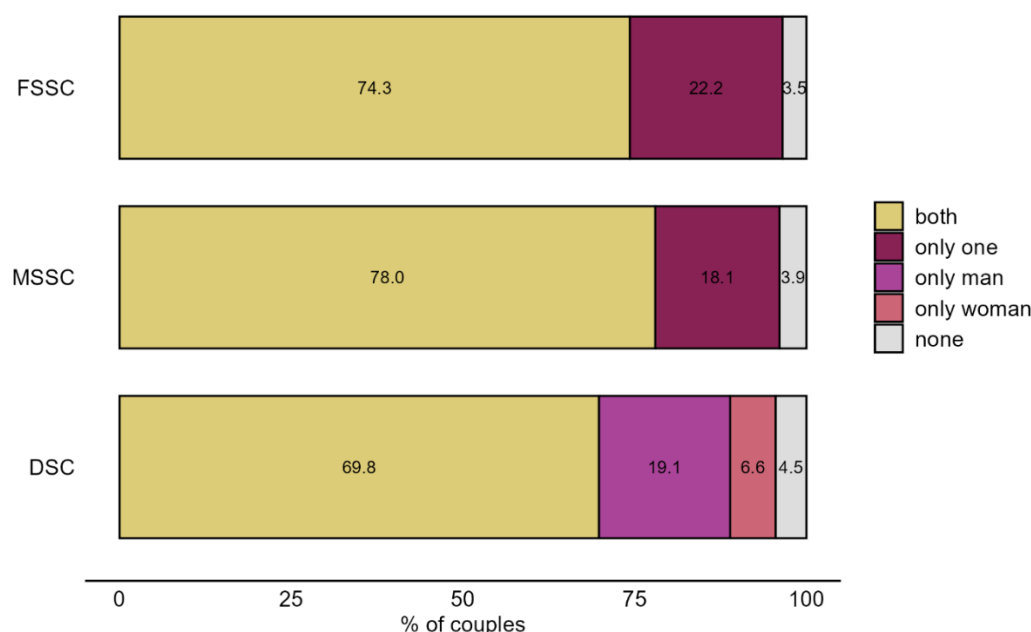
Regarding employment status, Figure 8 shows that both partners being employed is most common for all three couple types. Double employment is most prevalent among male SSC couples. This aligns with gendered expectations of employment being the focus more for men than women; however, the difference between the share of male and female SSCs with two partners in employment is comparatively small. Additionally, the share of couples with two partners in active employment is lowest among DSCs (70 percent), while, female SSCs (74 percent) come closer to the share of male SSCs (78 percent), contradicting these gendered expectations. Active employment includes any number of hours worked in employment, from full-time to marginal employment, which prevents making any assumptions about the extent of employment for each partner. Nevertheless, the result that female SSCs have higher shares of double-employment than DSCs is notable. In the quarter of DSCs that only include one employed partner, three quarters are male-only employment.

FIGURE 7: EDUCATION OF BOTH PARTNERS AMONG COUPLES (MEAN AGE 20–59), BY COUPLE TYPE



Note: Couples in marriage or registered partnership in shared household, 2022.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

FIGURE 8: ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT AMONG COUPLES (MEAN AGE 20–59), BY COUPLE TYPE

Note: Couples in married and registered partnership in shared household, 2022.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

Results on *income* (Table 7) clearly show that at the individual level, SSCs have a higher mean labour income than DSCs. Further, the total income earned by the lower-earning partner is higher in SSCs than in DSCs. This pattern changes when looking at higher-earning partners: Male SSC partners have a higher mean income than DSC partners, but it is lower for female SSC partners. Female same-sex partners show the greatest within-couple income equality, with lower-earning partners earning an average of 28 percent of the couple's income, and 40 percent of female SSCs having (close to) equal income. This share rises to 50 percent of female SSCs with (close to) equal income for couples without children (Figure 9). Among male SSCs and DSCs, there is less equality in the distribution of partners' relative income, with the lower earning partner's income averaging 22 percent (male SSCs) and 20 percent (DSCs). Different-sex couples therefore have the most unequal income distribution between partners of all three couple types in Austria. Just under one fifth of DSCs have (close to) equal incomes (19 percent), which is less than half the share among female SSCs.

Couple-level income is higher for male SSCs than both female SSCs and DSCs, both including and excluding government transfers.¹⁷ Male SSCs are also the group with the highest share of both partners earning at least €35,000 per year including government transfers (30 percent) as well as the lowest share of both partners earning under €35,000 (18 percent). Additionally, 45 percent of male SSCs have a combined yearly total income above €80,000 compared to 29 percent of female SSCs and 33 percent of DSCs.

¹⁷ Yearly primary income of couples (excluding government transfers, median): female SSCs €59,775.66, male SSCs: €74,366.65, DSCs: €59,122.00. Male same-sex couples have the lowest income increase from government transfers.

TABLE 7 INCOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SAME-SEX AND DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLES (MEAN AGE 20–59 YEARS)

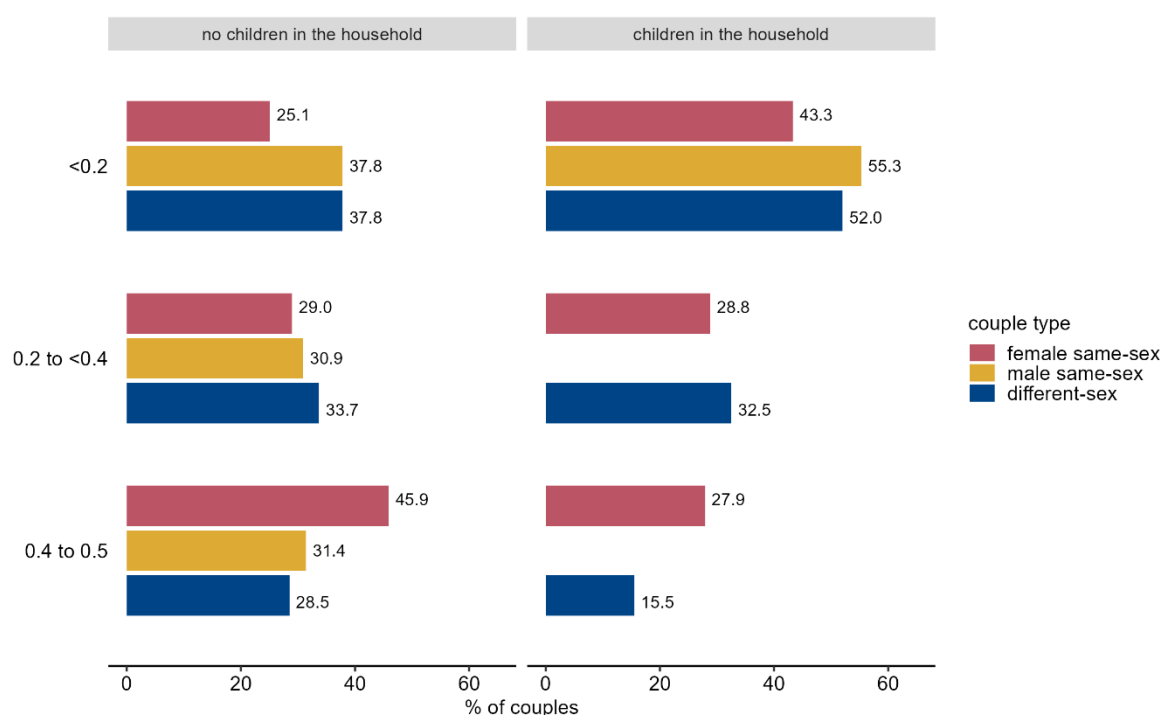
		2022		
		Female SSC	Male SSC	DSC
n (couples)		1,031	1,061	513,108
Person-level income				
Yearly labour income of partner with lower income	median, €	24,816	25,457	14,778
Yearly total income of partner with lower income	median, €	24,897	26,009	20,701
Yearly labour income of partner with higher income	median, €	45,031	54,600	47,000
Yearly total income of partner with higher total income	median, €	38,969	47,734	42,489
Relative yearly labour income of lower-earning partner	mean share (of income)	28.4	25.3	20.4
Share of relative labour income of lower-earning partner				
Less than 20 percent	% (of couples)	31.0	38.6	48.3
20 to less than 40 percent	%	29.1	30.3	32.9
40 to 50 percent	%	39.9	31.0	18.9
Couple level: total income				
Yearly couple labour income	median, €	69,702	83,387	65,119
Yearly couple total income	median, €	64,128	75,414	64,608
	1%-trimmed mean, €	68,430	88,541	73,620
Total yearly income of partners				
Both €35k or more	%	21.6	29.9	17.4
One €35k or more, one less than €35k (but above marginal earnings)	%	36.2	37.1	43.2
One €35k or more, one up to marginal earnings threshold	%	3.9	7.2	5.5
Both less than €35k	%	31.1	18.2	25.7
Other	%	7.2	7.7	8.2
Total	n	1,031	1,061	513,108
Yearly couple total income categories				
0 to less than €20,000	%	4.5	5.1	4.6
20,000 to less than €35,000	%	8.2	5.5	8.1
35,000 to less than €50,000	%	14.6	12.0	16.3
50,000 to less than €65,000	%	24.3	15.8	21.2
65,000 to less than €80,000	%	18.5	16.0	16.4
€80,000 or more	%	29.6	45.3	33.1
Total	n	1,029	1,058	511,296

Note: Couples in married and registered partnership in shared household, 2022.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

Looking closer at the within-couple income of partners in couples with and without children (Figure 9) reveals that among couples without children in the household, female SSCs show much greater income equality than different-sex and male SSCs, with 46 percent of female SSCs earning (close to) the same income. Unlike female SSCs, male SSCs and DSCs without children show more unequal labour income distributions, with 38 percent of couples having one partner that earns considerably less (under 20 percent of the shared income) in both couple types. For couples with children, the model of one partner earning considerably less is most prevalent for all couple types. This pattern is even visible for female SSCs with children, with one partner reducing employment after childbirth. Results for male SSCs should be interpreted with caution, since the number of couples with children in the household is low, and therefore not all income shares for male SSCs can be shown.

FIGURE 9: RELATIVE LABOUR INCOME OF THE LOWER-EARNING PARTNER (MEAN AGE 20–59), BY COUPLE TYPE AND PRESENCE OF CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD



Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria

It must be mentioned that the current analyses, which focus on couples with a mean age of both partners between 20 and 59 years, excludes many pensioners. Including couples of all ages reveals different income patterns (Table A2 in appendix). Both female and male SSCs in marriage and registered partnership have higher incomes than DSCs when no age restriction is applied, which could be explained by different age distributions: Same-sex couple partners are on average younger than DSCs and therefore include more partners of working age.¹⁸

To compare income by age group, Table 8 shows total incomes of all SSCs and DSCs in marriage and registered partnership (in comparison to the previously shown couples with a mean age of 20 to 59 years). An age-related pattern is visible for all

¹⁸ Mean ages by couple type (see Table A1 in appendix): female SSCs 41.7 years, male SSCs 45.6 years, DSCs 54.8 years.

three couple types: Income continues to increase by age group up until the 45–54 years age group and then decreases for the group above 54 years. Female SSCs have higher total incomes than DSCs in all age brackets (except for mean ages 35–44 years), but these differences are below 5 percent except for 55+ years, where female SSCs have a median total income more than €10,000 (or 22 percent) above DSCs. This is likely connected to higher shares of SSCs than DSCs with both partner in active employment (Table A1 in appendix). Of all three couple types, male SSCs with a mean age 25 years or older are the highest earning group.

TABLE 8 TOTAL YEARLY INCOME OF COUPLE, BY AGE GROUP AND COUPLE TYPE

Mean age in years		2022					
		Female SSC		Male SSC		DSC	
25 to 34	n, median, €	637	57,763	387	63,552	158,383	55,187
35 to 44	n, median, €	778	64,513	788	74,673	305,830	66,005
45 to 54	n, median, €	455	71,185	696	77,960	353,134	69,324
55 and over	n, median, €	300	65,505	492	75,879	837,363	53,564

Note: Couples with a mean age under 25 years are excluded because of low case numbers in comparison to other age groups. Income variables are gross income before deducting taxes. Transfers are included.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria

There are over 850 SSCs in the data that are married or in registered partnership according to the marriage register (available from 2015 onwards), but not sharing a household. Of these, 366 couples may be LAT couples. Some potential LAT couples may have dissolved a registered partnership between 2011 and 2017, when no dissolution data connectable by personal identification number was available, or they might be in the process of separating, but are not yet divorced; however, this would also include couples that do not share a household while maintaining their relationship. Since sexual minority couples are more likely than heterosexual couples to not share a household, this group of LAT couples are of special interest, but cannot be analysed using household data alone.

Table 9 contains characteristics of these (possible) LAT couples. While the group does not represent the true LAT population—it includes separated couples and excludes couples that are neither married nor in a registered partnership—it can nevertheless provide initial insights into same-sex LAT couples in Austria. Of the 164 female and 202 male same-sex couples identified as possible LAT couples between 2019 and 2022, nearly three quarters were registered at different municipality codes and therefore lived in different municipalities. Similarly to SSCs living in the same household, the majority of (possible) LAT couples lived in Vienna, main urban centres (over 100,000 inhabitants), or smaller urban centres, with 37 percent of female and 31 percent of male couples having one partner living in an urban area and the other in a rural area.

The (possible) LAT couples are older than SSCs in marriage or registered partnership sharing a household (Table A1 in appendix): The mean age of female LAT SSCs is 47 years, compared to 42 years for SSCs living together; for male SSCs, it is 50 years (LAT) compared to 46 years (same household). In 13 percent of female (possible) LAT couples, one or both partners live with a child under 15 years, which is a smaller share than for all female SSCs at 25 percent or female SSCs aged 20 to 59 years at 26 percent (the numbers are too low to be shown for male couples). The (possible) LAT couples are highly educated, with both partners in 38 percent of female and 30 percent of male SSCs having tertiary education, which is higher than for SSCs in shared households (Table 6, table A1 in appendix).

TABLE 9 CHARACTERISTICS OF (POSSIBLE) LAT SAME-SEX COUPLES, IN PERCENT

2019–2022		Female SSC	Male SSC
n (couples)		164	202
Same / different municipality code			
Same	%	28.7	27.2
Different	%	71.3	72.8
Urban / rural residential area			
Both in Vienna, main or smaller urban centres	%	53.0	57.9
Both in regional centres or rural areas	%	10.4	11.4
One in urban centre, one in rural area	%	36.6	30.7
Age			
Mean age of partners	%	46.7	50.0
Age difference		5.5	8.0
Children			
One or both live with children under 15 in the household	%	13.4	***
Both do not live with children under 15 in the household	%	86.6	98.5
Education			
Both tertiary	%	38.4	30.2
One tertiary	%	36.0	40.6
Both tertiary	%	25.6	29.2

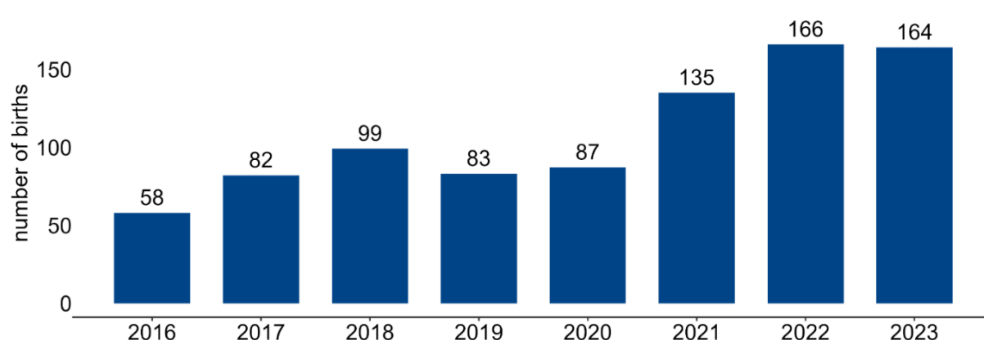
Note: *** Cases not stated due to low case numbers.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria

4.3 FEMALE SAME-SEX PARENTS AT BIRTH

As mentioned earlier, until 2015, same-sex parents in Austria could not both be registered as parents on their children's birth certificates, after which legal changes extended reproductive technologies and sperm banks to same-sex mothers. Births to female SSCs since this policy change took effect can be recorded from 2016 onwards. The following table records births and the parental characteristics for female SSCs and DSCs in the first four years after this policy change (2016–2019) and in more recent years (2020–2023). Births to same-sex fathers are too low to be reported in detail, as both fathers are only recorded on the birth certificate together when they have used international surrogacy. In the full observation period from 2015 to 2023, 14 male same-sex parent couples were recorded, with a total of 18 live births. For female SSCs, the birth data shows that 738 couples have had children together, including 601 couples with one birth and 137 couples with two or more births, and a total of 887 live births recorded.¹⁹ The yearly number of children born to female SSCs has risen over time from 13 births in the year that the policy change was implemented (2015) to 58 births in 2016, at which point couples would have had time to adapt to the policy change. In the seven-year observation period from 2016 to the most recent year available in this analysis, 2023, there has been a close to three-fold increase in the number of births to female SSCs (Figure 10). This number is nevertheless most likely an undercount, as the data excludes any couple using a private sperm donation before 2024 or living with children from previous relationships. Even in cases where the child is later formally adopted by the second parent, the birth register only records the birth parent.

FIGURE 10: NUMBER OF LIVE BIRTHS TO FEMALE SAME-SEX COUPLES ACCORDING TO BIRTH REGISTER



Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

When comparing parents in SSCs and DSCs with births between 2016 to 2023, birth mothers in SSCs were about three years older at time of birth than DSC mothers (Table 10). The difference is lower for second parents: Second mothers of children born in SSCs were on average close to 35 years old at the time of birth, whereas fathers of children born in DSCs were close to 34 years. The mean age differences for partners at time of birth were also similar, at around four years. Parental age was fairly stable over the two time periods covered, 2016 to 2019 and 2020 to 2023. Same-sex mothers must often decide who will give birth (first). Of the births recorded between 2016 and 2019, the younger mother was the birth mother in over 50 percent of cases, while under 40 percent had the older mother as the birth mother, and 10 percent of births were to mothers of the same age. This shifted slightly for 2020 to 2023, where the share of younger birth mothers was lower (47 percent) and the share of older birth mothers rose to 42 percent. Age differences between parents in female SSCs were higher in couples where the younger mother gave birth (mean age differences of about 5.5 years) than where the older mother gave birth (about 3.5 years) for both time periods.

¹⁹ As a comparison: In the 2015–2019 time period, there were 735,992 live births to 526,386 different-sex couples.

TABLE 10 CHARACTERISTICS OF SAME-SEX MOTHERS AND DIFFERENT-SEX PARENTS AT THE TIME OF BIRTH

		2016–2019		2020–2023	
		Female SSCs	DSCs	Female SSCs	DSCs
Number of births	n	322	334,561	552	323,049
Number of couples giving birth	n	277	288,791	497	280,853
Mean age at birth and mean age difference					
Age at birth (birth mother)	mean	33.44	mother: 30.52	33.65	mother: 30.95
Age at birth (second mother)	mean	34.94	father: 33.56	34.64	father: 33.80
Age difference	mean	4.14	4.06	4.04	3.87
Who gives birth					
Younger mother is birth mother	% (of births)	51.6	-	46.9	-
Mean age difference when younger mother gives birth	mean	5.5	-	5.4	-
Older mother is birth mother	% (of births)	38.5	-	41.8	-
Mean age difference when older mother gives birth	mean	3.4	-	3.6	-
Both mothers of same age	% (of births)	9.9	-	11.2	-

Note: Statistics shown only include live births. Male same-sex parents are not included in this table due to low case numbers.

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria

DISCUSSION

This analysis uses Austrian register data to provide a descriptive overview of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of SSCs as well as their prevalence in formal unions and female same-sex parents. The key results are as follows.

First, comparing registered partnerships from the 2015–2018 period to the “pioneer” marriages from the first year of same-sex marriage in Austria in 2019 and more recent marriages in 2023 shows that the pioneer couples’ characteristics differ from those that formalised their union before or after: Partners in same-sex marriages in 2019 are on average older, have the highest share of both partners with Austrian citizenship, and the highest number of (female) couples that are parents together at time of marriage. Based on these characteristics, the pioneers of same-sex marriage in Austria fit in with early results from Norway, where pioneer couples were likewise older and included a lower share of cross-national partnerships (Noack et al., 2005). Comparing married SSCs and DSCs in 2019 and 2023, the results for Austria reflect previously reported differences from Nordic countries, with more male than female SSCs or DSCs including a partner with non-Austrian citizenship (Andersson et al., 2006; Wiik et al., 2014) as well as (for men) higher age gaps at marriage (Zahl-Olsen & Thuen, 2023).

Second, the descriptive analysis of SSCs highlights some similarities with the majority of DSCs: Female SSCs show very similar shares of couples with and without Austrian citizenship to DSCs and have similar age gaps both when entering registered partnerships and marriage. Married male SSCs sharing a household in 2022 show similar income distributions between partners as DSCs. While these characteristics are similar for SSCs and DSCs, there are some distinct differences: Same-sex couples have more highly educated partners than DSCs and are more likely to live in urban areas. These two characteristics are connected: Most universities and other places of tertiary education are located in urban centres, as are many jobs that require a university education. The results for education reflect prior research from Nordic countries that showed higher rates of tertiary education among SSCs—especially in female couples—than among DSCs (Andersson & Noack, 2011; Wiik et al., 2014). This analysis cannot explain if same-sex partners often live in cities because lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals move to cities to experience higher freedom of sexual expression and subsequently study there, or if those that move to the city and gain a higher education are more likely to live their sexual orientation openly and/or find a same-sex partner.

Third, SSCs have far fewer children than DSCs, but the gap in the share of couples living with children in the household seems to be closing for female SSCs, where children younger than six years are far more common than older children. With the introduction of formal parenthood for female couples in 2015 at fertility clinics, the number of children with two mothers at birth has increased and can be expected to further increase following a policy change in 2024 that reduced barriers to (female) same-sex parenthood. This increase in female parenthood is in line with results from the Nordic countries (Kolk & Andersson, 2020; Ponkilainen, Einiö, Kolk, et al., 2026). Over time, the children born after these policy changes will age and more female SSCs can be expected to live with children of all age groups in the future. The initial results about parental age at birth for same-sex birth and second mothers demonstrate some similarities with different-sex parents, but also differences. Despite these findings, same-sex parenthood in Austria nevertheless remains an understudied topic.

Fourth, DSCs have a lower couple income than male SSCs (among couples in marriage or registered partnerships). This fits in with expectations of higher average incomes among men than women (the Austrian gender pay gap for was 18.7 percent (Statistics Austria, 2026)). The similar-to-slightly-higher income level among female SSCs compared to DSCs, however, contradicts expectations and can possibly be explained by the higher mean educational attainment of SSCs and less adherence to conventional gender roles among female SSCs, as seen in the higher number of female SSCs than DSCs with two partners in active employment. This can also be seen in partners in female SSCs having more equal incomes than in different-sex and male SSCs. This more egalitarian income distribution within all female SSCs is visible, but the share of couples with (close to) equal incomes is highest among female SSCs without children. For couples with children, the

majority of all three couple types includes one partner earning considerably less, even for female SSCs with children, possibly because female SSCs also utilise specialisation (cf. Becker, 1991)

Overall, these findings suggest that while the characteristics of SSCs and DSCs in Austria show some differences, such as SSCs having higher levels of educational attainment and being more likely to live in urban areas than DSCs, there are also commonalities. Rather than similarities mostly occurring between DSCs and all SSCs, these similarities tend to occur between DSCs and either female or male SSCs. The number of children under six years in female SSCs shows signs of approaching those of DSCs, a trend that can be expected to extend to children of older ages in the future. Female SSCs also have comparable levels of couple income to DSCs, but they are lower than male SSCs levels. Male SSCs, however, show similar income patterns to DSCs, while female SSCs are more egalitarian. Notably, partners in male SSCs are more heterogeneous than in female SSCs and DSCs, with larger age gaps and more partners with non-Austrian citizenship.

Many trends currently seen in same-sex relationships in the Nordic countries, such as the converging shares of female SSCs and DSCs living with children as well as marriage and divorce rates over several decades, can only be observed once same-sex marriage and parenthood policies have been in place for longer time periods. Because some Austrian policy changes have only recently occurred, such as the 2024 change that enabled female SSC parents to be recognised without using fertility clinics, certain trends cannot yet be analysed. Besides same-sex motherhood, descriptions of same-sex fatherhood are hindered by low case numbers, even in population-wide register data. Future analyses of gay fatherhood at the population level will depend on the inclusion of adoption and foster care information in connectable register data or policy changes enabling more male couples to have children, such as surrogacy. Ongoing data analysis on SSCs is highly relevant for understanding this population group, increasing knowledge, and hopefully reducing discrimination.

REFERENCES

- Andersson, G., & Noack, T. (2011). Legal advances and demographic developments of same-sex unions in Scandinavia. In M. Rupp (Ed.), *Partnerschaft und Elternschaft bei gleichgeschlechtlichen Paaren: Verbreitung, Institutionalisierung und Alltagsgestaltung [Partnership and Parenthood Among Same-Sex Couples: Prevalence, Institutionalization, and the Organization of Daily Life]*. Sonderheft 7 (1st edn, pp. 87–102). Verlag Barbara Budrich.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvdf0csb.10>
- Andersson, G., Noack, T., Seierstad, A., & Weedon-Fekjær, H. (2006). The demographics of same-sex marriages in Norway and Sweden. *Demography*, 43(1), 79–98. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.2006.0001>
- Auchmuty, R. (2004). Same-Sex Marriage Revived: Feminist Critique and Legal Strategy. *Feminism & Psychology*, 14(1), 101–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353504040307>
- Becker, G. S. (1991). *A Treatise on the Family: Enlarged Edition*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674020665>
- Beham-Rabanser, M., Berghammer, C., & Zartler, U. (2024). New normalities in partnership and parenthood in Austria? Changes in behavior, attitudes, and legal norms. *Österreichische Zeitschrift Für Soziologie*, 4(49).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11614-024-00575-1>
- Bendiek, L. (2025). *Lesben sind die besseren Väter. Regenbogenfamilien als Vorbild für gleichberechtigte Elternschaft [Lesbians make better fathers. Rainbow families as a model for equal parenthood]*. Edition Nautilus. <https://edition-nautilus.de/programm/lesben-sind-die-besseren-vaeter/>
- Biblarz, T. J., & Savci, E. (2010). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(3), 480–497. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00714.x>
- Black, D., Gates, G., Sanders, S., & Taylor, L. (2000). Demographics of the gay and lesbian population in the United States: Evidence from available systematic data sources. *Demography*, 37(2), 139–154. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2648117>
- Bos, H., & Gartrell, N. (2020). Lesbian-Mother Families Formed Through Donor Insemination. In A. E. Goldberg & K. R. Allen (Eds), *LGBTQ-Parent Families: Innovations in Research and Implications for Practice* (pp. 25–44). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35610-1_2

- Buber-Ennsner, I., Berghammer, C., Fent, T., Gisser, R., Riederer, B., Sobotka, T., & Zeman, K. (2021). Demografische Entwicklung und derzeitiger Stand der Familienformen [Demographic trends and the current state of family forms]. In *6th Austrian Family Report 2009-2019*. Bundeskanzleramt.
- City of Vienna. (n.d.). *Künstliche Befruchtung—Elternschaft für Lesben und Schwule* [Assisted Reproduction—Parenthood for Lesbians and Gays]. Retrieved <https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/queer/sexuelle-orientierung/recht/elternschaft/kuenstlich.html>
- Duggan, L. (2002). *The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism*. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822383901-007>
- Eggen, B., & Rupp, M. (2010). Gleichgeschlechtliche Paare und ihre Kinder: Hintergrundinformationen zur Entwicklung gleichgeschlechtlicher Lebensformen in Deutschland [Same-sex couples and their children: Background information on the development of same-sex lifestyles in Germany]. In *Partnerschaft und Elternschaft bei gleichgeschlechtlichen Paaren: Verbreitung, Institutionalisierung und Alltagsgestaltung*. Verlag Barbara Budrich.
- Eriksson Kirsch, M. (2025). *Promising Sameness? : Lesbian Couples in Sweden at the Transition to Motherhood*. <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-241724>
- Eurobarometer. (2023). *Discrimination in the European Union* (Special Eurobarometer No. 535). European Commission. <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2972>
- European Union. (2026). *Civil marriages in the EU: National and cross-border rules*. Your Europe. https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/family/couple/marriage/index_en.htm
- EVS. (2022). *European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS2017)*. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7500 Data file Version 5.0.0. <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13897>
- Farr, R. H., Vázquez, C. P., & Patterson, C. J. (2020). LGBTQ Adoptive Parents and Their Children. In A. E. Goldberg & K. R. Allen (Eds), *LGBTQ-Parent Families: Innovations in Research and Implications for Practice* (pp. 45–64). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35610-1_3
- Federal Ministry of Justice. (2024). *Stepchild adoption*. https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/en/themen/familie_und_partnerschaft/familie-und-kinderfuersorge/adoption/Seite.720022.html
- Festy, P. (2007). Enumerating same-sex couples in censuses and population registers. *Demographic Research*, 17, 339–368.

- Fortpflanzungsmedizinrechts-Änderungsgesetz 2015, NR: GP XXV RV 445 AB 450 S. 59. BR: 9316 AB 9318 S. 838 [Act Amending the Law on Reproductive Medicine]. (2015).
- FRA. (2020). *A long way to go for LGBTI equality*. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.
- Frost, D. M., LeBlanc, A. J., de Vries, B., Alston-Stepnitz, E., & Woodyatt, C. (2017). Couple-level Minority Stress: An Examination of Same-sex Couples' Unique Experiences. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior American Sociological Association*, 58(4). <https://doi.org/https://doi-org.uaccess.univie.ac.at/10.1177/0022146517736>
- Fuchs, R., Göllner, T., Hartmann, S., & Thomas, T. (2023). Fostering Excellent Research by the Austrian Micro Data Center (AMDC). *Journal of Economics and Statistics*, 244(4), 433–445. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jbnst-2023-0043>
- Ganz, K. (2007). Neoliberale Refamiliarisierung & queer-feministische Lebensformenpolitik [Neoliberal Refamilialization & Queer-Feminist Politics of Lifestyles]. In M. Groß & G. Winkler (Eds), *Queer Feministische Kritiken neoliberaler Verhältnisse*. Unrast.
- Garwood, E. (2016). Reproducing the Homonormative Family: Neoliberalism, Queer Theory and Same-Sex Reproductive Law. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 17(2), 5–17.
- Goldberg, A. E. (2006). The Transition to Parenthood for Lesbian Couples. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 2(1), 13–42. https://doi.org/10.1300/J461v02n01_02
- Goldberg, N. G., & Badgett, M. V. L. (2009). *Tax Implications for Same-Sex Couples* [Williams Institute.]. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Tax-Implications-SS-Couples-Apr-2009.pdf>
- Goldberg, S. K., & Conron, K. J. (2018). *How Many Same-Sex Couples in the U.S. are Raising Children?* The Williams Institute. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V7.0>
- Götl, G., & Berghammer, C. (2024). Aufteilung der unbezahlten Arbeit im Zeitgleich [Division of unpaid work over time]. *Beziehungsweise*, 5.
- Hays, J., & Minkin, R. (2025, June 12). Married Same-Sex Couples Head a Rising Number of Households. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2025/06/12/rising-number-of-u-s-households-are-headed-by-married-same-sex-couples/>
- HOSI Wien. (1992). *Stellungnahme zum Entwurf eines Strafrechtsänderungsgesetzes 1992* [Statement on the Draft for the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1992]. 20/SN-107/ME XVIII. <https://www.parlament.gv.at/gegenstand/XVIII/SNME/1933>

- Hoy, A. (2020). Accounting for Same-Sex Divorce: Relationship- Vs. Self-Focused Divorce Accounts and the Meanings of Marriage among Gays and Lesbians. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 61(5), 320–343.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2019.1619384>
- Jones, J. M. (2025, February 20). *LGBTQ+ Identification in U.S. Rises to 9.3%*. Gallup.Com.
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/656708/lgbtq-identification-rises.aspx>
- Julian, C. A., Compton, D., & Kaufman, G. (2026). Partnership patterns and living arrangements of LGBTQ+ identifying US adults: Estimates from a probability-based survey. *Demographic Research*, 54, 351–370.
<https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2026.54.11>
- Julian, C. A., Manning, W. D., & Westrick-Payne, K. K. (2024). Responses to Sexual and Gender Identity Measures in Population-Level Data by Birth Cohort: A Research Note. *Demography*, 61(1), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-11164985>
- Kaufman, G., Auðardóttir, A. M., Mazrekaj, D., Pettigrew, R. N., Stambolis-Ruhstorfer, M., Juros, T. V., & Yerkes, M. A. (2022). Are parenting leaves available for LGBTQ parents? Examining policies in Canada, Croatia, France, Iceland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In *Research Handbook on Leave Policy* (pp. 325–337). Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/book/9781800372214/book-part-9781800372214-35.xml>
- Kilbride, E. (2023). Italy's Mounting Attack on Lesbian Parents | Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch*.
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/24/italys-mounting-attack-lesbian-parents>
- Klesse, C. (2010). Beziehungsvielfalt, Nichtmonogamie und der Civil Partnership Act im Vereinigten Königreich [Relationship diversity, non-monogamy, and the Civil Partnership Act in the United Kingdom]. In M. Rupp (Ed.), *Partnerschaft und Elternschaft bei gleichgeschlechtlichen Paaren: Verbreitung, Institutionalisierung und Alltagsgestaltung* (1st edn, pp. 71–86). Verlag Barbara Budrich. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvdf0csb.9>
- Kolk, M., & Andersson, G. (2020). Two Decades of Same-Sex Marriage in Sweden: A Demographic Account of Developments in Marriage, Childbearing, and Divorce. *Demography*, 57(1), 147–169. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-019-00847-6>
- Lengerer, A., & Bohr, J. (2019). Gibt es eine Zunahme gleichgeschlechtlicher Partnerschaften in Deutschland? Theoretische Überlegungen und empirische Befunde [Is there an Increase in Same-Sex Couples in Germany? Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Findings]. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 48(2), 136–157. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zfsoz-2019-0010>

- Lesthaeghe, R. (2010). The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition. *Population and Development Review*, 36(2), 211–251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2010.00328.x>
- Manning, W. D., Brown, S. L., & Stykes, J. B. (2016). Same-Sex and Different-Sex Cohabiting Couple Relationship Stability. *Demography*, 53(4), 937–953. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-016-0490-x>
- Moberg, Y. (2016). *Does the gender composition in couples matter for the division of labor after childbirth?* (2016:8). IFAU - Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy. <https://www.ifau.se/en/Research/Publications/Working-papers/2016/does-the-gender-composition-in-couples-matter-for-the-division-of-labor-after-childbirth/>
- Möllborn, S., & Kolk, M. (2024). *Same-Sex Marriage in Sweden 1995-2021: A Research Note on Changing Patterns in Gender, Parenthood, and Socioeconomic Composition*. Stockholm Research Reports in Demography. <https://doi.org/10.17045/sthlmuni.26779633.v1>
- Noack, T., Seierstad, A., & Weedon-fekjær, H. (2005). A Demographic Analysis of Registered Partnerships (legal same-sex unions): The Case of Norway. *European Journal of Population / Revue Européenne de Démographie*, 21(1), 89–109. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-005-3626-z>
- Patterson, C. J., & Tornello, S. L. (2010). Gay fathers' pathway to parenthood: International perspectives. In *Partnerschaft und Elternschaft bei gleichgeschlechtlichen Paaren: Verbreitung, Institutionalisierung und Alltagsgestaltung: Sonderheft 7*. Verlag Barbara Budrich.
- Pew Research Center. (2026). *Same-Sex Marriage Around the World*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/fact-sheet/gay-marriage-around-the-world/>
- Pollard, M. S., & Lopez-Garcia, I. (2022). Exploring the Social Security benefit implications of same-sex marriage. In A. Hoy (Ed.), *The Social Science of Same-Sex Marriage: LGBT People and Their Relationships in the Era of Marriage Equality*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003089995>
- Ponkilainen, M., Einiö, E., Kolk, M., Fallesen, P., Torvik, F. A., Andersen, M. L., & Myrskylä, M. (2026). Changing Landscapes of Parenthood: Childbearing Among Same-Sex and Different-Sex Couples in the Nordic Countries. *Population and Development Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.70068>
- Ponkilainen, M., Einiö, E., Kühn, M., & Myrskylä, M. (2026). Same-Sex and Different-Sex Couples' Divorce Risks: The Role of Cohabitation and Childbearing. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 88(2), 457–472. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.70027>

- Rechta, H., Schwerer, E., & Waldner, C. (2014). Family Generation Process from Administrative Data Sources and the Austrian Register-Based Census 2011. *Austrian Journal of Statistics*, 43(1), 77–88. <https://doi.org/10.17713/ajs.v43i1.5>
- Reczek, C. (2020). Sexual- and Gender-Minority Families: A 2010 to 2020 Decade in Review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 300–325. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12607>
- Rydström, J. (2011). *Odd Couples: A History of Gay Marriage in Scandinavia*. Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789052603810>
- Schlagdenhauffen, R. (2018). *Queer in Europe during the Second World War*. Council of Europe.
- Schönherr, D., Leibetseder, B., Moser, W., & Hofinger, C. (2019). *Diskriminierungserfahrungen in Österreich [Experiences of discrimination in Austria.]*. Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte für Wien. <https://forschungsnetzwerk.ams.at/elibrary/publikation.html?id=ee33989d-296f-4f43-8b8b-3e2255d5a954>
- Schrupp, A. (2022). *Reproduktive Freiheit [Reproductive Freedom]*. Unrast Verlag. <https://unrast-verlag.de/produkt/reproduktive-freiheit/>
- Schuster, J. (2025). Nicht-binäre Geschlechter in der Bevölkerungsstatistik »Zählen« nur Männer und Frauen? *STATjournal*, (1).
- Siegel, M., Assenmacher, C., Meuwly, N., & Zemp, M. (2021). The Legal Vulnerability Model for Same-Sex Parent Families: A Mixed Methods Systematic Review and Theoretical Integration. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.644258>
- Siegel, M., Steyrl, D., Goldberg, A. E., Nicholson, A. A., & Zemp, M. (2025). Minority stress and structural stigma predict well-being in European LGBTQ+ parents. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 87(3), 1009–1037. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.13071>
- Statistics Austria. (n.d.). Target Record Swapping. *Bereich Registerzählung*. Retrieved https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/pages/402/record_swapping.pdf
- Statistics Austria. (2015). Family Generation by registers – approved methods and improvements for the Austrian Census 2021. *Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses Group of Experts on Population and Housing Censuses*. Conference of European Statisticians. https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.41/2015/mtg1/CES_GE.41_2015_11_Austria.pdf
- Statistics Austria. (2021). *Urban-Rural-Typologie*. Statistics Austria.

- Statistics Austria. (2026). *Income*. Gender Statistics - Income. <https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/population-and-society/gender-statistics/income>
- Statistisches Bundesamt. (2025). *Eheschließungen nach den Paarkonstellationen [Marriages by couple configuration]*. <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Eheschliessungen-Ehescheidungen-Lebenspartnerschaften/Tabellen/eheschliessungen-paarkonstellation.html>
- Tasker, F., & Lavender-Stott, E. S. (2020). LGBTQ Parenting Post-Heterosexual Relationship Dissolution. In A. E. Goldberg & K. R. Allen (Eds), *LGBTQ-Parent Families: Innovations in Research and Implications for Practice* (pp. 3–23). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35610-1_1
- Teschlade, J., Motakef, M., & Wimbauer, C. (2025). *Auf dem Weg zur Normalität?: LGBTQ+-Familien und ihr Kampf um Anerkennung [On the Path to Normality?: LGBTQ+ Families and Their Fight for Recognition]*. Campus Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.12907/978-3-593-46290-5>
- Wiik, K. A., Seierstad, A., & Noack, T. (2014). Divorce in Norwegian Same-Sex Marriages and Registered Partnerships: The Role of Children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(5), 919–929. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12132>
- Yan, T. (2021). Consequences of Asking Sensitive Questions in Surveys. *Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application*, 8(8, 2021), 109–127. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-statistics-040720-033353>
- Zahl-Olsen, R., & Thuen, F. (2023). Same-sex Marriage Over 26 Years: Marriage and Divorce Trends in Rural and Urban Norway. *Journal of Family History*, 48(2), 200–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03631990221122966>

APPENDIX

TABLE A1 INCOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SAME-SEX AND DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLES OF ALL AGES

		2022		
		Female SSC	Male SSC	DSC
n (couples)		2,202	2,373	1,662,473
Age				
Mean age of partners	mean			54.8
				f: 53.3
		41.7	45.6	m: 56.3
Age of younger partner ¹	mean			52.7
				f: 52.9
		39.3	41.8	m: 51.9
Age of older partner ¹	mean			56.9
				f: 55.2
		44.8	50.0	m: 57.7
Age difference	mean	5.0	7.7	4.1
Share of couples with same age (in years)	%	10.3	6.1	9.1
Children in the household²				
Families without children (all ages)	%	70.7	97.1	47.5
Families without children under 25 years	%	71.4	97.7	56.4
Families with children aged 18–25 years	%	3.1	0.5	35.0
Families with children aged 15–17 years	%	3.5	***	30.3
Families with children aged 0–14 years	%	24.6	1.7	15.1
Families with children aged 6–14 years	%	10.4	0.8	21.6
Families with children aged 0–5 years	%	17.3	1.1	15.1
Families living with “other household members” aged 0–14 years	%	1.8	1.3	0.3
	n	39	30	5477
Education				
Both tertiary	%	30.2	27.8	9.2
One tertiary	%	29.6	36.8	23.5
None tertiary	%	40.2	35.4	67.4
Urban/rural residential area				
Vienna	%	32.2	43.7	17.5
Urban centres	%	23.3	22.1	18.3
Smaller urban centres	%	11.4	7.2	12.9
Regional centres and areas surrounding urban	%	16.9	13.6	22.2
Rural	%	16.1	13.4	29.2
Citizenship				
Both Austria	%	70.7	58.1	76.9
One Austria, one EU	%	14.8	15.1	4.8
One Austria, one non-member state	%	7.1	15.2	6.6
Both EU	%	3.8	4.3	5.0
Other ³	%	3.6	7.4	6.6
Active employment				
Both	%	68.6	69.3	45.4
Only one	%			only m: 15.2
		24.1	22.0	only w: 8.0
None	%	7.3	8.7	31.4

Note: Couples in shared household 2022. ¹ Age of younger and older partner age are shown for DSCs with a female older/younger partner (f) and a male older/younger partner (m). ² Families may have children in different age categories; the percentage shares therefore do not add up to 100 percent. "Other household members" under 15 years include, among others, foster children. ³ Couples without citizenship information excluded (FSSC: 5, MSSC: 6, DSC: 9,285 couples).

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

TABLE A2 INCOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SAME-SEX COUPLES AND DIFFERENT-SEX COUPLES

		2022		
		Female SSC	Male SSC	DSC
n (couples)		2,202	2,373	1,662,473
Person level income¹				
Yearly labour income of partner with lower income ²	median, €	22,774	22,880	14,204
Yearly total income of partner with lower income	median, €	24,154	24,585	18,260
Yearly labour income of partner with higher income	median, €	44,493	52,464	42,251
Yearly total income of partner with higher total income	median, €	38,619	46,521	39,632
Relative yearly labour income of lower-earning partner	mean share (of income)	27.6	24.6	22.4
Share of relative labour income of lower-earning partner				
Less than 20 percent	% (of couples)	32.7	39.8	43.2
20 to less than 40 percent	%	29.4	29.2	35.9
40 to 50 percent	%	37.9	30.9	20.9
Couple level: total income				
Yearly couple labour income	median, €	67,810	78,409	58,093
Yearly couple total income	median, €	63,460	72,905	58,914
	1%-trimmed mean, €	68,290	83,916	67,997
Total income of partners				
Both €35k or more	%	20.4	28.0	14.8
One €35k or more, one less than	%	36.3	34.9	39.5
One €35k or more, one up to marginal	%	4.1	8.5	6.4
Both less than €35k	%	31.6	19.1	29.8
Other	%	7.5	9.6	9.6
Yearly couple total income categories ²				
0 to less than €20,000	%	4.4	6.2	4.2
20,000 to less than €35,000	%	8.3	6.7	11.6
35,000 to less than €50,000	%	16.5	12.2	20.7
50,000 to less than €65,000	%	23.5	15.8	21.2
65,000 to less than €80,000	%	17.9	16.3	14.5
€80,000 or more	%	29.2	42.5	27.5

Note: Couples in shared household 2022. ¹ Income variables are gross income before deducting taxes. ² Excludes couples with missing data on yearly couple total income (FSSC: 3, MSSC: 8, DSC: 4,160)

Source: AMDC, Statistics Austria.

