

Social Diversity in Non-marital Childbearing in Various Gender Contexts

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Two perspectives on non-marital childbearing

European countries have witnessed a drastic rise in non-marital childbearing during the past decades. This process is mostly driven by increases in childbearing within cohabitation.

Overall, the increase in non-marital fertility can reflect **constrained options to get married**. On the other hand, they can also result from **more freedom** to no longer rely on marriage as an institution.

Socio-economic disadvantage

Social disadvantage may be relevant in explaining the rise in non-marital childbearing:

- Single motherhood and childbearing within cohabitation is associated with lower levels of educational attainment in Europe and the United States.
- The socio-economic gradient of non-marital childbearing may be stronger in countries with low gender equality.

Women’s empowerment

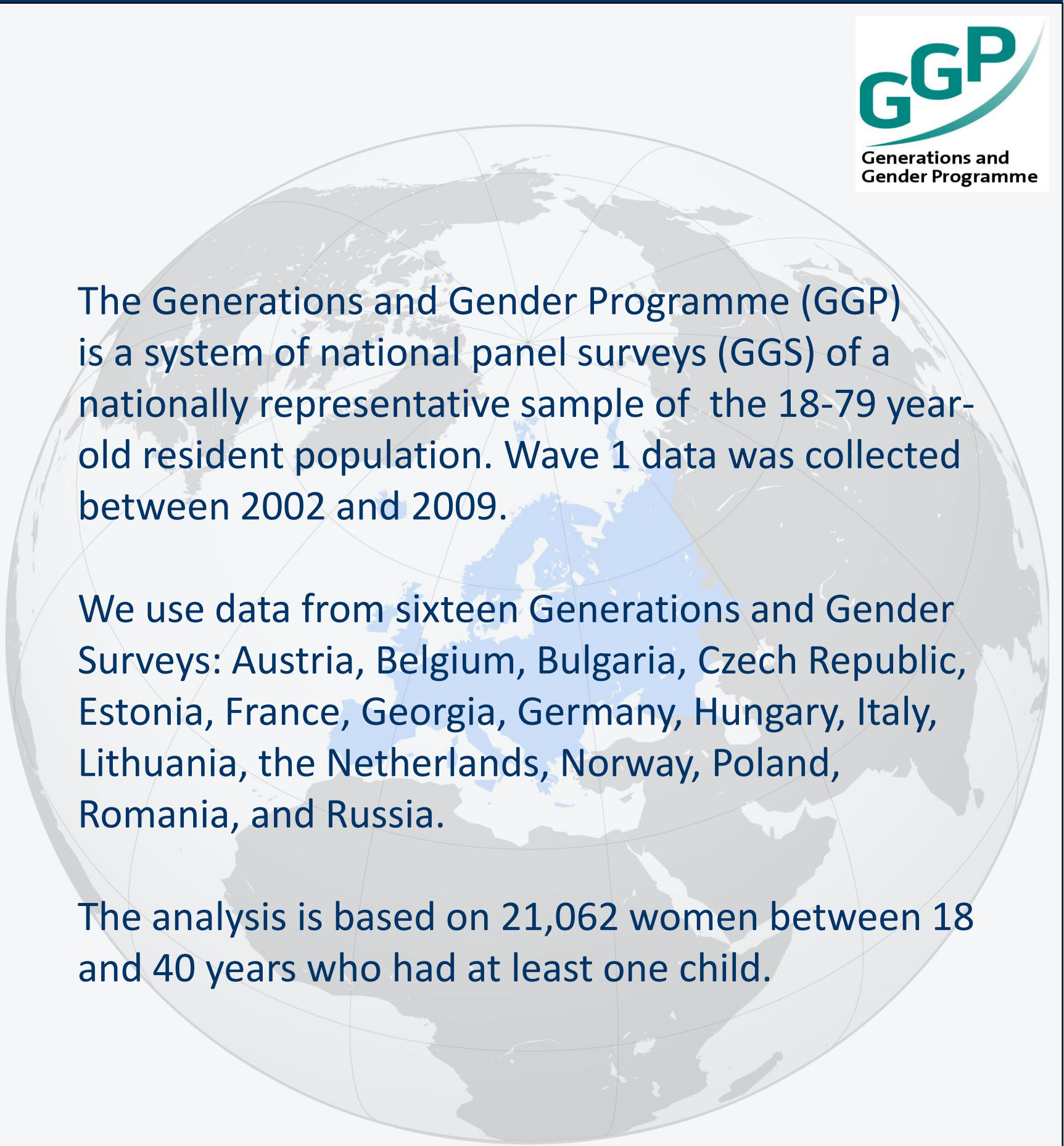
Increasing gender equality may be an important driving factor in the emergence of new family behavior:

- Childbearing within cohabitation is more prevalent in countries in which fewer people agree that men should enjoy priority in access to labor when jobs are scarce
- More children are born outside marriage in countries with higher dual-earner norms

Research goal

This study aims to improve our understanding of how variation in the national **gender context** (i.e. countries differ in the empowerment of women) might affect the likelihood of having children outside marriage in different **social groups** (i.e. educational groups differ in their resources).

Data



Model

Model: Multilevel multinomial logistic regression

Contextual variables

Women’s Autonomy - Female labor market participation rate ages 15 to 64

Gender pay gap - the difference between male and female median wages divided by the male median wages

Defamilisation - the ratio of enrollment in pre-primary education

Individual variables

Birth cohort; children from previous relationships

Results

Likelihood of having a first child outside marriage, women of different educational level by indicators of gender equality

PARITY ONE	Education					
	Low (primary, lower secondary education)		Medium (upper/post-secondary, non university)		High (tertiary, university education)	
	Cohabitation	Single	Cohabitation	Single	Cohabitation	Single
Women’s autonomy (female labor market participation rate)	1.05	1.04	1.12	1.05	1.09	1.05
Gender pay gap	1.00	1.01	1.04	1.01	1.03	1.00
Defamilisation (pre-primary education enrollment)	1.00	0.99	1.01	1.01	1.02	0.99

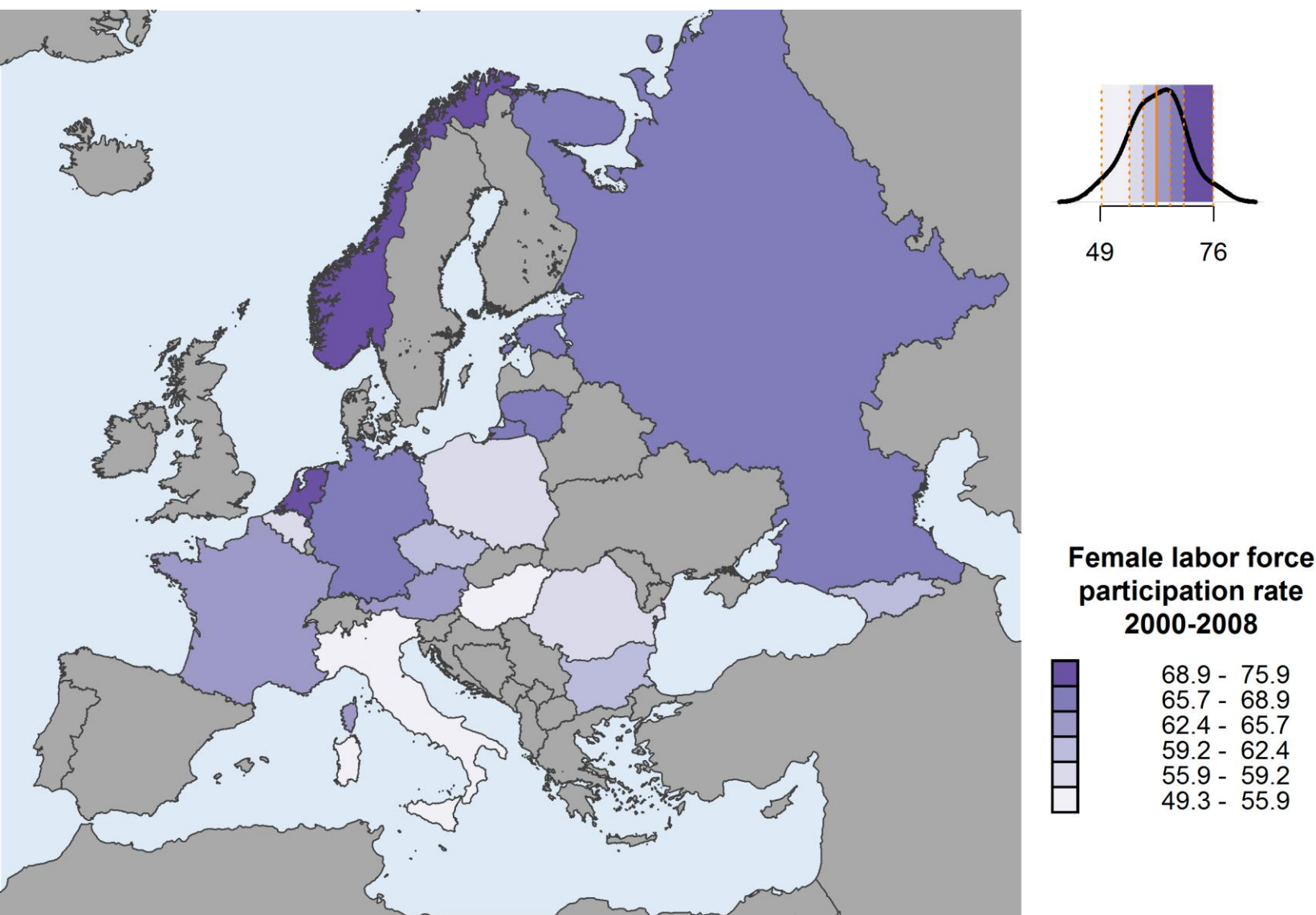
Controlled for birth cohort, children from previous relationships
Bold = significant at .05

Likelihood of having a second child outside marriage, women of different educational level by indicators of gender equality

PARITY TWO	Education					
	Low (primary, lower secondary education)		Medium (upper/post-secondary, non university)		High (tertiary, university education)	
	Cohabitation	Single	Cohabitation	Single	Cohabitation	Single
Women’s autonomy (female labor market participation rate)	1.07	1.07	1.11	1.07	1.09	1.06
Gender pay gap	1.02	1.01	1.03	1.01	1.01	1.01
Defamilisation (pre-primary education enrollment)	1.00	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.02	1.01

Controlled for birth cohort, children from previous relationships
Bold =significant at 0.05

Female labor force participation rate



Summary and findings

- Higher female labor market participation in a country increases the likelihood of having a first and second child for women across all educational groups.
- Smaller gender wage gap is only for one group significantly related with a higher risk to get a child outside marriage (first births within cohabitation for women with medium education).
- Higher enrollment of children in pre-primary education increases likelihood to have a second birth outside a partnership for women across all educational groups.
- Across educational groups, we identify more similarities than differences in the associations between gender equality at the country level and the likelihood of having a child outside marriage.**

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