

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).

