Educational differentials in cohabitants’ marriage intentions at different stages of family formation in 7 European countries

EDUCATION AND REPRODUCTION IN LOW-FERTILITY SETTINGS
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INTRODUCTION

- Rise of unmarried cohabitation and non-marital fertility
  - Western Europe:
    - Cultural change in more privileged social groups (Lesthaeghe & Surkyn 1988; 2002)
    - Recent diffusion linked to changing economic realities and uncertainty (Oppenheimer 1988; Mills & Blossfeld 2005; Perelli-Harris et al. 2010)
    - Decreasing importance of socio-economic position (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1995)
INTRODUCTION

- Rise of unmarried cohabitation and non-marital fertility
  - Central & Eastern Europe:
    - In most countries strong increase in post-communist era (Kostova 2007; Sobotka 2008; Zakharov 2008)
    - Relaxation of ideological controls and cultural orientation towards the west (Thornton & Philipov 2009; Gerber & Berman 2010)
    - Pattern Of Disadvantage: during economic transition particularly lowest social strata show alternative family behaviours (Sobotka 2008; Perelli-Harris & Gerber 2011; Potârcă et al. 2013)
• Education and intentions
  ○ Education
    ✷ SDT and POD suggest different socio-economic gradients in unmarried cohabitation and non-marital fertility
    ✷ SDT: education as a key mechanism leading to changing values and attitudes (Lesthaeghe & Surkyn 1988; 2002)
    ✷ POD: attainment strongly correlated with economic outlook (Perelli-Harris & Gerber 2011)
  ○ Intentions
    ✷ Scant research relates education to intentions of family behaviours
    ✷ Intentions may not reflect behaviours
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do marriage intentions relate to education among cohabitants at different stages of family formation?
  - SDT predicts negative educational gradients
    - Higher educated more inclined to long-term cohabitation
  - POD predicts positive educational gradients
    - Higher educated more likely to afford marriage
  - Diffusion hypothesis predicts neutral educational gradients
    - No particular difference between educational levels
DATA & METHODS

• Data
  o GGS Wave 1
  o WE: France, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway
  o CEE: Bulgaria, Georgia and Russia
  o Having a co-residential partner at interview time
  o Couple is unmarried
  o Age range: 20-34
  o Valid answers on short-term marriage and fertility intentions
  o Not pregnant or not unable to have children
  o (robustness checks for missing data)
  o (robustness checks for students)
### DATA & METHODS

- **Dependent variables**
  - Combining marriage and fertility intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Fertility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage only</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-marital fertility</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital fertility</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Independent variables

- Explanatory variables of interest:
  - Educational attainment: 3 levels
  - Education*parity: different family formation stages
  - Education*country: between-country variation

- Control variables:
  - Age (categorical)
  - Union duration (quadratic)
  - Gender
  - Parental divorce
  - Previous union experience
  - Employment status
  - Relationship satisfaction
• Methods
  ○ Binary logistic regression models
  ○ Set of models conditional on having no fertility intentions:
    ▪ Marriage intentions vs. no intentions (ref.)
  ○ Set of models conditional on having fertility intentions:
    ▪ Marital fertility intentions vs. non-marital fertility intentions (ref.)
  ○ Country groups: WE en CEE
  ○ All countries given equal representation: country weight
RESULTS: Distribution intentions

Unweighted frequencies and proportions in combined intentions for CEE and WE (cohabiting individuals, age 20-34)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CEE</th>
<th>WE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital only</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-marital fertility</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital fertility</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1061</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GGS Wave 1, calculations by authors
RESULTS: Marital only vs. no intentions

Net interaction effects (odds ratios) between education and parity in a multivariate model (cohabiting individuals without fertility intentions, age 20-34)

Central and Eastern Europe

Western Europe

Source: GGS Wave 1, calculations by authors

Multivariate models control for age group, union duration (quadratic), gender, parental divorce, relationship satisfaction, previous union experience, employment and country

Significance levels (two-tailed test): not significant ( ), p < 0.050 (*), p < 0.010 (**), p < 0.001 (***)
RESULTS: Marital only vs. no intentions

Net interaction effects (odds ratios) between education and country in a multivariate model (cohabiting individuals without fertility intentions, age 20-34)

Central and Eastern Europe

Source: GGS Wave 1, calculations by authors
Multivariate models control for age group, union duration (quadratic), gender, parental divorce, relationship satisfaction, previous union experience, employment and country
Significance levels (two-tailed test): not significant ( ), p < 0.050 (*), p < 0.010 (**), p < 0.001 (***)

Western Europe
RESULTS: Marital f. vs. n-mar. f. intentions

Net interaction effects (odds ratios) between education and parity in a multivariate model (cohabiting individuals with fertility intentions, age 20-34)

Central and Eastern Europe
Western Europe

Source: GGS Wave 1, calculations by authors
Multivariate models control for age group, union duration (quadratic), gender, parental divorce, relationship satisfaction, previous union experience, employment and country
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INTRODUCTION | RESEARCH QUESTIONS | DATA & METHODS | RESULTS

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Significance levels (two-tailed test): not significant ( ), p < 0.050 (*), p < 0.010 (**), p < 0.001 (***)
RESULTS: Discussion

- **Marriage intentions before family formation**
  - Western Europe and Central & Eastern Europe:
    - Support for diffusion hypothesis: neutral educational gradients
    - Detached from social group in both regions
    - Stronger effects for relationship quality (not shown) (Wiik et al. 2010)

- **Marriage intentions during family formation**
  - Western Europe:
    - Support for diffusion hypothesis: neutral educational gradients
  - Central & Eastern Europe:
    - Evidence for POD hypothesis: positive educational gradients
    - Predominantly childless couples and one-child parents
    - Bulgaria and Russia (Kostova 2007; Perelli-Harris & Gerber 2011)
RESULTS: Discussion

- Marriage intentions after family formation
  - Western Europe and Central & Eastern Europe:
    - Support for diffusion hypothesis: neutral educational gradients
    - Couples with traditional family behaviours have left cohabitation
RESULTS: Discussion

- New family behaviours progressed in WE
  - Less traditional intentions
  - Weak educational gradients suggest eroded traditional norms
  - Importance of other variables such as relationship quality

- Alternative diffusion pattern in CEE
  - Despite studies suggesting cultural convergence with west
  - Context of
    - Rapid institutional and economic changes (Perelli-Harris & Gerber 2011)
    - Long-standing association between disadvantage and cohabitation (Spéder 2005; Kostova 2007)
  - Awareness of between-country heterogeneity, cfr. Georgia
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