

The impact of parental socio-economic status on the timing of first marriage: What is the role of cohabitation?

A cross-national comparison

M.D. (Anne) Brons, A.C. (Aart) Liefbroer & H.B.G. (Harry) Ganzeboom

INTRODUCTION

Earlier research:

- An association found between parental SES and timing of marriage
- Cross-national variation in this association

However, due to **popularity of cohabitation**...

- Meaning of marriage changed
- Marriage formation process more complex

Cohabitation not taken into account in majority of studies

Institutionalization & prevalence of cohabitation **varies across countries**

OBJECTIVES

- **Still an effect of parental education on the timing of first marriage, once young adults start to cohabit?**
- **Does the association between parental education and timing of first marriage vary across countries, after taking into account whether young adults cohabited?**
- If so, how can this cross-national variation be explained? (*not yet analysed*)

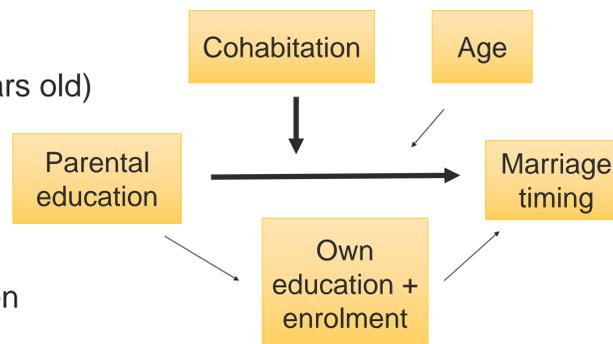
DATA & METHODS

Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) & Harmonized Histories
→ 19 countries

- Outcome: **First marriage during young adulthood** (15-40 years old)
- Independent: **Parental education (ISLED)**
- Moderator: **Cohabitation** (time-varying)
Controlled for own educational level, school enrolment, age, interaction age*parental education & year of birth

Discrete-time logistic models separately for each country for women

- Meta-analytical approach

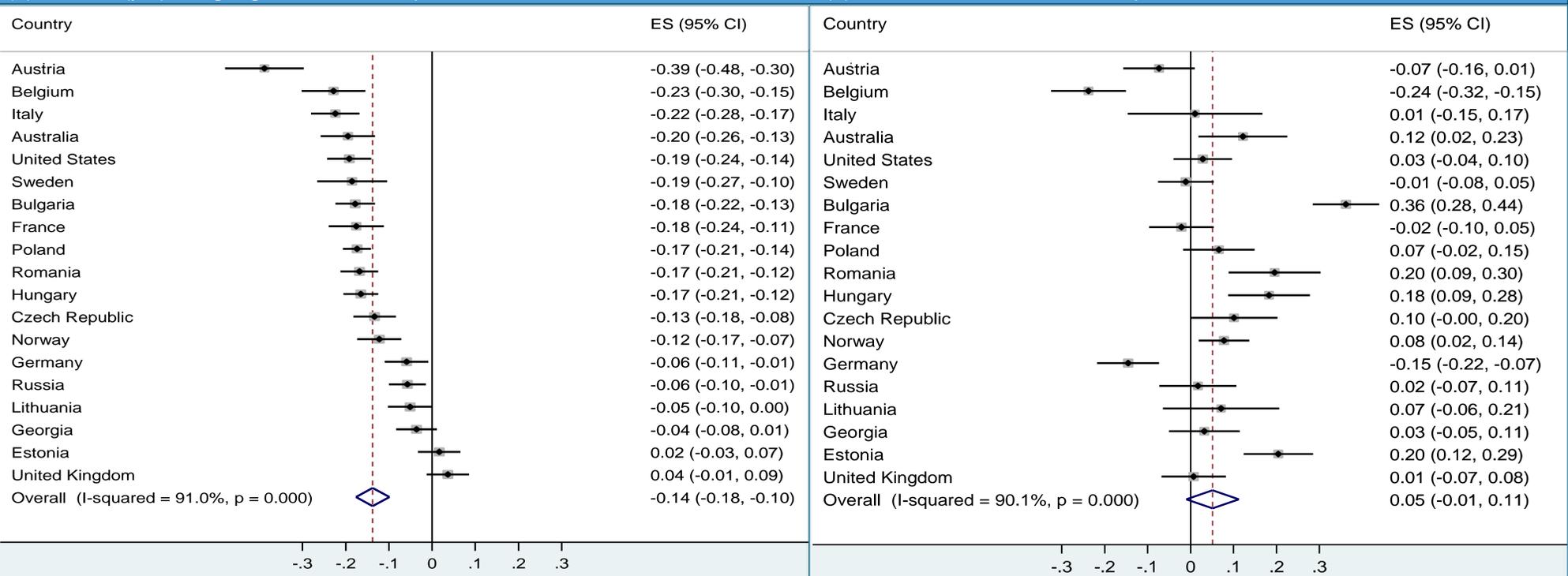


RESULTS

PARENTAL EDUCATION → MARRIAGE TIMING when young women....

(1) Are not (yet) living together with their partner

(2) Started to cohabit with their partner



- **Overall:** delaying effect of parental education on marriage timing when young women do not (yet) cohabit (1)
- But once they start to cohabit, **no significant effect of parental education on marriage timing** anymore (2)
- Many countries: **significant change** in effect of parental education when young women start cohabiting (in some countries even an **accelerating effect** of parental education on marriage)
- **Substantial cross-national variation** in association between parental education & marriage timing (I-square > 50%)

CONCLUSIONS

- **Parental education matters!**
In general, the higher parental education, the later young women enter their first marriage, but once they start to cohabit, we see in a number of countries that higher parental education results in an acceleration of marriage.
- Substantial cross-national variation found, so next step: **How can this cross-national variation be explained?**

Contact information:
Anne (M.D.) Brons
brons@nidi.nl

Acknowledgement: European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007-2013) / ERC Grant Agreement n. 324178 (Project: Contexts of Opportunity. PI: Aart C. Liefbroer).
www.conopp.com

