

# The influence of parental education on the partnership context at first birth in 17 Western societies

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## Abstract

*[I still have to write the abstract]*

## Introduction

*[I tried to keep the introduction as concise as possible, to avoid repetition in the intro and the theory section. I'm curious if you think the arguments are still clear and the importance of the paper is still convincing this way.]*

Over the past decades there has been a large increase in the percentage of children born outside marriage (nonmarital births) in Western societies. Within the European Union the percentage of all births to unmarried women increased from 9% in 1980 to 40% in 2011 (Eurostat, 2006, 2015) and in the US it increased from 18 percent in 1980 to 41 percent in 2013 (Martin, Hamilton, Osterman, Curtin, & Mathews, 2015). 'Nonmarital births' is an umbrella term including births within a cohabiting union and to persons without a residential partner. Since these are two very different situations some researchers have studied these phenomena separately from each other. This research shows that the increase in nonmarital births is mostly due to an increase in births taking place in the context of cohabitation (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008; Kiernan, 2004). As a consequence, nowadays births to cohabiting parents make up the lion's share of the nonmarital births in most European countries. However, in the US, with a history of high proportions of births to single mothers, even though births to cohabiting parents have increased, births to single mothers keep taking up a large portion of nonmarital births (Heuveline, Timberlake, & Furstenberg, 2003).

In the US it is found that growing up with parents with a lower socio-economic status (SES) increases the chance of having a birth outside of marriage (Aassve, 2003; Amato et al., 2008; Wu, 1996). European research did not pay much attention to the influence of family background on nonmarital childbearing, but focuses more on the influence of own education (Mikolai, 2012; B. Perelli-Harris & Gerber, 2011; B. Perelli-Harris et al., 2010). Because of this lack of attention outside of the US for the influence of the childhood family, we know little about cross-national differences in the influence of parental SES. In fact, one could