

Childhood Disadvantage and Childbearing Trajectories: A Comparison of 15 Industrialized Countries

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Industrialized societies are characterized by changing demographic behaviour regarding family formation (Elzinga & Liefbroer, 2007; Kiernan, 2004). Most of these changes appear to be fuelled by ideational shifts and relate for example to increasing individualistic and gender equal societies (Lesthaeghe, 2010; Van de Kaa, 2001). However, a growing literature indicates that children from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds often follow different childbearing trajectories (McLanahan, 2004). Postponement of the birth of the first child is for example more common among women from advantaged backgrounds (Blossfeld, 1995, Kravdal, 1994; Liefbroer & Corijn, 1999), while women from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be a single mother at one point during their life-course (McLanahan, 2009; Musick & Mare, 2004, 2006).

Most of these findings are based on single country studies (Aassve, 2003; Amato, et al., 2008; Högnäs & Carlson, 2012; Wu, 1993, 1996). Moreover, cross-national research that has investigated the link between childhood disadvantage and fertility behaviour has almost primarily focused on a single point in time, such as the moment of the birth of the first child (Koops, Liefbroer & Gauthier, 2015). In this paper we want to take a more holistic approach by examining how childhood disadvantage affects childbearing trajectories in different industrialized societies. We will thereby not focus on one specific moment in time, but instead follow the partnership trajectories of women from 1 year before the birth of their first child up to 3 years after. We will use the data of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGS) which provides detailed information on partnership and fertility histories, and includes information on the childhood family, such as parental socio-economic status and divorce. With latent class regression models (using the R package *poLCA*, see Linzer & Lewis, 2011) we will test if and to what extent, childbearing trajectories are different for women who grew up in advantaged and disadvantaged homes. Since the GGS combines information of several countries, we are able to examine if the findings are similar for different societal contexts.

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