

education, ISCED 5,6). We also distinguish among employed, not employed and enrolled in education. Employed respondents are either employed or self-employed, helping a family member in a family business or are currently on parental leave. Non-employed respondents are either unemployed, ill for a long time, disabled, housewife or in “other” employment situation. Respondents classified as “enrolled in education” are in school, in vocational training, in apprenticeship, in paid training, or at university. In pairfam this was explicitly not limited to first education.

4.2. Descriptive results

Below, we describe our findings of the binary analyses of first, the French data and second, the German data.

Table 4: Distribution of variables in the analysis (France)

	N	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>Dependent variable: Relationship status at wave 2</i>				
Married to W1 partner	93	17,68		
Still cohabiting with W1 partner	339	64,45		
Separated from W1 partner	54	10,27		
Civil union (PACS)	40	7,60		
<i>Main independent variables</i>				
Children born between waves				
No birth	399	75,86		
First birth	82	15,59		
Second or higher birth	45	8,56		
Education				
Low level of education	67	12,74		
Medium level of education	253	48,10		
High level of education	206	39,16		
Occupation				
Employed at W1	428	81,37		
Not employed at W1	70	13,31		
Enrolled in education at W1	28	5,32		
<i>Control variables</i>				
At least one child with partner at W1	265	50,38		
Female	317	60,27		
Marital intentions at W1	216	41,06		
Previously married at W1	28	5,32		
Age at start of union in years			24,5	4,5
Union duration in months			69,3	57,4

Source: GGS Wave 1 France V.4.2, GGS Wave 2 France V.1.1

Table 4 shows that 93 French cohabiters married their partner (18%) after the first interview. Two thirds of all cohabiters at Wave 1 were still cohabiting with the same partner three years after they had been interviewed for the first time. The remaining cohabiters had either dissolved their union or registered their partnership (PACS).

A quarter of all French cohabiters at Wave 1 had a child in between the waves. The majority of cohabiters has obtained at least secondary education and is employed in Wave 1. There are more women than men cohabiting at Wave 1 with their partner. The proportion of cohabiters who do not report having plans to get married is larger than cohabiters intending to marry and only a small minority has been married earlier. The mean age at the start of a union is 24,5. The observed duration of unions is 69.3 months on average.

Cohabiters who experience the birth of a child between waves more frequently make the transition to marriage than cohabiters who do not have a child between waves (Table 5).

Table 5: The transition to marriage within three years by childbirth among French cohabiters

	Child born	No child born	Total
Not married at W2	94	339	433
%	74.0	85.0	82.3
Married at W2	33	60	93
%	26.0	15.0	17.7
Total	127	399	526
%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GGS Wave 1 France V.4.2, GGS Wave 2 France V.1.1

Table 6: The transition to marriage within three years by level of education among French cohabiters

	Low educ	Medium educ	High educ	Total
Not married at W2	64	209	160	433
%	95.5	82.6	77.7	82.3
Married at W2	3	44	46	93
%	4.5	17.4	22.3	17.7
Total	67	253	206	526
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GGS Wave 1 France V.4.2, GGS Wave 2 France V.1.1

According to Table 6 highly educated respondents marry more frequently than respondents with a medium level of education who in turn marry more frequently than their low educated counterparts.

Table 7 shows that employed cohabiters more frequently got married between waves than their not employed counterparts. Most marriages are formed among cohabiters who were enrolled in education at the time of first interview.

Table 7: The transition to marriage within three years by employment status among French cohabiters

	Employed	Not employed	In education	Total
Not married at W2	349	64	20	433
%	81.5	91.4	71.4	82.3
Married at W2	79	6	8	93
%	18.5	8.6	28.6	17.7
Total	428	70	28	526
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: GGS Wave 1 France V.4.2, GGS Wave 2 France V.1.1

Below, we describe our findings of the bivariate analyses of the pairfam data. About 30 percent of German cohabiters marry between wave 1 and 4 (Table 8). This figure is higher compared to France. More than half of all cohabiters were still cohabiting after three years and 15 percent dissolved their relationship.

Table 8: Distribution of variables in the analysis (Germany)

	N	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>Dependent variable: Relationship status at wave 4</i>				
Married to W1 partner	237	31,23		
Still cohabiting with W1 partner	407	53,62		
Separated from W1 partner	115	15,15		
<i>Main independent variables</i>				
Children born between waves				
No birth	581	76,55		
First birth	53	6,98		
Second or higher birth	125	16,47		
Education				
Low level of education	65	8,55		
Medium level of education	364	47,96		
High level of education	330	43,48		
Occupation				
Employed in wave 1	593	78,13		
Not employed in wave 1	66	8,70		
Enrolled in education in wave 1	100	13,18		
<i>Control variables</i>				
At least one child with partner at W1	164	21,60		
Female	430	56,65		
Previously married at W1	66	8,67		
Marital intentions at W1	296	39,00		
Western Germany	539	71,01		
Eastern Germany	220	28,99		
Age at start of union in years			26,0	5,0
Duration of union in months			47,9	44,1

Source Pairfam V.4.0

Just as in the case of France, around a quarter of all German cohabiters had a child at the moment of last interview. The majority of cohabiters has obtained at least secondary education and is employed in Wave 1. There are more women than men cohabiting at Wave 1 with their partner. The proportion of cohabiters who do not report having plans to get married is larger than cohabiters intending to marry and only a small minority has been married earlier. The mean age at the start of a union is 24.5. The observed duration of unions is only 47.9 months on average.

Table 9: The transition to marriage within three years by childbirth among German cohabiters

	Child born	No child born	Total
Not married at W4	85	437	522
%	47.75	75.22	68.8
Married at W4	93	144	237
%	52.25	24.78	31.2
Total	178	581	759
%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source Pairfam V.4.0

Table 9 shows that more than half of all German cohabiters who got married between waves also experience the birth of a child. This proportion is larger compared to France. It has to be noted however that also in total, more marriages have been formed in Germany compared to France. Table 10 shows a similar picture we drew from the French data. Marriage formation is more frequent among higher educated cohabiters in Germany.

Table 10: The transition to marriage within three years by level of education among German cohabiters

	Low educ	Medium educ	High educ	Total
Not married at W4	55	241	226	522
%	84.6	66.2	68.5	68.8
Married at W4	10	123	104	237
%	15.4	33.8	31.5	31.2
Total	65	364	330	759
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: pairfam V.4.0

The results in Table 11 also point to a similar direction than the French descriptive analysis. Employed cohabiters more frequently marry than their non-employed counterparts.

Table 11: The transition to marriage within three years by employment status among German cohabiters

	Employed	Not employed	In education	Total
Not married at W4	396	50	76	522
%	66.78	75.76	76.00	68.8
Married at W4	197	16	24	237
%	33.22	24.24	24.00	31.2
Total	593	66	100	759
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: pairfam V.4.0

4.3 Multivariate Analysis

In order to test the association between the birth of a child and economic resources and the transition to marriage net of other factors that may be associated with union formation processes, we calculate two logit regressions for France and Germany separately (Table 12).

Table 12: Summary of binary logit regression model of the transition to marriage among cohabiters in France (n=526) and Germany (n=759)

	GGF France		pairfam	
	Odds Ratio	p-Value	Odds Ratio	p-Value
Birth of a child (France)	1.66	0.07		
Birth of a child (Germany; Ref: West–no child born)				
West – child born			3.60	0.00
East – no child born			0.53	0.01
East – child born			1.37	0.35
Education (Ref.: low):				
Middle	2.80	0.11	3.35	0.00
High	3.00	0.09	2.81	0.02
Employment (Ref: employed)				
Not employed	0.51	0.17	0.59	0.15
Enrolled in education	1.33	0.58	1.04	0.90
Cohabitation duration in months	1.01	0.37	1.00	0.59
Cohabitation duration squared	1.00	0.19	1.00	0.21
Age at the start cohabitation	0.98	0.65	0.98	0.39
Female (Ref.: Male)	1.40	0.23	1.00	0.98
Prior Marriage	0.64	0.52	1.48	0.28
Children with current partner	0.83	0.56	0.97	0.89
Intention to marry	5.00	0.00	6.37	0.00
Constant	0.04	0.00	0.10	0.00
N	526		759	
Pseudo-R ²	0.15		0.20	

Source: GGS Wave 1 France V.4.2, GGS Wave 2 France V.1.1; pairfam V.4.0

Compared to their childless counterparts, having a child is associated with higher odds of marriage for French as well as Western German cohabiters. In Eastern Germany we replicate findings from earlier studies that childbearing does not trigger marriage (Huinink and Kreyenfeld 2006; Huinink et al. 2012). Higher educated cohabiters exhibit higher odds of marriage in both countries. The effect of employment status is not significant in either of the

countries. Economic resources might be already captured by level of educational attainment. Oppenheimer (2003) concluded in her study on US American men that positive, long-term socio-economic perspectives represented by length of college education and a stable working situation lead to higher odds of leaving cohabitation by marriage (Oppenheimer 2003:146f.). Kalmijn (2011) drew similar conclusions testing Oppenheimer's uncertainty hypotheses in the European context. Köppen (2010) showed that highly educated men experience the transition from cohabitation to marriage by a higher rate in Western Germany compared to Eastern Germany (2010: 242). It could also be that the number not-employed cohabiters and those enrolled in education are relatively low which might imply some issues of statistical power. Some of our control variables are statistically significantly associated with the odds of marriage. Most importantly, cohabiters who plan to marry are much more likely to actually marry compared to cohabiters without marital intentions.

The two data sources would have allowed us to include more comparative information on respondent's level of religiousness or attitudes towards marriage in order to capture individual norms and values but also more measures of socio-economic background (i.e. income) as well as childbearing intentions rather than actual births.

5 Concluding remarks

In this paper we demonstrated the opportunities for comparative research combining the German Family Panel (pairfam) and the pan-European Gender and Generation Surveys (GGS). We illustrated the large overlap in the aims and designs of both surveys in order to encourage researchers to combine data from both surveys for cross-national comparative research. We presented an example of analyses studying cohabiters' transition to marriage among German and French survey respondents.

Both surveys aim at providing a high-quality data infrastructure that allows studying the ongoing changes in families and relationships in an ageing Europe in order to provide answers to the question how policy and contextual factors play in the lives of people. They cover a wide variety of topics related to different dimensions of the individual life course such as partnerships, fertility, employment, wellbeing and health and the relationships between different generations of a family.

Both data infrastructures provide nationally representative samples of the adult population. Whereas GGS covers the whole adult life course between ages 18 and 79, pairfam employs a cohort design of the birth cohorts 1971-73, 1981-1983 and 1991-93. We have

shown that because of the panel design of pairfam, the sample will – wave by wave – increasingly cover the age ranges included in the GGS allowing researchers to run statistically powerful and comparative analyses when combining data across waves and of both surveys.

Finally, we have presented a practical example of combining data from GGS and pairfam in order to study union formation behaviour in two different contexts. We have shown large similarities in Germany and France in the association between childbearing and marriage formation among cohabiters as well as signs of social stratification of the decision to marry in both countries.

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