



Wittgenstein Centre

FOR DEMOGRAPHY AND
GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL

Is two best for everyone? Trends in parity distribution across education in low-fertility countries

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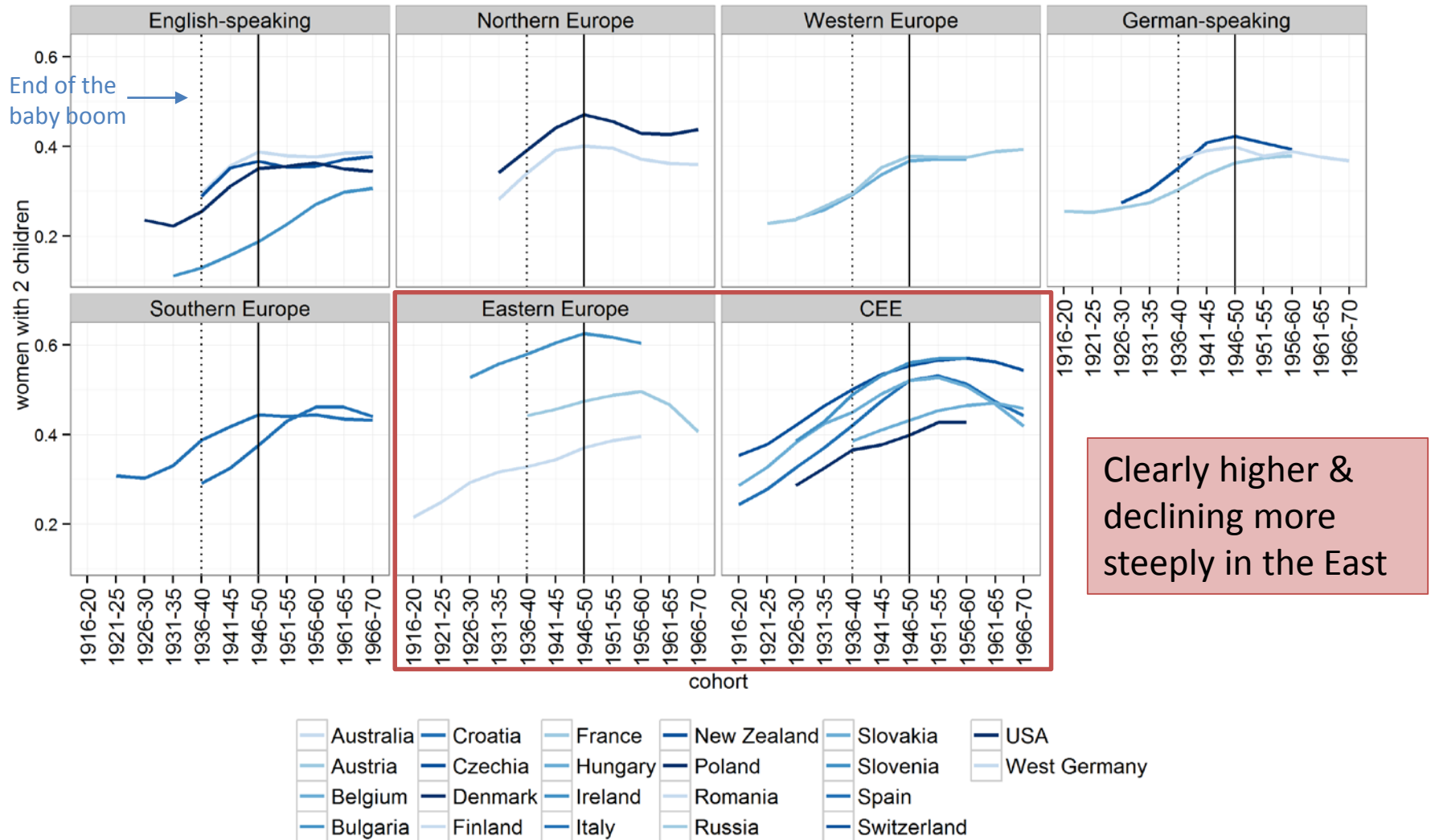
HFD Symposium, June 2016, Berlin

Motivation

Two-child families

- Two has been a universally shared ideal number of children in low-fertility countries since at least the 1980s (Sobotka & Beajouan 2014).
- Among women born in the 1950s and 1960s, the share of two-child families usually stopped rising (Frejka 2008).

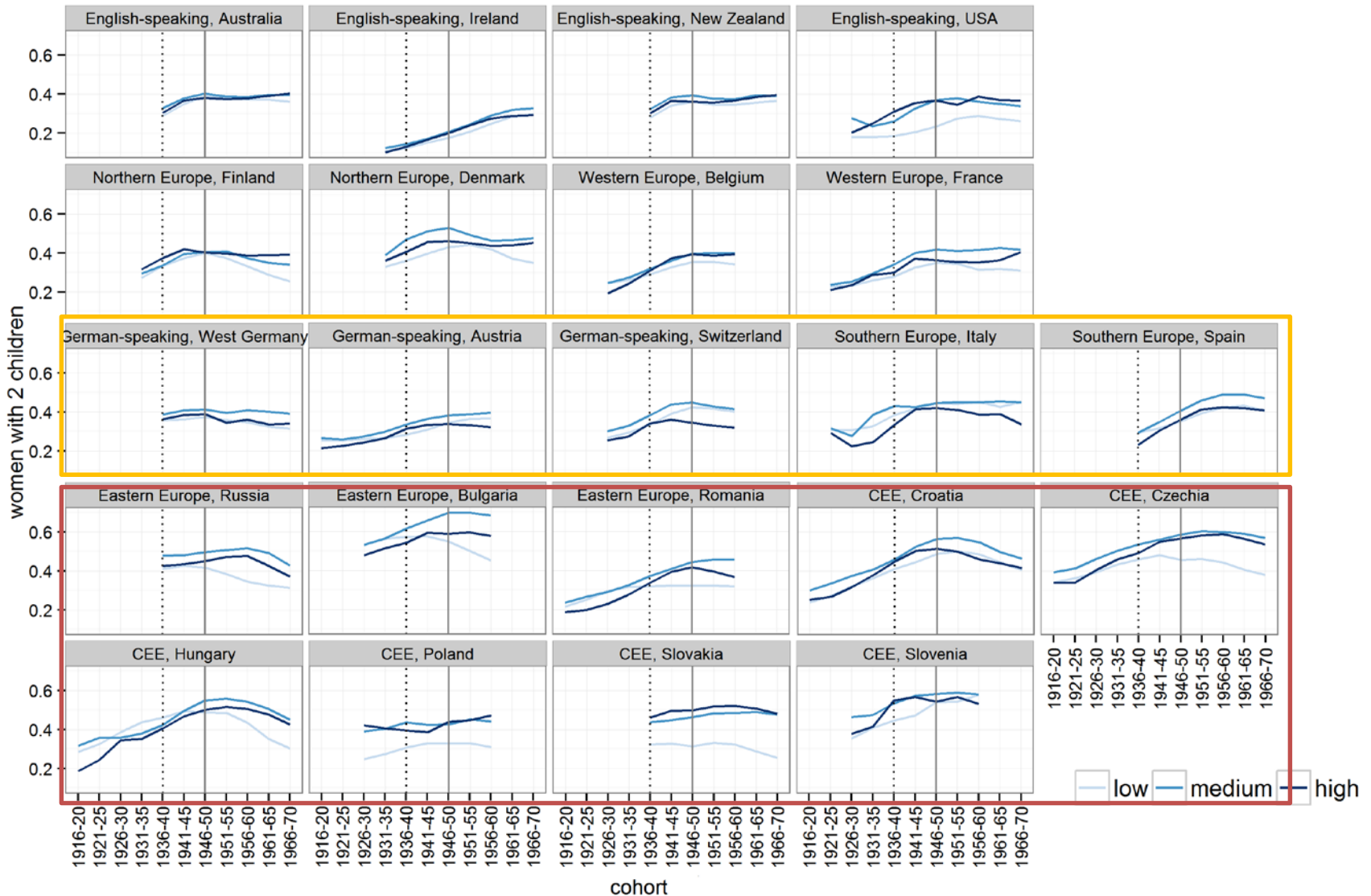
Share of two-child families



Two-child families

- Two has been a universally shared ideal number of children in low-fertility countries since at least the 1980s (Sobotka & Beajouan 2014).
- Among women born in the 1950s and 1960s, the share of two-child families has stopped rising (Frejka 2008).
- After the baby boom the educational differences in the share of two-child families (and generally in the parity distribution) increased in many countries (Berrington et al. 2015, Wood et al. 2014).

Share of two-child families by edu



Questions

Why did the share of two-child families start to decrease earliest and/or fastest among

- Highly educated women in the German-speaking and Southern-European countries?
 - Increases in childlessness and decreases in transitions to second child
 - Shown for childlessness (Beaujouan et al. 2015)
 - For one child: probably similar mechanisms (high opportunity costs)
- Low educated women in the East?
 - More frequent transitions to third child
 - Low opportunity costs
 - Selectivity

Data & Method

- Data

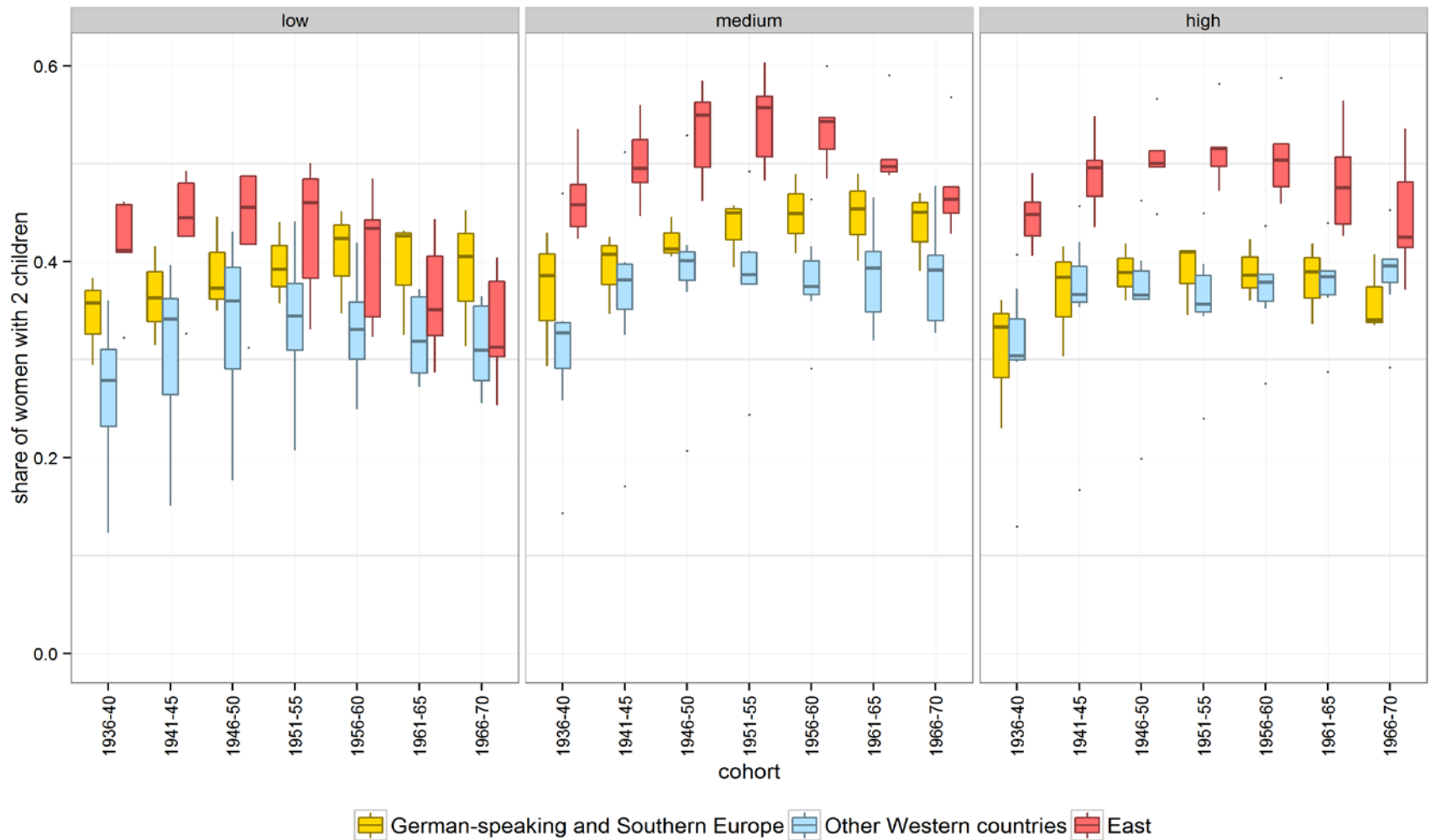
- Census and large-scale survey data mostly from the CFE database (www.cfe-database.org)
- 22 countries (19 European, Australia, New Zealand & USA)
- Women born between 1916-20 and 1966-70 (-> having children 1940s-2010s);

- Method

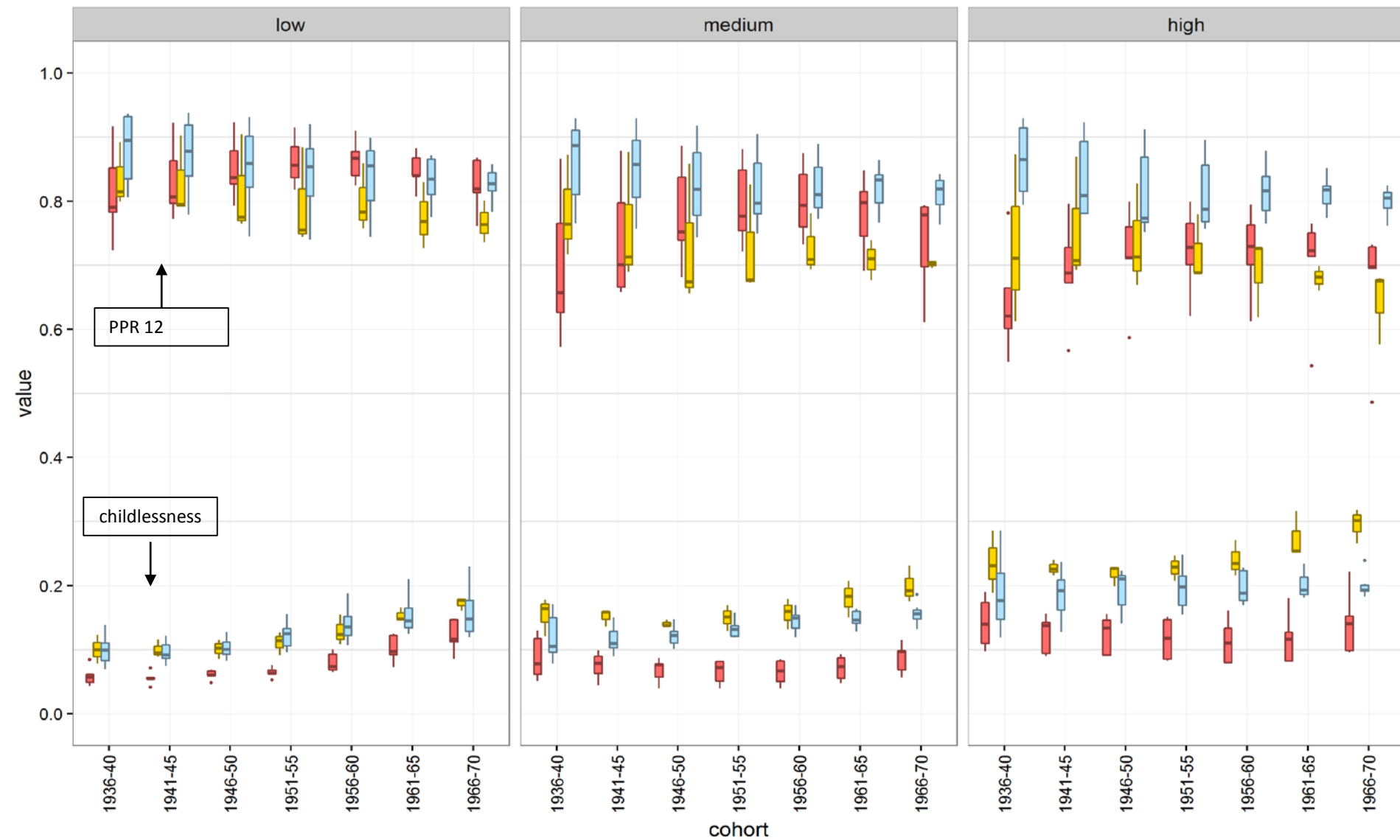
- Analysing parity distribution and progression ratios by education
- Education categories (ISCED 1997):
 - Low (ISCED 0-2), Medium (ISCED 3-4), High (ISCED 5-6)
- 3 regions:
 - German-speaking countries & Southern Europe (G-S),
 - West
 - East
- Regional aggregates
 - start from the 1936-40 cohorts
 - exclude Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovenia (no data for the 1960s cohorts)

Results

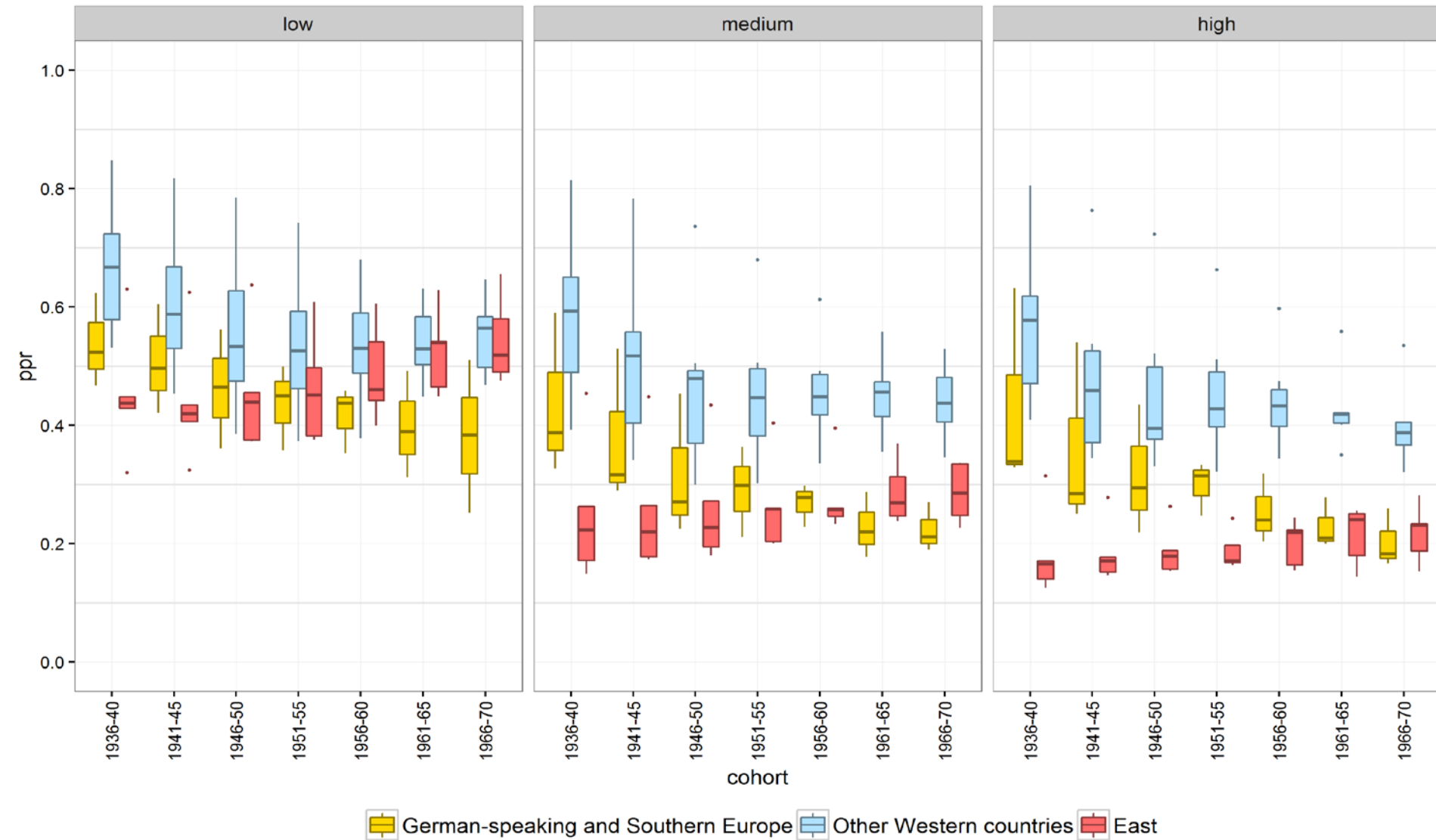
Share of two-child families by edu



Childlessness and PPR 12



PPR 23



Conclusions

Answers

Why did the share of two-child families start to decrease earliest and/or fastest among

- Highly educated women in the German-speaking and Southern-European?
 - ✓ Increases in childlessness and decreases in transitions to second child
- Low educated women in the East?
 - ✓ More frequent transitions to third child
 - + Strongly increasing childlessness in the 1960s cohorts

Conclusions

- In the 1966-70 cohort...
 - Childlessness **highest** in Germany, Italy and Spain (G-S), lowest in the East
 - PPR 12 **lowest** in G-S, highest in the West
 - PPR 23 **lowest** in G-S, highest in the West (among low edu: East & West)
- Very low fertility in Germany, Italy & Spain: decreasing PPR 01, 12 & 23 across education
- Very high shares of two-child families in the East among the medium & high- educated in the 1950s cohorts: high PPR 01 & low PPR 23
- Biggest regional contrasts among the highly educated
-> most sensitive to context ?



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THANK YOU

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