

# Growing up in a non-standard family, and later-life economic independence: partial mediation by mid-life family trajectories?

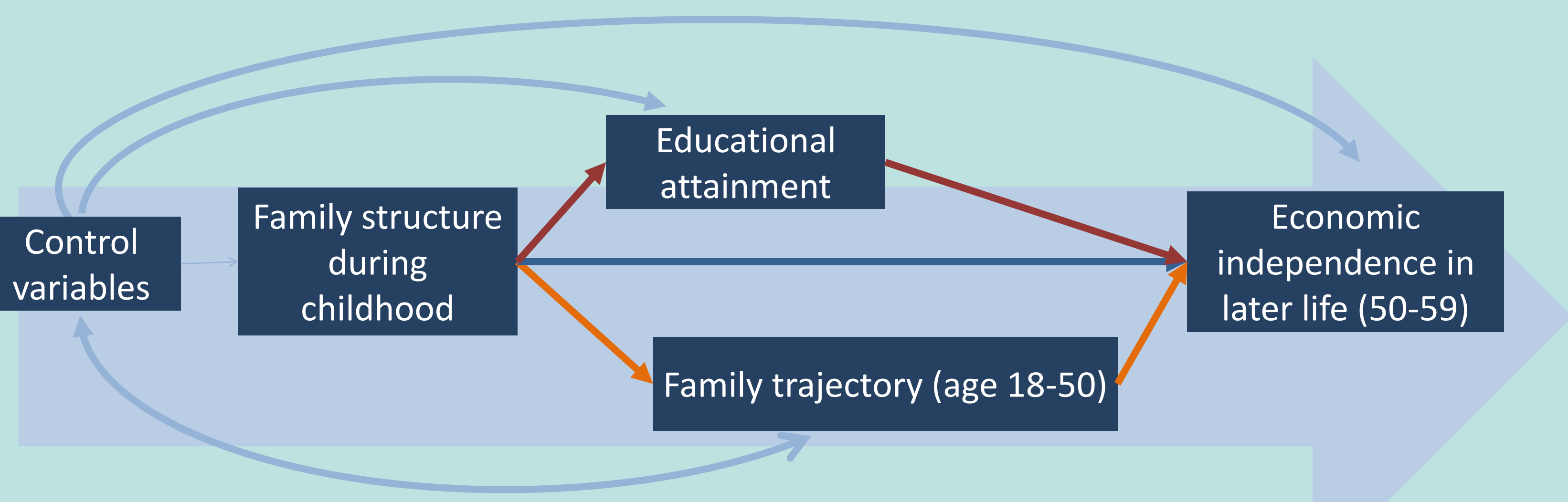
Joanne Sophie Muller, Nicole Hiekel & Aart C. Liefbroer

Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute  
University of Groningen | University of Cologne | Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

## THE PUZZLE

Adults who grew up in a non-standard family structure (i.e. without both biological parents, e.g. divorced parents) have lower economic outcomes in later life. Is this effect purely due to a **lack of resources and educational attainment**, or does **socialization into fragile family life courses** also play a role?

## MODEL



## VARIABLES

<b>Economic independence</b>	Personal earnings higher than 60% of median earnings in country (1) or not (0)
<b>Family structure during childhood</b>	Lived most of childhood with both biological parents (1) or not (0)
<b>Family trajectory</b>	Typology (six categories) based on the child's fertility and partnership trajectory between age 18 and 50. Continuous grade-of-membership (GOM) variables.
<b>Educational attainment</b>	Continuous ISLED scale (z-score)
<b>Control variables</b>	Parental educational level (mean of father's and mother's educational level, ISLED), gender, age in years at the time of interview and country (dummies).

The dependent variable combines employment and level of earnings. It is inspired by the Eurostat measure for (risk of) poverty.

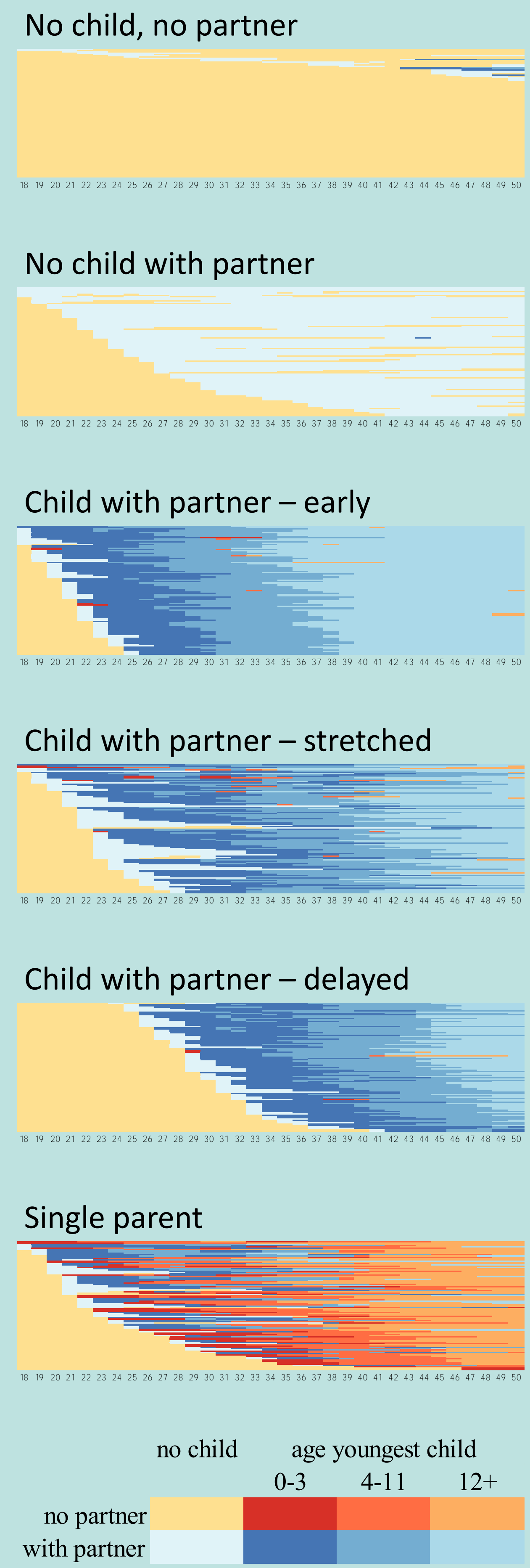
The GOM variables represent the distance to the medoid of each cluster. GOM variables account for 'cluster allocation fuzziness', i.e. for within-cluster heterogeneity.

## DATA

- We combine three major European longitudinal data sources:
- Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), wave 1 (2004-2010)
  - British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), wave 15 (2008)
  - SHARE wave 3 (SHARELIFE), (2005-2006)

**Sample:** Men and women aged 50 to 59 at the time of interview (total N=32.566). Data covers 21 countries, representing all European regions and welfare state types.

## FAMILY TRAJECTORIES



Notes. N=32.566 from 21 countries. Each horizontal line represents the family trajectory of 33 chronological yearly states from age 18 to 50 of one person. The sequence distance matrix was clustered with Ward's hierarchical method. The number of clusters was determined with two cut-off criteria (ASW and PBC) and with construct validity. The authors gave names to clusters based on characteristics.

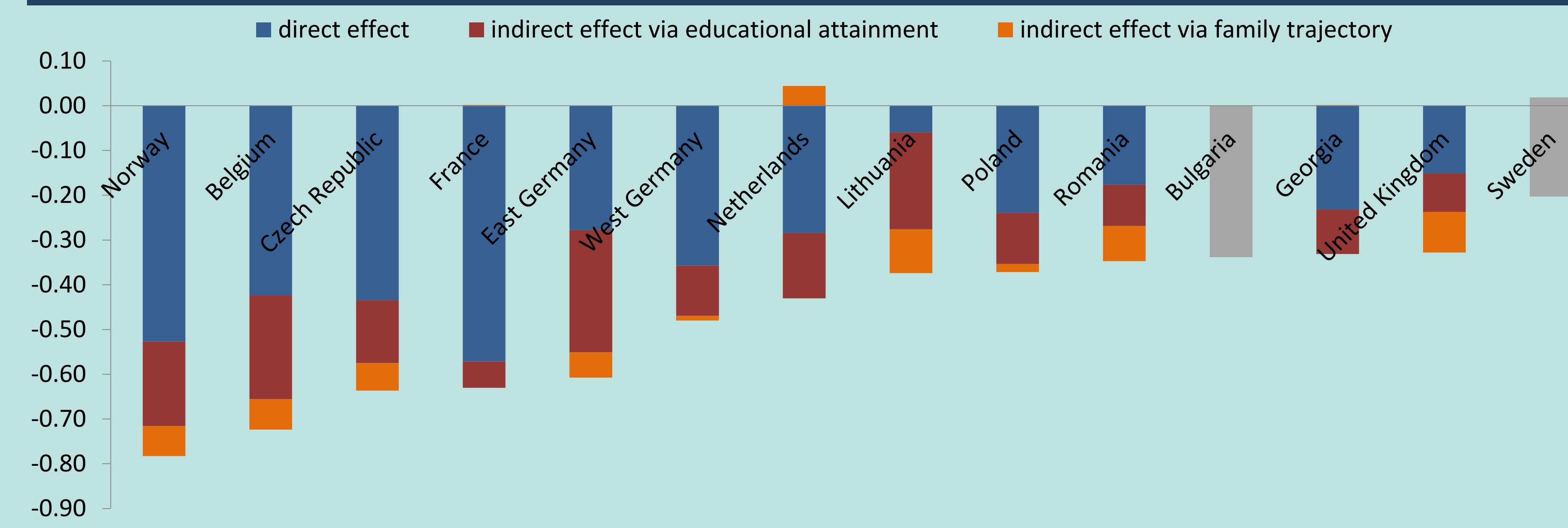
## RESULTS POOLED MODEL

Family structure during childhood	WOMEN		MEN	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Both parents (1) or not (0)	-0.44*** (0.06)	-0.27*** (0.05)	-0.47*** (0.09)	-0.30** (0.09)
<b>Mediators</b>	<b>Components of mediated effect</b>		<b>Components of mediated effect</b>	
Educational attainment	91%		57%	
No child, no partner	5%		2%	
No child with partner	9%		6%	
Child with partner – early	10%		1%	
Child with partner – stretched	15%		9%	
Child with partner – delayed	-20%		25%	
Single parent	-10%		0%	

Negative components indicate a suppressor effect, in other words: adding this mediator amplifies the effect of growing up in a non-standard family.

Notes. Sample model 1 and 2: women from 14 countries (N=13.387). Sample model 3 and 4: men from 14 countries (N=11.827). KHB-method for nested logistic models. VCE country cluster correction. Controlled for country fixed effects, parental educational level and age in years  
\*\*\* P<0.01, \*\* P<0.05

## COUNTRY-COMPARATIVE RESULTS



Notes. Estimates based on nested logistic models (KHB-method) for each country separately. Direct effect of growing up in a non-standard family on later-life economic independence. Controlled for gender, parental educational level and age in years. Grey countries: total effect not significant.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ Growing up in a non-standard family has a **long-term effect** on children's economic independence (for both men and women, across contexts)
- ✓ The effect of family dissolution is **partially mediated** by both the child's educational achievement and the child's family trajectory.
- ✓ The mediating effect of family trajectory **differs across European contexts**. This might suggest that these effects are context-dependent, for instance on the country-specific opportunity structure for reconciling work and family.

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