

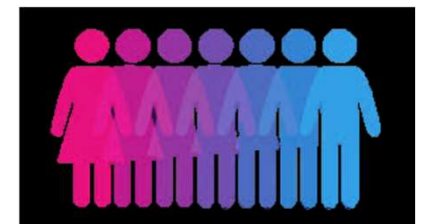
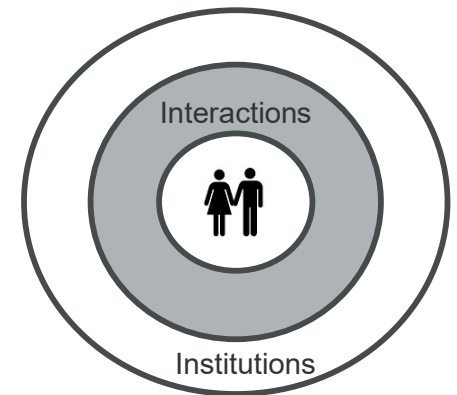
## Beyond the binary: Measures of gradational gender identification across Europe

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## Motivation

- **Multidimensional theorising** of gender in sociological theories (e.g. Risman, 2003, 2017; Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005)
- **Quantitative operationalisation** mostly simplistic: (binary) gender category and sometimes gender beliefs
- Recent suggestions of **self-rated femininity** and **masculinity** (Magliozzi et al., 2016) but not yet applied in representative samples and across diverse contexts
- Unclear how **everyday understanding of femininity** and **masculinity** match with sociological conceptualisations





## Substantive and methodological contributions:

- 1) Describe **diversity of *gender identification*** using self-rated masculinity and femininity in 200 regions in 26 European countries with varying gender regimes
- 2) Investigate how gender identification relates to gender **socialisation and performance** (e.g. paid work and care practices and bodily and personality experiences) and **regional gender regime**
- 3) Explore variations/comparability across gender regimes



## Current sociological theory: gender as a social structure (Risman, 2004)

- Gender is multidimensional and embedded in:

Personal identities

Cultural rules

Institutions

- Gender structure differentiates opportunities and restrictions (based on gender category) on **3 levels**:

**Individual level:**  
construction of identities through socialization from early childhood to adulthood

**Interaction level:**  
Cultural expectations vary according to gender category

**Institutional level:**  
Laws/organizational practices/formal regulations influence resource allocation



## Theoretical perspectives on masculinity & femininity

- **Masculinity and femininity:** normative concepts to which individuals refer to in the construction of their gender identities (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Schippers, 2007).
- “**sets of meanings** for what women and men are and should be” (Schippers, 2007, p.92)
- **Hegemonic masculinity:** qualities and practices defined as manly that establish and legitimate hierarchy (e.g., power, money, physical strength) (Connell 1995; Messerschmidt 2000)
- **Emphasized femininity:** complies with patriarchy and accommodates the subordinate relationship with hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Schippers 2007)
- **More conforming gender identification** (= stronger congruence with norms corresponding to assigned sex) socially more valued and more so in more traditional gender regimes

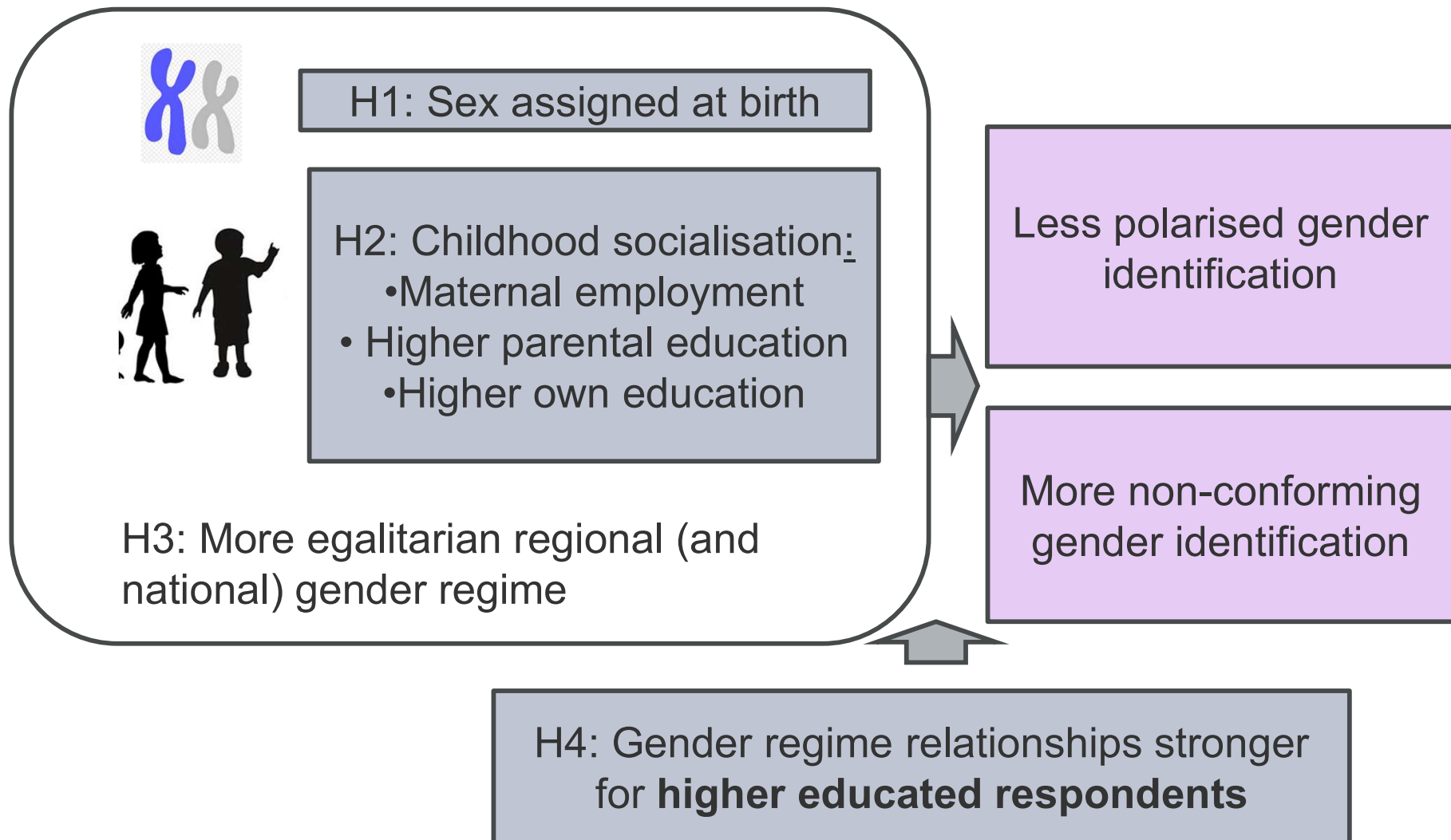


## Gender identity construction

- **Masculinity and femininity**: normative concepts to which individuals refer to in the construction of their gender identities (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Schippers, 2007).
- “**sets of meanings** for what women and men are and should be” (Schippers, 2007, p.92)
- Individuals learn about masculinity and femininity norms/ideals during socialization (Bussey and Bandura, 1999) and reproduce or undo them in their social practices (West and Zimmermann, 1987)
- **More conforming gender identification** (= stronger congruence with norms corresponding to assigned sex) **socially more valued** and **more so in more traditional gender regimes**

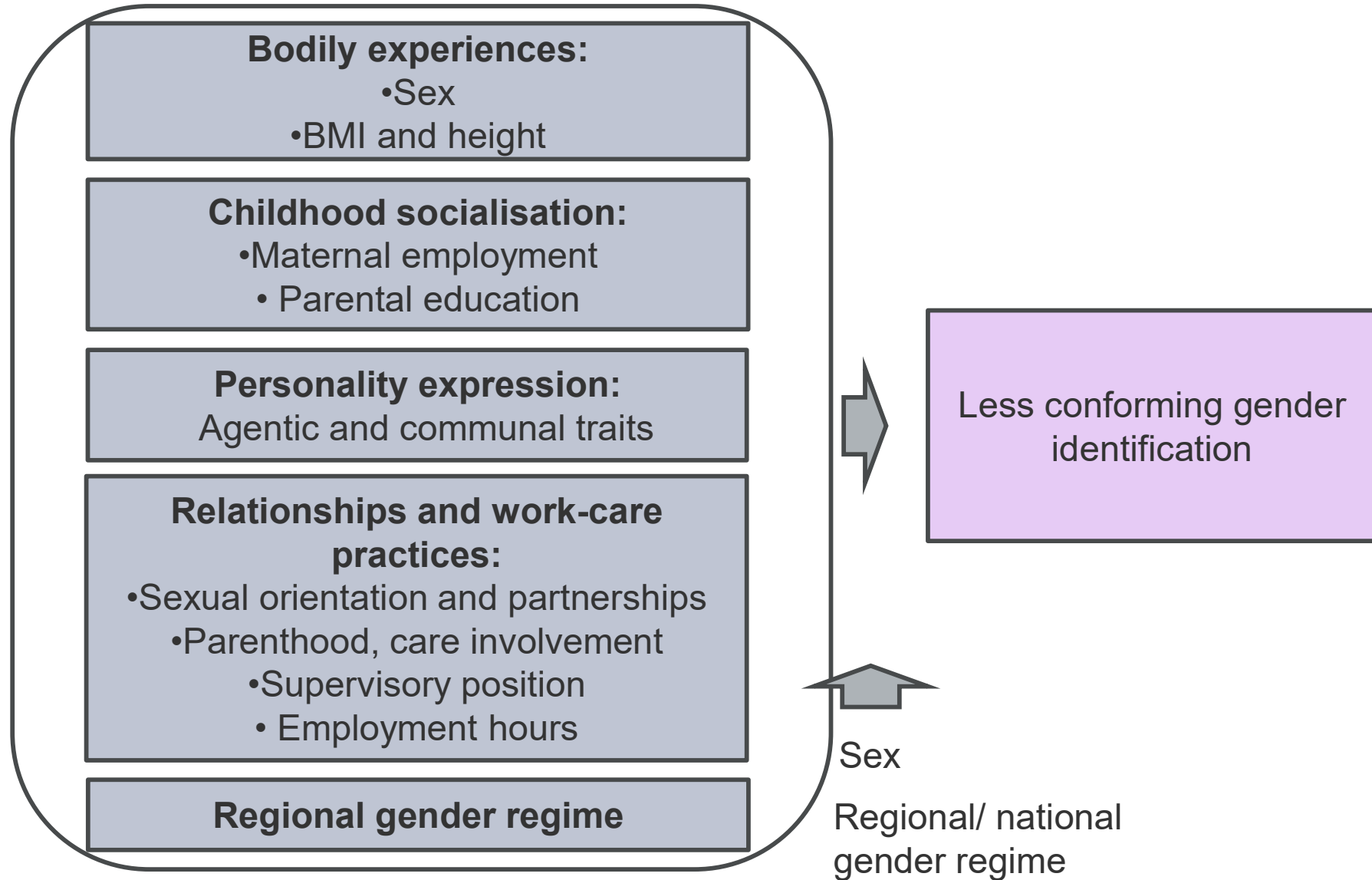


## Hypotheses I-IV: Socialisation, sex, gender regimes & intersectionalities





## Hypotheses: Gender socialisation and performance





## Gender regimes

- Gender regime theory (Walby 2009; 2020): **clusters of institutions** of economy, polity, violence and civil society
- European societies vary in **pace of gender regime transformation** in different domains, reproduced at national and regional levels

Dimensions	Politics	Labour market	Family and intimacy
Power and economic resources	Women's political representation	Female employment	
Cultural resources	Normative support of gender equality in public sphere		Normative support of homosexuality

Regional gender equality index



# Data and method



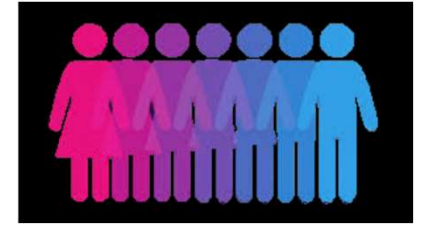
## Data and method

### European Social Survey data

- 11<sup>th</sup> Round, 2023/2024
- 26 countries, 200 NUTS2 regions, N = 43,647 individuals
- Nationally representative samples (sample sizes range from 685 in Cyprus to 2,865 in Italy)
- Weights (for linear models)

### Multilevel linear and logistic regression models

- Level 1 = individuals, Level 2 = regions
- Random intercept models (only for cross-level interactions  
random slopes models)



## Dependent variables: Gender identification

- **Gender conformity score** (-6 not at all conforming to +6 very conforming):
  - Based on self-rated masculinity (0-6) & self-rated femininity (0-6)
  - For Males: Masculinity – Femininity, for Females: Femininity – Masculinity
- **Non-conforming gender identification (0/1):**
  - Gender category: “other” (n = 64)
  - Interviewer-reported sex  $\neq$  gender category (n= 358)
  - Women: femininity < masculinity (n = 652), men: masculinity < femininity (n = 433)
  - Femininity = masculinity (n = 1,849)



## **Independent variables – individual level:**

### **Bodily experiences:**

- Sex (male/female): reported by interviewer
- Body mass index (BMI)
- Height (relative to sex- and country-specific median)

### **Personality expression:**

- Agentic traits (2 items: take risks, be a leader,  $\alpha = 0.67$ ).
- Communal traits (2 items: sensitive to others' needs, acts compassionately,  $\alpha = 0.79$ )

### **Gender socialisation:**

- Maternal employment at respondent age 14
- Any parent tertiary degree (1/0)



## Independent variables – individual level:

### Relationships, work and care practices:

- No cohabiting partner, same-sex partner, different sex partner
- Children in Household (1/0)
- Weekly working hours
- Supervisory position (1/0)
- Weekly hours of care (for family members, friends, neighbours): none, <1 h, <10 h, 11-20 h, 21-30 h, >30 h

### Respondent controls:

- Respondent tertiary degree (1/0), age (years), subjective hh income, migration background (0/1, place of living (ref big city, town, countryside), subjective health



## Independent variables – regional level:

**Regional gender equality index:** mean index of the following 4 domain indicators

- **Female employment rate (%)**
- **Women's share in politics (%)**
- **Attitudes towards gender equality (0-6)** mean based on 4 items ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), e.g. „how bad or good is it for businesses in [country] if equal numbers of women and men are in higher management positions?“
- **Attitudes towards homosexuality (1-5):** mean based on 3 items ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), e.g. „same-sex couples should have the same rights to adopt children“

**Controls:** regional GDP (Euro per inhabitant) and unemployment rate (%)

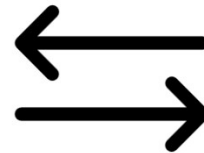
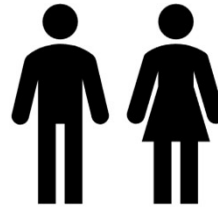


# Results



## Sample description

- 53.6% women (46.4% men)
- average age: 51.9 years
- 15,9% migration background



- 57.8% partnered



- 27.2% tertiary education



- Only 20.6% have dependent children (< 18 years in hh)

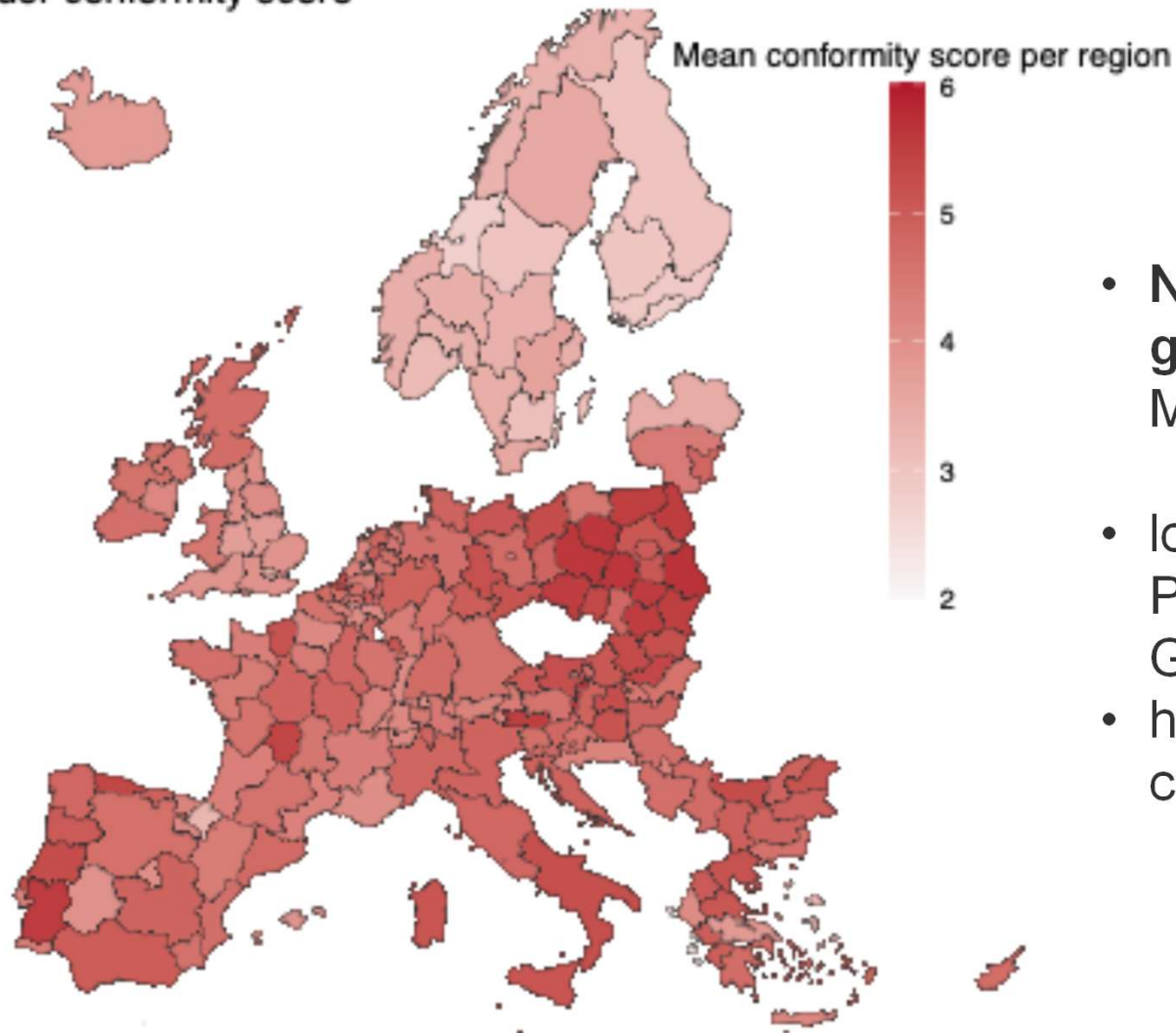


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## Gender identification across European regions

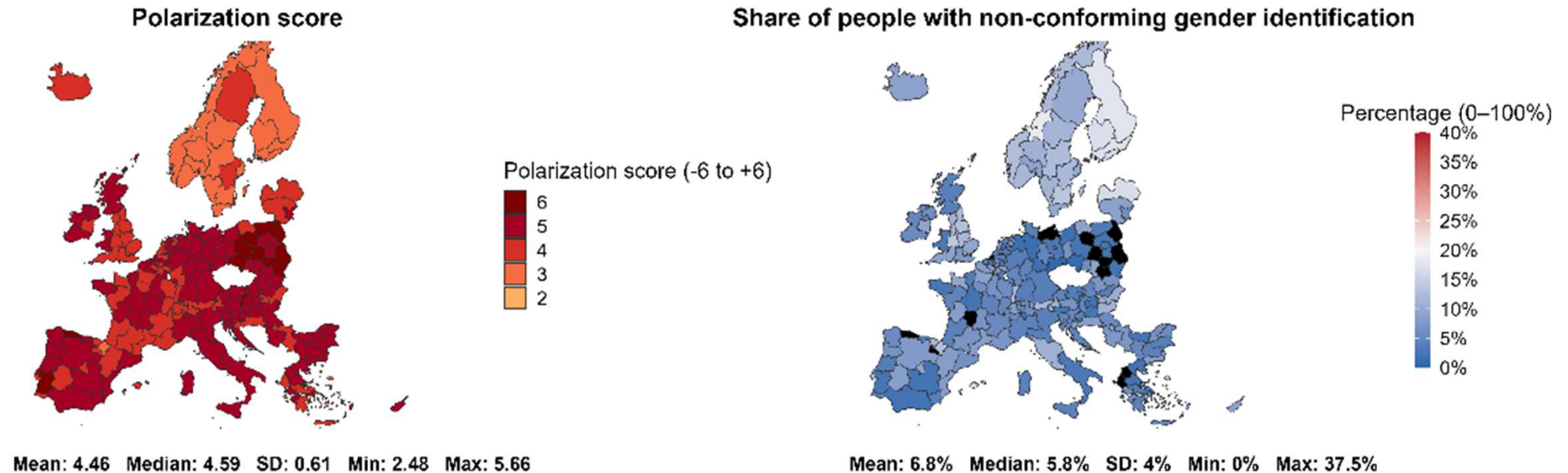
Gender conformity score



- **Non-conforming gender identification:** Mean 7%
- lowest shares (<5%) in Poland, Germany, and Greece
- highest in Nordic countries (12-20%)



## Descriptives: gender identification in European regions



- most European regions: high average values of *polarization score* (4 to 6)
- > country differences: e.g. Poland highest polarization (6), rest less polarized (4 or 5) and Northern countries the least polarized (3).
- only a minority identifies as gender *non-conforming* (6.8%)
- > e.g. lowest share in Poland (<5%), Germany, and Greece; highest share in Nordic countries (~20%)

## Multilevel regression: Bodily experiences & socialisation

Variable	DV Conformity score (linear)		DV non-conforming (0/1)		Hyp.
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
<b>Female (vs male)</b>	-		+		✓
<b>Height</b>	+	-	-	+	✓
<b>BMI</b>	+	-	-	+	✓
<b>At least one parent tertiary education</b>	-	-	+	ns	✓
<b>Maternal employment during adolescence</b>	-	ns	+	ns	~


Full sample ←

Separate models

## Multilevel regression: Personality expression, relationship and work and care practices

Variable	DV Conformity score (linear)		DV non-conforming (0/1)		Hyp.
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
<b>Agentic traits</b>	+	-	-	+	✓
<b>Communal traits</b>	-	+	ns	-	✓
<b>Same-sex relationship</b>	-	-	+	+	✓
<b>Not living with a partner</b>	ns	-	ns	+	~
<b>Children &lt; 18y</b>	+	ns	-	Ns	~
<b>Working hours</b>	ns	ns	-	ns	✗
<b>Leadership position</b>	ns	ns	ns	ns	✗
<b>Care hours</b>	ns	ns	+	+	✗

## Multilevel regression: Regional gender equality index



- significant negative association with DV gender conformity score & positive association with DV non-conforming 

## Cross-level interactions: Variations across regimes

Correlations with conformity score in more egalitarian regions	Smaller	Larger	
<b>Males</b>	Height, partnership status	Communal traits, maternal employment, working hours	→ Bodily experiences and care responsibilities slightly less important and personality expressions and childhood socialisation more important in more egalitarian contexts
<b>Females</b>	BMI, working hours, care hours	Height, parental education, maternal employment, agentic traits	



## Multilevel regression: Gender regime & intersectionality

Variable	DV Polarization score (linear)	DV non-conforming (0/1)	Hypothesis
<b>Gender regime indicators</b>	- (sig.) for gender equality index and all subdimensions	+ (sig.) for gender equality index, female employment, women in politics  Not sig. for attitudes towards gender equality & sexual diversity	
<b>Gender regime x tertiary education</b>	- (sig) for gender equality index and all subdimensions	n.a.	



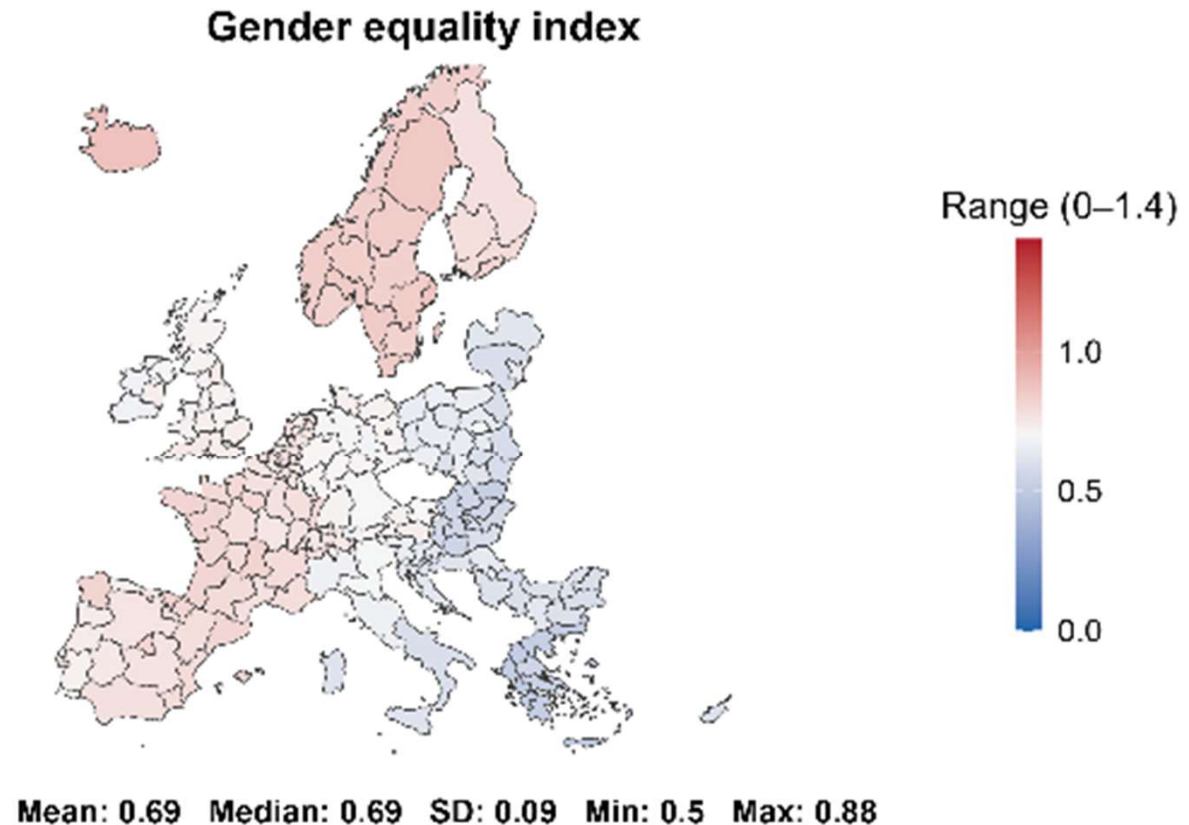
## Variations across gender regimes

Correlations with polarisation score in more egalitarian regions	Smaller	Larger
<b>Men</b>	Height, Overweight, care hours	Communal traits, maternal employment
<b>Women</b>	Overweight, care hours	Agentic traits, parental education, maternal employment

-> Bodily experiences and care responsibilities appear less important and personality expressions and childhood socialisation more important in more egalitarian contexts



**Descriptives:  
gender  
regime  
indicators  
per European  
region**



N

Gender regime index	Highest in regions in:	Lowest in regions in:
gender equality index	NO, SE, FI, IS, FR, ES	GR and HU
female employment rate	IS, NO, BE, NL, CH, LT	IT
women's share in politics	IS, NO, SE, FI, FR, ES	GR, HU, SK
gender equality attitudes	IS, NO, SE, ES, PT, FR	LT, GR, HU
sexual diversity attitudes	North & West Europe	East & South (except ES)



## Discussion: Gradational measure of identification with gender norms

Expected correlations of (non-)conformity of gender identification with **bodily characteristics, personality, sexual orientation and relationships, and gender regimes** but mostly not with labour market and care involvement

Correlates more with appearance and personality than with work-care practices

⇒ *captures gender conformity better among childless individuals than among those with care responsibilities?*

⇒ *Promising to complement gender category and domain-specific beliefs*

Some systematic variation in the associations across gender regimes

⇒ *Comparisons across contexts require adjustments, e.g. cluster mean-centering, to improve comparability*



Thank you for your attention!

Thanks to my co-authors:



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# Descriptives: gender regime indicators per European region

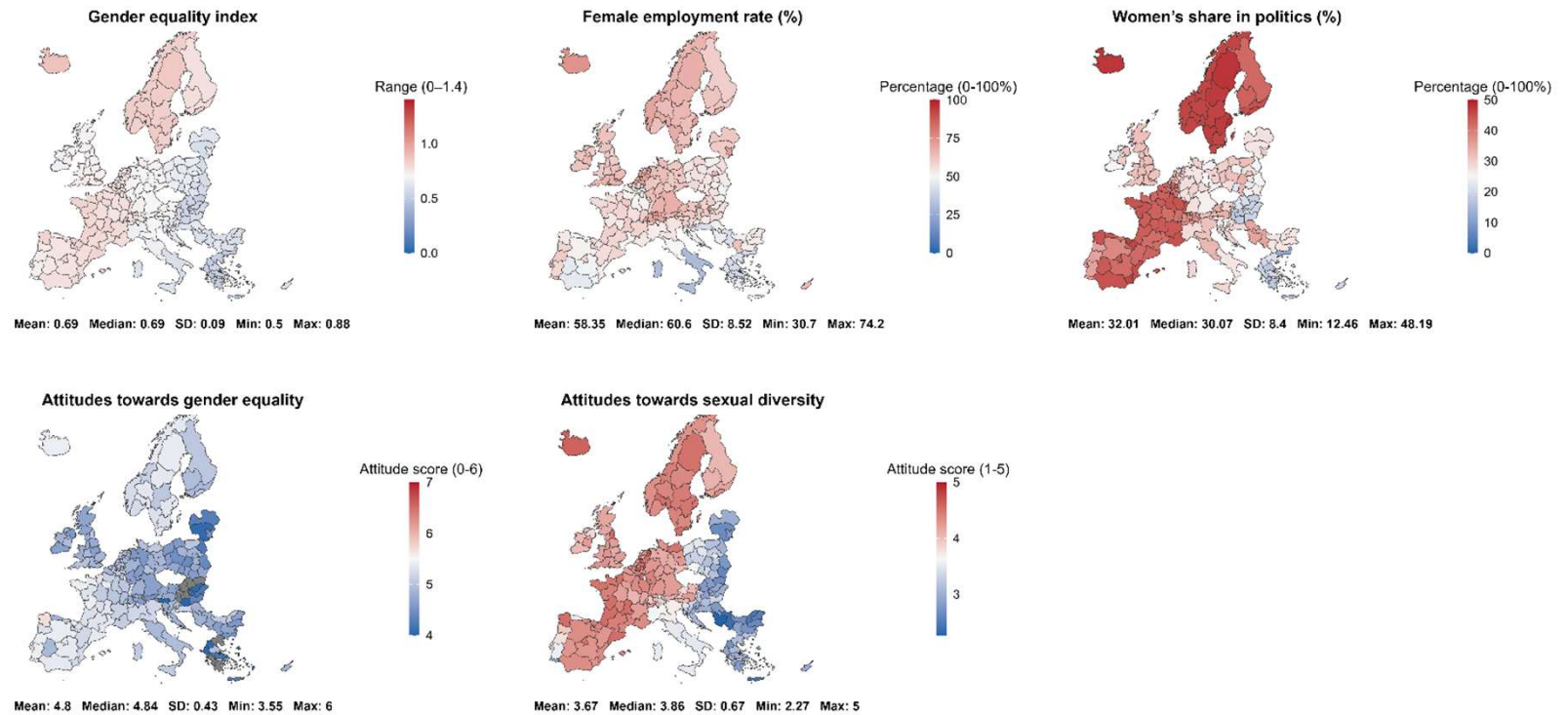


Figure 2. Distribution of regional-level indicators across European NUTS2 regions  
Note: Each map shows average values by NUTS2 region. Grey regions would indicate missing values. Data source: ESS Round 11, own calculations.

Gender regime index	Highest in regions in:	Lowest in regions in:
gender equality index	NO, SE, FI, IS, FR, ES	GR and HU
female employment rate	IS, NO, BE, NL, CH, LT	IT
women's share in politics	IS, NO, SE, FI, FR, ES	GR, HU, SK
gender equality	IS, NO, SE, ES, PT, FR	LT, GR, HU
sexual diversity	North & West Europe	East & South (except ES)



## Gender role self-concept: BEM Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974)

- Questionnaire to assess the self-concept in relation to masculine and feminine personality traits.
- Masculinity and femininity are not two ends of a dimension but are independent of each other.
- Masculinity scale contains personality traits that are assumed to be more socially desirable in men (e.g. "willing to take risks")
- Femininity scale contains characteristics that are socially more desirable in women (e.g. "warm-hearted"). 10-20 items each

→ **Problems:** Narrow focus on personality, change in social norms not taken into account



Items for evaluating  
masculinity

Items for evaluating  
femininity

Non-typed  
items

1.- Self-reliant.	2.- Yielding.	3.- Helpful.
4.- Defends own beliefs.	5.- Cheerful.	6.- Moody.
7.- Independent.	8.- Shy.	9.- Conscientious.
10.- Athletic.	11.- Affectionate.	12.- Theatrical.
13.- Assertive.	14.- Not susceptible to flattery.	15.- Happy.
16.- Strong personality.	17.- Loyal.	18.- Unpredictable.
19.- Forceful.	20.- Feminine.	21.- Reliable.
22.- Analytical.	23.- Sympathetic.	24.- Jealous.
25.- Leadership ability.	26.- Sensitive to others' needs.	27.- Truthful.
28.- Willing to take risks.	29.- Understanding.	30.- Secretive.
31.- Makes decisions easily.	32.- Compassionate.	33.- Sincere.
34.- Self-sufficient.	35.- Eager to soothe hurt feelings.	36.- Conceited.
37.- Dominant.	38.- Soft-spoken.	39.- Likeable.
40.- Masculine.	41.- Warm.	42.- Solemn.
43.- Willing to take a stand.	44.- Tender.	45.- Friendly.
46.- Aggressive.	47.- Gullible.	48.- Inefficient.
49.- Acts as a leader.	50.- Childlike.	51.- Adaptable.
52.- Individualistic.	53.- Does not use harsh language.	54.- Unsystematic.
55.- Competitive.	56.- Loves children.	57.- Tactful.
58.- Ambitious.	59.- Gentle.	60.- Conventional.

Source: Hyde (1995, p. 134).



## Discrepancy between theory and method

Problematic?

- Underestimation of gender diversity
- Reproduction/reinforcement of a binary gender order
- Lack of understanding of the causes and consequences of gender diversity for individuals and society.
- ...