

Is it men or women paying for the kids? The gendered division in the contributions to childbearing and implications for fertility



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Objective

The aim of our research is to

1. quantify the costs of childbearing in 25 countries across the globe (Fig 1),
2. analyze how the costs are shared within the society (public versus private) and the family (between men and women, Fig 2),
3. explore how the gendered division in the contributions is related to fertility in a cross-national comparative context (Fig 3).

We follow the extended theoretical treatment of child investments, by considering

1. not only the public and private market expenditure on children (the ones that go through monetary transactions or exchanged for money), but also
2. the **time costs of childcare and other household services** provided by mostly parents at home, chiefly by mothers.

Fig 1: The aggregate costs of childbearing by age as a percentage of total labour income, simple averages of 7 low- and middle versus 18 high-income countries*

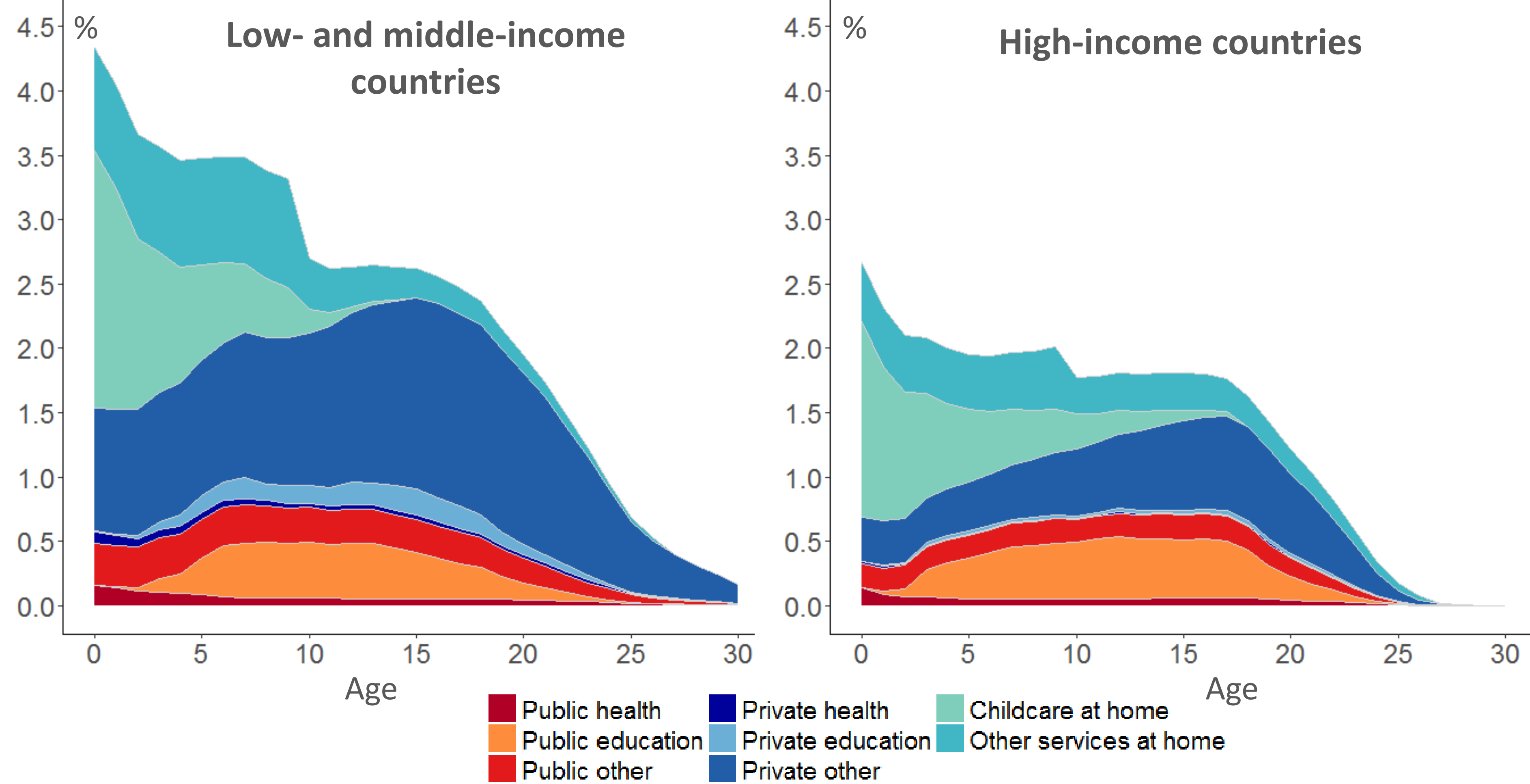
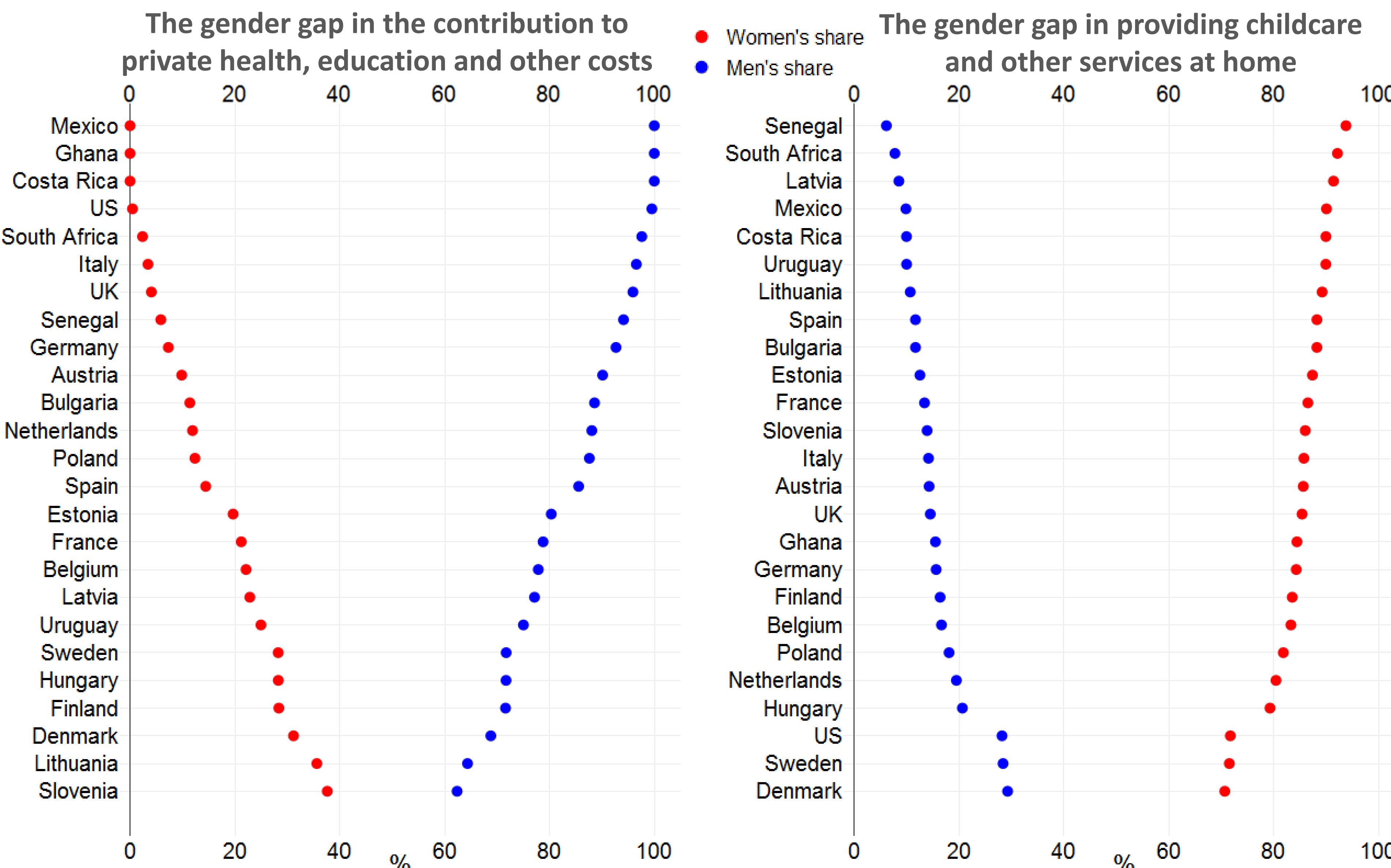


Fig 2: Men's and women's share in bearing the market and the nonmarket private costs of childbearing (%)*



Data and methods

We integrate the market expenditure on children with the value of time devoted to childcare and other household services consumed by children. The measures are from 2000-2010,** and they are based on

1. National Transfer Accounts (NTA)* estimations that disaggregate national accounts by age and gender (Lee and Mason 2011), and
2. National Time Transfer Accounts (NTTA)* that estimate the same quantities for household production activities, such as childcare, cooking, cleaning, etc. (Donehower 2014). These estimations are based on time use surveys and measured in time and in monetary terms by using the average wage of the different household production activities.

Only net costs are considered as childbearing costs, those ones that finance the consumption of children via transfers up to self-supporting ages. The estimation of women's and men's share in the private costs of childbearing (Fig 2 & Fig 3 left panel) depends on the amount of **net transfers (surplus)** they provide from their labour income and in the household via childcare and other household services. Since NTTA is also measured in time, we also estimate **how much time** women and men aged 16-59 spend with paid and unpaid work (Fig 3 right panel), as another indicator of the gender division.

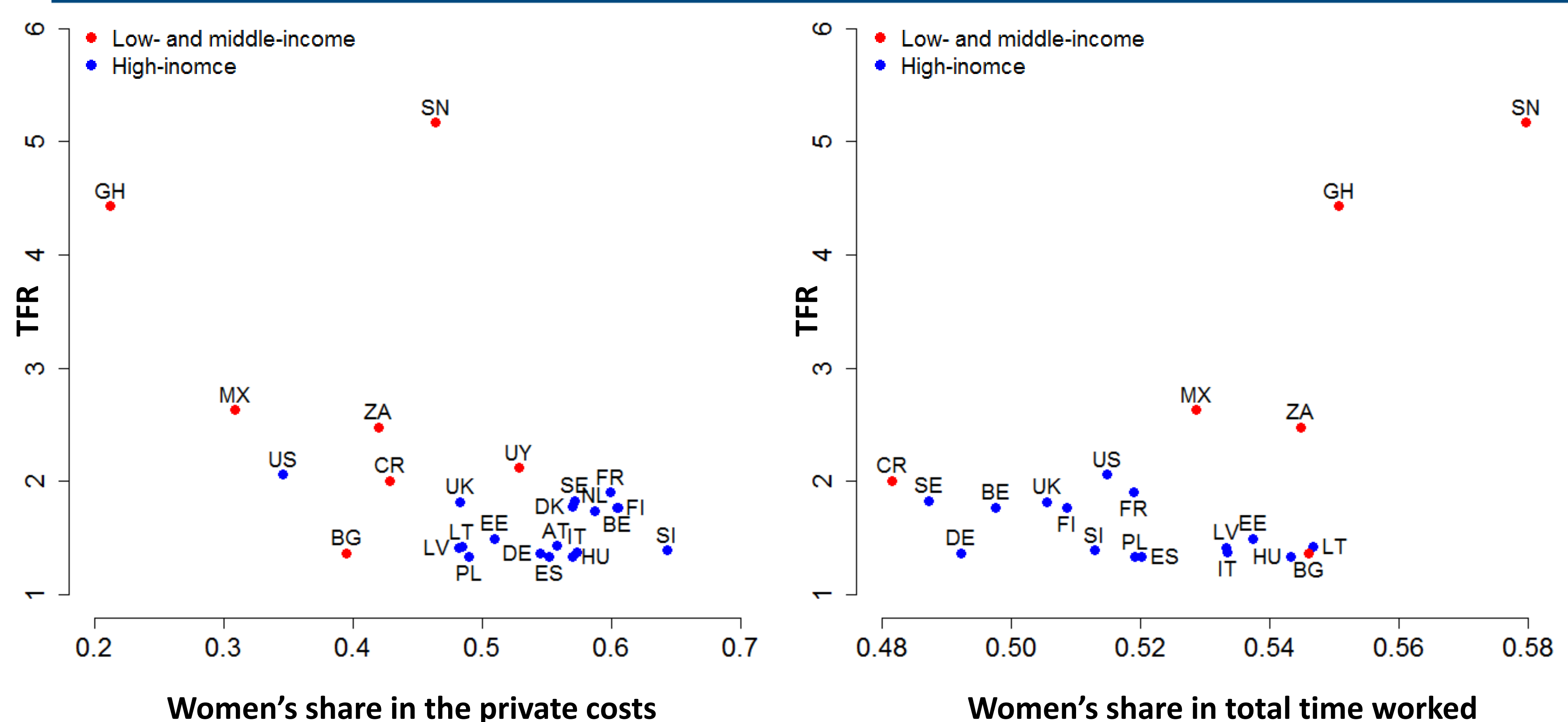
Main results

Fig 1: The value of nonmarket childcare and other household services provided at home is the largest cost for young children and declines by age, whereas the private and public market costs of child-raising increase.

Fig 2: The gender gap in the contribution to the private market costs of children is between 100 and 25 percentage points among the 25 countries. In providing childcare and other services, however, the gap is between 88 and 41 percentage points.

Fig 3: More than 50% of the total private costs of childbearing are supplied by women in almost all high-income countries included in our analysis, but in low- and middle-income countries female contribution tends to be lower. In those countries where fertility is lower, women's monetary contribution in sustaining for children is higher. The relation between total time worked and fertility is positive for low- and middle countries, and negative for high income countries. **The results indicate that in high-income countries a dual pressure on the market and home has a negative effect on fertility.**

Fig 3: Total fertility rate vs women's share in the contribution to the private costs of childbearing (left panel) and women's share of total time worked (right panel)*



* Source of Fig 1-3: Authors' calculations using National Transfer Accounts estimates from NTA www.ntaccounts.org & AGENTA <http://www.wittgensteincentre.org/ntadata>; National Time Transfer Accounts estimates from AGENTA & CWW <http://www.cww-dpru.uct.ac.za/>; TFR from UN. Data on total time worked is missing for AT, DK, NL and UY.

** Data is from 2000-2010, if the year of NTA and NTTA estimations do not match, they are adjusted to one year only.



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