

Queer demography

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Europe's Non-Binary Population: A Demographic Portrait

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Using the latest 2023 wave of the European Social Survey, I draw a demographic portrait of Europe's population that falls outside the gender binary. Only 0.15% of Europeans identify as non-binary, living predominantly in Western Europe. They are, on average, 17 years younger than the general population (35 vs 52), with two-thirds assigned female at birth. Non-binary individuals spend, on average, two more years in education than women and men (15 vs 13 years) and exhibit very high employment rates (over 90%). In terms of family outcomes, only 8% have ever had children living in the household, while 90% have never been married. Although their self-assessed health is similar to that of women and men, non-binary people report lower life satisfaction (6.6 compared to 7.2 on a scale from 0 to 10). I note that although only a small fraction of ESS respondents identify as non-binary, a broader share of European men and women express varying degrees of gendered self-perception. For instance, only 55% of men describe themselves as "very masculine", while 1.3% describe themselves as "not at all masculine". Similarly, 51% of women identify as "very feminine", while 0.8% reject that label entirely. This suggests that up to half of Europe's population may experience some fluidity or divergence from the gender binary. These findings shed new light on the understanding of gender in demography and call for the increased inclusion of non-binary perspectives in the discipline.

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Highly educated, successfully in love? The Intersection of Sexual Identity and Educational Attainment in LGB Partnership Outcomes

Anna Caprinali - University of Trento

Despite higher educational attainment, LGB individuals often face significant disadvantages in adulthood. Among others, LGB people are less likely to end up in partnership. Significant gaps remain in our understanding of the reasons why educational achievements do not fully translate into benefits in adulthood for LGB people. This study integrates literature on the LGB educational premium and partnership dynamics to better understand how sexual identity and education intersect in shaping partnership outcomes.

Using data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study (2009–2022), the analysis applies matching techniques to reduce observable differences between LGB and heterosexual individuals, followed by Event History Analysis and Poisson regressions. Preliminary findings show that gay men and low-educated lesbian women transition into co-residential partnerships later than their heterosexual peers. Bisexual women closely mirror heterosexual women in transition to first coresidential union, whereas the results for bisexual men vary by educational level: lower-educated bisexual men resemble heterosexual men, while higher-educated bisexual men resemble gay men.

Whereas cox regressions confirm these findings, results from Poisson regression for partnership chances show that LGB persons are more likely to be single or in non-cohabiting relationships than in coresidential ones, regardless of educational level. The sole exception appears in cohort analyses: younger highly educated LGB people exhibit slightly higher odds of partnership compared to those in older cohorts, particularly bisexual women.

These insights yield a more nuanced understanding of LGB partnership dynamics in the UK and how educational advantages interact (or not) with sexual identity to shape partnership outcomes.

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Dating, Identity, and Social Constraint: Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors in a Turkish University Context
Binnaz Poşul - Boğaziçi University

This study explores how university students in Turkey navigate romantic and sexual relationships within a cultural and political climate marked by strong conservative norms and minimal sex education. Drawing on an original, quota-sampled survey (n≈374) conducted at Bogazici University, the research examines the interplay of gender, religiosity, sexual orientation, and relationship status in shaping students' attitudes toward virginity, dating app use, casual relationships, non-heteronormative partnerships, and sexual health practices.

While the survey includes both heterosexual and non-heterosexual participants, particular attention is given to LGBTQIA+ students, whose experiences offer critical insights into the negotiation of identity, intimacy, and stigma in a context where queerness remains politically and socially marginalized. By comparing the attitudes and behaviors of sexual minorities and majorities, the study contributes to queer demography by situating LGBTQIA+ experiences within a broader social field—highlighting both points of divergence and unexpected convergence.

Preliminary findings, to be presented at the conference, will include how non-heterosexual students engage differently with dating technologies and casual dating, how sexual orientation correlates with gendered sexual norms, and how all groups—regardless of orientation—exhibit gaps in safe-sex knowledge.

By focusing on an under-studied population in a politically charged environment, this research expands existing demographic literature on queer life and digital intimacy. It invites conversation on how young adults resist or reproduce dominant ideologies around sex, relationships, and identity—and what this means for inclusive public health and education policy.

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Mortality in the intersex population: Evidence from Danish administrative data
Morten Kjær Thomsen - University of Oxford, Andrea Tilstra - University of Oxford, Jane Greve - Danish Center for Social Science Research

Individuals with intersex traits are born with sex characteristics (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies. Estimates suggest that this applies to more than 1 % of the population, and yet, the demographic characteristics of this population remain almost entirely unstudied. This is largely due to the lack of data sources capable of capturing the presence of intersex traits. To address this gap, we harness rich administrative population-wide data from Denmark spanning 1994-2022 and identify all who were assigned diagnostic codes associated with intersex traits. We match this at the individual-level to information on all deaths in Denmark in the same time period. This allows us to present the first analyses of mortality among individuals with intersex traits, comparing the age-specific mortality rates of individuals with intersex traits to that of non-intersex individuals. Our analyses reveal generally increased mortality rates among individuals with intersex traits, especially for men with intersex traits in their first 30 years of life. We examine cause-specific mortality patterns to approach the mechanisms driving the observed mortality disparities.

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