Partnership Formation and Dissolution in Eastern Europe

TLU Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Lifecourse Studies
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Katrin Schwanitz
Estonian Institute for Population Studies

TALLINN UNIVERSITY

European Union
European Regional
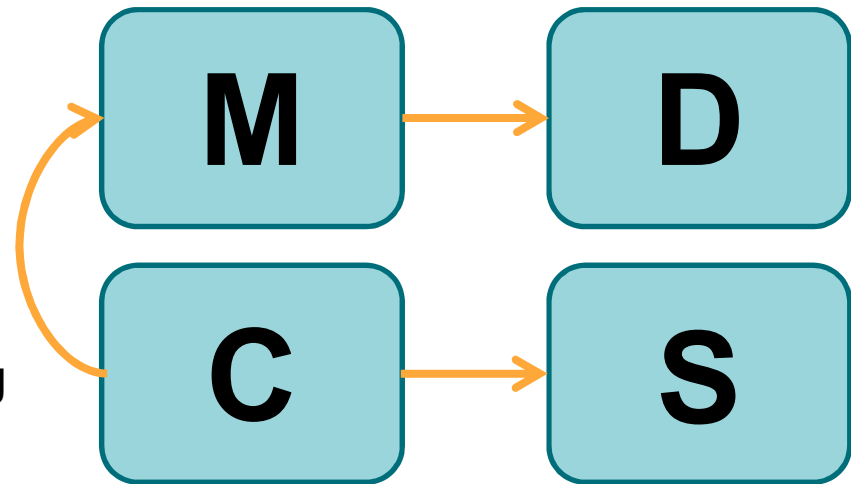Development Fund

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Background I

- Profound changes in demographic and family behavior over the last decades in many European countries:

    - „weakening of the traditional family" (decreasing fertility, postponement of marriage and childbearing, and rising divorce rates)

    - spread of unmarried cohabitation and rise in number of children born within cohabitation

- Partnership formation and partnerships dynamics have become much more complex over the life course – but cross-national differences within Europe remain high

Background II

- Partnership dynamics: union formation and union dissolution

- Union dissolution is a stratified and stratifying life event: It varies across groups in both its likelihood of occurring and its consequences

- Partnership dynamics thus (can) become mechanisms for the transmission of inequality both within and across generations

M → D

C → S

Background III

- Micro-predictors of partnership dynamics:

    - Union dissolution: education; female employment; age at union formation

    - Re-partnering: education; having child(ren); ethnicity

    - Marriage preceded by cohabitation: having child(ren)

- Weight of predictors may lessen if demographic behaviors are a modal experience rather than being uncommon ("diffusion perspective")

Background IV

Variation in union formation and dissolution:

- Across countries
- Across cohorts
- Between men and women

Variation due to context and/ or composition
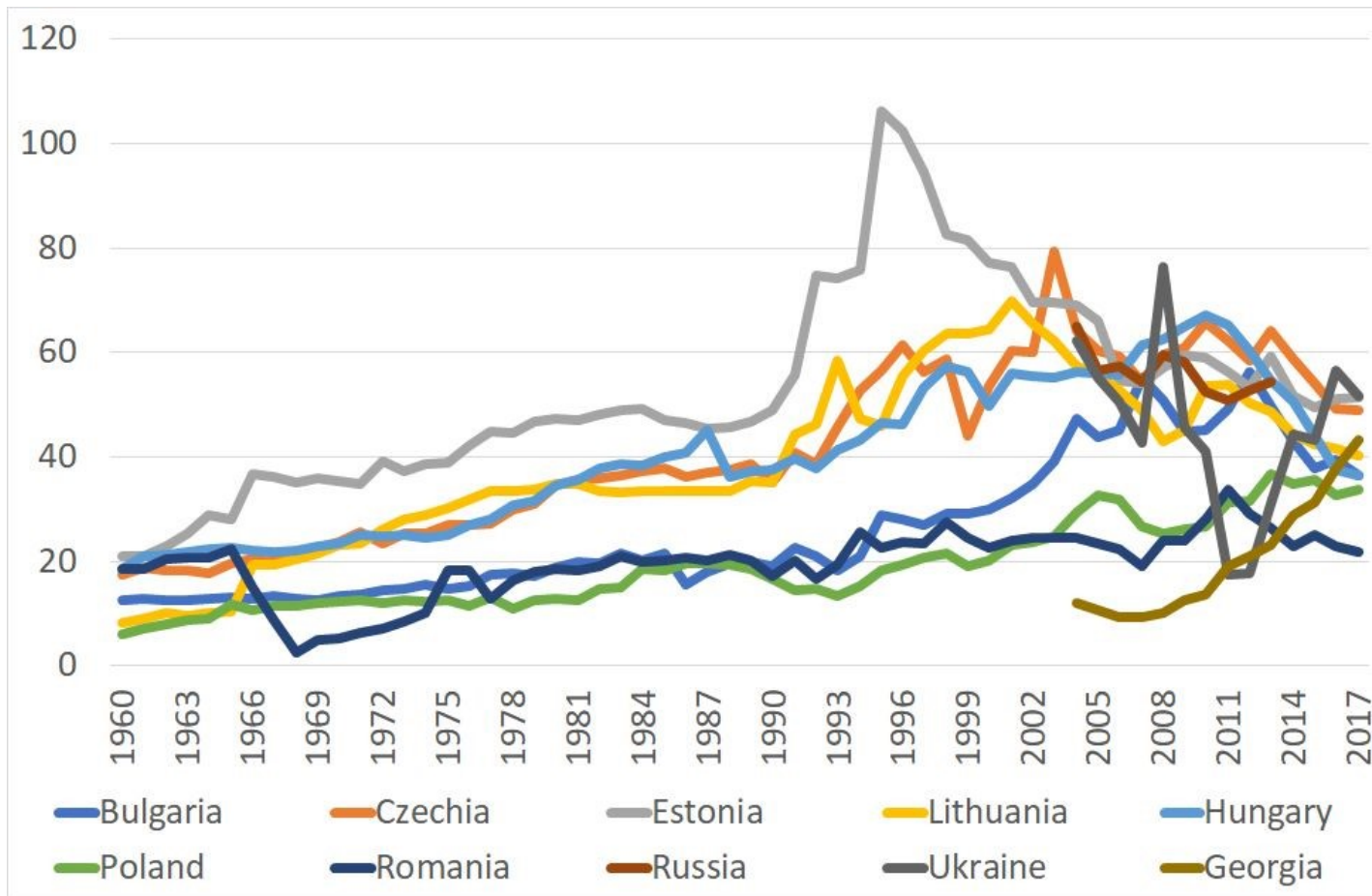
Research gap: Eastern Europe
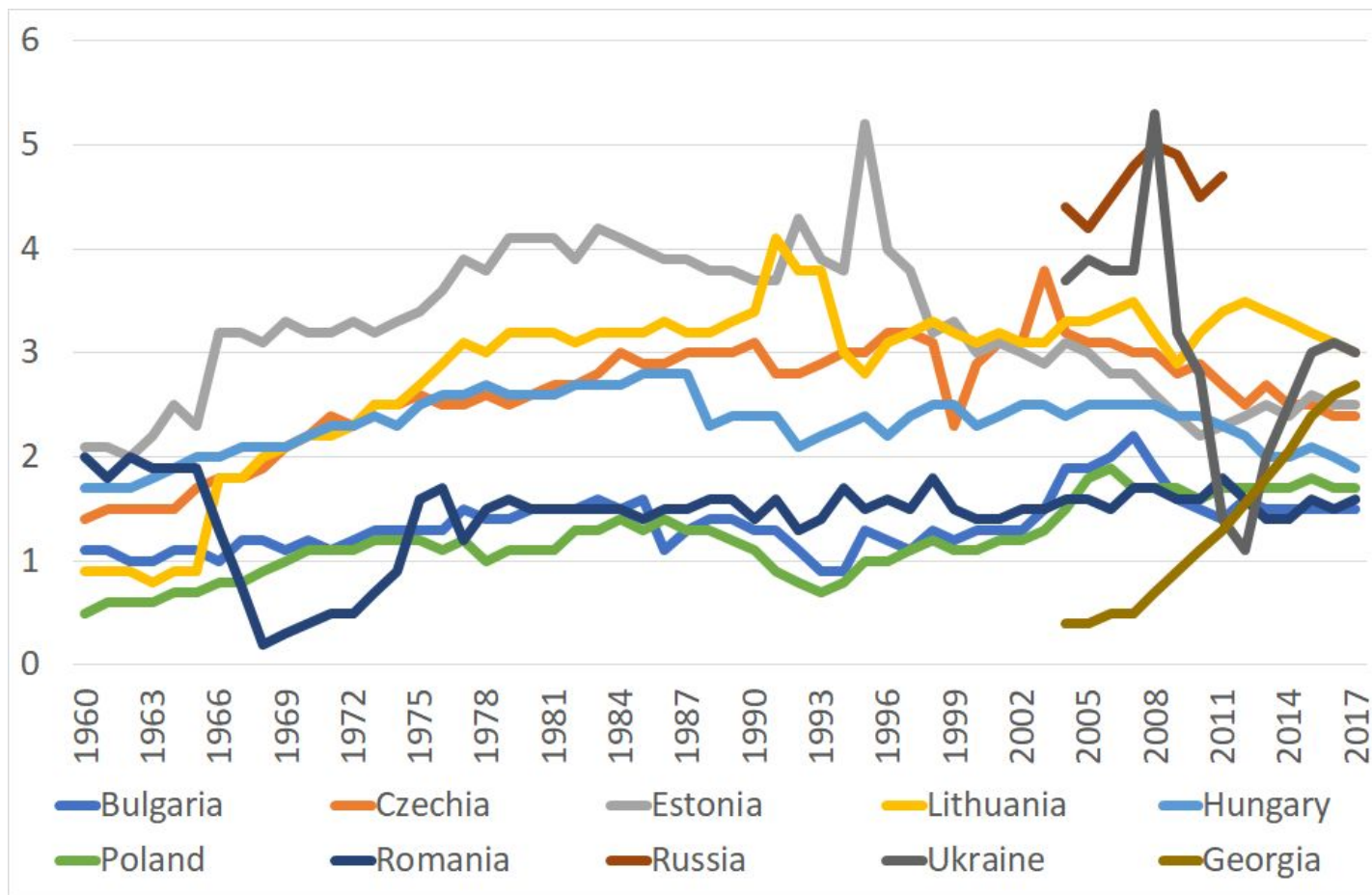
Fig. 1 Divorce per 100 marriages, 1960-2017 (Source: Eurostat)

Fig. 1b Crude divorce rate, 1960-2017 (Source: Eurostat)

Data & Method

Harmonized Histories

- $N_{country}$ = 10; $N_{respondents}$ = 117,517
- Information on socio-demographics and parental background
- Monthly partnership histories

Event history analysis (and sequence analysis*)

Country	Data source	Date of data collection	
Bulgaria	GGS - W1	10/2004	12/2004
Czech Republic	GGS - W1	2/2004	4/2006
Estonia	GGS - W1	8/2004	12/2004
Georgia	GGS - W1	3/2006	7/2006
Hungary	GGS - W1	10/2004	5/2005
Lithuania	GGS - W1	4/2006	12/2006
Poland	GGS - W1	1/2010	12/2011
Romania	GGS - W1	11/2005	12/2005
Russia	GGS - W1	6/2004	8/2004
Belarus	GGP - 2020	1/2017	11/2017

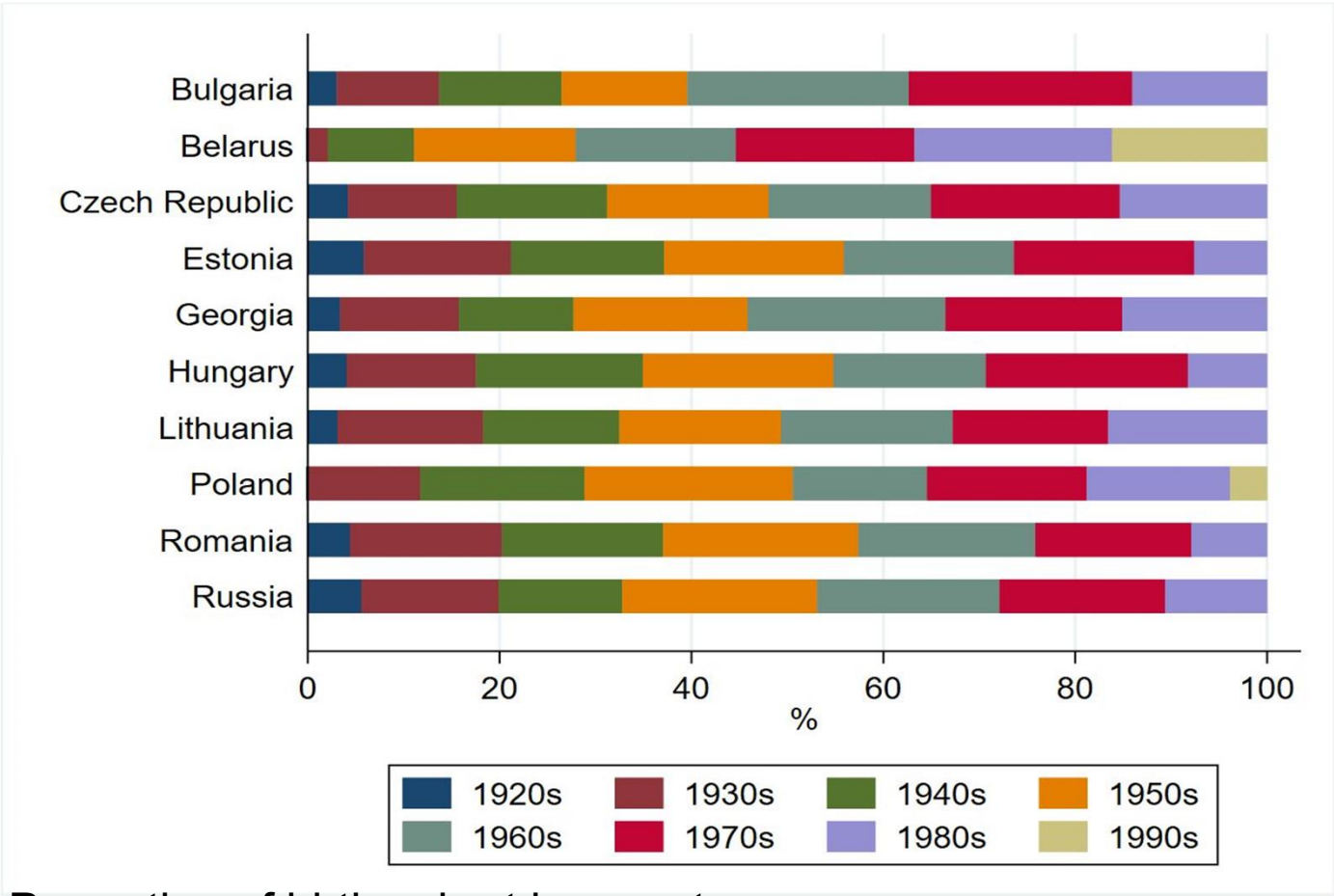Tab. 1 Overview of the Harmonized Histories

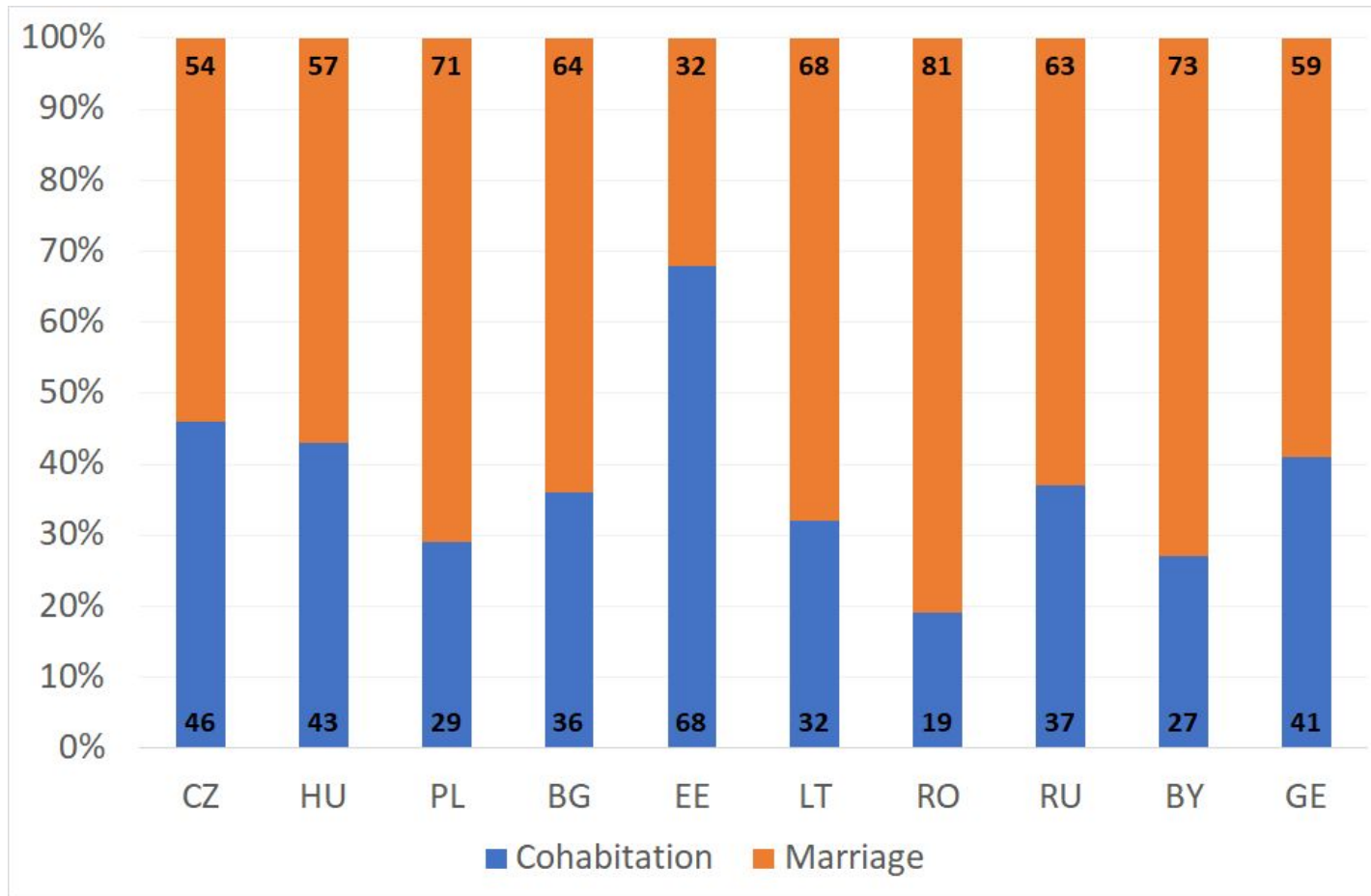Fig. 2 Proportion of birth cohort by country

Preliminary results

Fig. 3 Proportion of first unions formed after 1990, by type
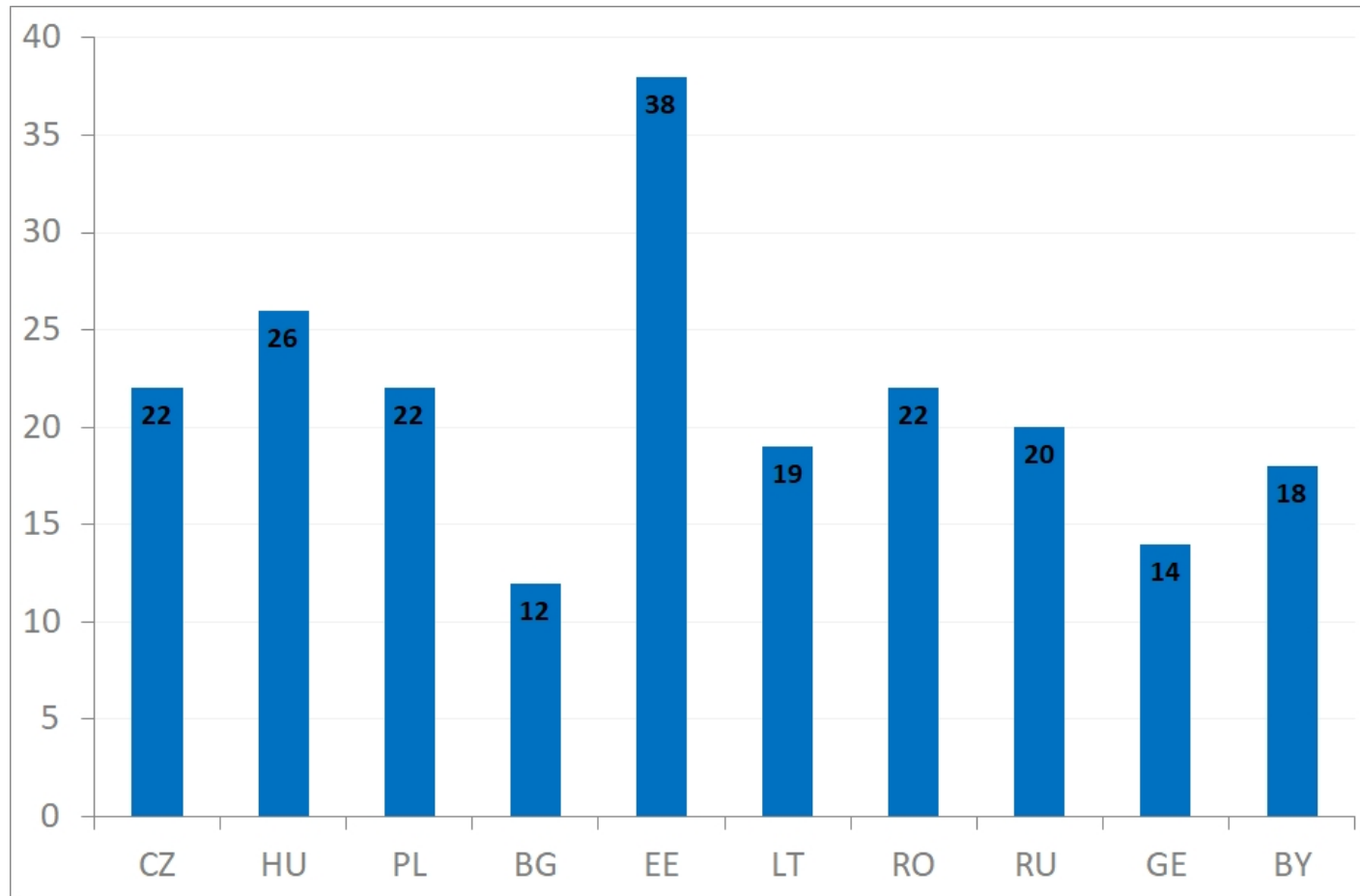
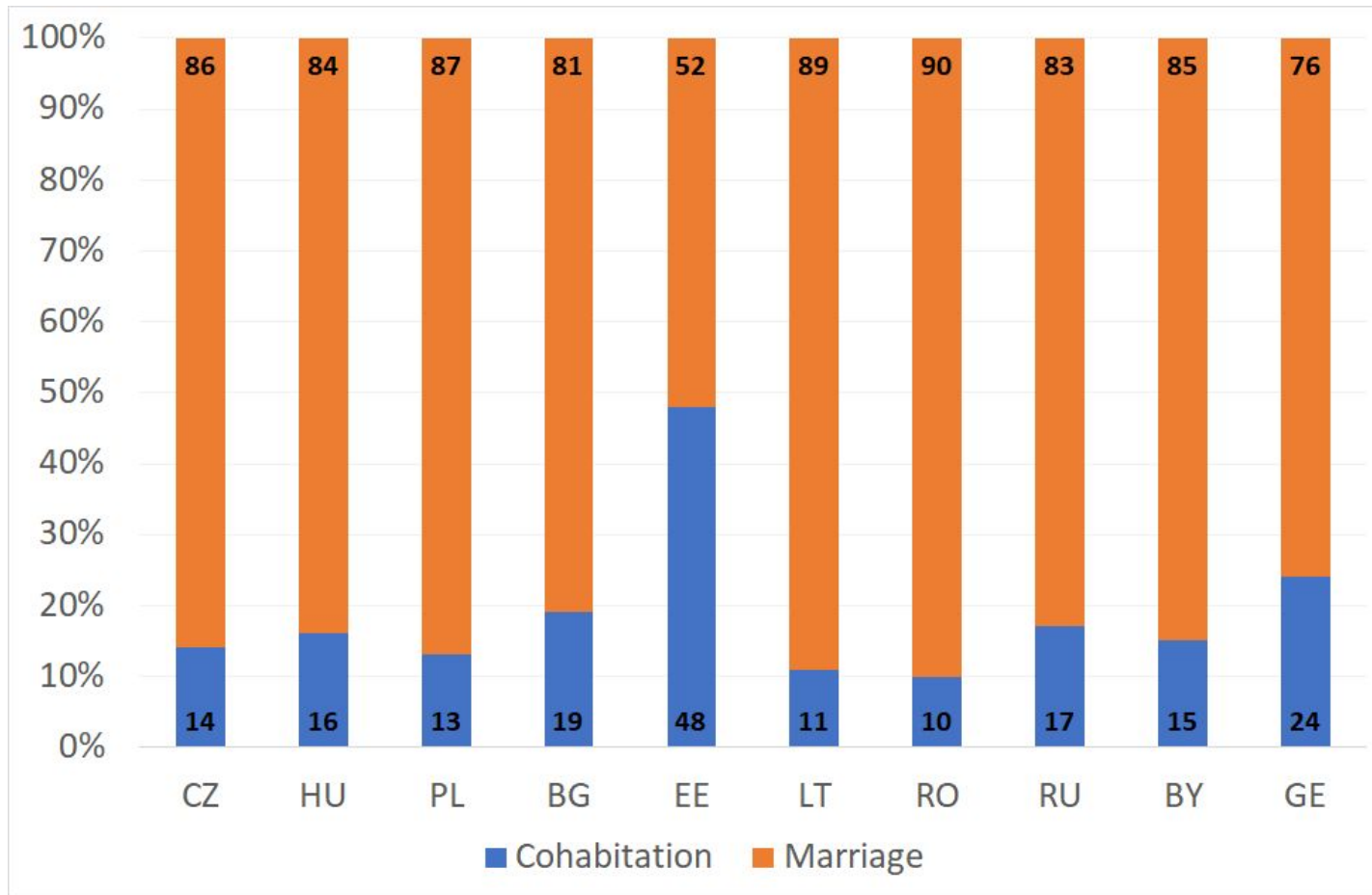Fig. 4 Mean duration of cohabitations formed after 1990 in months, women

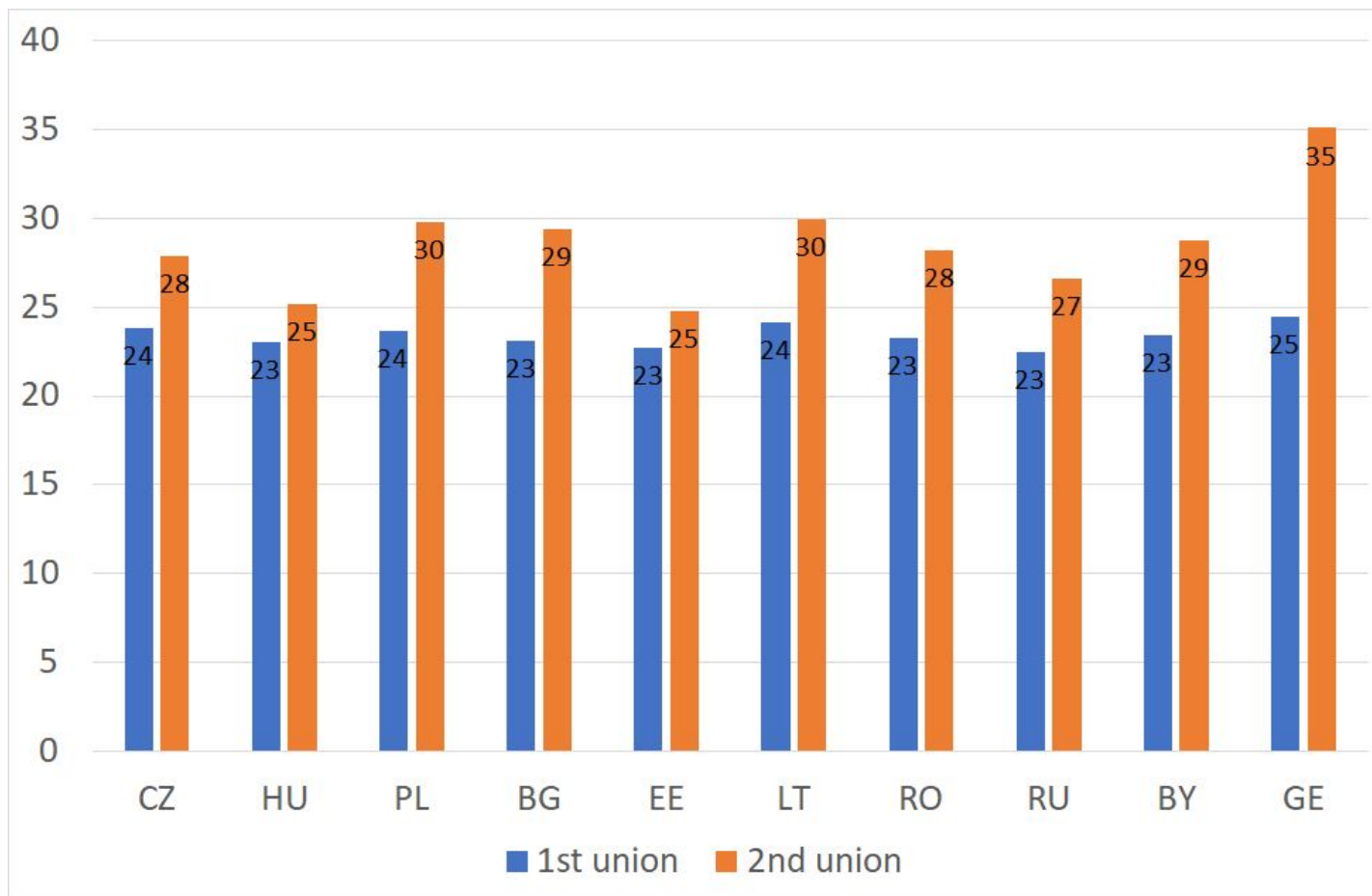Fig. 5 Union context of a first birth within co-resident unions
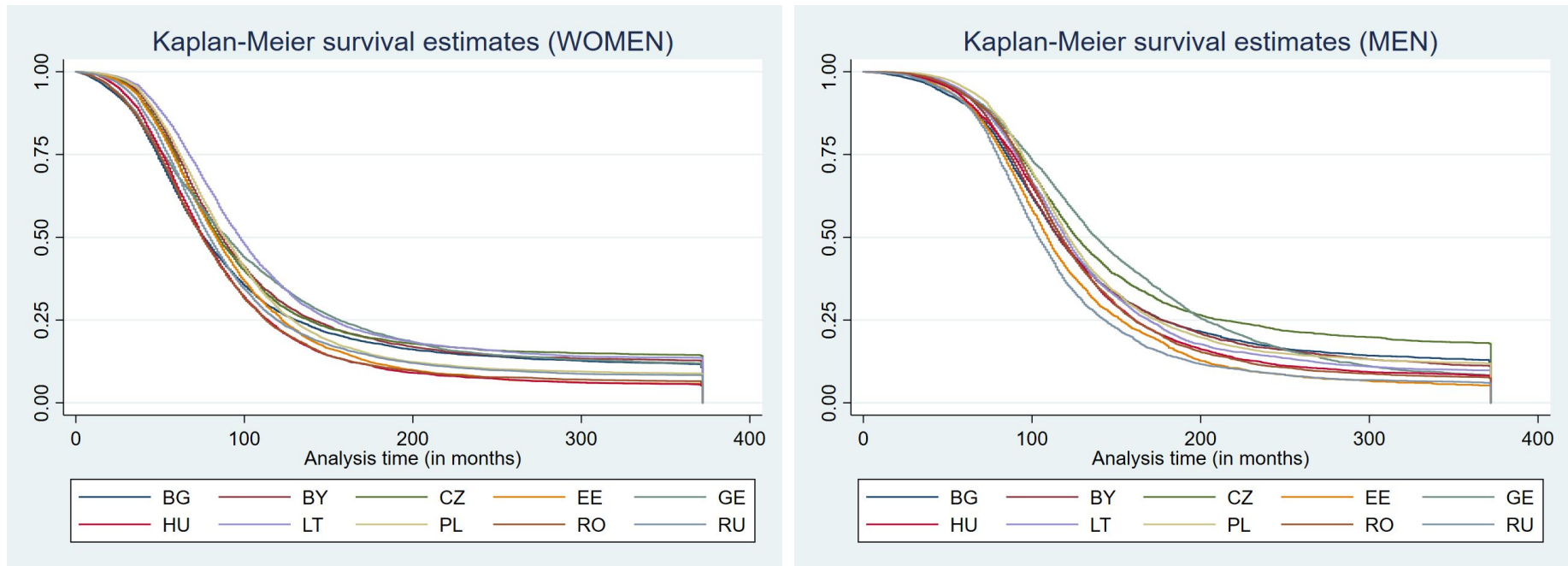
Fig. 6 Mean age at union start

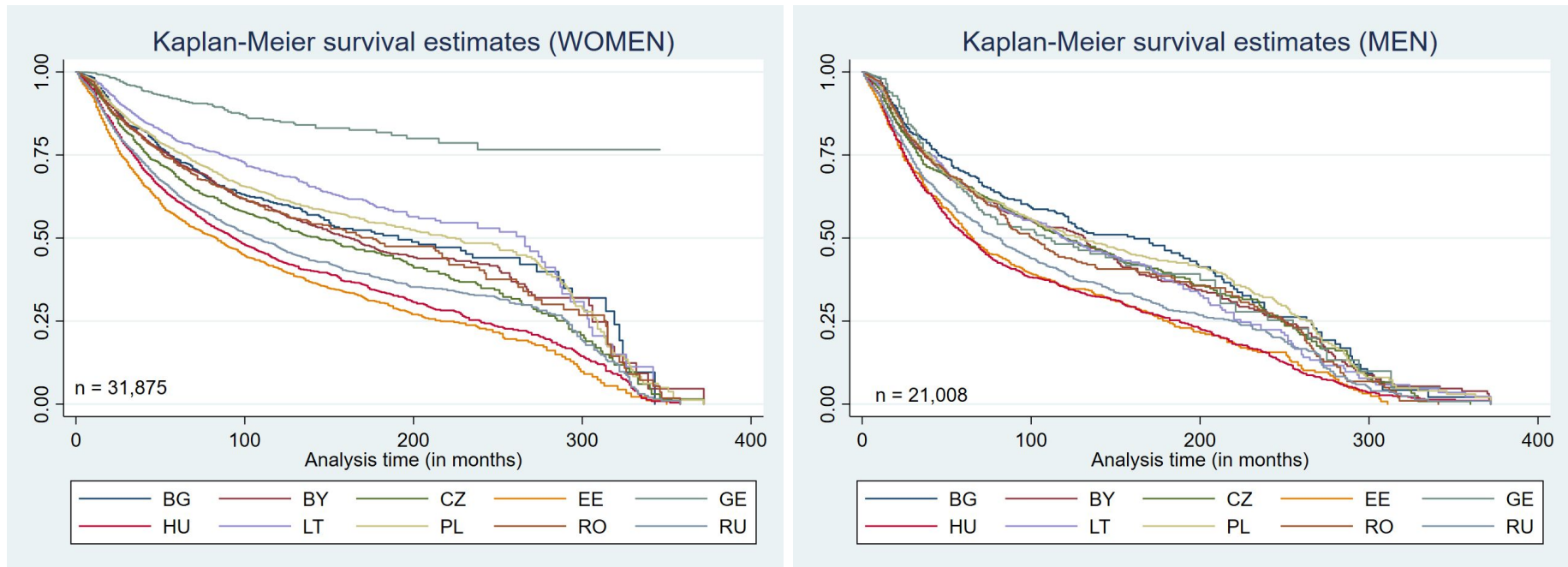Fig. 7 Monthly 1st union formation rates by sex

Fig. 8 Monthly 2nd union formation rates by sex
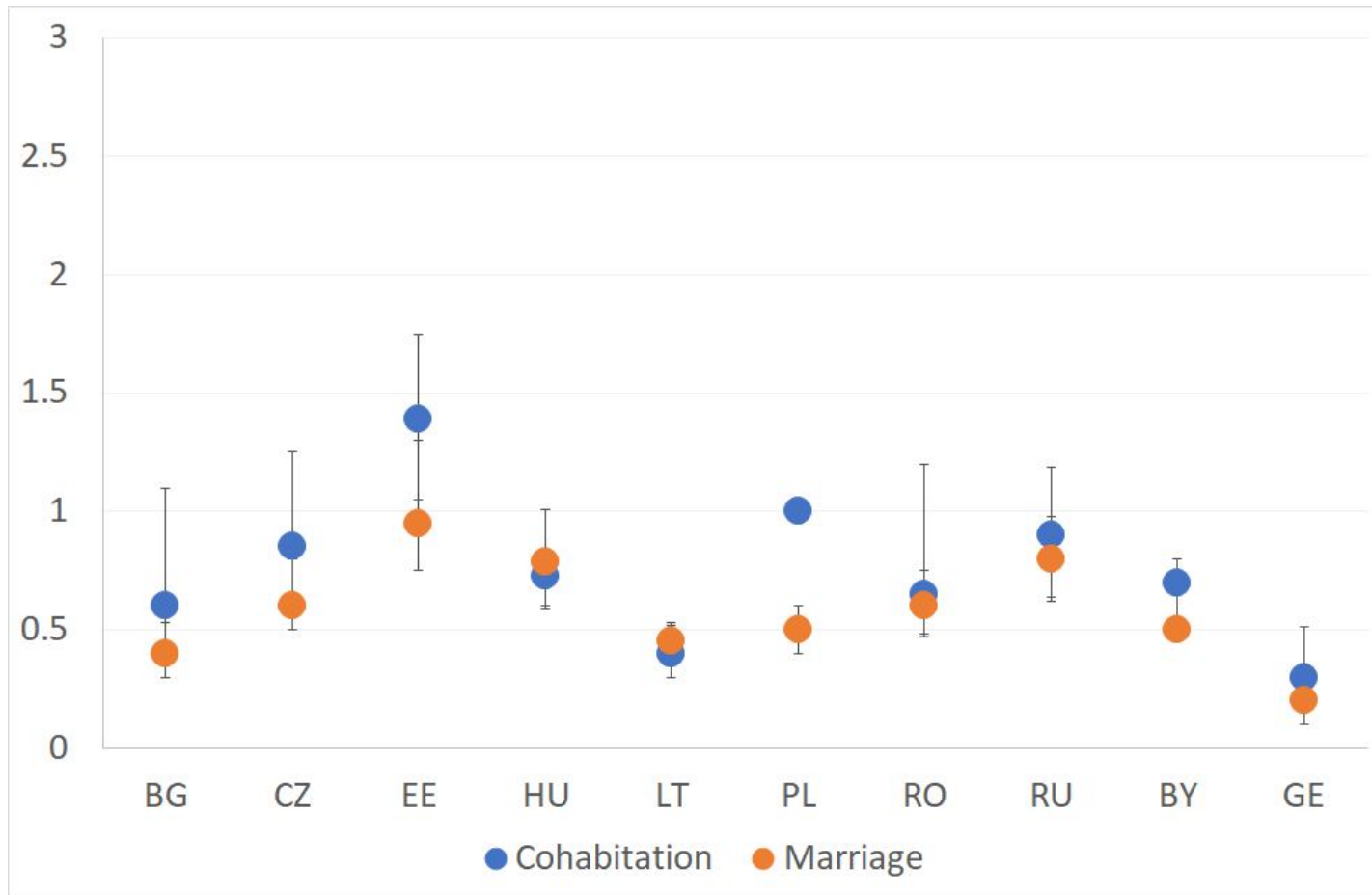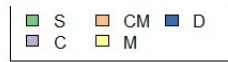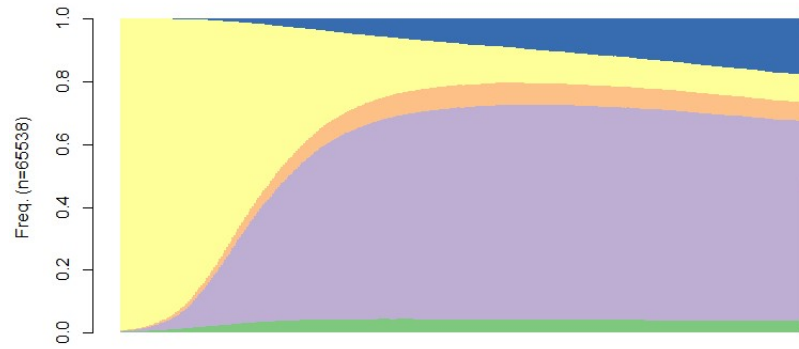
Fig 9. The odds ratio of re-partnering by country, women

Next steps

State definitions

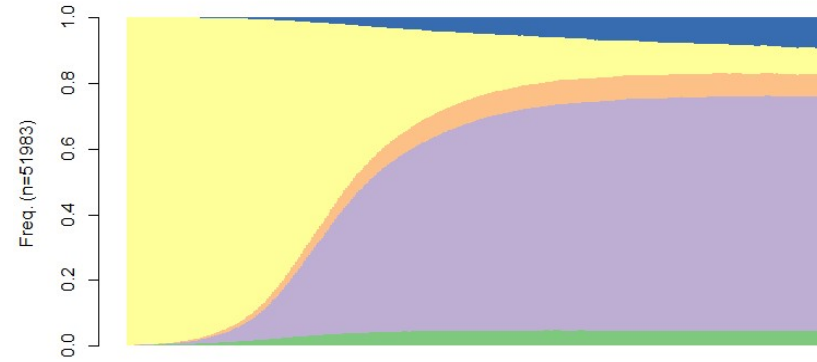|	Helske et al 2015	Perelli-Harris & Lyons-Amos 2016
0	Single	Never in a union
1	1st partnership	Cohabiting
2	2nd partnership	Married preceded by cohabitation
3	3rd+ partnership	Directly married
4	Divorced/ separated	Single after separation
5	Missing	Missing

WOMEN

MEN

Fig. 10 State distributions between age 15-45, by sex

Thank you!

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katrin.schwanitz@tlu.ee
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