



HUNGARIAN **DEMOGRAPHIC**
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Marriage boom and changing partnership patterns in Hungary

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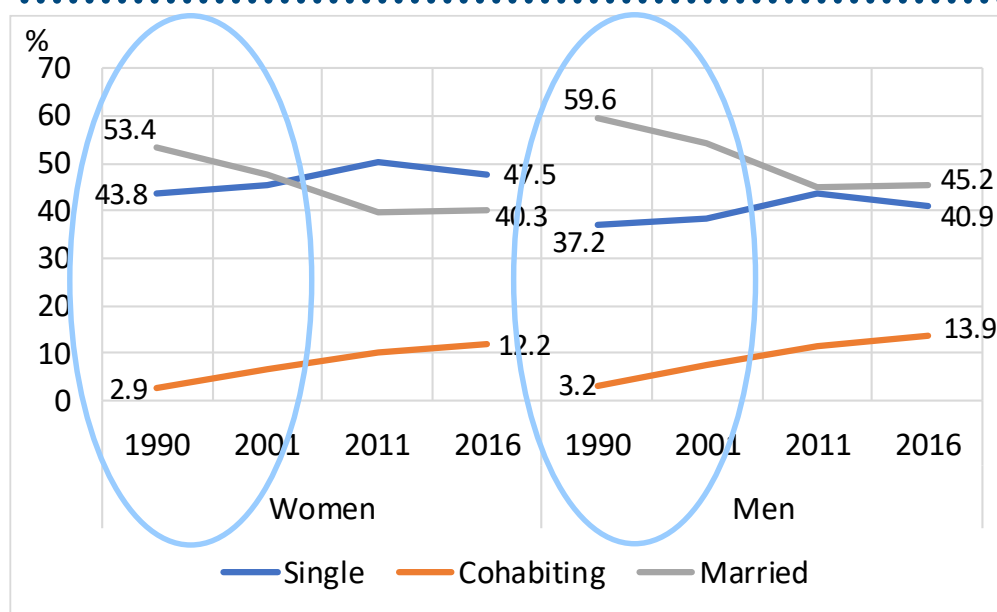
Corvinus University of Budapest, Institute of Sociology and Social Policy, Centre for Gender and Culture



1) GENERAL PARTNERSHIP TRENDS SINCE 1990



The partnership status of the population aged 15+

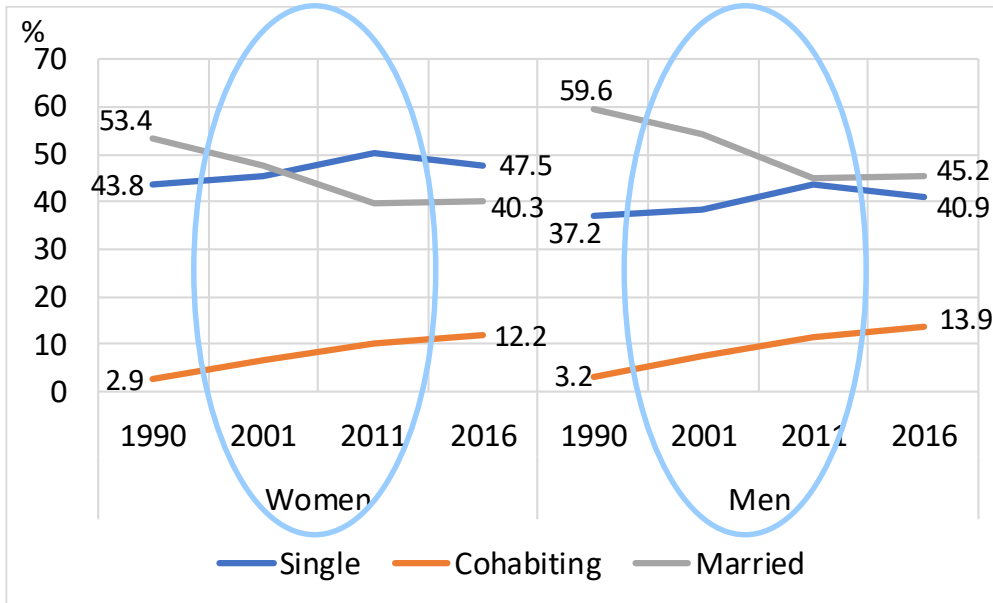


Sources: HCSO Censuses 1990, 2011, HCSO Microcensus 2016.

- **1990s:** a shift towards unmarried cohabitation among the partnered population



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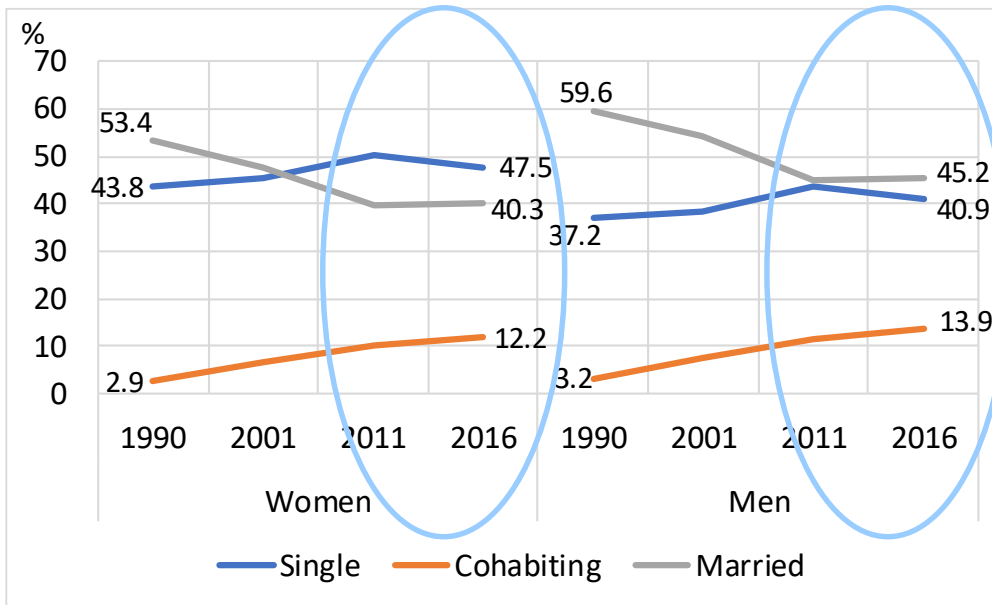


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- **1990s:** a shift towards unmarried cohabitation among the partnered population
- **2000s:** the most dynamic decade, the spread of cohabiting unions could not compensate for decreasing marriage rates, increase of singlehood → the non-married have become the majority



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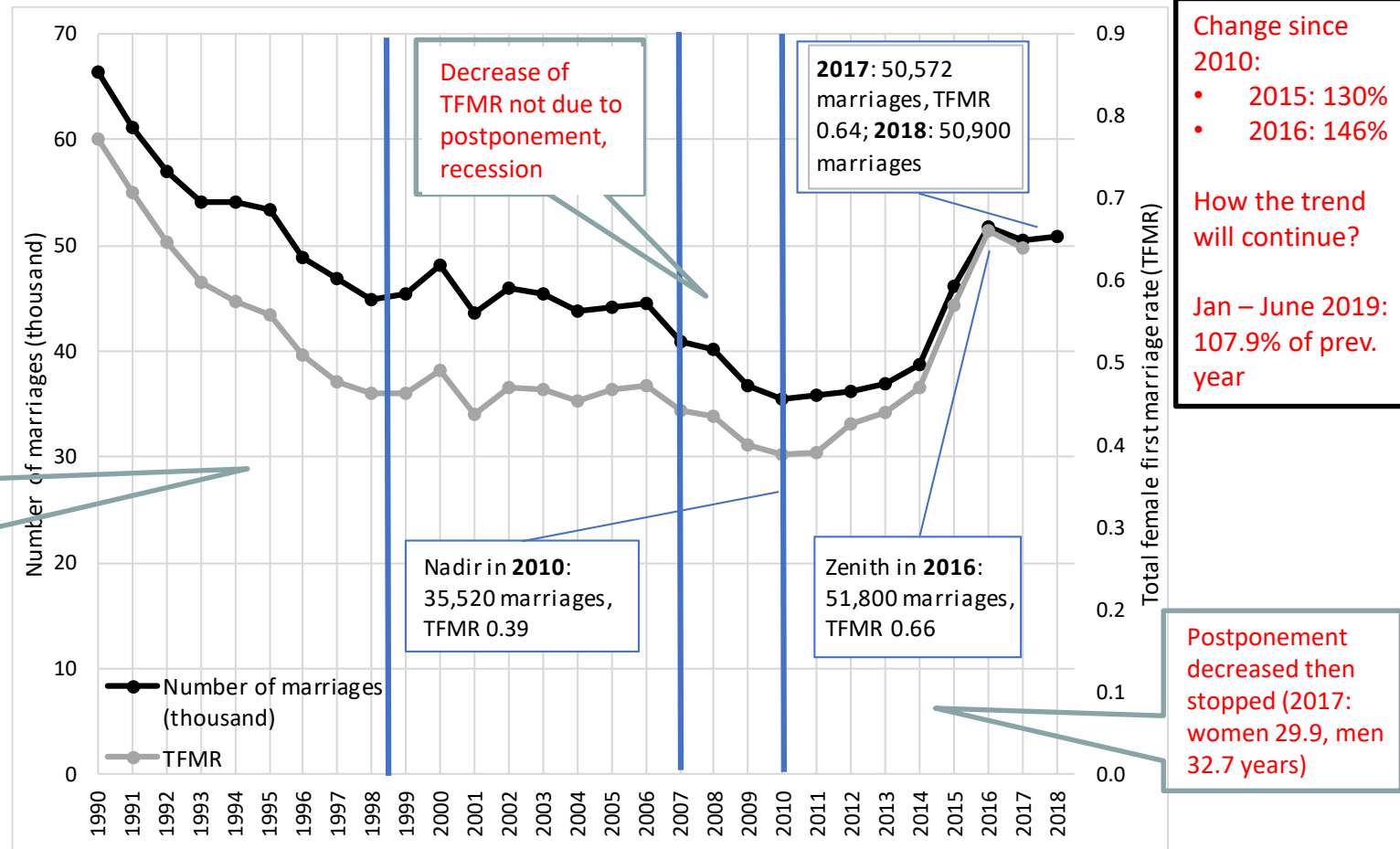
- **1990s:** a shift towards unmarried cohabitation among the partnered population
- **2000s:** the most dynamic decade, the spread of cohabiting unions could not compensate for decreasing marriage rates, increase of singlehood → the non-married have become the majority
- **2010s:** no further decrease in the share of the married, further increase of cohabiting unions
- → more partnered people under 30 live in cohabitation than in marriage; the majority of men under 35, women under 30 and over 65 are single



2) MARRIAGE TRENDS SINCE 1990



Decrease, stagnation, then marriage boom, and then ...?



HDRI

Sources: 1990–2017: HCSO Demographic yearbook 2017; 2018: HCSO STADAT tables, preliminary data.

Factors behind the marriage boom after 2010

- "Why people don't get married?" → "Why people do get married?"
- **"Recuperation" after the Great Recession**
 - Probable explanation for the above-average increase in the age group 40–49 and for people with lower education
 - Increase in most CEE countries
 - But increase among younger and older persons, the increase of 2015–2016 is not paralleled by GDP growth
- **Changes in social policy and legislation**
 - First marriage tax base allowance (5000 HUF/15 EUR per month): above-average increase among people getting married for the first time, the employed, people with low education, less developed regions
 - Housing support programme for families (CSOK): increase among parents aged less than 50
 - New civil code: increase among childless people in their 40s and widow(er)s
 - General political discourse in favour of marriage



Increasing marriage rate \neq increasing fertility rate

- The relationship between marriage and childbearing is loosening in both practice and public opinion
- 45% of children are born outside marriage (2017)
- Decreasing share of cohabitations turn into marriage and non-married couples live together for a longer period before getting married
- Increasing share of cohabiting couples raise children
- The proportion of brides and grooms who are already parents are increasing
- Public opinion on the childbearing of non-married couples has become more accepting



3) SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND COHABITATION (2001 AND 2016)



The diffusion of cohabitation, changes in its forms and meanings

- Cohabitation has turned from a **post-marital** into a **pre-marital** union, then into an **alternative** to marriage
- Trends towards cohabitation as **trial marriage** :
 - The share of divorced, widowed and separated (but still married) persons has decreased, the share of the never married has increased in the cohabiting population
 - First union is almost always non-marital, regardless of socio-economic status
 - Public opinion: very few would recommend direct marriage to young people, marriage after cohabitation is preferred (= "trial marriage" is an expected element of the life course)



The diffusion of cohabitation, changes in its forms and meanings

- Trends towards cohabitation as an **alternative to marriage**:
 - Increasing proportion of cohabiting unions that have lasted for at least 10 years, especially among the never married
 - Fewer cohabitations turn quickly into marriage
 - Decreasing remarriage rate, especially marriages that quickly follow divorce or widowhood
 - Slightly decreasing marital intentions of cohabiting people
 - Increasing share of parents among never married cohabiting couples
 - Public opinion towards childbearing in cohabitation has become more accepting
 - Increasing average relationship satisfaction among cohabiting couples, never married people in cohabitation worry less about their relationship in 2016 than in 2001



4) SINGLES IN THEIR 30s AND 40s



General features of singles in their 30s and 40s (1)

- **Increase** in the share of singles between 2001–2016, in 2016 1/3 of people in their 30s and 40s lives without a partner
- **Why?**
 - Postponement of the first union
 - An increasing share of never-partnered people among cohorts born after 1980
 - Slightly increasing divorce rate (until 2008)
 - The spread of cohabitations, that are less stable than marriages
 - Decreasing re-partnering and re-marriage
- Two subgroups among singles aged 30–49:
 - Have never (yet) lived with partner: 42%
 - Have lived with (married or cohabiting) partner: 58%, many single moms
- “Singles” with **LAT** partner: 16% in 2001, 21% in 2016, increase among people in their 40s



General features of singles in their 30s and 40s (2)

- Singlehood most often **results from** partnership dynamics but it may also be a choice and a long-term form of living
- Decreasing "**stability**", singlehood has become easier to exit
- Somewhat worse **socio-economic status** than the partnered population
- More singles **live alone** (2016: 26% of women, 44% of men), less frequently in the **parental household** (2016: 27% of women, 49% of men) than in 2001
- **Intention** to live with a partner within 3 years: 70% if has LAT partner; 1/3 of women and 1/2 of men if has no LAT partner



Expectations about the effect of living with a partner among singles aged 30–49

- **👍 Things that would improve:**
 - Joy and satisfaction they get from live (but 1/3 expect no change)
 - Sexual life (but 1/3 of women and 1/5 of men expect no change)
 - Financial situation (half of women)
 - What parents and friends think of them (40% of never partnered men, others expect no change)
- **👎 Things that would worsen:**
 - The possibility to do what they want (1/3)
 - Financial situation (1/5 of men)
- Most do not experience pressure from society or people around them
- The majority expect improvement only in two aspects (happiness, sexual life), most do not expect change in other areas
- Many singles do not expect happiness from a relationship: given up? content? negative experience? preference for single or LAT lifestyle?



Thank you for your attention!

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