Partnership Formation and Dissolution in Eastern Europe

TLU Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Lifecourse Studies
Research Seminar | March 2, 2020

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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
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

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

Event history analysis (and sequence analysis*)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Date of data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>GGS - W1</td>
<td>10/2004 5/2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>GGS - W1</td>
<td>1/2010 12/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>GGS - W1</td>
<td>11/2005 12/2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>GGP - 2020</td>
<td>1/2017 11/2017</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Single</td>
<td>Never in a union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 1st partnership</td>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2nd partnership</td>
<td>Married preceded by cohabitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 3rd+ partnership</td>
<td>Directly married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Divorced/ separated</td>
<td>Single after separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Missing</td>
<td>Missing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 10 State distributions between age 15-45, by sex
Thank you!

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