

Choosing between marriage and cohabitation: first union patterns in Hungary

Abstract

In this paper, we analyze the patterns of first union formation of various cohorts in Hungary using competing risk models applied (Cox regression) to retrospective data (women sub sample, N=8931) from the Gender and Generations Survey for Hungary, wave 1 (Turning points of the life course, 2001). Our results show that, while there is well defined tendency of the younger generations to choose cohabitation rather than marriage as a first union, the level of education, family history and ethnicity play an important role in taking this decision. We found that cohabitation is a replacement for marriage only for more mature women, while those who enter into cohabitation at young ages use it as a step toward marriage.