

Transitions to marriage in former Yugoslavia.

Interethnic differences across cohorts

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I.- Introduction

Process of marriage was mainly documented in former Yugoslavia (Mrdjen 1996, Petrovic, 1985). The focus was especially oriented on interethnic marriages, as they were considered as an indicator of integration of different groups into the Yugoslavian society, and even allowing building the unified Yugoslavian society (Morokvasic-Müller, 2004). After the beginning of ethnic conflicts, mixed couples and their children met many difficulties and were sometimes persecuted. Mixed marriage largely promoted before that moment entered in conflict with the idea of ethnical purity.

According to Kalmijn (1998), factors explaining the level of mixed marriages in a country are of three types. The first type is related to preferences of individuals about the characteristics of a potential partner. The second type is composed of institutional factors, for example, sanctions given by the institutions of the group when there is a mixed marriage. Third types of factors groups structural factors of the marriage market like the demographic weight of each

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group into a region, the degree of geographic segregation, or the differences in patterns of marriage between groups. In this paper, we will not exactly investigate mixed marriage. However we are interested to investigate the third type of factors which explain mixed marriages, especially, aspects about differences in their pattern.

In the second section of this chapter, we present a review of the literature on mixed marriage in former Yugoslavia. In the third, we present data we used, called Traces data, a retrospective survey realised in former Yugoslavia in 2006 by an interdisciplinary team of the University of Lausanne (Spini, Elcheroth and Fasel, 2007). In the third part, we investigate patterns of marriage in relation with ethnic group, and their evolution. Do differences in pattern of marriages between groups form barriers for the development of mixed marriages?

II. Mixed marriages in former Yugoslavia

Petrovic (1985, quoted by Mrdjen 1996), a demographer of the former Yugoslavia, described mixed marriage as an indicator of a “*general Yugoslav process*”, i.e. as an indicator in the building of an united Yugoslavian society. Following Morokvasic-Müller (2004), unions and weddings between partners from different ethnic groups were an occasion to create exchanges between families belonging to different communities. Children born from mixed marriages were also supposed to grow in an intercultural environment. Mixed marriages were then strongly encouraged by authorities of former Yugoslavia.

Moreover, exogamic marriages were facilitated by other institutional changes. First, religious marriage was replaced by civil marriage in 1945, which reduced the influence of religious authorities that are in general against interreligious marriages. Second, the economic migration of men from the south to the north of the country, especially to Slovenia, was a

factor of mixing different groups. In 1950, Mixed marriage represented one marriage in eleven (8.6%) while in 1990 they represented one marriage in seven (13.5 %) (Mrdjen, 1996). Korac (2004), on the basis of results presented by Petrovic (1985), states:

“At the time of the 1981 census, the number of people in ethnically mixed marriages and from ethnically mixed background was greater than the number of Albanians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Muslims and Slovenes. Approximately, two million of people out of twenty two million were either parents or children of ethnically mixed marriages. This group was outnumbered only by Croats and Serbs” (p. 251)

However, several authors were more mitigated about the reality of mixed marriages in former Yugoslavia. Regions with a strong ethnic heterogeneity did not display a higher level of mixed marriages. In 1991, the region with the highest rate of interethnic marriages was the Vojvodina (25%), followed by Croatia (18%), Serbia and Slovenia (16%), three regions with a strong homogeneous ethnic composition. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, where ethnic heterogeneity was higher, only less than a marriage in eight was interethnic (Mrdjen 1996). It is interesting to note that evolutions in mixed marriages between 1950 and 1990 even differed according to the region. If in Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina and Serbia display a constant increase of mixed marriages from 1950 until the beginning of nineties, in Montenegro, and Macedonia, after a first phase of increase from 1950, the rate of mixed marriages decreased from 1965 (Mrdjen 1996), while in Kosovo mixed marriages constantly decrease from 10% to 6% between 1950 and 1990. Such observations seem to indicate a process of aversion to mixed marriage for several ethnic groups.

Feminist authors mention that mixed marriage did not have the same meaning according to the gender (Morokvasic-Müller, 2004). In almost every region of the former Yugoslavia, a mixed marriage was often composed by a man belonging to the local demographically

dominant community and a woman of a local minority. The only exception was Slovenia, where many women married with immigrant men. Moreover, as women were more often socially classified by their marriage, they were more often excluded by their community of origin if she married with a man belonging from another community, and even considered as “gained” by the husband’s group. On the opposite, men engaged in mixed marriages generally maintained their social position into their origin’s group. Being a mixed couple had several implications. For example, in the context of wars and constitutions of new countries during the nineties, a lot of mixed couples moved from an area where men belonged to a minority to areas where their origin group was demographically dominant (Morokvasic-Müller, 2004). The transmission of the nationality to the child was another important issue. Census of 1981 showed that 55% of children of mixed marriages declared the nationality of their father, while only 26 % declared the nationality of their mother (Mrdjen, 1996). The only region where most of the children declared the nationality of their mother was, again, Slovenia. Only 12.7% of children of mixed couples declared in the census of 1991 that they were Yugoslav, a result that puts into perspective the Korac’s statement (2004) we just quoted above².

During and after conflicts, several countries, especially Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia promoted from the nineties a re-traditionalisation of sex roles, i.e. a return to gendered traditional norms of family organization (Giles and Hydman, 2004, Tomanovic and Ignjatovic, 2006): women became seen as mainly responsible for the household labour and even as mothers of the nation.

The low frequency of interethnic marriages in former Yugoslavia is also related to the presence of different patterns of marriage among ethnic groups (Botev, 1994). Two main dimensions of difference in these patterns are the mean age of marriage and in the rate of individuals remaining unmarried. Botev argues that patterns of marriage differed according to

² Note also, that respectively 3.8% and 2.5% declared another nationality than those of their parents and no nationality.

the ethnic group at the time of the former Yugoslavia. Its argumentation takes into account, in a historical perspective, the cultural influences from ancient empires, i.e. the Austrian and Ottoman empires. In fact, regions of the former Yugoslavia are situated along the Hajnal's line between St. Petersburg and Trieste, which define and divide from about the end of middle age to the beginning of the twenty century the Western and the Eastern European patterns of marriage (Hajnal, 1965). The Western European marriage is characterized by an important rate of men and women from a cohort remaining unmarried, and a higher age for marriage. According to historical demographers, this pattern of marriage allowed communities to regulate their fertility. Marriage did not have this role of fertility regulation in the Eastern European pattern where marriage occurred very early in the life course and almost all persons from a generation got married. However, a third pattern of marriage is mentioned by Botev (1994) in former Yugoslavia, that he called the Mediterranean pattern. This pattern of marriage is very similar to the Eastern European except that the difference of age between partners is higher. The Western pattern was mainly observed in Slovenia, the Mediterranean pattern in Kosovo, and the Eastern pattern, that he called the traditional pattern of marriage, was dominant in all other regions.

The arguments developed by Botev on different patterns of marriage are interesting for our analysis of the marriage in former Yugoslavia and its evolution because marriage is considered in their historical context. Moreover, these different patterns of marriage are considered encouraging endogamy and creating social barriers for mixed marriages. For example, two potential partners belonging to different ethnic groups are not "ready" to match at the same time or the difference of age between them is too high or too low. In his study however, Botev only considers the age at marriage and the final proportion of unmarried individuals in a cohort, which correspond to the two dimensions traditionally analysed by demographers. These two dimensions correspond to what Modell et al. (1976) called the

timing and prevalence of a life course event in their analysis of the standardisation in the transition to adulthood in United States between 1850 and 1950. These authors mention however other dimensions in the characterisation of a life course transition, as i.e. the consideration of other life events. For example, in almost all Western societies, before the diffusion of cohabiting unions after the seventies, marriage coincided with the formation of an autonomous household with the partner. These two events were not necessarily integrated in ancient communist countries in which it was not rare that married people lived by the parents of one partner because of housing crisis (Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1998). Such pattern of marriage preceding the formation of an autonomous household has been described in Serbia (Tomanovic and Ignjatovic, 2006) and confirmed by our own investigations (Le Goff and Giudici 2008, Giudici, Le Goff and Spini, 2009). Our previous analyses also show that cohabitation between parents (or parents in law) and married children are strongly developed in Kosovo while marriages after the formation of the household or the co-occurrence of the two events are extremely rare. This specific pattern is the expression of the predominance of extended families. The specificity of marriage in Kosovo can then be incompatible with the nuclear family pattern of marriage in which marriage and formation of an autonomous household are integrated. In the following section, we will then extend the notion of pattern of marriage not only in terms of prevalence or timing of marriage but also in terms of co-occurrence with other events, especially, the formation of the autonomous household.

III. The transition to adulthood and Collective Experiences Survey project

Data used in this paper come from the Transition to Adulthood and Collective Experiences Survey (TRACES) (Spini, Elcheroth and Fasel, 2007). The main aims of this

survey in which are involved social psychologists, sociologists, demographers and historians is to analyse experiences of collective vulnerability of young adults. The starting hypothesis of this research is that experiences of vulnerability, like those caused by conflicts or economic crisis, have an incidence on social representations about human rights, justice, and relation between social groups. According to this hypothesis, former Yugoslavia was chosen as the research field. This country presented all the necessary conditions to analyse vulnerability (table 1). A strong economic crisis started at the beginning of the eighties. Violent ethnic conflicts occurred during the nineties and several countries with new institutions emerged from the collapse of the former Yugoslavia.

Table 1 : Chronology of events in Former Yugoslavia (1980-2008)

1980	Titos' death, Beginning of the economic crisis
1989	Higher level of the economic crisis
1990	Independence of Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia
1991	Beginning of the war in Croatia
1992	Independence of Bosnia Beginning of the war in Bosnia
1995	End of the war in Croatia and Bosnia Dayton accords
1999	War in Kosovo NATO bombing on Belgrade End of the war in Kosovo
2006	Independence of Montenegro
2008	Independence of Kosovo

Questions on social representation are associated to calendars where life course events are reported. A first set of events is about having known armed conflicts (if the interviewed person was wounded, lost his relatives, or participates to the fights) and economic crisis

(unemployment spells for example). A second set is related to life course markers of the transition to adulthood, professional life and geographical mobility.

A sample of 600 persons born between 1968 and 1974 and living in urban areas of former Yugoslavia in 2004 were interviewed in a first pilot survey. Men and women of these birth cohorts were considered to have experienced their transition to the adulthood during the nineties. This first survey allowed the exploration of several hypotheses and the improvement of the quality of data, suggesting for example that information would have been better if respondents were from the whole territory and not only from urban areas. Moreover, a comparison of these cohorts with individuals born before 1968 or after 1974 would allow a better understanding in the changes of the transition to adulthood process. In the main Survey realised in 2006, former Yugoslavia was divided into 80 micro-regions and two samples were in fact interviewed³. The first one, called the *cohort sample*, is composed of 2 254 men and women born between 1968 and 1974. All these people were interviewed about their life course markers with a retrospective calendar and on social representations and other subjective indicators. The second one, called the *random sample*, is composed of 3 975 persons born between 1918 and 1981. They were interviewed only on life course events related to the transition to adulthood in one side and to armed conflicts or economic crisis in the other side. The aim of this sample is to obtain contextual indicators for each micro region and use them in multilevel analyses of answers given by young people belonging to the first sample.

Recorded transition to adulthood markers are the beginning of the first job, the leaving of parental home, the foundation of an autonomous household, the marriage and the birth of the first child. In this paper, we will mainly focus on marriage and the foundation of an

³ Note that the survey was done the same year as the partition of Montenegro from Serbia (2006). However, the survey was elaborated before in a context in which it was not expected that this partition will occur so quickly. As promoters of this survey did not anticipate this partition, the sample of persons surveyed in Montenegro is very little and for this reason, we take together Serbian and Montenegrins.

autonomous household. Previous results showed us that these events play a fundamental role in the process of the transition to adulthood (Giudici, Le Goff & Spini, 2009). The access to a first job is strongly postponed for the cohort who experience it during the period of economic crisis, but the postponement do not seem to have consequences on union formation, marriage and transition to parenthood. Leaving home occurred most of the time at the moment of the foundation of the household with the partner

Traces data allow an investigation of interethnic differences across cohorts for the prevalence and the timing of marriage. We obtain the age at the first marriage from the retrospective life event calendar, for both the random and the cohort samples. To assign individuals an ethnic belonging has been however more difficult. A question on the nationality declared in the census of 1991 was asked to all respondents. However, this census was boycotted by several nationalities, especially by Kosovars. A second question asked to respondents who did not participate to the census or who forgot the nationality they declared in this census, the nationality they considered to have at this epoch. We decided to choose answers to the one or the other question to define the ethnicity of respondents. Such a self declaration of the nationality in 1991 is not without problems, especially when we are interested in individuals past behaviours. We can, for example, suppose that a woman married with a man from another ethnical group than the one she belonged, have adopted and declared the nationality of her husband at the census of 1991. Moreover, ethnic groups or nationalities are moving concept changing across time and varies from a census to another. For example, the term of “Muslim” was used in the census of 1991, but replaced later by the term of “Bosniak”. Another option would have been to create an artificial “ethnical” variable crossing religion with language. But in this case, all persons of catholic religion and speaking a Serbo-Croatian language would have been classified as Croats. Such a procedure would have lead to exclude persons who declared not to belong to a religion or those who declared to speak several

languages of former Yugoslavia. Using the nationality give the advantages to consider also individuals who declared themselves as having a Yugoslavian nationality. According to Sekulic, Massey and Hodson (1994), these individuals are not only persons married with a partner from another community or child born from a mixed couple, but also individuals who belonged to the communist party or to ethnic minorities who do not wanted to declare their ethnical group, and more in general people living in an urban context.

We consider here two “cohorts” of men and women: one born between 1945 and 1967, and second born between 1968 and 1974. Members of the first cohort were born, spent their childhood and (for a majority of them) lived their transition to adulthood at the time of the former Yugoslavia, while members of the youngest cohort spent their childhood in former Yugoslavia, but experienced most of their transition to adulthood during and after the nineties. In order to have enough individuals for each group of cohort, sex, and nationality declared in 1991, the first cohort is selected from the random sample of Traces data, while the second cohort is composed by respondents to the Traces cohort data. In both cohorts, persons with missing data on date of marriage and nationality declared in 1991 are excluded from the analysis. Distribution of men and women are presented in table 2. Note that we conserved the term of “Muslims” rather than the one of “Bosniak” because the latter term did not exist in 1991.

Table 2: Distributions of different nationalities by sex and cohort

	Slovenians	Croats	Serbs	Montene- grins	Macedo- nians	Muslims	Albanians	Hung- arians	Yugoslavs	Other	Cannot remember
Cohort 45-67 men	44	139	126	10	55	51	74	6	53	10	11
Cohort 45-67 women	101	170	187	5	115	98	55	6	74	17	13
Cohort 68-74 men	84	243	257	8	114	97	154	12	72	16	24
Cohort 68-74 women	128	211	187	17	121	122	151	4	106	17	39

IV. Changes in patterns of marriage during the nineties

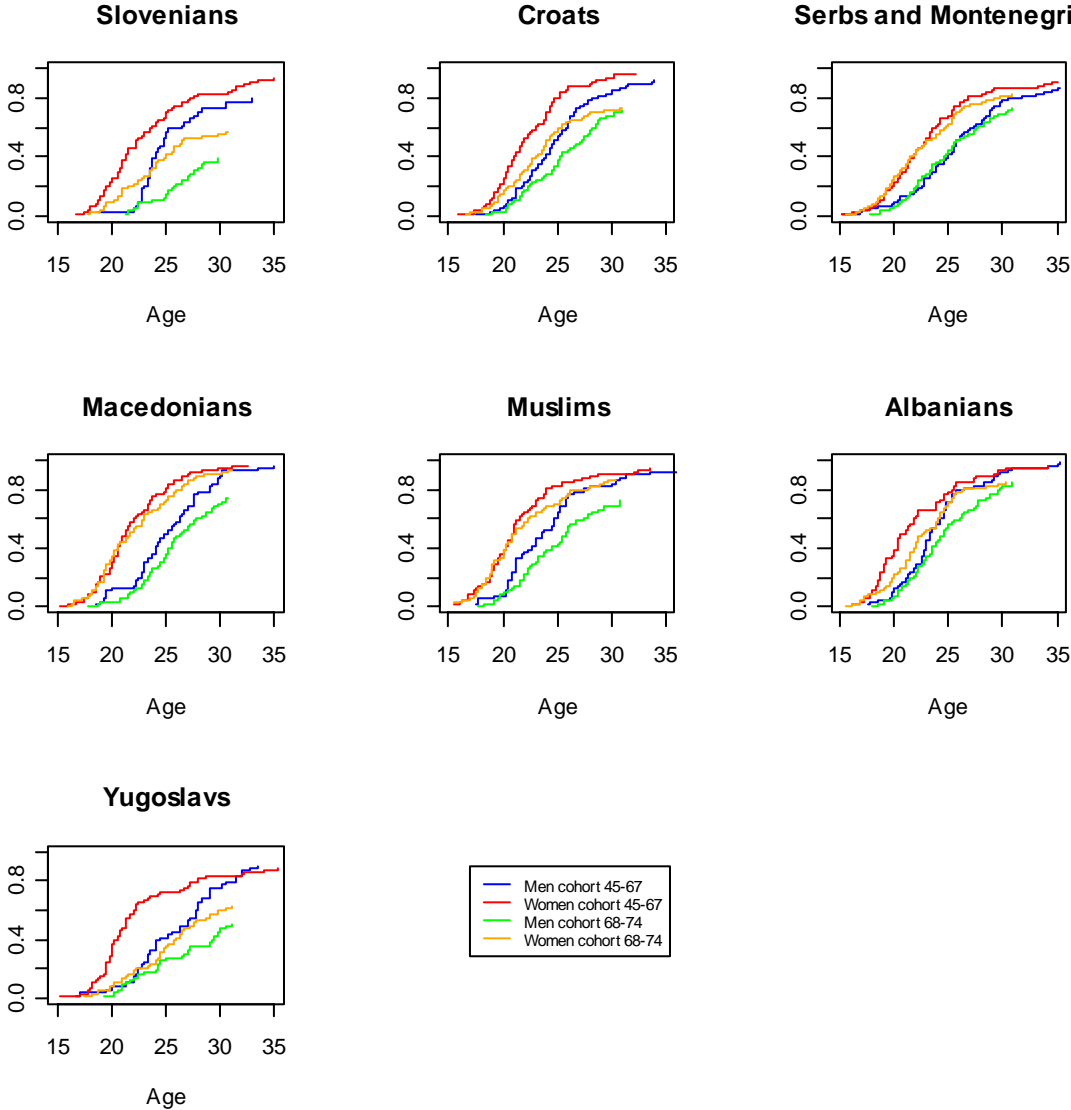
Figure 1 presents the evolution of marriage for every cohorts and genders, following the nationality declared in 1991. Results show a great heterogeneity: difference in patterns of marriage between men and women of the first cohort can be observed for almost every declared nationality (we put together Serbs and Montenegrins because of the small number of Montenegrins, see table 2). In the oldest cohort, men got married later than women, no matter their nationality, but the prevalence is more or less always the same between men and women of the same nationality. The lowest prevalence is observed for Slovenians where 80% of men born between 1945 and 1967 got married at the age of 36 years old, which confirmed what Botev (1994) observed. The median age at marriage for Slovenians of the oldest cohort is of almost 25 years old for men, which is similar with median age of Croats and a little less than Serbs and Montenegrins (25.8 years) and Macedonian (25.2 years). Serbs and Montenegrins have the second lowest prevalence (91.75%) while those who declared to be Yugoslav at the 1991 Census have the third lowest prevalence. “Yugoslavs” have however the highest median age of marriage. Macedonians, Muslims and Albanians have a high level of prevalence in marriage with more than 95% of men and women of the cohort who got married. Muslims and Albanians also present the lowest median age at marriage (respectively 23.5 and 23.2 years old).

The prevalence in marriage for Slovenian women born between 1945 and 1967 is of 93% which is the third one after the “Yugoslav” women (89%) and Serbs and Montenegrin women (91%). Prevalence for other nationality is of 95% or more. Age at marriage is for every nationality less than 23 years old.

These first results confirm partially what Botev (1994) observed. Slovenian men and women present low prevalence and their marriage occurs later in age. However, a low level of prevalence and a late age of marriage are also observed for Serbs and Montenegrins and for

Yugoslavs. Age of marriage does not seem to differ a lot between Albanian men and women. It is however important to note in this case, that we do not observe directly difference of age between partners, but differences of age at marriage between samples of men and women. Youngest cohorts often show a drastic change in their pattern of marriage, with a postponement of their wedding and a decrease in their prevalence (figure 1). Only Serbs and Montenegrins and also Macedonian women do not show such a postponement in the age at marriage.

Figure 1: Cumulated proportion of marriage according to the nationality declared in 1991, gender and cohort (source: Traces 2006)



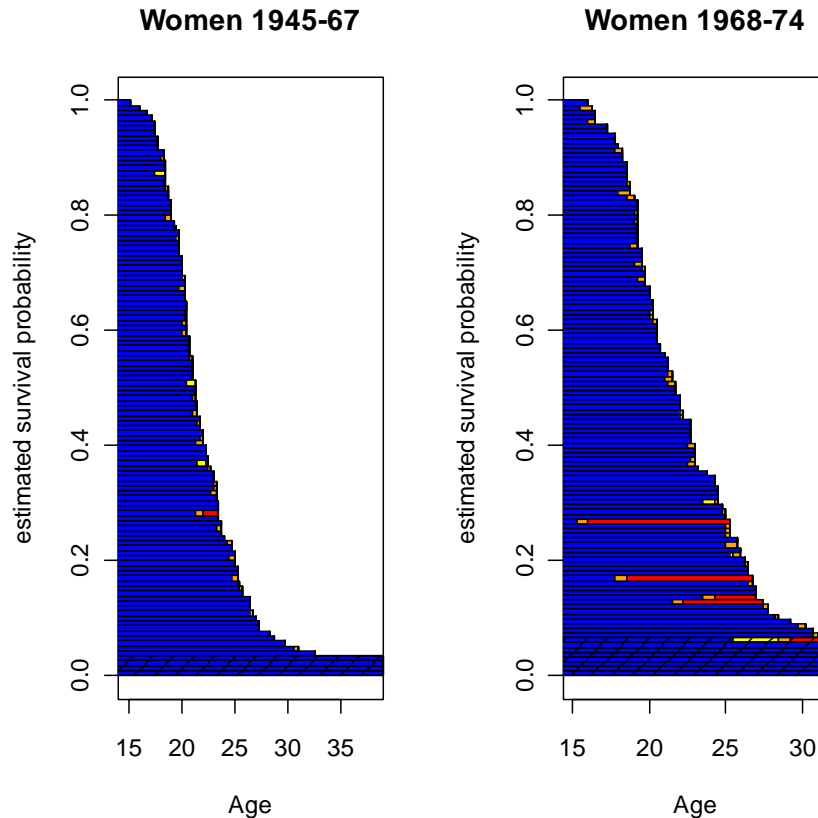
Patterns of marriages are not only related to the prevalence and the age at marriage, but also to the other life events, as the foundation of an autonomous household with the partner and the first pregnancy and subsequent birth of the first child. In order to see these relations, we drew for women of each nationality different event-history graphs (Dubin et al., 2001)⁴. An event-history graph is a sophistication of a graph of the evolution of the proportion of men or women of a cohort who are (still) unmarried along the time of observation. Such an event history graph is presented as an example for women who declared to be Macedonian in 1991 (figure 2). The *x* *abscise* reports the age while the *y* *ordinate* represents the proportion of persons who are not yet married. Each line describes the event-history of a woman before her marriage if she is married and before the age of 38 years if she belongs to the first cohort, respectively, before the age of 31 if she belongs to the second cohort. A blue segment indicates a life spell without pregnancy or child and without the foundation of a household with the partner. A yellow segment represents cohabitation in an autonomous household with a partner without being married. An orange segment represents the period of pregnancy of a first child⁵ while a red segment begins at the birth of the first child: in this case, this birth is an out-of-wedlock birth. Hatched lines are drawn in the case of persons who did not get married before the age of 38 or 31 years old. Macedonian women of the first cohort present a very standardized pattern of marriage. They rarely founded an autonomous household with a partner or gave birth to their first child before their marriage. In some rare cases, the marriage occurred as the woman was already pregnant. Unmarried persons are definitely rare and marriage occurs early in age as we have already mentioned. This pattern of marriage does not

⁴ If results we now present are descriptive, it should be noted that we perform several event history regression models in order to see if observed differences between nationalities were not due to other covariates, especially, their composition in social classes. Results of these regressions show that social classes measured from the profession of respondent's father plays a minor role in the timing and the prevalence of the marriage.

⁵ The beginning of the pregnancy is computed in subtracting three quarters to the age at the birth of the first living child. Note that there could have been precedent pregnancies before, but not followed by the birth of living child.

change for the second cohort despite that the proportion of unmarried women slightly increased.

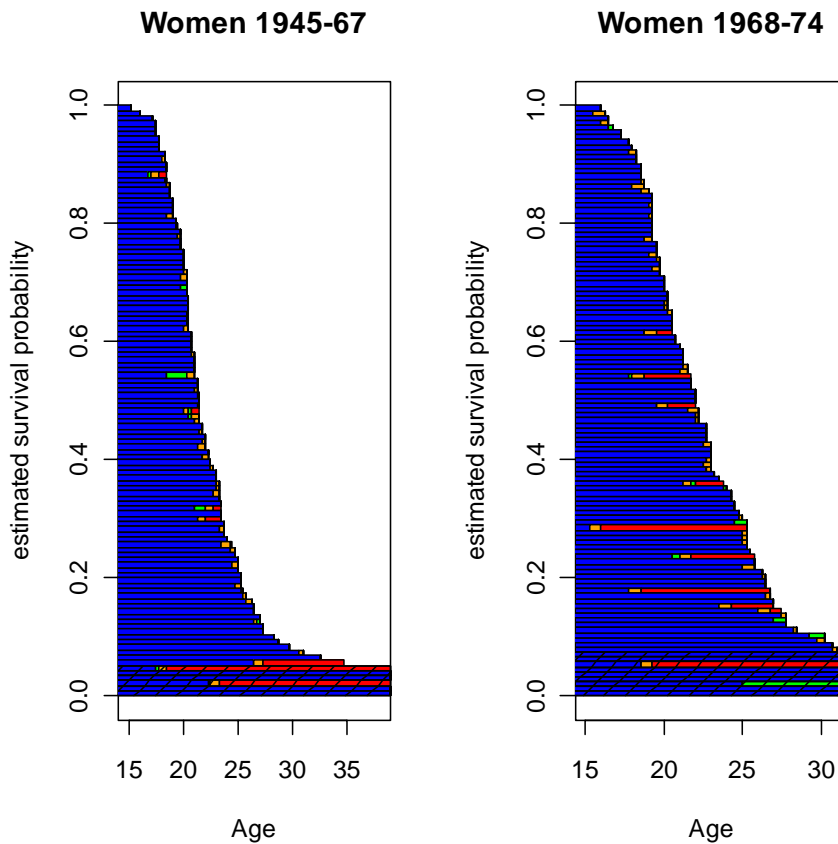
Figure 2: Life event graph for marriage of Macedonian women



Unmarried, childless, and not living with a partner (blue), living with a partner (yellow), pregnant of the first child (orange) and birth of the first child (red)

The foundation of a household with the partner after the marriage can be analyzed by drawing a new life history graphs in which the event of interest is now the foundation of an autonomous household and not anymore the marriage. Figure 3 presents these analyses for Macedonian women. Marriage without the foundation of an autonomous household is rare in Macedonia, even in the youngest cohort.

Figure 3: Life event graphs of the foundation of an individual household with a partner for Macedonian women

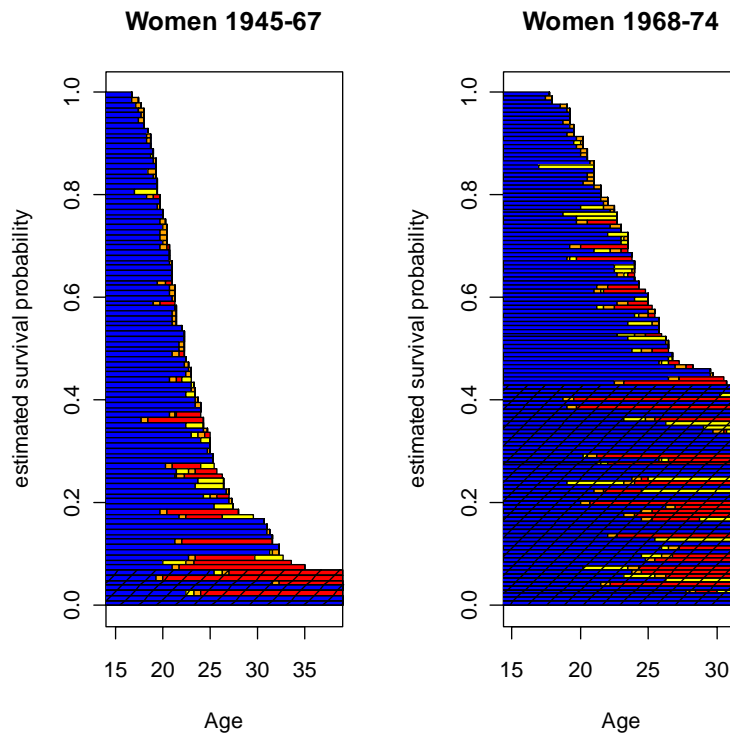


Unmarried, childless, and not living with a partner (blue), married (green), pregnant of the first child (orange, and birth of the first child (red)

Slovenians presents a particular evolution of marriage (Figure 4). In the oldest cohort, it is not rare that the foundation of the household with the partner precedes the marriage, which means that non-marital cohabitation was tolerated. Sometimes, weddings occur after the birth of the first child and even a few women remained unmarried after the birth of their child. Out of wedlock births diffused among the youngest cohort. Extra-marital unions became a standard of living, as it has already been observed in several Western European countries, especially,

the neighbouring country of Austria⁶. As a consequence, the prevalence of marriage decreases and becomes the lowest among all nationalities for both men and women.

Figure 4: Life event graphs for marriage of Slovenian women



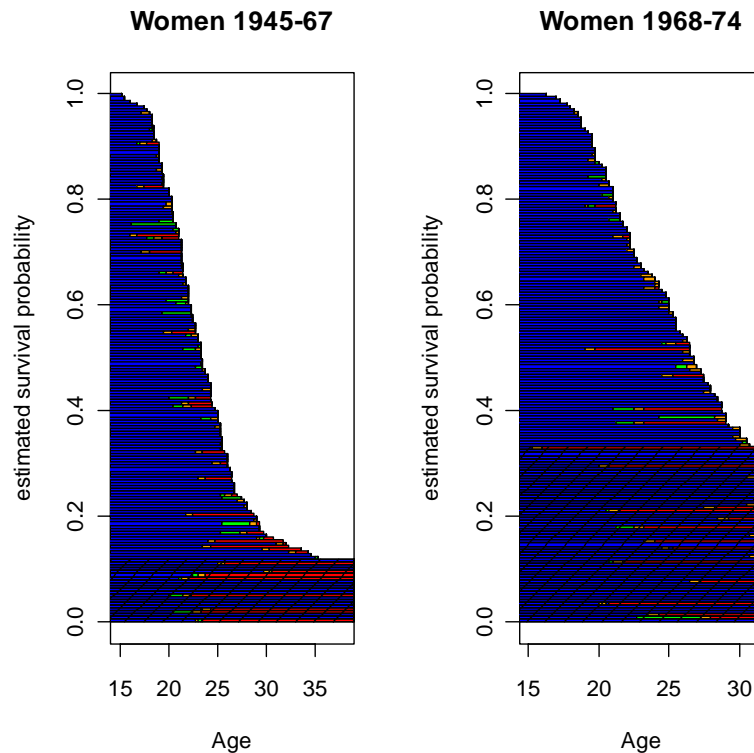
Unmarried, childless, and not living with a partner (blue), living with a partner (yellow), pregnant of the first child (orange) and birth of the first child (red)

Serbs on one side (Figure 5) and Albanians on the other (Figure 6) present a third type of pattern of marriage. In this pattern, weddings do not coincide with the foundation of a household with the partner. Several Serbian women of the ancient cohort married and sometimes gave birth to a child before the formation of an autonomous household. Only a few of them did not found an autonomous household. Women life courses appear then not to be as standardized as it is the case of Macedonian women. Marriages before the foundation of the household decreases in the youngest cohort, and life courses seem to be more standardized

⁶ According to Maria Winkler-Dvorak (personal communication), who is demographer at the Wiener Institute of demography, it seems that the level of extra-marital birth in Slovenia are the highest in the regions at the border of Austria, which could mean a spill over of behaviours from Austria to Slovenia.

than in the preceding cohort. However, a higher proportion of married women do not found an autonomous household, and among them, several had already their first child. The prevalence of marriage does not change, but marriages are postponed (See also Figure 1).

Figure 5: Life event graphs of the foundation of an individual household with a partner for Serbian women



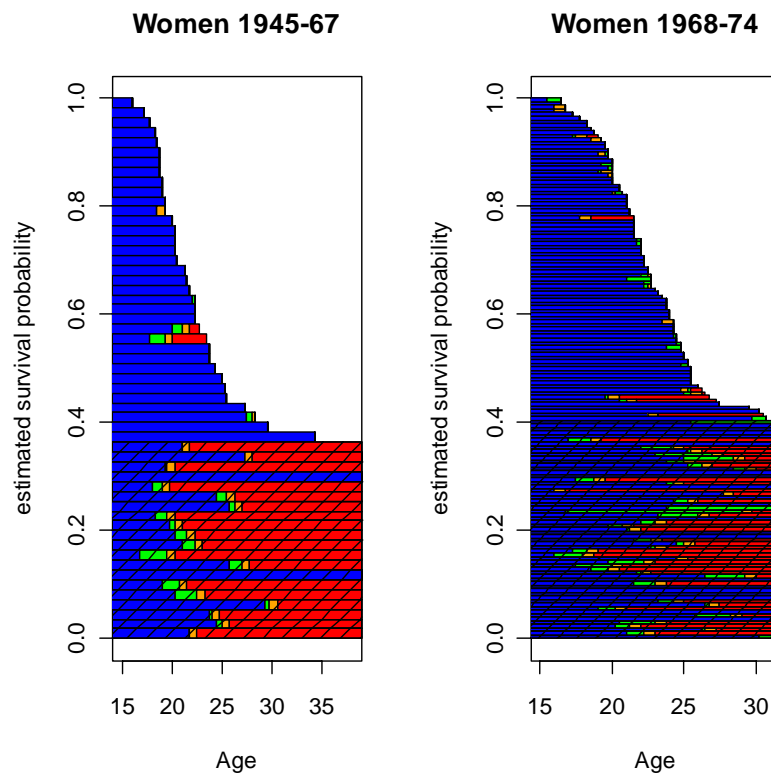
Unmarried, childless, and not living with a partner (blue), married (green), pregnant of the first child (orange, and birth of the first child (red)

Patterns observed among Croats, Muslims, and Yugoslavs belonging to the ancient cohort are between the one presented by Macedonians and the one presented by Serbs (not represented here). Patterns do not really change for people of the second cohort who declared these nationalities, despite the process of postponement in the age of marriage and the decrease of its prevalence. In the case of Croats, the prevalence at the age of 31 is of 75% for both men and women, while median age at marriage reaches 27 years for the former and 24 years old for the later cohort (see also Figure 1). Three men on four who declared to be Muslims were

married while this proportion is seven on eight for women. Median Age increased of 2 years and half in comparison to the first cohort for men (25.8 years old), while it remained the same for women (21 years old). For the men and women who declared themselves “Yugoslav” in 1991, one man on two and one woman on three remain unmarried at the age of 31; the median age is respectively of 31 for men and 27.5 years old for women. The prevalence is in this case the lowest while the median age is the highest of all declared nationalities in the census of 1991. This could be due to the fact that these people became less attractive on the marriage market because of their background (child of mixed couples, or to have belonging to the communist party, etc.).

Albanian women of the ancient cohort present two main patterns of marriage. The first one is the classic pattern of marriage which co-occurs with the foundation of the household, while the second corresponds to the marriage without the foundation of an autonomous household. In the later case, wedding is quickly followed by the conception and the birth of a first child. In this case, the foundation of an autonomous household with the partner is rare (figure 6). Such dichotomy in marriage behaviours does not have major difference among cohorts, despite the fact that the prevalence of marriage slightly decreased for both men and women (Figure 2). Marriages are also slightly postponed.

Figure 6: Life event graphs of the foundation of an individual household with a partner for Albanian women



Unmarried, childless, and not living with a partner (blue), married (green), pregnant of the first child (orange), and birth of the first child (red)

Discussion-Conclusion

Mixed marriages were highly promoted at the time of the united Yugoslavia and considered as a way to build a new society. Despite their increase until under the Tito's regime, the level of mixed marriages remained low just before the beginning of armed conflicts and the collapse of the former Yugoslavia. Mixed marriages did not have the same meaning for men and women and marriage market remained highly segmented by ethnic groups. One reason of this segmentation is that marriages presented different patterns according to the nationality.

Patterns of marriages for the youngest cohort generally are not new and correspond to patterns already observed during Tito's regime. For some ethnic groups as the Macedonian nationality, the pattern of marriage is highly standardized: marriage occurs quickly, co-occurred with the

foundation of the household with the partner and precedes the birth of the first child, even if in some rare cases, its conception occurred just before the marriage. Patterns of union formation and constitution of the family does not appear to be highly standardized between Serbians while the extended family competes with the nuclear family in the case of Albanians. Slovenians present a social change with the diffusion of extra-marital births. It is interesting to make the parallel with facts that Slovenians did quasi not experience war conflicts while the economic crisis was less strong in Slovenia than in other countries of former Yugoslavia. Moreover, Slovenian behaviours seem to be influenced by Western European countries in which for several of them, extra-marital births are already diffused.

Differences between ethnic groups and their evolution can have some consequences on the level of mixed marriages. The peculiarity of the marriage pattern in Kosovo in relation to the existence of extended families makes difficult mixed marriages with partners of ethnic groups in which prevails the nuclear family. In a similar manner, the cohabitation of young married couples with parents of one partner as observed in Serbia can be incompatible with models of marriage in which prevail the co-integration of marriage and the foundation of an autonomous household. Moreover, we can suppose that in Kosovo and Serbia, parents can exercise a control on the choice of a potential partner if this spell of cohabitation between generations is institutionalised. This control power of parents can also have a negative impact on interethnic mating. The development of cohabiting union and disappearance of marriage for Slovenians can have some impacts on mixed union if a potential partner belonging to another ethnic group is reluctant regarding to cohabiting union as an alternative to marriage.

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