

# Patterns of First Marriage in Finland and Hungary: a Comparative Study

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## Introduction

About two decades ago *Pressat (1968)*, the famous French demographer remarked when investigating the short-term fluctuations of birth rates in France that demographers are so sensitive to the changes of fertility to such an extent that they thought all its modifications were forerunners of a new trend differing from the previous one. As for the sensitivity of demographers in connection with fertility, the situation has not changed since the late 1960s, the difference being only that in our days a similar sensitive attention is being paid to other demographic processes, as well. The changes in the demographic features of marriage and the family have especially attracted much attention. The new directions of marriage and family life indicate an essential modification of behavior towards marriage and the family. It can be expected that the consequences of these changes will have an impact on family life, as a whole, and their effects will also appear on a macro-social level.

Sweden was the first to show signs of change in this respect. There a new »era» of marriage started with a sudden decline in the number of marriages in the mid-1960s. From the early 1970s, the previously record high marriage rates have begun to decline in almost every country of Northern and Western Europe, with some time lag, first in Denmark, Finland, West Germany, Switzerland and Austria (around 1970), some years later in France, England and Wales, and the Netherlands (in the mid-1970s). By the end of the 1980s the total first marriage rates, the sum of cross-sectional age-specific first-marriage rates, dropped rapidly everywhere to levels unprecedented in history. At present, people show not only a lower propensity to marry but they are also older when they do get married. According to the estimate for Northern and Western Europe, if the first marriage rates of the mid-1980s continue as they are, in Scandinavia hardly more than half of the population of marriageable age will get married by the age of 50. In other Western countries the proportion of ever-married population would decline to a level of 70—80 percent. This means that the institution of marriage may lose its traditional role in these countries. Although in the last few years a small degree of stabilization can be observed, it is doubtless that we are witnessing fundamental changes affecting the European marriage regime. (*Sardon, 1986*)

Parallel with the decline of marriages, although with significant differences between countries, non-marital cohabitation is extending all over Europe. However, disregarding the Scandinavian countries, above all Sweden, where over 40 percent of all children are born outside marriage, the couples cohabiting do not usually have children, or if they do so, they get married. This means, that the transformation of the patterns of marriage are accompanied with the postponement of the birth of children and perspectively an increasing frequency of childlessness. Thus, it has a consequence on the reproductive function of the family, as well.

The changes in marriage is also indicated by the fact that in almost all countries of Europe the proportion of marriages ending in divorce has radically increased in the last few decades. A recently observed phenomenon is that remarriages cannot equalize the effects of the increase in the number of divorces. Since the second half of the 1970s, the frequency of remarriage has started decreasing at a rapid pace, first of all in the countries where cohabitation was the most popular. (*Roussel, 1981*)

As a consequence of these processes, the structure of families and households is in transformation and nontraditional forms of the family, such as consensual unions and one-parent families are becoming more and more frequent.

According to comparative studies, the changes of marriage characterize Northern and Western Europe rather than Eastern Europe. In investigating the background of the differences between the two parts of Europe, one explanation could be that political developments after World War II have set the Eastern European countries apart from the rest of Europe (*van de Kaa, 1987*). While the social, economic and cultural development of Western countries has led to a freedom of choice between lifestyles and resulted in a radical transformation in values and behavior towards marriage, the people in the Eastern part of Europe have preserved their traditional ways of living in their personal lives, and have shown only a slight change in their former nuptiality patterns.

To demonstrate the nature and background of the differences between East and West, nuptiality patterns of Finland and Hungary provide very good examples.

The Finnish population has shown a radical reversal in nuptiality during the last two decades and reached a very low level in marriage rates, which is now one of the lowest in the industrial world. During the same time, Hungary followed the traditional pattern of nuptiality characterized by early and almost universal marriage. However, recently new directions have appeared in nuptiality in Hungary, as well. The most recent period measures indicate significant alterations in marriage behavior, which may have further consequences on family life in the future.

Taking into consideration the present situation in Hungary, a very interesting question is whether the recent declining tendency is a transient phenomenon in connection with the economic depression accompanying the radical political and social changes in this country or is it a sign that the Hungarian population is following the Western European patterns with a time lag.

As for Finland, one of the questions concerning nuptiality trends is whether marriage as an institution will lose its central role in family formation.

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the nature and background of differences between these countries and contribute to a better understanding of the demographic behavior of populations. For this reason, when examining the special features of first marriage in Finland and Hungary, I will try to refer to some of the social and demographic factors at work behind the changes. The results of the investigation are partly based on my research carried out in Finland in 1988. At that time Finland and Hungary represented different political, social and economic systems.

Since the investigation referred to the interval from the end of World War II to the end of the 1980s, it provided a good possibility to look into the background factors of nuptiality coming from different paths in history.

### Data and methods

In all societies first marriage is a highly age-specific phenomenon, concentrated largely in the early adult years between the ages of fifteen and thirty. For this reason the first step necessary in comparing countries is to examine the age distribution and intensity of first marriages.

As for first marriages, both Finnish and Hungarian vital statistics include excellent long time series of first marriages by marital status, age and birth year, so either period measures or cohort measures can be calculated for the purpose of investigation.

When investigating different countries, it is first necessary to eliminate the disturbing effects of the different age distribution of populations. Recently, the use of total first rates has become common mainly in period analyses. This paper also uses these rates to present period behavior in nuptiality.

For the purpose of the detailed analysis, however, the nuptiality tables give the best result. Nuptiality tables give a probabilistic description of marriage in which life-table techniques are employed. They are particularly useful in analyzing the cohort patterns of first marriages. As they eliminate the disturbing effects (mortality, migration), they are the most adequate tools for comparing the nuptiality patterns of different countries.

To investigate the real changes that have happened in the age structure and the intensity of first marriages in Finland and Hungary, the classical life-table method was applied to the cohorts born between 1945 and 1970. In the course of constructing nuptiality tables, the population of birth cohorts was supposed to be closed, not influenced by migration or mortality. Due to the different classification of data, different types of nuptiality probabilities were used for Finland and Hungary.

For Finland projective probabilities were computed on the basis of cohort first marriage rates, for Hungary conventional probabilities were used. The only difference in the two indices is that, in the case of projective possibilities, »age» is less strictly defined than in conventional probabilities which refer to exact ages. (*Presat*, 1972)

### Period measures of first marriage

Historically, Finland and Hungary represent different patterns of nuptiality in connection with their differences in their household systems. Finland belonged to the countries characterized by the European pattern of nuptiality, Hungary followed the so-called »non-European» or »Eastern European» pattern. (*Hajnal*, 1965) At the beginning of the 20th century, in Finland the average age at marriage was about 25 years for women and a considerable proportion, about 15 percent, ultimately remained single. In Hungary women married at a very young age, their average age at first marriage was about 21 years and only about 4—5 percent of them remained single at the age of 50. In comparison with other countries in Europe, both Finland and Hungary took an »in-between» place. (*Lutz*, 1987, *Hablicsek*, 1991)

It should be mentioned that in the first half of the 20th century the Hungarian population began to abandon this pattern. Especially between the two world wars,

due to postwar economic difficulties and the great economic crisis of the early thirties, the birth cohorts of women married not only at later ages but also the proportions remaining permanently single increased considerably. In these cohorts, the mean age at first marriage rose up to the age of 24 and more than 7 percent of the women remained single at the age of 50. (*Csernák, 1991*)

After World War II, the Hungarian population has returned to the traditional patterns and preserved the custom of early and universal marriage as a characteristic feature differentiating Hungary from the Western part of Europe.

After World War II, the »marriage boom» essentially altered the nuptiality patterns of Europe. The two patterns came closer to each other and at the beginning of the 1960s the »European» marriage pattern seemed to be disappearing. However, a radical decline in nuptiality started in the second half of the 1960s all over Europe.

According to the total first marriage rates, the downward trend began in Finland in 1968. Since that year the Finnish and Hungarian trends of first marriage, which had run together during the preceding years, began to separate. By 1986, the declining trend was almost unbroken in Finland. (Appendix Tables 1 and 2)

During the same period, the Hungarian trends have declined also parallel with fluctuations. It is worth looking into the background of these fluctuations in Hungary.

The total first marriage rates calculated for the interval 1950 and 1989 indicate three peaks and three troughs parallel with a decreasing trend in the long run.

After the decline during the years of World War II, the nuptiality of the Hungarian population showed a boom similar to that of most European countries. However, in contrast to the others, and above all the Western European countries, the extremely high level of nuptiality continued after the compensation of the war losses in marriages.

As a »by-product» of the radical social and political changes in Hungary, the period total first marriage rates reached their peak in the 1950s. The considerable fluctuation was closely associated with, among other factors, the great social mobility which reduced the economic considerations of marriage and broke down the barriers between social strata. At the same time, the ideology aiming at a decrease in parental authority led to a radical reduction in the legal minimum age of marriage. In 1950, the minimum age of marriage was reduced from 24 to 20 years and two years later, in 1952, the new Family Law Act reduced it from 20 to 18 years. This change resulted in a local peak in 1952. Accompanying the radical increase in fertility, in 1954, the total first marriage rate reached a second local peak, due to the administrative measures of population policy concerning the prohibition of induced abortion. The changes mentioned above, including the high value of marriage for young people, contributed to the prolonged increase in nuptiality. (*Csernák, 1983*)

A reaction to the fluctuations appeared in the late 1950s. It is, however, probable that the social and economic tensions connected with the collectivization of agriculture in the early 1960s and a smaller »disequilibrium» of marriageable cohorts also played an important role in the lower level of the total first marriage rates during the first half of the decade.

After the lowest point of 1962, the total first marriage rates rose again and they reached their peak in 1967. The upswing was partly connected with the improving standards of living and partly with the introduction of the child care allowance in 1967, which increased the propensity to get married with the aim of having a child. The peak was, however, only the result of timing effects and it was followed by a second trough which started at the beginning of the 1970s.

Due to the close connection between marriage and the beginning of childbearing, the population policy supporting young families contributed to the third peak of the

total first marriage rates in the mid-1970s. The increase, at the same time, also reflected the modification of the Family Law Act. The Act, which reduced the age limit for women from 18 to 16 years, became effective in 1974 and greatly increased the number of persons who were free to marry at a younger age.

During the 1970s, the differences became deeper between Finland and Hungary. The high level of Hungarian nuptiality, however, was only a transient phenomenon and it lasted only a few years. The downward trend began in the total first marriage rates of men, who had an extreme surplus in the marriageable ages. The decreasing number of births in the late 1950s and in the early 1960s led to a scarcity of young marriageable women relative to the number of young men in the population in the second half of the 1970s. This unfavorable shift of the sex ratio for men was followed by a surplus of women in marriageable ages, when the women born in the second half of the 1960s reached marriageable age and looked for marriage partners from among the survivors of smaller cohorts born in the first half of the 1960s. As a consequence of this turn in the sex ratio, some years later a similar decreasing trend became apparent for women, as well.

The most recent nuptiality changes can be considered neither the post-effect of the previous fluctuations nor the »disequilibrium» of the marriage market. The period indices suggest a radical decline in the overall intensity of nuptiality. If the age-specific first marriage rates of 1989 became constant in Hungary, about 25 percent of men and 23 percent of women would remain single at the age of 50 (Table 2). However, in spite of the fact that Hungary has come closer to Finland, the differences have not disappeared between the two countries. In Finland, the total first marriage rate of 1986 indicates that if the age-specific first marriage rates continued at this level, more than 50 percent of the men and almost 60 percent of the women would not marry at all by the age of 50.

An important summary index of marriage patterns is the average age at which people marry. The average age at first marriage in both of the countries indicates a radical fall after World War II. However, while the level of the total first marriage rate suggests some similarities, the average age at first marriage illustrates the fact that the same level of nuptiality in populations can be reached by very different timing of marriage.

In particular, Finnish women marry much later than their Hungarian counterparts. The mean age at first marriage of Finnish women was consistently higher in the past and the differences have increased during the last decades. In 1986, the mean age at first marriage was 25.8 years for Finnish women, while it was 21.2 for Hungarian women (Appendix Table 1). At present, Finnish women marry even later than Hungarian men. As a consequence of the radical postponement of marriage, the age difference has increased between Finnish and Hungarian men. In 1986, the mean age at first marriage of Finnish men reached 27.8 years. In the same year, Hungarian men married at age 24.3, on the average.

Again, in the light of the most recent period behavior, it is interesting to summarize some characteristic features of the age pattern of first marriages in Hungary.

Between 1950 and 1975, the mean age at first marriage, having been low earlier, declined from 26.3 to 24.0 years for men, and from 23.1 to 21.1 years for women. The change was particularly rapid, when the reduction of the age limit of marriage for women came into effect in 1974. E.g. from 1973 to 1975, the proportion of women married under the age 18 increased by 65 percent. According to the calculations, the proportion of women married under age 18 reached 16 percent in 1977 and the proportion of those who married before attaining the age of 20, rose to 44.6 percent (per 100 women having reached the minimum age of marriage). (*Csernák, 1984*) At the

time, when the earlier nuptiality trends of most Western countries had changed and a radical decline became visible all over Europe, in Hungary the historical pattern of nuptiality had strengthened.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the decrease of the total first marriage rates has been accompanied by the postponement of first marriage. The recent changes have been more considerable for women than for men. Especially the proportion of women marrying under age 20 has fallen. In 1989, the proportion of women marrying under 18 was 4.4 percent and only 26.1 percent of them married before attaining the age of 20. However, it should be mentioned that these extremely low values have, at least partly, come from the latest modification of the Family Law Act, which has increased the age limit of marriage from 16 to 18 years for women. (The age limit of marriage is also 18 years for men, it has been unchanged since 1952.)

As for higher ages, not only the age-specific first marriage rates under age 20 declined, but there was also a fall in the rates at each age above 20. Although recently the first marriage rates at age 20—24 have increased, they could not compensate the losses in marriage at younger ages. In 1989, the proportion of women ever married before age 25 was 66.1 percent and the proportion of men ever married by age 30 was 68.6 percent (per 100 persons having reached the minimum age of marriage). Respective figures in 1975 were 88.2 percent for women and 87.3 percent for men.

Due to the decline in the propensity to marry early, the mean age at first marriage reached 24.6 years for men and 21.9 years for women by the late 1980s. Compared to the earlier periods it is a sign of a reversal to the earlier marriage patterns.

### Cohort measures of first marriage

However, as is well known, one cannot, on the basis of period data, answer the question of whether the declining tendency in nuptiality is a transitional phenomenon coming from the temporary postponement of marriage or whether it indicates a substantial long-run decline in the intensity of marriage.

Taking into consideration the uncertainty of the conclusions from period indices, which tend to exaggerate the timing effects, the analysis should be supplemented by the experiences from the observations of the behavior of birth cohorts.

The investigation of the cohorts born after World War II indicates that cohort nuptiality does not differ so much as was assumed on the basis of the total first marriage rates of calendar years. In this respect, however, there are some interesting differences between Finnish and Hungarian cohorts. For Hungary, where the changes were less radical than in Finland, it is correct that the final level of cohort nuptiality is a relatively stable value and the changing behavior of cohorts only slowly modifies the proportions of persons remaining single at a higher age. In other words, the period fluctuations, the peaks and troughs in the trend of first marriage mainly result from the transitional changes of the age at marriage. The cohort data indicate that the period indices are much less reliable for long-range conclusions, especially, at the time of rapid changes in the timing of first marriage. (*Csernák, 1983*)

On the contrary, for Finland, the truth of this statement is rather doubtful. Finnish cohorts born after World War II, especially the cohorts born at the end of the 1940s and in the first half of the 1950s, have changed their behavior so dramatically that it can be expected that the final proportion ever marrying in these cohorts will increase radically. (Appendix Tables 3 and 4)

The radical decrease of nuptiality in Finnish cohorts began earlier than the period measures indicate. The sharp turn at the end of 1960s touched each cohort under

the age of 30. A special feature of the new trend is that the decrease starting in the »baby boom» cohorts strengthened when the cohorts of smaller size entered marriageable age. From the cohorts born at the beginning of the 1950s the postponement of first marriage has increased to a large extent and it has been accompanied by a downward trend in the proportions ever marrying at higher ages, as well. If the declining propensity to marry continued to remain at the level of the nuptiality probabilities of 1986, more than 50 percent of men and 40 percent of women would not marry by the age of 30. According to the projected proportions ever marrying, the final proportion of the single population would be 33 percent for men and 25 percent for women in Finland. In other words, it means, that the Finnish population would not only be returning to former patterns of marriage but would also be starting a new era of marriage. Regarding the future, of course, there are many uncertainties. For example, taking into consideration the behavior of the youngest, a less stronger increase can be visible in the proportions never marrying.

Comparing the marriage behavior of Finnish and Hungarian cohorts, they show two common features. One of them is that the nuptiality of Hungarian men shows a few features similar to Finnish men in respect to both the age distribution of first marriage and the proportion of those who remain ultimately single. In addition, during the past decades, the proportions ever marrying have been consequently lower for men than for women in both of the countries.

The other common feature is the effects of the size of cohorts on their nuptiality. Similarly to the Finnish trends, in Hungary the most recent changes have started in the large cohorts. The cohort nuptiality of Hungarian males and females confirm the period observations in connection with the conditions of the marriage market, which have become unfavorable since the late 1970s. The »baby boom» of the early 1960s, which was followed by an increasing number of births, has had a disturbing effect on each marriageable cohort through the last decade. The unbalanced sex ratio has particularly limited the marriage options of young women born in the second half of the 1960s and a significant postponement of first marriage has characterized these cohorts.

When compared with their Finnish counterparts, Hungarian cohorts born between 1945 and 1965 show a rather traditional pattern of marriage, in spite of the fact that the declining propensity to marry has become stronger in all cohorts born after 1960. Assuming constant nuptiality probabilities after 1987/1988, a long-run decline in the proportions married can be estimated for the youngest cohorts. For these cohorts the proportions ever married have consequently decreased at each ages. E.g. for men born between 1945—1949, the proportion marrying before age 30 was nearly 90 percent, in contrast with the cohorts born between 1960—1964, for which this proportion can be expected to be at a much lower level, about 75 percent. According to the estimate of cohort nuptiality, in the youngest male birth cohorts the proportion ever marrying by age 50 can fall to 80 percent, which would be without precedent in Hungary. A similar but less strong trend can be found for female birth cohorts. If the nuptiality probabilities of 1987/1988 became constant, for the women born in 1945—1950, the proportion married by age 25 would decline from 85 percent to 75 percent for the cohorts born after 1965. The proportion ever married by age 50 would decline from 95 percent to 90 percent for these cohorts. The estimated cohort data suggest that while men have experienced both shifts in timing and a decrease in the overall level of marriage, nuptiality change for women has been primarily a change in timing. (Appendix Table 5)

Parallel with the changes in the proportions ever marrying, significant alterations have become visible in the age distribution of first marriage in both of the countries.

It can be expected that the, median and mean age at first marriage will be increasing in the future. According to the estimate, the mean age at first marriage can reach 29 years for men and 27 years for women in Finland. In Hungary the changes are not so significant. For men the average age at first marriage can be 25 years and for women 22 years. (Table 6)

### Some concluding remarks

One of the most important questions is why the marriage patterns of Finland and Hungary are so different. The answer is rather difficult for several reasons. On the one hand, it requires wide-range knowledge of social, economic and cultural development regarding both countries. On the other hand, the factors in the background are not only different but also the factors influencing marriages change from time to time.

A study of the background factors suggests that the characteristics of historical development can explain part of the differences between the countries. Namely, both in Finland and Hungary, the modernization of society was accompanied by a radical transformation of the socio-occupational structure. However, in Finland the high social mobility from the agriculture to the non-agricultural strata occurred parallel to a similar high outmigration from the villages. In contrary, in Hungary the growing numbers of persons who left the agricultural stratum and became industrial workers did not leave their homes. As a consequence, while in Finland a significant part of the population had to adjust to new circumstances, learning new life-styles etc., in Hungary it was easier for people to preserve their former habits and the traditional features of their lives. Similarly, the structure of society, and the different educational level of the population can also pay an important role in the differences.

Of course, in explaining Finnish trends, traditional factors should be take into consideration, as well. For example, in Finland cohabitation before or instead of marriage has always been known. (*Lindgren, 1979*) Consequently the rapid spreading of cohabitation since the beginning of the 1970s has likely not met with special difficulties. Furthermore, early and more frequent marriage during the two decades after the Second World War was perhaps only an »episode» rather than a deep-rooted custom in the history of the Finnish family and society.

The present paper has already mentioned some factors contributing to the maintenance of the historical pattern of nuptiality in Hungary. An additional factor can be seen in the high proportion of so-called »forced» marriages contracted because of the pregnancy of the bride. According to the data of a survey carried out in 1983, one-third of the brides under age 20 were pregnant at the time of wedding. (*KSH, 1986*).

Another contributing factor is the high value of marriage. In Hungary, marriage still plays an important role in the realization of personal independence and in the establishment of the household. Besides, the intimate relations between parents and their children encourage marrying early, because parents usually support their children's plans to get married as soon as possible.

In the light both of the period and cohort indices, there are some similarities with the Western part of Europe, in general. Particularly the decrease of the total first marriage rates indicates a very similar pattern to that of some West European countries with a ten-fifteen-year lag in time. At the same time the age at first marriage is still very low, compared to that of Western countries and not only to that of Finland.

When analyzing the background of the decline of cohort nuptiality in Hungary,



besides the disturbing effect of the changing sex ratio, many arguments can be found in other reasons. One of them is the increasing economic difficulties in establishing a family, which also prevent young people from marrying. It is worth mentioning that compared with the trend in the Western European countries, in Hungary living in cohabitation without wedlock is not a phenomenon characterizing young, never married people.

As for the behavior of the youngest cohorts, of course, there are some uncertain circumstances. The radical changes in the Hungarian society, including the appearance of new phenomena, for example, the increasing level of unemployment, the spreading of individualistic values, etc. make it difficult to predict the future. In this respect the case of Finland should be considered. In Finland, the start of the radical changes in nuptiality at the end of 1960s and the deepening decline in the 1970s coincided with the radical changes in society and with the increasing economic difficulties of the population, which resulted in a large emigration and unemployment for young people. (*Lindgren 1975—76, Majava 1977*).

An interesting question is whether the features of marriage in Hungary come from only the lower level of the social, cultural and economic development of society or if there are also other deeprooted traditional reasons working in the background. In the light of the behavior of the youngest cohorts, there are some arguments for a gradual abandonment of the historical patterns of nuptiality. However, without further investigation, it would be hazardous to give a final answer to this question.

## Appendix

Table 1. Number of marriages, crude marriage rate and average age at first marriage in Finland and Hungary, 1931—1989.

Year	Number of marriages	Finland			Hungary			
		Crude marriage rate per 1,000	Average age at first marriage		Number of marriages	Crude marriage rate per 1,000	Average age first marriage	
			Male	Female			Male	Female
1931—1940	28 491	7.9	28.3	25.9	75 924	8.4	..	..
1941—1945	34 383	9.3	28.2	25.7	73 944	7.9	..	..
1946—1950	40 250	10.3			101 756	11.1	26.4 <sup>a</sup>	22.8 <sup>a</sup>
1951—1955	32 222	7.8			100 041	10.4		
1956—1960	32 049	7.3	26.3	24.4	92 889	9.4	25.6 <sup>b</sup>	22.2 <sup>b</sup>
1961—1965	34 514	7.6	25.4	23.3	85 201	8.5	24.9	21.8
1966—1970	40 283	8.7	24.7	22.8	95 454	9.3	24.2	21.2
1970	40 730	8.8	24.7	23.0	96 612	9.3	24.0	21.1
1971	37 925	8.2	24.8	23.1	94 202	9.1	23.9	20.9
1972	35 467	7.6	25.4	23.7	97 710	9.4	23.8	20.9
1973	34 883	7.5	25.1	23.4	101 614	9.7	23.7	20.7
1974	34 533	7.4	25.2	23.5	99 962	9.5	23.4	20.8
1975	31 547	6.7	25.3	23.5	103 775	9.9	23.4	21.0
1976	32 004	6.8	25.5	23.7	100 472	9.5	23.4	21.0
1977	30 966	6.5	25.8	23.4	97 015	9.1	23.5	21.1
1978	29 760	6.3	26.1	24.2	92 438	8.7	23.6	21.1
1979	29 277	6.1	26.3	24.3	87 172	8.1	24.0	21.3
1980	29 388	6.1	26.5	24.5	80 331	7.5	24.0	21.3
1981	30 100	6.3	26.7	24.7	77 131	7.2	24.1	21.4
1982	30 459	6.3	26.8	24.8	75 550	7.1	24.3	21.4
1983	29 474	6.1	27.0	25.8	75 969	7.1	24.4	21.4
1984	28 550	5.8	27.3	25.3	74 951	7.0	24.3	21.3

## Appendix

Table 1. Number of...

Year	Number of marriages	Finland			Number of marriages	Hungary		
		Crude marriage rate per 1,000	Average age at first marriage			Crude marriage rate per 1,000	Average age first marriage	
			Male	Female			Male	Female
1985	25 751	5.3	27.5	25.4	73 238	6.9	24.3	21.3
1986	25 820	5.2	27.8	25.8	72 434	6.8	24.3	21.2
1987	..	..	..	..	66 082	6.2	24.3	21.4
1988	..	..	..	..	65 907	6.2	24.3	21.5
1989	..	..	..	..	66 949	6.3	24.2	21.4

.. Data are not available.

<sup>a</sup> 1948; <sup>b</sup> 1955—1960.

Source: Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja = Statistical Yearbook of Finland. Vol. 83. Helsinki, 1988; Väestö = Population 1986. VI A: 153. Vol. 1. Helsinki, 1988; Demográfiai Évkönyv = Demographic Yearbook of Hungary, 1989. Budapest, 1990.

## Appendix

Table 2. Total first marriage rates in Finland and Hungary, 1946—1989.

Year	Males	Total first marriage rate, %			
		in Finland		in Hungary	
		Females	Males	Females	
1946—1950	120.0	110.0	126.0	113.0	
1951—1955	92.0	93.0	112.8	111.3	
1956—1960	91.0	94.0	107.0	102.2	
1961—1965	93.0	92.0	94.9	93.4	
1965	95.9	93.0	98.1	96.3	
1966	96.6	94.3	102.2	99.2	
1967	100.0	98.0	104.5	101.5	
1968	92.8	92.8	102.4	99.7	
1969	91.6	93.7	100.0	97.5	
1970	89.6	93.9	99.0	96.7	
1971	81.5	86.9	94.0	92.0	
1972	74.1	80.2	95.9	93.5	
1973	71.6	78.1	96.3	94.9	
1974	69.9	76.6	94.1	95.5	
1975	63.8	70.2	94.4	99.8	
1976	64.6	70.9	89.7	98.8	
1977	62.6	69.2	86.4	98.1	
1978	60.5	66.9	84.6	97.0	
1979	59.6	65.9	82.2	94.1	
1980	60.8	67.1	77.6	88.6	
1981	62.4	68.3	76.0	87.0	
1982	63.6	69.6	75.1	85.2	
1983	61.4	67.0	77.7	86.4	
1984	59.7	65.0	78.3	85.8	
1985	55.5	58.8	78.4	84.1	
1986	54.3	58.6	79.1	83.1	
1987	..	..	72.8	76.3	
1988	..	..	73.4	75.0	
1989	..	..	75.4	76.9	

.. Data are not available.

Source: 1946—1965: Economic Survey of Europe in 1974. Part II. United Nations, 1975.

1965—1984: for Finland: Sardon, J.-P. Evolution de la nuptialité et la divortialité en Europe depuis la fin des années 1960. Population, 41, 3, 1986. 463—482. for Hungary: Csernák M.: Az első házasságkötések alakulása Magyarországon a II. világháború után = First marriages in Hungary after World War II. KSH Népegyetem Kutató Intézet. vol. 54. Budapest 1983.

## Appendix

Table 3. Proportions ever marrying before attaining given exact ages in selected birth cohorts in Finland\* per 1,000 single persons.

Males		Birth cohort				
Exact age (in years)	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	
17.5	2.8	2.9	1.1	0.2	0.2	
18.5	22.0	20.7	10.7	2.3	1.6	
19.5	62.9	59.7	35.3	11.2	8.4	
20.5	125.9	119.4	68.5	32.2	21.4	
21.5	226.5	202.1	116.3	63.2	39.8	
22.5	334.9	288.9	177.1	107.0		
23.5	433.5	373.1	242.7	161.3		
24.5	522.4	450.4	310.3	221.8		
25.5	593.4	515.2	377.7	278.6		
26.5	645.9	567.5	439.8	334.6		
27.5	688.4	612.0	496.5			
28.5	718.2	646.7	541.4			
29.5	742.5	674.5	577.8			
30.5	763.8	698.6	606.7			
31.5	778.2	718.1	630.5			
32.5	789.2	734.3				
33.5	799.4	747.7				
34.5	807.4	758.0				
35.5	815.6	766.6				
36.5	821.3	774.5				
37.5	825.9					
38.5	830.3					
39.5	834.2					
40.5	837.2					
41.5	839.7					

  

Females		Birth cohort				
Exact age (in years)	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	
17.5	43.1	43.9	32.6	10.4	6.0	
18.5	114.1	113.5	86.4	35.6	22.6	
19.5	206.9	205.4	154.1	76.1	49.9	
20.5	307.7	314.3	231.0	131.1	86.8	
21.5	412.5	414.3	310.5	198.1	129.4	
22.5	510.4	496.5	387.4	270.8		
23.5	588.9	568.9	460.3	341.8		
24.5	650.3	627.7	524.1	411.6		
25.5	699.6	674.9	581.8	470.6		
26.5	737.5	711.1	631.0	521.8		
27.5	765.6	741.5	671.7			
28.5	787.5	766.2	703.6			
29.5	807.3	785.8	730.0			
30.5	822.4	802.1	748.4			
31.5	833.8	815.5	763.2			
32.5	842.2	825.5				
33.5	849.5	834.3				
34.5	855.3	840.9				
35.5	860.4	846.3				
36.5	864.8	851.3				
37.5	869.1					
38.5	872.0					
39.5	874.7					
40.5	876.6					
41.5	878.5					

\* Figures based on cohort nuptiality tables.

## Appendix

Table 4. Proportions ever marrying before attaining given exact ages in selected birth cohorts in Hungary\* per 1,000 single persons.

Males Exact age (in years)	Birth cohort				
	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965
17	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.2
18	1.3	1.0	1.6	2.5	2.8
19	21.5	23.8	30.1	34.7	29.5
20	65.1	66.0	93.6	91.3	75.7
21	133.8	134.2	187.2	173.0	134.6
22	230.4	245.2	285.0	259.2	218.8
23	359.6	387.3	381.0	344.1	318.0
24	504.1	525.0	474.1	441.9	417.9
25	624.9	635.1	565.2	540.5	
26	713.0	711.9	639.5	614.6	
27	771.8	761.9	694.2	667.9	
28	811.8	797.1	733.6	704.0	
29	840.1	820.1	762.7	731.9	
30	859.9	836.9	783.4		
31	873.5	849.1	799.5		
32	883.2	858.1	810.9		
33	891.6	865.9	818.9		
34	896.9	872.0	825.9		
35	901.3	876.7			
36	905.1	880.3			
37	908.2	883.4			
38	910.5	885.5			
39	912.4	887.4			
40	914.0				
41	915.6				
42	916.7				
43	917.8				
44	918.6				

  

Females Exact age (in years)	Birth cohort					
	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970
16	8.0	4.1	4.7	6.3	6.5	5.8
17	42.7	34.3	32.3	61.0	50.7	20.8
18	105.2	100.2	86.7	153.6	121.4	61.5
19	238.0	261.1	253.0	293.2	235.8	163.8
20	382.7	414.4	404.0	430.7	365.3	
21	522.8	552.0	542.5	546.4	485.2	
22	641.0	659.6	650.7	645.6	584.8	
23	728.3	740.1	732.3	725.2	661.9	
24	791.0	795.3	790.0	785.0	721.8	
25	836.9	834.3	832.1	826.8		
26	862.0	861.9	861.4	854.8		
27	881.3	882.2	882.3	874.5		
28	896.1	896.5	897.7	887.4		
29	907.2	907.2	909.1	897.8		
30	915.4	915.6	917.7			
31	921.9	922.4	924.0			
32	927.3	928.0	929.1			
33	932.2	932.4	932.7			
34	935.4	935.9	935.7			
35	938.2	938.8				
36	940.6	940.9				

Table 4. Proportions ever ...

Females Exact age (in years)	Birth cohort					
	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970
37	942.5	942.4				
38	944.1	943.6				
39	945.6	944.6				
40	946.7					
41	947.9					
42	948.7					
43	949.3					
44	949.8					

\* Figures based on cohort nuptiality tables.

## Appendix

Table 5. Estimated proportions ever marrying before attaining exact age 50 in birth cohorts, per 100 single persons\* Finland and Hungary.

Birth cohort	Exact age (in years)						
	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
<b>Males</b>							
Finland**							
1939	7.1	49.9	73.3	..	..	..	..
1940—1944	7.7	53.9	75.9	..	..	..	..
1945—1949	9.5	54.1	73.2	79.6	82.2	<u>83.4</u>	<u>83.9</u>
1950—1954	7.8	43.0	65.1	73.2	<u>75.9</u>	<u>78.0</u>	<u>78.7</u>
1955—1959	3.5	30.1	54.9	<u>65.0</u>	<u>69.2</u>	<u>71.2</u>	<u>72.2</u>
1960—1964	2.1	21.8	<u>47.2</u>	<u>59.0</u>	<u>63.9</u>	<u>66.3</u>	<u>67.5</u>
1965	1.	<u>18.6</u>	<u>45.0</u>	<u>57.3</u>	<u>62.4</u>	<u>64.9</u>	<u>66.1</u>
Hungary							
1939	6.9	56.8	87.1	90.8	92.3	92.9	<u>93.1</u>
1940—1944	6.7	59.3	87.4	90.6	92.1	92.6	<u>92.8</u>
1945—1949	6.3	63.6	85.7	89.6	90.9	<u>91.4</u>	<u>91.7</u>
1950—1954	7.2	60.7	81.4	85.7	<u>87.2</u>	<u>87.9</u>	<u>88.4</u>
1955—1959	9.7	55.1	77.1	<u>82.0</u>	<u>83.8</u>	<u>84.7</u>	<u>85.3</u>
1960—1964	8.4	53.0	<u>74.0</u>	<u>79.4</u>	<u>81.5</u>	<u>82.5</u>	<u>83.2</u>
1965—1968	5.6	<u>50.0</u>	<u>72.0</u>	<u>77.8</u>	<u>80.1</u>	<u>81.2</u>	<u>81.9</u>
<b>Females</b>							
Finland**							
1939	23.2	66.1	81.0	..	..	..	..
1940—1944	23.5	66.6	80.7	..	..	..	..
1945—1949	26.3	68.1	81.4	85.7	87.4	<u>88.1</u>	<u>88.5</u>
1950—1954	23.8	61.6	77.3	82.6	<u>84.6</u>	<u>85.5</u>	<u>86.0</u>
1955—1959	15.2	50.6	70.1	<u>76.9</u>	<u>79.6</u>	<u>80.7</u>	<u>81.4</u>
1960—1964	9.1	39.4	<u>61.9</u>	<u>70.4</u>	<u>73.8</u>	<u>75.3</u>	<u>76.2</u>
1965		<u>34.2</u>	<u>58.5</u>	<u>67.8</u>	<u>71.5</u>	<u>73.1</u>	<u>74.1</u>
Hungary							
1939	42.6	83.8	92.1	94.4	95.3	95.7	<u>95.9</u>
1940—1944	40.7	83.6	92.3	94.5	95.3	95.6	<u>95.8</u>
1945—1949	40.0	83.8	91.7	93.9	94.8	<u>95.1</u>	<u>95.3</u>
1950—1954	40.5	83.0	91.6	93.8	<u>94.5</u>	<u>94.9</u>	<u>95.1</u>
1955—1959	42.5	83.3	91.6	<u>93.6</u>	<u>94.3</u>	<u>94.7</u>	<u>94.9</u>
1960—1964	40.6	80.9	<u>89.4</u>	<u>91.9</u>	<u>92.8</u>	<u>93.3</u>	<u>93.6</u>
1965—1968	34.5	<u>75.6</u>	<u>86.5</u>	<u>89.6</u>	<u>90.9</u>	<u>91.5</u>	<u>91.8</u>

\* Figures based on cohort nuptiality tables. \*\* Exact age + 0.5 years.

.. Data are not available

— Figures underlined are based on an estimate of cohort nuptiality. The estimated values of residual cohort nuptiality were calculated by using the most recent age-specific nuptiality probabilities. (Assumption of constant nuptiality probabilities after 1986 for Finland and after 1987/88 for Hungary.)

## Appendix

Table 6. Mean and median age at first marriage at selected birth cohorts\*, Finland and Hungary.

Mean age Birth cohort	Male	Mean age at first marriage			
		Finland		Hungary	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
1945	24.8	23.1	24.3	21.5	21.5
1950	25.5	23.2	24.2	21.4	21.4
1955	26.9	24.3	24.4	21.4	21.4
1960	28.3	25.7	24.6	21.3	21.3
1965	29.2	26.9	25.0	21.9	21.9
1968	..	..	25.2	22.2	22.2

.. Data are not available.

Median age Birth cohort	Males	Median age of single persons			
		Finland		Hungary	
		Females	Males	Females	Males
1939	25.0	23.0	24.2	20.4	20.4
1940—1944	24.6	22.6	24.0	20.6	20.6
1945—1949	24.4	22.0	23.5	20.5	20.5
1950—1954	26.2	23.2	23.9	20.5	20.5
1955—1959	28.8**	25.0	24.5	20.5	20.5
1960—1964	..	26.0***	24.5	20.5	20.5
1965	..	..	..	21.5	21.5

\* Figures based on cohort nuptiality tables.

\*\* For cohorts of 1955, 1956 and 1957.

\*\*\* For cohort of 1960.

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### Acknowledgements

This study was carried out partly at the Population Research Institute of Väestöliitto by a scholarship granted by the Ministry of Education in Finland. I would like to thank Jouko Hulkko and Riitta Auvinen for this opportunity and all the colleagues at the Population Research Institute for their help. Especially, I am indebted to Jarl Lindgren and Marketta Ritamies who helped me with many excellent comments and suggestions. For the special literature I am grateful to Ulla-Maija Mattila for her invaluable assistance. Without their help and patience my efforts would not have been successful.

### Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the nature and background of the difference between the nuptiality pattern in Finland and Hungary and to contribute to better understanding of the demographic behavior. The emphasis is on the first marriage.

Historically, Finland belongs to the countries characterized by the European pattern while Hungary followed the so called Eastern European pattern. Even if the both patterns have come closer to each other there are still differences between them which is seen, especially, in the age at marriage and the total first marriage rate.

The author presents the marriage trends by using both period and cohort measures. In order to analyze the changes in the age structure and the intensity of the first marriage, the classical life table method was applied to cohorts born between 1945 and 1970. The birth cohorts are supposed to be closed, not influenced by migration or mortality. For Finland projective probabilities are computed on the bases of cohort first marriage rates, for Hungary conventional probabilities are used.