

Unmarried cohabitation in Ireland: Towards post-Catholic family dynamics?

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Abstract

This paper aims at better understanding the diffusion of unmarried cohabitation in Ireland. We focus on fertility within unmarried cohabitation and on its relation with age and with level of education as a proxy for social class using a period approach. We use data from the five censuses of Ireland conducted between 1991 and 2011 to compare marriage and unmarried cohabitation looking at the evolution of five measures: 1) the distribution of women aged 15 to 49 by conjugal situation (i. e. married, living alone or cohabiting); 2) age-specific fertility rates by conjugal situation; 3) total fertility rate by conjugal situation; 4) the contribution of each conjugal situation to age-specific rates; and 5) the contribution of each conjugal situation to the total fertility rate. Our results show that cohabitation and having children while cohabiting are related to education in a qualified way. Both cohabitation and having children while cohabiting become more common among all educational groups over time. However, the less educated tend to marry earlier than the highly educated who seem to use unmarried cohabitation as a means of postponing marriage. In recent years, having children while cohabiting is as likely as having them while being married among the less educated, but the likelihood of having children while cohabiting decreases as education increases among the top levels of education. Marriage remains by large the main locus of fertility, whereas the contribution of cohabiting women to the TFR is on par with that of unpartnered women. There is no clear negative relationship between cohabitation or fertility within cohabitation and education, but the use of cohabitation seems to vary according to education.

Keywords

Unmarried cohabitation; Marriage; Fertility; Childbearing; Education; Ireland (Republic of)

Introduction

The people of Ireland have, or had until recently, a reputation of being very conservative in family matters, in their law as well as in their behaviour. The result of the referendum held on 22 May 2015 that amended the Constitution of Ireland to provide that marriage be legal irrespective of the sex of the spouses came as a surprise, maybe not for the people of Ireland, but certainly to most of the rest of Europe and to other Western countries. Since the ground-breaking decision by the Netherlands in 2001, only fourteen countries had followed suit, and none through a referendum. In many cases, same-sex marriage was introduced as a consequence of courts' decisions in which restraining marriage to couples formed by a man and a woman was ruled being a form of unacceptable discrimination, and thus through a channel typically used to protect minorities against the will, or the tyranny, of the majority. Denmark, which, in 1989, had been the first country to introduce registered partnership as a substitute for marriage intended for same-sex couples, still does not allow same-sex marriage. In France, the United Kingdom and the USA, the introduction of same-sex marriage came only after large-scale debates and strong demonstrations by opponents. It is still not introduced in Northern Ireland, where the Catholics are a minority. The fact that same-sex marriage had been introduced in a country deemed still close to the teachings of the Catholic Church and through a referendum, with the explicit approval of over 60% of the votes, was truly astonishing.

Such an event fosters questioning whether the Irish people are still as conservative in family matters as they were long assumed to be. It is pretty difficult to imagine that a whole politic entity may have accepted a change of such magnitude without going first through more modest changes in values and behaviour. This question may be treated in a variety of ways. In this article, we focus on the diffusion of unmarried cohabitation and of childbearing within unmarried cohabitation. Allowing same-sex couples to get married is a strong departure from the traditional conception of marriage, actually more radical than the acceptance of unmarried cohabitation between a man and a woman. Logically, diffusion and acceptance of unmarried cohabitation should have preceded the introduction of same-sex marriage.

In this paper, we use census data and a period approach to compare marriage and unmarried cohabitation looking at the evolution of five measures: the distribution of women aged 15 to 49 by conjugal situation (i. e. married, living alone or cohabiting); age-specific fertility rates by conjugal situation; total fertility rate by conjugal situation; the contribution of each conjugal situation to age-specific fertility rates; and the contribution of each conjugal situation to the total fertility rate. We begin by providing an overview of recent research on family change in Ireland, on the social and legal context of family change and on the changes in values.

Overview of family change in Ireland

Despite some contention to the contrary (Canavan 2012), there is little published research on the contemporary family in Ireland and most of it is available in hard to find books or as reports from government agencies or non-profit organisations.

Kennedy (2001) is still the authoritative study on family change in Ireland. The author contrasts the conception of family enshrined in the Constitution of Ireland, in which, among other things, “the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved” and “the State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home”, with the deep transformation that occurred over the 20th century. At the beginning of the new millennium, the proportion of married women engaged in the labour force in Ireland is similar to the average proportion in Europe. Furthermore, changes such as the decline of fertility and the introduction of divorce in 1995 represent other examples of how Ireland has lost some features of what was seen as its exceptionalism in Europe. As one reviewer of her book summarises it, “Kennedy’s thesis is that economic influences were more important in the long term than the social and moral teaching of the Catholic Church” and that “the ideal constitutional notion of the family [...] could not remain above and beyond economic realities” (Ferriter 2002). Economic realities may have played a larger role in the transformation of family in Ireland than in other countries, or the stark opposition between the constitutional ideal based on Catholic teachings and the economic realities may have been more obvious in Ireland than in most other countries. However, as S. Coontz (2005: 262) puts it, “the erosion of the male breadwinner family is a classic example of what some historians call an overdetermined event” and one cannot refrain from thinking that the increase in Irish women’s labour force participation over the 20th century is also likely an overdetermined phenomenon that cannot be reduced either to changes in values or to economic pressure. Claiming otherwise would be another form of exceptionalism.

Whatever the causes of the deep changes that occurred in family structure and family dynamics in Ireland over the 20th century, the transformation is real. The general findings of a study based on the 2006 Census provide a picture in which, indeed, Ireland, is less of an exception than it may have been:

- “Approximately one-in-three families in Ireland departs from the traditional model of a married couple both of whom are in their first marriage. One in four children under 21 years of age lives in a family that does not conform to this model.
- Alternative family structures are dominated by never-married cohabiting couples and lone mothers (both never-married and divorced or separated). Together with first-time marriages, these four family types account for 92 per cent of families.

— Second relationships and step-families, though they exist in diverse forms, remain relatively rare in Ireland.” (Lunn and Fahey 2011)

Social and legal context

The Republic of Ireland came to existence in a context in which a religious difference, the opposition between Catholic Irishmen and “Protestant” Englishmen, structured the political fight that led to the independence of the Southern portion of the island. Not surprisingly given the context, the 1937 Constitution of the republic included several important elements of the traditional teaching of the Church. Such as the indissolubility of marriage — shared with the Church of Ireland, i.e. the Anglican Church in Ireland —, and of the social doctrine expressed in the *Rerum novarum* encyclical, such as the family as the foundation of society and the role of woman as mother.

The enshrinement of elements of the doctrine of the Church in the Constitution is viewed as the main reason why the Irish government has been late at developing an active policy towards the family (Cavavan 2012). The notion that the family is the foundation of society would have been the main deterrent. This notion has a long history and a very specific meaning in the doctrine of the Church. It goes back to Roman law. In Roman society, the family is the group of persons who live under the authority of the *paterfamilias*. A Roman family comprises a man, the *paterfamilias*, his spouse, his children, his grandchildren if any and his slaves. The family is the basic unit of Roman civil law and civil law is the set of rules that regulates the relations between families or between *paterfamilias*, both being the same for most purposes. A man remains under the authority of his father or his grandfather as long as they are alive and thus belongs to the family they head. If the son of a *paterfamilias* wishes to take a civil action against the son of another *paterfamilias*, the action must be brought by his father against the father of the “defendant”. In Roman law, the family is as much a legal entity and a legal fiction as a social reality. As a consequence of these conceptions of the family and of civil law, what happens within the family does not belong to the domain of the law, but to that of *mos*, custom or tradition, also the word from which derives “moral”. Behaviour within the family is not scrutinised by the courts, but every five years by the censors, and the political rights of a *paterfamilias* depend on whether or not the censors will consider that he behaves in accordance to *antiqui mores*, literally good old tradition, with respect to the persons under his authority. In Roman law, so to speak, the rules that apply to what happens between family members are outside the domain of civil law. During the 2nd century AD, emperors and jurists began developing rules about the relations between members of the same family. Having to justify such an invasion, a jurist — Ulpian — made clear that such rules did not belong to civil law, but to natural law, a notion that until then had been known in philosophy, but had not been used by jurists. The Church reinterpreted the distinction between civil law and *mos*, as well as the idea that *mos* was somehow related to natural law, and further reinterpreted natural law to be divine law. From these reinterpretations and a few others, the modern husband and wife family became the foundation of society so that what happens within the family remains out of the reach of secular law, but the province of the Church. Such notions are

exotic for the reader of the 21st century, but their consequences, at the very least, were widely understood well into the 20th. Given the spirit of the Constitution, it is not surprising that the Irish government “has been slow to articulate any overarching statement on family” and that it did not do so until 1998 (Canavan 2012).

Things started to change in the mid-1990s. The most important change of that period was the introduction of divorce through a constitutional amendment adopted by referendum. This may look like a precedent for the 2015 referendum on same-sex marriage, but the comparison would be dubious. The amendment that introduced same-sex marriage is a radical shift occurring less than 15 years after the first country in the world enacted such a possibility, whereas the 1995 amendment of the constitution merely authorised divorce after at least four years of separation and centuries after similar conditions for divorce had been enacted in various countries. Allowing same-sex marriage in 2015 is almost being a forerunner, allowing divorce under stringent conditions in 1995 is late adoption at best.

Three years later, the government issued a report in which it listed a series of principles that should be used to develop family policies, but these principles were not indicating a will to promote important changes or to invade what had remained largely outside the domain of the State. In 2004, the Law Reform Commission conducted a consultation on the rights and duties of cohabitants and drafted a bill on cohabitants soon after, in 2006 (Law Reform Commission 2004, 2006). The same year, the all-party committee on the Constitution of the Oireachtas — the legislature of Ireland — released a report, based on another consultation, which supported the idea of extending the notion of family to encompass non-marital families and same-sex couples through legislation rather than through amending the Constitution (Oireachtas 2006).

From then on, things changed fast. The Oireachtas — the legislature of Ireland— passed the *Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act* in 2010. This act introduced civil partnership, marriage by another name available to same-sex couples, and extended to unmarried couples some of the rights and obligations imposed on married couples (Tobin 2013; Mee 2011). The changes in society that made passing this act possible are probably the best indicator of the kind of change in attitudes towards the family that led five years later to the passing of the amendment that introduced same-sex marriage. In the 2010 act, the notion of family had already been extended to unmarried cohabiting couples and to same-sex couples. Secular and positive law had invaded the preserve of the Church and for all purposes, the individual — its needs and its rights — had replaced the family as the foundation of Irish society. From there, extending marriage to same-sex couples was merely the next possible step.

Change in values

We found little published research on the evolution of values and attitudes towards unmarried cohabitation and related matters in Ireland. Fahey, Hayes and Sinnott (2005) used survey data

covering the period from the 1970s to 2003 and the European Values Study (EVS) fielded in the Republic of Ireland as well as Northern Ireland in 1999–2000 to examine the differences in values and attitudes between Catholics and Protestants on a variety of topics. Among other things, they found that although religion remained a deep source of division in identity and constitutional preferences, Catholics and Protestants “were closer to each other in their thinking on many issues than either is to any other population in Europe, including that of Britain”. This was true on questions of family and sexual morality on which religion traditionally had an influence. They also found that “on a number of issues the divide is between the religiously committed and those whose faith has weakened or disappeared. Secularisation has replaced denomination as the main axis of differentiation in regard to certain values and attitudes.”

The questionnaire of the 4th wave of the EVS, fielded in Ireland in 2008, included two questions especially relevant to our study that were not asked in previous waves, at least not in Ireland. In these questions, respondents were asked to state their degree of agreement with the two following statements: “It is alright for two people to live together without getting married” and “Homosexual couples should be able to adopt children”. Given that the questions were asked only in 2008, there is no way to examine the evolution of the answers over time. An approximation is to examine the relation of the answers given in 2008 with the age of the respondent. Figures 1 and 2 report the probability of answering each of the five levels of agreement according to age as predicted from an ordinal logistic regression in which the relation between age and the dependent variable is specified as quadratic. Approval of unmarried cohabitation is related to age, but in a qualified way. Strong approval has high predicted probabilities among the youth, but these decrease rapidly as age increases. “Agree” has the highest predicted probabilities and these vary little with age while the two categories expressing disagreement only pick up after 50. Approval of homosexual couples having children is a different matter. The predicted probabilities of the two approval categories are not as high as those of the question on unmarried cohabitation, whereas the predicted probabilities of the two disapproval categories are higher. The probabilities of the approval categories decrease with age whereas those of the disapproval categories increase with age, the four relationships being almost linear. In 2008, seven years before the referendum on same-sex marriage and two years before the passing of the act that extended the notion of family to unmarried cohabitants and same-sex couples, approval for this extension to unmarried cohabitants would seem quite generalised, but the opposition to its extension to same-sex couples seemed quite strong, even among the young.

Previous research

Halpin and O’Donoghue (2004) used data from the Labour Force Survey and from the Living in Ireland Survey, the Irish component of the European Community Household Panel, to examine the diffusion of unmarried cohabitation in Ireland between 1994 and 2002. They found that unmarried cohabitation had become more common in Ireland over that period, the proportion of women living in an unmarried cohabiting relationship increasing from about 2% to 6%. Unmarried cohabitation

was associated with being young, urban and in the labour market. Most cohabitating relationships were short: only about 20% lasted at least seven years. A high proportion of them ended in marriage. More interestingly, they found that more than over 40% of new marriages were preceded by cohabitation, “making it close to a majority practice rather than the deviant behaviour it would have been a generation ago”. Because of the generalisation of unmarried cohabitation as a prelude to marriage, they conclude that unmarried cohabitation “seems to be developing as an adaptation of marriage rather than an alternative to it”.

A more recent study on family based on data from the 2006 Census estimated “that cohabiting couples accounted for 11 per cent of all couples, and 33 per cent of these cohabiting couples had children” (Fahey and Field 2008). If the estimates of the two studies were accurate, the proportion of couples living together without being married would have grown from 2% in 1994 to 6% in 2002 and almost 12% in 2006. The growth is impressive. Fahey and Field are of the same opinion as Halpin and O’Donoghue: they believe that unmarried cohabitation is not replacing marriage. Given that, according to their estimates, a third of cohabiting couples have children and that their data do not allow them to examine the evolution of the duration of cohabiting relationships, one wonders which of their findings support this conclusion.

Objectives

Some of the recent research on the diffusion of cohabitation in Western countries opposes cultural change and economic pressure as the main drivers of this phenomenon. For the first perspective, the spread of unmarried cohabitation is seen as one element of an overarching change in norms, values and attitudes. For the second, it is a consequence of the degradation of the economic conditions of the young over the last decades, especially the condition of young men. Kennedy’s views of the sources of the changes in the Irish family would suggest that, in Ireland, the second view would provide a better explanation.

Our objective is to contribute to the understanding of the diffusion of cohabitation in Ireland by looking at some aspects of it, especially its relation with age and with level of education as a proxy for social class, using a series of “snapshots”.

Specifically, we are interested in the growth, between 1991 and 2011, in the proportion of women who live in an unmarried cohabiting relationship. We are especially interested in the differences in this growth across age groups and educational strata. We are equally interested in childbearing within unmarried cohabitation and again, in the relation between fertility within unmarried cohabitation and age as well as level of education.

Data and methods

We use data from the IPUMS collection of harmonised census microdata files from the five most recent censuses of Ireland, i.e. 1991, 1996, 2002, 2006 and 2011 (Minnesota Population Center 2015).

We compute the proportion of women aged between 15 and 49 who are married, live in an unmarried cohabiting relationship or do not live in a any form of conjugal union. Given that in Ireland IPUMS data, age is grouped in five-year categories, we compute these proportions in five-year age groups.

We estimate childbearing within marriage, unmarried cohabitation and outside any form of conjugal union using an approach based on the own-children method. The own-children method was designed to study fertility using census data so that fertility could be related to characteristics collected by the census, but not recorded in vital statistics (Cho, Rutherford and Choe 1986). Using the own-children method allows us to detect recent births in unmarried cohabiting couples and in married couples. The original form of the method uses the distribution of the number of children less than five years old in the household conditional on the age of mothers aged between 15 and 49, grouped into five-year classes. Given that in Ireland IPUMS data, age is grouped in five-year categories, we estimate rates within five-year age groups, but using births which occurred in the year preceding the census.

First, we compare the fertility of women in unmarried cohabiting union and marriage estimating age-specific fertility rates (ASFRs) and the total fertility rate (TFR) by union type. The TFR by union type is an extension of the traditional distinction between the legitimate TFR and the illegitimate TFR to a third case, fertility within unmarried cohabitation. The legitimate, or marital, TFR is a measure of the number of children a woman would have had if she had been continuously married between ages 15 and 49 and subjected to the synthetic cohort's age-specific fertility rates of married women throughout this period. The unmarried cohabitation TFR should be interpreted in the same way, *mutatis mutandis*. These rates indicate implausible high levels of fertility in marriage and cohabitation, which is a consequence of union type being a time-varying characteristic (Hoem and Mureşan 2011a, 2011b). We do not interpret this TFR as an approximation of completed fertility, but as a measure of the overall intensity of fertility within each union type that allows using them to compare the overall intensity of fertility within each of the two forms of conjugal union. We estimate ASFRs and TFR using an approach that combines the own-children method and Poisson

regression, which allows us to compute standard errors and thus test whether observed differences between marriage and consensual union are statistically significant.

Second, we use two measures introduced in Laplante and Fostik (2015): the contribution of each conjugal status to age-specific fertility rates (CASFR) and the contribution of each conjugal status to cumulative fertility (CCF). The first measure, the contribution of each conjugal status to age-specific fertility rates (CASFR), is computed as the product of the within conjugal status age-specific rate and the proportion of women of the same age in a given type of conjugal status. The sum of the contributions of each conjugal status to age-specific fertility rates is the age-specific rate. The second measure, the contribution of each conjugal status to cumulative fertility (CCF), is the sum over age of the contributions of each conjugal status to age-specific fertility rates. The sum of the contributions of each conjugal status to cumulative fertility is the cumulative fertility. The sum of the contributions of all conjugal statuses to overall fertility is the total fertility rate. The value of the contribution of each conjugal status to cumulative fertility at age 49 is the contribution of the conjugal status to the TFR.

Substantively, the contributions to age-specific fertility rates provide a description of the fertility, over her life course, of a “synthetic woman” who would have spent her reproductive years unpartnered, cohabiting, and being married as the average woman of the synthetic cohort. The contributions to the TFR provide a decomposition of the cumulative fertility of this “synthetic woman”. Over her life course, she would have had exactly the same number of children as the period TFR, but using the contributions of each conjugal status allows us to detail the proportion of these children she would have had while having no co-residential partner, while cohabiting, and while being married.

Results are reported in figures.

Results

Figure 3 reports the distribution of conjugal status among women aged between 15 and 49 by five-year age classes for all five censuses. Not surprisingly, the overall proportion of women living in an unmarried cohabiting relationship increases from the oldest to the most recent census. The proportions increase steadily from 1991 to 2006, but more slowly between 2006 and 2011. As one could expect, unmarried cohabitation is more common among the young. The growth in the proportion of the cohabiting relationships is associated with a decrease in the proportion of the

married, but not with a decrease in the proportion of women living outside any form of conjugal union.

Figure 4 reports the proportion of women aged between 15 and 49 who are cohabiting among those who live in a conjugal union by five-year age classes and level of education for all five censuses. The relationship between education and living in a cohabiting union varies according to age, and the relationship between these three variables varies across censuses.

In 1991, among the youngest, the proportion increases somewhat with education from primary up to upper secondary, but is lower among women having postsecondary education and almost zero among women having university education. In all other censuses, the relationship between the level of education and cohabitation is positive and the proportion is very high. The proportion cohabiting increases with education in all censuses among the 20 to 24 age group, although women having university education stand as outliers in 1991. The proportion cohabiting increases with education in all censuses except the 1991 Census among women aged between 25 and 29. There is no relationship between the level of education and cohabitation among women aged between 30 and 34, but the proportion increases from one census to the next. In all groups of women aged at least 35, there is a slight negative association between education and living in an unmarried cohabiting relationship, but the levels are low and decrease with age.

Figure 5 reports the age-specific fertility rates for five-year age classes by conjugal status by census. The most striking change is the decrease in the fertility of young married women from the oldest census to the 2006 Census. Another striking feature is the relatively high rates among unmarried cohabiting women even in 1991, when unmarried cohabitation was uncommon. In 2006, the rates are the same among the married and the cohabiting among the youngest and among women aged at least 35. In 2011, the rates are higher among the younger married women.

Figure 6 reports the total fertility rate for marriage and unmarried cohabitation for women aged between 20 and 49 with 95% confidence intervals derived from estimating the age-specific rates using Poisson regression. There is some fluctuation across censuses in the overall intensity of fertility within both forms of conjugal union, but the overall intensity is always higher within marriage than within consensual union.

Figure 7 reports the Total fertility rate for marriage and unmarried cohabitation by level of education for women aged between 20 and 49, again with 95% confidence intervals. There are differences by education levels in all censuses, but the results from the 2011 Census are the most telling. The intensity of fertility is the same within marriage and within unmarried cohabitation for

women having the two lowest levels of education. The intensity is higher within marriage than within unmarried cohabitation for women having upper secondary education and from that level up, the difference between marriage and unmarried cohabitation keeps increasing.

Figure 8 reports the contributions to age-specific fertility rates by conjugal status for women aged between 15 and 49 across censuses. The contribution of unmarried cohabitation increased from the oldest to the most recent census, but even in the most recent, it is barely higher than that of women not living in a conjugal union.

Figure 9 reports the contributions to the total fertility rate by conjugal status for women aged between 15 and 49 by census. The contribution of unmarried cohabitation increases from the oldest to the more recent census and, again, is slightly higher than that of living outside any conjugal union in the most recent census. However, as the contribution of marriage decreases because of lower fertility within marriage, the relative contribution of unmarried cohabitation increases more rapidly than its absolute contribution. Over her life course, the average woman of the 2011 synthetic cohort would have had 0.25 of a child while not living in a conjugal union, another 0.25 child while living in an unmarried cohabiting relationship, and 1.25 child while being married. In 2011, unmarried cohabitation accounted for about 12.5% of Irish fertility as measured by the TFR.

Discussion

Unmarried cohabitation is more common among the young, but there is no real way to disentangle to what extent this association is due to new cohorts replacing older ones and carrying the new form of behaviour across age groups as they grow older or to the adoption of the new behaviour by older cohorts. Both are possible and the two are not mutually exclusive.

There is a positive relationship between education and unmarried cohabitation among the young, none among those aged 30 to 34 and a slight negative association at older ages. Unmarried cohabitation has become widespread among the young and the positive association between education and living together without being married suggests that early marriage has become more common among the less educated than among the well-educated, maybe because the former leave school and start working earlier. The well-educated marry later and are apparently choosing to live together without being married until older ages than the less-educated. Clearly, in Ireland, there is no negative gradient of unmarried cohabitation among the young.

Among women aged at least 35, marriage remains by far the most common form of conjugal relationship and there is a slight negative association between education and unmarried cohabitation.

The proportion of women living in an unmarried relationship increases slightly from one census to the next, but it remains low. Things are a bit different among women aged 30 to 34. In this group, there is no association between education and not being married and the proportion of those who live in an unmarried cohabiting relationship increases steadily from one census to the next. This could be the harbinger of a coming change in which the proportion of unmarried cohabiting women would increase in older cohorts in future censuses.

Living in an unmarried cohabiting relationship does not prevent women of any level of education from having a child, and this seems to have been true as early as 1991, when unmarried cohabitation was something rare. Whatever norms may have discouraged a couple to have a child without being married seem to have disappeared fast. However, having children within such a relationship is associated with education in a peculiar way: there is no difference between marriage and unmarried cohabitation among women who are less educated, but there is a difference within the three highest levels of education, and this difference becomes steeper the higher the level of education. As we pointed out, unmarried cohabitation among the well-educated seems to be a way of postponing marriage. The low fertility among the well-educated who are cohabiting could be a consequence of some class-related norms: having children while not being married would not be appropriate in the upper classes. Perhaps more convincingly, it could be that cohabitation is preferred by women who do not yet want to be a mother in a society in which career and motherhood may still be difficult to reconcile especially for highly educated women.

The relative increase of the contribution of unmarried cohabitation to overall fertility is largely due to the decrease of the contribution of marriage. In 2011, the contribution of unmarried cohabitation to overall fertility was on par with that of being alone.

The overall picture seems to be that in the Irish society, unmarried cohabitation has become acceptable, as well as having children while living together without being married. However, marriage and unmarried cohabitation are used in different ways by different social classes. Everyone uses unmarried cohabitation when they are young, but the less educated marry early and the well-educated later. Everyone may have children within an unmarried relationship, but more educated women are less prone to do so, maybe because among them, living together without being married is a way to give more importance to a professional career than to motherhood. Further research is needed.

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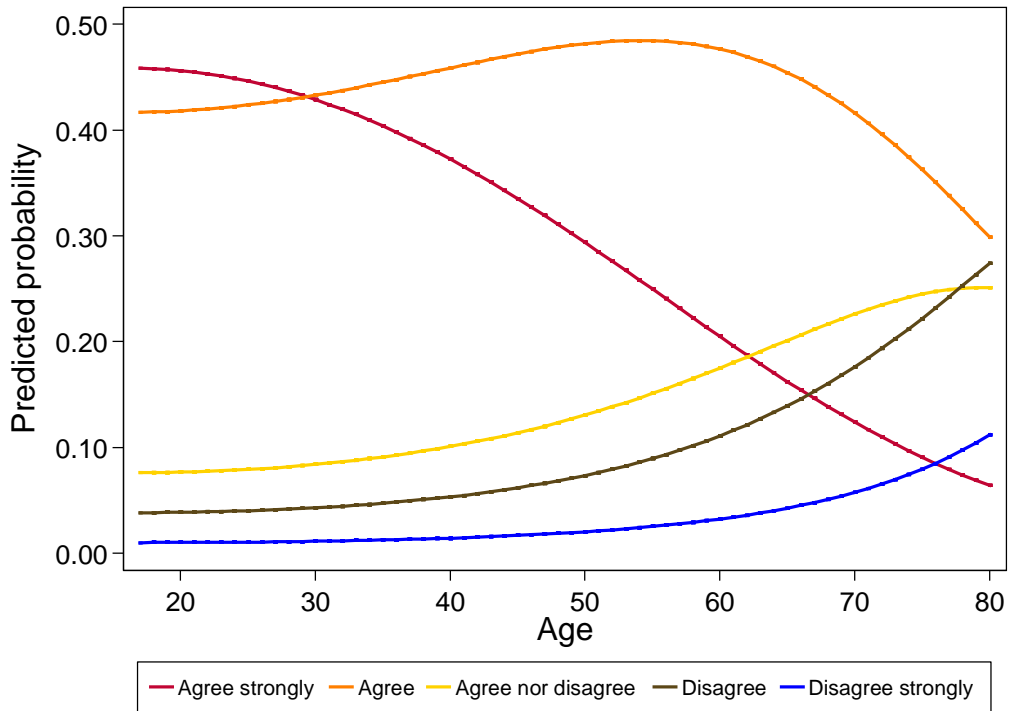


Figure 1. "It is alright for two people to live together without getting married". Ordinal logistic regression. Predicted probabilities. Ireland. European Values Study, Ireland, 2008.

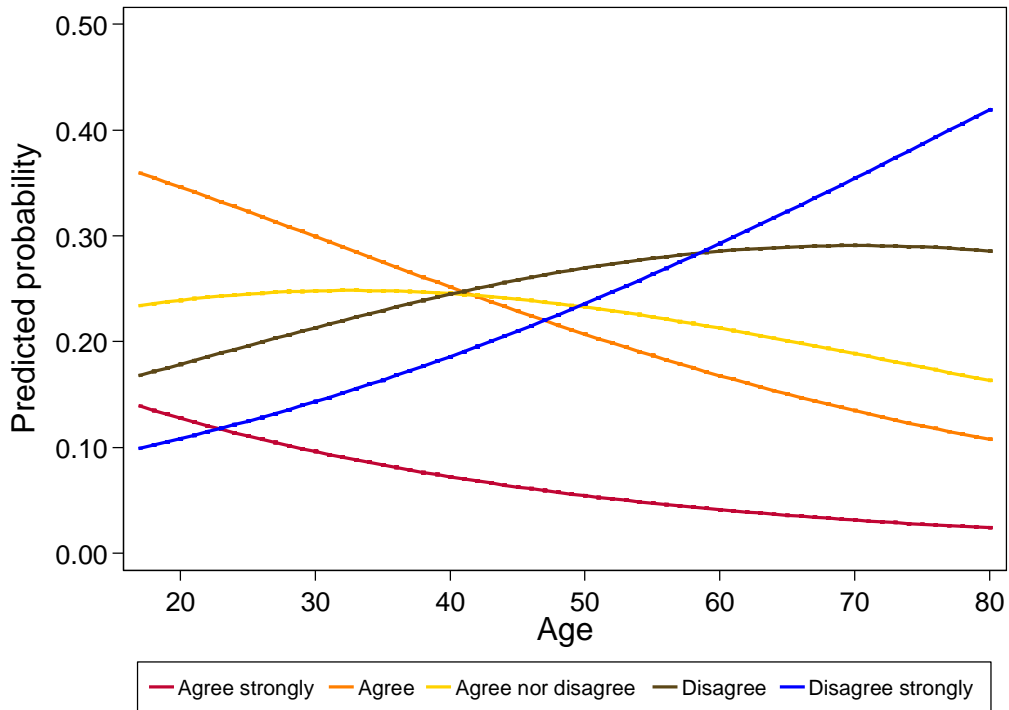


Figure 2. "Homosexual couples should be able to adopt children". Ordinal logistic regression. Predicted probabilities. European Values Study, Ireland, 2008.

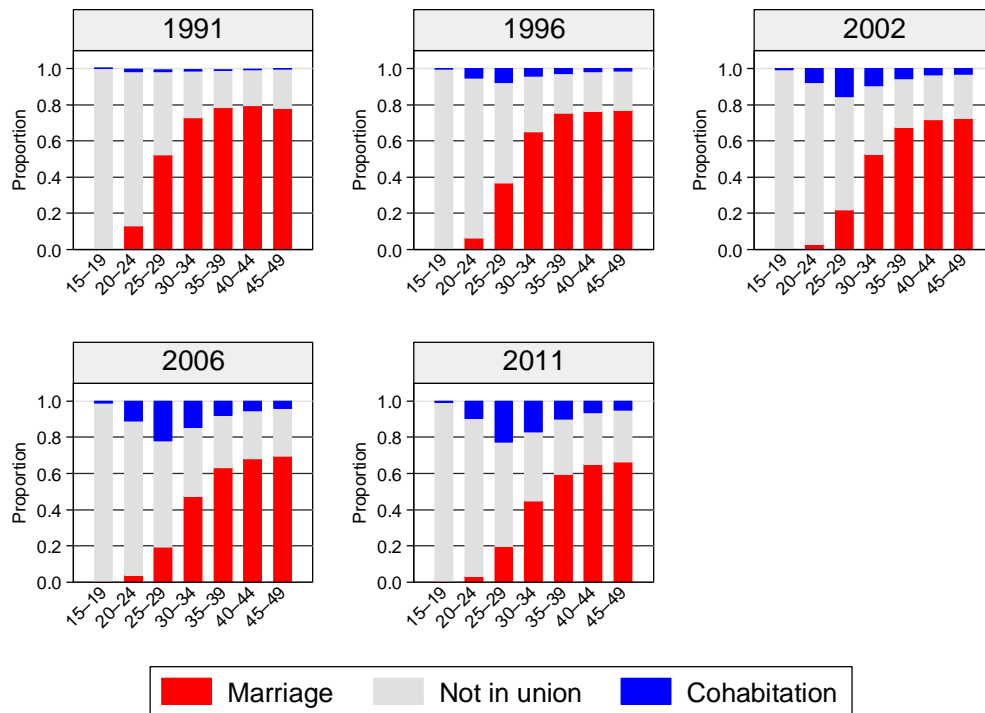


Figure 3. Conjugal status of women aged 15–49 by five-year age classes. Ireland. Census data. IPUMS.

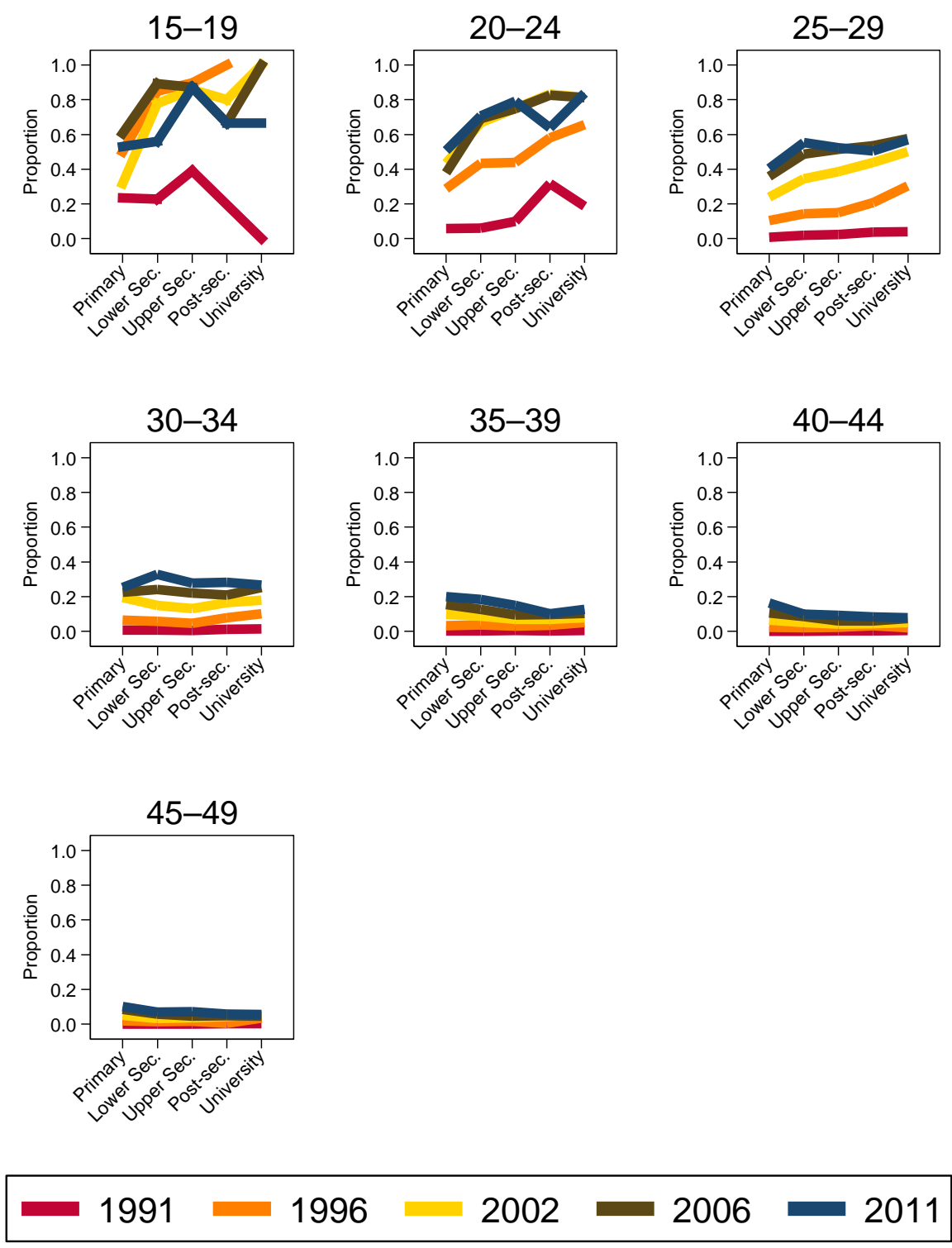


Figure 4. Proportion of women aged 15–49 cohabiting among those who live in a conjugal union by five-year age classes and level of education. Ireland. Census data. IPUMS.

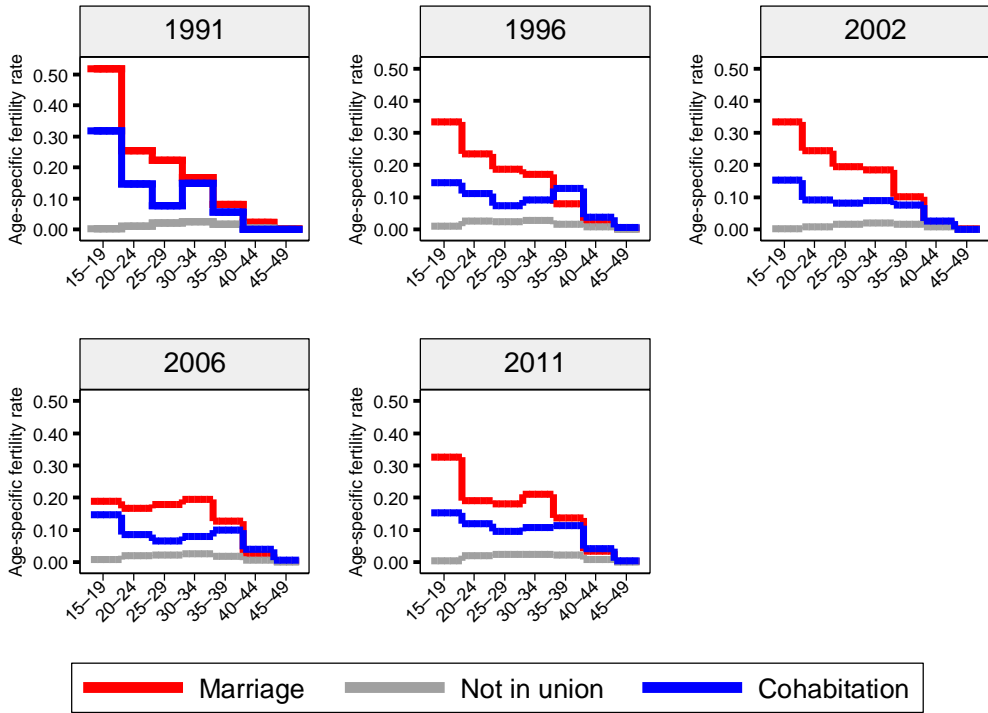


Figure 5. Age-specific fertility rates for five-year age classes by conjugal status. Ireland. Women aged 15–49. Census data. IPUMS.

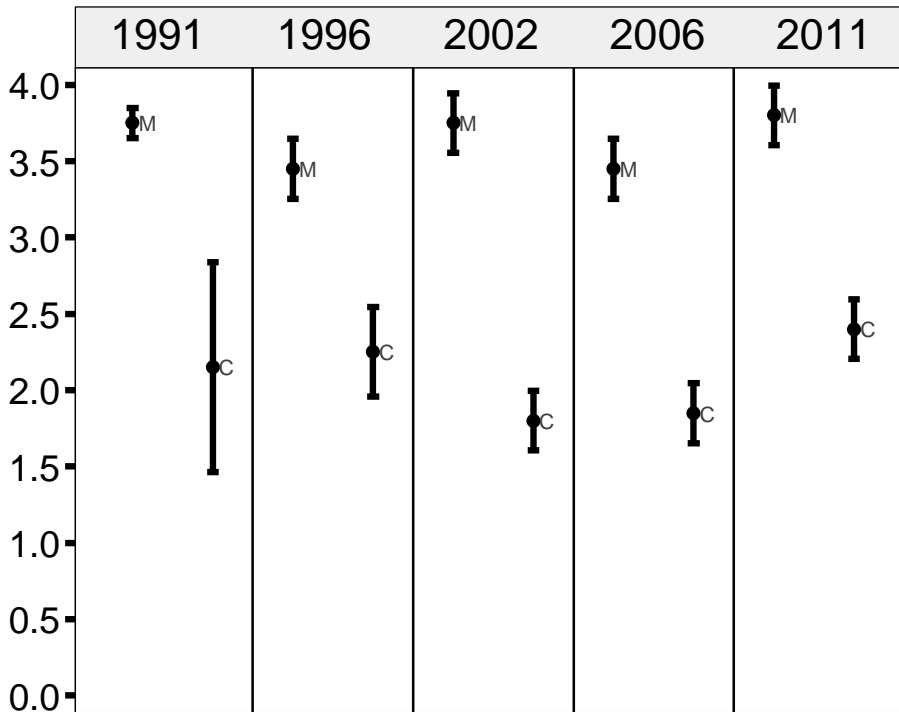


Figure 6. Total fertility rate for marriage and cohabitation for women aged 20–49 with 95% confidence intervals. Ireland. Census data. Poisson regression. IPUMS.

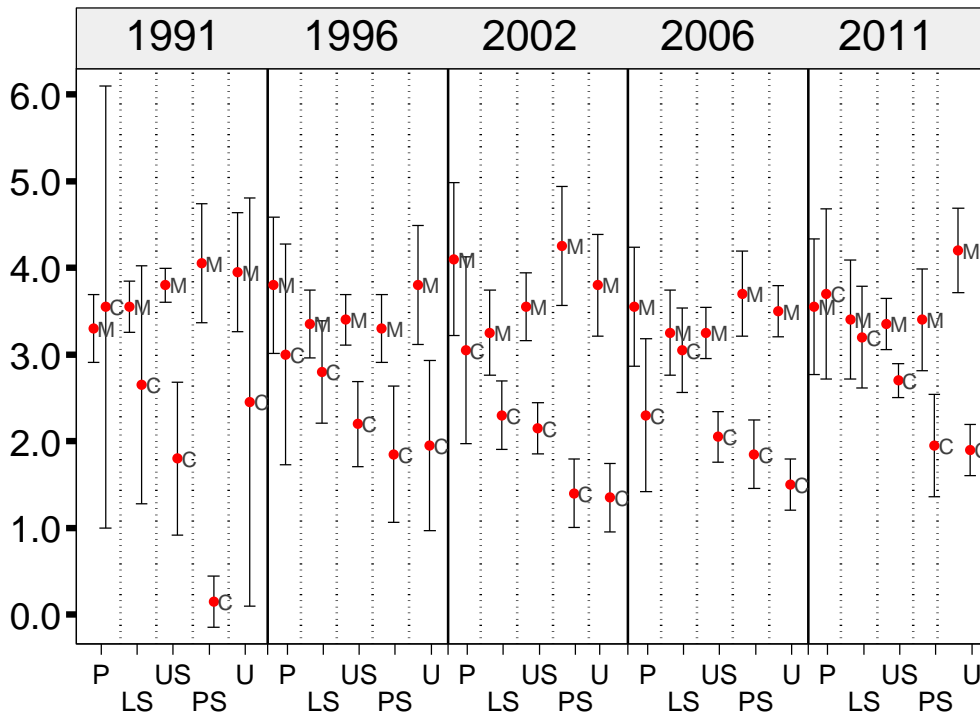


Figure 7. Total fertility rate for marriage and cohabitation by level of education for women aged 20–49 with 95% confidence intervals. Ireland. Census data. Poisson regression. IPUMS.

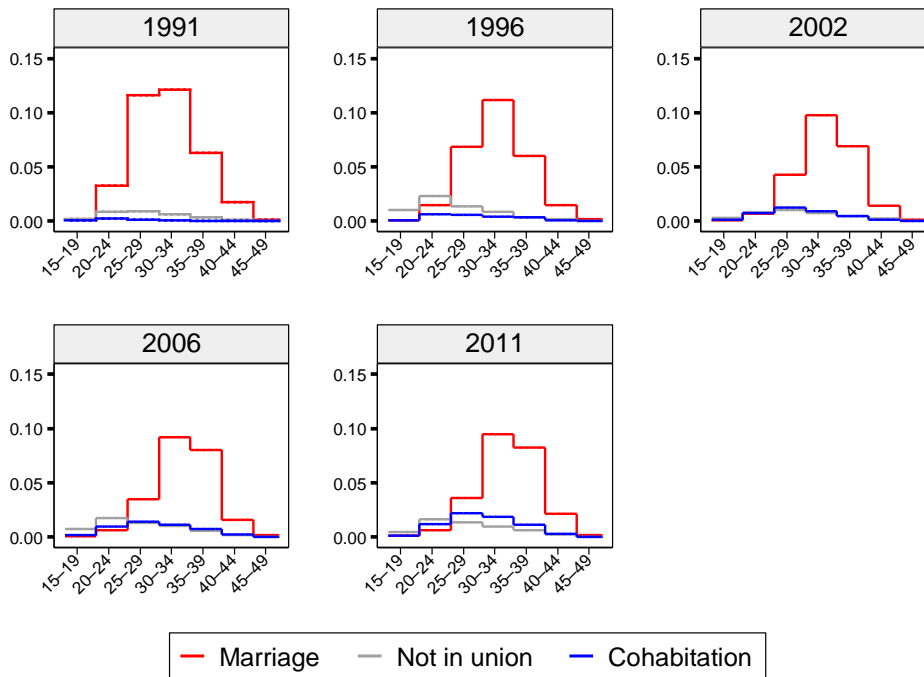


Figure 8. Contributions to age-specific fertility rates by conjugal status. Ireland. Women aged 15–49. Ireland. Census data. IPUMS.

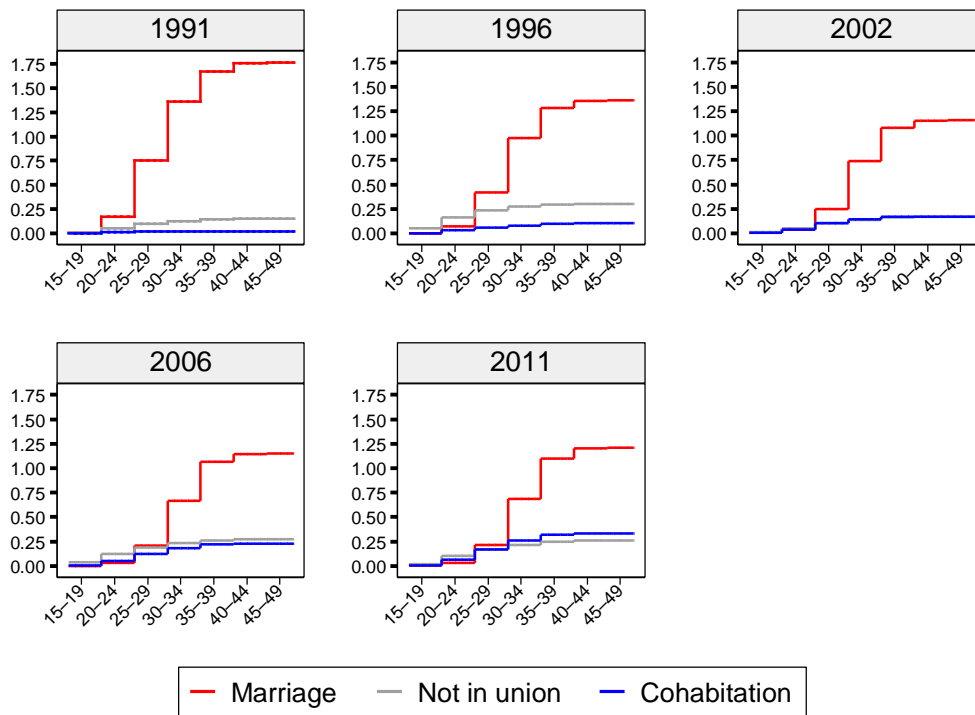


Figure 9. Contributions to the total fertility rate by conjugal status. Ireland. Women aged 20–49. Ireland. Census data. IPUMS.