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**TRANSITION TO THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FORMATION PATTERN IN LITHUANIA, RUSSIA
AND FRANCE: DIFFERENT PATHS TO CONVERGENCE?¹**

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the 20th c. the demographic development of the industrial countries has been marked by significant family changes and transition to a new model of partnership formation: the spread of consensual unions, ageing of marriages, etc. Regardless of the common features of the changes the manifestation level of the feature in different countries varies, which is frequently used as a basis to categorize the countries as the leaders of change, the moderate-change countries and the ones that experience fewest transformations in partnership formation. In such groupings, the post-communist countries are frequently singled out and opposed to the developed western countries. By this however, significant differences between the countries are flattened, as well as the set of factors conditioning these differences are obscured.

In the 1990s, in the post-communist countries, in parallel to the political, economic and societal transformations rapid changes started in the family formation patterns, which for several decades had been undergoing moderate change, or had remained stable. The set of changes that have been taking place since 1990 strongly resemble the ones that the northern and western European countries experienced about four decades ago, followed by the southern European countries somewhat later. These changes are summarized under the label of the Second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa 1986; van de Kaa 1987). Despite the fact that family changes in the post-communist countries echoes the ones in the other parts of Europe several questions need to be answered. Are the changes in the family formation pattern of the last almost twenty years in the post-communist countries really very much uniform between the countries? Are these countries re-treading the family transformation path of the western countries, as asserted, not infrequently, in the discussions on the general features of the latest family changes of the post-communist region? Moreover, is it possible that the common starting points of the pronounced socio-economic and political environment changes and the trend towards a fundamental social modernisation has predetermined the similarities in the pronounced change indicators of the family institution, despite the cultural and structural path dependencies, and different historical experiences (Reher 1998; Mamolo 2005)?

The aim of the chapter is to reveal, on the basis of the GGS findings, the similarities and specifics in changing strategies of family formation in Lithuania, Russia and France, the countries with different cultural and structural path-dependencies, and different historical experiences. An analysis is made of the countries, which were representing, for a long time, the opposite poles of the demographic, cultural, political and historical development. These are the countries which according to the family formation strategy were placed on the opposite sides of the St. Petersburg-Triest line (Hajnal, 1965), the cultural advance and the matrimonial behaviour of which were influenced, in different ways, by the dominant religious environment and different processes of secularization, and the long-decade historical-political-economic advancement of which was making prerequisites for options in the choice of individual life paths and demographic behaviour. All this evidently conditions specific features and trajectories in the changes of family formation for each country.

The article is organized into four sections. The first one is dedicated to the analysis of the historical development of the family formation patterns in all three countries and reveals the country specific historical preconditions of the modern family changes. In the second section of the article we analyze the shifts towards the modern partnership formation pattern. Two general tools of analysis are employed in this section: first of all we discuss changes in the timing of first partnership by birth cohorts and afterwards by certain age in birth cohorts. The analysis reveals the different models of the transition to the new partnership formation pattern. The closing section of the article raises the question on the forerunners of the new family formation pattern and addresses the issue of selectivity.

1. Historical paths of the changes in family formation patterns in Lithuania, Russia and France

Scholars that investigate family changes in the post-communist countries usually note that recent family changes have been taking place in the region since the 1990s. However, this is mostly presented as a rather uniform phenomenon across different post-communist countries, although the trends of the key demographic indicators alone show a significant variance at the start, in the pace and scope of changes the roots of which are in the distant past. This section of the article therefore presents a brief comparative assessment of the indicators illustrating the modernisation process of family: trends and specifics of the changes in families with respect to the paradigm of the Second demographic transition and at drawing attention to the historical paths and impact of the cultural environment of the countries. Several indicators are accounted for the estimation of the changes in the family formation pattern: timing of family formation (mean age at first marriage, which allows to estimate the matrimonial behaviour by age), the proportion of never married (as a consequences of later and no-universal marriages) and types of partnership formation (extra-marital birth rate, which indirectly assesses the spread of consensual unions and family deinstitutionalization). The Lithuanian and Russian family formation indicators will be compared with the French ones.

Timing of family formation. According to the historical, statistical and analytical information in the beginning of the 20th century the countries under the analysis belonged to the different marriage patterns: Lithuania - to the so-called "European marriage" pattern (Hajnal 1965), Russia - to the traditional "non-European marriage" pattern, whereas the family development in France already reflected the early departure from the "European marriage" pattern, and this transition took place since the middle of 19th century¹. "European marriage" pattern, is distinguished by the late marriage and a high proportion of never married (Table 1; Annex 1, 2) was typical for Lithuania until the middle of the 20th century (Marcinkeviciene 1999; Stankuniene 1989, 1995, 1997, 2001; Vishnevskij 1977; Vishnevskij, Tolts 1983; Volkov 1986; Blum, Rallu 1993). Lithuania constituted the confines of the eastward spread of "European marriage" pattern corresponding in area terms with the spread of the Catholic and Protestant faith (Vishnevskij 1977; Vishnevskij, Tolts 1983). Meanwhile, the early marriages and a very low proportion of never married prevailed in Russia since the end of the 19th century up to the middle of the 1990s.

However, it should be noted that in Russia in first decades of the 20th century marriage pattern has been shaped by different political events and legislation actions for several times. Before the WWII the specific bolshevik and soviet legislations related to family life have had a strong influence on family formation (Liberal Family Codes, Annex 1). The Second World War has led to catastrophic disturbances at the marriage market causing a sharp increase in age at first marriage in Russia (birth cohorts of the 1910s and 1920s; Fig. 1).

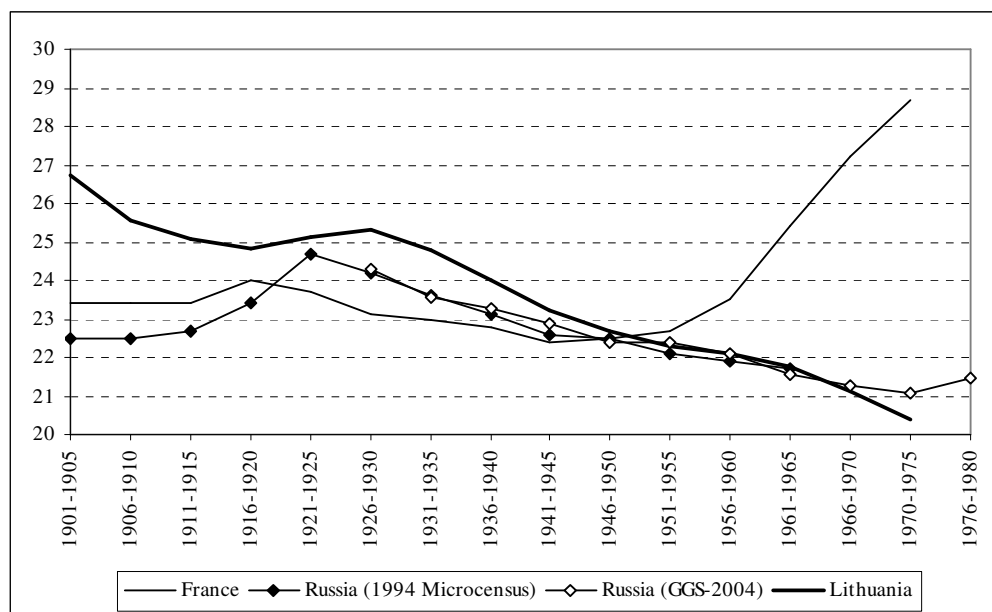
After the WWII the rejuvenation of marriage and decrease of the level of never married started in the European countries. Decrease in mean age at marriage which marked the coming of "the golden age of marriage" has been observed in almost all countries of Western and Western Europe in the 1950-1960s (Festy 1970-1971; Sobotka, Toulemon 2008). In the second half of the 20th century the rejuvenation of marriage started in the Baltics as well. However, the weakness of the post-war demographic statistics does not permit to make an accurate assessment of the timing and speed of the marriage rejuvenation in Lithuania until the 1960s.

Meanwhile in Russia, due to the historical events, just after the WWII the age of the entry to the first marriage increased. It reached almost 25 years for women, exceeding the indicator for France for the same cohorts of women born in the early 1920s who got married in the first decade after the war (Fig. 1). Women born in the 1920s and 1930s were entering the first marriage in Russia at still older ages than women of the same birth cohorts in France (Fig. 1). The same effect was observed for France after the WWI (Henry 1966).

A convergence of marriage patterns in Western countries related to the SDT occurred in the 1960s. The trajectories of family changes in Russia, Lithuania and France, diverged radically again (Monnier, Rychtarikova 1992; Vishnevskij, Zakharov 1995). Age rejuvenation of marriage still continued in

Russia and Lithuania as in other Eastern and Central European countries for more than two decades, while countries of the West at the beginning of the 1970s experienced sharp turn towards older ages at marriage. As a result, by the early 1990s, Russia returned to the level of indicators observed a hundred years ago (Zakharov 2006, 2007; Vishnevsky 2006): mean age at first marriage for women – 21-22 years (Annex 3). In Lithuania, the rejuvenation of marriage and the trends towards early and universal marriage continued into the early 1990s. The lowest mean age at first marriage both for men and women was registered in Lithuania in 1992. At that time, the indicators constituted, respectively by sex, 23.8 and 22.1 years (Annex 3). Meanwhile in France the rejuvenation of marriage terminated in the 1970s. The lowest mean age at first marriage for women was 22.5 in 1972-75 (Council of Europe 2000).

Figure 1. Mean age at first marriage for women in France, Lithuania and Russia, birth cohorts 1901-1980



Sources: Festy 1979; Prioux 2007; Council of Europe 2004; for Russia – S. Zakharov’s estimates based on special processing of the Russia’s 1994 Microcensus data and RusGGS-2004 data with an extrapolation for the last cohorts; for Lithuania – 2001 Lithuanian population census data. Calculations are done using 30% of 2001 Lithuanian population census micro data.

The ageing of marriage started in France since the 1970s, in Russia and Lithuania – for more than two decades later - since the mid-1990s. In 2006, the mean age at the first marriage reached the 30 years level in France - for men 31.2 and 29.2 women (Annex 3). The indicators for Lithuania and Russia are still noticeably lower, in 2006 correspondingly by sex - 26.2 and 23.3 in Russia, and 27.3 and 25.1 in Lithuania.

Thus, for France and Lithuania the coming from late to early marriages brought a revolutionary new family formation timing pattern that radically deviated from the previously existing so-called “European marriage” pattern. However, later since the 1970s the paths of family formation timing in France and Lithuania diverged. Lithuania still prolonged the course towards rejuvenation of family formation for around two decades, according to the indicators of family formation timing becoming very similar to Russia. At the same time, the early and rejuvenating family formation pattern continued to manifest in Russia until the last decade of the 20th century with fluctuations due to specific factors being aside to successive evolution of family pattern. Only in the 1990s all three analyzed countries stood on the same path – ageing of family formation, having been on the different stage of the phenomenon and having the different experience from the past.

Family deinstitutionalization. The course of the family deinstitutionalization process shows that historically Russia stands out among the countries under survey and other European countries by the prevalence of non-marital cohabitation. The proliferation of consensual unions in Russia was common

even before the WWII although from this period to the 1990s the spread of consensual unions in Russia persisted on a moderate level (Table 1; Annex 1). Thus the specific of Russia is the historically very early start of the consensual unions, which was inspired by the Bolshevik „family experiment“. In Russia with the introducing of Bolshevik power in the beginning of the 20th century, an adoption of different legislations related to the family created conditions for the emergency of a unique, by world measures, historical precedent – co-existence of two types of union enjoying equal rights - cohabitation and marriage². After the WWII, the several legislations³ on family issues changed the situation, and marriage registered with authorities became a dominant form of partnerships in Russia.

Table 1. *Paths to the modern family formation pattern in Lithuania, Russia and France: changes of main attributes*

	Until mid-XX c	Mid-XX c-mid-1960s	Late 1960s-beginning 1990s	Since the beginning of 1990s
TIMING OF FAMILY FORMATION				
Lithuania	Late marriage	Early marriage		Ageing marriage
Russia	Early marriage			Ageing marriage
France	Transition from late to early marriage since mid-XIX c.	Early marriage	Late marriage	
DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FAMILY – CONSENSUAL UNIONS				
Lithuania	No (exceptional cases)	Deviation		Spreading
Russia	Spreading in 1918-1940s	Moderate		Spreading/high
France	No (exceptional cases)	Spreading		Spreading/very high
NEVER MARRIED				
Lithuania	High level of never married	Very low level of never married		Never married: increasing
Russia	Very low level	Low level of never married		Never married: increasing
France	High to moderate level of never married	Very low level of never married	Never married: increasing	

Compared to Russia in France and Lithuania the living in consensual unions before the WWII was rather an exceptional case than common praxis. After the WWII this type of partnership became more common in France, especially from the 1970s, and by now has reached a very high level. "From 1965 to 1995, cohabitation has become the normative behaviour for union formation, with 90% of couples now starting out this way, compared to 10%" (Toulemon 1997). Contrary to France, in Lithuania, non-marital cohabitation has remained as deviation of the matrimonial behaviour till the very 1990s.

The indirect measure for the family deinstitutionalization process is the indicator of the extra marital birth rate. In France and Lithuania the extra marital birth rate have been low for a long time; this rate have reversed towards the increase from 8-9% in France in the 1960s, and in Lithuania – from 7% - at the beginning of 1990, i.e. three decades later. Whereas in Russia this indicator which has been considerably higher (over 10%) before the changes, started to increase slowly in the 1980s, with an upsurge towards increase in the 1990s, as in the case of Lithuania. At the time of the GGS, extra-marital birth rates have been 48% (Pla 2008) in France, 32% in Russia, and 29% in Lithuania (Statistics Lithuania 2008). According to this indicator both Russia and Lithuania are rapidly catching up with France, which is representing the early family changes emerged in the 1960s.

Extra-marital birth rate, as the indicator of partnership formation pattern shows that the processes of family deinstitutionalization in the countries under the analysis have taken different paths. In France

and Lithuania, the turning points from the universal marriage pattern to the spreading of consensual union are quite evident. The difference is only in the time of the turning point of the phenomenon (spreading of consensual union): Lithuania started to adopt the new pattern of partnership formation three decades later than France. Meanwhile in Russia, due to the different specific historical, cultural and legislation circumstances of the early and middle of 20th century, deinstitutionalization of the family emerged significantly earlier, but acceleration of the phenomenon occurred simultaneously with Lithuania, i.e. at the beginning of the 1990s, in parallel with the recent economic, political transformations and manifestation of the new ideational factors.

Thus, transition to the modern partnership formation in France, Russia and Lithuania started at the different time – in France in the beginning of 1970s, in Lithuania and Russia – at the beginning of 1990s. The turning point (starting point of the definite changes in the indicators used for estimation of the partnership formation pattern) towards the recent family changes and societal experiences in deinstitutionalised living arrangements in the analysed Eastern European countries – Russia and Lithuania, has nevertheless been different, and the course of the changes has also been far from uniform. Furthermore, the changes in matrimonial behaviour started at different times and took different paths.

2. Shift to the modern partnership formation pattern in Lithuania, Russia and France

2.1. Shifts in timing of the first partnership formation by birth cohorts

Historically different marriage patterns and different turning points toward the adoption of the new partnership formation pattern in France, Russia and Lithuania, have been shaping different trajectories of changes of the timing of first partnership formation. Among the countries, France is the most conspicuous by the shape of transition to the new pattern of the first partnership formation (Fig. 2, Fig 4). In France, changes in the partnership formation affected much earlier cohorts and the rate of changes was much faster, too, and currently, at the beginning of the 21st century the level of changes achieved in France is very significant and considerably greater than in Russia and notably than in Lithuania. At first glance the paths to the new pattern of the first partnership formation are very similar in Russia and Lithuania. However, a more detailed analysis of the first partnership formation strategies by birth cohorts and countries exhibits rather impressive differences.

First partnership formation as marriage. In general the patterns of the first partnership formation as the marriage and the achieved level of the entry to the marriage as the first partnership at a certain age of the cohorts born in the 1930s (1930-1939) are rather uniform in all the countries under the analysis (Fig. 2). However, the strategies of matrimonial behaviour of this cohort in Lithuania and Russia are already marked by the specific features: later marriages and higher rates achieved at older ages in Lithuania and much lower rates in the age groups over 25 year in Russia, especially compare to Lithuania (Fig. 3).

The signs of the new partnership formation pattern begin to manifest in the birth cohort of the 1940s in France: the rates of the entry to the first partnership as marriage of the cohort are already lower compare to the previous cohort. Meanwhile, in Russia and Lithuania the rejuvenation of marriages as the first partnership continue to be in the place here: the rates in the youngest ages (19-22 years) are evidently higher in the cohort compared to the birth cohort of the 1930s. (Fig. 2, Fig. 3).

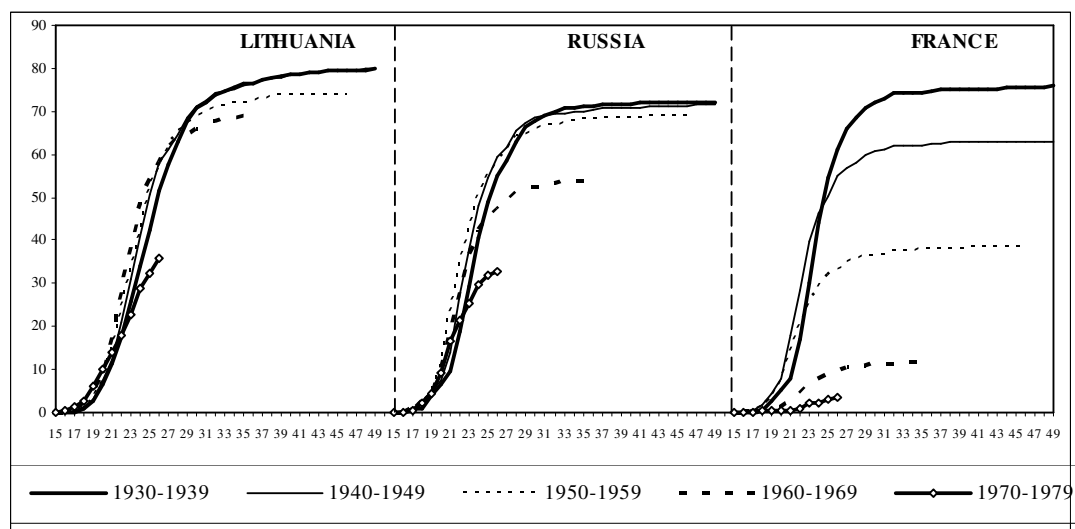
With every successive birth cohort the new trend of the first partnership formation develops very intensively in France: marriage rates have been decreasing very quickly, the achieved rates of the entry to the first partnership as marriage at the certain age have been lowering rapidly, the rates at very young marriageable ages dropped practically to the zero level in the youngest birth cohorts (Fig. 2).

Meanwhile in Russia, frequent marriage at very young age is typical practically for all birth cohorts under the analysis. The highest level of the entry to the first partnership as marriage usually is reached already before the age of 25. However, in older ages (over 25) of the rates in Russia are lower as in Lithuania, and in the oldest birth cohort (born in the 1930s) - even as in France. In Russia, the

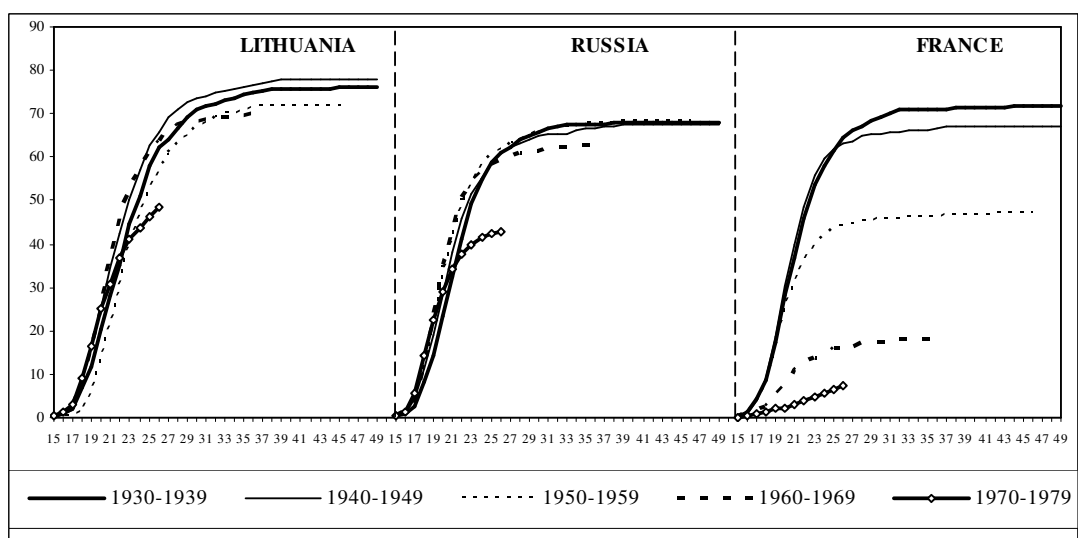
frequencies of getting married at very young age started to decrease only in the youngest birth cohorts (born in the 1970s and later) (Fig. 2, Fig. 3).

Fig. 2. Cumulative percentages of first partnership as *marriage*

MALES



FEMALES



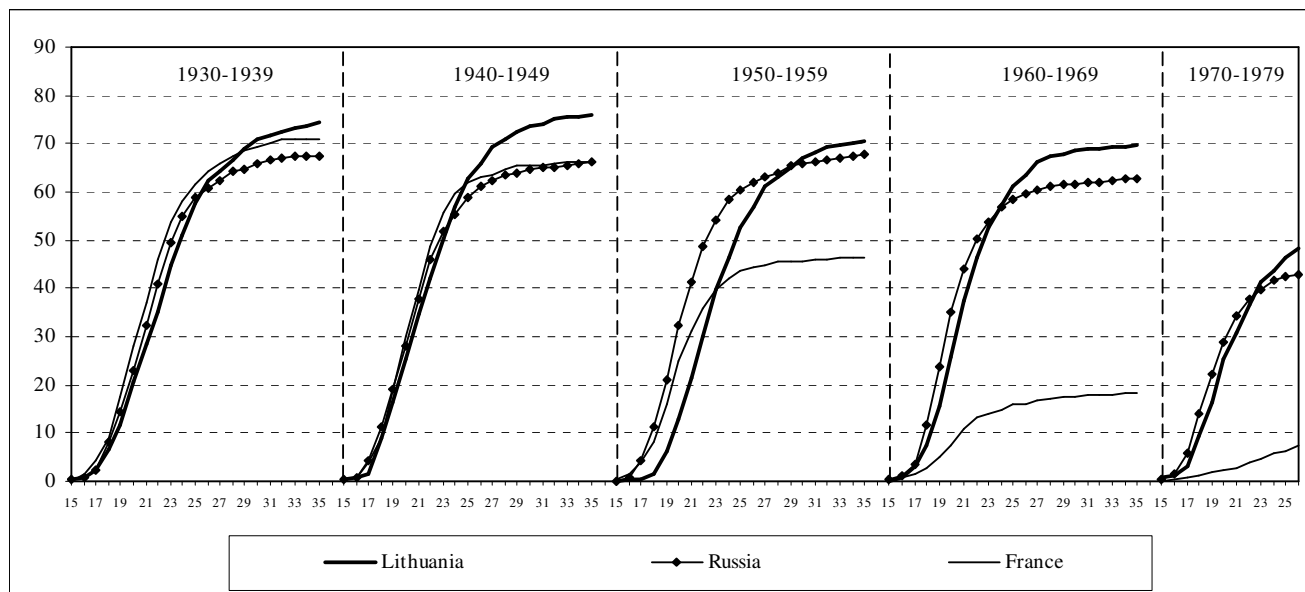
Thus, according to the specifics of the first partnership as marriage and the trends of changes by birth cohorts in all three countries the following conclusions could be drawn:

a) a shape of the rates of the first partnership as marriage by age in the birth cohorts of the 1930s and 1940s are very similar in all three countries under the analysis. However, in the later cohorts the differences between the countries have increased substantially, first of all because of the turn of France to the new family formation pattern;

b) in France it is observed early turn (starting with the birth cohort of the 1950s) from a rather early and nearly universal marriage in the birth cohorts of the 1930s and 1940s to very low rates of the entry to the first partnership as marriage achieved even at an older age in the later cohorts. According to the strategy of the entry to the first partnership as marriage France has stood out very quickly to other analysed countries;

- c) although Russia and Lithuania remained rather similar by the pattern of entry to the first partnership, since the birth cohort of 1950s early marriage and lower level of rates of entry to the first partnership as marriage achieved in the older age is typical for Russia;
- d) Lithuania is distinguished by the highest rates of entry to the first partnership as marriage achieved at older age. It is evident, that until now, the changes in the transition to the new strategy of entering the first partnership as the marriage are the lowest in Lithuania.

Fig. 3. Cumulative percentages of females first partnership as *marriage*



First partnership formation as cohabitation. The processes of deinstitutionalisation of the family, the spread of consensual unions in the countries under survey are quite different by the baseline position, the time of the acceleration process, consistency, rate and the level achieved.

Although in France the incidence of consensual unions is currently very high, considerably higher than in Russia and extremely out of proportion if compared with Lithuania, in this country the turning point to the spread of consensual unions which took place forty years ago, took off at a low level. The frequency of the first partnership as a consensual union among the persons born in the 1930s was lower nearly twice than that of the peer cohort in Russia and only marginally higher than in Lithuania. In France, the changes of the partnership forming pattern which started in the 1960s with the cohort born in the 1940s have been under intensive development until the recent time. To date, the first partnership as consensual union is actually a universal phenomenon for the youngest generations in France (Fig. 4).

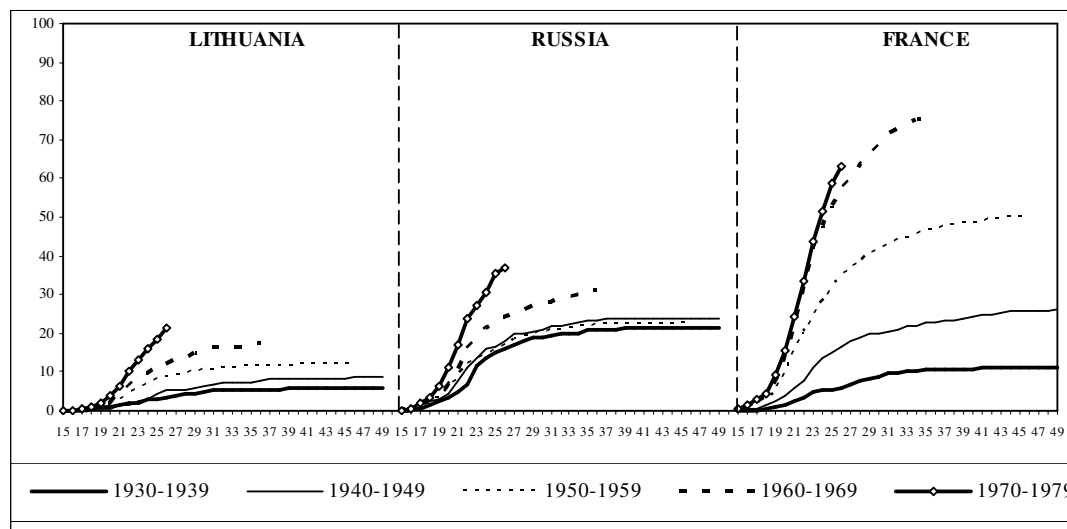
Whereas in Russia, according to the GGS data, the partnership formation via consensual union was fairly common already in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s birth cohorts (in these cohorts around 20%, have had experience of the first partnership as consensual union, Fig. 4), i.e. in Russia, about one in five used to start the first partnership as consensual union in the generations still unaffected by the processes of the Second Demographic Transition. Evidently such a situation was mostly an outcome of the specific historical, political and legislation developments of Russia. In the younger generations the spread of consensual union in Russia started to accelerate in the beginning of 1990. It emerged in the birth cohort of the 1960s and intensified in the 1970s cohort. Thus at the outset of the Second Demographic Transition, the spread of cohabitation in Russia was *not a new phenomenon*, it was just acceleration under the influence of a new factors.

Meanwhile, the spread of consensual unions in Lithuania, which manifested only in the beginning of the 1990s and started to be observed in the birth cohort of the 1970s, and partly, in the birth cohort of the 1960s (late of the 1960s), is a new phenomenon. Consensual unions in Lithuania until the recent

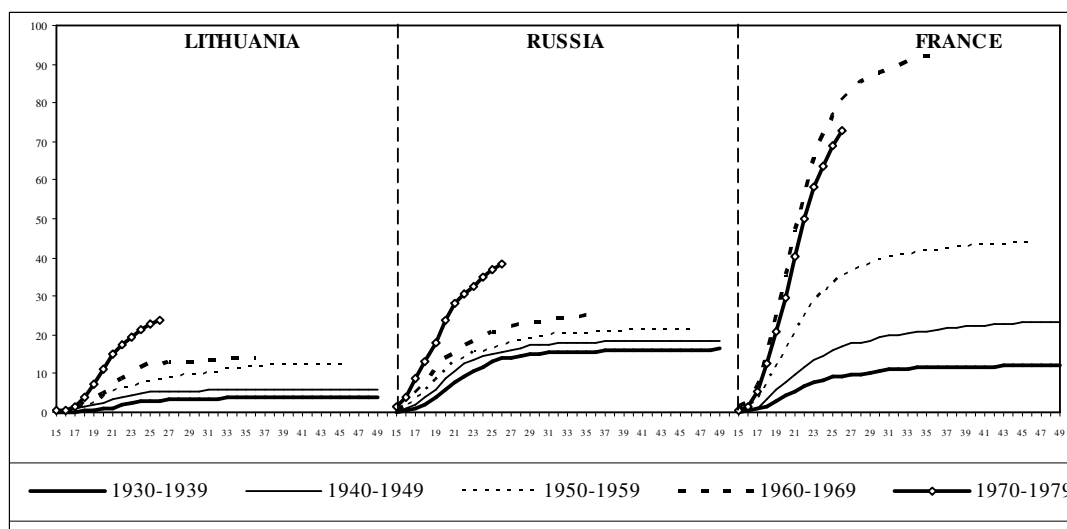
changes were treated as a deviation, nevertheless, in the 1990s and during the following years have been spreading very fast.

Fig. 4. *Cumulative percentages of first partnership as cohabitation*

MALES



FEMALES



In all countries under the analysis the spread of cohabitation is directly related to the rejuvenation of the first partnership as consensual union. Every younger cohort enters into the first partnership that is consensual union more and more often and at younger ages.

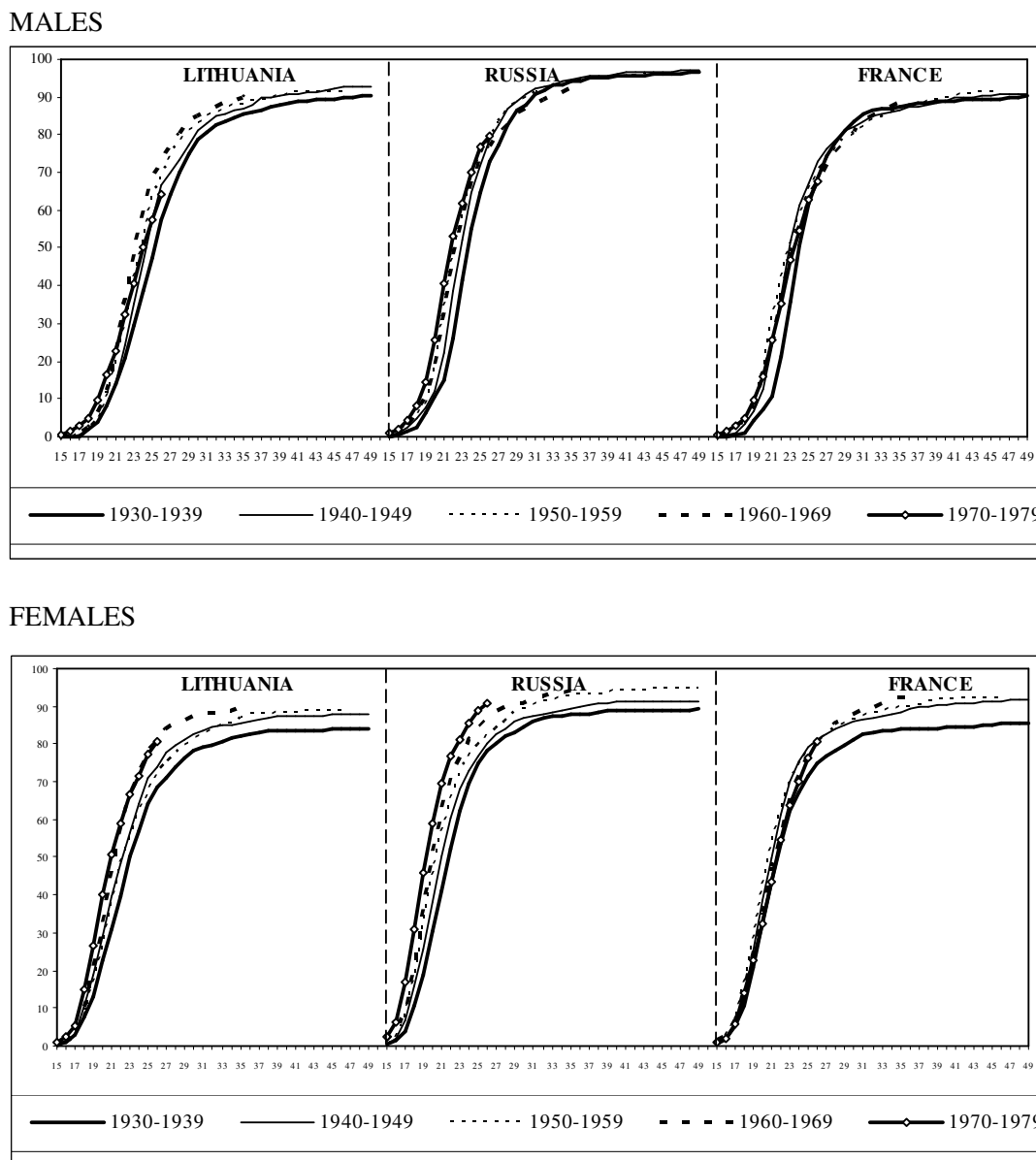
However the level at the beginning of spreading of consensual unions and tempo of the process are very different in all the countries. As it is evident from the fig. 4 already the oldest birth cohort more frequently (twice) and at very young age started the partnership as a consensual union in Russia. Partnership behaviour of other successive birth cohorts (born in the 1940s and in the 1950s) continued to be very similar to the oldest one in Russia. It could be concluded, that in Russia such partnership behaviour of the cohorts under the analysis has the roots in the past which is not related with the ideational factors of SDT yet.

Entry into the first partnership (marriage or consensual union). The analysis of the first partnership disregarding of the type (marriage or consensual union) suggest that the strategies of the first

partnership formation by age and achieved proportion at the certain age of the cohorts born in 1930-1979 have not experienced the cardinal changes in all the countries under the analysis (Fig. 5). However, the more detailed analysis shows slightly different trend and level of entering into the first partnership by cohorts:

- 1) The first partnership has rejuvenated slightly with every younger cohort in Lithuania and Russia. Besides, the proportions of those entered into the first partnership at certain age have increased among females in all the countries and among males in Lithuania. Meanwhile, there are no more noticeable differences between the birth cohorts according to the timing of entry into the first partnership in France, excluding 1930-1939 birth cohorts of females (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. Cumulative percentages of first partnership



- 2) The highest proportion of ever-in-union in all cohorts among males is characteristic for Russia and the lowest level – for France.

Consequently in all countries the decline in the rates of starting first partnership as the marriage has been compensated by increase of the first partnerships as consensual union. Moreover, the

rejuvenation of the entry into the consensual union resulted in the rejuvenation of the entry into the partnership in Lithuania and Russia.

Analysis of Lithuanian and Russian statistical indicators of marriage usually leads to a conclusion about the postponement of marriages for a later age. However, our above presented analysis rise the questions that could lead to a contrary conclusion. Could it be that such a postponement of marriage is just an illusion? Is it possible that the decline of marriage has manifested itself as a postponement of marriage only in the initial stage of family transformation? Could it possibly happen that both in Russia and Lithuania (the later has been experiencing the “golden age” of marriage until the 1990s, with early and universal marriage, low level of never married and extremely rare consensual unions) will adopt similar type of partnership formation pattern, which has been practiced in France by the birth cohorts of the 1960s and 1970s: the percentages of the *first partnership as marriage* are very low (Fig. 2) and the first partnership actually starts by consensual union, and at a young age (Fig. 4)?

2.2. Timing of entry to the first partnership at the certain age by birth cohorts

Analysis of the entry into the first partnership (as the marriage or consensual union) at the certain age allows to reveal the first partnership formation timing strategy, and the differences in these strategies by the cohorts, sex and countries. Moreover, this gives us an opportunity to indicate the vanguard cohorts, i.e. the cohorts that were the first to adopt the new partnership formation pattern.

Timing of the first partnership as the marriage

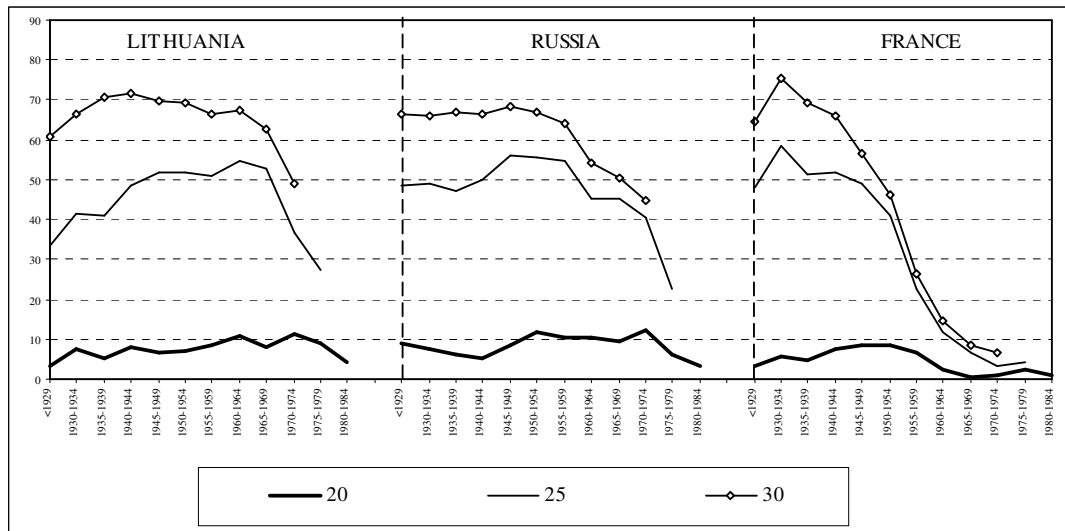
The marriages of males at very young age (before 20) have not been frequent for the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s birth cohorts in all the countries under the analysis (the rate of the entry to the first partnership as marriage achieved by the age 20 – around 10%). Such a trend continued to be incidental in Lithuania and Russia even for the cohorts born in the 1960s and 1970-1974 (Fig. 6). From the birth cohort of the 1960s in France, and from the birth cohort of the late 1970s in Russia and Lithuania proportion of those entered to the first partnership as marriage at very young age has dropped down very quickly and the level of rates by the age 20 is very low in all the countries, in France - approaching even the zero level (Fig. 6).

The rejuvenation of the marriage after the WWII have conditioned the increase in the proportion of entered to the first partnership as the marriage among females of the birth cohorts of 1930s, 1940s in France, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s - in Russia. In Lithuania this phenomenon was characteristic even for the birth cohort of early 1970s (born in 1970-1974). For females the highest rates by the age 20 have been achieved in the birth cohorts of 1950s and 1960s in Russia - over 30% (respectively by cohorts – 32% and 35%) (Fig. 6). Rather frequent marriages as the first partnership have been characteristic at very young age for females of 1930s, 1940s and 1950s birth cohorts in France as well (the rates by the age 20 of the cohorts have been reached near 30%). It could be estimated as the sign of “gold age of marriage” period. In Lithuania, the frequencies of marriage at very young age among females are lower compared to France and Russia and the proportion has never exceeded 25% (Fig. 6).

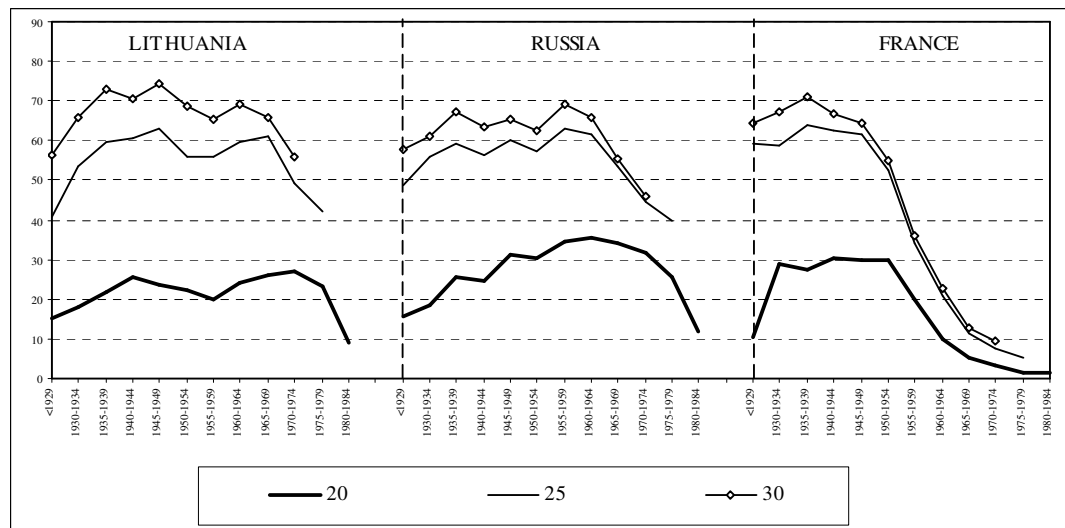
The proportion of first partnership as marriage by the age 25 shows that transition from the late to the young marriage among females of Lithuania has touched the birth cohorts of 1930s and 1940s and among males – even the cohorts of 1950s and 1960s. The trends of younger cohorts (of 1970s) in Lithuania are already caused by decrease or/and postponement of marriage. The changes in the marriage rates as the first partnership are not very definite in Russia: the changes towards rejuvenation of marriage in the older cohorts have been insignificant due to widespread of young (and very young) marriages in historical perspective. The decrease of the proportion of first partnership as marriage by the age 25 has manifested in Russia from the cohort born in the 1960s. In France, these indicators reflect the transition from the late marriages to the young only by the timing of matrimonial behaviour of the cohorts born in the late of 1920s and 1930s (Fig. 6). The consequences of the transition to the new partnership formation pattern – very rapid decline of marriage rates is evident in France already from the birth cohort of 1940s and especially - of 1950s: the proportion of those starting first partnership as marriage has been diminishing very rapidly and has reached very low level already in the birth cohort of 1960s.

Fig. 6. Cumulative percentages of the entry to first partnership as marriage achieved to the certain age

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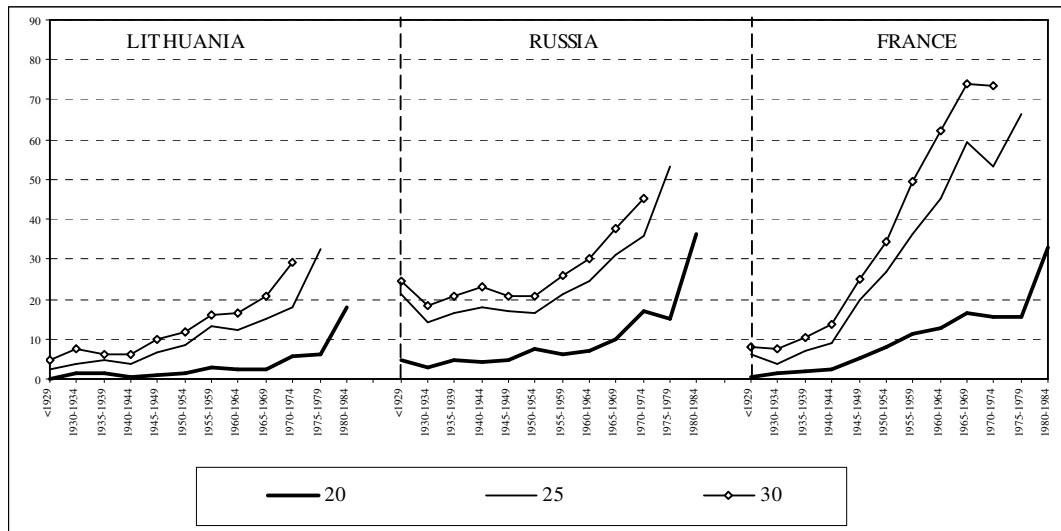
Timing of the first partnership as consensual union

The trend of the proportion of the first partnership as the consensual union by the age 20, 25 and 30 shows practically the opposite shape compare to the changes of the entry to marriage as the first partnership (Fig. 6, Fig. 7).

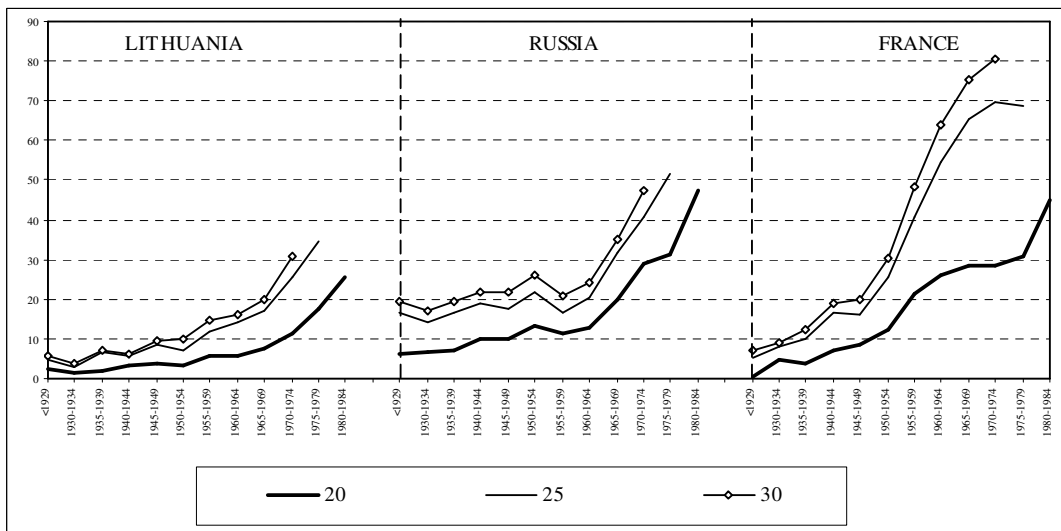
Rapid decreases of marriage rates in the young ages have been followed by the increase of the consensual unions in all countries. However, Lithuania stands out from France and Russia by the achieved level of entering consensual unions and by the pattern of the spreading of the phenomenon: very low level of consensual union as the first partnership in the cohorts born in 1930-1950s (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7. Cumulative percentages of the entry to the first partnership as consensual union achieved to the certain age

MALES



FEMALES



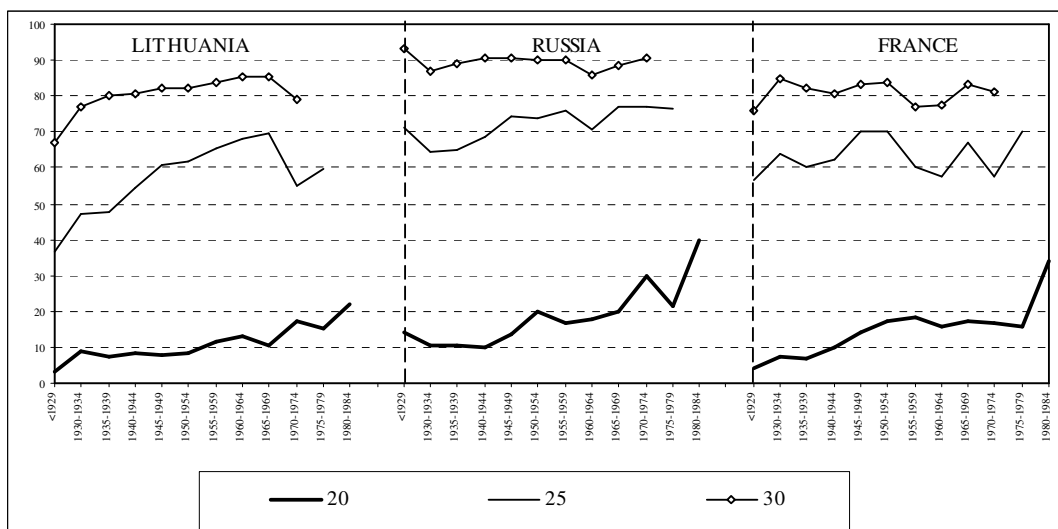
Timing of the first partnership

The main conclusions which could be drawn from the comparative analysis of changes in timing of the first partnership formation by cohorts in Lithuania, Russia and France (Fig. 5, Fig. 8) are as follow:

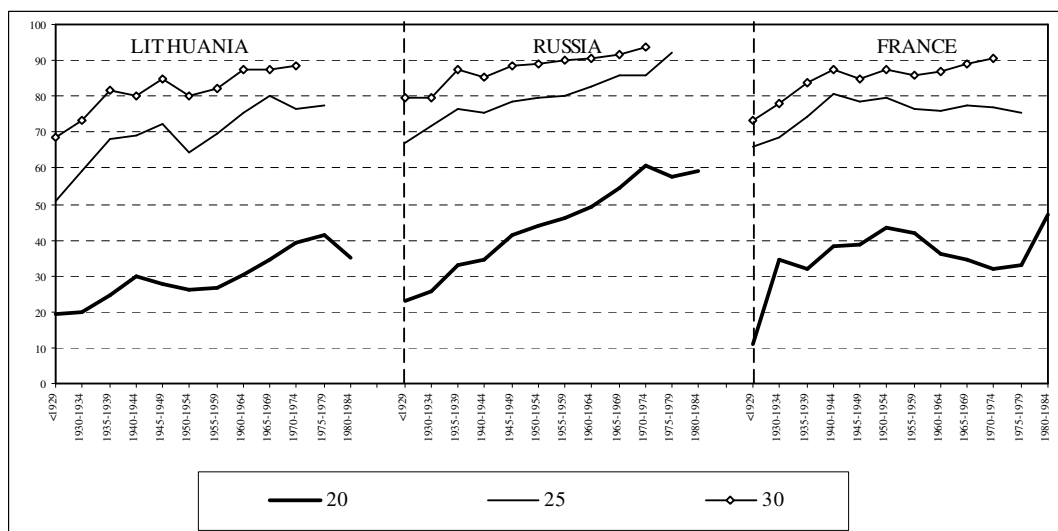
- 1) The highest level of the entry to the first partnership of all birth cohorts under the analysis is in Russia, especially among males.
- 2) The most sizeable changes in the timing of the first partnership formation by every subsequent birth cohort are among females in all the countries. The increase of the proportion of females that enters into the partnership and rejuvenation of the first partnership (rapid increase of entry to the first partnership formation at very young age) is evident especially in Russia.
- 3) Among Lithuanian males transition from the late partnership in the oldest cohorts to the earlier partnership in every subsequent birth cohort is clearly seen. However, the partnership behaviour of the youngest cohorts under the analysis is twisted: the increase of the entry to the first partnership in very young ages (up to 20 year) and the decrease in the older ages (the determinants of the changes have been discussed above).

Fig. 8. Cumulative percentages of the entry to the first partnership achieved to the certain age

MALES



FEMALES



2.3. Entry to the first marriage by birth cohorts

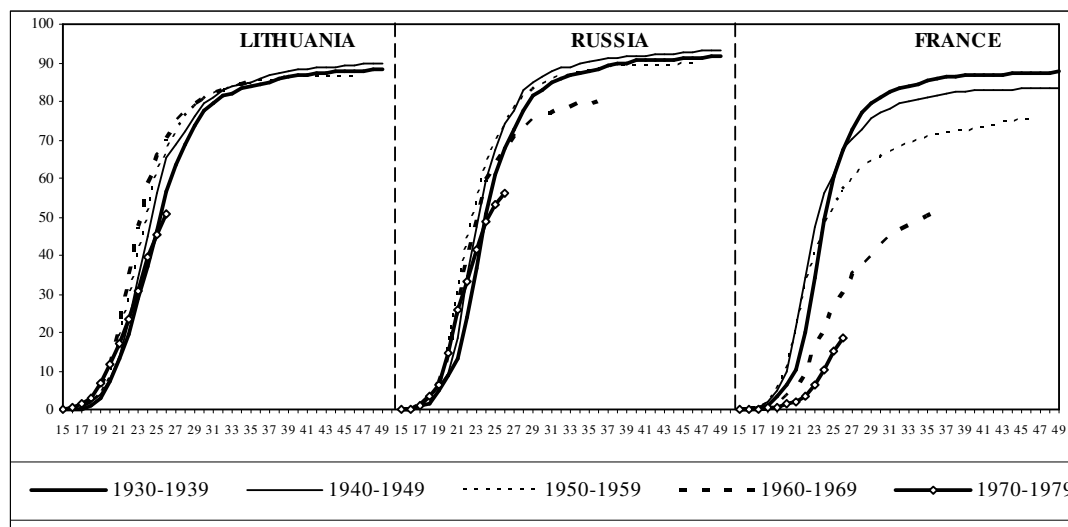
In each successively younger cohort the proportion of entered to the first partnership as marriage has been decreasing. Increasingly more common are the cases of starting partnership through cohabitation. In France, the phenomenon dates back a few decades. In Russia, this has been common for certain segment of population from the early 20th century however, since the early 1990s the spread of cohabitation has acquired an explosion effect (Zakharov 2008). Whereas in Lithuania the change in the strategy of first partnership is a new phenomenon which started just in the early 1990, nevertheless it has been evolving fast.

Is cohabitation becoming an alternative to marriage, or is it merely a prelude to the marriage? There are many ways to answer this question. We refuse to take path of deep historical analysis, the examination of the duration of cohabitation or the transition from cohabitation to marriage and restrain our inquiry to the analysis of the process of the entry into the first partnership (without detailing the type of partnership).

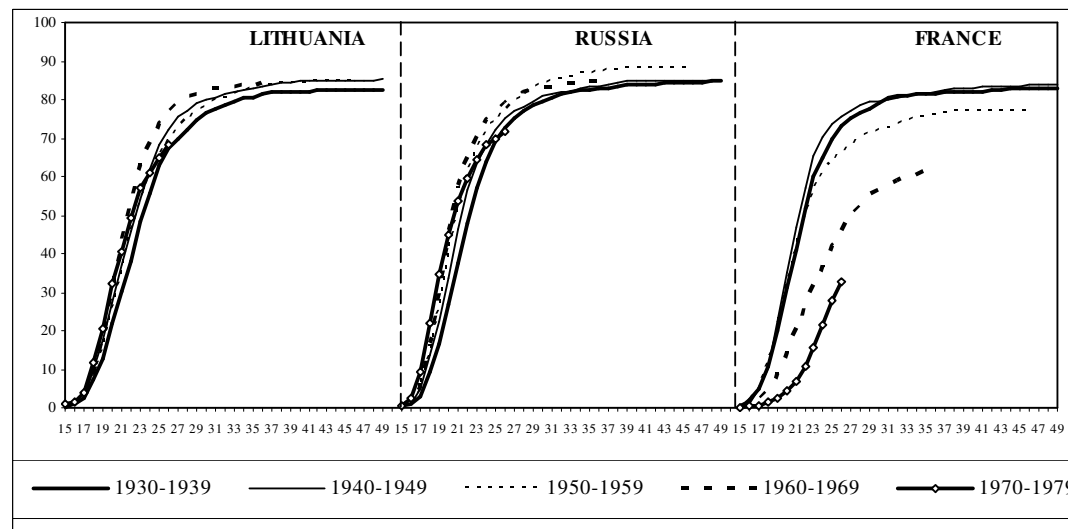
As seen from Figure 9, in all the cohorts in Lithuania the marriage remains a normative form of partnership. In Lithuania, male and female nuptiality rates by age are constantly high (over 80%) in

almost all the birth cohorts with the exception of the youngest one. Only in the birth cohort of 1970-1979 the first signs of the lowering nuptiality rates can be observed. A similar trend can be observed among the Russian females. Meanwhile the nuptiality rates of the Russian males, starting from the 1960-1969 birth cohort, have already been clearly going down from the extremely high ones (close to 90% or over). In France, on the other hand, the marriage was only typical for the majority in the oldest cohorts under survey (born in 1930-1939 and 1940-1949), where nuptiality rate was over 80%. Later the proportion of the married was dropping fast with each successively younger birth cohort, and besides marriages takes place at an older age.

Figure 9. *Cumulative percentages of entry to first marriage by birth cohorts*
MALES



FEMALES



3. Consensual unions in Lithuania, Russia and France: differences and similarities

3.1. Development and types of consensual unions: appraisal of previous research

In previous sections of the article we have identified the vanguard birth cohorts that were first to adopt the new partnership formation pattern. The next issue then is to identify the “pioneers of deinstitutionalization of the family” considering socio-structural and cultural factors. Put it otherwise,

could we identify the same social forces that expose individuals to form a consensual union in every country despite the differences in the development of this type of union over the time? Do the forerunners of consensual unions represent the same socio-demographic and socio-cultural groups in all three countries?

Questions on the nature of consensual unions and on forerunners of this type of family formation are widely addressed in the scientific literature. There is a large body of literature dedicated to the analysis of consensual unions in individual countries (Hoem 1986; Villeneuve-Gokalp 1991; Thornton 1991; Toulemon 1997; Raley 1996; Björnberg 2001; Seltzer 2000; Smok 2000; Smock, Gupta 2002; Smock and Manning 2004; Kulik 2005; Kostova 2007; Philopov, Jasilioniene 2007; Mynarska, Bernardi 2007) and across the countries (Kiernan 2001; Kiernan 2002; Kiernan 2004; Heuveline, Timberlike 2004; Liefbroer, Dourleijn 2006; Sobotka, Toulemon 2008). There are two ways the phenomenon of consensual unions is usually addressed in demographic and sociological literature. The first one scrutinizes consensual unions in the context of wider family transformations and as an indicator (one among the others) of the general family transformation processes. The second way to approach the consensual unions occupies the contrary position: consensual unions become the main topic of the inquiry; they are singled out from the discussions about the general family transformation process and occupies the primary interest in the research. This research strategy corresponds to our research purposes and could be discussed very briefly.

In this strategy the main question raised concerns the “forerunners” of consensual unions. In the countries, where consensual union is not the dominant pattern of partnership formation, “forerunners” should be a distinguishable group. Thus, consensual union - looking from the perspective of the individuals - is *selective process* in terms of attitudes or their socio-economic conditions. There are several variables that are usually controlled for in this research.

On individuals’ level the selectivity hypothesis assesses the impact of educational attainment and socio-economic status. Previous research proves that those with lower levels of educational attainment and income are more prone to form consensual union than marry (Bumpass, Lu 2000; Thornton, Axinn, Teachman 1995; Wait 1995).

Selectivity hypothesis includes cultural level factors, i.e. believes, values and attitudes that only recently have been added to the study of consensual unions (Smock, Gupta 2002). The effect of religion, gender attitudes, attitudes to marriage are tested for those living in consensual unions (Björnberg 2001; Batalova, Cohen 2002; Bernhardt 2002; Reneflot 2007; Mynarska, Bernardi 2007).

On intergenerational level experience of parental divorce or childhood in the single parent family are considered as important factors that catalyzes the acceptance of the new family formation path. Previous research proves that the child’s experience of the non-complete family is a risk factor for entering into a cohabiting union (Thornton 1991; Axinn, Thornton 1996; Turcotte, Bélanger 1997; Wolfinger 2005). Theoretical explanation behind this supposes that parental divorce or experience of incomplete family shapes the meaning of commitment in children’s generation and catalyzes the acceptance of non-traditional living arrangements.

The results of previous research bring several important. First, we might assume, that, the selectivity hypothesis will be more applicable to the Lithuanian and the Russian societies, where consensual unions are not as widespread as in France. We could suppose that in France those who start partnership with consensual unions will be less distinguishable by certain set of characteristics compared to Lithuania and Russia. Second, there are several factors that should be included into the analysis. Considering the intergenerational familial level factors we might assume that parental divorce will have positive association with the formation of consensual union. Moreover, we might expect that the quality of marital relationships in parental family will have impact on the child’s matrimonial behavior. Attractiveness of marriage could be lower for those who experienced poor quality of parental relationships. Third, individual demographic (birth cohort), structural (education, employment, place of living) and cultural (religiousness) level factors should be considered as well.

All these factors will be included into the further analysis employing the procedure of logistic regression. The dependant variable will be defined as type of first partnership, where value 1 is

attributed to the first partnership as a consensual union, value 0 – not consensual union. Additionally to the model that was applied to all cohorts we have build two different sets of regression for cohorts born before and after the 1960s in order to identify the forerunners and to check whether factors are cohort dependant.

3.2. Forerunners of consensual unions

Individual level factors. From the previous sections of the article it is evident, that age should be crucial factor that determines the adoption of new family formation path. In all three countries the risk to start partnership in consensual union is positively associated with age (Table 2). In France odds to

Table 2. *Relative risk of starting first partnership as cohabitation for women and men*

	Females			Males		
	Lithuania	Russia	France	Lithuania	Russia	France
R birth cohort						
1930-1939	1	1	1	1	1	1
1940-1949	1.98***	1.2	1.66***	1.29	1.27	2.19***
1950-1959	4.35***	1.46***	3.75***	2.11***	1.18	5.18***
1960-1969	5.64***	2.02***	14.93***	2.96***	2.09***	17.89***
1970-1979	12.11***	4.12***	19.75***	6.03***	3.42***	20.58***
R education						
higher	1	1	1	1	1	1
secondary	0.96	1.09	0.93	0.72***	1.46***	0.86
lower secondary	1.8***	1.47***	0.51***	0.88	1.65***	0.68***
R employment status						
employed	1	1	1	1	1	1
unemployed	1.03	0.92	1.18	1.07	1.06	0.91
other	1.07	1.09	0.9	1.08	0.9	0.67***
Type of settlement						
Rural (≤ 10 thousand inhabitants)	1	1	n.a.	1	1	n.a.
Towns (10 to 100 thousand inhabitants)	1.39**	1.15	n.a.	1.61***	1.32**	n.a.
Other cities (more than 100 thousand inhabitants)	1.11	1.68***	n.a.	1.27*	1.95***	n.a.
Capital cities ²	1.14	2.17***	n.a.	1.19	2.36***	n.a.
R religion/attendance						
Non-believer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Catholic ≥ 1 per week	0.66		0.28***	0.56**		0.25***
Catholic ≥ 1 per month	0.8		0.49***	0.58***		0.81
Catholic ≥ 1 per year	0.97		0.63**	0.7**		0.65**
Catholic/seldom	1.07		0.88	0.89		0.99
Orthodox ≥ 1 per week	1.24	0.89		0.7	1.18	
Orthodox ≥ 1 per month	1.11	0.77**		1.04	1.58*	
Orthodox ≥ 1 per year	1.95	0.76***		1.15	0.89	
Orthodox/seldom	0.8	0.81*		1.29	0.89	
Muslim ≥ 1 per week		1.02	0.22***		0.19***	0.15***
Muslim ≥ 1 per month, year or seldom		0.28***	0.15***		0.36***	0.45***
Other		0.76	0.89		0.842	0.41***
Parental family						
Live/lived together	1	1	1	1	1	1
Divorced	0.86	1.26**	1.22	1.15	1.36**	1.07
Never lived together	0.48	0.89	1.2	0.92	0.82	2.17
Assessment of parental relations						
Good	1	1	1	1	1	1
Neither bad nor good	1.54**	1.24	0.72**	1.54*	1.24	0.73
Bad	1.24**	1.2***	0.84	1.02	1.09	0.94
<i>Number of observation</i>	3344	4515	3746	3212	2687	2936
<i>R2 (Nagelkerke R Square)</i>	0.14	0.104	0.398	0.12	0.13	0.383
<i>-2Log pseudolikelihood</i>	2881.81	5195.74	3861.7	2899.21	3212.36	3065.93

*** - significant at 0.01% level, ** - significant at 0.05% level, * - significant at 0.1% level
n.a. – data not available

² For Russia this category includes Moscow and St. Petersburg

start partnership in consensual union are significantly higher for all cohorts born after 1940 and this is evenly applicable for females and for males. Especially high risk to start partnership with consensual union is observed for cohorts born after the 1960s and this reflects the demographic development of French family in the 1960s, when consensual unions rapidly replaced marriages.

In Lithuania for older female cohorts we observe similar state as in France, but differently from France in Lithuania the highest risks are observed in the youngest female cohort born in the 1970s. Similar process is observed in the Lithuanian male population, but it starts in the cohort born a decade later (in 1950s) and does not reach the same level as in the Lithuanian female population. Thus, in Lithuania females outpace males adopting the pattern of new family formation; moreover consensual unions are very diffusive among the cohorts born in 1970s and particularly among females.

As for Russia we observe relatively modest increase in risk to start first partnership as consensual union for all female cohorts born after the 1950s and for male cohorts born after the 1960s. This is definitely conditioned by the previously discussed fact that consensual unions have deeper historical roots in this country and were common even in the oldest births cohorts.

In France educational attainment is a significant predictor for first partnership as consensual union only for those with the lowest education (Table 2). Females and males with the lowest educational attainment are less exposed to start first partnership in consensual union compared to those with highest education. However, interaction between lower education and lower propensity to start partnership in consensual union is more applicable to cohorts born before 1960s and is not observed in the cohorts born after 1960s (Table 3 and Table 4). Thus lower education defines the selectivity of forerunners only in older cohorts.

In Lithuania and Russia the educational factor predicts the odds for the formation of consensual union in inverse order but there are relevant gender differences in Lithuanian population (Table 2). In Russia the educational effect is stable for both gender groups and birth cohorts: the lower the education the higher the propensity to start partnership with consensual union. We observe similar trend for Lithuanian female population, but it is not applicable for Lithuanian male population (Table 3 and Table 4). We might assume that in the Lithuanian society the effect of education on the male population reflects the specifics of marriage (partnership) market. The previous research shows, that lower education decreases the symbolical value of males as a prospective partners; accordingly there is highest proportion of never married among males born after 1950 with lowest education (Stankuniene 2006: 171). Thus, we might suppose, that males with lowest education are least desirable for partnership disregarding of the union type. Linking our findings with previous studies we might conclude that for Lithuania and Russia our results replicate the established interaction of lower education and higher propensity for consensual union with the exception of Lithuanian male population.

We found few support for the effect of employment status on the risk to start first partnership as a consensual union. Odds are not significantly different for employed and unemployed female and male population in Lithuania and Russia. The only exception is observed in France where in birth cohorts born before 1960s in female population unemployment increased risks for cohabitation.

Type of settlement is a very strong predictor for the risk to start first partnership as consensual union in Russia³ (Table 2). Those living in urban areas have higher chances to start their partnership in consensual union compared to rural population disregarding of the size of urban settlement; and this is valid for female and male population for both groups of birth cohorts. In Lithuania the interaction between living area and propensity to start first partnership in consensual union is not so clearly expressed as in Russia. The risks to form first partnership as consensual union are significantly higher only in towns with more than 100 thousand inhabitants. This effect is stable for both gender and birth cohort groups (Table 3 and Table 4). In Lithuania the propensity is not higher for those living in other urban areas compare to the rural population.

³ It was not possible to compose similar categories for the type of settlement for France

In our analysis we included one cultural factor, i.e. religiousness that was measured with the variable on the formal religion identity (belonging to the religious community) and the participation in the religious rituals (communal prayer or Holy Mass). Several categories were created considering the historically dominant religions or significant in numbers religious communities in each country. Hence, there have been composed the measures for Catholic religiousness in Lithuania and France, measures for Orthodox religiousness in Russia and measures for Muslim religiousness in France and Russia.

We observe that among Muslims in Russia and in France religion is a very strong predictor. In both countries Muslim females and males have lower chances to start first partnership as consensual union compared to non-believers (Table 2). The interaction between the Muslim religiousness and the type of the first partnership is clearly expressed in the birth cohorts born after 1960s in France for male and female and in Russia especially for male population (Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3. *Relative risk of starting first partnership as cohabitation for women and men, birth cohorts 1930 - 1959*

	Females			Males		
	Lithuania	Russia	France	Lithuania	Russia	France
R birth cohort						
1930-1939	1	1	1	1	1	1
1940-1949	1.71**	1.18	1.59***	1.31	1.29	2.14***
1950-1959	3.29***	1.55***	3.43***	2.19**	1.23	5.1***
R education						
higher	1	1	1	1	1	1
secondary	2.02***	1.15	0.56***	0.77	1.37*	0.88
lower secondary	2.49***	1.39**	0.32***	1.21	1.54**	0.53***
R employment status						
employed	1	1	1	1	1	1
unemployed	0.7	1.36	1.48*	0.9	1.1	0.99
other	0.78	1.25	0.9	0.92	0.95	0.72**
Type of settlement						
Rural (\leq 10 thousand inhabitants)	1	1		1	1	
Towns (10 to 100 thousand inhabitants)	1.49*	0.88	n.a.	1.75**	1.25	n.a.
Other cities (more than 100 thousand inhabitants)	0.8	1.32**	n.a.	1.15	1.77***	n.a.
Capital cities ⁴	0.87	1.86***	n.a.	1.19	2.07***	n.a.
R religion/attendance						
Non-believer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Catholic/ \geq 1 per week	0.7		0.28***	0.69		0.2***
Catholic/ \geq 1 per month	0.69		0.63**	0.74		0.77
Catholic/ \geq 1 per year	0.92		0.56**	0.81		0.46***
Catholic/seldom	1.34		0.71	0.81		0.68*
Orthodox/ \geq 1 per week	1.28	0.96		1.12	1.36	
Orthodox/ \geq 1 per month	1.31	0.74**		1.58	1.5**	
Orthodox/ \geq 1 per year	1.23	0.75**		1.59	0.8	
Orthodox/seldom	1.21	0.82		1.21	0.89	
Muslim/ \geq 1 per week		0.78	5.05		0.29	0.23*
Muslim/ \geq 1 per month, year or seldom		0.38***	0.28**		0.77	0.75
Other		0.88	1.03		0.65	0.38**
Parental family						
Live/lived together	1	1	1	1	1	1
Divorced	1.26	1.07	1.45**	0.98	1.31	1.1
Never lived together	0.53	0.72	0.95	0.48	1.25	9.65*
Assessment of parental relations						
Good	1	1	1	1	1	1
Neither bad nor good	1.03	1.5*	0.67**	1.57	0.94	0.8
Bad	1.48**	1.2*	0.78	1.88	1	1.05
<i>Number of observation</i>	1897	2539	2080	1809	1319	1664
<i>R2 (Nagelkerke R Square)</i>	0,08	0,03	0,2	0,04	0,03	0,2
<i>-2Log pseudolikelihood</i>	1088.35	2704.31	2195.04	1025.33	1453.36	1834.43

*** - significant at 0.01% level, ** - significant at 0.05% level, * - significant at 0.1% level

⁴ For Russia this category includes Moscow and St. Petersburg

Among Christians in France religiousness similarly affects female and male populations. Generally, Christian females have lower odds to start first partnership as consensual union despite the type of religiousness, i.e. the frequency of the attendance of religious rituals. For male population religiousness is important only for those, who attend the religious rituals at least once a week. This trend is observed for both birth cohort groups (Table 3 and Table 4). Thus we might conclude that in France the link between gender, Christian religiousness and traditional matrimonial behavior is stable over the time.

Table 4. *Relative risk of starting first partnership as cohabitation for women and men, birth cohorts 1960 - 1979*

	Females			Males		
	Lithuania	Russia	France	Lithuania	Russia	France
R birth cohort						
1960-1969	1	1	1	1	1	1
1970-1979	2.08***	2.04***	1.48***	2.06***	1.63***	1.31*
R education						
higher	1	1	1	1	1	1
secondary	0.79*	1.05	1.61**	0.68***	1.56***	0.85
lower secondary	2.04***	1.52***	0.92	0.67*	1.72***	0.97
R employment status						
employed	1	1	1	1	1	1
unemployed	1.11	1.02	0.75	1.2	1.04	0.48
other	1.2	1.05	0.99	1.29	0.83	0.35
Type of settlement						
Rural (≤ 10 thousand inhabitants)	1	1		1	1	
Towns (10 to 100 thousand inhabitants)	1.32*	1.174*	n.a.	1.58***	1.38**	n.a.
Other cities (more than 100 thousand inhabitants)	1.28	1.745***	n.a.	1.27	2.12***	n.a.
Capital cities ⁵	1.35	2.173***	n.a.	1.18	2.68***	n.a.
R religion/attendance						
Non-believer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Catholic ≥ 1 per week	0.56		0.28***	0.45**		0.3**
Catholic ≥ 1 per month	0.88		0.46***	0.48***		0.69
Catholic ≥ 1 per year	0.95		0.83	0.65**		0.96
Catholic/seldom	0.99		1.19	0.97		1.52**
Orthodox ≥ 1 per week	1.30	0.78		0.46	1.05	
Orthodox ≥ 1 per month	1.08	0.79		0.83	1.65	
Orthodox ≥ 1 per year	4.99*	0.76**		0.96	0.95	
Orthodox/seldom	0.6	0.78		1.41	0.89	
Muslim ≥ 1 per week		1.82	0.07***		0.17**	0.18***
Muslim ≥ 1 per month, year or seldom		0.23***	0.14***		0.29***	0.29***
Other		0.64	0.66		0.58	0.45***
Parental family						
Live/lived together	1	1	1	1	1	1
Divorced	0.8	1.37**	1.03	1.18	1.35*	0.99
Never lived together	0.45	1.05	1.2	1.03	0.66	0.58
Assessment of parental relations						
Good	1	1	1	1	1	1
Neither bad nor good	1.71**	1.08	0.81	1.50	1.45	0.59
Bad	1.13	1.18	0.93	0.92	1.16	0.76
<i>Number of observation</i>	1447	1976	1666	1403	1368	1272
<i>R² (Nagelkerke R Square)</i>	0,07	0,12	0,119	0,07	0,12	0,08
<i>-2Log pseudolikelihood</i>	1759.74	2470.94	1579.55	1862.5	1750.21	1196.18

*** - significant at 0.01% level, ** - significant at 0.05% level, * - significant at 0.1% level

n.a. – data not available

⁵ For Russia this category includes Moscow and St. Petersburg

In Russia Christian religiousness is important factor only for female population: Orthodox females who attend religious rituals at least once a month or several times a year demonstrate lower propensity to start partnership in consensual union compared to non-believers (Table 2). But if we consider the time factor, this conclusion has to be restricted only to those females born before 1960s. For the younger female cohorts the link between the matrimonial behavior and religiousness is weaker.

Contradicting trend is observed in Lithuania. Here the Christian religiousness is significant predictor for male but not for the female matrimonial behavior and not for older but for younger male cohorts. Male Catholics born after 1960s with weekly or monthly attendance of religious rituals have significantly lower risk to start first partnership in consensual union compared to non-believers; whereas religiousness has no effect on the matrimonial behavior of female population in Lithuania. Thus in Lithuania the religiousness has no consequences for the adoption of more liberal path of family formation among female, but has among the younger male population.

Intergenerational factors. The association of parental divorce with the risk to start first partnership in consensual union is significant only in Russia and for the cohorts born after 1960s. Children of divorce disregarding of gender have higher chances to start first partnership in consensual union compared to children from non-divorced families. And this finding corresponds to the previously discussed research on the intergenerational effect of divorce. Contrary to Russia we have not found this effect for Lithuania and France.

Assessment of parental marital relations is an important predictor for the first partnership as consensual union in Lithuania and Russia for female population. Lithuanian and Russian females who assess their parents' marital quality as "neither bad, nor good" or "bad" have higher risks to start first partnership as consensual union compared to those who assess their parents' marital quality as "good". In Lithuania this link is stable over the time and in Russia is observed only in the older birth cohorts. Consequently, parental family type and parental marital quality are not important predictors for the matrimonial behavior of children in France, parental divorce is relevant in Russia and parental marital quality in Russia and Lithuania but only for female population. Thus for females in Lithuania not the parental family form, but parental relationship quality is more important in defining the matrimonial decisions and accepting the new path of family formation.

Summing up the discussion and returning to the question on forerunners of consensual unions we could conclude that in all three countries set of factors that predict the first partnership as consensual union varies and is time and gender dependant.

In Lithuania female forerunners of the new path of family formation are those with the lower education, living in the middle size towns and those who lower evaluate marital quality in parental family. This set of factors is time stable, i.e. affects birth cohorts born before and after the 1960. As for Lithuanian male population there are more time dependant covariates. In male birth cohorts born before 1960s there are almost no significant factors that would affect the propensity to start partnership in consensual union. In the younger male birth cohorts important predictors are education, religiousness and living area. The risks to start first partnership in cohabitation are higher for those with higher education, living in middle size towns, religious. Intergenerational factors are not significant for male population.

In Russia for female and male populations significant predictors are education and living area. Those with lower education and living in urban areas have higher propensity to start partnership as consensual union. These factors are time independent; thus, they define risks for birth cohorts born before and after 1960s. Religiousness is time dependent predictor and affects differently female and male matrimonial behavior. Christian religiousness is important factor for female population born before 1960s and it decreases the risks to form first partnership as consensual union. Contrary to it Christian religiousness does not affect the matrimonial behavior of Russian male population. The importance of religiousness is observed only for male cohorts born after 1960s and with Muslim religious identity. Other time and gender dependant predictor is assessment of parental marital quality. It is not relevant for male population, but is significant for older female population. For females born before 1960s the negative or neutral assessment of parental relations increases risks for first partnership as consensual union.

In France as it was expected we observe the diminishing role of structural factors that determine the type of first partnership. In the birth cohorts born before 1960s the significant predictors to start first partnership in consensual union was higher education, being non religious or nominal Catholic, incomplete parental family experience. These predictors were relevant for both gender groups. Additionally to this for female population unemployment increased the risks to start first partnership in consensual union. The effects of almost all of these abovementioned predictors are not relevant for the birth cohorts born after 1960s with the exception of religiousness. Being Muslim significantly decreases the propensity to start first partnership in consensual union for female and male population. Christian religiousness despite the frequency of religious activity significantly lowers the risks for female population but affects male population only for those attending Christian religious rituals at least once a week.

Finally, several conclusions could be draw comparing the countries. First, in France the selectivity of forerunners in the younger cohorts is limited to religiousness and especially to Muslim religiousness. In Lithuania and Russia selectivity is at work in both groups of births cohorts despite the variations in the set of predictors.

Conclusions

Thus, in all three countries - France, Lithuania and Russia – could be distinguished very different historical paths of demographic changes in partnership formation over the 20th century and in recent times. At the beginning of the 20th century and after the Second World War until the 1970s, Lithuania and France were very much alike in terms of the marriage pattern; in the beginning of the 20th century both countries experienced the domination of the "European marriage" pattern and later on, until the 1970s – blossoming of the "traditional family" pattern. Meanwhile in Russia the demographic development of the family formation in the beginning of the 20th century was affected by the "non-European marriage" pattern and the bolshevik "family experiments" that conditioned the early spread of consensual unions. After 1960s France was already following the western path with clearly expressed signs of SDT, while the Lithuanian and Russian family formation patterns became closer. Thus historically all three countries represent three developmental trajectories of the family formation patterns. France manifests the *consequent transition* from the "European marriage" to "traditional family" and afterwards to the SDT, i.e. new family formation pattern; Lithuanian trajectory embodies the *delayed transition*, with the shift from "European marriage" to the prolonged period of the "traditional family" and afterwards towards the SDT family formation pattern; Russia represents the trajectory of *deformed*, while it departed from the "non-European marriage" pattern, acquired the features of "traditional family" and turned towards the STD family formation pattern.

The three developmental trajectories of the family formation patterns are related to the attitudes on the spread of new family forms: more liberal attitudes are – a more advanced process, conservative attitudes – a transition to the new family forms is delayed. However it is evident that the historical path of the country makes an impress on the specifics of the new family formation pattern.

The investigation has revealed that in transition to a new family formation pattern accompanied by an increasing proportion of entry into the first partnership through a consensual union, in all the countries the proportion of ever entered into the partnership by the birth cohorts remains either stable or has been growing (mostly among Lithuanian and Russian females). The decline in the rates of starting the first partnership as marriage has been compensated by the increase of the first partnership as the consensual union. Moreover, the rejuvenation of the entry into the consensual union among the female population resulted in the rejuvenation of the entry into the first partnership, especially in Russia and Lithuania.

Forerunners of the new family formation path are defined by the set of factors that is time and gender dependant in every country. In France time is important factor that affects the selectivity of the group of forerunners. Considering the time factor we observe the shift from multi-dimensional to uni-dimensional selectivity. Contrary to the older birth cohorts where we observed the effect of individual structural, cultural and intergenerational determinants, in the younger birth cohorts the one significant

factor is cultural. Religiousness remains the only relevant factor that defines the risks to start first partnership in consensual union.

In Russia and Lithuania set of factors that selects forerunners is more time stable and defines the group of family “modernizers”. Thus in both countries the multi-dimensional selectivity is still at work. Education, living area, religiousness and intergenerational factors determine risks to start first partnership in consensual union, but there are important time and gender dependencies specific to each country. In Russia factors of education and living area are time and gender stable, while religiousness and intergenerational factors are not. Hence in Russia lower education and living in urban areas define groups of male and female forerunners disregarding of time. In Lithuania both factors similarly affects female population, but education has an inverse effect in male population. Thus in Lithuania forerunners in younger male birth cohorts are defined not by the lower, but by the higher education. In Russia Christian religiousness affects only older female birth cohorts and decreases the propensity to start first partnership in consensual union. For male population religiousness is relevant factor for the younger male population but this concerns only Muslim religiousness. In Lithuania Christian religiousness does not affect the propensity to start partnership in consensual union neither for younger no older female birth cohorts, but is important for younger male cohorts. Forerunners in both countries are defined by one intergenerational factor, i.e. assessment of parental marital quality, but this is applicable to female population and is more clearly expressed for older birth cohorts. Overlooking effects of all discussed factors the results of education and religiousness for Lithuanian male population are most striking and this specific link between gender, time and matrimonial behaviour distinguishes Lithuania from two other countries.

Hence, comparing the selectivity of forerunners in all three countries we could conclude that in France, where consensual unions are almost universal phenomenon, the one remaining selectivity factor is religiousness. Thus France represents the case of uni-dimensional selectivity whereby in Russia and Lithuania, where the new family formation pattern was adopted later, the selectivity is multi-dimensional and consequently there are several structural and cultural factors that specifically define the group of forerunners.

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Annex 1. Historical paths of the changes in partnership formation patterns in Lithuania, Russia and France

LITHUANIA

Periods	Main characteristics
Until the mid-20th century	„European marriage“ pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late marriage • High proportion of never married
Mid-20th century – end of the 1980s	„Traditional family“ pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejuvenation of marriage → early marriage • Low proportion of never married • Partnership formation through marriage
Since the 1990s	Family transformation → modern partnership formation pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing of marriage • Spreading of cohabitation • Increase of proportion of never married <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> Shift to the new partnership formation pattern

RUSSIA

Periods	Main characteristics
Until the 1920s	Non-European pattern of marriage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early marriage • Very low proportion of never married
1920-1950s	Liberal Family Codes (1918, 1926-1944) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious marriage is under pressure by state • Civil marriage is gradually established • Consensual unions are widely spreading • Early family formation is temporally interrupted by the War
1950-1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal marriage dominates, divorces are climbing • Age of first marriage returns to traditional early pattern
Since the 1990s	Family transformation → modern partnership formation pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing of marriage • Spreading of cohabitation • Increase of proportion of never married <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> Shift to the new partnership formation pattern

FRANCE

Periods	Main characteristics
Until the end of 19 c. – beginning of 20 th c.	„European marriage“ pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late marriage • High proportion of never married
End of 19 c. – beginning of -20 th c. until the 1970s	„Traditional family“ pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejuvenation of marriage → early marriage • Low proportion of never married • Partnership formation through marriage
Since the 1970s	Family transformation → modern partnership formation pattern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing of marriage • Spreading of cohabitation • Increase/high proportion of never married <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> Shift to the new partnership formation pattern

Annex 2. Proportion of never married in Lithuania, Russia, France, per cent

	1923	1989	2001	1926	1989	2002	1926	1990	2001	2005
	LITHUANIA			RUSSIA			FRANCE			
MALES										
20-24	87.5	65.8	82.4	47.5	59.5	73.6	55.7	91.8	97.6	97.8
25-29	60.2	22.2	42.0	15.6	20.8	34.8		58.1	76.2	81.6
30-34	34.7	11.5	19.5	6.8	10.5	16.8	15.7	31.4	50.0	54.9
35-39	20.2	8.5	11.8	4.1	6.8	10.0		18.4	35.2	39.0
40-44	10.6	6.6	8.6	3.1	4.7	7.0	10.3	12.1	24.3	29.5
45-49		5.6	7.8	2.6	3.7	5.4		9.7	16.2	20.8
FEMALES										
20-24	73.3	41.8	65.0	28.0	33.5	52.6	39.5	79.3	92.2	93.4
25-29	43.0	15.3	26.1	9.1	12.0	21.8		42.0	62.5	69.2
30-34	25.1	9.0	13.1	5.7	6.9	10.9	16.3	22.0	39.8	44.6
35-39	16.5	6.3	9.0	4.3	5.3	6.8		13.5	27.4	31.7
40-44	12.5	5.3	7.3	4.2	4.5	5.1	11.4	9.4	18.1	23.0
45-49		5.1	6.3	4.1	3.5	4.5		7.6	12.3	15.7

Sources: Naselenie 2006; Pagrindiniai 1990; Gyventojai 2003; Lietuvos gyventojai 1925; Résultats 1926.

Annex 3. Mean age at first marriage in Lithuania, Russia and France (for those who married under 50 years of age)

	LITHUANIA		RUSSIA		FRANCE	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1925-1939 ⁶	29.1-30.3		25.7-26.0		23.4 ⁷	
Mid-1960s ⁸	26.3		24.7		22.7 ⁹	
1980		23.0	24.3	22.4	25.1	23.0
1981		23.4	24.4	22.4	25.3	23.1
1982		23.3	24.3	22.4	25.4	23.3
1983		23.3	24.3	22.3	25.6	23.6
1984		23.3	24.1	22.2	25.9	23.8
1985		22.3	24.2	22.2	26.2	24.2
1986		22.8	24.3	22.3	26.5	24.4
1987		22.9	24.4	22.3	26.8	24.8
1988		22.7	24.3	22.2	27.0	25.0
1989		22.5	24.1	22.0	27.3	25.3
1990 ¹⁰	24.1	22.4	24.0	21.9	27.5	25.5
1991	24.0	22.2	24.0	21.8	27.8	25.8
1992	23.8	22.1	23.9	21.7	28.0	26.1
1993	24.0	22.2	23.9	21.7	28.4	26.4
1994	24.2	22.3	24.0	21.8	28.7	26.7
1995	24.4	22.4	24.2	22.0	28.9	26.9
1996	24.5	22.5	24.4	22.2	29.4	27.4
1997	24.6	22.8	24.5	22.3	29.6	27.6
1998	24.8	22.9	24.7	22.3	29.7	27.7
1999	25.2	23.3	24.9	22.5	29.9	27.8
2000	25.7	23.7	25.1	22.6	30.1	28.0
2001	26.1	24.0	25.4	22.8	30.1	28.0
2002	26.4	24.3	25.7	23.0	30.3	28.2
2003	26.7	24.5	25.8	23.1	30.5	28.4
2004	26.9	24.8	26.1	23.3	30.8	28.7
2005	27.0	24.9	26.1	23.3	31.0	29.0
2006	27.3	25.1	26.2	23.3	31.2	29.2
2007	27.7	25.5	26.4	23.5		

Sources: Naselenie 2007. For Russia: author's calculations based on official statistics of marriages: before 1997 one-year-age marriage rates were used. Since 1997 – rough estimates based on rates for -18, 18-24, 25-34, 35+ age groups (Since 1997 the Russian statistical agency uses only these unconventional age groups for tabulations); *Statistics Lithuania* 2008; Stankuniene 2001.

⁶ Lietuvos statistikos metraščiai (1927-1940). Kaunas, Vilnius.

⁷ Halbwegs M., Sauvy A., *Le point de vue du nombre. 1936*, Édition critique sous la direction de Marie Jaisson et Éric Brian, INED, 2005, p. 309.

⁸ *Estestvennoe i mechanicheskoe dvizhenie naselenia Litvi 1965-1970* (1971), Vilnius (In Russian).

⁹ Means for 1965-1970

¹⁰ Data for 1990-1999 from *Statistics Lithuania* (2001). Vilnius

ENDNOTES

¹ Expression of the "European marriage" pattern and its duration in the West European countries has been thoroughly investigated and described by the different scholars (Hajnal 1965; Hoffmann-Nowotny 1987, Blum, Rallu 1993; Prioux 2007). However, in the countries of the former Soviet Union area the studies on specific features of the evolution marriage/nuptiality patterns in the West-East context started to be developed from the beginning of the 1970s when the data of large-scale sample surveys of the USSR population conducted in 1960 and 1967 became available. Russian scholars (Darsky 1972, Vishnevskij 1977) were aware of the well known work by J.Hajnal (1965), which was translated into the Russian language (Vishnevsky, Kon 1979). The surveys data allowed to reveal that the Soviet Union, with its fifteen republics much differing in the trajectories of the demographic transition including different patterns of matrimonial behaviour in a historical context (Visnevsky, Volkov 1983, Ilyina 1984, Tolts 1988, Darsky, Scherbov 1995, Darsky, Ilyina 2000). The issues of historic and cultural roots of an appearance, a long-standing persistence and convergence tendencies in the post-war period of two types of matrimonial behavior -- the European marriage pattern in Baltic states (more precisely in territories to the west of the Hajnal's S.-Petersburg-Triest line) and the traditional marriage pattern in Russia and Ukraine -- have been actively discussed by demographers under a reference name of "inter-ethnic differences". Using an operational term "Ethnicity", scholars were encoding a whole complicated bunch of cultural, including religious, socioeconomic and other specific features of the demographic behaviour, which have been shaped by previous epochs (Bondarskaya 1976, Bondarskaya and Ilyina 1979, Darsky, Ilyina 1990).

In Lithuania this phase of family evolution has been until recently investigated inadequately. The domination of the "European marriage" pattern in Lithuania has been discussed only casually in the several publications of Lithuanian scholars (Stankuniene 1989, 1995, 1997, 2001; Marcinkeviciene, 1999). The demographers of the other countries have also observed that Lithuania was among the countries in which the "European marriage" pattern prevailed (Vishnevskij 1977; Vishnevskij, Tolts 1983; Volkov 1986; Blum, Rallu 1993). It has been observed that the Baltics constituted the confines of the eastward spread of "European marriage" pattern corresponding in area terms with the spread of the Catholic and Protestant faith (Vishnevskij 1977; Vishnevskij, Tolts 1983).

² The first decrees of the Bolshevik power included Decree «On the Dissolution of Marriage» (16(29) December 1917)", and Decree "On Marriage, Children and the Adaptation of the Registers" (18(31) December 1917), Decree "On Secularization" (23 January (5 February) 1918) which were used to declare that the State recognizes only civil (non religious) marriages registered by bodies of Soviet administration (ZAGs). The Code of 16 September 1918, On Registers, the Law of Marriage, the Family and Guardianship, unified all different decrees and legislative texts. New laws established equal rights for spouses in marriage and under divorce (removing such conditions as "good reason" for divorce, "evidence of guilt of one spouse", court process under a mutual agreement of both spouses for divorce), and also recognized equal rights of all children whether born within marriage or outside it. The Family Code as of 19 November 1926 made a further step in liberalization of family relations. Beginning in 1927, an out-of-court divorce was permitted upon request of only one spouse (other spouse's opinion could be ignored). In addition, the law set up equal rights for unions registered by ZAGs (marriages *de jure*) and non-registered unions (marriages *de facto*). Obligations to care about a spouse and children were established equal for all unions regardless of its type. Since a registered marriage did not bring to spouses and children any legal or material and financial advantages, registration of marriage was losing meaning. Also important is that people did not yet forget a sacral meaning of wedding in a church ("before the god"), and, by and large, viewed with great suspicion a new, too formal system of "Soviet" marriage registration. As a result, consensual unions ("marriages *de facto*") – cohabitations as we call them today - became widespread.

³ Decree of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet "On Marriage and Family" adopted in 1944 (8 July) rescinded the recognition of *de facto* unions (which triggered of a wave of marriages "of regularisation" (Avdeev and Monnier 2000)) and introduced new divorce procedure that it may be regarded as prohibition on divorce. According to the 1944 law, a mother giving birth to a child outside of marriage did not have the right to apply to the court to receive child support from the father of the child. On the birth certificate of a child born out of wedlock the place for information about the father was crossed out, which meant deprivation of the right to bear the father's surname. In this way the status of "illegitimate" child was restored a status which had existed in the Russian Empire.