

PARADOXES IN PATTERNS OF PARTNERSHIP AND CHILDBEARING BEHAVIOUR DURING TRANSFORMATIONS IN LITHUANIA.

SEVERAL PARALLEL POPULATIONS?

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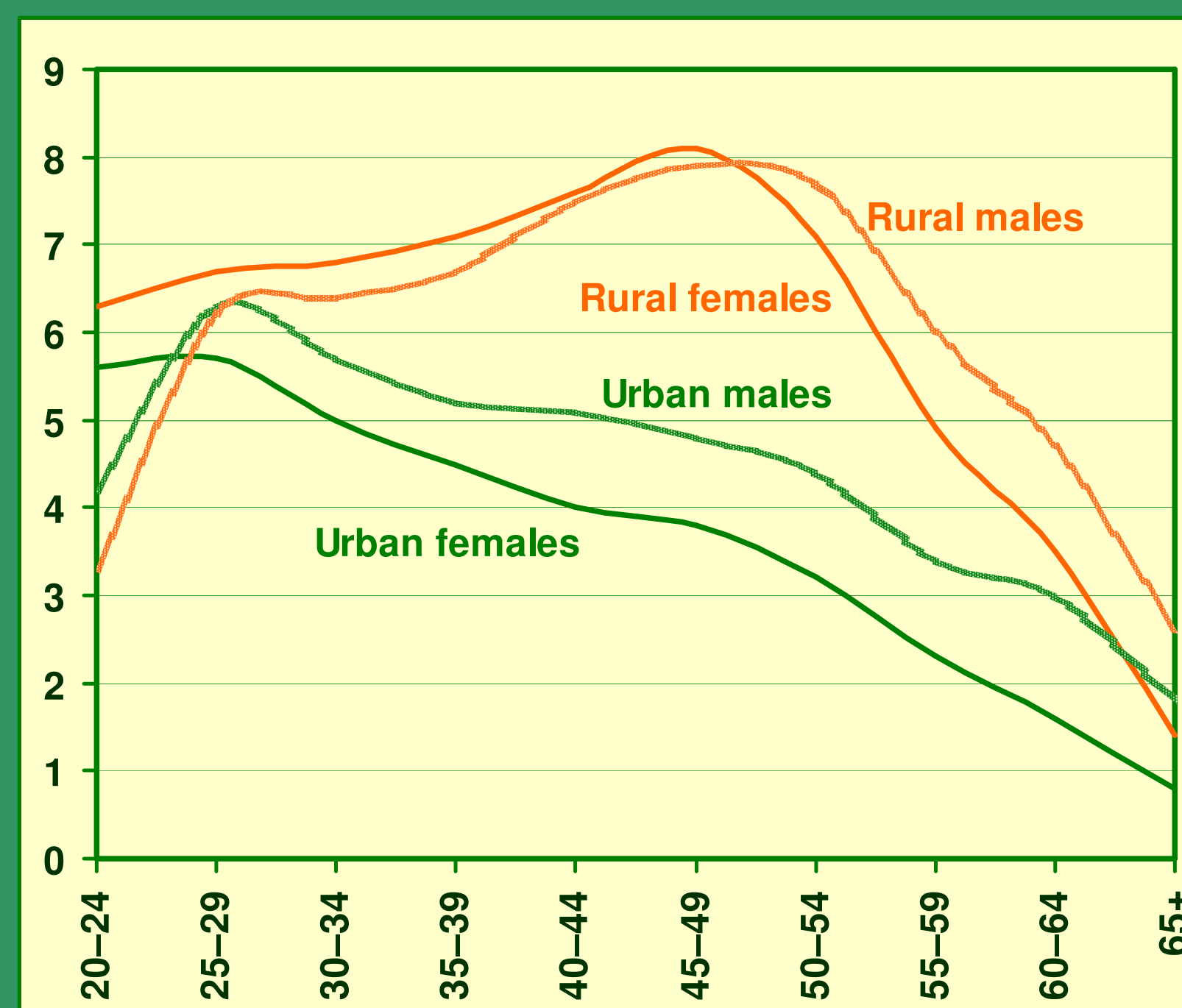
Since the beginning of the 1990s, like in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, rapid family transformations started in Lithuania: decrease of marriage rates, postponement and “ageing” of marriage, spread of cohabitation, postponement of fertility, transition to very low fertility, increase of extra marital births, etc. They might lead to a conclusion that SDT, which had started in the North and West European countries about four decades ago, followed by the South European countries some time later, has, since the 1990s, turned towards the Central and Eastern Europe. But some age and socioeconomic differentials of matrimonial and childbearing behaviour reveal that the processes in the Central and Eastern Europe region are more complex, contradictory and some times have a paradoxical nature.

The most different patterns of matrimonial and childbearing behaviour are demonstrated by the younger generations of Lithuania, which stepped into the marriageable age during the early and run up stages of the transformations. Still, the Population Census 2001, GGS_Lithuania 2006 and data from other sources reveal paradoxical age and socio-economic differentials of the matrimonial and childbearing behaviour. The patterns of this behaviour vary most among the more socio-economically advanced groups of the society (urban, with higher education, etc.) and the most disadvantaged groups of the society, which are marginalized and experience material and social deprivation (rural, with lowest education, etc.)

COHOBITATION

Social exclusion that is experienced by the rural population is one of the decisive factors determining the matrimonial behaviour of this part of the population. Cohabitation trends in the rural and urban areas are following different patterns: from the age of 30 the share of rural cohabitants starts rising in each older age group and reaches the peak in the 45-49 age group, whereas among the urban population the number of cohabitants starts falling in each age group from the age of 30 years (Fig. 1). The rural population which experiences material and social deprivation more often chooses cohabitation instead of marriage due to the lack of social and material resources. This type of cohabitation reminds of the historically earlier form of cohabitations, which in the literature are named as the “marriages of poor” (Kiernan, 2004).

Fig. 1. Cohabitants in private households by sex and age in urban and rural areas, 2001, per cent



Source: Population Census 2001

Deprivation among the rural population has a stronger impact on the matrimonial behaviour than the ethno-cultural factors, which usually are associated with the more conservative form of matrimonial behaviour. Thus, proliferation of a non-traditional family in the traditional socio-cultural environment (i.e. rural areas) is conditioned not by the modern values, but by the social and material deprivation.

As the Table 1 demonstrates there are the highest risk to experience cohabitation: for the youngest age groups; for the groups with the lowest education; more for the urban than rural population; more for the employers.

Table 1. Relative risk of ever entering cohabitation

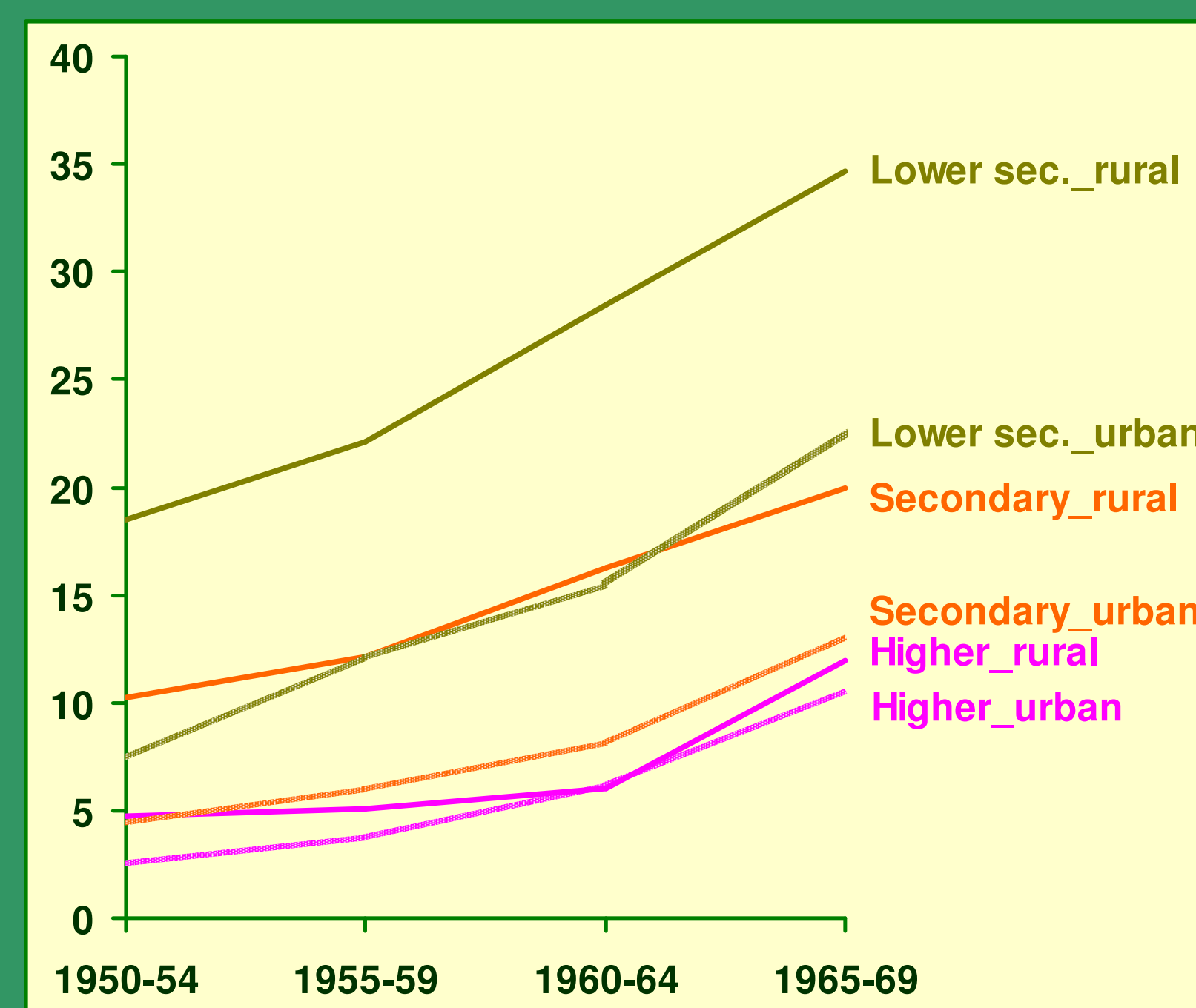
R age	
20-29	1
30-39	0.63***
40-49	0.43***
50-59	0.30***
60-69	0.16***
70+	0.11***
R sex	
male	1
female	0.97 n.s.
R education	
higher	1
secondary	0.9 n.s.
lower sec.	1.27***
R residence	
urban	1
rural	0.74***
R employment status	
employee	1
self-employed/ employer	1.38***
unemployed	1.12 n.s.

Source: GGS_Lithuania 2006

MARITAL STATUS

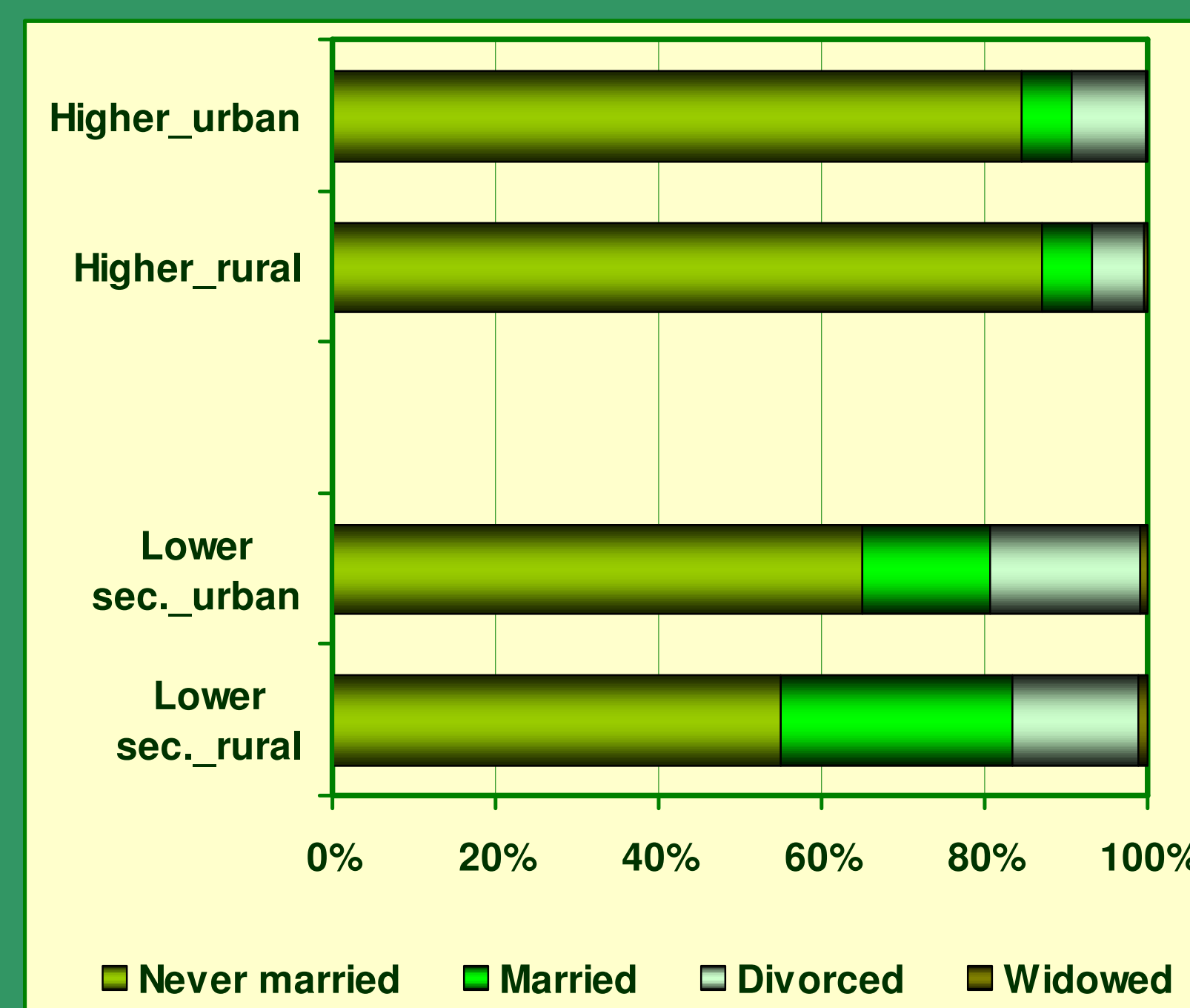
Social exclusion has a decisive impact on marital behaviour of the rural low educated male population. Among the rural males with low education and born in the second half of the 20th century (after 1950) the proportion of never married is considerably higher than among the rest of the male population (Fig. 2; Fig. 3; Table 2). This group of rural male population has a relatively “low value” in the “marriage market”. They are in social and “demographic exclusion”.

Fig. 2. Never married males: urban/rural males by education



Source: Population Census 2001

Fig. 3. Marital status and education, males, 1960-1964 birth cohort



Source: Population Census 2001

Table 2. Relative risk of never marrying, males

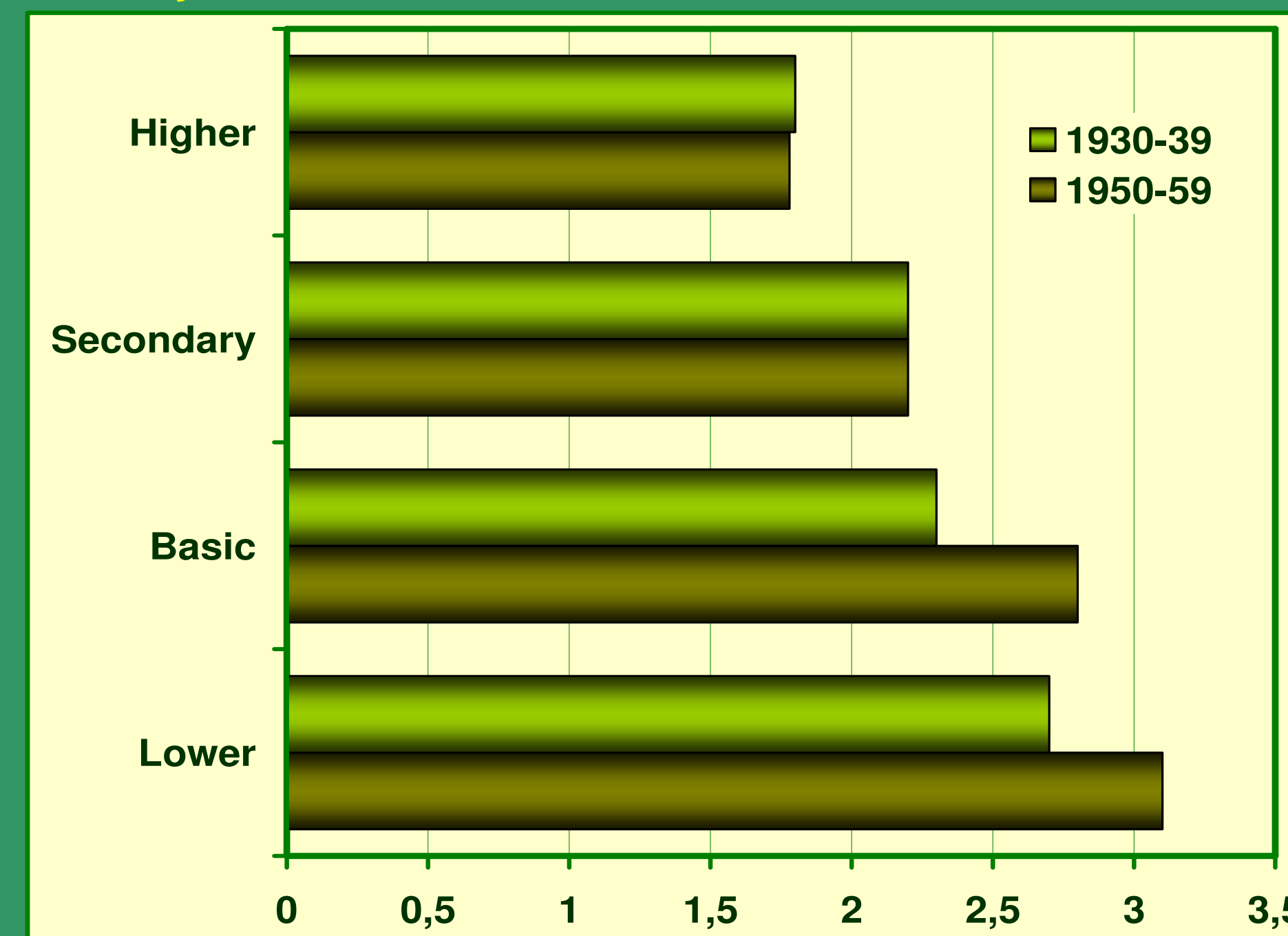
R cohort	
1930-1939	1
1940-1949	0.984 n.s.
1950-1959	1.735***
1960-1969	2.014***
R education	
higher	1
secondary	0.968 n.s.
lower sec.	1.610***
R residence	
rural	1
urban	0.799***
R employment status	
employee	1
self-employed/ employer	0.785***
unemployed	2.166***

Source: GGS_Lithuania 2006

CHILDBEARING

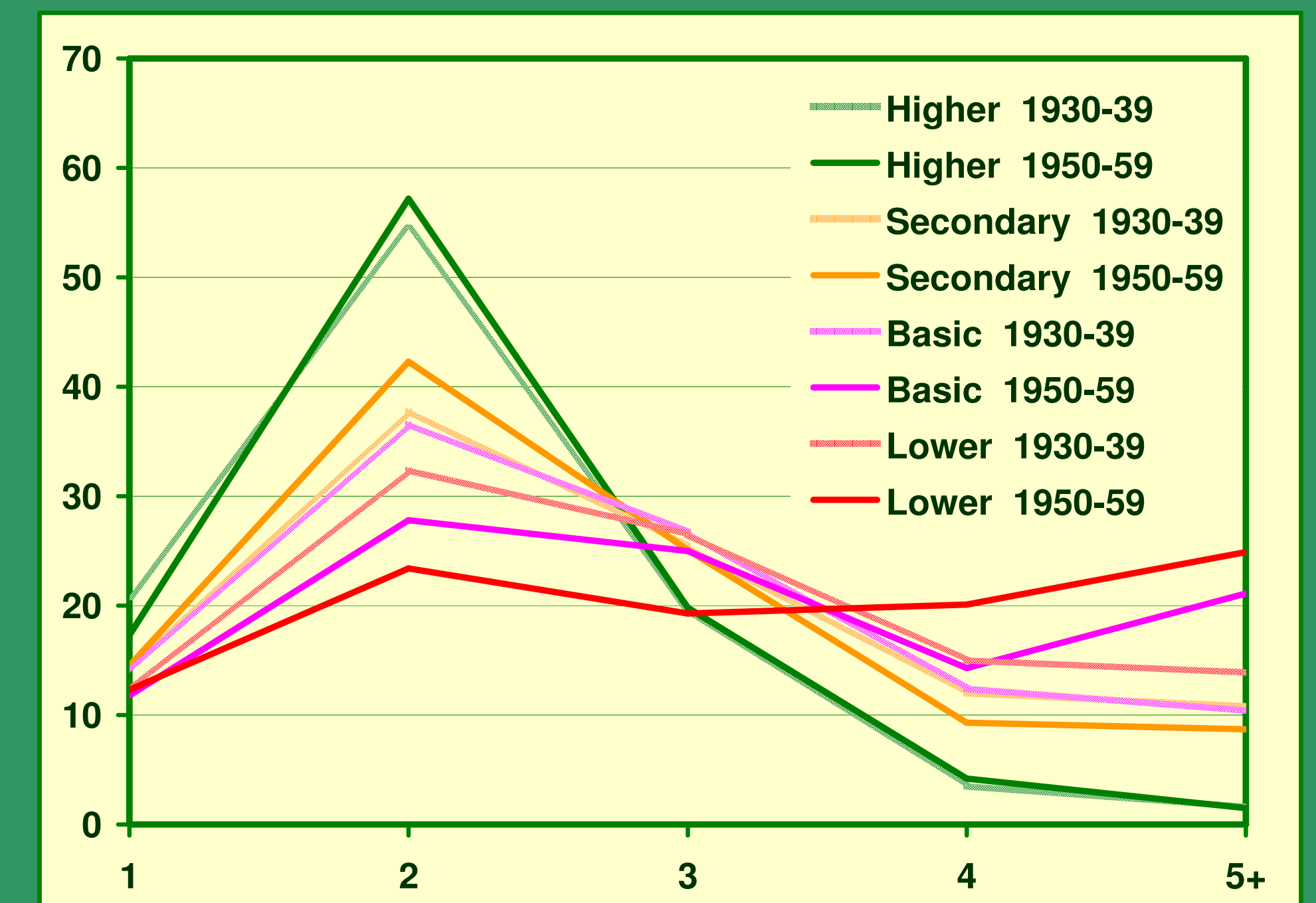
The childbearing trends among the socially marginalized female population are affected by the conditions of social exclusion as well. Despite the general trend of the fertility decline in the 1990s the fertility among the low educated females, especially in the rural areas, has increased due to giving birth to the children of higher parity. The average number of children born to these mothers is higher even comparing with the older generations that completed their childbearing behaviour twenty and more years earlier (Fig. 4; Fig. 5).

Fig. 4. Average number of children born to women by birth cohorts and education



Source: Population Census 2001

Fig. 5. Percentage of born children by parity and women cohort



Source: Population Census 2001

CONCLUSIONS

It could be maintained that different socio-demographic groups experience the determining power of factors of the second demographic transition at varying degrees, which would seemingly be confirmed by the growing sociodemographic differentiation of matrimonial and childbearing behaviour of the transformation period. However as the data of the 2001 Population Census, GGS_Lithuania 2006 and other surveys show the trends of matrimonial and childbearing behaviour of advanced and marginalized populations are even going in opposite directions. While among the advanced populations (higher educated, urban population) the SDT changes are observed, the matrimonial and childbearing behaviour patterns of the population in social exclusion deviate from the general trends of SDT. This enables us to make a symbolic distinction that divides the Lithuanian population into parallel existing populations with fairly different and contradictory patterns of matrimonial and childbearing behaviour.

Reference:
Kathleen Kiernan 'Unmarried Cohabitation and Parenthood in Britain and Europe'. In: Law and Policy, Vol. 26, No1, 2004, p.33-55