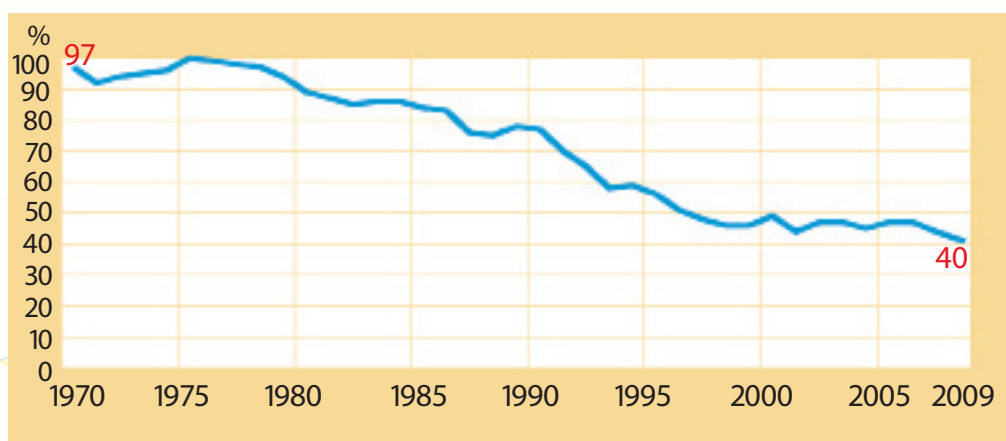


Facts and opinions about marriage

Traditionally Hungary used to belong to the countries with high marriage intensity. First marriage took place at a relatively young age and was almost universal, and divorced people frequently got re-married. Marriage propensity started to decline in the 1980s and it has been steadily decreasing since then. The number of marriages dropped to almost half between 1990 and 2009. The trend of total first marriage rate clearly demonstrates these changes in marriage behaviour.

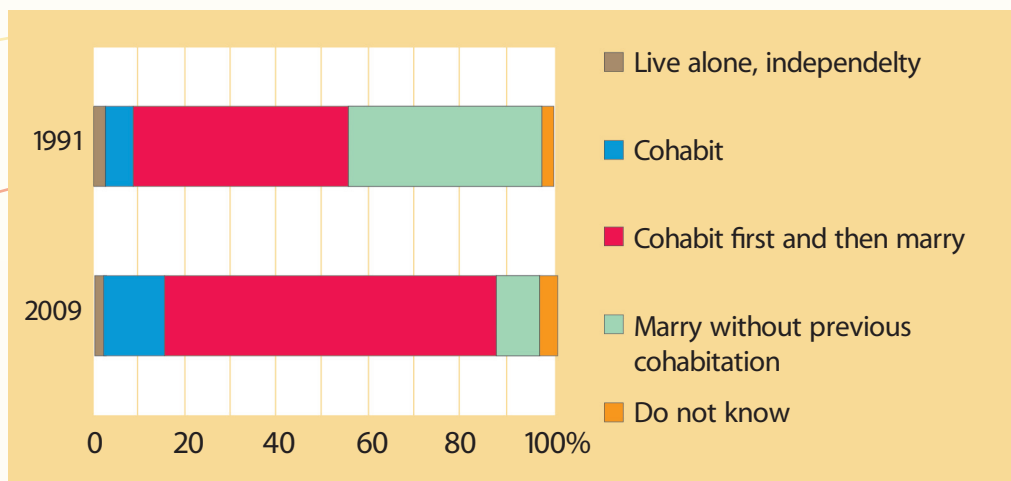
Total first marriage rate for women, 1970–2009



Source: HCSO.

Despite the significant decrease in marriage propensity, attitudes towards the institution of marriage have been invariably very positive. During the third wave of the Turning Points of the Life Course panel survey in 2008, 80% of the representative sample stated that marriage is still viable and is not an outdated institution. If we examine preferences about partnership forms, it becomes even clearer that Hungarian population is in favour of marriage.

The distribution of opinions about “What would you advise young men and women, what life should they choose?” 1991, 2009



Source: DRI surveys in 1991 and 2008
Own calculations.

Regarding the recommended partnership form, Hungarian society has been and it is still in favour of marriage. Only the ratio of people who favour pre-marital cohabitation has changed: these days more people consider it desirable that couples try living together before getting married and they decide on the legitimisation of the relationship based on these experiences. In spite of the growing prevalence of unmarried unions, the majority still does not prefer and does not recommend cohabitation.