



“Millennium Marriages” and “Birthday Peaks” in Sweden: Increased Marriage Propensities around Specific Dates and Birthdays

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Background

Marriage in Sweden

Leader of declining marriage trends since the 1960s, but increasing trends since 1998

Marriage and cohabitation very similar – choice between union forms taken lightly?

Digit preferences in marriage formation

Here: preference to marry at specific points in time related to certain numbers, e.g. the year 2000 or when turning 30, 40, 50 or 60 years old

Turning 30, 40, 50 or 60 associated with bigger celebrations than other birthdays

Increased number of marriages also on July 7 2007 (07-07-07) and August 8 2008 (08-08-08)

Data and methods

Swedish register data

Combination of administrative registers: longitudinal individual-level data

3.7 million men and women aged 18-75, 1991-2007

Data gathered by authorities – therefore patterns are **not due to biased respondent reports**

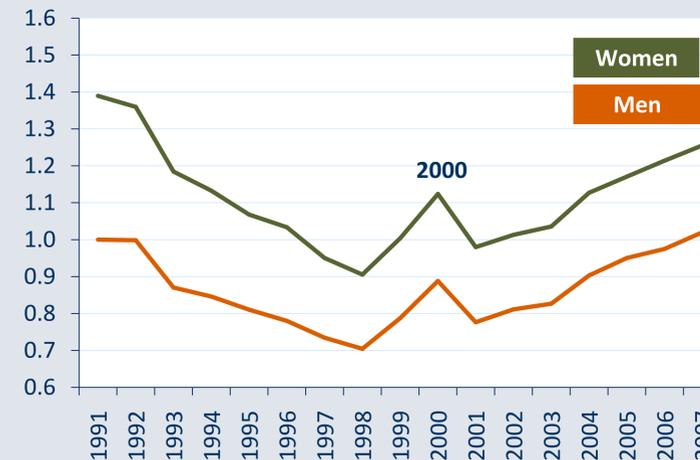
Event-history analysis

Piece-wise constant baseline intensity models

Risk of entering first marriage, months since turning 18

“Millennium marriages”

Relative first marriage risks in Sweden, 1991-2007, men and women aged 18-55. Interaction between year and sex, standardized for age. Men 1991 as reference category.



Clear peaks regardless of

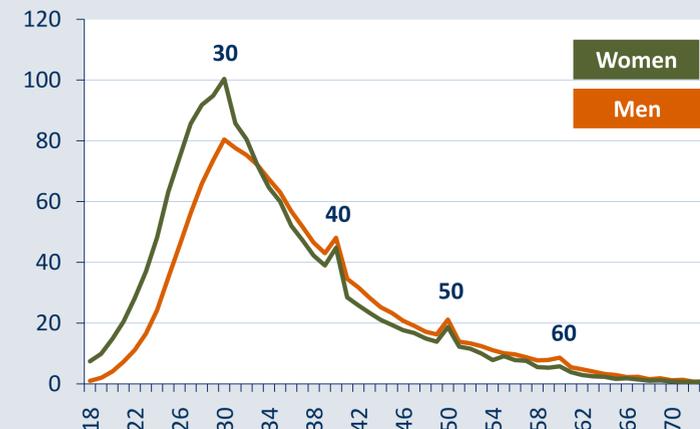
- age
- regional characteristics
- labor-market attachment

Slightly more prevalent among those

- in their late 20s to early 40s
- with children
- not living in big city regions

“Birthday peaks”

Relative first marriage risks in Sweden, ages 18-75, men and women 1991-2007. Interaction between age and sex. Men aged 18 as reference category.



Clear peaks regardless of

- year (1991-2007)
- regional characteristics
- labour-market attachment
- educational level

Slightly more prevalent among those

- with children
- without tertiary education

Discussion

Clear and widespread digit preferences

Prevalent across different demographic and socio-economic groups

Digit preferences not measurement error

The turn of the millennium – seen as a special time to marry

Marriages and birthdays – big transitions, big celebrations?

Similar patterns for men and women

Gender similarities in age peaks – not in line with view of marriage mostly being initiated by women?

Meaning of marriage and weddings

Choice between union forms taken lightly?

The timing of marriage not strictly determined by conventional socio-demographic factors

Patterns might reflect an emphasis on the wedding – not necessarily marriage itself

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Research questions

1. What kind of digit preferences can be observed in first marriage formation in Sweden?

2. How do these vary across socio-economic and demographic groups, in particular gender?