

2. Nuptiality

Tab. 2.1: Basic characteristics of nuptiality

		1985	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Marriages		38 930	40 435	30 771	28 155	27 489	27 484	27 955	27 494	27 340
Crude marriage rate		7.54	7.63	5.78	5.27	5.13	5.11	5.19	5.10	5.07
Total marriage rate	Males	0.836	0.919	0.708	0.613	0.588	0.570	0.569	0.555	0.544
	Females	0.912	0.942	0.713	0.613	0.590	0.575	0.581	0.563	0.555
Mean age at marriage	Males	25.8	25.9	25.8	26.1	26.3	26.8	27.2	27.3	27.7
	Females	23.1	23.1	23.1	23.3	23.5	23.9	24.3	24.4	24.8
Mean age at first marriage	Males	x	x	24.3	24.5	24.7	25.0	25.3	25.6	25.9
	Females	x	x	21.9	22.1	22.3	22.6	22.9	23.1	23.4
First marriages (%)	Males	89.7	89.5	89.7	89.3	89.4	88.3	87.8	88.3	88.0
	Females	91.3	90.9	91.1	90.9	91.2	90.1	89.4	89.9	89.9

In the second half of the twentieth century, the number of marriages oscillated in Slovakia between 27 and 44 thousand depending mainly on the number of people in the age of the highest nuptiality. In this period, the crude marriage rate, the most simple relative indicator, variably decreased from the values around 11‰ at the beginning of fifties to the level of around 7‰ in sixties, increased even to the level of 9‰ in the half of seventies and since that time it was more or less continuously decreasing down to values around 5‰ in the half of nineties. From that time period, it keeps these values with only negligible deviations.

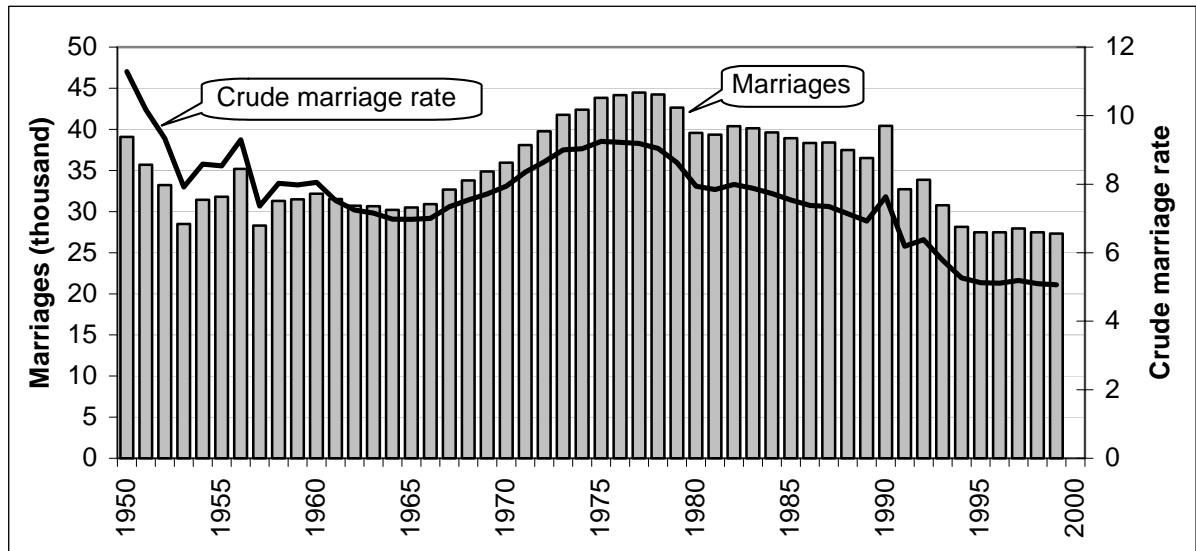
If we take into account that within the stationary population the crude marriage rate should be equal to approximately 7.1‰, we can say, that the nuptiality intensity in Slovakia was, except for the last decade, quite high (Graph 2.1). It may be related to various circumstances. From the beginning, it was mainly the reflection of the compensation phase after the World War II. This effect was multiplied by the inflow of powerful age groups born in twenties into the age of highest nuptiality, which recalled the secondary wave of strong marriage age groups in seventies. The increased intensity of nuptiality was also a consequence of the continuous diminishing of the age at marriage during fifties where the patterns of the reproduction behaviour changed. At those times, the age at marriage decreased approximately by one year, which represents the increase in the crude marriage rate during ten years nearly by 10%. The marriage kept a relatively high status - until the beginning of nineties nearly 95% of population aged 50 got married at least once and around 93% of children were born within marriage. The high status of marriage, however, did not mean its stability. The increasing number of divorces and at the same time the tendency to remarry had a consequence in the further increase of the crude marriage rate. Approximately one third of divorced people will remarry; since eighties, around 11% of grooms or 9% of brides were divorced. For comparison, in the Czech Republic (CR), this ratio was nearly twofold thanks to which the crude marriage rate in the CR was, as a rule, higher than in the SR. The

nuptiality intensity was to a certain extent influenced also by pro-natality measures (a development of the construction of dwellings at the beginning of seventies) or by measures having anti-natality effects (the slow-down of the construction of dwellings at the end of seventies, cancellation of the subsidies on the children consumer goods in 1979).

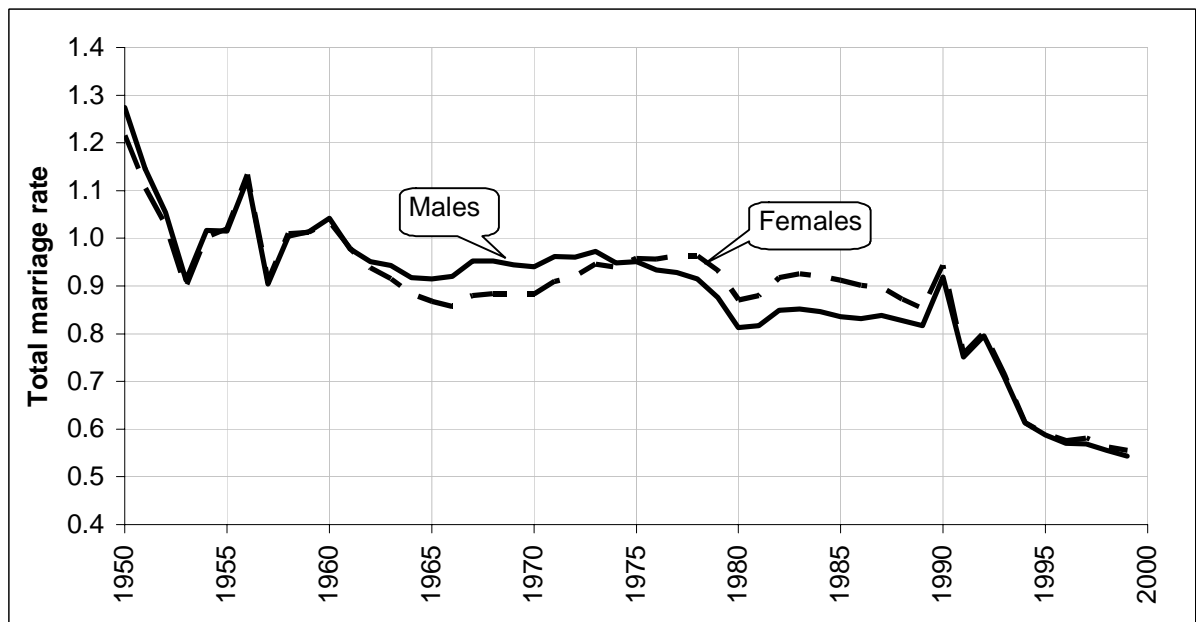
Similar information on the development of the nuptiality intensity is given also by the analysis of the total marriage rate (Graph 2.2), which is netted from the impact of the age structure and the marriages of higher order. The post-war compensation phase linked with the shift of the age at marriage downwards to lower values is a cause why the total marriage rate was until 1960 higher than 1. Except for fifties and nineties, the total marriage rate in the SR sustained at the levels between 0.85 and 0.95 for men as well as for women. It is a peculiarity that at the beginning of sixties, the powerful age groups of women began to enter the age of the highest nuptiality. There is a surplus of single women at the marriageable age and thus the total marriage rate of women is lower than the total marriage rate of men. In the half of seventies the situation turned around; the weak age groups had entered the age of the highest nuptiality, firstly women and then also men, and the total marriage rate of women increased again. Since the beginning of nineties, the total marriage rate at both genders has rapidly decreased.

In the development of the crude marriage rate during the last decade is conspicuous its single 10-percentage increase in 1990 and consequently a 20-percentage decrease in 1991, which is an evident reaction to the information on the cancellation of loans for the newly-married couples being under preparation from January 1, 1991. Many couples who had intended to contract a marriage speeded up their decision in order to get married before the end of 1990. The number of such couples in the age under 30 (a condition for obtaining the loan for newly-married couples) was around 5 thousand; the number of marriages contracted in 1991 was then lower by this number, as compared to the tendency.

Graph 2.1: Marriages and the crude marriage rate



Graph 2.2: Total marriage rate



The real breakpoint in the development of nuptiality, which meant a change in the demographic behaviour, has started since the end of 1992 and is related with the economic and social transformation of the country (increase in living costs, reform of the social policy, cancellation of the loans for newly-married couples, termination of the massive construction of dwellings). The nuptiality decreased most radically in 1993 and 1994. Since 1996, the crude marriage rate has stabilised at quite low values (around 5%), despite the fact, that the powerful age groups born in seventies matured to the age of the highest nuptiality. At the same time, a change in the age structure of married people occurred while the number of marriages at the age of 25-29 slightly increased. It is likely that this tendency will continue. There are no direct statistical data on consensual unions; indirect evidence on their increase is

given, for example, by the figure on children born outside marriage, which increased in nineties by 50%.

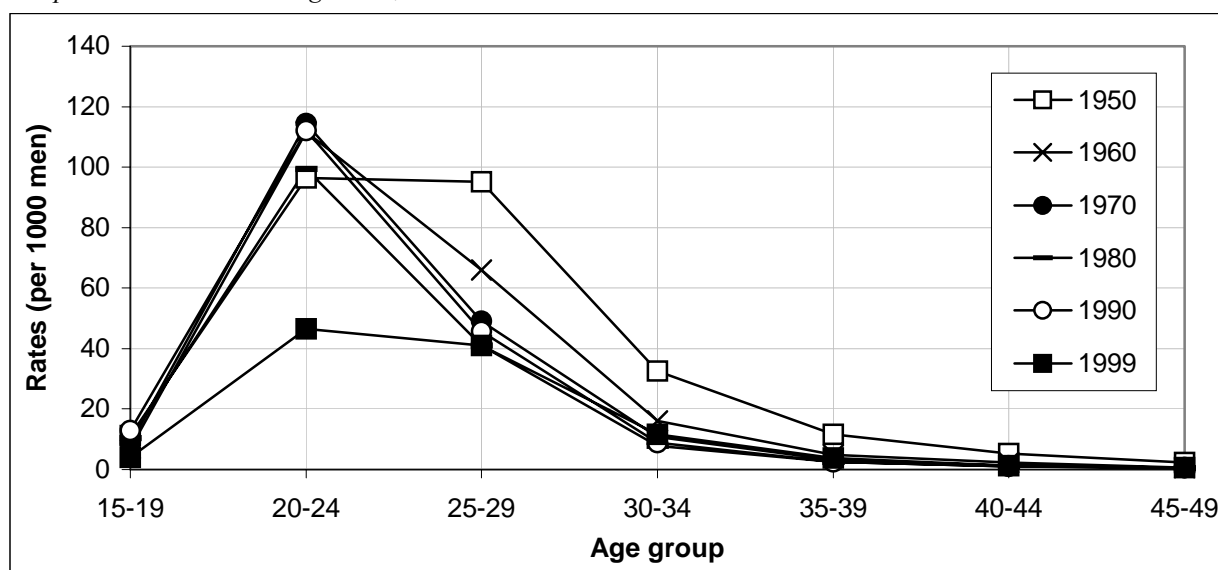
Lower nuptiality intensity, a higher age at marriage and a higher occurrence of consensual unions are part of demographic behaviour typical for the second demographic transition. After political changes in 1989, it has accommodated, in line with the expectations, also in Slovakia. On the one hand, it is a consequence of new life possibilities, which the young people are nowadays faced with. On the other hand, after 1990 the old patterns of the reproduction behaviour, with small changes valid 30 years, became inapplicable. The early marriage was typical for them (after finishing the school, military service and getting a job), which was at the same time a way to obtain an apartment. The early beginning of sexual intercourse, which anticipated a possible pregnancy of the partner and a consequent marriage, was

a socially accepted solution. After the termination of the massive construction of dwellings subsidised by the government, this possibility, mainly in cities, disappeared. The transition to new patterns was paradoxically accelerated by the intensive campaign against the abortions running at those times. In the case of possible pregnancy of the partner, neither the marriage nor the induced abortion were a satisfactory solution; it has resulted into a modern contraception. Since 1992 in the SR, the prevalence of using the contraception means was recorded again. Thus, the consensual unions became technically and later also socially feasible and acceptable.

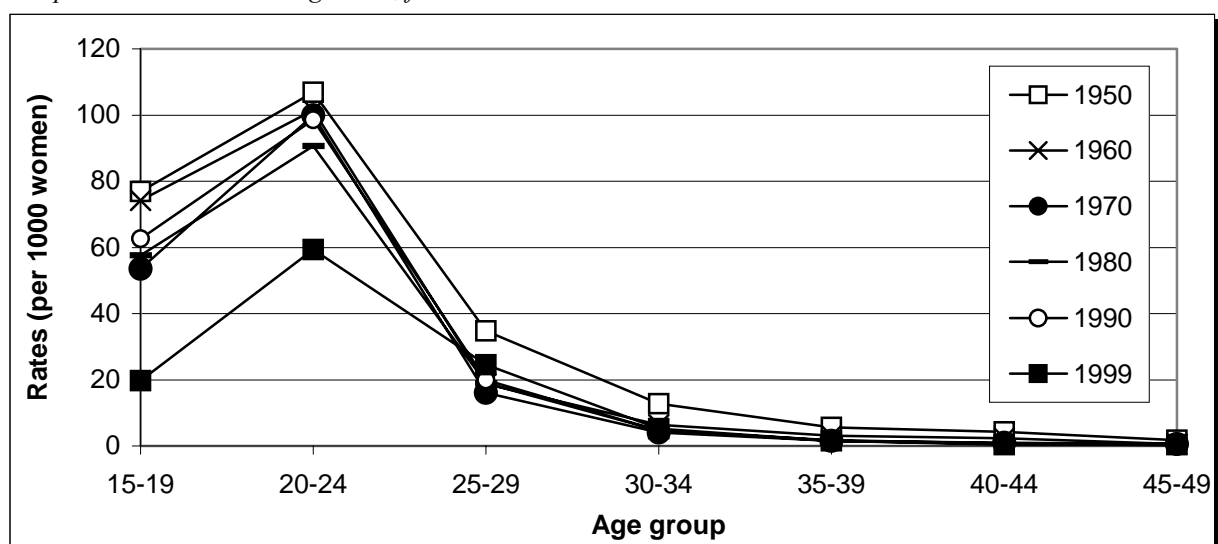
Nuptiality by age and sex

In the first half of the twentieth century the average age at first marriage was quite high (around 26.5 years in case of men and 23 years as for women). In fifties, it had decreased quite fast by approximately one year (Graph 2.3, 2.4) and during the next 30 years. It remained at the levels around 22 years as far as women are concerned, while in case of men, the decrease continued from the age of around 25.5 downwards to 24.5. After 1990, a change occurred and the mean age at first marriage started to grow up again. In 1999, the mean age at first marriage was 25.9 for men and 23.4 if women are under consideration; the median age was 25.0 and 22.7 respectively.

Graph 2.3: Reduced marriage rates, males



Graph 2.4: Reduced marriage rates, female

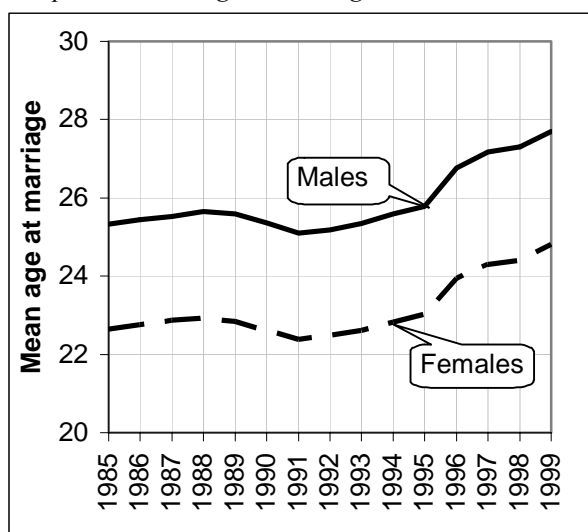


The similar course has been recorded also in the development of the mean age of all marriages (Graph 2.5), however, the decline in fifties and sixties was slower and since the half of seventies, a moderate increase has

replaced it. It is a consequence of an increasing share of marriages of the higher order. Irregularities in the development of the mean age at marriage in nineties are the result of above described irregularities in the development of nuptiality. In 1999, the mean age of all

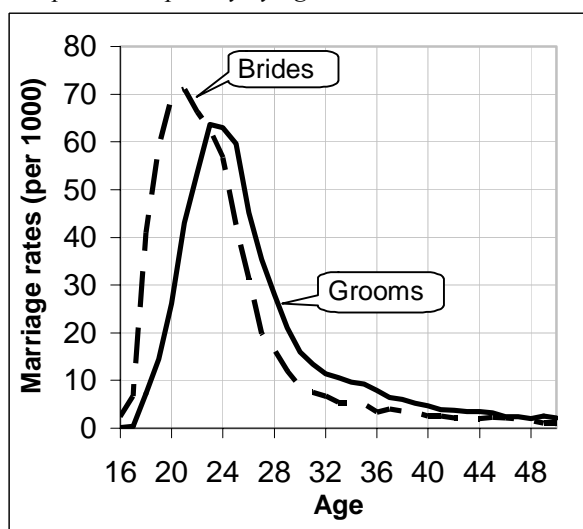
opment of nuptiality. In 1999, the mean age of all married couples was 27.7 in case of men and 24.8 in case of women; the median age was 25.5 and 23.2 respectively.

Graph 2.5: Mean age at marriage



The age of the highest nuptiality was equally for the first marriages as well as for all marriages 23 years for men and 21 years for women (Graph 2.6).

Graph 2.6: Nuptiality by age in 1999



Tab. 2.2: Marriage rates by age (per 1000 persons)

	1985	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
All grooms									
15-19	12.37	12.83	11.30	8.02	6.81	5.88	4.98	4.63	4.05
20-24	102.25	113.36	85.39	70.49	65.04	59.89	56.18	51.42	46.79
25-29	46.52	49.78	37.64	35.82	36.22	38.33	40.88	41.84	43.30
30-34	11.67	13.07	10.74	11.30	11.64	12.59	13.25	14.06	14.80
35-39	5.99	6.08	4.72	4.91	5.10	5.14	6.40	6.47	6.65
40-44	3.69	4.06	3.07	2.77	2.81	3.26	3.28	3.22	3.62
45-49	3.01	3.18	2.45	2.12	2.35	2.21	2.63	2.38	2.58
50-54	1.97	2.04	1.63	1.64	1.61	2.20	2.18	2.10	2.21
55-59	1.52	1.57	1.39	1.36	1.28	1.52	1.64	1.42	1.53
All brides									
15-19	60.35	62.61	47.59	36.88	32.35	28.32	24.96	22.41	19.76
20-24	99.12	101.23	75.99	66.64	64.74	63.52	64.21	62.02	60.31
25-29	22.81	24.40	18.64	18.08	19.35	21.39	23.90	26.02	27.62
30-34	7.94	8.41	6.36	6.29	6.25	7.24	7.56	7.39	8.10
35-39	4.14	4.31	3.12	3.15	2.95	3.34	3.48	3.38	3.68
40-44	2.56	2.77	2.13	1.93	2.00	2.22	2.24	2.15	2.06
45-49	1.72	2.04	1.57	1.51	1.47	1.51	1.86	1.72	1.80
Single grooms									
15-19	12.36	12.87	11.30	8.02	6.79	5.88	4.98	4.63	4.05
20-24	101.25	112.10	84.51	69.85	64.49	59.35	55.75	51.03	46.51
25-29	42.50	45.66	34.53	33.13	33.66	35.50	38.28	39.30	41.03
30-34	7.40	8.93	7.66	8.16	8.63	9.39	9.81	10.63	11.53
35-39	2.30	2.57	2.31	2.44	2.69	2.65	3.42	3.73	3.84
40-44	0.87	0.97	0.85	0.72	0.84	0.97	0.99	1.19	1.21
45-49	0.55	0.61	0.51	0.25	0.41	0.30	0.46	0.45	0.53

Tab. 2.2: Continuation

	1985	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Single brides									
15-19	60.21	62.54	47.55	36.83	32.32	28.29	24.94	22.38	19.75
20-24	96.52	98.63	74.16	64.93	63.41	62.10	62.64	60.93	59.29
25-29	18.69	19.92	15.14	14.91	16.37	18.23	20.49	22.61	24.53
30-34	4.42	4.67	3.67	3.69	3.96	4.31	4.44	4.46	5.17
35-39	1.72	1.69	1.30	1.31	1.24	1.30	1.47	1.37	1.50
40-44	0.65	0.79	0.57	0.50	0.52	0.61	1.87	0.53	0.48
45-49	0.24	0.27	0.26	0.39	0.27	0.24	0.33	0.26	0.30

Age at marriage belongs among demographic characteristics with the lowest variability. Roughly, half of all grooms (or brides) belong to the age group of 20-24, which, regarding the high nuptiality in the past, means that until 1990 more than half of the population contracted a marriage at this age (Tab. 2.2). In nineties, the distribution of the age at marriage extended, in 1999, 41.3% of grooms and 51.3% of brides belonged to this age group.

The nuptiality behaviour is best identifiable by marriage rates by age regardless whether they are calculated for all brides and grooms or only for singles (reduced marriage rates). It is remarkable that especially in case of women these rates practically did not change between 1960 and 1990 (as for men, the reduced rates sustained a little bit earlier), which witnesses the stability of the demographic behaviour. In 1990, due to the expected cancellation of loans for newly married couples, the marriage rates increased within the age under 29, in 1991 they diminished by this difference in order to approach the old values again in 1992.

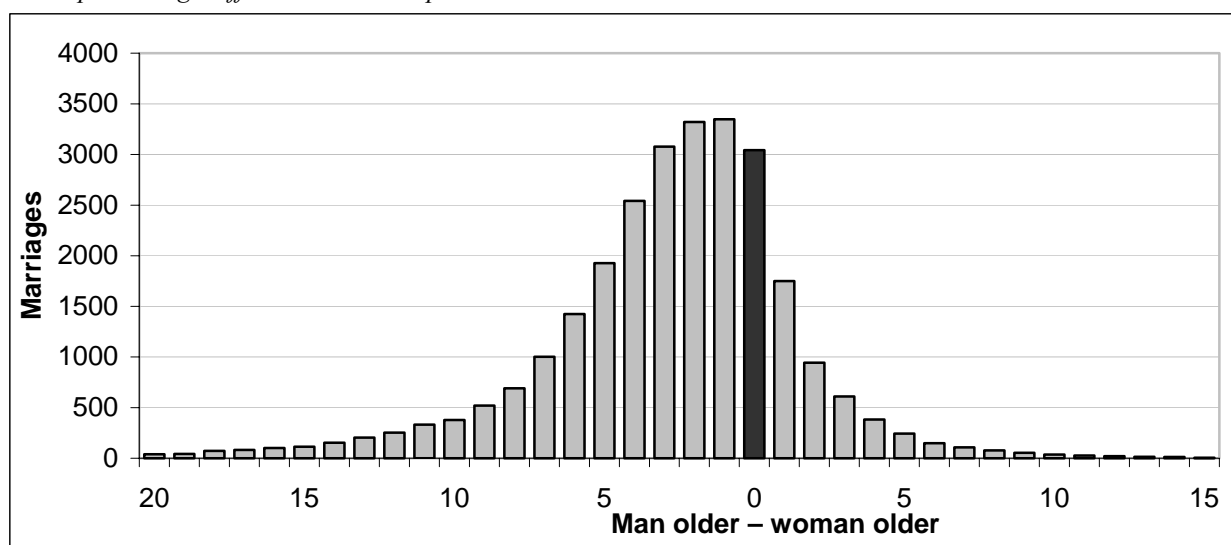
After 1992, the nuptiality decreased in all age groups while in the lowest age groups the decrease was faster. Formally, this fact appears as an increase of the average age, which in Slovakia belonged to the lowest in Europe. The sharpest decrease of nuptiality was recorded in 1993 and 1994. Since 1995, the decrease in

the age of 25 and more turned into a slight increase, which can be considered as a symptom of the compensation effect, i.e. contracting part of the postponed marriages. Only since that date we can speak about a real increase in the age at marriage.

In 1999, the reduced marriage rates of men aged 30-34 and women aged 25-29 were higher by more than 20% than in 1990, thus, these age groups became groups with the third or second highest nuptiality. The decrease in marriage rates in age groups of 15-19 and 20-24 was continuously going on. Due to a quite short time period of sustainability of these changes, it is not yet possible to evaluate the effect of the above mentioned shift of the age at marriage or divorces. However, the most risky group from the divorce standpoint are young people under 18. As a positive fact it should be highlighted that in 1999, as compared to 1990, the number of such grooms decreased from 131 down to 21 and in case of brides it was a decrease from 1342 downwards to 352.

Another indicator, which is related to age, is the difference in age of grooms and brides. It has a symmetric distribution close to the normal distribution. The average difference between the age of the groom and the age of bride has decreased since 1960 from 3.5 to less than 2.5 years. In 1999, the groom was older than the bride by 2.9 years in average (Graph 2.7).

Graph 2.7: Age difference between spouses in 1999

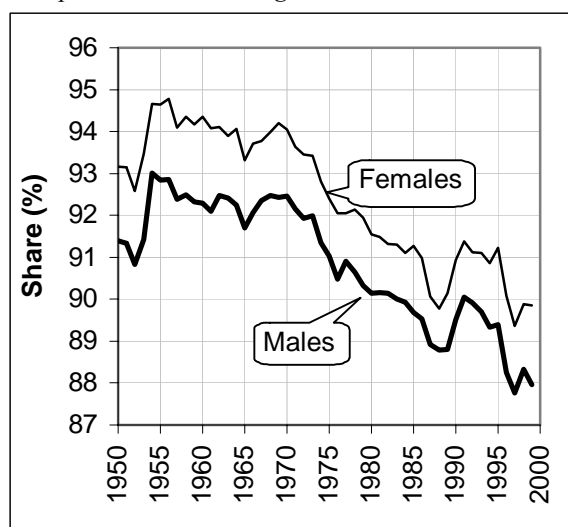


Marriages by marital status

A remarkable feature of the nuptiality in the SR from the long-term standpoint is not only a decline of the crude marriage rate (in nineties also of total marriage rate) but, moreover, the diminishing of the share of single men and women which means that the decrease in the nuptiality of single people is even more sharp (Graph 2.8).

As compared to 1990, the number of single grooms in 1999 reached only 66% and in case of single brides it was only 67%. More significant is the decrease of widowers and widows (56% and 58% respectively as compared to 1990), which, however, is from the demographic point of view not so substantial. The most moderate was the decrease of divorced grooms and brides; recently their share (and even the absolute value) has slowly increased. From the long-term point of view, marriages between brides and grooms of the same marital status prevail. In 1999, such marriages represent 88% of all marriages (Tab. 2.3).

Graph 2.8: First marriages



Tab. 2.3: Marriages by the marital status in 1999

		Brides				Mean age
		Single	Divorced	Widowed	Total	
Grooms	Single	22 834	1 129	85	24 048	26.0
	Divorced	1 648	1 285	94	3 027	40.0
	Widowed	86	125	54	265	55.4
	Total	24 568	2 539	233	27 340	27.7
	%	89.9	9.3	0.8	100.0	
	Mean age	23.4	36.1	45.8	24.8	

Nuptiality by regions

Tab. 2.4: Selected indicators of nuptiality in regions of the SR in 1999

	BL	TA	TC	NI	ZI	BC	PV	KI ²
Marriages	3 062	2 744	2 949	3 586	3 622	3 171	4 208	3 998
Marriages in % (SR=100%)	11.2	10.0	10.8	13.1	13.3	11.6	15.4	14.6
Crude marriage rate	4.96	4.98	4.84	5.01	5.23	4.78	5.38	5.23
Mean age at marriage - males	30.7	27.4	27.6	27.5	26.9	28.1	26.7	27.6
Mean age at marriage - females	27.5	24.5	24.8	24.4	24.1	25.0	24.0	24.7
First marriages - males (%)	78.0	89.0	88.6	87.4	92.6	85.1	92.2	88.5
First marriage - females (%)	82.0	91.4	89.4	89.5	92.9	88.8	93.1	89.8

In 1999, the crude marriage rate oscillated from 4.78‰ in the region of Banská Bystrica up to 5.38‰ in the region of Prešov (Tab.2.4). In comparison with 1997, the crude marriage rate, from the statistical significance point of view, decreased in the regions of Trnava, Košice and Žilina, i.e. in regions, where it was the highest (except for the region of Prešov). On the contrary, it maintained the low value in the region of Bratislava and a quite high level in the region of Prešov.

Although the crude marriage rate is rather differentiated in particular regions, the structure of nuptiality by age groups is in all regions nearly the same, except for the region of Bratislava. In the region of Bratislava, the brides and grooms are significantly older. In 1999, the average age of grooms was higher by 3 years and in case of brides it was by 2.7 years. To a great extent it is the consequence of the high share of divorced persons. From the same reason, the above mean age at marriage is to be found also in the region of Banská Bystrica,

² See Tab. 1.10.

although not so significantly. In the region of Bratislava, as compared to the Slovak average, the single men and women are older, grooms in average by one year and brides by 1.2 years. There are nearly no regional differences among other regions.

Another peculiarity of the region of Bratislava is the quite low share of single brides and grooms. In 1999, there were 20.3% grooms and 17% brides divorced, on the contrary, in the regions of Žilina and Prešov only 6.5% and 7% divorced grooms respectively and 6.3% and 6.0% divorced brides respectively.