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RESEARCH

Marriage and fertility in the Western Balkans since 1980

Mathias Lerch

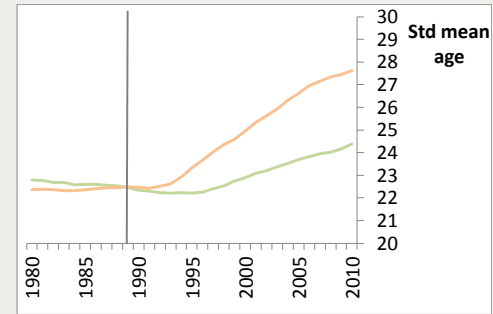
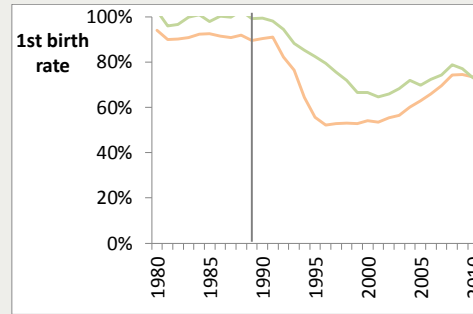
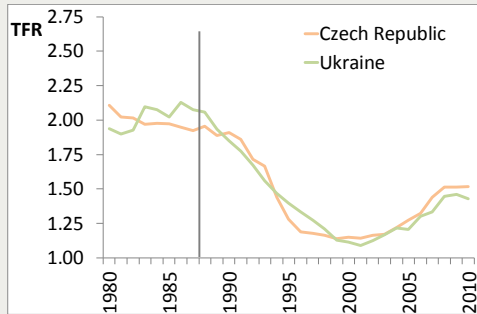
Second Human Fertility Database Symposium
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Background

Fast process of population ageing in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) :
Decline and postponement of fertility since 1990s (limited recovery since 2005;
HFD)



- Interaction of determinants: diverse country-specific pathways of fertility decline (Sobotka et al. 2008, Stopnik & Sircelj 2008, Perelli-Harris 2005, Gerber & Berman 2010; Basten & Frejka 2015)
- Birth limitation was associated with crisis; birth postponement with economic and political consolidation (Sobotka 2003, 2011; Billingsley 2010; Billingsley & Duntava 2015)

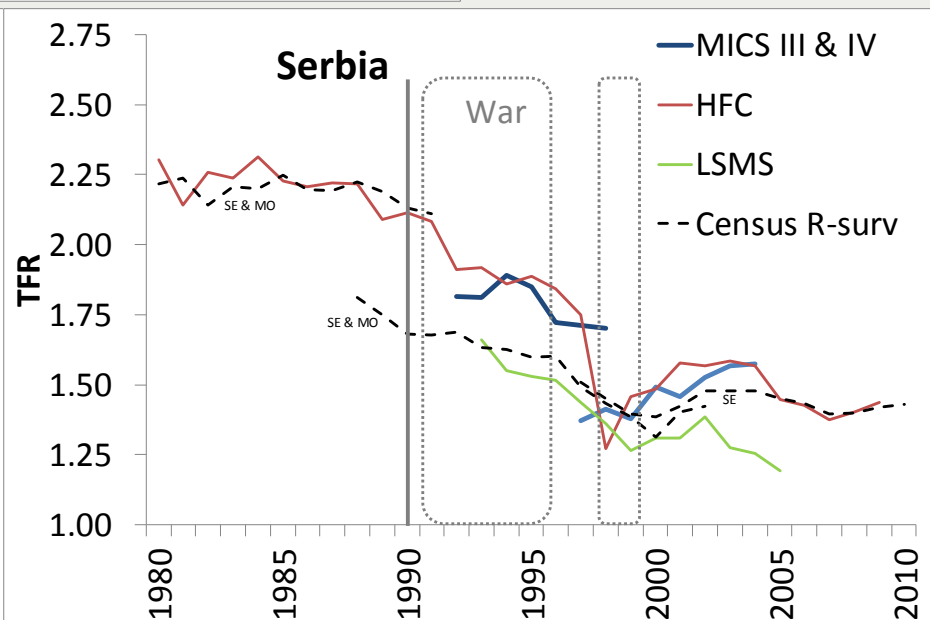
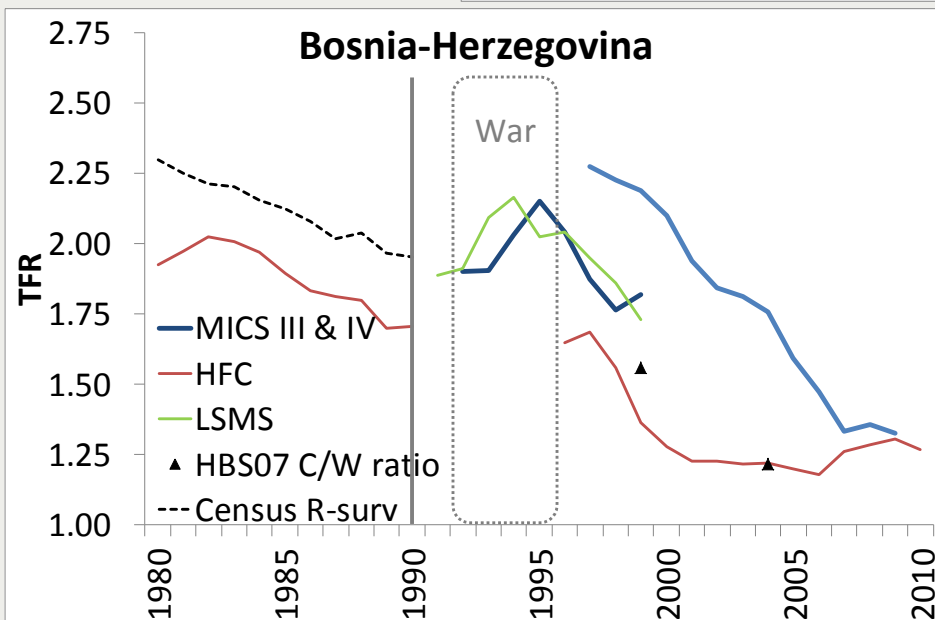
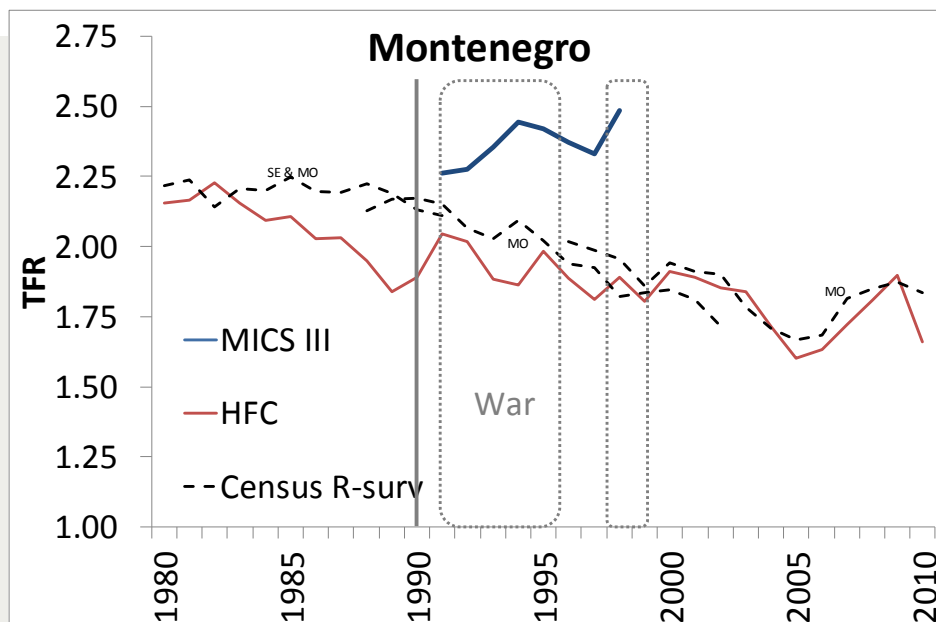
These processes have been very marked in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro & Serbia, Slovenia; Sardon 1991, 2000)

Yet the evidence base for monitoring fertility trends is incomplete and plagued by poor data quality

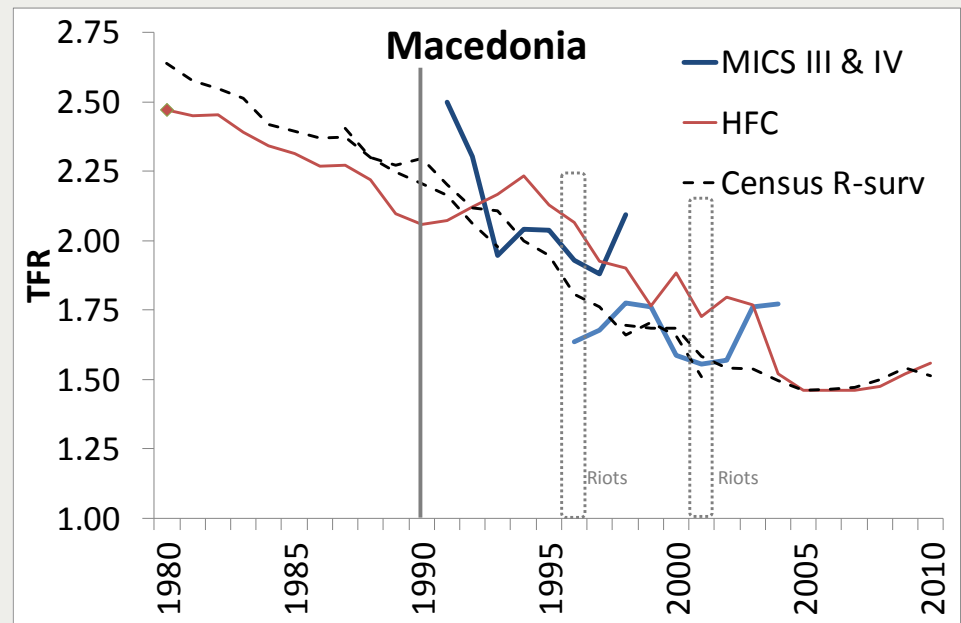
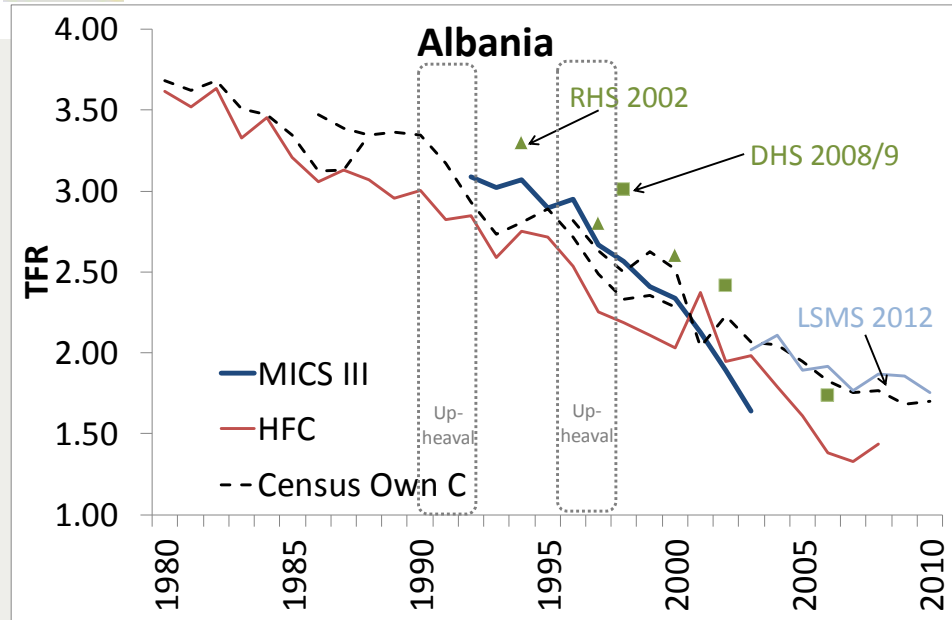
- Aim:
1. Assess levels and trends in the *TFR and in the transition to the 1st partnership (same residence) & 1st birth since 1980*
 2. Compare with CEE



Cross-validation of total fertility rates I

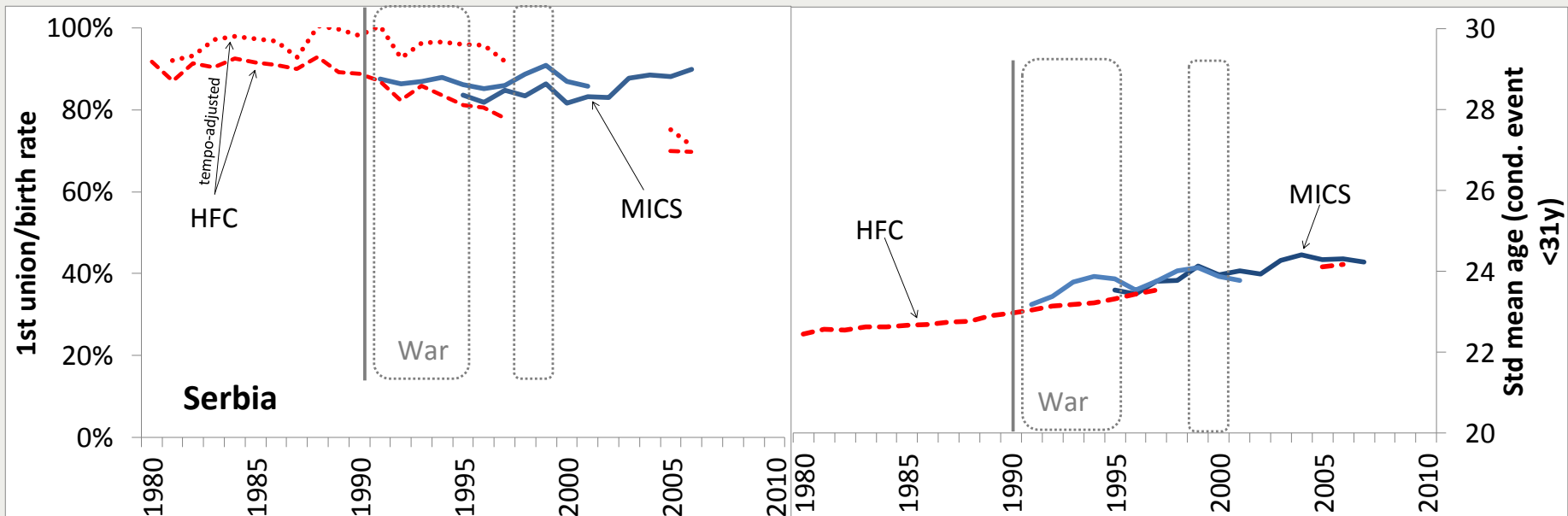
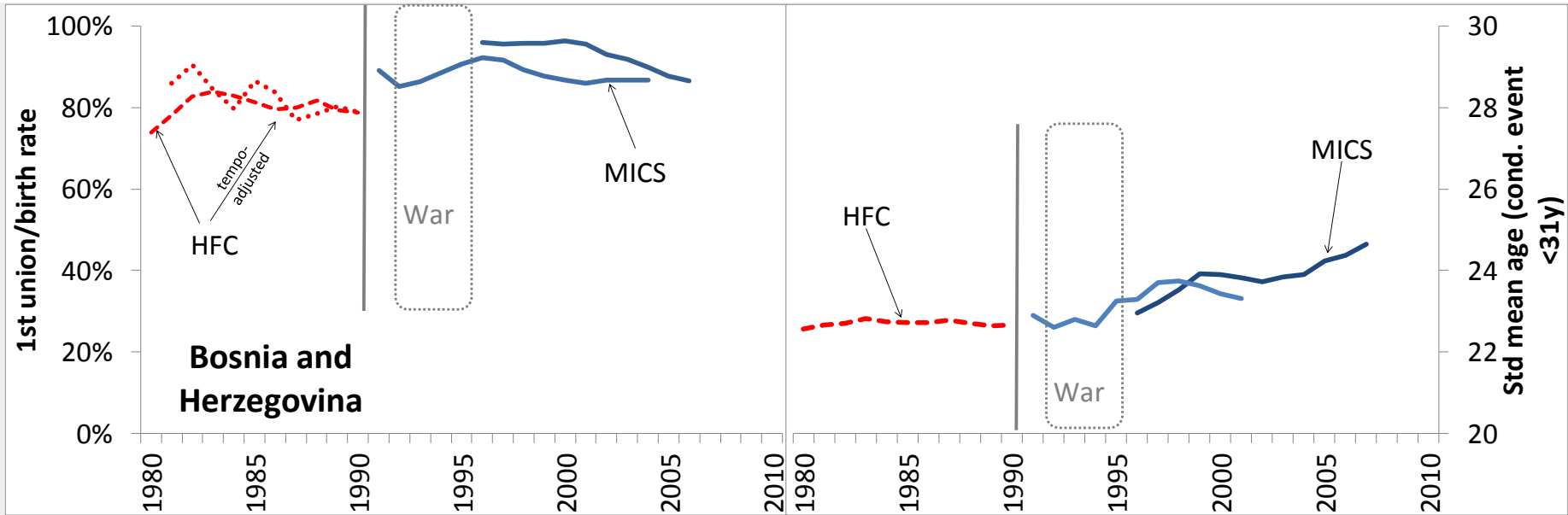


Cross-validation of total fertility rates II



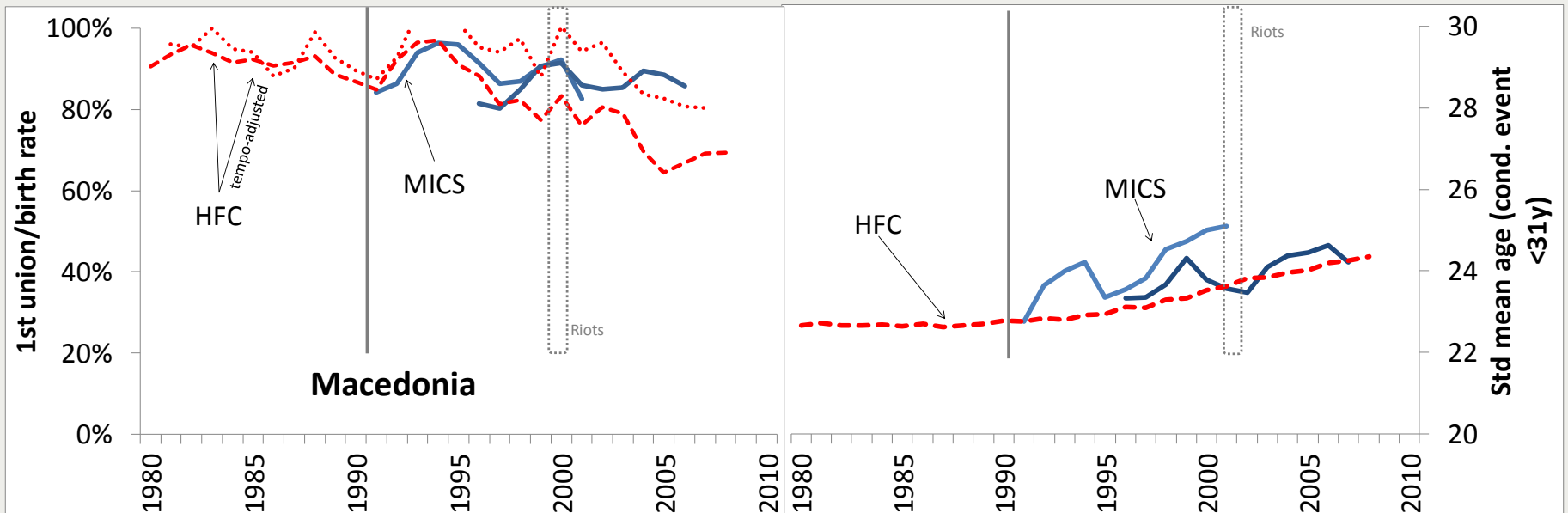
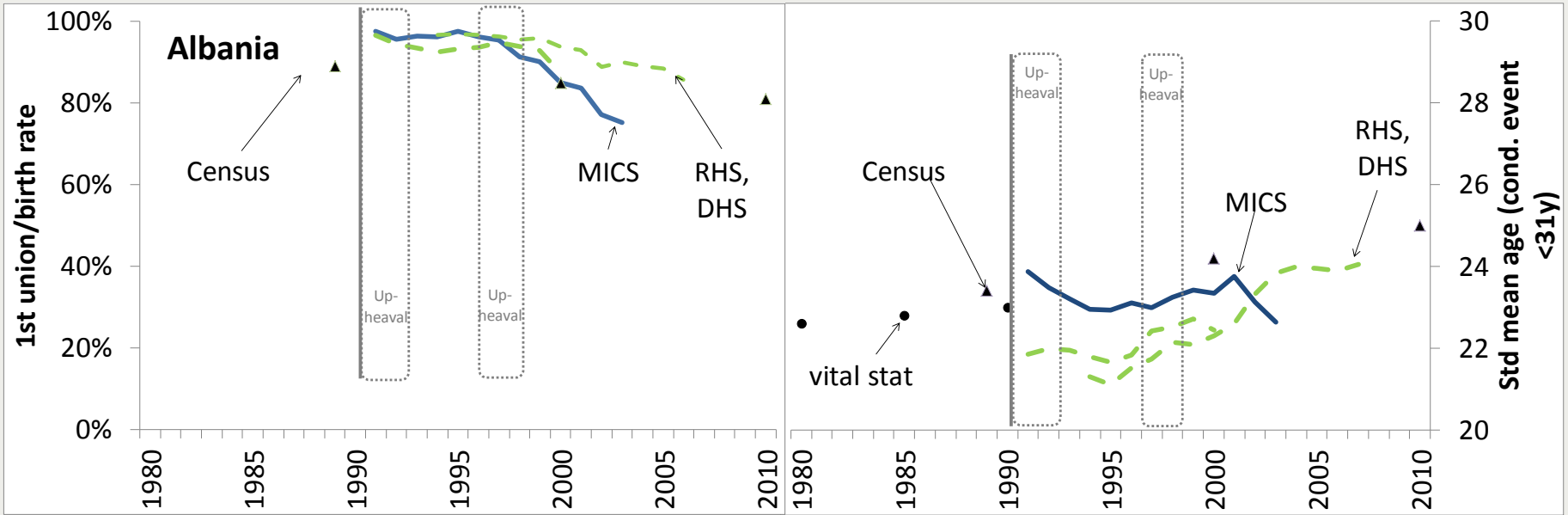


Rates of, and mean ages at, the transitions to 1st partnership & 1st birth I





Rates of, and mean ages at, the transitions to 1st partnership & 1st birth II





Discussion

Considerable uncertainty in fertility levels, but improved measurement in the 2000s

Low fertility countries in 1980: fertility plateau during the Bosnian war

- Pressure on women to reproduce & violation of reproductive rights (nationalist ideology, fear of depopulation / demographic eviction by minorities, and warfare; Shiffman et al. 2002)

Countries with moderate fertility: unperturbed course of the fertility transition

Limited pace of postponement in the period of economic and political consolidation

- ~ other post-communist contexts of acute crises and war (Dommaraju & Agadjanian 2008; Clifford et al. 2009; Shemyakina 2009; Spoorenberg 2015; Perelli-Harris 2005)

- Historical role of kinship structures as social safety nets maintained traditional demographic behaviour (Skalar 1974)

- Continuous social anomie: „patriarchal backlash“ (Kaser 2008) coupled with fast economic transformation creates tensions (Perelli-Harris 2005; Speder 2014)