

**CURRENT CHARACTERISTICS of LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOLLOWING
BEREAVEMENT in EUROPE and the US.**

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1. Introduction

While the study of family trajectories after divorce and of single parents has recently received a broader interest in Spanish sociology, there have been few studies on what happens after bereavement and even internationally it is not extensively covered, although as more flexible living arrangements such as living apart together are becoming more common in Western Europe and the US, it has provided the subject with new impetus.

While women appear less interested in starting new relationships following bereavement because it often means giving up their new freedom and independence, men perceive that re-partnering brings with it more benefits than remaining widowed and alone.

Using the 2001 Spanish census, the objective of the study is to compare demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the widowed population according to their different living arrangements such as single households, unmarried cohabitation and living with children.

Demographic characteristics of the widowed population in several western societies

Overall, the widowed population in western countries increased less than the total population over the course of the 20th century, although increases were not uniform between countries and trends were sometimes opposite for men than for women. For instance, as shown in Table 1, the widowed population stock was just 18% higher in 2001 than in 1901 in France, but while female numbers increased by 40%, the male widowed population actually decreased by 35%. On the other hand, total population grew by 54% over the course of the century with few gender differences. In the case of Spain, the total population was 119% higher in 2001 than in 1901 (about equal for both sexes) while the widowed population increased by 112%, +22% and +151% in the case of widowers and widows, respectively. A third example is US where the total population grew by 270% (and slightly more among women than among men) between 1900 and 2000. This very high increase for a western country was of course mainly the result of the high influx of immigrants throughout the course of the 20th century. It was also the case here that the widowed population increased almost equally, but with large gender differences (+343% in the case of widows and +130% in the case of widowers). Reason for these gender differences in both the stock of widows and their change over time has been the increase in gender differences in mortality and because women tend to marry older men.

Table 1. Total and widowed population of various European countries and the US in ca. 1900 and ca. 2000.

	ca. 1900			ca. 2000			Change 1900-2000			
	Population		%	Population		%	Total population		Widowed population	
	Total	Widowed	Widowed	Total	Widowed	Widowed	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Austria - Total	6057617	466649	7.7%	8032926	573318	7.1%	1975309	32.6%	106669	22.9%
Austria - Men	2900587	123443	4.3%	3889189	87215	2.2%	988602	34.1%	-36228	-29.3%
Austria - Women	3157030	343206	10.9%	4143737	486103	11.7%	986707	31.3%	142897	41.6%
France - Total	38485925	3268080	8.5%	59249169	3865313	6.5%	20763244	54.0%	597233	18.3%
France - Men	18938274	953928	5.0%	28776289	619622	2.2%	9838015	51.9%	-334306	-35.0%
France - Women	19547651	2314152	11.8%	30472880	3245691	10.7%	10925229	55.9%	931539	40.3%
Greece - Total	6204684	466163	7.5%	10964020	717460	6.5%	4759336	76.7%	251297	53.9%
Greece - Men	3076235	90929	3.0%	5427682	109760	2.0%	2351447	76.4%	18831	20.7%
Greece - Women	3128449	375234	12.0%	5536338	607700	11.0%	2407889	77.0%	232466	62.0%
Hungary - Total	7980143	561368	7.0%	10201683	956815	9.4%	2221540	27.8%	395447	70.4%
Hungary - Men	3870904	120859	3.1%	4858103	150864	3.1%	987199	25.5%	30005	24.8%
Hungary - Women	4109239	440509	10.7%	5343580	805951	15.1%	1234341	30.0%	365442	83.0%
Romania - Total				21878848	1565191	7.2%				
Romania - Men				10701926	222057	2.1%				
Romania - Women				11176922	1343134	12.0%				
Spain - Total	18618086	1280739	6.9%	40847371	2711173	6.6%	22229285	119.4%	1430434	111.7%
Spain - Men	9087821	391669	4.3%	20012882	478367	2.4%	10925061	120.2%	86698	22.1%
Spain - Women	9530265	889070	9.3%	20834489	2232806	10.7%	11304224	118.6%	1343736	151.1%
Great Britain - Total	36999946	2044883	5.5%	57103900	3847400	6.7%	20103954	54.3%	1802517	88.1%
Great Britain - Men	17902368	623071	3.5%	27758400	812500	2.9%	9856032	55.1%	189429	30.4%
Great Britain - Women	19097578	1421812	7.4%	29345500	3034900	10.3%	10247922	53.7%	1613088	113.5%
United States - Total	75994000	3879682	5.1%	281421906	14674500	5.2%	205427906	270.3%	10794818	278.2%
United States - Men	38816000	1173476	3.0%	138053563	2699175	2.0%	99237563	255.7%	1525699	130.0%
United States - Women	37178000	2706206	7.3%	143368343	11975325	8.4%	106190343	285.6%	9269119	342.5%

Sources: ca. 1900: Franz Rothenbacher (2002), The European Population 1980-1945. Hampshire, UK.: Palgrave MacMillan except for US (see below).

ca. 2000: Austria: Statistik Austria (2000). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2009: Vienna: Statistik Austria;

France: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques – www.insee.fr; Hungary and Romania: Eurostat – <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>;

Spain: Estadístico y Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2004). Censos de Población y Viviendas 2001. Resultados definitivos – www.ine.es;

Great Britain: Office for National Statistical. Marital Status, by sex 2001. Regional Trends 38. <http://212.58.231.21/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7680&More=Y>;

United States – US Census Bureau. Statistical Abstract: Historical Statistics. www.census.gov/compendia/statab/hist_stats.html.

Notes: Census years: Austria 1920 and 2001; France 1901 and 1990; Greece 1928 and 2001; Hungary 1920 and 2001; Spain 1900 and 2001; Great Britain 1901 and 1991; United States 1900 and 2000. For Austria, Greece and Hungary censuses were also held around 1900 but not considered due to territorial changes during the first decades of the 20th century.

The changing mortality trends among the married and widowed population caused both a feminisation and an ageing of the widowed population. Even so, *within* different age groups few sex differences are currently observed. In the case of Spain, for instance, about 3% were under the age of 45 (both sexes), 17% of widowers and 18% of widows were aged between 45 and 64 years of age, 47% were between ages 65 and 79 (both sexes) and, respectively 34% and 32% were older than 80 years of age. In terms of ageing, the highest proportions of older widows (aged 80+) are observed in those countries with the highest life expectancy such as France and Spain and the lowest in countries with relatively low life expectancies, such as Romania and Hungary. On the other hand, relatively high numbers of young widows (aged below 45) were found in the US, probably because of a higher marriage rates among young adults as Europeans of the same age are more likely to opt for cohabitation (see also Table 2).

Table 2. Age structure of the widowed population of various European countries and the US in ca. 2000

	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
	Austria		Hungary		Great Britain	
<45	2,6%	2,1%	3,3%	3,4%	2,4%	2,0%
45-64	20,2%	18,2%	27,6%	28,4%	19,4%	18,2%
65-79	46,9%	47,7%	48,2%	49,2%	51,7%	52,3%
80+	30,3%	32,1%	20,9%	19,1%	26,6%	27,5%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	France		Romania		United States	
<45	3,8%	3,1%	3,2%	4,2%	6,9%	3,6%
45-64	21,9%	21,0%	27,8%	30,3%	18,9%	18,5%
65-79	40,2%	42,9%	51,0%	49,8%	43,2%	44,1%
80+	34,1%	32,9%	17,9%	15,6%	31,1%	33,8%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	Greece		Spain			
<45	4,4%	3,9%	3,1%	3,0%		
45-64	16,8%	25,1%	16,8%	17,9%		
65-79	47,9%	49,2%	46,5%	46,9%		
80+	30,8%	21,7%	33,5%	32,3%		
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%		

Sources and notes: see Table 3.

Previous studies on widowhood

While widows are ever more present in society, contrary to divorce, widowhood is not an extensively studied field within family sociology or population studies. Exceptions include the comprehensive works by Lopata (1996) who also draws on research-related topics like later-life marriage, caregiving roles, friendship ties, employment patterns, and the changing roles of wife and mother; and Stroebe et al. (1993) who provide an account of what is understood by the process of grieving and the emotional, physical, and social impact of bereavement; as well as more specific research on the health effects of widowhood (e.g. Hu

and Goldman 1990; Joung 1996; Smith and Zick 1996; Mineau et al. 2002; Martikainen et al. 2005) and remarriage patterns (e.g. Bongaarts 1989, Smith et al 1991, Wu 1995, De Jong Gierveld 2002, and Carr 2004). In addition, as more flexible living arrangements such as living apart together have taken place in Western Europe and the US following bereavement (e.g. Davidson 2002; Stevens 2002; de Jong Gierveld 2004), it has provided this area of research with new impetus.

A changing social context

Changing norms and values have been important in shaping new trends in living arrangements among the widowed. In particular the growing search for individual status that has caused a shift from family orientation towards an emphasis on the individual have made people move away from traditional behavioural patterns (Van de Kaa, 1987) and more tolerant towards widowhood (Sánchez Vera y Bote Díaz 2007). This explains, for instance, the existence of a larger and more active elderly marriage market. Conversely, improved living standards, marriages surviving to older ages and lower fertility rates (i.e. generally no dependent children when becoming widowed) has made repartnering less economically necessary and allowed more older widow(er)s to live independently. The declining proportions of relatives in European households indicate, for instance, that widows (as well as single women and divorcees) are no longer as dependent on the support of their parents, children or brothers and sisters as they were in the past. They are either employed, or else they are entitled to social welfare or a pension (Schwarz 1988). Besides improved socioeconomic conditions, fertility decline and urbanisation processes have also contributed to the individualisation and ‘nuclearisation’ of the family household that has led to fewer families with three or four generations and fewer households with non-relatives (servants, lodgers, etc) and the concomitant decline in average household size (Keilman 1987).

2. Factors that influence new living arrangements after bereavement

As almost everyone who is married cohabits with their partner, the composition of the household changes the moment that someone becomes widowed and because widowhood usually occurs at older ages, this often means a change from a two- to a one-person household. However, it is also possible that the surviving spouse still had children living in the household, in which case the household composition changes to a single-parent household (although, as opposed to the former example, the family nucleus is not lost). Of course, post-widowhood living arrangements are not necessarily static. For instance, in the case of single-parent households, offspring are more than likely to move out once they become economically independent. Young widowed persons with dependent children may also opt to move back to their parents’ home (both for economic and practical reasons). On the other hand, elderly widows or widowers, especially those who are frail (and poor) may need to take

up residence in the home of one of the children, or when this is not possible, in an institution. Another possibility is that a widowed person finds new romance and decides to cohabit (with or without formal marriage).

The majority of the widowed will first remain in their own household, although this decision is not entirely made in isolation, but depend on individual demographic (age, sex, cohort, number of children), socioeconomic and health factors, values and character. The same applies to the likelihood of later starting a new relationship, to cohabit or to marry. For instance, in one Spanish study, the most inhibiting factor for initiating a relationship (including, or not, marriage) was the expected confrontation with one's children, followed by the possibility of becoming subjected to criticism from friends, neighbours and family, as well as the implication of a loss of personal and economic independence (Sánchez Vera and Bote Díaz, 2007). Not only are women less *interested* in finding a new partner, data show that men indeed remarry more often than women (and faster) (Houle et al. 2001). There are, however, also age and cohort effects, as younger widows are more likely to remarry than older ones and older women of recent cohorts are less interested in marriage or cohabitation following bereavement than those of older cohorts (de Jong Gierveld 2004). In addition, partner choice is influenced by the demographic imbalance in the sex ratio that is exacerbated by age due to the higher level of male mortality at advanced ages and the fact that elderly men tend to prefer women who are younger than they are (Morgan and Kunkel 1998). In other words, even if widows do not have any personal objection to repartnering, the scarcity of (eligible) men makes finding a suitable candidate unlikely.

Another known determining factor is motherhood, as particularly women with non coresidential children having a higher probability of repartnering than those with children still at home (Sweeney 1997), while for men it seems that socioeconomic circumstances are more decisive (Bumpass et al. 1990). At higher ages widows without any offspring have a high probability in ending up in a residential home (Désesquelles and Brouard 2003), while cohort differences in infertility in Spain could also explain different forms of living arrangements following bereavement over time (Pérez Díaz 2001). Another important factor is the health of the widowed person, as they tend to have worse health than their married counterparts and healthy individuals are more likely to marry than unhealthy ones (Hu and Goldman 1990; Joung 1996). Finally, the social construction of religious norms may be a reason for many to renounce any possibility of repartnering. According to the study by Sánchez Vera and Bote Díaz (2007) those most interested in repartnering were those who never attended a church.

3. Study objective, data source and methodological issues

The main objective of this study is to describe the living arrangements of widows and widowers in a number of western countries. More specifically, the study aims to do the following:

- i) to construct a household typology suited to describe the living arrangements of the widowed population;
- ii) to ascertain if there are age- and sex differences in the living arrangements of the widowed population;
- iii) to analyse differences according to individual characteristics, including educational level, housing ownership and economic activity.

To accurately describe the types of living arrangements of the widowed population, the “International Integrated Public Use of Microdata Series” (IPUMS-International) is employed. This database contains harmonized variables from census microdata from 35 countries and 111 censuses, including 10 European countries (31 censuses) and the US (6 censuses) (as at March 2009) that are downloadable free of charge after registering. It was aimed to incorporate data from the most recent census for which data were available. Table 3 displays the availability of European and US data of censuses held since 1990 and a more detailed description of the database can be found in www.international.ipums.org.

Table 3 Microdata of European and US censuses held since 1990 for which data are available (as at March 2009) and were used by country and subsample precision.

Country	≈2000	Subsample	Used in study	≈1990	subsample	Used in study
Austria	2001	10%	Yes	1991	10,0%	No
Belarus	1999	10%	No ¹			
France				1990	4,2%	Yes
Greece	2001	10%	Yes	1991	10,0%	No
Hungary	2001	5%	Yes	1990	5,0%	No
Netherlands	2001 ²	1,2%	No ³			
Portugal	2001	5%	No ¹	1991	5,0%	No ¹
Romania	2002	10%	Yes	1992	10,0%	No
Spain	2001	5%	Yes	1991	5,0%	No
United Kingdom	2001	3%	No ³	1991	2,0% ⁴	Yes
United States	2000	5%	Yes	1990	5%	No
	2005	1%	No ⁵			

Notes:

In bold, country and census used in study.

¹ It was not possible to identify (probable) partners of widowed persons

² Microcensus

³ Systematic sample of individuals whereby individuals are not organized in households. This made it impossible to construct a household typology.

⁴ Excludes Northern Ireland. As this study uses this sample it is therefore referred to in the text as Great Britain.

⁵ Not used due to some inconsistent results and the small subsample size (1%). In addition, the sample was not considered random and thus it was recommended to use the provided weights (also applied to 2005 sample).

One of the requisites for the construction of the household typology for the widowed population is that besides information on individual characteristics also household information is needed, in particular the existence or not of kinship and relationship ties between household members, including marital and non-marital unions and the presence of own children and parents. However, only in few censuses was information explicitly collected on consensual unions for all individuals in a household, namely in the Hungary 2001, Romania 2002, and Spain 2001 samples where it formed part of marital status. In the other samples non-marital unions had to be assumed on the basis of other variable characteristics. In the case of the U.S. 2000, Greece 2001, French 1990 and the British 1991 samples this was possible using a variable that described the relationship of the individual to the head of household. This was either directly (as spouse of the head of household) or indirectly (linking a child with a child-in-law² or a parent with a parent-in-law present in the household). What was not possible, however, was the reconstruction of living arrangements of *remarried* widows and widowers given that previous marital status is not asked in a census.

Besides the information on partner status, the data sets also contain variables that identify the presence and location in the household register of possible parents, own children and, as mentioned already, the relationship of each household member to the head of household, information also essential for the construction of the household typology for the widowed population. Initially, the household typology contained 9 categories. This was later reduced to 5 due to the relatively small proportions ($\leq 1\%$) in 5 of them. Given the many different possible combinations (i.e. the presence or not of a partner, children, parents, others), the obtained typology that was adhered to in the main analysis of this paper has a basic hierarchical structure. For instance, cohabitation with a new partner was considered more important than living with children, which was, in turn, more important than living with own parents. This led to the following living arrangement structure: 1) living in an one person household; 2) living with partner and possible other persons; 3) living with own child(ren) and possible other persons but not with a partner; 4) living with parent(s) and possible other persons but not with partner nor children; 5) other forms of living arrangements.

4. Results

Demographic characteristics

Around the turn of the millennium, between 79% (in the US) and 86% (in Romania) of the widowed population was female, although few sex differences were observed in terms of the age profile. As widowhood is a mortality-related state, the age-distributions of the widowed population is skewed towards older ages and as mortality is lower in Western Europe and the US than in the two Eastern European countries Hungary and Romania, this is more so in the former than in the latter countries. Ironically, though, while being a young widow is rare in all

² In the case of France and Greece, no spouses of children of the head of household could be identified as both children and children-in-law were labelled the same in the “relationship to household head” category.

countries it is most common in the US: about 4% of the total were aged below 45 years of age, twice as high than in Great Britain. On the other hand, almost 30% of the widowed population in Romania and Hungary is aged between 45 and 64 years, while this age group only accounts for between 18% in Spain and 24 % (in Greece) of the total widowed stock in the other countries. The largest group of widowers are between 65 and 79 years of age, ranging between 42% in France and 52% in Great Britain in the countries that were studied, while between 16% (in Romania) and 33% (France, Spain and the US are older than 80. The complete results are given in the Appendix.

Living arrangements

Also in terms of living arrangements countries differences are also observed, this time between the traditionally family-orientated and more individual societies. As shown in Table 4 there is a clear divide between the two southern European countries and Romania on the one hand and Austria, France, Hungary, Great Britain and the US on the other in that in the former countries studied most widows lived with their children, closely followed by those who lived alone, while in the latter countries the proportion of people who live alone is more than double that those who live with their children. Even so, in all countries studied the two categories comprise between 88% and 92% of all widows except for Hungary, where almost a quarter live in “other types of households”, i.e. widow(er)s who live with unrelated persons or where there is no family nucleus. In the other countries this ranged between 3% and 9%. The fourth most common type of living arrangement was for widows to live with a partner. In Austria, France, Hungary and Great Britain this amount to 4-5% of all widows and in the US, Romania, Spain and Greece between 1% and 3%. Finally, in all samples only about 1% or less live with their parents (excludes those who also live with a partner or children).

In terms sex-differences in living arrangement, few are observed for one-person households or households where widows live with their children, although the sex ratio is generally less skewed than overall for those who live with a partner and to a lesser extent when living with parents (Table 5).

In terms of age-differences by living arrangement, both widows and widowers who live in one-person households are on average the oldest (between about 71 and 75 years of age), although this does not apply to all countries studied. In the case of Hungary and Romania, those living in the remaining category of living arrangements are a few years older than those living alone. As to the widowed population who live with children, they average about 70 years of age (about 62 in the case of Hungary). Slightly younger, especially in the case of women, are those who live with a new partner. In most countries the widowers are in their early-to-mid 60s while widows who cohabit with a new partner are between 3 and 8 years younger. Widows and widowers who live with their own children (and without a partner) are on average in their late 60s, with few sex differences being observed. Finally, the youngest group are those who live with their parents. In this case widows tend to be older than widowers (respectively averaging about 50 years and 57 years) (see also Figure 1).

Table 4. Household structure of the widowed population¹ in European countries and the US.

	Austria '01	France '90	Greece '01	Hungary '01	Romania '02	Spain '01	Great Britain '01	US '00
One-person household	64.6%	66.9%	43.4%	49.5%	43.5%	42.9%	69.4%	63.3%
Widow(er) with partner ² with(out) other persons	3.9%	5.2%	0.9%	5.2%	3.1%	2.2%	1.4%	2.6%
Widow(er) with children ³ with(out) other persons ⁴	26.6%	24.2%	46.1%	21.0%	44.8%	45.5%	22.9%	25.4%
Widow(er) with parents with(out) other persons ⁵	0.3%	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	0.7%	0.5%	1.0%
Other type of living arrangement	4.6%	3.1%	8.6%	23.3%	7.4%	8.7%	5.8%	7.7%
Widowed population	570,280	3,885,240	717,460	994,180	1,877,180	2,650,620	3,753,900	14,664,255

Table 5. Sex ratio of the household structure among the widowed population¹ in European countries and the US.

	Austria '01	France '90	Greece '01	Hungary '01	Romania '02	Spain '01	Great Britain '01	US '00
One-person household	83.2%	84.4%	81.7%	85.7%	82.9%	81.3%	78.1%	79.0%
Widow(er) with partner ² with(out) other persons	80.1%	83.6%	79.4%	85.6%	68.5%	78.0%	81.1%	74.9%
Widow(er) with children ³ with(out) other persons ⁴	85.0%	85.0%	86.7%	86.0%	83.5%	82.8%	81.7%	84.8%
Widow(er) with parents with(out) other persons ⁵	72.8%	69.6%	64.4%	67.9%	61.4%	69.4%	57.9%	67.0%
Other type of living arrangement	85.5%	84.5%	83.7%	84.9%	79.7%	82.9%	80.1%	81.6%
Widowed population	84.8%	83.8%	84.7%	84.4%	80.9%	82.4%	80.0%	81.7%

Source: www.international.ipums.org (see Table 3); own elaboration and calculations.

Notes:

¹ In the case of Austria, France, Hungary and the US sample includes those living in collective dwellings (groups quarters).

² Excludes partners of children of head of household in France and Greece.

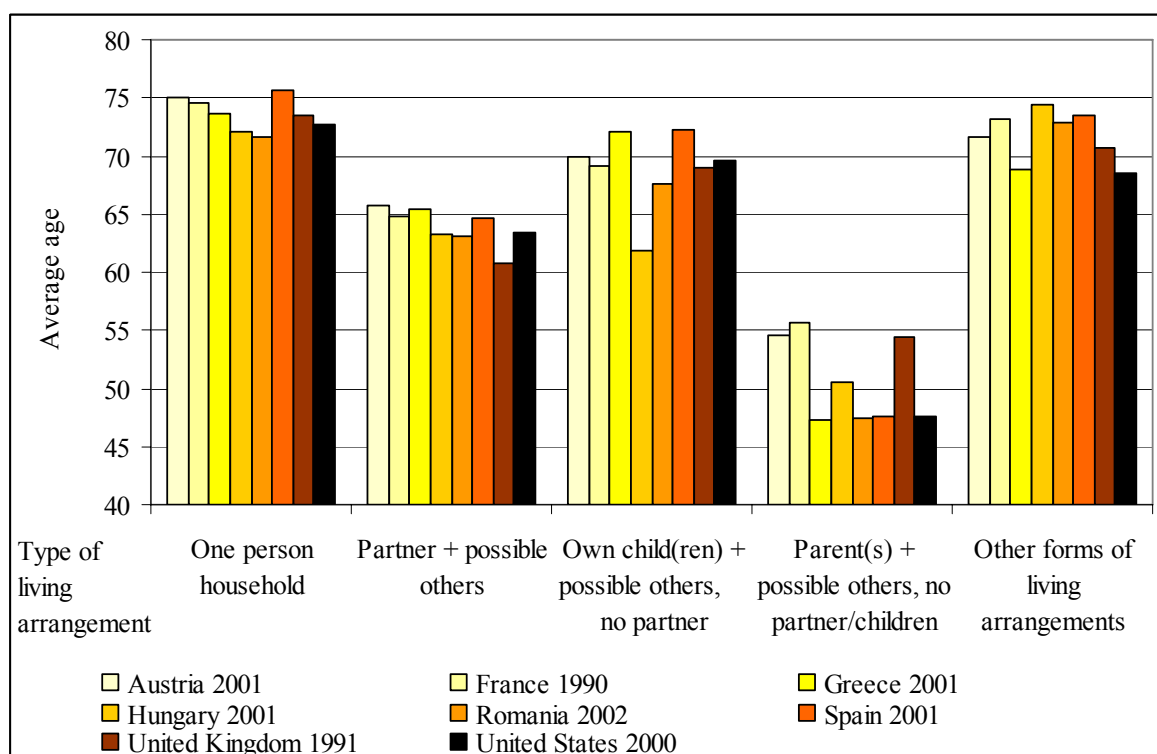
³ "Child" generally includes adopted and step-children. In Romania also includes foster children.

⁴ excludes partner

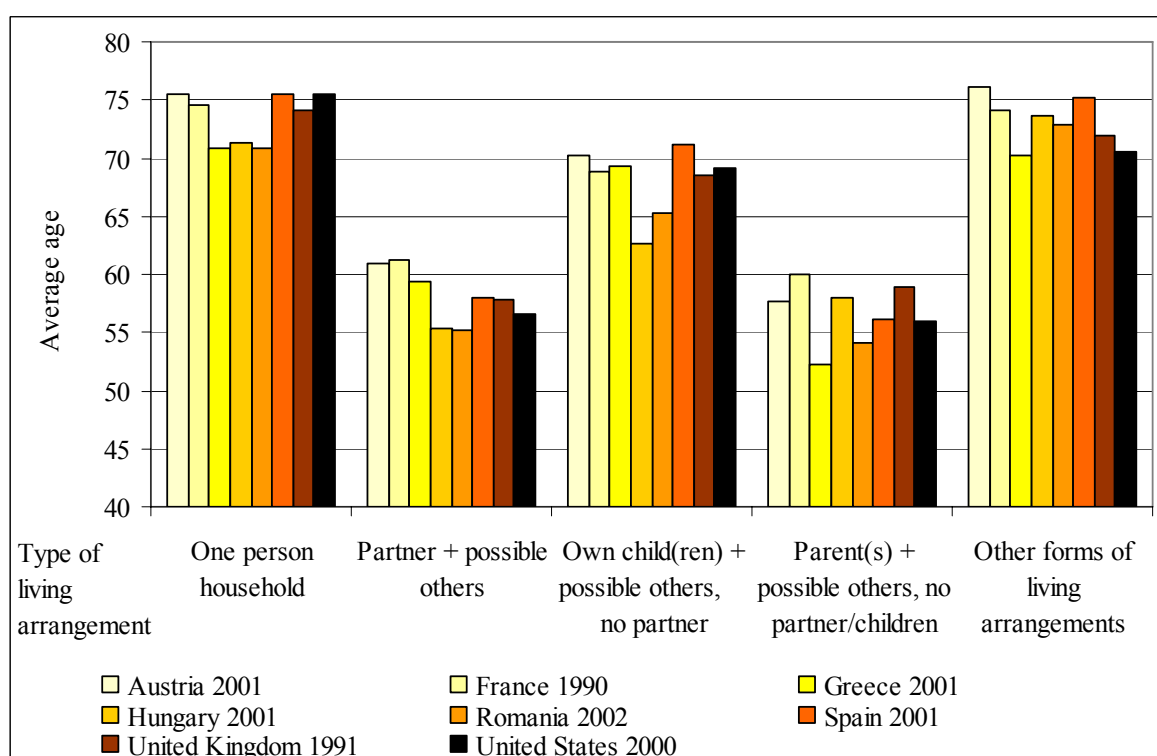
⁵ excludes partner and children

Figure 1. Average age of widowed population according to living arrangement in European countries and the US.

a). Males



b). Females



Source and notes: see footnotes Tables 3-5.

To show age differences among the different living arrangements can also be done by calculating age-categories or profiles. For instance, while just 2% of widowers and less than 1% of widows who live in one-person households are under the age of 45 (with a maximum of 5.4% of US widowers), this is respectively 31% and 13% of those who live with their parents. In the case of Greek and Spanish widowers who live with their parents, 41% are under the age of 45 and just 5% of French widows are. Vice versa, about 31% of widowers and 28% of widows who live in single-person households are over the age of 80, with US and Hungarian widows at both extremes (respectively, 39% and 18%). See the Appendix for the full results.

Socioeconomic differences in living arrangements

There is more information that may be of interest in the study of living arrangements among the widowed population which can be extracted from the census data, in particular level of education, economic activity and type of housing tenure. For instance, we know from the literature that the probability of *remarriage* is influenced by educational attainment –a component of an individual’s socioeconomic status (Bollen et al., 2001)–, whereby among widowers the association is positive and among widows negative (Smith et al. 1991; Wu 1995). A higher socioeconomic status therefore increases a man’s eligibility and consequently older widowers may require some minimal criterion of socioeconomic status before they can attract marriage offers (especially as they typically seek younger women). On the other hand, for women there may be more incentive to remarry when socioeconomic status is low as they tend to be more economically dependent (education and income are closely related). Having a lower socioeconomic status may, however, also mean that one is required to live with one’s children or in more complex household living arrangements in order to be able to make ends meet.

Using the IPUMS census data educational differences in living arrangements were analysed for men and women. Without going into too much detail here, results in Figure 2 demonstrate that widows who lived with their parents tended to have higher levels of education (secondary or tertiary) than those living in other types of households. In the case of widowers, the higher educated tended to live with their children if they were between 45 and 64 years of age or with their partner if they were older. In addition, educational level tended to be lower for the younger widowed population living in other types of living arrangements (i.e. without partner, children or parents). Apart from the fact that the level of education in the US was highest across the board and lowest in France³, few other country-specific patterns could be discerned. In fact, as few educational (as well as gender) differences are observed for Spain is perhaps surprising because there are clear educational differences in this country as to the

³ While IPUMS have harmonised different types of educational levels that are typical of each country to the best of their ability by creating common categories, it is possible that the true educational differences between countries according to the used broad categories are partly obscured by operationalisation differences of country-specific sub-categories (especially with regard to primary and secondary school level).

attitude of elderly towards the possibility of finding a partner: in the study by Sánchez Vera and Bote Díaz (2007) 60% of persons aged 65+ without any study showed a positive attitude towards it, while three-quarters of those with secondary-level studies did so and 85% of the tertiary educated. One may have therefore thought that cohabiting with a new partner would have been more confined to the higher educated.

The second tested indicator of socioeconomic status is home ownership. As shown in Figure 3, in all but Austria and France there are few differences in home ownership among the widowed population according to living arrangement. A likely reason is because one tends to remain in the same house when one becomes a widow. In the case of Greece, Hungary and Spain⁴, rates home ownership rates are between 80% and 100% with few differences between men and women and between the middle and early retirement age groups. Neither does the US show large differences according to living arrangement and sex, although the older age group has a 5-10% higher ownership rate than the 45-64 year olds. Regarding Great Britain, there are also few sex differences, but the ownership rates are lowest for one-person households, in particular for the 65-79 year age group (about 50%). On the other hand, rates reach 70% for those aged 45-64 who live with a partner and all those who live with parents (except widowers aged 45-64). Where general home ownership is lowest, the largest differences in ownership rates according to living arrangements are found. This is particularly the case in Austria, with levels of about 40%-50% for one-person households, slightly higher for those who live with a partner (50% in the case of the 65-79 year olds and 60% for those aged 45-64). Higher levels were observed for those widow(er)s who lived with their children or parents, particularly the elderly ones. Finally, with respect to France, we observe a clear gradient for the 65-79 year olds, while among the 45-64 year olds those who live with their parents observe the highest home ownership rates, irrespective of sex (about 80%).

The last analysis performed was on economic activity for the widowed population aged 45-64 (Figure 4), given that almost all of the older widowed population is out of the workforce. Here there are clear sex differences in related to the interaction between being active on the labour market and living arrangement. First of all, in all countries apart from the US, fewer women than men are employed. This is especially the case in the southern European countries. Secondly, in general, those among the widowed population who live in one-person households are least likely to work. Exceptions are those who live with their parents in Great Britain and the US and who live in the remaining category in Hungary (widowers only). Also striking is the very low percentage of employed widows in the case of Greece (just 10% of those who live in one-person households) and Hungarian and Romanian widowers (lower than 50% in each category).

⁴ We know that until recently renting rather than homeownership was a tradition in Spain, due to a combination of social and economic factors, including government tax reform, a homeownership culture has emerged without large socioeconomic differences although social position may influence the timing of access to ownership (Cabré and Módenes, 2004).

Figure 2. Living arrangements of the widowed according to highest completed educational attainment
a. Widowers and widows aged 45-64.

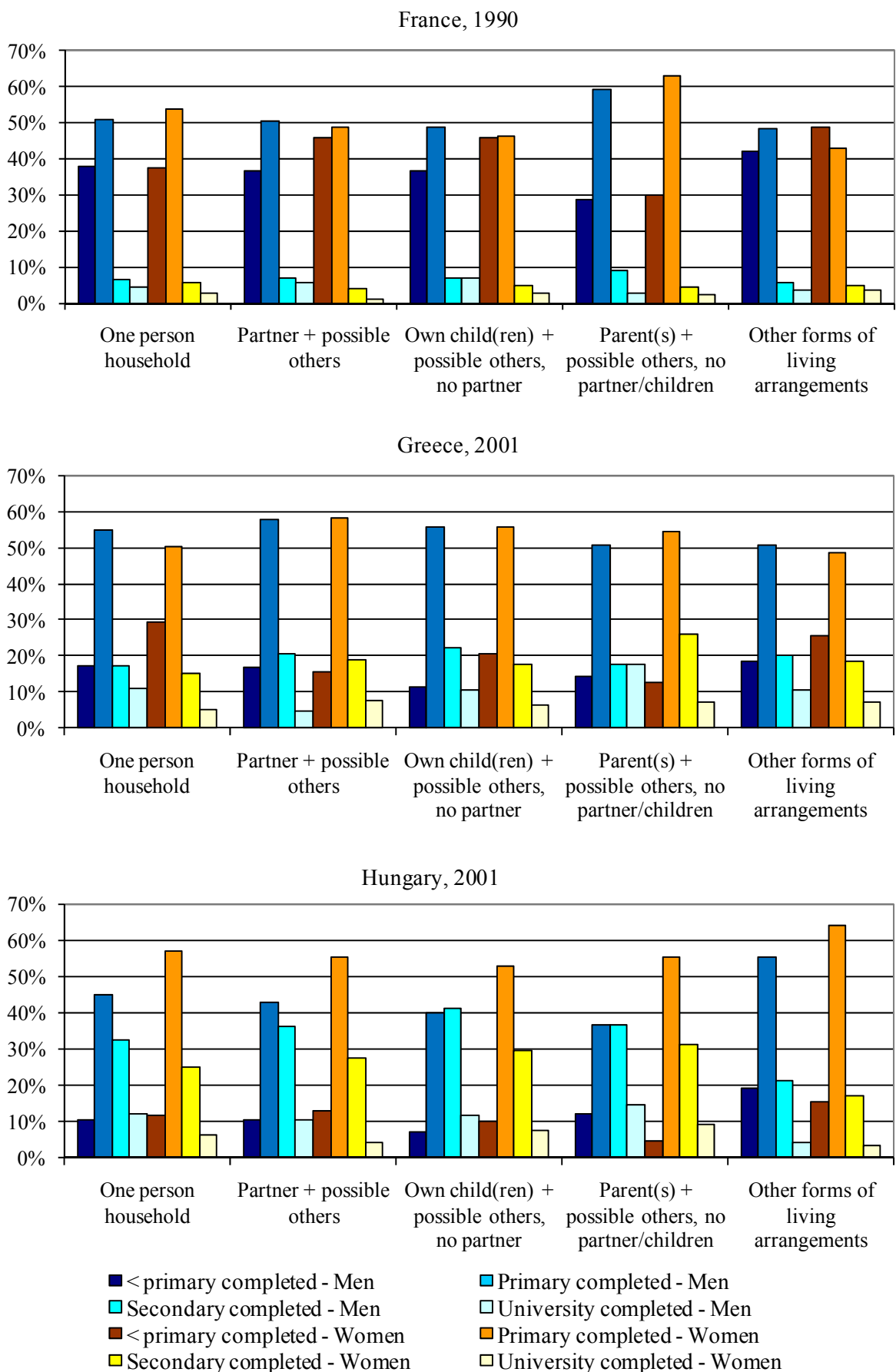
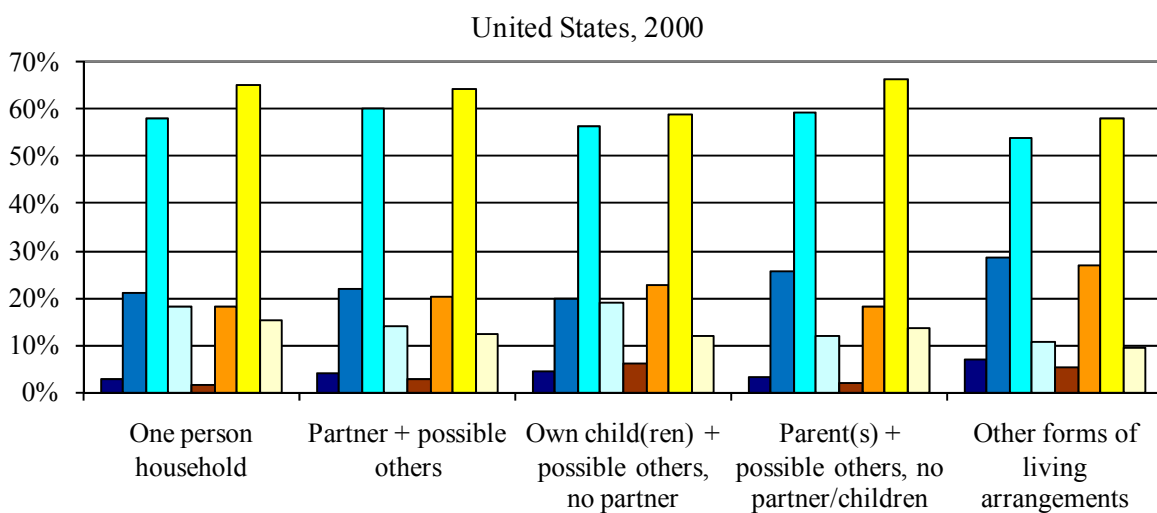
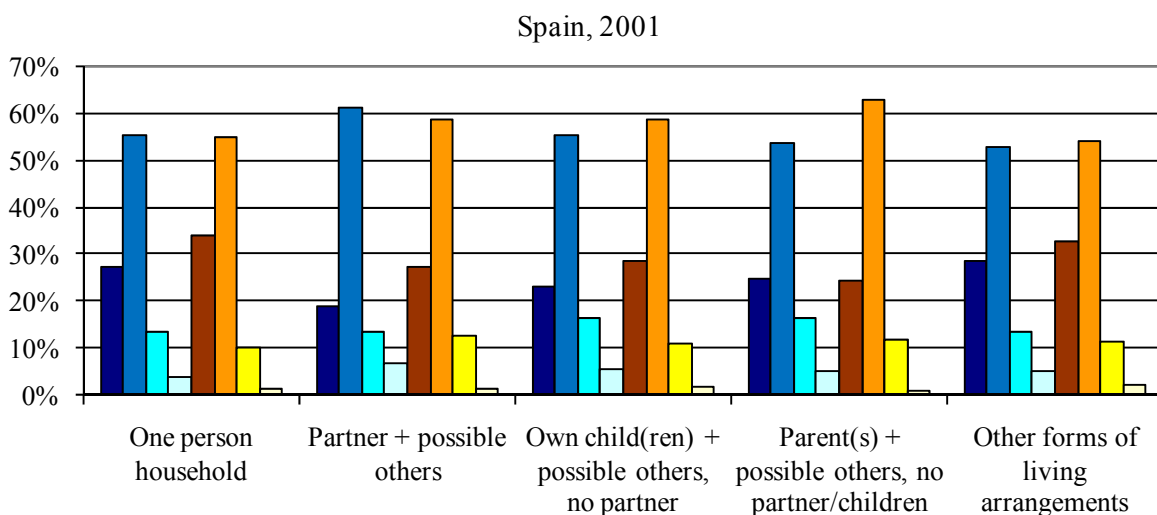
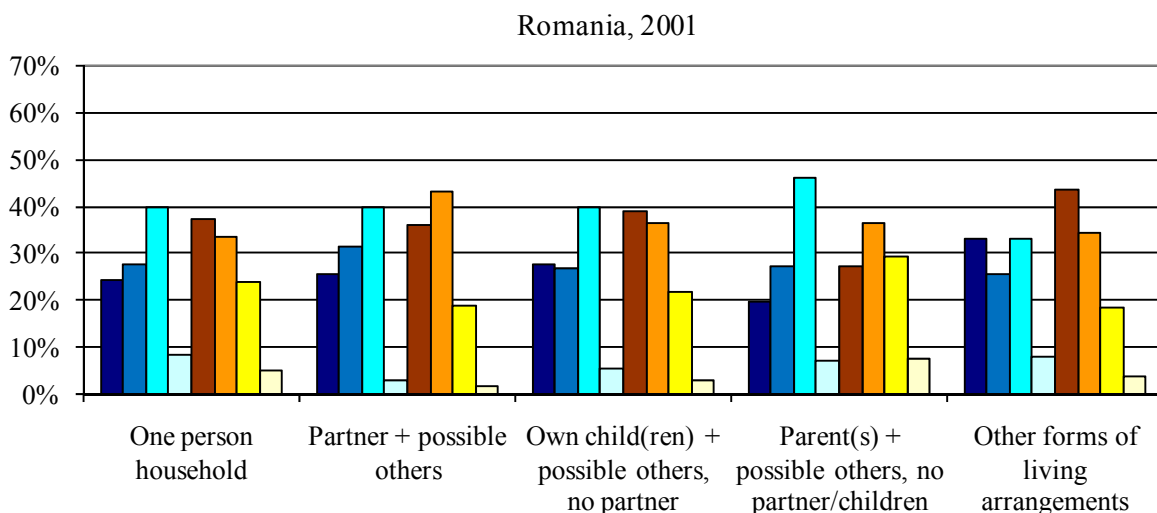


Figure 2. Continued



- <primary completed - Men
- Primary completed - Men
- University completed - Men
- <primary completed - Women
- Primary completed - Women
- University completed - Women

Figure 2. Continued

b. Widowers and widows aged 65-79.

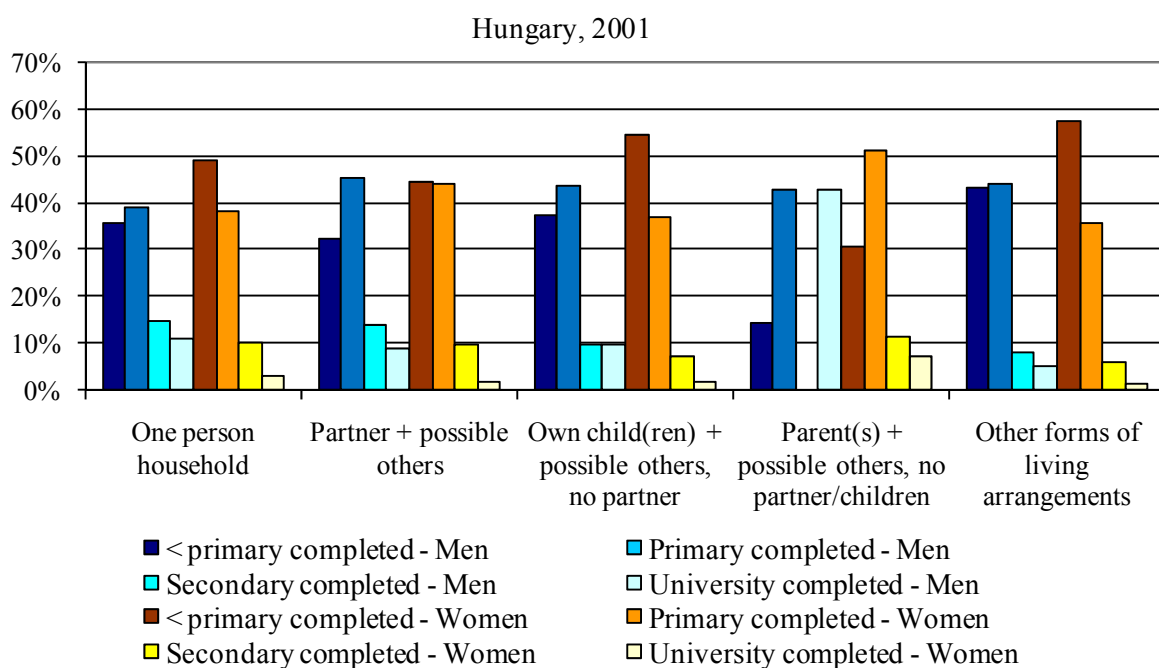
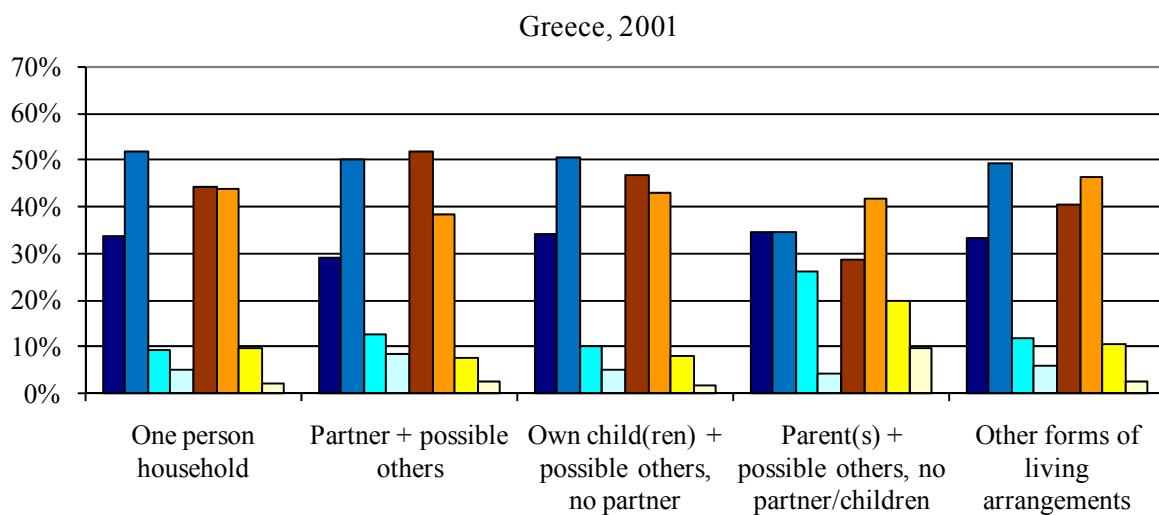
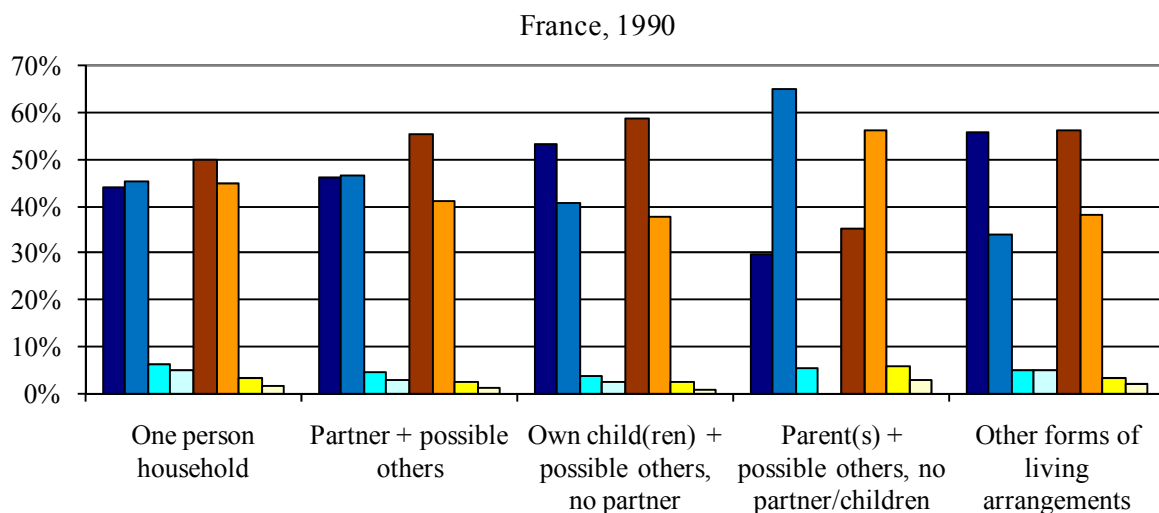
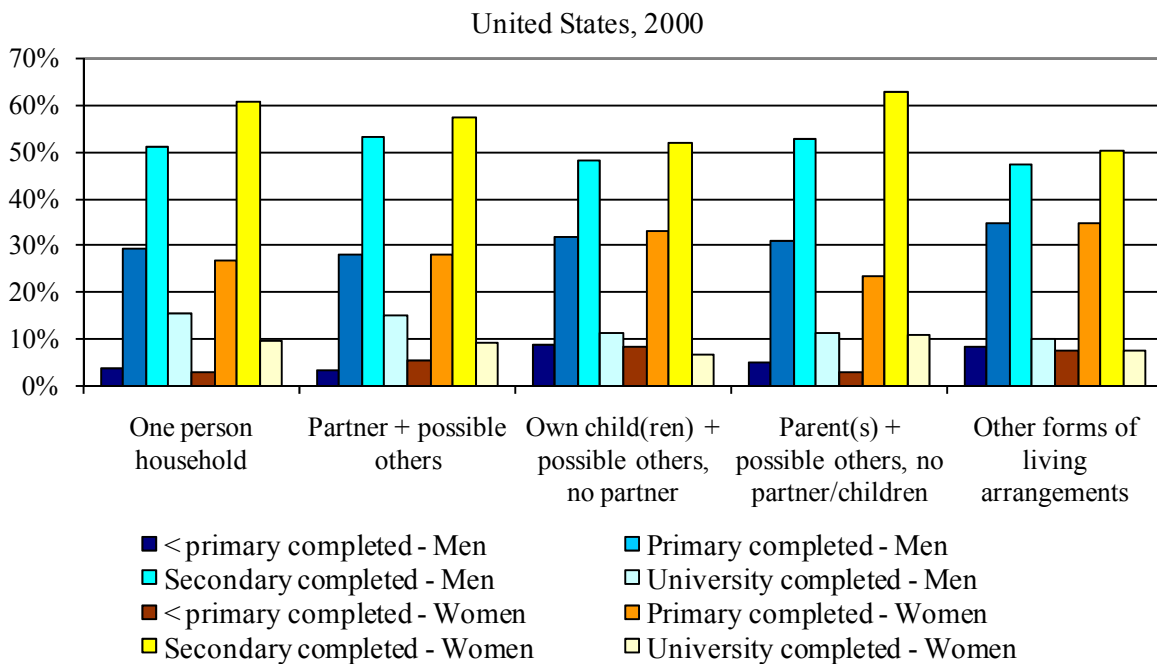
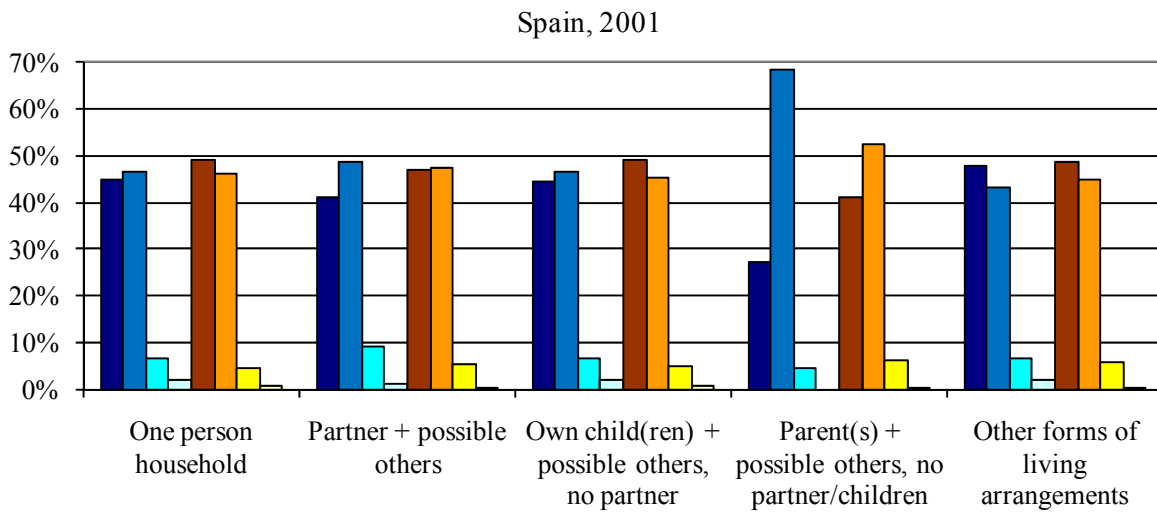
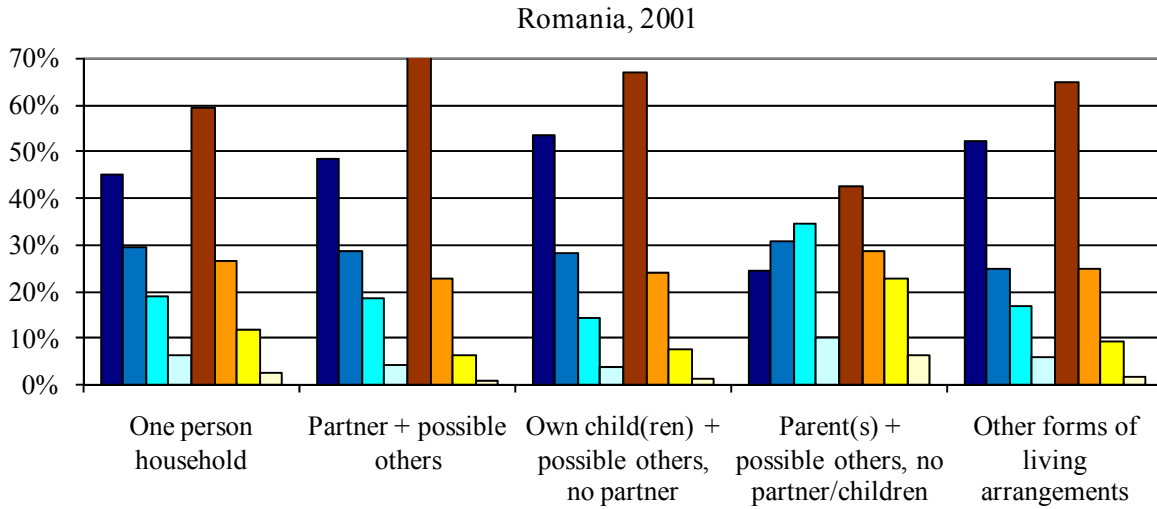


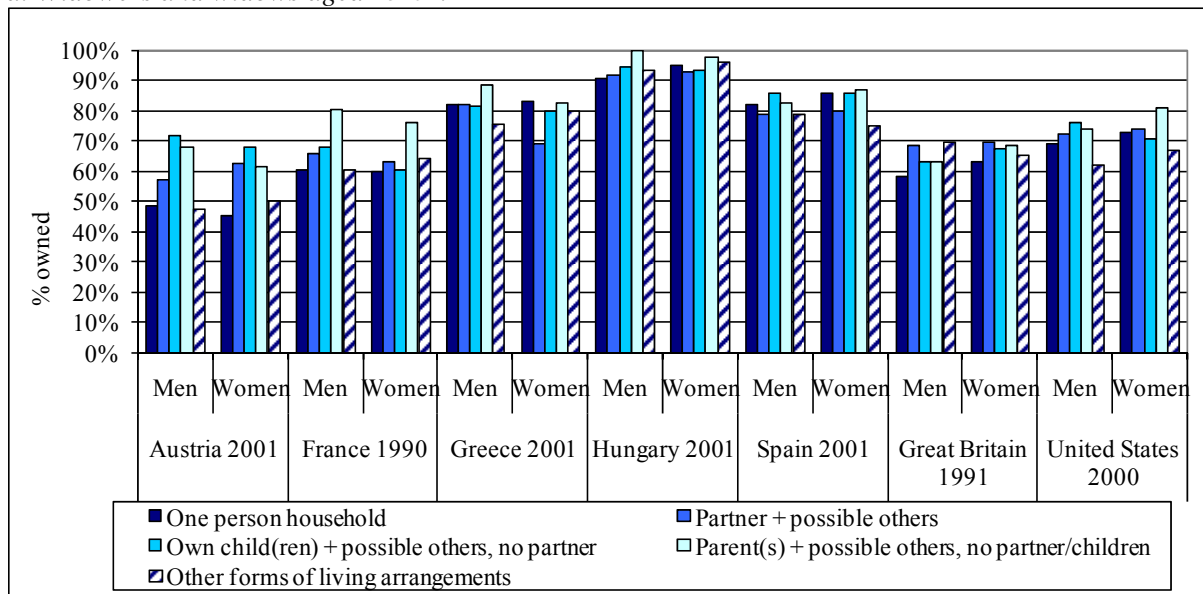
Figure 2. Continued



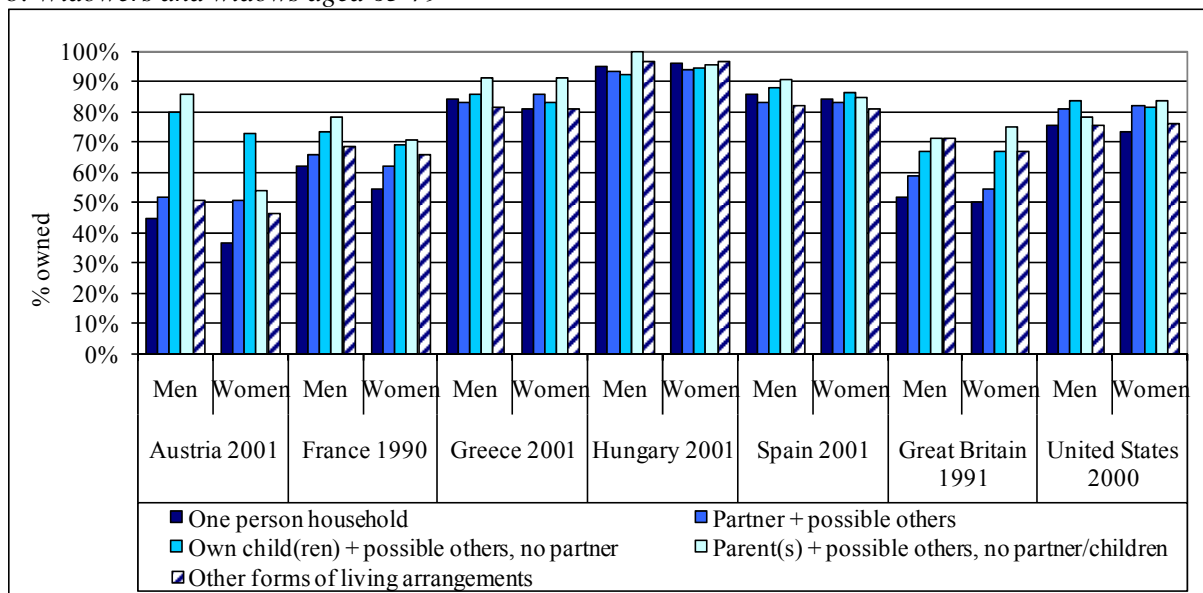
Source and notes: see footnotes Tables 3-5.

Figure 3. Living arrangements of the elderly widowed by tenancy (% owned)

a. Widowers and widows aged 45-64.



b. Widowers and widows aged 65-79



Source and notes: see footnotes Tables 3-5.

Figure 4. Living arrangements of the widowed aged 45-64 by economic activity and sex.

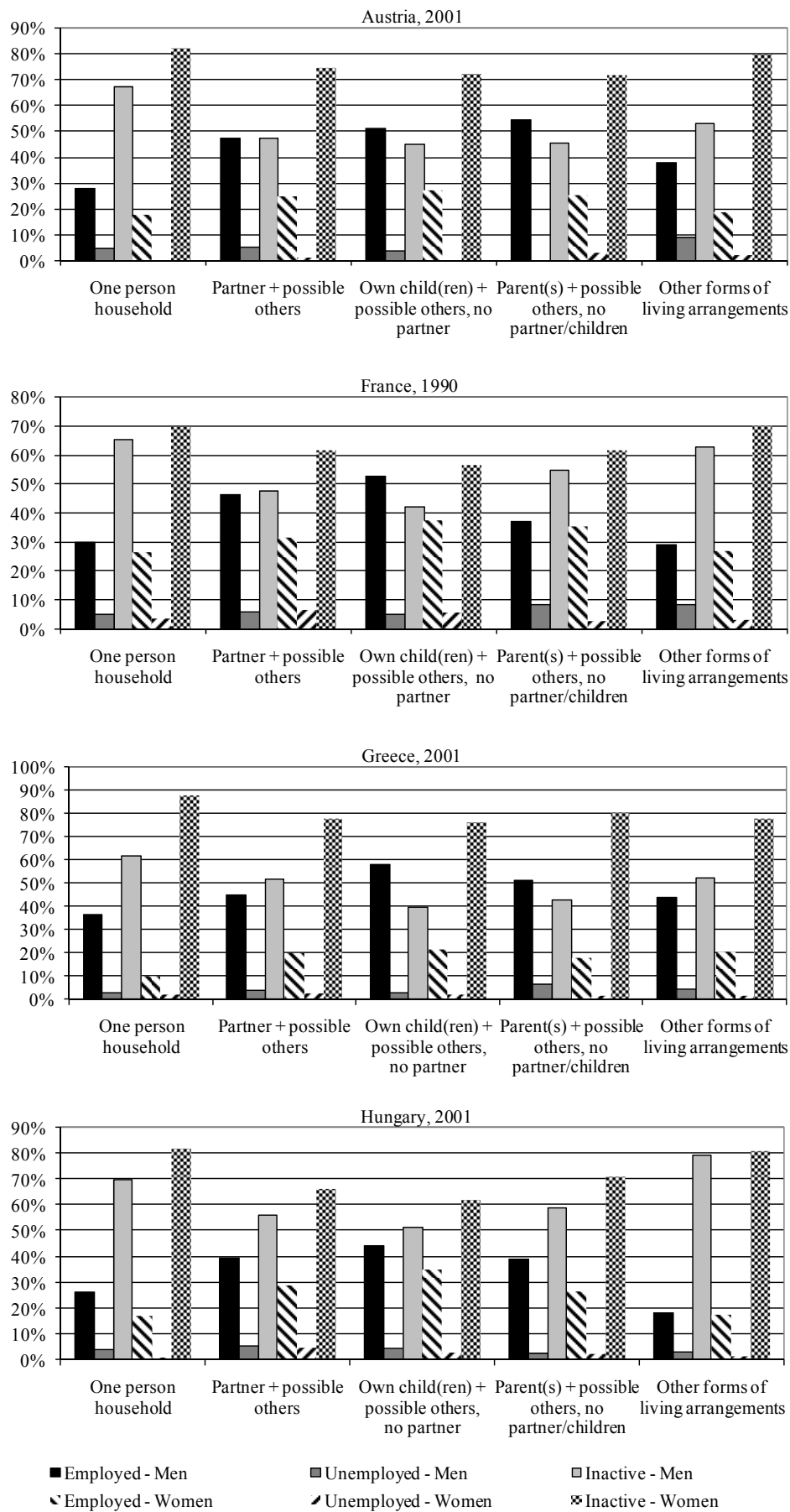
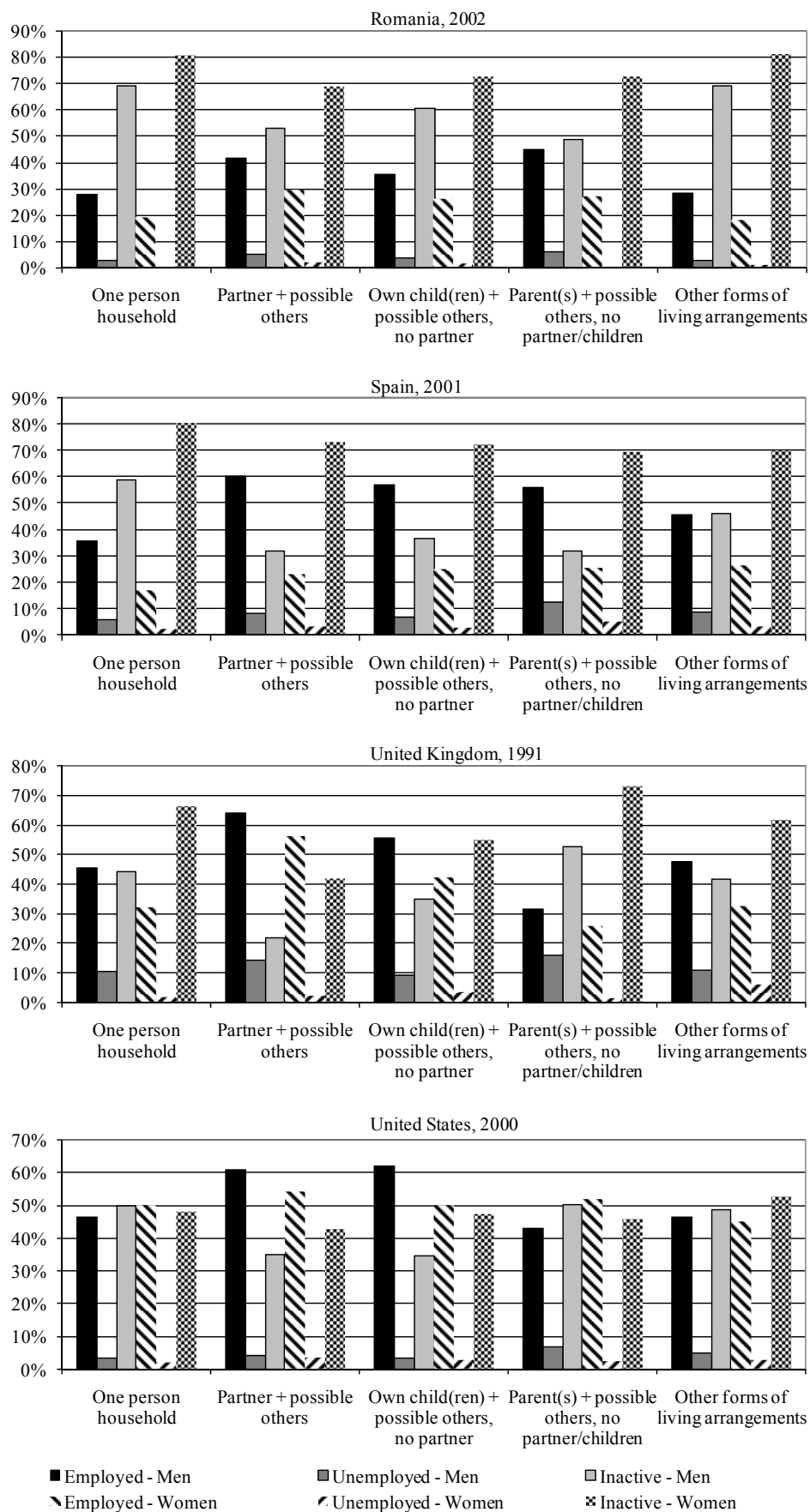


Figure 4 continued.



Source and notes: see footnotes Tables 3-5.

5. Room for improvement and ideas for future research

The major hiatus in the census information regarding the household structure of the widowed population is that we cannot identify one's previous marital status in order to ascertain remarriage patterns among the widowed and (preferably in combination with) the time that has passed since someone became widowed. This makes it impossible to study more exhaustively in a retrospective manner post-widowhood partnership- and family formation-trajectories using census information, and as a consequence, neither any gender-, age-, socioeconomic- and other differences therein. In order to do this, biographical survey data are needed. For the present study only a simple household typology was constructed. However, more detailed living arrangements of widows and widowers may also be worth exploring in future, for instance the age, sex, parenthood, educational level, economic and health characteristics of those who live with other relatives (e.g. a sibling or granddaughter with their family) or with non-relatives (e.g. with a partner or a frail widow who lives with a caregiver). In future it is also hoped to compare census results from earlier years or, in the case of France from the latest census (1999). We would suspect an increase in independent living over the last decades as the health status of elderly has improved, fertility rates have fallen and female labour force participation has increased⁵. The latter two tendencies have reduced the options for elderly who cannot take care of themselves. However, improved health also means that more people will live with a partner in future. This is why according to Gaymu et al. (2008) by 2030 a lower proportion of women older than 75 and men older than 85 years of age will live alone, in institutions or with others in Europe. The situation for 75-84 year olds would not change.

In the literature, a common distinction is made between southern and eastern European countries as being more family oriented than northern ones (i.e. the proportion of older people living with kin are higher in the former), either as a result of different welfare systems (e.g. Esping-Anderson, 1990) or different family systems (e.g. Reher 1998), although other researchers have challenged this delineation (see Glaser et al 2004 and Gaymu et al. 2006 for a review of the literature). According to Glaser et al (2004) it is difficult to determine its causality: is it families that provide help because of a lack of other alternatives, or do states provide services (including financial resources) because of a lack of family support or strong preferences for formal rather than family care? In their principal components and cluster analyses they investigated patterns across countries in four dimensions designed to be indicative of the balance between family and formally provided resources for older people and the socio-economic, demographic and policy contexts in which these are provided. Rather than a clear-cut north-south division European countries their results reflected a more

⁵ Increases in female labour force participation may also have positive effects on the probability of inter-generational co-residence given that the rise in the female labour force participation may have made the presence of a grandparent in the home more valuable as a potential source of childcare. Thus, the magnitude and the direction of the effects of increased female labour force participation depend on which of the two effects dominate (Karagiannaki 2005).

complex classification in terms of support for older individuals when a wide range of measures associated with different dimensions of support for older people are used⁶.

The overwhelming majority of individuals prefer and do stay in their own home after becoming widowed as they want to maintain their (newly found) independence. Of course, maintaining a household after spousal death is not easy as the personal strain is often considerable, and is most acute for those who were highly dependent on their spouses prior to death (Carr and Utz 2002). Moreover, as has been shown in the case of Greece, economic well-being increases much faster for elderly people who live with their children compared to their counterparts living alone (Karagiannaki 2005). This may be an important motive for elderly who have recently lost their spouse to go and live with one of their children given the precarious economic situation of this group and others may opt to move closer to one of the children, although a continuing improvement in (social) welfare should further reduce the economic necessity to cohabit with children. Lastly, we cannot dismiss the importance of intergenerational solidarity between, in particular, daughters and their elderly parents that is typical in southern European countries when it comes to providing the necessary help. The challenge for researchers is therefore to try to integrate these elements into a more explanatory analysis of living arrangements of elderly widows.

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⁶ Regarding Spain, it was included in one of four clusters, together with Germany, Ireland and Italy, being characterised by a lower proportion of older people receiving formal care, a higher prevalence of daily contacts with family, a lower prevalence of divorced women and a lower proportion of adults who believe their parents should go into nursing home care if needed. The two other southern European countries included in the study, Portugal and Greece, were placed in a separate cluster due to their higher level of religiosity and lower proportion of older people that feel comfortable with their income.

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Appendix. Average age of widowed population according to living arrangement in European countries and the US.

Household typology	Males						Females						TOTAL					
	One person household	Partner + possible others	Own child(ren) + possible others, no partner	Parent(s) + possible others, no partner/ children	Other forms of living arrangements	TOTAL	One person household	Partner + possible others	Own child(ren) + possible others, no partner	Parent(s) + possible others, no partner/ children	Other forms of living arrangements	TOTAL	One person household	Partner + possible others	Own child(ren) + possible others, no partner	Parent(s) + possible others, no partner/ children	Other forms of living arrangements	TOTAL
Age	Austria 2001						Austria 2001						Austria 2001					
<45	0.8%	8.0%	5.1%	19.4%	3.4%	2.6%	0.3%	12.3%	5.1%	7.6%	1.4%	2.1%	0.4%	11.1%	5.1%	9.9%	1.7%	2.2%
45-64	15.5%	35.2%	25.7%	61.1%	25.1%	20.2%	13.8%	46.8%	25.5%	68.3%	14.6%	18.2%	14.0%	43.6%	25.5%	66.9%	16.4%	18.5%
65-79	49.3%	40.2%	44.7%	19.4%	40.5%	46.9%	50.8%	33.1%	43.1%	24.1%	41.3%	47.7%	50.6%	35.0%	43.3%	23.2%	41.2%	47.5%
80+	34.5%	16.7%	24.5%	0.0%	31.0%	30.3%	35.1%	7.8%	26.3%	0.0%	42.7%	32.1%	35.0%	10.2%	26.0%	0.0%	40.7%	31.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	France 1990						France 1990						France 1990					
<45	1.1%	11.0%	7.8%	17.0%	3.7%	3.8%	0.6%	14.5%	8.3%	5.5%	2.3%	3.1%	0.6%	13.4%	8.2%	7.4%	2.5%	3.2%
45-64	16.7%	34.4%	30.2%	61.4%	21.8%	21.9%	16.4%	41.6%	29.4%	63.3%	18.8%	21.0%	16.4%	39.4%	29.5%	63.0%	19.3%	21.2%
65-79	44.8%	37.2%	29.0%	21.0%	37.3%	40.2%	47.8%	35.2%	31.6%	31.1%	40.3%	42.9%	47.3%	35.8%	31.2%	29.5%	39.9%	42.5%
80+	37.3%	17.4%	32.9%	0.6%	37.2%	34.1%	35.3%	8.8%	30.7%	0.1%	38.5%	32.9%	35.6%	11.4%	31.0%	0.2%	38.3%	33.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Greece 2001						Greece 2001						Greece 2001					
<45	3.0%	6.3%	2.5%	40.7%	13.1%	4.4%	1.8%	14.3%	4.9%	26.3%	6.0%	3.9%	2.0%	11.4%	4.6%	29.3%	7.3%	4.0%
45-64	11.4%	37.1%	21.9%	43.4%	14.3%	16.8%	21.4%	49.9%	28.0%	51.1%	23.4%	25.1%	19.7%	45.3%	27.2%	49.5%	21.7%	23.8%
65-79	53.7%	42.9%	44.6%	15.9%	40.4%	47.9%	57.8%	29.6%	43.5%	22.4%	42.1%	49.2%	57.1%	34.3%	43.6%	21.1%	41.8%	49.0%
80+	31.9%	13.8%	31.0%	0.0%	32.2%	30.8%	19.0%	6.2%	23.7%	0.2%	28.5%	21.7%	21.1%	8.9%	24.6%	0.1%	29.2%	23.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Hungary 2001						Hungary 2001						Hungary 2001					
<45	1.1%	6.6%	9.1%	30.4%	0.5%	3.3%	0.4%	18.7%	10.6%	5.8%	0.5%	3.4%	0.5%	14.8%	10.4%	9.4%	0.5%	3.4%
45-64	19.1%	44.5%	49.0%	59.4%	17.7%	27.6%	22.8%	57.5%	43.3%	70.3%	19.6%	28.4%	22.3%	53.3%	44.1%	68.8%	19.3%	28.2%
65-79	57.9%	40.2%	30.8%	10.1%	47.5%	48.2%	58.6%	21.5%	33.6%	23.8%	49.2%	49.2%	58.5%	27.5%	33.2%	21.9%	49.0%	49.0%
80+	21.9%	8.8%	11.1%	0.0%	34.3%	20.9%	18.1%	2.3%	12.5%	0.0%	18.7%	19.1%	18.7%	4.3%	12.3%	0.0%	31.2%	19.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Romania 2002						Romania 2002						Romania 2002					
<45	1.1%	7.5%	3.8%	35.7%	1.8%	3.2%	0.7%	21.5%	6.9%	16.3%	1.2%	4.2%	0.8%	16.1%	6.4%	22.4%	1.3%	4.0%
45-64	21.0%	41.4%	34.2%	56.5%	18.1%	27.8%	22.2%	52.3%	38.1%	66.7%	17.7%	30.3%	21.9%	48.1%	37.5%	63.5%	17.8%	29.9%
65-79	57.6%	44.8%	45.5%	7.7%	54.0%	51.0%	60.5%	24.0%	41.1%	17.0%	54.8%	49.8%	59.9%	32.0%	41.8%	14.0%	54.6%	50.1%
80+	20.3%	6.3%	16.5%	0.0%	26.0%	17.9%	16.6%	2.2%	13.9%	0.1%	26.3%	15.6%	17.4%	3.8%	14.3%	0.0%	26.3%	16.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Spain 2001						Spain 2001						Spain 2001					
<45	1.3%	10.8%	2.8%	41.1%	5.8%	3.1%	0.6%	22.1%	4.2%	18.5%	3.0%	3.0%	0.7%	18.7%	4.0%	23.5%	3.5%	3.0%
45-64	9.4%	33.2%	22.3%	48.0%	14.4%	16.8%	9.4%	40.5%	25.3%	54.3%	13.1%	17.9%	9.4%	38.3%	24.8%	52.9%	13.4%	17.7%
65-79	53.1%	41.8%	42.4%	10.9%	41.8%	46.5%	56.0%	31.1%	39.8%	26.9%	43.1%	46.9%	55.5%	34.3%	40.3%	23.4%	42.8%	46.8%
80+	36.2%	14.2%	32.4%	0.0%	38.1%	33.5%	33.9%	6.3%	30.7%	0.3%	40.8%	32.3%	34.3%	8.7%	31.0%	0.2%	40.3%	32.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	United Kingdom 1991						United Kingdom 1991						United Kingdom 1991					
<45	0.9%	15.4%	4.5%	23.5%	3.6%	2.4%	0.4%	19.2%	5.7%	7.5%	1.6%	2.0%	0.5%	17.6%	5.5%	10.6%	2.1%	2.0%
45-64	14.8%	36.4%	30.6%	55.9%	21.1%	19.4%	13.1%	45.0%	30.8%	61.0%	20.4%	18.2%	13.5%	41.4%	30.7%	60.0%	20.5%	18.5%
65-79	55.5%	42.5%	40.7%	20.6%	52.5%	51.7%	57.2%	27.5%	39.0%	30.1%	52.6%	52.3%	56.9%	33.8%	39.3%	28.3%	52.8%	52.1%
80+	28.8%	5.7%	24.2%	0.0%	22.8%	26.6%	29.2%	8.3%	24.5%	1.4%	25.4%	29.2%	29.1%	7.2%	24.5%	1.1%	24.8%	27.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	United States 2000						United States 2000						United States 2000					
<45	5.4%	12.5%	7.3%	37.6%	9.3%	6.9%	1.1%	23.1%	7.1%	16.2%	4.5%	3.6%	1.9%	19.6%	7.1%	21.6%	5.5%	4.2%
45-64	14.8%	33.7%	24.3%	49.6%	23.2%	18.9%	13.3%	44.4%	25.8%	55.7%	25.1%	18.5%	13.6%	40.9%	25.6%	54.2%	24.7%	18.6%
65-79	44.9%	41.3%	40.7%	12.3%	42.4%	43.2%	46.5%	26.1%	41.1%	27.2%	42.1%	44.1%	46.2%	31.1%	41.0%	23.5%	42.2%	43.9%
80+	34.9%	12.5%	27.7%	0.5%	25.2%	31.1%	39.1%	6.4%	26.1%	0.9%	28.2%	33.8%	38.3%	8.4%	26.3%	0.8%	27.6%	33.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	TOTAL (arithmetic average)						TOTAL (arithmetic average)						TOTAL (arithmetic average)					
<45	1.8%	9.8%	5.4%	30.7%	5.2%	3.7%	0.7%	18.2%	6.6%	13.0%	2.6%	3.2%	0.9%	15.3%	6.4%	16.8%	3.1%	3.3%
45-64	15.3%	37.0%	29.8%	54.4%	19.5%	21.2%	16.5%	47.3%	30.8%	61.3%	19.1%	22.2%	16.4%	43.8%	30.6%	59.8%	19.1%	22.0%
65-79	52.1%	41.4%	39.8%	14.7%	44.5%	46.9%	54.4%	28.5%	39.1%	25.3%	45.7%	47.8%	54.0%	33.0%	39.2%	23.1%	45.5%	47.6%
80+	30.7%	11.9%	25.1%	0.1%	30.8%	28.2%	28.3%	6.0%	23.5%	0.4%	32.6%	26.9%	28.7%	7.9%	23.8%	0.3%	32.3%	27.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%