

# Marginalization of women with low educational attainment on the partner market across Europe

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# A change in the educational gradient of cohabitation?

- Women's earnings are important to secure family's economic wellbeing
  1. Stability of formerly typically male blue-collar occupations has declined (Adserà, 2018; Autor, 2014)
  2. Women's labour market position has improved compared to men's (Goldin 2014)
  3. In younger generations, women with degrees in higher education outnumber men (Van Bavel, Schwartz, Esteve 2018); decline of hypergamy (Erát 2021; Esteve et al. 2016; De Houw, Grow & Van Bavel 2017)

# A change in the educational gradient of cohabitation?

- Are lower-educated women, who tend to have low earning potential in the labour market, facing increasing difficulties to find a stable partner?
- Contribution:
  1. Previous empirical findings are mixed, often focusing on single countries
  2. Adding to the empirical evidence of women's educational gradient of cohabitation
  3. Recent data from ESS 2022

# Hypotheses

- *Hypothesis 1:* The **transition rates to cohabitation** (married or unmarried) decreased for lower compared to higher-educated women in more recent cohorts.
- *Hypothesis 2:* The **likelihood** of women between the ages 35 and 45 **to have ever cohabited** (married or unmarried) decreased for the lower compared to the higher-educated women across cohorts.

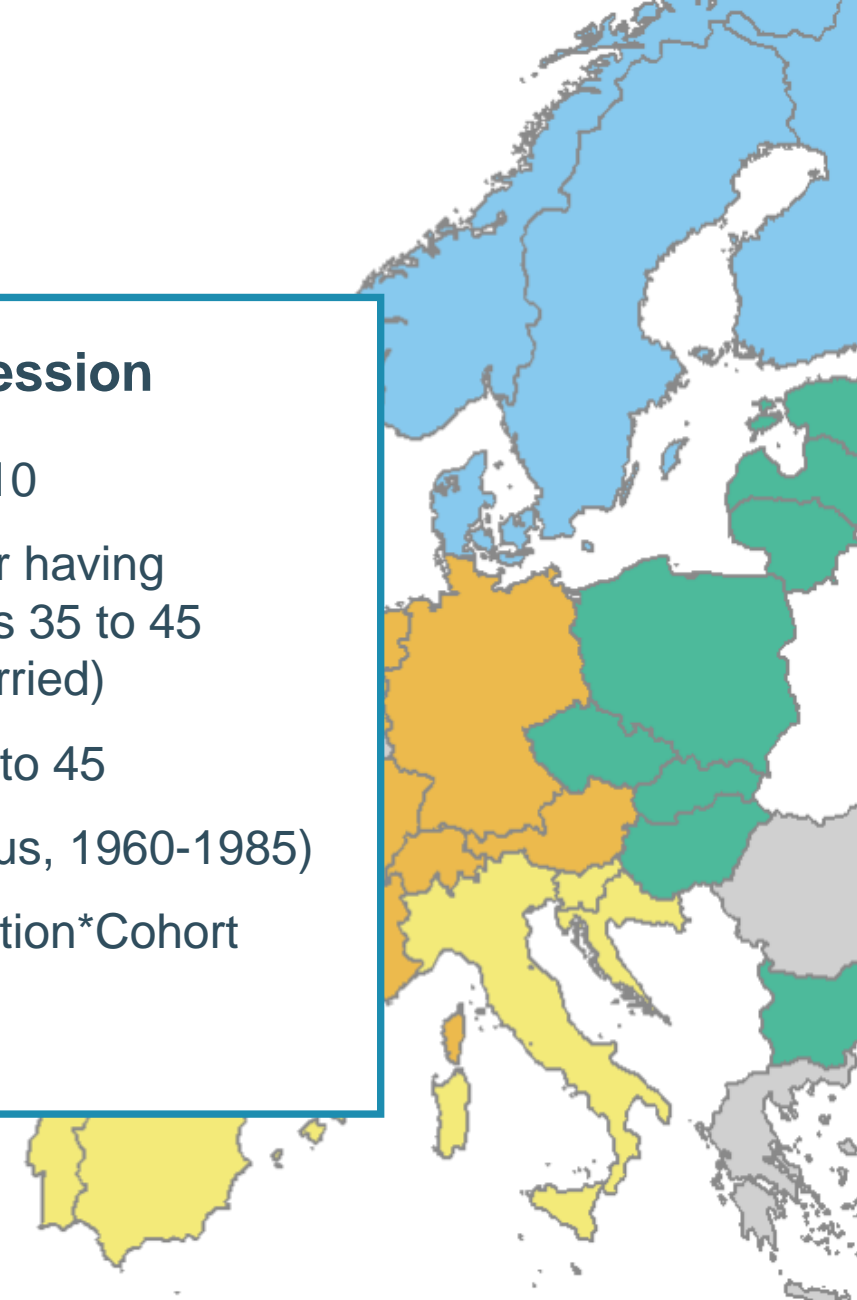
# Data & Methods

## H1 Event History Analysis

- ESS Round 3 & 9
- Transition to first cohabitation (married or unmarried)
- Follow respondents from age 15
- Stratified Cox Model
- Cohort (1960-79; 1980-2004)
- Enrollment in education (time-varying)

## H2 Logistic regression

- ESS Round 1 to 10
- Probability of ever having cohabited by ages 35 to 45 (married or unmarried)
- Sample: ages 35 to 45
- Cohort (Continuous, 1960-1985)
- Interaction Education\*Cohort



# Data & Methods

## Education

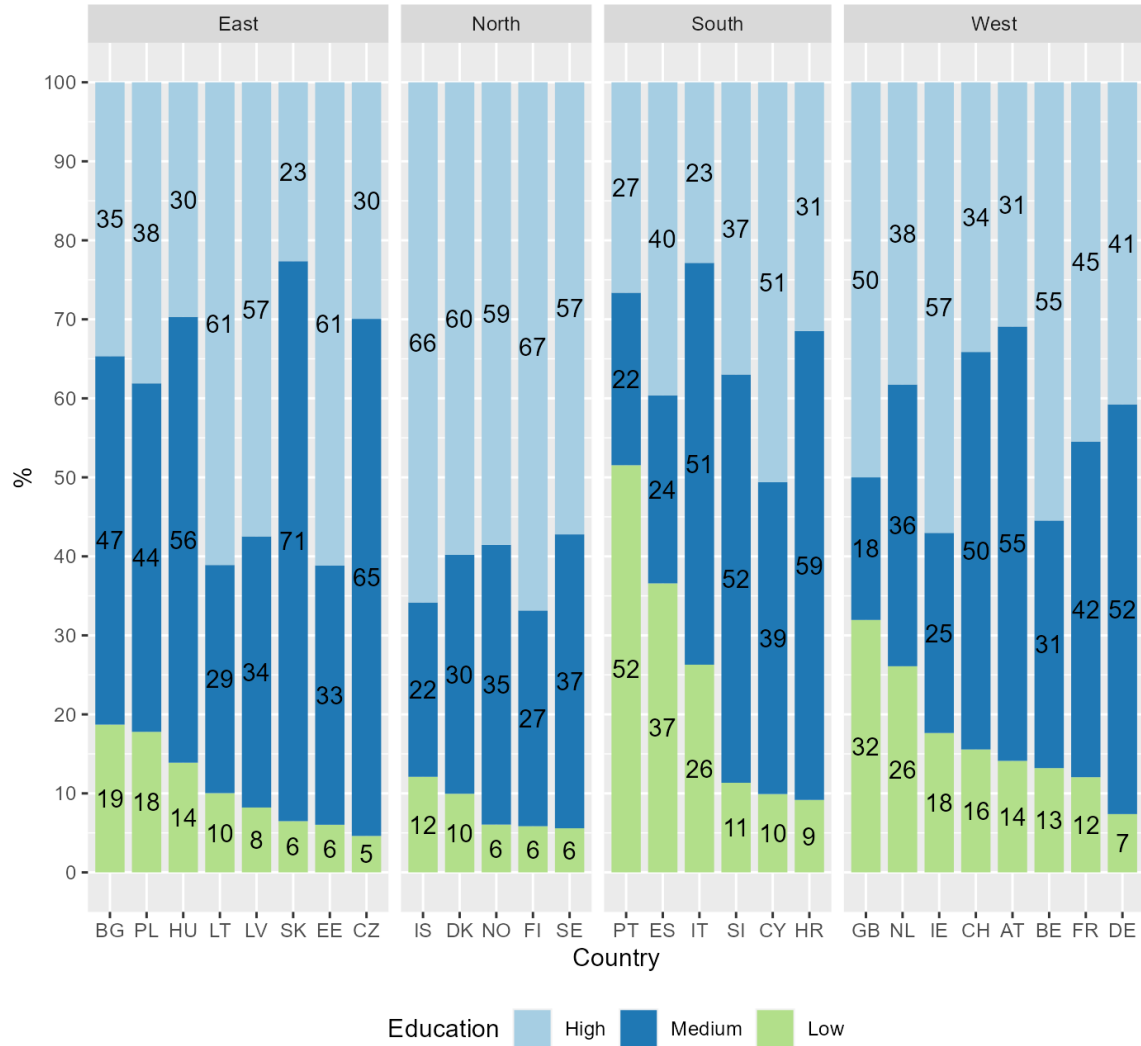
- Low (ISCED 0-2)
- Medium (3-4)
- High (5-6)

## Control variables

- Parental education
- Migration background
- Religious denomination

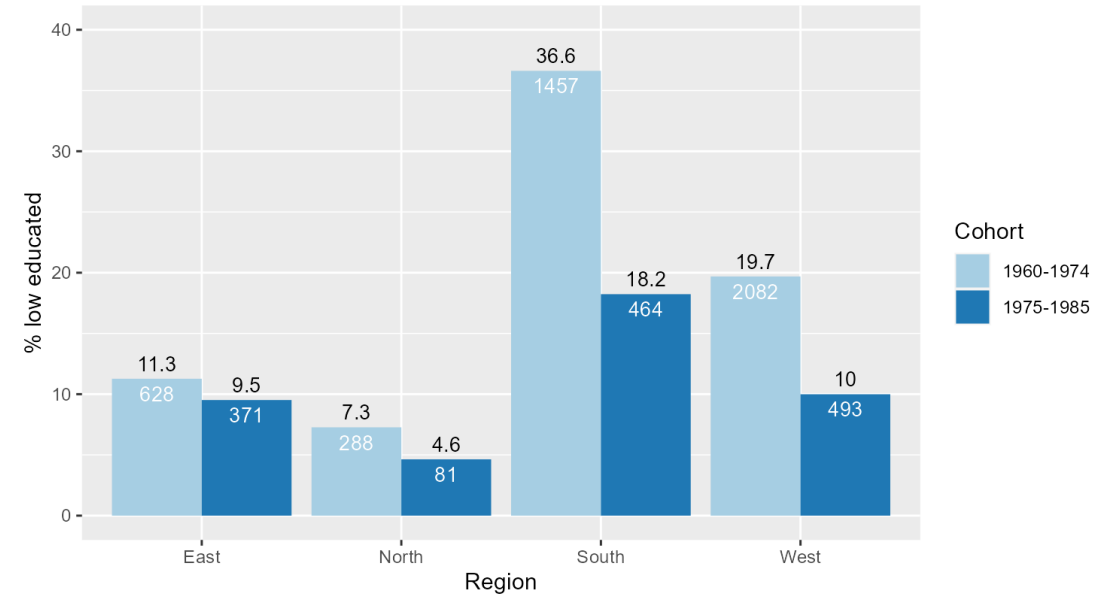


Share of educational levels across countries (in %)



Source: ESS Round 1 to 10 (own calculations)

Share of lower educated by region



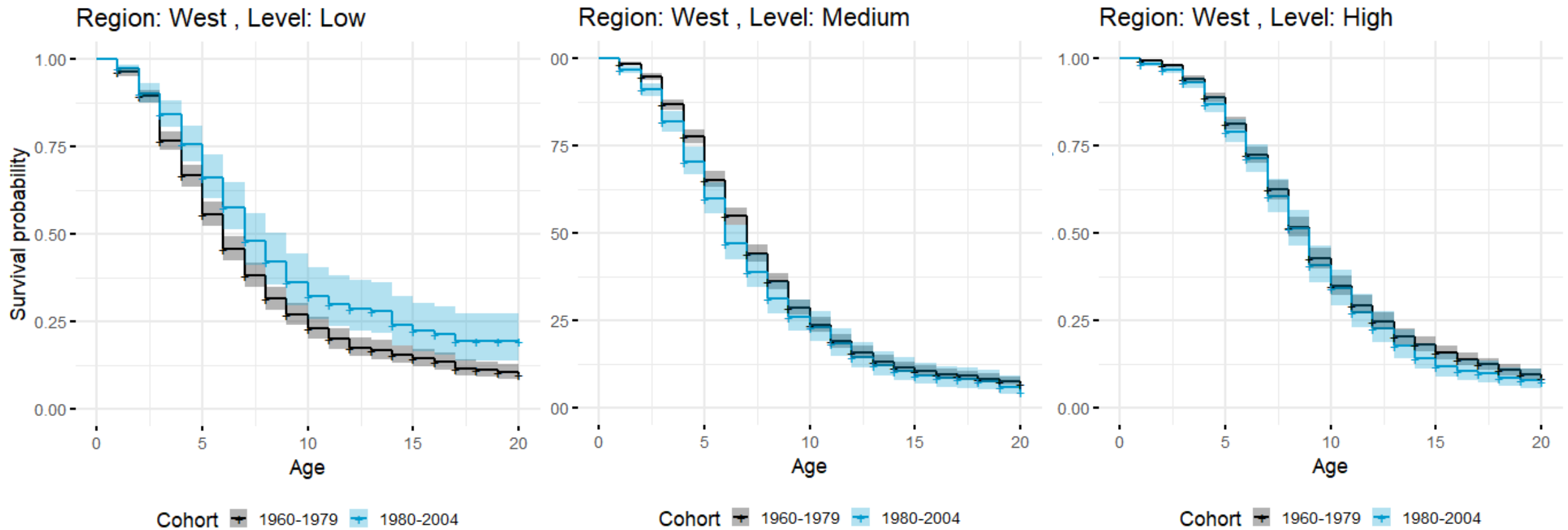
Source: ESS Round 1 to 10 (own calculations)

# Results: Transition to cohabitation (H1)



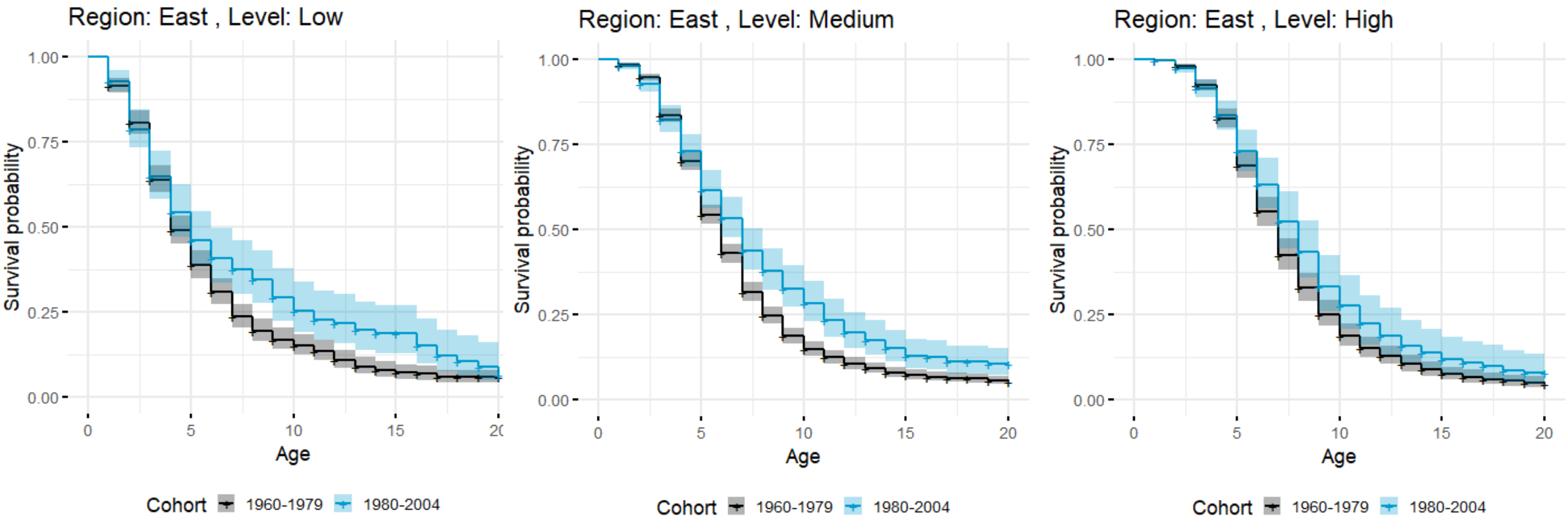


# Estimated survival curves: Western Europe



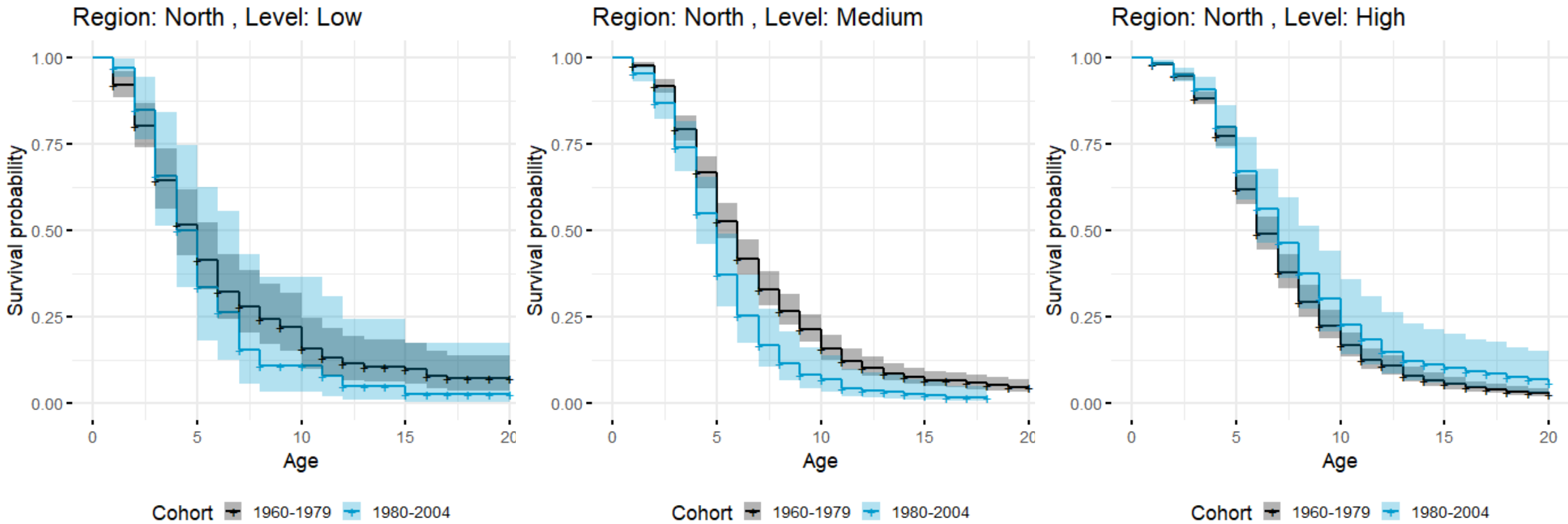
Source: ESS Round 3 to 9; controlled for parental education, migration background, enrollment in education & religious denomination

# Estimated survival curves: Eastern Europe



Source: ESS Round 3 to 9; controlled for parental education, migration background, enrollment in education & religious denomination

# Estimated survival curves: Northern Europe

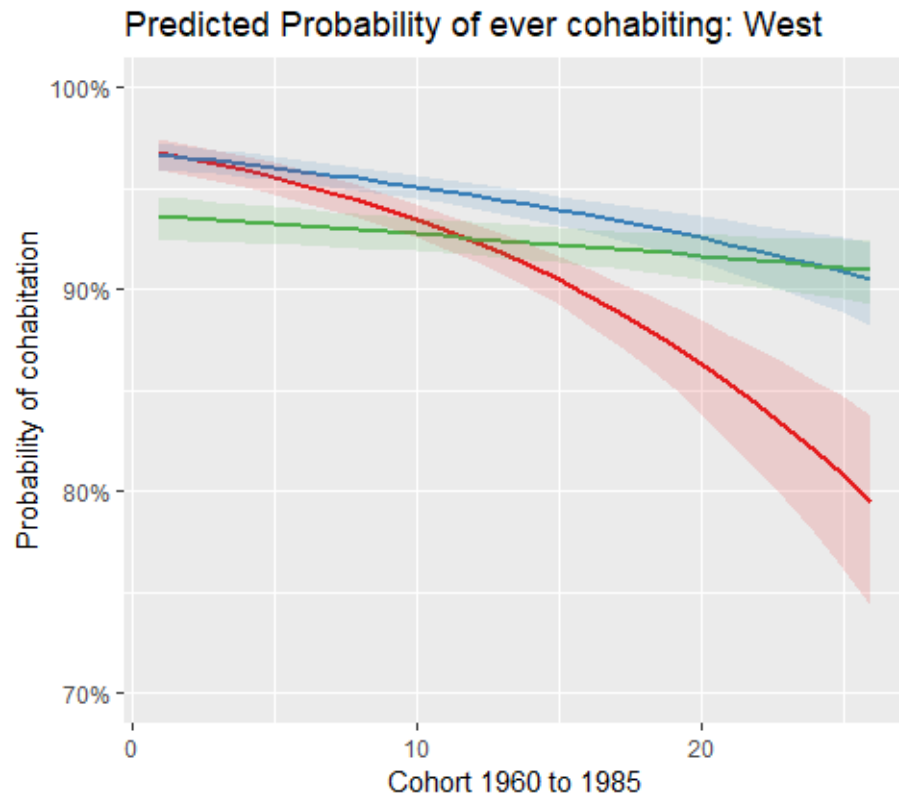


Source: ESS Round 3 to 9; controlled for parental education, migration background, enrollment in education & religious denomination

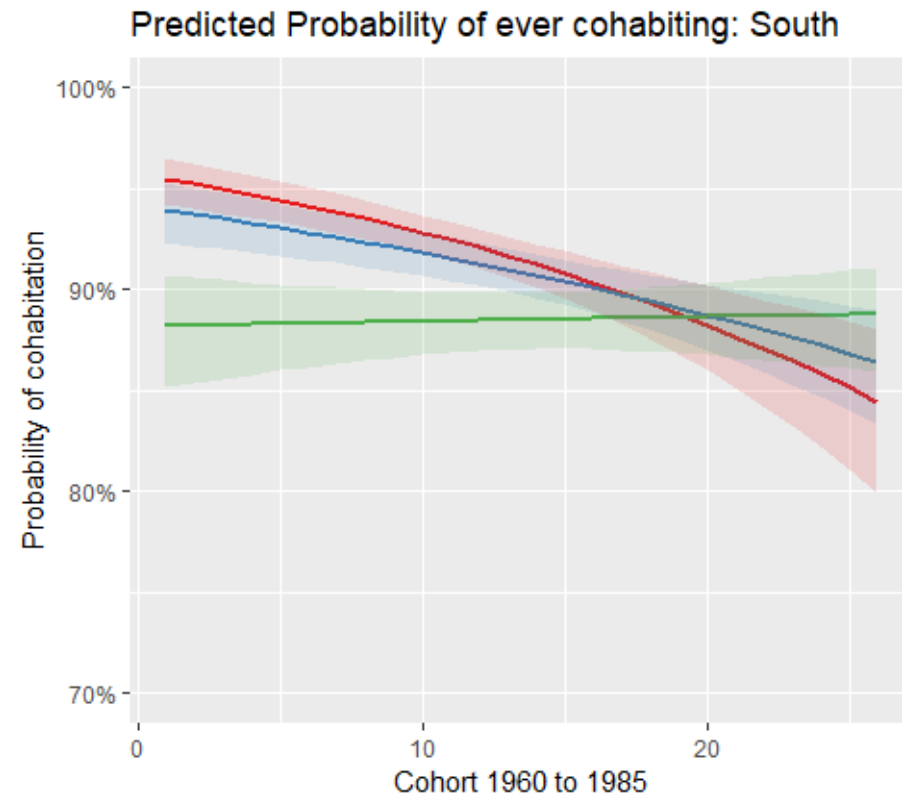
# Results: Probability of cohabiting by ages 35 to 45 (H2)



## H2: Probability of cohabiting by ages 35 to 45



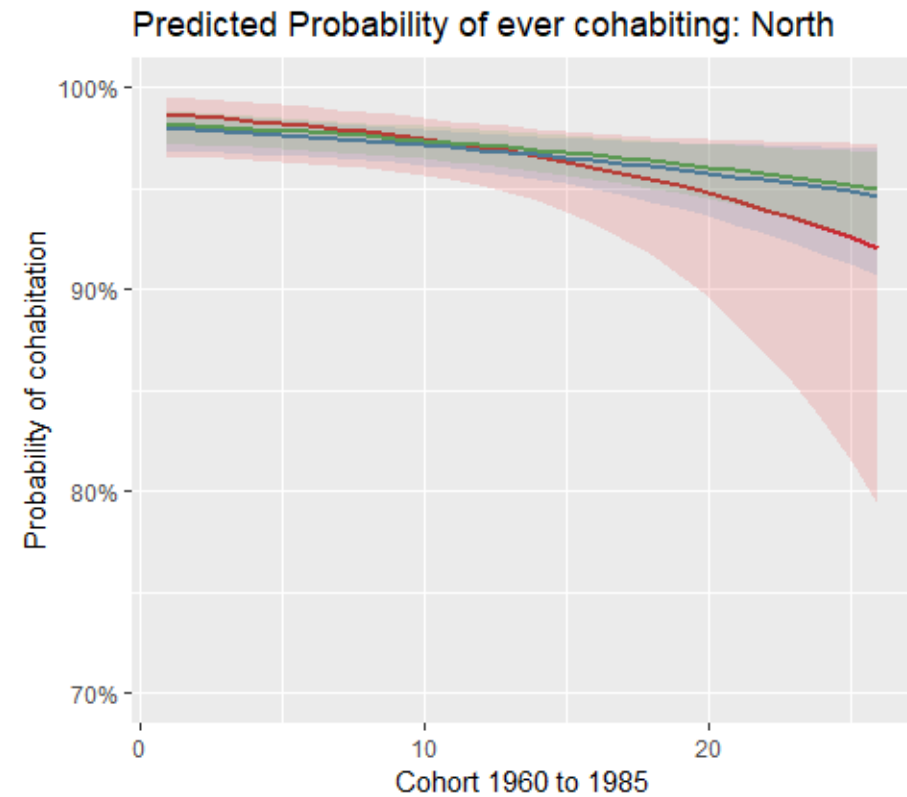
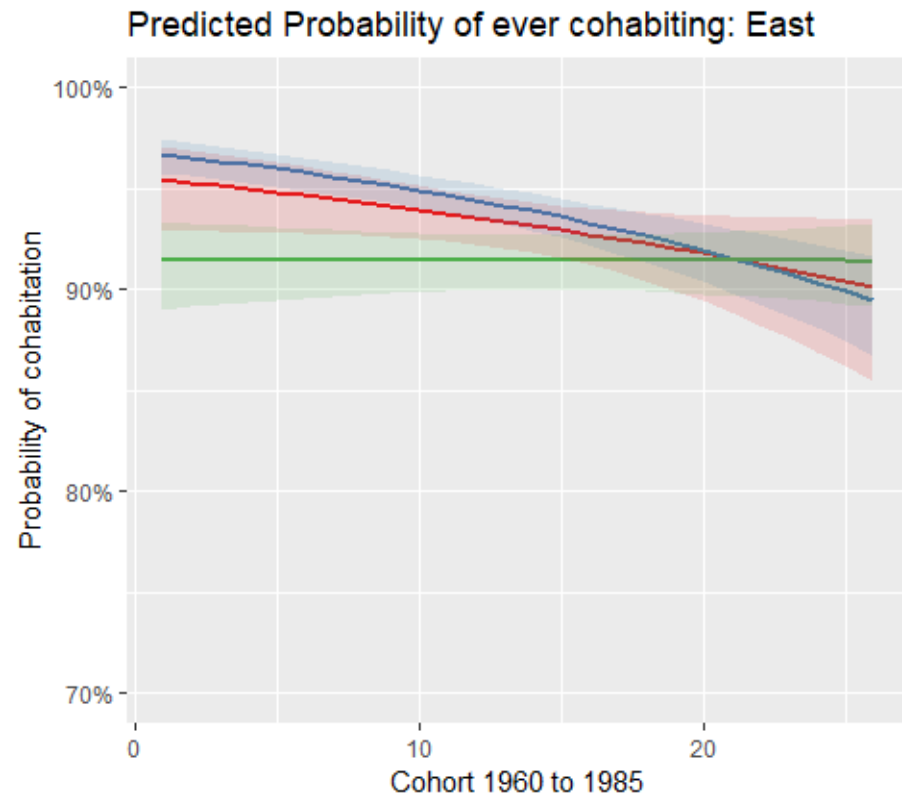
educ\_ineduc Low Medium High



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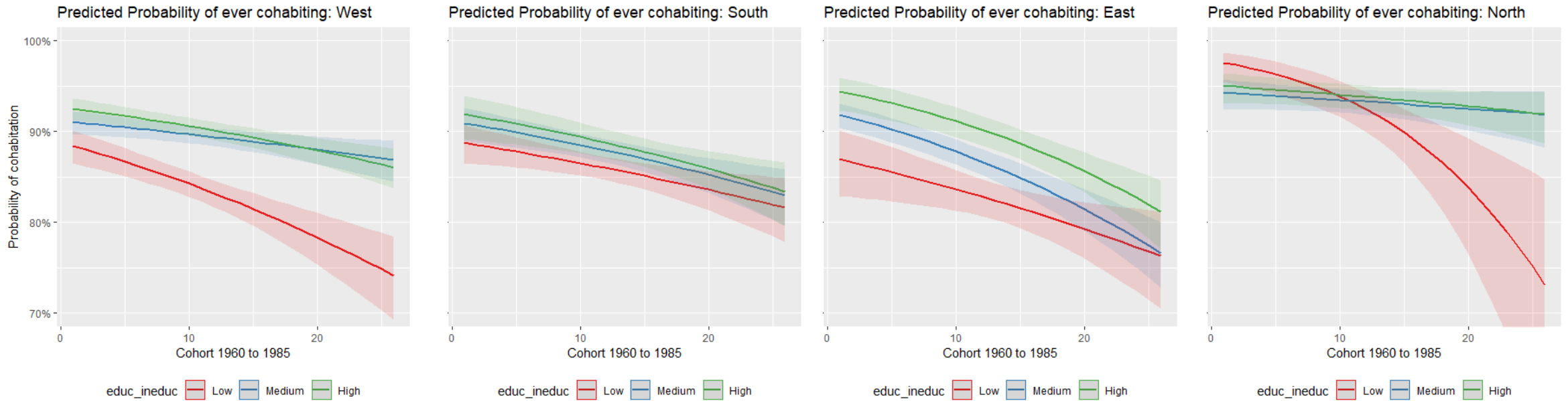
Source: ESS Round 1 to 10; controlled for parental education, migration background & religious denomination

## H2: Probability of cohabiting by ages 35 to 45



Source: ESS Round 1 to 10; controlled for parental education, migration background & religious denomination

# H2: Results for men



Source: ESS Round 1 to 10; controlled for parental education, migration background & religious denomination

# Conclusion & Discussion

- Women with low educational attainment typically exhibited a higher likelihood of cohabiting in the oldest cohorts
- This has changed in the more recent ones, where they exhibit similar (South) or lower rates (West) compared to women with higher degrees
- Limitations:
  - Sample size for lower educated in Nordic countries
  - No complete partnership history: LAT, union instability?
  - Data on age at first employment, but not income



Thank you for your attention!

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# References

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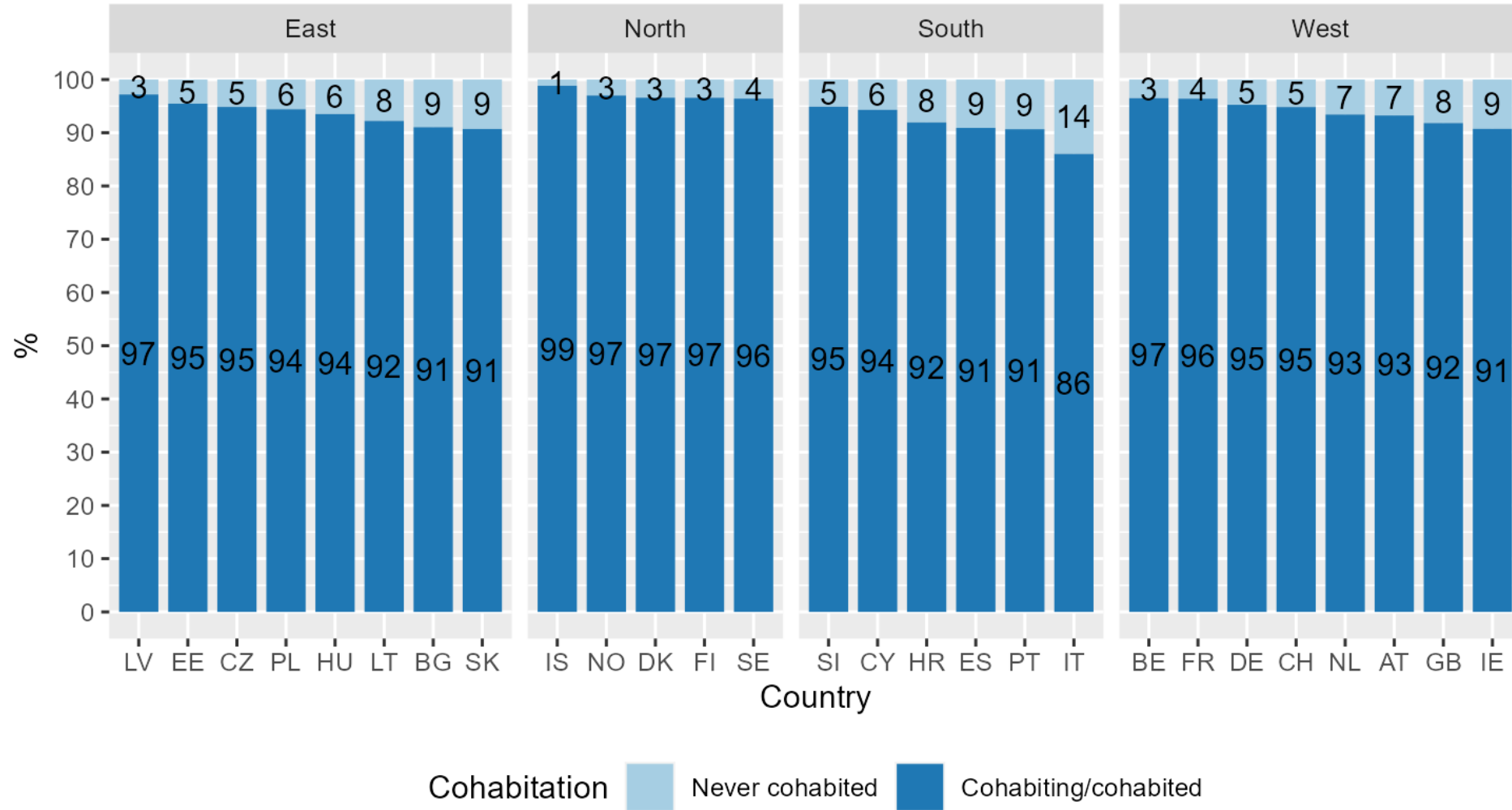
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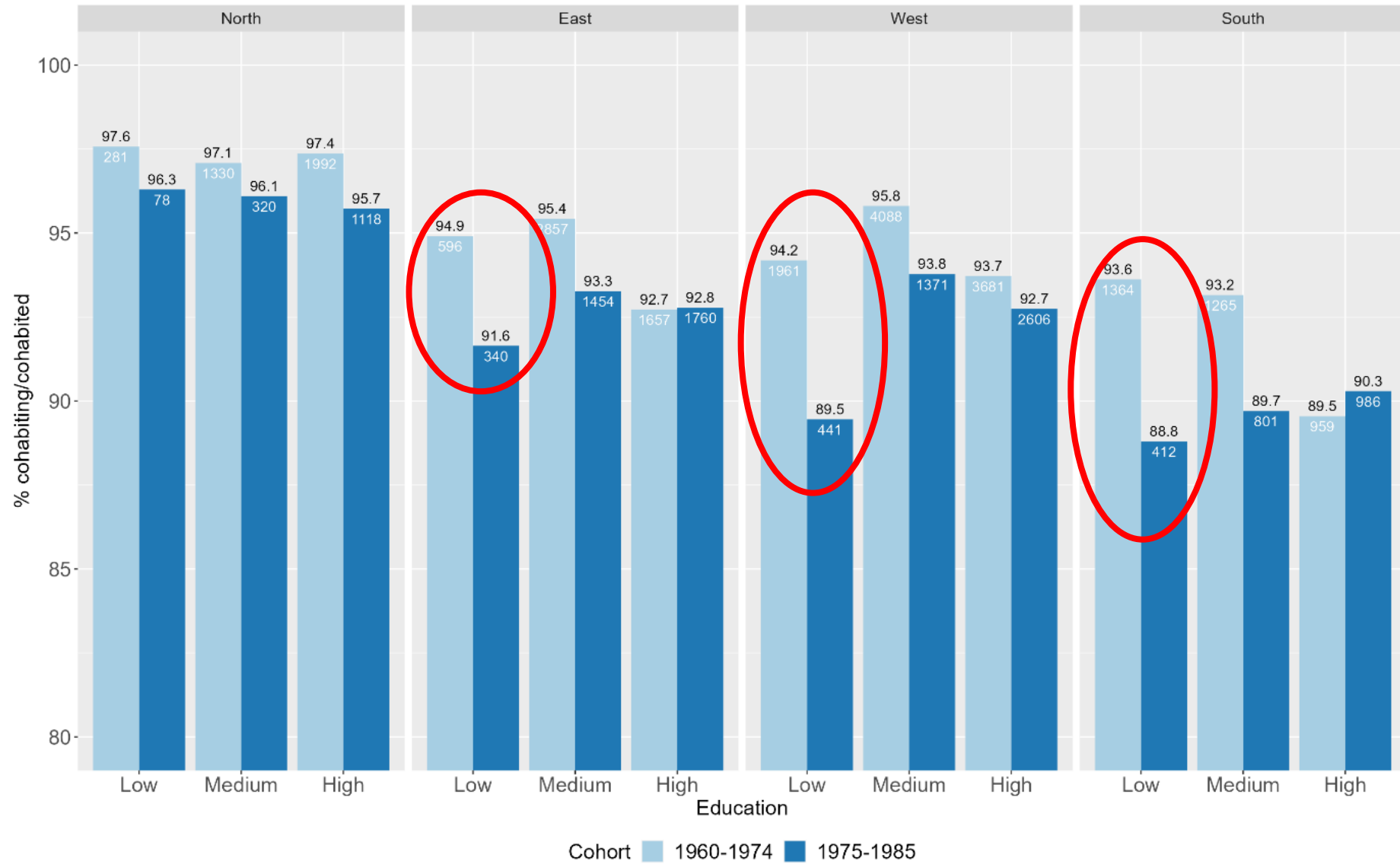
Van Bavel, J., Schwartz, C. R., & Esteve, A. (2018). The Reversal of the Gender Gap in Education and Its Consequences for Family Life. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 44(1), 341–360. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-041215>

## Share cohabiting between 35 and 45 across countries



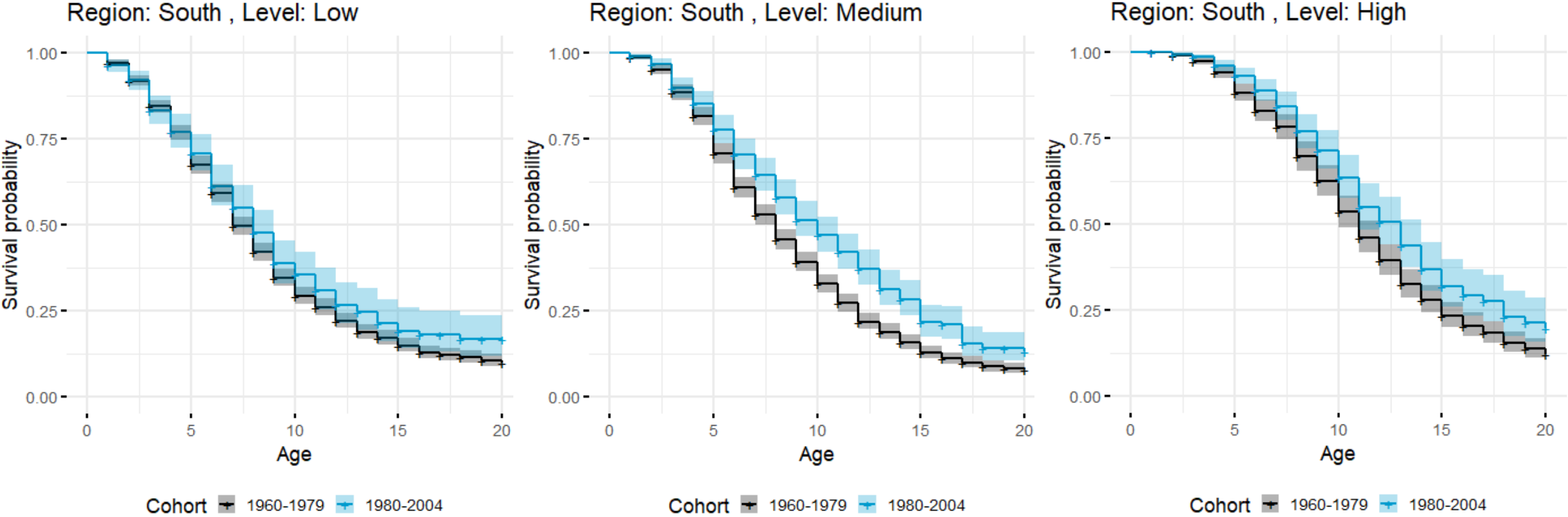
Source: ESS Round 1 to 10 (own calculations)

## Share of cohabiting/having cohabited across cohorts and regions (ages 35-45)



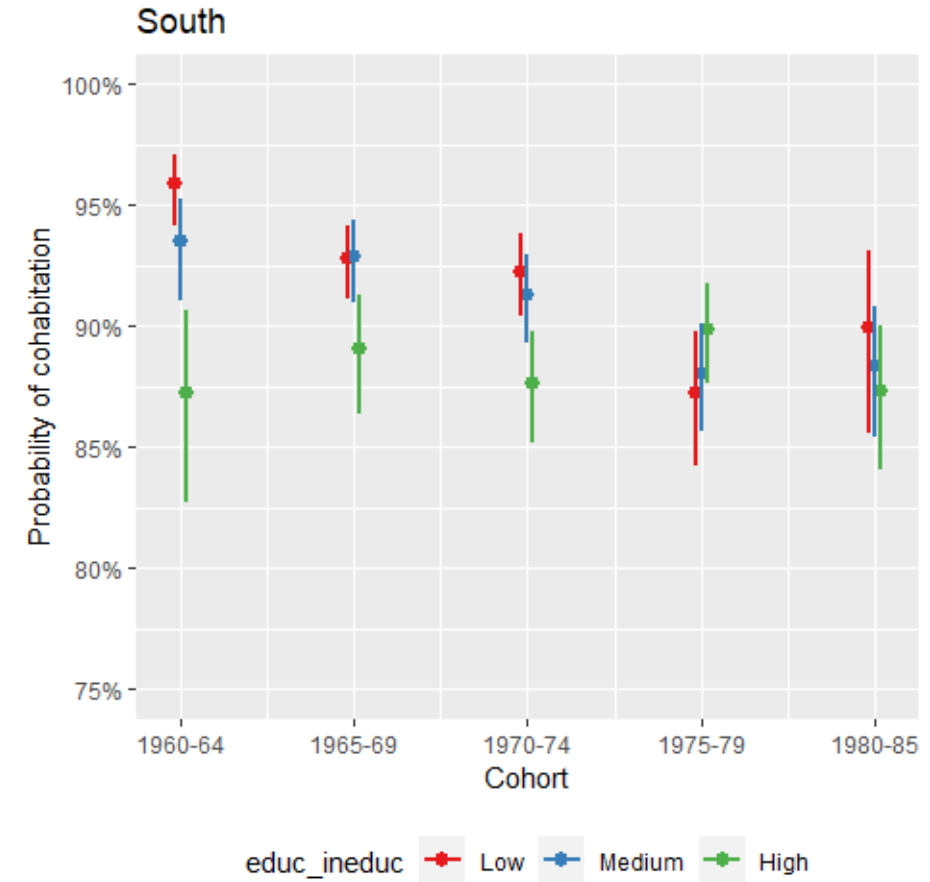
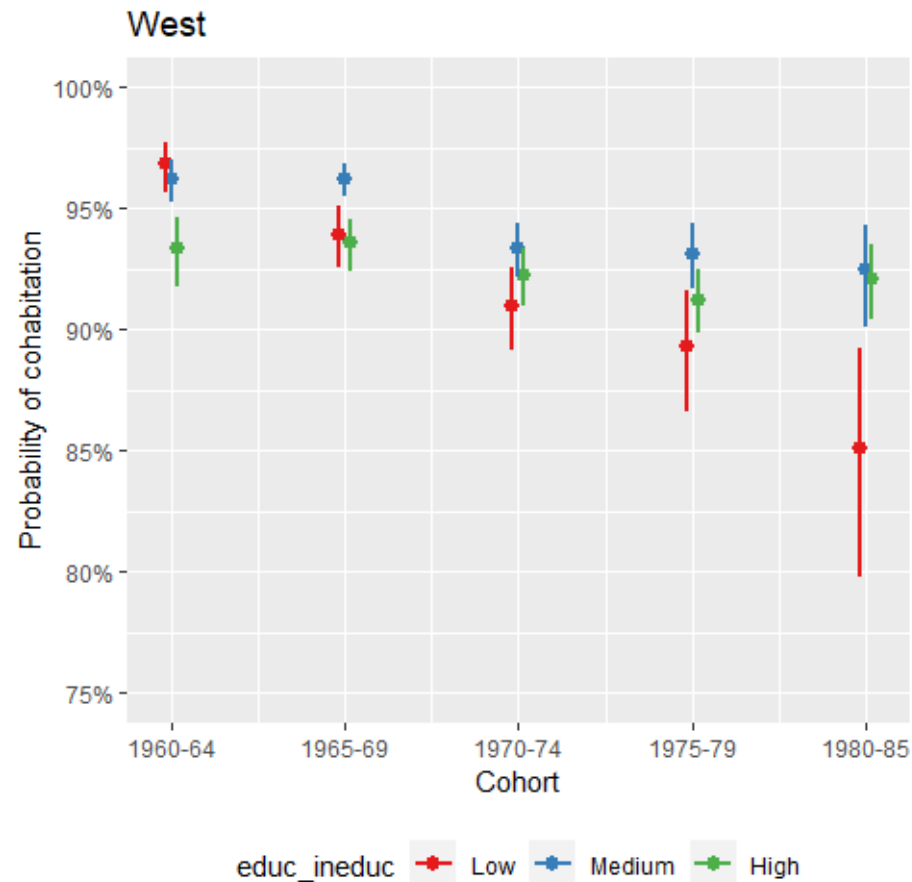
Source: ESS Round 1 to 10 (own calculations)

# Estimated survival curves: Southern Europe



Source: ESS Round 3 to 9; controlled for parental education, migration background, enrollment in education & religious denomination

## H2: Probability to cohabit by ages 35 to 45



## H2: Probability to cohabit by ages 35 to 45

