

# Homogamy and Convergence Theory Revised

## Stability of Cohabiting Unions among Second-Generation Caribbeans

Gusta G. Wachter<sup>1</sup>, Niels Kooiman<sup>2</sup> & Helga A.G. de Valk<sup>1</sup>

### Research Question

How does the dissolution of unmarried cohabiting unions relate to the ethnic composition of couples among the Caribbean second generation in the Netherlands?

### Background

Often argued that exogamous migrant unions are less stable than endogamous ones

#### Focus so far on

- Marriage
- First-generation migrants
- Traditional migrant groups
- One type of endogamous couple options

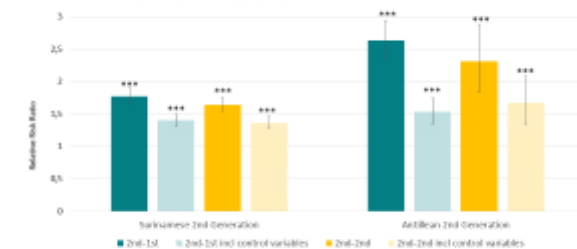
#### But what about

- Unmarried cohabitation
- The second generation
- Non traditional migrant groups
- Different types of endogamous couples

### Methodology

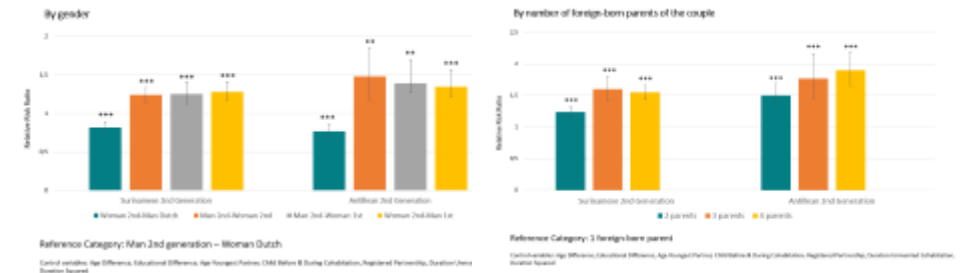
- Register data from statistics Netherlands  
Longitudinal data from 1995-2018
- Birth cohorts 1980-1995  
A birth cohort consists of all individuals born in a certain calendar year
- Surinamese and Antillean second generation + Partner  
A person born in NL with at least one foreign born parent
- 14,536 couples with at least one Surinamese 2<sup>nd</sup> generation partner  
5,552 couples with at least one Antillean 2<sup>nd</sup> generation partner
- Multinomial Event-History Analyses
  - Duration = years of unmarried cohabitation
  - Event = Union Dissolution or Marriage (not shown)

### Risk of union dissolution

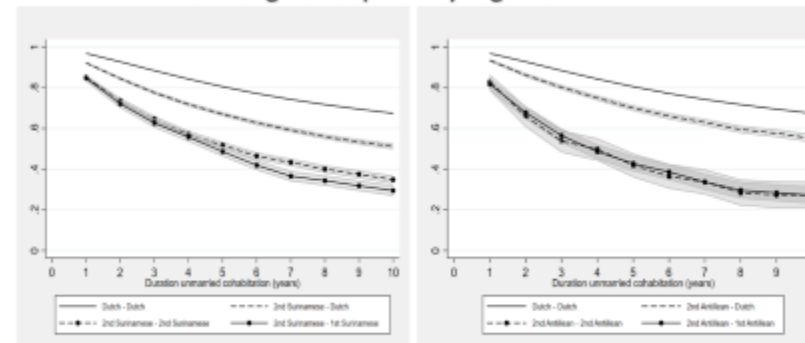


### Summary Results

- H1 = Rejected
- H2a = Confirmed
- H2b = Rejected



### How long do couples stay together?



### Homogamy

**Main premise**  
People search for partners who are similar to themselves as these unions would be more stable

**But what is a homogamous union for the second generation?**  
They are raised in two cultures → due to shared bicultural socialisation couples with two 2<sup>nd</sup> generation partners can be viewed as truly homogamous

**H1**  
Couples with two second-generation partners are less likely to separate than couples with a second-generation partner and either a first-generation coethnic partner or a Dutch partner

### Convergence

**Main premise**  
The risk for union dissolution of a couple reflects the combined risk for union dissolution in both partners' cultures

**Group specific risks**  
The risk of separating is higher among Surinamese and Antilleans, especially the 1st generation, than among the Dutch majority population

**H2a**  
Couples with a second-generation and a Dutch partner are less likely to separate than endogamous cohabiting couples between two partners with a Caribbean background.

**H2b**  
Endogamous cohabiting couples with two second-generation partners are less likely to separate than couples with a first- and second-generation partner

### Conclusion

- Homogamy theory is not universally applicable in research on union dissolution
- In line with convergence theory unmarried cohabiting couples are less likely to separate in case one of the partners has a Dutch background
- Migrant generation seems to have little influence on the risk of union dissolution; it may be more important to consider the number of foreign-born parents of the couple as an indicator for the socialization context
- Key Message:** It is important to take the diversity in population structures and union formation dynamics into account when conducting empirical research and formulating theoretical starting points

# Background

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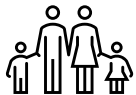
## Focus so far on



Marriage



First-generation migrants



Traditional migrant groups



One type of endogamous couple options

## But what about



Unmarried cohabitation



The second generation



Non traditional migrant groups



Different types of endogamous couples

# Homogamy

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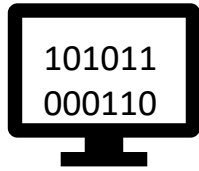
## H2a

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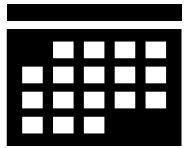
## H2b

Endogamous cohabiting couples with two second-generation partners are less likely to separate than couples with a first- and second-generation partner

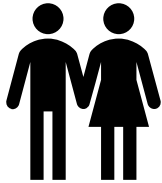
# Methodology



Register data from statistics Netherlands  
Longitudinal data from 1995-2018



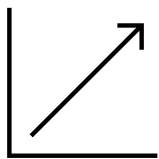
Birth cohorts 1980-1995  
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**N**

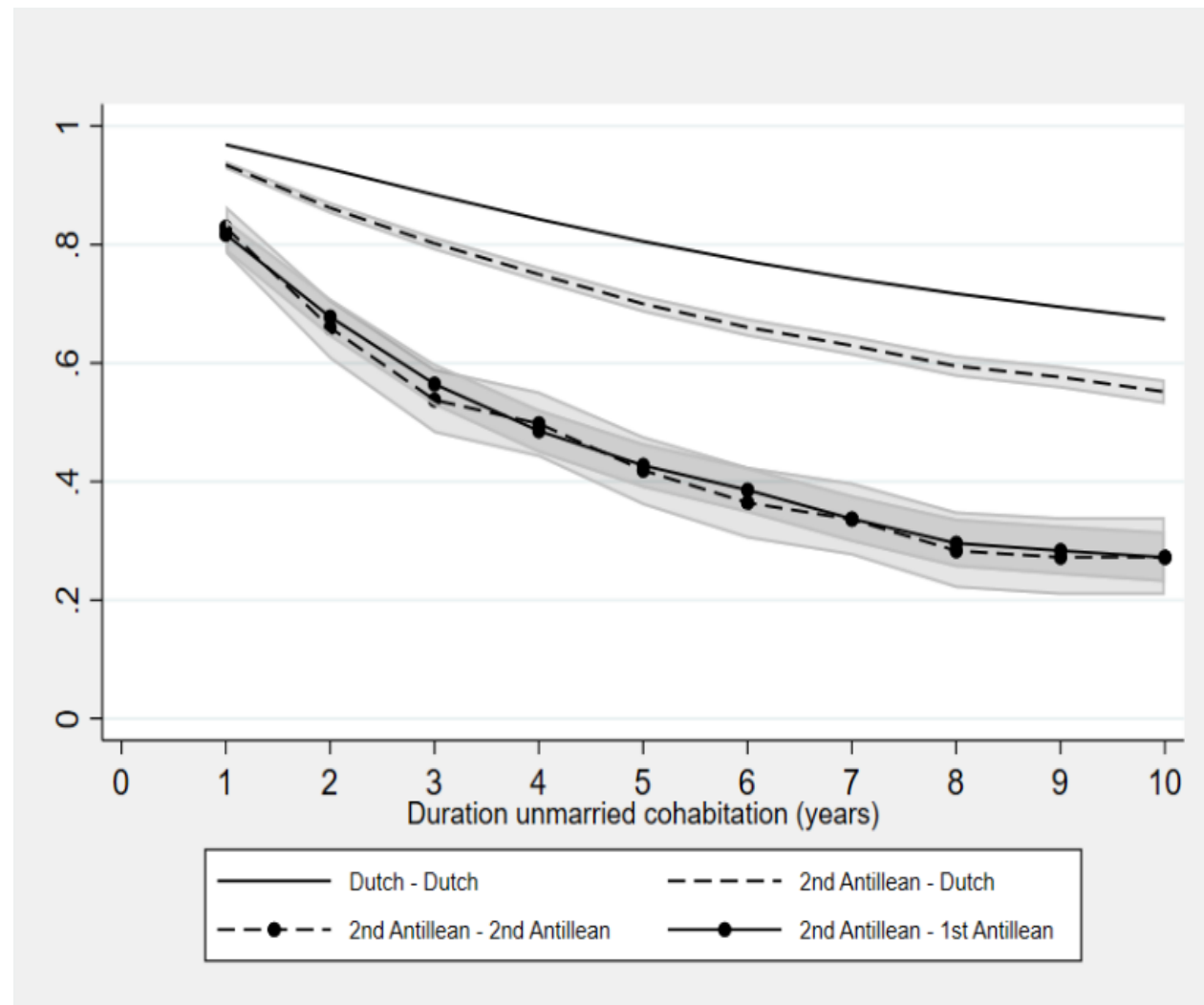
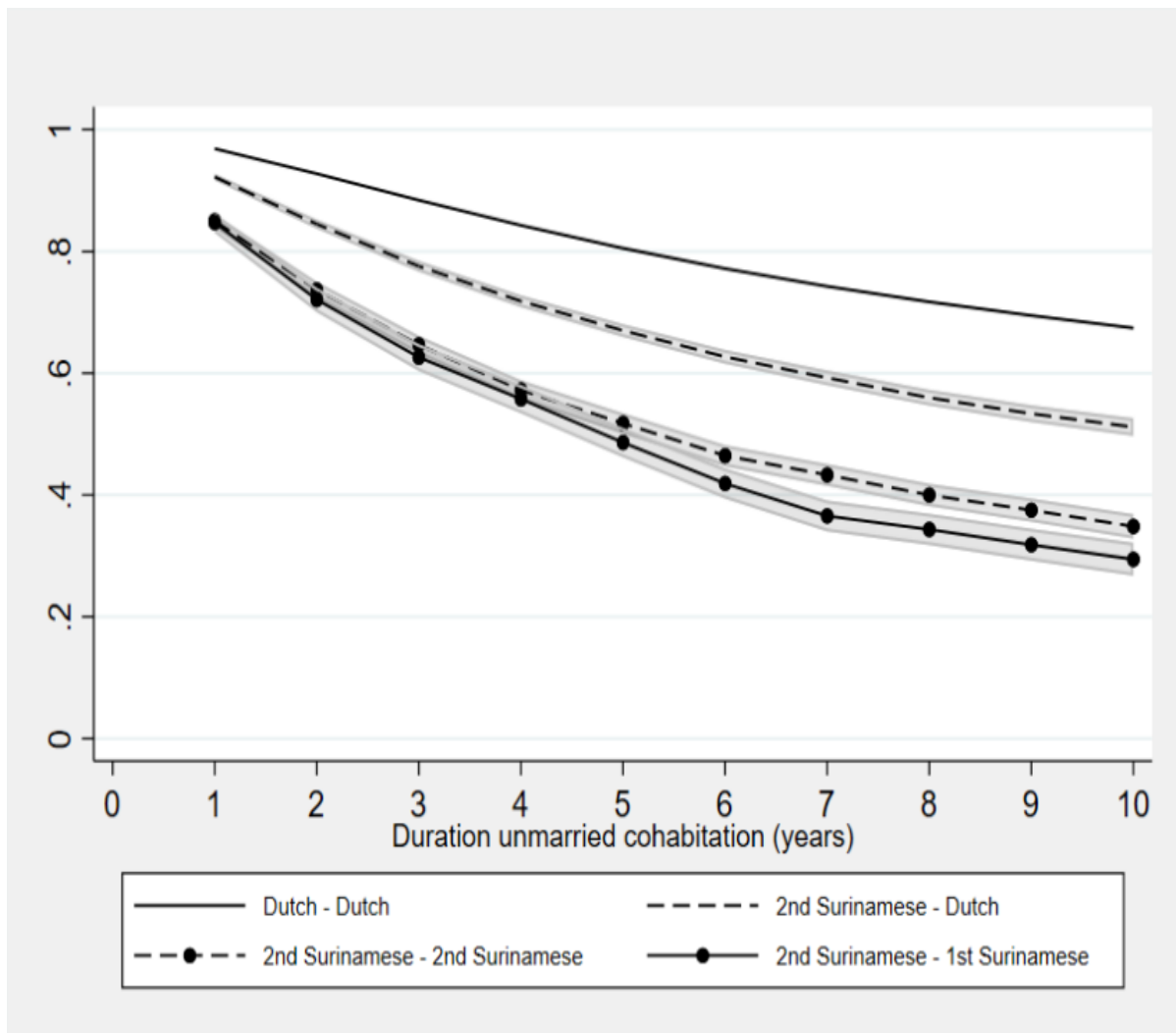
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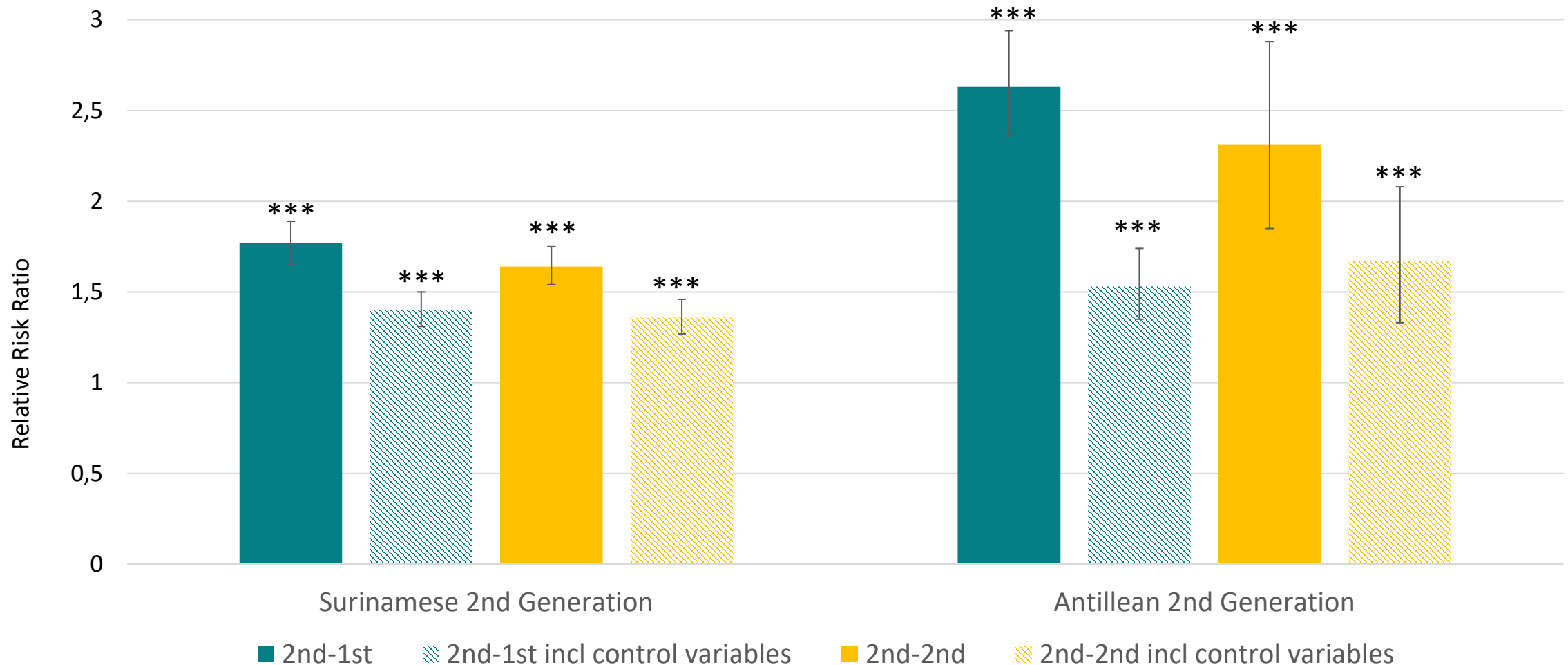
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# How long do couples stay together?



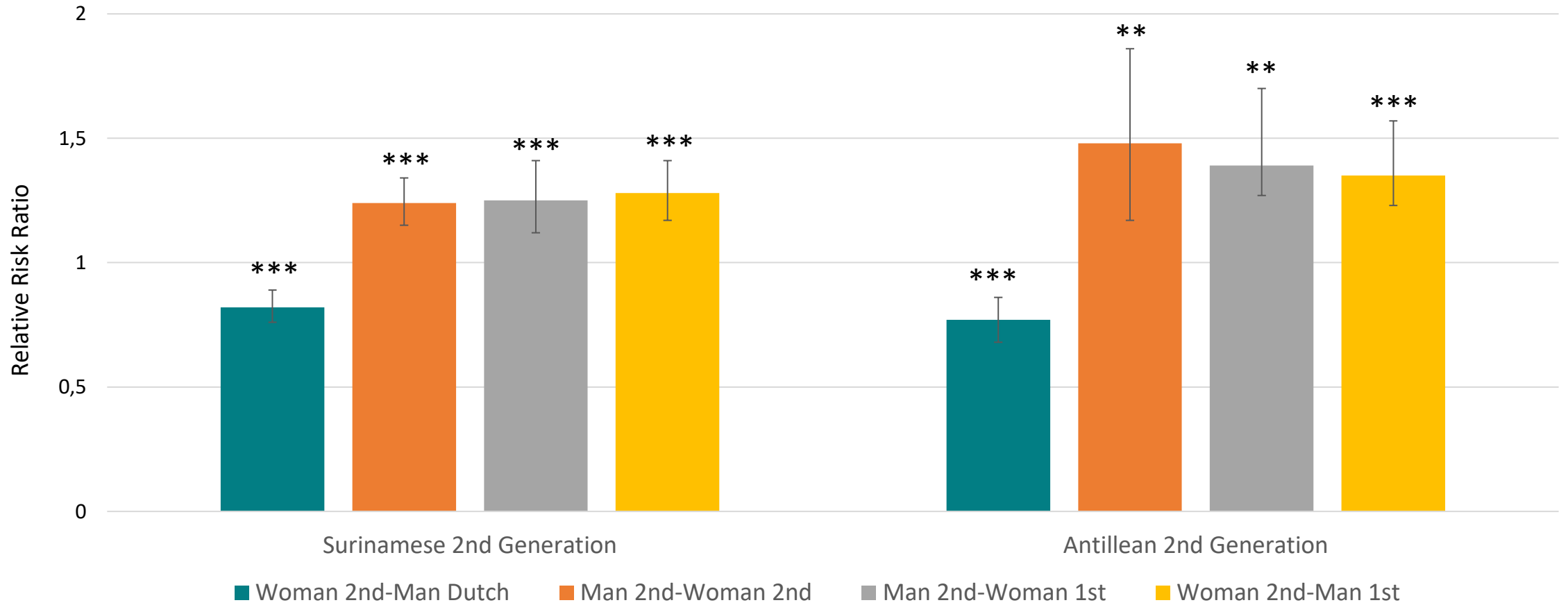
# Risk of union dissolution



Reference Category: Couples with a Second-Generation Partner and Dutch Partner (exogamous)

Control variables: Age Difference, Educational Difference, Age Youngest Partner, Child Before & During Cohabitation, Registered Partnership, Duration Unmarried Cohabitation, Duration Squared

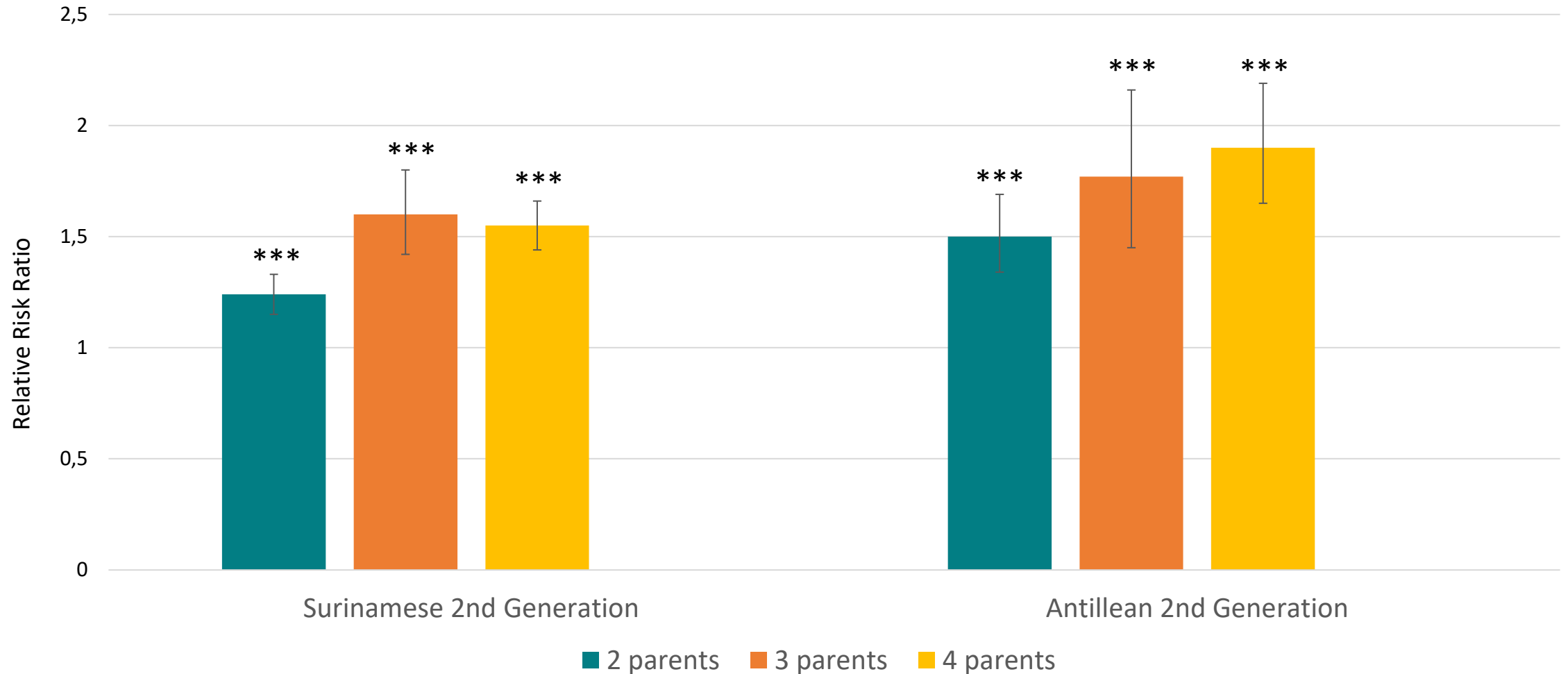
## By gender



Reference Category: Man 2nd generation – Woman Dutch

Control variables: Age Difference, Educational Difference, Age Youngest Partner, Child Before & During Cohabitation, Registered Partnership, Duration Unmarried Cohabitation, Duration Squared

## By number of foreign-born parents of the couple



Reference Category: 1 foreign-born parent

Control variables: Age Difference, Educational Difference, Age Youngest Partner, Child Before & During Cohabitation, Registered Partnership, Duration Unmarried Cohabitation, Duration Squared



# Conclusion

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