Indus Journal of Social Sciences
Online ISSN: 2960-219X
Print ISSN: 2960-2203
Volume 3, Number 1, 2025, Pages 1049 – 1065
Journal Home Page
https://induspublishers.com/IJSS/about

Divorce Dynamics: Understanding the Causes and Consequences of a Growing world

Ali Bukhtiar[1], Usman Ghani Usmani[2], Muhammad Faiq Butt[3] & Mohsan Iqbal[4]

[1]*Department of Law, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email: alibukhtiar61@gmail.com*
[2]*Department of Law, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email:usmanghanipak207@gmail.com*
[3]*Department of Law, University of Okara, Okara, Pakistan, Email: faiqbutt655@yahoo.com*
[4]*Department of Law, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email:advmohsaniqbal@gmail.com*

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received:	*February*	*20, 2025*
Revised:	*March*	*16, 2025*
Accepted:	*March*	*18, 2025*
Available Online:	*March*	*24, 2025*

Keywords:

Divorce rates, Family Dynamics, Emotional Impact, Relationship Education, Changing Family Structures

Corresponding Author:
Ali Bukhtiar
Email:
alibukhtiar61@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Globally, divorce rates are rising, which represents a dramatic change in the dynamics of contemporary family and relationship dynamics. Economic independence, shifting expectations in partnerships, and shifting social standards are some of the elements driving this trend. Divorce presents significant difficulties for all parties, even though it might give people the strength to leave violent or toxic relationships. Children of divorced parents may face scholastic disruptions, social challenges, and developmental setbacks. Divorced parents also frequently suffer significant emotional, psychological, and financial tolls. This problem affects social structures on a larger scale, placing a burden on mental health services, social support networks, and legal institutions. This review investigates the reasons behind the rising divorce rates, dives into their complex effects, and looks at their wider societal ramifications. In order to lessen negative effects, it also emphasizes the necessity of preventative actions including relationship education, easily accessible counseling, and community-based support. In order to effectively handle this expanding global issue, the study ends with a plea for families and societies to develop resilience and flexibility.

Introduction

In Western nations the dramatic increase in divorce rates over the past few decades has led to a flourishing of theories concerning the behaviour of individuals and couples (Wagner et al. 2015). It has been suggested that the increasing divorce rate is an indication of changing expectations in relationships (Cherlin, 2004) and a greater emphasis on individual liberty (Lesthaeghe, 1995). Additionally, it has been seen as a reflection of ways that men and women's relationship dynamics

have changed, with women controlling more and more aspects of their own life and how couples behave (Becker et al., 1977 & Oppenheimer, 1997). Scholars have recently begun to take notice of a pause in the rising divorce rate trend. In the United States, divorce rates have plateaued since the 1980s and may have lately begun to drop once more (Cohen, 2018).In several European nations, crude divorce rates have also been declining (Andersen, 2016). If rising divorce rates have affected how we view married life, then a partial reversal of that trend ought to spark new ideas and justifications as well. However, academics are still not very interested in the recent potential stabilization of marriage. This can be as a result of changes in the selecting process for marriage. Not all cohabiting partnerships are formally established through marriage nowadays, and many children are raised in homes with unmarried parents (Heuveline & Timberlake, 2004). Accordingly, divorce rates are declining across the board in couple and family life, and as a result, the indicator's usefulness has evolved with time (Cherlin, 2010). Thus, it would make sense to enquire: Has the overall stability of unions evolved over time? This chapter's goal is to attempt to provide an answer to this query regarding cohabiting couples and marriages in Britain. Sadly, when moving from the research there are several conceptual and empirical difficulties of marital stability to the study of union stability. Giving a summary of these many issues and offering suggestions for further data gathering and investigation are two of the book chapter's main objectives. Over the past few decades, there has been increased focus on issues with estimating cohabitation and divorce rates (Kennedy and Ruggles, 2014), but estimating trends in union stability has received hardly any attention. The two primary sub-questions will serve as the framework for the chapter. First, how should unions be defined and should union stability assessments take into account all kinds of relationships? Instead of giving a detailed explanation of what a union is, this section evaluates various workable choices based on their suitability for unambiguous measurement and likelihood of being pertinent to social scientific research. Second, what information is best suited to objectively record union stability trends. In the paper's empirical portion, a number of tests will be conducted using data from the British Household Panel Survey and Understanding Society to gain insight into how severe these biases are. An estimate of how union stability in Britain has changed over time will be given, as best as feasible, based on the outcomes of these tests.

Causes of Divorce

(Damota, 2019) highlights several key factors related to divorce. Marriages are most fragile in the first four years. While premarital cohabitation is linked to increased divorce rates, research suggests this is due to pre-existing differences between those who cohabitate and those who do not, rather than the cohabitation itself. Subsequent marriages also carry a slightly elevated risk of failure compared to first marriages. Furthermore, women are more likely to initiate divorce proceedings and tend to exhibit greater decisiveness in their separation compared to men (Asghar & Mumtaz, 2024). Adamu and Temesgen (2013) identify common grounds for divorce, including inadequate communication, deficient conflict resolution skills, waning affection and commitment, financial strain, substance abuse (specifically drunkenness), immaturity, and physical abuse. However, women's education, arguments over childrearing, prolonged absences from home, and disobedience to domestic responsibilities are the least common causes of divorce. Schaefer (2004) listed a number of criteria, including the following. First, there are liberal divorce laws that allow a couple to end their marriage without either party facing consequences. These laws are also referred to as no-fault divorce laws. Second, divorce is thought to be a reasonable strategy for a newly formed family to avoid having a lot of kids.

Estimating Trends in Union Stability

To determine the length of co-resident partnerships and marriages, researchers rely on several data sources. These generally fall into three categories: survey data (both prospective, which follow relationships over time, and retrospective, which ask about past relationships), and administrative data (such as marriage and divorce records). We will examine each of these in more detail.

Administrative Data

Governmental organisations frequently have data on people who live together, but unless they have officially recognised their relationship, such administrative data frequently do not indicate if co-residents are a couple. Studies on cohabitation and separation have used administrative data; These findings present challenges that necessitate specific methodological choices. One approach is to restrict the sample to parents who have children together (Thomson and Eriksson, 2013). Another involves making assumptions, for example, assuming that opposite-sex individuals living in the same household are a couple (Jalovaara & Kulu, 2018). A third option is to calculate the likelihood that co-residents are a couple or to cross-reference with other data to confirm the relationship (Esteve et al., 2012). However, it is yet unknown how frequently these presumptions and practices result in single people being mistakenly classified as couples and how significant this is for estimations of trends in the stability of unions based on administrative data. Finnish registry data, which has the special ability to identify residency at the dwelling level, was used by (Jalovaara & Kulu, 2018). Two people were considered a couple if they were of the opposite sex, lived together for 90 days or more, were not close relatives, and were not more than 20 years apart in age. The majority of cohabiting relationships are probably included in this definition, although it may also cover people of the other sex who live together but are not romantically attached. Analysis of Finnish data from the European Social Survey (2002–2014) revealed that 0.6% of respondents reported co-residing with an unrelated adult of the opposite sex but not as a couple (Jalovaara & Kulu, 2018). It remains unclear how this small percentage of misclassified relationships might influence predictions about trends in relationship stability, and further investigation is required.. Furthermore, administrative data is superior to survey data. Lastly, researchers in a small number of nations are now the only ones with access to administrative data.

Survey Data

Numerous previous researches on union stability have made use of survey data (Brown & Green, 2016). Self-reported couple status can be included in survey data, although selective non-response or misreporting may skew the results (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Studies on the measuring of cohabitation provide the majority of the misreporting data currently available that are pertinent to this chapter. For survey participants, figuring out whether a couple is cohabiting is not always simple (Manning & Smock, 2005). In this sense, the language employed to identify couple status seems significant. In their qualitative investigation, Manning and Smock (2005) discovered that a lot of people are perplexed by the term "unmarried partner," which is frequently used in sizable US datasets. Some couples may be reluctant to reveal their union status due to social shame or fear of losing welfare benefits, in addition to not knowing if they meet a certain criterion (Teitler et al., 2006). According to these claims, several studies' prospective data did, in fact, reveal lower rates of cohabitation than their retrospective data (Berrington et al., 2014).However, because retrospective data over-reports cohabitation, discrepancies with prospective data may also surface. If people do not remember events correctly, they may misreport them in one of two ways, according to (Teitler et al., 2010). First of all, people have a tendency to report states consistently, which makes them more likely to link the current circumstance to previously reported situations.

Second, respondents may retroactively "downgrade" the status of previous partnerships because memories are influenced by present emotions. More specifically, respondents may conclude that the union "existed" if it still exists today and that it did not "exist" if the relationship ended if the union's status in the past was unclear. By contrasting prospective and retrospective cohabitation data from the Fragile Families Study, they discovered evidence in favour of these hypotheses. After giving birth, moms were questioned if they lived with their child's father as part of the Fragile Families Study. A year after giving birth, mothers were asked to reflect on whether they were living with their child's father at the time. It seems that time and circumstances can change how we remember things. Many women, looking back, recalled living with the father even if they hadn't reported it that way initially. But for women whose relationships had ended by the time of the follow-up interview, the memory sometimes shifted in the other direction. They were more likely to remember not living with the father at birth, even if they had said they were at the time (Teitler et al., 2010). On relationship status retrospective reports may overestimate union durability if they do; in fact, rely significantly on present relationship status: unions that survive are reported, while those that does not. Retrospective union histories are likely to exaggerate union stability for other reasons. People may fail to report (brief) cohabiting unions that occurred in the distant past due to recall bias. " It's hard for people to remember all the details of their past relationships, including when they lived with someone. Because of this, when researchers ask people about their history of living together, they often find that people forget or don't mention periods of cohabitation, especially those that happened a long time ago. So, records of cohabitation are more accurate for recent years than for years further in the past" according to research by Hayford and Morgan (2008). If both assessment sites were farther apart in time, there would be more differences between prospective and retrospective reports of cohabitation, according to (Teitler et al., 2010). According to (Brown and Mitchell, 2010), non-response is an additional cause of bias in survey data, in addition to misreporting. When someone's love life is a bit of a rollercoaster – with relationships starting and ending frequently – it can be hard to focus on things like filling out surveys. They might not even start a survey about relationships, or if they do, the constant changes in their life might make it difficult for them to keep participating in a study that lasts for a long time, which might result in selective non-response. Different response rates are a problem for all estimates derived from survey data, but selective attrition would be a significant barrier to using longitudinal prospective data in particular. Numerous researches have demonstrated the connection between attrition and married status (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). The use of sample weights may be used to account for attrition that is dependent on traits seen in earlier waves. However, such changes are unlikely to be beneficial if attrition is directly linked to the union dissolution event. Two factors may make respondents who discontinue participation in a longitudinal survey particularly likely to do so: a) At least one person's residential mobility is included in the union dissolution, which could make it more difficult to get in touch with survey participants in a follow-up round; b) Going through a recent breakup is tough. People who are dealing with that are probably not in the mood to answer a bunch of questions in a survey (Huizinga et al., 2006), particularly if it asks about their past relationships. It has still to be determined how much attrition is linked to separation events.

The Transition from Marital to Union Stability Conceptually

In Europe, more and more partnerships deviate from the "traditional" path of romance, marriage, and childbearing. Therefore, the vast majority of relationships and families in society are no longer covered by commonly used metrics like marital stability (Cherlin, 2010). We've got pretty good ways of measuring how stable marriages are, but could we develop something similar for other types of long-term relationships? The challenge is that marriages have a clear "beginning" – a wedding day that everyone recognizes. This official starting point makes it easy to track how long

a marriage lasts. Other relationships don't usually have such a clear-cut marker. Authorities can gather legal agreements to create official marriage statistics. Other types of relationships frequently lack the distinct moment at which a pair declares their relationship status. For example, asking when a pair began "dating" frequently results in a discussion between partners about reconstructing prior events. A query like this might be construed in a number of ways, such as initial romantic involvement or an unofficial announcement of a couple status. How can we determine who is in a relationship at any given time since it is impossible to pinpoint the exact moment a relationship begins? For cohabiting couples, a transitional period may be more obvious. According to Perelli-Harris and Gassen (2012), a lot of cohabiting couples register with the government in different ways or sign cohabitation agreements. Therefore, registered partnerships ought to be distinguishable in a way that is comparable to marriages. Nonetheless, a large number of cohabiting couples never register with the government. Therefore, many long-term relationships are still likely to be overlooked by a new union stability metric that solely takes into account registered partnerships and weddings. Is it possible to define the beginning of a cohabiting relationship in other, more objective ways? A coresidential relationship may be said to begin when a couple moves in together. Nonetheless, qualitative studies have revealed that people frequently move in together gradually, beginning with a few evenings a week and progressing to full-time cohabitation (Manning & Smock, 2005). It is difficult to determine when a co-residing relationship began because of this sliding into cohabitation. There may be very objective methods to determine whether two people are co-residents, such as registering at a certain location or, for example, keeping track of how many nights one spends away from the partner's house (not including travel). Determining co-residence in this manner has several drawbacks, such as potential inability to register a new address. More significantly, however, two people living together does not always indicate that they are a couple. Therefore, it is possible to define co-residence in a way that makes it measurable in a fairly objective manner. However, it will always be essential to ask co-residents if they are a couple in order to quantify co-residential love relationships. In contrast to measurements of marital stability, a new union stability metric that takes cohabiting couples into account will inevitably need to rely on some kind of self-reported relationship status. But why should we completely disregard other relationships that also rely on this kind of self-identification if the concept of a union ultimately hinges on couples' self-identification as such? Definitions of non-residential partnerships, for example, depend on people considering themselves to be a couple (Rasmussen et al., 2015). When couples don't live together, you have everything from serious "Living Apart Together" (LAT) relationships, where there's a strong commitment, to casual dating where things are much less serious (Boertien, 2020). The question is, if we have to rely on people's own descriptions of their relationships, why not just count every relationship people say they're in when we're trying to figure out how stable relationships are in general? What would be the problem with that?In addition to being the primary setting in which relationships occurred, marriage has been extensively researched due to its effects on well-being (Amato, 2010), its ability to pool financial resources (Lyngstad et al., 2020), its impact on family relationships and social networks upon dissolution (Kalmijn, 2012), and its historical role as the primary setting for childbirth and upbringing (Perelli-Harris et al., 2012). Additionally, marriages define gender relations because they entail a split of paid and unpaid labour (Perelli-Harris, 2012).Because of these aspects of marriage, ideas and research on issues like gender relations (Perelli-Harris, 2012), child development (Amato, 2010), inequality of opportunity (McLanahan & Percheski, 2008), and child development (Goldscheider et al., 2015) have been concerned about changes in divorce rates. In other words, people's lives are impacted by marriage and divorce. By itself, the self-declaration that one is in a relationship with another person does not indicate that one's life has been impacted in any way. Marriage changes things – there are legal agreements and obligations involved. While any relationship can affect your finances, your relationships with others, and how you're doing emotionally, not all relationships have the same weight as marriage. Changes in marriage patterns

have a much bigger impact on society than changes in more casual relationships. Therefore, if we just counted every relationship people said they were in when measuring relationship stability, it wouldn't tell us much for most social science research. One solution is to consider how committed people are to the relationship for the long haul, which is something researchers have already done with "Living Apart Together" (LAT) relationships (Connidis et al., 2017). Coordination of behaviour is necessary for a long-term commitment. Therefore, compared to less committed relationships, committed partnerships are probably going to have a greater influence on people's life. Are there methods to gauge commitment that are comparatively objective? Focusing on the couple's joint investments—having children together being the most obvious example—might be one approach (Wiik, 2009). But not all long-term committed couples have children, including those who desire children but do not, and not all fertility is planned. However, recent research have adopted the technique of examining the stability of families with children (Musick & Michelmore, 2018), which is particularly pertinent to enquiries concerning child development and opportunity disparity (McLanahan & Percheski, 2008). Co-ownership of assets, such a house, could be another objective measure. A measure based on economic resource ownership, however, is probably only going to apply to certain (economically) segments of society. Consider co-residence as a gauge of how much a relationship affects people's life if it is difficult to quantify commitment objectively using a single metric that can be applied to all relationships. The concept of coresidence is important in this situation, although co-residence has at least some effect on people's lives if it includes splitting household chores, paying rent, and sharing bills for a minimum amount of time. Co-residence necessitates a minimum degree of coordination of practical and economic responsibilities, much like marriage, where the declaration of being a legal couple demands a minimum coordination of legal responsibilities. This distinguishing characteristic is not always present in non-resident self-declared relationships. So, when it comes to creating a new way to measure relationship stability, we basically have three choices: 1) count every single relationship people say they're in, including marriages; 2) count only couples who live together, including married couples; or 3) count only officially recognized partnerships and marriages. We could track option 1 without even asking people to define their relationships. But options 2 and 3 probably give us a better picture of the relationships that actually impact people's lives. In this chapter, I'm going with option 2 because option 3 might also include relationships that don't really have a big effect on people. This decision can be criticized for a number of reasons. One could claim, for example, that committed LAT relationships have an equal impact on people's life as many co-residential partnerships. The problem is, it's hard to distinguish between committed "Living Apart Together" (LAT) relationships and other less serious relationships where people don't live together, unless we can find a more objective way to define commitment. And even when people do live together, as Hiekel et al. (2014) show, those relationships can be very different, ranging from deeply committed partnerships to more casual arrangements. This means we can't assume that all cohabiting relationships are equally important when we're trying to measure relationship stability. Of course, some might argue that even marriages can lack commitment and end quickly. But this is a discussion that's likely to go on for a while.

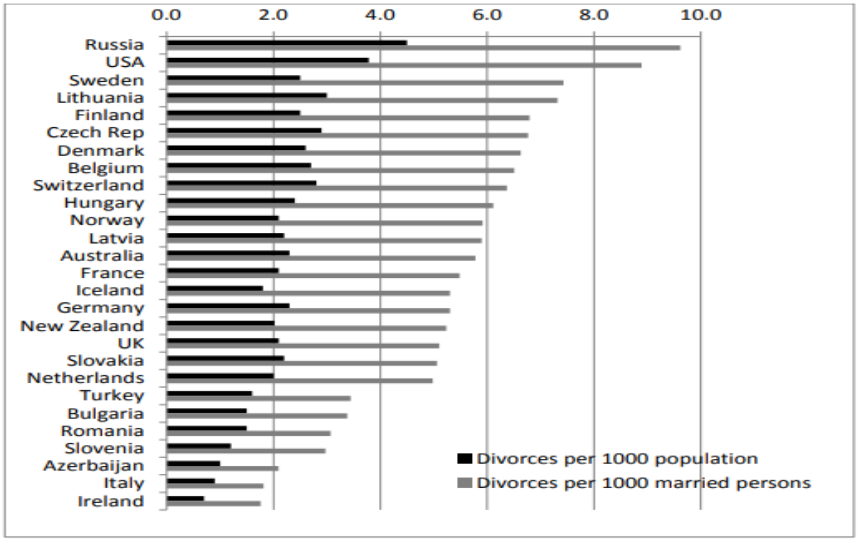
Interpreting Divorce Patterns: The Effect of Legal Changes

The United States, Russia, and Sweden—the three nations leading the divorce statistics in Figure 1 highlight the challenge of pinpointing characteristics typical of high-divorce countries, as this ambiguity spans a wide array of differences across nations. Russia, which holds the highest divorce rate, ranks among the least developed industrialized nations (placing nearly one-third of the way down on the UNDP's Human Development Index in 2012). In contrast, Sweden and the United States, positioned just below Russia in divorce rates, stand out as highly developed countries. Historically and internationally, the United States is relatively secular, yet it remains one

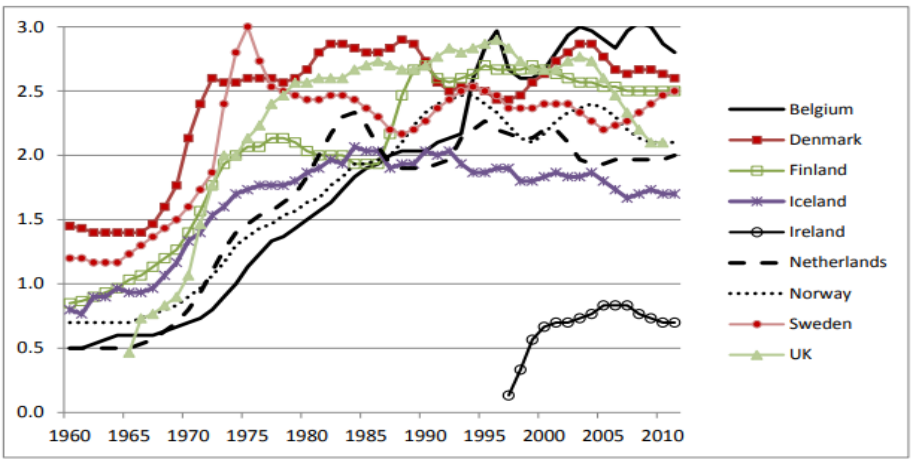
of the most religious Western nations today; according to Ronald Inglehart's cultural scale, Sweden and Russia are classified as among the most secular societies worldwide (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Both Russia and the US have traditionally seen high levels of early marriages, contributing to marital instability, whereas Sweden's notably late average marriage age does not appear to provide any safeguard against this issue. Meanwhile, the Catholic rationale for low divorce rates has diminished in relevance since Portugal and Spain moved away from the group of countries with low divorce rates, similar to Austria's exit at the onset of the divorce revolution. On the other end of the spectrum, Italy and Ireland may have low divorce rates because of their Catholic heritage. In 2009, the closest year, there were two divorce data for 27 nations. When looking at causes for cross-national divorce trends, we are particularly concerned with the divorce laws themselves as one possible causative element. Divorce rates have generally increased in recent decades in most countries at the same time that divorce rules have been liberalized. The majority of research on this topic has been comparative studies of different jurisdictions using econometric techniques, and the availability of multiple before-and-after examples of divorce liberalization has made it possible to address the technical difficulties associated with inferring causal correlations from statistical associations in this type of research (Wolfers, 2006). Due to this coincidence, a considerable amount of social science research has been carried out on the possible causal links between the two: Did the introduction of "easy" divorce lead to higher divorce rates, or was the legal change merely an effect of larger forces that influenced both behavior and legislation in the same direction? Early studies mainly concentrated on comparing different U.S. states, focusing on the variations in the dates when divorce became legal across states and the corresponding patterns in divorce rates. More recently, research has expanded to include comparisons among European countries as well as studies within individual nations (Huizinga et al., 2006). For an extended period, the results of these studies were ambiguous. However, as data and analytical methods improved and more jurisdictions were added for comparison, a tentative agreement emerged: easy divorce laws typically lead to a moderate increase in divorce rates, although this effect is likely only temporary (Fahey, 2013). On average, relaxing divorce regulations resulted in about a 10% rise in divorce rates over a ten-year span, according to a study of studies in this field. Given that divorce rates in western countries doubled and tripled throughout the reform era, this is a modest influence (Allen & Gallagher, 2007).

(Figure 1). There were two divorce laws in 27 separate countries in 2009, the closest year.

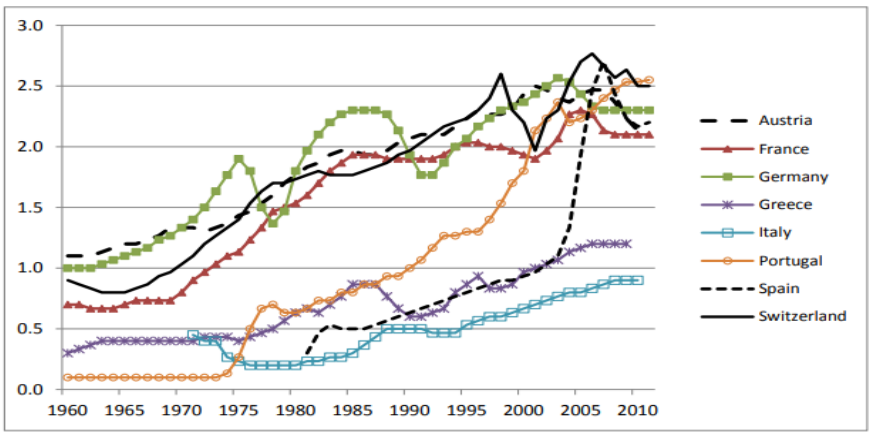
Different legal responses to a broken marriage



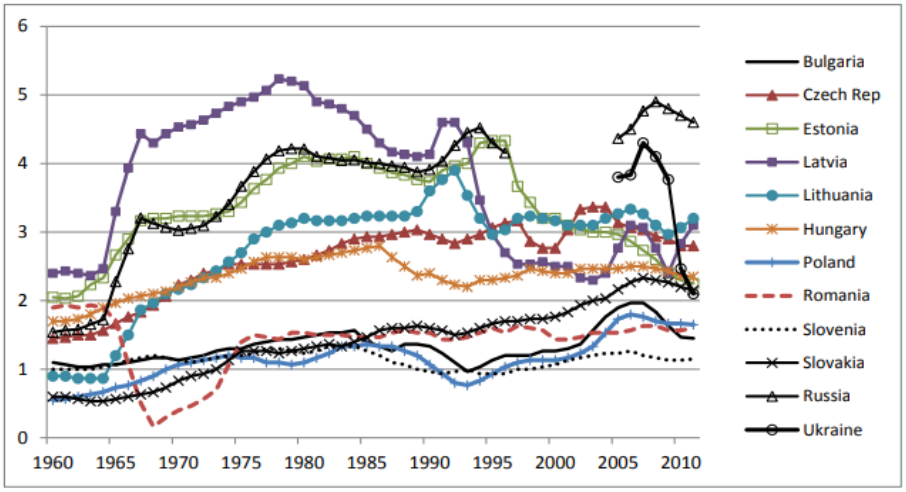
Northern Europe



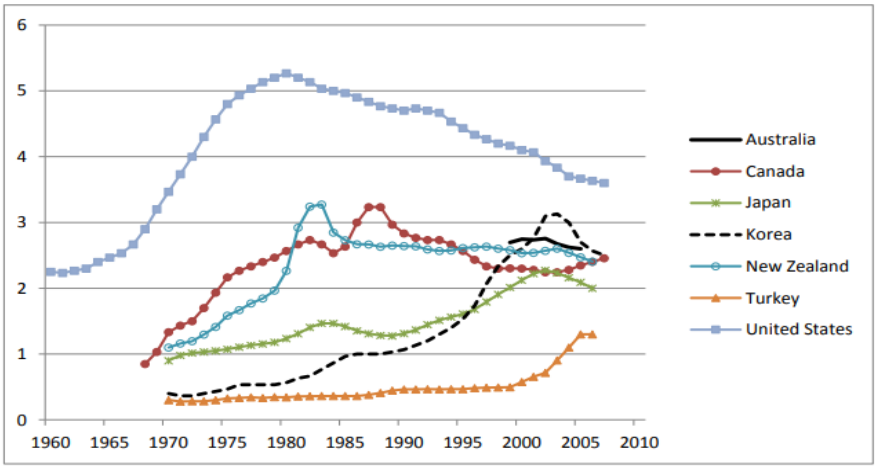
Central and Southern Europe



Eastern Europe



Other Industrialized Countries



Legal Approaches to Address Marital Breakdown

A deeper understanding of this issue can emerge by examining countries that have strayed from the norm by postponing the liberalization of divorce and creating distinctive legal solutions for marital instability. Is there a different trend in marriage dissolution within these nations, potentially shaped by their singular legal frameworks? What insights can we derive from their experiences regarding the law's influence on marital stability? Spain serves as a compelling example to address these questions, given that the significant rise in divorce rates following the advent of the "express divorce" law in 2005 seems to illustrate the powerful effect of more accessible divorce regulations. This situation is particularly noteworthy as it mirrors the extreme surges in divorce rates observed in various countries that experienced divorce reforms during the 1960s and 1970s. However, a closer examination of underlying trends indicates that the changes in divorce rates in Spain were less abrupt and not as heavily influenced by the law as the figures might suggest. Consequently, Spain's experience may not be entirely unique and could yield broader insights into how rapid increases in divorce rates in other regions might be interpreted.

Marriage's Deinstitutionalization and Cohabitation

In various nations where a new array of relationships has become part of family dynamics, Ireland's inconsistent method of handling union separations before divorce may have mirrored the country's delayed advancement in family law, yet it could also indicate potential changes ahead. The regulations concerning the termination of unions will likely need to evolve as the diversity of relationship types and entry points continues to grow. While divorce remains the most prevalent means of ending a partnership, marriage is still the most common way to initiate one. The theory of the Second Demographic Transition posits that the social upheaval in western nations after the 1960s was primarily driven by shifts in relationship patterns (Lesthaeghe et al., 2006). The rise in divorces, the decrease in marriages, the increase in childbearing outside of wedlock, the growing trend of cohabitation, and more individuals living solo all contribute to this trend (Sobotka & Toulemon, 2008). This discussion zeros in on the critical elements of these new family structures that are most pertinent to the legal management of union separations. One such element is that cohabitation may help decrease both the volume and severity of divorces by shifting the source of instability from marriage to more informal partnerships. The mechanism most likely driving this change is the tendency for couples with less stable or promising relationships to gravitate towards cohabitation or single parenthood rather than marriage. A comprehensive qualitative study from the United States has highlighted this phenomenon. It reveals that economically disadvantaged American women aspiring to have children often choose to raise them alone—not due to a lack of

appreciation for marriage, but because they view it as a distant ideal that they might not be able to maintain even if they did marry: "Poor women believe it is better to have children outside of marriage than to marry foolishly only to get divorced later," as noted by Gibson et al. (2005), reflecting a dramatic shift from middle-class values. In contrast, within the distinctly class-divided family landscape of the United States, middle-class and professional women are more inclined to postpone motherhood until they finish their education, launch their careers, and find partners who can provide them with genuine companionship and participate actively as both husbands and fathers. Consequently, couples of higher statuses are better equipped to minimize divorce rates and avoid unstable relationships while maintaining much of the traditional structure and stability associated with marriage (albeit with more equitable gender roles). In contrast, lower-status parents and their children are more likely to face the disruptions and instability captured by Sarah McLanahan in her concepts of the "fragile family" and the diverging outcomes for children from affluent versus lower-status backgrounds (McLanahan and Percheski, 2008).

In northern Europe, it is widely believed that unmarried couples living together is more common and possibly more similar to marriage compared to the situation in the United States, It is generally accepted that, at least in northern Europe, cohabitation is more prevalent and perhaps less different from marriage than it is in America, and that class disparities in these patterns are less noticeable in Europe (Kiernan et al., 2011).A careful examination, however, shows that cohabitation is socially stratified in Europe and even in the Nordic nations, where it is common, in a manner similar to that of the United States, albeit possibly not to the same degree. Furthermore, compared to their married counterparts, cohabiting couples who begin having children have a weaker quality of relationship and a higher divorce rate (Perelli-Harris et al., 2010). While the signs of instability typically focus on couples who live together without marriage, evidence suggests that the paths to family formation differ between married and cohabiting couples in this aspect as well. This doesn't necessarily mean we would observe correlations between increasing cohabitation rates and decreasing divorce rates, as one might expect if cohabitation were to attract a growing proportion of the relationship instability that might otherwise be associated with marriage. The decrease in divorce rates in the United States since the 1980s has been attributed to various elements, including individuals marrying at older ages and increased educational attainment among partners (Fahey, 2013). While it is possible that engaging in cohabitation during early adulthood may lead to more enduring marriages by allowing individuals to gain relationship experience, there is no substantial evidence suggesting that shifts in cohabitation trends are responsible for the enhanced marital stability observed in the US throughout the 1980s. Likewise, it appears that the high prevalence of cohabitation in Nordic nations had no impact on divorce rates, unless one contends that divorce rates would be considerably higher if cohabitation hadn't attracted less stable relationships. Regardless of its impact on marital stability, the rise of cohabitation as a family structure has consequences for family law. This development necessitates that government regulation of relationship dissolution expand beyond divorce to encompass the termination of various non-marital partnerships. As a result, determining whether these partnerships evolve into enduring, family-like bonds or remain temporary, legally insignificant arrangements can be difficult. The arrival of children is often considered a crucial milestone in this regard, and the regulatory issues raised by offspring from unconventional unions are not unprecedented. Western family law has extensively debated the question of whether and how to hold fathers responsible for supporting their children born outside of marriage. Historically, this desire was limited by a competing interest in preserving the sanctity of matrimony. This necessitated denying unwed mothers and their children the same rights as their married counterparts, and even subjecting them to social stigma, in order to prevent the moral hazard that could arise from treating extramarital relationships and parenthood on par with marital ones. The arrival of children is a major life change. When those children are born outside of marriage, it raises complex legal and social

questions, and these aren't new. Western family law has long wrestled with the question of fathers' responsibility to support children born outside of wedlock. Historically, there was a strong tension between wanting fathers to be financially responsible and a desire to protect the institution of marriage. This often meant that unmarried mothers and their children were denied the same rights and faced social stigma. The reasoning was that if extramarital relationships and parenthood were treated the same as marital ones, it would undermine marriage itself. It seems we're shifting back to some of the core issues that used to dominate legal thinking around separation. Instead of primarily focusing on divorce and the right to remarry, we're seeing renewed emphasis on practical concerns like financial support (maintenance), which gets custody of the children and when the other parent can see them (access), inheritance rights, and how family property should be divided. Beyond legal frameworks, another key way the government responds to family instability is by providing services and financial assistance to struggling families. This is a crucial aspect of how society deals with these complex situations.

Effects of Divorce

The Effect of Divorce on Children

Children drop out of school, become addicted, have sex before getting married, and exhibit delinquent behaviour in their communities, according to Damota (2019). Divorced families are the source of crimes, thievery, and immoral behaviour. Divorce may have the following effects on the psychological and social development of children according to Shahram, Ali, and Ghoobad (2012), referenced in Adamu and Temesgen (2014). These are:

a. Delinquency and antisocial conduct in kids and teenagers.
b. Prostitution, particularly in areas of ignorance and poverty.
c. Using youngsters for illicit purposes, such as distributing drugs, and abusing women, men, and children.
d. Children who exhibit maladjustment and aggression, as well as wander from their home.
e. Failing in school, a suicidal spouse or child.
f. Decrease in the desire to get married, particularly among children of divorced parents; and g) Children become less self-assured and fail to envision a bright future.

In Western countries, a lot of research has been done on the effects of divorce on children. Academic performance, health, behavioural issues, and emotional well-being are just a few of the outcomes that are looked at. In general, researchers have discovered that divorce negatively impacts the results of children (Amat0, 2001). Divorce also has lingering consequences that persist throughout adulthood. In addition to having worse physical health, lower incomes, greater rates of depression, and lower educational achievement, adults with divorced parents are more likely to get divorced themselves (Wolfinger et al., 2003). It's unclear how much of the research's conclusions apply to kids in Sub-Saharan Africa. No matter where they live, children may experience similar effects from divorce. One can distinguish between the short-, medium-, and long-term effects of divorce (Amato, 2001).

1. Short term effects: Most kids have some adjustment issues for the first two years after a divorce. Girls typically have emotional issues, while boys typically exhibit behavioural issues.

2. Medium term effects: Two statistical methods can be used to demonstrate the effects of divorce on children.

(1) A comparison of the mean levels of well-being (or maladjustment) experienced by children from intact families and those from divorced families.

(2) as the percentage of children of divorced parents who have difficulty adjusting. Children of divorce have regularly been found to have a lower mean level of maladjustment than children from intact households on a variety of adjustment criteria, such as conduct issues, emotional issues, academic achievement, self-esteem, and connections with parents. Because of this, several literary translators have come to the false idea that divorce invariably negatively affects children.

3. Long term effects: A small proportion of individuals from divorced families experience difficulties in forming stable relationships, struggle with psychological well-being, and achieve lower socioeconomic status compared to those raised in intact families.

Effect of Divorce on Parents

The financial consequences of divorce are not equally distributed between men and women. (Abera, 2008) research revealed a significant disparity: men's incomes see a decrease of around 10%, whereas women's incomes drop by about 30%. This financial strain contributes to greater hardship for divorced women compared to their married counterparts, especially in the initial three years after the divorce. This is further reflected in the higher levels of anxiety, depression, anger, and self-doubt reported by custodial mothers in the first year following divorce, compared to married mothers. They also disciplined their children more, talked to them less, showed somewhat less concern for them, and used punishment more inconsistently. Similarly, divorced mothers had more stressful events than married women, such as layoffs, demotions, accidents, significant illnesses, and problems with their own parents (Kotwal & Prabhakar, 2009).Divorced mothers are also caught in a vicious cycle of financial hardships and other unpleasant life occurrences. The results demonstrated that women often feel a sense of identity loss and rootlessness after a divorce. For women whose identities were formerly associated with their spouses, this is especially true. Ethiopian divorce statistics indicate that women, frequently housewives and primary caregivers, are rarely awarded child support (Trask & Semhal, 2007). This economic vulnerability is compounded by the fact that many divorced women enter the informal sector after separation, engaging in activities such as selling crafts, gathering wood, or small-scale retailing (Tella, Arekie, Injera, etc.), as highlighted by a 2015 study on the socioeconomic effects of divorce. These circumstances contribute to significant hardship and stress for these single mothers. Furthermore, Serkalem's study demonstrated that divorced women are unable to obtain the required moral and financial assistance because of their social interactions. Life changes Divorce causes major life changes for custodial parents, including a shift in living arrangements, financial difficulties, social network isolation, and role tension from the added responsibilities of caring for children and working outside the home. Due to changes in living arrangements, financial status, social networks, and role responsibilities, the majority of persons experience a decline in their physical and mental health in the immediate post-divorce period. These health problems, however, disappear for most people within two years following the divorce.

Mood Variations: Men and women both are extremely vulnerable emotionally in the two years after a breakup and in the period before it. Both the knowledge of the potential for a new way of life and the escape from the emotional pain of continuous marital strife cause periods of euphoria. The loss of a familiar way of life, the death of a long-term spouse, and the fear that one would not be able to manage the particular challenges that come with being a single parent or individual are often associated with episodes of low mood.

Identity Problems: Identity crises are associated with separation, particularly for women. A lot of women define themselves in terms of their spouses or kids before they divorce. For many women, their social circles are intertwined with their partners'. Divorce can be particularly challenging for those who relied on their husbands to shape their social lives, as they must then embark on a process of self-discovery and establish their own independent social networks. This process involves reevaluating their self-concept and understanding their individual roles. Women who maintain employment outside the home tend to experience fewer identity issues following divorce.

Escaping the Cycle of Negativity

According to a number of studies, some people support divorce because it has several advantages, even though the majority of societies around the world view it negatively. There are times when people are able to understand the benefits of ending a marriage, even if they are going through the most difficult and terrible circumstances. According to study, after a divorce, these people start to feel more positive about their lives (Boon, 2005). The breakdown of a marriage is advantageous for those going through the divorce process for a number of reasons that allow them to preserve their wellbeing. The negative impacts of divorce although for women have been overstated, (Boon, 2005) asserts that divorce can also have positive effects, especially for those whose marriage was violent and abusive and offers a way out of an unhappy and toxic relationship. Similarly, it has been demonstrated that people eventually experience relief from a violent relationship following the breakdown of their marriage. This is because the stress and emotional strain they previously endured in their abusive marriage have been eliminated since their divorce. Accordingly, people's psychological and physical health improves when unhealthy relationships are ended (Damota, 2019). Furthermore, research has shown that the majority of women experience improved personal development following marriage dissolution, which results in significant psychological functioning. As they are freed, some divorced women become bold and vivacious, and they can utilise the experience to begin a significant phase of emotional development. In a similar vein, (Writer, 2010) noted that divorce frees women from their husbands' control to engage with society and raise their children as they see fit. In addition, after a divorce, women are free to spend time alone in their own space and are less preoccupied with their husbands' demands and temperament. Additionally, research shows that divorced women report having more control over their lives than married people (Boon, 2005). Additionally, women who have divorced can feel a sense of independence that frees them from unwelcome connections, enables them to move on from their grievances, and allows them to move on with their lives. Divorce has the additional benefit of assisting divorcees in reviving themselves. Numerous studies have shown that after a divorce, people can engage in whatever activity they like, enjoy themselves without limitations, and create new social networks (Damota, 2019).

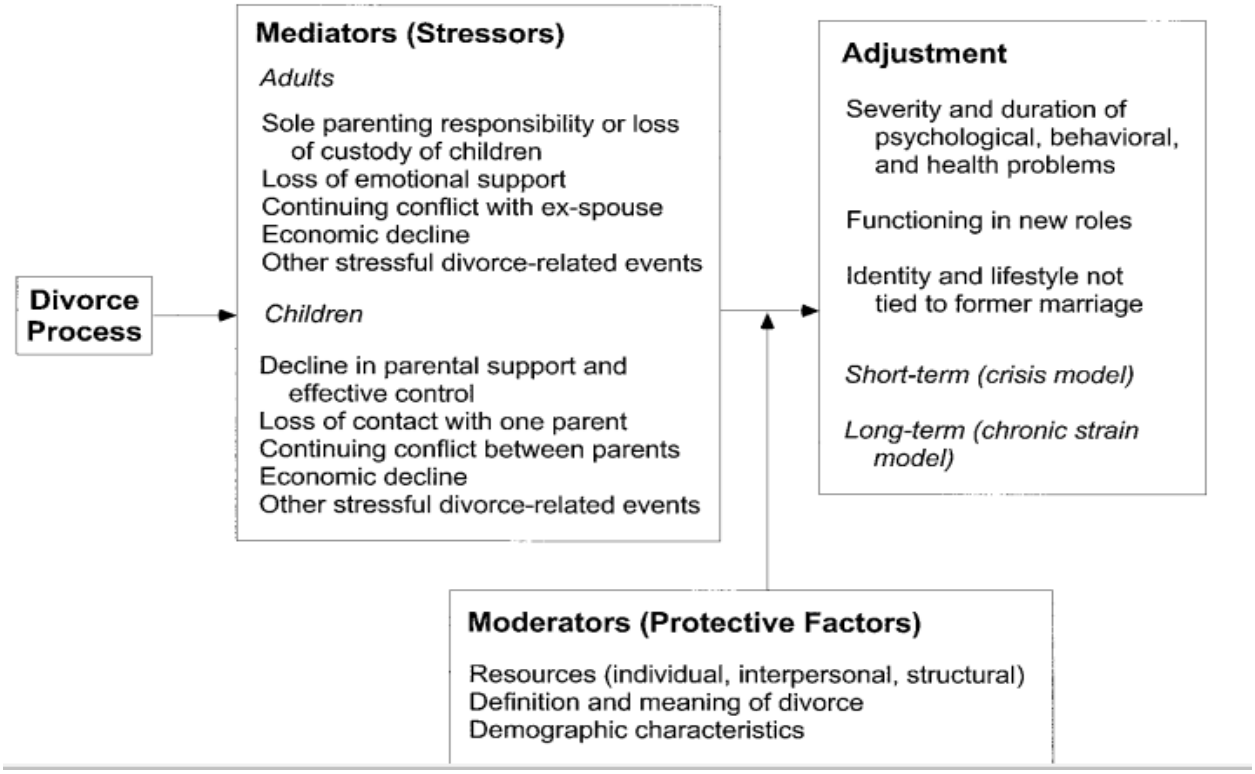
Divorce as Crisis or Chronic Strain?

The research of the 1990s left open the question of whether divorce is a source of chronic pressures that last forever or a transient crisis to which most people adjust. Unhappiness, distress, depression, alcohol use, and health issues had mostly decreased two or three years after the breakup, according to a number of studies; this finding lends credence to the crisis model (Lorenz et al., 1998). On the other hand, unless they remarried, other studies did not detect improvements in people's functioning in the post-divorce period. This finding lends credence to the chronic strain hypothesis (Johnson & Wu, 1996). Additionally, it was discovered by (Chung et al., 2004) that divorced dads' parental stress levels rose over time instead of falling. Of course, there may be some validity to both the crisis and chronic strain theories. About one-fourth of her respondents deteriorated with time, despite the fact that half of them improved (Kitson, 1992). According to

these findings, some people may benefit from a crisis model, which suggests gradual adjustment, while others may benefit from a chronic strain model, which suggests ongoing, long-term issues.

The Divorce-Stress-Adjustment Perspective

It can be elaborated in this way:



Conclusion

Significant changes in society standards, economic independence, and individual expectations in relationships are reflected in the rising divorce rates worldwide. The effects of this phenomenon on people, families, and society at large are significant. Divorce frequently causes co-parenting difficulties, financial strain, and emotional suffering on a personal level. When parental relationships end, children may experience psychological problems, poor academic achievement, and changed social behaviours. The rising divorce rate puts strain on legal frameworks, mental health services, and social support networks at the societal level. The effects are not always detrimental, though. Divorce can offer those who are stuck in violent or poisonous relationships a means to find safety and fulfillment in their lives. The change also reflects the increasing acceptance of individual autonomy and agency in contemporary partnerships. A diversified strategy is needed to address the rising divorce rates, one that includes expanding access to counseling services, developing communication skills, and promoting relationship education. In the end, even while the trend is a reflection of shifting social dynamics, it also emphasizes how critical it is to cultivate wholesome connections and offer support networks in order to lessen the negative impacts on families and communities. Addressing the difficulties presented by this worldwide issue can be facilitated by placing an emphasis on proactive tactics and flexible social structures.

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