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After the First Marriage

Dynamics of Partnerships, Routes into and from Lone Parent Situations in Hungary in the Second Half of Twentieth Century

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I. The aims of research and previous findings

In my dissertation I investigate the dynamics of partnerships after the first marriage: more specifically the key factors playing role in marriage dissolution and repartnering after marriage. In this paper I deal with demographic variables in particular as their effects are generally strong and significant with regard to both processes. But I also take into the account some variables for social status and cultural background (education, religiosity). I formulate answers to the following types of questions: „Do the parental background, family composition in childhood and divorce of the parents increase the risk of marriage dissolution among their children?“, „Which factor has a greater impact on the risk of divorcing : the number of children or the age of children?“, „Is there a significant difference on the risk of repartnering after divorce between men and women, in favour of men?“, „Do children decrease the risk of repartnering? Is there any difference in this respect between men and women? If there is such kind of difference, then how strong is it?“.

Originally I was interested in lone parent families. When I started to study this topic, it became clear soon, that to be lone parent is a temporary situation, and the meaning of this situation depends on the way of family formation (separation, divorce, death of spouse, for example) strongly. My main interest were lone parents after breaking up a relationship (either marriage or cohabitation), and repartnering as a way out from lone parent situation. In this way I got back to the problem of the relationship between parents, respectively – in a wider sense – the dynamics of partnerships with and without children. In my paper I study the dissolution of first marriage and repartnering after divorce – marriage or cohabitation -, and the role of children's role in these processes.

Previous theoretical and empirical findings

With regard to the dissolution of partnership several theories have been formulated. Most frequently economic and socialisation explanations have been constructed; the formulation of new partnership has been integrated into the theory of marriage markets and exchange theory has provided strong explanations concerning both processes.

Economic theories understand families as economic units in which family mem-

bers make investments and accumulate assets. In this perspective a child is part of marriage specific capital - and its value is increasing with the length of the relationship and marriage. At the dissolution of the relationship the concerned parties suffer losses, the extent of which is calculated during the decision on break-up.

According to the socialisation theories children learn those values, information and skills during their growth, which provide patterns for future family life and the integration into society. This can be the explanation that children of divorced couples themselves might more frequently get divorced: the pattern is inherited.

The formation of a new partnership is explained by the theory of marriage markets. The individual looking for a partner has some preferences concerning the future partner and wants to fulfil certain needs he/she has. Decisions are made on the marriage markets, where the partner seeking individuals present their own resources and check those of the partner. These traits may vary but in our own analysis the economic, cultural and demographic factors are important. In the case of divorced people we have to take into account a higher age and the probability of having children as special factors.

Exchange theory can be applied for both processes: divorce and the formation of new partnership. *Lewis és Spanier* (1979) has taken into account four different types of impact among the factors influencing divorce: the attractive elements of marriage, the tensions of marriage as factors within marriage, and the attraction of other living arrangements (alternatives) and outside forces (obstacles) as factors outside marriage. The first two factors determine the quality of marriage and they influence the stability, while the later two have direct impact on it. The establishment of a partnership and the advantages/disadvantages of remaining alone can also be considered in this way.

The impact of the divorce by the parents has also been demonstrated extensively with regard to the *dissolution of adult partnerships* although the impact is not too strong (Amato, 1996; Pope-Mueller, 1976; Greenberg-Nay, 1982). But it is also to be noted that it appears even among those whose parents divorce each other when the child is already an adult (de Graaf-Kalmijn, 2006; Wallerstein et al., 2000). This phenomenon has been explained by socialisation (Raschke, 1988), the disappearance of the psychological obstacles (Amato, 1996), and the lower status (Feng-Giarusso, 1999).

Early marriage increases the risk of divorce (Andersson, 1997; Kiernan, 1986; Kravdal, 1988) according to economic theories as they argue the partners do not spend

enough time and energy for finding an optimal spouse and they do not possess the necessary emotional, educational and economic resources required for a marriage (Martin-Bumpass, 1989).

Those *cohabiting before marriage* get divorced more frequently (White, 1987; Booth-Johnson, 1988; Thornton, 1991), one possible explanation of which is that the mode of getting married reflects a selection and those harbouring more liberal views get divorced more easily. Nonetheless Kiernan (2002) argues that, the phenomenon is not so general as thought earlier, due to the fact that there is no such relationship in several European countries. Dourleijn és Liefbroer (2006) comes up with an explanation, that the impact of cohabitation depends on the incidence of cohabitation in the concerned society.

Giving birth before marriage also increases the risk of dissolution especially in the first years of the marriage (Andersson, 1997; Lyngstad, 2006; Waite-Lillard, 1991; Martin-Bumpass, 1989).

Having children makes marriage more stable, because it increases the value of marriage and thus the costs of dissolution. With the growth of children the risk of divorce increases and the impact is stronger among the first born children (Andersson, 1997, Kravdal, 1988; Becker-Landes-Michael, 1977; Waite-Lillard, 1991; Brüderl-Kalter, 2001).

Divorce is also related to *satisfaction within marriage* and satisfaction decreases in the first year of marriage and then it increases (Rollins – Feldman 1970; Rollins – Cannon 1974; Spanier et al. 1975; Fergusson et al. 1984; Booth et al. 1986). The change of satisfaction is related to the personal events of the life course (like finishing school, building a career) and the birth of children. These results depend on cross-sectional analysis and thus the impact of cohorts could not be excluded and the impact of age and other factors. It is also important to note that during the longitudinal analysis U shape curves have not been found (White – Booth 1985; Caroline – George Vaillant 1993; VanLaningham et al., 2001; Glenn, 1998).

Among the *better educated* the divorce rate can be higher as they live in such a financial situation, which provide better opportunities to live in separate homes and households. Better-educated women (just like men) can be more secure that they can face different challenges including those of a restart and that they can make use of the adversi-

ties. At the same time there are empirical results showing a lower divorce rate among the better educated (Mott – Moor 1979). In 1979 Glick and Norton pointed out that, the individual, economic and social factors related to a higher level of education increase the stability of the marriage (Raschke 1988).

It seems that both arguments described above might be valid, although with regard to different periods, as demonstrated by Graaf and Kalmijn (2006) in the Netherlands. In those periods when divorce was not so widespread as today, the better-educated had higher chances to get divorced as compared to the lower educated people. With the substantial spread of divorce this tendency has changed and the risk of dissolution is higher among the not so well educated. Martin (2006) has demonstrated this with regard to the United States, while Raymo and his colleagues (2004) drew similar conclusions concerning Japan.

Religion has a major impact on the stability of the marriage – as the source of more traditional family values and higher-level moral convictions. In Hungary Bukodi and Róbert (2002) found a negative relationship between religion and risk of divorce, while Graaf és Kalmijn (2003) demonstrated the same for the Netherlands.

Changes in the frequency of divorce as appearing in a *calendar period* on the one hand reflect changes in the law of divorce and on the other hand social, economic and cultural transformations (Kravdal 1988; Andersson 1997).

On the basis of a metaanalysis of the results in a European longitudinal research on divorce Wagner and Weiss (2006) concluded, that factors supporting divorce follow different mechanisms according to socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the concerned countries. In those countries where marriage is controlled by strict norms, cohabitation has a greater impact on divorce than in those countries where this regulation is looser. At the same time with less constraints on divorce the relationship between the divorce of the parents and that of children becomes weaker.

With regard to the **new partnerships after divorce** the pattern varies according to gender: men establish a new partnership earlier and with a greater frequency than women. With the increase of age the probability of new relationships is lower and this decrease is more substantial among women than men (Graaf – Kalmijn 2003; Wu – Balakrishnan 1994; Haskey 1999; Parker 1999; Hughes 2000).

We know that the *divorce of parents* increase the probability that the future rela-

tionship of children will be broken up. (Amato 1996). But there is the question whether this impact appears with regard to new relationships. Sweeney (1995) did not find a significant relationship between remarriage and being brought up in an intact parental family and similar results were formulated by Bernhardt (2000) on the basis of researching marriages and cohabitations.

Children brought from the previous relationship generally form an obstacle in finding a new partner, while at the same time there is a strong economic motive to form new relationships among divorced women with more children (Bumpass et al. 1990). In the case of men the picture is more mixed: as according to certain surveys such a scenario decreases the probability of new partnerships (Bernhardt 2000; Keij – Harmsen 2001; Ermisch 2002), while others show no real impact (Parker 1999; Hughes 2000; Stewart et al. 2003).

The *duration of marriage* might have a varying impact on remarriage and the establishment of new cohabitations. Those who have lived in marriage for a longer period, being more "marriage oriented", might be more inclined to get married again. It is also possible that people spending most their adult life in marriage might find it more difficult to live as single. On the other hand we might also assume that people breaking up a long relationship might find it more difficult to find a new partner as they have lost their link to the marriage market and have less skills necessary for finding a new partner (Bumpass et al. 1990; Bernhardt 2000).

Higher *socio-economic status* among men generally leads to higher rate of remarriage, while in the case women to a lower rate. The later relationship can be explained by the fact that those with a lower status have a greater need to be helped by the other partner, while those with a higher status are not so vulnerable. In addition the highly qualified women can choose among less partners with the same qualification. At the same time we might also assume that higher level of education increase the attraction of women (for instance because of a higher income which might increase the stability of the family), thus they have better chances to get married again (Graaf-Kalmijn 2003; Bumpass et al. 1990).

Religiosity might operate two mechanisms with opposing outcomes. On the one hand we might assume that religious people might be more inclined to get married again and not to remain alone as this is the proper framework of being together in an intimate

way. At the same time we can also assume that the Catholic Church has reservations toward remarriage – although the impact of this might be limited today. It might also be possible, that religious people less frequently choose cohabitation as they are less permissive toward informal arrangements. In this way religiosity has a positive impact on remarriage, while negatively influences cohabitation (Graaf – Kalmijn 2003).

The hypotheses of the dissertation have been formulated on the basis of the above described very rich theoretical and empirical research.

The aims of the dissertation

On the basis of Hungarian and international research projects in my study on factors influencing divorce and the later relationships I intend to increase our already existing knowledge and to provide a picture about the main factors and the mechanisms these factors follow in Hungary.

I have concentrated on four groups of the variables. Beside the main socio-demographic characteristics (gender and age) I focused on the parental background, the traits of the partnership, children and such additional variable like level of education and religiosity. Among these I paid special attention to the ways how having children, the number of children and their age influences the risk of divorce and the probability of a new relationship.

II. The applied method and its justification

The main aim of the research was to investigate how certain demographic and socio-economic factors influence the dissolution of marriage and the creation of lone parent families when children are there and the establishment of new relationships as ways out from a lone parent status. During the analysis I used the first wave of the panel survey "Turning points of life course" carried out by the Demographic Research Institute.

Thus the focus of the analysis was the way how children influence the break-up of families and the establishment of new relationships and the timing of these events. Regression analysis suits such types of questions and I have chosen event history analysis.

Event history analysis aims at establishing what factors are related to the timing of the investigated event. The event history or hazard models are regression models, in which we estimate the risk of the occurrence of an event by the help of a set of variables. Hazard models differ from other types of regression models in two key respects. The first one is that in hazard models we can include such observations, where we have only partial information on the time of the occurrence of the event: these are the so called censored observations. The other such type of aspect is that the values of the explanatory variables might change during the observation period. These variables are the dynamic (time-varying) variables. The risk period is that time period, when there is a risk that a certain event might occur. The aim of the event history analysis is that, we give an estimate of the risk of the occurrence of the investigated event in the risk period.

During the analysis I used a piecewise constant event history model. This means that I assumed that the risk of the occurrence of the investigated event is constant during the categories of the risk period as categorical variable, while it can be different in the different categories. The results are presented in the form of relative risks.

In the analysis on the break up of first marriages I set up a separate model for investigating the impact of socialization, factors influencing marriage in the beginning, period impact, and the effect of religiosity and level of education. Finally I analysed the modification of impacts putting all the variables into one model. During the analysis on the break-up of first marriages only women were included due to the reason that children generally live together with them after divorce, in this way they and their children are the majority of lone parent families.

During the analysis of new relationships I also set up different models, which were

created separately for men and women as previous research has shown that there are significant differences among men and women in this respect. Three models have been estimated for men and women: the first one included age and familial background, the second in addition incorporated the traits of the dissolved marriage and that of children, while the third also took into account religiosity and the level of education.

The data used in this from in the analysis are mainly cross-sectional and therefore do not suit the data input needs of the event history analysis, but in many other cases the time sequences of the investigated events can also be reconstructed from retrospective data. In this way this database - even if in a limited way - is suitable for event history analysis. Data of the subsequent waves of the panel increases the analytical possibilities of this mode of analysis and provide chances for a more detailed analysis.

III. The main findings and results of dissertation

I focused on demographic factors among variables affecting dissolution of first marriage and repartnering after divorce. On the one hand, the effect of demographic factors are strong and significant according to previous research findings, and the my main goal was to investigate the role of children. On the other hand, in the database other – socio-economic – variables were not available in a special form needed for event history analysis.

Dissolution of the first marriage

For studying the dissolution of first marriages different models have been set up to test different hypotheses.

1. I tested the *socialization effect* in the first model. The divorce risk of the first marriage is one and a half times higher if the respondent's family was dissolved in his/her childhood, but growing up with two or more siblings decreases the divorce risk.

The positive effect of growing up with siblings is likely to be related to the fact that they are accustomed to a special family milieu, and they intend to live in a similar manner. The social support given by adult siblings can also help in solving the problems emerging in marriage, so it increases the stability of marriage.

2. I incorporated the *factors emerging at the beginning of marriage* into the second model. Marriages established very early age – before age 18 – proved to be more instable than those in later age. Cohabitation before marriage has an effect in the same direction, but the increase of divorce risk is greater.

As we expected, the divorce risk is higher when there is cohabitation before marriage, childbearing out of wedlock, and marriage at a very early age.

3. When data on children are incorporated into the previous model, risk of divorcing decreased in marriages where the respondent's age at marriage was higher than 26, but this effect had a weak statistical significance only; and the effect of premarital co-

habitation has also decreased to some degree. Childbearing before marriage increases the risk of marriage dissolution by one and a half.

In this analysis I concentrated on the number of children and the age of the youngest one. The relationship was investigated by creating an interaction variable, because when the effect of number of children and the age of the youngest child were taken into account separately, the fitting of the model improved less than when the combination of the two variables was considered. The reference category was women with two children, and their youngest child aged 0-3 years. Compared to the reference category, the divorce risk is 2.19 for childless women, which is the highest risk, as it was expected. The divorce risk is much lower for women with one child, but it has the lowest value, when the child is at school age, not for 0-3 aged child. The family survived the crisis of first childbearing at this time, they have no further child (yet), so they live their life calmly. The effect of the number of children is not significant in any other subgroups of women with two or more children.

These results are in line with previous findings that the risk of marriage dissolution is highest among childless couples, but the effect of children's number and the age of the youngest one is ambiguous. A higher number of children does not always decrease the risk of divorcing. The strongest stabilization effect is having a second child, but having further children has no similar effect on divorce risk. The age effect of the youngest child is significant and works on the expected way for the women with one child. For women with two children the effect decreases when the youngest child is aged 4-6 years, but the effect is weak. A possible explanation of this fact that the second childbearing is a result of the couple's decision, so not the childbearing stabilizes the marriage, but the causal relation is reversed: the second childbearing occurs in stable marriages – this explains why the child age effect can not be detected. Different mechanisms can be supposed for women with three or more children. Increase of divorce risk at 0-3 years old youngest children can be related to the idea that different intentions can be found concerning the third and further childbearing than the earlier births. The conception of the third child happens as it were „by chance”, and it is not planned; in many case the intention is to improve and to maintain the bad partnership; or – sometimes – the motivation is to get family allowances provided to families with three or more children. In such cases it can

be clear soon that the planned effect is not reached, and the marriage can be dissolved when the youngest child is very young.

4. The *calendar period effect* was tested in the fourth model – namely, how the changing of the calendar period has effect on the incidence of divorce. Relative risks of divorce increase continuously in each five years period compared to calendar period before 1960, with only one exception: a slight drop occurs between 1990 and 1994. The divorce risk of first marriages is two and a half times higher in the period 1995-2001 than it was before 1960.

Growing divorce rates were facilitated by the social acceptance of divorce in a society, by increasing female labour force participation and by building institutes of child care. The decrease of divorce rate between 1990 and 1994 was the consequence of changes in legal regulations on divorce. These rules became stricter. This is the only variable where variables of education and religiosity has important effect on divorce risks by decreasing the period effect. It is of no surprise, because both variables play essential role in marriage dissolution.

5. *Education and religiosity* were also integrated into the fifth model. The effect of religiousness can be shown clearly: the divorce risk is one and a half times higher among religious people following the teachings of the church, and it is almost two times higher for not religious people (or people who could not tell whether they were religious or not). We can state that the more religious people are, the less chance they have to dissolve their first marriage. Concerning education, regarding the lowest educated people as the reference category, the divorce risk is one and a half times higher among skilled workers and those having only secondary education, while the increase of the risk is not more than half of the previous one for college or university educated people.

This finding is in line with previous assumptions which are based on the facts, that religious people harbour more conservative values and attitudes, the family is more important for them than it is for not religious people. Religious persons regard marriage as a life-long commitment

Previous research found that demographic factors are more significant predictors of divorce than socio-economic ones. The analysis of the links to education – as we saw

earlier – led to ambiguous results. In our case higher education was correlated with higher divorce risk, but the rise is lower for college or university educated persons than among skilled workers and people with secondary education. This case can be explained by the way that people in privileged situation in the labour market get divorced more frequently because they are able to support themselves. Decline shown among well-educated people may be a consequence of a reverse effect: the amount of different types of capitals accumulated in the marriage is so high that losses for the couple would be too much in the case of marriage dissolution.

6. All variables were incorporated into the sixth, the „*full*” *model*. Effect shown previously were not modified at all or not considerably: the effect of growing up in intact family, cohabitation before marriage and religiosity decreased slightly, while the effect of growing up with several siblings, very young age at marriage and premarital childbearing became a bit stronger.

There were two important changes in the effect of children’s number and age, and that of the calendar period.

The divorce risk increased in every single category among women without child and with one child, and it became significant and substantially higher among families with three or more children where the youngest one aged 0-3 years. It can be stated that the second birth has a stabilization effect on marriage, but the third and the subsequent births have no such an effect. The age of the youngest child is also an important factor, but strong and significant effects can only be shown with regard to the first birth. To summarize our findings: the risk of marriage dissolution is lower in the period of giving birth to the first and second child, and when the first two children are very young; the risks are a bit higher when the first child is 4-6 years old, but the risks are lower for the second child in the same age period; and, finally, divorce risks increase when the third or the subsequent children are 0-3 years old

The effect of the calendar period decreased in every five year period, in this way the rise of risks are less than 75 percent in every categories (contrary to more than one and a half times higher risks experienced previously). This finding is not surprising at all, because several factors playing important role in divorce (respectively, those were taken

into consideration in this analysis) „take away” a substantial proportion of period effect, therefore the decrease is inevitable.

The duration of marriage has not been mentioned yet: this variable is involved in all models, because this is the basic time factor, the base of assessment of relative divorce risks. It can be seen that compared to the first year in marriage the risk of divorcing rise in the third, fifth and the seventh years – it is the highest in the third year -, but the scale of increase is lower and lower, and its value is very small for very long marriages – where the duration of marriage is 20 years or longer.

Repartnering after divorce

In analysing the establishment of a new partnership after marriage, remarriages and cohabitation were taken into consideration, but the differences between the two types of partnerships have not been analysed. The models were assessed for men and women separately and the result will be presented in the same way.

1. Men

Connection between age and repartnering is significant and negative: the older a person the more difficult he/she finds securing a new partner. Compared to people younger than 30 years, the risk is 50% for people aged 40-49 years, and about 33% for any older people. This phenomenon is related to decreasing physical appeal.

Repartnering risk is increased by 40% among men experiencing family dissolution in their childhood, compared to those who were raised in an intact family. Divorced men growing up with siblings also find a new partner with higher chance than singletons.

Premarital cohabitation and duration of previous marriage have no effect on repartnering risks after marriage dissolution.

It is not too easy to give an appropriate explanation for the result, that latter the divorce happened the lower the risk of repartnering of divorced people. For example, the repartnering risk in the group getting divorced during the period of 1970-1979 is about 20% lower than that it is for the reference group. It is known that the remarriage rate of divorced people dropped substantially from the beginning of 70's (the main cause was

considerable decrease in remarriage rate of men) (Szűcs 1996). However, at the same time, cohabitation spread rapidly in Hungary: while proportion of this type of partnership was 2,1 percent in 1970, the proportion was 4,3 percent in 1990 already, and 9,5 percent in 2001 (Demográfiai évkönyv 2000). Forasmuch both of marriage and cohabitation were considered as second partnership, the perceived trend can be explained by the fact that a rise in cohabitation could not compensate for the drop in remarriages. This assumption fits to real trends, because rise in cohabitation was accelerated during the last one-two decades.

Concerning divorce occurring during the period of 1990-2002 with an ever growing individualisation – which played important role in the previous calendar period – can be one of the causes avoiding any kind of strong commitment. This view is in accordance with the rapid spread of cohabitation in this period. On the other hand, it is important not to forget the fact that many couples live in a special partnership form, so-called „living apart together” (LAT).

When a divorced man coreside with at least one child older than six years, his repartnering risk is lower by 40 percent as compared to those who live alone or with one or more children where the youngest one is younger than seven years. Non-coresiding children have no effect on repartnering risks.

Men who are religious in their own way or those who are not religious at all, have about 30 percent higher chance to find a new partner than those men who follow the teaching of the church.

As the educational level is increasing the repartnering chance is also higher: the repartnering risk for college or university educated men is two times higher than those with elementary education.

The effect of time period passed after divorce is also clear and significant: the longer this period the lower the risk of repartnering, but the decrease is not balanced. For example, compared to the first two years after the divorce the repartnering risk is lower by 13 percent in the next three years, and then there is a decrease to a half of the previous risk, while it is only 30 percent after 15 years – this period seems to be a borderline – compared to the value of the risk immediately after divorce.

2. Women

Similarly to men, the effect of age is strong and significant for women as well, even it appears in a much more definite way: women aged 40-49 have very low repartnering chance, it does not reach one third of the youngest women having divorced, and the risk of older women is only one tenth compared to the reference group. Here we have to recognise that physical appeal is much more important in the case of women than in the case of men. But we also have to assume that the end of the fertility period also plays a role.

Dissolved family in childhood increases the risk of repartnering among women too, although to a lesser extent than it was experienced among men.

Contrary to men, women cohabiting before the dissolved marriage have higher chance to enter into a new relationship. It is known that premarital cohabitation increases the risk of divorce. An explanation could be that women who choose this type of partnership first – before marriage -, have generally more liberal views about partnerships, therefore they enter into a new partnership more easily, but in a less committed form, namely cohabitation.

Only among women the duration of previous marriage has an effect on repartnering risks: women divorced after 6-10 years of getting married has about 25 percent lower risk than those in the reference group (0-5 years). Repartnering risk decreases from the sixties up to recent years, similarly to men. However, the effect is weaker: women divorced during the period of 1990-2002 have a 25 percent lower repartnering risk, while among men the decline is about 50 percent. These results are in line with the fact that remarriage rate has mainly decreased among men.

Number of children has a weaker impact on repartnering risks than it was expected. Only one type of family has some negative effect: when a woman lives together with several children, and the youngest one is younger than seven years old. In any other case – when the mother lives together only one minor child or her children are at least in school age – the chance of new partnership does not decrease.

It is very interesting that women with non-coresident minor child(ren) have almost two times higher repartnering risk as compared to women not having non-coresiding minor child. A partial explanation can be – in the light of earlier findings – that these

women have no minor child in her own household or the number of coresiding minor children is few but this factor was not significant in itself.

Religiosity has no effect among women. The effect of education level is reverse to the effect experienced among men: skilled workers and people with secondary school education have 14-16 percent lower risk - among men it was higher - compared to people with elementary schools, and the impact of education is not significant for people with higher education.

The effect of time duration after divorce is also clear here: the longer the period passed after divorce the smaller the risk to find a new partner. In accordance with the fact that women form less and less new partnership after divorce, their risks are lower and lower, and they reach a final, low level earlier than men.

3. Differences between men and women with regard to determining factors of new partnerships

Here it appears again very clearly that demographic factors have direct and obvious impact in the process of repartnering, while the effects of socio-economic variables are ambiguous.

Parental family dissolution increases the repartnering risks in all cases, but the effect of premarital cohabitation was significant among women only. The effect of children is different for the two sexes: in the case of women repartnering risks are lower when they coreside with several minor children and at least one of them is aged 0-6 years, while among men the effect is similar to women when they live together with a minor child older than six years. Non-coresiding minor child has a significant effect on women only, where repartnering risk is two times higher than among childless women as a reference category. Studying the calendar period of divorce it is obvious that the incidence of repartnering decreases for both sexes from the sixties until recent years. The impact of education is significant among men, but it is not significant among women, its direction is reversed: higher education increases the repartnering risks among men, but it decreases the risks among women. Religiosity plays role in the case of men only: religious men who follow the teaching of the church have lower chance to find a new partner.

My results are generally in line with the findings of the scholarly literature, but in some cases – especially with regard to women – they are really surprising.

Risk increasing according to the level of education are in accordance with the theory of economic resources, however I could demonstrate the opposite effect for women. The arguments on success in the marriage market are valid for both sexes as the decrease in physical appeal with higher age is reflected in the lower probability in finding a new partner. The effect of number of children is ambiguous among women, and my thesis has demonstrated some unexpected results. On the one hand, it can be seen from the results, the only one minor child is not a serious barrier in finding a new partner. On the other hand, the burden of supporting two or more minor children is not enough to force the mother into a new marriage or cohabitation. It was also not expected that if a woman has a nonresident minor child her chances are higher in finding new partners. It can be explained by the fact that the woman has a new partnership when divorcing, that is why she gives up her child more easily.

IV. Comments on the ways dissertation can be utilised

Further utilisation of dissertation can be realised in two different ways. On the one hand, further research can be planned and performed on the base of these findings. On the other hand, on the basis of results we can define some problems which needs social political intervention.

Further research

There are several possibilities to extend the list of problems to be analyzed and to modify the method applied in this dissertation.

In case of partnerships, and especially partnerships with children further analyses should concentrate on cohabitations, because the proportion of this type of partnerships is higher and higher. It is known that cohabitations are more instable than marriages, and partnerships after divorce are mostly cohabitations, therefore deeper investigation of cohabitations is of great interest.

Further research is to be performed concerning the living conditions of lone parent families, the different types of lone parent families and relations among different parts of broken families.

In the analyses performed in the dissertation should fine tuned. On the one hand, when we define the date of divorce, we took into consideration the date of legal statement of divorce, but the date of separation should be used, because this event means the end of family life – in this way we could compare dissolution of marriages and cohabitations. On the other hand, some other variables should also be integrated into the analysis, with special respect to time-varying variables. To realize the latter idea data shall be available in a special form which are appropriate for event history analysis – that is, the changes of a given variable – for example, the labour market participation, which has important role in our case – should be followed from month to month. Until now there were barriers against creating this type of variables, because I used the first wave – retrospective - data from the panel survey titled „Turning points of life course”. From further waves of this survey we have prospective data which are suitable to create dynamic variables.

The applied method could also be changed in some respect. On the one hand, we can use different models where an event has not only one end status but more statuses –

for example, not only the existence a new partnership after divorce can be analysed, but the form of this relationship, that is marriage or cohabitation (method of competing risks). Multilevel event history analysis is also applicable, when macrosocial factors can also be integrated into the analysis – for example, divorce or remarriage rates in the given society. In event history analysis we can analyse together life course processes – which are in interaction - in a parallel way, for example, to economic activity and partnership history.

The next waves of the panel survey will allow us to investigate the role of values and attitudes in partnerships formation and dissolution.

Problems for social policy

Changes in partnerships and family life are most probably irreversible. This is why we have to make efforts to prevent problems arising from these changes or – when appearing – to find some solutions.

In our case the risk of partnership dissolution – marriage and cohabitation – should be reduced, especially for partnerships with children. When the partnership is dissolved the goal can be to moderate the disadvantages in socio-economic circumstances, and to increase the chance of repartnering.

Our results demonstrate some important factors palying role in divorce and repartnering after divorce, and this offers intervention possibilities for experts on different fields – for example, social workers, psychologists, lawyers.

The most important aims could be the following:

- gender inequality in divorce and repartnering should be decreased;
- special attention should be paid to the role of children when patterns of partnership change rapidly;
- special marriage consultation should be set up for marriages when they are in higher risk of dissolution;
- the link between family policy and social policy should be rethought due to the fact that the relation between social status versus partnership dissolution and repartnering is very complex.

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VI. List of publications and presentations by the author on the theme of dissertation

PAPERS

Az első házasság felbomlása – eseménytörténeti elemzés (Dissolution of first marriage - an event history analysis)
(forthcoming, Demográfia)

Az elváltak párkapcsolatai (Partnerships of divorced people)
Korfa, 2006/4. 1-5.

Új párkapcsolatok az első válás után – eseménytörténeti elemzés (Repartnering after the first divorce – an event history analysis)
Demográfia, 2006/2-3. 173-196.

Az elváltak lakáskörülményei (Housing conditions of divorced people)
Demográfia, 2005/4. 375-414.

Válás után két évvel (Two years after divorce)
Korfa, 2005/4. 3-4.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Repartnering after divorce in Hungary
German – Hungarian – Polish Demographic Seminar
Kiedrich, Germany
2-6 September, 2006.

Factors influencing divorce in Hungary over time - poster
“Social Exclusion and Changing Demographic Portrait of Europe”
International conference
Budapest, Hungary
6-8 September, 2007.

