

THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF DIVORCE BEHAVIOUR – THE EXAMPLE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON*)

ANNA ŠŤASTNÁ**)

Abstract: An increasing share of children in the Czech Republic live part of their childhood in lone-parent or reconstructed families, and the incidence of so-called social orphanhood is higher than that of factual orphanhood caused by death of one of the parents. Therefore, the author concentrates on the issue of the intergenerational transmission of divorce behaviour. Her analysis is based on data from the Fertility and Family Survey conducted in the Czech Republic in 1997, which she compares with the results of similar surveys in Great Britain and the United States.

Keywords: Czech Republic, divorce, union dissolution, intergenerational transmission, childhood, international comparison

Demographic behaviour evolves out of everyday human behaviour on the level of socially motivated individual decision-making. According to cohort theory and the theory of the family cycle and the life cycle, changes in behavioural patterns in one stage of the life cycle of a certain population (or generation) are reflected in the structure of its behaviour over the course of its entire history. Demographic processes are grounded in the structure of individual life course, the course of which is significantly influenced by such vital events as marriage, the birth of a child, divorce, and death. These processes are simultaneously determined by historical, thus generational, factors. Generational behavioural patterns as a manifestation of historical changes in social processes also include shifts in the timing of individual phases in the life course of people.

When demographers study divorce their attention focuses generally on analysing the process from the perspective of the former spouses. They also monitor the divorce rate and the timing of divorce in combination with other differentiating factors, such as the age of the spouses at the time of marriage, the order of the spouses' marriage, socio-economic status, the duration of the marriage, and the number of children. However, in this case children are regarded as a characteristic and not as the object of research in the sense of representing an independent sub-population.

In recent years in Western countries the number of children who experience at least a part of their childhood in a lone-parent family as a result of the divorce of their parents has been continually rising. In the United States the interest in studying this group of children has been evident for several decades. In Europe, similar studies have been emerging since the 1990s.

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***) Direct all correspondence to: PhDr. Anna Šťastná, Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, Palackého nám. 4, 128 01 Prague 2, e-mail: anna.stastna@vupsv.cz

Since the 1950s the Czech Republic has ranked among the countries with a high divorce rate, and so-called social orphanhood is today much more common than factual orphanhood resulting from the death of one of the parents. An ever-increasing number of children spend part of their childhood in a lone-parent or reconstructed family. Therefore, this is by no means a marginal phenomenon, and it should be taken into account in the study of reproductive behaviour.

According to the *Levinger* model of the marital instability of children, the likelihood of divorce increases when various factors reduce the rewards derived from marriage, weaken the barriers to dissolving a marriage, and increase the number of alternatives to marriage (*Amato*, 1996: 628). Using *Levinger's* theory, *Paul R. Amato* (1996) assumes that parental divorce has three types of effects on children: a) it effects the variables in the life course and socio-economic variables (it lowers the age at marriage, increases the occurrence of cohabitation prior to marriage, results in a low socio-economic status); b) it effects attitudes towards divorce (parental divorce liberalises children's attitudes towards divorce and weakens the main psychological barrier to dissolving a marriage); and c) it causes problems in interpersonal behaviour (parental divorce increases the likelihood that offspring exhibit the kind of interpersonal behaviour that interferes with the quality of marital relationships and thus reduces the rewards associated with marriage).

The Social Inheritance of Divorce Behaviour

Therefore, let us focus on the effect of the family experiences connected with parental divorce that children acquire while growing up on their family behaviour as adults. The basic question is how and whether at all parental divorce affects the life course of a child and the timing of some demographic events when they are adults. The starting point for this study is the concept of the transition to adulthood, based on the broader theory of the life course. The effect of parental divorce in the context of the Czech population was studied using data from the **Fertility and Family Survey**¹⁾ carried out in 1997 (*Rychtaříková – Kraus*, 2001). The data was processed using the method of event history analysis (*Courgeau – Lelièvre*, 1989; *Lelièvre*, 1992; *Lelièvre – Bringé*, 1998), specifically, life tables and Cox regression. The method of research was selected to enable, using life tables, a comparison of the duration of important life stages and the timing of important life events for two groups of women, for whom the differentiating characteristic was the divorce of their parents. Using the proportional hazard model the effect of variables on the risk of experiencing the given event is studied – in this case the focus is on the even of the dissolution of the first partnership and the divorce of the first marriage.

Out of a total of 1735 women, 308 (i.e. 17.8%) indicated that their parents had divorced²⁾. In the majority of cases the divorces occurred when the respondent was relatively young (Table 1) – at the age of ten more than one-half of these women (as children) had divorced parents, at the age of 20 the figure was almost 90%.

The divorce rate and thus the cumulative percentage of children experiencing divorce was higher in each subsequent generation. While among women born in 1952–1957 (the 40–44 age group) 10.2% of them experienced parental divorce by the time they were fifteen, among the generation of women born in 1968–1972 (the 25–29 age group) the figure was 14.1% of women, and among the youngest generation born in 1978–1982 (the 15–19 age group) the figure was more than 19% of women, that is, almost double that of the oldest generation studied.

¹⁾ The sample analysed in this study contained 1735 women aged 15–44 (the generation born in the years between 1952 and 1982), of which 1279 had been married (1255 women married the first partner they shared a household with). The sample includes marriages that took place between 1969 and 1997 and dissolved between 1974 and 1997.

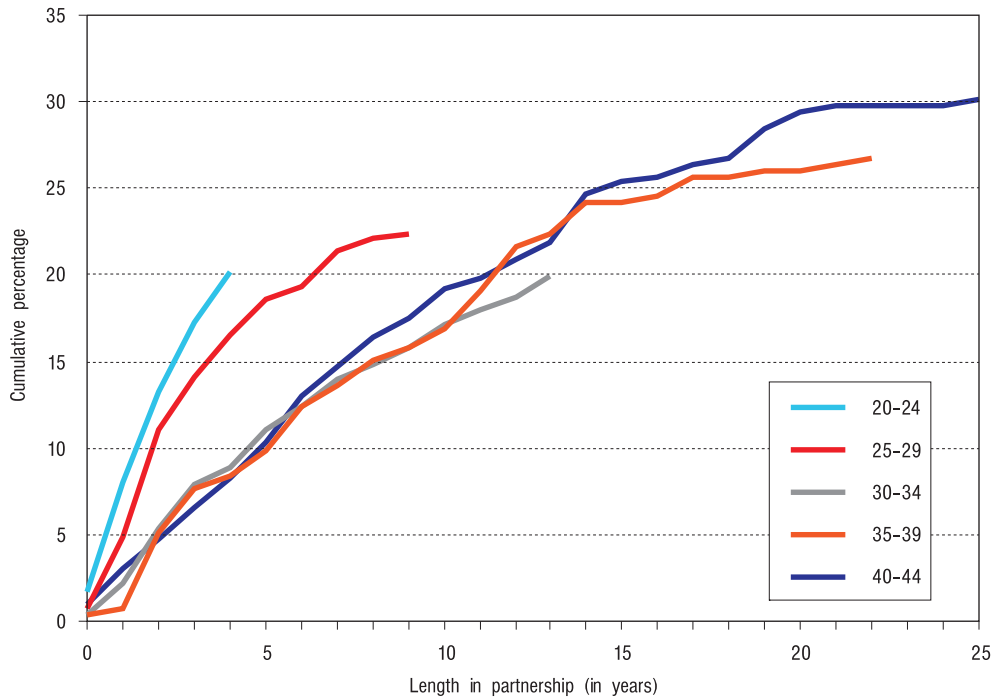
²⁾ Out of the total number of women two did not know whether their parents had divorced or not.

The high divorce rate in post-war Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic is reflected in a high dissolution rate of the first partnership of the women in the sample. Figure 1 shows the first partnership dissolutions overall, which includes both the dissolution of a first marriage and the declared dissolution of the first partnership in which a woman lived in cohabitation. There was a much higher tendency for the first partnerships of women in the youngest age group (aged 20–29 at the time of the survey) to break up than among women in the three older age groups, which are considerably homogeneous with regard to the duration of the first partnership (Figure 1). A similar difference can be observed between the youngest and the oldest generations if we calculate the cumulative percentage of divorces for first marriages not preceded by cohabitation.

Table 1 Parental divorce: by age of the child, woman, CR, FFS 1997

Age	Number	%	Cumulated %
0–4	66	21.43	22.68
5–9	72	23.38	47.42
10–14	59	19.16	67.70
15–19	63	20.45	89.35
20+	31	10.06	100.00
Unknown	17	5.52	x
Total	308	100.00	x

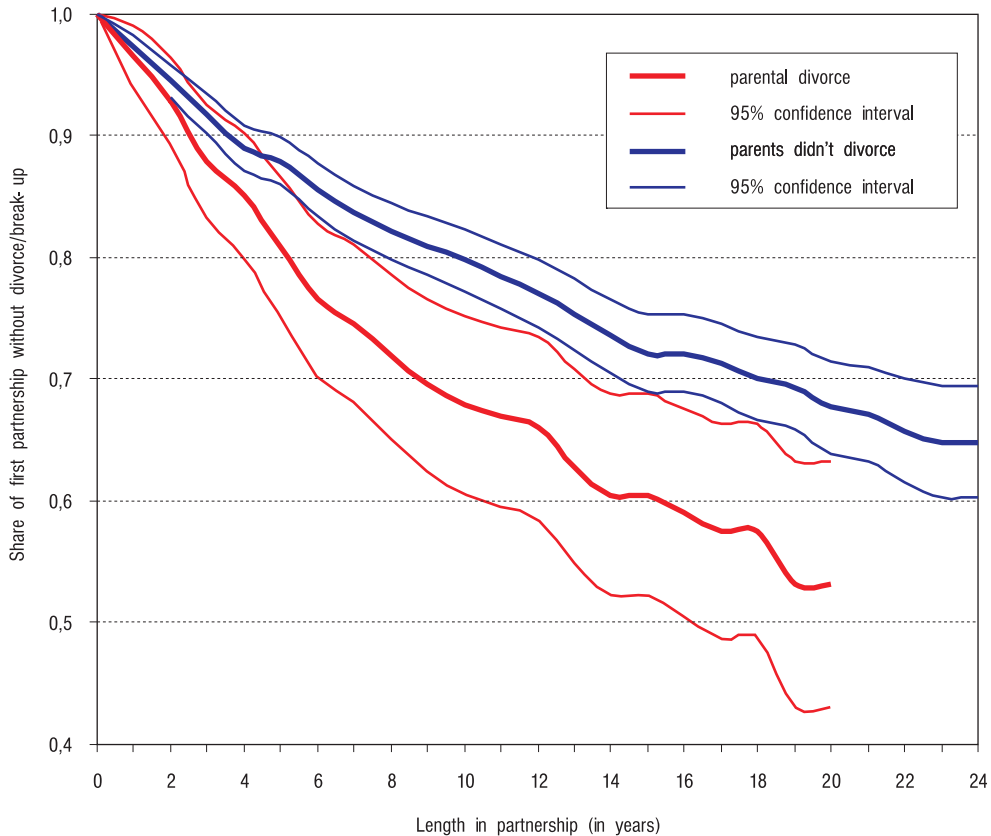
Figure 1 Cumulative percentages of first partnerships that broke up: by length of partnership (completed years) and by age at the time of the survey, women, CR, FFS 1997



The effect of parental divorce on the dissolution of the first partnership of offspring

In the following analysis the dissolution of a first partnership signifies those cases that ended in a dissolution or divorce or forced separation. The initial event is the woman's first partnership; the studied event is its dissolution. The time variable is the duration of the first partnership calculated in months, the stratification variable is the divorce of the parents if it occurred before the woman reached twenty years of age. The reference category is the group of women whose parents did not divorce or who divorced after the woman was twenty years old. The survival

Figure 2 Effect of parental divorce on the break-up of first partnership: women total, CR, FFS 1997



function along with the 95% confidence interval calculated using life tables for the entire sample of women illustrates the probability that the first partnership will not break up. If the survival function expresses the probability that the studied event will not occur before the date t , thus, the proportion of respondents who have not yet experienced the studied event at time t (at the end of interval t), from the figure it is clear that there is a higher risk that the first partnerships of daughters of divorced parents will break up, higher for the duration of their partnership, than there is among daughters who grew up in two-parent families (Figure 2).

The effect of parental divorce on the dissolution of the woman's first partnership, depicted as the difference between the curves, is in this case significant, and the results of the Cox regression (Table 2) show that parental divorce has a strong effect on the risk of the dissolution of the women's partnership – in the total sample the risk of the dissolution of the first partnership is 60.9% higher among women from divorced families than for women from families in which the parents remained married until the women reached adulthood (the result is significant at, $p \leq 0.001$).

When other explanatory variables³⁾ are added to the regression model the effect of parental

³⁾ Other explanatory variables included were the size of the place of residence till the age of 15, generations corresponding to two age groups with different timing of the event, the age at the start of the first partnership and whether marriage was preceded by unmarried cohabitation or whether the partners began sharing a household after marriage, and whether the first partner remained as unmarried cohabitation throughout its duration, and whether the woman married her first partner.

divorce is no longer significant. Here then parental divorce did not have a direct effect on the risk that the women's first partnership would dissolve, but rather an indirect effect mediated by the woman's age at the time of the first partnership and by the form of partnership. The analysis showed that parental divorce influences the age at which children leave home and at which they begin living with a partner, the effect being to reduce the age of these two events. It is the age at the time of the start of the first partnership that partly mediates the effect of parental divorce on the dissolution of this partnership. The younger age at the time of the start of the first partnership (14–18 years old) increases the risk that it will dissolve later on by 40% in comparison with women aged 19–22 at the start of partnership cohabitation. On the other hand, when a woman begins to live with her first partner at a later age (specifically, when aged 23–26), the risk of the dissolution of this partnership decreased as a result by 52.4% (Table 2).

The form of partnership – cohabitation throughout the duration of the partnership or marriage to the first partner – has the strongest effect on the probability of the partnership dissolution. When the woman lives with her first partner in cohabitation the risk of partnership dissolution is seven times higher than it is for marriage (direct marriage or marriage after cohabitation prior to marriage). This can also be regarded as one of the factors mediating the effect of parental divorce on the partnership stability of the children. In the research sample the percentage of women who lived with their first partner in cohabitation and never married them was significantly higher among women from lone-parent families.

Table 2 First partnership dissolution: women total, CR, FFS 1997 (Cox regression)

Indicator	MODEL A		MODEL B	
	Exp(B)	sign.	Exp(B)	sign.
Divorce of parents by child's 20th birthday				
Yes	1.609 ***		1.088	
No	1		1	
Cohabitation				
Started living together in cohabitation			1.295	
Started living together after marriage			1	
Marriage with first partner				
Yes			1	
No			7.016 ***	
Generation				
1968–1952			1.489 **	
1952–1967			1	
Age at the start of partnership				
14–18			1.393 **	
19–22			1	
23–26			0.476 **	
27+			0.721	
Municipality size group to child's 15th birthday				
up to 2000			0.389 ***	
2000–9999			0.461 **	
10 000–99 999			0.660 *	
100 000–999 999			0.441 **	
over 1 000 000			1	

Note.: *** $p \leq 0.001$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.05$.

The effect of parental divorce on the divorce of the first marriage of offspring

In addition to the dissolution of first partnerships in general, the probability of first marriages ending in divorce was also studied. A first marriage was defined as a first partnership, which either began as a marriage (the woman began sharing the same household with her partner after they were married) or began as cohabitation and was followed after some time by marriage.

In the total sample of women the risk of divorce of the first marriage was 52.2% higher among women from divorced families than among women from two-parent families (this finding was significant at $p \leq 0.01$; Table 3).

Table 3 Divorce of first marriage: women total, CR, FFS 1997 (Cox regression)

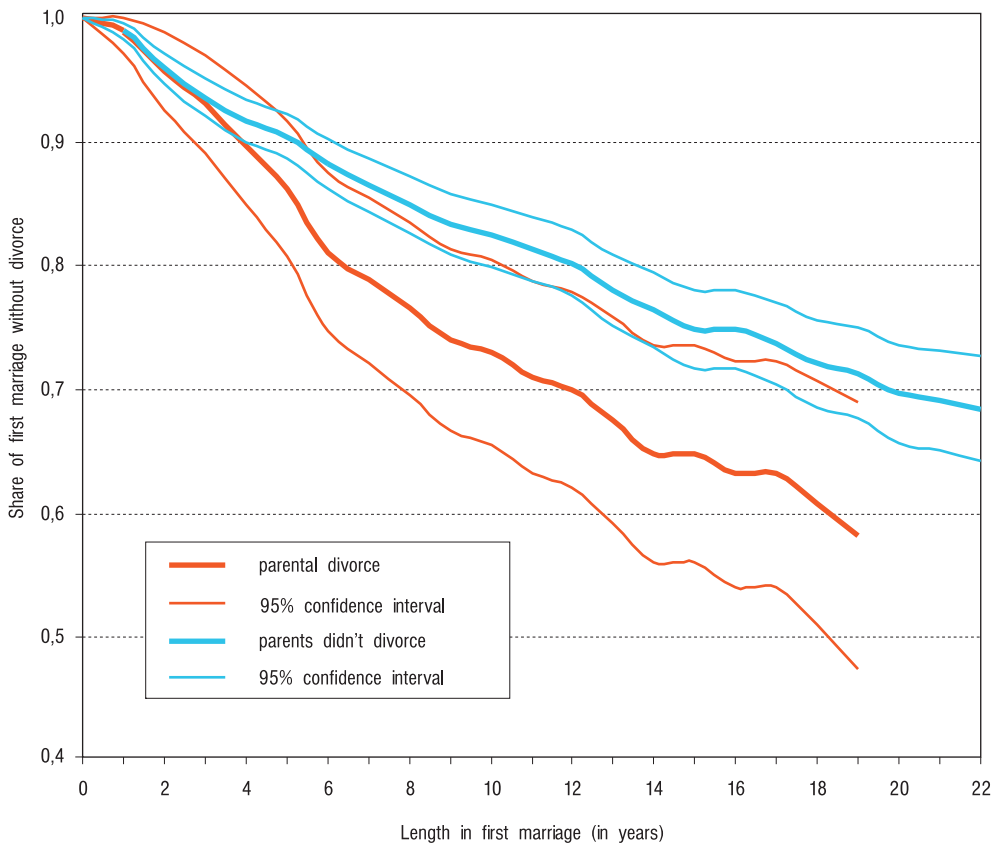
Indicator	MODEL A		MODEL B	
	Exp(B)	sign.	Exp(B)	sign.
Divorce of parents by child's 20th birthday				
Yes	1.522	**	1.272	
No	1		1	
Cohabitation				
Started living together in cohabitation			1.574	***
Started living together after marriage			1	
Generation				
1968-1982			1.716	***
1952-1967			1	
Age at marriage				
15-18			1.428	**
19-22			1	
23-26			0.630	*
27+			1.161	
Municipality size group to child's 15th birthday				
up to 2000			0.290	***
2000-9999			0.400	***
10 000-99 999			0.564	**
100 000-999 999			0.514	*
over 1 000 000			1	

Note: *** $p \leq 0.001$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.05$.

However, after controlling for additional variables (Model B in Table 3) the effect of parental divorce ceased to be significant. Like the analysis of the dissolution of the first partnership, in the sample of women parental divorce did not have a direct effect on the risk of the children's marital dissolution, but indirectly, through age at the time of marriage and through cohabitation prior to marriage. A very young marriage age (15–18 years) increases the risk of the first marriage ending in divorce by 42.8% in comparison with the age of 19–22 years. Conversely, if the marriage takes place at a later age (specifically at the age of 23–26 years), the risk of marital divorce decreases by 37% (Table 3).

Cohabitation prior to marriage increases the risk of eventual divorce by 57.4% compared to direct marriages (or to the case where the partners first began living in the same household after they were married). The daughters of divorced parents significantly more often lived with their partner in cohabitation than women who grew up in two-parent families. Also, in the case of first partnerships, a significantly higher percentage of women from divorced households began living with their first partner in cohabitation and a lower percentage of these women's first partnerships were direct marriages. In this case the effect of parental divorce on

Figure 3 Effects of parental divorce on divorce of first marriage: women total, CR, FFS 1997



the divorce of the daughters' marriages is mediated by the chosen type of private life arrangement.

According to researchers that study the issue of the effect of parental divorce on the children's life course, cohabitation is more often found as a type of partnership among children from divorced families (e.g. *Bumpass – Sweet – Cherlin, 1989; Bumpass et al., 1991; Thornton, 1991*). However, it is not clear even in the cited studies why children from divorced families prefer this form of partnership.

Even the data from the **Czech Fertility and Family Survey (FFS)** are no help in answering the question of why cohabitation as a form of partnership is more often chosen by children from lone-parent families, as there was no special part in this quantitative research in which respondents could offer interpretations of their own behaviour as they see it, interpretations influenced by the time elapsed since the event and the significance the individual ascribes to it. These approaches are typical for qualitative research, which were not available to complement the given quantitative data. Another limiting factor in this regard was the fact that we are working with data from retrospective not longitudinal survey. Responses to questions on attitudes often do not reveal the motives that were relevant at the given point in the past, because the declared view at the time of the research has already been influenced by events experi-

Table 4 Cohabitation with first partner: in relation to parental divorce, women, CR, FFS 1997

Indicator	"Were you married to your first partner when you started living together?"		
	Yes	No	Total
Divorce of parents	107	99	206
%	51.9**	48.1***	100
Parents didn't divorce	807	355	1162
%	69.5	30.5	100
Total	914	454	1368

Note: *** $p \leq 0.001$ ** $p \leq 0.01$.

reached the age of 20, the women tended to start sharing a household with their first partner in an arrangement of unmarried cohabitation, and conversely significantly fewer of them were married to their partner when they began living with them.

This confirms the indirect conclusions of some studies outside the Czech Republic showing that women from all divorced families are three times as likely (this calculation applies for the research in Great Britain, not for the Czech Republic) to live in unmarried cohabitation before their twentieth birthday than women from two-parent families or from families that broke up as a result of the death of one parent (Kiernan, 1992).

An International Comparison

The findings for the Czech society correspond to findings in studies carried out in Great Britain and the United States. They also demonstrate repeatedly the effect of the family arrangement a person lives in during childhood on their future life course, demographic behaviour, and family arrangement. The life strategies of children are influenced by the divorce situation, and with the emergence of a more complex network of relationships this has an effect on modifying relationships in the family system. In selected studies conducted outside the Czech Republic it was demonstrated that the intergenerational transmission or social inheritance of divorce behaviour exists (Amato, 1996; Amato – Booth, 1997; Booth – Edwards, 1989; Du Feng et al., 1999; Cherlin et al., 1995; Kiernan – Cherlin, 1999; Kiernan, 1992; Kiernan – Hobcraft, 1997).

In Great Britain the transmission of divorce behaviour was demonstrated among members of a cohort studied as part of **The National Child Development Study**⁴⁾. The probability that the first relationship remains intact was higher in each age group up to the age of 33 (the last study was conducted on this age) for those who grew up in a two-parent family – around three-quarters of their relationships lasted. The second highest probability of an intact relationship was detected among those whose parents had divorced after the cohort member had reached the age of 20 – two-thirds of these relationships lasted. The lowest probability was observed among respondents whose parents had divorced while the respondents were children (i.e. before they reached the age of 20) – in this group the probability of the union

ended since then. Each decision taken can be retrospectively rationalised, and the person can also draw on different explanatory motivations than those they experienced as the main motivations for their decisions at the time in the past.

However, using the FFS data we can trace whether there is a difference between the proportion of women from divorced families who cohabited with their first partner and the proportion of women who came from two-parent families (Table 4). The findings calculated from a sample of women who had at some time lived in a partnership indicate that in the case where the woman's parents had divorced before she

⁴⁾ The National Child Development Study (NCDS) monitored children born in Great Britain during the first week of March in 1958. Interviews were conducted with 17 414 mothers which represented 98% of all children born in that week. Follow-up interviews were conducted then with parents and teachers at the time when the children from the studied cohort were at the ages of 7.11 and 16 let. At the ages of 16.23 and 33 the birth cohort members themselves were interviewed. At the age of 33 the interview also included questions on information relating to the respondents' lives to that time and about any dissolutions of marriage or cohabitation they may have experienced. Also monitored was whether the parents are permanently separated or divorced, and in the case of positive responses the age of the respondent at the time this event took place was also recorded.

enduring is around 55–58% (Kiernan – Cherlin, 1999). A parental divorce during a person's childhood or adolescence has therefore the strongest effect on their future partnership. The findings apply even when control variables are added, such as the age at first partnership, the type of first partnership (marriage, cohabitation prior to marriage, unmarried cohabitation), including indicators that monitor the social background of the child, their school achievement, and behavioural problems. In this regard it is estimated that parental divorce before a child's twentieth birthday directly increases the risk of the dissolution of a partnership by 16% for women and by 41% for men (Kiernan – Cherlin, 1999)⁵.

Studies of the intergenerational transmission of divorce behaviour and the effect of parental divorce on the life course of children in the United States often use data from longitudinal studies such as **The Study of Marriage Over the Life Course**⁶ (Amato, 1996). Couples, in which one of the partners, the man or the woman, experienced parental divorce, were more likely to divorce than couples in which neither of the spouses experienced parental divorce. This was true for both first and second marriages. The risk that a marriage will break up increased mainly when both spouses were from lone-parent divorced families. Further analysis showed that the age at marriage, cohabitation, the completed education level, and interpersonal behavioural problems are the most probable variables that can play a role in mediating the effect of parental divorce on the marriage stability of offspring.

The author of the cited study reached the conclusion that the risk of divorce is especially high if both partners are from divorced families. The analysis identified two cases in which the effect of parental divorce was strongest: 1) in offspring marriages of short duration (for respondents married less than four years, the divorce of the wife's parents and the divorce of both spouses' parents increased the risk of divorce by 87% and 620%, respectively) and 2) if the spouses from divorced families experienced parental divorce before their twelfth birthday – parental divorce that occurred by the child's twelfth birthday increased the risk of divorce in the child's own marriage by 60%, with no difference detected according to the child's gender (Amato, 1996).

It was thus shown that life course variables (in particular, age at marriage and cohabitation) mediate some of the estimated effects of parental divorce. However, the study provided mainly longitudinal data enabling the formulation of further explanations of the intergenerational transmission of divorce behaviour. It was found that people's attitudes towards divorce are only slightly influenced by parental divorce. Therefore, parental divorce does not increase the risk of divorce among offspring by making children more accepting of the possibility of marital dissolution. In contrast, it was also found that the effect of parental divorce is much more strongly manifested through the interpersonal behaviour of spouses. Compared to people who grew up in two-parent families there was a higher probability of personal problems (problems with anger, jealousy, communication, infidelity, etc.) occurring in the interpersonal behaviour of people whose parents divorced, and these interpersonal problems then increased their risk of divorce.

In the 1990s studies began appearing in American journals that no longer dealt just with the effects of parental divorce but also posed a wider and, from the perspective of empirical research, harder to answer question. They focused more on the effect of the quality of the parents' marriage on children and their future life course, as some effects can be caused by the relationship differences that preceded the divorce. This claim has been supported in other studies (e.g. Cherlin *et al.*, 1995b), in which the family environment (factors such as a dys-

⁵ The above-mentioned findings correspond with the conclusions from a project titled "Transitions to Adulthood in Europe: from a Matter of Standards to a Matter of Choice", based on data from the FFS (Corijn, 1999).

⁶ The *Study of Marriage Over the Life Course* (SMOLC) is a study that was conducted in four waves between 1980 and 1992 – in the form of telephone interviews in the years 1980, 1983, 1988 and 1992. The analysis was based on individuals for whom information was obtained in at least two telephone surveys.

functional family and marital conflicts) prior to a divorce is shown to explain a number of effects of divorce on the level of children's education and behavioural problems.

However, problems remain with measuring the quality of the parents' marriage and the children's marriage. The study by *Booth and Edwards* (1989) revealed a positive correlation between the quality of marriage among children and their perception of the quality of their parents' marriage, but in order to study these issues directly it would be necessary to conduct longitudinal research, in which the parents themselves would comment on the quality of their marriage and the children would comment on it once they were adults. A study by *Amato and Booth* (1997) directly examined the quality of the marriage of parents and that of their children and showed a positive correlation between the quality of the marriage of parents in 1980 and the quality of their children's marriage in 1992.

In the **Longitudinal Study of Generations** (LSG), which examined the long-term effects of parental divorce on the quality of the marriage of children and on their marital instability, several hypotheses were tested that explain the intergenerational transmission of divorce behaviour (*Du Feng et al.*, 1999). Using data from a survey that studied both parents and their children, in addition to the questions of intergenerational transmission, various explanations for it were also studied, and hypotheses relating to the transmission of the quality of a marriage were also tested. Three main areas of factors were analysed. The first were demographic and life-course factors, as previous studies had shown that children from divorced families have lower levels of completed education and lower incomes, marry younger, and are more likely to live in cohabitation before marrying than children from two-parent families. The second area involved the factors external to the marriage, based on *Levinger's* theory and linking the probability of divorce with a decrease in the rewards derived from marriage. According to this theory, children of divorced parents have fewer psychological barriers to opting for divorce as a solution to relationship problems and also have more alternatives (according to studies in the United States, young women from divorced families are more likely to be employed than young women from two-parent families; financial independence can represent one alternative to marriage). The third group were the factors internal to the marriage which include the issue of the quality of a marriage and is based on the hypothesis that children from divorced marriages themselves have poorer quality marriages than children from two-parent families, and the lower level of satisfaction with their own marriage increases the risk of divorce.

The results from the study demonstrated the inheritance of divorce behaviour between parents and their daughters (especially if the divorce took place when the daughter was under the age of eighteen), but as opposed to other studies no intergenerational transmission was demonstrated between parents and sons. In addition, as in the other studies mentioned above, the mediating effect of demographic factors and the life course on the interpersonal transmission of divorce behaviour was also demonstrated, in particular the effect of marriage at a young age and the low level of education among children of divorced parents. In the sample children of divorced parents married at a younger age (the average difference was 1.8 years for men and 1.5 years for women), and this younger marriage age proved to be the main mediating factor. Parental divorce was associated with a lower level of completed education and a younger age at marriage among daughters, and low educational attainment was also connected with a young age at marriage. Thus it appears that the age at first marriage mediates the effects of parental divorce and the completed level of education of daughters on the probability of divorce of their marriages (*Du Feng et al.*, 1999).

On the other hand, the hypothesis about the effect of parental divorce on the income of children and on employment was not confirmed, nor was the effect of parental divorce on the quality of the children's marriage confirmed. In the case of the intergenerational transmission of the quality of the marriage the hypotheses were partly confirmed in a correlation analysis –

negative feelings and perceptions of their marriage by parents in 1971 was linked in the case of sons to a declared level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their own marriage in 1991. The authors themselves had no theoretical explanation for why the positive interaction of parents was not related in the studied sample to the marital satisfaction of offspring later on, and why the low quality of the parents' marriage influenced satisfaction with marriage only among sons and not among daughters.

Conclusion

Analyses of a sample of women from the **Czech Fertility and Family Survey** (CR, 1997) demonstrated the effect of the family arrangement in which individuals live during childhood on their future life course, demographic behaviour, and type of family arrangement. Parental divorce did not directly affect the probability that the first marriage of children from a divorced family would break up, but rather the effect was mediated by the age of the child at the time of first partnership and by the chosen form of partnership. Parental divorce has the effect of lowering the age at which a child leaves home and the age at which a child begins living with a partner in a shared household. It is the age of the child at the start of their first partnership that partly mediates the effect of parental divorce on the probability of the partnership breaking up. Similar conclusions can be reached in the study of the risk of the first marriage ending in divorce. In the studied sample, women whose parents divorced more often married younger than women who grew up and reached adulthood in two-parent families. Similarly, cohabitation prior to marriage is linked to an increased risk of the marriage breaking up.

These findings could provide a stimulus for further studies that would expand and add to the acquired data. More and more children are passing through various types of family arrangement, wherein not only are changes occurring in the kind of effects families have on their members but also in the way society looks at and accepts various types of family arrangement. Space is opening up for more, and in many ways better, studies on the effect of the quality of parental marriage on the life course of children. On the other hand, a marriage that is unhappy, even if it does not divorce, can also have various negative effects on children, as the children who live in such households acquire long-term experience of unhappily married parents.

For a scientific understanding of changes in the family structure, longitudinal surveys are required to provide information on interpersonal behaviour, attitudes, and mental well-being during various stages of development. Data from such surveys would be useful for studying the role of individual factors as part of the intergenerational transmission of marriage quality, as that is influenced by individual events in various stages in life.

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ANNA ŠTÁSTNÁ studied sociology at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University and demography at the Faculty of Science of Charles University, where in 2004 she defended her graduation dissertation on the topic **The Effect of Parental Divorce on the Relationships of Children – The Example of the Czech Republic**. She is now enrolled in the doctoral programme at the Faculty of Science of Charles University, and she also works at the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs in the family policy research team.