

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

European Network for the Sociological and Demographic Study of Divorce

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13

Session 1: New Trends in Divorce Research (9:10-10:40)

Whom do married and divorced parents consider their kin?

Christian Fang, Anne-Rigt Poortman and Tanja van der Lippe

Divorce affects whom people consider their kin. Through divorce, in-laws become, at least by definition, “former” in-laws that no longer qualify as kin. Relationships to former in-laws might become even more complicated following repartnering, as people then obtain “new” in-laws which may come to be regarded as kin, which may weaken ties to former in-laws. Even some blood relatives might come to be no longer consider kin in case of divorce-related conflict among blood relatives. Prior research on the effect of divorce on whom people consider their kin is overall scarce and rarely considered in-laws or more distant relatives such as cousins.

Using large-scale (N=4,800) Dutch survey data, we consider how married and divorced parents differ in which of their blood relatives and (former) in-laws they consider kin, and how this differs along with different types of kin (i.e., parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, cousins). Among divorced parents, we furthermore distinguish between those who remain single after divorce and those who repartner. Results show substantial differences in whom married and divorced people consider their kin, particularly regarding (former) in-laws and more distant relatives.

Cross-national comparison of divorce in heterosexual and same sex-couples: the case of Portugal and Spain

*José Manuel Jiménez Cabello, Sofia Gaspar, Diego Becerril Ruíz
and José Manuel García Moreno*

During the last decades, Portugal and Spain had registered several social changes within the family, particularly those related with the normalization of divorce in society and the legalization of marriage between same-sex couples. This paper aims to analyse the evolution and divorce processes in heterosexual and same-sex couples in both countries. Data analysis is drawn from the National Statistics Institutes from Portugal and Spain, between 2010 and 2020.

Our preliminary data reveals that divorce rates in Portugal had been higher than Spain, although these figures had been converging during the last years. Besides, most of heterosexual and same-sex divorces are characterized by consensus; and, as expected, the presence of children is higher in heterosexual than same-sex couples.

Trends in educational profiles of male lone parents. Evidence from Belgium (1990-2018)

Luisa Fadel, Christine Schnor and Diederik Boertien

This study investigates changes in the socio-demographic profile of lone fatherhood in Belgium, using register and census data for over 20 years (1992-2012). Nowadays, with the diversification of family forms and the rise in divorce and separation, a growing number of children live in lone parent families. Research has focused mainly on lone mothers because women form the largest share of lone parents and because they are known to be concentrated among the lower social strata facing high risks of poverty. Over the past decades, there has been a substantial increase in lone father families, but their socio-economic position remains insufficiently investigated. Do lone fathers also concentrate within lower social strata? Has their profile changed over the years? In a first step, we provide some descriptive statistics of the changes over time in the socioeconomic profiles (educational level) of lone fathers in Belgium. In a second step, we use logistic regression analysis to investigate the association of educational level with lone fatherhood. Our first results show that, in Belgium, despite the increasing proportion of lone fathers with higher levels of education between 1992 and 2012, low educated fathers are still more likely to be lone parents than the higher educated.

The genetics of divorce

Ruth Eva Jorgensen and Torkild Lyngstad

This study is the first to prospectively assess divorce risk differentials by multiple facets of human genetics. Previous research has demonstrated that there is a genetic component to divorce and union dissolution risk, but almost nothing is known about what genes are involved, or how they are linked to dissolution risk.

We combine data from the Norwegian Mother, Father and Child Cohort Study, information on parents' and child genomes, and Norwegian population register data to construct a sample of 26000 families. Using discrete-time event history analysis and polygenic scores, we assess associations between a range of genetic dispositions and union dissolution. We also use recently developed genetic variance decompositions to assess omnibus genetic and environmental effects on union dissolution, allowing us to examine the relative importance of the genes of the partners and their child.

Results show that dissolution risk increases with genetic predispositions for risk behaviours and various mental health problems, while genetic predispositions for cognitive and non-cognitive skills, a higher age at first birth and higher subjective well-being decrease the probability of union disruption. This research opens several "black boxes" in the literature on union dissolution, and is a starting point for sociogenomic analyses of family behaviors.

Session 2: Social Inequalities and Divorce (9:10-10:40)

Is the intergenerational transmission of divorce limited to working-class families?

Alessandro Di Nallo and Daniel Oesch

This paper examines whether the intergenerational transmission of union dissolution differs by parents' social class. It examines the argument that, among the offspring of divorced parents, children from more advantaged class origins are less likely to see their partnerships break up than children from less advantaged class backgrounds. This hypothesis of a compensatory class effect is tested for the United Kingdom, using detailed biographical data of Understanding society (UKHLS 2009-2018) and British Household Panel (BHPS 1991-2018). We use the same measure for union dissolution in parents' and children's generation, namely break-up of a child-bearing union (separation or divorce). Our results show that the class gradient for union dissolution is steeper among individuals from non-intact than intact families. The effect of parental break-up on children's separation is thus stronger among individuals from a working-class origin than among individuals from a middle-class origin. This suggests that parental separation is a more critical life event among working-class families as it more strongly predicts offspring's separation than in upper-middle class families.

Family instability and educational transitions: explaining heterogeneous effects across social backgrounds in Germany

Kristina Lindemann

This study explores how family instability affects children's educational outcomes depending on parental education. Previous studies have mainly focused on the heterogeneous effects of parental separation, but little is known about how the effects of family instability, also involving family structure experiences after separation, depend on the education of the mother, father and stepfather. Moreover, only limited empirical research has explored the mechanisms explaining heterogeneity in the effects of family instability.

The analysis relies on longitudinal data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (waves 1984-2018) and focuses on children born into two-parent families. Using models with entropy balancing and siblings fixed effects, I explore the effect of family instability during early and middle childhood on the educational transition to academic secondary school, grades and aspirations. The findings show that family instability reduces the likelihood to attend the academic school track only among children of lower-educated parents living in single-mother or stepfamilies and among children of higher-educated fathers living in single-mother families. These negative effects are associated with reduced income, exposure to poverty after separation and residential mobility. The moving in of a highly educated stepfather alleviates negative consequences of family instability.

Non-intact families and children's educational outcomes: comparing native and migrant students

Raffaele Guetto, Francesca Zanasi and Maria Carella

Children living in single-parent households have poorer educational performance than children living in intact families. This study explores whether the negative effect of living in a non-intact family differs by migratory background, comparing native with 1st and 2nd generation immigrant children in Italy. While there is evidence of an educational performance gap between immigrant and native students in this country, the interaction with family structure has not been explored.

With data from the ISTAT 2015 survey "Integration of the second generation", we explore school performance and aspirations of lower secondary school children. Preliminary results show that natives living in a non-intact family are more strongly penalized in school grades than 2nd and 1st generation children, the latter experiencing virtually no negative consequence of parental absence. As immigrant children are more likely to live in socioeconomically disadvantaged households, parental separation could entail fewer negative consequences for their (already poorer) educational outcomes. Moreover, especially for 1st generation children, family disruption could result from parents' migratory project, not necessarily implying parental conflict or reduced parent-child contact. Further analyses aim to explore the role played by parental SES, family environment, and the reason for parent's absence, e.g. separation, death, and transnationalism.

Family dissolution and children's income inequalities in adulthood: a decomposition approach

Emely Ullrich

The class divergence in the prevalence of non-intact families is consistently viewed as driver of increasing socio-economic inequalities in Western societies and discussed as "diverging destinies". By using data from the German Family Panel pairfam (N=4.199) and decomposition models, I examine whether growing up in a non-intact family is associated with lower incomes in adulthood as well as whether socio-economic differences (measured in parents' education) in non-intact family structure indeed account for income inequalities in adulthood. If the latter holds true, this suggests that family structure contributes to children's diverging destinies that even persist well into adulthood. Preliminary results, however, indicate that neither socioeconomic differences in the composition of family structure nor socioeconomic differences in the association between family structure and children's incomes in adulthood play a role in explaining income inequalities which can shed new light on the ongoing debate about the importance of family structure for the intergenerational transmission of inequality.

Stratification in separation: a review of the evidence from a risk and vulnerability perspective

Juho Härkönen, Lewis Anderson, Alessandro Di Nallo and Thomas Leopold

William Goode predicted that the originally absent or even positive association between class and divorce will become increasingly negative as the legal, social and economic barriers to divorce wane during the process of modernization. This hypothesis has attracted attention during the past fifteen years together with a broader recognition of the growing stratification in family demography. Given the mostly negative effects of separation on the well-being of adults and children, arguments of the increasing stratification of separation have led to concerns of its role in the reproduction of inequalities over the life course as well as across generations. How solid is the evidence on the linkage between separation and stratification?

We take stock of this evidence using a risk and vulnerability perspective. First, we review the research on educational differences in separation (stratification in risk), and ask how strong is the evidence of an increasingly negative educational gradient of separation from a cross-national perspective. Second, we review the literature on the effects of separation on adults and children and ask whether these effects are moderated by socioeconomic status (stratification in vulnerability). We conclude with future research recommendations and an interpretation of the role of separation for the reproduction of inequality.

Session 3a: Economic Causes of Divorce (9:10-10:40)

Employment shortage, employment instability, and women's and men's risk of union dissolution

Elena Bastianelli and Daniele Vignoli

Macro-level employment shortage has been shown to affect union dissolution dynamics, however, there are theoretical and empirical ambivalence about the direction of the effects at play. On one side, unfavourable employment conditions may increase couples' break-up through boosting their financial and psychological stress, on the other, may hamper union dissolution by rising its relative cost. This contribution aims at understanding the relationship between macro-level employment shortage and union dissolution, accounting for its variations across (i) individual employment instability, (ii) type of union, and (iii) gender. Individuals differing in these characteristics experience a different level of stress and separations' costs, and therefore, the introduction of these dimensions is of help to explain the predominance of the relational stress or cost of divorce mechanism.

We employ event history techniques using micro data from the 2016 Italian survey Family, Social Subjects, combined with time-series NUTS-2 level indicators on unemployment. Preliminary results show that employment shortage is associated with a lower risk of dissolution for men, and acts as inhibitor for union dissolution for both women and men with unstable job positions. Moreover, employment shortage hampers union dissolution for married couples but increases the risk of dissolving the union for cohabiting couples.

Changes and stability in labour market participation and union dissolution

Niels Blom

Prior research on couple's labour participation and union dissolution often has a largely stagnant view and do not explicitly include changes in the division of employment or its trajectory. Instead these focus on employment states up to separation. However, changes and instability in the division of labour can put pressure on relationship, potentially resulting in union dissolution, indicating that not merely employment states, but instead employment trajectories are crucial for understanding relationship dissolution. I incorporate a longitudinal perspective to study couple's employment, changes in employment, and relationship dissolution in the United Kingdom. The British BHPS and UKHLS data is used to study changes and stability in employment status and union dissolution among 15,568 couples.

(continued) The Results from event history analyses show that apart from partner's most recent division of labour, it is crucial to look at the stability in the division of labour for couple's relationship stability. Both increases and decreases in labour participation are associated with higher union dissolution risks compared to being stable full-time or part-time employed for both men and women. This may indicate that labour market stability fosters relationship stability. In further analyses explanations for these findings are explored, including whether relationship quality mediates these findings.

Spouses' division of labor and marital stability: applying newer theoretical perspectives to cohort trends of divorce in East and West Germany

Lisa Schmid and Michael Wagner

In Germany, the divorce rates were increasing in the latter decades of the 20th century, a trend that is still not completely explained. While the new home economics model posited that women's employment destabilized marriages, the multiple equilibrium model suggest that men can re-stabilize marriages by changing their behavior and engaging in housework. In comparing East and West Germany, we investigate task specialization and its association with marital stability twofold: (1) Has the association between women's employment and divorce risk changed across marriage cohorts? (2) Are men's levels of engagement in domestic task associated with divorce risk?

We analyze data from the SOEP using discrete-time event history models in a historical and a dyadic perspective. Our results show that the associations between women's employment and the risk of divorce have been changing across marriage cohorts, and that this trend began earlier in East Germany. Spouses' equal division of housework is not found to stabilize to marriages in East and West Germany. We can detect a suppression effect of age at marriage, which indicates that an increasing age at marriage is associated with decreasing divorce risks across cohorts.

Session 3b: Economic Consequences of Divorce (9:10-10:40)

When marriage ends: differences in affluence and poverty among older adults in Israel

Alisa Lewin and Haya Stier

Studies show that the economic benefits of marriage carry over into old age, and that widowhood and divorce have detrimental economic consequences, especially for women. Substantially less is known about affluence than about poverty. This study asks how affluence and poverty are affected by the timing of widowhood and divorce, by gender.

The study draws on Israel's annual Social Survey from multiple years (2013-2017), conducted by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. The sample is limited to older individuals, aged 55+ (n= 4,824 men, 5,643 women).

The findings show that among women, widowhood and divorce increase poverty and reduce affluence. However, among men, affluence and poverty do not always operate in symmetry. Late divorced and early widowed men evidence high rates of affluence and of poverty. The consequences of widowhood and divorce are gendered, with women incurring higher and longer-term penalties for their change in status than do men. Married couples are more likely to achieve affluence than are unmarried adults again pointing to the gains from marriage and the long-term costs of marital dissolution. These findings call our attention to the most vulnerable groups and to the economic resilience marriage provides.

Women and men after divorce: who the Israeli welfare policy really supports?

Miri Endeweld, Amit Kaplan and Anat Herbst-Debby

The study examines the gendered impact of welfare policy on household standard of living following divorce. Specifically, we compare household income before and after state transfers (market income versus net income) to examine whether these transfers help women and men improve their economic situation post-divorce. The study employs a unique dataset created for this research, merging administrative data from the tax authorities, including information on employment income and allowances, with the National Insurance Institute database. For a sample of 54,260 individuals who divorced between 2008 and 2010, we have data on their household income five years before and five years after the separation. Using a two-level growth model, we found that the market income of women falls by 1.3% post-divorce, while state allowances and taxes mitigate this decrease to 0.7%. In contrast, among men, both market and net income decrease only by 0.5%. Thus, while state support reduces the gender gap among divorcees, it does not eliminate it. Results can inform policy discussions on how women's and men's post-divorce earnings are impacted by welfare policy transfers.

Gendered consequences of divorce on old-age security in Sweden and West Germany

Sarah Schmauk and Linda Kridahl

The cohorts now reaching retirement age were affected by an increasing risk of divorce during their life course. However, Sweden and West Germany took different paths to mitigate the impact of 'new social risks' on men and women's old-age security.

Our study analyzes how divorce impacts employment and how this in turn affects public pension entitlements in two contrasting welfare states, Sweden and West Germany. The use of large-scale pension register data enables us to construct complete annual earnings histories. In order to decompose monthly public pension income into the components resulting from individual earnings and pension regulations, we calculate pension income without crediting for child-raising periods and, for the German sample, without the supplements/deductions for 'divorce splitting'. To examine which factors affect women and men differently and how the gender pension gap developed over time, we employ interaction models. Based on the average monthly public pension entitlement in 2018 our preliminary investigation for West Germany shows large differences in terms of family status: Married women receive the lowest pension income, while married men receive the highest pension income of all. The pension incomes of divorced women and men, however, align, albeit at a lower level than for married men.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14

Session 4: Causes and Consequences in Context (9:10-10:40)

A life course perspective on grey divorce in Europe

Livia Murinkó and Zsuzsanna Makay

While relatively few couples divorce in middle and old age, the divorce rate of persons aged 50 and older increased in the US and several European countries. Despite the growing share of middle aged and older people who experience the dissolution of their partnership, there have been very few studies on the individual antecedents and consequences of grey divorce in Europe. The aim of the study is to examine whether key later life events are related to divorce and partnership dissolution above age 50 in Europe and to account for related background factors. We use longitudinal panel data on eleven European countries from the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS). We model the risk of union dissolution between wave 1 and 2, focusing on the effect of life course events on the probability of separation and divorce in middle and late adulthood. These events include retirement, children leaving the parental home ("empty nest"), and entering grandparenthood. We also control for socio-economic background, family biography, partnership-specific capital and spousal homogamy. We wish to contribute to a better knowledge of the factors behind union dissolution above age 50 in a number of European countries.

Is educational hypogamy no longer risk of union dissolution? A comparative perspective on structural and normative drivers

Klára Reimerová

The latest research on the stability of couples based on their relative education suggests that hypogamous couples are no longer in a higher risk of dissolution. This assumption has been tested in terms of time (U.S. context, Schwartz & Han 2014) and space (Belgian context, Theunis et al. 2018). The time perspective explains that with the structural change in the educational attainments in favour of women (RGE), while the spatial one focuses on the higher prevalence of hypogamous couples in a given context. While these explanations concern structural change, there is also implicitly suggested another hypothesis – the normative change. Nevertheless, that has never been tested.

I examine the variance in the effect of educational hypogamy on the union stability across different social contexts in two waves of the GGS data. The preliminary results from the non-parametric Kaplan-Meier method shows lower stability of hypogamy (relative to hypergamy) in countries where the traditional gender norms are more common (such as Bulgaria, Poland, ...). These results will be further developed in an analysis of the influence of macro variables, such as gender norms, sex ratio of educational attainments and prevalence of hypogamy in given countries.

Gendered differences in the consequences of relationship dissolution and coping mechanisms in 7 OECD countries

Gert Thielemans and Dimitri Mortelmans

The majority of current research finds that while women lose in terms of – especially equalized – household income, men suffer no such loss or even stand to gain after relationship dissolution. More recently, Leopold (2018) has shifted the gaze from financial consequences and showed that, in Germany, men were more likely to suffer short-term consequences in terms of subjective well-being. De Vaus et al. (2017) studied economic consequences in six OECD countries. Their findings illustrated that, not only are there gendered differences in the financial outcomes after divorce, but the extent and duration of these negative outcomes differ between countries.

We combine the approaches of these two by looking at several measures of financial and subjective well-being (Equalized household income, personal income from employment, life satisfaction and self-rated health), in 7 OECD countries. Second, we explore the differences in short-term and longer-term consequences between – and within – countries by looking at 2 important coping strategies: repartnering and increasing employment. We make use of data from 7 of the longest running household panel surveys, which have been harmonized in an ongoing open-science project called Comparative Data File (CPF) (Turek et al., 2020).

Do welfare state taxes and benefits reduce gender income inequality after union dissolution? A comparative study of twelve European countries

Silvia Avram and Daria Popova

Union dissolution is a widespread lifecourse event that can trigger a substantial income shock to individuals experiencing it, especially if there are dependent children in the family. The large literature shows that after separation women experience a sharper decline in income and a greater poverty risk, while men, in contrast, may even improve their standard of living. This paper is aimed at comparing the financial consequences of union dissolution for men and women and the role of tax-transfer systems in reducing gender income inequality after union dissolution in twelve European countries. Our methodological approach consists of using microsimulation techniques in combination with the survey data. To capture the pre-separation income situation of men and women, we construct measures of individual income assuming minimum income pooling. In order to assess the impact of separation on gender inequality, we create a counterfactual scenario by splitting all heterosexual couples in our data and simulating all benefits and taxes that each individual would be entitled to if they lived in separate households. We sensitivity test the results by assuming different scenarios of sharing custody of the dependent children and housing costs after separation.

Single motherhood and intergenerational coresidence in Europe

Bram Hogendoorn and Juho Härkönen

The divorce revolution has triggered a rise in single motherhood across the Western world. The absence of a partner means that single mothers must play the dual role of provider and caregiver. Hence, to avoid role overload, they may seek help from their family. The crowding-out hypothesis states that demanding forms of family support, such as intergenerational coresidence, are less prevalent in contexts with strong welfare states. This study explores the crowding-out hypothesis. To do so, we harmonized three datasets, covering 40,968 single mothers in 27 European countries from 2002-2020. We document the prevalence of single motherhood and the share who coreside with a grandparent. Using multilevel techniques, we link intergenerational coresidence to indicators of welfare defamilization. The results confirm that coresidence is less widespread in countries with stronger welfare institutions, with access to housing being a key determinant. This demonstrates that family support is regulated by the availability of welfare institutions. It also suggests that the rise in single motherhood may pose a significant burden on families in Southern and South-Eastern in years to come.

Session 5: (Mental) Health Outcomes for Adolescents and Adults (9:10-10:40)

Carrying on the weight: parental separation and children's body mass index from childhood to young adulthood

Marco Tosi

This study examines whether and how parental union dissolution affects children's Body Mass Index (BMI) during childhood and young adulthood. Although a few studies have examined the impact of parental separation on children's risks of overweight and obesity longitudinally, little is known about how these effects persist during early adulthood. I contribute to the existing literature, by examining specific mechanisms through which shocks in family resources and social environment following separation may affect a child's BMI in the short and long run. I also investigate heterogeneity in these effects by parental education. Drawing on data from the PSID Child Development Supplement (1997-2007) and the PSID Transition into Adulthood Supplement (2005-2015), I use fixed effects models to analyze changes in children's BMI and overweight around parents' transitions to separation. The preliminary findings indicate that: (a) children's BMI and overweight risk increase after parental separation; (b) child BMI remains higher than the baseline even ten years after parental separation; (c) this association is attenuated by parental education; (d) changing family resources (i.e. economic resources) and family social environment (parent-child closeness) seem to explain only a marginal part of the association between parental separation and child BMI.

Divorce and diagnosis: the role of the marital history for illness after divorce in Germany

Michaela Kreyenfeld, Daniel Brüggmann, Martin Brünger and Paul Gellert

Prior research has shown that divorce has a strong impact on subjective measures of health and well-being. However, only few studies have differentiated between different types of health outcomes. If the outcome was distinguished, the focus has largely been on mental health, measured over scales of depression and mental wellbeing. With our project, we add to prior research by focusing on how divorce impacts the diagnosis of a certain disease. Data comes from the German Pension registers that include detailed information on the marital history (i.e., the dates of separation and divorce, the age at divorce, the length of the marriage). The data was combined with the 'rehabilitation statistics', which provide information on a diagnosed disease (i.e., alcohol abuse, psychiatric disorder, cancer, etc.). We use multinomial logistic regression to study the determinants of health outcomes. We also employ matching technique to account for the fact that there may be selection into divorce.

Family structure, stress, and mother's mental health: longitudinal evidence from Ireland

Cadhla McDonnell and Pablo Gracia

Lone mothers, including separated and divorced mothers, have worse mental health than partnered mothers. Cross-sectional research finds that stress exposure is a key mediator of the relationship between family structure and mothers' mental health. We consider links between family structure, stress, and mothers' mental health in Ireland using longitudinal data on 10,000 families from the Growing up in Ireland study. We compare CES-D scores for mothers who separate or divorce to those of mothers who re-partner and those in stable 2-parent and 1-parent families. We examine financial strain, caregiving strain, work-family strain, housing strain, and co-parenting relationship strain as possible mediators. We also consider the possible buffering effects of social support and parental self-efficacy. Preliminary results indicate that recently separated mothers have higher CES-D scores than other mothers. This effect is partly mediated by higher rates of financial strain and caregiving strain among recently separated mothers. High levels of social support appear to be protective.

Moving out and moving on: the triggering impact of mobility on mental health in the context of union dissolutions. Evidence from Belgium

Joan Damiens, Christine Schnor and Didier Willaert

There is already a large contribution of the literature on how union dissolutions increase the risk of depression, but little is known about the impact of the residential changes on mental health in a context of union dissolution. This research questions how depression risk varies during a period of separation and according to whether the individual moves or not at the moment and/or in the year following the separation.

The dataset gathers information about 20 to 64-year-old individuals affiliated to Solidaris, the largest health assurance company in French-speaking Belgium, who lived in opposite-sex partnerships and observable from 2008 to 2018. We defined depression as an antidepressants intake of at least 90 Defined Daily Doses (DDD) over a calendar year. Random-effect and fixed-effect OLS models are conducted.

Compared to 2 years and more before the separation, results confirm that the relation between depression and separation includes an anticipation effect and short-term consequences. After controlling for selection effect by accounting for the period following the separation only, this result only persists for women who cumulate moves during the year of the separation and during the year after the separation. Results reminds the potential material vulnerability of women during and after a separation.

Poster Session (9:10-10:40)

A parisian trial of separation of goods and bed in the age of Louis XIV: some aspects of a gendered-public affrontement

Claire Chatelain

This study relies on a case at microhistory level, at the age of Louis XIV, in the category of high-ranked officers. Social reasons and trial procedure of marital separation have been both together considered in order to approach issues of it and the making-off the separation.

Two centuries of marriage dissolutions in France (1792-1975)

Sandra Brée

Between research on the first divorces of the nineteenth century and socioeconomic researches on current divorces, historical studies on union dissolutions, and especially on separated and divorced people, are rare. But before embarking on a history of the separated and divorced, it is important to set out a broad framework for understanding the evolution of separations and divorces. From aggregated data at the country and counties scales, the idea of this paper is to trace a first quantitative history of union dissolution in France from the Revolution to 1975. This research on the long-term will provide information on the evolution of the number of union dissolutions in two centuries and that of the separating or divorcing couples to understand what can be the brakes or the motivations to the demand of separations and divorces, as well as their temporal and gender variations. Throughout the history of union dissolutions, it is a new approach to the evolution of gender relations and the place of women in the family and society that is targeted as well as a better understanding of the mechanisms that lead to the adoption of a new behavior hitherto little used or even prohibited.

Understanding and evaluating self during the ongoing divorce process. A grounded theory study

Lina Butkutė-Van de Voort and Dimitri Mortelmans

Marriage dissolution is associated with a reduction of self-concept clarity, which is highly related to the individual's well-being. As a divorce process has various (mainly adverse) effects on divorcees, it could be hypothesized that a prolonged (legal) divorce trajectory could negatively impact people's self-concept clarity. However, some research indicates that divorcees achieve more positive self-concept gains. This study aimed to explore how individuals understand and evaluate themselves during their ongoing active divorce process. Data came from semi-structured interviews with 21 individuals six months or longer in their divorce process. Results reveal that divorcing individuals experience marital dissolution as an interchange of three main processes. Firstly, people experience themselves as losing valued self-parts. Second, while losing less valued self-aspects, individuals experience a re-birth of an old, more valued self. Lastly, the actual losses and potential threats to lose valued self-aspects create much ongoing uncertainty. The experiences of absurdity, being attacked, and the need to protect valued-self come to play here. Discussion focuses on the implications of the findings for theory and research on self-concept change during major life transition, as well as insights for professionals working with divorcing individuals.

The transtheoretical model applied on accepting social support in single-parent families

Dries van Gasse and Dimitri Mortelmans

Despite being one of the quintessential resources of coping divorcees, the complexities of social support in the context of transitions to single parenthood are seldomly fully grasped. Whereas many studies are limited by data on type and intensity of support received, in-depth qualitative data allow us to go beyond the surface of care exchange and take into account the process of rehabilitation to a new organization of everyday life and eventual independence by lone parents. The exchange of social support itself is seen as a dynamic entity both across actors and across time.

We conceived the transition to single parenthood as a process in six stages in which the social network takes on multiple roles. We contribute to the existing literature in two ways. First, we take a deeper look into the acceptance of social support by lone parents, focusing on the narratives behind the involvement of peers in the organization of family life as a lone parent. Second, we focus on the dynamics when one's parents are backing out of these intergenerational support routines. Both the acceptance and the backing out of support help us to understand the complexities of support in the network of a lone parent.

The future of digital help in divorce: is "digital" enough in the presence of divorce conflict?

Ana Cipric, Gert Martin Hald, Jenna Marie Strizzi, Camilla Stine Overup, Theis Lange and Soren Sander

The quality of the ex-spouses' relationship during and after the divorce process has been suggested as a driving force of negative post-divorce health adjustment. Therefore, divorce conflict is recognized as a generic risk factor for a host of mental and physical health problems for adults and children. National administrations are increasingly working on strategies for reducing divorce conflict and promoting mental health. Despite the growing potential of online-based approaches, there is an assumption that families with greater divorce conflict require a more personal, paternalistic, and hands-on approach to effectively reduce the conflict and related negative health correlates.

Therefore, the 12-months longitudinal RCT of the CAD intervention inspected the effectiveness of a digital divorce intervention platform on the mental and physical health outcomes in the presence of divorce conflict. Linear mixed-effect regression modeling on 1,856 recently divorced Danish residents documented a strong negative longitudinal association between the initial conflict level and all the health outcomes. However, the findings documented no moderating effect of conflict levels on the effectiveness of the digital divorce intervention. Our results suggest that the digital help approach could be sufficient even for high-conflict divorces and save time and resources for everyone.

Women's family life courses after union dissolution: a comparative analysis

Sergi Vidal and Maike van Damme

Increased union dissolution rates have led to a diverse landscape of family forms in contemporary societies. While family dynamics after union dissolution are gathering scholarly attention, little is still known on how individuals bargain family life courses across contexts that offer different opportunities for family behaviour. To close gaps in knowledge, we combine life course and comparative approaches to address the following research questions: How do family life courses evolve after the dissolution of the first stable union? How do these processes vary across socio-historical contexts?

To respond these questions, we examine post-separation family pathways deploying sequence analysis on combined relationship and birth trajectories of women for the initial 60 months after the dissolution of the first union. Context variation is assessed by comparing family pathways across birth cohorts (1940-1983) and countries (Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK) using data from the Harmonized Histories comparative dataset.

Preliminary findings show diversity in how family trajectories evolve after union dissolution. In most countries, a range of pathways featuring complex family trajectories became more common among recent birth cohorts. Results suggest that socio-historical contexts importantly shaped union dissolution and subsequent family behaviour.

Income trajectories over the life course: how do Canadian complex families fare after a second birth?

Ana Fostik and Céline Le Bourdais

Taking advantage of an exceptional dataset linking retrospective family biographical data from the 2011 Canadian General Social Survey to longitudinal administrative income tax data (for the period 1982-2013), we document how adult-equivalent family income changes over the life-course of parents after the second birth, according to their childbearing trajectories either of single-partner fertility (SPF) or multiple-partner fertility (MPF).

Our sample consists of men and women born between 1940 and 1996 who had a second child between 1984 and 2008. We describe their median income trajectories in the period ranging from two years prior to the second birth to ten years following it, according to second birth status (single- or multiple-partner birth). At the bivariate level, mothers who had a second child in a new partnership exhibit significantly lower median adult-equivalent family income than mothers with single-partner fertility, whereas no significant differences in income by second birth status are found among fathers.

(continued) Generalized linear models controlling for characteristics of the first birth and other socio-economic covariates show that the negative effect of multiple-partner fertility on family income disappears once self-selection and confounders are controlled for, both among mothers and fathers. Our results for mothers are consistent with the “diverging destinies” hypothesis.

Through a stepmother's lens: fathers' role in shaping steprelationships

Patrycja Sosnowska-Buxton

Stepmothers appear to view themselves – and are viewed – as solely responsible for the success and/or failure of their steprelationships (see, for example, Church, 2000; Weaver and Coleman, 2005; Hart, 2009; Ganong et al, 2011; Sosnowska-Buxton, 2011, 2012, 2014). Our understanding of how stepmothers view their partners' involvement in shaping steprelationships is limited. My aim in this paper is to analyse the biological/adoptive fathers' role in shaping steprelationships which, I suggest, is complex, from the perspective of stepmothers. Drawing on from my qualitative semi-structured interviews with stepmothers, I argue that the biological/adoptive fathers influence the steprelationships directly through their fathering behaviour such as activities with, or for, the children and voicing their expectations of the stepmother, for example; and indirectly by, for instance, not articulating but insinuating their expectations of how their partners should stepmother. Looking specifically at the process of introduction to stepmotherhood; the effects of the biological/adoptive fathers 'siding' with or against the stepmother in step-relational conflict, and how conflicts were negotiated without taking sides.

Custody arrangement

Maria Morbech and Tonje Holt

In this study, we aimed to gain a more detailed picture of what characterises families across different custody arrangements. The present study used data from the Dynamics of Family Conflicts study (FamilieForSK), and the sample consisted of 244 mothers, 144 fathers and 374 parental dyads, where both parents had answered. Custody arrangement was divided into four categories: 50/50 (equally shared time), 35-50% with one parent (almost equally shared time), 15-35% with one parent (“normal” visitation schedule), 0-15% with one parent (little or no contact with one parent). One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate whether families with different custody arrangements significantly differed from each other in terms of cooperation, conflicts and mental health symptoms. We found that family characteristics varied with different custody arrangements. In families who had an arrangement with less equal time sharing, parents seemed to cooperate less and have more verbally aggressive conflicts.

Children's voice during the process of parent's divorce

Olav Tveit and Maren Sand Helland

Letting children's own voices be heard in the decision-making process following divorce is increasingly recognized as a democratic right and empowering on an individual level. The present multi-informant study investigates how parents invite their children to voice their opinions about divorce-related issues, and whether this is hindered by the presence of interparental conflict. Data were derived from the Norwegian longitudinal FamilieForSK study. A total of 565 children and their parents were included in the present sample. Participants reported on the presence of interparental conflict using the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC) and the Conflict and Problem Solving Scale (CPS), respectively. Binary logistic regressions will be performed to investigate whether being asked about their opinions or to participate in mediation increased the probability that children voiced their opinion. Multinomial logistic regressions will be performed to investigate whether conflict predicted the probability that parents invite their children to participate in divorce mediation, or invite them to share their opinion outside of mediation. The study will contribute to shed light on how children's agency may be promoted during their parent's divorce.

Like ripples on a pond: the long-term consequences of parental separation and conflicts in childhood on adult children's self-rated health.

Eva-Lisa Palmtag

The aim of the study was to explore how different forms of conflict in the childhood family and parental separation additively and interactively predict self-rated health (SRH) in adulthood. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis investigated how different family conflicts predict SRH in adulthood within the group of separated families.

Previous research show that children from separated families have lower well-being compared to peers from intact families. Additionally, family conflicts are closely associated with parental separation and is also predicted to negatively influence children's well-being. However, few studies have taken a broader perspective of conflicts into their analysis.

Data were based on Swedish Level of Living Survey (LNU). Using linear probability model the first analysis showed that SRH in adulthood vary depending on family type and the occurrence of conflict in childhood (n = 5,618). The study then explored variations in SRH within separated families (n = 905).

The preliminary results showed that adult children from separated families and families with different types of conflicts have worse SRH compared to their peers in intact families and families with no conflicts. Parental separation has long-term consequences on children's SRH and this relationship is partly predicted by parent-child conflicts.

The reasons and consequences of divorce: Sample of Tekirdağ

Elif Kiran and Adem Bölükbaşı

Divorce is one of the most common social phenomena occurring as one of the most common results of the problems occurring in marriage and family. Along with the modernization process, a considerable increase has been observed in divorce rates both in Turkey and all over the world. Tekirdağ is a city which has higher divorce rates than the national average divorce rates. Therefore, this study tries to elucidate the reasons behind these high divorce rates and the results of these divorces by making this field research. For this purpose, this paper examines reasons for divorce, marriage and divorce processes with a sample of 40 people and a qualitative method. The findings and results of the study show that in Tekirdağ there is a more individualized network of social relations, families of women are more supportive to their daughters and the phenomenon of divorce is considered as an ordinary social fact relatively to other regions of Turkey.

Women career growth and divorce rate in Kenya

Ndirangu Ngunjiri

The aim of this study is to deepen our understanding of the nexus between women's career growth and divorce rate. We use data from the generations and gender surveys to examine the women's growth and divorce in Kenya. We surveyed 90 women from executive leadership networks who held high-status roles and were in common-law relationships. Using retrospective and longitudinal data, we show that all else equal, there is a propensity to divorce among families in which the wife is a career woman. We found that women's career growth facilitates an increase in the divorce rate in Kenya, wives who believed they held higher status positions than their husbands were indeed more likely to experience feelings of resentment or embarrassment, feeling that their status was decreased by their husbands' lower status position, which increased the likelihood of divorce or already divorced. Husbands experienced greater marital dissatisfaction and thoughts about divorce if their wives' were outwardly unhappy with their marriage. Findings are relevant for organizations and for individuals, a reminder that women who seek a successful career and family life still find it challenging to achieve both. Notwithstanding our findings, other questions remain to be answered in future research.

Session 6: Pre- and Post-Divorce Family Arrangements (9:10-10:40)

The courtship process and marital outcomes in urban China: does courtship time matter?

Mengni Chen

This study investigates the courtship patterns of young adults in contemporary China in terms of the duration of dating, whether premarital cohabitation was undertaken, and duration of the cohabitation. It further explores the link between courtship patterns and marital outcomes. Analyses are based on the first wave of the Fudan Yangtze River Delta Social Transformation Panel Survey (FYRST) conducted in Shanghai in 2013–2014. A hierarchical cluster analysis is used to identify types of courtship among first-married individuals (N=1132). Multinomial logistic regressions are performed to examine the underlying individual and couple characteristics. OLS regressions and ordinal logistic regressions are adopted to investigate the link between courtship pattern, marital quality, and marital conflict.

Six types of courtship were identified: “short dating and cohabitation,” “marathoner,” “long dating and short cohabitation,” “sprinter,” “medium dater,” and “long dater.” More than half of the respondents experienced a short courtship. Factors like the age gap between spouses, the educational and hukou status of couples, and how the couple met (on their own or by introduction) are predictive of courtship patterns. The “short dating and cohabitation,” “sprinters,” and “marathoner” groups have worse performance in terms of marital outcomes.

Financial contributions to stepchildren

Ece Arat, Anne-Rigt Poortman and Tanja van der Lippe

Parents invest two key resources in children’s development: money and time. The more parents invest, the better children’s life outcomes are. Stepparents may invest less than biological parents. So far, research focused on stepparents’ time involvement. Little is known about stepparents’ financial contributions, especially from stepmothers and nonmarried stepparents. These are important gaps as spending is a notably gendered parental task and can be legally required from married stepparents. We study how much stepparents contribute financially to their stepchildren and what determines these contributions. Following obligations literature, we investigate the role of stepparents’ gender, employment, presence of other children, the type of relationship in a stepfamily, and children’s residence. We, furthermore, investigate the role of the employment of the focal biological parent and the family situation of the other biological parent.

We analyze data from the second wave of the New Families in the Netherlands survey (2015/16; N ~3500) among divorced parents with minor children. Because of its large scale and recency, it includes sufficient numbers of nonmarried stepparents, those with part-time and nonresident stepchildren and stepmothers. Our results show the importance of the type of relationship, residence, and the presence of stepparents’ other children for financial contributions to stepchildren.

Managing residential mobility, ordering a world in motion: the material practices of children in joint physical custody

Laura Merla and Bérengère Nobels

Through the analysis of the discourses of 21 Belgian adolescents between the ages of 10 and 16 on their lived experience of a multilocal lifestyle, this article sheds light on the way in which the materiality that surrounds these young people enables them to order their world into a lived space and to establish links and continuities that offer them a certain stability in the experience of mobility. Drawing on material studies and their application to the field of family studies, we begin by identifying the main functions of everyday objects in the lives of young people living in separated families. After outlining our method, we present two sets of material practices deployed by children in joint physical custody, which consist, on the one hand, of (1) ordering, distinguishing and anchoring themselves in each living space by fixing ‘stationary objects’, and, on the other hand, (2) creating permanence and continuity in movement with ‘objects in transition’.

(continued) We also assume that these practices and the meaning given to them are constructed at the intersection between their own aspirations and the framework set for them by their family environment (marked by material and spatial constraints, educational values and styles, and specific temporalities).

Justice is in the eye of the beholder

Elke Claessens and Dimitri Mortelmans

This study deepens our understanding of the perception of fairness in child support agreements. We build on the theory of reaching agreements and current knowledge considering justice perceptions in child support cases, applied to the specific case of Belgium. As this country lacks a uniform system for child support determination and thus relies heavily on parental negotiation, it offers a highly interesting research context for the topic at hand.

Using qualitative in-depth interviews conducted with both ex-partners of a parental dyad, we analyze which factors pertain to the perception of (un)fairness and how they are linked to the way an agreement was reached. We find that, next to the enumeration system and the height of the child support award, characteristics of the agreement and of the parents are also of importance in determining the perception of (un)fairness.

Converging these findings with the theory of reaching agreements provides a typology from communal problem-solving to unilateral yielding, which is linked to specific parental foci/motivations and brings forth agreement-specific sources of fairness and unfairness. The results of this study are particularly useful for mediation strategies aimed at enhancing the perception of fairness and offer relevant insights for child support policies at large.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15

Session 7: Consequences for Families (9:10-10:40)

For better or worse: economic strain and relationship quality during the covid-19 pandemic

Brienna Perelli-Harris, Shih-Yi Chao and Ann Berrington

Most theories on relationship quality argue that external stressors strain relationships, leading to a worsened relationship. Using the UK Household Longitudinal Study Covid-19 surveys, we evaluate whether this occurred during the Covid-19 lockdown.

We find that about 8% reported a decline in couple relationship quality, but 19% reported improvements. We further examine how the change in relationships was associated with socioeconomic resources and change in employment situation. Results from multinomial logistic regression indicate greater socioeconomic resources, such as education and household earning, facilitated a better relationship, presumably they buffering the economic shock. People, who experienced working hours loss but covered by government furlough/self-employed scheme or paid leave, were more likely to report improvements in relationships with their partner. In addition, we investigate whether the response of relationships to the change in employment situation differed by gender.

Using a sample of couple dyads, we show that men and women (only marginal) who were furloughed or supported by self-employed scheme report an improvement in relationship. Nevertheless, their partner's change in employment situation was not associated with either men's or women's evaluation of relationships.

How Italian separated families with children in shared physical custody adjusted to the 2020 Covid-19 spring lockdown

Laura Merla and Sarah Murru

This paper investigates the impact of the 2020 Covid-19 related Spring Lockdown in Italy on families practicing shared physical custody arrangements for their children. Here, we consider the lockdown as a “challenge-trial” (Martucelli, 2015) to analyse the strategies that these families have developed to cope with lockdown, and to reveal the overarching structures that contributed to shape this experience of lockdown. We draw mainly on semi-structured interviews with 12 families practicing shared physical custody, complemented with information drawn from qualitative fieldwork conducted in 2018-2019 with these families. We highlight the role played by the gender contract, material housing configurations, relations and tensions between family members, as well as balancing work, school and childcare in re-shaping custody arrangements under lockdown. We also show that shared custody represented a resource for families to alleviate the impact of lockdown on the wellbeing of family members.

Mental health before and during the Covid-19 pandemic: the role of role of partnership and parenthood status in growing disparities between types of families

Nicole Hiekel and Mine Kühn

This study set out to investigate mental health inequalities by family type and gender during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany. We analyzed three dimensions of mental health (i.e., self-reported stress, exhaustion, and loneliness) one year before the pandemic and during the first infection wave in spring 2020. First, two-parent families emerge as a vulnerable group, as they experienced the largest increases in levels of stress and exhaustion, converging with the levels experienced by single parents. Second, a gender gap emerges during this global health crisis, with women, and particularly mothers, carrying the heaviest burdens, and potentially having the greatest mental health declines. The findings presented here underline the empirical and substantive value of studying mental health inequality from a multidimensional perspective and over time. Based on these findings, we urge policy-makers to consider more seriously the disproportionate burdens that members of families, and women in particular, have been carrying due to the pandemic, both directly and indirectly.

The making and breaking of social ties during the pandemic. The role of partnership and parenthood

Ariane Bertogg

Physical distancing and contact restrictions were among the most effective measures against COVID-19. However, they may have affected individuals’ social networks, by limiting opportunities for tending old and forming new ties. Moreover, critical debates and a protest movement against the containment measures have polarized society, and may have disrupted social ties. On the other hand, a wave of new helping arrangements emerged, which may have created new social capital.

However, these potentials or threats should be different for partnered and non-partnered individuals, as well as for parents and non-parents. Individuals who have a partner should rely more on their partner as a resource in a crisis; whereas single individuals, divorced or widowed might be more strongly affected by the loss of contact opportunities.

Based on data from an online survey, we investigate both quantitative and qualitative network changes and their relation to two forms of solidarity – helping and protest movements – over one year after the pandemic broke out. We find that one in two reports network changes. Loss of ties is most frequent; about one in three respondents report having lost friends or acquaintances. However, one in four also have gained new ties. About one in six reports conflicts, and equally many report contact intensification. We find that the partnered are protected against a loss of ties and against conflicts; however, they are less likely to make new ties during a pandemic. Parenthood status, on the other hand is not associated with a differential risk in network changes.

Flash Session 8a: (Disrupted) Family Ties (9:10-10:40)

Changes in perceived fairness of division of household labor across parenthood transitions: whose relationship satisfaction is impacted?

Nicole Hiekel and Katya Ivanova

Using a nationally-representative, prospective study of young German adults (Pairfam), we address two research questions: First, are changes in the perceptions of the fairness of the division of (un)paid labor associated with changes in men's and women's partnership satisfaction across fertility transitions? Second, is the association between changes in perceived fairness and relationship satisfaction moderated by men and women's pre-birth gender role attitudes?

Our results indicate that differences between respondents in changes in relationship satisfaction after fertility transitions could be observed across perceptions of the fairness of the division of labor, rather than across differing actual divisions of household labor. That effect was found only for women's perceptions of fairness. Further examination of the heterogeneity of the findings across gender role attitudes revealed that the perception of a stable fair arrangement was detrimental to traditional men's relationship satisfaction, whereas the perception of increased fairness was a factor protecting against declines in relationship satisfaction only for egalitarian women. We discuss what a mismatch between imagined and lived realities might imply for relationship dynamics across fertility transitions in a context which possibly embodies a significant tension between individual aspirations and macro-level structures.

Are bigger families more stable? Differences in the link between household composition and relationship dissolution by migrant background

Layla Van den Berg and Dimitri Mortelmans

Throughout Europe, the average household size has decreased substantially during the past decades. Whereas part of this decrease in household size is due to declining fertility rates, trends of individualization and "nuclearization" also play an important role. Yet, it remains unclear whether differences in the household composition of couples with and without a migrant background have implications for the stability of their relationships.

This paper uses longitudinal administrative panel data from the Belgian Social Security registers which holds yearly information on a sample of couples that married or started cohabiting between 1999-2001, who are followed for the first 12 to 14 years of their relationship. Descriptive results show that couples of non-European origin are more likely to live with parents and other relatives, particularly when they have children. Event history models show that the association between the age and number of children and union dissolution does not differ between couples with and without a migrant background. Yet, the role of living with parents and other relatives seems to differ by migrant background and is linked to a higher likelihood of union dissolution particularly among mixed couples.

"Fault lines" in the family network: contact and substitution between children, parents, and paternal and maternal grandparents in divorced and non-divorced families.

Vera de Bel

To what extent differs contact between parents and their own parents from contact between parents and their (former) parents-in-law? A divide we refer to as a "fault line" in the family network. Based on kin-keeping theories we investigate to what extent the depth of this fault line varies across parents' gender and between divorced and non-divorced families. To investigate whether families find ways to substitute less than average contact with family members on one side of the family by higher than average contact frequencies with equivalent family members on the other side of the family, we study associations between parent-grandparental dyads and child-grandparental dyads.

(continued) 4,436 families from the multi-actor Divorce in Flanders data with 1-5 family members reporting on contact with 1-7 family members are analyzed. Results from the Social Relations Model show that although contact frequencies differ between fathers and mothers, parents have less contact with their parents-in-law compared to their own parents, especially when parents are divorced. The negative associations between child-paternal grandparental dyads and child-maternal grandparental dyads, as well as between parent-paternal grandparental dyads and parent-maternal grandparental dyads provide evidence for substitution in divorced and non-divorced families, but not for a stronger substitution effect in divorced families.

More or less help? A longitudinal investigation of positive and negative consequences of divorce for informal helping

Marlou Ramaekers, Ellen Verbakel, Gerbert Kraaykamp and Tanja van der Lippe

As divorce rates have risen, scholars and other have expressed concern that a breakdown of the traditional family might negatively influence community life. For example, divorced people might retreat from community involvement, such as informal helping. Yet, previous findings are mixed on whether divorce increases or decreases informal helping. Therefore, this study examines the impact of divorce on informal helping and whether it depends on household income, having adult children and being full-time employed. We hypothesize how informal helping can both increase and decrease after divorce and that the impact of divorce is smaller for people with higher household income and larger for those without adult children and without a full-time job.

Utilizing data from the first four waves (1986-2002) of the Americans' Changing Lives panel study (N=6,185), this study employed fixed effects regression models, which account for unobserved heterogeneity and reduce potential selection bias. These analyses demonstrated that people did not change their informal helping after divorce, neither in a positive nor in a negative way. Moreover, the impact of divorce did not depend on household income or full-time employed. However, people without adult children increased their informal helping more after divorce compared to people who with adult children.

Forever and ever. The impact of parental separation on intergenerational relations

Bettina Isengard, Ronny König and Marc Szydlik

Text Intergenerational cohesion across the whole life course is an important characteristic of parent-child relationships in contemporary societies. Although the attachment between generations strongly depends – among other things – on current individual and familial circumstances, the foundation of later parent-child-relationships is laid in childhood. This includes, for example, parental conflicts in general and separations or divorces in particular.

However, little is yet known about the impact of parental separation on intergenerational cohesion in adulthood. Therefore, this contribution examines the extent to which relationships between adult children and parents depend on previous experiences of parental separation. Main research questions are: (1) To what extent does the separation of parents affect intergenerational cohesion? (2) How important is it in the long run with which parent one grew up with? Can we furthermore find relevant gender-specific patterns?

The empirical analyses are based on the new representative study "SwissGen – Intergenerational Relations in Switzerland". The survey was conducted in 2018/19, including more than 10,000 respondents from 18 to 100 years. The analyses prove that parental separations and new family formations have (very) long-lasting consequences for parent-child-relations. Furthermore, we find specific patterns depending on who one grew up with.

Residential choice following separation and widowhood among 50-70-years old

Zuzana Zilincikova, Isabel Palomares Linares, Alyona Artamonova, Maria Brandén and Christine Schnor

It has been well documented that residential moves are connected to life events such as divorce or widowhood. However, much less is known about the residential choices that follow such events in middle and later life and how the location of family members outside the household relates to these choices. We propose to study (i) to what extent (im)mobility decisions after widowhood and separation/divorce of people at the age of 50-70 years are associated with the presence of intergenerational ties within the place of residence; (ii) to what extent the choice of the new municipality is connected to the family ties to older parents and adult children of these individuals, and (iii) how these patterns might vary among men and women and across different societal contexts. We answer these questions by means of discrete choice models fitted to Belgian and Swedish register data from the years 2012 to 2015 to assess whether the associations are similar in different societal contexts.

Flash Session 8b: Children's Health and Well-being Outcomes (9:10-10:40)

Family dissolution process and children smoking behaviour: what has lit the cigarette?

Juho Härkönen, Raffaele Grotti and Marta Pasqualini

Children of divorce fare worse in many outcomes, including smoking. However, existing research inconsistently agreed on whether the effects are causal or are driven by other factors (i.e., selection effects). Low attention has been played so far on whether effects on children are mainly attributable to the family dissolution process and, thus, on externalising behavioural response to conflictual family milieu, or to the parental separation event, which may not only represent a stressful event per se, but it may also lead to lower parental control.

This paper aims at investigating youth's smoking paths over the family dissolution process in the UK by disentangling the effect due to pre-separation phase from the separation event. Finally, since weak evidence has been provided on socio-economic inequalities in smoking behaviours among adolescents (i.e., the equalization hypothesis), this research will explore heterogeneity across socio-economic groups.

Data are drawn from the UK Household Survey collected between 1994 and 2018. The analytic sample consists of youths (10-15 yrs) who live with both biological parents when first observed (6,230 youths, 26,557 person-years). Preliminary findings from Random-effects & Fixed-effects panel regression (LPM) models show that regular smoking increases with separation event and later on.

Parental separation and long-term consequences for children's stress levels

Pauline Kleinschlömer, Mine Kühn, Lara Bister, Tobias Vogt and Sandra Krapf

Increasing numbers of parental separation have led to diverse and complex living arrangements of dependent children. Research has clearly established that children living in post-separation families face disadvantages compared to children living in nuclear families. Researchers often argue that higher stress levels of post-separation children, due to the new family structure, serve as an explaining mechanism for these differences. While many studies cite the stress argument in their theoretical explanations, it is rarely explicitly tested. In this study, we analyze the long-term consequences of a parental separation on children's stress levels. By applying a first difference estimator, we answer the following research question: Do children experience higher stress after parental separation than before? A unique feature of our study is that the KiGGS study from the German Robert Koch Institute collects data on children's living situation and biomarkers of children. We consider the c-reactive protein as our outcome variable, a corollary of psychological distress. In the data, it was measured in the first wave (2003-2006) and in the third wave (2014-2016). Our first findings indicate that children living in post-separation families have a higher level of c-reactive protein than children who live with their two biological parents.

Physical and mental health of children in joint physical custody arrangements. An analysis with a special focus on age differences

Lara Augustijn and Anja Steinbach

There has been a highly controversial debate among politicians, the public, and scientists in the past few years about the question, which physical custody arrangement is the most beneficial for children's well-being after parental separation or divorce: sole physical custody (SPC) or joint physical custody (JPC). In SPC arrangements children live with a residential parent (mostly the mother) and see their non-residential parent (mostly the father) only occasionally, whereas in JPC arrangements children live with both parents about equally.

Based on data from the Family Models in Germany (FAMOD) study that was conducted in 2019, we examined the association between physical custody arrangements and children's physical and mental health, respectively. The results of the linear regression analyses suggested that children living in different physical custody arrangements and belonging to different age groups did not differ regarding their physical health. Regarding their mental health the analyses revealed some significant differences: Children between the ages of 7 and 14 who were living in an asymmetric JPC arrangement did show fewer mental health problems than children living in a SPC arrangement. However, there were no differences in mental health problems between children living in a symmetrical JPC and a SPC family.

Family complexity and young children's health outcomes in the UK: a longitudinal study

Michaela Kyclova, Julia Mikolai, Nissa Finney and Katherine Keenan

This paper investigates the association between family complexity and children's health outcomes. Families have become more complex due to a rise in divorce, cohabitation, non-marital childbearing and multi-partner fertility. Thus, children are increasingly likely to grow up in a non-traditional family structure. Evidence suggests that children from two-parent married families fare better in terms of health, behavioural, developmental and educational outcomes compared to children from complex families (e.g. single parent families, divorced families, or stepfamilies). However, existing studies on family complexity and its consequences for children's outcomes only very rarely include detailed longitudinal measures of both parental relationship trajectories and children's outcomes.

Using data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, we employ longitudinal measures of both parental relationship trajectories and children's physical and mental health outcomes. Preliminary results indicate that children's mental health is worse for those who do not live in a two-biological-parent family. Compared to children with married biological parents, physical health is worse for children of mothers married to non-biological fathers and unpartnered mothers. We will use sequence analysis to capture parental partnership trajectories in detail and advance commonly used measures of family complexity and understanding of its impacts on children's lives.

Which children are most affected by stepfamily transitions? The moderating role of income

Sandra Krapf, Joshua Hellyer, Pia Schober and Ludovica Gambaro

Parental divorce and repartnering are becoming increasingly common experiences for children in many countries. However, research has not kept up with rapid changes in family life in recent decades, and the overall impact of living in a stepfamily on children remains poorly understood. Addressing conflicting findings in previous research, we hypothesize that the effect of stepfamily formation on child well-being may be moderated by socio-economic status. This follows previous research findings that children of high-income families suffer more from parental separation relative to children in lower-income families. We test whether British children aged 5-14 in low-income or high-income families are more strongly affected by stepfamily formation in longitudinal analyses of Millennium Cohort Study data. Our central outcome variables are externalizing and internalizing behaviours.

Adaptation of children from separated parents: a diversity of experience

Laurianne Corcoran, Catherine Trottier, Sylvie Drapeau, Marie-Christine Saint-Jacques, Mathilde Huard-Girard and Hans Ivers

A number of studies suggests that children from separated households tend to develop more behavioral problems than their peers. Scientific literature shows important variations in the duration and extent of the difficulties presented by children of long-term separated parents. The comparative perspective by family structure overshadows this reality. The objective of this study is to describe the various trajectories of behavioral problems of 452 children followed up to ten years post-separation. Latent class analyses distinguish four trajectories of internalized problems and three trajectories of externalized problems. Correspondence analysis suggests the presence of a moderate association between internalized and externalized problems' trajectories. Discriminant analyses also indicate that the child's age, gender, pre-separation problems and family's socio-economic status at the time of separation partially predict the adaptation trajectory. The results confirm the relevance of considering the diversity of adaptation trajectories to better target interventions that are specific to the characteristics of the child and his or her family.

Session 9: Fertility and Union (In-)Stability (9:10-10:40)

Union instability and fertility: an international perspective

Ana Fostik, Mariana Fernandez Soto, Fernando Ruiz Vallejo and Daniel Ciganda

We analyse the relationship between union instability and cumulated fertility among ever-partnered women aged 40 and older, in 24 countries from Europe and America. We use the Harmonized Histories dataset from GGP, and we conduct our own harmonization of survey data from three Latin-American countries containing comparable information. We estimate cumulated fertility by conjugal trajectory before age 40, and we analyse the proportion of cumulated fertility attributable on average to first and to second and subsequent unions. We conduct a similar exercise for ever repartnered women by age 40, analysing the proportions ever having children in first and higher order unions, as well as the proportions childless. We use a series of Poisson regression models to analyse the effect of union instability on the number of children ever born among ever partnered women. Finally, we shift our analysis to focus on the effect of time spent in first and subsequent unions on cumulated fertility among ever repartnered women. Our analyses reveal a negative effect of separation that is partially offset by repartnering in some national contexts. Our results suggest that time spent in a union is a key determinant of cumulated fertility, regardless of union rank and of national context.

Childbearing across partnerships in Italy

Elena Pirani and Daniele Vignoli

In most wealthy countries cohabitation, divorce, out-of-wedlock childbearing, and re-partnering have become common life course events. Consequently, childbearing across partnerships – or the experience of having children with more than one partner – is on the increase. With this article we complement previous studies on this issue for Italy, a country that despite being all-to-often caricatured as a traditional country, has undergone substantial family changes since the 1970s. We document a non-negligible share of childbearing across partnerships (4% among parents with more than two children). Interestingly, the characteristics associated with this phenomenon show an impressive similarity with those highlighted in quite different societies, especially regarding the role of demographic drivers. We also illustrate that childbearing across partnerships was initiated in Italy by the “social vanguard” of new family behaviors (highly educated individuals, living in the North, from high-class families); then, over the last years, it has been becoming equally likely – or more likely – in more disadvantaged groups. Overall, we offer additional evidence that structure of families is changing rapidly in Italy, with significant implications for children, parents, and service providers.

Childbearing and union dissolution: do children act as binding or destabilizing actors?

Valentina Tocchioni, Daniele Vignoli, Eleonora Meli and Bruno Arpino

It is well known that cohabitation and legally recognized marriage without a religious ceremony (civil marriage) are less stable than religious marriage. Both theories and empirical applications report a greater stability of unions with children, compared to those without children, but this relationship has not been investigated distinguishing between civil and religious marriages. Cohabitation usually emerges as less resilient than marriage, even when there are children involved, but the role of parity for cohabitation is usually ignored. This work investigates the relationship between childbearing and union dissolution in Italy, concentrating on different types of union and examining if and how the interrelationship between children and union cohorts has changed over time. Using the 2016 FSS survey by ISTAT and selecting all individuals aged 18-66 who had lived at least in one union, we employed piecewise-constant event history models to study the transition to first religious marriage dissolution, first civil marriage dissolution, and first cohabitation dissolution, separately. Our results show that in Italy the presence of children (especially of higher-order parities) reduces the risk of union dissolution, with a decreasing risk to dissolve a cohabitation and an increasing risk to dissolve a religious marriage (without children) by union cohort.

Union stability of second unions and the relationship baggage from the prior relationship

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Second unions are likely to differ from first unions in several ways. They often involve individuals with more complex life histories, due to their partnership history and possibly children from prior relationships. Also the dissolution risk might differ between first and second unions. Some previous studies, focusing on marriages, show that second marriages have higher dissolution risks than first marriages. Other studies, including both marriages and cohabiting relationships, found no difference between first and second unions, once controlling for selectivity. However, this was only true for former cohabiters. Formerly married people did experience higher dissolution risks. It was suggested that this has to do with the relationship 'baggage' formerly married people carry into their next relationship. Another type of relationship 'baggage' from the prior relationship that people bring into their second union is having children from prior relationships, which is the focus of this paper. We use the Dutch Survey on Family Formation (2013), containing complete retrospective union histories for birth cohorts 1934-1995. It can be expected that the presence of children from prior relationships increases the likelihood of second union dissolution. We control for selectivity and distinguish between marriage and cohabitation, both in the current and prior relationship.
