

PREMARITAL CONCEPTION AND DIVORCE RISK IN RUSSIA

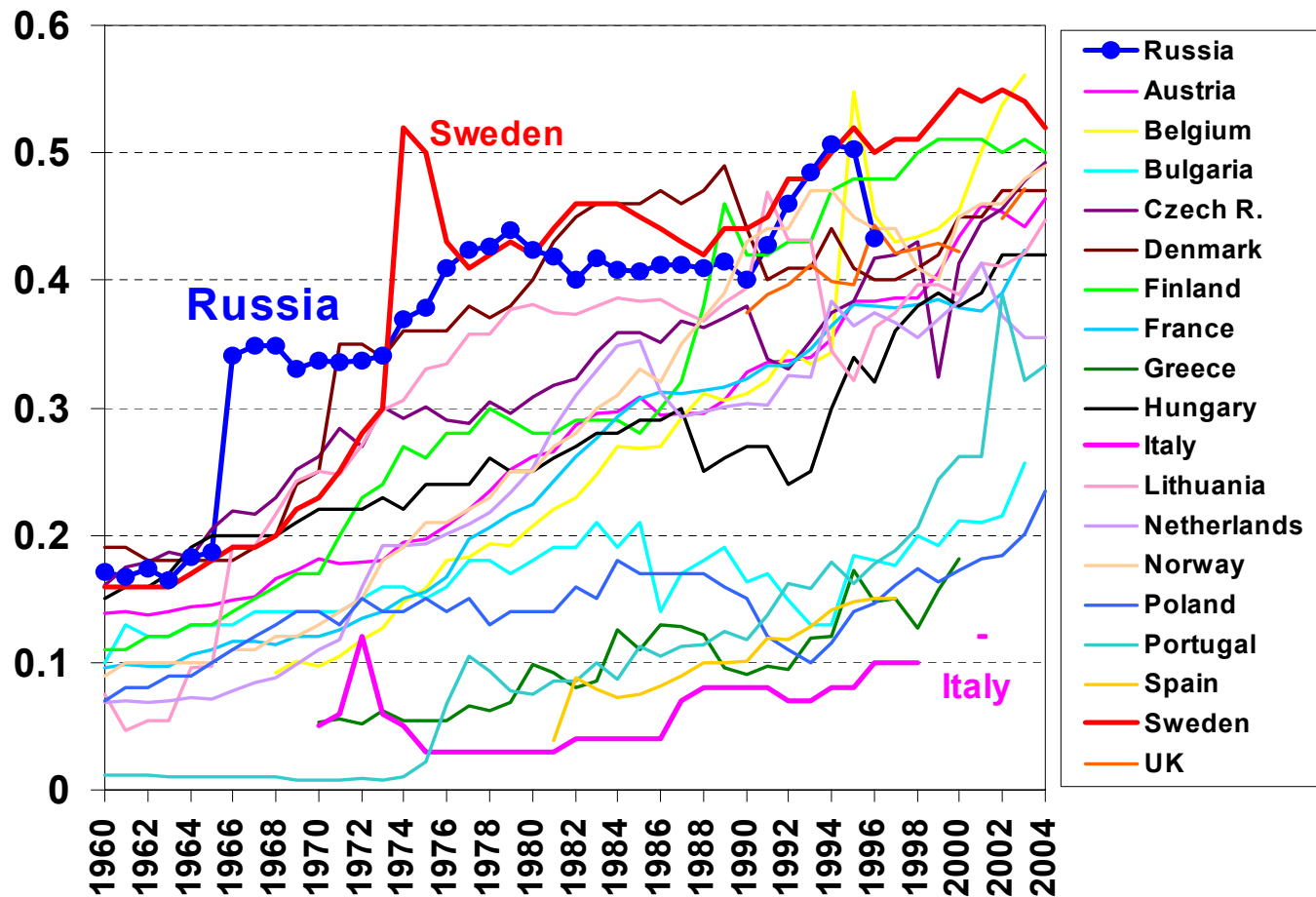
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TRENDS (1): divorce

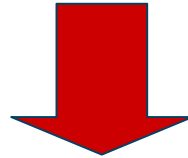
Total divorce rate 1960-2004 (Russia 1960-1996)



Source: Council of Europe 2006.

TRENDS (2): premarital conceptions

- relatively early sexual debut at least from the beginning of the 60s
- low availability of efficient contraception until the 90s
- high incidence of unplanned conceptions



increase in shotgun marriage → high divorce rates?

(Avdeev & Monnier 2000; Zakharov & Ivanova 1996)

- rapid increase in non-marital births (1980-11%, 1990–15%, 2004-30%),
increasing more of which are registered by both parents
- nevertheless, the share of premarital conceptions remains rather high
 - 35% of all first marital births occurred <9 months after
registration of marriage in 2002 (Tolts et al. 2006)



THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Premarital conception is considered to increase the risk of divorce due to:

haste in which marriage is usually contracted

- shorter time for searching the best match
- less time to build stable and firm relationships

entry into marriage requires important adjustments in life → more complicated to do when wife is pregnant

(Becker et al. 1977, Morgan & Rindfuss 1985, Hoem & Hoem 1997)

arrival of first child has a certain destabilizing effect on the marital relationship (Hoem, 1997) →

- more challenging if the couple has not yet established strong bonds
- if conception is presumably unintended

Based on these considerations, we assume that women who marry following conception run higher risk of marital disruption compared to women who marry without the intention to legitimate the birth

Russian GGS (2004)

Sample: 11261 (4223 males, 7038 females)

Age: 18-75

Focus on first-time married women

Dependent variable – legal divorce

N of women (study sample):

5599

Number of events:

1581

Censored: at the interview, death of partner

Piecewise constant event history model

Baseline hazard – time elapsed since entry into 1st marriage

until divorce (*in months*)



COVARIATES (1)

Motherhood status at marriage:

- (1) child(ren) at marriage**
- (2) pregnant at marriage**
- (3) No child at marriage**

pregnant at marriage/ “shotgun” marriage =
(date of childbirth – date of marriage) < 6 months

Assumptions:

- first month or two of pregnancy, woman might not be aware of or completely sure about her status
- couple might need some time to decide whether they want to keep the baby (abortions are still rather frequent in Russia)
- wedding arrangements take additional time

Earlier conceptions increase the probability of other situations:

- couple stopped preventing conception before the anticipated wedding
- woman was not aware of her very early pregnancy when married

COVARIATES (2)

Time-constant variables

- 1) **Age at 1st marriage:** 15-18, 19-22, 23-26, 27-29, 30+
- 2) **Parents ever divorced:** Yes, No
- 3) **Religious affiliation:** Orthodox, Muslim, Other/missing

Time-varying variables

- 1) **Duration of marriage:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-7, 8-9, 10+
- 2) **Calendar period:** <1960, 1960-64, 1965-69, 1970-74, 1975-79, 1980-84, 1985-89, 1990-94, 1995-99, 2000-04
- 3) **Parity & age of youngest child:** no child,
1 aged 0-3, 1 aged 4-6, 1 aged 7+
2 aged 0-3, 2 aged 4-6, 2 aged 7+
3+ aged 0-3, 3+ aged 4-6, 3+ aged 7+
- 4) **Educational attainment and enrolment:** *in education*
out of education:
low educ.
medium educ.
vocational medium educ.
higher educ.
missing

EMPIRICAL RESULTS (1)

Relative risks by motherhood status at marriage

Child(ren) at marriage	1.57***
Pregnant at marriage	1.22**
No child at marriage	1 (ref.)

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Controlled for: duration of marriage, period, parity and age of youngest child, age at marriage, parental divorce, religion, education

EMPIRICAL RESULTS (2)

Validation of results using Russian micro-census (1994) data

- 10% of the original sample: >200,000 first-time married women

Relative risks by motherhood status at marriage

	GGs	Micro-census
Child(ren) at marriage	1.52***	1.39***
Pregnant at marriage	1.24**	1.11***
No child at marriage	1 (ref.)	1 (ref.)

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Controlled for: duration of marriage, period, parity and age of youngest child, age at marriage

EMPIRICAL RESULTS (3)

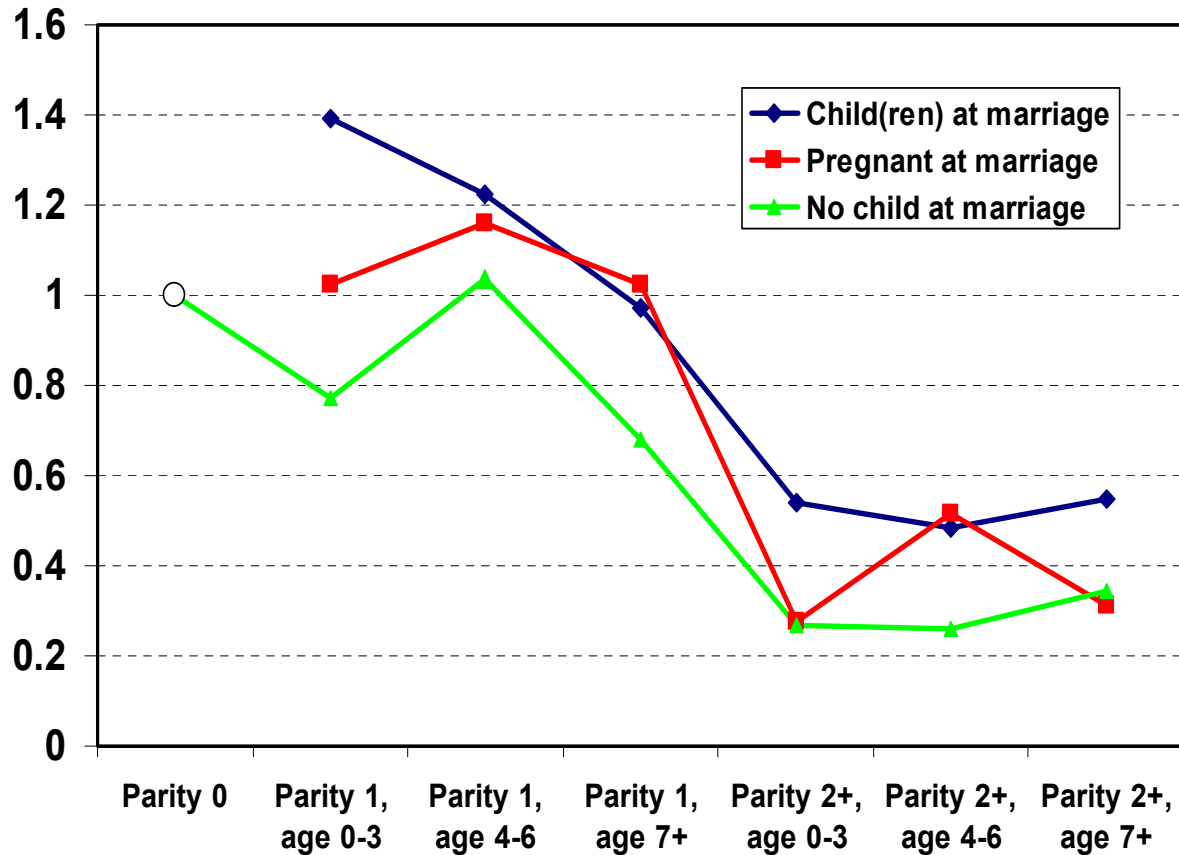
Parity and age of youngest child	
Parity 0	3.71***
Parity 1, aged 0-3	2.97***
aged 4-6	3.69***
aged 7+	2.57***
Parity 2, aged 0-3	1 (ref.)
aged 4-6	0.96
aged 7+	1.43*
Parity 3+, aged 0-3	1.07
aged 4-6	1.49
aged 7+	0.65
Period	
<1960	0.64**
1960-1964	1 (ref.)
1965-1969	1.20
1970-1974	1.71***
1975-1979	1.84***
1980-1984	1.61***
1985-1989	1.43**
1990-1994	1.65***
1995-1999	1.78***
2000-2004	1.76***

Further control variables
motherhood status
at marriage,
duration of marriage,
age at marriage,
parental divorce,
religion, education

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

EMPIRICAL RESULTS (4): interaction model

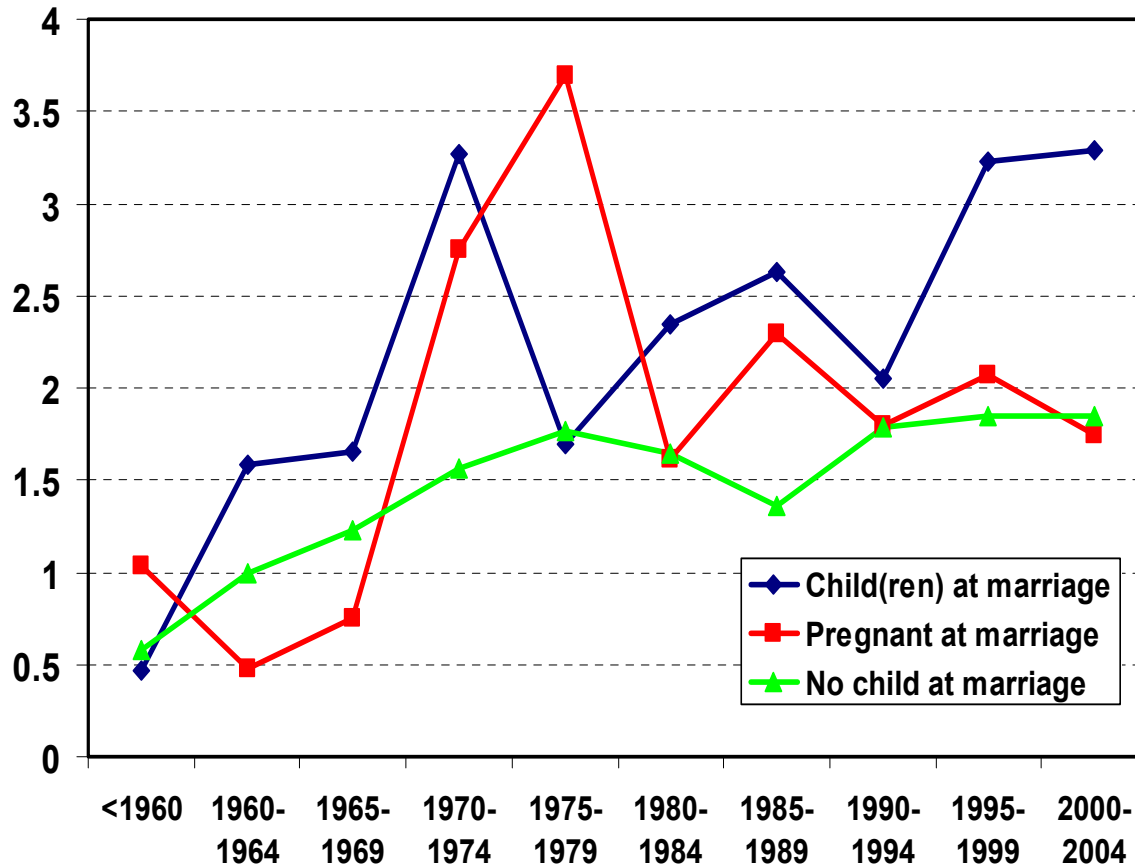
Relative risks of divorce by motherhood status at marriage and parity & age of youngest child



Controlled for: duration of marriage, period, age at marriage, parental divorce, religion, education

EMPIRICAL RESULTS (5): interaction model

Relative risks of divorce by motherhood status at marriage and calendar period

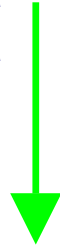


Controlled for: duration of marriage, parity & age of youngest child, age at marriage, parental divorce, religion, education

EMPIRICAL RESULTS (6)

Age at 1st marriage

15-18	1.95***
19-22	1.45***
23-26	1 (ref.)
26-29	1.19
30+	0.72**



Duration of marriage

1st year	1 (ref.)
2nd year	1.67***
3rd year	1.86***
4th year	1.89***
5th year	1.79***
6-7 years	1.53**
8-9 years	1.41**
10+ years	0.99

Parents ever divorced

Yes	1.49***
No	1 (ref.)

Religion

Orthodox	1 (ref.)
Muslim	0.44***
Other/missing	0.99

Educational attainment

In education	1.01
Out of education:	
Low education	0.94
Medium	1 (ref.)
Vocational medium	0.78**
Higher	0.99
Missing	0.66***

Further control variables:

motherhood status at marriage,
parity and age of youngest child,
period

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1



CONCLUSIONS (1)

Motherhood status at marriage

- Premarital conceptions and especially premarital births increase the likelihood of divorce in subsequent marriage

Number of children

- Childless couples run highest risk of marital breakup. Having more children, however, does not necessarily lead to lower divorce risk
- Arrival of the second child has strongest positive impact on stability of marriage
- Parity similarly affects all women irrespective of motherhood status at marriage

Age of youngest child

- Age of youngest child has a great impact on the propensity to divorce, but it mainly concerns first-borns. The association is not linear.

Calendar period

- Increasing incidence of shotgun marriages was among factors causing the rise in divorce in 60s-70s → highly elevated risk of divorce both among women pregnant at marriage and women with child(ren) at marriage in this period
- Converging trends for pregnancy-induced marriages and marriages contracted without anticipated childbirth in recent years are linked to spread of cohabitation?
 - Cohabiting couples are more likely to marry and to plan children than singles (Musick, 2007); thus, marriages following conception might not be forced to such an extent as they were before...



CONCLUSIONS (2)

Age at marriage

- Early marriage increases the probability of divorce

Duration of marriage

- Risk of marital breakup reaches peak in 4th year of marriage and then gradually declines

Parental divorce

- Parental divorce has a detrimental effect on children's marriages - they are more prone to divorce than children from stable families

Religion

- Divorce is more frequent among the Orthodox than among the Muslim population

Educational attainment and enrolment

- Little difference found in risk of divorce according to education