

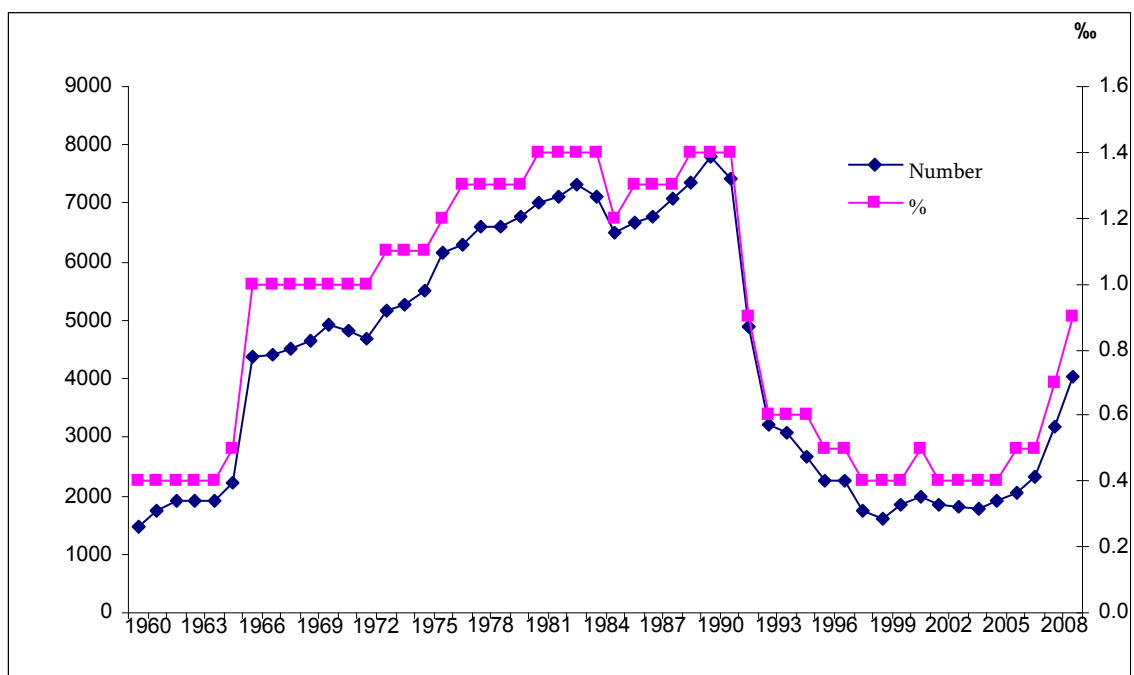
## PECULIARITIES OF DIVORCE IN GEORGIA

In 1960-2009

Generally, the European type of demographic behavior is characteristic of Georgia. From this point of view only divorce can be considered as an exception. The point is that the level of divorce in Georgia traditionally always was low. This, on the one hand, was conditioned by strong social and demographic traditions of divorce and family life, on the other hand, during the period of Soviet rule, particularly, communist ideology, existed until the 1980s. Proceeding from the communist ideology, divorce was considered as an immoral behavior and in case of this fact a person besides reproach at the collegial and friendly court, was under threat of dismissing from job.

Following from the above-noted the dynamics of divorce in Georgia in 1960-2009 is presented in two stages: communist (1960-1990) and post-communist periods.

Diagram 1. Dynamics of divorce in Georgia in 1960-2009



**Source:** this and the following tables and diagrams provided below are computed by the Demographic Yearbook of Georgia 2009. Compilers: G. Tsuladze, N. Maghlaperidze, A. Vadachkoria.

As diagram 1 shows, in 1960-1992 divorce is characterized by growth rate. In these years the general rate of divorce increased by 3.5-3.8 times. Since 1992 a low but substantial reduction has been observed.

It's interesting that in the period of 1960-1992 three stages of the growth of divorce can be outlined. The first – 1960-1965 divorce stabilization at a low level 0,4‰, the second –

1966-1972 stable growth of divorce at the level of 1,0‰, and the third – 1972-1992 divorce stabilization at a high level within 1,1-1,5‰, which was the highest for 50 years period (1960-2009).

Reduction of divorce was observed in 1993-2007 and its level 0,5‰, almost was the same as in 1960-1966. Since 2007 the growth of divorce up to 1‰ again has been observed.

It can be made assumption that the 50 year dynamics of divorce in Georgia has a circular form to a certain extent. Namely, the period similar to the 1960-1992 period will be recurrent after 1993. However, to justify this opinion besides special research it is necessary to carry out observation on the following years.

Generally, Georgia always was distinguished by the low level of divorce from the republics of the European part of the Soviet Union. For example, the general coefficient of divorce in Georgia in 1970 was 3.5 times lower than in Russia, 1990 – 2.5 times and in 1997 it was almost 8 times lower.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, the intensity of divorce is depended on the frequency of marriage. The statistics on marriages in Georgia were reliable more or less until 1990. Since 1990 when the religious marriage became frequent, the statistics on marriages didn't fully reflect the marriage indicator that practically had impact on the accuracy of divorce registration.

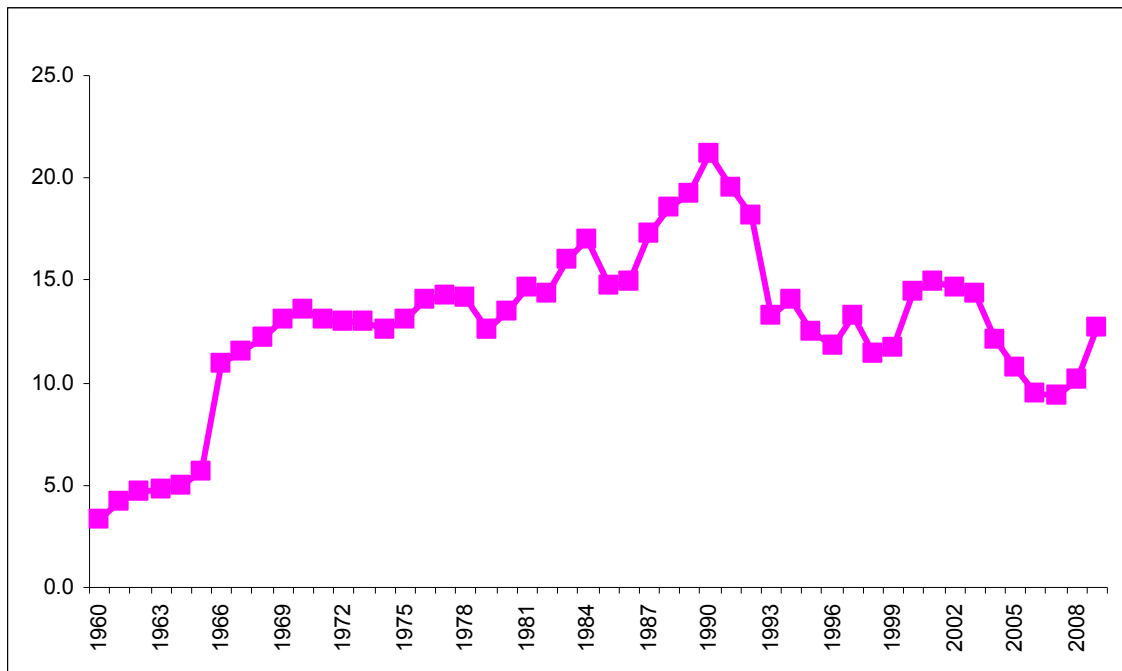
The fact is that a considerable number of young couples gave preference to religious marriage than to official, civil registration. Religious marriage is not acknowledged up to date by the state as official and equal to civil marriage, therefore, it is not recorded by official statistics. As a result of this, in case of divorce religiously married couples are not recorded in the total number of the divorced. Besides, there are separate occasions of cohabitation especially after 2000; although their number is not big, but it has a certain impact on the statistics of marriages and divorces.

As diagram 2 shows, the number of divorces grew per 100 marriages until the mid-period of the 1970s and it reached its peak in 1990, then after reduction until 2000, there is tendency of growth again but not so substantial.

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<sup>1</sup> Population of Russia. A. G. Vishnevsky, M., 1999, p. 33.

Diagram 2. Number of divorces per 100 marriages in Georgia  
in 1960-2009



Since 1990 the above-noted moments of statistical registration had also essential impact on the accuracy of this indicator. Namely, in computing divorces those ceased marriages are not recorded which officially didn't occur. For example, divorces after religious marriage and cohabitation. In addition, population age structure must be taken into account and so on.

The intensity and level of divorces are reflected much more accurately by the age and total rates of divorce.

In 1960-1980 the intensity of both males and females divorce increased in all ages, and in 1980-1990 in the light of the reduction of other ages among males a high level of divorces was observed among males of 35-49 age group and females of 25-29 and 35-44 age groups.

In comparison with the previous years, in 1990-2000 the tendency of reduction of divorces in all age groups is obvious. Particularly it should be noted that since 1995 there is a low level of divorces among females and males and in 2000 their rates comprised 42% and 28% of the 1990 rates respectively.<sup>2</sup>

In 1960-2000 a high level of divorced males was mainly with 30-39 year olds, after

<sup>2</sup> G. Tsuladze, A. Sulaberidze, N. Maghlaperidze,, G. Mamardashvili. Demographic Development of Georgia: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. 2007. pp. 57-58.

<sup>3</sup> G. Tsuladze, A. Sulaberidze, N. Maghlaperidze,, G. Mamardashvili. Demographic Development of Georgia: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. 2007. pp. 59.

2000, particularly after 2005 in contrast with previous years, as it was in 1990-1992, the intensity of divorces increased among 40-44 year old males and in 2008 and 2009 their rates comprised 3.3 and 3,2‰ respectively.

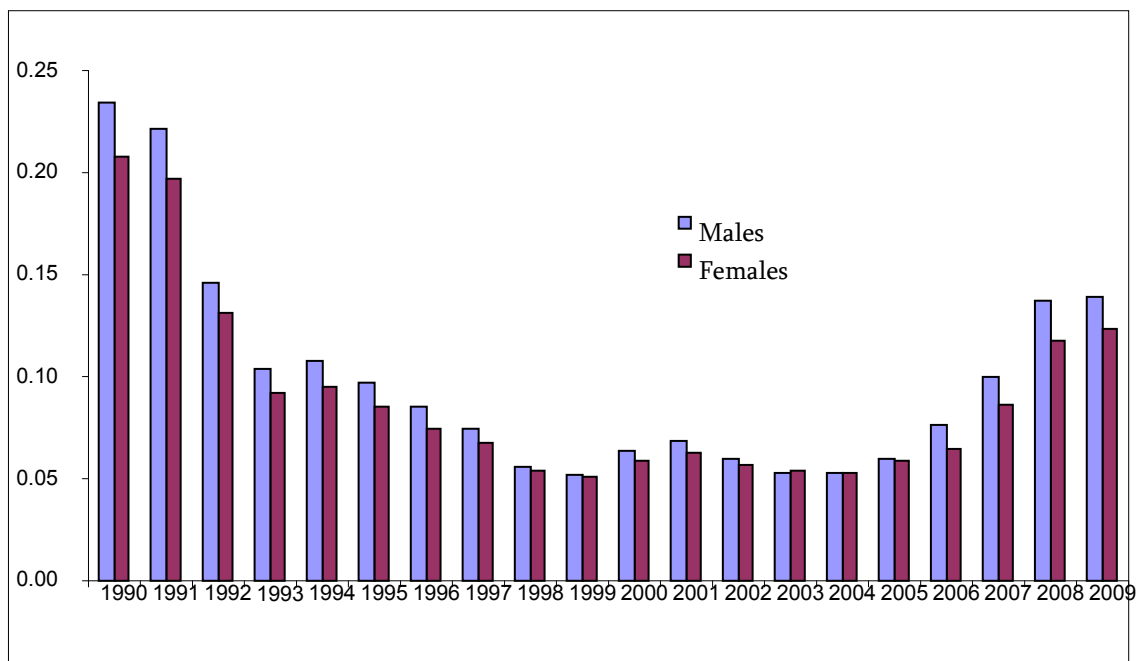
Reduction of the level of divorces in 1990-2000 was presumably due to the grave political and socio-economic situation existed in the country in that period. We think that against the background of grave socio-economic situation (increase of unemployment, family poverty, significant reduction of family incomes and so on) existed in families the couples decided to postpone divorces that apart from minor children it will worsen much more life conditions.

65-75% of divorces in Georgia are childless. In the 1990s the divorced couples had on average 0.4-0.5 child; this rate almost didn't increase in 2000-2009. Supposedly this is one of the main reasons of divorce, especially in 30-39 age groups.

In 1960-2009 the intensity of divorce dynamics in Georgia is well reflected by the total divorce rate which is presented on the diagram 3.

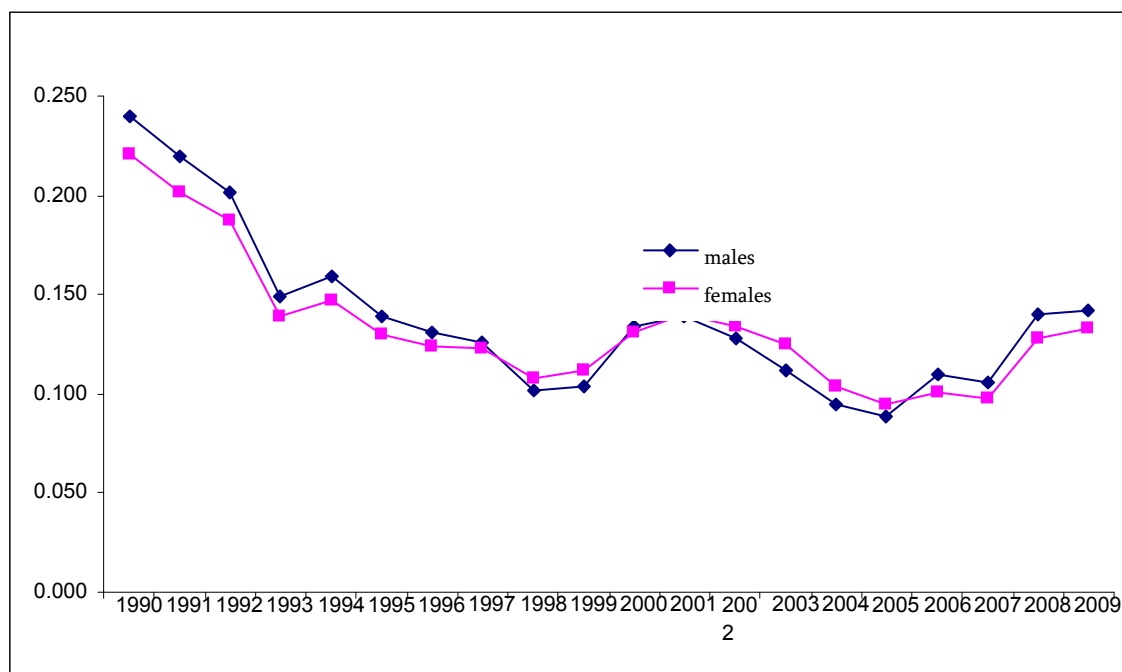
Diagram 3. Dynamics of divorce total rate in Georgia

in 1990-2009



In 1960-1990 the total divorce rate was growing steadily and it reached its peak in 1990, after that it declined sharply and in 1998-2006 a certain stabilization at low level was observed. Since 2007 it increased again and by 2009 it reached the highest level (0.139 among males and 0.124 among females) after 1993 (0.104 – males and 0.092 – females).

Diagram 4. Dynamics of divorce indexes in Georgia in 1990-2009



The intensity of divorces is more adequately reflected by the usage of indexes method which is given on diagram 4. Before discussion of the dynamics of divorce indexes it should be noted that in 1960-1990 this indicator was characterized by growth tendency, especially in the 1970-1990s and throughout 50 years it, like the total divorce rate, reached its peak in 1990 both among males and females.

In the period following 1990, the dynamics of divorce indexes clearly reflects the fluctuation of this indicator for the last 20 years. It should be noted that after certain reduction its growth in 1999-2001 is observed, after that it declined among males and females until 2007, then like 3 year period of 1999-2001 it increased again in 2007-2009 and it reached the highest level after 1993.

At the same time, it is interesting that divorce indexes of males are higher than females except the 1997-2005 period.

The majority of divorced males and females are at age from 25 to 39 (diagram 5), the mean age of divorced males was the lowest 37 in 1992, among females this indicator was 33, and the highest in 2004 (males under 41, females – 36). At that, throughout the whole period under review (1990-2009) the discrepancy between their mean ages was 3.0 years on average. It should be noted that from 1990 to 2009 the mean age of the divorced increased from 2.4 to 3.3, however, since 2004 the mean age of divorced males and females decreased and it was 39.3 and 36.2 respectively.

The high mean age of divorcees is substantially related to the length of marriage (see table 1). From this point of view, at first sight, divorce of spouses after 10 year cohabitation is illogical.

Particularly there was a high level of those divorcees whose marriage period by 2009 was 10-14 years (19.4%) and over 20 years (19.9%).

Table 1.

Divorces by the length of marriages

		Length of marriages in the years of filing for divorce								
weli	sul	0	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+
1990	100.0	4.2	6.9	7.3	7.6	6.3	26.5	17.7	11.3	12.2
1991	100.0	4.3	8.5	8.3	6.7	6.1	26.2	17.4	11.3	11.2
1992	100.0	4.8	15.5	7.9	6.5	6.3	23.6	16.6	9.0	9.8
1993	100.0	4.4	10.1	6.7	7.3	6.5	24.2	17.2	10.3	13.3
1994	100.0	3.9	4.6	5.5	8.0	6.7	24.8	17.8	11.5	16.8
1995	100.0	40.0	4.2	5.5	6.0	6.4	27.7	17.6	12.8	15.8
1996	100.0	4.3	8.8	4.6	5.2	5.5	26.1	16.1	14.1	14.7
1997	100.0	4.9	5.7	5.4	4.7	6.0	26.5	18.3	12.8	15.7
1998	100.0	6.3	4.3	7.1	5.5	4.9	26.1	18.4	12.0	15.4
1999	100.0	5.5	5.4	6.0	5.7	5.0	26.6	19.7	10.9	15.2
2000	100.0	2.5	6.6	4.0	5.2	4.0	22.8	21.1	13.9	19.9
2001	100.0	2.9	3.9	4.3	4.3	2.8	23.2	20.1	14.7	26.0
2002	100.0	3.4	3.6	6.9	5.5	3.8	23.0	20.1	13.6	20.1
2003	100.0	10.4	2.8	2.2	3.6	4.8	16.0	22.1	12.8	22.3
2004	100.0	4.4	3.7	3.0	3.6	4.2	20.4	19.6	16.6	22.5
2005	100.0	6.3	3.1	4.5	3.1	4.1	19.8	20.1	14.6	23.8
2006	100.0	6.3	4.5	4.1	3.5	4.2	19.3	19.4	16.0	22.4
2007	100.0	17.4	3.5	3.8	3.2	2.8	15.1	17.4	14.6	21.1
2008	100.0	3.3	4.8	4.0	3.9	3.6	18.4	19.3	16.9	20.1
2009	100.0	4.3	4.6	4.8	4.4	4.4	18.7	19.4	17.3	19.9

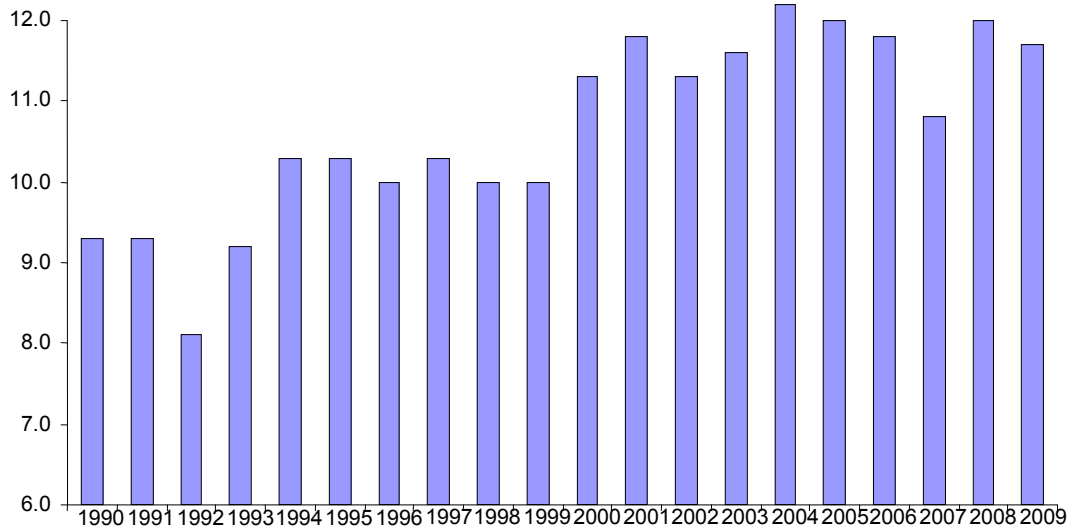
Generally, in the 1990-2009 period the greatest number of divorcees was with those divorcees whose marriage period was more than 5 years. It should be noted that in this period since 2002 there is decline of the number of those divorcees whose marriage period was 5-9 years and compared with them there was increase of the share of those divorcees whose marriage period was 10-14 years and 20 and more years, and their number by 2009

among all the divorced was 19.4% and 19.9% respectively.

As for the indicator of divorcees who were married for until one year, in the 1990-2009 period except for 2003 (10.4%) and 2007 (17.4%) it was somewhat low and fluctuated between 2.5% and 6.3%.

Diagram 5

The average duration



In analyzing divorce it should be taken into account the fact that legal registration is done only after a certain period (sometimes after several years) of actual divorce. Therefore, the actual length of divorce exceeds the actual length of marriage and respectively the actual period of divorce is longer than the period of legally registered divorce.

As for the average length of marriage at divorce, its dynamics in 1990-2009 is well reflected on diagram 5, according to it, since 2000 the average length of marriages increased substantially at the moment of divorce which fluctuates between 10.3 and 12,2 years. Estimation of divorces by the length of marriages (which is better, decrease or increase) is not easy and it is possible only through the special sociological research on the consequences of divorce.

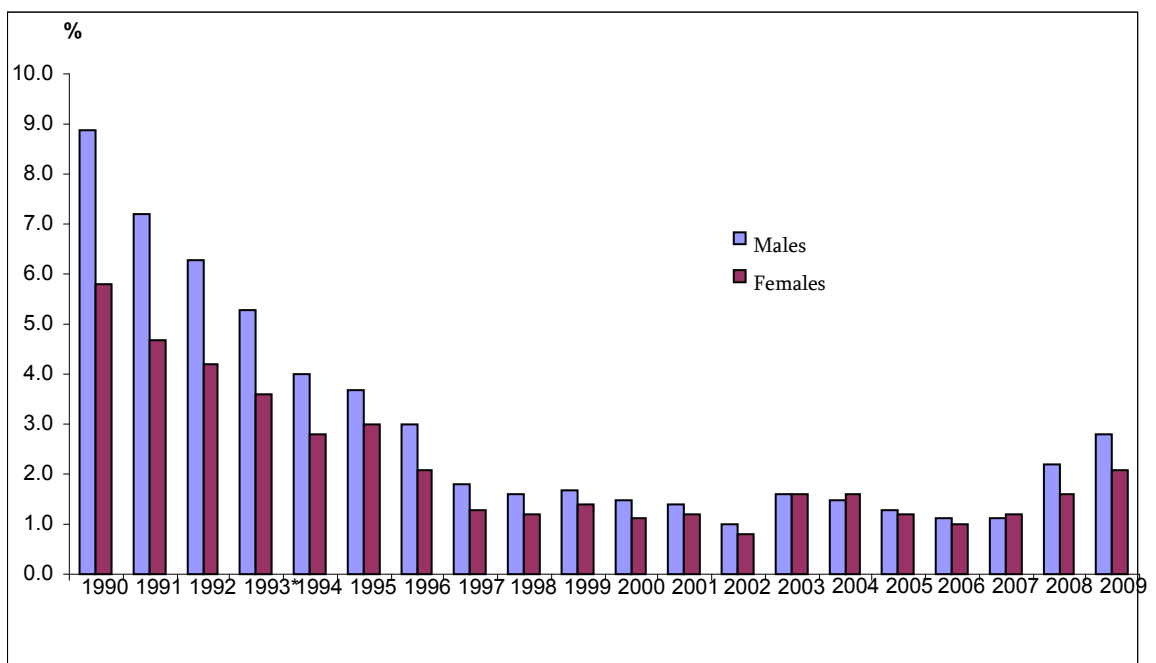
## CONSEQUENCES OF DIVORCE IN GEORGIA

Generally, there is a low level of divorce in Georgia. In spite of this, divorcees further demographic and social behavior is of great interest, how their divorce was reasonable. From

this point of view, first we have discussed remarriages, among them unfortunately, the Georgian official demographic statistics doesn't separate remarriages of divorcees in the sex-age context and presents them along with remarriages of the widowed.

Among all the married in 1990-2009 the share of the first married in various years is from 92.6% to 98.8%. As for the remarriages of the widowed and divorcees, they are low and in total made up from 1.1% to 7.4%. Out of it almost 90% is with the remarriage of divorcees. Their intensity was especially high in 1990-1996, however, its growth was observed in recent 2008-2009 years. 1.6% to 2.1% (see diagram 6).

Diagram 6. Share of previous marriages (divorcees) in all marriages



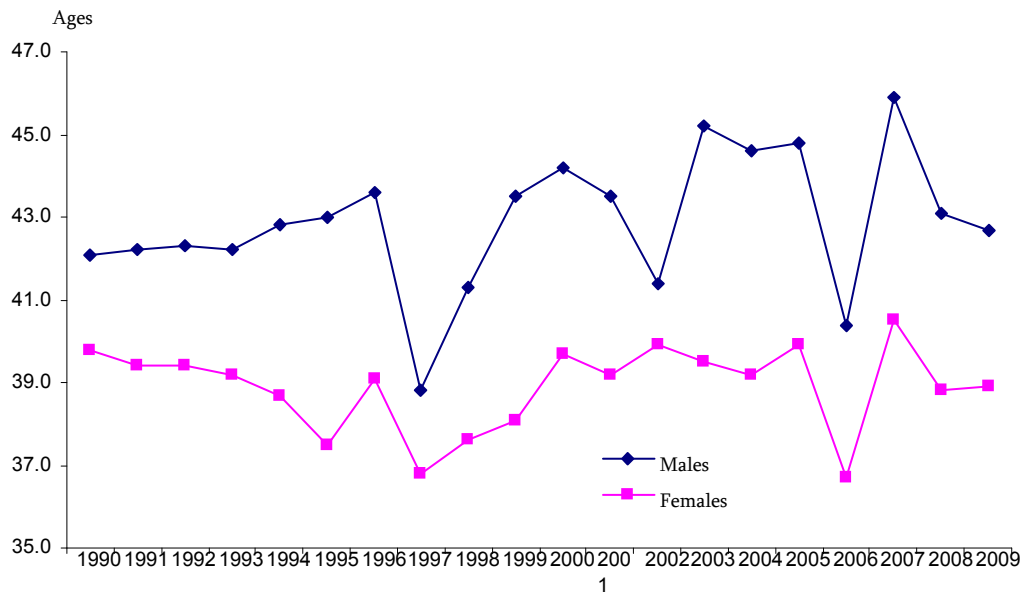
As diagram 7 shows, more divorced males get remarried than divorced females and their number, except for 2003, exceeded the females' indicator in all years of 1990-2009. Among them a large discrepancy was observed particularly in 1990-1996. This discrepancy declined in the following years, and it increased again in 2008-2009, however, it remained low compared with previous years.

As we have noted above, the Georgian demographic statistics doesn't separate the divorcees' sex-age indicators in remarriages and we are forced to discuss them along with the remarried widowed. However, because of the smallness of their number has not a great impact on the accuracy of the mean age of remarried divorcees.





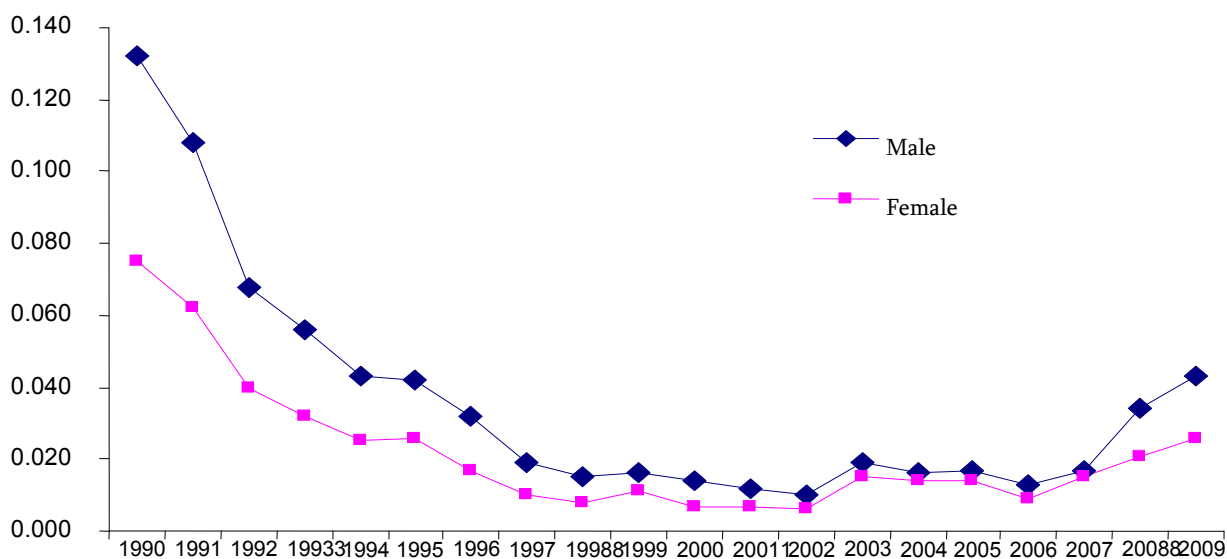
Diagram 7. Mean age of remarriage



As diagram 7 shows, the mean age of remarried males and females in 1990-2000 is characterized by significant changes and among males it is from 38.8 (1997) to 45.9 (2007), among females it fluctuated from 36.7 to 40.5. Also, there is discrepancy between their mean ages at remarriages which varies from 2.0 to 6.5. Among them there is a large discrepancy at remarriage in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2004 and 2007. It should be noted that the mean age of remarriage declined among males as well as females, and the discrepancy existing among them also continues to decrease.

Remarriage dynamics of divorced males and females more exactly shows the development and intensity of this process. As diagram 8 shows the number of the remarried decreases rapidly from 1990 to 1997, then (in 1998-2006) there is stabilization at a low level and it increases again after 2007 and by 2009 it reached the level of 1995. Despite the growth of remarriages of the divorced their level still lags behind the 1990-1995 level, and moreover, in this period it decreased at a rapid pace.

Diagram 8. The total remarriage rates



In this light it is interesting to discuss the main reasons for divorce in Georgia and consequences of divorce, its positive and negative results general analysis in retrospective, as a wide-scale scientific research was not conducted in this respect after 1985.

In studying the reasons for divorce (basically the court archives) it turned out that among the majority of the divorced this reason is complex, where at first sight, one unimportant reason (say, husband comes home late, quarrel with parents of spouse, jealousy, not taking of children to school and so on) can be developed into severe family conflict and turned out as a decisive reason.

The main reasons of divorces are presented in the following way: early marriage, presumption that spouse loved her/him and loves another person and spouses cheat for this reason, hard drunkenness, sexual violence, economic hardship, interference of spouse's parents in wife and husband's family life and so on. It should be noted that initiators of divorce on this grounds basically are females. At that, females go to court for divorce foremostly with the goal of material requirement. Females require the share of their husbands house and property, alimony and so on.

Unlike females, males apply to the court seldom and for divorce registration they give preference to the civil registry. The point is that divorce procedure in the civil registry compared with court (if both spouses are agreed on divorce and inter alia all material issues are solved without court showdown) is much easier and it takes less time. Therefore, we think that the main reason for divorce presented by spouses in the civil registry is less sincere and realistically it can be another reason. As the goal of spouses is divorce, frequently they

never name the main reason in the civil registry and they indicate unreal simple reason (incompatibility of characters, jealousy and so on). Following from the noted it is necessary to conduct sociological research along with the study of court cases.

Unfortunately, due to the absence of financial resources the complex scientific research was not conducted in 1985-2009. From this point of view prof. M. Mekaia's permanent researches conducted in 1975 and 1985 are of great interest.

She studied the reasons of divorces in 1970, then after 5 years she conducted a sociological research among divorcees and the aim was to find out positive and negative sides of divorce. The point is that in that period the communist society unequivocally negatively perceived divorce and its positive side was a taboo subject. From this point of view, her sociological research conducted in 1975 was, to say softly, considerable progress in the Soviet science (that was controlled by Moscow).

The results of the research confirmed the results of analogical researches conducted in other countries that the main reasons for divorce are economic, psychological and biosocial factors which include in themselves objective as well as subjective sides that sometimes develop conflict situation into severe conflicts.

One of the objectives of the research conducted in 1975 was identification of the consequences of divorce in 1970-1975. The research showed that 34% of the divorced were remarried by 1975. Among them 13 couples were reconciled (the main reason for reconciliation was joint caring of children and by certain opinion, traditionally a negative perception of society on divorce); 10% of the divorced considered the necessity of divorce rightly; 14% considered restraint at divorce and noted that it was a hasty decision; 26% regrets divorce, and the rest didn't have formulated opinion with respect to divorce.<sup>4</sup>

The goal of the research conducted permanently on this issue was to compare the consequences of divorce in the past 5 and 15 years and identify the degree of divorce functioning in the life of society and separate individuals. 13% of the respondents to be surveyed could not be found. The repeat interview with the rest of respondents showed that: family situation of the divorced still experienced changes, though, with less intensity. Remarriages were justified and they consider that they are happy. Those who were not reconciled, finally they were divided into reconciled families (they have relationship with each other); the number of those who are unsatisfied with divorce increased. Through the personal observation on them by M. Bekaia's opinion their majority because of personally

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<sup>4</sup> M. Bekaia. Social problems of family of industrial city of Georgia (historical-sociological research). The Abstract of the dissertation for receiving a scientific degree of the doctor of historical sciences. Tbilisi, 1989.

low socio-cultural type and low culture of mutual understanding were subject to divorce and this act got them rid of grave relations.<sup>5</sup>

Through this research it was found the consequences of divorce and divorced females and males, also children's attitude to divorce in the period after divorce. It was found its positive and negative sides.

In our opinion, conduction of the analogical sociological research in European countries example would give us very interesting information on the one hand on the peculiarities of divorce in separate countries; on the other hand, it would enable to formulate a general action program for further action after divorce, as well as a specific action program for separate countries.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid