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Do birds of a feather flock together? Effects of socio-economic homogamy on divorce risks in Sweden 1960-1962

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes a range of determinants of divorce during the 1960s when the labor force participation of married women increased more rapidly than during any other period of the twentieth century using an extensive dataset covering the entire married population in Sweden. The study applies a binary model where the couples are analyzed as units rather then separate individuals to uncover how socio-economic difference and similarity within the couple influenced marriage stability during the years 1960-1962. The main results show that the rapid economic restructuring and change in provider model did contribute to the large decrease in marriage stability during this period in Sweden. Dual provider families exhibit on average twice the divorce probability as compared to couples were the wife was a homemaker. A difference between the results reached in this study and divorce research covering later decades is that children do not reduce the probability of divorce when the labor force participation of the wife is controlled for. The results indicate that the determinants of divorce may have varied across different phases of the divorce transition during the twentieth century and that a historical perspective is necessary if we are to understand the long-term process that have produced current marital behavior.

Keywords: Divorce, Sweden, 1960s, Socio-economic determinants, Female labor force participation, Homogamy

INTRODUCTION

The decrease in marital stability during the 20th century has often been interpreted as a consequence of industrialization and the establishment of a market society. In these histories a rising standard of living and more general market participation by both men and women have caused intertwined economic and cultural processes that have transformed marriage into a contingent and more individualized relationship that in turn has increased the propensity for divorce among married couples in Western industrialized states.

Almost the entire transition from a low to a high divorce rate regime in Western countries occurred prior to the 1970s with significant increases in the divorce rate during the 1940s and the 1960s in both Europe and the US (Chester, 1977; Goode, 1993, pp. 84, 139; Phillips, 1988, p. 585). However, due in large to a lack of adequate data sources, few studies have been done on the determinants of divorce prior to the 1970s. To test theoretical presuppositions of how changes in normative and economic structures during the twentieth century have influenced marriage stability there is a need for research on the determinants of divorce during these highly dynamic periods in Western history. During the 1960s the transformation toward a dual-provider family model gained momentum in Sweden and the idea that married women could and should work outside the home had a definitive breakthrough in social practice as well as in political discourse (Florin & Nilsson, 2000; Åmark, 2006, pp. 323–234). The labor market participation of Swedish married women more than doubled between 1960 and 1975 and reached 59.3% of all married women between 16-64 years of age in 1975 (Stanfors, 2007, pp. 79–83). At the same time the divorce rate also increased more than during any other period of the twentieth century rising from 5 divorces per 1,000 married females in 1960 to almost 14 in 1975 (Sandström, 2011a). Theoretically the spread of the dual-provider family model has decreased the economic interdependence between spouses which in turn has augmented individualistic attitudes and decreased the legitimacy of values of self-sacrifice, duty and social conformity. The end result has been that spouses have increased their demands of returns on marriage and are less inclined to remain in relationships they find unsatisfactory causing more marriages to break up (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Giddens, 1992).

The aim of this study is to examine a range of determinants of divorce that has been implicated in the theoretical discussion on rising divorce rates during the twentieth century using an extensive dataset drawn from the Population and housing censuses covering the entire married population in Sweden in 1960. Special attention is given to the question of how socio-economic homo- and heterogamy influenced the risk of marriage breakdown during the period in Swedish history when both female labor force participation and the divorce rate increases rapidly. Although a majority of the studies that have investigated the effect of female economic independence using datasets from 1970s and 1980s have found evidence of a positive relationship (B. Hoem & Hoem, 1988, pp. 38–40; Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006; Rank, 1987; Spitze & South, 1985) several studies have failed to reproduce a simple connection and find that the causality involved is complex with interactions between the socio-economic position of the spouses (Jalovaara, 2003; Tzeng, 1992) woman's income, hours worked and the perceived fairness of the division of unpaid work (Amato, 2010, p. 651; Greenstein, 1990, 1995; K. Nilsson & Strandh, 2009).

Most studies that have examined how socio-economic position influence the probability of divorce have studied males and females as independent individuals rather than related couples. This study investigates the couple as a unit and try to see how different combinations of male-female socio-economic positions—i.e. how the degree of socio-economic heterogamy—influence the risk of marriage breakdown. During the 1960s when labor force participation among married women still remained relatively low it is interesting to study the effect of the wife's relative economic resources. If the sharp increase in the divorce rate during the 1960s is connected to the pronounced increase in the labor force participation of married women

during the same time period, the risk of marriage breakdown should be considerably higher among the couples where the wife was employed. The hypothesis is thus that high risks of divorce during this period mainly are found among the couples exhibiting a low degree of socio-economic heterogamy and more similar life-courses, as compared to couples exhibiting a more traditional single provider family model with a gainfully employed husband married to a housewife.

DATASET

The dataset utilized in this study was drawn from the Population and housing censuses of 1960 and 1965. The data from the censuses are a part of the ASTRID-database hosted by the Department of Social and Economic Geography at Umeå University and includes all individuals living in Sweden in 1960 and 1965. Using the ASTRID-database, a dataset was constructed that included all married couples in Sweden that were cohabitating at the time of the census in 1960. The dataset was then limited to only include couples where both spouses were alive and under the age of 67 years at the time of the next census in 1965. After excluding these couples the dataset included 1,359,624 couples between 21 and 66 years of age by the time of the census in 1965. The reason for excluding old age pensioners is that we do not know their prior occupation and thus cannot say anything about the man and the woman's relative socio-economic position. The extensive nature of the dataset offers several advantages to finite samples as it eliminates problems attached to sample selection and makes it possible to investigate many independent variables simultaneously. It should be noted that the use of the total population makes the significance tests and standard errors not directly interpretable as there is no random component due to sampling and thus the coefficients of the models become de-facto descriptions of the empirical patterns in the population under investigation.

OUTCOME VARIABLE

The outcome variable is binary in terms of a marriage being disrupted or still intact. However, the outcome is rare and the probability of remaining married is highly more probable than experiencing a marriage disruption. The divorce rate during the early 1960s was approximately 5 divorces per 1000 married women, which gives a 1 in 200 mean probability of divorce for a single year. Modeling rare binary outcomes has various statistical challenges associated with it (King & Zeng, 2001). But after considering the various options, we opted for the use of the canonical method for binary outcomes i.e. logistical regression.

Two alternative outcome variables to measure marriage disruption where constructed from the dataset. The first approach was to model if the couple had discontinued cohabitation at the time of the next census in 1965 or not. In this case we do not model the probability of divorce directly but the probability of that the spouses lives in separate households in 1965. If we want to identify all cases of marriage disruption, it is necessary to use the residential information as a proxy for marriage breakdown. Although there are some couples that stopped cohabitating due to other reasons than a failed marriage, we argue that the discontinuation of cohabitation is a good proxy for marriage breakdown. A strong argument for this is that almost 90% of the couples that divorced during this time in Sweden did so by means of a de-jure or de-facto separation (Sandström, 2011a, p. 73). If the separation was de-jure a one-year separation period was required before the couple could file for a final divorce. If the separation was de-facto the required separation period was at least three years. All these separated couples were recorded as married but not cohabitating in the census in 1965. Arguably, the fact that the couple has discontinued cohabitation makes it highly probable that this is indicative of actual marriage breakdown.

The alternative outcome variable was to model actual divorces that hade been finalized in 1965 and where at least one of the spouses had not remarried by 1965 and consequently had a divorced marital status in 1965. The main advantage of this approach is that we can identify the year that the divorce occurred for these cases, as there is information on what year the marital status changed. This makes it possible to limit the cases to couples that had divorced in the two following years after the census of 1960. This was advantageous as it shortened the time period between the measurement of the independent variables and the outcome variable and consequently reduced the amount of unobserved variability in the independent variables.

After testing these two approaches against the data we opted for the latter approach as it produced a better fit than modeling all couples that discontinued cohabitation between 1960 and 1965. The overall fit of the model and the size of the effects of coefficients in the regression model was however the only difference between the two approaches. There was no change in the direction of effects and the relative sizes of the coefficients were also more or less the same.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Control variables
Previous research has conclusively shown that couples living in densely populated areas have higher dissolution risks than couples living in rural areas (Glenn & Shelton, 1985; Sandström, 2011a, pp. 75–81; White, 1990, p. 905). Theoretically this relationship can be explained in a number of ways. Urban environments that offer a larger amount of social contacts provides a better supply-side in the marriage market and increase the chances of finding a new partner in case of divorce (South, 1995; South, Trent, & Shen, 2001). If the chances are good to supplement one's current partner with a new one both incentives and constraints will be influenced in a manner that promotes divorce. Other scholars argue that differences in the degree of social control and in normative structures between urban and rural areas can explain the higher divorce rates in urban settings (Goode, 1963, p. 83; Therborn, 2004, p. 22). We control for the *degree of urbanization* of the home district that the couple reside in by using the classification system of rural-urban areas developed by Statistics Sweden (Ylander, 2004, pp. 80–84). Based on the assumptions above we expect to find a positive association between the probability of divorce and the population density of the home district.

We control for the *duration of marriage* and expect that the risk of divorce will increase during the first couple of years and then after reaching a peak decrease as a function of time. Research on Swedish data has found that the highest risk of divorce on average has occurred in the 5th year of marriage during the twentieth century (Sandström, 2011a, p. 71). We also control for the *age at marriage* and expect to find a negative association as people that marry young have universally been found to have higher dissolution risks than couples that marry at a later age (G. Andersson, 1997, p. 113; White, 1990, p. 906).

The presence of *minor children in the household*, the *age of the children* and their *kinship relations* to the parents has been shown to influence the risk of divorce. Having dependent children decreases the risk of dissolution (Regarding Sweden see Britta Hoem and Jan M. Hoem 1988, 6; Hong 1996) and this effect tends to be larger the younger the children are (G. Andersson, 1997, p. 130; Waite & Lillard, 1991). The negative effect of minor children on dissolution risk likely works through several causal mechanisms. From an economic point of view the added sustenance needs that minor children impose on the family will increase economic interdependence between spouses. This disincentive will be especially pronounced for women who normally were awarded sole custody of the children after divorce during this period in Sweden (Familjelagssakkunniga, 1972, p. 60). For men disincentives to divorce produced by children are likely first and foremost of a social character rather than economic and are connected to the risk of losing day-to-day contact and emotional ties with the children

after divorce. For females, the effect of children as a deterrent to divorce will decrease as the child gets older and becomes less dependent on care giving. As the child reaches school age the need to arrange day-care is eliminated during the parts of the day that the child is engaged in school. As a function of increased age the need for supervision during work-hours continues to decrease and finally stops some time during adolescence. The perceived biological relationship between parents and children is however important as stepchildren have been found to have the opposite effect and increase the probability of dissolution; especially if the mother is the biological parent and not the father (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002, p. 25).

Socio-economic variables
The socio-economic variables included in the study are the socio-economic position of the wife and the husband and the housing tenure of the family. *Home-ownership* is a proxy for economic resources and has been found to influence divorce probabilities negatively (Greenstein, 1990; Jalovaara, 2001; South & Spitze, 1986). Owning rather than renting a home indicates relatively more affluent conditions and decreases the risk of strains on marriage due to scarceness of resources. Additionally, large amounts of capital that are bound in assets that that must be liquidated in case of divorce will increase the economic risk and transaction cost of divorce and will thus work as a constraint to divorce.

The census in 1960 and 1965 does not include complete information on *socio-economic position* of the husband and wife. Variables such as income and educational levels for both the man and the woman are not available but complete information on the occupation of the spouses were recorded in the census. The type of employment in terms of being self-employed or a hired employee is however not available. To achieve a workable socio-economic stratification that makes it possible to compare both the wife's and the husband's socio-economic position (SEI) the occupational information was recoded using the stratification scheme for occupations developed by Statistics Sweden (*Swedish socioeconomic classification MIS 1982:4)* which takes in to account differences in educational requirements, income and whether the occupation entails having subordinates or not (SCB, 1983). Due to the composition of the data source we were forced to classify all individuals as hired employees. For example, lawyers and carpenters were classified as higher white-collar and skilled blue-collar employees respectively, disregarding if they where self-employed or if they were hired employees working for someone else. All individuals outside the workforce were coded as zeros and the employed are coded in to 5 groups with the lowest level being unskilled blue-collar and the highest being higher white-collar professionals. A separate group coded 6 for farmers where also added giving a total of seven SEI groups. However, female farmers where extremely few and composed only 0.04 percent of the total female workforce. This group was excluded from the dataset giving a total of 6 female SEI-groups as opposed to 7 for the males and a total N of 1,359,081 couples.

The effects of the husband's and the wife's socio-economic positions on divorce risk since the 1970s have been widely investigated and found to partly work in different ways. Disregarding the separate contribution of the husband and wife to the effect between socio-economic position and the risk of divorce, the net effect has been found to be negative during recent decades (Hong, 1996; Jalovaara, 2001; K. Nilsson & Strandh, 2009; Ono, 2009). Couples that have higher incomes and higher educational levels exhibit lower dissolution risks than couples from the lower socio-economic strata. Scholars usually argue that this connection between divorce and low socio-economic position should be interpreted as an effect of the relative scarceness of resources within the marriage among low-income couples, which in turn puts added strain on the relationship. However, William Goode has suggested that this negative relationship should have been reversed during the earlier phase of the divorce revolution when economic and normative constraints to divorce where more pronounced (Goode,

1962, p. 517, 1993, pp. 26–27). Sandström (2011b) has shown that this hypothesis is consistent with Swedish data from the 1920s and 1930s, but exactly when the "democratization" of the access to divorce occurred in Sweden has not yet been established and we do not know to what extent the relationship had shifted by the early 1960s. For males all indicators of the socio-economic position during recent decades appear to be negatively associated with the dissolution risk but for females research have found more complex casual patterns. Female education seems to be negatively associated with dissolution risks while most studies find a positive effect of the hours worked by females. The results regarding income have been inconclusive (For rewives see White 1990; Spitze 1988).

The more complex relationship between the indicators of female socio-economic status and divorce are normally explained by the theoretical argument that the independent economic resources of wives work in two counteracting ways (Ross & Sawhill, 1975). Firstly, access to personal economic resources has an *independence effect* that decreases the economic disincentives against leaving an unsatisfactory marriage for wives. (Strube & Barbour, 1983) support this hypothesis by showing that battered women that are employed are markedly more likely to leave their partners than housewives. In a legal regime that award alimonies to unemployed spouses—such as Sweden's during the 1960s—Roderick Phillips have pointed out that the independent resources of wives also should work to decrease disincentives for husbands, as it decreases the amount of alimony they have to pay (Phillips, 1988, p. 620). On the other hand there is an *income effect* of the wife's labor force participation due to the fact that the added income of the wife will increase the total amount of resources that are shared within the marriage. The income effect of the wife's salary will thus increase the incentives to remain married among dual earner families. The dataset used in this study does however not make it possible to disentangle the complex causal patterns of how education, income and work time interact as it only contains information on the occupation of the husband and wife. For the present purpose, to ascertain if the increased divorce rate during the 1960s is connected to decreased socio-economic heterogamy the dataset is satisfactory as it does allow the investigation of the net effect of absolute and relative socio-economic positions of husband and wife.

Heterogamy variables
Our analysis includes tests of how three different types of heterogamy—age, ethnicity and socio-economic—influenced the risk of divorce. With regards to socio-economic heterogamy, a main question is to what extent the probability of divorce differed between the couples that remained in a traditional heterogamous single-provider family model compared to the rapidly increasing proportion of marriages that adopted a dual-provider model during the 1960s. Furthermore, we want to investigate how relative differences in socio-economic status between employed husbands and wives influenced the probabilities of marriage breakdown. Most studies have found that heterogamous couples where the wife has a higher SEI than the husband exhibit increased relative risks as compared to homogamous couples, as well as compared to couples were the wife has a lower SEI relative to the husband (Jalovaara, 2003; Tzeng, 1992).

Age-differences between spouses is assumed to increase the dissolution risk but in different ways depending on the gender of the younger party. Couples where one of the spouses is significantly older than the other increases the likelihood that conflicts arise due to differences in preferences, role-expectations and life-goals (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972, pp. 761–762). The fact that a couple is deviant with regard to age-difference also increases the risk of experiencing negative attitudes from the social surrounding that can influence the couples perceptions of their relationship negatively and consequently increase the risk of dissolution. As social norms tend to regard unions composed of younger women and older men as normal up to a certain point, the positive association between the divorce risk and age-heterogamy should be

larger in cases where the woman is older than the man (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006; South, 1991).

Ethnic-cultural heterogamy is theoretically assumed to increase the risk of divorce due to differences in normative dispositions and role expectations that promote marital conflict between spouses. Support for this hypothesis have been found with regard to heterogamy of language (Finnas, 1997), religion (Becker, Landes, & Michael, 1977; Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993) and ethnicity (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002, p. 20).

RESULTS

The results of the logistical regression analysis are reported in Table 1. The variables are entered in consecutive steps beginning with the population density of the home district where the couple resided and then adding the variables one by one until all variables are included in model 10. For each model the effect of the variable on the outcome is reported as the antilog of the coefficient exp(B), which is interpreted as the multiplicative difference in the odds of the event relative to the reference group in the case of categorical predictors. Consequently the reference category has an exp(B) value of 1. The result of the exponential function is thus an expression of the relative difference in the odds of the outcome for cases having a specific value on an independent variable as compared to the reference category controlling for all other variables in the model. For continuous variables the exp(B) value gives the multiplicative effect on the odds for a one unit increase in the independent variable rather than relative differences in the odds between different categories of variable values. For rare outcomes, were the probability of the outcome is small the odds-ratio can for all practical intents and purposes be interpreted as a relative risk (Agresti, 2002, p. 47). The exp(B) values reported in Table 1 can thus in this case be interpreted as the percentage difference in the risk of experiencing the event for a particular category as compared to the reference group when controlling for the other variables in the model. Significance of the complete model and added variables was tested with by means of reduction in deviance. All models have a significant Chi-square for both the model and for the added Chi-square of each step below the one percent level. Model fit was also tested with Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test which produced similar results as the Chi-square tests of reduction in deviance indicating that the models fits the data at an adequate level.

Table 1: Multi-step logistical regression for married cohabitating couples in Sweden 1960, aged 16-66 years. Variable effects on the probability of divorce during 1960-62.

Independent variables	Categories	Frequency	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
1. Degree of urbanization	Rural – 20,000	783,672	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Town 20-83,000	279,119	1.987**	1.879**	1.871**	1.863**	1.832**	1.631**	1.572**
	Town > 226,000	296,290	3.263**	3.075**	3.153**	3.143**	3.051**	2.590**	2.530**
2. Duration of marriage	More than 13 years	801,689	—	1	1	1	1	1	1
	7-12 years	263,960	—	2.065**	2.095**	2.325**	2.142**	1.976**	2.017**
	4-6 years	133,025	—	2.728**	2.770**	3.706**	3.083**	2,747**	2.786**
	0-3 years	160,407	—	2.853**	2.882**	4.200**	3.315**	2,884**	2.848**
3. Mean age of spouses at marriage			—	—	.968**	.966**	.950**	.954**	.957**
4. Age of youngest child	No children	363,384	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
	0-2 years	221,783	—	—	—	.902*	.845**	.858*	.911*
	3-5 years	169,578	—	—	—	1.258**	1.114*	1.131*	1.208**
	6-10 years	216,586	—	—	—	1.728**	1.475**	1.487**	1.592**
	11 years and older	387,750	—	—	—	1.693**	1.473**	1.490**	1.582**
5. Children with other than spouse	None	1,279,424	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
	Husband	39,062	—	—	—	—	2.400**	2.342**	2.304**
	Wife	34,992	—	—	—	—	2.649**	2.602**	2.506**
	Both	5,603	—	—	—	—	3.856**	3.719**	3.531**
6. Housing tenure	Home owner	518,266	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
	Condominium apartment	146,701	—	—	—	—	—	1.332**	1.253**
	Rented apartment	665,609	—	—	—	—	—	1.876**	1.737**
	Sub-leased - other	28,505	—	—	—	—	—	1.801**	1.647**
7. SEI husband	Outside workforce	43,761	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
	Blue-collar lower	353,379	—	—	—	—	—	—	.479**
	Blue-collar higher	402,146	—	—	—	—	—	—	.433**
	White-collar lower	112,373	—	—	—	—	—	—	.405**
	White-collar middle	146,098	—	—	—	—	—	—	.396**
	White-collar higher	172,236	—	—	—	—	—	—	.313**
	Farmers	129,088	—	—	—	—	—	—	.144**
N			1,359,081	1,359,081	1,359,081	1,359,081	1,359,081	1,359,081	1,359,081
Chi² step			1417.6**	1113.9**	169.4**	259.1**	526.2**	285.7**	388.5**
Chi² model			1417.6**	2531.6**	2701.0**	2960.1**	3486.3**	3772.0**	4160.5**

p. < .05* p. < .001**

(Table 1: Continued)

Independent variables	Categories	Frequency	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
1. Rural – Urban	Rural – 20,000	783,672	1	1	1
	Town 20-83,000	279,119	1.480**	1.495**	1.492**
	Town > 226,000	296,290	2.304**	2.331**	2.306**
2. Duration of marriage	More than 13 years	801,689	1	1	1
	7-12 years	263,960	1.839**	1.830**	1.802**
	4-6 years	133,025	2.417**	2.401*	2.355**
	0-3 years	160,407	2.380**	2.353**	2.300**
3. Mean age of spouses at marriage			.960**	.948**	.947**
4. Age of youngest child	No children	363,384	1	1	1
	0-2 years	221,783	1.272**	1.252**	1.245**
	3-5 years	169,578	1.548**	1.520**	1.511**
	6-10 years	216,586	1.815**	1.784**	1.777**
	11 years and older	387,750	1.611**	1.589**	1.589**
5. Children with other than spouse	None	1,279,424	1	1	1
	Husband	39,062	2.207**	2.125**	2.105**
	Wife	34,992	2.494**	2.415**	2.418**
	Both	5,603	3.396**	3.355**	3.397**
6. Housing tenure	Home owner	518,266	1	1	1
	Condominium apartment	146,701	1.180**	1.190*	1.193*
	Rented apartment	665,609	1.665**	1.663**	1.663**
	Sub-leased - other	28,505	1.610**	1.606**	1.605**
7. SEI husband	Outside workforce	43,761	1	1	1
	Blue-collar lower	353,379	.460**	.460**	.462**
	Blue-collar higher	402,146	.417**	.419**	.421**
	White-collar lower	112,373	.393**	.398**	.400**
	White-collar middle	146,098	.397**	.402**	.404**
	White-collar higher	172,236	.324**	.329**	.330**
	Farmers	129,088	.150**	.150**	.152**
8. SEI wife	Outside workforce	1,021,145	1	1	1
	Blue-collar lower	193,326	2.021**	2.016**	2,016**
	Blue-collar higher	27,201	2.182**	2.177**	2,173**
	White-collar lower	62,042	2.121**	2.133**	2,144**
	White-collar middle	49,646	1.215*	1.230*	1,233*
	White-collar higher	5,721	1.998**	2.021**	2,003**
9. Age-difference	Wife 10 ≥ younger	99,648	—	1.690**	1.675**
	Wife 9-5 younger	345,782	—	1.066	1.063
	4 years or less	865,315	—	1	1
	Husband 9-5 younger	41,362	—	1.671**	1.655**
	Husband 10 ≥ younger	6,938	—	2.670**	2.634**
10. Ethnicity of spouses	Both Swedish	1,255,462	—	—	1
	Husband non-Swedish	25,777	—	—	1.337**
	Wife non-Swedish	47,256	—	—	1.390**
	Both non-Swedish	30,586	—	—	.912
N			1,359,081	1,359,081	1,359,081
Chi² step			526.8**	167.8**	44.7**
Chi² model			4687.3**	4855.2**	4899.9**

p. < .05* p. < .001**

Model 1-10 show that there is an evident effect of the degree of urbanization on the risk of divorce in all models as we expected based on presuppositions of reduced social control and better access to alternative partners in urban areas. The couples living in Stockholm, Malmoe and Gothenburg (Town > 225,000) have approximately 2.3 times higher probability of divorce as compared to couples living rural areas and in small towns with less tan 20,000 inhabitants. The effect is consistent across models. The only variable that significantly decreases this effect of urbanization when controlled for is the housing tenure variable. In the expansive urban areas of Sweden there has been a permanent shortage of housing and home ownership has been significantly more expensive and socially excusive than in other parts of Sweden. The proportion of the married couples in the dataset that lived in rented housing in Stockholm, Malmoe and Gothenburg was 69% as compared to 38% in rural areas and small towns. The results indicate that part of the positive effect of urban living environments is a result of differences in the distribution of tenure between these environments. That urban couples largely lived in rented housing will have worked to decrease the transaction cost of divorce as compared to rural areas where more couples hade real estate that had to be liquidated.

The controls for duration of the marriage and the age of the woman at marriage exhibit the expected negative relationship with the probability of divorce and the effects are consistent across models. A more interesting result, at odds with both our hypothesis and almost all studies of divorce on post 1960s data (G. Andersson, 1997; B. Hoem & Hoem, 1988, 1992), is the positive relationship between the presence of a child in the household and the probability of divorce. In Models 4-7 there is a slight decrease in the probability of divorce for those couples having an infant under the age of two as compared to couples with no children. However this decrease in probability disappears when we control for the workforce participation of the wife and from Model 8 there is an excess probability of divorce for all couples having children of any age compared to childless couples. Further analysis showed that the excess probability of having children was considerably more pronounced among the gainfully employed wives than among wives outside the labor force and that these women hade excess probabilitys at all ages of the child. It thus seems that the protective effect of small children is confounded by the fact that most females with a child under the age of two were housewives and when we control for the labor force participation of the wife children do not decrease the probability of divorce. Although it is not perfectly clear why this relationship emerges, the conclusion is that the presence of children do not reduce but promote divorce during the 1960s in Sweden. In the concluding discussion we will return to these somewhat surprising results and offer some possible explanations to why these empirical patterns emerge in the 1960s but do not during later decades.

The other variable pertaining to the effect of children is the kinship relationships of the children in the household in relation to the parents. As evident from Models 5-10 the overall result is that the presence of stepchildren in the household promotes divorce, which is what we expect to find based on theory and previous research. The divorce promoting effect of stepchildren is larger in cases where the wife rather than the husband is the biological parent but the largest increase in probability is found among the couples where both spouses bring stepchildren into the marriage. These marriages are about 3.5 times as likely to be dissolved as compared to couples that do not have any stepchildren. This relationship is in part a result of the fact that the presence of stepchildren is a proxy for the parent being in a second or higher order marriage. Previous divorces have been related to increased probability of divorce (B. Hoem & Hoem, 1988, p. 40; Martin & Bumpass, 1989). Furthermore the more complex interpersonal-relationships of stepfamilies introduce strains and possibilities for conflict related to parental roles and upbringing of "your children and my children" that are not present in families where both parents are the biological mother and father (White & Booth, 1985).

Housing tenure that is introduced in Model 6 is the first of three variables pertaining to the socio-economic position of the family. The reference category is home-ownership and the empirical pattern is consistent with our theoretical expectations that the probability of divorce is inversely associated whit the amount of capital that is bounded in housing. The couples that rent or sub-lease their housing have approximately a 70% higher probability of divorce as compared to couples that own their homes when controlling for other covariates. Condominium apartment owners exhibit slightly higher divorce probability than homeowners, but a lower probability than couples that lived in rented housing. Apart from the constraining effect of having to liquidate property and the economic risk attached to this for both spouses, one could also argue that there is a selection effect at work. Couples that have a low anticipation of divorce and experience high marital quality will be more prone to invest a large sum of money together. Housing tenure also works as a proxy for socio-economic resources in general and couples that are economically well off and that can afford a high material standard are less likely to be affected by strains on the marriage due to difficulties in making ends meet.

Models 7-10 show that there is a evident negative association between the SEI-position of the husband and the probability that the couple will dissolve their marriage trough divorce in Sweden during the early 1960s. The positive relationship found in (Sandström, 2011b) between the socio-economic position of the husband and the probability of divorce seem to have shifted in the manner suggested by William Goode, so that males in the lower socio-economic strata exhibit an increased propensity for divorce relative to more affluent males. The negative effect on the probability of divorce is greatest for the higher white-collar occupations and even lower for farmers. The low probability of divorce among farmers has been noted in prior research (Goode, 1962, p. 517; Jalovaara, 2001, p. 122). Several factors are likely responsible for this pattern. One factor that is not controlled for in this dataset is the amount of capital bounded in land and real estate which are lager for the average farmer than for other homeowners in the population. Here we only distinguish between different types of tenure and do not differentiate between homeowners according to the size of their estate. Furthermore farming usually implies the active contribution of both spouses to the work on the farm (although wives normally were recorded as outside the workforce as their labor did not entail payment of salary). This made spouses mutually dependent of both one an others work as well as the actual land they shared ownership of for their livelihood. The division of a large shared property attached to a divorce and the breakup of the shared business likely worked to produce a strong economic interdependence in farming families that in turn produced strong disincentives to divorce in this group. It is important to note that the strongest relationship between socio-economic position of the husband and divorce is the high probability of divorce for males outside the workforce as compared to all males that are gainfully employed. We will discuss this relationship more at length in connection to the question regarding the effect of the relative socio-economic position of the spouses.

Models 8-10 show a marked positive relationship between the labor force participation of wives and the probability of divorce. All SEI-groups besides the middle white-collar employees have at least a doubled probability of divorce as compared to wives that are not gainfully employed. Wives in the middle white-collar category composing such occupations as teachers and nurses also have a slightly higher probability of divorce than women outside the labor force but a significantly lower probability than other women that are gainfully employed. The lower propensity for divorce among these women is an interesting empirical pattern that has no clear-cut interpretation. Some suggestions for how this pattern might be interpreted are however given in the concluding discussion. The considerably higher probabilities of divorce among gainfully employed wives support the hypothesis that economic self-sufficiency of the wives is connected to increased risk of divorce during the 1960s in Sweden. If there was a

marked income effect, the probability of divorce should be lower among females in the higher SEI-groups as they made a lager contribution to the shared economy of the family. However, there is no evidence of such an effect in this dataset as the increased probability of divorce is more or less stable across the female SEI-groups.

Models 9-10 test to what extent there is an effect of age and ethnic heterogamy on the probability of divorce. Age-differences seem to have the influence we would expect based on the presupposition that a large age-difference between the husband and wife promotes divorce. However, there is a marked difference in the overall importance of age-heterogamy depending on the direction of the age-difference. If the wife is ten or more years younger this increases the odds of divorce moderately by a factor of 1.6 and for those couples where the wife is between 9-5 years younger there is no increase in the propensity for divorce as compared to the age homogamous couples in the reference category. The marked effect of age-differences is on the other hand found among the couples where the husband is the younger spouse. In the cases where the man is ten or more years younger the odds is increased by a factor of 2.63 as compared to marriages that are age homogamous.

The hypothesis of increased probability of divorce among ethnically heterogamous couples is also confirmed although effects on the probability are quite modest only increasing the odds by a factor of approximately 1.3. The increase in probability is more or less the same whether it is the husband or the wife that is not born in Sweden. The estimate for couples where both spouses were born outside of Sweden is negative but the estimate is not significant and the effect is small.

The influence of socio-economic heterogamy on the risk of divorce is tested in our last model displayed in Table 2. A main question in this paper is how the divorce risk varied between the couples that remained in a traditional heterogamous single-provider family model compared to the rapidly increasing proportion of marriages that adopted a dual-provider model during the 1960s. To investigate this we combined the SEI-position of the wife and husband to see to what extent relative difference and similarity in SEI-position within the couple co-varied with the probability of divorce. Previous research has usually concluded that heterogamous couples where the wife has a higher SEI-position than the husband exhibit increased relative risks as compared to homogamous couples, as well as compared to couples were the wife has a lower SEI relative to the husband (Jalovaara, 2003; Tzeng, 1992). The model in Table 2 controls for all the variables in Model 10 but replaces the separate SEI-positions of wife and husband with a combined variable to test the importance of relative differences. The reference group is marriages with an employed husband and a wife outside the labor force, which is the by far most common combination, composing 64 percent of the married couples in the dataset.

Table 2: Logistical regression for married cohabitating couples in Sweden 1960 aged 16-66 years. The effect of socio-economic homo-heterogamy on the probability of divorce in 1960-62.[1]

Independent variables	Categories	Frequency	Model 11
Relative socio-economic position of spouses	Both outside workforce	32,304	2.407**
	Husband outside workforce — Employed wife	11,457	4.536**
	Employed husband — wife outside workforce	870,786	1
	Both employed — wife with lower SEI	149,801	1.924**
	Both employed — same SEI	103,484	2.011**
	Both employed — wife with higher SEI	62,161	2.002**
	Farmer — wife outside workforce	118,055	0.393**
	Farmer — employed wife	11,033	0.412*
N			1,359,081
Chi² model			4799.7**

 p. < .05* p. < .001**

[1] Model includes variables 1-6 and 9-10 in Table 1 as controls (not displayed).

The largest increase in risk, with a 4.5 times higher probability of divorce, is found in the group where the husband is outside the labor force and the wife is employed. The high probabilities of marital breakdown among couples where the husband is outside the workforce have been firmly established in previous research on Scandinavian divorce during the 1980s and 1990s (Hansen, 2005; Jalovaara, 2003; Jensen & Smith, 1990). Based on the theoretical argument of (Becker et al., 1977) the divorce promoting effect of the husband's unemployment is usually explained in terms of the husband's loss of status as a dependable provider causing the wife to reevaluate the utility of remaining married. Scandinavian research has also pointed to the fact that selection effects and unmeasured factors likely contribute to the positive effect of male unemployment on divorce (Hansen, 2005, p. 139; Jalovaara, 2003, p. 78). This is especially the case in a context such as Sweden during the 1960s when unemployment rates were very low affecting only 1.4 percent of the workforce in 1960 (SCB, 1961, p. 194). In a context of near full employment being out of work becomes a proxy for various social problems such as long-term illness, drug abuse and other risk factors that can be assumed to destabilize marriage.

Looking at the marriages where both spouses are employed there is little evidence of any marked effect of differences in the relative socio-economic position. The most evident relationship is that dual-earner marriages have approximately a doubled risk of divorce as compared to traditional single-provider families disregard less of the relative differences in SEI-positions between employed wives and husbands. Couples were the wife has a higher SEI than the man has about the same increase in risk as couples with equal SEI, as well as the couples where the wife has a lower SEI than the man if both are employed. Thus the conclusion is that socio-economic heterogamy in terms of the husband providing a lager contribution to the family economy decreases the probability of divorce during this period in Sweden. Socio-economic homogamy in terms of a adapting a dual-provider family model on the other hand worked to increase the risk of divorce. Socio-economic homogamy thus appears to have the opposite effect as compared to age and cultural-ethnic homogamy during this period in Sweden. Hence it appears that the sharp increase in labor force participation and increased economic self-sufficiency of married females is one of the structural changes in Sweden during the 1960s that at least to some extent contributed to the marked decrease in marriage stability during this period.

DISCUSSION

Perhaps not surprisingly, it is not possible to rely on the simple generalization alliterated in the title of this paper when it comes to the question of marriage stability. Rather, difference and similarity between spouses influence marriage stability in different ways depending on both the extent and the type of heterogamy in question. In Sweden during the 1960s it seems as dissimilarity that placed the wife in a disadvantaged position with regards to cultural and economic capital worked to promote marriage stability. The impact of differences between spouses is of course influenced by the attitudes that are promoted by the prevailing gender regime in society at any given time. In a society where power and resources are asymmetrically distributed in favor of the male gender, heterogamy in terms of an atypical distribution of social and cultural capital in favor the female can be assumed to destabilize marriage. This is apparent when it comes to the effects of heterogamy of age as well as socio-economic position in Sweden during the 1960s. Prevailing norms in Western culture have long regarded unions between younger women and older men as normal while the opposite is less common and regarded as deviant. In this dataset this is reflected by the fact that the increase in divorce risk due to age-heterogamy being much larger for couples where the husband is the younger spouse than among couples where this asymmetry is in the opposite direction. Also it is more accepted for a woman to be economically dependent of a man than a man of a woman. During the 1960s most married women were still housewives although the norm that married women should stay at home had started to come under considerable pressure as more and more married women opted to enter the labor market. For the women that choose to embark on life-courses that were more similar to that of their male companions the end result appears to have been that their marriages became less durable.

Sandström (2011b) found that during the 1920s and 1930s the relationship between socio-economic position and the probability of divorce was positive as suggested by William Goodes socio-economic growth hypothesis. The idea suggested by Goode is basically that divorce can be regarded as a consumer good that becomes available as an option when enough affluence has been reached in a given society (Goode, 1993, pp. 26–27). During conditions when normative and economic constraints to divorce are high only couples that can marshal considerable amounts of resources can traverse the high structural constraints and the access to divorce becomes mainly restricted to the upper social strata. In this study we find that by the early 1960s this relationship had shifted in the manner suggested by William Goode, so that males in the lower socio-economic strata exhibited increased risks relative to more affluent males. Thus, the democratization of the access to divorce seem to have been well under way by the early 1960s which of course was a necessary precondition for the rapid increase in the divorce rate that occurred on the aggregate level during the 1960s and 1970s in Sweden. If a society is to make a transition from a low to a high divorce rate regime the access to divorce cannot be socially exclusive, but has to be economically feasible for the majority of the married couples in the population.

With regard to the influence of wife's SEI-position, the tendency for lower risk at higher SEI-position is also present but much weaker than for men. Rather, it is the higher risks among all gainfully employed wives, as opposed to those outside the labor market, which is the most marked effect. However, there is an interesting divergence from this pattern exhibited by the females employed in the middle white-collar occupations such as teachers and nurses. These women have only slightly higher dissolution risks compared to females outside the labor force. It is possible that these groups exhibit normative traits that are internalized as part of their professional roles and that promote marriage stability. The fact that a large share of the female middle white-collar employees where found in what has been labeled caring professions, such as nursing and teaching, might indicate that a more conservative normative culture persisted in these professions that worked to inhibit divorce among these females.

When these occupations were professionalized during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the professional roles incorporated ideals of strict morality and respectability. Employment as a nurse or an elementary school teacher usually required that the women where unmarried thus implying sexual chastity (Å. Andersson, 2002, pp. 94–97; Florin, 1987, pp. 194–198). Possibly, the historical development of these feminine caring professions and cultural preconceptions of respectability attached to the professional roles imposed greater normative constraints to divorce for women in these occupations that explain the lower rates of divorce in this group. These results are consistent whit the findings of (J. M. Hoem, Neyer, & Andersson, 2006) regarding Swedish women born in the 1950s who found that women working in health care and teaching both are more prone to marry and have a significantly higher marital fertility than women in other sectors of the economy. They interpret these patterns as indicating a stronger family orientation among women in caring occupations that might be the result of socialization during education and work life towards values that are conductive of family formation.

One of the more interesting results of this study is the increased probability of divorce among the couples with children and that this effect is more pronounced among the dual provider families. The tendency for the risk promoting effect of children to be more marked for employed women can possibly be explained by the structural differences between the 1960s and later periods; both with regards to differences in gender regime as well as in the institutional settings. During the 1960s, children in pre-school age where normally cared for in the home by their mothers and it was not until the 1970s that institutional arrangements for daycare started to expand significantly in Sweden (SOU, 1972). This made gainful employment more difficult to organize for families with pre-school children than what was the case during the 1970s and 1980s when municipalities started to guarantee low-cost day care (Hatje, 2009, pp. 178–195). The fact that married women entered the labor market in a rapid pace during the 1960s in Sweden despite the lack of a developed institutional support system for dual working families is a possible explanation for the reversed relationship between children and the excess divorce risk during this period in the case of working mothers. It is plausible that strains on marriage due to role conflicts were more accentuated in a normative climate where employment of married females—although rapidly increasing—was not yet a given choice and still only practiced by a minority.

Although the differences in structural settings can be an explanation for the increased risk of divorce among working mothers it cannot explain the smaller but still evident excess risk of mothers outside the labor force. It may be that there is a selection effect at work here that to some extent can explain this pattern. The contraceptive pill was not introduced in Sweden until 1964 and abortions on a social indication were not allowed. Unplanned or even unwanted pregnancies were thus a very real risk for sexually active young adults during this period (Lennerhed, 1994, pp. 141–152). Hence, it is likely that there was a larger proportion of married couples with children that had entered their marriage as a consequence of an unplanned pregnancy during the early 1960s as compared to the 1970s when contraceptive pills was in wide use and abortions had been made freely available. How many these couples were and to what extent they contributed to the increased dissolution risk among married couples with children is however not possible to ascertain within this study. But perhaps a larger prevalence of marriages due to unwanted pregnancies is one of the reasons that this empirical pattern emerges during the early 1960s but do not during later decades.

Decreasing family stability appear to be a fundamental demographic aspect of the development of modern society and as such the question of family stability, and the factors that influence it, can be a powerful prism to view the structural changes that Western societies have undergone during the twentieth century. During the 1960s Sweden enters a highly dynamic period of change in economic, social and normative structures characterized by high

economic growth, the establishment of the extensive Scandinavian welfare state, rapidly increasing female labor force participation, the sexual revolution and the second wave feminist movement questioning of the traditional gender regime. One aspect of the social development during the 1960s was also a faster increase in aggregate divorce rates than during any other period of the twentieth century. The results of this study underline the importance of an historical perspective on family stability. The results indicate that the determinants of divorce may have varied across different phases of the divorce transition during the twentieth century. Important determinants of divorce, such as socio-economic position and the presence of minor children seem to have influenced family stability in different ways depending on the structural setting during different time-periods in Sweden. This shows that it is not possible to extrapolate backwards to gain a firm understanding of the changes in family stability and that a historical perspective is necessary if we are to understand the long-term process that have produced current marital behavior.

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