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**Woman's employment and union
disruption in a changing socio-
economic context: the case of Russia**

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socio-economic context: the case of Russia**

Abstract

Drawing on data from new Russian retrospective surveys, this study examines the relationship between women's employment and the risk of union disruption within both the centrally planned economy and transition period. Our results show that within the two periods, the risk of union dissolution was similar among women who worked and women who did not work. In the transition period, however, differences in the dissolution risk among women existed and were related to the characteristics of the job conducted: occupational status, hours worked and income from side employment activities. Since the collapse of communism, the most discriminating factor between women is the type of ownership of a company, with those who worked for newly established private companies having elevated risk of union dissolution. The results obtained in this study are interpreted in light of the independence effect of women's employment.

1 Introduction

The high prevalence of divorce in Russia is not a recent phenomenon. In comparison to other European countries, Russia was, by the 1960s, characterized by an already very high divorce rate (compare, Council of Europe 2004). In the period between 1960 and 2000, when Europe experienced changes in nuptiality patterns, among them a growing number of divorces, divorce rates in Russia were consistently one of the highest in Europe. In 2002 the total divorce rate in the Russian Federation equaled 0.84, which was the highest value of this indicator in Europe. Other countries with a high divorce rate are, for example: Sweden with $TDR=0.55$, Belgium with $TDR=0.54$, or Finland with $TDR=0.50$ (Council of Europe 2004).

The phenomenon of divorce in Russia is rarely studied and poorly understood. It has been studied mostly on the basis of aggregated data (e.g. Andreev and Scherbov, 1996; Avdeev and Monnier, 2000; Becker and Hemley, 1998; Mazur, 1969). Using the individual level data from the 1994 micro-census, Scherbov and van Vianen (2001, 2004) studied nuptiality histories of 1910-1970 cohorts. Darsky and Scherbov (1995) estimated marital life tables of Russian women and discussed marital behavior in the 15 republics on the basis of the 1989 census. Other studies based on individual level data concentrated on the consequences of divorce (e.g. Festy et al., 2003; Prokofieva and Terskikh, 1998). So far, to our knowledge, no study has been conducted for Russia using individual level data to discuss the determinants of divorce, in particular after the collapse of the USSR. In addition, the previous studies on Russia concentrated on dissolutions of formal marriages and none of the studies discussed dissolutions of cohabiting unions and their determinants.

In this analysis we investigate the relationship between the various characteristics of a woman and the risk of union dissolution in Russia using hazard regression models. In particular, we are interested in studying to which extent women's employment and the character of a job conducted would influence the risk of union dissolution in Russia after the collapse of the communist system. The results obtained for the transition period are opposed to the findings for the period of the centrally planned economy. We expect that in these dramatically different socio-economic conditions, women's employment and its characteristics have a different effect on the risk of union dissolution.

This article is structured as follows: after a description of living and employment conditions in Russia in the centrally planned economy and in the transition period, we present a short review of theories concerning the effect of women's employment on the risk of union dissolution. In this section we present hypotheses pertaining to the influence of economic and institutional conditions on the

relationship between women's employment and union dissolution. In the next section we describe the data and specify the models used in the analysis. Finally, we present our main findings concerning the effect of women's employment on the risk of union dissolution, opposing the results obtained for the transition period to those obtained for the years of a centrally planned economy.

2 Living conditions and women's employment in the centrally planned economy and in the transition period

During communism in Russia, Soviet citizens were required to work and employment was guaranteed by the state (Desa and Todd, 2000). The income assured a minimum standard of living (so called, 'social minimum income'). State enterprises guaranteed not only employment, but also provided a wide range of benefits and goods (Clarke, 1999; Mroz and Popkin, 1995). The level of earnings was centrally administered and, to a great extent, was independent of educational attainment and occupational status (Gerber and Hout, 1998; Lubyova and Sabirianova, 2001). However, differences in wages existed and were based on the branch of industry (e.g. employees in defense and heavy industry had on average higher earnings), regional differences, and also those in managerial positions had higher wages (Gerber and Hout, 1998).

In Russia's centrally planned economy, women's employment was an ideological principle. As a result, female labor force participation was almost as high as that of males (Ogloblin, 1999). Female labor force participation reached 81% in 1979 and stabilized at this level afterwards (Desa and Todd, 2000, p. 153). In addition, women were assured educational possibilities equal to men and the official principle was of equal pay for the same work for both sexes (Ogloblin, 1999). However, a segregation of the market, with women concentrated in light industry and services, in typical female jobs and low-skilled jobs, resulted in their lower earnings in comparison to men (Desa and Todd, 2000). For example, in the 1980s women earned on average only slightly more than 70% of men's wages (Gerber and Hout, 1998). There were hardly any part-time employment opportunities (Desa and Todd, 2000).

After the collapse of communism, Russia experienced profound economic and social changes. Although the Soviet Union dissolved in January 1992, the economic situation of the society had already been deteriorating since the late 1980s (Bühler, 2004). Wages were freed from government interference in October 1991 and all prices were, by October 1992, set by a free market (Clarke, 1999). The continuing decline in real incomes, related to high inflation and a slower increase in wages and family benefits, resulted in the lowering of living standards of Russian families, as well as a rising level of

poverty and income differentiation (Elizarov, 1999; Gerber and Hout, 1998; Prokofieva and Terskikh, 1998). The dramatic regression of living standards among Russian families in 1992 was followed in 1993 by an improvement of the economic situation among some social groups, and among them small nuclear families. The situation worsened for all the social groups again in the years 1994-95 (Prokofieva and Terskikh, 1998).

Apart from the low level of earnings, women faced two further problems on the Russian labor market: discrimination on the basis of sex in selection and promotion, and structural unemployment, as their skills did not match the requirements of offered jobs (Bridger and Kay, 1996; Lubyova and Sabirianova, 2001). Although unemployment in Russia, legalized in July 1991, affected both men and women, more women than men dropped out of employment (Lokshin, 2004). Additionally, while men moved to better paid occupations and jobs, women stayed in their old occupations or even moved downwards. This led to further differentiation between the situation of men and women on the labor market (Ashwin and Bowers, 1997). In addition, women with children were disadvantaged during the recruitment process (Bridger and Kay, 1996). A significant gender gap in pay existed, even when controlling for employment sectors (Gerber and Hout, 1998; Ogloblin, 1999).

In the Russian non-monetary economy, where the bulk of transaction between the firms is conducted through bartering, an additional problem related to job insecurity and a low level of wages that the households face is that wages are not paid on a regular basis (Clarke, 1999). One should remember, however, that in post-Soviet Russia, wages account for less than a half of the total income of the population (Clarke, 1999). For example, New Russian Barometer conducted in 1992, (after Rose and McAllister, 1996), revealed that in order to cope with the difficult economic situation almost every household in Russia in 1992 was involved in additional income-related activities. Russians have coped with the economic crisis in a variety of ways: moving from the state to the private sector which offers higher wages, having a side job, producing fruits and vegetables in small gardens for private consumption or sale, mutual help within a kin network in the form of financial support or services. While the first two solutions were most common in large cities, production of home vegetables on 'dachas' was popular in small or middle-sized towns (Bühler, 2004; Clarke, 1999; Desa and Todd, 2000; Lubyova and Sabirianova, 2001; Prokofieva and Terskikh, 1998; Rose and McAllister, 1996). The solution of mutual help is additionally an important source of child-care services, as the public childcare system has become expensive (Prokofieva and Terskikh, 1998).

3 Theoretical background

3.1 The effect of women's employment on the risk of union dissolution

Theories concerning the effect of women's employment on the risk of union dissolution are discussed here in two major groups, according to the channel of influence: 1. the effect of employment on the **desire to divorce**; 2. the effect of employment on the **opportunity to divorce**. This classification was originally proposed by Ogburn and Nimkoff (1955) for group types of factors influencing the decision to divorce.

According to theoretical explanations, women's employment influences the **desire to divorce** by 1. leading to the impairment of the marital interaction, 2. widening the marriage market, and 3. by *income effect*. The effects are opposite: the first two effects are claimed to increase the desire to dissolve a union, while the income effect is claimed to have a negative influence on it.

Women's employment might lead to **impairment of the relationship** due to lower union specific investments (Becker, 1993; Becker et al., 1977; Lehrer, 2003; Sayer and Bianchi, 2000; South, 2001), and the *absence effect* (Greenstein, 1990, 1995; Ross and Sawhill, 1975). The lower **union specific investments** cover lower investments of working women into non-market skills related to household work. Other marital specific investments are common children, with working women having on average fewer children than women who do not work. In addition, women who foresee the divorce might make lower investments into union specific capital and invest more into market-specific capital. As the union specific investments would be worth less when divorced, high investments reduce desire to divorce and women who work invest on average less into this capital than do women who do not work (Becker, 1993; Becker et al., 1977). The **absence effect** is related to the fact that when a woman enters employment, she does not focus solely on household work anymore and, as a result of her absence at home, some household tasks which are traditionally conducted by women are simply not done. The shift in gender roles of women do not signify an automatic shift in the roles conducted by men. In most developed societies, women entered the paid labor market and hence started conducting new tasks, while at the same time, men's household responsibilities did not change dramatically (Pascall and Lewis, 2004; Spitze, 1988). The unequal share of household duties in the couple might pose an additional stress on the relationship and increase the desire to separate (Greenstein, 1990, 1995; Ross and Sawhill, 1975). However, according to Greenstein (1995), this effect of unequal division of tasks on divorce propensity depends on the women's attitudes toward gender roles, with more modern women having a higher level of dissatisfaction and hence a higher risk of dissolution.

Women who work also have a larger marriage market than women who do not work and hence more opportunities to find a better match than the current partner (South, 1985; South and Spitze, 1986). This effect of widening the **marriage market** for working women would positively influence the desire to divorce.

Contrary to the previous arguments, women's employment might serve as a source of additional income to be invested in common assets (**income effect**). The common investments might decrease the desire to separate by increasing the utility of staying in the union (Greenstein, 1990). Higher disposable income in the household increases the quality of marital life (Sayer and Bianchi, 2000).

The second channel of influence of women's employment on dissolution risk relates to the increase in the **opportunities to divorce**. Women's employment raises the opportunities to divorce through the *independence effect*. Women's income would make them financially independent of their husbands and in addition reduces their gain from marriage. A woman who can afford to maintain a separate household would be less likely to stay in an unsatisfactory union than a woman who does not have any source of income independent of her husband (Becker, 1993; Lehrer, 2003; Sayer and Bianchi, 2000; South, 2001). In addition, women who anticipate a union dissolution might invest more in the labor force to become economically independent of their spouse (Becker, 1993; Lehrer, 2003; Poortman, 2005).

In summary, women's employment is claimed to increase risk of union dissolution due to the rise in the desire to separate related to the impairment of relations between the partners, a larger marriage market. As well, women's employment increases opportunities to dissolve unsatisfactory unions. On the other hand, women's employment decreases the desire to separate through the income effect. It is not clear which of the effects would dominate and the results of the previous empirical studies on the effect of women's employment on union dissolution are mixed (for review of previous studies see, for example, Ono, 1998; Oppenheimer, 1997; Spitze, 1988).

3.2 The effect of socio-economic conditions on the relationship between women's employment and risk of union dissolution

The socio-economic changes in Russia after the collapse of communism negatively influenced the level of incomes, as well as the "meaning of income" by increasing job instability, as well as difficulties in finding a job. The institutional change also resulted in a significant rise in the costs of maintaining a separate household, in particular for women with small children (compare, Section 2).

As our main point of interest is how the socio-economic situation changes in Russia influenced the relationship between women's employment and divorce, we devote the next part of this theoretical investigation to the theories on economic change and divorce.

In the theoretical investigations concerning the interrelation between economic cycle and divorce, the number of divorces is claimed to rise during periods of economic prosperity and decrease during recessions (South, 1985). In the periods of economic hardship, we can expect an elevated desire to divorce among working women. The rising tension in the marriage of working women might result from the absence effect, as economic necessity would increase the number of hours worked for both partners. In times of economic crises, it is also difficult to "fulfill the financial obligations required to maintain satisfaction in marriage" (South, 1985, p.33) and also investments into common assets are lower (decreasing income effect). On the other hand, the economic hardship would decrease opportunities to divorce. First of all, the level of income of women might be insufficient to maintain a separate household, and hence the recession would decrease the independence effect of women's employment.

The discussion presented above reflects the effect of lower income in times of economic hardship on the propensity to divorce among working women. However, the economic downturn also brings a high level of unemployment and job insecurity and hence two additional issues have to be discussed here: the effect of rising insecurity in the job on the desire and opportunities to divorce among women who worked. An increase in job insecurity would probably increase the desire to divorce, causing additional tensions between partners as a result of stress related to insecurity (White and Rogers, 2000). Among women who work, the insecurity of a job might also raise the number of hours worked in order to avoid dismissal and hence augment the absence effect. On the other hand, job insecurity might have a negative effect on the opportunities to divorce, as the risk of losing one's job would decrease the level of perceived well-being and disposable income. As shown by Ruggles (1997) it is not only women's employment that influences the risk of union dissolution, but the existing opportunities for a woman to find a job also increase the risk under study. Rising unemployment decreases the existing possibilities to find a job and hence reduces the opportunities to divorce. In addition, according to the "spillover theory," the negative feelings caused by job insecurity influence negatively marital satisfaction and, as a result, union stability (Larson et al., 1994).

We expect that in the transition period women's employment does not influence the risk of union dissolution. On the contrary, we hypothesize that in times of the centrally planned economy in Russia, women who worked had a higher risk of union dissolution than women who did not work. Our

expectation concerning no effect on women's employment on the risk under study in the transition period is based on another expectation, which is that in these socio-economic conditions, the low level of opportunities to divorce would dominate over the increased desire to divorce among working women. A low level of opportunities to dissolve a union, in addition to low wages, economic hardship and job insecurity, result from the high costs of maintaining separate households, in particular for women with small children (compare, Section 2). On contrary, we expect that women's employment influences the risk under study in the period of the centrally planned economy, when work for pay was an ideological principle and it was guaranteed by the state, because women who did not work formed a selective group, probably less prone to divorce.

Women who are in occupational groups of higher earnings would be expected to have a higher risk of dissolution due to increased opportunities to divorce. These occupational groups might also be faced with higher job insecurity, which would lead to a higher desire to divorce due to impairment of the relationship according to the mechanism described above.

We can also hypothesize that the effect of women's employment on the risk of union disruption depends on the type of job conducted, with women who are employed in traditional female occupations having a lower risk of union disruption than women working in non-typical female occupations. The reasons are: a selection effect of women into the typical female jobs, their lower earnings or lower occupational competition between the spouses (Philliber and Hiller, 1983).

As the average income in private companies is higher than in public firms (Lubyova and Sabirianova, 2001), those employees working in the private firms would be expected to have a greater opportunity to maintain a separate union and, as a result, would have a higher risk of dissolution. Additional to the independence effect, higher insecurity in a job in private companies would lead to an increased desire to divorce due to the impairment of a relationship (as discussed before).

The effect of women's employment on risk of dissolution depends on the number of hours she works for pay. The 'absence effect' would be stronger if a woman works full-time, compared to the situation when a woman works part-time (Greenstein, 1990). Additionally, the opportunities to separate are lower for women who work part-time in comparison to women who work full-time. A woman who works part-time is still dependent on the income of her partner and plays the role of supplementary worker (Bernhardt, 1993).

3.3 The effect of other covariates

In this section we present theories concerning the effect of characteristics, other than employment status, on the risk of union dissolution. The selection of additional covariates, apart from those referring to women's status on the labor market, was based on our expectation that women who work would differ significantly in respect to these characteristics from women who do not work.

One could expect that a divorce risk would increase with the **educational level** of a woman. First, women who are better educated earn, on average, more than those with a lower level of education (Becker, 1993). Second, they might be more aware of an unsatisfactory relationship and confident that they could manage on their own. On the other hand, some authors expect the educational level to have a stabilizing effect on union, as those better educated would be better at selecting appropriate mates (Lehrer, 2003) or have communication skills that improve the relationship (Ono, 1998). Most empirical studies have found that women with a higher level of education have a lower risk of union dissolution (e.g. Greenstein, 1990; Hoem, 1997; Martin and Bumpass, 1989; South, 2001).

In the centrally planned economy, the level of earnings did not differ significantly between various the educational groups (compare, Section 2). As a result, we expect that the stabilizing effect of education dominates over the income effect in this period. However, as shown by Rose and McAllister (1996), since 1994, a university education has had a positive effect on income, and hence we expect that the income effect would lead to a higher divorce risk for women with tertiary education in the transition period.

Place of residence influences risk of union dissolution, with those living in urban areas, and in particular, big cities, being more prone to separate than those living in rural areas. The reason is, first, a higher number of marriage alternatives to the current union in the cities; second, more liberal views and less social stigma of divorce; and third, existing opportunities to divorce are determined by the place of residence, with more employment opportunities and, as a result, more possibilities for a woman to maintain a separate household in urban areas than in rural ones (Boyle et al., 2006; South and Spitze, 1986).

As far as **the effect of children** on the risk of union dissolution is concerned, one can expect a negative effect of the existence of children. As children constitute a union-specific capital, they raise the value of a union and the cost of leaving it as the value of investments that have been already made into children decreases after the disruption (Becker, 1993; Becker et al., 1977; Lehrer, 2003; Waite and Lillard, 1991). In addition, we can expect a selection effect of transition into motherhood: individuals who anticipate a high risk of union dissolution would be less prone to make these types of investments

(Becker, 1993; Becker et al., 1977; Lehrer, 2003). Furthermore, considering the costs of raising children, and that children are costly, two separate households would require more financial resources than one household and as a result, the gain from marriage and the costs of divorce would be higher. However, children from previous partnerships might have a negative effect on union stability as they might cause conflict within the marriage (e.g. Andersson, 1997; Lehrer, 2003; Waite and Lillard, 1991).

In the Russian specific case, we can expect that the negative effect of the existence of children, and in particular small children, on the risk of union dissolution would be stronger after the collapse of the communism. Apart from decreasing benefits for children and a relative rise in the costs of living (compare, Chapter 2), after 1992 there was a significant decrease in child-care possibilities and the costs of those rose significantly (Bühler, 2004; Lokshin, 2004). As a result, we can expect that women would be less prone to divorce if they have to provide for their children alone and in addition pay high childcare fees.

Further, fertility levels have decreased significantly since the collapse of communism (Bühler, 2004; Kharkova and Andreev, 2000). Hence women who decide to have (more) children in the period characterized by low fertility are a selective, family-oriented group. As a result, we can expect the negative effect of children on risk of union dissolution to be stronger in the period when fertility is lower (after 1992) than in the years with relatively high fertility levels.

Individuals whose **parents divorce** would be expected to have a higher risk of union dissolution because, first, they are economically disadvantaged at union formation in comparison to those from two-parent families, enter marital union at an earlier age, and could be expected to have interpersonal skills which make them more prone to divorce (Amato, 1996; Lehrer, 2003).

Those in the **second and subsequent union** are expected to have a higher risk of dissolution than those who are in their first union. The reason is that those individuals who have already dissolved one union might have some traits that make them more prone to divorce (Becker et al., 1977; Hoem and Hoem, 1992; Lehrer, 2003). It is also possible that the same selection mechanism applies to women's employment: women's employment is hypothesized to increase divorce risk and, as a result, among those who have already divorced, work-oriented women would constitute a big share, forming a group with elevated risk to dissolve a subsequent union.

As the investments in the **cohabitation** and costs of its dissolution are lower than those of marriage, and considering the selection effect of those cohabiting versus married, one would expect a higher risk of dissolution of cohabitation versus divorce of marriage. In addition, one could expect that those who marry after a period of cohabitation would have a lower risk of union dissolution than those who marry

directly. The reason is that the pre-marital cohabitation would be a source of information about the characteristics of a marriage partner and those who eventually marry are more satisfied with the partner's characteristics (Becker, 1993; Hoem and Hoem, 1992; Lehrer, 2003). However, empirical studies have shown that the selection effect into direct marriage when the cohabitation is a common pattern lead to lower divorce risk among those marrying directly (in comparison to couples who chose cohabitation as first stage of a relationship) (Axinn and Thornton, 1992; Hoem and Hoem, 1992; Lillard et al., 1995). As a result, we expect that couples who cohabit (or marry after a period of cohabitation) are more divorce-prone and hence more likely to end the union than those who marry directly.

As to **union duration**, the risk of dissolution is expected to decrease as the union-specific capital increases with union duration, and also because couples who are more prone to divorce would dissolve their unions faster (Becker, 1993; Becker et al., 1977; Sayer and Bianchi, 2000).

4 Data and methods

4.1 Data

The study is based on data coming from two retrospective surveys. The first survey, *Generations and Gender Survey (GGS)*, was conducted in Russia between June and August 2004. This survey is a part of the Gender and Generation Programme which aims at conducting comparative individual-level surveys, which integrate both prospective and retrospective approaches. First, the questionnaire includes detailed retrospective questions, and among them questions on nuptiality and fertility histories. Second, the form of the survey is prospective and the respondents were followed in a panel study over several waves. For the description of the GGS Programme see Vikat, et al. (2005). The Russian study was based on a multistage probability sample of dwelling units. The target sample size consisted of 11,000 dwelling units (for the description of the sample see, Kosolapov 2004). As a result, 4223 men and 7038 women between ages 18 and 79 were interviewed. The second survey, *Education and Employment Survey (EES)*, was conducted in November 2005. In this survey respondents were asked detailed questions concerning their employment, educational and migration histories. The sample for this survey consisted of respondents of the GGS survey. The joined GGS and EES data set constitute the first Russian longitudinal data with detailed nuptiality, childbearing, employment and educational life-histories.

After combining the GGS and EES data files, there are 3074 cases of women who have ever been in a union and who were respondents in both surveys. As the marriage and divorce patterns might differ between various ethnic groups, we studied only unions formed by women who were Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian. We excluded 255 cases where a woman was of different nationality than that stated above. Additional corrections were introduced (different years of birth in both surveys or misreporting the date of union formation with age below 14 reported as 1st union formation), which limited the number of studied women to 2803.

The study subject is a union, with a woman as a marker. This analysis is based on marital histories as reported by women. The studied period is from 1967 to 2004. Apart from the fact that in our data the year 1967 is the earliest year a union was formed by our respondents, this is the period directly after the divorce procedure had been simplified in 1965. According to Avdeev and Monnier (2000), before 1965 (since 1944) the divorce procedure was very complicated and costly and, as a result, divorce was uncommon. We divided the studied period according to the theoretical background and into two subperiods: 1967–1991 and 1992–2004. In the first period, we studied 1989 first unions (409 dissolutions), 245 second unions (45) and 16 third unions (4). In the years 1992–2004, we studied 2226 first unions (497 dissolutions), 526 second unions (159) and 74 third unions (4).

4.2 Models

The event under study is union separation and not an official divorce. As a moment of union separation we consider the date the respondent reports the union ending. The reason for studying separation instead of a divorce is that for cohabiting unions there is no such event as official divorce. With the death of a partner, the observation is censored.

We model time since union formation to separation using hazard regression models (Blossfeld and Rohwer, 2002; Hoem, 1987, 1993, 2001). The baseline hazard of dissolution, according to duration since union formation, is modelled as a linear spline. The time is measured in months.

Unions formed in the years 1967–1991, which were still together in January 1992, were right-censored at this date. These unions were also followed up in the second set of models (for the years 1992–2004) and left-truncated as they entered the population under risk.

As the aim of this study is to test whether women's employment influences risk of union dissolution, information on the employment status of an individual and job's characteristics are entered into the model as a set of time-varying covariates. Several additional time-constant and time-varying

independent variables have been introduced into the model following the theoretical background of the study. Inclusion of these additional variables broadens the picture concerning determinants of union dissolution in Russia and it also allow us to control for the compositional effect of women's characteristics according to these variables and to those describing women's status on the labor market.

4.3 Variables

In this section, first, we present the variables created to describe women's status on the labor market and selected characteristics of their jobs. Only afterwards do we discuss the solutions employed in creating additional explanatory variables.

4.3.1 Women's employment

From detailed employment histories of women, several time-varying covariates were constructed to describe women's employment status in union. The first of the variables indicates if a woman was involved in paid employment. An additional variable was created to indicate if a woman had an extra source of income from an additional job (side job).

We distinguish also between full- (40 hours and more a week) and part-time (4-39 hours) employment spells. In the situation where the number of working hours was unknown, we created a separate level with unknown working hours.

An additional variable was created to distinguish between different ownership of a company where a woman worked: newly established private enterprise (new private), former state and privatized (including mixed property), state or municipal, and 'other'. In the latter group we included non-profit organizations, international organizations, regional offices of a foreign company, employment by private persons and groups named in the questionnaire as 'other'. We distinguished also between a group for whom the type of ownership was not specified. This variable was created only for the period after the collapse of communism. We did not include information concerning the type of ownership of the company in the centrally planned economy because women reported almost exclusively that they worked in the public sector.

Finally, we distinguished between different occupational groups (time-varying covariate). In constructing this variable, we made use of International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88). After every occupational group we distinguished in the brackets, we provide the reader with a ISCO-88 code of major groups of occupations. We distinguished between: agricultural workers (farmer

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analyses of divorce in Russia, years 1967–1991 and 1992–2004*

variables	1967–1991		1992–2004	
	person months	events	person months	events
union order				
1st	203757	409	194002	497
2nd or 3rd	19542	49	43615	185
parents divorced				
no	185773	357	197061	517
yes	37526	101	40556	165
educational level				
in education	14360	26	15688	49
primary or lower secondary	127159	285	129724	398
upper secondary	72121	129	78563	195
tertiary	9659	18	13642	40
motherhood at formation				
not mother	176017	354	161164	449
mother	47282	104	76453	233
motherhood status in union				
childless	47328	129	61997	282
one child	109398	289	100713	297
two and more children	66573	40	74907	103
place of residence				
regional center	78182	196	88113	353
another town/city	67748	154	65602	190
urban-type village	19088	26	18566	37
village	58281	82	65336	102
civil status				
cohabiting	18721	83	38909	237
married after cohabitation	44487	102	60307	184
married directly	160091	273	138401	261
employment status I				
does not work	36637	88	56382	172
works	186662	370	181235	510
employment status II				
works but no side job	183974	366	176251	486
works and side job	2688	4	4984	24
TOTAL	223299	458	237617	682

Table 1 (continued)

occupational group*				
farmers	16825	25	13627	23
manual workers	54939	113	48583	137
lower white-collar	42200	86	43296	155
upper white-collar	71736	141	74653	193
- in typical female jobs	43715	85	48147	119
- other upper white-collar	28021	56	26506	74
unknown	962	5	1076	2
hours worked				
works part-time	34262	70	42491	99
works full-time	151586	298	137973	407
unknown	814	2	771	4
type of ownership				
new private			14382	62
other private			9672	40
former state, privatized			21672	56
state or municipal			132338	344
unknown			3171	8
TOTAL	223299	458	237617	682

*farmers = farmer employers and own account farmers; manual workers = manual workers skilled and unskilled; lower white-collar = lower administrative or clerical employees; upper white-collar = managers and higher administrative or clerical employees; upper white-collar in female typical employment = teachers, working in medicine and social sciences

Source: author's estimations based on Russian GGS and EES

employers and own account farmers; in ISCO-88 coded as '6'), manual workers (unqualified and qualified; ISCO-88 codes: '8', '9'), lower white-collar ('4', '5', '0') and higher-white collar occupations ('1', '2', '3'). In addition, in the group of upper-white collar occupations, we distinguished women who worked white-collar jobs in typical female employment and distinguished them from other white-collar workers. As typical female employment, we regarded women with professional backgrounds working as teachers, in medicine and in the social sciences. We also included an additional level for the missing information spells. The distribution of exposures and events according to the women's status on the labor market as described above is presented in Table 1.

4.3.2 Control variables

The list of control variables and descriptive statistics for these variables are presented in Table 1. Below we explain how the variables were created only for those covariates which need additional clarification.

In the variable describing **educational status** of the respondents we distinguish between women in education and those who have completed their four levels of (according to the International Standard Classification of Education): primary or lower secondary (up to 9 years in education), upper secondary, and tertiary. For 25% of the respondents, there was no information concerning involvement in education (in the year they completed their 17th birthday). We assumed that the missing information is caused by the fact that they were not in education at that moment and had completed 9 years of education or less which classifies them in the first level of the variable.

As far as the **motherhood status** is concerned two variables were constructed: motherhood status at the union formation and number of common children. In the first variable, we distinguished between women who were mothers at union formation and those who were not (the latter group included women who were pregnant at union formation).

5 Results

Table 5 presents these selected results of the models which refer to the effect of women's employment and its characteristics on the risk of union dissolution. Only in Table 4 we present the obtained results for the effect of variables describing women's characteristics other than employment status.

5.1 The effect of employment and characteristics of a job

After the collapse of communism, and also during the centrally planned economy, the risk of union dissolution was similar for women who worked and for those who did not work. In addition, in none of the studied periods were there significant differences in the risk of union dissolution between women who worked full-, part-time and women who did not work. Despite the fact that the effect is insignificant, it is important to emphasize the fact that in the transition period women employed part-time had a lower risk of union disruption than women who worked full-time or did not work altogether. This difference in the effect of part- and full-time employment on union stability, together with no significant differences between women who worked full-time and women who did not work, could be a result of the combination of independence and income effects. Women's income from part-time work might contribute to household budget together with the husband's income and hence reduce insecurity and increase marital stability. However, income from part-time employment would not be enough to maintain a separate household and as a result part-time employment does not increase opportunities to

dissolve an unsatisfactory relationship. The independence effect might be stronger among full-time employees.

Work activity additional to the main job turned out to have an impact on union stability. In the years 1992-2004, women who had a side job had a higher risk of union dissolution than women who were not involved in any additional economic activity of this type or those who did not work. Contrary to this, during communism women who held a side job had a lower risk of dissolution than other women. In the time of the centrally planned economy, the secondary economic activity was a common phenomenon, but the number of people having a second job was very low. Most of the additional activity concentrated in the shadow economy (Foley, 1995) and served as a supplement to the wages from the primary job for those groups whose income was low (Rose and McAllister, 1996). After the collapse of communism, it became legal to have a second official job and it became an important survival solution for families in urban areas (compare, Section 2). As a result, income from a side job increased the opportunity to dissolve an unhappy union. Although the nature of a side job differed between the two periods, it is difficult to explain why the fact of having this secondary source of income had a different effect on the risk of union dissolution.

During the period of communism, there were no significant differences in divorce risk between women in different types of jobs. This was different in the transition period, when the risk of union dissolution was elevated for women in lower white-collar occupations, in comparison to other workers and non-workers, and in particular for women in other typical female (teachers, nurses) white-collar occupations. At the same time, the white-collar workers in typical female occupations do not have an elevated risk of union dissolution. This effect might be a result of the selection effect of women who are more family-oriented and hence less prone to divorce into these jobs. A lower divorce risk among these women, in comparison to other white-collar workers, could also result from lower opportunities to divorce. As shown by Lubyova and Sabirianova (2001), these groups of workers (in education, science and health services) have among the lowest of wages.

The type of ownership of a company a woman worked for turned out to be an important determinant of union stability after the collapse of communism. The highest risk of union dissolution characterized women working in newly privatized companies or in 'other' private enterprises. This group of women had, on average, greater opportunities to divorce as the earnings in newly established private and foreign companies are higher than in companies belonging to other categories of ownership (Lubyova and Sabirianova, 2001). On the other hand, one can hypothesize that employment in a private company results in an increased desire to divorce due to impairment of the relationship related to work-

related stress, the absence effect, and lower union-specific investments. However, this interpretation is less probable. As Vannoy, Rimashevskaya, Cubbins, Malysheva, Meshterkina, and Pisklakova (1999, p.116–119) reports, in Moscow satisfaction with a current marriage is the highest among women in higher professional occupations and satisfaction from a marriage is positively correlated with a woman’s monthly income.

Table 2. *Relative risks of divorce in Russia, according to the employment status of a woman, estimated separately for the years 1967-1991 and 1992-2004, controlled for educational level, place of residence, etc.*

	1967-1991				1992-2004				
employment status I	1	1	1.04	1.09	1	1	1.03	0.96	1.08
doesn't work	0.94				1.01				
works									
employment status II									
works but no side job		0.94				1.01			
works and side job		0.69				1.44			
occupational group									
farmers			0.92				0.93		
manual workers			1				1		
lower white-collar			0.95				1.27		
upper white-collar			1.02				1.07		
- in typical female jobs			1.05				1.02		
- other upper-white collar			0.97				1.15		
hours worked									
part-time				1.10			0.85		
full-time				1			1		
type of ownership									
new private								1.43**	
other private								1.57**	
former state, privatized								1.06	
state or municipal								1	

farmers = farmer employers and own account farmers; manual workers = manual workers skilled and unskilled; lower white-collar = lower administrative or clerical employees; upper white-collar = managers and higher administrative or clerical employees; white-collar in female typical employment = teachers, working in medicine and social sciences

** p<0.005

Source: author's estimations based on Russian GGS and EES

The abovementioned lower risk of union dissolution for women in typical female occupations might also result from the concentration of these types of occupations in the public sector. As a result, the lower risk of union disruption for women in typical female jobs would result from lower incomes and therefore fewer opportunities to form a separate household, rather than from a lower propensity to

divorce among women in these occupational groups. According to Lubyova and Sabirianova (2001), great differences in return to human capital existed between those employed in state-owned or privatized enterprises and new private companies. The differences in payment between workers in new private companies are mostly related to their occupational status and level of schooling. In state-owned or formerly public (later privatized) companies, the differences between employees are related to their work experience. The group of women employed in the public sector in education, science and health services, has one of the lowest wages (Lubyova and Sabirianova, 2001).

The effect of women’s employment on the risk of union dissolution, according to the type of ownership of a company a woman worked for, depended on the type of settlement (Table 3). In rural areas, as far as the risk of divorce is concerned, there was no difference between women who did not work, those working in private companies and those working in public companies. These differences existed only in the urban areas, with women working in private companies (new private or ‘other’ private) having a significantly higher risk than women who did not work or those who worked in public companies (including former public and privatized firms). In the cities, however, there are no significant differences in the risk of dissolution for women who did not work and women who worked in the public companies.

Table 3. *Relative risks of divorce in Russia, by type of ownership of the company a woman works for and place of residence, years 1992–2004*

	no job	new private or ‘other’ private	former state or state or municipal
urban	1	1.74 ***	0.96
rural	0.54***	0.59*	0.55***

***p<0.001 **p<0.05 *p<0.01

Source: author's estimations based on Russian GGS and EES

5.2 The effect of other characteristics

Similar to the results of other empirical studies, in Russia, the risk of union dissolution is the highest in the first months after the union formation and decreases with its duration.

The **educational level** did not have a significant effect on the risk of union disruption in Russia in the time of the centrally planned economy. The only group of women with a higher risk of dissolution was those with only primary or lower secondary educational attainment. After the collapse of communism, women with a university education had an elevated risk of dissolution, as did women who are still in school. The finding concerning women with only tertiary educational attainment having a higher risk of dissolution could be interpreted as an independence effect. In the transition period, returns to education increased only for women with a university degree and the payment as return to educational level characteristic of the Soviet era hardly changed in the transition period for those with educational attainment lower than tertiary (Gerber and Hout, 1998; Rose and McAllister, 1996). As far as a higher risk of dissolution for women in education is concerned, we suggest two possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, those still in school are on average younger women and the risk of dissolution is negatively related to age. Early marriages in Russia are relatively common. Many marriages occur while men and women are still in school (Festy et al., 2003), and hence both partners are still economically inactive. According to Festy et al. (2003), those who marry early are more prone to divorce than those who marry at an older age. The second explanation refers to a larger marriage market and more possibilities to find a better match while in school.

We found **place of residence** to have a significant effect on union stability. As expected, the risk is higher in the urban than in the rural areas. In the communist period, in the urban areas there were no significant differences between the risk of dissolution for women living in the regional centers and in other cities. Similarly, no differences existed between different types of villages. After the transition, however, unions in the big, regional centers had a higher risk of dissolution than those in the smaller cities. These differences can be interpreted as: higher opportunities to divorce in a big city, related to higher wages, and more job opportunities. Larger cities offer more private employment opportunities than other places, while the share of private sector in the number of jobs offered is the lowest in the rural areas (Gerber and Hout, 1998). On the other hand, jobs in the big cities might be characterized by a higher level of insecurity, which could lead to the increased desire to divorce due to the impairment of a relationship.

As far as **the effect of children** is concerned, we found a negative effect of the existence of children on the risk of union dissolution, both before and after the collapse of communism. The effect of the first child was insignificant when controlled for additional covariates, while the existence of a second child in the union significantly decreased the risk of dissolution. Contrary to what we expected, when controlled for additional characteristics, being a mother already when the couple moved in together

Table 4. *Relative risks of divorce in Russia, by selected individual characteristics other than employment status, controlled for a woman's employment status (I), slope estimates of log-hazard for duration variable, estimated separately for the years 1967–1991 and 1992-2004*

	1967-1991	1992-2004
educational level		
in education	0.99	1.15
primary or lower secondary	1.16	1.06
upper secondary	1	1
tertiary	1.04	1.18
place of residence		
regional center	0.99	1.24***
another town/city	1	1
urban-type village	0.57**	0.78
village	0.65***	0.64***
motherhood at formation		
not mother	1	1
mother	0.90	0.81**
motherhood in union		
childless	1	1
one child	0.96	0.91
two or more children	0.26***	0.57***
parents divorced		
no	1	1
yes	1.37***	1.25***
union order		
1st	1	1
2nd or 3rd	0.83	1.08
civil status		
cohabiting	2.18***	2.15***
married after cohabitation	1.21	1.44***
married directly	1	1
union duration (baseline)		
0-6 months (slope)	0.364**	0.994*
6-12 months (slope)	-0.032	-0.040
12-36 months (slope)	0.023**	0.018
36-48 months (slope)	-0.044*	0.025
48-60 months (slope)	0.037	-0.013
60-72 months (slope)	-0.032	-0.041**
72+ months (slope)	-0.001*	-0.001*
constant	-8.091***	-11.789***

***p<0.001 **p<0.05 *p<0.01

Source: author's estimations based on Russian GGS and EES

lowered the risk of dissolution. Following the theoretical background, the interpretation of this result is that common children stabilize the union (decrease desire to divorce), but also the presence of children in the household increases the costs of maintaining a separate household and hence decreases opportunities to divorce.

The effect of **parents' divorce** experienced by a woman has a negative effect on union stability. This effect is significant in both periods of analysis, and remains significant when controlled for additional characteristics of a woman.

Similar to previous empirical studies, the risk of dissolution depends significantly on the **civil status**. Those who marry directly have the lowest risk of divorce, as compared to those who marry after the period of pre-marital cohabitation or those who live together without being married.

The negative effect of **union order** on its stability disappears when controlled for additional characteristics of a woman and, in particular, for the civil status. The reason is that direct marriage is much more common in first unions than in the subsequent unions, and for those who marry directly, the risk of dissolution is lower. The effect of civil status turned out to be stronger than the effect of union order.

6 Summary

In this study, we examined the relationship between women's employment and risk of union dissolution in two different socio-economic conditions. In order to discuss the effect of economic shift on the process under study, we compared the results obtained in the models estimated for the transition period to those estimated during the time of the centrally planned economy.

We hypothesized that the experience of economic hardship in Russia shapes the relationship between women's employment and union dissolution through low opportunities to divorce and an increased desire to divorce. We expected that in the transition period only these groups of women who are in occupational groups with higher average salaries would have an elevated risk of union dissolution due to higher opportunities to maintain a separate household. On the contrary, we hypothesized that in the time of the centrally planned economy, when employment was guaranteed by the state, those women who did not work were a selective group and that they might be family-oriented and less prone to divorce. As a result, we expected that in the centrally planned economy, differences between women who worked and who did not work existed. However, the differences in divorce risk would not exist

between women who worked in different occupational groups. The reason is that in the centrally planned economy, there were hardly any differences in salary between women in different occupational groups. We included additional variables and tested hypotheses concerning the effect of characteristics other than woman's employment on the risk of divorce (e.g. educational level, place of residence, motherhood status, etc.).

As we expected, in the transition period there were no significant differences in the risk of union dissolution between the group of women who worked and the group who did not work. Contrary to what we anticipated, these differences neither were present in the period of the centrally planned economy. The effect of selected characteristics of a woman's job on the risk of union dissolution was, in majority of the analyses, insignificant. Despite their insignificance, as most of the findings support our theoretical investigations, we decided to discuss them in detail. The fact that the results were insignificant can also be attributed to a relatively small sample size, especially for some types of jobs.

Since the collapse of communism, we can distinguish between groups of working women with an elevated risk of dissolution. These groups are most probably characterized by a high level of income: women who worked full-time had a higher risk of dissolution than did women who worked on a part-time basis; those who had a side job had a higher risk of dissolution than did women who had only one (official) source of income; lower white-collar workers and workers in upper white-collar not-typical-female occupational groups had an elevated risk of dissolution in comparison to other occupational groups. During communism the fact of working did not influence the risk of dissolution, neither occupational status of a job. Different from the transition period, however, in the centrally planned economy women who held side job had lower risk of dissolution than other women.

A feature of a job, which in the transition period in Russia is an important determinant of the level of income, as shown by other studies, and turned out to significantly influence the risk of union dissolution, is the type of ownership of a company a woman worked for. The highest risk of union dissolution was characterized by women working in new private companies or in 'other' private enterprises. However, this effect was only present in the urban areas, which most probably resulted from greater differences in salaries between private and public companies in the cities than in the countryside. We interpret this result as an independence effect with women in private companies earning, on average, more than workers of public companies. Women who work in private companies simply have the financial resources which allow them to maintain a separate household, while in public companies, the level of payment is much lower and women who work in these companies might simply be unable to afford to break away from an unsatisfactory relationship. We admit, nevertheless, that the

higher risk of union dissolution might also be related to a higher desire to divorce among workers in private companies, which results from a high insecurity in their jobs, but also, women who are able to find a job in newly established private companies might have some personal characteristics which make them more prone to divorce. The data source on which this study was based allowed us only to approximate women's income by the characteristics of a job conducted. Information concerning the level of incomes of both partners could bring an additional insight into income-related determinants of divorce in Russia.

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