THE CONTINUING TRANSFORMATION OF NUPTIALITY AND DIVORCE IN CZECHIA AND SLOVAKIA AFTER 1989 IN A COHORT PERSPECTIVE

Branislav Šprocha[1]

Abstract

Nuptiality and divorce are processes that have undergone several important changes in Czechia and Slovakia in the last three decades. The main aim of this paper is a cohort analysis of the quantum and tempo of nuptiality among single persons and of divorce rates among the selected marriage cohorts that have been most affected by the transformation of marriage behaviour in Czechia and Slovakia since 1989.

The results show a significant and, among selected cohorts, gradually steeper decline in the rate of first marriages. At the same time, there has been a continuous and inter-cohort intensification of the process of postponing entry into the first marriage in both countries and in both sexes. These changes are occurring more dynamically in Czechia. This means that in the birth cohorts from the late 1970s, more than a third of men and almost 30% of women never marry. In Slovakia, the figure is about 30% of men and a quarter of women. The main reason for this is the significant drop in the probability of marriage at a younger age and insufficient recuperation in older ages.

The steadily increasing cross-sectional level of divorce rates in both countries was also reflected in the development of the cohort probability of divorce. The highest risk of divorce (47%–48%) was identified in Czechia among the marriage cohorts from the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s. In Slovakia, the highest risk was slightly lower (33–34%) and was observed among the marriage cohorts from the first half of the 1990s. Younger cohorts were affected by the faster increase in cross-sectional divorce rates. The result of the differences in the dynamics of the divorce rate trends between Czechia and Slovakia was thus a certain equalisation of the intensity of divorce among younger cohorts in both countries.

INTRODUCTION

Differences in family behaviour between Czechia and Slovakia have long reflected the countries' particular historical, social, economic, and cultural situations.

From a historical point of view, in Slovakia it was primarily the persistence and, after the Second World War, the fixation of the model of early and almost universal entry into marriage (*Fialová,* 1992; *Šprocha*

1) Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Šancová 56, 811 05 Bratislava, Slovak Republic. Also Infostat Demographic and Research Centre, Leškova 16, 817 95 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, Contact: branislav.sprocha@gmail.com.

and Tišliar, 2018). By contrast, family behaviour among the Czech population resembled more the European type (*Hajnal*, 1965) of marriage behavior (*Pavlík et al.,* 1990; *Fialová,* 1992 and 2006). However, the specific conditions of the previous political regime (see, for example, *Fialová*, 1992, *Sobotka*, 2002) contributed to a significant transformation of this model. In Czechia in the post-war period, marriage at a young age and high marriage rates became the main feature of family behaviour (*Fialová*, 1992). This sharply contrasted with the populations in the former Western bloc (*Monnier and Rychtaříková*, 1992, *Kalmijn*, 2007).

Some cultural and social factors also played an important role in the differences in nuptiality and divorce rates between Czechia and Slovakia. Czechia has been more culturally and socially advanced, with a higher proportion of educated people, more young people living in urban areas and especially in larger cities, and more people employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors (trade and services). It is also a much more secularised society, while in Slovakia the church, faith, traditions, social control, and norms played an important role in family behaviour even under the previous political regime. This could also help to explain why divorce rates in Slovakia long remained at a low level and only gradually increased in the period after the war.

In the last three decades the process of the formation and dissolution of marriages in Czechia and Slovakia has undergone several significant transformations. The model of early, almost universal entry into marriagedisintegrated relatively quickly. The year 1991 represents a dividing line between the old and the new model of marital behaviour (*Rychtaříková,* 1995 and 2018). As several researches have shown (e.g. *Fialová,* 2006, *Křesťanová*, 2020, *Šprocha*, 2012a), the old model ceased to fit in the new political, cultural, social, and economic conditions. The main feature (of the new model) is the postponement of marriage to a later age and in some cases the rejection of marriage, a tendency that was subsequently linked to a relatively significant drop in marriage rates. Only in recent years we have been able to observe the demise of this trend, and we have even witnessed a slight revival of nuptiality (*Křesťanová*, 2020, *Šprocha*, 2020). The process of marital dissolution (that can be empirically observed in both populations essentially only through

the legal termination of marriage by divorce) was characterised by intensification as the past long-term increase in divorce rates continued to rise (*Křesťanová*, 2020, *Šprocha*, 2012b, *Šprocha and Tišliar,* 2018). This clear trend has stopped in the last decade and divorce rates have declined somewhat in Czechia and Slovakia. In both countries, an important part of the divorce transformation was the increase in the risk of divorce among marriages of longer duration (*Fialová and Kalibová*, 2010, *Křesťanová*, 2020, *Šprocha*, 2012b).

Several authors (e.g. *Fiala et al.,* 2018, *Fialová and Kalibová*, 2010, *Rychtaříková*,1995, *Křesťanová*, 2020, *Křesťanová and Kurkin*, 2020, *Šprocha*, 2016 and 2020, *Vaňo et al.,* 2001) have, using various approaches, often and in detail analysed these and other transformational changes in nuptiality and divorce that have been taking place in Czechia and Slovakia since the early 1990s. However, a cross-sectional view and an effort to capture annual changes are the approaches that clearly prevail, while a cohort approach is rather an exception. This is mainly because of the high demand for input data and the need for the long-term monitoring of the development of the relevant demographic events for individual cohorts. We are able to identify the completed intensity of the process only when all the persons in the cohort have reached a certain age (e.g. 50 years), or after a set time has elapsed since the formation of the cohort. On the other hand, the advantage of the cohort approach is that it is not subject to random fluctuations in external conditions and it measures the real intensity of the demographic process observed in a real cohort.

The main aim of this article is to present some important findings using the cohort approach in an analysis of first marriage and the divorce of selected marriage cohorts in Czechia and Slovakia.

DATA AND METHODS

The process of first marriage in Czechia and Slovakia was analysed through cohort gross nuptiality tables. These can be compiled by appropriately adjusting first marriage probabilities from a long series of annually published nuptiality tables constructed in the second main parallelogram. For the period 1961–1988, the source of data for both populations was the publication 'Nuptiality tables of single persons in the ČSSR,

ČSR, SSR for the years 1961–1988', compiled by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO 1989). For the period 1989–1993, the nuptiality tables for Czechia were published in Appendix I of the publication 'Population Development of the Czech Republic 1994' (*Pavlík et al.,* 1994: 73–77). The nextperiod (1994–2019) was covered using the official tables computed by the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO). For Slovakia, the period 1989–2019 was covered using the author's own computations of first-marriage probabilities, which were directly constructed using anonymised data from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SOSR). The basic calculation formula was based on a well-known relationship (e.g. *Rychtaříková* 1984, *Pavlík et al.,* 1986):

$$
{}_{t}^{z}q_{x,x+1}^{s} = \frac{{}_{t}^{z}S_{x,x+1}^{s}}{{}_{1.1.t}^{z}P_{x}^{s} - \frac{{}_{t}^{z}D_{x,x+1}^{s}}{2} + \frac{{}_{t}^{z}I_{x,x+1}^{s}}{2} - \frac{{}_{t}^{z}E_{x,x+1}^{s}}{2}}
$$

where:

${}_{t}^{z}q_{x,x+1}^{s}$ is first marriage probability between exact age x and x+1 in the year (t) and for cohort (z),

${}_{1.1.t}^{z}P_{x}^{s}$ is the number of single persons aged (x), in the year (t) as of 1 January, and from cohort (z),

${}_{t}^{z}S_{x,x+1}^{s}$ is the number of first marriages aged (x and x+1), in the year (t), and from cohort (z),

${}_{t}^{z}D_{x,x+1}^{s}$ is the number of deaths of single persons aged (x and x+1), in the year (t), and from cohort (z),

${}_{t}^{z}I_{x,x+1}^{s}$ is the number of single immigrants aged (x and x+1), in the year (t), and from cohort (z),

${}_{t}^{z}E_{x,x+1}^{s}$ is the number of single emigrants aged (x and x+1), in the year (t), and from cohort (z).

Other functions were then calculated from this long-term series of cohort first marriage probabilities: the cohort numbers of never-married and the cohort

Figure 1 **A simplified diagram of the computation of first marriage probability in a cohort perspective**
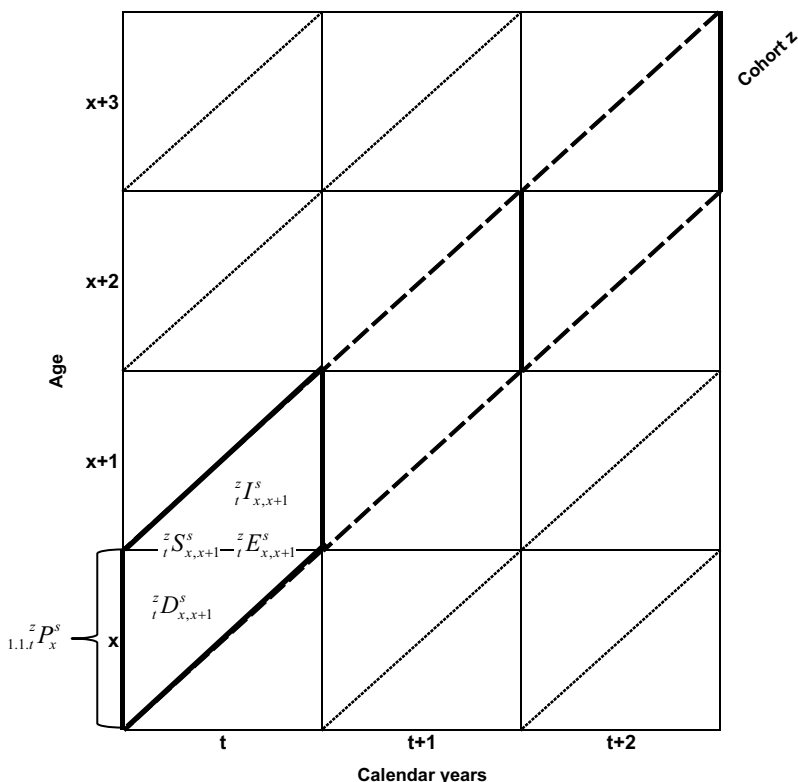
numbers of first marriages. These functions were designed for the 1945–1969 cohorts up to the exact age of 50. In our analysis, we also use the results for younger cohorts.

The radix of cohort nuptiality tables ${}_t^z l_{15}^s$ was set at 100 000 persons. The cohort numbers of first marriages were derived using this formula:

$$ {}_t^z d_{x,x+1}^s = {}_t^z q_{x,x+1}^s \cdot {}_t^z l_x^s $$

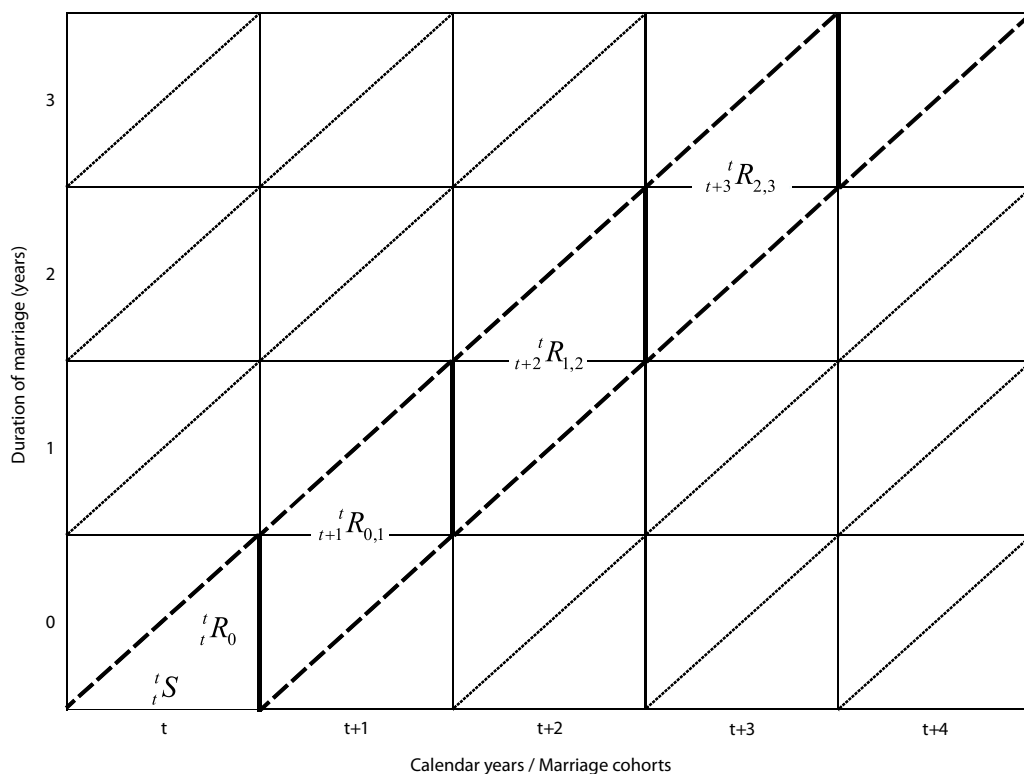and the cohort numbers of never married (x+1):

$$ {}_{t+1}^z l_{x+1}^s = {}_t^z l_x^s - {}_t^z d_{x,x+1}^s $$

The cohort analysis of divorce was based on cohort duration-specific divorce rates. The basis of this approach is to relate divorces classified by the time elapsed since the marriage to the relevant marriage cohorts. By specifically classifying divorces according to the year of marriage and the year of divorce, we are able to calculate directly the cohort duration-specific divorce rates for a given marriage

cohort (see Fig. 2). Inputs for these purposes were prepared using primary data from the CZSO and SOSR. Based on this approach, it was possible to analyse the effects of divorce on marriage cohorts from 1980–2019. Given that demographic statistics in Czechia and Slovakia do not track deaths and migration by year of marriage, it was not possible to take into account the impact of these disruptive factors. Therefore, the results of the analysis present only the 'net' effect of divorce on marriage cohorts. The concept of construction of cohort duration-specific divorce rates for a selected marriage cohort (t) is presented in Figure 2 and can be described with the following formulas:

$$ {}_t^t r_0 = \frac{{}_t^t R_0}{{}_t^t S} \quad {}_{t+1}^t r_{0,1} = \frac{{}_{t+1}^t R_{0,1}}{{}_t^t S} \quad {}_{t+2}^t r_{1,2} = \frac{{}_{t+2}^t R_{1,2}}{{}_t^t S} \quad {}_{t+3}^t r_{2,3} = $$

$$ = \frac{{}_{t+3}^t R_{2,3}}{{}_t^t S} $$

Figure 2 **A simplified diagram of the computation of duration-specific divorce ratesin a cohort perspective**

Duration of marriage (years)

Calendar years / Marriage cohorts

and generally:

$$_{t+x}^{t}r_x = \frac{_{t+x}^{t}R_{x,x+1}}{_t^tS}$$

where:

$_{t+x}^{t}r_x$ is the cohort duration-specific divorce rate of marriage cohort (t) in the year (t+x),

$_{t+x}^{t}R_{x,x+1}$ is the number of divorces in marriage cohort (t) and the number of divorced in the year (t+x),

$_t^tS$ is the number of marriages in the year (t).

A COHORT ANALYSIS OF FIRST MARRIAGE

A comparison of the trend in first marriage rates in Czechia and Slovakia after the Second World War reveals relatively significant changes (see, e.g. *Fialová*, 1992, *Rychtaříková*,1995, *Šprocha*, 2016). The earlier and more intensive first marriage rate that was identified in Czechia in the 1960s was a historical novelty. This phenomenon was also gradually reflected in cohort indicators. As can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, the exceptions were the youngest cohorts. In both countries and both sexes, data obtained from cohort nuptiality tables show that after a brief increase in first marriage rates among cohorts from the second half of the 1940s (influenced by the favourable population climate of the 1970s) there was a slight and gradual decline. This trend was more dynamic among the male population and in Slovakia. In Czechia, between the cohorts born in the mid-1940s and those in the 1960s, the first marriage rate of men fell from just over 93% to 87%. In Slovakia it went from less than 93% to below 85%. For women, the trend was more moderate, as the first marriage rates decreased from approximately 96–97% to 94% in Czechia and from 93–94% to approximately 90% in Slovakia (Fig. 3).

The development of the (table) cohort mean age at first marriage was more stable. In Czechia women born between the mid-1940s and the mid-1960s entered into their first marriage on average at the age of 21.3–21.6 years. For men, there was first a slight decrease among those born in the second half of the 1940s. In the following cohorts we can identify a gradual rise in the age of marriage from about 24.1 years to 24.7 years (Fig. 4). As mentioned above, in Slovakia first marriage occurred a little later. For women, it was more or less stable at the age of 22.

Figure 3 **Cohort total first marriage rate in Czechia and Slovakia, cohorts 1945–1979**
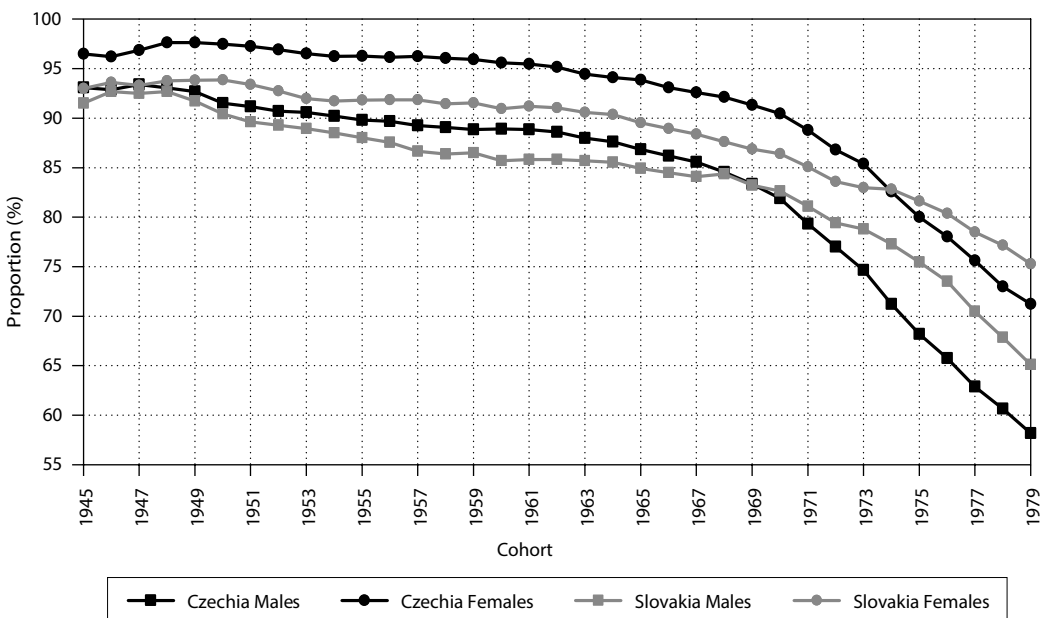
Source: *Tabulky sňatečnosti svobodných...* (1989); *Pavlík* (ed.) (1994); CZSO, SO SR; author's calculations.

For men, after an initial decline, there was a gradual increase from 24.3 years (cohort 1949) to more than 25 years (cohort 1965).

The trend in the first marriage rate of persons born in the second half of the 1960s was influenced by the transformational changes that took place in both countries after 1989. As Figures 3 and 4 show, with each younger cohort the first marriage rate decreased and there was a continuous increase in the cohort mean age at first marriage.

In the following text, we present the trend in the first marriage quantum and tempo for all the cohorts for which information was available on the nuptiality of persons aged 40 and over. We chose this age limit even though we are aware that the data obtained may not be final, especially for younger people. However, given the persistence of relatively low first marriage rates over the age of 40, no significant changes can be expected.[2] According to Figure 3, it is clear that

in Czechia the cohort first marriage rate has fallen quite sharply, to below 60% (cohorts from the late 1970s). If the current known marriage intensity of cohorts from the late 1970s increased by known cross-sectional intensity over the age of 40, that would mean that more than one-third of men would never marry. In Slovakia, the cohort first marriage rate started out from an even lower level. Between the 1965 and 1979 cohorts the decrease was from less than 85% to about 65%. This means that despite the slight increase in the first marriage rate among people over the age of 40, more than 28% of men would still be single at the end of the their reproductive life. However, the less dynamic inter-cohort drop in intensity contributed to the fact that the last known cohort first marriage rates are significantly higher than in Czechia. The less dynamic inter-cohort decrease in intensity in Slovakia is the reason why the last cohort first marriage rates for which we have information are higher than in Czechia.

Figure 4 **Cohort mean age at first marriage in Czechia and Slovakia, cohorts 1945–1979**
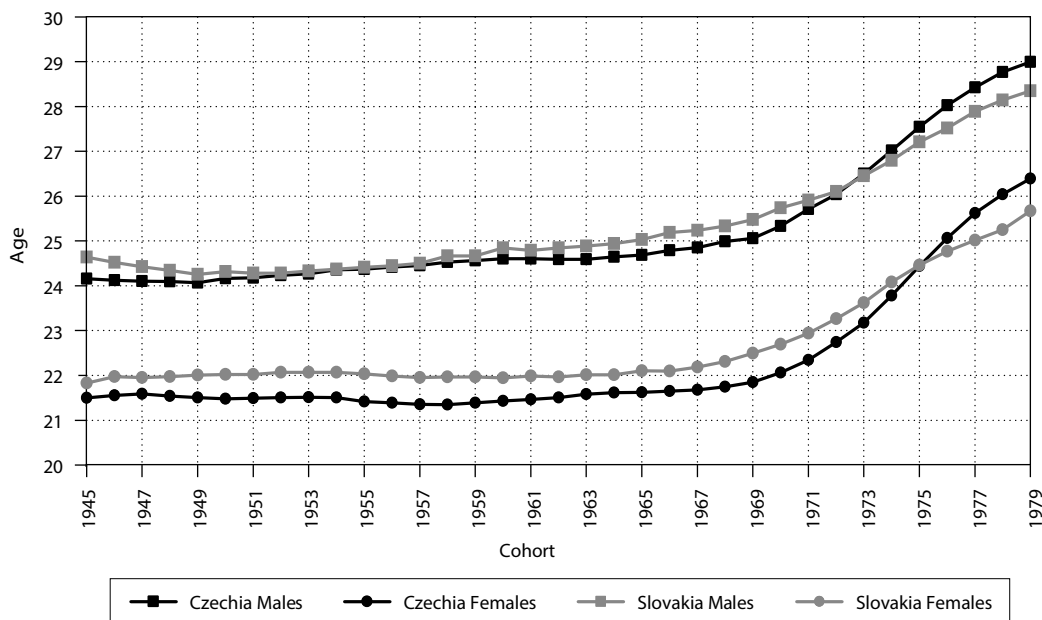
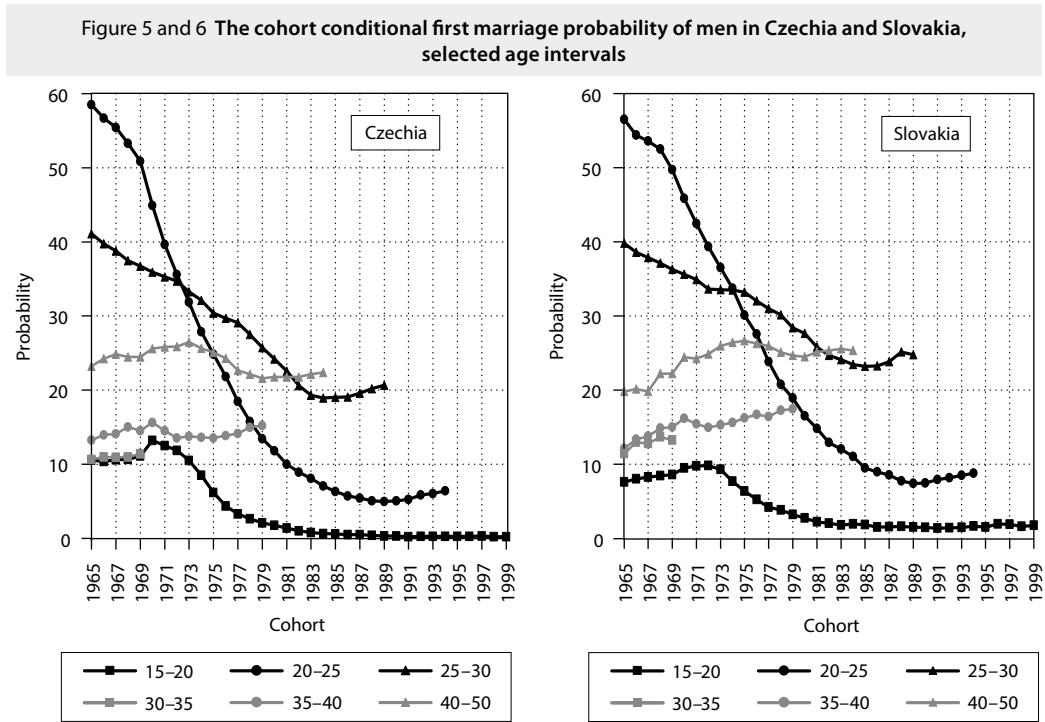Source: *Tabulky sňatečnosti svobodných...* (1989); *Pavlík* (ed.) (1994); CZSO, SO SR; author's calculations.

2) According to the data from the cross-sectional nuptiality tables in 2019, the first marriage rate of men in Czechia at the age of 40-49 would increase by almost 7 pp and for women by approximately 4 pp. In Slovakia, the situation is similar - for men, the potential increase is about 6.5 pp. and for women less than 4 pp.

The decline in the first marriage rates of women among cohorts from the late 1970s intensified in both countries. This process was more dynamic in Czechia, where the cohort first marriage rate fell from 94% to just over 71%. In Slovakia it went from less than 90% to just over 75%. This means that after taking into account the potential increase that may occur at the age of 40 and over in the cohorts from the end of the 1970s, almost a quarter of women in Czechia and a fifth in Slovakia would still be single at the age of 50.

Men and women in Czechia born between the second half of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1970s married for the first time at a slightly younger age than in Slovakia. The positions of the two countries changed very quickly (in this respect) as the cohorts transformed. The cohort mean age at first marriage among men in Czechia increased from 24.7 years (cohort 1965) to 29 years (1979). In Slovakia it rose from 25 years to more than 28 years. Given that the youngest cohorts are not yet at the end of their reproductive age, these figures may yet

rise. A similar situation was observed in the tempo of first marriages among women. The last available (although not yet final) data on the cohort mean age at first marriage (cohort 1979) indicated an age of 26.4 years in Czechia and 25.7 years in Slovakia.

Changes in marital behaviour can be identified from the cohort conditional first marriage probabilities in selected age intervals (Fig. 5–8). In Czechia and Slovakia, the probability for single men under the age of 20 increased slightly. It is only among the cohorts born in the early 1970s that we can see a relatively significant decline. In the cohorts born in the second half of the 1980s and in the 1990s probabilities stabilised at an extremely low level. In Czechia, the probability is below 0.5% and in Slovakia is just below 2%. The conditional first marriage probability between the ages 20 and 25 in Czechia and Slovakia decreased very sharply. A certain turning point after which this trend intensified even more can be identified among persons born in 1970. The sharp decline at this age interval did not stop until the cohort of men born in the late

Figure 5 and 6 **The cohort conditional first marriage probability of men in Czechia and Slovakia, selected age intervals**

Source: *Tabulky sňatečnosti svobodných...* (1989); *Pavlík* (ed.) (1994); CZSO, SO SR; author's calculations.
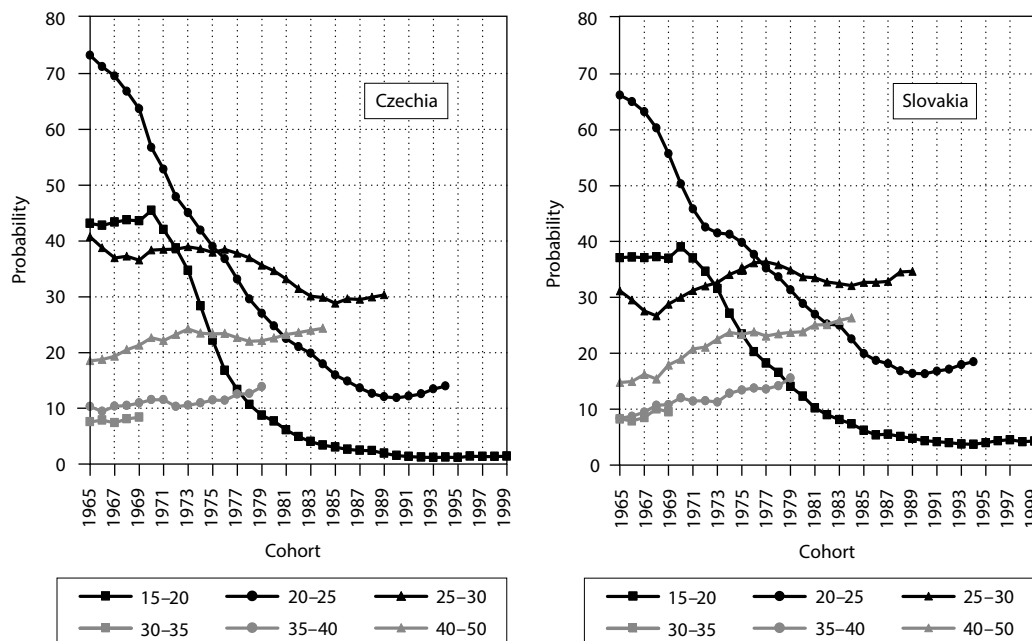
1980s, when in Czechia it reached the 5% threshold of the original almost 60% and in Slovakia it fell below 8% from just over 55%. In the youngest cohorts we can identify a very modest rise in the probability rate in both populations – in Czechia to over 6% and in Slovakia to 9%. A significant decrease is also observed in the first marriage probability of men between the ages of 25 and 30. In Czechia, this probability dropped from about 40% to half that figure and in Slovakia it fell to below 25%. However, there has already been some stabilisation in the cohorts of the 1980s, and we can also see a slight recovery in the youngest cohorts. After the age of 30, the first marriage probability did not change significantly. In the oldest cohorts, there was only a slight increase between the ages of 30 and 35, which in Czech was then followed by a decline and in Slovakia by stabilisation around the level of 25%. Due to the development in younger ages, since the cohorts from the beginning of the 1980s, the first marriage probability is the highest in this age interval. Likewise, the chances of a 35-year-old single man marrying

before the age of 40 in Czech remained almost the same across cohorts, while in Slovakia there was only a slight increase. The trend in conditional probabilities in the oldest segment of the population can only be observed in a limited number of cohorts. In Czechia, the information obtained indicates stability, while in Slovakia there has so far been a slight increase.

Almost the same picture is observed in the trend in women's conditional first marriage probabilities. The sharp decline in first marriage among young women was reflected in a decrease in probabilities to the age of 20 and also between the ages of 20 and 25. After this sharp decline occurred we then see in subsequent cohorts not only the stabilisation of probabilities in the youngest cohorts but also a slight recovery between the ages of 20 and 25. It turns out that women in Slovakia now have a slightly higher first marriage probability in this age interval.

In Czechia, despite the slight decrease from less than 40% to 30%, the highest first marriage probability is now found among women between the ages

Figure 7 and 8 **The cohort conditional first marriage probability of women in Czechia and Slovakia, selected age intervals**

of 25 and 30. This can also apply in the case of Slovakia. The difference is that there is the slight increase in probability to 35% among the youngest cohorts in Slovakia. An increase in conditional probabilities can also be identified in the second half of the reproductive period. According to the results presented in Figures 7 and 8, it is obvious that this trend is more dynamic in Slovakia. Consequently, the first marriage probabilities of women in Slovakia are slightly higher after the age of 30 and 35, respectively.

A COHORT ANALYSIS OF DIVORCE

According to the results of several papers (e.g. *Fialová and Kalibová*, 2010, *Křesťanová*, 2020, *Šprocha*, 2012b), the long-term rising trend in divorce rates in Czechia and Slovakia after the WW II. accelerated after 1990. From a cross-sectional point of view, the total divorce rate in Czechia increased from 38% (1990) to 50% (2010). In Slovakia, this growth was somewhat more dynamic, as between 1990 and 2009 the total divorce rate rose from 23% to more than 41%. After reaching these highs, we have seen a slight decrease in these divorce rates. The change in the trend is faster in Slovakia, where by 2019 the total divorce rate had then decreased again by more than 8 pp, while in Czechia the decrease was approximately 5 pp. According to the latest cross-sectional data (2019), if the same intensity were maintained approximately 45% of marriages would end in divorce in Czechia, while in Slovakia it would be approximately one-third. The key factor behind the changes in divorce intensity in Czechia and Slovakia was identified as the increase in the risk of divorce among longer-lasting marriages (*Křesťanová*, 2020, *Šprocha and Tišliar*, 2018).

Given that these findings relate to cross-sectional indicators, which present a synthetic cohort of marriages that often have a different history and are subject to different conditions, they only represent an estimate of the true intensity and nature of the divorce rate.

Thus, only a cohort approach can give us a realistic picture of divorce. The key factor behind the (rising) risk of divorce is the amount of time that has elapsed since the marriage took place (*Křesťanová*, 2020, *Šprocha*, 2012b). Therefore, we tried to identify divorces in relation to individual marriage cohorts (see the section on data and methods). In our case,

these marriage cohorts are defined as the number of marriages in one calendar year. As mentioned above, it was possible for the purposes of this analysis to construct the divorce rates for marriage cohorts going back to the year 1980. Because divorce can occur at any time within a cohort up until the last married couple in that cohort exists, the cohort divorce rates stated here represent the situation that was valid at the last recorded duration of the marriage and thus cannot represent the final cohort divorce rate.

The data on the cohort divorce rates in Czechia and Slovakia presented in Figure 9 point to a gradual increase in the proportion of divorced marriages in cohorts since the early 1980s. In Czechia we find in the 1980 marriage cohort that after 40 years of marriage slightly more than 40% of couples were divorced. When we look at the cohorts from the late 1980s and early 1990s (after about three decades of marriage) we see that it has already risen to more than 45%. The more dynamic rise in divorce rates in Slovakia noted above was also reflected in cohort data. While in the 1980 marriage cohort we find about a quarter of marriages were divorced forty years later, among cohorts from the first half of the 1990s the divorce rate rose to almost 35%. The subsequent decline observed in the cohort divorce rate in both populations among marriage cohorts since the second half of the 1990s is mainly due to the shorter period of time those cohorts have been married. At the same time, however, we believe that the decrease observed in the cross-sectional intensity of divorce is also likely to play a role in this development. If the last known cohort divorce rate in individual periods since marriage were to remain unchanged, the cohort divorce rate in Czechia would increase to over 50% (among marriage cohorts from the early 1990s), but it would decrease among more recent marriage cohorts to 47% (the 2005 cohort). In Slovakia, the cohort divorce rates among the marriage cohorts from the mid-1990s would also increase, rising to the level of 38–39%. Subsequent developments would bring the decline to 35%.

The higher cross-sectional intensity of divorce in Czechia also conditioned its higher cohort divorce rate in comparison with Slovakia (Fig. 9). At the same time, it is clear that the more dynamic rise in divorce

Figure 9 **The cohort divorce rate in Czechia and Slovakia, marriage cohorts 1980–2015**
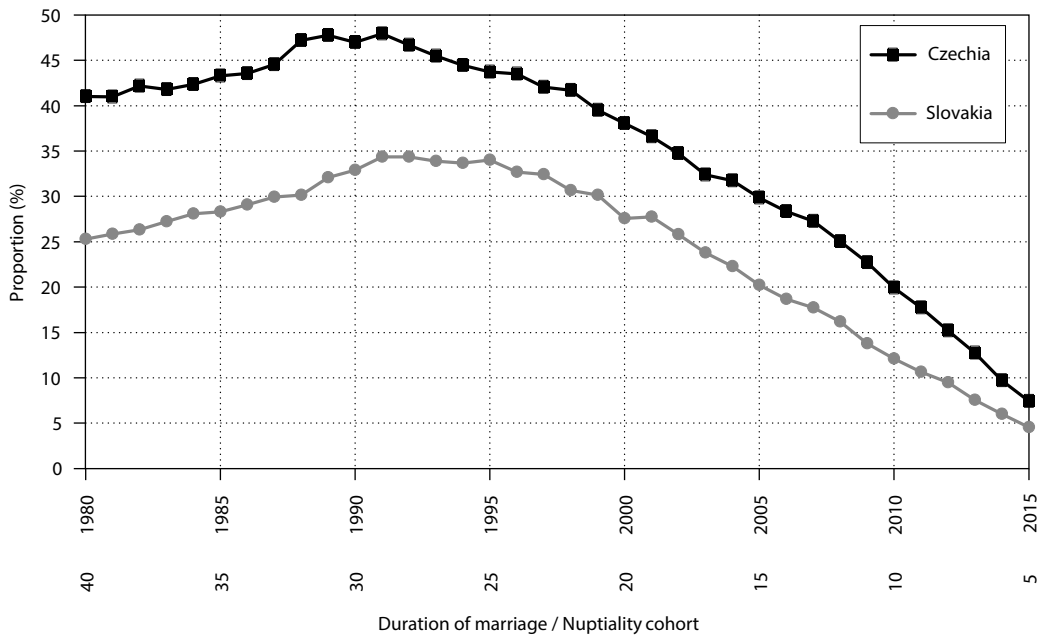
Note: Cohort divorce rates in younger marriage cohorts are affected by the shorter duration of their marriages
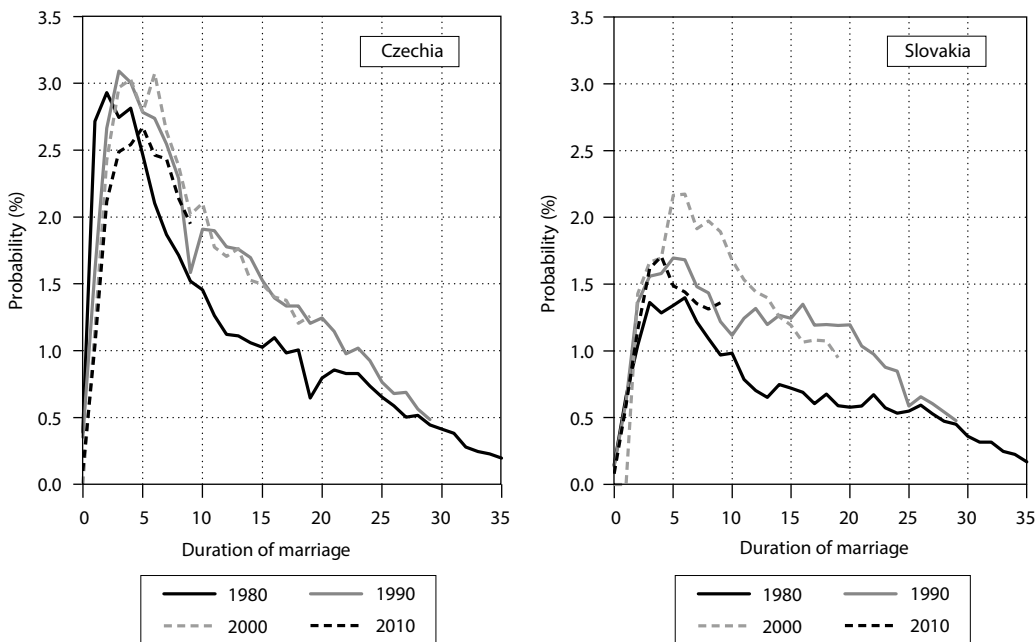**Source:** CZSO, SO SR; author's calculations.

rates in Slovakia has contributed to reducing these differences. While among the cohorts who married in the 1980s the difference between the two countries was 15–17 pp, in the younger marriage cohorts the difference decreased to 10 pp. or even less. Caution should be exercised with regard to the lower divorce rates connected to the shorter duration of the younger cohorts' marriages may be a factor in this.

Among the observed marriage cohorts, the distribution of the intensity of divorce according to the duration of the marriage also changed to some extent (Fig. 10 and 11). Above all, we can see a shift in when the maximum divorce rate by marriage duration occurs. While in Czechia in the 1980 marriage cohort the highest risk of divorce was in the 3rd year of marriage, in the 2010 cohort it was in the 6th year. In Slovakia, such a similar maximum risk shortly after marrying was not observed in the oldest cohort, and a high risk of divorce existed not only after the 3rd but also the 4th or 5th years of marriage. We have even seen an increase in the cohort intensity of divorce among 3-5-year marriages. It was only in the youngest marriage cohorts (after

2005) that this trend was reversed. Conversely, in Czechia, a legislative change in the 1990s (the *Family Act*, No. 91/1998) that made getting a divorce more difficult shortly after marriage contributed to the aforementioned shift in when the maximum divorce risk occurs and, in general, to a decrease in the cohort intensity of divorce in the first years of marriage. An important part of the changes in the distribution of the risk of divorce in both countries has been an increase in the likelihood of a marriage ending in legal termination after a longer period. Even in this case, however, we can see some differences between the course of these changes in Czechia and Slovakia. While in Czechia the main shifts occurred between individual marriage cohorts from the 1980s, in Slovakia changes in the distribution of divorce risk by marriage duration affected more marriage cohorts. In addition, they confirm the above-mentioned faster rise in divorce rates (especially when we compare the 1980 and 1990 cohorts). However, we can already partially identify (in the 2000 and 2010 cohorts) the effect of the decline in divorce rates that Slovakia has been experiencing in recent decades.

Figure 10 and 11 **The cohort probability of divorce by duration of marriage in Czechia and Slovakia, selected marriage cohorts**
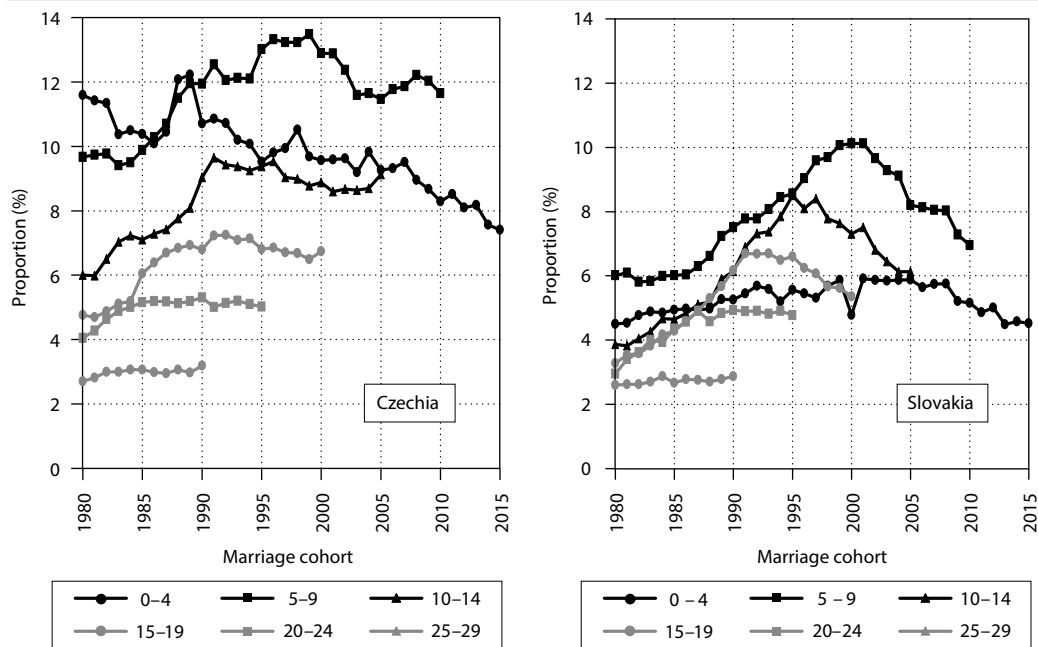

Source: CZSO, SO SR; author's calculations.

A more detailed analysis of the changes in the intensity of divorce in relation to the duration of marriage between the selected marriage cohorts observed here is provided in Figures 12 and 13. In Czechia, the analysis confirms the aforementioned more or less continuous process of declining divorce rates in the first years of marriage, while among the marriage cohorts from the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s the risk of divorce increased between 5–9 years and 10–14 years of marriage. We can also identify a certain increase between the 15th and 20th year of marriage. However, this only concerned the marriage cohorts from the 1980s, as we tend to see stagnation and even a slight decline in younger cohorts. This trend is also present in marriages of shorter duration (Fig. 12).

In Slovakia, the divorce risk within 0–4 years after marriage rose with each successive marriage cohort. Starting approximately with the marriage cohorts

from the beginning of the new millennium, there has been some stabilisation, so we are able subsequently then to identify the onset of a decline in the youngest cohorts (Fig. 13). There was also a significant increase in divorce intensity between 5–9-year marriages and 10–14-year marriages. However, it has been possible to observe a decline in divorce intensity among marriage cohorts from the 21st century and the mid-1990s in the 10–14-year group as well. Similarly, among 15–19-year marriages the increase in the divorce risk among the 1980s marriage cohorts was replaced in later marriage cohorts by a decline in the divorce risk. These findings confirm that the transformational changes in the divorce rate in Slovakia were more dynamic and had a more significant impact on the level and distribution of the divorce risk. The decline in divorce rates was also faster among the youngest marriage cohorts and has affected a wider range of marriage duration intervals.

Figure 12 and 13 **Cumulative cohort divorce rates by duration of marriage in Czechia and Slovakia**

Source: CZSO, SO SR; author's calculations.

CONCLUSION

The causes of dramatic changes in family behaviour in Czechia and Slovakia after 1989 can be explained by means of two main theoretical approaches. The first highlights structural changes associated with the collapse of the socialist bloc and the transition to a market economy. These changes (e.g. inflation, unemployment, falling living standards, a decline in real income, increasing disparities in the income distribution, changes in family policy, etc.), especially in the early part of the 1990s, may have had a negative effect on the intensity of nuptiality and the stability of marriages. Some features of a modern market economy also began to emerge around this time. These include, for example, the restructuring of the labour market, rising job insecurity, the need to achieve a higher education and lifelong learning, individual flexibility, new career opportunities, and the increasing availability of consumer goods and services (more *Frejka*, 2008).

The second approach points to social, cultural, and psychological factors. This especially relates to changes in values, norms, and attitudes towards marriage, cohabitation (and other forms of couple coexistence outside the marriage), and divorce. It also involves, for example, the expansion of consumer behaviour and increased opportunities in education, travel, and leisure activities (*Frejka*, 2008). Intimate partnership and sexuality are no longer so closely socially regulated and normatively controlled (*Sobotka and Toulemon*, 2008). There is a stronger assertion of the ideal of a pure relationship, which is based on the mutual consensus of partners and emphasis on individual autonomy (*Giddens*, 1992). As Sobotka and Toulemon (2008: 86) noted, the ongoing transformation of family behaviour is reflected in the spread of new family forms and living arrangements other than nuclear families comprised of a married couple with children. The boundaries between family and non-family life have become much more difficult to identify (*Sobotka and Toulemon*, 2008).

A cohort analysis of first marriages in both countries highlighted the effects of long-term major transformational changes. In particular, a significant decline in cohort marriage rates is evident in both sexes. A dynamic decline in the cohort table marriage

rate can be identified especially among people born in the early 1970s. With each younger cohort, the intensity with which single men and women entered into marriage has so far been decreasing. According to the latest known data (2019), one third of the men born in the cohorts from the late 1970s in Czechia will never marry. In Slovakia, due to the slower dynamics of the decrease in the intensity of cohort first-marriage rate, just over a quarter of men will remain single to the end of their reproductive period age. In the same cohorts of women, the proportion of never married will be about one-quarter in Czechia will never marry and one-fifth in Slovakia. Changes in the distribution of cohort age-specific marriage rates have confirmed that the postponement of marriage to a later age has become increasingly more common. This is associated with a continuous inter-cohort increase in the values of the cohort table mean age of men and women at the first marriage. The cohort analysis thus confirmed the known fact that the process of marriage of single persons in Czechia and Slovakia is by no means exclusive to people of a young and very young age and it is no longer an almost universal process, as a significant number of men and women will never marry.

The cohort analysis also confirmed the growing intensity of divorce rates among the marriage cohorts from the 1980s and early 1990s. In Czechia, the known cohort divorce rates in these cohorts were greater than 45%, and in Slovakia they reached 35%. Among younger marriage cohorts we can expect to see in both countries a decrease in the risk of divorce and thus also a smaller propotion of divorced couples from marriage cohorts. The above analysis confirms that the transformational changes in divorce were more dynamic in Slovakia and had a more significant impact on the level and distribution of the divorce risk. The decrease in the divorce rate among the youngest marriage cohorts is also occurring more quickly there and is affecting a wider range of marriage duration intervals.

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BRANISLAV ŠPROCHA

Graduated from the programme in demography at the Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague (2011). Since 2007 he has been a researcher at the Institute of Informatics and Statistics at the Demographic Research Centre in Bratislava and since 2009 he has been a researcher at the Institute for Forecasting, Slovak Academy of Sciences. In demography he specialises in the study of nuptiality, divorce, population development, and the transformation of reproductive behaviour after 1989 and its impact on society. He also analyses population structure, the reproductive behaviour of the Roma population in Slovakia, and population projections.