

Demographic approaches to the family behaviour

JOZEF MLÁDEK, JANA ŠIROČKOVÁ

Comenius University, Bratislava, Department of Human Geography and Demogeography,
Slovak Rep.

Abstract

Recently, the traditional model of the family behaviour in Slovakia is changing. The model of the early nuptiality is changing, and increasingly more signs are indicating the transition to the late marriage model. Recently, several divorce rates have shown a slight increase. The abortion rate lies in sudden fall of interruptions within recent 15 years. Analyses of the mentioned processes have shown a certain spatial differentiation of the family behaviour. There are actual regional types of the family behaviour. North and eastern part of Slovakia is characterized by the traditional, more conservative type of the family behaviour. South-west and south Slovakia are characterized by the liberal family behaviour.

Key words: family behaviour, nuptiality, divorce, abortion

1. Introduction

Several science disciplines are paying attention to the family, an elementary population society and there are many other institutions of the social praxis, which are attending to, as well. It testifies a high degree of importance (personal, social), that in general is ascribed to this society, namely from the economic, cultural, as well as from posterity education point of view.

Traditionally, to the family is paid a great attention within the demographic recognition, where its dominant orientation is focused on knowledge of those processes of its forming, if appropriate to disintegration, which exercise an influence on the population reproductive processes. In overall historical development was the substantial part of reproduction linked on the home-life and, the best part of population survived its reproductive stage within the family, in the formal society.

Despite the strong influence of traditions, also Slovakia is undergoing the changes in the family behaviour. These changes tend to certain long-term trends, which in recent 10–15 years are characterized by a definite acceleration. Some of the these changes have the same shape as those, which become manifested in the West-European populations since the sixtieth of the last century and, which are considered to be the characteristic peculiarities of the demographic behaviour during the 2nd demographic transition.

2. Some changes within the family behaviour

The dominant type of the so-called nuclear family created by two parents is getting broader about such forms, as the family created by single grown-up person is, or by a non-formal couple of partners living in companionate marriage. Van de Kaa (1987) characterizes these changes as a transition from the uniform family, to the broad-diversified forms of family and to the households. Informal unions during recent 20 years become massively widened within majority of the post-industrialized states, and became a common form of the partnership cohabitation, whereby stability of the family as a social institution is markedly affected. It is advisable to find roots of the informal marriages in an overall development of the high developed countries social-economic sphere. For the significant factors are considered an increased level of education of the woman's part of population, higher women's employment rate, which is assuring their economic independence, high effectiveness of the applied methods of the birth-control together with liberalization of the abortion laws.

Some information about the informal family unions in Slovakia can be drawn down from the census of population, houses and flats. There are data about the factual marriages (persons sharing the flat, marked as the companionate marriage). According to census 1991, in Slovakia were 20 864 factual marriages. Up to the year 2001 their number considerably increased up to 30 466, what reflects changes of the social conditions, as well as changes of population family behaviour. At the same time, together with increase in rate of the factual marriages, there are changing their structures, as well.

In comparison with the year 1991, in 2001 have considerably increased number of the factual marriages of the unmarried and divorced people of both sexes. By the other categories, according to the marital status there are not shown such significant changes, even by a widowed persons, in comparison with the year 1991, number of people living in cohabitation decreased.

Maximum number of cohabitations by men in the year 2001 was in the age group of 45–49, women at the age group 25–29. As to the "engaged" partners living in the factual marriages, there have predominated again the men, whose number was 1 186, whereas what the women regards, there were as little as 939. Similar situation, which had appeared in 1991 by the widowed people living in an informal marriage, seems to be also in 2001. In comparison with the widowed men, in the informal unions are markedly dominating the bereaved women. Ratio of the widowed men is nothing but slightly increasing, as late as in the last age categories, in particular within the age-group 70+. Near the women, the ratio is considerably higher from under the age group 20–24 (Fig. 1, Tab.1).

Within the period between censuses, for lack of complete and reliable data about the family unions (matrimonial, partnership) are frequently used the utility data, e.g. data on extramarital fertility.

Number of the non-marital children in Slovakia was traditionally low, in particular in comparison with the Western European countries. In 1950, there were 5,5% of non-marital children, and up to the year 1990 this ratio increased up to 7,6%. And just in 1990's this indicator increased considerably and in 2001, share of non-marital child-

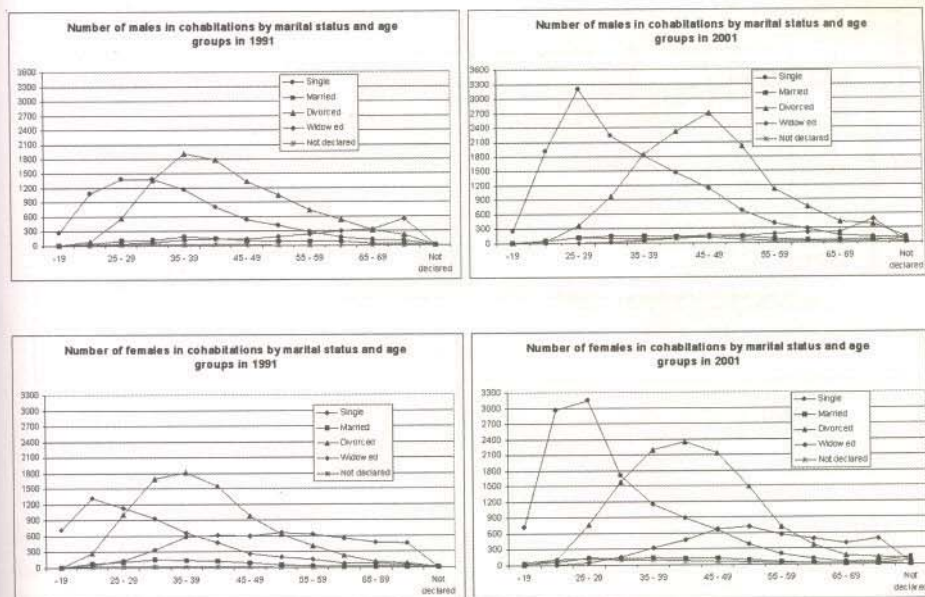


Fig. 1 Cohabitations in Slovakia (1991, 2001)

Tab. 1 Cohabitations in Slovakia by marital status (1991–2001)

Year	Sex	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Not declared	Total
1991	Males	7 745	995	9 912	2 088	124	20 864
	Females	6 057	810	8 791	5 101	105	20 864
2001	Males	13 761	1 186	13 056	1 598	865	30 466
	Females	12 206	939	12 123	4 386	812	30 466

Source: Sčítania obyvateľov, domov a bytov v rokoch 1991, 2001

ren increased up to 19.7% (Fig. 2). From the graphic chart it is possible to see, that curves mapping the total number of the born children, as well as the marital children born noted down, particularly in 1990s recorded the noticeable decrease. Rising tendencies show only the curves representing the count and share of the non-marital children. As a matter of fact, herewith is emphasized the relative growth of this phenomena.

In comparison with the Western European countries, the ratio of non-marital children in Slovakia is relatively low (Fig. 3).

Besides, changes in the family behaviour are characterized also by prioritizing the family with one child to the detriment of families with two, or three children. In recent years increased ratio of the first order born children. Ratio of the second order born children slightly decreased or is stabilized, respectively. Ratio of the children born within the higher order in the long term tends to decrease (Fig. 4).

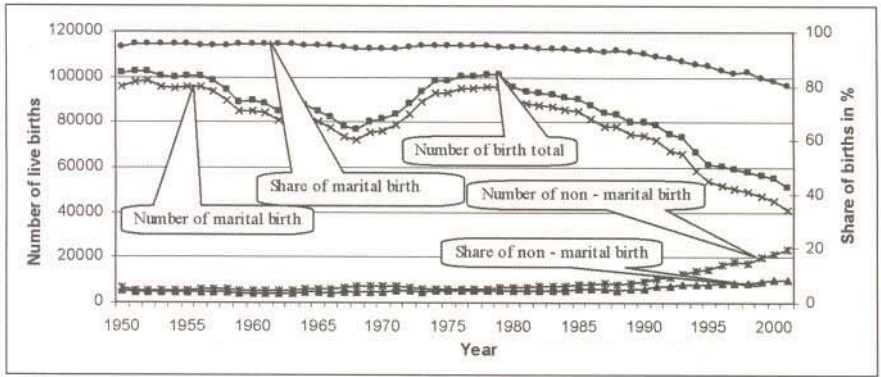


Fig. 2 Development of marital and non-marital natality in Slovakia (1950–2001)

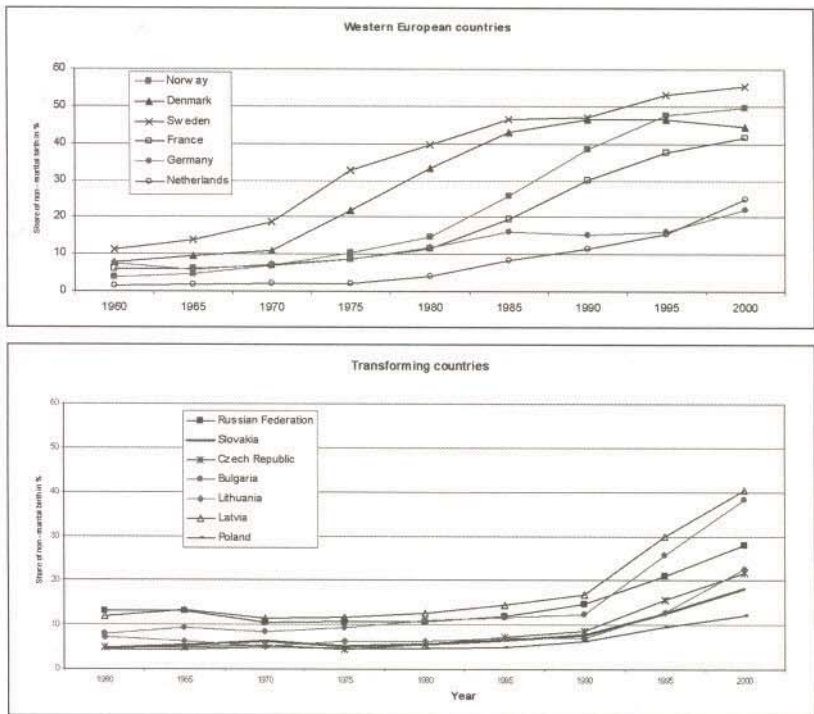


Fig. 3 Development of the non-marital birth in the European countries (1960–2000)

A certain information about changes in inhabitants family behaviour can be achieved from the other results of the population census, namely from indications about the number, greatness and structure of the summed up households. Development in the years 1961–2001 characterizes relatively sudden fall of the Slovak family's size. Average number of the family members in 1961 was 3.53. Within recent 40 years this

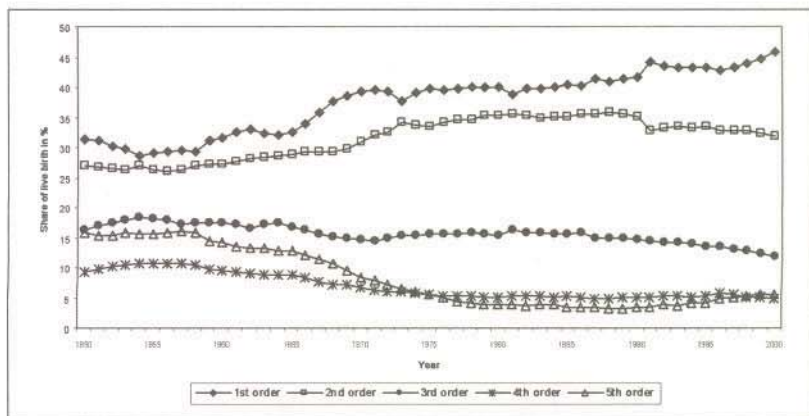


Fig. 4 Live birth in Slovakia by order (1950–2000)

figure sunk under the limit of 3 family members and, within the year 2001 achieved the average number of 2.66 persons on the census's household (Tab. 2). A significant feature of the development is also a sudden growth of the census's households with one person, i.e. single households. In 1961, ratio of these "single" households was 9.3%, in 1970 increased up to 11.9%, in the year 1980 up to 19.8% and in the year 1991 jumped up to 21.8%. Within last decade of the last century there was even more notable increase of ratio of the single households up to 30% from the overall number of the census households. In parallel with this tendency, it is possible to observe also decrease of the households with lower number of the family members. While in 1961 was ratio of the households with fertility rate of more than 6 children 11.8%, up to year 2001 their share dropped to 2.8%.

Tab. 2 Census households by number of members (1961–2001)

Census households total	1961		1970		1980	
	Number	Share in %	Number	Share in %	Number	Share in %
	1 183 316	100	1 344 687	100	1 660 477	100
Number of members						
1	109 692	9.30	160 802	11.9	328 188	19.8
2	281 416	23.80	317 175	23.6	384 931	23.1
3	251 085	21.20	276 534	20.6	316 917	19.1
4	247 157	20.90	294 501	21.9	374 926	22.6
5	153 657	13.00	166 997	12.4	168 021	10.1
6	74 549	6.30	72 119	5.4	55 090	3.3
7	65 760	5.50	30 208	2.2	18 272	1.1
8+	*	*	26 351	2.0	14 132	0.9
Average number of members	3.53		3.37		3.01	

Census households total	1991		2001	
	Number	Share in %	Number	Share in %
	1 832 484	100	2 071 743	100
Number of members				
1	399 288	21.79	622 023	30.0
2	438 827	23.95	481 628	23.2
3	336 692	18.37	370 966	17.9
4	421 569	23.01	404 046	19.6
5	168 523	9.20	134 617	6.5
6	67 585	3.69	58 463	2.8
7	*	*	*	*
8+	*	*	*	*
Average number of members	2.88		2.66	

Source: Sčítania obyvateľov, domov a bytov v rokoch 1961, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2001

Major part of the SR population live in the complete families even though, that their share is continuously decreasing (Tab. 3). While in 1961, the complete families represented 81.2% of all census families, in 1980 their ratio decreased to 70.6%, and in the year 2001 dropped further to 56.4%. On the contrary, the opposite trend are showing an incomplete families, share of which in 1961 was 8.4%, and up to the year 2001 increased up to 11.9%.

Tab. 3 Census households by kind (1961–2001)

Kind of households	1961		1970		1980	
	Number	Share in %	Number	Share in %	Number	Share in %
Complete families	960 348	81.2	1 055 744	78.5	1 171 976	70.6
without dependent children	396 875	33.5	461 652	34.3	535 644	32.3
with dependent children	563 473	47.6	594 092	44.2	636 332	38.3
Incomplete families	99 612	8.4	115 050	8.6	136 360	8.2
without dependent children	*	*	*	*	76 500	4.6
with dependent children	*	*	*	*	59 860	3.6
More members nonfamily households	13 664	1.1	13 091	1.0	23 953	1.4
Households of single people	109 692	9.3	160 802	11.9	328 188	19.8
Census household total	1 183 316	100	1 344 687	100	1 660 477	100

Kind of households	1991		2001	
	Number	Share in %	Number	Share in %
Complete families	1 234 473	67.4	1 168 023	56.4
without dependent children	472 137	25.8	524 020	25.3
with dependent children	762 336	41.6	644 103	31.1
Incomplete families	190 931	10.4	246 358	11.9
without dependent children	91 785	5.0	108 029	5.2
with dependent children	99 146	5.4	138 329	6.7
More members nonfamily households	7 792	0.4	35 339	1.7
Households of single people	399 288	21.8	622 023	30.0
Census household total	1 832 484	100	2 071 743	100

Source: Sčítania obyvateľov, domov a bytov v rokoch 1961, 1970, 1980, 1991, 2001

3. Characteristic changes of the nuptiality model

Nuptiality is a population process, by which is starting establishment of the family, namely by contracting a marriage. From this point of view, such process has a key importance on the population family behaviour, as well as on entire reproduction process.

Within the worldwide range, nuptiality has been developed into two models. The evolutionary elder and on the present for the population of the less developed countries is typical the model of the early nuptiality. It is characterized by the ultra-low average age of women by contracting the marriage (less than 21 years), high level of prevalence of the marriages (share of people being married achieves 90–95%), as well as very strong impact of traditions, faith and the family decision making. The second model of the later nuptiality is characterized by a high average marriage age (women between 23–28 years, men over 27 years). Approximately 10–20% of inhabitants remain unmarried. Forming such model of the nuptiality began in several countries of the Western and Northern Europe, and is typical for the period of the second demographic transition.

Slovakia, analogous to other Central and Eastern European populations had in 20th century several characters of model of the earlier nuptiality. A considerable changeover of the population nuptial behaviour is connected as with the long-term tendencies of the social development, as with transitional processes.

Within the long-term development, the characteristic feature was a relative steadiness of the crude marriage rate (within the range from 7 up to 9 ‰). A high level of nuptiality resulted from the traditional way of the population's life, which was formed under the thumb of the economic conditions, traditions of the family life, and the religious education.

Fall in the crude marriage rate commenced in the 2nd half of the 1970s. Its sudden acceleration appeared early in the ninetieth of the last century. Even in the year 1990

there were contracted more than 40 thousand marriages, whilst in 2001 the count of marriages was only 21 795. The crude marriage rate within this period dropped from the level 7.6‰ to 4.42 ‰, and achieved its own historical minimum (Fig. 5).

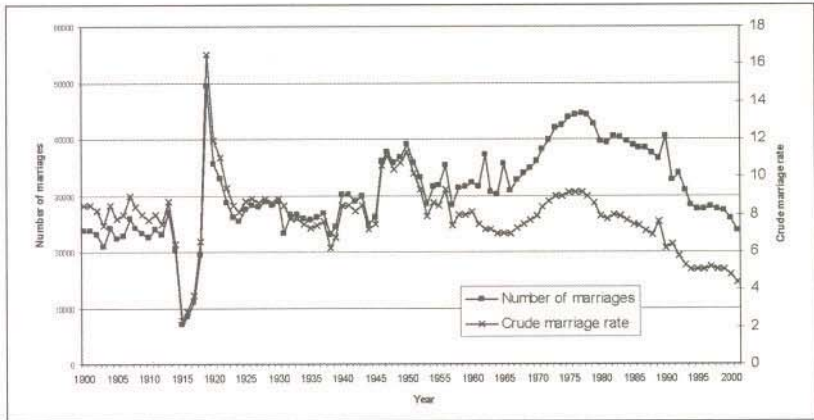


Fig. 5 Development of nuptiality in Slovakia 1990–2001)

This development has several continuities. The social transitions, transformation of society evoked a specific problem, in particular within the economic and the social situation of the young people. Rise in the cost of living, increase in unemployment, and cessation of the mass housing construction adversely affected the nuptiality process.

Set of indicators of the marriage age was on a relatively low level and indicated largely model of the early nuptiality. The average age during contracting the marriage was for a long time at a level of 25 years by men, and 23 years by women. In the 90's has slightly increased, and at a present time accomplished by men 28.6 years, and 25.6 years by women, what makes a permanent value of about 2–4 years lower than in the Western European populations.

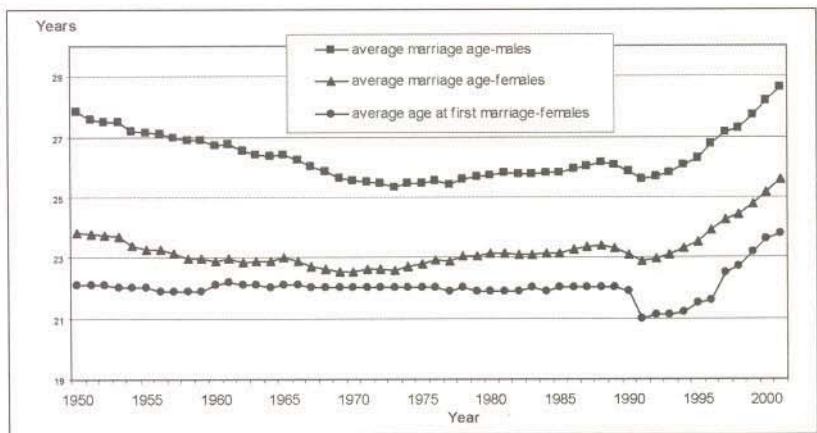


Fig. 6 Development of the marriage age in Slovakia (1950–2001)

Similar relations are documented also by indicator of the average age of the first-married. Also this indicator has undergone a certain shifting in the 1990s, and the average age of the first-married women was heightened up to 23.8 years, and by men up to 26.3 years in 2001 (Fig. 6).

Regional differentiation of the nuptiality in Slovakia is substantial. The map showing the crude marriage rate at the districts level provides a rather complicated picture. In order to interpret this is offered the need to take into account also effects of two more significant factors. The first is a traditional approach to close the marriage contract and start the family, oftentimes affected by the higher level of religiousness of the population. It makes itself felt, in particular within the set of districts of the northern and eastern Slovakia, where the crude marriage rate achieved value worth of more than 4.5‰. Generally, within this set of the districts is in parallel applied also the factor of the inhabitants age structure. It is concerned, in particular the regions with prevalence of the children and the reproducing category, i.e. with higher potential of the inhabitants marriages. Large group of districts in the southern and central Slovakia achieve level of the crude marriage rate less than 4‰. Beside the different religious orientation is applied an impact of the inhabitants obsolescence processes, as well. Enhanced level of the marriages ratio is observable also in the western Slovakian districts, in the surroundings of Nitra and Trnava cities (Fig. 7).

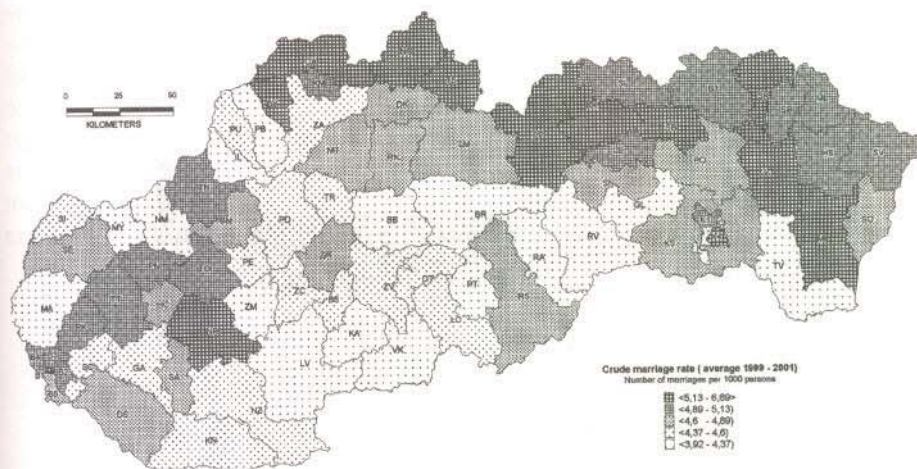


Fig. 7 Nuptiality in Slovakia (1999–2001)

4. Changes in the divorce processes

Divorce, as one of the forms of the legal annulment of the marriage is, from the family starting point of view, as well as from the reproduction point of view a negative demographic phenomenon. At the same time, from the demographic point of view, by means of divorce is extended the inhabitants marriage potential and, a considerable part of the divorced people are again contracting marriage, if appropriate participate in the reproduction of population.

Historical development of the divorce in Slovakia is characterized by a low level of these indicators. Thus is acknowledged imagination on stability of the family, and on the specific conservative family behaviour.

A common feature of the divorce processes is its low intensity as late as to the end of the World War II (an annual number of divorces has not exceeded level 1000). With gradual liberalization of the legislation related to divorce since the 1950s, the divorce intensity is becoming to increase faster. The crude divorce rate increased from 0.5‰ in 1950 up to 1.33‰ in 1980, 1.67‰ in 1990, and up to 1.82‰ in 2001. Number of divorces was increasing and in 1990 attained the figure 8800. In principle, this growing trend remained in the 1990s, as well and in 2001 achieved the figure 9817 divorces. These are values, which are ranking Slovakia between the European states with the average level of the divorce.

Slightly more dramatic is development of the divorces rate, when on its utterance is used the divorce index. Still in 1990, share of divorces on 100 of contracted marriages has fallen to 22 up to the year 2001 this index increased up to 41.3%. It is an impact, in particular of the sudden drop of number of the contracted marriages at this stage. This is characteristic, in particular for Bratislava (55.7 divorces per 100 of contracted marriages), Bratislava V. achieved 58.8%, and Bratislava IV. 62.8% in the year 2001 (Fig. 8).

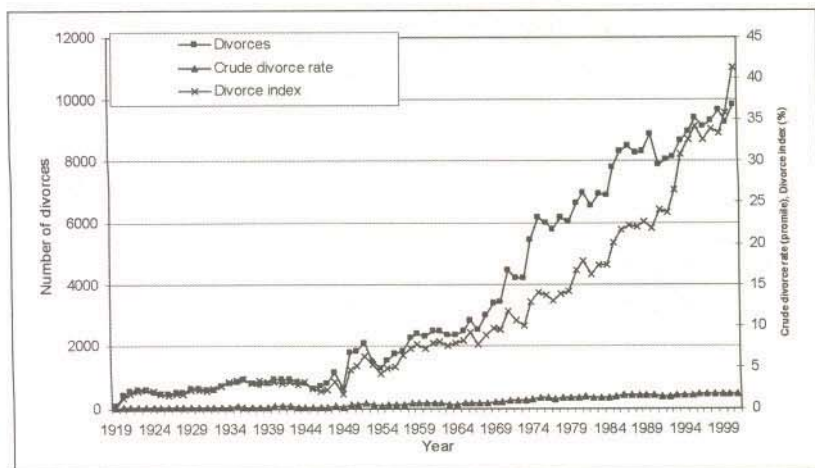


Fig. 8 Development of divorces in Slovakia (1919–2001)

Another accompanying phenomenon of the divorce is growth of average age of the people going to divorce. In the year 2001, the average age during divorce was by men 38.6 years, and 36.1 by women. Compared to the year 1990 this age increased of about 2.1 years by men, and 1.9 years by women. Increase of the average age in the divorce is associated with decrease of the marriage rate, in particular in a lower age, as well as with increase of the divorce intensity in the higher age (Fig. 9).

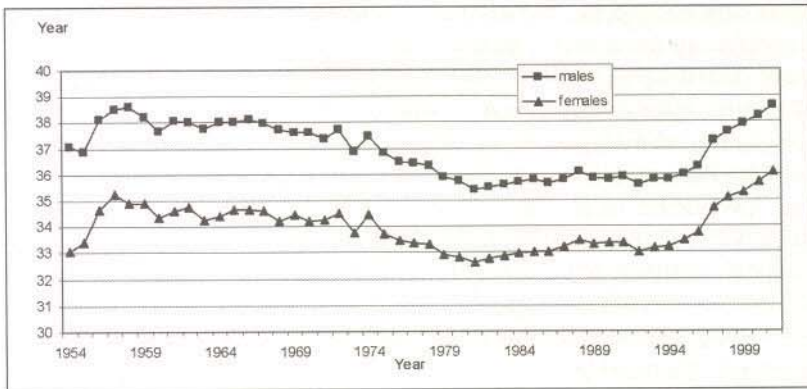


Fig. 9 Development of average age at divorce (1954–2001)

To divide the number of divorces in dependence on duration of the marriage is uneven, and it is undergoing a consecutive changes. Trends are showing that on the present the average duration of the marriage is gradually increasing.

The divorce characterizes a certain spatial differentiation (Fig. 10). It is caused by various factors among them it is possible to assign level of economic development, national and religious structure, degree of the urban development, the age structure, etc. In an effort to present more complex view of the spatial dedifferentiation, regionalization of the divorce has been elaborated. In the Slovak territory were identified three types of regions: region of the high level of the divorce, region of the mean level of the divorce, and region with low level of the divorce. Classification of the individual districts into the specified types of regions was realized on the basis of their incidence within the extremely high, or low divorce indicator levels (crude divorce rate, divorce index).

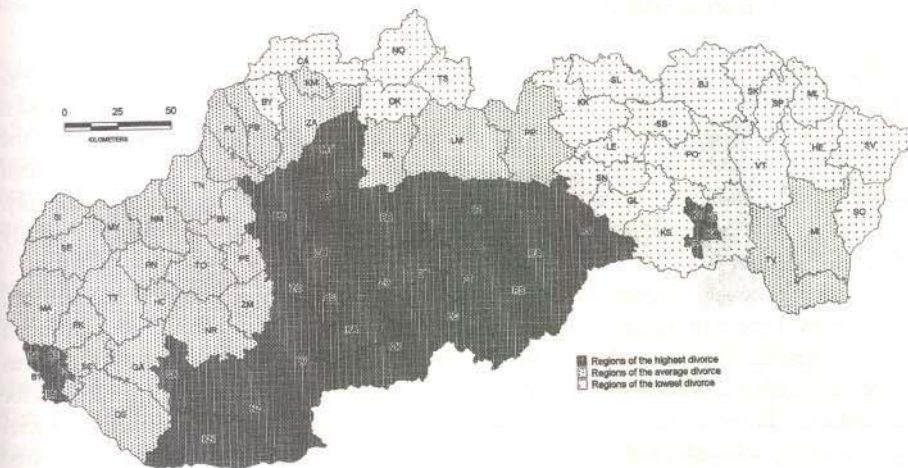


Fig. 10 Divorce regions in Slovakia (1997–2000)

Region with the high level of the divorce: Here belong largely the districts situated in the middle and in the south Slovakia, in addition two independent regional units – districts Bratislava and Košice. Districts with the above-average divorce are characterized by a higher ratio of the urban population (Bratislava, Košice, Martin, Banská Bystrica), as well as by higher degree of concentration of the occupancy in the district seat. In these districts it is manifested by the reduced natality, changes in the family structure, low number of families with more children, and the above-average number of families with one child. Another factor of the increased divorce is apparently specific socio-cultural continuity of the family behaviour, linked on the matter of fact that matrimonies and families of the Hungarian inhabitants were characteristic, compared to the others with longstanding instability (Guráň, 1992).

Region with the mean level of the divorce: Is consisted of three regional units – the region of the almost entire western Slovakia, after it 3 districts on the northern Slovakia – Ružomberok, Liptovský Mikuláš, Poprad and 2 districts in the eastern Slovakia – Michalovce and Trebišov. In the field of the reproductive and of the family behaviour is shown trend of the more smoothed-out development. Partly, there are still maintaining impacts of the conventional values and norms, adhered firmly on the cultural and the religious traditions of the population in the given area.

Region with a low level of the divorce: is constituted of two regional units, first in the north of Slovakia – Orava, Kysuce districts, and the second regional unit is represented by the Spiš, Šariš and North Zemplin districts. These districts are largely situated in the north and east of Slovakia. Almost in all cases it is related the areas being less developed in the past, and also today these regions are prevailingly economically underdeveloped. Demographical behaviour of the population is relatively strongly affected by the religiousness, what is reflected also in the marriage, and the family behaviour. Divorce is acceptable solution of the matrimonial causes just in the extreme.

5. Important changes in the abortion processes

Incorporation of the abortion processes into the tasks related to the family forming, and the family behaviour may cause specific controversial thoughts. On the one hand it is true, that the abortion is exceeding framework of the family and is concerning of the wider population sphere. On the other hand, however, 65% occurrence of the artificial abortions are accomplished on married women, accordingly it is regarding the family. Naturally, the abortion process herewith impacts also the fertility rate and the family reproduction rate.

Peculiarity of the long-term development of abortion is the growth of their numbers. While in the fiftieth of the last century their number had not exceeded figure 10 thousand per year, gradually increased up to 30 thousand in early 1980s. Such development was connected with the gradual liberalization of the legislation, laying down conditions for the induced abortion. To a certain extent has reflected also some aspects of the social development (woman's self-determination, low level of the birth-control, more free sexual behaviour, application of the model of the less numerous families, etc.). This trend culminated in the late eightieth (upon passing the bill in parliament on induced

abortion, which is not exceeding 12 weeks in the year 1986), and the greatest number of abortions have been recorded in the year 1988, when their number achieved 51 thousand. From that year and forth, development of the abortion has continuously decreasing tendency, what can be considered very positively. It is characterized by decrease of the relative indicators. The crude abortion rate decreased from 10.7 per mille in 1988 to 4.24 in the year 2001. The number of abortions falling on 100 born children decreased from 70.9 in the year 1988 to 44.4 in the year 2001 (Fig. 11).

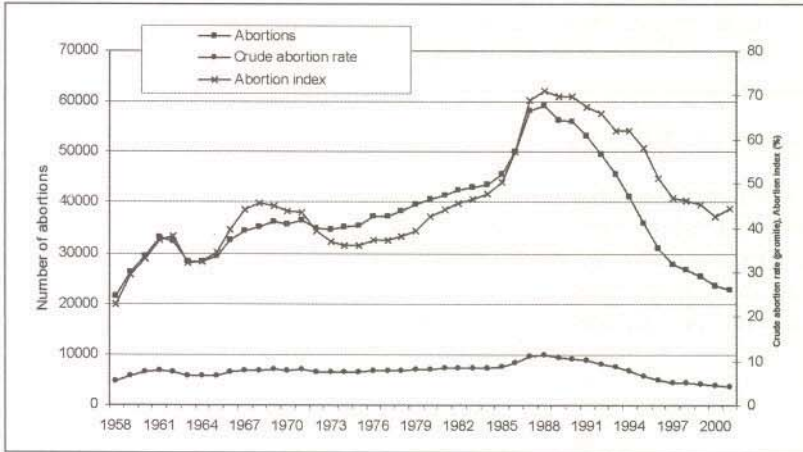


Fig. 11 Development of the abortion in Slovakia (1958–2001)

Just in the last development stage is positively reflected impact of many factors, first of all in regard to enhancement of knowledge, particularly of the young population (sexual education, literature), increasing of the moral pressure against abortions, distribution and availability of the reliable contraceptives.

Such dramatic changes in the abortion intensity implicated changes of other characteristics (parameters) of this process, as well. Induced abortion pursuant to age in the past (up to 1990) characterized a significant maximum in the women's category of 24–25 years. In the 1990s, except the fact of the abortion decreases within all age categories, the abortion level became even, any significant maximum is missing. It appears that there is a small feed in the maximum levels of abortion up to the higher age categories, particularly into the age category of 25–30 (Fig. 12).

The abortion is being found in very complicated relations with many economic, social and demographic spatial appearances. This is reflected also in the regional model of the abortion at the Slovakian districts level, which is a little bit complicated.

The low level of the abortion (determining relevance was assigned to values of the abortion index) characterizes two big regions. First of them is situated in the western Slovakia (from the districts Senica, Trnava, Nitra, Zlaté Moravce), continuing through Považie and Horná Nitra up to Kysuce and Orava. In the indicated direction are values of the index decreasing from the level 40–50% to level 15–25%. The second region is extended in the eastern Slovakia, except the Košice-city. Here belong all districts

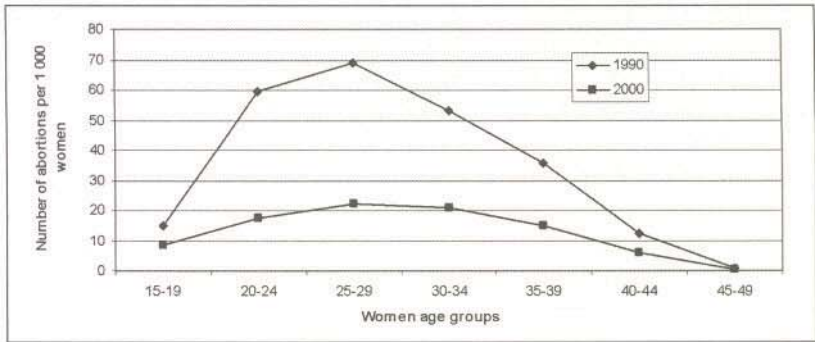


Fig. 12 Induced abortion by age (1990, 2000)

on the line Poprad, Spišská Nová Ves, Gelnica, Košice-okolie of the city. Intensity of the abortion achieves a relatively higher level in the southern parts (40–50%) and is decreasing in the northern districts (15–25%). In other parts of Slovakia, in particular in the southern districts of the western and, in a major part of the middle Slovakia is level of the abortion rate considerably higher (abortion index 50–75%) (Fig. 13).

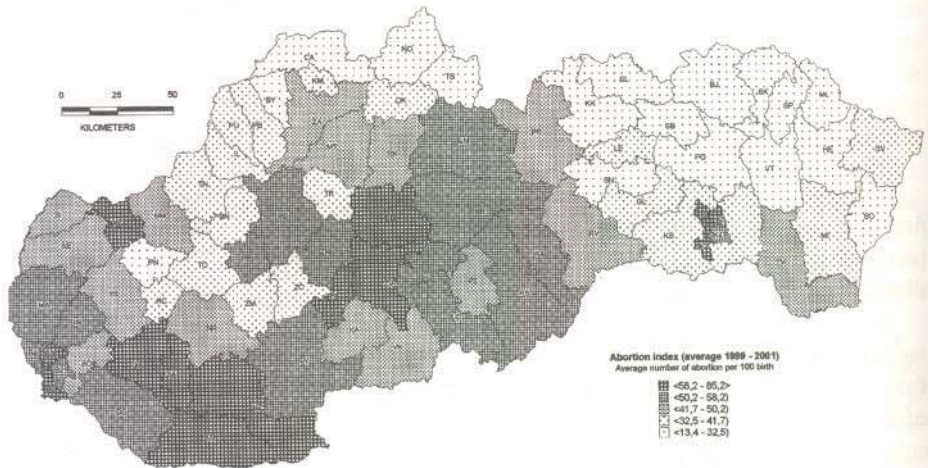


Fig. 13 Abortion in Slovakia (1999–2001)

6. Conclusion

Recently, the traditional model of the family behaviour in Slovakia is changing. Original type of the nuclear family is indeed a dominant form of this society, but at the same time we observe an advance in growth of the factual marriages, an extramarital fertility increased as well. Markedly is preferred model of the family with one child, fertility rate within the higher orders has a down trend.

Besides, changing is also the traditional model of the early nuptiality, and increasingly more signs are indicating the transition to the late nuptiality model. A crude marriage rate has noticed a sudden fall, what is implication neither the long-term trends, nor influences of the negative consequences of the social transformation. The average age of the engaged couples, as well as the women's average age at first marriage is slightly increasing although it is still markedly lower, than it is in the high developed countries.

Certain conservative approach in the family behaviour was manifested in the relatively low divorce rate. Recently, several divorce rates have shown a slight increase. The momentous characteristic is growth of the average divorce age, growth of the average duration of the marriage, and decrease in number of divorces in families with higher number of the children.

Peculiarity of the abortion lies in sudden fall of interruptions within recent 15 years. Here are reflected impacts of the growing knowledge of the young generation, enhancement of the reliable contraception, as well as the moral pressure on interruptions.

Analyses of the mentioned processes have shown a certain spatial differentiation of the family behaviour at the Slovak territory. Provided that these results will be generalized, then there are actual three regional types of the family behaviour. North and eastern part of Slovakia is characterized by the traditional, more conservative type of the family behaviour with relatively higher level of the marriage, lower divorce and low level of the abortion. South-west and south Slovakia with markedly presentation of the urban structures of Bratislava and Košice, are characterized by low level of the marriage, higher level of divorce and of the abortion, and the family behaviour can be considered a liberal. In addition to impacts of the urban environment, in this area is likewise shown influence of the inhabitants higher age structures of those regions. From among these marginal types of the regions it is possible to abstract the areas with various mixed characteristics of the family behaviour.

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