

DIVORCE IN SERBIA

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ABSTRACT: *This article analyzes the divorce issue in Serbia in the second half of the 20th century. Divorce is examined through several basic indicators: the legal basis of divorce and the laws, on which it is based, the manner in which the laws are implemented in practice, the divorce rate, as well as the causes and consequences of divorce.*

Key words: *Serbia, divorce, woman's legal position, marriage*

In Serbia after World War Two, binding civil marriages based on the laws of the socialist state meant that church marriages became meaningless. Divorce gradually became completely liberalized. The Founding Law on Marriage in 1946 abolished and replaced all hitherto existing laws on marriage. Constitutional and legal provisions changed a woman's legal position in marriage and liberated her from the husband's domination in the eyes of the law.¹ Equal rights were established for men and women with regards to their children. The law dictated that husbands and wives were jointly responsible for their children's upbringing and education.² Children from broken or invalid marriages received the same

¹ There have been big changes in the very field of the legal position of married women and the regulation of marital and family relations compared to legal practice and laws that applied until World War 2. The inequality of women's position, based on certain provisions within Serbian civil law, was annulled. Equality was a value promoted as far back as the first post-war Constitution. In principle, it guaranteed women's legal equality. Through other laws and normative acts, those rights were more deeply enshrined and developed. Vera Gudac Dodić, *Women in Socialism*, Belgrade, 2006.

² Founding Law on Marriage, *Official Gazette FNRY*, April 9, 1946, article 6.

rights as children born in wedlock.³ Some time later, under other laws, the same rules were applied to children born out of wedlock.⁴

Laws were enacted regulating conditions for divorce, including the right to divorce by mutual consent.⁵ The Founding Law on Marriage continued to be adapted following the enactment of republic normative provisions. At the time, a law was passed stipulating that property belonging to one spouse before marriage would be returned to him or her in its entirety in the event of the marriage collapsing. This applied to property bequeathed to the spouse during marriage or given as a gift. All other property acquired during marriage was considered to be jointly owned, with the establishment of a category for jointly acquired property. In the event of divorce, a couple would divide jointly-owned property according to their individual contribution to the marriage. The size of this contribution depended on a number of things, including „the earnings of each spouse“, although other factors were taken into account such as household jobs, and the maintenance and increase in value of jointly-owned property etc.⁶

The conditions for ending a marriage were liberally defined, as, among other things, divorce was permitted in cases where „owing to personality clashes, lasting animosity, insurmountable enmity or any other reason, marital relations are so impaired that living together has become unbearable for the spouse“. ⁷ The divorce procedure was simplified by this law, and particularly by the subsequently enacted Law on Marriage and Family Relations.⁸ It was launched by one or other spouse filing a suit, or via a proposal for a mutual separation.

By monitoring legislative changes, it can be noted that the Founding Law on Marriage was more restrictive in regard to divorce than the Law on Marriage and Family Relations, while the full liberalization of divorce and the act by which a marriage is terminated was realized through the clauses of LMFR.

Extra-marital and marital union was brought into line in terms of rights to mutual maintenance, though only in cases where no marital hindrances had existed when the extra-marital union had been formed. Upon termination of an extra-marital union between a man and a woman, each party could, under the conditions stipulated by law, claim their right to financial support from the other. They could only claim this right if the extra-marital union had lasted a long time,

³ Founding Law on Marriage, articles 38 and 52.

⁴ The 1947 Founding Law on Relations between Parents and Children established the principle that parents had the same commitments and responsibilities towards children born in and out of wedlock. Neda Božinović, *Women's' Issues in Serbia in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Belgrade, 1996, p. 157.

⁵ The district courts were the competent body for all marital disputes and divorces.

⁶ Founding Law on Marriage, article 10.

⁷ Founding Law on Marriage, article 56.

⁸ Law on Marriage and Family Relations, *Official Gazette FRY*, nos. 22/80 and 11/88.

or they had had children together. The Law on Marriage and Family Relations does not stipulate the exact meaning of the phrase, „the union lasted a long time“, but leaves it to judicial practice to decide. There is a standpoint in legal literature that a long-lasting extra-marital union cannot be accepted if it did not last longer than five years, while others believe that that time period should be no less than three years.⁹

Legal provisions regulating marriage and family relations in the second half of the 20th century generally showed the legislator's intention to take care of the interests of the child first and foremost in the event of divorce. Under the Law on Disputes over a Child's Custody and Education, it is the court's duty to rule on their maintenance.

Parents earning a permanent monthly salary had to pay maintenance of a minimum 15 percent of that income for every child, though they were not obliged to hand over more than 50 percent of their overall monthly income or salary. The courts are obliged to settle alimony cases without delay.¹⁰ Besides children, spouses who are unable to work find employment, or who do not have sufficient funds to survive are also entitled to receive maintenance.

However, enforcing the law is a different matter altogether.

Practice has shown that in the majority of cases, the mother is granted custody of the child, whereupon they encounter numerous problems, even once the courts have ruled that they are entitled to maintenance. Certain authors are entirely justified in viewing this as „a discriminatory practice and a particular form of economic suppression of women, in spite of the legislator's intentions.“¹¹ Everyday life reveals discrimination of divorced women and children from broken marriages, even though the law prohibits it.

Divorce suits can last a long time, and the process of property division can take years. During and after divorce, women have faced problems that have „slipped through“ the Law on Marriage and Family Relations.

Children over the age of 15 could decide themselves which parent to live with, though the court was obliged to ascertain the child's opinion in all cases.

Statistical indicators show that custody of children tends to be granted to the mother after divorce. Such practice has existed throughout the post-war period, in stark contrast to the days of pre-war Serbian civil law. In Yugoslavia in the early Sixties, women were awarded custody in 71.1% of cases, and men 22.2%; in the mid-Sixties, the figure fell to 69.9% compared to 23.7% in favor of women;

⁹ Dr. Ilija Babić, *Commentary on the Law on Marriage and Family Relations*, Belgrade, 1999, p. 336.

¹⁰ S. Ćopić, B. Grupković, G. Lazić, L. Dobrosavljević-Grujić, *Women in Serbia. Are we Discriminated against*, Belgrade, 2001, p. 47.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 48.

in the early Seventies, the ratio had risen to 72.5% against 21.5%.¹² Indicators relating to Serbia back this up. Following divorce, women were awarded custody in over 70% of cases, and in some years, over 80%.¹³

During the overall post-war period, divorced women and children from broken marriages suffered discrimination. Surveys carried out in certain companies, centre for social work etc. show that a high proportion of divorced women did not receive maintenance for their children. In the early Sixties, of 90 divorced women surveyed, 60 had not received child maintenance from their former husbands, even though, by law, they were obliged to pay alimony.¹⁴ The survey carried out by the Centre for Social Work in Belgrade included around 200 children. In most cases, parents did not pay any alimony (65% of cases). Only a quarter of parents paid regularly (25% of cases). Around 8% of parents paid alimony periodically and irregularly. Among those parents that did not pay any alimony, most said that they did not do so because the other parent had not asked for it (around 43% of cases). Some parents did not wish to pay any maintenance (around 31%), while others were financially unable to do so, as they were unemployed (around 26%).

The figures was even poorer when it came to divorced parents that had agreed over schooling, upbringing, medical care and other issues linked to children's welfare. Only 3.5% of parents had consulted and agreed over those details. Children very rarely got to see the other parent. It is a shocking fact that as many as 48% of parents – in other words, almost one in two - never got to see their children. The parent that lost custody of their child only spent the summer holidays with their child in 5% of cases. The results of the survey showed that parents who had lost custody of their child after divorce lost virtually all interest in them.¹⁵

Cases of dodging maintenance payments were very common. There were instances when the party responsible for making payments would leave his job just to avoid meeting his responsibilities to his children.¹⁶

At a symposium held at the Belgrade District Court during the mid-Sixties on the material circumstances of children from broken marriages and those born out of wedlock, it was found that only 25% of parents regularly paid child maintenance. Alimony suits were slow and could take months. Courts rarely

¹² *The Woman in Society and the Economy of Yugoslavia, Statistical Bulletin 788*, Belgrade, 1973, p. 21. Indicators are shown for 1961, 1966 and 1970.

¹³ S. Čopić, B. Grupković, G. Lazić, L. Dobrosavljević-Grujić, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹⁴ Belgrade Historical Archive (IAB), Conference on Women's Social Activity, vol. 4, Transcript from founding conference on women's social activities, held on November 10, 1961.

¹⁵ IAB, Conference..., vol. 5, Problems for children from broken marriages, City of Belgrade Institute for the Study of Social Problems, December 1962.

¹⁶ IAB, Conference..., vol. 4, Information on problems for women in agriculture and the Belgrade foodstuffs industry, 1961.

applied temporary measures and rarely collected evidence of parents' personal income, even though they were obliged to do so. Cooperation between the courts and centre's for social work was very poor.¹⁷

Single parents came up against numerous problems. The most common were, as they are today, those of housing, unemployment, and unpaid alimony by the other parent, in spite of the fact that parents who fail to make alimony payments could face prison sentences of several months.¹⁸

Divorce was, on the whole, unpopular during the first half of the 20th century. In those pre-modern societies where the choice of partner was influenced by the parents and the interests of various familial and social groups, it was hard to get divorced.¹⁹

There were relatively few divorces in Serbia prior to World War Two. Patriarchal families and social relations favoured marriage and the durability of this institution.

Only one in five marriages ended in divorce.²⁰

In patriarchal environments and in places where the church's influence was dominant, marriage stability was greater. In the early Twenties, only 4.28% of marriages ended in divorce nationwide, rising to 5.57% in 1934. In Belgrade during the Thirties, the figure was twice as high, so that by the end of the decade in 1939, the divorce rate in the capital had risen to 16.36%.²¹

According to certain sources, divorce in pre-war Serbia was justified only in cases where no children were involved. Children were the essence and point of marriage, and everything else could be tolerated. Divorces were rare. However, there are other sources that offer a different viewpoint, and which uncover various reasons why, and ways in which, marriages ended in divorce. Abuse of the

¹⁷ IAB, Conference..., vol. 5, Conclusions from symposium at Belgrade District Court held on September 29, 1965 on the theme of the material circumstances of children from broken marriages and those born out of wedlock.

¹⁸ V. Pavićević, „The Troubles of Single Parents“, *Politika*, February 10, 2008.

¹⁹ Anđelka Milić, *Sociology of the Family*, Belgrade, 2001, p. 128.

²⁰ According to data from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' Religion Ministry, the majority of marriages were terminated „to the woman's disadvantage. In the parish of Belgrade in 1920, 11,901 marriages were concluded. 177 of them were terminated „to the woman's disadvantage,“ 81 „to the man's disadvantage,“ and 45 „to the disadvantage“ of both spouses. In the parish of Braničevo, 6,921 marriages were concluded. 53 were terminated „to the woman's disadvantage,“ 20 „to the man's disadvantage,“ etc. That year in the parish of Žiča, there were 7,441 marriages concluded and 98 terminated. In 1925, there were 4,192 marriages, 472 divorces, and 770 common law marriages among 427,155 Orthodox believers. Serbia and Montenegro Archives, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' Religion Ministry, 69-11-26-34, 69-183-295-296 and 60-152-231.

²¹ Predrag J. Marković, „Sexuality between the Private and the Public“, *The Private Life of Serbs in the 20th Century*, Clio, 2007, p. 110.

wife by the husband and his family, alcoholism, and other factors sometimes led to divorce.²²

In the second half of the 20th century in certain countries, divorce and the process of terminating marriages were simplified, and it was often no more than a formality. That was the case in places where marriages were a matter of personal choice.²³ In others, such as Italy until the Seventies, there was an explicit intolerance of divorce, though such countries were few and far between.²⁴

Despite all the changes brought about by the system of the new social order, ruling ideology and promotion of different values in many spheres of life, marriage remained an unavoidable framework of founding a family and the most widely accepted way of living together. With all the transformation that went on within the family, marriage survived, and on comparatively large scale too. More than two thirds of men and women over 15 concluded marriage. On the other hand, modernization measures of the socialist state, legal equality of men and women, broader education and prolonged schooling of all, and of female population in particular, as well as the increased economic independence of women based on the fact that the percentage of employed women was much higher than before, affected significantly her status. Economic independence, higher level of education and emancipation of women, nuclearization of the family, possibility of birth-control etc, were only some of the factors which made divorce easier and contributed to the increased frequency of divorces.

An absence of apportioning blame in divorce cases, enshrined within the laws of the socialist state, was one of the factors impacting on the relatively high divorce rate.

The number of divorces in Serbia and Montenegro rose, with certain fluctuations from the mid-fifties until the eighties. 10,620 divorces were registered in the mid-fifties, 10,698 in the Sixties, 11,222 in the Seventies, and 12,287 in the mid-eighties.²⁵

In different parts and regions of Serbia, the divorce rate was not identical, and nor were these differences negligible. In Belgrade, as well as in other cities, the divorce rate was higher than in rural areas.

²² Aleksandra Pavičević, „Marital and Family Life“, *The Private Life of Serbs in the 20th Century*, p. 69.

²³ A. Milić, *op. cit.*, p. 128. It is interesting that in America, the divorce rate is rising year in, year out. For example, 30% of couples that married in the Fifties have since got divorced. There was a 50% chance of divorce for those marrying during the Seventies, and as much as 67% for those couples marrying during the Nineties. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, Belgrade, 2005, p. 123.

²⁴ A. Milić, *op. cit.*

²⁵ *Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia 2000*, Belgrade, 2000, p. 72, Natural Movement of the Population, *ibid*, p. 57.

The numbers of divorces per 100 marriages in the capital were: 1952–18; 1953–27; 1954–30; 1955–29; 1956–32; 1957–33; 1958–31; 1959–30; 1960–33; 1961–29.²⁶

The number of divorces fell markedly during the Nineties. So, in 1994 there were only 7,005 compared to 12,287 in 1985. Over the course of the next few years, the number of divorces stabilized at around 7,900.²⁷

In Serbia, the annual ratio of divorces to marriages oscillated, although, with certain fluctuations, grew gradually until the Eighties. In the last decade of the 20th century, the number of divorces fell, and the divorce rate was relatively low. In Serbia in 1987, the divorce rate per 1,000 of the population was 1.2, falling to 0.7 ten years later.²⁸

It is possible to express this fall in another manner. Of 1,000 marriages in Serbia, not including the autonomous regions, in the latter half of the Fifties, there were just over 170 divorces. The ratio of divorces to marriages fluctuated in subsequent years, between 160 and 176. In 1994, there were 144 divorces to every 1,000 marriages.²⁹

There are a number of reasons for this. At a time when a large section of the population was experiencing severe poverty, when two weeks pay was barely sufficient to satisfy a family's most basic needs, and when the bulk of one's wages was spent on feeding family members—not to mention those who were on a forced sabbatical, unemployed etc., and families with a large number of children – the main reason for the drop in the divorce rate can be attributed to expected existential uncertainty after divorce. The matter of claiming and receiving the legal right to child maintenance further highlighted this problem. The fact that some married couples continued co-habiting even after divorce not only indicates the lengthy procedure involved in dividing property between spouses,³⁰ but is also an indication of how difficult it was to find alternative lodging at the time. Besides economic constraints, one other socio-psychological factor had a bearing on the fall in divorces – the reliance on the family in times of crisis, strengthening family ties, and bolstering the perception of the family as a bastion.

²⁶ IAB, Conference on Women's Social Activities 1962–66, volume 5, Problems of Children from Broken Marriages.

²⁷ In 1995 there were 7,962 divorces; 1996–7,896; 1997–7,947; and 1998–7,874. *Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia 2000*, p. 72.

²⁸ *Demographic Statistics 1997*, Belgrade, 1999, p. 58; S. Ćopić, B. Grupković, G. Lazić, L. Dobrosavljević-Grujić, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²⁹ A. Pavićević, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

³⁰ According to a survey of 194 children from broken marriages in Belgrade in 1962, just over 11% of parents, former spouses continued to co-habit after divorce. IAB, Conference on Women's Social Activities 1962–66, vol. 5, Problems of Children from Broken Marriages.

Over the last few years in Serbia, the ratio of divorces to marriages has started to rise again sharply,³¹ which attests to the fact that in times of crisis, the divorce rate falls, but then rises, as the economy and other factors stabilise. Nowadays, every fourth marriage in the capital ends in divorce and every fifth in Serbia.

In the latter half of the 20th Century, a high proportion of marriages that ended in divorce were childless. The proportion of childless marriages that ended in divorce varied from year to year, though it was usually in between a third to a half of all divorces.

In the majority of divorces, the couple had been married for 15 years or more. That time category is expressed cumulatively, not in stages, as it is up to that time period. In terms of marriage duration, judging by the increased frequency of divorces, the most critical years for a marriage's survival were from the fifth to the ninth.³² In Serbia, marriages last just over 12 years on average.

The average age of men and women at the time of divorce has got ever higher over the last few decades. For men, the figure rose from 33.7 in the early Fifties (1952) to 39.4 in 1997. For women, the figure jumped from an average of 30.5 in the Fifties to 35.9 in the Nineties.³³

There are numerous factors leading to divorce, though the most common are infidelity by one or other spouse, alcoholism, which is frequently accompanied by aggressiveness and violence, and also disagreements or conflict with parents-in-law.

To illustrate this, one can look at the example of the courts, and the factors that, under court rulings in Mladenovac, regulated divorce. The most frequently cited reasons leading to divorce were grouped under the categories, „Serious and permanently ruptured marital relations“ and „Intolerable marital life“. Those categories encompassed a series of factors, above all, discord with the husband's family, the spouse's alcoholism, violence, gambling, and finally, adultery.³⁴

According to findings by psychologists, social workers, and more recently, detectives that have been hired as witness in certain divorce cases, women in Serbia divorce more often because of their mother-in-law, than infidelity or adultery on the part of their husband. According to the president of the Serbian Private Detectives association, divorce proceedings are launched by only a fifth of those who seek the services of detective agencies in search of proof of their

³¹ 208 divorces per 1000 marriages were recorded in Serbia, without Vojvodina and Kosovo, in 2004. Aleksandra Pavićević, „Marital and Family Life“, *The Private Life of Serbs in the 20th Century*, p. 92.

³² *Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia*, p. 72.

³³ *Demographic Statistics 1997*, p. 141. Since 2000, the average age of males at divorce has been getting higher and exceeds 40, and since 2001, 41. The average age of females at divorce is also on the rise, and since 2000 has exceeded 37. *Politika*, February 10, p. 13.

³⁴ A. Pavićević, *op. cit.*, p. 92, 93.

husbands' infidelity, and whose suspicions prove well-founded. According to the same sources, adultery is usually committed by those individuals whose professions presuppose a large number of social contacts, such as doctors, pilots, various managers etc.³⁵

Domestic violence is the fundamental reason why women launch divorce proceedings, claim staff at one of Belgrade's centres for social work, and even then only after repeated incidences. Alcoholism is also a frequent cause of divorce, while, as a factor leading to divorce proceedings, infidelity ranks down in third place. Males file for divorce over „clashes of personality,“ and because of interference and meddling in marital life on the part of the wife's parents.³⁶

According to other data and experiences from the Centre for Social Work in Šabac, during the Nineties, infidelity was down in fourth place as a cause of divorce, while it is in first place in the 21st century. Experience at the Centre for Social Work in this town indicates that this factor leads to marriage break-ups between young people primarily.³⁷

Certain psychologists' professional experience indicates that one of the factors leading to divorce is cohabitation between parents and their children, or, put another way, multi-generational families. A series of problems linked to everyday life often becomes a source of conflict. In cases where the different generations have actually succeeded in attaining a high level of independence, and do not interfere in the others' marriage – this particularly applies to the parents – the birth of a grandchild frequently alters the situation. Then, in practice, non-interference in the marital lives of their children, with whom they live under the same roof, becomes a real rarity. A string of problems open up, primarily regarding parental authority, mixing identification models, a lack of intimacy and familial privacy, rifts between the two generations become pronounced etc.³⁸

However, legal activities on the part of the state, as well as statistical data and average ages pointing to a change in the duration of marriages and the rise in the divorce rate, can in no way reflect the reality and repercussions of the break-up of a marriage. Divorce is undoubtedly one of the most stressful events in one's life, second only to the death of a close family member or loved one. The psychological consequences and aftermath that divorce leaves reflect not only on one's former partner, but also on their parents. It is most traumatic for the children. Although the consequences are never immediately obvious, they can be devastating – especially for very young children, and also children undergoing puberty. Psychologists warn that small children perceive themselves to be the

³⁵ Katarina Đorđević, „Myths about Marriage and Divorce“, *Politika*, February 10, 2008.

³⁶ Tamara Borisavljević from the Center for Social Work in Belgrade attests to this. „The Increasing Number of Divorces in Serbia,“ *Blic*, September 25, 2007.

³⁷ Miroљjub Mijušković, „Jobless, then Later Husband-less“, *Politika*, February, 10, 2008.

³⁸ K. Đorđević, *Opposites Attract, Similarities Stay Together*, *Politika*, February 10, 2008.

main culprits when their parents get divorced, which can leave serious scars, and lead to developmental problems. It is often very difficult to adapt to the new circumstances. Marriage break-ups affect youngsters badly, and it is very hard for children to come to terms with them. Indeed, divorce is a common cause and significant factor in the emergence of numerous complications when it comes to children's emotional and social development.

Some children suffer serious emotional problems long after their parents have divorced. One of the possible explanations for this is the particular importance of the personality traits and characteristics of the parent that has custody of them, in the process of helping the child come to terms with the divorce, „in the sense of their capacities to withhold from the child their frequently negative and ambivalent feelings towards the other parent, and to somehow alleviate this stressful, potentially traumatic situation for the child.“ Particularly susceptible to rejection, children want to rely on the other parent, while, at the same time, fearing that separation will recur.³⁹

The problem of a negative societal reaction to children from broken marriages, which was a feature of patriarchal environments and widespread in days gone by, is generally a thing of the past, at least in urban environments.

Although, in some cases, divorce has meant an escape from „hell“, release from domestic violence—both physical and more often, psychological—divorced women and their children have at times been exposed to various forms of hardship and concealed discrimination.

The number of problems and hardships that arise during divorce, and the amount of conflicts that family members and divorcing spouses are faced with, depends on a multitude of personal and group factors. Sociologists have noted and defined several stages in the divorce process and the readjustment to the new circumstances. These are: „1. Individual realization of the need to get divorced; 2. the family's realization; 3. Systematic separation; 4. Systematic re-organization; 5. Redefinition of the family.“ For all these factors to finish as painlessly as possible, especially for the children, the involvement of various experts, primarily psychologists and social workers is desirable.⁴⁰

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The collapse of the patriarchal society and the decline of the traditional system of social values, together with women's ever increasing independence, both economically and in all other areas, have shaken the stability of marriage to some extent. Among other issues, the ever rising divorce rate, and the emergence of new forms of shared life, extra-marital union etc. should be examined in light of this.

³⁹ Snežana Vidanović, Jelisaveta Todorović, Vladimir Hedrih, *Family and Work, Challenges and Possibilities*, Niš, 2006, p. 84.

⁴⁰ A. Milić, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

Резиме

Развод у Србији

Кључне речи: Србија, развод, законски положај жена, брак

У Србији је после Другог светског рата обавезни грађански брак, утемељен на законима социјалистичке државе, елиминисао значај црквеног брака. Развод је постепено потпуно либерализован. У целом послератном раздобљу после развода деца су најчешће била додељивана мајци, што је упадљива разлика у односу на законску регулативу и праксу у Србији пре Другог светског рата. Многе жене и деца из разведених бракова, међутим, били су суочени са бројним проблемима и изложени дискриминацији, чак и онда када је то закон забрањивао. Случајеви избегавања давања алиментације нису били реткост. Према неким истраживањима спроведеним у центрима за социјални рад, већина родитеља којима деца после развода нису припала губила је интересовање за њих. У Србији је број разведених у односу на број закључених бракова током година имао осцилације. Деведесетих година двадесетог века приметно је смањење броја разведених бракова. У условима свеопште кризе и израженог осиромашења већине становништва, егзистенцијална несигурност, али и појачано психолошко везивање за породицу карактеристично за кризна времена, само су неки од разлога који су допринели смањивању стопе развода брака деведесетих година. У другој половини двадесетог века висок проценат међу разведеним браковима чинили су они у којима није било деце. Просечна старост мушкарца и жене при разводу брака у Србији је у неколико протеклих деценија бивала све већа. Бројни су узроци који су доводили до развода, а најчешћи су неверство брачног партнера, алкохолизам и неретко с њим повезана агресивност и насиље, али и нераумевања и сукоби са родитељима супружника. Развод је свакако један од најстреснијих догађаја у животу, одмах након смрти члана најуже породице и губитка вољене особе. Психолошке последице и неповољни ефекти које је развод остављао, одражавали су се не само на бивше partnere већ и на њихове родитеље. Посебно трауматични били су за децу. Урушавањем патријархалног друштва и слабљењем традиционалног система друштвених вредности, те све већом економском и сваком другом независности жене, делимично је уздрмана стабилност брака. Поред осталог, све учесталије разводе бракова, али и појаву нових форми заједничког живота, ванбрачних заједница итд. требало би сагледати и у том светлу.