

## STRUCTURAL EVOLUTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS ON DIVORCES IN ROMANIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BY RESIDENCE, REGIONS, AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

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**Abstract:** The present study analyzes the evolution of the divorces in Romania over the period 1992-2023, aiming to investigate the social, economic, and cultural factors that have shaped family behaviors and decisions regarding the dissolution of marriages. Using an approach based on official statistical data, the research explores significant differences between urban and rural areas, identifying divergent and convergent trends regarding divorce rates, influenced by modernization, urbanization, and economic crises. The study also examines the impact of economic migration and access to education on family behavior, highlighting how these elements have contributed to structural changes in marriages and divorces in different regions of the country. The analysis focuses on factors such as the age group of spouses, marriage duration, number of minor children, and the geographical structure of divorces, providing a deep understanding of the social dynamics and changes related to the stability of marital relationships. Another important aspect of the research is the evolution of the woman's role in marriage, influenced by increased economic independence and changes in the social perception of marriage. Additionally, regional

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disparities are discussed, varying depending on cultural traditions, urbanization level, and the economic development of counties, as well as common challenges faced by families in different areas of Romania. The study emphasizes the complexity of divorces, offering a comprehensive perspective on current and future trends, as well as the factors that influence marriage and divorce decisions, within a constantly changing social and economic context. The research conclusions will contribute to a deeper understanding of this dynamic phenomenon, as well as to the formulation of public policies better adapted to the contemporary realities of Romanian society.

**Key words:** divorce; territorial disparities of divorces; duration of marriage; age at the time of divorce; minor children remaining after divorce

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## INTRODUCTION

Divorce represents the legal dissolution of a marriage, with significant implications for the individual, family, and society as a whole. In Romania, the phenomenon of divorce has experienced a complex evolution in recent decades, considering the economic, social, and cultural changes in the post-communist period. Over the years, the divorce rate has varied significantly, reflecting the transformations in Romanian society, such as urbanization, internal migration, changes in family structure, and the influence of economic factors like financial crises. In this context, the analysis of divorces in Romania provides an opportunity to better understand the dynamics of couple relationships and their impact on family and social structures.

This study aims to examine the phenomenon of divorces in Romania between 1992 and 2023, a period marked by major economic, political, and cultural transformations. The post-communist period brought significant changes in the perception and behaviours toward marriage and divorce, and this study will focus on analysing the evolution of this phenomenon based on residency areas (urban and rural), counties, age, marriage duration, and the number of minor children. Additionally, the study will explore how various socio-economic factors, such as financial independence, migration, and cultural values, have influenced divorce decisions in different regions of the country.

By utilizing official statistical data and subsequently processing it, this study will allow us to identify the general trends of divorces, as well as the significant differences between various age groups, counties, and residency areas. The impact of various social changes, such as the increased level of education and changes in the status of women, on divorce behaviour will also be analyzed. The study aims to contribute to understanding the factors that shape family behaviours in Romania, thus providing a framework for public policies that support the prevention of divorces and the strengthening of family relationships.

This research has a significant impact, considering the social importance of the institution of marriage and the consequences of divorce on family stability and the community. Understanding the causes and trends of divorces can offer solutions and recommendations for supporting families in preventing this phenomenon and promoting an environment conducive to stable and healthy relationships.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF DIVORCES

Numerous studies conducted on divorces provide a deeper understanding of the evolution and impact of this phenomenon on social, economic, and cultural relationships. The importance of divorce research cannot be underestimated, as divorce is not merely a legal act but also a significant change in the personal lives of individuals and within the broader societal context. In this paper, we will explore various aspects of the importance of studying divorces, ranging from their impact on

individuals to their effects on economic, political, and social structures, as well as the analysis of cultural changes and marital norms.

Divorce represents a major disruption in an individual's life, and the process can have profound consequences on the mental, physical, and financial well-being of those involved. It can lead to feelings of loss and uncertainty, significantly impacting self-perception and identity for those experiencing it. In many cases, divorce can trigger a long-term adaptation process that affects individuals over time, even in the absence of external factors. Additionally, children are often the most vulnerable following a divorce. The impact on them can depend on various factors, including their age, the type of relationship they had with each parent, and the stability of the post-divorce family environment. Studies show that divorce can lead to emotional and psychological challenges for children, manifesting as behavioural issues, learning difficulties, or social adaptation challenges. In this context, researching divorces helps identify factors that can mitigate these effects and create a stable environment for children, even within a divided family. Divorce can also have a significant impact on individuals' interpersonal relationships, often resulting in social isolation, difficulties in forming new relationships, and higher levels of stress. Studies analysing the behaviours and relationships of individuals post-divorce provide valuable insights into how these individuals can be supported in rebuilding their lives and overcoming the social or psychological difficulties that follow divorce (Stupariu & Josan, 2006; Macarie, 2008; Guran-Nica, 2015; Birta, Iftimoaei, & Gabor, 2024).

*The social impact* of divorce not only affects the individuals directly involved but also has a significant influence on the entire social structure. As divorce rates increase in many societies, including Romania, traditional social norms related to marriage and family may undergo changes (Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2008; Hetherington, 2014b; Grant, 2016; Everett, 2021; Drăghici, 2022; Arendell, 2023; Mihăilă, 2023).

In addition to personal effects, divorce can also have a considerable *economic impact*. It can create significant financial instability for both partners and their children. In many cases, women are more economically vulnerable after a divorce, with more limited access to financial resources and a lower economic status compared to men. This is a recurring issue, particularly in contexts where women have traditionally played a primary role in raising children and managing the household. After divorce, they often face the challenge of reintegrating into an economic system where financial independence has not always been a priority (Dnes & Rowthorn, 2002; Grossbard-Shechtman, 2003; Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2008; Andreß & Hummelsheim, 2009; Mihalache, 2010; Everett, 2014; Litra, 2015; Kreyenfeld & Trappe, 2020; Everett, 2021).

The study of divorces is also important from the perspective of *public policy* formulation. In many countries, governments are directly involved in regulating divorces through legislation, as well as in providing support services for those affected divorce (Olaf, 2022). Public policies must address the needs of individuals experiencing this unwanted event, and research can help develop more effective and better-adapted policies for the current context. In this regard, authorities can use the findings of divorce studies to implement pre- and post-divorce education and counselling programs. These programs can help couples make more informed decisions before resorting to separation and provide greater support to those affected by divorce. Additionally, it can contribute to the development of more effective social protection measures for individuals facing economic difficulties after divorce (Trebici, 1994; Dnes & Rowthorn, 2002; Grossbard-Shechtman, 2003; Douglas, 2006; Walker, 2015; Sclater & Piper, 2019; Kreyenfeld & Trappe, 2020; Everett, 2021).

Divorce is also connected to the *legal system*, as it is a process regulated by national and international laws. The study of divorces from a legal perspective is essential for understanding the evolution of legal norms and their impact on the family. The legal system influences decisions related to custody, the division of shared assets, and financial obligations between former spouses (Freeman, 2010; Mareș, 2013; Murphy & Singer, 2015; Nicolae, 2018; Romitan, 2019; Neamț, 2022; Clemente-Diaz, 2022; Neamț, 2023).

Divorce can have a significant impact not only on the individuals separating but also on *intergenerational relationships*. Children, parents, and even grandparents may be affected by the separation of a couple. In many cases, relationships between parents and children can undergo significant changes, and the study of divorces can explore how extended families respond to and adapt to this change (Connidis, 2001; Wolfinger, 2005; Chistruga-Sinchevici, 2009; Izuhara, 2010; Stanciu, 2016; Claster & Blair, 2021).

*Mass media* also plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and reflecting social phenomena. The study of divorces can include an analysis of how the media portrays and influences public perceptions of divorce. Whether through television, films, news, or social networks, messages about divorce can shape how individuals and societies view this phenomenon. Additionally, the media can contribute to educating the public about the rights and responsibilities of those involved in a divorce, as well as its impact on children and the community (Krantzler & Krantzler, 2003; Du Toit, 2019; Benedek & Huettner, 2019; Harlow, 2021; Slotter & Markey, 2021).

*Religion* is a determining factor in many cultures, and religious perspectives on divorce often influence both individual and collective decisions. In many religions, divorce is considered a sin or a last-resort solution. In this context, the study of divorces can include an analysis of religious influence on decisions to divorce and how religious institutions respond to divorces. These perspectives are important for understanding how various individuals and families cope with religious and social pressures, as well as for identifying religious support resources that can help people navigate this process (Efird, 2001; Nichols, 2002; Onedera, 2007; Mayo, 2008; Soroștineanu, 2010; Jenkins, 2014; Marks & Dollahite, 2016; Rutten, Deogratias, & Kruiniger, 2019; Răcilă, 2021)

From a *psychological* perspective, divorce has profound implications for individuals and their interpersonal relationships. Psychological studies on divorce focus on identifying the factors that contribute to the breakdown of relationships and on how individuals adapt after a divorce (Voinea, 2005; Lebow, 2018; Ackerman, Kane, Gould, & Dale, 2020).

Another important aspect of the study of divorces is related to the family transformations that occur in a society marked by a high divorce rate (Cuturela, 1995; Popescu, 2001; Jeynes, 2002; Rotariu, 2003; Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2008; Root & Clark, 2010; Behrendt, 2023). These changes reflect a redefinition of the concept of family, where traditional forms of marriage and parenthood may be replaced by more flexible family structures (Mitrofan, 1995; Smart, Neale, & Wade, 2001; Popescu, 2003; Harvey & Fine, 2004; Demo & Fine, 2010).

Therefore, the study of divorces can help in understanding the social, economic, and cultural changes that are transforming our family and society.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study on divorces in Romania between 1992 and 2023 aims to provide a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, considering factors such as the evolution of divorces based on residency environments (urban and rural), counties, age, duration of marriage, and number of minor children remaining after the dissolution of marriage. The study will use official data and will include both a descriptive analysis of trends and an evaluation of the factors that influenced the increase or decrease in divorce rates. This approach will involve a quantitative analysis based on official statistical data and, possibly, secondary data.

The main goal of the study is to understand the trends and factors that have influenced divorces in Romania, with specific objectives including analysing data based on residency environments (urban and rural), counties, age groups, duration of marriage, and the number of minor children left after the divorce. The study will include a comparison between regions and examine the socio-economic and demographic influences on divorce frequency.

Data sources will include official databases from the National Institute of Statistics, especially from the POP212A, POP212B, POP212C, POP212D, POP212E, and POP213A sets, which provide detailed information on divorces (INS, 2024). Additionally, annual reports and

previous research will be used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the divorce phenomenon in Romania.

The study analyses data from the period 1992-2023, taking into account that significant changes occurred in Romania's social and economic structure during this interval. The study period will include both general trend analyses and examinations of factors that have caused fluctuations in divorce numbers, such as urbanization, migration, and changes in legislation.

The units of analysis include residency environments (urban and rural), counties, age and gender groups, duration of marriage, and number of minor children. Each of these dimensions will be evaluated to identify patterns and differences in divorce behaviours, and the data will be correlated to uncover significant relationships between various variables. The influence of economic and social factors on divorces will also be analyzed.

Data collection will be based on the aforementioned official sources, and the data will be processed and interpreted to ensure their quality and consistency. After processing, statistical analyses will be applied to highlight correlations between the variables of interest. Descriptive analysis will include tables and graphs to present the evolution of divorces over time, while comparative analysis will identify significant differences between counties and regions. Regression will also be used to explore the relationships between various variables.

Among the measurement tools will be statistical indicators such as the divorce rate, divorce structure by residency environments and counties, and more detailed analyses based on age and number of children. The analysis will rely on statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R, Excel) to perform complex analyses such as regressions and correlations and to extract meaningful conclusions from the collected data.

The stages of the study will include first collecting and organizing the data, followed by processing to remove any errors. After the statistical analysis, the results will be interpreted in the context of social, economic, and cultural factors. Finally, the study will include a detailed report presenting the conclusions and recommendations for public policies in the fields of family, education, and marital counseling.

The study's limitations will include possible data gaps or errors in secondary sources, and external factors such as economic crises and legislative changes may influence divorce trends during a specific period. However, the study will aim to identify relevant determinants and propose solutions to support couples in preventing divorces and addressing emerging social needs.

### **DIVORCES IN ROMANIA. DYNAMICS BY AREAS OF RESIDENCE**

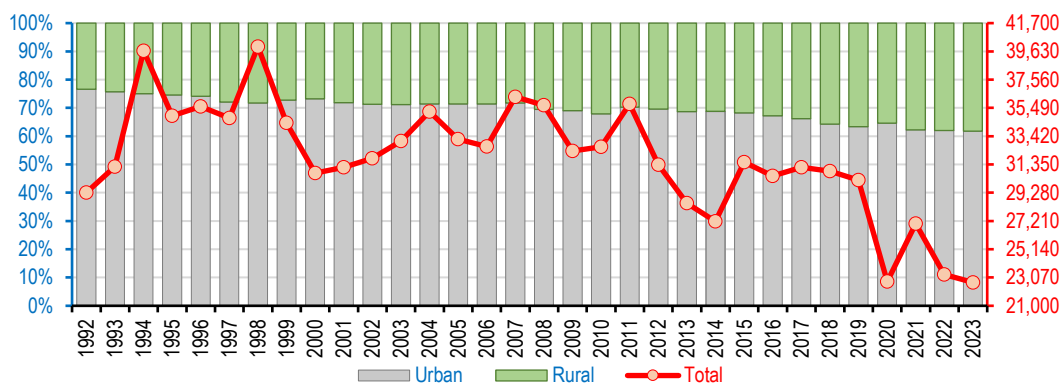
Divorces are an important indicator of family and social dynamics, reflecting structural changes in society and how these impact family relationships. The analysis of the divorces number evolution in Romania between 1992 and 2023, differentiated by residency environments (urban and rural), highlights relevant trends regarding their distribution, associated factors, and social implications. This study focuses on identifying extreme indicators, both in terms of total number of divorces and their share according to residence, in order to better understand these phenomena.

During the analyzed period, the total number of divorces in Romania experienced significant fluctuations, influenced by factors such as economic, social, and legislative changes. In 1998, the maximum number of divorces was 39,985, marking a period of economic and social instability in the context of the post-communist transition. In contrast, in 2020, the lowest number of divorces was recorded, with 22,785, which can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which created difficulties in legal procedures, as well as economic and social pressures on families.

In general, the number of divorces has shown a gradual decrease in the last two decades, which may reflect either a change in attitudes toward marriage or a trend toward increased stability in family relationships. Additionally, in the context of demographic changes, the smaller number of marriages and a declining birth rate have contributed to the reduction in the incidence of divorces.

*Divorces in urban residency.* During the analyzed period, the urban residency dominated in terms of the number of divorces, reflecting the complex influences of modernization, urbanization,

and cultural changes. In 1992, urban divorces accounted for 76.6% of the total, marking the highest proportion. This dominance can be attributed to the social and economic transformations after 1989, when cities were the first to experience the structural changes of the market economy. Increased unemployment, housing instability, and political and economic adjustments created a tense climate within families, leading to a higher incidence of divorces. The maximum number of urban divorces was reached in 1998, with 28,702 cases, highlighting the impact of the economic crisis of that period. Large cities, such as Bucharest or Cluj-Napoca, were the epicentres of these transformations, and families here faced major financial pressures, which exacerbated couple conflicts. Moreover, the urban residency, by its nature, was more receptive to cultural changes and offered greater social acceptance of divorce compared to rural residency. Over time, the share of urban divorces gradually decreased, reaching 61.8% in 2023, the lowest value in the analyzed period (14,041 cases). This reduction is explained by several factors, including the migration of the active urban population to rural areas or abroad, the increase in informal cohabitation, and the decrease in the number of marriages in the urban environment. Additionally, better access to education and marital counselling contributed to the stabilization of couple relationships in certain segments of the urban population (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Divorces by living environment in Romania during the period 1992-2023  
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

*Divorces in rural residency.* In contrast to the urban residency, divorces in the rural residency initially had a lower share but showed a significant upward trend over time. In 1992, only 6,847 divorces occurred in the rural environment, accounting for 23.4% of the total. This low percentage reflects the traditional characteristics of rural life: greater economic dependence between partners, stronger social control exerted by the community, and greater stigmatization of divorce. During this period, most rural families relied on agricultural labour or extended family support, which discouraged legal separation. Starting in the 2000s, divorces in the rural residency began to increase significantly, both in absolute numbers and as a share. The highest number of rural divorces was recorded in 2008, with 10,879 cases, marking a turning point in the dynamics of this phenomenon. This increase can be explained by several structural changes, such as rural modernization, better access to legal services, and greater economic independence of women. Additionally, the mass migration of the active population to other countries led to physical separations, which favored the dissolution of families. The share of rural divorces continued to rise, reaching 38.2% in 2023 (8,674 cases), indicating a significant reduction in the urban-rural gap. This evolution reflects a transformation of values and norms in the rural residency, with wider access to education and technology, as well as a diversification of economic opportunities, allowing partners to become more financially and socially independent (Figure 1).

*The ratio between urban residency and rural residency divorces.* The ratio between urban and rural divorces underwent significant changes over the analysed period, indicating a gradual

convergence of family behaviours between the two environments. In the early years of the post-communist transition, the differences were very marked, with urban divorces accounting for nearly three-quarters of the total. In 1992, the urban-rural ratio was about 3:1, reflecting a society still strongly divided culturally and economically. This initial discrepancy can be explained by the traditional structure of rural communities, where divorce was rarely accepted, as well as by the economic differences between the two environments. Urban areas, more dynamic and exposed to rapid changes, were much more prone to marital instability, while rural areas remained anchored in conservative values. However, over time, the ratio between divorces in the two environments became more balanced, as social values and practices in rural areas modernized. In 2023, divorces in the rural residency accounted for 38.2%, the highest level in the entire period. This evolution can be attributed to factors such as equal access to education and information, as well as economic changes that reduced the familial dependence between partners. Moreover, international migration and the situation of some families returning to rural areas contributed to the introduction of modern values, which redefined family structure and dynamics. This urban-rural convergence highlights a broader change in Romanian society, where cultural and economic differences between the two environments are becoming increasingly blurred. However, this trend also points to common challenges, such as the rising instability of families and the need for adapted social policies to support vulnerable families in both environments (Figure 1).

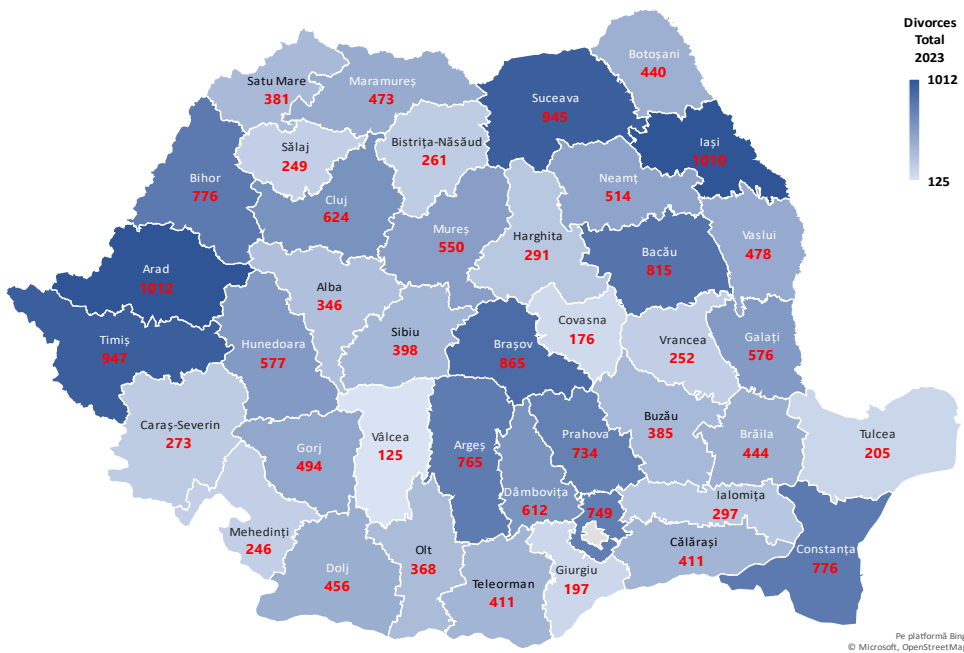
### **TERRITORIAL DISPARITIES IN DIVORCES IN ROMANIA**

Between 1992 and 2023, the dynamics of divorce in Romania show significant variations across counties and regions, shaped by factors such as the level of urbanization, cultural traditions, ethnic structure, and local economic dynamics. Analysing the evolution of divorces at the regional level provides a deeper perspective on the demographic and social differences within Romania, highlighting how various local factors influence the decision to separate and the stability of marriages.

*Highly urbanized and economically developed regions (Bucharest, Ilfov, Timiș, Cluj).* In these counties, the divorce rate is significantly higher than in other regions. For example, Bucharest, where the divorce rate is among the highest, is marked by a constant frequency of divorces over the years. Contributing factors here include the financial independence of partners, low pressure from traditional social norms, and greater acceptance of divorce. In Bucharest, for instance, the post-communist transition period saw a significant number of divorces, with a peak reached in 1994. This was a time when economic instability and rapid social transformations led to a reevaluation of personal priorities, resulting in a separations' increment. In the counties of Cluj and Timiș, rapid economic development and the attractiveness of young people from across the country of these areas had similar effects. The 2000s and the period following Romania's EU integration brought economic opportunities and growing careers for the urban population. In this context, economic independence, especially among women, and changes in social values led to an increase in divorces. In Cluj, for example, a peak in divorces was recorded in 2008, during the global economic crisis, which added additional stress to marital relationships (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with strong ethnic homogeneity and traditional values (Harghita, Covasna).* The counties of Harghita and Covasna, predominantly inhabited by the Hungarian ethnic population, have some of the lowest divorce rates in the country. Here, communities are characterized by strong cultural and religious norms that support marital stability and discourage divorce. The low number of divorces in these counties can be explained by social pressure to maintain marriages and the central role of the extended family, which provides emotional and financial support. For example, in Harghita County, the divorce rate has remained relatively constant over the past decades, with no significant increases even during economic crises, suggesting strong cultural resistance to external social changes. Moreover, the influence of the Church and traditional values is more pronounced here, making divorce perceived as a last resort (Figure 2-3).

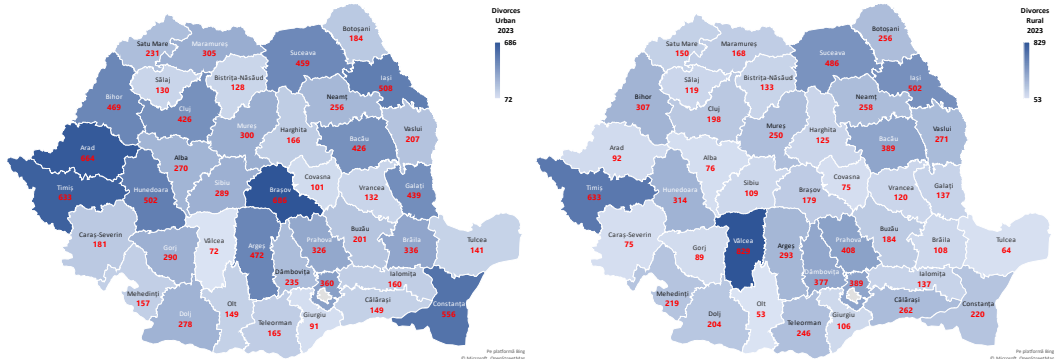
*Regions affected by economic migration and workforce exodus (Moldova, Oltenia).* The counties in Moldova and Oltenia, such as Bacău, Vaslui, and Dolj, have been strongly affected by economic migration, with many residents choosing to work abroad to financially support their families left behind. This geographical separation between spouses has contributed to an increase in divorce rates in these regions, as physical distance and long-term separation have led to tensions and misunderstandings. In Bacău County, for example, the divorce rate was notably high between 1998 and 2000, coinciding with the early years of workforce exodus abroad. Also, in the context of economic hardship, divorce appears as an option to overcome financial difficulties or as a consequence of changes in family dynamics. Similarly, Dolj County recorded increased divorce rates, as many residents who left for abroad struggled to maintain family relationships due to the lack of economic stability and physical distance (Figure 2-3).



**Figure 2.** Territorial disparities in divorces in Romania in 2023  
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

*Emerging urban areas and tourism (Brașov, Constanța, Sibiu).* In the counties of Brașov, Constanța, and Sibiu, economic development and the explosion of the tourism industry have attracted an increasing number of young people who settled in these areas for employment opportunities. While tourism and economic development bring prosperity, they also introduce a more permissive culture regarding personal relationships. In Constanța, for example, the number of divorces peaked between 2008 and 2011, during the years of the global economic crisis, but also a period of growing tourism and seasonal migration. In Brașov, a city recognized as a cultural and economic hub, divorces are also influenced by a more cosmopolitan population exposed to modern values that support independence and personal fulfilment. Furthermore, in Sibiu, a city with a strong cultural orientation and significant ethnic diversity, external influences and more liberal standards contribute to the acceptance of divorce as a solution for unstable relationships (Figure 2-3).





**Figure 3.** Territorial disparities in divorces in urban (left) și rural (right) areas of Romania in 2023  
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

*Rural areas and less economically developed regions (Teleorman, Giurgiu).* In the counties of Teleorman and Giurgiu, the predominance of a less developed economy and rural communities influences the low divorce rates. In these areas, the extended family plays a central role in supporting and maintaining marriages, and divorce is often avoided due to social pressure and stigmatization. For example, in Teleorman, the divorce rate has been among the lowest in the country, indicating a conservative tendency to preserve marriages, even in the face of economic difficulties. Additionally, the lack of economic independence for many women in these counties makes separation more difficult to achieve, both for economic and social reasons. Thus, the divorce rate remains low in these regions, where traditions and community norms play an important role in influencing marital decisions (Figure 2-3).

*Mountain regions and isolated tourist areas (Maramureș, Suceava, Caraș-Severin).* In the mountainous counties and more isolated regions, such as Maramureș, Suceava, and Caraș-Severin, divorces are rarer, but trends have evolved interestingly in recent years. These counties are characterized by a concentration of population in mountainous areas, where traditions are deeply rooted and religious and family norms remain very strong. In Maramureș, for example, divorce is rarer, mainly due to the religious influence and the dominant role of the extended family in everyday life. However, in the last two decades, certain localities have started to record an increase in divorces, especially among young people aged 25 to 35, as a result of migration to cities for better-paid jobs. Another important factor is tourism in the mountain regions, which brings a diversification of lifestyles and greater exposure to liberal values, potentially influencing personal life decisions. Also, in counties such as Suceava, which has significant cultural diversity due to Ukrainian, Polish, and Hungarian influences, divorces may be more frequent among young people who choose to leave these isolated areas in search of economic opportunities elsewhere in the country or abroad (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with a young and student population (Iași, Timișoara, Brașov).* Counties with a high concentration of young people, students, and young professionals, such as Iași, Timișoara, and Brașov, are characterized by a relatively high divorce rate. These cities are major university centers, where young people from all over the country and abroad gather for studies and careers. The diversity of lifestyle options, a greater openness to progressive values, and the possibility of building stable careers contribute to a more permissive perception of divorce. In these regions, divorce may be influenced by the desire for personal fulfilment and changes in life priorities, especially when partners have achieved economic independence and are exposed to more liberal social norms. For example, in Timișoara, in addition to the large student population, there is also a trend of internal migration of young people from other counties, which may contribute to an increase in divorces, especially among those who marry young and cannot adjust their expectations regarding marital life (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with an elderly population (Vrancea, Botoșani, Giurgiu).* In counties with an older population, such as Vrancea, Botoșani, and Giurgiu, divorces are less frequent, but the phenomenon has become more noticeable in recent years. Although divorce among older individuals was once a rare phenomenon, a more recent trend shows that some elderly individuals who have not adapted to the rapid changes in society choose to divorce, partly due to fatigue, accumulated frustrations, or feelings of isolation. Additionally, in these counties, some divorces may be related to the premature death of partners or retirement in rural areas, where new types of life relationships are formed. In many of these areas, divorce remains a relatively rare choice, often influenced by traditional norms and fewer economic options for the elderly (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with a large immigrant population or strong external influence (Bucharest, Constanța, Iași).* In counties with a large immigrant population or significant external influence, such as Bucharest, Constanța, and Iași, divorces are often linked to cultural and social tensions, as well as the forced migration of some partners to other countries. These counties have recorded an increase in divorces due to the cultural mix, exposure to external lifestyles, and, in particular, the phenomenon of labour migration, which leads to more fragile relationships and an increase in separations. For example, Constanța, with an important international port and a significant migrant worker community from other parts of the world, has seen an increase in divorces, especially among families who live abroad for a period and face difficulties in maintaining long-term relationship stability. Bucharest, another example of diversity and migratory flows, reflects the same trend, with a higher number of divorces recorded among young women from various parts of the world who seek to settle in the capital to build a career (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with an ethnically diverse population (Suceava, Mureș, Harghita, Covasna).* In counties in Romania with an ethnically diverse population, such as Suceava, Mureș, Harghita, and Covasna, divorces can be influenced by cultural and social factors related to the coexistence of different ethnic groups. In these areas, interethnic or mixed marriages are more common, and the phenomenon of divorce can reflect both the challenges of integrating different values and social norms, as well as tensions related to belonging to a particular ethnicity or religion. In Harghita and Covasna counties, where the Hungarian population is predominant, divorces are less frequent, but their occurrence may increase in cases of marriages between different ethnicities, especially in urban areas, where young people are more exposed to external influences. Additionally, in counties with a large ethnic diversity, divorces may also reflect the migration of young families to other parts of the country or abroad, which can lead to relationship instability due to physical distance and the difficulty of adapting to life in a different cultural context (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with a significant presence of religious minorities (Bucovina, Dobrogea).* In regions with religious minorities, such as Bucovina (with an important community of Orthodox and Greek Catholic Christians) and Dobrogea (with a diversity of religions, including Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics), divorces may be influenced by religious traditions and the norms specific to each community. In these counties, divorce may be much rarer in traditional religious families, where religious norms are strictly followed and there is significant social pressure to maintain the marriage. However, in urban areas of these regions, where religious values are more relaxed and where ethnic and religious diversity is more evident, divorces have become more frequent. For example, in large cities, such as Constanța, there is a growing trend of divorces, especially among mixed couples or those who follow more liberal values (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with a population of young people who marry early (Sălaj, Bistrița-Năsăud, Neamț).* In counties in Romania where young people marry at younger ages, such as Sălaj, Bistrița-Năsăud, and Neamț, divorces can be much more common. In these areas, early marriages are more frequent, and this is linked to social pressure and community traditions that encourage marriages before the age of 25. Young people who marry at a young age may face more difficulties in building a solid relationship due to emotional immaturity and the challenges of adapting to family life. In these counties, divorces are common among young people who marry before completing their education or before achieving financial stability. Additionally, the migration of young people to larger cities for

studies or jobs can contribute to relationship dysfunction, as partners fail to balance their time and resources between career and personal life (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with a low divorce rate and economic stability (Cluj, Sibiu, Timiș).* In counties with significant economic stability and a high level of urban development, such as Cluj, Sibiu, and Timiș, divorces are less frequent. These counties benefit from a well-developed economic infrastructure, career opportunities, and a higher standard of living, which can contribute to the stability of marriages. Thus, economic factors play a crucial role in maintaining stable relationships, as financial resources allow couples to better adapt to the challenges of daily life. In these counties, divorces are rarer, and the factors leading to separation are often related to personal misunderstandings or differences in lifestyles. Additionally, in large cities in these counties, divorce may be associated with a personal choice for those who wish to renew their life or seek new opportunities, rather than with major economic or social pressures (Figure 2-3).

*Regions with significant international migration (Bucharest, Iași, Bacău, Galați).* Another important factor in the analysis of divorces is international migration. Regions that have seen significant migration of Romanian citizens for business, such as Bucharest, Iași, Bacău, and Galați, have observed an increase in divorces among those who had partners abroad for business or other reasons. Migration for work has often led to the separation of couples, and the large distances between partners and the stress of life abroad have contributed to the rise in divorces. Additionally, in regions with significant migration, divorces are influenced by cultural and economic changes and the adaptation to life in another country. Moreover, those who remain in the country may choose to divorce due to the physical and emotional absence of their partner, which can lead to the breakdown of family ties.

## **AGE GROUP AT DIVORCES**

### **Age group of the wife at divorces**

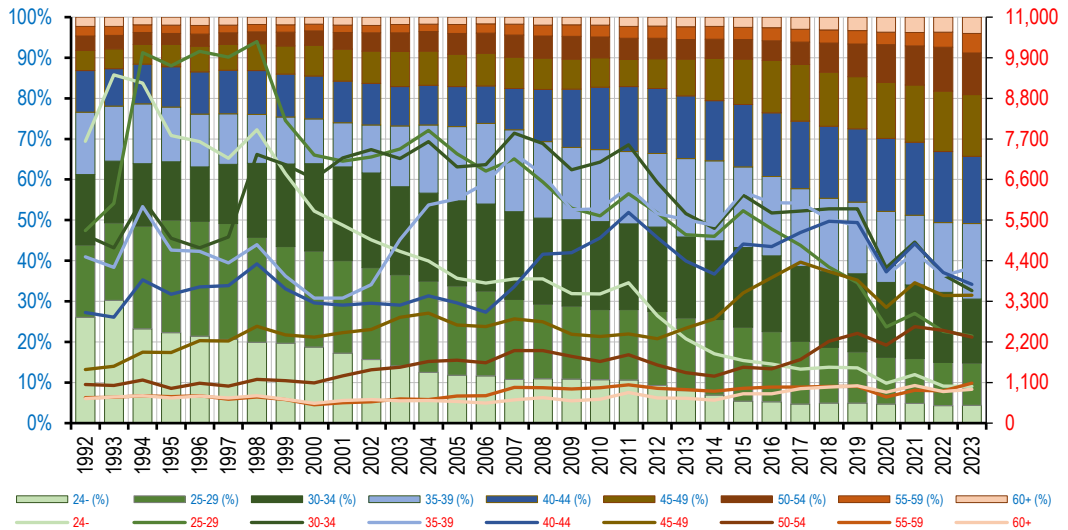
Between 1992 and 2023, data on the age of women at the time of divorce in Romania provides a clear picture of the dynamics of divorce in relation to the age of women. These statistics reflect not only demographic changes but also significant developments in social attitudes towards marriage and divorce. In this analysis, we will examine the trends in each age group, focusing on extreme values, that is, the highest and lowest values recorded during this period, to better understand the factors that influence the decision to divorce.

Starting with the age group under 24 years, we observe a consistent decline in the number of divorces starting in 1993, with the exception of some minor fluctuations. In 1992, the number of divorces in this age group was 7,634, and in 2023 it dropped to 997 divorces, which represents a significant decrease of approximately 87%. This evolution can be explained by changes in Romania's social and economic structure. In the 1990s, divorces among young married women were relatively common due to unstable economic and social factors, which often placed pressure on fragile marriages. However, starting in the 2000s, the decline in the number of divorces in this age group can be attributed to a shift in the mentality of young women, who became more aware of the implications of divorce and less likely to marry at an early age (Figure 4).

For women aged 25-29, the number of divorces fluctuated much more over the analyzed period. In 1992, 5,214 divorces were recorded, and by 2023, the number had decreased to 2,362 divorces, indicating a significant decline, though more moderate compared to the previous age group. The peak of divorces in this group was recorded in 1994, with 10,041 divorces, an extremely high value, which can be explained by a combination of economic and social factors, including economic instability and pressure on young marriages. After 2000, the number of divorces in this group began to decline, amid greater economic stability and a change in how young people view marriage, with an increased emphasis on education and career before committing to a long-term relationship (Figure 4).

The 30-34 age group presents an interesting trend. In this category, the number of divorces significantly increased over the years, reaching a peak of 7,856 divorces in 2007, and in 2023, it

remained at a relatively high value of 3,590 divorces. This signals that many women in this group experienced divorces after a longer period of marriage, when relationships began to face greater pressures, including managing careers and family responsibilities. Another factor that could explain this trend is that women in this age group have gained greater economic and social independence, which has allowed them to make more radical decisions regarding their relationships. Additionally, starting a family or securing a more stable job may influence this decision, as women become more conscious of their own needs and life priorities (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The age group of the wife at divorces in Romania from 1992 to 2023  
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

For women aged 35-39, the number of divorces recorded a significant increase until 2007, with a peak of 7,300 divorces. After this period, the number of divorces began to decrease slightly, reaching 4,210 divorces in 2023. This trend can be explained by a combination of factors, including the fact that women in this group are more established financially and professionally, but also because they typically have children who have reached a more advanced stage in their lives, which may lead to a reevaluation of the marriage. Women aged 35-39 are often in a period of self-discovery and reevaluation of their lives, and in this context, divorce may become a choice of self-definition and renewal of personal identity (Figure 4).

In the 40-44 age group, a steady increase in the number of divorces is observed until 2011, with a peak of 5,709. After this period, the number of divorces remained relatively constant, with a slightly higher value compared to the previous age groups, recording 3,764 divorces in 2023. This may be a period in which many women begin to feel increased pressure on their marriages due to hormonal changes, children leaving the parental home, and a general reevaluation of life priorities. In this sense, divorce at this age may reflect a desire to improve personal life quality and rediscover happiness in a new phase of life (Figure 4).

For women aged 45-49, there is a consistent increase in the number of divorces until 2017, when 4,362 divorces were recorded, followed by a decrease until 2023, when the number of divorces dropped to 3,464. This is a period in which many women face a major transition in their lives. After 40, children have often left the family home, and women may reach a turning point where the marriage no longer meets their personal or emotional needs. Additionally, this age range may bring greater financial independence and more freedom to make decisions, making divorce a more accessible option (Figure 4).

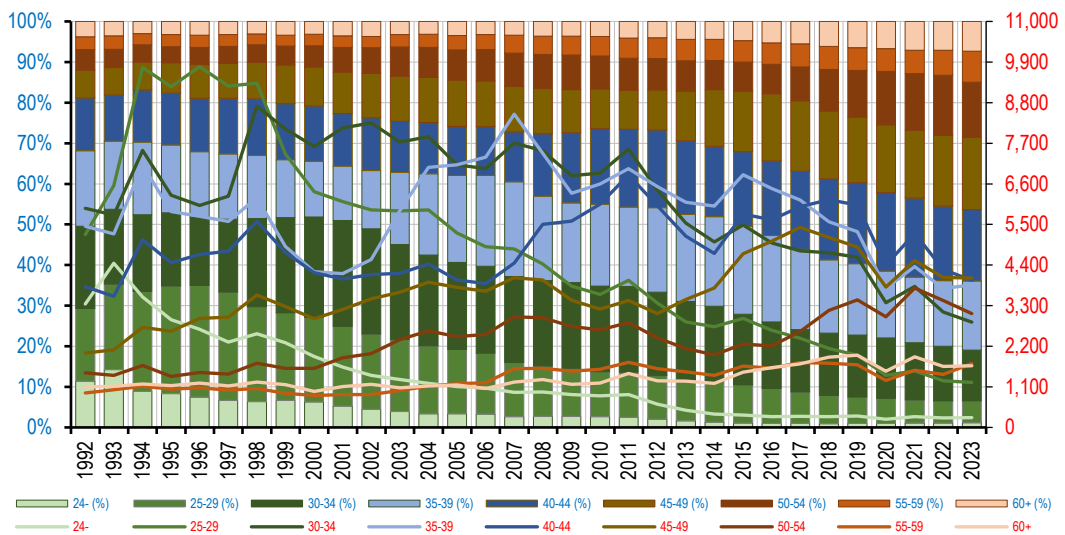
Regarding women aged 50-54, the number of divorces increased significantly, reaching 2,326 divorces in 2023, compared to 1,047 divorces in 1992, with a maximum of 2,615 divorces in 2021. This is a period in which women often reach a phase of deep self-reflection and a desire to regain independence and meaning in their lives. Additionally, at this age, divorce may be motivated by the physical and psychological changes associated with aging, as well as a higher degree of financial and personal autonomy. Women in this age group are often less concerned with social norms and more focused on their own emotional satisfaction (Figure 4).

For women aged 55-59 and those aged 60 and above, divorces are relatively rare, but there has been a trend of increasing numbers in the past two decades, with a peak recorded in 2023 for women aged 60 and over, where the number of divorces reached 919. This phenomenon may reflect changes in the lifestyle of women in their later years, who become more open to change and the possibility of living an independent life (Figure 4).

### Age group of the husband at divorces

The data on the husband's age at divorce for the period 1992-2023 in Romania reflect a series of important developments in behaviour towards marriage and divorce based on men's age. These statistics are useful for understanding the dynamics of divorce across different age groups of men and for analyzing the socio-economic factors influencing divorce decisions.

In the age group under 24, there is a consistent decrease in the number of divorces starting from 1992, from 3,345 divorces to 255 divorces in 2023. This significant decrease (almost 93%) is mainly due to social and economic changes, especially the trend of delaying marriages and divorces among young people. In the 1990s, divorces among young people were frequent due to economic instability and social pressures. However, since the 2000s, the number of divorces has decreased due to a change in the mentality of young people regarding marriage and divorce (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** The age group of the husband at divorces in Romania from 1992 to 2023  
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

For men aged 25 to 29, the number of divorces followed a fluctuating trend. In 1992, 5,226 divorces were recorded, and in 2023, the number dropped to 1,220, representing a significant reduction of about 77%. Over this period, the peak of divorces was recorded in 1996, with 9,774 divorces, a high that can be explained by economic and social instability at that time. The decrease in divorces may also reflect changing attitudes toward marriage and divorce, as well as an increase in the number of men choosing to marry later and thus avoid early divorces (Figure 5).

In the 30-34 age group, there was a significant increase in the number of divorces until 2000, with a peak in 1998 (8,705 divorces). After this period, the number of divorces began to decrease slightly, reaching 2,853 divorces in 2023, compared to 5,941 divorces in 1992. This evolution can be explained by the fact that men in this age group tend to have more professional and financial stability, and divorce may be the result of more complex relationships with children and financial obligations. The decrease in divorces in this group may also reflect greater maturity regarding marriage-related decisions (Figure 5).

For men aged 35 to 39, the number of divorces increased until 2007, with a peak of 8,487 divorces, and in 2023, there were 3,864 divorces. This can be explained by the fact that men in this age group often face stability issues in marriage, being at a point where family and professional responsibilities can affect relationships. In recent years, the number of divorces in this category has slightly decreased, which could be linked to greater awareness of the impact of divorce on children and financial implications (Figure 5).

Men aged 40 to 44 experienced a significant increase in divorces until 2008, when the number reached 6,842 divorces. After 2008, the number fluctuated, and in 2023 it reached 3,984 divorces. This period is characterized by a reevaluation of marriage, considering social and professional changes, as well as an increase in men's financial independence. In this age group, many men go through what is known as a "midlife crisis," which can contribute to the increase in divorces (Figure 5).

For men aged 45 to 49, the number of divorces increased steadily from 2,014 divorces in 1992 to 5,420 divorces in 2017, after which it decreased to 4,043 divorces by 2023. Additionally, in this age group, divorces are related to the process of reevaluating relationships as men reach middle age and face new personal and professional challenges. Another important factor is that, at this age, children have often left the family home, and men have more time and energy to focus on their own needs (Figure 5).

In the 50-54 age group, the number of divorces steadily increased over the years, reaching 3,776 divorces in 2021, compared to 1,476 divorces in 1992, after which it decreased to 3,084 divorces by 2023. This trend may be partly attributed to the fact that men in this age group have more financial independence and more time to reflect on the relationship. Additionally, at this age, men may feel the need for change in their lives, which can lead to the decision to divorce, especially after a long marriage (Figure 5).

Men aged 55 to 59 saw a general trend of increasing divorces from 933 divorces in 1992 to 1,731 divorces in 2023, with a peak of 1,764 divorces in 2011. At this age, many men go through a period of self-reflection and reevaluation of life, and divorce may be seen as an opportunity to live an independent life. This change is also facilitated by the financial independence gained over the years (Figure 5).

For men aged 60 and over, the number of divorces has increased significantly in the past two decades, reaching 1,673 divorces in 2023, compared to 1,098 divorces in 1992. This trend can be attributed to demographic changes, as well as greater financial availability and a desire to live an active and independent personal life in later years (Figure 5).

### **Structure of age groups of wives at divorce**

In the analysis of divorce trends in Romania, a key aspect is the age structure of women at the time of divorce. This indicator serves as a lens through which we can better understand not only the behaviors and attitudes associated with marriage and divorce but also the socio-cultural, economic, and demographic transformations that have shaped Romanian society over time. In this section, we will analyze data on the age of women at divorce for the years 1992 and 2023, highlighting the significant changes that have occurred in the structure of age groups and interpreting these changes in the broader context of Romania's social and economic developments.

In the comparative analysis between 1992 and 2023, we can observe a significant transformation in the distribution of divorces by age group of wives. In 1992, the majority of

divorces occurred among younger wives, aged under 24 years (26.1%), while in 2023, divorces were more concentrated among women of middle age, between 35 and 49 years (50.4%). This change is evident both numerically and in the relative share of each age group in the total number of divorces (Figure 6).

In 1992, divorces among women under 24 years old represented 7,634 cases, or 26.1% of total divorces. This percentage was significantly higher than in 2023, when the number of divorces for this age group dropped to just 997, representing only 4.4% of the total divorces. This dramatic decrease can be attributed to several factors, including changing attitudes towards marriage and divorce, as well as economic and educational changes in post-communist Romania.

Before 2000, divorces among young women were influenced by the country's social and economic instability, which led to earlier and less mature marriages. As Romania evolved economically and socially, young people became more cautious in choosing their partners and deciding to marry. The trend of postponing marriages and reducing the number of people marrying at a young age led to a decline in divorces in this age group. Additionally, changes in education and employment contributed to increased economic independence for women, allowing them to be more selective in choosing the timing of marriage and, implicitly, divorce.

In 1992, divorces among women aged 25-29 totalled 5,214, representing 17.8% of all divorces. By 2023, this number had decreased to 2,362 divorces, or 10.4% of the total. Although their relative share has declined, the absolute number of divorces in this age group was higher in 2023 compared to 1992. This suggests that, while divorces among young women are no longer as frequent as in the past, they remain a significant reality in the context of changes in the pace and nature of marriages.

Over these 30 years, most women in this age category have started to marry later, and divorces have become increasingly evident, especially due to differences between the initial expectations of marriage and the couple's realities. Moreover, the increase in women's economic independence has played a significant role, being an important factor in their ability to make the decision to separate when relationships no longer meet their needs.

The age group 30-34 years saw a significant increase in the number of divorces between 1992 and 2023, from 5,092 divorces (17.4% of the total) to 3,590 divorces (15.8% of the total), whereas the age group 35-39 years saw a slight decrease in divorces from 4,504 divorces (15.4% of the total) in 1992 to 4,210 divorces (18.5% of the total) in 2023. This change can be interpreted as a result of greater economic stability and a shift in attitudes towards marriage. Thus, women in this age group tend to stay married longer than before, but eventually face dissatisfaction with their relationship. Another significant factor is the increasing number of marriages where one or both partners are already involved in successful careers or have children, which can lead to tensions in the relationship and a reevaluation of the marriage. Additionally, international migration and economic changes in Romania have impacted family dynamics, with visible effects on divorce decisions in this age group.

One of the most notable changes is the rise in divorces among women aged 40-44 and 45-49. In 1992, divorces among women aged 40-44 totalled 2,994, or 10.2% of the total, while in 2023, the number increased to 3,764 divorces (16.6% of the total). Additionally, for women aged 45-49, divorces increased from 1,452 (5.0% of the total) to 3,464 (15.2% of the total). This change can be explained by several factors, including greater financial independence for women, as well as a shift in perspective on marriage. As women reach middle age, they may undergo a reevaluation of their relationship and choose to divorce when they feel dissatisfied with the marriage. Furthermore, many of them no longer have young or teenage children, which allows them to make the decision to separate without being influenced by parental responsibilities.

For women aged 50-54 and 55-59, there is a noticeable trend of increasing divorces. In 1992, 1,047 divorces were recorded for women aged 50-54 (3.6% of the total), and in 2023, this number grew to 2,326 divorces (10.2% of the total). Similarly, for women aged 55-59, divorces increased from 687 in 1992 (2.3% of the total) to 1,083 divorces in 2023 (4.8% of the total). This trend is significant and reflects the demographic and economic changes in Romanian society. Older women

tend to be less economically dependent on their partners and may more easily make the decision to divorce, especially in the context of increasing financial independence and more flexible life options. Additionally, once children reach adulthood, women may feel they have their own life, allowing them to make personal choices that focus more on their individual needs.

Divorces among women aged 60 and over showed a slight increase, from 666 divorces in 1992 (2.3% of the total) to 919 divorces in 2023 (4.0% of the total). This trend may reflect changes in society's views on age and retirement, as well as an increased desire among older women to regain their freedom and make decisions that align with their own needs and desires.

### **Structure of age groups of husbands at divorce**

Divorce is a complex social phenomenon, influenced by a range of demographic, economic, and cultural factors. A study of the husband's age at divorce offers insight into the evolution of marital relationships as well as the behavioural and social changes within Romanian society. A detailed analysis of data on the husband's age at divorce in Romania in 1992 and 2023 highlights significant changes in the structure of divorces across age groups, reflecting the socio-economic and demographic trends of the post-communist period. This paper will examine these changes, focusing on the shifts observed in the distribution of divorces by age and interpreting their causes and implications.

By analysing the data from 1992 and 2023, it is clear that the husband's age at divorce has undergone significant transformations. In 1992, most divorces occurred among young men under the age of 34. However, in 2023, divorces were more concentrated among middle-aged and even older men, starting at age 35, suggesting a change in the patterns of marriages and divorces in Romania. Below, we will analyse each age group in detail, noting significant developments and interpreting these changes (Figure 6).

In 1992, divorces among men aged under 24 numbered 3,345, representing 11.4% of the total divorces. In 2023, this number dramatically decreased to just 263 divorces, accounting for only 1.2% of the total divorces. The significant decline in divorces in this age group can be attributed to several factors. First, in the post-communist period, marriages were considerably delayed, and young people became more reluctant to engage in stable relationships. Additionally, a large part of this decline can be explained by the fact that young people invested more in education and careers before deciding to marry. Thus, young couples have become rarer, and divorces in this age group have become less frequent. Furthermore, changes in the family and social structure in Romania have led to a redefinition of expectations regarding marriage, and social norms that favoured early marriages have changed significantly. Today, young people tend to be more careful when choosing a life partner and balancing personal life with career, leading to a postponement of marriages and, implicitly, divorces.

In 1992, divorces among men aged 25 to 29 numbered 5,226, representing 17.8% of the total divorces. By 2023, the number of divorces in this age group dropped to 1,220, accounting for 5.4% of the total. This decrease can be explained by changes in the structure of marriages, which are now later and more selective. Men in this age group marry less frequently and later than before, and divorces among those who marry are usually the result of relationships that were not established on solid foundations. Also, the increased level of education and the integration of women into the labour market have led to changes in the structure of couple relationships, with men becoming more selective in choosing a life partner. Additionally, women who have gained economic independence are more willing to divorce when they feel that the relationship no longer meets their expectations.

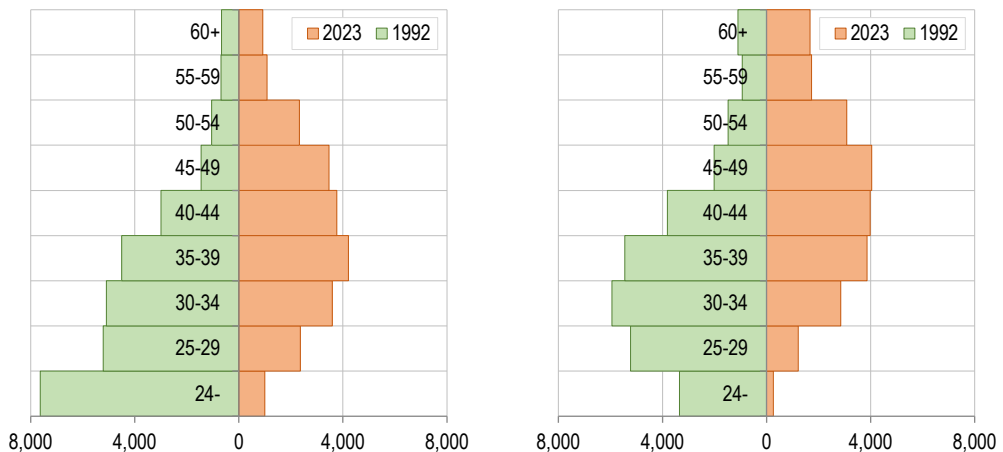
For men aged 30 to 34, the number of divorces decreased from 5,941 in 1992 (20.3% of the total) to 2,853 in 2023 (12.6% of the total). This change suggests a trend toward greater stability in marriages up to this point, but with an increasing tendency for divorces in this age group. A similar trend is also observed among men aged 35 to 39, where the number of divorces decreased from 5,447 in 1992 (18.6% of the total) to 3,864 in 2023 (17.0% of the total). These trends can be explained by a reevaluation of marriages, which become more complex as the years pass. After a period of relatively young marriage, couples in this age group may come to the conclusion that their



relationship is no longer satisfactory or does not meet their expectations. Moreover, the stress associated with careers, raising children, and other responsibilities can lead to a crisis in marital relationships, and some couples choose divorce as a solution.

One of the most significant changes between 1992 and 2023 is the increase in divorces among men aged 40 to 44 and 45 to 49. In 1992, divorces among men aged 40 to 44 totalled 3,810 (13.0% of the total), while in 2023, this number rose to 3,984 (17.5% of the total). Additionally, the number of divorces among men aged 45 to 49 increased from 2,014 in 1992 (6.9% of the total) to 4,043 in 2023 (17.8% of the total). These changes are significant and reflect a greater openness among middle-aged men toward the possibility of divorce. Once they reach middle age, men are more likely to reassess their relationships and opt for change, especially when they are no longer constrained by family or financial responsibilities. Another possible explanation is that, at this stage of life, men become more aware of their own desires and aspirations, which can lead to the decision to separate.

For men aged 50 to 54, divorces increased from 1,476 in 1992 (5.0% of the total) to 3,084 in 2023 (13.6% of the total), while for men aged 55 to 59, the number of divorces rose from 933 in 1992 (3.2% of the total) to 1,731 in 2023 (7.6% of the total). These moderate increases can largely be attributed to a shift in men's views on couple life and their personal futures. After a long period of marriage, some men choose to rebuild their lives, and divorce becomes a solution to live more in line with their own desires. Additionally, during this time, there may be a reevaluation of their careers and personal roles within the family, and men may be more willing to make the decision to separate.



**Figure 6.** Structure of age groups of wives (left) and husbands (right) in 1992 and 2023

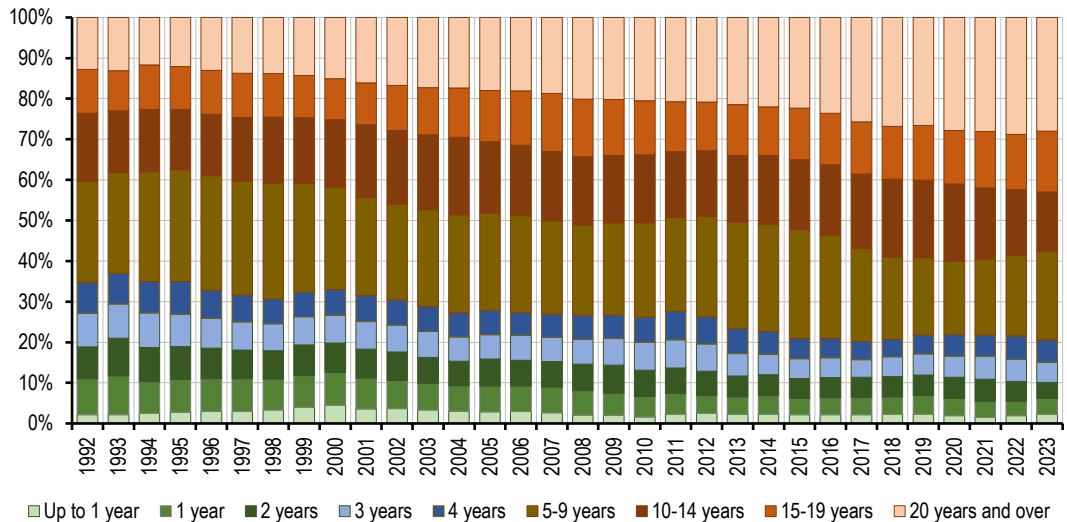
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

### THE DURATION OF THE MARRIAGE AT DIVORCE

The duration of marriage at divorce is an essential indicator in the analysis of family structures and in understanding the social and economic evolution of a society. In Romania, the period from 1992 to 2023 was marked by profound changes, both economically and culturally, and this time interval had a significant impact on the stability of marriages. By analysing data on marriage durations, we can observe general trends that reflect their evolution over different periods. This analysis will examine each category of marriage duration, highlighting the trends and structural changes observed over the 32 years of analysis.

Firstly, *marriages lasting less than 1 year* represent a significant category for analysis from the perspective of instability and vulnerability of relationships at the beginning of marriage. In 1992, there were 629 marriages lasting less than a year, representing approximately 2.15% of all marriages that ended in divorce. During these years, the transition from the communist regime to the market economy led to significant economic instability, and many young people married in a less stable

context despite socio-economic difficulties. In the following years, the number of marriages lasting less than 1 year that ended in divorce increased considerably, peaking at 1,336 in 1998, 1,364 in 1999, and 1,384 in 2000, which can be correlated with the rapid transition of Romanian youth to adult life marked by significant economic and social uncertainties. However, this period was also marked by a subsequent constant decline, and in 2023, the number of marriages lasting less than 1 year that ended in divorce decreased to 502, representing only 1.5% of the total divorces. This decreasing trend can be explained by a maturing social and family behaviour, with young people taking a more rational and responsible approach to the decision of marriage, with a greater awareness of its complexity and the economic and emotional factors involved (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** The duration of the marriage at divorce in Romania from 1992 to 2023

(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

*Marriages lasting 1 year* that ended in divorce had a significant share in the first post-communist decades. In 1992, they represented approximately 8.8% of all marriages that ended in divorce, with 2,582 cases. This period was characterized by significant economic instability, and many marriages during this period could not survive the economic and social challenges, including financial difficulties, precarious jobs, and the general uncertainty of those years. This type of marriage was common during a time when young people married spontaneously, without fully anticipating the complexity of a long-term relationship. However, this category has recorded a constant decline since 2000, and in 2023, the number of marriages lasting 1 year that ended in divorce reached 899, representing about 4.0% of the total divorces. This decrease reflects fundamental changes in how young people perceive marriage. More and more young people choose to settle into a stable relationship only after achieving financial security and overcoming adolescence, which allows them to approach marriage in a more responsible and conscious way (Figure 7).

*Marriages lasting 2 years* that ended in divorce represented a significant intermediate stage, where couples often face adjustment difficulties, especially in the face of economic and family responsibilities. In 1992, these marriages constituted 7.9% of all marriages that ended in divorce, with 2,305 divorces. This period was marked by a certain social volatility, with young people being subjected to economic pressures and the post-communist transition. Between 1992 and 2000, the number of marriages lasting 2 years that ended in divorce peaked, reaching a maximum of 3,342 in 1994. From 2000 onwards, the number of marriages lasting only 2 years that ended in divorce continuously decreased, reaching 895 cases in 2023, representing only 3.2% of the total divorces. This trend can be explained by the fact that young people have become more aware of the complexity

of marriage and choose to form relationships only when they have greater personal and economic stability. Moreover, more young people prefer to delay marriage until they have overcome the initial difficulties of adult life (Figure 7).

*Marriages lasting 3 years* that ended in divorce represent a significant intermediate stage in a couple's life, marked by relationship development and the strengthening of family bonds. In 1992, these marriages represented 8.3% of all marriages that ended in divorce. In 1992, 2,443 marriages lasting 3 years ended in divorce, and this number continued to rise until 1994, when it peaked at 3,371. However, starting from the 2000s, the number of marriages lasting 3 years that ended in divorce showed a significant decline, suggesting a shift in the perception of long-term commitments. In 2023, the number decreased to 1,125, representing only 5.0% of the total divorces. Economic and cultural changes, especially the migration of young families to large cities to seek stable jobs, led to a reassessment of the importance of stability in couple relationships (Figure 7).

*Marriages lasting 4 years* that ended in divorce are often significant because they represent marriages that begin to stabilize in the face of everyday challenges. In 1992, these marriages represented 7.5% of all divorces, with 2,203 cases. They peaked in 1994 with 3,059 marriages of 4 years that ended in divorce, reflecting a certain stability in relationships during that period. However, their number decreased significantly after 2000. In 2023, the number of marriages lasting 4 years that ended in divorce reached 1,265, representing only 5.6% of the total divorces, a significant decline compared to earlier periods. This reduction can be explained by changes in Romania's social and economic structure, with young people opting to choose their partners more rationally and with more detailed planning (Figure 7).

*Marriages lasting 5-9 years* that ended in divorce were the most frequent throughout the entire analyzed period, constituting a significant segment of stable marriages. In 1992, they represented 24.9% of all divorces, with 7,295 marriages of 5-9 years ending in divorce. These marriages are often those where the first signs of stabilization appeared, with couples having children or taking on family responsibilities. Between 1992 and 2000, this type of marriage had a growth trend, with a peak of 11,405 marriages of 5-9 years ending in divorce in 1998. After 2000, their share began to decline, and in 2023, the number decreased to 4,930, representing only 21.7% of the total divorces. This decrease may be linked to the trends of delaying marriage and family formation for economic or career reasons. Additionally, the migration of young people to urban areas and the diversification of family structures have led to a reassessment of the duration of marriage as a social institution (Figure 7).

*Marriages lasting 10-14 years* that ended in divorce represent those that are becoming extremely stable, with couples reaching a high level of family cohesion and responsibility. In 1992, they represented 16.8% of all divorces, with 4,930 cases. These marriages peaked in 2004, reaching 6,732 cases. In 2023, the number of marriages lasting 10-14 years that ended in divorce was 3,339, representing 17.7% of all divorces. This decline suggests a continuously changing social dynamic, with a reconfiguration of social and economic values, as well as a reconsideration of marriage as a traditional form of life (Figure 7).

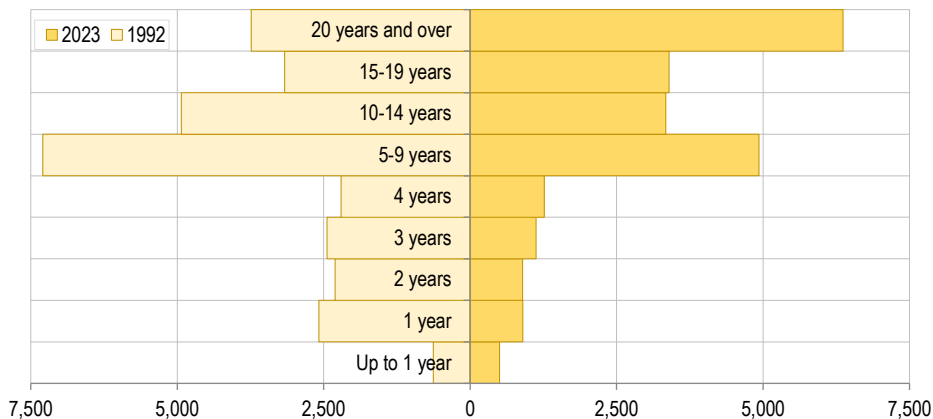
*Marriages lasting 15-19 years* that ended in divorce are already long-lasting and stable relationships, reflecting a change in the approach to marriage. In 1992, 3,166 marriages of 15-19 years that ended in divorce represented 10.8% of all divorces. After a nearly constant increase until 2007, their number began to decrease slightly. In 2023, the number of marriages lasting 15-19 years that ended in divorce was 3,395, representing approximately 14.9% of all divorces. Although this number is significant, the constant decrease in these marriages suggests a shift in the social and cultural focus toward shorter and more flexible relationships (Figure 7).

*Marriages lasting 20 years or more* that ended in divorce reflect a profound maturation of relationships, being the most stable and long-lasting. These marriages represented 12.8% of all divorces in 1992 (3,737 cases). Their number increased significantly over the decades, reaching 6,365 in 2023 (28% of the total). These relationships indicate stability and commitment to the institution of marriage (Figure 7).

### The structure of marriage durations at divorce

Between 1992 and 2023, the structure of marriages in Romania underwent significant changes, influenced by economic, political, and social developments, as well as by shifts in mentalities and values. These changes are particularly reflected in the duration of marriages, and analyzing each period can provide a deeper understanding of the trends in Romanian society. In the following, we will analyze structural changes for each marriage duration interval and the possible causalities behind them.

*Marriages lasting up to 1 year* experienced relatively small fluctuations, from 2.1% in 1992 to 2.2% in 2023, suggesting stability in social behaviours and the maintenance of traditional norms among younger generations. In the 1990s, young people in Romania were under social pressure to marry as a sign of stability and conformity to societal norms. In this context, many early marriages were motivated by the desire for a stable social status or economic reasons, particularly during the post-communist transition period. However, the phenomenon of short-term marriages was not necessarily amplified, and the decrease of only 0.1% in this interval suggests a relative permanence of the social model. One cause could be linked to the prevailing conservatism of that period, which encouraged maintaining the status of marriage even in the face of economic difficulties (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** The structure of marriage durations at divorce in 1992 and 2023  
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

*Marriages lasting 1 year* saw a significant decline, from 8.8% in 1992 to 4.0% in 2023. This reduction reflects fundamental changes in the mentalities and social behaviors of couples in Romania. One possible cause of this decrease could be related to changes in the status of women in society. After 1990, broader access to education and independent careers significantly influenced young Romanians, and marriage became more of a personal choice than a social obligation. Additionally, in the post-communist period, divorce became more accessible and socially acceptable. Many couples who married quickly chose to separate after a short time, without the stigma that divorce had previously carried, leading to the decrease in marriages lasting 1 year (Figure 8).

*Marriages lasting 2 years* saw a decrease from 7.9% in 1992 to 3.9% in 2023. This decrease suggests a continuation of the trend observed in the 1-year period, reflecting a reassessment by couples regarding the sustainability of short-term relationships. A possible explanatory factor is that, after 1990, couples in Romania were influenced by a greater diversification of life options and increased independence. After a relationship initially marked by ideals and expectations, many faced difficulties related to daily life integration, education, careers, and economic conditions. Furthermore, the migration of the population, especially the younger generations, led many relationships to be tested and ultimately result in separation (Figure 8).

*Marriages lasting 3 years* saw a decrease from 8.3% in 1992 to 5.0% in 2023. While a decrease is noticeable, it is not as significant as in the case of other shorter marriage periods, suggesting some stabilization in short-term relationships, where couples start to know each other better and overcome initial challenges. During this period, couples who married usually did not separate due to financial reasons, as many were already integrated into the labour market. Economic stability may be an important factor in maintaining a short-term relationship, and some of these 3-year marriages could be seen as a stage in the maturation of relationships, where couples face initial challenges and important decisions about their future (Figure 8).

*Marriages lasting 4 years* saw a moderate decrease from 7.5% in 1992 to 5.6% in 2023, suggesting that many couples began to overcome the early stages of marriage and entered a period of consolidation. A factor contributing to this phenomenon could be the fact that, between 1992 and 2023, young people in Romania began to place more emphasis on career development and personal independence. This led to a reassessment of marriage and the emergence of a period focused on establishing family life. Furthermore, social and economic changes, such as starting a family, can lead to the consolidation of the relationship during these early years of marriage (Figure 8).

*Marriages lasting 5-9 years* saw a significant decrease, from 24.9% in 1992 to 21.7% in 2023, which may indicate a distancing from traditional marriage norms and an increase in divorces during this period. The reason for this decrease may be linked to the fundamental changes in Romania's economic and social structure after 1990. Couple life often becomes more difficult during this period, as couples face challenges related to careers, education, and managing a family. In this context, the decision to divorce becomes easier, and the number of marriages that fail to survive this stage could explain the decline in 5-9 year marriages (Figure 8).

*Marriages lasting 10-14 years* decreased from 16.8% in 1992 to 14.7% in 2023, suggesting a significant change in the perception of long-term relationships. However, this decline is not as large as in other time intervals. These marriages, traditionally seen as stable, have increasingly been influenced by the economic and social dynamics of post-communist Romania. Additionally, globalization and the migration of younger generations led to a reassessment of the traditional marriage model and, implicitly, an increase in divorces during this period (Figure 8).

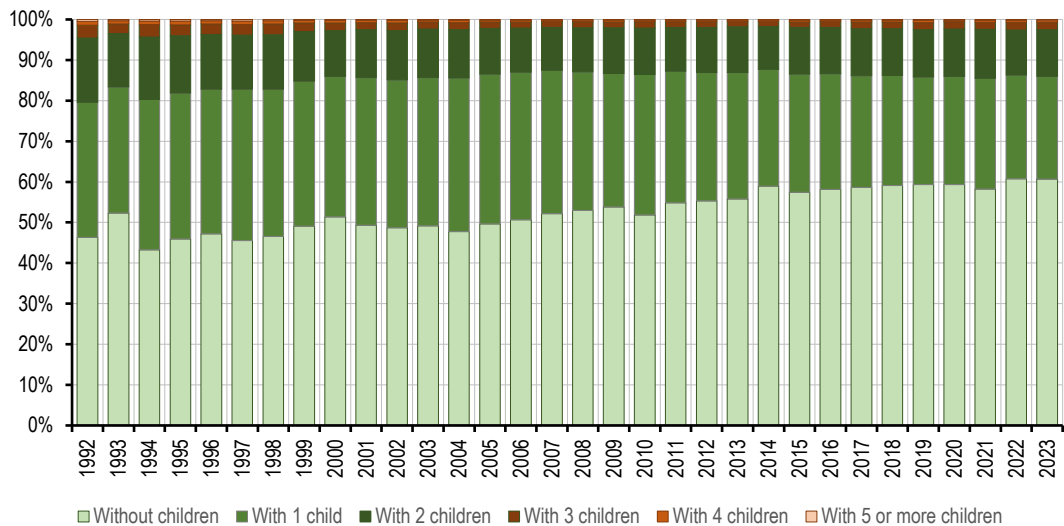
*Marriages lasting 15-19 years* saw a significant increase, from 10.8% in 1992 to 14.9% in 2023. This phenomenon can be explained by a general trend of consolidating long-term relationships, where couples who have overcome initial difficulties choose to continue their lives together. One possible cause of this increase could be related to changes in the social perception of marriage. Couples who have surpassed the early years of marriage tend to value the relationship more and face more challenges together, which may strengthen their bond. This may also signify the maturation of relationships and the desire to stay together to build a solid family (Figure 8).

*Marriages lasting 20 years or more* saw a considerable increase, from 12.8% in 1992 to 28.0% in 2023. This dramatic change reflects a strong trend toward stability in long-term relationships, suggesting that Romanians have begun to place more value on long-term relationships. This trend may be explained by the fact that, in recent years, couples have learned to face economic and social difficulties together, and accepting long-term marriages has become a sign of stability. Moreover, the increase in this interval may also be linked to the fact that Romanians have learned to appreciate long-term relationships more and place a higher value on family and its stability (Figure 8).

### **MINOR CHILDREN AT THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MARRIAGE**

The number of minor children left after the dissolution of marriage provides an important perspective on the evolution of divorce in Romania and its impact on families. By analyzing the distribution across categories of minor children, we can observe significant changes that reflect both demographic and social modifications, as well as their impact on the structure of families in Romania. We will now analyze the evolution of each category, with an emphasis on the extreme indicators.

The category with *no minor children* is by far the most frequently encountered in this database, with a constant number of divorce cases where there were no minor children. In 1992, the number of divorces without minor children was 13,568, and this number increased steadily until 2011, when it peaked at 19,910 divorces, likely influenced by the post-communist period, characterized by economic and social instability. After 2009, the number of these divorces began to decline, with a significant decrease in 2020, when only 13,521 divorces without minor children were recorded, suggesting a change in the behavior of couples in Romania. This decline could be explained by a number of factors. One of them might be changes in family structure, with a higher number of couples choosing to live together without having children, for various reasons such as careers, education, or economic pressures. Additionally, the social perception of relationship stability could be influenced by increased awareness of the negative effects of divorce, as well as changes in legislation that make the divorce process simpler (Figure 9).



**Figure 9.** Minor children remaining after the dissolution of the marriage in Romania from 1992 to 2023  
(Data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

As for divorces involving *one minor child*, the number of these cases has fluctuated significantly from 1992 to 2023. In 1992, divorces with one child amounted to 9,737, and this number increased substantially between 1993 and 2000, reaching 14,672 in 1994. However, after 2000, a steady decline was observed, and by 2023, the number of these divorces had dropped to 5,741. This continuous decline suggests greater awareness among couples with one child regarding the impact of divorce on the child, as well as a change in family dynamics and the decision-making process regarding divorce. A possible factor in this decrease could be better access to family and psychological counselling, which helps couples manage conflicts before reaching the point of divorce. Moreover, the increasing number of single-parent families and the economic difficulties faced by parents could contribute to the preservation of marriages, at least in the short term, to ensure the child's economic stability. Furthermore, a possible influence could be that divorces are increasingly viewed as an extreme and less frequent solution, with many parents choosing to stay together to provide a stable environment for the child (Figure 9).

Divorces involving *two minor children* have evolved in a similar manner, with a gradual decline recorded between 1992 and 2023. In 1992, 4,648 divorces occurred among couples with two children, and by 2023, this number had decreased to 2,626. These fluctuations are significant, and the constant decline suggests a change in the behaviour of couples with more than one child. Like divorces involving one child, economic and educational factors play an important role, but another

factor could be that, as couples have more children, they become more reluctant to divorce due to additional financial and family responsibilities. A significant factor influencing this trend could also be the awareness of the impact of divorce on children. Couples with more children may perceive divorce as a radical change, and some prefer to stay together to ensure maximum stability in their children's lives. Additionally, economic instability and the lack of financial resources can make the decision to divorce more difficult, especially when two children are involved (Figure 9).

Divorces involving *three minor children* are less frequent and have shown greater volatility than those in the previous categories. In 1992, the number of these divorces was 925, and by 2023, it had decreased to 386, reflecting a significant decrease. The considerable drop in the number of divorces with three children can be attributed to the complexity of relationships in families with more children, where divorce decisions may be harder to make due to increased economic and emotional responsibilities. Families with three children may be more likely to stay together for financial reasons or to maintain stability in the children's lives. Moreover, divorces in families with three children may be seen as an especially difficult failure, considering the significant resources required to raise a large number of children. Social and economic stability factors play a significant role in these decisions, and couples may make greater efforts to maintain family unity (Figure 9).

Divorces involving *four minor children* are relatively rare, and their number has steadily decreased over the period 1992-2023. In 1992, the number of divorces with four children was 282, and by 2023, it had decreased to 117. These fluctuations reflect the fact that families with such a large number of children are less likely to divorce due to the responsibilities and complexities involved. Therefore, economic factors, as well as access to resources for raising a large number of children, may make the decision to divorce less likely. Furthermore, in families with four children, stability and social integration are often more pronounced, and parents tend to make more compromises to keep the family together. In these cases, divorce may be seen as a last resort, due to the significant effort required to manage such a family (Figure 9).

In the category of divorces with *five or more minor children*, the number is consistently low, and the fluctuations are minimal. In 1992, there were 130 divorces in this category, and by 2023, the number had decreased to 64. This can be considered the extreme category, with very large families, where divorce is seen as an extreme option due to the complexity and responsibility involved in raising such a large number of children. This category reflects remarkable stability among couples with a large responsibility in raising children. From a social and economic standpoint, families with five or more children are often more integrated into communities and may have more resources to cope with difficulties, which makes it less likely that they will separate. Additionally, on a personal and emotional level, the decision to divorce in such families may be felt as an extreme rupture (Figure 9).

## CONCLUSIONS

The divorces in Romania reflect major social and economic changes between 1992 and 2023, highlighting an initially pronounced contrast between urban and rural areas, which has gradually diminished. In urban areas, the prevalence of divorces was associated with modernization, urbanization, and economic crises, peaking in 1998, when they represented 76.6% of the total. Over time, the proportion decreased to 61.8% in 2023, due to migration, informal cohabitation, and access to marital counselling. In rural areas, divorces, initially rare and influenced by traditions, increased with modernization and the economic independence of partners, reaching 38.2% in 2023. The uniformity in access to education and migration reduced urban-rural gaps, illustrating a convergence of family behaviours and common social challenges for both environments.

Divorces in Romania have shown significant disparities between counties, determined by factors such as the level of urbanization, ethnic structure, economic migration, and the dynamics of cultural values. In urbanized and economically developed regions (Bucharest, Cluj, Timiș), divorces are more frequent, influenced by financial independence and permissive social norms, while in counties with strong traditions (Harghita, Covasna), the divorce rate is low due to cultural pressures

to maintain marriages. Economic migration has increased the number of separations in Moldova and Oltenia, while in rural and underdeveloped areas (Teleorman, Giurgiu), divorces remain rare, discouraged by economic dependence and community norms. Tourist regions or those with cultural diversity (Braşov, Constanţa, Sibiu) reflect an increase in divorces with exposure to modern values, while in isolated or mountainous areas (Maramureş, Suceava), traditions continue to influence marital stability, although migration and recent social changes have created new trends.

The analysis of divorces in Romania by age groups shows a significant decrease in the number of divorces among young women and men, especially those under 24, due to social and economic changes and changing attitudes towards marriage. However, in older age groups, divorces have shown an upward trend, particularly between 30 and 50 years old, which may reflect factors such as relational instability, increased financial independence, and revaluation of personal priorities. For men, middle age and the midlife crisis play a significant role in divorce decisions, while for women, divorces at older ages are often motivated by the desire to regain independence and personal satisfaction.

In the analysis of divorces in Romania, a significant change is noticed in the age structure of husbands and wives between 1992 and 2023. For women, divorces have increasingly concentrated among those aged 35 to 49, while at the beginning of the period, most divorces occurred among those under 24. This change reflects the postponement of marriages, increased economic independence for women, and changes in the perception of marriage. Divorces have also increased among older women, particularly between 45 and 59 years old, due to revaluations of relationships and financial independence. In the case of men, divorces among those under 24 have decreased significantly, while divorces have increased considerably among middle-aged and older men, between 40 and 59 years old, reflecting a greater openness to separation at middle age, when family and financial responsibilities become easier to manage. These changes are primarily attributed to the economic, social, and cultural evolution of Romanian society, which has influenced decisions regarding marriage and divorce.

The analysis of marriage duration at the time of divorce in Romania between 1992 and 2023 reflects significant changes in the social and economic structure of society. Marriages of less than a year have steadily decreased, signalling a maturation of young people's behaviour towards marriage, while marriages of 1-2 years were influenced by post-communist economic uncertainties. Marriages lasting 5-9 years, the most common during the analyzed period, started to decrease after 2000, reflecting a revaluation of the role of marriage due to economic and social reasons. In contrast, long marriages of 20 years or more increased significantly, indicating the stability of long-term relationships and a shift in the perception of marriage as an institution. These trends suggest a change in values and social behaviours, where young people choose more stable and planned relationships, and economic changes influence marriage decisions.

The structure of marriage duration in Romania has evolved significantly, reflecting economic, social, and cultural changes, as well as shifts in the perception of marriage. Short marriages (under 5 years) have decreased, highlighting a change in social mentalities and a greater acceptance of divorce, especially after 1990, when women's status and career choices influenced the decisions of younger generations. In contrast, long marriages (over 20 years) have increased significantly, indicating a trend toward relationship stability and greater emphasis on family and enduring values. This evolution suggests that, while couples in Romania have distanced themselves from traditional norms, there has been a strengthening of long-term relationships, supported by a more stable economic context and a revaluation of marriage in the post-communist period.

The analysis of divorces in relation to the number of minor children left after the dissolution of marriage reveals significant trends in Romania between 1992 and 2023. Divorces without minor children showed a steady increase until 2009, followed by a decrease, suggesting a change in couple behaviour and a possible awareness of the negative impact of divorce. Additionally, divorces involving one child gradually decreased, and economic factors and access to counselling may explain this trend. Divorce cases with two or three minor children showed a continuous decrease,



indicating a greater reluctance to divorce due to economic reasons and the desire to ensure stability for children. In families with four or more children, divorces were much rarer, reflecting the complexity of relationships and greater responsibilities for these couples. These trends emphasize a change in the social perception of divorce, which is becoming less frequent, particularly in families with multiple children, due to the emotional and economic complexities involved.

Divorces in Romania between 1992 and 2023 have reflected profound social and economic transformations, with significant differences between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, divorces were influenced by modernization, urbanization, and economic crises, while in rural areas, they increased as economic independence and modernization progressed. Differences between counties were determined by the level of urbanization, ethnic structure, and economic migration, while tourist regions and those with cultural diversity saw an increase in divorces. The age group analysis showed a decrease in divorces among young people, but an increase among those of middle age, influenced by relational instability and financial independence. In terms of marriage duration, divorces were more frequent in the early stages of marriage, but increased in long-term couples, reflecting a reevaluation of family values and stabilization of long-term relationships. Additionally, divorces involving minor children showed a decreasing trend, suggesting a greater awareness of the impact on children and a reluctance to separate in families with greater responsibilities. These trends underline changes in the social and economic behaviours of Romanians, which have led to a reevaluation of the institution of marriage and divorce.

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