Gender Differences in the Consequences of Divorce:

A Multiple-Outcome Comparison of Former Spouses

Thomas Leopold

University of Amsterdam

t.leopold@uva.nl

Abstract

This study examined gender differences in the consequences of divorce for multiple measures of psychological, economic, and domestic well-being. I used household panel data from the German SOEP, retaining the link between initially married couples ($N = 755$) to compare both spouses over a period of up to four years before and after divorce. Findings showed that men were more vulnerable to short-term declines in subjective measures of well-being, whereas women experienced longer-term disadvantages in objective economic status. Taken together, these results suggest that women's disproportionate income strain is chronic, whereas men's disproportionate psychological and domestic strain is not.

Introduction

Who suffers more from divorce – men or women? This long-standing debate has been fueled by research findings that have consistently noted the gendered nature of divorce effects as well as policy reforms that have aimed to alleviate these differences (Amato, 2000; Diedrick, 1991). A major theme in this debate are the economic disadvantages that women face immediately after a divorce, particularly their disproportionate loss of disposable household income (Smock, 1994; Peterson, 1996).

The effects of divorce, however, are more complex on at least three grounds. First, they extend into various spheres. Although men are better off economically, women might fare better in terms of health and psychological well-being (Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Shor et al., 2012). Second, effects on subjective and objective measures may differ. The few existing studies to compare these measures have indicated that women are not necessarily less satisfied with their post-divorce income and standard of living, despite objectively greater losses in these domains (Andress & Broeckel, 2007; Keith, 1985). Third, effects are highly time-dependent. Panel data collected at two distant time points – one of the most common analytical setups in previous research – reveal only little about gender differences in the process of divorce. Although this problem has been addressed in studies of changes in household income (Tach & Eads, 2015; de Vaus et al., 2015), less is known whether gender differences in non-economic outcomes are permanent or transient (Strohschein et al., 2005).

In view of that, the present study aimed to offer a comprehensive description of gender differences in the consequences of divorce by tracing annual change in multiple outcome measures on the basis of multi-wave panel data spanning an extensive window of longitudinal observation before and after divorce. I use a novel analytical setup, which compares both spouses of an initially married couple up to four years before and after their divorce. Comparing the formerly married to examine gender differences is not only

intuitively appealing but also yields analytical benefits in dealing with time-changing unobserved heterogeneity.

I draw on data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP), one of the largest and longest-running household panel studies. Because the SOEP follows up both partners in separate households after a divorce, these data allow comparing formerly married spouses over time. I select a sample of 755 couples who divorce across the observation period and are followed up in subsequent years. To assess gender differences in the consequences of divorce, I compare these former spouses across three sets of outcome measures covering health and psychological well-being (satisfaction with life, satisfaction with health, and self-rated health), economic well-being (satisfaction with standard of living, satisfaction with household income, and equivalised post-government household income), and domestic well-being (satisfaction with family life, satisfaction with housework, and hours of housework).

Background

The main theoretical models to guide research about the consequences of divorce within the stress-adjustment framework – the crisis model and the chronic strain model – are not explicitly gendered. However, gender has been associated with different factors that may cushion or exacerbate adverse effects both in the short term and in the long term. Amato (2000, p. 1272) has noted that many of those factors can be "viewed as outcomes in their own right." In the present study, I consider possible gender differences in three sets of outcome measures covering the domains of health and psychological well-being, economic well-being, and domestic well-being.

Gender differences in health and psychological well-being

Many earlier studies that have compared divorced men to divorced women have suggested that post-divorce adaptation in health and well-being favors women (Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Wallerstein, 1986). One explanation for these differences are gendered health benefits of marriage: Because men experience greater health gains from marriage, divorce puts them at a higher risk of health declines and mortality. This idea has been corroborated by research showing that mental health is poorer among divorced men (Andress & Bröckel, 2007), and that mortality following divorce increases only among men (Berntsen & Kravdal, 2012; Shor et al., 2012).

A second explanation highlights behavioral differences in the pre-divorce period. Women are more aware of marital problems and make greater investments in holding a marriage together (Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983). At the same time, women are also more likely to initiate divorce once they accept the hopelessness of their efforts (Brinig & Allen, 2000; Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006). Because this decision often takes men by surprise (Thomas, 1982), they might experience more distress when their marriage breaks down. Women, in contrast, might already feel the relief of having terminated an unhappy relationship. These considerations suggest that health and subjective well-being may adapt on different time scales: Women mourn the end of a marriage already in the pre-divorce years, whereas this process is delayed – and possibly even more devastating – for men.

It is important to note, however, that results are not consistent about men's greater vulnerability to the adverse of divorce on health and psychological well-being. Some studies have reported the opposite pattern (Aseltine & Kessler, 1993; Simon & Marcussen, 1999); others have found no gender differences (Horwitz et al., 1996; Mastekaasa, 1995; Strohschein et al., 2005). In view of that, earlier and more recent reviews have concluded that there is no

compelling evidence to substantiate the claim that following a divorce, women are generally better off in terms of health and subjective well-being (Amato, 2000; Amato & James, 2010).

Gender differences in economic well-being

Numerous studies have shown that the economic costs of divorce fall more heavily on women. They experience a sharper decline in household income and greater poverty risk (Smock, Manning, & Gupta, 1999; Smock, 1994). Among their former husbands, in contrast, the standard of living might even increase in post-divorce years. Peterson (1996) has quantified this gender gap, producing estimates of a 27% decline among women and a 10% increase among men in the standard of living. Other U. S. estimates for women's drops in economic well-being are even larger (Bianchi, Subaiya, & Kahn, 1999). Results are similar in the German context of the present study: Andress and Bröckel (2007) have reported that women's equivalised household incomes one year after divorce amounted to only two-thirds of their former husbands' incomes.

Explanations for these gender inequalities typically highlight four risk factors for women (Holden & Smock, 1991; Andress & Bröckel, 2015): higher economic need and restricted earning capacities in the presence of children; risk of receiving insufficient child maintenance; disproportionate loss of income, which is often not fully compensated by spousal maintenance; and human capital deficits resulting from gender specialization in the division of labor during marriage.

These factors suggest that the chronic stain model applies more strongly to women than to men, at least within the domain of economic well-being. Yet, there are two qualifications to this assertion. First, results are not consistent about whether women's economic strain is chronic. A recent comparative study has indicated that in Germany, short-

term effects are more substantial than long-term effects, as women's incomes recovered in the years after divorce (de Vaus et al., 2015). Second, conclusions about gender differences in economic well-being may look different if assessed on the basis of subjective measures. Although subjective experience figures prominently in theoretical models of crisis and chronic strain, knowledge about gender differences in subjective measures of economic well-being is still scarce. An earlier study (Keith, 1985) has suggested that women were in fact more satisfied with their financial status after separation than men. Andress and Bröckel's (2007) findings have corroborated this idea, showing that women's satisfaction with household income reached men's levels shortly after separation. These results demonstrate that research needs to take into account both objective and subjective measures to understand gender differences in post-divorce economic well-being.

Gender differences in domestic well-being

Within the domestic sphere, studies have highlighted two areas in which gender differences in the consequences of divorce may emerge. The first and most intensely studied theme is parental strain associated with custodial arrangements. Noncustodial parents – usually fathers – are confronted with day-to-day strain in maintaining contact with their children (Vogt Yuan, 2014). Custodial parents – usually mothers – face the burden of solo parenting and difficulties in finding child care (Goldberg et al., 1992). As a result, divorce is generally expected to impact negatively on the quality of family life of both spouses (Umberson & Williams, 1993). Although there is a lack of longitudinal studies of change in a direct measure of satisfaction with family life, previous research has suggested that noncustodial strain may outweigh custodial strain, in particular if the nonresidential parent loses, or fears to lose, contact with children (Bauserman, 2012).

Second, divorce has implications for the performance of housework and the gendered division of household labor. Although previous studies have focused more on the reverse direction of this relationship (i.e., how gender roles in the home may affect the risk of divorce), there is some knowledge about the effects of divorce on the performance of housework. Two-wave panel studies have shown that men substantially increased their time spent on routine housework after separation, whereas women moderately reduced their housework hours (Gupta, 1999; Baxter et al., 2008). The only existing multi-wave panel study has indicated that these changes may be permanent, as no evidence for subsequent adaptation to previous levels was found (Hewitt et al., 2013).

To the extent that routine housework can be considered an onerous activity that people try to avoid, these findings suggest that women experience a moderate relief in this domain, whereas men's domestic well-being is more strongly, and more negatively, affected. The latter might apply particularly to men who endorse traditional gender role attitudes. Among those men, greater involvement in female-typed activities might exacerbate divorce-related strain by adding dissonance in their gender identity (West & Zimmerman, 1987). To gain more insight into these issues, it is useful to complement objective measures of hours spent on routine housework by subjective measures such as satisfaction with performing these tasks.

Method

Data and Sample

My analysis was based on data from 29 waves of the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP, Version 29, 2013, doi:10.5684/soep.v29; Wagner, Frick, & Schupp, 2007). For my purposes, these data yielded three analytical benefits. First, the SOEP includes multiple panel

observations of respondents and short gaps between observations, as data have been collected annually between 1984 and 2012. This large window of closely-spaced observations allows to study gender differences across the process of divorce. Second, the SOEP is a household panel study in which each household member age 17 and older is interviewed separately. Therefore, both partners of a marital union can be studied jointly as couples. Importantly, because the SOEP follows up respondents who leave their household, these data allowed me to retain the link between formerly married spouses after separation. Third, the SOEP is well-suited for a multiple-outcome study of gender differences in the consequences of divorce, as detailed longitudinal information is available about several outcome measures of psychological, economic, and domestic well-being.

The aim of this study was descriptive. Rather than estimating the counterfactual, the goal was offer a comprehensive description of gender differences among those who experienced divorce in terms of their year-to-year changes in multiple outcomes. Given this study focus, I selected an analytical sample of couples who were initially observed in a marital union, separated over the observation period, and remained under observation in subsequent years.

I used four restrictions to define the sample accordingly. First, I selected 15,613 heterosexual married couples in whom both spouses participated in the personal interview. Second, I removed 1,047 couples from a selective high-income sample (Sample G, drawn in 2002). Third, I constrained the remaining sample to couples ($N = 755$) who were (a) initially observed sharing a household in a marital union and (b) divorced across the observation period. The year of *divorce* was defined by two conditions: (a) the couple was no longer linked by a partner identifier, indicating a transition to no partner or to a new partner; (b) the couple no longer shared a household identifier, indicating a transition to separate households. This definition captured the year of separation. In the following, I refer to this year as the

year of divorce although change of the legal status from married to divorced is often delayed due to an obligatory year of separation before divorce. Finally, I removed observations outside an interval of four years before or after the year of divorce. This restriction ensured that I could draw on a sufficient number of observations across all time points before and after divorce. After all exclusions, my analytical sample consisted of 755 couples comprising 4,691 observations (couple-years). The data in Table 1 provide descriptive statistics about time-constant demographic characteristics of this sample.

- Table 1 -

Measures

To study gender differences in the consequences of divorce in a multidimensional way, I used three sets of *outcome measures*. These measures captured change over time in the domains of (a) health and psychological well-being, (b) economic well-being, and (c) domestic well-being. I created three variables for each of these measures – one for to the wife, one for the husband, and one measuring the difference within a couple. The difference variables were defined as the absolute difference between the wife's and the husband's measure. This means that positive values indicated a gender gap that favored the wife, whereas negative values indicated a gender gap that favored the husband. Table 2 includes detailed information and descriptive statistics about each outcome measure.

- Table 2 -

To assess changes across the *process of divorce*, I modelled these outcomes as linear functions of time before and after divorce. I allowed for year-to-year variation in the effects of time, captured by a set of dummy variables designating eight periods: (a) 4 to 3 years before, (b) 3 to 2 years before, (c) 2 to 1 years before, (d) 1 to 0 years before, (e) 0 to 1 years after, (f) 1 to 2 years after, (g) 2 to 3 years after, and (h) 3 to 4 years after divorce. These

measures jointly represented the effect of time on the outcome measures, allowing me to study change and stability before and after couples divorced.

Statistical Model

To estimate change in the outcome measures, I used random-effects hierarchical linear models for annual panel observations nested within couples. Given that every couple in my sample experienced the event of interest – divorce – there was no risk that the event indicators were correlated with unmeasured, stable characteristics of couples (Allison, 1994, p. 192). Because this rendered the bias-reducing properties of the fixed-effects estimator less relevant, the random-effects generalized least squares estimator was preferable due to its higher efficiency.

The separate models for wives and husbands were specified as follows:

$$y_{it} = a + \mu_i + \sum_{k=-3/-2}^{+3/+4} D_{it}^k \gamma_k + x_{it}\boldsymbol{\beta} + e_{it}$$

In this model, the outcome *y* of person *i* (wife or husband) at time *t* was estimated as a linear combination of a population constant *a*; an individual-specific random effect μ_i; a series of k = 7 dummy variables D_{it}^k capturing change over time compared to the omitted reference period of 4 to 3 years before divorce; a vector of control variables $x_{it}\boldsymbol{\beta}$; and errors e_{it}. Given the descriptive aims of my study, I included only age and period controls in this model. Age and period effects might introduce bias in the estimation of temporal profiles of change in the outcomes across pre-divorce and post-divorce periods. For example, if the age effect on subjective well-being is negative, an uncontrolled model could overestimate initial drops and underestimate subsequent adaptation. I introduced age and period in five-year intervals to reduce collinearity with the time dummies D_{it}^k.

The models for gender differences were specified as follows:

$$y_{wt} - y_{ht} = a + \mu_c + \sum_{k=-3/-2}^{+3/+4} D_{ct}^k \gamma_k + e_{ct}$$

In this model, a couple-level outcome measuring the absolute difference between the wife and the husband $y_{wt} - y_{ht}$ was modelled as a linear function of a constant, a couple-specific effect and time dummies. Compared to the separate models, this specification yielded advantages in controlling for unobserved heterogeneity. All time-varying unmeasured factors that applied similarly to former spouses in a couple were canceled out by differencing between them.

Results

The results from the models are plotted in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3. Appendix Tables A1 (wives), A2 (husbands), and A3 (differences) show the random-effects models on which these graphs are based. All graphs indicate change compared to the reference period of 4 to 3 years before divorce.

Figure 1 shows gender differences in the consequences of divorce for health and psychological well-being. Results for change in life satisfaction indicate that similar declines across pre-divorce years were followed by a sizable gender gap emerging in the year after separation. In this year, men's life satisfaction declined steeply to reach its low point, whereas their former wives were already on the rise. These differences translated into a gender difference of approximately 0.5 scale points or more than 0.4 *SD* of within-couple variation in life satisfaction over time measured in the full SOEP sample of couples. This gap was short-lived, however, as men recovered swiftly in the following year, reducing the difference to their former spouses' life satisfaction to less than a quarter of a scale point.

The health measures indicated little gender differences. For both spouses, health satisfaction declined moderately across the observation period. In self-rated health, women started out at slightly lower levels. In the year of separation, this gap was reversed, as women experienced a rise that mirrored the findings in the measure of life satisfaction. This shift, however, was less pronounced and did not translate into a meaningful gender gap.

Figure 2 shows gender differences in the consequences of divorce for economic well-being. The far right panel indicates the scope of post-divorce gender inequality in equivalised household incomes. In the year following divorce, women's drops amounted to almost a third of their pre-divorce incomes, whereas their former husbands experienced moderate gains. A comparison of the formerly married shows that the gender gap in annual household incomes increased from zero to approximately 8,000 Euros. In subsequent years, women's incomes recovered to reduce this gap to 5,000 Euros. Gender differences in post-divorce household incomes, however, remained sizable also in the long term.

How did women and men experience these changes subjectively? Figure 2 reveals a striking incongruence between objective and subjective measures of economic well-being. Despite their disproportionate losses in objective terms, women were only slightly less satisfied with their post-divorce household incomes than their former husbands. Two years after divorce, gender differences in satisfaction with household income were almost reduced to zero. Looking at the broader measure of satisfaction with the overall standard of living, divorced women even surpassed their former husbands. Although both experienced declines in this measure following divorce, these drops were less pronounced among women, yielding advantages in the difference measure comparing former spouses. Generally, however, results on the satisfaction measures suggested small gender gaps in the consequences of divorce in terms of subjective economic well-being.

Turning to the final set of outcome measures, Figure 3 illustrates gender differences in the consequences of divorce for domestic well-being. The measure of satisfaction with family life reacted strongly to the divorce process. This applied particularly to men who experienced a drop of three scale points between the reference period and the year of separation. The magnitude of this effect amounted to 2.5 *SD* of within-person variation in satisfaction with family life measured in the full individual sample of the SOEP. Sizable drops of were also found among women, who reached their low point already in the year before separation. Yet, in terms of differences between the formerly married, women still held a large advantage in post-divorce satisfaction with family life. This gender gap peaked in the year after separation, women being favored by almost 1.5 scale points. In subsequent years, however, the gap narrowed gradually, and vanished entirely between three and four years after divorce.

The second domain of domestic well-being – housework – also favored women. Their measure of satisfaction with housework indicated a marked rise in the year of separation. Yet, this increase was not accompanied by a concurrent decline experienced by their former husbands. Instead, men's satisfaction with housework showed little change across the observation period. Because women's initial rise was followed by a slight decline in subsequent years, the initial gender gap in satisfaction with housework narrowed in the longer term. In contrast, the final measure of domestic well-being – hours of housework – revealed persisting gender differences in the consequences of divorce. In the year of separation, women reduced and men increased their time spent on these tasks. As a result, gender gap in routine housework was cut in half. This shift was permanent, as subsequent years indicated little changes in the performance of housework among formerly married spouses.

Discussion

Divorce affects various aspects of health and psychological well-being as well as economic, social, and domestic life. Research on gender differences in the consequences of divorce has typically focused only on one of these domains. This study presents a fuller picture, drawing on multiple measures of subjective, economic, and domestic well-being. To examine gender differences in the consequences of divorce in the short term and longer term, I used multi-wave household panel data from the German SOEP, comparing initially married couples over a period of up to four years before and after divorce.

Three main findings emerged from the analysis. First, short-term changes in most outcomes favored women. In the year after divorce, women reported better health, higher subjective well-being, and greater satisfaction with family life and housework. Women also spent half an hour less on routine household tasks. Men were clearly favored only on one measure, post-divorce equivalised household income. Yet, women's subjective economic well-being was surprisingly robust against this large gender gap, as indicated by their only slightly lower satisfaction with income and higher satisfaction with overall standard of living.

Second, most of these differences were short-lived. The gender gaps in satisfaction with life, satisfaction with standard of living, and satisfaction with income closed already in the following year. Those in satisfaction with family life and housework lasted for two more years.

Third, sizable and statistically significant longer-term gender gaps were found only in two measures. In household income, men retained a substantial advantage, although their former wives' incomes recovered noticeably over time. In hours of housework, the pre-divorce gender gap was cut in half after separation, and changed little in subsequent years.

Taken together, the results of the present study shed new light on a long-standing question: Who suffers more from divorce – men or women? Taking psychological, economic, and domestic well-being into account, my findings suggest that men were more vulnerable to short-term effects on subjective measures of well-being, whereas women experienced longer-term disadvantages in objective economic status. In other words, women's disproportionate income strain was chronic, whereas men's disproportionate psychological and domestic strain was not.

Looking at the big picture of knowledge about gender differences in the effects of divorce, these conclusions demonstrate the importance of considering multiple outcomes in the analysis. This applies particularly to the simultaneous inclusion of objective and subjective measures. Most notably, gender gaps looked very different depending on whether objective financial status or subjective economic well-being was studied. This distinction is theoretically important, given that the chronic strain model highlights subjective factors such as the actual distress that individuals experience.

The results also support a number of specific theoretical ideas that have been advanced in previous research about gender differences in the consequences of divorce. The measure of life satisfaction, for example, indicated that women's and men's subjective well-being did indeed adapt on different time scales. The temporal pattern found is consistent with the idea that actual separation brings relief to women whereas it exacerbates distress among men (Andress & Bröckel, 2007; Thomas, 1982). It also mirrors the fact that women are more likely to initiate divorce than men (Kalmijn & Poortman, 2006). The idea that "the spouse who is considering divorce might mourn the end of the marriage even though it is still legally and physically intact" (Amato, 2000, p. 1272), however, was not supported, as pre-divorce declines in life satisfaction were similar among women and men.

In the domestic sphere, a direct measure of satisfaction with family life supported the assertion that noncustodial strain outweighs custodial strain in post-divorce years (Bauserman, 2012). These differences, however, disappeared in the longer term. Finally, the findings on changes in housework were in line with the idea that the division of labor becomes less gendered after marital dissolution (Gupta, 1999; Hewitt et al., 2013). Further analyses on change in hours of market work (not shown) indicated a convergence concurrent to the one found in routine housework. Yet, changes in the latter measure were more substantial. The finding of a fifty percent reduction in this gender gap is in line with other studies showing that although the division of labor is mostly stable across the life course, key transitions – namely parenthood, divorce, and retirement – involve substantial, and permanent changes (Kühhirt, 2012; Leopold & Skopek, 2015).

In closing, I note three limitations to the present study that require further investigation in future analyses of gender differences in the effects of divorce. First, the data did not include sufficient longitudinal information to assess gender gaps in objective measures of health (e.g., grip strength and cortisol levels) as well of measures of health behavior such as alcohol abuse and smoking. The latter omission is particularly important to address in future multiple-outcome studies, as previous research has indicated that men are more likely to exhibit externalizing behavior in reaction to stress (Horwitz & Davies, 1994).

Second, patterns of longer-term convergence between formerly married spouses might emerge from selective attrition. If those who are most distressed in post-divorce years drop out at higher rates, similar pathways of longer-term adaptation may pertain only to a selective subset of formerly married spouses who continue participating in the survey. Third, the present study was designed as a descriptive baseline assessment of gender differences in the joint effects of divorce on subjective, economic, and domestic well-being. An important

objective for future study is to test whether its conclusions are supported by a causal design,

which estimates the counterfactual on the basis of information about stably married couples.

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Satisfaction with Life

Satisfaction with Health

Self-Rated Health

Difference in Satisfaction with Life

Difference in Satisfaction with Health

Difference in Self-Rated Health
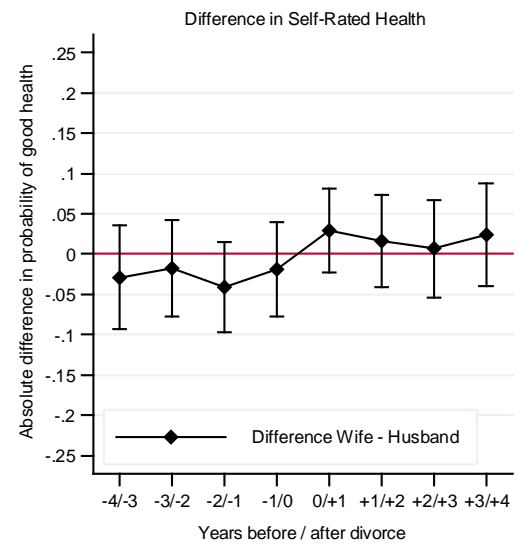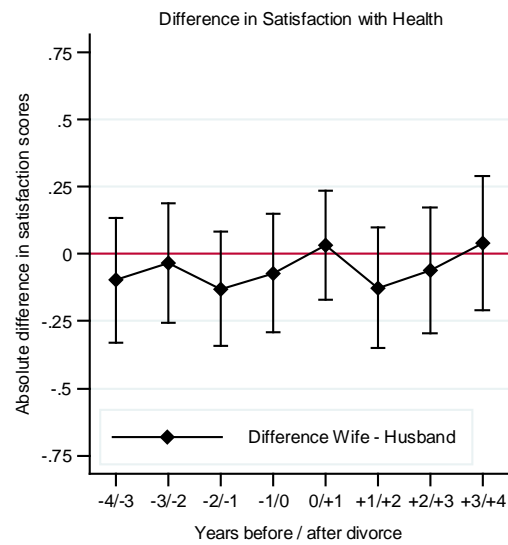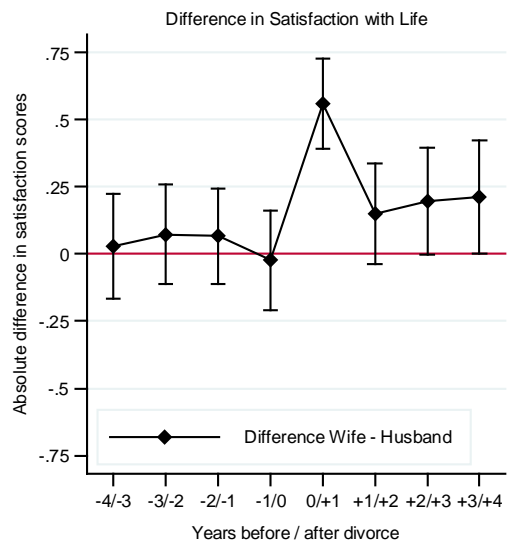
Figure 1. *Gender Differences in Health and Subjective Well-Being*

Note: Data are from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study 1984–2012, Release 2013. N = 755 married couples. N = 4,691 observations. See Table 2 for details on the measures.

Figure 2. *Gender Differences in Economic Well-Being*
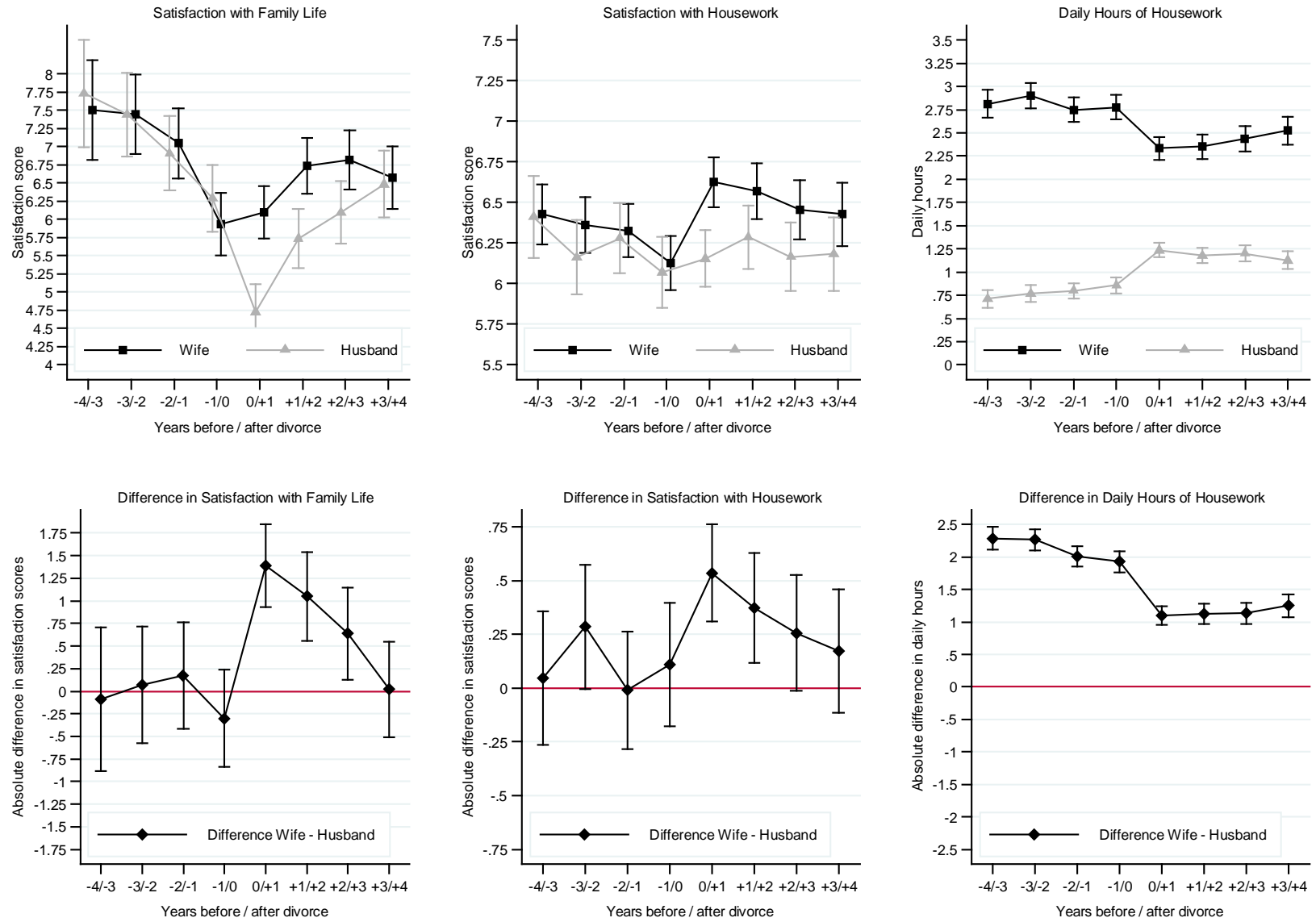
Figure 2. *Gender Differences in Domestic Well-Being*

Note: Data are from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study 1984–2012, Release 2013. $N = 755$ married couples. $N = 4,691$ observations.

See Table 2 for details on the measures.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Time-Constant Characteristics of Couples (N = 755)*
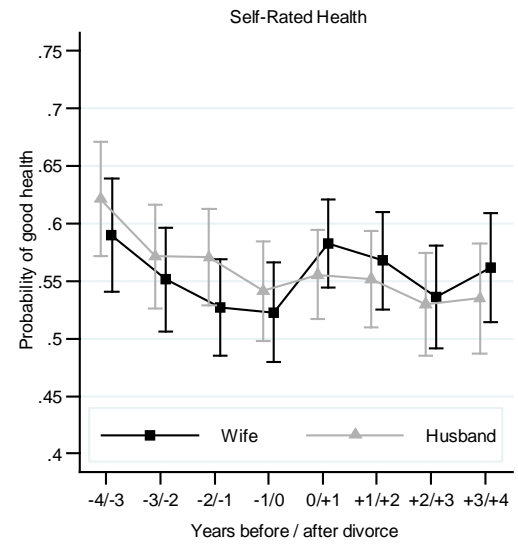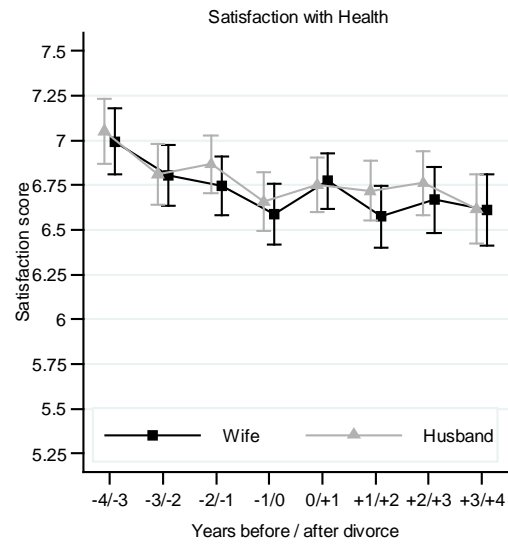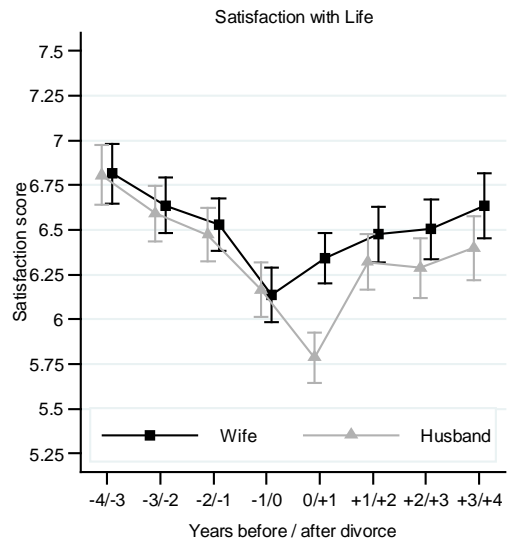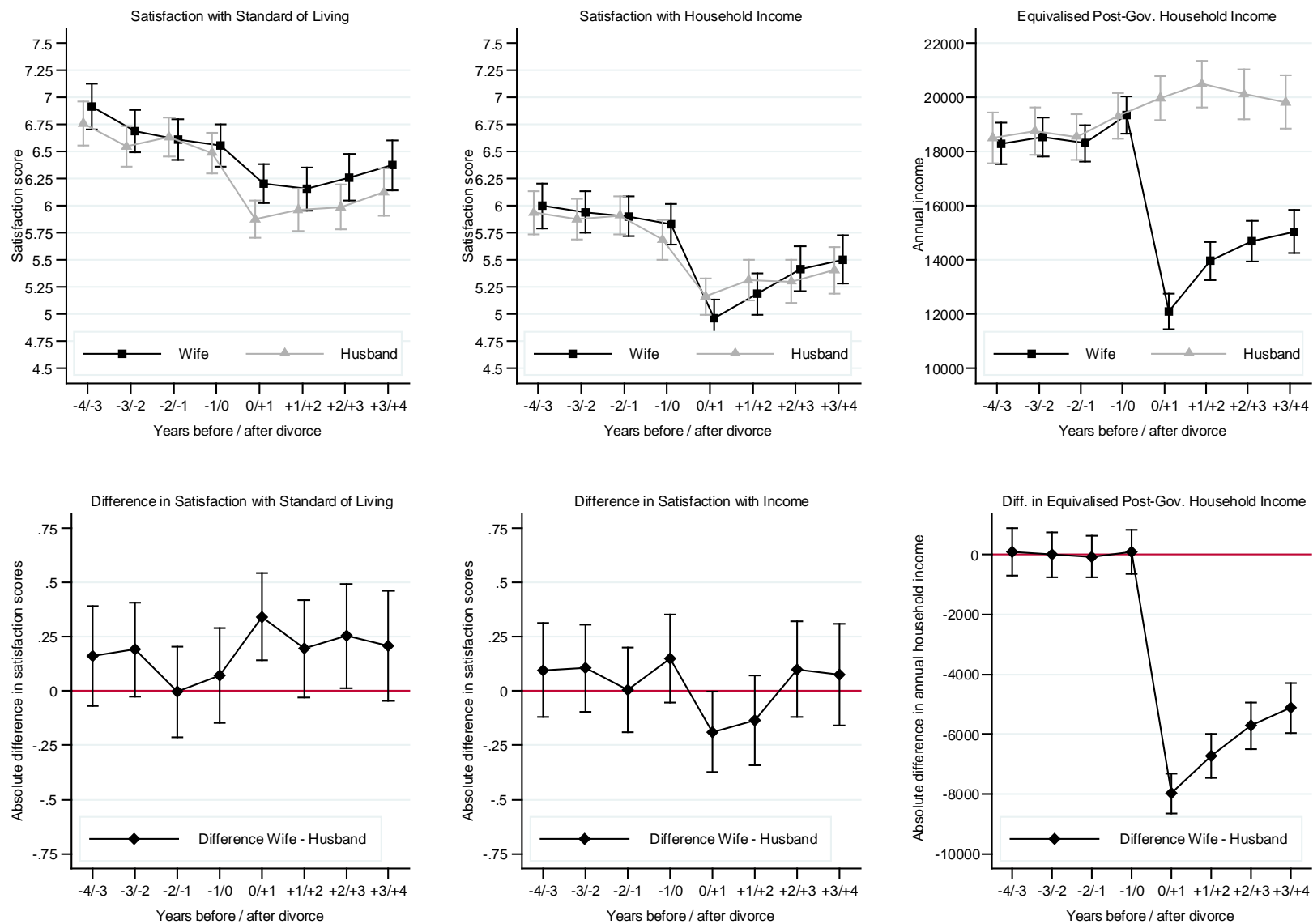
Variable	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max
Calendar year of divorce	1999.36	7.17	1985	2012
Child under 16 (1 = yes)[a]	0.52		0	1
Year of birth				
Wife	1961.02	10.38	1922	1985
Husband	1958.05	10.68	1919	1985
Age at divorce				
Wife	38.34	9.40	21	79
Husband	41.31	9.70	23	79
Education[b]				
Wife				
Low	0.37		0	1
Intermediate	0.48		0	1
High	0.13		0	1
Husband				
Low	0.43		0	1
Intermediate	0.40		0	1
High	0.15		0	1
East German (1 = yes)[c]				
Wife	0.24		0	1
Husband	0.22		0	1
Immigrant (1 = yes)				
Wife	0.12		0	1
Husband	0.13		0	1

Note: Data are from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study 1984 – 2012, release 2013. *N* = 755 couples. [a]At least one child age 16 or younger living in the couple's household in the year before divorce. [b]Low education = up to lower secondary vocational degree (CASMIN 1a-c). Intermediate education = up to higher secondary degree plus vocational training (CASMIN 2a-c). High education = lower and higher tertiary degree (CASMIN 3a-b). [c]Living in East Germany (Former GDR) in 1989.

Table 2. *Outcome Measures*

Measure	*M*	*SD*	Min	Max	N (obs.)	Description / Survey question
Health and psychological well-being						
Satisfaction with life						Asked annually 1984-2012
Wife	6.50	1.99	0	10	4,684	"How satisfied are you with your life, all things considered?"
Husband	6.32	1.99	0	10	4,679	0 = completely dissatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied
Difference Wife – Husband	0.18	2.36	-9	10	4,672	
Satisfaction with health						Asked annually 1984-2012
Wife	6.73	2.22	0	10	4,683	"How satisfied are you with your health?"
Husband	6.77	2.15	0	10	4,688	0 = completely dissatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied
Difference Wife – Husband	-0.04	2.83	-10	10	4,680	
Self-rated health						Asked in 1992 and annually 1994-2012
Wife	0.56		0	1	3,627	"How would you describe your current health?"
Husband	0.56		0	1	3,625	Original 5-point scale (1 = very good, 5 = bad) dichotomized:
Difference Wife – Husband	0.00		-1	1	3,621	1 = very good or good, 0 = less than good
Economic well-being						
Satisfaction with standard of living						Asked annually 1990-1993 and 1995-2006
Wife	6.44	2.11	0	10	3,048	"How satisfied are you with your overall standard of living?"
Husband	6.27	2.04	0	10	3,041	0 = completely dissatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied
Difference Wife – Husband	0.17	2.27	-10	9	3,034	
Satisfaction with income						Asked annually 1984-2012
Wife	5.58	2.46	0	10	4,667	"How satisfied are you with your household income?"
Husband	5.56	2.39	0	10	4,665	0 = completely dissatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied
Difference Wife – Husband	0.02	2.57	-10	10	4,642	
Equivalised household income						Annual post-government household income calculated by the SOEP as the
Wife	16,127.54	9,837.14	0	156,895	4,643	sum of total family income from labor earnings, asset flows, retirement
Husband	19,394.43	11,842.77	0	245,264	4,643	income, private transfers, public transfers, and social security pensions
Difference Wife – Husband	-3,266.89	10,010.44	-202,455	102,171	4,643	minus family taxes. Private transfers include alimony and child support payments. Public transfers include housing allowances, child benefits, subsistence assistance, and maternity benefits (Grabka, 2013). Equivalised by elasticity parameter $\theta = 0.5$: Household income / household size$^{\theta}$
Domestic well-being						
Satisfaction with family life						Asked annually 2006-2012
Wife	6.69	2.52	0	10	911	"How satisfied are you with your family life?"
Husband	6.18	2.75	0	10	909	0 = completely dissatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied
Difference Wife – Husband	0.51	3.06	-9	10	906	
Satisfaction with housework						Asked annually 1984-1990 and 1993-2012
Wife	6.43	2.04	0	10	3,947	"How satisfied are you with your work in the home?"
Husband	6.25	2.13	0	10	2,898	0 = completely dissatisfied, 10 = completely satisfied
Difference Wife – Husband	0.23	2.60	-8	10	2,680	
Hours of housework						Asked annually 1991-2012
Wife	2.59	1.60	0	10	4,639	"What does a typical weekday look like for you?
Husband	1.00	0.97	0	10	4,480	How many hours do you spend on the following activities:
Difference Wife – Husband	1.59	1.92	-9	10	4,435	Washing, cooking, cleaning?" Top-coded to 10 hours

Note: Data are from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study 1984 – 2012, release 2013. *N* = 755 couples. *N* = 4,691 observations (couple-years).

Table A1. *Random-Effects Regression Models for Change in Wives' Outcomes*

	Model W1	Model W2	Model W3	Model W4	Model W5	Model W6	Model W7	Model W8	Model W9
	Satisfaction with life	Satisfaction with health	Self-rated health	Satisfaction with standard of living	Satisfaction with income	Equivalised household income	Satisfaction with family life	Satisfaction with housework	Hours of housework
Years before/after divorce (ref. 4 to 3 before)									
3 to 2 before	-0.177+	-0.189+	-0.038	-0.224+	-0.058	235.260	-0.053	-0.065	0.091
	(0.095)	(0.103)	(0.028)	(0.116)	(0.111)	(351.784)	(0.363)	(0.105)	(0.078)
2 to 1 before	-0.286**	-0.249*	-0.063*	-0.304**	-0.097	8.131	-0.454	-0.103	-0.061
	(0.094)	(0.102)	(0.028)	(0.116)	(0.110)	(351.760)	(0.361)	(0.104)	(0.077)
1 to 0 before	-0.675**	-0.406**	-0.067*	-0.359**	-0.169	1051.417**	-1.565**	-0.300**	-0.034
	(0.098)	(0.107)	(0.029)	(0.122)	(0.116)	(372.205)	(0.364)	(0.109)	(0.081)
0 to 1 after	-0.474**	-0.221*	-0.007	-0.713**	-1.036**	-6205.928**	-1.406**	0.196+	-0.478**
	(0.095)	(0.103)	(0.028)	(0.119)	(0.112)	(366.272)	(0.361)	(0.106)	(0.079)
1 to 2 after	-0.340**	-0.421**	-0.022	-0.759**	-0.813**	-4329.224**	-0.764*	0.141	-0.458**
	(0.102)	(0.111)	(0.030)	(0.129)	(0.122)	(401.294)	(0.379)	(0.114)	(0.085)
2 to 3 after	-0.312**	-0.325**	-0.054+	-0.655**	-0.581**	-3603.076**	-0.684+	0.028	-0.375**
	(0.108)	(0.118)	(0.031)	(0.137)	(0.129)	(431.909)	(0.397)	(0.120)	(0.090)
3 to 4 after	-0.180	-0.383**	-0.028	-0.542**	-0.496**	-3251.050**	-0.928*	-0.001	-0.287**
	(0.115)	(0.126)	(0.033)	(0.145)	(0.138)	(467.013)	(0.415)	(0.127)	(0.096)
Constant	6.850**	6.953**	0.540**	7.003**	6.014**	20819.486**	7.656**	6.252**	2.664**
	(0.126)	(0.140)	(0.034)	(0.155)	(0.155)	(561.454)	(0.441)	(0.138)	(0.106)
Observations	4,684	4,683	3,627	3,048	4,667	4,643	911	3,947	3,898

Note: Data are from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study 1984 – 2012, release 2013. Standard errors in parentheses. All models control for age (categories -30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45 (ref.), 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66+), and period (categories 1984-1988, 1989-1993, 1994-1998, 1999-2003 (ref.), 2004-2008, 2009-2012). $+ p < 0.10$, $* p < 0.05$, $** p < 0.01$.

Table A2. *Random-Effects Regression Models for Change in Husbands' Outcomes*

	Model H1 Satisfaction with life	Model H2 Satisfaction with health	Model H3 Self-rated health	Model H4 Satisfaction with standard of living	Model H5 Satisfaction with income	Model H6 Equivalised household income	Model H7 Satisfaction with family life	Model H8 Satisfaction with housework	Model H9 Hours of housework
Years before/after divorce (ref. 4 to 3 before)									
3 to 2 before	-0.214*	-0.241*	-0.050+	-0.212+	-0.060	254.931	-0.290	-0.248+	0.057
	(0.093)	(0.094)	(0.027)	(0.113)	(0.106)	(439.176)	(0.382)	(0.149)	(0.055)
2 to 1 before	-0.332**	-0.185*	-0.051+	-0.124	-0.025	37.137	-0.821*	-0.130	0.088
	(0.092)	(0.094)	(0.027)	(0.113)	(0.106)	(438.620)	(0.381)	(0.147)	(0.054)
1 to 0 before	-0.640**	-0.394**	-0.080**	-0.270*	-0.249*	799.316+	-1.441**	-0.340*	0.146*
	(0.096)	(0.098)	(0.028)	(0.119)	(0.111)	(463.405)	(0.386)	(0.152)	(0.057)
0 to 1 after	-1.018**	-0.300**	-0.066*	-0.884**	-0.774**	1463.074**	-3.005**	-0.256+	0.524**
	(0.093)	(0.096)	(0.027)	(0.116)	(0.108)	(456.143)	(0.384)	(0.140)	(0.054)
1 to 2 after	-0.485**	-0.333**	-0.070*	-0.796**	-0.622**	1978.484**	-1.993**	-0.124	0.467**
	(0.101)	(0.104)	(0.029)	(0.125)	(0.117)	(499.012)	(0.405)	(0.149)	(0.058)
2 to 3 after	-0.519**	-0.290**	-0.091**	-0.773**	-0.635**	1612.730**	-1.638**	-0.245	0.488**
	(0.107)	(0.111)	(0.031)	(0.133)	(0.125)	(535.716)	(0.425)	(0.156)	(0.061)
3 to 4 after	-0.407**	-0.435**	-0.086**	-0.634**	-0.532**	1314.279*	-1.247**	-0.227	0.415**
	(0.114)	(0.119)	(0.032)	(0.141)	(0.133)	(578.476)	(0.446)	(0.164)	(0.064)
Constant	6.727**	6.817**	0.581**	6.784**	6.044**	20365.747**	7.747**	6.339**	0.695**
	(0.122)	(0.130)	(0.033)	(0.143)	(0.145)	(660.601)	(0.461)	(0.168)	(0.066)
Observations	4,679	4,688	3,625	3,041	4,665	4,643	909	2,898	3,784

Note: Data are from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study 1984 – 2012, release 2013. Standard errors in parentheses. All models control for age (categories -30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45 (ref.), 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66+), and period (categories 1984-1988, 1989-1993, 1994-1998, 1999-2003 (ref.), 2004-2008, 2009-2012). + p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01.

Table A3. *Random-Effects Regression Models for Differences between Wives' and Husbands' Outcomes*

	Model D1 Satisfaction with life	Model D2 Satisfaction with health	Model D3 Self-rated health	Model D4 Satisfaction with standard of living	Model D5 Satisfaction with income	Model D6 Equivalised household income	Model D7 Satisfaction with family life	Model D8 Satisfaction with housework	Model D9 Hours of housework
Years before/after divorce (ref. 4 to 3 before)									
3 to 2 before	0.044	0.064	0.011	0.029	0.009	-93.442	0.163	0.238	-0.019
	(0.119)	(0.132)	(0.038)	(0.147)	(0.135)	(487.414)	(0.475)	(0.200)	(0.098)
2 to 1 before	0.037	-0.032	-0.012	-0.166	-0.092	-153.641	0.262	-0.057	-0.280**
	(0.118)	(0.130)	(0.037)	(0.145)	(0.132)	(477.823)	(0.462)	(0.196)	(0.097)
1 to 0 before	-0.052	0.026	0.009	-0.089	0.053	3.045	-0.211	0.061	-0.357**
	(0.121)	(0.135)	(0.039)	(0.151)	(0.136)	(492.492)	(0.452)	(0.201)	(0.100)
0 to 1 after	0.531**	0.131	0.058	0.181	-0.285*	-8066.894**	1.480**	0.489**	-1.190**
	(0.115)	(0.127)	(0.036)	(0.144)	(0.129)	(465.571)	(0.435)	(0.181)	(0.094)
1 to 2 after	0.120	-0.028	0.045	0.034	-0.231+	-6821.723**	1.140*	0.326+	-1.162**
	(0.122)	(0.135)	(0.038)	(0.153)	(0.137)	(494.952)	(0.452)	(0.191)	(0.099)
2 to 3 after	0.167	0.036	0.035	0.092	0.004	-5808.917**	0.728	0.208	-1.155**
	(0.127)	(0.141)	(0.040)	(0.160)	(0.143)	(512.908)	(0.463)	(0.197)	(0.102)
3 to 4 after	0.182	0.139	0.053	0.048	-0.020	-5216.688**	0.112	0.124	-1.038**
	(0.132)	(0.147)	(0.041)	(0.166)	(0.149)	(534.586)	(0.476)	(0.203)	(0.106)
Constant	0.029	-0.097	-0.029	0.162	0.097	89.826	-0.091	0.047	2.288**
	(0.100)	(0.119)	(0.033)	(0.118)	(0.110)	(402.218)	(0.406)	(0.159)	(0.089)
Observations	4,672	4,680	3,621	3,034	4,642	4,643	906	2,680	3,749

Note: Data are from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study 1984 – 2012, release 2013. Standard errors in parentheses.
+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01.