



Journal Contents

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Current Volume

Volumes

Articles

Special Collections

General Information

About the Journal

Information for Authors

Copyright Information

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Children's experience of family disruption and family formation: Evidence from 16 FFS countries

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Abstract

In this paper, we present a number of descriptive measures on children's experience of family disruption and family formation. We use data from the Fertility and Family Surveys of 15 European countries and corresponding data from the USA in order to find out what kind of family circumstances children are born into and what experience they subsequently have of various family-transformation events of their mothers. Our presentation reveals some similarities but also striking differences in the family-demographic experience of children in different countries. The USA stands out as one extreme case with its very high proportion of children born to a lone mother, with a higher probability of children who experience a union disruption of their parents than anywhere else, and with many children having the experience of living in a stepfamily. Italy stands out at the other end of the scale. Practically all children here are born to a married mother and very few of them experience the dissolution of their parents' union before they turn 15.

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[[Back to previous page](#)]