

Deadbeat after Divorce?

Men's Employment Trajectories and Union Dissolution in Germany

Michaela Kreyenfeld & Sarah Schmauk

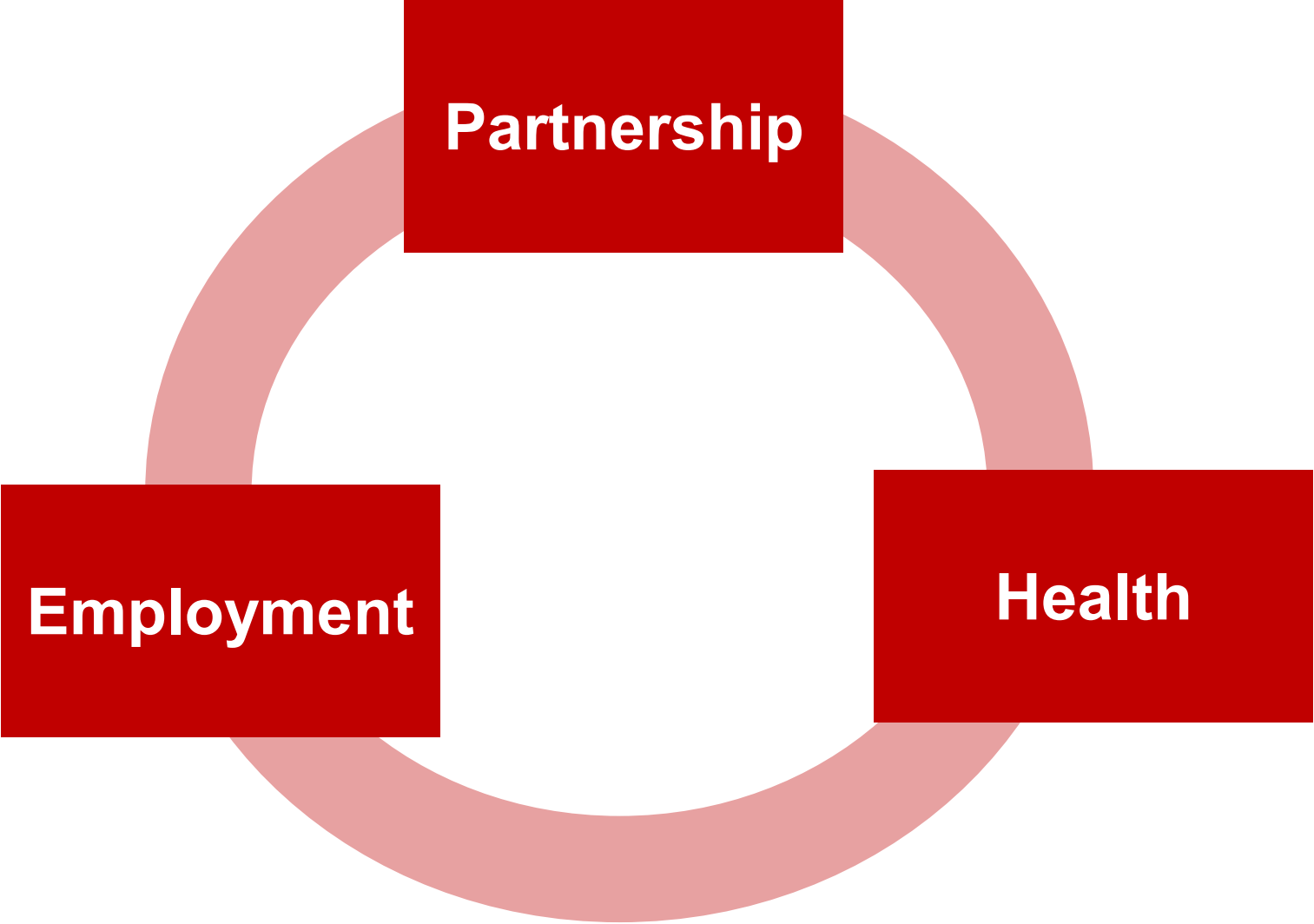


• **Linked Lives**

• **Cumulation**

• **Interdependencies**

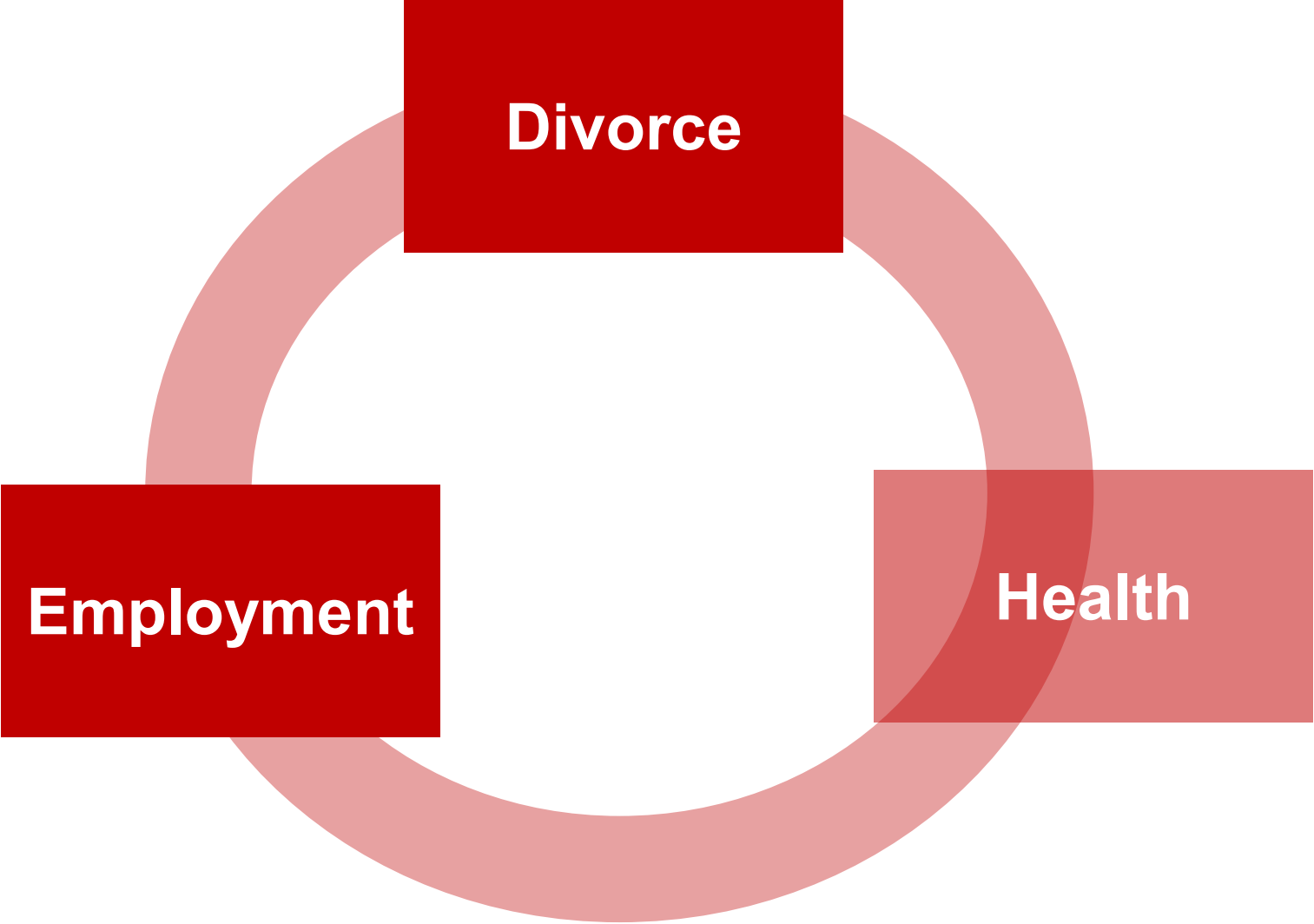
• **Feedback Effects**



Partnership

Employment

Health



Prior Research

Divorce & Household Income

Demography, Vol. 28, No. 3, August 1991

Wife or Frau, Women Do Worse: A Comparison of Men and Women in the United States and Germany After Marital Dissolution*

Richard V. Burkhauser
Syracuse University

Greg J. Duncan
The University of Michigan

Richard Hauser
Roland Berntsen
The University of Frankfurt am Main

European Sociological Review VOLUME 22 | NUMBER 5 | DECEMBER 2006 533-560
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The Economic Consequences of Partnership Dissolution— A Comparative Analysis of Panel Studies from Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Sweden

Hans-Jürgen Andreß, Barbara Borgloh, Miriam Bröckel,
Marco Giesselmann, and Dina Hummelsheim

The paper analyses the economic consequences of partnership dissolution in different institutional settings. Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Sweden are selected as representatives of four prototypical models of family support (market model, extended family model, male breadwinner model, dual earner model). It is assumed that these four types of family support create specific dependencies within the family, which in case of separation or divorce may have negative economic consequences for the weaker partner. The central question is how much economic autonomy is granted to the weaker family members within each of the four models. Following a thorough discussion of the institutional setting in each of the selected countries, it is assumed that economic autonomy is highest in Sweden and lowest in Italy with Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain ranging in between. Using a cross-national data set of separations developed by the authors from national household panels in these five countries, a large number of partnership dissolutions are studied over time. The observation period is long enough to distinguish short- from long-term consequences of partnership dissolution and in doing so to add to previous comparative research. Using multivariate panel data models it is shown that (i) adjusted household income is affected for both genders; however more negatively for women than for men, (ii) the income decline is highest in Italy and lowest in Sweden, and (iii) British and German women recover rather quickly from the negative economic effects of separation. Sweden stands out as the country with the highest gender equalities with respect to post-separation incomes. However, the model does not convince without having a blemish: in the long run both Swedish men and women have to deal with long-lasting financial consequences after separation, which do not appear to the same extent in any of the other countries.

Divorce & Household Income



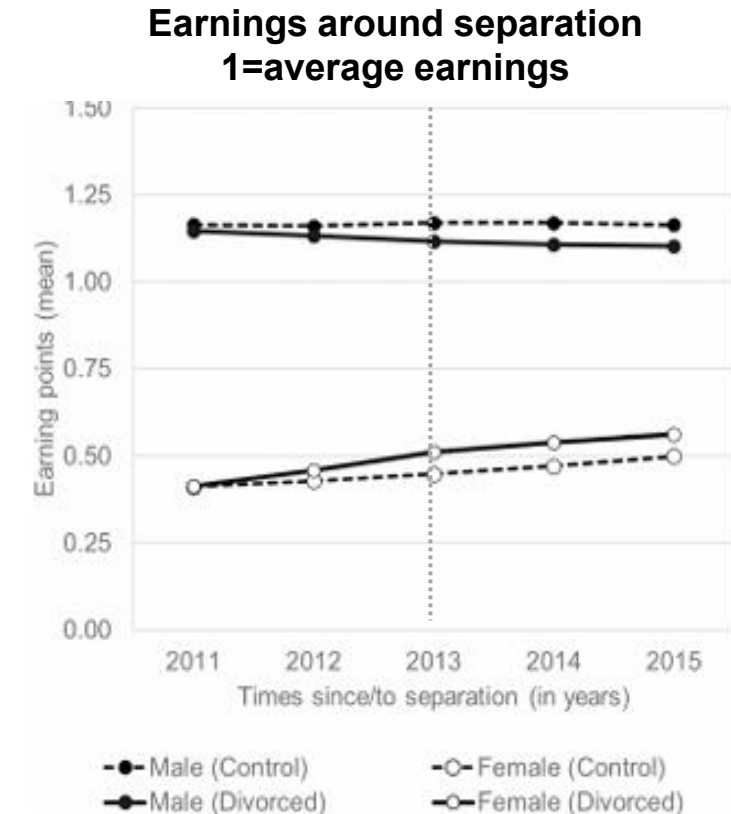
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Divorce & Men's Individual Income

- Stable earnings/employment around divorce of men compared to women ([Andreas et al. 2003](#))
- Increased risk of unemployment of men after divorce ([Kalmijn 2005](#); [Covizzi 2008](#))
- Heterogeneous effects depending on men's pre-divorce earnings ([Endeweld et al. 2022](#))



Note: only West Germany, divorced in 2013
Source: [Brüggmann & Kreyenfeld \(2023\)](#)

Trajectories:

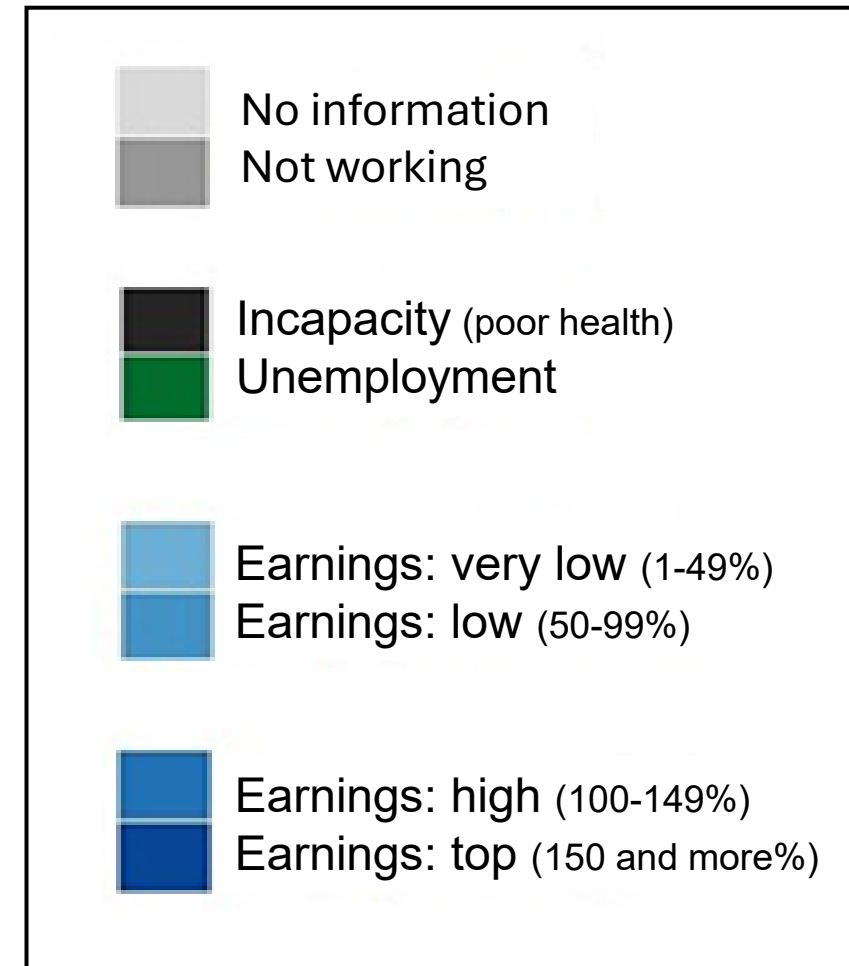
How do men's employment and earnings trajectories evolve following divorce?

Causality:

How do divorced men's trajectories differ from those of a comparable control group?

Heterogeneities:

How do these trajectories differ by pre-divorce earnings levels?



Data & Method

Data

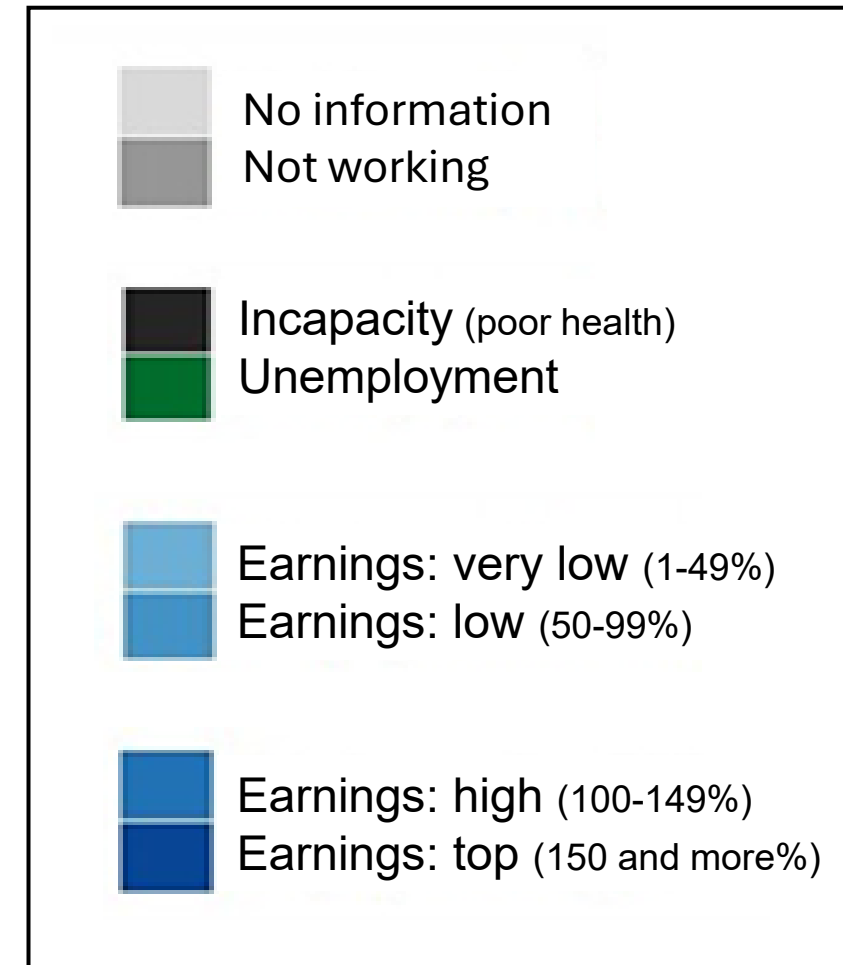
- German Pension Registers (VSKT2020)
- 2% subsample of all insured persons

Variables

- Monthly employment/earning histories
- Divorce histories of the divorced

Analytical Sample

- Men
- First divorce between 2008 and 2014
- Married for at least 3 years
- Younger than age 60 at divorce
- N: 10.044 divorced men



Marriage



Separation



Filing for divorce



Defendant receives divorce petition



Court Decision

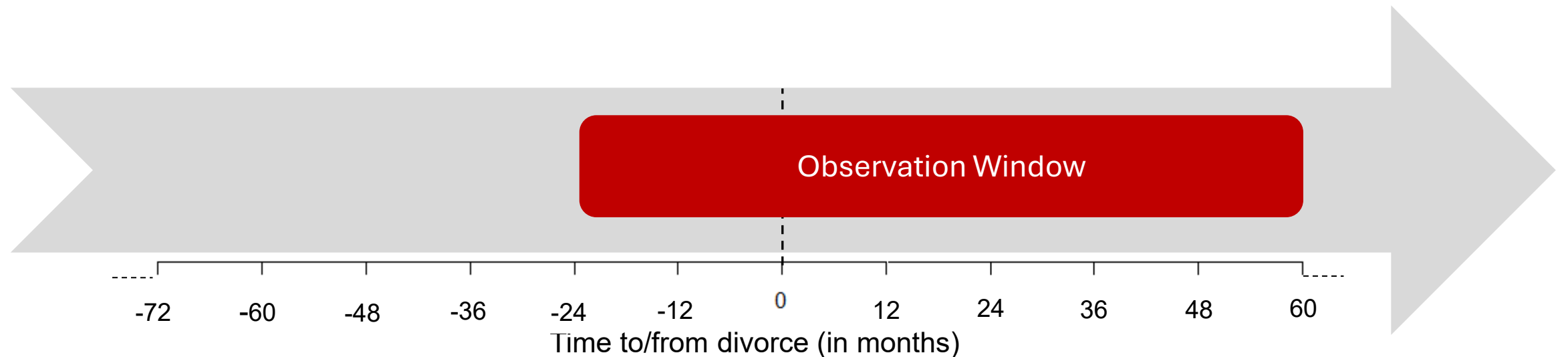


T=0



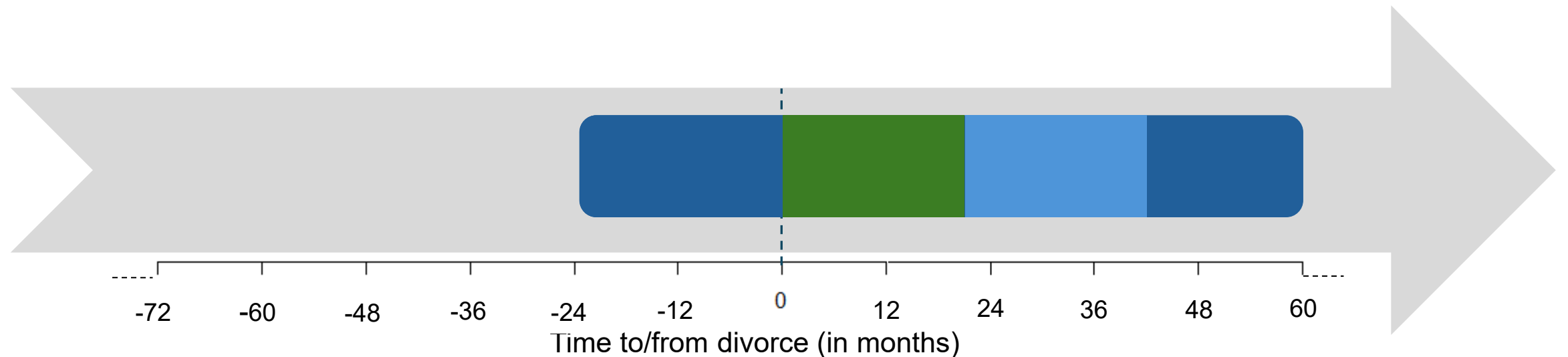
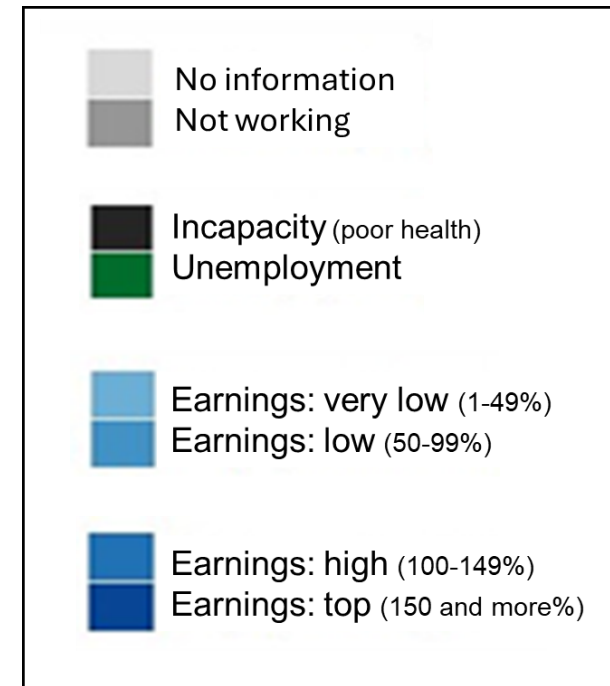
Method

- **Observation Window:** -2 to +5 years before/after separation



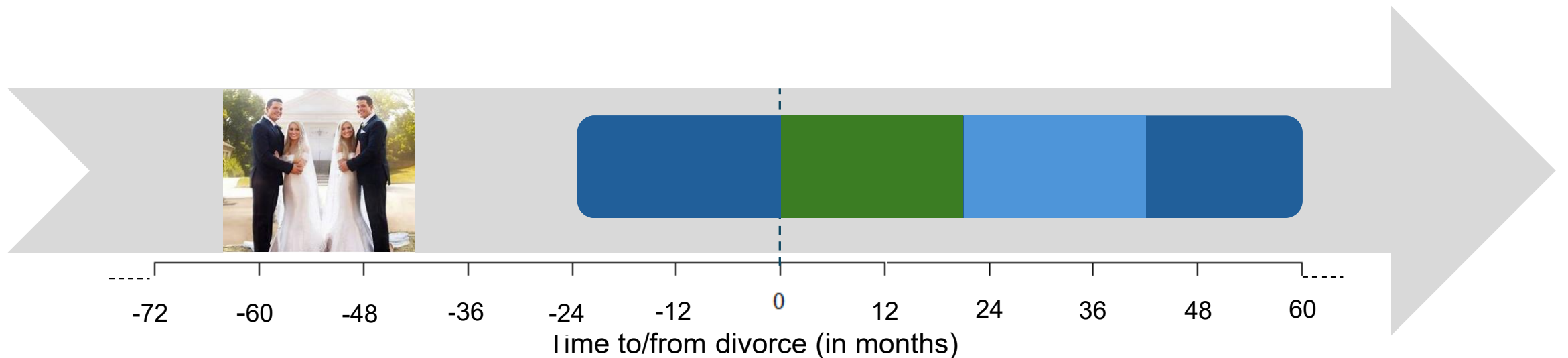
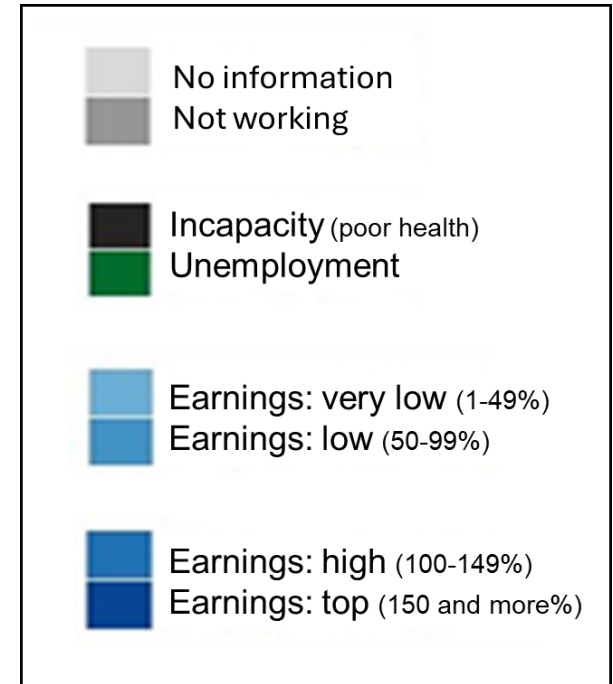
Method

- **Observation Window:** -2 to +5 years before/after separation
- **Method:** Sequence Analysis & Clustering



Method

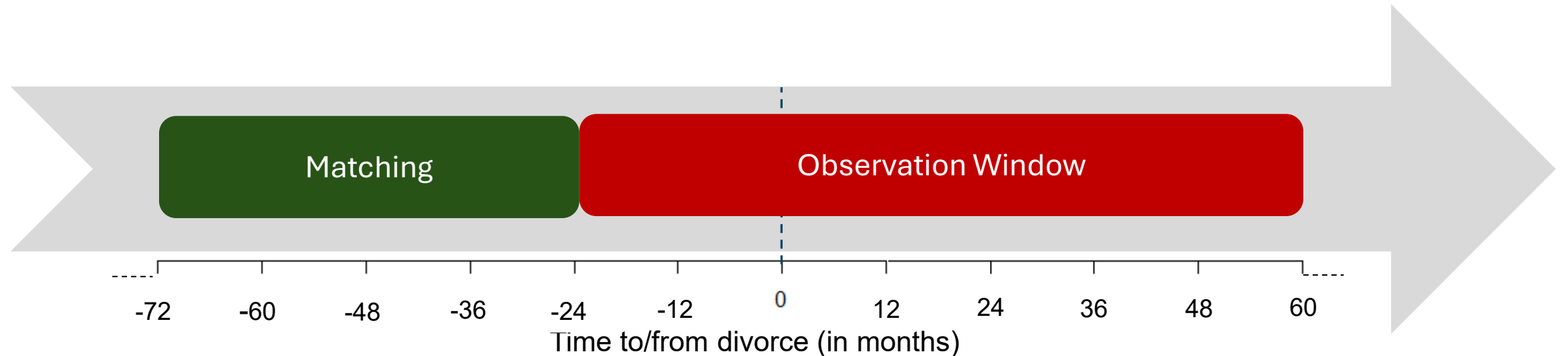
- **Observation Window:** -2 to +5 years before/after separation
- **Method:** Sequence Analysis & Clustering
- **Matching:** Search for a statistical twin



Method

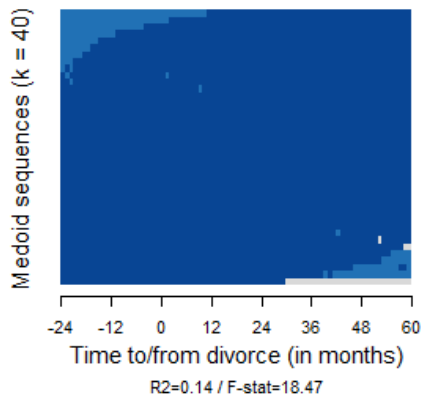
- **Matching Period:** -5 to +2 before separation
- **Method:** Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM)
- **N (before Matching):** 10.044 divorced men
- **N (after Matching):** 9.580 divorced men

	Original sample		Analytical sample	
	Divorced (before matching)	Excluded	Divorced (after matching)	Control
N	10.044	464	9.580	9.580
Year of birth	1968	1967	1968	1968
Year of divorce	2011	2011	2011	2011
Income (t-72 to t-24)	0.96	0.75	0.97	0.97
Income max (t-72 to t-24)	1.08	1.14	1.08	1.07
Pre-divorce earnings (t-36 to t-24)				
no income	12.3	25.7	11.7	11.7
up to 60%	15.7	25.0	15.2	15.2
more than 60 up to 100%	22.8	21.6	22.8	22.8
more than 100 up to 150%	28.0	15.9	28.6	28.6
more than 150%	21.2	11.9	21.7	21.7
Incapacity (t-72 to t-24)				
No	88.9	40.5	91.2	91.2
up to 6 months	8.6	29.7	7.5	7.5
more than 6 months	2.6	29.7	1.3	1.3
Unemployment (t-72 to t-24)				
No	70.3	27.4	72.4	72.4
up to 6 months	9.6	23.9	8.9	8.9
7-12 months	6.2	23.1	5.3	5.3
13-24 months	6.6	16.4	6.2	6.2
more than 24 months	7.4	9.3	7.3	7.3
Region				
West Germany	81.9	72.0	82.4	82.4
East Germany	18.1	28.0	17.6	17.6

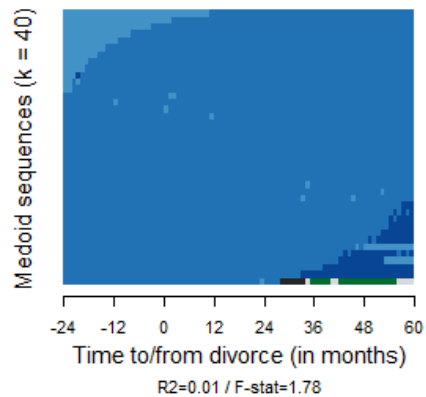


Results

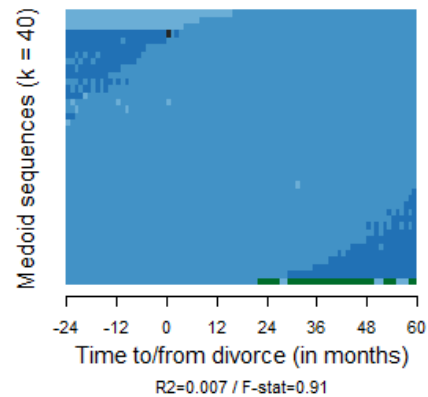
EMPLOYMENT HIGH (23.5%)



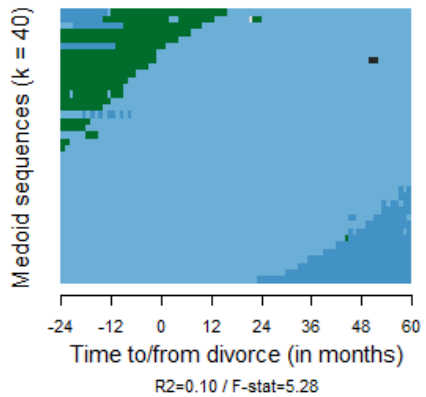
EMPLOYMENT AV. HIGH (28.2%)



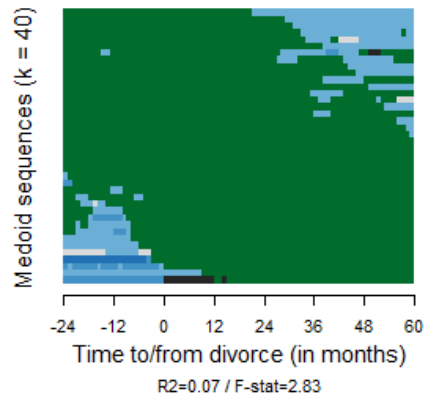
EMPLOYMENT AV. LOW (23.6%)



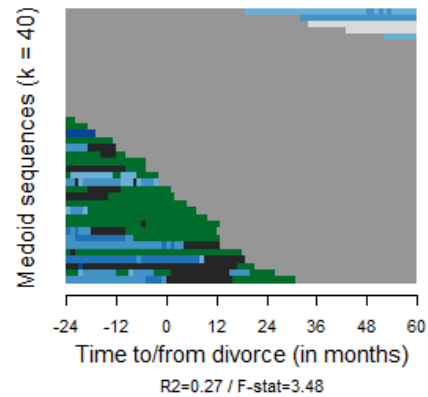
(UNSTAB.) EMP. LOW (9.5%)



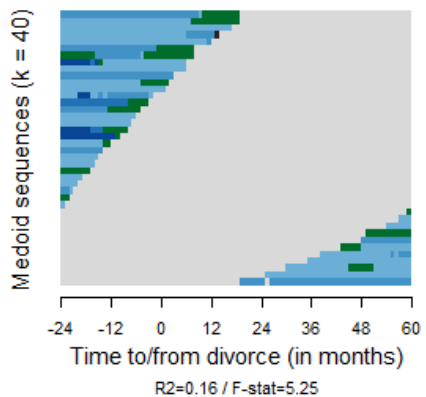
UNEMPLOYMENT (7.4%)



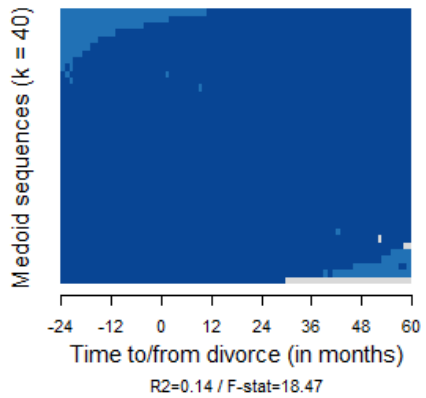
NOT WORKING (2.1%)



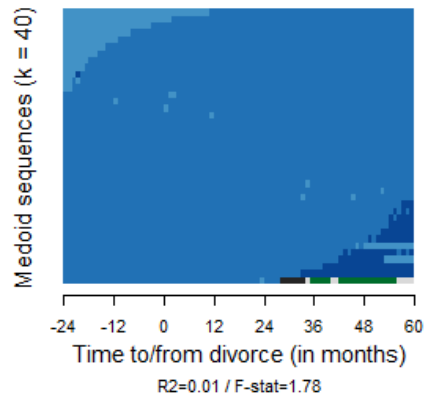
DROP OUT (5.7%)



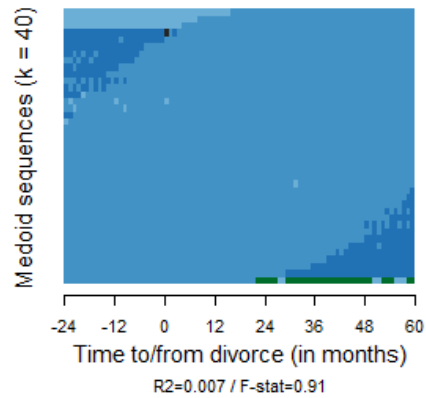
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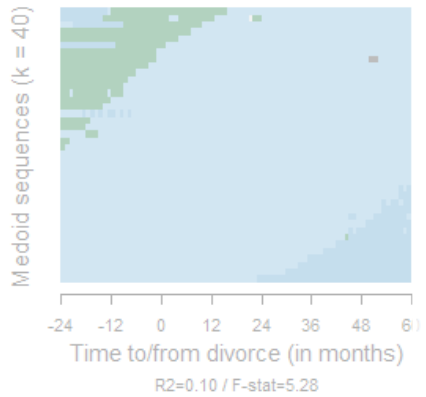


EMPLOYMENT AV. LOW (23.6%)

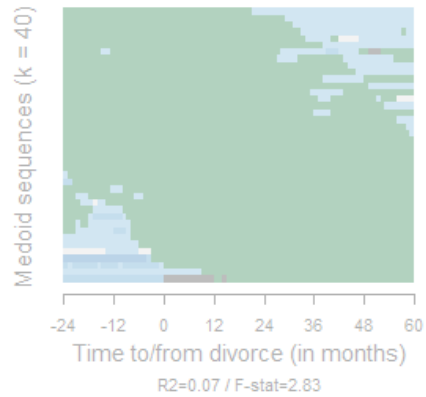


75.3%
stable employment
trajectories

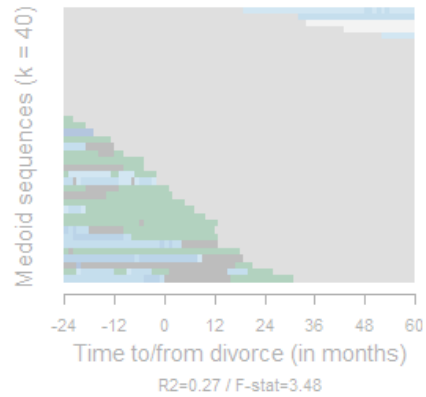
(UNSTAB.) EMP. LOW (9.5%)



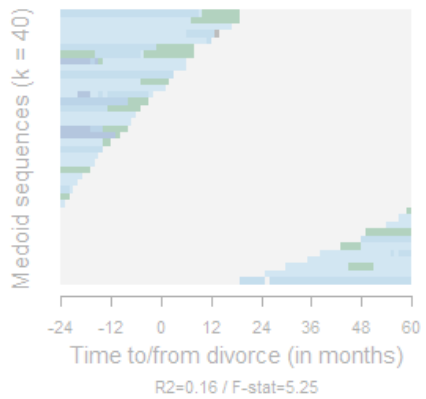
UNEMPLOYMENT (7.4%)



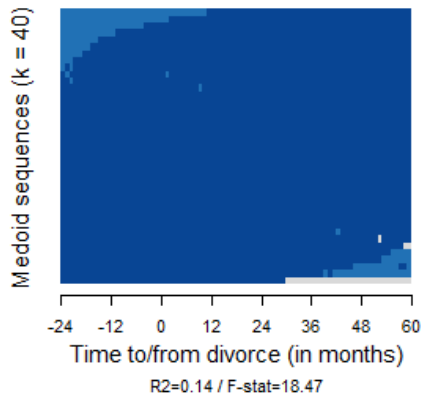
NOT WORKING (2.1%)



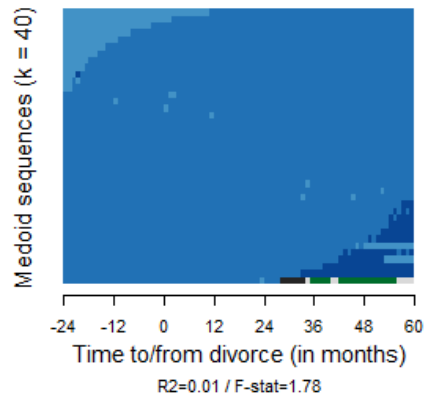
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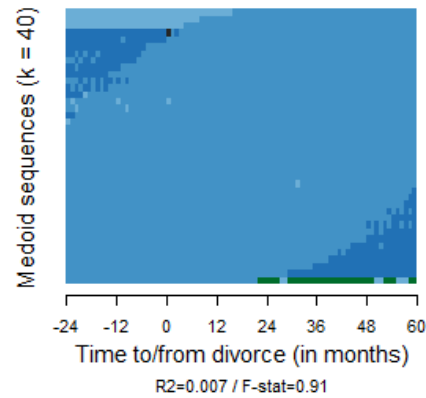
EMPLOYMENT HIGH (23.5%)



EMPLOYMENT AV. HIGH (28.2%)

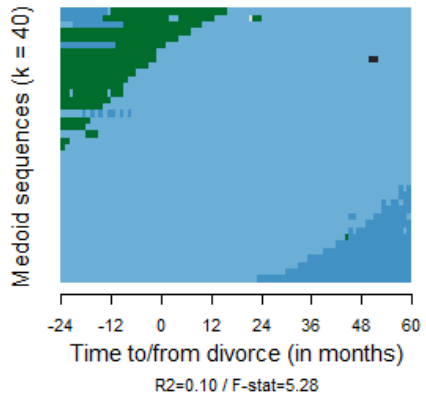


EMPLOYMENT AV. LOW (23.6%)

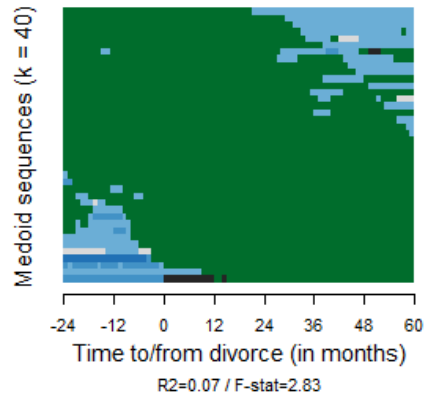


75.3%
stable employment
trajectories

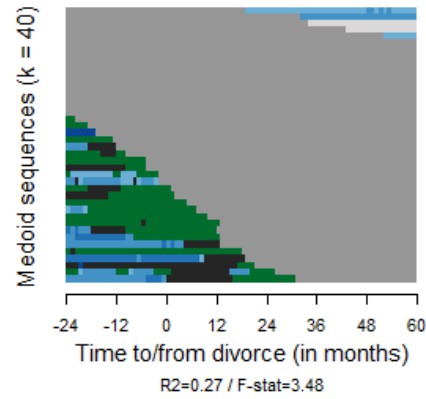
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UNEMPLOYMENT (7.4%)

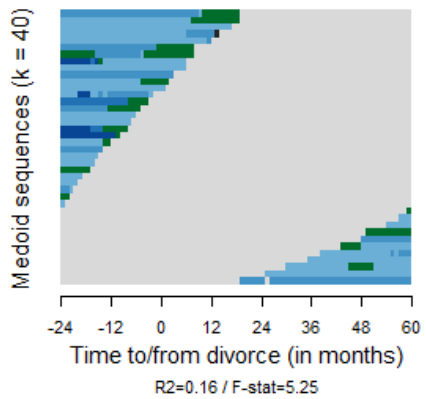


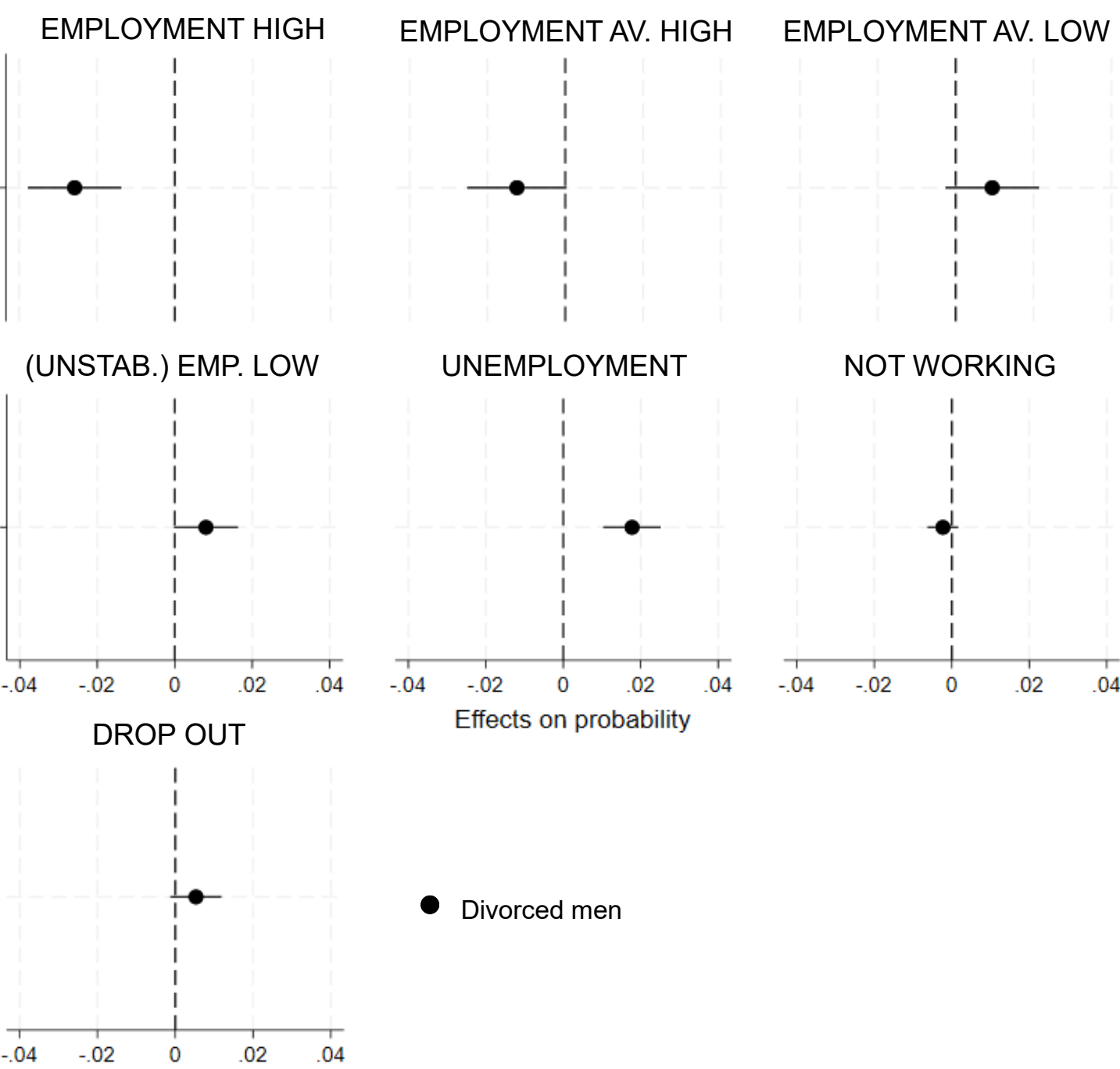
NOT WORKING (2.1%)



24.7%
unstable
employment
trajectories

DROP OUT (5.7%)





Multinomial Logit Model:
 Average marginal effect
 (with 95% CIs) of divorce
 status for cluster affiliation

Dashed reference line:
 control group

● Divorced men

EMPLOYMENT HIGH

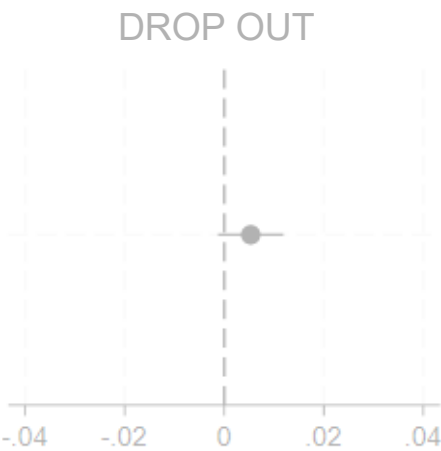
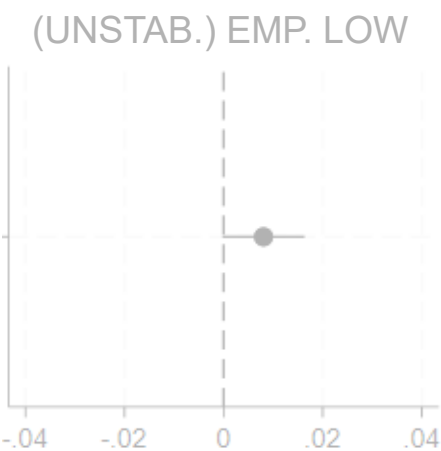
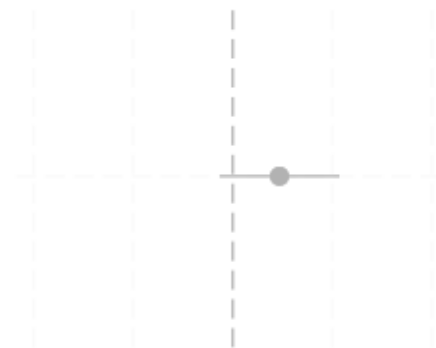
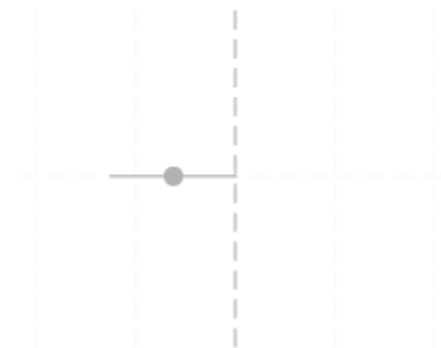
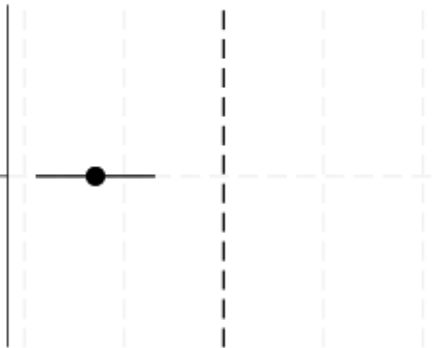
EMPLOYMENT AV. HIGH

EMPLOYMENT AV. LOW

Multinomial Logit Model:

Average marginal effect
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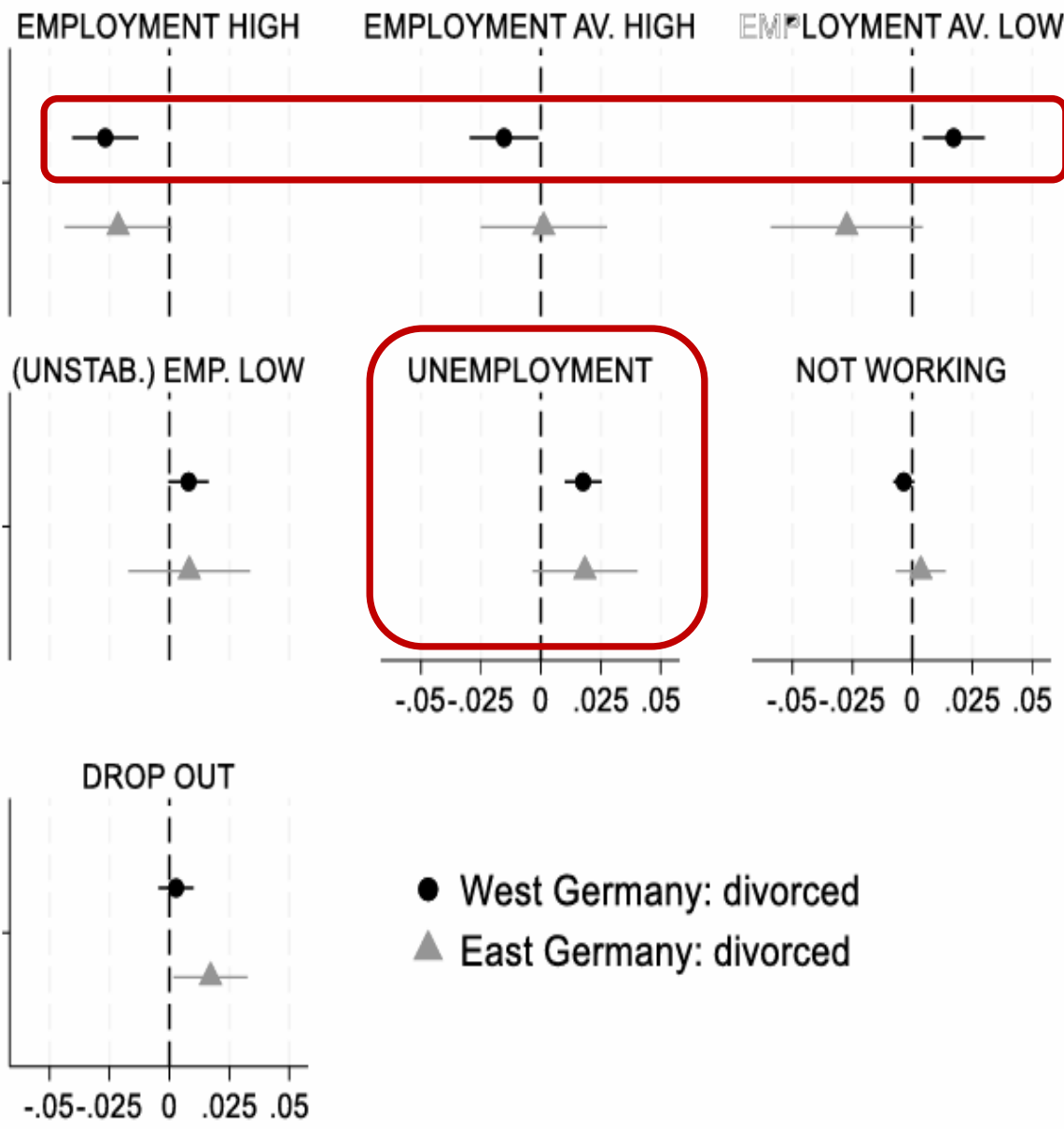
Effects on probability

Results by Region (East/West)

Multinomial Logit Model:

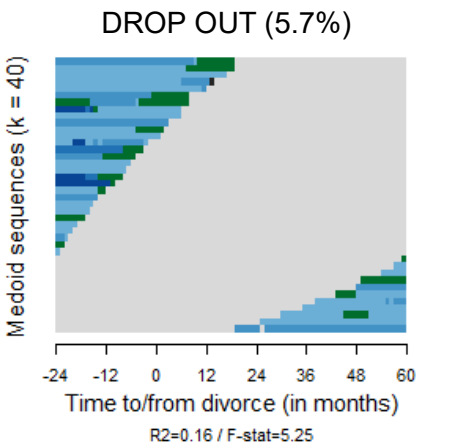
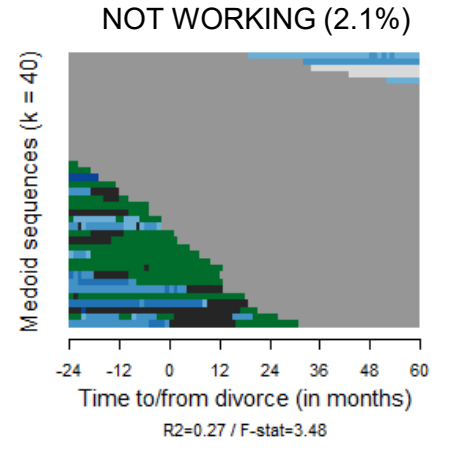
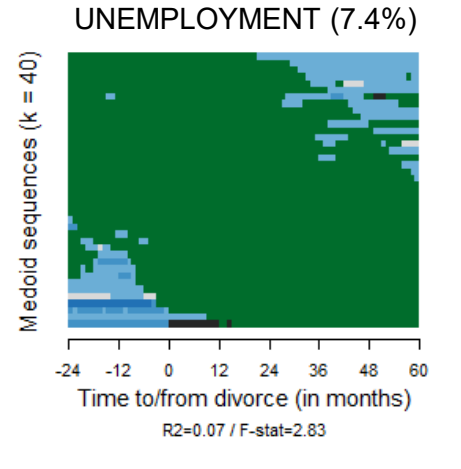
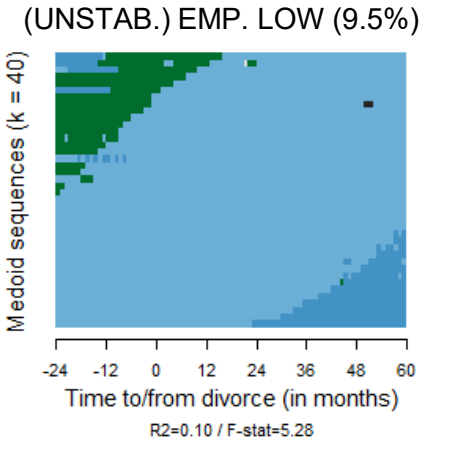
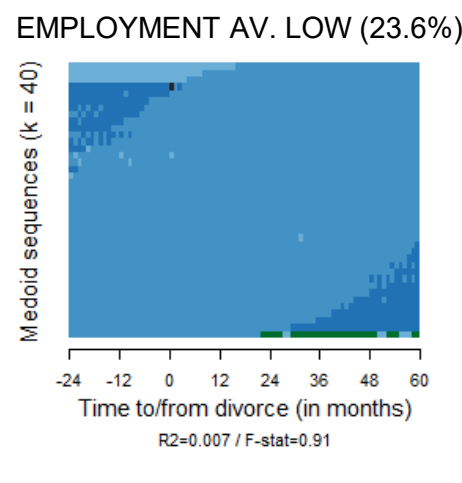
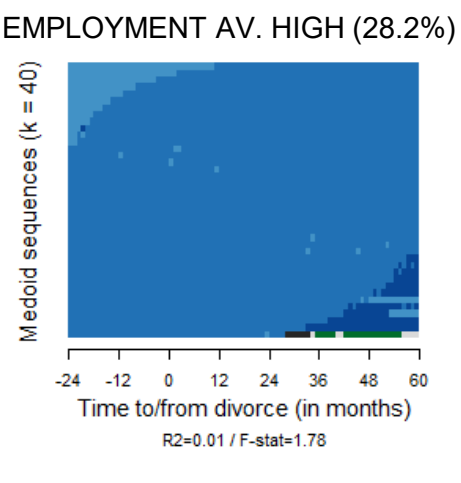
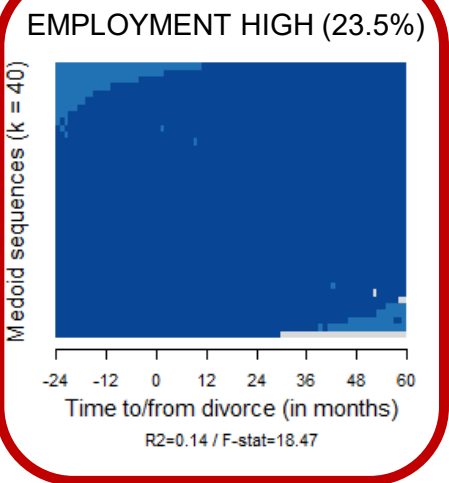
Average marginal effect (with 95% CIs) of divorce status for cluster affiliation

Dashed reference line: control group



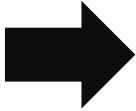
Results by Pre-divorce Earnings

Binary Logit Model: High Earners versus “Rest”

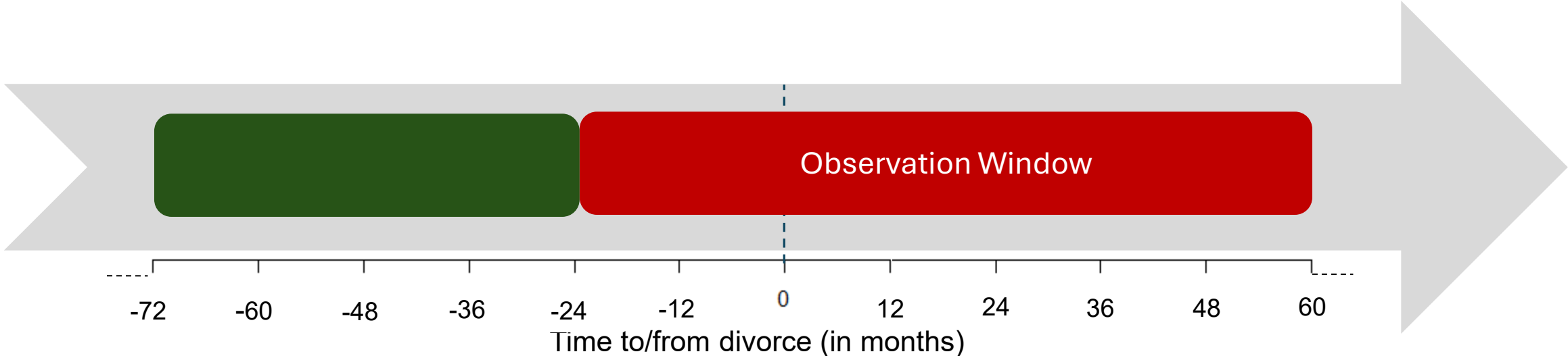
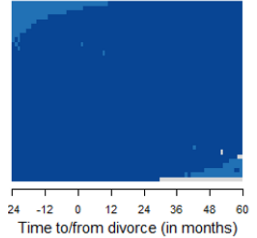


Binary Logit Model: High Earners versus “Rest”

Pre-divorce earnings groups (t.₋₇₂ - t.₋₂₄)
Q0 = no earnings
Q1 = up to 60%
Q2 = > 60% up to 100%
Q3 = > 100% up to 150%
Q4 = > 150% of average earnings



High Earners versus
“Rest”





Binary Logit Model:
 Higher Earners versus “Rest”
 Average marginal effect (95% CIs)

Pre-divorce earnings groups (t₋₇₂ - t₋₂₄)

Q0 = no earnings

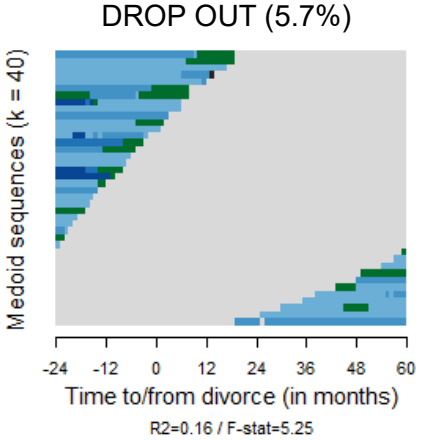
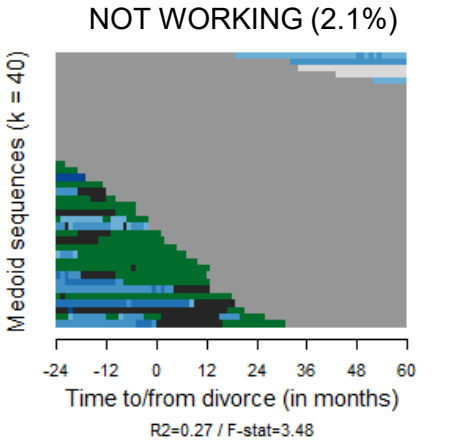
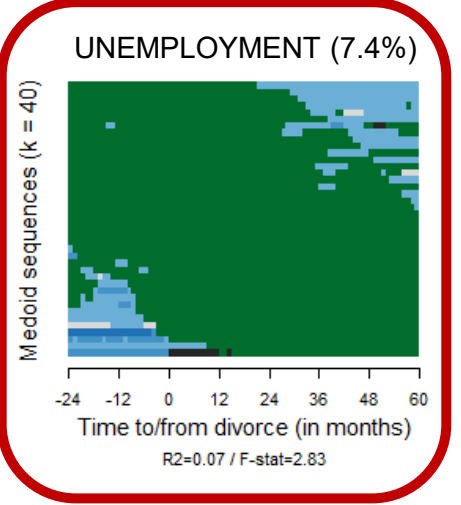
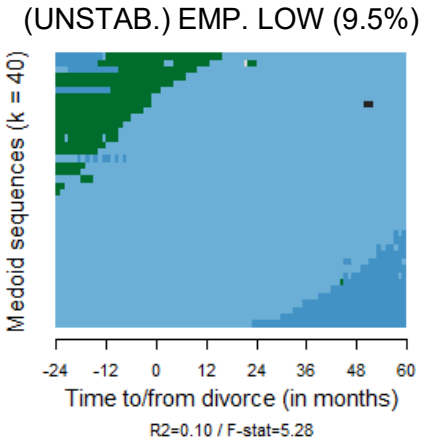
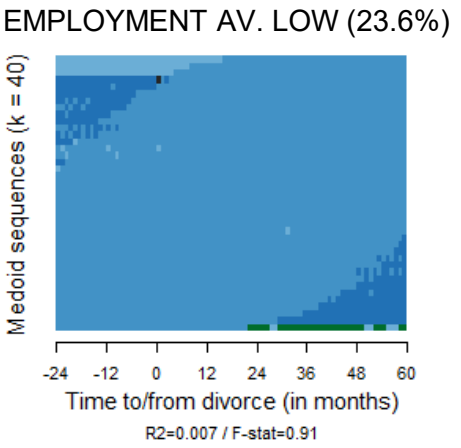
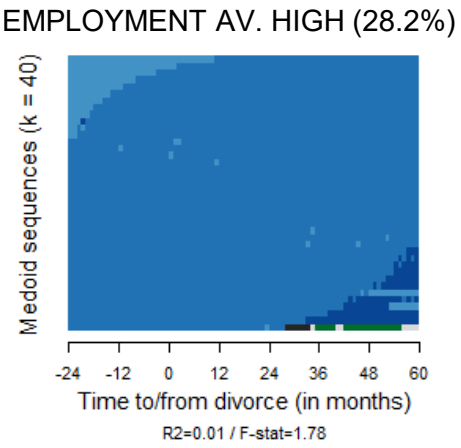
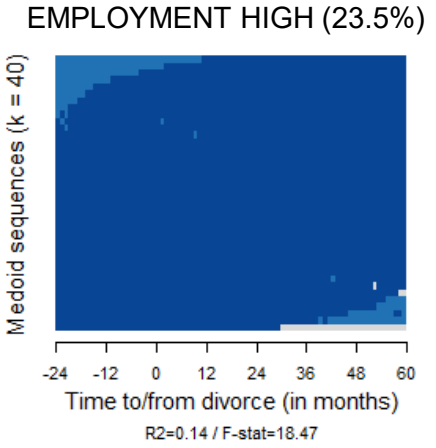
Q1 = up to 60%

Q2 = > 60% up to 100%

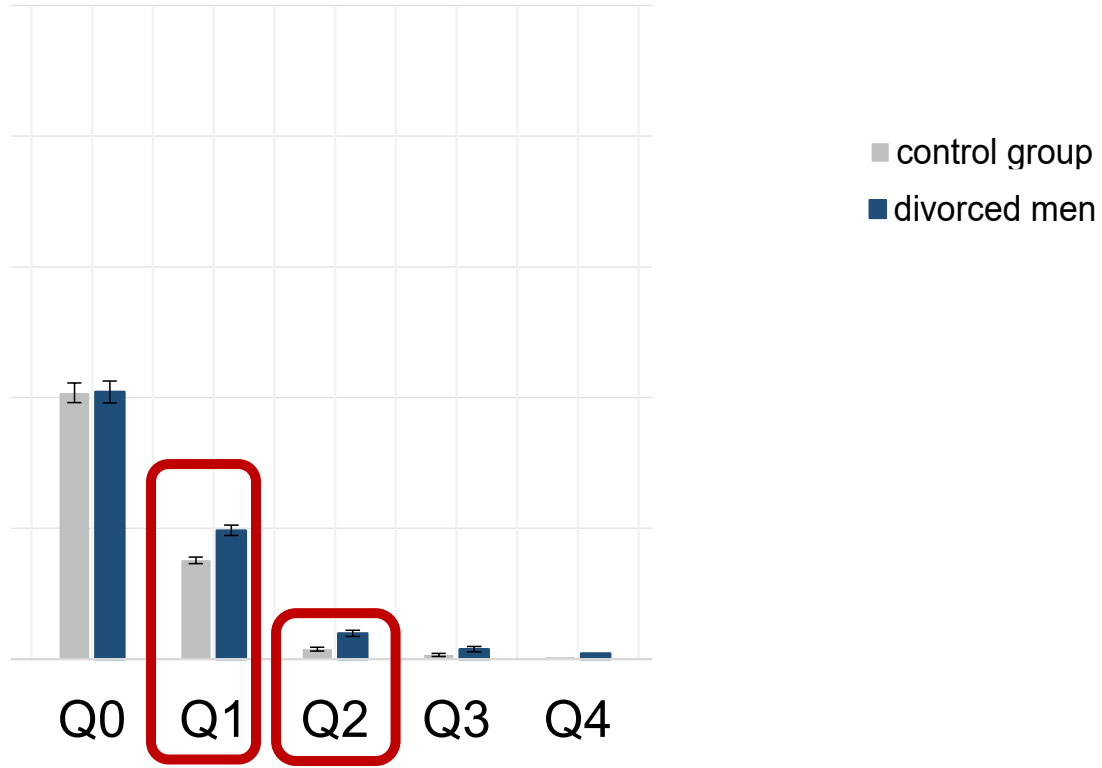
Q3 = > 100% up to 150%

Q4 = > 150% of average earnings

Binary Logit Model: Unemployment versus "Rest"



UNEMPLOYMENT



Binary Logit Model:

Unemployment versus “Rest”

Average marginal effect (95% CIs)

Pre-divorce earnings groups (t_{-72} - t_{-24})

Q0 = no earnings

Q1 = up to 60%

Q2 = > 60% up to 100%

Q3 = > 100% up to 150%

Q4 = > 150% of average earnings

Conclusion

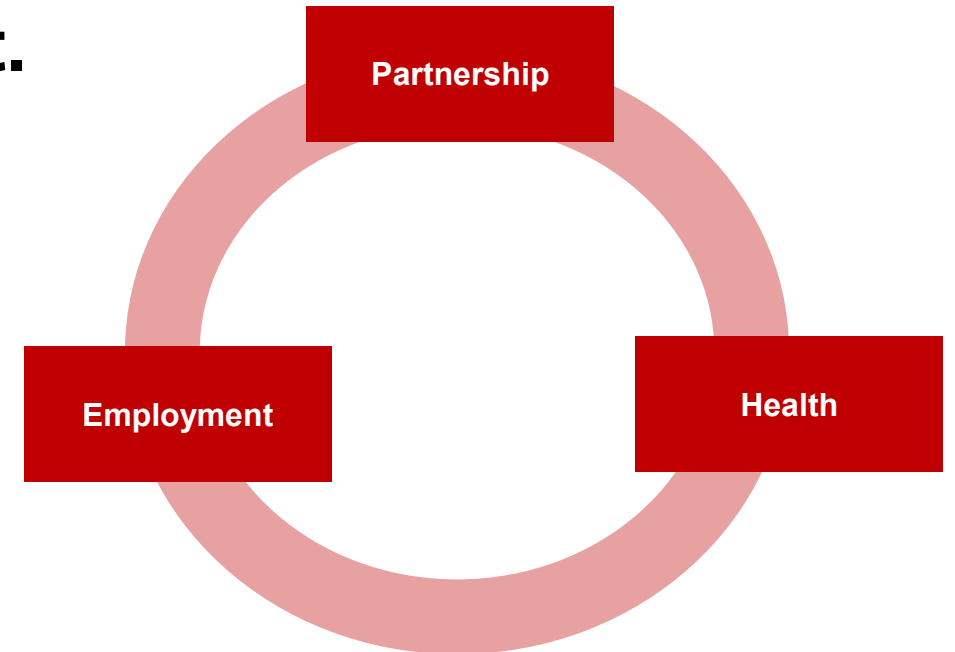
Main Findings

High earners

- Divorce reduces risk to be in “high income cluster”.
- Divorce seems to dampen **career advancement**.

Low earners

- Divorce increases risk to be in “unemployment cluster”.
- Divorce seems to discourage **employment**.

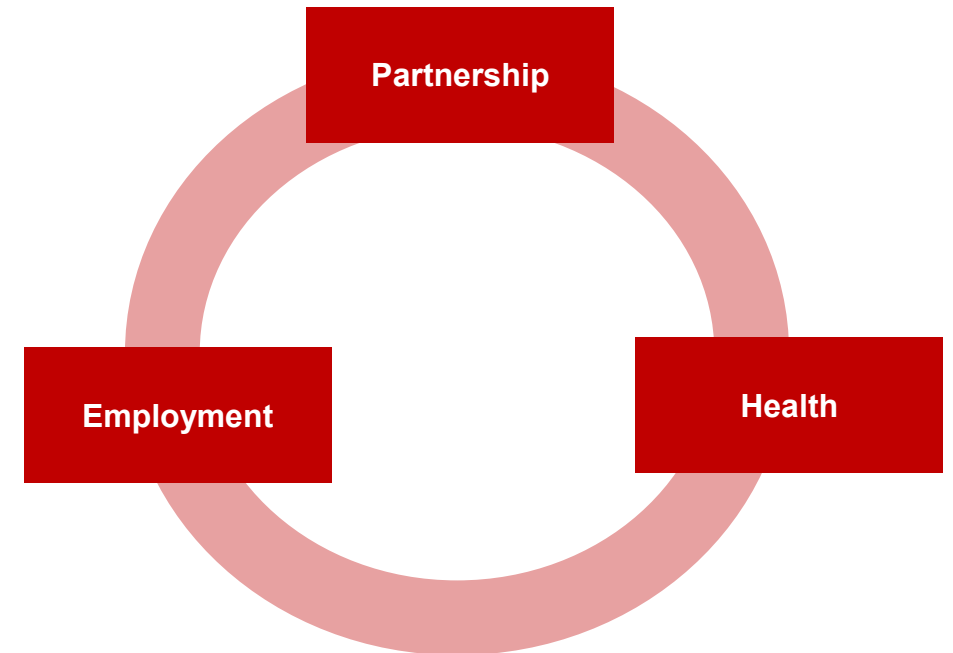


Limitations: Data & Method

- Pension registers: only 90% of population
- Divorce in the registers: no cohabitations, only divorce with VA
- Method: Good idea to combine matching & sequence analysis?

Limitations: Mechanisms

- Alimony payments?
- Health?
- Physical custody?



**EINSTEIN
CENTER**

Population Diversity



Hertie School



Berlin-Brandenburgische
AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN

Many thanks for the attention!

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