DIVORCE
IN ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Antigua & Barbuda Council on Sustainable Development
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Marriage isn't a love affair. It isn't even a honeymoon. It's a job. A long hard job, at which both partners have to work, harder than they've worked at anything in their lives before. If it's a good marriage, it changes, it evolves, but it goes on getting better. I've seen it with my own mother and father. But a bad marriage can dissolve in a welter of resentment and acrimony. I've seen that, too, in my own miserable and disastrous attempt at making another person happy. And it's never one person's fault. It's the sum total of a thousand little irritations, disagreements, idiotic details that in a sound alliance would simply be disregarded, or forgotten in the healing act of making love. Divorce isn't a cure, it's a surgical operation, even if there are no children to consider.

Rosamunde Pilcher, “Wild Mountain Thyme”
Glossary:

**Angst:** a feeling of deep anxiety or dread, typically an unfocused one about the human condition or the state of the world in general.

**Cohabitation:** living arrangement in which an unmarried couple lives together in a long-term relationship that resembles a marriage.

**Cohort effects:** a term in social science to describe variations in the characteristics of an area of study.

**Counsellor:** a person who gives counsel, (2) an attorney.

**Enduring dynamics:** states that people are realistic about their partners and your relationship within marriage will be similar to before marriage (rocky or not).

**Irreconcilable differences:** is a no-fault ground for divorce, which means neither party committed any sort of extenuating act, such as adultery, abandonment or extreme cruelty. In other words, no-fault divorce is just like it sounds—no single party is at fault for the breakdown of the marriage.

“No fault” divorce: divorces or (dissolutions) in which neither spouse is required to prove “fault” or marital misconducting the part of the other. To obtain a divorce a spouse must merely assert incompatibly or irreconcilable differences, meaning the marriage has irretreivably broken down. This means there is no defense to a divorce petition (so a spouse) cannot threaten to “fight” a divorce), there is no derogatory testimony, and marital misconduct cannot be used to achieve a division of property favorable to the innocent spouse.

**Period effects:** are the consequences of influences that vary through time.
Introduction

This article explores divorce, by definition as the termination of marriage, within the context in Antigua and Barbuda. The author has found that marriage itself has lost its once prestigious sense of prominence in society due to changing perspectives and an increasing acceptance of separations and cohabitation.

Although many marriages end in divorce, the phenomena and its consequences still remain a multifaceted psychosocial issue. Divorce as perceived by the public occurs very frequently. The high rate of divorce in Antigua and Barbuda over the period of a decade has been accompanied by the same reoccurring reasons.

Irreconcilable differences, communication issues, infidelity and abuse of all kinds validates previous hypothesis that divorce is a prevalent issue that needs to be studied and highlighted for the social stability and sustainability of our family unit and society.

As such the research objectives encapsulated three main aims:

1. Investigating and report the rate of divorce in Antigua and Barbuda;
2. Engaging professionals who have interacted directly with couples filing for divorce to ascertain (but not limited to) the main reasons cited
3. Reporting the findings of said investigation for public and stakeholder analysis and consumption.

The Law and Divorce

Divorce by the Farlex Legal Dictionary signifies: “A court decree that terminates a marriage; also known as marital dissolution.”

The liberalization of divorce law has been a common feature of law reform in many countries around the world throughout the twentieth century.

This liberalization has included the abolition of laws expressly prohibiting divorce, the relaxation of fault-based divorce, and the amendment of laws to make it easier and quicker to obtain divorces.

In Antigua, divorce law reform came in the form of the Divorce Act 1997 which repealed the Matrimonial Causes Act 1948.

The Divorce Act grants the High Court of Justice the power to grant a divorce on the application of either or both spouses on the grounds that there has been a breakdown of the marriage (section 7 (1) of the Divorce Act 1997). The breakdown of the marriage is established only if:

(a) spouses have lived separate and apart for at least one year prior to the determination of the divorce proceedings and were living separate and apart at the start of the proceedings,
(b) the spouse against whom the divorce proceedings is brought has since the date of the marriage committed adultery or treated the other spouse with physical or mental cruelty of such a kind as to render intolerable the continued cohabitation of the spouses.

In cases where a spouse petitions on grounds of separation, he or she is only required to establish the fact of separation and does not need to establish the underlying causes for the breakdown of the marriage. The introduction of divorce on the grounds of separation therefore created a “no fault” divorce option.

This was a sharp departure from the divorce regime under the old Matrimonial Causes Act which had a heavy reliance on proof of matrimonial fault. Under the old legislation, a spouse could petition for divorce on the grounds of adultery, desertion, cruelty or on the basis that the other party is incurably of unsound mind and has been continuously under care and treatment for a period of at least five years.

Barring mental illness, persons wishing to get divorced in Antigua prior to the Divorce Act of 1997 were required to present evidence of the matrimonial misconduct of the other party under one of the stated grounds.

Although the retention of adultery and cruelty as grounds for divorce means that matrimonial fault still features in our divorce law, we can describe the current regime as mixed as it allows for both fault-based and no-fault divorces.

There has been intense debate in other jurisdictions about whether or not there should be a move towards a strictly no fault divorce system. Supporters of no fault divorce argue that the fault-based system fails to address the complexities of the breakdown of the marriage and promotes discord as it forces parties, who may agree on the fact that the marriage has broken down, to attribute blame and produce evidence of marital wrongdoing.

In Antigua, there is currently no active public debate on this matter and no signaled legislative intention to reform the law.

Literature Review, Trends and Perspectives

According to a working paper presented by Wolcott and Hughes (1999, p.1) supported by Waite (1995), Silburn et al. (1996) and Amato & Booth (1997) stable and satisfying marriages contribute to men’s and women’s improved physical and psychological health, longevity as well as their material wealth.

Wolcott and Hughes (1999) further suggest that most young adults, who were surveyed, still find marriage desirable for themselves and for their future offspring. Given this, there seems to be a disconnect between the number of marriages taking place and the persistence of divorce within our society. If persons think of marriage as a desirable state, there should be a resultant impetus to get married and stay married.
Even more complex is the existence of functional marriages that end in divorce, while there are troubled ones that do not end in separation (Harkonen, 2013). This peculiarity prompts further need for understanding this phenomenon.

Hannah C. Williamson et al (2015) in a study published in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, revealed that roughly half of all first marriages end in divorce, causing elevated instances of economic, physical, and psychological difficulty for all family members involved. This was supported Balestrino et al (2013) supported by Ambert (2009).

Mainstream media sources have also reported negatively on marriage by highlighting the existence of unhappy marriages en masse, and often failing to provide adequate instances of happy marriages. Balestrino et al (2013) explained that the media chooses to disseminate heuristic information in order to satisfy its viewership’s demand for controversial news.

The result is that cases of lasting marriages go unnoticed and unreported. Conversely, it can be argued that perspective is colored by where the individual stands. Singles often opines that the media promulgates images of happy loving couples and wedded bliss. Potentially creating unrealistic expectations of marriage.

Balestrino et al (2013) and Ambert (2009) describe the issue of divorce as multi-layered, while Wolcott and Hughes (1999) subscribe to the view that contemporary expectations of marriage are somewhat more ambiguous in reference to desires of mutuality, intimacy and self fulfilment, as compared to the traditional construct of the breadwinner husband and homemaker wife.

They determined that it is impossible to discuss it, and the statistics pertaining to it, in all its complexity, all in a single article. However, it is a noteworthy undertaking to address the topic and capture the main issues surrounding it while suggesting, with references, how divorce possibly relates to an ever-changing society.

**Rate of Divorce**

Harkonen (2013, pp. 6-7) suggests that divorce rates fluctuate due to cohort effects – differences between groups of people who shared a critical experience during the same time interval, and period effects (which is more dominant): that refers to influences which affect all marriages regardless of when the couples married. Recessions, legal reforms and cultural trends are examples of those influences. In Harkonen (2013) research, for instance, the Second World War and the liberalization of Divorce Legislation were factors that affected marriages.

Using the reported rate of divorce around the world as a starting point, a study done by Ogawa and Ermisch (1994) recorded that the divorce rate in Japan had more than doubled over the past few decades (Lowenstein, 2005), while another study of the same population by Goldstein (1999) noted that divorce was levelling off because there were more instances of socially accepted cohabitation – more couples were living
together without marriage. With such opposing arguments, Ambert (2009) considered that further investigations were necessary, based on the way divorce rates were being calculated.

In reference to the aforementioned, – that half of all first marriages end in divorce – and the subsequent proposal that failed marriages are widespread, it was discovered that the statistical conclusions were, in many instances, erroneous. Ambert (2009) informs us that in many, if not most instances, the rate of divorce (referencing information found in the United States and Canada) was determined by dividing the number of divorces in any given year by the number of marriages within that same year.

By utilizing this method of calculation, it would seem that, in that particular year, the number of marriages declined from the previous year, which would automatically increase the rate of divorce, even if the numbers remained the same; for example, in 2005, ‘Quebec reported 15,423 divorces and only 22,244 marriages.

By implementing the above method, we would arrive at the false conclusion that 69% of current Quebec marriages would end in divorce, when the more realistic percentage would be 48.4%’ (Ambert, 2009, p. 4).

Other flaws included comparisons between the rate of divorce and the rate of marriage within one year used as a ratio or percentage. It is important to note, as the previous research points out, that the issue here lies in the fact that divorces recorded in any one year rarely pertain to couples who wed during the same year.

The more accurate way of measuring divorce is to calculate what is referred to as the Total Divorce Rate. It consists of examining the number of couples who marry in a given year and calculating the proportion expected to divorce before their 30th wedding anniversary.

For instance, Canada’s 2004 total divorce rate of 37.9% of divorces per 100 marriages projects that 37.9% of all marriages that took place in 2004 would have ended by 2035 if, as Statistics Canada pointed out, the duration-specific divorce rates calculated for 2004 remained stable. In other words, the Total Divorce Rate is a prediction of future levels of divorce based on the divorce patterns of the recent past. This method gives a more accurate approximation to a lifetime divorce rate, because after 30 years of marriage relatively few divorces take place.

On the other hand, according to Ambert (2009), this method cannot be used for comparisons across the world because it requires a higher level of governmental record keeping and more complex calculations that relatively few countries can afford. It does not account for, or report, the quantity of people who divorce, meaning that some divorces within a year may be the second, third, or more for some individuals.

Therefore, in order to contextually and statistically compare annual trends on the global stage (using data compiled by the UN), the most commonly accepted method of measurement is
the yearly crude rate calculation. This method calculates the divorced rate for every 1,000 or 100,000 persons in the population per year (Harkonen, 2013).

All of the methods to determine divorce have arguably some drawbacks. The research team is of the view that the best methodology/ metric of reflecting the divorce rate for the society contextually and/ or to meet international standards for comparison was the crude rate calculation.

**Gender and Divorce**

Based on information provided by Amato & Rogers (1997), divorce, generally, has not been experienced equally across the gender divide.

By definition, the act of divorce and legal separation involves the disjointing of two parties, traditionally a male and a female. Further, perceptions towards the act have been categorized as ‘his’ and ‘her’ divorces and/or marriages. The reasons for this gender distinction, as postulated and recorded, are various.

However, it is largely agreed by researchers (Amato & Previti, 2003; Cleek & Pearson, 1985; Hawkins et al, 2012) that men have more challenges identifying and communicating rationales for divorce than their female counterparts. These rationales may be found when ranking reasons for divorce according to gender specific responses.

For example, in a study conducted by Williamson et al (2015) and published in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, using a controlled research range, husbands were able to identify an average of 7.8% of the problems contributing to divorce, compared to 10.7% of issues reported by wives.

The research of Balestrino et al (2013) suggests that, despite advocacy for equality among men and women, many women who have active careers frequently lack the support of their spouse. Balestrino et al (2013) further suggests that well-educated wives who are high-income earners are more prone to divorce. This, according to his research, still occurred despite progressive attitudes towards equality between the sexes. However, Harkonen (2013) suggests that less educated women will still divorce.

**On Causes of Divorce**

According to the findings of Brinig and Allen (2000), the cause of divorce lies within the existence of asymmetric gender roles. This asymmetry is the result of how individuals have been socially cultured – that is, societal dictates on financial roles being filled by males only.

Women have often been subjected to little or no earning power, and have lacked opportunities of economic independence (Lowenstein, 2005). Some who have found themselves in these less than favorable circumstances have looked towards divorce for personal and financial freedom, and this suggests a link between female
earnings, or financial status, and increased divorce rates (Lowenstein, 2005).

Referencing previous research done by Cleek & Pearson (1985), arguably a number of unhappy marriages are still maintained due to a dependency of financial convenience – i.e. many remain within the marriage to maintain financial stability.

Also, it is noted that the unhappy marriage continues for the sake of maintaining the traditional and socially acceptable construct of family, and also for the wellbeing of the children involved.

In other respects, Brinig and Allen (2000) note that despite the urge for human companionship and other human emotional and psychological necessities, women who are successful in their careers post-divorce, have expressed less regret at ending their marriage.

In order to study the issue in a structured context, causes can be separated into two (2) main categories: enduring dynamics – marital angst from the beginning of the marriage and emergent distress – occurring over the course of the relationship.

These categories are based on a hypothesis that divorce is not the result of a one-off occurrence of distress. Cultural and demographic factors are two of the notable, ranked, and documented causes of divorce (Amato, 1997; Williamson et al, 2015; Ambert, 2009), and the research of Harkonen (2013), Wolcott and Hughes (1999); Cleek & Pearson (1985) &Orschell (no date), provides the following specific reasons for divorce that fall under these two categories, meanwhile noting that divorce is not limited to these:

- Difficulties in communication between spouses – cited most frequently by wives and ranking above infidelity,
- Incompatibility,
- Infidelity,
- Inadequate amount of time being spent together in the home – spouses disagree on free time and how much time should be spent with in-laws and friends, for example,
- Disagreements over money and how it should be spent,
- Suffering based on the effects of parental divorce on one or both spouses’ childhoods,
- Religious inequalities - disagreements that arise when spouses do not patronize the same religious denomination,
- Emotional abuse and lack of trust - mostly cited by husbands and ranked above infidelity,
- Alcohol and/or substance abuse,
- Unclearly defined responsibilities concerning household chores – spouses disagree on what household chores should be carried out by which spouse based on gender and traditional norms,
- Career decisions – spouses disagree on career decisions that affect the family unit. For example, a spouse may have been offered an employment opportunity that would require the family moving to a different location,
- Moods and tempers – spouses are unable to deal with marital issues because of their conflicting personalities,
- Growing apart – lack of love which may be the result of peaked frustrations,
- Early marriage – related to age and maturity.
- Cohabitation prior to marriage,
- Sexual factors – matters pertaining to libido or fertility,
- Sex ratio – male to female population,
- Poor intellectual, educational and/or social skills,
- Liberal divorce laws,
- Ethnic background – tensions that arise within interracial unions,
- Death of a child,
- Illness – spouses may be unwilling or incapable of tending to a sick or physically incapacitated spouse,
- Domestic violence,
- Personal perceptions of what a relationship should be – spouses may have contrasting views on the soulmate theory and the workout theory. The soulmate theory states that there is only one person in the world for each person, and that finding and building a life with only this person equals true happiness. The workout theory states that marital success is attainable only through communication and problem solving.
- Time consuming habits and interests such as telenovelas/TV soaps (Harkonen, 2013) or excessive Gaming (Young, 2004).
Divorce and its Consequences

Divorce, as suggested by Harkonen (2013, p. 3) ‘can cause major stress and upheaval for many and a sense of relief and opportunity for personal growth for others.’ Some may view cohabitation as an option. It is arguable that cohabitation has replaced traditional marriage and has reduced the rate of and necessity for divorce.

However, it has not been impactful in reducing the emotional pain that individuals experience while enduring the separation of a household. This suggests that both constructs can result in devastating consequences, both directly and indirectly.

Based on the research, consequences of divorce vary, but explorations into divorce have shown that consequences include the breakdown of the role of the father – with mothers usually receiving full custody of the children, which can result in paternal alienation.

This separation of the parents can affect children emotionally and psychologically (Harkonen, 2013; Orschell & College, n.d) and can manifest as bad behavior, lowered self-esteem, or decline in school performance.

Other negative side effects include, but are not limited to, a reduction in the standard of living; and challenges remarrying, for either party, due to the existence of children from the prior union (Lowenstein, 2005; Ambert, 2009); parental divorce possibly weakening contact between children, their parents and grandparents (Harkonen, 2013); costs associated with completing divorce proceedings; and ongoing custody battles (Orschell& College, n.d).

According to Ambert (2009), many couples who divorce after five years of marriage have no children, or do not have many. The aforementioned author suggests that divorced persons tend to have less children as compared to their happily married friends and relatives. As previously alluded, the majority of women and men seem to be generally satisfied with their lives post-divorce. Nonetheless, as noted by Wolcott and Hughes (1999), contentment, wellbeing and happiness are dependent on various factors.

Any future substantial increases or decreases in divorce rates will depend on the complex interplay between numerous socio-economic, political, cultural and demographic factors, as well as individual preferences and values (Ambert, 2009).

Each context is different and require in-depth research in order to determine what will be the new status-quo. Nonetheless, as Harkonen, (2013, p. 23) summated, it ‘seems unlikely that marriage will recover the same centrality in family life as it had in the previous decades’.

Limitations of the study

Particularly due to the personal, cultural and often complex rationales underscoring reasons for divorce, Harkonen (2013) has found it to be generally considered a sensitive matter, both legally and socially. While data from divorcees
and family by means of interviews or survey was initially considered (Amato, 1987), such personal information was not attainable due to current legal constraints.

The nature of the population that the researchers chose to sample lent itself to data collection and data analysis constraints. Demographic data such as income, education level and socio-economic background (among others) were not to collected and would therefore precluded the researcher’s ability to venture into searching for trends and patterns based on those demographic criteria.

For instance, a list of divorced individuals is confidential information, as informed by Registrar of the High Court in Antigua. One alternative course of action might have been to select a random, sample-size number of divorced persons within the community based on researchers’ and attorneys’ personal knowledge.

However, the aforementioned was found unattainable due to constraints to validate the study scientifically, and would have created some level of bias by the selected sampling based on familiarity.

Another possible limiting factor is that persons pursuing divorce on grounds of separation, may not necessarily disclose the underlying reasons for the divorce to the attorney.

Lastly, as it speaks to information such as research and academic papers related to divorce for the Caribbean context, it was not found readily available.

Data Collection and Findings

Ultimately, the research relied on surveys conducted with available (on island and not retired) registered attorneys, provided by the Bar Association, who have had (or continue to have) experiences with legal cases pertaining to divorce.

This was in addition to religious and non-religious counsellors by way of colleague reference. These surveys were conducted in order to provide insights into the underlying reasons for couples seeking divorce, and other relevant information.

As it speaks to Antigua and Barbuda’s population, for purposes of calculating divorce rates, the last census in Antigua and Barbuda was conducted in 2011. Calculating the crude rate of divorce per hundred thousand will suggest a change in population from 2011 to 2016, however the last official population figure was stated.

For the purposes of this study, a quantitative approach using convenience sampling was used. This was facilitated by use of a semi-structured survey consisting of 13 questions. Some key questions remaining open ended to facilitate discussions.

As previously mentioned, professionals from both the legal, counselling and psychological fields were engaged formally to assist with the research.
As recommended by Easterby-Smith, (2008) a cost and time saving method of data collection via telephone interviews and surveys was selected as the source of gaining responses for quantitative data; subsequent to sending same electronically to the Bar Association and Christian Council for their initial approval.

A total of 48 professional individuals were identified with 43 being successfully responsive. This number included professionals whom couples interacted with consisting of Attorneys, members from the Antigua and Barbuda Christian Council and Counsellors and Psychologist.

Four were unable to participate due to overseas travel and thus were unavailable for the survey, of those remaining one declined, with four survey responses remains pending. The results were garnered over a period of four weeks and took considerable effort as persons are normally very pressed for time. Nonetheless, ABCoSD was able to meet its sample size target for the purposes of this study.

As it speaks to data validity, as per ABCoSD’s previous research benchmark, researchers Baruch & Holtom (2008) found an average response rate for studies that utilized data collected from individuals being 52.7% with a standard deviation of 20.4, and data collected from organizations was 35.7% with a standard deviation of 18.8.

This ABCoSD research capturing 78%, indicates an overall quantitative research statistical significance for an overall sample population of 48 professional individuals. A confidence interval (margin of error) of 4.87 and a confidence level of 95% due to a sample size of 43.

The subsequent survey information collected was coded and tabulated in a IBM SPSS predictive analytics software. The results were later juxtaposed against available regional and international divorce rates for ranking.

As a form of reporting the findings the results are illustrated as follows for interpretation:

![Sample size calculator](http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm)
Survey Results represented in Tables, Graphs and Charts (from SPSS coding):

Table 1.1: Sex of professional respondents engaged, Survey Question 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Professionals</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1.1: Professional classification or occupation of respondents, Survey Question 2.
Chart 1.2: Respondents Years of Professional Experience, Survey Question 3.

Chart 1.3: Rate of divorce in Antigua and Barbuda by professional observation and interaction with couples who filed for divorce, Survey Question 4.
Consistent with the literature review, the Gender predominately initiating divorce in the context of Antigua and Barbuda is Female.

Notably the majority of the counsellors and attorneys surveyed indicated that they were of the view that the divorce rate in Antigua and Barbuda remains high.

This is consistent the rate of divorce of Antigua and Barbuda when compared to its Caribbean counterparts in Table 1.7.
Table 1.2: Antigua and Barbuda Divorce Rates from 2010-2015 (Registry of Antigua and Barbuda).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Antigua’ Population 2001 Census Issued July 2004 (Resident)</th>
<th>Divorce filed in...</th>
<th>Number of Divorces Occurring /Granted in...</th>
<th>Marriages Occurring in... (License special + ordinary)</th>
<th>Number of Marriages Occurring in (ordinary)</th>
<th>Total Number Marriages in the Population</th>
<th>Divorce Rate #1</th>
<th>Divorce Rate #2</th>
<th>Divorce Rate #3</th>
<th>Crude (per 1,000 people)</th>
<th>Refined (per 1,000 marriages)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>76,886</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>149.78</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>76,886</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>149.78</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>76,886</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>49.44%</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>149.78</td>
<td>156.46</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>76,886</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>51.63%</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>156.46</td>
<td>198.11</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>76,886</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>37.60%</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>198.11</td>
<td>24.42%</td>
<td>175.71</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>76,886</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>24.42%</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>175.71</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1.5: Responses on reoccurring occupation filing for divorce, Survey Question 6.
Table 1.3: Reason(s) frequently cited for divorce by couples, interacting with professionals, Survey Question 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Divorce</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iniquity</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Decisions</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues Defining Tasks</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Mental Health</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Time Issues</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Issues</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Interference</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse Personality</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Problems</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally Unhappy</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Problems</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infidelity</td>
<td>26.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 1.6: Couples engaging in cohabitation before marriage according to professionals interacting with couples filing for divorce, Survey Question 8.

Chart 1.7: Professionals who opine couples engaged in pre-marital counselling prior filing for divorce, Survey Question 9.
Chart 1.8: Professional view on couples who engaged in counselling prior to filing for divorce, Survey Question 10.

Chart 1.9: Professional's observation of couples remarrying post-divorce, Survey Question 11.
Chart 1.10: Professional’s responses on the observation of couples’ age range filing for divorce in descending order, Survey Question 12.

Chart 1.11: Professional’s observation of couples divorcing after a number of years of marriage, Survey Question 13.
Table 1.4: Professional observation on couples who engage in cohabitation prior to marriage, compared to stated divorce rate.

Divorce Rate * Cohabitation Pre-Marriage Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Table 1.5: Professional interactions compared to frequency of counselling prior to divorce.

Profession * Counselling Prior Divorce Cross-tabulation

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<th>Couples Engaged in Counselling Prior Divorce</th>
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Table 1.6: Professional interactions with couples who filed for divorce compared to frequency of counselling prior to marriage.

**Profession * Premarital Counselling Cross-tabulation**

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Of note, two options provided for frequent reasons for divorce; Political and Marital Rape at no time was selected by the respondents. This does not imply that this phenomenon does not occur, but rather to underscore its lack of frequency according to the respondents.

Under “Other” reason couples chose to divorce irreconcilable difference was mentioned 3 times. By order of descending ranking the various professionals who noted Males as the dominant gender filing for divorce selected for the options provided Infidelity as the highest, seconded by Communication problems and Financial problems on the same frequency as Emotional Abuse to be followed by Physical Abuse.

In respect to Females, Infidelity the main factor followed by Emotional/Verbal Abuse then Communication Problems and Physical abuse and Financial problems thereafter.

In respect to the experience of those interacting with divorce individuals the following noted for the various number of years of marriage being the main cause for divorce: <5 yrs Infidelity and Communication problems; 5-10yrs Infidelity then Abuse; 11-15 yrs Infidelity; 16-20 yrs Generally Unhappy. 21-30 yrs Communication, Emotional / Verbal Abuse, Infidelity, Financial Problems and Generally Unhappy had the identical frequency.
In the Caribbean, Antigua and Barbuda is noted to have lenient legal requirements for divorce according to the representatives in the high court registry department. This seconds the popular belief that the rate of divorce in Antigua and Barbuda is one of the highest in the region. This was researched, in an effort to fact check this belief, and it was found to be consistent as outlined below as shown in Table 1.16 below:

- In 2005 of 12 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 7th;
- In 2006 of 12 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 10th;
- In 2007 of 12 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 3rd;
- In 2008 of 11 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 4th;
- In 2010 of 9 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 1st (with Barbados);
- In 2011 of 7 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 1st (with Barbados);
- In 2012 of 7 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 1st (with Barbados);
- In 2013 of 5 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 1st (with Barbados);
- In 2014 of 4 Caribbean countries, Antigua and Barbuda ranked 2nd.

Contrary to the findings of literature review of law enforcement for instance having a high rate of divorce, there was an even spread in respect to career paths. However, Business professionals were noted as the highest frequency of those provided.
### Table 1.7: Crude Divorce Rate by Selected Countries

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Special Notes: Table 1.7:

1. Crude divorce rate is as divorce couples per 100,000 mid-year population.
2. Mexico and Argentina are obtained from United Nations, "Demographic Yearbook".
4. Sweden from 1 May, 2009 onwards includes data for divorces between in same-sex marriages.
5. Norway comprise where the husband was a resident of Norway. From 2010, total comprise divorces where the husband or older spouse were resident in Norway.
6. France is preliminary or provisional value from 2012 to 2013.
8. Yellow highlights source Antigua & Barbuda Registry.

*Important to note is that recent data within Caribbean countries are not easily accessible via the Internet. When compared to select countries around the world, Thailand was once such country that showed congruence. Of note, a significant number of first world countries had a higher divorce rate per one hundred thousand than Antigua and Barbuda.

As shown by chart Table 1.2: Antigua and Barbuda’s Divorce Rates from 2010-2015 and the number of local marriages have been on the decline over the last two years, possibly signifying a continuous rate of decline in divorce due to linkages to less marriages and more instances of cohabitation.

This information is particular useful for stakeholders in industries related to wedding industry, social planning, couple counselling and couple excursions. It is the objective of ABCoSD that the findings will shape public discourse on such an important topic to explore its implications of the foundation of any society- the family.
Interesting Facts, Studies and Statistics by Family Law Attorney in the USA (2013):

- Both marriage rates and divorce rates in the [developed countries] US are decreasing.
- Every 13 seconds, there is one divorce in America. That equates to 277 divorces per hour, 6,646 divorces per day, 46,523 divorces per week, and 2,419,196 divorces per year.
- The average age for couples going through their first divorce is 30 years old.
- 60 percent of all divorces involve individuals aged 25 to 39.
- Professions with highest divorce rate:
  1. Dancers – 43
  2. Bartenders – 38.4
  3. Massage Therapists – 38.2
  4. Gaming Cage Workers – 34.6
  5. Gaming Service Workers – 31.3
  7. Telephone Operators – 29.3
  8. Textile Machine Operators – 29
  9. Nurses – 28.9
- Professions with lowest divorce rate:
  1. Medical Scientists – 9.11
  2. Other Scientists – 8.79
  3. Legislators – 8.74
  4. Audiologists – 7.77
  5. Dentists – 7.75
  6. Farmers – 7.63
  7. Podiatrists – 6.81
  8. Clergy – 5.61
  9. Optometrists – 4.01
  10. Agricultural Engineers – 1.78
- Law enforcement and police divorce rate is 14.47, while corrections workers is 21.3.
- The divorce rate among U.S. Navy Seals is over 90 percent.
- The divorce rate among people 50 and older has doubled in the past 20 years, according to research by Bowling Green State University.
- About 1 percent of married same-sex couples get divorced each year, while about 2 percent of married straight couples divorce.
- According to figures from the UK's Office of National Statistics, lesbian couples are nearly twice as likely to end a marriage or civil union than gay male couples are.
- In the United States, the divorce rate is 3.1 per 1000 people that allow same-sex marriage, and 3.9 in states that prohibit it.
- The average length of a marriage that ends in divorce is 8 years.
- 48 percent of those who marry before the age of 18 are likely to divorce within 10 years, compared to 25 percent of those who marry after the age of 25.
- If both you and your partner have had previous marriages, you are 90 percent more likely to get divorced than if this had been the first marriage for both of you.
- If a person has strong religious beliefs, the risk of divorce is 14 percent less and having no religious affiliation makes you 14 percent more likely to get divorced.
- High School dropouts are 13 percent more likely to get divorced.
- Individuals who have attended college have a 13 percent lower risk of divorce.
Interesting Facts, Studies and Statistics by Family Law Attorney (2013) cont’d:

- Political affiliation and its impact on divorce: Conservative 28 percent, Liberal 37 percent, Moderate 33 percent.
- 60 percent of cohabiting couples will eventually marry. However, living together prior to marriage can increase the chance of getting divorced by as much as 40 percent.
- According to this study at least, if you met your spouse in high school, college, or grad school, you are 41 percent less likely to get divorced. The other major difference was couples who met in bars were 24 percent more likely to get divorced than expected.
- A 2011 study at the University of Iowa found that for both men and women, the loss of virginity before age 18 was correlated with a greater number of occurrences of divorce within the first 10 years of marriage.
- Women with 6 or more pre-marital sexual partners are almost 3 times less likely to be in a stable marriage.
- In 2011, Facebook was cited as a major contributor to 1/3 of divorce petitions examined by one U.K. study.
- Pornography addiction was cited as a factor in 56 percent of divorces according to a recent study.
- If your parents are happily married, your risk of divorce decreases by 14 percent.
- If your parents married others after divorcing, you’re 91 percent more likely to get divorced.
- The divorce rate for couples with children is as much as 40 percent lower than for those without children.
- If you have twins or triplets, your marriage is 17 percent more likely to end in divorce than if your children are not multiples.
- Having a baby before marriage can increase risk of divorce by 24 percent.
- Feeling that one’s spouse spent money foolishly increased the likelihood of divorce 45 percent for both men and women.
- Couples that argue about finances at least once a week are 30 more likely to get divorced.
- A recent study of divorce petitions found that nearly 15 percent of them cited video game addiction as a major factor in the decision to get divorced.
- 90% of divorced mothers have custody of their children.
- 65% divorced mothers receive no child support.
- Studies at the University of California and Brown University cite that when a married person works with someone who is in the process of divorcing, it increases the married person chances of divorce by 75%.
- In a large-scale Canadian survey, 19 percent of men reported a significant drop in social support post-divorce.

About ABCoSD

The Antigua and Barbuda Council on Sustainable Development (ABCoSD) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank. It is an organization that seeks to generate research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues in an effort to affect national policy. ABCoSD was founded in the year 2014 grounded on the principles of sustainability which at its core encapsulates the pillars of contextual Society and Culture, and Economy and Environment, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals of 2014 agenda.
References


Orschell, D., College, H. (n.d.) Effects of Divorce on Theories of Relationships, Relationship Theories.


APPENDIX: Divorce Rates from Around the World.

Updated World Divorce Rates, 2011
(Divorces/1000 population—82 countries reporting)

Updated World Divorce Rates, 2012
(70 countries reporting)
APPENDIX: Divorce Rates from Around the World cont’d
The Antigua & Barbuda Council on Sustainable Development requests your assistance in its latest research project. Please complete the following Divorce Survey based on your professional observations and findings. Participants’ personal identities will remain confidential. Information provided will be treated solely as research data for the objective of this study. Thank you for your time in advance.

Survey Questions (13 total)

1. Gender:
   Male  Female

2. Profession (multiple selections are accepted):
   Attorney  Counsellor  Religious Leader  Psychologist  Other

3. Please indicate length of time in your professional practice:
   1-5yrs  6-10yrs  11-15yrs  16-20 yrs  20-25yrs  26+yrs

4. From your professional experience, please select from the options provided the rate of divorce in Antigua & Barbuda:
   Very low  Low  Average  High  Very High

5. Based on your interactions please indicate which gender most often initiates divorce:
   Male  Female

6. Which profession(s) have been noted most reoccurring with divorce?

___________________________________________________________________
7. Please indicate the reasons most cited for divorce from the options below:

- Communication problems
- Marital Rape
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional and or Verbal Abuse
- Infidelity
- Financial problems
- Work/Time
- Family Interference
- Physical /Mental Health
- Other

If you select Other, please clarify:

______________________________________________________

8. Based on your interaction with couples who have been divorced, please rank the rate of cohabitation prior to marriage:

- Very Low
- Low
- Medium
- High
- Very High

9. Based on your interaction with couples please rank how many completed premarital counselling:

- Very Low
- Low
- Medium
- High
- Very High

10. Based on your interaction with couples please rank how many engaged in counselling prior to filing for divorce:

- Very Low
- Low
- Medium
- High
- Very High

11. From experience please rank the number of couples who remarried after divorce:

- None
- Low
- Medium
- High
- Very High

12. What is the average age range for couples who most often seek divorce?

- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60+

13. From the options below please choose the average number of years of marriage after which couples divorce?

- 1-5yrs
- 5-10yrs
- 11-15yrs
- 16-20yrs
- 21-30yrs
- 31+yrs

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is valued and appreciated!
THE END