

Has the Breakdown of the Family Influenced Dating Habits?

There's a fascinating little chart in today's [Washington Post](#) which records how American couples met their spouses. The most striking thing about the chart is the recent rapid rise in online introductions, which seems to correspond with the recent decrease in meeting spouses through friends or co-workers.



But there's another trend line in the chart which is less noticeable. That trend is the percentage of American couples who met their spouse through family, and its decline has been in the making far before internet dating stole the show.

The *Post* attributes the decline of family influence in dating relationships to the breakdown of "once rigid class borders." But doesn't such a large decline seem like it has to be influenced by more than this one factor? Is it possible that the rising prevalence of divorce could also play a factor?

Such an idea seems plausible, particularly given the [chart](#) below, which shows the rise of divorce rates over a similar timeframe as the chart above and may imply a correlation between the two.

It's an accepted fact that the effects of divorce [cause many problems for children](#), including a decline in academics, greater risk of illness, and poor lifestyle choices.

But are we now seeing another negative effect? Are the children of yesterday's divorce now missing out on a strong family structure to guide them into the wise introduction and

selection of a mate? And without that strong family support, will those marriages that are now being formed be less likely to survive?



Image Credit: Ed Yourdon bit.ly/1iowB8m