



Parental divorce and attitudes about society of their children

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Abstract

In this paper we analyze a possible relation between parental divorce and attitudes about (aspects of) society of their children. We discuss various arguments for such a relation: insecure attachment induced by parental conflicts and divorce; restructuring of the parental gender-roles in the single-parent-family; imbalance between gendered values and attitudes in single-father and single-mother families; parental conflicts before and after divorce and increased activities of children outside the single-parent house; cross-national variation in divorce levels and percentages single-father and single-mother families. We use data from the Civic Education Study conducted by International Educational Association (IAE) in 1999. This Civic Education Study tests civic knowledge, civic attitudes and civic participation of 14 year old students. We have five dependent variables for 17 countries: trust in government related institution positive attitudes towards immigrants, positive attitudes towards ones nation positive attitudes towards women's rights and civic participation. We find that children living in single-parent-families tend to have less trust in societal institutions than children from two-parent-families, but this difference is only significant in some countries. We find that that children living in single-parent-families tend to have a higher level of civic participation than children from two-parent-families, but also this difference is only significant in some countries. In addition our results show that children living in single-mother-families have attitudes that are more favorable to women rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family, while children living in single-father-families have attitudes less favorable to women rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family. But we did not find that children living in single-parent-families tend to have more negative attitudes towards outsiders than children from two-parent-families: the results are too mixed. Also contrary to our expectation, we found no relation with the percentage of single-parent-families in a country and the attitudes of children living in single-parents families. But our results support a more sociological approach of divorce: parental divorce does not only affect the individual well-being of the children involved, but also influences the societal attitudes of these children.

1. Introduction

Until today the sociological research on the effect of parental divorce on their children is restricted to aspects of the well-being of these children: educational performance, psychological well-being, health, marital and relational behaviors, divorce risks, etc. Interesting as these individual consequences of parental divorce are, they are confined to the individual variation and do not necessarily influence society as a whole. But cross-national research that compares the effects of parental divorce on some aspects of the well-being of these children touches upon the societal consequences of divorce in modern society. Pong, Dronkers & Hampton-Thompson (2003), Garib, Martin Garcia & Dronkers (2007) and De Lange, Dronkers & Wolbers (2008) showed that the effect of parental divorce on educational performance was stronger in societies with higher

divorce-levels. Härkönen & Dronkers (2006) showed that divorce is more common among lower educated women in societies with higher divorce-levels, while divorce is more common among higher educated women in societies with lower divorce-levels. Dronkers & Härkönen (2008) showed that overall higher levels of parental divorce in society increase the divorce risks in that society, irrespectively whether the parents of the respondents are divorced themselves. Pong (1997; 1998) and Sun (1999) both found for the USA that family disruption has a negative contextual effect on children's academic achievement, irrespectively of the divorce of their parents: schools with a large concentration of single-parent-families are usually characterized by less social relations between the parents consequently children's educational performance is negatively affected by this fact, when compared to the educational performance of children from schools with a smaller concentration of disrupted families. De Lange, Dronkers & Wolbers (2008) showed that this contextual school-effect of divorce also exists in nearly all modern societies. Using pooled PISA 2000 and 2003 data they find that attending a school with higher proportion of children from single-parent-families affects the educational performance of all children negatively, but, children from single-mother families are particularly harmed by attending such schools.

We can derive from those studies that parental divorce and its effects vary clearly by context and that parental divorce might have wider societal consequences than individual variation of the well-being of the children of divorced parents.

This paper focus is on such a societal consequences: the attitudes of children towards society. Empirical studies of the relations between parental divorce and the attitudes about (aspects of) society of their children are not available. One will not find any references to attitudes of children of divorced parents in the well-known review of Amato (2000). The only attitudes which are sometimes studied in relation with parental divorce are gender-role attitudes (Kiecolt & Acook, 1988; Wright & Young, 1998; Lont & Dronkers, 2004)

However, it can be argued that relations between parental divorce and attitudes about (aspects of) society of their children might exist. Parental divorce might affect the attachment of the children to their biological parents, either by the divorce itself, or by the parental conflicts before and after the divorce. A secure attachment of children to relevant adults (among whom biological parents are paramount) is an important condition of the balanced psychological development of children. Also the forced choice to live either with their father or their mother after the break-up might affect the attitudes and values of the children involved, by the biased socialization of the co-resident single parent. The problems in the parental home might push children outdoors, and thus stimulate more participation in civic activities.

Therefore we investigate in the first place different mechanisms underlying the relation between parental divorce and the attitudes of their children such as: 1. Insecure attachment induced by parental conflicts and divorce. 2. Restructuring of the parental gender-roles in the single-parent-family. And in the second place some other consequences of divorce such as 3. Imbalance between gendered values and attitudes in single-father and single-mother families. 4. Parental conflicts before and after divorce and increased activities of children outside the single-parent house. 5. Cross-national variation in divorce levels and percentages single-father and single-mother families.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Attachment

Attachment theorists, starting with Bowlby (1973, 1980, 1993) consider children to have a need for a secure relationship with adult caregivers, without which normal social and emotional development will not occur.

Attachment theory proposes that infant behaviour associated with attachment is primarily a process of proximity seeking to an identified attachment figure in stressful situations, for the purpose of survival. Infants become attached to adults who are sensitive and responsive in social interactions with the infant, and who remain consistent caregivers for some months during the period from about six months to two years of age. During the later part of this period, children begin to use attachment figures (familiar people) as a secure base to explore from and return to. Parental responses lead to the development of patterns of attachment which in turn lead to internal working models which will guide the individual's feelings, thoughts and expectations in later relationships. Separation anxiety or grief following serious loss are normal and natural responses in an attached infant. An extreme deficit in appropriate parenting can lead to a lack of attachment behaviours in a child and may result in the rare disorder known as reactive attachment disorder.

Ainsworth (1967), an important figure in the formulation and development of attachment theory, introduced the concept of the "secure base" and developed a theory of a number of attachment patterns or "styles" in infants in which distinct characteristics were identified; these were secure attachment, avoidant attachment, anxious attachment and, later, disorganized attachment. Other theorists subsequently extended attachment theory to adults. Methods exist for measurement of attachment patterns in older infants and adults, although measurement in middle childhood is problematic. In addition to care-seeking by children, one may construct other interactions including some components of attachment behavior; these include peer relationships of all ages, romantic and sexual attraction, and responses to the care needs of infants or sick or elderly adults.

Although in the early days academic psychologists criticized attachment theory, it has become the dominant approach to understanding early social development and given rise to a great surge of empirical research into the formation of children's close relationships (Rutter, 1995). There have been significant modifications as a result of empirical research but the main attachment concepts have become generally accepted (Bowlby & King, 2004).

Given that children of divorced parents are prone to have less secure attachment to significant others, we hypothesize that children living in single-parent-families have less trust in societal institutions and their own nation and have more negative attitudes towards outsiders in their society (immigrants) relative to the children living in two-parent-families.

2.2 Restructuring of parental gender roles in single-parent-families

According to social learning theory, children acquire sex-typed behavior by imitating significant others as role models (Stevenson & Black, 1996). Children learn that mothers and fathers perform different tasks, and this learning is different in single-mother-families and single-father-families, compared with families with both parents. Two theories

suggest why this differential learning of gender roles takes place. According to “role-restructuring” theory, specialization by gender is more difficult in single-parent-families, as single-mothers and single-fathers must perform a wide range of tasks, including ones that are non-traditional for their gender. Hence, children in single-parent-families, irrespective of the single-parent’s gender, should be less likely than children in two-parent-families to “learn” the traditional gender-roles. If this “role-restructuring” theory is correct, one would expect less traditional attitudes about gender-roles of children living in single-mother and in single-fathers families. According to the “father-absence” theory, in contrast, the impact of growing up in a single-parent-family depends on the single-parent’s gender. Fathers are more likely than mothers to stress conformity to traditional gender roles. Hence, the single-father-family should still instill more traditional gender attitudes in children than growing up with a single-mother, with children from intact families in an intermediate position (Kiecolt & Acock, 1988). Wright & Young (1998) found for the USA that children in father-headed families have more traditional gender-related attitudes than mother-headed families, which provided support for the “father-absence” theory. However, they found gender-specific effects after controlling for maternal employment. Children in father-headed families have more traditional gender-related attitudes than mother-headed families. Lont & Dronkers (2004) found for the Netherlands that secondary school pupils in single-mother-families had less traditional views on future task division in upbringing such as caring for children, cooking, earning money and other domestic chores than comparable pupils in two-parent families. But they found no difference in this attitudes regarding future task division between pupils in single-fathers-families and two-parents-families.

Given this overall support for the “father-absence” theory we hypothesize that children living in single-mother-families have more positive attitudes towards women’s rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family. We also hypothesize that children living in single-father-families have less favorable attitudes towards women’s rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family.

2.3. Increased civic participation outside the single-parent house

Parental divorce and the accompanying conflicts before and after the separation force their children to be faster independent, and thus be more active in the outside world than children who still have their both parents. For example, children of divorced parents leave on average their parental home at an earlier age to live independently and have their first sexual intercourse at an earlier age. (Amato & Keith, 1991). The “push” factors of the parental conflicts and divorce can induce the children to search for their social contacts outside the family, and thus to participate more in voluntary organizations than children living with both parents.

Given these “push” factors we hypothesize that children living in single-parents-families have a higher degree of civic participation than children living in a two-parents-family, and alike in single-father and single-mother-families.

2.4 Imbalance between gendered values and attitudes in single-father and single-mother families

We will distinguish between single-mother and single-fathers families. At the start of the second part of the 20th century, mothers got mostly the custody of the children and the

children lived mostly with her, while the father live separately, seeing his children less or more. The amount of time father spent with his children depended on the post-divorce development of the relations between the ex-spouses and of the possible new post-divorce partnerships of the ex-spouses. During the growth of percentages of divorced parents in the last part of the 20th century it became less exceptional that the father obtained the custody of his children and that his children lived with him. But until today even in the most “emancipated” societies the majority of the children lives with their mothers after divorce or separation. This societal preference towards children staying with their mothers might cause unmeasured selectivity effects. Children living with their single-fathers are still more exceptional than children living with their single-mother and the same can be true for their fathers. It might be that single-fathers with their children are more positively selected for the difficult task for raising children after divorce than single-mothers, and as a consequence the children of the former are better socialized than those of the latter. However, if mothers are more or differently equipped to raise their children single-handed than single-fathers (either by their biological characteristics or by cultural roles) the children of the single-mothers are better socialized than those of the single-fathers. For these two reasons, we assume that the attitudes of children in mother-single families will be different from those in father-single families, although the direction of these differences is not clear due to the outlined contradictory processes.

These attitudes might also differ between children in single-mother-families and single-father-families because of the gender-imbalance in both types of single-parent-families: the missing father in the single-mother-family and the missing-mother in the single-father-family. According to “role-restructuring” theory, single-mothers and single-fathers must perform a wide range of tasks, including ones that are non-traditional for their gender. This does not necessarily imply that these single-parents know how to balance these various gender-roles in the socialization of their children, also because these conflicts about gender-roles are themselves one of the important reasons for divorce in modern societies. As a consequence of this imbalance of the gender-roles in single-parent-families, female-values and attitudes will be more emphasized during the socialization in single-mother-families, while male values and attitudes will be more emphasized during the socialization in single-father-families, both in comparison with the socialization in two-parent-families. Murray & Sandqvist (1990) show that children in single-mother-families do relatively worse for math compared with their reading grades, while children in single-father-families do relatively worse for reading compared with their math grades.

Given these differential emphases of male and female values and attitudes during the socialization in single-father or single-mother-families, we hypothesize that children in single-mother- families will have different attitudes, reflecting the dominant gender roles in these single-parent-families. The traditional female gender role is more related with activities of caring and nurturing of children and those who need help, while the traditional male gender role is more related with defending territory against intruders and competition. As far as these traditional gender roles still influence the bias in the socialization in the single-parent-families we expects that more positive attitudes towards immigrants in single-mother families, while children in single-father-families will have more positive attitudes towards ones nation.

2.5. Cross-national variation

We will analyze the relations between parental divorce and the attitudes about society of their children in various countries at both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. We have no clear expectations about the cross-national variation in these relations. But we do not expect that these relations are smaller in societies with a high divorce and separation level, because the grounds for these relations are hardly influenced by the normality of parental divorce in a certain society.

3 Data and Measurements

This article uses data from the Civic Education Study (CivEd) conducted by International Educational Association (IAE) in 1999. The aim of this study is to examine to which extent are young people ready to take their role as citizens in democracies (CivEd, 2001). In order to achieve this goal Civic Education Study tests civic knowledge, civic attitudes and civic participation of 14 year old students across 28 countries. Regarding the civic attitudes there are three major domains of the study: *democracy and democratic institutions, national identity and social cohesion and diversity* (CivEd, 2001).

Civic Education Study focuses in particular on the role of schooling for the development of civic knowledge, attitudes and participation. However many background variables are available that give more insights into the student profile, such as family background. Therefore this study not only allows us to understand better how civic knowledge, attitudes and participation of young people are formed, but to examine this in comparative perspective.

For the purpose of this study we use measurements of civic attitudes and participation of the 14 year old pupils in the 17 countries: United States, Estonia, England, Sweden, Finland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, French Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Portugal and Poland (ordered in percentage pupils living in single-parent-families). In total we analyze 53542 children in 17 different countries. Finally, given the nature of our dependent variables we have decided to exclude cases with missing values from our study in order to make the analysis more conservative.

The descriptive statistics of both dependent and independent variables can be found in table 1.

About here table 1

3.1 Measurement of civic attitudes and participation

The three major domains of the study, democracy and democratic institutions, national identity, social cohesion and diversity, are reflected in the choice of our 5 dependent variables. The scaled items we base our dependent variables on are: trust in government related institutions, positive attitudes towards immigrants, positive attitudes towards ones nation and positive attitudes towards women's political and economic rights. The fifth depended variable that we have found additionally interesting to look at and which is not a scaled variable, is amount of civic participation of students. The scaled items are designed using the Item Response Theory and are based on the questions that are listed below.

Trust in government related institution is a scale designed by IEA that measures the extend to which pupils are having confidence in public institutions of their countries. It is based on the level of agreement of student on the following questions: “How much of the time can you trust the national government/ courts/ local government/ the police/political parties and national parliament?”¹.

The scale *positive attitudes towards immigrants*, measures to which extend pupils support certain rights and opportunities of immigrants. It is based on how the student feels about following statements²: “Immigrants should have the opportunity to keep their own language”; “Immigrants’ children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have”; “Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections”; “Immigrants should have the opportunity to keep their own customs and lifestyle”; “Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in a country has”.

The third dependent variable, *positive attitudes towards one’s nation*, measures pupils attachment to the country of destination and its political symbols and as well as their nationalistic feelings towards the country of destination. This item is based on the reactions of students to another set of statements such as: “The flag of this country is very important to me”; “I have great love to this country”; “This country should be proud of what it has achieved”; “I would prefer to live permanently in another country”.

The fourth scale that we use as dependent variable of this study is pupils’ *positive attitudes towards women’s rights*. This scale is an indicator of how much pupils actually endorse equal political and economic rights of men and women. Several questions are used to create it: “Women should run for public office and take part in government just as men do”; “Women should have the same rights as men in every way”; “Women should stay out of politics”; “When jobs are scarce men have should have more right to a job then women”.³

Our fifth dependent variable, *civic participation*, is not a scale of the IEA but an index that we generate our self. It measures to which extend pupils are involved in the civic activities. It is a sum of the positive answers to the questions on six different aspects of civic participation. The question asked here is if the pupil ever participated in the following six organizations: “a student council”, “youth origination affiliated with apolitical party or union”, “a group that prepares school newspaper”, “UNESCO club”, “human rights organization” and “a charity collecting money for a social cause”. One point is assigned to each confirming answer to these questions; therefore this variable can take values from 0 to 6, depending on the level of pupils’ civic participation.

3.2 Independent variables

Family form: In order to examine if the civic attitudes and participation of pupils from single-parent-families are different to those of pupils living with both parents, we have divided pupils in three different groups regarding the form of their families. The first group of pupils has reported to live all the time with either father, stepfather or male guardian, whereas the mother, stepmother or female guardian is reported as absent. This group we have called “single father families”. For second group of students the opposite is the case. Here the individual has reported to live with either mother, or stepmother or female guardian without father, stepfather or male guardian living with them all the time. Therefore this group is called “single mother family”. Finally our reference group to

which majority of pupils belongs is the one where they reported to live with mother, stepmother or female guardian *and* father, stepfather or male guardian. The percentage of single-parent- families varies from 7,3 % in Poland to 19,29 % in United States.

These measurement has three disadvantages and one advantage. The first disadvantage is that we do not know the cause of the single-parenthood: death, birth outside wedlock, divorce or separation. Although this disadvantage seems serious, we argue that it does not hamper our analysis. The percentage of dead parents of children of 14 year old is not large in modern societies and does not vary strongly between these societies. Therefore the cross-national variation in percentage single-parent-families can be mainly explained by the national variations in birth outside wedlock, divorce and separation. The differences between birth outside wedlock, divorce or separation from the child perspective is smaller than from the adult perspective: in all three situation father and mother do not live together. The second disadvantage is that we do not know how long the pupil lives in the single-parent-family or in the two-parent-family, in case of a reconstituted family with stepparents. This ignorance of the duration will probably lead to an underestimation of the strength of the assumed effects, because short and long term effects can not be estimated properly. The third disadvantage is the impossibility to distinguish between pupils who live with both their natural parents and pupils who lives in a reconstituted family with at least one stepparent. This ignorance of the composition of the two-parent-family will probably lead to an underestimation of the strength of the assumed effects, because a part of the assumed effects is also true for reconstituted families. The advantage of this measurement is that it is not restricted to legally divorced parents but that is also includes the separated cohabitating parents and their children. With the current lack of data about attitudes of children and the divorce of their parents, we can do nothing but accept these data as the best available proxy and the best data to test our hypotheses.

Individual characteristics and family background: We control for the gender of a child by creating a dummy variable for gender where we coded female pupils with “1” and male ones “0”. There 8 different groups of independent variables that represent *educational level of father and mother*. We constructed a dummy variable for the following educational levels; “elementary school”⁴, “high school” and “college”. We have also added additional category, where the respondent could not indicate the educational level of his or her parent. Next to parental education the variable *educational aspiration of pupils*, expresses by the expected amount of years of their further education. We were also interested in the *home literacy*. This variable expresses a number of books at pupils home. We control for *newspaper readership* of the pupils’ family, represented by the dummy that indicates if the families receive newspaper at home on the daily basis, where “1” means “yes” and “0” means “no”. Finally, we also look at the immigrant status of students and control for it by generating dummy variable, where the reference group is native students.

Civic participation: this last control variable is the one that represents the amount of *civic participation* of students. The reader has already encountered this variable on the “independent side of the model”. However we use it also as explanatory variables of the pupils’ civic attitudes⁵. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of all independent variables.

3.3 Analyses

The set-up of the Civic Education Survey requires techniques that take hierarchical data structure into account. Using individual's level Ordinary Least Square analysis would overestimate the standard errors of the model and therefore we would run the risk of disregarding the significance of some variables. In order to avoid this we use a Weighted Least Square (WLS) technique where the survey's weights and stratifications is taken into account. This technique is used to estimate the relationship between the levels of civic attitudes and the characteristics of individual pupil. This relationship is estimated for each 17 Western Countries under consideration.

As for the relationship between civic participation and the independent variables we use the Ordered Logistic Modeling (Ologit) as a technique that allows us to estimate the probability of having certain level of civic participation, conditioned on the characteristics of independent variables.

Each of the techniques is used to estimate two different models, the basic one (Model I) and the more extended ones (Model II and Model III), where more control variables are added. Model I examines if the levels of civic values (WLS) and participation (Ologit) of students living in single mother or single father families are significantly different to those living in two parent families. Next to family form we also control here for immigrant status and gender differences. In addition, Model II controls for parental educational levels. Finally Model III is the most extensive ones because we differentiate here as well for the effects of educational aspirations, newspaper readership, home literacy and civic participation of pupils.

The countries in tables 2 to 6 are ordered in the percentage single-parent-families in the various countries.

4 Results

4.1. Single-parent-families and trust in government related institutions

About here table 2

Table 2 shows that children in single-mother-families have a significant lower trust in government related institutions than children in two-parent-families in 6 countries (Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Norway and Bulgaria). This is also the case for children in single-father families in 2 countries (USA and Switzerland), also after controlling for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status. In no country the trust in government related institutions of children in single-parent-families is significantly higher than that of children in two-parent-families. Controlling for expected years of further education, readership of newspaper and number of books at home in model II or for civic participation in model III hardly change the parameters, only those for Switzerland become insignificant. These results support our hypothesis that children living in single-parent-families tend to have less trust in societal institutions than children from two-parent-families, and in a number of countries this difference is significant. There does not seem to exist any relation with the percentage of single-parent-families in a country and the amount of distrust in government related institutions in single-parent-

families. The countries with significant lower trust in single-mother-families are scattered around the ordering of countries based on the percentage single-parent-families in table 2.

However, the results for single-mother- families are stronger than the results for single-father-families: children in the latter have less often a stronger distrust in government related institutions than those in the former. This might be explained by the hypothesized imbalance between gendered values and attitudes in single-father and single-mother families. As said earlier the traditional male gender roles are more related with the defense of ones territory against intruders and competition and thus with government and police. This government related institutions like police seems more related with these traditional male values than the traditional female values of caring and nurturing, and thus more socialized in single-fathers-families than in single-mother-families.

4.2. Single-parent-families and civic participation

About here table 3

Table 3 shows that children in single-mother-families have a significant higher civic participation than children in two-parent-families in 4 countries (Slovakia, Switzerland, Slovenia and Portugal). This is also the case for children in single-father families in 2 countries (Slovakia and Slovenia), also after control for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status. In no country the civic participation of children in single-parent-families is significantly lower than that of children in two-parent-families. Controlling for expected years of further education, readership of newspaper and number of books at home in model II there is a change in some of the parameters; those for the single-mother-families of Slovakia become insignificant, but those for Finland and Norway become significant. The control for expected years of further education, readership of newspaper and number of books at home in model II do not change the parameters of single-father-families. These results support our hypothesis that that children living in single-parent-families tend to have a higher level of civic participation than children from two-parent-families, and in a number of countries this difference is significant. There does not seem to exist any relation with the percentage of single-parent-families in a country and the amount of civic participation in single-parent-families.

However, the results for single-mother-families are stronger than the results for single-father-families: children in the latter have less often a higher civic participation than those in the former. We can not explain this difference by the hypothesized imbalance between gendered values and attitudes in single-father and single-mother families. This might be explained by the higher selectivity of single-father-families compared to single-mother-families: the amount of intra-family conflict is lower in the former than in the later due to this selectivity and thus the strength of the "push" factors that induce children to search their social contacts outside the family.

4.3. Single-parent-families and positive attitudes towards immigrants

About here table 4

Table 4 shows that children in single-mother-families have a significantly more positive attitudes towards immigrants than children in two-parent-families in 2 countries (Denmark and Portugal) and significant less positive attitudes towards immigrants in Poland, also after control for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status. We find a comparable mixed result for children in single-father-families. Children in single-father families in 4 countries (French-Belgium; Norway, Germany and Bulgaria) have more negative attitudes towards immigrants than children in two-parent-families, but children in single-father-families in Switzerland have more positive attitudes towards immigrants. Controlling for expected years of further education, readership of newspaper and number of books at home in model II hardly change the parameters, only those for children in single-father-families in Bulgaria and children in single-mother-families in Poland become insignificant. Controlling for civic participation in model III makes more parameters insignificant. Only children in single-mother-families have more positive attitude towards immigrants, just like children in single-father-families in Switzerland. Only children in single-father-families in Germany have a more negative attitudes towards immigrants. These results are too mixed (both between countries and mother- and father-families) to support our hypothesis that children living in single-parent-families tend to have a more negative attitudes toward outsiders than children from two-parent-families.

However, something is going on in single-parent-families in relation with the attitudes towards immigrants. Would it be possible to explain the results for Germany by a higher proportion of the single-father-families living in former communist regions, where the open distrust against immigrants is higher than in West-Germany? Would it be possible to explain the positive attitudes of children in single-mother-families in Denmark by the concentration of single-mother-families and immigrant-families in the same neighborhoods, as a consequence of an unintended effect of the Danish welfare state?

4.4. Single-parent-families and positive attitudes towards ones nation

About here table 5

Table 5 shows that children in single-mother-families have significantly less positive attitudes towards ones nation than children in two-parent-families in 4 countries (England, Slovakia, Norway and Switzerland). This is also the case for children in single-father-families in 4 countries (Slovakia, Switzerland, Slovenia and Poland), while children in single-father-families in Sweden have a more positive attitudes towards ones nation than children in Swedish two-parent-families. Controlling for expected years of further education, readership of newspaper and number of books at home in model II or for civic participation in model III hardly changes the parameters, only those for children in single-mother-families in Switzerland and the single-father-families in Poland become insignificant. These results support our hypothesis that children living in single-parent-families tend to have less trust in their society (and thus ones nation) than children from two-parent-families, and in a number of countries this difference is significant. There does not seem to exist any relation with the percentage of single-parent-families in a

country and the amount of distrust in government related institutions in single-parent-families.

However, the only exceptions we find are children in single-father-families in Sweden: they have more positive attitudes towards their nation than two-parent-families in Sweden. We can put forward two explanations for this outcome. The first explanation might be the hypothesized imbalance between gendered values and attitudes in single-father and single-mother families. The symbolic authority of the nation seems more related with patriarchal values and attitudes than matriarchal values and attitudes, and thus more socialized in single-fathers-families. But why do we find this only in the Swedish case? The second explanation is that children living in single-parent-families have more need for positive identification with the larger context and thus have more positive attitudes towards their nation. But again, why is this the case only in Sweden?

4.5. Single-parent-families and women's political and economic rights

About here table 6

Table 6 shows that children in single-mother-families have more positive attitudes towards women's political and economic rights than children in two-parent-families in 3 countries (Czech Republic, Denmark and Slovenia). The opposite is the case for children in single-father-families in 2 countries (French Belgium and Norway), also after controlling for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status. In no country the trust in government related institutions of children in single-parent-families is significant higher than that of children in two-parent-families. Controlling for expected years of further education, readership of newspaper and number of books at home in model II or for civic participation in model III hardly change the parameters, only those for children in single-father-families in Slovenia becomes significantly negative. These results support our hypotheses that children living in single-mother-families have attitudes that are more favorable to women's rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family, while children living in single-father-families have attitudes that are less favorable to women's rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family.

5. Conclusions

We started with the thesis that parental divorce not only affects the individual well-being of the children involved, but also influences the societal attitudes of these children.

We find support for our hypothesis that children living in single-parent-families tend to have less trust in societal institutions than children from two-parent-families, but this difference is only significant in some countries.

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We find also support for our hypothesis that children living in single-parent-families tend to have a less positive attitudes towards ones nation than children from two-

parent-families, but also this difference is only significant in some countries and Sweden is an exception.

We find in addition support for our related hypotheses that children living in single-mother-families have attitudes that are more favorable to women rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family, while children living in single-father-families have attitudes less favorable to women rights and gender-equality than children living in two-parents-family.

But we did not find support for our hypothesis that children living in single-parent-families tend to have a more negative attitudes towards outsiders than children from two-parent-families: the results are too mixed for us to come up with a clear conclusion.

Also contrary to our expectation, we found no relation with the percentage of single-parent-families in a country and the attitudes of children living in single-parents families. Significant effects were found across the full spectrum of countries and there seems no clear pattern. We found also significant effects of single-parent-families on attitudes of the involved children in the Scandinavian countries, often regarded as the examples of liberal and relaxed climate towards divorce and single-parent-hood. Children in single-mother-families in Norway had less trust in government related institutions, higher civic participation, more negative attitudes towards their nation. Children in single-mother-families in Finland had higher levels of civic participation. Children in single-mother-families in Denmark had a more positive attitude towards immigrants and women's political and economic rights. Children in single-father-families in Norway had a more negative attitudes towards immigrants and women's political and economic rights. Children in single-father-families in Sweden had a more positive attitudes towards their nation.

Concluding, sociologists who are studying the causes and consequences of parental divorce and separation on children, should not restrict themselves to individual well-being of those involved. They should focus more on the societal consequences. If attitudes about society are formed in ones youth and if these attitudes are shaped also by parental divorce, then the overall level of social trust in a society might be negatively affected by the overall level of parental divorce and separation.

Notes

¹ The possible answers to all of these questions are: "never", "only some of the time", "most of the time", "always" and "don't know".

² Here, the possible answers are: "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", "strongly disagree" and "don't know".

³ We have calculated the Cronbach alpha values for all four scaled items. They are (respectively) 0.724, 0.8127, 0.734 and 0.7129. This means that all of the questions used to create scaled items do measure the same dimensions of civic attitudes of the stated item.

⁴ We did not distinguish between individuals with and without diploma, as this is not the main scope of the study.

⁵ Originally we had three constructed three different models, where the first basic model was containing only controls for immigrants, second was extended by family background control variables and this one comprised civic participation in addition to all other ones. As the difference between second and this model was not significant, for the practical reasons we decided to live it out of the main body of the paper. It can be found in the appendix.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Nr of observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Dependant variables</i>					
Trust in government related inst.	52198	10.0512	1.96685	2.7702	17.24348
Positive attitudes towards nation	52284	9.84317	2.034896	3.187201	13.67964
Positive attitudes women' rights	52292	10.2278	2.046711	2.813033	13.51111
Positive attitude immigrants	51921	9.928205	2.094257	4.040047	14.1657
Civic participation	47411	.6129379	.9236176	0	6
<i>Individual characteristics & family background</i>					
Single-mother family	45194	.1069611	.3090672	0	1
Single-father family	41326	.0233751	.1510936	0	1
Girl	52995	.5164072	.4997354	0	1
Educational aspirations	52531	4.207649	1.408244	1	7
Nr of books at home	52854	4.463579	1.297857	1	6
Immigrant status	49533	.0702966	.2556487	0	1
Newspaper readership	52719	.6660597	.4716232	0	1
<i>Parental education</i>					
Mother college	53542	.2399051	.4270293	0	1
Mother high school	53542	.4341452	.4956488	0	1
Mother elementary	53542	.1191961	.3240222	0	1
Mother don't know	53542	.1349408	.3416635	0	1
Father college	53542	.2272048	.4190299	0	1
Father high school	53542	.4073998	.491355	0	1
Father elementary	53542	.1198312	.324767	0	1
Father don't know	53542	.1604722	.3670468	0	1

Source: IAE CivEd study, 1999

Table 2: Trust in government related institutions (Weighted least square)

	USA	EST	ENG	SWE	FIN	CZE	SVK	AUS	BFR	DNK	NOR	DEU	CHE	BUL	SVN	PRT	POL
% Single-parent-families	19.29	18.23	15.22	14.46	13.74	13.77	13.56	13.31	12.98	11.90	11.65	11.20	10.93	9.26	8.74	8.07	7.38
% Single mother families	16.22	16.22	13.3	9.81	9.73	12.26	12.59	10.95	9.71	9.19	9.61	9.8	9.69	7.14	6.51	7.16	6.34
% Single father families	3.07	2.01	1.92	4.65	4.01	1.51	0.97	2.36	2.87	2.71	2.04	1.4	1.24	2.12	2.23	0.91	1.04
N of cases	2540	2743	2647	2629	2445	3385	3201	2878	1679	2873	2851	3152	2672	2353	2585	2750	2777
MODEL I¹																	
Single mother family	-0.202 (-1.50)	- (-2.19) 0.191*	-0.133 (-1.03)	-0.207 (-1.36)	-0.212 (-1.60)	- (-3.32) 0.424**	- (-2.22) 0.262*	-0.356** (-2.84)	-0.229 (-1.10)	-0.087 (-0.88)	-0.315** (-2.98)	-0.215 (-1.61)	-0.117 (-0.79)	-0.564** (-2.96)	0.147 (0.92)	-0.141 (-1.13)	-0.289 (-1.56)
Single father family	- (-2.67) 0.84**	0.111 (0.29)	-0.407 (-1.26)	-0.293 (-0.98)	-0.196 (-1.08)	-0.235 (-0.70)	0.0168 (0.04)	-0.0945 (-0.38)	-0.292 (-0.92)	-0.183 (-0.92)	-0.244 (-0.84)	-0.146 (-0.47)	-0.465* (-2.15)	0.0199 (0.07)	-0.0336 (-0.13)	-0.228 (-1.08)	-0.410 (-1.10)
MODEL II																	
Single mother family	-0.182 (-1.29)	-0.145 (-1.65)	-0.138 (-1.06)	-0.121 (-0.78)	-0.146 (-1.08)	- (-3.20) 0.425**	- (-2.21) 0.262*	-0.359** (-2.79)	-0.221 (-1.08)	-0.006 (-0.07)	-0.272* (-2.48)	-0.205 (-1.52)	-0.0749 (-0.48)	-0.576** (-3.17)	0.166 (1.05)	-0.126 (-0.97)	-0.281 (-1.50)
Single father family	- (-2.59) 0.804*	0.125 (0.33)	-0.380 (-1.17)	-0.370 (-1.27)	-0.116 (-0.65)	-0.239 (-0.68)	0.0205 (0.05)	-0.136 (-0.55)	-0.276 (-0.86)	-0.189 (-0.94)	-0.286 (-1.09)	-0.0556 (-0.18)	-0.523* (-2.09)	0.0356 (0.12)	-0.004 (-0.02)	-0.243 (-1.15)	-0.421 (-1.07)
MODEL III																	
Single mother family	-0.182 (-1.29)	-0.112 (-1.23)	-0.143 (-1.10)	- (-0.31) 0.0548	-0.165 (-1.18)	- (-3.20) 0.431**	- (-2.06) 0.245*	-0.315* (-2.36)	-0.195 (-1.04)	0.00675 (0.06)	-0.270* (-2.32)	-0.163 (-1.13)	-0.0005 (-0.00)	-0.614** (-3.31)	0.143 (0.90)	-0.229 (-1.46)	-0.275 (-1.44)
Single father family	- (-2.78) 0.89**	-0.225 (-0.71)	-0.391 (-1.19)	-0.228 (-0.84)	- (-0.38) 0.0727	-0.252 (-0.72)	-0.179 (-0.48)	-0.166 (-0.63)	-0.529 (-1.60)	-0.236 (-1.11)	-0.473 (-1.67)	0.223 (0.72)	-0.485 (-1.67)	-0.120 (-0.34)	0.0737 (0.31)	-0.371 (-1.68)	-0.543 (-1.43)

T-statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, * p<0.001, Source: IAE CIVED**

¹ Model I: Effect of single mother/father family on trust in government related institutions controlled for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status

Model II : Model I + additional control variables: years of further education, newspaper readership and # of books at home

Model III: Model II + additional control variable: civic participation

Table 3: Civic participation (Ordered logistic regression)

	USA	EST	ENG	SWE	FIN	CZE	SVK	AUS	BFR	DNK	NOR	DEU	CHE	BUL	SVN	PRT	POL
MODEL I²																	
Single mother family	-0.0199	-0.157	0.139	0.123	0.188	0.060	0.380*	0.009	0.195	0.117	0.155	0.265	0.483**	0.333	0.442**	0.464**	-0.04
	(-0.17)	(-1.13)	(1.19)	(0.78)	(1.32)	(0.43)	(1.99)	(0.07)	(0.92)	(0.86)	(1.12)	(1.48)	(3.21)	(0.96)	(2.90)	(2.89)	(-0.1)
Single father family	0.404	-0.181	0.120	-0.013	-0.136	-0.112	0.992*	-0.108	-0.027	0.0842	-0.197	-0.582	0.130	0.0342	0.964*	0.114	-0.49
	(1.51)	(-0.54)	(0.36)	(-0.05)	(-0.58)	(-0.28)	(2.36)	(-0.39)	(-0.06)	(0.36)	(-0.70)	(-1.27)	(0.20)	(0.06)	(2.35)	(0.36)	(-0.9)
MODEL II																	
Single mother family	0.121	-0.136	0.211	0.234	0.297*	0.063	0.372	0.0834	0.282	0.163	0.285*	0.260	0.503**	0.374	0.456**	0.491**	-0.00
	(1.05)	(-0.99)	(1.73)	(1.60)	(2.06)	(0.47)	(1.93)	(0.58)	(1.33)	(1.16)	(2.00)	(1.52)	(3.28)	(1.18)	(2.95)	(3.03)	(-0.0)
Single father family	0.502	-0.154	0.211	0.116	0.0284	-0.074	1.051*	-0.010	-0.007	0.0931	-0.002	-0.574	0.273	0.0649	0.918*	0.104	-0.36
	(1.73)	(-0.46)	(0.63)	(0.40)	(0.12)	(-0.19)	(2.40)	(-0.04)	(-0.02)	(0.39)	(-0.01)	(-1.16)	(0.38)	(0.13)	(2.13)	(0.34)	(-0.6)

T-statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, * p<0.001, Source: IAE CIVED**

² Model I: Effect of single mother/father family on trust in government related institutions controlled for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status

Model II : Model I + additional control variables: years of further education, newspaper readership and # of books at home

Model III: Model II + additional control variable: civic participation

Table 4: Positive attitudes towards immigrants (Weighted least square)

	USA	EST	ENG	SWE	FIN	CZE	SVK	AUS	BFR	DNK	NOR	DEU	CHE	BUL	SVN	PRT	POL
MODEL I³																	
Single mother family	-0.0639 (-0.47)	0.123 (1.37)	-0.0315 (-0.27)	-0.0243 (-0.11)	0.0709 (0.43)	0.202 (1.62)	0.141 (1.13)	0.139 (0.80)	-0.109 (-0.55)	0.334* (2.21)	-0.0759 (-0.51)	-0.013 (-0.09)	0.0918 (0.60)	0.469 (1.36)	0.288 (1.74)	0.271* (2.12)	-0.436* (-2.39)
Single father family	-0.367 (-0.93)	0.129 (0.60)	0.0781 (0.25)	-0.604 (-1.83)	-0.129 (-0.48)	-0.237 (-0.93)	-0.216 (-0.72)	-0.0987 (-0.37)	-0.608* (-2.09)	0.0289 (0.11)	-0.513* (-2.29)	-1.05*** (-3.43)	1.115** (3.07)	-0.653* (-2.19)	0.218 (0.84)	-0.0841 (-0.29)	-0.138 (-0.26)
MODEL II																	
Single mother family	-0.0533 (-0.40)	0.0529 (0.58)	-0.0332 (-0.29)	-0.0193 (-0.08)	0.0482 (0.29)	0.236 (1.86)	0.140 (1.14)	0.132 (0.75)	-0.0963 (-0.49)	0.394* (2.50)	-0.0805 (-0.51)	-0.0941 (-0.61)	0.00759 (0.05)	0.447 (1.34)	0.258 (1.52)	0.264* (2.05)	-0.307 (-1.81)
Single father family	-0.421 (-1.07)	0.0927 (0.44)	0.0728 (0.24)	-0.633 (-1.95)	-0.0777 (-0.29)	-0.212 (-0.79)	-0.197 (-0.65)	-0.176 (-0.66)	-0.596* (-2.04)	0.0354 (0.14)	-0.577* (-2.48)	-0.99** (-3.30)	0.997** (2.62)	-0.602 (-1.92)	0.0515 (0.22)	-0.0954 (-0.33)	0.214 (0.47)
MODEL III																	
Single mother family	-0.0414 (-0.30)	0.0531 (0.56)	-0.0262 (-0.23)	-0.0469 (-0.18)	0.0530 (0.29)	0.231 (1.82)	0.154 (1.19)	0.147 (0.81)	-0.124 (-0.63)	0.346* (2.14)	-0.0299 (-0.18)	-0.264 (-1.57)	-0.0133 (-0.09)	0.480 (1.36)	0.249 (1.45)	0.210 (1.59)	-0.271 (-1.60)
Single father family	-0.485 (-1.22)	-0.00151 (-0.01)	0.0830 (0.27)	-0.661 (-1.85)	-0.0304 (-0.11)	-0.210 (-0.78)	-0.157 (-0.50)	-0.321 (-1.30)	-0.640 (-1.92)	-0.0190 (-0.07)	-0.420 (-1.69)	-0.965** (-2.80)	1.071** (2.69)	-0.602 (-1.78)	-0.107 (-0.49)	-0.0612 (-0.19)	0.307 (0.65)

T-statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, * p<0.001, Source: IAE CIVED**

³ Model I: Effect of single mother/father family on trust in government related institutions controlled for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status

Model II : Model I + additional control variables: years of further education, newspaper readership and # of books at home

Model III: Model II + additional control variable: civic participation

Table 5: Positive attitudes towards ones nation (Weighted least square)

	USA	EST	ENG	SWE	FIN	CZE	SVK	AUS	BFR	DNK	NOR	DEU	CHE	BUL	SVN	PRT	POL
MODEL I⁴																	
Single mother family	-0.009	-0.0022	-0.253*	0.00125	-0.112	-0.159	-0.40**	0.0192	0.163	-0.150	-0.312*	-0.153	-0.399**	-0.200	-0.089	-0.0696	-0.00564
	(-0.08)	(-0.03)	(-2.45)	(0.01)	(-0.74)	(-1.38)	(-3.03)	(0.16)	(0.93)	(-1.31)	(-2.35)	(-0.87)	(-2.66)	(-1.12)	(-0.75)	(-0.55)	(-0.03)
Single father family	-0.120	-0.170	-0.158	0.545*	-0.169	-0.219	-0.735*	-0.127	-0.330	0.146	-0.613	0.415	-1.125*	-0.607	-0.841**	-0.175	-0.626*
	(-0.46)	(-1.05)	(-0.59)	(2.08)	(-0.81)	(-0.83)	(-2.15)	(-0.44)	(-1.05)	(0.77)	(-1.96)	(1.11)	(-2.42)	(-1.14)	(-3.12)	(-0.57)	(-2.14)
MODEL II																	
Single mother family	0.0153	0.0418	-0.246*	0.0176	-0.0794	-0.130	-0.36**	0.0669	0.173	-0.109	-0.287*	-0.112	-0.274	-0.243	-0.068	-0.0676	0.0185
	(0.13)	(0.49)	(-2.36)	(0.10)	(-0.52)	(-1.15)	(-2.73)	(0.56)	(0.98)	(-0.93)	(-2.13)	(-0.65)	(-1.84)	(-1.40)	(-0.57)	(-0.52)	(0.11)
Single father family	-0.0648	-0.162	-0.149	0.557*	-0.174	-0.275	-0.772*	-0.0278	-0.313	0.0949	-0.540	0.271	-0.964*	-0.602	-0.876**	-0.179	-0.573*
	(-0.25)	(-1.00)	(-0.56)	(2.24)	(-0.82)	(-1.03)	(-2.28)	(-0.09)	(-0.99)	(0.50)	(-1.65)	(0.69)	(-2.20)	(-1.12)	(-3.17)	(-0.59)	(-2.02)
MODEL III																	
Single mother family	0.0376	0.0191	-0.245*	-0.0754	-0.125	-0.144	-0.37**	0.0464	0.226	-0.0838	-0.260	-0.0366	-0.226	-0.277	-0.074	-0.0867	0.0617
	(0.31)	(0.21)	(-2.35)	(-0.37)	(-0.78)	(-1.26)	(-2.81)	(0.38)	(1.22)	(-0.71)	(-1.73)	(-0.19)	(-1.40)	(-1.53)	(-0.60)	(-0.59)	(0.34)
Single father family	-0.103	-0.195	-0.139	0.655*	-0.171	-0.278	-0.641*	0.186	-0.449	0.0740	-0.521	0.299	-1.293**	-0.514	-0.84**	0.00367	-0.554
	(-0.37)	(-1.38)	(-0.52)	(2.43)	(-0.78)	(-1.03)	(-2.04)	(0.59)	(-1.26)	(0.38)	(-1.47)	(0.69)	(-3.16)	(-0.91)	(-2.91)	(0.01)	(-1.90)

T-statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, * p<0.001, Source: IAE CIVED**

⁴ Model I: Effect of single mother/father family on trust in government related institutions controlled for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status

Model II : Model I + additional control variables: years of further education, newspaper readership and # of books at home

Model III: Model II + additional control variable: civic participation

Table 6: Positive attitudes towards women's political and economic rights (Weighted least square model)

	USA	EST	ENG	SWE	FIN	CZE	SVK	AUS	BFR	DNK	NOR	DEU	CHE	BUL	SVN	PRT	POL
MODEL I⁵																	
Single mother family	-0.122 (-0.88)	0.124 (1.36)	0.102 (0.76)	0.0741 (0.40)	0.175 (1.21)	0.340* (2.52)	0.0620 (0.65)	0.0868 (0.60)	-0.0327 (-0.17)	0.368* (2.54)	0.175 (1.36)	0.358 (1.67)	0.0709 (0.52)	-0.007 (-0.00)	0.325* (2.10)	0.246 (1.44)	-0.243 (-1.61)
Single father family	-0.529* (-2.22)	-0.292 (-1.42)	-0.504 (-1.80)	-0.261 (-0.93)	-0.0271 (-0.16)	-0.153 (-0.61)	0.219 (-0.76)	-0.229 (-0.74)	-0.728* (-2.39)	0.379 (-1.45)	-0.521** (-2.64)	-0.862 (-1.87)	-0.11 (-0.34)	-0.39 (-1.42)	-0.271 (-1.21)	-0.081 (-0.25)	-0.555 (-1.08)
MODEL II																	
Single mother family	-0.0259 (-0.19)	0.148 (-1.6)	0.158 (-1.22)	0.301 (-1.84)	0.245 (-1.74)	0.380** (-3.14)	0.0434 (-0.46)	0.154 (-0.69)	0.0456 (-0.26)	0.367* (-2.52)	0.208 (-1.65)	0.403 (-1.9)	0.191 (-1.62)	-0.0825 (-0.61)	0.320* (-2.09)	0.248 (-1.47)	-0.126 (-0.89)
Single father family	-0.539* (-2.33)	-0.252 (-1.23)	-0.39 (-1.40)	-0.0957 (-0.31)	0.0562 (-0.32)	-0.0957 (-0.36)	0.291 (-1.03)	-0.204 (-0.64)	-0.629* (-2.02)	0.388 (-1.53)	-0.457* (-2.26)	-0.697 (-1.51)	-0.062 (-0.20)	-0.333 (-1.22)	-0.385 (-1.78)	-0.105 (-0.30)	-0.129 (-0.30)
MODEL III																	
Single mother family	0.0154 (-0.11)	0.154 (-1.58)	0.16 (-1.23)	0.249 (-1.4)	0.223 (-1.51)	0.383** (-3.17)	0.0141 (-0.16)	0.108 (-0.76)	0.0924 (-0.47)	0.342* (-2.35)	0.203 (-1.43)	0.408 (-1.68)	0.192 (-1.6)	-0.0175 (-0.12)	0.345* (-2.22)	0.22 (-1.21)	-0.132 (-0.87)
Single father family	-0.559* (-2.32)	-0.321 (-1.46)	-0.387 (-1.39)	0.109 (-0.32)	0.0518 (-0.29)	-0.0834 (-0.32)	0.327 (-1.15)	-0.315 (-0.93)	-0.69* (-1.97)	0.352 (-1.34)	-0.485* (-2.21)	-0.562 (-1.19)	-0.104 (-0.28)	-0.303 (-1.02)	-0.544** (-2.81)	-0.0224 (-0.06)	-0.192 (-0.43)

T-statistics in parentheses, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, * p<0.001, Source: IAE CIVED**

⁵ Model I: Effect of single mother/father family on trust in government related institutions controlled for gender, father's and mother's education and immigrant status

Model II : Model I + additional control variables: years of further education, newspaper readership and # of books at home

Model III: Model II + additional control variable: civic participation