

Parental divorce and children well-being: a new challenge for social policies.

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Introduction

- Literature has shown that parental divorce is negatively associated with children's well-being in short and long term (Amato, Spencer-Loomis & Both, 1995) Our aim is to show the relationship between parental divorce and children educational outcomes and the transition to adulthood.

- It has been showed in cross-sectional studies that children who lived parental divorce show worse educational outcomes than children of intact families. (Amato & Keith, 1991; Amato, 2001).

For this reason, the question is: Is parental divorce the factor that causes all these differences or are the family's characteristics before this fact ?

Amato (2001) defends that it is necessary to improve the number and quality of pre-divorce controls in this kind of analysis.

→ **OBJECTIVE 1:** To show the effect of parental divorce on educational outcomes at 10 and 30 years old, including psychological, sociological and economical controls in the same analysis.

→ **OBJECTIVE 2:** To observe the association between parental divorce and transition to adulthood at 30 years old. Transition to adulthood is related to: psychological well-being and variables associated to developmental tasks typical of adulthood as the process of individuation and the formation of couple relationships (Erickson, 1982).

Data:

Longitudinal studies have a long tradition in the United Kingdom. The survey "British Cohort Study 70" studies the generation that was born in 1970. Three waves of the survey have been considered: when the cohort members are 5, 10 and 30 years old.

Educational Outcomes :

Sample

- Children who have lived with natural parents between 0 and 10 years old.
- Children who have experienced parental divorce between 5 and 10 years old.

Results

Test	Sentences	Math	Reading	Vocabulary
Divorce 5-10 years	-1,74** (0.83)	-1,74*** (0.68)	-2,60*** (0.84)	-1,23*** (0.45)
Sex	-0,98** (0.39)	1,68*** (0.32)	-2,53*** (0.40)	1,92*** (0.22)
Mother's age	0,02 (0.04)	0,04** (0.03)	0,04 (0.04)	0,04 (0.02)
Parents not from Great Britain	-4,03*** (1.05)	-1,30*** (0.85)	-1,69 (1.06)	-2,12*** (0.57)
Father's manual class	-4,17*** (0.48)	-3,91*** (0.39)	-4,47*** (0.48)	-1,79*** (0.26)
Live in rented flat or house	-3,42*** (0.45)	-2,84*** (0.37)	-3,66*** (0.46)	-1,62*** (0.25)
Father's years of education	0, 70*** (0.11)	0, 73*** (0.09)	0, 94*** (0.11)	0, 43*** (0.06)
Mother works more than 20 hours.	0, 31 (0.61)	-0,68 (0.51)	-1,20 (0.62)	-0,64** (0.33)
Parents did not read to the children last week	-3,08*** (0.65)	-2,05*** (0.54)	-4,04*** (0.66)	-1,23*** (0.36)
Mother with psychological problems	-0,31* (0.51)	-0,98*** (0.41)	-1,71*** (0.51)	-0,97*** (0.27)
Child psychological well-being	-0,17*** (0.04)	-0,19*** (0.04)	-0,20*** (0.04)	-0,03 (0.02)
Child reads some words	2,16*** (0.41)	2,53*** (0.34)	3,24*** (0.42)	1,42*** (0.22)
Test (Copy Designs)	4,27*** (0.15)	4,94*** (0.17)	5,44*** (0.22)	1,75*** (0.16)
Test (Vocabulary)	2,08*** (0.21)	1,70*** (0.12)	2,66*** (0.15)	1,57*** (0.08)
Constant	72,38	65,01	67,19	57,74
R2	0,204	0,28	0,28	0,20
N	7686	7602	7602	7722

1. "Sentences Test", "Match Test", "Reading Test" and "Vocabulary test" at 10 years old have scores from 0 to 100.

We observe that, although the introduction of controls in all kind of dimensions, the variable "parental divorce between 5 and 10 years old" have negative and significant impact on the scores obtained in all tests.

- Demographic variables
- Economical Dimension
- Sociological Dimension
- Psychological Dimension
- Educational outcomes at 5 years old.

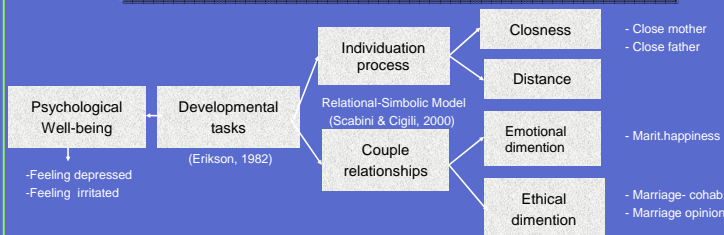
	No O Level	No A Level	No Degree
Divorce 5-10 years	1,46*** (0.12)	1,57*** (0.15)	1,57*** (0.15)
Sex	1,27*** (0.06)	1,17* (0.06)	1,17* (0.06)
Mother's age	1,00 (0.01)	0,99 (0.01)	0,99 (0.01)
Parents not from Great Britain	0,69** (0.17)	0,43* (0.17)	0,43* (0.17)
Father's manual class	1,54*** (0.07)	1,90*** (0.06)	1,90*** (0.06)
Live in rented flat or house	1,59*** (0.06)	1,87*** (0.06)	1,87*** (0.06)
Father's years of education	0,88*** (0.02)	0,84*** (0.02)	0,84*** (0.02)
Mother works more than 20 hours.	1,18* (0.09)	1,08 (0.09)	1,08 (0.09)
Parents didn't read to the children last week	1,38*** (0.09)	1,56*** (0.09)	1,56*** (0.09)
Mother with psychological problems	1,10*** (0.07)	1,15* (0.07)	1,15* (0.07)
Child psychological well-being	1,01*** (0.01)	1,01** (0.01)	1,01** (0.01)
Child reads some words	0,90*** (0.06)	0,92 (0.06)	0,92 (0.06)
Test (Copy Designs)	0,70*** (0.02)	0,77*** (0.02)	0,77*** (0.02)
Test (Vocabulary)	0,91*** (0.03)	0,84*** (0.03)	0,84*** (0.03)
Log-Likelihood	7001,8	7230,8	7230,8
N	6676	6676	6676

*p<0.10, ** p<0.05,*** p<0.01

Transition to adulthood and couple relationship:

Sample

- Young adults at 30 years old who have experienced parental divorce.
- Young-adults at 30 years old whose parents have always lived together.



	Feeling Depressed	Feeling Irritated	Close Mother	Close Father	Marr/cohab single	Marriage cohab.	Marriage opinion
Parental Divorce	1,308*** (0.83)	1,209*** (0.73)	1,113*** (0.89)	1,113*** (0.81)	0,878*** (0.075)	0,797*** (0.076)	0,598*** (0.113)
Sex	0,553*** (0.077)	0,584*** (0.066)	0,715*** (0.104)	1,097 (0.84)	0,810*** (0.067)	0,756*** (0.065)	1,244** (0.102)
Manual class	1,056 (0.088)	1,129 (0.075)	0,853 (0.112)	0,871 (0.094)	1,119** (0.08)	0,897 (0.074)	0,895 (0.116)
Financial Problems	2,228*** (0.08)	1,485*** (0.073)	0,704*** (0.109)	0,872 (0.094)	0,666*** (0.076)	0,962 (0.078)	0,898 (0.12)
Years of education	0,984 (0.013)	0,987 (0.011)	1,046** (0.020)	0,987 (0.014)	0,96*** (0.01)	0,975* (0.010)	1,038* (0.018)
Parents not from Great Britain	1,508* (0.177)	0,961 (0.173)	1,302 (0.297)	0,699* (0.207)	0,567*** (0.154)	1,232 (0.185)	1,119 (0.289)
Father's manual class I	1,018 (0.087)	0,953 (0.074)	0,839 (0.119)	0,851* (0.096)	1,22*** (0.076)	0,936 (0.074)	0,91 (0.117)
Father's years of education	1,012 (0.02)	1,003 (0.017)	0,982 (0.028)	1,012 (0.023)	0,947*** (0.016)	0,998 (0.018)	0,979 (0.028)
Log-Likelihood	4892.671	6190.830	3075.439	4079.058	5909.039	5857.939	2671.988
N	6019	619	5852	5535	5796	4529	2890

*p<0.10, ** p<0.05,*** p<0.01

Individual characteristics Family characteristics

*p<0.10, ** p<0.05,*** p<0.01

- Parental divorce is positively associated with "Feeling depressed" and "Feeling irritable".
- Parental divorce is negatively associated with "Having a close relationship with the father" and "Having a close relationship with the mother".
- Young adults who have experienced parental divorce have less probability of cohabitating with or being married than being single (never-married).
- Parental divorce is negatively associated with being married instead of cohabitating with.
- Married people who experienced parental divorce have less probability of considering that "Marriage is for life", than those whose parents have not divorced.
- Among those who are married, parental divorce has significant and negative association with the continuous variable "How happy is the relationship" (a 10 points scale).

Conclusion

Parental divorce is negatively associated with children's well-being.

- Parental divorce has negative and significant effects on children's educational outcomes at 10 and 30 years old, despite of the introduction of control variables before the divorce, considering economical, sociological and psychological dimensions.
- Among the variables related to the transition to the adulthood, we can not show effects of parental divorce, but only associations. Parental divorce is associated with more difficulties in the transition to adulthood.
- For this reason, if parental divorce has important effects on children's well-being, we consider that social policies and social services have to answer this new imbalance caused by family instability. For this purpose, psychologists have shown that some measures and programs can help families before and after divorce happens.

Referencenes

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