M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 170 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

8. The effects of separation and divorce on parent–child relationships in ten European countries

Matthijs Kalmijn

INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have demonstrated a negative long-term effect of divorce on father–child relationships. Compared to married fathers, divorced fathers see their adult children less frequently, receive less instrumental support from them in old age, and their children evaluate the relationship more often as poor (Lye 1996). There are several reasons for this. First, after divorce, mothers usually gain custody which reduces the father's role in the upbringing of the children (Seltzer 1991). As a result, the father has fewer opportunities to invest in his children and this may have negative effects on what he receives from the children when they are older (Spitze and Logan 1989). Second, divorced fathers may see their adult children less frequently because of sex-role specialisation during marriage. Hence, when gender roles are divided along traditional lines, married men benefit from a wife who takes care of family matters, for instance, by arranging visits from children and buying presents for the children's birthday (Hagestad 1986; Rosenthal 1985). When men divorce, they not only lose a spouse, they also lose a kinkeeper, which may explain part of the decline in intergenerational contact (Kalmijn 2007). A third possible reason for reduced contact is that divorced fathers may exhibit more behavioural problems. Research has shown that behavioural problems on the part of fathers are often a reason for divorce. Examples are mental health problems, substance abuse and aggressive behaviour (Kitson 1992; De Graaf and Kalmijn 2005). While many divorced fathers will not display such problems, some do, and if they do, this may have negative effects on the relationship they have with the children.

Although there are many arguments pointing in the direction of a negative effect for fathers, there are also reasons to believe that there will be a

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 171 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

negative effect for mothers. First, there are time constraints. Normally, adult children visit their parents together, but children of divorced parents have to divide their time between the two parents. Second, children sometimes experience conflicts of loyalty after a divorce. At the individual level, this should lead to less contact with one of the parents. On average, it will reduce contact levels with both fathers and mothers. Third, women may also exhibit personal problems, both before and after the divorce. Examples are higher levels of depression (Williams and Umberson 2004) and increased emphasis on their own psychological functioning (Kalmijn and Broese van Groenou 2005). Although such problems may be of a different nature than the problems typically associated with (some) divorced men, they too may reduce the degree of contact with the parent (that is, the mother).

Many studies have examined the effect of divorce on relations with adult children. Evidence for a negative effect for fathers has been presented for several different countries, including the United States (Cooney and Uhlenberg 1990; Aquilino 1994; Lye et al. 1995), East and West Germany (Szydlik 1996), Great Britain (Grundy and Shelton 2001; Grundy 2005), the Netherlands (De Graaf and Fokkema 2007; Kalmijn 2007), Finland, and Italy (Tomassini et al. 2004). Few studies, however, have compared the effect across countries. In this chapter, I analyse the effect in ten European countries. Two research questions guide the analysis: (1) Are the effects of divorce stable across societal conditions or do the effects vary? (2) If the effects are variable, what contextual characteristic is responsible for this variation? In other words, why are effects strong in some countries but weak in others?[1]

In answering the second question, my analysis is inspired by a specific macro-level hypothesis. Because the effects of divorce are gender-specific, it seems logical to consider gender role conditions in a country. As is well known, there are large differences among societies in the way gender roles are divided. In Northern European countries and also in some Western European countries, men's and women's roles are more equal than in Southern European countries. Country differences can be seen in a number of domains, such as in the extent of married women's employment (Blossfeld and Hakim 1997; Van der Lippe and Van Dijk 2001), in the attitudes of the population about women's roles (Banaszak and Pluzter 1993; Haller and Hoelinger 1994; Scott et al. 1996; Kalmijn 2003; Sjoberg 2004), in the way domestic tasks are divided between husbands and wives (Van der Lippe and Roelofs 1995; Davis and Greenstein 2004), and in the way childcare time is divided between husbands and wives (Sayer et al. 2004).

If gender roles are divided more equally, the negative effect of divorce on fathers can be expected to be weaker. In more egalitarian societies, fathers

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 172 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

are more involved in childcare than in other societies. Greater involvement in childcare can partly be regarded as an investment in children that will have positive effects later in life. In more egalitarian societies, fathers may also obtain custody more often after a divorce, which leads to a more normal continuation of the father–child tie later in life. Furthermore, in egalitarian societies, the kinkeeper role may not be limited to the wife. Fathers may participate more in kinkeeping, which will have positive effects on fathers' ability to maintain contact with their children when they are alone. Finally, in egalitarian countries, young children are more often in day-care centres, which could weaken the role of the mother relative to fathers, at least in terms of the time spent on children (Bianchi 2000). In summary, the considerations above suggest the hypothesis that the consequences of divorce for father–child relationships are more negative in traditional societies than in egalitarian societies.

Although this hypothesis has rarely been tested, it has often been used in recent policy debates about the consequences of divorce. In several European countries and in the United States, divorced fathers have been protesting against traditional custody laws and have been complaining about limited opportunities to see their children. One of the bases for the claims of these fathers lies in changing gender roles, which would justify a greater role of the father after divorce. Implicitly, these fathers are also arguing that there is a mismatch between current practice after divorce and current practice during marriage. At the individual level, such mismatches have not been demonstrated, however. Recent analyses show, for example, that fathers who participated more in child rearing during marriage were more likely to obtain custody and were more likely to see their children often after divorce than fathers who were only weakly involved (Kalmijn and De Graaf 2000). This finding suggests that at the individual level, the consequences of divorce for fathers coincide with gender roles. At the macro level, there can still be a mismatch, however, with post-divorce practice 'on average' being less egalitarian than what the 'average' marriage arrangement would suggest.

Country differences in gender roles coincide with other contextual differences. One of these is the divorce rate. There are large differences in the divorce rate within Europe and these coincide with differences in other indicators of individualism and traditionalism, including the division of gender roles. Divorce rates are highest in the northern part of Europe, lowest in the southern part, and they are in between in the western part. These national differences are associated with different levels of tolerance toward divorce. Gelissen (2003) has shown that in low-divorce countries, divorce is normatively disapproved of, whereas in northern countries, it is considered an acceptable solution to a bad marriage, even when there are

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 173 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

children. One could argue that higher levels of acceptance will also lead to weaker social sanctions of parents and weaker stigmatisation of the children.

Another correlate of gender role conditions is the degree of familialism. In Southern European countries, there is more emphasis on intergenerational solidarity and there is more prolonged adult–child co-residence than in Northern European countries (Reher 1998; Tomassini et al. 2004; Attias-Donfut et al. 2005; Ogg and Renaut 2006). Strong degrees of familialism are correlated at the societal level with gender roles: where family ties are strong, the domestic division of labour is more unequal. This may also lead to different effects of parental divorce. For example, there may be more room for a decline in contact when the pre-divorce position is a very high level of contact. Moreover, a divorce may disrupt the prolonged co-residence system in traditional countries, with negative consequences for parent–child ties.

In this chapter, I use data from the *Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe* (SHARE) to examine macro level differences in the effect of divorce.[2] I consider ever-divorced fathers aged 50 and over and compare them with married fathers, on the one hand, and with divorced mothers, on the other hand. Both comparisons are informative for a possible divorce effect. Subsequently, I use multilevel models to assess if the divorce effect varies significantly across countries. To gain more insight into the underlying reasons for the differences, I relate the effect sizes with external indicators of gender roles in a country, using cross-level interaction effects. This allows me to test whether the effect of divorce is weaker in more egalitarian countries.

DATA, MEASURES AND METHOD

Data and Design

I analyse the *Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe* (SHARE). SHARE is based on nationwide representative samples. In some countries, individuals were the sample units, in other countries, households were sampled. All persons aged 50 and over in a household were included in the sample. Household response rates are 55 per cent on average. Respondents were interviewed with CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviews) questionnaires at home. For the current analyses, I selected respondents aged 50 and over with at least one adult (18+) child. Ten countries are available for the analysis (Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Greece, Italy and Spain). SHARE provides detailed

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 174 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

information on relations with (and characteristics of) four individual children. The unit of analysis is the parent–child dyad.

Children were included in the analysis, regardless of whether they were living at home. For adult children, co-residence can be an important source of contact with parents so that we would underestimate contact frequency if we were to leave out co-resident children. More importantly, there are large differences in co-residence within Europe, with much higher levels of prolonged co-residence in Southern Europe than in the rest of Europe, and higher levels in some Western European countries (for example, Germany) than in Northern Europe (Baizan et al. 2001; Saraceno 2007). This is an important reason to include co-resident children. We further note that a divorce can also affect co-residence with adult children, and in doing so, indirectly affect the intensity of the relationship with a parent. Co-resident children are therefore especially important in an analysis of divorce effects, even when the focus is on adult children.

The design of the analysis is to compare divorced fathers to married fathers and to compare divorced fathers and mothers. The former comparison is used most often in previous research and is also the most straightforward. It is possible, however, that mothers also experience changes in their contact with the children after divorce. If this is true, it is more appropriate to compare divorced fathers and mothers to each other. This latter comparison, in turn, has the drawback of the possibility that gender differences also exist within marriage. For that reason, both comparisons are needed. The former informs us about the divorce effect for fathers, the latter informs us about the degree of gender inequality after divorce. To make the picture complete, I also make comparisons between divorced and married mothers. In other words, I also analyse if there is a divorce effect for mothers.

Four groups of dyads are constructed. The first group consists of father–child dyads in which the child is from a previous marriage (of the father) that was dissolved through divorce (n = 1458). The father may currently be married or not; this distinction is ignored in the analysis. Effects of remarriage are small, however (results available upon request). The second group consists of father–child dyads in which the child is from the current marriage of the father (n = 9429). The third group consists of mother–child dyads in which the child is from a previous marriage (of the mother) that was dissolved through divorce (n = 1996). The fourth group consists of mother–child dyads in which the child is from the current marriage of the mother (n = 9429).

Some limitations need to be mentioned. No information was used on the age at which the child experienced the parents' divorce because the number of cases per country would become too small if we applied such age

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 175 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

restrictions. This is a limitation of the analysis, since effects will be weaker on contact and distance when the child experiences the parental divorce as an adult (Kalmijn 2007). The number of divorced cases in some Southern European countries is already on the low side. This makes multivariate regression analyses for these countries one-by-one less reliable. Multilevel models can still be estimated, however, on a set of some relatively small contexts. Finally, we note that widowed parents are not analysed here, although these can be an interesting comparison group as well (Ha et al. 2006; Kalmijn 2007).

Individual Measures

The dependent variables are the physical distance from the child and the frequency of contact. The physical distance is measured in kilometre categories and categories are coded into midpoints. If a child is living in the household, the distance is coded as 0. I also estimated additional models where the resident children are left out and I discuss if effects are different. Contact refers to face-to-face and telephone contact and is also measured in categories. Categories are coded into the approximate number of times the father and child had contact. Resident children are coded into the top category (that is, daily contact), following practice in some previous studies (Tomassini et al. 2004). A two-step model (for residency and for contact given residency) was also considered but not used. Such a model would be too complex in the context of the random effects multilevel models that I use.

Distance and contact frequencies were transformed into natural logarithms to avoid heteroskedasticity. This also facilitates the interpretation of the coefficients. Effects refer to the percentage increase in distance or contact frequencies per unit change in the independent variable.

I use several control variables. The first set of controls are demographic characteristics of the father: father's age, the number of children and father's education. Education is coded by SHARE into the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-97). The coding is rank order, from 0 (for no education) to 6 (second stage of tertiary education). To obtain an interval order scale, I recoded the ISCED levels to percentile scores in each country. Hence, the variable indicates the relative position of each respondent in the educational distribution within a country.

I also include characteristics which may reflect the selectivity of the group of divorced parents. It is sometimes argued that divorced fathers see their children less often because they display more problematic behaviour. Although the data I use are not specifically collected for studying divorce, there are two measures in SHARE which can be used as indicators:

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 176 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

depression and alcohol consumption. I use the EURODEP measure of depression, which is based on a self-reported count of the presence of 12 depressive symptoms (Braam et al. 2005). The variable measuring alcohol use is based on three items: the number of times the respondent drank more than two glasses of beer in a day, more than two glasses of wine in a day and more than two glasses of hard liquor in a day. I recoded responses to the approximate number of drinking days and took the sum of the three items. Because the resulting measure is skewed, I took the natural logarithm.

Analyses show that divorced fathers have more depressive symptoms ($t = 2.6$, $p < 0.01$) and drink more than married fathers ($t = 3.4$, $p < 0.01$). The effect sizes are small however (Cohen's $d = 0.11$ for depressive symptoms and $d = 0.14$ for alcohol). Results are stronger when we make comparisons with divorced mothers. Divorced fathers drink significantly more than divorced mothers ($t = 12.5$, $p < 0.01$) and the difference is strong (Cohen's $d = 0.50$). For depression, the difference is in the opposite direction: divorced mothers are considerably more depressed than divorced fathers ($t = 9.0$, $p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.59$). We note, however, that such gender differences are also present for married persons. Married women are more depressed than married men and they drink less. This result has often been found in the literature (Simon 2002).

The differences observed above do not tell us much about the causal link between divorce, on the one hand, and depression and alcohol use, on the other hand, but they do indicate that divorced fathers are not greatly different from married fathers. Moreover, they indicate that when divorced mothers and fathers are compared – which is a relevant comparison for judges and other external parties who are involved in advising on custody and visiting arrangements – the difference does not point unequivocally in the direction of more problems among divorced fathers. Ideally, we would want measures about a greater variety of problems, for example, measures of aggressive behaviour, drug use and problematic personalities, but these are not available in the data.

Since support is a dyadic phenomenon, we take into account characteristics of both parents and children. The characteristics of the child are the following: (1) whether the child is living with a partner, (2) whether the child has own children, (3) whether the child is employed, (4) the child's sex, (5) the child's age, and (6) the child's education. The first three in this list indicate to what extent the child is able to provide social support. It is expected that children who have their own family and who are working for pay will have less time for visiting their parents (Waite and Harrison 1992). We also include the education of the child. Many previous studies have shown that education of parents and children has a strong negative effect

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 177 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

on contact and a positive effect on geographical distance (Kalmijn 2006). The child's age is highly correlated with the parent's age, but there were no signs that effects were affected by multicollinearity.

Contextual Measures

Measures of gender roles are obtained from two external sources, that is, the ISSP surveys *Family and Changing Gender Roles II (*1994) and *III* (2002).[3] In these surveys, the ten countries used in the current study are included. Both surveys have a series of questions to married respondents about how they divide the tasks in the household. The following tasks were included in the scale: doing the laundry, caring for sick family members, doing the groceries, cleaning the house (only in 2001) and preparing meals. I coded the answers as follows: 1 = equally divided (or the husband does 'more' or 'most'), 2 = done more by the wife, 3 = done entirely by the wife. Cronbach's alpha is 0.72 in 1994 and 0.82 in 2002. To construct a scale, I calculate the mean of the items, which are all coded in a similar metric. Not all ten countries were present in each year and I used linear interpolation to obtain an average score for the 1994–2002 period for all countries.

Greece is represented by the score for Cyprus because no national Greek sample is available. The validity of this approximation was checked by looking at data on gender-role attitudes in the 1999 wave of the European Values Studies (EVS) (Halman 2001). This survey contains Greek data and data on six of the other countries included in the ISSP (France, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain and Denmark). Five items on attitudes toward the equality of men and women's roles in paid and domestic work were combined in a scale using a confirmatory factor analysis with one dimension. Subsequently, scale scores were compared across countries. The rank order of the countries in terms of gender-role attitudes in the EVS is very similar to the rank order of the countries in terms of the division of household tasks in the ISSP (where Cyprus is used for Greece). The correlation between the two measures is $r = 0.80$. In other words, Cyprus takes a similar relative position in this set of countries as Greece.

Analyses of the scales confirm that the Southern European countries are the most traditional, whereas the Northern European countries are the most egalitarian. Western Europe falls in between these, with the exception of the Netherlands, which is as egalitarian as Denmark and Sweden. The order of the countries from least to most egalitarian is: Italy, Spain, Greece, Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands.

At the societal level, there is also a strong correlation between gender roles and the divorce rate. The higher the divorce rate in a country, the more

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 178 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

egalitarian are the gender roles (r = −0.89). Note that no comparable data are available for the separation rate. Correlations with the divorce and separation rate combined can be lower because in countries with low divorce, separation may be more common (for example, Italy). Egalitarian gender roles are also correlated with family contact measures. For example, the correlation between gender roles and the proportion having daily contact with children is r = 0.88 and the correlation with the percentage of adult children living at home is r = 0.89. Hence, more familialistic societies also have higher degrees of gender inequality, a finding observed before (Sainsbury 1996). Obviously, the sample of ten countries is small, which gives reason for caution.

Method

After providing descriptive information, I present multilevel regression models. Three levels can be distinguished: dyads, fathers and countries. Dyads are nested in fathers and fathers are nested in countries. Three-level linear regression models are presented. These models have a number of advantages. First, they allow me to correct for the clustering of dyads within fathers. It is an improvement compared to the practice of randomly choosing one child per father (Lye 1996). The multilevel approach uses more information while still correcting for correlated errors across children. Second, the three-level model offers a better test of macro-level hypotheses because it corrects for clustering of fathers in countries. Third, the multilevel model allows me to test cross-level interactions, that is, the interaction of father's divorce and the societal division of gender roles. If one would use regular regression for these interaction effects, the standard errors of these effects would be underestimated and the effects would more often be accepted as significant than is justified. In other words, the multilevel model essentially takes into account the small number of cases at the country level and therefore yields a more stringent test of the macro-level hypothesis than regular regression.

Models are estimated using STATA. Because the macro-level hypothesis is directional, one-sided *p*-values are used in the final multilevel model.

RESULTS

Table 8.1 presents the distribution of contact and proximity for divorced and married fathers and mothers. Adult children are more than two times as likely to live with a married father than with a divorced father. When looking at non-resident children, differences are observed as well. For example, about

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 179 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Table 8.1 Distance and contact in parent–child dyads by sex and marital status

	Divorced fathers	Married fathers	Divorced mothers	Married mothers	Divorsed father versus Married fathers	Divorsed father versus Divorced mothers	Divorce versus married mother
Living at home	4.7	20.5	11.8	20.1	−15.8	−7.1	−8.3
In the same building	0.7	4.7	1.9	5.3	−4.0	−1.2	−3.4
<1 km	6.8	15.3	9.6	16.6	−8.5	−2.8	−7.0
1–5 km	17.4	20.7	19.7	20.5	−3.3	−2.3	−0.8
5–25 km	25.7	23.6	26.1	23.3	2.1	−0.4	2.8
25–100 km	19.4	14.9	17.3	14.6	4.5	2.1	2.7
> 100 km	30.0	20.8	25.4	19.7	9.2	4.6	5.7
Daily contact	8.8	30.9	20.0	33.3	−22.1	−11.2	−13.3
Weekly	44.8	55.7	54.9	55.0	−10.9	−10.1	−0.1
Monthly	24.0	10.0	17.8	8.8	14.1	6.2	9.0
Less than once a month	12.9	2.5	4.7	2.4	10.4	8.2	2.3
Never	9.5	1.0	2.7	0.6	8.5	6.8	2.1
Number of dyads	1458	9429	1996	8079			

Note: Contact and distance for non-resident children; children 18+.

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 180 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

half of the children live more than 25 kilometres away from a divorced father. For married fathers, this is 35 per cent. Living within walking distance (1 kilometre), is also more common among children of married fathers (20 per cent) than among the children of divorced fathers (8 per cent). Most importantly, there are striking differences in the level of contact. Whereas 30 per cent of the children have daily contact with a married father, this is only 9 per cent for the children of a divorced father. The other extreme of the contact continuum reveals strong differences too. A considerable minority of children of divorced fathers lost contact with their father altogether (10 per cent). Among married fathers, this is rare (1 per cent).

The comparison of divorced fathers with divorced mothers points in the same direction. Children are more likely to live with a divorced mother than with a divorced father but the difference is smaller than the previous comparison suggests. The reason for this is that there is also a negative divorce effect for women: children are less likely to live with a divorced mother than with a married mother (12 per cent versus 20 per cent). This is quite a strong difference, which is probably due to the greater financial problems that single divorced mothers experience and which create a push-factor for the child. We further notice that among non-resident children, divorced fathers live further away from their children than divorced mothers. Furthermore, divorced fathers have less contact with their children than divorced mothers. But again, the differences are less spectacular in this comparison than in the comparison with married fathers. I come back to this finding when I discuss the regression models.

Table 8.2 presents the results of the multilevel regression models without contextual effects. I use three different contrasts in the regression models so that the three desired comparisons can be made. The results first show that divorced fathers live further away from their children and have contact with them less often. The effect is stronger in the comparison with married fathers than in the comparison with divorced mothers, but the effects are strong in both cases. We also see that there is a negative effect of divorce for women: divorced women have less contact with and live further away from children than married women. This effect for mothers is smaller than it is for fathers – 59 per cent smaller for distance and 69 per cent smaller for contact – but it is certainly not trivial. Hence, women are also negatively affected by a divorce. That there is a divorce effect for mothers has the result of reducing the differences between divorced fathers vis-à-vis divorced mothers. This is also the reason why the comparison with divorced mothers comes out less strongly than the comparison with married fathers.

The results in Table 8.2 mirror the descriptive information in Table 8.1 and show that the effect of divorce is present even after controlling for characteristics of parents and children. When adding distance to the model

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 181 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Table 8.2 Multilevel regression of distance from and contact with child

	Log distance beta	Log no. contacts beta	Log no. contacts beta
Parent's age	−0.015 *	0.012 *	0.008 *
Parent's education (relative)	0.503 *	−0.079 *	0.053
Number of children	0.035 *	−0.102 *	−0.093 *
Parent's depression	0.005	−0.018 *	−0.017 *
Parent's alcohol use	0.017 *	−0.016 *	−0.012 *
Daughter versus son	0.118 *	0.186 *	0.217 *
Child's education	0.997 *	−0.156 *	0.104 *
Child married	0.604 *	−0.219 *	−0.061 *
Child has children	−0.220 *	0.037	−0.021
Child employed	0.035	−0.046 *	−0.037 *
Child's age	0.052 *	−0.038 *	−0.025 *
Group contrasts[a]			
Divorced versus married father	0.779 *	−1.232 *	−1.028 *
Divorced father versus mother	0.510 *	−0.919 *	−0.786 *
Divorced versus married mother	0.322 *	−0.382 *	−0.298
Log distance			
Constant	0.260	5.896 *	5.961 *
Number of dyads	20 755	20 755	20 755
Number of parents	9 503	9 503	9 503
Number of countries	10	10	10

Note: Obtained from three different regression models, using alternative contrasts; * $p < 0.05$.

Source: SHARE (own analyses).

for contact, the effect of divorce on contact frequency declines by 17 per cent and 14 per cent (depending on the comparison) and the net effect is still strong and significant, which shows that the divorce effect on contact exists independent of geographic constraints.

The models presented in Table 8.2 include resident children and assume that resident children have daily contact. Additional analyses indicate that the divorce effect is fairly robust. When excluding resident children, the effect of divorce on contact frequency is similar to that in Table 8.2 ($b = -1.16$ when comparing to married fathers and $b = -0.85$ when comparing to divorced mothers). In other words, the lower levels of co-residence for divorced fathers cannot explain why there is less contact. For distance, the results are different. When excluding co-resident children, the effect of divorce on distance drops to $b = 0.44$ in the comparison with

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 182 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

married fathers and to b = 0.26 in the comparison with divorced mothers. These effects are still substantial and significant, but they are also much, lower than the ones observed in Table 8.2. Hence, an important reason why divorced fathers live further away lies in the fact that co-residence is much less frequent for divorced fathers.

Several of the control variables have significant effects as well. Higher educated parents and children live further away from each other than lower educated parents and children. The effect of the child's education is stronger than the effect of the parent's education, which probably reflects university-related geographic mobility of children. The higher educated also have less frequent contact with each other but this changes when distance is controlled for. After the influence of distance on contact is taken into account, the higher educated have more frequent contact, at least when we look at children's education. We note that telephone contact is included in the contact measure, which tends to reduce the association with education. Other studies show no positive or even a persistent negative effect of education on face-to-face contact after controlling for distance (Lawton et al. 1994; Kalmijn 2006).

The number of children has the expected negative effect on contact frequency – with more children, there is less contact per child even though there may be more contact with children in general in larger families (Waite and Harrison 1992). The two indicators of problematic behaviours have only weak effects on the parent–child tie. Depressed parents have less contact with children than other parents. This is as expected but the magnitude of the effect is small. Alcohol use also has a significant negative effect on contact, but again, the magnitude is small. Additional analyses show that the effect of depression on contact is stronger for divorced fathers than for others, suggesting that depression among divorced fathers may also be the result of not seeing the children often. Panel data are needed to explore the causal order.

Several characteristics of the child have effects as well. Daughters have more frequent contact with fathers than sons despite the fact that daughters also live further away. Married children have less contact with parents but they also live further away from parents. After controlling for distance, there is only a small remaining effect of the child's marriage on contact. Whether or not the child has children has only an effect on distance and no effect on contact. Employment status has only small effects.

The next question is whether the divorce effects vary across societies. To explore this, I first estimate multivariate regression models in each country and calculate the effect of divorce. Subsequently, I plot the effects for each country against the societal index of gender roles. These scatterplots are presented for distance in Figure 8.1 and for contact in Figure 8.2.

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 183 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

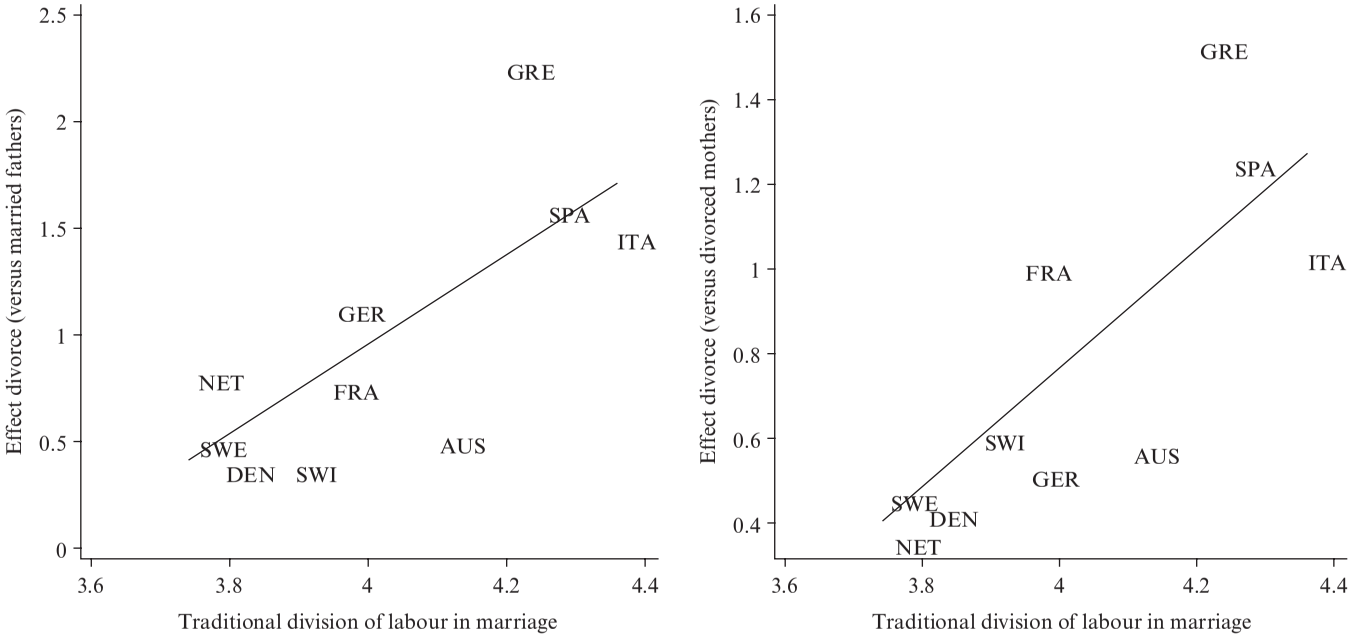

Figure 8.1 The relation between effects of divorce on intergenerational distance and sex roles at the macro level

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 184 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

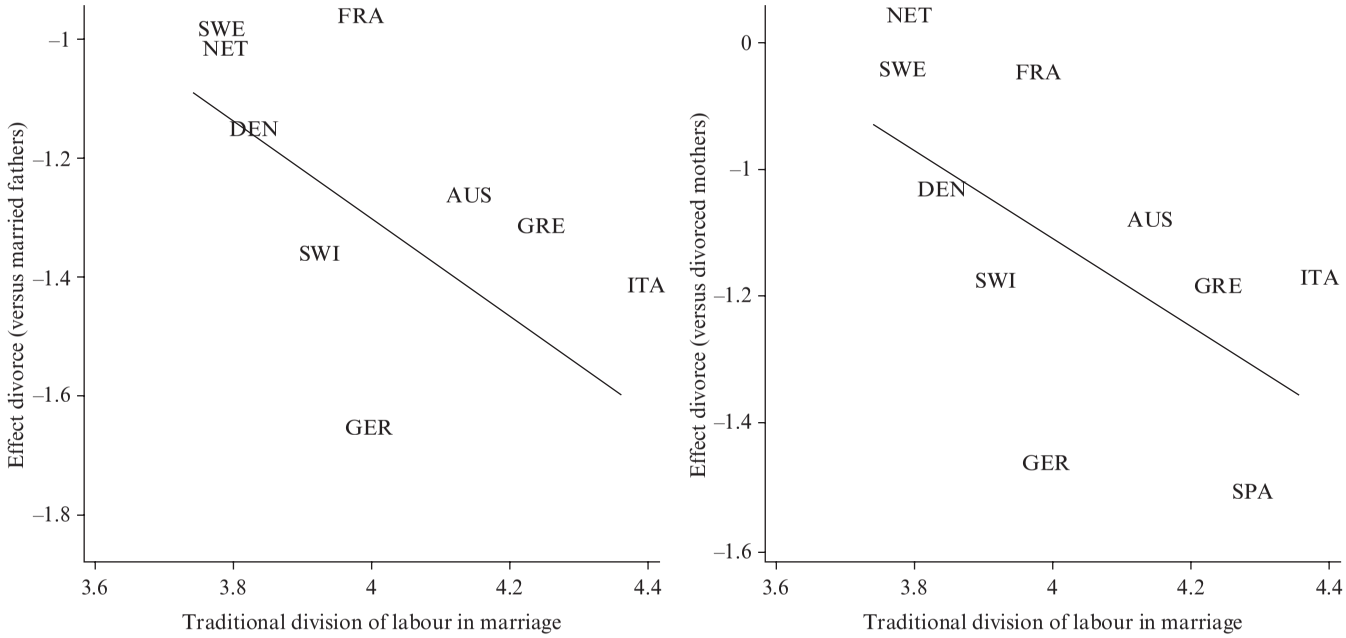

Figure 8.2 The relation between effects of divorce on intergenerational contact and sex roles at the macro level

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 185 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Figure 8.1 shows a clear relationship. In all societies, divorced fathers live further away from their children than married fathers but this is more so in societies with a traditional division of labour between men and women. This is regardless of whether one compares with married fathers or with divorced mothers. In societies with an egalitarian division of labour, the effect is not absent, but it is weaker.

The effects on contact are plotted in Figure 8.2. The plots suggest a negative relationship: the more traditional the gender roles in a society, the greater the reduction in father–child contact after divorce. Both comparisons (with married fathers and with divorced mothers) reveal this pattern.

Although the graphs suggest a clear relationship at the macro level, a statistical test of these patterns is necessary. I therefore return to the multilevel analyses in which the societal indicator of gender roles is interacted with the effect of divorce. The outcomes of these models are presented in Table 8.3 for distance and in Table 8.4 for contact. Model A allows the divorce effect to vary across countries without interacting it with macro-level indicators (random coefficients). Model B adds the interaction effect with gender roles (cross-level interactions). To simplify the models, the models are estimated separately on different subsets (one subset containing married and divorced fathers and the other subset containing divorced fathers and mothers).

I first look at effects on distance (Table 8.3). When we look at the comparison between divorced fathers and married fathers, there appears to be significant variation across countries in the divorce effect (Model A). For the comparison between divorced fathers and mothers, the variation is not significant. Model B includes the interaction effects and shows that the interaction with gender roles on distance is positive and significant in both comparisons. Hence, a divorce increases the distance more in traditional countries than in egalitarian countries. The magnitude of the interaction is also considerable. The range of the gender role index is 0.62, so that the effect (in the first comparison) ranges from $b = 0.926 - 0.31 \times 1.509 = 0.46$ in the most egalitarian country to $b = 0.926 + 0.31 \times 1.509 = 1.39$ in the most traditional country.

That a divorce increases parent–child distance more in traditional countries may be related to the role of co-residence. More specifically, a divorce may disrupt the pattern of prolonged intergenerational co-residence in more traditional countries. If this is the case, the interaction effect I find may not necessarily have to do with variations in gender roles. Although it is difficult to test competing macro-level explanations with ten cases at the macro level, some additional insights can be obtained. First, I estimated the model again while leaving out children who live with their parents. In this model, the cross-level interaction effect with gender roles declines by 70 per

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 186 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Table 8.3 Multilevel estimates of random effects of divorce on distance with cross-level interactions

Within-father comparison	Model A		Model B	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
Father divorced versus married				
Mean	0.891	0.138 *	0.926	0.094 *
Effect × emancipation score			1.509	0.463 *
Standard deviation	0.365	0.131	0.173	0.148
Within-divorced comparison	**Model A**		**Model B**	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
Father versus mother				
Mean	0.643	0.111 *	0.732	0.113 *
Effect × emancipation score			1.277	0.540 *
Standard deviation	0.183	0.154	0.224	0.155
Within-mother comparison	**Model A**		**Model B**	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
Mother divorced versus married				
Mean	0.310	0.079 *	0.330	0.083 *
Effect x emancipation score			0.474	0.408
Standard deviation	0.156	0.094	0.163	0.090

Notes: Emancipation score is centred; control variables are included (as in Table 8.4), Model C controls for co-residence.
[a]Model estimated with a two-level model, ignoring the nesting of dyads in parents.
* $p < 0.05$.

Source: SHARE (own analyses).

cent in the within-father comparison and disappears in the within-divorced comparison. This suggests that the observed country differences are indeed due to co-residence.

We should note, however, that a divorce also increases the distance between divorced mothers and children, to a large part because of the lower prevalence of co-residence with the mother (Table 8.2). However, there is no significant interaction between gender roles and divorce on the distance from mothers (Table 8.3). In other words, a divorce increases the distance from mothers to the same extent in all societies, regardless of their gender roles, whereas a divorce increases the distance from fathers more in more traditional societies. These latter findings suggest that the micro-macro level interaction effect of divorce and gender roles – although strongly related to co-residence – is still gender-specific.

The multilevel models for contact in Table 8.4 show significant variation in the effect of divorce when the focus is on comparisons with married

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 187 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Table 8.4 Multilevel estimates of random effects of divorce on contact with cross-level interactions

Within-father comparison	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
Father divorced versus married						
Mean	−1.290	0.078 *	−1.303	0.072 *	−1.120	0.075
Effect × emancipation score			−0.600	0.355 *	−0.172	0.365
Standard deviation	0.205	0.068	0.177	0.069	0.192	0.069
Within-divorced comparison	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
Father versus mother						
Mean	−1.031	0.079 *	−1.087	0.079 *	−0.857	0.093 *
Effect × emancipation score			−0.686	0.367 *	0.110	0.439
Standard deviation	0.119	0.092	0.082	0.134	0.180	0.095
Within-mother comparison	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
Mother divorced versus married						
Mean	−0.393	0.034 *	−0.402	0.036 *	−0.374	0.034 *
Effect × emancipation score			−0.161	0.176	−0.156	0.168
Standard deviation	0.040	0.047	0.036	0.059	0.033	0.055

Notes: Emancipation score is centred, control variables are included (as in Table 8.4). Model C controls for co-residence. * pp <0.05.

Source: SHARE (own analyses).

fathers (Model A). When the comparison is made with divorced mothers, the variation is not significant. Subsequently, we see in Model B significant and negative interaction effects with gender roles. Hence, the more traditional the gender roles are in a country, the more contact with the father is reduced after divorce. The effects are not trivial in size: they imply a variation in the effect between b = −1.12 for the most egalitarian country and b = −1.49 for the most traditional country.

The contact measure includes children who live with their parents. Because we found earlier that the interaction effect on distance was due to co-residence, it is important to check this for contact as well. To do this, I present an additional model in which I control for co-residence with an

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 188 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

additional covariate (Model C). These models show no significant remaining cross-level interaction effect. The effect of divorce itself is still strong, but it does not vary with the distribution of gender roles in a society. To be complete, I also estimated the interaction effect for women, comparing divorced and married mothers. This model does not show a significant interaction effect.

CONCLUSION

Consistent with prior research, this chapter shows that divorced fathers in Europe have much less frequent contact with their children than married fathers and than divorced mothers. We also observe lower levels of co-residence and greater physical distances between fathers and children after divorce, but the negative impact of divorce on contact is not fully due to the geographic consequences of divorce. We also find that divorced mothers in Europe have less frequent contact with children than married mothers, but this effect is weaker than it is for fathers.

In comparing countries, it appears that negative divorce effects for fathers are present in all countries. The magnitude of the effects varies, however. In some countries, divorce increases distance more than in other countries. Similarly, the negative impact of divorce on father–child contact is stronger in some countries than in others. Such country differences in the effects are, in part, also statistically significant. Further analyses indicate that these variations are associated with gender roles in a society. In countries with more traditional gender roles, such as Italy and Spain, contact with the father is reduced more strongly by a divorce than in countries with more egalitarian gender roles, such as the Netherlands and Sweden. This association is also found for proximity. The father–child distance is increased more by a divorce in more traditional societies than in more egalitarian societies.

One interpretation of these associations is that when gender roles are more egalitarian, fathers invest more in children, both during marriage and after a divorce. Higher investments on the part of fathers may lead to higher levels of contact later on, when children are older. The positive reciprocity effects of early investments in children have been established fairly well at the micro level, but it remains uncertain if such effects are also present at the macro level. My study has confirmed this association at the macro level using a small number of European countries.

Although this chapter suggests such a relationship, alternative interpretations need to be considered as well. First, countries with less egalitarian gender roles are also countries that are more familialistic. As a result, the

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 189 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

initial level of parent–child contact in more traditional countries is higher, which may give more room for a reduction. This alternative explanation can be ruled out. We find no significant interaction effect of gender roles and divorce when the focus is on mothers. Hence, the interaction applies specifically to fathers. Moreover, the scale I use to measure contact is already adjusting ceiling effects. There is indeed more room for an absolute decline in contact when the contact level is high, but this is less true for a logged measure. For example, when contact declines from daily (365 times per year) to weekly (52 times per year), this amounts to a decline of 1.9 on the log scale. This is comparable to the much smaller absolute decline from weekly (52 times per year) to almost monthly (8 times per year), which is 1.87 on the log scale.

Second, gender roles at the societal level are strongly associated with the divorce rate. For that reason, it may be that the stronger negative impact of a divorce in more traditional societies is related to the stronger barriers to divorce in such countries. This may lead to more behavioural problems on the part of divorced fathers – the degree of selectivity is greater – which in turn may have consequences for father–child relations. I tried to rule out this interpretation by including measures of mental health and alcohol consumption, two proxies for behavioural problems. The results show that these proxies have weak effects on father–child relations. Hence, the selectivity of divorced fathers cannot explain the divorce effect. The interaction effects are estimated while controlling for the role of mental health and alcohol consumption.

Third, and more importantly, the macro-level association for the frequency of contact can, in part, be attributed to the role of parent–child co-residence. In countries with more traditional gender roles, such as Italy and Spain, there is also a familialistic pattern of prolonged parent–child co-residence. What a parental divorce does is that it disrupts this pattern of long co-residence. In doing so, is leads to less frequent contact between parents and children and, hence, to a larger divorce effect in these countries. Important to note, however, is that the disruption of prolonged co-residence is still gender-specific. In other words, co-residence of both fathers and mothers is reduced after divorce, but more so for fathers than for mothers, especially in Southern European countries. As a result, the consequences of divorce are still more negative for fathers in these countries.

Some caveats must be noted at the end of this chapter. First, the number of cases within specific countries is limited in some cases, for instance, in countries where divorce and separation are less common (for example, there were about a hundred divorced parent–child dyads in Italy). In a multi-level context, such numbers can still be used to estimate cross-level interaction effects, but regression analyses within such countries will not be

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 190 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

convincing. Second, I have not taken into account the timing of divorce. Some of the divorces may have occurred after the child had already left the parental home. Although there may still be negative effects on relationships with fathers of such 'late' divorces, this will obviously attenuate the divorce effect. Third, I have used gender roles to characterise societies and not used other macro-level indicators. With the number of countries being relatively small, it is not possible to include other macro-level indicators, especially not if they are highly correlated with gender roles. I have also experimented with replacing the current macro indicator with other indicators, such as the divorce rate in a country and the average level of intergenerational contact – a measure of familialism. These indicators correlated heavily with traditional gender roles, and they also yield more or less similar results in the multilevel models. Hence, the best overall conclusion seems to be that the divorce effect on fathers is more negative in more 'traditional' countries than in less 'traditional' countries. The exact theoretical interpretation of this linkage should remain a point of discussion in empirical research. My research suggests that both gender roles and familialism may be important at the same time. In addition to this, my analyses of the divorce effect have again pointed to the importance of marriage for intergenerational ties in Europe.

NOTES

1. Note that throughout this chapter, separation is included in the divorced category.
2. The SHARE data collection has been primarily funded by the European Commission through the 5th framework programme (project QLK6-CT-2001-00360 in the thematic programme Quality of Life). Additional funding came from the US National Institute on Ageing (U01 AG09740-13S2, P01 AG005842, P01 AG08291, P30 AG12815, Y1-AG-4553-01 and OGHA 04-064). Data collection in Austria (through the Austrian Science Foundation, FWF) and Switzerland (through BBW/OFES/UFES) was nationally funded. Further support by the European Commission through the 6th framework programme (projects SHARE-I3, RII-CT-2006-062193, and COMPARE, CIT5-CT-2005-028857) is gratefully acknowledged. For methodological details see Börsch-Supan and Jürges (2005).
3. These data are documented and made available by the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung Köln. The data for the ISSP were collected by independent institutions in each country. See http://www.issp.org/ for more information.

REFERENCES

Aquilino, W.S. (1994), 'Impact of family disruption on young adults' relationships with parents', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **56**, 295–313.

Attias-Donfut, C., J. Ogg, and F.C. Wolff (2005), 'European patterns of financial and time transfers', *European Journal on Aging*, **2** (3), 161–73.

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 191 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Baizan, P., F.C. Billari and P. Philipov (2001), 'Leaving home in Europe: the experience of cohorts born around 1960', *International Journal of Population Geography*, **7** (5), 339–56.

Banaszak, L.A. and E. Pluzter (1993), 'The social bases of feminism in the European community', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, **57**, 29–53.

Bianchi, S.M. (2000), 'Maternal employment and time with children: dramatic change or surprising continuity?', *Demography*, **37** (4), 401–14.

Blossfeld, H.-P. and C. Hakim (1997), *Between Equalization and Marginalization: Women Working Part-time in Europe and the United States of America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Börsch-Supan, A. and H. Jürges (eds) (2005), *The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe – Methodology*, Mannheim: MEA.

Braam, A.W., J. Prince and A.T.F. Beekman (2005), 'Physical health and depressive symptoms in older Europeans: results from EURODEP', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **187**, 35–42.

Cooney, T.M. and P. Uhlenberg (1990), 'The role of divorce in men's relations with their adult children after mid-life', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **52**, 677–88.

Davis, S. and T.N. Greenstein (2004), 'Cross-national variations in the division of household labor', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, **66**, 1260–71.

De Graaf, P.M. and T. Fokkema (2007), 'Contacts between divorced and non-divorced parents and their adult children in the Netherlands: an investment perspective', *European Sociological Review*, **23** (2), 263–77.

De Graaf, P.M.d. and M. Kalmijn (2005), 'Divorce motives in a period of rising divorce: evidence from a Dutch life history survey', *Journal of Family Issues*, **27**, 483–505.

Gelissen, J.P.T.M. (2003), 'Cross-national differences in public consent to divorce: effects of cultural, structural and compositional factors', in W. Arts, L.C.J.M. Halman and J.A.P. Hagenaars (eds), *The Cultural Diversity of European Unity: Findings, Explanations and Reflections from the European Values Study*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, pp. 339–70.

Grundy, E. (2005), 'Reciprocity in relationships: socio-economic and health influences on intergenerational exchanges between Third Age parents and their adult children in Great Britain', *British Journal of Sociology*, **56** (2), 233–55.

Grundy, E. and N. Shelton (2001), 'Contact between adult children and their parents in Great Britain', *Environment and Planning A*, **33**, 685–97.

Ha, J.-H., D. Carr, R.L. Utz and R. Nesse (2006), 'Older adults' perceptions of intergenerational support after widowhood: how do men and women differ?', *Journal of Family Issues*, **27** (1), 3–30.

Hagestad, Gunhild O. (1986), 'The family: women and grandparents as kinkeepers', in A. Pifer and L. Bronte (eds), *Our Aging Society: Paradox and Promise*, New York: Norton, pp. 141–60.

Haller, M. and F. Hoelinger (1994), 'Female employment and the change of sex roles: the conflictual relationship between participation and attitudes in international comparison', *International Sociology*, **9**, 87–112.

Halman, L. (2001), *The European Values Study: A Third Wave. Source book of the 1999/2000 European Values Study Surveys*, Tilburg: EVS/WORC.

Kalmijn, M. (2003), 'Country differences in sex-role attitudes: cultural and economic explanations', in W. Arts, L.C.J.M. Halman and J.A.P. Hagenaars (eds), *The Cultural Diversity of European Unity: Findings, Explanations and*

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 192 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Reflections from the European Values Study, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, pp. 311–37.

Kalmijn, M. (2006), 'Educational inequality and family relationships: influences on contact and proximity', *European Sociological Review*, **22** (1): 1–16.

Kalmijn, M. (2007), 'Gender differences in the effects of divorce, widowhood, and remarriage on intergenerational support: does marriage protect fathers?', *Social Forces*, **85**, 1079–104.

Kalmijn, M. and M. Broese van Groenou (2005), 'Differential effects of divorce on social integration', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, **22** (4), 455–76.

Kalmijn, M. and P. De Graaf (2000), 'Gescheiden vaders en hun kinderen: een empirische analyse van voogdij en bezoekfrequentie', *Bevolking en Gezin*, **29**, 59–84.

Kitson, G.C. (1992), *Portrait of Divorce: Adjustment to Marital Breakdown*, New York, Guilford Press.

Lawton, L., M. Silverstein and V. Bengston (1994), 'Affection, social contact, and geographic distance between adult children and their parents', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **56**, 57–68.

Lye, D. (1996), 'Adult child–parents relationships', *Annual Review of Sociology*, **22**, 79–102.

Lye, D., D.H. Klepinger, P. Davis Hyleand A. Nelson (1995), 'Childhood living arrangements and adult children's relations with their parents', *Demography*, **32**, 261–80.

Ogg, J. and S. Renaut (2006), 'The support of parents in old age by those born during 1945–1954: a European perspective', *Ageing and Society*, **26**, 723–43.

Reher, D.S. (1998), 'Family ties in Western Europe: persistent contrasts', *Population and Development Review*, **24**, 203–34.

Rosenthal, Carolyn J. (1985), 'Kinkeeping in the familial division of labor', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **47**, 965–74.

Sainsbury, D. (1996), *Gender, Equality, and Welfare states*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saraceno, C. (2007), 'Patterns of family living in enlarged Europe', in J. Alber, T. Fahey and C. Saraceno (eds), *Quality of Life in Europe*, London: Routledge, pp. 47–72.

Sayer, L.C., A.H. Gauthier and F.F. Furstenberg (2004), 'Educational differences in parents' time with children: cross-national variations', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, **66**, 1152–69.

Scott, J., D. Alwin and M. Braun (1996), 'Generational changes in gender-role attitudes: Britain in a cross-national perspective', *Sociology*, **30** (3), 471–92.

Seltzer, J.A. (1991), 'Relationships between fathers and children who live apart: the father's role after separation', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **53**, 79–101.

Simon, R.W. (2002), 'Revisiting the relationships among gender, marital status, and mental health', *American Journal of Sociology*, **107** (4), 1065–96.

Sjoberg, O. (2004), 'The role of family policy institutions in explaining gender-role attitudes: a comparative multilevel analysis of thirteen industrialized countries', *Journal of European Social Policy*, **14**, 107–23.

Spitze, G. and J. Logan (1989), 'Gender differences in family support: is there a payoff?', *The Gerontologist*, **29** (1), 108–13.

Szydlik, M. (1996), 'Parent–child relations in East and West Germany shortly after the fall of the wall', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, **16** (12), 63–87.

M1505 - SARACENO TXT.qxd 27/6/08 11:34 Page 193 Gary Graham:GRAHAM'S IMAC JOBS: GRAYUMS G4

Tomassini, Cecilia, Stamatis Kalogirou, Emily Grundy, Tineke Fokkema, Pekka Martikainen, Marjolein Broese van Groenou, and Antti Karisto (2004), 'Contacts between elderly parents and their children in four European countries: current patterns and future prospects', *European Journal of Ageing*, **1**, 54–63.

Van der Lippe, T. and E. Roelofs (1995), 'Sharing domestic work', in A. Van Doorne-Huiskes, J. Van Hoof and E. Roelofs (eds), *Women and the European Labour Markets*, London: Paul Chapman, pp. 90–105.

Van der Lippe, T. and L. Van Dijk (eds) (2001), *Women's Employment in a Comparative Perspective*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Waite, L. and S.C. Harrison (1992), 'Keeping in touch: how women in mid-life allocate social contacts among kith and kin', *Social Forces*, **70**, 637–55.

Williams, K. and D. Umberson (2004), 'Marital status, marital transitions, and health: a gendered life course perspective', *Journal of Health and Social Behavior,* **45** (1), 81–98.