



Children's adjustment in different kinds of custodies

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Foreword

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the BSc Psychology degree, Reykjavik University, this thesis is presented in the style of an article for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

Abstract

This study examined how children adjust to the different forms of family structures within which they live. The different forms of family structures were; an intact family, a shared physical custody and a single-headed household. The data used to measure children's adjustment was taken from the National Survey of Icelandic Adolescents, Youth in Iceland 2012, gathered from a group of 2,089 students from the 8th, 9th and 10th grades. Anova one-way was used to compare means between the three different forms of residences. The findings were that there is a difference between the groups in regard to support from parents, time spent with parents, parental monitoring, quarrels with parents, financial standing, absence from school, sport activities, emotional health and depressed mood. There was no measurable difference regarding quarreling between parents. The conclusion using Bonferroni Multiple Comparisons, was that children are best adjusted in intact families and there are signs that children in shared physical custody are better adjusted than those who are living in a single-headed household. Finally, multiple linear regression was used with depressed mood as a dependent variable. It seems that the association between family structure and depressed mood is mediated through support from parents and sport activities.

Keywords: children's adjustment, custody, intact family, shared physical custody, single-headed households.

Útdráttur

Í þessari rannsókn var kannað hvernig börn aðlagast eftir mismunandi forræðum. Mismunandi forræði eru, venjulegt fjölskyldumunstur, sameiginlegt forræði þar sem börn búa nokkurn vegin jafnt hjá hvoru foreldri og einstæð foreldri. Gögnin sem notuð voru í rannsókninni eru fengin frá Rannsókn og greiningu, Ungt fólk 2012. Úrtakið var 2089 nemendur í 8., 9. og 10. bekk. Marghliða dreifigreining var notuð til að bera saman þessi þrjú forræðisform. Niðurstöðurnar eru að það er marktækur munur á milli úrræðanna varðand stuðning frá foreldrum, þess tíma sem foreldrar eru með börnum sínum, vöktun foreldra á börnum, rifrilda við foreldra, fjárhagslega stöðu, mætingu í skóla, íþróttaiðkunn, tilfinningalega heilsu og depurð. Það var ekki marktækur munur á milli rifrildis á milli foreldra. Með Bonferroni fjölda samanburði, fékkst sú niðurstaða að börn eru best aðlöguð í venjulegu fjölskyldumunstri og það eru vísbendingar um að börn sem búa í sameiginlegu forræði aðlagast betur en börn búa með öðru foreldrinu. Að lokum var fjöliliða aðhvarfsgreining notuð með depurð sem háða breytu. Svo virðist sem tengslin á milli fjölskyldumunsturs og depurðar sé að fullu miðlað í gegnum aðrar fjölskyldubreytur, íþróttaiðkunn og mætingar í skóla.

Lykilorð: Aðlögun barna, forræði, venjulegt fjölskyldumunstur, sameiginlegt forræði, einstæðir foreldrar.

Children's adjustment in different kinds of custodies

In recent decades divorce have become much more frequent. For example, in Iceland the number of divorces has increased from 96 per year in 1951 to 516 per year in 2013 (“Hagstofa Íslands - Talnaefni,” n.d.). The consequence is a large number of children who live in single-parent households. A study carried out in the US showed that in the year 2005, 23% of children stayed solely with their mother and 5% solely with their father (Chiappori & Weiss, 2007). The divorce rate varies between countries: for example 60% of children in Romania live in intact families, while 93% of the children in Macedonia are living in intact families (Bjarnason & Arnarsson, 2011).

There are indications that children of divorced parents do not perform as well as children from intact families (Chiappori & Weiss, 2007). As things have developed, however, today it's a simplification to group children only as children of divorced parents or children living in an intact family environment. There are more types of custodies and the custody set-up might influence how well a child adjusts to new circumstances. In a survey done in 36 western countries, 13% of children lived only with their mother without a stepfather, 2% lived with their father without a stepmother, 6% lived with their mother and a stepfather, 1% lived with their father and a stepmother, and finally 1% of the children lived equally with their mother and father in two households in shared physical custody (Bjarnason & Arnarsson, 2011).

As a reaction to this development, the Icelandic parliament passed a law in 2012 that obligates divorcing parents to share custody, either physical or legal (*Lög um breytingu á barnalögum, nr. 76/2003, með síðari breytingum (forsjá og umgengni)*).

Prior Research

Parental divorce and child adjustment

Robert Bauserman (2002) analyzed studies on how children with different custody arrangements adjusted to new circumstances. The different kinds of custodies examined in the study were sole custody, joint physical custody and joint legal custody. Children in joint custody, legal or physical, were better adjusted than those who were in sole custody. Moreover, parents with joint custody reported less conflict than those who had sole custody. Based on this, it seems that joint custody can be beneficial for children with ongoing positive relationships with both parents (Bauserman, 2002).

Children raised by two parents seem to perform better than children raised by one parent (Chiappori & Weiss, 2007). Nevertheless, one review indicated that being raised by one parent is not the sole reason for negative impact. Amato and Keith (1991) examined 92 studies which compared children in divorced families with those who lived in intact families. According to Amato and Keith, there were three factors or perspectives on which these studies focused most. First, parental absence, as the family is the key social institution tasked with the socialized upbringing of children. It is known that children spend less time with the parent who is noncustodial. Second, a decrease in living standards, which usually results from divorce. And third, family conflict, as conflict between parents during and following a divorce is a stress factor for their children (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Children who experienced divorce scored lower on a measure of well-being than those from intact families. However, there was a difference in the results; older research seemed to find stronger support for less well-being than more recent studies. Some support was found for parental absence and lower income resulting in less well-being, but the

strongest support regarding less well-being was conflict within families during and following divorce (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Communication between a parent and child is important. If different custody set-ups are compared in relation to communication, the outcome of children living in joint physical custody seems to be very close to the outcome of children living in intact families. In fact, communication with the father in joint physical custody set-ups seems to be better than within intact families: 32% of adolescents (11, 13 and 15 years old) found it difficult or very difficult to talk to their father about things that really bothered them while 29% of those who lived in joint physical custody experienced the same issue (Bjarnason & Arnarsson, 2011).

Protecting issues among adolescents and parental involvement

In the previous section, several factors that have a positive impact on adolescents' well-being were pointed out. Among these factors are time spent together with parents and parental support. However, family conflict seems to be one of the strongest predictors of less well-being among children in divorced families (Amato & Keith, 1991). There are factors that may have protective effects on adolescents who live in circumstances of family conflict. For example, research has been carried out to study the buffering effects physical activity may have on the impact of family conflict on depressed mood. Even though this research is not categorized by different custodies, it might reflect the situation among adolescents in divorced families. The result indicated that physical activity buffers the effect of family conflict on depressed mood (Sigfusdottir, Asgeirsdottir, Sigurdsson, & Gudjonsson, 2011).

This Study

Most studies so far have examined the relationship between family structures, for example living in an intact family versus living with a single parent, on behavior among adolescents. However, society has changed in the sense that divorce have become more frequent and divorcing parents are now more often sharing custody of their children. More

children than before now live with both their parents, for example, alternating on a weekly basis. Thus we lack better understanding of the effect of these circumstances on adolescent adjustment.

This study was designed to measure how children adjust to different kinds of custody set-ups within which they live. The different custody set-ups were: an intact family, shared physical custody and a single-headed household. Adjustment was measured by support from parents, time spent with parents, parental monitoring, family conflict, financial situation, absence from school, sport activities, emotional health and depressed mood.

This research examined the above mentioned factors on a population of 13 to 16 year old adolescents. The first hypothesis was that there would be a difference in children's adjustment depending on joint physical custody, a single-headed household and an intact family. The second hypothesis was that shared physical custody would be closer to an intact family than a single-headed household and the third and final hypothesis was that the influence on different kinds of custodies on depressed mood would be mediated through parental support and possibly other family factors.

Method

Participants

The data we use to estimate parental attachment and children's adjustment came from the National Survey of Icelandic Adolescents, Youth in Iceland 2012 ("Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA)," n.d.) The participants are all 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students in elementary schools in Iceland. All students who attended school the day the survey was executed participated in the research. Answers were collected from 3,698 students in 8th grade, 3,673 students in 9th grade and 3,747 students in 10th grade. Responses from 104 participants were not categorized by grades. The total amount of responses was 11,222 which

is an 86% response rate, similar among the grades. Around 300 of the responses were filled out in Polish questionnaires (Kristjánsson, Sigfússon, Sigfúsdóttir, & Pálsdóttir, 2012). In this study we used a random sample of the group described above with a total of 2,089 students, 1,006 boys and 1,054 girls, 29 were not categorized by gender. The classes were rather evenly distributed: 696 students in 8th grade, 682 students in 9th grade and 693 students in 10th grade. Responses from 18 participants were not categorized by grades.

Design

The ICSRA questionnaires cover a wide spectrum of demographic and social variables among students in Iceland including living status, the support they get from their parents, and the time they spend with them (Kristjánsson et al., 2012). In this research, the independent variables were different types of custody, including shared custody and single custody. The dependent variable was child adjustment.

Procedure

The study was carried out under the supervision of the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA). ICSRA has collected data each year for the past 15 years (Kristjánsson et al., 2012). Questionnaires were sent to all the elementary schools in Iceland. The teachers asked their students to fill out the questionnaires (see Appendix). The students received the questionnaire in a blank envelope and after they filled it out, they put it back into the envelope. The teachers made it clear in the beginning that they should not leave any mark on the envelope nor the questionnaire to make sure it could not be traced back to them. The students were also asked to fill out the form with an honorable intention and ask for assistance if something might be unclear. The questionnaire was translated into Polish for those who believed they would understand the questions better in that language (Kristjánsson et al., 2012).

Measures

Family structure. Children living in an intact family environment were measured by a variable coded 1. Children living in shared physical custody were measured by a variable coded 2. The data used contained information about children living with mother and children living with their father. These two conditions were combined as children living with one parent and were measured by a variable coded 3. The sample contained 1,443 children living in an intact family environment, 148 children living in shared physical custody and 247 children living with one parent. Responses from 251 participants were not categorized by the above defined forms of residence.

Support from parents. To measure support from parents, participants were asked how easy or difficult it was to receive the following from their parents: “warmth and caring”, “discussion about personal affairs”, “advice from parents on studies”, “advice on other issues or projects” and “assistance with projects”. The answers could be 0 (very difficult), 1 (somewhat difficult), 2 (fairly easy), 3 (very easy). The scale for every question was reduced from the original data from 1 to 4 down to 0 to 3. Answers were combined into a scale from 0 to 15.

Time spent with parents. To measure time spent with parents, the participants were asked how well the following statements applied to them. “I spend time with my parents outside school time on weekdays” and “I spend time with my parents during weekends”. The possible answers were: 0 (almost never), 1 (seldom), 2 (sometimes), 3 (often) and 4 (almost all the time). The scale for every question was reduced from the original data from 1 to 5 down to 0 to 4. Answers were combined into a scale from 0 to 8.

Parental monitoring. To measure parental monitoring, the participants were asked how well or badly the following statements applied. “My parents monitor with whom I spend time with during evenings” and “my parents monitor where I am during evenings”. The

answers could be 0 (applies very badly to me), 1 (applies fairly badly to me), 2 (applies to some extent to me) and 3 (applies very well to me). The scale for every question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 4 down to 0 to 3. Also, for these questions, the scale was inverted. Answers were combined into a scale from 0 to 6.

Parental quarrel: To measure parental quarrel, participants were asked how well the following statement applied: "My parents often quarrel". The answers could be 0 (applies very badly to me), 1 (applies fairly badly to me), 2 (applies fairly well to me)" and 3 (applies very well to me). The scale for this question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 4 down to 0 to 3

Quarrel with parents: To measure quarrel with parents, participants were asked how well the following statement applied: "I often quarrel with my parents". The answers could be 0 (applies very badly to me), 1 (applies fairly badly to me), 2 (applies fairly well to me)" and 3 (applies very well to me). The scale for this question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 4 down to 0 to 3

Financial situation. To measure poverty, participants were asked to indicate how the following conditions applied to them: "Your parents' financial situation is poor", "your parents can not afford to operate a car", "your parents have not enough money to pay for necessities (for example food, housing, telephone)" and "your parents have not enough money to pay for the hobbies you want to practice (for example music or sport)". The answers could be: 0 (almost never), 1 (seldom), 2 (sometimes), 3 (often) and 4 (almost always). The scale for every question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 5 down to 0 to 4. Answers were combined into a scale from 0 to 16.

Absence from school. To measure absence from school, participants were asked how many days they were absent from school the last 30 days due to the following: "Due to illness", "due to truancy", "due to work with school", "due to situations at home" and " due to

other reasons". The answers could be: 0 (never), 1 (one day), 2 (two days), 3 (three to four days), 4 (five to six days), 5 (seven days or more). The scale for every question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 6 down to 0 to 5. Answers were combined into a scale from 0 to 25.

Sport activities. To measure sport activities, participants were asked how often they performed the following activities: "Sport activities outside planned gymnastics classes in school", "sport activities with a sport club", "sport activities not arranged by school or sport club" and "physical workout until you sweat or pant". The answers could be 0 (almost never), 1 (once a week), 2 (twice a week), 3 (three times a week), 4 (four to six times a week) and 5 (almost every day). The scale for every question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 6 down to 0 to 5. Answers were combined into a scale from 0 to 20.

Emotional health. To measure emotional health, participants were asked to answer the following question. "How good is your emotional health". The answers could be: 0 (bad), 1 (reasonable), 2 (good) and 3 (very good). The scale for this question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 4 down to 0 to 3. For these questions, the scale was also inverted.

Depressed mood. To measure depression mood, participants were asked how often they experienced the following conditions or discomforts in the past weeks. "You were sad or showed no interest in doing things", "you had low appetite", "you felt lonely", "you cried easily or you wanted to cry", "you had difficulties falling to sleep or stay asleep", "you were depressed or sad", "you did not feel excited to execute things", "you felt slow and weak", "you felt that the future were hopeless" and "you had thoughts of committing suicide". The possible answers were: 0 (Almost never), 1 (seldom), 2 (sometimes) and 3 (often). The scale for every question in the original data was reduced from 1 to 4 down to 0 to 3. Answers were combined into a scale from 0 to 30.

Table 1

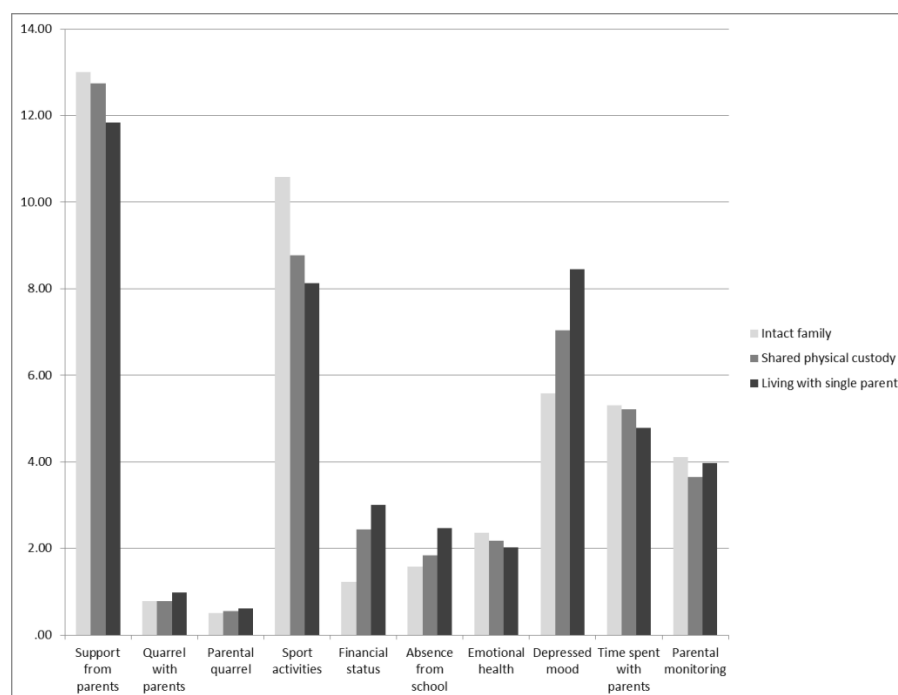
Variables	Range	Intact family			Shared physical custody			Living with single parent		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Support from parents	0-15	1411	13.00	2.70	147	12.74	2.65	235	11.85	3.32
Warmth and caring from parents	0-3	1426	2.75	.54	148	2.74	.52	241	2.60	.70
Discussion about personal affairs with parents	0-3	1418	2.44	.76	147	2.35	.82	241	2.28	.86
Advice from parents on studies	0-3	1421	2.63	.67	148	2.51	.74	241	2.31	.86
Advice about other issues or projects from parents	0-3	1423	2.58	.66	147	2.55	.63	238	2.32	.84
Assistance with projects from parents	0-3	1421	2.61	.65	148	2.56	.65	239	2.32	.84
Time spent with parents	0-8	1413	5.31	1.87	146	5.21	1.98	239	4.78	2.11
I spend time with my parents outside school time on weekdays	0-4	1426	2.48	1.09	147	2.40	1.13	242	2.16	1.23
I spend time with my parents during weekends	0-4	1419	2.83	1.02	146	2.81	1.11	241	2.63	1.13
Parental monitoring	0-6	1416	4.11	1.73	148	3.66	1.67	236	3.97	1.64
My parents monitor with whom I spend time with during evenings	0-3	1422	1.99	.95	148	1.72	.96	240	1.85	.94
My parents monitor where I am during evenings	0-3	1423	2.12	.90	148	1.94	.93	238	2.11	.85
I have often quarrels with my parents	0-3	1419	.78	.82	146	.79	.81	239	.97	.94
My parents often quarrel	0-3	1417	.50	.76	144	.55	.85	234	.62	.96
Financial situation	0-16	1413	1.23	2.21	145	2.43	3.18	234	3.00	3.24
Your parents' financial situation is poor	0-4	1423	.59	.84	147	.99	.98	242	1.28	1.09
Your parents can not afford to operate a car	0-4	1423	.16	.56	147	.49	1.01	238	.53	.97
Your parents have not enough money to pay for necessities (for example food, housing, telephone)	0-4	1424	.27	.86	146	.52	1.12	241	.69	1.12
Your parents have not enough money to pay for the hobbies you want to practice (for example music or sport)	0-4	1422	.21	.69	146	.48	1.05	240	.53	.94
Absence from school	0-25	1273	1.59	2.07	125	1.84	2.09	214	2.48	3.03
Due to illness	0-5	1395	1.13	1.43	141	1.18	1.31	232	1.39	1.58
Due to truancy	0-5	1298	.09	.52	129	.10	.39	224	.25	.82
Due to work with school	0-5	1296	.05	.37	130	.05	.21	220	.14	.63
Due to situations at home	0-5	1299	.07	.41	129	.09	.32	218	.17	.61
Due to other reasons	0-5	1332	.43	.97	135	.60	1.22	228	.74	1.32
Sport activities	0-20	1356	10.59	5.32	143	8.78	5.61	224	8.13	5.44
How often do you perform sport activities outside planned gymnastics classes in school	0-5	1385	3.08	1.66	145	2.59	1.77	227	2.24	1.75
How often do you perform sport activities with a sport club	0-5	1384	2.45	1.97	145	1.70	1.92	228	1.68	1.89
How often do you perform sport activities not arranged by school or sport club	0-5	1376	1.73	1.68	144	1.55	1.69	228	1.40	1.60
How often do you perform physical workout until you sweat or pant	0-5	1376	3.31	1.54	144	2.92	1.70	227	2.83	1.64
How good is your emotional health	0-3	1405	2.36	.79	143	2.18	.87	232	2.02	.89
Depression / depressed moods	0-30	1368	5.58	6.31	142	7.04	6.91	234	8.45	7.83
You were sad or showed no interest in doing things	0-3	1415	.86	.95	146	1.03	.99	239	1.15	1.05
You had low appetite	0-3	1409	.72	.95	145	.83	1.07	239	1.05	1.10
You felt lonely	0-3	1410	.62	.92	144	.70	.98	239	.88	1.05
You cried easily or you wanted to cry	0-3	1412	.57	.91	144	.76	1.06	238	.89	1.10
You had difficulties falling to sleep or stay asleep	0-3	1409	.76	.97	145	1.01	1.15	237	1.08	1.14
You were depressed or sad	0-3	1408	.57	.87	145	.73	.95	238	.88	1.05
You did not feel excited to execute things	0-3	1406	.52	.82	145	.68	.88	239	.86	1.04
You felt slow and week	0-3	1409	.48	.80	145	.55	.91	240	.77	.97
You felt that the future were hopeless	0-3	1409	.33	.73	146	.49	.86	238	.55	.95
You had thoughts of committing suicide	0-3	1408	.18	.58	144	.17	.47	237	.34	.82

Statistical Techniques

The software SPSS was used to analyze the data used in this study. The statistical technique used to analyze the data was anova one-way. Anova is used to compare means between three or more groups (Field, 2009). This way the mean was found for each of the variables described in the previous section and compared them against the three different forms of residence (intact family, shared custody, single parent). Finally, multiple linear regression was used to examine if the effect on depressed mood is mediated through other dependent variables.

Results

Table 1 provides means comparison on all of the study variables, between children living in intact families, shared custody and those who live with either mother or father. The results are also displayed in graph 1.



Graph 1

The difference within each group was linear, where an intact family seemed to be the best set-up, followed by shared physical custody, and a single-headed household being the least successful set-up. The exception was parental monitoring, in the case of which an intact family seemed to be the best set-up, followed by a single-headed household and the least successful being shared physical custody. The difference was significant for the following groups: Support from parents was $F(2, 1790) = 17,53$; $p < ,05$, time spent with parents was $F(2, 1795) = 7,81$; $p < ,05$, quarrel with parents was $F(2, 1801) = 5,53$; $p < ,05$, financial situation was $F(2, 1789) = 62,91$; $p < ,05$, absence from school was $F(2, 1609) = 14,92$; $p < ,05$, sport activities was $F(2, 1720) = 25,12$; $p < ,05$, emotional health was $F(2, 1777) = 20,15$; $p < ,05$, depressed mood was $F(2, 1741) = 20,73$; $p < ,05$, and finally parental monitoring was $F(2, 1797) = 5,00$; $p < ,05$. However, parental monitoring did not show the same linear trend as the other groups. The mean difference between the group in relation to how often their parents quarrel was not significant: $F(2, 1792) = 2,26$; $p > ,05$.

To examine where the significant difference was within each of the groups, a post hoc test was executed and the multiple comparison is shown in table 2. Below are the results categorized by family structure.

Intact families versus one headed households

There was a significant difference between children living in intact families versus those living with one parent in regard to financial standing, sport activities, depressed mood, emotional health, support from parents, absence from school, time spent with parents and quarrels with parents.

There was no significant difference between children living in intact families versus those living with one parent in regard to having parents who often quarrel and parental monitoring.

Intact families versus shared physical custody

There was a significant difference between children living in intact families and children living in shared physical custody in regard to poverty, sport activities, parental monitoring, emotional health and depressed mood.

There was no significant difference between children living in intact families versus shared physical custody in regard to absence from school, support from parents, time spent with parents, quarrels with parents and quarrels between parents.

Shared physical custody versus intact family

There was a significant difference between children living in shared physical custody and those living in an intact family in regard to poverty, sport activities, parental monitoring, emotional health and depressed mood.

There was no significant difference between children living in shared physical custody and those living in an intact family in regard to absence from school, support from parents, time spent with parents, quarrels with parents and quarrels between parents.

Shared physical custody versus single-headed households

There was a significant difference between children living in shared physical custody and children living in a single-headed household in regard to poverty, sport activities, parental monitoring, emotional health and depressed mood.

There was no significant difference between children living in shared physical custody and children living in a single-headed household in regards to absence from school, support from parents, time spent with parents, quarrels with parents and quarrels between parents.

Table 2

Multiple Comparisons

Bonferroni

Dependent variable	Family structure	Family structure	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Support from parents	Intact family	Shared physical custody	.824	-.3145	.8414
		Living with one parent	.000	.6883	1.6280
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	.824	-.8414	.3145
		Living with one parent	.007	.1935	1.5959
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.000	-1.6280	-.6883
		Shared physical custody	.007	-1.5959	-.1935
Time spent with parents	Intact family	Shared physical custody	1.000	-.3039	.4935
		Living with one parent	.000	.2081	.8497
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	1.000	-.4935	.3039
		Living with one parent	.093	-.0477	.9159
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.000	-.8497	-.2081
		Shared physical custody	.093	-.9159	.0477
Parental monitoring	Intact family	Shared physical custody	.007	.0985	.8082
		Living with one parent	.753	-.1504	.4273
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	.007	-.8082	-.0985
		Living with one parent	.240	-.7457	.1158
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.753	-.4273	.1504
		Shared physical custody	.240	-.1158	.7457
I often quarrel with my parents	Intact family	Shared physical custody	1.000	-.1814	.1677
		Living with one parent	.003	-.3345	-.0536
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	1.000	-.1677	.1814
		Living with one parent	.101	-.3982	.0237
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.003	.0536	.3345
		Shared physical custody	.101	-.0237	.3982
My parents often quarrel	Intact family	Shared physical custody	1.000	-.2166	.1173
		Living with one parent	.115	-.2511	.0183
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	1.000	-.1173	.2166
		Living with one parent	1.000	-.2690	.1354
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.115	-.0183	.2511
		Shared physical custody	1.000	-.1354	.2690
Financial situation	Intact family	Shared physical custody	.000	-1.7222	-.6967
		Living with one parent	.000	-2.1942	-1.3642
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	.000	.6967	1.7222
		Living with one parent	.084	-1.1912	.0516
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.000	1.3642	2.1942
		Shared physical custody	.084	-.0516	1.1912
Absence from school	Intact family	Shared physical custody	.665	-.7540	.2445
		Living with one parent	.000	-1.2849	-.4979
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	.665	-.2445	.7540
		Living with one parent	.033	-1.2363	-.0370
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.000	.4979	1.2849
		Shared physical custody	.033	.0370	1.2363
Sport activities	Intact family	Shared physical custody	.000	.6802	2.9399
		Living with one parent	.000	1.5345	3.3881
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	.000	-2.9399	-.6802
		Living with one parent	.770	-.7243	2.0267
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.000	-3.3881	-1.5345
		Shared physical custody	.770	-2.0267	.7243
Emotional health	Intact family	Shared physical custody	.031	.0122	.3516
		Living with one parent	.000	.2095	.4834
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	.031	-.3516	-.0122
		Living with one parent	.165	-.0409	.3701
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.000	-.4834	-.2095
		Shared physical custody	.165	-.3701	.0409
Depressed mood	Intact family	Shared physical custody	.035	-2.8580	-.0759
		Living with one parent	.000	-3.9939	-1.7615
	Shared physical custody	Intact family	.035	.0759	2.8580
		Living with one parent	.132	-3.0891	.2677
	Living with one parent	Intact family	.000	1.7615	3.9939
		Shared physical custody	.132	-.2677	3.0891

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Influence on depressed mood from other variables

To examine whether the influence of different kind of custodies on depressed mood was mediated through other variables, a multiple linear regression was executed with depressed mood as a dependent variable. In Model I the effects of family structure on depressed mood was examined. Variables are added in Models II to V. In order to see whether the effects of family structure on depressed mood were mediated through the other variables, the effects of family structure should become insignificant as possible mediating variables are added to the models.

Table 3
Multiple regression with depressed mood as a dependent variable

	Model I			Model II			Model III			Model IV			Model V		
	β	t	R ²	β	t	R ²	β	t	R ²	β	t	R ²	β	t	R ²
Family structure	.15*	6.44	.02	.15*	6.38	.07	.09*	3.68	.12	.07*	3.12	.24	.05	1.92	.28
Gender				.22*	9.55		.21*	9.14		.23*	10.01		.19*	8.03	
Financial status							.23*	9.63		.13*	5.48		.11*	4.36	
Family status															
Time spent with parents										-.02	-.77		-.01	-.46	
Support from parents										-.21*	-8.02		-.19*	-6.87	
Parental monitoring										-.03	-1.12		.01	-.20	
Quarrel with parents										.18*	6.88		.17*	6.48	
Parental quarrel										.06	2.36		.05	1.87	
Sport activities and school															
Sport activities													-.06*	-2.69	
Absence from school													.20*	8.45	

* P < .05

As seen in table 3, family structure becomes insignificant in model V. Hence, we see that the effects of living in different forms of families on depressed mood, is fully mediated through other family variables, sport activities and absence from school.

Model V in table 3 shows R² as .28 which means that the model can account for 28% of depressed mood.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to analyze the difference between children's adjustment within three different forms of residence: an intact family, shared physical custody and a single-headed household. The first hypothesis examined was that there would be a difference regarding children's adjustment in joint physical custody, a single-headed household and an intact family. The second hypothesis examined was that shared physical custody would be closer to an intact family than a single-headed household. The third and final hypothesis examined was that the influence of different kinds of custodies on depressed mood would be mediated through parental support and possibly other family factors.

In the last decades there has been a significant increase in the divorce rate ("Hagstofa Íslands - Talnaefni," n.d.). As a result, there is an increased number of children who do not live with both parents (Chiappori & Weiss, 2007) even though divorce rate is different between countries (Bjarnason & Arnarsson, 2011). This development has entailed different forms of custody (Bjarnason & Arnarsson, 2011). In our study, 68% of participants came from intact families, 7% lived in shared physical custody, 12% lived in single-headed households and 13% lived in other form of residence or did not answer as to categorization. As intact families are becoming fewer, it's important to find out how children adjust in new forms of residence.

The findings of this study were that there was a significant difference between the three residential forms for all the variables measured except for one: parental quarrels. The other variables measuring significant difference were: support from parents, time spent with parents, parental monitoring, quarrel with parents, financial standing, absence from school, sport activities, emotional health and depressed mood. The difference between the group was linear (see graph 1) for all variables except parental monitoring. For all the other variables, an

intact family scored best with shared physical custody second and a single-headed household scoring third.

If we compare shared physical custody with a single-headed household, the difference was significant for two variables (support from parents and absence from school). The difference seen in graph 1 was not significant for other variables.

However, if we compare intact families with families with shared physical custody, there was no significant difference between five variables (absence from school, support from parents, time spent with parents, quarrel with parents and parental quarrels). If we compare intact families with single-headed households there was no significant difference for two variables (parental quarrels and parental monitoring). As such, shared physical custody seemed to be closer to intact families than single-headed households in regards to children's adjustment.

Society has changed with more frequent divorce. The Icelandic parliament passed a law in 2012 which obligates divorcing parents to share custody (either physical or legal). This causes divorced parents to take joint major decisions regarding their children. The children will have legal residence with either of their parents and that parent will have legal rights to make decisions related to normal life, such as which school the child will attend, the child's healthcare and hobbies. The drawback is that a child can only have one legal residence and the law currently does not support shared physical custody. The fact that shared physical custody seems to be a better form of residence than a single-headed household, raises question about whether the legislator shouldn't adjust the laws to support such forms of residence.

Bauserman's study found that parents with joint physical and legal custody reported less conflict than those who had sole custody (Bauserman, 2002). This is not supported in the current study. However our data was not grouped the same way as Bauserman's. In our data, shared legal and sole custody are joined as single-headed households. This might explain why

there is no significant difference between the groups in our study. In future research, single-headed households need to be split up in shared legal custody and single-parent custody in order to find out whether family conflict is different between shared and exclusive custodies.

According to Amato and Keith (1991) there are three factors that most often are focused on in research regarding the impact divorce has on children. These factors are parental absence, financial standing and family conflict. In their findings the strongest factor was conflict within families. In our findings, there was no significant difference in parental absence between intact families and shared physical custody. The difference was significant, however, between intact families and single-headed households. Regarding financial standing, there was a significant difference between intact families and both shared physical custody and single-headed households. Finally, there was no significant difference for family conflict in means of parental quarrels but there was a significant difference between intact families and single-headed households in regard to quarrels between child and parent. Which is to say, the findings endorse Amatos and Keiths findings to some extent.

The findings in this study indicate less well-being among children of divorced parents. Regarding time spent with parents, this study is not in line with Amato and Keith's findings on shared physical custody. Finally, their strongest factor, family conflict, seemed only to be endorsed by this study to some extent. The reason for this might be that their study was performed 1991, since then shared physical and legal custody have become more popular and that might have lead to less conflict as parents have needed to cooperate on their children's well-being.

The effect of family structure on depressed mood seems to be fully mediated through family variables, sport activity and absence from school. As seen in table 3, the significant family variables were parental support and quarrel with parents. These results could be used to improve the readjustment process for children after divorce. For example, the difference

regarding parental support seemed not to be significant between intact families and shared physical custody. The difference between sport activities in intact families and shared physical custody seemed to be significant. As children in shared physical custody were more depressed and engaged in less sport activities than children in intact families, parents with children in shared physical custody should be encouraged to increase their children's possibility to engage in sport.

The only variable where single-headed households scored higher than shared physical custody was parental monitoring. It seemed that parents lose overview when their children are living with them only every other week. If that is the case, parents who share custody in this way should be warned and encouraged to improve parental monitoring.

These results raise ethical questions and call for further research to explore children's adjustment in relation to their form of residence. Such results could be used as a base for guidelines or rules for divorced parents to help them guard their children. This way, parents would be informed of the best practices for shared physical custody when going through divorce.

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Appendix

Question form used in the study.

Ungt fólk 2012

**Könnun á högum og líðan
grunnskólanema í
8., 9. og 10. bekk**

- Trúnaðarmál -

Til nemenda

Í þessu hefti eru spurningar sem þú ert beðin(n) að svara. Við vonum að þú svarir þeim af samviskusemi því svör þín skipta miklu máli. Þetta er ekki próf. Það eina sem skiptir máli er að þú segir satt og rétt frá.

Við flestum spurningunum eru nokkrir svarmöguleikar. Stundum þarf að velja einn og stundum má velja fleiri eins og fram kemur í leiðbeiningum við hverja spurningu. Settu kross í reitinn við það svar sem þú hefur valið ☐. Ef þér finnst enginn svarmöguleiki í einhverri spurningu eiga nákvæmlega við um þig merktu þá við þann svarmöguleika sem þér finnst komast næst. Vinsamlega notaðu penna. Ef þú skiptir um skoðun og vilt breyta svari við einhverri spurningu er best að fylla reitinn alveg út þannig að ekkert hvítt sjáist ☐. Þannig útfylltur reitur táknar „ógilt”. Á fáeinum stöðum eru ekki gefin svör og þar ertu beðin(n) að skrifa þitt eigið svar. Þar þarftu að skrifa mjög greinilega og helst nota prentstafi. Þú ræður því hvort þú svarar einstökum spurningum en við biðjum þig að svara þeim öllum eftir bestu getu.

Svör þín eru trúnaðarmál, það er að segja, enginn sem þekkir þig, hvorki kennarar þínir né foreldrar, kunningjar eða vinir, munu nokkurn tíma fá að sjá svör þín eða fá að vita hvernig þú svaraðir. Gættu þess því að skrifa hvorki nafn þitt né kennitölu á spurningalistann eða umslagið sem honum fylgir. Þegar þú hefur lokið við að svara öllum spurningunum, settu þá listann í umslagið, límdu vel fyrir og skilaðu til kennara.

Ef þú hefur einhverjar spurningar um spurningalistann, lokaðu þá listanum þínum og réttu upp hönd. Starfsmaður eða kennari kemur þá með óútfyllt eintak af spurningalistanum til að aðstoða þig án þess að sjá þín svör.

Með kærri þökk fyrir þátttökuna,

Starfsfólk Rannsóknna & greiningar

1. Ert þú strákur eða stelpa?

☐ Strákur ☐ Stelpa

3. Í hvaða bekk ert þú? (Merktu aðeins í EINN reit)

☐ 8. bekk ☐ 9. bekk ☐ 10. bekk

4. Hverjir eftirtalinna búa heima hjá þér? (Merktu aðeins í EINN reit)

- ☐ Ég bý hjá báðum foreldrum
☐ Ég bý nokkurn veginn jafnt til skiptis hjá föður og móður
☐ Ég bý aðallega hjá móður en ekki föður
☐ Ég bý aðallega hjá föður en ekki móður
☐ Ég bý hjá móður og sambýlismanni hennar
☐ Ég bý hjá föður og sambýliskonu hans
☐ Ég bý á eigin vegum
☐ Ég bý við annað fyrirkomulag

15. Hversu marga heila daga hefur þú verið fjarverandi frá skóla síðustu 30 daga?

(Merktu í EINN reit í hverjum lið)

	Engan dag	1 dag	2 daga	3-4 daga	5-6 daga	7 daga eða fleiri
a) Vegna veikinda	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Skrópaði	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Vegna vinnu með skóla	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Af heimilsástæðum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Af öðrum ástæðum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. Hversu vel eiga eftirfarandi fullyrðingar við um þig? (Merktu í EINN reit í hvorum lið)

	Nær aldrei	Sjaldan	Stundum	Oft	Nær alltaf
a) Ég er með foreldri/foreldrum utan skólatíma á virkum dögum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Ég er með foreldri/foreldrum um helgar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. Hversu auðvelt eða erfitt væri fyrir þig að fá eftirtalið hjá foreldrum þínum?

(Merktu í EINN reit í hverjum lið)

	Mjög erfitt	Frekar erfitt	Frekar auðvelt	Mjög auðvelt
a) Umhyggju og hlýju	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Samræður um persónuleg málefni	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Ráðleggingar varðandi námið	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Ráðleggingar varðandi önnur verk (viðfangsefni) þín	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Aðstoð við ýmis verk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Hversu vel eða illa eiga eftirfarandi fullyrðingar við? (Merktu í EINN reit í hverjum lið)

	Á mjög vel við um mig	Á frekar vel við um mig	Á frekar illa við um mig	Á mjög illa við um mig
a) Foreldrar mínir setja ákveðnar reglur um hvað ég má gera heima	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Foreldrar mínir setja ákveðnar reglur um hvað ég má gera utan heimilis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Foreldrar mínir setja ákveðnar reglur um hvenær ég á að vera komin(n) heim á kvöldin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Foreldrar mínir fylgjast með því með hverjum ég er á kvöldin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Foreldrar mínir fylgjast með því hvar ég er á kvöldin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Foreldrar mínir þekkja vini/vinkonur mína(r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Foreldrar mínir þekkja foreldra vina/vinkvenna minna	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Ég rífst oft við foreldra mína	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Foreldrar mínir rífast oft hvort við annað	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. Gerðu grein fyrir því hvort og í hve miklum mæli eftirfarandi aðstæður eiga við hjá þér.
(Merktu í EINN reit í hverjum lið)

	Nær aldrei	Sjaldan	Stundum	Oft	Nær alltaf
a) Foreldrar þínir eru illa staddir fjárhagslega	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Foreldrar þínir hafa ekki efni á að eiga og reka bíl	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Foreldrar þínir hafa varla næga peninga til að borga brýnustu nauðsynjar (t.d. mat, húsnæði, síma)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Foreldrar þínir hafa ekki ráð á þeirri tómstundastarfsemi sem þú vilt helst stunda (t.d. ástundum tónlistar eða íþróttar)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31. Hversu oft varðst þú var/vör við eftirfarandi vanlíðan eða óþægindi síðastliðna viku?
(Merktu í EINN reit í hverjum lið)

	(Nær) aldrei	Sjaldan	Stundum	Oft
a) Taugaóstyrk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Skyndilega hræðslu án nokkurrar ástæðu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Þú varst uppspennt/ur	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Þú varst leið/ur eða hafðir lítinn áhuga á að gera hluti	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Þú hafðir litla matarlyst	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Þér fannst þú einmana	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Þú grést auðveldlega eða langaði til að gráta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Þú áttir erfitt með að sofna eða halda þér sofandi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Þú varst niðurdregin(n) eða dapur/döpur	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Þú varst ekki spenntur fyrir að gera nokkurn hlut	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Þér fannst þú vera hægfara eða hafa lítinn mátt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Þér fannst framtíðin vonlaus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Þú hugsaðir um að stytta þér aldur	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

49. Hversu góð er andleg heilsa þín? (Merktu aðeins í EINN reit)

☐ Mjög góð ☐ Góð ☐ Sæmileg ☐ Slæm

