Divorce and well-being in 44 societies: Testing hypotheses about cross-national differences

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Introduction

Many studies have found that the experience of a divorce has a negative effect on mental health and well-being (Booth and Amato 1991; Kalmijn and Monden 2006; Marks and Lambert 1998; Mastekaasa 1995; Simon 2002; Wheaton 1990; Williams and Umberson 2004). Although these effects have been found in a number of countries, few studies have systematically compared the effect across national contexts. Exceptions are a descriptive paper by Stack on 16 countries in the early 1980s and a more explanatory analysis of 42 countries in the early 1990s by Diener et al. (Diener, Gohm, Suh, and Oishi 2000; Stack and Ross Eshleman 1998). Following these earlier efforts, in this paper, I re-examine to what extent the effect of divorce on subjective well-being varies across countries and I examine how such differences can be explained. Three hypotheses are tested about possible cross-national differences in the divorce effect.

The first hypothesis is inspired by the finding that there are large crossnational differences in the acceptance of divorce (Gelissen 2003; Kalmijn and Uunk 2007). This can have important implications for the effect of divorce on well-being. When divorce is disapproved of in a country, the person who divorces breaks a norm and will therefore face disapproval in his community. Disapproval may take several different forms. The person who divorces may receive criticism from others, he or she may be avoided by others, and in the most extreme case, he or she may be physically punished or ostracized.

The church in a community may also condemn the behavior of the divorcing couple and may give them the feeling that they are not welcome in the church anymore. Whatever the specific form of the sanction, it is generally believed that a divorce will lead to more negative social relationships with others and to feelings of guilt. Because behavioral confirmation is an important element of overall well-being (Lindenberg 1984), one would expect that a divorce will reduce well-being more strongly in settings where divorce is not accepted. Hence, our hypothesis is: *The stronger the disapproval of divorce in a country, the stronger the effect of divorce on subjective well-being (sanctioning hypothesis).* Similar hypotheses have been suggested by several authors in the past, but the evidence has been somewhat mixed (Diekmann and Smidheiny 2004; Diener, Gohm, Suh, and Oishi 2000; Dronkers 1997; Kalmijn and Uunk 2007).

Although it is clear that a divorce can be sanctioned, it is also known from the literature that people provide support to others who experience negative life events. A divorce is a negative life event which creates a demand for support. People close to the divorcee may be willing to provide that support, even if a divorce breaks a social norm. The persons most likely to provide support to the divorced are parents (Eggebeen and Davey 1998). This is a relevant argument for understanding macro-level differences because the role of the family varies from country to country. In familialistic countries, such as in Southern Europe and South America, there are strong norms of intergenerational support and people are more responsive to the needs of their family members (Kalmijn and Saraceno 2008; Reher 1998). In such societies, prolonged coresidence of children with parents is also common (Aassve, Billari, Mazzuco, and Ongaro 2002) and coresidence is a way in which parents may help (divorced) children both socially and financially. Our hypothesis is: *The more familialistic a society is, the weaker the effect of divorce on subjective well-being (support hypothesis).* This hypothesis was also suggested by Diener et al., although they framed it in terms of collectivism rather than familialism (Diener, Gohm, Suh, and Oishi 2000).

We note that there is some tension in the reasoning so far because familialistic societies also disapprove of divorce more strongly than individualistic societies. Hence, familialistic societies on the one hand have strong sanctions yet at the same time may compensate this by providing family support (Diener et al., p. 421). Similarly,

individualistic countries may be rather tolerant but individuals may also feel alone there with their problems. This clearly calls for a need to estimate the influences of support and sanctions in a multivariate perspective.

There is also considerable variation in the divorce rate across countries—divorce rates are high in Eastern and Northern Europe and in the United States, and they are generally lower in Southern Europe and in South and Central America. These differences are related to legal and social barriers to divorce. High legal and social barriers to divorce are generally associated with a lower divorce rate (Gonzalez and Viitanen 2006; Goode 1993). Such differences may have important consequences for the effects of divorce on well-being. When barriers to divorce are high, the people who divorce are a more selective group. Research suggests that in times of low divorce, the people who divorce have experienced more serious marital and personal problems than in times of high divorce (De Graaf and Kalmijn 2005). Examples are problems with addiction, psychiatric disorders, and violent behavior. If one assumes that there is no causal effect of divorce, a change in the threshold will affect the level of well-being in both the divorced group and in the married group. The following example illustrates this:

	Proportion .8	Proportion .1	Proportion .1
	Well-being level 3	Well-being level 2	Well-being level 1
High threshold	*Married*	*Married*	*Divorced*
Low threshold	*Married*	*Divorced*	*Divorced*

Mean married	Mean divorced	Difference
2.9	1.0	1.9
3.0	1.5	1.5

When a divorce becomes more common (we move from the top row to the bottom row), the level of well-being in the divorced group increases (the divorced are a less selected group), but the level of well-being in the married group increases as well. However, due to the fact that the divorced are a relatively small group, the former increase is larger than the latter increase, which means that the divorce *effect* becomes smaller when the threshold is lower. This leads to the following hypothesis: *The higher the barriers to divorce, the stronger the effect of divorce on subjective well-being (selection hypothesis).*

An alternative argument is that a divorce ends marital problems, and indirectly also personal problems. In this case, a divorce could increase well-being and only the level of well-being in the married group would be affected by the divorce threshold

(Stack and Ross Eshleman 1998). This would imply a weaker divorce effect in countries with a high threshold—in these countries, many people are unhappily married. However, studies have shown that the divorce effect on depression is generally not weaker when people divorce from a more unhappy marriage (Kalmijn and Monden 2006). This study suggests that there are rarely positive effects of divorce on well-being.

Design

Tests of macro-level hypotheses about divorce effects require micro level data in many different countries. Only then will there be enough degrees of freedom to test competing macro-level hypotheses simultaneously. Micro level data are needed to measure the effect of divorce in a convincing way. The divorced and the married need to be compared in their well-being after important individual-level differences between the divorced and the married are controlled for. The considerations above imply that multilevel regression models must be used for data on many countries. This is what this paper sets out to do.

Ideally, panel data should be used to assess the effects of divorce, but this can only be done at the cost of losing degrees of freedom at the macro-level. Multi-nation panel studies that include well-being measures are scarce and if they exist, the number of countries is small. For describing and understanding macro level differences, this disadvantage is more serious than the disadvantage of not using panel data. Moreover, selection effects can be taken into account in part by including important correlates of both divorce and well-being (*e.g.*, religion, education, children). In addition, selection effects can be examined at the macro level.

The data in this study come from the harmonized EVS/WVS studies (European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association 2006). From this data, I use all the EVS and WVS waves which were collected in the 1990s and 2000s. The EVS and WVS data sets partly overlap which means that sometimes countries are included in both surveys. Moreover, many countries were included in multiple waves within the same survey (within EVS and within WVS). This means that for each country, data may come from different sources. As a result, the N's increase for each country, which is a major advantage given the relatively small number of divorced persons in most societies.

Moreover, estimates for most countries are based on multiple and different samples, which also increases the reliability of the estimates (Ganzeboom, Luijkx, and Treiman 1989).

From the pooled surveys, I exclude African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries because this would make the sample of countries too heterogeneous. After excluding specific countries for specific reasons, the number of countries to be analyzed is 44.[1] These are distributed as follows: 16 in Europe, 18 in Central-Eastern Europe, 6 in Central and South America, and Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. From the national samples, I select married, divorced, and separated respondents (of all ages). The number of persons per country is 2,125 on average and the number of divorced persons per country is 225.

To test the hypotheses, I use a multilevel regression model with individuals nested in countries. The model includes random intercepts and random slopes. The intercept is random to allow for different levels of well-being across countries. The slope is random because the effect of divorce (versus marriage) can vary among countries. Cross-level interaction effects of divorce and macro-level indicators are used to test the central hypotheses.

My analysis is in part an extension and improvement of the original work by Diener et al. (2000). In comparison to Diener's analyses, my analysis first doubles the sample size (largely by including the EVS data and by adding the most recent waves). This improves the reliability of the estimates for the divorced, which are a rather small group in most societies. Second, I use different measures of some of the central concepts and I have a more homogeneous sample of countries (all of which have normal population samples). Third, I use multilevel regression models that rely on cross-level interaction effects to test macro-level hypotheses. Without a multilevel design standard errors of macro-level effects are underestimated. Moreover, interaction effects are entered simultaneously, which amounts to a multivariate design at the macro-level. This is important because the various macro-level indicators are correlated.

[1] The following countries are excluded (with reasons described in parentheses): Colombia (too many missings), Northern Ireland (not a country), Luxembourg (GDP outlier), Puerto Rico (U.S. territory), Argentina, Malta and Peru (no divorce rate), Iceland (N too low).

Measurement – individual level

Well-being – Well-being is measured in the EVS/WVS by two questions:

1. Taking all things together, would you say you are: very happy, quite happy, not very happy, or not at all happy?
2. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? (1 = dissatisfied, 10 = satisfied).

The two items are highly correlated (r = -.59) so that they can be combined to form a single, more reliable measure. After coding the items in a single direction, the items were standardized and summed. The standardization was needed because the two items have different original metrics. The resulting sum score was recoded into percentile scores. This gives the measure a metric and makes the regression effects more easy to interpret. The average is 50 and each point indicates a percentage point increase in the relative ranking of well-being from 0 to 100.

Marital status – distinguished in divorced/separated and married. Cohabiting persons are excluded since the terms divorce and separation refer to the breakup of a marriage. Remarried persons are included in the married because this cannot be measured in all the waves.

Church attendance – whether or not the person attends church monthly or more frequently. Prior research has found that church attendance is positively related to well-being.

Education – highest level of education completed broken down into primary, secondary, and tertiary. It has often been found that the higher educated are happier than the lower educated.

Age – age and age squared are included (age is centered so that the main effect is the average age effect).

Unemployed – it was chosen not to include employment as such since many nonemployed persons have meaningful roles in society which are conducive to well-being (being retired, being a housewife). For that reason, I contrast the unemployed with all other respondents.

Living with parents – in some societies, married and/or divorced persons can live with their parents and it was considered important to adjust for such differences.

The analyses include a dummy variable for sex. All analyses also adjust for the type of survey (EVS versus WVS) and for the year in which the survey was taken (varying from 1990 to 2002). Means and standard deviations of individual level variables are presented in Table 1.

Measurement – aggregate level

Divorce – since most databases only publish crude divorce rates or divorces per 100 marriages, I constructed net marriage rates. These rates are defined as the number of divorces in a year divided by the number of married women in that year (per 1000). The rate is constructed for 1990 and for 2000 (or years close to those years). The rate used in the analysis is the average of the two rates.

Two different variables are used to measure sanctioning of divorce: a variable which directly measures people's attitudes and a variable which indirectly reflects the norms in a society (i.e., strength of the church in a society).

Divorce attitudes – the data include a direct question on the degree to which people disapprove of divorce, ranging from 1 (divorce is never justifiable) to 10 (divorce is always justifiable). Inspection of the frequency distribution shows some concentration in the middle category (5), which suggests that 5 was considered neutral by respondents. I therefore break down the answers in two: people who are neutral or positive about divorce (67%) and persons who are negative (i.e., score below 5, 33%).

Church attendance – the strength of the church is a more indirect measure of norms against divorce. Churches are strong supporters of the institution of marriage and are generally opposed to divorce. Moreover, persons who attend church are more likely to choose marriage over cohabitation and they are less likely to divorce. Hence, it can be argued that the strength of the church in a society is an alternative measure of the degree to which that society accepts divorce. It was measured as the proportion of people in a country who attend church at least monthly.

Familialism – there were no good attitude items in the EVS/WVS which would be suitable for measuring familialism. I therefore use a simple behavioral indicator which is closely related to familialism: the percentage of unmarried adults (aged 18-50) who live with their parents. This varies from a low of about 20% in individualistic countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark, to more than 70% in familialistic countries such as Mexico, Italy, and Spain.

All analyses control for a main effect of economic development, using the GDP per capita, expressed in US dollars (in 1995). All contextual variables are standardized to facilitate the interpretation of both the main effects and the interaction effects. The macro level indicators are presented in Table 2 for each country.

Results

Aggregate level analyses

Before we examine the regression results, we look at the correlations among macro-level indicators (Table 3). We focus first on the relationship between the divorce rate and the other indicators (Figure 1a and 1b). We see in these figures that the divorce rate is negatively correlated with church attendance (r = -.52), which is in line with theory and with other macro-level research (Kalmijn 2007). The divorce rate is also correlated with the disapproval score (r = -.28), but this link is surprisingly weak. Figure 1a shows that there are several countries with negative attitudes toward divorce despite high rates of divorce. Examples are Lithuania, Venezuela, and El Salvador. There are also tolerant countries with low divorce rates, such as Greece and Slovenia. We further observe that familialism and disapproval of divorce are highly correlated (r = .64). Familialistic countries such as Poland, Italy, Portugal, Mexico, and Chile strongly disapprove of divorce, whereas individualistic countries such as Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, and New Zealand are also very tolerant of divorce.[2]

[2] The disapproval score is very highly correlated with economic development: the correlation with GDP is r = .72. We have no hypothesis about economic development, but if we had one, it would have been difficult to test it in the present context.

We now turn to the differences in well-being between the married and the divorced at the macro-level. Table 2 gives descriptive results. On average, the divorced are 12 percentage points lower in well-being than the married. Differences between countries are considerable, varying from a low of 7 points in Lithuania, to a high of 18 points in Australia. Are these differences related to the macro-level indicators?

Figure 2 shows the association with the disapproval score. The relationship is relatively clear but the direction of the association is contrary to our expectations. In countries that strongly disapprove of divorce, the divorce effect on well-being tends to be weaker. For example, very tolerant countries like the Netherlands and Australia do not have weak divorce effects. The second indicator of norms against divorce shows more positive evidence (Figure 3). In countries with high levels of church attendance, like Ireland, Poland, the United States, and Mexico, the divorce effect tends to be stronger. This is consistent with the sanctioning hypothesis. Figure 4 shows that there is a negative relationship between familialism and the divorce effect, in line with expectations. Figure 5, finally, shows the relationship between the divorce rate and well-being differences. The figure shows that the association is more or less in line with the hypothesis. Higher divorce rates are associated with weaker divorce effects. An important exception is the United States, with a very high rate of divorce but also a considerable divorce effect.

Regression analyses

The results so far were based on aggregate level and bivariate analyses. To test the hypotheses, we now focus on our multilevel regression models in which several macro-level indicators and their interactions are included simultaneously. The results of the multilevel models are presented in Table 4. I start by discussing the individual-level effects.

People with a higher level of education have higher levels of well-being than people with a lower level of education. Age has a negative effect on well-being but the effect is not linear given the significant negative quadratic effect. Graphic inspection shows that well-being declines up to age 55 and then increases again. We should keep in mind that these effects pertain to the married (and a small group of divorced

respondents), hence, they leave out single never married respondents and widowed respondents. The unemployed are 9 points lower in the well-being hierarchy than others (employed, retired, housewives, and students). People who attend church are happier on average than people who do not attend church. Finally, there are small negative effects on well-being of living at home and having children. Most of these effects are in line with what is found in the sociological, psychological, and economic research literatures on well-being and happiness.

The main effects of country level variables are also as expected. The strongest effect is observed for economic development. The richer a country is, the higher the level of well-being in that country. We also find that more religious countries have higher levels of well-being, which is surprising because the individual-level effect of church attendance is taken into account (and also has a positive effect). There are no effects of the divorce rate and attitudes toward divorce on well-being.

The most important effect for the present paper is that of divorce. Table 3 shows that the divorced are 12 points lower in the well-being hierarchy than the married after the effects of the other well-being determinants are controlled for. More importantly, we see that the effect varies significantly across societies. The variance of the divorce effect is 5.2 and this is more than twice its standard error. This shows that the divorce effect varies significantly across societal contexts.

To test the sanctioning hypothesis, Model 2 includes interaction effects of divorce and two macro-level indicators (church attendance and disapproval of divorce). Note that the aggregate variables are standardized so that the main effects always refer to the 'average' country. The interaction of divorce and church attendance is negative and significant. Hence, the higher the level of church attendance in a country, the more negative the divorce effect. A one standard deviation increase in church attendance is associated with a 1.2 increase in the divorce effect, which amounts to 10% of the average divorce effect. Given that the linear specification is correct, the divorce effect would range from 7.3 in the least religious society to 16.1 in the most religious society.[3]

The alternative indicator of norms against divorce—negative attitudes toward divorce—also has an interaction with the divorce effect. The direction of the effect is

[3] The macro-variable ranges from -1.28 to +2.56.

positive, however, which shows that in countries with negative attitudes toward divorce, the divorce effect is smaller (less negative). The interaction is marginally significant, but the direction is clearly opposite of what the hypothesis suggests.

Familialism does not interact with the divorce effect, although the direction is as predicted: a less negative divorce effect in more familialistic countries. Because familialism and disapproval are correlated strongly, it is also useful to enter them separately. The interaction of divorce and familialism is significant and positive when entered without the other interaction and the interaction of divorce and disapproval is also significant and positive when entered without the other.

The interaction of the divorce rate and the divorce effect is also statistically significant. The higher the divorce rate, the less negative the divorce effect. This is in line with the selection hypothesis, but the effect is small. If we go from the lowest to the highest divorce rate, the implied divorce effect increases from 9.8 to 13.9. This is not a very large difference.

To what extent are the differences in the divorce effect explained by the macro-level indicators in the model? When we compare Model 1 and 2, we see that the variance of the divorce effect declines from 5.15 to 3.06. Hence, about 40% of the variance in the divorce effect can be explained by disapproval, religion, familialism, and the divorce rate at the macro-level.

Conclusion

The divorced have a substantially lower level of well-being than the married, even after controlling for basic social and demographic determinants of well-being. More importantly, the divorce effects is negative in every country but its *magnitude* varies significantly across countries. Three hypotheses were examined: the sanctioning hypothesis, the support hypothesis and the selection hypothesis.

We find positive evidence for the notion that the divorce effect is stronger when the divorce threshold is high (selectivity hypothesis). The effect is rather small, however. We find contradictory evidence for the sanctioning hypothesis. The divorce effect is stronger in more religious countries which is in line with expectations since norms

against divorce are stronger in more religious countries. However, we also find that the divorce effect is *weaker* in countries where people themselves are more intolerant of divorce. This is contrary to what we expected. Finally, we find positive but somewhat weak evidence for the support hypothesis. The effects of divorce are weaker when the family is more central in a society.

In principle, disapproval and familialism could have opposite effects – in traditional societies, stronger sanctions for divorced persons could be compensated by strong family support. The two measures are highly correlated at the macro-level, however, which makes it difficult to separate these effects. However, when familialism and divorce attitudes are entered one-by-one, what seems to dominate are *positive* effects for divorced persons in more intolerant/familialistic countries. In other words, the negative effect of divorce on well-being is smaller in more traditional societies. This suggests that the support hypothesis is more strongly corroborated than the sanctioning hypothesis. However, the sanctioning hypothesis is also supported indirectly, via church attendance. The four macro-level characteristics were able to explain about 40% of the existing cross-national differences in the divorce effect. New hypotheses are needed to understand the remaining differences.

Data reference

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Table 1.- Means and standard deviations of variables

	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Well-being	50.02	28.81	0	100
Year of survey	5.35	3.97	0	12
WVS (versus EVS)	0.48	0.50	0	1
Lower educated	0.37	0.48	0	1
Secondary educated	0.40	0.49	0	1
Tertiary educated	0.19	0.39	0	1
Education missing	0.04	0.19	0	1
Woman	0.52	0.50	0	1
Age	46.26	14.08	16	97
Unemployed	0.06	0.23	0	1
Monthly+ church attendance	0.33	0.46	0	1
Having children	0.92	0.27	0	1
Living with parents	0.09	0.28	0	1
Divorced	0.11	0.31	0	1
Number of respondents	93513			
Number of countries	44			

Source: EVS/WVS 1990s, own calculations.

Table 2.- Macrolevel indicators and aggregated measures by country

	(1) Well-being	(2) Divorced - married	(3) Disapproval	(4) Church attendance	(5) Familialism	(6) Divorce	(7) GDP
albania	27.9	11.1	0.36	0.32	0.90	2.82	791
australia	68.5	18.1	0.22	0.25	0.26	11.73	21409
austria	67.0	11.4	0.37	0.44	0.50	11.00	29774
belgium	66.3	16.9	0.33	0.32	0.47	10.35	28049
bosnia and herzegovina	41.4	7.3	0.30	0.45	0.75	.	597
brazil	58.2	10.8	0.43	0.60	0.70	3.81	4364
bulgaria	30.4	11.8	0.40	0.16	0.74	5.48	1580
belarus	27.6	9.3	0.30	0.12	0.56	20.35	1351
canada	66.2	11.6	0.24	0.39	0.35	10.43	19851
chile	58.9	11.9	0.53	0.46	0.72	2.91	5006
croatia	45.0	12.7	0.31	0.43	0.75	4.18	4029
czech republic	48.4	11.8	0.23	0.12	0.58	12.42	5349
denmark	72.4	13.4	0.20	0.11	0.23	12.69	34811
el salvador	71.7	10.6	0.62	0.69	0.73	11.32	1676
estonia	35.4	12.6	0.26	0.10	0.48	18.90	3013
finland	63.1	12.3	0.18	0.12	0.20	11.26	25630
france	58.7	13.5	0.19	0.14	0.37	9.19	26261
germany	54.7	13.4	0.27	0.24	0.34	6.40	30891
greece	51.3	13.3	0.21	0.34	0.66	3.30	11275
hungary	42.6	11.4	0.38	0.20	0.60	10.83	4357
ireland	71.8	19.3	0.48	0.81	0.67	0.00	18595
italy	56.4	14.1	0.34	0.52	0.80	2.38	19652
latvia	32.6	7.6	0.30	0.14	0.47	14.45	1958
lithuania	33.4	6.8	0.45	0.30	0.59	13.84	1762
mexico	61.3	13.8	0.48	0.67	0.72	3.55	3093
republic of moldova	23.6	5.3	0.50	0.26	0.59	11.54	407
netherlands	70.2	16.5	0.20	0.28	0.18	8.74	27981
new zealand	66.1	12.9	0.17	0.22	0.24	14.14	16754
norway	64.7	12.6	0.27	0.13	0.36	11.80	33946
poland	46.4	17.2	0.46	0.78	0.67	5.19	3521
portugal	53.3	10.9	0.36	0.50	0.70	5.87	11262
romania	32.3	13.0	0.43	0.39	0.74	5.56	1564
russian federation	29.6	9.3	0.31	0.08	0.49	17.94	2694
slovakia	41.5	14.1	0.32	0.45	0.73	7.18	3617
slovenia	46.0	7.4	0.24	0.33	0.74	4.72	10193
spain	55.7	11.2	0.29	0.38	0.75	3.54	14949
sweden	68.7	13.7	0.14	0.10	0.32	12.74	28395
switzerland	69.5	13.3	0.23	0.28	0.40	7.23	44952
ukraine	24.6	7.3	0.36	0.18	0.60	15.87	943
great britain	63.8	12.5	0.24	0.22	0.29	12.76	19658
united states	67.9	15.1	0.31	0.59	0.32	19.72	27234
uruguay	56.0	14.5	0.28	0.23	0.62	11.43	5996
venezuela	66.0	7.5	0.44	0.49	0.73	10.12	3391
serbia and montenegro	40.1	17.4	0.30	0.17	0.79	4.61	2613

(1) Average level of well-being of the married and the divorced (see text).

(2) Difference in well-being between married and divorced.

(3) Percentage thinking divorce is unjustifiable (all ages and marital status categories)

(4) Percentage attending church at least monthly (all ages and marital status categories)

(5) Percentage of unmarried adults 18-50 who are living with parents.

(6) Number of divorces per 1000 married women in 1990 and 2000 (averaged).

(7) GDP per capita in US dollars.

Table 3.- Correlations between macrolevel indicators (N = 44)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) Well-being	1					
(2) Disapproval score	-.213	1				
(3) Church attendance	.305	.649	1			
(4) Familialism	-.462	.640	.455	1		
(5) Net divorce rate	-.126	-.282	-.523	-.564	1	
(6) GDP per capita	.721	-.550	-.135	-.695	.046	1

Table 4.- Multilevel regression models of wellbeing on characteristics of individuals and countries with random intercepts and random divorce effects

	Model 1	Model 2
Year of survey	0.36 (.00)	0.36 (.00)
WVS versus EVS	-1.64 (.00)	-1.63 (.00)
Middle level education	2.10 (.00)	2.10 (.00)
Higher level education	4.78 (.00)	4.77 (.00)
Education missing	3.10 (.00)	3.10 (.00)
Women	0.01 (.97)	0.00 (.99)
Age (centered)	-0.13 (.00)	-0.13 (.00)
Age centered squared	0.01 (.00)	0.01 (.00)
Unemployed	-8.90 (.00)	-8.89 (.00)
Monthly church attendance	3.03 (.00)	3.02 (.00)
Having children	-0.76 (.01)	-0.76 (.01)
Living with parents	-0.37 (.20)	-0.39 (.18)
Divorced versus married	-11.73 (.00)	-11.73 (.00)
Country: disapproval	-0.84 (.68)	-0.88 (.66)
Country: religion	7.39 (.00)	7.43 (.00)
Country: familialism	-5.29 (.06)	-5.34 (.06)
Country: divorce rate	-1.28 (.57)	-1.33 (.56)
Country: GDP	7.76 (.00)	7.75 (.00)
Divorce x disapproval		1.09 (.08)
Divorce x religion		-1.15 (.05)
Divorce x familialism		0.77 (.19)
Divorce x divorce rate		1.07 (.05)
Intercept	48.49 (.00)	48.49 (.00)
Random effects		
Variance of divorce effect	5.15 *	3.06 *
Variance of intercept	77.79 *	77.62 *
Number of respondents	93513	93513
Number of countries	44	44

Source: EVS/WVS 1990s, own calculations.
Note: All country-level variables are standardized.
* More than twice the standard error.

Figure 1a.- The relationship between the divorce rate and disapproval of divorce

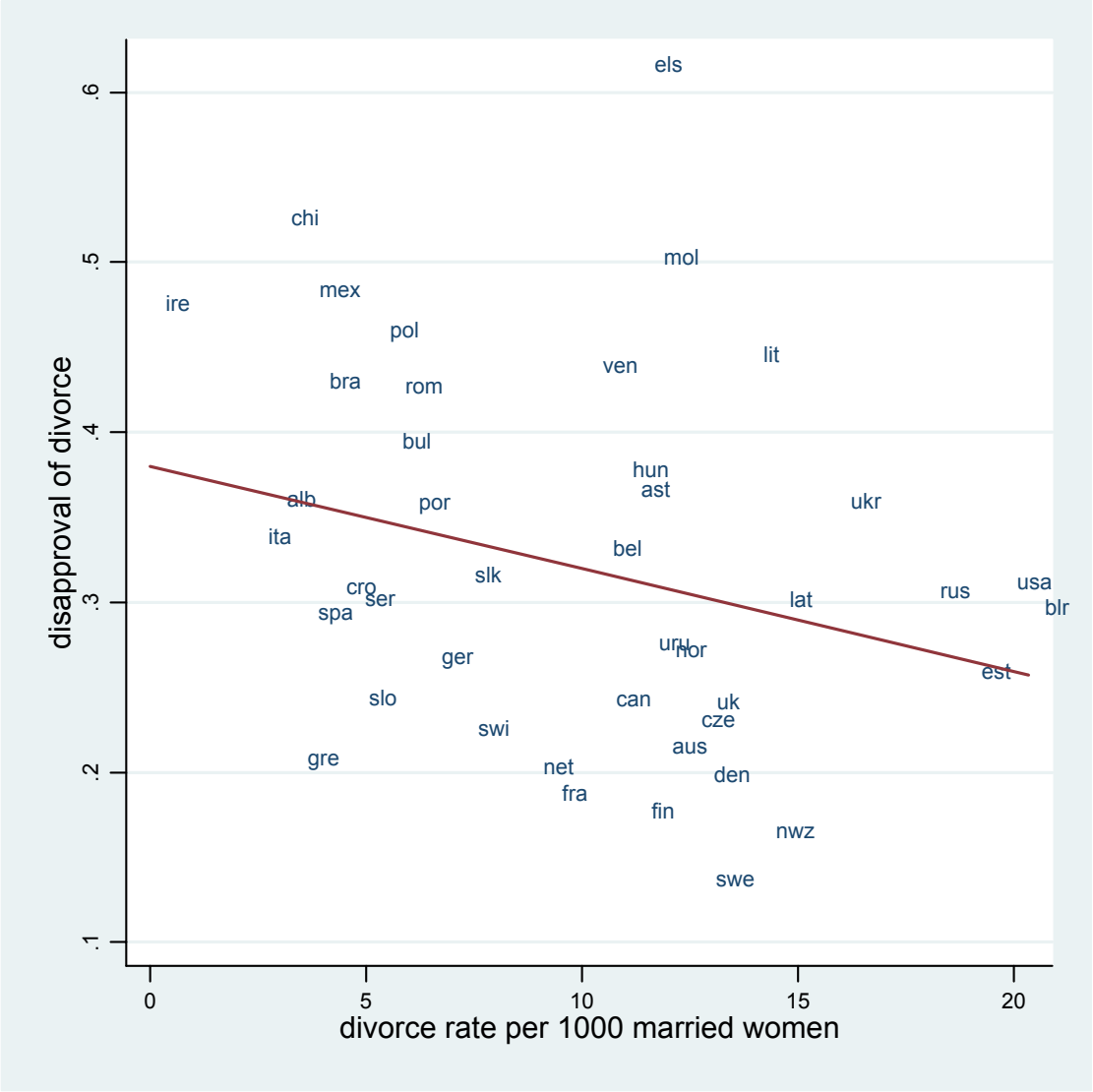

Figure 1b.- The relationship between the divorce rate and church attendance

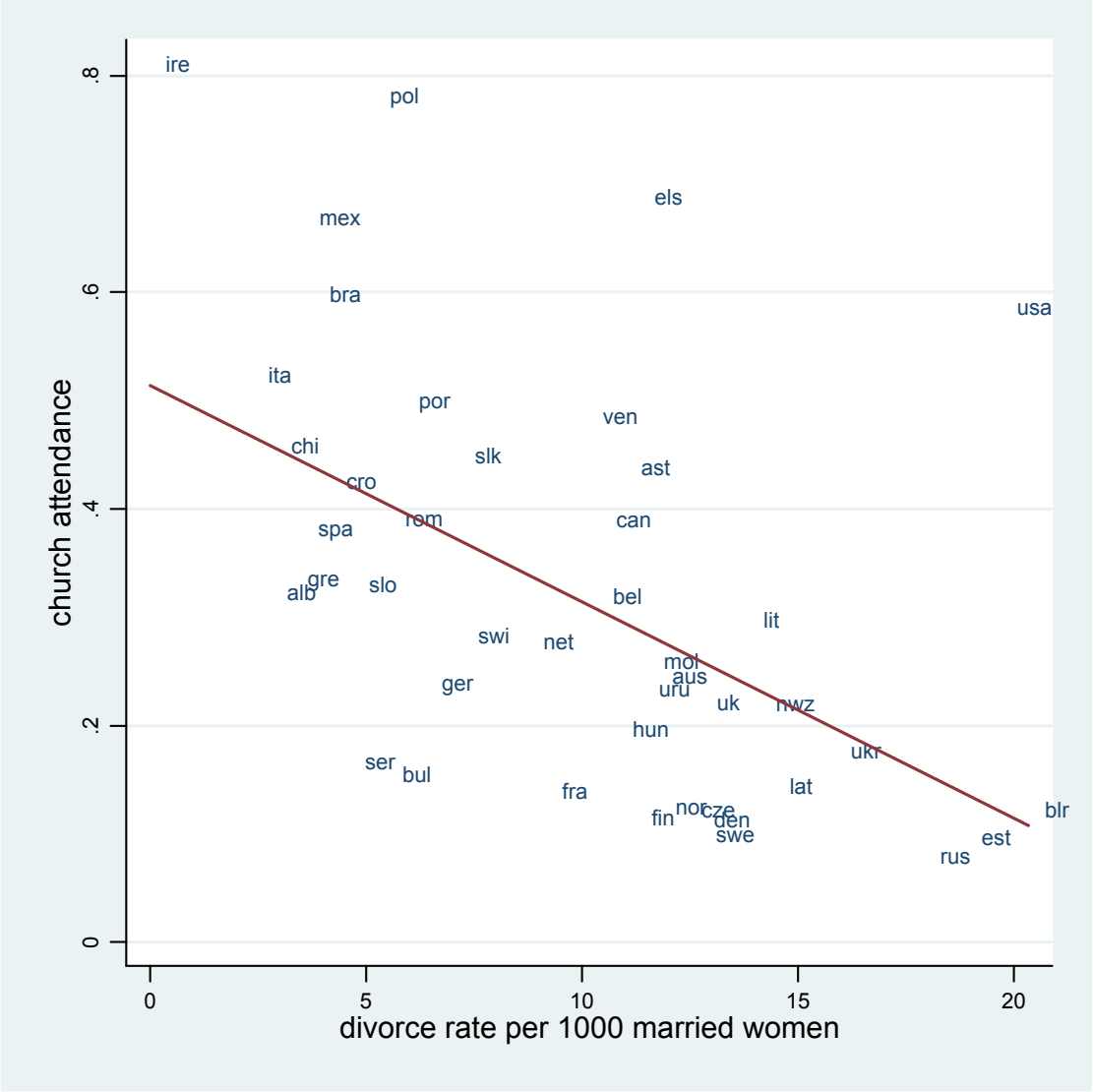

Figure 1c.- The relationship between the divorce rate and familialism

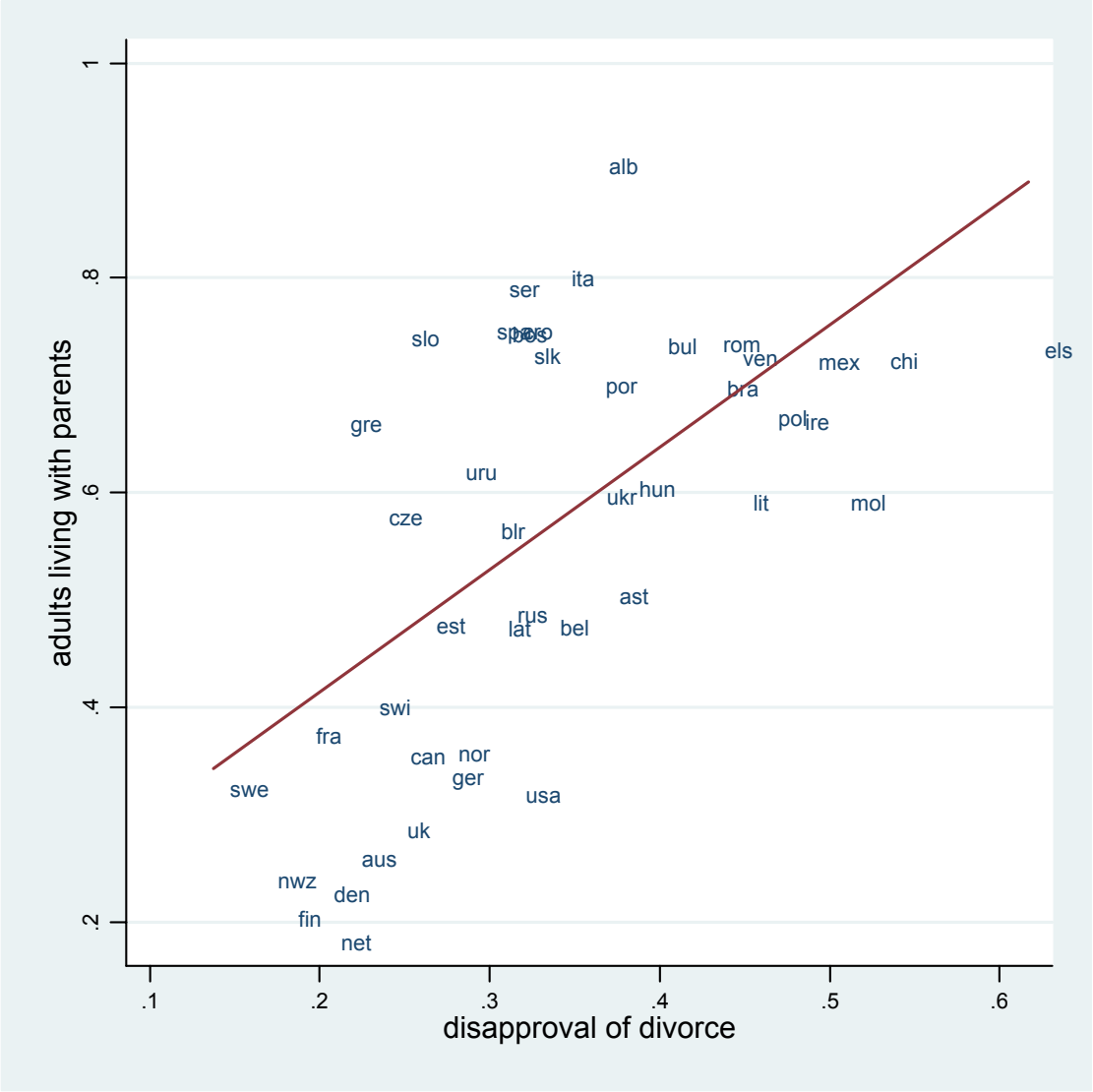

Figure 2.- The divorce effect on well-being and disapproval of divorce in 44 countries

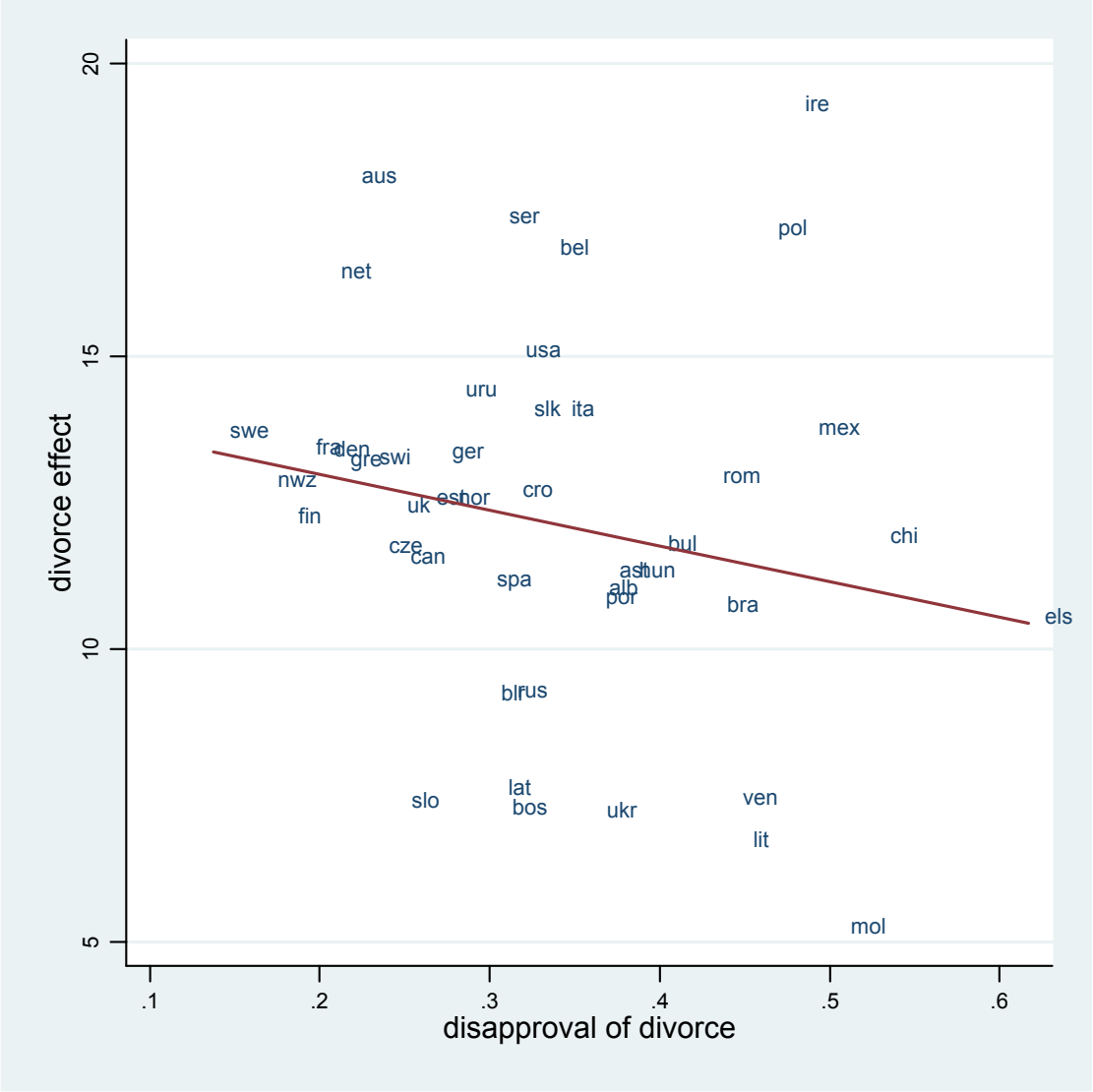

Figure 3.- The divorce effect on well-being and church attendance in 44 countries

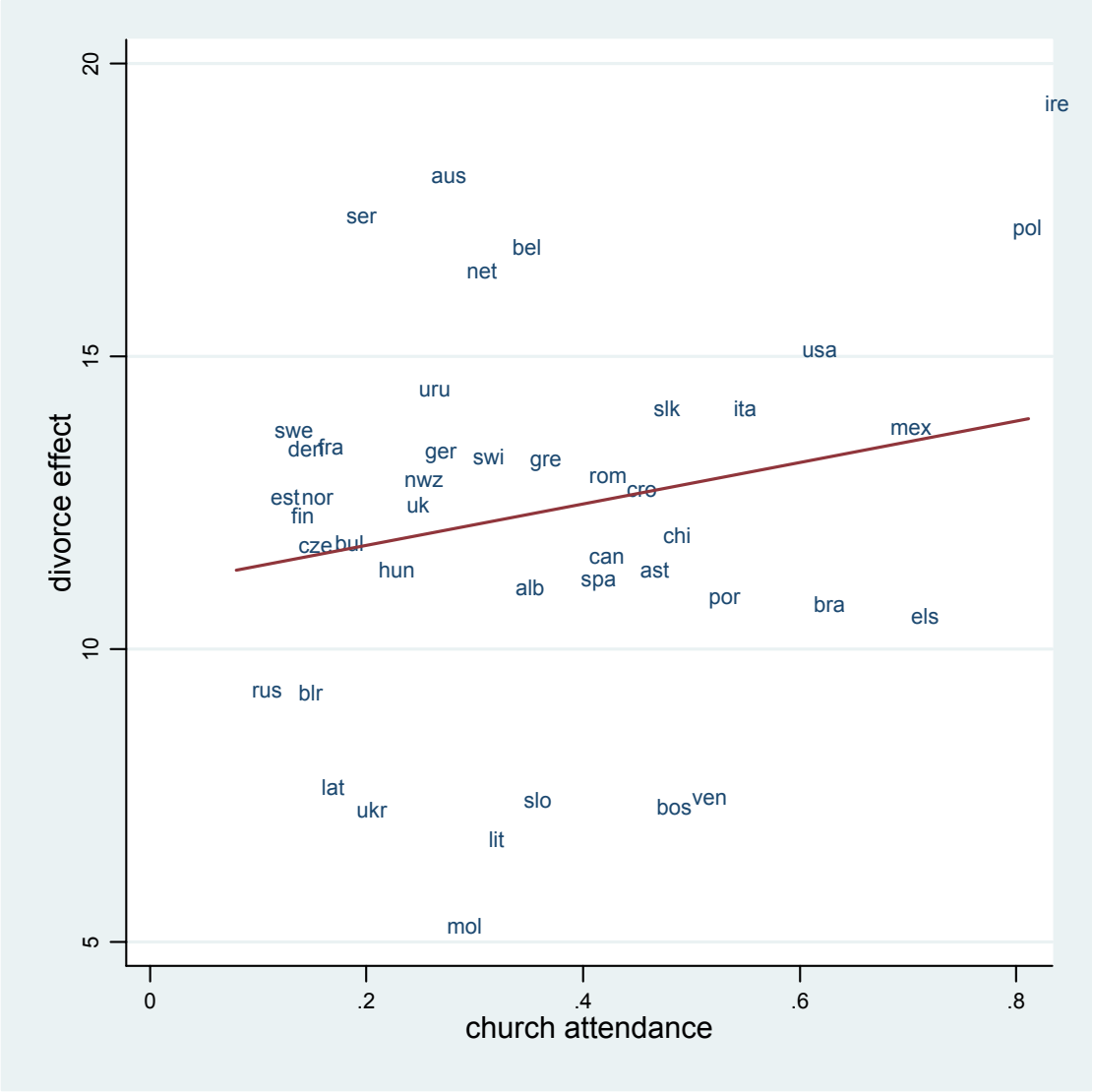

Figure 4.- The divorce effect on well-being and familialism in 44 countries

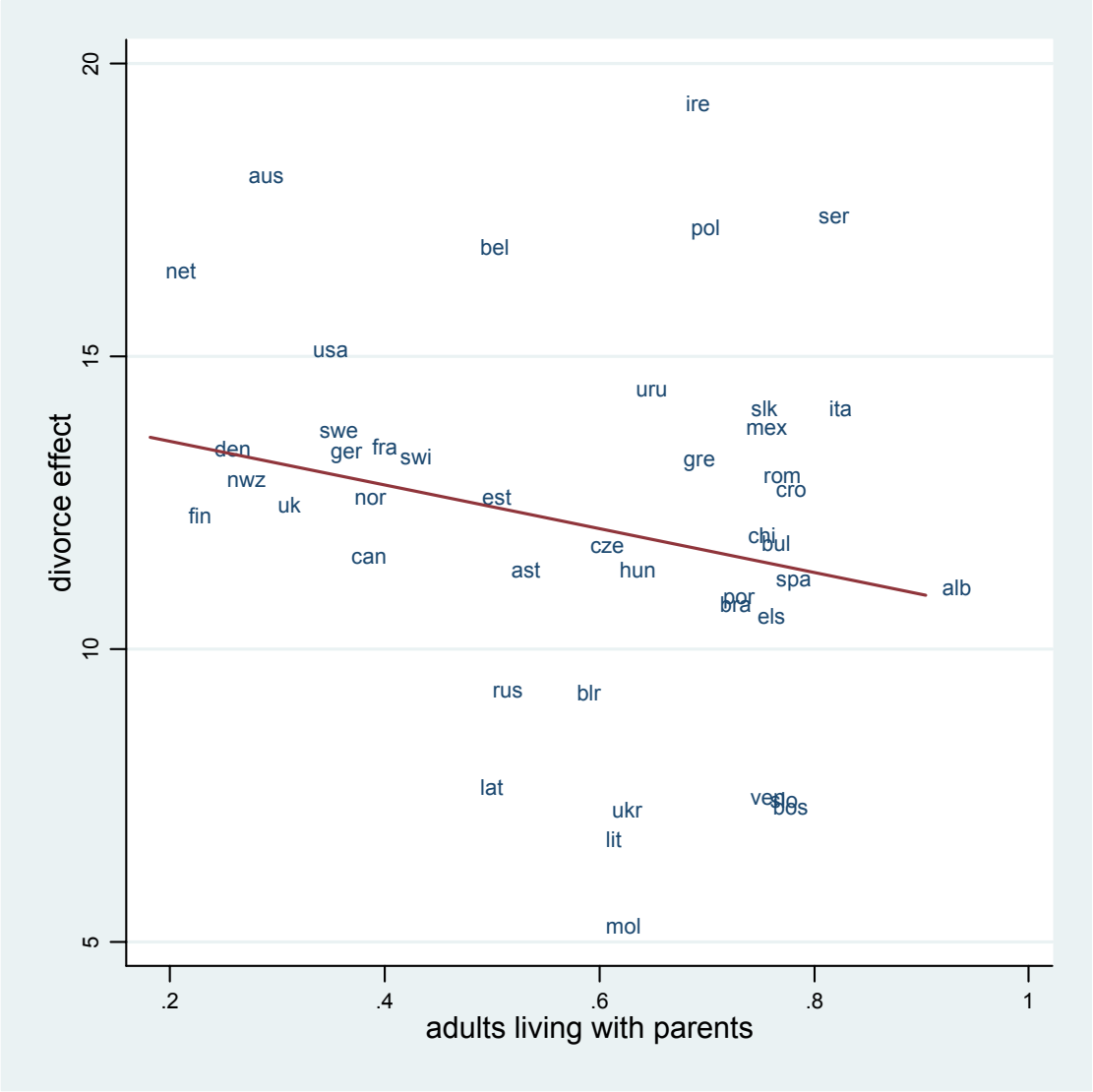

Figure 5.- The divorce effect on well-being and the divorce rate in 44 countries