Custody Form and Children’s Sleeping Habits

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Background

Figure 3: Percent of children born to cohabiting or married parents who will experience parents’ separation by 3, 6, 9 and 15 years after birth

Background cont.

Diagram 4.1
Växelvis boende bland barn med särlevande föräldrar. Procent
Shared residence among children with parents living apart. Percent

Procent


Källa: SCB:s Undersökningarna av levnadsförhållanden (ULF/SILC) för samtliga år utom 2012/13 som är hämtat från föreliggande undersökning.

Source: Statistics Sweden, Demographic Reports 2014:4
Shared physical custody

- Increasing number of studies

- Usually associated with better child outcomes compared to single parent families (Nielsen 2013; 2014; 2018)

- Correlations, no causal analyses
Children’s sleep habits

- Children’s sleep habits have changed since 1980’s
  - Later bed times
  - Sleep less than recommended time
  - More insomnia
  - Differences between school nights and weekends

Increased risk for mental and somatic problems
Custody and sleep habits

- Children alternating between homes may live under two very different parenting regimes and rule sets
  - May lead to inconsistencies in routines like bedtimes

- Living with one parent associated with worse psychological outcomes but may be more stable when it comes to routines

- May be due to selection
Data

- Health Behaviours of School-aged Children (HBSC)
  - WHO survey in ~40 countries every 4 years
  - Using Swedish national sample from 2013/14
  - Random sample of schools and classes within schools
  - Response rate: 69%
  - n: 7867
Dependent variables

- Getting recommended amount of sleep
  - 9 hours for 11 & 13-year olds and 8 hours for 15-year olds. Dichotomous variable.

- Bedtime
  - Range 21pm to ≥23.30pm

- Insomnia/Sleep onset problems.
  - Problems falling asleep at night more than twice per week. Dichotomous variable.
Custody type

- Living with both parents in same household
- Living with mother only
- Living with father only
- Regular 50/50 shared custody
- Regularly shared non-equal custody
- Low frequency irregularly shared custody
Controls

- Child’s sex
- School grade
- Any siblings
- Stepfamily
- Perceived family affluence
  - Index consisting of: own room, family car, going on vacation, number of computers in home
Methods

- OLS regression for *bedtime*

- Logistic regression for *enough sleep* and *insomnia*. Presented as average marginal effects.

- Sampling weights
Results
# Bedtime

## OLS regression: Children’s bedtime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Custody type</th>
<th>All children</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two parents</td>
<td>Reference category</td>
<td>Reference category</td>
<td>Reference category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>10 minutes later bedtime</td>
<td>10.5 minutes later bedtime</td>
<td>10 minutes later bedtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50 shared</td>
<td>7.5 minutes later bedtime</td>
<td>Not stat. sign. diff.</td>
<td>8 minutes later bedtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular sharing</td>
<td>17 minutes later bedtime</td>
<td>18 minutes later bedtime</td>
<td>14 minutes later bedtime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model also controls for: sex, age, siblings, stepfamily, perceived family affluence

Source: Swedish Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) 2013/14
## Getting enough sleep

### Average marginal effect on getting recommended sleep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Custody type</th>
<th>Reference category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two parent family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>Not statistically significant diff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50 shared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular non-equal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular sharing</td>
<td>7% lower probability to get enough sleep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model also controls for: sex, age, siblings, stepfamily, perceived family affluence

Source: Swedish Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) 2013/14
# Sleep onset problems

Average marginal effect on sleep onset problems by custody type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Custody type</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two parent family</td>
<td>Reference category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>Not statistically significant diff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father only</td>
<td>Not statistically significant diff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50 shared</td>
<td>5% higher probability of sleep onset problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular non-equal</td>
<td>11% higher probability of sleep onset problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular sharing</td>
<td>11% higher probability of sleep onset problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model also controls for: sex, age, siblings, stepfamily, perceived family affluence

Source: Swedish Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) 2013/14
Conclusions

• Negative sleep behaviors associated with type of custody

• Irregular sharing associated with all three outcomes

• Shared custody not better than living in one-parent household

• Small effects
THANK YOU!

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