Men’s education and post-divorce roles of fatherhood
Repartnering strategies as the missing link

Christine Schnor,
Sofie Vanassche & Jan Van Bavel
Divorced men’s father roles at home

Biological father role

- man’s child from previous relation
- Child with new partner
Divorced men’s father roles at home

**Biological father role**

- **man’s child from previous relation**

**Stepfather role**

- **Female partner’s child from previous relation**

- **Child with new partner**
Motivation

**Divorced men: Stepfathers or biological fathers?**

- Education often works as divider of life course patterns
- Men are assigned the role of economic provider,
  but whether they fullfill this role at home can depend on
  (1) their *capacity* (educational background)
  (2) their *willingness* to contribute (biological link to family)
Motivation

Divorced men: Stepfathers or biological fathers?

• Education often works as divider of life course patterns
• Men are assigned the role of economic provider, but whether they fulfill this role at home can depend on
  (1) their capacity (educational background)
  (2) their willingness to contribute (biological link to family)

Research question

Are there education-specific roles of fatherhood following a divorce?
Background

Men’s educational level is positively related
• to their attractiveness on the (re)partner market
• to their reproductive outcome
Background

Men’s educational level is positively related
• to their attractiveness on the (re)partner market
• to their reproductive outcome

Prior studies show that highly educated divorced men
• more often coreside with their children
• less often repartner a mother
• are as likely to have a child with the new partner as less educated men (once repartnered)
Background

Men’s educational level is positively related
• to their attractiveness on the (re)partner market
• to their reproductive outcome

Prior studies show that highly educated divorced men
• more often coreside with their children
• less often repartner a mother
• are as likely to have a child with the new partner as less educated men (once repartnered)

Hypothesis
• More educated men are more often in the role of a biological father
• Less educated men are more often in the role of a stepfather
Data & Methods

Data
“Divorce in Flanders” project (2009-2010)
Dutch-speaking Belgian couples
1/3 intact marriages, 2/3 divorced
1st marriage cohorts 1971-2008

Sample description
- N=1,111 divorced men, followed in first 7 years after divorce
- no educational gradient in first-marriage biological fatherhood (69% fathers) and mean age at divorce (34 years)

Method
- Chronogram (state-distribution plots)
- Multinominal logit and probit models, predictive margins
Men’s partnership and family trajectories

- descriptive results -
Men’s partnership and family trajectories

Descriptive results: Chronogram (state-distribution plot)

Low educated men (N=324)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘stepmother family’</td>
<td>‘stepmother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘stepfather family’</td>
<td>‘stepfather family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘stepparents family’</td>
<td>‘stepparents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time since marital dissolution (months)
Descriptive results: Chronogram (state-distribution plot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child</th>
<th>Common child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘stepfather family’</td>
<td>‘stepfather family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘stepmother family’</td>
<td>‘stepmother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘stepparents family’</td>
<td>‘stepparents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education-specific roles of post-divorce fatherhood

- multivariate results -
Residential fatherhood roles in the first 7 years following first marriage dissolution

Predicted margins, based on results from multinomial logit model; all shown results significant on p<0.05 or p<0.01 level; other control covariates: man’s age at marital dissolution, year of divorce.
Men’s education and repartnering

- multivariate results -
Men’s education and repartnering in the first 7 years following first marriage dissolution

PREDICTED MARGINS

Repartnering a childless woman

Figures: Predicted margins, based on results from multinomial logit model all shown results significant on p<0.05 or p<0.01 level; other control covariates: man’s age at marital dissolution, number and age of children from first marriage, year of divorce
Men’s education and repartnering in the first 7 years following first marriage dissolution

PREDICTED MARGINS

Remain unpartnered

Repartnering a childless woman

Repartnering a mother

Figures: Predicted margins, based on results from multinomial logit model all shown results significant on p<0.05 or p<0.01 level; other control covariates: man’s age at marital dissolution, number and age of children from first marriage, year of divorce.
Men’s education and new family formation

- multivariate results -
Men’s education and new family formation

PREDICTED MARGINS
Have a common child with new partner

- repartnered with childless woman
- repartnered with mother = man is stepfather

Coeff. ‘man has residential children’ was not significant.

Tables: Predicted margins, based on results from multinomial logit model all shown results significant on p<0.05 or p<0.01 level; other control covariates: man’s and woman’s age at union formation, residential children, year of divorce
Conclusion

Men’s education is linked to their post-divorce roles of fatherhood

• *Highly educated men* are more likely to have biological links to the children they live with.
• *Less educated* are more likely to be in the role of a stepfather.
Conclusion

Men’s education is linked to their post-divorce roles of fatherhood

• *Highly educated men* are more likely to have biological links to the children they live with.

• *Less educated* are more likely to be in the role of a stepfather.

Reason: men’s repartnering strategies differ by their education.

*Highly educated men* tend more to live with their children from first marriage, to repartner with childless women and to father children in this union.
Conclusion

Men’s education is linked to their post-divorce roles of fatherhood

- *Highly educated men* are more likely to have biological links to the children they live with.
- *Less educated* are more likely to be in the role of a stepfather.

Reason: men’s repartnering strategies differ by their education.

*Highly educated men* tend more to live with their children from first marriage, to repartner with childless women and to father children in this union.

Potential consequence: Reproduction of social inequality

Low educated men are less likely to act as the economic provider in the family (lower capacity and willingness)
The study has been funded by the Flemish agency for Innovation by Science and Technology (IWT grant agreement no. 080039 for the Divorce in Flanders project) and the European Research Council (ERC grant agreement no. 312290 for the GENDERBALL project).

Thanks for your attention!

Question or comments?
Christine.Schnor@soc.kuleuven.be
Repartnering in the first 7 years following first marriage dissolution

Figures: Predicted margins, based on results from multinomial logit model all shown results significant on p<0.05 or p<0.01 level; other control covariates: man’s age at marital dissolution, number and age of children from first marriage, year of divorce.
Multivariate findings

Residential fatherhood roles
in the first 7 years following first marriage dissolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>low</th>
<th>medium</th>
<th>high</th>
<th>Educational gradient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childless</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-residential father</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential biological father</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential bio. &amp; stepfather</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table*: Predicted margins, based on results from multinomial logit model; all shown results significant on p<0.05 or p<0.01 level; other control covariates: man’s age at marital dissolution, year of divorce
Partnership and family trajectories by divorced men’s education
**Men’s partnership and family trajectories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Men’s partnership and family trajectories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Men’s partnership and family trajectories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Men’s partnership and family trajectories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Men’s partnership and family trajectories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Men’s partnership and family trajectories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Men’s partnership and family trajectories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Men’s partnership and family trajectories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child with new partner</th>
<th>Common child with new partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; no res father role’</td>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; res father’</td>
<td>‘couple’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'couple' includes 'nuclear family', 'step-father family & child', 'step-mother family & child', 'step-parents family & child'.
Descriptive results

Partnership and family trajectories

Medium educated men (N=475)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No common child</th>
<th>Common child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; father’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time since marital dissolution (months)
Descriptive results

Partnership and family trajectories

Highly educated men (N=314)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No common child</th>
<th>Common child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; childless’</td>
<td>/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘single &amp; father’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘couple’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time since marital dissolution (months)
### Multivariate findings I

#### Residential fatherhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential fatherhood</th>
<th>‘single &amp; childless’</th>
<th>‘couple’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential biological father</td>
<td>‘single &amp; father’</td>
<td>‘nuclear family’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘step-mother family’</td>
<td>‘step-mother family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential stepfather</td>
<td>‘step-father family’</td>
<td>‘Step-father family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential biological and stepfather</td>
<td>‘step-parents family’</td>
<td>‘Step-parents family &amp; child’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>