

The effects of contested divorce on adolescent's and parent's resilience

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to investigate self and parent rated resilience in adolescence after contested divorce.

Methods: Using resilience questionnaire contains 10 items and its purpose is to measure the ability of emotional resistance. Inclusion criterion were: children had to be 10- 18 years old and previously participate in the investigation of a forensic expert hence the critic divorce

(contested divorce group). Control group: children whose parents are still together. The experimental group contained 22 girls and 17 boys, the control group 21 girls and 17 boys. The sexes' distribution between the two groups was not significantly different.

Results : Those adolescents who went through contested divorce see their own resilience significantly weaker than those who live in a complete family ($d(56,1) = -4,738$, $p=0,0000^{***}$). Mothers who had contested divorce also see their child's resilience weaker than mothers who did not ($d(61,4) = -3,217$, $p=0,0021^{**}$). The resilience of the mothers shows significant difference between the two groups. Our tests show significant difference between those fathers' resilience who went through contested divorce and those who did not.

Conclusions: For psychologists in clinical practice the importance of our results is that it is vital to strengthen adolescents' self-confidence, sense of competence, if their parents went through a contested divorce, because these factors improve resilience.

Introduction

Definition of resilience

The psychological term resilience, in other words the capability of resistance, represents those characteristics of our personality that help adaptive coping during stressful and dangerous times. It also plays a part in recovering and accommodating after such events. (Ahern, Kiehl, Sole, Byers, 2006; Black and Lobo, 2008).

Adolescent's resilience

Ahern (2006) reviewed 22 studies, attempting to create an accurate definition of adolescent's resilience. In his assessment he says that many factors contribute to adolescent's resilience – some of them are self-efficacy, coping, flexibility, self-evaluation, competence, and behaviour-control. Adolescent's resilience (also) evolve through early development, which means that those who bond safely with their parents during childhood are more likely to have a strong ability of resistance. This was confirmed by Blomgren, Shvan and Rönnlund (2016), who analysed Swedish adolescent's bonding and coping patterns from the perspective of time.

The researchers' results point out that adolescent's bonding patterns are coherent with their adaptive or maladaptive coping mechanisms during hard times in their past. It affects their judgement about their present life and future coping abilities.

Based on Haase et al.' (1999, cited by Ahern, 2006) adolescent resilience model the positive or negative process of a crisis situation will depend on resilience and life quality in three ways: personal characteristics, quality of family support and social network. Another model (Rew and Horner, 2003, cited by Ahern, 2006) suggests that during adolescence personal and sociocultural factors could be both protective and risk factors. The connection between them is the resilience created by the adolescent and the positive or negative outcome depends on its quality. Hampel and Peterman (2006) researched the correlation between the detection of stress, coping and psychological adjustment, among 286 adolescents, aged between 10-14. Using questionnaires they found that the coping mechanisms of teenagers are most likely to be maladaptive, which relates to highly experienced stress, low resilience, and the evolution of accommodating issues.

The worst coping strategy is withdrawing, resigning and denying. These prompt adolescents to develop externalisation and internalisation issues, in contrast with active, problem focused coping (Liu et al., 2004, cited by Pikó and Hamvai, 2012). In their Hungarian research, Pikó and Hamvai (2012) explored the coherency between adolescent's coping strategies and their resilience. Coping strategies were examined with Adolescent Coping Scale, stress with Detected Stress Scale, and resilience with Life Orientation test and Satisfaction with Life scale. The examination of 236 adolescent, aged between 12-14, showed that high stress level correlates to maladaptive coping strategies and the absence of resistant skills. Based on this research it can be safely stated that restraining from strategies including avoidance could help strengthen resilience.

Protective factors that help coping with divorce

Chen and George (2005) states that resilience is a key factor in the child's coping ability during stressful times caused by divorce, accommodating to the new situation, and it also affects their involvement in acting out, internalisation issues and behavioural problems. Just like Atwool (2006) they also see the child's characteristics as a holistic unity, which cannot be detached from the social and familial support that plays a huge role in resilience. The conflict between the parents is one component that the child has to struggle with. The parents' role is

coming to an agreement and lowering their conflict to a minimal level. Their emotional support is vital to the child's adaptive coping (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 1999; Chen and George, 2005).

It can especially be protective if both child and parents have relationships with further relatives and maintain a widespread social network (Chen and George, 2005). Questionnaires confirm that during divorce the most energizing factors are social support, religiousness, financial safety and open communication.

For teenagers the family's resilience is the most efficient protector: close relationships, efficient communication and problem solving actions instead of avoidance (Greef and Van der Merwe, 2003).

The change in the family's financial situation is a serious risk factor during a divorce, because adapting to that is difficult for a child. Moreover, this subject is one of the main parts of an argument next to right of custody of the child. Researchers suggest the parents cooperatively arrange financial matters, create their new lifestyle similar to each other's, by this helping their child to accommodate to this unusual situation (Chen and George, 2005). Based on researches open and honest communication is essential for coping with divorce (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan; Greef and Van der Merwe, 2013). In their research Frisby, Booth-Batterfield, Dillow, Martin and Weber (2012) looked for an answer to the question: what role does communication play in the parent's resilience? From their results it becomes clear that those divorced parents who openly communicated during crisis, expressed their feelings and had an overall optimistic attitude, experienced divorce more positively and maintained a preferable relationship after. Even though divorce was a high risk factor in these situations as well, resilient parents were probably more competent in helping their children during divorce's hard times.

In the end, Chen and George (2005) mention the importance of safe bonding. Bonding, as personality shaping, greatly contributes to how children cope with stressful events.

Overall it can be stated that for both parent and child similar factors can be protectors during trauma and contested divorce.

Divorce is a difficult, stressful event, which ends with the family's break-up, conflict between parents and basically challenges the child (Ayoub, Deutsch, Maraganore, 1999; Ama-

to, 2001), whose coping is affected by their parent's resilience (Frisby, Booth-Batterfield, Dillow, Martin, Weber, 2012), their own ability of resistance and bonding.

We phrased the aims of our research based on these particular facts.

Hipotesys

1. The resilience of adolescents whose parents had a contested divorce is lower than those's who live in a complete family
2. Those parents who went through contested divorce have lower resilience than those who still live with their partner.
3. The adolescents judge their resilience differently than their parents.
4. Parental resilience influences the judgement of own resilience.

Participians

The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of University of Karoli Gaspar, Hungary. The parents of each child and children older than 14 years included into this study provided written informed consent after being informed of the nature of the study. Children under 14 years received both written and oral information about the project.

Study participants were recruited from Vecsés City Local Government Department of Children and Family Services, Vecsés, Hungary. Inclusion criterion were: children had to be 10-18 years old and previously participate in the investigation of a forensic expert hence the critic divorce (critic divorce group). In Hungary the jury will subrogate a forensic expert if during the divorce trial parents do not find agreement. A control population from the same age group was recruited from the local community by word of mouth; For both study groups, the exclusion criterion was having had a diagnosis of mental retardation in the medical history. Additionally, in the control group, the exclusion criterion was any current or previous psychological or psychiatric treatment in the medical history. It was also a criterion that the trial of the divorce ended 1,5 years ago, excluding the possibility that the crisis situation is still ongoing. Controll group: children whose parents are still together.

Measures

Connor-Davidson's Resilience Questionnaire, 10 items version:

This resilience questionnaire contains 10 items and its purpose is to measure the ability of emotional resistance. It is the short version of the original questionnaire which contains 25 items and it was validated in Hungarian by Járαι and his colleagues (2015). Because of its shortness it is simple and does not require much time to fill (Járαι et al, 2015). The questionnaire has statements that can be rated on a scale from 0 to 4, 0 meaning “not true at all” and 4 “almost always true”. The person filling the questionnaire has to characterise themselves through statements such as “I think of myself as a strong person” or “I act on intuition”. In our research we had both parents and children fill the questionnaire. Parents filled two of this questionnaire: in one of them characterising themselves and in the other characterising their children. Children and adolescents characterised only themselves. In every case parents had to fill a *demography datasheet* which gave us information about their children’s sex, age, circumstances of labour, birth and perinatal period, type of the institute that the child goes to, number of siblings and the child’s place in the order, parent’s education and employment, the form of the family and whether there was psychiatric illness and/or suicide in the family.

Results:

Participants:

Overall 79 adolescents and their parents participated in our examination. The experimental group contained 22 girls and 17 boys, the control group 21 girls and 17 boys. The sexes’ distribution between the two groups was not significantly different. The control group’s 40 adolescents’ average age was 12,6 and the variance was 1,5. The experimental group’s participant’s average age was 12,9 and the variance was 1,9. We did not find significant difference between the two groups’ age ($t(74)=0,998$, $p=0,3218$). Based on demography data it can be stated that there is no significant educational difference between the participating parents of the two groups.

Resilience of adolescents who went through contested divorce

Based on our results, those adolescents who went through contested divorce see their own resilience significantly weaker than those who live in a complete family ($d(56,1)=-4,738$, $p=0,0000^{***}$). Mothers who had contested divorce also see their child’s resilience weaker than mothers who did not ($d(61,4)=-3,217$, $p=0,0021^{**}$). There is no significant difference between the fathers of the two groups ($t(77)=-1,333$, $p=0,1865$), based on their judgement those children who went through contested divorce do not have significantly weaker resili-

ence than those who did not. Figure 1. shows the difference between the average scores of adolescents resilience numbers, based on the three judgements:

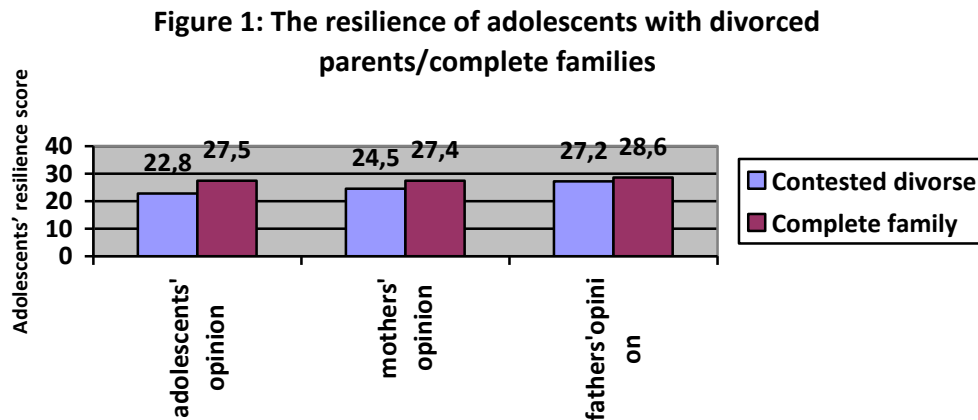


Figure 1.: Average scores of adolescents resilience numbers in the experimental and control group

Parents' resilience in the experimental and control group

Mothers' resilience

The resilience of the mothers shows significant difference between the two groups ($t(77) = -6,559$, $p = 0,0000^{***}$). Mothers who went through contested divorce have weaker resilience than those who live in marriage.

Fathers' resilience

Our tests show significant difference between those fathers' resilience who went through contested divorce and those who did not ($t(77) = -8,153$, $p = 0,0000^{***}$).

Figure 2 below shows the average scores that reveal significant difference, in both cases:

Figure 2: The resilience of parents with contested divorce/complete families

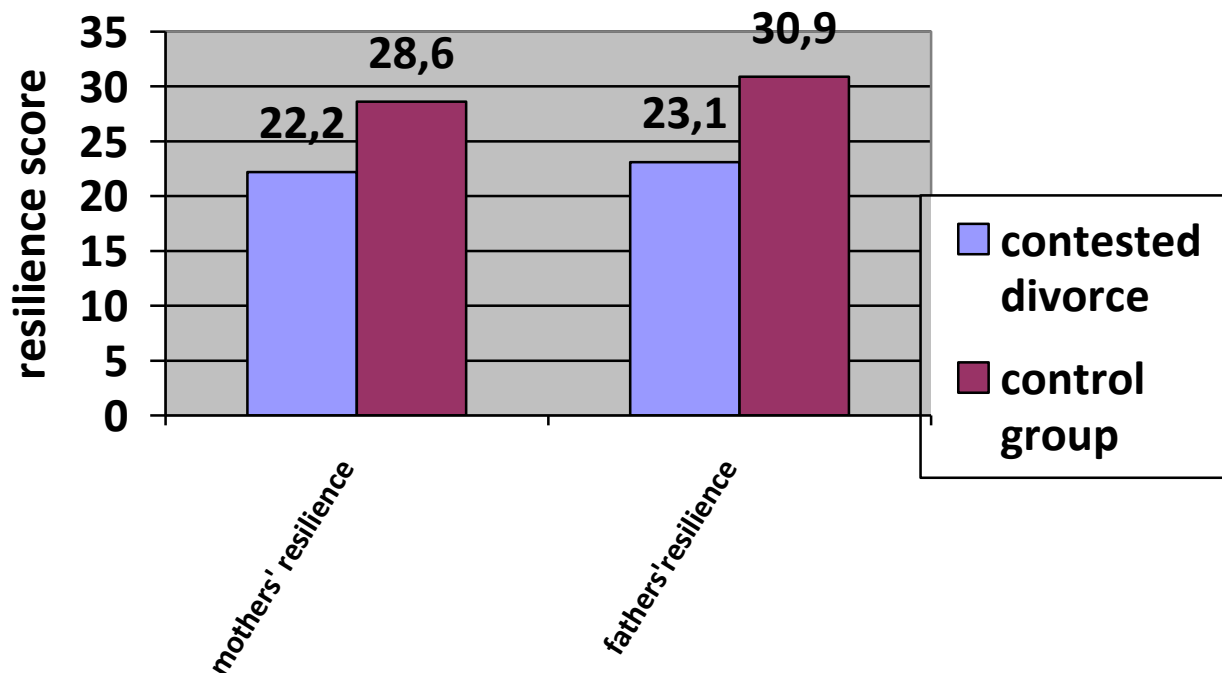


Figure 2.: Average scores of mothers and fathers based on resilience in the experimental and control groups

This means that parents who went through contested divorce (both mother and father) have significantly lower resilience than those parents who still live in marriage.

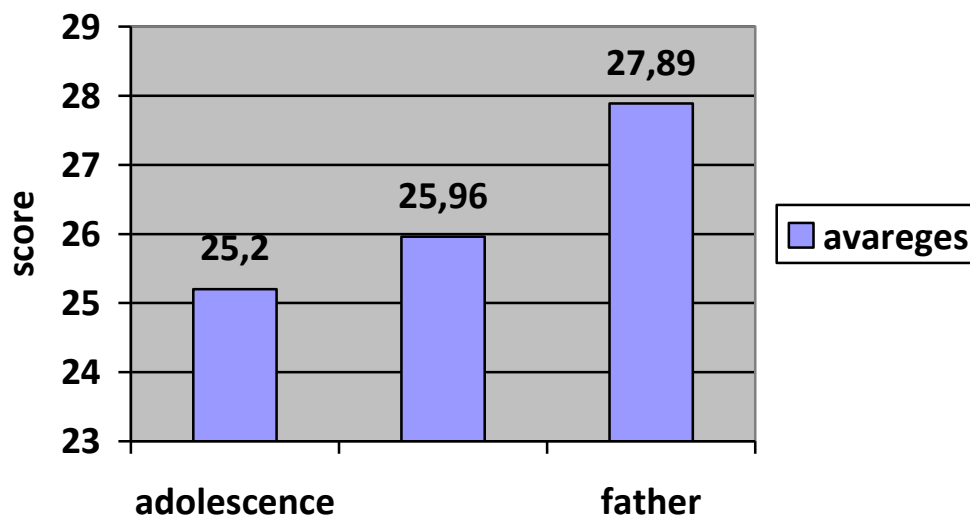
Difference between judgement of resilience in the contested divorce group

| DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Adolescents' resilience scores | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|-------|---------|--------------------|------|------|----------|----------|
| Basic statistics per groups | | | | | | | | |
| Index | Groups | Cases | Average | Standard deviation | Min. | Max. | Skewness | Kurtosis |
| 1 | serdülő | 39 | 25,2 | 5,014 | 10 | 37 | 0,383 | 0,588 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----|-------|-------|----|----|-------|-------|
| 2 | anya | 39 | 25,96 | 4,134 | 14 | 37 | 0,204 | 0,189 |
| 3 | apa | 39 | 27,89 | 4,506 | 15 | 39 | -0,13 | 0,328 |
| Variance analysis: $F(2; 234) = 7,252$ ($p = 0,0009$) | | | | | | | | |

Table 1

Figure 3. Scores given to adolescents' resilience



There is a 5% significant difference between the overall scores of adolescents' resilience and their parents' judgement, based on the between subjects anova variance analysis ($F(2;234) = 7,252$, $p=0,009$). To examine the significant difference we compared the averages with the Tukey-Kramer pair-wise: $T_{12}=1,48$ (adolescent-mother), $T_{13}=5,22^{**}$ (adolescent-father), $T_{23}= 3,75^*$ (mother-father). Based on this we can state that in the case of judging resilience there is no difference between the opinion of adolescents' and their mothers', whereas between mothers and fathers, fathers and adolescents, there is significant difference. Examining the averages we can say that in families that went through contested divorce fathers see their children's level of resilience higher than mothers and adolescents (adolescent average=25,2; mother average=25,96; father average=27,89).

Effect of parents’ resilience on judging own resilience

Based on the results, fathers’ resilience does not affect adolescents’ resilience. Mothers’ resilience (B:0,4313) positively affects adolescents’ resilience. Its power is (β :0,453) on adolescents’ resilience.

Table 2: Power of mothers’ resilience (in a linear regression model)

| Variable | F-test | R ² | t-rate | p-rate | B | β |
|-------------|-----------|----------------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|
| Mother res. | 18,653*** | 0,228 | 4,170 | 0,0001*** | 0,4313 | 0,453 |

Examining the two groups separately, it seems like mothers’ resilience affect adolescents’ resilience if there was a contested divorce, while in the case of adolescents living in complete families we did not find such connections. Graphic x shows that if there was a contested divorce mothers’ resilience explains adolescents’ resilience in 55% and in the case of higher scores also strengthens it. Basically, the 1 score increasement of mothers’ resilience results in 0,5 score increasement of adolescents’ resilience, which is shown in figure 4:

Figure 4: Mothers’ resilience as an influencer for adolescents’ resilience in the case of contested divorce

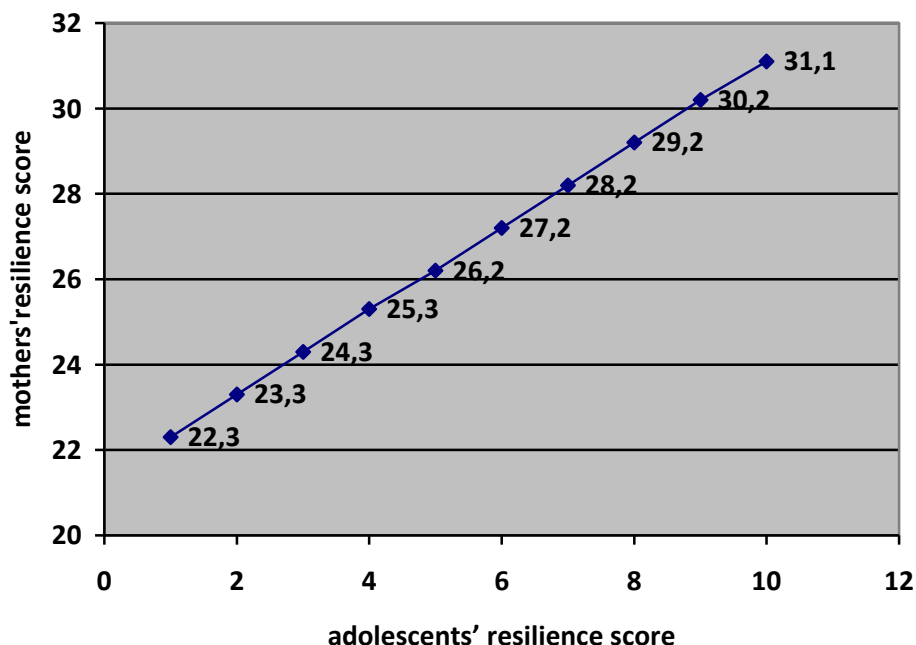


FIGURE 4:.: Illustrative bilinear about the effect of mothers' resilience on adolescents' resilience, in the case of contested divorce

Looking at adolescents' resilience, there is a difference between sexes as well. It seems like adolescent girls' resilience is coherent to their mothers' resilience ($p= 0,0022^{**}$), while boys' resilience is related to their fathers' ($p= 0,0003^{***}$).

| Variable/sortment | F-test | R ² | t-rate | p-rate | B |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Mother res./Girls | 11,097** | 0,261 | 3,331 | 0,0022** | 0,5669 |
| Father res./Boys | 16,005*** | 0,348 | 4,001 | 0,0003*** | 0,4751 |

Table 3.: Data of variables in the multiple linear regression model, sorted by sexes

Figure 5 shows that mothers' resilience explains adolescent girls' resilience in 26% and its strengthening strengthens girls' resilience as well. In practise it means that the 1 score increasment of mothers' resilience results in 0,6 score increasment of girls' resilience. Figure 5 shows how mothers' resilience strengthens adolescent girls' resilience.

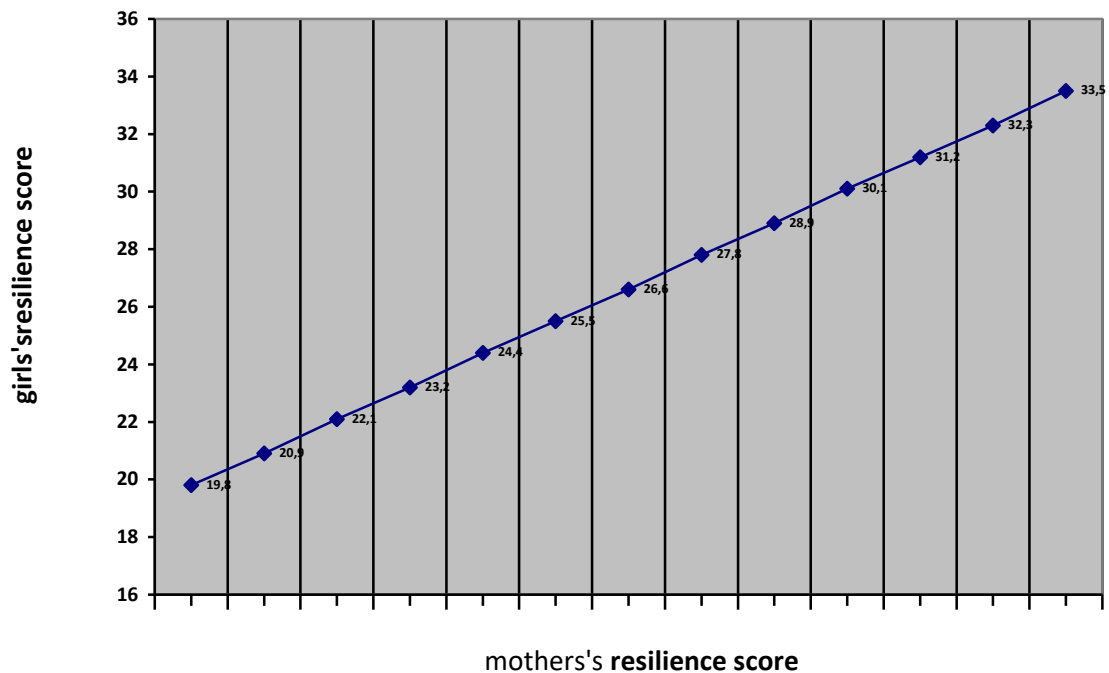
Figure 5: Mothers' resilience as an influencer for adolescent girls' resilience

FIGURE 5: Illustrative bilinear about the effect of mothers' resilience on adolescent girls' resilience, related to mothers' resilience.

The resilience of fathers explains the resilience of their adolescent boys in 34,8% and in the case of higher scores also strenghtens it. Fathers' 1 score resilience increasement results in almost 0,5 score increasement of boys' resilience.

Discussion

Our first hypotesis which states that „the resilience of adolescents whose parents had a contested divorce is lower than those's who live in a complete family” has been confirmed. Adolescents whose parents had a contested divorce indeed rated their quality of life significantly lower than their peers who live in a complete family. Moreover, mothers who had a contested divorce rated their children's resilience significantly lower than those mothers who still live with their partners. However, among fathers we did not discover such difference.

Our results confirm the theoretical fact that divorce is a significant stress factor for a child, independently of the circumstances (Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan, 1999), and during a contested divorce the child is affected by parental conflict. Roles in the family get confused and with at least one parent bonding is damaged (Ayoub, Deutsch, Maragnore, 2005). Though the support of the family and an affectioante relationship with the parents are main components for the adolescent's resilience (Ahern, 2006). Moreover, certain researchers state that for teenagers the resilience of the family is the most effective protection that helps them through the process of divorce (Greef and Van der Merwe 2003, Mashengo and Taruvinga, 2014).

It is not a surprise than that in the case of contested divorce, when the resilience of the family is probably already low, the adolescent's resilience is damaged. This is because parents were unable to solve the crisis in which their child is affected by their arguments and critics toward each other (Chen és George, 2005). Based on this we could not assume that adolescents who lost their base of resilience – namely their family – in a crisis caused by their parents' contested divorce have similar resilience to adolescents who live in complete families. The results of Pikó and Hamvai (2014) are adjustable to the low resilience of adolescents who experienced contested divorce, because they found that high level of stress is related to maladaptive strategies and the absence of resistivity. It has been proved that during a contested divorce adolescents experience a high level of stress which based on Pikó and Hamvai's (2014) results may cohere with the absence or low level of resilience. Hampel and Petermann (2006) found that children between 10-14 tend to intensively experience stress anyway, and use emotional based coping or avoidance which is connected to resilience. This means that the fact of having parents who had a contested divorce and being a teenager make adolescents' resilience twice as much endangered.

The results of our research confirm Lassú et al (2015) concept about the risks of a one parent family in which the adolescent is forced into the adult role therefore finds it difficult to cope with or adjust to the situation after divorce.

What is interesting in our results is that fathers who had a contested divorce did not rate their children's resilience lower than fathers still living with their partners. Even though there is no research data about this, we can assume that the father-child relationship is in its background. It is very rare that after the divorce the father gets custody, children usually continue living with their mother and Kaufman (1998, cited by Riggio, 2004) says that the father-child relationship always disimproves. The fact that fathers spend little or no time with their

children after the divorce explains why they are unable to judge their children's resilience correctly, while it is easier for mothers who play an active role in their children's life.

Based on the results above it would be very helpful for a child whose parents had a contested divorce to go into therapy with at least one of their parents (ideally with the one whom he/she has conflicts with) during or after the divorce, which would strengthen both the adolescent's and parent's resilience by sorting out their relationship. It would be important to professionally reinforce parents in keeping their child's behaviour under control even if they find it hard to do so, because it is the best way to provide safety for them. For psychologists in clinical practice the importance of our results is that it is vital to strengthen adolescents' self-confidence, sense of competence, sense of self-efficiency and control over their feelings if their parents went through a contested divorce, because these factors improve resilience. To educationalists our results tell that – because during hard times caused by divorce all supportive adults contribute to the development of an adolescent's resilience – with their empathy and thoughtful attention they provide external support to youngsters.

Our second hypothesis, which says that „those parents who went through contested divorce have lower resilience than those who still live with their partner” was also confirmed. Based on our results, parents indeed rate their resilience significantly lower after they had a contested divorce.

A lot of theoretical assessments ((Hetherington és Stanley-Hagan, 1999; Greef és Van der Merwe, 2003) confirm that false communication between parents and their maladaptive coping methods are responsible for the above mentioned phenomenon. It is further escalated by divorce being described as the rotten relationship between parents, the inability of making compromises and the constant accusations (Ayoub, Deutsch, Maragnore, 2005). The research of Frisby, Booth-Batterfield, Dillow, Martin and Weber (2012) confirms this assumption in practice, because their results point out that those divorced people who openly communicated with each other, expressed their feelings and had an overall optimistic attitude during the divorce were able to go through the process positively and have a lighter experience after all. For these parents, because of having a stronger ability of resistance, it was easier to help their children through the divorce. At this point I would mention that during the procession of our data it was noticeable how parents with contested divorce often wrote notes on their tests, mostly driven by their antipathy for their ex-partner. Though it is merely an observation it confirms the difficulties of communicating and expressing feelings. Based on the results of our research and its theoretical framework it can be stated that contested divorce and low resilience strongly stand together.

It seems obvious that in the case of contested divorce resilience is damaged as people experience long-term and high level of stress. However it can be assumed that divorce gets to such levels if parents inherently have low resilience. This is because the criterions for the family's resilience are parents communicating openly, having strong cohesion and understanding, expressing their feelings toward each other, which means that the resilience of the family evolves from the resilience of the parents (Black és Lobo, 2008). Communication between parents with low resilience is probably not balanced in the first place which makes adaptive coping a lot more difficult during the divorce, as we know it from the researches.

Turning it around, those divorcing couples who communicated well during their marriage inherently have a higher level of resilience and because of this they solve the crisis caused by divorce effectively. Although we did not examine this in our research therefore we cannot state this safely. A longitudinal research which investigates whether having low resilience is a risk factor for contested divorce would be interesting.

For development psychology our results are important because they give us the information that parents with low level of resilience and the experience of contested divorce are unable to provide safety to their children and help them through the process (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 1999;,2001; Chen and George, 2005). Their maladaptive coping methods lead the way to their broken marriage in the first place. From theories we also know that children are endangered by their parents in many ways, with special emphasis on parentification (Ayoub, Deutsch, Maragnore, 2005), and also on developing mental and behavioural issues (Johnston, Gonzales, Campbell, 1987; Johnston, 1994; Amato, 1993). In their research Arteche and Murray (2011) confirmed how badly parental conflict and maternal instability affects the child's coping with stress.

In clinical practise it is vital to recognize whether or not there are games – between parents or between parent and child – in the background of a child's problem, which makes the child's problem only a symptom. In this case family therapy is recommended to put everyone's role in order, because this can solve the child's problem without any further intervening while treating only the child and leaving out the recognition of the family's dynamics would not lead to recovery.

Our third hypotesis assumed that adolescents judge their resilience differently than their parents. This hypotesis proved to be partially true. Fathers judged their children's resilience significantly higher than mothers and adolescents, while there were no differences between mothers and adolescents. This matches with those studies and researches that reports about the father-child relationship getting worse after divorce. Amato drew attention to the fact that

marital conflict in itself is enough for the parent-child relationship to get worse, and this is especially true for the father-child relationship (Amato, 2001). And in the case of contested divorce parental conflict is quite common. After the divorce children usually stay with their mother which easily makes them think that their father left them. It is confirmed by Pruett and partners who pointed out that after a divorce which produced a lot of conflicts fathers are likely to be less involved in their children's life (Pruett, Williams, Insabella, Little, 2003). By this, because they spend less time with their children, it can happen that they don't hear about their difficulties, don't see how their children cope with everyday's unexpected situations and the effects those have on them, which make fathers unable to judge their children's resilience right. It also needs awareness that the child can reject his/her father and have intensive negative feelings for him (Boyan, Termini, 1999 cited by Mitcham-Smith, Henry, 2007). This could lead to the child refusing to meet his/her father or situations in which the father is unable to create an honest picture about his child and because of this cannot judge his/her resilience right. The explanation for the fact that fathers think their children's resilience is higher than it really is may be that they make assumptions based on their own feelings. It may occur that despite of the conflicted and difficult situation of the divorce, or exactly because after the procedure marital conflicts come to an end, divorce brings relief and the father feels free and may be in a better mood. I claim this based on Amato's observations (Amato, 2014). If the father does not detect any serious difficulties in his child's life (maybe because he does not participate in every day of it) he tend to assume that his child is getting on and coping well just like him. By contrast mothers are involved in children's everyday life and get a better picture about how they react to certain difficulties. If both parents stay equally involved in their children's life the result could be explained by the fact that mothers usually play the bigger role in children's life: they usually are the ones who stay in touch with the school, pay more attention to little details and because of this they have a more comprehensive picture about their children's abilities.

Moreover, researches that focus on adolescents' coping also provide results in which adolescents mention their relationships inside the family as the most helpful factor in coping (Greef and Van der Merwe 2003; Mashengo és Taruvinga, 2014).

Researches about traumas emphasize the holding powers of families and social network as the tools for succesful coping with traumas (Walsh, 2007; Ungar, 2013). Contested divorce could be viewed as a traumatic event which challenges adolescents, therefore it would be advantageous to test their resilience considering the divorce.

Our fourth hypotesis: parental resilience influences the judgement of own resilience.

Testing this hypothesis on the experimental and control groups we found that those adolescents' resilience who experienced contested divorce was influenced by their mothers'. A possible explanation to why mothers' resilience influences adolescents' could be that after the divorce most children stay with their mother. Isaacs and Levin (1984) examined family drawings and found that after the divorce the mother's figure gets bigger than the father's, moreover, fathers often get left out despite of keeping in contact, which shows the importance of the mother as well. Amato and Both (1991, cited by Riggio, 2004) found that – at the end of adolescence – among divorced parents mothers always almost get closer to their children while Kaufman (1999, cited by Riggio, 2004) says that fathers almost always drift away. It seems like in the case of such crisis what mostly matters for children is that their mother should be strong, purposeful, put control back in her hands and by this help her child in coping with the situation.

Testing our hypothesis by gender it appears that adolescent boys' resilience is strongly influenced by their fathers' while mothers' resilience influences girls' resilience on a medium level. Though to this result we did not find any theoretical explanation or research results, the definition of adolescents' resilience could provide explanation or at least be thought-provoking. Analysing 22 studies Ahern (2006) concluded that the resilience of adolescents is complex, it forms during development and is influenced by many factors such as life events or the quality of bonding. This was confirmed by a Swedish research in which resilience was examined from the perspective of time (Blomgren, Shvan, Rönnlund, 2016). Based on this we could assume that identification (identifying oneself with parent from the same sex) as a determining life event affects the development of resilience. It is of course only an assumption, but next to all resilience studies a longitudinal one which parallelly examines the forming of both parents' and children's resilience would be interesting. As limitation we have to mention that this research is cross-sectional and has small sample size. We are planning to examine its subject comprehensively. The results' definite conclusion is that coping with divorce would clearly need professional support. It would be good if all children with their parents received emotional support during this crucial time, which could protect the parent-child relationship and help avoid psychic damages.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting our findings. First of all, it is a cross-sectional study, which prevents us from making causal attributions. Second, self-rated data on resilience could be biased as well, while when data refer to personally sensitive information, persons tend to give socially acceptable answers. In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that resilience is a useful measure in the case of adolescence whose parents

went through contested divorce. Moreover, we would like to underline the importance of getting information on resilience from more sources.

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