The ripple effect in family networks

Bel ,de, Vera

DOI:
10.33612/diss.126812050

6

Multi-functional relationships and family members' well-being

6.1 BACKGROUND

The quality and strength of family relationships contribute to a multitude of beneficial individual outcomes such as well-being (e.g., Merz et al., 2009; Polenick, DePasquale, Eggebeen, Zarit, & Fingerman, 2018; Thomas et al., 2017). The contribution depends on the content of the family relationship (e.g., affection or instrumental support) and on the family members involved (e.g., Merz et al., 2009). From chapter 4 we learned that family networks of divorced families are more disjoint than those of non-divorced families, implying that the beneficial individual outcomes of family relationships may be less self-evident for family members of divorced families.

According to the Social Production Function (SPF) theory, individuals strive for optimization of two universal goals: physical and social well-being (Lindenberg, 1996; Ormel, 2002; Ormel et al., 1997, 1999). Comfort and stimulation are the needs required to achieve physical well-being, while status, behavioural confirmation and affection are the needs required for social well-being. An individual's social relationships, with family and friends, can supply affection and various forms of support that are the resources to fulfil the three social needs of status, behavioural confirmation and affection (Steverink & Lindenberg, 2006). In line with SPF, families can be seen as a sharing group (Lindenberg, 1997), a group of interdependent people together producing the common good of family well-being.

Some family relationships will not serve only one of these needs described in SPF, but multiple needs simultaneously. For example, a grandparent may provide instrumental support when taking care of a grandchild and may at the same time receive and provide affection. Relationships in which multiple types of relational dimensions are transmitted are called multi-functional and are considered to be of high value for social well-being (Lindenberg, 1996; Ormel, 2002; Ormel et al., 1997, 1999).

Parental divorce may on the one hand increase the need for family relationships to be active so that – if needed – the function of the safety net can be activated, leading to a cumulative beneficial advantage for all family members, but on the other hand may endanger the infrastructure required to accomplish this. A way to deal with these expected negative consequences of parental divorce is to make new ties or to reshape the remaining ones in order to fulfil the social needs required for social well-being (Ormel et al., 1997; Zettel & Rook, 2004). If these remaining or additional relationships fulfil the same or more functions or social needs, the relationships become multi-functional. By adding new ties and strengthening others through additional relational dimensions, family members' social needs can still be fulfilled and social well-being preserved (Steverink & Lindenberg, 2006). It is expected that relationships with extended family members are of special importance for nuclear family members experiencing parental divorce, extended family members form the knots of the nuclear family's safety net.

This chapter is based on the *Lifelines Family Ties* data set presented in Chapter 5. We first compare several relational reports of family members in divorced and non-divorced families, as well as the correlations of affection, emotional, material, and instrumental support with

well-being, before and after parental divorce. We investigate how multi-functional family relationships affect family members' social well-being. Sub questions are about whether the strength of this effect on well-being changes after parental divorce, whether multi-functional relationships from nuclear or extended family members affect family members' social well-being differently, and finally, whether the effect of multi-functional relationships on family members' well-being depends on the receiver's family role/position.

6.2 DATA & METHODS

The data collection for *Lifelines Family Ties* was carried out between Autumn 2017 and Spring 2019 (see Chapter 5 for an extensive description of the data collection). The data consist of 43 family networks: 35 multi-actor family networks (22 divorced and 13 non-divorced) and 8 ego-networks (2 divorced and 6 non-divorced) with prospective and retrospective information from 160 family members about 524 family members. For the retrospective part, divorced families reported about their well-being and family relationships in the time period before the parental divorce, while non-divorced families were asked to look back 5-10 years ago.

6.2.1 Measurements

Well-being. The well-being measurement is the social part of the Social Production Function (SPF-IL) scale (Nieboer et al., 2005). The scale measures well-being obtained from people in the respondent's environment, not necessarily family members. The measurement contains 9 items focusing on affection, behavioural confirmation and status. The items measuring affection are: (1) "Do people pay attention to you?", (2) "Do people help you if you have a problem?", and (3) "Do you feel that people really love you?". The items measuring behavioural confirmation are: (1) "There are situations in which we deal with groups of people, for example at home, at work or during our leisure time. Do others appreciate your role in the group?", (2) "When you are at school, at work, with family, at an association or in church, do you feel like you belong?", and (3) "Do others appreciate the things you do?", The items measuring status are: (1) "Do people think you do better than others?", (2) "Do people find you an influential person?", and (3) "Are you known for the things you have accomplished?" (Lifelines, 2019; Nieboer et al., 2005)[10]. Answer options are: never (1), sometimes (2), often (3), and always (4). Because of item-nonresponse[11] the average of the items was computed if at least one affect item (1-3), one behavioural confirmation item (4-6) and one status item (7-9) was reported.

10 Two items ("When you are at school, at work, with family, at an association or in church, do you feel like you belong?" and "Do others appreciate the things you do?") of the SPF behavioral confirmation items have been changed with respect to the original scale as presented in Nieboer et al. (2005) when implemented in Lifelines (Steverink, personal communication, March 3, 2020).

11 Item-nonresponse concerned 26 cases (family members) at t0 and 15 cases at t1. The procedure solved 9 cases at t0 and 8 cases at t1.

Family Ties. Based on the dimensions outlined in the solidarity-conflict model (Bengtson et al., 2002; Silverstein et al., 2010), *Lifelines Family Ties* distinguished seven dimensions (see chapter 5). Here, four types of ties are used: affection, emotional support, material support and instrumental support. Each tie was measured with two questions. Affection received is measured with the questions: "With whom do you have a strong bond?" and "From whom do you receive affection (love, warmth, sympathy)?" Emotional support received is measured with the questions: "From whom do you receive advice?" and "With whom can you talk about your worries or problems?". Material support is measured with the questions: "From whom do you receive presents? (do not only consider birthday presents, but also food, hobby materials, clothes or other goods that your family members not use anymore)" and "From whom do you receive financial support? (this means, who gives you occasional pocket money or who pays your bills or study costs?)". Instrumental support is measured with "Which family members help you with administrative tasks? (for example with taxes, school assignments, or computer issues)" and "Which family members help you in the household? (for example with cleaning, cooking, going places, doing groceries)". For each of these questions, participants picked their choice of family members from a list.

A tie received from a particular family member is scored as present (1) if this family member was selected for at least one of the two items. This definition of a tie considers that different family roles are related to various forms of affection and support. An example is that children may receive money from their parents but gifts from a stepparent, which are both forms of material support.

Multi-functional relationships between family members are defined as present (1) if at least one of the affection and emotional support ties is present and at least one of the material and instrumental support ties is present. Affection and emotional support are closely related and together represent the "emotional dimension" of multi-functional ties. Instrumental and material support are also closely related. Together they represent the "practical dimension" of multi-functional ties.

The total number of the separate and multi-functional relationships received is calculated by summing over all family members, and similarly, for the relationships received from the nuclear and extended family members, by summing over these groups of family members separately. The definition of nuclear and extended family depends on the family role of the respondent.

For children of divorced and non-divorced families the nuclear family is formed by their siblings and their parents. Children's extended family members are the paternal and maternal aunts, uncles and grandparents. After parental divorce, stepfamily members, i.e. parents' new partners and their children, are added to the current extended family members of children.

Parents' nuclear family members are their children, their parents and their siblings with their partners, i.e. the aunts, uncles, grandparents on their own side of the family. Only in non-

divorced families, parents belong to each other's nuclear family. New partners of divorced parents are also considered to be part of their current nuclear family. Non-divorced parents' extended family members are aunts, uncles and grandparents on the other (their spouse's) side. Divorced parents without a new partner do not have any extended family members; divorced parents new partner's children are considered to be part of their current extended family.

The nuclear family of aunts, uncles and grandparents on one side of the family is formed by themselves plus the parent on the same side (their sibling or child), and, in non- divorced families, the other parent. Their extended family members are the children and in divorced families, and if present, the new partner and stepchildren.

Predictor and control variables. Other predictor variables necessary to test our hypotheses are time (current time, t1 = 0.5, pre-divorce/5-10 years ago, t0 = -0.5); parental divorce (0 = no, 1 = yes) and, to distinguish the various family roles, gender (0 = male, 1 = female), dummy variables for child, grandparent or aunt/uncle (0 = no, 1 = yes; parents are the reference group), as well as for paternal and maternal family members (0 = no, 1 = yes).

Receiving support from family members is easier when family members live close enough to come and visit (Mulder & van der Meer, 2009). Geographical proximity is measured with the question: "Who lives nearby (nearby means that it does not take you longer than 10 minutes to reach this family member. If you live in the same house this is also considered to be nearby)". Similar to the relational dimensions we obtained the sum of the number of family members living nearby, also for the number of nuclear and extended family members living nearby. A further control variable is family size, which is the number of family members mentioned in the survey.

6.2.2 Description of the analytical sample

160 family members started the survey and 153 family members reported about their well-being for at least one of the two time points. 145 family members reported about the number of received multi-functional, whereas making the distinction in nuclear and extended family lowered the sample size to 144 family members. The other variables, as described above, did not further lower the analytical sample size.

The analytical sample thus consists of 144 family members from 41 families (23 divorced and 18 non-divorced, 90 family members from divorced families and 54 from non-divorced families). The 144 family members consist of 45 parents, 32 children, 26 grandparents, and 41 aunts or uncles. 32 family members are paternal family and 80 family members are maternal family. In two divorced families, the two divorced parents re-partnered each other. These families were coded as divorced.

Table 6.1 shows that the average well-being of divorced and non-divorced family members is slightly higher at t1 than at t0, somewhat more so for members of divorced families. The number of multi-functional ties received at both time points is higher in non-divorced families,

and seems to hardly have changed between time points. Affection is the tie received from most family members in both types of families, whereas instrumental support is received from the lowest number overall, and is slightly lower for divorced families both before and after divorce. Affection and support are received more from nuclear family members than from extended family members. The pattern is similar for divorced and non-divorced families as well as for the two periods reported on, with only small changes in the means at the two time points. Thus, no indication of a substantial change in the safety net – as measured by the number of family members perceived as providing multi-functional relationships – of divorced families is obtained.

The correlations in Tables 6.2a and 6.2b show strong associations over time of well-being and multi-functional ties, and between the total number of multi-functional ties and those received from nuclear and extended family members. At both time points, the correlation of multi-functional ties from extended family members with well-being is of medium size and larger than the correlations of the total number of multi-functional support ties and that of the nuclear family. These correlations are somewhat higher for divorced families. Geographic proximity has a correlation of medium size with multi-functional support ties in all three forms. Children report higher well-being than all other family members.

Table 6.1: Descriptive statistics

	Divorced (*N* = 90)				Non-Divorced (*N* = 54)			
	T0		T1		T0		T1	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
SPF	2.77*	(0.53)	2.95	(0.51)	2.77**	(0.44)	2.85	(0.46)
Multi-functional ties	5.43	(3.20)	5.30	(3.15)	6.13	(3.39)	6.33	(3.25)
Multi-functional ties NF	4.01	(2.63)	4.18	(2.88)	4.30	(2.34)	4.50	(2.40)
Multi-functional ties EF	1.37	(1.92)	1.17	(1.72)	1.80	(1.93)	1.89	(1.77)
Affection	7.53	(3.44)	7.68	(3.56)	7.31	(3.26)	7.41	(3.12)
Affection NF	5.19	(3.01)	5.07	(3.05)	4.74	(2.39)	4.87	(2.29)
Affection EF	2.10	(2.16)	2.06	(2.42)	2.41	(1.92)	2.37	(1.90)
Emotional support	4.42	(2.80)	4.66	(2.70)	4.94	(2.76)	5.09	(2.75)
Emotional support NF	3.42	(2.08)	3.74	(2.38)	3.65	(2.08)	4.00	(2.06)
Emotional support EF	0.84	(1.67)	0.80	(1.55)	1.04	(1.37)	1.07	(1.37)
Material support	5.62	(3.63)	5.38	(3.38)	6.94	(3.62)	6.96	(3.54)
Material support NF	3.89	(2.87)	3.96	(2.97)	4.43	(2.39)	4.63	(2.41)
Material support EF	2.04	(2.22)	1.24	(1.81)	3.15	(1.86)	2.30	(1.89)
Instrumental support	1.43	(1.66)	1.74	(1.53)	1.81	(1.54)	2.04	(1.59)
Instrumental support NF	1.30	(1.47)	1.49	(1.33)	1.59	(1.30)	1.93	(1.48)
Instrumental support EF	0.13	(0.50)	0.22	(0.56)	0.22	(0.57)	0.11	(0.32)
Nuclear family size	6.72	(4.23)	6.03	(4.05)	5.54	(2.34)	5.54	(2.34)
Extended family size	3.66	(2.96)	3.04	(3.35)	3.70	(2.58)	3.70	(2.58)
Family size	13.16	(4.14)			11.94	(2.61)		
Proximate	3.30	(3.47)			4.93	(3.72)		
Proximate NF	2.17	(2.13)			3.17	(2.38)		
Proximate EF	0.57	(1.37)			1.52	(1.92)		
Gender (1 = *female*)	0.64				0.63			
Parent (1= *yes*)	0.29				0.35			
Child (1= *yes*)	0.26				0.17			
Grandparent (1= *yes*)	0.13				0.26			
Aunt/uncle (1= *yes*)	0.32				0.22			

* *N* = 84, ** *N* = 52

Table 6.2a: Pearson (white), Spearman (light grey) and Phi coefficient (dark grey) correlations for divorced families (*N* = 90, expect for the combinations with SPF, where *N* = 84)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. SPF t0																
2. SPF t1	.609															
3. MF ties t0	.213	.340														
4. MF ties t0 from NF	.066	.183	.797													
5. MF ties t0 from EF	.260	.307	.566	-.041												
6. MF ties t1	.118	.280	.746	.729	.240											
7. MF ties t1 from NF	.052	.182	.652	.882	-.122	.832										
8. MF ties t1 from EF	.177	.304	.274	-.129	.631	.441	-.103									
9. Gender (1 = *female*)	.066	.050	.186	.154	.180	.184	.188	.049								
10. Parent (1= *yes*)	-.309	-.253	.118	.302	-.141	-.0081	.243	-.530	.038							
11. Child (1= *yes*)	.427	.522	.211	-.150	.510	.126	-.075	.439	.196	.345						
12. Grandparent (1= *yes*)	-.050	-.105	.033	.096	.0080	.113	-.0025	.241	.084	.214	.192					
13. Aunt/uncle (1= *yes*)	-.064	-.166	-.335	-.223	-.346	-.193	-.164	-.071	.158	.413	.377	.235				
14. Family size	.094	.025	.104	.241	-.131	.220	.361	-.182	.033	-.179	-.166	-.220	.488			
15. Number of proximate	.037	-.0091	-.181	-.146	-.098	.059	.045	.061	-.130	.068	-.046	-.075	.032	.225		
16. Number of proximate NF	-.0072	-.122	-.234	-.107	-.238	.014	.094	-.103	-.104	-.030	-.130	-.057	.192	.376	.849	
17. Number of proximate EF	.289	.285	-.026	-.208	.237	.096	-.137	.427	-.006	-.337	.382	.023	-.047	-.038	.547	.222

Table 6.2b: Pearson (white), Spearman (light grey) and Phi coefficient (dark grey) correlations for non-divorced families (N = 54, expect for the combinations with SPF, where N = 52)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. SPF t0																
2. SPF t1	.843															
3. MF ties t0	.364	.450														
4. MF ties t0 from NF	.181	.244	.832													
5. MF ties t0 from EF	.427	.490	.731	.235												
6. MF ties t1	.331	.369	.911	.804	.611											
7. MF ties t1 from NF	.173	.222	.766	.929	.206	.866										
8. MF ties t1 from EF	.388	.404	.698	.263	.908	.726	.298									
9. Gender (1 = *female*)	-.031	-.079	.104	.164	.031	.139	.136	.109								
10. Parent (1= *yes*)	.189	.207	.334	.488	.128	.390	.568	.101	.043							
11. Child (1= *yes*)	.405	.446	.310	-.295	.624	.180	-.299	.489	.017	.277						
12. Grandparent (1= *yes*)	-.392	-.362	-.299	-.187	-.267	-.242	-.217	-.119	.028	.392	.208					
13. Aunt/uncle (1= *yes*)	-.159	-.257	-.347	-.099	-.424	-.355	-.155	-.429	.000	.347	.179	.265				
14. Family size	.282	.250	.500	.472	.298	.483	.495	.298	.261	.048	.128	-.234	.077			
15. Number of proximate	.215	.264	.539	.494	.348	.508	.494	.320	.170	.196	.155	-.201	-.152	.656		
16. Number of proximate NF	.090	.161	.531	.617	.193	.510	.623	.162	.057	.482	-.088	-.360	-.095	.579	.882	
17. Number of proximate EF	.331	.340	.415	.183	.503	.383	.188	.490	.182	.030	.275	.013	-.294	.514	.795	.456

6.2.2 Plan of analysis

The main goal of our analysis is: (1) to investigate to what extent multi-functional family relationships affect family members' social well-being. Additionally, in an explorative fashion, we investigate (2) whether the strength of multi-functional ties on well-being changes after parental divorce, (3) whether there is a difference between the effects of multi-functional relationships received from nuclear and from extended family members, (4) whether the effect of receiving multi-functional relationships is dependent on the receiver's family role/position. The sample size of 144 respondents, leading to 280 observations over both time points, nested in 41 families, limits the possibilities to explore these additional questions. The results section therefore discusses sparse models, focusing on effect size, not on significance. The data will be analysed by a three-level repeated measures model (see e.g., Snijders & Bosker, 2012). Time is nested within individuals and individuals are nested within families.

The first model presents the null model, including only time. The contrast coding of time implies that the intercept refers to the average over the two time points. In order to investigate the first part of our research question, the number of multi-functional ties received is added to the model. Next, the other theoretically important predictor variables are added to the model: divorce, receiver's role, and gender.

In order to investigate whether the effect of multi-functional ties received on well-being changes after parental divorce (part 2 of the research question), the next two models test two two-way interactions: whether the well-being of family members from divorced families is higher at t1 (time*divorced) and whether the effect of multi-functional ties is higher at t1 (time*MF). The last model includes the control variables family size and proximity. In further models we explored the effect of multi-functional ties on well-being by adding the interaction testing whether well-being would be higher in divorced families (MF*divorced) and by adding the three-way interaction to test whether the effect of multi-functional ties on well-being changes over time if the family experienced parental divorce. Adding these interaction variables to the models did not improve the model nor gave well-interpretable effects due to the limited sample size (results available upon request).

To investigate whether receiving multi-functional relationships from nuclear or extended family members has a different effect on family members' social well-being (part 3 of the research question), the model-building procedure is repeated replacing the total number of multi-functional ties by the number of multi-functional ties received from nuclear and extended family members. In these models the control variables are also replaced by their nuclear and extended family counterparts.

Finally, to test whether the effect of receiving multi-functional relationships is dependent on the receiver's family role/position, we investigated interactions between role (child, grandparent, aunt/uncle) and the number of multi-functional ties received to the model. Again, due to the sample size, these interactions were not well-interpretable (results available upon

request). In conclusion, because models with more effects for divorce and family role did not show improvements in terms of model fit, model 6 (tables 6.3 and 6.4) is considered to be the final model that is used to test the hypotheses.

In additional analyses (available upon request), we checked to what extent the results of the final models using the number of multi-functional ties received as main explanatory variable for well-being differed when compared to similar analyses with "single" ties, i.e., affection, emotional support, material support and instrumental support separately. We also investigated within- and between-family effects (Snijders & Bosker, 2012) by adding the family averages for MF and proximity to the model and only found small and negligible differences (results available upon request). In a further additional analysis (available upon request), we made the distinction between paternal and maternal family members instead of using family role (child, parent, grandparent, aunts/uncles). This distinction turned out to be less informative than the analyses with family roles.

6.3 RESULTS

The number of multi-functional relationships received (MF) has a small positive effect ($b = 0.026$; S.E. = 0.010) on well-being at t0, which is slightly stronger at t1 ($b = 0.017$; S.E. = 0.011). Well-being after divorce is increased (time x divorce: $b = 0.138$, S.E. = .070), whereas it changes negligibly for non-divorced families. Children score 0.506 (*S.E.* = 0.088) higher on well-being compared to parents, and grandparents as well as aunts/uncles do not report significantly different scores from parents.

The results of analyses with multi-functional ties received from nuclear and extended family members are presented in Table 6.4 and show that multi-functional ties received from nuclear family have a positive effect on family members' well-being, which is somewhat larger than that of multi-functional ties by extended family members. This is significant in model 5 ($b = 0.039$, S.E. = 0.013) but smaller and not significant in model 6 due to the inclusion of the size of the nuclear family. Such an effect was not found for extended family members and these effects are not significantly different at t0 compared to t1.

Table 6.4 also shows a negative effect of gender, meaning that female respondents score lower on well-being. The size of the nuclear family is positively related to well-being, meaning that family members from larger families score higher on well-being. Family members indicating a higher number of proximate nuclear family members score lower on well-being, while family members indicating a higher number of proximate extended family members score higher on well-being.

In additional analyses (available upon request) we investigated the four relationships separately. Except for a non-significant negative estimate of instrumental support received, affection, emotional support and material support had a small positive effect on well-being.

The set of models distinguishing between nuclear and extended family showed that affection received from extended family members, and an increase of emotional support over time, led to higher well-being.

Second, it was checked whether the results of the analyses differed when using the proportion of multi-functional ties received instead of the number. No substantial change was found, except for a significant effect for family size, which makes sense as proportions – in contrast to the number – are independent of family size. Finally, we repeated the analysis for the two parental couples who re-partnered each other coded as intact instead of divorced, which did not change the results in any substantive way.

Table 6.3: Three-level repeated measures analyses of family members' social well-being (SPF): REML Estimates of Unstandardized coefficients (N = 144 family members, N = 280 observations).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.
Fixed part												
Intercept	2.833***	(0.042)	2.652***	(0.068)	2.644***	(0.108)	2.643***	(0.108)	2.645***	(0.108)	2.528***	(0.156)
Time	0.150***	(0.034)	0.150***	(0.034)	0.149***	(0.034)	0.072	(0.055)	-0.034	(0.087)	-0.033	(0.087)
MF ties received			0.032**	(0.010)	0.028**	(0.009)	0.029**	(0.009)	0.029**	(0.009)	0.026**	(0.010)
Divorce (1 = yes)					-0.013	(0.079)	-0.015	(0.079)	-0.014	(0.079)	-0.022	(0.081)
Gender (1 = female)					-0.100	(0.067)	-0.101	(0.067)	-0.103	(0.067)	-0.108	(0.068)
Receiver role (parent is ref.)												
… is child					0.502***	(0.087)	0.503***	(0.088)	0.505***	(0.088)	0.506***	(0.088)
… is grandparent					-0.112	(0.098)	-0.114	(0.098)	-0.119	(0.098)	-0.113	(0.099)
… is aunt/uncle					0.017	(0.086)	0.018	(0.086)	0.015	(0.086)	-0.013	(0.093)
Time x divorce							0.124†	(0.070)	0.139*	(0.070)	0.138*	(0.070)
Time x MF									0.017	(0.011)	0.017	(0.011)
Family size											0.012	(0.012)
Proximity											-0.0001	(0.010)
Random part												
Variance level 3 (family)	0.011	(0.105)	0.008	(0.087)	0.015	(0.122)	0.015	(0.121)	0.015	(0.121)	0.013	(0.113)
Variance level 2 (family members)	0.161	(0.401)	0.145	(0.380)	0.095	(0.308)	0.096	(0.310)	0.096	(0.310)	0.099	(0.315)
Variance level 1 (time)	0.077	(0.278)	0.080	(0.282)	0.080	(0.283)	0.079	(0.280)	0.078	(0.279)	0.078	(0.279)
Log Likelihood (ML)	-157.7		-152.7		-131.9		-130.3		-129.0		-128.4	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 6.4: Three-level repeated measures analyses of family members' social well-being (SPF): REML Estimates of Unstandardized coefficients (N = 144 family members, N = 280 observations).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.
Fixed part												
Intercept	2.833***	(0.042)	2.658***	(0.069)	2.602***	(0.109)	2.604***	(0.109)	2.609***	(0.109)	2.649***	(0.151)
Time	0.150***	(0.034)	0.152***	(0.034)	0.142***	(0.034)	0.069	(0.055)	-0.031	(0.087)	-0.018	(0.086)
MF ties received nuclear			0.020	(0.013)	0.041**	(0.013)	0.041**	(0.013)	0.039**	(0.013)	0.024†	(0.014)
MF ties received extended			0.060***	(0.016)	0.012	(0.018)	0.014	(0.018)	0.017	(0.018)	0.019	(0.018)
Divorce (1 = yes)					-0.020	(0.079)	-0.021	(0.079)	-0.018	(0.079)	-0.007	(0.081)
Gender (1 = female)					-0.109	(0.067)	-0.110	(0.067)	-0.111	(0.067)	-0.119†	(0.066)
Receiver role (parent is ref.)												
… is child					0.564***	(0.103)	0.558***	(0.103)	0.550***	(0.103)	0.608***	(0.124)
… is grandparent					-0.087	(0.098)	-0.091	(0.099)	-0.098	(0.099)	-0.038	(0.104)
… is aunt/uncle					0.035	(0.086)	0.035	(0.086)	0.028	(0.086)	0.090	(0.096)
Time x divorce							0.119†	(0.070)	0.137†	(0.071)	0.188**	(0.072)
Time x MF nuclear									0.013	(0.013)	0.014	(0.013)
Time x MF extended									0.024	(0.019)	0.014	(0.020)
Family size											-0.035†	(0.020)
Size nuclear family											0.072***	(0.020)
Size extended family											0.008	(0.018)
Proximity nuclear											-0.037*	(0.018)
Proximity extended											0.062*	(0.026)
Random part												
Variance level 3 (family)	0.011	(0.105)	0.011	(0.103)	0.014	(0.120)	0.014	(0.119)	0.014	(0.120)	0.010	(0.102)
Variance level 2 (family members)	0.161	(0.401)	0.133	(0.365)	0.094	(0.307)	0.096	(0.309)	0.096	(0.309)	0.089	(0.298)
Variance level 1 (time)	0.077	(0.278)	0.080	(0.284)	0.080	(0.282)	0.078	(0.280)	0.078	(0.279)	0.076	(0.276)
Log Likelihood (ML)	-157.7		-149.7		-130.2		-128.7		-127.5		-117.7	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

6.4 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The first part of our research question can be answered affirmatively: receiving multi-functional family ties from extended family members has a positive effect on family members' well-being. This effect is small, however, with approximately 10% explained variance at the individual level. Second, receiving multi-functional relationships from nuclear family members has a slightly larger effect on family members' social well-being than multi-functional ties from extended family members. Again, this difference is small and the data do not allow further, more precise analyses. Third, the increase in well-being over time is higher for members of divorced compared to non-divorced families. Based on the descriptive statistics this effect cannot be ascribed to a change in the number of multi-functional ties received. Fourth, although children had a clearly higher well-being than their family members, no substantial difference in the effect of multi-functional relations on well-being was found for family members.

An unexpected finding is that divorced families report higher well-being for the current time period. It may be that in the case of divorce, "it used to better" does not hold. It is quite possible that processes related to the divorce affected family members' well-being already before the divorce. Another interesting point is that family members living nearby to a larger number of nuclear family members score lower on well-being, whereas family members living nearby to a larger number of extended family members score higher on well-being. It would be interesting to explore this finding in future research.

In this chapter we did not find a clear indication of the safety net. As was derived from the descriptives, there were no substantial changes in the number of family members perceived as providing multi-functional relationships. In addition, the analyses did not show large differences in the effect of the number of multi-functional ties received from nuclear and extended family members. We also did not find evidence for a difference in the effect of multi-functional ties on well-being for divorced and non-divorced families. Thus, no clear indication of the safety net was found. Perhaps the safety net is – on an individual level – much smaller than theorized. For example, a divorced mother could rely on only one or two other family members as her personal safety net. In order to investigate this further in line with MAFNA, a qualitative investigation might provide further insights.