

Father-Child Contact after Separation: The Influence of Living Arrangements

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Research Puzzle

- What factors influence the amount of contact between father and child following separation?
 - Revisit previous work using more recent data with larger sample size
 - Examine untested variable of custody agreements.

Background

- Need to consider both parent and child level factors
 - Parenting & parental relations
 - Socio-demographic factors
 - Attitudes

Data

- GSS 2001: The Family
 - Biological and adopted children of separated or divorced parents
 - Aged 17 years and under
 - Not living with both parents
 - Both parents still living
 - Reported by their fathers

All Children	3401
With contact data	2580
Reported by mother	1660
Reported by father	920
No missing data	723
Fathers	496

Method

- Nested data structure requires multi-level modelling
 - Account for unobserved heterogeneity between fathers and correlation between children sharing same father

Dependent Variable

- Days spent with father in 12 months prior to survey

Number of days spent with father	Percent
None	6.5
1-6 days (less than 1 week)	3.5
7-29 days (less than 1 month)	10.8
30-59 days (1 to 2 months)	13.1
60-149 days (2 to 5 months)	22.2
150-209 days (5 to 7 months)	15.7
210-299 days (7 to 10 months)	6.1
300-365 days (10 months and over)	22.0
Total	100
N	723

Independent Variables

- Child Level
 - Sex
 - Age at separation
 - Time since separation
 - Type of union at birth
 - Distance between parents' residences
 - Father's satisfaction:
 - ..with time spent with child
 - .. with child's living arrangements
- Father Level
 - Age
 - Education
 - Income
 - Conjugal Trajectory
 - Happiness at having child
 - Custody agreement

Results – Child Level

- Sex: - if female
- Age: +
- Distance b/n parents residences: - if over 50 km
- Satisfaction of father with time spent: +
- Satisfaction of living arrangements: +

Results – Father Level

- Income: - if <\$30,000
- Conjugal Trajectory: - if in union with no other children
- Custody agreement: - if oral agreement, written agreement with legal assistance, or written without legal assistance

Conclusion

- Practical limitations on father-child contact
 - Distance between parents' homes
 - Income
 - Conjugal Trajectory
 - Custody Agreements