

Father–Child Contact After Separation

The Influence of Living Arrangements

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Following divorce or separation, father–child contact is deemed an important influence on child development. Previous research has explored the impact of sociodemographic and attitudinal factors on the amount of contact between fathers and their children following a union dissolution. This article revisits this important question using fathers' reports on a sample of 859 children from newly available survey data. Multilevel random intercept models are used to reassess the influence of child- and father-level factors on the amount of reported contact. Results show that the amount of father–child contact following separation is the product of several factors such as the father's income, conjugal/parental trajectory, and level of satisfaction with existing arrangements.

Keywords: *father–child contact; separated fathers; custody agreements; parental attitudes; multilevel modeling*

Given prevailing high rates of union dissolution over recent years, the fate of children following the separation of their parents has become a growing concern within North American society and a topic of great interest to researchers on the family. Indeed, the implications for children of

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their parents' separation have been much studied. One of the established facts in recent literature is that greater parent-child contact following separation is important to child welfare and development. As such, an important question to answer remains: What factors contribute to increased parent-child contact?

Many efforts to address this question have focused on the issue of father-child contact, particularly between nonresident fathers and their children, because the latter still more often reside with their mothers after parental separation (Cooksey & Craig, 1998; Juby, Billette, Laplante, & Le Bourdais, 2007; Manning & Smock, 1999; Manning, Stewart, & Smock, 2003; Seltzer, 1991, 1998). Others have taken an approach that examines father-child contact between all separated fathers and their children—allowing for the possibility of studying children residing with their fathers (Le Bourdais, Juby, & Marcil-Gratton, 2002). Indeed, recent research based on longitudinal data has revealed the transitory nature of children's living arrangements, as both children and parents move on with their lives in the years following separation, thus blurring the distinction between the categories of resident and nonresident fathers and pointing to the need for considering all separated fathers (Gill, 2004; Juby, Le Bourdais, & Marcil-Gratton, 2003). In all these studies, researchers examine a range of sociodemographic, contextual, and attitudinal factors to explain the amount of father-child contact in terms of visits, time spent together, telephone conversations, or even the amount of child support offered. However, varied results have found little consensus on which factors most influence father-child contact.

The present study revisits this question through fathers' reports of time spent with their children from the most recently available Canadian survey data and applies multilevel modeling techniques to test a number of factors explaining father-child contact. The advantages of using this recent data include a larger sample size than has previously been available to examine this question in much of the earlier research on this subject, new data on custody agreements, and the possibility to directly take fathers' points of view into consideration, as opposed to using that of mothers. Previous research has shown that the frequency of contact that fathers maintain with their children is closely related to their satisfaction with existing custody and access arrangements (Le Bourdais et al., 2002). Because separated mothers and fathers do not necessarily share the same level of satisfaction on these matters, it thus becomes important to adopt the father's perspective if we are to reach a better understanding of father-child relationships after separation. By revisiting the question of father-child contact with more recent data, we intend to provide an updated view of those factors that

matter most when considering father–child contact following union dissolution and separation as well as test the influence of new factors such as the presence of custody agreements between parents.

Factors Contributing to Quantity of Time Spent With Children

The nature of the father–child relationship is such that factors contributed by both individuals will be expected to alter relationship outcomes. Indeed, past research on the amount of contact between nonresident or separated fathers and their children has demonstrated the importance of considering factors at both the parent and child levels.

Father-Level Factors

The recent literature on nonresident fathers' involvement with their children has examined a number of factors that influence fathers in both the quantity of time spent with and the amount of child support provided to their biological children. Three main categories of factors emerge in the recent literature: (a) parenting practices and parental relations, (b) father's socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, and (c) father's attitudes toward parenting and his children.

Parenting practices and parental relations. Some recent research on nonresident fathers and their involvement with their children has looked at several facets of parenting and of relationships between parents. Two significant factors are identified: practices of coparenting and conflict between mothers and fathers.

Cooperative coparenting, defined as the "ability of mothers and nonresident fathers to actively engage with one another in order to share child-rearing responsibilities," was found to increase contact between children and nonresident fathers (Sobolewski & King, 2005, p. 1198). It was also found to improve the quality of that contact, regardless of any particular child's characteristics. However, parental conflict or disagreement concerning the time a nonresident father spends with his children was shown in two separate studies to have no notable effect on the amount of contact fathers have with their children (King & Heard, 1999; Sobolewski & King, 2005).

One important dimension regulating parental relations regarding children following separation is the presence of a custody agreement between parents. Most research on custody has examined the question of who receives custody

of children following separation (Cancian & Meyer, 1998; Fox & Kelly, 1995; Juby, Le Bourdais, & Marcil-Gratton, 2005). Yet the existence of a custody agreement has rarely been taken into consideration in previous research on father-child contact following separation. One of the few studies addressing this relationship found that fathers with joint legal custody of their children had an increased number of visits and overnight stays with their children (Seltzer, 1998). Given this finding, one could speculate that legal custody agreements that outline the physical custody of a child would have an even greater impact on the amount of father-child contact. Within the context of separation, the ability of parents to reach a custody arrangement reflects their ability to cooperate on behalf of their children regardless of the degree of conflict between them. Less parental conflict may therefore lead to custody agreements that are not legally binding, and indeed many parents have only oral agreements between themselves regarding the custody of their children. Greater parental conflict, on the other hand, may require a more rigidly adhered to legal arrangement mandated by a judge through the courts. Regardless of the type, we expect that the presence of any custody agreement should therefore lead to increased father-child contact as compared to children whose parents have no agreement in place. Furthermore, we expect fathers with agreements not requiring judicial assistance to have greater contact than those with judicially mandated agreements.

Fathers' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Also of significance to the amount of involvement nonresident fathers have in their children's lives are a number of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the fathers themselves. For instance, recent research has focused on factors such as racial/ethnic background, fathers' incomes, and the family dynamics/trajectories of fathers in new unions.

Fathers' racial and ethnic backgrounds—often in concert with structural socioeconomic factors—appear to influence the ways in which fathers interact with their children, but not the total amount of contact that they have (King, Harris, & Heard, 2004). Hence, fathers of different ethnic backgrounds and educational experiences were found to pursue different types of activities or modes of communication with their children. They did not, however, appear to significantly differ in the overall levels of contact once their socioeconomic characteristics were taken into account. For instance, controlling for the low level of schooling achieved and the high rates of nonmarital births observed among minority groups resulted in the elimination of the gap separating fathers in the amount of contact they have with their children. The fact that an “ethnic effect” can mostly be accounted

for by other sociodemographic factors suggests that it is not important to control for ethnicity in our present analysis; therefore, we do not include any categorical measure of ethnicity in our study.

Lower incomes related to structural factors in society, such as low levels of education, can directly contribute to decreased amounts of time that nonresident fathers spend with their children (King et al., 2004). This finding is supported by previous research that suggests that the costs of maintaining contact with children for a nonresident father can be quite high—as high as 40% of the costs of maintaining a child in a medium-income intact family or more than half the costs in an intact low-income family (Henman & Mitchell, 2001). These costs relate to nonresident fathers' need to maintain an infrastructure and environment suitable for child visits throughout the year regardless of the frequency of actual visits. Furthermore, given that the nature of many nonresident father-child visits tends toward leisure activities, costs can be considerable (Jenkins & Lyons, 2006). These additional costs demonstrate the extent to which the total cost of having children greatly increases when parents separate.

Lower incomes also appear to be closely linked to the degree of compliance with child support provision. In one study, low-income fathers were shown to be required to pay approximately 27% of their income for child support, in contrast to 16% to 19% for higher income individuals (Huang, Mincy, & Garfinkel, 2005). This higher burden of child support on low-income fathers was shown to significantly decrease their compliance with child support agreements and thus to reduce the amount of support given. Considering that mothers and children face many more economic challenges following separation and divorce than fathers (Bartfeld, 2000), this diminished child support can have a great impact on a father's nonresident children.

Among other factors, fathers' new family dynamics and the complexity of their parenting responsibilities appear to directly contribute to the amount of contact and child support offered by nonresident fathers. New unions do not in all cases affect the amount of father-child contact, but the birth of biological children in a newly formed union has been shown to decrease the amount of contact between fathers and nonresident children (Manning & Smock, 1999). A father's parenting responsibilities can be ordered on a scale ranging from simple to complex, depending on whether he has biological children from single or multiple unions, to which stepchildren can be added. Recent research found that higher parental complexity—that is, responsibility for new biological children or stepchildren in a new union—decreased the likelihood of child support payments but had little effect on visitation

(Manning et al., 2003). As such, the parenting trajectories of nonresident fathers are of significant interest when examining the level of contact and child support offered to their biological children from previous unions. We expect that those fathers who have entered into new unions and have new children or stepchildren present will spend less time with their children from a prior union than those fathers who have formed no further unions.

Father's attitudes toward parenting and his children. Along with sociodemographic characteristics, a father's attitudes toward parenting relationships and his children have also been shown to directly influence the amount of time he spends with them. Fathers who value being a parent and fathers who are satisfied with the time they spend with their children are more likely to spend more time with them than those who are not (Cooksey & Craig, 1998; Le Bourdais et al., 2002). In keeping with this previous research, we expect that fathers who display attitudes that are positive toward being a parent and positive toward the relationships they share with the child will spend more time with their children.

Child-Level Factors

Sociodemographic characteristics of children that have been shown to have some relationship with the amount of time they spend with their nonresident or separated fathers include age, gender, union type at birth, and the distance between their parents' residences. All of these factors appeared to be associated with the amount of contact children have with their father, but in the case of the distance variable the direction of the causality is not clearly specified (see below).

Children's gender has been included in many studies of father-child contact, with mixed results. Cooksey and Craig (1998) found no gender effect on the amount of in-person contact between nonresident fathers and their children, although they found that boys were more likely to have telephone contact with their fathers. Other studies have also found no significant effect of the child's gender on the amount of time spent with a nonresident or separated father (Le Bourdais et al., 2002; Manning et al., 2003). However, other research has demonstrated that the child's gender can affect the amount and types of contact between father and child, suggesting that boys are more likely than girls to experience greater amounts of contact with a nonresident father (King et al., 2004). Furthermore, earlier research on the impact of gender on custody arrangements for children following the separation of their parents suggested that the child's gender played a significant

role in custody decisions and thus on the amount of contact between father and child (Fox & Kelly, 1995). Despite this mixed evidence, as a previous analysis based on an earlier similar Canadian survey has shown no gender effect on the child's amount of contact with a separated father (Le Bourdais et al., 2002), we expect to find no gender effect in the present analysis.

Previous research has shown mixed evidence regarding whether the age of children can influence the amount of time fathers spend with them. A positive relationship between children's age and the amount of contact has been reported in some studies, suggesting that fathers spend more time with older children (Manning et al., 2003; Seltzer, 1991). Other research has shown that the relationship between a child's age and the amount of contact is nonlinear and fluctuates as the child goes through different development stages (Le Bourdais et al., 2002). This conflicting evidence regarding children's age can be addressed by taking into account the timing of parental separation. Seltzer (1991), for example, compared cases where separation had occurred within the past 5 years with those that occurred earlier, showing that a child's age has a significant impact only in the case of more recent separations. As such, measuring the child's age relative to the timing of separation may be a more appropriate approach to controlling for this variable.

Much research in this area has addressed the importance of the relationship context into which a child is born. Whether children are born to a married couple, to a cohabiting couple, or outside of a conjugal union altogether has been shown in some research to influence the amount of father-child contact, with children born into marriage more likely to have greater contact with their fathers (Cooksey & Craig, 1998). When considering out-of-wedlock births, recent research has shown that nonresident fathers are more likely to provide child support and have more regular contact with children when their paternity of that child is established in the hospital at the time of birth, in contrast to fathers who have not had their paternity officially recorded or those for whom paternity was established outside of the hospital after birth (Mincy, Garfinkel, & Nepomnyaschy, 2005). Another study has found no significant relationship between the conjugal context and the amount of father-child contact, suggesting instead that the type of union at the birth of the child influences contact only through interaction with other variables such as the child's age (Le Bourdais et al., 2002). Based on this previous Canadian research, we expect to find no relationship between contact and union type at birth.

The final child-level factor that is examined in most analyses of the amount of father-child contact between nonresident or separated fathers is the actual physical location of father and child, measuring the distance

between the parental residences. This physical distance has been shown to sharply affect the amount of contact between father and child, as greater distances can distinctly limit the number of days a child spends with his or her father (Cooksey & Craig, 1998; Le Bourdais et al., 2002; Manning et al., 2003; Seltzer, 1991). However, as previous studies have pointed out, it is not clear whether fathers' decision to live near their children is a cause or consequence of their parental engagement. In other words, does fathers' commitment to maintaining close relationships with their children dictate the choice of where they live or, conversely, does their place of residence affect the level of contact that they maintain with their children (Bradshaw, Stimson, Skinner, & Williams, 1999; Le Bourdais et al., 2002)? Clearly, the direction of causality is an open question that cannot be adequately addressed with retrospective survey data of the type we have.¹ Consequently, physical distance between parents' residences will not be included in the final models presented here.

Data and Method

The present analysis is based on a sample of fathers and their children drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS) on family conducted by Statistics Canada in 2001. The 2001 GSS interviewed a large sample of approximately 24,000 adult men and women representative of the Canadian population aged 15 years and older.² In addition to a variety of socioeconomic characteristics, the GSS collected the complete conjugal and parental histories for all male and female respondents. Respondents were asked to provide information about all the unions (marriages and cohabiting unions) that they experienced; they were also asked about all the children that they gave birth to, adopted, or raised.³

By using this retrospective information, we were able to identify all male respondents who had fathered—or adopted—children through the course of their lives. To examine the issue of father–child contact following separation, we first selected all respondents who had at least one biological/adopted child aged 17 years or younger and retained only those who were living apart from the mother of these children at the time of the survey.⁴ As fathers with more than one child are likely to spend different amounts of time with each of them, we constructed a sample of children comprising all those aged 0 to 17 in 2001. Our resulting sample consisted originally of 1,080 children reported by 738 fathers.

Dependent Variable

The measure we use to model father–child contact following a separation consists of the reported number of days the father spent with each child in the 12 months preceding the survey.⁵ Fathers living apart from their children's mother were asked to provide the amount of time (number of days, weeks, or months) that each child spent in their household during the 12 months prior to the survey; they were also asked to estimate the amount of time that each child spent with his or her mother. This information was recoded as a number of days in the data file released by Statistics Canada. For a few cases, we had to adjust the reported number of days by combining other information included in the data file. For instance, fathers who answered earlier in the questionnaire that their children lived in their household "all of the time" were not asked about the number of days that they spent with them. We estimated this number by subtracting from 365 the number of days these children spent with their mothers.

The first column of Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of children by the reported number of days they spent with their fathers in the 12 months preceding the survey, after excluding children for which this information was missing.⁶ Approximately one fifth of the 920 children identified by fathers spent 10 months or more with them in the year prior to the survey. At the other end of the ladder, 14% of children saw their fathers less than 7 days during the past 12 months; nearly a quarter (22%) spent 1 week to 2 months with their fathers, and 21% did so for 2 to 5 months. The high percentage of children spending 10 months or more with their father reflects those children who are living predominantly with him following separation. This relatively high figure, compared to that which is commonly observed in studies focusing on children of separated parents, is in large part attributable to a selectivity problem, that is, to the difficulty of reaching all fathers who are not living with the mother of their children.

The GSS spent considerable effort in trying to reach separated fathers not residing with their children's mothers. Yet the survey appears to have missed a substantial number of fathers, as did previous studies conducted in the United States (Garfinkel, McLanahan, & Hanson, 1998; Rendall, Clarke, Peters, Ranjit, & Verropolou, 1999). From the answers provided by female respondents, we were able to identify the number of children reported by mothers not living with the father of their children and to calculate the amount of father–child contact for each child. The numbers of children reported separately by mothers and fathers cannot be directly compared as they do not refer to children of the same families. This is because only one

Table 1
Distribution (in %) of Biological or Adopted Children Aged 0–17
Reported by Their Father or Mother, According to the
Number of Days Spent With Their Father in
the 12 Months Preceding the Survey

Number of Days Spent With Father	Reported by	
	Father ^b	Mother
None	9.4 (6.8)	22.4
1-6 days (<1 week)	4.6 (4.9)	12.3
7-29 days (<1 month)	9.9 (10.5)	14.3
30-59 days (1-2 months)	12.1 (12.5)	14.8
60-149 days (2-5 months)	21.3 (23.0)	17.0
150-209 days (5-7 months)	15.2 (15.5)	9.1
210-299 days (7-10 months)	6.1 (5.6)	3.1
300-365 days (≥10 months)	21.2 (21.3)	6.9
Total	100 (100)	100
N ^a of children	920 (859)	1,660
N ^a of fathers/mothers	629 (590)	1,095

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 15: The Family (2001).

a. Weighted data are brought back to the original sample size.

b. In parentheses are the distributions of the final sample retained in the analysis after excluding cases with missing data on one or several covariates.

parent and not both parents of children were interviewed in the GSS survey. Assuming that the number of children of parents living apart reported by fathers should roughly match that reported by mothers, the comparison of the two figures confirms the underrepresentation of fathers in our sample. As shown in Table 1, the number of children reported by mothers is significantly larger than that reported by fathers (1,660 vs. 920). Furthermore, we find discrepancies in the amount of father–child contact between children reported by their fathers and those reported by their mothers. Mothers are more likely to report less father–child contact for their children, and fathers tend to report greater amounts. Hence, according to mothers' reports, 22% of the children had no contact with their fathers in the 12 months preceding the survey, a proportion that is nearly 2.5 times larger than that (9%) reported by fathers. Conversely, 21% of the children mentioned by fathers spent 10 months or more with them, whereas only 7% of those declared by mothers did so.

Although rather large, the differences observed here between mothers' and fathers' declarations are consistent with those documented previously by other researchers analyzing father–child contact. For instance, Garfinkel

et al. (1998) observed that fathers' reports led to an underestimation of roughly 40% of nonresident fathers, when compared to mothers' reports. In another study, Rendall et al. (1999, p. 142) found that "one third to one half of men's nonmarital births and births within previous marriages are missed" in U.S. retrospective surveys. The dearth of children reported by fathers is, in large part, due to the fact that surveys have more difficulty contacting separated fathers than mothers, thus leading to an underrepresentation of fathers. In addition, fathers are more likely to underreport the number of children they had, especially those with whom they have little contact or with whom they never lived⁷ (Coley & Morris, 2002; Juby & Le Bourdais, 1999; Le Bourdais et al., 2002; Lin, Schaeffer, Seltzer, & Tuschen, 2004; Rendall et al., 1999). Consequently, studies based on fathers' reports are likely to comprise a larger fraction of those who are closely involved with their children in the first place and thus cannot provide good estimates of the frequency of father-child contact for all children of separated parents. However, as long as the selectivity of the sample is kept in mind when interpreting the results, the information provided by fathers can shed some interesting light on why some fathers remain more closely involved than others with their children.

Our study focuses on the impact of fathers' characteristics on the amount of contact that they have with their children. Because mother respondents were not asked about the sociodemographic or attitudinal characteristics of the fathers, their former partners, the information that they provided could not be used. Only biological and adopted minor children reported by their fathers are thus used in the analysis that follows. Unlike some research in this field that focuses only on nonresident fathers, our study includes not only nonresident fathers but also all fathers who are not living with the mothers of their children. It thus comprises some fathers who live with their children on a full- or part-time basis. We chose to do so in an attempt to avoid excluding children who were not residing with their mother at the time of the survey, but who may have done so earlier.

The final analytical sample retained in the following analyses, after excluding cases with missing data on one or several independent variables, comprises 859 children who were reported by 590 fathers. Comparing the percentages of children according to the level of father-child contact between the full sample of fathers with the analytical sample shows only minimal changes in the distribution (compare the two series of percentages in the first column of Table 1). Further analysis of those observations excluded from the sample because of missing data demonstrated no noticeable patterns that would affect the estimates obtained in our subsequent analysis.

Independent Variables

A number of fathers reported two or more children, who may be of different gender and age groups and with whom they may have different levels of contact. To fully capture the effects that both fathers' and children's characteristics exert on the amount of time that they spend together, our analyses include covariates that are measured separately at the child and father levels.

Child-level covariates. Previous research has shown that certain child-level characteristics can play important roles in the amount of time a father spends with his children. Although this is not the primary focus of our study, we control for a number of these factors in our analysis. Table 2 shows the distribution of each covariate measured at the child-level in our sample.

We include three sociodemographic variables at the child level: gender, age, and time elapsed since the parents separated. To control for the effect of gender, we use boys as the reference category. They constitute roughly half (52.1%) of the sample (Table 2). To control for the age of the child, we include not the child's actual age at time of survey but instead the age of the child at separation; it is entered as a continuous measure in the analysis. For children born outside a union, the age at separation is set to zero. The inclusion of children born to parents not living together at the time of the birth explains the high proportion (32.6%) of children aged 0 to 1 year at separation. Finally, time since separation is included as a continuous measure of the time in years since the child last lived with both mother and father. The maximum duration since separation is 17 years, reflecting the fact that no child in our sample is above that age.

The relationship context into which each child was born is captured in a variable we constructed reflecting the union type at birth, using data available on the union histories of the fathers. Four types of relationship are identified at the birth of each child: birth out of union; birth to cohabiting parents; and birth to a married couple, among which we distinguish married couples who had cohabited before marrying. Direct marriage is used as the reference category. The majority of children in our sample were born into a marriage (64.7%), with roughly two thirds of those born to parents who married directly, while the smallest group (17.4%) consists of children born outside of a union (Table 2).

Fathers were asked if they were satisfied with the living arrangements (broadly referring to custody and financial arrangements) reached for each of their children. As shown in Table 2, roughly one father out of five

Table 2
Weighted Descriptive Statistics of the Characteristics at the Child Level Included in Analysis of the Time That Separated Fathers Spend With Their Children^a

Variable	Category	Frequency
Sex of the child	Boys	52.1
	Girls	47.9
Age of child at separation	0-1 year	32.6
	2-5 years	32.9
	6-11 years	27.1
	12-17 years	7.4
Time elapsed since separation	0-1 year	17.8
	2-4 years	24.4
	5-9 years	36.2
	10-17 years	21.6
Type of union at birth	Marriage	42.9
	Marriage preceded by cohabitation	21.8
	Cohabitation	17.9
	Out of union	17.4
Father satisfied with child's living arrangement	Yes	78.2
	No	21.8
Custody agreement	None	10.5
	Oral agreement	27.5
	Written agreement; judge	31.6
	Written agreement; legal assistance	22.3
	Written agreement; no legal assistance	8.2

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 15: The Family (2001).

a. Weighted data ($N = 859$ children).

reported being dissatisfied with the living arrangements of the child. Fathers who are satisfied with the arrangements concerning child support and custody have been shown in previous work to spend more time with their children (Le Bourdais et al., 2002).

The GSS also asked fathers if they had reached a formal or verbal agreement concerning the custody arrangements made for each of their children. Based on their responses, we have constructed a categorical variable encompassing five possibilities: no agreement existed at the time of the survey, an oral agreement existed, a written agreement was reached with a judge's assistance, a written agreement was concluded with other legal assistance, and a written agreement was reached with no legal assistance.

Table 3
Weighted Descriptive Statistics of the Characteristics at the
Father Level Included in Analysis of the Time
That Separated Fathers Spend With Their Children^a

Variable	Category	Frequency
Age of father	<30 years	11.8
	30-39 years	35.0
	40-49 years	44.1
	≥50 years	9.1
Highest level of education	No high school diploma	17.6
	Secondary diploma	23.4
	Postsecondary	43.4
	University	15.6
Income earned in past 12 months (in Can\$)	<\$20,000	16.6
	\$20,000-\$29,999	15.7
	\$30,000-\$49,999	36.3
	≥\$50,000	31.3
Conjugal and parental trajectory	No subsequent union; no current partner	53.3
	Subsequent union; no current partner	8.1
	Partner present; no other children	15.0
	Partner and other children present	23.7
Happy to have had children	Strongly agree	47.4
	Agree	48.3
	Disagree	4.3
Satisfied with time spent with children	Very satisfied	33.5
	Somewhat satisfied	44.2
	Dissatisfied	22.3

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 15: The Family (2001).

a. Weighted data ($N = 590$ fathers).

We have used fathers with a written agreement involving judicial assistance as the reference category. Table 2 shows that approximately 90% of fathers have some sort of custody agreement in place with their children's mother, and more than 60% of fathers have some form of written agreement in place. In contrast to those parents with either no agreement or with a court-mandated agreement in place, we expect separated parents who have reached a verbal or written agreement without any legal or judicial assistance to have less conflict in their relationships, thus allowing for increased amount of time spent by fathers with their children.

Father-level covariates. At the father level of our analysis, we include sociodemographic and attitudinal variables. Table 3 shows the distribution of these father-level characteristics in our sample. The father's age is accounted for in our models by including the father's age at the time of the GSS interview in 2001. As with children's age, we expect this relationship to be significant and the amount of time spent with the child to decrease as the father ages (Le Bourdais et al., 2002). As shown in Table 3, more than 40% of the fathers included in our sample fall in the category of 40-49 years of age (44.1%).

We account for the father's socioeconomic status by including measures of education and income in our analysis. GSS respondents were asked to state their highest level of education achieved. These responses were coded into four categories: those without a secondary degree; those who have obtained a secondary diploma; those who have completed some postsecondary education; and the reference category, those with a university education. Table 3 shows that more than half of our sample has experienced some postsecondary or university education (59%). Respondents' incomes during the year prior to the survey were coded into a categorical variable with the following groups: less than \$20,000; \$20,000-\$29,999; \$30,000-\$49,999; and the reference category of more than \$50,000 (in Canadian dollars throughout). Roughly a third of the fathers included in our sample earn less than \$30,000 annually; a third earn between \$30,000 to \$49,999; and a third earn \$50,000 or more. Because of a high level of nonresponse to questions about income in the 2001 GSS, we imputed income for approximately 80 father respondents who would have otherwise been lost to our sample.⁸ We chose to include income in our models rather than some measure of employment status, as we felt it better captured the issue of the economic wherewithal available to fathers to offer support to and afford contact with their children (Henman & Mitchell, 2001; Huang et al., 2005).⁹

Using respondents' replies to GSS questions regarding their subsequent union and parenting histories, we constructed a variable to account for fathers' union and parenting experiences following separation with their child's mother. This categorical variable includes four groups: fathers with no partner at the time of the survey and who had not experienced any subsequent unions since separation (the reference category); fathers who have had subsequent union(s) but had no partner at the time of the survey; fathers living with a partner at the time of the survey but with no other children present in the union household; and fathers living with a partner and with other children (either stepchildren or children born in the new union) present

in the union household. Approximately half of our fathers sample falls into the reference category of having no new partner and no subsequent unions since separation, and a quarter lives with a new partner and children other than the children they had in a previous union (Table 3).

In contrast to the 1995 GSS on family, the 2001 cycle collected very little information on fathers' attitudes toward family life, but it did gather some data on their level of satisfaction about the state of the current relationship with their children. The first question relates to their paternal role. Fathers were asked if "having children made them happier." Close to half of those who participated in the survey either agreed (48.3%) or strongly agreed (47.4%) that children constituted a source of happiness in their lives, and only 4.3% disagreed with this statement (Table 3).

Fathers were asked if they were satisfied with the amount of time they spent with their children on the whole. This variable contrasts fathers who declared themselves as very or somewhat satisfied with the situation with those who were not or not very satisfied with it. Table 3 shows that roughly a third of fathers declared being very satisfied with the time they spent with their children, and one father out of five expressed dissatisfaction regarding the time that they spent on the whole with their children.

Method

Because our sample includes many siblings who share the same father but who might have different living arrangements or frequency of contact with him, we need to use a method that accounts for the nested structure of our sample. Children (Level 1) need to be seen as nested in the common characteristics of their fathers (Level 2). Without addressing this hierarchical structure of our data, our standard error estimates would fail to account for unobserved heterogeneity between fathers and the correlation between children who share the same father, leading to inaccurate interpretation of the statistical significance of our covariates (Hox, 1995; Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2006; Skrondal & Rabe-Hesketh, 2004; Teachman & Crowder, 2002). Therefore, we adopted a multilevel random intercept model that takes account of the nested structure of our data. This mixed-model approach allows us to analyze the fixed effects of covariates at the child and father levels, while at the same time addressing the random effects of dependence within clusters of children sharing the same father. To obtain unbiased estimates and standard errors, we made use of the GSS sample and bootstrap weights provided by Statistics Canada to account for the stratified and clustered sample survey design. All results presented in Table 4 reflect

Table 4
Coefficients for Two-Level Random Intercept Model Predicting
Time Spent Between Separated Fathers and Their Children^a

Variable ^b	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	10.005***	10.277***	10.935***	13.210***	7.523***
Child level					
Sex of child (male)		-0.996**		-1.035**	-0.958**
Time since separation		-0.072		0.033	-0.016
Child's age at separation		0.218*		0.221*	0.246**
Union type at birth (direct marriage)					
No union		-0.590		-1.179	-0.688
Marriage preceded by cohabitation		-0.135		0.135	-0.401
Cohabitation		-0.280		0.198	-0.098
Satisfied with living arrangements of child (no)					2.362***
Custody agreement (written agreement; judge's ruling)					
None					0.373
Oral agreement					-0.259
Written agreement; legal assistance					-0.661
Written agreement; no legal assistance					-0.319
Father level					
Age at time of survey			0.025	-0.044	-0.626 [†]
Education level (university)					
Some secondary or less			0.193	-0.048	0.017
Secondary			-0.317	-0.366	-0.017
Postsecondary			-0.122	-0.134	0.021
Income level in Can\$ (≥\$50,000)					
<\$20,000			-1.382 [†]	-1.163	-0.825
\$20,000-29,999			-2.418*	-2.485**	-2.456*
\$30,000-49,999			-0.748	-0.536	-0.420
Conjugal parental trajectory (no partner or subsequent union)					
No partner; subsequent union			-0.857	-0.948	-0.203
Partner; no other children			-3.987***	-4.059***	-3.538***
Partner; other children			-0.842	-0.934	-0.061
Happy to have had child (disagree)					
Agree					1.397

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Variable ^b	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Strongly agree					2.551 [†]
Satisfied with time spent with children (dissatisfied)					
Somewhat satisfied					3.008***
Very satisfied					4.294***
Variance: Level 1	11.218	11.740	12.205	12.253	10.787
Variance: Level 2	24.202	21.680	19.966	18.329	16.516
Log likelihood	-2,328,162	-2,309,103	-2,306,361	-2,289,241	-2,239,311

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 15: The Family (2001).

a. Weighted data, brought back to the original sample size ($N_1 = 859$ children and $N_2 = 590$ fathers).

b. Reference category for categorical variables is shown in parentheses.

[†] $p < .1$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Significance using bootstrapped standard errors.

standard errors derived from resampling each model 200 times during the bootstrapping process.

In our multilevel models, the dependent variable is transformed and included as the square root of the total number of days spent with the father in the previous 12 months. This transformation provided for a more normal distribution of the variable.

Results

The results in Table 4 reflect the fixed effect coefficients of the child- and father-level covariates in our models. Statistical significance is based on standard errors derived from resampling with bootstrap weights provided for the GSS by Statistics Canada. Model 1 shows only the constant and the variance at both levels. When squared, the constant corresponds to the mean number of days fathers spent with their children, approximately 100 days. The variances, given at the bottom of Table 4, show that the father level is responsible for approximately 68% of the observed variation in the days spent with the child. Put differently, it indicates that fathers more or less have the same frequency of contact with each of their children.

Model 2 includes the covariates at the child level. Contrary to our expectations, girls are shown to experience reduced number of days spent with their fathers when compared to boys. Based on previous studies, we expected to find no significant relationship between the gender of the children and the

amount of time they spend with their fathers. One explanation for this result might come from the fact that in contrast with analyses that include only nonresident fathers, our study comprises separated fathers who may also reside with their children. As such, past research showing that fathers are more likely to have custody of boys rather than girls might be able to explain our result here (Juby et al., 2005).

The age of the child at separation turns out to be positively linked to the amount of contact that fathers have with their children: The older they are at the time of separation, the greater the amount of time children spend with their fathers. This result supports our expectation, and it confirms the importance of the point in time at which parental separation occurs in children's lives. Maintaining father-child contact after separation appears to be directly related to the amount of time fathers had to create close ties through daily interactions with their children.

In keeping with past research and our expectations, the type of union at birth shows no significant relationship with the amount of time fathers spend with their children following separation, once controlling for the child's gender and age. None of the various union-type coefficients are significantly different from that of direct marriage (the reference category). Moreover, additional statistical tests between pairs of union-type categories (such as between children born outside a union and those born in a marriage preceded by cohabitation) revealed no significant differences.¹⁰

Model 3 includes only the sociodemographic characteristics of the father. Among these, only the income level and family trajectories of fathers appear to be significantly linked to the degree of contact they have with their children. The coefficients presented in Table 4 first reveal that fathers earning less than \$30,000 annually are likely to see their children less often than those earning \$50,000 or more per year. These results support the findings of previous research that suggest that fathers who face difficulties in fulfilling their economic responsibilities toward their children might partly withdraw from their parental role and thus diminish the frequency of contact with their children. This situation probably more strongly affects fathers with incomes that are relatively low but too high to qualify for social assistance programs. The fact that fathers reporting a yearly income between \$20,000 and \$29,999 appear to more substantially reduce the amount of time they spend with their children than those who earn less than \$20,000 gives credit to this interpretation.

Another explanation related to time availability can also be advanced to account for the difference observed between these two low-income groups of fathers, a difference that turns out to be statistically significant at the $p < .1$

level. Indeed, a close examination of our data revealed that more than half of fathers in the lowest income category did not declare employment as their main activity in the 12 months preceding the survey. The activities mentioned included education, looking for work, retirement, long-term illness, and child care provision. In contrast, more than 90% of fathers earning \$20,000 or more reported employment as their main activity in the previous year. This suggests that fathers in the lowest income category in our sample are pursuing activities that may facilitate dedicating time to their children, whereas those in the \$20,000 to \$29,000 category are probably more likely to be in jobs that afford them less flexibility in their schedules and thus contribute to reducing the time they have for their children.

In terms of the conjugal and parental trajectories of fathers, those who currently live with a partner in a new union were expected to see their children less often than those fathers who are not involved in a union. This result is confirmed by our analysis, but only for fathers living with a new partner while no other children are implicated; the level of contact with children among this group of fathers is significantly lower than that of fathers who were not previously engaged in a new union. In a sense, and as found in other research, the existence of a new romantic relationship to which no parental responsibilities are attached would seem more detrimental to father-child contact than the presence of other children per se. In fact, the presence of children in the new partner's life probably makes it easier for fathers to engage in kid-friendly activities with their own children while developing a new intimate relationship.

Model 4 incorporates the sociodemographic characteristics at both the child and father levels. No noticeable changes in the coefficients are observed, except perhaps the effect of low income (\$20,000-\$29,999) that is no longer statistically significant.

In Model 5, the variables related to fathers' satisfaction with their children's living arrangements, their attitude toward paternity, and the presence of custody agreements are entered into the analysis at the level at which they were measured. Although attitudes regarding the happiness that comes with being a parent appear to significantly influence the amount of father-child contact only for those who strongly agree (coefficient significant at the $p < .1$ level), views on the access they have to their children appear to substantially affect the amount of contact they experience. Indeed, those fathers who describe themselves as either very or somewhat satisfied with the time spent with their children and those who report being satisfied with their child's living arrangements are shown to have a significantly higher level of contact than those who are dissatisfied. Unfortunately, because of the cross-sectional

nature of our data, it is not possible to draw conclusions regarding the direction of the relationship between satisfaction and the number of days the father spends with his child. Is the satisfaction expressed by fathers concerning the arrangements in place the cause or the consequence of the amount of time they spend with their children? Our data do not allow us to answer this question; however, the data do suggest that when fathers' expectations concerning their relationships with their children are met—something more likely to occur when minimal levels of tension or conflict exist between separated parents—they tend to increase their level of involvement with their children.

Model 5 also incorporates the question of custody agreements. In contrast to our expectations that fathers who had concluded custody agreements without judicial assistance would spend more time with their children, our results show that this is not the case. Indeed, the type of custody agreement, or absence thereof, shows no significant differential impact on the time a father spends with his child following separation. Each of the four types of custody we tested are not associated with significantly different amounts of father-child contact when compared to fathers with a judicially assisted agreement in place.¹¹ Our finding runs contrary to our expectation that certain custody agreements would increase the amount of time a father spends with his children.

Keeping in touch with children is, of course, far easier for fathers who live with their children on a regular basis. As previous research showed that father and shared physical custody arrangements appear to be positively associated with family incomes and with the age of children (Juby et al., 2005), one might expect predictors of time spent with children to differ between resident and nonresident fathers. To test this, we decided to conduct separate analyses for resident and nonresident fathers. However, the number of resident fathers, here defined as those living full-time with their children and spending 10 months or more with them,¹² was too few to allow for a separate analysis.

The comparison of the results based on the whole sample to those including only nonresident fathers (data not shown)¹³ reveals largely similar results, except for a few differences that are worth noting. Among nonresident fathers, time elapsed since separation appeared more closely linked to the frequency of father-child contact than the age of the child at separation. In addition to fathers living solely with a new partner, those living with a partner and children were also found to spend less time with their own children, as compared to fathers who were not involved in a union. Finally, fathers' satisfaction with the living arrangements of each child and attitudes

toward paternity no longer appeared to significantly influence the time spent with children.¹⁴

Discussion

Although past research on the topic of father–child contact has focused to a great extent on sociodemographic factors, the results of our analysis suggest that perhaps researchers need to pay greater attention to the practicalities of contact that stem from the situational contexts of the financial affordability of contact, the other draws on a father’s family time as a result of new unions he may have formed, and the question of strictures placed on the father–child relationship by custody agreements. Taking into consideration these factors may help to shape our understanding of how fathers relate to their children following separation through the lens of what level of contact is in fact feasible to maintain given other demands in their lives.

The costs of maintaining contact with children have been well documented, and our results showing that fathers with lower incomes experience a decreased amount time spent with their children can be explained in a number of ways identified in earlier research on this subject. First, the costs associated with maintaining contact with children following separation can be disproportionately high for low-income parents (Henman & Mitchell, 2001). If there is not sufficient income to facilitate the infrastructure for overnight visits and other activities, then a father may be less likely to spend time with his children. Second, those earning lower incomes are more likely to be working in low-paying, part-time, or shift-oriented work where they may not be available to their children when the latter are free, that is, in the evenings and weekends (Le Bourdais et al., 2002). These two constraints imposed by income earnings can therefore be considered a practical limitation on time available to spend with children. Without resources and the infrastructure necessary to meet children’s needs, fathers are limited by their economic situation and the constraints it places on their relationship with their children.

Spending time with children is, of course, facilitated for fathers who live with them on a full-time or regular basis. In our attempt not to exclude from the analysis fathers who had only recently started living with their children when the survey was conducted, we pooled together both resident and non-resident fathers in our sample. Restricting the analysis solely to nonresident fathers led to a few divergent results that suggest that different mechanisms might be at work depending on the residential situations of fathers. Hence,

when the analysis is restricted to nonresident fathers, the facts point to two different dynamics: The child's age at separation no longer significantly affects time spent with fathers, but time elapsed since separation does. First, this suggests that age at separation is closely associated with the probability of children to live with their fathers and, for those who do, duration since separation no longer matters. Second, for fathers not living on a daily or regular basis with children, this result suggests that as duration since separation increases and time takes its toll, the level of father-child contact progressively erodes.

Another related practical limitation on father-child contact has to do with the distance between the parents' residences. Visitation over long distances is a fundamentally more challenging prospect for both father and child than it is for a father who lives down the street from his children. The additional costs, time, and planning involved in maintaining contact over greater distance illustrate how fathers' time with their children can be limited by choices made by both parents regarding the location of their post-separation residences. This raises the question, however, of whether fathers' residential choices are a cause or consequence of their parental engagement. With almost 70% of the children in our sample living within 50 km of their fathers, we can likely conclude that the fathers reached by the GSS choose to locate themselves relatively close to their children following a separation, with 43% of children living closer than 10 km. This in itself is perhaps not that unexpected, given the nature of our sample that comprises an overrepresented fraction of fathers who are closely involved with their children to start with. The fathers who do choose to live at a greater distance from their children's mother may be attempting to avoid conflict with their former spouse or parenting duties that they may feel incapable of achieving. Some research has indeed demonstrated that fathers who feel they cannot meet their fathering obligations may be more likely to intentionally distance themselves from their children (Bradshaw et al., 1999). This is an important avenue of research that requires further exploration and for which better measures of pre-separation characteristics than those contained in our retrospective data are needed.

Another situational factor to consider is the father's conjugal and parental trajectory. Our findings show that one barrier to fathers and children spending a greater amount of time with each other is the presence in the father's life of a new conjugal partner with no children and, in the case of nonresident fathers, of a partner with children. This result is nothing new, but we would be remiss here to attempt to separate this factor from the other contexts of practicality addressed already. In this case, fathers with a new childless

partner may find themselves torn between spending time with their partner and spending time with their children. A new partner with no children may be more reluctant to share the father with children of a former partner, and at the same time, mothers may be more reluctant to allow their children to spend extended periods with their father's new partner if that person is seen as an untested or untrusted commodity in terms of parenting. Additionally, a new partner with no children may imply living conditions that do not allow for the father to ensure the infrastructural child-rearing context needed to facilitate greater contact, such as maintaining a separate spare room for his child's visits. Finally, nonresident fathers who have acquired additional parental responsibilities through living with a partner's children and/or fathering a new child might find it hard to balance their multiple roles and to set apart time for the children with whom they no longer live. In this case, the living conditions of the father work to impose obstacles to the practicality of visiting that can sharply diminish the time he spends with his children.

The level of contact that fathers maintain with their children is likely to be influenced not only by the changes happening in their own conjugal and parental trajectories but also by those affecting their children's mother. The arrival of a new "dad" in the household where their children are living is likely to deter some nonresident fathers from their financial responsibilities, to reduce the pressure on them to provide a role model, and potentially to create conflict. Unfortunately, the 2001 GSS did not collect any information on the conjugal and parenting histories of respondents' previous partners and thus cannot shed light on this question. However, the results of recently published research on parents' new unions and the frequency of father-child contact, based on a prospective survey following children, showed that "nonresident fathers do indeed reduce the frequency of visits once their children acquire a stepfather" and that changes in their level of contact are more closely linked to the mothers' subsequent conjugal histories than to their own (Juby et al., 2007, p. 1198).

Custody agreements appear to have no statistically significant impact on the time fathers spend with their children, though the results suggest a possible negative relationship. This again may be linked to practical constraints on the time fathers have to spend with their children. Does the actual presence of some types of custody agreements indicate some level of parental discord between mother and father? Do the agreements themselves actually place limits on fathers' amount of contact? Both of these factors could be the case, placing constraints on the time fathers are able to spend with their children. If agreements are followed diligently, then children may be

limited in their exposure to the other parent in cases where distance is an issue or where there are other constraints on fathers' available time such as shift work. These constraints, in combination with a custody agreement, may be a means of regimenting time spent with the child but may also create obstacles to allowing fathers to spend more time with their children following separation. In contrast to previous research showing a positive relationship between custody agreements and father-child contact, our unexpected findings of no relationship with custody agreements point to the need for further investigation of the role and influence of this factor on father-child contact following separation. Again, prospective survey data would be required to better understand to what extent the existence of custody agreements are adhered to by fathers as they move on with their lives.

The types of union into which children are born did not appear to significantly affect the amount of time that fathers spent with their children. Although in line with previous Canadian research, this result is intriguing in the light of U.S. studies that found children born into marriage to be more likely to have close contact with their fathers (Cooksey & Craig, 1998). The lack of difference separating children born to married and cohabiting parents can probably be partly explained by the increasing popularity of cohabiting unions as appropriate settings in which to have and raise children. However, the fact that children born outside of a union were not found to be significantly less likely to spend time with their fathers than those born into marriage is doubtlessly related to the particular nature of our sample of fathers. As opposed to most studies based on mothers' reports, to be part of our analysis, separated fathers first needed to be aware that they were the father of a child. The comparison of fathers' and mothers' reports further showed that our sample comprises a larger fraction of fathers closely involved with their children, which could explain the lack of differences observed between union types.

Our analysis using a large sample of separated fathers showed that practical limitations related to the situational context of fathers and children are important factors to consider in explaining variation in the amount of time that fathers and children spend with each other following separation. By adopting the point of view of fathers and including both resident and non-resident fathers, our study underlined the role that attitudes toward parenting relationships and children play in defining the amount of father-child contact. Whether or not they live on a regular basis with their children, fathers who expressed satisfaction toward the amount of time they spent with their children were found to have greater levels of contact with them. However, when restricted solely to nonresident fathers, the analysis showed

that satisfaction with custody and child support arrangements no longer appeared to significantly influence the time fathers spent with their children, nor did the appreciation of happiness related to being a parent. Although the retrospective nature of our data does not allow us to further investigate the causal mechanisms that are at work, the results do suggest that these factors first closely affect the residential living arrangements of children following separation, which in turn definitely influence the level of contact that fathers are able to maintain over the long run.

The main contribution of our study stems from the adoption of the point of view of fathers, rather than relying on mothers' reports, in analyzing father-child contact following separation. By taking such an approach, we were able to show how the practicalities that fathers experience in their lives influence the amount of time that they spent with their children. Our analysis is not, however, without limitations. Based on a retrospective survey of male and female respondents, our sample includes an overrepresented fraction of fathers who are closely involved with their children. To what extent is their level of involvement over time shaped by their children's own behaviors and aspirations? The GSS did not collect sufficient information on children that would enable us to answer such a question. However, a recently published study, based on a follow-up interview of adolescents, showed that the characteristics of children do directly influence the type and level of activities that they pursue with their nonresident fathers (Hawkins, Amato, & King, 2007). The results of this study suggest that separated fathers are more likely to remain closely involved with well-adjusted children and to progressively disengage with those who are facing behavioral and academic problems. They point to the necessity of simultaneously taking into consideration the point of view of fathers and that of the children involved if we are to better understand the dynamics at work. Unfortunately, very few surveys focus on both sides of the parent-child relation, and the GSS is no exception.

The data we used did not contain any information on pre-separation family characteristics that are likely to influence the future living arrangements of children, such as the income of both parents or the division of paid and unpaid work among the couple. Only prospective surveys that follow individuals and families over time are able to collect such information. Yet these surveys have often faced great difficulties in trying to follow fathers past separation, and most studies using these data have thus been forced to rely on mothers' reports and to ignore the fathers' perspectives. Until better ways to track fathers are found, the solution probably rests in the ability to conduct both types of research. The findings established in a given type of

research will further our understanding of father–child relationships after separation by raising new questions or avenues of research that can be explored with the other type of study. This is the goal we hope to have achieved through this analysis.

Notes

1. The authors are grateful to an anonymous referee for pointing out this problem.
2. This excludes the residents of Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut as well as those living in institutions.
3. In addition to a general data file comprising all the other information collected, Statistics Canada produced a union data file and a child data file. The union file contains detailed information on each union (date of formation, date and reason of dissolution, if applicable); the latter contains the date of birth of each child (and of arrival in the respondent's household, for adopted and stepchildren) as well as the date of departure from the respondent's household. By combining these two files, we were able to reconstruct the full conjugal and parenting histories of respondents.
4. A small number of children were excluded because the mother had died (31 cases) or because of lack of information on whether she was still alive (6 cases).
5. Other studies of this topic have utilized different measures of contact between father and child, including such things as the amount of telephone, Internet, or postal communication between parent and child. Indeed, the 2001 General Social Survey (GSS) includes a measure of all telephone, Internet, and postal communication, which was found to be highly correlated with the number of days reportedly spent with the father. We chose to use only the "days spent with father" measure because the "communication contact" information was not collected for fathers with whom children were residing, therefore requiring the elimination of resident fathers from our sample. Because our analysis purposefully includes both resident and non-resident fathers, we chose not to use this measure in the analysis.
6. Eighty children had to be excluded because of missing data on the conjugal history of their fathers (union status, timing, and duration). For 80 other children, fathers were not asked (42 cases), claimed not to know (24 cases), or did not provide information (14 cases) about the time they and the other parent spent with the child. Statistics Canada reported that some of these missing data appear to be due to the paths of the computer-administered questionnaire.
7. In fact, a number of fathers may not even be aware that they are the father of a child born outside a union.
8. A categorical income value was imputed using variables measuring education, full-time/part-time work status, weeks worked in the previous year, average hours worked per week in the previous year, age of respondent, and sex of respondent.
9. We conducted additional analyses including full-time/part-time employment status and shift-work variables. Introducing these variables into the analysis did not contribute to significantly increasing the fit of the models, in part because of the added number of observations lost due to missing values. Therefore, we chose to maintain our sample size and exclude these employment measures.
10. In alternative models, we also included a measure for distance between parents' residences. Children whose parents reside more than 50 km apart were found to spend less time with their father than those living closer than 10 km apart. The inclusion of this factor did not alter the direction or general magnitude of coefficients for the other variables. Despite this

finding, this factor was not included in our final analysis due to the endogenous nature of the relation between distance and time spent with children.

11. We also tested for differences between no custody agreement in place and all other types of agreement, and we found no statistically significant differences.

12. Unfortunately, the 2001 GSS did not collect any information on legal parental custody. However, for each of their children, respondents were asked if the child "lives in your household all the time, most of the time, part of the time, and not at all." Answers to this question did not closely match the number of days that fathers report spending with their children. Using these two sources of information, we defined "resident" fathers as those living full-time with their children and spending 10 months or more with them.

13. The data can be sent by request.

14. As suggested by one anonymous reviewer, we tried to test for interaction effects between living arrangements (i.e., between resident and nonresident fathers) and some of the independent variables (e.g., time elapsed since separation, age at separation, conjugal/parental trajectory, and fathers' satisfaction and attitudes) in a pooled model analysis. We first introduced one interaction term at a time in the equation comprising all covariates included in Model 5 and the resident/nonresident father variable. The residence status of fathers was found to exert a massive effect on the amount of time spent with children, a result that came as no surprise given that this covariate is partly defined by the dependent variable. Only two interaction terms (those with age of child and time elapsed since separation) were found to be statistically significant and to significantly increase the fit of the model. In two other cases (satisfaction with living arrangements and attitudes toward paternity), the interaction effect was found to be not significant and, in one case (conjugal/paternal status), the model could not be estimated. In a second step, we included in the same model the two interaction terms (with age of child and time elapsed) that were previously found to be significant. When included in the same equation, both coefficients became statistically nonsignificant. As they do not contribute to further the interpretation of our findings, the results of these analyses are not presented here but can be obtained by request.

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