

Expenses, norms or practical considerations? The effects of income and education on non-resident fathers' contact with their children

(Work in progress)

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Background

Incentives to promote more active fathering in Norway, also for non-resident fathers.

A father friendly welfare state?

Organisations of non-resident fathers campaign for political measures to ease extended contact with their children.

The costs of contact a central issue. Expenses may hinder contact.

Since 2002 parents have been required to share the children's travelling costs between them.

A new formula for regulating child support money in 2003. Extended contact now implies reduced payment.

The Ministry of children and gender equality wants to explore what factors promote and what factors hinder contact. The present project: Investigate the association between the non-resident fathers' socio-economic characteristics and their contact with absent children.



The socio-economic advantaged parenting perspective:

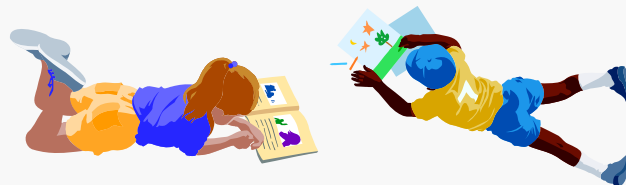
Socio-economic factors important for contact between non-resident fathers and their children.

Mixed results in prior research. Difficult to compare across surveys

- Dependent and independent variables defined differently
- Different control variables
- Some use the non-resident fathers' reports, others the resident mothers' reports
- Different samples

Some examples:

- Income as a continuous or categorical variable?
- Educational level as a dummy, a categorical variable or a continuous one?
- Explore the effect of poverty, or a general income effect?
- The effect of the father's personal income or household income?
- Some look at socio-economic characteristics of the resident mother
- Some look at in-person contact with the child, others include telephone- and letter contact
- Some look at contact on a weekly or monthly basis, others include vacations



Prior research in Norway

- Jensen and Clausen (1997): A strong association between the non-resident father's income, education and employment on the one hand, and the number of monthly contact days with children on the other. Bivariate analysis.
- Skevik and Hyggen (2002): No effect of the non-resident father's income on the number of monthly contact days with children.
- Skevik (2006): An effect of the non-resident father's use of social assistance and the probability of very little contact with children. No effect on frequent contact. Concludes that poverty is a challenge to continued fatherhood.



What do we do in the present paper?

Explore the effects of the father's socio-economic resources on his contact with absent children on a monthly basis and in vacations.

Dependent variables

Contact last month

Contact in vacations last year

Explanatory variables

The father's income

Education

Social assistance

Effects of the resident mother's socio-economic resources are not explored

Use the non-resident fathers' reports



Data

The survey *Contact arrangements and child maintenance 2004*

A sample of parents with children under 18 years of age with both parents living in Norway.
"Couples" of resident and non-resident parents.

Telephone survey

Non-resident parents reported their own contact with their absent children.
The resident parents reported the non-resident parents' contact.
Look at contact with the youngest child.

Gross sample: 2696 parents.

Response rate: 79 % among resident parents, 71 % among non-resident parents

Sample weights and non-response weights

Four groups of parents (net sample):

Resident mothers	1244
Non-resident fathers	1123
Resident fathers	174
Non-resident mothers	155

Dependent variables

- Number of contact days last month / Has seen the child last month
- Number of contact days in vacations last year/ Has seen the child in vacations

Independent variables

- The father's personal income (after tax and paid child support)
- The father's educational level
- Receives social assistance

Control variables

- The father's age
- The father is a student
- The father's health
- Number of full siblings
- Age of the focal child
- Relation to the child's mother (married, cohabiting or not)
- Time since split-up
- The father's present civil status
- Whether the father has biological children or stepchildren in present household
- Present partner has children living elsewhere
- Number of previous relationships with children
- Travelling time to the child's residence

Contact with children among various groups of non-resident fathers.

	Monthly contact		Vacation contact	
	Number of days, average	At least one day	Number of days, average	At least one day
All fathers	8.0	83	28.9	91
Father's income (Nkr)				
-149 999	6.2	70	23.2	82
150 000 – 199 999	7.6	82	25.4	88
200 000 – 249 999	8.1	85	29.5	93
250 000 – 299 999	9.0	90	33.3	96
300 000 +	9.0	87	32.1	93
Father's education				
Youth school/high school	7.9	82	28.0	89
University 1-4 years	8.2	88	32.6	95
University 5 years +	9.3	95	33.6	100
Social assistance				
No	8.2	85	29.5	91
Yes	6.5	68	22.8	80

Regression coefficients for number of days spent with children last month.
 Father's income continuous. N=1071

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Father's income (10 000 Nkr)	0.01		0.01	0.00
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		0.40	0.03	-0.34
University 5 years +		1.38	1.21	1.36
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			X	X
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			x	x
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			X	X
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			X	X
Number of previous relationships with children			X	X
Travelling time to child's residence				X
R ²	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.34

Regression coefficients for number of days spent with children last month.
 Father's income categorical. N=1071

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Father's income (ref: > 149 999 Nkr)				
150 000 - 199 999 Nkr	1.42		1.44	0.99
200 000 - 249 999 Nkr	1.84		1.85	1.87
250 000 - 249 999 Nkr	2.72		2.22	1.44
300 000 Nkr +	2.78		2.44	1.72
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		0.40	-0.23	-0.52
University 5 years +		1.38	0.83	1.07
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			X	X
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			x	x
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			X	X
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			X	X
Number of previous relationships with children			X	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X
R ²	0.03	0.00	0.18	0.34

Regression coefficients for number of days spent with children last month.
 Father receives social assistance. N=1071

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Social assistance (ref: No)				
Yes	-1.81		-1.62	-0.94
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		0.40	-0.02	-0.37
University 5 years +		1.38	1.22	1.37
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			X	X
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			x	x
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			X	X
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			X	X
Number of previous relationships with children			X	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X
R ²	0.01	0.00	0.17	0.34

Odds ratios for having seen the child last month. Father's income continuous.
 N=1071

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Father's income (10 000 Nkr)	1.00		1.00	1.00
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		1.88	1.55	1.61
University 5 years +		4.10	3.83	6.61
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			X	X
Father's health			X	X
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			x	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	x
Father's present civil status			x	x
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			X	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X

Odds ratios for having seen the child last month. Father's income categorical.
 N=1071

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Father's income (ref: > 149 999 Nkr)				
150 000 - 199 999 Nkr	2.06		2.50	2.50
200 000 - 249 999 Nkr	2.41		2.56	2.63
250 000 - 249 999 Nkr	3.85		3.26	2.69
300 000 Nkr +	3.14		2.57	2.34
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		1.88	1.43	1.56
University 5 years +		4.10	3.67	6.80
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			X	X
Father's health			X	X
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			X	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	x
Father's present civil status			x	x
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			X	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X

Odds ratios for having seen the child last month. Father receives social assistance.
 N=1071

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Social assistance (ref: No)				
Yes	0.37		0.40	0.44
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		1.88	1.52	1.62
University 5 years +		4.10	4.04	6.91
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			X	X
Father's health			X	X
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			X	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	x
Father's present civil status			x	x
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			X	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X

Regression coefficients for number of days spent with children in vacations.
 Father's income continuous. N=821

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Father's income (10 000 Nkr)	0.03		0.03	0.03
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		4.83	3.76	3.64
University 5 years +		5.43	4.99	4.21
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			x	X
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			X	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			x	x
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			x	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.09	0.11

Regression coefficients for number of days spent with children in vacations.
 Father's income categorical. N=821

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Father's income (ref: > 149 999 Nkr)				
150 000 - 199 999 Nkr	2.39		2.19	2.32
200 000 - 249 999 Nkr	6.71		6.30	6.45
250 000 - 249 999 Nkr	10.12		8.34	8.62
300 000 Nkr +	8.99		7.07	7.25
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		4.83	2.82	2.68
University 5 years +		5.43	3.64	2.75
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			x	x
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			X	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			x	x
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			x	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X
R ²	0.04	0.01	0.11	0.12

Regression coefficients for number of days spent with children in vacations.
 Father receives social assistance. N=821

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Social assistance (ref: No)				
Yes	-7.10		-5.47	-6.10
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University 1-4 years		4.83	3.74	3.63
University 5 years +		5.43	5.16	4.31
Father's age			x	x
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			x	x
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			X	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			x	x
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			x	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X
R ²	0.01	0.01	0.09	0.11

Odds ratios for having seen the child in vacations. Father's income continuous.
 N=821

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Father's income (10 000 Nkr)	1.02		1.01	1.01
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University		4.94	5.21	5.71
Father's age			X	X
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			x	x
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			x	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			X	X
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			x	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X

Odds ratios for having seen the child in vacations. Father's income categorical.
 N=821

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Father's income (ref: > 149 999 Nkr)				
150 000 - 199 999 Nkr	1.63		1.99	1.86
200 000 - 249 999 Nkr	2.63		3.47	3.46
250 000 - 249 999 Nkr	4.38		3.72	3.57
300 000 Nkr +	2.76		2.20	1.99
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University		4.94	5.41	5.95
Father's age			X	X
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			x	x
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			x	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			X	X
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			x	x
Number of previous relationships with children			x	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X

Odds ratios for having seen the child in vacations. Father receives social assistance.
 N=821

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
Social assistance (ref: No)				
Yes	0.34		0.23	0.21
Father's education (ref: High school)				
University		4.94	5.58	6.37
Father's age			X	X
Father is a student			x	x
Father's health			x	x
Number of full siblings			x	x
Age of the focal child			X	X
Relation to the child's mother			X	X
Time since split-up			X	X
Father's present civil status			X	X
Children in present household			x	x
Present partner has absent children			X	X
Number of previous relationships with children			x	x
Travelling time to child's residence				X

Conclusions

Monthly contact

- There is a positive association between the number of contact days and the father's income, but the income effect is not linear. We find an income effect when income is treated as a categorical variable, but not when it is defined as a linear variable.
- Including travelling time to the child's residence in the models slightly reduces the effect of the father's income, but the income effect is still significant.
- Most models show a positive effect of the fathers' education on monthly contact.
- Receiving social assistance has a significant negative effect both on the number of contact days and on whether there has been contact last month or not.

Vacation contact

- The zero order models show a positive association between the number of contact days in vacations and the father's income. The same is true for the more extended models, and also when we control for travelling time.
- The father's education has a positive effect on whether there has been vacation contact or not.
- The effect of receiving social assistance on contact in vacations is very much the same as it is on monthly contact.

