



Children's postdivorce residence arrangements and parents' social contacts

Franciëlla van der Heijden, Anne-Rigt
Poortman & Tanja van der Lippe

Divorce Conference 2014



Universiteit Utrecht

Residence Arrangements

- Main residence of the child
 - Sole residence
 - Shared residence
 - Nonresident
- Visitation frequency
 - Nonresident parents
 - Nonresident ex-partners



Relevance

- Divorce has negative consequences for wellbeing
- Social contacts as buffer
- But: Not all divorced parents are similar
- Differences in residence arrangements
- Parenthood influences social contacts
- Differences in involvement?



Research Question

What are the relationships between children's postdivorce residence arrangements and social contacts of parents with their own parents, neighbors and friends?



Parenthood & Residence

Parenthood shapes social contacts

- Not only: **being** a parent
- But also: **acting** as a parent
- Important for residence arrangements



Why related to contact?



Contact with own Parents

The more parents take care of their child, the more contact with their own parents

- + Opportunities
- 0 Constraints
- + Needs



Hypothesis 1 Own Parents

Main Residence

1. Sole resident parents
2. Shared resident parents
3. Nonresident parents

Visitation

- Nonresident parent visitation increases contact with parents
- Nonresident ex-partner visitation decreases sole resident parents' contact with parents



Contact with Neighbors

The more parents take care of their child, the more contact with their neighbors

- + Opportunities
- 0 Constraints
- + Needs



Hypothesis 2 Neighbors

Main residence

1. Sole resident parents
2. Shared resident parents
3. Nonresident parents

Visitation

- Nonresident parent visitation increases contact with neighbors
- Nonresident ex-partner visitation decreases sole resident parents' contact with neighbors



Contact with Friends

The more parents take care of their child, the less contact with their friends

0 Opportunities
+ Constraints
0 Needs



Hypothesis 3 Friends

Main residence

1. Nonresident parents
2. Shared resident parents
3. Sole resident parents

Visitation

- Nonresident parent visitation decreases contact with friends
- Nonresident ex-partner visitation increases sole resident parents' contact with friends



Data: New Families in the Netherlands

- Statistics Netherlands drew random sample of former cohabiting & divorced parents
- Divorced in 2010
- Children <18
- Websurvey
- Response 39%
- N = 4,182



Dependent variables

- Social contact frequencies per month
 - Own parents
 - Neighbors
 - Friends
- Coded from 0 – 30
- Log transformed 0 – 3.43



Independent variables

- Main residence
 - With respondent
 - With ex-partner
 - With both: shared residence
- Visitation per month
 - Visitation of nonresident parent
 - Visitation of nonresident ex-partners



Control variables

- Age of the youngest child
- Number of children
- New partner & children

- Conflicts after the divorce
- Parent & child predivorce problems
- Former union type

- Education
- Employment & working hours

- Residential move



Method

- SEM in Stata 13
- Grouped regression models mothers and fathers
- Clustering on household level
- All dependent variables estimated simultaneously

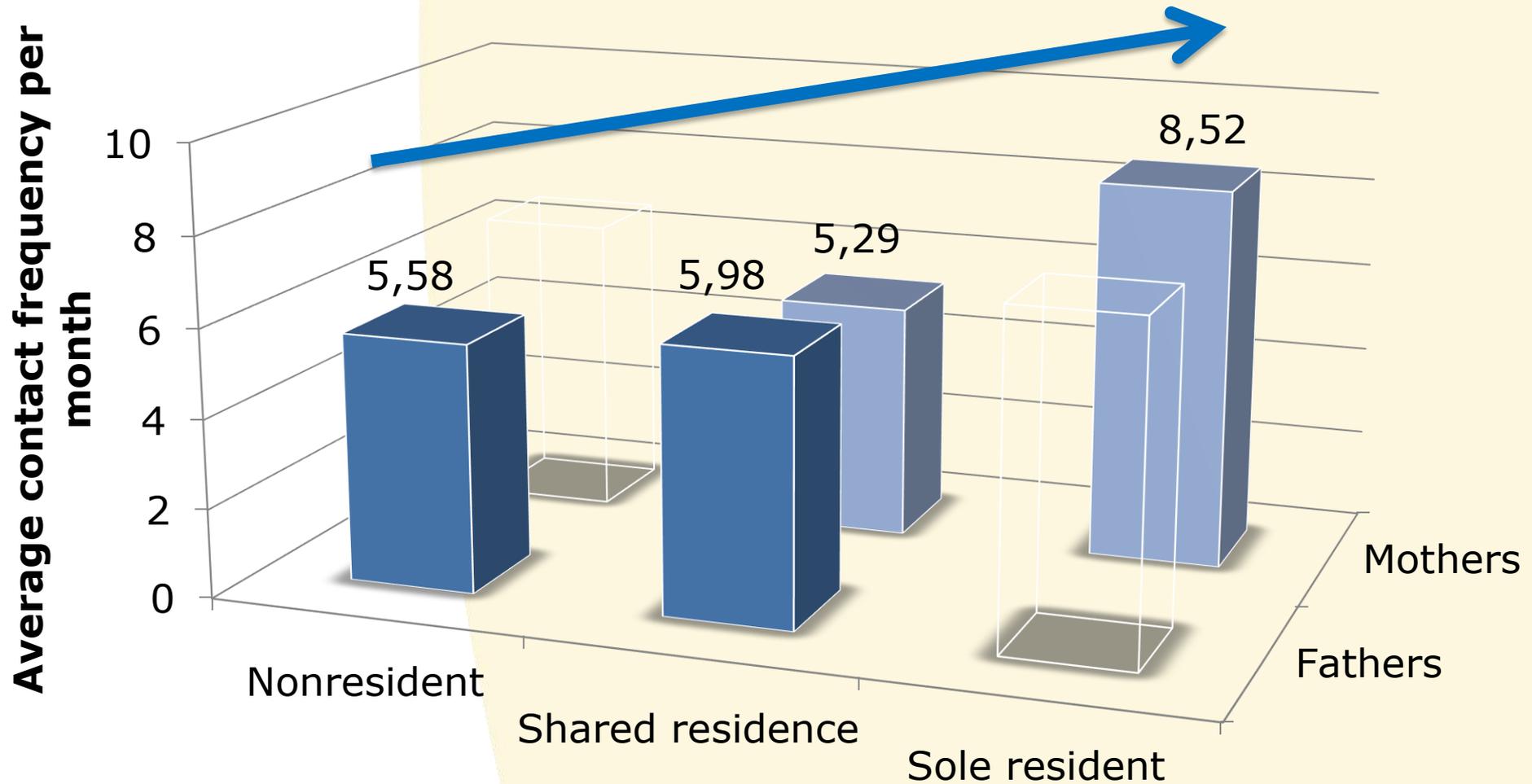


Findings Main Residence

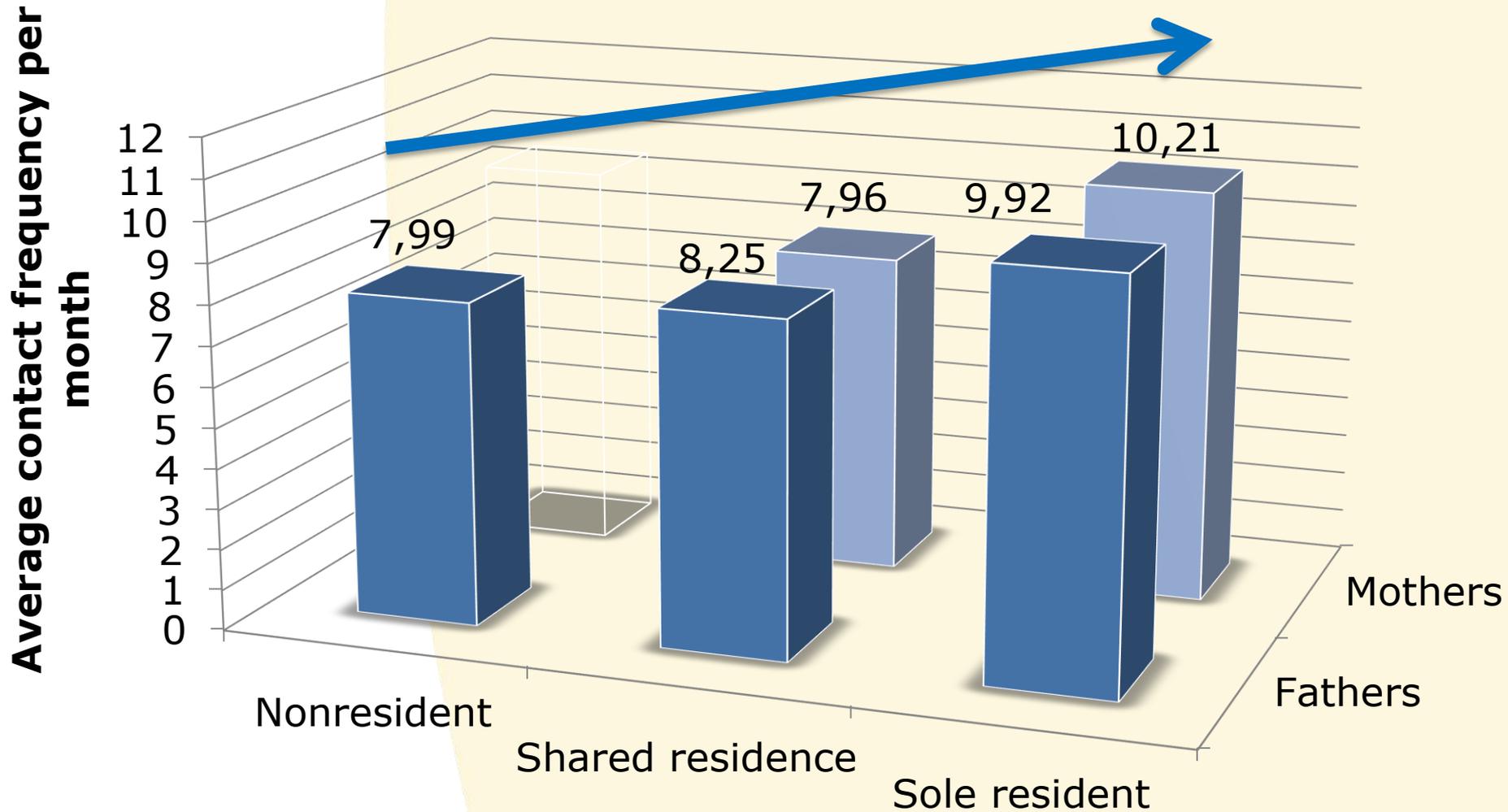
	Own parents		Neighbors		Friends	
	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
Sole resident (ref= nonresident)		+		+		
Shared (ref= nonresident)		+		+		+
Sole resident (ref= shared)				+	+	+



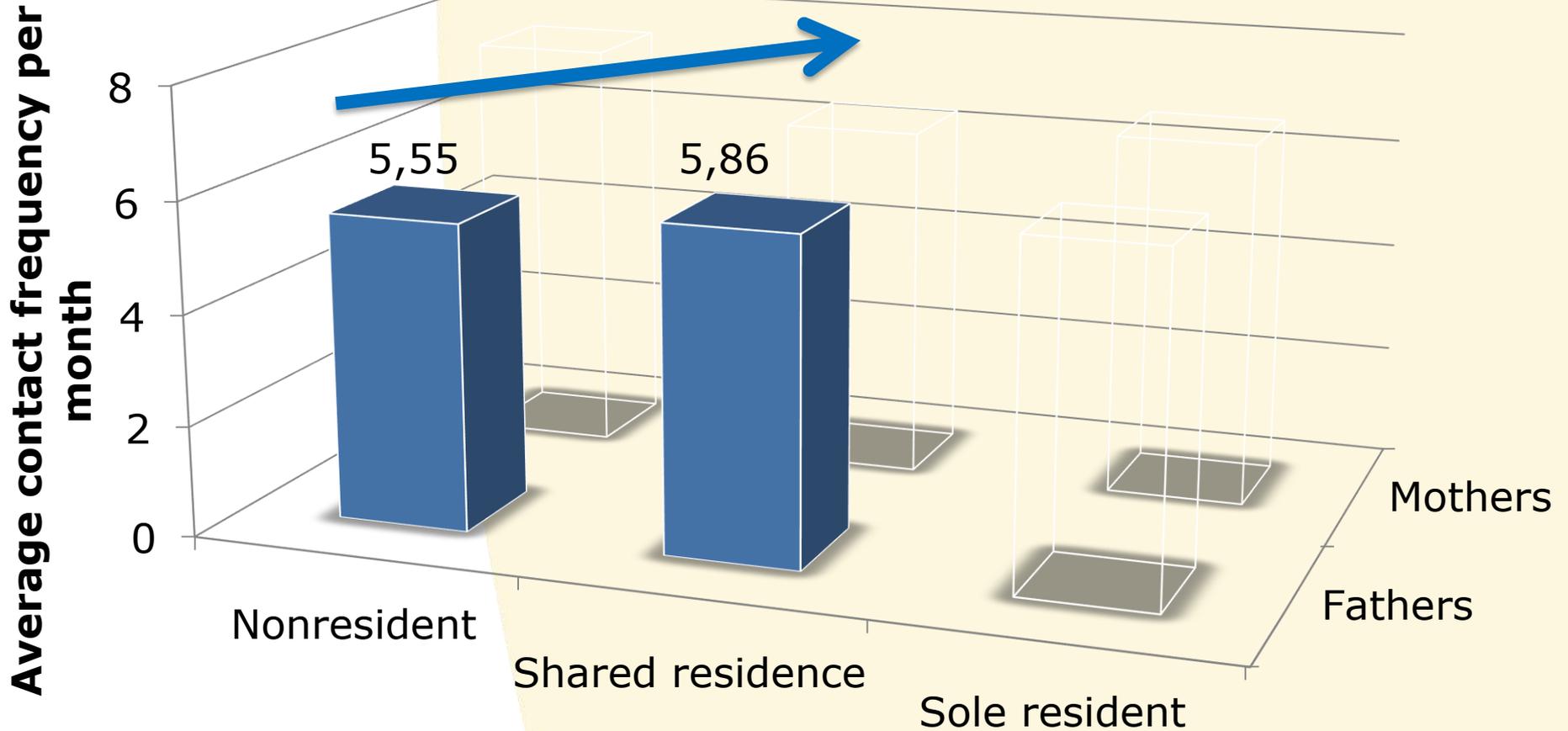
Distribution: Contact with parents



Contact with neighbors



Contact with friends



Findings Visitation frequency

	Own parents		Neighbors		Friends	
	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
Visitation nonresident respondent p/m				+		
Visitation nonresident ex-partner p/m			-			



Conclusions



- Parents who take more care of child → more contact with their parents and neighbors
- Shared resident fathers → more contact with their friends
- Nonresident fathers have least contact with their parents and neighbors, but also with their friends

- Hardly any differences between father residence and other arrangements

- Main residence > visitation
- Visitation only matters for mothers



Thank you for your attention!



Questions?

Franciëlla I. van der Heijden MSc
Department of Sociology
Utrecht University
+31 (0)30 253 1547
F.I.vanderHeijden@uu.nl



Limitations

- Cross-sectional data → causality is problematic
- Sample is likely selective on
 - Low conflict
 - High parental involvement
- Social contact frequency \neq quality of contact or support

