

Can Time Really Heal: The Long-term Impacts of Joint Custody Arrangements

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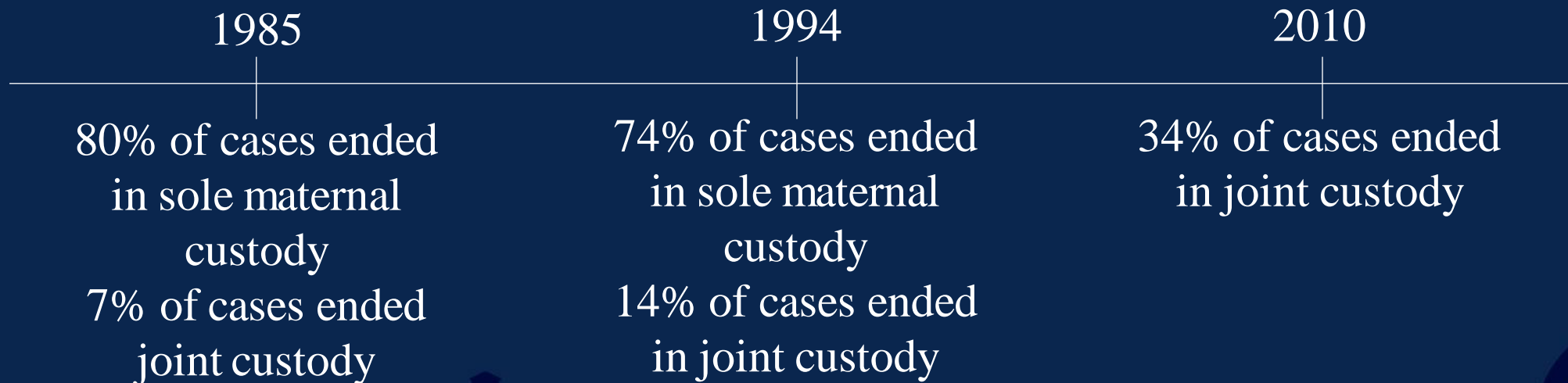
Overview

- History of Custody Arrangements
- Strength and Weaknesses of Joint Custody Arrangements
- Mitigating Factors
- Long-Term Perceptions and Research Questions
- Methodology and Results
- Limitations and Implications of Findings



History of Joint Custody Arrangements

Joint custody: “a post-divorce living arrangement where children spend up to 50% of their time in each parent’s household after separation or divorce” (Berman & Daneback, 2022, p. 1443)



(Cancian et al. 2014; Meyer et al., 2022)



Review of Joint Custody Arrangements

Strengths	Weaknesses
Increased parental emotional support (Bastaits & Pasteels, 2019)	Location instability and frequent transitions (Turunen, 2017)
Stronger father-child relationships (Bastaits et al., 2012)	Inconsistent parenting styles (Turunen, 2017)
Decreased parental stress (Breivik et al., 2009)	Increased exposure to interparental conflict (Augustijn, 2022)
Better access to financial and academic resources (Frasson et al., 2018)	



Figure 1.
Parents walking with young child



Note. From Low Angle Shot Of A Child Held by Woman and Man on On Each Hand Walking On An Unpaved Pathway Outdoors by C. Oquendo, 2015, retrieved from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/low-angle-shot-of-a-child-held-by-woman-and-man-on-on-each-hand-walking-on-an-unpaved-pathway-outdoors-3038455/>. CC0 1.0.

Situational Factors

- Age of Child
- Schedule Flexibility
- Interparental Conflict
- Quality of Parent-Child Relationships



Age of Child

- Younger children show greater affect dysregulation than older children
- Older children are more resilient to frequent transitions

(McIntosh et al., 2013)

VS.

- Bowlby's Attachment Theory
- Importance of frequent contact with caregivers

(Kelly & Lamb, 2000)



Schedule Flexibility

“Parenting plans should be flexible and accommodate the changing needs and preferences of the children involved and should consider the developmental needs of the child...and the changing views of children as they develop” (Birnbaum & Saini, 2015)



Interparental Conflict

- Poor adjustment and insecure attachments (Pires & Martins, 2021; Solomon & George, 1999)
- Distress, feelings of helplessness, lower trust and communication with parents, greater alienation (Sadowski & McIntosh, 2015)
- Family environment more significant than the type of custody arrangement (Baude et al., 2019)

Figure 2.
Parents in Conflict



Note. From *A Couple Talking while Arguing* by T. Weber, 2021, retrieved from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-couple-talking-while-arguing-8560383/>. CC0 1.0.



Figure 3.

Baby Holding Parent's Hand



Quality of Parent-Child Relationships

- Emotional isolation and disconnection
(Sadowski & McIntosh, 2015)
- Emotional availability and attunement
(Altenhofen et al., 2010)



Note. From *Person Holding Babys Hand* by A. Shvets, retrieved from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-babys-hand-3845456/>. CC0 1.0.

Long-Term Preferences

Derevenky and Deschamps (1997)'s Qualitative Study

Young adults from
divorced families



Sole custody
arrangements

Young adults from
intact families



Joint custody
arrangements



Research Questions

1. How do children tend perceive their joint custody living arrangements?
2. How do they perceive their childhood experience now as young adults? In what ways do they believe their joint custody arrangement has affected them long-term?
3. Did their perceptions of their joint custody experience change over time?



Methods and Participants

Participant	Age (in years)	Gender	Age at Parental Divorce (in years)
Participant 1	20	Female	2
Participant 2	20	Female	10
Participant 3	20	Male	13
Participant 4	20	Female	11
Participant 5	20	Female	5

- Purposeful sampling
- Semi-structured interviews
 - Demographic Information
 - Childhood Experience of Joint Custody Arrangement
 - Long-Term Perceptions and Impacts



Childhood Perceptions

Practical and Logistical Challenges

- Packing a suitcase
- Isolation from friends and community
- Boredom
- Small living space

Emotional and Psychological Conditions

- Strain of frequent transitions
- Parental conflict
- Feelings of “home”
- Parental emotional attunement



Long-term Perceptions and Impacts

- Fear for Future Marriage and Family
- Increased Parental Empathy and Understanding
- Response to Change
- Personal Growth
- Long-term Preference of Living Arrangement



Limitations

- Small sample size (Creswell, 2013)
- Phenomenological data cannot be generalized
- Retrospective analysis subject to recall or misclassification bias (Talari & Goyal, 2020)



Implications of Findings

- Developmentally appropriate education and counsel for children to better understand their parents
- Long-term therapeutic interventions for young adults to process their experience and build awareness of long-term impacts



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