



## The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 22  
Issue 4 *December*

Article 8

December 1995

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### Recommended Citation

Dubey, Sumati N. (1995) "A Study of Reasons for Non-Payment of Child Support by Non-Custodial Parents," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 22 : Iss. 4 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol22/iss4/8>

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# A Study of Reasons for Non-Payment of Child Support by Non-Custodial Parents

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## Historical Overview of Child Support Enforcement Program

The federal government became involved with child support in 1935 when it established Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) under the Social Security Act, 1935 to allow communities to be financially responsible for children whose parents had died or had deserted them. (Lieberman, 1986). The Child Support and Establishment of Paternity Act (1975) created title IV-D of the Social Security Act (PL93-647), made the Department of Health and Human Services responsible for administering the Child Support Enforcement Program, and created the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. Title IV-D required all states to: 1) Establish a parent locator service, 2) Establish paternity, 3) Obtain court orders of support and, 4) Enforce child support orders, and 5) Make services available to AFDC and non-AFDC families (Lieberman, 1986). Services to non-AFDC families were intended to be a preventative measure against welfare dependency. It was felt that assisting them to obtain child support would prevent them from later having to apply for AFDC.

The Child Support Enforcement Act of 1984 (PL98-378) which amended title IV-D of the Social Security Act, (i) required income withholding for those non-custodial parents who were at least one month delinquent with their child support payments; (ii) provided for an expedited process to enforce support obligations in cases which were brought before family courts; and (iii) for the first time developed the Comptroller Intercept Program to extend services to non-AFDC families whose child support was past due.

A significant piece of legislation dealing with child support is Title I: Child Support and Establishment of Paternity of the Family Support Act of 1988 (PL100-485) and its three sub-titles: A, B and C. Title I (A), *Child Support*, requires states to provide immediate

income withholding from non-custodial parents to satisfy their child support obligations; to implement automated child support monitoring and tracking systems; to provide a disregard clause for all timely payments made even though payments were received in a later month; and to send out timely notices of support payment collection to custodial parents. Title I (B), *Establishment of Paternity*, mandates the states to conduct a genetic test for all cases where the paternity is contested. Title I (C), *Improved Procedures for Child Support*, requires states to put in place an automated tracking and monitoring system, for which they will receive 90% of the cost from the federal government, to include additional information sources for parent locator service (e.g., data from the Department of Labor or state employment security agencies), to use social security numbers to establish the identity of parents, and to establish a commission for interstate tracking of child support.

The government's spending on the child support program has increased dramatically since 1978. Total administrative expenditure by the federal government grew from \$808.450 million in 1978 to \$1.343 trillion in 1993. Spending by states has also grown rapidly during this period: \$366.263 million in 1988 to \$651.80 million in 1993. Combined federal and state expenditures on child support enforcement grew from \$1.70 billion in fiscal year 1988 to \$1.998.649 billion in 1993 (OCSW, 1993:68). With the government's interest in child support enforcement, the media—newspapers, magazines, radio, and television,—have increased attention to the child support program. Popular magazines, especially those with a large portion of black and women readers, carry stories on deadbeat dads, performance of the program, and policy recommendations (New York Times Index, Newsweek, Index, U.S. News and World Report, Oprah Winfrey Show, Larry King Live, etc.). Newsweek (May 4, 1992) reports: "Consultants for former Louisiana governor, Buddy Roemer, were surprised to discover that in focus groups during the 1991 campaign, middle class voters spontaneously mentioned child support as one of their most important concerns."

It is easy to understand why: of the 5 million women who are supposed to receive child support only half reported receiving full payment, according to a 1990 U.S. Census Bureau study (U.S.

Bureau of the Census, 1991: p. 60–65). One quarter of the women got partial payment, and one quarter got nothing. An additional 2.7 million women said they wanted support but were never able to obtain an award. Non-payment cuts across income groups; college graduates are about as likely to have a negligent ex-spouse or ex-boyfriend as high-school grads. It even spans gender lines. Fifteen percent of custodial parents are now men and mothers in those cases have an equally dismal record of supporting their children. The consequences of nonpayment are staggering. On average, the family income of the mother retaining custody drops 23 percent after divorce or separation—a disparity that could be wiped out for many families if full child-support payments were made. Families headed by a mother alone are six times as likely to be poor as those with two parents (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1991: p. 66).

Since the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA, 1988), several bills have been enacted by Congress. On July 3, 1992, the Unemployment Compensation Bill was passed amending the FSA:88 to delay the due date for the report of the Commission on Interstate Child Support and to extend the termination date for the commission. On October 25, 1992, the Child Support Recovery Act of 1992 (PL: 102–521) was passed which imposed a criminal penalty on non-custodial parents for fleeing to avoid payment of child support. It amended the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 by establishing criminal penalties for willful failure to pay support to a child living in another state. It also authorized federal courts to make compliance with child support obligations a condition for probation and the establishment of a Commission of Child Family Welfare. Other important legislation passed in 1992 is the Ted Weiss Child Support Enforcement Act which requires credit reporting agencies to include delinquent child support payments on consumer credit reports.

### Children's Poverty and Collection of Child Support

Children under 18 years are over represented among the poor—they are 40.2 percent of the 35.7 million poor in America (OCSE, 1993). The poverty rate for children under 18 was 21.8 percent in 1991. In 1990, 45 percent of 7.7 million families maintained

solely by mother with children under 18 years had income below the poverty threshold. As of Spring of 1990, 10 million mothers age 15 and over were living with their own children under 21 years of age whose fathers were not living in the households. The mean amount received by poor women for child support was \$1,889. Child support payments, on average, were 37.4 percent of the total money income of poor mothers compared with 17.1 percent of non-poor mothers. In 1991, 4,374,708 families received AFDC assistance, and helped 8,527,028 children. In 1992 there were 15.2 million child support cases—8.7 million AFDC and foster care related cases and 6.5 million non-AFDC cases.

Collection of child support payments for the non-custodial parent is one way to lessen the impact of family disruption on children even though they may not be sufficient to reduce poverty. Nichols-Casebolt, and Robbins assert that the number of persons receiving welfare and the average AFDC payment would be reduced if absent parents were paying their fair share of support. For the 5 million women due child support payments in 1989, the average annual amount owed was \$2,252. The 3.7 million women received an average child support payment of \$2,995. If the full amount of payment due had been made to all women owed child support, the average annual amount would have been \$3,292 (Green Book, 1993). In 1989, if 37 percent of the 3.2 million women rearing children alone with incomes below the poverty level had received child support payments, only 140,000 of them would have income above the poverty level. The antipoverty effectiveness of the CSE program might be marginal for some families, given that maintaining a two-parent family is no guarantee against poverty. In 1991, 7.7 percent of two-parent families with children under the age 18 had incomes below the poverty level.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement under the Administration of Children and Family, Department of Health and Human Services, in its Seventeenth Annual Report to the Congress (1993) reveals: "As of Spring of 1990, 10 million mothers age 15 and over were living with their own children under 21 years of age whose fathers were not living in the households. The number of women 18 years of age and over with children from absent fathers grew higher by 39 percent since 1979 to 9.8 million" (OCSE, 1992:4). In 1992, out of 15,172,385 children due for child support in the

country only 2,839,150 or 18.7 percent of the total actually received it. This percentage is higher by 1.7 percent from 1988 but down by .6 percent from 1991 (OCSE, 1993:69). The report further notes that currently only about half of those awarded support receive the full amount they are owed. The total amount due for child support in 1991 was \$16.3 billion and only \$11.2 billion were collected indicating the large number of non-custodial parents who owed child support that did not pay it. The Clinton proposal included in the bill entitled: *The Work and Responsibility Bill 1994*, includes several provisions which aim at creating a new culture of mutual responsibility of custodial and non-custodial parents towards their children to ensure that both parents contribute financially towards the cost of raising them. This legislation recommends to the Congress to enact toughest measures to enforce child support responsibility of non-custodial parents.

Child support enforcement provisions are rooted in the beliefs that (1) the primary responsibility for child support rests with the children's parents whether or not they are married to each other, (2) custodial parents have every right to expect absent parents to contribute toward the children's care, (3) the state must force absent parents to fulfill their responsibility, (4) able-bodied mothers also have a responsibility to support their children by working, at least part-time, and (5) to the extent that parental support payments are inadequate, the government should provide a time-limited child-support supplement to custodial parents (Moynihan, 1987:8). The dominant view underlying the Child Support Provision of the FSA was that "having children is not a private affair when their material support is delegated to the community" (Moynihan, 1987:5).

The question raised in this study is: Why do fathers who owe child support ordered by the courts not pay it? The existing studies do not address this question. This study, therefore, has two purposes: (1) To identify reasons non-custodial fathers offer for not paying child support and (2) to identify social-economic variables associated with reasons of non-payment.

### Theoretical Perspectives

One of the theoretical models, called micro-economic model of family, developed by Becker (1981), has frequently been used

to identify reasons for payment or non-payment of child support by non-custodial parents. According to this model both parents value their children. The investment in children by one parent contributes to the benefits derived by the other parent. In the two parent family, expenses for children maximize the investment of both parents. After divorce, the non-custodial parent, usually the father, loses control over the use of resources for children and does not determine the distribution of these resources between the custodial parent and the children and is uncertain of maximization of utility when he is required to send money to the non-custodial parent. He is, therefore, reluctant to pay (Nye, 1979). Whether one parent finds payment of child support rewarding—instrumental to maximization of utility—depends further on the degree of emotional and instrumental interdependency between the father and his children and the quality of relationship between him and his ex-wife. Stronger dependency between fathers and children increases the utility of investment of resources on children, and a good relationship between the divorced parents may increase utility by increasing interdependency. The better relationship between the parents increases utility by increasing fathers' influence over how his contributions are allocated (Treachman, 1991:361–365). The strength of interdependency is determined by visitation rights, father's physical proximity, and the time elapsed since divorce. With younger children at the time of divorce which reduces their interdependency on the child, fathers in turn have less time to make economic and emotional investments. Both mothers and fathers are more likely to agree to visitation rights if the father-child interdependency is strong. Closer physical proximity also increases opportunity to maintain emotional and instrumental interdependency through contact. A longer time since divorce tends to lessen emotional and instrumental dependency between fathers and children. Thus, those fathers with younger children at divorce, who have no visitation rights, live away from the custodial parents, and have been divorced for a longer time are most likely to default in child support payment.

The nature of relationship between parents is influenced by length of marriage, whether divorce is voluntary and the mother's perception of quality of relationship during divorce. A short marriage ending in bitter divorce erodes interdependency between

mothers and fathers and these fathers then tend to refuse to pay child support. Further joint custody also increases interdependency between fathers and their children. However, sole custody to non-custodial parent after a bitter divorce with no visitation contribute to the unwillingness of fathers to make child support payment.

Another perspective, which seems to be useful to identifying factors associated with non-payment of child support by non-custodial parents involves the interaction of followings:

- (1) *Situational factors* such as non-custodial parent's income, custodial parent's income, remarriage of non-custodial parent, geographical proximity of custodial and non-custodial parent's households. The non-custodial parent's income affect their ability to pay support. For custodial parent's income and education provide resources—legal fees, ability to seek help of the child support enforcement agency, etc.—which augment the enforcement of child support obligations. When custodial parents have high income, non-custodial parents have diminished motivation to pay child support. Remarriage of non-custodial parent may reduce his financial ability to meet child support obligation. When both parents live nearby it is easier to enforce child support obligations (Peters *et al.*, 1993:719–735).
- (2) *Social-emotional commitments* of non-custodial parents to their formal families created by a sense of obligations towards one's own children. Non-custodial parents who do not care about their children and do not want to continue to look after them tend to renege on their support obligations to the non-custodial parents. The relationship with the former spouse may also affect the willingness of the non-custodial parents to pay child support. The degree of bitterness and acrimony between the parents in the separation and divorce process creates disincentive for payment of child support. Withholding child support is used to "get back" at the custodial parents and "teaching a lesson" to the former spouse. This situation decreases visits of non-custodial parents to their children. Lack of visits to the children stifles the availability of information on children's material needs that non-custodial parents fulfill by paying



support (Berton, 1990:124–134). Weiss and Willis (1985), for example, observe that non-custodial parents are most unlikely to pay child support when they do not know how custodial parents spend money paid in child support.

- (3) *The quality of the custodial and non-custodial parents' relationship.* A hostile, adversarial relationship between the former spouses may affect visitation of children and the willingness of the non-custodial parents to pay child support (Seltzer, *et al.*, 1989:1013–1031). Thus, the situational factors, degree of commitment to the welfare of one's children and post-divorce relationship between former spouses determine the nature of contacts between the non-custodial parent and the children, which, in turn, affects the non-payment of child support (Treachman, 1991:759–772).

Treachman (1991) found that non-custodial fathers' inability to control how support money is allocated by the custodial mother is one of the important reasons for non-payment of child support. The study also found that education level, income, and age of the children were less important in predicting whether assistance was given than whether the mother and father had a positive relationship, and share custody. Fathers with a positive relationship with the mother were able to come to a voluntary agreement and contribute regularly to their children's expenses. The worse the conflict, the less likely fathers will make any support payments. Another reason is the desire to control the custodial parent by refusing to make payments. Remarriage is also one of the reasons for non-payment. Wallerstein and Corbin (1986) found that fathers who remarry tend to make fewer or smaller payments. Lieberman (1986) reported that some fathers do not pay simply because they do not have the money.

### *Research Design*

A purposive sample of 150 was drawn from the non-custodial fathers who appeared before the court to respond to a summons of the State's Attorney's office or of the office of the Attorney General for non-payment of child support in six Illinois counties. Names of the respondents to whom summons were sent by the courts on the petition of the State's Attorney and Attorney General's

Office, dealing with the default cases of child support covering these counties were obtained for February 1994 to June 1994. The non-custodial parents coming before the court were asked to fill out a survey form. The contents and purpose of the survey were explained. A total of 150 persons who agreed to participate were interviewed or filled out the questions themselves. Thirteen fathers refused to cooperate.

#### *Description of the Sample and Data Analyses*

Out of 150 respondents 82 or 56.54 percent were African Americans, 32 or 21.33 percent were Caucasian, 23 or 15.33 were Hispanic and 9 or 6.43 percent were Native American. The mean age of the respondents was 26. The range was from 19 years to 34. The median age of the sample was 26. The average educational level was 9th grade. Out of 150, 92 or 61.33 percent of non-custodial parents were never married, 23 or 15.33 percent were separated, 19 or 12.66 percent were divorced, 16 or 10.66 percent were remarried.

#### *Reasons for Non-Payment of Child Support*

Out of 150 respondents, 38.65 percent indicated that they had no money; 23.33 percent indicated that they did not pay because the mother of the child would not allow visitation; 14 percent indicated that they did not have any control over how the money is spent, 12.67 percent said that they were not responsible for the children because they did not want to have a child and the women were the ones who wanted to have a child; 12.67 percent indicated that they were not the fathers of the children for whom child support was sought.

#### *Analysis of Reasons for Non-Payment by Marital Status*

Out of 19 divorced fathers, 31.5 percent reported that they did not pay because mothers did not allow them to visit their children. They mentioned that even when they were able to visit the children the mothers made the interaction between them and their children very controlled and limited. About 26.31 percent of fathers in this group indicated that they should not be held responsible for the child because only the woman wanted children.

An equal percentage of divorced fathers reported that they did not believe that they had fathered the children. They believed that the mothers had other men with whom they had a sexual relationship. The other two reasons are no money and lack of control as to how child support amount is spent by custodial parents.

Out of 92 men who never married, 46 (50 percent) of them reported lack of money as the reason for not paying child support, 21.74 percent reported that they were not allowed to visit the children by the mothers. Consequently, they felt that they should not be paying for the children with whom they could not even meet and develop parental relationships. About 13 percent reported "no control over the money paid" as child support to mothers as a reason for non-payment of child support. Eleven percent of the never-married fathers did not believe that they were the fathers of the children for whom they were asked to pay child support. Among the 23 separated fathers about one-third of them reported "no visitation" as a reason for not paying the child support. Among the remarried fathers about 31 percent reported "no money" as a reason and 23 percent reported the reason that they did not feel responsible to pay for child support because they did not believe they had fathered these children. These findings indicate that the never-married men more than any other marital group are most likely to renege on their child support obligation due to lack of money. Second group which is most likely to renege on its obligation for child support are remarried men. The separated and divorced men significantly more than other groups are likely to renege their obligations when they are denied visitation and hassled in visitation efforts and interactions. The divorced fathers most likely to renege on their child support payment because they dispute paternity and pass on the responsibility for the birth of the child on mothers. These data are shown in Table 1.

#### *Reasons for Non-Payment by Employment Status*

Out of 150 respondents 68 respondents had jobs or were self employed, and 82 of them were unemployed. Out of 68 employed respondents a little over one third indicated "no visitation" as a

Table 1

*Reasons for Not Paying Child Support by Marital Status*

Reasons	Divorced (%)	Never	Separated (%)	Remarried (%)	Total (%)
		Married (%)			
No money	2 (10.52)	46 (50.0)	5 (21.74)	5 (31.25)	58 (38.65)
No visitation	6 (21.5)	20 (21.74)	7 (30.43)	2 (12.53)	35 (23.33)
No control over how money is spent	2 (10.52)	12 (13.04)	5 (21.74)	2 (12.53)	21 (14.0)
Not my child	4 (21.0)	10 (10.87)	2 (8.70)	3 (18.75)	19 (12.66)
Not responsible	5 (26.3)	4 (4.34)	4 (17.39)	4 (22.51)	17 (12.66)
Total	19	92	23	16	150

$\chi^2=25.21$ ;  $df=12$ ;  $<.01$

reason for non-payment of child support, 23.53 percent indicated “no money” as a reason, 16.17 percent mentioned “no control over money,” 14.71 percent indicated “not my child” and 10.30 percent said they did not feel responsible for the payment of child support. Out of 82 unemployed respondents 51.21 percent indicated money as a reason for the non-payment. Other reasons for non-payments were indicated by 12 percent of the respondents: (i) not my child, (ii) no control over how money is spent, and (iii) not responsible for the children. The analysis suggests that employed fathers were most likely to renege on their payment when they were denied visitation and when they believe they do not have control how money is spent. A significant number of unemployed fathers reneged on payments due to lack of money. These data are presented in Table 2.

*Reasons for Non-Payment of Child Support by Race*

Of 82 African Americans, 46.34 percent indicated “lack of money” as a reason for non-payment of child support, 17.8 percent indicated “no visitation allowed by the mother,” 9.76

Table 2

*Reasons for Non-Payment by Employment Status*

Reasons for Non-Payment	Employed		Not Employed		Total
	Employed	Percent	Employed	Percent	
No money	16	23.53	42	51.21	58
No visitation	24	35.30	11	13.41	35
No control over how money is spent	11	16.17	10	12.20	21
Not my child	10	14.71	9	10.98	19
Not responsible	7	10.30	10	12.20	17
Total	68	100	82	100	150

$X^2=15.94$ ;  $df=4$ ; significant at .003 level.

percent indicated "no control over how the amount is spent," 12.20 percent indicated that they did not believe that had fathered these children, and 14.63 percent indicated that they were not responsible for paying child support since they did not want to have a child. Out of 32 white respondents, 25 percent indicated that they did not pay because they did not have money, 40.63 percent indicated that they did not pay because mothers would not allow them to visit their children, 25 percent indicated that they did not have any control over how the money was spent. Three respondents indicated that they did not believe that they had fathered these children or had not wanted to have the child/children. Out of 23 Hispanic respondents, 7 or 30.43 percent reported that they did not have money, 6 or 26.1 percent reported that they did not believe they were the fathers and 17.40 percent did not pay because they were not allowed to visit their children. Out of 13 Native American and Asian respondents 38.46 percent said that lack of money was the reason, 30.76 percent said that they were not allowed to visit their children, 15.38 percent said that they had no say over how money was spent. This result suggests that a significant number of African American fathers reneged on child support because they do not have money, while a significant number of fathers of white race reneged on their child support obligation due to difficulty in visitation or lack of control over the child support payments. The Hispanics, like the blacks,

become derelict in child support for lack of money. Asians and Native American groups did not show any significant differences in respect to the reasons for non-support. The data described above are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Reasons for Not Paying Child Support by Race*

Reasons	Black	White	Hispanic	Native American & Asian	Total
No money	38	8	7	5	58 (38.7)
No visitation	14	13	4	4	35 (23.3)
No control over how money is spent	8	8	3	2	21 (14.0)
Not my child	10	2	6	1	19 (12.7)
Not responsible	12	1	3	1	17 (11.3)
Total	82 (54.7)	32 (21.3)	23 (15.3)	13 (8.7)	150 (100.0)

$\chi^2=20.66646$ ;  $df=12$ ;  $significance=.05$

*Age and Employment of Respondents*

Out of 68 employed respondents, 29 were below 25 years of age, 20 between 26–30 years and 19 were 31 years of age and older. Out of employed fathers below 25 years of age (N=29), about 24 percent of them indicated lack of money and about 24 percent indicated “not responsible” for the children as the reasons for not paying child support. Out of employed fathers between 26–30 years of age, 40 percent indicated “no visitation,” and 25 percent indicated “no control over how money is spent” as reasons for non-payment of child support. Out of employed fathers over 31 years of age (N=19), a little over 50 percent of them indicated “no visitation,” a little over 20 percent “no control over money,” and a little over 20 percent as “no money” as reasons for non-payment of child support. An analysis of reasons offered by employed fathers of each age group suggests that fathers below 25 years of age do

not offer significantly different reasons ( $X^2=3.2$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p<.52$ ) while fathers between 26–30 years of age have significantly different reasons for non-payment and employed fathers over 31 years of age differ very significantly with respect to their reasons for non-payment of child support. This finding suggests that employed fathers below 25 years of age will renege in their obligation for child support due to lack of money, belief that they are not the fathers of the children and they believe mothers wanted children rather than they. A significant number of older employed fathers reneged in child support payment because of “no visitation” and no control over how money paid in child support is spent. Thus younger employed fathers significantly differ in their reasons for non-payment from the older employed fathers. Thus, the older and younger unemployed fathers differ significantly in respect to the reasons for non-payment of child support.

Out of 36 unemployed fathers below 25 years of age, 55.55 reported “no money,” 16.67 percent “not my child,” and about 14 percent “not responsible for the children,” as reasons for not paying child support. Out of 24 unemployed fathers, between 26 and 30 years of age, about 41.68 percent indicated “no money,” about 21 percent “no visitation,” and about 16.68 percent “no control over how money is spent” as reasons for non-payment of the support. Out of 22 unemployed fathers over 31 years of age, about 55 percent indicated “no money” and about 18 percent “no visitation” as reasons as reasons for not paying child support.

### *Employment and Annual Income*

The data on reasons given by younger employed fathers were further analyzed by annual income they reported. Significantly more employed fathers earning less than \$7,000 indicated lack of money as reasons for non-payment. However, these employed fathers earning >\$7,000 but <\$13,000 and employed fathers with income >\$13,000 do not significantly differ in their reasons.

We also analyzed data on responses by age of the respondents. Out of 65 respondents <25 years of age, 41.54 percent indicated no money, 20 percent indicated not my child, 18.46 percent not responsible, 12.31 percent no visitation as reasons for non-payment of child support. out of 44 respondents between 26 and 30 years of age 34 percent indicated no money, 29.55 no visitation, 20.45

percent, no control over money, 9 percent not my child and about 7 percent not responsible. Out of 41 respondents over 31 years of age, 39 percent indicated no money, 34.15 percent no visitation, 17 percent no control over money and about 5 percent each not my child and not responsible for the child for whom support is ordered. These data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Reasons for Non-Payment by Age*

Reasons	Below 25 (%)	26-30 (%)	31 & over (%)	Total
No money	27 (41.54)	15 (34.1)	16 (39.0)	58
No visitation	8 (12.31)	13 (29.55)	14 (34.15)	35
No control over how money is spent	5 (7.69)	9 (20.45)	7 (17.1)	21
Not my child	13 (20.00)	4 (9.1)	2 (4.87)	19
Not responsible	12 (18.46)	3 (6.81)	2 (4.87)	17
Total	65	44	41	150
$X^2=20.36; df=8; p=.01$	$X^2=22; df=4$ $p<.001$	$X^2=12.81$ $df=4$ $p<.01$	$X^2=21.96'$ $df=4$ $p<.001$	

*Policy Implications*

- (1) Since over 50 percent of the unemployed fathers report lack of money for non-payment of child support the state agency responsible for child support collection should attempt to help these fathers to find employment and should consider two policy choices to increase fathers' ability to pay: (i) expand "enrollment in jobs search" and monitor this program closely so that fathers make serious attempts to find jobs; (ii) create a public service job program for those fathers who are unable to find jobs through job search. Both these policy initiatives will be cost effective compared to the minimum child support



payment set by courts. Tax payers, fathers and the children will benefit from this change in the policy.

- (2) A second important reason that fathers do not pay is a poor relationship with the ex-wife resulting into no visitation or numerous hassles fathers reportedly experience when they visit their children, and lack of knowledge of how the money paid in child support is spent. For a father non-payment of child support often is a measure of retaliation against his ex-wife. Robert Moses of Champaign, Illinois (not his real name) explains his reasons for not paying court-ordered child support to the tune of \$2,500: "I do not know what she does with the money. She lives well—I can tell from her clothes. She takes vacations. I know it." By withholding child support he believes he can hurt her. Non-custodial deadbeat dads come to believe that "child support is like paying taxes," and if they can avoid it [the payment] they do not feel any remorse (Newsweek, May 4, 1992:49). Counseling for divorced spouses over these issues will improve their relationship and thus reduce their unwillingness to pay child support. The state may appoint counselors at each county court house to offer counseling to both parents to work their problems out in the interest of their children. This again will be more cost-effective since this will improve the effectiveness of current measures, i.e. wage withholdings, assignment of the property, tax intercept, etc. (Sensel, 1991).
- (3) Alleged fathers who dispute paternity will be helped if paternity establishment is expedited. Currently establishment takes 6 to 9 months.
- (4) Fathers who believe that they are not responsible for the children because they did not want the children and women got pregnant in spite of this understanding is difficult to resolve. This situation can be helped by conveying to non-custodial parents, through counseling; since they did not take measures to prevent pregnancy, they can't walk away from this responsibility. Courts do not have resources and professional expertise to offer this kind of counseling. The IDPA should use professionals trained in family counseling suggested earlier to address the attitude of "no responsibility" on the part of the fathers (Mabry, 1992).

- (5) Child support guidelines should take into account the financial responsibility of remarried fathers in setting child support payments. A realistic amount will encourage these fathers to pay the affordable child support payments (Schaeffer, 1990; Meyers and Garasky, 1993).

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