

LINKING FAMILY RECOMPOSITION WITH CHILDREN'S LIVING ARRANGEMENT AFTER PARENTAL SEPARATION

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ABSTRACT

Union dissolution has been on the rise in Canada for the last 30 years and the nature and intensity of the relation that children maintain with their parents after the family has broken up is now an important issue. Until now, most research on this topic has been done using cross-sectional data. However, the arrangements separating parents make concerning the physical and financial care of their children are far from static, evolving in response to a variety of changes in the lives of both biological parents among which the most common are those occurring as a result of the new conjugal unions mothers and fathers enter into.

In this paper, we first ascertain how custody arrangements evolve through time and then examine changes in the frequency of contact that non resident fathers maintain with their children. In both analyses, particular attention is given to the effect that the formation of a new union in the mother's or father's life exerts the level of contact that children maintain with the non-custodial parent. We also examine how this varies depending on whether or not the new partner had children from a previous union, and on whether the mother's or father's new union is fertile. Prospective data from the two first waves of the NLSCY will enable us to compare levels of contact both before and after family recomposition.

Analyses are conducted using multinomial logit and probit models, and ordered logit and probit models according to the nature of the dependent variables. The observation of some of our dependent variables e.g., the levels of contact between non-residing fathers and their child) is dependent on a selection process e.g., that a father not residing with his child at time 1 does not reside with the child at time 2). In such cases, analyses are conducted using ordered probit models with selectivity. In all analyses, standard errors are adjusted to account for the sample design.

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