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# Children's Residence After Parental Separation: Arrangement Diversity and Associated Factors in Quebec

Arnaud Régnier-Loilier\* and Amandine Baude\*\*

## Abstract

This article describes the diversity of children's residence arrangements after their parents separate and examines the characteristics associated with organizing and scheduling parenting time. We draw on data from the Longitudinal Study of Separated Parents and Stepfamilies in Quebec, conducted in 2018. We bring to light a wide range of residence arrangements through a descriptive analysis of the responses of the 677 mothers and 599 fathers who filled in a 28-night calendar indicating where their children spent each night. We found that children generally move from one parent's residence to the other's around weekends and on Wednesdays. However, we also found contrasts by sex of the parent. Multivariate analysis revealed that several factors—including parents' income and education level, employment situation at separation, country of birth, which parent initiated the separation, context of parental relations at that time, and children's age and sex—are associated with children's living arrangements. Thus, despite an increase in shared residence in Quebec over the last decades, important contrasts persist in children's post-separation living arrangements.

## Keywords

residential arrangements, shared residence, parenting time, separation, gender

Couple separation is rising in industrialized countries, and parents separate increasingly early in children's lives. Parental separation in Quebec is consistent with this trend (Castagner-Giroux et al., 2016; Desrosiers and Tétréault, 2018). Nearly 3 million children and adolescents live in single-parent or step-parent families (Bohnert et al., 2014), more than 600,000 of them in Quebec (Lacroix, 2014). In recent decades, the notion of the child's best interests has evolved towards an ideal of equally shared parenting. Moreover, in some countries, including Australia and Belgium, the law now supports establishing shared residence (joint physical custody) arrangements after separation (Côté and

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Gaborean, 2015). Shared residence is often defined as a living arrangement where the proportion of time a child lives with each parent ranges from 65% with one and 35% with the other to equal time, or 50% with each parent. (Sodermans et al., 2013; Bernardi and Mortelmans, 2021; Steinbach et al., 2021). This definition therefore covers both symmetrical shared residence, or equal parenting time, and asymmetrical arrangements, such as spending weekdays with one parent and weekends with the other.

While the prevalence of shared residence<sup>(1)</sup> has been rising in most industrialized countries (Hakovirta and Skinner, 2021; Steinbach et al., 2021; Zilincikova, 2021), it is exceptionally high in Quebec. Using data from 37 North American and European countries, Steinbach et al. (2021) estimated the level of symmetrical shared residence, where children spend equal time with both parents, at approximately 6% of living arrangements for adolescents (aged 11–15); the figure found for France was 7%. In Quebec, on the other hand, estimates of equally shared residence vary from 16% to 44%<sup>(2)</sup> and appear to be 3 to 4 times higher there than in the rest of Canada (Pelletier et al., 2017). Moreover, contrary to the situation in other regions, equal shared residence developed in Quebec without legislative urging. The last major changes to the Civil Code of Quebec in this matter date from 1977<sup>(3)</sup> (Côté and Gaborean, 2015; Pelletier, 2017). Quebec thus offers a valuable observation ground for studying child living arrangements after parental separation.

It has often been shown that shared residence is more widespread in socially advantaged environments, i.e. in families where the parents are not only relatively highly educated and financially comfortable but where they also experience less conflict (Bauserman, 2012), suggesting that this type of post-separation arrangement is ‘reserved’ for a specific subgroup of parents. However, some of the studies are dated or concern societies where shared residence is much less common than in Quebec today. A study conducted in the United States, where shared residence<sup>(4)</sup> levels have risen quickly, showed that the parents practising it are of increasingly more diverse socio-economic backgrounds (Meyer et al., 2017). However, the same authors have recently qualified that finding, showing instead an increasingly strong influence of ethnic origin and high educational attainment on shared residence in the United States, though in the later study they only considered post-divorce situations, leaving open the question of cohabiting couple dissolution (Meyer

(1) In this article, the term shared residence is not restricted to a 50%/50% division of time between each parent.

(2) The estimates obtained vary considerably by different parameters; specifically, child’s age, data collection year, time elapsed since separation, who answered the survey questions, and how shared residence was defined and measured (Pelletier, 2017).

(3) In 1977, a partial reform of Quebec family law replaced the notion of paternal power with that of parental authority jointly exercised by father and mother.

(4) Defined in that study as a child spending between 25% and 75% of their time with each parent.

et al., 2022). In a study of Flanders (Belgium), Sodermans et al. (2013) found that while socio-economic disparities remain, dual residence is now no longer practised solely by relatively non-conflictual former partners and is increasingly unlikely to involve consultation with a family mediator. The question that then arises is whether, in Quebec, the spread of shared residence observed in recent years has gone together with changes in the influence of certain factors associated with its use.

The prevalence, determinants, and impacts of shared residence have been the focus of increasing scientific interest in recent decades (Meyer et al., 2022). However, most of the results available are based on comparisons of residence arrangement types that are not always precisely defined<sup>(5)</sup> and that vary from one study to another. A single type of general residence arrangement often covers a wide range of different residence schedules that have not been thoroughly documented, despite their potential influence on child well-being and the quality of parent–child relationships (Smart et al., 2001; Smyth et al., 2012; Sodermans et al., 2013; Emery, 2021). To measure distributions of parenting time more accurately, several authors suggest having respondents complete a daily calendar (Sodermans et al., 2014; Pelletier, 2017; Steinbach and Augustijn, 2021). Furthermore, while most surveys question mothers, it has been shown that the prevalence of shared residence is lower according to women than men (Meyer et al., 2022) and that different members of a family using a particular type of residence arrangement do not describe it the same way (Kitterød and Lyngstad, 2014).

Our study, based on data from the first wave of the *Enquête Longitudinale auprès des Parents Séparés et Recomposés du Québec* [Longitudinal Study of Separated Parents and Stepfamilies in Quebec, or ELPSRQ], a survey where both mothers and fathers were questioned (though not of the same children) should help to fill in some of the knowledge gaps noted above. In the current context of rising shared residence in Quebec, our aim is to reach a better understanding of the types of residence arrangements children follow after parental separation and the factors associated with them. This is particularly important given that many studies set out to compare children's well-being in dual-residence arrangements involving equal or nearly equal parenting time versus arrangements that involve residing exclusively or mainly with one parent (Berman and Daneback, 2022) without presenting those arrangements in detail. We therefore seek:

1. to document the diversity of residence arrangements in the post-separation period found when both fathers and mothers fill in a residential calendar, and to explore discrepancies between their responses

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(5) In some cases, the questions asked were extremely general; for example, 'With whom did your children mainly stay in the first year after you broke up? With me/With my ex-partner/With both of us, on a time-shared basis' (Generations and Gender Survey, Core Questionnaire for Wave 1, 2004).

2. to examine associations between particular residence arrangements and the characteristics of parents, the dissolved union, the children, and the post-separation relationship between the ex-partners

After briefly reviewing the relevant literature (Section I) and presenting the data used (Section II), we describe the diverse living arrangements found 2 years after separation by way of a residential calendar; analyse differences by sex of responding parent; and present the factors associated with the ways parenting time is organized or scheduled (Section III). We then discuss the findings and conclude (Section IV).

## **I. Previous findings on children's post-separation living arrangements**

### **1. Arrangement diversity**

Few authors studying child custody generally and child well-being specifically have explored the exact details of how children's living arrangements are organized after parental separation, and most make no mention of the wide diversity of arrangements covered by shared residence. For example, some children transition between their parents' homes once a week, while others do so twice a week (Emery, 2021). The characteristics of a residence arrangement can affect child well-being and the quality of parent-child relations; they can also evolve with a child's needs, age, or the couple and/or family situation(s) of the separated parents, e.g. parents who repartner or move house (Smart et al., 2001; Smyth et al., 2012; Sodermans et al., 2013; Emery, 2021). The few studies we know of that investigate such details have shown that children's residence arrangements vary by proportion of time spent with each parent and the frequency of switching homes (Smyth et al., 2012; Steinbach and Augustijn, 2021).

For example, a German study (Steinbach et al., 2021) based on a sample of 463 parents with a child under 14 in shared residence (involving in this case a time distribution of at least 30%/70%) showed that 44.5% of parents set up a symmetrical 50/50 arrangement and 55.5% an asymmetrical one where the child spends at least 30% of their time with each parent; 4.5% of asymmetrical arrangements involve children living mainly with their father and 51% mainly with their mother. Regarding transition frequency, a Belgian study (Sodermans et al., 2013) found that most adolescents in shared residence (67%) switch parental homes 4 times a month, corresponding to weekly stays with parents: 7 days with one, followed by 7 days with the other. But other types of arrangements were also found (based on a twice-weekly stay, for example), usually implying a greater number of transitions between residences (Smyth et al., 2012; Sodermans et al., 2013; Steinbach and Augustijn, 2021). Steinbach and Augustijn (2021) found an average number of 9.5 transitions per month but also found that the number can vary from 0 to 48, depending on several

factors, including parents' working hours, geographic distance between their homes, and the quality of their relations.

## 2. How do mothers' and fathers' responses differ?

Methodologically, discrepancies in the prevalence of post-separation residence arrangements may be found in conjunction with various criteria, such as type of data used (judicial data usually concern divorce or conflictual situations and do not cover non-marital cohabitating couple dissolution or less conflictual separations), the person questioned (a child, a parent), and the sex of the individual parent questioned. We have long known that perceptions of partner breakup differ by sex (Roussel, 1975; Pettit and Bloom, 1984; Festy and Korchagina, 2002). In France, for example, fathers tend to under-report their children in surveys, especially when they do not have custody of them (Toulemon, 2005; Breuil-Genier et al., 2016) or never see them (Régnier-Loilier, 2014). Children who divide their time between two homes are more often counted as their mother's rather than their father's child because some mothers do not report that their children also live at their father's, and some fathers overestimate the time their children live with them in cases where it is less than half the time (Toulemon, 2011; Breuil-Genier et al., 2016). These tendencies were also found in a recent US study; specifically, female respondents are less likely to report shared living arrangements than their male counterparts (Meyer et al., 2022). The authors did not suggest possible explanations for these differences.

Although reporting particularities may be a matter of respondents leaving out information (omitting children that one has lost contact with, or seeking to show one's own involvement in parenting after separation), it is relevant to note the participation bias identified in the Belgian survey *Divorce in Flanders*. That survey interviewed both parents and found considerable differences. When only one parent (usually the mother) agreed to answer the questionnaire, this corresponded to relatively conflictual relations between parents and lower shared residence prevalence (Sodermans et al., 2013).

## 3. Factors associated with particular living arrangements

Since the late 1980s, several studies have identified factors associated with practising a particular residence arrangement and with the frequency of father–child contact after separation. Those factors can be grouped into four categories: children's characteristics, couple and family trajectories, post-separation relational context, and parents' characteristics.

### *Children's characteristics*

Child's age plays a major role. Parents of very young children are less inclined to set up shared residence and parenting arrangements, whereas shared

residence is more common for children aged 4–11; that arrangement is once again less common for adolescent children (Cashmore et al., 2010; Sodermans et al., 2013; Hachet, 2021a; Merla et al., 2022). In infancy and very early childhood, there is a preference for having the child live mainly with the mother; the arguments cited in favour concern child development (breastfeeding, need for stability, etc.) or gender norms. Adolescents, on the other hand, are more likely to live either part- or full-time with their father (Kitterød and Lyngstad, 2012; Poortman and van Gaalen, 2017).

Findings for child's sex and sibship size are not as clear (Pelletier et al., 2017). Poortman and van Gaalen (2017) found no difference by sex or number of children. When significant differences were found, boys were more often in shared residence or living with their fathers than girls (Cancian and Mayer, 1998). This is also the case for only-children (Juby et al., 2005; Kitterød and Lyngstad, 2012; Bonnet et al., 2015), while the probability of siblings living apart rises with sibship size (Bonnet et al., 2015). By contrast, no difference has been observed regarding sibship composition by sex (only boys, only girls, or a combination) (Sodermans et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2022).

### *Couple and family trajectories*

Whether the parents were married seems central in some studies, including one American and two Australian ones, all of which found that children born to unmarried parents had less contact with their fathers after separation (Cashmore et al., 2010; Cheadle et al., 2010; Weston et al., 2011). However, those studies lump together two very different situations—children born to parents in an officialized union and those born outside such a union—and this may partially explain their findings (Pelletier, 2017). In Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, and Europe generally, union type (couple cohabitation vs. marriage) does not seem to have a significant effect on contact frequency or type of residence arrangement, all else equal (Juby et al., 2005; Kitterød and Lyngstad, 2012; Pelletier et al., 2017; Poortman and van Gaalen, 2017; Zilincikova, 2021).

Other authors have shown that the longer a union lasted, the more involved the father is in caring for the children after separation. The results of Cashmore et al. (2010), for example, found that parents who had lived together more than 2 years were more inclined to share parenting time after separation. However, this variable's effect was not significant in Kitterød and Lyngstad's 2012 study of Norway.

Last, two characteristics can be associated with children's post-separation living arrangements, but they are subject to different interpretations. First, distance between the father's and the mother's homes is associated with contact frequency and residence arrangement (Cheadle et al., 2010; Kitterød and Lyngstad, 2012; Ferrari et al., 2019). Régnier-Loilier (2016) showed, for example, that the greater the geographical distance separating fathers from their children, the more often father–child ties loosen or break. Poortman (2021) showed that

commuting time between parents' homes is shorter in shared residence arrangements (8 minutes on average) than when the father or mother alone is granted custody of the children (24 and 22 minutes, respectively). However, interpretation in both cases should be qualified. On the one hand, parents wishing to share parenting responsibilities after separation can decide to live geographically close to each other for logistic, financial, and schooling purposes (Cashmore et al., 2010; Hachet, 2021b); on the other, the absence of parent–child contact, or situations where children seldom stay with one or the other parent (e.g. only during vacations), may allow for and even lead to increased geographical distance between ex-partners. The same is true for parents' post-separation couple situations. A break in father–child contact occurs more often when the father is in a new union, and more often still when he has children with his new partner (Régnier-Loilier, 2016). Furthermore, shared residence is more likely when the mother has a new partner (Juby et al., 2005, for Canada; Kaspiew et al., 2009, for Australia) and, more generally, in the event of remarriage (Meyer et al., 2022, for the United States).

### *Post-separation relations between parents*

Parents' willingness and ability to cooperate with each other and the general climate of their relationship (measured in studies by the degree to which their separation involved judicial intervention or the level of interparental conflict) may be associated with how parenting time is shared. Several studies have shown that parents whose relationship involves a high level of tension and conflict are less inclined to share parenting time after separation (Maccoby and Mnookin, 1992; Juby et al., 2005; Sodermans et al., 2013; Pelletier et al., 2017; Godbout et al., 2023). However, other studies, including meta-analyses, have arrived at different conclusions, showing, for example, that the level of interparental conflict does not vary by type of child custody (Leclair et al., 2019) or that its effect disappears as joint physical custody becomes more widespread (Sodermans et al., 2013, for Belgium); also that good relations between ex-partners do not guarantee that their children are in shared custody (Kaspiew et al., 2009).

### *Parents' characteristics*

Turning to parents' socio-economic characteristics, fathers and mothers with high educational attainment more often share parenting time in both Canada and elsewhere (Juby et al., 2005; Kitterød and Lyngstad, 2012; Pelletier et al., 2017; Poortman and van Gaalen, 2017; Bloch, 2020). According to Pelletier (2017), the effect associated with education should be 'interpreted in connection with the set of unobserved factors to which it is closely related: family background, economic opportunities, social network, etc.' (pp. 106–107). In the context of Quebec, another important effect is that of the mother's employment status (Pelletier, 2017; see also, for the Netherlands, Poortman and van Gaalen, 2017). Mothers who are active before the separation are more likely to share



parental responsibilities with the father after union dissolution. Shared residence is also associated with high income (Cashmore et al., 2010; Weston et al., 2011; Bauserman, 2012; Meyer et al., 2017; Bloch, 2020), a finding that may reflect the financial requirements—housing, furnishing, and transportation expenses—implicated in this type of custody. However, two studies (Pelletier, 2017; Poortman and van Gaalen, 2017) found that when educational attainment and employment status are included in the analysis as control variables, the association between family income and residence arrangement disappears. According to Pelletier et al. (2017), the association between income and shared parenting time involves those two other characteristics. Finally, a few American and Canadian studies found that the probability of shared residence or frequent father–child contact is lower among foreign-born persons (Juby et al., 2007; Amato et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2022).

## II. Data

### 1. A survey adapted to studying distributions of parenting time

Our data are from the first wave of the ELPSRQ survey (Saint-Jacques et al., 2018), conducted by the Partenariat de Recherche ‘Séparation Parentale, Recomposition Familiale’ (Parental Separation and Family Recomposition Research Partnership).<sup>(6)</sup> The population studied comprised parents separated for less than 24 months when the sample was drawn<sup>(7)</sup> (i.e. after May 2016) with at least one child under age 14 at the time of the study, of whom they either did or did not have custody. The separation followed a period of cohabitation with the other parent that lasted at least during the pregnancy.

The province of Quebec does not have a database that can be used to identify separated parents. The sample was drawn based on information in the registration files of the province’s health insurance system (Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec).<sup>(8)</sup> The files were used to identify parents residing at different addresses, regardless of who did or did not have custody of the children. The aim of sampling based on the different-addresses criterion was to target potentially separated parents effectively without presuming whether they were in fact separated or not. It was only later, when possible respondents were contacted, that they were asked whether they were separated (if so, they were eligible to participate in the survey). The sampling plan was stratified by parent’s sex to produce a sample composed equally—50%/50%—of fathers and mothers.<sup>(9)</sup>

(6) See <https://arucfamille.ulaval.ca>

(7) On 1 June 2018. As data collection was spread over several months, some parents had been separated over 24 months when they filled in the first-wave questionnaire.

(8) The sampling base was established by the Institut de la statistique du Québec together with the survey leaders and professionals at the Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec.

(9) Separated parents ‘living together apart’ (Martin et al., 2011), i.e. still living under the same roof, were not included in the survey.

The final first-wave sample comprised 1,551 parents.<sup>(10)</sup> For parents with several children under age 14, a 'target' child was designated randomly for detailed description in terms of well-being, place of residence, etc. Only one of the child's parents was questioned. Data were weighted to make them representative of the separated-parent population.

The data were collected in 2018, after a letter with acknowledgement of receipt was sent to respondents, followed by an invitation to fill in an online questionnaire. Before collection, the survey had obtained approval from the Université Laval research ethics committee (approval no. 2016-154/28-03-2018). For further details on the survey, see Saint-Jacques et al. (2023).

## 2. Determining children's residence arrangements

Consistent with the recommendations of several experts (Vanassche et al., 2013; Pelletier, 2017), the survey used a residential calendar to determine children's living arrangements. Parents were requested to indicate where their child had slept in the preceding 2 weeks, as follows: 'Thinking about the last two (school) weeks, please indicate, for each night, whose home [name of child] slept at: Yours/[name of ex-partner's]/Other's.

Respondents were then asked 'Was the arrangement also the same during the two weeks prior to that: Yes/No.' If the answer was negative (13% of cases), an identical blank 2-week calendar appeared on the screen, accompanied by the same first question: 'Thinking about these prior two (school) weeks, please indicate, for each night, whose home [name of child] slept at: Yours/[name of ex-partner's]/Other's. In this way, researchers knew whether the child had slept at their mother's or father's home, or elsewhere, for each of the 28 consecutive nights. The calendar also enabled them to identify transition or home-switching days (during the week or weekend, etc.) and their frequency.

Of the 1,551 survey participants, 197 did not complete the calendar due to a questionnaire filter error and were therefore excluded from our analysis.<sup>(11)</sup> Moreover, 78 respondents who completed the residential calendar did so only partly and so were not included. In the end, 1,276 usable calendars were collected, 677 of them from mothers and 599 from fathers. To identify possible bias due to the missing values, non-response in completing the calendar was modelled ( $n = 275$ ). These parents did not differ from the others for the variables of interest used here.<sup>(12)</sup>

(10) Corresponding to a response rate of 22.1% (32% if only contacted parents who fit into the survey frame are considered).

(11) According to information in responses to other questions, this mostly concerned parents with shared custody without the possibility of determining lengths of time.

(12) Model results not presented here but available from the authors.

### 3. Analytic strategy

First, the residential calendar data were used to construct a detailed panorama of the living arrangements, including number of transitions—residence changes made by the target child—and transition days. We then grouped this information in categories representing the most commonly occurring general residence arrangements while representing the diversity of child living arrangements and schedules within a single arrangement category in graphs. The descriptive analysis was also used to examine variation in responses by the sex of the responding parent. Then, to identify the characteristics associated with each way of organizing the child's post-separation residence, we performed multinomial logistic regression on four categories of residence: equally shared residence, where the child spends the same number of nights with each parent; always at the mother's; mainly at the mother's; and always or mainly at the father's.

### 4. Explanatory variables considered in the models

Echoing the literature review above, four sets of variables were considered:

1. Parents' characteristics: gender,<sup>(13)</sup> educational attainment, individual taxable income for the separation year (in Canadian dollars [C\$]),<sup>(14)</sup> ex-partners' compared levels of economic activity at separation, country of birth<sup>(15)</sup>
2. Target child's characteristics: crossing of sex and age, number of siblings
3. Characteristics of the dissolved union: marital situation, union length
4. Separation characteristics: initiating parent, reasons for separation, whether the separation was contentious.<sup>(16)</sup> Given that the longer partners have been separated, the looser the ties between father and child (Régnier-Loilier, 2016), that the survey data were collected over several months, and that the parents had not all separated on the same date (time elapsed since separation varied between 0 and 40 months, with an average of 21 months and a standard deviation

(13) To the question, 'What gender do you identify as? Female/Male/Other', two people answered 'Other'. Given the low number of cases—too low to be analysed specifically—and because we did not wish to exclude them from the analysis, we recorded their sex as that reported in the sampling frame (one man and one woman).

(14) Educational attainment and income known only for the responding parent. With respondent's permission, data from their tax file was matched to the survey. For respondents who refused (161 cases), income was determined by information from the questionnaire itself (exact amount or, for respondents indicating an income range, the centre of that range).

(15) Cases of intermarriage could not be distinguished from couples composed of two foreign-born partners because the numbers were too low: 55 cases of Canadian-born fathers, 76 of Canadian-born mothers, and 103 cases where both parents were born outside Canada.

(16) For more details on the variable used, see Godbout et al. (2023).

of 7.7 months), we also tested the impact of the time elapsed since separation. As no significant effects or interactions with the effects of other variables were found, that variable was not included in the models presented here.

Three characteristics related to the child's residence arrangement were introduced into the models only in a second stage because the direction of causality is more ambivalent than for the other dimensions. Those three characteristics are ex-partner's couple situation at the time of the survey (i.e. in a cohabiting union vs. not in such a union);<sup>(17)</sup> respondent's own couple situation (not cohabiting, living with someone who does not have children/living with someone who has at least one child who never lives with the respondent/living with someone who has at least one child who lives at least occasionally with the respondent); and distance between ex-partners' homes. They were introduced to observe the extent to which the parents' couple trajectories and geographical distance between homes could be associated with the child's residence arrangement, without considering them explanatory variables. Since taking (or not taking) account of those three characteristics does not affect the other variables, only the complete model, including them, is presented here.

Appendix Table A.1 presents the response options for each variable, along with non-weighted respondent numbers and distribution (weighted percentages).

### III. Shared parenting time and associated factors

#### 1. A wide variety of residence arrangements

The data from the 28-day residential calendar bring to light the wide variety of children's living arrangements 2 years after parents' separation, in connection with three factors: how the target child's nights were distributed between the father's home and the mother's home over the preceding 4 weeks; average number of transitions involved (i.e. home switches for the target child); and transition days (from Monday to Sunday). We grouped these indicators by the four most commonly occurring general residence arrangements (Table 1), using graphs to illustrate the variety of residence schedules found for each general arrangement (Figures 1 to 3).<sup>(18)</sup>

(17) In cases of respondent's ex-partner being in a new union, we could not know whether the new partner had children.

(18) The variable indicating in which parent's home each of the 28 nights was spent is in columns (one column per night) for each child (while a row in the figure represents a child's situation). The figures were done after sorting the database by general type of residence arrangement and, for shared residence, the frequency of home switching (Figure 1) or number of nights spent at the mother's (Figures 2 and 3).

Table 1. Description of the main types of child residence arrangements

	Children's residence arrangements			Transitions		
	Details	Proportion (%) of general residence category organized this way	Number of different ways of organizing child's residence schedule	Number of nights spent at the mother's	The 3 most frequently occurring transition days	Average number of transitions over the 28-day period
<b>Equally shared residence: 14 nights at the mother's, 14 nights at the father's (44.3%)</b>						
7 consecutive nights at both father's and mother's (n = 269; 20.6%)	Monday to Sunday Friday to Thursday Other transition days	38.6 41.0 20.4	13	14	Friday (41%), Monday (39%), Sunday (11%)	4
2 nights at the father's, 2 nights at the mother's, 5 nights at the father's, and 5 nights at the mother's (or the reverse) (n = 123; 9.6%)	With the first parent on Mondays and Tuesdays, with the second on Wednesdays and Thursdays, then with the first from Friday to Monday, and the second from Wednesday to Sunday Other transition days	97.9 2.1	7	14	Monday (98%), Wednesday (98%), Friday (98%)	7
2 nights at the father's, 2 nights at the mother's, and 3 nights at the father's (and the reverse the following week) (n = 92; 7.5%)	With the first parent on Monday and Tuesday, with the second on Wednesday and Thursday, back with the first on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; then the reverse the following week Other transition days	85.8 14.2	7	14	Wednesday (93%), Friday (92%), Monday (90%)	11
Other ways of organizing child's residence schedule (n = 85; 6.6%)	No specific recurrence	100.0	67	14	Wednesday (79%), Thursday (67%), Friday (64%)	12
<b>Child resides mainly at the father's (7.8%)</b>						
All nights at the father's (28 days) (n = 10; 0.8%)		100.0	1	0	-	0
More nights at the father's (15–27 days) (n = 87; 7.0%)	16 nights at the father's, 12 nights at the mother's 24 nights at the father's, 4 nights at the mother's (in 9 out of 10 cases, one in two weekends) 18 nights at the father's, 10 nights at the mother's Other distributions	37.8 20.6 11.1 30.5	67	8.9	Friday (68%), Monday (61%), Sunday (54%)	8

Table 1 (cont'd). Description of the main types of child residence arrangements

	Children's residence arrangements			Transitions	
	Details	Proportion (%) of general residence category organized this way	Number of different ways of organizing child's residence schedule	Number of nights spent at the mother's	Average number of transitions over the 28-day period
<b>Child resides mainly at the mother's (44.4 %)</b> All nights at mother's (28 days) (n = 122; 9.9 %) More nights at the mother's (15-27 days) (n = 445; 34.5%)		100.0	1	28	0
	24 nights at the mother's, 4 nights at the father's (in 8 out of 10 cases, one in two weekends)	25.2			
	16 nights at the mother's, 12 nights at the father's	22.0	237	20.3	7
	20 nights at the mother's, 8 nights at the father's Other distributions	15.5 37.3			
<b>At least 1 night spent elsewhere than at the mother's or father's (n = 43; 3.5 %)</b>			41	14.8	8
<b>Overall (100.0%)</b>			441	17.2	6

**Note:** unweighted n, weighted percentages.  
**Interpretation (e.g. 7 consecutive nights at the father's and the mother's):** 20.6% of separated parents report that the child spends 7 consecutive nights with one parent, then 7 consecutive nights with the other parent. Of this category, 38.6% of schedules run from Monday to Sunday (with a transition on Monday) at one parent's home for 1 week and at the other's for the next week. Of the 28 days, the child spends an average of 14 nights at their mother's and make four home transitions, the latter occurring mainly on Friday (the child transitions between Thursday and Friday), Monday, and Sunday.  
**Sample:** All separated parents, except those for whom data are missing.  
**Source:** ELPSRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1 FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).

The first major finding from the residential calendar is the extensive variety of arrangements used by separated parents: over 250 different ones<sup>(19)</sup> for the survey's 1,276 respondents.

The most common general living arrangement found for parents participating in the survey is equally shared residence (50% of the child's time spent with each parent), which accounts for 44% of cases (Table 1).<sup>(20)</sup> The most frequent schedule was a week at one parent's and the following week at the other's, with a transition at or near the weekend. Two other schedules found in cases of equal parenting time are also fairly frequent. The first is having the child spend 5 days with one parent, 5 days with the other, then 2 days with the first and 2 days with the second. Here, the child usually switches homes around the weekend (Friday and Monday) and on Wednesdays. The reiterated time unit in this schedule is not 1 but 2 weeks, and the child switches homes twice as often as in the preceding schedule. The second is to have the child spend the first 2 days of the school week (Monday and Tuesday) with one parent, the next 2 (Wednesday and Thursday) with the other, then finish out the week with the first parent (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday). The following week is structured identically but starts with 2 days at the second parent's. Here again, children mostly switch homes around weekends and Wednesdays, but the shorter stays with each parent lead to more transitions between the two (an average of 12 per month). Alongside these most frequently occurring schedules, which together represent 86% of cases of equally shared residence, we still find a large variety of solutions that cannot be detailed here (see Figure 1, 'Other transition frequencies').

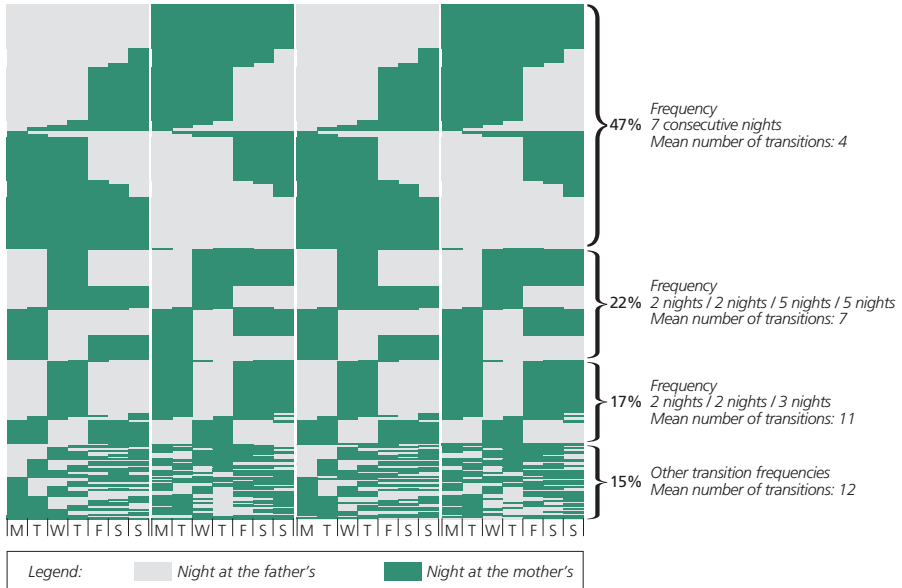
Target children whose time is not equally divided between their parents live mainly at their mother's (44% of cases). In slightly under one-fourth of those situations—one-tenth of all arrangements—the child lives full-time with her. For children who also live part-time with their father, that time is usually spent at weekends, either weekly or once every 2 weeks (Figure 2). If we rank the situations of children residing mainly with their mother by number of days spent at her home, the most frequently occurring situation is 24 out of 28 days (one-fourth of cases). These children usually spend 1 in 2 weekends at their father's. There are only a few cases of children who move to their father's for 1 night per week. Children who alternate between homes on a weekly basis spend more time with their father (at least 2 days a week, mostly weekend days).

Children who live mainly with their father (8% of schedules) only rarely do so full-time (fewer than 1% of all cases). Usually the child spends 16 days at the father's and 12 at the mother's, but no particular way of organizing this

(19) The calendar variable has a total of 441 different responses, but many schedules 'mirror' each other (e.g. spending the first week at the father's and the second at the mother's is the same arrangement as spending the first at the mother's and the second at the father's) and were therefore counted only once.

(20) A higher share than found by other surveys (see Discussion).

Figure 1. Diversity of residence schedules in cases of equally shared residence (numbers)



**Interpretation:** Figure 1 is made up of 569 lines, corresponding to the number of children spending an equal number of nights with each parent (equally shared residence). Each line represents the residence schedule observed for one child. Lines were sorted by major residence categories (here, according to transition frequency).

**Sample:** All separated parents whose child spends the same amount of time at each parent's (equally shared residence) ( $n = 569$ ).

**Source:** ELPSRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1 FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).

situation was observed (Figure 3). Not only is it more uncommon for children to live mainly with their father than their mother, but when they do, they also spend fewer days with him than they would with their mother: 22 out of 28 nights for children living mainly at the mother's, as against an average of 20 nights for children living mainly at the father's.

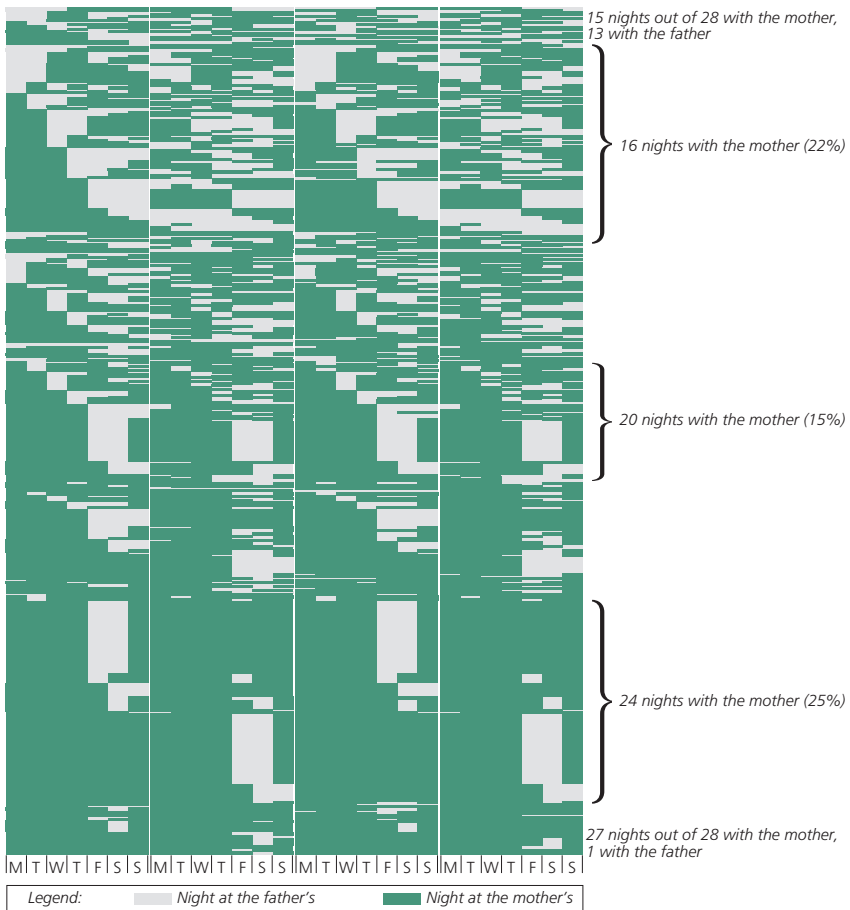
Last, children who spend some nights elsewhere (3% of situations) generally do so only exceptionally. In half of cases, they spent only 1 or 2 nights in the 4 weeks studied somewhere other than at one of their parents' homes, and only three parents indicated that their child 'always' lived 'elsewhere'.

## 2. Contrasting patterns of residence arrangements by respondent's sex

This broad array of residence arrangements is independent of the sex of the parent participating in the survey. Although ELPSRQ interviewed only one parent, it is reasonable to expect prevalence to be independent of respondent's sex since the residential calendar is presumably factual and relatively unexposed to variation by the gender of the person assessing the situation. Yet this



Figure 2. Diversity of residence schedules when the child resides mainly at their mother's (numbers)



**Interpretation:** Figure 2 is made up of 445 lines, corresponding to the number of children living mainly at their mother's. Each line represents the residence schedule observed for one child. Lines were sorted, in ascending order, by number of days at the mother's (at the top, 15 nights at the mother's, 13 at the father's; at the bottom, 27 nights at the mother's, 1 at the father's).

**Sample:** All separated parents whose child lives mainly at their mother's ( $n = 445$ ).

**Source:** ELPSRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1 FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).

Figure 3. Diversity of residence schedules when the child resides mainly at their father's (numbers)



**Sample:** All separated parents whose child lives mainly at their father's ( $n = 87$ ).

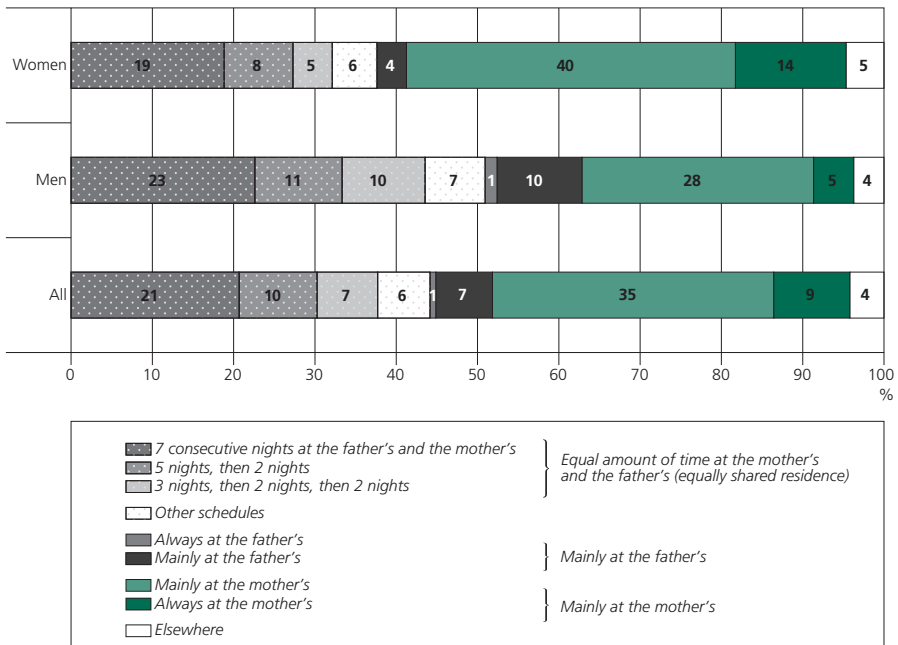
**Source:** ELPSRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1 FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).

did not turn out to be the case (Figure 4): 54% of women said their child spent more nights at their home, whereas only 33% of men said their child spent more nights at the mother's; conversely, 11% of men said their child spent more nights with them, while only 4% of women said the child spent more nights at the father's. Similarly, 51% of men reported that their child had spent the same number of nights with each parent, as against only 38% of women.

Three complementary rather than competing hypotheses can be put forward to explain these discrepancies. First, there may have been a reporting bias. Respondents, regardless of sex, may tend to attribute more of their child's time to themselves to evidence their commitment to parenting, or to downplay the other parent's commitment, perhaps with the underlying aim of devaluing the ex-partner's level of involvement. Still, the residential calendar is, theoretically, factual and therefore logically less subject to this type of bias.

The second hypothesis is a possible survey participant selection effect. Parents whose children live with them either very seldom or not at all, who feel as if they have been prevented from parenting or who have given up any intention of parenting after feeling wronged by a custody ruling, may feel less concerned by a survey on separation or more reluctant to take part in one (the

**Figure 4. Distribution of child residence arrangements (in the preceding 4 weeks) by respondent's sex**



**Interpretation (e.g. Women):** 14% of women indicate that the target child spent all nights of the 4 weeks preceding the survey at their house (response option: Always at the mother's).

**Sample:** All separated parents, except those for whom data were missing ( $n = 1,276$ ).

**Source:** ELPSRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1 FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).

subject being too sensitive for them), especially if they are in a new union or have formed a new family. This type of effect has already been brought to light in other studies (Sodermans et al., 2013; Bryson and McKay, 2018; Godbout et al., 2021). No mothers participating in ELPsRQ reported that their child resided permanently with the father, whereas according to fathers' responses such situations do exist (1% of cases). To account for this possible selection effect, we modelled responding parent's sex (using binary logistic regression) by characteristics assumed not to vary by parent's sex. The probability of the respondent being a man is lower (or being a woman, higher) in cases where the man is not working, the couple was not married, the relationship had broken up long before, relations between ex-partners were good, the parents had female children under 5, the distance between ex-partners' homes was considerable, the man was in a new union, and the woman was not (see Appendix Table A.2).

The third hypothesis is a possible sampling bias linked to post-separation migration trajectories that vary by sex. Two per cent of the fathers questioned reported that the mother lived overseas (from Canada) as against 7% of mothers reporting that the father did. The sample was composed of people living in Quebec, so parents living overseas seldom see their children, if at all, and therefore did not fit into the survey frame. As it turns out, most of those parents were fathers.

Because of these differences by sex, we analysed the factors associated with particular residence arrangements for both sexes combined and by sex—without comparing women's responses to men's, precisely because of the possible selection effects just indicated.

### 3. Factors associated with parenting time distributions

This last part of the analysis seeks to identify the factors associated with particular child residence arrangements. Table 2 presents the results of a multinomial logistic regression model estimating the probability of a child being always at the mother's (28 nights,  $n = 122$ ), mainly at the mother's (15 to 27 nights,  $n = 445$ ), or always or mainly at the father's (15 to 28 nights,  $n = 97$ )<sup>(21)</sup> versus equally shared residence (half of nights at one parent's, half at the other's,  $n = 569$ ) by parents' characteristics, children's characteristics, characteristics of the prior union, and separation context. The strict definition of equally shared residence was chosen as the reference because mothers' and fathers' perspectives on definitions of non-equally shared residence differ (40/60 or 30/70, for example). The more extensive the definition of shared residence, the

(21) For this last general residence category, we could not distinguish between always at the father's and mainly at the father's because the number of relevant survey participants was too low: only 10 cases of the child living permanently with their father. For children who spent some nights elsewhere than at their mother's or father's ( $n = 43$ ), only nights spent at one and/or the other parent's home were considered in determining their residence arrangement category.

more time the child spends at their mother's than at their father's.<sup>(22)</sup> Moreover, three specific cases—of children always living somewhere other than either of their parents' homes—were excluded from the analysis ( $n = 1,273$ ).

Table 2 presents odds ratios (OR) for both sexes combined and stratified by responding parent's sex, together with significance levels. Results refer to the reference situation of equally shared residence.<sup>(23)</sup>

### *Parents' characteristics*

Sex of responding parent has a marked effect, a finding consistent with the descriptive analysis. In sum, compared to men, women have a stronger propensity to report that the child always or mainly lives with them rather than in a situation of equally shared residence; conversely, they are less likely than men to report that the child resides mainly with the father.

Ex-partners' socio-economic situation(s) also influence the child's residence arrangement. Low educational attainment and low income (< C\$30,000 a year) go together with a greater probability of the child always living with the mother. Conversely, equally shared residence is more probable at the high end of the income scale. The propensity for having the child always or mainly reside with the mother is higher when the woman was not working at the time of separation. Post-separation arrangements may be said to overlap with pre-separation household role distribution (the man provides the resources, and the woman takes care of the children). Last, the father's not working before the separation increases the probability of the child residing both at the mother's *and* with him, reflecting a dual effect: for a man not to be working may be perceived as a situation that works against shared residence and in favour of the child residing with their mother, but the greater availability of a non-working father also works in favour of the child living always or mainly with him.

Ex-partners' country or countries of birth, densely aggregated here because of the low numbers (both parents born in Canada vs. one or neither), has a very clear effect. Shared residence is much less probable if at least one parent was born outside Canada, in which case the child resides more often with the mother. For these characteristics, the results differ little by responding parent's sex.

### *Characteristics of the dissolved union*

The survey offers scant information on these characteristics apart from marital status and union length, which do not seem at all associated with particular residence arrangements, except for long unions (14 years or more),

(22) For example, if shared residence is defined as spending between 40% and 60% of nights at each parent's, then in 16% of cases the greater proportion of the child's time was spent with the mother, while in only 6% was it with the father (in the remaining 78% of cases, the child's time was equally distributed: equally shared residence). If shared residence is defined more loosely as no less than 30% with one parent and no more than 70% with the other, then the corresponding proportions are 22%, 7%, and 71%.

(23) Statistics were processed with SAS 9.4 software.

Table 2. Characteristics associated with one or another residence arrangement versus equally shared residence (multinomial logistic regression, odds ratios)

	All		Women		Men	
	Always at the mother's	Mainly at the mother's	Always or mainly at the father's	Always at the mother's	Mainly at the mother's	Always or mainly at the father's
<b>Sex of responding parent (Ref. = Man)</b>						
Woman	3.7***	2.0***	0.3***			
<b>Educational attainment (Ref. = Quebec equiv. of Bachelor's degree)</b>						
High school degree or lower (Quebec equiv.)	3.0***	1.0	1.1	2.9**	1.2	4.9**
Master's, Professional master's, PhD	1.5	1.0	1.1	1.8	1.1	1.5
Other, don't know	2.5**	0.7	1.0	2.2	0.6*	5.3**
<b>Individual net income before separation (Ref. = C\$30,000–C\$49,999)</b>						
Less than C\$30,000	2.0**	1.0	1.4	2.5**	1.1	2
C\$50,000–C\$69,999	0.6	0.7*	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.4
C\$70,000 or more	0.4*	0.7*	0.5*	0.3	0.6	0.2**
<b>Ex-partners' employment status (Ref. = Both working)</b>						
Mother not working	1.8*	1.7***	1.6	2.2*	1.7*	1.1
Father not working (or both not working)	2.9***	1.4	2.0*	5.6***	1.5	0.4
<b>Country of birth (Ref. = Both parents born in Canada)</b>						
At least one parent born outside Canada	3.4***	1.7**	0.7	4.0***	1.5	1.5
<b>Marital situation before separation (Ref. = Married)</b>						
Not married	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.6	1.4	0.4
<b>Length (in years) of dissolved union (Ref. = 6–9)</b>						
under 6	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.0
10 to less than 14	1.6	1.0	1.0	2.6*	1.5	1.7
14 or more	2.1*	0.8	0.7	3.8**	1.3	2.5
<b>Separation initiator (Ref. = Both parents)</b>						
Mother	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.7
Father	1.8	1.5**	0.7	1.5	1.3	1.9
<b>Motive: violence against partner/children (Ref. = No)</b>						
Yes	2.4**	1.4	1.3	2.0	1.2	3.2

Table 2 (cont'd). Characteristics associated with one or another residence arrangement versus equally shared residence (multinomial logistic regression, odds ratios)

	All			Women			Men		
	Always at the mother's	Mainly at the mother's	Always or mainly at the father's	Always at the mother's	Mainly at the mother's	Always or mainly at the father's	Always at the mother's	Mainly at the mother's	Always or mainly at the father's
<b>Separation involving judicial intervention (Ref. = Mutual consent)</b>									
Lawyer(s), trial/ruling (past or pending)	1.6	1.4**	1.0	1.2	1.5	0.3	2.6*	1.2	1.2
<b>Sex and age of target child (Ref. = Boy, 7-10)</b>									
Boy, under 5	3.0**	1.6*	1.6	5.3**	1.5	2.6	0.9	1.8	1.5
Boy, 5-6	1.5	1.4	2.1*	2.3	1.6	2.8	0.5	1.3	1.8
Boy, 11-15	1.4	0.9	1.3	0.5	0.5*	1.2	2.4	1.6	1.5
Girl, under 5	4.4***	1.9**	1.1	7.1***	2.2**	0.5	1.4	1.7	1.3
Girl, 5-6	1.8	1.3	0.7	2.1	1.5	0.6	1.2	1.0	0.7
Girl, 7-10	1.4	1.2	1.1	2.1	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.9	1.4
Girl, 11-15	2.6*	1.2	1.6	1.7	0.9	1.6	2.6	1.7	1.6
<b>Number of children (Ref. = 2)</b>									
1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
3 or more	0.6	1.1	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.3	1.2	0.9
<b>Distance (km) between ex-partners' homes (Ref. = Less than 20)</b>									
20-49	2.7***	1.9***	1.4	2.9**	1.8*	0.9	1.1	2.2**	1.5
50 or more	35.5***	9.5***	8.0***	58.4***	10.1***	14.4***	16.0***	11.1***	6.2***
<b>Respondent's couple situation (Ref. = Living with a partner who has no children)</b>									
Not in a union	3.2***	1.4*	1.1	4.5***	1.9***	0.8	2.8	1.0	1.0
In a union, stepchildren never present	1.7	0.9	0.7	2.0	1.0	0.4	1.8	0.9	0.7
In a union, stepchildren occasionally present	1.8	1.4	1.4	3.0	2.3**	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.3
<b>Ex-partner's couple situation (Ref. = Not in a union)</b>									
In a cohabiting union	0.3***	0.9	1.2	0.4**	0.9	0.6	0.2**	0.9	1.5
Don't know	1.5	1.1	1.5	2.1	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.5
<b>N (Ref. = Equally shared residence)</b>	122	476	102	92	297	27	30	179	75
<b>All: (n = 573), Women: (n = 261), Men: (n = 312)</b>									
<b>Interpretation:</b> An odds ratio above 1 (respectively, below 1) and statistically significant indicates a factor that increases (respectively, decreases) the probability that one or another residence arrangement is used rather than equally shared residence.									
<b>Significance:</b> *** significant difference at < 1%; ** at 5%; * at 10%.									
<b>Sample:</b> All separated parents whose child does not live elsewhere (n = 1,273).									
<b>Source:</b> ELPsRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1) FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).									

where the propensity for having the child always live at their mother's is higher. No significant effect was found for marital status.

### *Separation context*

When the father initiated the separation, the propensity for having the child spend more nights at their mother's rises. The same holds for union dissolutions due to violence against the intimate partner and/or children; in such cases, the child is more likely to always live with the mother. Here the result is the same regardless of sex of responding parent, and the child is more likely to reside with their mother than their father (see Table 2; although the differences are not significant in the sex-specific analysis). One surprising result: according to women, separating due to violence also seems associated with a greater probability of the child living with the father ( $OR = 4.3$ , with a significance level of between .05 and .10). Is it that women are more likely than men to mention situations of violence where they themselves were the perpetrators? Or do women perceive seeing their children less than their ex-partner does as a form of violence at the moment of separation? Last, separations involving judicial intervention (lawyers and/or a trial or court order, past or pending) go together with children always or mainly residing with their mother, unlike separations by mutual consent (Table 2).

### *Children's characteristics*

Sibling group size does not influence type of residence arrangement. However, we do find a classic effect of child's age. Boys and girls under age 5 are more likely to always or mainly live with the mother. Another specificity is found for girls aged 11–15 (compared to boys aged 7–10): an increased probability of always living with the mother. Stratification by sex of responding parent shows similar tendencies in mothers' reporting (Table 2, 'Women'), but we observe no effect of children's sex or age on residence arrangements as indicated or described by fathers (Table 2, 'Men'), perhaps due to the participation bias mentioned above.

### *Situation of ex-partners at time of survey*

Not surprisingly, distance between ex-partners' homes is strongly associated with residence arrangement. The probability of the child living always or mainly with their mother, and, to a lesser extent, with their father, increases with the distance between parents' places of residence.

Moreover, compared with being in a new union with a partner who has no children, not being in a new union is associated with the child living more of the time with their mother (although this was not significant for male respondents). On the other hand, for female respondents, no difference was found between living with a new partner who has no children and living with a new partner who has children that either do or do not live with that female

respondent. Finally, regardless of the sex of the responding parent, it is less likely for the child to always live with their mother when the ex-partner is living with a new partner.

#### IV. Discussion and conclusion

The 28-night residential calendar used in ELPSRQ—to our knowledge, the first to be used in population surveys conducted in Quebec and Canada—makes it possible to show the extremely wide range of child residence arrangements and schedules while bringing to light certain constants. First, equally shared parenting time is not always organized on a weekly basis (1 week out of 2) but often on a 2-week basis, where two variations dominate: 5 days at one parent's, 5 days at the other's, then 2 days with one and 2 days with the other; or 3 days at one parent's followed by 2 days at the other's, then back to the first parent's for 2 days, and the reverse in the following week. Second, the great diversity of child residence schedules goes together with another constant: children usually switch homes around the weekend and on Wednesdays. These findings raise several questions that should be investigated in further research. What situations or parent and child characteristics are associated with what way of organizing equally shared residence? Do some ways of organizing child residence have an influence on how well or poorly children and parents adapt to them, and on child and parent well-being? Is the type of shared residence arrangement more, or less, likely to evolve over time? The ELPSRQ survey—particularly its later waves—should allow for answering some of these questions.

Here, we have limited ourselves to analysing first-wave data (the only data available when this study was conducted) and to breaking down residence arrangements into four different categories: equally shared residence; child always residing with mother; child mainly residing with mother; and child always or mainly residing with father. The point was to bring out the characteristics associated with each category in the specific context of Quebec, where shared residence is practised more frequently than elsewhere. Some studies have found that the effect of certain characteristics—particularly social ones—and that of interparental conflict become less salient with the democratization of shared residence (Meyer et al., 2017). Thus, we might have expected to find no more than a slight effect for them in the Quebec context. Instead, our results show that social disparities remain strong in that context. Shared residence (including equally shared residence) is more frequent among parents with high incomes; conversely, custody of children whose parents have relatively low educational attainment or whose mother and/or father are/is not working is more often granted to the mother. These results point to the resonance of class-related family behaviours. At the bottom of the social scale, gender-based role distribution between partners is likely to be found both before and after



separation; conversely, the norm is more egalitarian at the top of that scale. Like working fathers, working mothers often wish to devote themselves to their occupational activity and do not intend to find personal fulfilment exclusively in the family sphere. It has also been shown that fathers particularly invested in that sphere before separation remain so afterward (Haux and Platt, 2021). To this must be added the cost of shared residence, which requires each parent to have a home large enough to house their children, especially given that most separated parents do not wish to separate siblings (i.e. to have one child spend the week with the father while a second child is with the mother) lest that adversely affect intersibling relationships and/or limit parents' own freedom (either to work or to pursue personal projects) when the children are not with them (Hachet, 2021b). We also find a country-of-birth effect that persists once geographical distance between ex-partners (and therefore the possibility that one parent has returned to their country of birth) is controlled for. While it was not possible to obtain detailed information on parents' origins—meaning this finding should be interpreted with caution—we can venture that it may reflect a cultural or normative effect: shared residence is more widespread in the society of Quebec than in the other Canadian provinces or elsewhere, whereas parents originally from other countries who live in Quebec might be less likely to consider it as an option.

In addition to social characteristics, separations involving judicial intervention or due to domestic violence are less associated with shared residence. However, the causal tie is not straightforward to determine based on ELPSRQ data. A parent may sue to obtain shared custody; conversely, a judge may rule one of the parents unfit or a potential risk to the children's well-being and therefore foreclose the shared residence option. Likewise, though 'violence against intimate partner and/or one's children' was included in the survey as a motive for separation, ex-partners were not asked who perpetrated it (father or mother),<sup>(24)</sup> making it difficult to interpret clearly the discrepancies observed by respondent's sex in this matter. Last, our results confirm a classic effect of child's age, while bringing to light a much less common tendency: the increased propensity of adolescent girls (aged 11–15) to always reside at their mother's. This may reflect a mother–daughter tie specific to the moment a girl enters puberty. Due to the sex-dependent respondent selection effect mentioned above, this finding should be treated with caution, and it suggests the relevance of conducting other investigations based on other data or on evolving ELPSRQ data. Last, the couple situation(s) of ex-partners after separation, and how far they live from each other, are linked to the general residence arrangement. Once again, these correlations are both causes and effects: for parents to practice shared residence, they need to live not too far from each other, generally in the neighbourhood around the children's school (Hachet, 2021b). However, not having shared custody may induce a parent to move away; at the very least,

(24) It is easy to imagine why, given the probable reporting bias.

it would not require them to continue living near the other parent; additionally, some violence-related court rulings require ex-partners to live at some distance from each other. Regarding post-separation couple situations, the finding that the father being in a new union makes it less likely that the child will be living exclusively with their mother may seem counterintuitive. It has been demonstrated that an absence of father–child contact was associated with fathers entering new unions more often than mothers, for two reasons: not having much daily contact with their children may move them to disengage and to construct a new couple or family life, just as doing so may loosen ties with children from a previous family life. Still, we can reasonably hypothesize that if a child is not residing solely with their mother, this means the father is more strongly attached to the couple and family sphere—which would also imply a stronger propensity to start a new union. On these questions, the longitudinal data (Waves 2 and 3 were done 2 and 4 years later) should help determine the causality direction.

We conclude with a few thoughts on the ELPSRQ survey and the limitations of the data used here. According to this survey, 44% of separated parents share parenting time equally. Although we have no strictly comparable data—and prevalence varies considerably by survey frame and data source, even at the scale of Quebec (Pelletier, 2017; Godbout et al., 2021)—this rate is higher than previous estimates for the province. That may reflect the continuing rise of shared residence, a development that began several years ago and has been more pronounced in Quebec than in the other Canadian provinces (Pelletier, 2017; Godbout et al., 2021). However, several points suggest that the survey overestimated the rate of shared residence in Quebec due to a possible participant selection effect. In sum, more of the individuals taking part in the survey may be practising shared residence than non-respondents at large, an effect often highlighted in other surveys (Sodermans et al., 2013; Bryson et al., 2017; Godbout et al., 2021). Instructive here is the breakdown of responses by respondent's sex—a rare operation that, when used (cf. Meyer et al., 2022, for example), is hardly, if at all, discussed. Mothers report much more often than fathers that the children are most or all of the time with them, whereas more fathers report that the children move back and forth between residences or are mainly with them. Furthermore, the bias related to educational attainment is observed in the survey sample itself, suggesting an over-representation of highly educated respondents,<sup>(25)</sup> who more frequently opt for shared residence. The weighting variable calculated does not account for this characteristic due to a lack of an existing post-stratification variable. While this type of data limitation is not specific to this particular survey or research subject, we

(25) By limiting the population to residents of Quebec province that were lone parents living with at least one child aged 14 or under—though this remains an imperfect approximation of the ELPSRQ survey population—the comparison between the 2016 StatCan census microdata and ELPSRQ suggests that people who had a first higher education level degree (3 years) were over-represented (39% in the survey vs. 24% in the census).

highlight it here because it suggests the relevance of reflecting on how to improve representativeness in surveys of this type, specifically, surveys that use social variables even when there is no post-stratification margin.

### **Acknowledgements**

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## APPENDICES

**Table A.1. Characteristics of separated parents by residential arrangement (weighted percentages and unweighted bases)**

	Always at the mother's	Mainly at the mother's	Equally shared residence	Always or mainly at the father's	%	<i>n</i>
<b>Sex of responding parent</b>						
Woman	74.9	59.6	43.5	23.7	51.0	677
Man	25.1	40.4	56.5	76.3	49.0	599
<b>Educational attainment</b>						
High school degree or lower (Quebec equiv.)	47.8	36.3	30.1	40.8	35.6	427
BA/BS (Quebec equiv.)	12.1	24.8	23.6	20.0	22.4	302
Master's, Professional master's, PhD	16.9	26.4	28.1	22.3	25.6	341
Other, don't know	23.2	12.5	18.2	16.9	16.4	206
<b>Net individual income before separation</b>						
Less than C\$30,000	59.6	32.7	18.5	33.2	29.3	363
C\$30,000–C\$49,999	20.7	33.6	25.2	28.6	28.1	352
C\$50,000–C\$69,999	14.0	18.3	27.3	20.8	22.0	289
C\$70,000 or more	5.7	15.4	29.0	17.4	20.7	272
<b>Ex-partners' employment status</b>						
Both working	43.4	65.0	82.4	67.0	70.8	928
Mother not working	21.2	22.4	10.4	17.0	16.4	196
Father not working (or both not working)	35.4	12.6	7.2	16.0	12.8	152
<b>Country of birth</b>						
Both parents Canadian-born	66.9	81.7	87.3	88.6	83.1	1087
At least one parent born outside Canada	33.1	18.3	12.7	11.4	16.9	189
<b>Marital situation before separation</b>						
Married	29.6	25.6	27.3	24.7	26.2	321
Not married	70.4	74.4	72.7	75.3	73.8	955
<b>Length (in years) of dissolved union</b>						
Less than 6	43.5	31.3	21.1	23.4	27.9	322
6–9	18.8	30.0	30.8	33.6	29.0	380
10 to less than 14	16.3	23.7	26.8	27.5	24.8	325
14 or more	21.4	15.0	21.3	15.5	18.3	249
<b>Separation initiator</b>						
Both	17.8	21.5	24.1	30.9	23.1	297
Mother	56.6	54.6	57.8	49.1	55.2	714
Father	25.6	23.9	18.1	20.0	21.7	265
<b>Motive: violence against partner/children</b>						
Yes	19.8	10.0	4.4	5.9	8.1	100
No	80.2	90.0	95.6	94.1	91.9	1176
<b>Separation involving judicial intervention</b>						
By mutual consent	67.6	70.9	81.7	76.1	74.8	979
Lawyer(s), trial/ruling (past or pending)	32.4	29.1	18.3	23.9	25.2	297

Table A.1 (cont'd). Characteristics of separated parents by residential arrangement (weighted percentages and unweighted bases)

	Always at the mother's	Mainly at the mother's	Equally shared residence	Always or mainly at the father's	%	<i>n</i>
<b>Sex and age of target child</b>						
Boy, under 5	23.0	19.0	11.8	16.1	15.7	179
Boy, 5–6	12.2	13.1	9.3	15.4	11.5	144
Boy, 7–10	9.7	14.9	18.4	18.3	15.9	214
Boy, 11–15	5.9	6.4	10.0	8.0	8.1	111
Girl, under 5	24.0	16.3	12.5	10.5	15.6	189
Girl, 5–6	6.2	10.2	11.8	7.9	10.3	135
Girl, 7–10	8.3	13.9	19.0	16.2	15.7	204
Girl, 11–15	10.7	6.2	7.2	7.6	7.2	100
<b>Number of children</b>						
1	51.8	44.7	37.1	41.7	42.1	516
2	38.9	42.8	48.8	49.1	45.3	595
3 or more	9.3	12.5	14.1	9.2	12.6	165
<b>Distance (km) between ex-partners' homes</b>						
Less than 20	53.8	69.6	89.7	73.5	77.1	997
20–49	17.4	16.8	8.9	15.1	13.7	165
50 or more	28.8	13.6	1.4	11.4	9.2	114
<b>Mother's couple situation</b>						
In a cohabiting union	10.3	22.5	24.8	35.1	21.8	280
Not in a union	89.7	77.5	75.2	64.9	78.2	996
<b>Father's couple situation</b>						
In a cohabiting union	14.5	26.3	20.2	18.3	23.1	268
Not in a union	85.5	73.7	79.8	81.7	76.9	1008
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1276
<i>Interpretation:</i> 74.9% of persons reporting their child always lives at the mother's are women. Women represent 51% of responding parents. 677 women filled in the residential calendar.						
<i>Sample:</i> All separated parents, except those for whom data were missing.						
<i>Source:</i> ELPsRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1 FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).						

**Table A.2. Characteristics associated with sex of participating parent: men versus women (logistic regression, odds ratios)**

	Male respondent (vs. female)
<b>Ex-partners' employment status</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Both working)	
Mother not working	1.0
Father not working (or both not working)	0.7 **
<b>Country of birth</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Both born in Canada)	
At least one born outside Canada	1.2
<b>Marital situation before separation</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Married)	
Unmarried	0.7 **
<b>Length (in years) of dissolved union</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = 6–9)	
Less than 6	0.9
10 to less than 14	0.7 *
14 or more	0.8
<b>Legal intervention in separation</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Mutual consent)	
Lawyer(s), trial/court ruling (past or pending)	1.3 *
<b>Sex and age of target child</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Boy, 7–10)	
Boy, under 5	0.7
Boy, 5–6	0.7
Boy, 11–15	0.8
Girl, under 5	0.6 *
Girl, 5–6	1.2
Girl, 7–10	0.8
Girl, 11–15	1.0
<b>Number of children</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = 2)	
1	1.0
3 or more	0.8
<b>Distance (km) between ex-partners' homes</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Less than 20)	
20–49	0.9
50 or more	0.6 **
<b>Mother's couple situation</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Not in a union)	
In a cohabiting union	1.8 ***
<b>Father's couple situation</b> ( <i>Ref.</i> = Not in a union)	
In a cohabiting union	0.5 ***
<b>N</b> ( <i>non-weighted</i> %)	
Women	677 (53.2 %)
Men	596 (46.8 %)
<i>Interpretation:</i> An odds ratio (OR) above 1 (respectively, below 1) and statistically significant indicates that the factor increases (respectively, decreases) the probability of the respondent being male.	
<i>Significance:</i> *** significant difference at < 1%; ** at 5%; * at 10%.	
<i>Sample:</i> All separated parents whose child does not live elsewhere than with them ( <i>n</i> = 1,273).	
<i>Source:</i> ELPSRQ 2018, Wave 1 (T1 FICHER PARENT 2020-10-27).	



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## Résumé

### Arnaud RÉGNIER-LOILIER, Amandine BAUDE • RÉSIDENCE DES ENFANTS APRÈS LA SÉPARATION AU QUÉBEC. DIVERSITÉ DES ARRANGEMENTS ET FACTEURS ASSOCIÉS

Cet article présente la diversité des arrangements résidentiels après la séparation parentale et examine les caractéristiques associées au partage du temps entre les parents. L'étude s'appuie sur les données de l'Enquête longitudinale auprès des parents séparés et recomposés du Québec conduite en 2018. L'analyse descriptive met d'abord en lumière, sur la base d'un calendrier de 28 nuitées complété par 677 mères et 599 pères, la très grande diversité des organisations résidentielles, avec des transitions entre les deux résidences qui s'opèrent le plus souvent autour du week-end et du mercredi. Un panorama contrasté ressort cependant selon le sexe du parent ayant répondu à l'enquête. L'analyse multivariée permet d'identifier plusieurs facteurs associés aux arrangements résidentiels, tels que le revenu et le niveau d'éducation des parents, leur situation d'activité au moment de la séparation, leur pays de naissance, l'initiateur de la séparation, le contexte relationnel au moment de celle-ci, l'âge et le sexe des enfants. Ainsi, malgré la progression de la résidence partagée au cours des dernières décennies au Québec, d'importants contrastes demeurent quant aux modalités de résidence des enfants après la séparation.

## Resumen

### Arnaud RÉGNIER-LOILIER, Amandine BAUDE • LA RESIDENCIA DE LOS HIJOS TRAS LA SEPARACIÓN EN QUEBEC. DIVERSIDAD DE ACUERDOS Y FACTORES ASOCIADOS

Este artículo presenta la diversidad de acuerdos residenciales tras la separación de los padres y examina las características asociadas con el tiempo compartido entre los progenitores. El estudio se basa en datos de la Encuesta Longitudinal de Padres Separados y Recompuestos en Quebec realizada en 2018. Basándose en un calendario de 28 noches completado por 677 madres y 599 padres, el análisis descriptivo destaca en primer lugar la gran diversidad de acuerdos residenciales, con transiciones entre las dos residencias que tienen lugar con mayor frecuencia en torno a los fines de semana y los miércoles. Sin embargo, surge un panorama contrastado en función del sexo del progenitor que respondió a la encuesta. El análisis multivariante identifica una serie de factores asociados a los acuerdos residenciales, como los ingresos y el nivel educativo de los padres, su situación laboral en el momento de la separación, su país de nacimiento, la persona que inició la separación, el contexto de la relación en ese momento y la edad y el sexo de los hijos. Así pues, a pesar del aumento de la residencia compartida en Quebec en las últimas décadas, sigue habiendo grandes diferencias en la forma en que los hijos conviven tras la separación.

