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## **Fatherhood after union breakup in Uruguay: Transitory or life-long commitment?**

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**BACKGROUND:** Rising union dissolution in Latin America –and in much of the world– has increased political and public concern over nonresidential fathers’ involvement in their children’s lives. At the same time, we are witnessing a remarkable change in the culture of fatherhood, and fathers are increasingly expected to assume both a breadwinner and nurturing role. Social norms about post-separation fatherhood have also changed and they increasingly favor not only economic support, but also participation in childrearing.

**OBJECTIVES:** In this study we examine several critical issues related to union dissolution and fathers’ involvement with their children in Uruguay. First, we describe several dimensions of nonresidential fathers involvement with their (child)ren. Second, we examine whether there is a link between pre-separation and post-separation fathering practices. Third, we explore which dimension of pre-separation fathering practices – engagement, accessibility and responsibility– is more influential on post-separation parenting behavior. Our guiding hypothesis is that fathers who share care responsibilities on a more equal basis with their female partners will be also more involved with their children after separation than fathers who do not do so.

**DATA:** The study is based on two waves of a longitudinal national survey on early childhood carried out in Uruguay in 2013 and 2016: *Survey on Nutrition, Child Development and Health (ENDIS)*.

**RESULTS:** The empirical findings suggest that fathers’ pre-separation involvement in raising their child affects their post-separation parenting behavior, although results are not conclusive in all aspects of post-separation father-child involvement examined, and father’s educational level tends to have a more influential role.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Our research contributes to shedding new light on the importance of fathers’ involvement in early childrearing and the adoption of less traditional paternal models to enhance children’s well-being as well as gender equity, even in the event of union break-up.

*Keywords: Fatherhood; fathering; paternal involvement; separation; nonresidential fathers; childcare; Uruguay*