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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Sociology

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EARLY ADULT TRANSITIONS IN CANADA:
EXPECTATIONS, STABILITY AND CHANGE

(Thesis format: Integrated Article)

by

Laura Dawn Wright

Graduate Program in Sociology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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Abstract

The transition to adulthood is a much longer and less structured process for more recent generations than for those who came of age before the 1960s. Median age at first marriage has been increasing, cohabitation has become more prevalent, the role of cohabitation in the partnering process has changed, and young adults tend to live with their parents longer. This dissertation presents three studies of how new cohorts of Canadian youth are leaving home and starting their conjugal lives. I apply event history techniques using the 2011 General Social Survey, the most recent available data on the union and home-leaving histories of Canadians born between 1930 and 1996.

In Chapter 2, I examine changes over time in the type of first unions Canadians form, either marriage or cohabitation, and I compare changes in age at first marriage and age at first union. I find that although Canadians born after 1970 are more likely to cohabit with their first partner than Canadians of previous generations, they are not delaying their transition to partnership. In Chapter 3, I examine changes over time in the outcomes of first premarital unions formed between 1947 and 2010, and how the risk factors associated with first union outcomes have changed over time. First unions formed through cohabitation in the 2000s are no less stable than those formed in previous periods but unions formed more recently are less likely to transition into legal marriage. I also find that group differences in the propensity to transition to marriage have increased over time. In Chapter 4, I use in-depth interviews with young men certified in the skilled trades to explore their perceptions about how their educational choices affected their transition to adulthood and I use nationally representative data to compare these perceptions to their home-leaving and partnering behaviours. I find that tradesmen tend to leave home and partner at younger ages than their peers, but that they marry at older ages than those who completed college or university. My findings contribute to our understanding of the ongoing changes in the transition to adulthood.

Keywords

Transition to adulthood, marriage, cohabitation, home-leaving, union formation, education, apprenticeships, skilled trades, Quebec, survival analysis, competing risks.

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

The transition to adulthood is often the most 'demographically dense' part of the lifecourse (Richter, 2007), meaning that many life events occur in a short period of time. The transitions made in early adulthood set the foundation for the rest of the life course and have lifelong consequences for economic outcomes, family life, and the life chances of the next generation. They become a significant source of variation in individual trajectories in later life because they condition future opportunities and constraints (Assave, Billari & Piccarreta, 2007; Rindfuss, 1991). Three of the events that mark the transition from a dependent child to an independent adult that demographers often study are moving out of the parental home, forming a romantic partnership, and transitioning to legal marriage. When these events occur, in what order they occur, and if they occur at all, are reflective of the social, economic, and cultural context in which individuals are embedded and are an important source of stratification (Mitchell, 2006).

The transition to adulthood is a much longer and less structured process for more recent generations than it was for generations who came of age in the 1950s and 60s (e.g. Berlin, Furstenberg & Waters, 2010; Hango & LeBourdais, 2007; Settersten, 2007). Median age at first marriage has been increasing (e.g. Kerr, Moyser & Beaujot, 2006), nonmarital cohabitation has become much more prevalent, and the role of cohabitation in the partnering process has also changed (e.g. Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004). Moreover, young adults tend to live with their parents longer, partly because they take longer to finish school and start a career (Mitchell, 2006).

Most of our understanding about the way Canadians form their first partnerships and leave their parents' home relies on data collected in 2001 or earlier (e.g. Kerr et al., 2006; Ravanera, Rajulton & Burch, 2002; Turcotte & Goldscheider, 1998). Canadians born in the 1970s, 80s and 90s have since entered early adulthood and little is known about their partnering and home-leaving behaviour. This dissertation presents three studies of how and when these new cohorts of Canadian youth are leaving home and starting their conjugal lives. Studying the transition to adulthood among contemporary young adults and comparing their trajectories into adulthood with those of previous generations is a unique way to understand how broad social change alters the lives individuals.

Understanding the partnership and home-leaving behaviours of the most recent cohorts of young adult Canadians and how they compare to previous generations is important for two reasons. First, changes in home-leaving and partnering, along with other common markers of the transition to adulthood, are part of a much larger and wide-reaching transformation of the family and family behaviours that have occurred over the last century in Western countries (Lesthaeghe, 1995). Understanding this ongoing transformation requires up-to-date knowledge about how new cohorts are experiencing their transitions out of their natal families and into conjugal unions. Second, changes in how and when young Canadians are leaving home and forming their own families have implications for individuals and for public policy. Delayed home-leaving and partnering and changes in the ways that Canadians are forming unions may have implications for fertility, child-rearing contexts, and intergenerational relationships and transfers of resources (e.g. Bumpass, Sweet & Cherlin, 1991; Kerr et al., 2006).

1.1 Data

I use the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS), Cycle 25: Family in the three analytical chapters. This cross-sectional survey is the most recent in Canada to collect data on the partnering and home-leaving behaviours of Canadians. The 2011 GSS has a large sample size of over 22,000 respondents and is representative of all persons 15 years of age or older in Canada excluding those residing on Indian Reserves, in the three territories of Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, and those who are full-time residents of institutions. The survey was conducted using computer-assisted telephone interviewing and had a response rate of 65.8 percent. This survey is very well suited for the analyses in the following chapters because it includes extensive retrospective information on the home-leaving, marital, and cohabiting trajectories of Canadians born over six decades. The GSS uses an inclusive measure of cohabitation and allows respondents to self-classify their unions as cohabitation regardless of the length of coresidence. The English version of the GSS asks respondents if they are or had been in a “common-law relationship, even if for less than one year.” The French version asks the same questions but using the term “union libre.” Quebec follows the civil law tradition whereas the rest of Canada is based on the common law tradition, which has resulted in different legal definitions of *unions de libres* in Quebec and common law unions in the rest of the country (Beaujot, Du & Ravanera, 2013). This measure of cohabitation is therefore inclusive of both definitions used by both Anglophone and Francophone Canadians.

In Chapter 4, I supplement the 2011 GSS with in-depth qualitative interviews with young men who have completed trades certificates. Professors Wolfgang Lehmann and Alison Taylor conducted these interviews in 2010 for their project, *Tracking High School*

Apprentices: Expectations, Experiences and Outcomes. Through these interviews I am able to explore how the young men reflected on how their educational choices have affected their transition to adulthood and how they compare their experiences to their peers who completed more traditional postsecondary programs.

1.2 Overview

In Chapter 2, I examine changes over time in the proportion of Canadians who form their first union through cohabitation, who enter into legal marriage directly, and who remain unpartnered to examine the extent to which increases in cohabitation are offsetting declines in marriage as the type of first union among the most recent cohorts of Canadians. I also compare changes in the median age at first marriage to changes in the median age at first partnership to examine whether recent cohorts of Canadians are delaying their first unions or whether they are delaying only marriage.

Given that partnering behaviours in Quebec have been diverging from the behaviours prevalent in the rest of Canada since the 1960s (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004), in Chapter 2 I also examine these regional differences in these trends. I assess whether the differences in union formation patterns between Quebec and the rest of Canada have continued to increase in the past two decades, or whether there has been some convergence over time in the role of cohabitation in the partnership process. In Chapter 2 I also examine educational differences in the type and timing of first union formation and how these differences have changed across birth cohorts. My focus on educational differences in the type and timing of first unions allows me to assess the utility of applying existing theories of marriage and marriage timing and to examine the

extent to which increased educational stratification in a variety of other outcomes also applies to partnering behaviours in Canada (McLanahan, 2004).

I find that the long term trend among Canadians to increasingly form cohabiting unions rather than marriages as their first partnerships has continued for the most recent birth cohorts and that the rise in these first cohabiting unions has largely offset declines in marriage for young Canadians today. Differences in the choice of first union type between Canadians born in Quebec and those born in other parts of the country however have decreased among the most recent cohort as the patterns in type of first union formation in the rest of Canada have become more like those in Quebec.

I also find that despite dramatic increases in the median age at first marriage across the birth cohorts studied, median age at first union, whether marriage or cohabitation, has increased by only two years across the 60 years under examination. Although Canadians born after 1970 are much more likely to choose to cohabit with rather than directly marry their first partner than Canadians of previous generations, they are not delaying their transition to partnership. Moreover, educational differences in age at first union have been much more stable across cohorts than educational differences in age at first marriage. This suggests that previous theories used to explain differences in marriage timing may in fact be better suited to explaining differences in first partnership.

Chapter 2 demonstrates that young Canadians today are forming their first unions at approximately the same age as past generations did, but that these unions are far more likely to be nonmarital cohabiting unions. What does this mean for the outcomes of these first unions? Do these first cohabiting unions transition into marriage, do they dissolve, or

are they used as a long-term alternative to marriage? In Chapter 3 I address these questions and examine how the outcomes of these first premarital unions formed between 1947 and 2010 have changed over time to examine whether the transition to partnership has become more turbulent for recent cohorts of young Canadians. I also examine how the sociodemographic risk factors associated with first union outcome have changed over time. This allows me to examine whether changes in the role of cohabitation in the partnering process have been uniform for all Canadians or whether some groups are becoming more or less likely to use cohabitation as a step in the marriage process, as a short-term alternative to being single, or as an alternative to marriage over time.

I find that first unions that are formed through cohabitation in the 2000s are no more likely to dissolve than unions formed in previous periods and the stability of these unions has not changed over time. Transitioning to marriage however is less common among recent cohabitation cohorts than it was for unions formed in the past. I also find that group differences in the propensity to transition to marriage from a first cohabiting union have increased across cohabitation cohorts. These results suggest that cohabitation has moved towards being an alternative to marriage for all Canadians, but more so for the less educated, those born in Quebec, and for those who form their first cohabiting unions early. The more highly educated, those born in other parts of Canada, and those who delay their first cohabiting unions are more likely to use cohabitation as a step in the marriage process and the partnering patterns of these groups have been diverging over time.

In Chapter 4, I turn my attention to examining educational differences in the transition to adulthood in greater detail than in Chapters 2 and 3. In this chapter I extend my focus to

include both first partnering and first home-leaving and focus my analysis on the expectations that men with a skilled trades certificate have about their transition to adulthood and how their experiences differ from other educational groups. This group is very understudied, largely because they are not distinguishable from community college graduates in most data sources. In order to study this group I use the analytic file of the 2011 GSS in Statistics Canada Research Data Centre, which allows me to isolate respondents with a trade certificate.

It is important to examine the experiences of skilled trades people because they make up a relatively large proportion of the Canadian population (12 percent in 2011 according to Statistics Canada), and because there has recently been a concerted effort by the federal and provincial governments to attract young people into the skilled trades (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). Examining the transitions of young men who complete apprenticeships is an important way to evaluate the efficacy of these programs in facilitating the adult transitions.

I find that young men interviewed perceived that they transitioned into adulthood more quickly than their peers by avoiding student debt and getting their careers started earlier. However, among those interviewed, very few had completed any of the traditional markers of the transition to adulthood. To examine whether tradespeople's perception that their educational choices facilitated their transition to adulthood is supported by nationally representative data I returned 2011 GSS to examine educational differences in homeleaving and partnering patterns. I find that the perceptions of a quicker transition to adulthood are generally well founded. Men in the skilled trades tend to leave the parental home at a younger age than either their peers with a high school diploma or less or those

with a college or university credential. They also form their first unions at younger ages than any other educational group, but marry later on average than their more highly educated counterparts.

This dissertation concludes with a final chapter that summarizes the key findings of the three analytical chapters and offers suggestions for future research.

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Chapter 2

2 Change and Stability in First Union Formation among Canadians born between 1930 and 1989

2.1 Introduction

Patterns of union formation have been changing in Canada and other Western nations over the last five decades. One of the most important changes is the delaying of marriage. Median age at first marriage reached 29 and 27 years for Canadian men and women respectively in 2002, a full five to six years later than was the case in 1961 (Kerr, Moyser & Beaujot, 2006). A second dramatic change in the way Canadians form unions is the rise in non-marital cohabiting relationships, either as a pathway into marriage or as a union separate from the marriage process. In 2001, just over 16 percent of all couples were cohabiting without marriage compared to a negligible percentage in 1961 (Kerr et al., 2006). The proportion of Canadians whose first union was cohabitation rather than marriage has also increased from two percent for those born in the 1930s, to over 50 percent for those born in the 1970s (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004).

Some scholars have argued that these changes are due to increases in female education and employment, which have reduced the gains to marriage and resulted in delayed or forgone marriage (e.g. Becker, 1973). Others have argued that it is not women's economic independence that has delayed or discouraged marriage, but the lengthening of the transition from school to work and the greater uncertainty of early career prospects that have delayed marriage (e.g. Oppenheimer, 1988). Other explanations for foregone and delayed marriage include diffuse ideological changes such as increased

individualization and secularization (e.g. Lesthaeghe, 1995). Researchers have put a lot of effort into explaining changes in the proportion of the population marrying and increases in the average age at first marriage, yet very little attention has been paid to similar questions about cohabitation.

It is clear that Canadians are delaying marriage, but are Canadians delaying all types of unions? Studies of older Canadian cohorts suggest that median age at first partnership has not increased to the same extent as median age at first marriage, at least for Canadians born between 1916 and 1965 (Ravanera, Rajulton, Burch & Le Bourdais, 2002). Are more recent cohorts of Canadians entering into unions at similar ages as past generations? Are the theories used to explain forgone and delayed marriage useful for understanding trends in cohabitation or are different explanations required?

Drawing on the 2011 General Social Survey, I update and extend past research on the changing patterns of union formation in Canada and examine whether existing theories of marriage formation and marriage timing are useful for cohabitation. I examine three interrelated aspects of union formation and how patterns of union formation have changed across cohorts of Canadians born between 1930 and 1989. First, I examine changes across birth cohorts in the proportion of men and women choosing cohabitation rather than marriage as their first union type. Second, I examine changes in the proportion ever-partnered by age 35 to determine the extent to which rises in cohabitation have offset declines in marriage for recent cohorts. Finally, I investigate changes in median age at first marriage and median age at first partnership across cohorts to determine if Canadians are delaying all forms of partnership, or if they are only postponing marriage.

I examine these trends by educational attainment as a way to test the utility of Oppenheimer's (1988) theory of marriage and marriage timing. This focus on educational differences also allows me to assess whether the 'diverging destinies' (McLanahan, 2004) of American's family behaviour by social class are evident to the same extent in Canada. I also examine differences in the type and timing of first union formation between the Quebecois and other Canadians given that union formation patterns have differed greatly between the regions (Pollard & Wu, 1998). I focus on the partnering behaviours of the most recent cohorts to examine whether Quebec-Canada differences are continuing to grow or if the differences are narrowing as the rest of Canada continues on the trend toward increased cohabitation and declines in marriage.

Understanding the partnership behaviours of young Canadians is important for two reasons. First, the changes in partnership behaviours I examine in this chapter are part of a much larger and significant transformation of family behaviours that have occurred in much of the Western world in the last century (Lesthaeghe, 1995). In order to understand this transformation, social demographic researchers must continually update their analyses to examine how new generations are forming and living in families.

Second, there are widespread institutional and individual implications for changes in partnership behaviors. Some of these implications include delayed and lower fertility, changes in union stability and the family contexts in which children are reared, and the length of time spent as a dependent in the parental home and intergenerational resource transfers (e.g. Bumpass et al., 1991; Kerr et al., 2006; Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995). Knowing how and when recent cohorts of Canadians are forming their first unions is the first step to understanding how the needs of these new Canadian families may be

changing and how institutions can adapt to them rather than relying on outdated notions of the Canadian family.

In this chapter I seek to update and extend our knowledge of the trends over time in the type and timing of Canadian's first unions in order to add to our broad understanding of family transformation and to provide impetus for future research on the implications of these recent family changes.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Changes in Union Type

It is well known that recent cohorts of Canadians and Americans have been delaying marriage compared to cohorts who came of age in the decades following WWII (e.g., Bumpass, Sweet & Cherlin, 1991; Kerr, Moyser & Beaujot, 2006; Oppenheimer, Kalmijn & Lim, 1997), and that an increasing proportion are forming non-marital cohabitations (Guzzo, 2014; Le Bourdais & Lapierre Adamcyk, 2004). However, little is known about what type of first unions the most recent birth cohort of Canadians are forming, when they are forming these unions, and whether Canadians have been delaying all types of partnering or only marriage.

In Canada, the median age at first marriage among women reached the lowest point in the 20th century in the 1960s, at around 21 years. Since then, the median age at first marriage has been increasing dramatically; in 2002 the average first-time Canadian bride was 27 years old (Kerr et al., 2006). At the same time, the marriage rate in Canada has been decreasing, reaching only 4.4 marriages per 1,000 people in 2008 (Statistics Canada,

2012).

The trend towards delayed or forgone marriage may be offset by non-marital cohabitation, which has largely become an accepted and normalized part of the transition to partnership in Canada and the U.S. (Settersten & Ray, 2010; Guzzo, 2014). Cohabiting couples accounted for 6.3 percent of coresidential Canadian couples in 1985, 10 percent of couples in 1995 (Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995) and nearly 17 percent of Canadian couples in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012). The percentage of Canadians who have ever cohabited has increased over time, as has the proportion of first unions that are non-marital cohabiting relationships. Using the 1984 Canadian Fertility study, Rao (1990) found that 20.6 percent of Canadian women cohabited outside of marriage with their first partner. Dumas and Belanger (1997) updated this research using the 1995 General Social Survey and found that of Canadians who entered a first union between 1990 and 1994, 57 percent formed a cohabiting union. The most recent information to date on the proportion of Canadians starting conjugal life through cohabitation is derived from life table estimates using the 2001 Census, which finds that 53 percent of Canadian women born in the 1970s can expect to cohabit as a first union (Le Bourdais and Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004).

This past work has shown that the prevalence of cohabitation is increasing in Canada, but because each study uses different samples, measures, and methodologies, it is difficult to explicitly examine changes over time. For instance, some studies have examined cohabiting unions formed in a given year (e.g. Dumas & Belanger, 1997; Manning, Brown & Payne, 2014), some use crosssectional data to determine how many Canadians are currently cohabiting (e.g. Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995), and some estimate the

proportion of people who have ever-cohabited regardless of the order of the union (e.g. Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Bumpass et al, 1991; Brown, Roebuck & Lee, 2012). In this chapter I am able to directly examine changes in first union formation behaviours by examining five Canadian birth cohorts simultaneously.

2.2.2 First Union Timing

Median age at first marriage has been increasing in Canada, and the prevalence of cohabitation generally, and as a first union, has also increased. Yet, very little is known about median age at first union when considering both marriage and cohabitation as possible first union types, especially in Canada. Manning, Brown, and Payne (2014) have shown that in the U.S., the median age at first union in fact has not increased; Americans were partnering at roughly the same age between 1988 and 2010. They also show that the proportion of people who have ever partnered has also stayed relatively stable during this period. Therefore, in the U.S. it appears that the rise in cohabitation has offset the delaying and forgoing of marriage. As the financial barriers to marriage have increased in the U.S., cohabitation has become a more popular union type because there are fewer perceived financial barriers to entering a cohabiting union (Huang, Smock, Bergstrom-Lynch & Manning, 2011; Sassler, 2004). Looking at marriage rates and median age at first marriage alone would lead one to believe that the American family is in decline and that Americans today are not entering long-term committed relationships like the previous generations. However, once cohabitation is considered, Americans are still forming committed partnerships but are doing so more informally through cohabitation rather than marriage.

Are Canadians also committed to forming unions despite the trend towards cohabitation and delayed marriage and are they forming unions later than they used to? Only a few studies have compared increases in the median age at marriage and median age at first union in Canada. Rao (1990) examined women born between 1935 and 1966 using the 1984 Canadian Fertility Study and found no significant changes in the median age at first union across these birth cohorts. Ravanera, Rajulton and Burch (1998) used the 1995 General Social Survey to examine the timing of union formation among Canadian men and women. They found that median age at first union and median age at first marriage were nearly synonymous for men and women born before 1950. In subsequent cohorts, age at first marriage increased while age at first union stayed relatively stable because of the increased prevalence of cohabitation as first union. They were able to estimate median age at first marriage for Canadians born before 1966, and median age at first union for Canadians born before 1971. However, since these studies, Canadians born in the 1970s and 1980s have entered early adulthood and little is known about their partnering behaviour. In this chapter, I draw from the most recent available data to examine whether these trends have continued among the most recent Canadian cohort to enter into early adulthood.

2.2.3 Union Formation in Quebec

The meaning and prevalence of cohabitation differ greatly between Quebec and the rest of Canada (Hamplova, Le Bourdais & Lapierre Adamcyk, 2014). Quebecois tend to have more liberal perspectives on family issues than other Canadians (Wu, 2000). Cohabitation has become a socially acceptable alternative to marriage in Quebec, but is more likely to be a childless prelude to marriage in the rest of Canada (Hamplova et al.,

2014; Kerr et al., 2006; Le Bourdais & Lapierre Adamcyk, 2004). In 1981 only 7 percent of couples in Quebec were cohabiting, compared to 29.8 percent in 2001 (Kerr et al., 2006), and 38 percent in 2011 (Hamplova et al., 2014). There were also increases in the proportion of couples that were cohabiting in the rest of Canada during this period, but these increases were not as rapid and not to the same extent as those seen in Quebec. In the rest of Canada, the prevalence of cohabitation increased from 5 percent of couples in 1981, compared to 12 percent in 2001, and only 14 percent in 2011 (Hamplova et al., 2014).

The differences in union formation behaviour between people in Quebec and the rest of Canada are far greater than the differences between the other Canadian provinces (Pollard & Wu, 1998). In fact, the marriage rates of all of the Canadian provinces, excluding Quebec, became more similar over the course of the 20th century (Wu & Balakrishnan 1992) reaching 608 per thousand women outside of Quebec and only 373 per thousand women in Quebec in 1994 (Pollard & Wu, 1998). Moreover, the gap between the proportion of women in Quebec and the rest of Canada expected to ever-marry has widened from the 1960s to the 2000s with 40 percent Quebec women expected to marry compared to 60 percent of other Canadian women (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004).

Differences in union formation behaviour between Quebec and the rest of Canada cannot be fully explained by socioeconomic factors and can be partially explained by differences in cultural values (Pollard & Wu, 1998). Canadian researchers have argued that Quebec experienced a ‘quiet revolution’ in the 1960s whereby ideologies, values, and norms changed rapidly towards individualism, secularism, and gender equality which led to the

creation of a unique regime of union formation (Laplante, 2014; Pollard & Wu, 1998; Wu & Baer, 1996).

It is less clear whether the differences in union formation patterns between Quebec and the rest of Canada have continued to increase in the past two decades, or whether there has been some convergence over time. Le Bourdais and Lapierre-Adamcyk (2004) have suggested that Quebec has reached the final stage in Kiernan's (2001) typology of the progression of cohabitation while the rest of Canada has not. In Kiernan's (2001) conceptualization, cohabitation develops in a given spatial and temporal context in three stages. First, cohabitation is an uncommon partnership type and remains on the fringes of acceptance. In the second stage, cohabitation is used as a testing ground for marriage; many people use cohabitation as stepping-stone to legal marriage but remain childless while cohabiting. In the third stage, cohabitation is considered as an alternative to marriage and it is normatively acceptable for cohabiting couples bear and rear children outside formal marriage. Although my analyses in this chapter are not able to directly test the place of Quebec and the rest of Canada on Kiernan's typology of the meaning of cohabitation, I am able to examine whether trends toward cohabitation as a first union in Quebec and the rest of Canada have continued to diverge or if the rest of Canada is catching up.

Canada is also home to many immigrants who may have different partnering behaviours than native-born Canadians (Ravanera, Rajulton & Burch, 1998) due in part to different values and behavioural norms they bring from their source country (Aycan & Kanungo, 2008). I consider immigrants to Canada in my examination of changes in the type and timing of first union formation in Canada, but this group is not a key focus of this

chapter. I include immigrants as a separate category in my analyses in order to maintain the comparability of the Quebec population and the rest of Canada population. Immigration has changed so dramatically in the last 100 years, including changes in number of new immigrants admitted per year and the requirements for entry, changes in source countries, and changes in where new immigrants settle in Canada (Boyd & Vickers, 2000), that including immigrants in the long-term trends in the differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada's partnering behaviour could be misleading. Moreover, immigrants to Canada are not a homogeneous group and these inter-immigrant differences may be very important predictors of the type and timing of first union formation. These differences include religion, age at immigration, length of time in Canada, whether the first union was formed before or after immigration, source country and the union formation patterns prevalent at the time of immigration, and the year of immigration. The changing partnering behaviour of immigrants to Canada is an interesting topic to be explored in future research and it is my hope that the preliminary trends in immigrants' first union formation I show in this chapter offer an impetus for a more detailed examination.

2.2.4 Educational Differences in Union Formation

Research in the U.S. has found that the likelihood of marriage follows an educational gradient that has reversed directions over time. Goldstein and Kenney (2001) show that among American women born in the 1950s who entered adulthood in the 1970s, women with a college education were less likely to marry than less educated women. For women born in the 1960s who came of age in the 1980s, however, more highly educated women were more likely to ever-marry than the less educated. This more recent, positive

association between education and marriage for women has also been shown repeatedly in past research on American men (e.g. Manning et al., 2014; Manning, 1993; Oppenheimer et al., 1997). Men with a high school education or less have lower marriage rates overall than the more highly educated, and tend to wait longer after completing their schooling to marry because of difficulties securing a stable place in the labour market (Oppenheimer et al., 1997). However, more highly educated men are likely to delay marriage until they have completed their education, but typically marry soon after and have higher rates of ever being married (Raley, 2000).

The reversal in the association between women's educational attainment and marriage found in the U.S. is also evident in Canada. Using the 1995 General Social Survey to examine Canadian born before 1971, Turcotte & Goldschider (1998) find that for Canadian men born before 1951 who came of age in the pre-1970s era, higher education was associated with a higher likelihood of marriage, but for women in this cohort, higher education was associated with a lower likelihood of marriage. The relationships reversed in subsequent cohorts; for women born between 1961 and 1970 who entered adulthood in the 1980s and 1990s, higher education was associated with a higher likelihood of marriage (Turcotte & Goldschider, 1998).

The association between education and rates of first marriage has changed in large part because of the changing role of women in society at large and in the labour force specifically (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). Two very influential theories explaining marriage and marriage timing have come into conflict with each other in past research. The first is Becker's (1973; 1974; 1981) economic theory of marriage which, simply stated, posits that marriage is an arrangement entered into rationally when the advantages

of marriage outweigh the utility of remaining single. Becker argued that the major gain of marriage stems from the exchange of specialized skills and attributes within the couple, which arises from the gendered division of labour. According to this theory, less educated women are more likely to enter into marriage as they have much to gain by trading their domestic labour for the financial support of their husbands. More educated women on the other hand, have less to gain by entering into marriage because of their increased earning potential and position in the labour market, so they are more likely to remain single.

The second theory is the career entry hypothesis posited by Oppenheimer and colleagues which refutes Becker's thesis that women's economic independence has reduced the gains to marriage and extends the theory by focusing more specifically on the timing of marriage rather than marriage rates (Oppenheimer, 1988). Oppenheimer argues that women's economic independence is not reducing the gains to marriage but that women's economic independence, including increased educational attainment and labour market participation, is delaying the assortative mating process. The process is delayed because a longer period of schooling means that, just like it is difficult to predict men's future attributes until they have completed their education, it is harder to predict women's future attributes at young ages than it was when women offered only their domestic skills, which could be acquired at younger ages.

At their core, these theories diverge in how they conceptualize the family. Becker's specialization and trading model appears to be well suited to explaining marriage in times and places where there is a strict gendered division of labour, such as in the U.S. in the 1950s. Oppenheimer's career entry model, however, seems much better suited to explaining educational differences in marriage timing patterns in cohorts who are more

likely to form interdependent unions and have dual-earning households. The reversal of the association between education and marriage in the U.S. can be at least partly attributed to the changing nature of the economic relations between spouses and the waning of the explanatory power of Becker's theory and the growing explanatory power of Oppenheimer's, especially as the financial barriers to marriage increase.

Becker is largely silent on the issue of non-marital cohabitation but Oppenheimer also theorizes about cohabitation entry and timing. In her earlier works she briefly argues that cohabiting unions are temporary adjustments to the delays in the assortative mating process (Oppenheimer, 1988). In later works, she argues that although career maturity influences entry into both marriage and cohabiting unions, there are greater barriers to marriage than to cohabitation. She finds that employment instability prevents entry into marriage but actually promotes entry into cohabiting unions, implying that cohabitation may represent an adaptive strategy for young men who have yet to establish stable careers (Oppenheimer, 2003). It is not clear how Oppenheimer's career entry theory of marriage timing holds up against further changes in the family and the rise of cohabitation among recent Canadian cohorts.

Past research on educational differences in the prevalence of cohabitation shows that in more recent cohorts, Americans with less education are also more likely to cohabit than the more highly educated, and the difference in propensity to cohabit between the most educated and least educated has widened over time (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Bumpass et al., 1991). Cherlin (2004) argues that marriage has become a capstone in the union formation process; it is a marker of financial stability and couples will often choose to cohabit rather than marry if they feel they have not achieved this goal (Smock, Manning

& Porter, 2005). The increasing economic inequality in the U.S. may therefore partly explain the divergence in union formation behaviours as the less educated choose cohabitation over marriage because of their increasingly precarious standing in the labour market (Oppenheimer et al., 1997; Thornton, Axinn & Teachman, 1995). This is also indicative of growing social class differences in family behaviour in the U.S. (Cherlin, 2009; McLanahan, 2004), or what is often described as the ‘diverging destinies’ of the advantaged and the disadvantaged.

The timing of first marriage in Canada, like in the U.S., is stratified by education with the more highly educated delaying their marriage longer than the less educated (Ravanera & Rajulton, 2007). Yet, little is known about educational differences in timing of first cohabitation or first union among recent cohorts of Canadians. Among Canadians born before 1960, Turcotte and Goldschider (1998) found a positive relationship between education and the formation of a cohabiting union, especially for women. However, for Canadians born between 1961 and 1970, the association between education and cohabitation formation is non-existent (Turcotte & Goldschider, 1998). Ravanera and colleagues (1998a; 1998b) also examined educational differences in median ages at first marriage and first union and found that for both women and men, higher education is associated with delays in both marriage and cohabitation. Although they track overall changes in the median age at first marriage and first union across birth cohorts, their analysis of educational differences does not differentiate between birth cohorts. Given that the relationships between education and other aspects of union formation have changed across cohorts, an examination of how the association between education and union formation timing has changed across cohorts is needed.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to fully test Oppenheimer's career entry theory because career maturity is a multidimensional construct (Oppenheimer, 2003) that is not captured by educational attainment alone. Insofar as educational attainment is an indicator of long-term economic outcomes however, my analyses are a preliminary step in assessing the utility of Oppenheimer's theory of marriage timing to explain the timing of first unions in recent Canadian cohorts. These analyses will also greatly enrich our understanding of when Canadians are forming their first union given that cohabitation has increased dramatically since the 1970s.

2.3 Contributions

Past research provides insight into the union formation behaviors of Canadians, but it most often relies on data from 1990, 1995 or 2001. In this chapter I use the most recent Canadian data available on cohabitation and marriage formation, collected in 2011, which has not yet been examined. Given that the trends towards delayed marriage and increasing cohabitation have continued, an examination of the of the union formation behaviours of the most recent cohorts of Canadians is warranted to update our understanding of the widespread changes in union formation that have occurred over the past 60 years. By using rich retrospective data on union histories I am able to build on the approach used in past research, including Manning et al. (2014), by analyzing the union formation patterns of birth cohorts rather than period changes in union formation. I am also able to analyze trends over a very wide range of birth cohorts, from the 1930s to the 1980s, which will provide a better understanding of long-term trends in marriage and cohabitation than past research has typically been able to do.

In this chapter I update our understanding of the types of first unions Canadians form and how this has changed across birth cohorts, and our understanding of the age at which Canadians typically form their first unions compared to their first marriage and how this has changed over time. Beyond updating the trends in the type and timing of union formation in Canada, this chapter also contributes to existing literature by examining the extent to which increases in cohabitation have offset declines in marriage among the most recent cohort of Canadians. This chapter also explores whether the differences in union formation patterns in Quebec and the rest of Canada has continued to grow or if the rest of Canada has progressed along Kiernan's (2001) typology of the development of cohabitation. The last contribution I seek to make in this chapter is to assess the utility of applying Oppenheimer's (1988; 2003) theory of marriage timing to explaining the timing of first unions in recent Canadian cohorts.

2.4 Research Questions

In this chapter I address two research questions.

1. How are Canadians beginning their conjugal lives, through marriage or cohabitation? How has this changed across birth cohorts, especially for those born after 1970 who have entered adulthood in the 1990s and 2000s? Is the decline in marriage over time being offset by increases in rates of cohabitation?
 - a. Are there regional differences in the propensity for Canadians to either marry or cohabit as their first union? Are differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada increasing over time or are union formation patterns converging across the country?
 - b. Are there educational differences in the type of first union Canadians form?

Have these educational differences remained constant across birth cohorts or is education becoming more or less important determinant of union forming behavior?

2. How have the age at first marriage and the age at first union, whether marriage or cohabitation, changed across cohorts? Has cohabitation been delayed to the same extent as marriage, or has earlier cohabitation offset delays in marriage?
 - a. How have regional differences in ages at first marriage and first partnership changed across cohorts?
 - b. How have educational differences in ages at first marriage and first partnership changed across cohorts?

2.5 Data

I use the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS) to examine changes in union formation across six birth cohorts in Canada. The Canadian GSS is a cross-sectional survey conducted by Statistics Canada every year since 1985 with a specific thematic focus each year. The data for this study come from Cycle 25, the fifth and most recent GSS to focus on families. The GSS uses a stratified sample and is representative of non-institutionalized people aged 15 or older living in the 10 Canadian provinces. It was conducted by computer assisted telephone interviews between February and November 2011 and has a response rate of 65.8 percent. The 2011 GSS is ideal for this study because it includes detailed retrospective information on both marriage and cohabitation histories for respondents born between 1911 and 1996 which allows for an examination of long term trends in changes in the timing and type of union formation over many birth cohorts in Canada. These data are also the most recent available on Canadian families

and cover the most recent Canadian cohort whose partnering patterns have yet to be studied. Anglophone respondents were asked if they are or had been in a “common-law relationship, even if for less than one year.” Then detailed information on the date that each common law union was formed was collected. Francophone respondents were asked the same sequence of questions regarding their “*unions libres*” rather than their common law unions. This measure captures the different legal definitions of these non-marital unions between Quebec, which uses the civil law tradition, and the rest of Canada which uses the common law tradition (Beaujot, Du & Ravanera, 2013). I use the term cohabitation to encompass both common law unions formed outside of Quebec and *unions de libres* in Quebec.

2.6 Analytic Strategy

1. Proportion of respondents entering conjugal life through marriage and cohabitation, and proportion never-partnered.

I begin by using descriptive methods to chart changes in the percentage of Canadian women and men who enter their first union through marriage, through cohabitation, or who remain unpartnered at age 35 across five birth cohorts. I use age 35 as a cut point for my analysis of the proportion of Canadians ever-partnered because I am interested in the early life transitions of Canadian youth. The MacArthur Foundation Network on Transitions to Adulthood in the U.S. also considers young adulthood to be between the ages of 18 and 34 and many of their publications consider first unions formed between the ages of 30 to 34 as late transitions (e.g. Rumbaut, 2004). I group respondents by decade of birth and limit my analyses to those born between 1930 and 1976 inclusive. I

exclude those born in 1929 or earlier because of small sample sizes and the increased potential for recall and mortality biases. I also exclude respondents born after 1976 because they had not yet reached age 35 at the time of the survey. The sample for these analyses include roughly 15,600 Canadians, of which 56 percent are women and 44 percent are men.

1. a) Regional differences in first union type and proportion never-partnered

I then examine regional differences in the proportion of Canadian women and men whose first union was marriage, whose first union was cohabitation, and who ever-partnered by age 35 across birth cohorts. I group respondents into three categories based on place of birth; those born in Quebec, those born in the rest of Canada, and those born outside of Canada. I use place of birth because the region the respondent lived in at the time of first partnership is not available in the data. In these analyses I focus on the differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada and I include a separate immigrant category as a comparison. Because I am not specifically concerned with the union formation behaviours of immigrants to Canada, I do not consider time since immigration, source country, or whether the respondent's first union occurred before or after immigration. All of these factors likely influence the type and timing of first union formation but they are beyond the scope of this chapter.

1. b) Educational differences in first union type and proportion never-partnered

Educational attainment is the final axis along which I examine differences in the proportion of people marrying, cohabiting, or remaining unpartnered at age 35 and changes across birth cohorts. When sample sizes allow I distinguish between people who

have 1) less than a high school diploma, 2) those with a high school diploma, 3) those with some postsecondary education but less than a bachelor's degree, and 4) those with at least a bachelor's degree. However, the distribution of educational attainment in the population has changed quite dramatically across cohorts in Canada so for some birth cohorts grouping some of these educational categories together is necessary to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. In the birth cohort spanning from 1930 to 1939 I use a dichotomous education variable for both men and women consisting of 1) high school or less and 2) more than high school. For women born between 1970 and 1979 I group respondents with less than high school and those with a high school diploma together because only a small proportion of women in this cohort do not complete high school, but I am able to leave the some postsecondary and the bachelor or more categories separate. Many more men than women in the 1970s birth cohort did not complete high school, which allows me to use all four educational categories for this subgroup.

2. Age at first marriage compared to age at first union and changes across cohorts

I examine how changes across cohorts in the age at first union compare to changes in the age at first marriage. I estimate men and women's median survival times to two events: 1) first marriage (regardless of any premarital cohabitation) and 2) first partnership (either marriage or cohabitation), by birth cohort. My estimates are derived from the Kaplan-Meier survivor function for the given event, which has the advantage of accounting for censoring (Cleaves et al., 2010). Using these Kaplan-Meier curves, I estimate the age at which 50 percent of a given cohort experiences each of the partnering events. In these analyses I expand my sample to include respondents born between 1930 and 1989 rather than excluding respondents under the age of 35 at the time of the survey

because I am interested in median ages at partnering events rather than the proportion of people who will eventually partner as in the last set of analyses. This means I am able to include the most recent birth cohort, born between 1980 and 1989.

2. a) Regional differences in age at first marriage and age at first union

I estimate men's and women's median ages at first marriage and first partnership by cohort separately by place of birth using the same three regional categories as the previous analyses: 1) Quebec, 2) in Canada but outside Quebec, and 3) outside of Canada. This allows me to examine regional differences in the changing patterns of age at union formation across cohorts.

2. b) Educational differences in age at first marriage and age at first union

Finally, I examine educational differences in the ages at first marriage and first union for men and women by birth cohort. Since the sample is not further divided by type of first partnering event, like it was in the previous analysis, I am able to use all four of the educational attainment categories for men and women in each birth cohort because confidentiality is not compromised by small sample sizes. These educational categories include 1) less than a high school diploma, 2) high school diploma, 3) some postsecondary education but less than a bachelor's degree, and 4) at least a bachelor's degree.

2.7 Results

2.7.1 Description of Sample

Table 2.1 presents characteristics of the full analytic sample. In order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents I display the sample sizes rounded to the nearest 10. The full sample is used in the analyses addressing the second research question, while the analyses for the first question are restricted to respondents born before 1977 because those born later had not yet reached age 35 at the time of the survey. This exclusion reduces the sample size for the first set of analyses to roughly 15,600 Canadians, of which 56 percent are women and 44 percent are men.

The left pane of Table 1 provides the number of women represented in each cohort, the percentage of women born in each cohort by place of birth, and by highest level of education attained. The size of the samples of women within a given birth cohort range from 1,180 to 2,360, with the oldest and youngest cohorts having slightly smaller samples relative to the middle birth cohorts. Across all birth cohorts the majority of women were born in Canada but outside of Quebec, and the remaining women are split relatively evenly between being born in Quebec, and being born outside of Canada.

The distribution of women's education has changed much more dramatically over time as successive cohorts of women have become more educated. For women born in the 1930s, 40.1 percent had less than a high school diploma and 11.3 percent had an undergraduate degree or higher. By the 1970s birth cohort, only 5.8 percent of women had less than a high school diploma and 37.8 percent had a university credential. The proportion of women with less than a high school education continued to decrease in the most recent

birth cohort of women born after 1979. However, since women in this cohort ranged in age from 22 to 31 at the time of the survey, some have not had the chance to complete their undergraduate studies, which explains why there are more women with some post secondary education and fewer with completed degrees than would be expected by the trend of increased education over time.

Table 2.1 Sample CharacteristicsCharacteristics of the Sample, 2011 General Social Survey, Cycle 25 (Family)¹

n=18,740

Women					Men				
Birth Cohort	Place of Birth	%	Education	%	Birth Cohort	Place of Birth	%	Education	%
1930-39					1930-39				
n=1,210	Can. not Que.	52.3	< High Sch.	40.1	n=800	Can. not Que.	50.5	< High Sch.	37.5
	Quebec	25.2	High School	19.4		Quebec	24.6	High School	14.3
	Outside Can.	22.5	Some PSE ²	29.2		Outside Can.	25.0	Some PSE	27.9
			BA or more	11.3				BA or more	20.4
1940-49					1940-49				
n=1,930	Can. not Que.	52.9	< High Sch.	23.2	n=1,480	Can. not Que.	50.5	< High Sch.	24.6
	Quebec	24.0	High School	16.8		Quebec	24.6	High School	13.6
	Outside Can.	23.1	Some PSE	37.8		Outside Can.	25.0	Some PSE	33.6
			BA or more	22.2				BA or more	28.2
1950-59					1950-59				
n=2,360	Can. not Que.	56.2	< High Sch.	12.7	n=1,830	Can. not Que.	53.7	< High Sch.	13.0
	Quebec	24.9	High School	19.2		Quebec	24.4	High School	14.6
	Outside Can.	18.9	Some PSE	44.9		Outside Can.	21.9	Some PSE	44.4
			BA or more	23.2				BA or more	28.0
1960-69					1960-69				
n=2,020	Can. not Que.	56.9	< High Sch.	7.3	n=1,680	Can. not Que.	51.6	< High Sch.	10.8
	Quebec	21.7	High School	15.1		Quebec	21.5	High School	15.0
	Outside Can.	21.4	Some PSE	48.2		Outside Can.	26.9	Some PSE	45.0
			BA or more	29.5				BA or more	29.2
1970-79					1970-79				
n=1,840	Can. not Que.	53.2	< High Sch.	5.8	n=1,460	Can. not Que.	55.5	< High Sch.	8.1
	Quebec	20.0	High School	8.9		Quebec	18.0	High School	11.0
	Outside Can.	26.9	Some PSE	47.6		Outside Can.	26.6	Some PSE	48.5
			BA or more	37.8				BA or more	32.4
1980-89					1980-89				
n=1,180	Can. not Que.	60.4	< High Sch.	5.5	n=950	Can. not Que.	60.1	< High Sch.	9.2
	Quebec	19.2	High School	11.0		Quebec	21.3	High School	14.3
	Outside Can.	20.4	Some PSE	49.7		Outside Can.	18.7	Some PSE	51.4
			BA or more	33.9				BA or more	25.2

Notes: 1. Proportions are weighted to be representative of the Canadian population.

2. The category some PSE stands for some post secondary education and includes respondents with a trades certificate, a college diploma, and those with some university education but not a completed university degree.

The right pane of Table 2.1 displays the same information for the men in the sample. As was the case for the women in the sample, men born in the 1930s and 1980s are slightly underrepresented compared to those born in the mid 20th century; sample sizes range from around 800 to 1,830. In every cohort the majority of men were born in a Canadian province or territory outside of Quebec.

The same trend towards more education over time that was evident for women is also shown for men, however to a lesser extent. Of men born in the 1930s, 37.5 percent had less than a high school education and 20.4 percent had at least a baccalaureate degree. For men born in the 1970s, 8.1 percent had less than a high school diploma and 32.4 percent had a bachelors degree or higher. More men than women had a university education for those born between 1930 and 1959, but women born in the 1960s caught up with men and then surpassed them in subsequent cohorts.

2.7.2 Proportion marrying, cohabiting, and ever-partnered by age 35

The proportion of women whose first union was marriage, the proportion whose first union was cohabitation, and the proportion of women who had never partnered by age 35 for each birth cohort are displayed in Figure 2.1. As expected, the proportion of women who enter directly into marriage rather than cohabiting before marriage has declined dramatically across birth cohorts in Canada. Over 90 percent of women born in the 1930s, who reached adulthood in the 1950s, married their first partner, just over 2 percent cohabited with the first partner, and roughly 5 percent were yet to be partnered by age 35. By the 1950s birth cohort, who came of age in the 1970s, the proportion of women cohabiting with their first partner had increased dramatically to 24 percent, and the

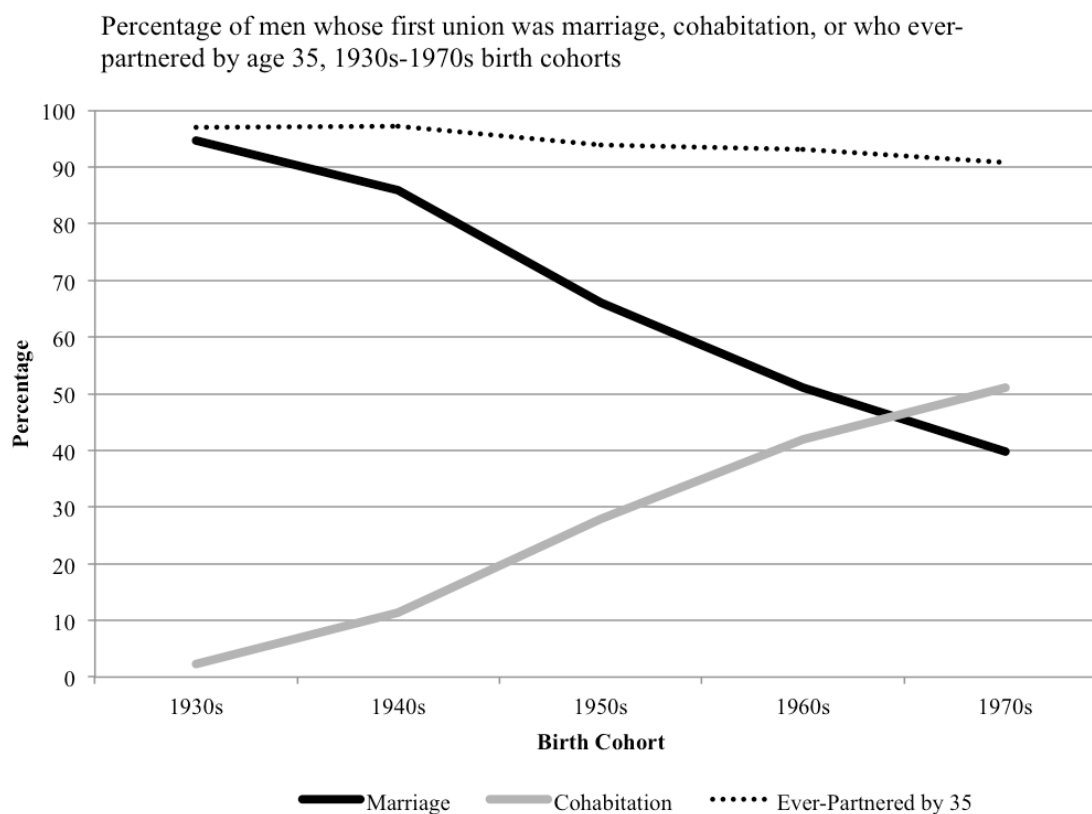
proportion entering marriage directly fell to just over 70 percent. The proportion of women remaining unpartnered remained relatively stable for those born in the 1930s to those born in the 1950s. These trends intensified for those born in the 1960s but the majority of women in this birth cohort still started their conjugal lives through marriage, rather than cohabitation, and the proportion remaining single at age 35 increased slightly to 6 percent. The 1970s birth cohort, who came of age in the 1990s, was the first to experience a change in the modal way to form a first partnership. Women born in the 1970s were more likely to cohabit with their first partner (52.3 percent), rather than marry their first partner (41 percent), and this cohort has the highest proportion of women remaining single by age 35 of all the cohorts examined (nearly 7 percent).

Figure 2.1 Types of First Unions, Canadian Women



The patterns for Canadian men are largely the same as those seen for Canadian women and are displayed in Figure 2.2. One notable difference is that gender differences in the proportion ever-partnered by age 35 has reversed across birth cohorts. Among Canadians born in the 1930s and 40s, women were significantly less likely to partner by 35 than men ($p < 0.001$). By the 1950s birth cohort, gender differences disappeared, but then reversed for the 1960s and 70s birth cohorts with women being significantly more likely to partner by 35 than men ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 2.2 Types of First Unions, Canadian Men



2.7.3 Regional Differences in Type of First Union

Figures 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 display, respectively, the proportion of women in each birth cohort who marry their first partner, who cohabit with their first partner, and who have ever partnered by age 35, by place of birth. Figures 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 display the same information for men. Regional differences in the type of first union formed are statistically significant among Canadians born in the 1950s and later ($p < 0.001$), for both men and women. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show that the proportion that enter into marriage as their first partnership has decreased across cohorts for women born in every region and the proportion who enter into a cohabiting relationship as their first union has increased. The degree of these changes, however, varies greatly by region.

Figure 2.3 shows that for all birth cohorts, women who were born outside of Canada are by far the most likely to marry rather than cohabit with their first partner, with no fewer than 68 percent of women in any given cohort marrying directly. Women born in Quebec on the other hand are the least likely to enter into marriage directly across all cohorts, and the decline in the proportion taking this path to partnership over cohorts is the most dramatic for this group. Of women born in Quebec in the 1960s who reached adulthood in the 1980s, only 30.8 percent choose marriage as their first partnership, and this decreased to only 16.8 percent for the 1970s birth cohort who came of age in the 1990s. Although it was not until the 1970s birth cohort that cohabitation became the most popular type of first union for Canadian women overall, the majority of first unions among women born in Quebec in the 1960s were cohabitations, a full decade sooner than the rest of the country.

Women born in the rest of Canada fit between the two extremes of women born in Quebec and women born outside of Canada both in terms of the proportion of women entering marriage directly and in the precipitousness of the decline in marriage as a first union, as shown in Figure 2.3. Notably, the decrease in the proportion of women who marry their first partner slowed in the most recent cohort for women born in Quebec, and even reversed for women born outside of Canada. The difference in the propensity to marry or cohabit as a first union between women born in Quebec and women born in the rest of Canada was therefore widening between the 1940s and the 1960s birth cohorts, but this difference seems to be narrowing for the most recent cohort. Overall, the proportion of women who have ever partnered by age 35, either through marriage or cohabitation, has stayed relatively stable across birth cohorts by place of birth, as seen in Figure 2.5. The only noticeable difference is a slight decrease in the proportion ever-partnered among women born in Canada but outside of Quebec, and a slight increase in the proportion among women born in Quebec. There is one notable difference between men and women in terms of first union type by place of birth: the proportion of men born outside of Canada who marry their first partner declines across all birth cohorts.

Figure 2.3 Percentage of Women Directly Marrying, by Place of Birth, across Cohorts

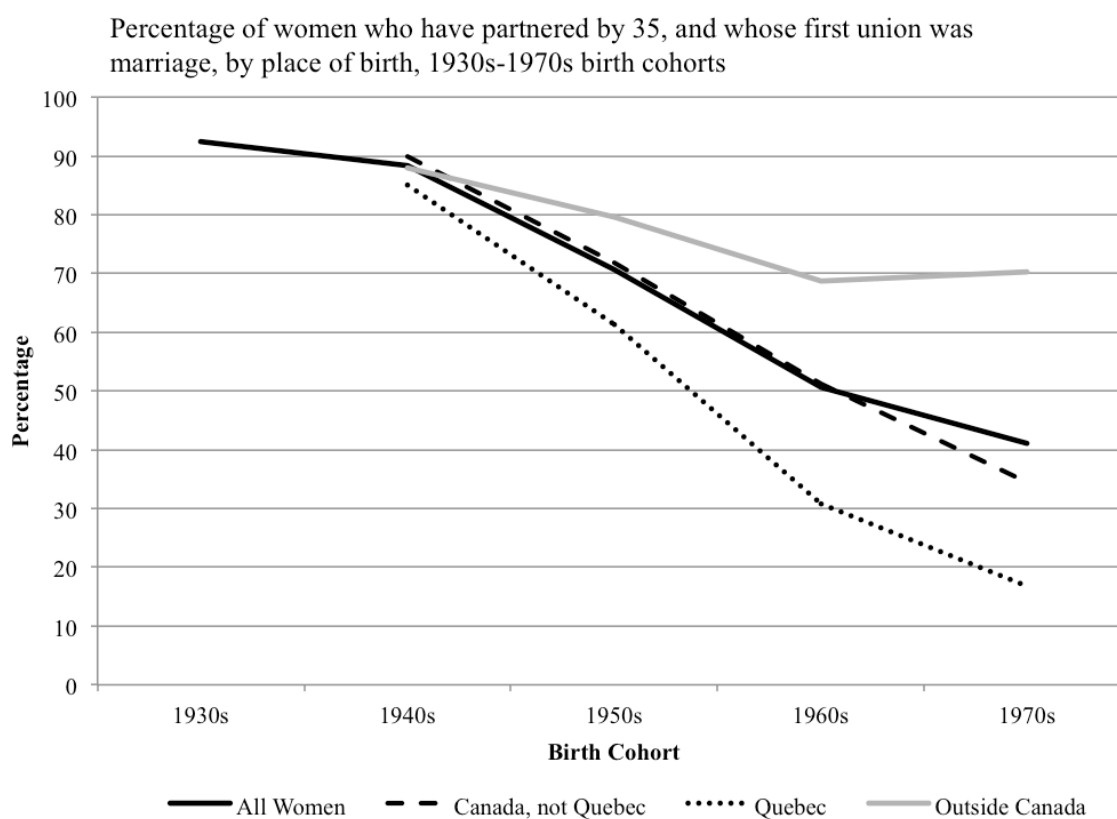


Figure 2.4 Percentage of Women Cohabiting as First Union, by Place of Birth, across Cohorts

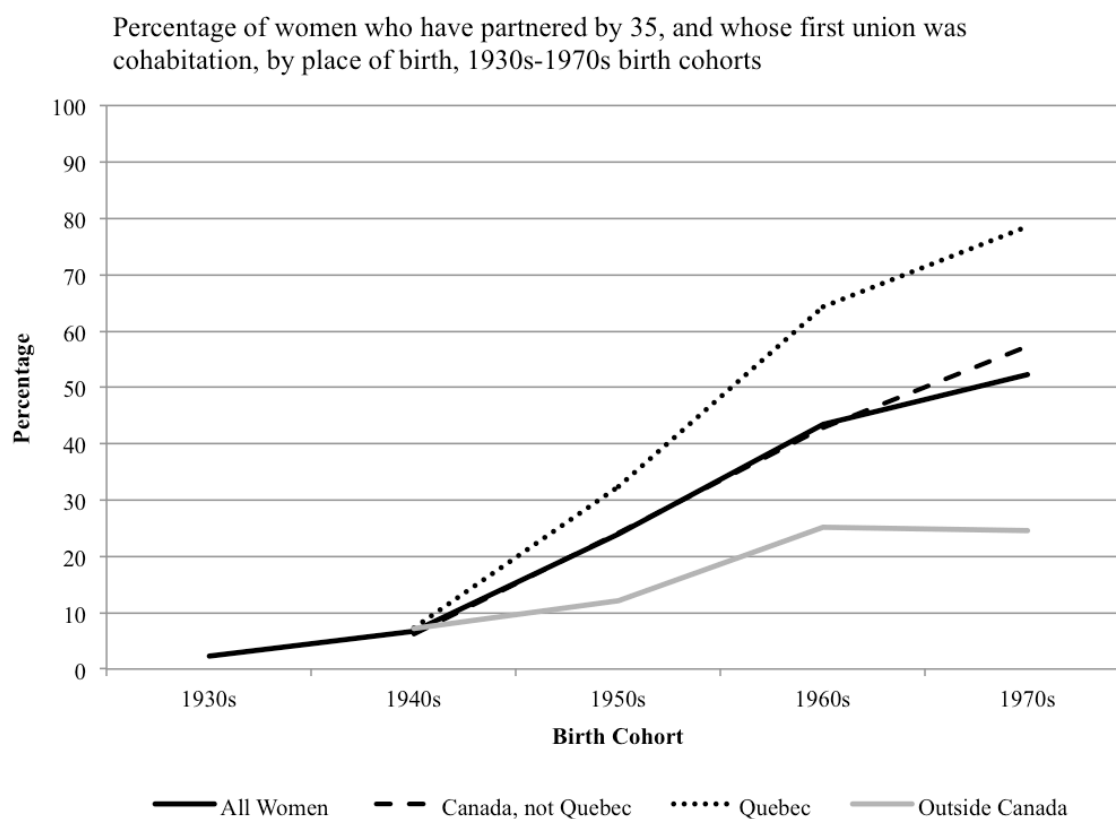


Figure 2.5 Percentage of Women Ever-Partnered by age 35, by place of birth, across Cohorts

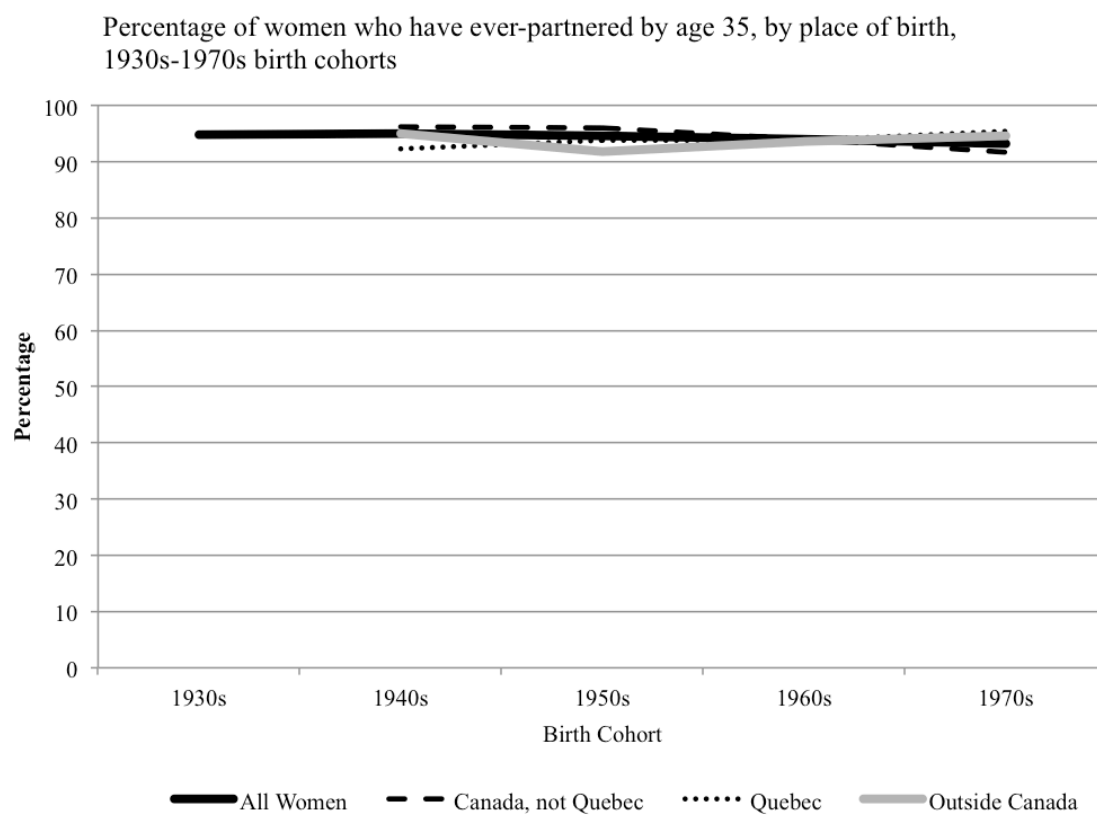


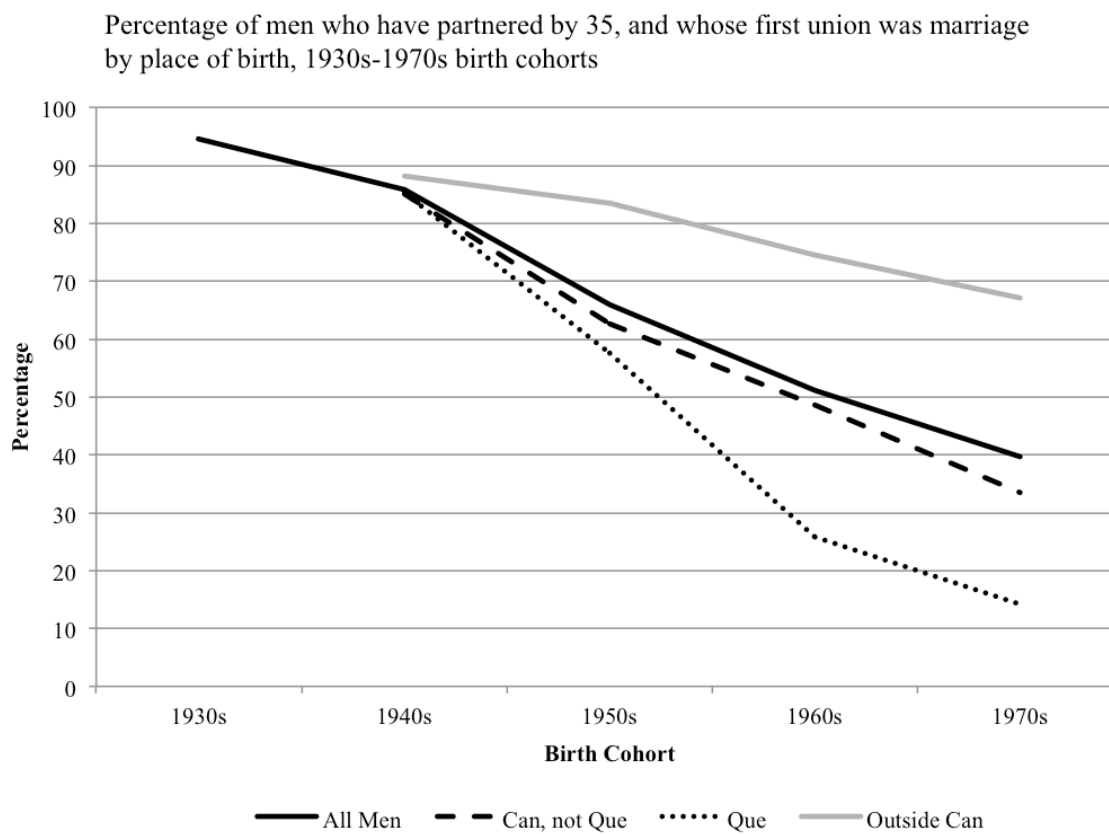
Figure 2.6 Percentage of Men Directly Marrying, by Place of Birth, across Cohorts

Figure 2.7 Percentage of Men Cohabiting as First Union, by Place of Birth, across Cohorts

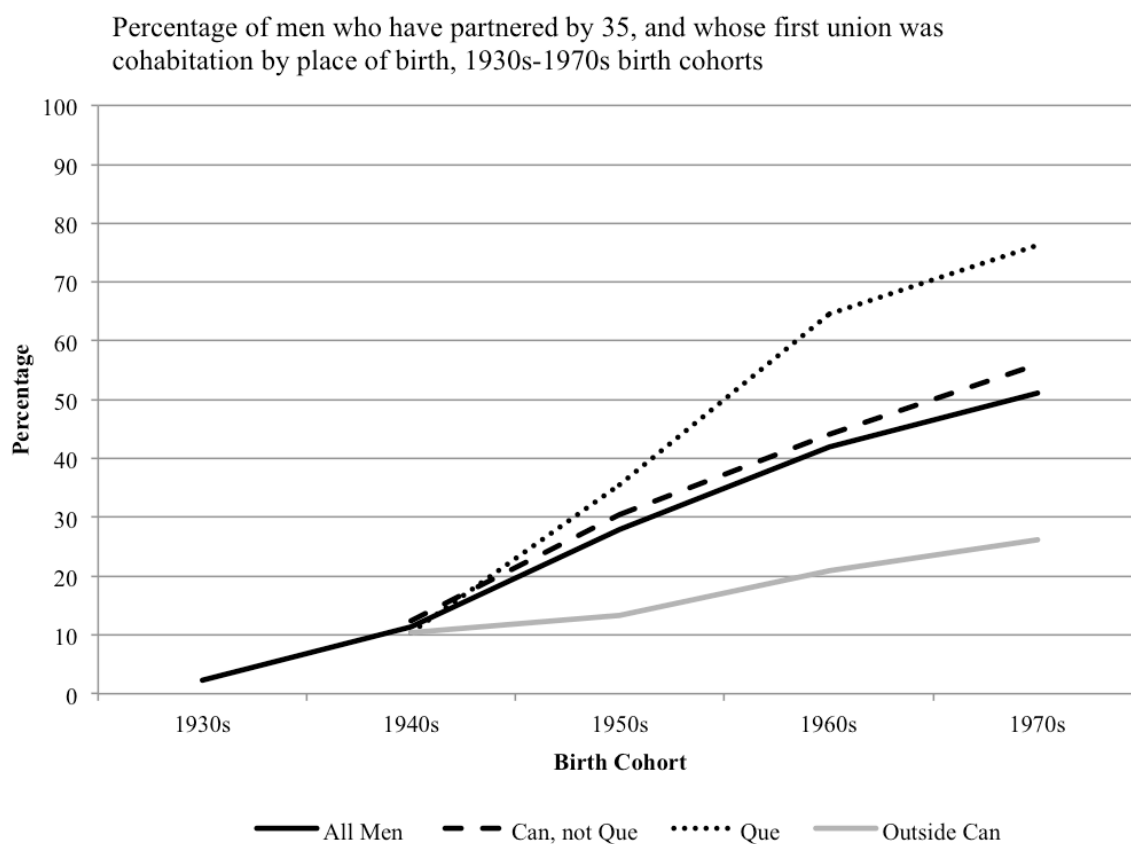
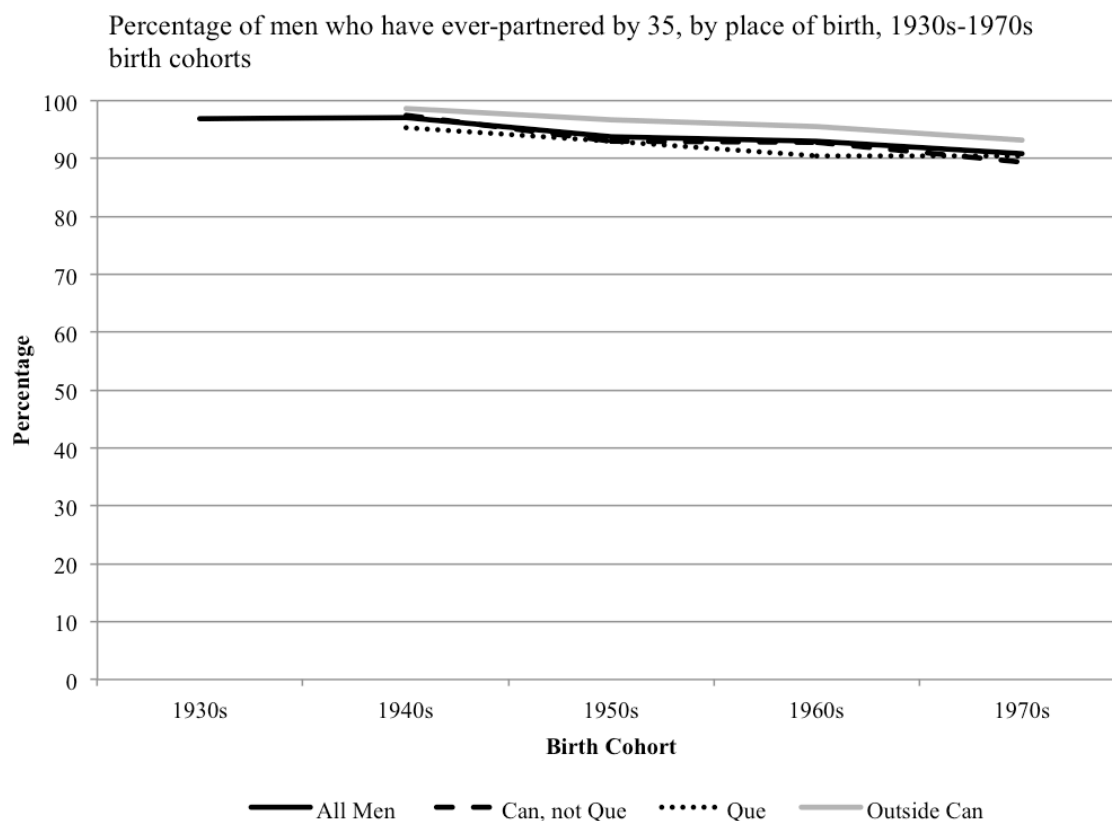


Figure 2.8 Percentage of Men, Ever-Partnered by Age 35, across Cohorts



2.7.4 Educational Differences in Type of First Union

Educational differences in the proportion of women whose first union is marriage, cohabitation, or who remain unpartnered by age 35 across birth cohorts are illustrated in Figures 2.9, 2.10, and 2.11 for women, and Figures 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14 for men. Educational differences in type of first partnership are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) for men and women across all birth cohorts, except among women born in the 1930s who entered their 20s in the 1950s. Patterns of change across cohorts are less clear for educational differences than for differences by place of birth.

There are no educational differences in the proportion of women who marry or who cohabit among those born in the 1930s; marriage is the near-universal type of first partnership regardless of education (shown in Figures 2.9 to 2.11). This birth cohort came of age in the 1950s and the near universality of direct marriage regardless of education is illustrative of the prevailing union formation patterns and the traditional nuclear structure that characterized families during this time. In the 1940s birth cohort, however, a clear difference emerges separating women with an undergraduate degree or higher from the other educational categories. These women are significantly less likely than the less educated to enter into marriage as their first union, but are only slightly more likely to cohabit with their first partner. The difference for the most highly educated women in this cohort is that they are over twice as likely to remain unpartnered than women with less education.

Figures 2.9 and 2.10 show that the gap between the most highly educated women and other educational groups found among women born in the 1940s remained for those born in the 1950s who came of age in the 1970s. In the 1950s birth cohort, women with a high school diploma also begin to display a different propensity to marry and cohabit than those with less than high school, and those with some postsecondary. The former are more likely to marry and slightly less likely to cohabit with their first partner than the latter educational groups. By the cohort born in the 1960s who entered adulthood in the 1980s, however, all educational differences in the proportion of women who enter marriage directly, and who cohabit as their first partnership disappear, except for women who do not have a high school diploma. These women are significantly less likely to

marry, more likely to cohabit, and less likely to form any type of partnership by the age 35.

The educational differences in first union patterns among women born in the 1970s are slightly more complicated than for previous cohorts (Figures 2.9 to 2.11). In stark contrast to the 1940s and 1950s birth cohorts, women born in the 1970s who came of age in the 1990s, with at least an undergraduate degree are the most likely to enter marriage as their first partnership. This highly educated group is also the least likely to cohabit as their first union type. Women with some postsecondary in this birth cohort are among the least likely, along with those without high school, to marry directly. However, although the some postsecondary group and the less than high school group have similarly low propensities to begin their conjugal lives with marriage, the less than high school group is more likely to cohabit, and thus more likely to be ever-partnered by 35. In fact, even though they are the least likely to marry directly, women with less than a high school education are the most likely to be ever-partnered.

Figure 2.9 Percentage of Women Directly Marrying, by Education, across Cohorts

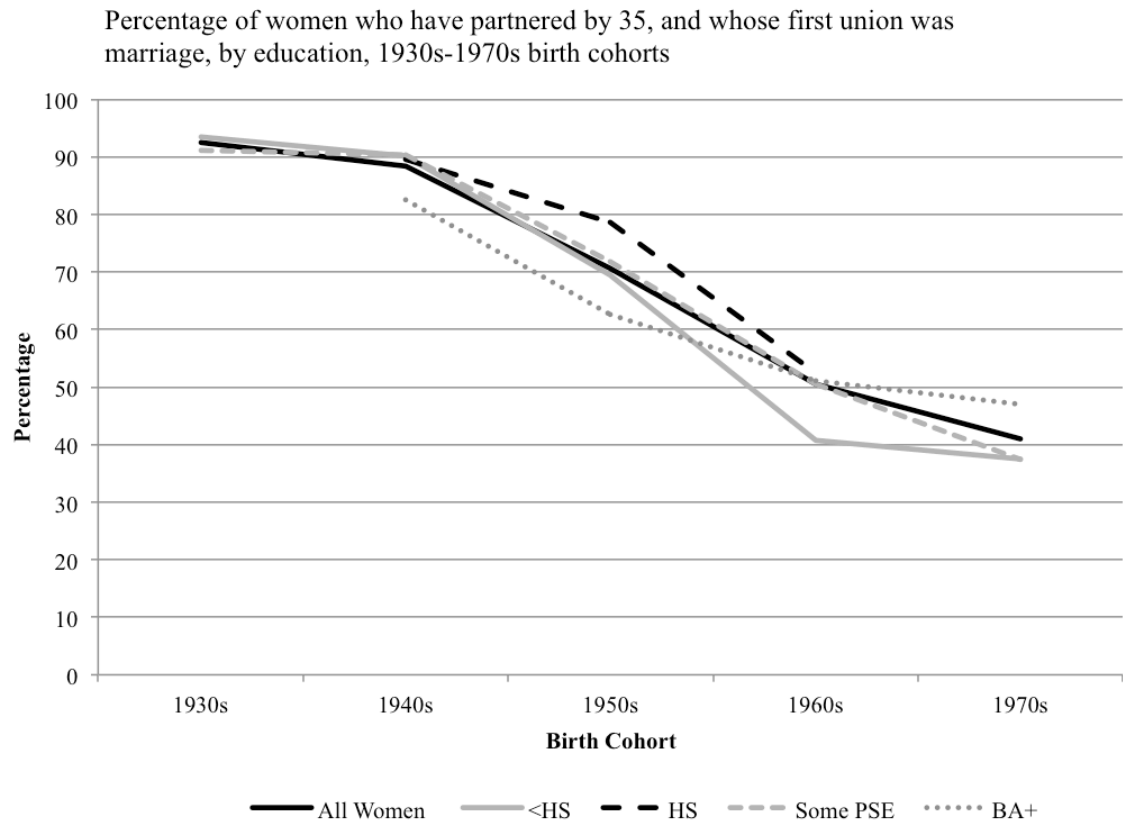


Figure 2.10 Percentage of Women Cohabiting as First Union, by Education, across Cohorts

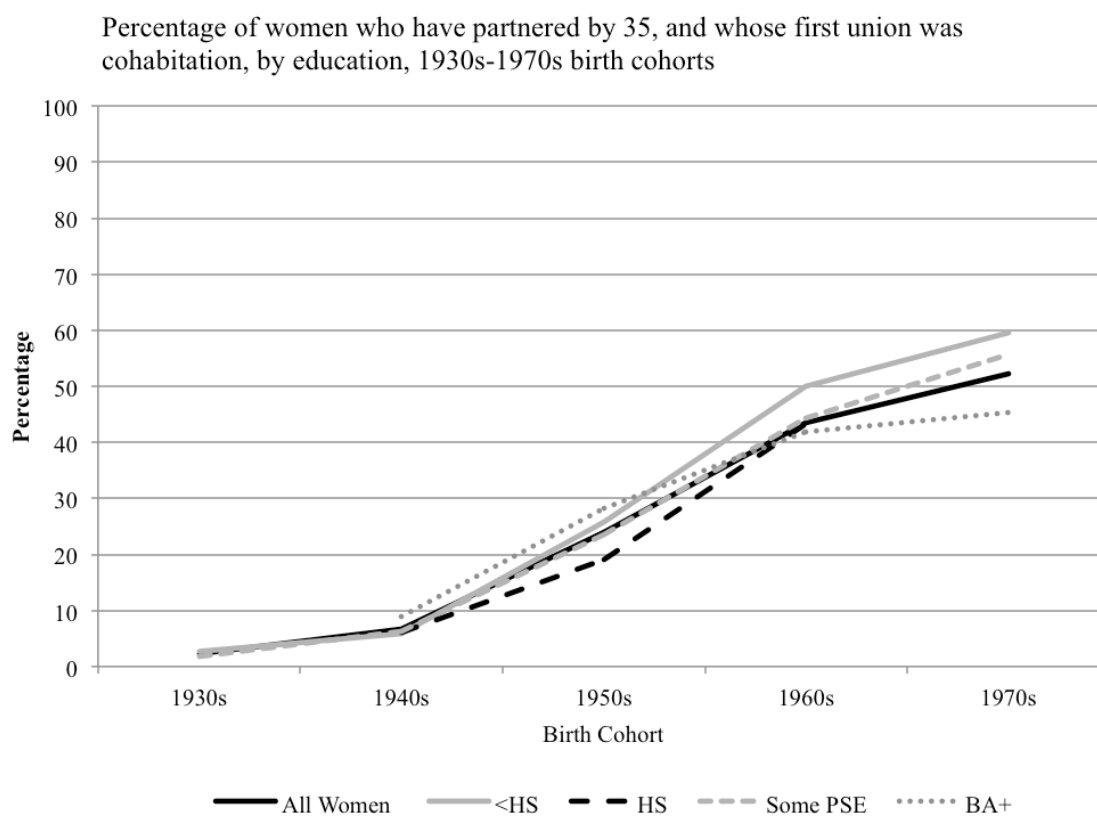
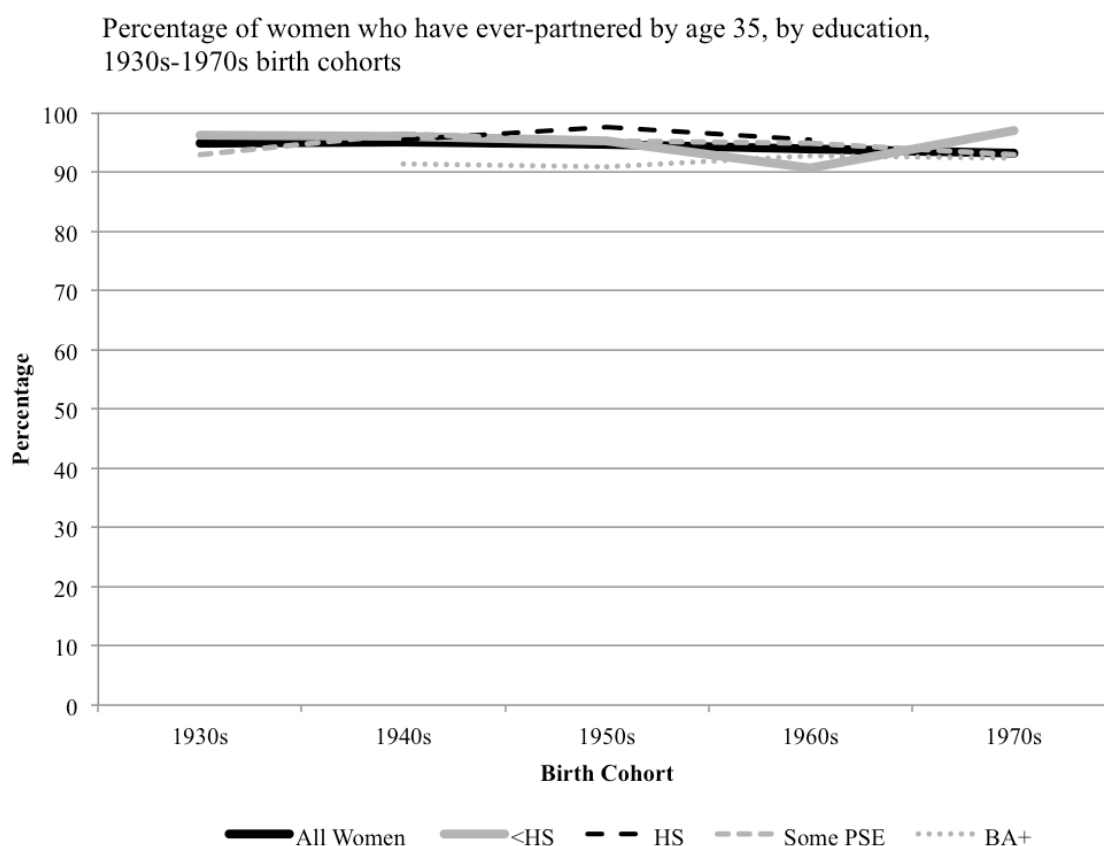


Figure 2.11 Percentage of Women Ever-Partnered by Age 35, by Education, across Cohorts



Educational differences across cohorts in type of first union and proportion ever-partnered by 35 are very different for Canadian men when compared with Canadian women, shown in Figures 2.12, 2.13 and 2.14. Across all cohorts, men with higher levels of education are more likely to marry and those with lower levels of education are less likely to marry. The difference in the proportion marrying their first partner between men with less than a high school diploma and men with a bachelor degree or more increased across the 1940 and 1960 birth cohorts who entered adulthood in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, but this gap narrowed somewhat in the most recent cohort. Men with less than a high school diploma are the most likely to cohabit across all cohorts (Figure 2.13), and

are also among the least likely to form any partnership by age 35 (Figure 2.14). Educational differences in the proportion ever-partnered by education are also more dramatic among men than women and the differences have grown across cohorts. In the most recent cohort, only 84.8 percent of men with less than a high school diploma have partnered by age 35 compared to 95 percent of men with at least a bachelor's degree.

Figure 2.12 Percentage of Men Directly Marrying, by Education, across Cohorts

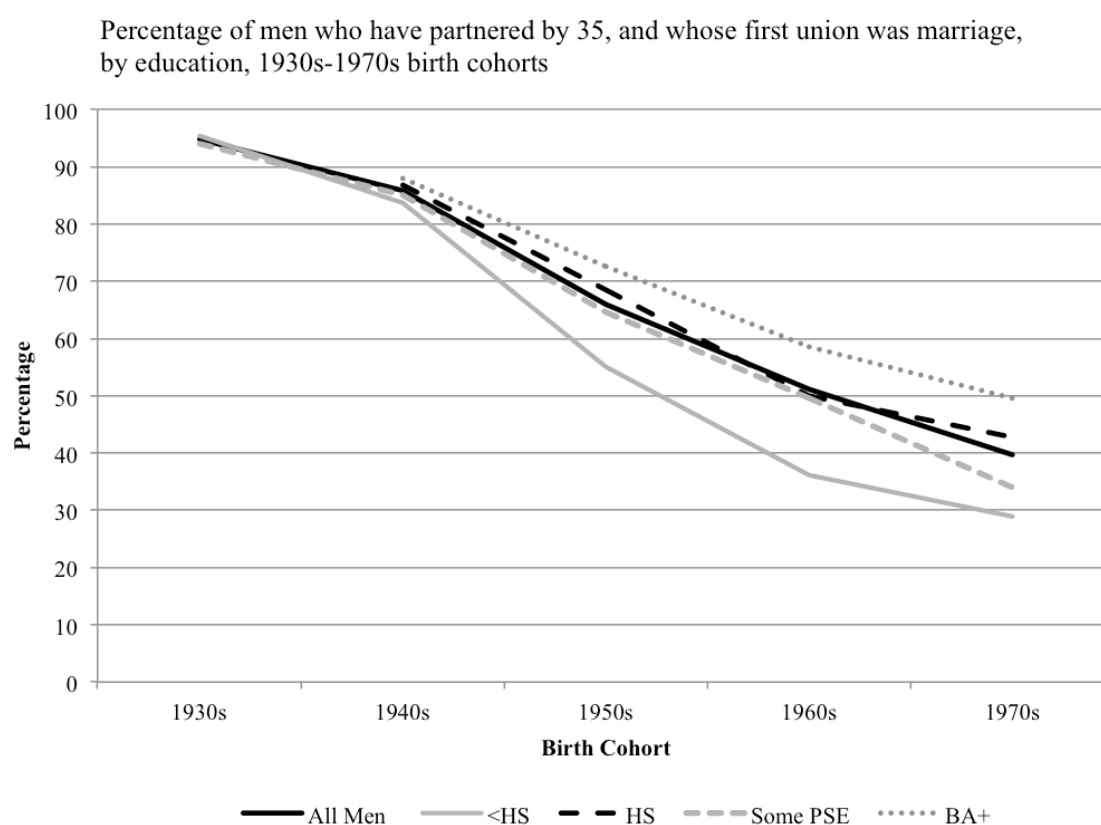
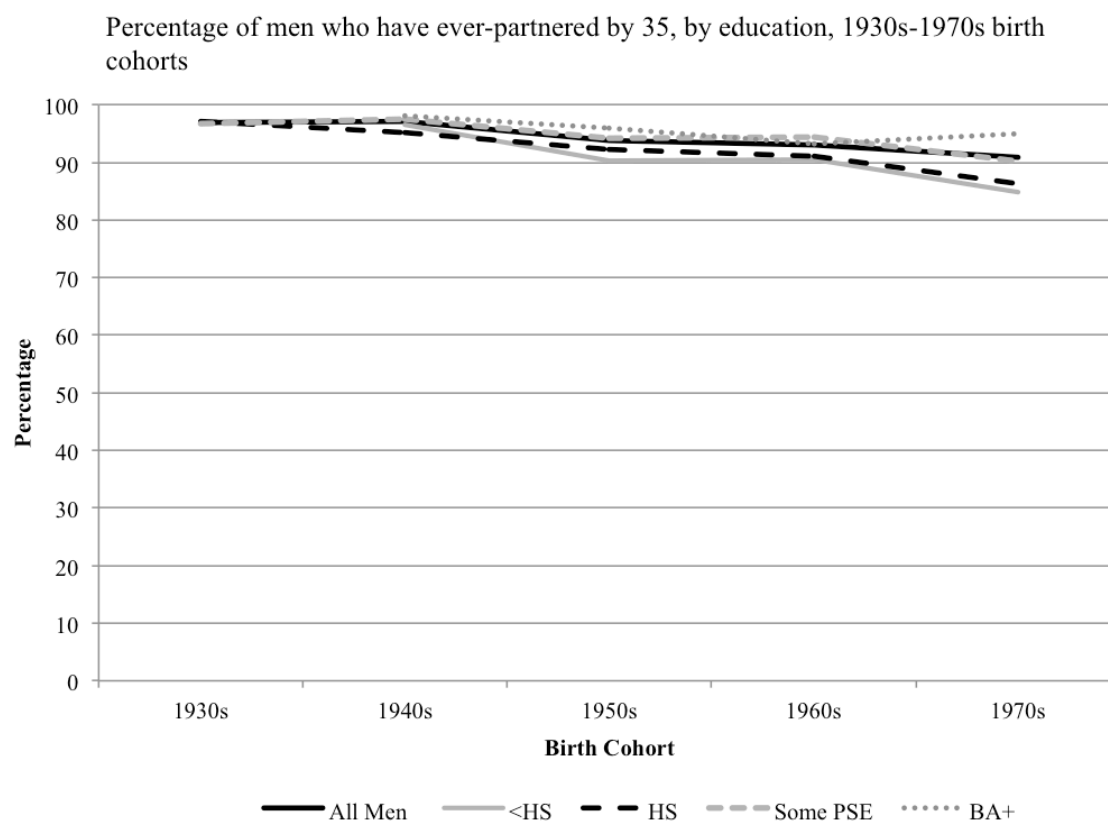


Figure 2.13 Percentage of Men Cohabiting as First Union, by Education, across Cohorts



Figure 2.14 Percentage of Men Ever-Partnered by Age 35, by Education, across Cohorts



2.7.5 Age at First Marriage vs. Age at First Union Across Cohorts

Median survival time to first marriage, and at first union regardless of union type, for each cohort, by place of birth and education are presented in Table 2.2 for women and Table 2.3 for men. The figures in these tables represent the age at which 50 percent of the given subgroup entered into a union or a marriage. The age at which half of all Canadian women formed a first marriage has increased from a low of 22 years for women born in the 1930s who came of age in the 1950s, to a high of 31 years for women born in the 1980s who came of age in the 2000s. Over this time, Canadian women have delayed their first marriage by nearly a decade. It appears however, that Canadian women are not delaying partnering to nearly the same degree as marriage. Half of all women born in the 1930s had formed their first union by age 22 and among those born in the 1980s, half had formed their first union by age 24.5; a difference of only 2.5 years. Typical ages at first marriage and first union corresponded quite closely in the earlier cohorts in which marriage was by far the most likely way to form a first partnership. These ages began to diverge across cohorts, starting with the 1960s birth cohort who entered adulthood in the 1980s, as cohabitation became an increasingly common way to form a first union (Table 2.2). Median survival times to first marriage, and first union have also increased across birth cohorts among Canadian men (Table 2.3) to the same degree as among Canadian women. Canadian men, however, are typically two or three years older than Canadian women when they form their first partnership and when they marry for the first time.

Men born in a Canadian province or territory other than Quebec display a similar pattern in age at first partnership and marriage as men born in the rest of the country until the 1950s birth cohort who entered adulthood in the 1970s (Table 2.3). After the 1950s birth

cohort however, the pattern is dramatically different ($p < 0.001$). Among Quebecois men born in the 1960s, who entered adulthood in the 1980s, half had entered marriage by the age of 42, which is more than 13 years later than men born in Canada but outside of Quebec. Estimates could not be derived for the age at which 50 percent of Quebec men born after 1969 entered marriage since too few had married by the time of the survey, indicating a continued trend of delayed or forgone marriage. The typical age at first partnership among this group however, has remained stable across the six birth cohorts hovering around 24 or 25 (Table 2.3). This extreme increase in the age at first marriage but surprising stability of the typical age of first union among men and women in Quebec is reflective of trends towards cohabitation as an alternative to marriage especially popular in the Quebec culture

Table 2.2 Women's Median Survival Time to First Marriage and First Union, by Place of Birth and Education, across Cohorts

Women's median survival time to first marriage and first union, across birth cohorts, by place of birth and educational attainment. n = 10,540

	Birth Cohort					
	1930-39	1940-49	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89
All Women						
Age at first marriage	22	22	23	26.2	28.3	31
Age at first union	22	21.9	22.1	23.5	24	24.5
By Place of Birth						
<i>Canada, outside Quebec</i>						
Age at first marriage	21.3	21.5	22.3	25.6	28.2	30.2
Age at first union	21.2	21.4	21.6	23.1	24.1	24.6
<i>Quebec</i>						
Age at first marriage	22.7	22.7	23.3	27.3	--	--
Age at first union	22.7	22.5	22.4	22.9	22.6	23.1
<i>Outside of Canada</i>						
Age at first marriage	22.7	22.7	24.4	26.3	25.8	26.9
Age at first union	22.7	22.5	23.9	25.4	24.6	25.2
By Educational Attainment						
<i>Less than High School</i>						
Age at first marriage	21.1	20.4	21.5	28	25.8	--
Age at first union	21	20.3	20.5	20.5	21.3	21.8
<i>High School</i>						
Age at first marriage	22.2	21.1	21.5	23.3	27.1	27.7
Age at first union	22.2	21.1	21.2	21	21.4	21.4
<i>Some Postsecondary</i>						
Age at first marriage	22.1	21.9	22.7	25.3	28.9	--
Age at first union	22	21.9	22	22.8	22.9	24
<i>Undergraduate or Higher</i>						
Age at first marriage	25.5	24.4	25.8	28.4	28.2	30.2
Age at first union	25.5	24.2	24.5	26	25.6	25.9

Notes:

2011 General Social Survey (Cycle 25)

Figures represent the age at which 50 percent of a given group experiences the partnering event

^a -- indicates that 50 percent of the subgroup have yet to experience the partnering event and thus a median age is not available.

Table 2.3 Men's Median Survival Time to First Marriage and First Union, by Place of Birth and Education, across Cohorts

Men's median survival time to first marriage and first union, across birth cohorts, by place of birth and educational attainment. n=8,200

	Birth Cohort					
	1930-39	1940-49	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89
All Men						
Age at first marriage	24.2	24.7	26.2	29.5	30.7	-- ^a
Age at first union	24.1	24.4	24.8	26.2	26.2	26
By Place of Birth						
<i>Canada, outside Quebec</i>						
Age at first marriage	23.8	24.1	26	28.6	29.9	--
Age at first union	23.7	23.8	24.3	25.7	25.5	26.5
<i>Quebec</i>						
Age at first marriage	24.3	24.8	26	42	--	--
Age at first union	24.3	24.4	24	25.2	25	24.8
<i>Outside of Canada</i>						
Age at first marriage	25.2	26.3	27.1	29	29	29.6
Age at first union	25.2	25.7	26.5	27.5	27.7	26.8
By Educational Attainment						
<i>Less than High School</i>						
Age at first marriage	23.7	23.8	26.5	35.5	39.1	--
Age at first union	23.6	23.3	24.2	24	25	24.5
<i>High School</i>						
Age at first marriage	24.1	24.5	24.6	29.8	32.6	--
Age at first union	24.1	24.4	23.3	26.3	25.5	25.9
<i>Some Postsecondary</i>						
Age at first marriage	24	24.6	25.8	28.6	31.2	--
Age at first union	23.9	24.1	24.3	25.5	25.7	25.6
<i>Undergraduate or Higher</i>						
Age at first marriage	25.5	25.7	27.2	29.8	29.6	--
Age at first union	25.5	25.5	26.3	27.9	26.8	26.7

Notes:

2011 General Social Survey (Cycle 25)

Figures represent the age at which 50 percent of a given group experiences the partnering event

^a -- indicates that 50 percent of the subgroup have yet to experience the partnering event and thus a median age is not available.

2.7.6 Educational Differences in Age at First Marriage and First Union

The age at which 50 percent of individuals have entered marriage has generally increased across cohorts of men and women for all educational groups, albeit to different extents, and these educational differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) for men and women across all birth cohorts. Table 2.2 shows that the most highly educated women have the highest median survival time to first marriage across birth cohorts, ranging between 2.4 years later and 5.1 years later than their less educated counterparts. However, the difference between the most highly educated and the less educated in age at which 50 percent enter marriage is much smaller for more recent birth cohorts than for earlier birth cohorts.

The most highly educated women also have, by far, the highest typical age at first partnership across all birth cohorts, ranging from ages 24.2 to 26. The typical age at first union among the other educational groups are only separated by approximately two years in any given cohort and tend to cluster around the ages of 20 and 22. For all of the birth cohorts under study, women with less than a high school diploma are among those who tend to partner the youngest. This less than high school group however, had one of the oldest ages at which 50 percent had experienced a first marriage among women born in the 1960s (age 28), and the youngest age at first marriage among women born in the every other cohort. Thus, despite remarkable stability in median survival times to first partnership among these women with less than a high school education, their median survival time to first marriage has varied greatly, indicating changes in the choice of type of first partnership. Educational differences in the typical age at which women form their

first unions have remained remarkably constant for those born between 1930 and 1989. Across all cohorts women with higher education tend to delay their first union.

The age at which 50 percent of men of a given cohort have entered into a first marriage has also increased over time, which can be seen in Table 2.3. In the earlier cohorts of men born between 1930 and 1949 who reached adulthood in the 1950s and 1960s, the typical age at first marriage increased along with education. Among these cohorts, men with less than a high school diploma typically married around age 23, and university educated men typically married at around 26. For men born in the 1950s who came of age in the 1970s, however, those with the least education and those with the most education delayed their first marriage longer than those with moderate levels of education, forming a shallow U-shaped pattern in median survival time to first marriage by education. Half of men with less than a high school diploma had formed their first marriage by the age of 26.5 and half of men with a university credential had transitioned to marriage by 27.2. Men with educational attainment between these two extremes typically married younger with median survival times between 24.6 to 25.8 years. The typical age at first marriage of men with less than a high school education continued to increase in subsequent cohorts while differences between the other educational groups shrank. In the most recent cohort of men, the positive association between the median survival time to first marriage and education found in earlier cohorts has completely reversed; less education is associated with delayed first marriage for Canadian men born between 1980 and 1989 who entered adulthood in the first decade of the 2000s. This is especially noteworthy since this educational group is likely not enrolled in school and therefore not delaying marriage until school completion.

Although men born in the most recent cohort with the least education tend to delay their first marriage, they have the lowest typical age at first partnership in most birth cohorts. As was the case among Canadian women, educational differences in age at first partnership among Canadian men are quite stable across cohorts, and positively associated with educational attainment. In the most recent birth cohort, men with less than a high school diploma form their first partnership at the youngest age (24.5), followed by those with a high school diploma (25.9) and those who have completed some postsecondary education (25.6), and men with at least one university degree delay their first partnership the longest (26.7).

2.8 Discussion and Conclusion

The rise in cohabitation and the delaying of marriage are two of the most important changes in union formation patterns that have occurred in Canada over the last 50 years between the time the cohort born in the 1940s came of age in the 1960s and when cohorts born in the 1970s and 1980s came of age in the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium. In this chapter I have documented these well-known trends in older Canadian birth cohorts and have updated previous analyses by using the most recent Canadian data available to examine these most recent cohorts of Canadians. I have also documented long-term trends in median age at first union across birth cohorts, which has been far less studied than median age at marriage. The results contribute to our understanding of the way in which increases in cohabitation have offset the decline and delay of marriage as a first partnership for the newest generation of Canadian young adults.

Consistent with past research (e.g. Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004), I found that across birth cohorts, an increasing number of Canadian men and women are choosing to form non-marital cohabiting unions rather than marriages as they enter conjugal life. Marriage as a first partnership type has continued to decline among the most recent birth cohorts of Canadians. The decline in the proportion of Canadians whose first union was marriage, however, has been largely offset by an increase in the formation of cohabiting relationships, especially for women, as the proportion of women forming any type of union by age 35 has remained quite stable over birth cohorts. Among men however, increases in the proportion of people forming cohabiting unions have not kept pace with decreases in marriage formation, leading to a steeper decline in the proportion of men ever-partnered by age 35 over birth cohorts.

I also find that the trend towards delayed marriage in Canada, which began in earnest among those born in the 1960s who came of age in the 1980s has continued for both men and women in the most recent birth cohorts increasing from 22 for women in earlier birth cohorts to 31 for women born in the 1980s who came of age in the 2000s. The typical age at first partnership, when both marriage and cohabitation are considered, however, has not changed much over the course of 60 years under study; Canadian women tend to form their first partnerships between the ages of 22 and 24.5, and Canadian men typically transition into their first union approximately two years later, between ages 24 and 26. This is further evidence that the rise in cohabiting unions have offset delays in marriage. Young adult Canadians born in the 1970s and 80s continue to form their first unions at approximately the same age as their parents' and grandparents' generations, the only change is the type of first union they form.

I also examined differences in first union formation behaviours between Canadians born in Quebec and other Canadians to determine if the disparity in the preferred type of first union that has been growing since the cohort born in the 1940s came of age in the 1960s has continued among the most recent birth cohorts who came of age in the 1990s and 2000s. Consistent with past research (e.g. Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004), I found that the pattern of increased preference for cohabitation and decreased preference marriage as a first union type is more dramatic among men and women born in Quebec and less dramatic for those born outside of Canada. Across all cohorts, men and women in Quebec are the least likely to marry their first partner. However, the this trend toward ever decreasing proportion of marriages as first union has slowed for the most recent cohort born in Quebec, while it continued for the most recent cohort born outside of Quebec, especially for men. This means that the difference in choice of first union type between the Quebec-born and other Canadians, which has been growing since at least the 1940s birth cohort, has stabilized among the youngest Canadians included in this study. This provides some evidence that the meaning and place of cohabitation in the union formation process in the rest of Canada may be becoming more like that found in Quebec.

Quebec also displays a more dramatic pattern of change in age at first marriage and first partnership over time than the rest of Canada. Age at first marriage has increased to a greater extent in Quebec, but age at first partnership, although also increasing over time, has been younger in Quebec than in the rest of Canada since the 1960s birth cohort who came of age in the 1980s. Canadians born in Quebec are increasingly moving away from marriage, but not only are they still partnering, they are doing so earlier than other

Canadians. It also appears that many Quebecois, especially men, are foregoing marriage entirely in favour of cohabitation.

The picture that these results reveal about how the role of cohabitation differs in Quebec and the rest of Canada is clear but not conclusive. On the one hand, Canadians born outside of Quebec seem to be catching up to those born in Quebec in terms of their propensity to start their conjugal lives through cohabitation. This indicates that cohabitation as a first union type is perhaps on its way to near universality among non-immigrant Canadians. However, this says little about whether these first cohabiting unions, or cohabiting unions in general, have replaced marriage or whether they are better conceived as a stage in the marriage process. The large differences age at first marriage however, do provide some evidence that marriage is still much more common among men and women born in other parts of Canada than it is among those born in Quebec.

This suggests that despite increases in the proportion of Canadians outside of Quebec forming their first unions outside of formal marriage, the role of cohabitation in two regions of Canada remain in different stages of Kiernan's (2001) typology. In Quebec, cohabitation is increasingly used as a marriage replacement, indicated by far fewer and later marriages, especially among those born in the 1970s and 80s who entered their early adult years in the 1990s and 2000s. Marriage is also being delayed in the rest of Canada, but is much more common than in Quebec, indicating that cohabitation is more likely to be part of the marriage process. However, the union types in which children are born and raised play a very important role in how Kiernan (2001) and others (e.g. Heuveline and Timberlake, 2004) theorize about the role of cohabitation in the union formation process. Unfortunately, my analyses could not take this factor into account and further research

examining union histories and fertility histories simultaneously will be able to provide more conclusive conclusions about the place of cohabitation in Quebec and the rest of Canada for more recent birth cohorts.

The final contribution this chapter makes is an examination of first partnership behaviours by educational attainment to assess the utility of applying Oppenheimer's (1988; 2003) theory of marriage and marriage timing to recent the union formation patterns of recent Canadian birth cohorts. The results show that differences in the choice of type of first union by education depend largely on gender.

For men across all cohorts, higher education is associated with a higher propensity to marry rather than cohabit. Educational differences in first union choice among men increased until the 1960s birth cohort who entered adulthood in the 1980s, after which differences by education have narrowed slightly, indicating a more universal acceptance of cohabitation as an appropriate first union. Educational differences in proportion of men ever-partnered however, have increased slightly over birth cohorts. Those with the least education are the least likely to form any type of union. Among more recent cohorts of men it appears that a low level of educational attainment prevents union formation. This is likely because of the falling position of the less educated in the new knowledge-based economy (Boothby & Drewes, 2006), which makes these men less attractive partners.

Educational differences in choice of first partnership type are less consistent over cohorts of Canadian women. In general, there is a negative association between women's education and the likelihood of marriage and positive association between women's

education and the likelihood of cohabitation in earlier cohorts, which reverses for women born after 1960 who came of age post-1980. In more recent cohorts of Canadian women, the more highly educated are more likely than any other educational group to enter into marriage directly. Moreover, in stark contrast to Canadian men, women from the most recent birth cohort with the least amount of education are the most likely to be ever partnered by age 35.

There have also been changes in age at first marriage and first partnership by education among the most recent cohorts and these patterns also differ by gender. Men's marriage timing by education shows a different pattern in earlier cohorts than in later cohorts. Higher education was associated with a higher typical age at first marriage for earlier cohorts of men, but higher education was associated with a younger typical age at first marriage for more recent cohorts. This reversal in the association between education and timing of first marriage is also evident across birth cohorts of Canadian women. Up until the 1980s birth cohort, women with higher education formed their first marriage later than women with less education, but this has reversed for women born after 1979. This is partly due to women with less education forming cohabiting relationships rather than marriages in early adulthood.

This reversal in the association between women's educational attainment and their family behaviours over time has also been found in past studies of union formation (e.g. Goldstein & Kenney, 2001), fertility (e.g. Kravdal & Rindfuss, 2008), and union dissolution (e.g. Harkonen & Dronkers, 2006). In a recent article, Goldscheider, Bernhardt and Lappegard (2015) argue that these reversals stem from the ongoing gender revolution, in which the structural relationships between men and women are

transformed. They posit that the gender revolution is comprised of two separate stages, the first of which involved women entering the public sphere of paid work, and the second of which involves men entering the private sphere of unpaid care work.

In the first half of the gender revolution, the dramatic increase in women's labour force participation weakened the family, evidenced by delayed and forgone partnering and fertility, and increased union instability. The family was weakened in large part because women took on roles in the public sphere, with little relief from their roles and responsibilities in the private sphere, which required compromises to their family life including marrying later, and delaying and reducing their fertility. Moreover, when women's labour market participation was peripheral, women who intended to maintain their employment after marriage were less desirable partners as most men preferred partners who would take responsibility for all of the domestic tasks.

In the second half of the gender revolution, which they argue is currently ongoing, the family is strengthened – unions are formed earlier, are more stable, and produce more children, because men are increasingly participating in the private sphere, especially in childcare. More highly educated women with stable employment are now much more desirable marriage partners than they were during the first stage of the gender revolution because of the contributions they make to the household economy, which increasingly requires two incomes. In Goldscheider et al.'s (2015) review, they find that younger, and more highly educated men and women have more egalitarian attitudes and that more highly educated men are more likely to contribute to the private sphere. This continuing gender revolution is one possible explanation for why the relationship between education and union formation patterns have reversed across the cohorts examined in this study.

The association between educational attainment and age at first partnering however, does not differ by gender and the relationship is remarkably stable across birth cohorts. Among both men and women, and in all birth cohorts, educational attainment is positively related to age at first union. For example, women with a high school diploma or less tend to partner between the ages of 20 and 22, regardless of birth cohort, and women in all birth cohorts with a university degree tend to partner four years later, between ages 24 and 26.

What do these results mean for the utility of applying existing theories of marriage and marriage timing to cohabitation and to recent Canadian cohorts? Becker's (1973;1974) specialization and trading model appears to be useful in explaining the association between men and women's education and their propensity to marry in earlier Canadian cohorts. I find that more highly educated women were less likely to marry than the less educated, and that more highly educated men were more likely to marry than the less educated in early Canadian birth cohorts. Thus, in earlier cohorts, it appears that men with high earnings potential and women with low earnings potential who had much to gain from marriage were more likely to enter into marriage.

Oppenheimer's (1988; 2003) theory that increases in women's economic independence have delayed the assortative mating process appears to be well supported for cohorts of Canadian men and women born before 1960 who reached adulthood in the decades preceding the 1980s. There is a clear, positive educational gradient in age at first marriage among these cohorts indicating that time spent in formal education and establishing a career delay marriage among the highly educated. However, this theory loses support in more recent Canadian cohorts born since 1970 who have come of age in

the 1990s and later, in which the most highly educated men and women are among the youngest of all educational groups when they transition into their first marriage.

Does this mean that Oppenheimer's theory of marriage timing has lost its utility to explain the partnership timing of recent cohorts of Canadians? To the contrary, Oppenheimer's theory remains incredibly useful when applied to first unions of any type rather than to first marriages in particular. The positive association between educational attainment and age at first marriage expected from Oppenheimer's hypothesis is in fact found much more strongly and consistently for age at first union and this relationship endures across all cohorts. This means that longer periods education and career development may in fact delay the assortative mating process of recent cohorts of Canadians, but that the goal of the assortative mating process is union formation in general rather than marriage *per se*. When marriage was the near universal form of first union, calling Oppenheimer's hypothesis a theory of marriage timing made sense, but I suggest that this may be a misnomer. Now that cohabitation has become a much more common way to form a first union among recent birth cohorts, a theory of union timing may be much more appropriate.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that the analyses in this chapter provide a definitive test of the applicability of Oppenheimer's theory of marriage timing to recent cohorts of Canadians' partnering behaviours. Future research should strive to incorporate other elements of career maturity, such as timing of school completion, work histories, earnings, and measures of work precariousness in order to more fully test the career entry theory of first union timing. My results using educational attainment as a reasonable

proxy for long-term economic outcomes suggests that this future work could be very interesting and fruitful.

This study has many advantages including the use of the most recent available Canadian data on union formation and the inclusion of a wide range of birth cohorts of Canadians born between 1930 and 1989. However, it is not without its limitations. One limitation is that it excludes other determinants of type of first union choice and timing of first union that have been shown to be important in past research including religiosity, the birth and presence of children, income, work status, and measures of family social class (e.g. Eggebeen & Dew, 2009; Kerr et al., 2006; Rao, 1990). It was my intention to document changes in the partnering behaviours of recent cohorts of Canadian rather than to explore specific factors that explain these changes but future research should examine these explanations in greater depth. The 2011 GSS includes retrospective information about fertility and work histories so future work could include these measures to further the results of this study. Unfortunately, these data do not include time varying measures of income, so a different data source is necessary to directly examine hypotheses about association between delayed or foregone marriage and income.

A second limitation is the reliance on retrospective data on union histories. As with all retrospective data, these data are subject to recall and mortality biases (Hassan, 2005). Recall bias is likely less of a problem when studying significant life course events, such as marriage and cohabitation that this chapter addressed, than it may be for more mundane or more frequently occurring events (Freedman et al., 1988). The mortality bias introduced by the data is likely more serious for the earlier birth cohorts under examination. Respondents born in the 1930s and 40s were between 62 and 81 years old at

the time of the survey, and only individuals who survived to this age could be sampled. The median age at first marriage for these birth cohorts found in this study correspond closely with past studies of these cohorts (e.g. Pollard & Wu, 1998; Rao, 1990; Ravanera & Rajulton, 2002), so it appears that the mortality bias is not a large concern.

Despite its limitations this chapter contributes to our understanding of the first partnering behaviours of recent cohorts of Canadians. The widespread changes in union formation that have occurred in Canada over the last 50 years are continuing among the newest generation of Canadians to come of age. Cohabitation is increasingly becoming the most common way to form a first union, and marriage is being delayed even longer and is increasingly foregone, especially among young men born in Quebec. Yet, the more things change the more they seem to stay the same. The proportion of Canadians that have formed any type of union by age 35 has not declined along with the decline in marriage, and typical age at first union have stayed remarkably stable across cohorts of Canadians born between 1930 and 1989. These changes in the types of unions that young Canadians are forming may have further implications. For instance, if cohabiting relationships continue to be less stable than marriages (Bumpass & Lu, 2000), and if unions formed at younger ages are more likely to dissolve, we can expect that more recent cohorts of Canadians will experience more turbulent partnership trajectories than past generations. This chapter serves as the foundation for future studies on the explanations and consequences of the partnership behaviours of young Canadians born after 1970s.

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Chapter 3

3 With This Key I Thee Wed? Change and stability in the outcomes of first premarital cohabitations and risk factors across cohorts

3.1 Introduction

The institution of the family has undergone significant changes in Canada and other Western countries over the last century. The type of first unions that Canadians form and the age at which they form them are two ways in which family behaviours have changed. Marriage has been delayed and increasingly forgone, and nonmarital cohabitation has increasingly become an accepted and normalized part of the transition to partnership (Bumpass, 1990; Settersten & Ray, 2010). Nonmarital cohabitation has become the most common way to form a first union in Canada (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004) and women's median age at first marriage has increased from around 21 in 1961 to 27 in 2002 (Kerr, Moyser & Beaujot, 2006) but research suggests that cohabiting union formation has offset increases in median age at first partnering (Manning, Brown & Payne, 2014). Indeed, in the previous chapter I show that Canadians' median age at first union has only increased by approximately two years across a 60-year period when both marriage and cohabitation are considered as possible types of first unions. Recent cohorts of Canadians continue to form committed coresidential partnerships in their early- to mid-20s despite delaying marriage until their late-20s and early-30s.

Despite the increased prevalence of cohabitation, as either a first or subsequent union, these unions have been found to be quite unstable and short-lived compared to marriages

(Bumpass & Sweet, 1989; Brown, 2000; Kerr et al., 2006; Smock, 2000). American studies have shown that over time, fewer cohabiting unions are transitioning to marriage (Bumpass & Lu, 2000), and more Americans are forming multiple, successive cohabiting unions (Lichter, Turner & Sassler, 2010). A body of research investigates the factors that affect the likelihood that a cohabiting union dissolve, or conversely transitions into legal marriage. Some of these factors include age at start of the union (e.g. Guzzo, 2014; Liefbroer & Dourleijn, 2006; Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995), education of the partners (e.g. Guzzo, 2014; Kulik, 2005; Steele, Kallis & Joshi, 2006), and the structure of the partners' family of origin as a child (Duvander, 1999; Kulik, 2005; Lichter, Qian & Mellott, 2006). This body of work provides insights into why some cohabiting unions are more stable than others, but as others have noted, cohabitation is somewhat of a moving target (Coontz, 2000; Smock, 2000) because its meaning and characteristics have changed dramatically over just a few decades (Heuveline & Timberlake, 2004; Kiernan, 2001). As Raley (2000) notes, "what we know about intimate sexual unions can quickly become outdated" (pg. 36).

Cohabitation has played a very different role in the partnership process at different times and in different places. Kiernan (2001) and Heuveline and Timberlake (2004) have developed typologies of the role and meaning that cohabitation has in the partnership process that range from cohabitation being used as a marginal form of partnership, to cohabitation as a stage or step in the marriage process, to cohabitation as an alternative to marriage. Applying these formulations, Le Bourdais and Lapierre-Adamcyk (2004) argued that over time, cohabitation has developed from being a marginal phenomenon in all parts of Canada to being an alternative to marriage in the province of Quebec, and a

prelude to marriage in other parts of Canada. As the role of cohabitation in the partnership trajectories of Canadians has changed, the outcomes of these unions, whether they dissolve or transition into legal marriage, have also changed (e.g. Guzzo 2014; Kulik, 2005; Lichter & Qian, 2008).

Cohabiting unions formed in different historical time periods have had different likelihoods of both marriage and separation. For instance, Bumpass and Lu (1999) found that between 1987 and 1995, a larger proportion of cohabiting couples were dissolving their unions and fewer were entering into marriage compared to cohabiting unions formed before this period. More recent research in the U.S. has found that this trend towards decreased risk of transitioning to marriage has continued. In 1995, 58 percent of couples in first cohabiting union transitioned into marriage by their third anniversary (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002) and in 2002 this decreased to 51 percent (Goodwin, Mosher & Chandra, 2010). The most recent estimates are provided by Copen, Daniels and Mosher (2013), who draw on the 2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth to show that only 40 percent of first premarital cohabiting unions in the U.S. transition into marriage.

Past research has established that the likelihood that a cohabiting union end through separation or that it transitions to legal marriage has changed over time. Past research has also demonstrated that there is variation in cohabitation outcomes by some key sociodemographic factors such as education, age at union start, province of birth, and family structure during childhood. However, to the best of my knowledge, there have been no past studies examining changes in the importance of risk factors on the outcomes of cohabiting unions over time. As the outcomes of premarital cohabiting unions have

changed over time, assuming that the determinants of these outcomes have remained constant is to assume that changes in the role and meaning of cohabitation have occurred uniformly for all cohabiting unions. This is unlikely to be true for many of the determinants of cohabiting union outcomes. For instance, partnering behaviour in Quebec has diverged from partnering behaviour in the rest of Canada since the 1960s; the Quebecois are particularly and increasingly likely to use cohabiting unions as a long-term alternative to legal marriage (e.g. Kerr et al., 2006; Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004). It is likely, therefore, that region has become a more important determinant of the outcomes of cohabiting unions over time as the role of cohabitation has changed more dramatically for Canadians born in Quebec than Canadians from other regions.

It is important to understand how first premarital cohabitations are ending for two reasons. First, examining the outcomes of first cohabiting unions among the never-married and the factors associated with the likelihood of these outcomes is one way to explore the role and meaning of cohabitation in the partnership process. If most first cohabiting unions transition into marriage it would mean that most Canadians are using cohabitation as a step in the marriage process. However, if most first premarital cohabiting unions end through separation, these unions might better described as an alternative to being single or as a stage in the dating process. Finally, if many cohabiting unions persist without either transitioning to marriage or dissolving, it would be an indication that Canadians are using long-term, committed cohabitation as an alternative to marriage. Examining how the outcomes of first cohabiting unions have changed across cohabitation cohorts also offers a way to explore the ways that the meaning and role of cohabitation has changed over time.

Second, if cohabiting unions are becoming more prone to dissolution over time, then it is an indication that early partnership trajectories are becoming more turbulent as young adults can expect to dissolve their first union and form one or more successive unions resulting in an increased number of unions formed in early adulthood. Experiences of premarital cohabitation are associated with greater marital instability (Amato, 2010; Lillard, Brien & Waite, 1995), although there is some contradictory evidence, especially among more recent cohorts (e.g. Manning & Cohen, 2012; Tach & Halpern-Meekin, 2009; Teachman, 2003). If first premarital cohabiting unions are becoming more prone to dissolution, then this may have implications for the likelihood of later divorce among previous cohabiters. More turbulent union trajectories in early adulthood may also result in worse outcomes for any children that are born into these unions since research has shown that children's experience of union transitions is detrimental (e.g. Amato, 2003; Fomby & Cherlin, 2007; Osborne & McLanahan, 2007).

In this chapter I examine how the risks that a first premarital cohabiting union ends in separation or transitions into legal marriage have changed over time in Canada, from first premarital cohabiting unions formed in 1947 to the most recent cohabiting unions formed between 2000 and 2010. I also examine five sociodemographic variables that may be associated with cohabitation outcomes, and how the associations between these variables and cohabitation outcomes have changed across cohabitation cohorts.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 Review of Past Research on Risks Factors

A large body of research has been devoted to examining the factors that are associated with entry to marriage (e.g. Manning et al., 2014; Manning, 1993; Oppenheimer et al., 1997; Turcotte & Goldschider, 1998), entry into cohabitation (e.g. Brown, 2000; Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004;), and marital dissolution (e.g. Jalovaara 2003; Lillard & Waite, 1993; Teachman 2002). There is also a growing literature on the factors associated with outcomes of cohabiting unions including separation and the transition to marriage in the U.S. (Brown, 2000; Guzzo, 2014; Lichter, Qian & Mellott, 2006; Manning & Smock, 2002; Smock, Manning & Porter, 2005), in Europe (Duvander, 1999; Kulik, 2005; Maenpaa & Jalovaara, 2013) and in Canada (Wu, 1995; Wu & Pollard, 2000; Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995). In this section I review past research on the five correlates of union dissolution and the transition to legal marriage that I consider in this chapter: gender, age at start of union, region of birth, education, and family structure at age 15. Of course, the covariates reviewed here and examined in this chapter are not the only determinants of the outcomes of first premarital cohabiting unions. Other important correlates that are beyond the scope of this chapter include the presence and birth of children (e.g. Guzzo & Hayford, 2010; Guzzo, 2014a; Manning, 2004; Wu & Musick, 2008; Wu, 1995), employment and economic circumstances (e.g. Bohnert, 2011; Duvander, 1999; Lichter et al., 2006; Manning & Smock, 2002; Smock et al., 2005; Wu & Pollard, 2000), and relationship quality and marital intentions (e.g. Brown, 2000; Guzzo, 2009; Guzzo, 2014).

Age at union start has been repeatedly shown to be associated with marital and cohabiting union dissolution (e.g. Amato, 1996; Guzzo, 2014; Liefbroer & Dourleijn, 2006). Individuals who form unions at younger ages are more likely to separate from their partners. Researchers have argued that this is because younger people have engaged in a shorter partner search before forming a union, which may result in a relatively poor match (Liefbroer & Dourleijn, 2006; Lyngstad & Jalovaara, 2010; Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995). Some also argue that those who partnered at younger ages may also be more prone to separation because they have a larger pool of potential new partners after a separation than their older peers (Lyngstad & Jalovaara, 2010). Age at union start may have a stronger association with dissolution for cohabiting unions than for legal marriages if younger people are using cohabitation as a less formal union, or as an alternative to being single. Guzzo (2014) argues that people in their early 20s are typically not considering marriage, but may choose to live with their romantic partners for economic reasons or for convenience. Older individuals on the other hand, are more likely to use cohabitation as a trial period before transitioning to legal marriage.

Educational attainment has also been shown to be negatively associated with the likelihood of divorce in American, Nordic, and British studies (Amato, 2010; Teachman, 2002; Lyngstad, 2004). This is argued to be because higher education is associated with improved social and cognitive skills, and more economic resources that increase the stability of unions (Amato, 1996). Some studies have shown that the association between education and union dissolution has become more negative over time (Harkonen & Dronkers, 2006; Martin & Bumpass, 1989) and others have shown that the strength of the relationship has remained stable over time (Teachman, 2002). Educational attainment is

also associated with the likelihood of marriage, although the relationship has reversed over time. For Canadian men born before 1951, higher education was associated with a higher likelihood of marriage, and for women in this cohort, higher education was associated with a lower likelihood of marriage. The relationships reversed in subsequent cohorts and largely lost significance. For men born between 1961 and 1970, higher education was associated with decreased chances of marriage, and for women, higher education was associated with a higher likelihood of marriage (Turcotte & Goldschider, 1998). Guzzo's (2014) study of the outcomes of cohabiting unions in the U.S. also shows that individuals with less education have a higher likelihood of separating from their partner and the more highly educated have a higher likelihood of transitioning into legal marriage.

Parental divorce and experiences and family instability during childhood are also associated with an increased likelihood of marital dissolution (Amato, 1995; Bumpass, Martin & Sweet, 1991; Korbin & Waite, 1984). This association appears to be due to differences in the socialization process experienced by individuals who experienced parental divorce or who lived with single parents (Amato, 1996; Teachman, 2003). Parental divorce is also argued to influence the likelihood of offspring divorce through its detrimental impact on their socioeconomic outcomes, their attitudes towards divorce and the permanency of marriage, and the development of problematic interpersonal behaviour (Levinger, 1976). Individuals who experienced parental divorce are more likely to develop problematic interpersonal traits such as a lack of trust, difficulty communicating, or jealousy due to a lack of exposure to a happy, successful, and healthy parental marital relationship (Amato, 1996). Adult children of divorce are also more likely to cohabit

before marriage and tend to marry at younger ages, in some cases because of conflicts with stepparents or because of economic disadvantage (Amato, 1996). Experiences of family instability growing up may also lead individuals to use cohabitation as an alternative to marriage and decrease the risk that they enter into legal marriage with their cohabiting partner if they are disillusioned with the institution of marriage and hesitant because of the possibility of divorce.

The partnership behaviours in Quebec and in the rest of Canada differ greatly. Marriage rates and prevalence are lower, and the likelihood of divorce are higher in Quebec than in the rest of Canada (Le Bourdias & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004; Pollard & Wu, 1988). Cohabitation as a first union and overall is also more prevalent and is more likely to be used as an alternative to marriage in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada (Hamplova, Le Bourdias & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2014; Kerr et al., 2006; Le Bourdais & Lapierre Adamcyk, 2004). Past research has shown that cohabiting unions in Quebec are less likely to transition into legal marriage than cohabiting unions in other Canadian provinces and that they typically last longer than similar unions in other parts of Canada (Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1996; Turcotte & Belanger, 1997; Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995). Most importantly, past research finds that the differences in the partnering behaviours described above between Quebec and the rest of Canada have increased over time (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004; Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1996).

Most of the research on the outcomes of cohabiting unions reviewed in this section has focused on cohabiting unions in general, not first premarital cohabiting unions specifically. One notable exception is the study conducted by Wu and Balakrishnan (1995), which examined the competing risks of dissolution and transition to marriage

among first premarital cohabiting unions in Canada. They find that women are significantly more likely than men to marry their first premarital cohabiting partner, and that men are significantly more likely than women to dissolve their first premarital cohabiting union. They also find that beginning a cohabiting union at older ages is associated with a decreased likelihood of both separating from the cohabiting partner, and transitioning to marriage (Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995). Cohabiting unions in Quebec were found to be more stable in this study, both in terms of having a lower likelihood of dissolution, but also a lower likelihood of transitioning into legal marriage (Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995). This study included first premarital cohabitations formed before 1990 and found that the year of cohabitation formation was a strong predictor of the outcome of the union. More recent cohabiting unions had a higher likelihood of separation but differences in the likelihood of legal marriage across cohabitation cohorts were less pronounced.

3.2.2 Changing Importance of Factors over Time

Studies such as the one conducted by Wu and Balakrishnan (1995) on the outcomes of first premarital cohabiting unions provide insights into the factors that are associated with these cohabitation outcomes; however, they do not address whether these factors are gaining or losing importance as predictors of cohabitation outcomes over time. To do this, it is not enough to control for historical time because this assumes that historical changes in the likelihood of marriage and separation affect all cohabitations equally and that group differences in cohabitation outcomes have remained constant over time. This assumes that the meaning of cohabitation and its place in the union formation process has changed uniformly across historical time among men and women, among different

educational groups, in Quebec and the rest of Canada, among people from different family backgrounds, and among those who start their unions at different ages.

This assumption is tenuous for a variety of reasons. First, consider how differences in cohabitation outcomes by age at union formation might be expected to vary across historical time. If for instance, younger Canadians are becoming more likely to use cohabitation as an alternative to being single rather than a trial marriage compared to younger Canadians in the past, then we could expect that age differences in the likelihood of separation and marriage from these union would become greater over time. Alternatively, if Canadians who form their first premarital cohabiting union at relatively older ages are becoming less likely to use these unions as a step in the marriage process and are more likely to use these unions as a way to live in a long-term marriage alternative than they were in the past, then we could expect that age differences in the outcomes of these unions would decrease.

Second, educational differences in the likelihood of different first premarital cohabitation outcomes also likely differ over time, as educational attainment has become an increasingly important determinant of many family behaviours (McLanahan, 2004). Employment stability and economic security are commonly perceived as prerequisites for marriage (Sassler, 2004), and a completed postsecondary education is increasingly required to achieve financial independence (Boothby and Drewes, 2006). The less educated may be less likely to transition into marriage from their first cohabiting union in more recent cohorts than in past cohorts due to the increased financial barriers to marriage.

Experiences of parental divorce and living in a non-nuclear family may be becoming less important determinants of adult children's partnering behaviours? If parental divorce is becoming less economically detrimental for children's economic circumstances, then we may expect the impact of the structure of the family of origin on first premarital to decrease over time. However, this is not likely to be the case. Teachman (2003) finds a very consistent relationship between parental divorce and adult children's risk of divorce over historical time. Moreover, since most of the explanations for this intergenerational transmission of union dissolution focus on social-psychological factors, including the transmission of unhealthy relationship behaviours (Levinger, 1976), it is less likely that this the relationship between family structure and cohabitation outcomes would change over time.

Cohabitation trends have taken a very different trajectory in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004; Laplante, 2014), so differences in the likelihood of first premarital cohabitation outcomes between Quebec and the rest of Canada are very likely to depend on the historical period in which the union was formed. As marriage rates and prevalence have continued to decline in Quebec faster than in other parts of Canada, the likelihood of transitioning to marriage from a first cohabiting union have also likely decreased more rapidly.

Wu and Balakrishnan (1995) found that women are significantly more likely than men to marry their first premarital cohabiting partner, and that men are significantly more likely than women to dissolve their first premarital cohabiting union but have these gender differences have changed over time? In past cohorts of Canadians, when cohabitation was less prevalent, women may have been less likely to enter into these unions unless they

felt that there was a real possibility that the union would transition to marriage. This could be because there was more societal and parental pressure on women to conform to the ideals of the traditional family than there was on men in the post WWII era. As the normative expectations of women have become more like the expectations of men it is possible that gender differences in cohabiting union outcomes have diminished.

3.3 Contributions

This chapter makes two contributions to the literature on the partnering behaviours of Canadians in young adulthood. First, by examining the outcomes of the most recent first premarital unions, those formed since 2000, I contribute to our understanding of how the role and meaning of cohabitation has changed in Canada. I examine the likelihood of separation and the likelihood of transitioning to legal marriage for unions formed between 1947 and 2010 to determine if these first premarital unions have become more or less stable over time and whether they are more likely to serve as an alternative to marriage for more recent unions.

The second contribution of this chapter is to add to our understanding of how the role and meaning of cohabitation in the partnership process has changed over time for different social groups, including different educational groups, people born in different regions of Canada, men and women, younger and older first-time cohabiters, and people from different family structures. I do this by analyzing whether the correlates of union dissolution and the transition to legal marriage depend on the when in historical time the cohabiting union was formed. This approach allows me to determine if cohabitation the outcomes of these unions are changing across time universally for all Canadians or

whether some groups are becoming more or less likely to transition to marriage or dissolve their first cohabiting union over time.

3.4 Research Questions

In this chapter I address three research questions:

1. How has the likelihood of different transitions out of first cohabiting unions changed across historical time?
2. What factors are associated with the likelihood that a first cohabiting union ends in separation? What factors are associated with the likelihood that a first cohabiting union ends in marriage?
3. Are the associated factors stable across cohabitation cohorts or have they become more or less important determinants of first cohabitation outcome over time?

3.5 Data

I use the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS) to examine the risks of first cohabiting unions ending in marriage or separation and changes in the importance of these factors over time. The Canadian GSS is a cross-sectional survey conducted by Statistics Canada every year since 1985 with a specific thematic focus each year. The data for this study come from Cycle 25, the fifth and most recent GSS to focus on families. The GSS uses a stratified sample and is representative of non-institutionalized people aged 15 or older living in the 10 Canadian provinces. It was conducted by computer assisted telephone interviews between February and November 2011 and has a response rate of 65.8 percent. The 2011 GSS is ideal for this study because it includes detailed retrospective union histories for Canadians born between 1911 and 1996, which allows for an

examination of the outcomes of first cohabiting unions over many cohabitation cohorts. In the GSS, Anglophone respondents were asked if they are or had been in a “common-law relationship, even if for less than one year.” Then detailed information was collected on the date that each union was formed, and the date the union dissolved or the date of marriage if the union transitioned to marriage. Francophone respondents were asked the same sequence of questions regarding their “*unions libres*” rather than their common law unions. This measure captures the different legal definitions of these non-marital unions between Quebec, which uses the civil law tradition, and the rest of Canada, which uses the common law tradition (Beaujot, Du & Ravanera, 2013). I use the term cohabitation to encompass both common law unions formed outside of Quebec and *unions de libres* in Quebec.

The survey also provides information on many of the covariates found to be associated with union transitions out of cohabitation including year at start of the union, sex, age at union start, region of birth, educational attainment, structure of the family of origin, and religion. These data are the most recent available on Canadian families, allowing for examination of very recent cohabiting unions that have yet to be studied.

3.5.1 Sample

I restrict my analyses to respondents whose first union was a non-marital cohabiting union resulting in a subsample of 6,112 respondents from the original GSS sample of 22,435. I focus solely on these unions because the risks for marriage and separation likely differ depending on whether individuals are in their first or subsequent cohabitation, and on whether they are in a cohabiting union following the dissolution of a marriage. I limit

my analyses to respondents with valid data on age at the start of first cohabiting union, age at union dissolution (or current age if still in this union), and the type of union transition, which requires excluding 3.6 percent ($n=228$) of respondents. I also exclude those whose first cohabiting union ended through the death of their partner ($n=55$) because this outcome is too rare to analyze separately and the time of union dissolution through partner's death is not available in the data. I also exclude respondents who were born outside of Canada because all or part of their union histories may have occurred outside of Canada, which complicates the examination of changes in union formation in Canada. This results in a sample size of 5,490.

3.5.2 Measures

The outcome of the respondents' first non-marital cohabiting union is the focus of the analyses and is coded into three categories: (a) transitioned into legal marriage, (b) union dissolved, and (c) the first cohabiting union is still intact at the time of the survey. A measure for the cohabitation cohort, or the year the union began is included as the key explanatory variable. I group union start years into five cohorts: unions starting between 1947 and 1969, those starting in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and those starting between 2000 and 2010. Unions formed before 1970 are grouped together because sample sizes by decade before this time are too small because premarital cohabitation before first marriage was relatively uncommon.

I examine the association of multiple factors on the outcomes of first cohabiting unions. I include a measure for age at start of the first cohabiting union by grouping these ages into quartiles which range from 15 to 19, 20 to 23, 24 to 26, and 27 and older. I use quartiles

for two reasons. First, I do not expect there to be a linear relationship between age at start of union and the risks of each union outcome so a single continuous measure is not appropriate. I also do not want to make any assumptions about the functional form of these relationships so I prefer a piecewise specification of age. Second, including dummy variables for each age is far too cumbersome for the models and does not provide for a parsimonious interpretation. These categories also correspond nicely with typical categorizations of early, on time, and late union formation.

I include an indicator for gender of the respondent and for whether the respondent was born in Quebec or in another part of Canada. Educational attainment is coded as less than high school, high school, some postsecondary education (including a diploma from a two year community college, a trades or vocational certificate, and some undergraduate education), and a completed bachelor's degree or higher. The structure of the respondent's family of origin is coded as whether the respondent lived with two parents in the household up until age 15 or not.

3.6 Methods

I use discrete time multinomial logistic regression models to examine the risks of separation and marriage among first cohabiting unions and changes to these risks over time. Event history models are appropriate for these data because they account for right censoring, which occurs because some current cohabiting relationships may transition into marriage or dissolve after the date of the survey (Allison, 1984). I use discrete time event history techniques rather than continuous time because the most precise measurement of event times available in the data are tenths of years but many

respondents reported their age at the events of interest. This creates many tied survival times in the data. Treating these event data with many ties as continuous risks biasing the resulting regression coefficients (Kalbfleisch & Prentice, 1980; Scheike & Sun, 2007). I created a person-period data file in which the unit of analysis is tenths of years, which results in 256,656 person-period observations from 5,490 cohabiting unions. Cohabitors enter the risk set of union transition at the time of union formation and exit at the time of either (a) legal marriage, (b) union dissolution, or (c) survey date, whichever occurs first.

Unlike continuous time event history models, such as Cox-proportional hazards models, discrete time models require that the shape of the hazard (the duration dependence) be specified (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 2004; Jenkins, 2005). Rather than assume a theoretical shape of the hazard function I use a piecewise constant to model the duration dependence. I group the units of union duration into quartiles ranging from 0 to 1.3 years, 1.4 to 3.3 years, 3.4 years to 7.9 years, and 8 or longer using dummy variables. Within each category the hazard rate is assumed to be constant but is allowed to vary across these duration categories. This approach has the advantage of allowing the shape of the hazard function to be determined empirically without burdening the model with dummy variables for every unit of time. My piecewise approach is very similar to the one used by Kulik (2005) to model outcomes of cohabiting unions among Hungarian women.

3.7 Analytic Strategy

First, I examine the characteristics of respondents whose first union was a nonmarital cohabitation compared to those who entered directly into marriage. I document the proportion of respondents who began their conjugal life through marriage and the

proportion that formed cohabiting first unions across birth cohorts. I then examine sociodemographic differences between these two groups of respondents.

The rest of my analysis focuses solely on respondents whose first union was a nonmarital cohabitation. I chart the proportion of these respondents who end their first premarital cohabitation through union dissolution and through transition into legal marriage by year of cohabitation start. This descriptive analysis will show changes in whether these first cohabiting unions are ending and how they are ending.

Finally, I examine the how the likelihood of a first cohabiting union ending in separation and the likelihood of a first cohabiting union ending in marriage differs across historical time by estimating a bivariate discrete time multinomial logistic regression model. Next, I estimate a full additive model that includes some of the factors that have been shown in the literature to be associated with the risks of union dissolution and legal marriage including sex, age at start of union, region of birth, educational attainment, and whether the respondent grew up with two parents. Finally, I estimate a series of five models that include the full additive model from the previous analytical step plus an interaction term between each of the five risk factors and cohabitation cohort separately. These models test whether the risk factors for cohabiting union dissolution and transitioning to marriage have become more or less important over historical time. All analyses are weighted to be representative of the population and to account for the clustering of observations within respondents in the person-period data file.

3.8 Results

3.8.1 Descriptive and Bivariate Results

The proportion of respondents in each birth cohort who married or cohabited with their first partner, and the proportion who remained unpartnered at age 35 are shown in Table 3.1. Across birth cohorts marriage has become a less popular type of first union and cohabitation has become much more common. Among the earliest birth cohort of Canadians born in the 1930s who came of age in the 1950s, nearly 94 percent married their first partner and a near negligible 2 percent cohabited as their first union. Cohabiting as a first union became more common for Canadians born in the 1940s and 1950s (8.4 percent and 26.1 percent of first unions respectively), but marriage remained the modal way to start a first union for these birth cohorts (88.1 percent and 68.9 percent for the respective birth cohorts). By the 1960s birth cohort who came of age in the 1980s, roughly half of Canadians entered marriage directly before age 35, and nearly 43 percent chose to cohabit with their first partner. After this birth cohort, cohabitation became a more popular way to start conjugal life than direct marriage. Approximately 54 percent of Canadians born in the 1970s cohabited with their first partner compared to only 38 percent who entered directly into marriage. This trend towards forming cohabiting first unions rather than marital first unions has also continued for the most recent birth cohorts.

Table 3.1 First Union Type Across Birth Cohorts

Type of first union across birth cohorts	n=21,995		
	First Union Type		
	Marriage	Cohabitation	Unpartnered
	%	%	%
Birth Cohort			
1930-39	93.8	2.2	4.0
1940-49	88.1	8.4	3.5
1950-59	68.9	26.1	5.0
1960-69	51.1	42.8	6.2
1970-79	38.1	53.7	8.2
1980-89	15.2	42.8	42.0
1990-96	/	5.4	94.2
Overall	48.4	29.7	21.9

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Note: The unpartnered category includes respondents who had not formed a partnership by age 35 or at the time of the survey if the respondent was younger than 35.

Table 3.2 displays the characteristics of the respondents separately by type of first union they formed in order to compare the characteristics of those who directly married, who are not the focus of this chapter, and those who formed first cohabiting unions whose unions are analyzed. The characteristics of the sample who cohabited with their first partner who are used in the remainder of this chapter are found in the right pane of Table 3.2 and the characteristics of their counterparts who married directly are found in the left pane. Roughly 48 percent of the respondents entered directly into marriage and approximately 30 percent formed a cohabiting partnership as their first union. However the decline of marriage and the rise of cohabitation as a first union type over time is apparent when considering the distribution of year of union start. Of the respondents who married directly, nearly 40 percent married between 1947 and 1969 and less than 10

percent married in the first decade of the 2000s. Conversely, a very small proportion of the respondents who formed their first union through cohabitation did so before the 1970s (1.5 percent) but 36 percent did so between 2000 and 2010.

There is a more even gender split among the focal sample that cohabited as their first union than there is among those who directly entered marriage. Forty-nine percent of those who cohabited with their first partner are men and 51 percent are women whereas only 46.6 percent of those who directed married are men and 53.4 percent are women. It is also clear that Canadians who cohabited with their first partner tended to do so at younger ages than those who directly married their first partner. Only 9.7 percent of respondents who formed marriages as their first union did so before the age of 20 but nearly one quarter of those who formed cohabiting unions were partnered by this age. Regardless of type of first union, the modal age category for forming a first union was between 20 and 23 (40.3 and 37 percent of those who married directly and who cohabited with their first partner did so between these ages respectively).

Table 3.2 also shows that one third of the focal sample that formed first cohabiting unions was born in Quebec and the remaining two thirds were born in other Canadian provinces or territories. A larger proportion (74.6 percent) of the comparison sample who married their first partner were born outside of Quebec than the focal sample and a smaller proportion (25.4 percent) were born in Quebec compared to the cohabiting sample. The sample of Canadians who formed first cohabiting unions tend to be more highly educated than those who married directly. Among the focal sample 76.3 percent held some sort of postsecondary credential compared to 63.2 percent of the direct marriage sample. Finally, a larger proportion of Canadians in the focal sample grew up outside of a traditional

nuclear family form than those who entered into marriage directly (22.3 percent compared to 12.1 percent respectively).

Much of the difference between the focal sample of Canadians who formed first cohabiting unions and the comparison sample of Canadians who formed direct marriages is likely due to changes in partnership behaviour over time. Over time cohabitation has become a more common way to start conjugal life, and over the same span of time levels of educational attainment have increased and family structures have changed. It is not my intention in this chapter to explore the compositional changes of these two samples over time. Rather, my intention is to exclusively examine the outcomes of nonmarital cohabiting first unions and how these outcomes have changed over time and I present the characteristics of these two groups of people in order to provide context for the ways in which my focal sample may differ from Canadians who chose to enter into marriage directly.

Table 3.2 Sample Characteristics

Descriptive Statistics	n=16,894	
	Marriage	Cohabitation
	%	%
Type of first union	48.5	29.7
Year of union start		
1947-69	37.5	1.5
1970-79	23.7	12.1
1980-89	18.5	21.6
1990-99	11.1	28.3
2000-10	9.3	36.4
Sex		
Male	46.6	49.0
Female	53.4	51.0
Age at union start		
< 20	9.7	24.0
20-23	40.3	37.0
24-26	24.8	20.3
27+	25.1	18.7
Region of Birth		
Can, outside Que.	74.6	64.6
Quebec	25.4	35.4
Education		
High School or less	36.8	23.7
More than High School	63.2	76.3
Family Structure until 15		
Lived with 2 parents	87.9	77.8
Did not	12.1	22.3

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Note: Type of first union does not add to 100 percent because 23.3 percent of the sample had not partnered at the time of the survey

Next, I examine the proportion of cohabitations that end in (a) separation, (b) marriage, or are (c) still intact at the time of the survey by cohabitation cohort by constructing a simple bivariate table that is displayed in Table 3.3. Across all cohabitation cohorts marriage is a more likely outcome than separation. Reading across the rows of Table 3.3 also reveals that proportion of first premarital cohabitations that end in separation is quite similar regardless of the year the union was formed and ranges from 30 to 39 percent. The proportion transitioning to marriage, however, has decreased quite dramatically from 60 percent of first premarital cohabiting unions formed before 1970, to around 46 percent of unions formed in the 1990s, and 31 percent of unions formed between 2000 and 2010. It is clear from this bivariate association that it is important to consider the year first premarital cohabitations are formed when considering how these unions are likely to end.

Table 3.3 Outcomes of First Cohabiting Unions by Year of Union Start

Outcomes of First Cohabiting Unions by Year of Union Start

	Year Cohabitation Began				
	1947-69 (%)	1970-79 (%)	1980-89 (%)	1990-99 (%)	2000-10 (%)
Separation	37.1	34.3	36.0	39.4	30.1
Marriage	60.1	60.6	55.0	46.5	31.6
Censored	2.8	5.1	9.0	14.1	38.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

I also examine how the *risks* of separation and marriage from first cohabiting unions have changed over cohabitation cohort while accounting for the right censoring in the data. Table 3.4 displays the relative risk ratios from a bivariate multinomial regression modeling the outcome of first cohabiting union by year of union start. I find that the risks of dissolving a first cohabiting union relative to continuing to cohabit have not changed

across historical time. Cohabiting relationships that began in 1947 up until 2010 are equally likely to end in separation. The risks of marriage among cohabitators in their first union however, have decreased over time. Cohabiting unions that began after 1989 are significantly less likely to transition to marriage than unions that began in earlier periods. This indicates that among more recent cohabitation cohorts, couples who remain together are less likely to marry and more likely to continue as a cohabiting couple.

Table 3.4 Risks of Separation and Marriage from First Cohabiting Union, Bivariate

Relative Risk Ratios from Bivariate Discrete-Time Multinomial
Logistic Regression Models Predicting First Cohabiting Union
Outcome across Cohabitation Cohorts

	Separate (vs. Cohab)	Marry (vs. Cohab)
Year of union start		
1947-69	0.98	0.91
1970-79	ref.	ref.
1980-89	0.92	0.79 **
1990-99	0.99	0.63 ***
2000-10	1.05	0.56 ***

p<0.05 * p<0.01 ** p<0.001 ***

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

3.8.2 Multivariate Results

I examine how a variety of factors affect the risk of first cohabiting unions dissolving the risk of these unions transitioning to legal marriage. Table 3.5 shows relative risks ratios from a multivariate multinomial regression including year of union start, sex, age of the respondent at the beginning of the union, whether the respondent was born in Quebec or in another part of Canada, education, and family structure up until age 15. The patterns of separation and marriage by year of union start are the same even when controlling for

other factors that affect the outcome of first cohabiting unions; the risks of separation have stayed constant and the risks of marriage have declined over time.

Table 3.5 Risks of Separation and Marriage from First Cohabiting Union, Multivariate

Relative Risk Ratios from Multivariate Discrete-Time Multinomial Logisitic Regression Model Predicting Outcome of First Cohabiting Union

	Separate (vs. Cohab)	Marry (vs. Cohab)
Year of union start		
1947-69	0.96	0.89
1970-79	ref.	ref.
1980-89	0.95	0.79 **
1990-99	1.04	0.60 ***
2000-10	1.17	0.53 ***
Sex		
Male	ref.	ref.
Female	0.91	1.24 ***
Age at union start		
< 20	1.41 ***	0.74 ***
20-23	ref.	ref.
24-26	0.71 ***	1.19 **
27+	0.58 ***	0.98
Region of Birth		
Can, outside Que.	ref.	ref.
Quebec	0.86 *	0.43 ***
Education		
High School or less	ref.	ref.
More than High School	1.11	1.30 ***
Family Structure until 15		
Lived with 2 parents	ref.	ref.
Did not	1.23 **	0.75 ***

p<0.05 * p<0.01 ** p<0.001 ***

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Table 3.5 also shows that females are significantly more likely to marry their first premarital cohabiting partner compared to men. How old the respondent was at the time of their first cohabiting union is also an important factor in whether the union dissolves or transitions to marriage. The older the respondent at the start of the union the less likely it is that the union ends by dissolution. Respondents who began their first cohabiting union between the ages of 24 and 26 are more likely to marry their partner rather than continue cohabiting but the relationship between age at start and the risk of marriage is not monotonic. Those who began their first cohabiting unions at age 27 or older are no more likely to marry their partners than those who started cohabiting between 20 and 23.

Cohabiting unions formed by respondents born in Quebec are slightly less likely than those formed by respondents born elsewhere in Canada to end in separation relative to remaining in the cohabiting relationship. The risks of marriage however, are much lower among those born in Quebec. This suggests that first cohabiting unions are equally stable across region of birth, but that among the Quebec-born these unions are more likely to continue as non-marital unions.

Educational attainment is also significantly related to the risks of marriage, but not related to the risks of separation, holding other variables in the model constant. Higher levels of education are associated with increased risk of transitioning into marriage from a first premarital cohabitation relative to continuing as a cohabiting union.

Respondents who grew up in household without two parents are significantly more likely to dissolve their first cohabiting union relative to continuing as cohabiting couple compared to those who had two parents in the home during their childhood. This group is

also much less likely to transition to marriage from their first cohabiting union relative to continuing their relationship as a non-marital union.

3.8.3 Changes in Risk Factors over Time

As the final step in the analysis I examine whether the factors that affect risks of marriage and separation from first premarital cohabitation have become more or less important over time. I do this by estimating five separate discrete-time multinomial logistic regression models. Each model includes additive terms for each the six factors included in the multivariate model, plus an interaction between one of these factors and year of cohabitation start. To illustrate the changing importance of each factor over time, I plot the relative log odds of (a) separation and (b) marriage at each time period for each category of the factor under consideration.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 display changes in the relative log odds of separation and marriage respectively, for men and women across cohabitation cohorts. There is a significant interaction ($p < 0.001$) between gender and the risk of separation and cohabitation cohort, and between sex and the risks of marriage. This means that the association between sex and the risks of dissolving a first premarital cohabitation and the risks of transitioning into marriage depend on the year in which the union was formed. Figure 3.1 shows that among cohabiting unions formed in the earliest time period, men were significantly more likely than women to end their unions through separation. The significant interaction in this model, however translates into a reduction in the sex-based difference in risks of separation across cohabitation cohorts. Similarly, Figure 3.2 shows that the importance of sex for the risks of marriage among first premarital cohabitation has also declined over

cohabitation cohorts. In past cohabitation cohorts, women were more likely to transition to marriage than men, but among the most recent cohabitation cohort, men and women experience the same log odds of marrying their first premarital cohabiting partner.

Figure 3.1 Relative Log Odds of Separation, by Sex, across Cohabitation Cohorts

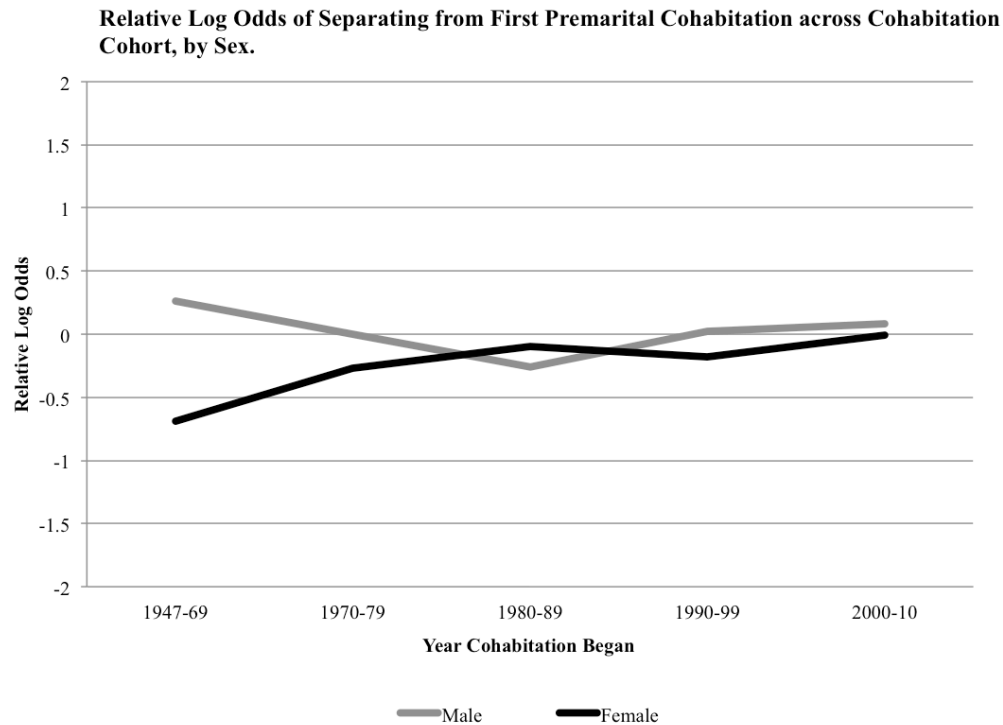
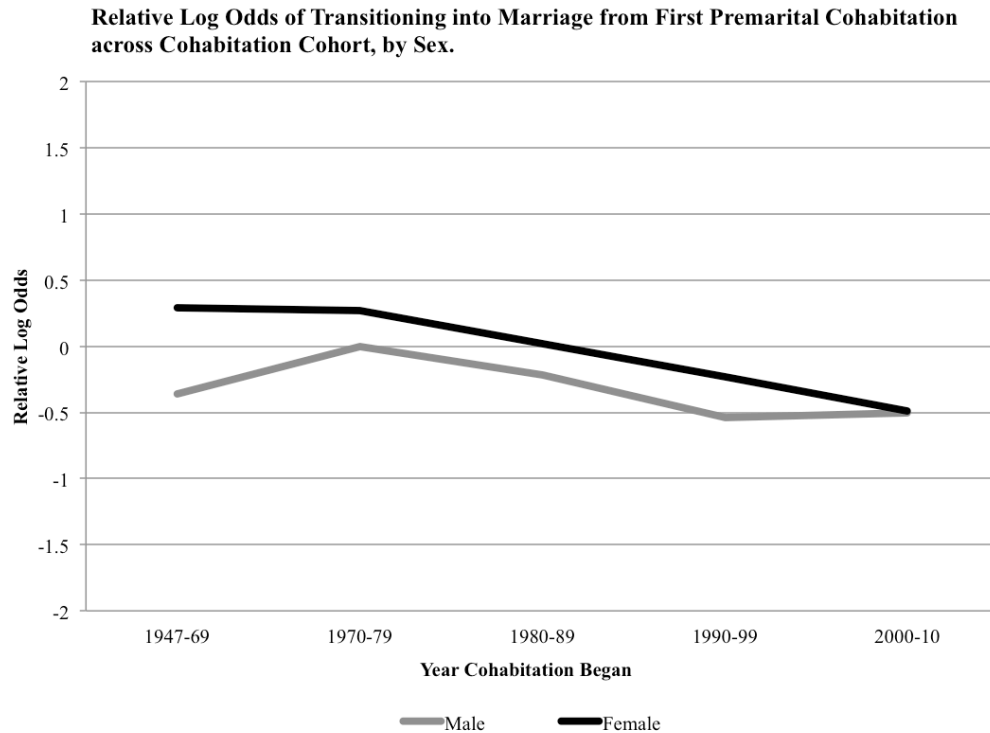


Figure 3.2 Relative Log Odds of Marriage, by Sex, across Cohabitation Cohorts

The next model includes an interaction between age at union formation and the decade the union began. Figure 3.3 displays relative log odds of separating across cohabitation cohorts by age at the start of the cohabiting union. There is not a significant interaction between age and year of cohabitation start meaning that the association between age at cohabitation formation and the risks of separation is constant across cohabitation cohorts, controlling for the other variables in the model. This is not true for the risks of marriage however as shown in Figure 3.4. The risks of marriage have generally declined across cohabitation cohorts among all age groups, but they have declined more dramatically among those who begin cohabiting before the age of 24. Age at union formation has, therefore, become a more important predictor of the transition to marriage from a first premarital cohabitating union over time.

Figure 3.3 Relative Log Odds of Separation, by Age at Union, across Cohabitation Cohorts

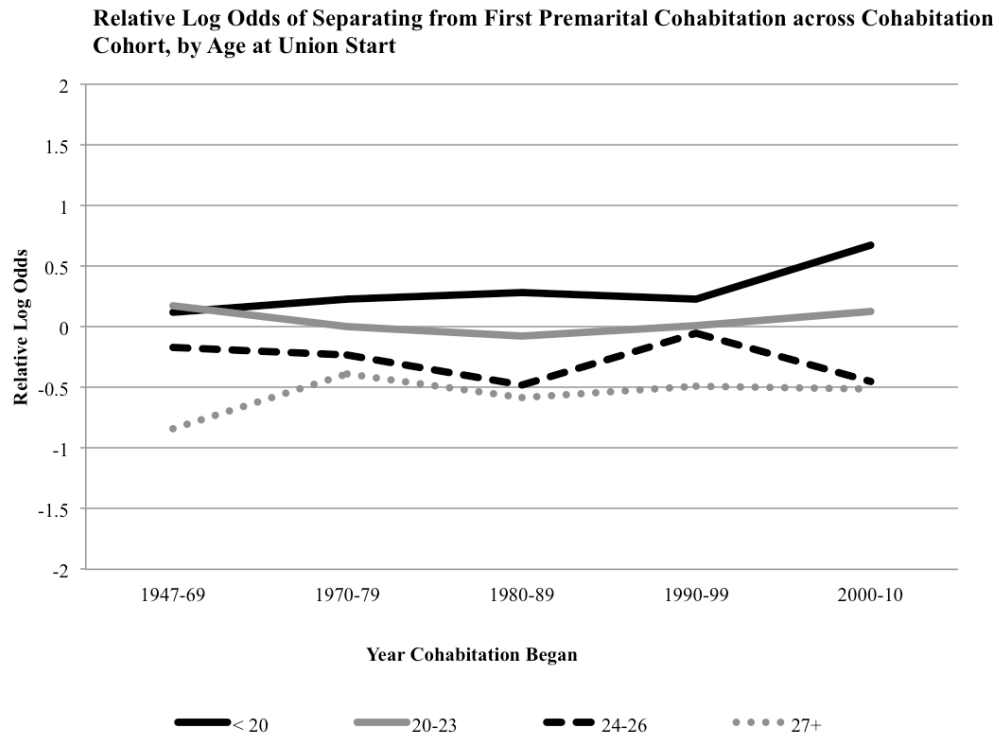
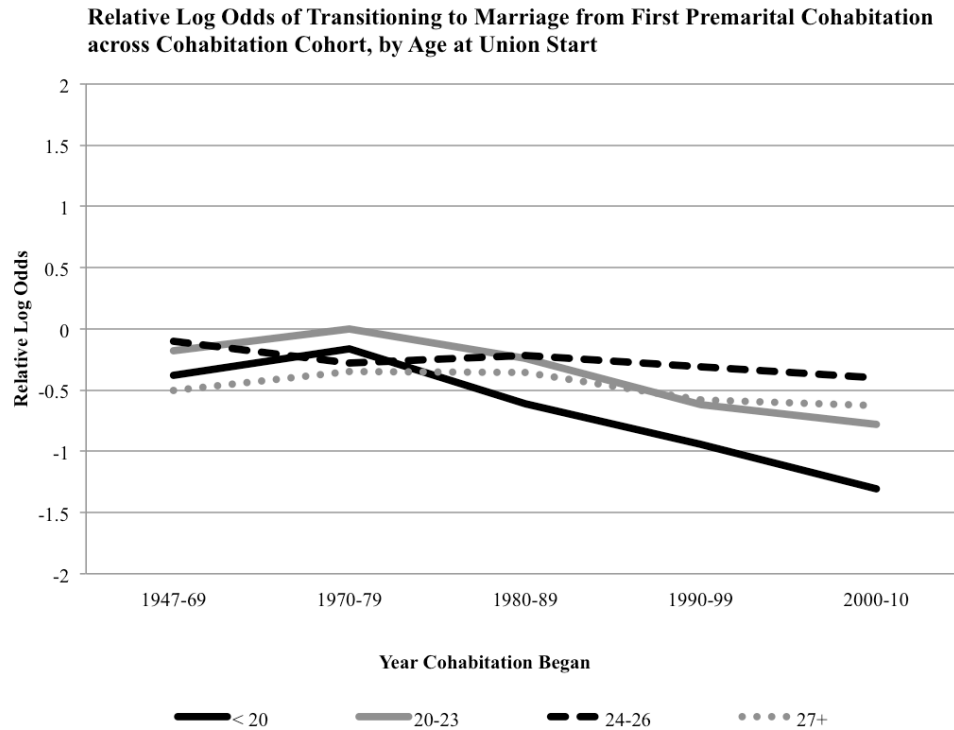


Figure 3.4 Relative Log Odds of Marriage, by Age at Union, across Cohabitation Cohorts



Figures 3.5 and 3.6 display the results of the next model, which includes an interaction between cohabitation cohort and place of birth in addition to additive terms for the other risk factors. As seen in Figure 3.5, people born in Quebec and people born in other Canadian provinces or territories have similar risks of separating from their first premarital cohabiting union, and this does not vary over time. A significant interaction between place of birth and cohabitation cohort on the risks of marriage, however, is very evident in Figure 3.6. The risks of marriage among those born outside of Quebec have declined slightly across year of cohabitation formation, while the risks of marriage among those born in Quebec have decreased dramatically over time. This strong and

significant interaction means that place of birth has become an increasingly important predictor of the risks of marriage across cohabitation cohorts.

Figure 3.5 Relative Log Odds of Separation, by Place of Birth, across Cohabitation Cohorts

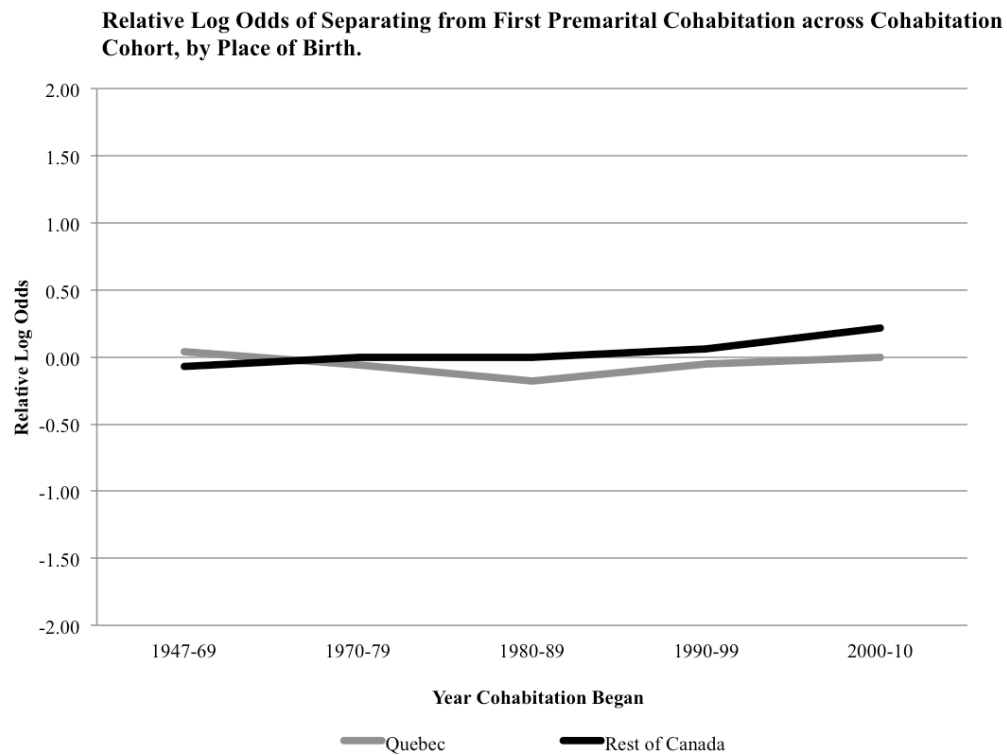
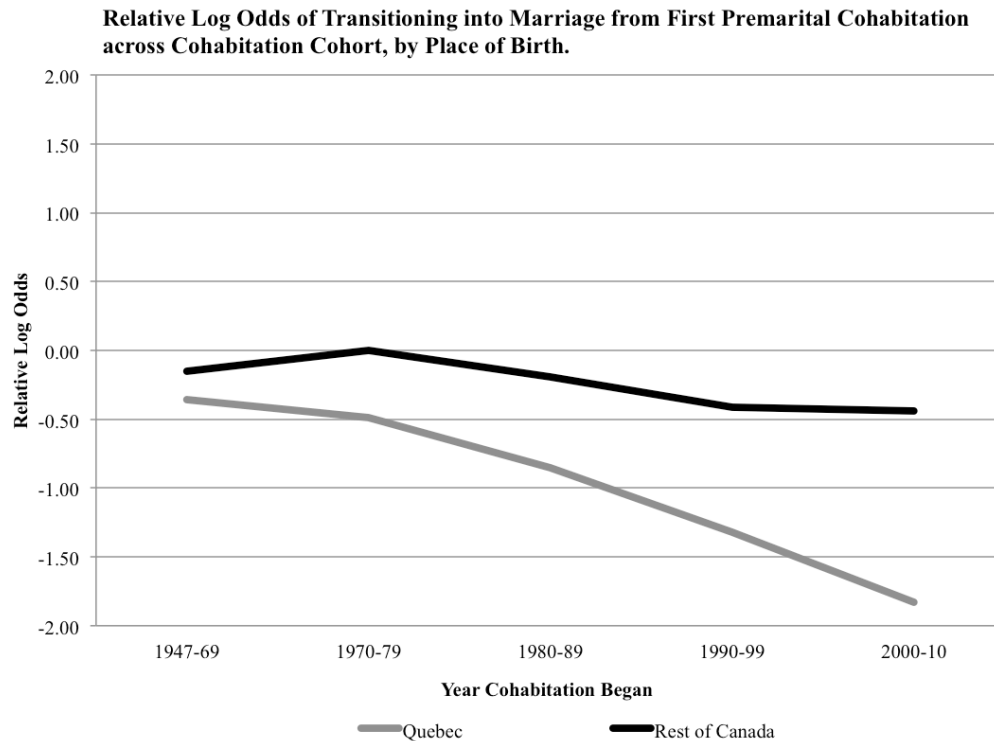


Figure 3.6 Relative Log Odds of Marriage, by Place of Birth, across Cohabitation Cohorts



The interaction between educational attainment and year of cohabitation start is included in the next model and the results are displayed in Figures 3.7 and 3.8. The risks of separation among those with any postsecondary education have stayed stable over time but the general trend among the less educated is towards higher risks of separation over cohabitation cohort as shown in Figure 3.7. In fact, the association between having less education and risks of separation depends so heavily on when the cohabiting union formed that there is a reversal in the direction of the relationship in the most recent period. The less educated have similar or lower risks of separation compared to the more highly educated for cohabitations formed before 2000, but have higher risks of separation in cohabiting unions formed after this time. There is also a significant interaction between

educational attainment and cohabitation cohort on risks of marriage. As with the other factors, the risks of transitioning to marriage from a first premarital cohabitation have generally declined for both educational groups. The risks of marriage, however, have declined more dramatically among the less educated than those with at least some postsecondary education. Educational attainment has become a more important predictor of separation and marriage in cohabiting unions formed more recently. First premarital cohabiting unions formed by the less educated in more recent years are less stable than those formed and are also less likely to transition to marriage.

Figure 3.7 Relative Log Odds of Separation, by Education, across Cohabitation Cohorts

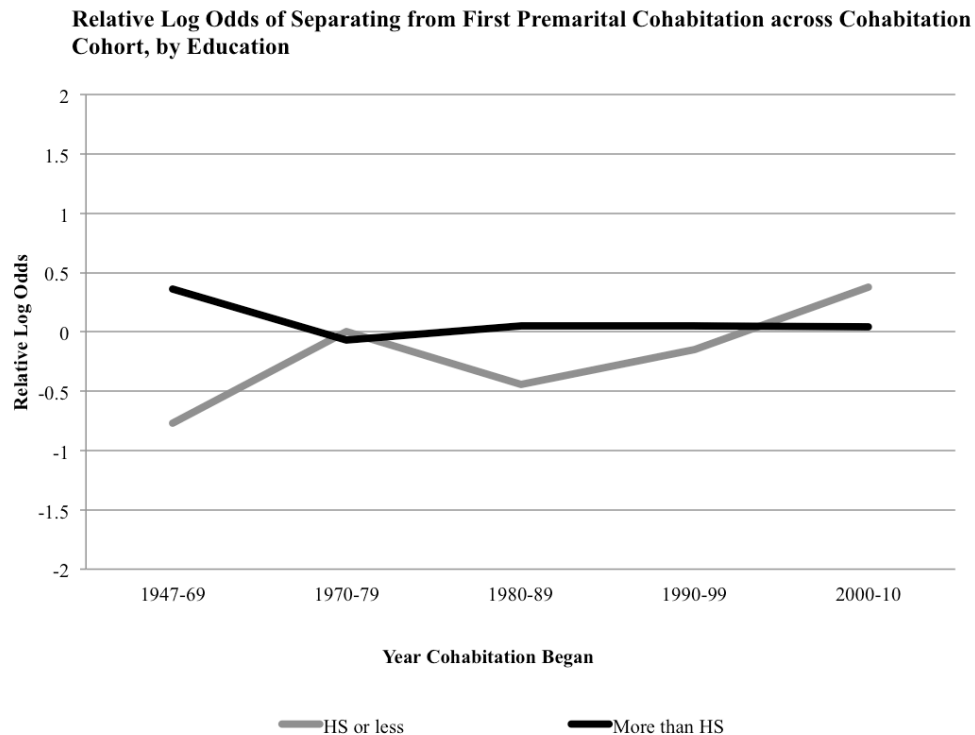
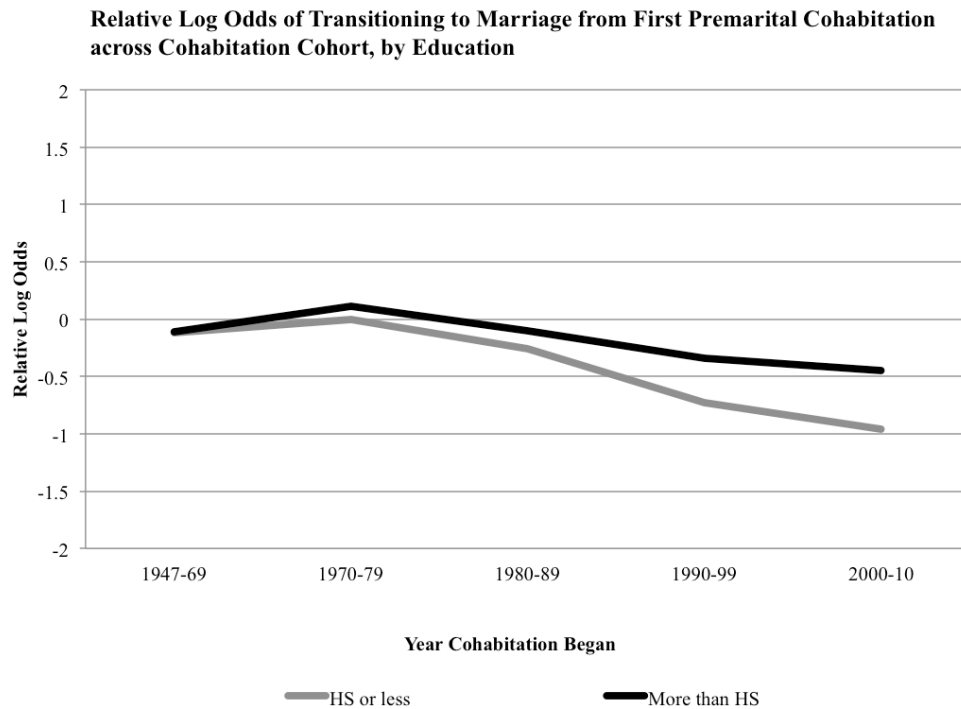


Figure 3.8 Relative Log Odds of Marriage, by Education, across Cohabitation Cohorts



The final factor I consider is the structure of the respondent's family of origin up to age 15. The results of the model that includes an interaction between origin family structure and cohabitation cohort can be found in Figures 3.9 and 3.10. Unlike the other risk factors included in this study, the association between family structure and the risks of separating from a first premarital cohabitation and the risks of transitioning into marriage does not vary significantly across cohabitation cohort as evidenced by the relatively parallel lines. Respondents who did not live with two parents until age 15 are slightly more likely to dissolve their first premarital cohabitation than those who lived with both parents, but this is the case regardless of when the cohabiting union was formed. Likewise, those who did not have two parents in their childhood home are less likely to

marry their first premarital cohabiting partner than those who had two parents, but the difference between the two groups is consistent over cohabitation cohort.

Figure 3.9 Relative Log Odds of Separation, by Family Structure, across Cohabitation Cohorts

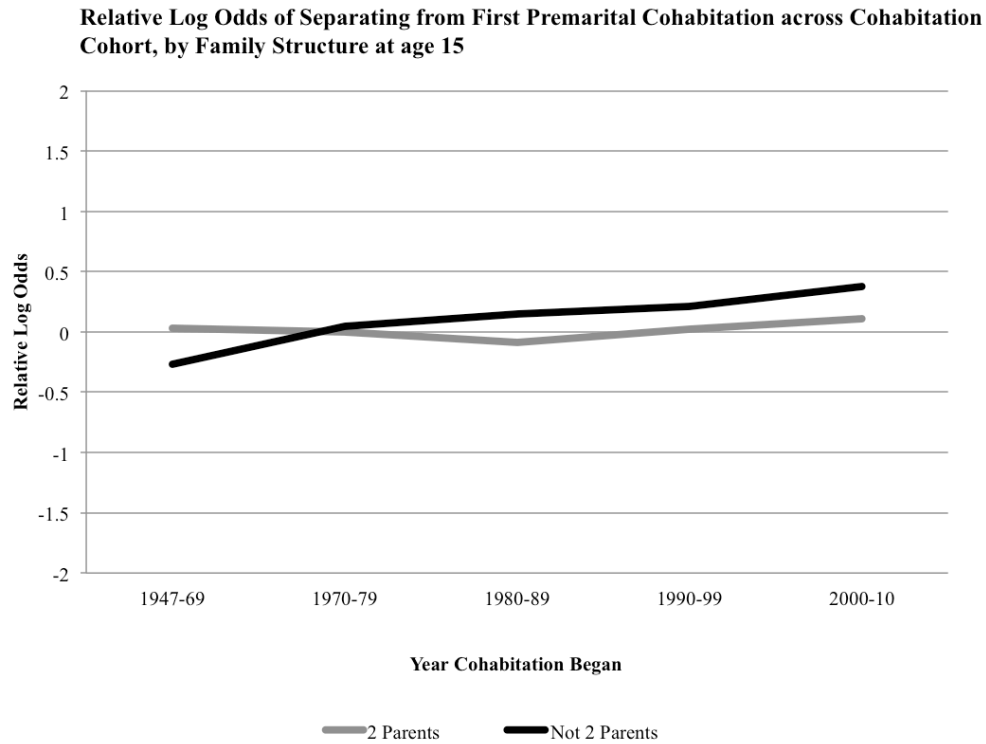
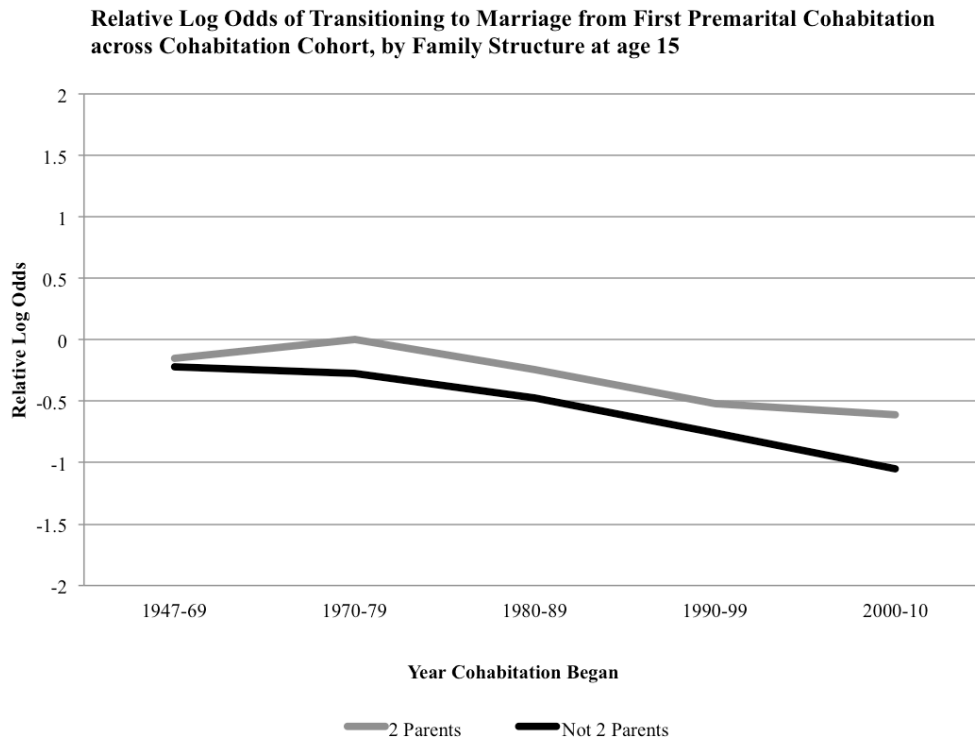


Figure 3.10 Relative Log Odds of Marriage, by Family Structure, across Cohabitation Cohorts



3.9 Discussion and Conclusion

Canadians are becoming increasingly likely to form their first conjugal partnerships through nonmarital cohabitation rather than legal marriage. What does this continued trend mean for the early partnering transitions of Canadians? Are Canadians becoming more likely to use these first unions as short-term alternatives to being single? Are Canadians using these first unions as a stepping-stone to legal marriage, or are these unions becoming alternatives to marriage? In this chapter, I examined Canadians who formed their first unions through cohabitation, which represents roughly 30 percent of the population, and analyzed the likelihood that these first premarital cohabiting unions end

in dissolution, the likelihood that they end by transitioning to legal marriage, and how these risks have changed across cohabitation cohorts.

I found that the risks of separating from first unions formed through cohabitation have not changed across historical time, but that cohabitations formed more recently are significantly less likely to transition to legal marriage relative to remaining as a cohabiting union. This holds true whether examining only the bivariate relationship between year of cohabitation start and union outcome, and when controlling for other factors that are associated with union outcome. First unions that are formed through cohabitation are therefore not becoming less stable over historical time and there is little evidence that Canadians forming their first cohabiting unions more recently are less committed to their partners than Canadians who formed similar unions in the past. There is some evidence, however, that these more recent unions are more likely to remain as nonmarital cohabiting unions rather than transition to marriage. Some caution, however, must be exercised in making comparisons to cohabitations formed in the earliest period because of the relative rarity of this union type in the 1970s and earlier. Only 1.5 percent of my sample formed their first cohabiting union before 1970 and approximately 12 percent formed their first union in the 1970s. These unions represent a small proportion of the sample compared to 22 percent, 28 percent, and 36 percent of the sample that began their first cohabiting union in the 1980s, 1990s, and first decade of 2000 respectively.

Are there group differences in the outcomes of first premarital cohabiting unions in Canada and what does this mean for the ways in which different social groups are using cohabitation in their early partnership transitions? To answer this question I tested

whether five factors: (1) sex, (2) age at start of union, (3) province of birth, (4) education, and (5) the structure of the family of origin, were associated with the likelihood of separation or the likelihood of marriage among these unions. Only age at union formation, birth region, and origin family structure are significant predictors of the likelihood of separation in Canada. First premarital cohabitations formed at younger ages, those formed by Canadians born outside of Quebec, and those formed by people who did not live in a two parent home as a child are more likely to dissolve.

The significant differences in the likelihood of separating from a first premarital cohabiting union that I found in this chapter are largely consistent with past research on union dissolution generally, and first premarital cohabiting union separation specifically. Past research has shown that unions formed at younger ages are more likely to dissolve (Amato, 1996; Guzzo, 2014; Liefbroer & Dourleijn, 2006), that cohabiting unions in Quebec tend to be more stable and last longer than elsewhere in Canada (Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1996; Turcotte & Belanger, 1997; Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995), and that children who experienced parental divorce are more likely to dissolve their own romantic unions in adulthood (Amato, 1995; Bumpass, Martin & Sweet, 1991; Korbin & Waite, 1984).

Past research has also shown, however that individuals with less education are more likely to divorce (Amato, 2010; Teachman, 2002; Lyngstad, 2004), but my results show that at least for first premarital cohabiting unions, education does not appear to have any significant effect on the likelihood of union dissolution. One of the explanations commonly used for the negative association between education and the likelihood of divorce is that the more highly educated have more economic resources, which increase

the stability of marriages (Amato, 1996). It may be that economic resources are a less important determinant of the stability of first premarital cohabitations than for legal marriages (Bohnert, 2011). Wu and Pollard (2000) examined the association between economic circumstances and the stability of cohabiting unions more closely and found that household economic disadvantage increased the likelihood of union dissolution, but that increases in one partner's income alone also increased these risks. The insignificant relationship between education and the likelihood of union dissolution found in this study may be due to the countervailing trends identified by Wu and Pollard (2000). Educational homogamy may also play a more important role than either partner's level of education in explaining differences in cohabitation outcomes (Maenpaa & Jalovaara, 2013). Unfortunately, the 2011 GSS does not include detailed information on the characteristics of the partners of the respondents but future research should examine this more closely.

Although only three of the five factors I examined are significantly associated with the likelihood of separation from a first premarital cohabiting union, all five of the factors examined are significantly associated with the likelihood that a first union formed through cohabitation transitions to legal marriage. Overall, Canadian women are more likely to marry their first premarital cohabiting partners than Canadian men. Canadians born in Quebec, and those who did not live with both parents are less likely to transition to marriage, and those with higher educational attainment are more likely to transition to marriage. Age at union formation displays a U-shaped relationship with the risks of transitioning to marriage. For Canadians aged 26 or younger, increased age is associated with an increased risk of marriage. At age 27 and over, however, the risks of marriage are no different from the risks experienced by Canadians in their early 20s.

These results are also consistent with past research on group differences in the transition to marriage. Cohabitation has become a near universal first union type in Quebec and marriage rates have also declined dramatically compared to other parts of Canada (Le Bourdias & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004; Pollard & Wu, 1988). Therefore it is not surprising that those born in Quebec whose first union was a nonmarital cohabitation were less likely to transition to marriage and more likely remain cohabiting outside of legal marriage than other Canadians. Past research has also shown that, overall, higher education is associated with a higher likelihood of marriage (Guzzo, 2014), which is likely partly due the greater economic resources that higher education affords that facilitate the transition into marriage (Amato, 1996). Growing up in a family without two parents present in the home has also been found in past research to reduce the likelihood of marriage, at least partly through the effect of parental divorce on adult children's attitudes towards marriage (Levinger, 1976). This is consistent with my findings that the likelihood of transitioning to marriage from a first cohabiting union is lower for adult children from non-intact families.

That unions formed at younger ages are less likely to transition to legal marriage than unions formed at older ages is also not surprising given the results of past research (Liefbroer & Dourleijn, 2006; Lyngstad & Jalovaara, 2010; Wu & Balakrishnan, 1995). Younger people who form cohabiting unions appear to be less likely to be using these unions as a step towards marriage (Guzzo, 2014), and may make poorer matches than those who form their first union at older ages which would also decrease the likelihood that they enter into legal marriage with their first partner (Lynstad & Jalovaara, 2010). Data on the marital intentions and engagement status of the partners at the time of union

formation would help to disentangle the effects of age at union start and the motivations of the partners on the outcomes of these unions but unfortunately this is not available using the current data source. Research using American data sources has shown that marital intentions and expectations are highly associated with cohabitation outcomes but that the relationship depends heavily on gender and race (Brown, 2000; Guzzo, 2009).

Another contribution of this chapter was to explore whether the risk factors associated with different union outcomes have gained or lost importance over cohabitation cohorts as a way to examine whether changes in cohabitation are occurring uniformly for different social groups over time. I find that age at union start, region of birth, and origin family structure are stably associated with the likelihood of separating from a first premarital cohabiting union. Conversely, in past cohabitation cohorts, being female was significantly associated with a lower risk of separation from first premarital cohabiting unions, but this sex difference has disappeared for first cohabiting unions formed more recently. The association between educational attainment and the likelihood of separation also depends on cohabitation cohort; in unions formed earlier the less educated have a higher risk of dissolution compared to the more highly educated, but in more recent unions, the less educated have a higher risk of dissolution.

Changes in the importance of these factors on the likelihood of transitioning into legal marriage reveal a much different pattern. The only risk factor I found to be stable across cohabitation cohorts was growing up in a household without two parents. This group is less likely to marry their cohabiting partner, but the difference between the groups in the likelihood of marriage is the same regardless of when the cohabiting union was formed. Gender is the only risk factor I found to have lost all significant association with the

likelihood of marriage over time. All other factors, including having less education, being born in Quebec, and forming the first cohabiting union at a young age, have become increasingly negatively associated with the likelihood of marriage. In other words, group differences in the propensity to marry a first premarital cohabitation partner have become more dramatic over time.

My findings that age at the start of a first premarital cohabitation has not become a stronger predictor of union dissolution over time but that age differences in the likelihood that a union transitions to marriage have increased across cohabitation cohort have several implications. First, it does not appear that cohabitation is becoming a short-term union type that Canadians in their early 20s use as an alternative to being single. If this were the case we would expect to see the likelihood of first premarital dissolution increasing more rapidly among younger Canadians in more recent cohabitation cohorts. First premarital cohabitations that are formed at young ages in more recent years however, are less likely to transition to marriage, which means that these unions formed at younger ages may be increasingly used as an alternative to marriage for this group.

Gender differences in the likelihood of both separation from a first premarital cohabiting union and of the transition to legal marriage have disappeared across cohabitation cohorts. In unions formed before 1970, when premarital cohabitation was still quite uncommon, men were more likely to separate from these unions and women were more likely to marry from these types of first unions. The women's liberation movement, and increased educational attainment of women, and the greater control over fertility that came with the widespread availability of the oral contraceptive pill in the 1970s likely contributed to the diminishing of gender differences in cohabitation outcomes as these

changes gave women more freedom and control over when to form unions and the types of unions they choose to form (Goldin & Katz, 2002).

Cohabiting unions formed before 1970 were formed in a time when women's employment was marginal and in which the division of labour between the public and private spheres was highly gendered (Goldcheider et al., 2015). This gender structure encouraged women into traditional family roles and encouraged women cohabiting with their first partner to legally formalize the union in order to secure long-term benefits from the specialization and trading model in which women exchange their domestic labour for the economic protection of their husbands (Becker, 1973). However, the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s witnessed the first half of the gender revolution in which women moved into the public sphere, increased their labour force participation, and educational attainment (Goldcheider et al., 2015). During this time women had less need to engage in the highly gendered specialization and trading model, and became less likely to transition to marriage from their first cohabiting unions, resulting in the gender difference in the likelihood of different cohabiting union outcomes disappearing over time. Therefore, the gender revolution (Goldscheider, Bernhardt & Lappegard, 2015) may an important explanation for the disappearing gender differences in the likelihood of different cohabitation outcomes across historical time found in this study.

Like past research (e.g. Harkonen & Dronkers, 2006; Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Turcotte & Goldschider, 1998), I find that educational differences in partnership behaviours have increased over time. Less education is more strongly associated with a higher likelihood of separation and a lower likelihood of marriage for first premarital cohabiting unions formed more recently than for those unions formed in the past. My findings are consistent

with the theme of ‘diverging destinies’ (McLanahan, 2004) and show that lower levels of education may be increasingly likely to act as a barrier to marriage and union stability. In this chapter I included only a binary measure of education in pursuit of parsimony and as a first step to examining changes in educational differences in first premarital cohabiting union outcomes across historical time. Given that the educational distribution of the Canadian population has changed across the period under study and that the economic outcomes of different types of postsecondary education vary (Boothby & Drewes, 2004), future research should interrogate these changes in educational differences in union outcomes with a finer measure of education.

It is not surprising that the likelihood of transitioning to marriage from a first premarital cohabiting union have become much lower over time in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada since many past studies have shown that regional differences in marital behaviours are increasing over time (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004; Le Bourdais & Marcil-Gratton, 1996). The results of this chapter show that these regional differences have continued to increase for the most recent unions formed between 2000 and 2010 with cohabiting unions in Quebec being treated like alternatives to marriage even more so than they were in the past. Future research in this area should also consider language and religion as determinants of these union outcomes because these factors have been used in past research to interrogate and explain regional differences in partnering behaviours (e.g. Laplante, 2014).

In summary, the results of this chapter show that cohabitation has moved towards being an alternative to marriage for all Canadians, but more so for the less educated, those born in Quebec, and for those who form their first cohabiting unions early. The more highly

educated, those born in other parts of Canada, and those who delay their first cohabiting unions are more likely to use cohabitation as a step in the marriage process and the partnering patterns of these groups have been diverging over time.

This study has the advantage of using the most recently available data on union histories of Canadians, which includes rich retrospective information on unions formed between 1947 and 2010 through cohabitation rather than relying on information about a cross section of cohabiting and marital unions at one point in time. Although these retrospective union histories allow me to analyze first premarital cohabiting unions formed across a wide span of time, the retrospective nature of the data mean that the data may be adversely affected by recall bias (Hassan, 2005).

The threat of recall bias is also one of the reasons I chose not to include employment transitions in my analyses of the determinants of first premarital cohabitation outcomes. Past research has shown that gaining or losing employment is also an important correlate of union formation and dissolution (e.g. Lichter et al., 2006; Maenpaa & Jalovaara, 2013; Wu & Pollard, 2000). Future research should examine the changing importance of work and employment measures on the outcomes of first premarital cohabiting unions over time but should use either a different data source than that used in this chapter or should pool retrospective data from previous GSS surveys taken in the 1990s and early 2000s so that analyses could be based on respondents recollections of more recent work events rather than events in the distant past.

Future research should also consider how the association between cohabitation outcomes and the presence of children within the union may depend on when in historical time the

union was formed. Having a child within a cohabiting union has been shown in past research to increase the likelihood of transitioning to marriage and decrease the likelihood of separation (Manning, 2004; Wu, 1995) but this has also been shown to depend on the on whether the pregnancy was intended (Guzzo, 2010; Guzzo, 2014a; Manning, 2004). The association between having children and the likelihood of each union outcome depend on the historical period in which the union was formed as the meaning of cohabitation has changed and as cohabitation becomes an increasingly popular context for fertility (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004). For instance, a conception or birth of a child may have been a greater impetus to transition into legal marriage for first premarital cohabitations formed in the past when cohabiting was a more marginal family type than it may be in more recently formed unions as childbearing in nonmarital unions becomes increasingly common (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004).

Despite its limitations, this study contributes to our understanding of how the role of cohabitation in the marriage process has shifted over time to different extents for different groups of people. Past research in the U.S. (Manning et al., 2014) and my own work in Chapter 2 show that recent cohorts of young adults are continuing to form their first unions in their early to mid twenties, like generations before them, but the results of this chapter show that there is little indication that the first premarital cohabiting unions formed more recently are any less stable than those formed in the 1960s, 70s or 80s. What has changed is that these first unions are less likely to transition into legal marriage. This study provides further evidence that trends in the changing meaning of cohabitation,

and trends in increasing cohabitation and declining marriage in Canada are not monolithic but require a more nuanced examination.

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Chapter 4

4 ‘If You Want to Have a Future and Get a Life, Do an Apprenticeship’: The expectations and realities of tradesmen’s transition to adulthood

4.1 Introduction

The transition to adulthood is a much longer and less structured process today than in the 1950s and 60s (e.g. Berlin, Furstenberg & Waters, 2010; Hango & Le Bourdais, 2007; Settersten, 2007). Demographic research on the transition to adulthood typically focuses on five key transitions: home-leaving; finishing school; entering the labour force; forming romantic partnerships; and becoming a parent. This research finds that these transitions are occurring later on average for more recent cohorts compared to previous generations, especially the early baby boomers who made these transitions relatively quickly. The transitions made in early adulthood set the foundation for the rest of the life course and are a significant source of variation in individual trajectories in later life (Assave, Billari & Piccarreta, 2007; Rindfuss, 1991).

The delayed and prolonged transitions are due to a variety of structural and normative changes (Furstenberg, 2000; Lesthaeghe, 1983; Mayer, 2004). One of the most important of these changes is the transition of the economy away from manufacturing and primary and secondary industries, towards a knowledge-based, service sector driven economy requiring a more highly skilled labour force (Barakat & Durham, 2013; Berlin et al., 2010; Danziger & Ranter, 2010; Furstenberg, 2010; Fussell, Gauthier & Evans, 2007). Young people today have more difficulty achieving the economic stability that is required

to achieve the traditional markers of adulthood than young people four decades ago because of changes in the economy, the labour market, and the economic returns to education. Compared to the labour market conditions in Canada and other Western countries in the 1950s and 60s, today's labour market is characterized by fewer well-paying manufacturing jobs, stagnant earnings, longer and more dramatic recessions, and the collapse of job opportunities for youth (Bell, Burtless, Gornick & Smeeding, 2007).

The transition from school to work is particularly hard for students who do not finish postsecondary education, who are often called 'the forgotten half' (William T. Grant Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, 1988; Rosenbaum, Ahearn, Becker & Rosenbaum, 2015). These young people have been found to struggle with the passage to adulthood due, in part, to the lack of clearly designated pathways and a lack of institutional support for their transition from high school to work (Frank, 1996) that often lead to difficulties finding employment, building careers, and making other life transitions (Pinquart, Juang & Silberesen, 2003).

Apprenticeship programs in the skilled trades have been promoted as a way to help facilitate the transition from school-to-work and into successful adulthood by creating concrete links between education, training, and the labour force, especially for youth who would not otherwise pursue education beyond high school (Ryan, 2001). Some Canadian provinces, including Ontario and Alberta, have in fact introduced youth apprenticeship initiatives in high school to encourage student to enter the skilled trades by allowing them to begin their apprenticeship while also earning credits toward their high school diploma (Lehmann, 2000). Apprenticeships have become much more common over the past two

decades; there were over 400,000 registered apprentices in Canada in 2009 compared to less than 190,000 in 1991 (Skof, 2013).

Apprenticeship programs are provincially legislated training programs that lead to certification, commonly called a ticket, in a skilled trade (Watt-Malcolm & Barabasch, 2010). There are over 200 designated trades in Canada that are generally classified into four groups: construction, transportation, manufacturing, and service (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2012a). All apprenticeship programs lead to a trades certification, however, not all trades occupations require certification in order to work in that trade. Many of the most common trades, including electrical, plumbing, steam-fitting, automotive mechanics, and hairstyling, require certification, which can only be achieved through apprenticeships (Ontario College of Trades, 2015). Many people employed in skilled trades that do not require certification also voluntarily complete apprenticeships and become certified in their trade in order to increase their employability and develop their skills (Ontario College of Trades, 2015).

The majority of an apprentice's training is done in the workplace but some training is done in a formal classroom setting in community colleges, technical institutes, or union training centres. These specialized courses are applied towards a trades certification rather than a college diploma, which is not required for any skilled trade. The number of hours of on the job training and the number of weeks of in-class instruction required for certification vary by trade but programs usually last three or four years (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). Apprentices typically have to find their own employer willing to enter into a training contract and then have their apprenticeship registered with the governing provincial body (Watt-Malcolm & Barabasch, 2010).

While completing the in-class portion of training, most apprentices qualify to receive benefits from the federal Employment Insurance program and the cost of in-class training is heavily subsidized by the provincial governments, but apprentices are still required to pay tuition fees, and pay for books and supplies (Watt-Malcolm & Barabasch, 2010). When all of the requirements are completed, apprentices are eligible to take qualifying examinations consisting of a written component and in some cases a practical component in order to earn their certification (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005).

There is a growing body of research on apprenticeship programs and people in the skilled trades. One strand focuses on the determinants and barriers to apprenticeship completion (e.g. Coe, 2013; Dostie, 2011; Laporte & Mueller, 2011; Morrisette, 2008; Prasil, 2005). Other strands focus on the learning experiences and pedagogy of the programs (e.g. Bills, 2009; Clarke & Winch, 2004; Fuller & Unwin, 1998, 2009), and the structure of the programs and how they fit into the Canadian economy (e.g. Bosch & Charest, 2008; Lehmann & Taylor, 2003; Taylor, McGray & Watt-Malcolm, 2007). There is also a developing literature on why individuals choose to enter the skilled trades which has been concerned with how apprenticeship programs may reproduce social inequalities and how individuals in the skilled trades exercise their agency in their educational decisions (e.g. Lehmann, 2004, 2005; Rudd & Evans. 1998). Lehmann (2005) found that one of the ways in which trades people rationalize their decision to enter the trades is by drawing on promotional materials that endorse the benefits of youth apprenticeship programs.

The federal and provincial governments, and not-for-profit organizations such as the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, have been encouraging youth to enter the skilled trades both as a way to fill labour market shortages, and as a way to facilitate youth's transition

from school to work in an increasingly complex labour market, especially for those who might not otherwise attend postsecondary education (Canadian Council on Learning, 2006; Sharpe and Gibson, 2005). Publications from governmental and non-profit sources claim that anywhere from one million to nearly four million workers will be required to replace those retiring from the skilled trades (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2012). The federal government has also created several initiatives to encourage youth to enter the skilled trades and complete their apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant is one of these programs, which offers a taxable cash grant of \$1,000 per year for up to two years to help apprentices offset the costs of their training (Pyper, 2008).

Some of the benefits that youth are told they can expect when entering the skilled trades are less student debt than other postsecondary options, the ability to ‘earn while you learn,’ good pay, and stable employment (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2012; Lehmann, 2000; Lehmann, 2005; Lehmann, Taylor & Wright, 2014; Taylor, 2010). Apprenticeship programs that lead to certification in a skilled trade are being marketed as a fast track to rewarding, lucrative, and stable careers. This potentially condensed and smooth transition from school to work with little or no student debt may translate into achieving other markers of adulthood at an earlier age, such as leaving the parental home, partnering, and marriage since many studies suggest that these transitions are usually completed after a person gains some financial independence (Bell et al., 2007).

Young people in the trades are aware of the purported benefits of entering and completing an apprenticeship (Lehmann, 2005). Whether they think that they have reaped these benefits, or believe that these benefits have given them an advantage in their transition to adulthood is unknown. These are the questions I seek to answer first part of

this chapter using in-depth interviews with young men certified in a skilled trade. In the second part of this chapter, I turn to nationally representative data to examine three early adult transitions - home-leaving, first union, and first marriage – to determine if apprenticeship programs do facilitate earlier transitions or a quicker succession of transitions compared to other educational streams.

Examining the transitions to adulthood of this educational group is important for two reasons. First, policy makers are particularly interested in promoting apprenticeship programs as a way to improve the wellbeing of young Canadians, particularly those who do not go on to higher education (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). Examining how men in the trades make their transition to adulthood is one important way to evaluate how apprenticeship programs may be beneficial for Canadian youth. Second, people with a trade certificate make up a significant proportion of the Canadian population. In 2011, 12.1 percent of the Canadian population held a trade certificate. This is very similar to the 12.7 percent of Canadians without a high school diploma who have been studied much more extensively (Statistics Canada, 2013). Understanding how those in the skilled trades make their way into adult roles will provide a more complete picture of how Canadian youth are transitioning into adulthood than we currently have.

4.2 Research Questions: Interview Data

1. How do young men certified in the skilled trades talk about their educational choices in relation to their transition to adulthood? How do they compare their experiences to those of their university-educated peers?

4.3 Methods: Interview Data

I draw on in-depth interviews conducted by Wolfgang Lehmann and Alison Taylor in 2010 for their project, *Tracking High School Apprentices: Expectations, Experiences and Outcomes*. Their participants began apprenticeships in the skilled trades between 2001 and 2006 through Ontario's Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). The OYAP program allows high school students to earn high school co-op credits while completing hours in a registered apprenticeship program. A random sample of former OYAP students was invited to participate in the original study and the researchers purposively sampled to cover a wide range of occupations. Interviews lasted from 60 to 120 minutes and were conducted either in person or by telephone and were fully transcribed. I limit my analyses to young men who had successfully completed their trade certification at the time of interview. I use full transcripts from 18 interviews with men who ranged in age from 21 to 24 and were variously licensed in the electrical, machinist, plumbing, automotive, culinary, and carpentry trades. The interviews were originally conducted for a different project and therefore the respondents were not asked about specific transitions such as moving out, partnering or marrying, but respondents did nevertheless, speak about their expectations and experiences of their transition to adulthood more generally.

I began by open coding all of the interview transcripts to identify passages in which participants reflected on their educational choices, their completed transitions to adulthood, their goals and expectations for their transitions, and how they compare themselves to their peers. During this process I also created a summary document for each participant describing their age, their trade, their living arrangements, their marital status, their nativity status, their parents' education and occupations, and whether they

had continuous employment since beginning their apprenticeship. I then analyzed the selected passages more closely, while using the summaries of each participant to help ensure that I understood the selected passages in the context of the participant's life (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I sought to identify common themes from this close reading of the participants' transcripts that speak to my first research question.

4.4 Findings: Interview Data

In this section I describe the themes related to the transition to adulthood that I identified in the interviews with young men who have earned a trade certificate. I provide passages from the interviews to illustrate the young men's perspective in their own words and I include contextual information about the respondent. I use pseudonyms in all cases to protect anonymity of the participants.

4.4.1 Getting a Head Start

Many of the interview participants reflected on how they compare themselves to their peers who attended university. All of the respondents expressed a keen awareness of the negative stereotype of the trades as low status but many countered this perception by talking about one of the major advantages of this educational path – that it allowed them to get a head start on the path to adulthood. Mike, a 23-year-old electrician, living with his parents illustrates this theme in the following passage:

[A trade certificate] is a quicker process [than a university degree] so it's more appealing. You don't have your four years in university, you don't have to basically start at the bottom and work your way up. It takes 15 years or more to get somewhere in business where as if you go

into the trade end of it, within 5 or 6 years you can be up in a management level very quick.

When further probed on whether this path provided an edge over a university education

Mike responded with the following:

We already have a job somewhere, because we've worked for five years to get to where we are today. We don't have the massive – as much knowledge maybe as what you would get at a university, but we have the knowledge geared to what we're doing.

In addition to the feeling of being ahead in the world of work illustrated by Mike, some participants expressed that they felt like they got a head start in other domains of life. Aleks (24 years old) and Adam (22 years old) are both mechanics living at home who shared the following thoughts:

Aleks: I would say that I'm at a higher level of personal satisfaction, and at a more, I guess, advanced stage in life than [my friends who went to university].

Adam: [My friends who went to university] did a lot more partying. They were in school for a whole year where I was only there for 40 days. They did more partying, they spent more money. It's almost like I grew up quicker and grew up more than they did because there were still kids going to school. I actually had responsibilities; I was working on somebody else's vehicle. They're putting their life in your hands basically, where some of my friends just went to school. They were smart so they didn't have to try, and they just partied and had a good time. It's different.

These comments, and the many similar comments made by other participants, show that these men perceive that going into the trades allowed them to get a head start in life compared to those who went to university. For some, this seemed to be one of the motivations for pursuing the trades, but for others, it was an advantage they perceived later and they used it as a way to elevate the perceived status of young trades people. It is notable, however, that most of the respondents who claimed that this educational path allowed them to grow up more quickly had not completed many of the traditional transitions to adulthood. The vast majority were still single and living at home with their parents. The other two themes I identified in the interviews help to explain this discrepancy.

4.4.2 Staying out of Debt

Many of the interview participants felt that one of the main advantages of going into the trades was avoiding student debt. In fact, many of them were quite debt-adverse and were concerned that taking on debt would stall their adult transitions. Steve, a 23-year-old mechanic living with his parents made the following statement, which succinctly expresses the thoughts of many other participants:

It is a heck of an accomplishment to pay off a student loan, but you're going to be paying for it well into your late 20s/early 30s. I don't want to be paying for tuition and kids. That works into later plans in life. Sometimes getting school out of the way early is best.

Many of the participants were motivated to enter the trades because of this aversion to student debt. However, extreme overestimates of how much a university education costs abounded in the interviews. The following is how Jason, a 23 year

old plumber living with his parents explained his motivation to become a tradesperson:

The money was a big thing. I didn't have any debt when I finished my trade school, I didn't have any student debt. Compare that to if I went to college or university, I was looking at \$15 or \$20 thousand a year.

Adam also shared his thoughts about how he was ahead financially and further along in life by not taking on any student debt. But, like Jason, he overestimated the potential costs of a bachelor degree:

I'd tell [university] students, I'd walk into the school and say, hey, five years of university? Sure, you've got your [degree], but you're over \$100,000 in debt. If, ... if you want to have a future and a life, do OYAP, get in on an apprenticeship. I'm not even anywhere near \$100,000 in debt.

It is clear from these statements that many of the young men were concerned that pursuing higher education would prevent them from starting their adult lives and thought that their educational choice allowed them to become independent adults faster. Their belief that university graduates typically owe up to \$100,000 in student loans upon graduation, however, is a far cry from reality in Canada. In the 2008-09 academic year, the year before these interviews were conducted, the average tuition fee for one year of undergraduate study was \$4,724 (Statistics Canada, 2009). Moreover, among university graduates with student debt, the average debt load at graduation was approximately \$19,000 (Wright, Walters & Zarifa, 2013). It may be that by overestimating the cost of other forms of postsecondary education these

men are also overestimating how much further along on the road to adulthood they are compared to the university educated.

This comparison between the costs of university and the costs of entering the trades is further complicated by the substantial financial investments many of these men had to make to learn their trade. Steve made the comparison between tuition and his investment in his tools like this:

Some people are stunned that maybe I spent \$10,000 in tools. They're like, oh man, that's crazy. I'm like, well, you spent \$15,000 on tuition and you made no money last year, so you're negative \$15,000. I made maybe \$35,000 so I'm still up \$25,000. That's a \$40,000 difference between going to university and racking up a tuition bill and hopefully having a way to pay for it. Getting into a trade, it may not be that fancy job with a suit, but you're not costing anybody any money.

Adam spoke about the exorbitant cost of his tools in this statement:

[Mechanics] is a hard trade. It's the least recognized trade, the least paid, least recognized, and yet we have to buy the most tools. I have probably \$70,000 worth of tools... I need special tools for each individual car. If you work at a private dealer that's not a specific brand, you need all of them. My buddy just bought a \$20,000 toolbox to keep all his tools in.

So it seems that for some, especially mechanics who require many specialized tools, entering the trades is not a completely debt-free endeavor. However, none of the participants spoke about this kind of debt preventing them from moving forward in life like they did about student debt acquired through university. Avoiding student debt was one of the major reasons respondents gave for why they

felt they had gotten a head start on their adult lives, but many of them incurred considerable debt, or at least made significant financial investments in their training. The respondents seemed to overestimate the differences in the financial costs of university and the trades. This may be one explanation for why respondents felt they were further along the path to adulthood than university graduates when in fact, all but one of the respondents, aged 22-24, had yet to move out of their parental home.

4.4.3 Employment Challenges

The second major reason respondents gave to explain why they felt they were more advanced in life than their friends who went to university was related to their employment. As demonstrated in the previous sections, the respondents often spoke about how being in the trades let them start their careers earlier and allowed them to earn a wage while undergoing training. However, many of the respondents experienced employment difficulties during their training programs. Dave, a 24-year-old electrician discusses how difficult it can be to find an employer during an apprenticeship:

I know how many other electrical contractors there are. I know how many apprentices are calling our phone everyday looking for jobs. And I know how hard it is to get a job. I don't think there's any shortage of workers... and if there is a shortage, give them my card, 'cause I'd be happy to work for them.

Many respondents also found that the 2008 recession made it particularly difficult to find employment in the skilled trades. Jon is a 22-year-old machinist who expressed how he was personally affected by the lack of job opportunities:

Yes, the recession affected [my city]. A lot of companies in [my city] are automotive companies. In the last five years... they really took a bad hit. I'm a general machinist and before the recession there was about 115 machine shops and now we're down to 19. I was out of work for 11 months, not because I didn't try or anything. Everyday I was out there looking.

Even after they completed the apprenticeship many respondents found it difficult to find steady employment. Below, Brian a 24-year-old heavy equipment operator, speaks about his experiences trying to find work after he finished his apprenticeship and his reasons for leaving his trade.

I completed the apprenticeship and stuff but what it came down to at the end of the day was there wasn't really employment in it. There was some, but it was unionized so essentially there's a waiting list for everybody. The only [reason I left] is just a lack of employment afterwards.

Some respondents expressed frustration with the government, assumingly meaning the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and the Ontario College of the Trades, because they felt that these bodies encouraged people to enter specific trades with the promise of steady jobs, but the labour market realities they experienced were very different. Jon, the machinist who struggled to find employment during the 2008 recession, says the following:

When I was going through school for general machining, the government in particular were pushing machinist because they said it was going to be a focus point of older people retiring. There's a lot of machinists out there that were pushed through the system but never

found jobs.... When I first got into the [apprenticeship] system everything was booming. [The government] said there'd be no problems finding jobs and stuff like that. As soon as I left high school it kind of went down the crapper.

Many of the respondents had difficulty securing jobs during and after their apprenticeship; two or three job transitions and periodic layoffs were common experiences among the participants. It bears repeating that all of the respondents included in this study successfully completed their apprenticeship, so it is likely that young men who were not successful in obtaining their certificate had even greater employment difficulties. It is not clear from the interviews whether these experiences of unemployment are universal, or whether the specific circumstances of the 2008 recession are responsible for the employment difficulties the respondents reflected on when they were interviewed in 2010. Consistent labour market challenges for people in the skilled trades may delay home-leaving, partnering, and marriage but it work in the skilled trades is sensitive to economic cycles (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). To better understand how being in a skilled trade influences the timing of these transitions, it is necessary to turn to nationally representative data.

4.5 Conclusions from Interview Data and Next Steps

My analysis of the qualitative interviews with young men with trade certificates revealed that many of them thought that entering the trades allowed them to “be at a more advanced stage of life,” allowed them to “have a future and a life,” and not have a university education “work into later plans in life.” This perception that trades people transition into adulthood more quickly than the university educated stemmed largely from

the perception that people in the trades were able to start their career at a younger age and were able to avoid incurring student debt, which was understood as a delayer of adulthood. These are the same benefits that are often promoted by the federal and provincial governments, and not-for-profit organizations. However, many of the young men interviewed did not feel like they had reaped the benefits they were promised. Many had made substantial financial investments in order to complete their training, and many experienced unfavorable labour market conditions and turbulent employment histories.

There is also evidence from past research that suggests that the skilled trade path is not as rosy as the promotional materials make it out to be. For one, jobs in the skilled trades are sensitive to economic booms and busts which can lead to frequent layoffs and difficulties keeping steady employment (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). Canadians with a trade certificate are less likely to be employed fulltime, and more likely to be unemployed than their more highly educated counterparts (Boothby & Drewes, 2006; Frank & Walters, 2012; Walters, 2004). Although popular estimates of how many skilled trade jobs need to be filled in the coming years are in the millions (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2012), a recent academic analysis of labour shortages in the skilled trades finds that labour shortages in different skilled trades occur only sporadically and are typically short-lived (Lefebvre, Simonova & Wang, 2012).

Canadian men who have completed an apprenticeship to obtain a trade certificate tend to make more than men with only a high school diploma, but they tend to make much less than men with an undergraduate degree. In 1980, Canadian men between the ages of 25 and 34 with a trades certificate could expect to make nine percent more than their counterparts with only a high school diploma. This earnings premium of a trades

certificate increased to 15 percent in 2000 (Boothby & Drewes, 2006). Men with an undergraduate degree on the other hand could expect to make 34 percent more than a high school graduate in 1980 and 51 percent more in 2000 (Boothby & Drewes, 2006). These figures are very similar to those found in the U.S. and more recent estimates of these disparities show that in 2007, university educated Americans earned 79 percent more than those with a high school diploma (Mishel, Bernstein & Shierholz, 2008). These disparities in labour market and economic outcomes, as well as the length of education, may have dramatic effects on other elements of the transition to adulthood (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007).

Only one of the 18 young men included in the interview sample of 21-24 year olds had moved out of his parental home, none had formed a cohabiting union and only one was engaged to be married (while still living with his parents). However, the respondents interviewed are not representative of the Canadian population. These respondents all began their apprenticeships in high school through Ontario's Youth Apprenticeship Program and therefore do not represent the experiences of men in the skilled trades in other provinces, those who began their apprenticeships after completing high school, or those in skilled trades that are not supported in Ontario high school programs. Using the timing and occurrence of their transitions to adulthood to make broad claims about the timing of trades people's transitions to adulthood, therefore, is not tenable.

In the next section I turn to nationally representative data on the timing of three traditional markers of the transition to adulthood to explore this apparent contradiction found in the qualitative data. I examine whether the participants' perception that trades people enter adulthood more quickly is supported in Canada more generally. I explore

educational differences in moving out of the parental home, forming a first union, and entering into marriage as markers of the transition into adulthood.

4.6 Research Questions: Survey Data

2. Are there significant educational differences in the timing of home-leaving, partnering, and marriage at the national level? How do men with trade certificates compare to those with higher or lower educational credentials? Are these differences in line with the perceptions and expectations of young men in the trades?
3. How compressed or dispersed are home-leaving, partnering, and marriage in Canada and does this differ by education? Do tradesmen complete these transitions in a shorter timespan than other educational groups?
4. Are differences in the risks of home-leaving, partnering, and marriage between men in the trades and men with higher levels of education explained by father's education, the structure of the family of origin, or birthplace?

4.7 Methods: Survey Data

I use the 2011 General Social Survey (Cycle 25 Families), a nationally representative survey conducted by Statistics Canada that includes detailed educational attainment measures, retrospective home-leaving, union, and marital histories, and a variety of socioeconomic variables. I use the restricted use analytic file in the Statistics Canada Research Data Centre because it distinguishes between those with trade certificate and those with a college diploma, which are collapsed in the public use data file.

I exclude women in my analyses because the transitions to adulthood of women in the trades are likely very different from those of men and because far fewer women than men enter the trades which limits the available sample. The transition to adulthood among women in the trades is worthy of investigation but is beyond the scope of this chapter. I also limit my analyses to those born in 1970 or later in order to focus on the most recent cohort of Canadians who are entering adulthood and to aid comparability with the interview respondents. The timing of home-leaving and marriage have changed across birth cohorts in Canada (Ravanera, Rajulton & Burch, 1995; Zhao, Rajulton & Ravanera, 1995) so looking at educational differences in the timing of these transitions among the Canadian population as a whole may conflate educational differences and changes over time. An examination of how the transitions of tradespeople have compared to other educational groups in older birth cohorts, although interesting, is left for future research.

The 2011 GSS includes 3,271 men born after 1969 but I limit my analyses to respondents who provide valid information on all of the measures included in the analyses. For models examining age at first partnership this includes 3,068 respondents, for those examining age at first marriage this includes 3,076, and 2,700 are included in the age at first home-leaving analyses.

4.7.1 Measures

In this chapter I consider three separate markers of the transition to adulthood: moving out of the parental home; forming a coresidential romantic union; and legally marrying.

Home-leaving has been conceptualized in various ways in past research; some studies examine first home-leaving (e.g. Beaupre, Turcotte & Milan, 2006; Billari & Liefbroer,

2007) and other studies examine final home-leaving (e.g. Mitchell, Wister & Burch, 1989; Ravanera et al., 1995; Zhao et al., 1995). These differing conceptualizations stem from the varying goals of different researchers and from varying sources of data. Researchers who are more interested in multigenerational coresidence tend to focus on first or any type of home-leaving, regardless of the reason the child is not residing in the parental home. Conversely, researchers who are more interested in home-leaving as a measure of independence and as a completed transition often consider the reason for home-leaving. In this research, leaving home temporarily to attend school is considered a period of semi-autonomy (White, 1994) in which youth are away from the control and supervision of their parents but under the supervision of another institutions, such as school dormitories. Differences also stem from the definitions used in available data sources. For instance, the Current Population Survey in the U.S. counts college students living away from home as part of their parents' household but the U.S. Census counts college students separately from their parents' household (White, 1994).

I conceptualize leaving the parental home to live independently of parents as different from living away from home to attend school – I only consider the former as an event of interest in my analyses. I do this because I am interested in the home-leaving as a marker of the transition to adulthood and as an indicator of independence from parents rather than as a measure of coresidence. The 2011 GSS provides information on multiple home-leaving events and the reasons for home-leaving and returning home which allows me to differentiate between different types of home-leaving events.

The 2011 GSS allows respondents to report the main reason for leaving the parental home and where applicable, the main reason for returning, up to the respondent's most

recent home-leaving and return. I use this information to determine whether a respondent's move from their parental home was a true home-leaving or if they were temporarily living away from home for school. Respondents whose first home-leaving was for a reason other than to attend school were categorized as home leavers at the time of this first home-leaving. Those who first left to attend school but subsequently returned for reasons other than the end of the school year/term or finishing/leaving their educational program were also classified as true home leavers at the time of their first move. Respondents who left to attend school, who were not currently enrolled in school, and had not returned to their parents' home at the time of the survey were also considered home leavers at the time of this first move from the parental home.

For those respondents whose first move from their parental home was not considered a true home-leaving, but rather a period of living away from home for school, I then turned to information regarding their subsequent home-leaving and returning. I used the time of their last move from the parental home as the time of first home-leaving for respondents whose last home-leaving was for reasons other than school. Those whose last home-leaving was to attend school, but who returned for reasons other than school were also coded as leaving the parental home at this last move. Respondents who left home to attend school either as a first or last move from the parental home, who had not returned at the time of the survey, but were still enrolled in school were classified as living away from home rather than as home leavers. Of these respondents, it is likely that some will never return to their parents' home after finishing school, and will therefore be misclassified as living away from home in this coding framework. To test the sensitivity of the results to this coding decision I ran the analyses considering these respondents as

home leavers at the time of their first home-leaving and the results are consistent regardless of how I conceptualize these moves.

Respondents were asked to report the month and year of each home-leaving and returning event and I used this, along with their month and year of birth to construct an age at first home-leaving measure that is as precise as allowed by the month data. Respondents who did not provide the month or year of home-leaving were asked to report the age at which the home-leaving event occurred and I used estimated age in whole numbers in cases where month specific data were not available.

The next transition to adulthood I consider is forming a first co-residential romantic union. I include first unions that are either legal marriages or nonmarital cohabitations. The large majority of respondents formed their first union through cohabitation rather than marriage. To construct this measure I use the month and year that the respondent reporting beginning their first union, and when this is not available, the age at which the union began. The GSS uses an inclusive measure of cohabitation and allows respondents to self-classify their unions as cohabitation regardless of the length of coresidence. The English version of the GSS asks respondents if they are or had been in a “common-law relationship, even if for less than one year.” The French version asks the same questions but using the term “union libre.” Quebec follows the civil law tradition whereas the rest of Canada is based on the common law tradition, which has resulted in different legal definitions of *unions de libres* in Quebec and common law unions in the rest of the country (Beaujot, Du & Ravanera, 2013). This measure of cohabitation is therefore inclusive of both definitions used by both Anglophone and Francophone Canadians. I use

the term cohabitation to encompass both common law unions formed outside of Quebec and *unions de libres* in Quebec.

Finally, I use respondents' reports of the month and year, or age when this information is not available, of their first marriage, regardless of any previous non-marital unions to construct the age at first marriage measure.

The key independent variable in all of the analyses is respondents' highest level of educational attainment. Given that my focus is on men who are trained in the skilled trades, I create a trichotomous measure of education. The first category includes men who have completed high school or less, the second isolates men whose highest level of education is a completed certification in the skilled trades through an apprenticeship, and the third and final category includes men who have finished a college or university program. Apprenticeship programs often require some formal training in colleges or other training centres, but these specialized college courses are applied towards a trades certificate rather than a college diploma. I use respondent's highest level of educational attainment so respondents certified in the skilled trades who also have a higher educational credential are not included in the trades educational category. This means that the educational measure I use does not include men who work in the skilled trades while simultaneously holding a college or university credential in the trades category. However, the focus of this chapter is on how different educational pathways rather than different occupational choices are associated with the transition to adulthood, which makes this measure of education appropriate for this study.

My analyses also include three covariates that have been found in past research to be associated with the timing of the transitions to adulthood examined in this chapter. I include a father's highest educational attainment as a proxy for family social class. I code father's education into the same three categories as the respondent's education: high school or less; trades certification; and completed college or university. Parental income and education have been shown to be related to home-leaving and union formation in complicated ways that vary by age (e.g. Avery, Goldscheider & Speare, 1992). The second covariate is a binary measure for whether or not the respondent lived with two parents in the home until the time they were 15. Past research has found that young people who grew up in with a single parent or in a stepfamily tend to leave home at younger ages than those who grew up in an intact family (e.g. Beaupre et al., 2006; Mitchell, 2004; Gee, Mitchell & Wister, 2003). Finally, I include a control for the birthplace of the respondent. I distinguish between men born in Quebec, men born in a Canadian province outside of Quebec, and men born outside of Canada because union formation behaviours have been shown to differ widely between Quebec and the rest of Canada (e.g. Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004)

4.8 Analytic Strategy

I employ event history analysis to examine educational differences in the timing of first home-leaving, first partnering, and first marriage, and in the hazards of experiencing these events. Event history techniques are the most appropriate for my analyses because they effectively deal with right censoring, which occurs when the event of interest takes place after the observation period ends (Allison, 1984). This allows me to examine the

transitions among the most recent cohort of Canadian men who may not have made their adult transitions at the time of the survey.

I use Kaplan-Meier survival curves to address the second and third research questions, which examine educational differences in the timing and spread of the three transitions to adulthood. To examine educational differences in the timing of these transitions I plot survival curves for first home-leaving for each of the three educational groups, then survival curves for first partnership by education, and finally, first marriage survival curves by educational group. I then display the survival curves for first home-leaving, first partnership, and first marriage for men with a high school diploma or less on one plot to show the relative timing of these three transitions for these least educated men. I construct the same plots for men with a trade certificate and for men with a college or university education to illustrate the typical time between achieving each of the three transitions.

As a final step in my analysis, I model the risks of experiencing each event separately using extended Cox proportional hazards models (Cox, 1972). I use Cox models for two reasons. First, Cox models allow me to take advantage of the relatively precise measurement of survival times I have in the data. The month and the year that a respondent enters the risk period and the month and year of the event or interview are available in the data so I am able to treat survival time continuously (Cleves, Gutierrez, Gould & Marchenko, 2010). Second, I have no strong theoretical reason for choosing a specific distribution of event times which fully parametric continuous time event history methods require (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 2004). The semiparametric Cox model on the other hand, allows me to leave the baseline hazard unspecified and focus my analysis

on the relationships between educational attainment and home-leaving and union formation (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 2004). For each outcome I estimate a bivariate model that includes only highest educational attainment as a predictor of the risks of completing an event, and a multivariate model which adds father's education, family structure until age 15 and place of birth to each of the models.

4.9 Results from Nationally Representative Data

4.9.1 Sample Characteristics

Table 4.1 displays the characteristics of the sample used in the quantitative portion of the analysis. These analyses are restricted to men born in 1970 or later, of which slightly more than half (51.65 percent) have earned high school diploma or less at the time of the survey. Respondents who are pursuing a postsecondary credential but had not (yet) completed their program at the time of the survey are also included in this high school or less category. Nearly 36 percent have either a college diploma or a university degree, and the remaining 12.6 percent have completed a trade certificate. Approximately 50 percent of respondents' fathers had a high school diploma or less, 40 percent had a college diploma or university degree, and roughly 9.5 percent of fathers had earned a trade certificate. The majority of respondents (77.7 percent) lived with two parents in the home until age 15. Just fewer than 60 percent of respondents were born in a Canadian province other than Quebec, approximately 20 percent were born in Quebec, and the remaining 21 percent of respondents were born outside of Canada.

Table 4.1 Sample Characteristics

Sample Characteristics	n=3076
	Mean/Percentage
Education	
High School or less	51.65
Trades Certificate	12.55
Other Postsecondary Credential	35.80
Father's Education	
High School or less	50.37
Trades Certificate	9.49
Other Postsecondary Credential	40.14
Family Structure until 15	
Lived with 2 parents	77.72
Did not	22.28
Region of Birth	
Can, outside Que.	59.09
Quebec	19.85
Outside Canada	21.06
Age	28.53

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

4.9.1.1 Descriptive Results

Figure 4.1 displays smoothed Kaplan-Meier survival curves showing the proportion of men who remain living in their parental home across age, for the three educational groups separately. Similarly, Table 4.2 displays the first quartile, the median, and the third quartile survival times for first home-leaving for the total sample and by educational category. The educational differences in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2 are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Figure 4.1 and the corresponding statistics in Table 4.2 show that men with a trade certificate leave the parental home earlier on average than those with either higher or lower levels of education. One in four men with a trade certificate had left home by age 19, more than half had left home before their 22nd birthday, and three in four had left home by the time they were approximately 26. Figure 4.1 also shows that

the home-leaving patterns of men with a high school diploma or less and those with a college diploma or university degree are nearly indistinguishable before the age of 25, but that their home-leaving patterns diverge quite dramatically thereafter. Twenty-five percent of both educational groups have left home around age 20, and half have left home by age 24. The steep failure trend continues for those with a postsecondary credential; 75 percent have left by age 29, and nearly all have left by age 40. The curve flattens after 25, however, for those with a high school diploma or less. More than 25 percent of those in the lowest educational category are still living with their parents at age 35. Finally, by age 35 respondents with a college diploma or a university degree are the least likely to have never left the parental home, those with a high school diploma or less are the most likely to have never left, and those with a trade certificate are between these two extremes.

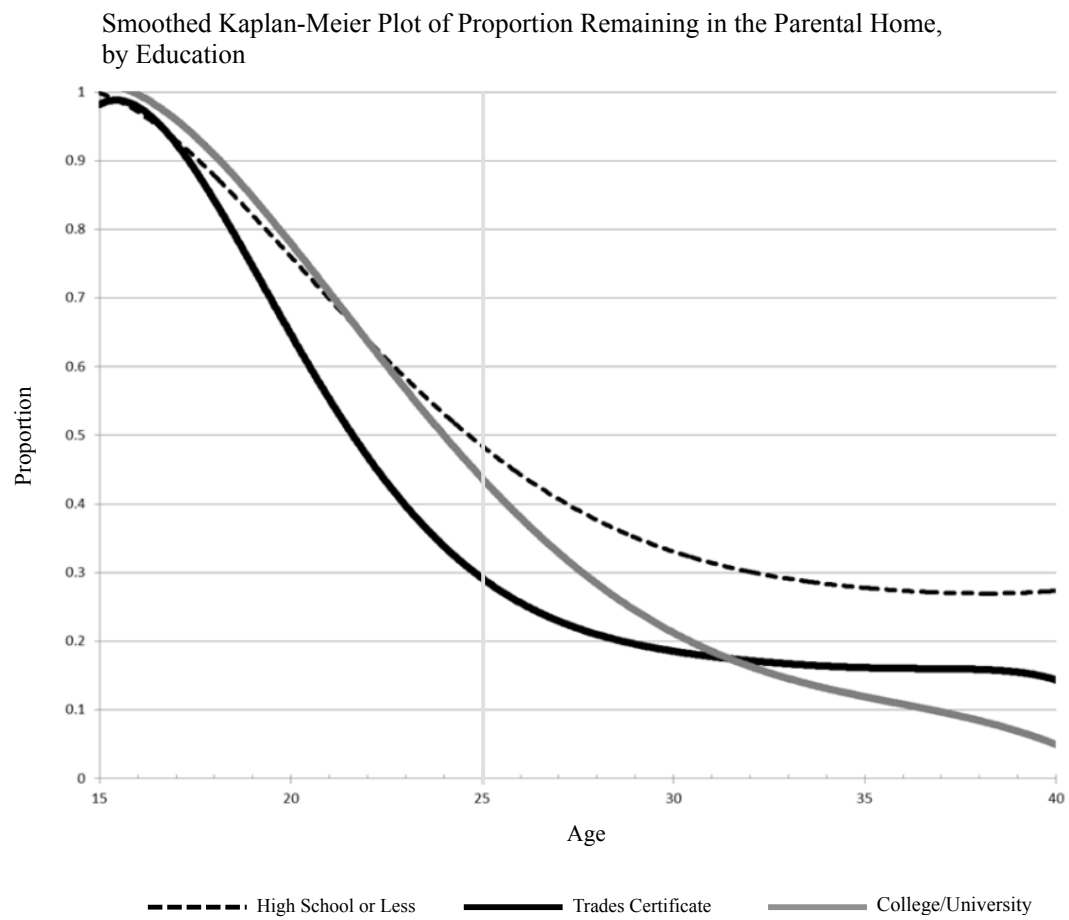
Figure 4.1 Kaplan-Meier Survival Curves, First Home-leaving, by Education

Table 4.2 First Home-leaving Survival Time Distributions

Survival Time Distributions for Canadian Men's
First Home Leaving by Education

Education	Age at First Home Leaving		
	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile
High School or less	20.0	24.3	/
Trades Certificate	19.0	21.6	26.3
College/University	20.1	24.0	29.3
Overall	20.0	24.0	30.3
n	2700		
failures	1748		
person-periods	57996.25		

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Figure 4.2 and Table 4.3 display educational differences in age at first partnership, which includes either nonmarital cohabitation or legal marriage. A log-rank test reveals that these educational differences in age at first partnership are also significant ($p < 0.001$) however the relative differences are smaller than was the case for age at first home-leaving. Similar to differences in age at first home-leaving, those with a trade certificate make the transition to partnership earlier on average than the other educational groups. The median survival time to first partnering among those with a trade certificate is 21.6 which is significantly younger than high school graduates or less (24.3) or postsecondary education graduates (24.0). The survival curves for young men with a trade certificate and for young men with a postsecondary credential are largely parallel between ages 20 and 30; the former tend to partner approximately 2 years earlier than the latter between these ages. The age at first union formation among the less educated is much more variable as indicated by the more gradual survival curve. Before age 27, those with a high school diploma or less tend to partner earlier than those with the highest levels of

education, but if one has not partnered up to this point, those with less education tend to partner later than the more highly educated. By age 35 the differences in the proportion ever-partnered between the most highly educated and those with a trade certificate disappear, however, those with a high school diploma or less are significantly less likely to be ever partnered at this age.

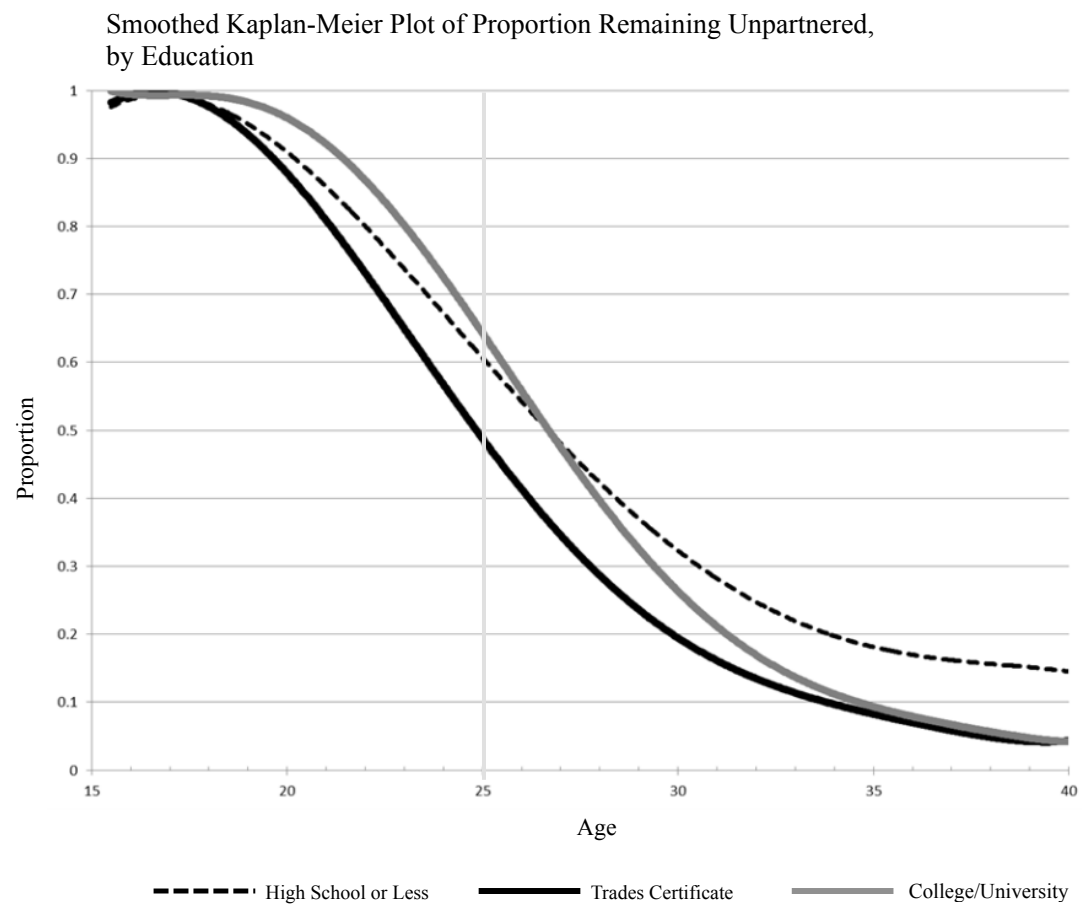
Figure 4.2 Kaplan-Meier Survival Curves, First Union by Education

Table 4.3 First Union Survival Time Distributions

Survival Time Distributions for Canadian Men's
First Union, by Education

Education	Age at First Union		
	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile
High School or less	22.8	26.8	32.5
Trades Certificate	21.8	25.0	29.0
College/University	23.8	26.7	30.4
Overall	23.1	26.3	30.5
n	3068		
failures	1907		
person-periods	74873.4		

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

There are also significant educational differences in age at first legal marriage ($p < 0.001$), which are shown in Figure 4.3 and Table 4.4. At younger ages, before 25, educational differences are very small largely because relatively few men have transitioned to marriage by this age. By age 26.8 one quarter of men with education beyond high school, either through training in the trades, college or university, have formed a legal marriage and approximately one year later, at 27.5, the same proportion of men with a high school diploma or less have entered into marriage. The difference between the least educated and those with either a trades, college, or university credential increases until about age 30. The median survival time to first marriage is similar for men with a trade certificate and with a college or university credential (31.4 and 30.2 respectively), but it takes significantly longer for 50 percent of those with high school to make the transition to marriage (age 34.5). At even older ages, the difference between those with high school or less and those with a trade certificate begin to shrink as the marriage timing of trades people who have yet to marry by age 30 become more similar to the marriage patterns of

those with a high school diploma or less. These less educated men are less likely to be ever-married by age 35 than men with a college diploma or university degree. In fact, 75 percent of highly educated men are married before age 36, but the comparable figure could not be computed for the other educational groups as fewer than 75 percent had married at the time of the survey.

Figure 4.3 Kaplan-Meier Survival Curves, First Marriage, by Education

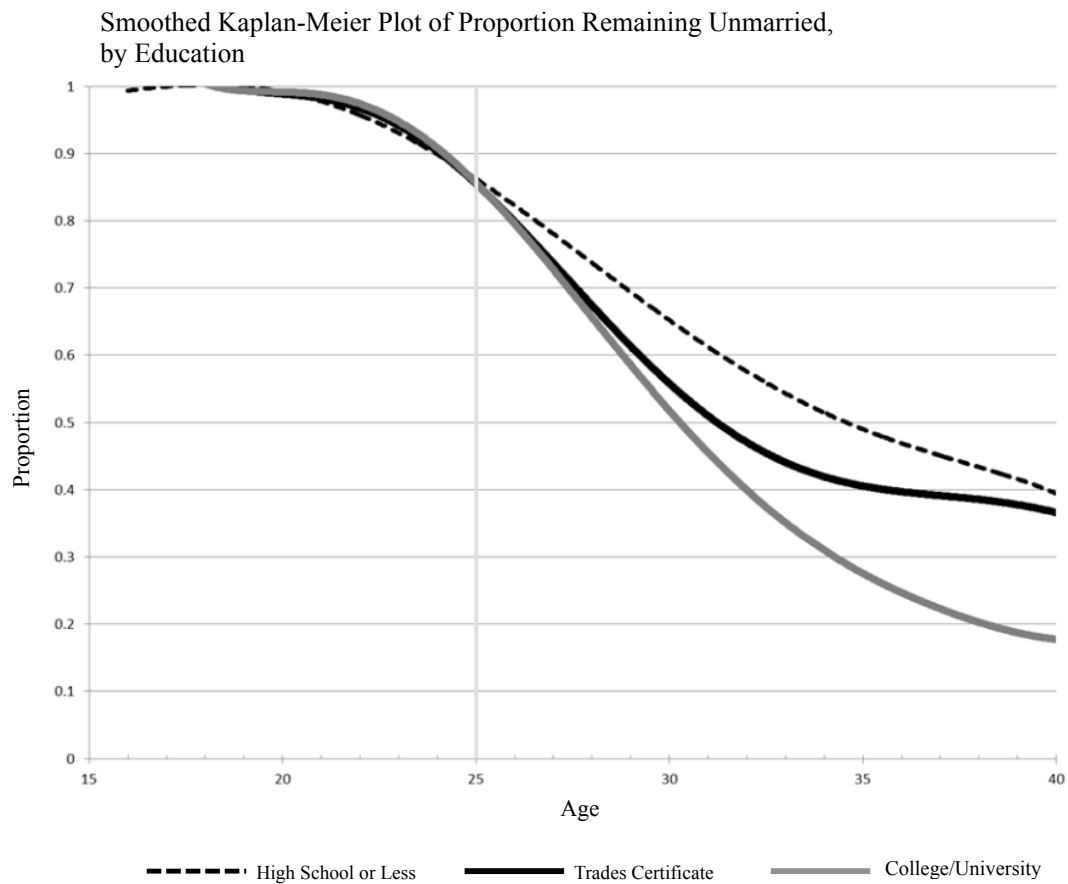


Table 4.4 First Marriage Survival Time Distributions

Survival Time Distributions for Canadian Men's
First Marriage, by Education

First Marriage			
Education	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile
High School or less	27.5	34.5	/
Trades Certificate	26.8	31.4	/
College/University	26.8	30.2	35.8
Overall	27.0	31.4	/
n	3076		
failures	1210		
person-periods	82426.4		

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Note: The third quartile of the age at first marriage could not be estimated for the high school or less group, or the trades certificate group because too few of the sample had married by the survey

The following set of Figures displays the same curves that are shown in Figures 4.1 to 4.3, but groups the survival curves of the three different events for each educational category together in order to compare the timing of each event relative to the other events by education. This allows for comparison of how compressed or dispersed these three transitions are for different educational groups by examining the relative distance between the three curves in each figure. Figure 4.4 shows the survival curves for first home-leaving, first partnership, and first marriage for men with a high school diploma or less, Figure 4.5 shows the same three curves for those with a trade certificate, and Figure 4.6 does the same for those with a completed college or university education. These curves plot the proportion surviving the event across ages and should not be mistaken for descriptions of any given individual's trajectory into adulthood. Of course, there may be individual situations where the order in which the transitions are completed are reversed, but I seek to show general trends in timing and ordering in these plots.

In general, all men regardless of education, tend to complete the three transitions being examined in the same order; first they leave the parental home, then they form a cohabiting union, and later marry. The number of years between the median survival time to these transitions, however, differs by education. Among the three educational categories, the most highly educated have the most condensed timing of the three transitions (Figure 4.6). The difference between the median survival time to the first transition (first home-leaving) and the median survival time to the last transition (first marriage) is only 6.2 years. On average, men with a trade certificate take 9.8 years to from the time they move out to live independently from their parents to when they marry (Figure 4.5), and those with a high school diploma or less tend to take the longest time between their first and last transitions (10.2 years), as shown in Figure 4.4.

Closer examination of the relative distance of the three survival curves on each figure shows that the large educational differences in spread in the typical ages at each transition are mostly due to delayed marriage between the two less educated groups. For the college and university educated there is 3.5 years between the median survival time to first union and to first marriage (Figure 4.6), for those with a trade certificate, there is 6.4 years between these two typical ages (Figure 4.5), and there is 7.7 years between the median survival time to first union and median survival time to first marriage for respondents with a high school diploma or less (Figure 4.4). This variation between age at first home-leaving and first union is much smaller than the variation in the time it takes on average to transition to marriage after forming a first union. The time between the age at home-leaving and age at first partnership varies from a low of 2.5 years for the least educated group (Figure 4.4), to a high of 3.4 years for tradesmen (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4 Kaplan-Meier Survival Curves, First Home-leaving, First Union, and First Marriage, Men with a High School Diploma or Less

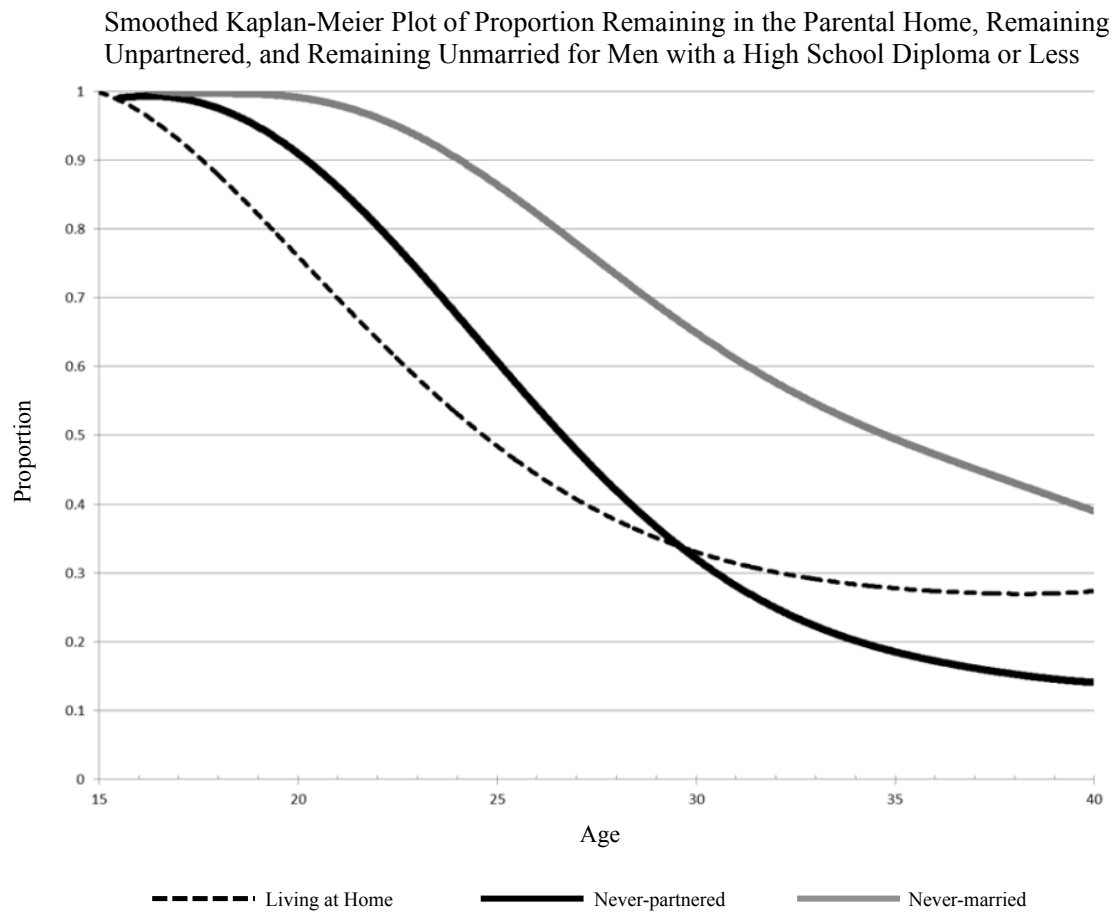


Figure 4.5 Kaplan-Meier Survival Curves, First Home-leaving, First Union, and First Marriage, Men with a Trade certificate

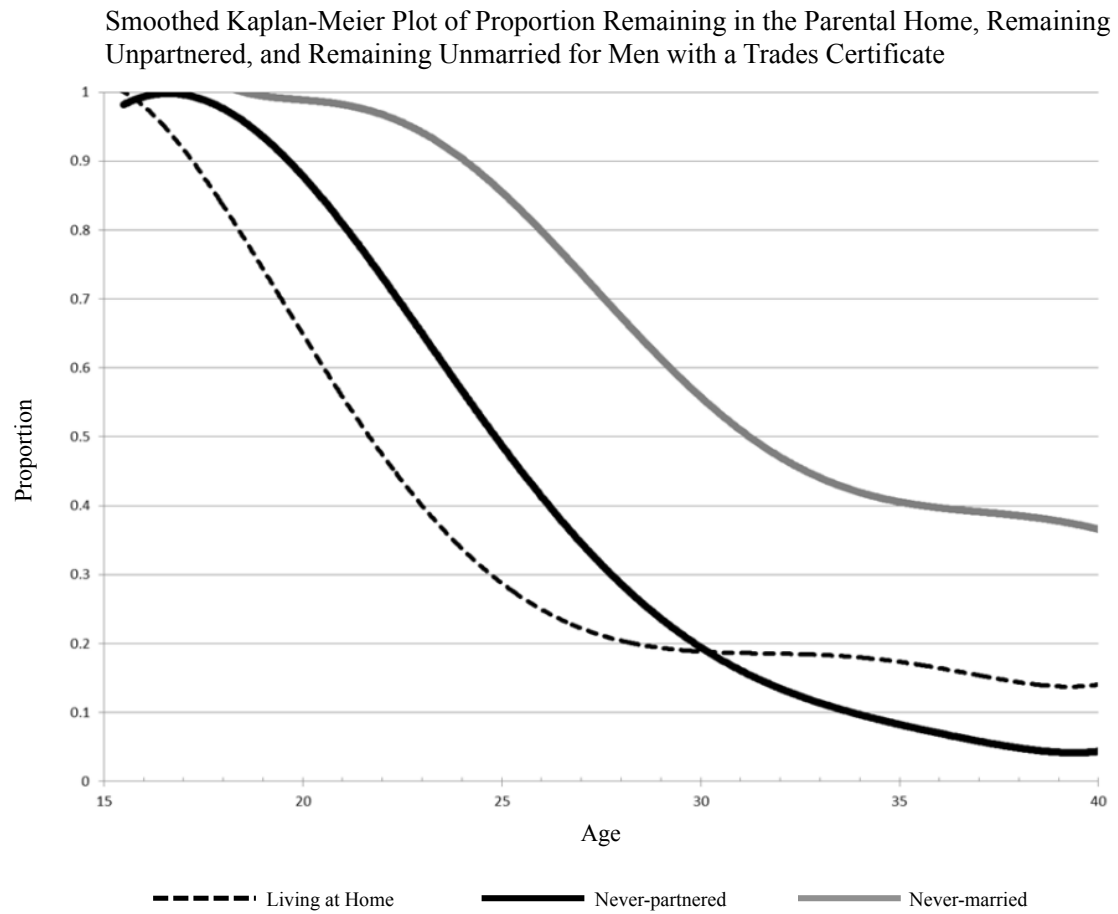
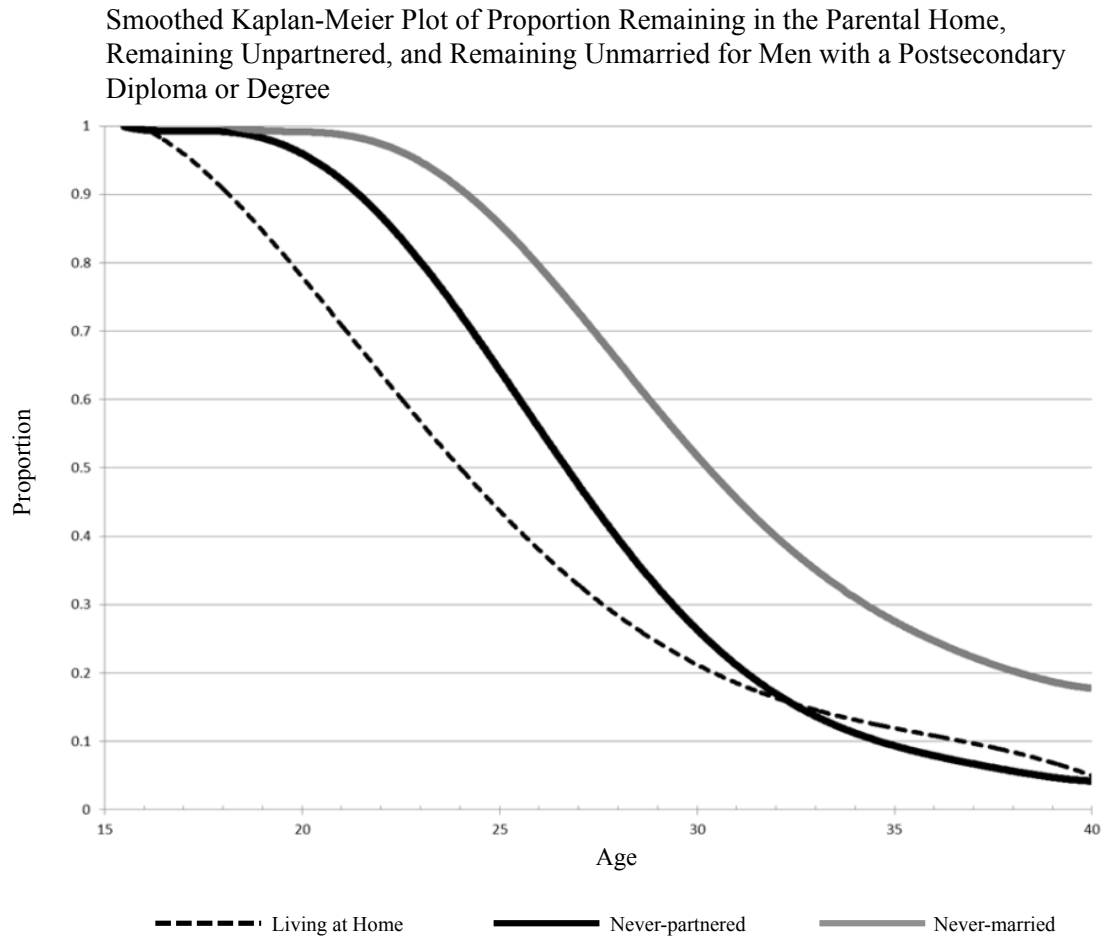


Figure 4.6 Kaplan-Meier Survival Curves, First Home-leaving, First Union, and First Marriage, Men with a Postsecondary Diploma or Degree



4.9.1.2 Multivariate Results

Next, I present a series of extended Cox proportional hazards models estimating the hazards of 1) first home-leaving, 2) first partnering, and 3) first marriage. For each outcome I estimate a bivariate model, which includes only education, and a multivariate model with controls for other covariates found to be associated with the timing of the transitions under study. These Cox proportional hazards models assume that educational differences in and the hazard of experiencing the event is constant over time (Alison,

1984). I tested this assumption and found that the associations between education and the hazards for each of the outcomes are not constant over time and therefore the assumption is violated. To mitigate this violation, I include an interaction between education and analysis time in all of the models (Singer & Willett, 2003). I divide analysis time into two categories; ages 15 to 24 and ages 25 and older and estimate the educational differences in the hazard of event occurrence separately in each of these time periods. I have illustrated these two time categories in Figures 4.1 to 4.3 with a vertical gray line at age 25.

The first outcome I consider is first home-leaving. Model 1 in Table 4.5 shows that, before age 25, there is no statistically significant difference between those with only a high school diploma or less and those with a college or university credential in the risks of first home-leaving. During the same time period, those with a trade certificate were more than 1.5 times more likely to move out of their parents' home compared to those who had completed other postsecondary education. This association completely reverses in the later time period, after age 25. The risks of first home-leaving are significantly lower for the less educated groups than for those who completed university or college.

These educational differences in the risks of first home-leaving in the two time periods hold even when including controls (Model 2 in Table 4.5). Once father's education, family structure, and place of birth are controlled, those in the high school or less category are at significantly lower risk of home-leaving in both the earlier and later periods. Model 2 also shows that respondents whose fathers have a high school diploma or less have a significantly higher hazard of home-leaving than those with fathers who are college or university educated. Men who lived in a home without two parents at anytime

before they were 15 also had significantly higher hazards of home-leaving. Men born in Quebec have similar hazards of home-leaving as those born in the rest of Canada, but those born outside of Canada have significantly lower hazards of home-leaving.

These results show that men with trade certificates are indeed more likely than either the more highly educated or the less educated to move out of their parents' home in early adulthood before the age of 25. This educational pathway seems to give men an early advantage on their transition into independence. However, this early advantage facilitating home-leaving disappears at older ages. If tradesmen had not started living independently by the time they were 25, they were much less likely to move out than their peers to completed other postsecondary credentials.

Table 4.5 Extended Cox Proportional Hazard Models for First Home-leaving

Extended Cox Proportional Hazard Models for First Home Leaving				
	Model 1		Model 2	
	Hazard Ratio	S.E.	Hazard Ratio	S.E.
Education * ages 15-24				
High School or less	0.97	0.08	0.83 *	0.07
Trades Certificate (College/University)	1.56 ***	0.16	1.43 ***	0.15
Education * ages 25+				
High School or less	0.43 ***	0.08	0.38 ***	0.08
Trades Certificate (College/University)	0.51 *	0.15	0.47 **	0.14
Father's Education				
High School or less			1.28 ***	0.10
Trades Certificate (College/University)			1.21	0.15
Family Structure until 15				
Did not live with 2 parents (Lived with 2 parents)			1.57 ***	0.14
Place of Birth				
Quebec			1.11	0.09
Outside Canada (Canada, outside Que)			0.59 ***	0.06
n	3143		2845	

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Notes: Reference categories in parentheses

Educational differences in the hazard of event occurrence are estimated separately in two periods of analysis time; between the ages of 15 and 24, and age 25 and older.

p<0.05 * p<0.01 ** p<0.001 ***

The next outcome I examine is first union formation. The bivariate and multivariate models are displayed in Table 4.6. As was the case for home-leaving, educational differences in the hazards of partnering are different at younger and older ages (Model 1). In the earlier time period, before the age of 25, men with a high school education or less

have 1.24-fold higher hazard of partnering than men with a college or university education. During this younger period, men with trade certificates have an even higher hazard of first partnership (1.70 times higher) than more highly educated men. At older ages, the difference between men with a trade certificate and men with higher education disappears. The difference between men in the high school category and the postsecondary category reverses; if not already partnered by age 25, men with a high school diploma or less have significantly lower odds of forming a union compared to the most educated men.

Model 2 in Table 4.6 builds on the bivariate model by including covariates. Even after controlling for other factors that are associated with the hazards of first partnering, the same educational differences seen in Model 1 are found in Model 2. Young men whose fathers did not complete any education beyond high school have significantly lower hazards of forming a first union. Men who grew up in families without two parents before the age of 25, and men who were born in Quebec have higher hazards of partnering compared to their counterparts.

As was the case for home-leaving, it appears that completing an apprenticeship in the skilled trades facilitates an early transition into romantic unions compared to other educational pathways. However, much like educational differences in home-leaving, the advantage that tradesmen have over their peers disappears after age 25.

Table 4.6 Extended Cox Proportional Hazard Models for First Union

Extended Cox Proportional Hazard Models for First Partnering				
	Model 1		Model 2	
	Hazard Ratio	S.E.	Hazard Ratio	S.E.
Education * ages 15-24				
High School or less	1.24 **	0.11	1.28 **	0.12
Trades Certificate (College/University)	1.70 ***	0.18	1.51 ***	0.17
Education * ages 25+				
High School or less	0.65 ***	0.07	0.66 ***	0.07
Trades Certificate (College/University)	1.01	0.13	0.97	0.13
Father's Education				
High School or less			1.00	0.07
Trades Certificate (College/University)			1.19	0.13
Family Structure until 15				
Did not live with 2 parents (Lived with 2 parents)			1.21 *	0.10
Place of Birth				
Quebec			1.43 ***	0.11
Outside Canada (Canada, outside Que)			0.96	0.07
n	4271		3853	

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Notes: Reference categories in parentheses

Educational differences in the hazard of event occurrence are estimated separately in two periods of analysis time; between the ages of 15 and 24, and age 25 and older.

p<0.05 * p<0.01 ** p<0.001 ***

Finally, I model the hazards of entering into legal marriage by education (Model 1), and by education with covariates (Model 2) in Table 4.7. There are no educational differences in the hazards of first marriage in the earlier period but this is not unexpected given that very few marriages occur before age 25 among men born in 1970 or later. In the later

period however, the educational differences in the hazard of first marriage are significant. Men with a trade certificate have significantly lower hazards of entering marriage than the college and university educated, and men with a high school diploma or less have even lower hazards of first marriage than the more highly educated.

The difference in hazards of first marriage during the later period between men trained in the trades and men with other postsecondary credentials is attenuated and loses statistical significance once other covariates are included in the Model 2 in Table 4.7. Father's education, and family structure before age 16 is not significantly associated with the hazards of entering marriage, but place of birth is strongly related to the hazards of marriage. Not surprisingly, men born in Quebec have much lower hazards of transitioning to marriage than men born in other Canadian provinces. Conversely, men born outside of Canada are 1.36 times higher hazards of marriage than native born Canadians outside of Quebec.

The transition to marriage is the one transition studied here that in which tradesmen seem to be disadvantaged. Despite facilitating an early transition out of the parental home and into a cohabiting union, an education in the trades is not associated with an earlier transition to legal marriage.

Table 4.7 Extended Cox Proportional Hazards Models for First Marriage

Extended Cox Proportional Hazard Models for First Marriage				
	Model 1		Model 2	
	Hazard Ratio	S.E.	Hazard Ratio	S.E.
Education * ages 15-24				
High School or less	1.11	0.16	1.32	0.19
Trades Certificate (College/University)	1.19	0.22	1.35	0.26
Education * ages 25+				
High School or less	0.54 ***	0.05	0.60 ***	0.06
Trades Certificate (College/University)	0.73 **	0.09	0.86	0.10
Father's Education				
High School or less			1.01	0.08
Trades Certificate (College/University)			0.94	0.12
Family Structure until 15				
Did not live with 2 parents (Lived with 2 parents)			0.82	0.09
Place of Birth				
Quebec			0.36 ***	0.05
Outside Canada (Canada, outside Que)			1.36 ***	0.11
n	4871		4390	

Source: 2011 General Social Survey

Notes: Reference categories in parentheses

Educational differences in the hazard of event occurrence are estimated separately in two periods of analysis time; between the ages of 15 and 24, and age 25 and older.

p<0.05 * p<0.01 ** p<0.001 ***

4.10 Discussion and Conclusion

Canadian and provincial governments and non-profit organizations promote the skilled trades as a way to facilitate the school-to-work and other adult transitions of Canadian youth. In this chapter I used in-depth interviews with young men certified in the skilled trades to explore their perceptions about how their educational choices affected their transition to adulthood, and the explanations they give for these expectations. The young men interviewed perceived that they transitioned into adulthood more quickly than their peers by avoiding student debt and getting their careers started earlier. However, the interviews with respondents also revealed that training in the skilled trades can require substantial financial investment and employment is often unstable and difficult to secure. Past research has also shown that the jobs in the skilled trades are particularly vulnerable to economic cycles (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005), and that tradespeople are more likely to experience unemployment than people with higher levels of education (Frank & Walters, 2013; Walters, 2004).

Despite large government investment in the recruitment, training, and retention of new skilled trades people, and the common perception that this educational path is a fast track to adult transitions, to my knowledge, no research to date has examined whether young men in the skilled trades do in fact make their transitions to adulthood more quickly than men with other educational backgrounds. The aim of this chapter was to determine whether these perceptions that trades people get a head start on the transition to adulthood compared to their peers who chose different educational paths are supported in nationally representative data on the home-leaving, union formation, and marriage behaviors of a recent cohort of Canadian men.

Do the trends in the timing found in the nationally representative data align with the perception of the young tradesmen interviewed that pursuing a skilled trade facilitates a timely transition into adulthood? On the whole, yes. Men in the trades begin living independently and form their first coresidential unions earlier than the other educational groups examined.

The results show that men with a skilled trade certificate leave home at a younger age on average than either those with a university or college credential or those with a high school diploma or less. The perception that entering a skilled trade facilitates a more timely transition to adulthood is well founded in the case of transitioning to independent living. University graduates tend to leave home at an older age than trades people and this is likely due to the length of a university education. University attendance itself may delay home-leaving, especially because I do not include living away from home for school as a true home-leaving event. Although many university students have part time jobs throughout their studies, most remain at least partly financially dependent on their parents and often live in dormitories or off campus student housing only quasi-independently (White, 1994).

However, considering that trades people also tend to leave home at younger ages than high school graduates and high school leavers, length of education cannot explain all of the variation in the educational differences in the timing of home-leaving since both groups are expected to finish full-time schooling at the same age. It is likely that young men who enter the trades are better off financially in their early twenties than high school graduates and higher school leavers and are therefore in a better position to establish an independent household at a younger age. Employment is a precondition for finishing a

trade certificate unlike other forms of education. In order to finish a trade certificate an apprentice must complete anywhere from 2000 to 5000 hours of relevant work, depending on the specific trade (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). Despite the difficulties finding employment that many of the respondents expressed, successful apprentices appear to be well poised to gain residential independence in early adulthood.

Young men educated in the skilled trades also tend to form their first coresidential partnerships at a younger age than their counterparts who undertook other postsecondary education and their peers who have a high school education or less. However, they tend to marry at older ages than the university and college educated, and at younger ages than those with less education. The relatively late transition into marriage of people in the skilled trades compared to those who complete college or university programs is contrary to what would be expected by Oppenheimer's (1988) career entry theory of marriage timing.

Oppenheimer's (1988) career entry theory of marriage timing posits that individuals with higher education delay marriage because longer periods of schooling delay the assortative mating process because of uncertainty about one's own future attributes and the future attributes of potential partners (Oppenheimer, 1988; Oppenheimer, Kalmijn & Lim, 1997). Oppenheimer argues that delays in the transition to work are a major source of this uncertainty so marriage is put off until important attributes, like earning potential and career prospects, are established. Following this logic, people who enter apprenticeship programs should marry at younger ages than any other educational group because their transition from school-to-work is highly structured and their future career attributes are largely determined when they start the program. However, as I argued in Chapter 2,

Oppenheimer's theory may be more appropriate for explaining first union formation rather than marriage *per se* as cohabitation has become a more common way to form a first partnership. This is also supported by the present results showing that men who completed apprenticeship do indeed tend to partner at younger ages than any of their peers.

Educational differences in the risks of leaving the parental home, forming a first union, and entering a first marriage are not explained by the background characteristics included in the models. Consistent with past research, young men with less educated fathers tend to experience a higher risk of leaving the parental home (e.g. Jones, 2009). Young men who grew up without two parents at home had both higher risks of home-leaving and partnering (e.g. South, 2001; Zhao, et al., 1995). Men born outside of Canada had lower risks of home-leaving (Mitchell, Wister & Gee, 2004), and those born in Quebec had higher risks of partnering, but a much lower risk of marrying compared to men born in other Canadian provinces (Le Bourdais & Lapierre-Adamcyk, 2004).

To explore the educational differences in the transition to adulthood more closely I also examined the relative time between each of adult transition events for each educational group and the hazards of experiencing each event in early young adulthood (before age 25), and later young adulthood (age 25 and older). Home-leaving generally occurs before forming a first partnership, and marriage occurs at a later age for young Canadian men regardless of education. College and university graduates have the most condensed transitions with the shortest time between home-leaving, partnering, and marriage of all the educational groups whereas the three transitions are more protracted for men with less

education. Most of the educational difference is due to the delaying of marriage among tradesmen and men with high school or less.

The results of these analyses reveal a more nuanced picture of tradesmen's transitions to adulthood. Education in the skilled trades seems to facilitate home-leaving and union formation in early adulthood (before age 25), but the relative advantage that this educational group has over their more educated peers disappears in later adulthood after the age of 25. During young adulthood, men with a trade certificate had higher hazards of home-leaving and partnering than more highly educated men. If they had not left the parental home by age 25 however, these men had lower hazards of home-leaving compared to the college and university educated.

Why do these educational differences differ across age? It is likely educational differences in other outcomes that affect the home-leaving and partnering decisions of young people, like employment and earnings, also change over the early life course. For instance, men who have a university degree were likely working part time, if at all, when they were 21 years old because they were likely enrolled in full time school (Curtis & Shani, 2002). Men who have a trades certificate on the other hand, are much more likely to be working full time at age 21 as they pursue their apprenticeship through paid, on-the-job training (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). These early advantage that tradespeople experience in the labour market may be leading to earlier home-leaving and partnering compared to more highly educated men who are still in school in early adulthood. At later ages, however, educational differences in employment and earnings are likely the reverse. In 2000, men with a university degree between the ages of 25 and 34 earned 31 percent more than men with a trades certificate (Boothby & Drewes, 2006), and were more likely

to be stably employed (Frank & Walters, 2012; Walters, 2004). Thus, trades people seem to lose their labour market advantage over the university educated as they progress through their young adulthood.

Unfortunately, the 2011 GSS does not have information about the earnings of the respondents at the time they experienced the transitions studied in this chapter which limits my ability to test this explanation. Another limitation of this study is that I examine the association between highest level of education attained at the time of the survey rather than the highest level of education attained when the transitions were experienced. It is possible that respondents' experiences of the transition to adulthood influenced their educational decisions rather than the reverse and future research should examine this more closely.

This chapter had largely descriptive aims because it is a first foray into the transitions of tradespeople. Future research should explore the mechanisms responsible for educational differences in timing of these and other transitions to adulthood. Employment trajectories, fertility histories, and information about student and household debt, and information about the local housing market could be useful in explaining the differences found in the present analysis. Examining education as a time varying measure is also a promising way of untangling the effects of schooling duration and level of education on the timing of the transition to adulthood.

In addition to examining other traditional markers of transitions in adulthood, like transitioning to parenthood, it would also be fruitful to examine the ways in which trades people could be feeling more adult in more subjective ways. There is evidence that

internal markers of adulthood, such as taking responsibility for one's own actions and making independent decisions, are more important to young peoples' sense of being an adult than the objective markers usually studied by demographers (Hendry & Kloepp, 2007). People who choose to enter into apprenticeship programs rather than engage in an extended identity moratorium by attending college or university may feel more certain about their future (Hendry & Kloepp, 2007) and may be more likely to feel like they have achieved adult status.

On the whole, this study shows that entering a skilled trade does seem to facilitate earlier transitions into independent living and conjugal partnership. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to examine the home-leaving and union formation behaviours of tradespeople in Canada. Studying the transitions to adulthood of people in the skilled trades is important because an easier transition into adult roles is one of the major benefits that governmental and non-profit organizations cite when trying to attract young people to apprenticeship programs. In this way, this chapter also contributes to a wider literature evaluating the outcomes of apprenticeship programs (e.g. Laporte & Mueller, 2011; Morrisette, 2008; Prasil, 2005).

4.11 References

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Chapter 5

5 Conclusion

The three empirical studies that make up this dissertation examined three of the key markers of the transition to adulthood, the ways in which they are experienced differently by recent cohorts of Canadians, and how these transitions differ between social groups with a particular focus on educational and regional differences. The three transitions examined were leaving the parental home, first partnership and the outcomes of these first unions, and first marriage. Understanding how the most recent cohorts of Canadians are experiencing these transitions to adulthood is important because it updates and extends our understanding of the widespread and ongoing changes in the family and in family behaviours that have been occurring under the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe, 1995). These changes may also have implications for fertility, child rearing contexts, and intergenerational relationships and transfers of resources (e.g. Bumpass, Sweet & Cherlin, 1991; Kerr et al., 2006), so ongoing assessment of the ways in which Canadians are forming unions and leaving home is essential.

In chapter 2, I documented well-known trends among older cohorts of Canadians towards forming first unions through cohabitation and delayed marriage and found that these trends have continued for recent Canadian cohorts indicating that the rise in these first cohabiting unions has largely offset declines in marriage for young Canadians today. I found however, that despite dramatic increases in the age at first marriage across the birth cohorts studied, age at first union has remained remarkably stable for Canadians born between 1930 and 1989. In Chapter 2, I also found that differences between Quebec

and the rest of Canada in the choice of first union type have decreased among the most recent cohort as the patterns in type of first union formation in the rest of Canada have become more like those in Quebec. Finally, I found that the positive association between education and age at first union is much stronger and more consistent across cohorts than the association between education and age at first marriage, suggesting that theories often used to explain marriage and marriage timing may be better suited to explaining first partnerships in Canada.

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that first premarital cohabiting unions formed more recently are no more likely to end in separation than similar unions formed in the past but that the former are less likely to transition to legal marriage. I also found that the determinants of first cohabiting union outcome, whether marriage or dissolution, have changed over time as the meaning and role of cohabitation has changed in different ways for different social groups. I found that although over time first cohabitating unions are less likely to transition into marriage for all Canadians, the less educated, those born in Quebec, and for those who form their first cohabiting unions early are much more likely to use these unions as an alternative to marriage and that these differences have become more dramatic over time.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I analyzed interviews conducted in 2010 with Canadian men certified in the skilled trades, aged 21 to 24. I found that these men feel like their educational choices facilitated their transition to adulthood and allowed them to reach adult status before their more highly educated peers by avoiding student debt and beginning their careers at a younger age. However, many of the respondents described making large financial investments in their training and experiencing very difficult labour

market conditions and very few of the interview participants had completed any of the transitions to the traditional markers of adulthood. My analysis of the educational differences in the home-leaving and partnering behaviours using national representative showed that the perceptions that apprenticeship programs lead to earlier transitions to adulthood are for the most part well founded. Canadian men with certificates in the skilled trades move out of their parental home and form their first partnership at an earlier age on average than either men with a lower or higher level of educational attainment. Tradesmen however, delay their first marriage longer than the college and university educated. These findings contribute to a growing body of research that suggests that socioeconomic inequalities being generated by the new economy are having a dramatic impact on family formation (McLanahan, 2009). Marriage is emerging as a marker of class, whereby the flight from marriage is increasingly concentrated among those with less education. Marriage offers greater stability and confers more financial, health, and social benefits than cohabiting relationships (McLanahan, 2009) which makes the retreat from marriage concerning.

5.1 Directions for Future Research

In this dissertation I examined three of the key markers of the transition to adulthood that demographers typically study. Future work should also examine the other markers including school completion, the beginning of employment, and the transition to parenthood to update and extend our understanding of how recent cohorts of Canadians are experiencing these transitions. Attention should be paid to how these five transitions interact with and influence one another and how some transitions can be reversed and experienced again. Understanding the complete trajectories into adulthood of today's

young Canadians is also important to gain a richer and more nuanced understanding of the transition to adulthood (Aassve, Billari & Piccarreta, 2007; Elzinga & Liefbroer, 2007).

In future work I plan to incorporate fertility and employment histories into the analyses presented in this dissertation because trajectories in these life domains are likely to be important determinants of the outcomes studied here. The conception and birth of children and the gaining and losing of employment have been shown to have complicated affects on union formation (e.g. Oppenheimer, Kalmijn & Lim, 1997; Rao, 1990), the transition from cohabitation to legal marriage (e.g. Bohnert, 2011; Guzzo & Hayford, 2010), and home-leaving (e.g. Holdsworth & Morgan, 2005; Ravanera, Rajulton & Burch, 1995). How the relationships between trajectories have changed over time is also a promising avenue for future research. Other work on changes in the transition to adulthood should also look more closely at the experiences of immigrants to Canada, and among young members of the LGBTQ community.

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of how recent cohorts of young Canadians are forming their first unions and leaving their parents' home, how their experiences are different from past generations of Canadians, and how these transitions are experienced differently for different social groups while also raising new and interesting questions for family demographers.

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Related Work Experience	<p><u>Research Assistant</u> The University of Western Ontario, University of Guelph 2009-2015</p> <p><u>Teaching Assistant</u> The University of Western Ontario, University of Guelph, McMaster University 2008-2011</p>

PUBLICATIONS:

- 2015 Margolis, Rachel & **Laura Wright**. Better off Alone than with a Smoker: The influence of partner's smoking behavior in later life. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. doi 10.1093/geronb/gbu220.
- 2014 Lehmann, Wolfgang, Alison Taylor & **Laura Wright**. Youth Apprenticeships in Canada: on their inferior status despite skilled labour shortages. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 66(4):572-589.
- 2013 **Wright, Laura**, David Walters & David Zarifa. Government Student Loan Default: Differences between Graduates of the Liberal Arts and Applied Fields in Canadian Colleges and Universities. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 50(1):89-115.
- 2012 **Wright, Laura** & Jerry P. White. Developing Oil and Gas Resources On or Near Indigenous Lands in Canada: An Overview of Laws, Treaties, Regulations and Agreements. *International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 3(2).
- 2010 **Wright, Laura**, Melinda Vasily & David Walters. "Analyzing and Interpreting Quantitative Data using SPSS." *The Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pearson Education Canada.
- 2010 Vasily, Melinda, **Laura Wright** & David Walters. "Qualitative Data Analysis Using NVivo Software: An Introduction." *The Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pearson Education Canada.
- 2010 Neuman, W. Lawrence. "Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches." Second Custom Edition. Edited by Vasily, Melinda, **Laura Wright** & David Walters.

PRESENTATIONS:

- 2015 Outcomes of First Premarital Cohabitations: Change and Stability in the Risks Factors of Separation and Marriage across Cohorts. Congress 2015: Canadian Population Society Annual Meeting, Ottawa, ON.
- 2015 Stability and Change in the Type and Timing of Union Formation Across Canadian Cohorts. Poster presented at the Population Association of America, San Diego CA.
- 2015 Using the 2011 General Social Survey to Examine Cohort Differences in the Type and Timing of First Partnerships in Canada. Research Data Centre at Western Speaker Series. *Invited talk*.

- 2015 From Zero-to-Sixty in Four Decades: stability and change in the type and timing of first partnership across Canadian cohorts. Poster presented at the Population Change and Lifecourse Strategic Knowledge Cluster Conference: Taking stock and looking forward, Ottawa, ON.
- 2014 The Timing of Family Formation: A comparison of those in the skilled trades and the university educated across the 1905-1995 Canadian cohorts. Congress 2014: Canadian Population Society Annual Meeting, St. Catharines, ON.
- 2014 Educational Differences in the Timing of First Marriage and Changes across Cohorts in Canada: Is a Trades Ticket a Ticket to Marriage? Poster presented at the Population Association of America, Boston MA.
- 2013 (Youth) Apprenticeships in Canada: on their inferior status despite skilled labour shortages. With W. Lehmann, A. Taylor & Z. Hamm. Journal of Vocational Education & Training Conference, Worcester College, Oxford, UK.
- 2013 Oil and Gas Development on Indigenous Lands in Canada: Laws, Treaties, Regulations, and Agreements. Congress 2013: Canadian Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Victoria British, Columbia.
- 2012 Oil and Gas Development on Indigenous Land: The Canadian Experience. Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Graduate Seminar, University of Western Ontario. *Invited talk*.
- 2011 Exploring the Effects of Aboriginal-Specific Early Childhood Education Program Participation Congress 2011: Canadian Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Fredericton, New Brunswick.
- 2011 Postsecondary Student Loan Defaults in Canada. With M. Vasily & D. Walters. Congress 2011: Canadian Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Fredericton, New Brunswick.
- 2010 An Examination of Student Loan Default Rates by Level of Study and Field of Study. With M. Vasily & D. Walters. American Sociological Association: 105th Annual Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.