Inequality and the Life Course: Differentials in Trajectories and Timing of Transitions of Canadian Women

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Differentials in Trajectories and Timing of Transitions of Canadian Women

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Abstract

There has been a recent concern over polarization of family life among the younger Canadians; that is, differences in family life are accentuated by the differences in their social and economic situations. Using the retrospective data on life course events gathered through the 2001 General Social Survey, we show that there is basis for this concern - the timing of transitions and early life trajectories of Canadian women born from 1966 to 1975 do differ by parental socio-economic status. However, the influence of social inequality on the life course is not a recent phenomenon - results of our analysis show that the timing of transitions have also differed by social status among women born from 1926 to 1945. What is unique to younger cohorts is that, through a process of diffusion, similar influence of social status is also seen in the other life events such as cohabitation. We discuss the implications of these findings for policies.

20 March 2006

A. Introduction

Young Canadians, compared to their forebears, delay their transition to adulthood and follow more complex family life course trajectories. They leave their parental home, complete their schooling, enter the labour force, and form unions at older ages (Ravanera, Rajulton, and Burch, 1998; Ravanera et al., 2002). However, the socio-economically disadvantaged are observed to be forming unions, through marriage but more often by cohabitation, and having children at ages younger than those in better socio-economic situations. The young age at family formation, associated with greater likelihood of being dissolved, translates to greater number of lone parents. This is referred to as polarization of family life; that is, disparities in social and economic spheres may be intensifying the differences in family formation and dissolution, which in turn result in differential development outcome of children (Schulze and Tyrell, 2002; Martin, 2000; Bianchi, 2000; Lochhead, 2000, 2001).

Using retrospective data gathered through the 2001 General Social Survey, this paper examines the trends by social status in life course timing and trajectories of Canadian women born from 1966 to 1975 who were 26-35 years old at survey date. To put the findings for young women in perspective, the trends by social status in the timing of experience of life events of women born from 1926 to 1965 are also shown. We explore some possible social mechanisms to help explain the social status differences in timing and trajectories. In particular, we propose that differential constraints in the decision making process and the diffusion of divorce and cohabitation by social status are possible mechanisms leading to variations in timing and trajectories of family life. We conclude with some implications for policy considerations. But first, we briefly discuss our data and methods.

B. Data and Methods

The 2001 General Social Survey on Family History is a country-wide survey of Canadians aged 15 and older, excluding residents of Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut and full-time residents of institutions (Statistics Canada, 2003). The survey was conducted by Statistics Canada with a representative sample of 24310 men and women. This paper focuses on 10280 women born from 1926 to 1975 with particular attention on 2350 young women born from 1966 to 1975. The survey gathered information on the respondent’s family such as details pertaining to parents and children, about event histories of education, work, and unions through both common-law and marriage, and various socioeconomic characteristics. For analysis of timing and trajectories, we use retrospective information on age at which events were experienced.

Two parental variables, mother’s education and father’s occupation when the respondent was aged 15 were used to derive the social status variable. Parental social status is relevant to the respondents’ transitions, particularly those that happen at early life. We
ranked mother’s education and father’s occupation into low, middle, and high and then combined them to obtain the social status variable\(^1\).

We analyzed the data using the following methods for event-history analysis.

1. To explore the differentials in timing by social status, we constructed single-decrement life tables of age at experience of various events for 5-year birth cohorts. In the discussion of the results from these life tables, we use the median ages.

2. The trajectories through five life course events - education, work, cohabitation marriage, and first birth (also referred to as “states”) are traced for the two 5-year birth cohorts, 1966-70 and 1971-75. For this procedure, we used the LIFEHIST program that computes the conditional probabilities of making specific trajectories on the assumption that past history is important (that is, a non-Markovian assumption). (Rajulton, 2001). Essentially, the procedure is a multiple-decrement life table technique that estimates the conditional probabilities of transition to each state and the mean duration of stay in each state. In this paper, we focus on two specific trajectories: (a) trajectories to marriage without cohabitation; and (b) trajectories to marriage through cohabitation. For both trajectories we show the probabilities of going through specific trajectories; and the age at which the trajectory is traversed.

3. To examine the variation of trajectories by social status, we used a multivariate logistic regression using as dependent variable the trajectories to marriage through completion of tertiary education and starting regular work but without going through cohabitation.

The independent variables included are birth cohort, family-related variables (social status, family structure), variables to capture culture and location (religion, migration status, region of residence), and variables that denote values

\(^1\) Mother’s education was ranked as low (some high school or lower), middle (high school graduate or some post-secondary) or high (post-secondary graduate or higher). And, based on the prestige scores established by Goyder, Thompson, and Dixon (2003) and applied to the Standard Occupational Classification provided in the survey, father’s occupations was ranked as follows: Low (Sales and Services Occupations, Occupations Unique to Processing and Manufacturing, Occupations Unique to Primary Industry), Middle (Trades, Transport, and Equipment, Business, Finance, and Administrative Occupation, Artistic, Culture, Recreational, Sport, and Occupations in Social Sciences, Education) and High (Management Occupations, Natural and Applied Sciences, and Health Occupations). The two rankings were added and the final social status rank was assigned as follows: low (1,2), middle (3,4), high (5,6). A score of one is possible when information on mother’s education is missing.

Where mother’s education is missing, the measurement of social status is based only on father’s occupation. Where both mother’s education and father’s occupation were missing, social status was imputed from the information on the respondent’s education and occupation, and as it turned out, almost all of them were assigned to either low or middle social status.
(importance of family, importance of paying job). These variables are meant to signify the availability of resources that facilitate acquisition of higher education and entry into labour force, and the presence of values that favour marriage over cohabitation. In keeping with the purpose of this paper, we mainly discuss the influence of parental social status.

We use individual (fractional) sampling weights in all statistical procedures. This is necessary as Statistics Canada uses complex sampling procedures for its surveys (Statistics Canada, 2003).

C. Timing of Various Transitions

As can be seen in Figure 1, young women of low status go through events from leaving their parents to becoming a parent themselves earlier in life than those from higher social status. Among women born in 1966-70, for example, low status women leave home at 21, while high status women leave at almost 23. The gaps are bigger in events related to family formation (first union, marriage, and parenthood) than in home-leaving or in start of regular work. For example, a high status woman, on the average, gave birth to her first child at age 31 whereas a low status woman did so at age 26, a difference of 5 years. In contrast, low status women start regular work only a year and a half earlier than high status women. The trend is similar for women born in 1971-75, though the differences are not as big as in the earlier cohort, particularly between the middle and high status women.

These differences in timing of transitions by social status are not a recent phenomenon as the differentials hold true even for the older cohorts. As shown in Table 1, for instance, women of low status born in 1926-30 married at age 22.4 whereas women of high social status married at 23.6. While the magnitude of difference fluctuated, the direction has been consistent in that the high social status women experienced family formation events later than women from low status (Figure 2).

D. Trajectories to Marriage

The series of median ages at experience of each event as shown in Figure 2 might be seen as reflecting the trajectories that women of different social status traverse. However, not everyone goes through all these events and neither are the events always experienced in the sequence shown. To trace trajectories through these various events, a more refined tool is needed. LIFEHIST is one such tool and is used here to follow the trajectories of women of interest here – those born in 1966-70 and 1971-75. We first show a few trajectories traversed by these young women, in particular, the direct trajectories to marriage, and trajectories that pass through cohabitation. In order to detect the influence of parental social status, we then present the results of logistic regression.

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2 The median age at school completion is not shown as the survey did not ask the date at school completion from those who did not graduate. The median age at completion from post-secondary education of the respondents did not vary greatly.
1. Direct Routes to Marriage. As can be seen in Table 2 forming a family through marriage without going through cohabitation is still common among young Canadian women, though the probability of going through this pathway is decreasing. Among women born in 1966-70, for example, the total probability of five trajectories to marriage that do not go through cohabitation is 0.43, whereas it is 0.39 among the 1971-75 birth cohort (see the last row of Table 2, page 1). The single most common trajectory for both cohorts of women is the graduation → work → marriage, with a probability of about 0.15. A smaller proportion of women go through the work → marriage trajectory, that is, without graduation (0.12 and 0.07 for 1966-70 and 1971-75 cohorts respectively) and, non-negligible proportions directly marry without having graduated from post-secondary education or going for regular work. This direct trajectory has a probability of 0.08 and 0.06 for 1966-70 and 1971-75 birth cohorts. In general, the probabilities of shorter routes to marriage – that is, marriages that are not preceded by either graduation or work – are lower for the 1971-75 than for the 1966-70 birth cohorts.

2. Marriage Preceded by Cohabitation. With the rapid spread of cohabitation, one would expect a great proportion of women cohabiting first before marrying. However, the probability of marriage preceded by cohabitation is still lower than that of direct marriage even among these young cohorts. The total probabilities of the most common trajectories to marriage through cohabitation are just 0.09 and 0.11 for the 1966-70 and 1971-75 cohorts respectively (see last row of Panel 2 in Table 2). However, these probabilities could increase as the preferred first union of the younger cohorts (particularly the 1981-85 birth cohorts) is cohabitation rather than marriage (results not shown in the table).

3. Age at Completion of Trajectories. Table 2 also shows the duration of stay in each state, which when summed up, provides the age at reaching the final event in the trajectory. In general, the more the number of events included in a trajectory, the longer the time it takes to experience the last event. Thus, the age at marriage of those who go through both graduation and work is generally higher than the age of those who skip one or the other event. For instance, women in the 1966-70 birth cohorts marry at almost 25 years of age when they go through the graduation → work → marriage trajectory, whereas those who take the work → marriage trajectory, that is, without completion of post-secondary education, marry at about age 23.

Similarly, those whose marriage is preceded by cohabitation marry at older ages than those who marry without cohabiting. Thus, women belonging to the 1966-70 birth cohort who go through the graduation → work → cohabitation → marriage trajectory marry at almost 29 years of age, or almost 4 years later than those who go through the graduation → work → marriage. However, if one were to take cohabitation as the start of family formation when the union is followed by legal marriage, then family formation starts at about the same or even at earlier age, particularly among the younger cohorts. Thus for women born in 1971-75, those whose trajectory is work → cohabitation → marriage cohabit at about 22 years of age, which is the same age at start of family formation of those who went directly for marriage, that is, those whose trajectory is work → marriage.
4. Social Status and Trajectories to Marriage. As seen in Table 2, women follow various pathways to marriage but do the trajectories differ by social status? One way of answering this question is to trace trajectories separately for women belonging to each social status. However, the small sample size in each 5-year age group precludes doing this type of analysis. We thus opted to use a multivariate technique with social status as one of the independent variables. The dependent variable is dichotomous that takes a value of one if a person goes through either of two trajectories: (1) graduation → work → marriage and (2) work → graduation → marriage. These two trajectories (also referred to, for convenience, as preferred trajectories) go through completion of post-secondary education and start of regular work before marriage that is not preceded by common-law union. A substantial proportion of young women (16%) have gone through these preferred trajectories.

As seen in Table 3 (Model 1), in comparison to high status women, the odds ratios of going through these preferred trajectories are significantly lower among the low and middle status women (0.37 and 0.58 respectively). This means that low and middle status women are more likely than high status women to take other pathways to marriage, that is, a more direct route that does not go through graduation from post-secondary education or having a regular work, or a marriage that is preceded by cohabitation. Also seen in Table 3 is that values that women hold have significant effects on the trajectories that they traverse, however, the inclusion of values variables in the model does not alter the odds ratios of the social status variables (Model 2).

E. Toward a Possible Explanation

Our findings have pointed to the impact of social status on timing and trajectories of life course events, however, as Hedström and Swedberg (1998:11) note, to understand why social class (or social status) is associated with a certain outcome (here, timing and trajectories), “it is necessary to introduce and explicate the generative mechanisms that might have produced the observed differences…” It is imperative that we find an explanatory mechanism if we hope to draw implications of the findings for policy purposes. One such social mechanism may be found in the decision making of individuals, a model that has been used in the study of demographic and family-related behaviours such as fertility and migration, marriage, and divorce (Burch, 1980).

1. Constrained Decision Making

Using the basic model of rational decision making, we posit that the timing of experiencing an event is an outcome of a deliberate decision and a choice made among alternatives that involved evaluation of consequences. The choice made is one that is perceived to yield the best set of consequences for the decision-maker (Burch, 1980: 5). The decision-making process and effectiveness of decisions vary depending upon several factors, among which, the kind of decisions being made and the characteristics of
individuals making them are important considerations (Galotti, 2002: 6). In particular, the motivation, attitude, and beliefs (MAB) of individuals determine the direction of their choices (Miller and Godwin, 1977: 85) [For more details on constrained decision making or “bounded rationality” see, Simon, 1982, 1997, Simon et al, 1992, Galotti, 2002, Ranyard, Crozier, and Svenson, 1997]. Furthermore, the decision making process takes place within contexts or situations of the individuals. As our focus is on social status, our attempts at explanation will concentrate on the family and community contexts rather than on individual characteristics and their MAB systems, which are better explained by psychologists.

In their book, *Psyche and Demos: Individual Psychology and the Issues of Population*, Miller and Godwin (1977: 99) identified four important contexts within which decisions are made: (a) the family; (b) the community; (c) the life course; and (d) the random life event contexts. We hypothesize that these contexts, particularly the first three, could explain some of the differences by social status in the timing and trajectories of life course events. Random life events (for example, accidents) necessarily imply that they could happen to anyone regardless of social status and thus will not be further discussed.

2. Parental Social Status: A Family Context

Figure 3 illustrates that constrained decision-making applies to all life course events and that events experienced earlier have impact on later ones. Of these early life events, the family social status effect on timing is probably manifested most strongly through school completion. Parental education and income are two of the factors that influence the quality and quantity of time and resources invested on children’s education. In Canada (where state support for education extends to secondary education), the effect of parental social status would likely be more discernible at tertiary or higher levels of schooling. Children of poor parents have greater constraints in going for post-secondary schooling, and thus would be more likely to leave school at younger age. Having left school, they would then have a greater likelihood of moving on to other life course events; that is, the life course context of their decision-making process would be different from that of children who would have completed higher education. As part of their survival mechanism, the former would need to find a job, or find a partner either in cohabiting or marital union and consequently become parents at younger age than those with higher status parents.

3. Community Context and Social Status: Opportunity Structures

Miller and Godwin (1997: 100) identified structures in the community that have bearing on the decision making, which are: patterns of social opportunity (or *opportunity* structures), acceptable and expected behaviour (*normative* structures), the incentives and disincentives in the community and its institutions (*incentive* structures), and the legal rights and obligations (*rights* structure). The first three structures are relevant to the findings that relate social status to the timing and trajectories. The opportunity structure would most likely manifest its impact on earlier life events of school completion, work
start, and home-leaving, whereas the normative and incentive structures would be more relevant for union formation and entry into parenthood.

Ravanera, Rajulton, and Burch (2003) showed that opportunities in communities have an effect on the timing of early life transition, particularly for school completion. In areas with greater opportunities for schooling, young Canadians complete their schooling, and consequently obtain higher education, 2 to 3 years later. However, access to facilities for higher education could vary by social status. At the early stage of expansion of facilities or when opportunities are limited, those with higher social status are better able to take advantage of the available opportunities (Ravanera and Rajulton, 2004a).

The opportunities for work could also vary by social status and by the types of jobs that are available. Availability of jobs that do not require high skills or education would have the effect of decreasing the age at entry into the labour force but would most likely be filled by those who have stopped schooling earlier. With job growth in high skill area, the community opportunity structures would increase the age at entry into regular work, most likely, among those who have the individual or family resources to afford the training for such jobs.

Community opportunities would have its impact on the timing of leaving the parental home in terms of availability of affordable rental accommodations. Ravanera, Rajulton, and Burch (2004) found that there is a significantly higher risk of home-leaving among those residing in small urban area, possibly an indication of greater availability in small urban areas of affordable rental accommodations, which may be few in rural areas and expensive in large urban areas. While those of higher social status are in a better position to take advantage of this opportunity, there are other factors affecting home-leaving as well because some other studies found that parental resources are not significantly related to the timing of home leaving (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1999: 209 cited in Beaujot, 2006: 107). However, Goldscheider and Goldscheider (1999) did find that leaving home to attend post-secondary education is more likely when parents have more resources.

The effects of opportunity structures on completion of schooling, entry into work, and home-leaving are extended to family formation as well because all these become part of the life course context.

4. Community Context and Social Status: Normative Structures

The normative structure as a context in decision making is salient to the findings that the family formation trajectories of low social status women are more likely to pass through cohabitation than those of women from higher social status. Ravanera, Rajulton, and Burch (2005) find that divorce and cohabitation have undergone a process of diffusion. Both these behaviours started among those with high social status who would have had the resources to defy prevailing norms and to cope with the adverse outcomes of their behaviours. With the change in behaviour norms, formally signalled by adoption of laws
governing such behaviour - for example, the 1968 Divorce Act, and the granting of rights to common-law unions similar to those of marriage in the 1980s - social control diminishes and individual factors exert stronger influence on the behaviour. Divorce, while not dealt with in this paper, is relevant because its diffusion may have propelled the diffusion of cohabitation. That is, when norms regarding exits from marriage are loosened, it was just a matter of time before norms regarding entries to marriage became less stringent as well.

While opportunity structures limit or constrain the choices in the decision-making process, the change in the norms regarding divorce and cohabitation has expanded the choices. These two contexts of opportunity and normative structures, together with a prevailing social norm that individuals have to be materially or financially prepared to form their own family, might help explain the differential by social status in timing and trajectories. For instance, a woman who has limited resources to take advantage of opportunities for higher schooling would quit after high school and find work, most likely in a job that does not require high skill. A relationship she forms will probably be with a man in similar situation; that is, with low education and in low status job. Because marriage requires that they be materially prepared to form a family and because society no longer frowns on cohabitation, they might enter into a cohabiting relationship with (or without) the intention of marriage in the future. They may move on to becoming parents as a child within a cohabiting relationship is increasingly tolerated. In contrast, a woman with resources (most likely from parents) would go for higher education and would take the time to find a secure, well paying job. She would most likely be in a better position to find a partner with similar high education and good job, and would then be materially prepared to enter into marriage. If she chooses to go for cohabitation, she would be in a good position to move on to marriage, should she decide to do so.

4. Community Context and Social Status: Incentive Structures

We see the relevance of the incentive structure in explaining social status effect mainly for entry into parenthood. As seen in our analysis, the differential by social status in the timing of having a first child is wider than for earlier life events of home-leaving, work start, and union formation. This might find explanation in the incentives or disincentives to have a child. The disincentives to parenthood particularly for women are mainly the opportunity foregone in the labour market and the increase in time spent for housework. This incentive/disincentive structure interacts with value systems of individuals (Miller and Godwin, 1977: 100) and seems to vary by social status. Hakim (2003) categorizes women as home-centered, adaptive, or work-centered on basis of their preferences. Home-centered women have family life and children as priorities, the work-centered are most committed to employment, and the adaptive are the in-between who want work but are not totally committed to it. It follows that, compared to the other two groups, work-centered women would put larger investment for education and training thereby delaying or even foregoing parenthood. Family-oriented women would take the shorter trajectories to parenthood, by-passing other early life course events particularly those related to work.
and education. Using information from the 2001 General Social Survey, Ravanera and Rajulton (2004b) find high status women have factor scores that are high for job-related values and low for family-related values (indicating work-centered tendencies); in contrast, low status women have high score for family-related values and low score for job-related values (that is, tending toward being home-centered).

F. Policy and Research Implications

Miller and Godwin, 1977: 226-232 identify decision-making issues that would benefit from policies, two of which are relevant to our findings about social status and the life course timing and trajectories: (1) ineffective decisions; and (2) conflict between individuals and society.

1. Ineffective Decisions. The issue of ineffective decisions is salient to the timing and trajectories of low status women, whose decisions would be considered rational given the contexts in which they were made. However, these rational decisions are ineffective because of the greater likelihood of adverse consequences of the decisions for themselves and their children. This situation could benefit from distributive policies, that is, taking resources from the general fund and distributing them to individuals or groups (Miller and Godwin, 1977: 226), which should be aimed at altering the opportunity structures and the access to such opportunities to benefit those with low status. Because decisions are made within life course contexts, these policies would most likely have greater impact when aimed at earlier life events.

Distributive policies could take several forms some of which could be: assistance for access to higher education and policies promoting job creation for the young, with the latter policies touching on the roles of the private sector as well (Beaujot, Ravanera, and Burch, 2006: 52). As decisions are made within family context, policies aimed at helping parents would have beneficial effects on children, whose decision contexts could be made better than those of their parents. Support for parents who find themselves in difficulty (for example, lone parents) would be helpful (Beaujot, Ravanera, and Burch, 2006: 49-52).

2. Conflict between Individuals and Society. The issue of conflict between individuals and society pertains to decisions regarding delays in transitions, particularly in the transition to parenthood. Canadian women are delaying having their first child, and the delay is longest for high status women. While part of the delay is a consequence of longer period for education and finding a job, there is an additional period of waiting between marital union and having a child. While the decision to delay may be beneficial to individual women and their children, this conflicts with society’s function of regeneration. The below replacement level of fertility mostly brought about by delays in child-bearing and the small number of children per woman is leading to population aging (Beaujot, Ravanera, and Burch, 2006: 5). This conflict requires “a change in incentives structures surrounding the individual’s choice so that the incentives involved would lead
him or her to make a choice compatible with the social interest” (Miller and Godwin, 1977: 232).

The change in incentive structures could be done through policies that would facilitate a balancing of work and family life including provisions for parental leave and benefits for children either as family allowance or tax deductions; labour market policies that would allow reduced hours of work such as improving the benefits for part-time work; and provision for child care services (Beaujot, Ravanera, and Burch, 2006: 50).

3. Some Implications for Research.

Our use of “social status” as indicator of social inequality and measured through ranking of education and occupations variables is mainly dictated by the type of data available, and as seen from the results of our analysis, social status does differentiate life course timing and trajectories. Had we made our analysis based on “social class” measured in terms of ownership, wealth and income, in addition to education and occupation (Grabb, 2002: 224), the observed effects of social inequality might have been even greater. In general, surveys on family life do not collect data on ownership and wealth; and while income information is gathered, many respondents choose not to provide the information.

Furthermore, as McMullin (2004) notes, understanding social inequality requires an examination of the intersection of social class, age, gender, and ethnicity. In this paper, we focus on social status; on women whose life course timing and trajectories are most certainly different from the men’s; and, take age into account by the use of birth cohort. Lacking in our analysis is the ethnicity factor. It is conceivable that the timing and trajectories of life course differ by ethnicity; for example, the life course of a typical aboriginal woman would most likely be markedly different from that of a woman of say, English origin. And, the difference might be even greater if the former belongs to a low and the latter to a high status or class. In general, country-wide surveys in Canada do not allow examination by different ethnic groups, the exception being surveys that are particularly focused on ethnic groups such as aboriginal surveys or ethnic diversity surveys. This is because surveys aim at representative samples, typically excluding residents of Northwest Territories and Nunavut, with the results that the number in the sample from ethnic groups are too small for inclusion in statistical analysis. In future surveys, be they longitudinal or cross-sectional, a solution may be to over-sample groups that are deemed to lead different life course from the “mainstream” population, for example, aboriginals, and visible minority immigrant groups.

In this analysis we made use of retrospective information about timing of life events and of parental characteristics when the respondents were growing up. Currently, there are proposals for prospective longitudinal surveys that would cover the different facets of a life course including health, income, family events, etc. While they could be a rich source of data, these surveys would need to collect information over several years, probably 10 or more years, before they yield a better understanding of life course differentials and trajectories. As alternative or complement to large, country-wide representative surveys, information on the life course may be obtained from small qualitative surveys that gather
retrospective and in-depth information on topics aimed to be covered by prospective longitudinal surveys. These could be designed such that samples are representative of groups whose life courses are deemed to differ significantly, possibly groups that vary by social class and ethnicity.

References:


Figure 1A: Age at Experience of Early Life Events
Women, 1966-70 Birth Cohort

Figure 1B: Age at Experience of Early Life Events
Women, 1971-75 Birth Cohort
Table 1: Median Ages at Life Course Transitions, By 5-Year Age Groups and Social Status
Women, 1926-1965 Birth Cohorts

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Figure 2: Median Age at Transition, Women, by Various 5-Year Birth Cohort

1926-30

1941-45

1946-50

1956-60

Work Start Home-Leav First Marr. Parenthood

Age

Low Middle High

Low Middle High

Low Middle High

Low Middle High
Table 2: Probabilities and Mean Duration of Family Formation Trajectories  
By 5-Year Birth Cohort, Women, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel 1: Common Trajectories to Marriage Without Cohabitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. O - Grad - Work - Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) Origin to Post-Secondary Graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) PS Graduation to Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Work to Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajectory Probability/ Age at Final Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. O - Work - Grad - Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) Origin to Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Work to Post-Secondary Graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Post-Secondary Graduation to Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajectory Probability/ Age at Final Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. O - Grad - Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) Origin to Post-Secondary Graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) PS Graduation to Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajectory Probability/ Age at Final Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. O - Work - Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) Origin to Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Work to Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajectory Probability/ Age at Final Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. O - Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) Origin to Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Prob. of Trajectories to Marriage without Cohabitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N -- number of cases; Prob. -- Probability of Transition; Dur. -- Mean years of stay in the state before transition
Table 2(Cont'd): Probabilities and Mean Duration of Family Formation Trajectories
By 5-Year Birth Cohort, Women, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1966-70</th>
<th></th>
<th>1971-75</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Panel 2: Common Trajectories to Marriage through Cohabitation

B1. O - Grad - Work - Cohab - Marriage

(I) Origin to Post-Secondary Graduation  
414 0.34 20.7  
436 0.38 21.0

(ii) PS Graduation to Work  
313 0.77 1.2  
327 0.77 1.0

(iii) Work Start to Cohabitation  
88 0.33 4.6  
98 0.39 2.7

(iv) Cohabitation to Marriage  
36 0.46 2.2  
35 0.50 1.9

Trajectory Probability/ Age at Final Transition  
0.04 28.7  
0.06 26.6

B2. O - Work - Grad - Cohab - Marriage

(I) Origin to Work  
484 0.40 18.3  
415 0.36 18.1

(ii) Work to Post-Secondary Graduation  
104 0.22 3.4  
125 0.33 3.5

(iii) Post-Secondary Graduation to Cohabitation  
32 0.32 2.2  
35 0.31 2.0

(iv) Cohabitation to Marriage  
12 0.43 2.5  
16 0.65 1.8

Trajectory Probability/ Age at Final Transition  
0.01 26.4  
0.02 25.4

B3. O - Work - Cohab - Marriage

(I) Origin to Work  
484 0.40 18.3  
415 0.36 18.1

(ii) Work to Cohabitation  
171 0.37 4.0  
127 0.35 3.8

(iii) Cohabitation to Marriage  
47 0.28 2.0  
23 0.22 2.6

Trajectory Probability/ Age at Final Transition  
0.04 24.3  
0.03 24.5

Total Prob. of Trajectories to Marriage through Cohabitation  
0.09 0.11

N -- number of cases; Prob. -- Probability of Transition; Dur. -- Mean years of stay in the state before transition
Table 3: Odds Ratios from the Logistic Regression of Traditionally Preferred Trajectories to Marriage 1966-75 Birth Cohorts, Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth Cohort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-75</td>
<td>0.81 *</td>
<td>0.78 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Family Characteristics |         |         |
| Social Status |         |         |
| Low | 0.37 *** | 0.34 *** |
| Middle | 0.58 *** | 0.55 *** |
| High |         |         |

| Family Structure |         |         |
| Lived with Both Parents | 2.39 *** | 2.15 *** |
| Did not Live with Both |         |         |

| Culture and Geography |         |         |
| Religion |         |         |
| No Religion | 0.77  | 1.01 |
| Roman Catholic | 0.99  | 1.00 |
| Protestant | 1.08  | 1.03 |
| Other Religion |         |         |

| Migration Status |         |         |
| Born in Canada | 0.96   | 0.93   |
| Immigrant |         |         |

| Region of Residence |         |         |
| Atlantic | 0.80   | 0.80   |
| Quebec | 0.34 *** | 0.43 *** |
| Ontario | 1.26   | 1.20   |
| Prairies | 0.73   | 0.69   |
| British Columbia |         |         |

| Intervening Variables |         |         |
| Values |         |         |
| Importance of Family | 2.27 *** |         |
| Importance of Paying Job | 0.78 *** |         |

| Constant | 0.20 *** | 0.17 *** |

| Total N | 1986  | 1986  |
| % traversing dependent trajectory | 15.7  | 15.7  |
| Nagelkerke R Square | 0.094 | 0.168 |
| - 2 Log likelihood | 1859.4 | 1719.6 |

Levels of Significance: *** 1%, ** 5%, * 10%
Figure 3: A Decision-Making Framework

Constrained Decision-Making

School Completion

Work Start

Cohabitation

Marriage

Parenthood

Life Course