

Early Union Formation in Canada: Links with Education

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Background

- Link between education and union formation in the transition to adulthood
 - Generally, the process of becoming an adult has lengthened over time
 - Leading to greater conflict between student and conjugal partner roles, which are typically thought to be incompatible
 - Earlier commitment to education may hold some answers into the education-union formation relationship

Research Questions

- Does exit from full time schooling affect the timing of early union formation?
- Does the level of achieved education affect the timing of early union formation?
- What affect does educational commitment, aspirations for future education, as well as parental and peer influences have on early union formation?
 - Are the effects similar for first marriages and first common law unions?
 - Are the effects similar for men and women?

Data

- **Youth in Transition Survey (YITS)**
 - A Canadian longitudinal survey started in 2000
 - 2 cohorts (15 year olds AND 18-20 year olds) every two years.
 - We use data on the 18-20 (respondents born 1979-1981) year old cohort from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 (end age of sample is 20 to 22)
 - Original n at Cycle 1 was 22,738 cases
 - About 3600 dropped out between cycles
 - Attrition effect is reduced because we use information from both cycles; ie, our time dependent measures allow for different end of observation points, while our time constant measures are from Cycle 1.

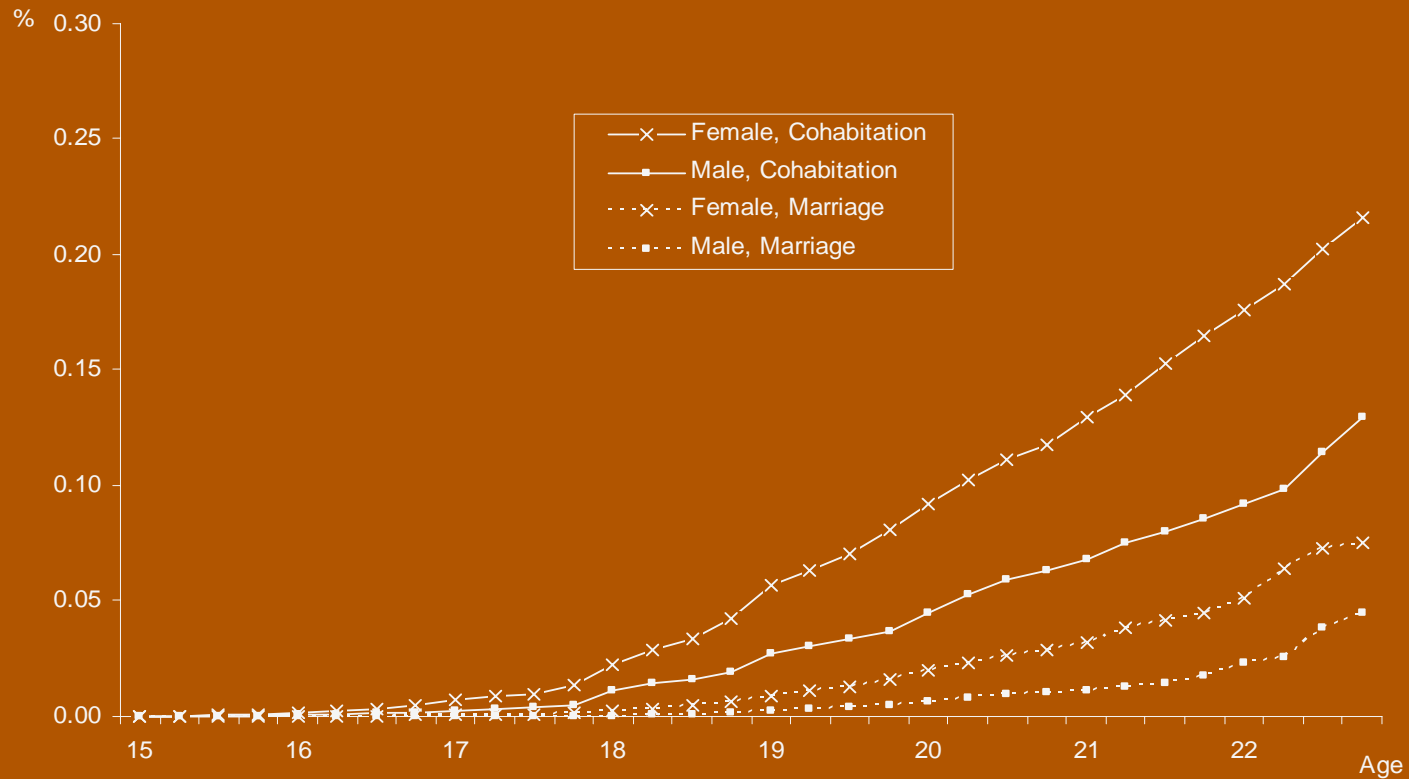
Analysis Strategy

Outcome: First Conjugal Union

- We estimate a series of Cox Proportional Hazard models
 - Dependent measure defined as the *instantaneous rate of entry into a first union*, and is specified as a function of time constant and time dependent covariates
- We conceptualize marriage and cohabitation as distinct and treat them as competing risks; observation begins at age 15 and ends with first marriage, or first cohabiting union; or for right censored cases, with the date of the last interview.
- To introduce the time dependent variables into the models we use the method of episode splitting

A Descriptive Look at Union Formation for YITS

Figure 1: Cumulative proportion of respondents who ever formed a union, according to sex and union type



Cox Regression Models

- Does exit from full time schooling affect the timing of early union formation?
 - Are the effects similar for first marriages and first common law unions?
 - Are the effects similar for men and women?

Exit from Full Time School Hazard Ratios

	<u>Females</u>		<u>Males</u>	
	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Cohabitation</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Cohabitation</u>
Exit from Full-Time School	3.114***	1.986***	2.893***	2.240***

*** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .1$. Controlling for place of birth, ethnicity, language, urban status, province of high school, number of siblings, family type in high school, parental education, and conception

Cox Regression Models, continued

- Does the level of achieved education affect the timing of early union formation?
 - Are the effects similar for first marriages and first common law unions?
 - Are the effects similar for men and women?

Level of Achieved Education Hazard Ratios

	<u>Females</u>		<u>Males</u>	
	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Cohabitation</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Cohabitation</u>
High School	0.973	1.014	0.725	1.035
Some PS	1.011	0.978	1.323	0.989
Grad PS	1.807**	1.579***	1.972	1.749

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1. Less than High School is reference category

Shaded Cells indicate effect was removed by exit from education variable.

Controlling for place of birth, ethnicity, language, urban status, province of high school, number of siblings, family type in high school, parental education, and conception

Cox Regression Models, continued

- What affect does educational commitment, aspirations for future education, as well as parental and peer influences have on early union formation?

Other Education Hazard Ratios

	<u>Females</u>		<u>Males</u>	
	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Cohabitation</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Cohabitation</u>
Freq Skipping Classes	0.869**	1.206***	0.945	1.150***
Highest Educ Level Would Like to Obtain				
Some PS	0.960	1.177	0.164	0.624
College/Trade, Other	0.714	1.053	0.578	0.577**
BA or Higher	0.371***	0.612**	0.396*	0.501**
Undecided	0.524	0.725	0.492	0.606
Importance to Parents that Child Obtain More than HS	0.597***	0.901***	0.831	0.997
# of Friends Going Beyond HS	1.035	0.977	1.282*	0.991

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1. Controlling for place of birth, ethnicity, language, urban status, province of high school, number of siblings, family type in high school, parental education, and conception

Cox Regression Models, continued

- What other factors are important?

Important Control Variables Hazard Ratios

	<u>Marriage</u>		<u>Common Law</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
English is First Lang (ref: French)	4.346***	3.334	0.646***	1.140
Other is First Lang	6.454***	3.206	0.373***	0.708
HS in Maritimes (ref: Quebec)	0.669	0.538	0.653***	0.662
HS in Ontario	0.703	0.866	0.594***	0.366***
HS in Man./Sask	1.016	1.198	0.937	0.387***
HS in Alta/BC	1.234	0.917	0.943	0.466**
Step Family in HS (ref: Intact)	0.685	0.331*	1.400**	1.558*
Lone Parent Family in HS	0.627**	0.614	1.112	1.400**
Other Family Type in HS	1.010	0.579	1.435*	2.239**
Conception	3.963***	24.270***	3.642***	7.108***

*** p < .01; ** p < .05; * p < .1.

Conclusion

- Our results highlight 3 important aspects of the link between education and early union formation:
 1. The separation of school and marriage is still very present, yet is weaker for school and cohabiting unions
 2. Education level of women and men operates similarly, in that higher credentials appear to be a positive incentive for partnering
 3. Commitment to education, educational aspirations and parental expectations are especially important