Time trends and class differences in childless partnering

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Abstract

As childbearing has been delayed in recent decades, the period of life in which women engage in childless partnering has emerged as a significant life stage. I examine time trends and class differences in the duration of time women spend living with partners before their first birth. Using the National Survey of Family Growth, I find that the duration of childless partnering has grown, from approximately 1.8 to 2.4 years between 1988 and 2002. In addition, lower SES women begin childbearing more quickly after entering a first union compared to higher SES women. I argue that these class and cohort differences in childless partnering have implications for family stability and the accumulation of human capital and wealth.

Introduction

In recent decades, childbearing has been increasingly delayed in response to rising returns to education combined with the availability of birth control (Lundberg 2007). However, as premarital sex and cohabitation have gained social acceptability, there is little incentive for young adults to postpone coresidential partnerships. As a consequence, we can expect that the period during which young people engage in partnerships without children has grown during recent decades. During this period of life, young adults test out partners and build committed relationships. It is not well known, however, how long this period lasts, how it has changed over time, or how it differs between socioeconomic (SES) groups.

This paper builds on prior research on family behaviors and transitions to adulthood by documenting the changes and socioeconomic differences in pre-childbearing partnership experiences. Past life course research has focused on the timing of adult transitions, but there is little research emphasizing durations. The time that young adults devote to childless partnering is qualitatively different from time spent single and time spent with children, and has a number of implications. To the extent that this period of childless partnering is devoted to building a relationship with the father of the child, longer durations likely mean greater family stability in the future. Childless partnering also affords young adults the advantages of economies of scale without the financial burden of supporting children. The social circumstances that affect the duration of childless partnering differ greatly across socioeconomic groups. Because women of lower socioeconomic status have fewer incentives to delay childbearing, compared to higher SES women, I expect that they will spend less time gaining relationship experience prior to childbearing

I analyze the duration of time women spend engaged in childless partnering, the period starting with first co-residence (marital or nonmarital) and ending with first birth. This includes time spent married and cohabiting, and may include living with both the father of the child and other men. I examine SES differences and changes over time in the duration of this life stage. Using the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), I consider the relationship histories of two cohorts of women: those who are ages 35-44 in the 1988 survey, and those who are 35-44 in the

2002 survey. I use a Cox proportional hazards model to examine how birth cohort and socioeconomic status are associated with the risk of birth after a woman enters her first union. I then discuss various characteristics of this life stage, including the average number of partnerships high and low SES women have prior to first birth, and the average amount of time spent in cohabitation and in marriage. Finally, I examine trends in the duration of time spent exclusively with the father of the first child and the duration of time spent between first marriage and first child, since these factors are closely linked with family stability.

Background

The period of life in which women engage in childless partnering has grown in response to various social changes. Specifically, pressures to delay childbearing have not been accompanied by similar pressures to delay co-residential partnerships. Over the last several decades, the average age at which women begin childbearing has increased from 21.4 in 1970 to 25.2 in 2002 (Martin 2006). Childbearing has been increasingly postponed in response to the rising value of education, particularly for women, as discrimination declined and the economy grew over the second half of the twentieth century (Lundberg 2007). This demand for later births was aided by the availability of the pill and the legalization of abortion in the 1960s and 1970s, which allowed women greater control over the timing of births (Goldin & Katz 2002).

Although there have also been pressures to delay marriage, the increasing acceptability of cohabitation allows many of the advantages of a coresidential partnership without having to make a long-term commitment. Young adults postpone making relationship commitments because, as Giddens (1991, 1992) points out, the reason people enter such commitments has shifted away from fulfilling social expectations and toward personal fulfillment (see also Thornton 1982). Therefore, the quality of the match is more important and the search process takes more time. Contributing to this, the rise in education means that the economic prospects of potential partners are uncertain until relatively old ages (Oppenheimer 1988). These factors increased the demand for cohabitation as a marriage "trial period" or as a more flexible alternative to marriage. The introduction of the pill helped make this arrangement feasible by allowing nonmarital sex with a low risk of pregnancy. As a result, there is little incentive for

young people to delay entering into co-residential unions. As part of these social changes over the last several decades, cohabitation and divorce have increased, while marriage rates have decreased (Bumpass & Lu 2000; Martin & Bumpass 1989). In addition, the percentage of births that occur outside of marriage has risen from 5% in 1960 to 33% in 1999 (Ventura 2000).

At the same time, an extended period of young adulthood has emerged, whereby the ages at which young people leave home, complete their education, become financially independent, marry, and have children have all risen (Furstenberg, et. al. 2005) Moreover, there has a been a shift away from a highly normalized sequence of events towards a situation where these events can happen in any order and transitions are not necessarily permanent. Life course scholars also emphasize the fact that these transitions are highly interrelated, so the timing of childbearing, for example, is likely to be affected by changes in the timing of events in other domains, including completing education, partnering decisions, and achieving financial independence (Marini 1978a, 1984c). In particular, increases in the duration of childless partnering are likely to be tied to delays in other domains.

There are stark socioeconomic differences in family behaviors and in the transition to adulthood, and we might expect those differences to extend to the period of childless partnering. Since 1960, the proportion of mothers who are unmarried and the proportion of marriages that dissolve have increased across the board, but have increased the most among women with relatively low education (McLanahan 2004). Lower SES women are also more likely to have births outside of marriage: in 2002, 35% of women whose mother had a high school degree had had a nonmarital birth in the last 5 years, compared to only 21% of women with college educated mothers (Chandra 2005). Moreover, women of lower socioeconomic status make adult transitions earlier, including finishing education, starting work, entering partnerships, and starting families (Marini 1978a, b; 1984a, b, c). In particular, delays in childbearing have been smaller for low SES women compared with high SES women (Ellwood & Jenks 2004). The life course period of childless partnering is tied up in these larger patterns of class difference in both family-related behaviors and the transition to adulthood.

Although we know quite a bit about class differences in the timing of first births, and whether childbearing occurs within marriage, within a cohabiting relationship, or outside a relationship, the duration of these relationships is rarely studied. I focus on childless partnering as a distinct life stage since the experience of living with a romantic partner is qualitatively different from living alone or living with children. Coresidential partnerships foster the development of relationship skills and allow partners to build trust and experience together before children enter the picture. They also allow for the financial advantages of economies of scale and resource pooling without the monetary burden of childrearing. We can expect marriage and cohabitation to have similar effects on these outcomes, though they will not likely be identical (Brines & Joyner 1999; Clarkberg 1995). Because cohabitation involves a lower level of commitment, there is less pooling of resources on average compared to marriage, and time spent married will probably have a more positive effect on long-term stability than time spent in cohabitation. The magnitude of the effects of cohabitation and marriage on these outcomes likely differs, but the direction is probably the same. A second reason to consider this period as a whole is that when women make decisions about the timing of childbearing, time spent cohabiting and time spent married likely substitute for one another, to some extent. For example, if a woman has spent some time cohabiting with her husband before marriage, she might wait less time after marrying to have a child.

Changes over time and SES differences in the period of childless partnering have implications for several domains. First, longer periods of childless partnering improve the quality of partner matches and allow more time for partners to bond and build a relationship prior to childbearing. The risk of relationship dissolution generally declines over time (Martin & Bumpass 1989; Simpson 1987; Lloyd, et. al 1984). Morgan and Rindfuss (1985) explain higher marital dissolution rates among "shotgun" marriages by saying that shorter relationships "produce more marriages with gross incompatibilities." The implications of the period of childless partnering for subsequent stability, however, are likely to vary according to how this time is spent. Marital relationships are more stable than cohabiting relationships, which in turn, are more stable than non-coresidential relationships (Teachman et al 1991). Moreover, the number of partners seems to be associated with stability. Having multiple cohabitation partners has been linked to higher marital instability, compared to having only one partner (Lichter). And, having no coresidential

partners prior to childbearing is strongly associated with relationship instability (Carlson 2004). Selection likely plays some role in these associations, but if there is a causal relationship between stability and relationship type or number of partners, we can expect that the various characteristics of this period will have varying impacts on subsequent family stability.

Second, the period of childless partnering is of interest because of its implications for material resources. Engaging in childless partnerships offers young adults the financial advantages of economies of scale and resource pooling without the financial burden of caring for children. Third, there are implications for human capital accumulation. A desire to postpone childbearing until a high relationship standard is met might allow someone extra time to gain education or career experience before childbearing that he or she might not have had otherwise. Compounding this effect, someone who doesn't yet have a committed partner has an additional incentive to invest in his or her own human capital.

My research hypotheses are as follows:

- The duration of childless partnering has grown longer over time
- Higher SES women spend more time engaged in childless partnering compared to low SES women
- Higher SES women spend more time with the partner who will become the father of the first child and more time married before children, compared to low SES women
- Because the duration of childless partnering is expected to be longer for high SES women, I anticipate they will have more partners prior to childbearing

Data & Methods

To examine the period of childless partnering I use the National Survey of Family Growth, a large-scale, nationally representative study of women in the United States. The data are cross-sectional and six waves of data were collected between 1973 and 2003. Information on pregnancy history, marriage history, contraception, childbearing intentions, and infertility are collected in each wave, and the survey is considered to contain the best information on childbearing behavior in the U.S. Starting with the 1988 wave, the section on marriage history

was expanded to include cohabitation. Cohabitation data in this early survey was limited to the timing of the first union, and whether the cohabitation was marital or nonmarital. In more recent waves -- 1995 and 2002 -- more detailed cohabitation histories were collected. This study utilizes the 1988 and 2002 waves of data in order to capture change over the longest possible period of time. Roughly 7,700-8,500 women ages 15-44 were interviewed in the 1988 and 2002 waves, and response rates were around 80%.

Dependent variables

The central outcome variable used in this analysis is the duration of time spent engaged in childless partnering. I analyze the relationship histories of the oldest women surveyed in each wave (ages 35-44). This captures the experiences of women who engaged in childless partnering between 1965 and 2002, a period when norms around cohabitation and childbirth timing changed dramatically. The analysis is limited to older women to minimize the amount of bias introduced by excluding women who had not completed the transitions to first union or first birth. A small minority of women (5% in 1988 and 4% in 2002) had not completed either transition by the time they were surveyed and so were not included in the analysis. The period of childless partnering begins at point of entry into first co-residential union (cohabitation or marriage) and continues until first birth. Therefore, this period can include time spent cohabiting, time spent married, and time spent between relationships[1]. There are 2,611 respondents in the cohort aged 35-44 in 1988 and 2,460 respondents in the cohort aged 35-44 in 2002[2].

I also examine the components of this period, including time spent married, time spent cohabiting, and time spent with the partner who eventually fathers the first child. In addition, I compare the likelihood of having no partners, one partner, or multiple coresidential partners prior to childbirth

[1] The proportion of childless partnering time that is spent in between relationships similar across SES groups [and cohorts?], so including between-relationship time does not bias the results. There are two advantages to including this period of time in the period of childless partnering. One is methodological: conceptually it makes sense for entrants to remain "at risk" for childbearing after they have entered first union and not withdraw for spells and then re-enter. Also, recent research by Smock & Manning (in progress) shows that many couples who end a cohabiting relationship continue to be involved in a romantic relationship.

[2] Marriage dates were missing for less than 1% of respondents; cohabitation dates were missing for approximately 5% of respondents. Respondents who had neither marriage nor cohabitation dates were not included in the analysis.

Independent variables

The duration of childless partnering is expected to vary across time and across socioeconomic status. Change over time is measured by comparing the cohort of women ages 35-44 in 1988 with the cohort of women 35-44 in 2002. The level of education of the respondent's mother is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status because respondent's own education and income are endogenous, as they both affect and are affected by birth timing. Income in the respondents' family of origin is not included in the dataset, but education is commonly used as an indicator of SES and there is a fairly high level of correlation between the educational attainment of parents and children. Most of the analyses use an SES variable that is a relative measure. This is preferable since the meaning of a given level of education changes over time and I want to capture relative status. The variable is constructed as a percentile based on how a respondent's mother's education level compared to the education of other mothers in her cohort[3].

Methodological Approach

I conduct a descriptive analysis of cohort and class differences in the period of childless partnering. I focus first on durations -- how durations have changed over time and how durations differ by socioeconomic status. Second, I describe how this time is spent: whether with one partner or multiple partners, and whether inside or outside marriage. I calculate these descriptives for the 2002 cohort by SES in order to better understand the heterogeneity of experiences that is captured by the umbrella of "childless partnering." Finally, I repeat the first analysis using two individual components of this period: duration of time spent married and duration of time spent with the father of the first child. Limiting the analysis in this way results in a smaller, more selective group of women, but because these periods are less heterogeneous, they have the advantage of being more interpretable.

In examining durations for the first part of the analysis, I use Cox proportional hazards models to estimate relative hazards by SES and cohort. Cox models are appropriate for analyzing time-period data in which the data is skewed and some "exits" (in this case births) are censored because they take place outside the period of observation. For each woman, the period being

[3] There was no missing data for mother's education. Less than 5% of respondents reported having no mother figure. These cases were not included in the analysis.

examined begins at the time when she enters her first union and ends when she has her first birth. Alternatively, for women who do not have a birth by the time of the survey, the period ends with the survey date. The key predictors of the length of duration are SES and cohort, and age is controlled. This model assumes hazards are proportional across SES, cohort, and age categories. The hazards estimated using the Cox model are translated into a "survivorship function" which outlines the expected duration of time women will spend engaged in childless partnering. This function is used to describe the average or expected experiences of women in various SES subgroups over time.

Next, I describe the characteristics of the period of childless partnering and how they differ by class, using the cohort of women ages 35-44 in 1988 in 2002 who had a first birth at the time of the survey. Here I compare discrete categories of mother's education rather than education percentiles. I look at differences in the amount of time spent married compared to the time spent cohabiting. I also estimate the amount of time spent with multiple partners compared to the amount of time spent with the father of the first child. It is useful to understand how the period of childless partnering is spent because the various components have somewhat different implications. For example, cohabiting with one partner is associated with higher levels of marital stability compared with cohabiting with no partners or multiple partners.

Finally, I repeat the first analysis two more times using different parameters. Rather than condition on entry into first union, I condition one model on entry into marriage and a second model on entry into coresidence with the partner who becomes the father of the first child. Focusing on these particular components of childless partnering reduces the number of women in the analysis. However, it has the advantage that the implications for time spent in marriage and time spent with the father are more clear-cut than the implications for the full period of childless partnering which includes various states. In particular, time spent married is associated with higher family stability, while longer durations spent cohabiting may not be, particularly if they involve multiple partners.

Results

Table 2 outlines the distribution of women in each cohort according to whether women have had a birth by the time of the survey, whether they have had a first union by the time of the survey, and whether first birth comes before or after initiating the first union. The hazard regression that follows takes into account women who had a birth after entering first union and those who had entered a union but had not had a birth at the time of the survey (78% of the 1988 cohort and 80% of the 2002 cohort). The first group of women (those who had entered first union prior to first birth) contributed both exposure time and "exits," while the second group (those who had co-residence experience but no births) contributed only exposure time. A third group – women who had a birth prior to co-residence (and therefore no time spent in a childless union) – are accounted for in the survivorship graphs (Figures 2 and 3) but excluded from the Cox regression. Table 3 describes the results of the Cox hazard regression where the dependent variable is the hazard for experiencing a birth conditional on entry into first union.

As expected, women in the later cohort have a lower hazard for transitioning to first birth compared to women in the earlier cohort, controlling for age of the respondent at the time of the survey. Being part of the 2002 cohort is associated with a 0.21 decrease in the log hazard rate, or a 19% decrease in the risk of having a child ($1-e^{-0.21}$). The same pattern holds for women of higher SES compared to their lower SES counterparts. Here, a one-half-unit change in SES percentile (being in the 75th percentile rather than the 25th, for example) is associated with a 29% decrease in the hazard rate ($1-e^{-0.67/2}$). Both of these coefficients are statistically significant at the .01 level. The coefficient for the interaction between cohort and SES is also negative, which is consistent with class divergence over time, but the coefficient is not statistically significant.

Figures 2 and 3 present the information from Table 2 in graphical form. Figure 2 outlines the survivorship functions for the two cohorts, while Figure 3 presents survivorship functions for four cohort-SES subgroups: high and low SES women in 1988 and in 2002. To compare SES groups, I calculate hazard functions for the 30th SES percentile (which falls near the top of the 32-40% of women whose mothers have less than a high school degree) and the 90th percentile (which falls at the upper end of "some college" for the 1988 cohort and at the bottom end of "Bachelor's or higher" category for the 2002 cohort).

Between 1988 and 2002, the median duration of childless partnering for women 35-44 grew from 1.8 to 2.4 years (including the 8-15% of women whose duration was zero). Among women who had some childless partnership experience, the period grew from 2.2 to 3.3 years. In both cohorts, women of high socioeconomic status spend more time engaged in childless partnering than do women of lower status, and the range across SES categories is larger than the overall difference across the 12-year gap between cohorts. For the 1988 cohort, the median duration of childless partnering for the 90th percentile is almost twice the duration experienced by the 30th percentile (2.3 years versus1.2 years). For the 2002 cohort, the median duration for the higher SES group is more than double the duration for the lower SES group (3.4 years compared to 1.6).

Consistent with my hypothesis, higher SES women spend both more time married and more time cohabiting before beginning childbearing (see Table 2). This is in part because lower SES women were more likely to enter childbearing with no cohabitation experience and no marriage experience. Women in the high SES group also spend more time with the partner who becomes the father of the first child[4]. However, the proportional breakdown between cohabitation and marriage is nearly identical for the two groups, with about half spent in marriage, a quarter spent cohabiting, and the remainder spent between unions.

Higher SES women also have a slightly higher mean number of partners (see Table 3). This is mainly because lower SES women are more likely to have no coresidential partners prior to first birth. In both groups, the majority of women – around 70% -- had one partner prior to childbearing. Of women whose mothers had less than a Bachelor's degree, a fairly small percentage (less than 11%) had reported more than one partner. This proportion was substantially bigger among women whose mother had a college degree[5].

The expected cohort and SES patterns hold when the Cox hazard analysis is applied to women who have entered a marital union, rather than women who have entered any union (see Table 6).

[4] The father is assumed to be her husband or cohabiting partner at the time of birth

[5] There could be SES differences in the propensity to report partners, but any possible effect is reduced by careful interviewing. Interviewers ask respondents for a complete timeline of their relationship experience, including start and end dates, and characteristics of each partner

These results support the descriptive results presented in Table 4. Higher SES women spend more time married before childbearing compared to lower SES women, and the duration of childless marriage has grown over time. The analytic sample is those women who had entered marriage by the time of the survey and did not have a birth before their first marriage (80% in the 1988 cohort and 71% in the 2002 cohort; see Table 5). This analysis still includes time spent in states other than marriage for women who divorced prior to first birth, but is more homogeneous than the full duration of childless partnering.

Finally, the hazard model which conditions on entry into coresidence with the father of the first child also gives consistent results (data not shown)[6]. Echoing the descriptives in Table 4, the duration of time spent with the partner who eventually fathers the first child is longer for higher SES women than for lower SES women. Also, the 2002 cohort spent more time with the father of the first child prior to birth than did the 1988 cohort.

Discussion

I find that the duration of childless partnering has grown by one-third over a twelve year period, from about 1.8 years for women who were 35-44 in 1988 to about 2.4 years for women who were the same age in 2002. Moreover, there are profound class differences in the way women experience this part of the transition to adulthood. Lower SES women spend less time partnering before childbearing compared to higher SES women. Higher SES women spend more time married before first birth and more time in a union with the father of the first child, compared to lower SES women. These results fit with the aggregate-level changes and class differences observed in family behaviors and adult transitions. Interestingly, the SES gap in the duration of childless partnering remained constant over the period. This pattern differs from other family behaviors (such as nonmarital birth rates and divorce rates), which have seen class divergence over time (McLanahan 1994).

[6] Unlike the other Cox models, this includes only women who had a birth by the time of the survey. This is because for nulliparous women, it is unclear who the father of the first child will be.

Changes in the duration of childless partnering have a number of implications, including implications for quality of partner matches and the extent of partner bonding before childbearing. Morgan & Rindfuss (1985) argue that a higher proportion of short-term relationships are poor matches, compared to long-term relationships. Spending more time engaged in childless partnering theoretically allows young adults more time to weed out poorly matched relationships before children enter the picture. Similarly, the time that partners spend together before childbearing allows them to build relationship skills and to bond as a couple. Having this experience might make the transition to co-parenthood easier. For these reasons, having longer durations of childless partnering is likely to be beneficial for relationship quality after children are born.

Implications for subsequent family stability, however, are likely to vary depending on how this period is spent, including the number of partners involved and the level of partner commitment. Some research links premarital cohabitation (particularly with multiple partners) with marital instability (DeMaris & MacDonald 1993; Teachman & Polonko 1990; Lichter). If the associations established in the literature are causal, we can expect that having one partner during the period of childless partnering will increase stability after children are born relative to having no partners or multiple partners. Moreover, reaching the point of marriage prior to childbearing will increase stability, compared to those who do not. We can also expect that spending longer periods with the partner who fathers the first child will lead to greater stability. The net effect of the period of childless partnering on stability will depend on the particular combination of characteristics. .

The lengthening of the period of childless partnering is one of many recent changes in the transition to adulthood. To some extent, it is the inadvertent consequence of the delay in childbearing, which is a frequent subject of study and speculation. However, the period of childless partnering may have it's own advantages, which young adults may actively seek to prolong. There are several studies showing that people tend to be unhappy when engaged in parenting activities (cite). Evidence on whether parents have higher overall happiness compared to non-parents is mixed (Campbell 1981; Kohler et. al 2005). Even if children do yield greater happiness in the long-run, the evidence suggests that having children results in an immediate

decline in quality of life. Moreover, the quality of life within the period of childless partnering has likely risen in recent years, particularly for women as opportunities outside the home have expended. Therefore, the growth over time and SES differences in the period of childless partnering might, in part, be responding to differences in young adults' preference for this state.

As family behaviors and the transition to adulthood have become increasingly destandardized, high SES women have disproportionately adopted behaviors that foster long-term advantages for themselves and their children (McLanahan 1994). Although I don't test these implications, the fact that higher SES women spend more time married and more time with the father of the first child may help to explain higher family stability after the child is born. Longer durations of childless partnering also foster certain financial and human capital advantages, and these benefits will go disproportionately to high SES women.

Table 1. Background Characteristics, women 35-44 at each wave (unweighted)		
	1988	**2002**
Average age	39.2	39.4
% with Bachelor's degree or higher	23%	29%
Mother's education		
% with less than HS degree	40%	32%
% with HS degree	43%	36%
% with some college	9%	17%
% with Bachelor's degree or higher	8%	14%
Race/Ethnicity*		
% White	62%	57%
% Black	29%	20%
% Hispanic	7%	19%
% other race	3%	4%
N	**2,611**	**2,460**

*Blacks and Hispanics are over-sampled. This is corrected with weights in the analysis

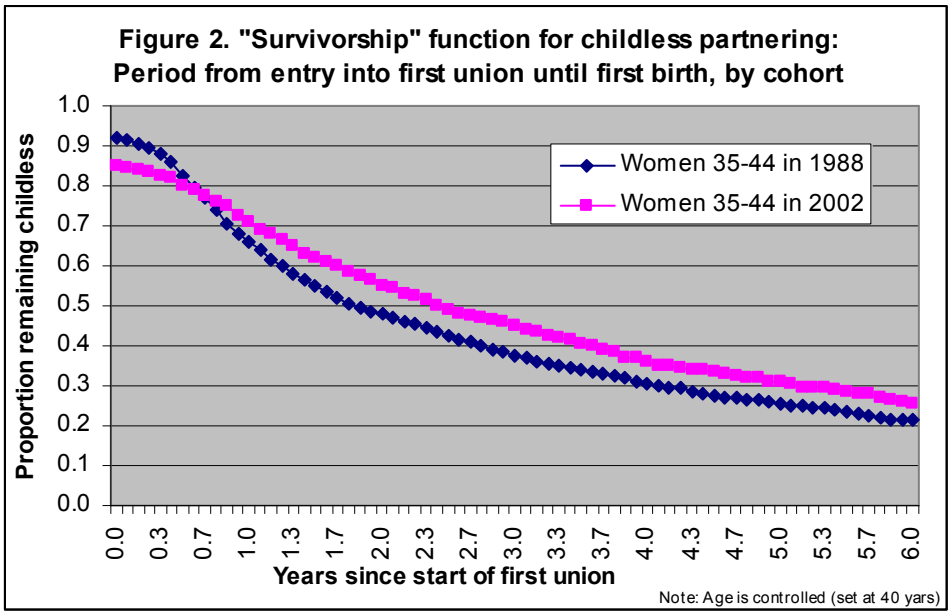
Table 2. Distribution of women by first union and first birth status				
	% in 1988 cohort*	% in 2002 cohort*	Included in regression	Included in survivorship graph
Had a birth	(84%)	(84%)		
and no first union	1%	2%	no	yes**
before starting first union	7%	13%	no	yes**
after starting first union	76%	69%	yes	yes
No birth	(16%)	(16%)		
and first union experience	12%	11%	yes	yes
and no first union experience	5%	4%	no	no
Total	**100%**	**100%**		

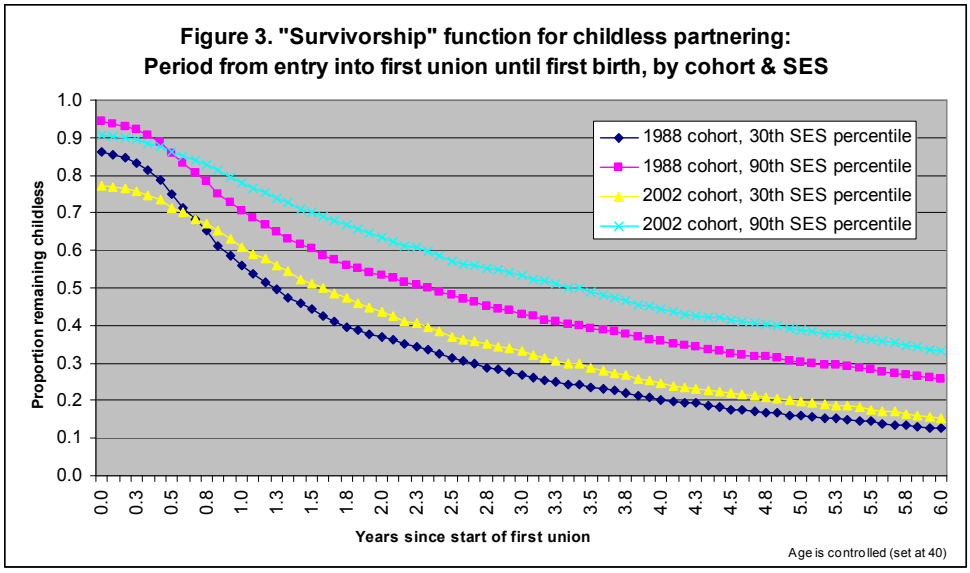
*Percentages are weighted

**These cases are counted as having 0 years and are accounted for in the downward-adjusted intercept

Table 3. Coefficients for relative hazards, beginning at initiation of first union and ending with first birth, Women ages 30-44 in 1988 or 2002		
	Model 1	Model 2
Co-residence		
Cohort*	**-0.21**	-0.19
SES percentile	**-0.67**	**-0.67**
Age	**0.03**	**0.03**
Cohort x SES interaction		-0.03

Note: Bold coefficients significant at the 0.01 level
*Cohort=0 if 30-44 in 1988, cohort=1 if 30-44 in 2002





Note: Low SES = respondent's mother has less than college education; High SES = respondent's mother has some college education or more

Table 4. Average years spent in various coresidential states and mean number of partners, Women 35-44 with a birth, by mother's education, 2002

		Respondent's mother's education			
		Less than HS	High school degree	Some college	Bachelor's degree or higher
Years spent cohabiting		0.6	0.6	0.7	**1.1**
Years spent married		**2.8**	3.2	3.5	3.6
Total childless partnering years (sum)		**3.4**	3.8	4.2	4.9
Time spent with the father of first child		2.6	3.0	3.4	3.4
Average number of partners		**0.8**	0.9	1.0	**1.1**
% with number of cohabitation/ marriage partners before childbearing	0	28%	17%	21%	8%
	1	67%	73%	69%	72%
	2+	5%	10%	11%	21%

*Bold numbers signify that difference with "High school degree" category is significant at .05 level

Table 5. Distribution of women by first marriage and first birth			
	% in 1988 cohort*	% in 2002 cohort*	Included in regression
Had a birth	(84%)	(84%)	
and no marriage experience	3%	7%	no
before starting first marriage	7%	14%	no
after starting first marriage	74%	62%	yes
No birth	(16%)	(16%)	
and marriage experience	10%	9%	yes
and no marriage experience	6%	7%	no
Total	**100%**	**100%**	

*Percentages are weighted

**These cases are counted as having 0 years and are accounted for in the downward-adjusted intercept

Table 6. Coefficients for relative hazards, beginning at initiation of first marriage and Women ages 30-44 in 1988 or 2002		
	Model 1	Model 2
Co-residence		
Cohort*	**-0.15**	-0.21
SES percentile	**-0.64**	**-0.64**
Age	0.02	0.09
Cohort x SES interaction		0.02

Note: Bold coefficients significant at the 0.01 level

*Cohort=0 if 30-44 in 1988, cohort=1 if 30-44 in

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