

Educational differences in partnership formation and life-time childlessness of Finnish men and women

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Wien 2.-4.12.2015



Purpose of the study

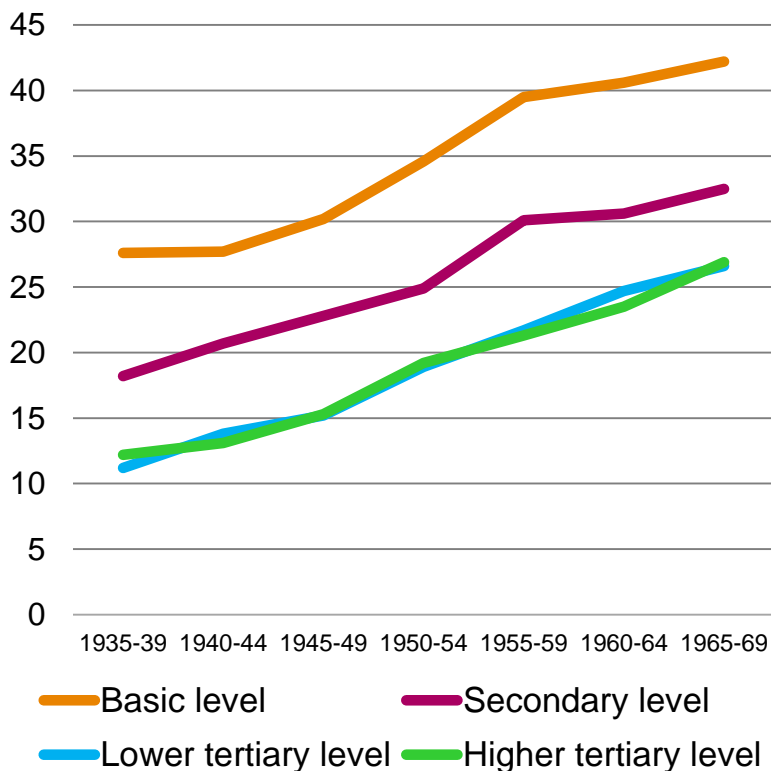
- Childlessness often related to not finding a partner - however, as union formation has changed considerably, do we also see changes in the relationship between partnership behaviour and childlessness?
- To what extent educational differences in life-time childlessness can be explained by differences in union formation
- Are there other aspects in union formation patterns which might contribute to educational gradient in childlessness
- Are the associations between union formation patterns and childlessness similar across educational groups



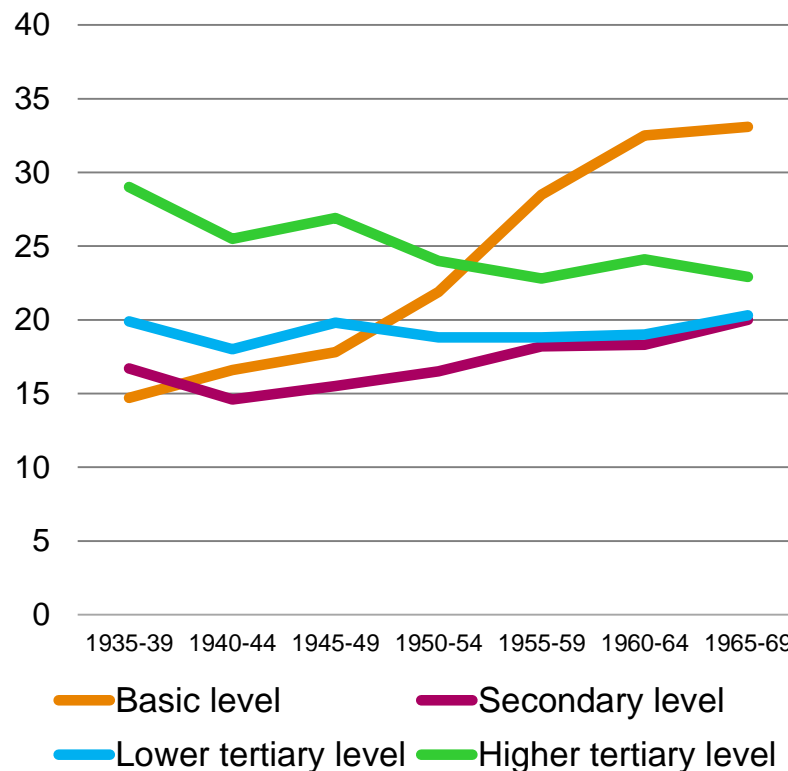
Finland: Changing educational gradient in childlessness (women)

Childlessness at age 40 by birth cohorts, men and women by highest educational level

Childlessness rates in men



Childlessness rates in women





Changes in partnership behaviour (Finland)

- Most unions start with a cohabiting period – cohabitation may or may not lead to marriage
- Childbearing (first child) within cohabitation common
- Marriage is postponed, but age at entry into the first union has decreased
- Union dissolution common; cohabiting unions more vulnerable
- Cohabitation common also in later union formation
 - > the proportion of persons living in many subsequent unions during their life time likely to have increased



What we could expect?

- Differences in the partnership formation likely to explain largely the educational gradient in life-time childlessness – but are there educational differences – more visible in women?
- Later entry into the first union likely to increase childlessness – less in men
- No apriori expectations: The link between multiple unions in early adulthood or during the life course and life-time childlessness (serial monogamy increases fertility in men?)



Data

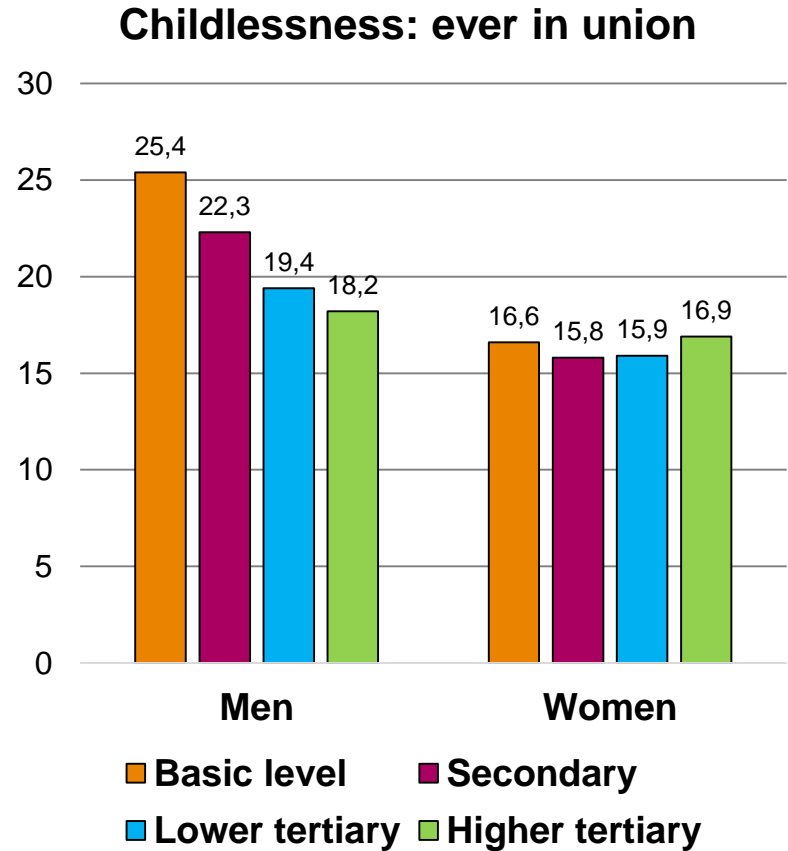
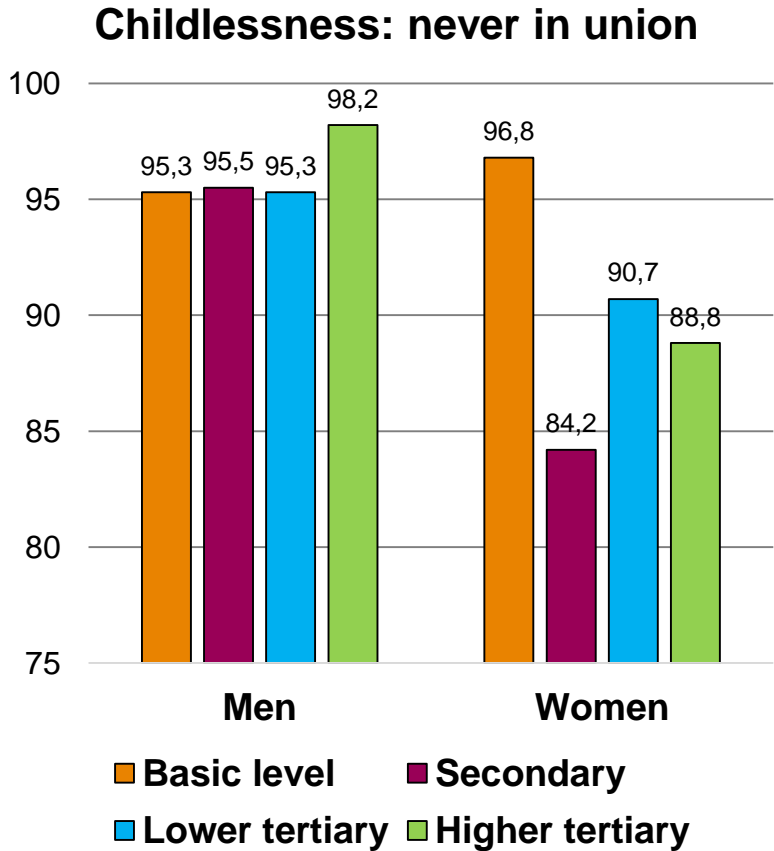
- FINNUNION – a population register -based dataset (Statistics Finland)
- Covers individuals' couple relationship histories, including also cohabitation (not LATs!)
- We examine childlessness at age 40
- Focus on union formation patterns: age at 1st union, number of unions by age 28 and by age 40
- Cohort 1967-70, N=27.280
- Men's childbearing relatively well covered: less than 2% of children do not have a registered father



Educational gradient considerably smaller once we adjusted for ever forming a coresidential union

		MEN		WOMEN	
		OR	OR	OR	OR
Education	Basic level	1.51***	1.17**	1.98***	1.21*
	Secondary	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)
	Lower tertiary	0.73***	0.84**	0.99	1.04
	Higher tertiary	0.72***	0.80***	1.15	1.10+

1967-1970 cohort: never/ever in union and childlessness at age 40





How do other aspects of partnership behaviour affect educational gradient in childlessness?

Age at 1st union

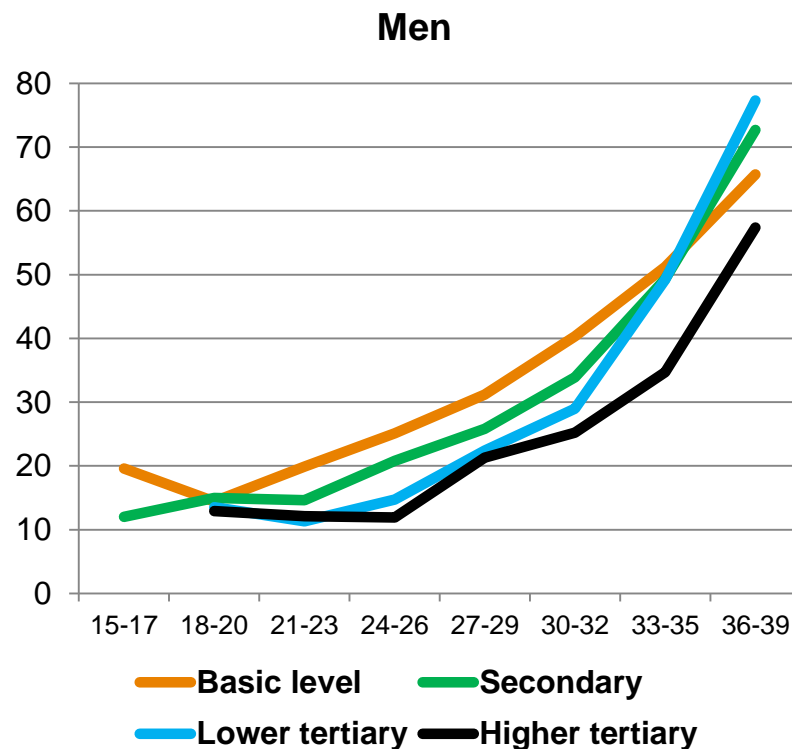
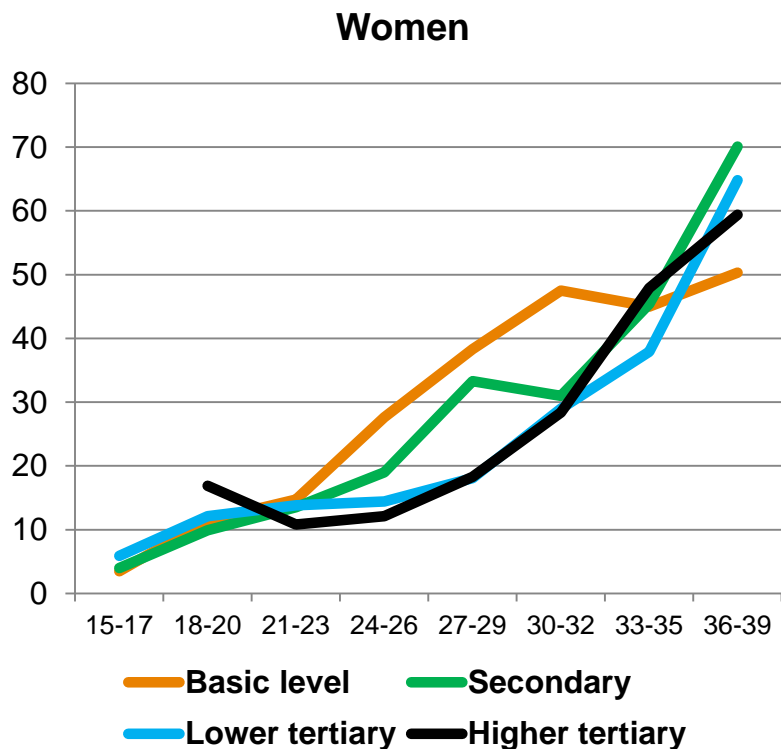
		MEN		WOMEN	
		OR	OR	OR	OR
Education	Basic level	1.18**	1.24***	1.06	1.15
	Secondary	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)
	Lower tertiary	0.84**	0.78***	1.00	0.89+
	Higher tertiary	0.78***	0.65***	1.09	0.79**

NOTE: Only persons who (had) lived in a coresidential union



AGE AT 1ST UNION

1967-1970 cohort: Educational differences in the relationship between Age at 1st union and childlessness at age 40



Predicted probabilities (Model: Cohort, Education, Age at 1st union, and Edu*Age1st)



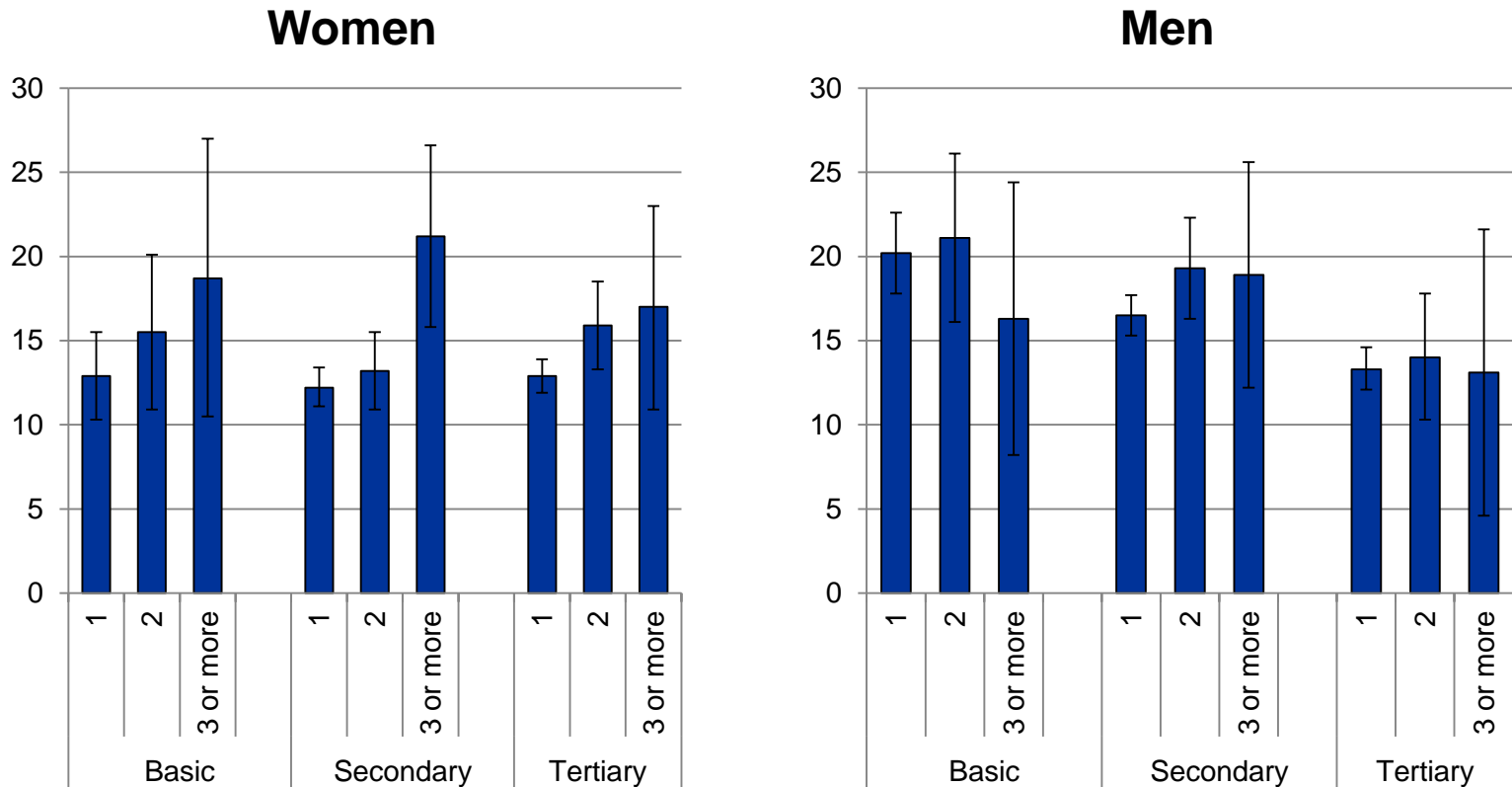
Multiple unions in early adulthood (<28 yrs)

		MEN		WOMEN	
		OR	OR	OR	OR
Education	Basic level	1.18**	1.23**	1.06	1.06
	Secondary	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)
	Lower tertiary	0.84**	0.80***	1.00	0.97
	Higher tertiary	0.78***	0.67***	1.09	0.91

NOTE: Only persons who (had) lived in a coresidential union

EARLY MULTIPLE UNIONS

1967-1970 cohort: Educational differences in the relationship between number of unions <28yrs and childlessness at age 40



Note: Persons who had not lived in a coresidential union by age 40 are not included here

Predicted probabilities (Model: Cohort, Education, Number of unions<28, and Edu*Number)



Multiple unions during the life course (<40 yrs)

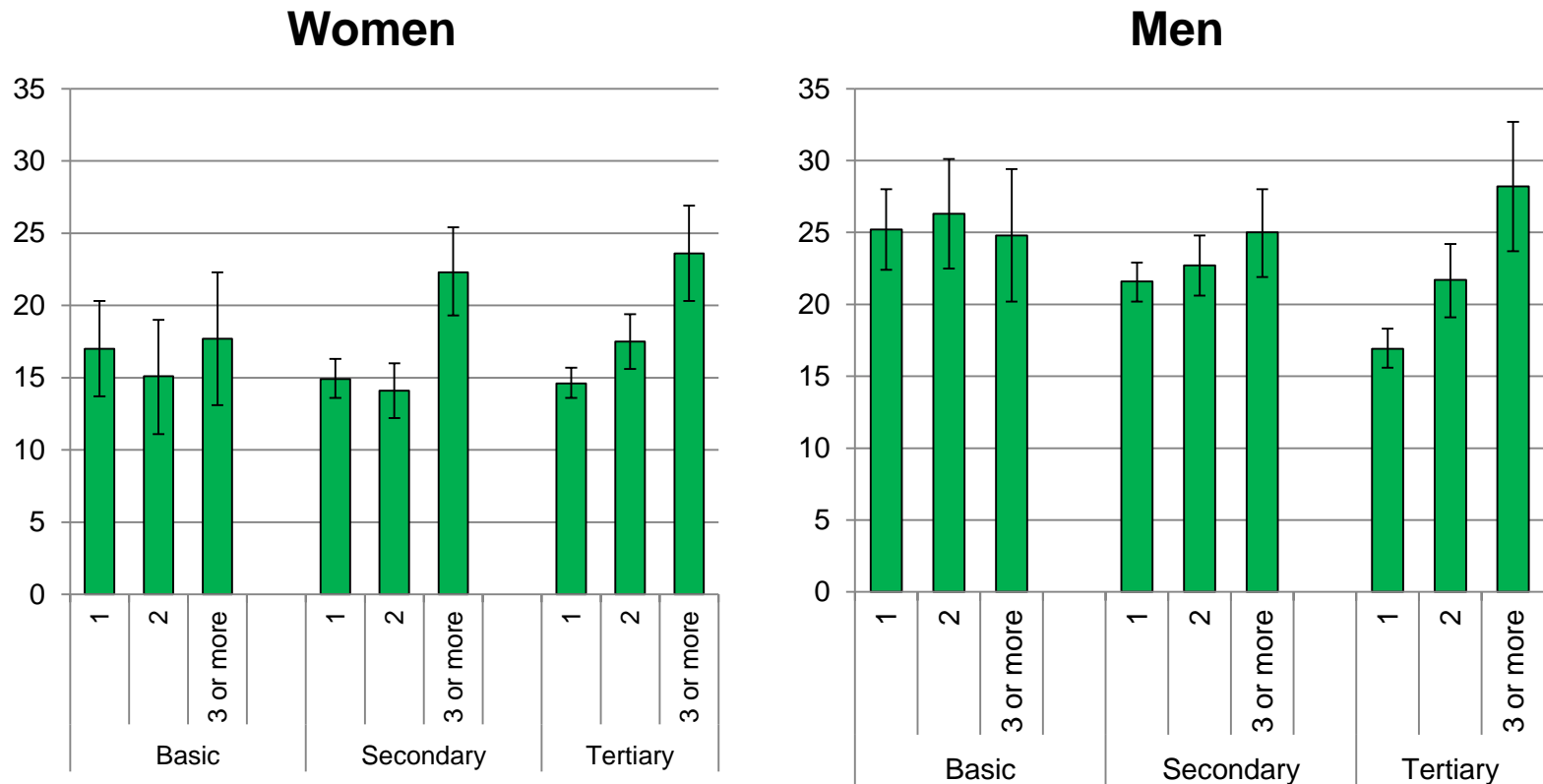
		MEN		WOMEN	
		OR	OR	OR	OR
Education	Basic level	1.18**	1.17*	1.06	1.00
	Secondary	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)
	Lower tertiary	0.84**	0.85**	1.00	1.03
	Higher tertiary	0.78***	0.80**	1.09	1.13+

NOTE: Only persons who (had) lived in a coresidential union



MULTIPLE UNIONS DURING THE LIFE COURSE

1967-1970 cohort: Educational differences in the relationship between number of unions <40yrs and childlessness at age 40



Note: Persons who had not lived in a coresidential union by age 40 are not included here

Predicted probabilities (Model: Cohort, Education, Number of unions<40, and Edu*Number)



Summary

- Having (ever) a partner more important: highly educated men and less educated women
- Late (first) union formation increases the likelihood of remaining childless
 - Similar effect in men and women
 - Later entry into union more detrimental for less-educated men/women, and less harmful for men with higher tertiary education
- Multiple unions in early adulthood, or later in life are associated with higher likelihood of remaining childless
 - The effect is more accentuated among highly educated men and women
 - Less educated men 'compensate' with earlier union formation and with multiple unions



..and limitations

- Potential associations not significant
- 'Static' point of view – on the other hand, quantum more important here than timing
- We could not study mechanisms
- Our analyses do not capture the magnitude of different partnership trajectories
- Not possible to examine time trends
- Distinguishing between cohabitating and marital unions problematic



Thank you!
Questions & Comments?

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1967-1970 cohort: partnership behaviour and childlessness

		WOMEN		MEN	
		OR	95%CL	OR	95%CL
Age at 1st union (ever-in-union)	15-17	0.20	0.10-0.42	0.62	0.14-2.79
	18-20	0.63	0.54-0.74	0.70	0.58-0.83
	21-23	0.81	0.70-0.94	0.73	0.64-0.83
	24-26	1 (ref)		1 (ref)	
	27-29	1.64	1.37-1.96	1.50	1.30-1.73
	30-32	2.36	1.90-2.93	2.12	1.80-2.51
	33-35	4.10	3.18-5.30	4.00	3.28-4.86
	36-39	9.45	6.92-12.90	10.66	8.44-13.47
Number of unions <40yrs	0	51.13	41.2-63.5	82.91	66.3-103.73
	1	1 (ref)		1 (ref)	
	2	1.08	0.97-1.21	1.16	1.05-1.28
	3+	1.62	1.42-1.86	1.32	1.16-1.50
Number of unions <28yrs	0	8.66	7.83-9.58	8.48	7.79-9.24
	1	1 (ref)		1 (ref)	
	2	1.14	0.98-1.31	1.11	0.95-1.30
	3+	1.53	1.20-1.95	0.95	0.69-1.32

1967-1970 cohort: Distribution of men/women by age at 1st union (ever-in-union), %

		15-22	23-27	28-34	35-39	Mean
MEN	Basic	43.6	35.6	16.3	4.5	24.8
	Secondary	39.4	38.0	18.4	4.3	25.1
	Lower tertiary	27.2	47.3	21.2	4.3	25.8
	Higher tertiary	16.2	51.5	27.5	4.8	26.8
	All	34.1	41.6	19.9	4.4	25.5
WOMEN	Basic	68.7	22.3	6.5	2.5	21.8
	Secondary	56.4	33.0	7.9	2.7	22.6
	Lower tertiary	38.7	47.6	10.8	2.9	23.8
	Higher tertiary	19.5	58.2	17.3	5.0	25.6
	All	44.9	41.6	10.4	3.1	23.5



1967-1970 cohort: Number of unions by age 28 yrs, or by age 40, %

Number of unions <28 yrs		0	1	2	3
MEN	Basic	39.9	45.9	10.8	3.4
	Secondary	33.6	54.5	9.9	2.0
	Lower tertiary	32.1	58.5	7.9	1.5
	Higher tertiary	38.7	55.6	4.9	0.8
		35.0	54.1	9.0	2.0
WOMEN	Basic	28.0	48.1	17.6	6.3
	Secondary	16.2	63.1	16.3	4.4
	Lower tertiary	18.5	66.8	12.3	2.4
	Higher tertiary	28.3	61.9	8.3	1.5
		20.2	62.7	13.7	3.4
Number of unions <40 yrs		0	1	2	3
MEN	Basic	24.1	39.6	21.8	14.5
	Secondary	14.1	51.7	22.6	11.6
	Lower tertiary	8.8	61.1	21.3	8.9
	Higher tertiary	9.5	65.8	18.4	6.3
		14.1	53.5	21.7	10.8
WOMEN	Basic	20.9	36.0	23.5	19.6
	Secondary	6.3	53.3	26.1	14.3
	Lower tertiary	5.5	61.2	23.3	10.1
	Higher tertiary	7.8	64.7	20.8	6.7
		7.7	56.2	24.0	12.1