*- **Preliminary - please do not cite without the authors' permission** -*

Convergence across generations in the marital behaviors of immigrant youth compared to the native-born in Canada

by

Thomas LeGrand
Professor of Demography
Université de Montréal (Canada)
E-mail : tk.legrand@umontreal.ca

Mélanie Meunier
Graduate student in Demography
Université de Montréal, and
Analyst, Citizenship and Immigration Canada
E-mail : m.meunier@umontreal.ca

Paper presented in Session 145 on *Marital trajectories and social interactions* at the XXVI International Population Conference of the IUSSP

Marrakech, 1 October 2009

We thank Statistics Canada for allowing us access to the data used in this study in a secure data center. The views expressed here are, however, those of the authors alone and do not represent Statistics Canada.

Convergence across generations in the marital behaviors of immigrant youth compared to the native-born in Canada

Introduction

At the time of the last Canadian census in mid-2006, nearly one in five Canadians were foreign born (19.8%) – a considerable rise from 18.4% in 2001 and 15.3% in 1971 (Statistics Canada 2009). Of the high-income Western countries, only Australia has a higher percentage of immigrants in its population (22%). As the weight of the immigrant population has risen over time, the geographic origin of immigrants to Canada has also dramatically changed, with the percentage hailing from Europe falling from 62% in 1971 to just 16% in 2006. Over half of immigrants now come from Asia, although significant and increasing numbers arrive from Latin America and Africa. This has led to a growing diversity of immigrant groups to Canada and often to a deepening of differences between immigrants and the local-born population in terms of background culture, religions and language.[1] The future of Canada will be greatly affected by how these newcomers adapt to life in their new home country in upcoming years.

The experiences of first and second generation immigrant youth – transitional generations living between the culture and ways of their parents' country of origin and that of their new country – are determining factors for migrant integration and the task of accommodating the aspirations of both immigrants and the native-born in the longer term. The problems these people encounter during their formative years, the behaviors established during youth and the identities they develop, will underlie the decisions they make in regard to how to construct their lives and interact with their neighbors. The processes of leaving home and entering a union are widely recognized as key components of the transition to adulthood. (e.g., NRC 2005). While formal marriages and starting one's family (childbearing) remain central aspects of becoming an adult in many parts of the world, consensual (common-law) unions have become common in recent decades in many Western countries, and having children is increasingly viewed as an important lifestyle choice rather than an essential part of adult life. As a result, there can be sharp divergences between the values and behaviors of immigrants and those of Canadians. This is especially true in Quebec, where common-law unions are among the most prevalent in the world.

This study uses logit regressions to examine the union (marriage) behaviors of immigrant youth compared to non-immigrants, and how these evolve between the first and second generations, using data from the 2001 census for Canada – the long-form sample containing information on roughly 20% of the Canadian population. The analysis focuses on differences between first and second generation immigrant youth aged 20-29 compared to non-immigrants in terms of their probability of living in union and, for those in union, the likelihood of it being a consensual unions versus a marriage. The effects of intergroup marriages – in particular, the extent to which behaviors differ for immigrant youth born into families with one Canadian parent – are also studied. The unusually large size of the data allows for a detailed analysis of behaviors of young adults from different geographic origins and how they evolve across immigrant generations – for example, assessing whether young adults from South Asia tend to maintain their marriage traditions to a greater degree than those from Latin America. The next sections present a brief review of the relevant literature, our key research questions and hypotheses, and the data and method. The empirical results and a conclusion section complete this study.

[1] Less than 30% of long-term immigrants living in Canada reported English or French as their mother tongue on the 2006 census.

Literature review and context

This paper examines patterns of convergence or sustained differences in the marriage behaviors between first and second generation immigrants and the longstanding local population, an issue that has received little attention to date.[2] When considering the economic and social insertion of immigrants, it has commonly been observed that, over time and across generations, immigrants often grow to resemble local populations, gradually converging in terms of their attitudes, behaviours and economic success to those of the local population (e.g., Gans 1992). This is the path of linear assimilation, as immigrants are progressively merged into mainstream local society.

Portes and Zhou (1993) have argued that this is a partial portrayal of immigrant integration, and have developed a theory of "segmented assimilation" that attempts to cover systematically different pathways for subgroups of immigrants. For them, society is stratified and unequal, and immigrants can find themselves integrating into these different segments of local life. Some groups will follow a path that can be characterized as classic assimilation – a gradual acculturation and integration into the middle class. Some disadvantaged immigrant groups may instead find themselves unsuccessful on the job market and integrating into the life of the underclass, facing the risk of chronic poverty and related social and family problems. They argue that a third path termed "selective acculturation" (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) also occurs, as immigrants seek to avoid downward mobility by reaffirming the culture, ways, and community cohesiveness of their country of origin.

The outcomes of economic and social integration are influenced by numerous factors, and segmented assimilation theory has identified family structure, modes of incorporation in the host society and human capital as having important effects on the experiences of the first generation of immigrants (Xie and Greenman 2005). The intergenerational links between parents and their second generation children result in a transmission of the first generation's cultural baggage to the second generation, sustaining differences in behaviors over time.

It is clear that there is an enormous diversity in the cultures and religions of immigrants from various geographic origins, leading to differences in the degree of distance between their values, attitudes and behaviors and those of the host society. Cultures can also differ in terms of their cultural cohesiveness, with the immigrants from some groups (but not others) developing vibrant cultural communities that provide the social infrastructure necessary to maintain distinct value systems and ways of behaviors over time. Marriage and family-building are of central importance to many cultures and, even if economic integration is successful, immigrants from some groups may actively seek to maintain the distinct core values that they hold dear. Even without segmented assimilation, it may nevertheless possible to observe sharp differences in social behaviors that are be sustained across generations (the small Hassidic Jewish population in Canada is an extreme example of this). While the social and economic dimensions of peoples' lives are surely interrelated, and economic integration outcomes will certainly affect social behaviors, immigrant groups may also diverge in their integration trajectories for purely social and cultural reasons.

Canada proclaims itself to be a multicultural society and government policies and programs are often designed to accommodate a large range of cultural differences across groups (e.g., Hallis

[2] Brown et al. (2008) and LeGrand et al. (2008) are two of the rare studies that have examined these issues in the American, Canadian and Australian contexts. For both studies, the size of the data sets posed important limits on the analysis.

and Driedger 1999). Within Canada, two geographic areas exhibit markedly different marriage (union) behaviors: Quebec and the other nine provinces of Canada (which we denote as the rest of Canada or "ROC"). Quebec has one of the highest prevalences of common-law unions in the world and has witnessed a remarkable increase in this type of union over the past three decades. According to the 2006 Canadian census, almost 35% of couples living in the province were in common-law unions (Statistics Canada, 2007). This type of union is especially popular among the Francophone majority population in the province, whose youth frequently view non-marital unions as the preferred lifestyle choice (Lapierre-Adamcyk and Charvet 1999). For this reason, Quebec is an especially interesting site for this study, as differences in values and behaviors across the local population and many immigrants are unusually large. In Quebec, the large majority of immigrants settle in Montreal, a city that has long had a large Anglophone minority, and, up until at least the 1970s, most immigrants integrated into this linguistic social group. As a result, Quebec has two prevailing local norms that are relevant to this study – that of the Anglophone minority and that of the Francophone majority.

In the ROC, marriage behaviors tend to resemble more those of the United States or Australia, where a slower rise in the popularity of common-law unions has been observed in recent decades. Census data shows that nearly 14% couples residing in the nine provinces of Canada outside of Quebec were common-laws couples in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007). While there are substantial numbers of French-speakers also living in the ROC, the areas with relatively high proportions (e.g. New Brunswick – 17%) do not attract large numbers of immigrants. Hence, the ROC has one prevailing local norm that is pertinent to this study – that of the Anglophone majority. (In the regression models, we nonetheless distinguish people of the third (or higher) generation who live in francophone households, Anglophone households or bilingual English-French households.)

Research questions and hypotheses

Immigrants will adapt to life in their new home countries and, over time, their behaviors should change in systematic ways. If this adaptation process takes the form of classic assimilation, then we will observe a continuous convergence across immigrant generations towards the local norms and practices. If instead there is segmented assimilation along the lines of that argued by Portes and colleagues, then different groups will exhibit different behavioural changes – some again converging to local mainstream norms and others going in different paths including maintaining the ways of their original home countries. If society is highly multicultural and some immigrant groups hold firmly to the values of their pasts, then we might again observe sustained differences across immigrant groups coming from different regional (and cultural) origins. This paper aims to examine patterns in marital behaviors across generations of immigrants that should reflect changes over time in fundamental, underlying cultural values, and to explore possible explanations for those patterns.

The main questions we seek to answer are:

- To what extent and at what speed do the union behaviours of immigrants converge to those observed for the local population over time?
- To what degree do immigrants from different geographic origins exhibit different union behaviors or different speeds of convergence? To what degree are these findings consistent with the various theories of immigrant integration over time?

- Is the lower likelihood of being in union among 2nd generation immigrants found in studies on the US (Brown et al. 2008), Australia and Canada (LeGrand et al. 2008, using data from the much smaller public use file of the 2001 census) also evident in these data? Is this pattern widespread among immigrants of different geographic origins and what possible explanations seem most plausible?

We also hypothesize that young adults born into "mixed" marriage families with both foreign-born and Canadian-born parents will exhibit behaviors that are relatively closer to those of the local norms, and that differences will also be less for immigrants from countries with cultures that are broadly similar to Canada – Americans, Europeans and, to a lesser degree, those from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Data and method

The analysis is based on data collected by the long-form questionnaire used by the 2001 Canadian census, covering approximately 20% of the Canadian population. This questionnaire asked respondents for their places of birth and, for the first time since 1971, for those of both parents.[3] In addition, the sheer size of the data set - nearly 720,000 observations of young men and women aged 20-29 (see Table 1 below) - allows us to do a disaggregated analysis of immigrant behaviors across generations by place of origin, a subject has previously been impossible to examine in detail using data from surveys or the typically smaller census public use samples. The main disadvantage of these data is that, like all census data, they only provide a snapshot of people's marital situations at the time of the census along with information on a limited set of possible covariates. As a result, while we can examine the probability of people's current cohabitating relationships, it is impossible to estimate a behavioural model on their transitions into (and out of) unions.

Data are limited to young men and women aged 20 to 29. Information from the three northern territories of Canada – Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon, which together account for just 1.1% of the total population of Canada aged 15 and above – are omitted from the analysis. Extremely few immigrants settle in those areas and the local populations (many of whom are Aboriginal (native) Canadians) have marriage behaviors that can significantly depart from general Canadian norms. In addition, immigrants who arrived in Canada after age 19, who had spent less than two years in the country at the time of the census, or who did not have permanent resident status are also omitted. The justification for this is that, as we seek to understand systematic changes in marriage behaviors of long-term immigrants *after their arrival in Canada*, temporary immigrants and those whose unions are likely to have occurred prior to immigration should be excluded from the analysis.

[3] The recently released long-form census data for 2006 also collected this information but, in contrast to 2001 census, omitted questions on respondents' religion – an important control variable.

Table 1: 2001 Canadian census data used in this study

	Total Population	Not in union	Living in union		
			Marriage	Common-law	Total in union
Quebec					
Women	85 620	48 190	10 150	27 280	37 430
Men	86 905	60 505	5 950	20 450	26 400
Total	172 525	108 695	16 100	47 730	63 830
Rest of Canada					
Women	272 850	165 315	65 090	42 445	107 535
Men	273 110	194 840	42 880	35 390	78 270
Total	545 960	360 155	107 970	77 835	185 805
Canada					
Women	358 470	213 505	75 240	69 725	144 965
Men	360 015	255 345	48 830	55 840	104 670
Total	718 485	468 850	124 070	125 565	249 635

Note: For confidentiality, numbers are rounded to the nearest "5".

Logit regressions are used to study the behaviors of 1st and 2nd generation immigrant young adults compared to that of population of generation 3 and above (whose parents were both born in Canada), after accounting for the effects of a number of plausible control variables. Two aspects of marriage behaviour are examined: the likelihood of living in union and, among those in union, the likelihood of a union being common-law rather than a formal marriage. Regressions are estimated separately for Quebec and the rest of Canada – regions that display considerably different union norms and behaviors – and within those areas, for men and women. Two regressions are estimated for each population subgroup and dependent variable: a baseline model and an extended model including a full set of region of origin by immigrant generation interactions, giving 16 regression models in all.

While this study is largely exploratory in nature, care was nonetheless taken to avoid including independent variables in the regression that are likely to be endogenous—characterised by simultaneous or reverse causality. For example, the attainment of diplomas beyond high school is not included as an explanatory variable because most postsecondary diplomas will be obtained when people are in their 20s (the period under study), and it is likely that investments in higher education and union behaviors are, to some extent, interrelated. We do however include a variable for having continued studying beyond high school whether or not a diploma or certificate was eventually acquired, as the large majority of people who do so would have started their postsecondary studies before age 20.

The independent variables of central interest to this study are related to immigration status. Four sets of people are defined based on when they or their parents arrived in Canada:

- Generation 1-recent: young men and women born abroad with at least one foreign-born parent, and who arrived in Canada after age 12.[4]

[4] As noted above, these data are limited to young men and women who arrived in Canada by age 19, who had lived for at least 2 years in the country at the time of the census and who had at least landed immigrant status.

- Generation 1.5: Those born abroad with at least one foreign-born parent and who arrived in Canada by age 12; these people were socialized to life in Canada during much of their formative years.

- Generation 2: Those born in Canada with at least one foreign-born parent.

- Generation 3+: Those born into families with two Canadian-born parents.[5]

For each of immigrant generations 1-recent, 1.5 and 2, we further distinguish young people with both parents born abroad from those with one Canadian-born parent, giving six immigrant subgroups. The marriage behaviors of generation 3+ youth - those born into families with two Canadian-born parents - are taken as reflecting the local norm. Three subgroups of generation 3+ are defined according to the languages spoken at home: Anglophones, Francophones and households in which both English and French are spoken.[6] In Quebec, the behaviors of the majority Francophone population and the Anglophone minority that is strongly present in Montreal, where most immigrants settle, should portray the two relevant local norms. In the ROC, the union practices of the English-speaking majority are taken to reflect the dominant local norm.

In the baseline regression models, these nine immigrant categories are represented by eight dummy variables plus the default reference category – generation 3+ Anglophones. In the full regression models, each of the immigrant generation variables is further interacted with ten region of origin variables – the United States, Latin American, the Caribbean islands, Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and a small miscellaneous category (Oceania…). These regions were defined to capture grossly similar cultures while being large enough to ensure an adequate number of observations to allow for a statistical analysis. These interactions result in 63 groups – 60 for the first and second generation immigrants by region of origin and 3 for the generation 3+ Canadians – and are captured by 62 dummy variables in the regressions. Notwithstanding our unusually large data set, some groups have few observations; this is especially the case for immigrants from mixed marriage families in the "type of union" regressions (e.g., men living in union who are second generation immigrants from South Asia, residing in Quebec and with one Canadian-born parent). Small numbers lead to unstable and generally highly insignificant regression coefficients, and also incur confidentiality concerns. As a result, in analysis of behaviors by regional origin we only consider the marriage behaviors of immigrants with both parents born abroad and for whom there are at least 20 observations for each immigrant generation.

Control variables used in all regressions are:

- Age, measured in single years using dummy variables from 20-29 (the default: age 20).
- Schooling: no high school diploma (the default category), high school diploma, and some study beyond high school.
- Type of place of residence: large cities with over a million people (Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver); towns with populations between 100,000 and 1 million; and rural areas or smaller towns (the default).

[5] This group includes a small number of people born outside of Canada - typically the sons and daughters of diplomats, military personal, aid workers, or others who were residing temporarily abroad.

[6] When only other languages are declared, information on mother tongue and knowledge of English and French are used to define these variables. The rare generation 3+ Canadians who do not report knowing or using either English or French are dropped from the analysis.

- Religion: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and other Christian groups, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Other Eastern religions, miscellaneous other religions, and none (the default: Atheist, Agnostic, Humanist, etc.).

- Proportion of the community population that is immigrant. Using census codes we defined 223 geographic places of residence in Canada. For each of these areas, the proportion of the population aged 15 and above that is foreign born was calculated, and this variable is included in all regressions.

Findings

The logit regression results are not yet available for dissemination – they must be first reviewed by Statistics Canada to ensure that their presentation does not put at risk the confidentiality of respondents. For the key explanatory variables of interest to this study, the results were transformed into mean predicted probabilities of living in union or of a union being common-law for men and women aged 25 at the time of the census, and these are the statistics presented in the figures below. As the regressions control for the confounding effects of other explanatory variables, the mean predicted probabilities reflect the estimated net effects of the variables, and may differ greatly from observed crude probabilities.

1. Living in union

Figures 1a-1d present the predicted probabilities of young men and women living in union at age 25 by immigrant generation for Quebec and the rest of Canada, using on the baseline regression results. Figures 2a-2d show similar results for immigrants with both parents born abroad, disaggregated by regional origin, based on the full regression models. Regional origin groups for which there are less than 20 observations for a given immigrant generation are omitted from the graphs, and those with one or more cases of 20-49 observations are shown by lighter lines.

As explained earlier, the local marriage norms in the ROC should be reflected in the behaviors of Anglophones of generation 3 and above and, in Quebec, by those of both the longstanding Francophone and Anglophone populations. Examining the behaviors of generation 3+ Canadians, in both Quebec and the ROC young Francophones are seen to be moderately more likely to live in union than Anglophones during their 20s. Men and women in Quebec are also somewhat more likely to live in union than those of the ROC, even after controlling for linguistic group. Young women are much more likely to live in union than men, a result that was examined in detail by LeGrand et al. (2008) using data from the smaller public use sample of the 2001 Canadian census (they also report similar results for Australia). To the extent that the age pattern of living in union during early adulthood can be taken to reflect differences in the timing of entry into union,[7] it appears that women tend to enter unions roughly two years earlier than men. This finding is consistent with the notion that young women in general mature psychologically faster than men and may too reflect gender norms in Canada.

The patterns presented in Figure 1a-1d clearly show that the union behaviors of young first and second immigrants with two foreign-born parents diverge sharply from those of immigrants

[7] Making the link between age patterns of living in union and first entry into union is complicated by the occurrence of union breakups and the advent of subsequent unions.

with a Canadian-born parent and also from the local population (generation 3+). Immigrants with both parents born abroad exhibit a systematically lower likelihood of living in union, although differences are sometimes small for the most recent immigrants. Interestingly, for both men and women and in both zones, there is a strong decrease in the likelihood of living in union for generations 1.5 and especially 2, compared to more recent immigrants and the local population, probably indicating later ages at first union for these people. Similar patterns have also been found for Australia (LeGrand et al. 2008) and the US (Brown et al. 2008).

Three possible reasons come to mind that could explain this pattern. First, the observed decline and then rise in union prevalence may be an artefact of the evolving underlying regional composition of immigrants, which could affect the "cultural desirability" of early versus later unions of different groups. For example, if recent immigrants - disproportionately from non-European origins - are relatively influenced by cultures conducive to early unions, one might observe a higher union prevalence for this group even if there is no real change in their behaviors across generations. However, the fact that very similar patterns are observed in Figures 2a-2d for a broad range immigrant groups indicates that this is not the case.

Second, immigrants frequently state that their move was first and foremost motivated by a desire to give their children better lives, and it is well known that they often place much importance on their children's educational success. Advanced schooling can incur heavy investments in time and money, perhaps reducing the likelihood of a young person simultaneously entering union and starting his or her family. It is possible that the lower likelihood of living in union estimated for immigrants of generations 1.5 and 2 compared to the local population may be caused by their greater emphasis on university education. (While the same could be argued for more recent immigrants, it may be the case that the immigration process and common problems encountered during early economic integration – poverty, parents' unemployment, incomplete recognition of past diplomas, etc. – alters their schooling and union behaviors.) To test this hypothesis, the baseline models were re-estimated with two additional endogenous covariates included for current part-time and full-time school enrolment. The results show that, while current schooling is strongly associated with a much lower likelihood of living in union, the dip in the estimated predicted probabilities of living in union for immigrant generations 1.5 and 2 remains largely unchanged.[8] Differences in schooling behaviors appear to be, at most, only a small part of the explanation.

Third, it may be the case that immigrant parents seek to reinforce their cultural legacy and the values they wish to pass onto their children by pressuring them to marry others of the same group. Their children may resist this effort and yet not be willing to openly confront their parents' desires by marrying someone else. To the extent that this occurs, it could act to delay the establishment of unions, giving rise to the patterns seen in Figures 1 and 2. The fact that the dip in mean predicted probabilities is comparatively small for immigrants from the United States, Europe and Latin America – parts of the world with broadly similar cultures to Canada/Quebec – is consistent with this argument.[9] Along the same lines, the dip is seen to be much less pronounced for young immigrants born into mixed marriage families, whose parents are likely to be more accepting of intermarriages. In marked contrast, immigrants from some other areas of the world display much more pronounced declines in the prevalence of unions

[8] In all cases, the extent of the dip lessens marginally, and the estimated mean predicted probabilities for generations 1.5 and 2 increase at most by 4% in relative terms.

[9] At the other extreme are immigrants from East Asia, whose predicted probability of being in union at age 25 is systematically very low for all first and second immigrant generations.

during young adulthood; this is especially the case for women from South Asia in both the ROC and Quebec. In subsequent work we will re-estimate the model 2 regressions with three outcomes – out of union, in union with someone of the same regional origin and in union with a partner of another origin. If the results indicate that unions with partners from the same group occur generally earlier than others, it would provide another piece of evidence consistent with this explanation.

First and second generation immigrants with one Canadian-born parent exhibit union behaviors that are much closer to those of the local population. For these people, the likelihood of living in union is systematically above that estimated for immigrants with both parents born abroad, and differences between these groups are largest for generations 1.5 and 2. Only among women in Quebec do we observe a clear, moderately-sized dip in their likelihood of living in union (Figure 1c), and the extent of this decline is much weaker than that estimated for immigrant women with two foreign-born parents.

In both the ROC and in Quebec, the predicted probability of living in union by second generation immigrants is much closer to that calculated for longstanding Anglophones than Francophones, and there is little evidence of convergence towards the Francophone ways. This is not altogether surprising because, up until about a generation ago, the bulk of immigrants to Quebec were integrated into the relatively more welcoming Anglophone segment of Montreal society, and it is plausible that their children continue to be heavily influenced by the social norms of that group. Over the past three decades, Quebec's language policy has favoured immigration from French-speaking countries and obliged immigrant children to attend French-language primary and secondary schools, with the consequence that more recent immigrants are more likely to live in the Francophone social community. It may be the case that, in the future, the union behaviors of second generation immigrants in Quebec will gradually approach more those of the French-speaking majority.

An important point to keep in mind is that evolving behaviors across immigrant generations can occur through systematic changes in the ways of specific immigrant groups and also through the growing prevalence of inter-marriages with the local Canadian population over time – a change in groups shown in Figures 1a-1d. In our data, just 4.2% of first generation immigrants were born into families with one Canadian-born parent; this figure rises to 42.7% for the second generation.[10] As the figures show the separate behaviors of immigrants with one Canadian-born parent and those with both parents born abroad, they present only the second part of this adaptation process. The adaptation pattern shown in the figures would have been considerably different if there was no distinction made for parents' union status. The average behavior of the set of all immigrants would in that case be close to the points observed for first generation immigrants with both parents born abroad, and nearly mid-way between the two points for the second generation. Furthermore, as time passes, immigrants who prefer to marry within their own group may tend to be an increasingly select group, disproportionately made up of people who place relatively greater emphasis in maintaining the traditions and values of their origins. To the extent that this is true, the observed behaviors of immigrants with both parents born abroad shown in the graphs will overstate the lack of change in behaviors towards the local norms across the generations.

[10] Intermarriages are much more common among some groups: nearly one out of two of first generation immigrants from the United States reported having a Canadian-born parent, versus about 7% of immigrants from Europe and at most 3.5% for those of all other geographic origins.

With regard to the "control" variables in the regressions, essentially all have statistically significant effects because of the large sample size. Young men and women who continued their studies beyond high school are found to be less likely to be in union compared to others, an effect that is strongest for women living in the ROC. Urban residents are also less likely to live in union during their twenties, especially if they live in one of Canada's three large cities. After controlling for individual's own characteristics (immigrant status and origin, age, education, etc.), those who live in areas with a higher percentage of immigrants are considerably less likely to live in union. This is an intriguing finding, and a priority for our future work in this area is to examine in detail the possible effects of immigrant communities on marriage behaviors. Finally, the results reveal often strong differences in behaviors by religious affiliation. Generally speaking, for both men and women and for both residents of Quebec and the ROC, those who are most likely to live in union are Protestants, Muslims, and to a lesser degree members of other Eastern religions (excluding Buddhists) and those who report having no religion, and the least likely are Buddhists, Orthodox Christians and, in the rest of Canada, Jews.

2. Type of union: Common-law versus marriage

Figures 3a-3d and 4a-4d present the mean predicted probabilities of young men and women living in a common law union versus a marriage calculated from the baseline regression results and the disaggregated regional origin (full model) results, respectively.

In the ROC and, to a lesser degree, in Quebec, common law unions are often temporary or trial unions – unions that are destined to be dissolved or transformed into marriages in the upcoming years. For this reason, common-law unions are understandably found to be more much common at younger ages for both men and women and in both zones (see also LeGrand et al. 2008). Among young adults of generation 3+ who were living in union at the time of the census, the regression results also show men to be much more likely to be in common-law union than women. This finding is probably in large part due to men's relatively lower likelihood of living in union at young ages: in our data, over 40% of women aged 20-29 lived in union at the time of the census versus just 29% of men (Table 1). As noted above, men's behaviors seem to resemble those of women two years younger (LeGrand et al. 2008). Hence it is not surprising that common-law unions are more prevalent among young men than women of the same age, as men may be less advanced in their "adult lifecycle" and more of their unions at an early stage.

The results confirm the findings of many other studies that common-law unions are much more prevalent in Quebec than in the ROC at all ages and for both sexes. The estimated decline in the prevalence of common-law unions with age is also seen to be less pronounced in Quebec, consistent with the notion that common-law unions in the province have often become lifestyle choices rather than simply transitional unions (e.g., Lapierre-Adamcyk and Charvet 1999). The statistics show that common-law unions are more common among Francophones than Anglophones of both sexes and zones, although the English-French language divide is much smaller than the geographic Quebec-ROC divide. Indeed, for both sexes the marriage behaviors of Francophones in the ROC is seen to be closer to that of their Anglophone neighbours than to Francophone and even Anglophone residents of Quebec.

Turning to changes in behavior across immigrant generations, the patterns in Figures 3a-d again show that immigrants of generations 1 and 2 with both parents born abroad display markedly different behaviors from those of either immigrants with one Canadian born parent or

the local population. In both Quebec and the ROC, there is a substantial rise in the prevalence of common-law unions between recent immigrants and those of generation 1.5, amounting to roughly 40% of the initial gap in prevalence between 1.0 and 3+ with respect to the local Anglophone behaviors. Little change in the popularity of common-law unions is then visible in the ROC between generations 1.5 and 2.0 while, in Quebec, a sharp decline is observed for both men and women. On the whole, there appears to be only a limited convergence to the Canadian norm in the ROC and, comparing generations 2 and 3, little if any convergence at all in Quebec.

As was the case with the likelihood of living in union, the distinction of immigrants with two parents born abroad and those with a Canadian-born parent in Figures 3a-3d will again significantly understate the degree of convergence across generations towards the Canadian norms. If the Figures were drawn with just one like showing average union behaviors across generations, they would show continued convergence over time towards the behaviors displayed by the longstanding local populations, with a slowdown in this progress between generations 1.5 and 2.

The patterns in Figures 3a-3d reflect the combined effects of diverging underlying behavioural changes of groups from different regional origins weighted by their evolving relative importance in the immigrant populations over time (e.g., the declining importance of immigration from Europe in recent years). Figures 4a-d present the evolving union behaviors across generations for each of the regional groups. In both areas, strongly contrasted changes are observed for the various groups; a pattern that is very different from that observed for the probability of living in union shown in Figures 2a-d. In the ROC, immigrants from East Asia, Southeast Asia and, to a lesser degree, South Asia appear to converge in their behaviors towards the local norm in a fairly continuous manner across the generations. For them, a linear process of adaptation appears to occur – one that is consistent with progressive assimilation into Canadian society. In Quebec, the behaviors of South Asian women found to be similar and, for the other groups, there are too few observations to allow for their analysis.[11] In sharp contrast, a pronounced decline in the popularity of common-law unions is seen between generations 1.5 and 2 among immigrants from Europe, from sub-Saharan Africa for women in the ROC, and from Latin America for men in Quebec. Generally speaking, the evolving behaviors across generations of immigrants from other geographic origins fall between these two extremes.

It seems unlikely that Portes' theory of segmented assimilation could explain this pattern. Compared to most other immigrants, the process of integration into mainstream Canadian life should be easy for those at least from Europe, as their studies and work experiences prior to migration will be better recognized by local employers and their racial and cultural similarity to most Canadians will reduce the risks of their facing discrimination. Hence, they are not a disadvantaged group that might perceive the need to assert their traditional values and ways so as to avoid economic decline. For us, a more plausible explanation for this finding is that second generation immigrants from Europe often come from fairly conservative working class families, and their local large immigrant communities in Canada may have proven to be fairly successful in maintaining their traditional values over time.

With respect to immigrants with one Canadian-born parent, Figures 3a-3d show that common-law unions are systematically much more prevalent than those with both parents foreign-born.

[11] More generally, the smaller sample size of migrants of different groups in Quebec is the reason why fewer lines shown in Figures 4c and 4d.

For them, the mean predicted probability of a union being common-law grows significantly from recent first generation immigrants to those of generation 1.5. From that point onward, however, immigrant marriage behaviors broadly resemble those observed for generation 3+ and assimilation with regard to type of union appears to be complete.

Finally, young adults who did not complete high school are significantly more likely to live in a common-law union, although differences across educational category are small. Rural and small town residents are more likely to marry, although the effects of place of residence are even smaller and mostly statistically insignificant in Quebec. Other things being equal, young men and women living in communities with a higher proportion of immigrants appear to be more likely to opt for a common-law union, although the effects of this variable are less pronounced than for union prevalence and statistically insignificant for men in Quebec. The regression results again point to sharp differences across religions, with common-law unions being most popular among the non-religious, Catholics and Buddhists, and lowest among Muslims, Orthodox Christians, to a lesser degree members of other Eastern religions, Protestants in the ROC and Jews in Quebec.

Discussion

Using an unusually large data set from the 2001 Canadian census, this paper examines how marriage behaviors evolve across generations of immigrants in terms of their likelihood of living in union and, of those in union, the probability of it being a common-law union rather than a marriage. The large sample size allowed us to study differences in behaviors across immigrant generations for immigrants from 10 major geographic regions with broadly different cultures, after controlling for a variety of covariates. The analysis is done separately for men and women living in the province of Quebec and in the rest of Canada – areas of the country that have highly distinct marriage behaviors. In addition, the empirical analysis distinguishes immigrants with both parents born abroad and those with one Canadian-born parent, and much of the analysis focuses on differences between these groups over time.

The regressions reveal intriguing patterns of behaviors but, for first and second generation immigrants with both parents born abroad, do not show evidence of a strong convergence across generations in union behaviors towards the dominant local norms. In regard to the likelihood of young men and women living in union, immigrants of generations 1.5 and 2.0 with two foreign-born parents are found to have substantially lower mean predicted probabilities of living in union than either newer arrivals or the longstanding local population. This tendency is clear both for men and women and in both Quebec and the ROC; it is also widespread among immigrants from a broad range of geographic origins. Similar patterns have also been documented for Australia and the United States (LeGrand et al. 2008; Brown et al. 2008). There is no evidence to support the contention that this phenomenon is grounded in the high educational aspirations of many immigrants and their differential investments in schooling—to some degree a competing activity with couple and family life. It may be the case that the pattern emerges from immigrant parents' desires to transmit their values to their children by pressuring them to marry within the same group, and that children's resistance to this acts to delay the start of unions. For the most part, the size of this "dip" in predicted probabilities is weaker among groups that are fairly similar to the local Canadian majority population, and small or inexistent for immigrants with a Canadian-born parent, providing tentative evidence for this hypothesis.

The decision to enter into a common-law union rather than a marriage should generally impinge more fundamental cultural values, given the central importance of recognized marriages and the start of family life in the countries of origin of many immigrants. With regard to those with two foreign-born parents, there is a great deal of diversity in the behaviors of immigrants from different regional origins. On the whole, the results suggest that the marriage behaviors of East, Southeast and South Asians can be characterized as linear assimilation with a continual rise and convergence over time towards the levels exhibited by the local population. Other groups display quite different patterns of union behaviors. The behaviors of immigrants from Europe (an important part of the second generation) stands out: there is a sharp decline in their predicted probability of living in a common-law union between the first and second generations—the opposite of convergence. Insofar as social and economic integration should be relatively easier for immigrants from Europe than for those from most of the developing world, this result is also inconsistent with Portes' theory of segmented assimilation. It strikes us as more plausible that the composition of this European group has changed over time, with the relatively small number of recent immigrants from Europe in recent years displaying second generation behaviors now fairly established throughout Europe, and many of those of generation 2 being from more traditional working class families often originating from southern or eastern Europe.

As hypothesized, the behaviors of young immigrants with one Canadian-born parent are found to be much closer to those of the local population in terms of both their propensity to live in union and of an ongoing union be consensual rather than a marriage. Indeed, there is little difference between the behaviors of generation 1.5 immigrants born to mixed-union parents and those of the longstanding Canadian population, suggesting a rapid convergence in behaviors.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that the separation of immigrants into two broad groups – those with two foreign-born parents and those with one Canadian-born parent – will tend to exaggerate the lack of convergence in union behaviors over time. The process of immigrant adaptation over time can occur through systematic changes in behaviors within specific immigrant groups over time and also through mixed marriages – shifting from the lower to higher graph lines in Figures 1 and 3. In our data, the prevalence of mixed unions rises tenfold from the first generation to the second, and the average union behavior of young second generation immigrants will be roughly midway between the two groups. In addition, it is plausible that those who continue to marry within their own group will often be relatively conservative in their outlook, tending to place greater importance on the traditional values and ways of their background culture. In other words, this will probably be an increasingly selective group whose observed behaviors will understate the degree of change for immigrants as a whole.

It seems likely that marriages with people outside one's group will generally continue to increase after the second generation, further reducing a given group's ability to maintain its distinct values and behaviors and acting to dissipate remaining differences with the general Canadian (and Quebec) norms. In order to continue over time, systematic differences in behaviors will probably need to be grounded in religious or cultural communities. It is plausible that immigrants who live in large, active and cohesive cultural communities will find it easier to pass on their values and ways to their children, and the likelihood of their children finding a partner from the same group should also be greater, compared to immigrants who live without the support of such a community. This is a topic we will target in our future work in this area.

References

Brown, Susan L.,Jennifer Van Hook and Jennifer E. Glick, 2008. "Generational Differences in Cohabitation and Marriage in the US", *Population Research Policy Review* 27:531–550.

Gans, Herbert J. 1992. "Second-Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of the post-1965 American Immigrants." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15(2), pp. 173-192.

Hallis, Shiva S. and Leo Driedger, 1999. *Immigrant Canada: Demographic, Economic, and Social Challenges*, University of Toronto Press, 358 pp.

Lapierre-Adamcyk, Évelyne et Carole Charvet, 1999. « L'union libre et le mariage : un bilan des travaux en démographie », *Cahiers québécois de démographie*, 28(1-2), pp. 1-21.

LeGrand, Thomas, Ann Evans, Siew-Ean Khoo and Peter McDonald (2008). "Marriage behaviours of immigrant and native-born youth in Canada and Australia", study presented to the annual meetings of the Population Association of America (New Orleans, April), and to the AIDELF Conference (Quebec City, August).

NRC (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine), 2005. *Growing Up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries*, Report of the Panel on Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries (Cynthia Lloyd, ed.) Washington DC: National Academies Press.

Portes, Alejandro and Min Zhou, 1993. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530, pp. 74-96.

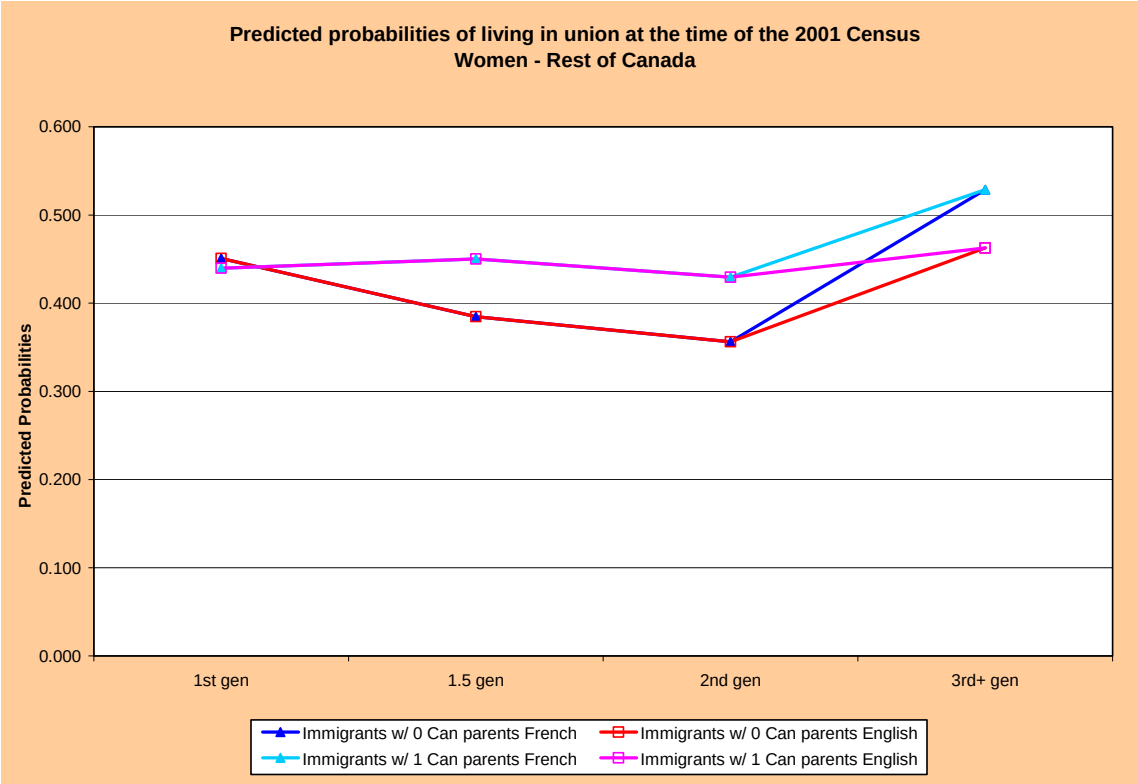
Portes, Alejandro and Rubén G. Rumbaut, 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 406 pp.

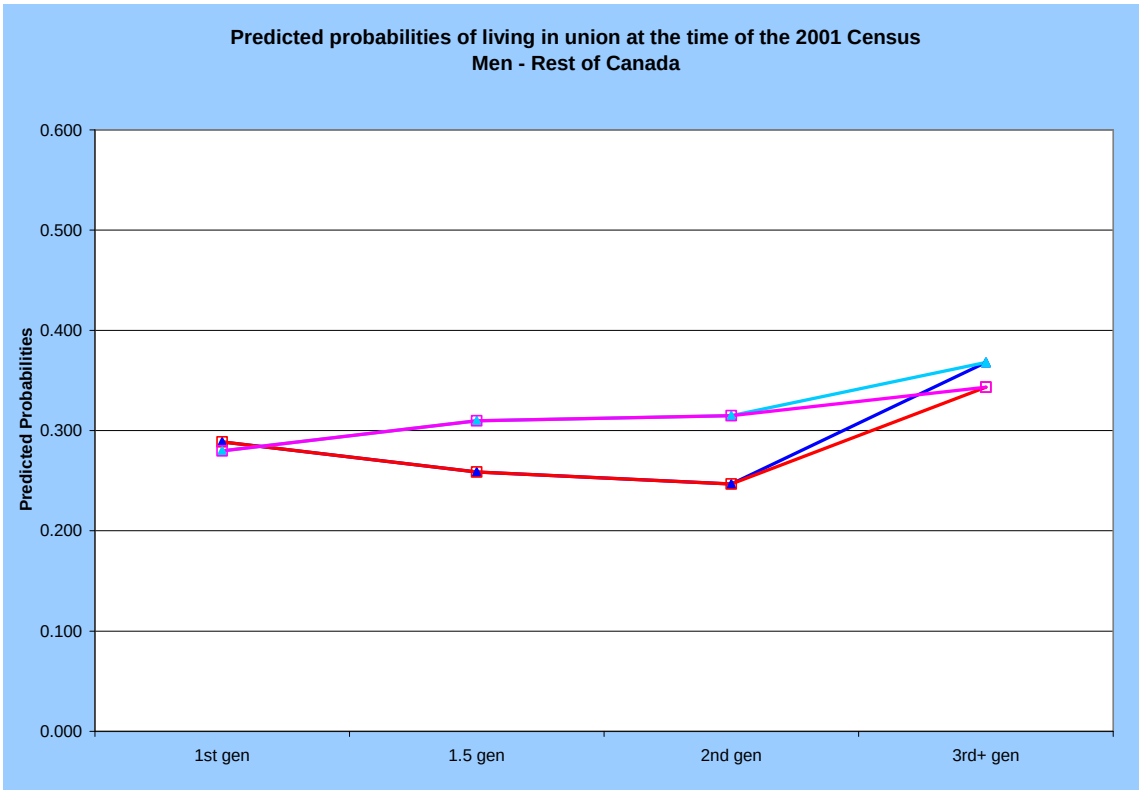
Statistics Canada, 2007. *Couple families by presence of children of all ages in private households, percent distribution, for Canada, provinces and territories – 20% sample data*, http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/highlights/households/pages/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&Code=01&Table=1&Data=Dist&Age=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&Display=Page (accessed 12/09/ 2009).

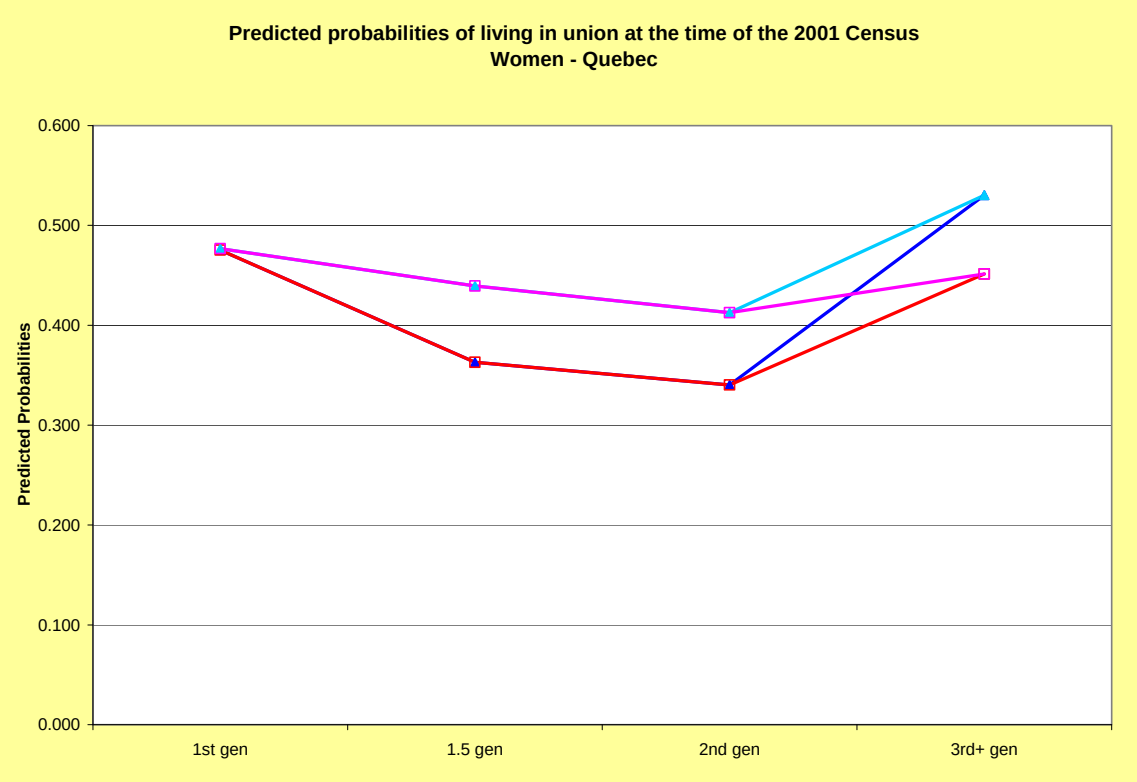
Statistics Canada, 2009. *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census,* www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/index-eng.cfm (accessed 31/08/2009).

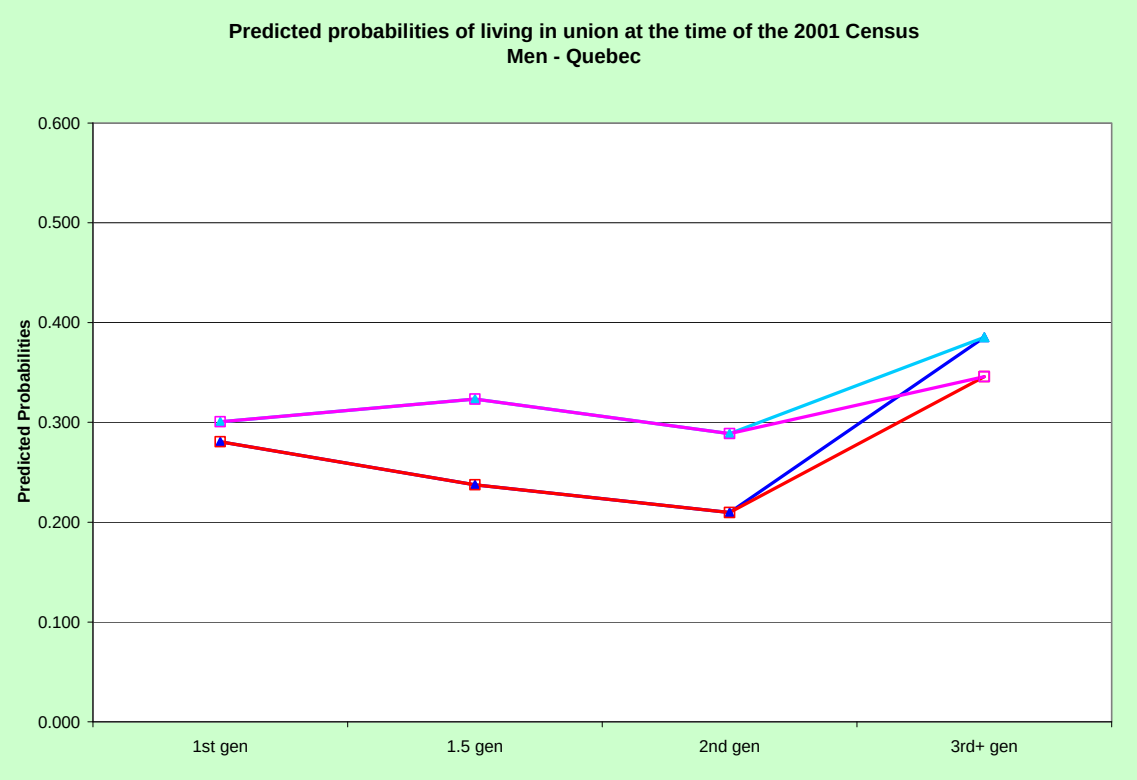
Xie, Y., and E. Greenman. 2005. "Segmented Assimilation Theory: A Reformulation and Empirical Test". Population Studies Center Research Report No. 05-581, University of Michigan.

Figures 1 a-d

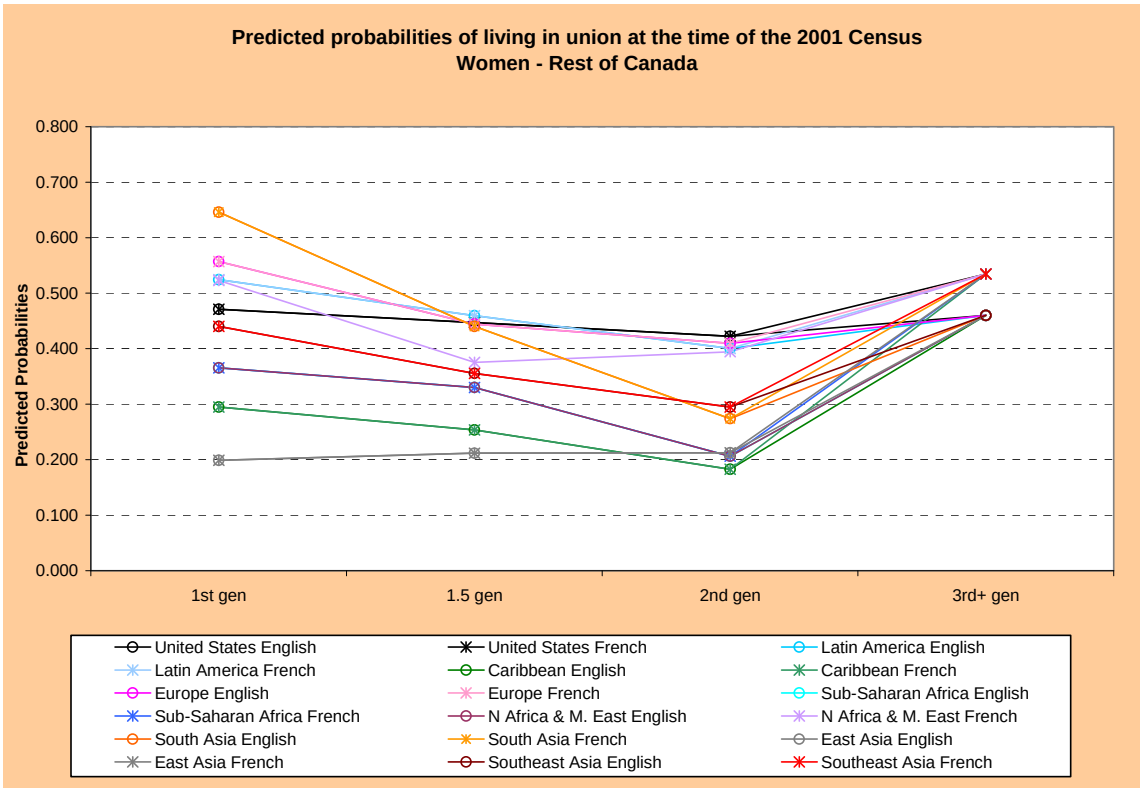

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen
Immigrants w/ 0 Can parents French
Immigrants w/ 0 Can parents English
Immigrants w/ 1 Can parents French
Immigrants w/ 1 Can parents English

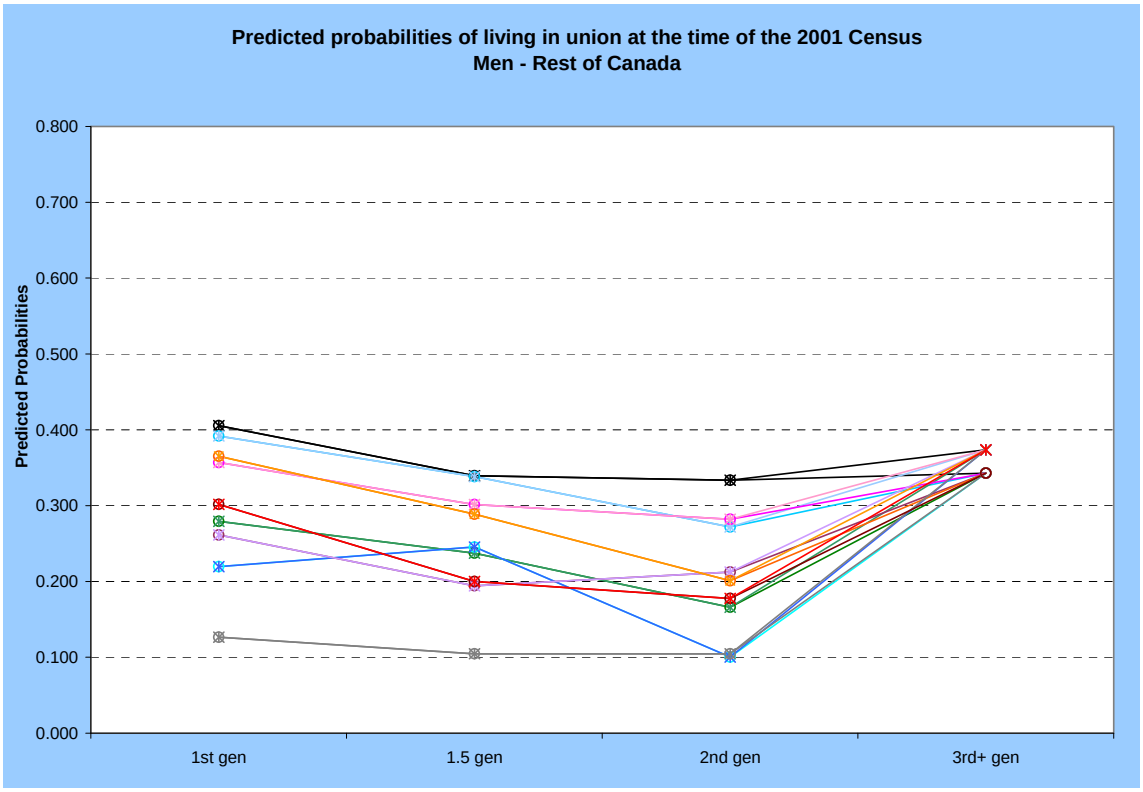

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

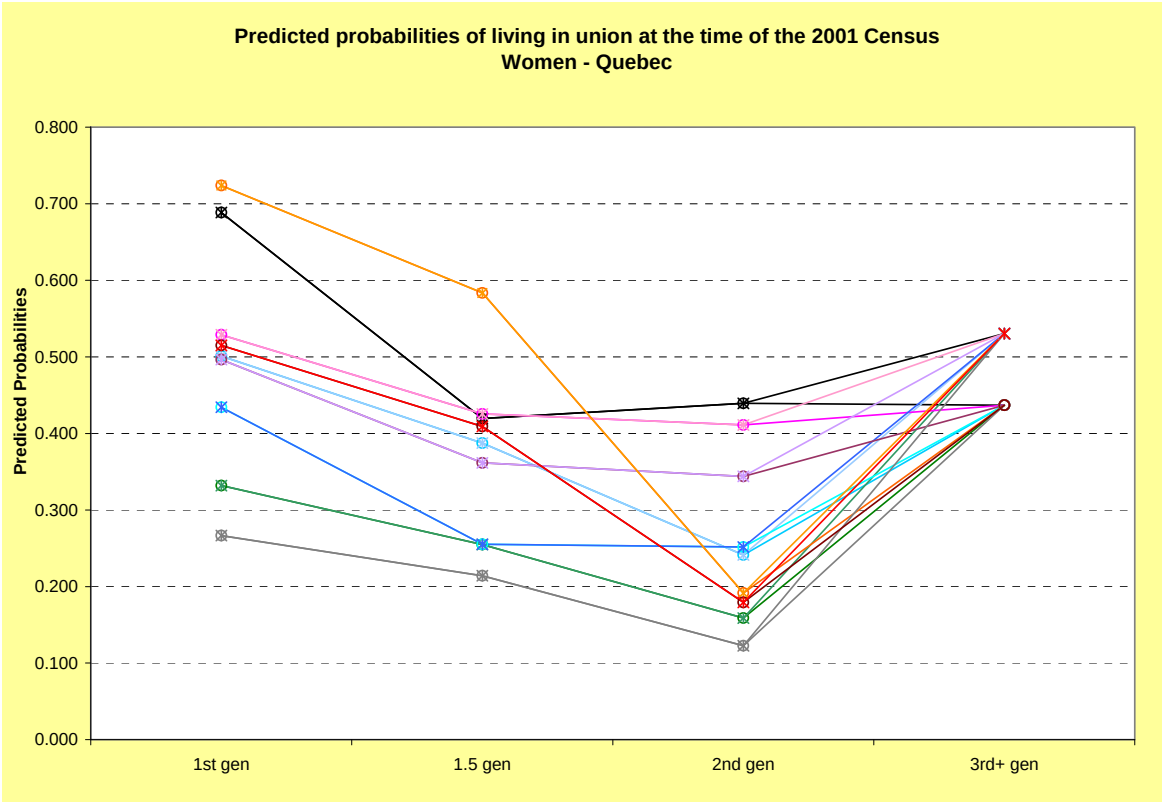

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

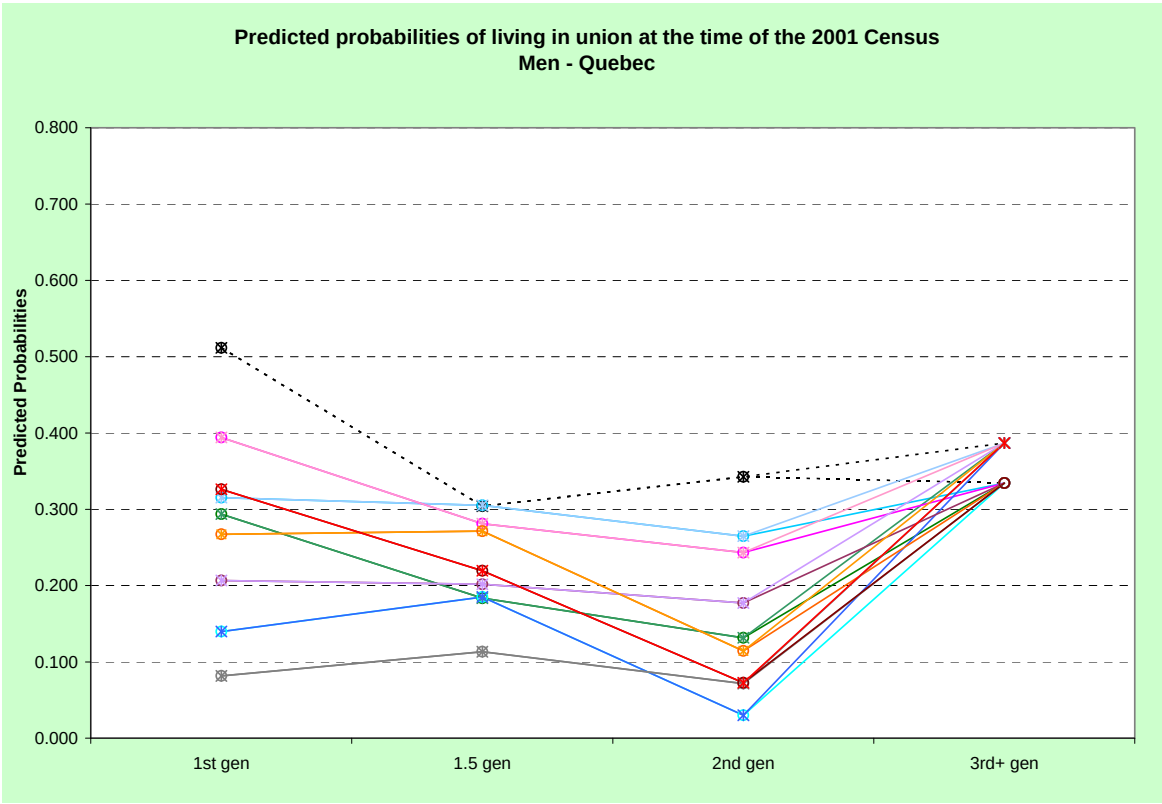

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

Figures 2 a-d

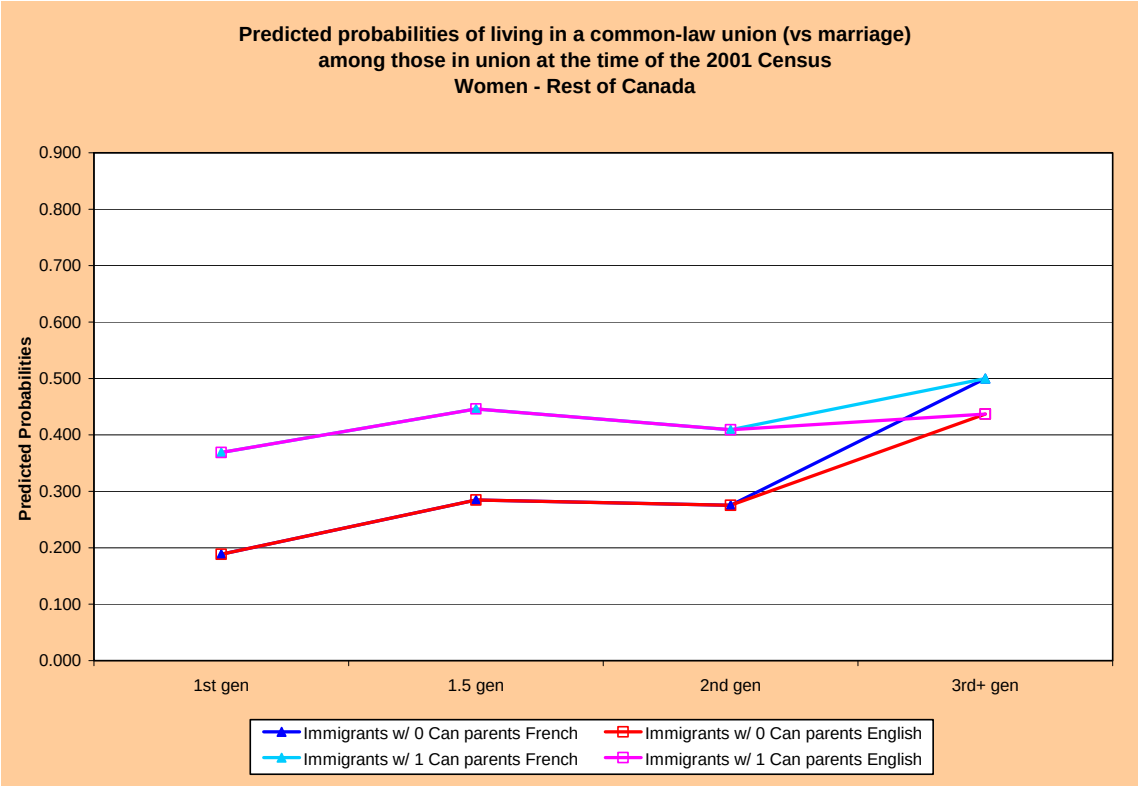

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen
United States English
United States French
Latin America English
Latin America French
Caribbean English
Caribbean French
Europe English
Europe French
Sub-Saharan Africa English
Sub-Saharan Africa French
N Africa & M. East English
N Africa & M. East French
South Asia English
South Asia French
East Asia English
East Asia French
Southeast Asia English
Southeast Asia French

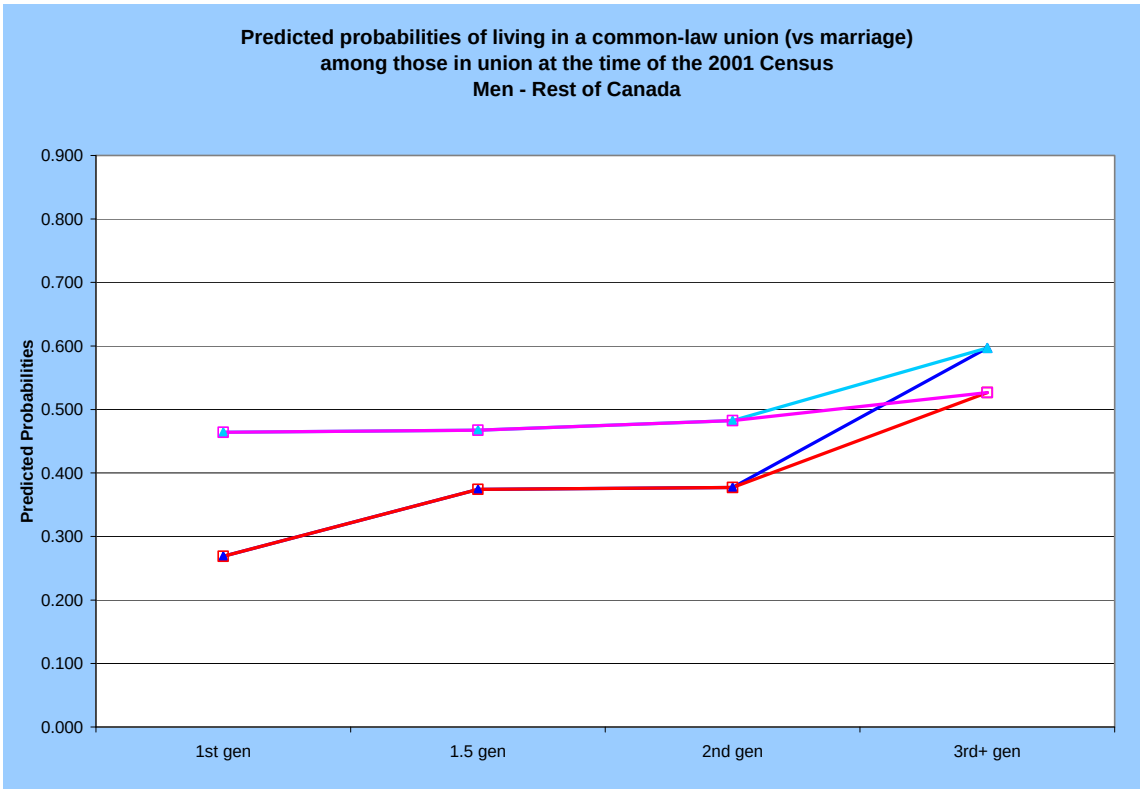

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

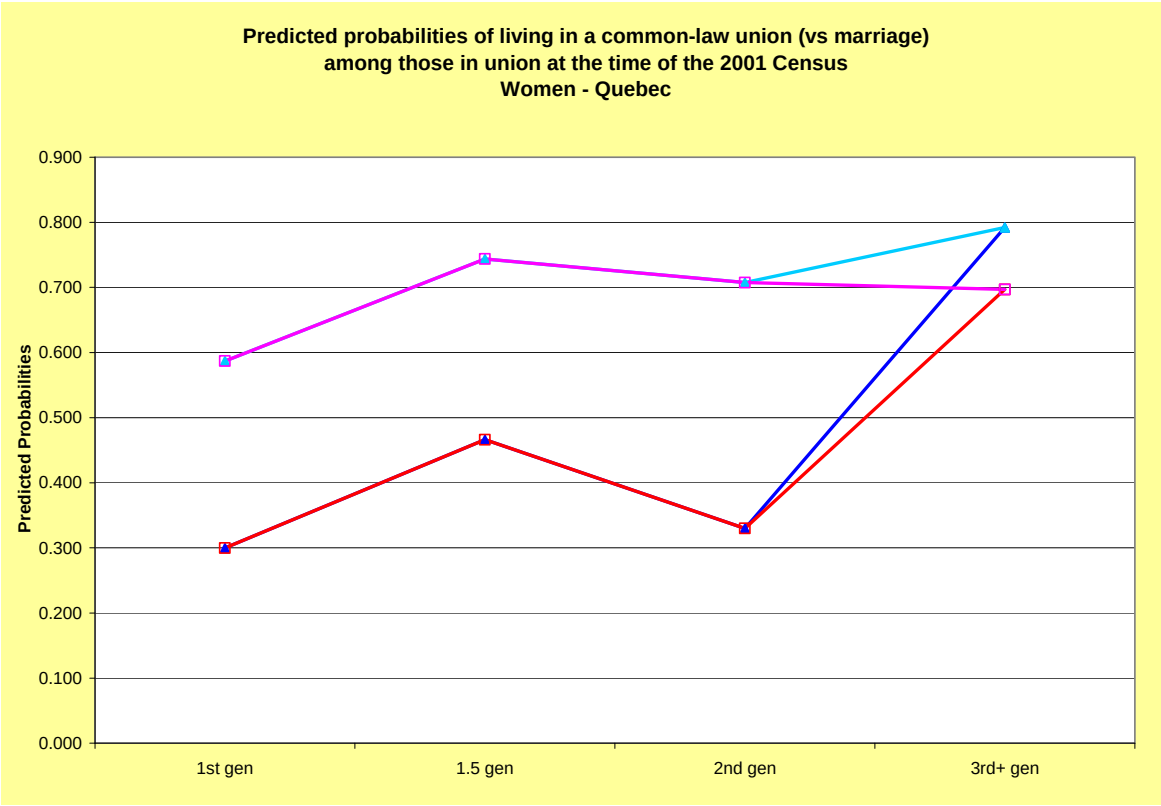

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

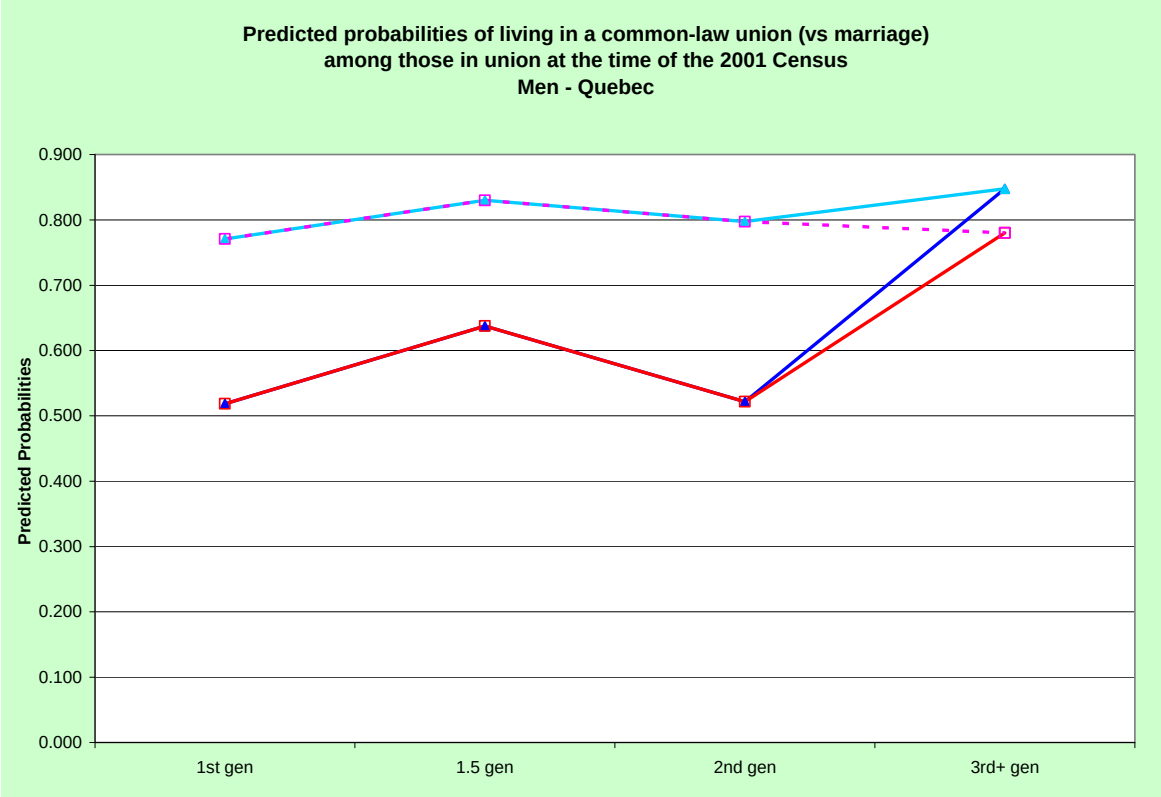

Predicted probabilities of living in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

Figures 3 a-d

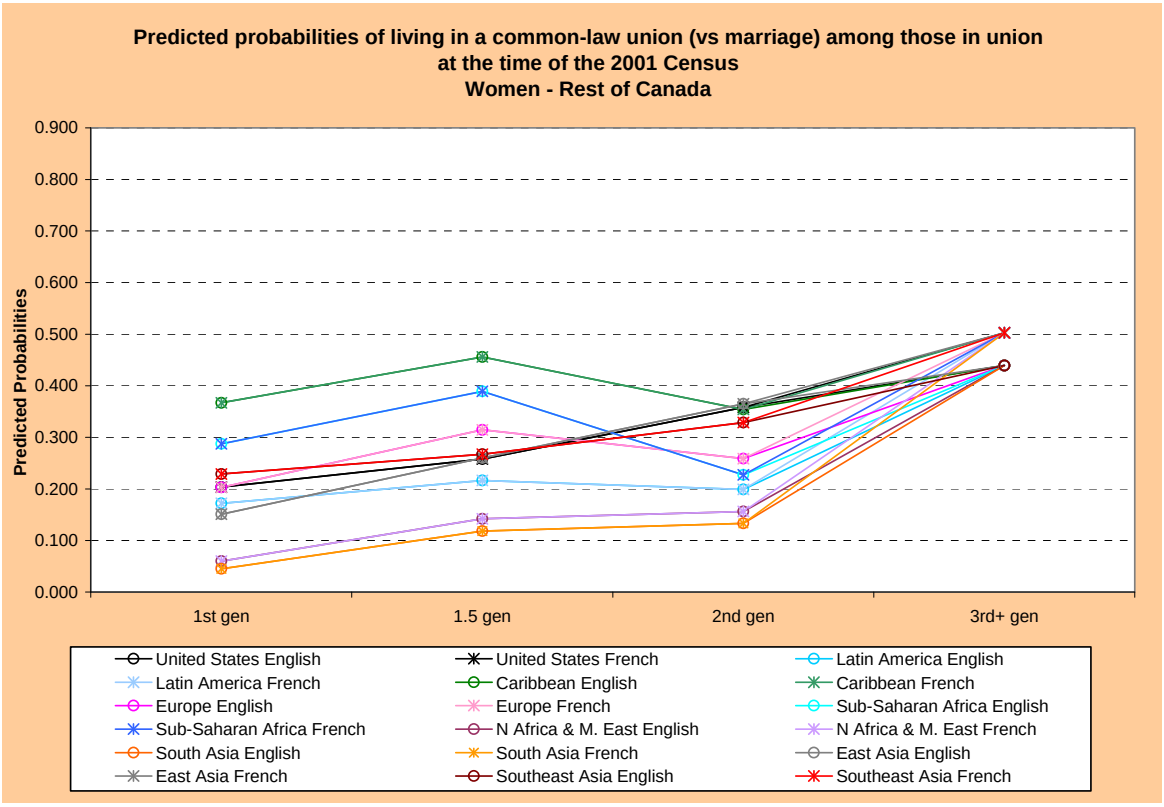

Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage)
among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen
Immigrants w/ 0 Can parents French
Immigrants w/ 0 Can parents English
Immigrants w/ 1 Can parents French
Immigrants w/ 1 Can parents English

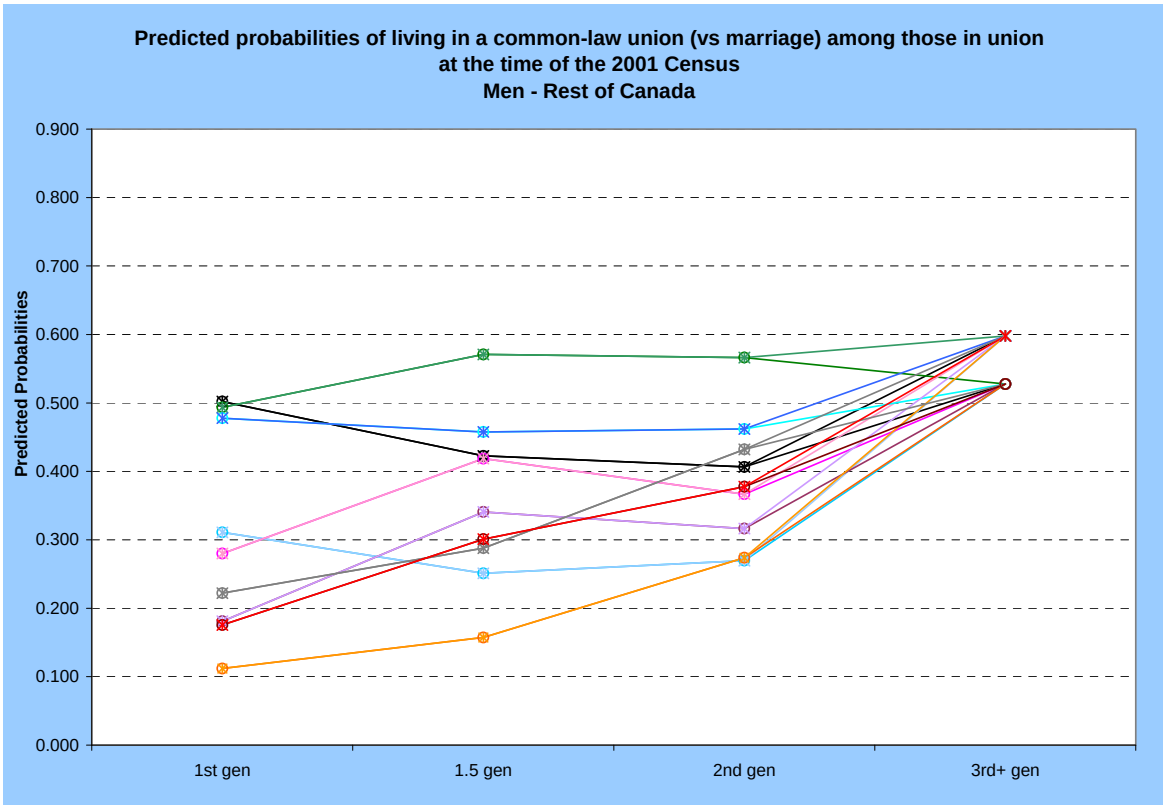

Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage)
among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

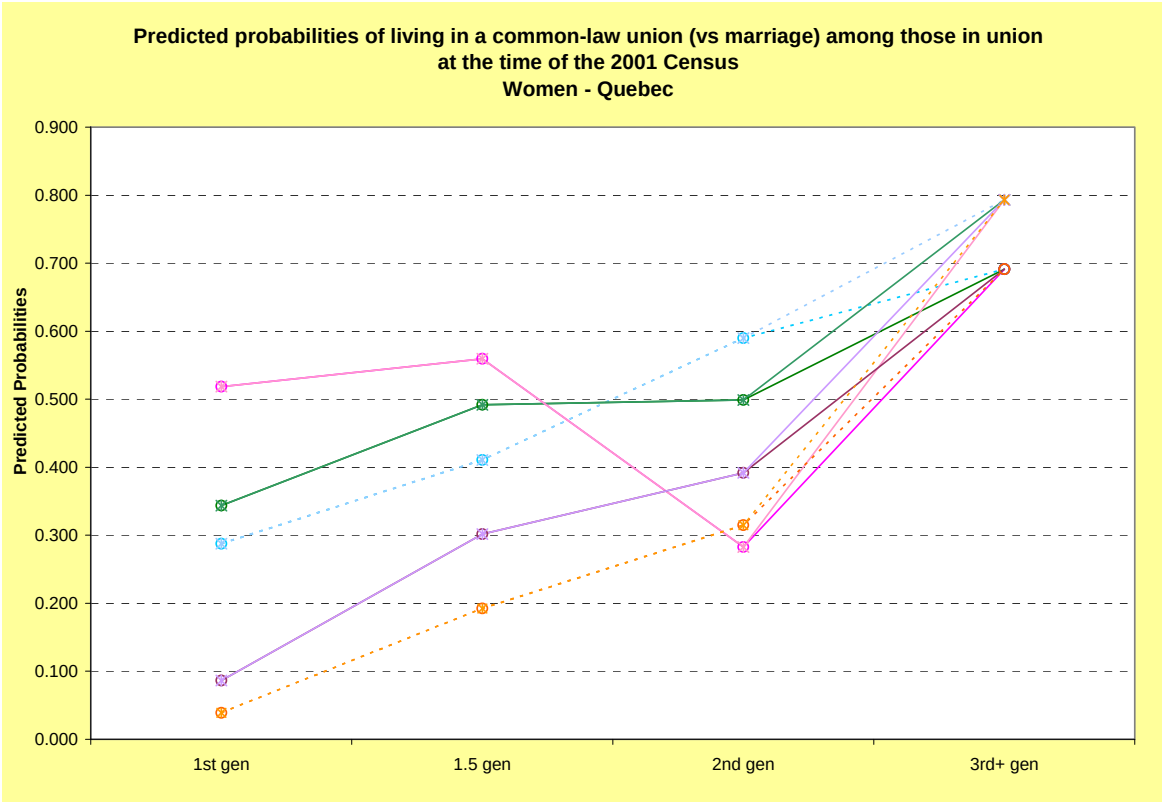

Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage)
among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

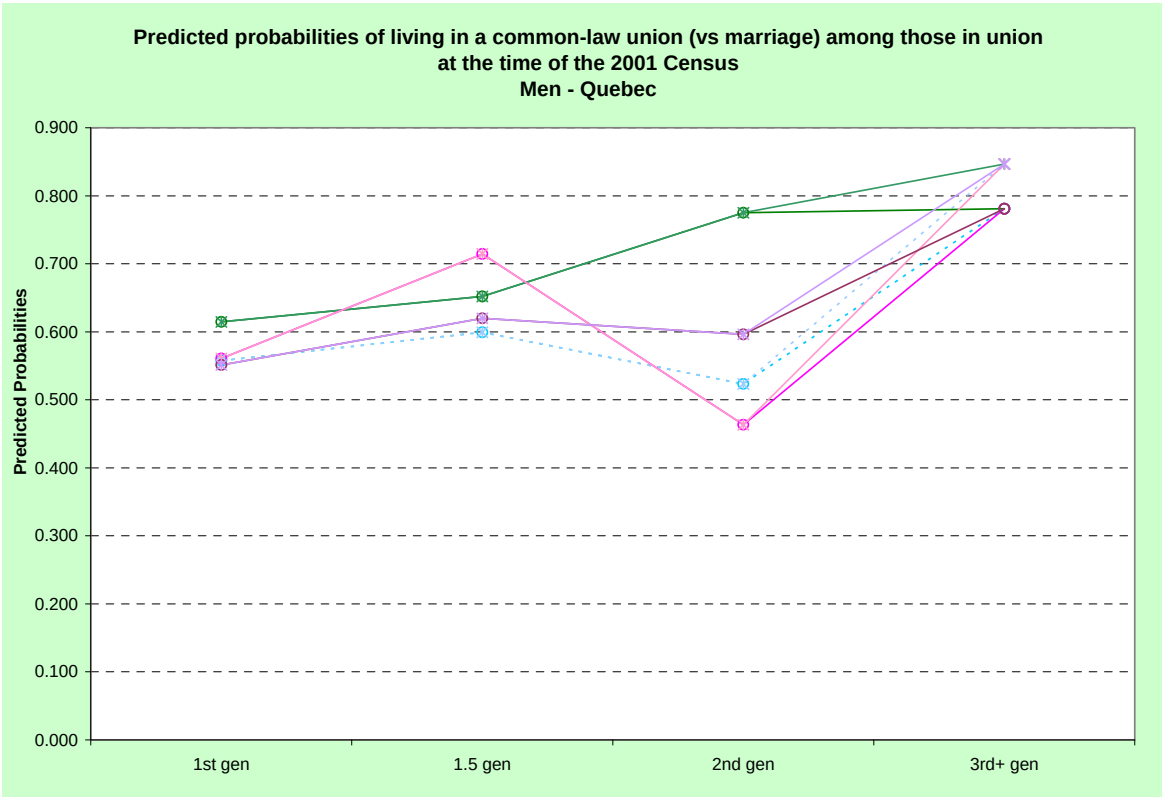

Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage)
among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen

Figures 4 a-d


Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage) among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen
United States English
United States French
Latin America English
Latin America French
Caribbean English
Caribbean French
Europe English
Europe French
Sub-Saharan Africa English
Sub-Saharan Africa French
N Africa & M. East English
N Africa & M. East French
South Asia English
South Asia French
East Asia English
East Asia French
Southeast Asia English
Southeast Asia French


Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage) among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Rest of Canada
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen


Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage) among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Women - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen


Predicted probabilities of living in a common-law union (vs marriage) among those in union at the time of the 2001 Census
Men - Quebec
Predicted Probabilities
0.900
0.800
0.700
0.600
0.500
0.400
0.300
0.200
0.100
0.000
1st gen
1.5 gen
2nd gen
3rd+ gen