Family Formation during the Baby Boom: Canadian Marriage Trends in Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The Baby Boom which occurred roughly between 1940 and the mid-1960s was as much—if not more—a boom in marriages, than a boom in the number of births and other fertility indicators. We use in this paper newly available census micro-level data to document marriage patterns in Canada during the 20th Century and contrast them according to socio-economic and cultural variables, in the two most populous provinces of Quebec and Ontario. The baby boom unfolded very differently in these two provinces, with Quebec couples still experiencing a decline in marital fertility during that period, but changes affecting marriage patterns appear to have been very similar. Yet, how many people did get married and at what age were differentiated culturally and socially, both prior to and during the baby boom. The picture that emerges from these analyses is used to examine more closely what could have been the major causes of this rather sudden *appetite for marriage*.

Renewed interest for studying the causes of the baby boom has been observed recently and the publication of *The Baby Boom and Its Causes: What We Know and What We Need to Know* (van Bavel and Reher 2013) has fuelled discussion around these questions. In addition to demonstrating how little we know about the causes of the baby boom, the two authors emphasized in this paper the importance of the marriage boom that went along with the baby boom and called more specifically for more analyses using micro-level data in order to study the differential contribution of various groups to the baby boom. In their view, and we concur with them, this is a necessary step for a more thorough discussion of the causes of the Baby Boom.

We have undertaken in 2013 such a project using Canadian micro-level data from censuses recently made available for the 20th Century[1]. Our goal in this paper is to shed light on the first phase of the project which deals with marriage patterns during the baby boom, examining cohorts of individuals born between 1900 and 1960. This broad temporal framework is used in order to situate the baby boom in perspective. Analyses are conducted separately for the two most populous provinces of Canada, Quebec and Ontario, and for each gender alternatively.

Studying the modalities of the baby boom in these two provinces is interesting for a number of reasons. First, the two populations differ markedly by their ethnic origin, religion, and linguistic features. Quebec population is mostly French Catholic and has a majority speaking French while Ontario is composed of a majority of Protestant of British descent whose mother tongue is English. Second, the two provinces offer quite contrasting patterns of how the baby boom could unfold in different settings. Having experienced delays in its first demographic transition (Charles 1948, Henripin 1968, Beaujot 2000, Lapierre-Adamcyk et Lussier 2003, Gauvreau and Gossage 2001), Quebec displayed much higher fertility rates at the onset of the baby boom and the fertility increase was less pronounced there than in Ontario (Figure 1). As a matter of fact, when one looks more closely at how specific demographic factors contributed to fertility changes during census intervals (Table 1), it becomes obvious that marital fertility continued to **decrease** within Quebec during the Baby Boom. The baby boom in this province was, indeed, a marriage boom! This very unusual pattern contrasts with the situation in Ontario and in most other countries, to the exception of the Netherlands and Italy where the baby boom was less pronounced (van Bavel and Reher 2013).

We use in this paper data from the 1981 census which contains a question about the age at first marriage. We employ Royston-Parmar hazard models (Royston and Parmar 2002) to analyse the risk of marriage according to various characteristics. Consistent with a perspective where marriage is grounded on economic foundations but also embedded in a complex array of cultural values, we use a combination of ethnic origin, religion, and the level of education in order to highlight social and cultural differences in marriage patterns for each gender and within each province. By doing this, we

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wish to better document the modalities of the marriage boom that fuelled the baby boom and find hints as to why more youth were getting married during this period and at a much younger age. At the difference of much of the literature which emphasizes female marriage patterns due to their importance for subsequent fertility outcomes, we give as much attention to male marriage patterns during a period where the dominant breadwinner model strongly shaped the destiny of both men and women. We thus take as broad an approach as possible to understand the generalized push towards marriage that prevailed at the time in the industrialized world.

In the next section, we provide a brief overview of what we know about Canadian marriage patterns during the 20th Century. Then we present the data and methods used in this paper, and our results. A discussion follows along with some concluding remarks.

Some things we know about marriage patterns in Canada

Marriage rates are displayed on Figure 2 for Quebec and Ontario since the implementation of vital statistics in Canada (1921). These rates present fluctuations which attest that the formation of new couples could easily be delayed when the conditions were not proper to it. The wars, although these could also momentarily prompt marriages in order to avoid men's conscription, the 1918 Spanish Flu Epidemics and the Depression all had downward effect on marriage trends during the first decades of the 20th Century (not all visible on this figure). The first sharp increase in the late 1930s signals the catching up of marriages that could not have happened earlier due to the harsh economic conditions (Dumas and Péron 1992, Péron 2003), followed by the beginning of the marriage boom. The second sharp increase observed in the sixties and later is a direct consequence of the baby boomers starting to get married, after which cohabitation becomes increasingly popular, especially in Quebec. Except for this last period, marriage rates in Quebec and Ontario followed quite similar patterns although they were usually slightly higher in Ontario.

Higher marriage rates during the 40s and 50s went along with a significant decline in the age at first marriage, both for men and women (Figure 3). The comparison on this figure involves the Quebec province and Canada as a whole, but if we were to withdraw Quebec from this ensemble or directly compare with Ontario (a large share of Canada less Quebec), the difference would be even larger. Following the increase in age at first marriage during the Depression, the timing of marriage changed drastically towards much earlier ages during the next 25 years, before these went up again at

the onset of the second demographic transition. These trends are generalized except for the fact that people in the rest of Canada married even earlier than Quebecers.

Work using census data has yielded proportions remaining single at various ages, including at 50 and over, the so-called never married, as well as ages at first marriage, particularly with the 1941 and 1961 censuses which included a direct question to that effect (Charles 1948, Henripin 1968, Krotki and Lapierre 1968). Charles (1948) reports proportions of never married women among those aged 45-54 in 1941, women born between 1886 and 1895, to be 15% in Quebec and 12% in Ontario. Median ages at first marriage were very similar in Quebec and Ontario, at 22.9 and 23.4. She further unveils lower ages at marriage for women of French origin and Catholic women compared to British and Protestant women, respectively, as well as a pattern of delayed marriage for the most educated. Henripin (1968) finds a similar result for schooling with the 1961 Census data. Consistent with results displayed on Figure 3, he also finds higher ages at first marriage in Quebec than in Ontario for women born in 1911-1916, as well as later ages at first marriage for women residing in large cities compared to those living in small cities and rural areas. In their study of cultural differences in fertility with the 1961 census, Krotki and Lapierre (1968) document nuptiality differences between provinces and religious groups: among Quebec women aged 40-44 (born 1916-1921), 13.9% of Catholics remained single compared to 9.8% of Protestants; the corresponding percentages for Ontario were 8.1% and 6.9%. These results suggest that Ontario women were more likely to marry than Quebecers, and Protestant women more likely to do so than Catholics. Using Hajnal methods, Mertens (1976) found similar results for Ontario males compared to Quebecers, but did not compute detailed tables for women.

Using data from various censuses, Duchesne (1976) provides us with a detailed analysis of marriage trends within Quebec, which he compares at times with the rest of Canada. The proportion of women remaining single at age 45 according to the 1971 census figures he uses was 19% in Quebec for women born prior to 1906 and only 11% for those born 1921-1926. Among women residing in the rest of Canada, the proportions never married were much lower at 12% and 6% respectively for the same two groups of cohorts. Corresponding figures for men living in Quebec were lower than those unveiled for women and they remained rather stable around 10%. Surprising at first, we believe that this gender difference is consistent with the fact that more women than men were entering the religious orders at the time. It also reminds us that conditions associated with the marriage market such as the sex ratios of young adults, the proportions marrying a widow or a widower, and the

age gap between brides and grooms could be responsible for such differences. Consistent with the trends in ages at first marriage (Figure 3), Duchesne finds that the proportions already married at various ages went up very steeply at ages 25 and 30 for both men and women as we move to the cohorts born after 1920.

More is known about Quebec socio-economic differentials in marriage patterns for the Saguenay region where families have been completely reconstituted using parish records. In this remote region where agriculture was important and industrialization developed around pulp industries and large aluminum & hydro-electric plants, ages at first marriage tended to be lower than in the rest of Quebec. Socioeconomic differentials affected women in that farmers' daughters were getting married at a younger age, 21 years on average, while daughters of non-manual workers displayed the highest age at first marriage, around 22 (Gauvreau D. 1992, Bouchard 1996, Vézina et al., 2014). Despite the baby boom period, these ages tended to go up after the 1930s, which points to regional differences even during the baby boom period[2], and emphasizes the importance of the starting point when examining trends.

Data and methods

In this paper, we follow van Bavel and Reher's call for more micro-level analyses of the baby boom and make use of newly available micro-level data to study marriage patterns of individuals born between 1900 and 1960. We use confidential data from the master file of the 1981 census, available in Research Data Centres (RDC) in Canada[3]. In addition to the usual socio-demographic variables, Canadian censuses include questions such as religion, ethnic origin, country of birth, age at immigration, schooling, linguistic skills, occupation, and income. Because we observe married people well after they got married, we have to limit our analyses to stable characteristics that are likely not to have changed since the time of marriage.

[2] Such differences are difficult to assess with retrospective census information given that the place of residence is likely to have changed since marriage.

[3] The 1981 census was the first set of micro-level data available that contained a question on the age at marriage after the sample for the 1941 census created by the Canadian Century Research Infrastructure (CCRI, Gaffield 2007). A similar file for the 1971 census has just become available in the Research Data Centres at the end of March 2015.

Religion, ethnic origin, and schooling are all variables that fit this criterion[4]. Schooling is the best proxy we could come up with for socio-economic status since any other characteristic observed at the time of the census (occupation, income) is likely to have evolved since the marriage took place. Schooling also has the advantage of being available for both men and women. In addition, there is a renewed interest for this variable which has been presented as a key factor for understanding fertility –and nuptiality− changes during the Baby Boom in Europe (Riquena and Salazar 2014, Sandström 2014, and van Bavel 2014). For various contexts where educational achievements were rising rapidly (Spain, Sweden, and Belgium), these authors provide evidence for the increasing convergence of educational fertility differentials of married women while singleness seems key to understanding overall fertility differentials according to education in Spain. The delayed fertility calendar observed for most educated women also confirms the late marriage of the most educated. We wish to pay particular attention to the role played by this variable on marriage patterns, since it was also subject to significant increases for both men and women in Canada.

Religion and ethnic origin have been combined to delineate four ethno-religious groups present in each province: French Catholic, British Catholic (mostly Irish), British Protestant, and Jewish. Most of the French Catholics are descendants of the French settlers who came during the period of the French Regime, which ended in 1765 when Canada became a British colony. Immigrants from Ireland, England and Scotland composed the next waves of immigration, along with Loyalists from the United States who were from the same British descent. Immigration became more diversified at the end of the 19th Century when Italian, Chinese, and Eastern European immigrants (including Jewish immigrants) arrived during a period which was a boom of immigration for Canada (roughly 1896-1914). The four categories retained for this analysis account for over 85% of the Quebec population in each cohort (top part of Table 2), and between 54-69% in Ontario where immigration was more diverse, especially for the last cohorts (Table 3).

The number of years and level of schooling have been grouped into four categories: 1) less than 9 years of schooling, 2) 9-13 years of schooling, which includes higher high school levels and completed high school, 3) post-secondary studies, excluding university, 4) university studies (with or without a degree). As expected, there are very significant increases in the higher categories of this variable, to the detriment of the lowest category. One can see that while very educated individuals

[4] Tentative analyses were run with immigration variables that showed a delay in marriage for those who immigrated to Canada.

born at the beginning of the 20th Century were quite exceptional, the situation reversed towards the end of the period when individuals with less than 9 years of schooling occupied a rather "marginalized" position. As time passes, the two middle categories became the most common in both Quebec and Ontario, to the exception of the Jewish group, by far the most educated of all for the last two cohorts.

The main characteristics of the samples are presented in Tables 2 & 3 for men and women altogether since only minor differences affect these groups, the most noticeable being that women are slightly less educated than men at all times. The percentage of men and women ever married also differs but this will be analysed more specifically in the next section of the paper. Thanks to the use of the master file of the 1981 census, the sample sizes reported in the top part of these tables are large enough to allow for hazard models to be run on these various populations. The only exception will come at times from the Jewish population which also presents some distinct features compared to the other groups, especially its changing composition due to the arrival of immigrants from other parts of the world (see the lower % born in Canada) and, of course, the aftermath of the WWII.

We used interval-censored hazard models to analyse the risk of marriage according to the above characteristics, separately for men and women living in Quebec and in Ontario. Models have been run separately within educational levels due to the non-proportionality of the effects observed for this variable. Proportionality tests showed, for example, that more educated women being less likely to marry than less educated women was not a consequence of the hazard function being similar in shape but lower among the higher levels of education; rather, within a given cohort, the hazard function shifts rightwards as education increases. This impairs estimating the effect of education directly; it also impairs estimating the effect of other relevant variables, such as being French Catholic or British Protestant. Such a situation requires estimating separate baseline hazard functions for each level of education. Thus, separate analyses of women and men in the four cultural communities were conducted according to the four levels of education described above.

One last methodological concern has to do with the fact that we use for this study retrospective information from people who are for the most part over the age of 50, some of them as old as 80 years old. Observing only those who survived and are still living in Canada may yield some biases associated with differential mortality or out-migration patterns according to marital status. We have used data from other censuses concerning the same cohorts to validate some of the percentages

observed in 1981. They were generally in line with our own numbers[5], suggesting the absence of any severe bias. For women, the recent literature on mortality/fertility (and thus nuptiality) association suggests mixed results about its direction or, in the specific case of Belgium, suggests that both childless women and women with many children might suffer from higher mortality risks (van Bavel 2014). Translated into our situation, this might lead to biases both in favor and against married women, which would compensate each other at least to a certain extent. The stronger association usually observed for men between mortality and nuptiality, to the advantage of married men, might cause more problems, although we did not observe so far the signs of this. Finally, emigration rates are not very high in Canada and these flows are overly composed of immigrants, which is not likely to have affected our cohorts extensively.

Results

Results are presented alternatively for women and for men. First we summarize nuptiality on two graphs reporting the percentage remaining single at age 50 and age 25, for each ethno-religious group and within each province, from the Kaplan-Meier estimator of the survivor function. Second, we present graphs showing the cumulative hazard estimated using Royston-Parmar models for three groups of cohorts that provide an overview of the trends before, during, and at the end of the baby boom (individuals born in 1911-20, 1921-30, and 1941-50) by educational level, for each province and each ethno-religious group separately. They allow us to visualize the extent to which people in each group were getting married as well as the differences in the timing of the event[6].

Female marriage patterns

It is quite clear from Figures 4 and 5 that women of each ethno-religious group in Quebec and Ontario experienced a very significant increase in their propensity to marry and a decline in their age at first marriage. For example, 18% of French Catholic women born between 1901 and 1910 remained single at age 50 in Quebec, but only 11% of those born between 1921 and 1930 did. The extent of the decline was such that the percentage of women still single at age 50 was reduced by

[5] This is the case for example for the numbers reported by Krotki and Lapierre (1968) for women aged 40-44 in 1961 or those reported by Duchesne (1976) for men and women in Quebec. More direct assessments will be performed with older censuses that are also available to us.

[6] The whole set of results, tables and figures, is available upon request. Since there was no sudden reversal of the trends, showing only these three groups of cohorts does not affect our grasp of the results.

about half within 20 years in almost every group. At age 25, 49% of women in the first group of cohorts were still single, but only 23% two decades later. This decline in the age at first marriage comes to an end with women born during the 1940s who would have got married in the late 1960s and 1970s. These significant changes, both in terms of the intensity and timing of marriage, were generalized across all groups and in both provinces, although Ontario women were always more likely than Quebecers to marry and to do so at a slightly younger age.

In both provinces, we also see marked differences in marriage patterns among ethno-religious groups. Catholic women were always the least likely to marry, followed by the Protestant and then by Jewish women. These differentials remained pretty constant throughout the period, contrary to the difference between Catholic women of French or British origin. British Catholic women born in the first decade of the 20th Century were the least likely to marry and were marrying late compared to women of other origins, even those who were French Catholic. This difference is consistent with what other studies have found, for example for a diverse milieu like Montreal at the end of the 19th Century, which was seen as one of many strategies for social mobility within this group (Olson and Thornton, 2011). This difference disappears with later cohorts in Quebec but remains in Ontario.

When we further break down the groups to analyse educational differentials in marriage patterns, we refine our assessment of the various trends that were occurring simultaneously with a spectacular increase in the level of education for these women. On Figures 6 and 7, the patterns for French and British Catholic women in Quebec and Ontario appear strikingly similar. Marriage propensities for women born in the 1910s decrease from least educated to most educated women while the least educated are also more likely to marry at a young age. For French Catholic women of this generation in particular, being highly educated was not very compatible with marriage: only 53% of them married compared with 91% of the least educated[7]. As the propensity to marry increased for all except the least educated, those with a high school level reached the top, followed very closely by those with some other non university level. Women with a university education remained the least likely to marry, but the spectacular increase they experienced signalled that a higher education was no longer at odds with marriage and reproduction. For example, 81% of the most educated French Catholic women born in the 1940s were married by age 40, while the percentage for the least educated women remained at 91%. As a matter of fact, this group numerically in decline also seemed to be losing its advantage in terms of proportions married. Catholic women from all educational

[7] Not shown here, these figures are taken from K.-M. survivor functions estimated for each level of education.

groups experienced a decline in age at first marriage during the baby boom and the gradient observed with the age at first marriage remained the same in all cohorts: no matter your ethno-religious group or the province you resided in, "the longer your studies, the later you marry".

The results for British Protestant women are quite different from the ones just described for the Catholics (Figure 8). Although they also existed, educational differentials were much less pronounced and they remained very similar from the first to the last cohort of women. For example, the proportions married at age 50 varied from 85% for women with university education in Ontario to 95% for the lowest two educational categories. In Quebec, the most educated British Protestant women were not even the least likely to marry (86%) and the range of the proportions ever married was quite similar to Ontario. The overall increased propensity to marry for British Protestant women thus seems to have been more structural than substantive as more and more women were getting educated and joined groups where marriage was already more common or even slightly increasing in the case of other non university education. The structural explanation certainly played a role for Catholic women as well but for them, this went along with significant increases in marriage rates directly proportional to the level of education. British Protestant women also married earlier during the baby boom but the change was less pronounced for the least educated who, even more than the Catholics, were losing ground in terms of marriage. Among women born in the 1940s, British Protestant women with less than grade 9 level of education were indeed at par with the very educated for the lowest propensity to marry (84% in Quebec, 80% in Ontario), having experienced an actual decline of their propensity to marry, especially in Ontario. The educational gradient in the timing of marriage did remain the same throughout the cohorts and was identical to the Catholic one, although slightly less pronounced.

Due to smaller numbers, the picture we get for Jewish women is not as complete as for the other groups (Figure 9). Represented on this Figure are the two cohorts for which the data allowed obtaining consistent estimates. Marriage was almost universal for Jewish women born in the 1920s, no matter their level of education: for example, the lowest percentage ever married in Ontario was 97% for women with other non university studies. A slight educational gradient similar to what prevailed for Catholic and Protestant women affected the timing of marriage, while educational differences in the propensity to marry tended to widen for women born in the 1930s. The very small group of least educated Jewish women were then the least likely to marry, but the differences are small and

marriage remains almost universal. As mentioned before, the Jewish population is more likely than any other group to have been affected by compositional changes during the period.

Male marriage patterns

In line with what we reported from previous studies, men born at the beginning of the 20th Century were less likely than women to never marry (Figures 10 & 11). This gender differential in marriage, to the advantage of men, decreased as we move to the last group of cohorts born in the 1920s, who became young adults right during the Baby Boom period. In the Province of Quebec, the percentage of women who were single at age 50 was almost twice that of men for the first cohort, but this gap no longer existed for the last cohort (Figure 10). In Ontario, women from every ethno-religious group were all more likely than men to marry among those born in the 1920s (Figure 11). Men usually marry later than women and this is true for 20th century Canada as well, although this gender gap slightly narrowed during the Baby Boom (figures not shown here).

Consistent with the elimination of the gender gap in the propensity to marry, the push towards more marriage during the baby boom was not as pronounced for men as it was for women (Figure 12). An increase in the overall proportions getting married −observed at age 50− only holds for the two Catholic groups in Ontario while the other groups display no systematic pattern. The Ontario advantage over Quebec which we observed for women is not as systematic either on the male side, and applies almost exclusively to the group of British Protestant men. The ethno-religious differential in the propensity to marry bears more resemblance with female patterns than any other aspect: in Quebec as well as in Ontario, French and British Catholic men were the least likely to marry, followed by the British and then by Jewish men who were the most likely to marry.

Another strong pattern affecting both men and women is the propensity to marry much earlier as we move to cohorts born later in the 20th Century (Figure 13). Men born after the 1910s married much earlier than men born at the turn of the 20th Century and this change in the timing of marriage was almost as pronounced as it was for women (Figure 5). The trend slowed down a little later than for women but not by much given the gender gap in ages at marriage. Except for Jewish men, we observe the same tendency towards Ontario men marrying earlier than men from Quebec which we observed for women. Finally, there is very little difference in the timing of male marriage among various ethno-religious groups.

Educational differentials in marriage patterns also existed for men but they were less pronounced than for women (Figures 14 to 17). The most common trend in all ethno-religious groups was the decline in the propensity to marry for less educated men. This category, which accounted for a much smaller percentage of all men in recent cohorts, might have been composed of an increasing proportion of men who were not fit for marriage or did not represent an attractive party for women from an economic point of view. This group was usually the least likely to marry although their probability of remaining single at age 50 never surpassed one in five. At the other end of the spectrum, men with some other non university education were the most likely to marry, to the exception of highly educated Jewish men who were also very likely to marry. A final trend can be seen in the increased probability to marry for French Catholic men with a university education, which went from 0.78 to 0.88 in Quebec and from 0.80 0.85 in Ontario, reaching similar levels observed in other groups throughout the period. This could be partly due to the lesser attraction of the religious orders, whose male members were among the most educated.

As far as the timing of marriage is concerned, all groups in both provinces experienced a similar trend towards much earlier marriage, which was by far the most important change for men. One can also see a slight educational gradient in the timing of marriage while men with a university education tended to marry a little later than men from the three other groups.

Discussion

The detailed analysis of marriage patterns according to cultural and social characteristics in two different provinces and for each gender alternatively yielded some important results. First, the most generalized change was certainly the push towards an early age at marriage, both for men and for women, no matter where people lived, what ethno-religious group they belonged to or even their educational level. Second, not only did women marry at a younger age but they also married more than the generations born at the beginning of the 20th Century. Third, there was for both women and men an ethno-religious gradient going from Catholics, who were less likely to marry, to Protestant, and then to the Jewish group where marriage was more universal. As a consequence, more of the increase in the propensity to marry took place within the Catholic group. Fourth, marriage in Ontario was more prevalent, especially among women, and tended to occur at a slightly younger age. Fifth, there were educational differentials in marriage patterns. Women with a high school degree were often the most likely to marry while men with other non university education

were in a similar position. There was a certain marginalization of the least educated, both men and women, who while becoming less numerous were also less likely to marry than other groups. Finally, the positive association between the level of education and age at marriage was remarkably stable during the period: in the case of women, it followed a perfect gradient for each level of education, while in the case of men it rather opposed the most educated to the other three groups.

These trends certainly have much to do with the end of the Depression and the improved economic context which went along the WWII and its aftermath. These could have played a role in at least two different ways. First, improved economic conditions could have allowed parents to let their children leave the parental home to get married in larger proportions and at a younger age, because the family economy was less dependent upon their work. This trend would have been amplified by longer schooling duration and the implementation of the first welfare state measures, both likely to weaken the requirements of the family economy, especially those running from children to parents (Vaillancourt and Pelletier 1988). Second, improved economic status of youth and better prospects for their immediate future would also have improved their chances of marriage and allowed them to get married early (Charland and Désautels 1992, Fahrni 2005). The relatively new status of young wage-earners within the family could also have undermined some pillars of the family and caused more intergenerational conflict and eagerness on the part of youth to leave the parental home (Simmons 2009, Comacchio 2006).

The Depression could have affected families in other ways than simply economic[8]. For some observers, this period—and high unemployment in particular—also had a major impact on gender relations and the family (Campbell 2009). In many respects, the Great Depression saw the return of the family economy and the renewed significance of each and every member's contribution to its proper functioning (Comacchio 1999). For a generation of individuals who came of age during this decade, the family was viewed as something serviceable from which to draw, in order to function and persevere during difficult times. It is this pragmatic conception of the family, with its specific roles and implications for men and women, which would help to reproduce the breadwinner model as well as its corollary: the marriage boom. Largely fixed gender roles—expressed through the categories of "breadwinner" and "dependant"—were compounded by the cultural and political climate of the 1930s, reflecting and reinforcing the patriarchal dominance of the time. As Campbell reminds us, "the moral panic about women working was primarily embedded in concern over the demise of

[8] For a broader discussion, see for example Elder 1974 and Weiss 2000.

traditional gender roles and, most importantly, in the fear over the erosion of masculinity." (2009:6) "Men had their pride," explained a woman interviewed by Baillargeon in her work on Montreal, "They didn't want their wives working." (Baillargeon 1999: 56). In his work on masculinity in Post-war Canada, Dummitt echoes these comments and explains rightfully:

> The Depression and war had not only disturbed individual lives, but had also threatened economic and political relations and the notions of gender through which they had been sustained. The crisis years of the 1930s and 1940s challenged the ideology of male breadwinning: first, by putting so many men out of work; and second, by drawing so many women into the workforce. As historian Nancy Christie has argued, state planners during these years saw re-establishing the role of the male breadwinner as one of the main goals of social-welfare policy. The postwar emphasis on returning to normal, then, needs to be seen in this context – that is, as an attempt to re-establish dominant notions of masculinity. (2007: 29-30)

The surge of marriages at the end of the Depression can then be seen as a direct consequence of the regained economic prosperity, entrenched in a gender ideology where the breadwinner model was put forward as the ideal solution for a return to normal.

Another significant and enduring transformation identified by historians during the interwar years was the gradual displacement of strictly economic unions between men and women by increasingly affective ones. In her monograph detailing the transformations undergone by marriage in the early decades of the 20th century, Christina Simmons suggests that women's increased freedom was the motor driving sexual and marital change (Simmons 2009: 13). Careful to acknowledge that women's continued financial dependence on men precluded any real egalitarianism between the sexes, she nonetheless draws our attention to the ways in which newfound liberties in the realms of work and politics, the right to vote in particular, had a transformative effect on the way women began to think of themselves in relation to marriage. Spouses' expectations would change accordingly and would place much more emphasis on sexuality, which became increasingly separated from reproduction within marriage. This would prompt young couples to turn to marriage as a way to express their newly acknowledged sexual desires (Cott 2002). Facing especially harsh consequences in the case of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, women could have been even more inclined to follow this path.

For Simmons, the "modernization" of marriage was first and foremost a white, Protestant, middle-class phenomenon, which seems consistent with some of our results: the differences observed for British Protestant women, the lagging behind of Catholics and of Quebec, especially in the case of women, and the highest proportions married for the middle educational categories, both for men and for women. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the fertility transition was

already complete in Ontario at the time of the Baby Boom, which was not the case in the Quebec Province. But things were changing even in Quebec. In an article tracing the relationship between kinship and romantic love through the study of amorous correspondence, sociologist Roch Hurtubise posits that an important and noticeable shift occurred at the beginning of the 1920s. Prior to this decade, he writes, love was not considered legitimate unless it received familial recognition (Hurtubise, 1991: 117-120). Everything from courtship to the marriage proposal to the wedding happened within the family milieu and with the family's consent. At the outset of the twenties, however, there appears to have been a rupture of sorts between the couple and their families of origin. The latter would often still act as intermediaries, to be sure, but there appears to have been a deliberate cordoning off of the young couple from their families.

Contributing factors to the overall explanation of the results we found probably lie also in more stable economic or cultural divides shaping the groups under study. In the Province of Ontario, a more favorable economic situation (Charland and Désautels 1992, Linteau et al. 1989) might further explain the slight advantage observed in terms of proportions married and age at marriage, although the structural explanation and differences in the unfolding of the first demographic transition also participate in this. Religions have different views on marriage which are consistent with the religious gradient found in our analyses. Even more practically, Catholics do not allow priests and nuns to marry, which adds another layer to the explanation of religious differentials in marriage patterns. More women than men entered religious orders within Quebec (Bouchard and Thibeault 1995), which could further explain the difference between the proportions ever married among men and women. Thanks to the impressive work of Laurin and her colleagues on this question (1992), we have been able to assess that 4.8% of women born in the first decade of the 20th Century did become nuns, contributing to the large proportion never marrying registered for this cohort. Consistent with the transformations affecting Quebec during this period (Gauvreau M. 2005 and 2003), this proportion follows a downward trend thereafter, reaching 3.1% for women born in 1920, 2.5% for the 1930 cohort and 1.4% ten years later[9]. Nuns were not as educated as priests and many were coming from farmers and working class families. But according to Laurin and others (1992), they were consistently more educated than lay women from the same generations, meaning that most of them belonged to the second and third educational categories of our analyses. This situation, combined with the decreasing popularity of religious orders during the first half of the 20th Century, is

[9] We are currently working on models that would allow us to integrate this competing risk to the chance of getting married.

consistent with the increases we found in the proportions getting married among Catholics in these two educational groups.

One final remark has to do with the difference observed between male and female propensities to marry. This intriguing result calls for more attention given to the characteristics of the marriage market, particularly the imbalance in sex ratios of young adults, the age difference between spouses, the proportion of first marriages involving a widow or a widower, and even the degree of openness to other groups (intermarriage) since we have not been dealing here with the total population. One factor which may not yet has received sufficient attention pertains to the mortality trends during the first decades of the 20th Century, which were declining at a very rapid pace and contributed in a significant way to augment the number of youth. Did these changes affect the sex ratios at marriageable ages? And, more importantly, have we taken the full measure of how these trends contributed to fuel the baby boom, at a time where not only the marriage trends were changing but more youth than ever were reaching the age when one expected to marry?

Conclusion

As expected by van Bavel and Reher (2013) who called for more studies of this type, the approach we used in this paper proved to be useful. By using micro-level data containing information about gender, religion, ethnic origin, schooling, and province of residence, we were able to pinpoint specific areas where changes were less or more pronounced. Marriage patterns during the Baby Boom were first and foremost a matter of youth marrying earlier and, for some groups only, a matter of marrying to a larger extent. This result bears important consequences for further fertility outcomes and should be explicitly taken into account in fertility studies. Schooling had a very steady impact on the timing of marriage and, for Catholics in particular, on proportions marrying. For people of this religious faith, being highly educated and having a family increasingly became compatible. Although very educated women and men were always marrying later, their propensity to marry did not contrast much with that of the less educated or almost caught up with this group in the case of Catholics. At a time when educational achievements were steadily increasing, this result is important and we should continue to pay close attention to schooling distribution and differentials in fertility studies.

The Canadian case studied here is interesting in at least two different ways. First, it allowed us to contrast two provinces where the cultural fabric was different but yet comparable. Within similar ethno-religious groups, we did not find much difference according to the province, a result which gives credit to the importance of cultural factors in such matters as marriage decisions. Yet, we did see convergence trends at work when comparing the first and last cohorts of our study. Second, the fact that the changes in marriage patterns and fertility of married couples ran in two opposite directions in each province, as unveiled at the beginning of this paper, is going to provide a very interesting example for the second phase of our project on fertility trends during the Baby Boom. Questions such as whether there were different logics at the origin of more universal and earlier marriage patterns on one hand and at the origin of the increase in marital fertility rates usually observed during the Baby Boom, will be examined. The evidence so far suggests that changes in marriage were more widespread and absolutely central to the Baby Boom. Of course, changes in marital fertility rates during the baby boom were linked to their levels just before the onset of this period (van Bavel and Reher 2013). We wish in that regard to shed more light on the connections between the First Demographic Transition and the Baby Boom period. Besides the fact that the Baby Boom was indeed an exception in long-term fertility trends, approaching it as an intermediate step between the first and second demographic transition, which began to unfold right at the end of the Baby Boom, may help us understand major demographic shifts of the 20th Century.

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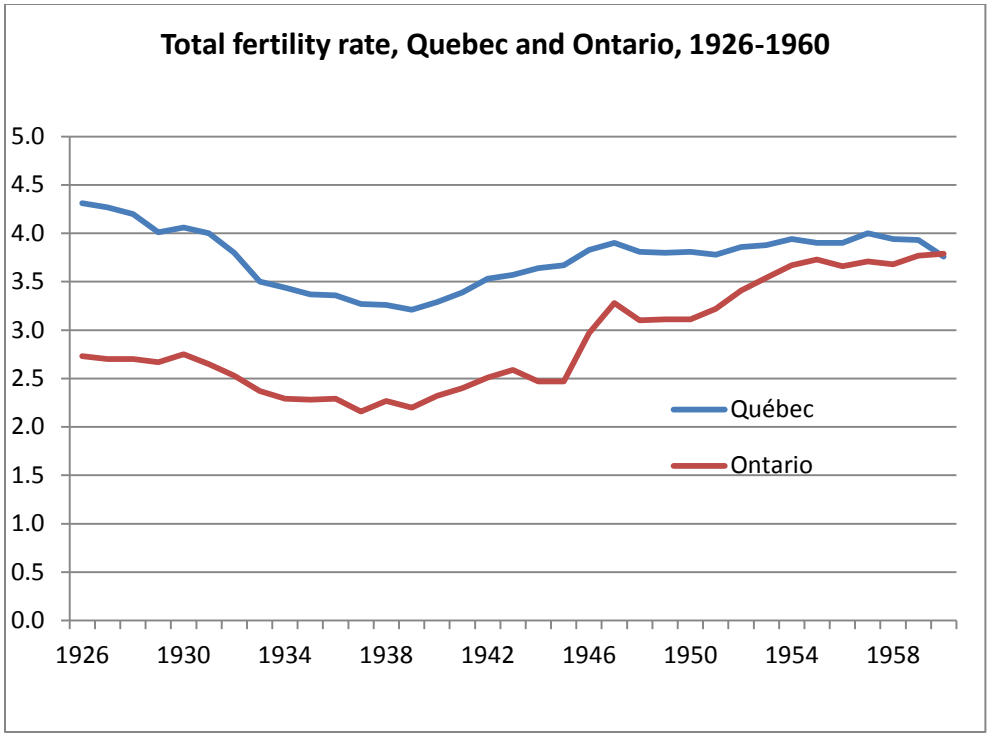
Figure 1



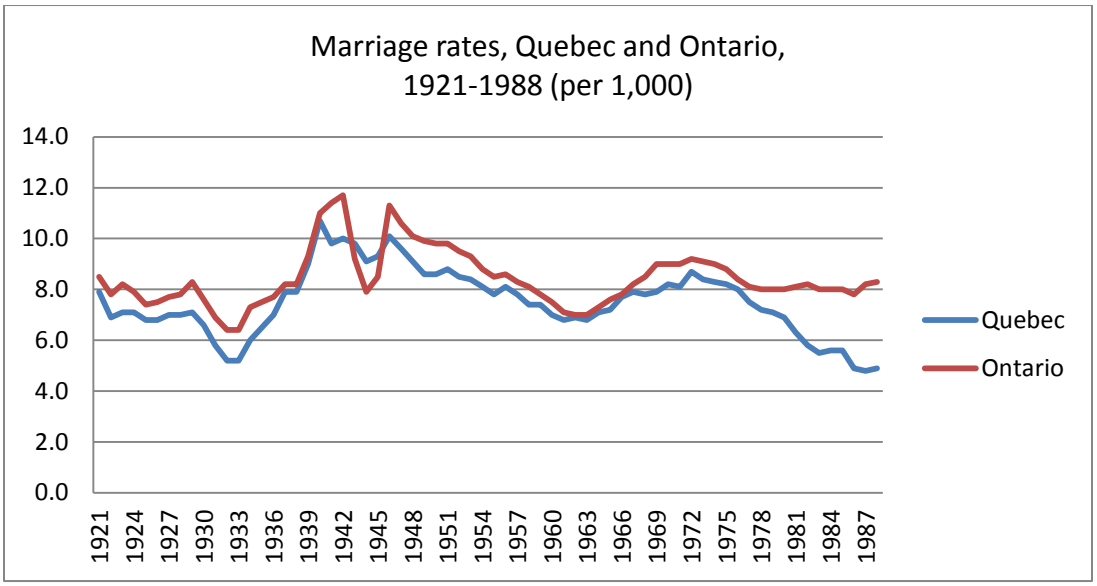
Source: Vital Statistics, Statistics Canada, various years.

Table 1. Impact of changes in various factors affecting general fertility trends, Quebec and Ontario, 1921–1961.

	From 1921 to 1931	From 1931 to 1941	From 1941 to 1951	From 1951 to 1961
			Quebec	
Age distribution	0.09	1.49	1.61	-6.65
Nuptiality	-8.79	-2.20	**19.45**	**9.77**
Marital fertility	-15.87	-11.07	**-6.62**	**-10.81**
Non-marital fertility	-0.48	-0.36	0.46	0.35
Total	-25.05%	-12.14%	14.90%	-7.34%
			Ontario	
Age distribution	-2.85	2.02	1.71	-5.91
Nuptiality	-1.22	10.36	**22.38**	**6.94**
Marital fertility	-16.85	-19.92	**12.59**	**7.10**
Non-marital fertility	1.12	0.54	-0.14	0.39
Total	-19.80%	-7.00%	36.52%	8.52%

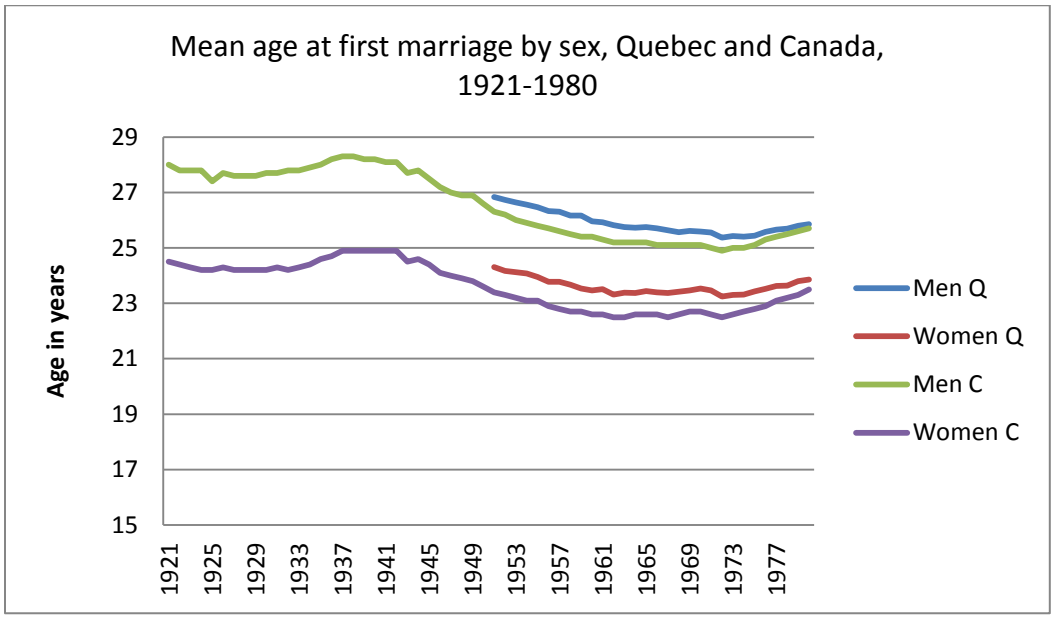
Source: Henripin, 1968: 62-63.

Figure 2



Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Canada, various years.

Figure 3



Source : Dominion Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Canada, various years, reported by Dumas and Péron 1992 and the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

Table 2. Main characteristics of the Quebec sample by birth cohort, 1981

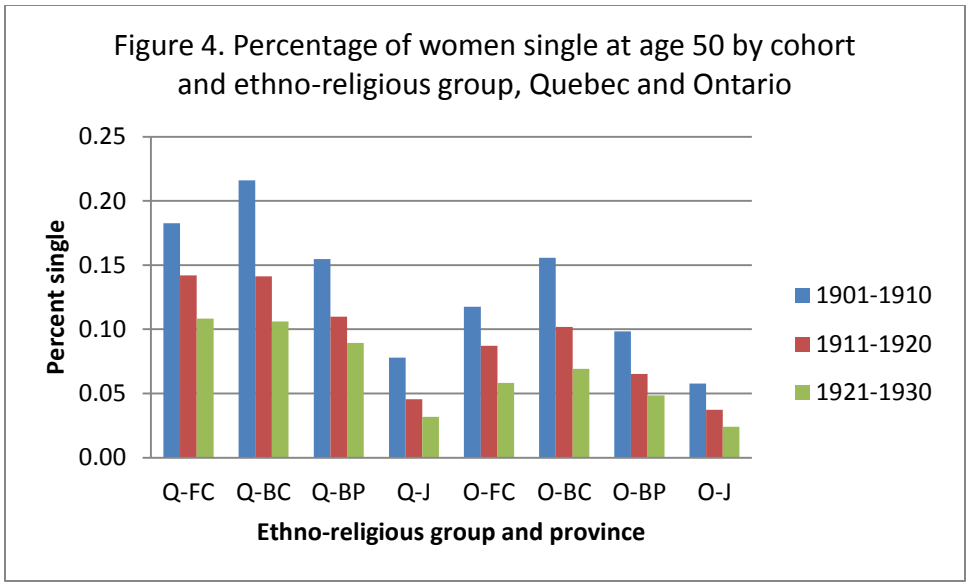
	1901-1910	1911-1920	1921-1930	1931-1940	1941-1950	1951-1960
French Catholic	82.44	84.82	87.72	90.10	90.47	91.06
British Catholic	4.63	4.73	4.43	4.16	4.18	4.30
British Protestant	8.53	7.01	5.60	4.05	3.71	3.20
Jewish	4.39	3.44	2.26	1.69	1.64	1.44
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample size	47,857	86,941	117,846	125,537	175,128	216,017
% of population	90%	90%	87%	85%	85%	86%
French Catholic						
Schooling < 9	67.16	61.85	51.32	37.77	18.33	6.35
Higher high school	20.89	22.11	25.99	29.86	35.58	43.12
Other non Univ.	7.31	9.94	15.28	20.78	28.44	35.37
University level	4.64	6.10	7.41	11.60	17.65	15.16
% Canadian born	97.12	98.28	97.60	98.15	98.20	98.99
% ever married	86.56	88.85	90.29	90.73	88.35	57.85
British Catholic						
Schooling < 9	50.03	41.50	33.03	24.49	13.30	4.35
Higher high school	29.48	31.88	34.76	34.98	36.48	41.27
Other non Univ.	11.99	16.68	19.07	23.03	27.07	31.49
University level	8.51	9.94	13.14	17.49	23.15	22.89
% Canadian born	79.95	88.17	87.76	89.71	90.52	94.04
% ever married	84.66	88.36	90.25	90.86	87.50	56.83
British Protestant						
Schooling < 9	39.73	32.45	24.55	16.57	9.50	4.28
Higher high school	31.03	30.46	31.98	34.63	32.10	40.96
Other non Univ.	15.89	19.92	22.58	23.02	23.46	23.81
University level	13.35	17.17	20.89	25.79	34.93	30.95
% Canadian born	66.13	79.84	79.45	76.08	77.08	88.00
% ever married	88.25	91.09	91.60	90.68	85.45	50.43
Jewish						
Schooling < 9	45.67	32.02	21.36	6.94	3.02	1.59
Higher high school	33.29	40.20	38.28	32.00	20.14	15.67
Other non Univ.	9.65	12.86	15.33	15.73	15.43	17.78
University level	11.38	14.93	25.03	45.33	61.41	64.96
% Canadian born	27.80	48.09	48.50	57.31	55.21	71.25
% ever married	93.97	95.81	95.49	94.59	85.69	43.35

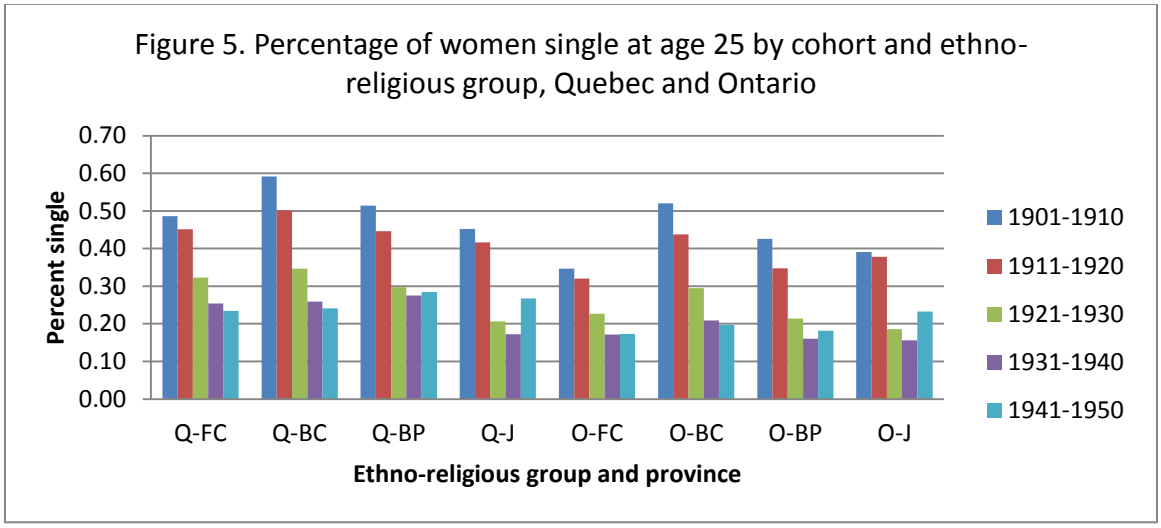
Source: Our compilations from the master file of the 1981 Canadian Census.

Table 3. Main characteristics of the Ontario sample by birth cohort, 1981

	1901-1910	1911-1920	1921-1930	1931-1940	1941-1950	1951-1960
French Catholic	7.65	9.19	10.86	12.94	12.90	13.85
British Catholic	10.01	11.89	14.32	17.06	18.09	19.83
British Protestant	78.19	75.22	71.78	67.25	65.51	63.28
Jewish	4.16	3.69	3.04	2.74	3.50	3.04
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample size	49,938	86,860	110,632	106,066	141,544	165,529
% of population	69%	68%	60%	55%	54%	54%
French Catholic						
Schooling < 9	67.88	56.46	47.86	32.67	15.63	3.96
Higher high school	17.57	24.61	27.82	35.12	40.83	52.24
Other non Univ.	9.39	12.43	17.00	20.98	27.29	27.61
University level	5.16	6.50	7.32	11.23	16.24	16.19
% Canadian born	95.92	97.80	97.06	97.55	97.52	98.56
% ever married	90.28	91.96	93.07	93.67	91.35	63.98
British Catholic						
Schooling < 9	39.64	27.24	21.57	14.13	7.22	2.56
Higher high school	36.03	43.65	43.40	43.83	40.69	47.17
Other non Univ.	16.43	19.71	22.74	26.98	30.42	28.59
University level	7.91	9.40	12.29	15.05	21.66	21.68
% Canadian born	74.24	79.48	77.11	77.21	79.34	89.23
% ever married	86.89	90.56	92.45	93.45	90.25	56.55
British Protestant						
Schooling < 9	40.70	26.78	20.48	13.13	5.82	2.34
Higher high school	32.88	42.05	42.47	43.68	40.17	45.65
Other non Univ.	18.03	20.60	23.84	27.41	30.79	29.22
University level	8.39	10.57	13.21	15.79	23.22	22.79
% Canadian born	70.01	82.12	80.46	82.36	83.87	91.95
% ever married	92.26	94.35	95.04	95.11	91.35	59.35
Jewish						
Schooling < 9	44.51	25.14	14.39	3.94	1.07	0.48
Higher high school	35.09	44.55	42.08	31.09	17.15	14.01
Other non Univ.	10.69	15.14	17.28	18.89	18.07	16.48
University level	9.71	15.17	26.25	46.08	63.17	69.03
% Canadian born	20.74	47.03	48.74	61.30	58.65	79.81
% ever married	95.38	95.54	96.16	95.27	88.58	46.05

Source: Our compilations from the master file of the 1981 Canadian Census.





Source for Figures 4 & 5 : Our analyses of the master file from the 1981 Canadian Census.

Figure 6 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for French-Catholic women by birth cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario, 1901-1960

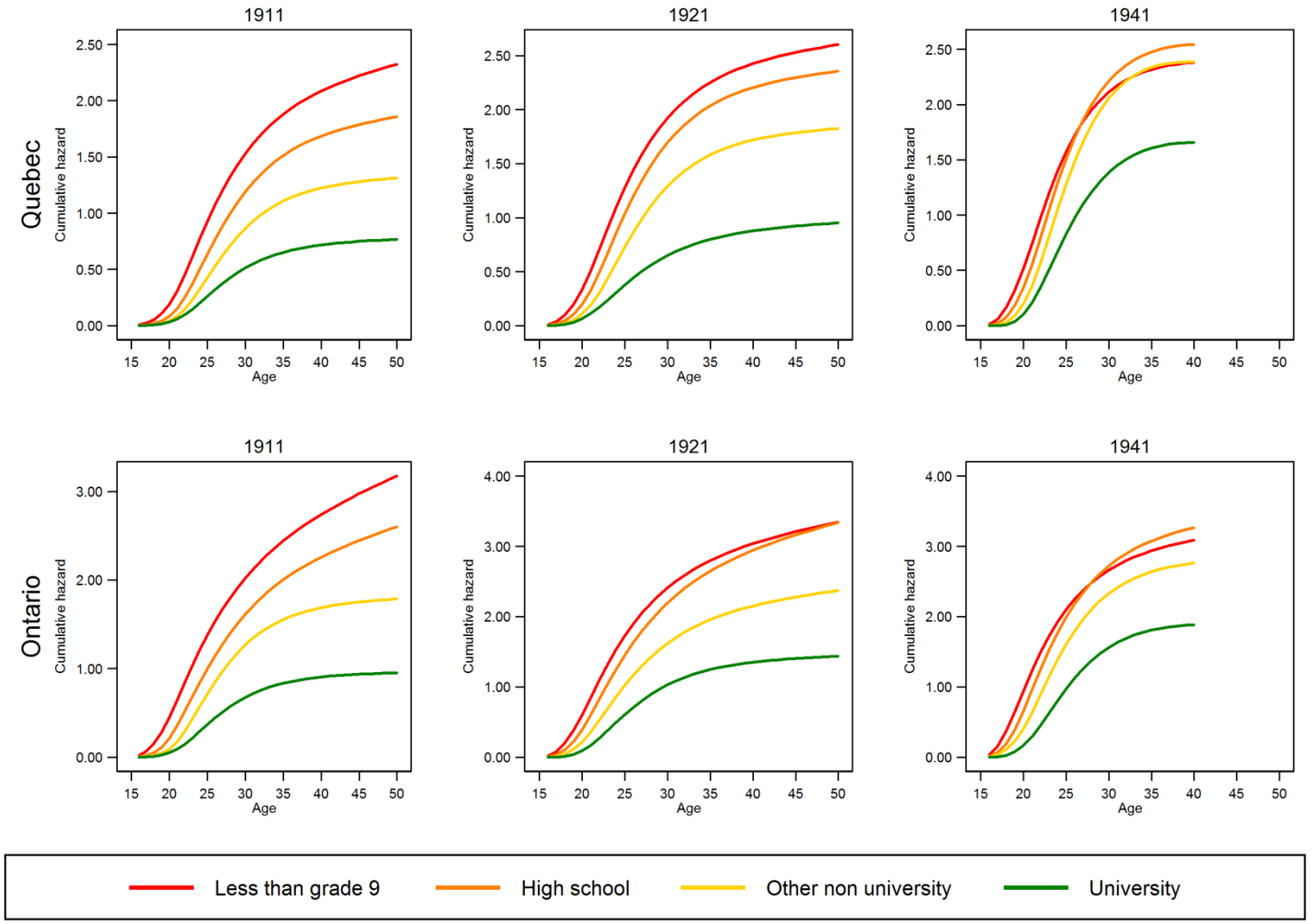


Figure 7 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for British Catholic women by birth cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario

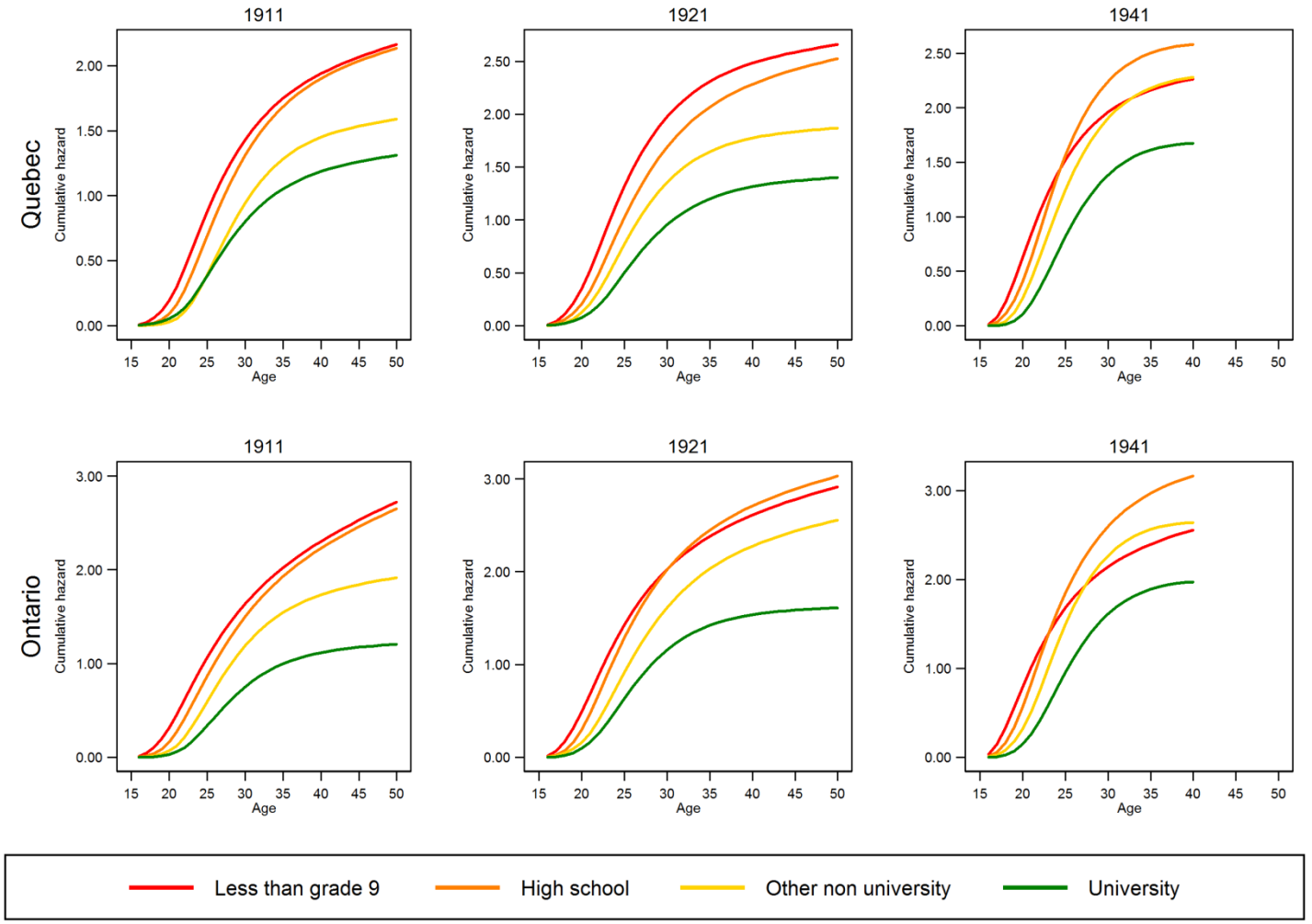


Figure 8 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for British Protestant women by birth cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario

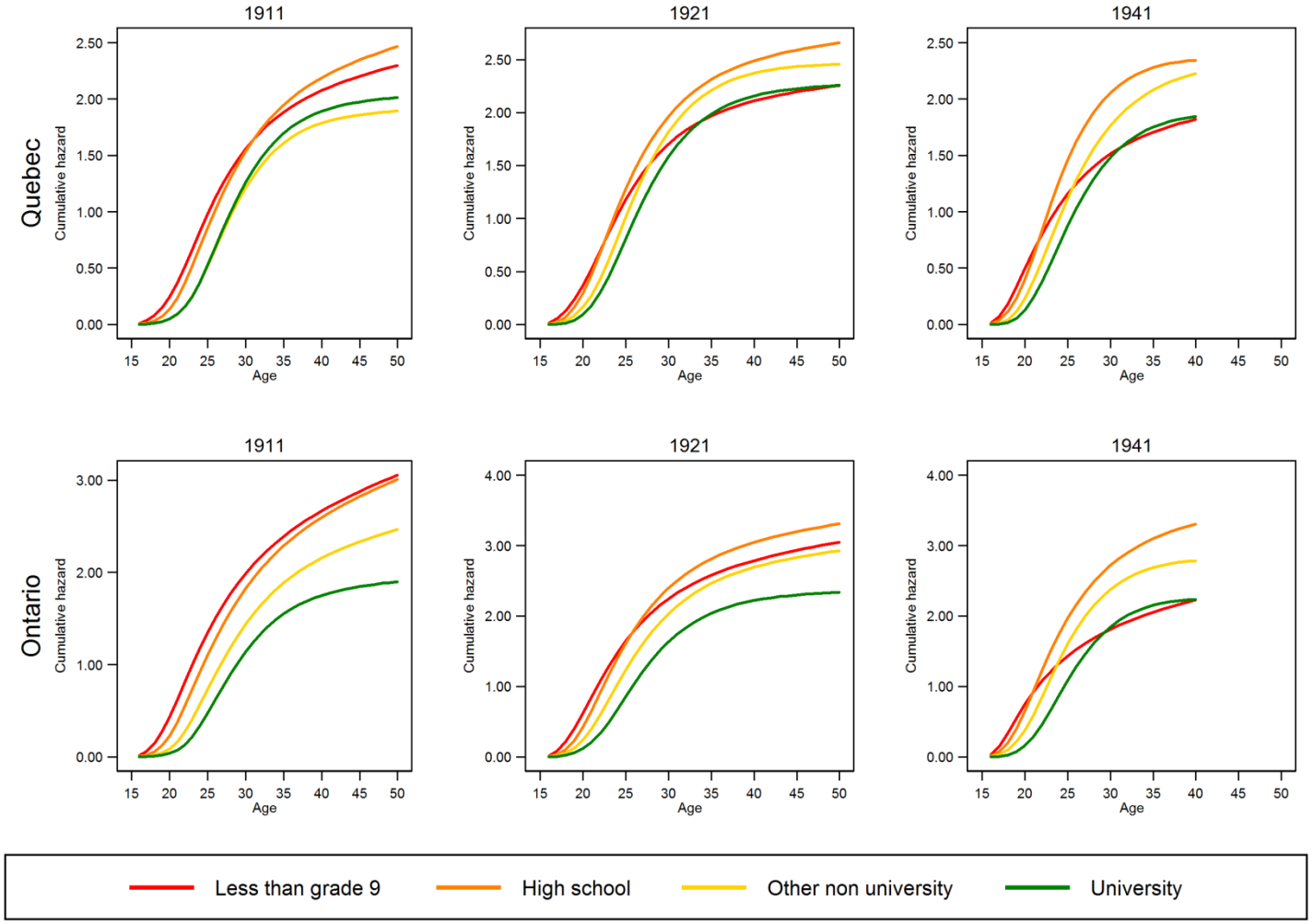
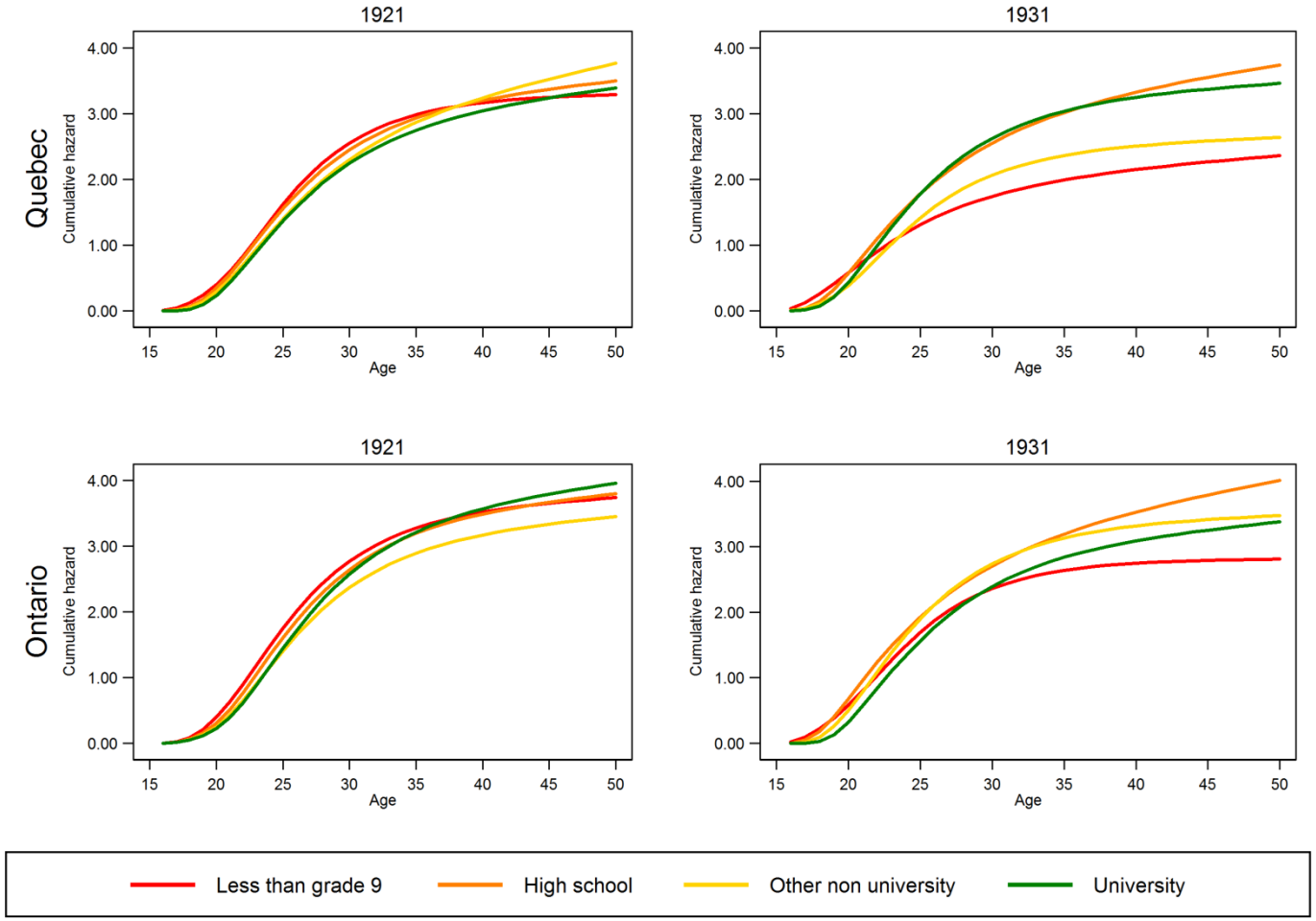
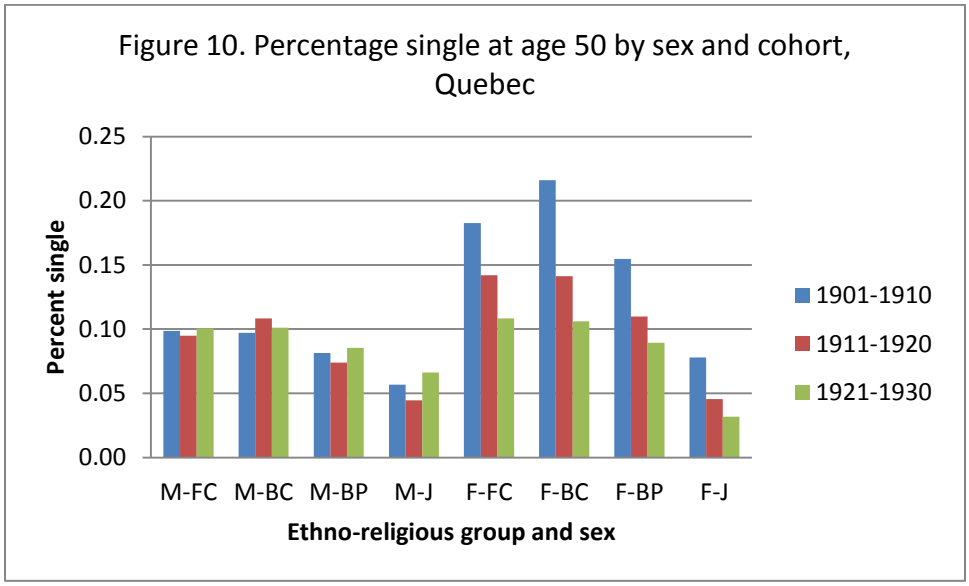
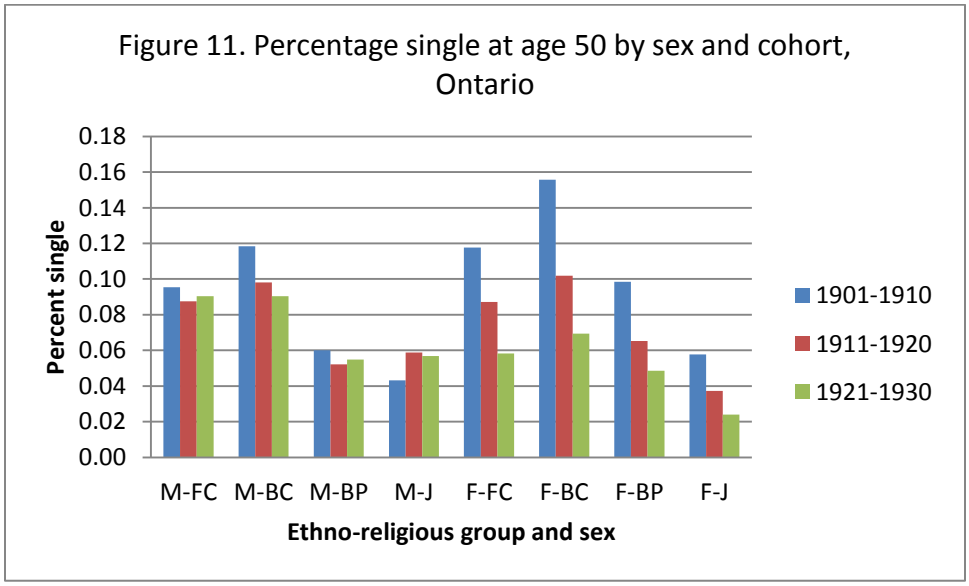


Figure 9 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for Jewish women by cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario







Source for Figures 10 & 11 : Our analyses of the master file from the 1981 Canadian Census.

Figure 12. Percentage of men single at age 50 by cohort and ethno-religious group, Quebec and Ontario

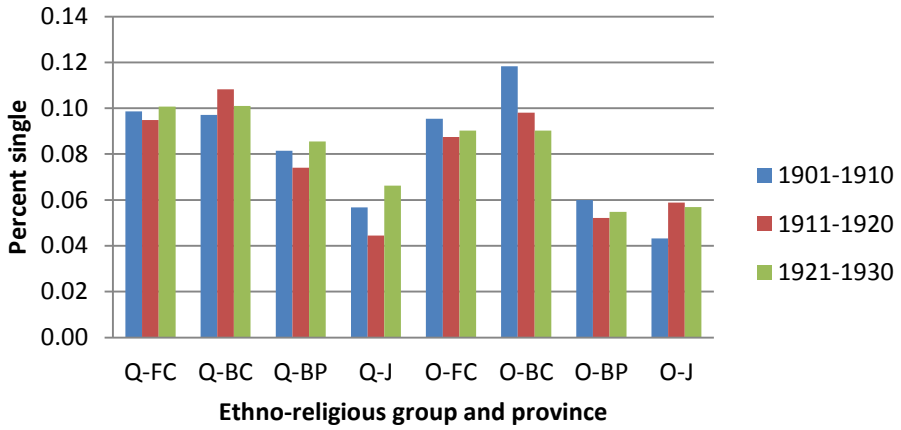
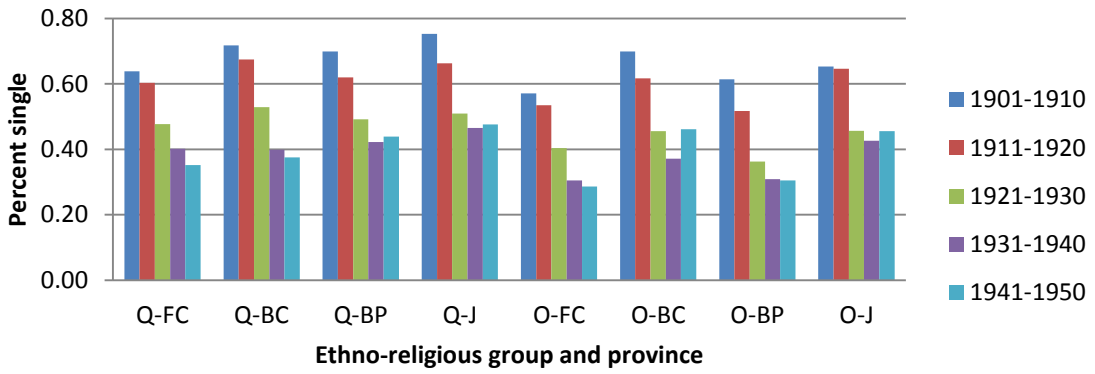


Figure 13. Percentage of men single at age 25 by cohort and ethno-religious group, Quebec and Ontario



Source for Figures 12 & 13 : Our analyses of the master file from the 1981 Canadian Census.

Figure 14 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for French Catholic men by birth cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario

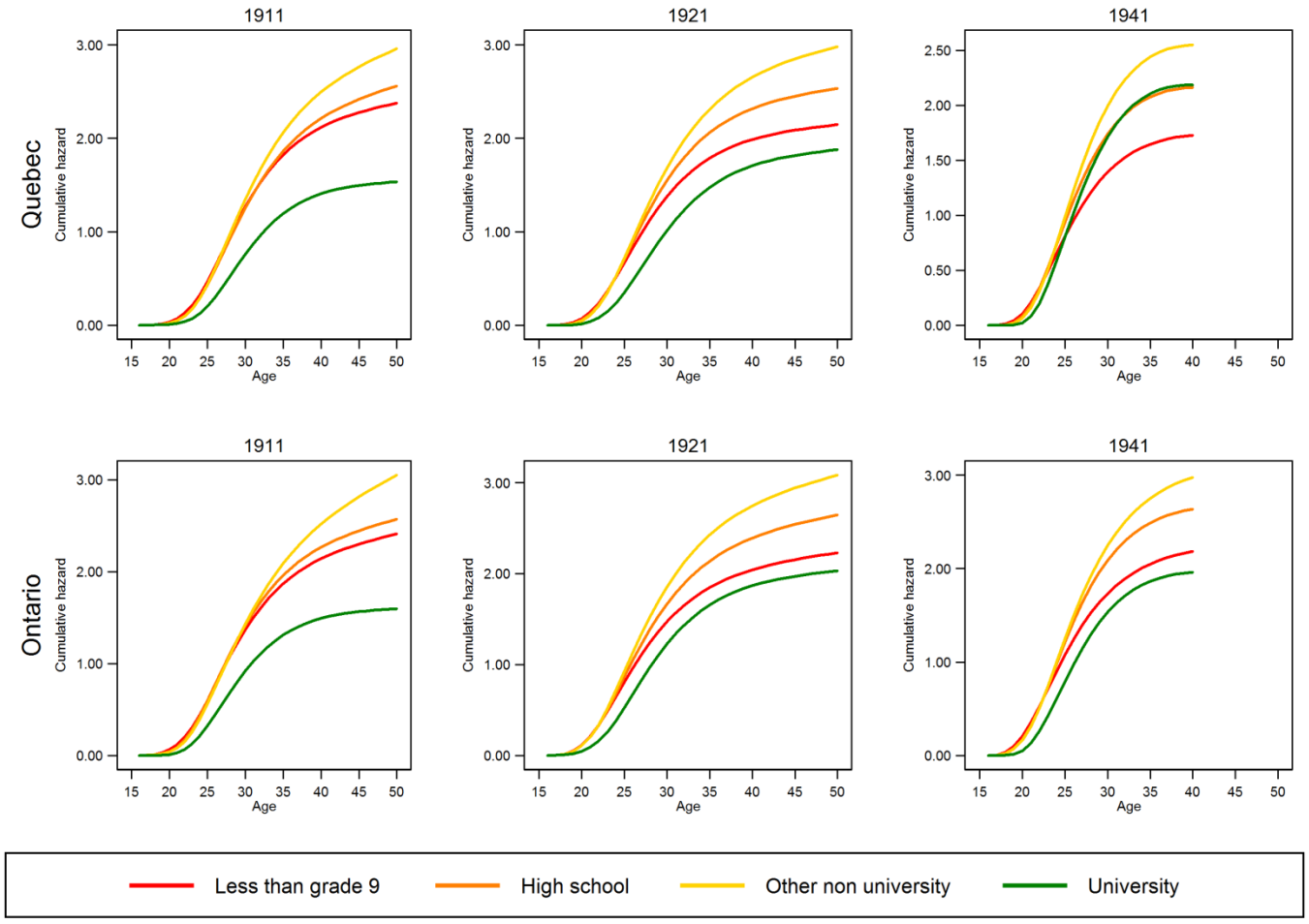


Figure 15 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for British Catholic men by birth cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario

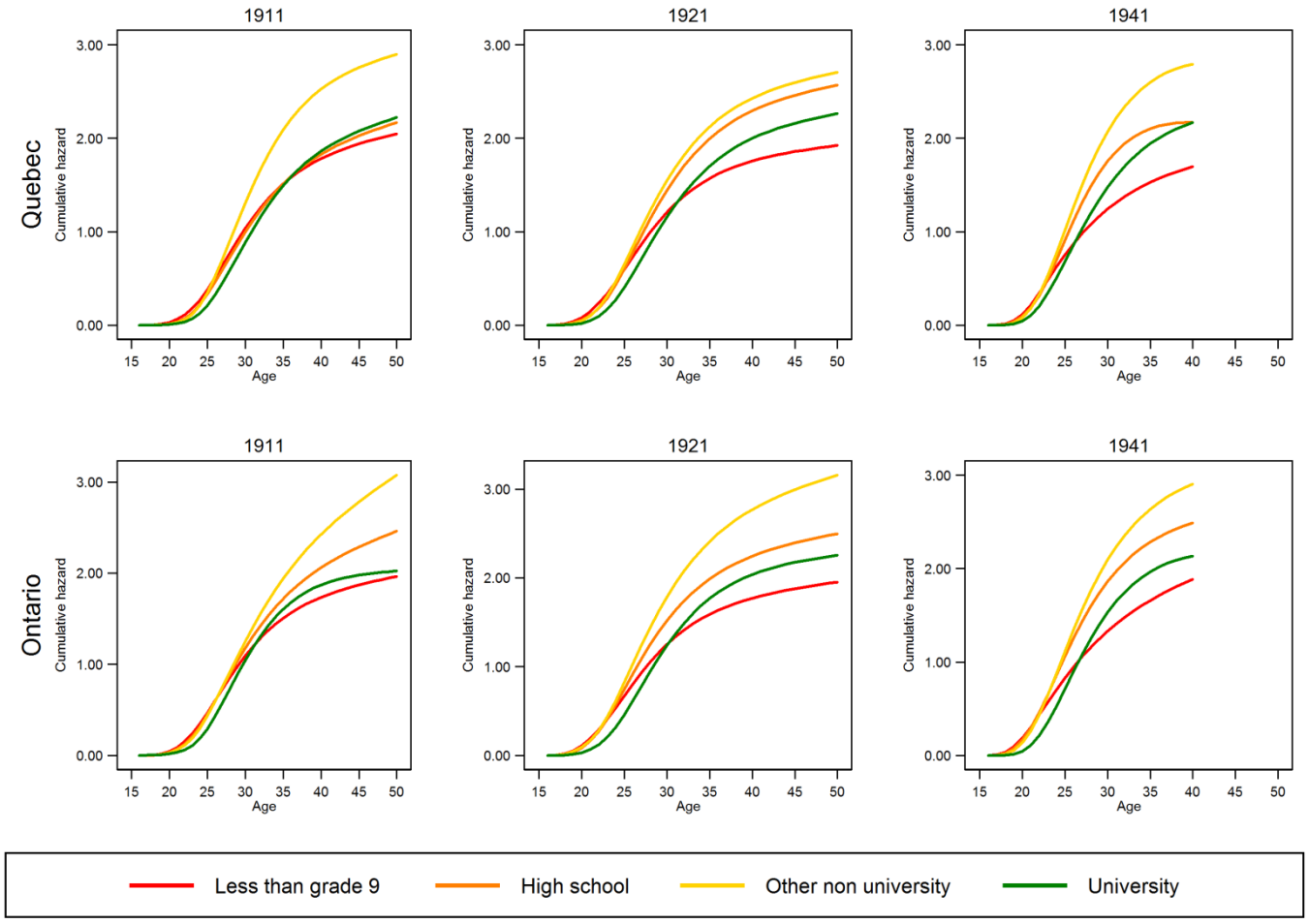


Figure 16 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for British Protestant men by cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario

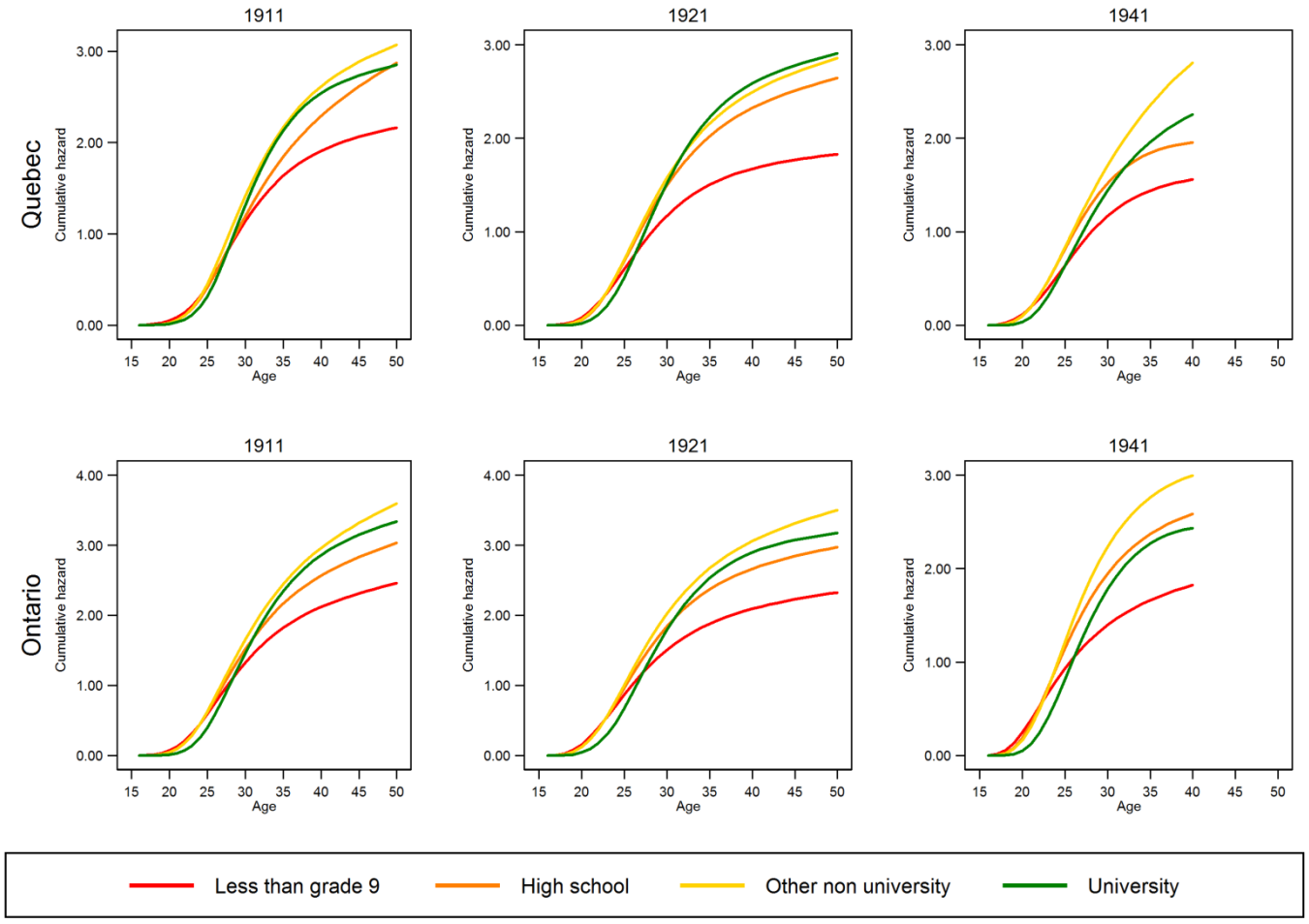


Figure 17 – Cumulative hazard function of marriage for Jewish men by cohort and level of education, Quebec & Ontario