

Pathways to Adulthood and Fertility: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Québec

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Outline

- Background
- Objective
- Why Italy and Québec?
- Theoretical framework
- Hypotheses
- Data
- Descriptive statistics
- Results and discussion

Background

- Individual choices during the period of early adulthood (the so-called 'transition to adulthood') might have long-lasting effects on total fertility.
 - Differential fertility trends in Europe are closely related to differences in homeleaving, union formation and dissolution
- Limited research available, especially comparative analyses

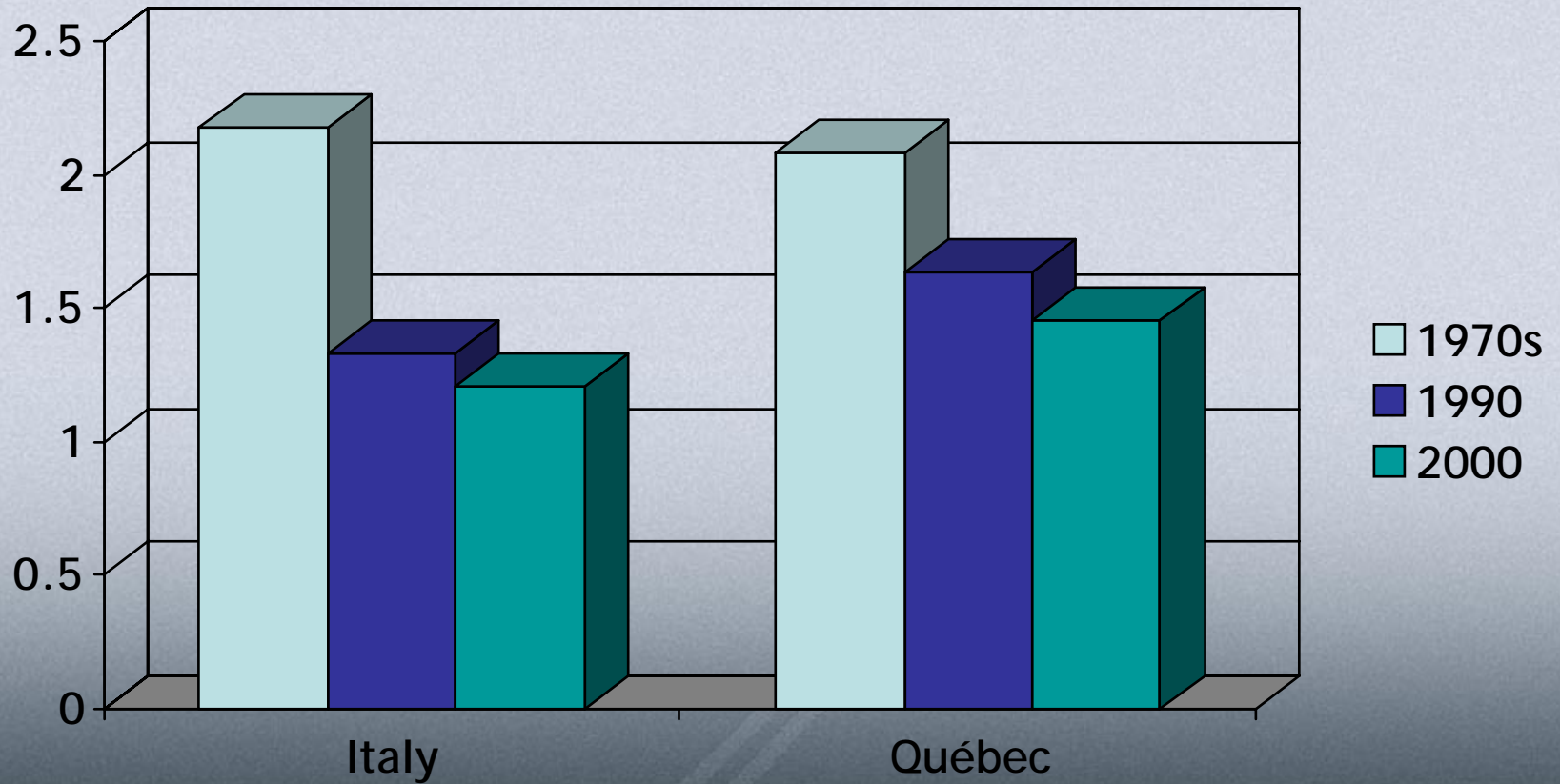
Objective

- Investigate the consequences of different pathways to adulthood (first homeleaving and union formation) for total fertility in comparative perspective

Why Italy and Québec?

- Similarities
 - Fertility decline since 1970s
 - Increasing age at first marriage and first birth
- Differences
 - % of nonmarital cohabitations and extramarital births higher in Québec than in Italy

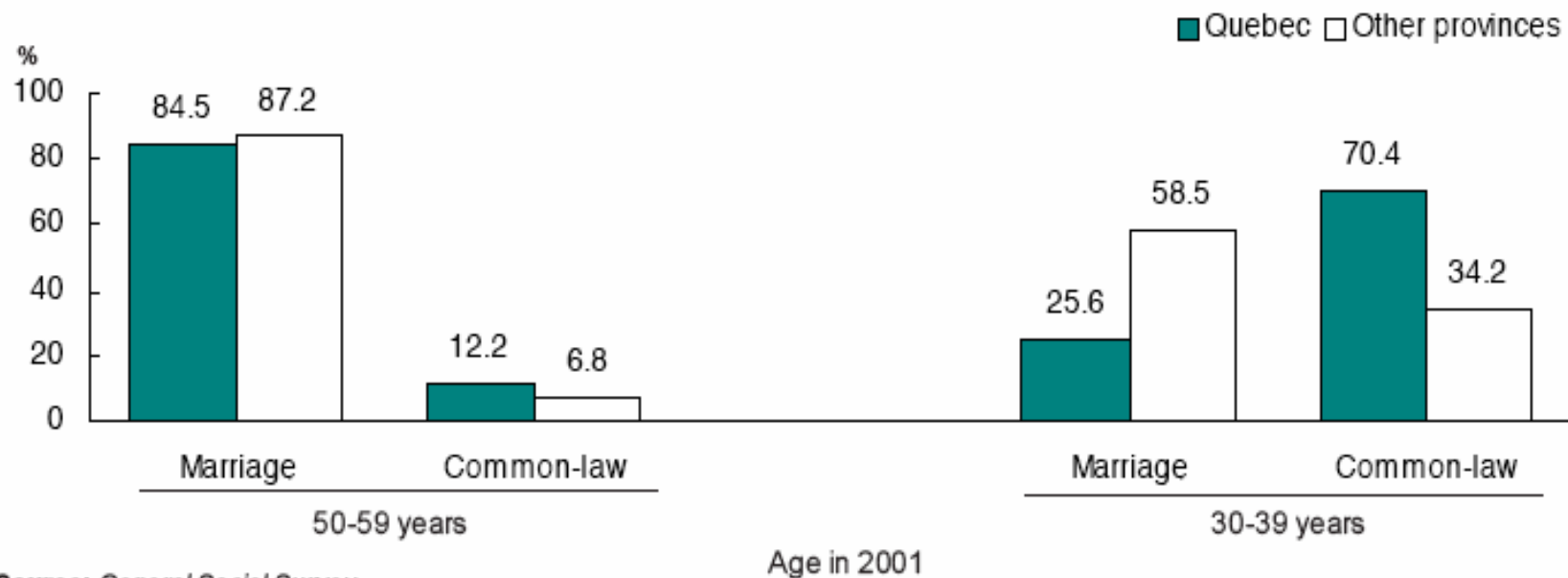
Total Fertility Rate



% nonmarital cohabitations

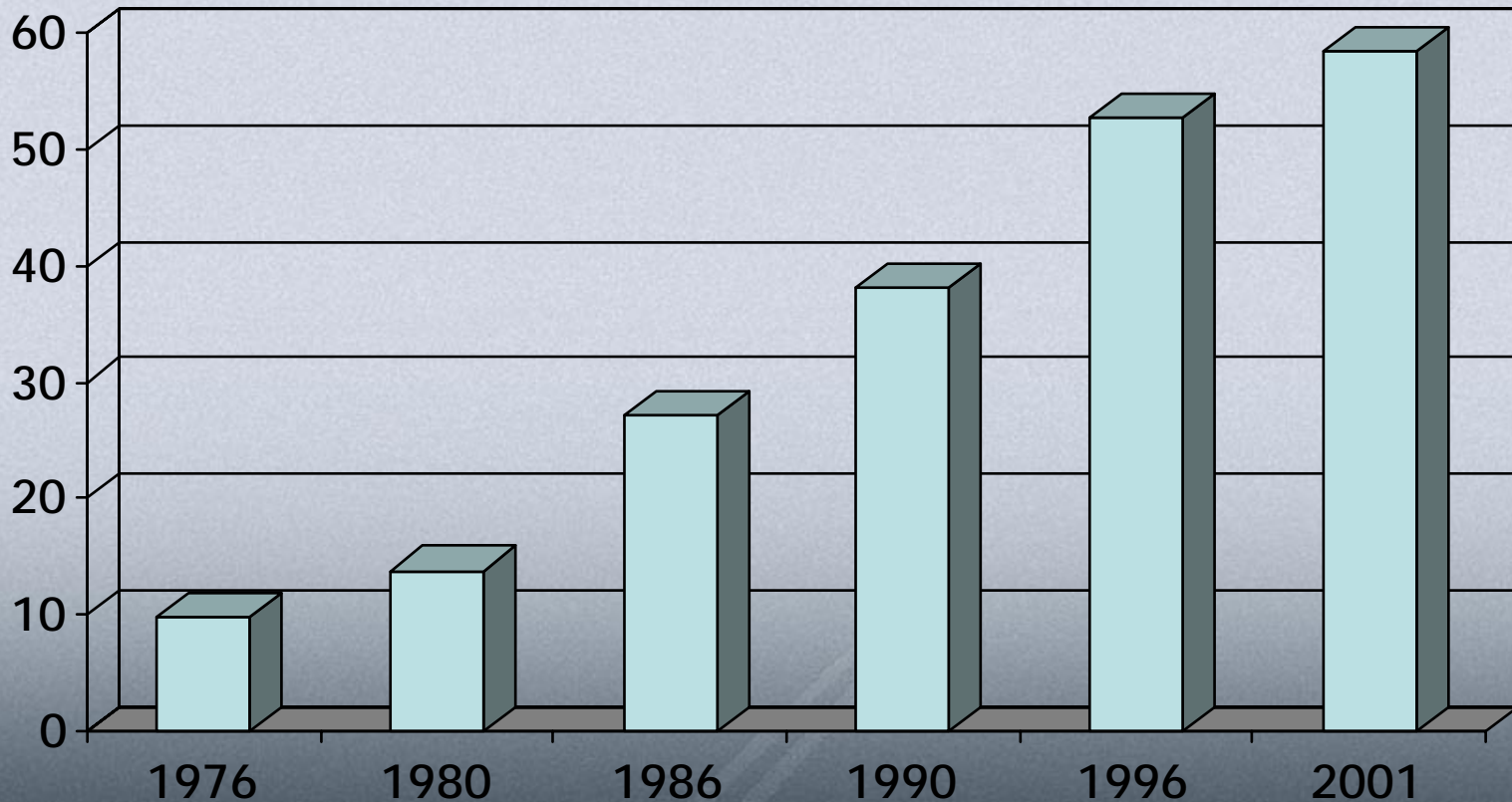
Chart 2

Probability for Women of Experiencing a Marriage or a Common-Law Union as a First Union, Quebec and the Other Provinces, 2001



Source: General Social Survey.

% extramarital births, Québec



Theoretical framework

- Life-course approach
 - The decision to become a parent involves several transitions in early adulthood
- Macro-micro approach
 - Factors at the macro-level channel the impact of micro-level characteristics on the transition to adulthood

Data

- Italy
 - 1998 Survey on Family and Social Subject
 - N=7631
- Québec
 - 2001 General Social Survey
 - N=1390

Descriptive statistics

Women having experienced demographic events by their 25th birthday, two cohorts

	1956-60 cohort			1966-70 cohort		
	Left home	Entered 1st union (marriage)	Became mother	Left home	Entered 1st union (marriage)	Became mother
Italy	67.7	61.2 (57.8)	44.3	64.7	40.7 (35.0)	23.5
Québec	77.3	62.8 (15.1)	26.0	71.8	55.6 (6.2)	25.5

Hypothesis

- Smaller effect of union type (marriage vs. cohabitation) on fertility in Québec than in Italy because of the different phases of the Second Demographic Transition the two countries are experiencing

Methods

- Ordered logit regression analysis
- Dependent variable: log (number of children)
- Independent variables:
 - Timing and sequencing (age at homeleaving, experience of nonmarital cohabitation, leaving home before union)
 - Controls (father's education, mother's education, number of siblings)
- Estimated parameters can be interpreted as log-odds of parity progression

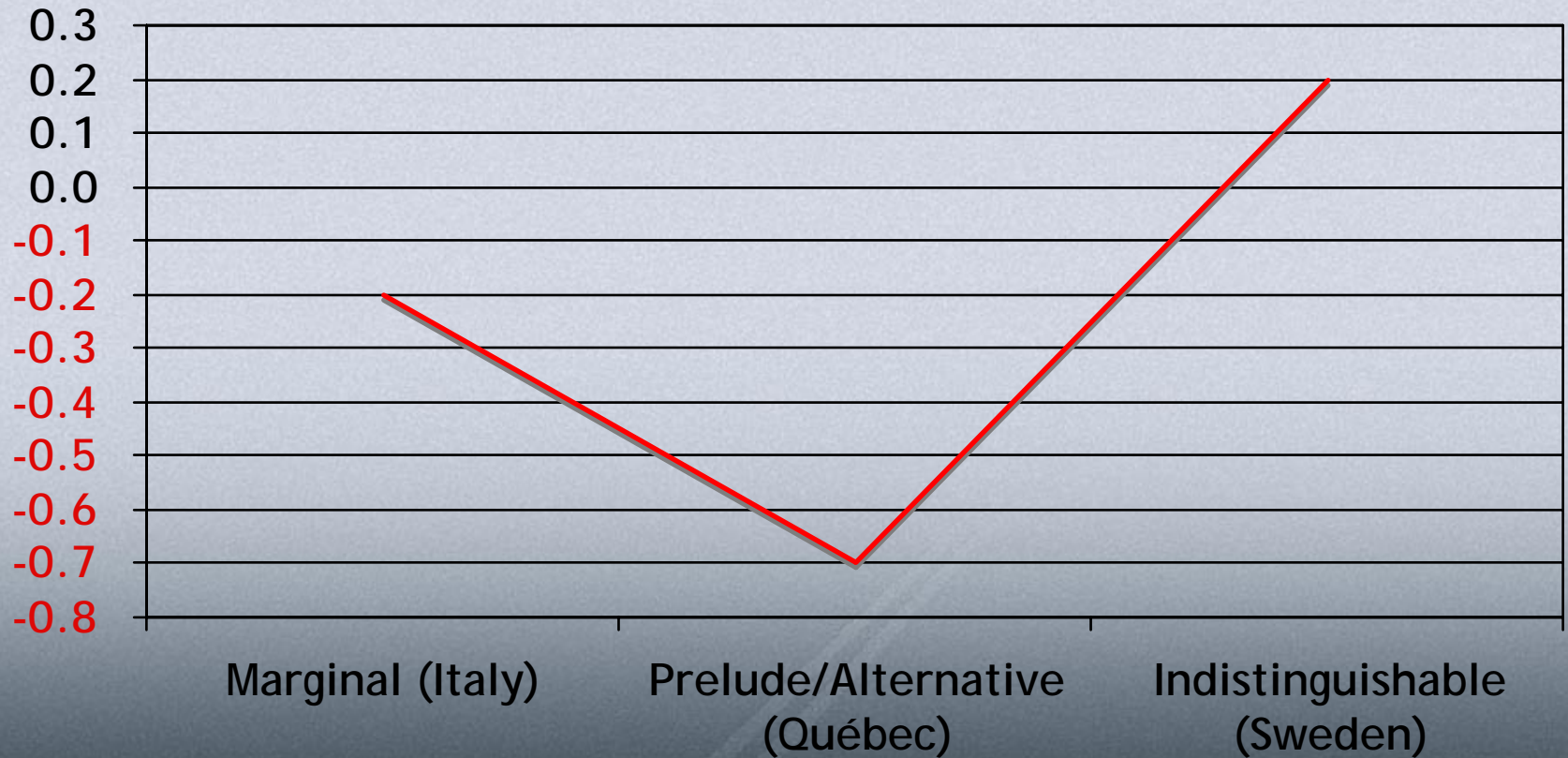
Ordered logit regression results

Dep. Var: Number of children	Italy (N=7631)	Québec (N=1390)
Left home before union	-0.229*	-0.268*
Age at first union	-0.131*	-0.112*
Experience of cohabitation	-0.229*	-1.113*
Number of siblings	0.157*	0.171*
Father's education (ref. low)		
Medium	-0.186*	-0.130
High	0.072	0.096
Woman's education (ref. low)		
Medium	-0.364*	-0.765*
High	-0.224*	-0.643*

Discussion

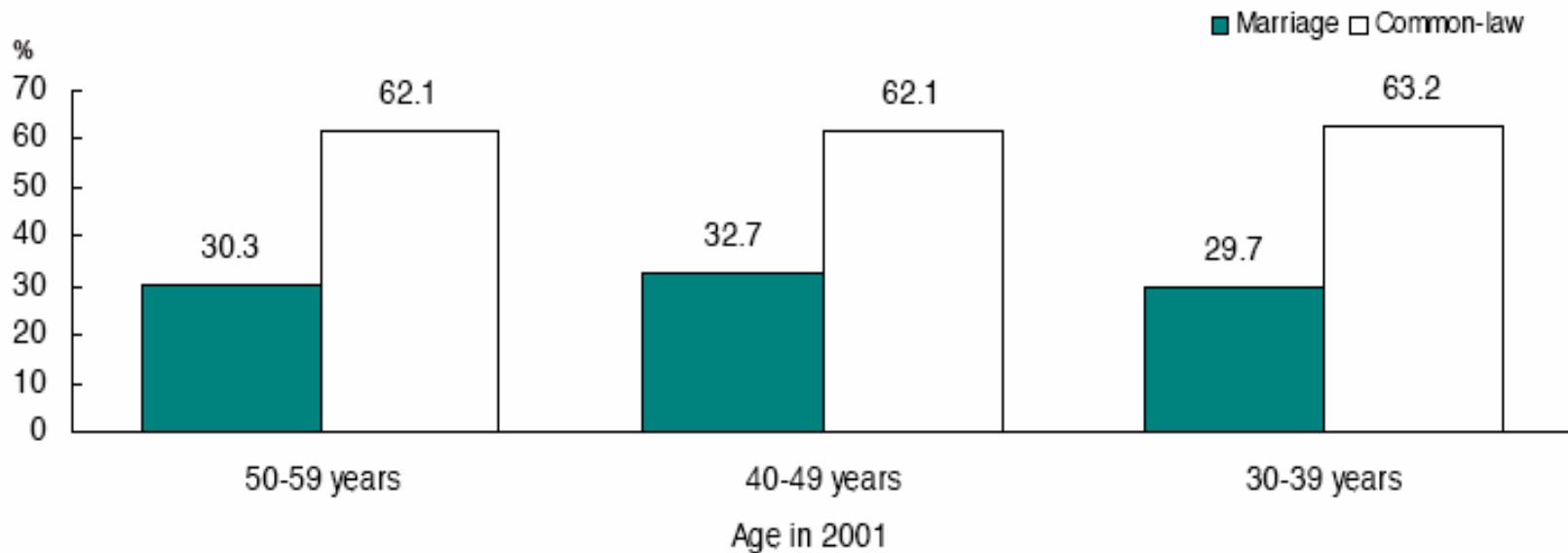
- How to explain the much stronger impact of cohabitation on fertility in Québec than in Italy?
 - Effect of the type of cohabitation
 - U-shaped relationship between fertility and incidence of cohabitation
 - Cohabitation and union instability

Impact on fertility of different cohabitation types



Cohabitation and union instability

Chart 5
Probability for Women to Separate, by Type of First Union, Canada, 2001



Source: General Social Survey.

Next steps

- Propensity score matching to evaluate casual treatment effects