

ISSN 1183-7284
ISBN 0-7714-2050-1

**Male Parenting:
A Life Course Perspective**

by
Fernando Rajulton
and
Zenaida R. Ravanera

Discussion Paper no. 97-10

December 1997

Introduction

In recent years, there have been suggestions, if not clamour, for greater male participation in the process of reproduction. Men are urged to take on more active roles in child-rearing. With greater involvement of women in paid employment, it seems but logical and fair for men to take on bigger roles in parenting (Presser, 1995; Goldscheider and Waite, 1991). As Goldscheider and Waite (1991) remark, the choice among the young is clear: either to have "new families" with men taking on more of the traditional roles played by women, or to have "no families" at all.

While men may not have been as greatly involved in parenting as many women (or men themselves) would have liked them to be, there is no question that men have fathered and have lived with their children. In this paper, we concentrate on measuring the quantity or the amount of time lived by men with their children, and leave out the quality or the types and intensity of involvement in child-rearing. As we shall show below, it is no easy matter even to find out the length of time men live with their children, especially in the context of recent trends in union formation, dissolution, reunion, and custody of children.

For measurement purposes, we simply define "parenting" as living in the same household with one's biological, adopted, or stepchildren. And, by using a life course approach, we examine the proportions of men parenting at various life-course stages and estimate the timing of the onset and end of parenting. For a man in a typical "traditional" family, parenting would start with the birth of his first child and end with home-leaving of his last child. In the first part of the paper, we present a traditional life course model. Using the Canadian General Social Survey (Cycle 5) data collected in 1990, we show the proportions of men (classified by birth cohorts) going through the process of parenting in an intact two-parent family. The timing of the start and end of parenting is also discussed for older cohorts of men (for whom the transition to empty nest is complete). In the second part, we propose a model that can be used for accommodating the recent trends in single-parent and blended families. We apply this model to the information on non-traditional family types that was collected only in a more recent survey of the Canadian General Social Survey (1995, Cycle 10). We compare and contrast the changes taking place over cohorts as well as the results obtained from the two surveys.

I. The Classic Family Life Cycle

The classic family life cycle studies basically described family life as starting with family formation, then moving on to family extension and contraction, and finally, to family dissolution (Hill and Rodgers, 1967; Duval and Miller, 1985). These stages were assumed to coincide with events such as marriage, births of children, home-leaving of children, and finally death of a spouse. Since family life cycles are composite results of individual experiences within the family, a life course approach is a better way of examining trends in family life. Individuals who experience these events trace a pathway or trajectories forming life histories or biographies (George, 1993; Elder, 1991).

Perspectives through which life histories are examined obviously depend on what events are included in an analysis. To examine family life histories of recent times, for example, it is no longer enough to take marriage as the starting point for family formation. Many young adults leave their parental homes to set up independent households either alone or with another person in a cohabiting union. Marriage dissolutions occur more often, not with spouses' death but with separations and/or divorces; and, dissolved families are re-formed by second or higher order unions, which may be cohabiting or marital unions. This may compel youngsters who have come of age to seek their own independence rather than living in a stepparent household. We prefer to consider therefore leaving parental home to start an independent life as the starting point of family life history.

In order to compare the changes introduced by various birth cohorts from the classic life cycle, we consider the following events in our analysis: (1) Leaving the parental home, (2) First cohabitation or common-law union, (3) First marriage, (4) First separation and/or divorce, (5) Death of spouse, (6) Second marriage (7) Birth of first child, (8) Birth of last child, (9) Home-leaving of first child, and (10) Home-leaving of last child. We use the technique of event history analysis, which essentially produces multiple decrement life tables by considering these events as states into which individuals enter and from which they exit (for details, see Ravanera, et. al., 1994).¹ A dynamic analysis of this sort gives us measures on timing as well as sequences of events. These sequences of transitions from one state to another help us identify a large variety of family types, not all of which can be examined in depth; we need to focus our attention only on a few salient types.

The 1990 GSS data allow us to apply this event history technique to ten-year birth cohorts of men born

¹ Details on the computer program LIFEHIST used for this purpose can be found in Rajulton (1991).

from 1910 to 1970. Among the large variety of trajectories, the most common one, though by no means experienced by the majority of Canadians but definitely followed by the older cohorts, is what we refer to here as the "classic" family life course.² Starting from an origin, here taken as co-residence with parents at age 15, a classic life course consists of the following experiences in the given sequence (of transitions from a specific origin state to a specific destination state as given in brackets below):

- Leaving parental homes to start an independent living, known as launching stage (OR-HL);
- Getting first married, known as family formation stage (HL-FM);
- Having first birth, known as extension stage (FM-FB);
- Having last birth, known as completed extension stage (FB-LB);
- First home-leaving of anyone of the children, known as contraction stage (LB-FHL)³;
- Last home-leaving of the child left at home, known as completed contraction or empty nest stage (FHL-LHL).

Table 1 presents the estimates of the conditional probabilities⁴ that specific transitions will eventually occur in a particular birth cohort. For example, the probability of transition from origin to home-leaving (OR-HL) is 0.79 (in column 2, row 1) for men born during the period 1910-20. The table also gives the probability of transition through a sequence of events. Thus, the probability of transition from origin to first birth among those who left home, got married and had first birth is 0.55 (column 2, row 4). This is obtained by multiplying the preceding conditional probabilities ($0.788 \times 0.858 \times 0.819$).

Once married, most men become fathers as shown by the high probabilities of having a first child among married men (row 3: FM-FB). The computed probability for the oldest cohort is 0.82; it reaches a peak of 0.91 for the 1931-40 birth cohort and remains high at about 0.88 for the younger cohorts.

² The stages included in this category are those identified by Glick (1964), the only difference being that instead of starting with family formation as stage 1, we started with launching or leaving the parental home. We also omitted the last stage (dissolution by spouse's death) used by Glick, because our interest here is mainly on parenting and also because the initial version of the computer program allowed a maximum of only six transitions in a sequence for reasons of memory storage.

³ The first home-leaving need not be that of the first child; it may be that of the second or even third child. What counts here is that one of the children leaves home. In the case of one-child family, however, the first home-leaving coincides with the last home-leaving, and we have not duplicated the incident by ascribing it again to the completed contraction stage.

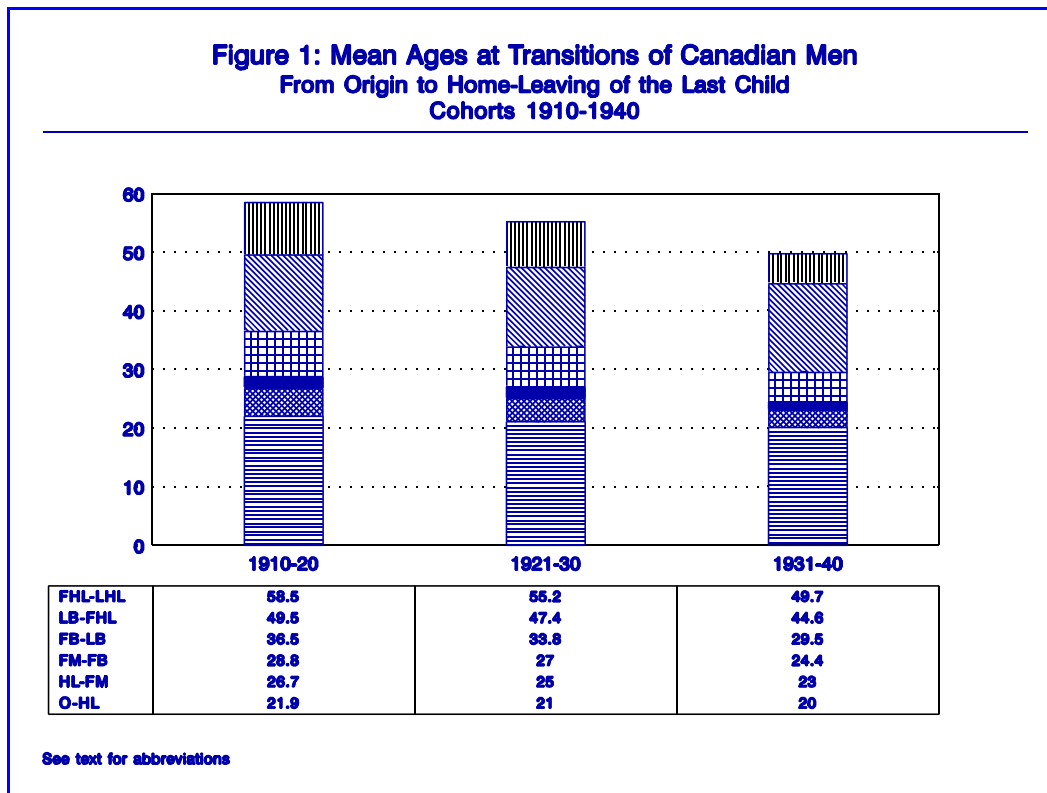
⁴ These probabilities are not simple proportions, even though they can be interpreted as proportions (as sometimes done in this paper for simplicity). These probabilities are analytically sound in the sense that they have been corrected for "censoring", a persistent problem with life history data collected through either prospective or retrospective surveys. For more details, readers can refer to Rajulton (1991) or Ravanera et al. (1994, 1995).

Table 1. Conditional probabilities of experiencing sequences of events
– for men classified by birth cohorts, 1990 GSS, Canada.

Transitions	Birth Cohort					
	1910-20	1921-30	1931-40	1941-50	1951-60	1961-70
1. Classic Trajectory:						
1. O - HL	.79	.80	.82	.80	.82	.74
2. HL - FM	.86	.89	.88	.79	.54	.40
3. FM - FB	.82	.86	.91	.87	.88	.88
4. O-HL-FM-FB	.55	.61	.66	.55	.39	.26
5. FB - LB	.75	.83	.86	.84	.91	
6. O-HL-FM-FB-LB	.42	.51	.56	.46	.36	
7. LB - FHL	.93	.93	.83			
8. FHL - LHL	.71	.75	.71			
9. O-HL-FM-FB-LB- FHL-LHL	.27	.35	.34			
2. Modern Trajectory						
10. O - HL				.80	.82	.74
11. HL - FC				.12	.38	.49
12. FC - FM				.84	.87	.76
13. FM - FB				.61	.82	.96
14. O-HL-FC-FM-FB				.05	.17	.27

However, the initial transitions involved in a classic trajectory (that is, leaving the parental home, getting married and having a child) are becoming less common among the younger cohorts. The probability of going through this sequence reaches its peak value of 0.66 for men born during the depression of the thirties (Row 4). It has continually decreased for younger men such that the 1961-70 birth cohort has only a probability of 0.26 for going through this sequence. No doubt, some of these men go through less common paths such as marrying first before leaving the parental home or fathering a child before marrying. A competing trajectory that has become as popular as the classic one for these men is to pass through cohabitation before marriage and to have a first child. This has a probability of 0.27 (row 14), which is about the same as the classic transition probability, and when combined with the probability given in row 4 gives a value that is more or less equal to that of the older cohorts.

After fathering a child, most married men move on to other stages of their family life: having their last child (row 5), launching their first child (row 7) and finally, entering the empty nest stage (row 8). These probabilities indicate that some men experience other family life events including spouse's death, separation or divorce, and remarriage. The completion of this classic life cycle can be observed only for older cohorts. Row 9 in Table 1 gives this probability. It is clear that only about 25 to 30 percent of men eventually complete the classic trajectory that starts from establishing an independent life and ends with empty nests. The chances of going through this sequence are 0.27, 0.36, and 0.34 for the 1910-20, 1921-30, and 1931-40 birth cohorts respectively.



Among those men who completed the classic family life cycle, we can estimate the timing of transitions. As Figure 1 shows, men born during the period 1910-20 became fathers as late as when they were 29 years old, on the average. Men belonging to the next two birth cohorts started parenting at younger ages: at age 27 among those born during the twenties and at age 24 among those born during the depression. These two cohorts were made up of the baby boomers' fathers; they married young and started their

family extension at younger ages. As a consequence, they went through the family completion stage at younger ages (around age 30) particularly because they had fewer children than those men born before the twenties (who had their last child, on the average, at age 37).

The same pattern continued with launching of children as well. Since the oldest cohort of men had more children and had them later in life, they were also older when their children started leaving home. On the average, these men were 50 years old when their children started leaving home and were about 59 at the time of empty nest stage. In contrast, men born during the thirties saw their children starting their own independent lives at age 45 and experienced the empty nest stage almost a decade earlier (at age 50) than men born before the twenties.

Tracing the life courses of men experiencing the same sequences of events allows us to compute the length of time spent in each stage from the mean ages at transitions given in Figure 1.⁵ In particular, the length of time spent in parenting by men who have gone through the classic trajectory can be computed by subtracting the mean age at transition to first birth (FM-FB) from the mean age at transition to home-leaving of last child (FHL-LHL). We can readily see that the total parenting time has decreased by about 5 years from the 1910-20 cohort to the 1931-40 cohort. The former lived with their children for almost 30 years, the latter for 25 years.

A New Scheme of Parenting States

Estimating the timing and the length of male parenting among the younger cohorts born after the forties cannot be as easily done as we did in the last section for those born before the forties. There are many reasons for this, four of which are important for a life history analysis.

First, it is obvious that men born during and after the forties have not had as much time to complete the

⁵ One of the common errors in life history analyses is to use mean ages at experiencing events to find the mean duration between events. Feichtinger (1987) clearly pointed this out when he noted: "... the differences between successive mean ages or durations are meaningless, since the succession of averages applies to a continually changing set of persons." This kind of error does not occur here since we have computed the timing of transitions from the set of persons who experience the same sequence of events.

trajectory reaching the empty nest stage. Second, the classic trajectory itself becomes less and less the norm among these men. Thirdly, and more importantly, an infinite variety of trajectories enters the picture due to recent trends in other types of union formation, dissolution or reunion, making the analysis more and more complex from one generation to another. Lastly, but in no way the least, lack of refined data makes it difficult to find how long men spend their lives parenting. This problem is peculiar to studies on male parenting, not so for female parenting, because with family dissolution by separation and/or divorce, women usually take custody of their children and their parenting continues even after dissolution. Thus, estimating the length of parenthood in the case of women is not too different from the procedure followed in the last section for intact families. Not so for men. If dissolution occurs, we need to know whether a man continues to have the custody of his children in order to estimate more accurately the duration of parenting. This problem is more accentuated when after dissolution, a man enters into another union in which his partner may bring into his custody her own children. Unless surveys capture all these complex situations, no worthwhile inference can be made regarding male parenting.

In Canada, men born during and after the fifties entered into fatherhood at later and later ages. This is mainly because unions - both through cohabitation and marriage - were entered into at increasingly older ages (Ravanera, et al. 1995). Except for the timing of the start of parenting, we do not know much about male parenting from a demographic viewpoint. It would seem that increasing divorce rates, coupled with the fact that men usually do not take custody of children, would shorten the period of male parenting. However, men do have higher remarriage rates, usually with younger and possibly single women. In which case, do higher divorce and remarriage rates eventually lead to longer male parenting?

A life course analysis covering some of these complexities would be useful for finding answers to the above questions related to non-classic mode of parenting. For this purpose, we need to modify the states used in the last section. It would not be sufficient just to know the timings of cohabitation, first marriage, separation and/or divorce, and remarriage. Information about children, especially about their custody as well as living arrangements after a union dissolution, is required.

Towards this end, we propose here a model that would focus on the parenting states and examine their different types. To simplify the model, we exclude one of the early life course transitions, namely leaving one's parental home. Two more events, birth of last child and first home-leaving that have clear meaning in the classic family life course (marking family completion and the start of family contraction),

are also omitted since they become less of landmark transitions in more complicated family life courses. The new set of events or state space thus consists of the following:

	Events	Indicators
1. First Union	a. Beginning of First Union (BFU)	Age at the start of first commonlaw union or at first marriage
	b. End of First Union (EFU)	Age at dissolution of first union (through death of spouse or through separation or divorce).
2. Birth Parenting	a. Beginning of Birth Parenting (BBP)	Age at birth or adoption of first child.
	b. End of Birth Parenting (EBP)	Age at departure of last birth or adopted child (through home-leaving, parental divorce, or death)
3. Second Union	a. Beginning of Second Union (BSU)	Age at second commonlaw union or marriage.
	b. End of Second Union (ESU)	Age at dissolution of second union (through death of spouse or through separation or divorce).
4. Step Parenting	a. Beginning of Step-parenting (BSP)	Age at start of step-parenting.
	b. End of Step-parenting (ESP)	Age at departure of step-children (through home-leaving, parental divorce, or death)

"Age" here refers to age of the respondent at the time of occurrence of events. Starting times and their associated events are usually clearer than the ending times and their associated events. Thus, for example, birth parenting obviously starts with the birth of a child. But birth parenting can end in a number of ways: the departure of a young adult from his/her parental home to be independent, separation

or divorce that leaves the respondent without custody of children, or the death of the child.

While working with this scheme, we need to assume that cohabiting and marital unions do not differ in their manner of parenting. This follows from our definition of "parenting" as living in the same household with one's biological, adopted, or stepchildren.

With a state space thus defined, event history analyses similar to the classic life course can be done to generate probabilities of sequences of transitions and other measures of timing and duration of parenting.

Table 2 presents some of the possible sequences that may be obtained from data analysis using the proposed scheme.

Table 2: Possible Family Types described by sequences of events

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Intact Family : | BFU--> BBP--> EBP |
| 2. Single Parent Family : | BFU -->BBP--> EFU--> EBP |
| 3. Step Families | |
| a. Single Persons Forming Union with Partners who have children: | BFU --> BSP --> ESP |
| b. Simple Blended Family: | BFU --> BBP--> EFU -->EBP--> BSU --> BSP--> ESP |
| c. Complex Blended Family: | BFU -->BBP -->EFU -->BSU--> BSP--> ESP {or EBP} |

For men experiencing an intact nuclear family (referred to above as the classic life course), the transition will be from first union (BFU), to beginning of birth parenting (BBP), and to end of birth parenting (EBP) most likely through the home-leaving of the last child. They would experience no other transition. Men who live through as single parents - a situation which is not too common among men - would start with first union (BFU), move on to fathering (BBP), experience widowhood or separation/divorce but keep custody of the children (EFU), and then see their children leave home (EBP).

Step parenting can be experienced through a number of life course trajectories. The simplest one would be to form a union (BFU) with a woman who has custody of her children (BSP), live with them as a stepfather without having biological children of his own, then launch the stepchildren into adulthood (ESP).

Another pathway toward step parenthood is what we refer to as "simple blended family" defined by the following sequence of events: entering first union (BFU), fathering children (BBP), experiencing a divorce or separation (EFU) but getting no custody of the children (EBP), forming a second union (BSU) with a partner who has custody of her children through a previous union (BSP), living with stepchildren and possibly having biological children within the second union, then seeing all children, step and biological, leave home (EBP or ESP whichever comes later).

A "complex blended family", on the other hand, comprises the following sequence: form a union (BFU), have children (BBP), divorce or separate (EFU) but keep custody of own biological children, then form a second union (BSU) with a partner with children (BSP), live with the step children and possibly have biological children in the second union, and finally launch the children (EBP or ESP whichever comes later).

A scheme of the type used here brings out varieties of family types depending on the trajectories traced by individuals belonging to different birth cohorts. The probabilities will highlight the chances of different trajectories. Measures of timing and duration will highlight the length of time fathers live with their biological children, or with stepchildren, or the total time spent in parenting. We can expect a diminishing pattern of the intact family type and an increasing pattern of the blended family types over various birth cohorts.

All these explorations, however, require refined data. Information on children, their presence and their custody are not as yet routinely collected even in family surveys. And, even if such data are collected, there may just be only a few cases for some family types, which would pose problems in estimations.

Application to the 1995 GSS Canada

To verify the usefulness of our proposed scheme, we apply it to the more recently collected GSS 1995 data.⁶ Table 3 shows the conditional probabilities of experiencing events and sequences of events for men classified by birth cohorts. These results are not strictly comparable with those shown in Table 1 for a number of reasons. (1) The oldest birth cohort 1910-20 is excluded here because it was sampled less in the GSS 1995. (2) The life course states and events are different in the new scheme. (3) More events, not captured in the 1990 survey, should have occurred between 1990 and 1995 besides the fact that the sample respondents are different in the two surveys. Even with these differences, the trends revealed by the conditional probabilities in Table 3 are similar to those in

Table 1. As Table 3 shows, the probabilities of experiencing a transition from first union (BFU) to beginning of birth parenting (BBP) are .84, .87, and .86 for the birth cohorts 1921-30, 1931-40, and 1941-50 respectively. The comparable figures from Table 1 are the probabilities of transitions from first marriage (FM) to first birth (FB) which are .86, .91, and .87 respectively. The increasing proportions experiencing cohabitation in the younger cohorts would account for the divergence in their probabilities. This is because the probability of first birth following cohabitation is generally lower than that following first marriage.

It is also clear from Table 3 that the intact family sequence is to be found less and less over cohorts. Even though the experience of the last birth cohort for which we can compute this probability, namely those who were born during the forties, is right censored, we can expect that less number of these men would follow the intact family sequence.

As can be seen in the next two panels of Table 3, the probabilities of undergoing the other family types, notably single parent and step family types, are increasing among younger men born during the forties

6. The core contents of the GSS 1995 are very similar to the GSS 1990 except for two major differences. The 1995 survey a) obtained data on school completion and start of regular work, and (b) used more refined measures of timing, asking for both the year and month when each event occurred. The survey covered the whole of Canada excluding residents of Yukon and Northwest Territories and full-time residents of institutions. The respondents consist of 10750 individuals aged 15 and older, of whom 4836 are men. We limit our study to 3412 men aged 25 to 74 at the time of the survey. The sampling procedure followed by Statistics Canada ensures that the sample is representative of the population. Since the survey had a complex design rather than simple random sampling, weights are used throughout all our analyses.

and fifties.

Table 3: Conditional Probabilities of Experiencing Sequences of Events - for Men Classified by Birth Cohorts, 1995 GSS Canada					
Birth Cohorts N (weighted)	1921-30	1931-40	1941-50	1951-60	1961-70
1. Intact Family					
1. OR - BFU	.89	.88	.90	.91	.91
2. BFU - BBP	.84	.87	.86	.74	
3. BBP - EBP	.78	.71	.38		
OR - BFU - BBP - EBP	.58	.54	.29		
2. Single-Parent Family					
1. O - BFU	.89	.88	.90	.91	.91
2. BFU - BBP	.84	.87	.86	.74	.62
3. BBP - EFU	.14	.15	.23	.29	
4. EFU - EBP	.43	.34	.37		
O - BFU - BBP - EFU - EBP	.04	.04	.06		
3. Step-Parent Family					
1. O - BFU	.89	.88	.90	.91	.91
2. BFU - BBP	.84	.87	.86	.74	.62
3. BBP - EFU	.14	.15	.23	.29	.18
4. EFU - BSU	.29	.51	.57	.83	
O - BFU - BBP - EFU - BSU	.03	.06	.10	.16	

The occurrence of single parent families (Panel 2) among the two oldest cohorts was most likely the result of unions that ended with wife's death, whereas in the subsequent cohorts it came about most likely through separation and divorce. This can be deduced from the fact that mortality rates have decreased and yet the probability of transition to the end of first union (from BBP to EFU) has increased from about 0.15 in the two earlier cohorts to 0.23 and 0.29 in the two subsequent cohorts. On the whole,

however, the trajectory leading to single-parent families among men has a low probability hovering just around .04 to .06.

Step-parenting can bring in a variety of sequences of transitions. Panel 3 gives the most plausible type, where step-parenting takes place because of second union. The probability of this sequence (first union leading to birth parenting to end of first union to second union) shows a definite increase from 0.03 for the 1921-30 cohort to 0.16 for the 1951-60 cohort. This increase is large and will perhaps be larger since men born during the fifties have not had as much time as older men to experience this sequence. It is also possible that soon after the end of first union, birth parenting comes to an end and the second union leads to step-parenting the partner's children. Such diverse types leave us with small number of cases, from which we cannot make general conclusions about cohort behaviour.

Table 4 presents the mean ages at various transitions *among those who complete a given sequence of transitions*. From these mean ages, the duration spent in each state can be estimated (see footnote 5). As can be seen in Table 4, the trends in both the mean ages and duration of parenting among the intact families is similar to what has already been found using the 1990 GSS, that is, a decrease in age at completion of birth parenting and in the parenting duration.

Of greater interest here are the mean ages and duration of parenting among the other family types. For example, the mean age at end of birth parenting is higher (58.4 as against 55.8) among the single parents of the 1921-30 cohort, because these men, once widowed, continued their parenting for six more years, on the average. As the proportions of unions dissolved by separation or divorce increase in the younger cohorts, the mean ages at end of birth parenting get younger and the duration of birth parenting shorter. These trends are clearly established among those born during the thirties and forties, and indicative of what would happen among men born during the fifties (even though their experience is severely curtailed by the survey). All these, however, refer only to birth parenting from a first union. No doubt some of those who ended birth parenting would move on to take on a second episode of birth parenting in subsequent unions. While it is desirable to obtain measures of parenting in subsequent unions, the number of men who went on to have children (step or biological) in higher order unions are too few to

allow a reasonably good estimation of mean ages and duration of parenting.

The scenario of stepparent families is visible only among men born during the forties. Even among them, those who complete the sequence are only about 15 in number. Their mean ages at various stages are presented in Table 4 mostly for information; no generalization can be made at this point for this cohort or for later ones. We will have to wait for the next round of the survey either to confirm or to negate the continuation of the trends for the younger cohorts.

**Table 4: Mean Ages at Transitions for Specific Sequences
Men Classified by Birth Cohorts, 1995 GSS Canada**

Birth Cohorts	1921-30	1931-40	1941-50	1951-60
1. Intact Family				
N*	212	198	76	
1. BFU	25.3	23.9	22.4	
2. BBP	27.9	25.9	24.2	
3. EBP	55.8	52.6	46.4	
2. Single Parent Family				
N*	13	16	37	11
1. BFU	27.0	24.8	23.5	24.5
2. BBP	30.2	26.6	25.6	26.1
3. EFU	52.0	43.8	39.0	32.6
4. EBP	58.4	49.0	42.3	33.1
3. Step-Parent Family				
N*			14	
1. BFU			22.2	
2. BBP			24.1	
3. EFU			35.5	
4. BSU			39.8	
5. EBP			45.6	

N* : The (weighted) number who followed the given sequence.

Conclusions

This study has attempted to measure the length of male parenting. First of all, it is difficult to research on the quality or intensity of fathers' involvement in childrearing without developing adequate tools for such a purpose. The analysis of the quantity or the amount of time lived by men with their children as attempted in this paper may be a first step toward more refined measurements of fathering.

Second, the question of custody itself is a very mooted point. When separation or divorce splits a family, mothers are usually given the custody of children. Without adequate alimony, these mothers depend on welfare payments for raising children. Similarly, when paternity is not established or refused, mothers once again depend on welfare. Paternal custody and support of children, therefore, have important policy consequences. It is a worthwhile exercise to find out how many fathers do get the custody of their children after family dissolution, and how long they are able to remain as custodians even in a different family type.

Finally, and more importantly, it is essential to know the type and frequency of different family types that have come into existence in recent times. One often hears figures on non-normative family types that seem to be bloated either by the media or by many an advocacy group. Only a nation-wide survey such as the GSS can offer valid and conclusive evidence on such information. For example, the 1995 GSS had the ambitious intention of collecting data on gay/lesbian families, inspired by the recent publicity on the media. But the gathered information reveals that only 0.1% of respondents answered that they lived with the same sex partner. Yet, the availability of such surveys enquiring into different family types, and correct procedures for analysing such information are absolutely essential. Our contribution will be toward achieving the latter aim, as modest as it may be to begin with.

This paper has shown the need for revising our analytical tools for the sake of examining male parenting scenarios in a family life course perspective. The rise in rates of cohabitation, divorce and remarriage with consequent changes in living arrangements of children necessitate the revision of the classic family life stages and life courses that we are most familiar with. The modified states or events as well as their indicators we have proposed here seem to be reasonably useful for the type of data collected through the 1995 Canadian General Social Survey. And, probabilities of experiencing certain events and sequences of events seem to be good estimates of the reality. However, the proportions in the population who

experience family types other than the traditional one are still too low to allow reasonable estimates of duration and mean ages. No doubt as the new family types continue to increase in the near future, similar future surveys would surely capture these variations and possibly confirm the trends established in this study.

References

Elder, G. H. 1991. "Family Transitions, Cycles, and Social Change" in P.A. Cowan and M. Hetherington (eds) *Family Transitions*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Pp.31-57.

Feichtinger, G. 1987. "The Statistical Measurement of the Family Life Cycle" in J. Bongaarts, T.K. Burch, and K. Wachter (eds) *Family Demography: Methods and Applications*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 81-101.

George, L.K. 1993. "Sociological Perspectives on Life Transitions". *Annual Review of Sociology* 19:353-73.

Glick, P.C. 1964. "Demographic Analysis of Family Data" in H.T. Christiansen (ed) *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co.

Goldscheider, Frances K. and Linda J. Waite. 1991. *New Families, No Families? The Transformation of the American Home*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hill, R. and R.H. Rodgers. 1967. "The Developmental Approach" in H.T. Christiansen (ed) *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co. Pp.171-211.

Presser, H. B. 1995. "Are the Interests of Women Inherently at Odds with the Interests of Children or the Family? A Viewpoint" in K.O. Mason and A. Jensen (eds) *Gender and Family Change in Industrialized Countries*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 297-319.

Rajulton, F. 1991. "Life History Analysis: Guidelines for Using the Computer Package LIFEHIST". Population Studies Centre, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

Rajulton, F. and T. R. Balakrishnan . 1990. "Interdependence of Transitions Among Marital and Parity States in Canada". *Canadian Studies in Population* 17(1):107-32.

Ravanera, Z. R., F. Rajulton, and T.K. Burch. 1994. "Tracing the Life Courses of Canadians". *Canadian Studies in Population* 21(1):21-34.

Ravanera, Z.R., F. Rajulton and T.K. Burch. 1995. "A Cohort Analysis of Home-leaving in Canada, 1910-1975" . *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 26(2): 179-193.