

Nonmarital Pregnancy and the Timing of First Union Transition

Abstract

Considering the importance of family context for children's welfare, this study uses the most recent data to update research on the union transitions of women with premarital pregnancies. Using data from the 2002 and 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth, we examine patterns in the timing between first premarital conception and first union transition across 2 decades of pregnancy cohorts. As expected, an increasing number of women marry as the duration since conception increases across all cohorts. But, the transition is slower among women with more recent pregnancies. For example, in one third of pregnancies between 1980–84, where the mother was single at conception, has the mother married within 24 months of becoming pregnant. For pregnancies in 2000 or later, the figure is 17.8%. Transitions among mothers who were cohabiting at conception show similar trends. We plan to use multivariate models to explore how the pace and type of these union transitions has changed over time.

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