

Study: The duration of first unions: A comparative analysis between landed immigrants and Canadian-born individuals

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Monday, March 11, 2024

The family institution has undergone important transformations in recent decades that have led to a greater prevalence of common-law unions and an increase of repartnering, that is, of second marriages and common-law unions. A new study released today, based on data from the 2017 General Social Survey – Family, examines first union dissolution in Canada. The goal of the analysis is to understand the sociodemographic factors that influence the duration and the risk of first union dissolution. This analysis sheds light on the differences between landed immigrants and Canadian-born individuals with respect to union instability.

The results show that landed immigrant women were less likely than Canadian-born women to experience the dissolution of their first union. Some of the characteristics examined, such as the type of union (marriage or common-law) and the presence of children born or adopted through the union, influence in the same way the risk of first union dissolution among Canadian-born individuals and landed immigrants. However, the effect of other sociodemographic characteristics, such as age at the start of the union and the highest level of education attained, varies by sex and landed immigrant status.

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Note to readers

The data in this analysis are from the 2017 General Social Survey (GSS) – Family. This survey tracks trends and changes in Canadian families, collecting retrospective information on conjugal and parental history (chronology of marriages, common-law unions, divorces and separations, and the arrival of children), family history, leaving the parental home, parent-child contacts, fertility intentions, and other socioeconomic characteristics. The target population of the 2017 GSS includes non-institutionalized people aged 15 years and older who live in one of the Canadian provinces. This is a sample survey with a cross-sectional design. Data were collected directly from respondents using computer-assisted telephone interviews.

This analysis covers people aged 20 and older who, at the time of data collection, were or had ever been in a relationship (marriage or common-law union).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4501](#).

For more details, readers are invited to consult "[The duration of first unions: A comparative analysis between landed immigrants and Canadian-born individuals](#)", available as part of the *Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey (89-652-X)*

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).

