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FEATURES

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Who's religious?

by Warren Clark and Grant Schellenberg

There has been much debate about whether Canada is becoming increasingly secularized. Many argue that institutional religion has a reduced influence on Canadian society. Certainly, religious attendance rates between the late 1940s and late 1990s have declined significantly while the percentage of people reporting no religious affiliation has increased. But does this imply that there is an erosion of individual faith, based on the supposition that attendance rates decrease because people lack the belief that motivates attendance? Well-known social researcher Reginald Bibby asserts that others have been wrong in predicting the demise of religion in Canada because people continue to have spiritual needs.¹

This article uses data from the General Social Survey (GSS) and the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) to track the religious views and practices of Canadians and identify those groups most likely to be religious. An index of religiosity is developed based on the presence of religious affiliation, frequency of attendance at religious services, frequency of private religious practices and the importance of religion to the respondent.

The decline in religious affiliation and attendance

Since the mid-1980s, Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) has provided insights into Canadians' public religious behaviour by asking

about their religious affiliation² and frequency of attendance at religious services, the first two dimensions of religiosity considered in this article. There have been noticeable declines in these measures over the past twenty years.

Between 1985 and 2004, the share of Canadians aged 15 and older reporting no religious affiliation increased by seven percentage points from 12% to 19%.³ In addition, a growing share of Canadians had not attended any religious services in the previous year, even though they reported an affiliation (19% to 25%). Together, the proportion of adult Canadians who either have no religious affiliation or do have a religion but don't attend religious services increased from 31% to 43% over this period.

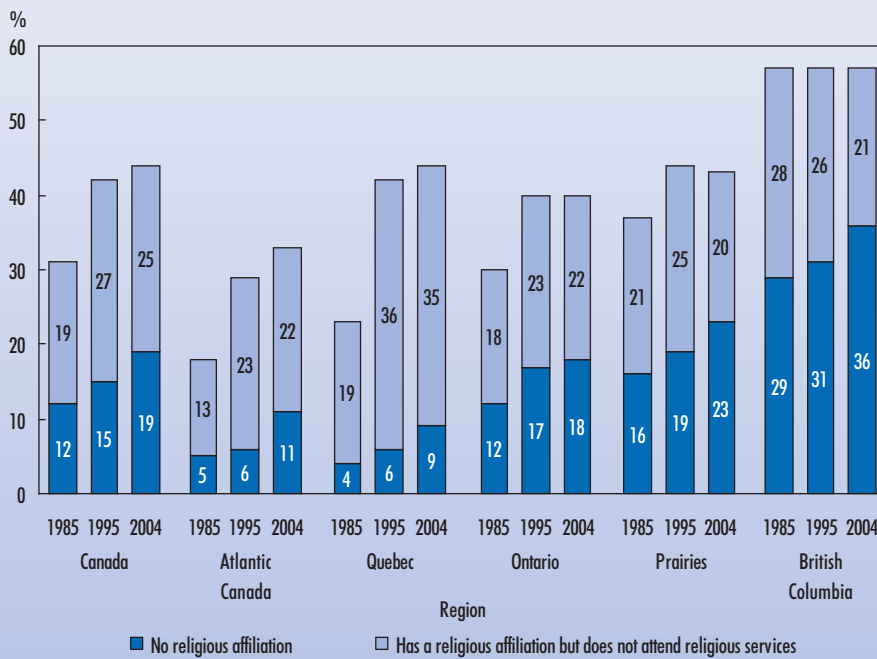
This upward trend was evident among all age groups and in all regions of the country, although young people and British Columbians were most likely to have weak ties with religious organizations. Indeed, in 2004 over half of Canadians aged 15 to 29 and almost 60% of British Columbians either had no religious affiliation or did not attend any religious services.

Since 1985, a widening divergence in the public religious behaviours of immigrants and persons born in Canada has also emerged. The percentage of Canadian-born 15 to 59-year-olds with no religious affiliation or not attending religious services has increased from 33% in 1985 to 48% in 2004. In contrast, immigrants in this age group have changed very little, from 36% to 35%.⁴ All in all, public

GSS Religious affiliation and attendance among Canadians aged 15 and older						
	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	% point change 1985-2004
%						
Population aged 15 & over	100	100	100	100	100	...
No religious affiliation	12	12	15	20	19	7
Frequency of attendance						
Not in the last 12 months	19	23	27	21	25	5
Infrequently ¹	28	28	24	28	25	-3
At least monthly	41	37	33	31	32	-9

... not applicable
 1. Attended religious services, but only a few times a year or less frequently.
 Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Young adults are most likely to have no religious affiliation



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

religious behaviours among persons born inside and outside Canada became more dissimilar, although this divergence conceals considerable diversity in levels of religiosity among immigrants from different regions of the world.

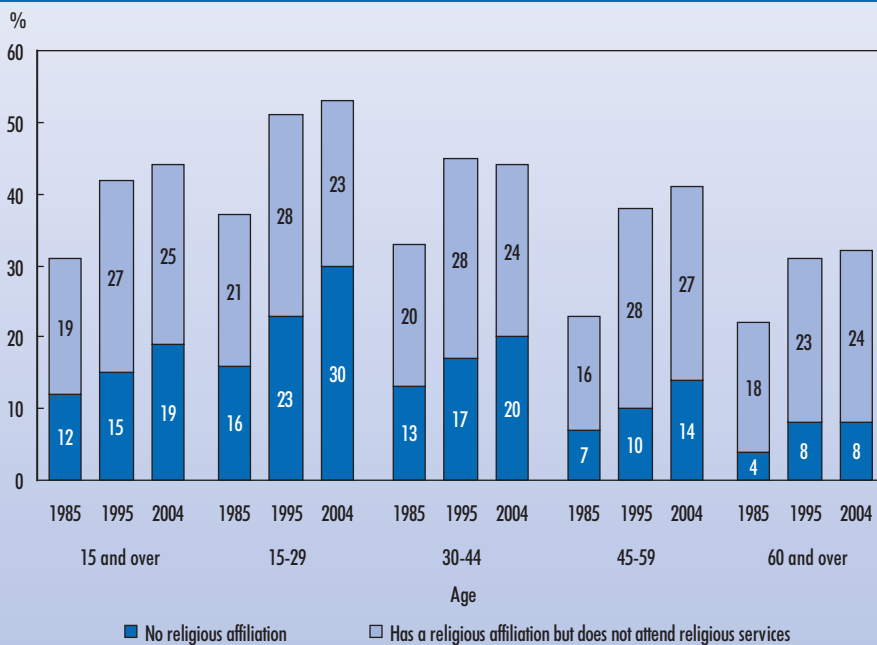
Half of adult Canadians regularly engage in religious activities on their own

Public religious behaviour, religious affiliation and attendance, have been declining among much of the population, but this captures only one aspect of peoples' religiosity. To get a more complete picture, private religious behaviour such as prayer, meditation, worship and reading of sacred texts on one's own is examined.⁵ Although some Canadians have little or no connection with religious organizations, the 2002 EDS shows that they do engage in such private religious behaviour either at home or in other locations.

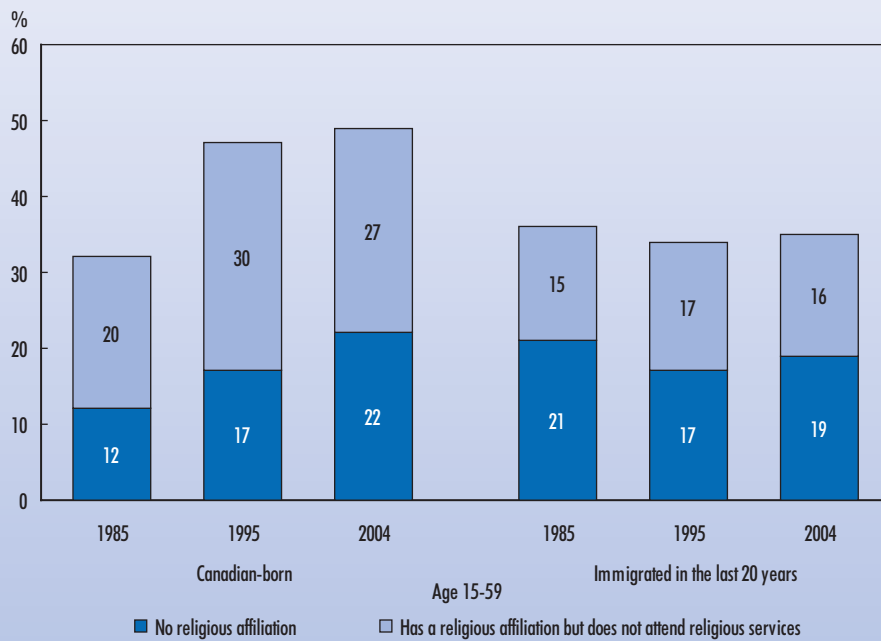
While only about one-third (32%) of adult Canadians attend religious services at least monthly, over one-half (53%) engage in religious activities on their own at least monthly. Eleven percent engage in religious activities on their own a few times a year, while 18% never engage in such activities. Those who said they have no religious affiliation (17%) were not asked this question on the EDS.

As with religious attendance, the likelihood of engaging in religious activities on one's own was more prevalent in older age groups. Similarly, individuals in the Atlantic region were most likely to engage in such practices while individuals in British Columbia were least likely to do so. Immigrants were more likely to engage in such activities than persons born in Canada.

British Columbians are least likely to have a religious affiliation or to attend religious services



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Not surprisingly, individuals who frequently attended religious services were also most likely to regularly engage in personal religious practices. In fact, 75% of Canadians who attended religious services at least monthly also engaged in religious practices on their own on a weekly basis.

Perhaps most striking is the many Canadians who infrequently or never attend services yet regularly engage in personal religious practices. Of those who infrequently attended religious services over the previous year, 37% engaged in religious practices on their own on a weekly basis. And of those who had not attended any religious services over the previous year, 27% engaged in weekly religious practices on their own. Overall this group of adults who regularly engage in private religious practices, but infrequently or never attend religious services, represent 21% of the adult population.

This pattern was most prevalent among older Canadians. Among Canadian adults who do not regularly

attend religious services, 45% of those aged 60 or older engaged in personal religious activities compared with 27% of those aged 15 to 29. Religious attendance is prevalent among people in their 60s but declines as age advances because of factors such as illness, disability and access to transportation. But despite these barriers to attendance, seniors retain their religious attitudes and beliefs and continue to engage in private religious practices.⁶

Is my religion important?

Going beyond public and private religious practices to measure religiosity, a fourth dimension can be added reflecting the level of importance that religion has in peoples’ lives. Overall, 44% of Canadians place a high degree of importance on religion in their life.⁷ Again, this is associated with age, region of residence, immigration status and the frequency of public and private religious practices.

Almost half (45%) of those Canadian adults who do not regularly

attend services but who engage in religious activities on their own at least once a month place a high degree of importance on their religion. This suggests that more Canadian adults attach a high degree of importance to religion than attendance figures alone would indicate. Not surprisingly, individuals who regularly attend services and engage in personal religious practices are most likely to place high importance on religion (87%). In contrast, only 15% of those who infrequently or never participate in public or private religious practices place high importance on religion.

Religiosity index

Finally, the four dimensions of religiosity – affiliation, attendance, personal practices and importance of religion – can be combined into a simple additive ‘religiosity index’.^{8,9} People may attend religious services or choose religious denominations to please their loved ones, so an index which also captures the importance of religion and personal religious practices may be a better indicator of religiosity.

Individuals with no religious affiliation were assigned a score of 0, while those with an affiliation received a score ranging from 1 to 13. A score of 1 indicates that the person does not attend religious services, does not engage in religious practices on their own, and places no importance on religion. A score of 13 indicates that the person attends religious services at least once a week, engages in personal religious practices at least once a week, and places a great deal of importance on religion. To simplify the analysis of religiosity, Canadians were grouped into three broad categories based on their religiosity index, low (0-5), moderate (6-10) and high (11-13). The group with ‘low religiosity’ includes persons with no religious affiliation.

Based on these criteria, 40% of Canadians have a low degree of religiosity, 31% are moderately religious and 29% are highly religious.

	Frequency of religious practices on one's own					Total
	Weekly	Monthly	A few times a year ¹	Not in past 12 months	No religion	
	%					
Total	43	11	11	18	17	100
Men	34*	10	13*	23*	20*	100
Women	51	11	10	14	15	100
Age						
15 to 29	32*	12	12	19	25*	100
30 to 44	39	11	12	19	19	100
45 to 59	44*	10*	11	19	15*	100
60 or older	58*	9*	8*	17	9*	100
Region of residence						
Atlantic	48	13	13	19	8*	100
Quebec	43	11	14	24*	7*	100
Ontario	44	11	10	17	17	100
Prairies	41	11	10	16	22*	100
British Columbia	35*	8*	8	14*	36*	100
Immigration Status						
Canadian-Born	40	11	12	20	17	100
Immigrated before 1982	51*	8*	8*	17*	16	100
Immigrated in 1982-2001	50*	9*	8*	12*	21*	100
Frequency of attendance at religious services or meetings						
At least monthly	75	13	5	6	...	100
Infrequently	37*	17*	25*	21*	...	100
Not in last 12 months	27*	8*	13*	51*	...	100
No religious affiliation	...	...	...	...	100	100

1. Attend religious services, but only a few times a year or less frequently.
 * Statistically significant difference from reference group in italic ($p < 0.05$).
 Source: Statistics Canada, Ethnic Diversity Survey, 2002.

Again, religiosity is lowest among young people and higher among individuals in older age groups. Men are also much more likely to have low religiosity than women. Across the country, low levels of religiosity are most prevalent in British Columbia. One might guess that the prevalence of Chinese visible minorities in British Columbia may contribute to the British Columbia's low level of religiosity since levels of religiosity (as measured here) are low among this group and they comprise a larger share of British Columbia's population

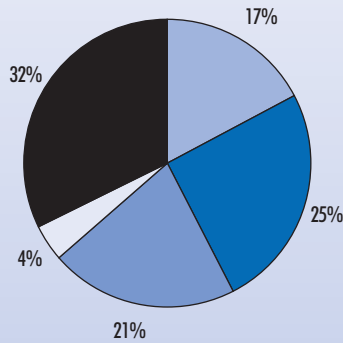
than other provinces. They do in part, but by far the greatest contributor is the low religiosity among non-visible minorities in British Columbia. Non-visible minorities in British Columbia are one and half times as likely as non-visible minorities in Ontario to have low religiosity (57% versus 38%).

The degree of religiosity expressed by Canadians is associated with the religious background of their parents. Of those who say that neither of their parents had a religion, 85% have a low degree of religiosity and 10% have

a high degree. In contrast, of those who say that both of their parents had similar religious backgrounds, 32% have a low degree of religiosity and 33% have a high degree. This is consistent with other studies that show religious parents are most likely to pass their religion on to their children and this occurs most often when both parents have similar religious backgrounds.¹⁰

About four in ten (41%) of the immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1982 and 2001 have a high degree of religiosity, compared with

About one in five adults infrequently engage in or never attend religious services, but do regular religious practices on their own



- No religion
- Regular public practice only³
- Infrequent public and private practice¹
- Regular public and private practice⁴
- Regular private practice only²

1. Infrequent public and private practice - infrequently or never attends religious services or does religious practices on their own.
2. Regular private practice only - infrequently or never attends religious services, but does religious practices on their own at least once a month.
3. Regular public practice only - attends religious services at least once a month, but does religious practices on their own infrequently or never.
4. Regular public and private practice - attends religious services and does religious practices on their own at least once a month.

Source: Statistics Canada, Ethnic Diversity Survey, 2002.

26% of persons born in Canada. However, there is considerable variation in levels of religiosity among immigrants from different regions of the world. High levels of religiosity are most prevalent among immigrants from South Asia (e.g. India and Pakistan), South East Asia (e.g. the Philippines) and the Caribbean and Central and South America. In contrast, high levels of religiosity are least prevalent among immigrants from East Asia (e.g. China and Japan) and Western/Northern Europe (e.g. France and the United Kingdom) and Eastern Europe (e.g. Hungary).

Summary

The last several decades have witnessed an increasing share of the population reporting no religion and a decreasing share reporting monthly or weekly attendance at religious services. However, declining attendance may overstate the extent to which Canada is becoming

The importance of religion to one's life, Canada, 2002

Importance of religion to you¹

High Moderate Low No religion Total

	High	Moderate	Low	No religion	Total
	%				
Total	44	20	19	17	100
Men	36*	21	23*	20*	100
Women	51	20	14	15	100
Age					
15 to 29	34*	20*	22	25*	100
30 to 44	39	23	20	19	100
45 to 59	43*	22	20	15*	100
60+	62*	16*	13*	9*	100
Region of residence					
Atlantic	54*	22	17	8*	100
Quebec	41*	26*	26*	7*	100
Ontario	47	19	16	17	100
Prairies	42*	19	17	22*	100
British Columbia	34*	15*	15	36*	100

Importance of religion to you¹

High Moderate Low No religion Total

	High	Moderate	Low	No religion	Total
	%				
Immigration Status					
Canadian-born	40	22	21	17	100
Immigrated before 1982	55*	15*	15*	16	100
Immigrated in 1982 to 2001	57*	12*	10*	21*	100
Religious practices					
Attendance at religious services	Private religious practices				
At least monthly	87	11	2	...	100
At least monthly	60*	27*	12*	...	100
Infrequently or never	45*	36*	18*	...	100
Infrequently or never	15*	31*	54*	...	100
No religion	...	...	...	100	100

1. Importance of religion to you is scored from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important). High importance is defined as a score of four or five, moderate importance — a score of three and low importance — a score of one or two. Those reporting no religious affiliation were not asked this question.

* Statistically significant difference from reference group in italic (p < 0.05).

Source: Statistics Canada, Ethnic Diversity Survey, 2002.

	Degree of religiosity			Total
	Low (0-5)	Moderate (6-10)	High (11-13)	
	%			
Total	40	31	29	100
Men	48*	28*	24*	100
Women	32	33	35	100
Age				
15 to 29	48*	30*	22*	100
30 to 44	43	32	25	100
45 to 59	39*	31	30*	100
60+	26*	30*	44*	100
Region of residence				
Atlantic	29*	35*	36	100
Quebec	39*	37*	24*	100
Ontario	37	30	33	100
Prairies	42*	28*	31	100
British Columbia	54*	22*	25*	100
Immigration Status				
Canadian-born	41	32	26	100
Immigrated before 1982	33*	27*	40*	100
Immigrated 1982 to 2001	34*	25*	41*	100
Religion of parents				
Both parents same religion	32	34	33	100
Parents from different religions	50*	28*	22*	100
Neither parent religious	85*	6*	10*	100

* Statistically significant difference from reference group in italic ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Statistics Canada, Ethnic Diversity Survey, 2002.

secularized, since a considerable proportion of Canadians do not attend religious services but do engage in religious practices on their own. Similarly, some Canadians who do not attend services still attach a high degree of importance to religion in their life. This suggests that while attendance rates have declined, many Canadians continue to practice their religion in private.

Consistent with previous studies, young adults are the group with the weakest attachment to organized religion. However, even when other forms of religious behaviour are considered, almost half of Canadians aged 15 to 29 still have a low degree of religiosity. Similarly, most individuals in British Columbia exhibit a low level of religiosity whether this is measured in terms of attendance,

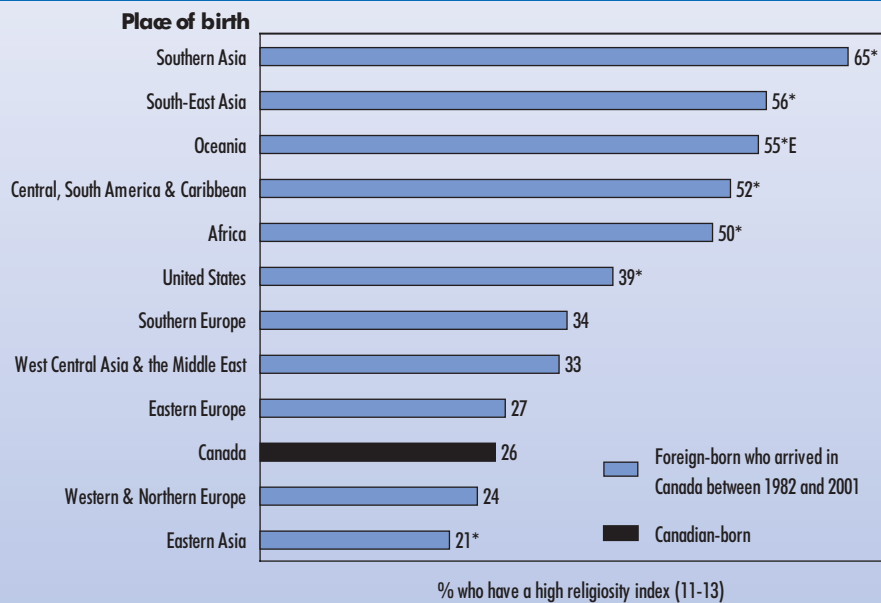
personal practices or importance attached to religion. There also appears to be a wide variation in religiosity of immigrants associated with the religious traditions of their country of birth, which may differ substantially from persons born in Canada.



Grant Schellenberg and **Warren Clark** are senior analysts with Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

1. Bibby, Reginald W. 2002. "Restless Gods — The renaissance of religion in Canada" Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, pp. 58-59.
2. For example: Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Jewish, Muslim or Buddhist.
3. The Census indicates 4% in 1971, 7% in 1981, 12% in 1991 and 16% in 2001 of the population aged 15 and over reported no religious affiliation.
4. This comparison is limited to immigrants who arrived in Canada during the 20-year period from 1982 to 2001.
5. Cornwall, Marie et al. 1986. "The dimension of religiosity: A conceptual model and an empirical test." *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 226-244.
6. Broyles, Phillip A., & Cynthia K. Drenovsky. 1992. "Religious attendance and the subjective health of the elderly." *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 152-160.
7. A high degree of importance is defined as a score of 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale where 1 means "not important at all" and 5 means "very important." Individuals who did not have a religious affiliation were not asked this question.

GST South Asians are most likely to be highly religious



E High sampling variability. Use with caution.

* Statistically significant difference from estimate for Canadian-born ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Statistics Canada, Ethnic Diversity Survey, 2002.

8. The religiosity index is obtained by adding a score from each of the groups in the following table (dimensions of religiosity). Those with no religious affiliation were not asked about the other dimensions of religiosity and therefore have a religiosity index of "0". For example, the religiosity index for someone who has a religion (add 1), does not attend religious services at all (add 0), who does personal religious practices on their own at least once a month (add 3) and considers religion to be at an importance level of 1 (add 1) would have a religiosity index of $1+0+3+1=5$, in the low range of the religiosity index.

Religious affiliation

No affiliation (0)

Has a religion (1)

Religious attendance

Not at all (0)

Once or twice a year (1)

At least 3 times a year (2)

At least once a month (3)

At least once a week (4)

Frequency of religious

Not at all (0)

Once or twice a year (1)

At least 3 times a year (2)

At least once a month (3)

At least once a week (4)

Importance of practices on your own religion to one's life

Not important at all (0)

(1)

(2)

(3)

Very important (4)

9. The giving of time and money to religious organizations were not collected by the EDS, but may also be important dimensions of religiosity.

10. Bibby, Reginald W. 1997. "The persistence of Christian religious identification in Canada" *Canadian Social Trends*, No. 44, Spring 1997. pp. 24-28.

Sherkat, Darren E., Christopher G. Ellison. 1999. "Recent developments and current controversies in the sociology of religion" *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 363-394.

GST What you should know about this study

Almost every year since 1985, Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) has interviewed adults aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces. The GSS has collected information about religious affiliation and the frequency of attendance at religious services (excluding special occasions such as weddings, funerals and baptisms). This article uses GSS data to identify trends in adult religious attendance rates and in the percentage of the adult population that has no religion.

Prior to 2003, GSS respondents who indicated they had a religion were asked how frequently they attended religious services. Beginning in 2003, GSS respondents who had a religion were asked how important their religious or spiritual beliefs were to the way they lived their lives. Those who indicated that religious beliefs were not at all important were not asked about their frequency of attendance at religious services in order to reduce response burden. In theory, this implies that pre- and post-2003 religious attendance rates are different, but a comparison of the rates for 2003 and 2004 with those in 2000 and 2001 shows very little difference, suggesting that the impact of the question changes is minimal.

Respondents to the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS)¹ were also asked: "In the past 12 months, how often did you do religious activities on your own? This may include prayer, meditation and other forms of worship taking place at home or in any other location." Information was not collected on individuals' specific beliefs or on the specific types of religious activities in which they engage.² Respondents were also asked: "Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important, how important is your religion to you? Again, 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important." Those who reported they had no religion were not asked about their religious practices on their own or about the importance of religion to them, presumably because they would not engage in religious practices or view religion as important to them. However, this does not imply that those with no religious affiliation are not interested in spiritual issues or may not be keenly interested in spiritual growth and spiritual philosophies.

1. The 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey surveyed the non-Aboriginal population aged 15 and over only.
2. General Social Survey (GSS) and Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) questions on the frequency of religious attendance are worded differently. GSS respondents are asked "Other than on special occasions, (such as weddings, funerals or baptisms) how often did you attend religious services or meetings in the last 12 months?" EDS respondents were asked "In the past 12 months, how often did you participate in religious activities or attend religious services or meetings with other people, other than for events such as weddings and funerals?" In short, EDS respondents are asked about a somewhat broader range of religious activities (i.e. religious activities or religious services/meetings) than GSS respondents. Consequently, the EDS yields a slightly larger share of Canadians who attend services/meetings on a monthly basis (37% versus 31%).

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Taking charge: Perceptions of control over life chances

by Anne Milan

Most people have moments when they feel that their lives are going along as planned, while at other times nothing seems to go right. In these situations, they might feel in complete command of the paths they follow, and view their achievements – or even their failures – as the result of their own efforts and abilities. Alternatively, they might feel that certain aspects of life are beyond their control, and that fate, destiny, luck or a higher power play an important role in how their lives unfold.

The concept of mastery refers to an individual's perception that she has control over her own life. A person's response to events can be influenced by many factors that affect his assessment of his own role in society as well as his future outcomes. Of course, there are larger situations at the national or international level which are beyond the realm of individual control, such as business cycles in the economy or natural disasters. However, people with high levels of perceived control are "effective forces in their own lives"¹, and are likely "to accumulate resources and to develop skills and habits that prevent avoidable problems and reduce the impact of unavoidable problems."² This, in turn, can produce a reciprocal effect between achievements and sense of mastery over life chances which could influence many areas of a person's life.

GST What you should know about this study

Using the 2003 General Social Survey (GSS), this paper examines the extent of perceptions of control over life chances for individuals aged 15 and over. The results are based on a sample of about 22,600 people representing over 23 million Canadians.

Sense of mastery was determined by asking respondents if they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree that:

- they have little control over the things that happen to them;
- there is really no way they can solve some of the problems they have;
- there is little they can do to change many of the important things in their lives;
- they often feel helpless in dealing with problems of life;
- sometimes they feel that they are being pushed around in life;
- what happens to them in the future mostly depends on them;
- they can do just about anything they really set their mind to.

These factors were then combined to form a mastery scale,¹ ranging in value from 0 to 28, which measures the extent to which individuals believe that their lives are under their own control. Higher scores indicate a greater sense of mastery.

Readers should note that it is not possible to identify the realms in which respondents felt they controlled their lives. Perceptions of control could be context-specific in that people might feel in control of certain areas of their lives, but not others. For example, someone might feel powerless when faced with a health problem, but still believe that they can achieve their desired education, marriage or family goals.

Life satisfaction was measured as respondents' satisfaction with their lives as a whole on a ten-point scale ranging from a score of 0 ("very dissatisfied") to 10 ("very satisfied").

A statistical model was developed in order to examine the influence of a number of characteristics on the sense of personal control. These characteristics included: age, sex, household language, immigration status, region of residence, marital status, number of close friends and relatives, education, main activity, occupation, household income, group membership, volunteer status, religiosity, life satisfaction, perceived health status, and happiness.

1. The scale which measures sense of mastery is based on the work of L.I. Pearlin and C. Schooler. 1978. "The structure of coping." *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour* 19(1):2-21.

This paper uses the 2003 General Social Survey (GSS) to examine the extent to which Canadians aged 15 and over feel a sense of mastery, or responsibility for what happens to them in life. A mastery scale, comprised of seven indicators measuring such elements as the respondent's perceived control over things that happen in life, problem-solving capability, feelings of helplessness and the ability to accomplish goals, was used in the analysis. A statistical model was also designed to examine the influence of a number of socio-demographic, family, economic, community and well-being characteristics on the respondent's sense of personal control.

Indicators of control over life chances

In general, Canadians have a fairly high sense of being in charge of the circumstances in which they find themselves. According to the GSS data, the average score was 18.8 on the scale ranging from 0 to 28

(the higher the score, the greater the sense of mastery). Specifically, nearly nine in ten (89%) respondents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that what happens to them in the future mostly depends on them. Similarly, 84% agreed that they could do just about anything in life that they really set their mind to. In contrast, only about three in ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they sometimes felt pushed around in life or that they have little control over the things that happen to them.

Most Canadians also reported positive feelings about managing the problems in their lives. (These results are based on each respondent's own interpretation of what constitutes "problems.") Indeed, 77% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is little one can do to change many important things in life. At least seven in ten rejected the statements that they often felt helpless in dealing with problems of life or that there is really no way to solve some of their problems.

Younger adults are most likely to feel in control

The perception of control over life peaks for adults aged 25 to 34 and then declines steadily. For example, on the mastery scale, the average score for people in their late 20s and early 30s was 19.6, then falls to 18.2 for those in their early fifties and to 16.7 for seniors in their late seventies. Consistent with previous research which found that perceived control declined at older ages³, this reduced sense of mastery may reflect lower energy and physical health changes as well as the loss of valued social roles.⁴ Perhaps younger adults feel that most of their lives are still ahead of them, and as a result, they are more optimistic about their chances in life. In contrast, people may become more realistic with age, basing their expectations on their cumulative experiences. Results of the statistical model show that even after taking into account other characteristics, the relationship held between age and a person's sense of control.

There was some evidence that men experienced a greater feeling of mastery than women, but the difference between the sexes was not large. A 2002 American study found that men generally have a greater sense of control than do women, particularly at older ages,⁵ perhaps because of women's less secure economic conditions (for example, less attachment to the labour force, lower average incomes and so on). Converging labour market experiences and educational levels of men and women may contribute to growing similarity in perceptions of control.

Both place of birth and region of residence played a role in how individuals perceived their ability to affect their situations and outcomes. According to the GSS data, foreign-born individuals feel less in control of their lives than do Canadian-born individuals. (Mastery score values averaged 18.1 for immigrants arriving before 1990; 17.5 for those landing between 1990 and 2003; and 19.0 for people born in Canada.) Immigrants



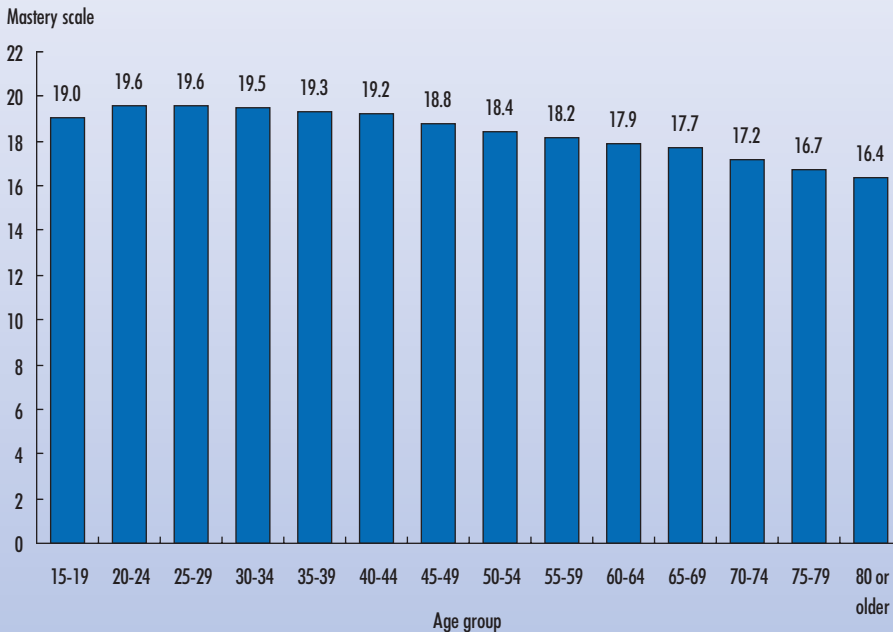
In general, Canadians have a fairly high sense of being in charge of the circumstances in which they find themselves

% of Canadians aged 15 and over

	Total	Agree or strongly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree
I believe that...				
... what happens to me in the future mostly depends on me	100	89	4	7
... I can do just about anything I really set my mind to	100	84	6	10
... sometimes I feel that I am being pushed around in life	100	32	7	61
... I have little control over the things that happen to me	100	30	9	61
... I often feel helpless in dealing with problems of life	100	23	7	70
... there is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have	100	21	6	73
... there is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life	100	18	5	77

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

Feelings of personal control are highest for people in their twenties



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

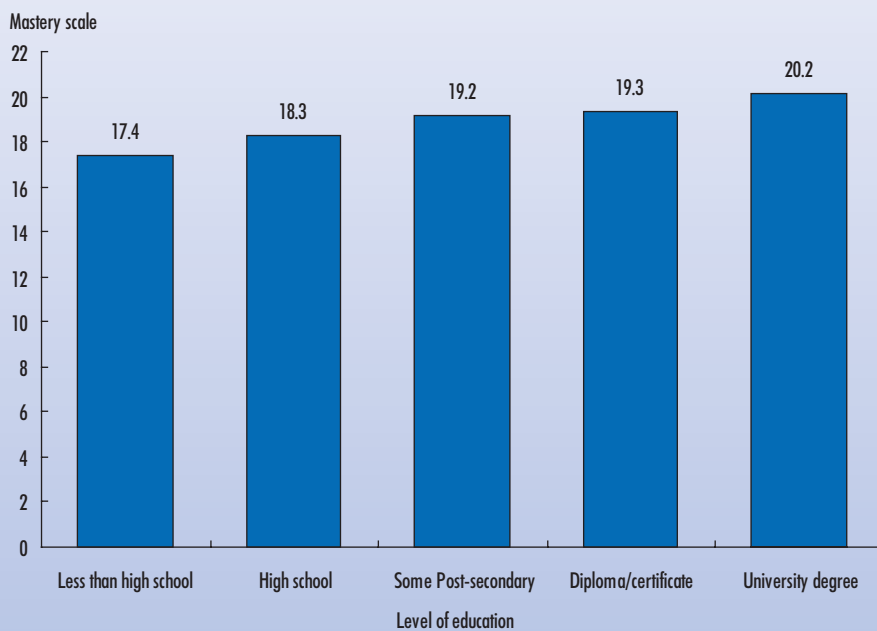
may feel that they are confronted with more obstacles to achieving their goals than people born in this country. In fact, studies have found that foreign-born individuals may face difficulty obtaining work experience in Canada or having their previous work experience or qualifications recognized in Canada⁶ and, as a result, be underemployed.⁷

Region of residence also influenced perceived control. Compared to living in Quebec (mastery score of 18.0), living in any of the other regions was associated with a greater sense of control (ranging from 18.8 in the Atlantic Provinces to 19.3 in the Prairies). These relationships between place of birth, region of residence and mastery remain significant, even after accounting for all other variables in the statistical model.

Higher education key to perceived control

Social position, as reflected by various indicators of socio-economic status, can have an effect on an individual's sense of self, and presumably, on perceptions of control over his or her life. Indeed, the GSS data show that there is a clear relationship between education, household income, type of job and feelings of personal control over one's life. In terms of education, people who were university-educated scored 20.0 on the mastery scale, while those with less than high school scored 17.3. It may be that higher education provides people with the tools and resources necessary for meeting their goals, not only in terms of career development, but in other areas of life as well. These "learned effectiveness"⁸ skills – which may include being persistent, more adept at communication and able to gather, interpret and analyze information – can be directed toward problem-solving and achieving one's objectives. Higher education levels might also reflect more experience negotiating with large and complex organizations, for example social services, government or health systems.

Among 25- to 54-year-olds, feelings of personal control are highest for those with higher levels of education



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

Perceptions of control over life are also influenced by a person's career. Average scores on the mastery scale were over 20.0 for those in management or professional occupations, but were below 18.0 for employees in blue-collar occupations related to processing, manufacturing, and utilities. Individuals who were not in the labour force scored even lower – an average of only 17.4. Even when accounting for other characteristics in the statistical model, these relationships held. The reason may be that the self-confidence common to people with more autonomy and control in their jobs extends to other aspects of their lives. An earlier study also found that the sense of personal control is greater among people with paid jobs than those not in the labour force and, furthermore, that the difference increases with more job autonomy and higher income.⁹

Consistent with the findings of education and occupation, the GSS data showed that respondents with household incomes of less than \$20,000 reported a lower sense of control over life chances (an average score of 16.8) than those in households earning \$60,000 or more (19.9). While it may not necessarily be true that "money buys happiness," it does provide a greater perception of being in charge of one's life. This sense of control might also arise from greater feelings of financial security when confronted with unexpected problems.

Physical and emotional well-being important to feeling in charge of life

There was a substantial difference in perceptions of control depending on the health status of respondents. People who rated themselves as being in excellent health, scored an average of 20.0 on the mastery scale, compared to 16.1 for those who reported that their health was fair or poor. While it is possible to take responsibility for certain aspects of one's health, with measures such as exercise, diet or lifestyle, accidents

and some illnesses are beyond one's control. Therefore, it is not surprising that individuals in less than optimal health feel that their sense of mastery is lower than that of others with little or no health challenges.

Indicators of emotional well-being, such as level of happiness and life satisfaction, are also associated with perceptions of control over life. People who were somewhat or very unhappy scored only 14.9 on the mastery scale, whereas those who were very happy scored 19.8. It seems, therefore, that when people experience positive feelings, they believe they exert more control over the situations in which they find themselves.

It should be noted that the relationship between indicators of well-being and perceptions of control over life chances may be reciprocal. For example, feeling in control may be mitigated by health problems or dissatisfaction with life; however, having a reduced sense of mastery could also lead to poorer health or well-being. Indeed, a 2005 study found that a low perception of control over one's own life negatively affects health outcomes, which in turn reduces sense of control.¹⁰

Large social network produces heightened sense of internal control

Involvement with a social network, whether it is membership in a group, having family and friends on whom to rely, or both, can influence a person's internal sense of control. Respondents who were single and those who were living common-law had similar scores on the mastery scale (19.1). In contrast, people who had been widowed felt the least power over their life chances (17.0). This is understandable since it would be more difficult to feel in charge of one's life after experiencing the death of a husband or a wife. In addition, widows are generally older and may be less financially secure, both of which are related to lower perceptions of control. The average

scores for married (18.8) and divorced or separated individuals (18.3) were more moderate. However, once the statistical model controlled for other variables, widowed and divorced people were found to score higher than single people, while people who were married or living common-law had lower scores than unmarried respondents. Perhaps "solo agents" feel they are better-placed to control their lives, since married people need to take their partner into account when making decisions.

Individuals with no close friends or relatives had a much lower sense of control over their life than those who had a wider social network. For example, respondents who said they had no close friends scored 16.9 on the mastery scale, compared to 19.5 for those with at least six friends. Even when holding the effect of other characteristics in the model constant, people with fewer close friends or relatives had a lower perception of their mastery skills than those with six or more people in their social network. Having significant others in one's life can offset feelings of isolation.

Community involvement associated with greater feelings of mastery

Being involved in a social network extending beyond immediate family and friends also appears to increase a person's sense of control over life chances. For example, respondents who did not belong to any organizations scored 17.9 on the mastery scale, compared to 20.1 for those who belonged to three or more groups. Perhaps being part of a larger community gives people a feeling of support that enhances their belief that they can accomplish their goals or overcome obstacles. Being part of a larger network could also help people to mediate or negotiate any difficulties they may be facing.

Similarly, volunteering in the year prior to the survey also increased the perception of control over one's life, possibly because volunteering is

done at the individual's discretion. Alternatively, it may connect people with others, thereby increasing the size of their social networks. Volunteering was associated with a score of 19.5 on the mastery scale, while those who did not scored 18.4. Even after accounting for all other characteristics in the model, this relationship still held. Again the influence may be reciprocal: individuals who have a heightened sense of personal control may be more outgoing and willing to participate in such groups.

Belonging to a religious organization might provide support and a sense of togetherness; on the other hand, believing in a higher power may encourage some people to feel relieved of some responsibility for their life chances. Religiosity – measured as the frequency of attendance at religious services – tended to reduce the amount of control people felt they had over their lives. For example, respondents who attended religious services every week had an average mastery score of 18.3, while those who rarely or never attended services had a score of 19.0. This relationship between being more religious and feeling less control over one's life remained even after taking the impact of other variables into account.

Summary

Although individuals' sense of mastery is quite high, a number of factors can influence a person's perception of control over their life chances. Generally, economic and emotional well-being contribute to a sense of mastery, perhaps by providing them with necessary resources and with the conviction that they have won their achievements by their own efforts. The results of the statistical model developed for this study show that the characteristics offering the strongest explanation for perceived control over life chances are education, income, age, life satisfaction, health and happiness.

Having a larger social support network, particularly close friends and relatives, also increases an individual's internal sense of life management. But while involvement in external groups or organizations and in volunteering increases a person's sense of control, frequent attendance at religious services does not.

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10. Mirowsky and Ross. 2005.

	β^1		β^1
Demographic characteristics		Occupation	
Age	-0.09*	<i>Management</i>	0.00
Sex		Professional	-0.04*
<i>Male</i>	0.00	Technologists, technicians, and technical operators	-0.03*
Female	-0.02*	Clerical	-0.06*
Region		Sales and services	-0.07*
<i>Quebec</i>	0.00	Trades, transport and equipment operators	-0.08*
Atlantic	0.04*	Primary industries	-0.06*
Ontario	0.08*	Processing, manufacturing, and utilities	-0.07*
Prairies	0.08*	Not in the labour force ²	-0.10*
British Columbia	0.06*	Household income	
Immigrant status		Less than \$20,000	-0.07*
<i>Canadian-born</i>	0.00	\$20,000 to \$29,999	-0.05*
Immigrated before 1990	-0.04*	\$30,000 to \$39,999	-0.05*
Immigrated between 1990 and 2003	-0.10*	\$40,000 to \$49,999	-0.03*
Family characteristics		\$50,000 to \$59,999	-0.02*
Marital status		<i>\$60,000 or more</i>	0.00
<i>Single</i>	0.00	Not stated or don't know	-0.06*
Married	-0.02*	Other characteristics	
Common-law	0.05	Number of groups of which a member	0.05*
Widowed	0.02*	Volunteered in the past year	
Divorced	0.03*	<i>No</i>	0.00
Number of close friends		Yes	0.02*
None	-0.02*	Religious attendance	
1 or 2	-0.03*	<i>Rarely/not at all</i>	0.00
3 to 5	-0.01	Weekly	-0.06*
<i>Six or more</i>	0.00	Occasionally	-0.03*
Number of close relatives		Well-being characteristics	
None	-0.02*	Life satisfaction	0.19*
1 or 2	-0.05*	Health status	
3 to 5	-0.01	<i>Excellent</i>	0.00
<i>Six or more</i>	0.00	Very good	-0.04*
Economic characteristics		Good	-0.06*
Education level		Fair or poor	-0.10*
<i>University degree</i>	0.00	Happiness	
Less than high school	-0.15*	<i>Very happy</i>	0.00
High school	-0.10*	Less than very happy	-0.09*
Some post-secondary	-0.04*	Adjusted R squared	
Diploma or certificate	-0.06*	0.23	

1. Standardized regression coefficients expressed in standard deviation units. This is useful in comparing the relative impact of variables on the mastery score within the model.

2. Represents an "other" category of main activity such as childcare, home-making, illness, etc.

* Statistically significant from benchmark group shown in italics ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

Learning Disabilities and Child Altruism, Anxiety, and Aggression

by Anne Milan, Feng Hou, and Irene Wong

Most children in Canada are physically and emotionally healthy, and the majority of children do not have social and behavioural problems. Yet some children do experience challenges both in the classroom and the wider society. One group of children whose characteristics may affect their behaviour is those who have been identified as learning disabled. They may have difficulties with written or spoken language, comprehension, calculation, or reasoning and often experience academic disadvantages or difficulties with their social relationships.

This paper uses Canadian data from the 2002/03 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) to examine the levels of altruism or prosocial behaviour, anxiety or emotional disorder, and physical aggression or conduct disorder for children aged 8 to 11 with and without learning disabilities, controlling for characteristics of the child, the family and parenting style. Children were identified as having learning disabilities if they were diagnosed as having this long-term condition by a health professional.

GST Definition of Learning Disabilities¹

Partial definition adopted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada on January 30, 2002, and presented on their website «www.ldac-tacc.ca».

“Learning Disabilities” refer to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual deficiency.

Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. These include, but are not limited to: language processing; phonological processing; visual spatial processing; processing speed; memory and attention; and executive functions (e.g., planning and decision-making).

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- oral language (e.g., listening, speaking, understanding);
- reading (e.g., decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension);
- written language (e.g., spelling and written expression); and
- mathematics (e.g., computation, problem solving).

Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction and perspective taking.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. «www.ldac-tacc.ca» Accessed Oct 20, 2005.

How do learning disabilities influence social behaviour

According to the 2002/03 NLSCY, about 4% of 8- to 11-year-olds were identified as being learning disabled in 2002. Existing research findings on the social and behavioural outcomes for children with and without learning disabilities have been varied, and may depend on how particular behavioural outcomes are measured. Some studies have concluded that there are few differences between children with and without learning disabilities on certain social dimensions, for example, in peer acceptance and self-concept¹. Two reviews of recent research literature reported that although children with learning disabilities have a lower self-perception in the academic domain, their overall self-concept is on par with other children.² An earlier study, however, found that children with learning disabilities were less well-liked and less accepted compared to other children.³

Previous research indicated that social cues seem to be important to children with learning disabilities⁴, and social skill deficits may be an important part of having this condition.⁵ Social indicators of children with learning disabilities may include impulsiveness, frustration, poor sportsmanship, and difficulties with creating friendships, accepting changes in routine, interpreting subtle or nonverbal cues, and working with others.⁶ The lack of self-esteem experienced by students with learning disabilities might create feelings of inadequacy or inferiority,⁷ which could be an impediment to establishing social relationships. Consequently, children with learning disabilities might find it difficult to develop an altruistic or compassionate attitude towards others. The results of the present study show that 8- to 11-year-olds with learning disabilities had lower average scores on the altruism/prosocial behaviour scale than did other children. According to the NLSCY, children identified as having learning disabilities scored 12.84

	No learning disabilities	Learning disabilities
Children age 8-11		
Altruism	14.45	12.84*
Anxiety/emotional disorder	2.63	3.89*
Aggression	1.27	2.29*

1. Includes learning disabilities identified in 2000 or 2002
 * Statistically significant at $p < .05$ from children with no learning disabilities
 Source: Statistics Canada, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, PMK Report, 2002/03.

on the altruism/prosocial behaviour scale compared to 14.45 for children without learning disabilities. Once children's age and sex were taken into account in the statistical model, the altruism/prosocial behaviour scores for children with learning disabilities narrowed slightly to 1.51 points below children without learning disabilities (from a gap of 1.61 points).

Anxiety and aggression more common for children with learning disabilities

Children who exhibit emotional problems, depression or anxiety are less likely to develop to their full potential. Research results on the association between learning disabilities and anxiety/emotional disorder have been mixed. Some findings indicate that there is little difference in the depression or anxiety measures for children with and without learning disabilities when rated by children, although a higher level of depression among children with learning disabilities was found when rated by teachers.⁸ Researchers have also documented that children with learning disabilities experience more minor somatic complaints — such as fatigue — than do other children, which can increase anxiety.⁹ Other research found that although there were no consistent differences between children with and without learning disabilities in their non-academic problem solving, the anxiety

of children with learning disabilities increased in testing situations relative to other children.¹⁰

According to the present study, the anxiety/emotional disorder scores of children in the NLSCY was higher for those with learning disabilities, compared to other children (scale scores of 3.89 and 2.63, respectively). The presence of learning disabilities continued to be statistically significant after entering child's age and sex into the model. The results from Model 1 show that the difference between the anxiety/emotional disorder scores of children with and without learning disabilities remained virtually the same (i.e., 1.27 points higher for children with learning disabilities compared to other children).

Related to greater difficulties in the areas of anxiety and altruism, children with learning disabilities may also show more physical aggression or conduct disorder. The frustration that typically accompanies learning disabilities¹¹ may result in aggression if children feel that circumstances are beyond their control. The social skills deficits reported to characterize children with learning disabilities¹² may also be manifested through aggressive behaviour. In fact, patterns similar to the results of anxiety/emotional disorder hold for the findings of aggressive behaviour. That is, children who have learning disabilities have higher scores on the

	Altruism	Anxiety	Aggression
Model 1			
Learning disabilities	-1.51*	1.27*	1.00*
<i>Child characteristics</i>			
Age of child	0.06	-0.04	-0.10*
Female	1.50*	0.00	-0.35*
Intercept	13.12*	3.05*	2.37*
Adjusted R ²	0.05	0.01	0.03
Model 2			
Learning disabilities	-0.69	0.74*	0.60*
<i>Child characteristics</i>			
Age of child	0.08	-0.02	-0.09*
Female	1.32*	0.11	-0.23*
<i>Family characteristics</i>			
Two parent	-0.38	-0.38*	0.11
Low-middle income adequacy	0.01	0.26*	0.26*
Family functioning score	-0.10*	0.02*	0.01
Ineffective parenting	-0.22*	0.22*	0.20*
Intercept	16.00*	0.96*	0.31
Adjusted R ²	0.13	0.14	0.20

1. Includes learning disabilities identified in 2000 or 2002

Unstandardized regression coefficients for altruistic/prosocial behaviour, anxiety/emotional disorder, and physical aggression/conduct disorder of children aged 8-11.

Note: *significant at p < .05

Source: Statistics Canada, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, PMK Report, 2002/03.

the influence of household income on the behavioural and cognitive outcomes of children.¹⁵ Perhaps most significant is the role of parenting practices. A 2005 study found that children whose parents use more punitive measures exhibited higher levels of aggressive behaviour, higher levels of anxiety and lower levels of pro-social behaviour.¹⁶

In the present study, controlling for family characteristics eliminated the statistically significant difference in the level of altruism or prosocial behaviour between children with and without learning disabilities. Once family characteristics were included in the statistical models, the scores on the anxiety/emotional disorder scale continued to be statistically significant, but the scores for children with learning disabilities were only 0.74 points higher than children without learning disabilities (from an original difference of 1.26). Similarly, when family characteristics were introduced in Model 2, the gap in aggression/conduct disorder scores between children who had learning disabilities and other children fell to 0.60 points (compared to a gap of 1.02 without controlling for such factors). Overall, the combined effects of family and child characteristics account for about 41% of the difference in the anxiety/emotional disorder score, as well as the aggression/conduct disorder score, for the children with learning disabilities compared to other children.¹⁷

Family characteristics reduce much of the impact of learning disabilities

According to the NLSCY, children with learning disabilities do experience less altruism, and greater anxiety and aggression, but the strength of the association is rather weak. In other words, children with learning disabilities exhibit only slightly higher behavioural problems than other children. It is clear that although the presence of learning disabilities is associated with behavioural

aggression/conduct disorder scale than do other children – a difference of 1.02 points (scores of 2.29 and 1.27, respectively).

Children’s age and sex may influence their aggressive behaviour, given that recent research found that young girls (aged 5 to 11) showed less physical aggression compared to boys, and decreased with age for girls while remaining constant for boys.¹³ According to the results of the present study, the gap on the aggression/conduct disorder scale for children with and without learning disabilities remained largely

unchanged even after including child’s age and sex in the statistical model (a difference of 1.00 point).

Why family characteristics matter

Family-related characteristics such as growing up in a lone-parent household, or in families with low income or high levels of dysfunction can have a negative effect on child outcomes. Children of lone parents fare less well in their emotional and behavioural outcomes compared to all children.¹⁴ Similarly, previous research found some support for

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) is used to examine the extent to which children with learning disabilities exhibit altruism or prosocial behaviour, anxiety or emotional disorder, and physical aggression or conduct disorder, based on the NLSCY behaviour scales (see "Variable Descriptions" for individual scale items). The NLSCY is a joint project between Human Resources and Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada, and focuses on the characteristics and life experiences of children in Canada as they develop from birth to adulthood. The children are followed longitudinally, with interviews every two years, excluding children living in institutions for six months or more, and those living in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. In the initial cycle (1994/95) information was collected for nearly 23,000 children aged 0 to 11. In addition to a household-based interview with the Person Most Knowledgeable (PMK) about the child (typically the mother), the NLSCY collected information using self-completed questionnaires for 10 and 11-year-olds. In this study, only the PMK assessed information about the children is included in the analyses.

This study uses responses for about 5,000 children aged 8 to 11 in 2002/03. Of this group, about 200, representing 61,000 children, have learning disabilities. Because of the nature of the longitudinal sample, 8 to 11-year-olds in 2002 are children still in the survey and who were originally sampled as 0 to 3-year-olds in 1994. While the longitudinal sample is representative of the 1994 population, it may not be representative of the 2002 population as children may have left the study or the country since 1994, or may have entered Canada as immigrants.

Only those who recently (2000 to 2002) have been diagnosed by a health professional with a long-term learning disability¹ and who still have a learning disability in 2002 are

identified as learning disabled in this article. The models include several control variables such as age and sex, income adequacy in 2002 relative to family size, family type, family functioning, and ineffective parenting.

For the analyses, family functioning and ineffective parenting are scales operationalized at the interval level (see "Variable Descriptions" for scale items). Age of child is measured in years, while the remaining indicators are coded as: sex of child (female, male), income adequacy (low/middle, high), family type (two or one parent), with the last categories serving as the reference groups. Multiple regression is used to relate the independent variables to the child outcomes. The slope estimates or regression coefficients indicate the average change in the dependent variable associated with a unit change in each of the independent variables, when the other independent variables are held constant.² The unstandardized coefficients for each child outcome show the difference in the scale values for children with and without learning disabilities, taking into account the characteristics of the child (Model 1) and both child and family characteristics (Model 2).

Differences between frequent and occasional behaviours (i.e., altruism, anxiety, or aggression) were not distinguished in these analyses. Most children are prosocial, and do not have problem behaviours with aggression or anxiety. Furthermore, even higher levels of aggressive or anxious behaviours for children with learning disabilities compared to other children may still be considered within the normal range.

1. Long-term learning disabilities refer to an actual or expected duration of six months or more.
2. Lewis-Beck, M.S. 1989. *Applied Regression: An Introduction*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

difficulties, there are other factors which are better able to explain the variation in the child outcomes.¹⁸ Throughout the analyses, adding family characteristics to the models reduced the differences between children with and without learning disabilities. For example, children who experienced an ineffective parenting style also had higher levels

of aggression/conduct disorder and anxiety/emotional disorder, and lower altruism/prosocial behaviour scores. An earlier study found that families of children with learning disabilities experienced greater stress but are similar to other families with respect to family cohesion and household rules.¹⁹

Summary

Early life experiences of children can have a significant influence on their development and well-being. The influence of these experiences for children with learning disabilities is found to be similar to other children. Children with learning disabilities did have lower altruism or prosocial behaviour, and higher

levels of anxiety/emotional disorder and aggression/conduct disorder than did other children, however, the differences in the scores between children with and without learning disabilities were not large, and may well be within the normal range of these behaviours. Although children with learning disabilities were slightly more likely to exhibit behavioural problems than other children, including family characteristics in the statistical models reduced much of the impact of learning disabilities. This suggests that the challenges faced by children with learning disabilities may be at least partially offset by a positive and supportive family environment.



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17. This proportion is calculated as [(the difference in the scale scores between children with and without learning disabilities) – (the difference in the coefficients between these groups once child and family characteristics are included in the model)/ (the difference in the scale scores between children with and without learning disabilities)]. For example, the combined effects of child and family characteristics contribute 41% to the difference in the prosocial behaviour scores for children with and without learning disabilities, i.e., (1.26-0.74)/ 1.26=41%.
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Family functioning scale items

The scale includes the following 12 questions, each of which contains four response categories (i.e., 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree). The total score for the additive scale ranges from 0 to 36, a high score indicating the higher levels of dysfunction. Values were recoded in order to have a value of 0 for the lowest score, that is, individual items were recoded from 0 to 3 (rather than the original range of 1 to 4), and reversed where necessary so that higher scores indicated dysfunction. This strategy also applies to the other scales included in the analyses.

- Planning family activities is difficult because we misunderstand each other.
- In times of crisis we can turn to each other for support.
- We cannot talk to each other about sadness we feel.
- Individuals (in the family) are accepted for what they are.
- We avoid discussing our fears or concerns.
- We express feelings to each other.
- There are lots of bad feelings in our family.
- We feel accepted for what we are.
- Making decisions is a problem for our family.
- We are able to make decisions about how to solve problems.
- We don't get along well together.
- We confide in each other.

Ineffective parenting scale items

The scale includes the following seven questions, each of which contains five response categories. The first item has the response categories: never, about once a week or less, a few times a week, once or two times a day, many times each day. The response categories for the other six items are: never, less than half the time, about half the time, more than half the time, all the time. The total score ranges from 0 to 28, a high score indicating the presence of hostile/ineffective interactions.

- How often do you get annoyed with ... for saying or doing something he/she is not supposed to do?
- Of all the times that you talk to ... about his/her behaviour, what proportion is praise?
- Of all the times that you talk to ... about his/her behaviour, what proportion is disapproval?
- How often do you get angry when you punish ...?

- How often do you think that the kind of punishment you give him/her depends on your mood?
- How often do you feel you are having problems managing him/her in general?
- How often do you have to discipline him/her repeatedly for the same thing?

Low to middle income adequacy consists of the following categories

- Household income is less than 40,000 and household size is up to 4 persons; or
- Household income is less than 60,000 and household size is 5 or more persons.
- Respondents who do not fall into these categories were coded as high income adequacy.

Altruism/prosocial behaviour scale items

The scale includes the following ten questions, each of which contains three response categories (i.e., never or not true, sometimes or somewhat true, often or very true). The total score ranges from 0 to 20, a high score indicating the presence of prosocial behaviour.

- Shows sympathy to someone who has made a mistake.
- Will try to help someone who has been hurt.
- Volunteers to help clear up a mess someone else has made.
- If there is a quarrel or dispute will try to stop it.
- Offers to help other children (friend, brother, or sister) who are having difficulty with a task.
- Comforts a child (friend, brother, or sister) who is crying or upset.
- Spontaneously helps to pick up objects which another child has dropped (e.g. pencils, books).
- Will invite bystanders to join in a game.
- Helps other children (friend, brother, or sister) who are feeling sick.
- Helps those who do not do as well as he does.

Anxiety/emotional disorder scale items

The scale includes the following seven questions, each of which contains three response categories (i.e., never or not true, sometimes or somewhat true, often or very true). The total score varies from 0 to 14, a high score indicating the presence of behaviours associated with anxiety and emotional disorder.

GST Variable Descriptions (continued)

- Seems to be unhappy, sad or depressed.
- Is not as happy as other children.
- Is too fearful or anxious.
- Is worried.
- Cries a lot.
- Is nervous, high-strung, or tense.
- Has trouble enjoying self.

Physical aggression/conduct disorder scale items

The scale includes the following six questions, each of which contains three response categories (i.e., never or not true, sometimes or somewhat true, often or very true).

The total score ranges from 0 to 12, a high score indicating behaviour associated with conduct disorders and physical aggression.

- Gets into many fights.
- When somebody accidentally hurts..., ...reacts with anger and fighting.
- Physically attacks people.
- Threatens people.
- Is cruel, bullies or is mean to others.
- Kicks, bites, hits other children.

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- ➔ Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)
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Till death do us part? The risk of first and second marriage dissolution

by Warren Clark and Susan Crompton

Marriage has been on just about everyone's mind for the last few years. While the discussion was sparked by the debate over same-sex marriage, many thoughtful Canadians were led to consider just what marriage means in today's society.

Marriage as we have understood it over the last 50 or 60 years seems to be losing its appeal. Marriage is being "de-institutionalized", in the words of American social researcher Andrew Cherlin, as old social norms crumble and couples must negotiate new, mutually acceptable standards of behaviour.¹

Certainly, there is now less marriage, partly because young adults are delaying marriage and partly because common-law union is increasingly replacing marriage among Canadians of all ages.² Also, there is more divorce; well over one-third of Canadian marriages will end in divorce before the couple celebrates their 30th anniversary.³ Finally, marriage is no longer a prerequisite to childbearing, as more and more children are being born to single mothers or unmarried couples.⁴

Nevertheless, the great majority of people do marry. This article uses the General Social Survey on family history to briefly examine the basic

characteristics of Canadians who have legally married once, twice or more than twice. It then uses a proportional hazard model to identify some of the factors that are associated with ending a first and a second marriage by divorce or separation.

The first marriage

According to the 2001 General Social Survey (GSS), just slightly more than 16.6 million Canadian adults — 80% of the population aged 25 and over — have married at least once.

On average, Canadian adults entered their first marriage when they were about 25 years old (for 89%, their first marriage is their current marriage). The grooms had been about two and a half years older than the brides, at 26.2 and 23.6 years old, respectively. (See Appendix Table 1.)

Most people married another single person, but a few of them (6%) exchanged their first matrimonial vows with someone who had been married before. And although living common-law was not widely acceptable before 1980 (when most of them were courting), about 15% had lived with their spouse before the wedding.

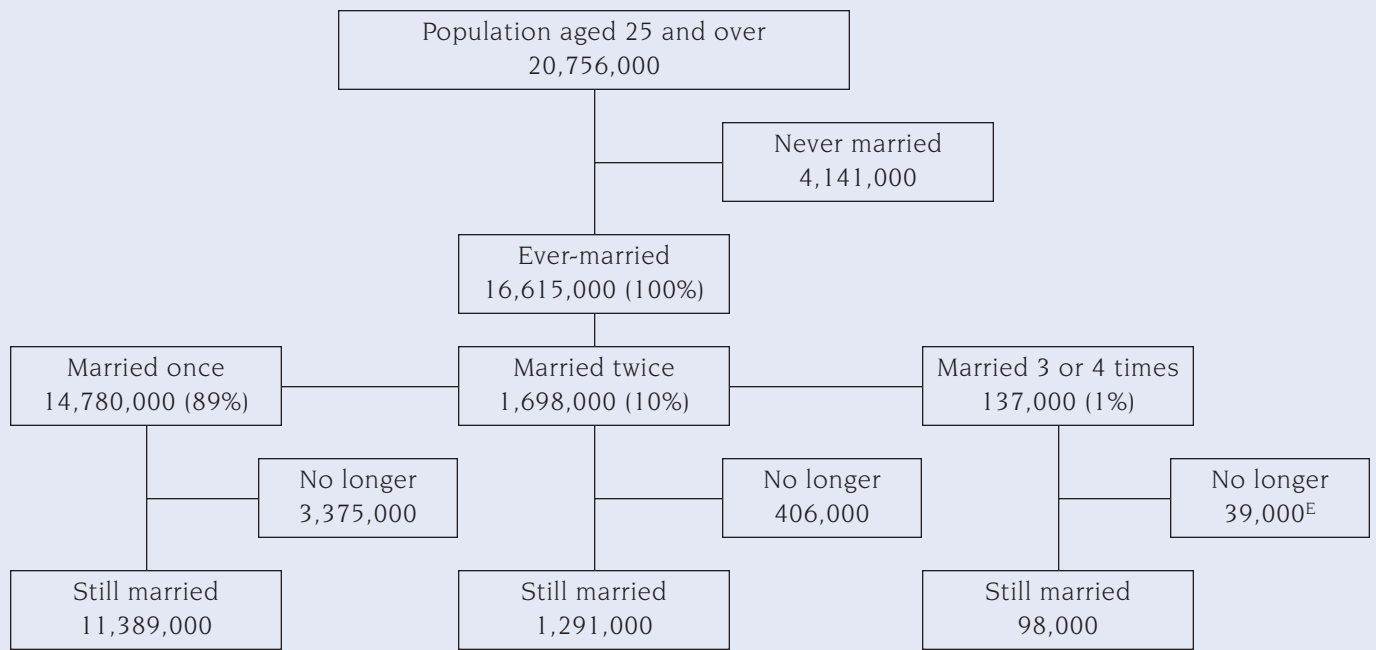
About 9 in 10 ever-married Canadians (88%) have raised at least one

child and at the time of the survey, 60% of them still had children living at home. Having children tends to bring people back into the places of worship they may have neglected in their youth,⁵ and indeed the majority (86%) of ever-marrieds reported that they belonged to a religious faith. Of these, 42% had attended religious services at least once a month in the year preceding the survey. (The corresponding rates for adults who have never married are 77% and 22%, respectively.)

At the time of the GSS, over two-thirds of ever-married people (69%) were still with their first spouse and they had been married for an average of 23.5 years. But for 23%, their first marriage had ended in dissolution following about 11 years of matrimony. (For the remaining 9%, their first marriage had ended in their spouse's death after 34 years together.)

Age at marriage and living common-law are key factors in first marriage failure

The success or failure of a marriage is ultimately decided by the deeply personal dynamics of the couple and their unique situation. However, a hazard model can be used to calculate the relative likelihood



E High sampling variability: use with caution.
 Note: "No longer" includes those separated from their current spouse, divorced and widowed.
 Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001. Unpublished data.

that a person's marriage will end in separation or divorce, given that the individual has certain socio-demographic characteristics. (See "What you should know about this study.")

One of the key factors associated with a first marriage breaking down is a newlywed's age. Someone marrying in their teens faces a risk of marriage dissolution almost two times higher than a person who marries between the ages of 25 and 29. In contrast, people who wait until their mid-30s or later to marry run a risk 43% lower. (The hazard ratio – or risk – is estimated for each variable when all other factors in the model are controlled for. See "What you should know about this study" for the list of variables included.) Age difference between spouses is not a significant risk factor if the husband is more than 5 years older than his wife, but it is 29% higher if he is more than 5 years younger.

People with less than high school education at the time of their first marriage face a 38% greater risk of marital dissolution than those with secondary completion; those with a university degree are at 16% less risk, when all other factors in the model are controlled for. This finding may seem contradictory – presumably people with lower socioeconomic status are least able to afford to leave their marriage – but it supports evidence which suggests that people with higher social status (especially women) are happier and less likely to divorce.⁶

Living common-law is also strongly associated with a first marital breakdown. In fact, the risk is 50% higher among people who lived with their partner before the wedding than among those who did not. This finding is supported by recent Canadian research which clearly shows that marriages preceded by a common-law union are distinctly less

stable than those that began at the altar,⁷ possibly because the tradition of marriage is less important to people who have participated in non-traditional conjugal relationships.⁸

The longer a couple has been married, the greater their chances of staying together. For example, someone who married in the 1960s is at 13% lower predicted risk of first marriage dissolution than someone married in the 1970s; however, the risk is a notable 67% higher for someone married in the 1990s, even when all other factors are accounted for. This difference across the decades probably reflects people's changing expectations of marriage, particularly the shift in emphasis from family-oriented child-rearing to individually-based personal fulfillment.

Having children significantly reduces the predicted risk of first marriage failure: it is 73% lower than that for married partners without children, after controlling for all other

variables in the model. This finding bolsters the fact that, although children can put a strain on the adult relationship, marriage dissolution is actually less likely to occur among couples with than without children, an observation which is true across most societies and cultures.⁹

Religion and mother tongue are linked with staying married

Religious belief can also have a protective effect on first marriage. Although religious affiliation does not seem significant, religious observance is associated with marital durability. People who attend religious services during the year, even if only several times, have between a 10% and 31% lower predicted risk of marital dissolution than those who do not attend at all. (This excludes attending services on special occasions like weddings, christenings and funerals.)

The GSS does not provide information about respondents' cultural heritage. Nevertheless, given that language is a key transmitter of values and norms within a social group, mother tongue can be used as an indirect indicator of the attitudes to which a person was exposed while growing up.

People living outside Quebec, and whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, have a significantly lower risk of first marriage dissolution than the reference group (Anglophones outside Quebec), at almost 26% lower. The large majority of these allophones report that at least one of their parents was born in Asia or Europe, cultures which tend to have traditions that place strong emphasis on the importance of marriage and family.

On the other hand, Francophones in Quebec have even less risk of first marital failure, at 29% lower than Anglophones outside the province. This result is quite puzzling since Quebec posts a divorce rate higher than elsewhere,¹⁰ common-law unions are much more acceptable, and Quebec generally has a more

socially liberal attitude than the rest of the country.¹¹ In fact, being a francophone Quebecer is no longer a significant factor in lowering the risk of first marital dissolution if the attitudinal variables are removed from the hazard model (that is, importance of being in a couple, being married, and having children. Results of model not shown.)

The second marriage

The great 18th century English lexicographer Dr. Samuel Johnson famously remarked that remarrying was "the triumph of hope over experience."¹² But about 43% of Canadian adults whose first marriage had ended in divorce had married again by the time of the GSS,¹³ as had about 16% of those whose first spouse had died.

Canadians who married a second time averaged about 39 years old at the time of the wedding. Over half (55%) exchanged vows with someone who had also been married before, and more than one-third (37%) had already lived common-law with their new spouse.

At the time of the GSS, about 1.3 million of them (71%) were still married to their second spouse of almost 13 years. There are good reasons for believing that these marriages will continue to be successful. American research suggests that remarriages made after age 40 are more stable than first marriages.¹⁴ And the hazard model predicts that, all other factors being controlled for, Canadians who were in their 40s when they remarried face only half as great a risk of marital dissolution as those who were under 30. Even those who remarried in their 30s have a 27% lower risk of breaking up.

The reason dissolution risk falls as age at remarriage rises may be partly due to the partners' increased maturity. An American study reported that the quality of the relationship between the couple is better when both spouses are remarried; they scored higher on measures of intimacy-based reasons for marriage

than other types of couples and lower on external reasons.¹⁵ As for the "psychological baggage" they may bring to their new marriage, evidence suggests that the effect of divorce on general happiness, depression and general health is significant but weak, once the effects of demographic variables are removed.¹⁶

The first failure may help to set the stage for the next one

However, over one in five of Canadians who remarried had left their second spouse within an average of 7.6 years. Why someone's subsequent marriage should end in dissolution is perhaps more puzzling than why their first one did.

Some of the theories social research has presented to explain remarriage failure include: a personal psychology that makes someone more likely to end relationships; learned behaviour, that is, they solved the previous marital problem with divorce; lack of social support for remarriages; and a smaller pool of suitable candidates available for remarriage, which reduces the likelihood of finding a compatible partner.¹⁷

The first two hypotheses suggest that previous conjugal history may help to explain why the subsequent marriage failed. As shown earlier, both first and subsequent marriages contracted at a young age are less likely to succeed, probably because failure tends to repeat itself if a person has not corrected their "marital style". Adults who are twice-divorced were 3 years younger than their still-married counterparts, both the first time they tied the knot (22 versus 25) and the second (about 36 versus almost 40).

Interestingly, though, living common-law – which is much more common among twice- than once-married people and is strongly associated with a first marital breakdown – is not a significant factor in the dissolution of a subsequent marriage, once all other variables are controlled for.

	Risk ratio of marital dissolution			Risk ratio of marital dissolution	
	First marriage	Subsequent marriage		First marriage	Subsequent marriage
Gender					
<i>Men</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>No religion</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>
Woman	0.83*	0.91	Catholic	1.00	1.22
Age at start of marriage					
Less than 20	1.98*	--	Protestant	1.13*	1.22
20 to 24	1.34*	--	Others	1.07	2.35*
25 to 29	1.00	--	Religious attendance		
30 to 34	0.67*	--	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>
35 and over	0.57*	--	Infrequently	0.90*	0.67*
Age at start of marriage					
<i>Less than 30</i>	--	<i>1.00</i>	At least once a month	0.69*	1.04
30 to 39	--	0.73*	Mother tongue and region of current residence		
40 to 49	--	0.50*	Francophones in Quebec	0.71*	1.04
50 and over	--	0.39*	Anglophones in Quebec	1.05	0.87
Age difference between spouses					
Husband 6 or more years older	1.09	0.87	Allophones in Quebec	1.25	0.66
<i>Less than 5 years between spouses</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	Francophones in rest of Canada	1.00	1.83*
Husband 6 or more years younger	1.29*	0.90	<i>Anglophones in rest of Canada</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>
Lived common-law with spouse before marriage					
<i>No</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	Allophones in rest of Canada	0.74*	0.79
Yes	1.50*	1.05	Population of community where respondent lived in 2001		
Decade when marriage started					
Before 1960	0.29*	0.19*	<i>One million or over</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>
1960s	0.87*	1.03	250,000-999,999	1.11*	1.19
1970s	1.00	1.00	10,000-249,999	1.05	1.15
1980s	1.41*	1.43*	Rural And Small Town Canada	0.87*	0.82
1990s or later	1.67*	2.50*	Importance of being married to respondent's happiness		
Educational level at start of marriage					
Less than high school graduation	1.38*	1.34	<i>Very important to my happiness</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>
<i>High school graduation</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	Important	1.38*	1.28
Some postsecondary	1.03	1.28	Not very important	3.08*	2.70*
Trade or vocational diploma	0.33*	0.90	Not at all important	3.96*	4.30*
College certificate or diploma	0.89*	1.34*	Importance of relationship as a couple to respondent's happiness		
University degree or certificate	0.84*	1.18	<i>Very Important to my happiness</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>
Presence of children in the marriage					
<i>No</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	Important	1.20*	1.41*
Yes	0.27*	0.79	Not very important	1.60*	1.54*
Religious affiliation					
Importance of having children to respondent's happiness					
<i>Very important to my happiness</i>					
Important					
Not very important					
Not at all important					
Would you stay in a bad marriage for the sake of your children?					
Yes					
No					

* Significant statistical difference from reference group shown in italics ($p < 0.05$).

Note: Most subsequent marriages are second marriages.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

The importance of social support to the success of remarriage has been acknowledged by a number of researchers. The support received from family and friends plays a significant role in the quality of the marital relationship, especially in couples where both partners are remarried.¹⁸ In contrast, low levels of social support contribute to the psychological distress reported by people who have divorced, especially those who have left a marriage more than once.¹⁹

Being a member of a minority population is associated with subsequent marriage failure

The choice of a second marriage partner has interested sociologists long enough for them to produce two competing theories. The "learning hypothesis" proposes that a person looks for someone similar to themselves after the failure of a marriage to someone dissimilar; in contrast, the "marriage market hypothesis" argues that people end up with a dissimilar partner because of the limited number of candidates available for remarriage.²⁰ Neither hypothesis has trumped the other, and the results of the GSS hazard model are equally inconclusive.

Although higher education is a prime protective factor against first marriage dissolution, it is much less important to subsequent marriage dissolution. This seems to suggest that there may be more educational similarity between partners in second marriages. This interpretation is supported by a Dutch study of recently remarried adults that shows both sexes tend to choose a second partner who is better educated than their first; men especially are more likely to remarry a woman whose education more closely matches their own.²¹

On the other hand, the model's results also seem to speak to the difficulty of finding a compatible partner the second time around if a person belongs to a small population group. Two variables that played no

role in first marriage dissolution are significantly associated with the breakdown of subsequent marriages. First, the risk for a francophone living outside Quebec is 83% higher than that for an Anglophone, when all other factors in the model are controlled for. Second, being a member of a religious faith other than the predominant Catholic or Protestant churches increases the risk by 135%, compared with someone who has no religious affiliation at all.

It has become a truism that stepchildren are a prime contributor to the collapse of second marriages. The appeal of this idea is obvious, and teenagers especially can put any marital bond to the test, but studies are inconclusive: some find that they are a prime factor in remarriage failure²² yet others determine that they contribute to the marital satisfaction of the adults.²³ The GSS model predicts that, when all other variables are controlled for, the presence of children in the household at the time of a subsequent marriage is not associated with marital dissolution.

The hazard model also shows that some factors associated with marital success or failure are simply not within a person's power to control. For example, women have the same risk of subsequent marriage dissolution as men, which is somewhat surprising because they had a significantly lower risk for a first marriage break-up. The answer may lie in women's attitudes to marriage, since a new story appears when attitudinal variables are removed from the model. If the predicted risk is calculated using only socio-demographic variables, women and men in a first marriage have an equal risk of dissolution; but in a subsequent marriage, women face a 30% higher risk than men. (Results of model not shown)

The third marriage

In 2001, according to the GSS, almost 137,500 Canadian adults had been legally married more than twice. They

represented less than 1% of the ever-married population aged 25 and over. Virtually all of them had tied the knot three times.

Apart from their marriage habit, nothing much sets these serially-married Canadians apart, socio-demographically, from other married Canadians. They had entered their third marriage at an average age of almost 46, generally to someone who had also been married before. Over one-third (38%^F) had lived with their third spouse before the ceremony.

And although 71% had recently celebrated their 8th anniversary with their most recent partner, almost one-quarter (23%^F) had left their marriage after less than 4 years of matrimony.

Some researchers believe there is credible evidence that "...multiple marriers are different in personality and behavior (sic) from those who remarry only once."²⁴ A 1990 U.S. study specifically of serial marriers agreed that both men and women married multiple times have higher levels of anxiety than those married only once or twice; multiply-married women also reported more psychological distress than other married women, even after controlling for their divorce history.²⁵

Believing in Marriage produces a stronger marriage

This psychological profile – however brief – may help to shed some light on a rather counterintuitive finding from the GSS. One would expect that people who marry multiple times are keen believers in the value of marriage and family, but the data tell a different story.

Serial marriers are significantly less likely to claim that being married is important or very important to their happiness, at 69% versus 82% of people who married only once (including those divorced or widowed as well as those still married). Of course, deeply held beliefs can be altered by a person's experience, especially a severely negative experience such as the failure of their

GST What you should know about this study

This study is based on the General Social Survey (Cycle 15) on family history, conducted by Statistics Canada during 2001. Almost 25,000 Canadians aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces were asked to provide information about all their marital and common-law unions, on separation, divorce and death of their partners, as well as a wide array of background characteristics.

This article focuses on adults aged 25 and over who have been legally married a minimum of one time, and the likelihood that their marriage will end in divorce or separation. The analysis is based on about 14,550 respondents who have married only once, 1,750 who married twice and 140 who married more than twice. These respondents represent almost 14.8 million, 1.7 million and 137,000 Canadians aged 25 and over respectively.

Ever-married: Adults aged 25 and over who have been legally married at least once, regardless of their marital status (still married, divorced, widowed) at the time of the survey.

Once-, twice- and serially-married: Persons who, as of the time they were surveyed, had legally married once, twice or more than twice, respectively.

Dissolution: The end of marriage due to separation, divorce or annulment. (Widowhood is excluded.) Because this study examines the breakdown of the relationship rather than its legal termination, dissolution is defined to occur at the time of final separation from the spouse; in the small

number of cases where marriage ended with an immediate divorce without a period of legal separation, it is the time at divorce. This category therefore includes respondents who were separated but whose divorce was not yet final; these individuals account for about 30% of all persons in this category.

Risk ratio: The predicted likelihood that an individual's marriage will end in separation or divorce, compared with a reference individual. The ratios were calculated using a proportional hazard model, a statistical technique that estimates the likelihood that an individual will experience an event (in this case, marital dissolution), given a certain set of explanatory variables.

In this study, the explanatory variables are: sex; age at start of marriage; age difference between spouses; whether the couple had lived together before marriage; the decade in which the marriage started; educational level at the time of marriage; whether there were children in the household during the marriage; religious affiliation; religious attendance; mother tongue and region of residence. The model also included variables that measured the respondent's attitudes to marriage, being part of a couple and having children, as well as whether they would stay in an irreparable marriage for the sake of the children (if their children were less than 15 years old).

marriage. But this lack of commitment to the idea of marriage may become a self-fulfilling prophecy, since it is a key factor associated with marital collapse. People who do not believe that marriage is important for them to be happy have a predicted risk of both first and subsequent marriage failure 170% to 330% higher than people who feel it is very important, when all other variables are controlled for.

Similarly, serial marriers are almost twice as likely to say they would not stay in a bad marriage even for the sake of their children (50% compared with 28% of once-marrieds). Of course, this is probably

a very hypothetical question for most once-marrieds, who may overstate their case, while serial marriers might have a more realistic idea of how much they are prepared to tolerate. Nevertheless, compared with those who believe they would stay in an irreparable marriage for the sake of their kids, the predicted risk of a first or second marriage dissolution is 69% to 116% higher for people who are prepared to leave.

Summary

Current events may suggest that the estate of marriage is in disarray. Some people would argue that society's

acceptance of the individual's demand for personal fulfillment has freed irresponsible and hedonistic people to flit from one spouse to another.

However, marriage still seems to possess an aura that elevates it above a simple living arrangement. Most Canadians marry once and only once; less than one percent walk down the aisle more than twice. Married couples generally have "greater commitment and higher relationship quality" than partners in common-law unions,²⁶ which suggests something about the transcendent nature of the marriage bond itself.

The factors associated with the break-up of a first marriage tend to be different than those that are significant risk factors for the dissolution of a subsequent marriage. In general, however, the predicted likelihood that their marriage will succeed is higher for people who marry in their 30s, did not live common-law before the wedding, have children, attend religious services, are university educated, and believe that marriage is important if they are to be happy.



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Current marital status (2001)	Ever-married: At least once			
	Total	<i>Married</i>	Divorced	Widowed
Both sexes (000s)	16,701	12,778	2,416	1,405
Men	7,810	6,466	1,043	300
Women	8,788	6,312	1,372	1,104
Average age at first marriage				
Both sexes	24.8	25.1	24.0	23.8
Men	26.2	26.3	25.5	26.0
Women	23.6	23.8	22.8	23.2
Average age difference between respondent and first spouse				
Both sexes	3.5	3.4	3.8	4.8
Men	3.3	3.2	3.8	3.5
Women	3.7	3.5	3.8	5.2
Average duration of first marriage (years)				
Total	21.7	22.2	12.2	33.9
Still married	23.5	23.5	..	..
To divorce or separation	11.1	8.9	12.1	13.4
To death of spouse	34.2	23.0	16.7	35.7
First spouse's marital status before the marriage (%)				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Widowed	0.6	0.5	F	1.6 ^E *
Divorced	5.5	5.3	7.6*	3.9
Single	93.9*	94.2	92.0*	94.5*
Respondent lived common-law with first spouse before marrying				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	14.9	14.8	22.4*	2.7*
No	83.3*	4.3	29.9*	8.0*
Have never lived common-law	76.8*	80.9	47.7*	89.3*
Reason for end of first marriage				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Still married	68.7*	89.1	..	..
Divorced or separated	22.7*	9.7	99.2*	9.5
Death of spouse	8.6*	1.2	F	90.5*

^E High sampling variability; use with caution.

^F Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

* Statistically significant difference from reference group (currently married) marked in italic ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

Current marital status (2001)	Ever-married: At least twice			
	Total	<i>Married</i>	Divorced	Widowed
Both sexes (000s)	1,834	<i>1,389</i>	299	146
Men	865	<i>722</i>	115	28 ^E
Women	970	<i>667</i>	184	119
Age of respondent at start of second marriage				
Both sexes	38.7	<i>39.1</i>	35.6	41.3
Men	40.6	<i>40.7</i>	38.6	45.2
Women	37.1	<i>37.4</i>	33.7	40.5
Average age difference between respondent and second spouse				
Both sexes	5.9	<i>5.9</i>	5.7	6.0
Men	6.5	<i>5.6</i>	6.5	5.7
Women	5.3	<i>5.2</i>	5.2	6.1
Average duration of second marriage (years)				
Total	12.2	<i>12.5</i>	7.7	18.7
Still married	12.7	<i>12.7</i>	..	..
To divorce or separation	7.6	<i>6.7</i>	7.7	F
To death of spouse	19.3	<i>F</i>	F	20.0
Marital status of second spouse before entering into second marriage (%)				
Total	100.0	<i>100.0</i>	100.0	100.0
Widowed	7.9	<i>7.1</i>	F	22.6 ^{E*}
Divorced	46.6	<i>48.3</i>	45.6	32.7 ^{E*}
Single	45.5	<i>44.6</i>	50.0	44.7
Respondent lived common-law with second spouse before marrying				
Total	100.0	<i>100.0</i>	100.0	100.0
Yes	36.8	<i>38.9</i>	36.1	18.6 ^{E*}
No	8.1*	<i>5.6</i>	20.6*	F
Have never lived common-law	55.1	<i>55.5</i>	43.3	75.1*
Reason for end of second marriage				
Total	100.0	<i>100.0</i>	100.0	100.0
Still married	70.6*	<i>93.0</i>	0.0	0.0
Divorced or separated	21.7*	<i>6.1</i>	98.5*	15.0 ^{E*}
Death of spouse	7.7	<i>F</i>	F	85.0

^E High sampling variability; use with caution.

F Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

* Statistically significant difference from reference group (currently married) marked in italic ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

Current marital status (2001)	Ever-married: At least 3 times	
	Total	Married
Both sexes (000s)	137	98
Men	67	56
Women	70	41 ^E
Age of respondent at start of third marriage		
Both sexes	45.6	46.2
Men	47.5	48.5
Women	43.9	43.2 ^E
Age difference between respondent and third spouse		
Both sexes	7.2	7.4
Men	7.8	8.0
Women	6.5	6.6 ^E
Average duration of third marriage (years)		
Total	7.1	8.1
Still married	8.3	8.3
To divorce or separation	3.7 ^E	..
To death of spouse	F	..
Marital status of third spouse before entering into third marriage (%)		
Total	100.0	100.0
Widowed	F	F
Divorced	54.4	57.8
Single	F	F
Respondent lived common-law with third spouse before marrying		
Total	100.0	100.0
Yes	37.8 ^E	39.5 ^E
No	23.4 ^E	F
Have never lived common-law	38.9 ^E	40.3 ^E
Reason for end of third marriage		
Total	100.0	100.0
Still married	71.1*	100.0
Divorced or separated	22.9 ^E	..
Death of spouse	F	..

^E High sampling variability; use with caution.

F Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

* Statistically significant difference from reference group (currently married) marked in italic ($p < 0.05$).

Note: Divorced and widowed persons are not included due to very small sample size.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.

	Ever-married		
	Once	Twice	Three or four times
(percent distribution downwards)			
For me to be happy, it is ... to have a lasting relationship as a couple			
Very important	72.0	69.1*	57.8*
Important	23.0	22.1	30.6
Not very important	3.5	6.0*	F
Not at all important	1.5	2.8 ^{E*}	F
For me to be happy, it is ... to be married			
Very important	55.6	50.5*	42.2*
Important	26.0	25.7	26.8 ^F
Not very important	12.7	16.3*	22.1 ^{E*}
Not at all important	5.6	7.5*	F
For me to be happy, it is ... to have at least one child			
Very important	60.8	59.4	46.2*
Important	28.2	29.6	33.4
Not very important	7.1	11.0*	F
Not at all important	4.0	6.1*	F
If I had young children under 15 and my marriage was in trouble and the differences with my spouse could not be resolved, I would still stay in the marriage for the sake of the children¹			
Yes	46.7	30.7*	25.7 ^{E*}
No	34.7	57.9*	67.1*
Do not know	18.6	11.4*	F
Religious affiliation			
No religion	13.9	16.5*	23.6 ^{E*}
Catholic	43.6	31.7*	17.2 ^{E*}
Protestant	25.8	36.5*	34.2
Orthodox	1.5	1.3 ^F	F
Jewish	1.0	F	F
Other Eastern religions	4.3	2.0 ^{E*}	F
Other, Do not know	9.8	10.8	22.6 ^{E*}
Religious attendance²			
Weekly	29.5	19.3*	29.8 ^F
Monthly	13.5	11.5	F
Occasionally	22.3	23.2	F
Yearly	8.0	10.0	F
Not at all	26.7	36.0*	39.3*

^E High sampling variability; use with caution.

^F Sample size too small to produce reliable estimate.

1. Asked only of respondents who were still married at the time of the survey.

2. Asked only of those who reported having a religious affiliation.

* Statistically significant difference from reference category (ever-married once) marked in italic ($p < 0.05$).

Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2001.



SOCIAL INDICATORS

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Labour force								
Labour force ('000)	15,316	15,588	15,847	16,110	16,579	16,959	17,182	17,343
Total employed ('000)	14,046	14,407	14,764	14,946	15,310	15,672	15,947	16,170
Men	7,613	7,797	7,974	8,036	8,184	8,348	8,481	8,595
Women	6,433	6,610	6,790	6,910	7,126	7,324	7,466	7,575
Workers employed part-time (%)	18.8	18.4	18.1	18.1	18.8	18.9	18.5	18.3
Men	10.5	10.3	10.3	10.5	11.0	11.1	10.9	10.8
Women	28.6	27.9	27.2	27.0	27.7	27.9	27.2	26.8
Involuntary part-time	27.8	25.5	24.4	24.9	25.5	26.5	26.2	25.0
Looked for full-time work	8.7	7.8	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.9	7.5	6.8
% of women with a child under 6 employed	61.2	62.6	63.2	63.7	64.5	65.1	66.6	67.2
% of workers who were self-employed	17.1	16.9	16.1	15.2	15.1	15.3	15.4	15.5
% of employed usually working over 40 hours per week	17.4	16.8	16.4	15.9	15.2	15.1	15.8	15.9
% of workers employed in temporary/contract positions	9.8	10.0	10.5	10.8	11.0	10.5	10.8	11.1
% of full-time returning students employed in summer	52.2	51.5	54.6	54.2	57.5	57.4	55.8	54.9
% of full-time students employed during the school year ¹	32.9	34.8	37.0	37.0	38.3	39.2	38.8	38.5
Unemployment rate (%)	8.3	7.6	6.8	7.2	7.7	7.6	7.2	6.8
Men aged 15-24	16.6	15.3	13.8	14.5	15.3	15.3	14.9	14.2
25-54	7.2	6.5	5.7	6.3	6.8	6.6	6.1	5.8
Women aged 15-24	13.6	12.7	11.4	11.1	11.7	11.8	11.7	10.6
25-54	6.9	6.3	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.3	5.9	5.7
By education level								
High school or less	11.3	10.3	9.4	9.7	10.3	10.2	9.7	9.1
Postsecondary certificate or diploma	6.5	5.9	5.2	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.6	5.3
University degree	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.6	5.0	5.4	4.9	4.6
Education								
Total enrolment in elementary and secondary schools ('000)	4,924	4,937	4,945	4,934	4,928	4,905	4,840	..
Secondary school diplomas granted ('000)	164.9	166.6	282.8	282.8	290.2	308.7	287.0	..
Postsecondary enrolment ('000)								
Community college, full-time	403.5	408.8	..	..	..	..	..	..
Community college, part-time	91.4	85.4	..	..	..	..	..	..
University, full-time	580.4	593.6	607.3	635.6	675.5	735.6	..	..
University, part-time	246	254.9	243.2	251.1	258.4	254.8	..	..
Educational attainment of 25- to 54-year olds (% distribution)								
Less than high school graduation	17.8	17.1	16.0	14.9	14.3	13.4	12.9	12.2
High school graduation	20.7	20.8	21.1	20.7	20.9	20.1	20.1	20.3
Some postsecondary	8.1	7.9	8.2	7.8	7.7	8.1	8.0	7.0
Postsecondary certificate or diploma	34.0	34.0	33.6	34.9	34.9	35.3	35.8	36.0
University degree	19.5	20.2	21.0	21.7	22.2	23.1	23.3	24.4

1. 15- to 24-year-old students.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey and Centre for Education Statistics.



LESSON PLAN

Suggestions for using *Canadian Social Trends* in the classroom

“Taking charge: Perceptions of control over life chances”

Objectives

- To consider what “mastery” means and how it may differ between individuals.
- To understand why feeling in control of one’s life may influence one’s future.

Curriculum areas: social studies, family studies, communications, life skills

Classroom instructions

1. Read “Taking charge: Perceptions of control over life chances.” Why is mastery important and what contributes to a sense of mastery? In what circumstances do you think that having a lot of control is useful? What do you think may happen to people who don’t believe they can change the important things in their lives?
2. One theme that emerges from this study is “reciprocity,” the idea that a person’s sense of mastery may be created and sustained in a kind of feedback loop. It seems that you need to be successful to feel in control of your life, but you may also need to feel in control of your life to be successful. Do you think this is true? If it is, does this mean that “acting” or “playing a part” is an important element of mastery?
3. The article shows that young people record some of the highest scores on the mastery scale. Yet adolescence is often a time when people feel most vulnerable to the actions and opinions of other people. How would you explain the high sense of mastery expressed by Canadians in their late teens?
4. Canadians born abroad have lower mastery scores than Canadians who were born here. The article suggests that immigrants may feel less in control of their lives because they may have difficulty integrating into the labour market. But other factors may also sap their confidence, such as poor language skills, social isolation or even cultural traditions and expectations. How can recent Canadian immigrants be helped to improve their belief that they control events in their lives?
5. When people are really happy, they may say they feel like “the king of the world.” The article finds that the happier people are, the higher their mastery scores. Make a list of sayings and expressions that people use to describe their feelings, and see how many of them reflect the characteristics associated with a sense of mastery.

Using other resources

See Teacher Resources by Subject at www.statcan.ca/english/edu/teachers.htm

Educators

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