Did Siblings Marry In Birth Order?  
Influences on the hazard of marriage, women and men born in Québec before 1710

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Introduction
This study explores how intersecting family characteristics and events influenced the hazard of marriage for persons born in Québec before 1710. The challenge is to account for the sequencing of multiple conditions, including sex, time period, rank in sibling birth order, urban-rural contrasts, the influence of paternal priorities on children’s timing of marriage and family propensities to marry children earlier or later.

Hypothesis
Paternal authority: Children’s tendency to marry in birth order reflected the authority of their father, who needed time to accumulate and transmit the resources necessary to endow sons with an independent livelihood and girls with a dowry.

Sources and Methods
This research draws upon the Registre de la population du Québec ancien (RPQA), a family reconstitution database based upon parish registers for Québec from 1621 to 1799. The Cox proportional hazards model is used to account for multiple and time-varying influences on the risk of marriage.

\[ h(t|x) = h_0(t) \exp(x\beta) \]

Results and Conclusions
- Age: Both brothers and sisters were more likely to marry if all their younger siblings were still unmarried.
- If one or more younger siblings had already married, it appears that the ego had been “passed over” by potential mates and was less likely to marry.
- The marriage behaviour of older siblings affected sisters but not brothers: sisters’ prospects of marriage were significantly and negatively associated with prior marriages by older sisters.
- Paternal authority hypothesis is proven with qualifications. Siblings generally married in birth order, yet less effort was expended to settle youngest daughters. Was this the preference of daughters or their parents? Counting for persons who never married refines our analysis with respect to gender. Paternal authority was particularly exercised with respect to daughters. Perhaps fathers.

Marriage practices with respect to birth order profoundly gendered.

Gender differences: In fact, Québec men’s survival time to marriage varied little by rank of birth. In contrast, younger sisters consistently took longer to transition to marriage than their older sisters.