From Floating Brothels to Suburban Semi-Respectability: A History of Nonmarital Pregnancy in Australia

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ABSTRACT

The sexual revolution which through the 1950s and 1960s saw nonmarital fertility and marital childbearing following premarital conception rise rapidly in Australia, especially among women in their teens and early twenties, received considerable research attention. Now, in the mid-1990s, childbearing following nonmarital pregnancy has assumed a very different character. The pregnant teenaged bride is almost a thing of the past, and nonmarital births occur mainly at normative reproductive ages within consensual unions. Similar trends have occurred in other developed countries, but Australia boasts a distinctive parallel between this new phase and the earliest years of colonial settlement, when convictism also gave rise to widespread childbearing within consensual unions. This parallel is highlighted in the context of tracing the full and varied history of fertility associated with nonmarital coitus in Australia.

FROM FLOATING BROTHELS TO SUBURBAN SEMI-RESPECTABILITY: A HISTORY OF NONMARITAL PREGNANCY IN AUSTRALIA

Gordon A. Carmichael

Between the late 1960s and the early 1980s, considerable research attention was focused on childbearing resulting from nonmarital pregnancy in Australia (Basavarajappa, 1968; Spencer, 1969; Ruzicka, 1975, 1976, 1977; Reifshauge, 1982). Its stimulus was the development of a sexual revolution which, through the 1950s and 1960s, helped pitch successive youth cohorts into ever earlier marriages and saw nonmarital fertility rates at younger reproductive ages rise rapidly, providing a growing supply of children for adoption. Now, in the mid-1990s, a new phase is well established. Childbirth associated with nonmarital pregnancy is no longer as substantially the unplanned experience of women in their teens and early twenties. More typically it involves consensually partnered women of normative reproductive age, who may well have planned conception. An interest in this new phase provided the initial impetus to write this paper. However, a fascinating parallel between the contemporary situation and the earliest years of European settlement in Australia, when childbearing within consensual unions also was commonplace, has seen it develop into a historical account spanning over 200 years.

The major data sources exploited are annual tabulations of nonmarital confinements yielding live births by age of mother, and of marital first confinements yielding live births by age of mother and duration of marriage in months. These are available for Australia since 1908. Using an approach outlined by Carmichael (1985), nonmarital confinements and confinements within eight months of marriage are lagged back to an age and date at conception basis, whence age-specific rates of nonmarital conception leading to live births (which may be partitioned according to marital status at confinement) can be estimated. Employing principles detailed by Basavarajappa (1968) the data on marital first confinements also yield, in conjunction with marriage registration data, annual age-specific levels of bridal pregnancy.
For the period of European settlement before 1906, reliance must be placed on more limited published birth registration data, on evidence for restricted geographic areas assembled from vital registers by social historians, and on other documentary and secondary sources. The first published data for the nineteenth century Australian Colonies’ separating illegitimate from legitimate births date from 1854 in Victoria, 1857 in New South Wales, 1870 in Queensland, 1881 in South Australia, 1882 in Tasmania (known until 1855 as Van Diemen’s Land), and 1892 in Western Australia. Only New South Wales (from 1869), Western Australia (from 1897), Victoria (in 1886 and 1900) and Tasmania (1903-06) published data permitting estimation of numbers of prematurely conceived marital births. Moreover, defects in the quality of early registration data must be appreciated. Until 1896 in Tasmania and 1906 in South Australia, for example, birth registration procedure did not seek details of the parents’ marriage, predating identification of illegitimate births to consensual unions where the mother had taken the father’s name. The opprobrium nonmarital confinement and illegitimate birth status assigned in the second half of the nineteenth century, coupled with many mothers’ difficult economic circumstances, also created a powerful incentive to either avoid registration (often in association with infanticide, ‘baby farming’ or privately arranged adoption) or take legitimacy.

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1 These Colonies became the present-day States upon federation in 1901.
2 Based on aggregated data for the period 1861-1900 published by Coghlan (1903), estimates were also prepared for the years 1891 and 1892.
3 Data in the 1899 Statistical Register of Victoria pertain to first births in marriages celebrated in 1897; those in the 1900 Register pertain to first births registered in 1900.
4 Date and place of marriage for the mother was first required to be given in Tasmania with the passage of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1895, while in South Australia year of parents’ marriage was required with the passing of the Births, Marriages, and Deaths Registration Amendment Act, 1907.
5 This involved mothers of mostly illegitimate babies paying unlicensed child minders a flat or weekly fee to take their children into care, often on the pretext of adopting them or acting as adoption agents. Flat fee baby farmers in particular would acquire far more children than they could possibly care for properly, the children often dying from neglect if not being murdered.
6 Victoria’s Government Statist noted regularly during the 1870s the likelihood that illegitimate birth status frequency was disguised, and that a rising illegitimacy ratio was due in part to greater vigilance in identifying illegitimate births. Likewise Fahey (1985:147) in his portrait of the Victorian town of Bendigo observes that ‘in 1901, 11 per cent of parents who registered the births of children declared a Victorian place and date of marriage that could not be found by searching through Victoria’s marriage indexes’. Allen (1990:38) is similarly sceptical of the quality of nineteenth century New South Wales data on illegitimacy; unmarried mothers were hardly likely to advertise the baby’s existence by registering its birth if they were making private adoption arrangements.

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THE CONVICT ERA: 1788-1840

Early European colonization of Australia was uniquely inauspicious for family formation. Transported convicts predominated among immigrants from the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 until 1830. During this time over 44,000 reached New South Wales and almost 11,000 Van Diemen’s Land, the ratio of males to females being six to one (Shaw, 1977). In 1828 the first colonial census found 63 per cent of an enumerated population of 36,598 in New South Wales to be convicts or former convicts, while only one person in five lived over 12 years old was female (Santow et al., 1988). The 1830s saw the influx of convicts peak, but also saw free settler arrivals at last outnumber convict arrivals. Transportation to New South Wales (which then included Victoria and Queensland) and Van Diemen’s Land ceased in 1840 and 1852 respectively, although Western Australia, founded as a free settlement in 1829, became a third penal colony during 1850-58, its 9,700 convict settlers boosting the total intake above 160,000. The history of European settlement to 1840 is, however, essentially the history of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land.

A population comprising largely convicts and emancipists from the lowest stratum of British society, and featuring a massive gender imbalance, was never going to exhibit ‘normal’ family formation behaviour. The undersupply of women excluded most men from the process, while among those who did participate consensual partnering and illegitimacy were widespread. The latter scene was set on board the convict ships. The first native-born European Australians were conceived of liaisons between female convicts and ships’ officers and crew, reflecting ‘the almost invariably’ (Hughes, 1987:251) which saw ships carrying these women become ‘floating brothels of varying degrees of degradation’ (Sweeney, 1981:41).

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7 Coghlan (1894:72) indicates that this census omitted the military establishment with a complement of at least 1,400 and failed to count perhaps 2,000 other persons. Santow et al. (1988:41) place the total undercount at more like 6,000.
8 Note that 70 per cent of male and 75 per cent of female convicts transported before 1840 went to New South Wales, and that no female convicts were sent to Van Diemen’s Land until 1820. South Australia, founded in 1836, barely contributed to Australia’s first half century of colonial history, and never received convicts under sentence. Western Australia’s population growth was extremely slow prior to its own convict era (Statham, 1981).
Circumstances aboard the convict ships were but one aspect of what Summers (1975:270) labelled 'enforced whoredom' imposed upon female convicts for at least the first twenty years of European colonization. During this time, she writes,

The best a woman could do was to form an attachment with one man and live with him as his wife and in this way protect herself from the unwelcome attentions of any other man who fancied her. But whether she was concubine to one man or available to all she was still considered a whore.

Summers' further assertion that convict women 'were transported solely to serve as sexual commodities and the British government acted as imperial whoremaster' has been labelled 'clearly insufficient' by Aveling (1992:145). Robinson (1988-89, 1988-90) also roundly rejects as 'distorted ... excuse-explanation' based on uncritical acceptance of contemporary comment the portrayal of convict women by Summers and other feminists as 'victims of victims'. There is no question, however, that convict women frequently exercised circumscribed control over their sexual and reproductive destinies. The only employment widely available to them outside female factories (the first not opened until 1804) was as domestic servants, and duties when assigned as such often extended into their masters' beds (Turner, 1969). Alternatively, especially if assigned to the interior, they became, in the words of the 1837 Mylesworth Report on transportation (cited in Summers, 1975:274), 'object[s] of constant pursuit and solicitation' by unattached males, whence a woman was 'generally obliged to select one as a paramour, to defend her from the importunities of the rest'. Those not in domestic service are described by

* Note, however, that in a review of Robinson's second book Richard Waterhouse claims that her portrayal, based on 'a plethora of examples of women who became entrepreneurs, wives and mothers', paints an overly rosy picture. A more measured portrayal, he claims, is that of Oxley (1988). See Campus Review, 3(48), 1985, p. 15.

† Oxley (1988) asserts that the proportion who had ever practised prostitution before being transported will never be known, rejecting Robinson's (1970) 'one-in-five' estimate as based on reports of grocers and surgeon-superintendents who (p. 86) 'frequently promiscuously with prostitution'.

‡ Alford (1984-85) doubts the assignment of female convicts 'arbitrary and indiscriminate'. Individual selection by those entitled to a servant was peculiar to the assignment of females, and physical appearance was paramount. Hughes (1967:248) observes that 'a female convict soon learned that her best chance of survival in New South Wales was to give herself over to the "protection" of some dominant male.' Henry (1978:257-8) further notes that while reformist goals recommended assignment to 'respectable families' under female supervision, female convicts were most needed by bachelors or by widowers with children, with whom the temptation to cohabit was greatest. Indeed Sweeney (1981:198) claims that prostitution bred suspicion of female convicts among 'respectable families', not least as potential corrupting influences on children. A consequent preference for males only heightened the prominence of questionable motives in recruiting females as servants. Foster (1983:58), however, notes that from the mid-1820s, more attention was paid to 'the moral qualifications of assignees'.

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Alford (1984-77) as having been, especially early on and in Van Diemen's Land, 'woefully neglected', with little provision made for their employment or accommodation. The latter reality forced women to trade sexual favours for a bed, cohabitation with one male the only alternative to outright prostitution. The opening of female factories at Parramatta (near Sydney) then at Hobart Town and Launceston in Van Diemen's Land only partially alleviated the situation. Given restricted external demand for female convict labour, these multi-function institutions prettily were chronically overcrowded, forcing many women to seek lodgings in the towns and again fostering prostitution and cohabitation. Alford (1984-87) concludes:

That prostitution, concubinage and the production of large numbers of illegitimate children was to be the lot of many of the convict women stands as less of an indictment of the women themselves than of the British and colonial authorities for failing to provide reasonable economic options for the women.

In time increasing numbers of convicts completed their sentences or were granted tickets-of-leave (parole) or pardons. Marriage rates, however, remained low and levels of cohabitation and illegitimacy high. Governors from Phillip onward variously made quite strenuous efforts towards, or paid lip service to, the promotion of marriage as allegedly conducive to individual reform and general social order, but to limited avail. Figures compiled from the muster of August 1806 by Anglican chaplain the Reverend Samuel Marsden purported to show that only 27.6 per cent of 1,430 adult women in New South Wales were married, the percentages for 210 free and 1,220 convict women being 84.3 and 17.8 respectively. Of 1,832 children, 55.9 per cent allegedly were legitimate, the figure for the 1,384 children of convict women being 75.1 per cent. Hughes (1987:147) has described this "Female Register" as:

... an inspired piece of creative bigotry ... The only kind of marriage [Marsden] recognized was one performed by a Church of England clergyman - ideally himself. It followed that all Catholic and Jewish women who married within the form of their

* They served variously as gaols, refuges, places of employment, maternity hospitals for women who became pregnant on assignment, pre-schools and orphanages.

† Phillip used rewards to encourage convicts to marry. Some 220 marriages, representing half the female population, occurred between January 1788 and October 1792, but Hughes (1987:248) dismisses this 'matrimonial rush' as 'a scramble for gubernatorial favours'.

‡ Atkinson (1978:108) identifies Governor King (1800-06) as according cohabitation some legitimacy: 'He understood that [it] was regarded on the whole as a dutiful and stable institution, and he was too generous, or too lazy, to want total conformity in such matters.'

§ The table yielding these calculations appears in Robinson (1988-200). Women were deemed 'convicts' if they had arrived as such.
religion were automatically listed as "concubines", as were all common-law wives whose relationship with their men, however durable, went unsanctified by Anglican rite. For present purposes only the former flaw constitutes a real defect. Its severity is unknown, but adjusting Marsden's figures to recognize non-Anglican marriages would not alter the conclusion that, among women who had arrived as convicts, consensual partnering and nonmarital childbearing were common.  

Assuming office in 1810, Governor Macquarie pledged change. In a memorable proclamation advising that "illegal cohabitation ... with any man, confers no valid title upon the woman to [his] goods and effects ... in case he should die intestate", Macquarie vowed "to reprefube and check, so far as lies in [my] power, the scandalous and venereal custom so generally and shamelessly adopted throughout this territory, of persons of different sexes cohabiting and living together unsanctioned by the legal ties of matrimony". He went on to assert his determination "to hold forth every inducement to the formation of lasting and virtuous connexion, and to encourage lawful marriage by every possible means". Although some of his actions probably had the opposite effect, Macquarie from 1810 to 1822 "undoubtedly promoted marriage, particularly among the convict class" (McDonald, 1974: 34). Indeed a successor, Governor Darling, charged that he was too lenient in granting convicts marriage licences, claiming that many marriages intended only to alter civil status had been contracted. But despite Macquarie, by the late 1820s marriage was far from universal among convict and emancipist females. Robson (1970) estimated that just 60 per cent of women transported to New South Wales by 1825 married, many when quite old and after cohabitating and bearing children for lengthy periods (Atkinson, 1985; Robinson, 1988). Even as late as 1841 Governor

Gipps, while noting "rapid improvement in the social and moral condition of the people" as free settlement gathered momentum, still lamented that "amongst the lower orders ... and a large proportion of the emancipated class, libertinism ... of every description exists".

A range of explanations has been advanced for the infrequency of marriage among convict and emancipist females. Some were coarse, and as committed prostitutes and/or alcoholics, individually unattractive as prospective lifetime companions. But beyond this was a corporate image of debasement and promiscuity which owed much to behaviour that, if not totally involuntary, was engaged in as a survival strategy, and to its interpretation from a middle class value perspective. Their distinctive collective image largely disqualified female convicts as marriage partners (though not as sexual partners) of free settlers and, later, native-born males. Yet given that most convict and emancipist women partnered within their own class, the most compelling explanation for the indifference with which legal marriage was regarded is that cohabitation was common among the urban working class in Britain. Sturma (1978) argues that this culture was transported with convicts to New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land. There, combined with local circumstances that enhanced the incentive to cohabit and as an isolated but numerically dominant segment of their class, they appalled their upper middle class colonial masters. But those masters' expectations betrayed an ignorance of working-class habits ... Britain's revulsion was a revulsion with her own image' (Sturma, 1978:10). Their unflattering stereotype of convict women lumped together the consensually partnered and genuine prostitutes, ignoring the reality that cohabiting unions were mostly quite stable, often lifelong, foundations of family life - marriages in all but law.

Other impediments to convict marriage can be subsumed under the 'local circumstances' referred to above. The English Marriage Act assumed to apply in the Australian Colonies until challenged in the late 1820s had no relevance to Scots and Irish convicts. McDonald (1974)

See Historical Records of Australia, I, XXI, p. 510.

See Historical Records of Australia, I, XXXI, p. 510.

Alford (1984:46) notes that some convict women were materially provided for by their de facto husbands, some of whom could not marry because of having legal wives back in Britain.

For a discussion of the development of Australian marriage laws see McDonald (1974), Chapter 2.
reports some marriages by Presbyterian and Catholic clergy and some civil marriages being officially sanctioned, but in general their uncertain legal validity, shortages if not absences of clergy of some persuasions, and convict hatred of the Anglican chaplain Marsden (1978) discouraged formalizing of unions. Inability to pay fees for marriage licences and ceremonies allegedly dissuaded some free settlers and emancipists from marrying, but is unlikely to have had a major impact. A similar conclusion is reached by Alford (1983) with respect to the legal impediment having left a spouse in Britain constituted, although Atkinson (1893) and Robinson (1895) demur. A significant minority of transportees were married, and the issue of legal entitlement to marry generated both a proposal that married women sentenced to transportation automatically be divorced (Cunningham cited in Wilson, 1978:92) and schemes to fabricate a previous spouse’s death. Bigamous marriages are nevertheless claimed to have been common, and condoned by most who cared at all as the lesser of two evils. A final consideration is the penal context of early settlement. The need to obtain permission to marry, a process which became especially complex and off-putting in the late 1820s (Atkinson, 1893); the circumstances under which unions were formed - women perhaps seeking shelter and/or to minimize sexual vulnerability, or being forced into liaisons with free men unwilling and often legally unable to marry them; men seeking to secure any share of a scarce commodity and bringing precarious economic foundations to relationships; both sexes probably often reluctant to close off future options. Each concomitant of convict status was conducive to informal partnering, and to the early establishment of a pattern which, through repetition, acquired persistence.

This applied to Catholic and Presbyterian marriages until 1834, when the Legislative Council gave them the same legal status as Anglican marriages (Atkinson, 1978). Legal provision was not made for civil marriage in New South Wales until 1855 (Mcdonald, 1974).

Marsden arrived in New South Wales in 1794, and while periodically overseas, died there in 1832 (Yanwood, 1797).

Robson (1979) indicates that 17 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females sent to New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land were married, but marital status was unknown for a further 31 and 24 per cent respectively.

Alford (1983) cites Commissioner Bigge’s 1822 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales with respect to bigamy among convicts, and Judge Therry with respect to that among free people. Atkinson (1965:21), however, claims that women married “in the books” - convict indents compiled on arrival - ‘could not normally be married again’, and that “[m]any” created problems for themselves by falsely claiming to be married on advice that married women enjoyed greater freedom, not realizing that what mattered was not marital status per se, but having a husband present.

South Australia excepted, continuing large gender imbalances prevented males from remotely approaching, let alone also surpassing, their counterparts in England and Wales (Carmichael, 1992: Figure 7). Grimbshaw and Fathery (1962), discussing illegitimate births registered in Castlemaine, Victoria in 1861 and 1891, conclude from the frequent coincidence of names of children with those of male ‘friends’ registering babies that “(p. 103) Many of these infants were born into relatively stable de facto unions.” Howe and Swain (1991:10) also note from Victorian birth registers ‘considerable evidence of ongoing de facto relationships across the colony.’

THE LATER NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Atkinson (1893:166) has described the 1830s in New South Wales as ‘a transitional period, full of ambiguity’. Free settlement overtook convict settlement, and 1840, with transportation to New South Wales ceasing, is widely accepted as marking the start of the era in which middle class values rapidly swamped convict class values as the dominant culture in Eastern Australia. Whereas free settlers were 51 per cent of 102,700 immigrant arrivals in the eastern colonies during the 1830s, during the 1840s and 1850s they were 71 and 99 per cent of 114,700 and 533,900 arrivals respectively (Price, 1967). Moreover, from 1836 South Australia developed as a colony founded entirely on free settler immigration.

The profoundly altered moral climate in the second half of the nineteenth century is captured in the following description of the changing circumstances of women in New South Wales:

...from the very earliest days, nasty, brutish and not short enough, when rape precluded any bargaining power, to more settled "Georgian" times when men's needs for "normal comforts" could create a visiting circle restricted to the de facto wives of respectable officials; to the "Victorian", sentimental and censorious, when ... censure was swelt upon females who were deemed unfit for respect. (Aveling, 1978:122)

Aided by the enactment of marriage laws in all colonies in the decade commencing 1836 and by the changed composition of immigration by social class, marriage rapidly became the norm for females. In 1861 34 and 63 per cent of females aged 20-24 and 25-29 in England and Wales had ever married, rising slightly to 35 and 64 per cent by 1871. In the Australian Colonies equivalent figures were 54 and 65 per cent (Victoria in 1861), 65 and 68 per cent (Queensland in 1864), 52 and 81 per cent (South Australia in 1865) and 47 and 70 per cent (New South Wales in 1871). Consensual partnering did not disappear, but the normative resort to it of the convict era did, and illegitimacy, for both mother and child, became heavily stigmatized.
Figure 1 plots illegitimacy ratios for Australian Colonies/States from the mid-1850s until 1910. Nonmarital births were everywhere at all times distinctly in the minority, but their shares of total births increased over time until stabilizing around the turn of the century. Recalling data quality concerns expressed earlier, the extent to which these trends are attributable to variable underregistration of illegitimate births is unknown. Of greater moment, however, is the fact that the illegitimacy ratio does not measure the incidence of nonmarital childbearing among women at risk, and hence is 'very apt to mislead' (Coghlan, 1903: 11). It rises and falls with changes not only in age-specific nonmarital fertility rates, but in marital fertility rates, female ages at marriage and the age structure of females of reproductive age (Carmichael, 1982).

And in this instance rising illegitimacy ratios primarily attest not rising nonmarital fertility, but retreat from the young ages of female marriage that prevailed in mid-century and declining marital fertility, the former trend lengthening the average period of exposure to the risk of giving birth outside marriage.

Several measures of childbearing among unmarried women of reproductive age which support this conclusion are shown in Table 1. Generally the indications are of fairly constant levels until 1891. The low age-standardized nonmarital fertility rate for Victoria in 1857 compared to 1861 likely reflects severe undercounting of illegitimate births in the early years of attempting to identify them; the high 1861 figure is in keeping with the large element of transient, unattached males attracted by the gold rushes. The former phenomenon may also explain an upward trend in Queensland during 1871-76, but Queensland is distinguished mainly by having the highest recorded levels of nonmarital fertility. After the mid-1860s, it and Western Australia, for which data on illegitimacy begin later, were easily the most male-dominated colonies (Carmichael, 1992), and this masculine, pioneering environment was conducive to nonmarital childbearing. South Australia, by contrast, was a more gender-balanced, urban, middle class colony in which the scope and pressures for socially approved sexual expression through marriage made such childbearing less common. The 1890s had no discernible impact

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36 In 1860 there were 150 males per 100 females in Victoria, compared to 131, 124 and 105 in New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia respectively. In 1855 Victoria's sex ratio was 187 males per 100 females.

37 Western Australia is included in this list on the basis of Jones's (1971) l value for 1891 (see Table 1). To obtain this, [illegitimate births for 1889-91 were estimated based on the proportion of all births which were illegitimate 1892-95 (Jones, 1971:334)]

38 Redshaw graphs Princeton l by Colony/State for 1821 and 1933 as well as the years shown in Table 1. Beyond 1911, declines occurred everywhere except in Tasmania, which recorded a slight increase during 1911-21 then a significant fall during 1921-33. In South Australia l fell by more than half during 1911-33, to 0.010.
1890s. These trends were consequences of accompanying trends to later marriage (McDonald, 1974; Carmichael, 1992), for as age at marriage rises so does the period of exposure to the risk of premarital pregnancy, and hence, other things remaining equal, the likelihood of pregnancy occurring to precipitate marriage. Difficult economic conditions such as Melbourne experienced after 1889 also tend to raise levels of premarital conception of first children as, in the absence of pregnancy, marriages are postponed.

Like the illegitimacy ratio, the percentage of marital first births premaritally conceived is, however, a sub-optimal index. The ideal measure of fertility associated with nonmarital coitus allows all such childbearing, whether occurring outside or within marriage, to be related to an unmarried population at risk, and can be partitioned by marital status at confinement. By focusing on conception, at which moment women experiencing nonmarital and premaritally conceived marital births all are unmarried, Carmichael (1985) developed such a measure using the principles of the Lexis diagram. Overall (ages 15-44) and age-specific nonmarital conception rates\(^2\) and component rates associated with marital and nonmarital confinement are plotted for New South Wales between 1891 and 1907 in Figure 2.\(^3\)

Commenting on the period 1891-1911, Refshauge (1982) advanced the 'offset' hypothesis, arguing, largely from New South Wales data, that the incidence of nonmarital pregnancy in Australia changed little, but a significant shift from nonmarital to marital confinement occurred. Nonmarital conception rates for age group 15-44 in Figure 2 suggest that this oversimplifies what happened. While the total rate was similar in 1891 and 1907, it was not constant in between; neither did component rates associated with marital and nonmarital confinement respectively rise and fall in an 'offsetting' fashion throughout the period. Rather there was a concerted decline in the rate of nonmarital conception leading to nonmarital confinement until 1902, the year before the Great Drought broke, accompanied by stability in the rate leading to marital confinement and hence a drop in the total nonmarital conception rate. Then, the rate leading to marital confinement turned upward as that leading to nonmarital confinement stabilized, returning the total rate to its level of the early 1890s.

Elaborating on these trends, rates of nonmarital conception leading to nonmarital confinement fell at all ages during 1891-1902, declines at ages 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39 exceeding 40 per cent. By contrast rates leading to marital confinement rose slowly at ages 15-19, rose then levelled off at ages 20-24,\(^3\) and tended to decline only slightly at older ages. Combined (total) rates remained stable at ages 15-19, rose then declined again at ages 20-24, and fell from 30 to 25, 20 to 19, and 17 to 15 per 1,000 unmarried women at ages 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39. After 1902, rates associated with nonmarital confinement stabilized or recovered marginally at all ages while those associated with marital confinement rose as the economic disincentive to courtship and marriage eased. Over the full period the prevalence of marital confinement increased from 44 per cent in 1891 to 51 per cent in 1902 and 56 per cent in 1907 at ages 15-19; from 48 to 56 to 60 per cent at ages 20-24; from 33 to 44 to 48 per cent at ages 25-29; and from 23 to 30 to 33 per cent at ages 30-34. It was not, however, simply a case of couples more often marrying in response to pregnancy. Initially pregnancies in circumstances in which marriage was unlikely declined and/or became less likely to lead to registration of an illegitimate birth. Later, those in circumstances conducive to marriage increased.

What forces produced these trends, which probably had parallels beyond New South Wales? For the 1890s there are several possibilities. Contraceptive practice may have increased within consensual as well as marital unions (Hicks, 1978): the unmarried may have resorted increasingly to abortion, and to other activities (infanticide, patronizing baby farmers and private adoption) which caused births not to be registered or to be falsely registered as...
for falling nonmarital fertility levels.

Infanticide in late nineteenth and early twentieth century New South Wales and Victoria has been studied by Allen (1982, 1990) and Burton (1986) respectively. They concur that given minimal official surveillance over childbirth, no reliable estimate of its prevalence can be made. Available data derive from legal (including coronial) processes, the only certainty being that they greatly understated the phenomenon's incidence. There were frequent discoveries of infant corpses in public places; Allen (1982) reporting 864 in Sydney between 1861 and 1939 (58 per cent of them from 1881 to 1909) while Burton finds in the Victoria Police Gazette reference to 614 cases between 1865 and 1914 (44 per cent occurring during 1885-94). But how small a tip of how big an iceberg these numbers represent is unknown. Legal proceedings ensued in only a minority of detected cases, and evidenced much sympathy for mothers involved. Allen (1990) describes the reluctance of juries to convict of a capital offence; lenient sentencing on 'concealment of birth' counts (said where evidence would not sustain a murder charge); invariably successful campaigns for clemency for mothers sentenced to death; and the limited effort made by police, familiar with the often pitiful circumstances of working class women, to apprehend those who abandoned babies. How keenly working class women felt the shame at giving birth outside marriage which middle class ideology imposed is unclear (Burton, 1986), but the main motive for maternal infanticide almost certainly was not shame but hardship. Unmarried women dependent on employment were precariously placed. Domestic service was still the main option, and as frequently a live-in proposition exposed them to the risks, first, of seduction if not rape, and then, in the event of pregnancy, of loss of income and shelter, and hence any capacity to support a child.²²

²² Both McDonald (1974) and Carmichael (1998, 1992) have noted that the 1890s depression led to much more permanent postponement of marriage than did its counterpart in the 1930s. This impact was especially strong in Victoria.

²³ See the evidence of Dr Youl in Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1852-20, Volume IV, Number 60, p. 311.

²⁴ Allen (1990:70-71) is acerbic: "Witnesses [to the New South Wales Royal Commission] maintained that married women were the main clientele of abortionists. Doctors argued that working-class husbands were unwilling to [use] available methods of artificial contraception, and for wives, abortion was the first line of defence against unwanted pregnancy." Hicks (1978) notes some disagreement over the incidence of abortion by social class, but concludes (pp. 46-47) that "it may be fair to say that induced miscarriage as a means of family limitation found greatest acceptance among the less well-off."—Finch and Strutton (1988:15) assert and describe in some detail abortion's 'crucial role [in the late 1800s] in the lives of most Australian working class women.'

²⁵ In evidence to the Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth Rate and on the Mortality of Infants in New South Wales inspecto-Général of Police Forsby estimated that one in eight infanticides came to official notice. The basis of this ratio is unclear, but the observation that far more bodies were successfully concealed than were not is probably sound, although Howe and Swain (1991:3) caution that 'stories of stolen numbers of undiscovered corpses [may be] somewhat exaggerated.'

²⁶ Police inaction also reflected the difficulty of securing evidence that would counter defences of 'stillbirth' and 'accidental death', particularly if a body had begun to decompose.

²⁷ In 1891 62, 45, 44 and 32 per cent of employed females aged 5-14, 15-19, 20-24 and 25-44 in New South Wales had 'Domestic' occupations. Within this group, 74, 74, 61 and 38 per cent were classified 'Housemaid, kitchenmaid, general servant'. Similarly in Victoria in 1891 46, 40,
Inability to support a child might also be a stark reality for the unemployed single woman or the deserted intending bride, while for the few married women who killed their babies high parity, overcrowding, and loss of a husband's income seem typically to have been involved.

Besides mothers and midwives acting on their behalf, the other perpetrators of infanticide were the notorious baby farmers. Their seamy activities were facilitated by the smokescreen of horrendous rates of infant mortality among illegitimate children created: "by limited alternative options for unmarried mothers unable, or unwilling, to care for their children;" by a lack of regulation of midwives, quacks, private hospitals and adoptions; by doctors' willingness to attribute deaths to separation from the natural mother rather than to inadequate substitute care; by the capacity of midwives to misrepresent infant deaths as stillbirths (which did not have to be registered and whose burial they could authorize);94 and by the collusion of some undertakers (Allen, 1982, 1990; Burton, 1986, Gilding, 1991). Baby farmers ranged from the ruthless 'fat fee' exploiters responsible for their unflattering collective reputation to those who genuinely tried to provide a service; from trained nurses to poor, unqualified women, often lone mothers eking out a living (Laster, 1985; Burton, 1986). Not all deaths over which they presided were infanticides ('Misguided nursing, neglect and poverty rather than malice were probably the chief causes of the loss of life' (Laster, 1985:150)), but what matters from the perspective of assessing levels of illegitimacy is that, like other victims of infanticide, children born to baby farmers took in, whether they survived or not, seem rarely to have had their births registered.

43 and 42 per cent of employed females in the same age groups had 'Domestic' occupations, with 96, 88, 78 and 58 per cent of domestics by age being 'Domestic or lodging-house servants'. Kingston (1975:29) describes the feudal conditions under which [domestic servants] work, making them often absolutely dependent on their employment.

94 While infant mortality was generally high at this time, Victorian data indicate that illegitimate infants were almost three times as likely to die before their first birthday as legitimate infants were. For example, the Victorian Year-Book, 1908-09 reports (p. 306) infant mortality rates of 202 and 75 per 1,000 live births for the period 1904-08. See also Howe and Swan (1991).

95 Laster (1985:153) writes that the [Victorian] government would not provide realistic alternatives for desperate mothers. It had long resisted demands for the establishment of a foundling home ..., on the grounds that this would encourage immorality. Howe and Swan (1991:5) cite the editor of The Age on the issue: 'The primary effect of non-provision of any kind for the consequences of illicit intercourse is to keep illegitimacy within bounds'.

96 This capacity also enabled midwives to conceal maternal infanticides and to sometimes 'arrange' for babies to be stillborn (Burton, 1986).

The story of infanticide and baby farming is sensational enough to warrant the disregard to briefly tell it, but how does an increase in these activities rate as an explanation for falling nonmarital fertility rates through the 1890s? An unequivocal answer is not possible. Allen (1982, 1990) and Burton (1986) maintain that between the depressions of the 1890s and 1930s infanticide greatly diminished and abortion became overwhelmingly the more usual 'solution' to unwanted pregnancy. But it is doubtful whether the former trend started before the turn of the century. Public disquiet over infanticide (described by Quiggin (1988:110) as "a continuing scandal [from] at least the 1870s") led to Victoria's Infant Life Protection Act of 1890 and New South Wales' Children's Protection Act of 1892. Both Acts, however, aimed only at curbing baby farmers96 and achieved little. Burton (1986:15) describes the former as 'unenthusiastically administered' and 'a well-publicised attempt to appease public wrath'; and Allen (1990:9) writes of the latter that '[l]imitations on its effective operation ... were considerable'. It would be surprising if the hardships depression brought did not boost infanticide and recourse to baby farmers, but it seems doubtful that such trends prevented as many illegitimate births from being registered as did greater use of abortion. As to private adoptions not involving baby farmers, it is easy to imagine that economic adversity saw demand fall, so that fewer misregistrations of illegitimate children as legitimate offspring were possible. Burton (1986:16) writes of a society in which 'the idea that unscrupulous people would kidnap babies for money was far more palatable than the possibility that mothers were killing their infants because they had no money to keep them'.

96 Burton (1986:16) writes of a society in which 'the idea that unscrupulous people would kidnap babies for money was far more palatable than the possibility that mothers were killing their infants because they had no money to keep them.'
adoptive parents may have occurred.

The other mechanism that may have reduced recorded nonmarital childbearing through the 1890s was a lower coital frequency among ‘at risk’ women. In New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland percentages of females aged 25-29 never married rose from 29 to 40, 38 to 51 and 23 to 35 between 1891 and 1901, clear evidence of disincentive to courtship and matrimony. Less social intermingling and significant boosts to risk populations that may have rendered them more conservative (women committed to premarital chastity were best placed to avoid pregnancy and thus to defer marriage) could have tended to reduce nonmarital sexual activity. However, the failure of rates of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement to fall lends this proposition no support. Of greater significance might have been extension of the disincentive to matrimony to the formation of consensual unions, for if these became less common, proportions of unmarried women with marriage-like coital frequencies will have fallen. A minor force for reduced coital activity could have been the virtual cessation of immigration, leading to fewer ‘at risk’ women totally remote from parental oversight.

The obvious explanation for upturns in overall and age-specific rates of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement in New South Wales in the early 1900s (Figure 2) is that improving economic conditions loosened the shackles on courtship. Similar upturns probably occurred elsewhere. In Western Australia, partly, admittedly, due to rapid population growth, the number of premaritally conceived marital first births rose from an annual average 290 during 1897-1901 to 500 in 1906. And even in Victoria, census data point to significant recovery of the marriage market during 1901-11 (Carmichael, 1992), so that the incidence of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement probably rose.

Two other indices pertaining to nonmarital pregnancy in New South Wales between 1891 and 1907 are plotted by age in Figure 3. Bridal pregnancy increased from 35, 20 and 11 per cent among women marrying at ages 16-19, 20-24 and 25-29 in 1891 to 53, 32 and 19 per cent in 1901. Increments occurred mainly early in the 1890s, when the onset of depression caused deferral of marriages in the absence of pregnancy, and after 1902, as the economy improved. They were accompanied by increases in the likelihoods of marital first births at the same ages being premaritally conceived, from 40 to 68, 24 to 40, and 13 to 20 per cent between 1891 and 1907. Again a dual explanation seems warranted. Pressure to delay marriage in the absence of pregnancy later gave way to more precocious behaviour, some possibly designed to counter parental championing of the very late marriage pattern that had become established.

FROM 1908 TO THE EARLY 1990s

Figure 4 shows overall (ages 15-44) and age-specific nonmarital conception rates partitioned by marital status at confinement for all of Australia over the period 1908-92. Figure 5 shows, by age of woman, the changing distributions of nonmarital conceptions leading to live births by marital status at confinement. A glance at Figure 4 suggests that discussion might usefully focus on three sub-periods: that until the outbreak of the Second World War; the wartime and post-war period until 1970; and the period since 1970.

Before the Second World War

In the latter part of the first decade of this century the pattern established for New South Wales during 1902-07 is evident for Australia. Overall and age-specific rates of nonmarital conception leading to live births rose because rates leading to marital confinement rose. The First World War then separated many courting couples, so that rates leading to marital confinement fell sharply. Downturns in rates leading to nonmarital confinement were milder, but because of separations some pregnancies that normally would have led to marriage may instead have led to nonmarital births. Such transfers from marital to nonmarital confinement would have compensated partly for fewer conceptions in less committed relationships.

Following the War, neither the overall nor age-specific ‘total’ rates of nonmarital conception regained their pre-war levels. Declines in rates of nonmarital conception leading to nonmarital confinement that would continue to and through the Great Depression were under way, and while age-specific rates leading to marital confinement briefly almost reached pre-war levels
again, they, too, quickly began to fail. The one exception was the rate at ages 15-19, which recovered more slowly from its wartime trough and turned down again only after 1927. It is possible that the dislocation of war allowed parents to reclaim some lost control over their daughters' early courting activity, and that they only gradually relinquished this again. Between the War and the onset of depression marriage occurred relatively late; on average around ages 24 for females and 27 for males (Carmichael, 1988). Together with declining rates of nonmarital conception leading to nonmarital confinement (for example, from 17.3 per 1,000 in 1908 to 7.8 per 1,000 in 1935 at ages 20-24) and very high bridal pregnancy levels at ages 16-19 and 20-24 (Figure 6), this suggests firm and increasing parental and institutional control over courtship and matrimony. The incidence of pregnancy among brides aged 16-19 and 20-24 until 1930 was far higher than during the sexual revolution of the 1960s, but does not evidence widespread sexual precocity. Rather it attests to pressures that existed to avoid marriage at these ages unless pregnant. With a groom's economic readiness to marry heavily stressed, marriage generally was out of the question for a young woman in her teens and to be contemplated barely more seriously in her early twenties. Hence, 50-60 per cent of brides aged 16-19 and a quarter of those aged 20-24 were pregnant, compared to 40-45 per cent and 15 per cent respectively in the early 1960s.

Also consistent with increasing parental and institutional control over courtship prior to the Second World War are trends evident in Figure 7. This plots percentages of marital first confinements at marriage durations 0-7 months which occurred at durations 0-3, 3-4, 4-5, 6 and 7 months. Spencer (1969) divided premarital pregnancies into 'shotgun' (those resulting in confinement at marriage durations 0-3 months) and 'anticipatory' (those ending at durations 4-7 months). Ruzicka (1977) used the same criteria to distinguish marriages 'forced' and 'advanced' by pregnancy. The theory is that the longer the delay from conception to marriage, the more likely it is that pregnancy was the reason for marriage, time being taken to confirm pregnancy, agree to marry, and arrange the wedding. On the other hand, marriage shortly after conception tends to imply coitus in anticipation of a scheduled event. A standout feature of Figure 7 at ages 16-19 and 20-24 is the declining importance of confinement at marriage durations 0-3 months from 1910 to the end of the Second World War, and the compensating rising importance of confinement at durations 6 and 7 months. This suggests an increasingly committed relational context for premarital pregnancy and, placed alongside falling rates of nonmarital conception leading to nonmarital confinement, reduced opportunity for more casual sexual encounters. Upward trends in percentages of premaritally pregnant 16-19 and 20-24 year-olds confined after 7 months of marriage were interrupted through the late 1920s and the Depression. A more cautious approach to sexual risk-taking immediately before marriage in the wake of a deteriorating economy is implied.

As the Depression passed, long-term declines in rates of nonmarital conception leading to nonmarital confinement bottomed out, and at ages 25-29 and 30-34 rates began to rise again (Figure 4). The depression and immediately following years were the period this century, and perhaps throughout Australia's 200-plus years of European settlement, during which, at ages 15-19 and 20-24, children conceived outside marriage were least likely to also be born outside marriage (Figure 5).

Wartime to 1970

The outbreak of the Second World War brought a rush to the altar, female first marriages leaping from 60,000 in 1939 to 73,000 in 1940 and 80,000 in 1942. Marriages were advanced last war prevent their ever taking place; the thought of a waiting wife appealed to servicemen; and the imminent departure of troops meant that marriage often had minimal immediate economic implications (Carmichael, 1988). Matrimonial momentum was also sustained into the war years by 15,000 marriages of Australian women to visiting American servicemen (Moore, 1981). The brevity of many courtships at this time brought a precipitous decline in the
bridal pregnancy ratio at ages 16-19, and extended declines at older ages that had begun earlier in the post-depression period as deferred marriages took place (Figure 6). Rates of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement fell, as they had during the First World War. But in contrast to 1914-18, overall and most age-specific rates leading to nonmarital confinement rose. To what extent this reflects the failure of couples caught in the counting frenzy to marry before military service separated them, the formation of new relationships after husbands had departed, and the behaviour of predatory GIs is impossible to say. At ages 25-39 a tendency for the marriage scramble to mean that proportionately fewer women at risk were never married and proportionately more were separated or divorced may also have been a factor. The trend was, however, to prove anything but temporary.

The first quarter century post-war was marked by persistent increases in both the overall total rate of nonmarital conception leading to live birth and component rates associated with marital and nonmarital confinement (Figure 4). From 21.8 conceptions per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15-44 in 1945, the former rate rose to 51.6 in 1970. The rate associated with nonmarital confinement was steady at 10.5 per 1,000 during 1945-47, but then increased to 26.8 in 1971. That associated with marital confinement rose sharply from 11.3 to 15.6 between 1945 and 1947 as impediments to 'regularizing' nonmarital pregnancies disappeared (note the black 'humps' associated with the World Wars at ages 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 in Figure 5), then increased steadily to 23.3 in 1960 before slowing to rise further to only 25.4 by 1970.

Age-specific 'total' rates in Figure 4 show that the upward trend in the overall total rate was sustained through the 1960s by the 15-19 age group. At older ages rates rose steeply until about 1960, then leveled off or declined slightly. These steep increases owed much, but not all (Ruzicka, 1975), to the post-war marriage boom. As it reduced the ranks of the never married, by default, populations at risk of nonmarital pregnancy increasingly comprised higher risk separated and divorced women. The lack of further increases through the 1960s attests to the completion of this trend and the 1961 advent of oral contraception, which was far more accessible to older than to teenaged unmarried women. When age-specific 'total' rates in Figure 4 are split into rates associated with marital and nonmarital confinement the trend of persistent 1945-70 increase at ages 15-19 is evident for both components, although for the former it passed after 1960 whereas for the latter it accelerated, with obvious consequences for the proportion of nonmarital pregnancies yielding nonmarital births (Figure 5). At ages 20-24, with some hesitation in the early 1960s, the rate associated with nonmarital confinement also rose throughout 1945-70, but that associated with marital confinement increased only prior to 1960, as did both rates at older ages. The changed composition by marital status of older populations at risk over this period is reflected in Figure 5, especially at ages 25-28 and 30-34, by the higher percentages of conceptions that led to nonmarital births immediately post-war compared to pre-war, and by increases that then occurred in these percentages to 1960.

Over time at these ages, much as with increasing age at a given date, nonmarital pregnancy became ever more the domain of women unable or unwilling to marry.

While not always recording the highest age-specific rates of nonmarital conception between 1945 and 1970, 15-19 and 20-24 are the key age groups in Figure 4 by virtue of accounting for the bulk of women at risk. Trends for these age groups, and especially the younger one, cannot be passed off as statistical artefacts of changing marriage patterns; they evidence real behavioural change, and a substantial loss of parental control over dating and courtship.

Explanations for the post-war marriage and baby booms in Australia have suggested that they were in part a quest for independence by the young, persuaded by depression and second world war that the life course was less predictable than the notion of an economically proper time to marry prevailed, and by their contribution to the war effort that they merited more autonomy. They have also highlighted, as an outgrowth of a craving for 'normality', the familialism of the late 40s and 50s (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977; Caldwell, 1982; Carmichael, 1987, 1988). A desire to assert independence and young women's being urged on all sides to see marriage and a cent and from 12.6 to 6.5 per cent. Formation of a new union frequently accompanies marital breakdown, and legal and/or psychological barriers can inhibit formalizing such unions.
family as their calling in life clearly gave impetus to the rise in nonmarital sexual activity among the young. But also important were full employment, which fostered carefree social behaviour, and increasing access to motor vehicles. Not only were the latter makeshift bedrooms; the mobility they gave permitted courtship in unprecedented privacy, and certainly beyond the capacity of parents to exercise physical oversight. In 1945 there were 8.7 persons per registered motor vehicle in Australia, but by 1960 and 1970 this had fallen to 3.8 and then 2.6 (Office of Road Safety, 1964). Another indicator, specific to relevant age groups, is that road accident death rates rose 3.4 and 2.4 times for males, and 5.1 and 3.4 times for females, aged 15-19 and 20-24 between 1945-47 and 1969-71 (personal communication, Zou Qing Feng).

Figure 8 shows the changing age composition, overall and by marital status at confinement, of women experiencing nonmarital conceptions that led to live births. Three of the graphs show results standardized to the age structure of the female population of reproductive age in 1990. The stereotype of the pregnant unmarried woman as a teenager conforming best with reality during the period under review. In 1965, after standardizing, 15-19 year-olds accounted for 29 per cent of each of total nonmarital conceptions leading to live births and those that led to marital and nonmarital confinement. By 1945 the figure for total conceptions was 37 per cent, having been constant at that level since the mid-1920s, while those for conceptions leading to marital and nonmarital confinement respectively had risen to 44 per cent and remained at 29 per cent (the latter had reached 34 per cent during the Depression). Thereafter teenagers' standardized share of total conceptions rose to 52 per cent in 1971 (the highest actual share was 56 per cent in 1966, when large baby boom cohorts were in their teens), and their shares of conceptions culminating in marital and nonmarital confinement reached 64 per cent and 43 per cent in the same year.

This epidemic of pregnancy among unmarried teenagers, reflecting the collapse of parental control over courtship in a moral climate that (i) precluded adequate sex education and the premeditation required to contracept effectively and (ii) rendered premarital sexual encounters secretive and guilt-ridden, was bound eventually to generate a reaction. It was all the more conspicuous during the 1960s because baby boom cohorts were affected. The fact that as nonmarital conception rates rose at younger reproductive ages the likelihood of being confined nonmaritally also rose (Figure 5) invites two conclusions: intercourse was taking place in less committed contexts, and/or the norm that marriage was the honourable response to unmarried pregnancy began to be queried. There undoubtedly is truth in both propositions.Marketing of the contraceptive pill from 1961 created the illusion that any woman could avoid pregnancy if she had a mind to, and made contraception distinctly a female responsibility. It very likely was a factor in young men becoming both more sexually demanding and more resistant to marriage when 'accidents' occurred. Figure 7 is instructive here. After 1960 the likelihood that a 16-19 or 20-24 year-old pregnant bride would give birth within four months turned sharply upward again, suggesting that proportionately more were pregnant to men they had not predetermined to marry. Also of interest in Figure 7 is the steepening from the early 1960s at ages 16-19 of a decline in the importance of confinement at marriage duration seven months. It became the practice to prescribe the pill from a few weeks prior to marriage, affording unprecedented protection against pregnancy in the shadow of one's wedding day. This decline, and similar ones at ages 20-24 and 25-29, started, however, about 1947, suggesting an early post-war tendency to more adventurous premarital sexuality.

The 1960s were a watershed in Australia, as in other developed countries, witnessing the birth of modern feminism and a generational revolt that opposed the Vietnam War and subjected a range of behavioural norms to critical scrutiny. With a major feminist aim being to open up life options for women through education and pursuit of careers, the frequency with which unintended pregnancy was intervening to severely limit those options at a crucial stage of the life course was of obvious concern. Sex education and modern contraception needed to be made available to all in need of them, and induced abortion had to be readily accessible as a

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44 It has been argued (Bell, 1966, Ruzicka, 1975) that as parents ceased to have at their disposal effective means of social control over their unmarried children's (and especially daughters') sexual behaviour, cloaking such behaviour in shame and guilt was pursued with renewed vigour.
backstop. Meanwhile the young of both sexes were beginning to question whether pregnancy alone was a sufficient basis for marriage, and to reject the secrecy, guilt and risk cloaking nonmarital coitus by cohabiting unmarried (Santow and Bracher, 1994; Carmichael, 1995).

Recent Times

Clearly from Figure 4 something dramatic occurred in the early 1970s to radically reduce, over a very short period of time, childbearing associated with nonmarital sexual activity. From 50.7 conceptions resulting in live births per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15-44 in 1971 the overall total rate of nonmarital conception plummeted to 26.7 in 1976, before rising steadily again to 35.0 in 1992. Both component rates contributed to the decline, but that associated with marital confinement was the major player, falling from 23.8 in 1971 to 9.8 in 1976 compared to a drop from 26.9 to 19.9 in the rate associated with nonmarital confinement. Moreover, the former component rate continued to decline beyond 1976, reaching a mere 4.2 by 1992. The latter, however, turned upward again, surpassing its 1971 peak to reach 30.9 in 1992.

Refining the analysis (Figure 4), all reproductive age groups participated in the sharp decline in the total nonmarital conception rate, rates at ages 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39 then trending decisively upward again while that at ages 20-24 rose more gently and that at ages 15-19 stabilized. Partitioning by marital status at confinement, for conceptions leading to marital confinement age groups 15-19 and 20-24 stand out. Rates for both declined spectacularly after 1971, and have continued to fall into the 1990s. Nowadays, pregnant teenaged brides are almost a thing of the past, the rate of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement at ages 15-19 having dropped from 29.4 per 1,000 unmarried women in 1970 to just 1.9 in 1992. One in five teenaged brides still is pregnant (Figure 6), but whereas in the early 1970s one in three women married as a teenager (Carmichael, 1967, 1968), less than 4 per cent now do so. The decline at ages 20-24 was hardly less impressive, from 32.5 per 1,000 in 1970 to 5.5 per 1,000 in 1992. At ages 25-29 a much gentler downward trend accelerated in the early 70s and then resumed its gentle course, while at older ages there was little change.

With conceptions leading to nonmarital confinement the sharpest trends are evident for age groups 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39 (steep declines to the mid-1970s followed by recoveries to almost early-70s levels by the early 1990s) (Figure 4). Initial declines for age groups 15-19 and 20-24 were more modest, partly because the steep falls in rates of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement undoubtedly entailed some transferring of cases from marital to nonmarital confinement. Any increasing tendency to cohabit rather than marry, or to reject entry into either type of union in response to pregnancy would have had this effect, and young women acquired a new incentive to adopt the latter stance with the mid-1973 introduction of the Supporting Mother’s Benefit (SMB). After the mid-1970s, trend lines at these younger ages also turned upward again, and by 1992 had reached their highest ever levels.

What accounts for the trends just described, which at ages 15-19 and 20-24 have seen nonmarital confinement become ever more dominant, while at older ages that dominance was checked then reassessed (Figure 5)? It is implausible to imagine that nonmarital coital activity suddenly dipped sharply after 1970. There obviously was a major improvement in ability to control fertility in nonmarital relationships, after which the dominant development was the spread of consensual partnering (Carmichael, 1991, 1995; Santow and Bracher, 1994) and its evolution to a lifestyle that has embraced parenthood increasingly openly.

How was improved nonmarital fertility control achieved? In part probably through increased use of modern methods of contraception. The emerging tendency for couples to live together prior to marriage will have given impetus to such a trend. Young unmarried women heeding feminist urgings to avail themselves of reliable means of pregnancy prevention doubtless also played a part. But given the timing and speed of the downturn in nonmarital pregnancies that culminated in live births, it seems clear that the main mechanism of improved control was induced abortion. As concern mounted through the 1960s over the number of unplanned pregnancies occurring in adolescence and early adulthood, Australia’s restrictive abortion laws became targets for criticism, at least among those whose burden was for the effect on young people’s lives rather than for perceived moral decay. Mr Justice Menkness clarified the
conditions under which abortion was legal in Victoria in 1969 and South Australia liberalized its abortion law with effect from early 1970, but the really significant change came with Mr Justice Levine's directions to the jury in R v. Walf et al. in New South Wales late in 1971. Unlike Menenstatt, he explicitly admitted the 'effects of economic or social stresses that may be pertaining at the time' (cited in Treloar, 1982:7) as relevant to establishing danger to a woman's mental health sufficient to justify abortion. He also asserted that a second doctor's opinion was not necessary and that abortions need not take place in public hospitals, giving private practitioners and specialist clinics the green light to provide abortion services (SUPRA Sex Education Committee, 1972; Treloar, 1982). Immediately Sydney became a magnet for women seeking abortion.

Abortion is notifiable only in South Australia and data on its prevalence are limited. Nationally the only data derive from claims under Medicare, the national health insurance scheme, supplemented by statistics from State Health Departments on services provided to public patients in public hospitals. The former do not begin until 1984, whereas South Australian data date from 1970. Table 3 shows for South Australia annual age-specific abortion rates per 1,000 unmarried women based on notified abortions. In 1970 the abortion rate for unmarried 15-19 year-olds was 4.9 per 1,000, this more than doubling to 12.1 in 1971, reaching 17.8 in 1976 and peaking at 21.6 in 1980, since when it has fluctuated in the range 18-20 per 1,000.

At older ages, probably reflecting the capacity of women to act independently of parents, transitions to equilibrium levels of abortion were much more rapid; essentially these levels were reached in 1971. Interpretation of Table 3 is hampered by not knowing to what extent notified abortions displaced clandestine ones. However, if an increase in the abortion rate for unmarried 15-19 year-olds from near zero before 1970 to 8 per 1,000 in 1975 approximates the true scale of change in South Australia, and if it bears some resemblance to the scale of change nationally once abortion virtually on request became available in New South Wales, then clearly abortion was the major factor in the national total rate of nonmarital conception leading to live birth at ages 15-19 falling by 24 per 1,000 between 1971 and 1975. The pattern of increase in abortion levels among older unmarried women in South Australia is more difficult to reconcile with the national pattern of decline in nonmarital conception rates, which was steep, but not a one-year phenomenon. But the national uptake of abortion at these ages may not have occurred quite so overnight, many women needing to travel large distances to obtain terminations and local services taking time to become established.

It is interesting to speculate as to the type of situation involving nonmarital pregnancy on which freer access to abortion had most impact. For reasons already discussed the steepness and magnitude of 1970s declines in rates of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement at ages 15-19 and 20-24, compared to those in rates leading to nonmarital confinement, (Figure 4) could be deceptive. Nonetheless, it is entirely plausible that young women whose pregnancies once would have precipitated marriage were the most likely to seek abortions. Male partners who would have accepted responsibility by marrying may instead have helped arrange abortions. Rising youth unemployment and desires not to disrupt education or be tied down too young or in uncommitted relationships may all have been factors here. Parents who formerly sought to minimize embarrassment by encouraging marriage very likely tried to conceal pregnancies by advocating abortion. And if better educated young women from

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46 The Menenstatt judgement required that a doctor 'honestly believe on reasonable grounds that the abortion is necessary to preserve the woman from serious danger to her life or her physical or mental health [and] is in the circumstances not out of proportion to the danger to be averted' (cited in Treloar, 1982:8). South Australia's law allowed abortion if continuing the pregnancy would involve greater risk to the life or mental or physical health of the woman; and permitted doctors to take into account her 'actual or reasonably foreseeable environment'. However, a second doctor's opinion was needed; abortions were restricted to 'prescribed hospitals'; and a two-month residency requirement virtually eliminated movement interstate for first trimester abortions (Treloar, 1982). Applying to less than 10 per cent of the population, the impact nationally of the legislation was limited.

47 Abortion obtained interstate are excluded. Under-supply of services in the public hospital system allegedly causes some women to travel interstate to avoid delays (Expert Panel of the NHMRC, 1995), while privacy concerns may lead others to choose this option.

48 The nature of the legal change in New South Wales, making abortion available through private practitioners and specialist clinics, may have generated a more spectacular response than the South Australian law change. The main uncertainty with respect to the level of response nationally is how much of a barrier distance from termination services was.

49 By late 1974 legal abortion services existed in Victoria and the Northern Territory in addition to those in South Australia and New South Wales, and services of uncertain legal status were available in Western Australia. Services set up in Queensland were not ruled lawful until 1985, and private clinics did not open in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory until 1991 and 1994 respectively (Ryan and Ripper, 1993; Expert Panel of the NHMRC, 1995).

50 The mean August unemployment rate for males aged 15-19 rose from 2.6 per cent during 1966-70 to 14.4 per cent during 1978-80.
higher status backgrounds formerly tended to opt for marriage when pregnant, these may have been just the types to appreciate the limitations early motherhood would impose on them, to have clear life plans that stood to be disrupted, to have the skills and resources to obtain abortions, and to have parents concerned that they not limit their life options. On the other hand, women who under the old regime would have given birth outside marriage may not only have had less support, personal incentive and capacity to seek terminations; from 1973 the SMB was an inducement to bypass abortion that may often have been attractive. There was, after 1971, a rapid decline in adoptions by non-relatives in Australia, this market having been supplied mainly by unmarried mothers. Non-relative adoptions peaked at almost eight thousand in 1971-72, but by 1976-77 had fallen below three thousand and numbered fewer than 15 hundred in 1981-82. It is unclear, however, to what extent abortion ended pregnancies that would have supplied the adoption market, and to what extent supply fell because, with the SMB available, unmarried mothers elected to retain their babies.

The trend to consensual partnering that underpins resurgent rates of nonmarital conception leading to nonmarital confinement after the mid-1970s (Figure 4) originated in the mid-1960s (Santow and Bracher, 1994; Carmichael, 1995). It seems likely to have been rather tentative at first, involving short periods of cohabitation prior to marriage that essentially extended a childless phase early in marriage that developed after the introduction of oral contraception (Ruzicka and Choi, 1982; Carmichael, 1988). From about the mid-1970s, however, signs emerged that couples increasingly were not bothering to marry to have children, the new culture receiving impetus from higher levels of marital dissolution after the 1976 introduction of 'no-fault' divorce (Carmichael and McDonald, 1988; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995).

Suddenly there were many more people around who were seeking to partner, but were decidedly wary of formal marriage.

Australia's illegitimacy ratio averaged just 4.0 per cent during 1951-55. From the late 1950s it rose steadily, to 8.3 per cent in 1970 and 10.3 per cent in 1977, before increasing more rapidly to 24.9 per cent in 1993. Age-specific trends are also spectacular. From 14.8, 4.3 and 2.9 per cent in 1957, percentages of births to women aged 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 occurring outside marriage rose to 29.8, 7.6 and 3.7 in 1970, 43.3, 10.4 and 4.9 in 1977, and 87.0, 45.0 and 17.8 in 1993. Despite the illegitimacy ratio being a crude index, its upsurge since the mid-1970s, a period of unprecedented capacity to avoid unwanted births, says loudly that concern to marry before having a family has greatly diminished. An indirect indication of increasing prominence of nonmarital fertility by consensually partnered couples is provided by Figure 9. Birth registration law in Australia precludes registration of the father of a nonmarital child except with his written consent. Since 1976 birth registration data have indicated whether paternity of nonmarital births was acknowledged, acknowledgement being deemed a proxy of sorts for birth into a consensual union. Noting that by 1976 the major impact of improved access to abortion already had been felt, marked upward trends in acknowledgement of paternity are evident thereafter; at ages 16-19, 20-24 and 25-29 the rises to 1993 are from 35 to 75 per cent, 48 to 82 per cent, and 62 to 85 per cent. While in part these trends may reflect decisions to cohabit instead of marrying in response to unintended pregnancy, they also suggest that nonmarital fertility has become to a much greater extent planned fertility.

Consistent with this argument, Figure 8 shows a clear redistribution of nonmarital conceptions leading to nonmarital confinement from age group 15-19 to more normative reproductive ages since the early 1970s. These age-standardized data show a decline in the share of 15-19 year-olds from 43 per cent in 1971 to 25 per cent in 1992, offset by increases in the shares of 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34 year-olds from 26 to 32, 16 to 23 and 9 to 13 per cent. An even more spectacular redistribution is evident for nonmarital conceptions leading to marital confinement: from a 52 to a 15 per cent share at ages 15-19, and from 27, 11 and 6 to 34, 28 and 16 per cent shares at the three older ages. Here what is reflected is the combined rejection (through opting instead for sole parenthood or cohabitation) and elimination (through abortion and improved contraception) of pregnancy-induced marriage at young ages, and the consequent increased relative importance of age groups in which the concept of 'shotgun' marriage is less appropriate. Being pregnant at marriage sometimes is a product of a need to legally dissolve

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Adoptions by relatives mostly are adoptions by a natural parent and a stepparent.
a previous union, or of the linking of decisions to formalize a consensual union and to have a child, and these circumstances apply more often beyond the younger reproductive ages.

It is interesting finally to note another feature of Figure 7. The dispersion of trend lines for the four durations of marriage at confinement for pregnant brides was never greater than recently. Confinements after 7 months have been proportionately fewer than ever because modern contraception and cohabitation have delivered hitherto unknown protection against pregnancy close to the wedding day, and because initiation of coitus less often has been delayed until then. By contrast confinement after 4-5 months has emerged as the modal experience, with that after 0-3 months falling in importance after 1975, especially at ages 25-29 and 30-34, after rising quickly over the previous few years. That as abortion rapidly reduced rates of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement proportions of pregnant brides confined within four months of marriage climbed seems to reaffirm that women for whom personal and/or parental values would have favoured marriage before pregnancy became obvious embraced abortion particularly enthusiastically. The timing of the reversal of this trend and its prominence at ages 25-29 and 30-34 suggest a link with 'no fault' divorce. This allowed marriages to be legally dissolved earlier in the lives of subsequent relationships, perhaps reducing instances where pregnancy was well advanced before marriage was possible. But it also undermined other values pertaining to marriage dissolution and repartnering, invigilating a culture in which consensual unions were legitimate and couples who once might have bowed to pressure to 'do the right thing' late in pregnancy no longer felt obliged, or indeed that it was wise, to do so.

As to the position in recent years of marriage duration category 4-5 months in Figure 7, a preeminent middle-of-the-road timing of marriage via a vie conception is indicated, suggesting that marriages of pregnant brides now tend to be considered events, neither hastily arranged immediately pregnancy is confirmed nor grudgingly entered as confinement approaches to satisfy perceived societal mores. With bridal pregnancy nowadays probably often associated with conception within a consensual union, such timing seems consistent with both deliberate dual decisions to have children and to marry (set the wedding date and in the meantime discontinue contraception, or discontinue contraception and set the wedding date once the inevitable happens), and decisions to convert consensual unions to marriages in the wake of less carefully planned conceptions (plan the wedding without undue urgency, but to occur early enough in pregnancy to be enjoyable).

CONCLUSION

In a sense the wheel in Australia has turned full circle. Childbearing outside marriage was common in the earliest decades of European settlement, and much if not most of it took place within consensual unions. Marital childbearing following premarital conception was probably less common; ensuring a child's legitimacy was not a cultural imperative for many, and there were often significant practical obstacles to doing so anyway. In the 1990s there once again is widespread lack of concern that marriage precede parenthood, even if the illegitimacy ratio still is some way from rivalling its likely level during the convict era. Nowadays, however, this behaviour reflects not fundamental cultural and structural impediments to marriage which were simply more severe in Australia than they were in the working class Britain from which convict settlers came. It is the product of deliberate, individualized choice following a period of intense re-evaluation of the middle class, largely religiously founded moral mores that supplanted convict values governing relationships and reproduction after 1840. The same process underlies unprecedented low contemporary rates of nonmarital conception leading to marital confinement among 15-19 and 20-24 year-olds. The capacity for choice has been greatly enhanced by new contraceptive technology, access to abortion, welfare provision for sole mothers, female labour force trends and supportive feminist and individualistic ideologies, and the choices being exercised have roundly rejected marrying because of pregnancy.

In between convictism and the 1990s nonmarital pregnancy was ever present in a much more conservative moral climate. While the stereotype oversimplifies reality (Howe and Swain, 1991), in the late nineteenth century domestic servants, seduced or raped in their employers' households, had to choose between killing their babies, surrendering them to people with
often dubious concern for their welfare, or living in abject poverty in a society which saw any measure to alleviate their suffering as inviting immorality. In the 1920s and 30s the likelihood of giving birth outside marriage was as low as it would ever be and the prospect of nonmarital pregnancy leading to marriage was high because of strong parental and institutional control over courtship. Through the 1950s and 60s the social freedom which economic prosperity, parental desire that they enjoy their youth, personal desire for autonomy and increasing access to motor vehicles afforded placed the young in situations of unprecedented temptation to follow their biological urges in a climate that, quite unrealistically, preached self control as the way to cope with those urges. The story is a colourful one, but one frequently tinged with personal suffering and underachievement, if not tragedy. Its latest chapter offends Judeo-Christian morals, but seeks to lessen the personal negatives by placing greater emphasis on choice and commitment.

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**Table 1: Levels of Nonmarital Childbearing in Australian Colonies/States: Census Years to 1911**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Queensland</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
<th>Tasmania</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
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<td>1857</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
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<td>15.8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>22.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1901</td>
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<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1911</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Nonmarital fertility rates**

1857 11.4  
1861 15.6  
1871 13.4  
1876 23.3  
1881 23.5  
1886 20.1  
1891 21.4  
1901 20.5  
1911 19.6  

---

**Age-standardized nonmarital fertility rates**

1857 11.4  
1861 15.6  
1871 13.4  
1876 23.3  
1881 23.5  
1886 20.1  
1891 21.4  
1901 20.5  
1911 19.6  

---

**Princeton \( I_y \) Indices**

1961 0.41  
1971 0.047 0.035 0.051  
1976 0.056  
1981 0.032 0.058 0.021 0.032  
1986 0.049  
1991 0.033 0.050 0.020 0.033 0.049  
1991 0.034 0.025 0.042 0.019 0.034 0.040  
1991 0.034 0.025 0.039 0.022 0.031 0.034  

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Source: Fertility rates calculated from published vital registration and census data. Princeton \( I_y \) Indices from Jones (1971:327).  
1 No calculations for 1861 possible; table giving marital status by sex and age not published.  
2 Except for South Australia in 1881 (no 1880 data), numerators are averages of nonmarital births for three years centred on the census year.  
3 Indirectly standardized using age-specific nonmarital fertility rates for New South Wales in 1901 as the standard schedule.  
4 These indices express nonmarital fertility as a proportion of biological maximum, as represented by age-specific fertility rates for married Hutterite women during 1920-30. The Hutterites are a small North American Anabaptist sect which, at the time, exercised virtually no control over its fertility.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Date/period</th>
<th>% of marital first births premaritally conceived</th>
<th>Premarital conception assumed if confined at marriage durations</th>
<th>Number of marital first births</th>
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<td>Anderson (unpublished)</td>
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<td>0-7 months</td>
<td>137</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1885-89&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson (1984: 16)</td>
<td>Swan River, Western Australia</td>
<td>1842-49&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>0-7 months</td>
<td>196</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grellier (1981: 485)</td>
<td>York, Western Australia</td>
<td>1850-53&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>0-7 months</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cole (1981: Table 5.9)</td>
<td>Boorah, Queensland</td>
<td>1850-69&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>0-7 months</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>1870-89&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>67</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1890-1913&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24.2</td>
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<td>385</td>
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<td>Grimshaw and Fahey (1982: 92, 103, 105)</td>
<td>Loddon Registration District, Victoria (incorporating the Boroughs of Castlemaine and Chewton plus nearby villages)</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>0-7 months</td>
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<td>1861</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>0-8 months</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grimshaw et al. (1984: 40)</td>
<td>Horsham, Victoria</td>
<td>1864-79</td>
<td>22.5&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0-7 months</td>
<td>240</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1890-94</td>
<td>30.8&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larson (1986: 149-150)</td>
<td>Melbourne suburbs of North</td>
<td>1866-96&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0-7 months</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Melbourne, Hawthorn and Kew</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>1876</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1881</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1886</td>
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<td>1896</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fahey (1965: 148)</td>
<td>Bendigo, Victoria</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>28.4&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0-7 months</td>
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<td>Grimshaw and Fahey (1982: 92, 103, 105)</td>
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<td>0-7 months</td>
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<td>Neele et al. (1981: 98)</td>
<td>Hillgrove, New South Wales</td>
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<td>35.4</td>
<td>0-6 months</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1900-09</td>
<td>40.6</td>
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<td>160</td>
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</table>

<sup>1</sup> Dates identify a marriage cohort. In all other cases the date/period shown is that during which the marital first births in question occurred. For Cole's (1981) study percentages of brides pregnant rather than of marital first births premaritally conceived are given, but calculations seem to include only brides for whom a first birth and its timing were confirmed, and only a minority of brides known to have belonged to relevant marriage cohorts were sufficiently well documented to yield this information. Note also that for Larson's (1986) study the 1866-96 marriage cohort is the sum of the other single-year cohorts at five-yearly intervals.

<sup>2</sup> Although the title of Grimshaw et al's relevant table suggests that this figure relates to marital/first births only, their text indicates that illegitimate first births are included in both the numerator and the denominator of the calculation.

<sup>3</sup> These figures are estimates derived from Fahey's percentages of total/first births which were (i) illegitimate and (ii) marital but premaritally conceived. They were obtained using the expression 100[(i)/(100-(i))].
Table 3: Age-specific Abortion Rates per 1,000 Unmarried Women: South Australia 1970-1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>40-44</th>
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<td>15.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>12.1</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>26.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>14.5</td>
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<td>25.8</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>18.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>17.8</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>1982</td>
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<td>1993</td>
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<td>33.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Committee Appointed to Examine and Report on Abortions Notified in South Australia (unpublished data); Australian Bureau of Statistics - Estimated Resident Population by Sex and Age: States and Territories of Australia (annual data published intermittently), 1966-91 Censuses.

1 Small numbers of abortions for which age and/or marital status not specified distributed pro rata. Estimates of unmarried women at risk by age obtained by applying to official annual mid-year estimates of total females by age proportions unmarried by age obtained by linear interpolation between quinquennial census proportions (except 1952 and 1993, for which 1991 census proportions were assumed).
Figure 5: Percentages of Nonmarital Conceptions Leading to Live Births Which Resulted in Marital and Nonmarital Confinement by Age 1900-1992
Figure 6: Age-specific Bridal Pregnancy Ratios 1905-1992

Figure 7: Percentages of Marital First Confinements at Marriage Durations 0-7 Months Which Occurred at Durations 0-3, 4-5, 6 and 7 Months by Age of Mother 1905-1993
Figure 8: Distributions by Age of Nonmarital Conceptions Leading to Live Births, Marital Live Births, and Nonmarital Live Births 1908-1992

Figure 9: Proportions of Nonmarital Births for Which Details of the Father Were Registered by Age of Mother 1976-1993