

Albert Esteve
Ron J. Lesthaeghe *Editors*

Cohabitation and Marriage in the Americas: Geo-historical Legacies and New Trends



Springer Open

Cohabitation and Marriage in the Americas: Geo-historical Legacies and New Trends

Albert Esteve • Ron J. Lesthaeghe
Editors

Cohabitation and Marriage in the Americas: Geo-historical Legacies and New Trends



Springer Open

Editors

Albert Esteve
Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED)
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)
Bellaterra, Spain

Ron J. Lesthaeghe
Free University of Brussels
and Royal Flemish Academy
of Arts and Sciences of Belgium
Brussels, Belgium

ISBN 978-3-319-31440-2

DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-31442-6

ISBN 978-3-319-31442-6 (eBook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016947044

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and the Author(s) 2016. This book is published open access.

Open Access This book is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this book are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

This work is subject to copyright. All commercial rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG Switzerland

*To Robert McCaa, for his extraordinary
efforts in creating a data utopia for social
scientists in IPUMS-International*

Preface

Fate would have it that I sat next to Prof. Ron J. Lesthaeghe on the plane from New Orleans to New York the day that the 2008 meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA) closed. At that meeting, Ron received the Laureate award of the International Union for the Scientific Study of the Population (IUSSP) from its president, John Cleland, for his influential contributions to demography, amongst which there is the theory of the second demographic transition (SDT). Mine was a more modest contribution to the meeting. I had presented a poster on the marriage implications of the race and gender gaps in educational attainment in six Latin American countries. During the flight, we had a friendly and non-stop conversation mostly centered on non-academic issues. Well into the last stretch of the trip, I invited Ron to a research stay at the Center for Demographic Studies (CED), Barcelona. He accepted my invitation and, 2 years later, Ron came to the CED with the idea to examine the spatial continuities between the first and second demographic transitions in Belgium and Spain. On a Friday afternoon, I invited Ron to my office, and I showed him a series of regional color maps on the percent of partnered women in cohabitation in Latin America over the last four decades. Shades of blue indicated more marriage than cohabitation. Shades of red indicated more cohabitation than marriage. In the course of 40 years, the blue shades faded completely away and Latin America dramatically reddened. The Latin American Cohabitation Boom had emerged.

I still remember Ron's enthusiasm about the cohabitation boom. His first words were 'This is like watching the Mona Lisa for the first time'. It goes without saying that I have nothing to do with Leonardo Da Vinci, but after having co-edited this book and co-authored most of its chapters with him, I can now fully understand his reaction. Our maps were showing the spectacular rise of unmarried cohabitation in Latin America together with a sharp deinstitutionalization of marriage, two of the most salient and expected manifestations of the second demographic transition. I tried to temper Ron's enthusiasm by arguing that there was controversy about the Latin American fit to the SDT framework because, among other things, cohabitation in Latin America had coexisted with marriage since colonial times and it was historically associated with a pattern of disadvantage. At that moment, Ron and I

committed to exploring the social drivers and geography of the trend to more widespread cohabitation and to investigating to what extent economic and ideational factors were the root causes of the rise in cohabitation. We quickly realized that the presence of cohabitation and marriage in the Americas was diverse across social groups and regions and that geo-historical legacies were of paramount importance. Faced with the impossibility of bringing all the elements that emerged during our research in one or several standard journal articles, we decided to edit a book with the title ‘Cohabitation and Marriage in the Americas: Geo-historical Legacies and New Trends’.

In this book, we document the rise of cohabitation (and decline in marriage) in the Americas during the last four decades. We do it by relying on the vast collection of census microdata available for most countries in the region since the 1970s. The very large samples sizes allows for disaggregation of national trends in to far more detailed spatial, ethnic and educational patterns. This enabled us to adopt a geo-historical view of the rise of cohabitation for an entire continent, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. The order of the chapters does not necessarily reflect the order in which they were started and completed. The first two chapters adopt a cross-national perspective. The first one traces the geography of cohabitation and marriage in the Americas across more than 19,000 local units of 39 countries. The second one offers a general overview of the spectacular rise in cohabitation in Latin America over the last four decades and inspects the ethnic, social and educational differentials in cohabitation. From the third to the penultimate chapters, we follow a geographic order. We begin with Canada and continue with the United States, Mexico, Central America, the Andean Region, Brazil and the South Cone. In the last chapter, number 10, we reflect on both the methodological and substantive nature of this book.

All country-specific chapters share several characteristics but they also have their distinctive features. Among the shared characteristics, there is the use of census microdata, the analysis of the social and spatial profiles of cohabiting and married partners and the quest for the historical roots of cohabitation. Among the distinctive features, the Canadian chapter focuses on the differences in cohabitation between Quebec and the rest of Canada. The US chapter examines the social and spatial development of the rise in cohabitation over the last two decades. In the case of Mexico, individual microdata from the 1930 census allow us to better document the phase that preceded the post-1980 cohabitation boom. The chapter on Central America investigates the recent trends in cohabitation in six countries that historically had the highest levels of informal unions in the Americas. In the Andean chapter, we explore in detail the geographic differences within countries and the structuring role of ethnicity, education and religion on the individual and contextual levels of cohabitation. In the Brazilian chapter, we not only document the social and spatial profile of cohabitation but examine the change over time using regression models. Finally, the South Cone chapter combines the analysis of cohabitation with the living arrangements of cohabiting couples.

To make this book possible, many things had to happen before its publication. Hundreds of millions of American citizens had to fill their census questionnaires over the last four decades. Thirty nine statistical offices had to collect, process and

preserve the microdata. The Latin American and Caribbean Center for Demography (CELADE), based in Santiago de Chile, had to organize and maintain an archive of census microdata from most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Integrated Public Use of Microdata international series project (IPUMS-I) had to be funded to preserve, harmonize and disseminate census microdata to the scientific community from all over the world, currently including 23 countries in the Americas. Today, IPUMS-I provides access to the census microdata of over 80 countries, with the number of contributing countries continuing to grow. Our work, as well as that of countless others, would not have been possible without this invaluable resource. Therefore, the authors of this book express their gratitude to all persons and institutions involved in gathering these extraordinary microdata. We especially thank our colleagues in CELADE for providing access to the database needed for documenting the geography of cohabitation. Also special thanks to our colleagues of the Minnesota Population Center for building IPUMS-I, and among them, Steve Ruggles, Robert McCaa and Matt Sobek, who deeply inspired my (Albert) passion for international census microdata.

The European Research Council has provided most of the funding to the researchers that worked on this project, in particular those affiliated to the Center for Demographic Studies (Barcelona). The main funding came through a Starting Grant project granted to Albert Esteve with the title ‘Towards a Unified Analysis of World Population: Family Patterns in a Multilevel Perspective’. The book also benefited from the contribution of distinguished scholars with expertise on marriage and cohabitation in the Americas, whose names appear on the chapters. In the final preparation of the manuscript, the professionalism and efficiency of Teresa Antònia Cusidó was fundamental in ensuring editorial consistency and quality. All figures and graphs were carefully crafted by Anna Turu.

In sum, we are proud to present a comprehensive study of a remarkable phase in the demographic history of the Americas, i.e. the universal rise of cohabitation to unprecedented levels in all strata of the population.

Bellaterra, Spain
Brussels, Belgium

Albert Esteve
Ron J. Lesthaeghe

Contents

1	A Geography of Cohabitation in the Americas, 1970–2010	1
	Albert Esteve, Antonio López-Gay, Julián López-Colás, Iñaki Permanyer, Sheela Kennedy, Benoît Laplante, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Anna Turu, and Teresa Antònia Cusidó	
2	The Rise of Cohabitation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1970–2011.....	25
	Albert Esteve, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Antonio López-Gay, and Joan García-Román	
3	Cohabitation and Marriage in Canada. The Geography, Law and Politics of Competing Views on Gender Equality	59
	Benoît Laplante and Ana Laura Fostik	
4	The Social Geography of Unmarried Cohabitation in the USA, 2007–2011	101
	Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Julián López-Colás, and Lisa Neidert	
5	The Expansion of Cohabitation in Mexico, 1930–2010: The Revenge of History?	133
	Albert Esteve, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Julieta Quilodrán, Antonio López-Gay, and Julián López-Colás	
6	Consensual Unions in Central America: Historical Continuities and New Emerging Patterns.....	157
	Teresa Castro-Martín and Antía Domínguez-Rodríguez	
7	The Boom of Cohabitation in Colombia and in the Andean Region: Social and Spatial Patterns	187
	Albert Esteve, A. Carolina Saavedra, Julián López-Colás, Antonio López-Gay, and Ron J. Lesthaeghe	

- 8 Cohabitation in Brazil: Historical Legacy and Recent Evolution** 217
Albert Esteve, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Julián López-Colás,
Antonio López-Gay, and Maira Covre-Sussai
- 9 The Rise of Cohabitation in the Southern Cone** 247
Georgina Binstock, Wanda Cabella, Viviana Salinas,
and Julián López-Colás
- 10 Cohabitation: The Pan-America View** 269
Ron J. Lesthaeghe and Albert Esteve

Contributors

Georgina Binstock CONICET-Centro de Estudios de Población (CENEP), Buenos Aires, Argentina

Wanda Cabella Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay

Teresa Castro-Martín Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), Madrid, Spain

Maira Covre-Sussai Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Teresa Antònia Cusidó Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

Antía Domínguez-Rodríguez Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

Albert Esteve Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

Ana Laura Fostik Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS), Université du Québec, Montréal, QC, Canada

Joan García-Román Minnesota Population Center (MPC), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA

Sheela Kennedy Minnesota Population Center (MPC), University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN, USA

Benoît Laplante Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS), Université du Québec, Montréal, QC, Canada

Ron J. Lesthaeghe Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium

Julián López-Colás Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

Antonio López-Gay Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

Lisa Neidert Population Studies Center (PSC), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

Iñaki Permanyer Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

Julieta Quilodrán El Colegio de México, Mexico City, Mexico

A. Carolina Saavedra Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

Viviana Salinas Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Anna Turu Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Bellaterra, Spain

List of Figures

Fig. 1.1	Patterns in the increase in the percent of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 in regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, various census rounds, 1970–2010	13
Fig. 1.2	Regional distributions of the proportions of consensual unions among all 25–29-year-old women in a union by country, based on census data from the 2000 and 2010 census rounds	18
Fig. 1.3	Share of consensual unions by municipality's altitude (in meters) among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on the 2000 census round for the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela)	21
Fig. 2.1	Age distributions of the share of cohabitation for all women in a union and corresponding cohort profiles (C.). Brazil and Mexico, 1960–2010	36
Fig. 2.2	Share of cohabitation among all unions of women 25–29 by level of completed education, country and census round	38
Fig. 3.1	Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 15–49 living in a marital union.....	69
Fig. 3.2a	Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 20–24 living in a marital union by level of education.....	70
Fig. 3.2b	Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 25–29 living in a marital union by level of education.....	71
Fig. 3.2c	Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 30–34 living in a marital union by level of education	72

Fig. 3.2d	Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 35–39 living in a marital union by level of education	73
Fig. 3.2e	Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 40–44 living in a marital union by level of education	74
Fig. 3.2f	Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 45–49 living in a marital union by level of education	75
Fig. 3.3	Median market income according to age and sex, men and women aged 20–24 and 25–34. Canada, 1976–2011 (Thousands of Canadian 2011 constant dollars).....	76
Fig. 4.1	Percent cohabiting among women in a union, 2007–2011, ages 20–49, by education.....	107
Fig. 5.1	Percent partnered Mexican women currently cohabiting by age and in the censuses from 1930 to 2010	137
Fig. 5.2	Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union, Mexican states 1930–2010.....	140
Fig. 5.3	Percent cohabiting among partnered women 25–29 by level of education, Mexico 1960–2010.....	144
Fig. 5.4	Share of cohabitation among partnered women by birth cohort and level of education, Mexico	145
Fig. 5.5	Estimated odds ratios of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29 according to the individual (Y) and the contextual levels (X) of education combined, Mexico 2000 and 2010 (university completed and Q1: OR = 1).....	152
Fig. 6.1	Percent distribution of women aged 25–29 by conjugal status.....	164
Fig. 6.2	Trends in the percentage of consensual unions among total unions. 1960–2011. Women 15–49.....	168
Fig. 6.3	Trends in the percentage of consensual unions among total unions. 1960–2011. Women 25–29.....	169
Fig. 6.4	Percent cohabiting among partnered women by age group and year	171
Fig. 6.5	Percent cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by completed educational level and year	174
Fig. 7.1	Percentage of partnered Colombian women currently cohabiting by age and selected birth cohorts in the censuses from 1973 to 2005.....	191
Fig. 7.2	Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by years of schooling. Colombia, 1973–2005	193
Fig. 7.3	Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by ethnic background. Colombia, 2005	194

Fig. 8.1	Plot of the meso-region effects of the model with all individual-level variables against those of the “empty” model 1.....	231
Fig. 8.2	Percent cohabiting among partnered women 25–29 by education, Brazil 1970–2010	235
Fig. 8.3	Birth-cohort profiles of the share of cohabitation among partnered women up till age 50 by level of education. Brazilian cohorts born between 1910 and 1995.....	236
Fig. 8.4	Increase in the percentages cohabiting among all partnered women 25–29 in Brazilian meso-regions: 1980 (<i>bottom</i>), 1990, 2000 and 2010 (<i>top</i>)	237
Fig. 9.1	Proportion of women aged 20–29 years in a conjugal union, 1970–2010.....	254
Fig. 9.2	Proportion of women aged 20–29 years in a conjugal union by education, 1970–2010	255
Fig. 9.3	Share of cohabitation as a proportion of women who are in a conjugal union.....	256
Fig. 9.4	Share of cohabitation by education, aged 20–29 years, 1970–2010	258
Fig. 10.1	Percentages of population 18+ of the opinion that homosexuality is never justified, by education and period	282
Fig. 10.2	Percentages of population 18+ of the opinion that euthanasia is never justified, by education and period.....	282

List of Maps

Map 1.1	Share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on census data from the 2000 census.....	9
Map 1.2	Share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on census data from the 2010 census.....	10
Map 1.3	Evolution of the regional share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on 1970–2010 census data	16
Map 1.4	Evolution of the regional share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on 1970–2010 census data. Cartogram Map (administrative units are weighted by population in 2000)	17
Map 1.5	Standard deviations (z-scores) from each country's mean of the rate of cohabitation among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union. Based on census data from the last census available for Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.....	20
Map 4.1	Share of cohabitation for all women 25–29 in a union, 2000–2011, by state. Cartogram 2007–2011	110
Map 4.2	Share of cohabitation among women 25–29 in a union, 2007–2011, by state and race	111
Map 4.3	Share of cohabitation among women 25–29 in a union, 2007–2011, by state and education.....	113
Map 4.4	Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA).....	114
Map 4.5	Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, along the Northern Atlantic conurbation by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA)	116
Map 4.6	Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, in the larger New York area by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA)	117

Map 4.7	Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, in the greater Los Angeles area by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA).....	117
Map 4.8	Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, along Lake Michigan by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA).....	118
Map 5.1	The share of cohabitation in all unions of women 25–29 in Mexican states, 1930–2010	141
Map 5.2	Percent currently cohabiting women among all partnered women 25–29, Mexican municipalities, 1990, 2000 and 2010	147
Map 6.1	Share of consensual unions among women 25–29 in union by municipalities. 2000 Census round.....	165
Map 7.1	Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by Colombian municipalities. 1973–1985.....	196
Map 7.2	LISA cluster maps of unmarried cohabitation in Colombia, 1973–2005.....	198
Map 7.3	Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29. Bolivia, 2001; Ecuador, 2010; and Peru, 2007	205
Map 8.1	Proportions cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union; Brazilian meso-regions 2000	224
Map 8.2	Proportions in various religious groups, women 25–29; Brazilian meso-regions 2000	225
Map 8.3	Proportions in various racial categories, women 25–29; Brazilian meso-regions 2000	227
Map 8.4	Proportions in three education categories, women 25–29; Brazilian meso-regions, 2000	228
Map 8.5	The four types of meso-regions distinguished according to their relative risk of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29, 2000 regions.....	234
Map 8.6	Percent cohabiting among all partnered women 25–29 in Brazilian municipalities, 2000 and 2010	238

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Summary of the census data, boundary files and geographic details used to analyze the prevalence of consensual unions in the Americas in the 2000 and 2010 census rounds.....	5
Table 1.2	Changes in the percent of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 in the 25 regions with the lowest and the highest initial levels of cohabitation in 1970	15
Table 2.1	Distribution of 51 ethnic populations according to selected characteristics of their marriages and sexual unions	28
Table 2.2	Percent cohabiting among all persons in a union (married+cohabiting), 25–34, by sex and census round, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1970–2010.....	34
Table 2.3	Percentages of women 25–29 with completed primary and completed secondary education by country and census round.....	40
Table 2.4	Attitudinal changes in ethical issues in three Latin American countries, by age and sex, 1990–2006	45
Table 2.5	Attitudinal changes regarding religion and secularization in three Latin American countries, by age and sex, 1990–2006	47
Table 2.6	Attitudinal changes in issues regarding family and gender in three Latin American countries, by age and sex, 1990–2006	48
Table 2.7	Percentage of women 25–29 living in extended/composite households by type of union, Latin American Countries, latest available census data	50
Table 2.8	Sample characteristics, numbers of cases and numbers of regions within the 24 Latin American countries	53
Table 3.1	Percent of Canadian women cohabiting among women aged 15–49 living in a marital union by province and census year.....	60

Table 3.2	Estimated odds ratios from a logistic regression model of living in consensual union among women aged 15–49 in marital union by age, social and economic characteristics, Canadian provinces and territories in 2006	80
Table 3.3	Predicted probabilities of living in a consensual union among women aged 15–49 in marital union (estimated from the logistic regression model specified in Table 3.2), Canadian provinces and territories in 2006	83
Table 3.4	Estimated odds ratios from a logistic regression model of living in consensual union among women and men aged 20–49 in marital union by age, social and economic characteristics, Canadian selected provinces in 2012	85
Table 3.5	Number of Canadian men and women aged 15–49 living in a marital union according to level of autonomy by sociolinguistic group and sex	92
Table 3.6	Percent distribution of autonomy index among Canadian men and women aged 15–49 living in a marital union according by sociolinguistic group and sex	92
Table 3.7	Percent of people living in consensual union rather than being married among Canadian men and women aged 15–49 living in a marital union according to level of autonomy by sociolinguistic group and sex	92
Table 3.8	Estimated odds ratios from a logistic model of living in consensual union among women and men aged 15–49 in marital union by age, presence of children and economic characteristics, English Canada and French Quebec	93
Table 4.1	Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in union, 1990–2011, by race and education	106
Table 4.2	Percent cohabiting among women in union, 2007–2011, by education and 5-year age groups	106
Table 4.3	Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in union, 2007–2011, by race/ethnicity	108
Table 4.4	Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression of unmarried cohabitation by individual and contextual level variables, women 25–29, 2007–2011	120
Table 4.5	Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression of unmarried cohabitation by individual and contextual level variables, women 25–29, 2007–2011	122
Table 4.6	Share of cohabitation among all unions of partnered women 25–29, 1990–2011, by State, based on “relation to householder” question	129

Table 5.1	Percent in each type of marriage and in cohabitation, partnered women 15–59, Mexican censuses 1930–2010	136
Table 5.2	Percent cohabiting among partnered women age 25–29 in Mexican states, 1930–2010	139
Table 5.3	Percent cohabiting among all women in a union, selected Mexican indigenous population, 1930–2010	142
Table 5.4	Percent distribution of women 25–29 by level of education, Mexico 1970–2010.....	143
Table 5.5	Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union, Mexico 1970–2010.....	143
Table 5.6	Estimated odds ratios of cohabiting as opposed to being married for Mexican women 25–29 in a union, results for the individual level variables, Mexico 2000 and 2010.....	149
Table 5.7	Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation by contextual characteristics at the municipality, women 25–29 in a union, Mexico 2000 and 2010 (complete model).....	151
Table 5.8	Estimated odds ratios of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29 according to the individual and contextual levels of education combined, Mexico 2000 and 2010	152
Table 6.1	Central America: selected demographic, economic and social indicators.....	161
Table 6.2	Percent of women in consensual union among women aged 15–49 and 25–29 in conjugal union. Most recent data source.....	163
Table 6.3	Percentage of consensual unions among total unions, 1960–2011	167
Table 6.4	Socio-demographic profile of women aged 25–29 in marital and consensual unions based on the most recent census.....	177
Table 7.1	Distribution of women aged 25–29 by years of schooling and union characteristics. Colombia, 1973–2005	192
Table 7.2	Characteristics of the individual and contextual variables included in the multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation, women aged 25–29. Colombia, 2005.....	200
Table 7.3	Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation by individual and contextual characteristics, women aged 25–29. Colombia, 2005.....	201

Table 7.4	Averaged residuals at the municipality level from Model 2. Municipalities classified according to their contextual characteristics and the cultural complex to which they belong. Colombia, 2005	204
Table 7.5	Sample characteristics and estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women aged 25–29 by selected individual and contextual level characteristics. Bolivia 2001	206
Table 7.6	Sample characteristics and estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women aged 25–29 by selected individual and contextual level characteristics. Ecuador, 2010	209
Table 7.7	Sample characteristics and estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women aged 25–29 by selected individual and contextual level characteristics. Peru, 2007	211
Table 8.1	Distribution of characteristics of 137 Brazilian meso-regions, measured for women 25–29 as of 2000	222
Table 8.2	Proportions cohabiting among Brazilian women 25–29 in a union by social characteristics, 2000.....	223
Table 8.3	Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 by social characteristics, Brazil 2000	230
Table 8.4	Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, Brazil multilevel logistic regression results for proportions cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union by type of meso-region, Brazil 2000	233
Table 8.5	Prediction of the increase in cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 in the meso-regions of Brazil, period 1980–2010: standardized regression coefficients and R squared (OLS)	239
Table 8.6	Percent cohabiting among partnered women 25–29 in Brazil and Brazilian States, 1960–2010 censuses (IPUMS samples)	241
Table 8.7	Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 by social characteristics and types of meso-regions, Brazil 2000	242

Table 8.8	Full OLS regression results of the three models predicting the change in percentages cohabiting among partnered women between 1980 and 2010 in 136 Brazilian meso-regions.....	243
Table 9.1	Women in conjugal unions aged 20–29 years	259
Table 9.2	Women in conjugal unions aged 20–29 years	262
Table 9.3	Women in conjugal unions aged 20–29 years	264

Chapter 1

A Geography of Cohabitation in the Americas, 1970–2010

Albert Esteve, Antonio López-Gay, Julián López-Colás, Iñaki Permanyer,
Sheela Kennedy, Benoît Laplante, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Anna Turu,
and Teresa Antònia Cusidó

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we trace the geography of unmarried cohabitation in the Americas on an unprecedented geographical scale in family demography. We present the percentage of partnered women aged 25–29 in cohabitation across more than 19,000 local units of 39 countries, from Canada to Argentina, at two points in time, 2000 and 2010. The local geography is supplemented by a regional geography of cohabitation that covers five decades of data from 1960 to 2010. Our data derive primarily from the rich collection of census microdata amassed by the *Centro Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Demografía* (CELADE) of the United Nations and from the IPUMS-international collection of harmonized census microdata samples (Minnesota Population Center 2014). In preparing these maps over 2 years, the authors retrieved

A. Esteve (✉) • A. López-Gay • J. López-Colás • I. Permanyer • A. Turu • T.A. Cusidó
Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain
e-mail: aesteve@ced.uab.cat; alopez@ced.uab.cat; jlopez@ced.uab.cat;
ipermanyer@ced.uab.cat; aturu@ced.uab.cat; tacusido@ced.uab.cat

S. Kennedy
Minnesota Population Center (MPC), University of Minnesota-Twin Cities,
Minneapolis, MN, USA
e-mail: Kenn503@umn.edu

B. Laplante
Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS),
Université du Québec, Montréal, QC, Canada
e-mail: Benoit.Laplante@UCS.INRS.Ca

R.J. Lesthaeghe
Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium,
Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: RLesthaeghe@yahoo.com

the data from CELADE, searched for alternative data for the missing countries and censuses, prepared the digital boundary files, produced the maps and analyzed the results.

Such a degree of effort was required to unveil the rich spatial heterogeneity in cohabitation both across and within countries, heterogeneity that would have remained hidden had the analysis been conducted at the country or even at the province level. This study also examines whether, despite the recent increases in cohabitation, there has been continuity in the regional patterning of cohabitation over the last five decades.

The results have not been disappointing. The following sections show that the geographic analysis of cohabitation has unveiled a substantial amount of spatial heterogeneity both within and across countries, reminding us of the importance of contextual level factors. We also show that the regional patterning of cohabitation has remained relatively unchanged over the last decades, which points to the presence of geo-historical legacies in the present patterns of unmarried cohabitation. However, if the expansion of cohabitation continues at its current pace, such legacies may soon blur. The analysis of the data left us with some unexpected surprises, one being the striking correlation between altitude and the rate of cohabitation observed in all Andean countries, to which we will devote the last section of this chapter.

2 The Motivation for a Map

Although social scientists have not had many opportunities to examine social phenomena using local level data for an entire continent, the few precedents have been extremely illuminating. The Princeton Project on the Decline of Fertility in Europe is one of the most remarkable studies of this scope (Coale and Watkins 1986). Under the guidance and coordination of Ansley Coale, the Princeton project amassed a collection of creative family and fertility life indicators for 1229 provinces in Europe from the late eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The results showed that the unfolding of the fertility transition in Europe occurred under a wide variety of social and economic conditions, often following religious and linguistic contours. The widespread heterogeneity across regions motivated Ansley Coale to develop his praised explanatory framework of the ‘willing’, ‘ready’ and ‘able’ conditions for social change (Coale 1973).

The lack of geographic awareness in social science research is not necessarily because of a lack of interest among researchers (e.g. Billy and Moore 1992; Bocquet-Appel and Jakobi 1998; Boyle 2014; Klüsener et al. 2013; Vitali et al. 2015) but may be attributable to the lack of data and limited access. Surveys’ micro-data have become the primary statistical source for family studies. Compared with traditional censuses or population registers, surveys offer much greater conceptual detail but more limited geographic detail, basically because of sample size. Conversely, population censuses based on universal enumeration provide detailed geographic coverage although access to such detail is not always available for reasons of confidentiality.

The availability of geographic data affects the research questions and the interpretation of results (Weeks 2004). Large cross-national studies are overwhelmingly conducted at the country level, and in some cases, countries must be grouped to develop statistical representativeness (e.g., European countries are often grouped into northern, western, southern, and eastern countries). Multilevel models are becoming increasingly popular in cross-national research to, at least, account for variance at the country level (e.g., Soons and Kalmijn 2009; Aassve et al. 2013). Rarely is there a multilevel model in which individual factors account for differences across countries or regions, which suggests that, despite the emphasis on individual level explanations, the contextual factors are certainly important.

Little is known regarding within-country differences in cohabitation and even less when the analysis involves more than one country (Quilodrán 1983 and 2001). As in Europe, most cross-national analyses have been conducted at the country level (Rodríguez Vignoli 2005; García and Rojas 2002; Binstock and Cabella 2011; Cerruti and Binstock 2009). Broadly we know that Central America and the Caribbean have historically had the highest levels of cohabitation and the South Cone countries the lowest (Esteve et al. 2012; Castro-Martín 2002). The Andean countries and Brazil lie somewhere in between. Although the US and Canada are seldom compared to Latin American countries, in light of existing evidence, levels of cohabitation are remarkably lower in the US but not in Canada. The Quebec region has historically had higher levels of cohabitation than the rest of Canada (Le Bourdais and Lapierre-Adamcyk 2004; Laplante 2006).

3 The Making of the Map of Cohabitation

3.1 *Gathering the Data*

The maps of unmarried cohabitation in the Americas would never have been possible if the information had not been previously collected, processed and disseminated by National Statistical Offices throughout the Americas over the last five decades. Originally, all of our data came from multiple rounds of population censuses accessed through various databases and institutions. For the regional maps, we primarily relied on IPUMS-international census microdata (Minnesota Population Center 2014). IPUMS is the world's largest repository of census microdata, currently disseminating data from 258 censuses from 79 countries, including censuses from the 1960s to the 2010s census rounds. Our regional maps include data from the 2010 round that were not available on the IPUMS website. Therefore, we gathered these data from the respective National Statistical Institutes. The regional maps offer geographic detail of the first or second administrative unit of each country. We have prioritized those administrative units to allow maximum comparability over time. In this regard, the first or second levels of geography (e.g., state level in the US, Mexico and Brazil) scarcely experience changes over time.

Data for the local maps were much more challenging to obtain. Table 1.1 describes the data used to produce the 2000 and 2010 maps of unmarried cohabitation. Table 1.1 presents information regarding the reference year, source of information, sample density, and name and number of the administrative unit used in each of the 39 countries represented. Table 1.1 also provides information regarding the average population and surface per unit. The map depicts data for 32 countries and 15,895 units in the year 2000 and 20 countries and 17,397 units in 2010. The majority of the data came from full counts of census microdata obtained from the CELADE's database. For 14 Caribbean countries and Belize, we used aggregated census data from the Caribbean Community organization (CARICOM). The French National Statistical Institute, INSEE, provided data for Guadalupe, Martinique and French Guiana. Cuban data from 2002 were obtained from the IPUMS international project. Finally, data for Canada, the United States and Colombia were directly accessed through their respective statistical offices.

The number of units and the scale of the analysis employed to produce the local maps of cohabitation vary widely across countries and over time. In all countries except Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador and Honduras, we used the lowest geographical level at which we could estimate the proportion of cohabitation given the available data. Brazil provides the largest number of units with over 5500 municipalities, followed by Mexico (2456 municipalities in 2010), the United States (2071 counties), Peru (1833 districts) and Venezuela (1128 parishes in 2010). In Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador and Honduras, we abandoned the initial idea of using the lowest geographic detail available because of the difficulty of obtaining the corresponding geographic boundary files for the final mapping. In Bolivia, for example, we used the 314 *secciones* instead of the 1384 *cantones*; in Chile, we used 314 *municipios* instead of 2881 *distritos*; in El Salvador, 261 *municipios* in place of 2270 *cantones*; and in Honduras, we used 298 *municipios* instead of 3727 *aldeas*. On the whole, we have a heterogeneous geographic coverage in terms of average population and surface per unit (as shown in Table 1.1) that may not be optimal for some geographic analysis but provides an extremely informative account of the geography of cohabitation in the Americas.

Boundary files for the various countries and geographic units were obtained from multiple sources but primarily from CELADE, websites of National Statistical Institutes and the GADM database website. We used GIS software to assemble the country-specific boundary files and produce a unique shape file for the entire Americas.

3.2 Identifying Unmarried Cohabitation

Latin American censuses have historically provided an explicit category for consensual unions. The examination of the questionnaires of all Latin American and Caribbean censuses conducted between the 1960s and 2010s reveals that the vast majority of cohabitants could be explicitly identified either by the variables 'marital

Table 1.1 Summary of the census data, boundary files and geographic details used to analyze the prevalence of consensual unions in the Americas in the 2000 and 2010 census rounds

Country	Census year (2000/2010 rounds)	Census data provider (2000/2010)	Census sample (%)	Administrative level	Denomination	Number of units (2000/2010)	Average pop. per unit (in last data available)	Average surface area (km ²) (in last data av.)
North America								
Canada	2001/2011	STATCAN	20	2	Census division	288/293	114,255	33,961
Mexico	2000/2010	CELADE/INEGI	100	2	Municipality	2,443/2,456	45,793	800
United States	2000/ (2007–2011)	IPUMS	5	3	PUMA	2,071	148,046	4,417
Central America								
Belize	2000/2010	CARICOM/SIB	100	0/1	Single division/district	1/6	41,486	3,828
Costa Rica	2000/2011	CELADE/INEC	100	3	District	459/472	9,372	111
El Salvador	-2007	CELADE	100	2	Municipality	262	21,924	77
Guatemala	2002/-	CELADE	100	3	Municipality	331	33,949	327
Honduras	2001/-	CELADE	100	2	Municipality	298	20,392	377
Nicaragua	-2005	CELADE	100	2	Municipality	153	33,609	787
Panama	2000/2010	CELADE/INEC	100	3	Corregimiento	592	4,793	126
South America								
Argentina	2000/2010	CELADE/INDEC	100	2/1	Department/province	532/23	1,576,527	120,887
Bolivia	2001/2012	CELADE/INE	100	3	Section	314/339	29,675	3,241
Brazil	2000/2010	CELADE/IBGE	100	3	Municipality	5,507/5,565	34,278	1,530
Chile	2002/-	CELADE	100	3	Comune	342	44,200	2,220

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Country	Census year (2000/2010 rounds)	Census data provider (2000/2010)	Census sample (%)	Administrative level	Denomination	Number of units (2000/2010)	Average pop. per unit (in last data available)	Average surface area (km ²) (in last data av.)
Colombia	-2005	DANE	100	2	Municipality	1,113	36,995	994
Ecuador	2001/2010	CELADE/INEC	100	3	Parish	9951,024	14,144	277
French Guyana	-2008	INSEE (FR)	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	219,266	83,299
Paraguay	2002/-	CELADE	100	2	Census district	241	21,424	1,655
Peru	-2007	CELADE	100	3	District	1,833	14,955	702
Rep. of Guyana	2002/-	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	751,230	209,739
Uruguay	1996/2010	CELADE/INE	100	1/2	Department/census tr.	19/229	14,350	769
Venezuela	2001/2011	CELADE	100	3	Parish	1,116/1,128	24,138	812
Caribbean								
Anguilla	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	11,430	83
Antigua and Barbuda	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	63,863	436
Bahamas	2000	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	303,611	13,388
Barbados	2000	CELADE	100	1	Parish	11	22,728	74
Cuba	2002	IPUMS	10	1	Parish	15	745,845	7,382
Dominica	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	69,775	754
Dominican Republic	2002/2010	CELADE/ONE	100	3	Municipality	225/386	24,470	125
Grenada	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	103,137	360
Guadeloupe	2008	INSEE (FR)	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	401,784	1,731

British Virgin Islands	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	23,161	169
Jamaica	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	2,607,635	11,000
Martinique	2008	INSEE (FR)	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	397,693	1,118
Montserrat	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	4,303	101
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	46,325	267
Saint Vincent and the Gren.	2001	CARICOM	100 ^a	0	Single division	1	106,253	398
Saint Lucia	2001/2010	CARICOM/CSO	100	0	Single division	1	156,741	614
Trinidad and Tobago	2000	CELADE	100	1	Parish	15	74,318	344

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the 2000 and 2010 census rounds
^aAggregate data in the census samples

status' (dominant approach) or 'union status' (quite common in Caribbean countries) or by a direct question (e.g., in Brazil and more recently in Argentina and Suriname). In Canada and the United States, the identification of unmarried cohabitation occurred much later, in 1981 and in 1990, respectively. For the United States, cohabiting couples were identified on the basis of their relationship to the head of the household and marital status: the unmarried partner of an unmarried head of household is considered to be in a cohabiting union.¹

After identifying cohabiting unions, we computed the percentage of cohabiting women among 25–29-year-old women in unions. Women in unions are those who report being married or cohabiting at the time of the census. For the geography of cohabitation, whether one focuses on men or women does not matter.²

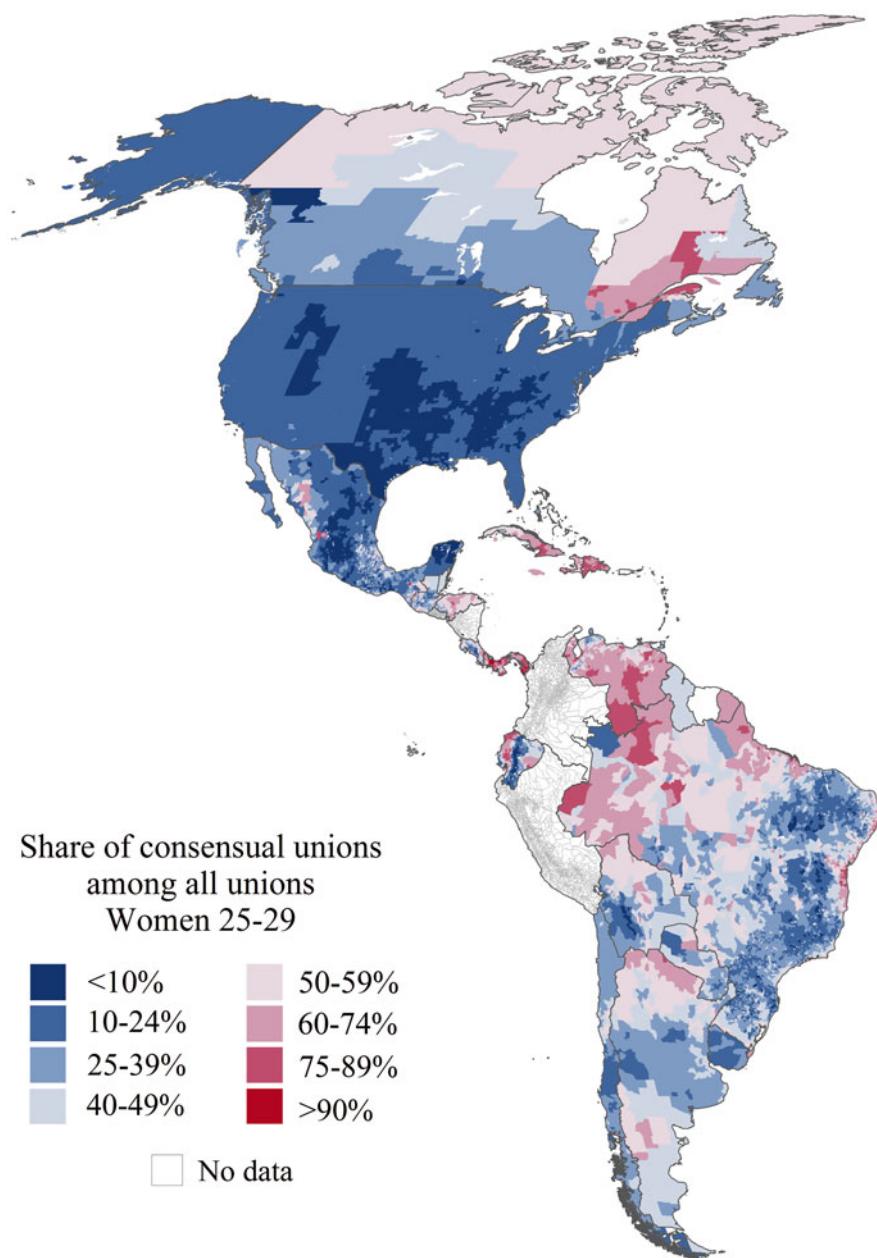
4 The Increase in Cohabitation in the Americas from a Regional Perspective

The results that are reported in this study stem from extensive analysis of the harmonized Latin American census microdata samples presented in the previous sections. This analysis uses as many census rounds between 1970 and 2000 as possible. Consequently, with the exception of a few areas, the time series generally captures the initial increases in the degree of cohabitation among all unions. The census estimates of the proportion of cohabitation for women 25–29 are equally available for the regions of the various countries. For most countries, these regions remain the same over the entire period of observation, except for Brazil and Haiti, in which the spatial resolution improves, beginning with 26 regions in 1970 and increasing to 135 smaller regions in Brazil and increasing from 9 to 19 in Haiti. There are no regional data for Puerto Rico whereas Cuba, Honduras and Jamaica contribute information only for the 2000 census round. Bolivia, Belize and Costa Rica only provide information accumulated after the 2000 census round. Until the 1990s, there are no data on cohabitation for the United States and Canada.

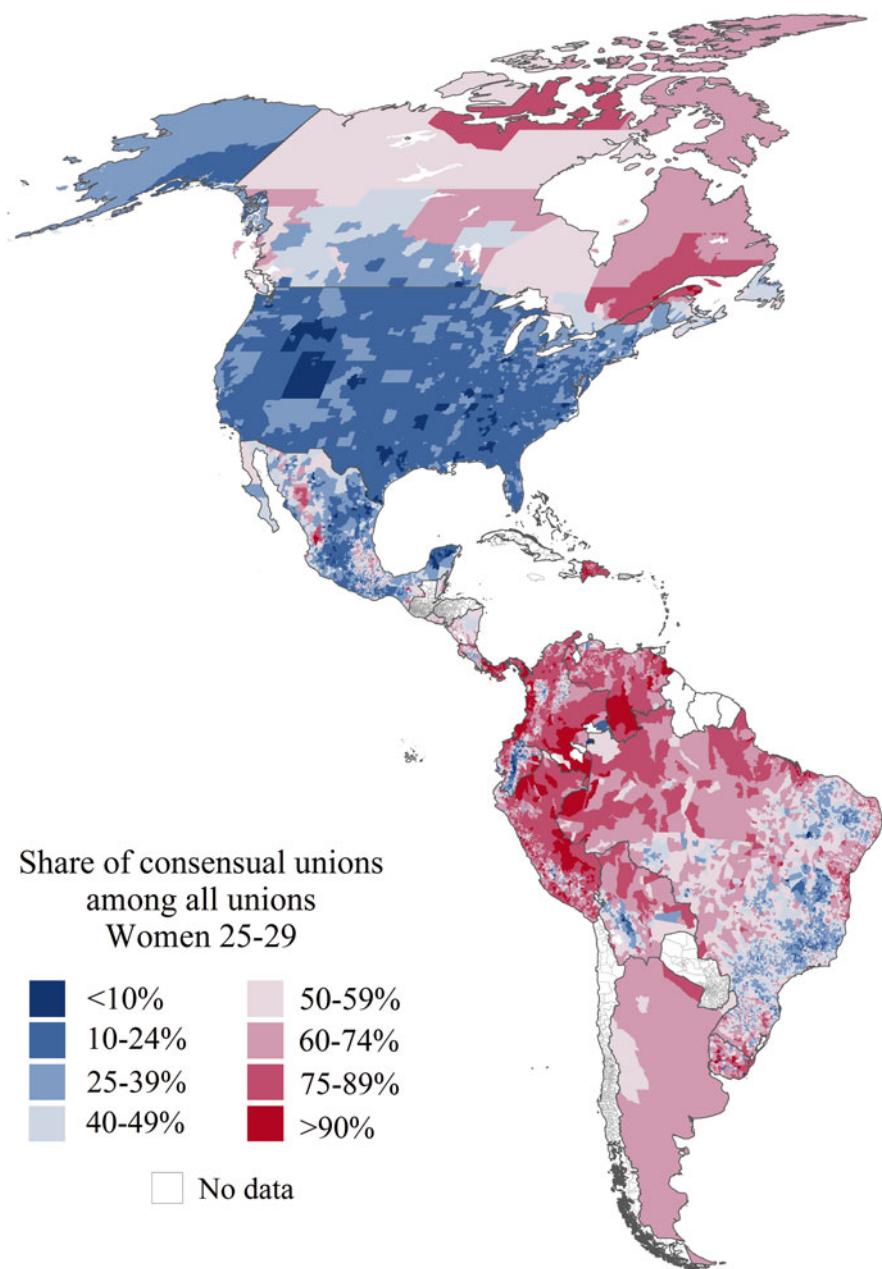
Geographical details can be gleaned from the two series of maps presented in Maps 1.1 and 1.2. The maps in the first series are of the classic type and have the advantage of familiarity. However, these maps misrepresent the demographic weight of each region, sometimes enormously so. For example, the Amazon basin covers

¹Recent research indicates that this approach underestimates US cohabitation levels by 20 % compared with direct methods (Kennedy and Fitch 2012). Consequently, we adjusted our estimates to reflect this under-reporting. Our adjusted estimates of the percentage of women who were cohabiting in 2000 exactly match the cohabitation estimates produced for 2002 using a direct cohabitation question (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008).

²The degree of correlation between female and male cohabitation rates across local units is 0.93. Concentrating on the 25–29 age group permits the comparison of successive cohorts at an age at which education is already completed and patterns of family formation have become clear. Alternative age groups yielded identical spatial patterning. The degree of correlation between female 25–29 and female 35–39 cohabitation rates across local units is 0.87.



Map 1.1 Share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on census data from the 2000 census (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census microdata from the represented countries (see Table 1.1 for the exact sources))



Map 1.2 Share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on census data from the 2010 census (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census microdata from the represented countries (see Table 1.1 for the exact sources))

an extremely large area but is only sparsely populated. Conversely, large urban areas are barely dots on a classic map but may contain sizable portions of a nation's population. To correct for this anomaly, a series of Gastner-Newman cartograms was created, which may look less familiar but do respect the true demographic weight of each region (see Map 1.2). Obviously, the color (shading) codes have been kept constant for the 5 census rounds so that the "darkening" of the map fully captures the ubiquitous American cohabitation boom.

By 1970, fewer than 25 regions of the 224 represented on the map reached a percentage of cohabitation above 50%. These regions were located in Central America (Panama) and in some areas of Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador. Most regions at that time had levels below 25%. None of the 13 regions in Chile reached a level of 25% until 1990. However, at the time of the 2000 census, 6 regions of these 13 had crossed that threshold. In Brazil, only 11 of 133 regions had passed the lower threshold of 25% by 1980. By 2010, 115 regions had surpassed that level, and 32 regions had previously surpassed the much higher threshold of 60% cohabitation rather than marriage. The movement in Argentina is quite similar. In the 1970 census, 5 of 25 regions had cohabitation rates of 25% or more, and by 2010, all of the regions had crossed that lower threshold. Furthermore, all of the regions had previously crossed the line with more women 25–29 in cohabitation than in marriage. The increase in Mexico is less spectacular before 2000 but accelerates later. Twenty-five of the 32 states reported a share of cohabitation above 25% in 2010 whereas there were only 6 in 1970, 3 in 1990 and 13 in 2000.

Of all countries, the most striking cohabitation boom may have occurred in Colombia. In 1970, only 2 regions of 30 had more cohabiting than married young women, and 15 regions did not even reach the 25% threshold. However, in 2005 (the 2005 data are shown in the 2010 census round map), all 33 regions had not only passed the lower but also the upper threshold of 50%.

As noted earlier, not only the countries with low or moderate levels of "old cohabitation" in 1970 or 1980 saw increases but also the countries with higher levels (e.g., Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela). These countries were previously above the lower threshold of 25% to begin with; thus, for these countries, the upper threshold is more relevant. In Venezuela, all of the 24 regions passed the 50% mark in 2010 whereas there were only 4 regions in 1970. Between 1993 and 2007, our maps show a jump from 8 to 24 regions above the 50% level for the 25 Peruvian regions. Finally, two-thirds of the 15 Cuban regions joined the fifty-percent group by 2000 and all 10 Panamanian regions joined in 2000 and 2010.

In 1990, the lowest levels of cohabitation were registered in the United States. In that year, cohabitation in the US was lower than in any other American country during the two previous decades. All but one of the 51 US states were below the 25% threshold in 1990. By 2010, 16 states were above the 25% level, and there was only 1 state below the 10% level, compared with 26 states that had less than 10% cohabitation in 1990. Canadian regions were all above 10% in 1990; however, only 3 were above 25%. Two decades later, all of the Canadian 12 regions were above 25% and 4 had cohabitation levels above 50%.

A telling manner in which to describe the regional data comprises ranking the regions by level of cohabitation as measured at the earliest date and following the regions as they move up in the ensuing decades. This is performed for 15 countries in Fig. 1.1. In addition, a straight line was included through the provincial data points for each census so that one can see whether the distribution shifted more as a result of the tail being pulled up or the vanguard moving out. In this manner, the lines are essentially parallel in Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Brazil, indicating that all regions had similar absolute increases in percentages cohabiting, irrespective of their earlier position in the distribution. The majority of the other countries have higher increments in regions that were at the lower end to begin with. This catching-up effect also indicates that the overall increase is because of a slightly greater degree of “new” rather than “old” cohabitation. The primary exception was observed in Chile, in which the increase between the 1990 and 2000 census rounds is largest for the areas that previously had higher cohabitation rates. Finally, El Salvador retained the distribution of 1990 with scarcely any changes in overall levels. If anything, the 2010 census round for El Salvador indicates the disappearance of regional heterogeneity.

The bottom two panels of Fig. 1.1 contain the ranked regional levels for the single census round of 2000, and the slopes of the fitted lines in this instance are indicative of regional homogeneity (flat) or heterogeneity (steeper). Honduras, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have the least heterogeneity in this respect, and Belize, Bolivia and Cuba the most.

Finally, we present the list of 25 regions that, respectively, had the lowest and the highest shares of cohabiting women aged 25–29 in 1970 in addition to the subsequent increments in these rates over the next three decades. As shown in Table 1.2, 24 of the 25 “lowest” regions began with less than 5 % cohabitation, and the increase to levels of up to 40 % can be considered “new cohabitation”. The most spectacular of such increases occurred in seven Brazilian regions (Parana, Ceara, Minas Gerais, Santa Catarina, Piaui, Sao Paulo and particularly Rio Grande do Sul), in Argentina (Cordoba), Chile (RM Santiago) and Colombia (Valparaiso). At the other extreme, among the 25 regions with the highest proportions of “old” cohabitation, the majority of these regions consolidated their positions although others increased more than 10 percentage points. The latter are areas in Colombia (Cordoba, Cesar and particularly Choco and La Guajira), Ecuador (Esmaraldas), Venezuela (Portuguesa, Amazonas, Yaracuy, Delta Amacuro) and even in Panama (Colon).

5 The Local View for 2000 and 2010

The regional perspective of the Fig. 1.1 has shown trends in cohabitation over the last four decades and across more than 500 regions across the Americas. From the local perspective, we portray the same indicator but for a number of units forty times higher than the number of regions. The local view substantially increases the resolution of the geography of cohabitation. The local perspective defines more

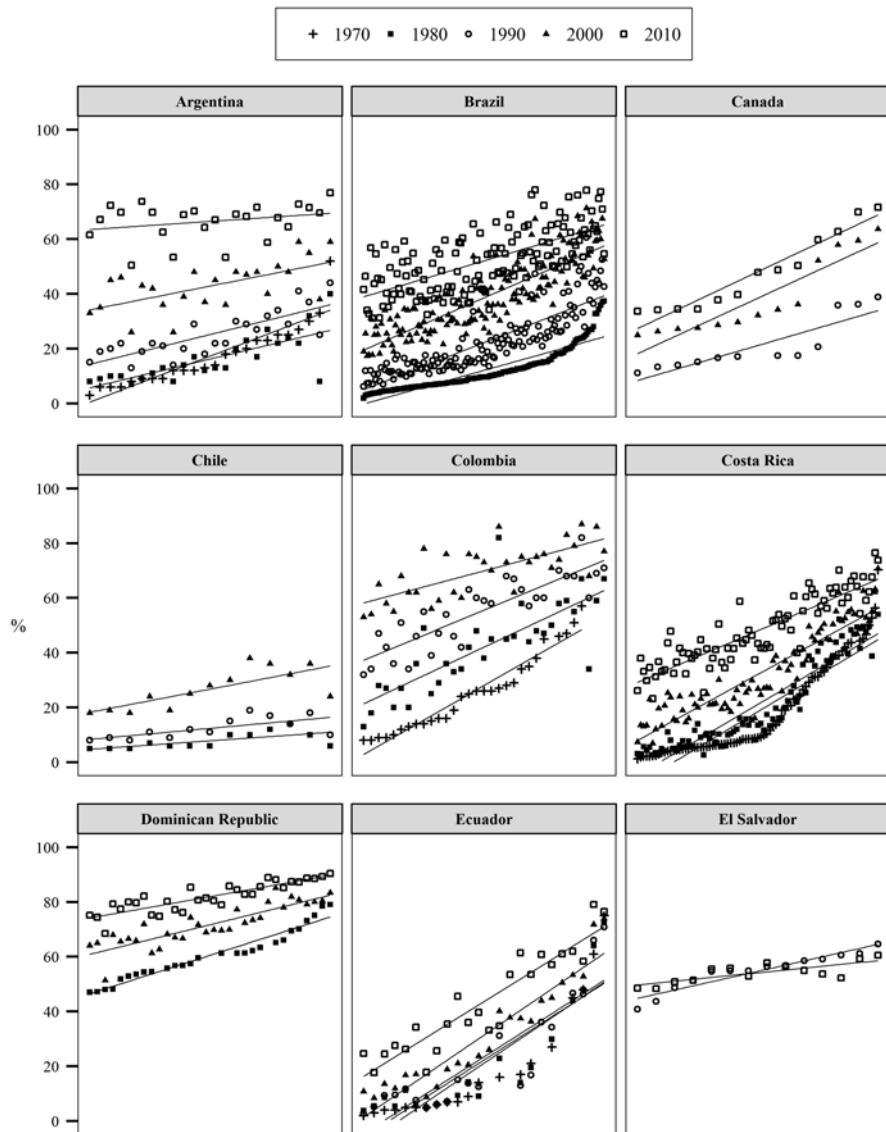


Fig. 1.1 Patterns in the increase in the percent of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 in regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, various census rounds, 1970–2010 (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

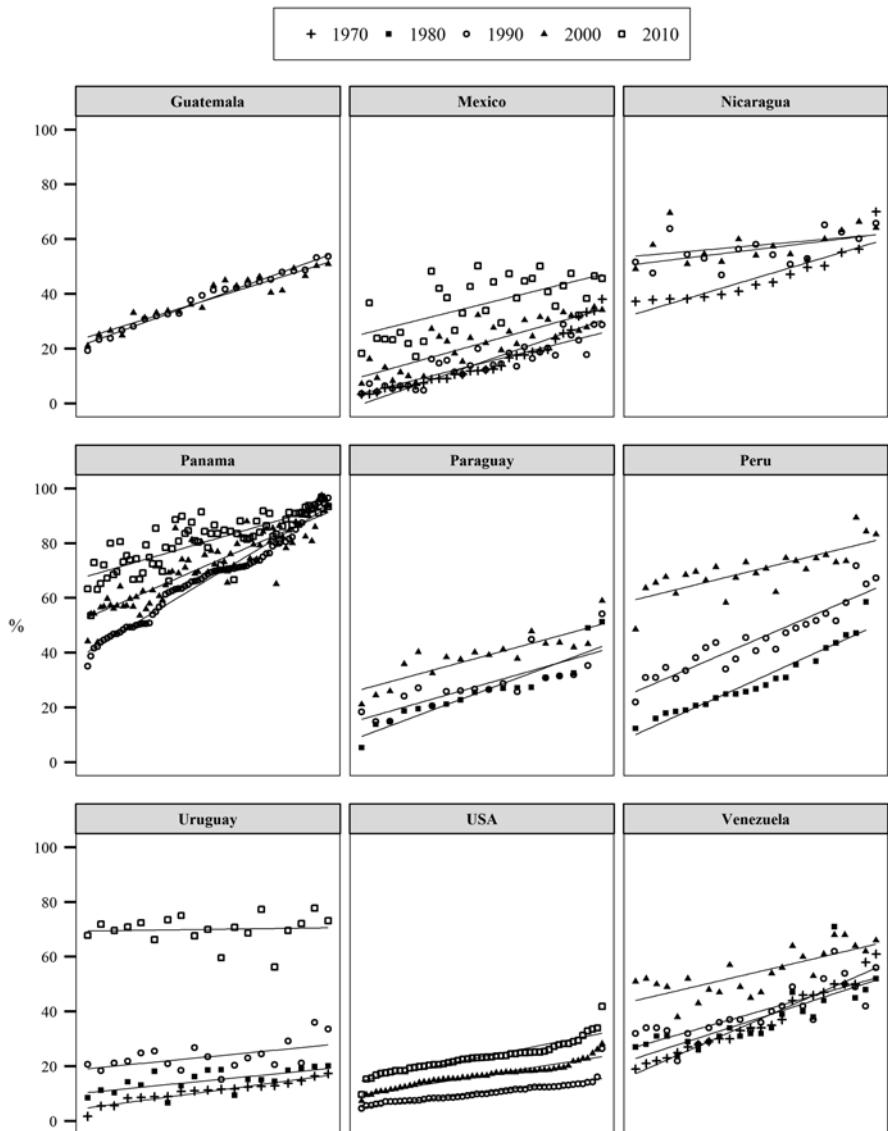


Fig. 1.1 (continued)

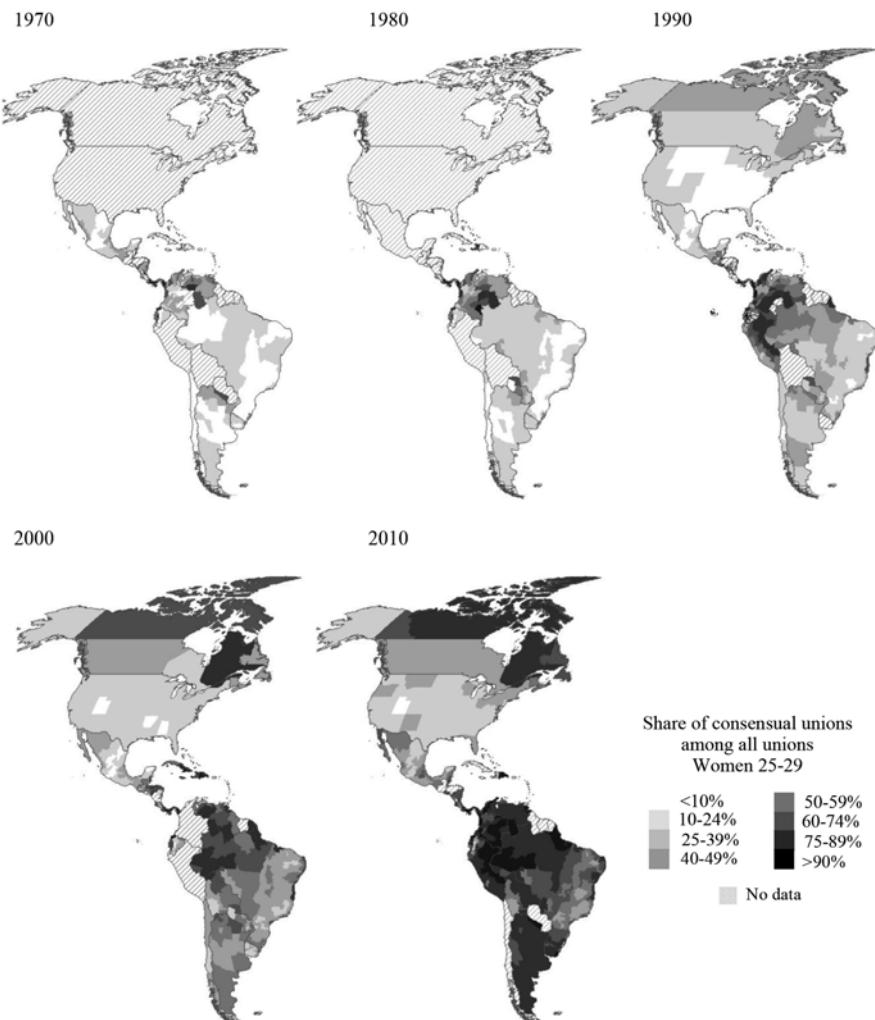
clearly the spatial boundaries of the areas with high and low levels of cohabitation. For this occasion, and as an exception to the entire book, the local maps of cohabitation have been edited in color, in shades of blue and red (Maps 1.3 and 1.4). Bluish colors indicate that marriage among women 25–29 in a union is more important than cohabitation, and reddish colors indicate that cohabitation is more important than marriage. The reddening of the map between 2000 and 2010 indicates a

Table 1.2 Changes in the percent of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 in the 25 regions with the lowest and the highest initial levels of cohabitation in 1970

25 Regions with the lowest % of cohabiting unions in 1970				25 Regions with the highest % of cohabiting unions in 1970				
	Region	Country	% 1970	% 2000	Region	Country	% 1970	% 2000
1	Azuay	Ecuador	1.6	12.1	Kuna Yala (San Blas)	Panama	90.6	85.1
2	Del Maule	Ecuador	2.4	18.2	Darien	Panama	81.0	82.1
3	Magallanes y Antartica Chilena	Chile	2.5	18.1	Bocas del Toro ^a	Panama	78.4	73.9
4	Tungurahua	Ecuador	2.7	8.7	Los Rios	Ecuador	75.3	74.4
5	Del Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins	Chile	3.0	19.5	Cocle	Panama	70.7	75.7
6	Parana	Brazil	3.1	28.9	Chiriquí ^a	Panama	69.9	61.4
7	Guanajuato	Mexico	3.3	7.1	Veraguas ^a	Panama	68.6	68.2
8	Cordoba	Argentina	3.3	32.6	Los Santos	Panama	65.3	61.1
9	Ceara	Brazil	3.4	35.7	Apure	Venezuela	60.8	65.6
10	Queretaro	Mexico	3.4	16.2	Esmeraldas	Ecuador	60.7	75.4
11	Santa Catarina	Brazil	3.5	30.4	Cojedes	Venezuela	58.2	62.0
12	Valparaiso	Colombia	3.5	23.9	Choco	Colombia	57.1	87.4
13	Minas Gerais	Brazil	3.7	26.0	Formosa	Argentina	52.1	59.1
14	Loja	Ecuador	3.8	11.6	Colon	Panama	51.7	62.0
15	Region Metropolitana de Santiago	Chile	3.9	24.8	Cordoba	Colombia	50.8	79.5
16	Cotopaxi	Ecuador	3.9	13.6	Amazonas	Venezuela	50.4	67.6
17	Piaui	Brazil	4.0	27.6	Yaracuy	Venezuela	50.2	63.9
18	Aguascalientes	Mexico	4.1	9.3	Delta Amacuro	Venezuela	49.5	67.8
19	Bio-Bio	Chile	4.1	19.0	Guayas	Ecuador	48.3	50.7
20	Sao Paulo	Brazil	4.3	34.8	Panama	Panama	47.4	57.2
21	Chimborazo	Ecuador	4.6	8.5	La Guajira	Colombia	47.4	82.8
22	Cartago	Costa Rica	4.6	15.5	Herrera	Panama	47.1	50.7
23	Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil	4.9	40.6	Portuguesa	Venezuela	46.7	60.6
24	Canar	Ecuador	4.9	16.2	Cesar	Colombia	46.4	74.3
25	Carchi	Ecuador	5.5	19.1	Monagas	Venezuela	46.3	52.9

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

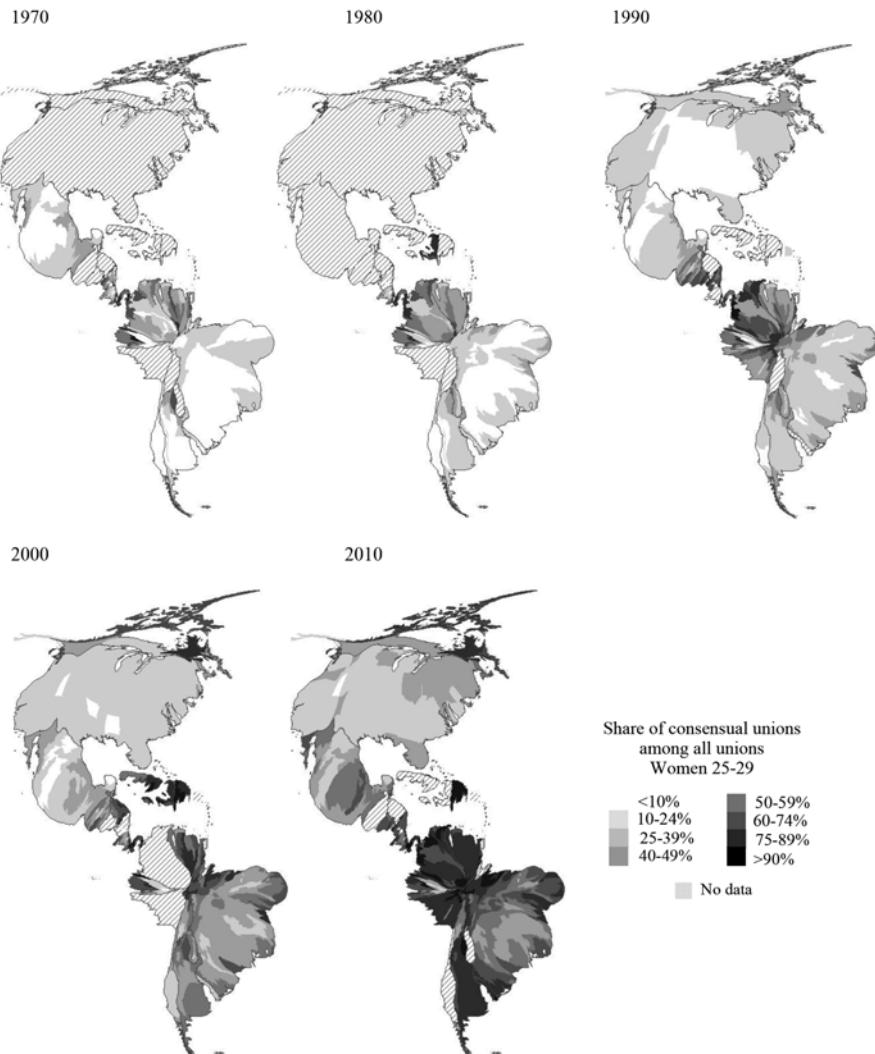
^aThe decrease in the % of cohabitation unions in these regions can be explained by the creation of a new region in Panama in the 2000 round, which was created from existing regions (Ngoblé-Bugle; 2000=88.44 %)



Map 1.3 Evolution of the regional share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on 1970–2010 census data (*Source*: Authors' elaboration based on census microdata from the represented countries (see Table 1.1 for the exact sources))

substantial increase in cohabitation throughout the Americas. In 2000, 33 % of the 19,255 areas had values of cohabitation above the 50 % level. In 2010, the percentage had increased to 51 %.

In approximately the year 2000, the highest rates of cohabitation were in Central America, the Caribbean, Colombia and Peru. In all of these countries, the percentage of local units in which cohabitation was more prevalent than marriage reached 80 %. The lowest cohabitation rates were in the United States and Mexico; Canada, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile occupied intermediate



Map 1.4 Evolution of the regional share of consensual unions among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on 1970–2010 census data. Cartogram Map (administrative units are weighted by population in 2000) (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census microdata from the represented countries (see Table 1.1 for the exact sources))

positions. However, the country perspective hides a high degree of international heterogeneity.

To assist with the description of the local maps, we created the boxplots displayed in Fig. 1.2, which summarizes local data on cohabitation from 17 countries, showing the median and the interquantile range: longer bars indicate greater heterogeneity within countries. The whiskers represent the lowest and highest values still

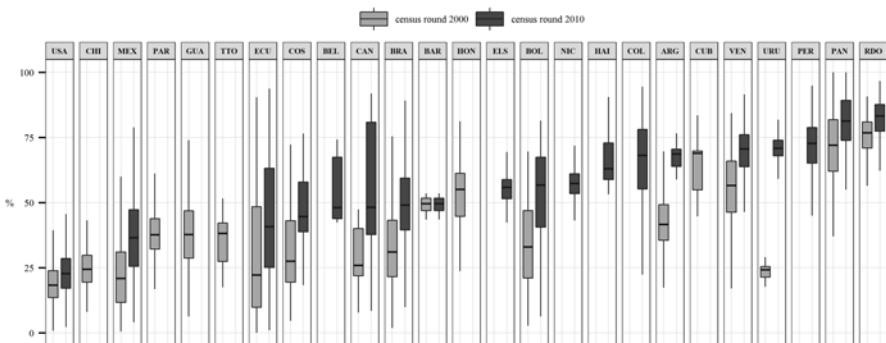


Fig. 1.2 Regional distributions of the proportions of consensual unions among all 25–29-year-old women in a union by country, based on census data from the 2000 and 2010 census rounds (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census microdata from the represented countries (see Table 1.1 for the exact sources))

within the 1.5 IQR of the lower and upper quartiles. Countries are ordered on the horizontal axis based on the median level of cohabitation of the most recent census for each country. We excluded those countries for which there was only one observation.

By the year 2000, the median values of cohabitation ranged from 15.2 % in the United States to 76.8 % in the Dominican Republic. The United States is the only country in which the median was below 20 %. In the 20–40 % range, there is a diverse group of countries, including Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago. In the 40–60 % range are three Central American countries (El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras) as well as Venezuela and Barbados. Above the 60 % median level, there are five countries: Colombia, Cuba, Panama, Peru and the Dominican Republic. By 2010, the median values of cohabitation across local units had increased in all countries. The US still represented the lowest levels of cohabitation although the median had increased from 15.2 % in 2000 to 22.7 % in 2010. The Dominican Republic continued to maintain the record for having the highest levels of cohabitation. The median value of cohabitation increased in that country from 76.8 % cohabitation in 2000 to 83.2 in 2010.

What is most surprising about the boxplots is the substantial amount of internal heterogeneity evident for certain countries. One manner in which to measure such diversity is by looking at the interquartile range (IQR): the distance in percentage points between the 25th and the 75th percentiles. For countries with two time points, IQR values did not change dramatically, which indicates that the relative difference within countries remained stable despite the widespread increase in cohabitation. This is consistent with the results observed at the regional level: regions with the highest levels of cohabitation in the past remain the regions with highest levels of cohabitation in the present. The boxplots and the two local maps corroborate that the regional patterning of cohabitation (regardless of changes in levels between 2000 and 2010) did not change significantly over the last decade.

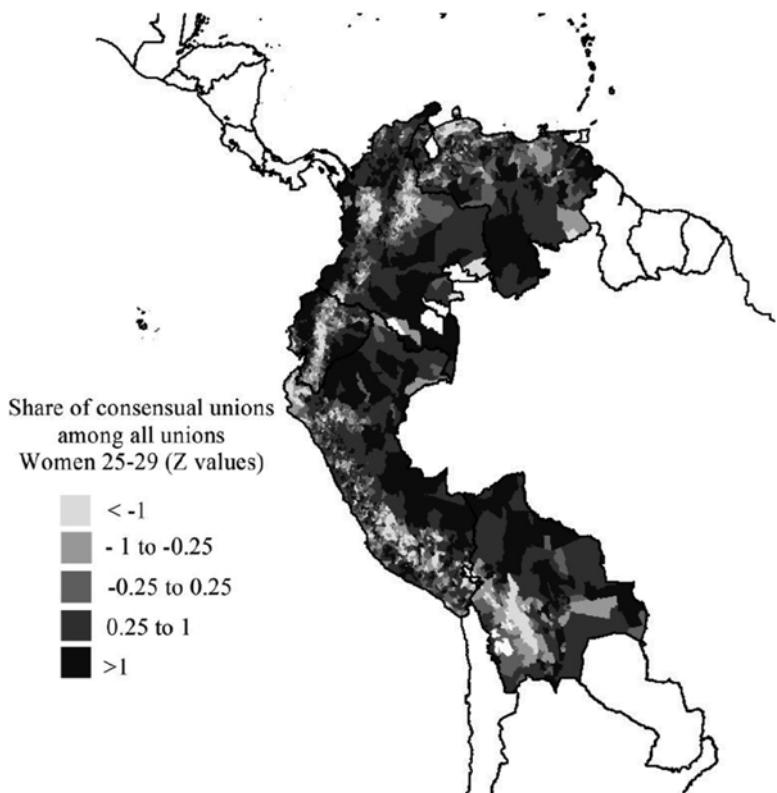
Turning to the geographic heterogeneity within countries, Canada and Ecuador stand out among the most internally diverse countries regarding the presence of cohabitation. In both countries and in both years, the IQR values spanned approximately 40 % points, which indicates sharp contrasts between areas. When we examine the geography of cohabitation in Canada and Ecuador, we observe that the high and low areas of cohabitation are not randomly distributed across local units. Instead, there is substantial spatial clustering. In Canada, the Quebec region includes the highest levels of cohabitation whereas in the other regions, from Ontario to British Columbia, cohabitation is much lower. In Ecuador, the geographic patterning is neatly structured by the presence of the Andean range. Cohabitation is much lower in the Andes than in the coastal and the Amazon regions.

After Canada and Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Brazil display substantial heterogeneity as well, with IQR values ranging from 20 to 27 percentage points. As in Ecuador, the geography of the Andes is a useful demarcation to describe where the low values of cohabitation are in Bolivia and Colombia. In Costa Rica, the lowest levels of cohabitation are observed in the central region and the highest in the southern portions of the South Pacific (*Brunca*) and Caribbean (*Huetar Atlántico*) regions. The highest levels of cohabitation in Brazil are in the Amazonian basin and along the coast of the northern and northeastern regions. The geography of low and high cohabitation is less clear in Mexico. Cohabitation rates do not coincide with the delimitation of Mexico's states. The clusters of municipalities with the highest levels of cohabitation are in the *Sierra Madre occidental*, Chiapas and Veracruz.

At the opposite end, there are exceptionally homogenous countries among either the low or the high cohabiting countries. The United States, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic have IQR values below 10 percentage points. In all of these countries, the IQR values are computed from more than 100 units per country.

6 Cohabitation in the Andean States

One of the most surprising and consistent spatial patterns that emerged from the local maps of cohabitation has been the systematic low rates of cohabitation observed in the municipalities or localities of the Andes Mountains. Largely, this pattern applies to those countries that are politically, culturally and geographically known as the Andean States: Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. The physical geography of the Andean states is clearly structured by the presence of the Andean range that extends along the western coast of South America, stretching from north to south through Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. Along its length, the Andes are split into several mountain ranges that are separated by intermediate depressions. The clearest example of that separation is Colombia, in which the Andes Mountains divide into three distinct parallel chains, called *cordillera oriental*, *central* and *occidental*. Moreover, in the Andes



Map 1.5 Standard deviations (z-scores) from each country's mean of the rate of cohabitation among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union. Based on census data from the last census available for Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census microdata from the represented countries (see Table 1.1 for the exact sources))

are several high plains on which major cities such as Quito in Ecuador, Bogotá and Medellín in Colombia, Arequipa in Perú, La Paz and Sucre in Bolivia and Mérida in Venezuela are located.

What is the correlation between the Andes Mountains and cohabitation? In this chapter, we do not provide an answer to this question although we can definitively show the striking correlation that exists between the geography of the Andes and the geography of cohabitation. Although levels of cohabitation are different across the Andean countries, the relation between the two geographies is remarkably strong in all of these countries except Peru.

Map 1.5 shows the local map of cohabitation only for Venezuela in 2001, Colombia in 2005, Ecuador in 2001, Bolivia in 2001 and Peru in 2007. For this map, we used country-specific standard scores, which measure the number of standard deviations of an observation is above the mean. This process enhances the internal geographic differences in cohabitation, controlling by the factor that countries have different levels of cohabitation.

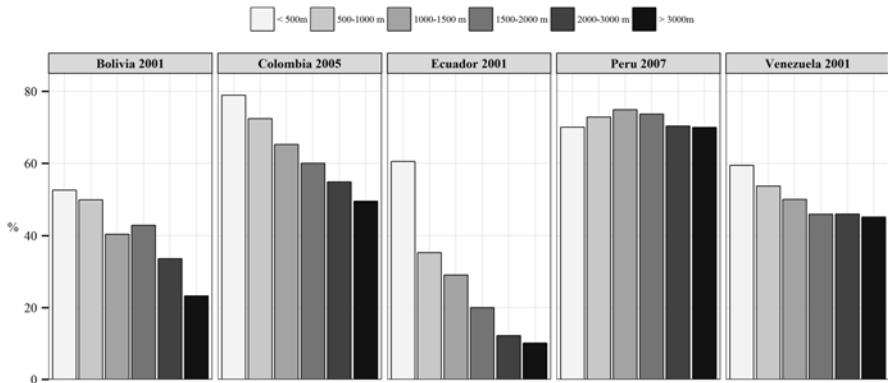


Fig. 1.3 Share of consensual unions by municipality's altitude (in meters) among all 25-to-29-year-old women in a union based on the 2000 census round for the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census microdata from the represented countries (see Table 1.1 for the exact sources))

Ecuador stands out as the country that best exemplifies the structuring power of the Andes with regard to cohabitation. The Andes Mountains run from the north to the south of Ecuador, inland from the coast, and divide the country into three continental regions: the *Costa*, the *Sierra* and the *Oriente*. The *parroquias* (parishes) located in the *Sierra* region show the lowest levels of cohabitation whereas the *Costa* and *Oriente* regions present the highest levels of cohabitation. In Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela and to a lesser extent, Peru, the areas that have the lowest levels of cohabitation in each country clearly outline the contour of the Andes Mountains.

One manner in which to show the relation between the geography of the Andes and the geography of cohabitation is to examine the relation between altitude and cohabitation. We used GIS software to assign each unit the altitude of its geometric center. Figure 1.3 shows the average rate of cohabitation by each municipality's altitude (in meters above sea level) among all women aged 25–29 in unions. Except in Peru, we observe a negative relation between altitude and cohabitation. In Bolivia in 2001, the average rate of cohabitation in those municipalities located below 500 m was slightly over 50 %. For those municipalities above 3000 m, cohabitation drops to 20 %. Colombia shows the most regular relation between altitude and cohabitation. With every additional 500 m, cohabitation decreases by 6–7 percentage points. The largest contrast in cohabitation between low and high altitudes is in Ecuador: a 60 % cohabitation rate in municipalities below 500 m and 10 % in those above 3000 m. In Venezuela, the decrease of cohabitation with altitude is observed until one reaches 1500 and 2000 m. Peru has a different pattern: the highest levels of cohabitation are observed in those districts located between 1000 and 1500 m high. After that level, cohabitation falls with additional altitude, as in the other Andean states.

What is the relation between altitude and cohabitation? At this point, we cannot provide an answer to this question. Of course, we assume that altitude *per se* has nothing to do with cohabitation; however, in the context of the Andean countries,

altitude may be a proxy for diverse social and cultural family environments that are more or less prone to cohabitation. Is it religion? Perhaps the coastal and Amazonian areas were less heavily Christianized during colonization. In the next chapters, we will address several of the questions that may clarify this puzzling relation.

7 Conclusion

We have traced the geography of cohabitation in the Americas at the regional and local levels. We have also explored changes in time. We have shown that the prevalence of cohabitation, as opposed to marriage, is quite diverse across countries and that in the majority of countries, there is quite substantial regional and local heterogeneity. Such diversity reminds us of the importance of contextual factors. Despite the increase in cohabitation, the regional and local patterning of cohabitation remains scarcely changed, which unambiguously indicates the presence of geo-historical legacies in the most recent geography of cohabitation. The identification of such legacies is one of the major challenges of this book. To the extent possible, geographic diversity will be a constant across the next chapters. The rich geography of cohabitation invites researchers to identify contextual level variables in the lowest possible geographic detail. The rich geography also reminds us that the interaction between individual and contextual level variables is critical to understanding the social and regional patterning of the increase of cohabitation in the Americas.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Aassve, A., Arpino, B., & Billari, F. C. (2013). Age norms on leaving home: Multilevel evidence from the European social survey. *Environment and Planning A*, 45(2), 383–401.
- Billy, J. O., & Moore, D. E. (1992). A multilevel analysis of marital and nonmarital fertility in the US. *Social Forces*, 70(4), 977–1011.
- Binstock, G., & Cabella, W. (2011). La nupcialidad en el Cono Sur: evolución reciente en la formación de uniones en Argentina, Chile y Uruguay. In G. Binstock, J. Melo (Coords) *Nupcialidad y familia en la América Latina actual*. Rio de Janeiro: Ediciones ALAP, Serie Investigaciones No. 1, 35–60

- Bocquet-Appel, J. P., & Jakobi, L. (1998). Evidence for a spatial diffusion of contraception at the onset of the fertility transition in Victorian Britain. *Population*, 10(1), 181–204.
- Boyle, P. (2014). Population geography: Does geography matter in fertility research? *Progress in Human Geography*, 27(5), 615–626.
- Castro-Martín, T. (2002). Consensual unions in Latin America: Persistence of a dual nuptiality system. *Journal of comparative family studies*, 33(1), 35–55.
- Cerrutti, M. S., & Binstock, G. P. (2009). *Familias latinoamericanas en transformación: desafíos y demandas para la acción pública*. Santiago de Chile: Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), 61 pp. ISBN 9789213233337
- Coale, A. J. (1973). The demographic transition reconsidered. In *Proceedings of the international population conference* (Vol. I, pp. 53–72). Liege: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP).
- Coale, A. J., & Watkins, S. C. (Eds.). (1986). *The decline of fertility in Europe: the revised proceedings of a Conference on the Princeton European Fertility Project*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 484 pp. ISBN 0691094160 (cloth), 0691101760 (pbk).
- Esteve, A., Lesthaeghe, R., & López-Gay, A. (2012). The Latin American cohabitation boom, 1970–2007. *Population and Development Review*, 38(1), 55–81.
- García, B., & Rojas, O. (2002). Cambios en la formación y disolución de las uniones en América Latina. *Gaceta Laboral*, 8(3), 391–410.
- Kennedy, S., & Bumpass, L. (2008). Cohabitation and children's living arrangements: New estimates from the United States. *Demographic research*, 19(article 47), 1663–1692.
- Kennedy, S., & Fitch, C. A. (2012). Measuring cohabitation and family structure in the United States: Assessing the impact of new data from the current population survey. *Demography*, 49(4), 1479–1498. doi:[10.1007/s13524-012-0126-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-012-0126-8).
- Klüsener, S., Perelli-Harris, B., & Gassen, N. S. (2013). Spatial aspects of the rise of nonmarital fertility across Europe since 1960: The role of states and regions in shaping patterns of change. *European Journal of Population/Revue Européenne de Démographie*, 29(2), 137–165. doi:[10.1007/s10680-012-9278-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-012-9278-x).
- Laplante, B. (2006). The rise of cohabitation in Quebec. Power of religion and power over religion. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 31(1), 1–24.
- Le Bourdais, C., & Lapierre-Adamcyk, É. (2004). Changes in conjugal life in Canada: Is cohabitation progressively replacing marriage? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(4), 929–942. doi:[10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00063.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00063.x).
- Minnesota Population Center. (2014). *Integrated public use microdata series, international: Version 6.3* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Quilodrán, J. (1983). La nupcialidad en las áreas rurales de México. In R. Benítez, J. Quilodrán (comps), *La Fecundidad rural en México*. México: El Colegio de México/UNAM, Cap. 5: 176–193 (Tables 11,12 and 17).
- Quilodrán, J. (2001). A la búsqueda de modelos regionales de Nupcialidad. In J. Quilodrán. *Un siglo de matrimonio en México*. México: Centro de Estudios Demográficos Y de Desarrollo Urbano, Colegio de México, Cap.6: 205–251. ISBN 68121014X, 9789681210144.
- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2005). *Unión y cohabitación en América Latina: modernidad, exclusión, diversidad?* Santiago de Chile: CELADE, División de Población de la CEPAL and UNFPA, Serie Población y Desarrollo 57.
- Soons, J. P., & Kalmijn, M. (2009). Is marriage more than cohabitation? Well-being differences in 30 european countries. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(5), 1141–1157. doi:[10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00660.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00660.x).
- Vitali, A., Aassve, A., & Lappégaard, T. (2015). Diffusion of childbearing within cohabitation. *Demography*, 52(2), 355–377. doi:[10.1007/s13524-015-0380-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-015-0380-7).
- Weeks, J. R. (2004). Chapter 19: The role of spatial analysis in demographic research. In M. F. Goodchild, D. G. Janelle, (Eds.), *Spatially integrated social science*. (pp. 381–399). New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 2

The Rise of Cohabitation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1970–2011

**Albert Esteve, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Antonio López-Gay,
and Joan García-Román**

1 Introduction

This chapter offers a general overview of the often spectacular rise of the share of cohabitation in the process of union formation in 24 Latin American and Caribbean countries during the last 30 years of the twentieth and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Firstly, a brief ethnographic and historical sketch will be offered with the aim of illustrating the special position of many Latin American regions and sub-populations with respect to forms of partnership formation other than classic marriage. Secondly, the national trends in the rising share of cohabitation in union formation will be presented for men and women for the age groups 25–29 and 30–34. This is extended to full cohort profiles covering all ages in Brazil and Mexico. Thirdly, we shall inspect the education and social class differentials by presenting the cross-sectional gradients over time. The fourth section is devoted to the framework of the “second demographic transition” and hence to the

A. Esteve (✉) • A. López-Gay

Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain

e-mail: aesteve@ced.uab.cat; alopez@ced.uab.cat

R.J. Lesthaeghe

Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium,
Brussels, Belgium

e-mail: RLesthaeghe@yahoo.com

J. García-Román

Minnesota Population Center (MPC), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA
e-mail: jgarciar@umn.edu

de-stigmatization of a number of other behaviors that were equally subject to strong normative restrictions in the past (e.g. divorce, abortion, homosexuality, suicide and euthanasia). The last section deals with the household and family contexts of married persons and cohabitators respectively.

The chapter is not only meant to offer a statistical description, but also to raise several points that should facilitate an interpretation of the phenomenon of the “cohabitation boom”. A short introduction of the issues involved is now being presented.

In many provinces, and especially those with larger native and black populations, cohabitation and visiting unions have always existed as alternatives to the classic “European” marriage. However, as the data from up to five census rounds indicate, the rise in cohabitation occurred *both* in such areas with “old cohabitation” practices and in those where cohabitation had remained much more exceptional till the 1970s. In other words, there is now a sizeable amount of “new cohabitation” besides or on top of “old cohabitation” (see also: Castro-Martín 2002; Binstock 2008).

The same census data also document the existence of a *universal* negative cohabitation- education gradient, with women with higher levels of education cohabiting less and moving into marriage in greater proportions. The existence of a negative gradient with education, and by extension also by social class, is commonly interpreted as the manifestation of a “pattern of disadvantage”. In this pattern, the poorer segments of the population would not be able to afford a wedding and the setting up of a more elaborate residence, but they would move into other forms of partnership such as cohabitation or visiting unions. In this view, “*cohabitation is the poor man’s marriage*”. The “crisis hypothesis” follows a similar line of reasoning. Given the deep economic crises and spells of hyperinflation during the 1980s in almost all Latin American countries, the lower social strata would have reacted by further abandoning marriage and resorting to more cohabitation instead.

The matter is, however, far more complicated than just sketched. Given this negative cross-sectional gradient with education, one would expect that with advancing education over time many more persons would get married rather than cohabiting. The advancement in male and female education in Latin America has been very pronounced since the 1970s, and yet, just the opposite trend in marriage and cohabitation is observed compared to the one predicted on the basis of the cross-sectional education gradient: there is now far more cohabitation and much less marriage. In other words, the changing educational composition not only failed to produce a “marriage boom”, but a “cohabitation boom” developed instead. This not only reveals once more the fallacy inherent in the extrapolation of cross-sectional differentials, but illustrates even more strongly that other factors favorable to cohabitation must have been “flying under the radar”. In this chapter we shall therefore also explore to what extent ideational factors, especially in the domains of ethics, sexuality, secularization and gender relations, could have contributed to the emergence of the “cohabitation boom”. This brings us inevitably to the issue of a possible partial convergence of several Latin American populations to the pattern of the “Second Demographic Transition” (SDT) (Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa 1986; Lesthaeghe 2010).

The rise in cohabitation also begs the question whether cohabiting persons form nuclear families or stay with their own parents or kin instead and hence continue to rely on residential extended family structures. In other words, is the rise of cohabitation a source of family simplification (nuclearization), or are the residential household compositions essentially untouched?

We shall now turn to the details of the points just sketched above.

2 “Old” and “New” Cohabitation

Native and black populations in Latin America and the Caribbean have been known to have maintained patterns of union formation other than classic marriage. (e.g. Smith 1956; Roberts and Sinclair 1978). In the instance of American Indian indigenous populations, ethnographic evidence shows that they did not adhere to the group of populations with diverging devolution of property through women. As argued by J. Goody (1976), populations that pass on property via a dowry or an inheritance for daughters (i.e. populations with “diverging devolution” of family property via women) tend to stress premarital chastity, control union formation via arranged marriages, elaborate marriage ceremonies, and reduce the status of a married woman within the husband’s patriarchal household. Moreover they tend toward endogamous marriage (cross-cousin preference) or to caste or social class homogamy. Through these mechanisms the property “alienated” by daughters can still stay within the same lineage or clan or circulate within the same caste or social class. Populations that are hunter-gatherers or who practice agriculture on common community land, have fewer private possessions, no diverging devolution of property via dowries, no strict marriage arrangements or strict rules regarding premarital or extramarital sex. Instead, they tend to be more commonly polygamous with either polygyny or polyandry, have bride service or bride price instead of dowries, and practice levirate or even wife-lending. The dominance of the latter system among American natives can be gleaned from the materials brought together in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 was constructed on the basis of the 31 ethnic group references contained and coded in the G.P. Murdock and D.R. White “Ethnographic Atlas” (1969), and another 20 group specific descriptions gathered in the “Yale Human Areas Relation Files” (eHRAF 2010). Via these materials, which refer mainly to the first half of the twentieth century, we could group the various populations in broader ethnic clusters and geographical locations, and check the presence or absence of several distinguishing features of social organization.

Of the 41 *native groups* mentioned in these ethnographic samples, only one had an almost exclusively monogamous marriage pattern, whereas the others combined monogamy with polyandry often based on wife-lending, occasional polygyny associated with life cycle phases (e.g. associated with levirate), more common polygyny, or serial polygyny in the form of successive visiting unions. For 26 native Indian groups we have also information concerning the incidence of extramarital sex or of visiting unions. In only six of them these features were rare. Furthermore,

Table 2.1 Distribution of 51 ethnic populations according to selected characteristics of their marriages and sexual unions

Populations	Dominant type of union			Consensual unions and/or extramarital sex				
	Monogamy only	Monogamy + polyandry	Monogamy + occas. polygamy	Monogamy + common polygamy	Monogamy + visiting unions	Universal	Moderate	Occas./uncom.
Mexican/Centr. Ame. Indian (9)	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
Amazon/Oriñoco Indian (9)	0	1	7	1	0	3	3	0
Mato Grosso, Braz. Highlands, Gran Chaco (12)	0	5	6	1	0	5	1	2
Andes Indian (11)	0	1	6	4	0	3	1	2
New world Black&mixed (8)	0	0	2	0	6	7	0	0
European or upper class (2)	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
TOTAL (N=51)	3	10	23	7	8	20	9	6
Marriage mode								
Populations	Bride price / bride service			Women/sister exchange		None/gifts exchange	Dowry	Elaborate
	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
Mexican/Centr. Ame. Indian (9)	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
Amazon/Oriñoco Indian (9)	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Mato Grosso, Braz. Highlands, Gran Chaco (12)	7	3	2	0	0	0	0	2
Andes Indian (11)	2	0	1	0	0	0	–	–
New world Black&mixed (8)	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
European or upper class (2)	27	6	5	1	1	5	5	5

Source: Compiled by authors on the basis of 31 coded references in the G.P. Murdock and D.R. White "Ethnographic Atlas" Standard Cross Cultural Sample and 20 ethnic groups described in the Yale "Human Areas Relations Files" eHRAF electronic version

vnone have a dowry, which implies that the feature of diverging devolution is absent, and that, compared to their European colonizers, these populations are located on the other side of the “Goody divide”. As expected, they have the opposite pattern in which the prospective groom or the new husband has to render services to his in-laws or pay a certain sum of money to his wife’s kin. In a number of instances, there was also a custom of women or sister exchange in marriage between two bands or clans, and there were also instances with just gift exchanges or no exchanges at all. And finally, mentions of elaborate marriage ceremonies were only found among the references to Mexican or Central American indigenous groups, whereas the others had marriages with a simple ritual only, and often had a “marriage” as a gradual process rather than a single event.

The data presented in Table 2.1, however, essentially refer to smaller and more isolated indigenous populations who had maintained their lifestyles until the beginning of the twentieth century, and as a consequence they constitute a selective sample. At the time of the European conquests during the sixteenth century also large states existed (e.g. Aztec, Maya, Inca), which were both highly centralized and “ritualized”. These features facilitated the conversion to Christianity, and hence the adoption of a monogamous Christian marriage. By contrast, nomadic tribes and small indigenous populations in isolated places such as mountain canyons or the forest could maintain their traditions much longer and resist both, economic and administrative control from the center and the adoption of Christianity. These dualities help to explain the diverging historical tracks followed by indigenous populations. Furthermore, also the “mestization” of large numbers of them and the concentration of these populations in larger villages or around agricultural enterprises fostered conversion to Catholicism and the adoption of the Christian marriage pattern.

The story for the *New World black and mixed* populations is of course very different, since these populations were imported as slaves. As such they had to undergo the rules set by their European masters, or, when freed or eloped, they had to “reinvent” their own rules. When still in slavery, marriages and even unions were not encouraged by the white masters, given the lower labor productivity of pregnant women and mothers. And for as long as new imports remained cheap, there was little interest on the part of the owners in the natural growth of the estates’ slave population. The “reinvented” family patterns among eloped or freed black populations were often believed to be “African”, but in reality there are no instances where the distinct West African kinship patterns and concomitant patterns of social organization are reproduced (strict exogamy, widespread gerontocratic polygyny). Instead, there is a dominance of visiting unions, in which the woman only accepts a male partner for as long as he contributes financially or in kind to the household expenditures and where the children of successive partners stay with their mother. Not surprisingly, diverging devolution is equally absent among the New World black and mixed populations reviewed by our two ethnographic samples. In this regard, they do follow the pattern of West-African non-Islamized populations.

The *white colonial settler population or the upper social class* by contrast adhered to the principles of the European marriage (“Spanish marriage”, “Portuguese

nobres marriage") being monogamous, based on diverging devolution and hence with social class as well as preferred families endogamy. However, this European pattern was complemented with rather widespread concubinage, either with lower social class women or slaves (see for instance Borges 1985 and Beierle 1999; for the Bahia colonial upper class in Brazil and Twinam 1999; for several Spanish speaking populations). Children from such unions in Brazil could easily be legitimized by their fathers via a simple notary act (Borges 1985).

As indicated, the data of Table 2.1 should of course be taken as an illustration, and not as an exhaustive classification of Latin American ethnic populations. But, in our opinion, they clearly demonstrate that "marriage" as Eurasian societies know it, initially must have been a fairly irrelevant construct to both indigenous and New World black populations, and subsequently, just an ideal or a formal marker of social success.

So far, we have mainly dealt with the historical roots of the diverse patterns of union formation. But more needs to be said about the influence of institutional factors and immigration.

The Catholic church and the states generally tended to favor the "European" marriage pattern, but originally with quite some ambiguity. First, the Catholic clergy, and especially those in more distant parishes, did not observe the celibacy requirement that strictly. Second, many Christian and pre-Colombian practices were merged into highly syncretic devotions. The promotion of the Christian marriage was mainly the work of the religious orders (Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, and until the end of the eighteenth century also the Jesuits). At present, that promotion is vigorously carried out by the new Evangelical churches which have been springing up all over the continent since the 1950s, and most visibly in Brazil and Peru.

Also the role of the various states is often highly ambiguous. Generally, states copied the European legislations of the colonizing nations and hence "officially" promoted the classic European marriage, but more often than not this was accompanied by amendments that involved the recognition of consensual unions as a form of common law marriage and also of equal inheritance rights for children born in such unions. In Brazil, for instance, Portuguese law had already spelled out two types of family regulations as early as the sixteenth century (Philippine Code of 1603), namely laws pertaining to the property of notables (*nobres*) who married in church and transmitted significant property, and laws pertaining to the countryfolk (*peões*) who did not necessarily marry and continued to live in consensual unions (Borges 1985). Furthermore, it should also be stressed that many central governments were often far too weak to implement any consistent policy in favor of the European marriage pattern. Add to that the remoteness of many settlements and the lack of interest of local administrations to enforce the centrally enacted legislation.

However, as pointed out by Quilodrán (1999), it would be a major simplification to assume that this "old cohabitation" was a uniform trait in Latin American countries. Quite the opposite is true. In many areas, late nineteenth century and twentieth century mass European immigration (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German) to the emerging urban and industrial centers of the continent reintroduced the typical

Western European marriage pattern with monogamy, highly institutionally regulated marriage, condemnation of illegitimacy and low divorce. As a consequence, the European model was reinforced to a considerable extent and became part and parcel of the urban process of *embourgeoisement*. It is interesting to note that even the Communist party in Cuba initially wanted to promote classic European-style marriages. To this end, they considered erecting “marriage palaces” and organizing group marriages, so that also poorer people would be able to celebrate the event “with all the luxuries of a bourgeois wedding” (Martínez-Allier 1989: 140).

The combination of the various factors just outlined not only caused the incidence of cohabitation to vary widely geographically and in function of the ethnic mix, but also produced the emergence of a marked gradient by educational level and social class: the higher the level of education, the lower the incidence of cohabitation and the higher that of marriage. This negative cohabitation-education gradient is obviously essentially the result of historical developments and long term forces, and, as we shall illustrate shortly, found in every single one of the countries studied here. The gradient is not the outcome of a particular economic crisis or decade of stagnation (e.g. the 1980s and early 1990s).

3 The Latin American Cohabitation Boom: The National Trends

Latin American censuses have historically provided an explicit category for consensual unions (*uniones libres*, *uniones consensuales*). The examination of the questionnaires of all Latin American and Caribbean censuses conducted between the 1960s and 2000s reveals that in the vast majority of them cohabitants could be explicitly identified either through the variables ‘marital status’ (dominant approach) or ‘union status’ (quite common in Caribbean countries) or through a direct question (e.g. Brazil and recently in Argentina and Surinam). A methodological problem emerges, however, when individuals that cohabited in the past and were no longer in union at the time of the census report themselves as singles (Esteve et al. 2011). This clearly exaggerates the proportion of singles and affects the ratio between married and cohabitating couples as we observe ages that are increasingly distant from those in which union formation was more intense. To minimize bias, our analysis focuses on young ages, mainly 25–29.¹ However, cohabitation may not be an enduring state and subsequent transitions to marriage are often the rule. In such circumstances, those with early entries into a partnership may already be in the process of moving from cohabitation into marriage at ages 25–29, whereas those

¹ Age at union formation has remained remarkably stable in Latin America during the last few decades. This implies a process in which young cohorts substitute more and more non-marital cohabitation for marriage without modifying substantially the timing of union formation. Since we observe over time similar proportions of individuals in union by age, the rise of cohabitation among individuals aged 25–29 cannot be explained by changes in the timing of union formation.

with later partnering, such as the more educated, may still be in the process of moving from singlehood to cohabitation (Ni Brolchain and Beaujouan 2013). In that instance there would be a bias in favor of marriage for the less educated and in favor of cohabitation for those with longer educational careers. In the Latin American setting there is simply no increase in the proportions married in *any* of the education groups at *any* age, and hence this timing effect of entry into a partnership barely affects the outcomes that will be described. This is furthermore confirmed by inspecting the share of cohabitation in the next age group 30–34 and by following men aged 25–29 and 30–34 as well. In other words, the “quantum” effect (i.e. the sheer size of the ubiquitous rise in cohabitation) by far outweighs any tempo-related distortion.

Several researchers (e.g. Ruiz Salguero and Rodríguez Vignoli 2011; Rosero Bixby et al. 2009; López-Ruiz et al. 2008; Rodríguez Vignoli 2005; García and Rojas 2002) have used census data to explore cohabitation patterns in Latin America. Some of them did so on the basis of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) that have been collected and harmonized at the University of Minnesota Population Studies Center (Minnesota Population Center 2014). Also, estimates of the share of consensual unions among all unions were made by the US Census Bureau (2004) for the censuses of the 1950s and 1960s in a more limited number of countries.

Previous research reveals a remarkable rise of the share of consensual unions among all unions, and this rise most probably already starts during the 1960s in a number of countries (Fussell and Palloni 2004), involving both countries with an initially very low incidence of cohabitation and countries with higher levels. The early cohabitation shares reported by Fussell and Palloni pertain to the unions of women aged 20–29. These data indicate that Argentina (5.8% cohabitation of all unions in 1950), Uruguay (5.7% in 1960), Chile (3.0% in 1970) and Brazil (5.1% in 1960) belong to the former category. Peru (20.9% in 1960) and Colombia (13.5% in 1960) are typical examples of the latter group with later rises. However, countries with pre-existing high levels of what we have called “old cohabitation” did not witness the onset of such a trend until much later. Examples thereof are Guatemala (56.1% in 1950) or Venezuela (29.7% in 1950), the Dominican Republic (44.4% in 1960) or El Salvador (34.2% in 1960).

The results that will be reported from here onward stem from the extensive analysis of the harmonized Latin American census microdata samples available at IPUMS international (Minnesota Population Center 2014). This analysis uses as many census rounds between 1970 and 2010 as possible (see Appendix Table 2.8). Consequently, with the exception of few areas, the time series generally capture the initial rises of the share of cohabitation. The results are shown in Table 2.2 for 24 countries, and for men and women aged 25–29 and 30–34 respectively.

The data in Table 2.2 not only document the marked heterogeneity of Latin American countries at the onset, but also the acceleration in an already upward trend during the 1990s. There are essentially two groups of countries, i.e. countries that had a strong tradition of marriage with little cohabitation to start with, and countries in which cohabitation was more widespread and had stronger historical roots.

During the early 1960s (1970 census round) the share of cohabitation among all men or women 25–29 in a union varied between about 5 and 20 % in countries with low levels of “old cohabitation”, i.e. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay. However, a genuine cohabitation boom took place during the 1990s that drove up these percentages to levels between 25 and 70 %. The 1990s were particularly significant for Colombia where the share of cohabitation for women 25–29 jumps from about 20 % in 1973 to almost 50 in 1993 and over 65 in 2005. Less spectacular, but equally noteworthy are the large increments in Argentina and Brazil where the cohabitation shares initially remained fairly stable around 15 %, but then increased during the 1990s by about 30 percentage points compared to the 1970 figure. Increments over that period of about 20 percentage points are witnessed in Costa Rica and Chile. But the “late starters” are Mexico, Puerto Rico, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay with only modest rises till 2000.

The first decade of the twenty-first century is characterized by several further spectacular rises in the initially “low” group of countries. The latest census figures for the 2010 round indicate that the share of cohabitation passed the 50 % threshold in Brazil and Costa Rica, and that even the 60 % mark was amply passed in Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay. For Puerto Rico and Chile we have no 2010 data, but Mexico, the other late starter, was clearly catching up and coming close to a cohabitation share of 40 %.

Among the countries with about 30 % or more cohabitators among women or men 25–29 in unions in the 1970s census round, i.e. among those with sizeable categories of “old cohabitation”, there are also remarkable rises that took place during the last two decades. Clear examples thereof are the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru and even Panama which had the highest levels to start with in 1970.

For the remaining countries in Table 2.2 we have only one or two points of measurement, but according to the 2000 census round, most of them had a cohabitation share in excess of 35 % and up to about 60 % (highest: Cuba, Jamaica, Honduras, Nicaragua). Furthermore it should be noticed that several Central American countries tend to exhibit a status quo, but at high levels. This holds for Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, but as indicated above, not for Costa Rica and Panama where the upward trend was continued.

Judging from the most recent 2000 or 2010 figures, cohabitation has overtaken marriage among men 25–29 in 16 of the 23 countries (no data for men in Trinidad and Tobago), and among women 25–29 in 13 of the 24 countries considered here. In 1970 there was only one case (Panama) among 12 countries with a cohabitation share in excess of 50 %, and in 1980 there were only 2 (Dominican Republic and Panama) among 13 countries.

Finally, it should also be noted that the figures for the next age group, i.e. 30–34, are roughly 10–15 percentage points lower. There are two competing explanations for this feature. First, the drop off could be due to the post-cohabitation transition into marriage, and this would be indicative of cohabitation being only a transient state as in several European countries. Alternatively, it can be explained by a cohort effect with the older generation having experienced less cohabitation when they were in their late twenties. This explanation is particularly likely in periods of rapid

Table 2.2 Percent cohabiting among all persons in a union (married+cohabiting), 25–34, by sex and census round, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1970–2010

	25–29					30–34				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Men										
Argentina	13.1	14.9	25.9	48.7	72.2	10.9	12.2	20.9	33.2	54.6
Belize	—	—	—	44.9	—	—	—	—	36.9	—
Bolivia	—	—	—	41.1	—	—	—	—	28.6	—
Brazil	7.2	13.3	25.2	45.5	57.3	6.5	11.3	19.5	35.4	47.3
Chile	4.4	6.2	12.1	29.3	—	4.2	5.8	9.6	20.4	—
Colombia	20.3	36.4	54.8	73.0	—	18.6	30.5	46.1	62.1	—
Costa Rica	17.0	20.1	—	38.1	56.0	15.3	18.0	—	29.8	42.4
Cuba	—	—	—	62.1	—	—	—	—	54.6	—
Dominican Rep.	—	64.5	—	73.1	83.3	—	60.5	—	66.3	76.4
Ecuador	27.2	29.9	31.3	41.5	52.9	24.8	27.6	28.6	36.4	44.5
El Salvador	—	—	57.7	—	60.8	—	—	50.3	—	49.5
Guatemala	—	—	39.1	39.3	—	—	—	36.1	34.4	—
Guyana	—	—	—	50.8	—	—	—	—	46.3	—
Honduras	—	—	—	60.7	—	—	—	—	53.4	—
Jamaica	—	—	—	69.9	—	—	—	—	58.4	—
Mexico	16.6	—	16.2	25.0	41.7	14.6	—	12.6	19.6	30.8
Nicaragua	44.8	—	60.1	61.0	—	39.3	—	51.8	52.4	—
Panama	58.4	54.9	58.8	70.2	79.7	57.5	52.4	50.5	58.3	68.2
Paraguay	—	28.7	31.1	47.4	—	—	21.7	25.85	39.59	—
Peru	—	32.7	50.7	—	76.6	—	23.2	37.5	—	62.7
Puerto Rico	8.1	6.2	13.5	—	—	8.0	5.1	11.0	—	—
Trinidad & Tob.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Uruguay	10.0	14.7	—	27.7	77.1	9.0	13.4	—	20.7	61.2
Venezuela	30.6	34.1	38.7	56.4	—	30.6	32.8	35.3	47.7	—
Women										
Argentina	11.1	13.0	22.5	41.3	65.5	10.1	11.5	19.5	28.7	48.1
Belize	—	—	—	41.1	—	—	—	—	35.4	—
Bolivia	—	—	—	34.7	—	—	—	—	23.4	—
Brazil	7.6	13.0	22.2	39.3	51.1	7.1	11.7	19.0	31.6	43.5
Chile	4.6	6.7	11.4	24.6	—	4.6	6.5	11.0	18.3	—
Colombia	19.7	33.2	49.2	65.6	—	18.2	28.4	42.4	56.6	—
Costa Rica	16.8	19.4	—	32.6	48.5	16.1	17.3	—	26.3	37.7
Cuba	—	—	—	55.8	—	—	—	—	50.0	—
Dominican Rep	—	60.8	—	67.6	78.4	—	55.2	—	61.1	71.3
Ecuador	27.0	29.4	30.1	37.4	47.4	25.3	26.8	27.5	32.5	40.1
El Salvador	—	—	53.1	—	53.7	—	—	48.1	—	44.4

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

	25–29					30–34				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Guatemala	—	—	37.2	37.1	—	—	—	35.3	33.4	—
Guyana	—	—	—	47.23	—	—	—	—	42.92	—
Honduras	—	—	—	55.5	—	—	—	—	49.7	—
Jamaica	—	—	—	61.3	—	—	—	—	51.8	—
Mexico	15.3	—	15.2	22.7	37.1	14.2	—	12.5	18.6	28.1
Nicaragua	42.8	—	54.9	55.5	—	36.0	—	49.6	49.4	—
Panama	58.9	52.3	53.2	62.5	73.9	53.8	51.0	49.3	54.1	62.6
Paraguay	—	20.6	27.5	36.5	—	—	19.4	23.3	31.0	—
Peru	—	29.2	43.1	—	69.8	—	21.9	31.9	—	56.1
Puerto Rico	8.5	5.3	12.0	—	—	6.6	4.7	10.1	—	—
Trinidad & Tob.	—	—	24.9	31.9	37.6	—	—	22.4	25.4	27.8
Uruguay	9.6	14.1	—	23.6	70.7	7.8	13.3	—	18.8	53.7
Venezuela	30.8	32.6	36.9	51.6	—	31.2	32.6	34.9	45.2	—

Notes: Uruguay: results of the Extended National Surveys of Homes of 2006: Males 25–29 (60.7%); M 30–34 (44.3%); Females 25–29 (53.8%); F 30–34 (36.9%)

Guatemala: results of the Survey of Employment and Income of 2012: Males 25–29 (37.9%); M 30–34 (37.4%); Females 25–29 (39.3%); F 30–34 (35.2%)

Trinidad and Tobago only provides union status for women. Census 2011 includes visiting unions as consensual unions

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and National Statistical Offices

change. In this instance cohort profiles should be layered horizontally rather than dropping off with age, meaning that each generation climbs a step further upward with respect to the incidence of cohabitation. This would, furthermore be indicative of cohabitation being a much more permanent state over the life cycle of individuals. Note, however, that such stability of cohabitation over age and time does not imply stability with the same partner.

The availability of several successive censuses permits the reconstruction of the cohort profiles stretching over the entire adult life span. It should be noted, however, that this is a reconstruction at the macro level, and that no individual transitions are recorded (a life table analysis of individual cohabitation durations would then be needed). Nevertheless, the cohort profiles are still very instructive, as can be seen from the reconstructions for Brazil and Mexico in Fig. 2.1.

The Brazilian age distributions of the share of cohabitants among all partnered women are dramatically moving up at *all* ages during the window of observation between 1960 and 2010. For all cohorts up to the one born in 1980, this results in flat rather than downward slopes of cohort profiles starting at age 20, and the gap between the successive generations also widens with the arrival of the younger ones born between 1960 and 1980. All of this is illustrative of a very clear generation driven pattern of social change, with cohabitation being a much more enduring state

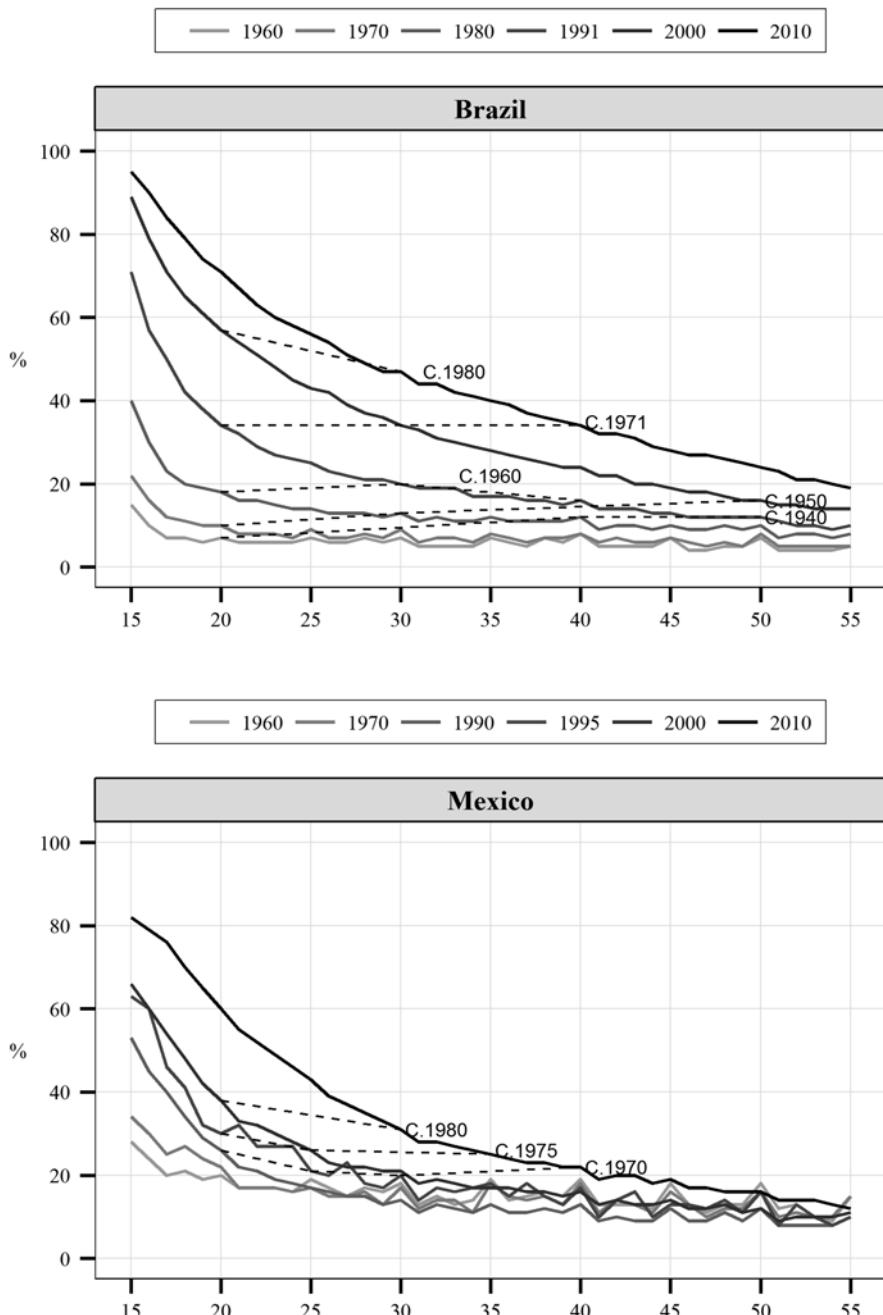


Fig. 2.1 Age distributions of the share of cohabitation for all women in a union and corresponding cohort profiles (C.). Brazil and Mexico, 1960–2010

Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International

over long periods in the life cycle. In other words, cohabitation is not just a matter of a short spell of partnership trial(s) but more like a marriage substitute. The slightly upward slopes for the older cohorts may also be indicative of older women moving into cohabitation following a marriage interruption due to divorce or widowhood. The cohort born in 1980, by contrast, shows the downward slope which is normally associated with greater fractions moving from cohabitation to marriage. For this younger Brazilian cohort, which starts at a much higher level of cohabitation in their early twenties than their predecessors, there may still be some shift associated with a pattern of “trial marriage” going on.

The Mexican data for the earlier censuses are based on a one percent sample only, which explains their bumpier patterns. This, however, does not affect the basic interpretation of what happened. Firstly, Mexico’s later take-off is very clearly in evidence with the initial cohort lines being fairly undifferentiated. The big change comes between 2000 and 2010, when the share of cohabitation increases for all ages, including the older ones. This not only means that the later cohorts born after 1970 become more differentiated, but also that the cohorts born in the 1970s have increasing rather than decreasing percentages cohabiting after the age of 25. Secondly, the same feature is found as for the youngest cohort in Brazil: a downward profile between age 20 and 30. Evidently, also in Mexico, as many more younger women initiate a partnership via cohabitation, a larger segment of them converts their consensual union into a marriage. However, this movement among the youngest cohort does not at all prevent them from reaching higher levels of cohabitation by age 30.

4 The Education Gradient

We have already pointed out that the negative cross-sectional gradient of cohabitation with rising female education is a historical reflection of ethnic and social class differentials in Latin American and Caribbean countries. This negative slope is found in *all* countries considered here, and as the data of Fig. 2.2 indicate, this was already clearly in evidence prior to the post-1970 cohabitation boom.

Taken individually, each of the negative gradients in Fig. 2.2 could be interpreted as the manifestation of the “pattern of disadvantage”. However, given the often spectacular rises since the 1970s, this interpretation would fall considerably short of accurately representing the situation. In fact, in *all* countries and in *all* education groups there is such an increase in the share of cohabitation. This obviously includes sometimes dramatic catching up among women with completed secondary and completed university educations. Such increases at the top educational layers obviously cannot be taken as a manifestation of a “pattern of disadvantage”. Clearly, there is a substantial amount of “new cohabitation” that developed on top of the historical “old cohabitation” during the last four decades.

There are, however, substantial differences among the countries represented in Fig. 2.2 Brazil, for instance, is the only country in which the largest rise of the share

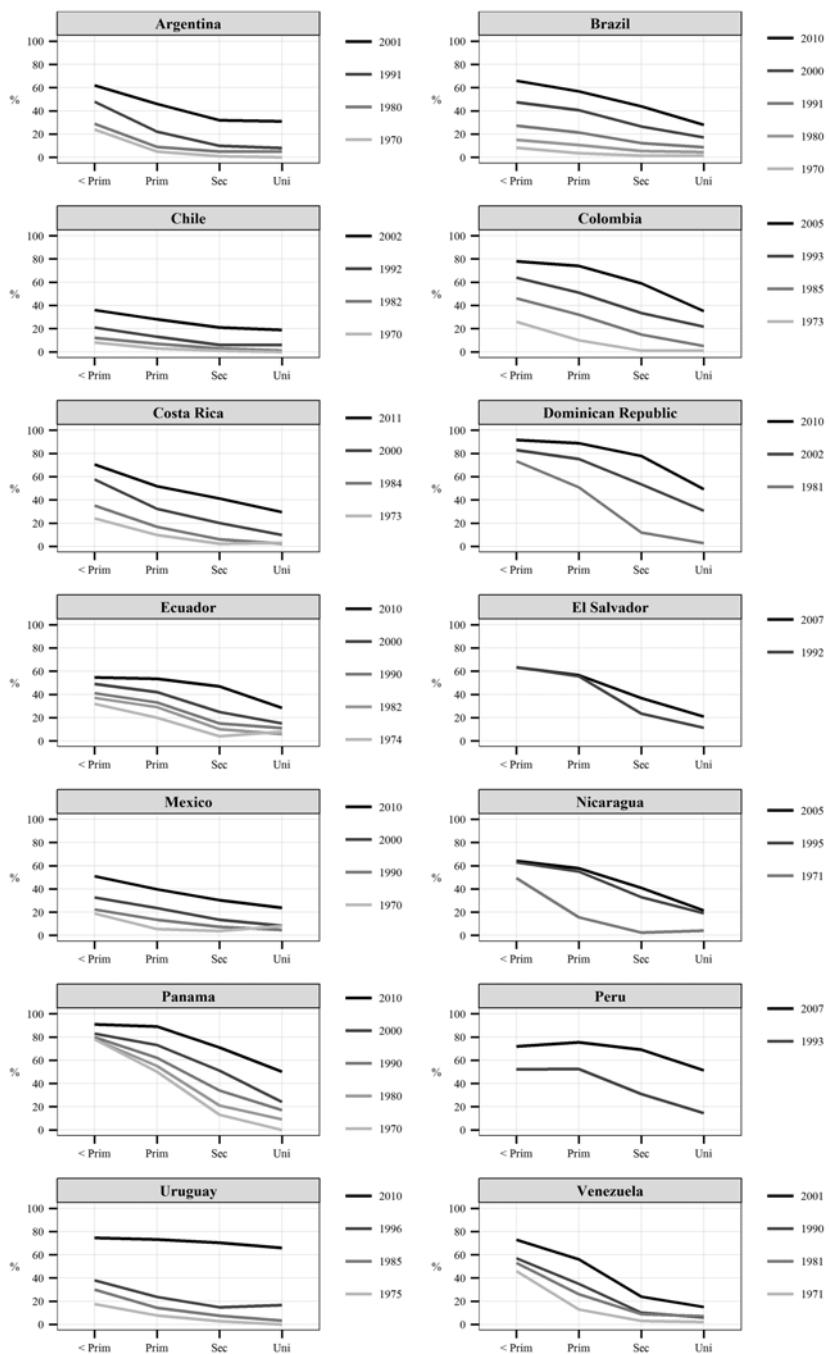


Fig. 2.2 Share of cohabitation among all unions of women 25–29 by level of completed education, country and census round (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International and National Statistical Offices)

of cohabitation of partnered women 25–29 is still to be found among women with incomplete primary education. Over the 40 years span, i.e. from 1970 to 2010, Brazilian women with secondary and higher education are the more reluctant ones to swap marriage for cohabitation. This does, however, not stop such women to increase their cohabitation share from virtually zero in 1970 to some 35 % in 2010.

Venezuela comes closest to the Brazilian pattern, but the largest increment is found among women with completed primary education. Also in this country, the catching up of cohabitation among women with completed secondary or higher education is modest, and of the order of 20 percentage points over three decades.

The next group of countries is made up of cases in which the increments are roughly of equal importance in all four education groups. This group comprises Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico. These are all countries with overall low levels of cohabitation to start with, but with an original “pattern of disadvantage”. Given similar increments in all groups, this negative gradient is maintained throughout. The Colombian pattern of change over three decades is also quite evenly spread over the various education categories, but the successive increments are much larger than in the previous countries. Moreover, the growth is most pronounced in the middle education categories. Similarly, also Ecuador provides an example with the largest increment for women with completed secondary education, but the overall rise is more modest than in neighboring Colombia. In the other Andean country, Peru, the current pattern of 2007 has become almost flat for the first three education groups at no less than 70 % cohabiting. Women 25–29 with completed tertiary education have crossed the 50 % mark, which was about the level for Peruvian women with no more than primary education in 1993.

The case of Uruguay merits attention in its own right. In 1975, the country also exhibited the classic negative gradient with education, but at low levels for all groups, i.e. not exceeding 20 %. During the next 20 years, the growth was modest and very even. But between 1996 and 2010, a truly spectacular shift occurred from marriage to cohabitation, resulting in an almost flat gradient located at 70 % cohabitation and only 30 % marriage for women 25–29. Among women with completed tertiary education, Uruguay now has the highest percentage cohabiting women 25–29 of all the countries considered here, including the ones with long histories of traditional cohabitation.

The last group of countries is composed of those with long traditions of cohabitation especially among the less educated social classes. These countries are typically in Central America or the Caribbean: Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama. In all four countries the original gradient, measured as of 1970, was very steep, with a share of cohabitation in the 50–90 % range for the lowest education group, and a share not exceeding 12 % for their small group of women with completed university education. In all instances, women with completed secondary education or more have been catching up. In El Salvador, this gain was very modest.

Fig. 2.2 (continued) Notes: < Prim Less than Primary Completed, *Prim* Primary Completed, *Sec* Secondary Completed, *Uni* University Completed. Some college is included in university completed in Colombia 1993. There is no category for less than primary in Jamaica 2001. We do not have data on educational attainment for Guatemala 1994, Paraguay 1982–1992 and Peru 1981

Table 2.3 Percentages of women 25–29 with completed primary and completed secondary education by country and census round

Women	Completed primary or more					Completed secondary or more				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Argentina	68.5	79.1	89.4	93.7	94.2	6.6	15.9	27.5	53.2	60.1
Belize	–	–	–	70.2	–	–	–	–	30.0	–
Bolivia		27.5	63.8	72.2	–	–	7.9	24.6	37.9	–
Brazil	14.6	33.9	53.1	62.9	84.0	7.3	17.8	27.3	34.2	56.4
Chile	60.3	79.8	88.8	94.3	–	12.7	30.1	41.8	55.9	–
Colombia	41.6	68.8	77.3	86.0	–	7.5	25.4	31.6	55.8	–
Costa Rica	50.6	78.9	–	84.6	89.4	8.2	15.2	–	31.6	48.3
Cuba	–	–	–	98.8	–	–	–	–	59.0	–
Dominican Republic	–	58.3	–	74.6	85.2	–	22.9	–	45.0	56.5
Ecuador	38.9	61.5	76.7	80.2	88.8	8.5	20.9	33.9	37.6	50.5
El Salvador	–	54.0	–	–	65.8	–	22.7	–	30.8	–
Guatemala	–	–	–	42.0	–	–	–	–	16.2	–
Honduras	–	–	–	85.8	–	–	–	–	30.3	–
Jamaica	–	–	–	98.0	–	–	–	–	82.0	–
Mexico	29.2	–	70.2	85.9	90.8	2.6	–	22.6	30.6	41.2
Nicaragua	19.5	–	54.2	60.8	–	4.7	–	19.3	28.6	–
Panama	56.3	73.9	86.4	88.3	91.4	13.8	28.7	44.2	49.6	59.8
Paraguay	–	–	–	76.6	–	–	–	–	31.4	–
Peru	–	–	70.0	–	85.6	–	–	49.2	–	65.1
Puerto Rico	79.1	91.7	97.3	98.5		40.7	65.6	78.7	85.1	
Trinidad & Tobago	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Uruguay	72.7	89.0	91.5		96.2	21.6	33.4	36.9		41.9
Venezuela	45.8	70.2	79.5	87.7	–	3.2	13.4	18.7	27.4	–

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and National Statistical Offices

In Nicaragua the increment among the middle education groups is already much more pronounced, but this rise occurred essentially between 1971 and 1995, and not so much thereafter. The other two countries in this group with a long cohabitation tradition, i.e. the Dominican Republic and Panama, provide examples of further increments above the initial 70–80 % cohabitation among the least educated women 25–29. This is remarkable given the high levels to start with. However, even more striking is the very substantial catching up in all the other education categories. University educated women 25–29 in both Panama and the Dominican Republic now have an equal 50–50 share of cohabitation and marriage, whereas the middle categories have reached percentages between 70 and 90, i.e. nearly as high as those in the lowest education group.

The upward shifts of the share of cohabitation during the last three or four decades have occurred in tandem with very considerable improvements in education among women in these countries. This can be gleaned from the data in Table 2.3 representing the percentages of all women 25–29 who have completed either

full primary or full secondary education. The point here of course is that the group of women with less than complete primary education have become more marginal, and that women with full primary education of today basically belong to the same social strata as those with no or incomplete primary education three decades ago.

Considering these major improvements in educational levels described in Table 2.3 in tandem with a negative education gradient for the prevalence of cohabitation, one would project declining overall proportions cohabiting and rising proportions being married. Of course, just the opposite has happened, and quite dramatically so. In other words, the effect of a changing educational composition of the population did not at all work out in the expected direction. Hence, all the changes in cohabitation in Latin America are due to individual changes, and not at all due to the educational composition change.

Now that an explanation based on such a composition shift can be discarded completely, we need to explore other avenues to account for the spectacular rises in cohabitation in all these countries, regions and social strata.

5 Explaining the Rise in Cohabitation

A useful framework for the analysis of any new form of behavior is the “ready, willing and able” (RWA) one used by Coale (1973) to interpret the historical European fertility transition, and elaborated by Lesthaeghe and Vanderhoeft (2001) to accommodate heterogeneity and the time dimension. The “Readiness” condition states that the new form of behavior must have an economic or psychological advantage, and hence refers to the cost-benefit calculus of a particular action compared to its alternatives. The “Willingness” condition, by contrast, refers to the religious and/or ethical legitimacy of the new form of behavior. And the “Ability” condition states that there must be technical and legal means available which permit the realization of that “innovation”. Note, however, that the RWA-conditions must be met *jointly* before a transition to a new form will take place. It suffices for one condition not being met or lagging for the whole process of change coming to a halt.

In the instance of cohabitation, a number of economic advantages are easily identified. First, compared to legal marriage, cohabitation is an “easy in, easy out” solution. This implies, more specifically, (i) that considerable costs are saved by avoiding more elaborate marriage ceremonies, (ii) that parents and relatives or friends are presented with the outcome of individual partner choice as a *fait accompli*, and (iii) that the exit costs from cohabitation, both financial and psychological, are considerably lower than in the case of a legal divorce. In other words, cohabitation is the quicker and cheaper road to both sexual partnership and economies of scale. And in many instances, such shorter term advantages may indeed weigh up against the main advantage of marriage, being a firmer longer term commitment.

In addition to these general economic advantages, the rise in cohabitation can also be a response to the economic downturns of the 1980s and the slow recovery of the 1990s. Potential couples in these instances could postpone entry into a union of

any type. Alternatively they could opt for the easier and cheaper version, and therefore choose cohabitation. Furthermore, the transition from cohabitation to marriage could be delayed and even forgone as a result of unfavorable economic circumstances. The latter two instances would lead to a rise in the share of cohabitation among all persons in a union.

Within the RWA framework, a basic change in the readiness condition, as described above, would not be sufficient. Concomitant changes in the other two conditions are equally necessary. In the Latin American context, we would therefore expect to identify major cultural changes as well, particularly related to ethics and morality, thereby lifting the stigma on certain forms of behavior, including cohabitation. Most likely, such changes are accompanied by further secularization and by changes in attitudes toward gender relations.

We address the readiness and willingness conditions in the next two sections. Discussion of the ability condition, which would require a detailed study of legal provisions and changes affecting the status of consensual unions, is beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say that national differences in trends related to cohabitation can also be the result of differences or shifts in such legal and institutional factors (cf. Vassallo 2011).

5.1 Cohabitation as a Response to Economic Shocks

Latin America has been characterized by both widespread social and economic inequalities and turbulent macroeconomic performance. After a period of dictatorships, a number of Latin American countries “re-democratized”, but policies aimed at diminishing the large differentials in standards of living resulted in inflation and outbursts of hyperinflation (Bittencourt 2012). Attempts at income redistribution during this populist phase were conducted through unfunded public deficits, which led to massive inflation, and ultimately to even greater inequality as the poor were affected more than the rich. In such instances the benefits of economic development realized before 1980 were often lost.

The timing, duration and severity of the periods of hyperinflation varied considerably from country to country. Roughly speaking, we can identify two patterns. The first was characterized by a very long period of inflation, but at peak annual levels during the 1980s that were generally below 30 %. The second pattern is a short period of inflation of such high intensity that money became worthless overnight. Peak levels of 1000 % inflation in a given year were common (Singh et al. 2005; Adsera and Menendez 2011). Obviously, the effect of such inflation spikes is felt for many years, and in the Latin American case, well into the 1990s. Examples of long duration inflation are Chile (already starting during the Allende presidency) and Colombia (Singh et al. 2005: 4). Examples of virulent hyperinflation are Brazil (2950 % in 1990), Argentina (3080 % in 1989), Peru (7490 % in 1990) and Bolivia (11750 % in 1985). Such figures provide ample reason to advance the thesis that economic conditions could have been primary causes of the rise of the share of cohabitation in Latin America.

We mention three caveats regarding this explanation, however. As argued by Fussell and Palloni (2004) ages at first union remained remarkably stable throughout the second half of the twentieth century and show a surprisingly low elasticity to such economic disturbances. The authors assert that economic conditions accelerated the fertility decline, but that, “*as it has been for many centuries, the marriage and kinship system in Latin America continues to provide a system of nonmonetary exchange that parallels rather than competes with market systems.*” (p.1211). In their opinion, the nuptiality system would provide a buffer against economic hardship, for both elites and the bulk of the population. But their research focuses on the stable ages at first union, not on the shift from marriage to cohabitation. Viewed from the latter perspective, much more “internal” change took place within the nuptiality system, and it remains possible that the more turbulent 1980s and early 1990s are at least partially responsible for accelerating the shift from marriage to cohabitation.

Our second caveat concerns the timing of both features, inflation and the rise of cohabitation. In two of the countries considered here, Brazil and Colombia, the largest increase in percentages cohabiting occurred during the 1970s, well before the shocks of the 1980s. During that decade, these percentages cohabiting continued to grow, but in two different inflation regimes. The Brazilian hyperinflation peak of almost 3000% occurred in 1990, by which time the cohabitation share for women 25–29 had nearly tripled from some 8% to 22% (see Table 2.1). In Colombia, the 1980s inflation peak was much lower, at 33%, and also long-term inflation was low by Latin American standards – 16% per annum for the second half of the twentieth century (Adsera and Menendez 2011: 40). Yet Colombia experienced the most pronounced increase in cohabitation, from around 20% in 1970 to almost 50% before the 1990 inflation maximum.

The two countries with the largest increments in cohabitation in the 1980s are Argentina and Puerto Rico. The former saw a hyperinflation peak of over 3000% in 1989 and average annual inflation rates for the 50 years prior to 2003 of 184% (*ibidem*). Puerto Rico, by contrast, experienced nothing comparable to Argentinean inflation levels, yet still recorded a noticeable rise in cohabitation before 1990. The Chilean example is also worth noting. Chile had an early hyperinflation peak of about 500% during the 1970s, and again a more modest rise in the 1980s. Yet, Chile does not have the steepest rise in cohabitation by the year 2000. Similarly, also Mexico had its take off phase of cohabitation during the 1990s, and not a decade earlier when it had its high inflation regime.

The conclusion from these comparisons is the absence of a clear correlation between the timing and rise in cohabitation on the one hand, and the timing of inflation peaks or the overall rate of inflation on the other. Admittedly, a more precise time-series analysis is not possible since annual cohabitation rates, unlike marriage rates, cannot be computed. The entry into a consensual union is by definition an unrecorded event. The most one can say is that inflation and hyperinflation may have been general catalysts that strengthened the trend in the shift from marriage to cohabitation, but other causes must have been present as well.

Our third caveat points even more strongly in that direction. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, inflation rates in Latin American countries have fallen to much lower levels than during the 1980–1995 era, and yet, the upward trend in cohabitation has not abated. In fact, as the results for the 2010 census round indicate, the opposite holds to a striking degree in Uruguay, Argentina, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Mexico where a high rate of increase in cohabitation has been maintained (Table 2.1). Even Panama, which had the highest incidence of cohabitation throughout the entire study period, witnessed a further increase in cohabitation during the first decade of the new Century. Hence, it is now very clear from the 2010 census round that the rise in cohabitation is a fundamental systemic alteration and not merely a reaction to economic shocks.

5.2 *Lifting the Stigma: Cohabitation and Ideational Change*

As the RWA-framework posits, the switch to larger shares of cohabitation in all strata of the population would not have occurred had a major stigma against cohabitation persisted. Hence, the “willingness” condition must have changed in the direction of greater tolerance. Responses to the World Values Surveys indeed suggest the occurrence of a major change in crucial features of the ideational domain. We now turn to that evidence.

The European (EVS) and World Values Studies (WVS) have a long tradition often going back to the 1980s to measure major ethical, religious, social and political dimensions of the cultural system. Most Latin American countries have only one wave of the WVS, and a single cross-section is of course inadequate for our purposes. Moreover, unlike the EVS, the WVS-surveys measure current cohabitation only (“living as married”) but fails to catch the “ever cohabited” state, thereby confounding married persons with and without cohabitation experience.²

For three Latin American countries with large shares of post-1960s “new” cohabitation we can at least follow the trend over time with an interval of 15 years. Argentina and Brazil had WVS waves in 1991 and 2006, and Chile in 1990 and 2006, with a subset of questions being repeated across the two surveys. Several of these questions are of particular relevance for our purposes since they shed light on the changes occurring in the various age groups in values pertaining to ethics, secularization and gender relations.

In Table 2.4 we have brought together the WVS results for the 1990–1991 and 2006 waves with respect to five ethical issues. For three broad age groups and both sexes we have measured the percentages that consider as inadmissible (“never justified”) the following actions: divorce, abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia and

²That problem is particularly important for countries where much cohabitation is of the “new” type. These countries are more similar to the European ones, for which the insertion of the “ever cohabited” question in the EVS revealed very stark contrasts in values orientations between those who ever and never cohabited (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 2004).

Table 2.4 Attitudinal changes in ethical issues in three Latin American countries, by age and sex, 1990–2006

		Men					Women				
		≤29	30–49	50+	Total	N	≤29	30–49	50+	Total	N
Never justified: Euthanasia											
Argentina	1991	43.3	53.4	62.0	53.6	453	46.8	57.1	72.2	59.9	491
	2006	36.3	38.2	52.0	42.1	382	36.2	39.1	58.9	45.2	434
Chile	1990	51.9	62.6	72.8	61.0	700	58.7	65.2	75.9	65.7	760
	2006	25.7	34.1	48.9	36.7	411	35.1	33.0	50.0	39.4	510
Brazil	1991	58.2	59.2	73.2	62.0	811	60.8	70.4	79.2	68.6	869
	2006	41.4	48.8	47.1	46.0	611	50.4	50.3	56.3	51.9	855
Never justified: Homosexuality											
Argentina	1991	52.7	58.8	70.4	61.2	448	42.3	56.4	73.9	59.0	505
	2006	24.8	27.5	50.4	33.5	400	16.7	23.9	40.5	27.6	449
Chile	1990	71.8	75.6	83.6	76.1	703	71.4	77.5	86.2	77.6	774
	2006	17.5	24.6	36.0	26.4	425	13.9	21.6	32.7	23.2	512
Brazil	1991	74.7	70.1	84.9	75.2	888	57.6	62.3	76.6	63.6	867
	2006	35.8	32.5	38.7	35.3	606	22.6	27.6	37.4	28.6	838
Never justified: Abortion											
Argentina	1991	45.0	39.1	50.0	44.6	446	38.3	39.9	58.2	45.9	518
	2006	49.6	50.0	64.7	54.7	430	44.0	53.8	68.2	56.1	490
Chile	1990	69.3	76.7	78.8	74.5	709	73.8	74.6	82.0	76.2	783
	2006	43.0	53.7	63.8	54.2	432	49.6	53.6	72.1	58.9	533
Brazil	1991	59.6	59.0	67.5	61.1	890	61.7	68.5	74.9	67.3	887
	2006	55.8	65.0	62.7	61.5	613	59.5	65.6	68.5	64.5	866
Never justified: Divorce											
Argentina	1991	20.0	20.8	31.9	24.5	461	14.1	23.2	30.6	23.4	518
	2006	13.5	16.8	24.8	18.3	427	9.9	13.4	21.2	15.2	499
Chile	1990	36.4	49.5	50.3	44.8	707	42.0	44.3	58.8	47.3	780
	2006	15.3	13.0	27.5	18.3	437	8.0	13.7	26.2	16.5	533
Brazil	1991	28.8	26.5	42.2	30.9	883	25.1	32.6	45.5	32.6	881
	2006	14.6	21.1	22.0	19.3	612	12.6	20.5	26.0	19.6	859
Never justified: Suicide											
Argentina	1991	76.7	80.1	84.7	80.8	458	78.9	81.4	89.4	83.7	496
	2006	58.5	46.1	79.4	71.6	408	69.5	74.4	85.0	76.8	462
Chile	1990	73.3	78.9	85.4	78.3	706	77.9	85.0	86.9	83.0	782
	2006	48.2	60.0	65.7	58.7	426	52.6	61.5	75.0	63.8	517
Brazil	1991	83.1	89.3	92.0	87.5	890	85.5	92.7	92.5	89.9	888
	2006	64.9	77.8	79.7	74.3	619	71.2	78.1	78.7	76.2	864

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the 1990 and 2005 rounds of the World Values Survey data files

suicide. With the exception of abortion in Argentina and Brazil, there are major changes in the direction of greater tolerance, and in many, there is just about a landslide with reductions in the percentages “never justified” of 10 to over 50 percentage points. Furthermore, these changes are often just as large among the older men and women (50+) as among the younger ones.

By far the largest change noted in all three countries is the increase in tolerance toward homosexuality. The percentages who consider this as “never justified” are halved or, as in Chile, have been reduced to a third or even a quarter of their 1990 levels. In addition, a similar landslide can also be noted with respect to euthanasia. It equally occurs in the three countries, among both sexes and in all age groups. The change is again most pronounced in Chile. The reductions in percentages rejecting suicide and divorce are more modest compared to the massive change in the previous two items, but still very substantial and found in all age groups. And, as noted above, only the attitudes toward abortion show a mixed picture, with greater tolerance emerging in Chile, but not in Brazil and Argentina.

The latter exception notwithstanding, the data in Table 2.4 clearly indicate that a massive attitude change has taken place during the last two decades in favor of greater tolerance to forms of behavior or interventions that were largely tabooed before. This is obviously a cultural change which is entirely in line with what the theory of the “Second demographic transition” predicted (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 2004; Lesthaeghe 2010).

The next set of items deals with secularization. The results for three sub-dimensions are given in Table 2.5: church attendance, roles of the church, and individual prayer. In all instances we measured the percentages who are at the secular end of the spectrum (no attendance, no prayer, church gives no answers). The results for the four items in Table 2.5 are very clear in the Chilean case: secularization has advanced to a remarkable degree and the trend is entirely in line with those described for the ethical issues in Table 2.5. The evidence for Argentina is more attenuated. There is a major increase in non-attendance, but a much more modest increase in doubts about the church being capable of addressing family issues and in men reporting no moments of private prayer or meditation. By contrast the church’s capacity to address social problems seems not to have suffered in Argentina.

The Brazilian outcome differs substantially from the previous two countries: the landslide toward greater ethical tolerance is not matched by advancing secularization. Compared to the 1990 WVS-round, the 2006 one indicates falling percentages of persons never or very rarely attending church and falling percentages of persons doubting the role of the church. In fact, there is a clear rise in the proportions thinking that the church has a role to play in family matters. Only the percentages without moments of prayer and meditation have not changed in any significant direction. Overall, the Brazilian lack of secularization is not in line with international trends.

The results for four classic attitudinal items regarding family and gender are reported in Table 2.6. The Chilean results are again the most striking and totally in line with the expected trend: a sharp increase for men and women of all ages who consider marriage an outdated institution, a parallel decrease of respondents considering that a child needs both a father and mother, a marked increase of persons dis-

Table 2.5 Attitudinal changes regarding religion and secularization in three Latin American countries, by age and sex, 1990-2006

		Men					Women				
		≤29	30–49	50+	Total	N	≤29	30–49	50+	Total	N
Church attendance = never or less than once a year (%)											
Argentina	1991	45.6	33.0	30.8	35.2	275	31.5	18.1	26.0	24.0	383
	2006	73.3	58.3	65.6	65.5	467	46.5	36.8	25.0	34.9	535
Chile	1990	61.2	50.2	38.7	51.5	714	36.2	27.7	23.3	29.5	786
	2006	76.1	55.9	55.7	61.1	425	47.9	39.2	23.8	36.2	542
Brazil	1991	46.0	45.8	35.4	43.5	892	34.3	31.5	16.0	29.1	890
	2006	38.5	38.7	34.3	37.3	624	25.7	21.9	19.9	20.9	870
Church gives answers to social problems (% No)											
Argentina	1991	72.6	72.3	56.8	66.8	407	68.3	62.6	48.7	55.4	448
	2006	72.8	63.6	63.5	66.5	391	67.4	57.7	438	55.4	466
Chile	1990	29.3	25.1	15.6	22.8	663	32.0	22.9	21.1	25.7	723
	2006	70.3	57.9	55.3	60.4	407	57.0	51.5	44.1	50.3	509
Brazil	1991	66.7	64.9	46.4	61.4	858	67.0	59.2	40.8	55.9	829
	2006	64.4	50.2	48.8	54.3	606	56.2	54.4	44.6	52.4	842
Church gives answers to problems of the family (% No)											
Argentina	1991	60.0	62.3	44.1	55.5	407	54.4	47.7	39.4	46.6	465
	2006	63.1	58.2	58.1	59.7	397	60.8	58.6	44.3	53.9	475
Chile	1990	22.1	16.0	13.0	17.5	668	18.6	18.5	14.0	17.4	743
	2006	59.6	47.9	43.9	49.9	413	51.9	42.9	38.7	43.7	517
Brazil	1991	55.0	55.3	45.9	53.0	860	54.1	41.4	32.1	44.3	844
	2006	34.2	29.0	26.5	29.9	608	27.2	27.0	25.2	26.6	854
Moments of prayer or meditation (% No)											
Argentina	1991	38.5	34.5	26.1	32.6	466	28.5	16.6	10.9	17.7	526
	2006	44.6	34.2	32.7	37.0	462	23.6	14.4	6.6	14.1	532
Chile	1990	27.0	18.2	14.4	20.5	706	16.3	8.9	2.0	9.7	784
	2006	45.8	29.9	22.6	31.8	443	24.6	17.5	5.9	15.3	543
Brazil	1991	15.5	15.1	10.0	14.1	887	13.9	6.4	3.0	8.6	886
	2006	21.2	13.2	10.4	14.9	609	11.2	5.4	4.4	6.9	859

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the 1990 and 2005 rounds of the World Values Survey data files

agreeing with the statement that being a housewife is just as fulfilling (even among men), and a clear drop in the percentages stating that men should have priority when jobs are scarce. It should also be noted that the “feminist” shift is as pronounced among men as among women.

The Argentinean results again follow the Chilean pattern, but with more moderation. The increase in the percentages considering marriage an outdated institution is just as large, but the Argentinean public is still more convinced that a child needs both a father and mother. There are also mixed signals regarding gender equality: there is the expected increase in persons who disagree with the role of housewife

Table 2.6 Attitudinal changes in issues regarding family and gender in three Latin American countries, by age and sex, 1990-2006

		Men					Women				
		≤29	30–49	50+	Total	N	≤29	30–49	50+	Total	N
Marriage is an outdated institution (% agree)											
Argentina	1991	13.5	11.4	4.8	9.6	460	13.7	10.5	4.4	9.2	502
	2006	38.1	29.0	22.8	29.7	434	38.2	32.3	22.0	30.1	521
Chile	1990	18.5	15.4	10.4	15.4	702	17.0	16.1	10.2	14.9	774
	2006	42.4	26.6	23.3	29.8	433	39.3	29.6	22.3	29.6	530
Brazil	1991	29.0	28.4	20.5	26.9	875	32.1	26.1	18.2	26.7	868
	2006	30.4	21.8	19.2	23.4	619	17.7	19.6	19.7	19.1	871
Child needs home with father and mother (% agree)											
Argentina	1991	91.5	93.4	97.6	94.4	462	94.2	96.1	96.1	95.6	519
	2006	83.7	93.6	98.0	92.0	449	79.6	80.3	89.9	83.6	518
Chile	1990	93.5	93.6	98.2	94.6	708	89.5	90.1	94.1	90.9	781
	2006	66.7	84.0	89.0	80.9	440	59.3	66.5	78.5	68.6	539
Brazil	1991	89.8	92.2	96.5	92.2	890	82.0	80.9	94.0	84.3	885
	2006	82.6	89.6	91.5	87.9	622	73.2	76.3	81.0	76.6	867
Being a housewife is just as fulfilling (% disagree + strongly disagree)											
Argentina	1991	42.9	39.0	44.8	42.1	401	54.6	46.6	28.9	42.6	496
	2006	50.4	45.0	53.4	49.5	364	45.3	46.1	30.9	40.1	506
Chile	1990	35.1	23.0	11.9	24.9	687	35.4	29.6	15.3	28.0	765
	2006	48.3	43.3	24.3	38.4	419	55.4	44.7	31.9	43.0	542
Brazil	1991	43.5	36.3	27.2	37.0	862	51.5	39.0	29.4	41.8	872
	2006	51.9	40.7	39.3	43.8	601	58.7	53.6	45.3	53.0	869
Priority for men if jobs are scarce (% agree)											
Argentina	1991	25.2	23.1	31.1	26.5	471	13.1	21.8	29.8	22.2	517
	2006	26.9	29.4	32.2	29.5	454	17.6	14.2	32.8	22.0	523
Chile	1990	34.0	35.0	50.0	38.1	713	30.3	33.7	49.0	36.5	781
	2006	24.0	28.9	41.4	31.6	446	21.1	19.8	32.8	24.6	548
Brazil	1991	39.8	37.2	45.8	40.1	892	33.8	33.7	49.0	37.2	885
	2006	26.2	19.9	33.1	25.6	624	10.6	20.1	27.5	19.2	870

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the 1990 and 2005 rounds of the World Values Survey data files

being just as fulfilling, but there is no convincing decline in the opinion that men should have priority when jobs are scarce.

The Brazilian results with respect to the two family items are equally mixed, but different: there is no increase in the percentages considering marriage as an outdated institution, and even a drop among female respondents, but there is a systematic reduction in percentages considering that a child needs a complete parental family. The trend with respect to the gender items is more consistent: there is a rise in percentages disagreeing with the fulfilling nature of being a housewife and a clear drop in those giving men priority if jobs are scarce.

The question of “what flew under the radar” can now be answered partially. The ethical dimension has indeed undergone very large shifts during the period under consideration. This lends strong support to the thesis that tolerance for various sorts of non-conformist behavior, including the rise of “new” cohabitation in Chile, Argentina and Brazil, has increased quite dramatically, and that as a consequence, the W or “willingness”-condition in the RWA-framework has ceased to be a limiting or bottleneck condition. Obviously other changes that remain undocumented here could have equally contributed in creating more favorable R and A conditions for the Latin American cohabitation boom, but at least it is becoming clear that a cultural shift component is again a necessary (but probably not a sufficient) ingredient of a more complete explanation.

6 The Family Context of Cohabitation and Single Motherhood

Not only has there been a rise in unmarried cohabitation, but also in the proportion of single mothers (e.g. Arias and Palloni 1996; Castro-Martín and Puga 2008; Castro-Martín et al. 2011). Since these features are often linked to increased chances of poverty it is essential to know whether cohabitators and single mothers are living in nuclear households with presumably essentially neolocal residence or, by contrast are co-residing with parents (often three generation households) and/or other kin or unrelated persons in extended or composite households. In addition, a nuclear family context would be more in line with the notion of a “second demographic transition”.

In what follows we shall present the most important trends for the period up to 2000, since the reworking of the IPUMS individual pointers in the household composition files (Sobek and Kennedy 2009) into a new typology (see Esteve et al. 2012) for the 2010 census round has not yet been completed. But results can be presented for 13 Latin American countries. Also, we shall refrain here from giving further technical details, as these can be found in Esteve et al. 2012.

More often than not, the shifts in living arrangements of young women are considered without further reference to the possible presence of other kin or other non-relatives. This is not a major issue in situations dealing with European populations or populations with European traditions since the neolocal nuclear household is by far the dominant one. But matters change considerably when other populations are analyzed. In these instances the incidence of extended or composite household structures becomes of interest, not only in its own right, but also because such family or household structures can absorb or soften the effects of economic shocks, or alleviate the consequence of more precarious situations. In the first instance marriage or cohabitation without leaving the parental household could have been a response to the period of high economic instability and hyperinflation of the 1980s. In the second case single mothers could benefit both financially and in kind from the

Table 2.7 Percentage of women 25–29 living in extended/composite households by type of union, Latin American Countries, latest available census data

	Single mothers	Cohabiting, no children	Married, no children	Cohabiting with children	Married with children
Chile 2002	81.8	37.4	37.3	29.2	24.6
Argentina 2001	73.4	28.3	21.9	23.2	19.7
Colombia 2005	72.7	41.1	28.3	26.9	25.9
Ecuador 2001	67.7	59.8	51.9	32.2	26.8
Venezuela 2001	79.4	50.1	42.6	29.4	30.4
Panama 2000	73.4	41.4	32.2	31.6	28.9
Puerto Rico 1990	40.0	41.9	14.6	10.4	90.1
Costa Rica 2000	66.1	37.0	21.5	18.8	15.0
Brazil 2000	69.4	26.0	18.1	17.9	14.3
Mexico 2000	72.5	37.1	31.2	20.8	18.7
Peru 2007	71.6	54.8	52.7	33.6	31.9
Bolivia 2001	56.8	59.9	56.9	28.9	29.1
Cuba 2002	74.2	44.7	51.3	27.9	38.0

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

presence of parents, other kin, or even non-relatives. In what follows we shall analyze our Latin American version of the LIPRO typology (Esteve et al. 2012: 700–703) as to reveal to what extent the shifts documented in the previous sections occurred within the context of nuclear versus extended or composite households. To this end standard tables are extracted from the LIPRO-master table for women 25–29 which all have the same structure in studying, both per country and over time, the internal distribution of 5 individual positions over 3 household situations. The 5 individual positions are: single mother, cohabiting or married without children, cohabiting or married with children. The 3 household situations are: nuclear, extended with parents and possibly other kin or non-kin, and all other forms of extensions or composite structures without own parents. Here, we shall consider the prevalence of *any* form of extension (i.e. with parents, kin or non-relatives) for each of the 5 union subcategories. These percentages extended (or composite with non-kin) of all types are given in Table 2.7. The complement of these percentages gives the incidence of living in nuclear households.

Table 2.7 illustrates that very considerable proportions of young women 25–29 still live in extended or composite families. This is particularly so for single mothers, with figures typically ranging between two thirds and four fifths. Only in Bolivia and Puerto Rico are these proportions below 60 %.³ The degree of splitting off from

³ For a more detailed analysis of the residential family context for single mothers in these 13 countries, see Esteve et al. 2012, especially pages 709–714.

the parental or otherwise extended household upon the formation of a partnership, either through marriage or cohabitation, can be assessed in the next two columns: still a third to over one half of young childless women in a partnership are commonly found in extended or composite households. Only in Argentina and Brazil do we find lower figures of the order of one quarter. Equally remarkable is that the differences between the cohabiting and the married women without children in the percentages living in extended households vary substantially between countries, but with the percentages for childless cohabitators systematically being higher than for their married counterparts. This may indicate that further splitting off from the parental household occurs when a cohabiting union is converted into a married one. Regardless of the actual process, all of this means that cohabiting partners are accepted as residents in extended households in very much the same way as married spouses. In other words, cohabitation does not lead to more nuclear households being formed, and in countries with a strong tradition for coresidence of young couples with parents and/or others, this tradition is maintained for cohabitators as well.

As indicated, the incidence of co-residence varies substantially from country to country. In Argentina and Brazil, co-residence in an extended household is least common for cohabiting childless couples, and it is equally rare for childless married ones in these two countries and in Puerto Rico. At the high end of the distribution for both types of couples are Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia and Cuba, with percentages in extended households typically in excess of 40 %. As expected, co-residence with parents or other adults drops further for cohabiting and married women with children. There is still a slight tendency for cohabiting mothers to be found more frequently in extended households than for married mothers, but this tendency is not universal. More striking is the lasting difference between countries. Puerto Rico, Costa Rica and Brazil have fewer than 20 % of young married or cohabiting mothers living in extended households, whereas the figures for Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Panama and Cuba are still in range of 30–40 %.

There are two substantive conclusions to be drawn from these findings. First, the more precise nature of the “robustness” of Latin American families to the economic shocks of hyperinflation in the 1980s, as perceived by Fussell and Palloni (2004), lies in the fact that co-residence with parents or others remains the rule for single mothers, and also remains very common for both cohabiting and married couples without children. And second, there is a caveat with respect to the Latin American convergence to the pattern of the “Second demographic transition” (SDT). The sheer size of the cohabitation boom and the de-stigmatization of unmarried unions definitely fit the SDT prediction, but the convergence to a purely western pattern is only a partial one given that significant proportions of childless cohabiting couples and a still noticeable percentage of cohabiting parents are not living in a nuclear household but in extended and/or composite ones. For such couples it is harder to imagine that cohabitation would be merely a “trial marriage” between two individuals. Hence for several countries there is a clearly distinct Latin American version of one of the key aspects of the SDT, and it is produced by the historical context of continued robustness of co-residence in extended households for a significant seg-

ment of the population. For the others, however, and they are a majority (9 countries of the 13 considered here), cohabitants do live predominantly in a neolocal and nuclear setting, and for them the convergence to the western SDT pattern is much more likely.

7 Conclusions

The reconstruction of the share of cohabitation in the process of union formation of both men and women in 665 Latin American regions indicates that there has been a real “cohabitation boom” taking place since the 1960s in some instances and accelerating during the 1990s in most. This holds particularly, but not exclusively, in areas which had relatively low levels of “old” or traditional cohabitation with a historical ethnic background. Furthermore, the upward trend shows no signs of abating during the first decade of the twenty-first century, and latecomers such as Mexico and Uruguay have caught up with the others. Hence, the lion’s share of the boom is due to “new” cohabitation. Moreover, the negative gradient of cohabitation with female education is somewhat alleviated over time since the rise in cohabitation affected all educational categories, with the middle educational groups and the more educated catching up to a significant extent.

This raises the question whether or not this feature signals a partial convergence of Latin American countries to the European pattern of the so called “second demographic transition”. The discussion of this question has already emerged in the Latin American literature (García and Rojas 2004; Cabella et al. 2004; Rodríguez Vignoli 2005; Quilodrán 2008; Castro-Martín et al. 2011; Salinas and Potter 2011; Covre-Sussai and Matthijs 2010). Two arguments are offered here in favor of such a convergence. Firstly, on the basis of both the negative cross-sectional gradient with education and the steep rises in female education, one would expect the share of marriage to gain importance, and not the share of cohabitation. Secondly, for three major countries with a sizeable increase in “new” cohabitation (Chile, Brazil, Argentina) data from two rounds of the World Values Studies show major changes, if not a landslide, in the direction of greater tolerance for previously tabooed behavior or actions, such as euthanasia, homosexuality, and suicide. Moreover, several other attitudes in favor of greater secularism, of non-conformist family arrangements, or more egalitarian gender relations emerged during the 15 year period documented by the WVS. These ideational changes, and particularly those in ethics, are indicative of the fact that the cohabitation boom has indeed developed in a context of growing individual autonomy and greater overall tolerance.

The expansion of cohabitation and of parenthood among cohabitants, or the “non-conformist transition”, is not the only hallmark of the SDT. The other major ingredient is the so called “postponement transition” with the shift to older ages of both nuptiality and fertility. In Western and Northern Europe, both the non-conformist and the postponement parts occurred more or less simultaneously. In advanced Asian industrial societies, the marriage and fertility postponement pre-

ceded the hitherto modest increase in cohabitation by three decades. A similar timing gap was witnessed in Southern Europe. The Latin American experience provides an illustration of the reverse, with the “non-conformist transition” preceding the postponement one. If that proposition holds, we should now be looking out for rises in ages at first birth and further drops in fertility to below replacement levels.

Appendix

Table 2.8 Sample characteristics, numbers of cases and numbers of regions within the 24 Latin American countries

Country	Year	Sample density (%)	Women in all unions		Men in all unions		Type of unit	# Units
			Age 25–29	Age 30–34	Age 25–29	Age 30–34		
Argentina	1970	2.0	11,951	12,594	9,410	11,565	Province	24
	1980	10.0	73,547	73,733	62,566	72,154	Province	24
	1991	10.0	108,866	119,285	90,369	113,934	Province	24
	2001	10.0	82,852	89,599	68,084	83,112	Province	24
	2010	100	943,348	1,129,914	789,937	1,050,519	Province	24
Belize	2000	100	7,133	6,417	6,364	6,205	District	6
Bolivia	2001	10.0	21,002	20,533	18,001	19,275	Department	9
Brazil	1970	5.0	128,358	119,990	108,100	120,653	State	26
	1980	5.0	175,376	152,298	157,046	157,778	Meso-region	137
	1991	5.8	248,620	245,327	210,307	238,203	Meso-region	137
	2000	6.0	269,940	288,332	229,222	275,801	Meso-region	137
	2010	5.0	263,214	277,735	219,781	260,804	Meso-region	137
Chile	1970	10.0	21,923	20,134	18,653	19,269	Region	13
	1982	10.0	31,884	30,151	27,873	29,992	Region	13
	1992	10.0	41,721	43,286	34,968	41,737	Region	13
	2002	10.0	34,803	42,994	27,592	39,349	Region	13
Colombia	1973	10.0	47,046	42,346	34,580	38,717	Department	30
	1985	10.0	80,109	67,829	60,629	66,113	Department	33
	1993	10.0	97,898	96,791	76,585	90,675	Department	31
	2005	10.0	95,127	97,155	77,645	88,833	Department	33
Costa Rica	1973	10.0	4,430	3,970	3,790	4,032	Canton	79
	1984	10.0	7,380	6,591	6,616	6,749	Canton	81
	2000	10.0	10,242	11,364	8,391	10,750	Canton	81
	2011	100	111,281	117,085	88,032	106,528	Canton	81
Cuba	2002	10.0	31,355	40,142	26,048	37,580	Province	15
Dominican Republic	1981	100	142,937	125,852	116,401	123,137	Province	27
	2002	100	237,271	237,546	182,759	221,813	Province	32
	2010	100	236,252	243,514	191,157	228,886	Province	32

(continued)

Table 2.8 (continued)

Country	Year	Sample density (%)	Women in all unions		Men in all unions		Type of unit	# Units
			Age 25–29	Age 30–34	Age 25–29	Age 30–34		
Ecuador	1974	10.0	16,243	13,543	15,839	15,654	Province	20
	1982	10.0	22,534	19,787	19,492	20,050	Province	21
	1990	10.0	28,991	26,605	23,770	25,744	Province	21
	2001	10.0	33,923	33,228	28,616	32,206	Province	24
	2010	100	403,372	391,765	352,850	374,881	Province	24
El Salvador	1992	10.0	13,828	12,349	11,177	11,258	Department	14
	2007	10.0	15,170	15,116	12,102	12,808	Department	14
Guatemala	1994	100	226,512	219,725	194,895	208,141	Department	22
	2002	100	308,775	280,528	252,157	255,117	Department	22
Guyana	2002	100	20,423	20,964	16,276	19,898	–	–
Honduras	2001	100	161,683	139,256	135,453	132,210	Departament	18
Mexico	1970	1.0	13,275	10,914	11,370	10,785	State	32
	1990	10.0	251,282	231,777	209,584	216,167	State	32
	2000	10.6	311,063	300,694	260,268	276,893	State	32
	2010	10.0	317,419	337,031	264,654	306,820	State	32
Nicaragua	1971	10.0	4,937	3,931	3,769	3,542	Departament	15
	1995	10.0	12,037	10,038	10,230	9,775	Departament	15
	2005	10.0	14,729	12,709	13,022	12,360	Departament	15
Panama	1970	10.0	3,921	3,384	3,307	3,169	–	–
	1980	10.0	5,412	4,991	4,347	4,916	–	–
	1990	10.0	6,653	6,172	5,459	5,966	District	74
	2000	10.0	7,953	8,047	6,580	7,600	District	75
	2010	10.0	8,832	9,131	7,604	8,575	District	75
Peru	1981	100	437,398	385,974	348,016	378,091	Department	22
	1993	10.0	61,926	60,788	49,143	56,845	Department	25
	2007	10.0	73,421	76,790	61,394	71,985	Department	25
Puerto Rico	1970	1.0	740	654	606	600	–	–
	1980	5.0	4,326	4,560	3,799	4,336	–	–
	1990	5.0	4,240	4,542	3,691	4,128	–	–
Trinidad & Tobago	1990	100	30,276	31,390	–	–	–	–
	2000	100	21,312	25,608	–	–	Parish	15
	2010	100	27,065	29,071	–	–	Region	21
Uruguay	1975	10.0	6,905	7,211	5,455	6,523	Department	19
	1985	10.0	7,707	7,642	6,443	7,099	Department	19
	1996	10.0	7,388	8,472	5,989	7,961	Department	19
	2010	100	66,529	80,500	53,761	72,826	Department	19

(continued)

Table 2.8 (continued)

Country	Year	Sample density (%)	Women in all unions		Men in all unions		Type of unit	# Units
			Age 25–29	Age 30–34	Age 25–29	Age 30–34		
Venezuela	1971	10.0	27,616	24,586	22,828	24,653	State	24
	1981	10.0	41,685	36,022	37,357	37,231	State	24
	1990	10.0	46,707	44,909	41,354	44,621	State	24
	2001	10.0	59,709	62,640	49,570	58,867	State	24

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Adsera, A., & Menendez, A. (2011). Fertility changes in Latin America in periods of economic uncertainty. *Population Studies*, 65(1), 37–56.
- Arias, E., & Palloni, A. (1996). Prevalence and patterns of female-headed households in Latin America. *CDE-Working paper*, No. 96–14, University of Wisconsin, Center for Demography and Ecology, Madison.
- Beierle, J. (1999). *Bahian Brazilians*. Excerpted in eHRAF World Cultures.
- Binstock, G. (2008). Cambios en la formación de la familia en Argentina: ¿cuestión de tiempo o cuestión de forma?. Paper presented at the *III Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población (ALAP)*, Córdoba, Argentina, 24–26 September.
- Bittencourt, M. (2012). Democracy, populism and hyperinflation: Some evidence from Latin America. *Economics of Governance*, 13(4), 311–332.
- Borges, D. E. (1985). *The family in Bahia, Brazil: 1870–1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. ISBN-10: 0804719217, ISBN-13: 978-0804719216. Also excerpted in eHRAF World Cultures.
- Cabella, W., Peri, A., & Street, C. (2004). ¿Dos orillas y una transición? La segunda transición demográfica en Buenos Aires y Montevideo en perspectiva biográfica. Paper presented at the *I Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población (ALAP)*, Caxambu, Brazil, 18–20 September.
- Castro-Martín, T. (2002). Consensual unions in Latin America: The persistence of a dual nuptiality system. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 33(1), 35–55.
- Castro-Martín, T., & Puga, D. (2008). Matrimonio versus unión consensual en Latinoamérica: contrastes desde una perspectiva de género Paper presented at the *III Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población (ALAP)*, Córdoba, Argentina, 24–26 September.

- Castro-Martín, T., Cortina, C., Martín García, T., & Pardo, I. (2011). Maternidad sin matrimonio en América Latina: un análisis comparativo a partir de datos censales. *Notas de población*, 93, 37–76.
- Coale, A. J. (1973). The demographic transition reconsidered. In *International population conference* (Vol. 1, pp. 53–72). Liège: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP).
- Covre-Sussai, M., & Matthijs, K. (2010). Socio-economic and cultural correlates of cohabitation in Brazil. Paper presented at the 2010 Chaire Quetelet Conference, Louvain-la-Neuve. Catholic University Leuven, Centre for Sociological Research, Leuven, Belgium.
- Esteve, A., Garcia-Román, J., & McCaa, R. (2011). La enumeración de la soltería femenina en los censos de población: sesgo y propuesta de corrección. *Papeles de Población*, 16(66), 9–40.
- Esteve, A., Garcia-Román, J., & Lesthaeghe, R. (2012). The family context of cohabitation and single motherhood in Latin America. *Population and Development Review*, 38(4), 699–720.
- Fussell, E., & Palloni, A. (2004). Persistent marriage regimes in changing times. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(5), 1201–1213.
- García, B., & Rojas, O. (2002). Cambios en la formación y disolución de las uniones en América Latina. *Papeles de Población*, 32, 12–31.
- García, B., & Rojas, O. (2004). Las uniones conyugales en América Latina: transformaciones familiares en un marco de desigualdad social y de género. *Notas de Población*, 78, 65–96.
- Goody, J. (1976). *Production and reproduction: A comparative study of the domestic domain*. London: Cambridge University Press, 157 pages.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (2010). The unfolding story of the second demographic transition. *Population and Development Review*, 36(2), 211–252.
- Lesthaeghe, R., & Surkyn, J. (2004). Value Orientations and the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) in Northern, Western and Southern Europe: An update. *Demographic Research*, Special Collection 3, Article 3, (pp. 45–86). doi: [10.4054/DemRes.2004.S3.3](https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2004.S3.3).
- Lesthaeghe, R., & Van de Kaa, D. J. (1986). “Twee demografische transities?” (Two demographic transitions?). In R. Lesthaeghe, D. J. Van de Kaa, (Eds.), *Bevolking: Groei en Krimp*. (pp. 9–24). Annual book volume, *Mens en Maatschappij*. Deventer: Van Loghum-Slaterus.
- Lesthaeghe, R., & Vanderhoeft, C. (2001). Ready, willing and able: a conceptualization of transitions to new behavioral forms. In J. B. Casterline, (Ed.), *Diffusion Processes and Fertility Transition: Selected Perspectives* (pp. 240–264). Washington, DC: US National Research Council, National Academies Press. ISBN 978-0-309-07610-4.
- López-Ruiz, L. A., Esteve, A., & Cabré, A. (2008). Distancia social y uniones conyugales en América Latina. *Revista Latinoamericana de Población*, 1(2), 47–71.
- Martínez-Allier, M. (1989). *Marriage, class, and color in nineteenth century Cuba. A study of racial attitudes and sexual values in a slave society* (2nd ed., p. 202). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. ISBN 97805210984.
- Minnesota Population Center. (2014). *Integrated public use microdata series international: Version 6.3*. [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Murdock, G. P., & White, D. R. (1969). Standard cross-cultural sample. *Ethnology*, 9, 329–369.
- Ni Brolchain, M., & Beaujouan, E. (2013). Education and cohabitation in Britain: A return to traditional patterns? *Population and Development Review*, 39(3), 441–458.
- Quilodrán, J. (1999). L'union libre en Amérique latine: aspects récents d'un phénomène séculaire. *Cahiers Québécois de Démographie*, 28(1–2), 53–80.
- Quilodrán, J. (2008) ¿Hacia la instalación de un modelo de nupcialidad post transicional en América Latina? Paper presented at the *III Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población (ALAP)*, Córdoba, Argentina, 24–26 September. Revised English version (2008) A post-transitional nuptiality model in Latin America? Paper presented at the *International Seminar on Changing Transitions to Marriage*. New Delhi, India, 10–12 September.
- Roberts, G. W., & Sinclair, S. A. (1978). *Women in Jamaica. Patterns of reproduction and family*. New York: KTO Press.

- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2005). *Unión y cohabitación en América Latina: modernidad, exclusión, diversidad?* Santiago de Chile: CELADE, División de Población de la CEPAL and UNFPA, Serie Población y Desarrollo 57.
- Rosero Bixby, L., Castro-Martín, T., & Martín García, T. (2009). Is Latin America starting to retreat from early and universal childbearing?. In S. Cavenaghi, (Ed.), *Demographic transformations and inequalities in Latin America: Historical trends and recent patterns*. Rio de Janeiro: Latin American Population Association (ALAP), Serie Investigaciones 8: 219–241. ISBN 978-85-62016-07-3.
- Ruiz Salguero, M., & Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2011). *Familia y nupcialidad en los censos latinoamericanos recientes: una realidad que desborda los datos*. Santiago de Chile: CELADE, Division de Poblacion de la CEPAL and UNFPA, Serie Población y Desarrollo 99.
- Salinas, V., & Potter, J. E. (2011) On the universality of the second demographic transition and the rise of cohabitation and non-marital childbearing in Chile. Paper presented at the *2011 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA)*, Washington, DC, USA, 2 April
- Singh, A., et al. (2005) *Stabilization and reform in Latin America: A macroeconomic perspective on the experience since the early 1990s*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund. Occasional paper No. 238. ISBN 1589062507.
- Smith, R. T. (1956). *The negro family in British Guyana: Family structure and social status in the villages*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Sobek, M., & Kennedy, S. (2009). The development of family interrelationship variables for international census data (Working Paper Series, No. 2009–02). Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota.
- Twinam, A. (1999). *Public lives, private secrets: Gender, honor, sexuality and illegitimacy in colonial Spanish America*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- United States Census Bureau. (2004). Population by marital status, sex and age. Table 047 in *International Data Base*. <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbsprd.html>
- Vassallo, J. (2011). Leyes patriarciales para parejas modernas? La regulación legal de las parejas conyugales en Latinoamérica. In J. Quilodrán (Ed.), *Parejas conyugales en transformación: Una visión al finalizar el Siglo XX* (pp. 575–624). México: El Colegio de México.
- Yale Human Relations Area Files. (2010). Complete list for the HRAF collection of ethnography and eHRAF World Cultures. <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu>

Chapter 3

Cohabitation and Marriage in Canada. The Geography, Law and Politics of Competing Views on Gender Equality

Benoît Laplante and Ana Laura Fostik

1 Introduction

Canada is a federation of ten provinces and, nowadays, three territories. Most of the population lives in the provinces. Table 3.1 shows the proportion of women cohabiting among women aged 15–49 living in a marital union in 1986, 1996 and 2006. This proportion has increased over time in all provinces and territories. The spread of unmarried cohabitation was larger from 1986 to 1996 than from 1996 to 2006. The increase has been more important in Quebec and in the territories. This conjugal arrangement remains more common in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada.

There is scarce research on unmarried cohabitation in the territories. A large fraction of their inhabitants are First Nations members. Most other inhabitants are people coming from other parts of the country who live there, usually for their work, for a limited time. The level of unmarried cohabitation has increased in the territories between 1986 and 2006; thus, the current level cannot easily be explained by the persistence of pre-European customs among members of First Nations. Part of the increase may be due to the increase of the proportion cohabiting among the people from the First Nations, maybe linked to the demise of Christian influence. Part may be due to an increase in the proportion cohabitating among people coming from other parts of Canada. In the latter case, unmarried cohabitation could be associated with internal migration and the fact that some of the people who live temporarily in the territories may find cohabitation better suited to their transitory situation than marriage.

The high level of unmarried cohabitation in Quebec is known since the 1980s. Consequently, a substantial part of the research on unmarried cohabitation in

B. Laplante (✉) • A.L. Fostik
Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS),
Université du Québec, Montréal, QC, Canada
e-mail: Benoit.Laplante@UCS.INRS.Ca; AnaLaura.Fostik@UCS.INRS.Ca

Table 3.1 Percent of Canadian women cohabiting among women aged 15–49 living in a marital union by province and census year

Province or territory	Year		
	1986	1996	2006
Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) ^a	5.4	13.4	20.1
Prince Edward Island (PE)	7.1	12.3	18.2
Nova Scotia (NS)	9.3	15.5	23.4
New Brunswick (NB)	8.0	17.4	25.1
Quebec (QC)	16.9	33.5	48.6
Ontario (ON)	8.9	12.3	16.4
Manitoba (MB)	9.3	13.9	18.4
Saskatchewan (SK)	8.4	14.0	19.2
Alberta (AB)	11.2	15.0	19.9
British Columbia (BC)	12.0	16.3	19.8
Yukon Territory (YT)	23.1	30.8	36.6
Northwest Territories (NT) ^b	20.3	37.0	41.2

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the 1986, 1996 and 2006 Canadian census data

^aIn 2001, the official name of Newfoundland became Newfoundland and Labrador. For brevity, we sometimes refer to this province using its older and shorter name

^bUntil 1999, there were only two territories, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. In April 1999, the eastern portion of the Northwest Territories became a separate territory, Nunavut. To maintain coherence over time, we treat Nunavut as if had remained united with the Northwest Territories

Canada has actually focused on Quebec. Most of the research that has not focused on Quebec has dealt with Canada as a single unit, with little attention to regional differences, and with the assumption that, outside Quebec, the spread and meaning of cohabitation are similar to what they are in the United States.

In this chapter, we look at unmarried cohabitation in Canada with a stress on regional differences. We begin with a review of previous research and an overview of the legal context of marriage and unmarried cohabitation in Canada. We use census data from 1986, 1996 and 2006 to explore the relations between age, education and unmarried cohabitation within the provinces and territories.

We then use data from census and two surveys to examine the individual factors that could explain the differences in the spread of unmarried cohabitation between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Analyses lead to conclude that the differences arise from the institutional settings rather than being related to individual characteristics. Quebec law uses unmarried cohabitation and marriage to accommodate two competing views of gender equality—one that rests on the assumption that spouses should be as economically independent as possible during and after marriage, while the other contends that equality implies dependence even after separation or divorce—whereas in the rest of Canada, law implements only the second one, more in marriage, but also in unmarried cohabitation.

The analyses also point to differences within English Canada that, as far as we know, had not been noticed in previous research: unmarried cohabitation seems to be more common in Eastern Canada than in Western Canada, which might be related to immigration.

2 Terminology: Language Matters

According to official demographic terminology, there are two kinds of *marital* unions: marriage and consensual union.¹ Marriage is typically solemnized and registered; consensual union is typically neither solemnized nor registered. Both are stable forms of relationships that involve cohabitation and both may have civil effects.

Sociologists and demographers routinely use the word “cohabitation” to refer to *unmarried* cohabitation, and “marital union” as a synonym of “marriage”. Using “cohabitation” for “unmarried cohabitation” seems to have roots in early modern studies on college students living together without being married. In today’s parlance, this was a form of transitory room sharing with benefits that might or might not have led to marriage, but obviously not a substitute for marriage (e.g. Macklin 1972). It was dubbed “premarital cohabitation” and, at some point, for convenience or otherwise, it became shortened to “cohabitation”.

Recently, “partner” and “partnership” have become common in English-speaking literature on unmarried cohabitation, but their meaning is uncertain. At times, partnership is used for what is “marital union” in the dictionaries, and there are two types of “partnership”: marriage and “cohabitation”. At times, “partnership” means unmarried cohabitation, maybe with a nuance of stability; in such a case, there is no word for the larger category of “marital union”.

Things would be less confusing if demographers abided by their dictionaries. They would allow brevity to anyone writing about Canada. Everything relevant would fit in two sentences:

- In Canada, consensual union is a legal institution.
- Canadian demographers do not abide by the dictionaries: they use “common-law union” for consensual union in English, and “union libre” in French.

3 Previous Research

Anecdotal evidence suggested that by the end of the 1970s, unmarried cohabitation was no more an isolated phenomenon in Canada. In the 1981 Census, Statistics Canada attempted to enumerate unmarried partners by instructing them to answer the question on the relation to the head of the household as if they were husband or wife. Spouses were to be distinguished from unmarried partners using marital status. Given that, at any time, some unmarried partners are still married to their “former” spouse, this strategy led to the misclassification of such individuals and the underestimation of unmarried partners (Dumas and Bélanger 1996). The 1986

¹ See, for instance, the *Multilingual demographic dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Liège: Ordina: 1982), or the *Population Multilingual Thesaurus*, 3rd ed. (Population Information Network, Paris: CICRED: 1993).

Census used the same strategy, but since 1991, the Census form uses different categories for spouses and unmarried partners in the question on the relation to the head of the household, as well as a direct question on living or not in a common-law union, separate from the question on marital status.

In 1984, a research team led by academics and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council conducted the National Fertility Survey, the first biographical survey of family events carried out using a probabilistic sample of the Canadian population (Balakrishnan et al. 1993). The same year, Statistics Canada conducted a somewhat similar survey, the Family History Survey (Burch and Madan 1986). Since then, Statistics Canada has conducted retrospective biographical surveys on family events in 1990, 1995, 2001, 2006 and 2011 as part of its General Social Survey program. Much if not most of the demographic research on unmarried cohabitation in Canada has been done using either census data or data from these biographical surveys.

Some of the research published in the 1990s—such as Dumas and Péron (1992), Balakrishnan et al. (1993) and Dumas and Bélanger (1996)—focused on documenting the rise of unmarried cohabitation. The main finding was that “living common-law” was more widespread in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. Others looked more specifically at the relation between living in a common-law union and sociodemographic characteristics (Turcotte and Bélanger 1997; Turcotte and Goldscheider 1998; Bélanger and Turcotte 1999). Kerr et al. (2006) conducted the most recent study of this type, which confirmed what had emerged over the previous decade or so: unmarried cohabitation is associated with lower social status in English-speaking provinces, but not in Quebec.

Given these results, it is no surprise that Quebec demographers got interested in the “meaning of cohabitation”. Early research investigated whether unmarried cohabitation was a prelude to marriage or an alternative to marriage, without providing a definitive answer (Lapierre-Adamcyk et al. 1987; Lapierre-Adamcyk 1989). Several years later, it had become clear that, at least in Quebec, *unmarried* cohabitation was not just *premarital* cohabitation (Le Bourdais and Marcil-Gratton 1996; Le Bourdais and Neill 1998; Le Bourdais et al. 2000; Le Bourdais and Lapierre-Adamcyk 2004). Comparative research showed that unmarried couples stayed together longer in Quebec than in Ontario, and were less prone to marry (Le Bourdais and Marcil-Gratton 1996; Lapierre-Adamcyk et al. 1999). Comparative research also showed differences in values. In Quebec, young people favoured values pointing towards a redefinition of the conjugal union: compared to young people from Ontario, they gave less importance to a stable couple relationship, less importance to marriage as a source of happiness, and more importance to work (Lapierre-Adamcyk et al. 1999). Péron (2003) summed up this line of research in the title of a book chapter he wrote on nuptiality in Quebec, stating that from the beginning to the end of the twentieth century, marriage went from being a necessity to being an option. Lachapelle (2007) added one important nuance to this synthesis: unmarried cohabitation is not more common in Quebec than in the rest of Canada, it is more common among French-speaking Quebecers than among other Canadians.

Given that from the 1970s to the end of the 1990s, fertility had plummeted in Quebec, some looked into the relation between the diffusion of unmarried cohabitation and the decrease of fertility. The prevailing view was that Quebec low fertility was caused by Quebecers' fondness for cohabitation. Rochon (1989) found that within age groups, women who live or have lived in common-law union had fewer children, on average, than women who were married or had been married. According to Caldwell (1991) and Caldwell et al. (1994), the high proportion of Quebec women living in a common-law union and the instability of their chosen form of union explained their high level of childlessness. Dumas and Bélanger (1998) concluded that fertility is lower within common-law union than within marriage. Krull and Trovato (2003) found that low marriage rates among Quebec women were a key factor of Quebec low fertility in the 1990s. Lapierre-Adamcyk and Lussier (2003) also found that the overall impact of unmarried cohabitation in Quebec was to reduce general fertility. Caron-Malenfant and Bélanger (2006: 88) reported results in which fertility was lower for women living in a common-law union than for married women. This line of research ended recently, probably because since the mid-2000s, the TFR is higher in Quebec than in Ontario. The new difference is interpreted as an effect of family policies: the public provision of parental leave and childcare is more generous in Quebec than in Ontario (Beaujot et al. 2013). Interestingly, such an explanation assumes implicitly that fertility may be as high within unmarried cohabitation as within marriage, and that unmarried partners may be as responsive to policies as spouses. Recent work by Laplante and Fostik (2015) shows that among French-speaking Quebecers, consensual union has become the main locus of fertility.

Recent research takes unmarried cohabitation as a given. Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard (2009) find little differences in the quality of the relationship between unmarried partners and spouses in Quebec. Laplante and Flick (2010) found that in Ontario, reported measures of health were significantly lower among unmarried partners than among spouses, but found little differences between the two groups in Quebec. Lardoux and Pelletier (2012) found that, in Quebec, having unmarried parents has no negative effect on educational outcomes for boys, and a *positive* outcome for girls.

Much of the research on unmarried cohabitation in Canada has focused on Quebec. Quebec demographers know the American literature and cite it, but they also know the French literature and it is no surprise that, on this topic, they seem to find more similarities between Quebec and France than between Quebec and the USA. The article by Villeneuve-Gokalp (1990), in which the diffusion of unmarried cohabitation in France in the 1980s is documented, is widely cited by them. More recently, studies on the use, by opposite-sex couples, of PACS,—a form of “dependence free” registered partnership originally designed for same-sex couples—has attracted some interest for its practical similarity with common-law union (on PACS, see Rault 2009).

Some of the research on unmarried cohabitation in Canada as a whole has been done with an eye on the American experience. From this perspective, unmarried cohabitation is considered something that delays marriage, or a step in the forma-

tion of a new marriage after divorce. Pollard and Wu (1998), Wu (1995, 1996, 1999) as well as Wu and Balakrishnan (1995) are typical examples of this approach, in which “cohabitation” in Canada appears to be similar to “cohabitation” in the USA, once admitted that things are different in Quebec. Wu (2000) concludes the book in which he summed up the research he conducted in the 1990s by pleading for a legal framework of common-law union that would give it the same civil effects as marriage especially for the sharing of assets and spousal support.

The current dominant view is that in Quebec, or more precisely among French-speaking Quebecers, living in a consensual union is as normal or mainstream as it is in France or in the Nordic countries, whereas outside Quebec and among non-French-speaking Quebecers, it is either a convenient transient state for young adults or an alternative form of marriage for the poor, pretty much as it is held to be in the USA.

4 Legal Context

The regional differences in the spread of unmarried cohabitation across Canada are closely related to differences in legal systems. Canada is a federation formed by grouping together, from 1867 onwards, the British possessions in North America. Newfoundland, in 1949, was the last British colony to become a Canadian province. According to the 1867 Constitution, the federal Parliament has exclusive legislative authority over “Marriage and divorce”, whereas “the solemnization of marriage in the province” and “property and civil rights in the province” fall under the jurisdiction of each province. The legislative authority of the federal Parliament on marriage is limited to impediments. “Property and civil rights” include much of family law, especially marital property. The authority of the federal Parliament over divorce has been interpreted by the courts as including spousal support, child custody and support, as well as the grounds for divorce. However, judicial separation and annulment, which have consequences very similar to those of divorce, fall under provincial jurisdiction. All Canadian provinces have inherited English common law as the basis of their private law, except Quebec whose private law is based on French civil law.

The difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada involves language and religion as much as law. Quebec was predominantly Catholic whereas the rest of Canada, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador, was mainly Protestant. About 80% of Quebecers speak French as their first language, whereas English is the first or main language of the vast majority of the population in all other provinces and territories, except New-Brunswick, where French is the first language for a large fraction of the population and which is the only officially bilingual province. However, although language and the relation to religion are essential to understand how cohabitation may have become so widespread in Quebec, the values and mechanism that support cohabitation in Quebec nowadays are embodied in law and are best understood by focusing on legal issues.

Until 1969, divorce, although falling under federal jurisdiction since 1867, was actually regulated by the law as it existed in each province before 1867. Former colonies which had allowed courts to grant divorce before 1867 kept allowing it, whereas in the other provinces, such as Ontario and Quebec, divorce had to be granted by a private bill from the federal Parliament, as in the UK until 1857. In 1968, the federal Parliament passed the Divorce Act (S.C. 1967–8, c. 24), enforcing the same provisions for all of Canada. From that moment, divorce was granted by courts in all of Canada and became an important feature of family law and, so to speak, of everyday life.

As seen in Table 3.1, common-law union became statistically noticeable in the 1980s. Although common-law union remains limited in spread in English Canada, the legal situation of unmarried couples and their children was dealt with by the federal Parliament, the provincial legislatures and the courts. A series of rulings of the Supreme Court, changes in status law in the common-law provinces and to status law and the Civil Code in Quebec progressively reduced the differences between married and unmarried couples. In their dealings with the State and with third parties (employers, insurance companies, etc.), married and unmarried couples are treated in the same way. Legal rights and obligations between parents and children depend solely on filiation, not on the circumstances of birth. Furthermore, Canada's welfare system is a mix of the liberal and the Nordic welfare regimes and, as in the Nordic welfare state regime, social rights largely depend on individual characteristics and not on marital status. Having access to health insurance or favourable taxation are no more incentives for marriage in Canada than in the Nordic countries (see Andersson et al. 2006). The legal recognition of consensual union is extended to foreigners: Canadian immigration law handles in the same way married couples and couples living in a consensual union. As we saw earlier, Statistics Canada gathers and publishes information on consensual unions since the 1980s, using the terms "common-law union" in English and "union libre" in French. The remaining legal differences between married and unmarried couples are mainly limited to the degree of economic dependence between the two persons who live together, and they are a consequence of competing visions of individual autonomy within the couple rather than a form of discrimination. In Canada, consensual union has become a social and a legal institution.

The prevailing view in the English-speaking provinces is that marriage is a relation based on mutual dependence. Within marriage, gender equality is best defined relative to divorce and implies the equal sharing of assets and spousal support that ideally allow the economically dependent spouse to maintain her standard of living. In principle, the same should apply to common-law union. In all common law provinces, legislatures have passed statutes on "domestic relations" that govern the economic relations between the spouses or partners, with some freedom to write agreements on the sharing of assets, the extent of the freedom being typically greater for partners than for spouses.

In Quebec, there are two competing views of what should be gender equality within the couple: the one that is prevailing in the English-speaking provinces, and one that says that gender equality first implies economic independence. According

to the second view, property should be separate as a principle, spouses and partners being free to write down whatever agreement suits them best, and spousal support should not exist. The strength of the two competing views eventually led the Quebec government to implement a system that accommodates both, but significantly altered the meaning of marriage. Allowing spouses to keep their property separate if they wished so, and to write whatever contractual agreements suit them best had been a traditional feature of French and Quebec law. However, the Quebec government redrew marriage in such a way that, for most practical purposes, assets earned once married are deemed common and are split equally upon divorce; furthermore, private agreements that depart from that rule are void. From contemporary documents (e.g. CSF 1978, 1986), it was clear from the beginning that with such a redefinition of marriage, common-law union, which was already attracting many, should become the legal form of marital union for couples who want their relation based on economic independence. This was a drastic change, but was met with very little opposition.

How it became almost natural to implement a legal solution that would literally push a large fraction of the population away from marriage in a province traditionally as close to the Catholic Church as, say, Ireland or Poland, is dealt with in Laplante (2006, 2014) and Laplante et al. (2006). Basically, the French-speaking Catholics broke away from the Church almost instantly at the end of the 1960s, after a decade of rapid and deep social change. The *Humanae Vitae* encyclical, in which the Church restated its ban on contraception, acted as a catalyst. Until 1968, in Quebec, marriage had to be solemnized by a priest or some other religious minister and, despite all civil effects of marriage being detailed in the Civil Code, the common view was that marriage was a religious institution. The depth of the social change, the rise of feminism and the flurry of new issues related to sex and the family on which the Church was perceived as disconnected from modernity—divorce, abortion, homosexuality—debased the Catholic doctrine. Marriage became optional in this context. The process may have been similar to the one that led to the loss of meaning of marriage in East Germany after the rapid and deep changes that followed German reunification (Perelli-Harris et al. 2014).

Currently, in Quebec, spouses and unmarried partners receive equal treatment by the State and third parties, and children have equal rights in all respects whether or not their parents are married. The differences between spouses and unmarried partners are in the sharing of property and the right to spousal support after the breakdown of the union. Unmarried partners may keep all their property separate if they wish so, as spouses could do until 1989. Unmarried partners are not entitled to “spousal” support from a former partner. As before 1989, spouses may choose between two matrimonial regimes: separation as to property or partnership of acquests. However, since 1989, even for spouses who chose separation as to property, the accrued value of the home and second home, of pensions and retirement savings, the cars used by the family, the furniture and some others assets are shared equally upon separation or divorce. Whatever the matrimonial regime, spouses are entitled to spousal support after separation or divorce. Since 1989, sepa-

ration as to property has little other use than allowing spouses to maintain their businesses assets separate.

The Quebec legal “balance” between the two competing views of gender equality has been challenged in court. The case opposed a former unmarried partner—born in a Latin American country where, under some circumstances, consensual union has all the civil effects as marriage—to one of Quebec most successful and richest businessmen. She asked for spousal support and the equal sharing of assets as if she had been married under the regime of partnership of acquests—something rather unlikely for married couples comprising a prominent businessperson. Given the Canadian legal context, to get in court, the case had to be framed as a form of discrimination. Not imposing the sharing of assets and the entitlement to spousal support to unmarried partners was thus argued to be a form of discrimination against unmarried partners.

Given the stakes, several third parties were involved, including the Quebec government, which insisted on keeping the balance it had painstakingly achieved in 1989. Interestingly, both the plaintiff and the Quebec government used demographers as experts. Thus, Céline Le Bourdais and Évelyne Lapierre-Adamcyk wrote reports and testified as experts for the Quebec government whereas Zheng Wu did so for the plaintiff.

The case was heard by the Supreme Court, which was asked to answer two questions: whether not imposing the sharing of assets and spousal support to unmarried partners was a form of discrimination and, if so, whether it was an acceptable form of discrimination. Five of the nine judges answered “yes” to the first question, and five answered “yes” to the second. The Chief justice is the one who answered “yes” to both (SCC 2013). This decision upheld Quebec law and probably avoided a constitutional crisis. Recently, the *Conseil du statut de la femme*, the Quebec government agency that advises the government on women’s rights, changed its position. After having advocated during decades for a strong economic dependence between spouses after divorce and freedom in these matters for unmarried partners, it now supports imposing the sharing of assets and “spousal” support for unmarried partners upon and after breakup (CSF 2014).

5 Consensual Union as a Function of Age and Education

Table 3.1 shows that, overall, in all Canadian provinces and territories, the proportion of women living in a marital union who live in a consensual union rather than being married has increased from 1986 to 2006. The question still at the core of most inquiries about the diffusion of consensual union is whether this phenomenon is primarily the outcome of a change in values—an ideational change—or the consequence of a change in the economic conditions of young people.

It is commonly assumed that if the diffusion of consensual union is primarily the consequence of a change in the economic conditions of young people, living in a consensual union should be negatively associated with education: the proportion of

women living in a consensual union should be low among highly educated women and remain so across periods.

It is commonly assumed that if the diffusion of consensual union is primarily the outcome of an ideational change, the diffusion of consensual union should start among highly educated women and then spread to the less educated. Thus, living in a consensual union should be positively associated with education at the beginning of the process, and uncorrelated with it at the end, once it has become a socially accepted form of relationship or maybe even a new norm.

In both cases, the proportion of women living in a consensual union should decrease with age. As a “new” pattern of behaviour, it should be more common among the young than among the old and remain so until the end of the diffusion process. Furthermore, given that, over time, a couple may transform its consensual union into a marriage, but not its marriage into a consensual union, the proportion of women living in a consensual union among women living in a marital union should decrease with age even once the diffusion process is over.

Figure 3.1 reports the proportion of women living in a consensual union among women aged between 15 and 49 living in a marital union in each Canadian province and territory in 1986, 1996 and 2006. Looking at this figure leads to four main findings. In most provinces this proportion decreases with age. It increases from one census to the next for all ages in each province and territory. It is higher in Quebec and in the territories than in the rest of Canada. In most provinces and territories, the increase seems to have been larger between 1986 and 1996 than between 1996 and 2006.

Figures 3.2a, 3.2b, 3.2c, 3.2d, 3.2e and 3.2f allow exploring the relation between consensual union and education. They report the proportion living in a consensual union among women living in a marital union according to level of education within 5-year age classes, for women aged between 20 and 49, in each Canadian province and territory in 1986, 1996 and 2006.

Among women aged 20–24, the proportion is high, it increases from one census to the next and there is no strong relation with education, except in 1996 in Saskatchewan, and in 1996 and 2006 in the Northwest Territories, where the proportion decreases as the level of education increases. In 2006, the levels are higher in Eastern Canada—Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec—than in Western Canada—Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Among women aged 25–29, the proportion is still high, but lower than among women aged 20–24. It increases from one census to the next. It is higher in Eastern Canada than in Western Canada, much higher in Quebec than in the other provinces, much higher in the territories than in all provinces but Quebec. In 2006, the proportion slightly decreases as the level of education increases in most provinces and territories, but clearly not in Quebec where there is no apparent relation between consensual union and education.

Among women aged 30–34, the proportion is still lower than among women aged 25–29. It tends to be higher in Eastern Canada than in Western Canada, even higher in the territories, and higher still in Quebec. In 2006, the proportion decreases

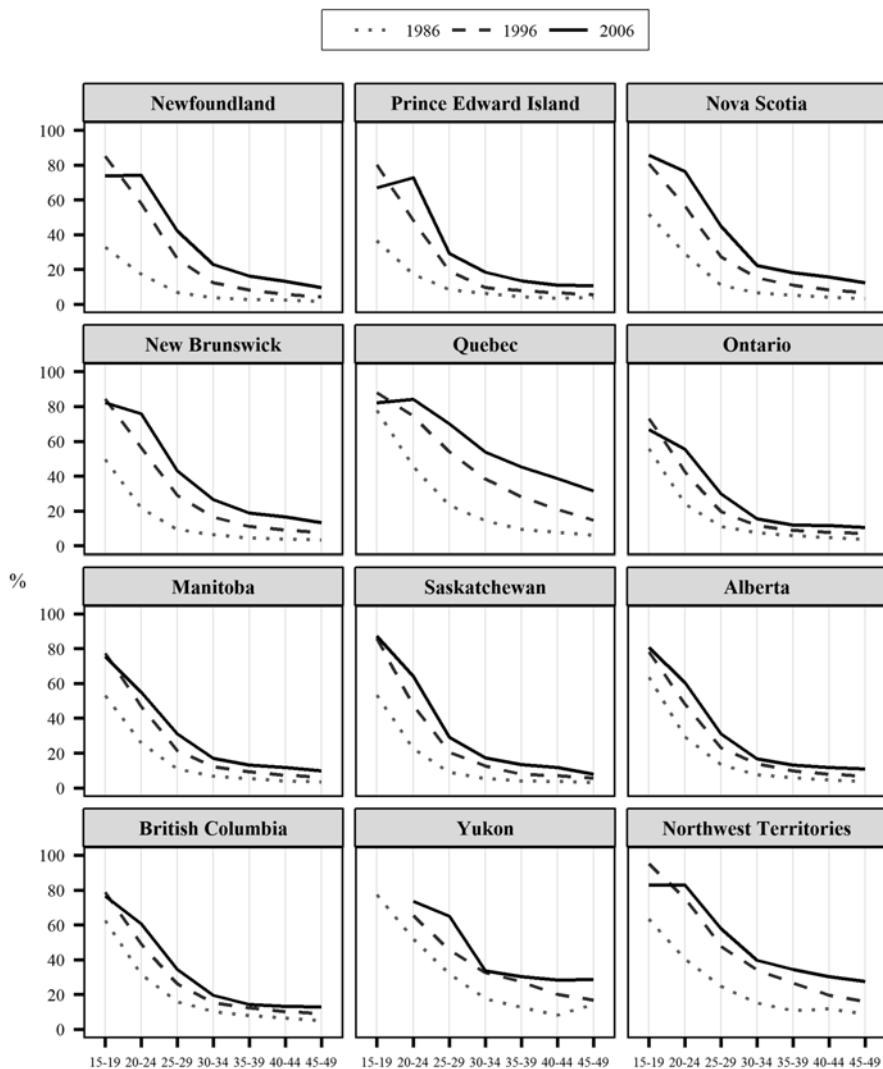


Fig. 3.1 Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 15–49 living in a marital union

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 1986, 1996, and 2006 Canadian census data

as education increases, but the slope varies across provinces and territories, tending to be larger where the proportion is higher, except in Quebec where the slope is small despite the proportions being high. Among women aged 35–39, the proportion is lower. It tends to be higher in Eastern Canada than in Western Canada, again higher in the territories and still higher in Quebec. In 2006, the proportion decreases as education increases in the same fashion as among women aged 30–34. The levels are still lower among women aged 40–44, in all provinces but Quebec. They are

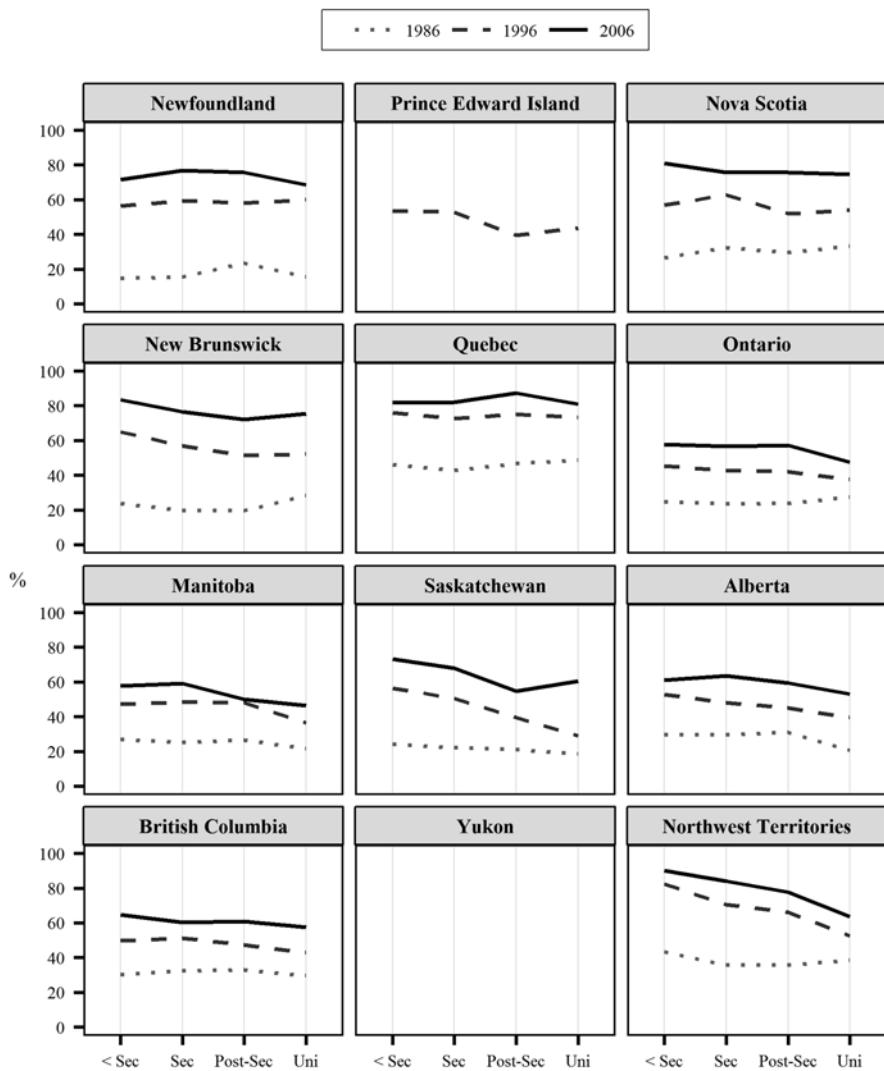


Fig. 3.2a Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 20–24 living in a marital union by level of education

Note: < Sec Less than Secondary Completed, Sec Secondary Completed, Post-Sec Post-Secondary Completed, Uni University Completed

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 1986, 1996, and 2006 Canadian census data

higher in the territories; in 2006, in the territories, the association between consensual union and education appears to be strong. In Quebec, the proportion is higher and, in 2006, there is no clear relation between consensual union and education.

One final fact is worth noting. In Quebec, in 1986, the proportion of women living in a consensual union slightly increases as the level of education increases

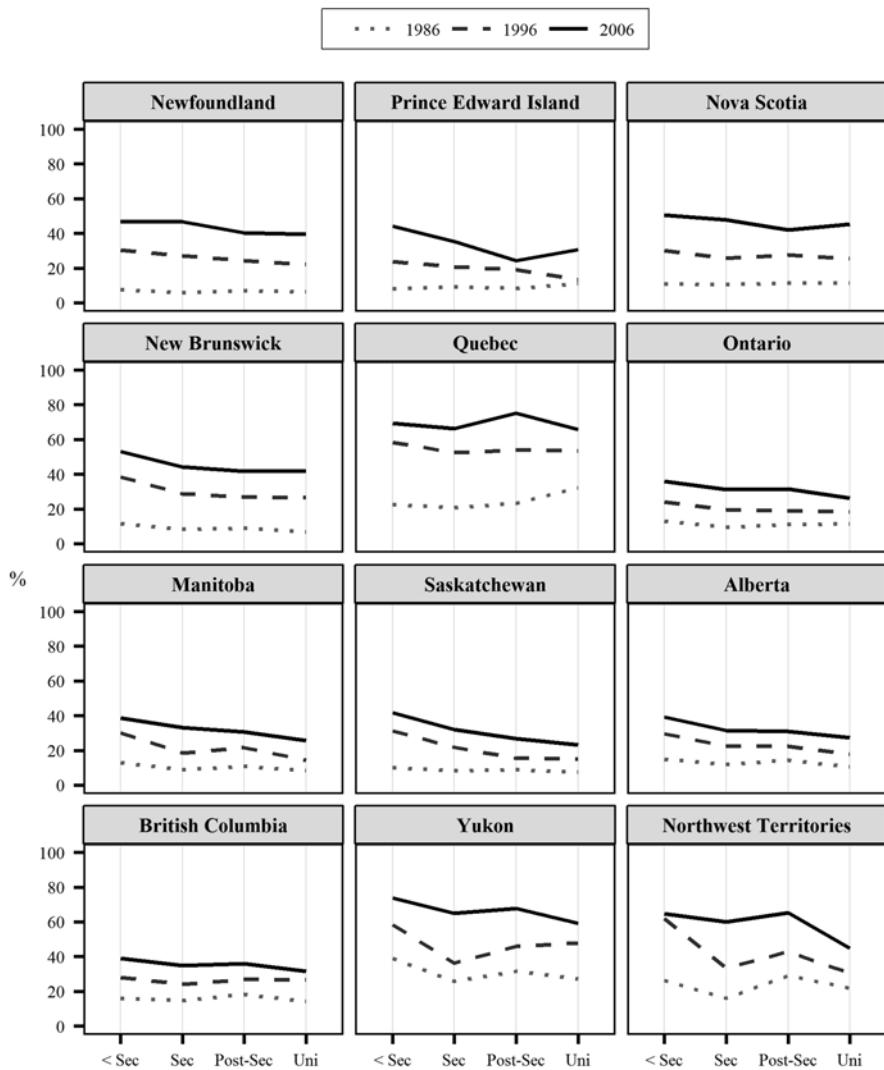


Fig. 3.2b Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 25–29 living in a marital union by level of education

Note: < Sec Less than Secondary Completed, Sec Secondary Completed, Post-Sec Post-Secondary Completed, Uni University Completed

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 1986, 1996, and 2006 Canadian census data

among women 25–29 and 30–34. Something similar can be seen among women aged 40–44 in 1996.

In Quebec, the pattern suggests that the diffusion of consensual union is the outcome of an ideational change. The proportion of women living in a consensual union is slightly higher among educated women in what could have been “leading”

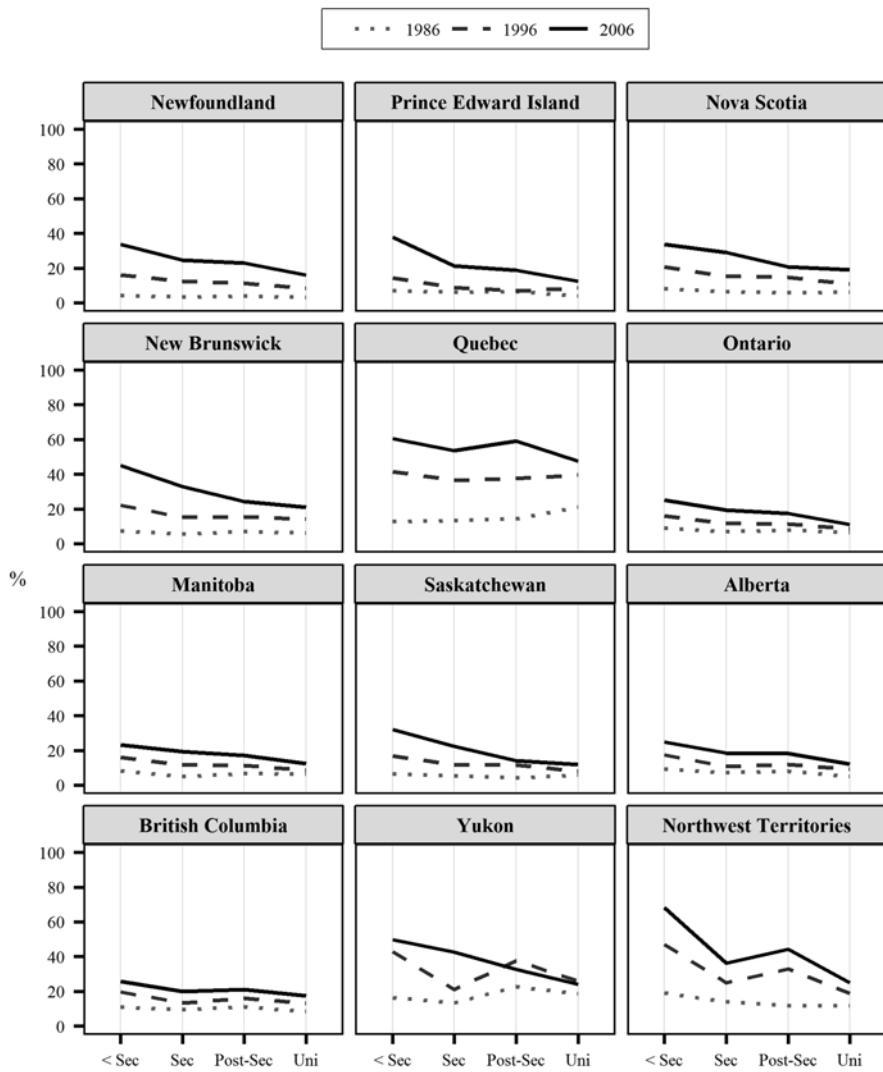


Fig. 3.2c Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 30–34 living in a marital union by level of education

Note: < Sec Less than Secondary Completed, Sec Secondary Completed, Post-Sec Post-Secondary Completed, Uni University Completed

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 1986, 1996, and 2006 Canadian census data

cohorts. In recent censuses, the proportion is high even among women aged between 40 and 44, with little variation across education levels.

Things are different in the rest of Canada. Despite interesting regional differences between East and West and between provinces and territories, the overall pattern is quite similar. The proportion of women living in a consensual union is

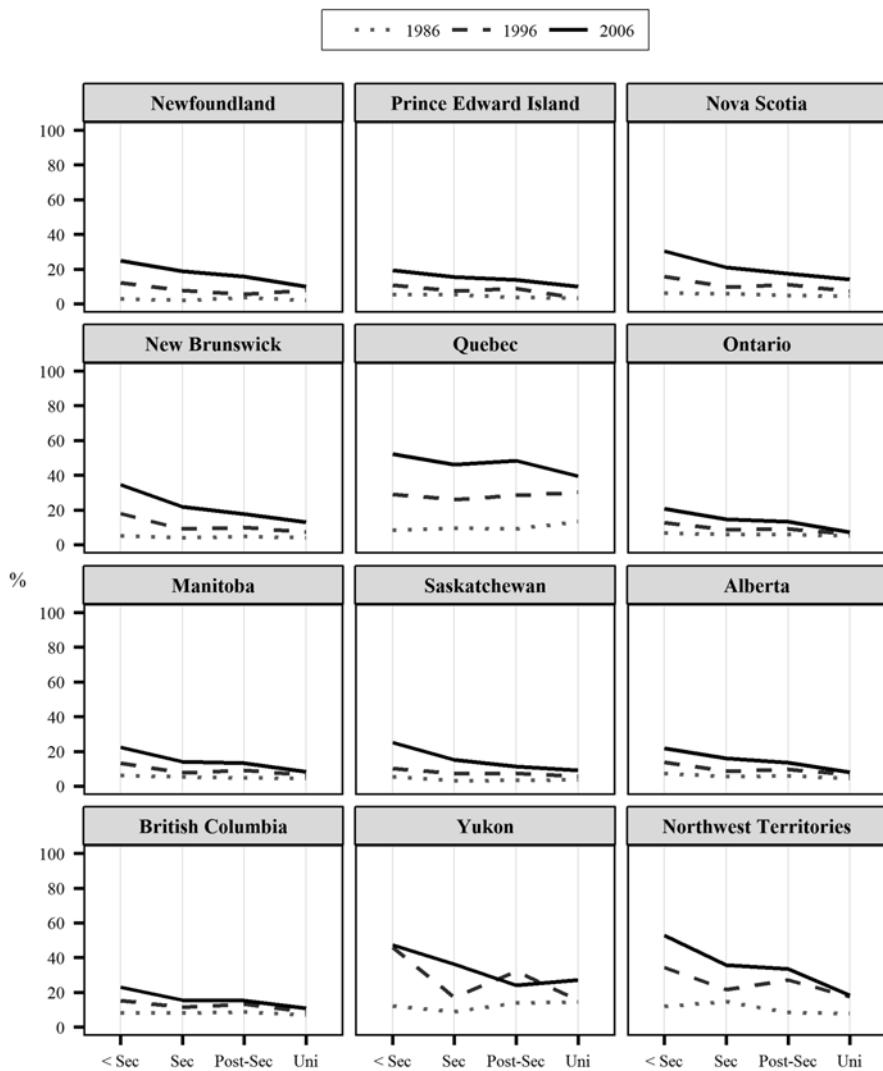


Fig. 3.2d Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 35–39 living in a marital union by level of education

Note: < Sec Less than Secondary Completed, Sec Secondary Completed, Post-Sec Post-Secondary Completed, Uni University Completed

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 1986, 1996, and 2006 Canadian census data

comparatively high among young women, aged between 20 and 29, with little variation across education levels. The proportion is lower among older women, and decreases as education increases. The diffusion of consensual union among the young can be interpreted as the outcome of an ideational change allowing transitory relations similar to those of the 1970s college students. Among women aged over

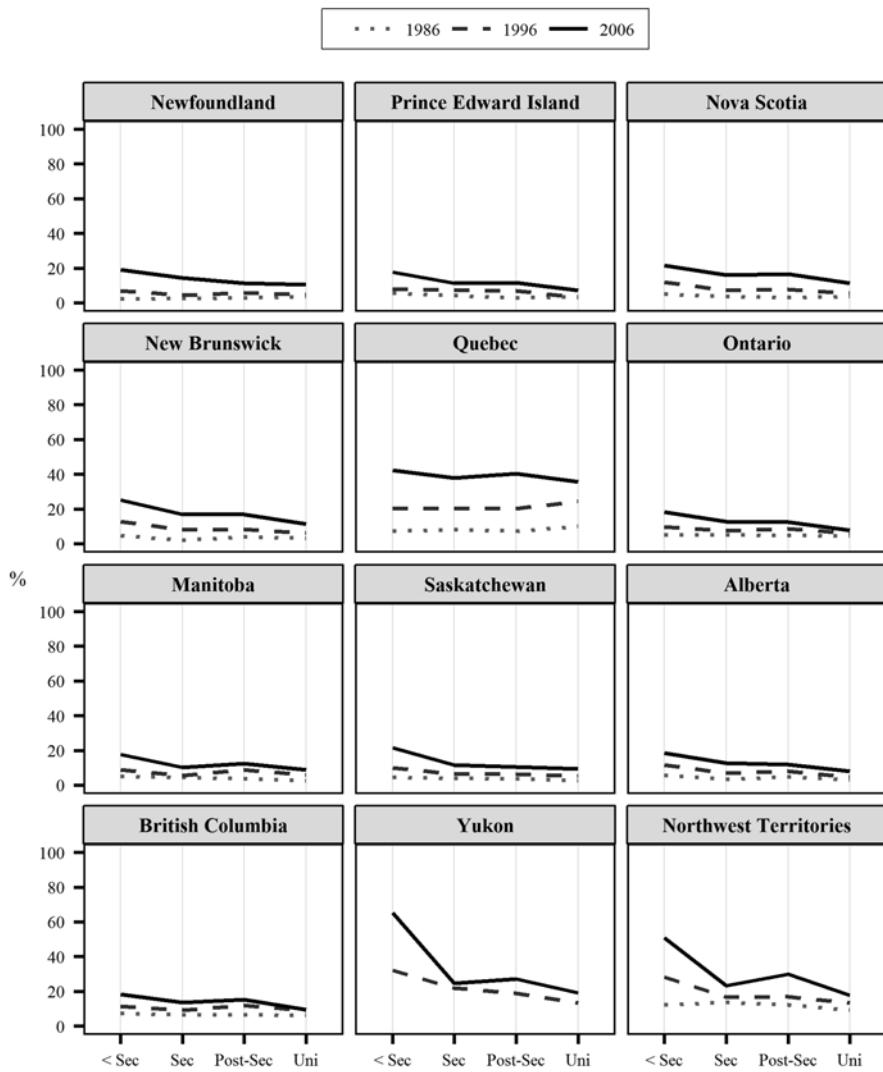


Fig. 3.2e Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 40–44 living in a marital union by level of education

Note: < Sec Less than Secondary Completed, Sec Secondary Completed, Post-Sec Post-Secondary Completed, Uni University Completed

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 1986, 1996, and 2006 Canadian census data

30, the association between consensual union and education is consistent with an explanation involving the economic condition of the individuals.

Phrased this way, such an interpretation would lead to conclude that there has been little relation between the change in the economic conditions of the young, from 1976 onwards, and the diffusion of consensual union. Looking at the context

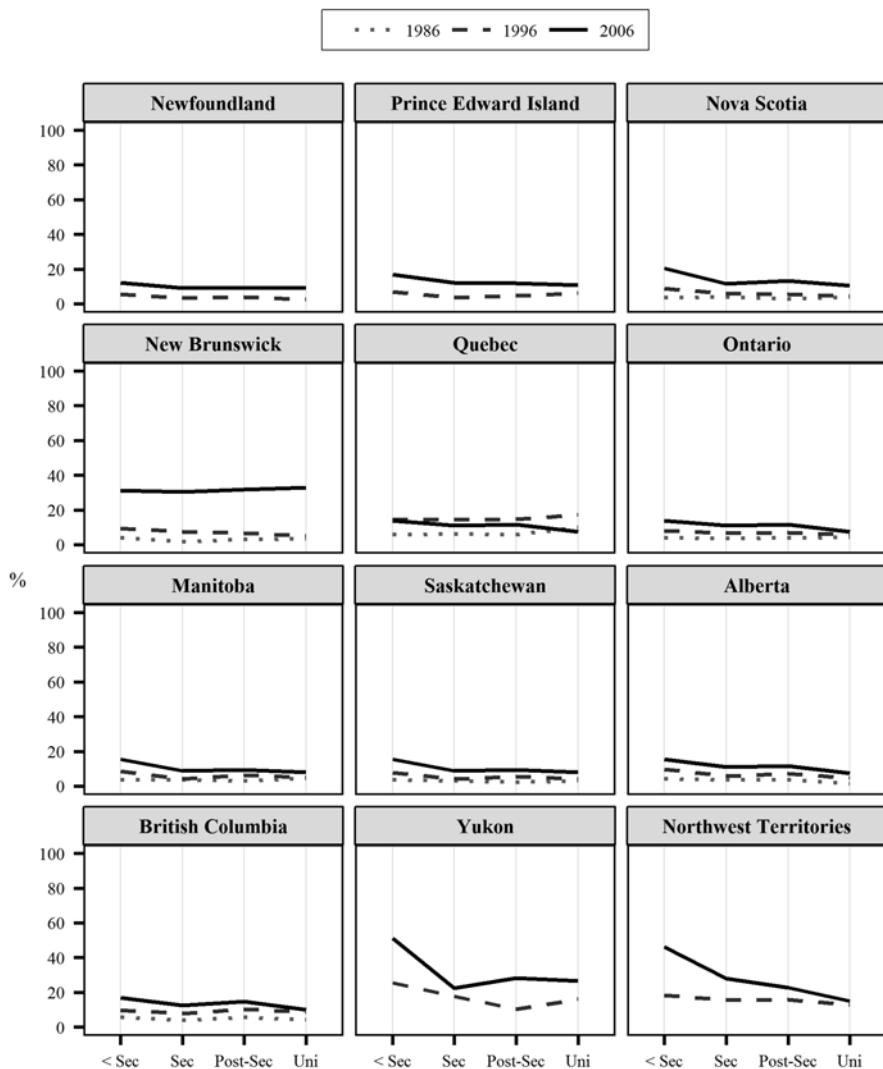


Fig. 3.2f Percent of women living in a consensual union among women aged 45–49 living in a marital union by level of education

Note: < Sec Less than Secondary Completed, Sec Secondary Completed, Post-Sec Post-Secondary Completed, Uni University Completed

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 1986, 1996, and 2006 Canadian census data

offers a slightly alternative view in which the change in the economic conditions of the youth and the diffusion of consensual union as their preferred form of marital relationship are related through their common dependence on a more fundamental change.

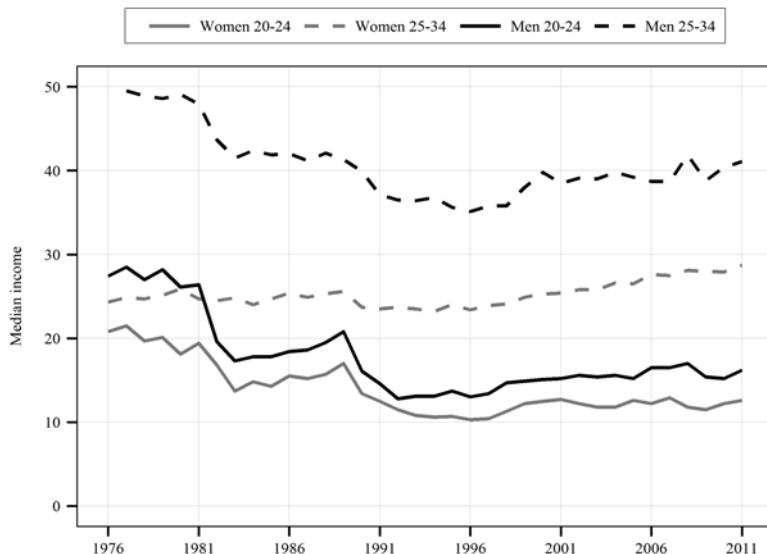


Fig. 3.3 Median market income according to age and sex, men and women aged 20–24 and 25–34. Canada, 1976–2011 (Thousands of Canadian 2011 constant dollars)

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, CANSIM table 202-0407 (Income of individuals, by sex, age group and income source, 2011 constant dollars)

Figure 3.3 reports the evolution of the median market income according to age class and sex for men and women aged 20–24 and 25 to 34 in Canada from 1976 to 2011, expressed in thousands of Canadian 2011 constant dollars. Between 1976 and 1996, the real median income of young men and women aged 20–24 decreased annually by an average rate of 3.58% and 3.44% respectively, whereas the real median income of men aged 25–34 decreased annually by 1.83% and the real median income of women of the same age class remained stable. From 1996 onwards, the real median income of all groups have been increasing by almost 1.5% a year, except for men aged 25–35 for which the increase has been close to 1%.

Although some other interpretation may be possible, from a demographic perspective, the decrease in the income of young men and women aged 20–24 is likely to be related the postponement of the transition to adulthood. Between 1976 and 1996, the proportion of men and women aged 20–24 engaged in postsecondary education has increased, leading to the decrease in median income, either because some do not have any market income at all, or because their market income comes from part time work or seasonal work combined with college or university attendance. From this perspective, living in a consensual union may be seen as associated with low income, but the association is somewhat spurious. Low income and potentially transitional marital relationship are likely two markers, outcomes or consequences of the postponement of the transition to adulthood. In other words, low income is likely not the cause of the prevalence of consensual union among the

young. Apparently the diffusion of the postponement of adulthood ended around 1996. Since then, the median income of both men and women aged 20–24 has increased slowly, but steadily, likely because the proportion enrolled in postsecondary education has reached a plateau.

The evolution of the median income of men and women aged 25–34 tells a somewhat different story. The decrease in the real median wage of men is likely a consequence of the postponement of the transition to adulthood. Still in the 1970s, men were expected to have “real” jobs providing a real male breadwinner income, whereas women were not yet expected to work full time or even at all once married. Between 1976 and 1996, this has changed, more men becoming enrolled in postsecondary education in their late 20s and even early 30s, and more women adopting patterns similar to those of the men of the same age.

If this interpretation is correct, the diffusion of consensual union among the Canadian youth outside Quebec could be interpreted mainly as a consequence of the postponement of the transition to adulthood in a world that accepts marital relationships outside of marriage. The limited diffusion of consensual union among women aged at least 30 and its negative association with education would mean that after age 30, consensual union is somehow related with lower social status or lower economic conditions.

In Quebec, the postponement of adulthood is likely to have been related with the diffusion of consensual union among the young in the same way as in the rest of Canada, but the ideational change has been deeper and consensual union has become a mainstream form of marital union for women aged 30 or more. The narrowing difference between the real median income of men and women aged 25–34, which does not seem to be related to the diffusion of consensual union outside Quebec, is likely to have been a key factor in Quebec. More equal incomes across genders, and likely within many couples, have empowered women in a way that made them economically independent and thus favoured a form of marital union that does not enforce economic dependence between the partners. This did not happen in the rest of Canada, but it is consistent with the conception of gender equality within the couple on which the current Quebec legislation on consensual union is based.

6 Hypotheses

Consensual union is more common in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. The association between living in a consensual union, age and education is weak to non-existent in Quebec, but clear in the rest of Canada. The evolution of the median income of young men and women during the years from 1976 onwards and the pattern of the relation between living in a consensual union and age and education suggest that outside Quebec, consensual union is a widespread form of marital relationship, likely transitory, for the young, and a “cheap” form of marriage for people aged at least 30. In Quebec, consensual union among the young may be hard to

distinguish from consensual union among the young in the rest of Canada; however, among women aged at least 30, it is not related to lower education, but, given the legal context and what is known from previous research, likely to be related with independence and gender equality within the couple. If this is true, economically independent women should be more likely to live in a consensual union than being married in Quebec, but not in the rest of Canada. Furthermore, favouring values related with individual autonomy should increase the probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married in Quebec, but not in the rest of Canada, or, at least, not as much in the rest of Canada as in Quebec. We perform three analyses related to these hypotheses.

In the first one, we focus on the economic role of the woman in the couple. We use being the main source of income in the family, combined with labour force status, as an indicator of one aspect of the level of economic independence of women. We expect women who are the main source of income in their family and are in the labour force to be more likely to live in a consensual union rather than being married in Quebec, but not as much or less so in the rest of Canada.

In the second analysis, we focus on the effect of the level of individual economic security provided by the job. We use holding a job in the public sector, in the private sector, being self-employed or being out of the labour force as an ordinal proxy of the level of economic security. In Canada, typically although not universally, jobs in the public sector are more stable and provide a higher level of social protection than jobs in the private sector. Obviously, the self-employed get less protection from their job than the employed. People out of the labour force are the most economically insecure. Previous research and the legal context of consensual union and marriage suggest that, in Quebec, consensual union could be used by some women as a way to ensure their independence during and after their marital union, whereas marriage could be used by other women as a strategy to secure resources in the event of the breakdown of their union. If this were true, the probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married should increase as the level of job-related economic security increases. There should not be such an effect in the other provinces. Given the nature of the hypothesis, we estimate similar equations for men.

In the third analysis, we focus on the role of values. Data on values are scarce in Canada. We use the limited data available on Canada in the World Value Surveys aggregate sample to study the effect of the level of the importance given to the autonomy of the individual on the probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married. We expect the probability of living in a consensual union to increase with the importance given to autonomy in Quebec, but not as much or less so in the rest of Canada.

In all analyses, we control for age and education, combining them when the size of the sample makes it possible. Additional controls depend on the availability of data in each source and are detailed in the next section.

7 Data and Methods

7.1 *The Economic Role of the Woman in the Couple*

In this analysis, we use individual level data from the 20 % sample of the population that filled the “long” form of the Canadian census in 1986, 1996 and 2006. We model the probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married among Canadian women aged 15–49 living in a marital union as a function of a series of characteristics using logistic regression. We estimate separate equations for each province and territory.

We measure the level of economic independence by combining two binary variables: being the main support of the family or not, being in the labour force or not. Combining these two variables defines a gradient of economic independence where being the main support and in the labour force implies the highest level of independence, being the main support and not being in the labour force the second, not being the main support and being in the labour force the third and not being the main support and not being in the labour force the last.

Age is grouped in 5-year classes. Education is measured as the highest level of education completed and grouped in four categories as in the figures: less than secondary, secondary, non-university post-secondary education and university. Preliminary analyses showed that the effect of education varies according to age; we estimate the effect of education within age classes.

The data allow examining the effect of several other relevant factors.

Taken together, having lived previously in Quebec and speaking French form a proxy of having been socialised within French-speaking Quebec, where consensual union is more common; this may have an effect, even for people who reside outside Quebec at the time of census. Having children or not may have an effect on the probability of living in a consensual union. Given that having children while living in a consensual union is more common in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada and that the size of the sample allows it, we combine language, having previously lived in Quebec and having children or not. Taken together, these variables define a series of combinations in which each category has its own effect. We report the results from a model in which these variables are combined as to define such a series.

Census data also allow estimating the effect of belonging to a First Nation.

We use the degree of freedom usually associated with the constant to estimate directly the odds of living in a consensual union rather than being married for each group resulting from the combination of age and education. This allows a direct and easy interpretation of the coefficient: if the coefficient for a given combination of age and education is 1, the base probability of cohabiting rather than being married is .5 If the coefficient is greater than 1, the base probability of cohabiting rather than being married is greater than .5 and if it is less than 1, the base probability of cohabiting rather than being married is less than .5.

The coefficients associated with the other variables are interpreted in the usual way: they increase or decrease the base odds. In the Tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 the

Table 3.2 Estimated odds ratios from a logistic regression model of living in consensual union among women aged 15–49 in marital union by age, social and economic characteristics, Canadian provinces and territories in 2006

		NL	PE	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	YT	NT
<i>Age and education</i>													
15–19													
Less than secondary	5.91*	2.66	15.38***	12.92***	12.62***	9.77***	7.46***	16.94***	12.60***	11.21***	8.00	2.57	
Secondary	6.04***	6.08***	34.16***	6.58***	14.86***	5.51***	6.11***	13.54***	10.95***	7.86***	3.78	33.28**	
Post-secondary	2.58	7.75	1.50	1.47	7.04***	2.13***	3.83***	3.56***	3.76***	3.25***	(empty)	0.99	
University	(empty)	(empty)	9.87	(empty)	0.98	0.44	(empty)	(empty)	0.69	0.68	(empty)	(empty)	
20–24													
Less than secondary	6.77***	41.78***	12.76***	10.35***	14.95***	5.28***	3.588***	5.34***	5.26***	5.51***	7.54**	6.47***	
Secondary	8.01***	4.53***	6.90***	5.82***	12.68***	3.99***	3.36***	4.41***	4.70***	3.62***	3.75**	5.83***	
Post-secondary	6.42***	4.27***	6.49***	3.68***	13.48***	3.30***	2.22***	2.33***	3.29***	3.36***	2.16	3.87*	
University	3.77***	6.25***	5.29***	3.49***	10.05***	2.34***	1.71***	2.56***	2.42***	2.80***	1.34	1.71	
25–29													
Less than secondary	2.18***	2.60	2.79***	2.26***	6.79***	2.12***	1.74***	1.33*	2.34***	1.95***	3.16*	1.54	
Secondary	2.21***	1.30	2.56***	1.51***	5.40***	1.49***	1.30**	1.03	1.40***	1.49***	2.17*	1.66	
Post-secondary	1.55***	0.68	1.76***	1.16	6.10***	1.25***	1.03	0.80*	1.17***	1.35***	2.90*	1.88*	
University	1.28*	1.03	1.61***	0.93	4.30***	0.85***	0.76**	0.55***	0.83***	0.97	1.76	1.10	
30–34													
Less than secondary	1.00	1.42	1.23	1.13	4.09***	1.03	0.61***	0.734*	0.95	0.88	0.88	1.47	
Secondary	0.70*	0.71	0.9614	0.82	3.01***	0.74***	0.63***	0.56***	0.67***	0.69***	1.00	0.60	
Post-secondary	0.71***	0.60*	0.64***	0.53***	3.11***	0.62***	0.49***	0.34***	0.60***	0.68***	0.58	0.66	
University	0.45***	0.35***	0.54***	0.41***	2.09***	0.36***	0.37***	0.29***	0.37***	0.53***	0.50*	0.50*	

35-39													
Less than secondary	0.59***	0.44	0.89	0.66***	2.50***	0.67***	0.48***	0.44***	0.61***	0.61***	0.91	0.62*	
Secondary	0.43***	0.31***	0.53***	0.40***	1.94***	0.44***	0.34***	0.30***	0.44***	0.42***	0.70	0.50*	
Post-secondary	0.36***	0.34***	0.42***	0.30***	1.82***	0.38***	0.31***	0.22***	0.35***	0.39***	0.38**	0.41***	
University	0.24***	0.24***	0.38***	0.21***	1.43***	0.22***	0.22***	0.19***	0.23***	0.31***	0.49*	0.28***	
40-44													
Less than secondary	0.40***	0.44***	0.51***	0.39***	1.49***	0.48***	0.34***	0.37***	0.42***	0.40***	1.28	0.59*	
Secondary	0.31***	0.24***	0.34***	0.26***	1.17***	0.30***	0.20***	0.22***	0.28***	0.30***	0.31***	0.29***	
Post-secondary	0.21***	0.23***	0.36***	0.25***	1.17***	0.29***	0.24***	0.18***	0.25***	0.32***	0.35***	0.36***	
University	0.21***	0.15***	0.24***	0.15***	1.05*	0.18***	0.18***	0.17***	0.18***	0.17***	0.20***	0.27***	0.26***
45-49													
Less than secondary	0.24***	0.27***	0.37***	0.30***	0.87***	0.33***	0.27***	0.22***	0.33***	0.36***	0.91	0.46***	
Secondary	0.17***	0.29***	0.25***	0.16***	0.79***	0.24***	0.17***	0.12***	0.23***	0.26***	0.29***	0.35***	
Post-secondary	0.17***	0.17***	0.24***	0.18***	0.78***	0.25***	0.17***	0.11***	0.23***	0.29***	0.36***	0.21***	
University	0.16***	0.21***	0.19***	0.15***	0.86***	0.15***	0.14***	0.10***	0.14***	0.19***	0.39*	0.18***	
Economic independence: role and labour force status													
Main and in the LF (ref.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Main and Out of the LF	1.16	1.64	1.22	1.34*	0.90**	0.98	1.12	1.43***	0.99	0.79***	1.36	1.17	
Not main and In the LF	0.46***	0.41***	0.48***	0.52***	0.60***	0.41***	0.43***	0.48***	0.44***	0.46***	0.82	0.62***	
Not main and Out of the LF	0.54***	0.37***	0.43***	0.52***	0.40***	0.31***	0.42***	0.49***	0.37***	0.37***	0.68	0.65*	

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

	NL	PE	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	YT	NT
Language, origin and children												
Other, Other, None (ref.)	1	1	1	1	0.36***	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other, Other, Children	0.46***	0.47***	0.41***	0.42***	0.10***	0.38***	0.39***	0.45***	0.36***	0.39***	0.37***	0.60***
Other, Quebec, None	6.54	(empty)	1.39	2.22*	0.17***	1.66***	3.98*	1.89	1.28	2.12***	(empty)	2.04
Other, Quebec, Children	0.43	(empty)	0.81	0.88	0.07***	0.45***	0.05**	0.16**	0.23**	0.93	(empty)	0.19*
French, Other, None	1.73	1.94**	1.12	1.98***	0.99	1.58***	0.72*	0.97	1.32**	1.92***	0.89	1.27
French, Other, Children	1.14	0.32*	0.43***	1.21*	0.46*	0.68***	0.25***	0.41*	0.38***	0.78	0.95	0.32
French, Quebec, None	7.46**	10.65*	1.97	3.69***	1 (ref.)	4.53***	4.81***	3.86*	4.59***	6.27***	0.56	6.37
French, Quebec, Children	5.37	6.564	0.26	1.09	0.76***	1.62**	0.45	2.33	2.42*	2.16*	10.79*	(empty)
First nation	1.88***	3.981***	1.44***	1.85***	1.66***	2.60***	2.65***	3.58***	3.35***	3.08***	2.89***	3.33***
N	14,888	3457	23,780	20,230	199,752	328,189	34,622	30,020	99,111	109,875	1916	3736

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the 2006 Canadian census data, 20% sample

Note: See Table 3.1 for the meaning of the abbreviations

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3.3 Predicted probabilities of living in a consensual union among women aged 15–49 in marital union (estimated from the logistic regression model specified in Table 3.2), Canadian provinces and territories in 2006

	NL	PE	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	YT	NT
Age and education												
15–19												
Less than secondary	85.5	72.6	93.9	92.8	92.7	90.7	88.2	94.4	92.6	91.8	88.9	72.0
Secondary	85.8	85.9	97.2	86.8	93.7	84.6	85.9	93.1	91.6	88.7	79.1	97.1
Post-secondary	72.1	88.6	60.0	59.5	87.6	68.1	79.3	78.1	79.0	76.4		49.7
University					49.4	30.3			40.9	40.6		
20–24												
Less than secondary	87.1	97.7	92.7	91.2	93.7	84.1	78.2	84.2	84.0	84.6	88.3	86.6
Secondary	88.9	81.9	87.3	85.3	92.7	79.9	77.1	81.5	82.5	78.3	78.9	85.4
Post-secondary	86.5	81.0	86.7	78.6	93.1	76.7	69.0	70.0	76.7	77.0	68.3	79.5
University	79.0	86.2	84.1	77.7	91.0	70.0	63.1	71.9	70.7	73.7	57.3	63.1
25–29												
Less than secondary	68.5	72.2	73.6	69.3	87.2	67.9	63.5	57.1	70.1	66.1	76.0	60.7
Secondary	68.8	56.5	71.9	60.2	84.4	59.8	56.5	50.7	58.4	59.9	68.5	62.3
Post-secondary	60.7	40.3	63.8	53.7	85.9	55.5	50.7	44.4	53.9	57.5	74.4	65.2
University	56.1	50.8	61.6	48.1	81.1	45.9	43.2	35.5	45.3	49.2	63.8	52.3
30–34												
Less than secondary	49.9	58.6	55.1	53.1	80.4	50.7	37.9	42.3	48.8	46.9	46.7	59.6
Secondary	41.2	41.5	49.1	44.9	75.0	42.7	38.5	35.8	40.1	40.9	50.0	37.6
Post-secondary	41.4	37.5	38.9	34.5	75.6	38.4	32.7	25.1	37.3	40.4	36.5	39.8
University	31.0	25.9	35.1	29.3	67.6	26.2	26.9	22.2	27.2	34.6	33.1	33.3

(continued)

Table 3.3 (continued)

	NL	PE	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	YT	NT
35-39												
Less than secondary	37.1	30.7	47.1	39.8	71.5	40.2	32.4	30.7	37.7	38.0	47.5	38.2
Secondary	29.8	23.6	34.6	28.8	65.9	30.4	25.3	23.0	30.3	29.3	41.3	33.3
Post-secondary	26.4	25.5	29.5	22.8	64.5	27.3	23.6	18.0	26.1	28.1	27.6	28.9
University	19.2	19.5	27.3	17.0	58.9	18.0	17.8	16.1	18.9	23.5	32.9	22.1
40-44												
Less than secondary	28.4	30.3	33.7	27.9	59.8	32.5	25.3	26.7	29.5	28.7	56.2	36.9
Secondary	23.4	19.6	25.2	20.7	53.8	23.3	16.9	17.7	21.6	23.0	23.8	22.7
Post-secondary	17.6	18.7	26.3	20.2	53.9	22.4	19.4	15.2	20.1	24.4	26.0	26.6
University	17.0	13.0	19.1	13.3	51.3	15.5	15.1	14.3	15.0	16.9	21.5	20.4
45-49												
Less than secondary	19.4	21.1	27.0	22.8	46.5	24.8	21.5	18.0	24.6	26.4	47.7	31.4
Secondary	14.6	22.3	19.8	13.9	44.1	19.5	14.6	10.6	18.6	20.6	22.7	25.8
Post-secondary	14.4	14.3	19.0	15.0	43.7	19.7	14.7	10.0	18.5	22.3	26.6	17.5
University	13.8	17.2	16.2	12.7	46.0	13.0	12.6	9.4	12.5	16.0	28.0	15.3

Source: Authors' elaboration based on 2006 Canadian census data, 20% sample

Note: See Table 3.1 for the meaning of the abbreviations

Table 3.4 Estimated odds ratios from a logistic regression model of living in consensual union among women and men aged 20–49 in marital union by age, social and economic characteristics, Canadian selected provinces in 2012

	Women		Men		BC			
	QC	ON	AB	BC		QC	ON	AB
Age and education								
20–24								
Less than secondary	27.78***	5.41***	6.07***	7.91***	75.81***	5.16***	2.18	6.571*
Secondary	11.05***	2.71***	3.95***	2.80**	26.54***	4.49***	2.22*	2.846*
Post-secondary	19.47***	2.72***	2.09*	6.80***	10.69***	1.90*	1.10	1.048*
University	6.66***	1.60	0.98	0.98	(empty)	2.68	0.82	1.226
25–29								
Less than secondary	13.31***	2.37***	2.96***	3.79*	8.45***	4.31***	1.43	5.01***
Secondary	10.25***	1.57*	1.05	1.83*	5.88***	1.63*	0.96	1.59
Post-secondary	11.69***	1.25	0.92	1.56	10.11***	1.38	0.96	1.25
University	4.61***	0.94	0.51**	0.88	3.03***	0.81	0.40*	0.95
30–34								
Less than secondary	4.70***	1.00	0.83	2.71*	11.43***	1.99*	1.22	1.03
Secondary	6.50***	0.90	0.55*	0.95	6.89***	1.01	0.61	0.57
Post-secondary	6.56***	0.63***	0.57*	0.86	6.20***	0.49***	0.49*	0.74
University	3.63***	0.41***	0.35***	0.35***	2.69***	0.56**	0.20***	0.24***
35–39								
Less than secondary	6.41***	1.18	0.48	1.58	3.94***	0.65	0.46	0.675
Secondary	5.97***	0.94	0.86	0.70	3.80***	0.62*	0.70	0.70
Post-secondary	4.66***	0.50***	0.47**	0.46**	6.31***	0.62**	0.32***	0.49*
University	3.19***	0.21***	0.16***	0.31***	1.61***	0.33***	0.13***	0.36***

(continued)

Table 3.4 (continued)

		Women		Men					
		QC	ON	AB	BC	QC	ON	AB	BC
40-44									
Less than secondary	6.52***	0.58	0.88	1.09**	2.90***	1.27	0.37**	0.80	
Secondary	3.69***	0.56**	0.33***	0.55*	3.28***	0.67	0.47*	0.40***	
Post-secondary	3.25***	0.34***	0.45**	0.49***	2.21***	0.50***	0.39***	0.48***	
University	3.19***	0.21***	0.20***	0.31***	2.20***	0.25***	0.12***	0.34***	
45-49									
Less than secondary	4.07***	0.37***	0.62	0.13***	3.63***	0.73	0.57	0.58	
Secondary	3.57***	0.44***	0.21***	0.36***	2.92***	0.32***	0.31***	0.33***	
Post-secondary	2.91***	0.39***	0.32***	0.26***	2.49***	0.36***	0.30***	0.32***	
University	2.28***	0.35***	0.23***	0.20***	1.62***	0.27***	0.10***	0.18***	
Economic risk: employment status									
Public sector (ref.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Private sector	0.71***	0.98	0.86	0.98	1.13	1.11	1.29	1.38	
Self-employed	0.56***	1.04	0.71	1.09	0.89	0.81	0.85	0.88	
Out of the labour force	0.30***	0.91	0.52***	0.47***	0.62	1.49	0.30*	2.19*	
Other	0.25***	0.78	1.22	0.99	0.67	1.94	0.48	3.09*	

Age of the youngest own child in the household								
None less than 25 (ref.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Less than 3	0.72***	0.29***	0.43***	0.24***	0.61***	0.27***	0.41***	0.23***
Between 3 and 5	0.57***	0.30***	0.34***	0.27***	0.50***	0.23***	0.27***	0.23***
Between 6 and 12	0.50***	0.32***	0.53***	0.38***	0.45***	0.23***	0.40***	0.30***
Between 13 and 15	0.32***	0.35***	0.31***	0.31***	0.26***	0.32***	0.25***	0.21***
Between 16 and 17	0.32***	0.43***	0.58	0.27***	0.34***	0.44***	0.49	0.26***
Between 18 and 24	0.33***	0.24***	0.42***	0.60	0.33***	0.30***	0.51	0.55
Census metropolitan area								
None (ref.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Montreal	0.39***				0.40***			
Toronto		0.42***				0.48***		
Vancouver				0.53***				0.57***
N	5175	8835	3573	3640	4546	7746	3239	3089

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the Statistics Canada's 2012 Labour Force Survey Public Use Microdata File

Note: See Table 3.1 for the meaning of the abbreviations
 * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

reference categories are written besides the name of the variable, between brackets. The reference category for the measure of economic independence is the highest level, “Being the main support and Being in the labour force”. The reference category for the combination of speaking French, having lived in Quebec and having children has been chosen to allow easy contextual interpretation: it is referring to a majority group within each province. Thus it is speaking French, having lived in Quebec and not having children in Quebec, but not speaking French, not having lived in Quebec and not having children in all other provinces and territories.

7.2 *The Level of Economic Security*

In this analysis, we use data from the 2012 Labour Force Survey (LFS) public use microdata file. This survey is used primarily to estimate the unemployment rate, but includes information on marital union and is the only source of data that includes a variable that allows differentiating employment in the public and the private sectors. The LFS uses rotating panels; we use the January and July samples to avoid using twice the same individuals. As explained in the previous section, we use information on job sector as a gradient of economic security. Thus, we model the probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married among Canadian men and women living in a marital union aged 20–49 as a function of the level of economic security measured through employment status, controlling for age, education and other relevant variables available in the survey: age of the youngest own child in the household and census metropolitan area. The LFS does not provide information on language. We use living or not in the main census metropolitan area (CMA) of the province as a proxy for language: in Quebec, the proportion of French-speaking people is lower in the Montreal CMA than elsewhere the province. We thus expect living in a CMA to decrease the probability of living in a consensual union in Quebec and to have no significant effect in the other provinces. We estimate separate equations for men and women and, given the number of equations, we limit the analysis to the four most populous provinces. We estimate the equations using logistic regression.

7.3 *Values*

We use data from waves 4 and 5 of the Word Values Survey (World Values Survey Association 2005), the only waves of this survey conducted in Canada. We measure the importance given to the autonomy of the individual using the Inglehart autonomy index (Inglehart 1997). We model the probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married among men and women aged 15–49 living in a marital union as a function of the importance they give to individual autonomy, controlling for age, education and the presence of children. The data allow

estimating the effect of the economic role of the respondent in the same fashion as we do in our first analysis. Because of the limited size of the sample, we cannot estimate separate equations for each province. Instead, we estimate separate equations for French Quebec and English Canada. For the same reason, we cannot estimate separate equations for men and women. However, we estimate the effect of the autonomy index and of our proxy of the level of economic independence separately for men and women.

8 Results

8.1 *The Economic Role of the Woman in the Couple*

Although this analysis focuses on economic independence, the main sources of variation in the probability of living in a consensual union are age and education and we describe their effect first (see Table 3.2). Not surprisingly, the base odds of living in a consensual union rather than being married are higher than 1 for all levels of education among Quebec women up to and including ages 40–44. The coefficient associated with women aged 15–19 and completed university education is less than 1 but not significant, which does not come as a surprise since having completed even a one-year university diploma before age 20 is nearly impossible and the category is almost empty. Despite the odds being higher than 1 in all, but one age class, there is an education gradient within each age class. The base odds decrease with age within each education level.

In Ontario, the base odds are greater than 1 for all education levels in the two youngest groups, and for all education levels but university in the 25–29 group. The base odds are less than 1 for all education levels within older groups with the exception of the “Less than secondary group” among the 30–34. As in Quebec, there is an education gradient within age classes and the base odds decrease with age within each education level. The overall pattern is about the same as in Ontario in all other provinces, although a case could be made that the base odds are consistently higher up to and including age group 25–29 in the Atlantic provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) than west of Quebec. Table 3.3 reports the coefficients from the combination of age and education transformed into easier-to-read predicted probabilities.

The coefficients associated with the levels of economic independence are ordered according to the hypothesis and significant in Quebec and British Columbia. In Ontario and Alberta, the coefficients are ordered according to the hypothesis, but without a significant difference between the two highest levels. In the remaining provinces, the coefficients are not ordered as expected. In New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, being the main support and out of the labour force is associated with a higher probability of living in a consensual union than being the main support and being in the labour force. In Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island,

Nova Scotia and Manitoba, the coefficients point in the same direction, but are not significant. There is no sizeable difference between the coefficients associated with the two lowest categories in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

In Quebec, childless French-speaking women from Quebec have the highest odds of living in a consensual union; for these women, having children reduces the odds of cohabitation by about 25 %. The odds are about the same for childless French-speaking women from elsewhere; for these women, having children reduces the odds by about 50 %. The odds of living in a consensual union for childless non-French-speaking women from outside Quebec are about a third of those of childless French-speaking women from Quebec; for these women, having children reduces the odds by about 75 %. The odds for childless non-French-speaking women from Quebec are less than 20 % of those of childless French-speaking women from Quebec; for these women, having children reduces the odds by about 60 %. French-speaking women from Quebec have the highest odds of living in a consensual union and, among them, having children reduces these odds by only 25 %. All other women are less likely to live in a consensual union and; for these women, having children reduces the odds by a much larger proportion.

In Ontario, for non-French-speaking women from somewhere else than Quebec, having children reduces the odds of living in a consensual union by about 60 %. Childless French-speaking women from Quebec have the highest odds, more than four times those of non-French-speaking women from elsewhere; for these women, having children reduces the odds by about 66 %, much more than in Quebec. Childless non-French-speaking women from Quebec and childless French-speaking women from elsewhere have about the same odds of living in a consensual union, roughly 60 % higher than those of non-French-speaking women from somewhere else than Quebec; having children reduces the odds by about 75 % in the first group and by about 60 % in the second group. For French-speaking women from Quebec, having children has a stronger effect in reducing the odds of consensual union in Ontario than in Quebec. Speaking French or coming from Quebec increases the odds for childless women. In all groups, having children reduces them from 60 to 75 %.

Given the small number of French-speaking women and of women coming from Quebec in most provinces outside Quebec, many coefficients are not statistically significant despite their magnitude. In Alberta and British Columbia, where numbers are larger, the structure of the ratios between the coefficients is the same as in Ontario.

In all provinces and territories, belonging to a First nation increases the odds of cohabiting. Interestingly, this effect is smaller in Quebec, where the reference group is childless French-speaking women from Quebec, than in any other province and even than the two territories, where the proportion of the population belonging to a First nation is the highest.

8.2 *The Level of Economic Security*

The effects of age and education are similar to what we have seen in Table 3.2. As expected, among Quebec women, the odds of living in a consensual union decrease as the level of economic risk increases (see Table 3.4). There is no similar gradient for women in the other provinces, and no similar gradient for men in any province. Women out the labour force are more likely to be married in Alberta and British Columbia. Men out of the labour force are more likely to be married in Alberta, but more likely to be living in a consensual union in British Columbia.

In Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, for men and women, having children reduces the odds of living in a consensual union by about two thirds, regardless of the age of the children. For Quebec women, the effect of having children decreases as the age of the youngest child increases. There is a similar trend among Quebec men, but not as strong as among women. This could be interpreted either as a consequence of having children while cohabiting still becoming more common in Quebec, or as marriage occurring as a “capstone” event.

In Quebec, but also in Ontario and British Columbia, the odds of living in a consensual union are lower for people living in the main metropolitan census area rather than elsewhere in the province. We were using this variable as a proxy for language and we were expecting it to have such an effect in Quebec, but not in the other provinces.

8.3 *Values*

The sample is small. Given its limited size, it seems appropriate to provide a description in Table 3.5. Table 3.6 shows that there is no striking difference in the distribution of the autonomy index within sociolinguistic groups and sex. However, Table 3.7 shows a clear association between the level of the index and the proportion living in a consensual union among both men and women in French Quebec.

We estimate three equations (see Table 3.8). In the first one, we look at the effect of economic independence net of those of age, education and the presence of children. In the second one, we estimate the gross effect of the autonomy index for men and women. In the third one, we look at the net effects of economic independence and of the autonomy index net of those of age, education and the presence of children:

- Equation 1: In English Canada, living in a consensual union is associated with economic independence as hypothesized for women. There is no association for men, except for those who are not the main source of income in their family and are not in the labour force, who are much more likely to live in a consensual union rather than being married. There are no significant coefficients for economic independence in French Quebec, which could be a consequence of the small size of the sample. As expected, the odds of living in a consensual union

Table 3.5 Number of Canadian men and women aged 15–49 living in a marital union according to level of autonomy by sociolinguistic group and sex

Autonomy	English Canada		French Quebec	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1 Low	34	17	9	1
2	79	57	24	11
3	190	111	55	27
4	205	131	67	28
5 High	149	94	56	23

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the World Values Survey, waves 4 and 5

Table 3.6 Percent distribution of autonomy index among Canadian men and women aged 15–49 living in a marital union according by sociolinguistic group and sex

Autonomy	English Canada		French Quebec	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1 Low	4.99	4.53	4.55	2.00
2	11.57	13.83	12.21	14.88
3	27.95	25.11	29.16	28.37
4	30.06	33.75	27.27	36.06
5 High	25.43	22.78	26.81	18.69
N	657	410	211	90

Note: Weighted estimation

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the World Values Survey, waves 4 and 5

Table 3.7 Percent of people living in consensual union rather than being married among Canadian men and women aged 15–49 living in a marital union according to level of autonomy by sociolinguistic group and sex

Autonomy	English Canada		French Quebec	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1 Low	12.38	22.16	12.78	0.00
2	16.20	15.60	20.80	18.80
3	15.24	16.73	49.65	56.43
4	22.21	26.80	67.64	54.97
5 High	22.33	26.75	55.02	65.03
N	657	410	211	89

Note: Weighted estimation

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the World Values Survey, waves 4 and 5

decrease as age increases in both English Canada and French Quebec. Not surprisingly, they decrease as the level of education increases in English Canada; the coefficients are not significant in French Quebec, but this could be a consequence of the sample size rather than a real lack of association. Having children decreases the odds in English Canada and in French Quebec, apparently more in the latter than in the former.

Table 3.8 Estimated odds ratios from a logistic model of living in consensual union among women and men aged 15–49 in marital union by age, presence of children, and economic characteristics, English Canada and French Quebec

	English Canada			French Quebec		
	Women		Men	Women		Men
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Age	0.94***		0.93***	0.94**	0.94***	0.91***
Education						0.94
Lower (ref)	1		1	1	1	
Middle	0.54		0.46*	0.46	0.85	
Upper	0.264***		0.20***	0.27**	0.26***	0.64
Children						
No (ref.)	1		1	1	1	
Yes	0.35***		0.344***	0.33***	0.34***	0.17***
Economic independence: role and labour force status						
Main and In the LF (ref.)	1		1	1	1	
Main and Out of the LF		(empty)	0.34	0.30	1.12	
Not main and In the LF	0.42**		1.56	1.57	0.41	
Not main and Out of the LF	0.34***	0.33***	5.99*	6.27*	0.27	
Autonomy	1.21	1.44***	1.23	1.17	1.57***	1.58***
Origin	20.40***	0.21***	26.42***	12.76***	0.25***	10.93**
N	657	657	410	410	211	211

Note: Results from logistic regression model that includes autonomy, sex, age, education, income role, labour force status and presence of children. Weighted estimation

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the World Values Survey, waves 4 and 5

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

- Equation 2: In English Canada, the odds of living in a consensual union do not increase with the value of the index neither for women nor for men. In French Quebec, the odds increase with the value of the autonomy index for men and women, maybe more for men than for women.
- Equation 3: In English Canada, once controlling for sociodemographic characteristics and economic independence, the effect of the level of autonomy becomes significant: the odds of living in a consensual union increase with the value of the autonomy index for women. There is still no association between the autonomy index and living in a consensual union for men. In French Quebec, the odds increase with the value of the autonomy index for men and women, maybe more for men than for women, as in Equation 2. Thus, they are robust to control by sociodemographic characteristics and especially economic independence.

9 Discussion

Both the descriptive figures and the linear models show that the main sources of variation in the probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married are age, education and the difference between French Quebec and English Canada. Figures 3.2a, 3.2b, 3.2c, 3.2d, 3.2e and 3.2f show that the gross probability of living in a consensual union rather than being married decreases with age, but the pattern is not the same in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. In Quebec, the proportion living in a consensual union is high, close to 50 %, among women in their late 30s and even early 40s. Elsewhere in Canada, consensual union is not common after the late 20s. Among women aged at least 30, living in a consensual union decreases as education increases in most of Canada, but this relation looks much weaker in Quebec.

Linear models convey similar results. Some of the control variables provide additional understanding. Having children does not decrease the probability of living in a consensual union as much in Quebec as elsewhere in Canada, but, unlike elsewhere in Canada, the probability decreases as the age of the children increases. Given that this effect is net of that of age, it could be the hint of a cohort or period difference: vital statistics show that the proportion of children born to mothers living in a consensual union increased over the years in which these children were born. In Quebec, the net effect of education is larger in the linear models than what the gross effects depicted by Figs. 3.2a, 3.2b, 3.2c, 3.2d, 3.2e and 3.2f would suggest. The apparent paradox is easy to explain: the base odds, or the base probability, of living in a consensual union is so large in Quebec that even a “large” net effect of education does not lead to a sizeable change in the gross effect.

Our main focus was the effect of economic independence, economic security and the importance given to autonomy. We expected all three to increase the probability of living in a consensual union in Quebec and especially among Quebec women, but

not as much or not at all elsewhere in Canada. Results basically look as expected. The probability of living in a consensual union is related to the level of economic independence of women as expected in Quebec, but also in British Columbia. In these two provinces, women who are the main source of income are more likely to live in a consensual union. This could be interpreted as an indirect effect of poverty or disadvantage. However, living in a consensual union is clearly related to the level of economic security among Quebec women, but not among men and not elsewhere in Canada. In Quebec, as expected, women who get less economic security from their job use marriage as a form of protection against the consequences of the breakdown of their couple. In Quebec, “women at risk” tend to be married, whereas “empowered women” tend to live in a consensual union. Net of our measure of economic independence—hence, net of their actual situation relative to income and participation—the importance given to autonomy increases the probability of living in a consensual union among women from English Canada and among men and women in French Quebec.

The difference between French Quebec and English Canada is related to differences in the effects of economic independence, economic security and autonomy, but the differences in the effects of age and education as well as the difference in the net base odds are not altered by controlling the effect of these potential explaining variables. Individual characteristics and their effect do not explain much of the difference between the two sociolinguistic groups. This leads to concluding that the difference between French Quebec and English Canada is institutional, or macrosocial, rather than compositional or microsocial.

The analyses generated two new and unexpected results. First, living in a census metropolitan area does not behave as a proxy for language. Second, outside Quebec, consensual union seems to be more common in Eastern Canada than in Western Canada. As far as we know, this had not been observed yet.

One alternative interpretation of the effect associated with living in a CMA is considering it as a proxy for immigration. Canada has a large influx of international immigration, amounting each year to about 0.75 % of its population. Most immigrants choose to live in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. The results we got would suggest that people born abroad and children of immigrants are less likely to live in a consensual union than people born in Canada or born to parents born in Canada.

There is no obvious explanation for the difference between Eastern and Western Canada. One tentative explanation would involve immigration. Few immigrants choose to live in the Atlantic Provinces. Another one would involve a mix of religion and economy. Alberta, and to a lesser extent Saskatchewan, have received a significant influx of religious dissenters from German-speaking countries in the nineteenth century and are nowadays the home of the Canadian religious right. Furthermore, both provinces thrive on oil and offer highly paid blue-collar jobs that allow maintaining the traditional breadwinner-homemaker family model (Beaujot et al. 2013).

10 Conclusion

Family law and, more generally, the legal framework of family life changed in a deep way over the last decades in Canada. In a clearer way than in many other countries, these changes have created a context that provided unmarried couples with a legal institution that is best described as consensual union. While the details vary across provinces and despite larger differences between Quebec and the common law provinces, this is true all across the country. Such legal changes reflect a broad change in values.

This said, unmarried cohabitation did not become widespread in the same way in all of Canada. In all provinces, unmarried cohabitation has become common among women aged less than 30, and its diffusion among the young from the early 1980s onwards may be related to the postponement of the transition to the adulthood. Among women aged 30 or more, outside Quebec, unmarried cohabitation remains uncommon and clearly related to education. In Quebec, and probably more properly in French Quebec, unmarried cohabitation is common among women aged more than 30 and living in a consensual union is not primarily related to education.

The main legal difference between consensual union in Quebec and in the common law provinces is the level of mutual economic dependence the law imposes on the partners. In the common law provinces, consensual union is almost a form of “de facto” marriage. Typically, in the common law provinces, statute law assumes that partners should share some assets and allows the judges to impose “spousal” support after breakdown if circumstances seem to justify it even if both partners had waived their rights to such support in a written contract. In Quebec, marriage and consensual union differ radically in that the former imposes the sharing of assets and the possibility of spousal support, whereas the latter leaves all economic relations between themselves to the partners. Being married or not has more legal and economic consequences in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. As we explained earlier, this feature of Quebec law is related to the coexistence, in the Quebec society, of two different and competing views of gender equality within the couple, one that stresses the pooling and equal sharing of wealth and income and leads to economic dependence—which clearly prevails in the rest of Canada—and one that stresses independence and leads to keeping assets and income separate.

This radical difference between marriage and consensual union in Quebec law shapes a setting in which being married or not is associated with the actual level of dependence. Thus, in Quebec, economically dependent women tend to be married, whereas economically independent women tend to live in a consensual union. Other factors are associated with being married or not in Quebec as in the other provinces—such as the presence of children and education—but not in the same way or not with the same strength as in the other provinces. The difference between English Canada and French Quebec is macrosocial rather than microsocial, more embedded in the institutions than in the distribution of individual characteristics, not so much related to the distribution of values as they may be recorded in a survey, but more to the values enshrined in the law through the political and legislative process.

This difference is not limited to the spread and use of consensual union. Moving away from traditional Christian doctrine towards a moral based on individual freedom, especially on contested issues, has become a distinctive characteristic of Quebec within Canada. Abortion is legal in Canada, but the provision varies greatly across provinces. Some provinces do not provide any abortion service, whereas Quebec is among the few provinces that provide them through a network of public and not-for-profit clinics; about 22 % of pregnancies end in abortion in Quebec, but only 16.5 % in the rest of Canada (Statistics Canada 2014; CIHI 2013). In early 2014, Quebec's National Assembly passed an act on end-of-life care that allow terminally-ill patients to require medical aid in dying as in some European countries (NA 2014). It is the first Canadian province to do so.

The main difference in the spread of cohabitation in Canada is the difference between French Quebec and English Canada, but there are other differences. We found two that, as far as we know, had not been noticed before: outside Quebec, unmarried cohabitation seems to be more common in Eastern Canada than in Western Canada; unmarried cohabitation could be more common outside the larger census metropolitan areas than elsewhere. These findings were unexpected and the interpretation we provide is tentative. This said, we suggest that both could be related with immigration. Foreign-born Canadians could prefer marriage over unmarried cohabitation for a variety of reasons, among which—notwithstanding cultural or religious issues—more easily insuring the transmission of their original citizenship to their spouse and offspring. Furthermore, the low proportion of people living in a common-law union in Alberta and Saskatchewan is likely related to the combination of religious conservatism and an oil-based economy. Such interpretations are obviously a matter for further research.

More generally, doing research on unmarried cohabitation in Canada suggests that exploring the differences in the meaning of marriage could help understanding differences in the spread and circumstances of unmarried cohabitation. In common law provinces, there is little legal difference between marriage and consensual union, and this similarity seems to be rooted in a strong consensus on economic dependence being the real meaning of a couple relationship. In Quebec, competing views lead to a large difference in some of the civil effects of marriage and consensual union, and to choices that lead themselves to different outcomes in the event of a breakdown. For migrants and immigrants, marriage may have a very practical meaning that has little to do with romance or culture, and more with legal issues. From this perspective, the association between marriage and education, when it exists, could as well be interpreted as a practical issue. Educated people tend to move across larger labour markets than less educated people, and a couple in which both partners are highly educated is more at risk of being affected by career moves that involve moving across large distances, making difficult choices about who will take the risk of losing his or her job to accommodate the other's career, or choosing to maintain separate residences in different cities or provinces or even countries. For such couples, marriage may provide a safe and simple way of maintaining the legal status of the relationship and ensure protection in case of a breakdown.

Acknowledgement This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Andersson, G., Noack, T., Seierstad, A., & Weedon-Fekjaer, H. (2006). The demographics of same-sex marriages in Norway and Sweden. *Demography*, 43(1), 79–98.
- Balakrishnan, T. R., Lapierre-Adamcyk, E., & Krotki, K. J. (1993). *Family and childbearing in Canada: A demographic analysis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Beaujot, R., Du, C. J., & Ravanera, Z. (2013). Family policies in Quebec and the rest of Canada: Implications for fertility, child-care, women's paid work, and child development indicators. *Canadian Public Policy*, 39(2), 221–240.
- Bélanger, A., & Turcotte, P. (1999). L'influence des caractéristiques sociodémographiques sur le début de la vie conjugale des Québécoises. *Cahiers québécois de démographie*, 28(1–2), 173–197.
- Burch, T. K., & Madan, A. K. (1986). *Union formation and dissolution: Results from the 1984 family history survey*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. (Catalogue No. 99-963).
- Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2013). *Induced abortions reported in Canada 2012*. Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Health Information.
- Conseil du statut de la Femme. (1978). *Pour les Québécoises. Égalité et indépendance*. Quebec: Éditeur officiel du Québec.
- Conseil du statut de la Femme. (1986). *Le partage des biens familiaux en cas de divorce*. Quebec: Conseil du statut de la femme.
- Conseil du statut de la femme. (2014). *Pour une véritable protection juridique des conjointes de fait*. Quebec: Conseil du statut de la femme.
- Dumas, J., & Bélanger, A. (1996). Common-law unions in Canada at the end of the 20th century. In *Demographic situation in Canada* (pp. 123–181). Ottawa: Statistics Canada. (Catalogue No. 91-209-XIE).
- Dumas J., & Péron, Y. (1992). *Marriage and conjugal life in Canada*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. (Catalogue No. 91-534).
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and postmodernization: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kerr, D., Moyser, M., & Beaujot, R. (2006). Marriage and cohabitation: Demographic and socio-economic differences in Quebec and Canada. *Canadian Studies in Population*, 33(1), 83–117.
- Lachance-Grzela, M., & Bouchard, G. (2009). La cohabitation et le mariage, deux mondes à part? Un examen des caractéristiques démographiques, individuelles et relationnelles. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, 41(1), 37–44.

- Lachapelle, R. (2007). La montée des unions de fait. Un phénomène québécois ou francophone? *Colloque de l'Association des démographes du Québec*, Congrès de l'ACFAS, 7–11 May.
- Lapierre-Adamcyk, E. (1989). Le mariage et la famille: mentalités actuelles et comportements récents des femmes canadiennes. In K. J. Krotki, & R. P. Beaujot (Eds.), *The family in crisis: A population crisis?/Crise de la famille: crise démographique?* (pp. 94–104). Ottawa: Société Royale du Canada.
- Lapierre-Adamcyk, É., Balakrishnan, T. R., & Krotki, K. J. (1987). La cohabitation au Québec, prélude ou substitut au mariage? Les attitudes des jeunes Québécoises. In R. B. Dandurand (Ed.), *Couples et parents des années quatre-vingt* (pp. 27–46). Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture.
- Lapierre-Adamcyk, E., Le Bourdais, C., & Marcil-Gratton, N. (1999). Vivre en couple pour la première fois. La signification du choix de l'union libre au Québec et en Ontario. *Cahiers québécois de démographie*, 28(1–2), 199–227.
- Laplante, B. (2006). The rise of cohabitation in Quebec. Power of religion and power over religion. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 31(1), 1–24.
- Laplante, B., & Flick, C. (2010). Le mariage, l'union de fait et la santé des conjoints au Québec et en Ontario. *Cahiers québécois de démographie*, 39(1), 1–26.
- Laplante, B., & Fostik, A. L. (2015). The recent evolution of fertility within marriage and consensual union in two Canadian provinces: Disentangling the Quebec fertility paradox. *Canadian Studies in Population*, 42(2), 81–101.
- Laplante, B., Miller, C., & Malherbe, P. (2006). The evolution of beliefs and opinions on matters related to marriage and sexual behaviour of French-speaking Catholic Quebecers and English-speaking Protestant Ontarians. *Canadian Studies in Population*, 33(2), 205–235.
- Lardoux, S., & Pelletier, D. (2012). Trajectoires conjugales des parents et rendement scolaire des enfants en première année du primaire. *Cahiers québécois de démographie*, 41(2), 369–412.
- Le Bourdais, C., & Lapierre-Adamcyk, E. (2004). Changes in conjugal life in Canada: Is cohabitation progressively replacing marriage? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66(4), 929–942.
- Le Bourdais, C., & Marcil-Gratton, N. (1996). Family transformations across the Canadian/American border: When the laggard becomes the leader. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 27, 415–436.
- Le Bourdais, C., & Neill, G. (1998). Are mom and dad married? And does it matter for the future of the family? In *Contributions to family demography: Essays in honour of Dr. Wayne W. McVey, Jr.* (pp. 75–97). Edmonton: Department of Sociology, University of Alberta.
- Le Bourdais, C., Neill, G., & Turcotte, P. (2000). The changing face of conjugal relationships/L'évolution des liens conjugaux. *Canadian Social Trends/Tendances sociales canadiennes*, 56, 14–17.
- Macklin, E. D. (1972). Heterosexual cohabitation among unmarried college students. *The Family Coordinator*, 21(4), 463–472.
- National Assembly. (2014). *An act respecting end-of-life care* (S.Q. 2014, c. 2). Quebec City: Quebec Official Publisher.
- Perelli-Harris, B., Mynarska, M., et al. (2014). Towards a new understanding of cohabitation: Insights from focus group research across Europe and Australia. In Session 212: *Cohabitation and marriage, 2014 annual meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA)*, Boston, USA, 1–3 May.
- Péron, Y. (2003). Du mariage obligatoire au mariage facultatif. In V. Piché, & C. Le Bourdais (Eds.), *La démographie québécoise. Enjeux du XXI^e siècle* (pp. 110–143). Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Pollard, M. S., & Wu, Z. (1998). Divergence of marriage patterns in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. *Population and Development Review*, 24(2), 329–356.
- Rault, W. (2009). *L'invention du PACS. Pratiques et symboliques d'une nouvelle forme d'union*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
- Statistics Canada. (2014). *Table 051-0004 - Components of population growth, Canada, provinces and territories, annual (persons)*. Ottawa: CANSIM (database), Statistics Canada.

- Supreme Court of Canada. (2013). *Quebec (Attorney General) v. A*, 2013 SCC 5, [2013] 1 S.C.R. 61.
- Turcotte, P., & Bélanger, A. (1997). *The dynamics of formation and dissolution of first common-law unions in Canada/La dynamique de formation et de rupture des premières unions libres au Canada*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. (Catalogue No. 89F0113XIE).
- Turcotte, P., & Goldscheider, F. (1998). Evolution of factors influencing first union formation in Canada. *Canadian Studies in Population*, 25(2), 145–173.
- Villeneuve-Gokalp, C. (1990). Du mariage aux unions sans papiers. Histoire récente des transformations conjugales. *Population*, 45(2), 265–297.
- World Values Survey Association. (2005). *World values survey wave 5 2005–2008 official aggregate v.20140429*. Madrid: Asep/JDS, Aggregate File Producer.
- Wu, Z. (1995). Premarital cohabitation and postmarital cohabiting union formation. *Journal of Family Issues*, 16(2), 212–232.
- Wu, Z. (1996). Childbearing in cohabitational relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58(2), 281–292.
- Wu, Z. (1999). Premarital cohabitation and the timing of first marriage. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 36(1), 109–127.
- Wu, Z. (2000). *Cohabitation: An alternative form of family living*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Wu, Z., & Balakrishnan, T. R. (1995). Dissolution of premarital cohabitation in Canada. *Demography*, 32(4), 521–532.

Chapter 4

The Social Geography of Unmarried Cohabitation in the USA, 2007–2011

Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Julián López-Colás, and Lisa Neidert

1 Introduction

As Europe and Latin America, also the US has experienced a new phase of “de-institutionalization of marriage” (Bumpass 1998; Cherlin 2004, 2005, 2010; Smock 2000; Heuveline and Timberlake 2004; Thornton et al. 2007) mainly as a result of the emergence of pre-marital and post-divorce or “post-union” cohabitation, and to a very minor degree as the result of the growth of same sex households (Gate and Ost 2004; O’Connell and Feliz 2011). But unlike the Latin American censuses, the US did not have any tradition of direct measurement of such cohabitation via a direct question about unmarried partnerships or consensual unions. In fact, before 1970 cohabitation was illegal in the United States (Wikipedia 2012, 2013). In 1990, the decennial US Census began to include “unmarried partner” as a category in the household composition section where individuals are related to the household head (Casper et al. 1999). There is no such specification in the individual marital status section as in other countries. Before that, various indirect procedures were utilized to identify cohabitators, and the most common one is known as the “Persons of

R.J. Lesthaeghe (✉)

Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium,
Brussels, Belgium

e-mail: RLesthaeghe@yahoo.com

J. López-Colás

Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain

e-mail: jlopez@ced.uab.cat

L. Neidert

Population Studies Center (PSC), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA
e-mail: lisan@umich.edu

Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters” or POSSLQ.¹ This procedure of identifying cohabitators had several imperfections such as including roommates but omitting post-divorce cohabitators who had children older than 15 stemming from an earlier union or marriage.²

In 1999 the US Bureau of the Census (Casper et al. 1999) published a consistent series of adjusted POSSLQ figures including those which had older children of one of the presumed adult cohabitators. In these 1995–1997 adjusted data, about 60 % of POSSLQ individuals were officially “singles” and 40 % were separated, divorced or widowed. These figures convey the orders of magnitude of pre-marital versus post-marital cohabitation. Also about 5 % of POSSLQ households contained children below age 18 (Casper et al. 1999: Table 2 and Figure 7). During the period 1977–1997, the number of POSSLQ individuals rose from one to about five million. Another striking feature of the US data is that the self-reported number of cohabitators (i.e. “unmarried partners” of householders) shows a slower evolution and only increases to about three million in 1997.³ Apparently, the American public was still reluctant to admit to such a relationship or disliked the term “unmarried partner” altogether because it sounded like a reference to an illicit sexual affair (Manning and Smock 2005).⁴ Another reason for the underestimation produced by the direct individual question is its incorporation into the household composition schedule. In this schedule solely relationships with the heads of the household are recorded, but not those between the other members. As a result, cohabitators are missed if neither one is coded as the household head. Furthermore, there may be a non-negligible

¹The radio poet Charles Osgood had this to say about “My POSSLQ” (pronounced *Poss-L-Q*):

*You live with me and I with you
And you will be my POSSLQ.
I'll be your friend and so much more;
That's what a POSSLQ is for.
And everything we will confess;
Yes, even to the IRS.
Some day on what we both may earn,
Perhaps we'll file a joint return.
You share my pad, my taxes, joint;
You'll share my life – up to a point!
And that you'll be so glad to do,
Because you'll be my POSSLQ*

²In the original version of the POSSLQ, the presence of other persons older than 15 was used as one of the non-inclusion criteria (Casper et al. 1999) presumably to eliminate composite households containing several unrelated adults.

³The estimate for 2010 is that more than two-thirds of American adults cohabit before they marry (Kennedy and Fitch 2012: 1479).

⁴During in-depth interviews Manning and Smock (1995) found that respondents felt that the term “unmarried partner” was a derogatory one. Cohabitators then preferred the use of “my boyfriend/girlfriend” or “my fiancé(e)”. According to the IPUMS documentation for the Current Population Survey (CPS) data, the direct question was “Do you have a boyfriend, girlfriend or partner in this household?”, so that the error due to wording was minimized. Unfortunately for our purposes the CPS sample is smaller than the ACS one, so that our results may be affected by the higher degree of underestimation.

number of “false singles” who have a regular partner but in fact live in unions that resemble LAT-relationships or “visiting unions”.⁵

After the turn of the Century, most surveys adopted the direct option of indicating an “unrelated partnership” to the household head, and the indirect POSSLQ procedure has been abandoned. As a consequence, the figures about the incidence of cohabitation may be systematically underestimated, and the cohabitation trend may be even sharper upward than presumed (cf. Manning and Smock 2005). A recent analysis of another source, the US Current Population Survey (CPS) 2007–2009, remedies some of the shortfalls inherent to the “unmarried partner of the householder” procedure (Kennedy and Fitch 2012). More particularly, cohabitants could be identified even if neither one was the head of the household, and also children could be connected to their biological parents. The outcome is that the hitherto dominant “unmarried partner” procedure had missed some 18% of cohabiting different-sex couples and 12% of children residing with cohabiting partners. Moreover, the newly identified cohabitators were either older or belonged to a particular group of young disadvantaged adults co-residing with parents or other family members (see also Esteve et al. 2012). This illustrates the order of magnitude of errors than occur as a result of the use of different questionnaire methodologies.

In the analysis that follows, exclusive use is made of this direct “unrelated partner” question in the IPUMS files of 1990, 2000 and 2007–2011. The first two observations utilize US census household composition data and the most recent one is based on pooled samples of the annual American Community Survey (ACS). As in the other chapters, we shall focus mainly on women aged 25–29. Too many women are still in education prior to that age and have not entered into any union or have not “stabilized” their union type. Also the data pertain to the status of the current union, meaning that we do not have data on *ever* versus *never* experiencing cohabitation. For this extra and highly relevant information of ever experiencing premarital cohabitation use has to be made of smaller and more detailed surveys such as the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG).⁶

⁵The possibility of non-coresidential sexual partnerships (LAT or visiting) may be of particular relevance for the black population as the group of black women aged 25–29 had surprisingly low percentages ever in a union in the censuses of 1990 and 2000. It is also possible that many single mothers were in such undocumented visiting relationships.

⁶The omission of the “ever” question (i.e. “have you ever experienced event X ?”) is a recurrent problem in surveys. A population with a high prevalence of ever experiencing an entry into a certain state may have a lower current incidence of being in that state if the duration of that stay is shorter than in some other group. In our case, population A may have a higher percentage ever-cohabiting and a lower percentage currently cohabiting than population B if those of A have on average shorter durations of cohabitation. According to data on women 19–44 in the NSFG survey of 2002, almost two thirds of those with only a high school degree or less had ever-cohabited. Among those with incomplete college education, about half had ever cohabited, and among those with completed college education or more, the figure was 45 percent (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008). When interpreting these figures, one should bear in mind that a higher proportion of those with more than high school education had not yet entered into *any* union, and that among those

These caveats regarding method of data collection and associated data quality should be born in mind throughout the rest of this chapter. In other words, the social and spatial differences are essentially acceptable estimates which point at underlying mechanisms, but they should not be interpreted as perfectly exact measurements.

2 The Social Context and the Meaning of Cohabitation

It is to be expected that the nature of a phenomenon changes as it spreads from a small minority to a clear majority of the population. This is clearly the case with respect to cohabitation. From an illicit form of behavior prior to 1970, premarital cohabitation replaced traditional dating (Macklin 1972, 1978; Manning and Smock 2005; Cherlin 2005; Furstenberg 2013), and in the strongly pro-marriage American cultural context, many justified cohabitation as a “trial marriage”. This change from dating while living at home or in segregated dormitories to cohabitation was undoubtedly spurred on by the rise in education, the anti-authoritarian revolt of the 1960s, and by both the sexual and contraceptive revolutions of the late 1960s and 1970s (Macklin 1972, 1978; Furstenberg 2013).⁷ As the process develops further, marriage no longer constitutes the initiation of a union but becomes the outcome of a tested period of union stability and mutual satisfaction. As Furstenberg (2013: 11) puts it: *“Marriage is increasingly regarded as less of a pledge to commitment than a celebration of commitment that has already been demonstrated.”* This has far-reaching implications. Firstly, cohabitation can lead to a greater diversity in the further development of the life cycle, since, besides the transition to actual marriage, it may also be followed by multiple disruptions, multiple partnerships, lone motherhood, “visiting union” or LAT-relationships, or reconstituted families. Such a growth of diversity is then a logical consequence of the “de-institutionalization of marriage” and an integral part of the “Second demographic transition”. In other words, it is not so much that classic marriage leads to greater union stability, greater happiness, better school performance of children etc, but the reverse is likely to hold, i.e. it is tested and proven union success that leads to marriage. With such reversed causation one can furthermore expect that both cultural (e.g. religion, upbringing, ethnicity, social pressure) and socio-economic factors (e.g. social background, education, social status and income) will cause major differentials with respect to these outcomes (cf. Axinn and Thornton 1992; Smock 2000, Manning and Smock 2005). To these one should also add the gender dimension,

better educated who already were in a union the percentages “ever-cohabited” would be substantially higher.

⁷In this respect the US is hardly any different from the other western countries such as Canada, France or the Low Countries which equally witnessed the rise in cohabitation as a result of these societal transformations. The concept of the “second demographic transition” (Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa 1986) was developed as a result of these changes.

since men and women have come to experience different “utilities and disutilities” during a partnership and may therefore expect different returns from a prospective marriage (Huang et al. 2011).

The overall outcome for the US according to Furstenberg (2013) is a two tiered disparity according to social class : The upper, better educated third of the population enters cohabitation at later ages, considers this a testing ground for compatibility and quality, has more stable jobs and higher incomes, moves more frequently into marriage and stay more frequently married as well. They reap the fruits of union stability. The lower third, by contrast, enters into a partnership at younger ages, has more teenage pregnancies, experiences a less satisfactory life with a partner, partly because of job instability and low income, partly because of other factors (e.g. violence, crime), have prolonged cohabitation, more frequent partnership disruptions and multiple partnerships, and less entry into a stable marriage. The middle third, according to this view, would be sinking toward the lower third as the American “middle class” has greatly suffered from the crisis years since the turn of the Century.⁸

3 Some Major Differentials in the Incidence of Current Cohabitation, 1990–2011

As indicated, all statistical results on the incidence of cohabitation pertain to women who are currently in a union (i.e. married + cohabiting). Unpartnered women are not included in the denominators. The results stem from the direct question on the relationship to the head of the household, i.e. either married spouse or unrelated partner, and should be considered as lower estimates. The evolution of the share of cohabitation among all unions of women 25–29 is given in Table 4.1 together with the education and race differentials.

Compared to the Latin American countries, the share of cohabiting women has risen considerably more slowly in the USA. The US census results for 2000 indicate that about 16 % of women 25–29 in a union were cohabiting, whereas among the Latin American and Caribbean countries most had reached 40 %. About a decade later, virtually all these countries had passed the 50 % mark, whereas the US figure must have been about 25 % for 2010. Among Latin American countries, Mexico has the slowest evolution, but it is still faster than the US. For the census rounds of 1990 and 2000, Mexico had about 5 percentage points more cohabiting women 25–29

⁸In the Northern and Western European countries such a growth of union instability and its consequences is less marked than in the US, which may well be the outcome of the fact that the European welfare state provisions have protected the middle class far better than in the US. But it should also be noted that divorce rates in the US rose much earlier and to much higher levels than in Europe during the 1950s and 1960s, and that the US also has a long tradition of much higher teenage fertility and earlier entry into marriage. Hence, a comparison with several Latin American countries and the UK may be more appropriate than with continental Northern and Western Europe.

Table 4.1 Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in union, 1990–2011, by race and education

	Census 1990	Census 2000	ACS 2007–2011
White non-Hispanic	9.9	16.1	23.2
Black	16.7	23.5	31.1
Hispanic	9.8	13.7	21.9
Less than complete High School (LSH)	13.6	16.2	24.3
High School or some College (HS or SC)	9.9	16.4	24.4
BA or higher	9.7	15.3	20.5
Total	10.3	16.0	22.9

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database

Table 4.2 Percent cohabiting among women in union, 2007–2011, by education and 5-year age groups

Age group	Less than High school	High School or some College	College graduate or higher
20–24	33.4	38.7	38.7
25–29	24.4	24.1	20.6
30–34	18.3	15.3	9.2
35–39	14.7	11.6	5.8
40–44	12.5	9.8	5.2
45–49	10.9	8.4	5.1

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database

than the US, but in 2010, the Mexican figure rose to 37 %, compared to the 23 % for the US in the period 2007–2011.

The profiles by education indicate a slightly more rapid rise after 2000 for the less educated group, but the difference with the best educated segment (completed college or more) is only about 4 percentage points. Hence, it is clear that the US rise in cohabitation as a means of starting a union is occurring rather evenly in all education groups. The “pattern of disadvantage”, i.e. the association of more cohabitation and less marriage in the least educated and poorest part, has not yet fully developed in the age group 25–29. However, differential sorting into marriage could occur at later ages. As is shown in Table 4.2 and Fig. 4.1, this is exactly what happens.⁹ In the age group 20–24 both the least and the most educated group of women have the highest shares of cohabitation among those in a union. By age 25–29, the college educated slide back to some extent, but it is essentially after age 30 that the differentials develop. After that age the least educated women have the most cohabiting and the least married unions, whereas the college educated clearly exhibit the opposite pattern. *In other words, despite the fact that all education categories move*

⁹ It should be noted that not all of the dropping off of the three curves in Fig. 4.1 is due to the transition from cohabitation to marriage. A significant part of it is also due to the cohort effect, with older cohorts of women having less entry into cohabitation to start with.

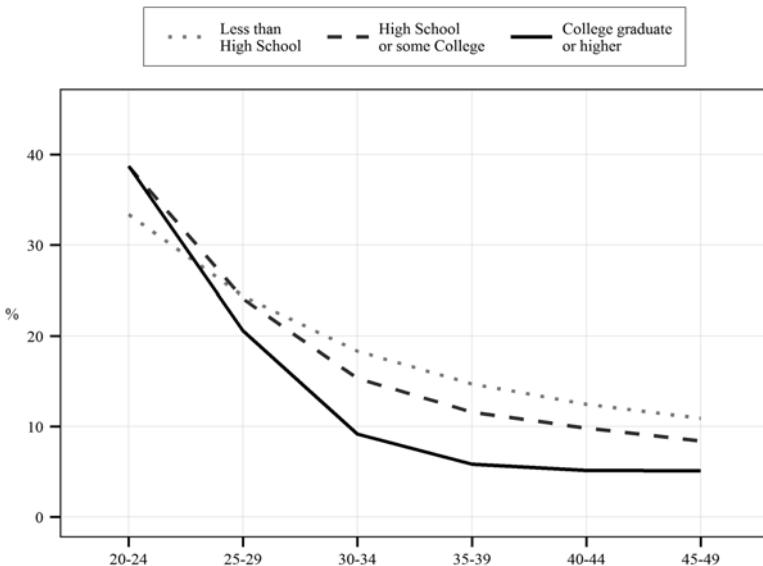


Fig. 4.1 Percent cohabiting among women in a union, 2007–2011, ages 20–49, by education (Source: Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)

into unions via cohabitation in roughly similar proportions, it is at later ages that the better educated can afford to convert their cohabiting unions into marriages to a significantly greater extent. This is perfectly in line with the Furstenberg “sorting” hypothesis. It is also consistent with a “pattern of disadvantage”, but only at later ages. It is not so that the better educated initiate their unions much more via marriage, but it is true that after a cohabitation spell they convert their cohabiting union more into classic matrimony.

As far as race or ethnicity is concerned, more variation emerges in the way unions are initiated. From Table 4.1 it is already clear that the black population has a significantly higher share of cohabitation in the age group 25–29. Adding more detail to the data of Table 4.1 will of course bring out more diversity. In Table 4.3, we have used a finer racial classification with 16 categories which was built after inspecting the complete racial breakdown involving some 170 different categories. From the other chapters in this volume, we know that cohabitation varies considerably in the Latin American countries and the Caribbean. As a result, we have broken down the US Hispanics into three groups: Mexican, Central American + Caribbean, and South American. We also expected American Indians and Alaskan natives to have higher cohabitation figures. Finally, the group of US Asians could be quite heterogeneous, and hence we adopted a finer breakdown of this category as well.

With the breakdown of ethnicity as done in Table 4.3, it appears that American natives have the highest incidence of cohabitation, and are even higher than the US black population, whereas Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders have a slightly lower figure than whites. The Hispanic group exhibits the expected heterogeneity

Table 4.3 Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in union, 2007–2011, by race/ethnicity

Ethnic background	Percent cohabiting women 25–29 in union
White	23.2
Black	31.1
Natives: Indian + Alaska	33.1
Pacific + Hawaii	20.7
Mexican	20.0
Central American + Caribbean	28.1
South American	18.6
Other/unknown Hispanic	25.6
Chinese	17.3
Japanese	28.6
Filipino	18.6
Asian Indian	2.3
Korean	16.6
Vietnamese	15.8
Other/unknown Asian	15.4
All Other	26.9
Total	22.9

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database

with Central Americans and Caribbeans having the higher incidence compared to Mexicans and South Americans. The heterogeneity among Asians is larger still. Normally one would expect populations of Asian origins to have very low cohabitation figures, as this runs counter to strong patriarchal systems of arranged and endogamous marriage which was historically highly prevalent in most Asian societies. As far as Asians in the US is concerned, this only holds for Asian Indians, for whom cohabitation is indeed exceptional. For most of the other US Asians, however, this is no longer the case, even though the figures are in the 15 to 18 % range and hence lower than in the white population. There is one major exception: women 25–29 of Japanese descent stand out with a considerably higher share of cohabitation, even surpassing the figure for white women.

4 The Social Geography of Cohabitation in the US

In this section we shall explore the spatial differences with respect to the share of cohabitation among all unions of women 25–29. Firstly, a set of maps by state combined with race and education will be presented. The full set of figures for 1990, 2000 and 2007–2011 by state is presented in Table 4.6 in the Appendix. According to the most recent figures, the highest percentages cohabiting among

partnered women 25–29 are registered in Washington DC. (41.9), Maine (34) and Massachusetts (33.6), whereas the lowest are in Utah (9.7), Alabama (15.3) and Arkansas (15.6). Secondly, also a more detailed map for smaller spatial aggregates, i.e. PUMAs, will be produced. Moreover, since either populations or surfaces of states are highly uneven, also a cartograms is being presented with areas proportional to population size in 2009. In other words, the cartogram provides a “visual correction” by restoring the true demographic weights of the various states.¹⁰ Also, in all maps pertaining to the states we have used a unique set of categories in order to have complete comparability. *The categories correspond to the quintiles of the share of cohabitation as measured for the States in the period 2007–2011.* The recent State map and its corresponding cartogram are shown in Map 4.1, together with the State map for the 2000 census.

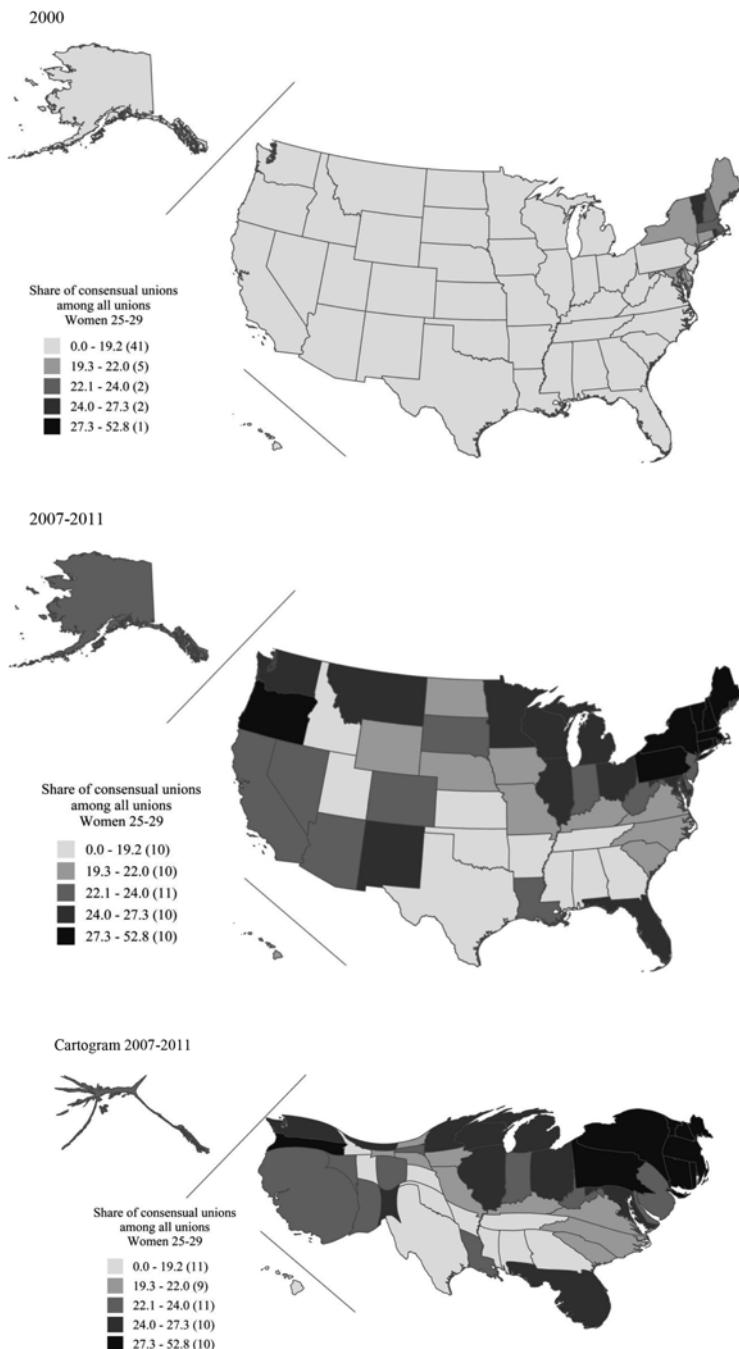
In Map 4.1 we could omit the 1990 results, since all states then fell into the lowest quintile (less than 19.3 %) except Washington DC. In 2000, however, all of New England and several other North Atlantic States (New York, Maryland, Delaware and Washington DC) move up to the higher quintiles, with Vermont and Rhode Island closely following the lead of Washington DC. The striking element here is that these states all contain large better educated populations and smaller populations in poverty (cf. US Bureau of the Census: SAIPE).¹¹ Roughly 10 years later, the share of cohabitation rapidly increases in the majority of states, but with the noticeable exception of most Southern ones (Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee), Kansas, Idaho and Utah. New England and New York maintain their leading position together with Washington DC, but they are joined by Pennsylvania and Oregon in the top quintile. Also clearly above average are the states around the Great Lakes, Florida, New Mexico, Washington State and Montana. It is equally striking that California does not belong to the leading set.¹²

The racial breakdown by state is given in Map 4.2. Obviously, the map for the young white non-Hispanic women closely resembles that for states as a whole, but with the exception of California, Nevada, Colorado and Louisiana which move up one quintile and Minnesota and New Mexico which slide down one category. The map for the black non-Hispanic women 25–29 indicates that by 2007–2011 a clear majority of states are to be found in the upper two quintiles. Only the black populations in northern New England, the Pacific North-West and the northern

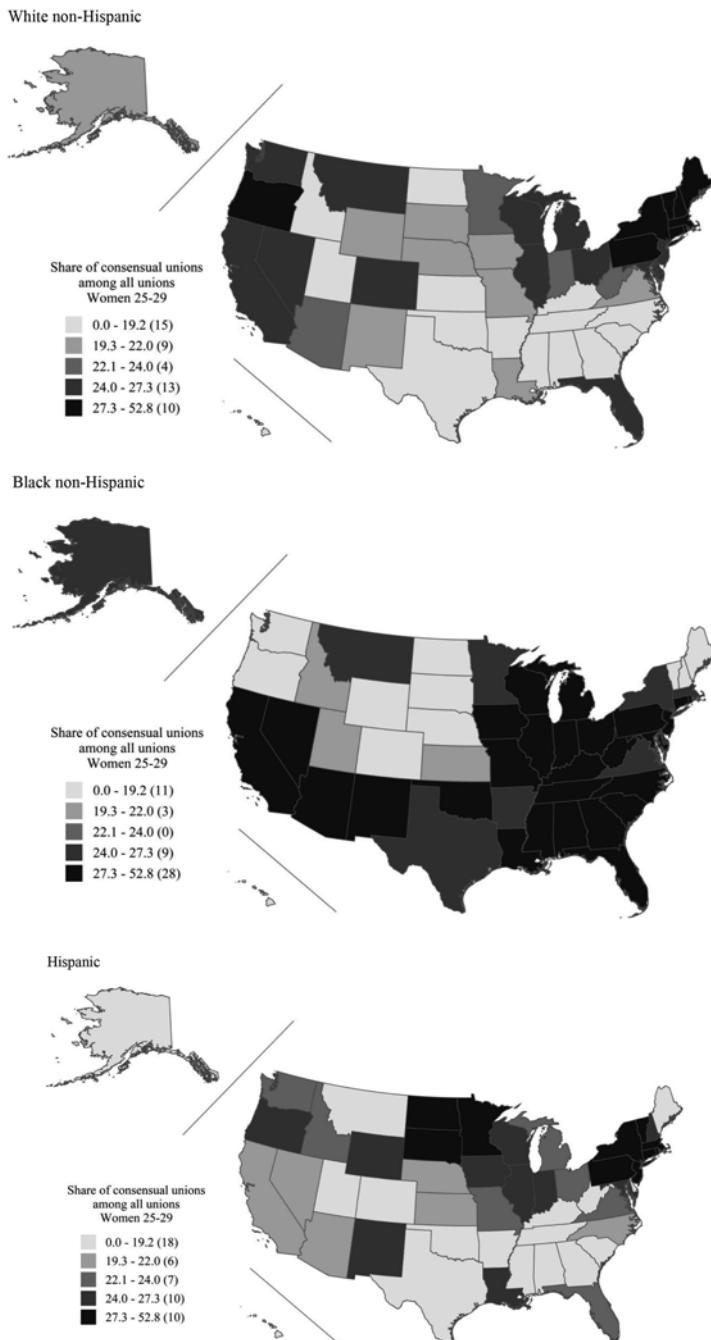
¹⁰A cartogram for PUMAs could not be made because of the “donut” effect. Many urban PUMAs are entirely located within another PUMA (= donut effect), and when drawn proportional to population size, the inner part becomes larger than the outer one. The software to produce cartograms cannot cope with such situations.

¹¹SAIPE=Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. The US Bureau of the census publishes detailed figures of these estimates by school district, county and state.

¹²For those readers who like the highly stylized “11 nations” as published by Colin Woodard in *American Nations* (2011), cohabitation among whites started and rose most rapidly in the Yankeedom nation and spread to the western part of the Midlands, followed by the Left Coast and presumably New France. Greater Appalachia, Tidewater and Deep South (except Florida) exhibit the highest degree of resistance. Woodard has no finer breakdown for the Far West than the El Norte and the rest, but the Mormon nation would be an obvious addition.



Map 4.1 Share of cohabitation for all women 25–29 in a union, 2000–2011, by state. Cartogram 2007–2011 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)



Map 4.2 Share of cohabitation among women 25–29 in a union, 2007–2011, by state and race
(Source: Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)

Great Plains have much less cohabiting young women. These are all states where the black populations constitute smaller minorities.

Among the Hispanic women cohabitation is most widespread in two distinct zones. The first one largely corresponds to the conurbation running from Massachusetts to Washington DC, and the second is made up of Minnesota and the adjacent Dakotas. By contrast, most Hispanic women 25–29 in the Southern states fall in the lowest quintile, whereas those of California, Nevada and Arizona also belong to the second lowest category. The large Hispanic group of Florida is close to the median level.

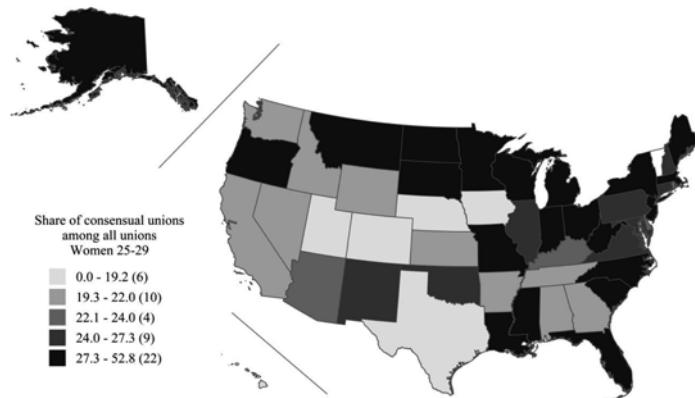
The geography of the share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 is given in the panels of Map 4.3 for the three education groups. In 2000, the least educated group scored highest in the Minnesota-Dakotas and in the Vermont-New Hampshire areas, followed by the rest of New England and Michigan. By 2007–2011, however, partnered young women with less than completed High school have cohabitation shares in excess of 27.3% (highest quintile) in no less than 22 states, even including several southern ones (Louisiana, Mississippi and the Carolinas). By contrast, cohabitation among such women is much less in evidence in Texas and along the line Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Utah (lowest quintile, i.e. less than 19.3%).

Young partnered women with completed High school or some College education had the higher shares of cohabitation in 2000 in New England, Maryland, Delaware and Washington DC, and further west, in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota (12 states in the second to fourth quintile, none in the top one). In all remaining states their shares were in the lowest quintile. Ten years later, these shares increased into the highest quintile in 16 states, all concentrated along the north Atlantic (from Maine to Washington DC) and stretching inland to the Great Lakes and as far west as Minnesota and South Dakota. By contrast, young women in the middle education category currently have the lowest incidence of cohabitation in the South (Florida and Louisiana again being the exception) and in the Utah-Idaho pair.

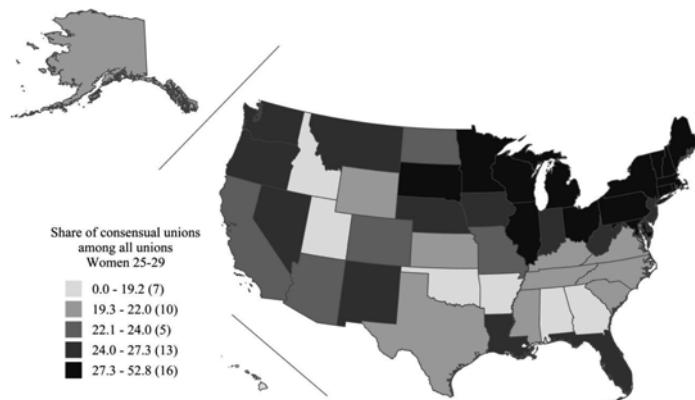
In 2000, young partnered women with completed College or higher had the larger shares of cohabitation (upper three quintiles) in New England (Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island), Washington DC and in Oregon. But by then the movement among them had started to spread to New York, Maryland, Colorado-Wyoming and California-Nevada. In 2007–2011, the increases are again most noticeable in the whole of New England plus New York and Oregon, but closely followed by Washington State, California and Colorado. However college educated young women still have low cohabitation shares in no less than 33 states (lowest two quintiles).

From these maps it is also clear that many states have a negative education gradient for partnered women 25–29, i.e. that the better educated are less likely to cohabit, either because of a lower incidence of entry into cohabitation or by a higher rate of leaving that condition by moving into marriage. Most states in the upper quintile, however, have essentially a flat gradient, and there are also a few cases in which there is a positive gradient or a non-linear pattern. In these instances, the better educated have the highest shares of cohabitation and/or the least educated have the smallest share. These noteworthy exceptions are California, Washington State,

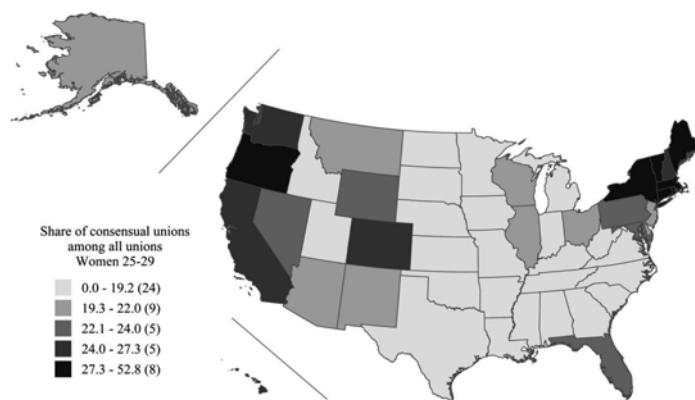
Incomplete High School



Completed High School or some College



College BA or higher



Map 4.3 Share of cohabitation among women 25–29 in a union, 2007–2011, by state and education (Source: Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)

Colorado, Wyoming, Hawaii (positive gradient), and Oregon (U-shaped gradient). There are also a few states with an inverted U-shaped pattern in which the middle education category has the larger share of young cohabitators: New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, and Texas.

A much finer resolution of these maps can be obtained by plotting the results by PUMA (Public Use Microdata Area). Such PUMA areas are defined as spatial units comprising at least 100,000 individuals, and they are set up to produce meaningful spatial results while still adequately protecting the privacy of survey respondents ([University of Michigan Population Studies Center](#)). As a result, there may be more than one PUMA in Metropolitan counties, whereas there may be many counties being aggregated into a single PUMA in sparsely populated regions. The advantage of the PUMA units is that they are much more homogeneous in terms of population size than counties are. The disadvantage is that the PUMA borders in large urban areas are often too closely together to be identified on a map for the entire nation. Despite this drawback, we are still reproducing the PUMA results, essentially because we are using PUMAs as units for the multilevel analyses in the subsequent section. Furthermore, only the PUMA-map for 2007–2011 is being shown in Map 4.4, since the formal statistical analysis will bring out the dominant covariates. The categories in this map correspond to quartiles.

At this point, we can only formulate a few more general comments that were not yet made while exploring the results by State.

Firstly, high cohabitation shares are not necessarily a typical metropolitan or urban feature. For instance, the urban crescent of PUMAs along the Atlantic from Connecticut to New Jersey frequently exhibits lower levels than the rest of New



Map 4.4 Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)

England and upstate New York or PUMAs in western Pennsylvania. By contrast, there is a band of high levels of cohabitation running through central Michigan and spilling across the lake into northern Wisconsin. These are not urban areas. In Texas, only Odessa has a cohabitation share in the top quartile, as opposed to the much larger other urban areas of the state. But there are also counter-examples: for instance, the Miami-West Palm Beach area has values in the top quartile. And the only two upper quartile cases in virtually the entire South are New Orleans and Baton Rouge. The overall picture seems to be that the link between cohabitation and degrees of urbanization is not always obvious, and that many other factors interfere. It should also be noted that PUMAs can be in the upper quartiles when they contain Indian reservations. But then, totally at the other end of the socio-economic spectrum, the same also holds for small college towns.

Secondly, the spatial concentration of the low shares of cohabitation is equally of interest. A striking finding is that there are very few cases in the lowest quartile among the PUMAs to the east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio and Potomac rivers. South of the Ohio most PUMAs have cohabitation shares of partnered women 25–29 below the median of 23 %, but there are a few major exceptions such as most of Florida and a few PUMAs in Louisiana, Mississippi and the Carolinas. Further west, the Mormon belt in Utah and southern Idaho is a striking example of a very low incidence of cohabitation. But also most PUMAs of Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, and virtually all of Oklahoma and Arkansas score well below the median as well. Along the Pacific coast, there are much fewer PUMAs in the lowest quartile, and virtually none in Washington State, Oregon and Northern California.

5 Cohabitation in Selected Metropolitan Zones

The PUMA-map of the share of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29 for the entire US obscures differences that exist within large urban zones. To remedy this, we have also produced a few more detailed regional maps for the Northern East coast and the New York area, Chicago and Lake Michigan shores, and Los Angeles. The legend for these maps refers to the same quartiles as those used in Map 4.4 for all the PUMAs in the entire US.

As mentioned before, Map 4.5 equally shows that many New England PUMAs form a contiguous zone with shares in the top quartile, whereas this only holds for a more limited number of them in the coastal crescent from Connecticut to Maryland. In the latter area, the top quartile is reserved for mainly urban areas (e.g. Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Norwalk in Connecticut, the Bronx and Manhattan in NYC, the Jersey side of the lower Hudson, Monmouth, Burlington and Camden counties together with Trenton in New Jersey, Philadelphia and Delaware county in Pennsylvania, Baltimore, and Washington DC with two adjacent areas in Maryland and Virginia, namely Prince George's county and Alexandria). The rest of the Connecticut-Maryland crescent tends to have percentages in the third quartile, but



Map 4.5 Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, along the Northern Atlantic conurbation by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)

there is also a large zone in northern New Jersey together with Long Island that belongs to the two lower quartiles.

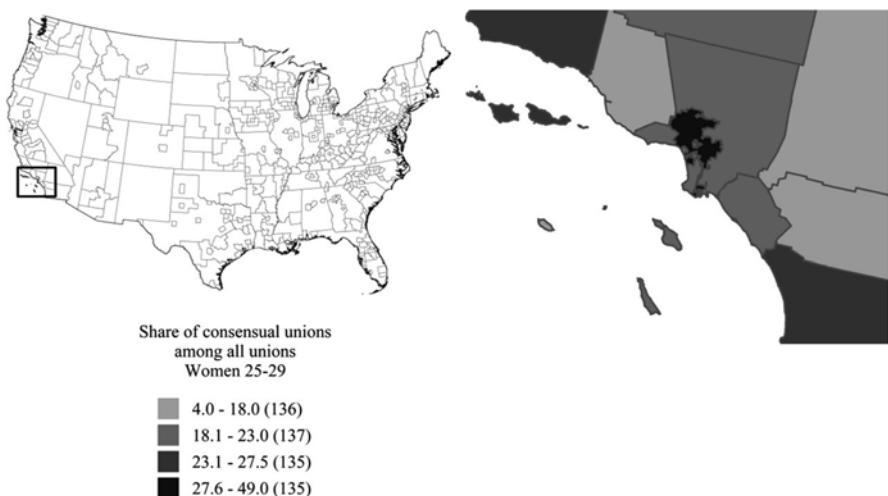
A more detailed map for the New York-New Jersey area (Map 4.6) further illustrates the high degree of heterogeneity. In New York City, Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island are in the top quartile, but not the other two boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. In fact, the shares of cohabitation are lower for the totality of Long Island. Across the Hudson, 6 more PUMAs have cohabitation shares in the upper quartile and they are parts of Hudson, Essex, Union and Middlesex counties, i.e. roughly comprising the areas around Jersey City, Newark, Elizabeth and New Brunswick. But, as already indicated, the shares of cohabitation are much lower in the rest of northern New Jersey.

For greater Los Angeles (Map 4.7), the top quartile is essentially reserved for downtown, Eastern and Southern Los Angeles, Inglewood and Venice, to the North-West and in the south along the corridor to Wilmington-San Pedro. Only belonging to the second quartile are Malibu, Santa Monica, Beverley Hills, Hawthorne-Torrance, Long Beach, Burbank-Pasadena, Glendale and the rest of the county together with neighbouring Orange county. These divisions clearly reflect social class and Hispanic versus non-Hispanic differentials with the former having higher cohabitation shares.

The situation along the shores of Lake Michigan is shown on Map 4.8. Again, there is no clear contrast between Metropolitan and non-Metropolitan PUMAs. Part of the upper quartile are Chicago, Milwaukee-Racine and the eastern part of the industrial Indiana shore (e.g. Porter and Laporte counties), but so are much more



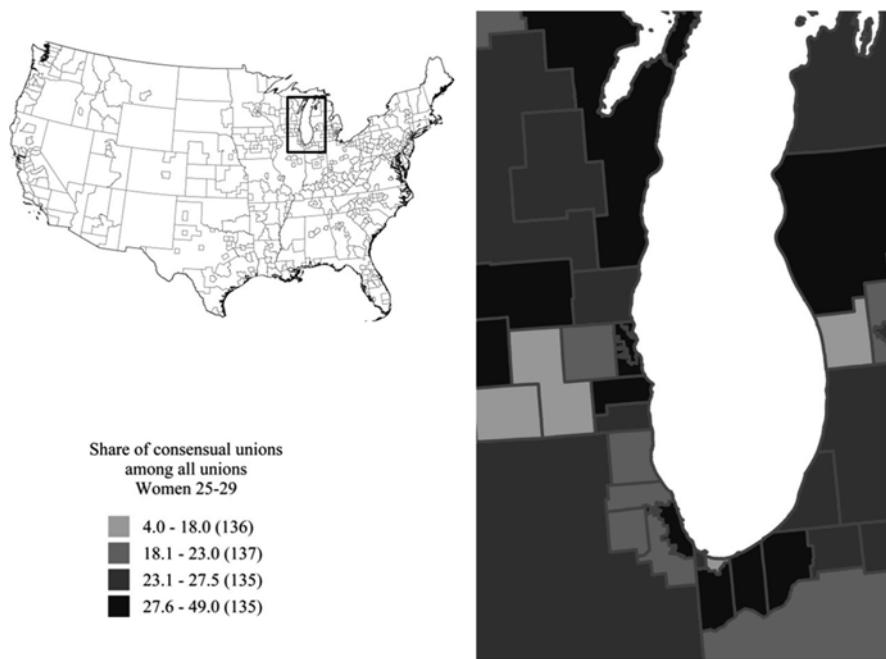
Map 4.6 Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, in the larger New York area by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) (*Source*: Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)



Map 4.7 Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, in the greater Los Angeles area by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) (*Source*: Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)

rural areas with small towns such as Green Bay and Door county or Sheboygan in Wisconsin or Muskegon, Oceana and Mason counties in Michigan. Also the lowest quartile is heterogeneous and includes highly industrial Gary, Indiana, together with completely non-industrial Ottawa County in Michigan.¹³ Evidently, many other factors play a role at the local level in this part of the US.

¹³ Ottawa county MI contains the traditional town of Holland, founded by Dutch Calvinists.



Map 4.8 Share of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011, along Lake Michigan by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database)

For a few more large areas we do not need a detailed map to identify the upper quartile PUMAs. In the larger San Francisco Bay area, there are only four cases: down town San Francisco, Sonoma to the North, Santa Cruz to the South and the state capital Sacramento to the West. The other eight PUMAs of the larger Bay area are in the second or third quartile. The Florida cases in the top quartile are also easily identifiable: Tampa-Saint Petersburg, Lake county in central Florida, and the two stretches along the Atlantic coast made up of Brevard county and of Broward and Miami-Dade counties further south.

6 A Multilevel Analysis of Cohabitation, 2007–2011

In this section a formal statistical analysis will be presented based on a two-level contextual logistic analysis (for details see Chapter on Brazil). The data pertain to 252,299 individuals and 543 PUMAs. We model the probability of a partnered woman 25–29 to be in a cohabiting union as opposed to being married. Variables at the individual level are education (4 levels), race/ethnicity (16 categories) and migrant status (born in state, out of state but in US, foreign born). The ACS

individual-level data for 2007–2011 do not contain any information on religious practice or denomination nor on income level, which is a major shortcoming. However, at the level of the PUMAs, such measures could be included. Religion is then measured in the form of the share of various denominations (Catholic, Mainstream Protestant, Black Protestant, Evangelical+Mormon). Income is captured via the shares of the population below the official US poverty threshold (i.e. below index 100).¹⁴ Equally available at the PUMA-level are a measure of degree of urbanization based on population density, the share of the population born out of state (including abroad), and the voting results at the time of the 2008 presidential elections.

Apart from the coefficients and odds ratios (OR or exponentiated logistic regression coefficients) also the variance across PUMAs is measured. Normally, this variance should shrink as more and better predictors at the individual level are entered. If this is not the case, then important spatial differences are persisting, independently of the individual-level variables.

The first set of results is presented in Table 4.4 and table 4.5 showing the main effects (OR) for both individual-level and PUMA-level variables.

In the zero model without any covariates, the spatial variance between the 543 PUMAs is 0.183 (see Table 4.4). When introducing the three individual-level variables, this variance fails to shrink and increases even to 0.218, indicating that the controls for individual education, ethnicity and migrant status cannot account for the spatial differences. Besides this important finding, the results for the individual level determinants confirm or strengthen the results already reported in the previous tables with bivariate outcomes. This is clearly in evidence for the odds ratios of the various ethnic groups. With whites as a reference category (OR = 1), the odds ratios are highest for the Japanese women, which is surprising in view of their Asian origin and high education. They are followed by the American natives (Indians + Alaskan), and lower down in the ranking by black women and women of Central America and the Caribbean origins. At the other end of the spectrum we find the Asian Indians with virtually no cohabitation. Also lower than whites are the Vietnamese women and those belonging to the residual Asian category. For all other groups, including women with Mexican roots, the difference with whites is not pronounced.

The negative educational gradient is emerging very clearly in these data and it is further enhanced after controlling for the status of being foreign born. Before this control, the odds ratios for college educated women was 0.71, but thereafter it is reduced to 0.59 (figures not shown in Table 4.4). Furthermore, the negative gradient with education after controls for the other individual level characteristics is almost perfectly linear.

¹⁴The poverty index has been defined by the US Social Security Administration in 1964, and is based on the cost of a food basket for households of different sizes and age compositions. The measure has been revised subsequently and it is adjusted annually for inflation. The poverty threshold corresponds with a value of 100. See Minnesota Population Center <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/volii/poverty.shtml>.

Table 4.4 Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression of unmarried cohabitation by individual and contextual level variables, women 25–29, 2007–2011

Category	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2
Individual variables			
Education			
College or higher	0.59	0.59	0.59
Some college	0.81	0.74	
High school	0.74	0.81	
Less than HS (ref.)	1	1	
Race			
Asian Indian	0.14	0.14	
Black	1.49	1.49	
Central American & Caribbean	1.43*	1.43	
Chinese	0.95	0.95	
Filipino	1.11	1.11	
Japanese	1.80	1.80	
Korean	0.99*	0.99*	
Mexican	1.05	1.05	
Native Indian	1.66	1.66	
Other Asian	0.81	0.81	
Others	1.30	1.30	
Others hispanics	1.19	1.19	
Pacific & Hawaiian	1.13	1.13	
South American	1.01	1.00*	
Vietnamese	0.90	0.90	
White (ref.)	1	1	
Migrant status			
Born abroad	0.48	0.48	
Born out of State but in US	1.03	1.03	
Born in state of residence (ref.)	1	1	
Contextual variables			
Catholic			
Q4			1.46
Q3			1.24
Q2			1.30
Q1 (ref.)			1
Main Protestant			
Q4			1.36
Q3			1.15
Q2			1.28
Q1 (ref.)			1
Black Protestant			
Q4			0.97
Q3			0.96

(continued)

Table 4.4 (continued)

Category	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2
Q2			1.00
Q1 (ref.)			1
Evangelical or Mormon			
Q4			0.79
Q3			0.89
Q2			0.89
Q1 (ref.)			1
Poverty <100			
Q1			0.82
Q2			0.92
Q3			0.91
Q4 (ref.)			1
Born out of state (Stay2)			
Q4			0.95
Q3			0.98
Q2			0.97
Q1 (ref.)			1
Foreign Born			
Q4			0.98
Q3			1.07
Q2			0.99**
Q1 (ref.)			1
Density			
Q4			1.35**
Q3			1.14*
Q2			1.09*
Q1 (ref.)			1
Democrats			
40–49.9 %			1.10
50–59.9 %			1.23**
>60 %			1.30
<40 % (ref.)			1
Variance left between Pumas	0.18	0.22	0.11
Intercept	-1.24	-0.87	-1.30

Note: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p<0.001$ except * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database

Table 4.5 Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression of unmarried cohabitation by individual and contextual level variables, women 25–29, 2007–2011

Category		Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Individual variables					
Education by race					
White LHS		1.67	1.72	1.72	
White HS or SC		1.31	1.32	1.32	
White BA or higher (ref.)		1	1	1	
Black LHS		2.06	2.38	2.38	
Black HS or SC		1.90	2.03	2.03	
Black BA or higher		1.28	1.38	1.38	
Mexican, South American and other Hisp LHS		1.03**	1.85	1.85	
Mexican, South American and other Hisp HS or high.		1.01	1.34	1.34	
Central American and Carib LHS		1.62	2.82	2.82	
Central American and Carib HS or higher		1.28	1.73	1.72	
American Indian and Alask LHS		3.01	3.03	3.04	
American Indian and Alask HS or higher		2.06	2.07	2.07	
Asian and Pacific LHS		0.18	0.34	0.34	
Asian and Pacific HS or SC		0.65	1.10	1.10	
Asian and Pacific BA or higher		0.42	0.71	0.71	
Others Mixed LHS		1.72	2.09	2.09	
Others Mixed HS or higher		1.37	1.55	1.55	
Migrant status					
Born abroad			0.46	0.46	
Born out of State but in US			1.03	1.03	
Born in state of residence (ref.)			1	1	
Contextual variables					
Poverty by density by religion					
Evan/Morm-not urban- not poor (Eup) (ref.)				1	
Evan/Morm – not urban- poor (EuP)				1.01*	
Evan/Morm – urban- not poor (EUp)				0.68	
Evan/Morm – urban- poor (EUP)				1.02	
Not Evan/Morm – not urban- no poor (eup)				1.56*	
Not Evan/Morm – not urban- poor (euP)				1.64	
Not Evan/Morm – urban- not poor (eUp)				2.48*	
Not Evan/Morm – urban- poor (eUP)				1.84	
Variance left between Pumas	0.18	0.20	0.22	0.14	
Intercept	-1.24	-1.41	-1.40	-1.81	

Note: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database

Finally, at the individual level, it does not matter very much whether or not one is born in the state of current residence. What matters, though, is whether one is foreign born or not. Cohabitation is considerably lower among the latter than among those born in the US.

In the hierarchical model used here, these individual effects are not altered by entering the contextual variables measured at the PUMA level. These additional variables are population density of PUMAs, proportions in four religious denomination groups, the US Census Bureau proportions of households in poverty, the proportions born out of state (Stay2), foreign born (FB) and the political orientation of the PUMA of residence (share of votes for Democrats). All these contextual variables were furthermore divided up in categories corresponding to their quartiles.

The findings for religious denominations in the PUMAs are as follows. Cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 increases as the area of residence has higher proportions Catholic. Evidently Catholicism is no longer a cultural barrier to cohabitation, despite the official Vatican teaching on such matters. Very much the same result is found for mainstream Protestants, i.e. an almost linear increase in the odds ratios of cohabitation for individuals as the population share of mainstream Protestants in the PUMA of residence increases. In fact, these two large mainstream denominations could be pooled together, presumably as a result of internal secularization. By contrast, there is hardly any difference in cohabitation risks among partnered women 25–29 depending on the relative size of black Protestant populations in their PUMA of residence. For PUMAs with a dominance of Evangelicals and Mormons, exactly the opposite occurs. Cohabitation risks for partnered young women, after controlling for the individual-level characteristics, are considerably reduced, particularly if residing in PUMAs that belong to the higher quartile with respect to the size of their Evangelical or Mormon populations.

The conclusion with respect to this contextual variable is that the individual probability of cohabitation versus marriage for women 25–29 varies considerably according to the religious mix in the overall population of the PUMA of residence. Also indicative of the importance of this religious composition variable in the model is that the variance left among PUMAs after individual-level controls decreases considerably after its introduction, i.e from 0.218 to 0.136. However, it should be noted that the strength of the contextual religious composition variable is in part due to the lack of measurements of religious denomination or practice at the individual level. Also, the importance of the agnostic population is not well measured in the data that we have used here. Information on these issues at the individual level could well explain a part of what is now only captured at the contextual level. With these caveats in mind, there is still a firm conclusion: religion matters very much in the US, either at the individual or contextual level. This is essentially a cultural effect and independent of the socio-economic ones that are also included in the model (individual education, contextual poverty).

The urban-rural gradient also emerges in a systematic fashion: residence in the more urban quartiles (as measured through population density) increases the probability of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29, and the effect is noticeably stronger for residence in the most urban group. The same holds for poverty: odds ratios decline as poverty levels of PUMAs of residence diminish, with the strongest reducing effect noticed for PUMAs in the quartile with the smallest overall poor population. Hence, there is a clear double effect here: individual cohabitation risks increase most when resident in the most urban and the poorest PUMAs. This is a clear socio-economic effect, which together with individual education levels, point in the direction of cohabitation exhibiting a pattern of disadvantage.

The prevailing political orientation in the PUMA of residence also exerts a clear effect. Compared to residence in dominantly Republican PUMAs (40% or fewer votes for Democrats in the 2008 presidential elections), odds ratios for young women to be cohabiting instead of being married linearly increase to a value of 1.30 for residence in a strongly Democratic PUMA. However, as was also the case with contextual religion, this effect is not strictly a contextual one since political preference is not available as an individual-level variable and since cohabiting persons are more likely to vote for Democrats. What the result means is that politics and sub-dimensions of the “second demographic transition” are strongly correlated in the US at the individual and contextual levels (cf. Lesthaeghe and Neidert 2006, 2009).

The other two contextual variables exert only minor effects. Cohabitation risks slightly decline when resident in PUMAs with more persons born out of state and with more foreign born populations.

The introduction of the contextual variables has a major effect on the spatial variance, as it is now further reduced to 0.112, i.e. down from 0.183 in the zero model and from .218 in the model with only individual-level variables.

The model of Table 4.4 only produces main effects, and does not include any interactions, i.e. effects of particular combinations. In the model of Table 4.5, by contrast, we study effects of combined characteristics, both at the individual and at the PUMA level.

For the former, we have retained the ethnicity and education dimensions. For non-Hispanic whites and blacks and for Asians we distinguish between three education levels, but for the other groups, there are too few young partnered women with BA or higher degrees in the sample. This individual-level combination variable also makes sense since educational achievement is often strongly conditioned by ethnic background. For the contextual variables we dichotomized population density and poverty by contrasting the most urban and the poorest quartile against the rest. Religious denomination is dichotomized by selecting the PUMAs in the quartile with the largest Evangelical+Mormon population. The sizes of the population born out of state or foreign born in PUMAs are no longer included in view of their weaker discriminating power as shown in Table 4.4, and because the characteristic of being foreign born is already included at the individual level.

The odds ratios for cohabitation versus marriage according to the individual ethnic background/education combinations are measured against the level for whites with complete college education (BA) or higher (reference category). Firstly, in all ethnic groups, except Asians and Pacific/Hawaiians, higher education lowers the probability of cohabiting. Secondly, the negative gradient with education is strong for almost all races, but least pronounced for Hispanics with Mexican or southern American roots. Thirdly, native American women score by far the highest. It is also worth noting that the odds ratios for the better educated native Indian and Alaskan women is equal to that of the least educated group of the black population (OR in both cases is 2.06). Conversely, the lowest odds ratios of all groups are for Asian/Pacific & Hawaiian women with either the lowest or the highest education. Presumably the former retain their strong pro-marriage traditions, whereas the latter have better chances of converting cohabitating unions into marriage.

The introduction of the migrant status individual variable produces an increase in all odds ratios of the ethnic categories, but the differences by education remain intact. This also changes the order between the ethnic groups to some extent. After removing the foreign born effect, the highest odds ratios are for less educated native American Indians and Alaskans, followed by less educated women with Central American or Caribbean backgrounds, and then by less educated black non-Hispanic women. Asian/Pacific & Hawaiian women still have substantially lower odds ratios than college educated white women, except when they belong to the middle education category (OR = 1.09).

The combinations formed with contextual variables are equally revealing. The reference category is the combination with the overall *lowest* incidence of cohabitation, i.e. PUMAs belonging to the highest quartile *Evangelical/Mormon* (*E*), *not* belonging to the most *urban* highest population density quartile (*u*), and *not* belonging to the *poorest* quartile (*p*) either. With these abbreviations, using capital letters for belonging and lower case letters for not belonging, the eight categories now range from *EUP* (= most Evangelical, most urban, most poor) to *eup* (= less Evangelical, less urban, less poor).

First and foremost, the odds ratios for cohabitation are insignificantly different from the reference category when residing in highly Evangelical/Mormon PUMAs (*Eup*, *EUP*, *EuP*). Only residence in the PUMAs of the *EUp* combination lowers the probability of cohabiting still further. In other words, residence in PUMAs with a high Evangelical-Mormon concentration swamps the effect of the other PUMA characteristics of urbanity or income, and lowers that probability even further when such a PUMA belongs to the “most urban*non-poor” combination (*EUp*).

Secondly, concentrating on the 75% of PUMAs with smaller Evangelical-Mormon populations (*e*), odds ratios of cohabiting obviously increase quite substantially. The smallest increase is, as expected, for the less urban and the non-poor PUMAs (*eup*). The next higher value is for the less urban and poor PUMAs (*euP*), then for the most urban but not poor ones (*eUp*), and the highest odds ratios are for

residence in the non-evangelical/Mormon, most urban and most poor PUMAs (*eUP*). In other words, conditioned on *e*, the gradient from lower to higher odds ratios for contextual combinations neatly follows the transition from “up” to “UP”, as expected.

7 Conclusions

Among all studies of US cohabitation since the 1990s, there is to our knowledge not one that focuses on the spatial development of the phenomenon in any detail. Also, heterogeneity in measurement methodology equally resulted in a shortage of studies of differences in trends over the last two or three decades. In other words, time and space have been underexposed dimensions. By contrast, most studies heavily rely on cross-sections, either focusing on one census, or more frequently on surveys. As a consequence, social differences stood in the limelight, and much of the sociological literature in the US focuses on the so called “pattern of disadvantage”. While it is undeniable that this pattern exists, and our results equally testify to this effect, it does by no means cover the entire story.

Firstly, it should be stressed that cohabitation for younger *white* women originated in the New England states and the state of New York, and that at the very beginning college students were involved (Macklin 1972, 1978). Also Pennsylvania and Oregon joined early on, which are two other states with liberal attitudes and a better educated population.¹⁵ This clearly points in the direction of the original northern and western European “second demographic transition” pattern, in which a liberal elite opened the doors for everyone else to a new form of behavior in the 1960s and early 1970s. This point is typically absent in studies that lack the spatial dimension or have measurements at much later dates.

Secondly, as in Europe and Latin America, cohabitation shares among partnered women 25–29 subsequently rose quite dramatically in *all* education groups without exception. The gradient with education can be negative, flat or positive, but the *most* striking feature is the order of magnitude of that virtually *universal* increase. In addition, large increases can occur in a very short period of time and even in a single decade. These two features are virtually always overlooked by studies that lack a focus on the time dimension, and yet they are of particular relevance for the US as well. Furthermore, in the US this overall increase in cohabitation largely occurred prior to the economic crisis of 2008–2009, and it is obvious that the prime causes of the singular upward trend in cohabitation have little or nothing to do with ups and downs in the economy.

¹⁵ Washington DC too was part of the vanguard states, but we do not know at this point whether this is mainly due to its large black population or its liberal whites or both.

Thirdly, a distinction should be made between (i) cohabitation versus directly marrying as an *initial* choice for entering into a union, and (ii) staying in cohabitation versus converting the union to a marriage at later times. Using percentages currently cohabiting, as we were forced to do here, mixes these two aspects of differential union entry and exit forms. We suspect that, as cohabitation expands among younger women, we are by now mainly capturing differential “exit forms” (i.e. staying in the existing consensual union versus converting it to marriage, exiting from a union altogether, re-partnering etc.). In order to measure the differential union entry form, percentages ever and never cohabiting have to be studied as well. However, this information is seldomly available in large nation-wide surveys.

Fourthly, black women, native American and Alaskan women, and women with Central American or Caribbean roots have longer histories of less institutionalized marriage that sets them totally apart from Asians, whites, Mexicans, and Latin Americans with European origins. However, it should be stressed that the former groups too experienced rising cohabitation during at least the last two decades. Furthermore, as education and poverty are associated with race and ethnicity, the measurement of cohabitation as a possible pattern of disadvantage should be performed for all these racial groups *separately*.

The pattern of disadvantage does show up quite clearly in our results as all but one of the ethnic groups exhibit a negative cohabitation-education gradient in the 2007–2011 ACS data. But, it should again be stressed that the levels at which these gradients manifest themselves are vastly different depending on historical ethnic differences. *In other words, the negative education gradient operates at levels conditioned by older ethnic divisions.* The only group of young partnered women for which there is no negative cohabitation gradient is predominantly made up of persons of Asian descent. Among them, the least educated among them have the lowest odds ratios and they are by far the most traditional of all ethnic groups considered.

Independently of the individual combined race and education effects just mentioned, the pattern of disadvantage also emerges in the contextual effects. Conditioned on not being located in an area with large Evangelical or Mormon populations, odds ratios for cohabitation for young partnered women are enhanced further by residence in urban PUMAs and even more by residing in the poorest quartile of these urban areas. This implies that the pattern of disadvantage operates at both levels, individually, via lower education, and contextually, via residence in poor urban areas. However, there is one exception: residence in areas with larger Evangelical or Mormon populations largely neutralizes the joint negative contextual effect of urbanity and poverty on the incidence of cohabitation.

The US story is likely to develop further and with it the patterns by race, education and area of residence. The Furstenberg hypothesis of the pattern of disadvantage spreading to the American middle class is a possibility, but there may still be large differences in the unfolding of “diversity” depending on cultural (ethnicity, religion, political, ethical, gender-related values orientations) and socio-economic (education, income, job availability ...) conditions. A slower exit from cohabitation

as a result of delayed marriage is very different from a rapid exit from it due to “endemic” union instability. In order to differentiate between these alternative paths for the culturally and socially very heterogeneous US public the large nationally representative surveys (such as the ACS) need to go beyond the current status questions and measure the incidence of transitions as well.¹⁶

Another crucial issue not covered in this chapter is the relationship between the changing legal landscape with respect to cohabitation and rights of or benefits for cohabitants and the observed spatial pattern of cohabitation. Despite the unifying effect of Supreme Court rulings, there are still very substantial differences depending on states, counties and municipalities.¹⁷ A key issue here is to what extent the rise of cohabiting is the source of more liberal legislation, or to what degree legal adaptations spur on the rise in cohabitation.

To sum up, the US joined the all-American trend of rapidly rising shares of cohabitation. The US trend followed with a lag when compared to its neighbors, and with a substantial lag when compared to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the rise has been particularly pronounced since the turn of the Century. All races and educational categories contributed to this increase but in a very uneven way. Furthermore, aspects of the second demographic transition explanation and of the pattern of disadvantage are *both* at work, as was also true in the Latin American countries. Furthermore, also pre-existing ethnic differences with respect to the strength of marriage as an institution need to be added to the picture. As the process of increasing cohabitation is not terminated, it becomes more and more likely that the ensuing growth of diversity could follow different paths depending on both cultural and socio-economic conditions. Finally, these factors will not only play out at the individual level, but at the contextual one as well.

¹⁶A first, but major step forward consists of also including the very simple “ever” questions: ever in a union ?, ever cohabiting ?, ever married ?, ever divorced ?, ever separated ?, ever re-partnered via cohabitation or via marriage ? etc.

¹⁷An instructive map, apparently originally compiled at the US Bureau of the Census, showing the legal differences regarding “domestic partnerships” for states, counties and cities, and updated to 2012, can be found in a Wikipedia article, 2013. The article uses a three-way classification of (1) County/city offers domestic partner benefits, (2) State-wide partner benefits through same sex marriage, civil union, domestic partnership or designated beneficiary, and (3) No domestic partner benefits offered by state. The states belonging to category 2 are all the New England ones plus New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland on the Atlantic coast, four Plains states of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota, and the three Pacific states plus Nevada and Colorado. In states without benefits for domestic partners, however, there may be selected counties or cities that do offer these benefits. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:US_counties_and_cities_with_domestic_partnerships.svg

Of the 16 states that offer benefits to domestic partners, seven are in the top quartile of cohabitation (share among partnered women 25–29, 2007–2011), five in the second quartile, against four in the third quartile and none in the lowest quartile.

Appendix

Table 4.6 Share of cohabitation among all unions of partnered women 25–29, 1990–2011, by State, based on “relation to householder” question

State	1990	2000	2007–2011	State	1990	2000	2007–2011
Alabama	4.6	9.6	15.3	Montana	8.7	17.2	25.2
Alaska	13.6	18.6	22.7	Nebraska	7.9	12.9	20.9
Arizona	12.5	17.6	22.6	Nevada	14.2	17.8	23.8
Arkansas	5.7	9.6	15.6	New Hampshire	12.4	22.8	29.4
California	13.1	16.5	23.2	New Jersey	11.0	17.6	23.7
Colorado	12.4	18.3	22.1	New Mexico	12.7	16.6	25.1
Connecticut	12.5	20.2	29.0	New York	11.6	19.5	28.3
Delaware	10.3	21.8	24.0	North Carolina	8.4	14.3	20.4
District of Columbia	26.4	28.2	41.9	North Dakota	7.6	16.3	19.9
Florida	12.5	18.7	25.5	Ohio	9.3	16.6	25.2
Georgia	8.6	13.2	17.9	Oklahoma	6.2	10.6	17.4
Hawaii	10.8	15.9	19.3	Oregon	14.2	18.6	27.9
Idaho	7.2	11.0	16.8	Pennsylvania	10.0	18.4	28.2
Illinois	9.9	15.9	25.0	Rhode Island	11.6	26.1	31.3
Indiana	9.0	15.4	23.0	South Carolina	7.5	15.5	20.0
Iowa	8.4	15.5	20.6	South Dakota	9.8	15.3	23.4
Kansas	7.4	10.9	18.4	Tennessee	7.1	11.5	18.4
Kentucky	7.2	12.2	19.6	Texas	7.5	11.7	17.6
Louisiana	8.3	14.9	23.3	Utah	5.7	7.3	9.7
Maine	13.5	22.0	34.0	Vermont	16.1	24.8	32.9
Maryland	12.2	19.6	26.1	Virginia	9.5	15.0	20.6
Massachusetts	13.3	22.9	33.6	Washington	13.0	18.3	24.6
Michigan	10.4	17.9	24.9	West Virginia	7.2	12.5	23.1
Minnesota	11.6	18.1	24.6	Wisconsin	11.3	19.1	27.3
Mississippi	6.4	14.0	18.4	Wyoming	8.4	17.8	21.6
Missouri	8.8	14.4	21.4				
				Total	10.3	16.0	22.9

Source: Authors' tabulations based on the census and American Community Survey samples from the IPUMS-USA database

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Axinn, W. G., & Thornton, A. T. (1992). The relationship between cohabitation and divorce: Selectivity or causal influence? *Demography*, 29(3), 357–374.
- Bumpass, L. L. (1998). The changing significance of marriage in the United States. In K. O. Mason, N. O. Tsuya, & M. K. Choe, (Eds.), *The changing family in comparative perspective: Asia and the United States* (pp. 63–70). Honolulu: East-west Center, ISBN 10: 0-86638-187-2/ ISBN 13: 978-0866381871.
- Casper, L. M., Cohen, P. N., & Simons, T. (1999). *How does POSSLQ measure up? Historical estimates of cohabitation*. US Census Bureau, Population Division (Working Paper, 36), Washington, DC.
- Cherlin, A. J. (2004). The deinstitutionalization of American marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66(4), 848–861.
- Cherlin, A. J. (2005). American marriage in the early twenty first century. *The Future of Children*, 15(2), 33–55.
- Cherlin, A. J. (2010). Demographic trends in the United States: A review of research in the 2000s. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 72(3), 403–419.
- Esteve, A., Garcia-Román, J., & Lesthaeghe, R. (2012). The family context of cohabitation and single motherhood in Latin America. *Population and Development Review*, 38(4), 699–720.
- Furstenberg, F. F. (2013). Fifty years of family change: From consensus to complexity. In *Conference on family complexity, poverty and public policy*, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Gate, G. T., & Ost, J. (2004). *The gay-lesbian atlas*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.
- Heuveline, P., & Timberlake, J. M. (2004). The role of cohabitation in family formation: The United States in comparative perspective. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66(5), 1214–1230.
- Huang, P. M., Smock, P. J., Manning, W. D., & Bergstrom-Lynch, C. A. (2011). He says, she says: Gender and cohabitation. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(7), 876–905. doi:[10.1177/0192513X10397601](https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10397601).
- Kennedy, S., & Bumpass, L. L. (2008). Cohabitation and children's living arrangements: New estimates for the United States. *Demographic Research*, 19, 1663–1692.
- Kennedy, S., & Fitch, C. A. (2012). Measuring cohabitation and family structure in the United States: Assessing the impact of new data from the Current Population Survey. *Demography*, 49, 1479–1498.
- Lesthaeghe, R., & Van de Kaa, D. J. (1986). Twee demografische transities ?. In R. Lesthaeghe, & D. J. Van de Kaa (Eds.). *Groei en krimp*. Annual book volume of *Mens en Maatschappij* (pp. 9–24). Deventer: Van Loghum-Slaterus.
- Lesthaeghe, R., & Neidert, L. (2006). The second demographic transition in the United States: Exception or textbook example? *Population and Development Review*, 32(4), 669–698.
- Lesthaeghe, R., & Neidert, L. (2009). US presidential elections and the spatial pattern of the American second demographic transition. *Population and Development Review*, 35(2), 391–400.
- Macklin, E. (1972). Heterosexual cohabitation among unmarried college students. *Family Coordinator*, 21, 463–472.
- Macklin, E. (1978). Nonmarital sexual cohabitation. *Marriage and Family Review*, 1, 3–12.
- Manning, W. M., & Smock, P. J. (2005). Measuring and modeling cohabitation: New perspectives from qualitative data. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(4), 989–1002. doi:[10.1111/j.1741-3737.2005.00189.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2005.00189.x).
- O'Connell, M., & Feliz, S. (2011). *Same-sex couple household statistics for the 2010 census*. SEHSD (Working Paper), Ref. SEHSD-WP2011-26, United States Census Bureau. <http://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2011/demo/SEHSD-WP2011-26.html>

- Smock, P. J. (2000). Cohabitation in the United States: An appraisal of research themes, findings and implications. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 1–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/223434>
- Thornton, A., Axinn, W. G., & Xie, Y. (2007). *Marriage and cohabitation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 443 pages.
- Population Studies Center (University of Michigan). *Creating county-level statistics from Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs)*. <http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/dis/census/Features/puma2cnty/>
- Wikipedia. (2012). US counties and cities with domestic partnership.svg http://en.wikipedia.org/wikimedia/File:US_counties_and_cities_with_domestic_partnership.svg (license US Census Bureau)
- Wikipedia. (2013). Cohabitation. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohabitation> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohabitation_in_the_United_States
- Woodard, C. (2011). *American nations: A history of the eleven rival regional cultures of North America*. New York: Viking Press.

Chapter 5

The Expansion of Cohabitation in Mexico, 1930–2010: The Revenge of History?

**Albert Esteve, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Julieta Quilodrán, Antonio López-Gay,
and Julián López-Colás**

1 Introduction

Mexico shares with most other Latin American countries a nuptiality system that is characterized by the coexistence of marriage and cohabitation. This dual nuptiality model (Castro-Martín 2002), with origins in pre-hispanic times, has been present for centuries. Despite the fact that cohabitation survived in Mexico with different intensity between regions and among several indigenous populations for such a long period of time, the shift from marriage to cohabitation in Mexico came relatively late by Latin American standards. In fact, the main increase in cohabitation occurs after 1990 and especially during the 2000–2010 decade. After the economic crisis of 1994–1995 the upward trend not only continues but also accelerates, so that the Mexican case too is an example of a sustained rise of cohabitation and not just of a temporary response to an adverse economic event.¹

Our study of Mexican partnerships is furthermore enriched by the availability of the census data of 1930. By being able to go further back in time than in the other countries, we can also better document the phase that preceded the post-1990

¹The economic crises of the 1980s in the Latin American countries or later in Mexico did not produce a postponement of partnership formation, but may have caused a temporary postponement of marriages and the concomitant celebrations.

A. Esteve (✉) • A. López-Gay • J. López-Colás
Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain
e-mail: aesteve@ced.uab.cat

R.J. Lesthaeghe
Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium,
Brussels, Belgium

J. Quilodrán
El Colegio de México, Mexico City, Mexico

cohabitation boom. This earlier phase is characterized by the systematic reduction in cohabitation in favor of marriages, which, in tandem with the subsequent increase, results in an overall U-shaped evolution of cohabitation for the entire period between 1930 and 2010. The geo-historical study of cohabitation is also enhanced by the availability of data at the level of municipalities for the three most recent censuses. Quite often regions with the higher percentages of cohabiting women straddle the state borders, and links with ethnic or other local particularities are only visible when using smaller spatial aggregates. As a result, a detailed statistical contextual analysis can be performed for 2000 and 2010, with some 317,000 individual partnered women 25–29 each, and 2456 municipalities as units.

As is the case for the other Latin American countries treated in this volume, also the Mexican individual census data are provided by IPUMS. This allows for the use of similar methodologies and statistical models as in the other chapters.

The recent expansion of cohabitation, which occurs at the expense of religious and civil marriages, compels us to gain a better understanding of the nature and type of cohabitation that is now booming in the area. More specifically, we should investigate whether recent cohabitation shares the same characteristics with the older forms or with the new type that emerged in the western industrialized world. In the former instance, we would merely have a “*revenge of history*”, but in the latter we would witness an entirely novel phenomenon that fits the “*Second Demographic Transition*” (SDT) description (Lesthaeghe 1995, 2010; Esteve et al. 2012). In this eventuality, we would have the traditional consensual unions and “trial marriages” with centuries of history at one end, and, at the other end, the SDT-type cohabitation that is part of the “non-conformist” transition that supports individual freedom of choice in a great variety of domains (individual autonomy) and questions both the intergenerational and gender power relationships (anti-authoritarian, egalitarian, secularized). Another, and quite plausible, possibility is that the two types interconnect so that their boundaries become more blurred. Such a syncretic form would also be a novel feature corresponding to a Latin American SDT “*sui generis*”, which would be partially distinct when compared to the Western and Northern European SDT-pattern.

2 The Historical Phases in the Evolution of Partnership Types in Mexico

Examining the new cohabitation in a Mexican or Latin American context containing a historical precedent is a challenging task. Both the traditional and the new cohabitation developed from profound changes in the way couples were formed. The traditional cohabitation was already present before the Spanish conquest, but it was reinforced later on because of the characteristics of that colonization and its subsequent evolution. On the other hand, the rise of a new SDT-type of cohabitation also has to be understood as the culmination of a long process of secularization and emancipation.

2.1 *Cohabitation: A Secular Institution*

The traditional cohabitation includes a series of practices that belong to what some scholars refer to as “the Meso-American model of family formation” (Robichaux, 2003): early formation of first union as a response to high mortality, early start of childbearing, universality of unions, possibility of union dissolution, parental and community influence in partner choice, and tolerance toward cohabitation and even polygamy, which was accepted, but only for the upper class. In other words, contrary to the Tridentine religious marriage that the Catholic Church tried to impose during colonial times, the pre-hispanic model allowed “trial marriages” that could lead either to a formal marriage or to the return of the woman to her parental home. In the former instance, residence became patrilocal, and the groom’s parents could press the new couple to marry if they thought that the young adults were behaving as married. The trial period worked as a filter to select the best fitting woman or to select the woman that would function best in her new family, a practice that continues to the present (Gonzalez Montes 1999).

After the Spanish conquest, the Church tried to impose its religious marriage, but it had to make several concessions. During the initial years, the Church reacted against the early union formation accompanied with early childbearing, and against arranged and trial marriage. However, cohabitation had an inherent flexibility that puts it outside the normative European framework. During the colonial period cohabitation also fostered “*nestizaje*” between the indigenous and Spanish populations, since it gave shelter to inter-racial concubinage and extra-marital unions. Those unions were tolerated by the Church, provided that the status of the legitimate spouse was respected (Gonzalbo 1991; Gonzalbo and Rabell 2004). In addition, cohabitation was a refuge for heterogamous couples whose marriage would not have been socially acceptable by one or both sets of parents. In this instance, cohabitation would still provide a sufficiently stable setting for raising children. By the end of the Colony, in 1776, the Crown toughened the conditions to form heterogamous or exogamous marriages by passing the “*Real Pragmatica de Matrimonios*”, but its impact was only felt by a small group of property holders. In every-day life, lassitude in complying with imposed rules prevailed (Gonzalbo 1991). Furthermore, also old Spanish customs such as the *barrangania* (concubinage or consensual union) and polygamy, inherited from the Muslim occupation of Spain, left openings for transgressing the official colonial legislation.

2.2 *From the Institutionalization of Civil Marriage to the Expansion of Cohabitation*

By the time of the Independence at the start of the nineteenth century, the Mexican marriage laws were not that different from what they had been before, except for the fact that they weakened the position of women (McCaa 1994). By the middle of that

century, the liberal movements were able to institute civil marriage, in which the State replaced the Church in the sanctioning of marriages. In 1859 the Law on Civil Marriage was passed as the only code that provides official recognition of marriages. Concomitantly, also the civil registration system was established. However, it took more than 30 years for the first marriage statistics to be published in 1893 ([Secretaría de Gobernación 1982](#)), which clearly shows that the implementation of the 1859 legislation met with major obstacles such as inadequate communication, a lack of enforcement, and the rejection by a large part of the population which still preferred a religious marriage. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the secularization of marriage was one of the main results of the liberal legislation of the nineteenth century, and that this in its turn also initiated the secularization of society as a whole. The outcome was a double institutionalization of marriage and the establishment of three categories: civil only, religious only and civil plus religious.

The early decades of the twentieth century were characterized by the consolidation of civil marriage, and in 1929 such a marriage became compulsory prior to the religious one. Simultaneously, cohabitation was coded for the first time in the census of 1930, which makes this census the prime source for starting more detailed studies of Mexican nuptiality patterns. In the earlier censuses (1895, 1910, 1922) cohabitants just appeared in the category of singles ([Quilodrán 1974, 1998 and 2010](#)). However, it is also likely that the 1930 census underestimated the incidence of cohabitation.

Between 1930 and 1990 there is a steady decline of religious marriages (R) as a single event, and a smaller concomitant rise in the proportions only having a civil marriage (C). The category of the dual marriage (C+R) is the one that expands from 1930 till 1980. An accompanying feature is the reduction in cohabitation during that period. The data for women 15 to 59 are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Percent in each type of marriage and in cohabitation, partnered women 15–59, Mexican censuses 1930–2010

	Religious only (R)	Civil marriage only (C)	Both C+R marriages	Cohabitation
1930	27.6	11.8	35.1	25.5
1940	15.8	14.9	47.0	22.3
1950	12.7	16.2	52.2	18.9
1960	9.6	17.4	56.7	16.2
1970	8.3	14.8	61.4	15.5
1980	4.1	19.5	62.4	13.9
1990	3.9	21.7	59.9	14.6
2000	6.5	24.3	51.9	24.1
2010	3.0	24.9	43.6	28.6

Source: J. Quilodrán ([1998](#)) and INEGI

3 The Rise of Cohabitation: The View from the Censuses 1930–2010

3.1 The Age Profiles

As in the studies of the other countries, we mainly analyze Mexican data which pertain to proportions currently cohabiting among women who are currently in a union (i.e. “partnered”), either via marriage or via cohabitation. The evolution of these proportions by age and over the censuses from 1930 to 2010 is shown in Fig. 5.1. The age profiles from age 20 to 65 are very similar in the censuses till 1990, and until that date, the proportions cohabiting systematically decreased. However, already in 1990 a trend reversal can be noted for the youngest cohort then aged 20–24. After 1990, all new incoming cohorts produce *major increases* in cohabitation and the expansion gains momentum between 2000 and 2010.

The data of Fig. 5.1 can also be read for cohorts. For instance, among ever-partnered women at age 25 in 1930 about 27 % were cohabiting, and 30 years later in 1960 this percentage dropped to about 12 % for these women then age 55. Evidently, many young cohabiting women in 1930 converted their unions into marriages at older ages. This dropping off of proportions cohabiting with age is being attenuated as time advances. For instance, the young partnered women of 25 in 1970 start out at 17 % cohabiting, and about 12 % are still doing so at age 55 in 2000.

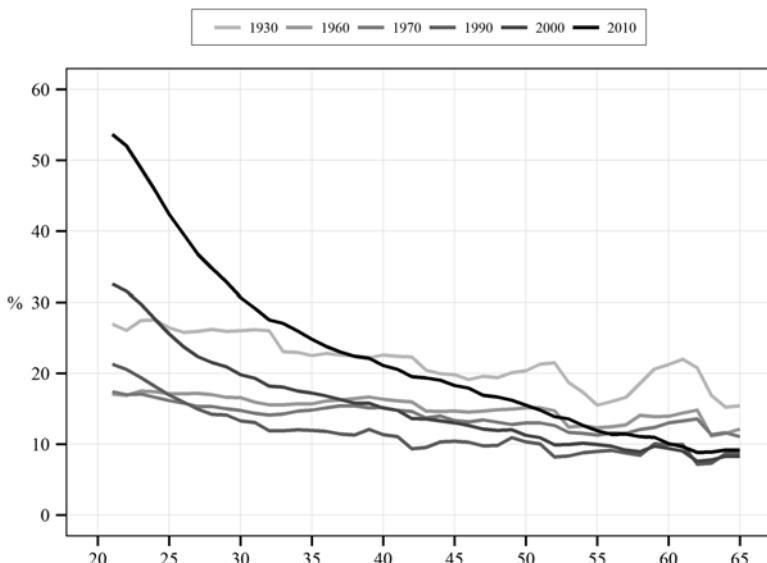


Fig. 5.1 Percent partnered Mexican women currently cohabiting by age and in the censuses from 1930 to 2010 (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International and INEGI)

This is a drop off of 5 percentage points against 15 points in the cohort previously discussed. For partnered women age 25 in 1990, however, the move over 20 years is from about 17–19 % at age 45, and the drop off with age beyond 25 has disappeared.² Hence, there is a new element being added to the picture after 1990: *cohabitation is now again a more lasting state*.

3.2 *The Spatial Distribution by State*

Restricting the analysis to partnered women 25–29, the percentages cohabiting for Mexico as a whole show the initial downward trend from about 26 % in 1930 to 13 % in 1980. Despite the fact that several states are missing in 1930, one can still assume that the share of cohabitation has about halved during these initial 50 years. In 2010, however, the percentage cohabiting reaches 37 %, and during the last three decades its incidence has almost tripled (Table 5.2).

The data in Table 5.2 are also plotted in Fig. 5.2. These data show that the U-shaped evolution is present in the majority of states, but also that the variance was much larger in 1930 than in 2010. In other words, at the start of our observation there were many states where cohabitation was already very rare, but also others in which it still exceeded 40 and even 50 %. At the low end of the distribution with less than 10 % in 1930 or 1960 are states such as Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacan, Colima, Nueva Leon, Queretaro, Tlaxcala and Zacatecas. At the opposite end with more than 40 % cohabiting are Sinaloa and then Hidalgo, Veracruz, Tabasco and Chiapas. Hence, there were two zones with high levels of cohabitation (Sierra Madre Occidental, Gulf of Mexico and Chiapas) separated by a “North-south trench” of low levels, running from Coahuila to Michoacan. In addition to this trench, the entire Yucatan peninsula, with a large Maya indigenous population, also exhibited very low levels of cohabitation.³

The evolution by state is also presented in Map 5.1. The top row of three maps shows the reduction phase, whereas the bottom row with the three maps starting in 1990 displays the expansion phase. As already noted, the high cohabitation areas at the onset formed a band along the Gulf of Mexico (Veracruz, Tabasco) and stretching inland to Hidalgo in the North and Chiapas in the South. In addition, the equally high northwestern zone in the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra de Nayar corresponds to the states of Sinaloa and Nayarit. All these areas have falling percentages cohabiting till the 1980s, but stay nevertheless at the upper end of the distribution. During the second phase, after 1990, *cohabitation increases everywhere*, but the former higher states stay at the top of the distribution. But many others are also catching up: the Baja California states, Sonora and Chihuahua,

²This interpretation assumes that there are no or only minor changes in the denominator across cohorts, i.e. that over these ages, different cohorts did not experience significant differences in the proportions in a union.

³Quilodrán (1998, 2001) established the same corridor with 1990 data.

Table 5.2 Percent cohabiting among partnered women age 25–29 in Mexican states, 1930–2010

State	1930	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Aguascalientes	—	1.0	4.1	3.7	4.3	9.28	23.8
Baja California	—	16.3	12.0	14.8	19.9	32.24	50.3
Baja California Sur	—	20.5	16.7	12.2	18.4	26.19	47.4
Campeche	—	15.4	10.6	8.3	11.5	18.29	26.6
Coahuila	12.9	10.7	5.6	7.2	6.4	13.13	23.5
Colima	—	15.6	9.1	12.9	15.7	22.64	38.6
Chiapas	63.6	43.7	38.1	27.8	28.7	34.14	45.7
Chihuahua	18.4	12.9	12.5	11.8	14.0	27.65	44.4
Distrito Federal	—	13.2	8.9	10.2	16.2	27.26	48.2
Durango	20.7	11.1	12.4	12.6	12.3	22.01	33.9
Guanajuato	4.0	3.9	3.3	3.4	3.5	7.15	18.2
Guerrero	25.7	14.5	13.6	12.5	14.5	19.38	29.4
Hidalgo	59.2	34.7	26.8	24.22	24.9	32.09	47.5
Jalisco	8.0	6.7	6.0	6.02	6.4	11.35	25.9
México	13.9	8.7	9.1	10.5	14.6	24.33	42.0
Michoacán	14.8	5.0	6.1	6.4	6.5	9.97	21.9
Morelos	34.7	25.3	17.7	18.3	20.5	30.39	44.7
Nayarit	34.1	34.3	25.7	28.3	28.8	33.29	43.0
Nuevo León	10.0	6.9	7.4	4.4	4.8	9.74	22.6
Oaxaca	30.9	21.0	23.6	18.2	17.6	24.24	35.6
Puebla	29.0	18.8	19.1	15.8	18.7	31.56	50.1
Querétaro	—	2.9	3.4	5.9	7.2	16.21	36.7
Quintana Roo	—	11.8	18.8	10.4	16.4	24.47	45.7
San Luis Potosí	21.0	14.0	10.6	10.0	10.7	15.27	33.0
Sinaloa	54.0	32.6	31.9	22.7	23.1	26.56	32.2
Sonora	19.8	20.3	19.7	14.5	20.2	30.56	40.8
Tabasco	55.3	29.5	33.3	16.4	17.8	27.76	38.3
Tamaulipas	26.6	20.1	17.6	13.6	13.5	21.72	38.5
Tlaxcala	—	9.1	11.9	13.1	13.7	23.91	42.7
Veracruz	44.8	35.8	33.9	29.6	28.8	35.21	46.5
Yucatán	21.8	12.3	6.6	5.8	5.0	7.56	17.1
Zacatecas	6.9	4.2	5.8	4.2	5.3	8.29	23.3
Total	25.9 ^a	17.2	15.3	13.2	15.2	22.69	37.1

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and INEGI

^aStates without data not included in total

Mexico State and Mexico City (Federal District), Tlaxcala, and Quintana Roo in Yucatan.⁴ On the whole, the geographical pattern of the resurgence exhibits more than a mere “revenge of history” given the rapid rise of cohabitation in states that were only in the middle of the distribution in the 1960–1980 period.

⁴ It should be noted that the state of Quintana Roo contains a very large population originating from other areas in Mexico. This was due to the development of the tourism sector after 1970.

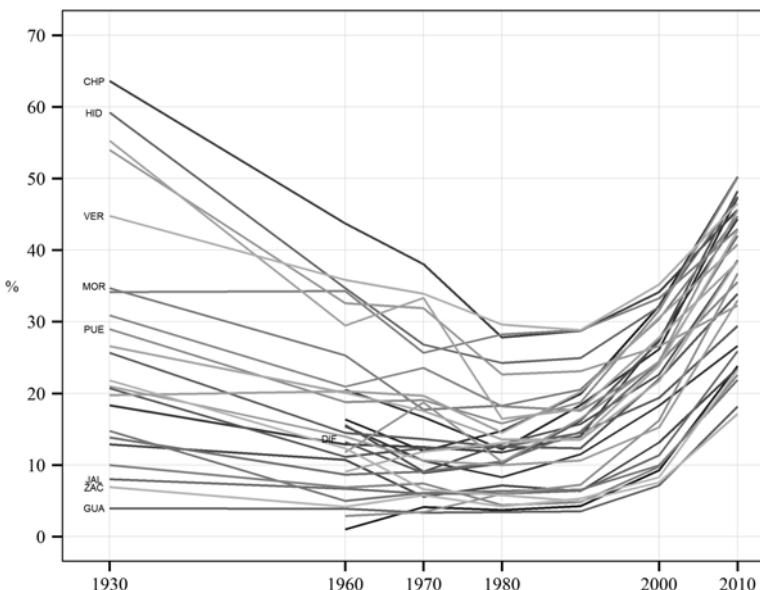


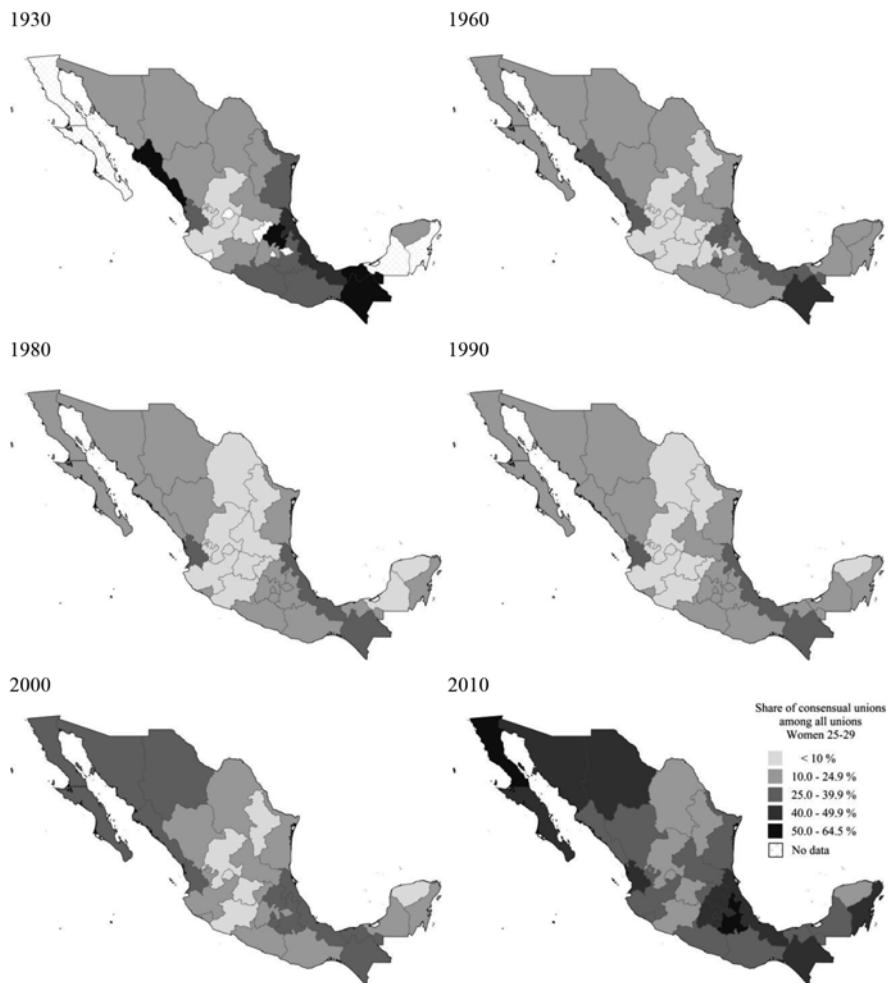
Fig. 5.2 Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union, Mexican states 1930–2010 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International and INEGI)

4 The Indigenous Factor

The geo-historical evolution of cohabitation in Mexico cannot be understood without a more detailed scrutiny of the differential survival of cohabitation among the various indigenous populations. The Mexican censuses captured this factor via the native language question. But as the population of indigenous language speakers have shrunk over time, the information provided by the 1930 and 1970 censuses has been crucial in reconstructing this earlier distribution.⁵ With this information we now have an idea of the possible evolution of cohabitation for 19 indigenous populations that are scattered over the entire Mexican territory. The data of Table 5.3 pertain to *all* women in a union irrespective of age. Despite the data limitations, it is abundantly clear that already in the 1920s there was a high degree of heterogeneity among the indigenous groups.⁶ For instance, the northern groups made up of the Tarahumara in the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Cora and Huichol in the Sierra

⁵The Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI, 2004) estimated the size of the indigenous population age 5+ on the basis of the 2000 census data for language and ethnic auto-ascription to be 5.26 million which is 6.7% of the total population.

⁶We obviously cannot reconstruct the history of cohabitation among indigenous populations before 1930, but many factors must have been at work such as location in mountains and isolation, differential Christianization, pre-Hispanic state formation, eradication of nomadism and creation of fixed settlements, etc. See Escalante-Gonzalo (2013) and García-Martínez (2013) for relevant historical background information.



Map 5.1 The share of cohabitation in all unions of women 25–29 in Mexican states, 1930–2010
(Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International and INEGI)

de Nayar had a high incidence of cohabitation to start with and continued to be at the top of the distribution throughout the entire period 1930–2010. For these groups, the percentages cohabiting among all partnered women are commonly between 60 and 80 %. A second stretch with a history of sustained cohabitation is located in the coastal plains along the Gulf of Mexico (Llanura Costal del Golfo), but the levels are already noticeably lower than in the northwestern groups, and comprised between 20 and 60 %. Examples thereof are the Popoluca and Totocana. Equally in the 20–60 % range are populations in the central volcanic system (e.g. Popoloca, Nahuatl, Otomi), in the Sierra Madre del Sur (e.g. Chontal of Oaxaca, Mazateco), and in the Sierra of Chiapas (e.g. Zoque and especially Tzotzil). At the low end of

Table 5.3 Percent cohabiting among all women in a union, selected Mexican indigenous populations, 1930–2010

Geographical area	Indigenous languages	1930	1970	1990	2000	2010
Sierra Madre Occidental	Tarahumara	54.4	58.0	65.5	66.4	80.8
Sierra de Nayar	Cora	—	60.0	78.2	66.7	86.9
	Huichol	—	87.5	85.7	70.3	85.6
Sierra Madre Oriental	Tepehua	51.7	40.0	33.8	38.5	34.6
Sistema volcánico transversal	Mazahua	6.1	6.6	8.8	12.4	19.1
	Otomi	29.7	22.1	22.7	22.2	29.5
	Nahuatl	34.3	24.8	20.7	25.2	32.0
	Purepecha	10.9	5.6	5.7	8.6	13.1
	Popoloca	68.2	55.4	49.0	48.6	31.9
Llanura Costal Golfo	Huasteco	23.4	19.2	12.2	15.4	23.8
	Totocana	28.8	30.8	24.6	26.2	30.8
	Popoluca	44.4	42.1	57.2	56.8	56.1
Sierra Madre Sur	Amuzgo	20.0	26.9	13.5	11.9	20.7
	Chontal (Oaxaca)	44.4	22.0	15.1	35.5	29.5
	Mazateco	44.0	35.0	24.6	26.5	31.6
Golfo Tehuantepec	Zapoteco	25.6	20.1	15.7	18.7	20.0
Sierras de Chiapas	Tzotzil	75.2	68.5	56.7	54.8	57.6
	Zoque	50.0	30.6	17.2	18.8	31.2
Yucatan	Maya	22.9	12.6	6.9	8.7	13.1

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

the distribution with commonly less than 20 % cohabiting women are the Huasteco of San Luis Potosi, the Zapoteco on the Golfo de Tehuantepec, the Amuzgo of Oaxaca, the Mazahua and Purepecha of Michoacan, and the Maya population of Yucatan.

Also the trends over time exhibit heterogeneity, as there are indigenous populations with steady declines (Popoloca in the central volcanic range, Tepehua in the Sierra Madre Occidental, Tzotzil of Chiapas), but also others with sustained increases, notably in the northwestern sierras (Tarahumara and Cora). The majority pattern, however, seems to be the U-shaped one with the troughs in the 1980s (1990 census). This pattern also matches the U-shaped evolution shown for the Mexican states.

Finally, also the group of Afro-Mexicans (sometimes referred to as Jarochos) has to be mentioned. This population was brought in as slaves as early as the sixteenth century and their descendants are still found in the province of Veracruz and on the Pacific coast of Guerrero and Oaxaca (Costa Chica). They do not figure among the indigenous populations since they are Spanish speakers, but they also have a tradition of forming cohabiting unions.

Since the indigenous populations are concentrated in specific locations, the more detailed maps by municipality will equally show the ethnic clusters of high percentages cohabiting. It should be noted, however, that these indigenous population

Table 5.4 Percent distribution of women 25–29 by level of education, Mexico 1970–2010

Education	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Primary or less	90.5	17.6	52.7	35.9	24.0
Secondary	3.6	10.9	15.9	28.7	30.1
Preparatory & Technical	4.4	11.4	16.9	21.1	20.6
Higher (Bachelor and more)	1.5	6.2	14.4	14.3	25.3

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

Table 5.5 Percent cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union, Mexico 1970–2010

Education	1970	1990	2000	2010
Less than Primary completed	18.8	22.4	32.7	51.0
Primary completed	5.4	13.5	23.6	39.7
Secondary completed	3.9	7.3	13.6	30.3
University completed	8.0	4.7	8.3	23.8

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

clusters are typical of traditional forms of cohabitation and “trial marriage” and that many are also low on the scales of education and infrastructural development (e.g. lacking piped water, sewage system, electricity etc.) (Permanyer 2013; INEGI 2004; Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas CDI 2002).⁷

5 The Education Factor

As in many other Latin American countries, the level of education of women has also substantially increased in Mexico. As is shown in Table 5.4 for women at ages 25–29, the percentage illiterate women or with no more than primary education declined from a high of no less than 90.5 % in 1970 to 24.0 % in 2010. The middle education groups expanded considerably from 8.0 to 50.7 % over that period, and also the percentage of women 25–29 with higher education rose from a mere 1.5–25.3 % by 2010. The upward shift in the educational composition is a key element in interpreting the importance of the shift toward cohabitation by education.

As shown in Table 5.5 and Fig. 5.3 for partnered women 25–29, there has been a systematic negative relation between the incidence of cohabitation and the level of education. Mexico is no exception in this respect. The figures for 1960 and 1970 capture the situation when overall cohabitation levels were still declining and

⁷ CDI (2002) gives an overview of the development characteristics of the indigenous population based on the 2000 census. For the populations listed in Table 5.3, high percentages illiteracy and/or lack of amenities (piped water, sewage system, electricity) were particularly prevalent for the Amuzgo, Cora, Tarahumara, Mazateco, Huasteco and Totonaca, whereas the better conditions were observed for the Chontal of Oaxaca, Maya, Mazahua and Otomi.

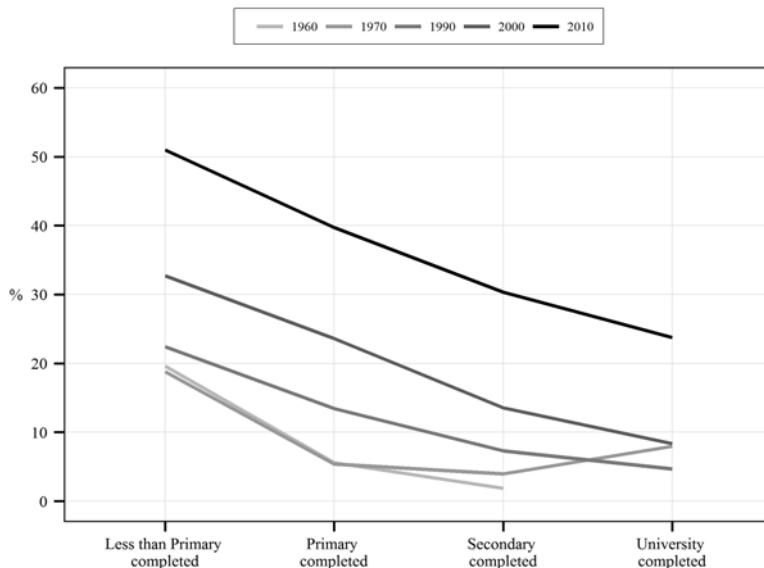


Fig. 5.3 Percent cohabiting among partnered women 25–29 by level of education, Mexico 1960–2010 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International and INEGI)

reached an overall low (also very low by Latin American standards).⁸ However, from 1990 onwards the levels *increase for all education categories by very similar amounts*, thereby maintaining the negative relationship (downward profiles by education). Particularly the large and uniform increase between 2000 and 2010 in the various education groups is a striking feature. Not only has there been an upward shift in educational composition, *but the higher educated have increased their levels of cohabitation to the same extent as those with less education*. This implies that the overall pool of cohabiting educated women has grown substantially after 1990. If there is indeed a social class difference with traditional cohabitation being the dominant type for the less educated and the SDT-type for the more educated, then the share of the SDT-type should have expanded along with the pool of cohabiting educated women. Conversely, despite the increase in the probability of being in a consensual union for the least educated women, the dramatic shrinking of this education category would produce a major reduction in traditional cohabitation. Obviously, if the SDT-type has also gained a foothold among the least educated, which cannot be ruled out given their similar shift in values, then the shift to the SDT-type would be even more marked.

⁸ In 1930 the percentages cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union were 29.4 for illiterate women and 14.0 for literate ones. These figures are higher than those for less than primary completed and primary completed in 1970 and about at the same level for these groups in 1990 (22.4 and 13.5 respectively).

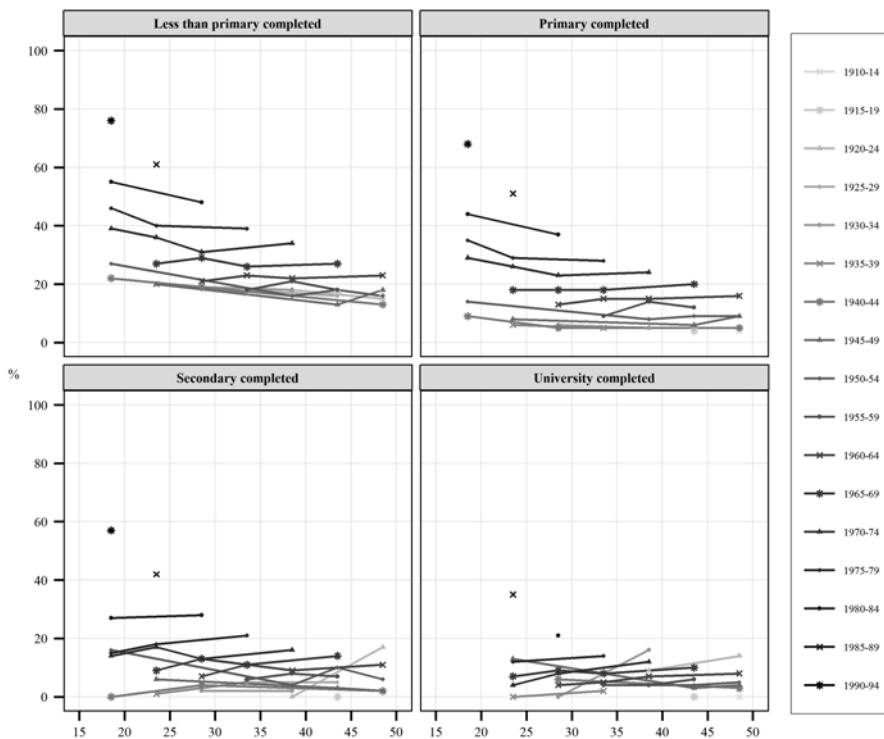


Fig. 5.4 Share of cohabitation among partnered women by birth cohort and level of education, Mexico (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International and INEGI)

A more detailed picture of the evolution of cohabitation by birth cohort and by level of education is shown in the four panels of Fig. 5.4. These figures reveal that in *all* education groups the pioneers of rising cohabitation were the cohorts born between 1960 and 1964 and who entered unions in the 1980s. This is of some relevance because this increase in the pioneering cohort predates the economic crisis of the mid-1990s. Evidently, cohabitation expands initially more among the least educated, but once started, the movement is universal. The generally flat cohort profiles over age also suggest that, once past the age of 25, cohabitation frequently becomes a lasting state over the life cycle.

6 Cohabitation at the Municipal Level: Maps and Models

For the censuses of 1990, 2000 and 2010 the spatial pattern of cohabitation can be studied at the municipal level using the IPUMS files. This permits defining variables both at the individual level and at a contextual level.

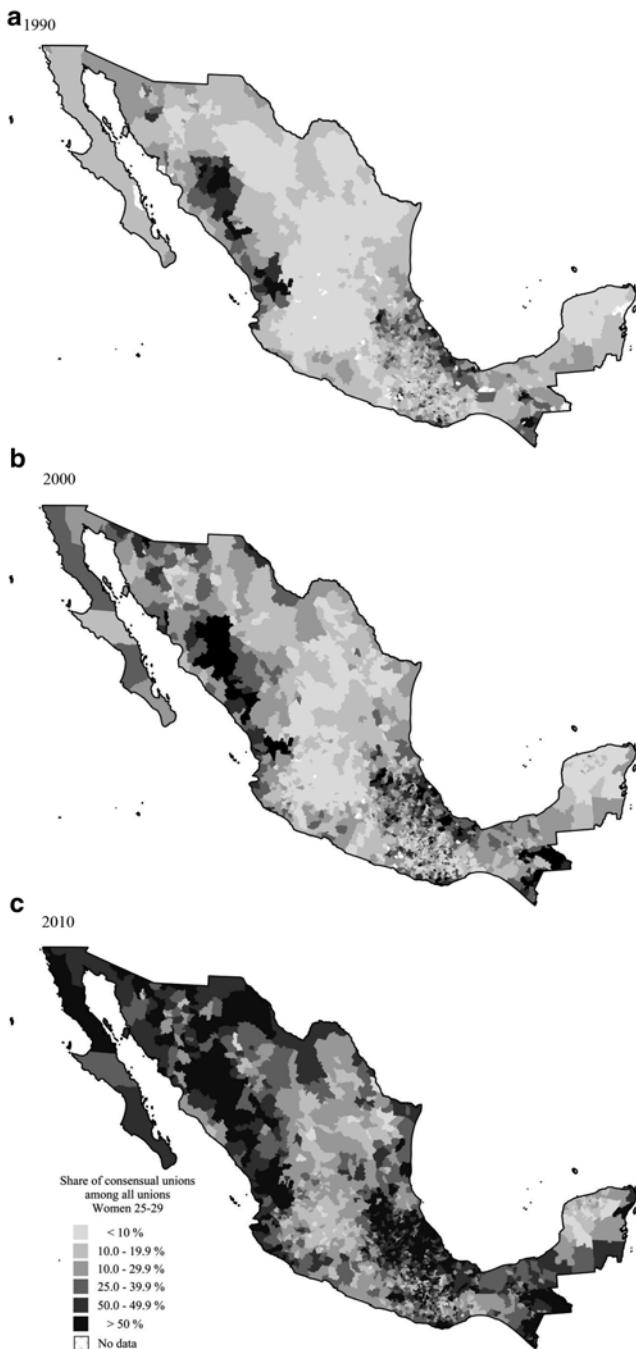
6.1 A More Detailed Geography of Cohabitation

The maps of percentages cohabiting among currently partnered women 25–29 is given in Map 5.2, using the same legend. In 1990 the vast majority of municipalities had either less than 10% cohabiting women, or were just in the next category between 10 and 25 %. Municipalities with more than 40% very frequently contain indigenous populations with the higher cohabitation levels. The ethnic factor accounts largely for the clusters in the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra de Nayar (Tarahumara, Cora, Huichol), the clusters in Chiapas (e.g. Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Zoque, Chol and Mame), and many municipalities in the province of Veracruz. Map 5.2. a for 1990 seems to capture the surviving traditional ethnic form of cohabitation as they survived during the previous two decades. During the 1990s, however, the incidence of cohabitation further increases in and around these aforementioned areas, but also spreads to Central Mexico, the coast of Oaxaca and along the border with the USA. The provinces with very low levels of cohabitation in 1990 still are low in 2000: the large area of the “North–south trench” from Coahuila to Michoacan, and also the Yucatan peninsula comprising the provinces of Campeche, Yucatan and Quintana-Roo. In 2010, by contrast, there are only few municipalities left with less than 10% cohabiting women among those 25–29 in a union, and these are scattered in the “North–south trench” and on the Peninsula (Yucatan, Campeche). Most of the other municipalities in the “North–south trench” and the province of Quintana Roo (Caribbean coast) have moved up to the higher categories. The further rise in cohabitation is also very noticeable along the US border and in Central Mexican municipalities, i.e. in the provinces of Queretaro and Hidalgo, Mexico, Puebla, Tlaxcala and Morelos, and further south in Oaxaca.

The general story is well known by now: municipalities in the vanguard often had a large indigenous population component, but they are joined by many others in the same or adjacent regions during subsequent rises. In addition new zones of higher levels of cohabitation developed in the North along the US border and Baja California, in Central Mexico, and along the Caribbean coast of Yucatan.

6.2 The Contextual Statistical Models, 2000 and 2010

The data that are used in this section stem from the 2000 and 2010 censuses, they pertain to currently partnered women 25–29, and they are compiled from the IPUMS files. The Human Development Index for Mexican municipalities, however, is provided by its author Iñaki Permanyer (2013). As in the chapters on Brazil and Colombia, we again model the probability of cohabiting (versus being married) by making use of a two-level random intercept logistic model. We assess the impact of a series of individual level variables first, and then that of a set of contextual variables measured at the level of the 2456 municipalities. In this hierarchical model, the residual variance is partitioned according to the two levels, and we again use the



Map 5.2 Percent currently cohabiting women among all partnered women 25–29, Mexican municipalities, 1990, 2000 and 2010 (*Source*: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

variance across municipalities as an indicator of the degree to which the introduction of the individual level variables as controls is capable of reducing the differences between municipalities. The results are presented in the form of odds ratios (OR) (exponentiated regression coefficients), i.e. relative to a chosen reference category (OR = 1).

At the individual level, we first introduce the respondent's ethnicity, but coded according to whether the individual's indigenous group had a tradition of cohabitation or not. This produces 5 categories, ranging from not belonging to an indigenous population to being a member of the group with a history of a high prevalence of cohabitation (40+ percent in 1930 and/or 1970). The group with "unknown/unspecified ethnicity" is also identified. The next variable is the respondent's level of education in 4 categories ranging from less than primary to completed university. The respondent's religion is next, with 5 categories: Catholic, Protestant, other religion, no religion and unknown. Finally, we also have some information about the respondent's migratory status, with a two-way classification as being born in the state as opposed to being born out of state.

At the level of municipalities, we use four contextual variables. The first one measures the local degree of religiosity versus secularization, by looking at the frequencies of religious marriages (religious only plus civil and religious marriages) in the municipality, and then using the quartiles of this distribution as categories. The second contextual variable classifies the municipalities depending on their percentage of indigenous people belonging to the groups with a history of high levels of cohabitation. We obtain three groups: municipalities without indigenous people, with less, and with more than the median percentage cohabitation in 1930–1970. The third contextual variable is the Permanyer composite Human Development Index adapted for the Mexican municipalities (HDI-M). In this version, the HDI-M corresponds to the "wealth dimension" (building materials and assets in households⁹) and captures the degree of development of the material living conditions.¹⁰ Finally, the educational level of the municipality is introduced via the percentage of its population with full secondary education or more. The quartiles of this distribution define the categories used in the tables.¹¹

The results are presented in Table 5.6 using the individual variables only and in Table 5.7 presenting the full model with also the contextual variables being added in. Each table contains a comparison between the 2000 and the 2010 results. The odds ratios for the former date capture the situation at the time of the incipient rise of cohabitation, whereas those for the latter date capture the evolution at a more advanced state. It should also be noted that the distribution of several independent variables has changed during the 1990–2010 period. For instance, despite the economic crisis of the mid-90s, all three dimensions of the HDI-M index (health,

⁹The assets are: piped water, flush toilet, quality floors, quality walls, quality roof, electricity, radio, TV, refrigerator, phone, and car.

¹⁰The other HDI dimensions are health and education.

¹¹Also the population size of municipalities (5 categories) was used as a contextual variable, but its effect was negligible in either 2000 or 2010.

Table 5.6 Estimated odds ratios of cohabiting as opposed to being married for Mexican women 25–29 in a union, results for the individual level variables, Mexico 2000 and 2010

Individual variables/Level	2000		2010	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Member indigenous group, 1930–1970. Cohabitation level</i>				
Low cohabitation group LT 20 %	0.97*	0.73	1.04**	0.83
Medium cohabitation 20–39 %	1.41	1.01*	1.30	1.03**
High cohabitation group 40+	1.82	1.16	1.82	1.40
Membership unknown	1.57	1.10	1.99	1.52
Not indigenous (ref.)	1	1	1	1
<i>Education</i>				
Less than Primary		6.93		4.12
Primary completed		3.93		2.50
Secondary completed		1.74		1.45
University completed (ref.)		1		1
<i>Religion</i>				
No religion		1.47		1.67
Other religion		0.89**		0.51
Religion unknown		1.14		1.28
Protestant		0.53		0.53
Catholic (ref.)		1		1
<i>Migrant</i>				
Born out of state		1.27		1.23
Born in state (ref.)		1		1
<i>Remaining variance between municipalities</i>	1.03	1.10	0.64	0.68
<i>Intercept</i>	-1.52	-2.94	-0.67	-1.49

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

Notes: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except *: $p < 0.05$ and **: $p < 0.01$. The initial variance between municipalities in the zero models without covariates was 1.06 in 2000 and 0.65 in 2010

wealth, education) have vastly improved (Permanyer 2013).¹² The number of religious marriages declined faster than before,¹³ and also the percentage of indigenous language speakers continued its downward trend.

The analysis progressed via a stepwise introduction of each of the individual variables, starting with the individual's membership of an indigenous group with a tradition of lower versus higher cohabitation, and using persons not belonging to any indigenous group as the reference category (OR = 1).¹⁴ At both dates, the results

¹²On a 0 to 1 scale, the mean of the wealth index for Mexican municipalities (based on household assets), rose from 0.34 in 1990 to 0.56 in 2000 and 0.62 in 2010.

¹³Among women 25–29, those with a religious marriage (religious only plus civil and religious) declined from 68.3% in 1970 to 65.5 in 1980, 61.0 in 1990, and then more rapidly to 50.0% in 2000 and only 33.8% in 2010, according to census figures from INEGI.

¹⁴No significance levels are reported since almost all results are significant given the very large sample of individuals (over 300,000 for each year), and the use of the totality of municipalities in the contextual analysis.

for Model 1 are as expected: current indigenous group membership clearly follows the historical gradient, as established in 1930 or 1970. Also, those belonging to an indigenous population without any further specification exhibit high percentages cohabiting. The introduction of the individual level of education (results not shown) reduces the ethnic differentiation, which is of course the reflection of the fact that indigenous populations tend to have significantly less education than the population as a whole. Thereafter the odds ratios remain very stable, so that one can directly inspect the results for Model 2 which contains all individual covariates. In this model, the negative education gradient remains strong and robust over the two periods of observation. Also the religious gradient is very clearly in evidence at both dates. Those without religion have higher cohabitation risks than Catholics, whereas Protestants (largely Evangelicals) have much lower ones. Furthermore, it should be noted that the education gradient in 2010 is less steep than in 2000. Finally, being born outside the state of current residence slightly increases the risk of cohabitation in both years of observation.

The multivariate analysis essentially confirms what we could infer from the bivariate relationships. However, the variance between municipalities is not reduced following the controls for these four individual variables. This holds for both dates. Only the variance between municipalities is smaller in 2010 than in 2000 as many more municipalities are concentrated in the middle categories of cohabitation.

The stepwise introduction of the contextual variables, i.e. the characteristics of the municipalities of residence, does not alter the odds ratios observed for the individual level variables, so that the results of Model 2 are not repeated in Table 5.7. These individual variables are, however, now used as controls in assessing the odds ratios for the contextual ones. Also, the stepwise additions of the contextual variables did not alter the coefficients in any significant way, so that only the results for the complete model need to be presented.

In addition to individual religion and ethnicity, also the contextual measures of these two cultural variables continue to be of relevance in 2000 and 2010. For instance, in 2000, the odds ratios of cohabiting among partnered women 25–29 increases more than twofold when being a resident in a secular municipality with few religious marriages. Furthermore, living in a municipality with a significant ethnic population equally exhibits the same effect. Only the distinction with respect to the specific indigenous group, classified in two historical categories, has been attenuated. The results for 2010 are similar, but the gradient according to the secularization dimension has become more flat. This is presumably the effect of further secularization of municipalities that still had more religious marriages 10 years earlier.

On the socio-economic side, the gradient with respect to the material living conditions is the same at both dates: partnered women 25–29 in municipalities belonging to the poorest quartile have the highest likelihood of being in a consensual union, but the differences are not very pronounced when compared to the middle quartiles. Essentially women living in the wealthiest municipalities have a reduced odds ratios for cohabitation.

Table 5.7 Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation by contextual characteristics at the municipality, women 25–29 in a union, Mexico 2000 and 2010 (complete model)

Contextual variables (municipalities)	2000	2010
Incidence religious marriages in quartiles		
Upper Q4 (ref.)	1	1
Third Q3	1.41	1.23
Second Q2	2.05	1.45
Lower Q1	2.41	1.57
Historical presence indigenous cohabitation, 1930–1970		
Not indigenous population	0.49	0.58
Indigenous above median	1.10*	1.07**
Indigenous below median (ref.)	1	1
Municipal education, Pct Secondary + in quartiles		
Upper Q4	1.59	1.57
Third Q3	1.29	1.38
Second Q2	1.19	1.20
Lower Q1 (ref.)	1	1
Material living conditions in quartiles		
Upper Q4	0.61	0.69
Third Q3	0.86*	0.88*
Second Q2	0.86	0.86
Lower Q1 (ref.)	1	1
<i>Remaining variance municipalities</i>		
in complet model	0.76*	0.54
<i>Intercept</i>	-3.37	-1.76

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

Notes: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except *: $p < 0.05$ and **: $p < 0.01$. The Remaining variance municipalities in 2000 is 1.06* in the empty model, and 1.10* after controlling for the individual variables (see Model 2). The same values in 2010 are: 0.65 and 0.66 respectively

The municipal level of education, measured through the proportion of women with secondary education or more, exhibits the opposite pattern of what is expected: residence in a better educated municipality *increases* the odds ratios of cohabiting. A further inspection of this overall contextual pattern revealed the existence of a marked degree of interaction between individual and contextual levels of education. It turned out that, controlling for the other variables, *it is essentially the less educated women who cohabit much more when residing in the better educated municipalities than when residing in the least educated locations*. This finding furthermore holds for 2000 and for 2010, as shown in Table 5.8 and Fig 5.5. Hence, it is *not* that the university educated women cohabit more in the better educated municipalities. In fact, until 2000, these better educated women cohabited slightly less when in high education environments. In 2010 there is no longer a contextual effect of the educational status of the place of residence for better educated women (secondary and higher), but even higher odds ratios for the least educated residing in the better

Table 5.8 Estimated odds ratios of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29 according to the individual and contextual levels of education combined, Mexico 2000 and 2010

	Educational level municipalities (% secondary+)			
	Q1 Low	Q2	Q3	Q4 High
2000				
Less than Primary completed	1.16	1.52	1.80	2.58
Primary completed	0.96	1.02	1.05	1.33
Secondary completed	1.26	0.77*	0.66*	0.57
University completed (ref.)	1	0.74	0.57	0.32
2010				
Less than Primary completed	1.60	2.05	2.56	3.54
Primary completed	1.24	1.39	1.60	1.87
Secondary completed	1.18	1.20	1.05	1.04
University completed (ref.)	1	0.82	0.79	0.74
<i>Intercept</i> -1.07				

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

Notes: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p<0.001$ except *: $p<0.05$ and **: $p<0.01$
The quartile cut off points for the municipal education variable in 2000 are LT 2.7% women secondary education, 2.7–4.6, 4.7–8.8, and 8.9+, and for 2010 : LT 5.5, 5.5–9.4, 9.5–14.4 and 14.5+

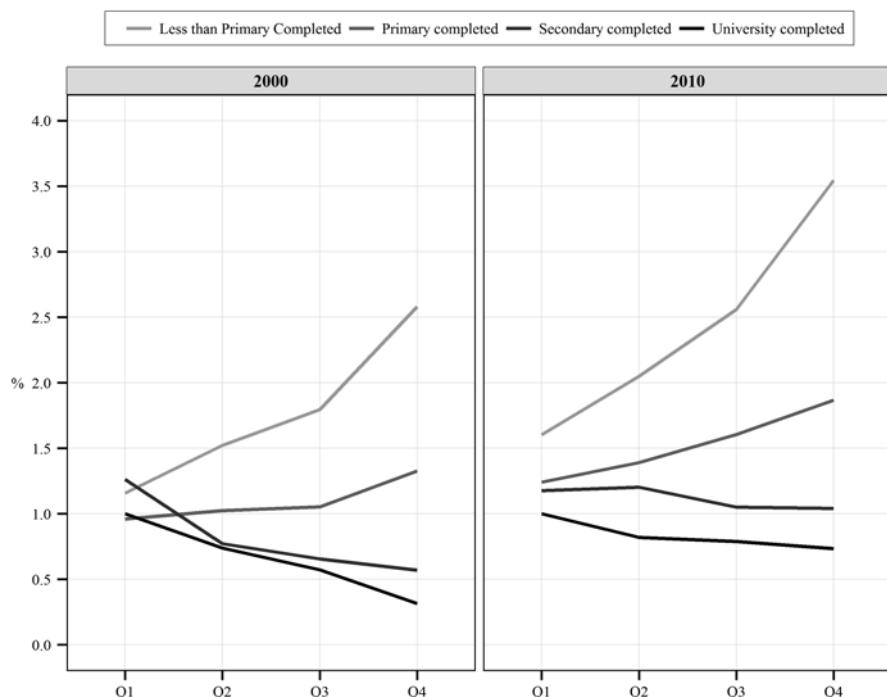


Fig. 5.5 Estimated odds ratios of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29 according to the individual (Y) and the contextual levels (X) of education combined, Mexico 2000 and 2010 (university completed and Q1: OR=1) (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

educated places. A possible explanation could be that the wealthier areas have a large service sector that attracts less educated women, who on the basis of their income, can establish a household via cohabitation.¹⁵ In addition, the better educated municipalities may have a greater tolerance for diversity, and even if highly educated women tend to have a preference for marriage, they are not concerned about the behavior of the less educated, who can enter into long term consensual unions without stigmatization.

7 Conclusions

In comparison to the other Meso-American countries, Mexico must have witnessed a far steeper decline of cohabitation before and/or during the first half of the twentieth century, and furthermore maintained these relatively low levels all the way till the 1980s. Only after 1990 and especially during the first decade of the twenty-first century has there been a substantial increase. The U-shaped evolution over time found for the nation as a whole is equally in evidence in the evolution for the states and for many indigenous populations.

The geography of the phenomenon of rising cohabitation owes a clear tribute to the historical patterns that developed among the various indigenous populations. The municipalities with the higher levels of cohabitation in 1990 are typically places with more isolated indigenous groups who had managed to maintain their older traditions. Thanks to the availability of the 1930s census data it is now clear that there was a great deal of heterogeneity among the indigenous groups to start with. For instance, the Mayas of Yucatan already had very low levels of cohabitation during the early decades of the previous century, in strong contrast to the indigenous populations of the northwestern sierras which kept their high levels above 60% among women 25–29 in a union. Consequently, the 1990 map of cohabitation for states and municipalities predominantly reflects the much earlier history of ethnic differentiation in cohabitation. In addition, the indigenous factor is also partially responsible for the initial negative gradient of cohabitation with level of education, given the disadvantaged position of most indigenous populations in this and other respects.

When the “cohabitation boom” also takes shape in Mexico after 1990, the phenomenon ceases to be mainly “ethnic”. Admittedly, membership of an indigenous group with a strong cohabitation tradition and residence in an area of concentration of such groups are still positively associated with higher levels, but these are not the main factors anymore. Equally striking are the differentiations according to religion, both at the individual and contextual levels: being a non-religious person and residing in a municipality with fewer religious marriages both significantly increase

¹⁵ Women in the service sector can establish cohabiting households at fairly young ages with men with low wages, temporary jobs, or even with unemployed men.

the likelihood of cohabitation. Hence, Mexico's history of differential secularization emerges as well.¹⁶

The most striking feature of the post 1990 era is the maintenance of a steep educational gradient. However, it would be fallacious to infer from this that the rise in cohabitation would be the result of increased poverty among the less educated. Not only do we know that the standards of living and the health conditions have vastly improved in Mexico over the last two decades (Permanyer 2013), but even more strikingly, the rise in cohabitation is just as outstanding among the better educated women as among the least educated ones. As in all the other Latin American countries, the education gradients remains negative, but the rises are by no means confined to the lower social strata.

Do we have a revenge of history in Mexico? Judging from the mere *cross-sectional* profiles (e.g. the ethnic and geographic profiles, the secularization pattern, or the education gradient) one could indeed conclude that historical differentials are being replicated, and that there is nothing new. At a closer inspection of *changes over time*, however, several features emerge that strongly mitigate this historical inheritance. First and foremost, there has been a quantum upward shift in the educational distribution of the female population, which, in tandem with the rise of cohabitation in the better educated groups, must imply that cohabitation is now a "normal" form of partnership among that expanding educational group as well. It is, furthermore, likely that the shift from marriage to prolonged cohabitation is equally driven by further secularization and an overall shift in values. Also at the aggregate level there are several novelties. Firstly, a number of indigenous groups who used to be in the middle or at the lower end of the cohabitation distribution joined the ones which were at the top before the 1990s. Secondly, and more importantly, a number of states have been catching up after that date, and are now in the upper part of the distribution as well. And finally, a striking interaction effect has been discovered in our analysis: cohabitation levels among the less educated women are much higher when these women are residing in heterogeneous municipalities with many more educated women than in homogeneous municipalities where virtually everyone has little education. Apparently, the large service sector in the wealthier areas provides jobs for less educated young women which help them in setting up households via cohabitation.

Hence, there are several reasons to believe that the SDT-type of cohabitation has taken a foothold in Mexico as well.¹⁷ But, as stated in the introduction, a finer

¹⁶ It should also be noted that the World Values Survey results for Mexico document major changes between 1996 and 2005 in attitudes toward suicide, abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia and divorce. The attitudes became more tolerant for all five ethical items and in all education categories at the later date. There was only one exception: the tolerance for abortion remained the same at both dates for the middle category of education. Hence, it is not unreasonable to assume that also the weakening cultural stigma against cohabitation was an integral part of the process for all education groups or social classes.

¹⁷ Another factor that can be mentioned is the effect of the "sexual revolution", i.e. the rise of pre-marital sexual relations and concomitant unplanned pregnancies, (Gayet and Szasz 2014) which would have sped up the entry into a consensual union.

typology of cohabitation is needed to accommodate the multi-faceted picture of Latin American cohabitation (Covre-Sussai 2014; Quilodrán 2006, 2011).

Time will tell how fast and to what degree the shift to the SDT-type will be occurring in Mexico, but at present it is clear that the shift away from the traditional type is under way, and that this is furthermore the main reason for the Mexican expansion of cohabitation after 1990.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Castro-Martín, T. (2002, Winter). “Consensual Union in Latin America: Persistence of a Dual Nuptiality System”. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 33(1), 35–55.
- Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI). (2002). *Indicadores socioeconómicos de los pueblos indígenas de México 2002*. México, DF: CDI, Table 16 “Indicadores socioeconómicos de las localidades con 40 % y más de población indígena por lengua, México, 2000” (base: 12th Census 2000) and Map “Grada de marginación”
- Covre-Sussai, M. (2014). *Cohabitation in Latin America: A comparative perspective*. PhD-dissertation, Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL), Louvain.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI). (2004). *La población indegena de Mexico*. Aguascalientes: Dirección General de Coordinación de los Sistemas Nacionales Estadístico y de Información Geográfica; Dirección de Atención a Usuarios y Commercialización, 196 pages. ISBN 970-13-4406-5.
- Escalante-Gonzalbo, P. (2013). “Ancient Mexico”. In Escalante-Gonzalbo, P. et al. *A new compact history of Mexico*. El Colegio de México, Chapter 1: 12–54. ISBN 10: [6074625026](http://9784625026)/ISBN 13: 9786074625028.
- Esteve, A., Lesthaeghe, R., & López-Gay, A. (2012). The Latin American cohabitation boom 1970–2007. *Population and Development Review*, 38(1), 55–81.
- García-Martínez, B. (2013). The colonial era to 1760. In P. Escalante-Gonzalbo et al. (Eds.), *A new compact history of Mexico* (pp. 58–112). El Colegio de México, Chapter 2. ISBN 10: 6074625026/ISBN 13: 9786074625028.
- Gayet, C., & Szasz, I. (2014). Sexualidad sin matrimonio. Cambios en la primera unión sexual de las mujeres mexicanas durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX. In C. Rabell (Ed.), *Los Mexicanos: un balance del cambio demográfico* (pp. 350–385). Fondo de Cultura Económica: México.
- Gonzalbo, P. (1991). Familias novohispanas, Ilustración y Despotismo. In A. Hernández (coord), *Cincuenta años de Historia en México: en el Cincuentenario del Centro de Estudios Históricos* (Vol. 1, pp. 119–138). México: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos.

- Gonzalbo, P., & Rabell, C. (2004). La familia en México. In P. Rodríguez (coord) *La Familia en Iberoamérica 1550–1980* (pp. 92–125). Bogotá: Centro de Investigación de Dinámica Social, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Colección Confluencias. ISBN 958-698-134-7.
- González Montes, S. (1999) Las costumbres del matrimonio en el México indígena contemporáneo. In B. Figueroa Campos (Ed.), *V Reunión de investigación sociodemográfica en Mexico, Vol 4: México diverso y desigual: enfoques sociodemográficos* (pp. 87–105). México: El Colegio de México/Sociedad Mexicana de Demografía.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (1995). The second demographic transition in western countries. In K. Oppenheim-Mason & A.-M. Jensen (Eds.), *Gender and family change in industrialized countries* (pp. 17–62). Oxford: Clarendon. ISBN 978-0-19-828970-8.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (2010). The unfolding story of the second demographic transition. *Population and Development Review*, 36(2), 211–252.
- McCaa, R. (1994). *Mariageways in Mexico and Spain, 1500–1900. Continuity and change* (pp. 11–43). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Permanyer, I. (2013). Using census data to explore the spatial distribution of human development. *World Development*, 46(1), 1–13.
- Quilodrán, J. (1974). Evolución de la nupcialidad en México 1900–1970. *Demografía y Economía*, 8(1), 34–49.
- Quilodrán, J. (1998). *Le Mariage au Mexique: évolution nationale et typologie régionale*, Louvain-la-Neuve: Bruylants-Académie s.a., 256 pp. ISBN 2-87209-503-9 (Academia)/2-7384-5584-0 (L'Harmattan).
- Quilodrán, J. (2001). *Un siglo de matrimonio en México*. México: Centro de Estudios Demográficos Y de Desarrollo Urbano, Colegio de México, 375 pp. ISBN 68121014X, 9789681210144
- Quilodrán, J. (2006). ¿Está cambiando la naturaleza de la unión libre en América Latina? Los ejemplos de Brasil, México y República Dominicana". In J. L. Lezama & J. B. Morelos (Eds.), *Población, Ciudad y Medio Ambiente en el México Contemporáneo*. México: El Colegio de México, Serie Estudios Demográficos, Urbanos y Ambientales pp. 149–183. ISBN-10: 9681212088/ISBN 13: 978–9681212087.
- Quilodrán, J. (2010). Hacia un nuevo modelo de nupcialidad. In B. García & M. Ordorica (Eds.), *Los grandes problemas de México. I. Población* (Vol. 1, pp. 173–212). México: El Colegio de México. <http://2010.colmex.mx/16tomos/I.pdf>
- Quilodrán, J. (2011). ¿Un modelo de nupcialidad postransicional en América Latina? In G. Bistock & J. Melo (coords.) *Nupcialidad y familia en América Latina actual* (pp. 11–34). Río de Janeiro: UNFPA/ALAP.
- Robichaux, D. (comp). (2003). *El matrimonio en Mesoamérica ayer y hoy: unas miradas antropológicas*. Mexico: Universidad Iberoamericana, Biblioteca Francisco Xavier Clavigero, 360 pp. ISBN 968-85-9503-9.
- Secretaría de Gobernación. (1982). *El Registro Civil en México, Antecedentes Histórico-Legislativos, Aspectos Jurídicos y Doctrinarios*. México: Dirección General del Registro Nacional de Población e Identificación Personal, 181 pages. ISBN 9688051349, 9789688051344.

Chapter 6

Consensual Unions in Central America: Historical Continuities and New Emerging Patterns

Teresa Castro-Martín and Antía Domínguez-Rodríguez

1 Introduction

The coexistence of marriages and consensual unions has long been one of the most distinctive features of nuptiality patterns in Latin America (Quilodrán 1999; De Vos 2000; Castro-Martín 2002; Rodríguez Vignoli 2004; Esteve et al. 2012a). This ‘dual nuptiality’ regime, in which formal and informal partnerships – similar in their social recognition and reproductive patterns, but divergent with regard to their stability, legal obligations and safeguard mechanisms – coexist side by side, has been particularly salient in Central America, where high levels of cohabitation have prevailed historically until present times. Whereas in many Latin American countries a trend towards the formalization of conjugal bonds and a consequent decline in consensual unions took place during the first half of the twentieth century (Quilodrán 1999), levels of cohabitation in Central America remained among the highest in the Latin American context. According to census data, the proportion of consensual unions already surpassed that of legal marriages in 1940 among women of reproductive age in Panama; and in the 1970 census round, consensual unions outnumbered formal marriages also in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Therefore, consensual unions have long been the dominant type of conjugal union in the region, well before the ‘cohabitation boom’ that many Latin American countries experienced as of the 1970s and particularly from the 1990s onwards (Esteve et al. 2012a).

T. Castro-Martín (✉)

Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), Madrid, Spain
e-mail: teresa.castro@cchs.csic.es

A. Domínguez-Rodríguez

Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain

Prior studies have documented only minor changes in the prevalence of consensual unions in most Central American countries since the 1970s as well as a downward trend in Guatemala, depicting an overall picture of relative stability around high levels (Castro-Martín 2001). This evolution goes counter to the general upward trend of cohabitation in the rest of Latin America and could suggest the existence of a ceiling to the expansion of informal unions. Hence, it is relevant to examine recent trends and patterns with updated data in order to ascertain whether cohabitation has in fact reached an upper ceiling in the region and whether the apparent stability at the aggregate level conceals significant changes in cohabiting patterns across social groups.

As in the rest of Latin America, consensual unions have been an integral of the family system for centuries (Socolow 2000). Their historical roots can be traced back to pre-Hispanic times and to the early colonial period, when male colonizers, largely outnumbering women, found in the “amancebamiento” a means of sanctioning sexual unions with indigenous women (McCaa 1994). The dual nuptiality system consolidated throughout the colonial period: formal marriage was the norm within the Spanish elite in order to guarantee the intergenerational transmission of property, whereas informal unions were mainstream among the majority mestizo population (Lavrin 1989), resulting in very high proportions of births occurring out of wedlock (Kuzneof and Oppenheimer 1985; Milanich 2002). The Church was only partially successful in imposing the Catholic marriage model on culturally and ethnically mixed societies, and restrictions towards inter-ethnical marriages constituted an additional obstacle. In rural areas, the scarcity of civil and ecclesiastic authorities may also have prevented couples from seeking legal or religious sanction for their unions. Consensual unions, hence, have been commonplace in the region for centuries. Although they had broad social recognition and did not face stigmatization in the past, they were rarely conferred the same social prestige or rights – for instance, in terms of inheritance – as formal marriages.

Besides the legacy of a long historical tradition of cohabitation, persistently high poverty levels and deprived socio-economic conditions among large segments of the population are also part of the explanation for the widespread presence of consensual unions in Central America. Consensual unions were the typical partnership form outside the social elite in the past, and they still remain nowadays the predominant union type among the lower educated and disadvantaged social strata. Not only do the expenses of a wedding celebration pose a significant hurdle for poor couples, but some segments of the population may also feel alienated from the legal system, distrust bureaucratic procedures, or perceive no practical benefits from legal contracts over implicit agreements.

Central America is also known for having a pattern of early sexual initiation, early union formation and early motherhood. As a result, the region displays the youngest age at first union and the highest rates of adolescent fertility in Latin America (Monteith et al. 2005; Lion et al. 2009; Remez et al. 2009). All these factors are associated with a higher likelihood of entering cohabitation instead of marriage (Bozon et al. 2009; Grace and Sweeney 2014). Limited access to reproductive health care and low contraceptive use among the poorest and less educated

segments of the population (Stupp et al. 2007; Grace 2010) can also lead to early entry into cohabitation after an unplanned pregnancy (Rodríguez Vignoli 2004).

The widespread presence of consensual unions is clearly reflected in the remarkably high levels of nonmarital childbearing in the Central American region. Vital statistics, although prone to under-registration, indicate that since at least the 1970s more children are born outside the legal framework of marriage than within. Nonmarital births currently represent about 70 % of all births in Costa Rica and El Salvador and around 80 % in Panama (Laplante et al. 2015). A recent study on unmarried childbearing in Latin America based on census data (Castro-Martín et al. 2011) showed that the increase in nonmarital births observed in the 1970–2000 period was mainly attributable to births to cohabiting parents. In this period, the proportion of births to women in a consensual union increased from 19 to 33 % in Costa Rica, although in countries such as Panama, where this proportion was already high in 1970, the increase was minor (from 57 to 59 %).

In this chapter, we will review past and recent trends in the prevalence of consensual unions in six Central American countries – Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama – in order to ascertain whether cohabitation levels have remained relatively stable around high levels or whether further increases can be observed in more recent times, as is the case in the rest of Latin America. We will also examine how the prevalence of consensual unions across the age range has changed in past decades. Next, we will address whether differentials in the level of cohabitation across educational strata, which have been traditionally very large, have lessened over time. Given that a recent increase in consensual unions among the highly educated strata has been documented for many Latin American countries (Esteve et al. 2012a), it would be interesting to learn whether the same pattern can be observed in Central America, despite its polarized social structure and its slow pace of social and economic development. Finally, we will compare the socio-demographic profile of married and cohabiting women aged 25–29 in order to identify similarities and differences in labor force activity, reproductive behavior and co-residence patterns by union type.

The analysis is based on census and survey data. For census data, we mainly use the IPUMS files of harmonized census microdata (Minnesota Population Center 2014). All census sources for Central America contain information on current union status, including the category of consensual union (Rodríguez Vignoli 2011). For Panama, six census rounds (1960–2010) are accessible in IPUMS, but for the rest of the Central American countries, either no census microdata are available (Honduras and Guatemala) or only a limited number of census rounds are accessible in IPUMS. Therefore, in order to examine trends and changing patterns over the past five decades for all countries, we also use the REDATAM online system provided by CELADE to process census information, as well as survey data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and the Reproductive Health Surveys (RHS). For Guatemala, we also use the 2011 National Living Conditions Survey. The analysis focuses on current types of partnerships because recent demographic surveys with retrospective union histories, which would allow us to examine the dynamics of the process of union formation, are not available for all countries in the region.

Although the analyses in this chapter are of a descriptive nature and rely on cross-sectional data, they provide compelling evidence of recent increases in cohabitation in most Central American countries and a shift away from marriage among higher educated women, resulting in narrower gaps in the prevalence of consensual unions across countries and across social groups in the region.

2 The Central American Demographic and Social Context

The Central American isthmus, with a total population of nearly 45 million in 2013, over 15 million of whom live in Guatemala, comprises some of the poorest and more rural countries in Latin America. High and persistent levels of poverty and inequality have long characterized the region (Pérez Brignoli 1989; Pebley and Rosero-Bixby 1997). In the last two decades, following a long period of political turmoil, civil unrest and armed conflicts, the Central American economies have begun to recover from the structural and debt crises of the 1980s, and most countries have entered a path of moderate economic growth. Nonetheless, the benefits of economic growth have not yet reached the majority of the population and most Central American countries still lag behind the rest of Latin America with regard to socioeconomic development. As shown in Table 6.1, all countries except Costa Rica and Panama had a GDP per capita well below the average for Latin America in 2013. Concerning social development, the Human Development Index (HDI) – a composite measure of income, life expectancy and education outcomes – also ranks all Central American countries, aside from Costa Rica and Panama, below the average for Latin America (UNDP 2014).

Poverty remains deeply entrenched in the region (CEPAL 2014). About half of the population in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, and over two-thirds of the population in Honduras live below the national poverty line. The incidence of extreme poverty – defined as severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food – is highest in Honduras, where it reaches 46%, well above the average for Latin America (11%). Although some progress in poverty reduction has been made in the past two decades, advances have been very slow, and rural areas continue to have twice the incidence of extreme poverty than their urban counterparts (Hammill 2007). Progress in inequality reduction has been even more limited. In most countries, the Gini coefficient¹ remains close to or above 50, a level that denotes a very unequal distribution of income. Guatemala and Honduras not only record the highest levels of poverty but also those of socio-economic inequality. In both countries, the richest 10% holds about 45% of all income (UNDP 2014).

This deep-rooted social inequality may hamper the expansion of education across all social groups. Over the past two decades, Central America has achieved

¹The Gini coefficient measures the deviation of the distribution of income among individuals or households within a country from a perfectly equal distribution. A value of 0 represents absolute equality and a value of 100 absolute inequality.

Table 6.1 Central America: selected demographic, economic and social indicators

	Total Population (millions) 2013	Rural population (%) 2013	GDP per capita (2011 PPP \$) 2012	Human Development Index (HDI) 2013	Gini Coefficient 2003–2012	Population below the poverty line (%) 2006–2012	Population in severe poverty (%) 2006–2012	Net enrolment rate in primary education 2012	Net enrolment rate in secondary education 2010–2012	Total fertility rate 2010/2015	Adolescent fertility rate 2010–2015
Costa Rica	4.9	34.4	13,091	0.76	50.7	17.8	7.3	97.1	73.9	1.8	60.8
El Salvador	6.4	34.2	7445	0.66	48.3	45.3	13.5	90.6	62.6	2.2	76.0
Guatemala	15.5	49.3	6990	0.63	55.9	54.8	29.1	89.1	36.9	3.8	97.2
Honduras	8.1	46.7	4423	0.62	57.0	69.2	45.6	84.0	35.2	3.0	84.0
Nicaragua	6.1	41.9	4254	0.61	40.5	58.3	29.5	90.8	45.8	2.5	100.8
Panama	3.9	23.5	16,655	0.77	51.9	24.0	11.3	92.5	58.0	2.5	78.5
Latin America	611.3	20.5	13,554	0.74	49.3	28.1	11.3	92.2	73.0	2.2	68.3

Source: Authors' tabulations based on UNDP, Human Development Report 2014; Programa Estado de la Nación, Estadísticas de Centroamérica 2014; CEPAL, Social Panorama of Latin America 2014

important gains in literacy and elementary education. Most countries have already met or are close to meeting the second millennium goal of primary education for all (CEPAL 2010). According to Table 6.1, the net enrollment rate in primary education² in 2012 was over 90 % for boys and girls in all countries, except in Guatemala and Honduras, where it was somewhat lower. However, the progress made in the area of secondary education has been less than optimal and there remains considerable variation across countries. In 2012, net enrolment rates in secondary education ranged from around 36 % in Guatemala and Honduras to 74 % in Costa Rica. The reduction in disparities of access, continuation in and completion of secondary education, both across and within countries, continues to be a challenge ahead in Central America in order to lessen social inequality and social vulnerability. Other important challenges that the region face are gender inequality (CEPAL 2013), and the highly segmented labor market, with large informal economies where employment is more volatile, pays lower wages and provides no social protection (Hammill 2007).

With regard to demographic trends, most countries in the region are well advanced in their demographic transition, although the poorest countries lag behind. Total fertility rates currently range from 1.8 children per woman in Costa Rica to 3 in Honduras and 3.8 in Guatemala. Despite overall fertility reduction, adolescent fertility remains at very high levels, particularly in Nicaragua and Guatemala (Samandari and Speizer 2010). The prevalence of adolescent fertility is disproportionately higher among disadvantaged women – poor, rural or indigenous – perpetuating the vicious cycle of poverty (Remez et al. 2009). Central America also stands out in the Latin American context for having an early pattern of union formation. According to demographic surveys conducted around 2000, the median age at first union for women was slightly over 18 in Nicaragua and around 19 in Honduras and Guatemala (Monteith et al. 2005). Union disruption and migration – to other Central American countries or to the United States – are also frequent in the region, and are two major factors contributing to the relatively large prevalence of female-headed households, which currently represent nearly one-third of all households in most countries of the region (CEPALSTAT; García and de Oliveira 2011).

3 Current Prevalence of Cohabitation: At the High End of Latin America

Central America, together with the Caribbean, has traditionally exhibited the highest levels of cohabitation in Latin America, and it still maintains this leading position, although the gap with other regions has recently narrowed due to the considerable increase in cohabitation that has taken place in many Latin American countries during the past decade (Esteve et al. 2012a).

²The net enrollment rate in primary education accounts for the proportion of children of enrollment age who are actually enrolled in primary education.

Table 6.2 Percent of women in consensual union among women aged 15–49 and 25–29 in conjugal union. Most recent data source

	Women		
	15–49	25–29	Source and date
Panama	64.1	73.9	Census 2010
Honduras	62.3	67.2	DHS 2011–2012
Nicaragua	53.8	55.5	Census 2005
El Salvador	48.9	53.7	Census 2007
Belize	47.0	52.9	Census 2010
Costa Rica	39.6	48.5	Census 2011
Guatemala	37.9	40.7	LCS 2011

Source: Authors' tabulations based on censuses, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and Guatemala Living Conditions Survey (LCS)

Note: Countries are sorted in descending order by prevalence of cohabitation

Table 6.2 presents the proportion of consensual unions among women aged 15–49 currently in a partnership, according to the most recent census or survey data. The figures attest the widespread presence of unmarried unions in the region. The prevalence of cohabitation among women of reproductive age is highest in Panama, where informal unions comprise about two-thirds of all partnerships, and it is also remarkably large in Honduras and Nicaragua, where consensual unions outnumber formal marriages. A somewhat lower prevalence but nonetheless high is found in El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala, where consensual unions currently represent 49, 40 and 38 % of all partnerships respectively.³

Since many consensual unions are short-lived – either because the couple separates or formalizes the union through marriage – current levels of cohabitation measured cross-sectionally in censuses and surveys are typically well below women's life experience of cohabitation. However, the lack of retrospective survey data for all Central American countries precludes us from using a longitudinal approach to study the dynamics of entry and exit from cohabitation and to estimate the proportion of women who have ever been in a consensual union at any point in their lives. It should also be noted that current levels of cohabitation at the time of the census or survey include second and higher order unions, which are less likely to be legally sanctioned than first unions.

Table 6.2 also presents the current prevalence of cohabitation among partnered women in the age group 25–29, in order to capture primarily first unions and contemporary patterns, as well as to maximize comparability with the rest of the

³ Belize is not included in this chapter because of the paucity of statistical data and because, as a former British colony until 1981, it has a different historical and cultural heritage than the rest of the countries in the Isthmus. Also, Belize shares with the Caribbean region a relatively high incidence of visiting-partner relationships, suggesting the existence of more complex union patterns than in the rest of the Central American region. Nonetheless, we include the share of consensual unions among partnered women in Table 6.2 according to the Belize 2010 census to show that current levels of cohabitation are also high.

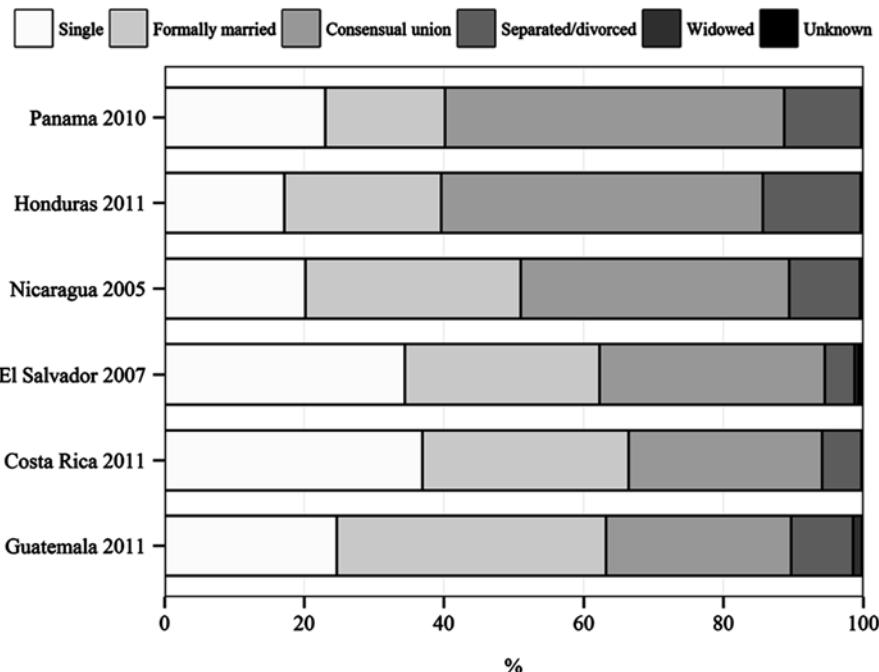


Fig. 6.1 Percent distribution of women aged 25–29 by conjugal status

Note: Countries are sorted in descending order by prevalence of cohabitation.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the data sources displayed in Table 6.2

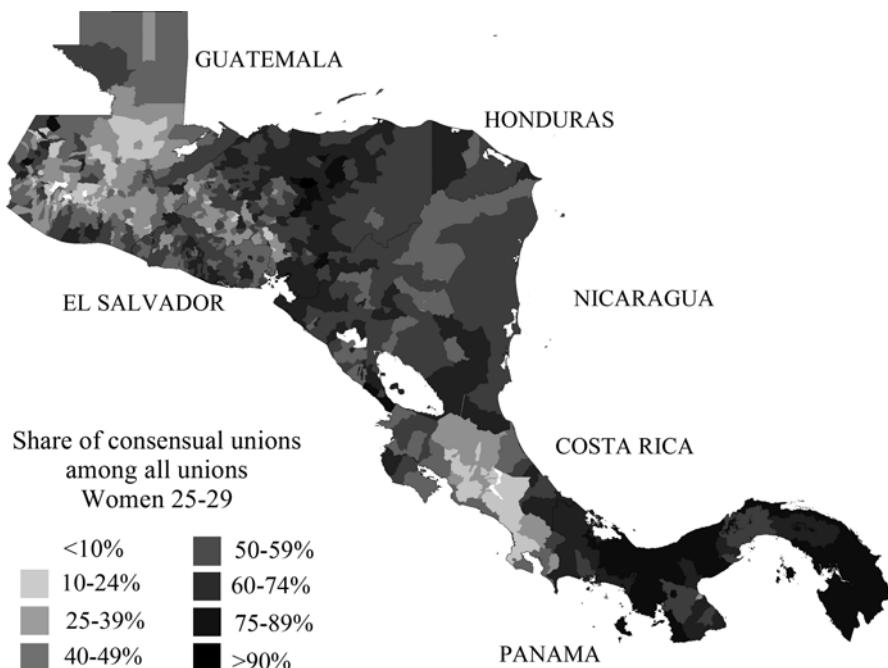
chapters in this book. At that age most women in the region have completed their education and have entered their first partnership. It can be observed that, in this specific age group, the proportion of partnerships built on a consensual basis is above the average for all women of reproductive age, but the ranking of the countries remains unaltered. As before, the highest incidence of cohabitation is observed in Panama (74 %) and the lowest in Guatemala (41 %).

The widespread prevalence of cohabitation in this age group is also confirmed if, instead of focusing only on partnered women, we take into consideration all women regardless of union status (Fig. 6.1). The proportion of all women aged 25–29 who are currently in a consensual union ranges from 26 % in Guatemala to 49 % in Panama. We can also observe a relatively high proportion of women aged 25–29 who declare themselves to be single in countries such as Costa Rica or El Salvador – 37 % and 34 % respectively –, but these proportions are probably overestimated because many women who have experienced a consensual union break-up are likely to report their current conjugal status as single instead of separated (Esteve et al. 2010). There is also a nontrivial proportion of women who declare themselves to be separated or divorced at this relatively young age: in the range of 10–14 % in Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. In countries with higher rates of union disruption, the mismatch between cross-sectional measures of cohabitation and the true extent of lifetime cohabitation will be larger.

4 Spatial Patterns of Cohabitation

Despite generally high levels of cohabitation in the Central American Isthmus, there is a certain degree of heterogeneity not only across countries but also within countries, presumably linked to distinct socioeconomic and cultural factors, as well as ethnic composition. Detailed spatial data at the municipality level based on the 2000 census round are represented in Map 6.1. The share of consensual unions among all partnerships of women aged 25–29 ranges from 5 % in the municipality of Almolonga (department of Quetzaltenango) in Guatemala to 91 % in the municipality of Marale (department of Francisco Morazán) in Honduras. Overall, we can observe strong patterns of spatial clustering within countries, but also across some borders, as in the case of Honduras and Guatemala. In order to understand the spatial patterns of cohabitation, future research would need to examine contextual information on dimensions such as socioeconomic development, social stratification and ethnic composition (López-Gay et al. 2014).

The data represented in the Map 6.1 indicate that the spatial correlation between ethnic composition and cohabitation varies according to ethnic group. In Guatemala, for instance, the areas with lower levels of cohabitation correspond to those with a



Map 6.1 Share of consensual unions among women 25–29 in union by municipalities. 2000 Census round (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International and CELADE (Honduras and Guatemala))

higher proportion of Mayan population. By contrast, in Costa Rica, the areas with higher levels of cohabitation are located along the Atlantic coast, in the Limón province, which has the largest concentration of Afro-Caribbean and indigenous groups.

5 Trends in Cohabitation Over the Past Five Decades

The widespread presence of consensual unions is not a novelty in Central America. This region, together with the Caribbean, has long displayed the highest levels of cohabitation in the Latin American context (Castro-Martín 2001). Although statistical information is limited for the first part of the twentieth century, census data compiled in early United Nations Demographic Yearbooks record exceptionally high levels of cohabitation for some Central American countries in comparison to the rest of Latin America. The share of consensual unions among partnered women of reproductive age was 59 % in Panama according to the 1940 census, and reached 70 % in Guatemala in the 1950 census. In the 1960s census round, for which data are accessible for all countries, consensual unions outnumbered formal marriages in Guatemala and comprised about half of all unions in Honduras, El Salvador and Panama. A somewhat lower level, but still high, was recorded in Nicaragua (40 %). Costa Rica was the only ‘outlier’ as regards the regional pattern of high cohabitation: according to the 1963 census only 14 % of partnered women aged 15–49 were in informal unions.

Table 6.3 and Fig. 6.2 depict time trends in the prevalence of consensual unions based on a fairly comprehensive list of data sources compiled, which includes censuses and surveys (mainly Demographic Health Surveys and Reproductive Health Surveys) from 1960 to date. Although variation in coverage and quality across different data sources and periods might affect comparisons over time and create some artificial fluctuations, the high degree of consistency of different data collected over close dates and the coherence of the tendencies over time point to the reliability of the evolution portrayed.

Since the 1960s, the evolution in the prevalence of cohabitation has not been uniform across all Central American countries. Most countries have followed a trend characterized by relative stability or moderate increases, but there are also some countries that have undergone a large increase or a substantial decline in the prevalence of unmarried unions over this period. In general, those countries where the share of consensual unions was around half of all partnerships among women of reproductive age in the 1960s, such as El Salvador, Honduras or Panama, have maintained those high levels of cohabitation and, with the exception of El Salvador, have experienced a moderate rise in recent years. By contrast, those countries where the share of consensual unions was below half of all partnerships, such as Nicaragua and Costa Rica, have experienced a considerable expansion of cohabitation. The increase was particularly sharp in the case of Costa Rica, where the share of consensual unions among all partnerships of women in reproductive age rose from 14 % in 1963 to 40 % in 2011. The observed increase was particularly intense from the mid-1990s onwards.

Table 6.3 Percentage of consensual unions among total unions, 1960–2011

	Women 15–49					Women 25–29						
	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Costa Rica	14	18	19	21	30	40	15	17	19	20	33	49
El Salvador	48	53	58	54	50	49	50	52	57	55	56	54
Guatemala	59	54	43	37	35	38	66	54	42	38	34	41
Honduras	48	56	52	57	56	62	49	57	51	58	57	67
Nicaragua	40	41	—	55	53	56	40	43	—	56	53	60
Panama	49	56	53	54	58	64	53	59	52	53	63	74

Source: Authors' tabulations based on Census; Demographic and Health Surveys; Reproductive Health Surveys and national surveys
Note: When there are more than one data source in one decade, an average is computed

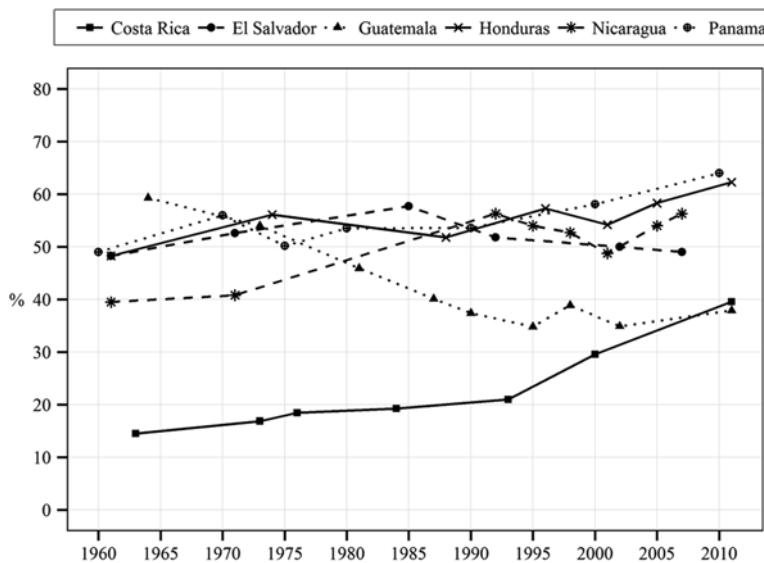


Fig. 6.2 Trends in the percentage of consensual unions among total unions. 1960–2011. Women 15–49

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Census, Demographic and Health Surveys, Reproductive Health Surveys and national surveys

A trend in the opposite direction can be observed in Guatemala, the most populated Central American country. By the mid twentieth century, Guatemala had the highest levels of cohabitation in the region. As mentioned above, consensual unions represented 70% of all unions among women of reproductive age according to the 1950 census. Afterward, a prolonged downward trend can be observed until the mid-1990s: the proportion of consensual unions nearly halved from the 1964 census to the 1994 census. Two subsequent surveys, the 1998 Demographic and Health Survey and the 2002 Reproductive Health Survey, indicate that the decline in cohabitation levels has recently stalled and the more recent 2011 Living Standards Survey even shows a slight increase. The observed tendency towards higher formalization of unions during the second half of the twentieth century constitutes an exception not only in Central America, but also in the Latin American context, and the underlying causes are intriguing. Guatemala, where about half of the population still lives in rural areas and nearly one-third lives in severe poverty, has experienced a very slow pace of social and economic development. The 36 years of civil war, which dominated the second half of the twentieth century, also caused extensive societal disruption and halted the expansion of education and health programs. The high proportion of indigenous population combined with marked social, economic and political inequality has resulted in a two-tier country where ethnic divides are strongly correlated with geographical location and socio-economic stratification (Hallman et al. 2007). However, despite the common belief that unmarried cohabitation is more frequent among the Mayan groups than among *ladinos* – the Spanish-

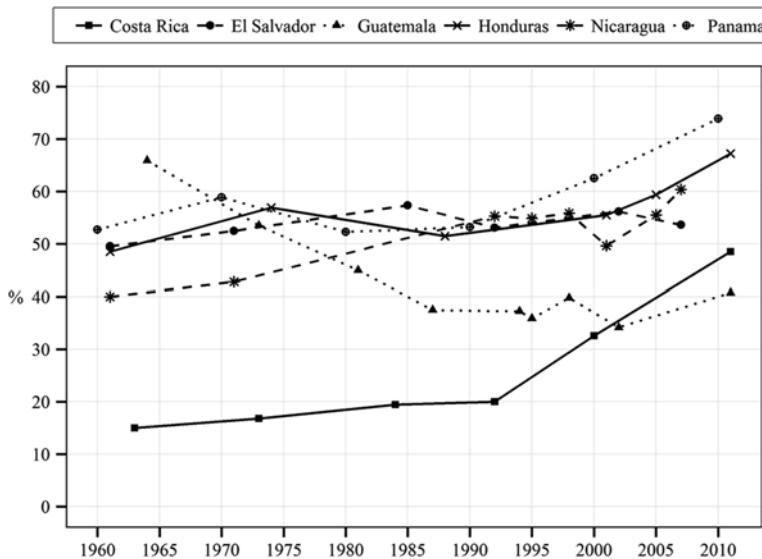


Fig. 6.3 Trends in the percentage of consensual unions among total unions. 1960–2011. Women 25–29

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Census, Demographic and Health Surveys, Reproductive Health Surveys and national surveys

speaking non-indigenous or mestizo population—, several studies have documented the opposite pattern (Castro-Martín 2001; Grace and Sweeney 2014). It is possible that increases – albeit small – in age at union formation may have driven the downward trend in cohabitation during the second half of the twentieth century. Another potential explanation is that, in countries with traditionally very high levels of cohabitation largely linked to poverty and low women's status, the expansion of primary education favors the formalization of partnerships at first, and it is not until the expansion of secondary education to large segments of the population that the tendency to form a consensual union reemerges, although with a different connotation than in the past. In this regard, access and attainment of secondary education is still rather limited in Guatemala and vast inequalities linked to ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and geography remain: only 23 % of the population over age 25 has at least some secondary schooling (UNDP 2014).

Overall, the diverse trends across countries over the past five decades have led to an increasing convergence of the levels of cohabitation in the region. Since countries with a historically high prevalence of consensual unions have experienced small to moderate increases, while countries with a traditionally low prevalence of consensual unions, such as Costa Rica, have experienced very large increases, past divergences in the levels of cohabitation across neighboring countries have lessened. The singular downward trend in cohabitation observed in Guatemala during the second half of the twentieth century seems to have halted and, since it started off

at a very high level, it has also contributed to the increasing convergence in the share of consensual unions in the region, which now hovers in the 40–60 % range.

Figure 6.3 presents analogous time trends in the prevalence of consensual unions for the age group 25–29, in order to capture mainly first unions. The long-term trend patterns (1960–2011) are largely similar to those presented above, but the magnitude of the increase in the more recent period is generally larger when we focus on this young age group. Costa Rica is the country that displays the largest expansion of cohabitation among partnered women aged 25–29 in the past two decades: from 20 % in 1992 to 49 % in 2010. Honduras and Panama have also experienced recent increases in cohabitation after decades of relative stability, and consensual unions currently comprise more than two-thirds of all unions among women aged 25–29. Even Guatemala displays a moderate increase in the share of cohabitation in the most recent years, after several decades of sustained decline. With the exception of El Salvador, all countries have experienced a sizable rise in the prevalence of consensual unions among women aged 25–29 since the turn of the twenty-first century.

In sum, previous studies that examined trends in cohabitation in the Central American region during the second half of the twentieth century described this evolution as characterized by relative stability, with short-term fluctuations around a level that was already high in the 1950s, suggesting that cohabitation in the region might have leveled off (Castro-Martín 2001). Data from the latest surveys and from the 2010 census round indicate that further increases in cohabitation have recently taken place in most countries, and this rise becomes even more evident when we focus on the 25–29 age group, questioning the assumption of stable cohabitation levels in the region.

6 The Age Profile of Cohabitation: A Union Type Not Confined to Youth

The age profile of cohabitation can provide some indications on the underlying dynamics of entry and exit from cohabitation. Figure 6.4 illustrates the prevalence of consensual unions according to women's age for different time periods in six Central American countries. As expected, the highest incidence of cohabitation corresponds to the youngest age groups. In all countries except Guatemala, informal unions currently outnumber formal marriages until age 30. Consensual unions account for the large majority of partnerships among women under age 20, ranging from 84 % to 95 % in all countries but Guatemala. Their incidence is also very high in the 20–24 age group, reaching over 70 % of all partnerships in Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Although cross-sectional data do not allow us to analyze adequately the timing and process of union entry, they suggest that first union formation outside the legal marriage framework is the norm in the region.

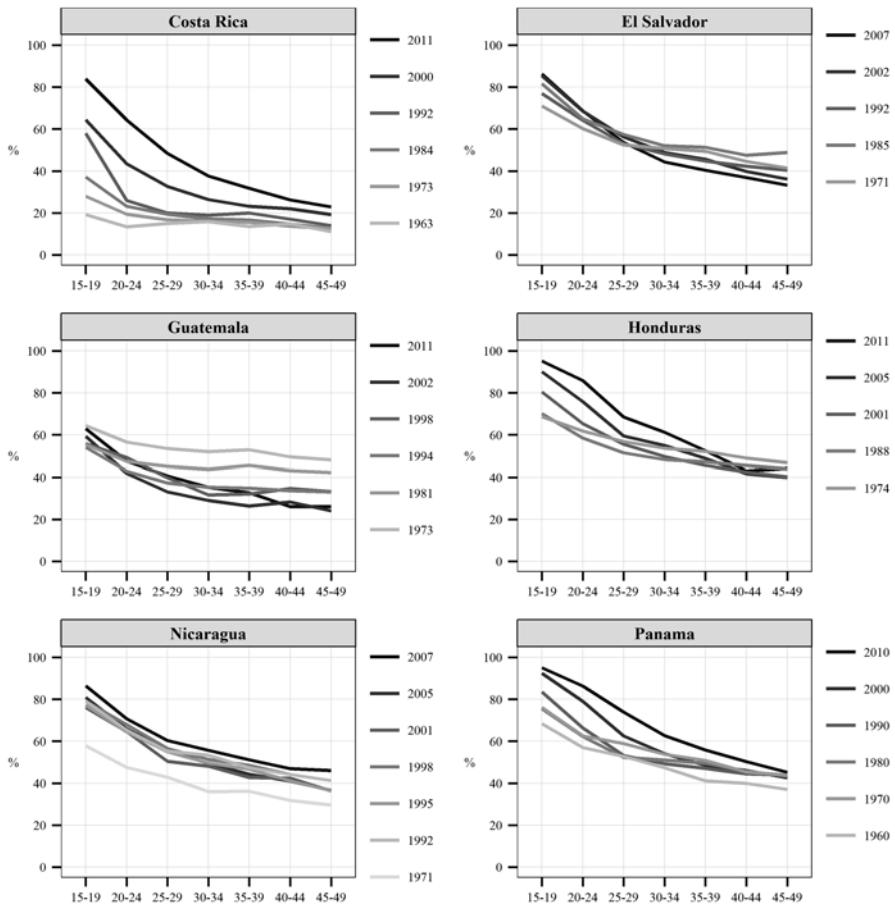


Fig. 6.4 Percent cohabiting among partnered women by age group and year

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Census; Demographic and Health Surveys; Reproductive Health Surveys and national surveys

The ratio of consensual unions to formal marriages diminishes with age, a pattern that could reflect multiple underlying processes: cohort changes in the rate of entry into cohabitation, a higher preference for marriage among women who delay union formation, a tendency to formalize relationships as women grow older, different rates of separation among married and cohabiting women, and different rates of entry into cohabitation among formerly married and formerly cohabiting women at later ages. These processes cannot be adequately disentangled without longitudinal data. However, although consensual unions become less prevalent at advanced ages, the graphs corroborate that they cannot be accurately portrayed as a type of union confined to youth. The proportion of consensual unions surpasses that of formal marriages among women aged 35–39, and represents around 45 % of all unions among women aged 45–49 in Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Some of these

consensual unions might be second or higher order unions, which are generally more likely to be informal than first unions. Nevertheless, the fact that cohabitation remains common at later stages of the life cycle suggests that the process of union formalization is not widespread in Central America and that for many women cohabitation represents a surrogate for marriage rather than merely an early stage in the family formation process.

When we read the cross-sectional data cohort wise, in most countries we can observe a decline in the proportions cohabiting over the life cycle, which could reflect a certain tendency to formalize conjugal unions with duration, but the drop observed is relatively moderate. For instance, in Panama, where the prevalence of cohabitation has been relatively stable for the past five decades, the percentage of partnered women in consensual union at ages 20–24 in 1980 was 62 %, and 20 years later in 2000, this percentage drops to 46 % for this female cohort then aged 40–44. Although we cannot ascertain whether these women continue cohabitating with the same partner or a different one, this moderate descent indicates that, for a large segment of the population, cohabitation is not merely a transient state in the pathway to marriage, but a partnership form with long-term expectations.

When data from different periods are compared, in most countries the level of cohabitation has risen moderately across the whole age range over time, but age patterns remain relatively stable, except in the case of Costa Rica, where differences among the younger and older age groups have widened considerably over time, presumably as a result of the sharp rise in cohabitation experienced by younger cohorts since the 1990s. Guatemala also displays a singular pattern: whereas the age profile was nearly flat in the 1970s and 1980s, indicating little variation in the prevalence of cohabitation across the reproductive age range, in 2011 differentials across age groups are more marked, reflecting the recent increase in cohabitation among young cohorts, after decades of a downward trend.

7 Changes in the Educational Gradient of Cohabitation

In Central America, the ‘dual nuptiality’ regime has traditionally mirrored the large economic and social inequalities prevailing in the region. Formal marriage was the rule for the upper social class, whereas consensual unions functioned as a kind of surrogate marriage for those social groups with low education, few economic resources and poor economic expectations (Arriagada 2002). This socioeconomic divide in family formation patterns had led to symbolically associate cohabitation in the region with poverty, gender inequality, and distrust of legal processes.

Social class differentials in the prevalence of cohabitation were indeed extremely marked in the past. In 1960, for instance, the share of consensual unions among partnered women aged 25–29 in Panama was 11 % for those with at least secondary education compared to 64 % for those who had not completed primary schooling. A widely polarized social structure was manifested in very divergent union formation patterns, suggesting that family formation via cohabitation was not always the result

of personal choice but largely the consequence of limited economic and social opportunities (García and Rojas 2004). This negative educational gradient of cohabitation persists until today in all Central American countries, although, as we will see next, much more attenuated than in the past.

Education is often used as a proxy for socio-economic status, which is related to property ownership and hence with the perceived need to formalize a conjugal union in legal terms. Education also enhances social mobility and prospective opportunities in life chances, influencing women's decisions in the domain of family and work. At the same time, education shapes attitudes, values and aspirations, providing women with greater personal autonomy and bargaining power to negotiate conjugal arrangements on the terms they wish (Castro-Martín and Juárez 1995). Therefore, changes in the educational gradient of cohabitation can provide insights not only into the impact of socioeconomic inequalities on union formation patterns but also into the different social meanings attached to cohabitation across social classes.

Although consensual unions were very rare among the upper social classes until the 1980s, a number of studies have documented a recent increase in cohabitation among the better-educated strata in many Latin American countries (Parrado and Tienda 1997; Laplante and Street 2009; Binstock and Cabella 2011; Quilodrán 2011; Esteve et al. 2012a). The rise in cohabitation among highly educated women is at odds with the view of consensual unions as "poor people's marriages", linked to economic constraints and low women's status. It tends to be interpreted as the outcome of value shifts towards greater personal autonomy in decision-making and greater gender equity in family relations, in line with the patterns observed in most European countries (Lesthaeghe 1995, 2010). Below, we will examine whether this important change in the meaning attached to cohabitation has also emerged in Central America.

Figure 6.5 illustrates changes in the educational gradient of cohabitation over time in the Central American countries. The graphs represent the proportion of partnered women aged 25–29 currently in a consensual union according to completed educational level for different time periods. It should be noted that cross-sectional data do not allow us to determine to what extent observed differentials among educational groups are due to different probabilities of entering a consensual union or different transition rates from cohabitation to marriage. It should also be taken into account that the social definition of high and low education is subject to change over time. For instance, in Costa Rica, according to the 1963 census, 68% of women aged 25–29 had not finished primary schooling and only 9% had completed secondary education or gone beyond. The corresponding percentages for 2011 were 30 and 32%. Therefore, the expansion of education has made the higher educated strata a less select group. Likewise, women with less than primary education are becoming an increasingly smaller fraction of the population.

We can observe different trend patterns by education across countries. In those countries that have experienced a small or moderate increase in cohabitation since the 1970s, such as El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua or Panama, the prevalence of consensual unions among women with uncompleted primary education has

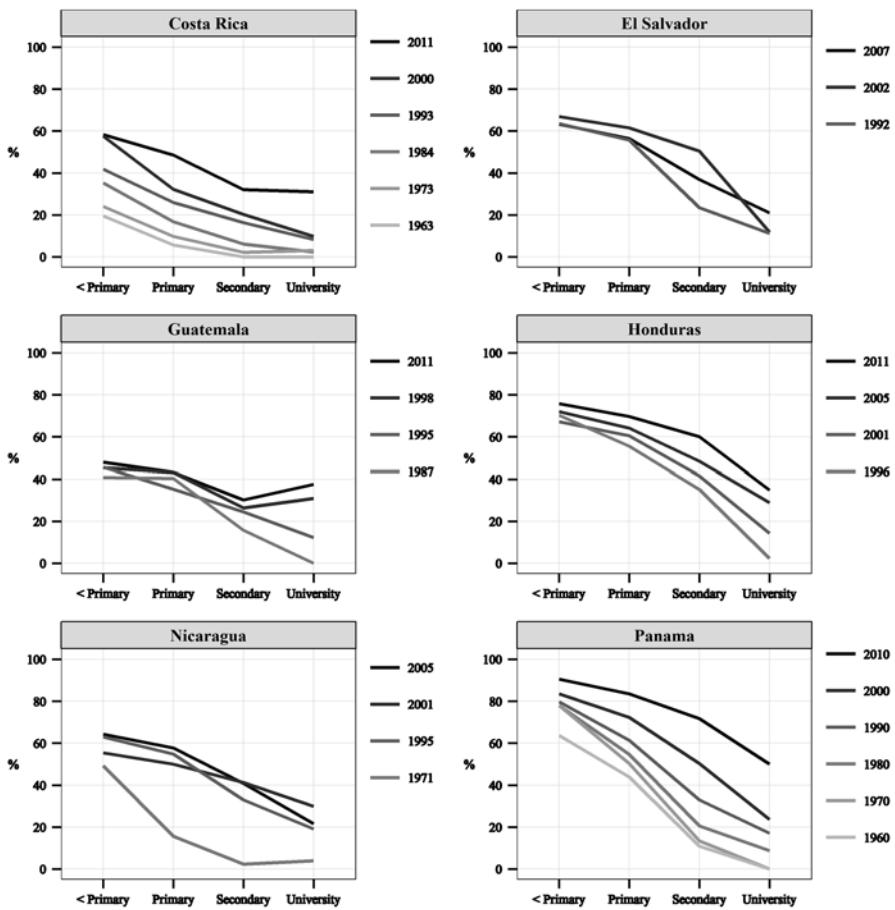


Fig. 6.5 Percent cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by completed educational level and year

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Census; Demographic and Health Surveys; Reproductive Health Surveys and national surveys

remained relatively stable at very high levels, and the increase in cohabitation has been largely concentrated among women with secondary and higher education. In Panama, during the period 1970–2010, the proportion of partnered women aged 25–29 living in a consensual union increased from 13 % to 72 % among women with completed secondary education and from 0 % to 50 % among women with post-secondary education. In Honduras, during the more recent period 1996–2011, the share of consensual unions increased from 2 % to 35 % among partnered women with post-secondary education, whereas the corresponding increase among women with incomplete primary was only minor: from 70 % to 76 %. In Nicaragua, cohabitation was also exceptional among women with at least secondary education in 1971, but no longer in 2005: consensual unions comprised 41 % of all unions among

women with secondary education and 22% among women with post-secondary education. In El Salvador, recent trends point toward stability in the prevalence of consensual unions among the lower educated groups and a moderate increase in the higher educated groups. On the whole, the educational gradient of cohabitation in all these countries remains negative, but since the increase in consensual unions has been relatively larger among higher educated women, for whom cohabitation was very rare in the past, differentials in union patterns by education have weakened over time.

In the case of Costa Rica, the Central American country that has experienced the largest expansion of cohabitation over the past five decades, the rise in consensual unions has encompassed all educational strata. Back in the 1960s, the presence of consensual unions was relatively marginal in the higher educated strata, but also in the lower educated strata, in contrast to its neighboring countries. During the following decades and until the end of the twentieth century, the ratio of informal unions to legal marriages increased across all educational groups, but primarily among women with less than secondary schooling. This pattern changed with the turn of the century. From 2000 to 2011, the share of consensual unions remained unchanged for partnered women with less than primary education, whereas it increased from 20 to 32% among women with completed secondary education and from 10 to 31% among women with post-secondary education. These latter two educational groups currently comprise the majority of the female population aged 25–29.

As already mentioned, Guatemala is the only country in the region that has experienced a downward trend in cohabitation over the second half of the past century, although this trend has been reversed in the past decade. In fact, the recent increase in cohabitation observed from the mid-1990s to 2011 among young women is primarily concentrated in the higher educated groups, resulting in a much weaker educational gradient than in the past.

Despite the existing divergences across countries in the evolution of cohabitation, there is a phenomenon emerging in the more recent period that is shared by all countries: the increase in consensual unions among the higher educated strata. In this regard, Central America follows a similar pattern to the rest of Latin America, in spite of its slower pace of progress in educational expansion and socioeconomic development. In fact, in those countries that had already reached in the 1970s high levels of cohabitation – which was strongly clustered in the poor social groups –, most of the recent increase in cohabitation is concentrated in the higher educated strata.

Further research with longitudinal data is needed to examine the duration patterns of cohabitation and the rate of transition from cohabitation to marriage among well educated women in order to ascertain whether consensual unions are considered a temporary stage in the path to marriage and motherhood or an alternative to marriage, and hence a family arrangement where children are typically born and raised, as is the case among their lower educated counterparts.

A recent study has examined fertility trends and patterns for consensually and legally married women across different educational strata in 13 Latin American countries, including Costa Rica and Panama (Laplante et al. 2015). One of the rel-

event findings of this study was that similarities in reproductive behavior between marital and nonmarital unions are currently not confined to socially disadvantaged groups, but apply as well to the better-off. Three decades ago, entering cohabitation and having children within cohabitation was atypical among highly educated women. However, nowadays not only are university-educated women more likely to enter a consensual union, but their childbearing patterns do not differ much from those of their married counterparts. In the case of Costa Rica, fertility was much lower among highly educated women in consensual unions than in marriages in 1984, but it was only slightly lower in 2000. In the case of Panama, there were no significant differences in fertility among highly educated women in informal and formal unions already in 1980, and this pattern remains unaltered in 2010. Although we lack empirical evidence for the rest of the Central American countries, the patterns documented for Costa Rica and Panama seem to suggest that highly educated women are not entering consensual unions merely as a trial marriage, where child-bearing is postponed until the relationship is formalized.

8 The Socio-demographic Profile of Cohabiting and Married Young Women

The socio-demographic profile of young cohabiting and married women can give us some hints as to the background factors associated with opting for a consensual union rather than a formal marriage in the process of family formation. A prior study which compared the socio-demographic characteristics of cohabiting and married women of reproductive age in Central America, based on data from the Demographic and Health Surveys for El Salvador (1985), Guatemala (1995) and Nicaragua (1998), documented that women in consensual unions were on average younger, less educated, had experienced the key transitions to adulthood (sexual initiation, first union and first birth) at an earlier age, and were more likely to have experienced a prior union disruption, a profile that suggests an earlier initiation and higher instability of consensual unions relative to marriages (Castro-Martín 2001). A more recent study adopting a life course approach and based on the Demographic and Health Surveys and Reproductive Health Surveys conducted during the 2000s in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua also documented that an early onset of sexual activity increased the likelihood of entering cohabitation in Honduras and Nicaragua, and found strong indications that consensual unions were less stable than formal marriages (Grace and Sweeney 2014).

Since not all Central American countries have recent survey data, we will compare the socio-demographic characteristics of young cohabiting and married women based on the latest census data available. Although cross-sectional census data do not allow us to determine which background factors influence the patterns of entry into and exit from consensual and marital unions, the socio-demographic profile of currently partnered women can still shed light on the distinct features of each type of partnership.

Table 6.4 Socio-demographic profile of women aged 25–29 in marital and consensual unions based on the most recent census

	Costa Rica (2011)	El Salvador (2007)	Guatemala (2002)	Honduras (2001)	Nicaragua (2005)	Panama (2010)	Consensual union
	Marriage	Consensual union	Marriage	Consensual union	Marriage	Consensual union	Marriage
<i>Female education</i>							
Less than primary	4.9	13.5	30.0	44.5	27.0	38.1	10.9
Primary completed	61.8	68.5	35.4	39.6	44.9	46.0	52.5
Secondary completed	11.6	9.6	28.9	14.5	22.4	14.4	29.5
University completed	19.0	8.5	5.7	1.3	5.7	1.5	7.1
<i>Partner's education</i>							
Less than primary	—	—	26.0	40.1	—	—	—
Primary completed	—	—	37.8	41.0	—	—	—
Secondary completed	—	—	28.4	17.1	—	—	—
University completed	—	—	7.8	1.8	—	—	—
<i>Rural-urban residence</i>							
Rural	27.2	33.4	32.1	40.1	50.1	55.9	47.3
Urban	72.8	66.6	67.9	59.9	49.9	44.1	52.7
<i>Currently in the labour force</i>							
Yes	37.8	31.2	38.0	33.1	21.0	19.2	23.4
No	62.2	68.8	62.0	66.9	79.0	80.8	76.6

(continued)

Table 6.4 (continued)

	Costa Rica (2011)		El Salvador (2007)		Guatemala (2002)		Honduras (2001)		Nicaragua (2005)		Panama (2010)	
	Marriage Consensual union											
<i>Member of an indigenous group</i>												
Yes	1.5	3.7	0.1	0.3	41.5	38.0	7.5	5.7	5.1	6.1	5.1	16.2
No	98.5	96.3	99.9	99.7	58.5	62.0	92.5	94.3	94.9	93.9	94.9	83.8
<i>Number of children</i>												
0	20.3	12.6	11.4	7.4	7.5	7.9	0.2	0.2	8.7	5.1	22.6	12.7
1	36.8	33.5	30.8	24.3	15.4	13.0	24.7	17.5	26.7	20.4	34.4	26.6
2+	42.9	54.0	57.7	68.3	77.1	79.0	75.2	82.3	64.6	74.6	43.0	60.7
<i>Co-residence with (in-law) parent(s)</i>												
Yes	8.6	10.4	16.4	15.5	15.2	15.0	12.3	12.7	20.0	20.5	15.3	18.8
No	91.4	89.6	83.6	84.5	84.8	85.0	87.7	87.3	80.0	79.5	84.7	81.2
% among all unions	51.5	48.5	46.3	53.7	62.9	37.1	44.5	55.5	44.5	55.5	26.1	73.9

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, CELADE (REDATAM) and Centro Centroamericano de Población

Table 6.4 presents the socio-demographic composition of cohabiting and married women aged 25–29 in all Central American countries in recent times. As discussed before, although the educational gradient of cohabitation has changed significantly over time, it remains negative for all countries. The indicators in this table confirm that young women in consensual unions not only have lower education but also have less educated partners than their married counterparts. Nonetheless, consensual unions are no longer negligible among the middle and upper educated groups, as was the case in the past. The proportion of cohabiting young women who have completed secondary or tertiary education ranges from 16% in Guatemala and El Salvador to 47% in Panama. Women in consensual unions are also more likely to reside in rural areas than married women, although differentials are relatively small except for Panama. With regard to labor force participation, young women in consensual unions are slightly less likely to be employed than their married counterparts. Differentials are only relatively large in the case of Panama, where 36% of young cohabiting women are currently working compared to 54% of young married women.

The relative prevalence of consensual unions in the indigenous population is not uniform across societies. Cohabiting women are more likely to belong to an indigenous group than married women in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and particularly in Panama, but the opposite pattern is observed in Guatemala and Honduras. In the case of Guatemala, which holds the largest indigenous population in the Isthmus, previous studies have documented a lower prevalence of unmarried cohabitation among Maya groups than the rest of the population (Castro-Martín 2001; Grace and Sweeney 2014). Although we do not know exactly since when this pattern holds, in the 1987 Guatemalan Demographic and Health Survey the proportion of consensual unions among partnered women aged 25–29 was already lower among indigenous women (32%) than among the rest of women (41%).

With regard to women's reproductive patterns by union type, it is well-established that childbearing is not circumscribed to formal marriages in Latin America (Castro-Martín et al. 2011). The above-mentioned study by Laplante et al. (2015) documented that fertility levels have not differed significantly between consensual and married unions during the past four decades in 13 Latin American countries, including Costa Rica and Panama, and came to the conclusion that the legal status of conjugal unions has no relevance for Latin American women's childbearing behavior. Studies focused on the Central America region have also shown that consensual unions constitute a usual and socially acceptable context to have and raise children (Castro-Martín 2001). According to the indicators in Table 6.4, the large majority of women aged 25–29 in both consensual and marital unions have borne at least one child. The incidence of childlessness is in fact lower among cohabiting women than married women in most countries, although differences are relatively small except in Costa Rica and Panama, where the proportion of cohabiting women aged 25–29 who has not made the transition to motherhood is about half that of married women. Observed differentials are probably partly linked to the lower use of contraception by low educated women and to the fact that cohabitation is a common strategy to cope with unplanned adolescent pregnancy among poor social strata (Rodríguez

Vignoli 2004). Overall, these indicators confirm that childbearing remains commonplace within consensual partnerships in Central America and that it does not seem to trigger the legalization of the union. With regard to differentials in the number of children born, the descriptive results point towards higher fertility levels in consensual unions than marriages, but these differentials are largely explained by educational composition, which is closely linked to contraceptive use (Laplante et al. 2015).

The intergenerational support provided by the extended family system continues to play a key role in the Latin American context and it has been argued to explain the resilience of families during difficult economic periods and to alleviate the consequences of precarious situations (Fussell and Palloni 2004). Co-residence with parents, in-laws, other relatives or unrelated persons in extended and composite households is relatively common among young cohabiting and married women in Latin America (Esteve et al. 2012b), and it represents a frequent strategy to cope with housing shortage, to broaden the sources of income or to facilitate the access to employment for mothers of young children, particularly in lower social strata (Ullmann et al. 2014). Table 6.4 presents the proportion of cohabiting and married women aged 25–29 that co-reside with their own parent/s or parent/s-in-law. This proportion is probably underestimated because it is calculated based on women's type of family relationship with the household head, and in multigenerational households, it might be the case that none of the co-resident parents or parents-in-law are classified as household heads. The proportion of women living in the parental household is also notably lower than when co-residence with other kin and non-relatives is also taken into account, as in the study by Esteve et al. (2012b). Despite these limitations, the overall patterns observed indicate higher levels of intergenerational co-residence in the poorer countries of the region, such as Nicaragua, than in better-off countries, such as Costa Rica. However, although we expected to find a higher incidence of co-residence with own parents or in-law parents among young cohabiting women than married women, given that the former typically face more precarious economic conditions, the data in Table 6.4 show relatively small differentials in living arrangements by partnership type.

9 Conclusions

Central America has a long history of family formation via consensual union instead of formal marriage. The historically high levels of cohabitation have persisted throughout the twentieth century up to the present day. In the 1960 census round, the earliest census round for which we had data access for all countries, consensual unions surpassed formal marriages among women of reproductive age in Guatemala and Panama, and comprised about 40–50 % of all unions in the rest of the countries except Costa Rica. At that time, Central American countries were predominantly rural societies, with very high levels of illiteracy and extreme poverty. Consensual unions were the norm among the lower social strata and functioned as a kind of

surrogate marriage and an acceptable family arrangement for bearing and raising children. Pre-existing traditions and economic constraints rather than individual preferences probably lay behind the prevailing patterns of partnership formation at that moment. Since then, the Central American Isthmus has gone through important socioeconomic transformations, including economic growth, increasing urbanization and the expansion of mass education, although the persistence of high levels of poverty and pronounced social inequality indicates that the benefits of socioeconomic development have not yet reached large segments of the population. Against this background, changes in the patterns of union formation have been more modest than in other Latin American regions, but not nonexistent.

The evolution in the prevalence of consensual unions over the past five decades described in this chapter shows a different pace of change across countries and an increasing convergence in cohabitation levels in the Isthmus. In general, countries which already had high levels of cohabitation in the 1960s have experienced small to moderate increases whereas countries with traditionally low levels of cohabitation, such as Costa Rica, have undergone large increases. Guatemala is the only country where a downward trend can be observed during the second half of the twentieth century, although recent survey data from 2011 suggest that the decline in cohabitation has halted and is possibly reversing.

By the end of the last century, the downward trend in Guatemala and the small or moderate increase in cohabitation in those countries where consensual unions had already surpassed formal marriages appeared to signal an upper ceiling to the expansion of cohabitation in Central America. However, more recent surveys and data from the 2010 census round indicate that the rise in cohabitation has not come to an end in the region. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, consensual unions have gained prominence in all countries but El Salvador, particularly if we focus on the 25–29 age group.

This recent increase has been largely concentrated among women with secondary and higher education, for whom cohabitation was negligible in the past. The historically negative educational gradient of cohabitation remains largely in place, but differentials in union patterns by educational level have narrowed considerably in the past two decades. Unmarried cohabitation remains the dominant type of conjugal union among the lesser educated women, but in recent times cohabitation has become an increasingly frequent partnership option among higher educated women as well. The recent spread of cohabitation among the middle and upper classes has probably been facilitated by the wide social recognition conferred on consensual unions in the lower strata, but it challenges the traditional strong association between cohabitation, poverty and social disadvantage. Consensual unions presumably have different social meanings, underlying motivations and implications for the family life cycle across social classes (Covre-Sussai et al. 2014). In order to highlight these divergences, a growing number of studies distinguish between “traditional” consensual unions, linked to pre-existing customs, economic constraints and women’s limited choices, and “modern” consensual unions, driven by increasing women’s empowerment among the better educated strata as well as changes in values regarding life styles and family behaviors (Quilodrán 2011; Esteve et al. 2012a;

Covre-Sussai et al. 2015), along the lines of the Second Demographic Transition (Lesthaeghe 2010). Yet, economic uncertainty during early adulthood cannot be discarded as an additional factor driving the recent expansion of cohabitation among the middle classes at least in the first stages of family formation (García and Rojas 2004; Arriagada 2007). In order to compare the older and newer patterns of cohabitation, further research with longitudinal data is needed in order to ascertain whether the emerging form of cohabitation among the middle and upper classes is usually a transitional stage in the family formation process that precedes union formalization or a more long-term alternative to marriage, as it has traditionally been for the lower class. Recent studies highlighting the increasing convergence of childbearing patterns between cohabiting and married women in the upper social strata seem to suggest that highly educated women do not currently view cohabitation merely as a prelude to marriage (Laplante et al. 2015).

Research on gender dynamics in consensual unions across social strata could also shed some light on the different meanings attached to cohabitation by different social groups (Covre-Sussai et al. 2013). Gender relations are expected to be more egalitarian in the “modern” type of cohabitation than in the “traditional” type. However, a former study that examined conjugal violence by union type in four Latin American countries, including Nicaragua, found that women in consensual unions were more likely to be controlled by their partners and to have experienced conjugal violence than married women, and this finding applied to both low educated and highly educated women (Castro-Martín et al. 2008). Hence, more in-depth research is needed on gender attitudes and intra-couple balance of power by union type, as well as on the role of economic constraints versus preferences for interpersonal commitment over institutional regulation as motivations for entering a consensual union in order to disentangle the different rationales, social meanings, and repercussions of cohabitation across social strata. Furthermore, preferences and motivations to form a consensual union might differ not only by social class but also between men and women.

In sum, besides the long-standing coexistence of marriages and consensual unions in the region, the contemporary coexistence of traditional and modern types of cohabitation adds another layer of complexity to nuptiality patterns in Central America. This chapter has illustrated that, despite historically high levels of cohabitation in the region, the expansion of cohabitation has not come to an end so far, largely because of the recent increase in consensual unions among the higher educated strata. The trend analysis has revealed not only a tendency towards convergence in cohabitation levels across all countries in the Isthmus, but also towards diminishing gaps in partnership types across social strata. In most countries, cohabitation seems to have almost reached an upper ceiling among the lesser educated, but there is still ample room for further increase in the middle and upper education groups. The prospective expansion of secondary and tertiary education to larger segments of the population, continuing changes in attitudes and values regarding family and life styles, and advances in the legal and financial protection of children after the disruption of a consensual union are likely to condition further increases in cohabitation throughout the Central American region in the coming decades.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Arriagada, I. (2002). Changes and inequality in Latin American families. *CEPAL Review*, 77, 135–153.
- Arriagada, I. (2007). Familias latinoamericanas: Cambiantes, diversas, desiguales. *Papeles de Población*, 53, 9–22.
- Binstock, G., & Cabella, W. (2011). La nupcialidad en el Cono Sur: evolución reciente en la formación de uniones en Argentina, Chile y Uruguay. In G. Binstock & J. Melo (Eds.), *Nupcialidad y familia en la América Latina actual* (pp. 35–60). Rio de Janeiro: ALAP.
- Bozon, M., Gayet, C., & Barrientos, J. (2009). A life-course approach to patterns and trends in modern Latin American sexual behavior. *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 51(Supplement 1), S4–S12. doi:10.1097/QAI.0b013e3181a2652.
- Castro-Martín, T. (2001). Matrimonios sin papeles en Centroamérica: persistencia de un sistema dual de nupcialidad. In L. Rosero-Bixby (Ed.), *Población del Istmo 2000: Familia, Migración, Violencia y Medio Ambiente* (pp. 41–65). San José, Costa Rica: Centro Centroamericano de Población. http://ccp.ucr.ac.cr/libros/poblaist/pdf/poblacion_istmo.pdf
- Castro-Martín, T. (2002). Consensual unions in Latin America: Persistence of a dual nuptiality system. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 33(1), 35–55.
- Castro-Martín, T., & Juárez, F. (1995). The impact of women's education on fertility in Latin America: Searching for explanations. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 21(2), 52–57+80.
- Castro-Martín, T., Martín-García, T., & Puga, D. (2008). Tipo de unión y violencia de género: Una comparación de matrimonios y uniones consensuales. In L. Rodríguez Wong (Ed.), *Población y Salud Sexual y Reproductiva en América Latina* (pp. 331–348). Río de Janeiro: ALAP. http://www.alapop.org/docs/publicaciones/investigaciones/SSR_parteIV-1.pdf
- Castro-Martín, T., Cortina, C., Martín-García, T., & Pardo, I. (2011). Maternidad sin matrimonio en América Latina: Un análisis comparativo a partir de datos censales. *Notas de Población*, 93, 37–76.
- CEPAL (Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe). (2010). *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals with Equality in Latin America and The Caribbean: Progress and Challenges*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL, United Nations publication, 395 pages. LC/G.2460.
- CEPAL (Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe). (2013). *Gender equality observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean annual report 2012*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL, United Nations publication, 106 pages. LC/G.2561.
- CEPAL (Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe). (2014). *Social panorama of Latin America 2014*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL, United Nations publication, 286 pages. ISBN: 978-9211218824.
- CEPALSTAT. Databases and statistical publications. CEPAL (Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe). <http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat>

- Covre-Sussai, M., Meuleman, B., Botterman, S., & Matthijs, K. (2013). Measuring gender equality in family decision making in Latin America: A key towards understanding changing family configurations. *Genus*, 69(3), 47–73.
- Covre-Sussai, M., Van Bavel, J., Matthijs, K., & Swicegood, G. (2014). *Disentangling the different types of cohabitation in Latin America: Gender symmetry and contextual influences*. Available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2376739>
- Covre-Sussai, M., Meuleman, B., Botterman, S., & Matthijs, K. (2015). Traditional and modern cohabitation in Latin America: A comparative typology. *Demographic Research*, 32(32), 873–914.
- De Vos, S. (2000). Nuptiality in Latin America. In S. L. Browning & R. R. Miller (Eds.), *Till death do us part: A multicultural anthology on marriage* (pp. 219–243). Stamford, CT: JAI Press.
- Esteve, A., García-Román, J., & McCaa, R. (2010). La enumeración de la soltería femenina en los censos de población: sesgo y propuesta de corrección. *Papeles de Población*, 16(66), 9–40.
- Esteve, A., Lesthaeghe, R., & López-Gay, A. (2012a). The Latin American cohabitation boom, 1970–2007. *Population and Development Review*, 38(1), 55–81.
- Esteve, A., García-Román, J., & Lesthaeghe, R. (2012b). The family context of cohabitation and single motherhood in Latin America. *Population and Development Review*, 38(4), 707–727.
- Fussell, E., & Palloni, A. (2004). Persistent marriage regimes in changing times. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66(5), 1201–1213.
- García, B., & de Oliveira, O. (2011). Family changes and public policies in Latin America. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37, 593–611.
- García, B., & Rojas, O. (2004). Las uniones conyugales en América Latina: Transformaciones en un marco de desigualdad social y de género. *Notas de Población*, 78, 65–96.
- Grace, K. (2010). Contraceptive use and intent in Guatemala. *Demographic Research*, 23(12), 335–364.
- Grace, K., & Sweeney, S. (2014). Pathways to marriage and cohabitation in Central America. *Demographic Research*, 30(6), 187–226.
- Hallman, K., Peracca, S., Catino, J., & Ruiz, M. J. (2007). Indigenous girls in Guatemala: Poverty and location. In M. Lewis & M. Lockheed (Eds.), *Exclusion, gender and schooling: Case studies from the developing world* (pp. 145–175). Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. ISBN 1-933286-22-8.
- Hammill, M. (2007). *Growth, poverty and inequality in Central America*. Mexico D. F.: United Nations, CEPAL Serie Estudios y Perspectivas No. 88, 74 pages. ISBN 9789211216592. <http://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/5025>
- Kuzneof, E., & Oppenheimer, R. (1985). The family and society in nineteenth century Latin America: An historiographical introduction. *Journal of Family History*, 10(3), 215–234.
- Laplante, B., & Street, M. C. (2009). Los tipos de unión consensual en Argentina entre 1995 y 2003: una aproximación biográfica. *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*, 24(2), 351–387.
- Laplante, B., Castro-Martín, T., Cortina, C., & Martín-García, T. (2015). Childbearing within marriage and consensual union in Latin America, 1980–2010. *Population and Development Review*, 41(1), 85–108.
- Lavrin, A. (Ed.). (1989). *Sexuality and marriage in Colonial Latin America*, Latin American studies series. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 349 pages. ISBN 080327940X, 9780803279407.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (1995). The second demographic transition in western countries. In K. Oppenheimer-Mason & A.-M. Jensen (Eds.), *Gender and family change in industrialized countries* (pp. 17–62). Oxford: Clarendon.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (2010). The unfolding story of the second demographic transition. *Population and Development Review*, 36(2), 211–252.
- Lion, K., Prata, N., & Stewart, C. (2009). Adolescent childbearing in Nicaragua: A quantitative assessment of associated factors. *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 35(2), 91–96.
- López-Gay, A., Turu, A., Esteve, A., Kennedy, S., López-Colás, J., Laplante, B., Permanyer, I., & Lesthaeghe, R. (2014). Towards a geography of unmarried cohabitation in the Americas. *Demographic Research*, 30(59): 1621–1638.

- McCaa, R. (1994). Marriage ways in Mexico and Spain, 1500–1900. *Continuity and Change*, 9(1), 11–43.
- Milanich, N. (2002). Historical perspectives on illegitimacy and illegitimate in Latin America. In T. Hecht (Ed.), *Minor omissions: Children in Latin American history and society* (pp. 72–101). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. ISBN 0-299-18030-1, 0-299-18034-4.
- Minnesota Population Center. (2014). *Integrated public use microdata series, International: Version 6.3* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota
- Monteith, R. S., Stupp, P. W., & McCracken, S. D. (2005). *Reproductive, maternal and child health in Central America: Trends and challenges facing women and children*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, University of Texas. 126 pages.
- Parrado, E., & Tienda, M. (1997). Women's roles and family formation in Venezuela: New forms of consensual unions? *Social Biology*, 44(1–2), 1–24.
- Pebley, A., & Rosero-Bixby, L. (Eds.). (1997). *Demographic diversity and change in the Central American Isthmus*. RAND Corporation, Conference Proceedings (Rand Corporation), Vol. 135. ISBN 0833025511, 9780833025517. http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF135.html
- Pérez Brignoli, H. (1989). *A brief history of Central America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 240 pages. ISBN 0520909763, 9780520909762.
- Programa Estado de la Nación. (2014). *Estadísticas de Centroamérica*. San José: Programa Estado de la Nación. <http://www.estadonacion.or.cr/otras-publicaciones-pen/productos-intermedios-pen/estadisticas-de-centroamerica-2014>
- Quilodrán, J. (1999). L'union libre en Amérique Latine: aspects récents d'un phénomène séculaire. *Cahiers Québécois de Démographie*, 28(1–2), 53–80.
- Quilodrán, J. (2011). Un modelo de nupcialidad post-transicional en América Latina?. In G. Binstock & J. Melo (Coord), *Nupcialidad y Familia en la América Latina Actual*. Rio de Janeiro: ALAP, Serie Investigaciones No. 11, pp. 11–33.
- Remez, L., Singh, S., & Prada, E. (2009). Trends in adolescent unions and childbearing in four Central American countries. *Población y Salud en Mesoamérica*, 7(1): article 5. <http://ccp.ucr.ac.cr/revista/>
- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2004). Cohabitación en América Latina: ¿modernidad, exclusión o diversidad? *Papeles de Población*, 10(40), 97–145.
- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2011). La situación conyugal en los censos latinoamericanos de 2010: relevancia y perspectivas. In M. Ruiz Salguero & J. Rodríguez Vignoli (Eds.), *Familia y Nupcialidad en los Censos Latinoamericanos Recientes: Una Realidad que Desborda los Datos* (Vol. 99, pp. 47–70). Santiago de Chile: Naciones Unidas, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, CEPAL, Serie Población y Desarrollo. ISBN 9210545400, 9789210545402. <http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/9/42709/lcl3293e-P.pdf>
- Samandari, G., & Speizer, I. S. (2010). Adolescent sexual behavior and reproductive outcomes in Central America: Trends over the past two decades. *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 36(1), 26–35.
- Socolow, S. M. (2000). *The women of colonial Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 1316194000, 9781316194003.
- Stupp, P. W., Daniels, D., & Ruiz, A. (2007). *Reproductive, maternal and child health in Central America: Health Equity Trends*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, University of Texas, 126 pages.
- Ullmann, H., Maldonado, C., & Rico, M. N. (2014). Families in Latin America: Changes, poverty and access to social protection. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, 40(2), 123–152.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2014). *Human development report 2014. Sustaining human progress: Reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience*. New York: United Nations Development Programme. ISBN 978-92-1-126368-8.

Chapter 7

The Boom of Cohabitation in Colombia and in the Andean Region: Social and Spatial Patterns

**Albert Esteve, A. Carolina Saavedra, Julián López-Colás,
Antonio López-Gay, and Ron J. Lesthaeghe**

1 Introduction

Colombia exemplifies the boom of unmarried cohabitation more than any other country in the Americas. Between 1973 and 2005, the percentage of 25–29-year-old cohabiting women increased from 20 % to 66 %. Within that period, Colombia advanced from being among the Latin American countries with low to medium levels of cohabitation (similar to those of Costa Rica and Mexico) to achieving the first positions in the mid-2000s, with percentages similar to those of the Dominican Republic in 2000 (68 %) or Panama in 2000 (62 %). Pending the results of the next Colombian census, scheduled for 2016, the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) conducted in 2010 confirms that cohabitation has continued to expand well beyond 2005 levels. According to DHS data, cohabitation in 2010 was approximately 73.6 %.

Despite the increase in cohabitation, the social profile and spatial distribution of cohabitating women (and men) has remained unchanged over the last four decades. Cohabitation is highest among women with low educational levels, with an ethnic background and living in the Caribbean, Pacific, Orinoquia and Amazonian regions. By contrast, cohabitation is lowest among women with high educational levels, no ethnic background and residing in the Andean region. These patterns have

A. Esteve (✉) • A.C. Saavedra • J. López-Colás • A. López-Gay
Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain
e-mail: aesteve@ced.uab.cat; csaavedra@ced.uab.cat;
jlopez@ced.uab.cat; alopez@ced.uab.cat

R.J. Lesthaeghe
Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium,
Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: RLesthaeghe@yahoo.com

persisted to the present but at much higher levels than in the early 1970s (Saavedra et al. 2013).

Colombia shares with its neighboring countries the social and regional patterning of cohabitation. These countries compose the Andean region and include Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and, to a lesser extent, Venezuela. In all of these countries, cohabitation has increased in recent decades. In Ecuador, cohabitation increased from 27 % in 1974 to 47 % in 2010. In Peru, cohabitation levels increased from 29 % to 70 % between 1981 and 2007. And in Venezuela, cohabitation increased from 31 % to 52 % between 1971 and 2001. In Bolivia in 2001, cohabitation among 25–29-year-old partnered women was at 35 %.

Because of the similarities among the Andean countries, we decided to study these countries together in this chapter although we focus particularly on Colombia. First, we document in detail the increase in cohabitation in Colombia and investigate the historical, social and legal contexts in which the expansion of Colombian cohabitation occurred. Based on 2005 Colombian microdata, we implement a multilevel model to examine the individual and contextual level determinants of cohabitation. In the final section of the chapter, we reproduce identical models for Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru.

2 The Increase in Cohabitation and the Social and Ethnic Profile of Cohabiting Women in Colombia, 1973–2005

2.1 A Brief Note on the History of Cohabitation

The history of cohabitation in Colombia is not particularly different from the history of cohabitation in Latin America. Cohabitation and marriage have coexisted in Latin America since colonial times. The European colonization of America implied interaction between culturally and ethnically heterogeneous groups that yielded a complex system of family structures (Castro-Martín 2001). Within that context, cohabitation emerged as a strategy employed to escape the strong social control of the church, the state and families (Rodríguez Vignoli 2004; Quilodrán 2001). In pre-Hispanic America, the indigenous populations had marriage systems quite different from the systems present in Europe. Cohabitation was a widespread practice among certain indigenous groups (Castro-Martín 2001; Quilodrán 1999; Vera Estrada and Robichaux 2008). The *siryanakuy* in the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes or the *amaño* in Colombia were two clear examples of informal unions. In both cases, cohabitation functioned as a marriage trial to test whether the partners could live together (Gutiérrez de Pineda 1968; Pribilsky 2007; Rojas 2009).

After the conquest of the Americas and during the peak of colonialism, the Catholic Church established and spread its catechism and the sacramental rites,

particularly the marriage rite (Ghirardi and Irigoyen López 2009; Quilodrán 1999). The Church condemned all behaviors regarded as heresy such as polygamy, polyandry, bigamy and adultery (Dueñas 1978; Rodríguez 2004). The activities of the missionaries saw results in the long run and changed the lives of indigenous populations. Marriage was also further strengthened by institutions such as the *encomienda*. The influence of the Church in addition to the role of the *encomendero* fostered marriage among the indigenous populations as a strategy to ensure a supply of workers, maintain stability within the community and guarantee the payment of tributes.

Despite the Church-fostered ethnic endogamous marriages, the ethnic and racial diversity of colonial Latin America and the interaction among indigenous, black and Hispanic populations resulted in an intense *mestizaje*. Given that the influence of the Church on the black and *mestizo* population was rather weak and less intense than among the indigenous populations, cohabitation emerged (Rodríguez 2004; Vera Estrada and Robichaux 2008). Consequently, the vast majority of unions among black and *mestizo* populations were formed without the marriage bond (Dueñas 1997; Rodríguez 2004). The *mestizaje* thrived through the *amacebamiento* and *concubinato*. The former was a stable union, most common among single populations. The latter had a less stable nature than the *amacebamiento* and, in most cases, assumed the form of adultery. Compared with marriage, the *amacebamiento* and the *concubinato* were weaker and less stable types of unions (Rodríguez 2004). Marriage reigned at the very top of the social hierarchy although the ability of the state and the Church to impose marriage was quite unequal. Marriage was rare among the *mestizo* and slave populations and in those isolated areas in which the lack of administration hindered its implementation.

At the end of the colonial period, which was at the beginning of the nineteenth century, cohabitation, in the form of *amacebamiento* and *concubinato*, remained strongly rooted among the lowest social classes, and its geographic distribution within Colombia clearly followed the ethnic and religious contours of the country.

During the twentieth century, the evolution of cohabitation occurred in two different stages. During the first half of the century, the formation of both formal and informal unions generally intensified. Marriage reached its highest levels near mid-century and among women born between 1910 and 1914 (Zamudio and Rubiano 1991). For the next generations, marriage began to decline. In the 1960s, cohabitation began a strong expansion that persists today. Such expansion occurred in a context of strong structural and cultural change. Females' education and participation in the labor market began to expand as fertility declined. Access to contraception increased, and attitudes toward marriage changed (Zamudio and Rubiano 1991). Cohabitation increased at the expenses of marriage. Before the law of divorce in 1976, cohabitation was the only option for second unions among married populations. In addition to the increase in cohabitation, separation and divorce had also increased, as did the number of female-headed households (Pachón 2007).

2.2 *The Legal Institutionalization of Civil Marriage and Cohabitation*

The expansion of cohabitation and the deinstitutionalization of marriage have paralleled changes in legislation. Before the institutionalization of civil marriage, the Church had the exclusive power to marry. The institutionalization of civil marriage in Latin America dates back to the end of the nineteenth century (Quilodrán 2003). In Colombia, the Law of Marriage of 1853 exclusively recognized civil marriage and waived the legal status of canonical marriage. However, 3 years later, canonical marriage regained its legality, but only until 1862. These back-and-forth changes in marriage legislation illustrate the tensions between the liberal and conservative movements during the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1887, Law 57/1887 legalized Catholic marriage (Guzman Álvarez 2006; Aristizábal 2007). No further legal changes concerning marriage occurred until 1974. In that year, Law 20/1974 finalized the adoption of civil marriage and recognized the civil nature of Catholic marriages without requiring apostasy. Two years later, the Law of Divorce for civil marriages was adopted.

The primary legal developments regarding cohabitation occurred between 1968 and 2005, when several laws were adopted to legally increase the security of cohabiting unions and the offspring of those unions. Cecilia's Law in 1968 was the first to regulate cohabitation. This law established paternal legal recognition of children born out of wedlock, offered legal protection to those children and established paternal responsibility for their children. Law 29/1987 equalized the inheritance rights of "legitimate" and "illegitimate" children (Echeverry de Ferrufino 1984). Law 54/1990 established the legal definition of a consensual union as a "union between a man and a woman that, without being married, constitute a unique and permanent community of life." In addition, this law regulated the property governance between permanent partners: a property society is established when the *de facto* marital union exceeds a period of no less than 2 years of co-residence between a man and a woman with or without the legal impediment of marrying. In 1991, the Colombian Constitution established the family as the center of society and simultaneously recognized the legal validity of consensual unions. The Constitution equalized the rights of and obligations toward children regardless of the union status of their parents. Finally, Law 979/2005, which partially modified Law 54/1990, established more efficient procedures to verify the existence of *de facto* marital unions (Castro-Martín et al. 2011).

2.3 *The Growth of Cohabitation and Its Age Profile*

Figure 7.1 documents the increase in cohabitation in Colombia since 1973. This figure shows the percentage of partnered women in cohabitation according to age in the last four Colombian population censuses. The respective census microdata are

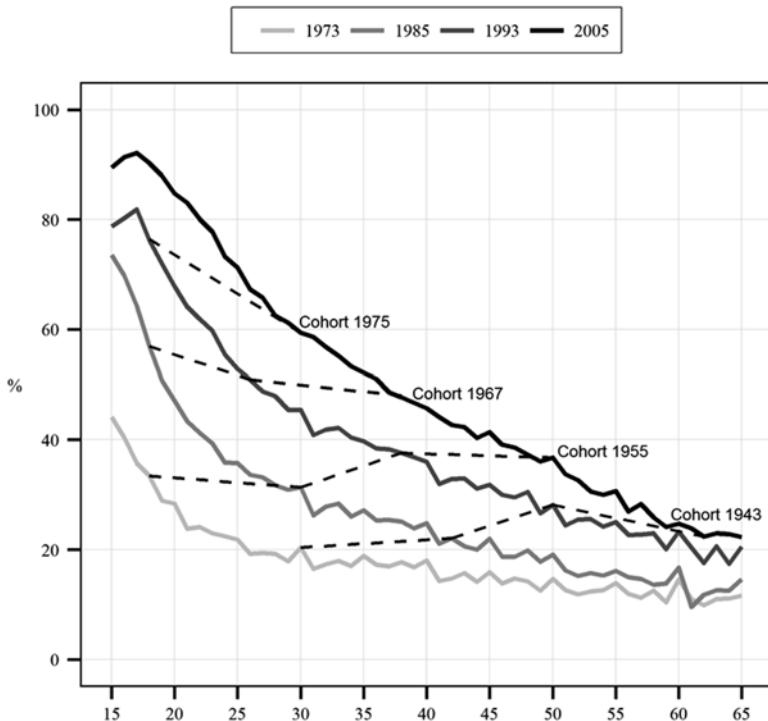


Fig. 7.1 Percentage of partnered Colombian women currently cohabiting by age and selected birth cohorts in the censuses from 1973 to 2005 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

available through the IPUMS-International project (Minnesota Population Center 2014). The percentage of cohabitating women among women in union decreases with age. Cohabitation is much more frequent among young women than among older women although cohabitation rates increased across all ages between 1973 and 2005. The percentage of cohabitating 20-year-old partnered women increased from 22 % to 82 % between 1973 and 2005, and for 30-year-old women, the rate increased from 20 % to 60 %. For older women, the increase in cohabitation during this period is less noticeable.

The age profile of cohabitation may be the result of either an age effect or a cohort effect. An age effect would indicate that as people age, the transition from cohabitation to marriage becomes more likely. A cohort effect indicates that with every new generation entering the marriage market, cohabitation is more widespread and not necessarily disappear as women age. Without appropriate longitudinal data, it is difficult to provide a definitive answer regarding which effect is stronger. However, as an indirect measurement, we can follow cohorts over time using different censuses. The dotted lines in Fig. 7.1 represent several cohorts of women by year of birth. The results indicate an extremely stable/flat age pattern but at different levels depending on the year of birth. Cohabitation is much higher

Table 7.1 Distribution of women aged 25–29 by years of schooling and union characteristics. Colombia, 1973–2005

Years of schooling	1973	1985	1993	2005	1973	1985	1993	2005	1973	1985	1993	2005
	% Population				% in union				% partnered women in cohabitation			
	0	17.0	6.8	4.7	5.5	67.4	70.9	67.1	61.3	40.5	61.1	72.3
1–5	57.8	41.7	34.7	33.0	69.9	72.2	71.6	72.9	18.8	39.8	58.3	74.8
6–9	16.5	23.2	26.3	17.5	63.1	67.9	69.0	69.2	6.4	29.6	49.9	75.3
10–11	5.9	17.9	19.7	24.6	58.5	58.8	60.2	58.5	2.3	17.1	35.3	62.7
12 years +	2.9	10.4	14.6	19.4	50.2	43.8	42.3	41.6	1.4	7.0	21.7	43.9
Total	100	100	100	100	67.1	65.7	64.2	59.0	19.4	33.0	48.8	65.6

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

among younger cohorts than among older ones. Cohabitation among partnered women born in 1955 has remained between 31 and 33 % between age 18 and age 30. Of women born in 1967, 56 % were cohabiting at age 26 and 48 % at age 38. These results provide clear support for the cohort effect: once the majority of women of a given cohort have entered into a union (at approximately age 30), cohabitation remains stable at older ages. This suggests that the age pattern that we observe in the cross-sectional view is merely the result of the importance of cohabitation when these women were young and entering into unions.

2.4 The Educational Gradient in Cohabitation

Table 7.1 presents the distribution of women 25–29 years old by years of schooling. This table also shows the percentage of women in unions among all women and the percentage of cohabitating women among all women in unions. Overall, the figures in Table 7.1 show that the expansion of cohabitation has occurred in a context of educational expansion and of relative stability of the age at union formation. The percentage of women with 12 years of schooling or more increased from 2.9 % to 19.4 % between 1973 and 2005. The percentage of women without schooling correspondingly decreased from 17 % to 5.5 %.

The expansion of education has had a modest effect on a woman's age at union formation because the percentage of women in unions only declined from 67 % to 59 % during this period. Whereas it may appear that there is a slight postponement in union formation, it is important to note that the percentage of women in union does not include all women who are ever in union. Some women at the time of the census were not in a union because of separation, divorce or, to a much lesser extent, widowhood. If we consider all women ever in union, the percentage of women ever in union is quite stable over time (Rodríguez Vignoli 2011; Esteve et al. 2013). Current trends over time in women in union show different patterns according to

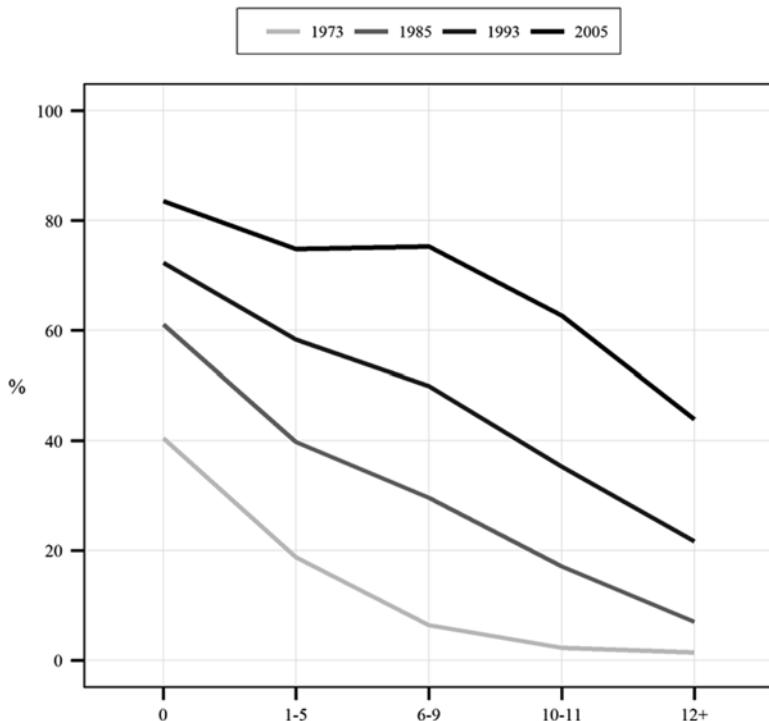


Fig. 7.2 Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by years of schooling. Colombia, 1973–2005 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

years of schooling. The percentage of women in union declines among women with no schooling and among women with 12 or more years of education at both ends of the educational hierarchy, although not necessarily for identical reasons. However, the percentage of women in union increases among women with 1–9 years of education and remains stable among women with 10–11 years of education.

Regarding cohabitation, the observed trends unambiguously indicate higher levels of cohabitation over time across all educational groups (see also Fig. 7.2). There is a clear educational gradient by which women with fewer years of schooling are more prone to cohabitation than women with more years of schooling. The educational gradient persists across all census years but at much higher levels. Slightly over 40% of partnered women without schooling were cohabiting in 1973, compared with 83.5% in 2005. In relative numbers, the jump in cohabitation among the highly educated, 12 years or more, is even more spectacular: from 1.4% in 1973 to 43.9% in 2005. Throughout Latin America, the expansion of cohabitation has occurred in a context of dramatic educational expansion. Given the negative relation between education and cohabitation observed at the micro level, less cohabitation should be expected with the expansion of education; however, the opposite occurred (Esteve et al. 2012).

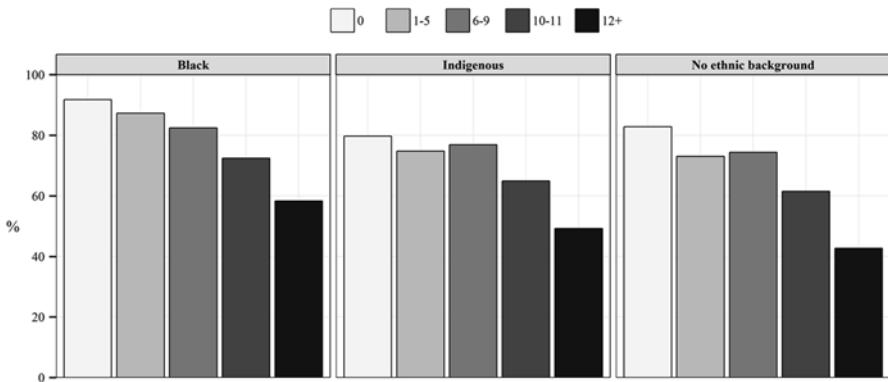


Fig. 7.3 Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by ethnic background. Colombia, 2005 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

2.5 The Ethnic Dimension of Cohabitation

Finally, we examine cohabitation by ethnic background and years of schooling. Figure 7.3 shows the percentage of cohabiting women among 25–29-year-old partnered women by ethnic background and years of schooling. The first Colombian census to register ethnicity for the entire population was the 1993 census (DANE 2007b). The 1993 census form included a question regarding ethnic background based on self-reporting. Persons had to respond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the question regarding whether they belonged to any ethnic or indigenous group or black community. If the answer was positive, the name of the ethnic, indigenous or black community had to be reported. This approach led to a significant underestimation of some groups, particularly black communities. To address such bias, the 2005 census modified the original question and asked the following: ‘According to your culture, group or physical characteristics, the respondent is known as *Indigenous; Rom; Raizal of the archipileago of San Andres and Providence; Palenquero of San Basilio; Black, mulatto, African-Colombian or of African ancestry; None of the above*’ (DANE 2007a).

The 2005 ethnic question increased the statistical visibility of the black population compared with the 1993 census. Because of the lack of comparability between the 1993 and 2005 censuses, we focus exclusively on the latter. The educational gradient in cohabitation is present in the three ethnic groups: more years of schooling, less cohabitation (Fig. 7.3). At all educational levels, black women show the highest levels of cohabitation, followed by indigenous women and then women with no ethnic background, who compose the majority of the population.

3 The Geography of Cohabitation in Colombia

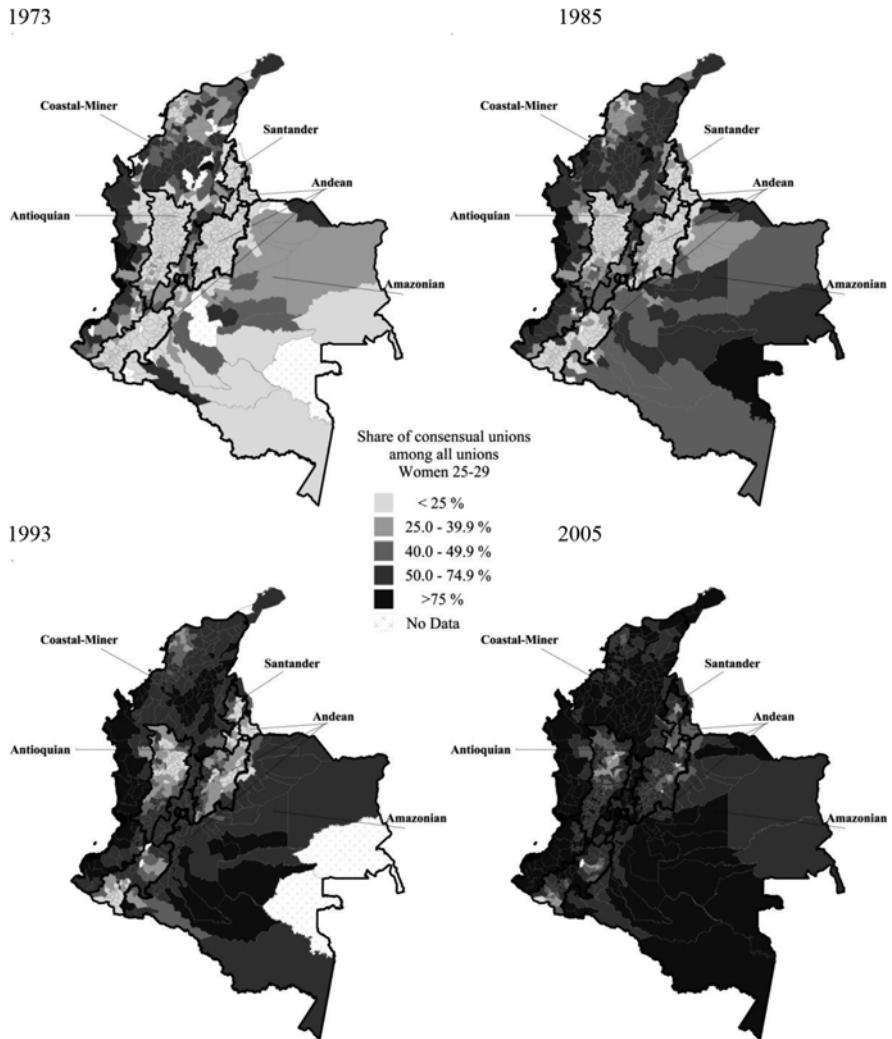
3.1 The Physical and Social Geography of Colombia Based on the Work of Gutierrez Pineda

The geography of cohabitation in Colombia is extremely diverse and full of contrasts. As we have shown in Chap. 1, cohabitation in Colombia 2005 may range from values as low as 8.7 % to values as high as 95.4 % across different municipalities. Despite the recent increase in cohabitation, its spatial distribution has remained unchanged. To understand the geography of cohabitation in Colombia, some background knowledge of its physical and cultural geography is necessary. Colombia is divided into five natural regions: Caribbean, Pacific, Andean, Orinoquia and Amazonia; each region has its own physical character regarding the environment, the climate, and the orography. The boundaries of these regions are strongly determined by the presence of the Andes Mountains and its three primary ranges, *Cordillera Oriental*, *Occidental* and *Central*. The presence of these ranges has caused some regions of Colombia to remain relatively isolated. Colombia's heterogeneous geography in addition to its cultural and ethnic diversity results in an extremely diverse country, which has contributed to its family heterogeneity.

From a social and cultural point of view, the best manner in which to approach the social and family geography of Colombia is reading the work of Colombian anthropologist Virginia Gutierrez Pineda. In the 1950s, Gutierrez Pineda conducted one of the most complete studies on family systems in Latin America. The work was published in 1968 under the title *Familia y Cultura en Colombia* (Family and Culture in Colombia). It was an exhaustive study of Colombian families in the three most populated regions of the country: the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Andean regions. Within these regions, Pineda identified four cultural complexes: the *Andean*, the *Santander*, the *Antioquian*, and the *Coastal-Mining* complex. In Map 7.1, we show the geographic boundaries of the four complexes.

The *Andean* complex primarily comprised descendants of indigenous populations with a small white population. The *Andean* complex was characterized by strong patriarchal norms and great religious assimilation. Therefore, marriage was strongly present in this area. In the *Santander* complex, the Hispanic presence was greater than in the *Andean* complex, and the presence of indigenous populations was much lower. The *Santander* was also an extremely patriarchal complex. The low presence of black populations and the presence of religious and economic institutions such as the *encomienda* fostered the religious assimilation of the indigenous groups. However, marriage was not particularly important to the Hispanic population. Among Hispanic families, patriarchal norms and the political tensions with the Church moved these families away from the influence of the Church. Marriages were arranged by the families and were therefore strongly endogamic in terms of social status.

The *Antioquian* complex was the most heavily influenced by the Church, which structured the families under its norms. Religious marriage was the dominant form



Map 7.1 Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29 by Colombian municipalities 1973–1985 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

of union. Historically, the *Antioquian* complex had the lowest levels of cohabitation and the highest marriage rates. Cohabitation within this complex occurred in the urban areas or in areas adjoining the other complexes. Finally, the *Coastal-mining* complex was a tri-ethnic complex with a predominantly black population. Poverty was higher than in any other complex, and the Church had a rather limited influence. Hence, cohabitation was the dominant form of union. The geographic isolation of these areas combined with the lack of influence from the Church explains the diminished presence of marriage in the *Coastal-mining* complex.

3.2 *The Geography of Cohabitation at Municipal Level, 1973–2005*

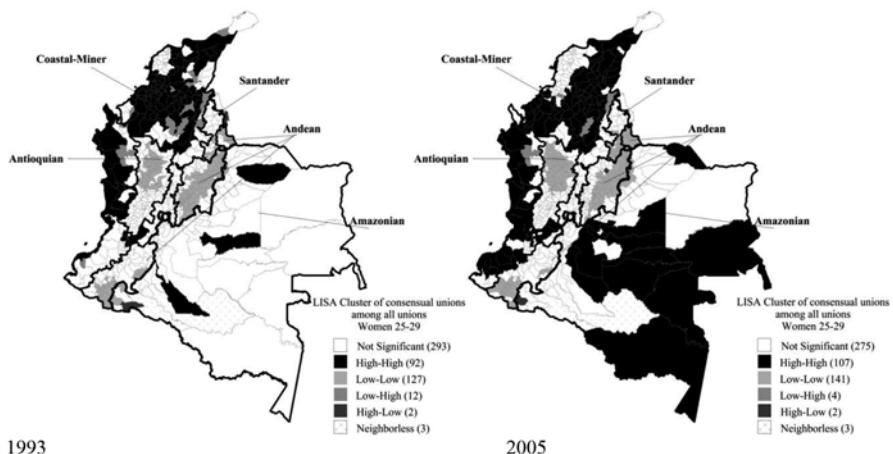
Map 7.1 shows the geography of cohabitation in 1973, 1985, 1993 and 2005. It represents the percentage of cohabitation among 25–29-year-old partnered women in 532 spatial units that correspond to Colombian municipalities or groups of municipalities. The geographic boundaries of Gutierrez Pineda's four cultural complexes are highlighted on the maps. The geography of cohabitation in Colombia is quite diverse. Consistent with Pineda, the *Coastal-mining* complex shows the highest proportion of cohabiting women. This complex includes the majority of the municipalities along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts. The Caribbean coast is characterized by *mestizo* populations and the important presence of Afro-Colombian populations, the majority of whom reside in the Department of Bolívar. The Pacific coast includes the largest concentrations of Afro-Colombian populations in sparsely populated areas, such as in the Department of Chocó. Cohabitation in the *Coastal-mining* complex grew to 72.8 % in 2005, from 45 % in 1973.

The *Andean*, *Santander* and *Antioquian* complexes had traditionally lower levels of cohabitation than the *Coastal-mining* complex. The *Antioquian* and *Santander* complexes have similar levels of cohabitation, which increased from 20 % in 1985 to 54 % in 2005. Cohabitation in the *Andean* complex grew from 24 % in 1985 to 63 % in 2005. These three complexes belong to the Andean and Central regions of Colombia that have historically been the most economically developed regions and contain the largest cities in the country (e.g., Bogotá, Cali and Medellín).

The *Orinoquia* and the *Amazonian* regions were not included in Gutierrez Pineda's work but can be studied with the census. These two regions are characterized by a large presence of indigenous populations in a low-density setting. For example, in the eastern Departments of Vaupes and Guainía, the percentage of indigenous populations exceeds 60 % of the entire population. The level of cohabitation in these areas is similar to levels in the *Coastal-mining* complex. Cohabitation in these regions increased from 43 % to 71 % between 1985 and 2005.

Despite the surge in cohabitation, its spatial distribution has scarcely changed. The spatial distribution of high and low values of cohabitation has remained relatively constant over time. One manner of showing this stability is to observe this trend in the Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA). LISA indicators belong to the family of spatial autocorrelation measurements (Anselin 1995) and indicate the extent to which a particular observation correlates with its neighboring units. Positive autocorrelation indicate spatial clustering of values similar to the unit of reference. Negative spatial autocorrelation indicates spatial clustering of values dissimilar to the reference unit. Positive autocorrelation can be further deconstructed into two groups based on whether the similitude is to high or low values of cohabitation. The LISA indicators are based on standardized levels of cohabitation within each year; thus, the increase in cohabitation is neutralized. When this occurs, we can clearly observe a nearly identical spatial patterning over the 4 years (see Map 7.2), indicating, once again, the stability of the geographic pattern of cohabitation over time.

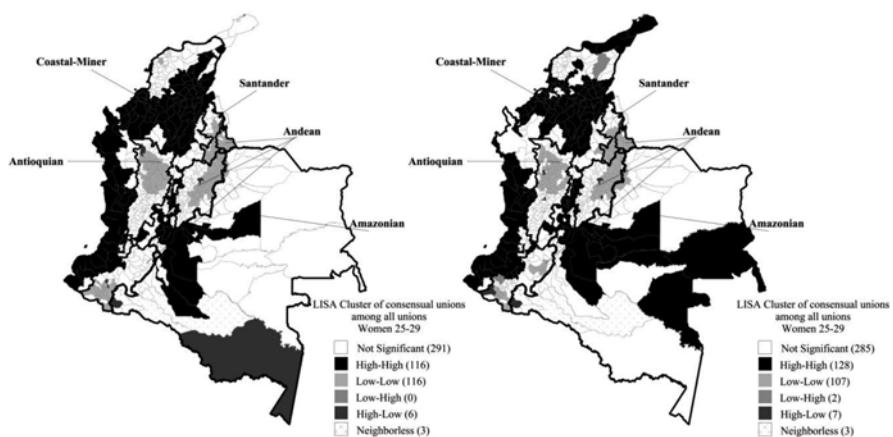
1973



1985



1993



2005

Map 7.2 LISA cluster maps of unmarried cohabitation in Colombia 1973–2005 (*Source:* Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

4 A Multilevel Model of Cohabitation in Colombia, 2005

The previous sections depicted the social profile and spatial patterning of cohabitation in Colombia. We have also shown that despite the increase in cohabitation, its social and spatial patterning has remained constant over time. We now turn to the 2005 census microdata to implement a multivariate multilevel logistic regression model of cohabitation based on individual and contextual characteristics at the municipal level. The multilevel logistic regression model serves three primary purposes. First, this model allows us to examine the individual profile of cohabiting women in a multivariate framework in which the role of education and ethnic

background and other individual variables can be simultaneously considered. Second, the multilevel logistic regression model assesses the importance of contextual variables by measuring its influence on the probability of cohabitation, which allows us to answer the following question: Is the ethnic composition of the municipality more important for cohabitation than the ethnic background of the individual? Third, multilevel models offer the possibility of exploring the degree to which the variance at the municipal level is explained by the individual- and contextual-level variables.

Our model includes three individual and four contextual-level variables. As individual variables, we include education, ethnic background and migratory status (see Table 7.2). At the contextual level, we considered four variables on the municipal scale and one on the department scale. On the municipal scale, we included a measure regarding the level of education, the ethnic background and the migrant composition of the population. The fourth variable at the municipal level is altitude, which in Chap. 1 has been strongly and negatively correlated to cohabitation. The influence of religion was important to consider; however, religious data were not available at the municipal level. Therefore, we used department-level data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) data source to include the proportion of Catholics in each department. This obliged us to develop a three-level model with individuals nested into municipalities and municipalities nested into departments.

Table 7.3 shows the results of four different specifications of the multilevel logistic regression model of cohabitation. The interpretation of the results is analogous to a logistic regression model in which the estimated parameters are shown in odds ratios. Odds ratios express the relative risk of experiencing an event given a particular category (e.g., more education) compared with the reference category (e.g., less education). Values above 1 indicate that the relative risk of that particular category is higher than the reference category. Values below 1 indicate the contrary. In a multilevel model, the constant is deconstructed in various sections: the fixed intercept plus a random effect for each unit at each level. In our case, we have designed a three-level model in which level one is the individual, level two is the municipality of residence and level three, the department of residence. As output, multilevel models yield the variance of the random effects at each level. A higher variance indicates greater heterogeneity across units. If the variance were zero, this would mean that there were no differences across municipalities or departments. An interesting feature of multilevel models is that we can observe how much of the variance is modified after including (controlling for) individual and contextual variables. If the heterogeneity across level two (municipalities) or level three (departments) units is explained by the socioeconomic characteristics of their populations, the variance across units should decrease after considering such characteristics in the model.

We start our modeling strategy with an empty model in which there is only one term: the constant. This model predicts the probability of a 25–29-year-old partnered woman being in an unmarried cohabitation as opposed to a married union. However, this probability is stratified by municipality and department of residence.

Table 7.2 Characteristics of the individual and contextual variables included in the multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation, women aged 25–29, Colombia, 2005

Category	%	% partnered women in cohabitation	Standard Deviation	N
Dependent variables				
Women in union				
Married	32.6	—	—	30,987
Cohabiting	67.4	—	—	64,140
Individual variables				
Educational attainment				
Less than primary	24.6	78.1	—	23,221
Primary completed	38.8	74.3	—	36,701
Secondary completed	30.9	59.0	—	29,251
University completed	5.7	34.7	—	5,399
Ethnic background				
No ethnic background	82.0	63.7	—	77,981
Afro-descendant	10.9	78.2	—	10,348
Indigenous	6.4	73.8	—	6,074
Other	0.7	68.3	—	724
Migration status				
Sedentary (resides in municipality of birth)	61.0	64.6	—	57,803
Migrant (resides in different municipality as birth)	39.0	66.9	—	36,961
Contextual variables				
Municipality level				
Percentage of women with secondary education or more	14.3	—	0.08	—
Percentage of women with no ethnic background	93.5	—	0.26	—
Percentage of women residing in different municipality from birth municipality	30.0	—	0.16	—
Altitude				
Up to 500 m	31.7	73.0	—	—
500–1000 m	9.1	68.8	—	—
1000–1500 m	16.3	65.2	—	—
1500–2000 m	10.2	56.8	—	—
2000–3000 m	15.2	56.6	—	—
Above 3000 m	17.5	63.9	—	—
Department level				
Percentage of Catholics	83.3	—	0.09	—

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and the 2009 Americas Barometer

Table 7.3 Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation by individual and contextual characteristics, women aged 25–29, Colombia, 2005

Category		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Individual variables					
Education					
Less than primary (ref.)		1	1	1	
Primary completed		0.82	0.82	0.82**	
Secondary completed		0.39	0.39	0.39**	
University completed		0.13	0.13	0.13**	
Ethnic background					
No ethnic background (ref.)		1	1	1	
Afro-descendant		1.41	1.41	1.41**	
Indigenous		0.86	0.86	0.86**	
Other		0.95*	0.95*	0.95	
Migration status					
Sedentary (ref.)		1	1	1	
Migrant		1.16	1.16	1.00	
Contextual variables					
Percentage of women with secondary education or more (municipality)				0.99**	0.99*
Percentage of women with no ethnic background (municipality)				0.99	1.00**
Percentage of migrants (municipality)				1.01	1.01
Level of Catholicism in the department					
At or above the median				0.61**	0.79*
Below the median				1	1
Altitude					
Up to 500 m					1.00
500–1000 m					0.73
1000–1500 m					0.57
1500–2000 m					0.44
2000–3000 m					0.36
Above 3000 m					0.25
Variance					
<i>Municipalities</i>	0.38	0.36	0.32	0.26	
<i>Departments</i>	0.26	0.27	0.15	0.11	
<i>Intercept</i>	0.96**	1.37	2.03*	1.97*	

Note: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except*: $p < 0.05$ and**: $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and the 2009 Americas Barometer

Thus, the constant is partitioned into a fixed effect plus a random effect at higher levels. The variance at both levels indicates that there are statistically significant differences across municipalities (0.38) and across departments (0.26). Model 2 adds three individual variables to the baseline model: education, ethnic background and migratory status. All of these variables have a statistically significant effect

on cohabitation. Highly educated women are less likely to cohabit than poorly educated women. Afro-Colombian (black) women are more likely to cohabit than women with no ethnic background. Indigenous women are less likely to cohabit than women with no ethnic background. Women who are not living in the municipality of their birth are more likely to cohabit than women who do reside in the municipality of their birth. Although all individual variables have a significant effect on cohabitation, the variance at the municipal and contextual levels has scarcely changed from the baseline model. This shows that regional differences in cohabitation persist after controlling for the individual characteristics of the regions' inhabitants. In other words, women with identical socioeconomic characteristics in two different regions may have quite different levels of cohabitation.

Model 3 adds four contextual variables to the model, three variables at the municipal level and one variable – religion – at the department level. Again, we identify statistically significant effects for all contextual variables. Consistent with the individual effects, as the percentage of women with secondary education in the municipality increases, the level of cohabitation decreases. Similarly, cohabitation is lowest in those areas with the fewest women with an ethnic background. The presence of migrants in the municipality is positively related to cohabitation. Finally, there is less cohabitation in those departments in which there are the greatest proportions of Catholics (above the median level of the country).

Adding the contextual characteristics at the municipal and department levels leads to two basic conclusions. First, there is an important structural-level dimension of cohabitation that suggests that regardless of individual characteristics, women living in areas with low levels of education, a high ethnic presence, a high migrant component, and low levels of religiosity are more likely to cohabit than women living in areas with the opposite characteristics. Second, contextual characteristics do not account for the heterogeneity across municipalities; however, the variance across departments has shrunk from 0.27 in Model 2 to 0.15 in Model 3, primarily because of the religiosity factor.

Finally, Model 4 adds the altitude at the municipal level. Given that there are several units with more than one municipality, we used a population-weighted average of the altitude corresponding to each municipality in that group. As shown in Chap. 1, we identified a striking relation between altitude and cohabitation in all Andean countries except in Peru. Colombia and Ecuador were the clearest examples of that correlation. In a multilevel framework, we can now test whether the altitude gradient remains statistically significant after controlling for socio-economic individual and contextual level characteristics. The answer to this question is yes. Cohabitation decreases with altitude even in a model in which the educational, ethnic, migrant and religious dimensions are considered. Not only does altitude have a statistically significant effect on cohabitation but also decreases the variance left at the municipal and department levels. At the municipal level, the variance decreases from 0.33 to 0.25 between Models 3 and 4. This indicates that our models are not completely capturing the rich spatial variation of Colombian cohabitation, which suggests the need to further investigate what altitude is in fact capturing.

To conclude the multilevel analysis of cohabitation in Colombia, we decided to examine the random (or residual) effects estimated by Model 2 at the municipal level and cross-tabulate those effects by two dimensions. The results of this exercise are shown in Table 7.4. The first dimension classifies municipalities based on their contextual characteristics regarding education, ethnicity and religion. The second dimension classifies municipalities according to which cultural complex the municipality belongs to according to Gutierrez Pineda's classification. For each combination of the two dimensions, we compute the average of the residual effects at the municipal level and show the number of municipalities that fall into each category. Positive values indicate that the municipalities that belong to that combination have higher than average levels of cohabitation, and negative values indicate lower than average levels of cohabitation. Municipalities with identical contextual characteristics have different values of cohabitation depending on which cultural complex the municipality belongs to. Regardless of their contextual characteristics, the municipalities in the *Antioquian* and *Santander* complexes have systematically low levels of cohabitation. In the *Andean* complex, cohabitation is typically below the average but not always. In this complex, only the municipalities with low percentages of Catholics and a strong ethnic presence have levels of cohabitation above the average. In the coastal-mining complex and in the Amazonian and Orinoquia regions, we find the municipalities with the highest levels of cohabitation regardless of their contextual characteristics, with few exceptions.

5 Cohabitation in the Andean States

Using the same analytical approach employed in the Colombian data, the final section of this chapter is devoted to the Andean countries that because of their characteristics and the availability of data allow running a similar model. We focus on Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, which with Colombia belong to the so-called Andean States. We have excluded Venezuela from the analysis because the presence of the Andes there is less important than in the other countries and because the 2001 census includes a limited coverage of key variables such as ethnicity.

The geography of cohabitation in Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru is quite heterogeneous. In Chap. 1, we have shown that Ecuador displays the highest internal contrast regarding cohabitation. We have also observed that, except for Peru, there is a strong relation between altitude and the presence of cohabitation. To examine the influence of the socioeconomic profile of women and the influence of contextual variables on cohabitation, we use multilevel logistic regression models in which individual variables are at the first level of analysis and the contextual characteristics are at the second level. In Ecuador, we use 114 *cantones* as geographic units; in Bolivia, 84 provinces; and 176 provinces in Peru. Map 7.3 shows the percentage of 25–29-year-old partnered women in cohabitation in the three countries.

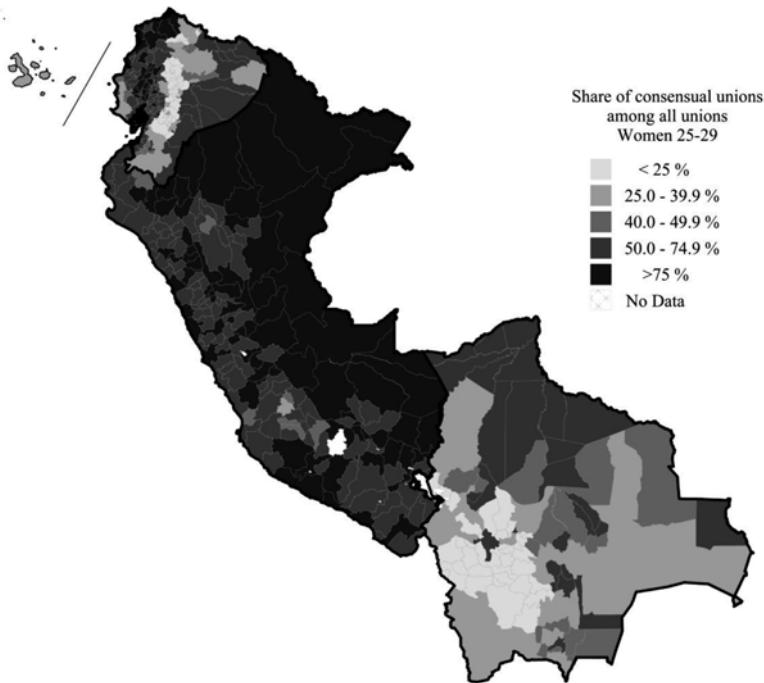
We comment on the results of the models country by country; however, we use the same analytical strategy for all countries. Model 1 is the baseline or empty model.

Table 7.4 Averaged residuals at the municipality level from Model 2. Municipalities classified according to their contextual characteristics and the cultural complex to which they belong, Colombia, 2005

Education	Religion	Ethnic background		All municipalities	Antioquian	Santander	Andean	Coastal-Mining	Amazonian and Orimoquia
		Low	High						
High	High	Low	-0.42 (101)	-1.04 (33)	-0.68 (6)	-0.31 (45)	0.40 (14)	0.27 (3)	
High	High	High	-0.22 (40)	-0.96 (13)	-	-0.81 (9)	0.20 (16)	0.47 (2)	
High	Low	Low	-0.10 (45)	-0.08 (11)	-0.38 (1)	-0.30 (8)	-0.06 (18)	0.09 (7)	
High	Low	High	0.15 (81)	-0.01 (12)	-0.25 (1)	0.52 (1)	0.27 (56)	0.37 (11)	
Low	High	Low	-0.79 (89)	-0.89 (27)	-1.28 (4)	-0.70 (42)	0.05 (10)	-0.48 (6)	
Low	High	High	-0.09 (61)	-0.71 (13)	-	-1.12 (15)	0.41 (29)	-0.25 (4)	
Low	Low	Low	-0.52 (30)	-0.22 (2)	-0.66 (8)	-1.13 (10)	0.28 (5)	-0.04 (5)	
Low	Low	High	0.44 (85)	-	-0.15 (1)	0.14 (13)	0.53 (52)	0.41 (19)	
Total			-0.11 (532)	-0.74 (111)	-0.73 (21)	-0.55 (143)	0.32 (200)	0.16 (57)	

Note: In brackets, number of municipalities that belong to each category.

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and the 2009 Americas Barometer



Map 7.3 Percentage cohabiting among partnered women aged 25–29. Bolivia, 2001; Ecuador, 2010; and Peru, 2007 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

In this model, the intercept is partitioned into two components: the fixed effect plus a random effect for each of the units at the second level (*cantones* in Ecuador and provinces in Bolivia and Peru). Model 2 includes individual variables. These variables refer to the ethnic, educational, and migration backgrounds and when available, the language spoken. Model 3 adds several contextual variables. Model 4 examines whether altitude remains a significant influence on the level of cohabitation.

5.1 Bolivia

Table 7.5 shows the results for Bolivia, 2001. The Bolivian model includes four individual-level variables – ethnicity, education, migration status, and urban residence – and 4 contextual-level variables based on the ethnicity, education, migration status and altitude of each *cantón*. We have dichotomized each *cantón* based on whether the presence of the Quechua population was above or below the median among *cantones*. The same strategy was used for the percentage of women with secondary education and women born in the *cantón* of residence. Altitude was

Table 7.5 Sample characteristics and estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women aged 25–29 by selected individual and contextual level characteristics. Bolivia, 2001

Category	Distribution in %	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Dependent variable					
Married	65.32				
Cohabitation	34.68				
Individual variables					
Ethnicity					
Guarani	1.60		1.34	1.34	1.34
Chiquitano	2.42		0.93**	0.93**	0.93
Quechua	30.71		0.86	0.86	0.87
Aymara	25.34		0.81	0.81	0.81
Other indigenous	2.45		1.39	1.39	1.39
Spanish (ref.)	37.49		1	1	1
Education					
University completed	3.70		0.08	0.08	0.08
Secondary completed	25.8		0.38	0.38	0.38
Primary completed	38.6		0.88	0.88	0.88
Less than primary completed (ref.)	31.8		1	1	1
Migration last 5 years					
Abroad	1.12		0.87**	0.87**	0.87
Different major administrative unit	16.17		1.16	1.16	1.16**
Same major, different minor administrative unit	0.20		1.30*	1.30*	1.30
Same major, same minor administrative unit (ref.)	82.51		1	1	1
Urban					
Rural	32.44		0.95**	0.95	0.95
Urban (ref.)	67.56		1	1	1
Contextual variables. Proportions by provinces for all women					
Quechua/Aymara (median 45.6 %)					
At or above the median				0.41	0.56
Below the median				1	1
Secondary (median 11.0 %)					
At or above the median				0.99*	1.19
Below the median				1	1
Born in same administrative unit (median 89.5 %)					
At or above the median				0.77*	1.13
Below the median				1	1
Altitude					
Above 3000 m	40.5				0.39

(continued)

Table 7.5 (continued)

Category	Distribution in %	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
2000–3000 m	19.3				0.60**
1500–2000 m	1.5				0.57**
1000–1500 m	4.8				1.16*
500–1000 m	1.6				0.66*
Up to 500 m	32.3				1
<i>Variance left between provinces</i>		0.91	0.89	0.60	0.53
<i>Intercept</i>		-0.84	-0.53	-0.05*	0.13*

Note: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except *: $p < 0.05$ and **: $p < 0.01$.

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and the 2009 Americas Barometer

categorized in 6 categories, ranging from less than 500 m below sea level to over 3000 m above sea level.

Model 1 is the empty model. It presents the variance that exists across *cantones* when neither individual nor contextual level variables are considered. In this model, the variance is 0.90. Model 2 includes all the individual variables and shows that the estimated odds ratios are statistically significant. Regarding ethnicity, women of Quechua and Aymara ethnicity, who combined compose more than 50% of the population, are less likely to cohabit than women who reported Spanish ethnicity (the reference category). By contrast, Guaraní and other indigenous groups have higher odds of cohabiting than women with Spanish ethnicity. Chiquitano women are slightly less likely to cohabit than Spanish women.

The relation between cohabitation and education shows a steep negative gradient. Women with a university education are less likely to cohabit than women with less than a primary education. Except for Bolivian women who were living abroad 5 years earlier, cohabitation is always higher among women who were living in a different municipality 5 years earlier than among women who were living in the same municipality. Women in rural areas are less likely to cohabit than women in urban areas, although the difference between rural and urban areas is rather small. Including the individual variables in the model has had little effect on the variance observed across provinces (0.88 compared to 0.91 in Model 1).

Model 3 adds three contextual variables, all with statistically significant effects on cohabitation. Clearly, women residing in provinces with the largest shares of Quechua and Aymara residents are less likely to cohabit than women living in provinces with the lowest presence of these two ethnic groups. The effect of the educational variable at the contextual level has a statistically significant but modest effect: Women in the more educated provinces are less likely to cohabit than those residing in the less educated provinces. Finally, the migratory dimension is important as well. Cohabitation is less frequent in those provinces with fewer migrants (i.e., the largest percentage of the population residing in the same province in which they

were residing 5 years ago). The contextual variables have reduced the variance across provinces to 0.6, from 0.88 in Model 2. Finally, Model 4 examines whether altitude remains a significant influence on cohabitation. Women residing in provinces above 1500 m are less likely to cohabit than women residing in provinces below that level. Above 3000 m, the rate of cohabitation is even lower. After including altitude, the variance across provinces shrinks to 0.53, from 0.6 in Model 3. Contrary to what occurred in Colombia, the contextual variables included in Model 3 have had a greater effect on reducing the variance across provinces than altitude.

5.2 Ecuador

The Ecuadorian model includes 5 individual level variables – race, education, language, migration status and urban/rural – and three contextual variables at the *cantón* level regarding Quechua speaking, education and migration (see Table 7.6). Provinces are dichotomized based on the percentage of the population that speaks Quechua (below or above the median across provinces), the percentage of women with a secondary education, and the percentage of the population born in the province of current residence. Model 1, the empty model, yields a variance across provinces of 1.55, which in Model 2, after including the individual variables, shrinks to 1.17.

All individual variables matter for cohabitation. Afro-Ecuadorians, Black, Montubio and mulatto women have higher levels of cohabitation than white women (reference category). Indigenous and *mestizo* women have lower levels of cohabitation than white women. Education is negatively related to cohabitation. Quechua-speaking women are less likely to cohabit than women who only speak Spanish (reference category). However, for women speaking Shuar, Jivaro or other indigenous languages, the odds of cohabitation are higher than among Spanish-speaking women. Migration matters as well. Women who lived in a different municipality 5 years before the census are more likely to cohabit than women who remain in the same municipality.

The contextual variables included in Model 3 have a significant effect on cohabitation. Cohabitation is lowest in those *cantones* with the largest Quechua-speaking populations. Cohabitation is also low in those *cantones* in which the percentage of women with a secondary education or beyond is above the median. And, finally, cohabitation is lowest in provinces with the lowest presence of migrants. The variance across *cantones* in Model 3 is 0.78, which is half of the variance observed in Model 1 (1.55).

Model 4 adds altitude as a contextual variable, which is statistically significant. Higher altitudes indicate lower levels of cohabitation. Furthermore, the altitudinal gradient halves the variance across *cantones* (0.38) with regard to Model 3 (0.78). This clearly suggests that altitude is measuring a social and historical legacy that is not fully captured by any of the individual and contextual variables included in the model.

Table 7.6 Sample characteristics and estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women aged 25–29 by selected individual and contextual level characteristics. Ecuador, 2010

Category	Distribution in %	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Dependent variable					
Married	52.12				
Cohabitation	47.88				
Individual variables					
Race or color					
Afro-Ecuadorian	4.91		1.45	1.45	1.45
Black	0.95		1.96	1.96	1.96
Indigenous	7.68		0.42	0.42	0.42
Mestizo (indigenous and white)	71.44		0.82	0.83	0.83
Montubio (Ecuador)	7.18		1.34	1.34	1.34
Mulatto (Black and white)	2.42		1.58	1.58	1.58
Other	0.41		0.67	0.67	0.67
White	5.01		1	1	1
Education					
University completed	9.48		0.18	0.18	0.18
Secondary completed	34.94		0.38	0.38	0.38
Primary completed	43.27		0.69	0.69	0.69
Less than primary completed	12.31		1	1	1
Language 1 or 2					
Missing and only foreign	0.72		0.82	0.82	0.82
Other indigenous language	0.28		1.89	1.89	1.89
Quechua or Kichwa	4.66		0.43	0.44	0.44
Shuar/Jivaro	0.50		5.53	5.53	5.53
Only Spanish	93.83		1	1	1
Migration last 5 years					
Abroad	1.52		1.84	1.84	1.84
Different major administrative unit	7.56		1.31	1.31	1.31
Same major administrative unit	90.92		1	1	1
Urban					
Rural	36.02		0.94	0.94	0.94
Urban	63.98		1	1	1
Contextual variables. Proportion by cantons for all women					
Quechua (median 4.0%)					
At or above the median				0.29	0.81*
Below the median				1	1
Secondary (median 17.8%)					

(continued)

Table 7.6 (continued)

Category	Distribution in %	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
At or above the median				0.89**	0.75**
Below the median				1	1
Born same administrative unit (median 95.8 %)					
At or above the median				0.68**	0.87*
Below the median				1	1
Altitude cantones					
Up to 500 m	55.43				1
500–1000 m	2.01				0.81*
1000–1500 m	2.68				0.47**
1500–2000 m	0.51				0.35
2000–3000 m	33.10				0.23
Above 3000 m	6.26				0.12
<i>Variance left between cantones</i>		1.55	1.17	0.78	0.38
<i>Intercept</i>		0.03*	0.80	1.65	1.72

Note: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except *: $p < 0.05$ and **: $p < 0.01$.
Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and the 2009 Americas Barometer

5.3 Peru

Finally, we examine Peru, 2007. The models for Peru include five individual variables – mother tongue, education, religion, migration and urban areas – and four contextual level variables regarding the importance of the Quechua/Aymara language, education, religion and altitude (see Table 7.7). The baseline model yields a variance across provinces of 0.36. After including all of the individual variables, the variance remains nearly identical (0.35) despite all of the variables having a significant effect on cohabitation. Women who speak Quechua or Aymara are less likely to cohabit than Spanish-speaking women (the reference category). Women speaking Ashanika or any other indigenous language are more likely to cohabit than Spanish-speaking women. Highly educated women (secondary or university) are less likely to cohabit than women with only primary or less than primary education. Women who report no religion are more likely to cohabit than women who profess Catholicism. Among religious women, however, evangelicals are less likely to cohabit than Catholic women (the reference category). Women living in a different administrative unit 5 years before the census are more likely to cohabit than women who reside in the same unit, except for women living abroad 5 years prior to the census. Cohabitation among rural women is lower than among urban women.

Model 3 includes three contextual variables. Women living in provinces with the largest shares of Quechua- and Aymara-speaking populations are less likely to cohabit than women in provinces with low shares of these two populations. However, cohabitation is highest among women living in areas with the greatest proportion of

Table 7.7 Sample characteristics and estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women aged 25–29 by selected individual and contextual level characteristics. Peru, 2007

Category	Distribution in %	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Dependent variable					
Married	30.2				
Cohabitation	69.8				
Individual variables					
Mother tongue, Peru					
Asháninka	0.3		1.96	1.96	1.96
Quechua	13.5		0.92	0.92	0.92
Aymara	2.0		0.69	0.69	0.69
Other indigenous language	0.9		2.67	2.67	2.66
Foreign language	0.1		0.53	0.53	0.53
Not applicable	0.0		1.11*	1.11*	1.11*
Spanish (ref.)	83.2		1	1	1
Education					
University completed	8.1		0.31	0.31	0.31
Secondary completed	48.2		0.72	0.72	0.72
Primary completed	25.8		1.12	1.12	1.12
Less than primary completed (ref.)	17.9		1	1	1
Religion					
No religion	2.9		1.15	1.15	1.15
Evangelical Protestant	13.9		0.34	0.34	0.34
Other	3.2		0.35	0.35	0.34
Catholic (Roman or unspecified) (ref.)	80.1		1	1	1
Migration last 5 years					
Abroad	0.3		0.41	0.41	0.41
Different major administrative unit	8.4		1.27	1.27	1.27
Same major, different minor administrative unit	3.3		1.22	1.22	1.22
Same major, same minor administrative unit (ref.)	88.0		1	1	1
Urban					
Rural	23.8		0.73	0.73	0.73
Urban (ref.)	76.2		1	1	1
Contextual variables. Proportions by provinces for all women					
Quechua/Aymara (median 8.1 %)					
At or above the median				0.97*	1.05*
Below the median				1	1

(continued)

Table 7.7 (continued)

Category	Distribution in %	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Secondary (median 17.3 %)					
At or above the median				1.03*	1.01*
Below the median				1	1
Evangelical (median 9.7 %)					
At or above the median				1.08*	1.00*
Below the median				1	1
Altitude province					
Up to 500 m	18.7				1.00*
500–1000 m	35.4				0.85*
1000–1500 m	3.4				0.94*
1500–2000 m	3.7				1.00*
2000–3000 m	11.8				0.85*
Above 3000 m	27.0				0.81*
<i>Variance left between provinces</i>		0.36	0.35	0.35	0.36
<i>Intercept</i>		0.98	1.49	1.45	1.58

Note: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except *: $p < 0.05$ and **: $p < 0.01$.

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International and the 2009 Americas Barometer

women who have secondary or college educations and with the highest shares of evangelicals. Despite including the contextual variables, the variance across provinces has scarcely changed with regard to Models 1 and 2. Model 4 includes altitude in the equation and shows that there is no relation between altitude and cohabitation in Peru.

To conclude, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru have exhibited some common characteristics regarding the effect of individual variables on cohabitation. Education is negatively related to cohabitation. Migrant and urban women are more likely to cohabit. Migrant and urban women also show substantial diversity across ethnic, racial or linguistic groups. Quechua and Aymara populations in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador systematically exhibit the lowest levels of cohabitation. However, there are indigenous groups with high levels of cohabitation, such as the Jivaro in Ecuador, the Guaranis in Bolivia, and the Ashanika in Peru. In Ecuador, Black and mulatto populations are more likely to cohabit than white populations. Contextual-level variables are always statistically significant, and basically their effect is consistent with what is observed at the individual level. The capacity of each model to explain the variance across second-level administrative units (i.e., the geography of cohabitation) varies depending on the country. In Ecuador, which displayed the largest internal contrasts, the variance across *cantones* decreases by half when the individual and contextual variables (excluding altitude) are considered (from 1.5 to 0.78). In Bolivia, the variance declined from 0.9 to 0.60, and in Peru, the variance did not change. Altitude has no effect in Peru, a modest effect in Bolivia, but a substantial effect in Ecuador.

6 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have documented the spectacular increase in cohabitation in Colombia and explored its social and spatial patterning, which, despite the overall increase in cohabitation, continues to the present day. We have shown that education, ethnicity and migration status matter to cohabitation. However, we have also shown that these individual characteristics matter relatively little when explaining the large internal differences observed within countries. In this regard, contextual variables are important as well and always behave in the same manner as the individual variables. Poorly educated women in poorly educated provinces are always more likely to cohabit than poorly educated women in highly educated provinces. Education, ethnicity and migration matter at the individual and contextual levels. However, contextual characteristics at the municipality level account for only a portion of the variance in cohabitation levels within countries.

These results demonstrate the importance of context and the need to delve into the historical legacies of cohabitation to understand the origin of the Colombian boom in cohabitation. The examples of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia have been used in this chapter to enhance the Colombian case. The four countries could in fact have been analyzed together because the individual and contextual predictors of cohabitation behaved in similar manners. We have observed that education indicates a negative gradient with cohabitation and that the effect of ethnicity varies by ethnic background. Indigenous populations are not a homogeneous group. Quechua and Aymara populations exhibit different behaviors from other groups, as seen in the cases of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. In Colombia, that distinction was not possible although it is quite likely that we would have identified different patterns of cohabitation across indigenous groups. Consistent with historical explanations, Afro-descendant populations systematically show the highest levels of cohabitation.

The joint use of individual- and contextual-level explanatory variables is sufficient to account for the majority of Bolivia's internal diversity regarding cohabitation but not sufficient to account for the internal diversity identified in Peru or Ecuador. Compared with Ecuador, Peru has fewer internal differences in terms of cohabitation. Ecuador was the country in Latin America with the sharpest contrasts within regions. Half of the internal variance in Ecuador was explained by individual and contextual characteristics based on education, ethnicity and migration status. After all these controls, however, altitude nevertheless remains a good predictor of cohabitation, suggesting that, as in Colombia, altitude is a proxy of an unobserved feature of how the institutionalization of marriage occurred in the Andes.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Anselin, L. (1995). Local indicators of spatial association – LISA. *Geographical Analysis*, 27(2), 93–115. doi:[10.1111/j.1538-4632.1995.tb00338.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1538-4632.1995.tb00338.x).
- Aristizábal, M. (2007). *Madre y esposa: silencio y virtud. Ideal de formación de las mujeres en la provincia de Bogotá, 1848–1868* (p. 333). Bogotá: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. ISBN ISBN: 9789588316260.
- Castro-Martín, T. (2001). Matrimonios sin papeles en Centroamérica: persistencia de un sistema dual de nupcialidad. In L. Rosero-Bixby (Ed.), *Población del Istmo 2000: familia, migración, violencia y medio ambiente*. San José de Costa Rica: Centro Centroamericano de Población, 388. ISBN ISBN: 9977-15-096-6.
- Castro-Martín, T., Cortina, C., Martín García, T., & Pardo, I. (2011). Maternidad sin matrimonio en América Latina: un análisis comparativo a partir de datos censales. *Notas de Población*, 37(93), 37–76.
- DANE (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística). (2007a). *La visibilización estadística de los grupos étnicos colombianos*. Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional.
- DANE (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística). (2007b). *Colombia una nación multicultural. Su diversidad étnica*. Bogotá: Imprenta Naciona.
- Dueñas, G. (1997). *Los hijos del pecado. Illegitimidad y vida familiar en Santafé de Bogotá colonial*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 284 pages.
- Echeverry de Ferrufino, L. (1984). *La familia de hecho en Colombia: constitución, características y consecuencias socio jurídicas*. Bogotá: Editorial Tercer Mundo, 484 pages. ISBN 9586010104.
- Esteve, A., Lesthaeghe, R., & López-Gay, A. (2012). The Latin American cohabitation boom 1970–2007. *Population and Development Review*, 38(1), 55–81. doi:[10.1111/j.1728-4457.2012.00472.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2012.00472.x).
- Esteve, A., López-Ruiz, L. A., & Spijker, J. (2013). Disentangling how educational expansion did not increase women's age at union formation in Latin America from 1970 and 2000. *Demographic Research*, 28(3), 63–76.
- Ghirardi, M., & Irigoyen López, A. (2009). El matrimonio, El Concilio de Trento e Hispanoamérica. *Revista de Indias*, 69(246), 241–272.
- Gutiérrez de Pineda, V. (1968). *Familia y cultura en Colombia*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia/Tercer Mundo Editores. ISBN 958-655-156-3.
- Guzman Álvarez, M. P. (2006). *El régimen económico del matrimonio*. Bogotá: Centro Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 182 pages. ISBN 958-8225-82-5.
- Minnesota Population Center. (2014). *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)*. University of Minnesota [online]. <https://international.ipums.org/international-action/variables/group>
- Pachón, X. (2007). La familia en Colombia a lo largo del siglo xx. In R. Puyana & M. H. Ramírez (Eds.), *Familias, cambios y estrategias* (pp. 145–159). Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia. ISBN 9789587017984.
- Pribilsky, J. (2007). *La chulla vida: Gender, migration, and the family in Andean Ecuador and New York city*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 336 pages. ISBN 0815631456/978-0815631453.
- Quilodrán, J. (1999). L'union libre en Amérique Latine: Aspects récents d'un phénomène secularisé. *Cahiers Québécois de Demographie*, 28(1–2), 53–80.
- Quilodrán, J. (2001). L'union libre latinoaméricaine a-t-elle changée de nature. Paper presented at the XXIVe Congrès International de la Population, IUSSP, Salvador de Bahía (Brasil), 18–24 August. http://www.archive-iussp.org/Brazil2001/s10/S11_02_quilodran.pdf
- Quilodrán, J. (2003). La familia, referentes en transición. *Papeles de Población*, 9(37), 51–83.
- Rodríguez, P. (2004). *La familia en Iberoamérica 1550–1980*. Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia, 526 pages. ISBN 9586981347/9789586981347.
- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2004). Cohabitation en América Latina: ¿Modernidad, exclusión o diversidad. *Papeles de Población*, 40, 97–145.

- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2011). La situación conyugal en los censos latinoamericanos de la década de 2000: Relevancia y perspectivas. In M. Ruiz Salguero, & J. Rodríguez Vignoli (Eds.), *Familia y Nupcialidad en los Censos Latinoamericanos Recientes: Una Realidad que Desborda los Datos* (pp. 47–70). Santiago: CELADE, Serie Población y Desarrollo n° 99. ISBN 9789213234808. <http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/9/42709/lcl3293e-P.pdf>
- Rojas, T. (2009). Colombia en el Pacífico. In UNICEF, FUNPROEIB Andes (Ed.), *Atlas Sociolingüístico de Pueblos Indígenas en América Latina* (pp. 660–676). Cochabamba: FUNPROEIB Andes. ISBN 978-92806-4491-3
- Saavedra, A. C., Esteve, A., & López-Gay, A. (2013). La unión libre en Colombia: 1973–2005. *Revista Latinoamericana de Población*, 7(13), 107–128.
- Vera Estrada, A., & Robichaux, D. (comps.). (2008). *Familias y culturas en el espacio latinoamericano*. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, and Centro de Investigación, and Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello, 411 pages. ISBN 9592421196/9789592421196.
- Zamudio, L., & Rubiano, N. (1991). *La nupcialidad en Colombia*. Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia.

Chapter 8

Cohabitation in Brazil: Historical Legacy and Recent Evolution

Albert Esteve, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Julián López-Colás, Antonio López-Gay, and Maira Covre-Sussai

1 Introduction

As in North America and Europe, equally major demographic transitions have taken place in many Latin American countries during the last four decades. Brazil is no exception. Its population is terminating its fertility transition and is even on the brink of sub-replacement fertility (Total Fertility Rate = 1.80 in 2010), its divorce rate has been going up steadily for several decades in tandem with falling marriage rates (de Mesquita Samara 1987; Covre-Sussai and Matthijs 2010), and cohabitation has spread like wildfire (Rodríguez Vignoli 2005; Esteve et al. 2012a). These have all been very steady trends that have persisted through difficult economic times (e.g. 1980s) and more prosperous ones (e.g. after 2000) alike. There is furthermore evidence from the World Values Studies in Brazil that the country has also been experiencing an ethical transition in tandem with its overall educational development, pointing at the de-stigmatization of divorce, abortion, and especially

A. Esteve (✉) • J. López-Colás • A. López-Gay
Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain
e-mail: aesteve@ced.uab.cat; jlopez@ced.uab.cat; alopez@ced.uab.cat

R.J. Lesthaeghe
Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium,
Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: RLesthaeghe@yahoo.com

M. Covre-Sussai
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
e-mail: maira.covre@gmail.com

of euthanasia and homosexuality (Esteve et al. 2012a). These are all features that point in the direction of a so called “Second demographic transition”(SDT) as they have taken place in the wider European cultural sphere and are currently unfolding in Japan and Taiwan as well (Lesthaeghe 2010).

In what follows, we shall solely focus on the rapid spread of unmarried cohabitation as one of the key SDT ingredients. In doing so, we must be aware of the fact that Brazil has always contained several ethnic sub-populations that have maintained a tradition of unmarried cohabitation. By 1970, these were definitely minorities, and Brazil then ranked among the Latin American countries with the lower levels of cohabitation (cf. Esteve et al. 2012a). In fact, Brazil belonged to the same “low cohabitation” group as Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Mexico. Nevertheless, given an older extant tolerance for cohabitation which was probably larger than in the other four countries just mentioned, we have to take this historical “baseline pattern” fully into account when assessing the recent trends.

In much of the work that follows, we shall concentrate on women in the age group 25–29. At that age virtually all women have finished their education and they have also chosen from a number of options concerning the type of partnership, the transition into parenthood, and employment. Furthermore, the analysis is also restricted to women who are in a union (i.e. marriage + cohabitation), and percentages cohabiting are calculated for such partnered women only.

The analysis is novel in the sense that it includes a much more detailed spatial analysis involving 136 Brazilian meso-regions instead of the classic 26 states (+ the Federal District of Brasilia). This finer geographical grid also permits us to elucidate the weight of the “historical legacy” to a greater extent. For the rest, the cross-sectional analysis for the year 2000 is built along the classic multi-level design, with effects being measured of both the individual characteristics and of the contextual ones operating at the meso-regional level (see also Covre-Sussai and Matthijs 2010). But even more important is the availability of several measurements over time, thanks to the IPUMS data files with large micro-data samples of the various censuses.¹ This allows for an analysis of changing educational profiles, spatial patterns, and overall levels over time, and solidly steers us away from erroneous extrapolations and interpretations drawn from single cross-sectional differentials.²

¹The IPUMS data files contain samples of harmonized individual-level data from a worldwide collection of censuses. See Minnesota Population Center (2014).

²The interpretation of the European cohabitation data has greatly suffered from such misinterpretations of educational and social class differentials observed in a *single* cross-section. The negative “gradients”, mostly found in former Communist Europe were typically interpreted as the manifestation of “patterns of disadvantage”, whereas measurements over several points in time showed that cohabitation rose – sometimes quite spectacularly – in *all* social strata, and in several instances even as much among the better than the less educated women.

2 The Historical Legacy

As is the case of several other Latin American countries and all Caribbean ones, also Brazil has a long history of cohabitation (Smith 1956; Roberts and Sinclair 1978; for Caribbean: de Mesquita Samara 1987; Borges 1994; de Alzevedo et al. 1999; Holt 2005; for Brazil: Covre-Sussai and Matthijs 2010; Quilodrán 1999, 2008). However, the historical roots of cohabitation are quite distinct for the various types of populations. The indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, and white populations (either early Portuguese colonizers or later nineteenth and twentieth century European immigrants) have all contributed to the diverse Brazilian scene of marriage and cohabitation. A brief review of these contributions will elucidate why the historical roots are of prime importance.

In the instance of the Brazilian *indigenous populations*, ethnographic evidence shows that they did adhere to the group of populations, which, according to Goody's terminology (1976), lacked diverging devolution of property through women. As shown in Chap. 2 (Table 2.1) for 21 Brazilian indigenous groups (Amazon, Orinoco, Mato Grosso, Highlands and Gran Chaco), none were strictly monogamous, and, if there were exchanges between kinship groups at the occasion of partnership formation, all had exchanges benefitting the wife's kin (bride service or bridewealth) rather than the husband's kin (dowry). Moreover, the majority of them tolerated consensual unions or extra-marital sex. Also the Black and mixed populations, originating from the imported slaves, tolerated consensual or visiting unions and did not engage in passing on any wealth via dowries. The European colonists, by contrast, celebrated their monogamous marriages, followed the dowry system and adhered to social class homogamy. The major caveat, however, is that they often practiced forms of concubinage, either with lower class women or slaves (see for instance Freyre 1933 for Northeastern sugar-cane farmers; for the Bahia colonial upper class in Brazil: Borges 1994 and de Alzevedo et al. 1999). The overall result of these ethnic differences was the creation of a negative relationship between social class and the incidence of consensual unions.

The negative gradient of cohabitation with social class and the stigma attached to consensual unions was enhanced further by mass European immigration during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These migrants to mining areas and to the emerging urban and industrial centers reintroduced the typical Western European marriage pattern with monogamy, institutionally regulated marriage, condemnation of illegitimacy and low divorce. As a consequence the European model was reinforced to a considerable extent and became part and parcel of the urban process of *embourgeoisement*. This not only caused the incidence of cohabitation to vary according to ethnicity, but also regionally and according to patterns of urbanization and migration. The overall result is that the negative cohabitation-social class gradient is obviously essentially the result of crucial historical developments, and not the outcome of a particular economic crisis or decade of stagnation (e.g. the 1980s and 1990s).

Nowadays, (since 1996) cohabitation is recognized by law as a type of marriage in Brazil. Cohabitors have the option to formalize the relationship through a contract with the purpose of specifying property divisions. In case of dissolution, the content of the contract is followed. In the absence of a formal contract, the partnership can be considered by the judge as a type of marriage if one of the partners proves that there was an intention to constitute a family, or proves that the couple lived “as a family”. In this instance, the same rules apply as for married couples. (Brazil 2002). Furthermore, as of May 2013, Brazil is on the brink of fully recognizing gay marriage as the third and largest Latin American country, i.e. after Argentina and Uruguay which recognized it in 2010. The Brazilian Supreme Court ruled that gay marriages have to be registered in the same way as heterosexual marriages in the entire country, but there is still stiff opposition in Congress coming from Evangelical politicians.

3 Socioeconomic and Cultural Development

As stated before, for the Brazilian upper classes the institutions of marriage and the family were historically constructed based on hierarchic, authoritarian and patriarchal relationships, under influence of the Catholic morality. Conversely, men were ‘allowed’ to have relationships with women from different social and ethnic groups, following different rational and moral codes (Freyre 1933). At the same time, while this patriarchal model described by Freyre serves as a very good illustration of families of sugar cane farmers in the Northeast region of Brazil during the colonial period (sixteenth to the end of nineteenth centuries; de Mesquita Samara 1987, 1997), there was a noteworthy variance in terms of family compositions and roles over different social strata and regions of the country (i.e. Vidal Souza and Rodrigues Botelho 2001; de Mesquita Samara 1997, 1987; Corrêa 1993; de Almeida 1987). It is now well understood by Brazilian social scientists that the influence of the Catholic Church on family life, the patriarchal model of family and gender relations inside the family, all vary considerably across the Brazilian regions, and that this variation is related to both socioeconomic and cultural differences (Vidal Souza and Rodrigues Botelho 2001; de Mesquita Samara 2002). The Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro (1995) suggests the following distinctions for the five major areas.

Firstly, the North and Northeast regions have the higher proportions of mixed race populations (*pardos*: mainly the mixture of native indigenous, European and African descendants), with 68 and 60 % of self-declared *pardo* in 2011, respectively (IBGE 2013). It was among the upper classe in the Northeast that the family model, described by Freyre (1933) as patriarchal and hierarchic, was more visible. According to Ribeiro (1995), both regions are characterized by a social system stressing group norms and group loyalty.

Secondly, until to the second half of the nineteenth century, the groups in the Southeastern and Southern regions were formed by the union of the Portuguese colonizer with indigenous people and some African slaves. During the colonial period it was from the city of São Paulo that expeditions embarked in order to

explore the mines found in the countryside and to spread the Brazilian population beyond the Tordesillas line. During this period, while husbands went to the countryside, wives took care of children and of the household as a whole. This system fostered less hierarchic family relationships than the ones observed in the North (Vidal Souza and Rodrigues Botelho 2001; de Mesquita Samara 1987, 1997; Corrêa 1993; de Almeida 1987). Today, the descendants of these early settlers in the Southeast and South share their regions with social groups composed of descendants of the large European immigration of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially Italians and Germans. These historical roots explain the contemporary majority of self-declared whites in the South and Southeast (78 and 56% respectively – IBGE 2013).

The last sub-culture identified by Ribeiro (1995) includes people from the inland part of the Northeast and, particularly, from the more rural Central-west area. The Central-West region contains the most equilibrated division of ethnicities in Brazil with 43% of whites, 48% of pardos, 7.6% of African descent and about 1% of indigenous and Asiatic descent (IBGE 2013). The development of this region started later compared to the coastline and was accelerated, in part, when the country's administrative capital was transferred from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília (Distrito Federal) in 1960. Although this region was relatively unsettled up to that time, the creation of a new city (Brasília was built between 1956 and 1960) spurred population growth and created more heterogeneity and educational contrasts. The rural areas of the Central-West still hold small populations devoted to subsistence agriculture (Ribeiro 1995).

The current socioeconomic development of Brazilian regions is related (among other factors) to different processes of occupation and industrialization. Industrialization and urbanization started earlier and happened faster in Southern regions than in the Northern ones (Guimarães Neto 1998). With the investments realized in recent years, the gap in socioeconomic development among Brazilian regions is reduced, but still evident (IBGE 2012: 168). The North and Northeast regions are the poorest and least developed in the country. These are regions where between 24.9 and 17.6% of the population were living in extreme poverty, in comparison to 11.6, 6.9 and 5.5% of the population in the Central-West, Southeast and South (Ipeadata 2010). These two regions also have the lowest values on the Human Development Index of 0.75 and 0.79 for the North and Northeast respectively, whereas the South, the Southeast and Central-West have values of 0.85 and 0.84 (Banco Central do Brasil 2009).

In demographic terms, there is also a significant variation between Brazilian regions. Vasconcelos and Gomes (2012) demonstrated that the demographic transition happened at a different tempo and to a different degree in the five regions. While the Southeast, South and Central-West are found in a more advanced stage of the demographic transition, the North and Northeast showed higher levels of fertility and mortality, as well as a younger age structure (Vasconselos and Gomes 2012). In addition, Covre-Sussai and Matthijs (2010) found that the chances of a couple living in cohabitation instead of being married differ enormously if Brazilian regions and states are compared, and that this variance persists even when socioeconomic and cultural variables are considered.

4 The Basic Geography of Cohabitation and Its Major Conditioning Factors

From the brief picture sketched above, we essentially retain three dimensions that would capture the essence of the historical legacy: (i) the ethnic composition, (ii) the religious mix, (iii) the social class diversity and educational differentials. To this we also added a “frontier” dimension since large parts of western Brazil were settled much later in the twentieth century, and a considerable segment of their population is born outside the region. These dimensions were operationalized using the census definitions as provided by the IPUMS files. Table 8.1 gives the definitions of the categories and the mean of the proportions in the 137 meso-regions as of 2000.

The expected direction of the effects of these dimensions is clear for the racial and religious composition: cohabitation should be lower among Catholics and especially Protestant and Evangelicals than among the others, and the same should hold for whites who traditionally frowned upon cohabitation as lower class behavior. The effect of the frontier should be the opposite as settlements are often scattered and

Table 8.1 Distribution of characteristics of 137 Brazilian meso-regions, measured for women 25–29 as of 2000

Variables/category	Average of proportions in 137 meso-regions
Cohabitation	
Married	61.5
Cohabitation	38.5
Religion	
Catholic	76.0
Protestant Lutheran, Baptist	03.6
Evangelical	14.0
No Religion	4.9
Others	1.5
Race	
White	51.0
Brown Brazil (Pardo)	42.0
Black	05.1
Indigenous	1.1
Others	0.9
Education	
Less than secondary	76.9
Secondary	20.0
University	03.1
Migrant	
Sedentary (Residence in State of birth)	81.5
Migrant (Residence in other State)	18.5

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

Table 8.2 Proportions cohabiting among Brazilian women 25–29 in a union by social characteristics, 2000

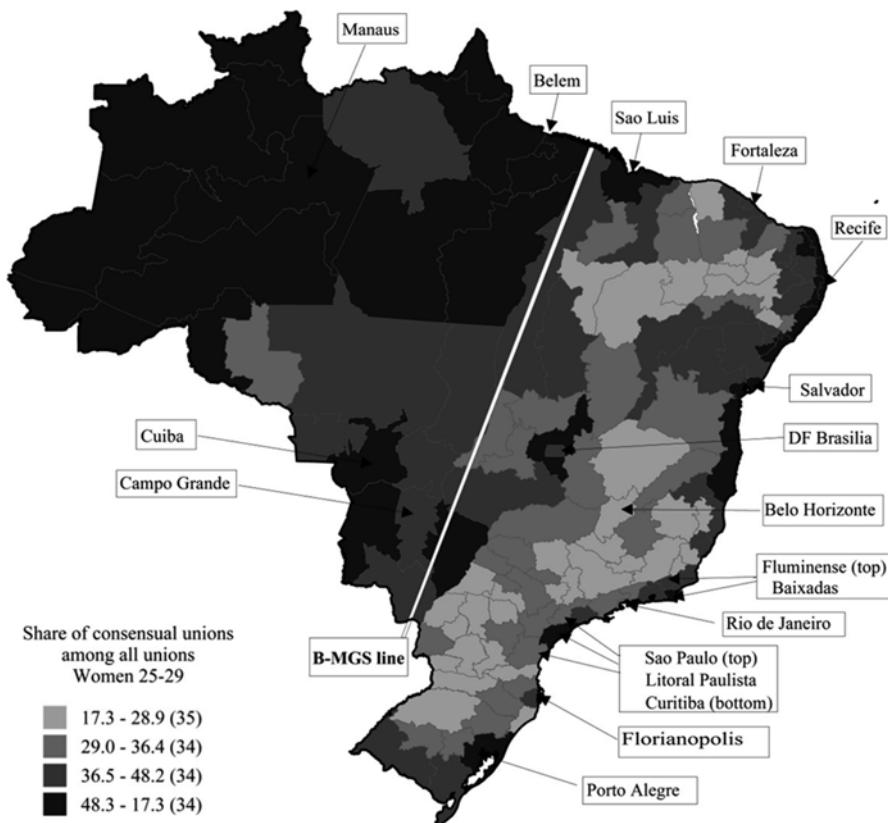
Variables/category	Proportion cohabiting
Religion	
Catholic	40.8
Protestant Lutheran, Baptist	23.2
Evangelical	27.6
No Religion	62.7
Others	40.0
Race	
White	32.4
Brown Brazil (Pardo)	46.9
Black	53.6
Indigenous	59.1
Others	38.4
Education	
Less than secondary	44.6
Secondary	26.4
University	17.2
Migrant	
Sedentary (Residence in State of birth)	38.0
Migrant (Residence in other State)	44.0
Total Brazil 2000	39.3

Note: The Maps 8.1 and 8.4 represent quartiles of these characteristics

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

social control weaker than elsewhere. The role of large cities is however more ambivalent. On the one hand urban life too allows for greater anonymity and less social control, but in the Latin American context, the urban reference group is the wealthier white bourgeoisie and its essentially European pattern of union formation. Then, marriage carries a strong connotation of social success. Moreover, we expect that a more detailed analysis of the patterns among large cities warrants attention as their histories are very diverse. We shall therefore measure each of these metropolitan effects together with those of all the other meso-regions in a subsequent contextual analysis.

Table 8.2 gives the share of women aged 25–29 currently in a union (i.e. married or cohabiting) who are cohabiting according to their religious, educational, racial and migration characteristics, as of the census of 2000. As expected, Protestants (here mainly Lutheran and Baptist) and Evangelicals have by far the lowest proportions cohabiting (see also Covre-Sussai and Matthijs 2010). Catholics and “other” (here including a heterogeneous collection of Spiritist and of Afro-brazilian faiths) have a similar incidence, but also markedly lower levels than the category “no religion”.



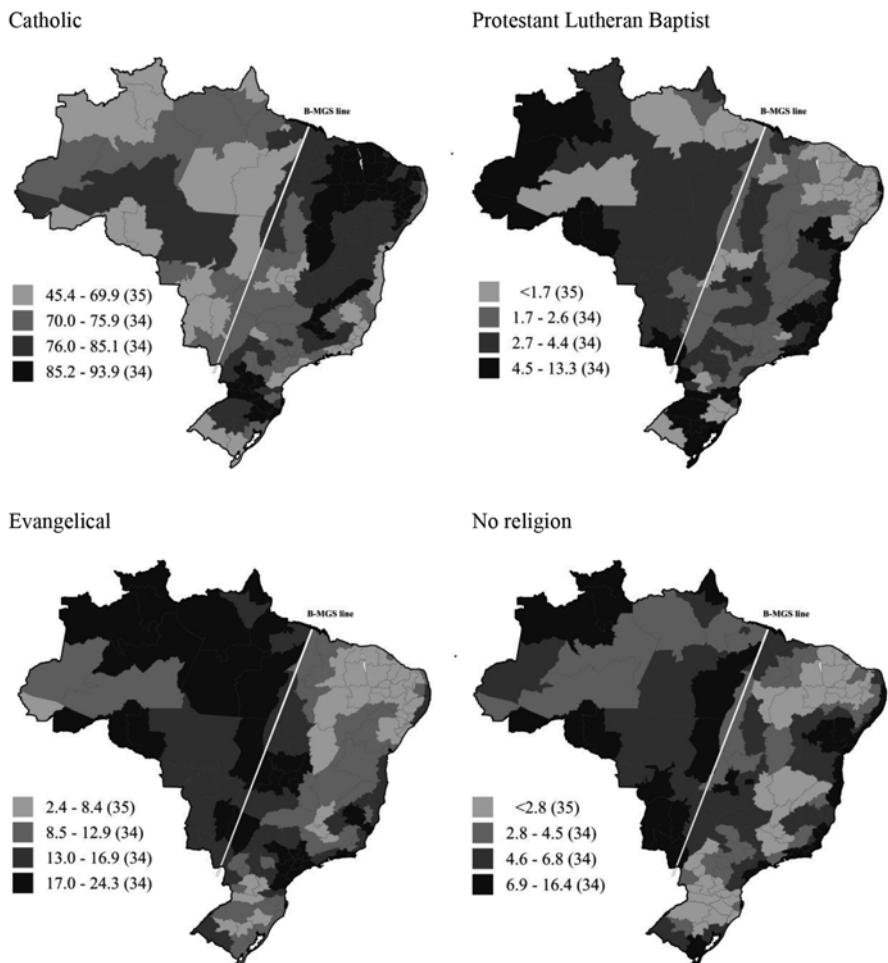
Map 8.1 Proportions cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union; Brazilian meso-regions 2000
(Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

The racial distinctions are completely as expected, with whites and “others” (i.e. mainly Asians) having the lower proportions cohabiting, the indigenous and black populations the highest, and the mixed “Pardo” population being situated in between. The educational gradient is still very pronounced with only 17% of partnered university graduates in cohabitation against 44% among partnered women with primary education only and 39% for the whole of Brazil. Finally, the incidence of cohabitation among migrants is indeed higher than among non-migrants, but the difference is only 6 percentage points.

As far as cohabitation is concerned, there are three major zones in Brazil. Firstly, the areas west of the “Belem – Mato Grosso do Sul” line (see Map 8.1, dotted line marked “B-MGS”) virtually all fall in the top two quartiles, and the majority even in the highest quartile with more than 48% cohabiting among partnered women 25–29. This is also a huge area with low population densities. The second region with similarly high percentages cohabiting stretches along the Atlantic coast, from Sao Luis in the North to Porto Alegre in the South. However, it should be noted that Rio de Janeiro is only in the second quartile. The third zone forms an inland

North-South band, with a majority of meso-regions having percentages below the median (36%). There are, however, a few notable exceptions such as the Rio Grandense regions along the Uruguay border, the Baiano hinterland of Salvador de Bahia (former slave economy), and the broader area of the Federal capital of Brasilia (large immigrant population). By contrast, the zones in this hinterland band in the lowest quartile, i.e. with less than 29 % of partnered women 25–29 in cohabitation, are Pernambuco to Tocantins stretch in the North, Belo Horizonte and the whole of Minas Gerais in the center, and most of the “white” South. Virtually all of the remaining areas of the band are in the second quartile.

The spatial patterning of religious groups is given in the four sections of Map 8.2. The Catholics are a large majority (over 85 %) in three areas east of the



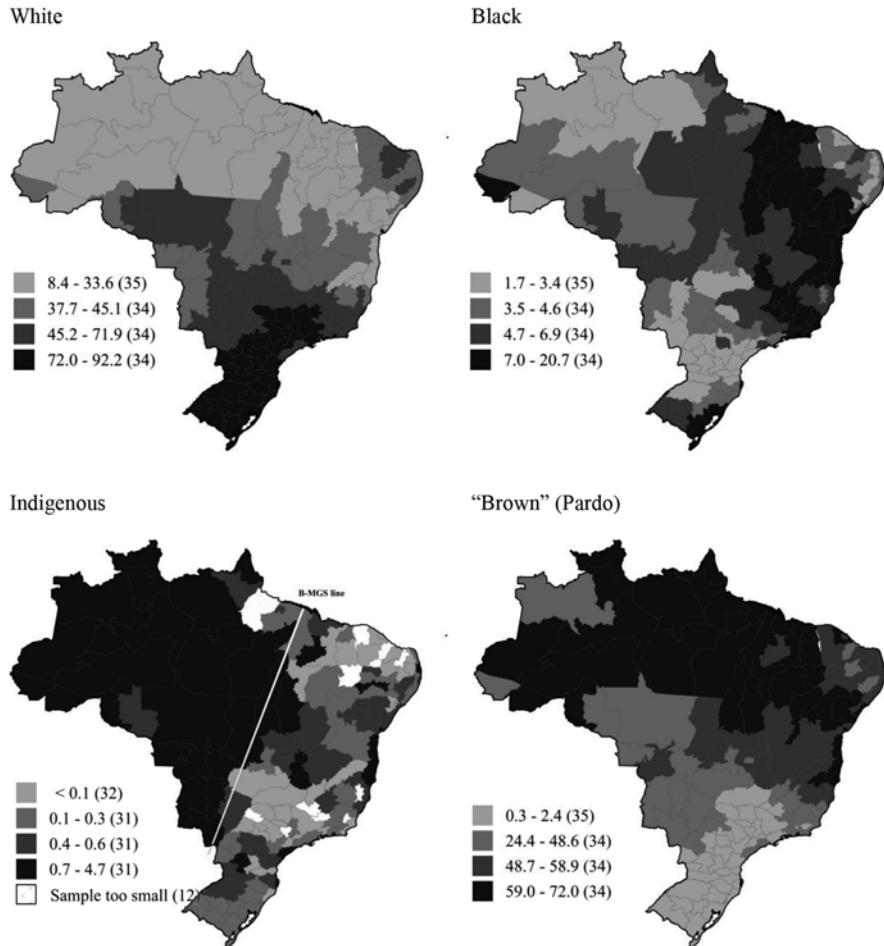
Map 8.2 Proportions in various religious groups, women 25–29; Brazilian meso-regions 2000
(Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

“Belem – Mato Grosso do Sul” (B-MGS) line: (i) a broad area centered around Pernambuco, Piaui and Eastern Baiana, (ii) a stretch in central Minas Gerais, and (iii) much of the Catarinense and Paranaense in the South. To the west of the B-MGS line there is an important concentration of Evangelicals (upper quartile = 21–35 %) and no religion or other religion (upper quartile = 8–18 %), whereas Spiritists and Afro-brazilians are rare. To the east of the SL-MG line, lower proportions Catholic are compensated by Evangelicals in three smaller areas: (i) meso-regions around Brasilia, (ii) the southern Bahia, Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro coast, and (iii) central São Paulo. The Spiritist and Afro-brazilian group is much smaller and the upper quartile only ranges from 2 to 8 % of young women in 2000. They are predominantly found in (i) Metropolitan Recife and Salvador, (ii) the central band from Espírito Santo/Rio to the Mato Grosso, and in (iii) Florianópolis and southern Rio Grande do Sul. The group without or other religions is somewhat larger and the upper quartile reaches 6–18 %. They are located along the Atlantic Ocean from Recife to the Paulista coast, in Brasilia and western Minas Gerais, and finally again in the Rio Grandense south.

The racial composition is presented in the four sections of Map 8.3, which immediately highlights the strong degree of spatial clustering. The white population forms a large majority of more than 70 % in the four southern states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul and in the south of Minas Gerais. The black population forms a similarly large majority in the North-East from the São Luis coast and running further south via an inland stretch to Sergipe, Bahia, eastern Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro. Two much smaller clusters are found along the Porto Alegre coast, and at the other extremity of the country in Acre.

The indigenous population is very largely located to the west of the SL-MGS line, but is also to be found in scattered areas of Bahia, Minas Gerais, the Paulista coast and in eastern Paraná. Finally, the important mixed race population (often referred to as “Pardo”) form a majority in all the Northern regions, with the exception of the Ceará-Pernambuco-Alagoas corner. Wherever whites are a majority of over 70 %, as in the South, the mixed race population obviously falls below 25 % (lowest quartile), but it is still the second largest group.

The three sections of Map 8.4 show the educational distribution. Many of the areas in the North with a majority of black, indigenous and mixed race populations also show up on the map of the population with no more than primary education. Apart from this contiguous zone of low education, including the central Baiano, there is no other area in the country that falls in this category, except again eastern Paraná with a more important indigenous population. Still in the “Norte” and “Nordeste”, the top quartile of secondary education mainly contains the large urban meso-regions, such as Manaus, Belem, São Luis, Fortaleza, Recife and Salvador, and of them only Recife makes it to the top quartile of university level education. The story for the Center and the South is completely the opposite, with many meso-regions making it to the top quartiles of secondary and/or university education. With respect to the latter, the regional cities and the large urban areas with institutions of higher learning are standing out, in the Mato Grosso and Goias as well as in the main parts of Minas Gerais and the South. Hence, the spatial distributions of race and education show a marked degree of correlation.

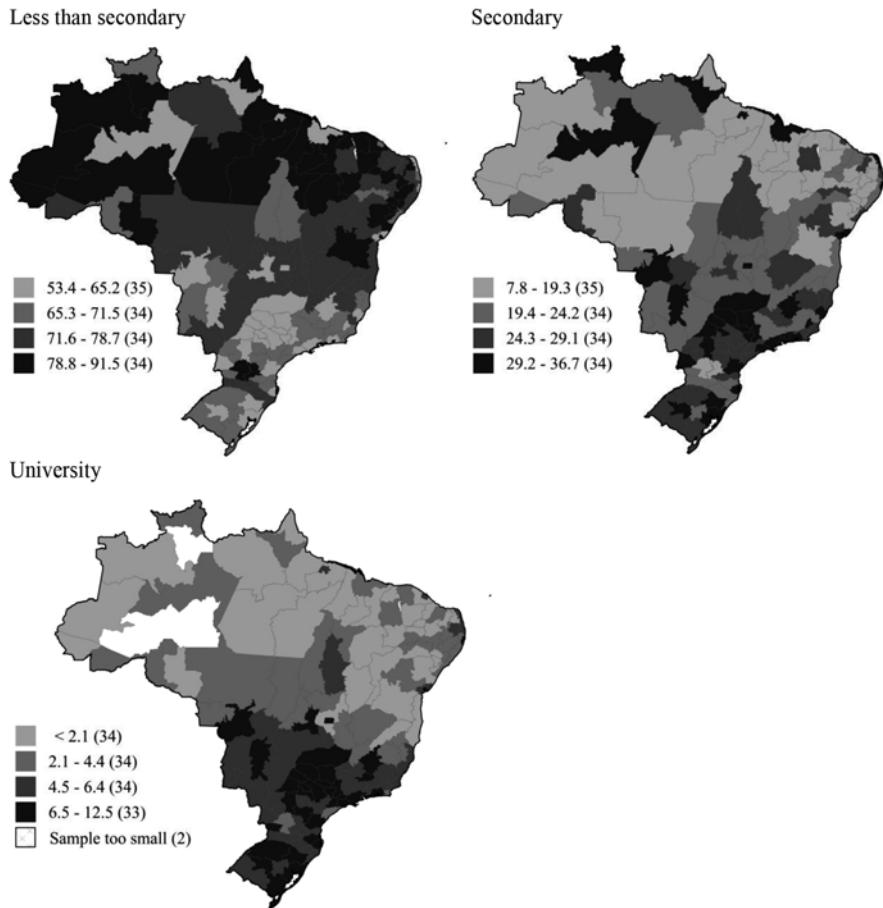


Map 8.3 Proportions in various racial categories, women 25–29; Brazilian meso-regions 2000
(Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

5 Explaining the Levels of Cohabitation as of the Year 2000

The harmonized IPUMS microdata files for Brazil cover the period up to the census of 2000. The percentages cohabiting among women 25–29 currently in any union for 2010 is also available from IBGE, but not the essential individual-level covariates. Hence, the statistical models are only constructed for the year 2000 at this point. The 2000 sample used here contains just over 4.6 million women 25–29 currently in a union, which is about 6 % of the total in Brazil.

The statistical method is that of contextual logistic regression. A very similar method was used by Covre-Sussai and Matthijs (2010), using the larger Brazilian states as spatial units instead of the micro-regions used here (see Map 8.1). Other



Map 8.4 Proportions in three education categories, women 25–29; Brazilian meso-regions, 2000
(Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

major differences compared to the present analysis is that these authors used a sample of couples of *all* ages, with individual characteristics being available for both men and women. Hence they could refine their categories by combining the information for each partner or spouse. In addition they have income and education as separate indicators. And given their much broader age range they also needed to include the number of children and the birth cohort of men stretching as far back as the 1920s.

Our dataset consists of individuals (women 25–29 in union) nested within meso-regions. We model the probability of partnered women to be in a cohabiting union (as opposed to being married). We include explanatory variables at the individual level (e.g. education, race, religion) and at the meso-regional level (e.g. % Catholics, % whites). To this end, multilevel models recognize the hierarchical structure and

are able to exploit hierarchically arranged data to differentiate the contextual effects from background effects for individuals. In particular, we use a two-level random intercept logistic regression model. Level 1 is the individual (i) and level 2 is the meso-region (j). In this model the intercept consists of two terms: a fixed component, β_0 , and a random effect at level j (meso-region) μ_{0j} . The model assumes that departures from the overall mean (μ_0) are normally distributed with mean zero and variance of σ_{u0}^2 . Therefore, meso-regions are not introduced into the models using fixed effects (i.e. including dummy variables for each of the 136 meso-regions in Brazil). Instead, we use the σ_{u0}^2 parameter to measure the variance across meso-regions. In the models that follow we use this variance as an indicator of the degree to which the introduction of individual-level variables as controls is capable of reducing the differences between the meso-regions. Normally, this variance should shrink as more and better individual-level predictors are introduced. If this is not so, then substantial spatial differences are persisting independently of the individual-level controls.

In Table 8.3 the results are given in the form of odds ratios (OR) of cohabiting relative to a reference category (value of unity) of the individual-level determinants. Model 1 is the “empty” model, but it estimates the variance between de meso-regions when there are no controls for the individual-level covariates. We start out with introducing religion and then add in race, and subsequently education and migrant status of the individuals. As can be seen, the odds ratios are very stable, and all in the expected direction. Compared to Catholics, the odds of cohabiting is much smaller among partnered Protestants and Evangelicals (OR=0.43 and 0.44 in model 5). By contrast, the odds is higher among “Others” (including Spiritists and Afro-brazilians (1.12), and much higher among persons without religion or of another faith (1.92)). Compared to partnered whites, indigenous and black women are roughly twice as likely to cohabit (2.14 and 1.98). The Pardo women are having risks that are more modest (OR=1.47), and other races resemble the whites (1.19). Not surprisingly, the educational gradient is steep, with lower educated partnered women being four times more likely to cohabit than partnered women with a university education (OR=4.02). Partnered women 25–29 with secondary education are also more likely to cohabit compared to those with a tertiary education (1.72). Finally, as expected, residence in another state increases the odds ratio, but only modestly so (OR=1.27).

None of these findings come as a surprise given the historical context of patterns of partnership formation in Brazil, and our findings are entirely in line with those of Covre-Sussai and Matthijs (2010). Given the much broader age group used in their sample, they are also capable of illustrating a very marked rise in cohabitation over marriage for each successively younger generation.

The more striking result of the analysis in Table 8.3 is that the variance between states is not reduced by the introduction of controls for individual-level characteristics. Clearly there are robust effects strictly operating at the regional level that continue to carry a substantial weight. Another way of showing this is to plot the meso-region effects (i.e. random part of the intercept) of Model 5 with all individual level predictors against the “empty” Model 1 effects without these controls.

Table 8.3 Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 by social characteristics, Brazil 2000

Category		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Religion						
Protestant Lutheran, Baptist		0.39	0.40	0.41	0.43	
Evangelical		0.50	0.47	0.44	0.44	
No religion		2.06	2.00	1.91	1.92	
Others		0.84	0.87	1.12	1.12	
Catholic (ref.)		1	1	1	1	
Race						
Black			2.27	1.97	1.98	
Brown Brazil			1.67	1.47	1.47	
Indigenous			2.46	2.11	2.14	
Others			1.16	1.19	1.19	
White (ref.)			1	1	1	
Education						
Less than Secondary				4.07	4.02	
Secondary				1.72	1.72	
University (ref.)				1	1	
Migrant						
Residence in another State					1.27	
Residence in State of birth (ref.)					1	
<i>Variance left between meso-regions</i>	0.32	0.34	0.30	0.34	0.32	
<i>Intercept</i>	-0.50	-0.41	-0.68	-1.82	-1.85	

Notes: Regression coefficients are reported in the appendix Table 8.7. All regression coefficients are statistically significant at the 0.0001 level

Source: Authors' tabulation based on census samples from IPUMS-International

This scattergram is presented in Fig. 8.1 and it clearly shows that controls for all individual-level variables do not change the map of cohabitation versus marriage among women 25–29.

In order to elucidate these regional effects, a Model 6 was tested with a typology of meso-regional characteristics being added. After exploring various possibilities, we settled for a contextual variable made up of eight categories of combinations of the following three variables: percentage Catholic in the meso-region, the percentage white and the percentage with more than secondary education. Each of these were dichotomized and split at their median. The median values for the 137 meso-regional values were 0.77 for proportions Catholic, 0.46 for proportions white and 0.15 for proportions with at least secondary education. The variables are respectively indicated by C, W and S. We use upper cases if the meso-region value is equal or above the median, and lower cases if it is below. The eight categories then range from CWS to cws, with all the other combinations in between, and together they form this meso-regions typology. The results with this contextual information being added to the regression are given in Table 8.4 (Model 6).

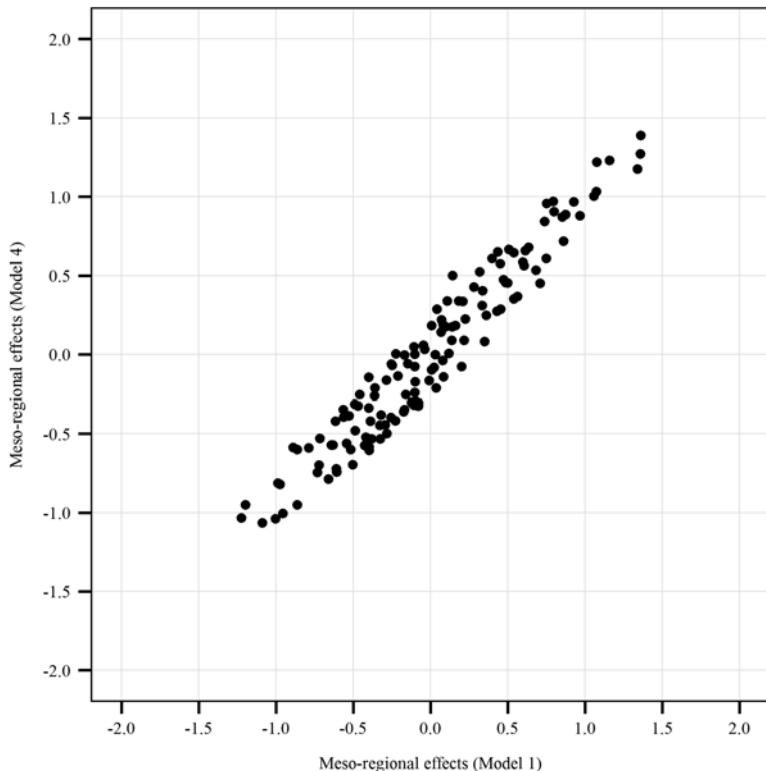


Fig. 8.1 Plot of the meso-region effects of the model with all individual-level variables against those of the “empty” model 1 (Source: Authors’ elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

In Model 6 the odds ratios for the individual-level variables are identical to those of Model 5, but the addition of the eight meso-regional types clearly reduces the variance of the random parts of the intercept, roughly from 0.30 to 0.19. This means that residence in any of the types helps in accounting for a woman’s status as being in cohabitation rather than in a marriage. Taking CWS as the reference category, residence in the cwS meso-regions increases the odds ratio the most (3.67), followed by residence in the cws and the CwS regions ($OR = 2.41$ and 2.12). A more modest effect is noted for the cWS and the cWs regions, whereas the Cws and the CWs meso-regions are not different from the CWS reference category.³

³ A Boolean minimization performed for these eight combinations and predicting their level of cohabitation being either above or below the overall median for all meso-regions produces similar results, which are easily interpretable. The combinations that fall below the median are:

$$\text{Coh} < \text{Me} = \text{C}(W + s) + \text{WS}$$

or

$$\text{Coh} < \text{Me} = \text{CW} + \text{Cs} + \text{WS}$$

These eight combinations can be reduced to four:

1. the “very low” group of meso-regions which are all more strongly Catholic and who are made up of three types (Cws+CWS+CWs, or CW+Cws) and which have relative risks in Model 6 comprised between 1.000 and 1.126,
2. a “moderately low” group which is white and less Catholic (cWs+cWS, or simply cW) with relative risks of 1.353 and 1.580,
3. a “moderately high” group with two non-white types (CwS and cws) and relative risks of 2.120 and 2.408 respectively,
4. and finally a “very high group” with the cws type only and a relative risk of 3.673.⁴

These four types are reproduced on Map 8.5, with the number of meso-regions in each of the categories mentioned between parentheses.

The main demarcations are again clear. The highest group cws is composed of mainly urban areas to the west of the B-MGS line or along the Atlantic coast. The same holds for the next highest group with a predominantly non-white population. At the other end of the distribution, the lowest group of more strongly Catholic meso-regions stands out, with the CW combination in the south and the Cws combination in the North-East.

i.e. meso-regions tend to be below the median level of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 when they exhibit the following combinations of just two characteristics, i.e. they are either Catholic and white(CW), or Catholic and lower education (Cs), or white and higher education (WS).

A linear decomposition of conditional probabilities of cohabiting using 4 dichotomized predictors, i.e. for the 16 combinations, gives the following average net effects for the contrasts:

$$C - c = -0.56$$

$$W - w = -0.67$$

$$S - s = +0.11 (\text{but interaction with } w)$$

$$M - m = -0.09$$

This means that, across the three other dichotomies, the average difference in cohabitation percentages between the more Catholic and the less Catholic areas (C-c) is 56 percentage points less cohabitation in the areas with the C condition. Similarly, such a strong contrast is found for white versus non-white areas, with the former having on average 67 percentage points fewer cohabitating women. The contrast for the migration variable (M-m) is very small and negligible. However, the education contrast goes in the opposite direction from what is expected. This is entirely due to the wS and ws combinations: in non-white areas, cohabitation among young women is MORE prevalent in the better educated meso-regions than in the less educated ones. This may reflect the fact that non-white better educated women are starting partnerships much later, and therefore have a greater likelihood of still being in the premarital cohabitation phase. However, it should be noted that this is only so if the non-white condition (i.e. w) is met as well. In white areas (i.e. W), the educational contrast is smaller and goes in the expected direction, i.e. more cohabitation in the s than in the S categories.

⁴The fact that the cws group of meso-regions has the highest relative risk is concordant with the finding mentioned in the previous footnote, i.e. that non-white and not predominantly catholic areas with more better educated women have higher cohabitation rates possibly because of these women delaying partner selection to a greater extend.

Table 8.4 Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, Brazil multilevel logistic regression results for proportions cohabiting among women 25–29 in a union by type of meso-region, Brazil 2000

Catholic – White – Secondary (CWS) (ref.)	1
Catholic – No White – No Secondary (Cws)	1.12
Catholic – No White – Secondary (CwS)	2.11
Catholic – White – No Secondary (CWs)	1.13
No Catholic – No White – No Secondary (cws)	2.40
No Catholic – No White – Secondary (cwS)	3.67
No Catholic – White – No Secondary (cWs)	1.35
No Catholic – White – Secondary (cWS)	1.58
Individual level variables: same relative risks as in Model 5	
<i>Variance among meso-regions</i>	0.19
<i>Intercept</i>	-2.26

Notes: Odds ratios for individual variables same as in Model 5. Regression coefficients of the full model are reported in the appendix Table 8.7. All regression coefficients are statistically significant at the 0.0001 level

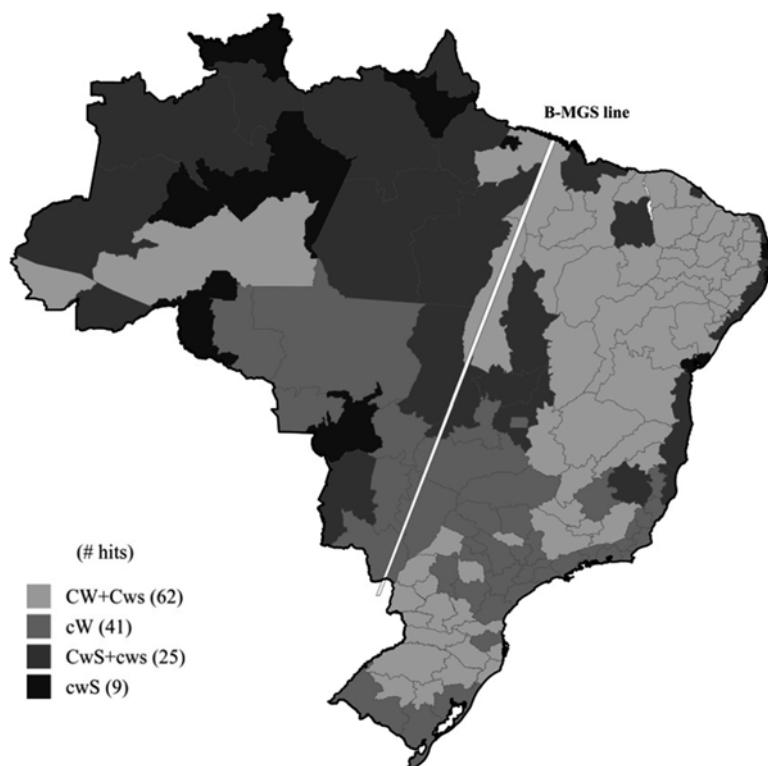
Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

The conclusions concerning the differentials in levels of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 as of the year 2000 are, first and foremost, that the historical patterns are still very visible, and that the racial and religious contrast are by far the two dominant ones. Moreover, these characteristics are operating both at the individual and the contextual level and in a reinforcing fashion. In other words, whites in predominantly white or Catholic meso-regions are even less likely to cohabit than whites elsewhere, whereas non-whites in non-white or less Catholic meso-regions are much more like to cohabit than non-whites elsewhere. The force of history and its concomitant spatial patterns clearly still formed the “baseline” onto which the more recent developments are being grafted.

6 Recent Trends

We are able to follow the trends in cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 for the period 1974–2010 by level of education and for the period 1980–2010 by municipality and by meso-region. These data are based on the IPUMS census samples and on IBGE data for 2010, and eloquently show the extraordinary magnitude of the Brazilian “cohabitation boom”.

The evolution by education is presented on Fig. 8.2. Since social class and education differences are closely correlated in Brazil, these percentages duly reflect the rise in cohabitation in all social strata since the 1970s.



Map 8.5 The four types of meso-regions distinguished according to their relative risk of cohabitation for partnered women 25–29, 2000 regions (legend: see text) (*Source*: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

More specifically, the 1970 results can be taken as a “historical baseline” against which the subsequent evolution can be evaluated. A rather striking feature of this initial cohabitation profile by education is that consensual unions by no means constituted the dominant union type among the lesser educated women: less than 10% of such women were cohabiting in 1970.⁵ This is a strikingly low figure compared to the incidence of cohabitation among such women in the northern Andean countries and in many of the Central American ones. It reveals that, apart from northern coastal towns and areas to the west of the B-MGS line, cohabitation was not at all a common feature, not even among the lower strata of the population. But, from the mid-70s onward, there is a remarkably steady trend to much higher levels. Initially, the rise is largest among the women with no more than partial or complete primary education, who both exceed the 20% level by 1991. After that date, however, women

⁵The share of cohabitation among all partnered women in a union as of the 1960 census was only 6.45%.

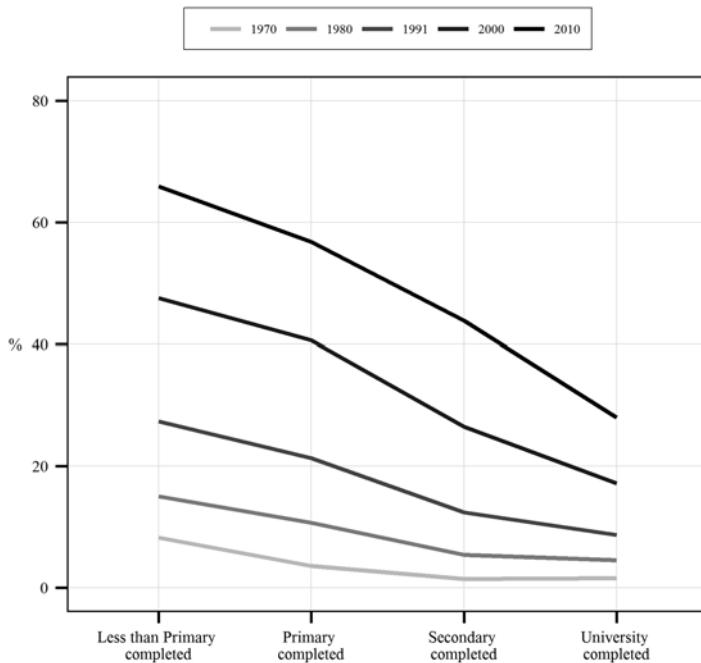


Fig. 8.2 Percent cohabiting among partnered women 25–29 by education, Brazil 1970–2010
(Source Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

with completed secondary education are rapidly catching up, and shortly thereafter women with a university education follow as well. The overall result by 2010 is clear: the educational gradient of cohabitation remains negative throughout, but the levels shift up in a very systematic fashion among all social strata. Cohabitation is now no longer the prerogative of the lesser educated women. And by extension, it is no longer an exclusive feature of the non-white population either. Moreover, it is most likely that the upward trend will continue in the near future, and that the negative education gradient will become less steep as well.

The availability of six successive censuses, i.e. from 1960 to 2010, also offers the possibility of following cohort profiles by education. These are shown in Fig. 8.3. There are two issues here: (1) The cohort layering and the pace of change, and (2) the slope of each cohort line over time. There has been a steady cohort-wise progression of cohabitation, with successive accelerations for each younger cohort compared to its immediate predecessor. That is abundantly clear for all levels of education, and the lower educated ones obviously lead the way. This is not surprising and perfectly consistent with the evolution of the cross-sectional profiles shown in Fig. 8.2. But when inspecting cohort tracks between ages 20 and 50, an interesting feature emerges: most of the cohorts have *upward* slopes. This is caused by the rapid increases in percentages cohabiting during the period 1990–2010. Evidently, before that period the progression of cohabitation was slow among the older cohorts when

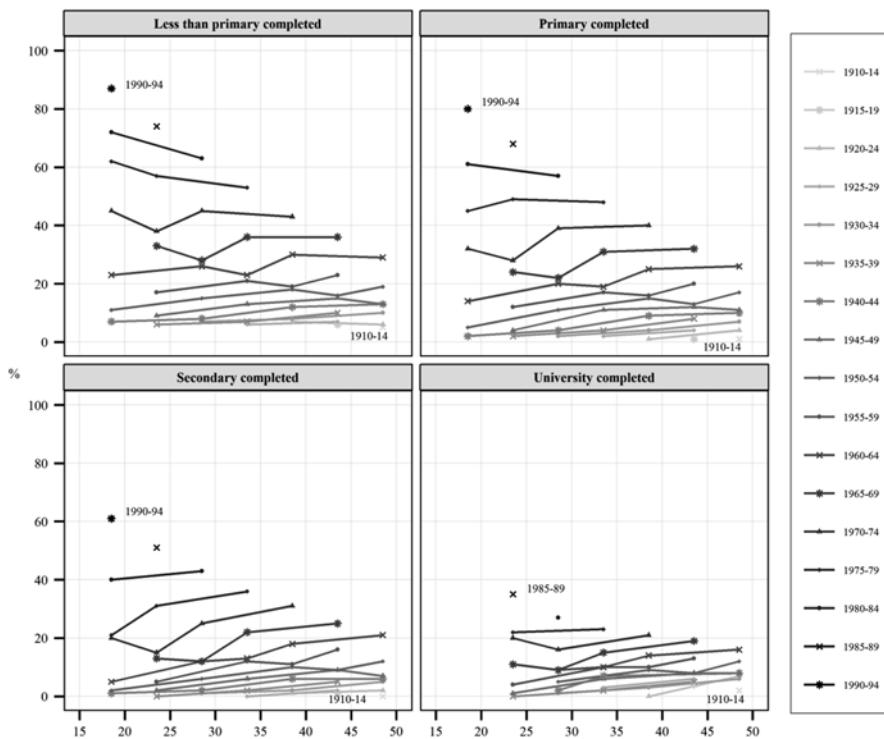


Fig. 8.3 Birth-cohort profiles of the share of cohabitation among partnered women up till age 50 by level of education. Brazilian cohorts born between 1910 and 1995 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

they started out, but later on their shares of cohabitation grew when they reached older ages, i.e. between 30 and 50. This remarkable later age “catching up” is found at *all* educational levels, Brazilian university graduates included. It is only when younger incoming cohorts born after 1975 are reaching much higher starting levels that the slopes reverse, and that cohabitation may be more frequently converted into marriage before age 30–34. There is also the possibility of a selection effect, because the composition of those in a union at age 20 may not be identical to those in a union at age 30. The final caveat is that the stability of the aggregate percentage cohabiting across ages does not imply longer term cohabitation with the same partner. Frequent partner change within the same type of union would also produce flat cohort profiles for that type.

The spatial pattern is equally worthy of further investigation. In Fig. 8.4 we have ordered the meso-regions according to their percentage of partnered women 25–29 in cohabitation as of 1980. That plot shows that a large majority of meso-

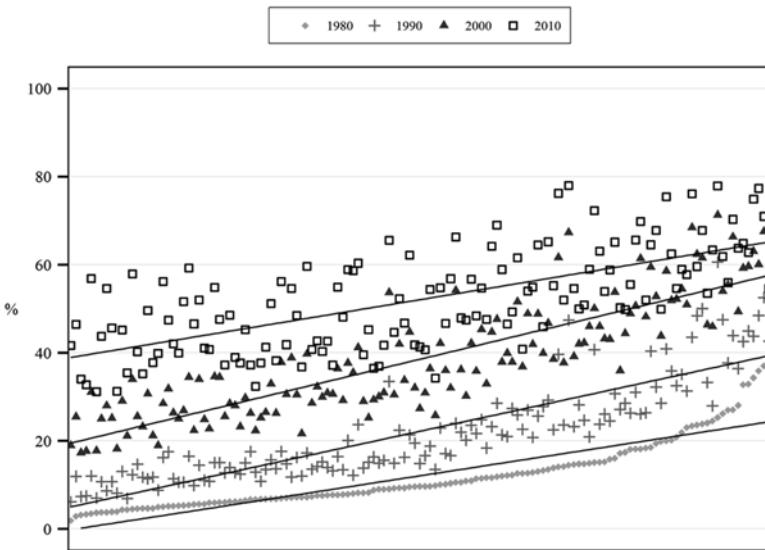
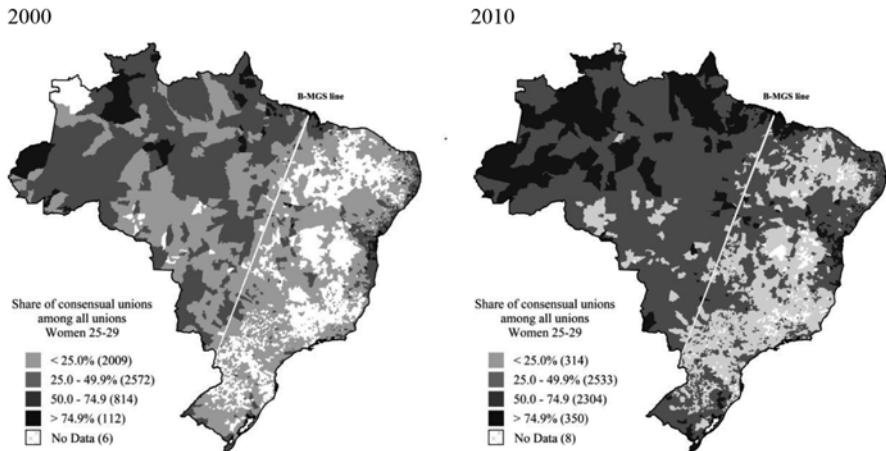


Fig. 8.4 Increase in the percentages cohabiting among all partnered women 25–29 in Brazilian meso-regions: 1980 (bottom), 1990, 2000 and 2010 (top) (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

regions did not have levels of cohabitation exceeding 20 % as of that date, but also that the outliers exceeded 30 %. By 1990, there is a universal increase of cohabitation, but the vanguard regions of 1980 exhibit the larger increments, and several of them reach 50 %. Between 1990 and 2000, there is a further increase by on average about 15 percentage points, and this increment is fairly evenly observed for the entire distribution of meso-regions. The vanguard areas now exceed the 60 % level, but the areas at the tail also pass the 20 % mark. The last decade, however, is characterized by a typical catching up of the meso-regions at the lower end of the distribution. For these, the increment is on average close to 20 percentage point, whereas the increment is about half as much for the vanguard regions. As of 2010 no regions are left with less than 30 % cohabitation, and the upper tail is about to reach the 80 % level.

A much more detailed view is also available by municipality for the last decade, and these maps are being shown in the appendix (Map 8.6). The main features are: (1) the further advancement in all areas to the west of the B-MGS line, (2) the inland diffusion from the Atlantic coast in the North, and (3) the catching up of the southern states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina.



Map 8.6 Percent cohabiting among all partnered women 25–29 in Brazilian municipalities, 2000 and 2010 (Source: Authors' elaboration based on census samples from IPUMS-International)

7 Further Examination of the Spatial Trends in 136 Meso-Regions, 1980–2010

In this section we will examine the relative pace of the change in proportions cohabiting among women in a union aged 25–29 over the 30 year period between 1980 and 2010, using the meso-regions and their characteristics as of the year 2000. To this end, the following covariates were constructed for women 25–29: (i) the percentage Catholic, (ii) the percent white, (iii) the percent with full secondary education or more, (iv) the percentage immigrants, i.e. born out-of-state, and (v) the percentage urban (Brazilian census definition). We shall also use two different measures of change. The first one is the classic exponential rate of increase, whereas the second one is a measure that takes into account that a given increment is more difficult to achieve for regions that already covered more of the overall transition to start with than for regions which at the onset of the measurement period still had a longer way to go. This measure will be denoted as “Delta Cohabitation”, and it relates the gains in a particular period to the total gains that could still be achieved.

The classic rate of increase is defined as:

$$r30 = \ln(Cohab2010 / Cohab1980)$$

And the Delta30 measure as:

$$\text{Delta30} = (\text{Cohab 2010} - \text{Cohab 1980}) / (0.950 - \text{Cohab 1980})$$

Table 8.5 Prediction of the increase in cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 in the meso regions of Brazil, period 1980–2010: standardized regression coefficients and R squared (OLS)

Covariates in 2000	<i>r30</i>	<i>r30 with Cohab 1980</i>	<i>Delta30</i>
% w. Catholic	0.66	0.22	-0.15 ns
% w. White	0.42	0.11*	-0.26**
% w. Secondary educ.	0.12 ns	0.06 ns	0.04 ns
% w. Migrant	0.07 ns	-0.03 ns	0.01 ns
% w. Urban	-0.32*	-0.22*	-0.37*
% w. Cohab 1980	Not used	-0.68	Not used
<i>R squared</i>	0.65	0.85	0.24

Note: All the coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ except at * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

The numerator of Delta captures the actual increase in cohabitation in the observed 30 year period, whereas the denominator measures how far off the region still was at the onset from an upper maximum level, set here at 95 % cohabiting. This upper limit is chosen arbitrarily, but taking into consideration that some Brazilian meso-regions are now already at about 80 %, and that in other Latin American countries, some regions have almost universal cohabitation among women 25–29.

The outcomes of the OLS regressions are displayed in Table 8.5 in the form of comparable standardized regression coefficients (betas). The complete regression results are given in the appendix Table 8.8.

As indicated by the results for r30, the highest rates of increase are found in the areas with larger Catholic and white female populations. The percentages born out-of-state and with secondary education produce no significant effects, whereas urban meso-regions exhibit slower rates of increase. The large standardized regression coefficients for percentages Catholics and Whites come as no surprise, since these areas had the lowest cohabitation incidence to start with and have the widest margins for subsequent catching up. This is indeed what is happening: when the initial levels of cohabitation measured as of 1980 are added, the standardized regression coefficients of percentages Catholic and white drop considerably, and most of the variance is explained by the level of cohabitation at the onset. The higher that level, the larger the denominator of r30, and hence the slower the relative pace of change.

Delta30, however, corrects for this artifact by dividing by the remaining gap between the level of 1980 and the level taken as that for a “completed” transition. Regions with higher levels at the onset are now at a greater advantage and get a bonus for still completing a portion of the remaining transition. The standardized regression coefficients for Delta30 indicate that the Catholic and the white meso-regions were on average closing relatively *smaller* portions of the remaining transition, and the same was also true for urban meso-regions.

Hence, in terms of classic growth rates of cohabitation among partnered women 25–29, predominantly Catholic and white regions are exhibiting the expected catching up, but in terms of the portion covered of the amount of transition still left, these regions were not doing better than the ones which were further advanced to start with. In addition, urban meso-regions tended to move slower irrespective of the type of measurement of change. Much of this amounts to stating that the steady upward shift of the meso-regions, as depicted in Fig. 8.3, occurred rather evenly in all types of meso-regions, with the exception of a somewhat slower transition in the urban ones.

8 Conclusions

The availability of the micro data in the IPUMS samples for several censuses spanning a period of 40 years permits a much more detailed study of differentials and trends in cohabitation in Brazil than has hitherto been the case. The gist of the story is that the historical race/class and religious differentials and the historical spatial contrasts have largely been maintained, but are now operating at much higher levels than in the 1970s. During the last 40 years cohabitation has dramatically increased in all strata of the Brazilian population, and it has spread geographically to all areas in tandem with further expansions in the regions that had historically higher levels to start with. Moreover, the probability of cohabiting depends not only on individual-level characteristics but also on additional contextual effects operating at the level of meso-regions. Furthermore, the progression over time shows both a clear cohort-wise layering and a steady cohort profile extending over the entire life span until at least the ages of 50 and 60. Hence, we are essentially not dealing with a pattern of brief trials of partnership followed by marriage, but with extended cohabitation.

The rise of cohabitation in Brazil fits the model of the “Second demographic transition”, but it is grafted onto a historical pattern which is still manifesting itself in a number of ways. Social class and race differentials have not been neutralized yet, young cohabitants with lower education and weaker earning capacity can continue to co-reside with parents in extended households (cf. Esteve et al. 2012b), and residence in predominantly Catholic and white meso-regions is still a counteracting force.

All this is reminiscent of the great heterogeneity among countries, regions and social groups that emerged from the studies of the “First demographic transition”, and especially from those focusing on the fertility decline. Then too, it was found that there were universal driving forces, but that there were many context- and path-specific courses toward the given goal of controlled fertility. In other words, the local “sub-narrative” mattered a great deal. The same is being repeated for the “Second demographic transition” as well, and the Brazilian example illustrates this point just perfectly.

Appendix

Table 8.6 Percent cohabiting among partnered women 25–29 in Brazil and Brazilian States, 1960–2010 censuses (IPUMS samples)

	1960	1970	1980	1991	2000	2010
Rondônia	—	13.6	15.4	30.7	42.6	53.4
Acre	—	11.0	18.8	44.6	60.0	61.1
Amazonas	—	9.6	17.5	41.1	60.1	67.0
Roraima	—	20.1	22.9	45.8	61.6	68.2
Pará	—	19.0	22.2	38.3	58.9	70.4
Amapá	—	20.6	23.6	45.1	68.7	76.2
Tocantins	—	—	—	19.4	38.3	54.6
Maranhão	—	13.6	19.2	28.5	48.3	64.7
Piauí	—	4.0	4.2	11.9	27.6	44.8
Ceará	2.48	3.4	7.3	17.9	35.7	50.4
Rio Grande do Norte	5.99	6.2	9.6	22.2	46.2	60.2
Paraíba	5.76	5.5	11.1	21.7	40.8	49.6
Pernambuco	12.34	13.7	21.4	31.4	48.5	53.9
Alagoas	10.35	11.1	16.6	28.2	46.0	53.5
Sergipe	13.56	12.0	18.5	33.4	50.9	63.3
Bahia	16.19	15.1	22.5	32.2	49.0	60.2
Minas Gerais	3.08	3.7	7.1	13.6	26.0	37.7
Espírito Santo	—	8.1	11.8	20.8	34.2	40.7
Rio de Janeiro	12.60	13.9	22.6	32.0	45.1	52.6
Guanabara	—	12.4	—	—	—	—
São Paulo	2.57	4.3	10.3	17.6	34.8	43.4
Serra dos Aimorés	5.17	—	—	—	—	—
Paraná	2.49	3.1	7.0	13.6	28.9	43.4
Santa Catarina	—	3.5	5.4	12.6	30.4	50.8
Rio Grande do Sul	5.22	5.0	9.2	19.8	40.6	60.6
Mato Grosso do Sul	—	—	18.1	28.2	45.2	53.6
Mato Grosso	11.62	10.8	13.5	24.9	44.2	55.6
Goiás	5.87	7.3	11.9	21.8	36.5	46.6
Distrito Federal	3.90	8.5	14.8	28.2	42.0	50.0
Fernando de Noronha	0.00	—	44.4	—	—	—
Total	6.17 ^a	7.6	13.0	22.2	39.3	51.0

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

^aThe 1960 total does not include the values of the states with no data

Table 8.7 Estimated odds ratios from a multilevel logistic regression model of unmarried cohabitation among partnered women 25–29 by social characteristics and types of meso-regions, Brazil 2000

Variables/category	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Religion						
Protestant Lutheran, Baptist	-0.94	-0.93	-0.85	-0.84	-0.84	
Evangelical	-0.71	-0.75	-0.83	-0.83	-0.83	
No religion	0.72	0.69	0.65	0.65	0.65	
Others	-0.17	-0.14	0.11	0.12	0.12	
Catholic (ref.)	0	0	0	0	0	
Race						
Black		0.82	0.68	0.69	0.68	
Brown Brazil		0.51	0.39	0.38	0.38	
Indigenous		0.90	0.75	0.76	0.76	
Others		0.15	0.17	0.18	0.18	
White (ref.)		0	0	0	0	
Education						
Less than Secondary			1.40	1.39	1.39	
Secondary			0.54	0.54	0.54	
University (ref.)			0	0	0	
Migrant						
Residence in another State				0.24	0.24	
Residence in State of birth (ref.)				0	0	
Types of meso-regions						
Catholic – No White – No Secondary (Cws)					0.11	
Catholic - No White – Secondary (CwS)					0.75	
Catholic – White – No Secondary (CWs)					0.12	
No Catholic – No White – No Secondary (cws)					0.88	
No Catholic – No White – Secondary (cwS)					1.30	
No Catholic – White – No Secondary (cWs)					0.30	
No Catholic – White – Secondary (cWS)					0.46	
Catholic – White – Secondary (CWS) (ref.)					0	
<i>Meso-regions variance</i>	0.32	0.34	0.30	0.34	0.32	0.19
<i>Intercept</i>	-0.50	-0.41	-0.68	-1.82	-1.85	-2.26

Note: All regression coefficients are statistically significant at the 0.0001 level

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International

Table 8.8 Full OLS regression results of the three models predicting the change in percentages cohabiting among partnered women between 1980 and 2010 in 136 Brazilian meso-regions

Variable	DF	Parameter Estim.	Standar Error	t value	Pr> t	Parameter standardized
(a) $r30 = \ln(\text{Coha 2010}/\text{Coha 1980})$, results without control for initial cohabitation level.						
Rsq=0.650						
Intercept	1	-0.98518	0.3728	-2.64	0.009	0
Catholic	1	3.47761	0.34453	10.09	<.0001	0.657
White	1	0.9691	0.153	6.33	<.0001	0.422
Secondary	1	0.96482	1.08298	0.89	0.375	0.120
Migrant	1	0.27356	0.22425	1.22	0.225	0.071
Urban	1	-1.04587	0.4321	-2.42	0.017	-0.317
(b) $r30$, results with initial cohabitation level of 1980 (Coha 1980). Rsq=0.845						
Intercept	1	1.5852	0.31962	4.96	<.0001	0
Catholic	1	1.15925	0.2926	3.96	0.000	0.219
White	1	0.25654	0.11627	2.21	0.029	0.112
Secondary	1	0.47144	0.72378	0.65	0.516	0.059
Migrant	1	-0.09826	0.15245	-0.64	0.520	-0.026
Urban	1	-0.7088	0.28957	-2.45	0.016	-0.215
Cohabitation 1980	1	-4.33242	0.33818	-12.81	<.0001	-0.679
(c) $\Delta r30 = (\text{Coha 2010} - \text{Coha 1980}) / (0.950 - \text{Coha 1980})$. Rsq=0.239						
Intercept	1	0.8854	0.12543	7.06	<.0001	0
Catholic	1	-0.17619	0.11592	-1.52	0.131	-0.146
White	1	-0.13537	0.05147	-2.63	0.010	-0.259
Secondary	1	0.07723	0.36437	0.21	0.833	0.042
Migrant	1	0.00421	0.07545	0.06	0.956	0.005
Urban	1	-0.27755	0.14538	-1.91	0.058	-0.369

Note: Covariates measured in 2000 as percentages for women 25–29 in each meso-region

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS–International

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Banco Central do Brasil. (2009). Evolução do IDH das Grandes Regiões e Unidades da Federação. *Boletim Regional do Banco Central do Brasil*, Janeiro.
- Borges, D. E. (1994). The family in Bahia, Brazil, 1870–1945. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Also excerpted in eHRAF World Cultures.
- Brazil, *Código Civil*, 2002 (Civil Code).
- Corrêa, M. (1993). Repensando a família patriarcal brasileira: notas para o estudo das formas de organização familiar no Brasil. In M. Corrêa (Ed.), *Colcha de retalhos: estudos sobre a família no Brasil*. Campinas: Editora da Unicamp.
- Covre-Sussai, M., & Matthijs, K. (2010). *Socio-economic and cultural correlates of cohabitation in Brazil*. Paper presented at the 2010 Chaire Quételet Conference, Louvain-la-Neuve.
- de Almeida, A. M. (1987). Notas sobre a família no Brasil. In A. M. de Almeida et al. (Eds.), *Pensando a família no Brasil: da colônia à modernidade* (pp. 53–66). Rio de Janeiro: Espaço e Tempo. ISBN 8585114207.
- de Alzevedo, T., Beierle, J. B., Edward, D. et al. (1999). Bahian Brazilians. *eHRAF World Cultures*. Yale University Human Relations Area files (electronic version: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/ehrafe/browseCultures.do?owc=SO11#owc>)
- de Mesquita Samara, E. (1987). Tendências atuais da história da família no Brasil. In A. M. Almeida et al. (Eds.), *Pensando a família no Brasil* (pp. 25–36). Rio de Janeiro: Espaço e Tempo.
- de Mesquita Samara, E. (1997). A família no Brasil: história e historiografia. *História Revista, Goiânia*, 2(2), 7–21.
- de Mesquita Samara, E. (2002). O que mudou na família brasileira? (Da Colônia à atualidade). *Psicologia USP*, 13(2), 27–48.
- Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2012). Síntese de indicadores sociais 2012. Uma análise das condições de vida da população brasileira. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, Estudos e Pesquisas. Informação demográfica e socioeconômica, Vol. 29.
- Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2013). Banco de Dados Agregados. Sistema IBGE de Recuperação Automática – SIDRA. Available in: www.ibge.gov.br
- Esteve, A., Lesthaeghe, R., & López-Gay, A. (2012a). The Latin American cohabitation boom, 1970–2007. *Population and Development Review*, 38(1), 55–81.
- Esteve, A., Garcia-Román, J., & Lesthaeghe, R. (2012b). The family context of cohabitation and single motherhood in Latin America. *Population and Development Review*, 38(4), 699–719.
- Freyre, G. (1933). *Casa grande e senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal*. 41st edition reprinted in 2000. Rio de Janeiro: Record.
- Goody, J. (1976). *Production and reproduction. A comparative study of the domestic domain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9780521290883.
- Guimarães Neto, L. (1998). Ciclos econômicos e desigualdades regionais no Brasil. *Cadernos de Estudos Sociais*, 14(2), 315–342.
- Holt, K. (2005). Marriage choices in a plantation society: Bahia, Brazil. *International Review of Social History*, 50(Suppl S13), 25–41.
- IPEA. (2010). Dimensão, Evolução e Projeção da Pobreza por Região e por Estado no Brasil. *Comunicados do Ipea*, 58. Brasília: Governo Federal. Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos da Presidência da República.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (2010). The unfolding story of the second demographic transition. *Population and Development Review*, 36(2), 211–252.
- Minnesota Population Center. (2014). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). version 6.3. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Nogales Vasconcelos, A. M., & Forte Gomes, M. M. (2012). Transição demográfica: a experiência brasileira. *Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde*, 21(4), 539–548.
- Quilodrán, J. (1999). L'union libre en Amérique latine: aspects récents d'un phénomène séculaire. *Cahiers Québécois de Démographie*, 28(1–2), 53–80.

- Quilodrán, J. (2008). A post-transitional nuptiality model in Latin America? Paper presented at the *International seminar on changing transitions to marriage*, New Delhi, India, 10–12 September.
- Ribeiro, D. (1995). *O povo brasileiro: a formação e sentido do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- Roberts, G. W., & Sinclair, S. A. (1978). *Women in Jamaica. Patterns of reproduction and family*. New York: KTO Press.
- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2005). *Unión y cohabitación en América Latina: modernidad, exclusión, diversidad*. Santiago de Chile: CELADE, División de Población de la CEPAL and UNFPA, Serie Población y Desarrollo 57.
- Smith, R. T. (1956). *The negro family in British Guyana. Family structure and social status in the villages*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Vidal Souza, C., & Rodrigues Botelho, T. (2001). Modelos nacionais e regionais de família no pensamento social brasileiro. *Estudos Feministas*, 415(2), 414–432.

Chapter 9

The Rise of Cohabitation in the Southern Cone

Georgina Binstock, Wanda Cabella, Viviana Salinas, and Julián López-Colás

1 Introduction

Argentina, Chile and Uruguay share several characteristics in terms of the historical composition of their population and the demographic and social trends that they have followed. The three countries also share social and cultural patterns that differentiate them from the rest of the region. These countries were not political or economic empires before the Spanish conquest, as were Mexico and Peru; instead, they were largely uninhabited territories that were progressively populated as the Spanish Crown expanded. The three countries have experienced a deep process of *mestizaje* since Colonial times, as did the rest of Latin America, but they were more ethnically homogeneous in terms of larger shares of Europeans (Frankema 2008) and smaller shares of Africans, who arrived as enslaved workers. The indigenous population did not have the salience that it had in other Latin American countries, especially in Argentina and Uruguay (Pellegrino 2010). In Chile, the native population had more importance historically, particularly regarding the reluctance of the *mapuche* people (the main native

G. Binstock
CONICET-Centro de Estudios de Población (CENEP), Buenos Aires, Argentina
e-mail: gbinstock@cenep.org.ar

W. Cabella (✉)
Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay
e-mail: wanda.cabella@cienciassociales.edu.uy

V. Salinas
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile
e-mail: vmsalina@uc.cl

J. López-Colás
Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain
e-mail: jlopez@ced.uab.cat

group) to surrender, first to the Spanish Crown and then to the Chilean government, but the group was confined to specific areas in the country's south. As a result, the proportion of the indigenous population is currently small in all three countries as measured by self-identification (4–5% in Chile and 2% and 4% in Argentina and Uruguay, respectively, according to census data from 2002, 2010 and 2011).

At the end of the nineteenth century, this region received important contingents of European migrants, mainly from Italy and Spain. The influx of European immigrants was not as large in Chile, but it existed and was encouraged by the government as a way to populate the country's southern region. Immigration significantly influenced the cultural patterns and demographic characteristics of these countries. Argentina and Uruguay are well known as pioneers of the demographic transition in Latin America (Pantelides 2006), where the fertility decline followed the European path; in Chile, the fertility decline began in the mid-1960s, similar to the rest of Latin America (Chackiel and Schkolnik 1992). By the middle of the twentieth century, the total fertility rate in the three countries was three children per woman, which was half of the value of the sub-continent.

The early development of welfare states in the region also contributed to the introduction of modern behaviours. Argentina and Uruguay organized their welfare states at the beginning of the twentieth century, whereas Chile did so in the 1920s. In terms of education, the three countries experienced early expansions of their educational systems as the welfare state developed. The gross rates of enrolment in primary education were relatively high at the beginning of the twentieth century compared with other Latin American countries (except for Costa Rica, which also had relatively high rates) (Frankema 2008). Laws that established compulsory primary education were enacted in 1877 in Uruguay, 1884 in Argentina, and 1920 in Chile. Women had early access and similar rates of education as men since the beginning and during most of the twentieth century, which was similar to the situation in the US and the most advanced European economies. Gender equality was especially clear at the primary level, but there were comparatively low levels of gender inequality concerning access to secondary and tertiary education (Frankema 2008). Over the course of the twentieth century, the educational system expanded, similar to the rest of Latin America. Around 2010, of the population aged 25 years and older, approximately 40% in Argentina, 52% in Chile and 42% in Uruguay had completed at least a secondary education (12 years of schooling or more).

The early creation of social security systems that covered the population in the formal sector of the economy, including retirement benefits, may be related to the low proportion of extended and composite households in the Southern Cone compared with the rest of Latin America (Arriagada 2002; García and Rojas 2002). In the three countries, nuclear households that include only one family are currently the rule, as 80% or more of the population live in this type of household. The proportion of people who live in extended-family households has decreased sharply in the last two decades (Ullmann et al. 2014).

Despite these similarities concerning population composition and the development of the welfare state, there are differences in the countries that may shape the fertility and family formation patterns that they follow. Uruguay showed the earliest

and highest level of secularization because divorce has been possible since 1907 (Caetano and Geymonat 1997). Although the State-Church division occurred at the end of the nineteenth century in the three countries, in practice, the influence of the Church continued to be important in public matters in Argentina and Chile (Torrado 2003). In these countries, divorce laws were approved late in the twentieth century in the case of Argentina (1987) and in the first decade of this century in Chile (2004).

Uruguay is on the cutting edge in terms of legal changes and recognition of the demands of civil society, which likely reflects its high rate of secularization and the diminishing power of the Church. Of the three countries, Uruguay is the only country where abortion is legal in all circumstances since the approval of a new law in 2012.

In recent years, the three countries have made some progress regarding the recognition of legal rights for consensual unions. Towards the end of the twentieth century (1985 in Argentina, 1998 in Chile and 2004 in Uruguay), changes in the *ley de filiación* ended the privileges of children born within marriages, which blurred any differences in the rights of children who were born within and outside marriage in terms of inheritance and alimony. Additionally, the three countries introduced different legal measures to recognize informal unions in the first decade of this century, and same-sex marriages were legally recognized in Argentina and Uruguay (in 2010 and 2013, respectively).

These changes imply a recognition of diversity concerning individual and sexual identities, which contributes to greater tolerance and individual autonomy. In this vein, it is reasonable to consider an ideational change according to the postulates of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT).

2 Historical Trends in Cohabitation in the Southern Cone

The Southern Cone has historically had low levels of cohabitation compared with the rest of Latin America. The three countries appear at the bottom of the ranking by Quilodrán (2003) regarding the prevalence of informal unions in Latin America. This ranking is based on census data from 1960 to 2000, and the rates in the three countries are lower than 20 %.

Historical studies suggest that informal unions were not necessarily rare in the Southern Cone, but their overall prevalence was lower than the rest of the region. The social recognition and acceptance of these types of unions were also low. These studies typically indicate a prevalence of cohabitation that is higher in rural areas and among the poor (Pellegrino 1997; Barrán and Nahum 1979; Schkolnik and Pantelides 1974; Moreno 1997; Ciccerchia 1989, 1994)

Cohabiting unions have historically had great importance in Latin America, especially in Central America and the Caribbean, where they have coexisted with marriage as types of unions (Quilodrán 2003; De Vos 1998; Castro-Martin 2002). The existence of these two types of unions has created a “dual nuptiality system” in Latin America, where socioeconomic status, not individual preference, decides who

marries and who cohabits. Although both types of unions were recognized as families and accepted as settings for childbearing and childrearing, they differed in social legitimacy and in the legal rights that they offered to women and children (Castro-Martin 2002).

In the Southern Cone, cohabiting unions were historically a minority practice. Some historical reports indicate that cohabiting unions may have been an important type of union at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, urbanization, modernization, and the actions of the incipient welfare state promoted the formalization of unions; therefore, marriage became the main type of union (Pellegrino 1997). Thus, marriage used to be the norm for union formation in the Southern Cone. The crude marriage rate in the three countries has followed a relatively erratic but overall increasing pattern during the first half of the twentieth century and peaked in Chile in 1930 (9%). The crude marriage rates peaked in Argentina and Uruguay in the 1950s and reached approximately 7.5% and 8.5%, respectively. These values were among the highest in the region (for instance, the crude marriage rate for Venezuela in 1970 was approximately 3.6%). The decline in the marriage rate started slightly earlier in Argentina and Uruguay than in Chile, but the differences are small; the three countries converged towards similar rates at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Binstock and Cabella 2011). From 1970 forward, there was a clear decrease in the crude marriage rate in the Southern Cone, and it reached approximately 3.5% at the beginning of the twenty-first century in the three countries.

Simultaneously, the vital statistics for the three countries show an increase in the proportion of children who were born outside of marriage. This percentage fluctuated approximately 20–25% during the 1970s, but it reached 68% in Chile in 2010 (Salinas 2014), 50% in Argentina in 2001 (the Office of Vital Statistics stopped gathering information regarding the marital status of mothers in that year) and 78% in Uruguay in 2012.

Neither the decrease in the crude marriage rate nor the overall modest delay in union formation seems to reflect an open rejection of conjugal unions. These factors also do not seem to be related to significant changes in individual preferences concerning the timing of a co-residential union. On the contrary, these dynamics seem to reflect a change in the type of union that people choose to form rather than a change in the timing of union formation. Most couples choose cohabitation, not marriage, as the first type of union that they form. There is ample evidence that this choice is the case in Argentina and Uruguay (Binstock 2004, 2013; Cabella et al. 2005), and there is incipient evidence of this choice in Chile (Salinas *forthcoming*; Ramm 2013).

In recent decades, cohabiting unions have continuously increased. The first signs of the increase in cohabitation appeared in the mid-1970s in Uruguay and Argentina and in the 1990s in Chile. Compared with the rest of Latin America, the Southern Cone showed the greatest increases in cohabitation between 1970 and 2000. These increases were most noticeable among the most educated groups (Quilodrán 2011).

At the end of the 1980s, approximately 10% of all unions were informal in Argentina and Uruguay. This proportion doubled in the next decade, and it doubled

again in the decade after that. In Chile, the trends are similar, but the increase in cohabitation started in the 1990s. In approximately 2010, nearly half of Argentinian and Uruguayan women who were aged 20–44 and lived in a union were cohabiting instead of married, and the corresponding percentage in Chile was 40% (Binstock and Cabella 2011).

Discussions regarding the reasons for the increase in cohabitation in the Southern Cone began in the mid-1990s, and scholars offered different arguments.

In Uruguay, two prominent sociologists, Ruben Kaztman and Carlos Filgueira, argued that the increase in cohabitation related to social disintegration and was a response to a male identity crisis. Changes in the labour market, including the worsening of employment opportunities for men and increases in female labour force participation, led men to question their ability to provide for their families. Men may have answered these challenges by avoiding stable or more committed relationships such as marriage (Kaztman 1992; Kaztman and Filgueira 2001; Filgueira 1996) (This interpretation was extended to the rest of Latin America *by Kaztman in ¿Por qué los hombres son tan irresponsables?* (Kaztman 1992). A minor proportion of the increase in cohabitation could be attributed to what scholars called “modern cohabitation”, that is, cohabitation among young, educated people, which are similar to European cohabitation traits. However, generally, the family changes that appeared during the 1990s (i.e., increases in divorce or union dissolution, increases in the proportion of children born outside of marriage, etc.) were interpreted in this perspective as a result of social malaise and manifestations of the inability of the family to fulfil its functions (Rodriguez 2004).

From another perspective, these family changes were interpreted as the emergence of new forms of unions that were a response to the deinstitutionalization of formal relationships. In this view, cultural or ideational changes were more important to explain the increase in cohabitation. This explanation is consistent with the postulates of the SDT. However, it has always been recognized that the SDT’s theoretical apparatus will not likely fit perfectly in societies that have still not solved the problem of material needs and must address these needs simultaneously as they begin to face higher order needs (Cabella et al. 2005; Salinas 2011; Ramm 2013).

At the end of the 2000s, the controversy between social disintegration and SDT as explanations for the increase in cohabitation became diluted. This dilution can probably be explained by the lack of appropriate data that link union formation patterns and ideational change. This dilution may also be because the trends that the labour market and the economy generally followed were not consistent with the theory of social disintegration. The increase in cohabitation was stable from year to year, which the data from household surveys show, and was independent of the economic and labour market conditions. Between 1990 and 2010, the Southern Cone countries experienced different economic cycles, including downturns, severe crises, recoveries, and sustained growth. These fluctuations are especially true for Argentina and Uruguay, whereas Chile experienced downturns and upturns of comparatively smaller magnitude and showed more economic stability. The decreasing trend in the crude marriage rate was unaffected by these changes, and cohabitation continued to increase in the years of economic crisis, in the years of economic

growth and in periods of high unemployment and high employment (Esteve et al. 2012; Cabella 2009).

One of the main variables that marked the differences in the types of cohabiting unions in the Southern Cone is the timing of family formation (that is, the timing for starting co-residential unions and fertility). Although young people of all socioeconomic strata adopt cohabitation as their first type of co-residential union, they begin it at different times. These differences among socioeconomic groups have increased over time (Binstock 2010; Cabella 2009). The gap in the age of union formation or childbearing has increased because more vulnerable socioeconomic groups (with the lowest educational attainment) do not change the timing of union formation and childbearing between censuses, whereas more affluent groups (the most educated) postpone the age of union formation and their first births.

Observed in perspective, the explosive increase in cohabitation that registered between 1990 and 2000 again became a subject of discussion several years later. The spread of cohabitation as the mechanism for entering into conjugal unions in all social strata and as a universal practice among youths pulled the arguments towards cultural or ideational explanations (Cabella 2009; Peri 2004). From this cultural perspective, the increase in cohabitation is assumed to be related to the diffusion of new ideas concerning the relationships between men and women. However, cohabitation is also presumed to have different meanings for different social groups because different types of informal unions coexist, and the trajectories that different cohabiting unions are a part of may differ.

3 Census and Survey Analysis

3.1 Data and Analytical Strategy

For the empirical analysis, we use census data that were retrieved from IPUMSi for the census rounds of 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010. Not all the variables from the 2010 census are available for Argentina; therefore, we complement the census data for that year with data from the Permanent Household Survey (2010) and the National Survey of Sexual and Reproductive Health (ESSR), which was conducted in 2013. The Permanent Household Survey is representative of the population who lives in large urban areas (70 % of the Argentinean population). The ESSR is representative of women aged between 14 and 49 years and men aged between 14 and 59 years who live in urban areas (of more than 2000 inhabitants).¹ The 2012 Chilean census suffered serious problems of implementation and coverage; thus, the government discarded it. Therefore, we use data from the 2011 *Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional* (CASEN), which is the largest official household survey

¹We use this data source for the childbearing-related variables, given that this data source (unlike the Permanent Household Survey) directly identifies all children who were born.

in Chile. The CASEN is representative at the national and regional levels for both rural and urban areas.

We restrict the sample to women aged 20–29 years, which are usually considered the principal years for union formation and childbearing. In the first section, we examine the general trends and how they differ by women's educational attainment over the study period. We use educational attainment as a proxy of socioeconomic status to compare the most advantaged (postsecondary studies) with the most disadvantaged women. In the first censuses, the most disadvantaged group comprised women with primary education, but because access to education has expanded, women with incomplete secondary education or less more properly represent this group. Consequently, we conducted a preliminary analysis that distinguished two alternate groups as the most disadvantaged in educational achievement (women who have completed primary education or less and incomplete secondary education or less), and we obtained similar substantive conclusions. Thus, to simplify the presentation, the tables include the results that compare women who have an incomplete secondary education or less with women who have higher education (which includes tertiary and university).

In the second section, we restrict the analysis to married and cohabiting women to examine them across three aspects, namely, childbearing, labour market participation, and household arrangements. Childbearing distinguishes women who are mothers from women who are not. Labour market participation differentiates women in the labour force (including employed or unemployed) from women who are outside the labour force. Household arrangement is a dichotomous variable that has the value "nuclear" if the married or cohabiting woman is the head or partner of the head of household compared with "not nuclear", which includes all other arrangements. Our motivation is to identify the extent to which young couples can form and manage an independent household or whether they co-reside with other relatives and/or non-relatives.

The analysis compares married and cohabiting women across these three dimensions to assess whether any differences, if they exist, are increasing or diminishing over time as cohabitation becomes more common. The analysis also controls for educational attainment to identify patterns according to socioeconomic status.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Family Formation: When and How Do Women Start Conjugal Unions?

Figure 9.1 shows the proportion of women who are in a conjugal union (married or cohabiting) in each age group. The data suggest a slight delay of union formation in the three countries, particularly since the 1990s. The delay is similar in Argentina and Uruguay between 1970 and 2010 and reaches approximately 10 percentage points in the 20–24 and 25–29 age intervals. The delay is more marked in Chile,

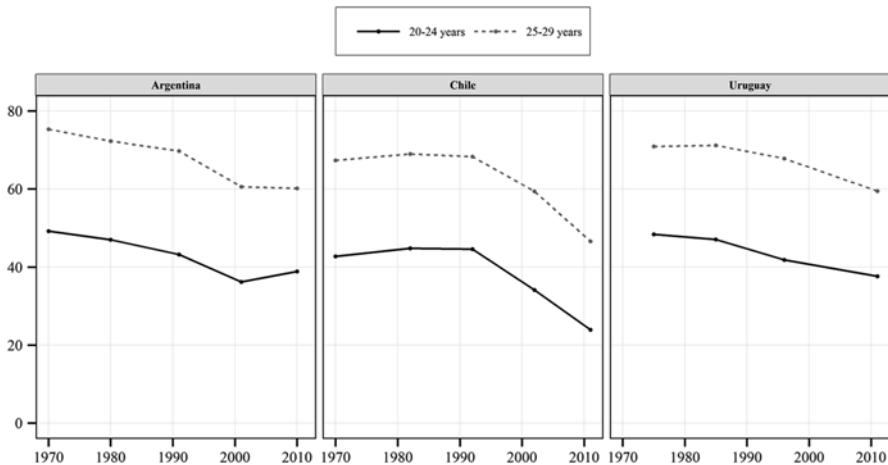


Fig. 9.1 Proportion of women aged 20–29 years in a conjugal union, 1970–2010 (Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, except Chile 2011 which are based on Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional (CASEN))

where the decline of women who are in a conjugal union reaches 20 percentage points in both age groups. As a result, the proportions of women who are in a conjugal union are currently lower in Chile than in Argentina and Uruguay, which have similar values.

This general pattern of union postponement hides marked differences based on women's educational attainment. As expected, Fig. 9.2 shows that in the youngest age interval (20–24), the proportion of women who are in a conjugal union is higher among the least educated than among the most educated in every census round. This result reflects the fact that many of the most educated women are more inclined to delay union formation. Among the highly educated women in Chile and Uruguay, the postponement of union formation between 1970 and 2010 is continuous and distinct. In the 20–24 age interval, the proportion in any type of union declines by approximately half between 1970 and 2011 and goes from 27 to 15 % in Uruguay and from 21 to 9 % in Chile. The trends in the 25–29 age interval are similar. Argentina, in contrast, shows a relatively stable pattern until 2010, when there is a noticeable postponement among the most educated women in both age groups. However, given that the information for that year is based on a complementary (and not fully comparable) data source, these results should be viewed cautiously.

In contrast, the least educated group of women shows a relatively stable yet somewhat erratic timing of union formation. By the 2010s (the last available data period), there is a decline in the proportion of women who are in a conjugal union in both age groups in all three countries, but the decline is much smaller compared with the most educated group of women. That is, the least educated women in the Southern Cone changed the propensity and timing of their union formation very little. It is necessary to continue to monitor the timing of entry into conjugal unions to determine whether this trend continues.

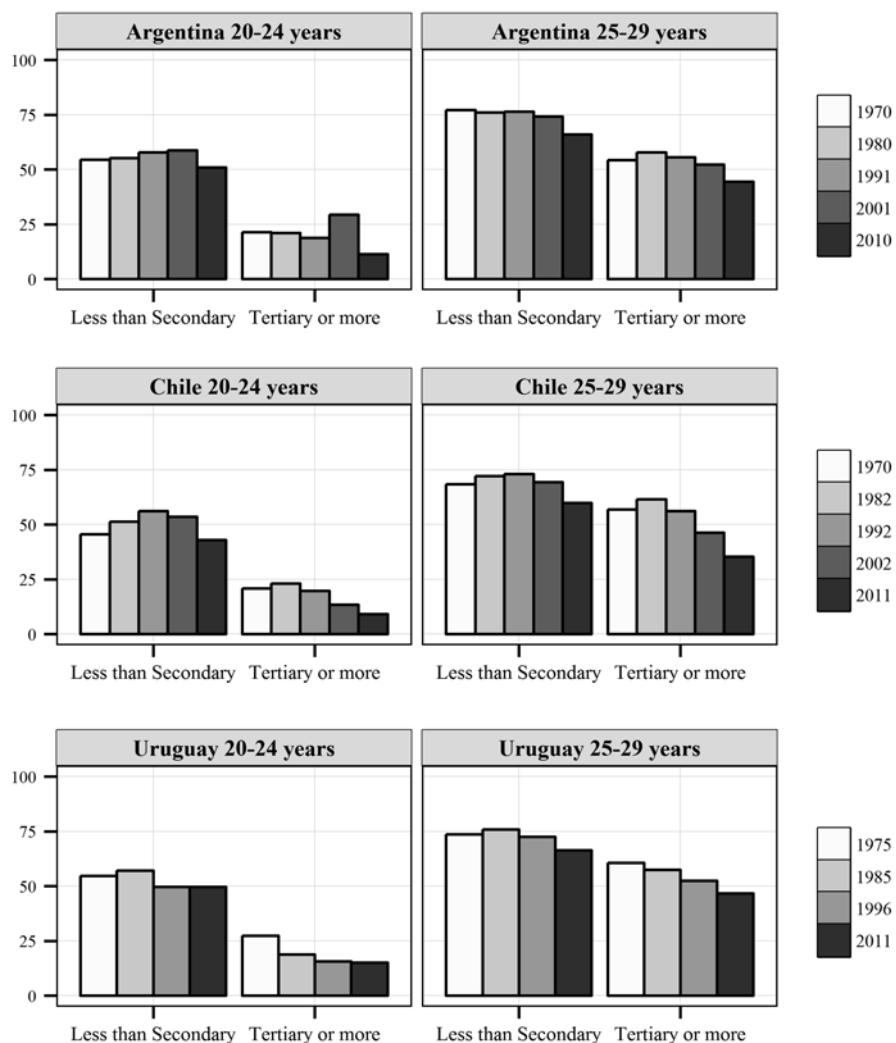


Fig. 9.2 Proportion of women aged 20–29 years in a conjugal union by education, 1970–2010
(Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, except Chile 2011 which are based on Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional (CASEN))

3.2.2 The Evolution of Cohabitation

Figure 9.3 shows the well-known increase in cohabitation. Among women in a conjugal union, the proportion of cohabiting women was very low in the 1970 census round. There were virtually no differences according to age in the proportion of cohabiting women in Chile, whereas in Argentina and Uruguay, the youngest group had a relatively higher proportion of cohabiters. The increase in cohabitation is

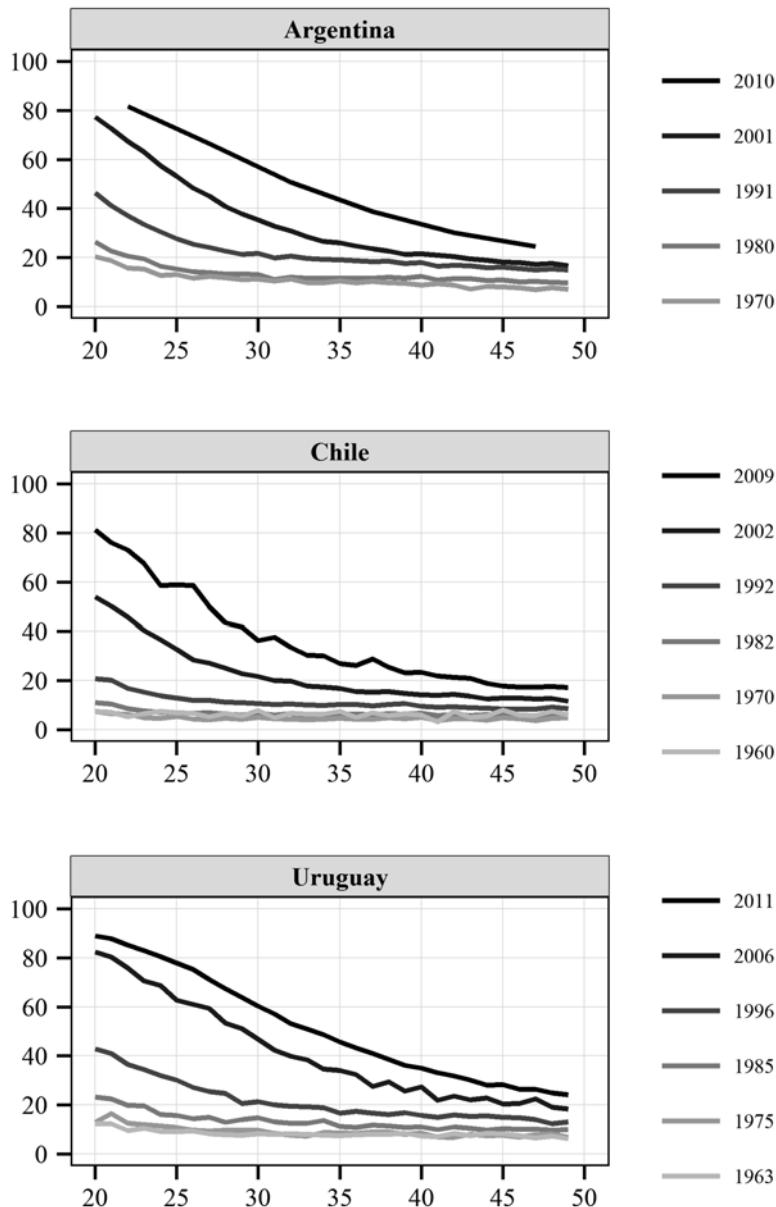


Fig. 9.3 Share of cohabitation as a proportion of women who are in a conjugal union (*Source:* Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, except Chile 2011 which are based on Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional (CASEN))

remarkable and nearly doubles between 1980 and 1990; although in the 1990 census round, the proportion of women in cohabiting unions was still a minority (a growing minority but still a minority). The largest increase in cohabitation is observed between 1990 and 2000, when it becomes the relationship where most women start their co-residential unions.

A pronounced increase in cohabitation occurred by the 1990s and continues to today. In the 2010s, the proportion of cohabiting women in the 20–29 age group generally doubled from the number that was observed in the previous census. Currently, cohabitation has become the norm for young people: between 77% and 85% of women who are 20–24 years old and are in conjugal unions are cohabiting. Cohabitation is still very high in the next age interval, with values that vary from 71% in Uruguay to 57% in Chile.

3.2.3 The Shift in Cohabitation by Educational Attainment

The novelty in this period is that the growth in cohabitation is more striking in the group of the most educated young women than in the group of the least educated young women.

As observed in Fig. 9.4, considering that the overall level of cohabitation was low, cohabitation in the 1970s was a type of union that a proportion of the least educated young women engaged in (in the 20–24 age interval), although this proportion was small. Conversely, among the most educated young women, cohabitation was practically non-existent (approximately 1–4%).

Clearly, the most significant change among the least educated women is the increase in the preference to cohabit as opposed to marry. Cohabitors represented between 10% and 20% of women between the ages of 20 and 24 years and between 8% and 18% of women aged 25–29 years in 1980. By 2010, these figures increased at extremely rapid rates and reached between 80% and 86% for women aged 20–24 years and 64% and 73% percent for women aged 25–29 years. These percentages closely mirror the percentages that were previously observed for all women, which indicates the influence of the least educated women in driving these trends.

The prevalence of cohabitation among highly educated women was extremely low until the 1990 census round. Between then and the next data collection, the increase was remarkable and approached the levels of their less educated peers. In fact, the most recent available data show similar patterns of cohabitation among women aged 20–24 years across educational groups. Additionally, the differences in conjugal preferences among women in other age groups have been declining.

The postponement of union formation is not a shared feature among all young women in the Southern Cone, but the election of cohabitation as the first type of conjugal union that they engage in is a shared feature of young women of all educational statuses. This result is not surprising. The cohabitation boom (Esteve et al. 2012) exists because nearly all members of certain cohorts choose this type of union.

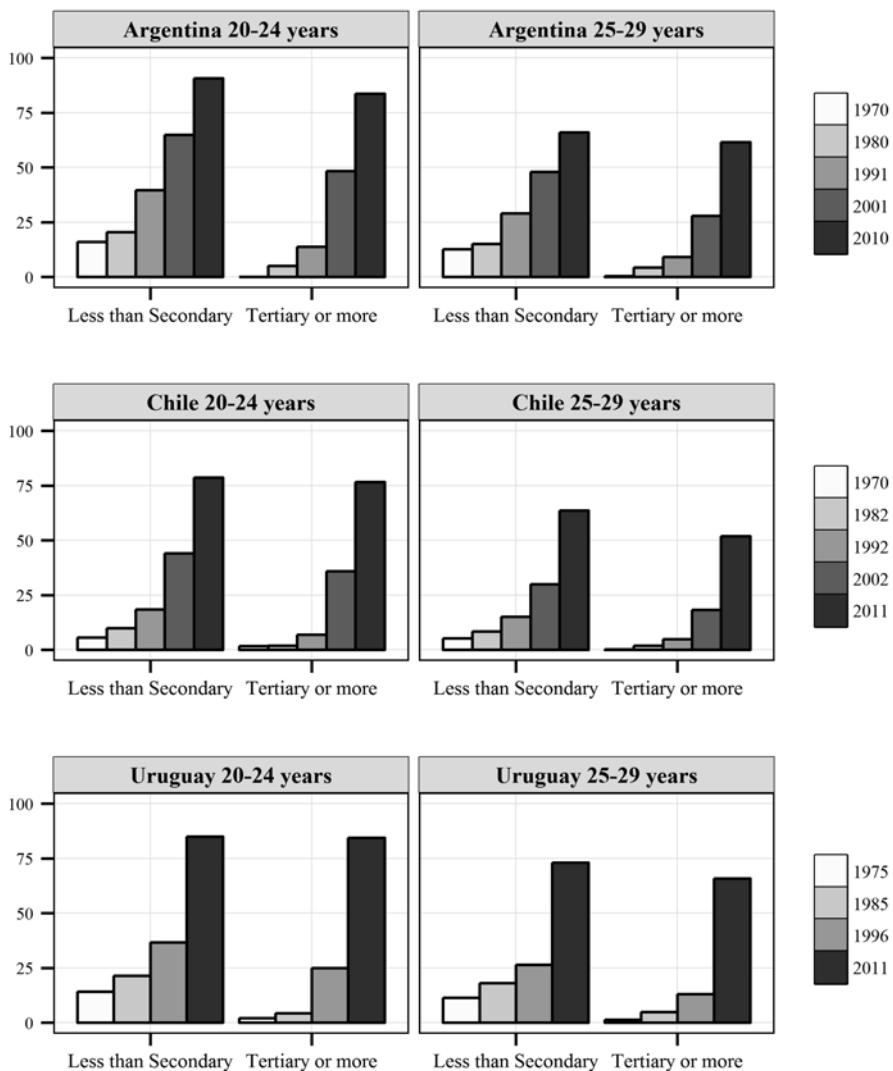


Fig. 9.4 Share of cohabitation by education, aged 20–29 years, 1970–2010 (Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, except Chile 2011 which are based on Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional (CASEN))

3.2.4 Differences and Similarities Between Married and Cohabiting Women

The rationale, meaning and motivation to cohabit – as opposed to marry – has been a topic of intense and continuous debate in Latin America, particularly in the Southern Cone, where unmarried cohabitation was not previously a prevalent or common feature of the family system (Binstock and Cabella 2011; Quilodrán 2001; Rodríguez 2004; Filgueira and Peri 1993).

Table 9.1 Women in conjugal unions aged 20–29 years

	Argentina				Chile				Uruguay			
	1980	1991	2001	2013	1982	1992	2002	2011	1975	1985	1996	2011
Total women												
% with children among cohabitators												
20–24	81.3	79.9	79.1	73.8	90.9	87.5	83.5	77.2	83.0	81.6	70.8	61.9
25–29	85.8	84.1	81.7	67.3	93.3	92.8	87.8	78.6	89.0	86.6	79.6	68.4
% with children among marrieds												
20–24	77.1	76.8	83.6	62.5	87.7	85.7	84.9	77.0	70.8	72.3	73.2	69.7
25–29	86.6	84.4	85.6	74.5	93.4	91.5	88.6	86.7	84.2	83.4	81.6	74.7
Women with low education												
% with children among cohabitators												
20–24	83.8	84.0	86.6	84.3	92.5	91.7	92.0	87.5	85.1	83.6	74.7	70.9
25–29	88.1	88.9	92.3	74.1	94.7	96.1	96.0	96.4	89.4	89.8	85.4	83.9
% with children among marrieds												
20–24	82.5	84.5	89.4	88.0	91.6	91.4	92.8	90.6	76.3	78.7	77.1	77.7
25–29	90.4	90.9	94.6	98.4	96.0	95.7	96.5	95.9	86.8	88.4	87.5	88.4
Women with high education												
% with children among cohabitators												
20–24	17.2	38.0	48.8	40.3	55.0	48.0	55.3	57.2	50.0	40.0	20.8	18.8
25–29	52.1	48.5	49.5	52.9	73.7	60.4	63.2	51.1	90.0	33.3	31.8	28.3
% with children among marrieds												
20–24	52.7	55.6	66.9	14.0	67.5	64.0	66.1	61.2	47.3	39.2	43.3	35.4
25–29	71.8	70.5	71.3	58.2	83.6	78.0	74.0	71.9	72.8	63.5	60.5	48.0

Proportion who have children by type of union and education

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, except Argentina 2013 and Chile 2011 which are based on the National Survey of Sexual and Reproductive Health (EESR) and the Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional (CASEN) respectively

In this section, we move from the focus of examining the expansion in the incidence and preference to cohabit to the study of the similarities and differences between the dynamics of cohabitation and marriage in three specific dimensions: childbearing, labour market participation, and household arrangements. Again, we further control for educational attainment to assess whether cohabitation and marriage have different implications for women in different social strata. Given that cohabitation in the 1970s was extremely low (particularly among women with higher education), we begin the analysis in 1980.

3.2.5 Childbearing

The first panel of Table 9.1 shows that childbearing has been common among married and cohabiting women in each of the three countries, particularly until the 1990s. Afterwards, the pattern seems to have reversed (with the exception of Argentina), and childbearing becomes more common among married than cohabiting women.

When we consider women's educational attainment, we observe two contrasting trends. Women with low levels of education are mothers in a similar proportion whether they are married or cohabiting. The proportions of mothers in each conjugal group are high and remain stable across the observed period, particularly in Argentina and Chile. In Uruguay, the frequency of mothers among married women is slightly higher than among cohabiters, and this difference has somewhat increased over time in both age groups of 20–24 and 25–29 years. In Uruguay, compared with Argentina and Chile, childbearing seems to be more suitable in marriage among young, low-educated women.

The childbearing patterns among highly educated married and cohabiting women are very different. In general, and with only several specific exceptions, childbearing is more frequent among married women than cohabiters, which is consistent with the idea that marriage is still considered the more appropriate context to raise children. However, the trends are changing in a specific manner in each country.

In Argentina, the difference between cohabiting and married women's childbearing behaviour has declined in both age groups of 20–24 and 25–29 years, which suggests a change in people's conceptions of the two types of unions as an appropriate context for childbearing. In fact, this trend is consistent with the dramatic increase in births outside of marriage that mainly occur in cohabiting relationships. This result is also consistent with a lower and slower tendency for cohabiting couples to marry after the birth of a child.

In Chile, however, the childbearing differences between married and cohabiting women are also decreasing but only in the youngest age group, whereas among women aged 25–29, the pattern is more erratic. Among highly educated Chilean women, the youngest group differs from their married peers in terms of having and raising children within cohabitation, whereas in the older group, this tendency is less clear. Currently, the data from the next census is needed to evaluate the extent to which this pattern has continued or changed.

The situation among highly educated women in Uruguay shows a different yet interesting pattern. The decrease in the proportion of mothers was dramatic among both cohabiting and married women, as is the gap between the behaviours of these two conjugal groups. That is, the ratio of the proportions of highly educated cohabiting mothers and highly educated married mothers aged 20–24 declined from 1.2 to 0.5 between 1996 and 2011. The comparable proportion among these women aged 25–29 decreased from 0.97 to 0.57. The estimated ratios in 2011 are similar to the estimated ratios from 2001. Cohabiting and married educated women in 1985 exhibited a more similar reproductive profile than their reproductive profiles in the next two censuses. In the context of a general decline in the proportion of mothers among educated women, the reduction was significantly higher among cohabiters than among married women. A plausible explanation for this result is that younger highly educated cohabiting women may be transitioning to marriage as a response to motherhood more often than older highly educated cohabiting women.

3.2.6 Labour Force Participation

One of the most common explanations for the increase in cohabitation, particularly in European and highly developed countries, depends on people who behave based on values that are more oriented towards individualism and higher-order needs, as stated in the SDT schema. In this scenario, varying gender dynamics are expected based on the type of union in which people live. Consensual unions tend to be more egalitarian. Marriage is often a scenario for a more traditional division of gender roles in the family, where men are the main (or only) economic provider. In addition, if people choose cohabitation because it is a less restrictive type of union, it is likely that cohabiting women will be more inclined to work so that they can afford to live independently if the union dissolves. Therefore, cohabiting women should have higher rates of labour force participation than their married peers. An alternative scenario is that cohabitation is chosen because of the socioeconomic restrictions on marriage (Katzman 1997). If this is the case, it is likely that cohabiting women will be less likely to work than their married peers.

The study period has witnessed increasing rates of female labour force participation that are independent of age, education and conjugal status (CEPAL 2014). Additionally, highly educated women consistently exhibit higher participation rates than their lower educated peers, which is not surprising given their better occupational opportunities and labour conditions.

The comparison of labour rates shows that by 1980, cohabiting women had somewhat lower rates of labour force participation than their married peers. This difference decreased as the years passed. The differences levelled off and even changed sign at the turn of the twenty-first century. By 2010, cohabiters generally showed higher rates of labour market participation. The differences are not very large, but the pattern is similar across countries and ages.

When we consider women's educational attainment and we focus on the least and most educated groups, we find similar trends across both groups. Cohabitors have somewhat higher rates of labour force participation in Argentina and Chile, regardless of their age and educational level. In Uruguay, the pattern is more erratic, and cohabiters have slightly lower levels of participation than married women in the first two censuses. By 1996, the differences tended to either level off or revert, with more cohabiting than married women in the labour force, which continued to 2010 (see Table 9.2).

3.2.7 Household Arrangements

One dimension that is frequently cited to account for the increase in cohabitation involves economic downturns or circumstances that lead young couples to postpone or avoid marriage. We lack the appropriate data to test this hypothesis for the Southern Cone, but it seems unlikely that this drastic and sustained increase across social groups in all three countries across such a long period is only or mainly a response to economic circumstances.

Table 9.2 Women in conjugal unions aged 20–29 years

Labor force participation	Argentina				Chile				Uruguay			
	1980	1991	2001	2010	1982	1992	2002	2011	1975	1985	1996	2011
Total women												
% in the labor force among cohabitators												
20–24	16.9	35.4	45.6	36.1	11.2	15.1	28.8	41.0	18.2	25.9	51.0	64.1
25–29	23.3	41.8	54.0	53.7	19.0	21.1	38.4	60.4	21.6	37.1	55.6	73.2
% in the labor force among marrieds												
20–24	21.1	36.6	42.3	35.3	13.2	16.9	27.4	38.7	25.3	35.4	52.9	59.5
25–29	24.8	44.0	51.6	54.4	20.3	22.5	36.7	47.4	30.8	44.7	60.9	71.6
Women with low education												
% in the labor force among cohabitators												
20–24	15.7	32.7	40.6	29.3	9.5	11.0	19.9	31.4	16.8	25.1	48.7	58.9
25–29	20.9	37.0	45.2	35.3	16.8	15.2	23.0	41.5	21.2	33.4	51.1	63.9
% in the labor force among marrieds												
20–24	15.2	29.2	36.2	35.9	8.9	9.6	16.6	27.2	17.9	30.0	54.2	54.4
25–29	15.9	31.9	39.0	34.4	11.3	10.1	18.3	24.6	13.7	33.5	53.4	60.2
Women with high education												
% in the labor force among cohabitators												
20–24	49.0	58.9	69.7	56.1	36.4	40.7	43.3	50.4	37.5	35.7	75.4	77.5
25–29	70.2	75.5	80.5	80.3	61.8	63.6	69.2	80.5	30.0	79.5	87.7	91.4
% in the labor force among marrieds												
20–24	47.0	57.6	62.9	34.3	36.2	38.3	41.7	47.7	50.7	53.5	69.0	72.2
25–29	57.3	71.4	74.9	71.2	60.3	58.7	62.2	70.2	64.4	77.5	84.7	89.1

Proportion in the labour force by type of union and education

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, except Argentina 2010 and Chile 2011 which are based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares and the Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional (CASEN) respectively

The eldest cohorts in the Southern Cone tend to be homeowners who do not depend on their children to live, which is not necessarily the case in the rest of Latin America. This result is also fuelled by the fact that pension systems in the Southern Cone achieved a high level of coverage very early compared with the rest of the region (Rofman and Oliveri 2011). Instead of promoting the incorporation of their children's new families into the parental household, the eldest cohorts support the youngest cohorts in the establishment of their own (rented or owned) dwellings. This neo-local norm is highly accepted by the population ("el casado casa quiere"). Certain groups of the population, however, still depend on their relatives to solve their housing needs, which conforms to extended households that allow them to take advantage of economies of scale. This type of family arrangement is more common during economic downturns.

One consequence of good economic circumstances is the ability to fulfil a strong and long-established cultural preference for nuclear living arrangements. In addition, or alternatively, if cohabitation and marriage are considered essentially similar unions regarding commitment and expectations (i.e., reproduction, family organization,

ownership, etc.), we would expect similar household organizational arrangements for both types of unions.

Cohabiting and married women live in nuclear arrangements in similar proportions in Argentina and Uruguay, which is a pattern that remained stable across the study period. In contrast, Chilean cohabiters lived in nuclear arrangements more often during the first three censuses. This difference levelled off by 2000 and reverted by 2010, when married women more often lived independently.

When we separately examine the household arrangements of women from different social sectors, we observe that low-educated women closely replicate the overall trend for all women. That is, the proportion of women who live in nuclear arrangements is similar among cohabiting and married women in Argentina and Uruguay. In Chile, the trend moves from nuclear arrangements that are somewhat more common among cohabiters to nuclear arrangements that are more common among married women (see Table 9.2).

The situation among more educated women is different. In Chile and Uruguay, it is more common for cohabiters to live in nuclear arrangements, whereas in Argentina, there are no differences, or these differences are restricted to the youngest group.

A tentative explanation for this finding considers that Chile has the highest incidence of extended arrangements in the Southern Cone, which correlates with a greater emphasis on more long-term, established Catholic family values. Accordingly, the first cohabiters, particularly the cohabiters with higher education, faced greater family resistance and opposition to co-residence as an unmarried couple. Alternatively, these cohabiters may have been more ready to confront the social norms that they did not share, such as extended household arrangements (accompanied by the economic ability to create an independent nuclear residence), and they may have placed greater value on couple intimacy (Table 9.3).

4 Discussion

The objective of this chapter was to describe the changes in family formation in the Southern Cone by focusing on the spread of cohabitation and determining the differences and similarities between marriage and cohabitation. The objective was also to determine if the differences between these arrangements are increasing or decreasing and whether it is possible to identify groups of women in which either the old or new behaviours prevail. In general, the three countries clearly share patterns regarding forming unions and having children. Although there are nuances among them, it makes sense to distinguish this region as a whole.

There has been a change in the timing of union formation, and women show signs of delaying the age when they initiate their conjugal history. This change, however, has mainly occurred among highly educated women. Among the least educated group, conjugal union formation still occurs relatively early in life. In the future, the postponement of union formation may be expected to spread to groups with less socioeconomic resources as education expands.

Table 9.3 Women in conjugal unions aged 20–29 years

Household arrangements	Argentina				Chile				Uruguay			
	1980	1991	2001	2010	1982	1992	2002	2011	1975	1985	1996	2011
Total women												
% in nuclear arrangement among cohabitators												
20–24	50.5	65.2	59.1	66.2	54.3	61.2	52.0	48.0	54.1	63.5	62.0	67.9
25–29	54.0	73.4	71.4	81.9	57.3	68.9	62.0	70.4	56.9	68.2	69.4	78.8
% in nuclear arrangement among marrieds												
20–24	53.7	68.3	67.2	73.0	52.1	54.5	55.8	74.1	60.1	64.1	64.6	75.3
25–29	62.0	75.8	77.5	85.3	56.3	62.8	64.9	83.5	63.2	69.4	72.0	82.8
Women with low education												
% in nuclear arrangement among cohabitators												
20–24	50.5	65.0	60.6	63.9	54.0	61.7	53.7	52.2	53.5	63.4	61.8	66.6
25–29	53.3	73.0	71.7	83.1	57.3	69.6	62.2	74.9	56.6	67.9	68.7	76.5
% in nuclear arrangement among marrieds												
20–24	51.9	67.7	68.0	73.6	53.6	56.4	58.0	81.9	60.4	63.1	64.2	74.5
25–29	60.3	74.7	76.8	79.1	59.3	65.9	66.4	88.2	63.8	68.0	70.4	80.4
Women with high education												
% in nuclear arrangement among cohabitators												
20–24	33.0	68.0	51.7	72.2	36.8	46.3	45.2	49.6	50.0	52.9	63.3	69.4
25–29	57.4	78.0	78.4	88.3	62.5	68.0	71.2	87.9	57.1	84.4	78.7	88.8
% in nuclear arrangement among marrieds												
20–24	45.9	57.7	40.3	75.3	24.7	29.6	24.1	38.1	46.0	49.6	46.1	51.4
25–29	70.1	79.0	75.9	91.4	46.6	53.9	58.0	89.0	61.9	70.2	73.1	79.9

Proportion living in nuclear arrangements by type of union and education

Source: Authors' tabulations based on census samples from IPUMS-International, except Argentina 2010 and Chile 2011 which are based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares and the Encuesta de Caracterización Económica Nacional (CASEN) respectively

There has also been a change in the modality of forming unions, and this change affects both the most and the least educated women. Cohabitation is becoming the typical way that women start their unions. Thus, entering directly into marriage is becoming more infrequent in the region.

Regarding childbearing, the proportion of women who have children has decreased but mainly among the highly educated. Most of the least educated women become mothers before they reach 25 years of age, whether they are married or cohabiting. Among the most educated women, there seems to be an increasing tendency to bear and rear children within cohabitation rather than within marriage in Argentina and Chile. In Uruguay, it seems that the most educated women are turning to marriage regarding childbearing and childrearing. These tendencies are recent and should be re-evaluated with more recent data, but with the results that were discussed above concerning the timing and modality of union formation, we can distinguish old and new behaviours among the least and most educated women. In the group with fewer socioeconomic resources, cohabitation starts early and is

accompanied by early childbearing. For women with greater socioeconomic resources, cohabitation begins later, and fewer women have children.

With the increase in female labour force participation in the Southern Cone in recent years, the basic pattern is that the most educated women are more likely to be in the labour force than the least educated women. However, married women in the past were more likely to work than cohabiting women, whereas in recent years, this difference has levelled off or even reversed. Because this new pattern is recent and the difference in favour of cohabiters is small, we again need new data to determine whether this pattern is actually a trend. However, this pattern is another feature that may depict the emergence of more egalitarian behaviours in cohabitation, this time across groups with different socioeconomic statuses.

Our results concerning household arrangements are surprising. Among the least educated women, the tendency to live in a nuclear household is similar for both cohabiting and married women. Among the most educated and young women, in contrast, we observe a higher tendency to live in nuclear arrangements of cohabitation than marriage in Uruguay and Chile, whereas in Argentina, there are no major differences. Once the income that is required to afford independent living is met, we suggest that in the group of young women, cohabiters have a higher preference for independent living because it represents a setting where they face less questioning of their lifestyle (i.e., living with a partner and eventually having children without being married) by older relatives. This explanation makes more sense in Chile than in Uruguay because the conservative sector seems to wield more weight in Chilean society. Moreover, the household arrangement has not received much attention when examining marriage and cohabitation in the Southern Cone. What we know regarding families and household arrangements in Latin America is generally based on data in Central America and the Caribbean that were produced some years ago (De Vos 1987 and 1995). Our results are somewhat contradictory to the image that emerges from these studies, where extended arrangements appear to be characteristic of the region, especially among groups with few socioeconomic resources. More work should be conducted in this area to determine whether young and better-off cohabiters have a higher preference for independent living than their married peers and what such a preference implies.

Overall, we verify the expansion of cohabitation across socioeconomic statuses in the Southern Cone. However, when comparing cohabitation and marriage, our data suggest that married and cohabiting women in the lowest socioeconomic strata are more alike than better-off married and cohabiting women. Thus, cohabitation may be equivalent to marriage in the most deprived sectors of the population.

The tension between “modern” and “traditional” explanations of the increase in cohabitation has been present throughout the last two decades in Latin America. In the Southern Cone, and likely in the rest of the continent, it seems highly unlikely that we are witnessing a “traditionalization” of consensual unions. However, we probably cannot say that our societies are undergoing a “modernization” of consensual unions. Considering the strong social differences in the timetable of transitions in union formation and childbearing, we should focus on the interpretation of the social polarization of demographic behaviours.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Arriagada, I. (2002). Cambios y desigualdad en las familias latinoamericanas. *Revista de la CEPAL*, 77, 143–161.
- Barrán, J. P., & Nahúm, B. (1979). El Uruguay del Novecientos. Tomo I. Batlle, los estancieros y el Imperio Británico. Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental.
- Binstock, G. P. (2004). Cambios en las pautas de formación y disolución de la familia entre las mujeres de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. *Población de Buenos Aires*, 1, 8–15.
- Binstock, G. (2010). Tendencias sobre la convivencia, matrimonio y maternidad en áreas urbanas de Argentina. *Revista Latinoamericana de Población*, 6(1), 129–146.
- Binstock, G. (2013). Avatares de las familias argentinas: evidencias a partir del censo 2010. *Población*, 6(10), 25–33.
- Binstock, G., & Cabella, W. (2011). La nupcialidad en el Cono Sur: evolución reciente en la formación de uniones en Argentina, Chile y Uruguay. In G. Binstock, & J. M. Vieira (Eds.), (coord) *Nupcialidad y familia en la América Latina actual*. Río de Janeiro: Asociación Latinoamericana de Población (ALAP), Serie Investigaciones 11: 35–59. ISBN 978-85-62016-13-4.
- Cabella, W. (2009). Dos décadas de transformaciones de la nupcialidad uruguaya. La convergencia hacia la segunda transición demográfica. *Estudios demográficos y Urbanos*, 24(2), 389–427.
- Cabella, W., Peri, A., & Street, M. C. (2005). Buenos Aires y Montevideo: Dos orillas y una transición? La segunda transición demográfica en Buenos Aires y Montevideo en perspectiva biográfica. In S. Torrado (Ed.), *Trayectorias Nupciales, Familias Ocultas (Buenos Aires, entre siglos)*. Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila Editores.
- Caetano, G., & Geymonat, R. (1997) *La Secularización Uruguaya, 1859–1919*. Montevideo: Taurus, Tomo I. ISBN 9974590914.
- Castro-Martin, T. (2002). Consensual Union in Latin America: Persistence of a dual nuptiality system. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 33(1), 35–55.
- Chackiel, J., & Schkolnik, S. (1992). La transición de la fecundidad en América Latina. *Notas de Población*, 20(55), 161–192.
- Cicerchia, R. (1989). Vida familiar y prácticas conyugales. Clases populares en una ciudad colonial. Buenos aires, 1800–1810. *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana*, 3(2), 91–109.
- Cicerchia, R. (1994). Familia: la historia de una idea. Los desórdenes domésticos de la plebe urbana porteña, Buenos Aires, 1776–1850. In C. H. Wainerman (Ed.), *Vivir en familia* (pp. 49–72). Buenos Aires: UNICEF/Losada.
- Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). (2014). Panorama Social de América Latina. Cepal: Santiago de Chile, (LC/G.2635-P).
- De Vos, S. (1987). Latin American households in comparative perspective. *Population Studies*, 41(3), 501–517.

- De Vos, S. (1995). *Household composition in Latin America*. New York: Springer.
- De Vos, S. (1998). *Nuptiality in Latin America: The view of a sociologist and family demographer*. Working papers. University of Wisconsin-Madison. <https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cde/cdewp/98-21.pdf>
- Esteve, A., Lesthaeghe, R., & López-Gay, A. (2012). The Latin American cohabitation boom 1970–2007. *Population and Development Review*, 38(1), 55–81.
- Filgueira, F. (1996). *Sobre revoluciones ocultas: la familia en el Uruguay*. Montevideo: CEPAL.
- Filgueira, C., & Peri, A. (1993). Transformaciones recientes de la familia uruguaya: cambios coyunturales y estructurales. In CEPAL (Ed.), *Cambios en el perfil de las familias. La experiencia regional*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.
- Frankema, E. (2008). *The historical evolution of inequality in Latin America. A comparative perspective, 1870–2000*. PhD thesis. Groningen: University of Groningen.
- García, B., & Rojas, O. (2002). Los hogares latinoamericanos durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX: Una perspectiva sociodemográfica. *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos*, 17(2), 261–262.
- Katzman, R. (1992). ¿Por qué los Hombres son tan irresponsables? *Revista de la CEPAL*, 46(1), 87–95.
- Katzman, R. (1997) Marginalidad e integración social en el Uruguay. *Revista de la Cepal*, 62: 91–117, LC/MVD/R.140/REV.1
- Katzman, R., & Filgueira, F. (2001). *Panorama de la infancia y la familia en Uruguay*. Montevideo: Universidad Católica del Uruguay.
- Moreno, J. L. (1997). Sexo, matrimonio y familia: la ilegitimidad en la frontera pampeana del Río de la Plata. 1780–1850. *Boletín de Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani”*, 16–17: 61–82.
- Pantelides, E. A. (2006). La transición de la fecundidad en la Argentina 1869–1947. In *Cuadernos del CENEP* (Vol. 54). Buenos Aires: CENEP.
- Pellegrino, A. (1997). Vida conyugal y fecundidad en la sociedad uruguaya del siglo XX: una visión desde la demografía. In J. P. Barrán, G. Caetano, & T. Porzecanski (Eds.), *Historias de la vida privada en Uruguay*. Montevideo: Taurus.
- Pellegrino, A. (2010). *La población de Uruguay. Breve caracterización demográfica*. Montevideo: UNFPA, Edición Doble Clic.
- Peri, A. (2004). Dimensiones ideológicas del cambio familiar en Montevideo. *Papeles de Población*, 10(40), 147–169.
- Quilodrán, J. (2003). Efecto de la transición demográfica sobre la formación familiar. *Papeles de Población*, Año 9, No 37.
- Quilodrán, J. (2001). L'union libre Latinoamericaine a-t-elle changée de nature? Paper presented at the XXIV International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). Salvador-Bahía, Brasil.
- Quilodrán, J. (2011). ¿Un modelo de nupcialidad postransicional en América Latina? In G. P. Binstock & J. M. Viera (Eds.), *Nupcialidad y familia en la América Latina actual* (pp. 11–34). Rio de Janeiro: ALAP.
- Ramm, A. M. (2013). *Unmarried cohabitation among deprived families in Chile*. PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, Cambridge.
- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2004). Cohabitation in América Latina: ¿modernidad, exclusión o diversidad? *Papeles de Población*, 10(40), 97–145.
- Rofman, R., & Oliveri, M. L. (2011). *La cobertura de los sistemas previsionales en América Latina: conceptos e indicadores*. Buenos Aires: Banco Mundial, Serie de Documentos de Trabajo sobre Políticas Sociales N° 7, 229 pp.
- Salinas, V. (2011). Socioeconomic differences according to family arrangements in Chile. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 30(5), 677–699. doi:[10.1007/s11113-011-9206-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-011-9206-5).
- Salinas, V. (2014). Cambios en el tipo de unión ante el nacimiento del primer hijo en Chile. *Revista Latinoamericana de Población*, 8(15), 65–92.
- Salinas, V. (forthcoming). Changes in cohabitation after the birth of the first child in Chile. *Population Research and Policy Review*.

- Schkolnik, S., & Pantelides, E. A. (1974). Los cambios en la composición de la población. In A. Lattes & Z. Recchini de Lattes (Eds.), *La población de Argentina* (pp. 67–93). Buenos Aires: INDEC.
- Torrado, S. (2003). *Historia de la familia en la Argentina moderna (1870–2000)*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones de La Flor.
- Ullmann, H., Maldonado Valera, C., & Rico, M. N. (2014). *La evolución de las estructuras familiares en América Latina, 1990–2010: Los retos de la pobreza, la vulnerabilidad y el cuidado*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL, Colección Políticas Sociales N° 193 (LC/L.3819).

Chapter 10

Cohabitation: The Pan-America View

Ron J. Lesthaeghe and Albert Esteve

1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter we shall reflect on a series of issues of both a methodological and substantive nature encountered in this research project. Firstly, we must realize that the use of individual census records not only opened vast possibilities, but also entails a number of limitations. Secondly, the very large sample sizes allowed for the disaggregation of national trends into far more detailed spatial, ethnic and educational patterns. This, in its turn, allowed us to adopt a “geo-historical” view of the rise of cohabitation for almost the entire American continent, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. Such an approach is an indispensable ingredient in understanding settings in which older and newer pattern of cohabitation meet and intermingle. Furthermore, another crucial feature is that statistical analyses could be performed at the individual and contextual levels simultaneously. *Individuals have histories, but regions have much longer histories.* Therefore contextual analyses are of paramount importance.

This volume is but a starting point for much more in-depth studies of partnership formation in the Americas, and particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, there is ample room for studies that follow the life course longitudinally (Bozon et al. 2009; Grace and Sweeney 2014) and for qualitative studies probing into the motivations for preferring cohabitation over marriage. Nevertheless, as the

R.J. Lesthaeghe (✉)

Free University of Brussels and Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences of Belgium,
Brussels, Belgium

e-mail: RLesthaeghe@yahoo.com

A. Esteve

Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics (CED), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB),
Bellaterra, Spain

e-mail: aesteve@ced.uab.cat

more detailed conclusions below will illustrate, a statistical analysis of the vast body of census information since the 1970s or 1980s is a necessary stepping stone. These analyses bring out unexpected variations, intriguing patterns of diffusion, and intricate interactive effects. And by doing so, pre-existing theories and expectations could be challenged, adapted or refined.

2 Data and Analyses

The vast majority of the data used in this volume stem from the large samples of individual census records as compiled and archived by the Minnesota Population Center. This unique and vast data set is known as the *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series* or IPUMS for short (Minnesota Population Center 2014). In all Latin American sources, there were direct questions as to the presence and nature of partnerships, including the category of consensual union. In Mexico, we could even make use of such information for the 1930 census, thanks to the recovery efforts made by the Mexican *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (INEGI). In Canada there is a direct question since 1986. In the US, where unmarried cohabitation was uncommon and theoretically illegal, such a straightforward question was absent, and as a result, indirect procedures had to be used, which presumably underestimated the true incidence of the phenomenon (Kennedy and Fitch 2012). In addition, several chapters were also able to use information stemming from large scale surveys, such as the *Demographic and Health Survey* (DHS) or the pooled annual *American Community Surveys* for the period 2007–2011. It should be noted that the DHS surveys do not permit a more detailed spatial decomposition and are best used for entire countries.

The reader will note that the present project bears some resemblance to the well-known “Princeton European Fertility Project” of the 1970s studying the spatial aspects of the European fertility transition (Coale and Watkins 1986). This was equally a census-based investigation, but of regional patterns of fertility control and their economic and cultural determinants. The main criticism of the Princeton project pertained, obviously for the lack of better, to its exclusive use of aggregate data only. The availability of individual census records in the IPUMS files has entirely removed that barrier. The net outcome is that the present analyses of patterns of cohabitation can be performed both at the individual and the contextual levels simultaneously.

The spatial disaggregation of the national data sets not only pertains to entities such as large provinces and states but very frequently also to much smaller spatial units such as cantons, meso-regions or even municipalities. The outcome is that this project is unique in having information for over 19,000 such spatial units. Obviously the study of contextual effects is considerably enhanced by the availability of such smaller units. For instance, for Mexico, a very detailed disaggregation has been highly instrumental in documenting the diffusion pattern of consensual unions, which we certainly would have missed if our information would have been restricted to the Mexican states only. Very much the same would have happened in the US if

the analysis were conducted at the level of the states, instead of at the currently used much finer grid of the *Public Use Microdata Areas* (PUMAs).

A major drawback of census data is the lack of retrospective information concerning the process of union formation. In other words, we only know the current type of partnership, i.e. married or cohabiting, but we do not know how the union was initiated. Obviously a simple question of having *ever* experienced a period of living in a consensual union would have gone a long way in splitting up the large category of married respondents into those who ever and those who never cohabited. As a result, we have to be careful when interpreting the lower figures of cohabitation for somewhat older women, as these can result from either a straightforward cohort effect (older generations cohabiting less) or from a life cycle effect (the differential conversion of cohabitation into marriage as age advances). Similarly, when considering a negative education profile of cohabitation in the age group 25–29, we do not know whether the better educated have a lower incidence because they were less prone to initiate a partnership via cohabitation at the onset, or whether they started out in the same way as the others but more frequently converted their consensual union into a marriage later on. We presume that it is likely that the latter pattern becomes more frequent as the stigma against cohabitation is lifted and as the incidence of cohabitation is rising among new cohorts. In this instance, marriage is not a pledge of commitment for the future, but the outcome of a tested stable existing relationship (Furstenberg 2014). This conundrum could be solved partially by considering younger women, but then many have not yet initiated a partnership of any kind, and those who have are a self-selected subsample at any rate. Furthermore, with advancing education, more permanent partnerships are commonly being initiated later as well. In the balance, our frequent focus on the 25–29 age group is a compromise, but it is not without drawbacks. Therefore, whenever possible, we have reconstructed the full cohort profiles by age and education.

But there are also limitations on the independent variables side. Most censuses have information on the level of education. This is a crucial variable, but it has many meanings and is therefore a proxy for both economic and cultural dimensions (e.g. income, social class, openness to the world, political awareness and cultural modernity). Also, the rise in education over the years may not have altered the relative social position of the younger generations compared to the older: literate daughters can still be as poor as their illiterate mothers. And this may hold in particular in societies with large class differentials and ethno-racial stratification.

Language and ethnicity are also important variables commonly recorded in censuses. But very often only the first language is recorded. Most respondents in Hispanic countries state that they are Spanish speakers, but they may also use indigenous languages which remain unrecorded in several censuses. As such, the relative sizes of indigenous populations tend to be underestimated.¹ Religious denomination

¹ Bolivia is an exception as the latest census records up to three languages per respondent. This also permits to check the bias in the instance that only a single language were recorded. In the case of Bolivia 49.6% give Spanish as a first language, but 17.5% use it in combination with an indigenous language. If ethnicity is what needs to be captured then the latter group should be added in with their respective indigenous group.

is another important variable, but denomination alone falls short of measuring religiosity or the importance of religion in a person's meaning-giving system. It is well known that Evangelical Christians and Mormons strongly oppose cohabitation, but for the large category of Catholics, denomination alone falls short of what is wanted. Actual practice of Sunday Mass attendance would also be needed. Also, censuses provide no information about the importance of syncretic religions which mix Christianity and older native religions. These syncretic religions are very important in Brazil and in the Andean region. Furthermore, the category without religion is probably a more mixed bag and does not only capture agnostics.

Finally, and very importantly, censuses provide no clues whatsoever on cultural shifts. More specifically, we have to infer the de-stigmatization of cohabitation from the mere rise of this form of partnership, but we cannot link it to related dimensions of changes in ethics at the individual level and to patterns of secularization at the contextual level. All that can be done is to use illustrations with data from other sources, such as the successive rounds of the *World Values Surveys*.² In other words, crucial cultural changes in attitudes toward politics, religion, and ethics are flying under the radar, which will inevitably lead to the underestimation (or worse, even negation) of their effect.

With these caveats in mind, we can now turn to the substantive findings.

3 The Pertinence of Historical Factors and Contexts

Indigenous populations, European immigrants and African slaves all had their distinct systems of partnership formation, but over the centuries, religious conversion, colonial reorganization, and marked ethno-racial social stratification frequently resulted in new *sui generis* partnership patterns as well.³ During the twentieth century, and possibly even earlier, the general tendency was that consensual unions would eventually be replaced by the standard European pattern of marriage. But large pockets would remain, mainly among Afro-Americans and selected indigenous groups, in which the tradition of forming consensual unions would be maintained.

² It should be noted that the sample sizes of the national data sets of the World Values Surveys are often quite small which poses problems when trends need to be inferred. Moreover, the surveys outside Europe only capture the current status of the partnership, i.e. married or in a consensual union, but do not ask the simple "ever cohabited ?" question. As a result, the large group of currently married respondents cannot be split up into those who ever and those who never cohabited. This shortcoming blurs the differences between current cohabitators and currently married respondents. This is all the more regrettable since the WVS is a major source of information on ethical, psychological, political and religious orientations.

³ For many years the Franco-German television channel ARTE featured a program called "*le dessous des cartes*" in which masterly interpretations were given of what laid underneath various phenomena documented by means of maps or landscape photography. In our case, there is no way of understanding the maps of Chap. 1 without such a deeper historical probing into their "*dessous*". Spatial representations may indeed provide windows into the past, but the views are, unfortunately, not always that crystal clear.

So far, this summary of the situation would have been accurate until about 1970.⁴ After that date the pattern of union formation turns around with cohabitation gaining greater prominence and even becoming the modal form in many places. We shall refer to this later period as the “*reversal phase*”, which in fact is not yet completed, as further rises in cohabitation are to be expected in areas with a later take-off.

What are the salient characteristics of the reversal phase? *First and foremost, the effects of social stratification, religion and ethnicity are continuing to be of major importance. In other words, the historical “pattern of disadvantage” is still in evidence, virtually everywhere in the Americas.* Only in Canada are these effects strongly attenuated since this is a much more egalitarian society with only small Indian, Inuit and Métis populations. Aside from the Canadian case, if one is black or belonging to an indigenous group, not very religious, and poorly educated, then the odds of starting and remaining in a consensual union are largest. If one is white, well educated, and religious, then the odds are totally reversed. *This not only holds at the individual level, but at the contextual level as well.* Hence, if one is black, uneducated and not very religious, and one furthermore resides in an ethnic, poor and not particularly religious area, then the odds for entering and staying in cohabitation increase even more. Also, residence in an area with more immigrants systematically increases the odds for cohabitation. Conversely, the odds shrink further for white educated and religious persons residing in areas with similar contextual characteristics. *In all countries for which contextual analyses could be performed with a finer spatial resolution, it was found that the contextual effects were highly significant and, even more importantly, entirely robust for controls for individual characteristics.*⁵ *In other words, area or region of residence matters a great deal over and above the effects of individual characteristics.*

There are major exceptions to this basic rule. Several indigenous populations must have lost their preference for cohabitation much further in the past or had a pattern with more monogamous marriage at the onset.⁶ For instance, among the Mayan groups in both Mexico and Guatemala monogamous marriage is the preferred form of entering a union, even if marriages take place at young ages (see also Grace and Sweeney 2014). Similarly, several Andean native populations in Columbia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru do not stand out as having a higher prevalence of consensual unions either. In fact, the maps in Chap. 1 show that there is an Andean Altiplano ridge of low cohabitation. The Bolivian, Ecuadorian and Peruvian cen-

⁴The 1930 census records for Mexican indigenous populations perfectly illustrate this point. For all these populations, irrespective of the initial level prevalent in the 1920s, the incidence of consensual unions declines during the following four decades.

⁵If that were also true for the history of fertility control in European provinces, then the Princeton results would have reflected genuine contextual effects.

⁶The exceptions of indigenous groups with a strong marriage preference tend to be old complex civilizations (Maya, Inca and affiliated) with fixed settlements and based on agriculture. This suggests an explanation along the Boserup-Goody lines, which links more advanced agriculture, settled population and state formation to control of properties via controlled marriage and a stronger institutionalization of marriage as well (see J. Goody 1976).

suses reveal that the two largest ethnic groups (i.e. the Quechua and Aymara) have, controlling for other characteristics, the lowest incidence of cohabitation.⁷ By contrast, for Afro-American populations, we have not encountered any exceptions in the present set of country studies. Whether in the US, in the Caribbean, or along the Pacific coast of Colombia, the odds for cohabitation among women ages 25–29 are always higher for black descendants of slaves than for whites or for most indigenous or mixed populations.

The dichotomy sketched above merely capture the two extremes of the continuum. Decades, if not centuries, of *mestizaje* or miscegenation have blurred the ethno-racial factor. Mass migration to urban areas and megalopolis has created new patterns of segregation. And the growing Evangelical adherence has produced a reaction against the prevailing demographic and ethical trends. As a consequence, there are various combinations of factors that produce intermediate results. In order to illustrate these interactions between conditioning factors, our contextual variables are being constructed as *combinations* of categories. This leads to interesting insights. Here are a few examples.

In the US, the effect of the “pattern of disadvantage” on cohabitation completely disappears for the Black population when residing in areas with a large Evangelical presence and it is also attenuated when there is a strong presence of Afro-Protestant churches. Conversely, the odds for cohabitation increase with increasing proportions Catholic and Mainstream Protestants in the US PUMA areas. Also residence in a PUMA with a strong Democrat political composition increases the odds for cohabitation for everyone.⁸

Another example of an interactive effect pertains to Mexican areas with a high concentration of educated women. In these upper social strata municipalities the odds for cohabitation were not lower, as expected, but significantly higher. Furthermore, this puzzling feature remained robust for all sorts of controls. A further scrutiny revealed that it was not women with more than secondary education that produced the positive contextual effect, but the least educated women residing in these areas. A plausible explanation for this is that women with no more than primary education find employment in the larger service sector in better off municipalities, and on the basis of their earnings can maintain a cohabiting household. Moreover, in such settings, the de-stigmatization of cohabitation could have advanced further than in the more homogeneous municipalities.

⁷Both groups are descendants of old civilizations and they have retained strong traditions and have absorbed Christianity within their older “cosmovision” inhabited by spirits of lakes, rivers and mountains. Among Quechua and Aymara, marriage is a kinship group affair and highly ritualized. Boys and girls may have a period of flirtation, but thereafter, the parents on both sides will seize control in organizing the marriage and the subsequent fertility rituals. The entire village witnesses the marriage procession.

⁸Another interpretation of this finding would be that cohabiting couples prefer residing in areas where that behavior is more commonly accepted, i.e. in areas with a strong Democrat tradition. This would contribute to the phenomenon of the “Big Sort” (Bishop and Cushing 2008) in which individuals or families seek like-minded areas with respect to political allegiance and family characteristics.

In the example of Brazil, individual membership of an indigenous or Black population is indicative of a higher risk for cohabitation, but the effect of this individual characteristic is either strongly attenuated or reinforced depending on the strength of Catholicism in the various meso-regions. In this interaction, a higher than average percentage of Catholics in the area substantially reduces the incidence of cohabitation, also for Blacks. Furthermore, the importance of religion in Brazil equally shows up at the individual level, with Lutheran Protestants (mostly whites), Baptist and Evangelicals (mostly Pardo or non-whites) having much smaller odds than Catholics, whereas women 25–29 in a union reporting no religion have a much higher incidence of being in a consensual union. Another striking feature for Brazil is that the educational contrasts are very substantial at the individual level, but much less so at the contextual one.

In Colombia 2005, the most striking effects in favor of cohabitation at the individual level are found for education, with the classic negative gradient, and for membership of the Afro-Colombian group. This population is concentrated along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts and the northern mining regions. By contrast, membership of an indigenous population compared to the majority of the mixed race population *reduces* the incidence of cohabitation. This is, along with the Mayas of Mexico and the Quechua and Aymara of Peru and Bolivia, another example of the fact that the correlation between ethnicity and consensual union formation is weaker for the indigenous Americans than for the Afro-American populations. Furthermore, as in Brazil, the contextual effect of education is weak, but that of the local strength of Catholicism much more important in reducing the incidence of cohabitation. Hence, Colombia is a typical case of continued heterogeneity according to social class and race (essentially Afro-Colombian versus others), but also of persisting regional differentiation according to the historical strength of Catholicism.

In Ecuador 2010, the negative gradient with education has been maintained during the reversal phase, in tandem with the impact of the ethnic factor. As expected, Black and mulatto populations have considerably higher proportions of women in consensual unions, whereas Quechua speakers maintain their strong tradition of moving into marriage. The populations on the Amazonian side such as the Shuar (Jivaro) fit the pattern with widespread cohabitation. At the contextual level, being a resident in a predominantly Quechua speaking area decreases the incidence of cohabitation even more. A similar, but weaker, effect in the same direction is also found when resident in areas of less immigration.

The Peruvian findings for 2007 are more attenuated. The education gradient remains negative, but the ethnic differentiation is less pronounced. The Quechua speakers are not standing out anymore, and it is the Aymara that now have the lower incidence of cohabitation. By contrast, the small groups on the Amazonian side, such as the Ashaninka, have much higher levels. The other dominant trait in Peru is the impact of Evangelical proliferation. The strong negative effect on cohabitation associated with being Evangelical Christians emerges mainly at the individual level, and not so much at the contextual level of the provinces. In fact, the Peruvian contextual effects as measured here are of secondary importance to the individual ones. The reasons for this are not only the weaker contrasts at the individual level,

but equally the greater homogeneity of the 176 Peruvian provinces than in the neighboring Andean countries. It should also be stressed that Peru and Colombia have had a more rapid expansion of cohabitation than Bolivia and Ecuador, and that this could have contributed to a leveling of contrasts.

In Bolivia 2001, the education related gradient is steep, with less cohabitation among young women with secondary education or and much less among those with university degrees. Also at the individual level, Aymara, Quechua and Chiquitano speakers have again considerably lower relative odds for being in a consensual union, whereas the Guarani and other indigenous populations exhibit the reverse pattern. The contextual effects among the 84 provinces are more pronounced than in Peru. In addition to the individual effect of ethnicity, residence in areas with mainly Quechua and Aymara speakers significantly reduces the odds for cohabitation. The same holds for residence in areas with fewer immigrants. By contrast, the educational composition of the provinces produces no extra contextual effect.

In Central America, the evolution in the prevalence of consensual unions over the past five decades has shown different paces of change across countries and an increasing convergence in cohabitation levels. In general, countries which already had high levels of cohabitation in the 1960s (e.g., El Salvador, Honduras, Panama) have experienced small to moderate increases whereas countries with traditionally low levels of cohabitation, such as Costa Rica, have undergone large increases. Guatemala is the only country where a downward trend can be observed during the second half of the twentieth century, although recent survey data from 2011 suggest that the decline in cohabitation has halted and is possibly reversing. The recent increase in cohabitation in Central America has been largely concentrated among women with secondary and higher education, for whom cohabitation was negligible in the past. As elsewhere in Latin America, the historically negative educational gradient of cohabitation remains largely in place, but differentials in union patterns by educational level have narrowed considerably in the past two decades. The spread of cohabitation among the middle and upper classes has probably been facilitated by the wide social recognition conferred on consensual unions in the lower strata, but it challenges the traditional strong association between cohabitation, poverty and social disadvantage.

4 Indigenous Latin American Marriage and Cohabitation in a Global Perspective

It is frequently stated that consensual unions are common among indigenous people in Latin America and that this is the main reason for the expansion of cohabitation. Such a general formulation is invalid for major parts of the continent. In fact, our scrutiny of late twentieth and twenty-first century demographic data reveals the existence of a high degree of heterogeneity among native populations, and not only between whites and others. The Zapotec of Mexico, the Mayas of Mexico and

Guatemala, and the Quechua and Aymara of the central Andean Altiplano stand out by considerably lower levels of cohabitation. The Nahuatl group in Mexico who are considered to be the direct descendants of the Aztecs have intermediate levels of cohabitation, but the adjacent civilizations in Central Mexico, i.e. the Mazahua, Otomi and Purepecha had the lowest incidence of consensual unions in 1930 and still are at the lower end of the distribution in 2010. These pre-Hispanic civilizations were based on intensive agriculture often with irrigation and terracing, advanced architecture and technology, state formation and central control, priestly and military castes, and local tribal nobilities. At the other extreme were hunter-gatherer populations and groups that engaged in shifting agriculture (slash and burn). These societies had much simpler forms of organization with only local heads, or occasionally in South America, even without any clear fixed pattern of authority structure.

This duality fits the Boserup-Goody typology of global patterns of partnership formation (Goody 1976). According to these authors, populations that reached the stage of intensive and technologically advanced forms of agriculture also tend to form larger states, develop a system of social stratification with social classes or castes, and have appropriation of agricultural land. If land belongs to a corporate kinship group or to smaller individual families, marriages need to be controlled to avoid misalliances resulting in devolution of property. In this situation, there is much less room for free partnership formation, shifting partnerships, polyandry, sister exchange etc. Instead, marriage becomes a firm institution under parental or kinship control, and marriages are furthermore ritualized. This commonly involves a public and elaborate ceremony (or even a sequence of ceremonies). A further distinction is made by Goody concerning the direction of the exchange of goods. In systems with “diverging devolution” women alienate property upon marriage through their dowry (bridewealth). In the opposite systems, exchanges are either bilateral or are at the expense of the male kinship group (brideprice). In the former system women are “a loss” to their brothers, and societies with diverging devolution tend to be strongly “patriarchal” with endogamous and arranged marriages, and various sorts of discriminations against women. Most Asian societies exhibit these characteristics. In the type without diverging devolution of property, such “patriarchal” control is much milder, and in the European setting the Catholic Church further limited the control of marriages by the parents and kin (Goody 1983). Unless altered by Islam, most sub-Saharan African populations have the system of bride-wealth and of exogamous marriages. They also had slash and burn agriculture, lacked irrigation and plough, and had no individual appropriation of land. They are at the opposite end of the Boserup-Goody typology.

The Goody-Boserup reasoning goes a long way in describing the present duality concerning the incidence of cohabitation. Several Central Mexican, Zapotec, Maya, Quechua, and Aymara populations all seem to have maintained systems of stronger marriage control by parents and kin. Moreover, the Quechua-Aymara group is known for the lavish marriage ceremonies and other celebrations associated with rites of passage (births, puberty, deaths, fertility rites).

The duality between populations of pre-Hispanic organized empires and others was of direct relevance for the Spanish conquerors and missionaries. The Catholic monogamous marriage and its ceremony fitted the indigenous forms much better for populations such as the Quechua, Aymara or Maya. Hence, over time, cohabitation did not become the rule among them. By contrast, for most of the other indigenous populations without complex state formation, Christian marriage was not only an alien concept, but ran entirely against the much more free forms of courtship and partnership. This is very well illustrated by Livi-Bacci (2010) who describes the Jesuit efforts to eradicate widespread “promiscuity” in Chiquitano⁹ and Guarani populations around their seventeenth century missions. Today, according to the current Bolivian census figures, marriages are considerably more prevalent among the Chiquitano than among the Guarani.

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, regions have much longer histories than individuals. As is clear by now, the current picture of partnership formation is still influenced by the historical structuration of centuries ago. The impact of Christianization is undeniable, but older patterns of consensual union formation commonly prevailed. The “*dessous des cartes*” is at least five centuries deep.

Nevertheless, an entirely new wave of change started rolling over the pre-existing patterns from the 1970s onward. That wave is commonly referred to as the “Second Demographic Transition”.

5 The Trend Reversal and the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) Factors

The core thesis of the SDT-theory is the Maslowian principle that the nature of needs changes as populations become wealthier and, by extension, more educated. As the material needs are better satisfied, more non-material needs tend to be accentuated, and populations become more vocal in articulating them. This mechanism also translates into cultural changes, with individuals stressing the right to make decisions autonomously, i.e. independently of religious or older moral codes, and furthermore in articulating expressive needs: freedom of choice, self-actualization and emancipation, maintenance of a more open future and flexibility, gender equity etc.¹⁰ The manifestations at the macro-level are the growth of emancipation movements claiming equal rights for women or for ethnic or sexual minorities, further secularization, and concomitant de-stigmatization of a number of moral issues such

⁹ Chiquitano refers to the Jesuit mission along the Chiquitos river and to the common language that was imposed by the Jesuits on a variety of indigenous groups.

¹⁰ Sometimes the term “individual autonomy” is taken as meaning “more selfishness”. This is a misinterpretation. Individual autonomy only refers to the right of self-determination, and has nothing to do with selfishness or altruism, which is a completely different dimension that is not an ingredient of the SDT. The confusion probably stems from the multiple meanings of the term “individualism”.

as divorce, abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality and suicide. Obviously, the moral stigma against the formation of a sexual union outside marriage belongs to that values dimension as well.

The SDT factors work in three different ways. Firstly, the pattern of union formation now belongs to the domain of *individual choice* (i.e. autonomy) and not any longer to that of a corporate or collective normative regulation. If choices are open, then the *cost-benefit evaluation* as perceived by individuals (rather than families) applies to a greater extent, and these evaluations may not be the same for men and women respectively. Also, the elements in the calculation must not of necessity be of a mere material nature. Fidelity and trust, for instance, may score equally high on the priority list, and if not guaranteed at the onset, a period of cohabitation could be preferred over marriage. Translated into the “*Ready, Willing, and Able*” (RWA) framework of preconditions for the adoption of new forms of behavior (Coale 1973), the opening up of wider choices and the evaluation of advantages and disadvantages constitute the “Readiness”-factor.

“Willingness” refers to the normative, i.e. the religious or moral acceptability of forms of behavior. The SDT operates via the “Willingness”-factor through the aforementioned *de-stigmatization* of a number of hitherto negatively sanctioned forms of conduct. There is often a positive recursive relationship at work: as religious or moral objections to a given form of conduct weaken, then the practice of that behavior will spread, and as that occurs, then the religious and moral objections will weaken even further.

“Ability” refers to the technical or legal constraints or possibilities for the new form of behavior to materialize. In the context of cohabitation, mainly the legal context is of relevance.¹¹ Typically, as a new form of behavior spreads, the legal system tends to adapt, but this frequently involves time lags of varying durations. In most Latin American countries, the legal impediments to consensual unions were not of a prohibitive nature, but that was not so in Canada and especially not in the US. On the whole, except for the Canadian chapter, the legal situations and their changes have been completely underexposed in this volume, as this requires specialists’ competence in what is often a complex and diverse subject matter.

An essential implication of the RWA-model is that these preconditions need to be met jointly for the outcome to materialize. However, these three components do not change at the same speed. Contrary to intuition, the slowest of the three conditions at the aggregate level does not set the ultimate pace of change of the outcome feature. This ultimate pace is *slower* still. The reason for this is that the conditions change at the individual level, and that the slowest condition in the aggregate is not of necessity uniformly the slowest for all the individuals. It is the remaining smaller group of individuals with lower scores on the other factors who slow down the process to an extra degree (Lesthaeghe and Vanderhoeft 2001). The implication of this form of change is that bottlenecks become even more important than they seem

¹¹In the case of the fertility transition, the “ability” factor was not only of a legal nature, but also refers to the growing perfection of contraceptive methods and to the greater availability of such methods.

at first sight. For instance, even if cohabitation would have many advantages over marriage (high R) and if both forms of unions were legally equivalent (neutral A), then this form of partnership would emerge even slower than the pace set by the gradual removal of the religious or moral objections. *This illustrates that the rapid rise in cohabitation as witnessed in so many parts of the Americas could not have taken place without the very fast removal of the moral and religious stigma against it.* In other words, the rapid rise of cohabitation required nothing less than an “ethical revolution”, similar to the “cultural revolution” that occurred in Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s.

The cost-benefit evaluation of the marriage-cohabitation duality (Readiness) can obviously not be addressed with census records. More qualitative studies are required for that. Most of the sources that shed light on the motivations stem from US or European sources, and point to a multitude of elements being involved (e.g. Liefbroer 1991). Crucial factors cited in focus-groups in eight European countries seem to be centered around “commitment”, “the testing of a relationship” and “freedom” (Perelli-Harris et al. 2014).¹² In the Latin American context, there is, to our knowledge, no equivalent set of studies based on focus groups or in-depth interviews that probe into the motivations plethora. One can imagine that the three key dimensions found among European motivations would be relevant for the Latin American context as well, but we have no comparable investigations that would document this point or bring up other dimensions (e.g. “respect for tradition”, “affordability of marriage”, “weak employment prospects”, to name a few possibilities).

Also the dynamics of the process of partner formation help in interpreting the various meanings of cohabitation. With respect to the process of partnership formation over time, several surveys are by now available that have retrospective information on the sequences of events (e.g. DHS), but, with a few very recent exceptions (e.g. Covre-Sussai et al. 2015; Grace and Sweeney 2014), these data have remained underexploited on this topic.

Information on the “willingness”-factor can be gleaned from the World Values Surveys (WVS) as they measure attitudes in the domain of ethics. In fact, the WVS rounds that often started in the 1990s in Latin American countries are capable of documenting the “ethics revolution” in several cases. At the individual level, no link can be established between the ethics attitudes and type of partnership for the lack of a retrospective probe among married women about a possible prior cohabitation experience, but the WVS does provide aggregate trends on the ethics changes and de-stigmatization. We shall provide some further details on these issues in the next section.

¹²In this 2014 article Perelli-Harris et al. explicitly claim that the SDT theory suggests that cohabitation would completely replace marriage. We quote: “This dominant opinion (i.e. of participants emphasizing the value of marriage) suggests that marriage is not likely to disappear, *as suggested by proponents of the Second Demographic Transition ...*” (p.1066). This is another misrepresentation: the SDT theory only claims that there would be a growing diversity in partnership types with cohabitation taking a more prominent place, not at all the total demise of marriage.

6 The Education Gradient and the “Ethics Revolution”

As indicated, the historical negative gradient of cohabitation with respect to the level of education is a well-nigh universal Pan-American pattern, which, furthermore, remains largely in place during the reversal phase so far.¹³ If the only process at work would be a composition change with respect to the considerable increases in education levels for men and women, then, given the negative gradient, consensual unions would have yielded further to marriage. In other words, no trend reversal would have taken place and the old trend towards more marriage would have been reinforced. *Yet, the trend reversal is as universal as the negative cohabitation-education gradient itself.* As depicted in all the previous chapters, since the 1970s the share of cohabitation among women in a union 25–29 has increased *at all levels* of education. Moreover, this holds for the adjacent age groups as well. Apparently, within an SDT-context, rising education must have spurred on the degree of autonomy of young adults in making crucial decisions, and must have de-stigmatized the formation of consensual unions among population segments, such as urban educated whites, that had hitherto exhibited a strong preference for marriage. Moreover, one could argue that autonomy in decision making and the de-stigmatization could have been initiated by the better educated in American societies. Data on the “ethics revolution” are supportive of this conjecture.

In Figs. 10.1 and 10.2 use is made of WVS-data pertaining to the “ethics revolution” for selected countries for which there are multiple measurements in time. Divorce is not so much of an ethical issue anymore, and suicide is only at the very beginning of de-stigmatization in the Americas.¹⁴ More specifically, we have plotted the percentages of respondents (18+, both sexes) that are of the opinion that homosexuality and euthanasia can never be justified, and we show the results for three education levels and for two periods, the 1990s and the years 2005–06. These trends by education in acceptability of euthanasia and homosexuality document very clearly that the inferred de-stigmatization of cohabitation is matched by the explicitly measured de-stigmatization of the other two ethics issues. The results of Figs. 10.1 and 10.2 plainly indicate that for each period considered there is a clear education gradient, with the rejection of euthanasia and homosexuality weakening with advancing education. Conversely, *the degree of de-stigmatization increases with education.* In addition, the rejection of euthanasia and homosexuality rapidly weakens over time, with much smaller percentages taking a negative view in the twenty-first century measurements compared to those of the 1990s. In other words, these findings are in line with the interpretation that the de-stigmatization started in the

¹³We must realize that by 2010, the increases in cohabitation had not come to an end, and it could well be that the less educated will reach an upper ceiling, while the better educated are still catching up. At this point, the negative education gradient would become flatter or could possibly disappear. The changing Uruguayan gradient is an example of such an evolution. It should also be noted that the negative gradients with respect to education in the Canadian provinces are noticeably less steep than elsewhere and even absent in Quebec.

¹⁴Acceptability of suicide is further advanced in Northern and Western Europe.

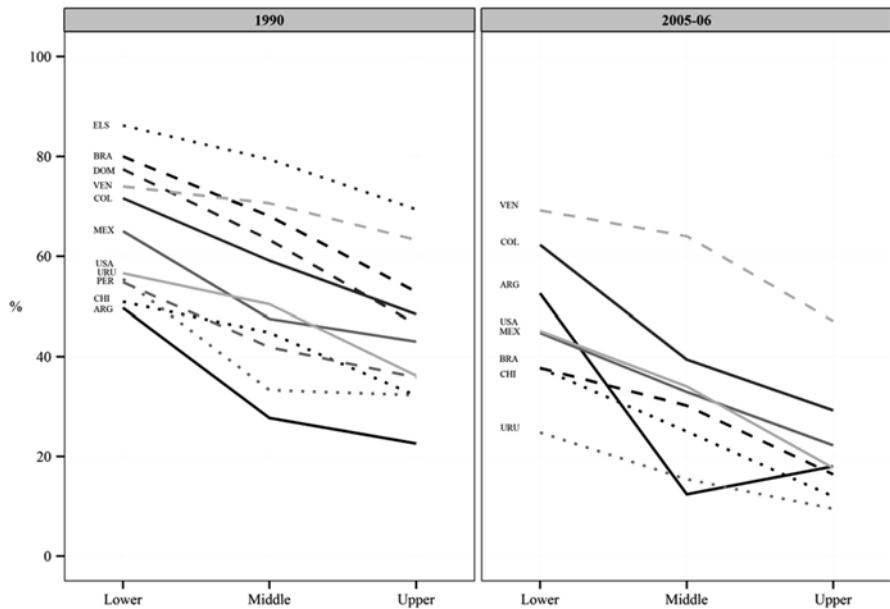


Fig. 10.1 Percentages of population 18+ of the opinion that homosexuality is never justified, by education and period (Source: Authors' elaboration based on World Values Surveys)

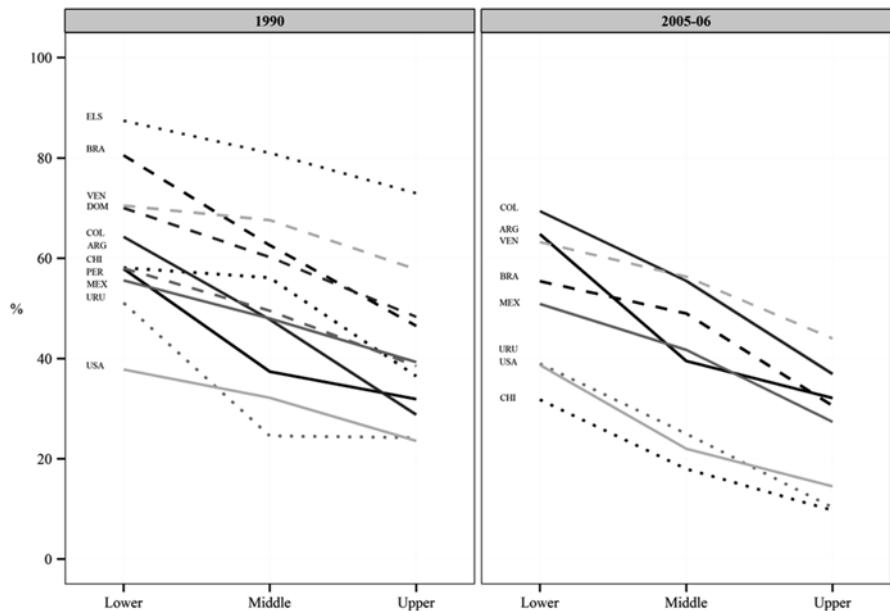


Fig. 10.2 Percentages of population 18+ of the opinion that euthanasia is never justified, by education and period (Source: Authors' elaboration based on World Values Surveys)

higher education strata and, in tandem with advancing education, spread to the society as a whole.¹⁵ So far, that positive gradient of ethical tolerance and education has remained intact. Hence, with respect to the “ethics revolution” there is no contradiction between the upward cohabitation trend, the education related gradient, and the shifting educational composition. The top to bottom diffusion of the de-stigmatization and the increasing levels of education operate in the same direction, and probably reinforce each other in accelerating the trend.

It is also interesting to note that the de-stigmatization profiles by level of education are at present indicative of more permissiveness in a number of Latin American countries than in the US. By 2005–06, the percentages never accepting homosexuality are lower in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, i.e. the countries with the largest white populations. With respect to the de-stigmatization of euthanasia, the US is still in the vanguard, but matched by Uruguay and Chile.

To sum up, there are two strong arguments that are in favor of the hypothesis that the trend reversal phase since the 1970s is fuelled by SDT factors as in Northern America and Europe. First, cohabitation very clearly increased among the middle and upper education groups, meaning that consensual unions are breaking loose from their ethnic and economically disadvantaged substratum. And, secondly, the de-stigmatization or “willingness”-factor operated entirely in the expected direction, both with respect to the positive tolerance gradient and the concurrent upward compositional shift in education. In other words, the reversal phase since the 1970s is largely induced by factors that are congruent with the SDT theory.

7 The Cohabitation Boom in Settings Without a Major Ethno-Racial Component

A widespread view of the rise of cohabitation in Latin America is that it should not come as a surprise, since these countries “*always had it*”. This standard view is evidently oblivious to the steeply upward trends of cohabitation in Southern Brazil and the *Conosur* (“Southern Cone” composed of Uruguay, Argentina and Chile), i.e. the four areas that have only small indigenous or mixed populations, and are largely made up of descendants of European immigrants. In this large Southern Cone, the ethno-racial component of the negative cohabitation gradient by education is largely absent. However, the negative gradient with education is equally in evidence, but then mainly connected to pure social class distinctions among whites. Moreover, due to their European origins, cohabitation was much less common in these regions than in the rest of Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s. In other words, there was no model at the onset that justified cohabitation, and the result was a strongly negative view of it. Despite internal differences among the *Conosur* countries in terms of their educational expansion, the development of welfare

¹⁵ At this point, the roles of mass media and of social media should obviously be mentioned (if not stressed).

state provisions, political stability, and economic shocks, these areas have had *the largest increases* in cohabitation since the 1970s of the entire American continent. Particularly striking is the rise of cohabitation in Uruguay which trumps that in all other countries. Moreover, the negative gradient with education in Uruguay had almost disappeared in 2010. Hence, the classic argument that the ethno-racial component in Latin America triggers off the cohabitation boom is incorrect: *white populations of European descent equally experienced the phenomenon, and even to a more marked degree.*

The other region with a strikingly steeply upward trend in cohabitation is Quebec province in Canada. This is another area with a dominant white majority, who had in addition guarded its French language and its strong allegiance to the Catholic Church till the “Quiet Revolution” of the late 1960s. Even more striking is that the education related profile of cohabitation in Quebec did not display the negative gradient during the entire “reversal phase”. In fact, in 1986, the highest incidence of cohabitation existed among women with a university education (see Figs. 3.2a and 3.2b in the Canadian), and the gradient becomes essentially flat thereafter as the new behavior spreads very rapidly to the rest of the Quebec population. This occurred concurrently with a major secularization wave and the demise of Catholic authority. Furthermore, Quebec did not experience any major economic setbacks as the Conosur countries did, so that the “crisis” hypothesis has no empirical grounding in this part of Canada. The case of Quebec is a perfect, if not an extreme example of a Western European pattern of the SDT. But one could also argue that, in terms of cohabitation levels and lack of social stratification differentials, “Uruguay became the Quebec of Latin America”.

8 Patterns of Entry into Cohabitation and Mixed Types

At various points it has been stressed that traditional patterns of cohabitation with either an ethno-racial or a plain social class origin and the new SDT-type of cohabitation have also produced blended types. Such intermediate types can be studied from different angles. Esteve et al. (2012) use the characteristic of residence in an extended household, as opposed to the formation of a nuclear household, as a criterion for evaluating the maintenance of traditional form of marriage and cohabitation. Covre-Sussai et al. (2015) use DHS surveys to construct a three-way typology of cohabitating women depending on the maternity paths followed prior to the union and after cohabitation. Grace and Sweeney (2014) focus on the onset of sexual activity of adolescents and young adult women in Central America and the consequences for entering into a consensual or marital union.

The Esteve et al. study compares the percentages of women 25–29 in extended or composite households (as opposed to nuclear households) for cohabiting couples, married couples, cohabitating mothers, married mothers and single mothers. Again census data archived in IPUMS files are used. Of the 13 countries considered, three Andean ones, i.e. Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, had the highest co-residence

with parents or others for both cohabiting and married women 25–29. In these countries the percentages were similar for these two categories and situated between 50 and 60 %. Also for women with children, co-residence with parents or others remained high at around 30 %, and again with little difference between cohabiting and married mothers. Evidently, in these countries traditional co-residence in extended households is still very common, and there is no distinction between cohabiting and married women. The next group is made up of Cuba, Panama, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Colombia, with 40–50 % of cohabiting women 25–29 residing in extended households. However these countries exhibit more diverging figures for percentages of married women in extended households. In Cuba, more married women than cohabiting women live together with parents or others (51.3 % vs. 44.7). By contrast, in Puerto Rico, co-residence is much more common for childless cohabiting women than for married ones (41.9 % vs. 14.6). In the other countries of the group, there are also more cohabiting women in extended households, but the difference with the married women are less pronounced (around 10 percentage points). Apparently in these countries the economic situation plays a prominent role in determining the outcome for childless cohabitators, with more precarious situations for them leading to prolonged residence with parents or others. For cohabiting and married mothers, however, the marital status distinction vanishes. Evidently, cohabitators split off from the extended family a bit later and upon the birth of a child. In the remaining countries, i.e. Mexico, Costa Rica, and Chile, co-residence in an extended household for childless cohabiting women drops below 40 % and in Brazil and Argentina even further below 30 %. In all these instances, co-residence with parents or kin for married women is lower, thereby again illustrating that the more precarious situations of cohabiting women are to some degree compensated by prolonged residence in the family of origin.¹⁶ Hence, there is again a geographic clustering of the patterns with (i) an Andean form in which both cohabitation and marriage are most commonly occurring with prolonged co-residence with kin, (ii) a Central American and Caribbean one with lower overall co-residence, and with more cohabitating than married women staying in the extended family, and (iii) a more diluted pattern with less co-residence with kin among cohabitators and much less among married women.

In these respects, the contrast with European patterns of residence is striking. The Western and Northern European cohabitators and single mothers rarely derive support from co-residence in extended families, since the European historical pattern is overwhelmingly that of neolocal residence of nuclear families. *Hence, there is a major type of cohabitation with co-residence in extended families in Latin America that is completely distinct from the European or US and Canadian pattern. This contrast is plainly rooted in the different historical patterning of household formation, spanning at least over several centuries.*

The Covre-Sussai study is based on the 2005–2010DHS surveys in eight countries, and uses latent class analysis and retrospective data to construct a typology of

¹⁶ Co-residence with parents or others is much higher for single mothers. Except for Puerto Rico (40 %), the percentages range between 57 (Bolivia) and 82 (Chile) in the other countries.

cohabiting women (all ages). The classification criteria are the age at the start of cohabitation, the number of children and the ages at motherhood (1st birth), pre-cohabitation pregnancy or not, and currently living together with partner or not. Controls are introduced for age and education. The results indicate that between a traditional form and a modern form there is also a mixed group. The traditional group has the earliest age at the start of cohabitation (typically before age 19), and had children before the age of 20. They are concentrated among the younger women (younger than 26), women with primary education only and resident in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Honduras. In other words, the typology also picks up the Caribbean and Central American pattern of cohabitation. The contrasting group (“the innovative group” according to the author) has a later age at entrance in cohabitation and of motherhood (over 20), had no pre-union pregnancy, and the highest incidence of still being childless. This type is most common among women with secondary education. Brazil has the highest proportion of this “innovative” type (43 %), but in all the other countries the incidence is between 30 and 38 %. The intermediate type in Covre-Sussai’s analysis resembles the more modern one. The main difference is that they all had a pre-union pregnancy and no childlessness, but otherwise their profiles are similar to the “innovative” group. This intermediate group has the smallest occurrence in the Central American and Caribbean countries, and also a smaller presence in Brazil,¹⁷ but was more common (again about a third) in Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and Guyana. Besides capturing an educational difference, the typology also identifies an Andean pattern as being distinct from the Central American-Caribbean one.

A further study of the life-course unfolding in Central America (Grace and Sweeney 2014) focuses on the adolescent and young adult stages (ages 12–24) in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Data stem from the DHS and RHS surveys from 2001 to 2009. The authors use an event history analysis of competing risks for entering a consensual union or marriage. At this point we must recall that the Central American region harbors many populations that already had a high to very high incidence of cohabitation to start with and still have the earliest ages for women at entering a union (Bozon et al. 2009). Hence, it comes as no surprise that the new SDT-form of cohabitation adds little to the already high percentages in consensual unions. Also, as expected, the analysis brings out that the start of a sexual relationship and potential pregnancy spur on the formation of a union at very young ages, i.e. before age 18 (*Ibidem*). However, by staying in school longer, the onset of sexual relations is delayed, and later on, further education is again linked to a higher probability of entering a marriage. But there is also an important ethnic effect: Mayan women in Guatemala have a greater likelihood of entering marriage, even at young ages, than women in the other two countries. As already indicated, this matches the much lower incidence of cohabitation of the Mayas of Yucatan in Mexico. In Honduras and Nicaragua, by contrast, the early onset of sexual activity

¹⁷ Brazil appears to be the most “innovative” in this analysis, but this could be due to the large white population in the densely settled south of the country.

strongly increases the probability of entering a consensual union and has little impact on the likelihood of marrying.

These three examples clearly bring out the heterogeneity within Latin America in patterns of partnership formation. In addition, they elucidate the differences with respect to family context and possibilities for co-residence with parents and kin. And, thirdly, historical factors associated with ethnicity are emerging again, even within much smaller regions such as Central America.

9 The Unfolding of a Latin American Duality: Expanding SDT and Persistence of the Pattern of Disadvantage

The original conceptualization of the SDT three decades ago (Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa 1986) was essentially the description of a Northern and Western European phenomenon. The SDT-theory had two central components: the “*non-conformist*” aspect, referring to the non-marital union formation and parenthood, and the “*postponement*” aspect, referring to the postponement of marriages and parenthood to much later ages than recorded in Europe during the 1960s.¹⁸ In this European conceptualization, effective contraceptive methods disconnected the link between the start of sexual activity and marriage, and also the rise of cohabitation lead to the postponement of parenthood. Hence, the “*non-conformist*” and the “*postponement*” parts were very *closely linked in time* in that part of the world. The same was also observed in the US and Canada. Later on, however, it became more obvious that these two dimensions did not necessarily have the same determinants. The ideational changes in emancipation or expressive values and in ethics were more strongly predictive of the “*non-conformist*” part than of the “*fertility postponement*” part of the SDT.¹⁹ In fact the relationship with values orientations operated the other way: it was parenthood that systematically altered these values in the conservative direction (Surkyn and Lesthaeghe 2004). Moreover, as the SDT spread beyond the Northern and Western European sphere, it became even more evident that the two aspects could be disconnected in time as well (Lesthaeghe 2014).

The Southern European pattern constitutes a second variant of the SDT. These countries had started their fertility postponement and fertility levels dipped far below replacement level without any signs of emerging cohabitation. The initial reactions in Spain and Italy to the SDT-theory was “*not us, we’re different*”, and after the fall of Communism, identical reactions were voiced in Central and Eastern Europe. Also there, fertility dropped precipitously as a result of massive postponement. After the turn of the Century, however, cohabitation did rise in these parts of Europe as well. The outcome is that with very few exceptions, European populations

¹⁸van de Kaa also added the issue of replacement migration to the SDT in subsequent publications.

¹⁹This point emerged very clearly from Karel Neels’ analysis of Belgian regional data and in subsequent discussions with him.

have had sub-replacement fertility for up to four decades, and rising levels of cohabitation as well, with the Nordic countries presumably reaching an upper ceiling. Marriage has obviously not disappeared, but when it occurs, it is at a later stage in the life-cycle and no longer of necessity at the occasion of a first birth.

As in Southern Europe, also in Japan the postponement transition of marriage and of fertility had already ran much of its course prior to the first signs of emerging cohabitation. It is only several years after the turn of the Century that demographers realized that Japan too was witnessing the emergence of consensual unions (Tsuya 2006; Raymo et al. 2009). Furthermore, also data for Taiwan illustrated the same phenomenon (Lesthaeghe 2010). Admittedly, the incidence of cohabitation is still lower than in Europe or in Latin America, but these examples nevertheless illustrate that much more strongly “patriarchal” societies in the Far East are not immune to the manifestation of the “non-conformist” part of the SDT.²⁰ It should be noted that maternity without marriage is still exceptional in Japan, whereas this is no longer so in Southern Europe and particularly not in Spain and Portugal.

In the Latin American situation, the sequence is reversed: as documented in this volume the cohabitation boom developed *without* the postponement effect of union formation and of fertility. This constitutes a third variant of the SDT. Fertility levels declined substantially since the 1970s in a number of countries, but this occurred without a major shift in its timing. In 1970, total fertility rates were above three children in all Latin American countries with Uruguay as the sole exception. By 2010 all countries but Bolivia, Guatemala, and Haiti were below three children per woman. A number of countries even dipped below replacement fertility: Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador and Uruguay (CELADE 2013). Despite such significant declines in fertility levels, women’s mean ages at first union and at first birth remained quite stable across cohorts and time. This has been a puzzling characteristic of Latin American family systems that sets them apart from western countries in which the “non-conformist” and “postponement” transitions occurred simultaneously.

This feature of stable mean ages at union formation and ages at maternity has attracted a fair amount of interest (e.g. Fussell and Palloni 2004; Esteve et al. 2013; Castro-Martín and Juarez 1995). Also, improvements in education were not accompanied by an expected overall tempo shift in fertility. Rather, opposite tendencies occurred at the extremes of the education spectrum. Recent analyses of census and survey data indicate that the women with tertiary education tend to postpone their first birth in a number of more developed regions, but also that teenage fertility is rising in the lower and middle education groups (Rosero Bixby et al. 2009; Esteve et al. 2013). Chile and Uruguay show the largest increases in childlessness among the best educated women, followed by Brazil and Mexico. In the São Paulo state of Brazil an increase in fertility among women 30+ is being noted among the wealthier

²⁰In many other Asian countries there have been very large rises in ages at first marriage for women. Expanding education is clearly a major component of that story, but there are to our knowledge still no studies that look into the matter of a possible rise of cohabitation. This also applies to the PR of China.

strata (Berquo et al. 2014), which equally points in the direction of postponement and subsequent recuperation at later ages. These features are in line with the SDT scenario.

High teenage fertility, even before the age of 18, constitutes the other side of the coin and points in the direction of a persistent pattern of disadvantage. The DHS survey data for 12 countries show high and stable proportions of women with children by age 18 across cohorts (Esteve and Florez 2014). For some authors high teenage fertility is regarded as the main reason for the stable and low mean age at maternity (Rodríguez Vignoli 2008). Early ages of starting sexual activity in combination with deficient contraception among young women account for this to a significant degree. However, all indicators show that the use of contraception has increased throughout Latin America, before and after controls for factors such as education, age at sexual début, current age, among others. Therefore, there should be additional explanations as well. Rodríguez points to three additional factors: (i) weak autonomy for young women, (ii) a lack of economic opportunities for them and hence low opportunity costs associated with early maternity, and (iii) the availability of family support (e.g. co-residence).

The overall outcome for Latin America is the duality with increasing postponement of first births among an educated elite and high and often rising adolescent and teenage fertility among the most disadvantaged parts of the population (López-Gay and Esteve 2014). Among the former, the full SDT pattern is currently unfolding, whereas the latter have increased cohabitation in combination with very early fertility schedules. It remains to be seen to what extent the central category with secondary education will be following the elite. If they do so, a top-down pattern of fertility postponement would be followed, leading to lower period rates of total fertility in a number of better educated countries. However, a tenacious persistence of high teenage fertility pattern is highly likely, even when overall educational levels continue to increase. In fact, despite the striking advances in contraceptive technology, such a history of high teenage fertility has been observed in the US until the recent turn of the Century. Hence, high teenage fertility is an additional feature which sets the Latin American and Caribbean countries apart from most of Europe and the Far East.

10 Final Note

This entire volume deals with evolutions in partnership formation which are still in full progress. Admittedly, in some countries that evolution advanced with a big leap, whereas in others the trends have been more gradual. But in all cases these trends are following a firm course, irrespective of the economic ups and downs. What we are witnessing is not just “a temporary aberration” but a genuine systemic alteration covering an entire continent. The Americas, as opposed to many Asian societies and Africa, are now following in the European footsteps, be it with their own distinct and path-dependent characteristics associated with regionally varying historical antecedents.

Open Access This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

References

- Berquó, E. S., Cunha-Waldvogel, B. C., García, S., de Cavalho-Ferreira, C. E., Di Giacomo do Lago, T., & Batista, L. E. (2014). Reprodução após os 30 anos no estado de São Paulo. *Novos Estudios- CEBRAP*, 100, 9–25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0101-33002014000300002>
- Bishop, W., & Cushing, R. G. (2008). *The big sort: Why the clustering of like-minded America is tearing us apart*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 384 pages. ISBN 0618689354, 9780618689354.
- Bozon, M., Gayet, C., & Barrientos, J. (2009). A life-course approach to patterns and trends in modern Latin American sexual behavior. *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, 51, S4–S12. doi:[10.1097/QAI.0b013e3181a2652f](https://doi.org/10.1097/QAI.0b013e3181a2652f).
- Castro-Martín, T., & Juárez, F. (1995). La influencia de la educación de la mujer sobre la fecundidad en América Latina: en busca de explicaciones. *Perspectivas Internacionales en Planificación Familiar*, número especial.
- Centro Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Demografía (CELADE) and Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). (2013). *Observatorio Demográfico 2012. Proyecciones de población* (LC/G.2569-P). Santiago de Chile: CELADE, Serie: Observatorio Demográfico América Latina y el Caribe No.13, 142 pages. ISBN 9789210210898. <http://hdl.handle.net/11362/7118>
- Coale, A. J. (1973). The demographic transition reconsidered. In *Proceedings of international population conference* (Vol. 1, pp. 53–72). Liège: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP).
- Coale, A. J., & Watkins, S. C. (1986). *The decline of fertility in Europe: The Revised Proceedings of a Conference on the Princeton European Fertility Project*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 484 pages. ISBN 0691094160, 9780691094168.
- Covre-Sussai, M., Meuleman, B., Boterman, S., & Matthijs, K. (2015). Traditional and modern cohabitation in Latin America: A comparative typology. *Demographic Research*, 32, 873–914.
- Esteve, A., & Florez, E. (2014). Edad a la primera unión y al primer hijo en América Latina: estabilidad en cohortes más educadas'. *Notas de Población*, 99, 39–65.
- Esteve, A., Garcia-Román, J., & Lesthaeghe, R. (2012). The family context of cohabitation and single motherhood in Latin America. *Population and Development Review*, 38(4), 699–720.
- Esteve, A., López-Ruiz, L. A., & Spijker, J. (2013). Disentangling how educational expansion did not increase women's age at union formation in Latin America from 1970 to 2000. *Demographic Research*, 28, 63–76. doi:[10.4054/DemRes.2013.28.3](https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2013.28.3).
- Furstenberg, F. F. (2014). Fifty years of family change: From consensus to complexity. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 654(1), 12–30.
- Fussell, E., & Palloni, A. (2004). Persistent marriage regimes in changing times. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66(5), 1201–1213.

- Goody, J. (1976). *Production and Reproduction. A comparative study of the domestic domain.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9780521290883.
- Goody, J. (1983). *The development of family and marriage in Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Past and Present Publications, Studies in literacy, family, culture and the state, 308 pages. ISBN 0521289254, 9780521289252
- Grace, K., & Sweeney, S. (2014). Pathways to marriage and cohabitation in Central America. *Demographic Research*, 30(6), 187–226. doi:10.4054/DemRes.2014.30.6.
- Kennedy, S., & Fitch, C. A. (2012). Measuring cohabitation and family structure in the United States: Assessing the impact of new data from the Current Population Survey. *Demography*, 49(4), 1479–1498. doi:10.1007/s13524-012-0126-8.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (2010). The unfolding story of the second demographic transition. *Population and Development Review*, 36(2), 211–251.
- Lesthaeghe, R. (2014). The second demographic transition: A concise overview of its development. *PNAS—Proceedings of the US National Academy of Sciences*, 111(51), 18112–18115.
- Lesthaeghe, R., & van de Kaa, D. J. (1986). Twee demografische transities? (Two demographic transitions?). In D. J. van de Kaa & R. Lesthaeghe (Eds.), *Bevolking: Groei en Krimp (Population: Growth and decline)* (pp. 9–24). Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus.
- Lesthaeghe, R., & Vanderhoeft, C. (2001). Ready, willing and able. A conceptualization of transitions to new behavioral forms. In J. Casterline (Ed.), *Diffusion process and fertility transition. Selected perspectives* (pp. 240–264). Washington, DC: National Research Council, National Academies Press.
- Liefbroer, A. C. (1991). The choice between a married or unmarried first union by young adults. *European Journal of Population/Revue Européenne de Démographie*, 7(3), 273–298.
- Livi-Bacci, M. (2010). *El Dorado in the marshes. Gold, slaves and souls between the Andes and the Amazon.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 196 pages. ISBN 9780745645520.
- López-Gay, A., & Esteve, A. (2014). El auge de la cohabitación y otras transformaciones familiares en América Latina (1970–2010). In L. Wong, J. E. Alves, J. Rodríguez Vignoli, & C. M. Turra. (coords) *Cairo + 20: perspectivas de la agenda de población y desarrollo sostenible después de 2014* (pp. 113–125). Series Investigaciones. ALAP-UNFPA. ISBN 978-85-62016-19-6.
- Minnesota Population Center. (2014). *Integrated public use microdata series, International: Version 6.3* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Perelli-Harris, B., Mynarska, M., Barrington, A., Berghammer, C., Evans, A., Isupova, O., Keizer, R., TrupeLappgard, A. K., & Vignoli, D. (2014). Toward a new understanding of cohabitation: Insights from focus group research across Europe and Australia. *Demographic Research*, 31(34), 1043–1078.
- Raymo, J. M., Iwasawa, M., & Bumpass, L. (2009). Cohabitation and family formation in Japan. *Demography*, 46(4), 785–803.
- Rodríguez Vignoli, J. (2008). *Reproducción adolescente y desigualdades en América Latina y el Caribe: un llamado a la reflexión y a la acción.* Santiago de Chile: Organización Iberoamericana de Juventud (OIJ)/Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)/CELADE/UNFPA, 116 pages.
- Rosero Bixby, L., Castro-Martín, T., & Martín-García, T. (2009). Is Latin America starting to retreat from early and universal childbearing? *Demographic Research*, 20(9), 169–194.
- Surkyn, J., & Lesthaeghe, R. (2004). Value orientations and the second demographic transition in Northern, Western and Southern Europe: An update. *Demographic Research*, Special collection, 3, 45–86.
- Tsuya, N. (2006). Patterns and co-variates of partnership formation in Japan. *Jinko Mondai Kenkyu. Journal of Population Problems*, 62(1–2), 1–19.