

**CHANGING PATTERNS IN HOUSEHOLD
FORMATION IN BARCELONA AND
MADRID, 1985**

**Anna Alabart, Anna Cabré, Núria
Castells, Andreu Domingo, Assumpta
Fabrè i Verena Stolcke.**

10

Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics

1986

CHANGING PATTERNS IN HOUSEHOLD FORMATION IN BARCELONA
AND MADRID, 1985

Anna Alabart, Anna Cabré, Núria Castells,
Andreu Domingo, Assumpta Fabré i Verena Stolcke.

Ponència presentada a:

Workshop "Life, Styles, Contraception and Parenthood".

Amsterdam, 25-27 Septembre de 1986

RESUM

CANVI DE MODELS EN LA FORMACIÓ DE LA PARELLA A BARCELONA I MADRID, 1985

La finalitat d'aquest estudi és donar a conèixer els resultats inicials del projecte d'investigació en curs sobre "Models de Formació de la Parella" i, particularment, les causes i implicacions de la cohabitació no-marital. Els resultats estan basats en entrevistes qualitatives en profunditat dins d'una mostra de homes i dones de diferents grups d'edat, diferent nivell d'estudis i condicions de vida, i vivint a Barcelona o Madrid. El projecte era un estudi pilot dissenyat per preparar les preguntes més importants de cara a una investigació quantitativa futura respecte de la incidència, sentit i distribució de la cohabitació no-marital.

RESUMEN

CAMBIO DE MODELOS EN LA FORMACION DE LA PAREJA EN BARCELONA Y MADRID, 1985

La principal finalidad de este estudio es el de dar a conocer los resultados iniciales del proyecto de investigación en curso: "Modelos de Formación de la Pareja" y, particularmente, las causas e implicaciones de la cohabitación no-marital. Los resultados se basan en entrevistas cualitativas en profundidad a partir de una muestra de mujeres y varones de diferentes grupos de edad, diferente nivel de estudios y condiciones de vida, residentes de Madrid o Barcelona. El proyecto era un estudio piloto diseñado para preparar aquellas preguntas más importantes de una futura investigación cuantitativa sobre la incidencia, sentido y distribución de la cohabitación no-marital.

RESUME

CHANGEMENTS DES COMPORTEMENTS DANS LA FORMATION DU COUPLE À BARCELONE ET À MADRID, 1985

Le but principal de ce travail est de donner à connaître les résultats préliminaires d'une recherche en cours sur les "modèles de formation des couples" et en particulier les facteurs causants et les conséquences du concubinage. Les résultats se basent sur une exploitation d'une enquête qualitative en profondeur faite auprès d'un échantillon de femmes et d'hommes appartenant à différents groupes d'âge, niveaux d'études et niveaux de vie, résidants à Barcelone et à Madrid. Le projet est une étude pilote menée en vue de préparer les questions les plus importants à poser pour une enquête quantitative future sur l'incidence, la signification et la distribution du concubinage.

ABSTRACT

CHANGING PATTERNS IN HOUSEHOLD FORMATION IN BARCELONA AND MADRID, 1985

The aim of this paper is to present the initial results of the research project in progress on "Patterns of Household Formation" and in particular on the causes and implications of non-marital cohabitation. The results are based on qualitative in-depth interviews with a sample of women and men of different age groups, and with different levels of education and living arrangements, residing in Barcelona and Madrid. The project was a pilot study designed to prepare the relevant questions for a future quantitative investigation regarding the incidence, meaning and distribution of non-marital cohabitation.

CHANGING PATTERNS IN HOUSEHOLD FORMATION IN BARCELONA AND MADRID, 1985.

1. Historical antecedents

Spain has long been thought to be different. In family matters and gender roles in particular Spanish society was, until recently, regarded as extraordinarily traditional. Rapid and spectacular changes that have taken place in the past decade are only now beginning to be acknowledged abroad and in Spain itself¹.

Recent political and legal transformations occurring at a time of deepening economic crisis have certainly contributed to these social changes. Nonetheless, one should not underestimate those largely subterranean modifications in attitudes which had already taken place prior to 1975 and without which it would be impossible to account for the emergence of new values and behavioural patterns after Franco's death.

On the one hand, the country was never as monolithically traditional as the stereotyped image - a reflection of Franco mythology rather than reality - would make one believe. Workers' struggles and the women's liberation movement, especially during the Second Republic (1931-1939) had generated new

models of behaviour which had been consolidated by progressive legislation, the most advanced laws being those passed in Catalonia² establishing the equality of women and men before the law, and the legalisation of divorce and abortion (Beneria, 1976). Following the overthrow of the Republic, official obscurantism aided by repression and coercion (e.g., being part of a "normal" family was a prerequisite for being granted housing, for getting a job and for school access) covered with a homogeneous national Catholic veil a remarkable variety of personal attitudes and situations. This moral imposition was especially noticeable in the industrialised urban areas which had a more modern social structure and which had precisely been the cradle of Republican Spain.

The gradual opening of the country to foreign influences gathered force in the late fifties, by the yearly arrival of masses of tourists, the migration to Europe of millions of workers and the spread of television. Spaniards were thus confronted with new, foreign ways which by the late sixties were themselves undergoing change. Part of this "modern" behaviour was adopted in the context of the economic boom and its sociological consequences. But the legal framework remained unchanged, constituting a serious obstacle to genuine change and having some paradoxical consequences; thus, since the possibility of divorce did not exist, *de facto* separations (popularly known as "ahí te quedas"- there you stay) became more common, accompanied by a kind of cohabitation which was tolerated because it was imposed.

The popular movements which reached their peak in the early seventies, inspired by the legal changes occurring in Europe and stimulated by the women's liberation movement, incorporated among their demands for political change a series of points concerning family law in general and the condition of women and the youth in particular; the coming of age at 18, the legal emancipation of married women, divorce, the repeal of adultery, abortion and homosexuality as criminal offences and of legal discrimination of illegitimate, etc.

With changing political conditions, most of these demands were enacted in the late seventies. However, depending on their content and applicability, they had a very uneven impact³

There is no doubt that in the past decade significant transformations have occurred in relation to the institutions of marriage and the family in Spain, irrespective of the relative weight of the different factors (cultural, political and legal change, the economic crisis, etc.). The noticeable decline in the same period in the number of marriages and births- by over a third in Spain as a whole and by 40 to 45 per cent in Catalonia! - is seen to be connected with this trend.

Unfortunately for researchers, this decade has also seen the worst crisis in a century in Spanish demographic statistics: the most recent definitive figures that have been published are those for 1980! The provisional figures are unreliable as to the magnitude of phenomena and the absence of detailed tabulations does not permit proper analysis. Hence, we are confronted with a situation in which change is demonstrably taking place but which has been hardly studied at all and which is, moreover, difficult to observe⁴

It is possible to hypothesize however. Cabré and Pujadas (1986), in a monographic study of Catalonia based on existing data for the period 1975-1980 have attributed the decline in fertility in the first instance to a decline in legitimate fertility. Lower nuptiality in turn could express a lower propensity to form couples, which is perhaps connected with the economic crisis or the changing status of women, but which is more likely to reflect another phenomenon which is becoming more widespread, namely consensual unions, or extra-marital cohabitation.

Our knowledge about cohabitation, however, is not only hampered by the obvious lack of registration but also by semantic lacunae. We do not even possess appropriate universal concepts to name this phenomenon. Who should be considered an "alternative couple" or a "cohabitant", if we did indeed choose to agree upon this term? We could decide that cohabitants are those

who live together without being married; yet it is precisely the fact that one is married which defines a marriage as such, since the "marital way of life" nowadays includes an increasing number of situations regarding gender roles and residence (it is not uncommon for couples, whether they are married or not, to live separately for some time, either for a few days a week, or for several months a year, etc.). Which are thus the criteria to define a couple as cohabitants? Which are the specific characteristics of this category of people? Does cohabitation replace marriage or does it precede it as a new kind of courtship?

Interest in demographic change in Spain has raised the issue of non-marital cohabitation from a quantitative perspective. The difficulties entailed in a quantitative study have given rise to this more qualitative and conceptual research project.

2. The study of patterns of household formation

Work on this project began in 1985 at the Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics⁵ and is being sponsored by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas of the Ministry of the Presidency of the Spanish Government. The project is directed jointly by Anna Alabart, Anna Cabré and Verena Stolcke⁶ working with a research team composed of Andreu Domingo, Assumpta Fabré, Núria Castells, and Carles Blas in charge of computer processing.

The main aim of the project is to explore the process of household formation of different types of union, and of their respective peculiarities, with the objective of linking these with the suggested explanatory variables.

The study is based on data collected with the aid of open in-depth interviews of individuals of both sexes and of ages ranging from 20 to 40 years residing in the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Madrid. In addition to the aforementioned criteria, the samples were structured by marital status and level of education. Secondary criteria such as income level, political and

religious attitudes, occupation and number of children have also been taken into account.

The open in-depth interview is especially suited to an exploratory study designed to generate a wide range of information unmediated, as far as possible, by the researcher's own theoretical prejudices. Interviews of this type may not provide systematic factual data but they respect the interviewee's own categories, concepts, associations and vocabulary and thus allow for the assessment of conceptual changes and ideological processes.

The study was carried out in the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Madrid because it was thought that patterns of household formation were changing most noticeably (particularly the decline in the number of marriages) in these large urban centres. Initially, other major urban areas had also been considered (especially Sevilla) but were dropped later for financial reasons.

For the stratification by age of the samples, we chose groups whose ages ranged from 20 to 40 years, for two reasons: we expected that the age group between 20 and 30 would reveal more clearly present patterns of household formation while the individuals between 30 and 40 years could be regarded, as witnesses of the immediately preceding phase. By comparing the behaviour of the two groups we hope to be able to assess changes in household formation through time.

The interviewees exhibited three different marital situations, namely married, cohabiting and single (this last category comprised single, widowed, separated and divorced persons). This choice was prompted by our interest in observing not only favourable but also unfavourable attitudes with regard to specific coupling behaviour (marriage versus cohabitation, for example) which could be in some way connected with the present living arrangement of the person interviewed.

Lastly, the samples were stratified into three groups by level of education since we suspect that this variable exercises

a strong influence on household formation options and is also a useful indicator of socioeconomic status.

By combining all these criteria (two regions, both sexes, four age groups, three marital states, three levels of education) we obtained 144 possible cases; our sample contains one of each. The samples do not differ greatly from the population as regards sex and age distribution, but there is a bias towards individuals with higher education and those who are not married, a fact which should improve our opportunities for exploring the new patterns of household formation. The samples are evidently not representative but we have controlled its composition to avoid excessive bias.

The interviews were carried out between May and November of 1985. The people interviewed proved surprisingly open, even about subjects such as sexuality which were traditionally taboo.

In addition to information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the individuals (such as family status and structure, level of education, place of origin, etc.) the interviews also provide data on the circumstances under which the union was entered into, the kind of union, the economic and occupational situation, housing, gender roles, domestic division of labour, sexual practices and experiences, reproductive behaviour, number of children, kinship and friendship relations, leisure time, values, expectations and practices regarding forms of cohabitation. The information obtained refers mainly to the interviewee but also to the partner and focuses not only on a couple's present situation but on their past experiences and expectations and their hopes for the future as well.

The interviews, about one and a half hours each, were taped and transcribed into a computer. A code for text analysis as well as a computer programme were prepared as a first step towards the interpretation of the data. In this paper we want to present some of our findings on cohabitants and cohabitation.

3. On cohabitants and cohabitation

Our first findings are determined by the characteristics of the interviewees (in this case cohabitants); they do not tell us anything about cohabitation in general. Before we have analysed all the data we can not provide a broader and more complete idea of the phenomenon of cohabitation, for married and single people also express ideas and attitudes with regard to this phenomenon and in many cases describe earlier personal experiences of cohabitation.

Our first findings result, then, from the analysis of 48 interviews distributed equally between Barcelona and Madrid, between women and men and among three levels of education (high, middle and low).

For the purpose of interpreting the data, we have divided this sample into two distinct age groups of under and over 30, respectively. Those belonging to the over-30 group, who were born in the meager years between 1946 and 1955, are in a way, the Spanish equivalent of the "generation of '68" characterized by an ideological belligerence intensified in this country by the political effervescence which accompanied the end of the Franco regime and the transition to democracy. Those under 30, born between 1956 and 1965, on the other hand, grew up in a context of economic prosperity and followed the road often paved by their elder siblings, and enjoyed the political and personal liberties of whose recent origin they were not always aware. The seriousness of the economic crisis, however, has plunged them into a world full of anxieties over professional and social prospects, unknown to their predecessors⁷ Here we focus on the under-30s because we believe that they are more representative of present trends and because cohabitation has for them a more voluntary character.

In the older age group, by comparison, individuals awaiting a divorce predominate. Hence their option for cohabitation has a somewhat different character.

In the analysis we will proceed through to the following steps:

- 1) Ideas and concepts on cohabitation.
- 2) Experiences of cohabitation:
 - a) entering into cohabitation;
 - b) daily routine;
 - c) outcome.

For the moment we will discuss the issues covered by points 1 and 2a: the other topics also require an analysis of the attitudes of married and single individuals; the daily routine of cohabitation can be better assessed by comparing different types of unions whereas the final outcome, whether in the form of marriage or a break-up of the relationship, will be studied in depth with the aid of data on the relatively frequent past experiences of cohabitation described by married individuals or by those who at the time of the interview were living alone.

3.1. Ideas and concepts on cohabitation

Confronted with the important changes that have occurred in daily life, behavioural patterns, values and social relations, the cohabitants we interviewed saw themselves as much as on-lookers as actors. Some theorize on these transformations, thus attributing some sense to them; others regard them as a "fashion" which is, nonetheless, accepted by society although certain reservations can be perceived in specific social circles. At any rate, the family model which in the sixties enjoyed enormous vitality (Lapierre-Adamcyck, 1984) and which seemed to have become "the universal form of living together" (Sardon, 1984) is used as a point of reference to define the new behavioural patterns which have not as yet been duly typified and classified.

The notion of "cohabitation" appears to embrace two main ideas: humans need to be paid, and "non-marriage".

3.1.1. The couple as a natural imperative

Marriage may be undergoing a crisis; the couple, however, is in excellent health. Forms of pairing may have changed but its general acceptance has not. Thus, the individuals interviewed regard the couple implicitly stable and monogamous⁸ formed by a woman and a man⁹ as the way par excellence of living together.

But why do people get married? Why out of the various forms of living together do they choose the couple? We raised these questions with all the interviewees unless of course they talked about them spontaneously. The recurrent answer was: not to be alone. To be single, to be without a partner permanently, is considered an anomalous condition.

"People pair because they need company" (man, age 26, low educational level)

"We are not made to live alone" (woman, age 28, medium educational level)

"There are moments when I get bored and grow tired and think, look I'll send it all to hell, I'll take my child and leave. I'm with him in order not to be alone, to live with someone but not because he helps me in any way; I can't see that he helps me at all" (woman, age 29, low educational level)

There are also other arguments which are adduced and which refer to biological needs (related to sex and reproduction):

"People pair because they need it. I don't know how to answer you, because they simply need it... I, for example. I need to satisfy my urges in this way. I honestly don't know how to tell you, how to explain" (man, age 22, low educational level)

"Q: Why do you think that people tend to live in couples?

A: Good Lord! Well, I don't know (laughter). I really don't know. People are people. Couples are formed out of necessity, or because they like

each other, or because they feel attracted to one another or at ease; because it's different. You come home and you feel better. I don't know, it depends on the individual. There are people who form a couple simply because they need someone of the opposite sex in order to overcome the troubles of the day" (man, age 24, low education level)

This latter explanation contains another psychological reason frequently given by the people interviewed for the popularity of the couple: it offers emotional stability.

"If you live well with a person it makes you feel good; you feel balanced" (woman, age 25, high educational level)

"Couples endure because everybody likes to be independent, to have a life of his own and at the same time to share it" (woman, age 22, low educational level)

3.1.2. Cohabitation versus marriage

Couples organize their "living together" in different ways: through a religious ceremony, a civil wedding, cohabitation... But why do people choose one rather than the other of these forms of entering a union? Which are the motives that prompt a specific option? Do they decide consciously or unconsciously?

All the individuals interviewed (irrespective of age and sex) spoke of cohabitation with reference to marriage: to cohabit means, above all, having decided 'not to marry' or to postpone, more or less indefinitely, the possibility of marriage.

But, why do they decide against marriage, that is to say "not to marry"?

In the first place, because cohabitation, contrary to marriage, constitutes an agreement which is free of any social representation at the contractual level, which by many is understood as state interference in the private sphere of the individual. Most interviewees thought in these terms:

"I don't believe in the Church and in all those papers. Why should I get married? The solidity of a relationship of a couple does not depend on whether or not they are married" (man, age 25, low educational level)

"I believe in the couple but not in marriage... having to go to Church to get married, or to the Registry. I don't consider this to be normal; well, normal yes but not for me; it creates problems with papers. (...) If you live together, it's the same thing, the affection is the same: 'on day so and so it was a year since we met' and you don't have to worry about papers; I consider this a sign of backwardness" (woman, age 29, low educational level)

"I don't think there is a difference between being married or not as far as the way of life is concerned. The only difference is that you have avoided the legal barrier" (woman, age 23, medium educational level)

"We like neither civil nor religious marriage" (woman, age 23, high educational level)

"There is no reason why there should be some 'external' agency to tell you 'you are a couple!', if you already are (...). There should not be any laws or things external to the couple which prescribe a type of conduct that in fact only depends on the couple itself" (man, age 22, low educational level)

"I have been talking with her about this, you know, and it matters to her (getting married). But I don't really know why it matters to her because she sees it as I do. If two people love each other why the hell should there be any need for papers; to prove that you love the person and that you have a relationship with her? That's all nonsense, isn't it? If you really love her there is no reason why you should get married! I don't know, but that's the way I see it" (man, age 22, low educational level)

On the other hand, cohabitation has, in the opinion of the cohabitants we interviewed, certain advantages over legal marriage:

"What changes is the way you relate to your partner: there is much more independence on both sides. There are more things to share because the two of them have many more experiences. You can have a very good time with your partner if you have things to offer; if you are stuck in a house every day looking after your children and cleaning the kitchen, you don't have much to offer your husband. And, besides, you may have much to offer your husband one day and maybe the next but after a month you are bored of what you have to offer him (...). If the couple exists this is because both partners want it. That means that there is more independence, each one chooses what he really wants (...). I find that there is much more honesty among cohabiting couples (...). It is a relationship between two people, and there is more sharing, quite apart from the economic aspect which for me is rather important. If both are

economically independent things change a lot" (woman, age 25, medium educational level)

"Marriage ties you down too much; you get few legal benefits in return and I find, moreover, that it diminishes the freshness of the relationship" (woman, age 20, high educational level)

By contrast with marriage, then, cohabitation is thought to favour honesty, to grant the partners greater independence and above all to offer the woman greater freedom:

"I believe the marriage contract favours the man. In the event of separation the one who is faced with greater difficulties is the woman" (woman, age 25, medium educational level)

"...that is, you get married and the man, let's suppose, is a whoremonger who has many women... Do you have to live with that man because the Lord has told you so, because you have married him and it was for life? And if that man is a drunkard and beats you up, should you continue living with him? Why? Because you have married him by the Church? I don't think this is right. Marriage, moreover, implies greater domination by the man. Even now that I only live with him there are times when he tries to order me around. If I were married to him he would dominate me even more!" (woman, age 29, low educational level)

Not all cohabitants interviewed, however, interpret the advantages of cohabitation in the same way. For some, the benefits of civil or religious marriage are considerable:

"In principle we decided to live together. That doesn't mean that I have given up the idea of marriage. If I were to get married it might be for reasons of security, but not because of outside pressure; just for my own security" (woman, age 21, low educational level)

"At first, when I was very young, I thought I would marry. Only later I changed my mind but I am, even now, not quite sure whether I'll marry or not; he wants to get married because of his parents who are quite devoted Catholics. If I were to marry, I would do it for two reasons: because I would find it all more settled, more secure and because I would feel more at ease. My life will be the same, nothing will change but I'll be more at ease psychologically" (woman)

The advantages of marriage (be it civil or religious) and the disadvantages of cohabitation in relation to the social acknowledgement of the couple are taken into account even by the declared advocates of the "free union":

"Nowadays there aren't as many problems as in the past if you don't get married. I imagine that people used to look at you more... There are now lots of couples who live together (...). My parents' friends will never consider me married" (woman, age 28, medium educational level)

"Socially, if you are a married couple, people look at you with more respect, there is more consideration (...). If you cohabit you can't tell everyone about it (woman, age 28, medium educational level)

3.2. Entering into cohabitation

Because marriage was constantly referred to as an option that differed significantly from cohabitation we thought it relevant to enquire into the circumstances under which the decision to cohabit was taken, that is to say, to study why cohabitation was chosen instead of the courtship pattern which traditionally preceded marriage. In some instances the decision to cohabit flowed almost naturally from the development of the relationship and was taken with considerable candour:

"We decided to cohabit because things were going well for both of us: I worked, she worked; I had already left home (...), she lived at home and at my place (...). She didn't mind leaving home and just left" (man, age 22, medium educational level)

"He didn't have parents and lived with his sister. He had a house where he had lived with his mother before she died (...); he was alone, had a job, had a house, so there was no problem at all (...) and one day, well, it happened, it just happened. We decided to live together after only four months. We met in February and in June we were already both living here" (woman, age 20, high educational level)

"She was working here (in Barcelona) and lived with a girlfriend. I decided to look for a job. I considered the possibility of coming to Barcelona; I arrived and we started living together" (man, age 24, high educational level)

"When I met him I was already independent. Well, I lived in my grandmother's house; she spent six months here and six months in

France. Anyway, it's an independence of sorts" (woman, age 28, medium educational level)

Note that in these cases a whole set of circumstances are generally said to account for the decision to cohabit, which in the last instance boil down to the existence of prior autonomy in the family of origin. The more material aspects of this autonomy consist in having a place to live and being economically self-sufficient. The consequences appear to be the same even if these circumstances have arisen without any apparent intention during the course of the relationship:

"How did we decide to live together? The truth is that I don't know. I found a job, a stable job, so I decided to live on my own, to leave home; I found this flat, rented it, started to fix it... She came to help me fix it, and so we spent quite a number of hours here, the two of us, and... when the moment came to move in here,... After all, we could both of us come to live here, couldn't we? It would be rather silly for only one of us to move in" (man, age 24, high educational level)

Another factor which seems to be relevant to the decision to cohabit appears to be a certain psychological independence, even physical distance, from the family of origin, unless it is of the permissive kind, as is the case in some instances here:

"Before I was drafted we already wanted to live together. I finished my military service three years ago and we then decided to live together. We told the family and they approved" (man, age 26, low educational level)

The characteristics of the family of origin, its attitude and the nature of the children's relationship with their parents seem to play a very important role in determining the option to cohabit or to follow the more conventional path to marriage. The specificity of the sample analysed here, made up exclusively of cohabitants, does not allow for comparisons. Nonetheless, we would venture the hypothesis that a disruptive event of any kind

that affects the family of origin (migration, death, separation, the same as serious conflicts among its members) has a centrifugal effect on the children both as regards their personal situation as well as with respect to their own ideal of the family; such a centrifugal effect would favour cohabitation:

"We met when we were fourteen or fifteen. After some time we went to live together. I think it was when we were nineteen. Both of us had problems at home, family problems. So we said let's live together. It was as easy as that. We rented a little flat and came to live there". (man, age 26, medium educational level)

The parents' attitude affects considerably the interviewees' reactions to the social reception which his or her union encounters; there is a certain logic to this since family pressure on the individual is usually directly proportional to the pressure, be it real or imaginary, exercised by the social environment. This also accounts for the fact that the vehemence with which the respondents defend their condition is greater the more they feel they are being attacked; in some cases we could almost speak of a sort of "discourse of resistance".

"I tell you that I won't get married. No doubt about it; because he sometimes tells me: "in the end they will squash you and you will..." And I say: "No!" This head is harder than their efforts to squash me: if I say no, it's no! (woman, age 29, low educational level)

"We never considered getting married. Our families made us think about it but that only strengthened our decision: we won't marry (...). I suppose that if we have a child we will hear the same story. "Well, won't you marry?" They say that a couple of times and then get over it, they become more understanding and things return to normal" (woman, age 23, medium educational level)

Difficulties with parents usually occur at the onset of cohabitation even in cases where the families have, generally for tactical reasons, accepted sexual intercourse of the couple:

"As long as we went out together and didn't do anything more, like living together, it was all very well! But the moment we talked of living together, at least for a while, the problems started, especially on the part of her parents. Conversations, arguments, worries and... "it's your future..." the perpetual concern of parents. But we got on with it" (man, age 24, high educational level)

Material and economic pressures should be added to these other pressures of an emotional and moral nature which are usually more intense on the side of the woman's family. The family puts an economic "premium" on marriage, especially when it satisfies their expectations, by offering the couple substantial help in setting themselves up (especially when the couple is young) and by paying the wedding banquet for a considerable number of relatives and friends; these, in turn, give presents usually chosen from the "wedding list" prepared by the couple prior to the wedding, or, more recently, they give sums of money which are deposited on a "wedding account". If the couple doesn't get married, they won't enjoy any of these benefits, a fact which is conceived as a "punishment", for it means foregoing a customary right.

In some extreme cases, the family can punish the rebellious children by depriving them of the advantages inherent to belonging to the family, either in the form of income, or consumer goods.

It needs no saying that the ability to "buy" the decision of the couple is related to the economic circumstances of the family. For this reason some of the interviewees believe (although we do not have any evidence of this) that it is the children of the upper classes who are most addicted to marriage:

"The rich continue to get married because it is a way of preserving traditions, the family, and capital. But the ordinary people, well, why should they get married?" (man, age 26, medium educational level)

Due to the usually negative reaction of the family, some

cohabitants prefer, if possible, to hide their situation in order to avoid tension. This is especially common among students and young workers who have migrated. They may, for example, pretend to live with a group of people.

The existence of precedents of cohabitation among elder siblings seems to mollify the family's attitude and the breaking up of a child's marriage seems to generate. In a similar way, a more permissive attitude in relation to the other children's possible decisions to cohabit. In the few cases in which the parents themselves exhibit an atypical personal situation, their attitude is definitely more open. In general, as expected, the strongest opposition to cohabitation comes from devoted Catholic families or from those who belong to the political right as well as from families who have a recent rural origin.

4. Conclusion

Our study has shown that cohabitation outside of marriage, which appears to be the most radical and visible aspect of changes undergone by the family in Spain, prevails in the large urban areas and among the highly educated. The demonstration effect is therefore large and so the phenomenon seems to be spreading rapidly to other groups and regions. It would be of the greatest interest to study this phenomenon quantitatively, in a survey. We hope that our first qualitative exploration of the subject shall provide the necessary concepts and practical knowledge to implement such a larger statistical study, possibly at the national level.

REFERENCES

BENERIA, L, (1976),: "Women's participation in paid production under capitalism: the Spanish experience." In: **The Review of Radical Economics** 8, pp. 18-33.

CABRÉ, A. and PUJADAS, I, (1986),: "Caída de la fecundidad y evolución demográfica en Cataluña". In: A. Olano (ed.), **Tendencias demográficas y planificación económica**. Madrid, Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda, pp. 153-175.

HÖPFLINGER, F, (1985),: "Changing marriage behaviour: some European comparisons". In: **Genus** 413/4, pp. 61-64.

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADISTICA, (1986),: **Encuesta de fecundidad 1985. Avance de resultados**. Madrid.

LAPIERRE-ADAMCYCK, E, (1986),: "La famille à la fin des années soixante: l'exemple de la famille américaine". In: **Les familles d'aujourd'hui**. Association Internationale des Démographes de Langue Française (AIDELF), Colloque de Genève, Septembre 1984. Paris, INED, pp. 5-13.

SARDON, J.P, (1986),: "Evolution de la nuptialité et de la divorcialité en Europe depuis la fin des années soixante". In: **Les familles d'aujourd'hui**. Association Internationale des Démographes de Langue Française (AIDELF), Colloque de Genève, Septembre 1984. Paris, INED, pp. 15-30.

NOTES

¹ Thus, in a recent article on the topic (Höpflinger, 1985) Spain was not mentioned.

² Spain is in fact a heterogeneous set of peoples and cultures which have experienced an unfortunate historical process of centralisation. The new Constitution established 17 Autonomous Communities but this autonomy is in no way comparable to that enjoyed during the Second Republic by the then existing communities, and which permitted Catalonia to enact exceptionally advanced family and social legislation which could not have been extended to the rest of the country at the time.

³ The good intentions of the divorce law contrast starkly with the absence of instruments to enforce the payment of alimony; moreover, the law on abortion, which is in itself extraordinarily restrictive, is made even less effective by the undue bureaucratic delays and by the appeal to reasons of conscience by a significant sector of the medical profession (which does not prevent the same doctors from carrying out illegal but very profitable abortions); under these circumstances thousands of women (90.000 according to the official "Instituto de la Mujer") continue to abort abroad every year (in England, the Netherlands, Morocco). By contrast, only a few hundred have been able to use the law in its first year. Spain is obviously not exceptional in this.

⁴ The first results of the second Spanish Fertility Survey (1985) have appeared recently (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 1986); some figures are related to our subject. We present them in the tabulations at the end of this paper (see appendix); some of the figures are given in their original form, others have been reorganised by us. Since the Fertility Survey does not have specific tabulations for the geographic areas of our study (Barcelona and Madrid), comparison is difficult. However, the figures at the national level on kinds of unions by socioeconomic characteristics of women match well with our empirical findings on every item except age. Owing to the difficulties in locating interviewees of the different age groups, we have come to think that ages 25-29 show the highest level of cohabitation in our areas, while the Fertility Survey points to the 20-24 age group as the modal one in Spain; probably both are true, since cohabitation is extended to the entire scale of social groups in Barcelona and Madrid, while in the smaller urban areas of Spain cohabitation is almost specific to the group of university students, whose age range from 18 to 25.

⁵ The Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics is a research centre founded in 1984 jointly by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and the Generalitat de Catalunya (the autonomous Catalan government).

⁶ Anna Alabart, a sociologist, teaches at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Barcelona; Anna Cabré, a demographer, and Verena Stolcke, an anthropologist, both teach at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

⁷ Unemployment in Spain, among the highest in Europe, has since 1982 consistently exceeded 20 per cent; youth unemployment (ages under 25) stands at approximately 50 per cent and this figure is probably even higher in the metropolitan areas of Barcelona and Madrid. Unemployment benefits only cover 30 per cent of the jobless, those looking for a first job not being entitled to it.

⁸ Although the individual, neither in theory nor in practice, is denied parallel relationships as a personal right, these are, nonetheless, viewed, save under exceptional circumstances, as a sign of deterioration or a process of dissolution.

⁹ Homosexuality is accepted as a fact but by the great majority it is considered unnatural.

APPENDIX: The Spanish Fertility Survey 1985

Table A1. Distribution of women by age and kind of union (per cent)

Kind of union	Current age					
	Total	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39
All unions	70,398	10,222	40,68	77,078	86,187	87,929
Married	69,641	9,694	39,646	76,142	85,51	87,226
Cohabitants	0,756	0,005	1,035	0,936	0,673	0,702

Table A2. Distribution of women by marital status and kind of union (per cent)

Kind of union	Marital status				
	Total	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Married living with husband	69,6	-	99,5	-	-
Other stable union	0,7	1,8	-	4,2	19,9
No stable union	29,6	98,2	0,5	95,8	80,1

Table A3. Distribution of women by kind of union and size of place of residence (per cent)

Size of place of residence	Kind of union			
	Total	Married	Other stable union	No stable union
Total	100	69,64	0,76	29,6
≤10.000 inhab.	100	71,55	0,2	28,25
10.000-50.000 in.	100	72,29	0,37	27,34
50.000-500.000 in.	100	70,75	0,76	28,49
>500.000 inhab.	100	62,28	1,9	35,82

Table A4. Distribution of women by kind of union and educational level (per cent)

Educational level	Kind of union			
	Total	Married	Cohabitant	Single
Total*	100	69,64	0,76	29,6
Illiterate	100	86,99	0,1	12,91
Low	100	85,2	0,6	14,2
Medium	100	53,5	1	45,5
High	100	57,84	2,84	39,32

* absolute number is 8.262.336

Table A5. Distribution of women by kind of union and religion (per cent)

Belief and religious practice	Kind of union			
	Total	Married	Other stable union	No stable union
Total	100	69,64	0,76	29,6
No religion	100	52,79	2,82	44,39
Catholic (not pract.)	100	65,39	1,33	33,28
Catholic (pract.)	100	73,86	0,19	25,95
Others religions	100	68,49	2	29,51
No answer	100	65,74	1,11	33,15

Table A6. Distribution of women according to kind of union and selected regions (autonomous communities) (per cent)

Autonomous communities	Kind of union			
	Total	Married	Other stable union	No stable union
Total Spain	100	69,64	0,76	29,6
Of which:				
— Catalunya	100	73,83	1,31	24,86
— Madrid (Comunidad)	100	67,59	1,53	30,88