

**IS THE MALE PROVIDEN MODEL STILL IN  
PLACE? PATNERSHIP FORMATION IN  
CONTEMPORANY SPAIN**

Marta Luxan, Pau Miret, Rocío Treviño

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**Resum.-** En aquest article s'examina el nivell educatiu i la posició d'homes i dones en el mercat de treball, en relació a la probabilitat de formar una primera unió a Espanya, per a dos períodes contemporanis. El nostre objectiu és aprofundir en l'estudi de les raons per les que es formen tan poques primeres unions a Espanya i plantejar diferents interpretacions dels canvis que han tingut lloc en relació a la formació de la primera parella. S'han observat diferències entre el període de desenvolupament (1965-1974) i el de crisi (1981-1990), pel que fa referència als patrons de gènere: per un costat, pels homes, la relació positiva entre la probabilitat de formar una primera parella, el nivell educatiu i la posició en el mercat de treball s'ha reforçat; per altre, per les dones, desapareix la relació negativa entre la posició en el mercat de treball i la formació de la parella.

**Paraules clau.-** Gènere, nivell educatiu, primera unió, Espanya.

**Resumen.-** En este artículo se examinan el nivel educativo y la posición de hombres y mujeres en el mercado laboral, en relación a la probabilidad de formar una primera unión en España, para dos períodos contemporáneos. Nuestro objetivo es profundizar en el estudio de las razones por las que se constituyen tan pocas primeras uniones en España y plantear diferentes interpretaciones de los cambios acontecidos en relación a la formación de la primera pareja. Se han observado diferencias entre el período de desarrollo (1965-74) y el de crisis (1981-90) en cuanto a los patrones de género se refiere: por un lado, para los hombres, la relación positiva entre la probabilidad de formar una primera pareja, el nivel educativo y la posición en el mercado laboral se ha reforzado; por otro lado, para las mujeres, la relación negativa entre posición en el mercado laboral y formación de la pareja desaparece.

**Palabras clave.-** Género, nivel educativo, mercado laboral, primera unión, España.

**Abstract.-** In this article, we examine the influence of some explanatory variables related to educational attainment and labour market position for males and females on the hazard rates of entry into first partnership in two historical periods in contemporary Spain. Our goal is to highlight the causes of the present low levels of first unions in Spain and to assess different approaches for interpreting the changes in first partnership formation. Some changes have been observed between the development period (1965-74) and the crisis period (1981-90) in gender patterns of family formation: on the one hand, for males, the positive relationship between the probabilities of entering into a first partnership and educational attainment and labour-market position has been strengthened; on the other hand, for women, the negative relationship between labour market position and first partnership formation has disappeared.

**Key words.-** Gender, educational attainment, labour market, first union, Spain.

**Résumé.-** Dans cet article on examine le niveau d'éducation et la position sur le marché du travail des hommes et des femmes en relation avec la probabilité de former une première union en Espagne, pour deux périodes contemporaines. Notre objectif est d'approfondir l'étude des causes selon lesquelles il se constitue si peu d'unions en Espagne, et proposer différentes interprétations des changements survenus en relation à la formation des premières unions. On a observé des différences entre une période de développement (1965-74) et une période de crise (1981-90) en ce qui a trait modes de formation des unions de chaque sexe: d'un côté, pour les hommes, la relation positive entre la probabilité de former une première union et le niveau d'éducation et la position sur le marché du travail s'est renforcée; d'un autre côté, pour les femmes, la relation négative entre la position sur le marché du travail et la formation des unions est disparue.

**Mots clés.-** Genre, niveau d'éducation, marché du travail, première union, Espagne.

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## **IS THE MALE PROVIDER MODEL STILL IN PLACE? PARTNERSHIP FORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY SPAIN**

### **1.- Introduction**

We would like to begin by clarifying what we mean for "male provider model". The ideal-type male-provider model would be a partnership constituted by a full-time employed man in a stable job and a woman not in the labour market. By contrast, we could have a dual-earner model, where both the man and the woman would be involved in the labour-force in stable full-time jobs. Of course, between these two poles we can find a wide range of other possible situations, for instance, a partnership where each person works in an unstable job or where one of them is not in full-time employment. We must take into account the variety of labour-force involvement among adult family members.

Usually, patterns in the timing of male entry into marriage and its prevalence had been explained as a function solely of young men's economic characteristics with regard to their position in the labour market. The argument goes as follows. On the one hand, the more problematic it is for men to achieve economic independence, the later they will marry (and, vice versa, the better their economic conditions, the earlier they will be able to constitute a partnership). On the other hand, periods of critical economic difficulties will lead to an increase in the number of single males (while, on the contrary, the number of married men would increase during economic booms). Once young men have solved all possible economic problems, imbalances in the marriage market (that is, between the number of unmarried men and unmarried women) can obstruct their transition from being single to getting married. Thus, to consider the economic position of male young adults as a key factor for understanding marriage patterns has a long tradition in social analysis.

In consequence, within this model, the characteristics of young females, other than the relative number of unmarried women compared to unmarried men, played almost no role in explaining the timing and prevalence of marriage. It is a combination of the "threshold hypothesis" and the "marriage market perspective", that is, young men in the early stages of their careers must, first of all, ensure that they have enough family support (basically, help from their parents) or enough earnings, or both, to set up an independent household. This is the "threshold" they should pass in order to be able to constitute a family. As a

second step, they had to find an appropriate partner (competing in the marriage market). Of course, higher socio-economic groups would have higher standards concerning the minimum necessary to get married and different opinions than other social classes about who could be considered a suitable partner.

One important example of how to achieve enough autonomy to get married was the so-called "life-cycle servant" (Laslett 1972). In England, from the seventeenth century up to modern times, young men worked in a household other than their family home during earlier stages of their lives in order to achieve economic independence and, consequently, establish their own household. Although this "life-cycle servant" was not historically a common phase in the life course of young adults in other countries such as Spain, there have always been strategies through which a young man could reach the threshold necessary to get married. These strategies in Spain varied very much by region (see Reher, 1997: Ch. 3), but are basically related to family support (when it is available) and to involvement within the labour-force.

We should note, nevertheless, that according to the "West European Marriage Model" (which in some countries appeared from the seventeenth century), female marriage patterns were a social means of controlling fertility levels, that is, the more important it was socially to maintain low fertility, the more restricted and delayed was marriage for women (Hajnal 1965). As a consequence, the lower the pressure from community or family for having children (or the higher the pressure for having less), the greater female labour-force participation became. Thus, within western European culture, although "traditional" role within a married couple for men was to be a father-breadwinner, for women it was not being a full-time caregiver-mother, but to combine this role with their labour-force participation (especially in the earlier stages of family building). By contrast, if fertility was encouraged (that is, the pressure for having as many children as possible increased), society encouraged earlier and more widespread female marriages and, as a consequence, female labour-force participation was kept to a minimum (as women were forced to focus only on reproductive tasks).

Of course, setting up dual-earner household has always been a stronger strategy than relying for household income on just one member of the new family, especially during hard times. In fact, in the past, families relied on the work of their teenage and young adult children to create economic flexibility in the family household, although this is not the case any more in contemporary industrialized cultures (Oppenheimer 1994). In the same sense, female labour-force participation was seen as a way of "helping" the family get ahead in difficult situations, but it was not considered the "normal" role for married women.

Indeed, most sociologists have pointed out from Emile Durkheim onward (1960, original edition in 1892) that the sexual division of labour within marriage was the source of interdependence between men and women in a family nucleus and as such was also the basis for social cohesion and stability. Talcott Parsons (1949) considered sexual role differentiation as the real foundation of any modern industrial society. This argument was mathematically formalized by Gary Becker (1987), who argued that both increases in female labour-force participation and progressively higher levels of female involvement in non-compulsory educational system leads to a rise in women's opportunity cost of having children and, consequently, women delay or avoid family formation. In other words, the higher the level of educational achievement for a woman, and the better and longer her labour-force career, the later she will marry and the stronger will be her desire to remain single and not have a family. However, there is only weak empirical support for this argument (Oppenheimer *et al.* 1997).

According to these approaches, the present low levels of cross-sectional first marriages registered in southern European countries should be explained by either (1) the present economic crisis, which does not allow young men to attain their traditional role of breadwinners or (2) the fact that women who are educated and highly involved in the labour-force no longer accept their traditional role of care-givers as imposed by the conservative culture of the region. Of course, a combination of both perspectives is perfectly possible in suggesting that the rate of marriage will decline if men and women do not accept and fully apply the male-breadwinner and female-care-giver family model.

Yet there is a third possible explanation, which derives from the fact that the closer the marriage model comes to absolute gender role differentiation in western Europe, the lower is the level of first unions. Conversely, it appears that as more progress there has been toward gender equality within marriage, the greater is the intensity of cross-sectional family formation. Hence, the third hypothesis states that the present low levels of first unions in southern European countries are actually due to the difficulties in transforming partnership roles from a complementary model to a more egalitarian one (Cabr  1995; McDonald 1997).

We propose in this article to focus on trend changes in the male role in family formation in contemporary Spain. We will focus in the comparisons between two different periods in recent history of Spain which differ with regard to economic characteristics, political system and levels of cross-sectional partnership formation. Our goal is to find the key factors for understanding a particular pattern in marriage formation, especially for men. We will highlight the relevant changes observable in educational attainment and labour-market position for males and females and their possible association with the transition

from single status to partnership. We will focus on how past economic booms and stability in family values in comparison with recent economic crises and changes in cultural values could maintain (even reinforce) or change (and even destroy) traditional roles in family formation. We will proceed by elaborating hazard rates by age and sex of entering into a first partnership, according to the level of educational attainment on the one hand and position within the labour market on the other.

## **2.- Source of data and methodology**

The data used are drawn from the 1991 Socio-demographic Survey conducted by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Spanish Central Statistical Institute). The 1991 Survey consists of a sample of about 160,000 individuals, representative of the Spanish population resident in private households and aged over ten years (communal households are excluded). It is a retrospective survey and individuals were asked to report information about specific life-course events.

This survey asks respondents to give the date of their first partnership, if any. From that, we will build our dependent variable, that is, the transition from "never in a partnership" to the "constitution of a partnership". We include marriage and cohabitation. In fact, it is not possible to differentiate clearly in the 1991 Survey between "cohabitation outside the wedlock" and "marriage". That is because only cohabitation which last for more than one year is recorded and, moreover, those partnerships which started in cohabitation but finished in marriage are considered as marriages from the very beginning. In any case, up to 1991 (when this survey took place), cohabitation outside wedlock in Spain was at a very low level and was usually considered as a "trial" marriage (Cabré *et al.* 1995; Delgado 1993; Health and Miret 1996). Consequently, we will deal basically with family formation thought marriage, and only cohabiting partnership which are ongoing, ended in a marriage or which lasted more than one year will be taken into account.

Of course, within a partnership, men and women define their roles one in relation to one another. Unfortunately, the 1991 Survey is an individual data set and therefore does not provide us with longitudinal information concerning either educational attainment or the labour-market position of the interviewed partner. Hence, we have been forced to consider each sex separately, assuming that changes in gender roles within marriage will become evident by looking at the determinants for partnership formation for men on one hand and for women on the other.

We will employ discrete-time event-history methodology (Allison 1982; Yamaguchi 1991). For each year that an individual is know to be "at risk", a separate observational

record is created. Empirical analysis has shown that during the twentieth century in Spain there was no family formation before 17 years for males and 15 years for females (see, for women, Fernández 1978). In consequence, in our research, a man is considered to be at risk if he has never entered a partnership and is over 16 years old, and woman is considered to be at risk if she has never been in a partnership and she is over 14 years old. We refer to these observations in terms "person-year". For each person-year, the dependent variable (that is, transition to first partnership) is coded one if a person becomes involved in his or her first partnership in that year. Otherwise it is coded zero (that is, he or she remains single during that particular year). Thus, a dummy variable is computed indicating whether a person begins a first partnership in any particular year. Individuals are followed from the minimum age considered (17 for men, 15 for women) up until the year they become involved in a partnership, or up to 50 years old if they never have a partnership.

Our goal is to check the influence of some selected explanatory variables on the hazard rates of changing from the state of "never in a partnership" to the state of "beginning in a first partnership". As we noted, we will analyse independently each sex. We will use four time-dependent categorical variables: (1) age, (2) observational period, (3) educational attainment and (4) labour-force participation.

We have divided the age continuum into several age groups which came from a previous exploratory analysis: for men, the age groups are 17-19, 20-21, 22, 23, 24-26, 27-28, 29-32, 33-35, 36-38, 39-41, 42-44, 45-47 and 48-50 years; for women, they are 15-17, 18-19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24-26, 27-28, 29-32, 33-35, 36-38, 39-41, 42-44, 45-47 and 48-50 years. Age as an independent variable shows to what extent differences in first-partnership hazard rates are due to timing but not to intensity, that is, the extent to which people in a specific period formed a first union earlier or later, but not more or less.

We will compare two periods: 1965-74 and 1981-90. Furthermore, we will illustrate the reason for choosing these two historical periods. The methodology is based on elaborating the hazard rates of entering into a first partnership registered by Spanish men and Spanish women during these two different periods of time, that is, 1965-74 (development period) and 1981-90 (crisis period).

Educational attainment has been classified into five categories: 1) compulsory education as a maximum, (2) high school (*bachillerato*), (3) vocational training (*formación profesional*), (4) three years university degree (*diplomaturas*) and (5) five years university degree (*licenciaturas or ingenierias*).

Lastly, the 1991 Survey categorizes labour-force participation according to the characteristics of the period each individual is experiencing. In other words, we can separate periods when the individual was (1) always at work in a continuous and full-time job (stable and full-time job), (2) continuous and full-time job but with periods of unemployment (full-time job with unemployment), (3) always at work but in part-time or seasonal job (stable but non full-time job), (4) experiencing a combination of periods of unemployment with either a seasonal or part-time job (unemployment with a job that was not full-time) and (5) not in the labour-force.

### **3.- Contextual factors shaping the evolution of partnership formation in Spain**

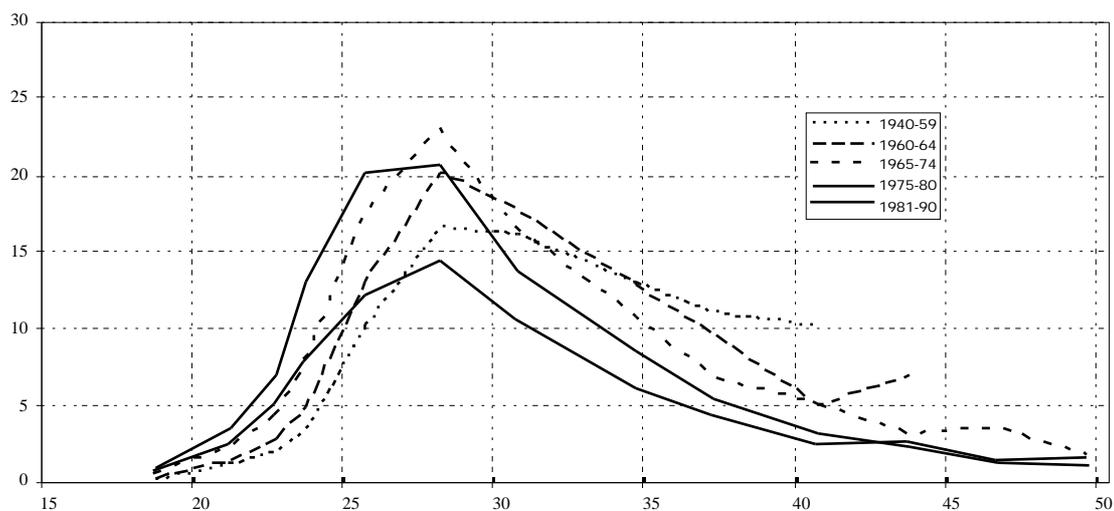
In order to justify the choice of these periods, we need to present the historical context that has prevailed since 1939 (the end of the Civil War) until 1991 (the last year for which we have information from the data).

After the Civil War, Spain experienced a severe set back in its economic development. Moreover, it was completely isolated from the rest of the world, even socially and culturally. Because of the political system, Spain did not undergo any kind of economic development or changes in civil society's values up to the beginning of the 1960s. For instance, in terms of economic development, it was not until the early 1960s that Spain attained the same percentage of the population working in the industrial sector (Garrido 1992), the Gross National Product (Tamames 1986) and per capita income (Carreras 1988) that had existed in 1930. Moreover, the prevailing ideology was so-called "National-Catholicism".

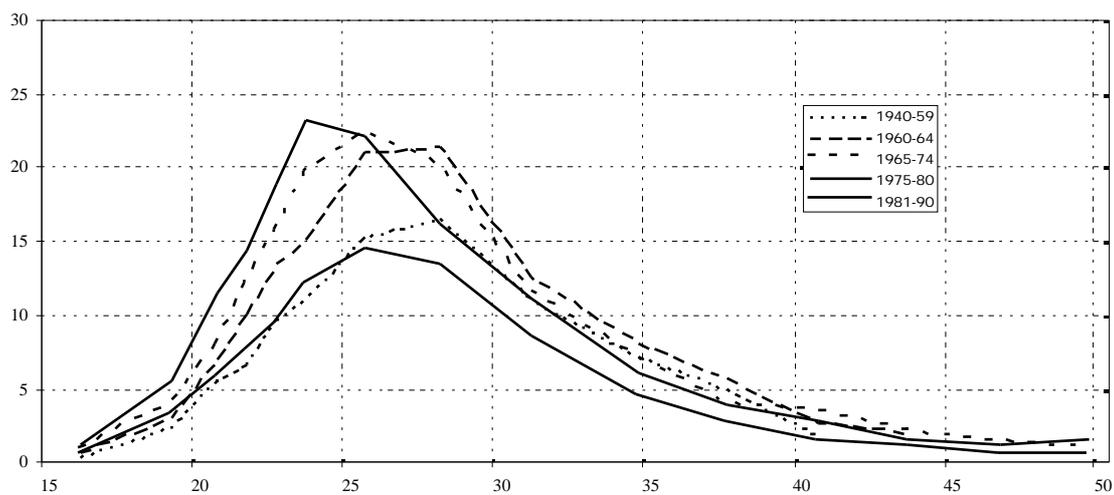
Concerning demographic behaviour, from the end of the Civil War until the late 1950s, people experienced very delayed marriages, with a mean age at first marriage of almost 29 years for men and about 26 years for women. Consequently, fertility levels remained very low indeed (Fernández 1978). In Figure 1 we plot the hazard-rates of entering a first partnership for men by age groups for different periods between the end of the Civil War and 1991. We can show how delayed the male marriage pattern was during the period from 1940 to 1959 in comparison with other periods. The highest hazard-rate during 1940-59 was for the aged 27-28 years (about 17 per cent), closely followed by the age group 29-32 (about 16 per cent) and the hazard rates of getting married were still quite significant at age 39-41 (about 10 per cent, percentage very similar to that for the 24-26 age group). We should note that we have no information for those who married after the age 40, because they did not survive up to 1991, when the survey took place. For women (Figure 2), the period 1940-1959 is characterized both by a delay in the first marriage and

low intensity. Moreover, hazard rates in comparison with these of men were much more concentrated in a central age group, that is, 24-26 years (15 per cent) and 27-28 years (17 per cent).

**Figure 1.- Male First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and periods**



**Figure 2.- Female First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and periods**



But from the beginning of the 1960s, something changed inside the dictatorship, as the economy was liberalized and the country was opened to external influences. Therefore, the

period 1960-64 should be considered as a transitional period from an isolated to a relatively open economy. In fact, as a consequence of these changes, although total employment grew only slightly in the mid-1960s, both men and women left the agricultural sector. The proportion of people in the labour market working in the agricultural sector fell by a half, with men leaving to work in industry and women to work in services (Garrido 1992). As we can observe in Figure 1, regarding male family formation and comparing the two decades (1940-59), marriage during 1960-64 was timed earlier, as men were more likely to marry at any age before 32 years and were less likely to get involve in a first partnership over the age of 35. For women, this transitional period lead to a higher hazard rates right across the age range (Figure 2). But this 1960-64 period still did not reveal a completely new pace in marriage rates as the hazard rates of getting married for males from 40 years on were still unusually high (Figure 1).

The period from 1965 until 1974 is called "the economic development period", and is characterized by an increase in the number of employed people (Garrido 1994). The unemployment rate was close to zero, partly because almost all married women did not work outside the family home and because of enormous emigration from Spain, mainly to Germany and France, at that time. These ten years (from 1965 to 1974) are the first period to be subject to systematic comparison in this article.

To illustrate changes in the structure of the population for the periods we will focus on, we will present the proportion of men and women by age who were "at risk" of entering into a first partnership, first by educational attainment (Table 1) and second by labour-force participation (Table 2). So, in Table 1 we observe the structure by age of never-married or never-cohabiting males and females according to educational attainment for the period 1965-74. During this period, a little over ten per cent of never-married men and around nine per cent of never-married women in their late twenties had finished high school level, about the same percentage held a university degree and the rest had not more than compulsory education (more than 75 per cent of men aged 27-32 years and 80 per cent of women in the same age). By contrast, for those over 30 years, the percentage with maximum primary school education was significantly higher (90 per cent for both men and women) and, consequently, the lower the number with a high school diploma or university degree. This cannot be other than a "birth-cohort effect", because clearly the older people are, the less their involvement in the educational system.

Completing this, we present in Table 2 the percentage of people "at risk" according to the nature of their labour-force participation. In 1965-74, the proportion of 17-19 year old men not in the labour market and who had never married or had ever lived in cohabitation was 36 per cent (Table 2). We should remember than before 20 years of age, male hazard

rates for entering a first partnership were not significant for the period 1965-74 (Figure 1). At the age of 23, however, 37 per cent of men who had never married or cohabited were not in the labour market (Table 2). We suggest that at this stage of their lives during the decade 1965-74, Spanish men who were not involved in partnerships were mainly in education. Furthermore, after 23 years of age, 70 per cent of men who had never married in 1965-74 were in employed in full-time, continuous job. On the other hand, 35 per cent of women over 20 years of age who had never married or cohabited during 1965-74 were not in the labour-force, while 45 per cent were working in a full-time, continuous job and 15 per cent were in the labour market in a part-time job or experiencing some periods of unemployment (Table 2).

**Table 1.- Proportion of never-cohabiting and never married men and women according to their Educational Attainment by age, for 1965-74 and 1981-90 periods**

MEN									
	1965-1974				1981-1990				
	Max. Primary	High school		Total	Max. Primary	High school		Total	
		/Vocational	University			/Vocational	University		
17-19	76,67	23,01	0,33	100	66,82	33,15	0,02	100	
20-21	72,67	24,65	2,68	100	54,03	45,05	0,92	100	
22	73,73	20,97	5,30	100	22	53,65	42,62	3,73	100
23	73,94	18,72	7,34	100	23	53,37	37,80	8,83	100
24-26	74,59	15,06	10,35	100	24-26	52,39	33,48	14,13	100
27-28	75,29	12,54	12,17	100	27-28	52,65	28,84	18,51	100
29-32	78,71	10,19	11,10	100	29-32	58,53	23,22	18,25	100
33-35	85,25	6,65	8,11	100	33-35	69,41	16,91	13,68	100
36-38	87,45	5,30	7,25	100	36-38	77,31	12,22	10,47	100
39-41	89,17	3,72	7,11	100	39-41	81,99	9,60	8,41	100
42-44	89,69	3,40	6,91	100	42-44	83,68	8,87	7,45	100
45-47	90,60	2,67	6,72	100	45-47	85,61	7,73	6,66	100
48-50	92,95	2,27	4,78	100	48-50	89,29	5,36	5,36	100
Total	76,70	17,65	5,65	100	Total	60,30	32,67	7,03	100

WOMEN									
	1965-1974				1981-1990				
	Max. Primary	High school		Total	Max. Primary	High school		Total	
		/Vocational	University			/Vocational	University		
15-17	93,74	6,17	0,10	100	15-17	91,72	8,26	0,01	100
18-19	81,85	17,01	1,14	100	18-19	52,98	46,99	0,03	100
20	81,45	15,29	3,26	100	20	46,66	53,02	0,32	100
21	81,79	13,16	5,04	100	21	45,64	49,10	5,26	100
22	81,90	11,66	6,44	100	22	44,80	46,57	8,63	100
23	81,67	9,90	8,43	100	23	43,24	39,83	16,93	100
24-26	82,38	8,71	8,90	100	24-26	41,97	33,07	24,96	100
27-28	82,45	8,62	8,92	100	27-28	42,50	27,80	29,71	100
29-32	85,72	7,27	7,00	100	29-32	50,17	22,40	27,43	100
33-35	88,24	4,51	7,26	100	33-35	58,51	19,16	22,32	100
36-38	89,84	3,40	6,76	100	36-38	63,31	16,74	19,95	100
39-41	90,35	2,46	7,19	100	39-41	68,42	14,37	17,21	100
42-44	90,63	2,04	7,33	100	42-44	73,22	11,55	15,22	100
45-47	90,86	1,81	7,33	100	45-47	79,78	8,77	11,44	100
48-50	90,04	1,71	8,25	100	48-50	84,79	5,99	9,22	100
Total	86,30	9,62	4,08	100	Total	60,84	30,48	8,68	100

**Table 2.- Proportion of never-cohabiting and never married men and women according to their Labour Force Participation by age, for 1965-74 and 1981-90 periods**

		MEN										
		1965-1974					1981-1990					
		Non in lab.					Non in lab.					
		Stable job	Stopgap job	market	Others	Total	Stable job	Stopgap job	market	Others	Total	
17-19		43,78	18,97	35,92	1,33	100	17-19	15,92	15,31	66,14	2,59	100
20-21		32,24	12,98	53,82	0,96	100	20-21	19,28	15,31	62,74	2,67	100
22		29,23	9,41	60,20	1,16	100	22	36,90	23,28	36,89	2,92	100
23		47,70	13,89	37,20	1,21	100	23	45,74	26,84	24,54	2,89	100
24-26		67,60	19,52	11,72	1,16	100	24-26	53,14	28,87	14,83	3,16	100
27-28		72,35	21,79	4,43	1,42	100	27-28	58,27	30,51	7,46	3,76	100
29-32		70,35	24,63	2,90	2,12	100	29-32	60,83	29,29	3,95	5,92	100
33-35		68,07	26,40	2,15	3,38	100	33-35	61,12	28,55	3,40	6,92	100
36-38		67,49	26,45	1,96	4,10	100	36-38	62,22	28,45	3,29	6,05	100
39-41		68,50	24,83	2,46	4,20	100	39-41	62,98	26,77	3,47	6,77	100
42-44		68,53	23,29	3,45	4,73	100	42-44	62,49	25,98	3,67	7,86	100
45-47		69,15	20,99	4,95	4,91	100	45-47	59,27	26,59	4,78	9,36	100
48-50		70,57	17,38	5,05	7,00	100	48-50	57,63	25,89	5,90	10,58	100
Total		50,96	18,24	29,10	1,70	100	Total	37,64	22,38	36,32	3,66	100

		WOMEN										
		1965-1974					1981-1990					
		Non in lab.					Non in lab.					
		Stable job	Stopgap job	market	Others	Total	Stable job	Stopgap job	market	Others	Total	
15-17		21,13	11,95	63,02	3,90	100	15-17	4,41	6,25	86,39	2,95	100
18-19		34,66	16,70	45,34	3,31	100	18-19	14,66	16,41	65,54	3,39	100
20		39,45	17,64	39,80	3,11	100	20	20,53	20,94	54,74	3,79	100
21		41,54	17,94	37,71	2,81	100	21	23,75	22,82	49,42	4,01	100
22		42,73	18,13	36,37	2,76	100	22	27,72	23,68	44,45	4,15	100
23		42,87	18,14	36,00	3,00	100	23	31,02	25,40	39,33	4,25	100
24-26		43,42	19,07	34,34	3,17	100	24-26	38,28	26,68	30,17	4,87	100
27-28		44,07	17,91	33,98	4,04	100	27-28	47,53	26,50	20,96	5,01	100
29-32		42,82	17,04	34,68	5,47	100	29-32	51,57	24,09	18,87	5,46	100
33-35		43,27	14,74	35,58	6,40	100	33-35	54,98	20,45	17,39	7,18	100
36-38		45,08	15,46	34,30	5,15	100	36-38	52,04	21,67	18,79	7,50	100
39-41		44,36	15,55	34,94	5,15	100	39-41	52,04	19,62	20,84	7,51	100
42-44		45,78	14,10	35,46	4,66	100	42-44	47,68	19,86	24,73	7,73	100
45-47		46,66	13,48	35,68	4,17	100	45-47	42,59	19,60	30,20	7,62	100
48-50		48,74	13,62	34,66	2,98	100	48-50	43,86	16,48	31,94	7,72	100
Total		35,74	15,77	44,81	3,69	100	Total	23,56	17,61	54,68	4,15	100

Moreover, Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the relative early timing of the hazard rates of getting married for that period 1965-74. Definitely, the main difference between this period and 1960-64 was the pace of marriage formation rather than the cross-sectional intensity, that is, people got married with similar intensity, but much younger than before.

We should note that when the period of economic expansion came to an end, ushering in a period of economic crisis, it was ten years since the pre-war economic activity pattern had finally been restored. Furthermore, although some scholars place the beginning of the crisis in 1973, due to the euphoria caused by democratic transition, the effect of the crises was not noticed in Spain until 1977 (with The Moncloa Pacts) or, even later, until 1981, when a coup d'etat occurred (Domingo, 1997). Therefore, 1975-1980 was a transitional period and from then until 1990 was a period of economic crisis. As we can verify in Figures 1 and 2, the trend in the timing of partnership formation in 1975-80 began to change in the early 1980s (Miret 1997). From 1975 onward, there was a continuous fall in the number of people in work and a complementary increase in unemployment rates.

There were no differences by gender. We will take this "crisis period" (1981-90) as our second period for comparison.

Table 1 reveals one of the key aspects of the 1980s in Spain, that is, the high level of involvement in non-compulsory education, especially for women. Some 45 per cent of men around 20 years of age who had never married or cohabited in 1980-91 had finished high school (compared 20-25 per cent in 1965-74), as against 50 per cent for women (15 per cent during 1965-74). For 27-32 years olds in 1981-90, almost 19 per cent of males who had never had partnership held a university degree (compared to 12 per cent during 1965-74) as against 30 per cent (9 per cent during 1965-74).

In 1981-90, compared with 1965-74, the proportion of men over 23 years old who had never married or never cohabited and were working in an stable full-time job decreased by ten percentage points (Table 2). Consequently, the impact of the economic crises affected single men uniformly across the whole age range. On the other hand, for women who had never married or cohabited, changes in labour-market participation were very much shaped by age. While a lower proportion of women aged less than 26 years old who had never had a partnership were working in an stable job in 1981-90 than in 1965-74, for women in their late twenties and early forties who had never married or cohabited the situation was the reverse (Table 2). That is, adult single women increased their involvement in the labour market.

Throughout this period, 1981-90, the total first nuptiality rate fell, while the age of marriage rose. Although there was a period of economic recovery from 1985 to 1990, the unemployment rate did not fall as might otherwise have been expected due to a parallel increase in the economically active population. Nuptiality levels experienced a little growth, but this ended suddenly due to the increase in rents and prices in the housing market, among other factors, following the removal of state controls on the market (Heath and Miret 1995; Miret 1997).

As we observe in Figures 1 and 2, the hazard-rates of family formation are lower in 1981-90 than in 1965-74 for men over 25 years and for women at any age. For males, the age pattern for the 1981-90 period was significant for younger ages but male hazard-rates over 25 years were the lowest among all the periods analysed (Figure 1). For women aged under 25, the same age pattern is found in 1981-90 as in 1940-59; but women over 25 years of age experienced the lowest partnership-formation hazard rates of all the periods analysed during 1981-90.

#### **4.- Operative hypothesis**

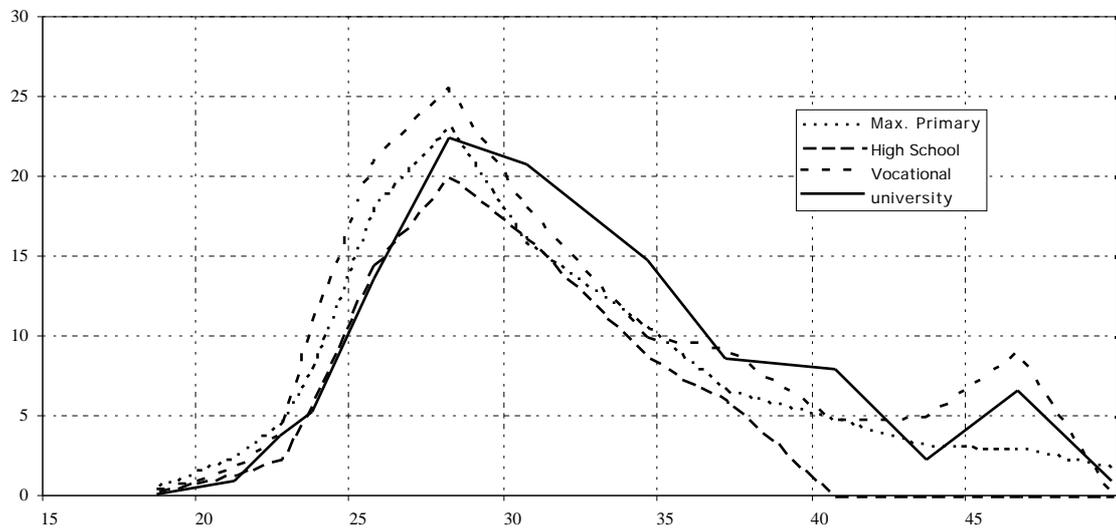
We expect to find during the "development period" (1965-74) in Spain that roles regarding the relationship between labour-market participation and educational attainment on the one hand, and family formation on the other, remained "traditional", that is, fully separated by gender. Thus, during the period 1965-74, for a man, the age-group hazard rates for moving from "never in a partnership" to "in his first partnership" should be higher as (1) he becomes better educated and (2) he has a more stable involvement in the labour market. By contrast, during this first period (1965-74), for women we expect to find either that (1) there is no association between, on one hand, educational attainment and labour-force participation and, on the other hand, the hazard-rates by age-group for a woman to move from "never in a partnership" to "in her first partnership" or that (2) there is a negative effect, that is, the age-group hazard rates for entering a first partnership were lower the more educated she was and the greater her labour-force participation. This would lead us to conclude that the ideal-type male-provider and female care-giver family-formation model was very much in place in Spain during the decade 1965-74.

Moreover, we suppose that between the 1965-74 period and the 1980s, gender roles regarding the relationship between labour-market participation and educational attainment, on the one hand and family formation on the other changed a great deal, that is, during the 1980s, there were many more similarities between males and females regarding the effect of each independent variable on the hazard-rates of entering in a first partnership among the various age groups than during 1965-74. Assuming that we can find in this last period an evident male-provider model in family formation, this pattern would be eroded in the 1980s the more we find signs of a more egalitarian model. Nevertheless, we also expect to observe many more changes in female patterns of family formation than in males ones. That is, (1) we still suppose that men's first marriage hazard rates during the 1980s will be disproportionately higher for those men who were more highly educated and better connected to the labour market than for those who were less well-educated and who experienced job difficulties. But (2) for women, by contrast, we think we will find a very different model between the two periods analysed, with never-married or cohabiting women entering into partnerships more frequently the more highly educated and more involved in labour market they become.

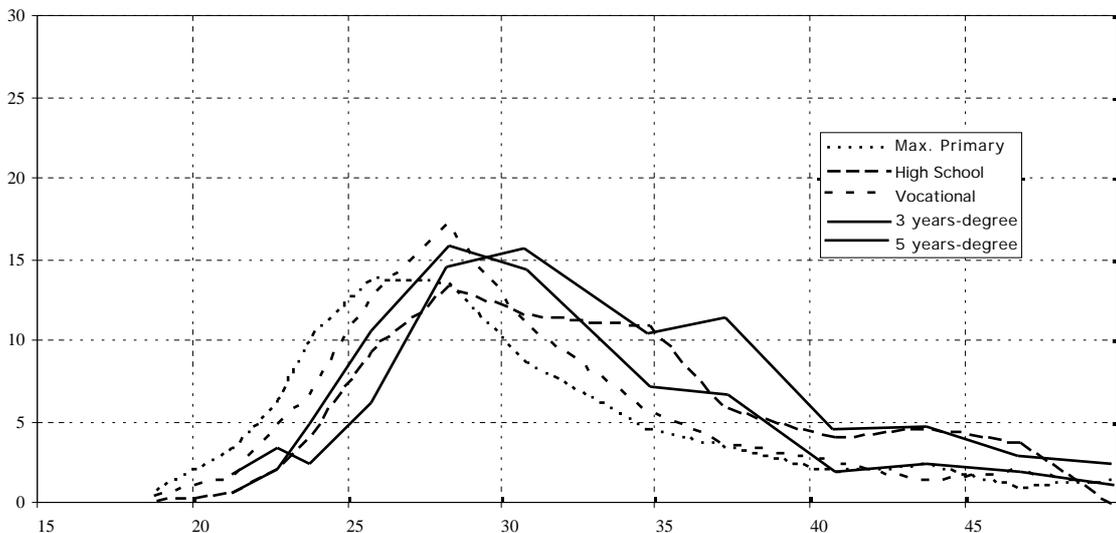
## 5.- Educational attainment in understanding the pace and cross-sectional intensity of partnership formation

Could we explain the differences in the timing and prevalence of partnership formation between 1965-74 and 1981-90 in terms of changes in the educational attainment of men or women during these periods? To answer this question, we present in Figures 3-6 the hazard rates for males and females by age group and for each historical period according to their educational attainment. For 1965-74, we have grouped university degrees because there was no difference during that period between a three-year and five-year university degree regarding first partnership hazard-rates.

**Figure 3.- Male First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Educational Attainment for 1965-1974**



**Figure 4.- Male First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Educational Attainment for 1981-1990**



We discovered from Figure 3 that during 1965-74, no matter which age group, male hazard rates for becoming involved in a first partnership were lower for men whose education had ended with primary school than for those with vocational training, and lower for those who had finished high school than for those who had finished primary school. Because it affected the whole age range (although it was more evident for young adult men) we can state that men with vocational training married more than those with maximum compulsory education and the latter more than men with high school diplomas. Men with a university degree had timed their marriage later, but at a similar general intensity, than those with primary-school education. We can conclude that during the "economic development period", for men to reach any level of non-compulsory education created a higher probability of marrying (with the exception of the high school diploma, which we suppose was considered by the overwhelmingly majority of young Spanish men to be a steep in their educational career), while attending university led to a postponement of marriage.

With our data for the 1981-90 period, we can divide university degrees into those which lasted three years and those which lasted five years. Figure 4 illustrates how during the 1980s economic crisis, Spanish men had different paths for entering a first partnership, (which was clearly more delayed the longer was their chosen educational path), again with the exception of high school. But we cannot infer that men married or became involved in a partnership less frequently the less educated they were. In short, education 1981-90 affected timing but not intensity.

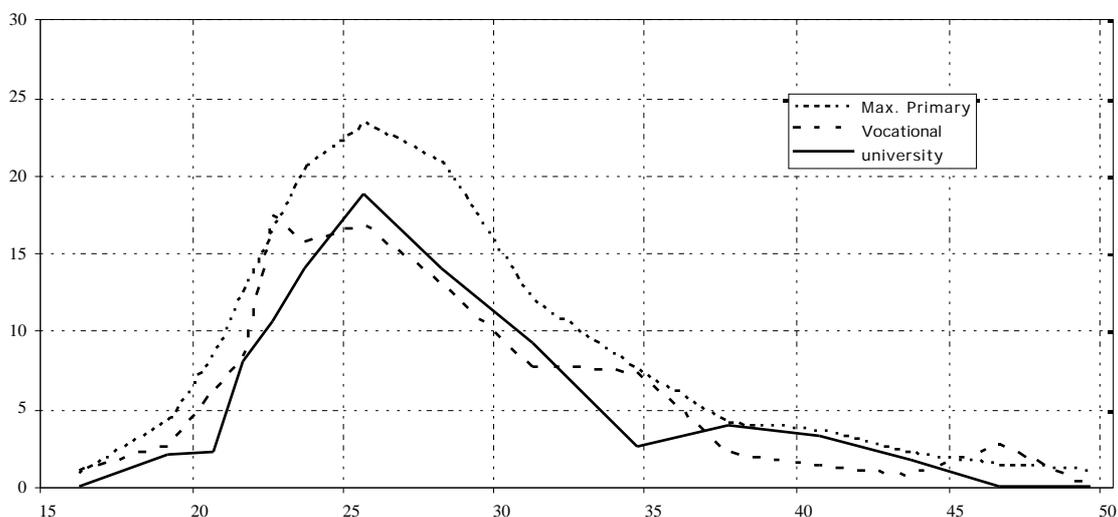
We turn now to Figures 5 and 6 to examine the relationship between educational achievement and first partnership formation for Spanish women. In contrast to men, during the period 1965-74 we can clearly see that young females with vocational training a high school diploma or a university degree were less likely to be involved in a partnership than those with primary school education only, no matter which age of group is chosen.

That is, for women in 1965-74, there was a negative connection between education and partnership formation.

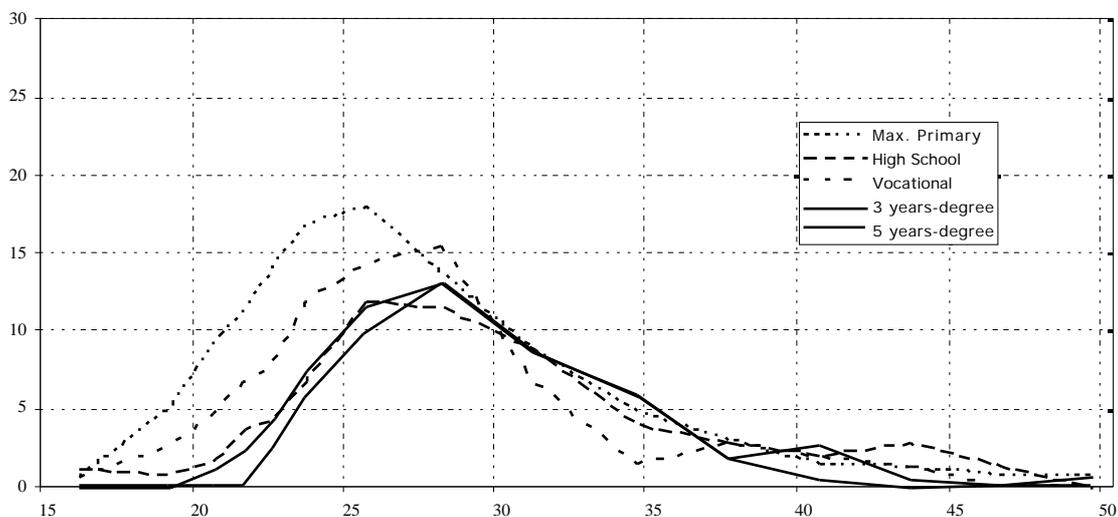
On the other hand, during the 1980s, younger females shared with their male counterparts later entry into partnership the more educated they were (Figure 6), although the difference between the educational categories are much more variable for women than for men. But, definitely, education affected cross-sectional general intensity, because more highly educated women over 30 years old did not register higher hazard rates (as was the case with men).

In brief, education during the economic crisis of the 1980s had differential effects by gender. While for men, higher education implied later marriage, but not less intensity, in partnership formation, for women, higher education led to both fewer and delayed marriages. Thus, although for men we can state that educational attainment did not influence their nuptiality levels during the crisis, the behaviour of younger and more educated women was the reverse, that is, female education clearly did have a negative impact on partnership formation in Spain during the 1980s.

**Figure 5.- Female First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Educational Attainment for 1965-1974**



**Figure 6.- Female First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Educational Attainment for 1981-1990**



## **6.- Labour-force participation in understanding the cross-sectional intensity and timing of partnership formation**

Maybe labour-force participation will shed more light on changes in the partnership-formation process between 1965-74 and the 1980s. To begin with, we would like to note the classification of labour-force participation used in Figures 7-10. In these figures, we have elaborated the hazard rates of entering a first partnership for Spanish men by age group, according to different levels of involvement in the labour force. First, we have the hazard rates for males who were occupied in a full-time and stable job (labelled "Full-time Job & Stable Occupation" in Figures 7-10). Subsequently, in a second category, we find men who were in a full-time job, but had experienced unemployment ("Full-time job & Unemployment"). The next ranks related to those who were in a part-time or seasonal job and either without unemployment periods ("Non Full-time Job") or with periods of unemployment ("Non full-time Job & Unemployment"). Lastly, we have those men who were "Not in the Labour-force".

The ideal-type, male-provider, family-formation model would show, at any specific age group, the highest first partnership hazard rates for men with a full-time job without unemployment, followed by those in a full-time job but with periods of unemployment, followed, in turn, by those in neither full-time nor continuous job but never unemployed, those with neither a full-time nor a continuous job who experienced periods of unemployment and, lastly, the lowest first partnership hazard rates those men not in the labour market. For women, the ideal-type, female-care-giver, family formation model would present the opposite situation, that is to say, the highest first partnership hazard rates would be for women not in the labour market, followed by those for women in a stop-gap job with periods of unemployment, those for females in a stopgap job but without periods of unemployment, those for women in a full-time job with unemployment gaps and, lastly, the lowest first partnership hazard rates would be for those women in a full-time, continuous job.

The combination of these situations for men and women would lead us to conclude that the ideal-type, male-provider and female-care-giver, first-partnership-formation model is strongly entrenched in Spain for given. Otherwise, we could state that the family-formation pattern in Spain during a particular period did not match with this ideal-type model. At the other extreme, a symmetric provider model would be illustrated by very similar first partnership hazard rates for men and women, showing quite equal hazard rates for different forms of involvement in the labour market, that is, for people with stable occupations, with stop-gap jobs and with or without periods of unemployment.

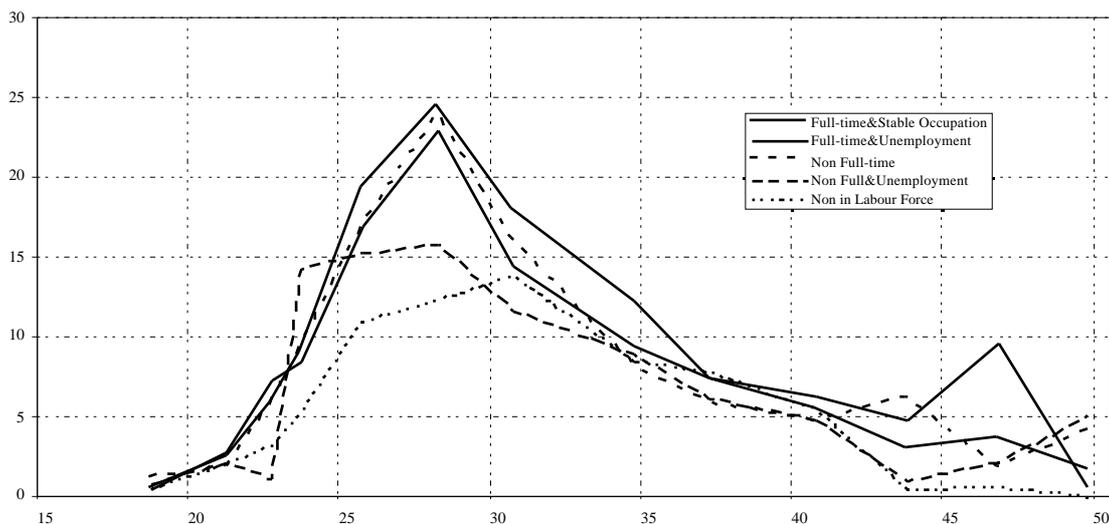
During the period of economic development (1965-74), only single men in their early and mid-thirties had higher first partnership hazard if their employment circumstances were better than for other men. Indeed, men in all forms of employment married at very similar pace and intensity, with exception of those men not working full time or working in seasonal jobs and with periods of unemployment (Figure 7). That is, in 1965-74, only men in more unstable jobs between 25 and 35 years of age experienced significantly lower hazard rates for entering their first partnership than other men of the same age but with more secure involvement in the labour market. Furthermore, as expected, first partnership hazard rates for those males not in the labour market were extremely low compared those in the labour market (Figure 7). Thus, to sum up, though the economic boom education played a more important role in explaining differentials in the pace and intensity of first marriage among males (Figure 3) than did the nature of their employment (Figure 7).

By contrast, during 1980s economic crisis, men entered their first partnership with less intensity the more precarious was their job (Figure 8): the hazard rates of marriage for men of any age group were lower the worse their link with the labour market. Moreover, during 1980s, men not in the labour market had both a low intensity and later timing in family formation (Figure 8). Thus, we can conclude, in line with other analyses (Oppenheimer *et al.* 1997), that one of the causes for the low total first nuptiality rate in Spain during the 1980s was the employment crisis, a crisis is still being experienced by young adults males. In summary, for men, being a "provider" in family formation was much more important during 1980s economic crisis than during the 1965-74 period of economic development.

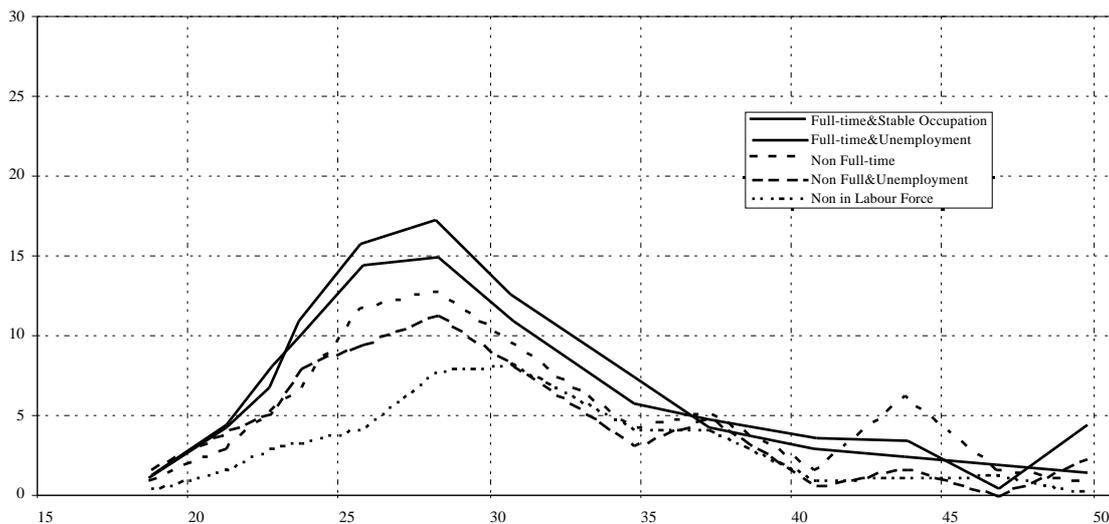
On the other hand, in the economic development period, the hazard rates of entering a first partnership for women not in the labour market and working in part-time jobs or seasonal occupations were quite similar. In addition, they were clearly higher than those for women who were working full time. Nevertheless, this does not reveal a threat to the care-giver model, as part-time work or seasonal occupations clearly allow care-giver roles. Furthermore, part-time work in Spain was very unusual, as is still the case (Eurostat 1995; 1997). Women in part-time jobs or seasonal occupations who experienced periods of unemployment do not appear in Figure 9 because they are not significant. Another unexpected result in Figure 9 is the effect of unemployment for women working full time, as unemployment clearly discourage partnership formation among in this category. It seems that in 1965-74 period women's behaviour was segmented: first, those single women not in the labour market or in stop-gap jobs had the highest probability of getting married (they were obviously well adapted to the "care-giver model"); second, single women in more stable jobs had a lower probability but not remarkably so in relation to the

first category: and, lastly, those who show clearly the lowest hazard rates were single women working full time but with periods of unemployment.

**Figure 7.- Male First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Labor Force Participation for 1965-74 period**



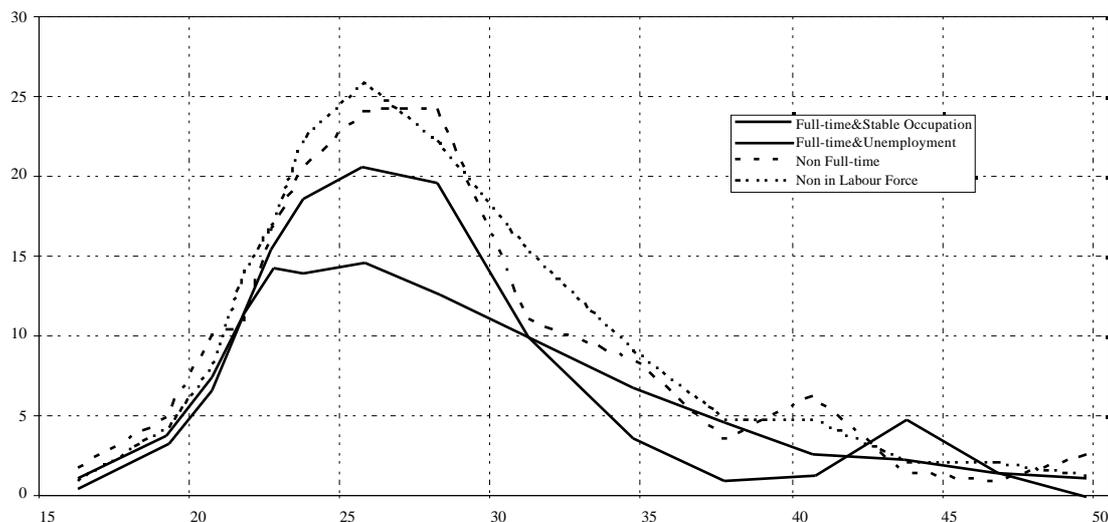
**Figure 8.- Male First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Labor Force Participation for 1981-90 period**



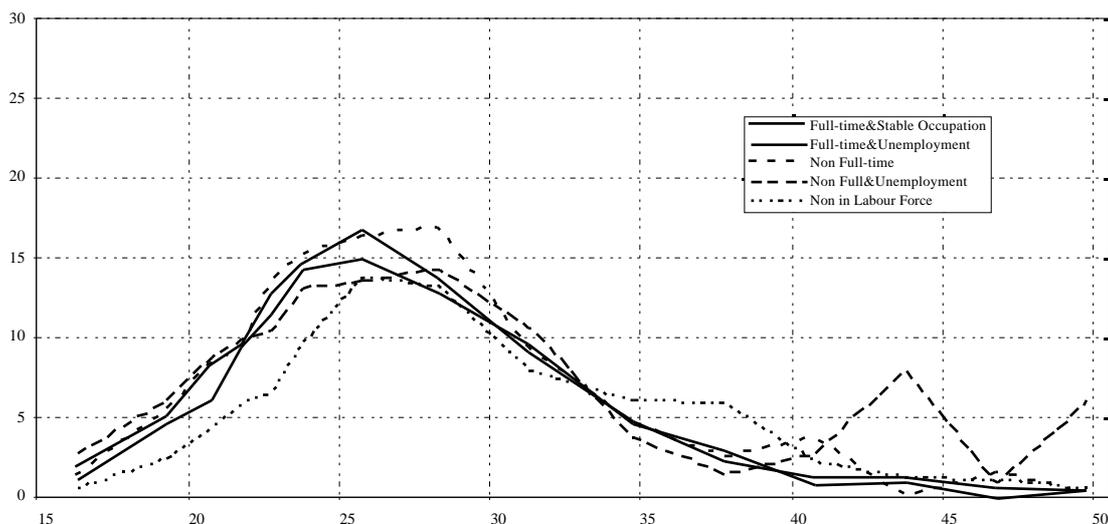
By contrast, during 1981-90, there were no significant differences in the pattern of partnership formation among the various female labour-force categories. Only women not

in the labour force stand out, as they have a late timing in first partnership formation. We imagine this is due to the high proportion of students among women less than 25 years old who have never been in a partnership. Although, in comparison to the previous period, women were less likely to enter a first partnership whatever position they had in the labour market. This means that in 1981-90 women behave quite differently from what one would expect in the extreme care-giver, partnership-formation model.

**Figure 9.- Female First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Labor Force Participation for 1965-74 period**



**Figure 10.- Female First-partnership Hazard rates by Age-groups and Labor Force Participation for 1981-90 period**



## 7.- Conclusions

During the development period, for men any level of non-compulsory education led to higher partnership-formation hazard rates (high school was an exception, we imagine because it was never considered by young men as the end of their educational career). However, a university degree implied a later entrance into marriage but not a higher intensity. Regarding the labour variable, through 1965-74, only men in more precarious jobs or outside the labour market experienced lower partnership-formation probabilities across all age groups. The excellent economic circumstances did not force a strong relationship between labour stability and first marriage, as any job could be considered "stable". So, in 1965-74, education assumes much more importance in explaining differences in male partnership-formation patterns than labour-market position.

On the contrary, for women, we can confirm the hypothesis formulated for the period 1965-74, that is, that education diminishes a great deal the intensity of female partnership formation. In addition, in the same period, there was no clear direct relationship between the first marriage of a woman and her labour-force participation. On the one hand, as we expected, single women not in the labour market, and those with either part-time or seasonal jobs, registered the highest first partnership hazard rates. But, on the other hand, surprisingly, these rates contrasted strongly with those of single women working full time in a continuous job, unless they experienced periods of unemployment.

By contrast, in 1981-90, higher levels of education led to a more delayed pattern of partnership formation, but not to a low intensity. In short, for men, there has been a shift from a better education, higher first-nuptiality-rate model to another in which education makes a difference by age but not at the general level. Educational differences made much less difference in the past as regards male marriage behaviour. However, the importance of labour-force participation for the male-provider model increased during the economic crises of the 1980s: the probability of marriage for single men increased the better their position in the labour market. On the whole, the main explanation for male partnership-formation patterns has shifted from education to labour-force involvement: while education only played an important role in timing, labour-force participation mainly explained differences in intensity.

For women, in 1981-90, higher levels of education led to a pattern of less and later female partnership formation. In summary, between the two periods, while education disappears as a significant independent variable for understanding the formation of first partnerships for males, its role in explaining female first marriages was strengthened. Furthermore, during that period, any sign of the care-giver-type model had disappeared: first partnership

hazard rates were very similar regardless of the labour-force participation of single women.

Crises seem to affect family formation unequally by gender. While for men economic crises increased differences in partnership formation according to labour market position, these were eliminated for women. That is, within the present economic crisis, a male's chances of first partnership formation are absolutely related to his involvement in the labour market. Thus, these results indicate that one explanation for the low levels of first partnership formation in 1980s in Spain was the difficulties faced by young men in finding a stable job. However, we cannot find support for the hypothesis that the present higher level of female involvement in the labour market explains their low levels of marriage.

In conclusion, we cannot state that the male-provider model has disappeared, because the rules of family formation in Spain still encourage those men who are better situated in the labour market, that is, those who better fit the male-breadwinner model. However, there are important signs of change, especially for women.

We leave open the hypothesis that the present low levels of first family formation in Spain are due to the lack of radical transformation in the male-provider model. Lastly, we should emphasize that we are analysing just one aspect of family life, that is, the formation of first partnership. In order to really understand whether the male-provider model is still in place, we need to analyse the entire family life course.

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