



**International Seminar on
First Union Patterns around the World
Madrid, Spain, 20-22 June 2012**

IUSSP Scientific Panel on Nuptiality

Chair: Julieta Quilodrán (Chile/México)

Members: Narayanaswamy Audinarayana (India); Andrew Cherlin (USA); Clara Cortina (Spain); Bilampoa Gnoumou (Burkina Faso)

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REPORT

In recent decades, the formation of marital couples has witnessed a substantial transformation. Age at entering a union has been delayed, the percentage of people who do not marry has shown an upward trend, and the marriage institution has lost value in face of other forms of union. In this context the Nuptiality Panel has adopted as one of its central activities the study of ways of entering into first conjugal unions and how they vary in timing and quantum, and according to geographical location (country, regions, rural/urban), socio-economic characteristics (education, occupation, gender, etc.) and cultural and ideational aspects. The call for papers for the Seminar on First Union Patterns around the World looked forward to addressing these issues by inviting papers concerned with four major topics: *Tempo and quantum of the entering into first union; Changes in conjugal union types; Assortative mating and matching; Early marriage (union) and lifetime singlehood.*

The Seminar was held in Madrid (Spain) from 20 to 22 June 2012 with the financial support of Madrid's Institute for Economy, Geography and Statistics of the CSIC (Spanish National Research Council), the Fund for Complementary Activities of the National Research and Development Plan of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, and the IUSSP. It also received a contribution from El Colegio de México. Thirty-three researchers from sixteen different countries attended the Seminar as speakers, special guests, observers and Panel members. Twenty-one papers were presented during the six ordinary sessions and two special sessions in the programme. The extensive collection of currently available sources (census series, vital statistics and surveys) together with the quality and variety of submitted works allowed covering all the topics referred to in the Call for Papers.

Entering into first union: tempo and quantum

Four papers were presented during this first Session. Two of them offered a wide overview of the timing and quantum of nuptiality, first at world level and then focusing on Asia and the Pacific Area. The use of the data base on marriages and unions published by the United Nations' *World Marriage Data 2008* enabled the author of the first paper to define nuptiality patterns for 227 countries and territories as of 1970. Based on SMAM estimations –a measure

that sums up the tempo and quantum of nuptiality— and other derived indexes, as well as the use of various maps, the author establishes that the proportion of individuals that enter at least in a first union (or first marriage when data on cohabitation is absent from Censuses) has not declined. This implies that married (in union) life and family formation are still the most frequent choice upon the arrival of adulthood; that the age at the first union has been universally delayed (two years in average); that early unions (15-19 years of age) still prevail in the poorest areas, and that the age gap between spouses averages 3 years, men being older than women. These regularities acquire quite different values and develop at different paces. For example, average age of women at first union fluctuates between 23.3 and 20.7 years respectively for developed and developing countries, with minimum and maximum values of 20.4 years for Central Africa and 30.9 years for Western Europe.

The second paper on Asia and the Pacific region with the same data (UN, 2008) shows, for the ten countries that were analyzed, that the age increase at the first union has been higher among women than among men, particularly in Iran, Japan and Australia. India and China are also changing, although at a slower pace. A systematic analysis of literature on this topic has led the authors of this paper to assert that the cultural and attitudinal factors related to marriage can better and more directly explain differences rather than merely the effects of modernization and socio-economic factors. The postponement of age at the first union is necessarily accompanied by longer singlehood periods. However, it has not been observed that this situation has resulted in increases of lifetime singlehood.

The exception is China, for somewhat different reasons, as asserted in another paper presented during this Session. In this country, the imbalances among marriageable populations (“marriage squeeze”) acquired significance as a consequence of the one-child state policy and the option of preventing the birth of female children by the use of sonogram studies. Along time, this has brought about a surplus of men in the marriage market (a current 120 sex ratio at birth). As a consequence, the rate of permanently single men has increased, and is estimated to reach 10% after 2044. This is a very high percentage for a country with a universal marriage tradition and an old-age support system that relies, to a large extent, on the family. Singlehood is becoming a real social problem that has made it necessary to implement government programs to deal with some of its effects: male pressure on the younger generations when searching for a wife (“child brides”); mercenary marriage, and of permanent celibacy among the rural and poor population.

The paper on Spain also addresses the imbalance between sexes and shows the strong link between sex indexes and immigration levels. This macro-level view of the evolution of nuptiality rates (total sum of age rates by periods) from 1900 through 2000 is completed through its association to the GDP and unemployment rates.

Union Patterns: Africa overview

As a rule, nuptiality patterns in Africa continue to be characterized by early unions among women and much later unions among men. This consequently represents important age gaps between spouses; a practically universal marriage/union; a rapid remarriage, especially among widows and divorcees in fertile ages, and a certain degree of polygamy within certain populations. The already existing differences in these characteristics and the varying rhythms of evolution of determinants (social development, special differences, religion, educational level) contribute to produce a set of conditions that greatly diverge from those of earlier days.

The proposed analyses, based on a pan-African Database on Marriage (censuses and surveys) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), allowed the reconstruction as of 1950

of various series of indicators from large national operations for most African countries. Median ages at first marriage among women were below 18 in most African countries. However, recent data show that the median age at the first marriage for women is now usually over 20. For men, the median age at first marriage is higher. Southern Africa and North Africa are characterized by fast and long-standing developments leading to late entries into union and relatively low age differences between sexes. At the other end, West Africa has experienced slower changes and growing differences among coastal countries and the Sahel.

In addition to these changes in the ages at first union a large number of countries have experienced an increase in cohabitation. Since these transformations have taken place quite recently, it is difficult to determine which region maintains structural differences, and which offsets similar trends over time. The study on Ethiopia confirms the increase in age at marriage and adds to the analysis of socioeconomic and religious determinants a likely imbalance in the marriage market (“mate availability index”), the incidence of which is finally rejected. On the contrary, it seems that women’s aspirations for marrying up delay marriage in a country with high unemployment levels – and rural-urban migration – that offers men little opportunity for advancement.

The Cohabitation Diffusion

The most widespread theories link cohabitation to the conditions of the least favored social groups, and hence the inverse relationship to the educational levels of the population (USA, Latin America). The study for Great Britain, however, exhibits a different reality: the better educated population pioneered cohabitation during the 1970s and 1980s. But even though the gap between educational levels has narrowed, the diffusion of cohabitation to less educated groups has not taken place. Among these groups, the likelihood of marriage is still higher than that of cohabitation. These assertions oppose those supported by the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) theory concerning the diffusion of non-conformist behaviors. According to the authors, women with higher educational levels married later than the rest, and took advantage of their singlehood to step away from parental control (living independently) and adopting such new behaviors as contraceptive use and cohabitation.

Another paper that addresses the relationship between cohabitation and education refers to Latin America (population between 25-29 years of age). Findings based on census data (IPUMS) show the region’s heterogeneity with respect to cohabitation levels and their overall increase between 1970 and 2000. The central point of the study is whether the “Latin American cohabitation boom” has the same characteristics as those considered by the theory of the SDT. The first observation is that marriage decline is giving way to its substitution, to a greater or lesser extent, by cohabitation, almost independently from the educational level. This means that the inverse relationship between education and cohabitation would have tended to disappear between 1970 and the year 2000. However, in some countries the population with higher educational levels has chosen to remain single for longer periods. The substitution of marriage by cohabitation, which usually takes place at earlier ages than marriage, was also the main reason why ages at the first union have remained stable in most countries of the region. The fact that the first union is not significantly postponed moves this region away from the “postponement dimension” (SDT). Could increases in cohabitation be explained as forming part of the so-called “non-conformist dimension” (SDT) in a region where cohabitation has existed for centuries? To answer this question it is necessary to make a distinction between these last events and cases that can be assimilated to the adoption of non-conformist values.

With this in mind, the same authors (Lesthaeghe among them) have analyzed in a second paper – based on the already mentioned census data – the characteristics of households integrated by women in cohabitation (25-29 years of age). Women living in extended and complex households, whether they have children or not, would correspond to the traditional patterns, while those living in neolocal households without children would belong to the cohabitation model put forward by the Second Demographic Transition theory. In the year 2000, this last group represented 70% in Argentina and was never below 50% in the rest of the countries analyzed. This would imply that an SDT “non-conformist dimension” would be observed in advance to a certain extent in Latin America. The comparison between English-speaking and French-speaking Canada made by another study shows that the latter went from a “delayed” position in cohabitation diffusion to an “advanced situation”. Data from surveys conducted from 1984 (NFS) to the year 2006 (GSS) indicate a more rapid evolution of the cohabitation ratios in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. The progressive abandonment of the precepts of the Catholic religion practiced by the great majority of Quebec inhabitants towards the mid-twentieth century and the subsequent secularization would help explain the change in values and the consequent increase of cohabitation. At present there is no difference between the behavior of “Catholics” and “Atheists”; the acceptance of cohabitation is widespread.

Different trends on marriage formation in India and some Islamic countries

Papers presented in this session discussed the trends of marriage formation in three different sub-groups of population with different perspectives. While the effect of the first and second Palestinian Intifadas became apparent in the transition to first unions in the occupied Palestinian territories, other papers discussed the effect of educational differentials on marriage formation and prevalence, and the patterns and preferences of consanguineous marriages in India. Although some studies have shown the effect of conflict on demographic behaviours such as fertility, only a few have focused on the long-term effect of conflict on nuptiality behaviour and patterns. Nuptiality still represents the onset of passage to reproduction, especially in cultures and countries where pre-marital sexual activity is against the common norms and traditions.

Using the data collected by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the submitted paper suggested that in comparison to the period of the first Intifada (before 1994), the transition to first marriage between the first and second Intifadas remained low. Age increases began as of the second Intifada. The increase in women’s education seems to point in this direction, as more educated women were significantly less likely to transit to first unions as opposed to their less educated counterparts.

The level of education also emerged as an important predictor of marriage formation in Bangladesh. Following the trends and educational differentials in marriage formation for successive cohorts of women born between 1944 and 1987 in Bangladesh, the study for this country suggested that early marriage is commonplace although substantial educational differentials have increased over time. The birth cohorts and marriage cohorts of women have confirmed that the median age at the first marriage has been gradually increasing. Women with more education, or those born into more recent cohorts, have married later and less often in comparison to those with less education or born into earlier cohorts. Moreover, educational differentials related to probabilities of late marriage have increased across birth cohorts and marriage cohorts.

The paper discussing the trends, patterns and preferences of consanguineous marriages highlighted the fact that the most commonly found form of consanguineous union is between

first cousins. However, there exists a contrast in the patterns and preferences of consanguineous marriages among Indian Hindus and followers of Islam in Arab countries and in India. Muslim girls preferably marry their first cousin from the father's side, whereas among Hindus (mostly in Southern States and Maharashtra) girls' marriage favors first cousins from the mother's side. The reason for the preference of consanguineous marriages lies within three major domains, namely, economic, cultural and religious: Consolidation of family property; the dowry as a socioeconomic security for women after marriage (this tradition is still present among Hindus); and a better opportunity for compatibility between husband and wife, and between bride and mother-in-law.

Marriage or co-habitation? An intergenerational analysis of European countries and the United States

The timing, duration, and repetition of cohabiting and marital unions have become very complex. The papers presented during this session draw pictures of the variety of relationship and cohabitation patterns that occur in Europe and the U.S.

Drawing on 23 waves (1979-2008) of the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY79), and on main youth and two waves (2008 and 2010) of the NLSY young adult (YA) surveys, the first paper of the session attempted to understand the mechanism underlying the increase in cohabitation in the U.S. This was done from the perspective of childhood experiences of various family types for young adults' own expectations about cohabitation and marriage and their actual union formation behaviors. The findings of the papers show that nearly 60% of the sample had spent at least some time in a single-mother family and over one-half experienced at least one family structure transition during childhood. These results seem to be consistent with the *social learning perspective* which suggests that the influence of parents extends well beyond adolescence. At least to some extent, cohabitation and marriage are "transmitted" inter-generationally.

How can individuals change their relationship status over the life course and the duration of different relationship conditions? The results obtained from using the *latent class growth analysis* to compare the heterogeneity of union type trajectories for three cohorts (between 1954 and 1974) in the U.S., and across 14 countries in Europe, show that the majority of changes have resulted from the postponement of stable marriages. Findings also suggest that overall in Europe and the U.S., persistent cohabitation does not behave like marriage, with a sharp slope in increasing and long-term stability. Cohabitation is still a precursor to marriage, a partnership form after divorce, or else is characterized by high levels of separation. In general, this study has provided insights into the heterogeneity of partnership trajectories – never partnered, marriage, premarital cohabitation, persistent cohabitation, separated – within countries. It has also shown the similarity of relationship patterns across countries.

Using the data of ten Western and Eastern European countries (GGS 2005 to 2009) another study highlighted the fact that there is no single meaning of cohabitation. Cohabitors form a heterogeneous group in which meaning is attached almost always to marriage. This statement is based on a *latent class analysis* on cross-national data that allows to define three broad classes of meaning of cohabitation: 1) cohabitors that consider it a prior stage in the marriage process (as a trial marriage or a poor man's marriage); 2) cohabitation seen as an alternative to marriage; and 3) cohabitation as an alternative to singlehood. The comparison among countries indicates that marriage is still of central importance to many cohabitors in European countries.

The Mate Selection: Who Marries Whom?

The existing literature talks about changes in the mate selection in both developed societies and in developing countries which are more exposed to modernization: increasing urbanization, rising literacy rates, and increased female participation in the labor market. The papers on India, China and Nigeria show evidence of changes and persistence. In the case of India the objective was to depict the sense of the modern outlook that guides the mate selection process and defines the ideal marriage partner in traditional societies. The analyzed data come from a primary survey conducted during 2007 in urban areas of Varanasi, a still traditional location at the same time exposed to the effects of modernization. Irrespective of the generational difference, individuals presently show preference for marriages arranged on the basis of the personal characteristics of the bride/groom, rather than on the familial background, such as same caste or religion.

Another paper attempts to evaluate, based on data for 2006, the extent to which important changes experienced by China in the socioeconomic field have influenced the process of assortative matching during recent decades. The findings indicate that the pattern of universal, institutionalized and highly homogamic marriage persists in this country and is still strongly related to the father's socioeconomic status. As the father's social class ascends, the daughter's field of choice for marriage becomes wider, and there is a higher likelihood of marrying up according to the educational and income levels. Women whose parents belong to low-income classes with scarce "Hukou" (social protection system) hardly ever change their status, thus favoring the reproduction of the existing social stratification. Between 1970 and 1990 the educational homogamy slightly increased as well as marrying up due to economic and social class reasons (Hukou).

In Nigeria, data from three DHS allowed analyzing couples that had married five years prior to the date of the surveys. The findings indicate that ethnic and religious homogamy fluctuates around 90%, unlike educational homogamy which is somewhat below 60%. The religious affiliation indicates that the Roman Catholic denomination is more homogamous; husbands' odds of inter-ethnic marriage are significantly high among adherents of Islam and the same applies for wives from Protestant Christian and Muslim faiths. No variations are observed with respect to the probabilities of inter-ethnic marriages according to educational levels. On the other hand, the analysis of exogamic marriages among a country's nationals, Spain in this case, and the major immigrant groups (Latin American, Moroccan and Romanian) makes it possible to detect that the existence of relatives or friends within the country of arrival reduces the likelihood of marrying a native individual. Contrarily, having Spanish nationality and a higher educational level increases this probability. The analysis across time of migrants' residence in the country does not support the theory of assimilation since the risk that the immigrant may marry upon his arrival in Spain is high.

Concluding remarks

One of the most important achievements was the consensus that the age at marriage is increasing over the world – even though marriage at early ages has not completely disappeared – both among men and women; that the age gap among spouses has declined; that the number of singlehood years has increased, and that most of the population marries or enters union at least once in a lifetime (a ratio rarely below 90%). Other aspects that are rapidly changing have to do with the nature of the marital link. On the one hand, marriage is being partially substituted by cohabitation in developed countries, Latin America and Africa.

On the other hand, in Asia the election of a partner is increasingly becoming a matter of negotiation among parents and children. All these indicators vary from one place to the other according to the pace in the changes of socio-economic, environmental, religious, psycho-social and cultural conditions. It is equally important to consider the influence upon the timing and quantum of nuptiality produced by the imbalances in marriageable populations that migration and public policies have brought about, among them China's one-child policy ("marriage squeeze"). The theory of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) put forward during the late eighties by Van de Kaa and Lesthaeghe for developed countries of the Western hemisphere proposes that changes in family formation are one of the fundamental aspects of the post-demographic transition. The presented findings and the discussion about the SDT have indicated that for many countries the evolution of the phenomena that define transition are not necessarily following the guidelines foreseen by this theory. Therefore, considering education as one of the major predictors of changes in values and consequently of an increase of cohabitation does not always follow the anticipated pattern. We thus have indications that in developed countries cohabitation is still a precursor to marriage and people in classes with higher educational levels are marrying later and their marriages lasting longer than in the past. In the less educated classes people continue to prefer marriage over cohabitation. We thus have indications that in developed countries people in classes with higher educational levels are marrying more frequently than those of classes that are less well-off, and that their marriages are lasting longer. The opposite relationship between education and cohabitation is not taking place in Latin America, where cohabitation is increasing regardless of the educational level. Nonetheless, we cannot disregard that the formation of first unions has become more complex and that its determinants do not always act as expected. It is worth asking whether the differences among countries respond to structural aspects that will continue in the future, or if, on the contrary, differences can be attributed to the stage they are going through within an ample process of convergence.



International Union for the Scientific Study of Population
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PANEL ON NUPTIALITY

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

FIRST UNION PATTERNS AROUND THE WORLD

Madrid, Spain, 20-22 June 2012

CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE
INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS (CSIC)
Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS)

C/Albasanz 26 - 28
Madrid 28037, (Spain)



CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS
CSIC



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EL COLEGIO
DE MÉXICO

International Seminar on First Union Patterns around the World*

Organized by

Scientific Panel on Nuptiality of International Union for Scientific Studies of Population (IUSSP)
and

Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS) del
Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)
El Colegio de México (CEDUA)

Madrid 20-22 June 2012

Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

c/ Albasanz 26-28, 28037, Madrid, SPAIN

Room: Sala Menéndez Pidal

Programme

Wednesday 20 June

13:00-13:30	Registration at the Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS) Room: Sala Menéndez Pidal (the registration will be open during the afternoon for participants arriving later)
13:30-15:00	For participants having arrived: LUNCH at the cafeteria of the Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS)
15:00-15:45	<u>Opening Session</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diego Ramiro, President of the ADEH and Vice Director of Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales • Peter McDonald, President of the IUSSP • Julieta Quilodrán, Chair of the IUSSP Scientific Panel on Nuptiality • Clara Cortina, Local Organizer, Member of the IUSSP Scientific Panel on Nuptiality
16:00-17:30	<u>Session 1 First Union: Tempo and Quantum</u> Chair: Andrew Cherlin RECAÑO VALVERDE/MUÑOZ-PEREZ Demographic and Macro-economic Determinants of First Marriages in Spain, 1900-2010 JIANG/FELDMAN/LI Marriage Squeeze, Never Married Proportion and Mean Age at First Marriage in China ORTEGA OSONA Evolving Union Patterns: Trends and Patterns in Marriage and Union Formation throughout the World since around 1970. KHALAJABADI/KAZEMIPOUR/RAHIMI/MAHMOODI Trends and Determinants of Marital Timing in Selected Countries of Asia and the Pacific Region

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Thursday 21 June

<p>9:30-11:00</p>	<p>Session 2. Union Patterns: Africa Overview Chair: Laplante HERTRICH Eroding Standards of African Nuptiality. Long Term Trends and Regional Patterns of Age at First Marriage SHAPIRO Marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa: Trends, Determinants, and Consequences ADEBOWALE Survival Analysis of Timing of First Marriage among Women of Reproductive Age in Nigeria: Regional Differences GURMU/MACE Determinants of Age at First Marriage in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</p>
<p>11:00-11:30</p>	<p>Coffee break</p>
<p>11:30-13:00</p>	<p>Session 3 The Cohabitation Diffusion Chair: Wendy Manning BEAUJOUAN/NI BHROLCHAIN The Changing Relationship between Education and Union Formation in Britain 1980-84 to 2000-04 LAPLANTE Normative Groups. The Rise of the Formation of the First Union through Cohabitation in Quebec. ESTEVE PALOS/LESTHAEGHE/LOPEZ-GAY The Latin American Cohabitation Boom, 1970 - 2007.</p>
<p>13:00-13:30</p>	<p>Special Session I Chair: Teresa Castro Martín Ron Lesthaeghe: Changing Patterns in Family Formation in Latin America</p>
<p>13:30-15:00</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>15:00-16:30</p>	<p>Session 4 Different Trends on Marriage Formation in India and Some Islamic Countries Chair: Clara Cortina JARALLAH Conflict and Transition to First Union in the Occupied Palestinian Territories KAMAL* Trends and Educational Differentials in Marriage Formation among Women in Bangladesh: a Cohort Analysis SAXENA Prevalence, Patterns and Preferences of Consanguineous Marriages in India: Similarities and Contrasts with Some Islamic Countries</p>
<p>16:30-17:00</p>	<p>Coffee break</p>
<p>17:00-17:30</p>	<p>Special Session II Chair: Véronique Hertrich Margaret Greene: Building a Global Movement to End Child Marriage: Donor and Civil Society Advocacy</p>
<p>20:00</p>	<p>Group dinner at Centro Riojano Restaurant Calle de Serrano, 25 , Madrid</p>

**Paper presented by Session Chair on behalf of author who could not attend.*

Friday 22 June

<p>9:30-11:00</p>	<p>Session 5 Marriage or Cohabitation? An Intergenerational Analysis of European Countries and the United States Chair: David Reher PERELLI-HARRIS/LYONS-AMOS The Heterogeneity of Relationship Patterns within and across Countries: an Examination of the United States and 14 Countries in Europe SMOCK/MANNING/DORIUS/COOKSEY The Intergenerational Transmission of Cohabitation and Marriage in the U.S.: The Role of Parental Union Histories</p>
<p>11:00-11:30</p>	<p>Coffee break</p>
<p>11:30-13:00</p>	<p>Session 6 Mate Selection: Who Marries Whom? Chair: Albert Esteve WEI* Marry Up or Marry Down? Transition of Assortative Matching in China PRAKASH/SINGH Who Marries with Whom? Changing Mate Selection Preferences in India and Emerging Implications on Social Institutions VONO/DEL REY POVEDA First Marriage among Recently Arrived Immigrants: the Role of Social Networks in the Selection of Partners</p>
<p>13:00-14:30</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>14:30-16:00</p>	<p>Round Table Chair: Andrew Cherlin (Johns Hopkins University, USA-IUSSP Panel) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter McDonald (President of the IUSSP, Australian National University) • Ron Lesthaeghe (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium) </p>
<p>16:00-16:30</p>	<p>Closing Remarks and Next Steps Julieta Quilodrán and Véronique Hertrich</p>

**Paper presented by Session Chair on behalf of author who could not attend.*



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Humanas y Sociales



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