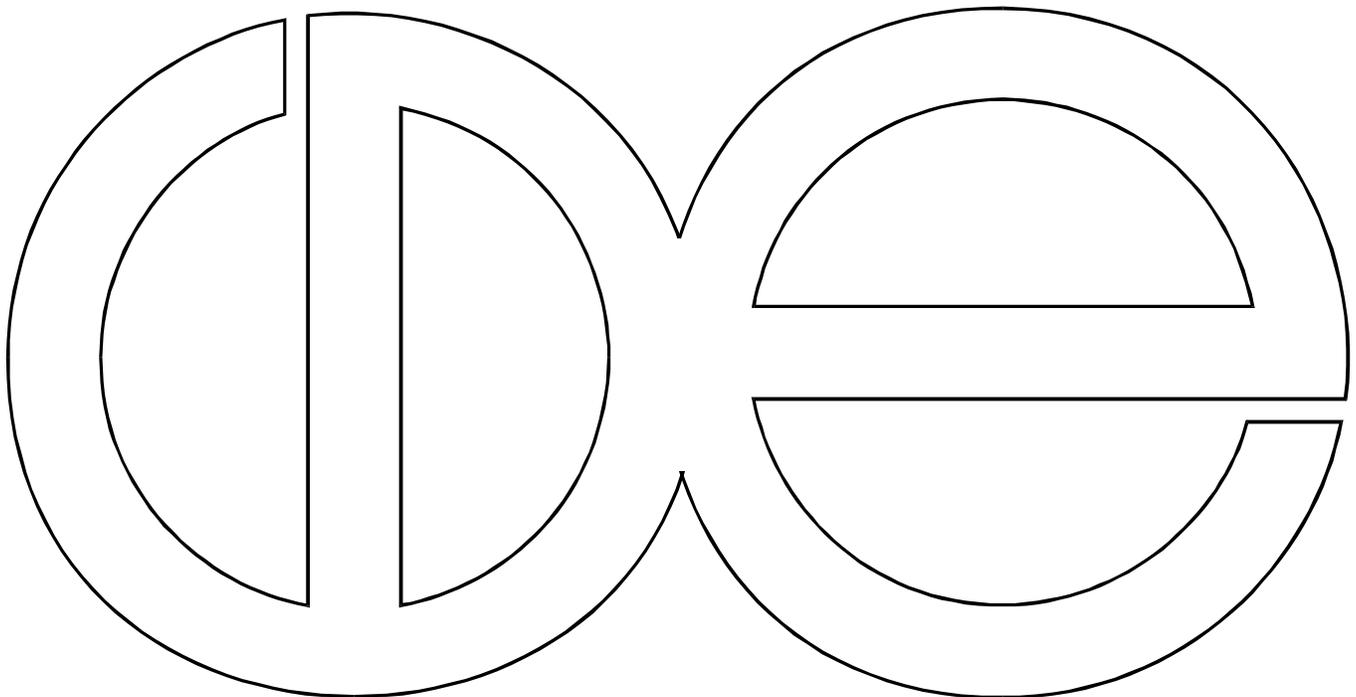


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**Nuptiality in Latin America:  
The View of a Sociologist and Family Demographer**

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NUPTIALITY IN LATIN AMERICA:

The View of a Sociologist and Family Demographer<sup>1</sup>

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"Because changes in marriage patterns take place within the process of family formation, a major difficulty in assessing the future direction of marriage patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean is the slight knowledge of the dynamics of family formation in these regions. The origin of social acceptance of consensual and visiting unions and the undetermined conditions which have maintained such norms from the colonial era to the present have not been often addressed. ..." (United Nations 1990, p.157)

#### INTRODUCTION

Even as we struggle to understand the role of marriage in contemporary American society, it is fruitful to consider union formation to our south in Latin America. Latin America shares some features with North America: It had an indigenous population that was overtaken by a European one; it experienced colonization over hundreds of years; parts depended on a slave and plantation economy while other parts had large urban labor forces; colonial status was overcome, but historical circumstances left a legacy of a mixture of races, ethnicities and socioeconomic groups; and it is changing. As importantly however, Latin America differs significantly from the north. One difference is that North America was colonized primarily by the French and English whereas Latin America was colonized primarily by the Spanish and Portuguese of an Iberian Peninsula influenced by an intersection of Moorish and Catholic ideologies; colonizers left different cultural legacies. Perhaps related to this is that one of Latin America's characteristics, despite the region's

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heterogeneity, is having an informal marital type known as 'consensual union' in which a couple lives together with any children (but qualitatively different from the *barraganía* known in Iberia). To be sure, both cohabitation and non-marital childbearing are increasingly common in the United States and many other developed societies; but this is not the same as what has been an historically-rooted but changing situation in Latin America.

The purpose of this paper is to try to understand, if only in a limited way, this system of having two types of unions. After providing a short historical view of union formation in Latin America, we try to understand the recent situation--the ambivalence toward union type, the timing of first union, and union dissolution. We use census microfile data from a number of countries around 1980 to additionally help show the tremendous diversity between and within countries, and the fact that union type has had a definite socioeconomic side to it that may have historical roots but which, in altered form, persists to this day. We also show that unions tend toward socioeconomic homogamy, marriages only slightly more so than consensual unions. It is important at the outset to point out however, that this essay is written by a family demographer. What is family demography? And why should a family demographer be interested in a socioeconomic aspect to union type in Latin America? That topic deserves some discussion.

### Family Demography

Family demography is the natural "marriage" between a sociological interest in the family and a demographic interest in population structure. The family is often considered the fundamental social unit, natural for sociological (and anthropological) study (see e.g. Murdock 1949), while after age and sex, marital status may be one of the most important population characteristics there is (see Shyrock and Siegel 1973). If one considers the

major population processes to be birth, migration and death, then age, sex and marital status tend to be the first characteristics by which crude measurement of these processes is refined. For instance, instead of looking at a crude birth rate (births per thousand in the population) one may wish to look at the crude birth rate standardized for a population's age distribution or a birth rate per thousand women of childbearing age or a birth rate among women at risk of bearing a child, often a marital-specific fertility rate. Students of migration have found it helpful to differentiate between married people and others, as well as by their age and sex because married and unmarried people can have notably different migration rates. Finally, people have been intrigued to find that married men may have lower mortality than unmarried counterparts.

Of population-related processes, it has seemed natural to study nuptiality, because marriage or union formation is associated with the production of children, but such demographic study developed independently from most sociological study of marriage and the family. For instance, marriage or exposure to the risk of pregnancy, conception and gestation, is considered an important "proximate determinant" of fertility (Davis and Blake 1956) while demographers usually ignore marriage's potential effect on other political, economic, social or psychological factors. Demographers may learn about the European marital pattern of late marriage, little age difference between spouses and much non-marriage, but mainly in relation to historic Europe's relatively low fertility (Hajnal 1965). It was usually family scholars, some of whom were also demographers, who pointed out what late marriage might mean for women's employment, ability to own property, and/or general social status. In general, until women demographers such as Judith Blake or Ruth Dixon (now Dixon-Mueller) came along, how the European marriage pattern or any pattern for that matter was related to gender relations was a

topic outside most demographers's scope. A big point was made tracing the contribution of a later female age at marriage to fertility decline in East Asia (e.g., Cho and Retherford 1974; Mauldin and Berelson 1978) but again, it was a female demographer, Karen Mason, who made a point of exploring the relation between women's status and fertility decline there. In a recent collection of articles on the fertility transition in Latin America, Rosero-Bixby (1996) inquires about the degree to which changes in marriage patterns might help explain the general fertility decline, but how changes in marriage patterns might be related to women's status there was outside the scope of his study. Likewise, demographic interest in union type in Latin America is usually limited to the issue of its effect on fertility, asking for instance whether being married or in a consensual union leads to higher fertility (e.g. Chen et al. 1974; Henriques 1979, 1989; Juarez 1989).<sup>2</sup>

A preoccupation with fertility as the reason to study nuptiality or union formation along with the oft-unspoken assumption that a woman decides her own fertility and/or use of contraception, resulted in many demographers concentrating on only half the married population--the women--thus further separating demographic study from studies that would naturally consider both elements in a marriage. For instance, demographers developed clever ways to measure fertility in the past or its "proximate determinants," including use of  $I_m$  (an indicator of level of marriage) and  $C_m$  (the proportion of women married) (Bongaarts 1978; Coale and Treadway 1986), measures that concentrate on women. Beside a general bias in reproductive study toward the female (human or not), there is a reason for this limited concentration. That reason is sometimes called the "two-sex" problem (Keyfitz 1987). Our mathematical and statistical models and methods can deal satisfactorily with only one unit at a time, often chosen to be the female. Attempts at developing two-sex models have not been satisfying. This situation does not make demographers

happy and attempts are being made to bring males into the picture as well as to tackle the issue in other ways. For instance, instead of only collecting fertility information from women, fertility surveys now often contain a module directed at men. Demographic inquiry sometimes talks about a couple's decision making process regarding the number of children in their family instead of using only the woman's preference (e.g. Thompson et al. 1990). Family planning programs sometimes reach out to males despite others' ideas of 'maternal and child health.' The 1997 Population of Association of America annual meetings was replete with papers addressing such issues as paternity and the male family life course, as if demographers are finally discovering that males are important (!) (see also Goldscheider and Kaufman 1996).

Some demographers have been less concerned about the demographic processes of birth, death or migration than about the population's composition, the idea that a population's structure that includes such factors as age, sex, marital status, race/ethnicity, households, education and labor force participation, provides a backbone or skeleton upon which the rest of a social body is formed. It is here that the sociological imagination can take off, because sprouting from the demographic concern with population composition is the subfield of 'family demography' that deals with "union formation and dissolution; family and household structure and change; and kinship" (Burch 1995: 85). Its strengths are "accurate measurement and description of what is" (Sweet 1977:364) and it looks at men as well as women (Sweet and Bumpass 1987). Theory is not its strong point although one might add that a life course or family development perspective seems to have provided good organizing principles (Glick 1955; Klein and White 1996; Uhlenberg 1978). And one of the stages in most life courses is the formation of a union. Indeed, Sweet and Bumpass seem to have organized their 1987 book on American families and households in part by marital status, while earlier

Sweet (1977) had listed nine marital issues as topics in family demography:

- 1) age at first marriage--individual variation;
- 2) age at marriage--aggregate variation;
- 3) age at marriage and fertility;
- 4) age at marriage, age at first birth and subsequent life chances;
- 5) premarital pregnancy;
- 6) marital disruption--aggregate trend;
- 7) marital disruption--differentials;
- 8) remarriage;
- 9) marital disruption and fertility.

A sociologist's "marriage" between sociology and demography to produce family demography has advantages that formal adherence to one or another discipline could not provide. Demographers have a tradition of presenting "what is" coherently, but sociology has a tradition of thinking deeply about and formulating numerous theories and hypotheses about marriage that can help guide descriptive inquiries and interpret observed trends. In fact, the challenge has been to organize all the different perspectives sociology has to offer into a few overarching frameworks such as exchange, symbolic interaction, family development, conflict or ecological ones (Klein and White 1996). Since a central sociological concern has been that of hierarchy and inequality, and since in the past actual "marriage" was most common among people of upper class or European descent in Latin America, it seems natural to ask in this chapter whether there is a relationship between social hierarchy and union type in Latin America. In addition to the normal demographic inclination of looking at individuals, we look at couples because of the guiding sociological idea of "homogamy," that likes tend to marry (or unite with) social likes. A sociological observation has been that there tends to be a marriage "market" in which individuals or families exchange various attributes such as looks, family background, fertility and earning potential in what ultimately appears to be a more or less fair exchange (culturally-defined). Psychologists too speak of the benefits of shared values. Here, we limit ourselves to the issue of socioeconomic status. To

understand the recent situation however, we need to first delve into the past because the practice of having different types of unions has historical roots.

#### A SHORT HISTORICAL VIEW OF UNION FORMATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Historically, Latin America was home to many different aboriginal groups who ranged from being simple hunters, fishers or gatherers to slash and burn farmers, small-scale irrigation farmers and pastoralists, to large-scale irrigation farmers. These pre-Columbian groups practiced an assortment of marital customs ranging from monogamy, men marrying women from conquered tribes, to polygamy (Bernard and Gruzinski 1996; Steward and Faron 1959). Some women appear to have never married, instead serving as consorts, and the remarriage of widows also seems to have been handled in a variety of ways including with the levirate (a man marrying the widow of his dead brother). Some groups considered sibling marriage taboo while others saw no problem with it, at least among the elite (e.g. Bernard and Gruzinski 1996). Regarding Mexico, McCaa (1994) suggests that female's entry into marriage was fairly young, around 15, because mortality was high and it was important to maximize the woman's production of children.

Despite their pre-Columbian variety, conquered American Indians everywhere confronted two common situations. One situation was that the Church imposed its own view of marriage onto them, including its ideas of monogamy, concubinage and incest. Women who might have been 'second wives' under other conditions became mere concubines even when they had been baptized. Children by those consorts were "natural" and did not have the same rights as children by wives. The marriage of close relatives was banned, and

even first cousins required special permission to marry (e.g. Bernard and Gruzinski 1996). The levirate was forbidden. However, sometimes the Church went further to outlaw the marriage of Europeans to Indians, even Catholic Indians, and often demanded a high price for a wedding. Thus, even when some Europeans wanted to formally marry Indians, they were prohibited from doing so by miscegenation laws, Church rule, or just the expense of a religious ceremony.

The second situation was that the Europeans were predominantly men, perhaps six men to every woman, and many of these, even married ones, wanted and did have relations with aboriginal women (Bernard and Gruzinski 1996; McCaa 1994). We might think of true marriage as being between equals (more or less) but these relations were between conqueror and conquered. Today the population of many areas is predominantly a mixture of white and Indian blood, the people called *mestizo*. For a variety of reasons, many of these people historically were not the product of formal marriages per se. And despite the fact that the current ratio of males to females is much more equal, the custom that men might have a marriage and extra-marital relations persists. It is this persistence that we shall explore further.

Our story is not finished yet however because the situation was further complicated by the importation of African slaves to work on Spanish or Portuguese plantations. Africans had yet other marital customs (including polygamy and bride-price) that were ignored by the plantation owners, and slaves were also predominantly male. While slaves might have been encouraged to marry each other, there often was a striking sex imbalance that could only be solved by other means (Love 1978). Also, it was not uncommon for a plantation owner to have a European family by legal marriage and another family (or families) by less legal means (see also Nazzari 1996), or for a son of the owner to be initiated into sexual relations by a slave (see also Smith

1972). The populations of some areas have many people of mixed white and black blood called *mulatto* while people of mixed Indian and African blood are sometimes referred to as *zambo*.

Jack Goody among others has speculated that a Western, Church-related ideology in Europe was historically different from that in places like North Africa and the Middle East or Sub-Saharan Africa, and that Spain and Portugal was an area where European/Christian and Moorish/Muslim ideologies met. In his 1983 book on the development of marriage and the family in Europe, he elaborates on a scheme proposed by Guichard (1977 according to Goody) that distinguishes between Western and Eastern family structures in six ways (Chapter 2): 1) system of descent, 2) conjugal pair, 3) kin groups, 4) matrimonial alliances, 5) position of women and 6) the notion of honor. The Moorish system of descent was strictly patrilineal whereas the European one was clearly bilineal. The Moorish conjugal pair had little strength whereas the European one was the "basic cell of social organisation..." A kin group among the Moors was "a group clearly defined in time and space in relation to an ancestor" whereas European kin groups were weak and existed at all among the aristocracy only. The Moors had strong "endogamous tendencies." The preferred marriage was "with the father's brother's daughter." "To give a wife to another lineage (*linage*) is dishonorable and the wife-takers are superior to the wife-givers." In Europe, the tendency was towards exogamy (and prohibiting the marriage of first cousins). "Marriage alliances are valued; women circulate, bringing goods and honor; the wife-givers tend to be superior to the wife-takers." The Moors often observed a "Strict separation of the sexes and exclusion of women from the public sphere." In contrast, Europeans had "No rigid separation of the sexes; in the Germanic tradition, women appear to be able to play a public role and to have some political authority." The Moorish notion of honor was based on "being rather than

having; feminine honor is passive, masculine honor, active." A European sense of honor was not supposed to be linked to gender or the person. "Honor is tied to the possession of a title, a rank or riches; it can therefore be handed on and circulated in the social system." Thus missionaries may have brought to Latin America Catholic ideas about marriage, concubinage and incest but one has to wonder how much Moorish ideas may have influenced the Spaniards and Portuguese colonial laity, especially ideas about gender roles and honor.

At the time of the European conquest of Latin America, the Iberian peninsula had expunged the Moors and had the European feudalistic economic and social system. Seemingly consistent with such a system, Spanish and Portuguese crowns often granted conquerors huge tracts of land and, perhaps, the labor of the lands's Indian residents as well. While some people have consequently likened the colonial situation in Latin America to the feudal system of Europe, others take issue with this in what I think is a convincing way. First, they point out that serfs in Europe were the same as their ladies and lords racially and culturally. Indians on the other hand were different from their European masters and a status system developed involving skin color (Europeans and later Creoles being on top). Some people considered a White person morally superior to a person of color simply by virtue of race. Nor was it unheard of for a relatively poor White to marry a rich Indian, *Mestizo*, or *Mulatto*, basically trading skin color for economic well-being. Second, many of the large land tracts existed far away from governmental control; owners were often "above the law," and did what they pleased, including taking sexual favors and/or concubines. Third, even White women in Latin America may have had lower social status than their European sisters, perhaps because of the presence of so many non-European women. European-based ideas about female rights to owning and inheriting property could do only so much in an environment of relative lawlessness in which few people had much property

anyway.

Given the complicated situation of there being different peoples, of homogamy, and of interbreeding, one might well imagine that a formal Church marriage was only one of a host of different kinds of marriage known to these varieties of people. But in colonial Latin America, there was one and only one kind of marriage recognized by the authorities, a marriage blessed by the Catholic Church. Later in some countries, there developed the institution of a civil marriage that could be separate from a Church marriage but even civil marriage was mirrored after the Church one in many ways. All other unions of which there were often many, even ones that could be considered customary marriages, were lumped together into a 'free union' category, and all the children produced by such unions were called 'natural' or illegitimate.<sup>3</sup> That is, one kind of union was legal and sanctioned by the authorities while all other kinds were not. In a thought-provoking article, Davis (1985) suggests that 'marriage' is the only sexual union that commands public recognition while common-law marriage lacks that recognition, and consensual union also lacks an assumption of permanence. This is confusing when trying to understand the situation in Latin America however, because common-law marriage is an English concept lacking in Latin American society while customary marriage is a concept that is foreign to the societies of which Davis was thinking. Furthermore, if true marriage involves public recognition whereas other unions do not, just who is the 'public' supposed to be when Davis mentions public recognition--a European (and later Creole) administration? Perhaps instead of common-law marriage, we might speculate that there is a marriage type that could be called 'customary' distinct from both the formal marriage of Church or state and consensual union. But how such marriage would be dealt with in relation to the other two types of union is unclear, especially since many unions that start out as consensual later become

formalized through legal marriage.

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If a demographic view of marriage generally involves issues of formation and dissolution, we have to add and begin with a third issue, that of union type, since we have seen that formal marriage is not the only kind of "marriage" in Latin America. Also included here must be the formalization of what had started as an informal union, sometimes even after the children are old enough to leave home. When viewing formation, the United Nations has generally found it helpful to consider both the timing and prevalence of first "marriage," where "marriage" includes all unions, not just formal ones (e.g. 1990). Dissolution also must consider the unofficial breakdown of informal unions as well as formal divorce or separation from legal marriage, especially since divorce was often illegal until recently. It still was in Chile and Paraguay in 1987 (Quale 1988).

#### Union Type

Although historic accounts of colonial "marriageways" (marriage-like unions in McCaa's view) allude to the commonality of non-marital sexual relations, one is still left to wonder how common this was. Probably unknowable for the past, at least now most Latin American censuses include a marital status of "consensual union" (really just not formally married) along with married. This was not always the case as they used to only recognize "married" and "single" (and separated or widowed). Indeed, the situation was so surreal that Hajnal (1965) omitted Latin America from his worldwide study of nuptiality with the observation that the Latin American data were "largely

useless." When trying to trace marital structure from a series of Brazilian censuses, Greene reports (1991, p.36) "Women in consensual unions were treated as single in 1940 and 1950, and as married in 1960 and 1970, appearing in the 'other' married category." Probably typical, I found in 1970 census data for the Dominican Republic, that 62 percent of people 15 and over were listed as single, but that further probing disclosed many of these "single" people to be in a consensual union (see also Camisa 1978). The next (1981) census included consensual union as a marital status outright.

Although the true situation is probably somewhat different because of a social stigma sometimes attached to consensual union instead of formal marriage, census data tell us that in the recent past, between 5 (Chile 1982) and 54 (Honduras 1970) percent of all reported unions to women 15 and over were informal. This can be mapped out in Figure 1 based on a grouping by Palloni and De Vos (unpublished) of under 15 percent, 15-25 percent and over 25 percent.<sup>4</sup> Although the figures are for women, those for men are similar if not slightly lower, and reflect actually maintaining a family with someone else. When viewing the map, Palloni and De Vos observe: "We can only speculate at this point, but the differences **within** Latin America as of 1980 may have more to do with the prevalence of Indian and African-American populations and with the degree of ethnic intermarriage than with stages in an evolution of the patterns of union formation or the levels of socioeconomic development." The United Nations (1990, p.157) similarly observes after reporting some socioeconomic differentials in marriage: "However, preference for a type of union appears to interact with factors of a more cultural nature, such as ethnic group." Greene (1991) echoes this conclusion from her examination of Brazilian data, noting for instance, how there were marked regional differences in the proportion of unions that were consensual rather than formal.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to note the apparent ambivalence about sexual relations in Latin America. On one extreme of a continuum one might place *machismo*, an idea that includes male sexual conquest without thought of marriage or responsibility for any offspring. On the other side, one might place a faithful marriage that can only be broken through the death of a spouse. But even if marriage is involved, men are still supposed to be very concerned about honor and virility, and may be "somewhat formal and restrained" with their children, even "stern and authoritarian" (Leonard and Louriero 1980, p.211). The irony is to hold both familism and *machismo* as ideals at the same time although they contradict each other (Ingoldsby 1991). Marriage and *machismo* can and do coexist when there is the double standard that women must stay faithful in marriage but men do not. (Remember Moorish ideas about honor and the position of women.) That upper class married men often had lower class *queridas* (sweethearts), sometimes in an ongoing consensual relationship, is by no means unheard of perhaps because "often there is little emphasis upon the companionate aspects of the marriage" (Leonard and Louriero 1980; also Carvajal 1980). In contrast, their wives were supposed to find solace in their relationship with their children. "Thus, the content of husband-wife conversation may hinge mostly on activities of the children, local gossip and the activities of friends and relatives. The husband is likely to belong to one or more clubs where he frequently goes in the evening to discuss finances, philosophy and politics with friends and associates. There are few women's organizations in which the wife can get involved" (Leonard and Louriero 1980).

Among the lower class, both men and women were supposed to be more free from the constraints and privileges of formal marriage since they were often

not expected to contract them and were thus not bound to the other legally. The catch is however that the children produced from such unions tend not to be legally bound to the father either (usually). Sometimes the men in such unions are step-fathers to some of the children but biological parent to others (see also Fonseca 1991; Ingoldsby 1995). Thus Greene (1991) argues that women traditionally preferred marriage to consensual union in part because of the child responsibility issue even if the marital institution could hardly be considered ideal. Although in some places the legal responsibilities of biological fathers may be clear, paternity may still be difficult to establish and beside a man can "evaporate" if he so wishes, while mothers cannot. This may seem strange to people steeped in the idea that children are both prized and furthermore belong to the father's family, but it appears that in Latin America, as in the United States, children may sometimes be considered liabilities rather than assets despite their supposed value and they stay with their mothers when there is a conjugal break up. Some men may see children primarily as proof of their virility rather than something they offer to the future (see also Desai 1992), and may see women primarily as sources of sexual gratification and the mothers of their children rather than as equals emotionally or intellectually.

If responsibility for children has been a major reason women traditionally preferred formal marriage over consensual union and its risk of instability, then one has to wonder about the consequences of more widespread mechanisms of fertility control. That is, even in countries like Brazil or Mexico that traditionally experienced noticeable increases in formal marriage at the expense of consensual union (e.g. Nyrop 1983; Ojeda 1987), there appears now to be a either a rise or stability in the tendency to form consensual unions (e.g., Greene and Rao 1995; Quilodrán 1993; also Zamudio and Rubiano 1991). It is also unclear right now, how any overall figure may be

due to changes or stability among women in different social groups, whether maintenance or rise is being caused by an increase among rather well-educated and/or well-to-do young women who are able to postpone childbearing (see also Parrado and Tienda, forthcoming) or whether any stability or change is occurring among less educated women whose bargaining has been undermined by a "marriage squeeze" (Greene and Rao 1995). In any case, the marriage market will be changing, and the value placed on different assets will change along with it. Could it be that formal marriage *per se* will acquire more of a companionate quality, less of an institutional one (à la Burgess and Locke, 1945)?

The ambivalent attitude toward informal (consensual) union might best be noted through the fact that many unions that begin informally eventually become formalized. Direct evidence on this matter has been difficult to come by as even the World Fertility Survey, that was so good in many respects, did not gather the kind of information on marital histories necessary for ascertaining the later legalization of a union that began consensually (except in Mexico). But there is some evidence. For instance, in looking at the proportion of women in a union who are in a consensual union, that proportion tends to be much higher among younger women than older women. For instance in Colombia (1985) over 41 percent of the women 20-24 who were in a union were in a consensual union. By age 45-49, that was only 20 percent. Figures for Peru (1981) were 40 and 16 percent respectively, and 27 and 15 percent in Paraguay (1982) (U.N. 1990 Table 19). Of all the World Fertility Surveys, the Mexican one (EMF) did gather information necessary to construct a life table that could show the termination of consensual unions because of their conversion into legal unions (for women). Pebley and Goldman (1986, p.206) constructed such a table and found that "in the absence of separation or widowhood, two-thirds of consensual unions would eventually become legal marriages; ..." In

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an earlier work, the same authors (Goldman and Pebley 1981) used 1960s data for women in rural Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru to estimate that "in the absence of separation and death of a partner almost half of consensual unions would eventually become marriages in Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico, and about 65 percent in Peru" (1981, p.54). Commenting on the discrepancy between the earlier and later figures for Mexico, the authors note "Such a difference could result from a number of factors including a change in the pattern of legalization subsequent to 1970, differential misreporting in the two surveys or differences in the sampling frames between PECFAL and EMF (Pebley and Goldman 1986, p.206). Of these possibilities, they go on to suggest that differences in question wording in the two surveys may have been a major cause.

A next natural question might be whether there are certain measurable characteristics of the woman or man that might make a union more or less prone to become legalized. Perhaps the outgrowth of our notions about the "shotgun marriage," it was often speculated for instance, that a pregnancy might induce union legalization. After careful analysis, Goldman and Pebley (1981; 1986) did not find substantiation for the notion in either their rural samples of women in four countries in the 1960s (Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru) or their national sample of women in Mexico in the mid 1970s. However they did find that such factors as education, age and whether the union was the woman's first union *did* have important influences on whether the union became formalized.

## Timing and Prevalence of First Union

Although we are really talking about a range here from perhaps 18 to 23 in 1950 and 20 to 24 in 1980, the average mean age at first marriage for women in Latin America as a whole appears to have risen from not quite 21 around

1950 to not quite 22 around 1980. Likewise despite a range for men, an average mean appears to have declined from almost 26 around 1950 to around 25 in 1980. See Figure 2. The age at first union for both males and females in Latin America appears "intermediate," since a European late age might be over 23 for women and over 27 for men and an early age might be 20 for women (early and intermediate age at first union for men does not appear to be an issue that has been addressed) (U.N. 1990). The narrowing age gap between males and females could be indicative of what demographers often refer to as a "marriage squeeze" or a mismatch between available men and available women. Greene and Rao (1995) suggest that a marriage squeeze in Brazil has resulted in an increase in consensual unions because males can then "circulate" better than if they were permanently matched with someone. A marriage squeeze in favor of males may more generally give them more leverage in any situation while we may start seeing the opposite in the future in places like India, China and Korea where there appears to be a gross selection in favor of the survival of male infants at present. (One wonders how many of those prized males will be matched with a spouse later on.)

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

We should pause here to note that the figures are based on a measure, the "singulate mean age at marriage" (SMAM) that was developed to make use of census data on marital status and deal with a differing incidence of non-marriage (Hajnal 1953). Of various ways to measure an average age at first marriage, SMAM has become quite popular, but it should be remembered that it will provide slightly different numbers from other measures, even ones based on census data instead of vital registration statistics (from registrations and such) (Shryock and Siegel 1973). In addition, it should be mentioned that

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census data provide a cross-sectional view because different generations (or cohorts in demographic parlance) may enter into marriage at different average ages yet census data refer to different age groups at the same point in time (period). Finally, such data cannot address the issue of mortality; even a modest level of mortality could affect the figures.

Although earlier figures are particularly suspect because of a problem reporting non-legal unions, in 1980 the proportion of males or females ever married by age 50 appeared to be about 91 and 90 percent on average (Palloni and De Vos unpublished; U.N. 1990). Such figures suggest a moderately high prevalence as opposed to the much lower figures for Western Europe historically if one is wont to consider 90 percent or above to mean fairly prevalent (U.N. 1990). Actually, that seems to be a fairly liberal cut off point as more than 95 percent of a population is married by age 50 in some places. It would be more accurate perhaps to describe marital prevalence in Latin America as "moderately universal."

## Union Dissolution

Related to the difficulty of obtaining an accurate picture of people's real union status in Latin America has been the difficulty of acquiring information on union dissolution because a common view of formal marriage there has been that it can only be dissolved when one of the spouses dies. Divorce can be considered so dishonorable in fact, that it is not unheard of that a married man actually resides in a consensual union while still reporting himself as married (see e.g. Caravajal 1980). One might also speculate that the rigidity of laws and views regarding formal marriage could help the option of forming a consensual union instead appear attractive, for both men and women, despite its unsanctioned quality. Divorce *per se* was even illegal until recently in many countries except for the gravest of

reasons, and still is illegal in Chile. Even legal separation (*diquete*) was difficult to obtain. It should come as no surprise therefore that the reported divorce rate in Latin America is very low when statistics on it are even available: "The rates of divorce [...] are about one half to one fifth those of Europe because registered dissolutions in Latin America occur only to the **legally** married, who form a smaller percentage of the total adult population" (Goode 1993, p.191).

The picture is very different if one considers union dissolution broadly to include consensual unions however because consensual unions are much less stable than formal marriages. For instance, using World Fertility Survey data, Quilodrán (1985) estimated that the likelihood of dissolution after five years was perhaps six times higher for consensual unions than for formal marriages during the 1970s in various Latin American countries. Perhaps a third of the consensual unions tallied were not still operative after five years among women 15-49. Thus, instead of having a **low** dissolution rate, the region could be considered to have a rather **high** dissolution rate and some people have described Latin American union formation "serial monogamy" in which people have successive partners who may behave as if they are married for a limited period of time. (This is probably related to the fact that a relatively large proportion of children live in female-headed households in Latin America, but that is a topic outside the scope of our present study.) Divorce has become increasingly acceptable socially (and legally) however, perhaps reducing the appeal of a consensual union.

#### A SOCIOECONOMIC DIMENSION TO UNION TYPE IN LATIN AMERICA

One often reads about what traditionally were the socioeconomic correlates

of consensual union or that union type was connected to "class" (a related but different concept to that of status). But when I was challenged to provide substantiation for that claim, I was amazed to find little hard evidence. And what I did find tended to be limited to women who had participated in fertility surveys. For instance, in a recent paper that used Demographic and Health Survey data from three Latin American countries (Dominican Republic 1986, Peru 1988, Brazil 1986) Quilodrán (1992) presented a table showing separately that women who lived in urban areas, and had seven or more years of school were more likely to be married than in a consensual union both among 20-24 year olds and 40-44 year olds. Her figures also suggested that among the younger group, women who had worked outside the home before their union were less likely to be formally married. While one can easily consider the limitations of her analysis (such as being limited trivariate analysis, perhaps because of sample size), I was in the awkward position of finding it much better than nothing but the "common knowledge" that nobody bothered to substantiate. Indeed, I looked at her references in the hope of finding other studies similarly documenting socioeconomic differentials, but I came up empty handed.

Greene's (1991) use of 1984 data for one Latin American country, Brazil, limited to women, was a big step in the right direction. She ran multivariate analyses at the national-level among different age groups including variables for race and region as well as years of education, urban/rural residence and whether or not had earned income (Table 5.4). Since the race and region variables were significant even after including the other variables, she had evidence to back the claim that there seemed to be a cultural factor behind union type not explained by education, urban/rural residence or income. One is also left to ask whether otherwise, was general "common knowledge" so clear that one did not need documentation of "fact?" And since all the sparse

evidence there is pertains to women, one has to ask about men even in the societies for which we have some evidence. A failure to document what many considered to be facts does not seem particularly scientific to me, even if there is now interest in showing the emergence of a "new" as opposed to traditional kind of consensual union (e.g. Parrado and Tienda forthcoming). And while demographers may have traditionally focused on women, a family demographer includes men as well as women in her purview.

The main sociological question, nothing new, is how one is supposed to think about "social structure" when one reads that the formation of consensual unions seems to be more cultural than socioeconomic. Take for example education, an indicator often used to signify socioeconomic status. In Argentina in 1981, of in union women aged 20-24 with less than a primary school education, 35 percent were in a consensual union and 65 percent were married. Among comparable women with more than a primary education, 7 percent were in a consensual union while 93 percent were married. How does one interpret this? Can one say that there is something structural as opposed to cultural about an educational difference? Does not education deal with both ideas and one's position in society? Or take urban/rural residence for another example. In Argentina in 1981 again, among in union women 20-24 who were urban residents, 16 percent were in a consensual union while 84 percent were married. Among their rural counterparts, 27 percent were in a consensual union and 73 percent were married. How does one interpret this? What is socioeconomic about living in an urban or rural area? Since people with the same culture occupy different positions on a social hierarchy, how would you interpret an education difference among people in the same area who presumably share a common culture? I would interpret it in terms of a socioeconomic effect. Call that "structural" if you wish.

In this exercise, let us use education as our indicator of socioeconomic

status but stay more agnostic about urban/rural residence. (Sociologists also like to use characteristics such as occupation (see Portes 1985) but I find that bad for studying women even when a society is primarily industrial.<sup>5</sup> Adequate income data usually do not exist save for a few countries.) We furthermore hypothesize that people with more education tend to marry rather than be in a consensual union, that there is a positive relationship. We could simply look at figures for other Latin American countries like the ones presented before for Argentina but we can do better than that because we can assess a net effect of education on union type that persisted after controlling for factors that might muddy that true differential. For instance, we know that the probability of being married rather than in a consensual union increases with age for both men and women, and therefore want to control for age. One way, done above, is to limit the analysis to a five-year age group like what Greene did in her 1991 study. I found this to be only partly satisfactory however, especially among young people, because even one year makes a substantial difference. Hence I limited my purview both to young people and furthermore controlled for years of age in multivariate analyses of these groups. That is, since age at first union for women tended to be somewhere in the 21-22 year area, I limited my view of women to 20-24 years of age. Since men's age at first union was somewhere around 25, I limited my view of men to 23-27 years of age.<sup>6</sup> Within these groups, I added a control for years of age.

A second factor, after age, is urban/rural residence. Although Quilodrán and Greene (1992; 1991) both found consensual union more common among rural than urban residents, the issue is complicated and may differ from place to place. It seemed important to include urban/rural residence in our model however if we really want to assess the net effect of education on union type. Finally, every country, no matter how large or small, has different regions

that can sometimes be very different. The situation in Ecuador might be the most dramatic because less than 10 percent of the women 20-24 or men 23-27 who were in a union in 1982 were in a consensual union if they lived in the mountains but over half were in a consensual union if they lived on the coast.<sup>7</sup> (When we additionally ran separate models within regions instead of whole countries, we obtained similar results for the effect of education but different ones [sometimes] for the effect of urban/rural residence.)

Results from these multivariate analyses, separately for males (23-27) and females (20-24) are shown in Table 1. Throughout Latin America, there is a definitely positive relationship between education and union type among young people that persists after controlling for region, urban/rural residence and age, and that is as true for women as for men. Women and men tend to be married instead of in consensual unions the more education they have received. It also seems the case that, except in Argentina, there is more of a gradient by education among women than men.<sup>8</sup> But since results generally seem so similar for men and women, does this mean that men and women of similar education tend to marry or enter a consensual union with each other? It appears so.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The issue of homogamy is a complicated one, and discussion of the methods one might use to study it also are complicated. Additionally, the examination of the issue here cannot be definitive even if we wanted because, among other things, my data do not contain information that could link all spouses. Instead, I have information on "relationship to head" and can only link heads to their spouses or vice versa. Since many young people do not live in their own households even when they have formed a union (another topic), such links

can only be performed on a sub-group of all the people, generally 75 percent or so of them only selected because of their "relationship to head." What bias this might entail in representing the entire sample has to be an open question. The proportion of the entire sample included in the analysis is listed in Table 2. Here, I compute correlations between heads and spouses of heads for in-union women 20-24 years old by type of union for this sub-group.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

In general and as one might expect, it appears from the figures in Table 2 that among young women 20-24 who were in a union and co-headed a household, those unions tended to be socially (educationally) homogamous whether they were in formal marriages or consensual unions. However, they tended to be somewhat more so in formal marriage than in a consensual union. That is, whereas the correlation between the man's and woman's education ranged from .33 (Paraguay) to .61 (Panama) among those in a consensual union, it ranged from .53 (Chile) to .71 (Ecuador) for those in a formal marriage. The difference seemed greatest in Paraguay, where the education correlation for those in a consensual union was .33 compared with .59 for those in a formal marriage, and smallest in Panama where the correlation for those in a consensual union was .61 compared with .66 for those in a formal marriage.

CONCLUSION

Deeply entwined in Latin America's social system is a nuptiality pattern in which there have been rather stable formal marriages, at least for public record, and informally rather unstable consensual unions. Although most

marriages today are civil rather than religious, the idea of a Catholic-like marriage that is very difficult to untie on the one hand, and everything else that can dissolve "easily" since it is not legal on the other, has obvious historic roots. Ideologically, these two types of union are very different, and predictably have a strong socioeconomic as well as cultural dimension to them. Marriage is often preferred over consensual unions and is positively related to educational attainment, but the two types are both common and well entrenched. The coexistence of the two types suggests an ambivalent attitude toward union formation, union dissolution, and gender relations that has never been resolved in a coherent manner. For instance, many unions that start consensually end up becoming formalized, even if the children are already grown. If a marriage goes sour, the husband (usually) may form a consensual union with someone else while officially staying "married" instead of divorcing and remarrying. There has been a coexistence of contradictory *machismo* and marriage ideologies because men can act "macho" but women are supposed to be faithful. Whereas the idea of the dialectical nature of union formation is hardly unique to Latin America, how this has evolved there is.

Traditional demographic interest in nuptiality may have been limited primarily to nuptiality's role in fertility, but family demographers have found union formation patterns to be of interest in their own right because they consider marriage-like unions to be a fundamental population characteristic, of similar demographic interest as occupational or ethnic composition. However, they and other social scientists have generally eschewed studying nuptiality in Latin America, in part because of the difficulty in obtaining reasonable-looking data. Until recently, censuses and other government agencies have often tried to act as if consensual unions did not exist although such unions are an important type of union in most of Latin America. One result is that great strides have been made contrasting an

historic European family system with an Asian one (e.g. Goody 1996; Hajnal 1982) but family systems in Latin America stay big enigmas.

The situation of the recent past should not obscure the fact that it is changing, as the social meaning of union formation seems to be doing everywhere. But trying to understand this change as part of an overall social change (see Ogburn 1932) is hampered by a poor understanding of what family formation traditionally was. Social scientists have generally neglected study of marriage and the family in Latin America in favor of studying the region's political processes, economic development or overall population change. In an exceptional piece that was focused primarily on ideology, Todd (1985) emphasized the importance of marriage and inheritance systems as helping to form family types. He assigned Latin America two family systems, both associated with neo-local residence but having different marital and inheritance customs. Unfortunately, the empirical substantiation of his assertion is difficult to understand and is therefore suspect but it does seem correct in at least proposing that most households contain only one married couple (see also De Vos 1995). Yet one has to conclude (tentatively) that the Latin American nuptiality situation is both distinctive and of probable value when trying to develop an overarching theory of marriage that can help us understand the wide variety of forms marital union takes around the world.

NOTES

1. The author is grateful to doctoral candidate Elizabeth Arias for comments on an earlier draft, to senior programmer Julia Gray for preparing data for computer analysis, and the University of Wisconsin's Center for Demography and Ecology's *Changing Household in Latin America* for providing the necessary data. The Center's facilities funded by NICHD center grant HD05876 are also gratefully acknowledged.

2. In the end it seems that results vary between places, perhaps because the different union types have different implications for the exposure to the risk of pregnancy in different places.

3. Sometimes distinction was made according to the father's marital status, by whether he was already formally married to someone else.

4. <15%: Argentina 1980, Brazil 1980, Chile 1982, Mexico 1980, Uruguay 1975;  
15-25%: Bolivia 1950, Costa Rica 1984, Paraguay 1982, Peru 1981;  
>25%: Colombia 1985, Cuba 1981, Dominican Republic 1981, Ecuador 1982,  
El Salvador 1971, Guatemala 1981, Honduras 1974, Nicaragua 1971,  
Panama 1980, Venezuela 1981.

5. Females in Latin America tend to receive education along with males whereas they do not tend to have an "economic activity" other than housework if they are in a union. Thus the social demographer can examine the socioeconomic dimension to union type by looking for a relationship between education and union type. Whether one is more concerned with class than status is another issue...

6. Just as researchers in the past have lamented the fact that it can be impossible to determine whether a woman's present marriage originally began as a consensual union, one has to lament the fact that most censuses cannot determine whether someone's current union is the first or is of some higher order. One way people have dealt with the limitation is to limit their analysis to women of a young age in the expectation that by doing so, they are dealing mainly with first unions. We follow that course.

7. The regions were:

Argentina:

Central (depts. Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Santa Fe, Capital Federal);

Northeast (depts. Corrientes, Chaco, Entre Rios, Formosa, Misiones);

Northwest (depts. Catamarca, Jujuy, La Rioja, Salta, Santiago del Estero,  
Tucuman);

West Central (depts. La Pampa, Mendoza, San Juan, San Luis);

Patagonia (depts. Chubut, Neuquen, Rio Negro, Santa Cruz, Tierra del Fuego).

Brazil:

North ("states" of Rondonia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará, Amapá);

Northeast (states of Maranhao, Piaui, Ceara, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraiba,  
Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe, Bahia, F. Noronha);

Southeast (states of Minas Gerais, Espirito Santo, Rio de Janeiro,  
Guanabara, Sao Paulo);

South (states of Parana, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul);

Central (states of Mato Grosso Sul, Mato Grosso, Gois, Distrito Federal).

Chile:

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Santiago (regions of Tarapaca, Antofagasta, Aysen, Magallenas, Santiago);  
Wide Center (regions of Coquimba, Maule, Bio-Bio, Araucania, Los Lagos);  
North & South (Atacama, O'Higgins, Valparaiso).

### Colombia:

Pacific (depts. of Choco, Chauca, Nariño);  
Atlantic (depts. of Atlantico, La Guajira, Cesar, Magdalena, Bolivar, Sucre,  
Cordoba, Norte de Santander, San Andres, Casanare);  
Highlands (depts. of Boyoca, Cundinamarca, Valle, Meta, Antioquia, Quindio,  
Tolima, Huila);  
Bogotá (Bogotá D.E. dept.);  
National Territories ("depts." Caqueta, Arauca, Putumayo, Amazonas, Guania,  
Guaviare, Vaupes, Vichada).

### Costa Rica:

San José (prov. of San José);  
Other valley (provs. Alajuela, Cartago, Heredia);  
Limon and outer (provs. Guanacaste, Puntarenas, Limon).

### Dominican Republic:

Capitol (prov. of Distrito National);  
North (prov.s of Dajabon, Espaillat, La Vega, Monte Cristi, Puerto Plata,  
Salcedo, Santiago, Santiago Rodriguez, Valverde);  
Southwest (provs. of Azua, Bahoruco, Barahona, Elias Pina, Independencia,  
Pedernales, Peravia, San Juan);  
Southeast (prov.s of Duarte, El Seybo, La Altagracia, Semana, San Cristobal,  
San Pedro de Marcoris, Sanchez Ramirez, Maria Trinidad Sanchez).

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### Ecuador:

Sierra (prov. of Carchi, Imbabura, Pichincha, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Bolivar, Chimborazo, Canar, Azuay, Loja);

Coast (prov. of Esmeraldas, Manabi, Los Rios, Guayas, El Oro);

East (prov. of Napo, Pastaza, Morona Santiago, Zamora Chinchipe);

Galapagos (prov. of Galapagos).

### Panama:

South (prov. of Colon, Darien, Panama);

Center (prov. of Cocle, Herrera, Los Santos);

North (prov. of Boca del Toro, Chiriqui, Veraguas).

### Paraguay:

Capitol (dept. Asuncion, Cordillera, Paraguari);

North & West (dept. Concepcion, San Pedro, Amabay, Pte. Hayes, Boqueron, Olimpo);

East (dept. Guaira, Caaguaza, Caazapa, Itapua, Misiones, Alto Parana, Neembucu).

8. This was not assessed statistically.

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Table 1. Logit Results of Regressing Union Type (married=1/union=0) onto Education and Urban Residence Controlling for Years of Age Among Females Age 20-24 and Males Age 23-27 (standard error in parentheses)

	Argentina 1981		Brazil 1980		Chile 1982		Colombia 1985		Costa Rica 1984	
	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male
Region 1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Region 2	-.572** (.08)	-.586** (.08)	.729** (.06)	.587** (.05)	.065 (.10)	-.072 (.11)	-.328** (.04)	-.287** (.04)	.429** (.09)	.430** (.10)
Region 3	-.286** (.09)	-.430** (.09)	.799** (.06)	.745** (.06)	-.025 (.08)	-.153 (.08)	.036 (.04)	.104* (.04)	-1.141** (.09)	-1.325** (.09)
Region 4	.824** (.14)	.727** (.15)	1.364** (.08)	1.134** (.08)			-.341** (.04)	-.241** (.05)		
Region 5	-.335** (.12)	-.495** (.13)	.588** (.07)	.606** (.06)			-.805** (.07)	-.901** (.08)		
Age	.140** (.02)	.087** (.02)	.084** (.01)	.064** (.01)	.146** (.03)	.074** (.03)	.090** (.006)	.101** (.007)	.035 (.02)	.029 (.03)
Urb	.005 (.07)	.090 (.08)	-.629** (.05)	-.692** (.04)	-.255** (.10)	-.219* (.10)	-.501** (.02)	-.386** (.03)	.125 (.08)	.137 (.08)
Ed1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ed2	.788** (.12)	.917** (.12)	.465** (.05)	.730** (.05)	.642** (.18)	.791** (.20)	.411** (.03)	.282** (.04)	.579** (.17)	.689** (.18)
Ed3	1.686** (.14)	1.644** (.13)	.624** (.06)	.969** (.06)	1.249** (.18)	1.322** (.20)	.742** (.04)	.508** (.04)	1.323** (.17)	1.268** (.17)
Ed4	2.340** (.13)	2.466** (.13)	.801** (.06)	1.003** (.06)	2.010** (.18)	2.056** (.20)	1.090** (.04)	.839** (.04)	1.474** (.18)	1.483** (.18)
Ed5	2.949** (.16)	2.743** (.19)	1.588** (.12)	2.055** (.12)	2.247** (.26)	2.353** (.25)	1.918** (.04)	1.287** (.04)	2.558** (.20)	2.068** (.20)
Ed6	2.614** (.23)	2.790** (.19)	2.133** (.28)	2.044** (.37)	3.281** (.42)	2.773** (.28)	2.888** (.09)	2.088** (.06)	3.218** (.30)	2.907** (.26)
% in CU	17.5	17.1	16.1	16.5	8.9	8.4	39.8	40.0	22.3	21.7

Table 1 continued

	Dom. Rep 1981		Ecuador 1982		Panama 1980		Paraguay	
	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male
Region 1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Region 2	.149*	.179*	-2.737**	-2.743**	.228**	.267**	.182*	.247**
	(.07)	(.08)	(.06)	(.06)	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)
Region 3	-.473**	-.397**	-.873**	-.938**	.315**	.386**	.610**	.522**
	(.08)	(.09)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.08)	(.07)	(.07)
Region 4	.133	.070	-2.721**	-2.665**				
	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.09)				
Age	.084**	.127**	.096**	.067**	.112**	.136**	.036	.074**
	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Urb	.475**	.567**	.118*	.186**	.400**	.483**	-.253**	-.283**
	(.06)	(.06)	(.05)	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)	(.07)
Ed1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ed2	.423**	.388**	.520**	.824**	.732**	.296	.733**	.293*
	(.08)	(.09)	(.06)	(.08)	(.15)	(.18)	(.10)	(.12)
Ed3	.592**	.515**	.914**	1.214**	1.217**	.951**	.816**	.426**
	(.11)	(.13)	(.06)	(.08)	(.14)	(.16)	(.11)	(.13)
Ed4	1.483**	1.167**	1.275**	1.217**	1.845**	1.634**	2.207**	1.197**
	(.08)	(.09)	(.07)	(.09)	(.14)	(.17)	(.25)	(.22)
Ed5	3.229**	2.115**	2.523**	2.002**	2.940**	2.511**	2.963**	1.772**
	(.13)	(.12)	(.14)	(.12)	(.15)	(.17)	(.25)	(.21)
Ed6	4.134**	3.261**	2.670**	2.578**	3.825**	3.177**	3.576**	2.643**
	(.22)	(.16)	(.16)	(.13)	(.18)	(.18)	(.52)	(.31)
% in CU	76.1	70.8	31.2	30.8	60.4	57.8	26.7	29.6

\* = p < .05; \*\* = p < .01

Urban=1 if yes; 0 if no.

Education is: illiterate/no education, < primary school, primary graduate, middle school or some high school, high school graduate, more (such as some or all of college).

% CU is the percentage of all unions (marriages & consensual unions) being consensual.

Table 2. Proportion of Total Sample Included in the Analysis (co-heads) and Correlation Between Woman's and Spouse's Education<sup>a</sup> By Union Type -- Nine Latin American Countries Circa 1980

	In Consensual Union		Married	
	%	r <sup>2</sup>	%	r <sup>2</sup>
Argentina 1981	75	.50	71	.65
Brazil 1980	88	.51	91	.60
Chile 1982	79	.40	75	.53
Colombia 1985	71	.56	75	.70
Costa Rica 1984	89	.46	91	.63
Dom. Rep. 1981	87	.43	86	.59
Ecuador 1982	81	.56	81	.71
Panama 1980	79	.61	82	.66
Paraguay 1982	83	.33	84	.59

<sup>a</sup> Education is a six category variable where 1=illiterate/no school; 2=less than all of primary school; 3=primary graduate; 4=some high school or middle school; 5=high school graduate; 6=more than high school

All correlations were significant at  $p < .001$ .

Source: From in-house calculations of census microfiles of the *Changing Household in Latin America* at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Demography and Ecology.

# Figure 1

Percent Adult Females in Union in Consensual Unions

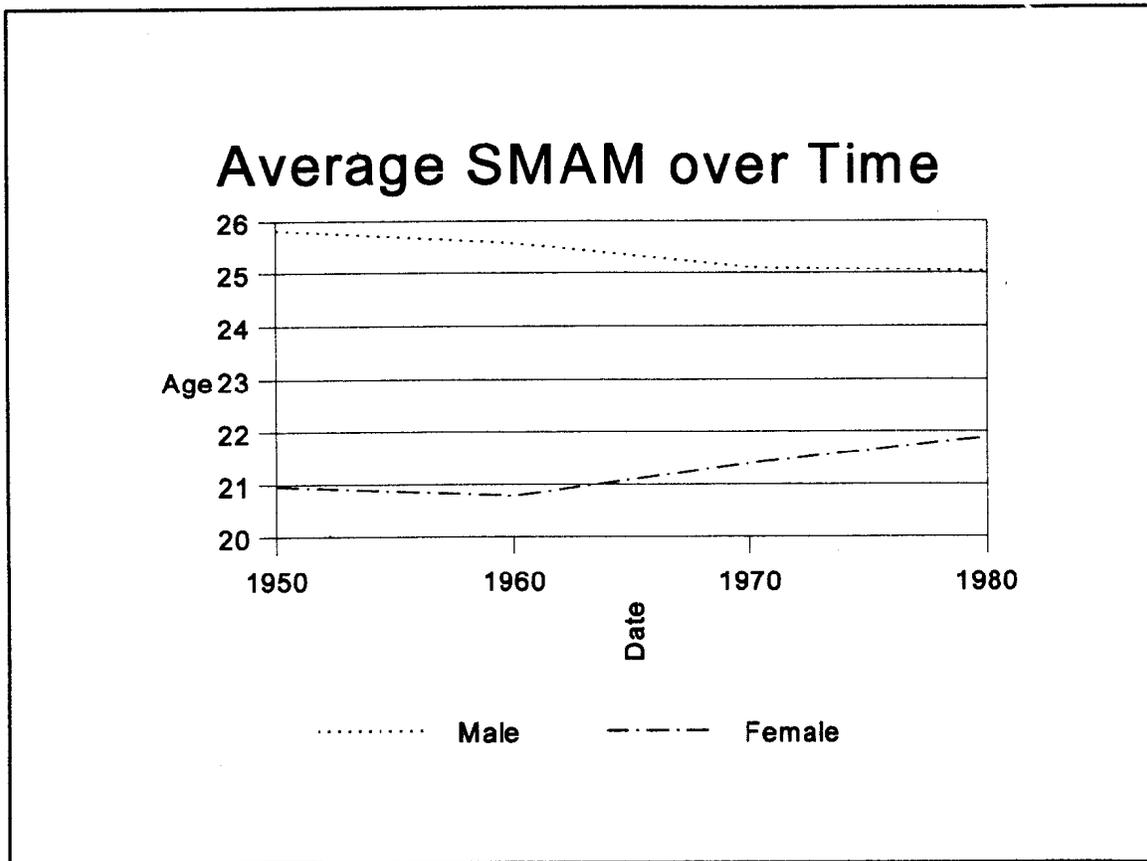


Percent     no info.     < 15%  
               15-25%     > 25%

Source: Palloni and De Vos, n.d.

FIGURE 2

AVERAGE SINGULATE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE IN LATIN AMERICA, 1950-1980



Averages were based on SMAM for:

1950	1960	1970	1980
Bolivia	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
Chile	Chile	Bolivia	Brazil
Colombia	Colombia	Brazil	Chile
Costa Rica	Costa Rica	Chile	Colombia
Cuba	Dom. Rep.	Colombia	Costa Rica
Ecuador	Ecuador	Costa Rica	Cuba
El Salvador	El Salvador	Dom. Rep.	Dom. Rep.
Guatemala	Guatemala	Ecuador	Ecuador
Nicaragua	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Panama	Mexico	Guatemala	Mexico
Paraguay	Panama	Honduras	Panama
Venezuela	Paraguay	Nicaragua	Paraguay
	Peru	Panama	Peru
	Uruguay	Paraguay	Venezuela
	Venezuela	Peru	
		Uruguay	
		Venezuela	

Source: From Palloni and De Vos, n.d. and U.N., 1990.

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