

Abstract

Secularization and industrialization: the seasonality of marriages at the Barcelona area, 1820-1860

Miquel Valls, Joana Maria Pujadas, Anna Cabré

After the end of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain, the country faced decades of extreme confrontation between opposed absolutist and liberal forces. A liberal period, 1820-1823, was followed by an absolutist decade (*la década ominosa*), 1823-1833, and afterwards by a more or less belligerent alternation that was punctuated by two civil wars (*guerras carlistas*) in 1833—1839 and 1846-1849. Views on religion and the role of the Catholic Church were one of the main sources of conflict. One of the most striking episodes was the seizure and public sale of many of the Church properties (*desamortización de Mendizábal*) in 1837.

At the same time, a process of industrialization went on, with very different intensities through the territory. In Catalonia, the industrialization was particularly fast and intense. The region became the industrial core of Spain, the city of Barcelona as well as part of the surrounding rural areas became the seat thousands of factories.

How did the changes in the political and economic fields affect the minds and behaviours of the inhabitants?

Our contribution approaches the process of secularization, seen as the loss of religious influence in behaviours, through the seasonality of marriages celebrated between 1820 and 1860 at the Barcelona area. The period has been delimited by the beginning of the years previous to the first liberal government and the culmination of the industrialization process. Traditionally, marriages were restricted or advised against during Lent, the reason why specific changes in the seasonality of marriages have been used by different authors, such as R. Lestaeghe et al. (1986)¹, as an indicator of secularization.

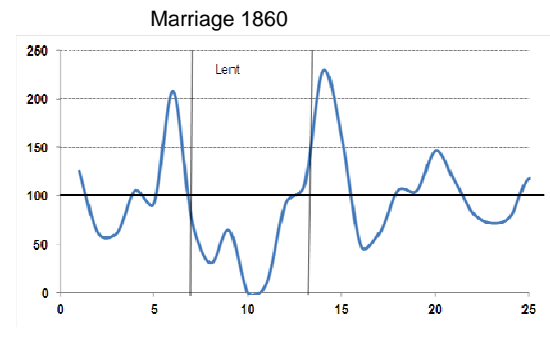
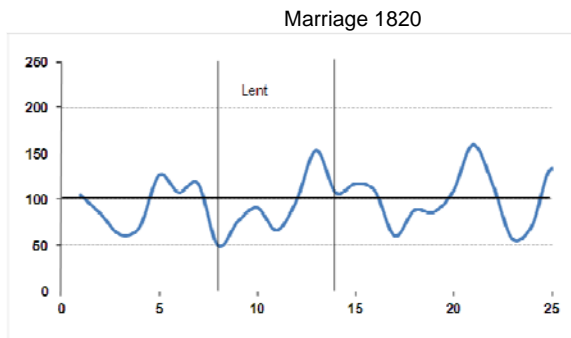
The data used in this contribution are available at the Barcelona Historical Marriage Database (BHMD), offering detail of place of the wedding and occupation and social status of the husband. The first results presented here correspond to the years 1819-21 and 1860 but we intend to show data for the full period in the final poster, allowing for a precise chronology of the changes and for a higher statistical signification of the data when aggregated in five-year periods.

Results

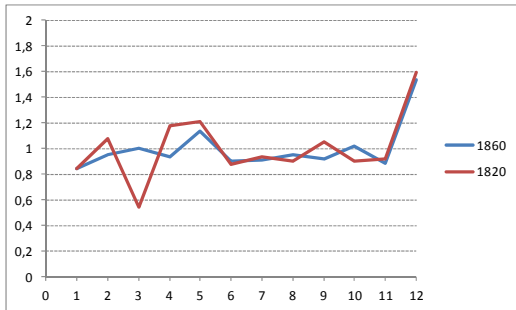
In the attached graphs, the seasonality of marriages can be compared by the weekly distribution in the two moments (graph 1) and by the monthly distribution between the two moments for the following:

¹ Lestaeghe, R. and Wilson, C. (1986) "Modes of production, secularization and the pace of the fertility decline in Western Europe, 1870-1930" in A.J. Coale and S.C. Watkins, eds. *The decline of fertility in Europe*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.

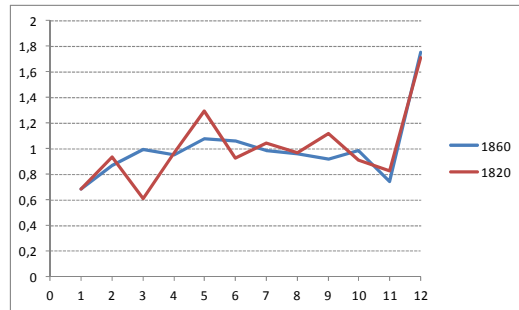
Graph 1: Lent



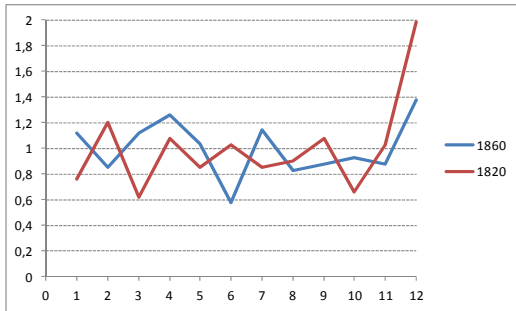
Graph 2: The whole Barcelona area (90 parishes)



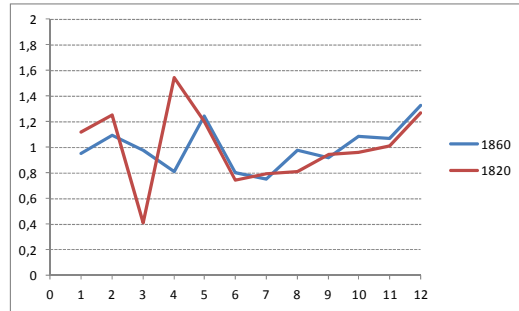
Graph 3: The city of Barcelona (15 parishes)



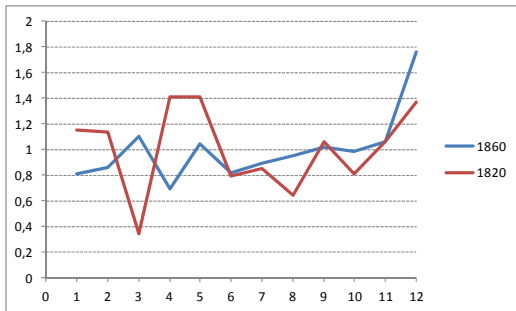
Graph 3.1: The industrial parishes (Badalona, Mataró, Sabadell and Terrassa)



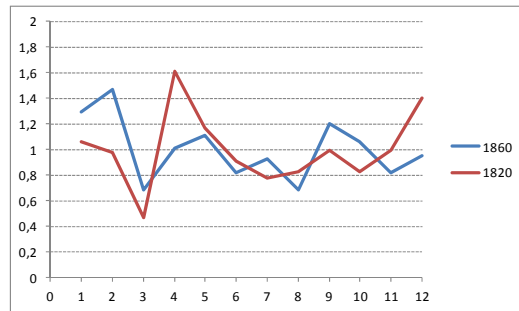
Graph 3.2: The rural parishes



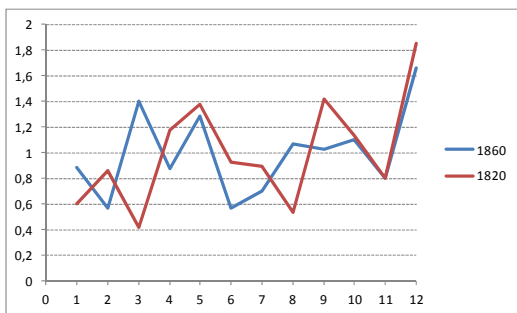
Graph 4: The "worker" husbands



Graph 5: The "peasant" husbands



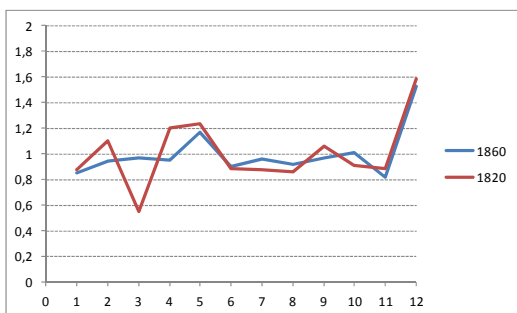
Graph 6: The “weaver” husbands



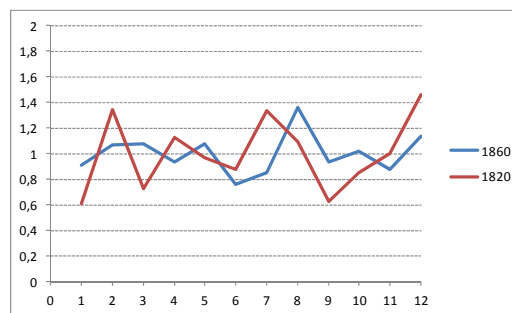
Graph 7: The poor, not paying marriage taxes



Graph 8: The common people, paying the lower tax



Graph 9: The rich, paying the higher taxes



Discussion

The reduction of the number of marriages observed in 1820 during the month of March and more precisely during the weeks of Lent in all places, occupations and social conditions, has disappeared completely by 1860 in all of them except the peasants.

The contrast between social categories is higher in 1860, when the poor show the highest concentration at the end of the year, while the rich show a quite flat distribution and the common people are half-way between both.