

# ***The heterogeneity of family forms in France and Spain using censuses***

Béatrice Valdes

IEDUB (University of Bordeaux)

The deep demographic changes experienced by Europe in recent decades have resulted in the process of population aging. Some authors have even suggested a "second demographic transition in Europe." With the arrival at older ages people born during the baby boom, and with increase of life expectancy, population aging will accelerate. In this context, two issues are important: to support seniors losing their autonomy by family solidarity, and to support young adults in the process of empowerment. The analysis of patterns of cohabitation of the elderly persons and young adults, may reflect both the dependency, lack of autonomy, and needs in terms of family solidarity.

But researchers often face a major difficulty: the complexity in obtaining data for international comparisons.

To alleviate these difficulties, the Minnesota center of population and the Population Studies Center of Barcelona, have joined forces to establish, through the collaboration of various national institutes of statistics, using samples, the IECM database (Integrated European Census Microdata). Through statistical institutes, this database contains anonymized microdata samples covering nineteen European countries, fifty-five censuses and totaling more than 90 million person records. The purpose of this database is to provide data to all researchers to facilitate comparisons within Europe in time and space.

## **1) Analysis of spatial differences in patterns of cohabitation from IECM census samples - French and Spanish regions**

We will use the I E C M database to study the prevalence of intergenerational co-residence of adults in French and Spanish regions. This comparison is a test of the operational value of the I E C M database. This database consists of census samples that allow a priori that kind of study because the data are provided at individual, household and regional level.

### **Comparability:**

It is important to consider the differences between the two countries regarding the methodology, questionnaires, definitions and concepts used in censuses, because some differences can have an influence on the analysis, especially in a comparative perspective. Here is an overview of key issues that should be asked to verify the comparability of data:

#### **1) The question of the definition of household**

The criteria for the definition of a household are the same in the French census of 1999 in the Spanish census of 2001, and refer to the concept of household-dwelling that is, the household consists of all occupants in a dwelling.

## 2) The question of the definition of household members

The definition used to identify household members differs between France and Spain for the two censuses. The population enumerated in the census is the population:

- "de facto" in Spain in 2001, every person is identified at the point where it is at the time of the census.
- "de jure" in France in 1999, those identified are those usually living in the household, even if they are absent for a longer or shorter at the time of the survey.

This difference introduces an inconsistency regarding the inclusion of certain categories, particularly with regard to student residents. We can nevertheless consider, as showed by Sabine Springer in 2010, that this divergence does not suggest that the family co-residence of young people - we will highlight it later in this work - is actually greater in France than in Spain, and does not result solely from different definitions.

This discrepancy in definitions used can also affect the proportion of elderly persons in institutions identified, particularly with regard to those who do not reside full time in nursing homes. However, as showed by Sabine, this difference does not fully explain the difference between the two countries in the frequency of residence in institutions. Therefore, this divergence of definitions will not disturb our conclusions.

## 3) The issue of designation of the reference person

The household reference person is designated as automatic in both cases.

- In Spain in 2001, the first respondent in the questionnaire is considered to be the reference person. This definition of the reference person is a priori arbitrary. Nevertheless, the questionnaires submitted by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics at the census of 2001 were based on information from the *Padron municipal* (which is an administrative register of the population showing residents of each commune) so as to include the person "most appropriate" first in each sheet of household. Thus, we can consider that the person chosen by the administration during the pre-filling of questionnaires actually corresponds to the most appropriate person.
- In France, since 1982 the head of household has become "household reference person." It is designated by an automated procedure that assigns the reference person according to several criteria: sex, age and activity. Applying this automated procedure could be problematic for the analysis of family co-residence over 65 years if we sought to distinguish those who live with their parents and those living with their children, but it has no influence our study because in our typology we do not make this distinction.

In this work we assume that the choice of the household reference person through each of these procedures, can actually lead to the designation of the correct head of household in these two censuses.

## Methodological choices:

The I E C M data base is available in "NUTS2" which is the administrative level of the French regions and the autonomous communities of Spain. However, we will exclude from the analysis the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla and the French overseas territories, due to cultural and economic contexts that differ from the metropolis. Also, results for the Canary Islands will not be presented in the cards for convenience, for visibility in the mapping.

We will focus first on the modes of cohabitation among young adults aged 20 to 30 who are increasingly leaving home later, and second on persons over the age of 65 in early dependence.

Also, we develop a typology of households by mode of cohabitation to distinguish coresidence family life, one person living alone, living in a couple alone, institutional living and co-residence with non relatives. Family co-residence may be subdivided into three sub-modes of co-residence family: couples with children, single parent families, and multigenerational cohabitation.

This typology will allow us to study the distribution of the elderly persons by way of distinguishing cohabitation collective households, that is to say, people in institutions. However, we chose to consider only private households to conduct an analysis of patterns of cohabitation among young adults<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1: Typology of households**

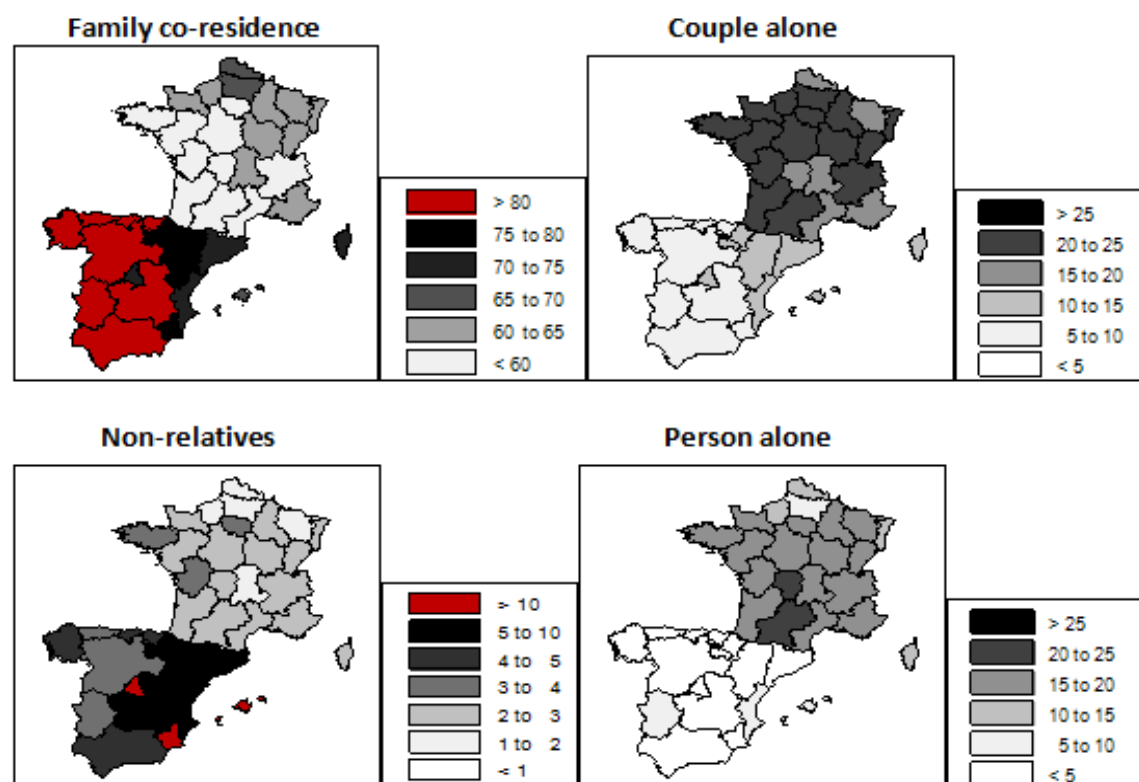
Type of household	Characteristics
<b>Couple only</b>	Household composed of the person of reference and his/her spouse or partner, without children.
<b>Non-relatives</b>	Household with at least one individual unrelated to any household member.
<b>Collective</b>	Person who lives in an institution.
<b>Person living alone</b>	Household with one and only member.
<b>Family co-residence</b>	
▪ either a "couple with child (ren)"	Household composed by a couple with child (ren).
▪ either "a parent with child (ren)"	Household consists of a single parent with child (ren).
▪ either "cohabitation multigenerational"	Household consisting of more than two generations (parents and/or child (ren) and/or grand-child (ren)...).

## 1-1) Regional analysis of cohabitation among young adults, aged 20-30 years, from census samples

We distinguish highly specific national cohabitation of young adults. In France the young seem to live more independently- in couple or alone, while in Spain, young people do not live nearly independently, and more often with "unrelated". Family co-residence of young adults is very strong in both countries (over 60%) but is much higher in Spain.

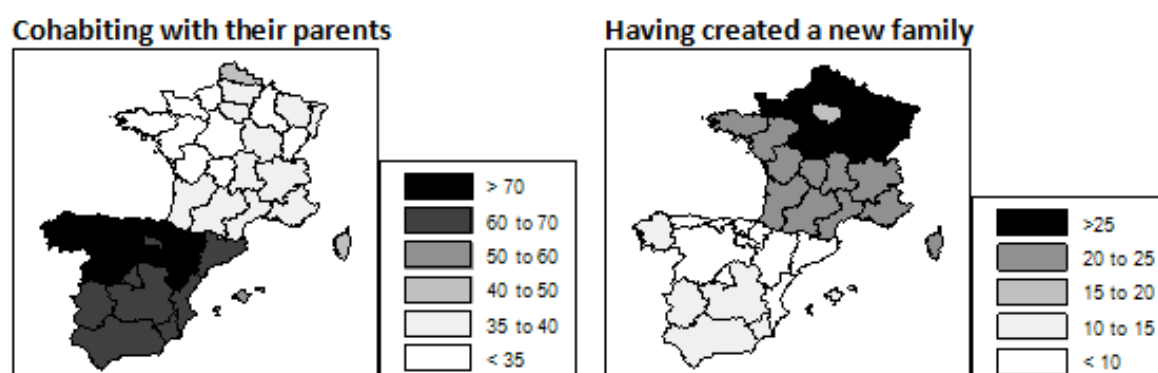
<sup>1</sup> In France, the proportion of young adults living in "collective" varies from 3 to 5% depending on the region, while in Spain, the percentage varies from 0.2 to 0.8% in the autonomous communities of mainland Spain . Therefore, in deciding to exclude the "collective" of the analysis, ruling out a significant fraction of young adults.

**Maps 1 to 4: Proportion (%) of young adults of 20-30 years by mode of cohabitation, in the French and Spanish regions**



However, we should distinguish youth who still co-resident with their parents, that is to say did not leave yet home, and those who have created a new family. This confirms that young people do not live virtually independently in Spain, while in France the young adults live more independently. These results attest that in Spain young people leave home more and more later.

**Maps 5 and 6: Proportion (%) of young adults of 20-30 years in family co-residence, in the French and Spanish regions**



In fact, if we refine our typology in terms of family co-residence, we find that:

- multigenerational cohabitation is highest in Spain, but remains rare in France. It corresponds almost exclusively to young people still living with their parents (between 1 and

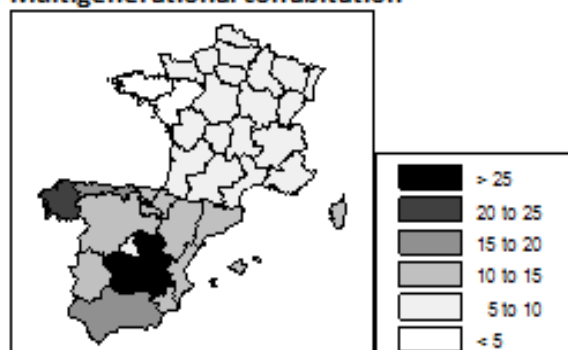
less than 4% of young people in coh. multi. by region, have created a new family).

- the co-residence of 'one parent with child (ren) is higher in Spain, and PACA-Corsica. It is also almost exclusively young adults still living with their parents. (less than 3% of young adults living independently with their child in sp.)

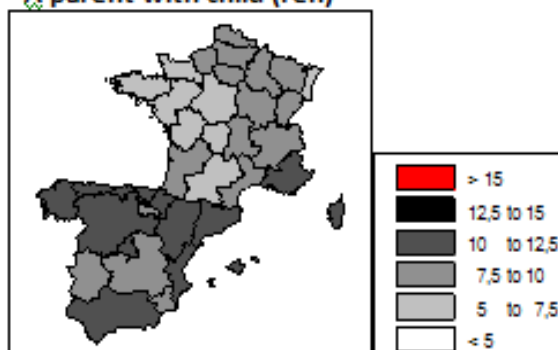
- cohabitation as a "couple with child (ren) is particularly important in Spain, while in France it is weaker for youth in the south than the north. But if there are young couple with child (ren) living with their parents, and those who have created a new family, we discover that Spain is characterized by young adults who still live with their parents, while in France the young people leave home more often, especially in northern regions.

Maps 7 to 11: Proportion (%) of young adults of 20-30 years by mode of cohabitation, in the French and Spanish regions

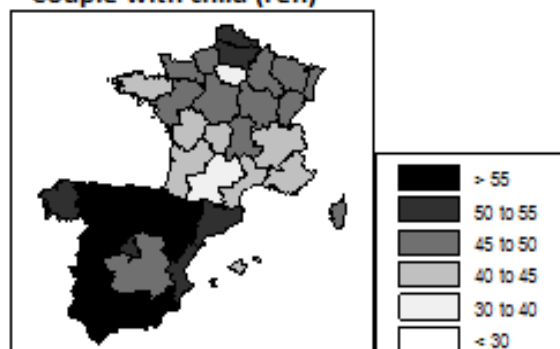
**Multigenerational cohabitation**



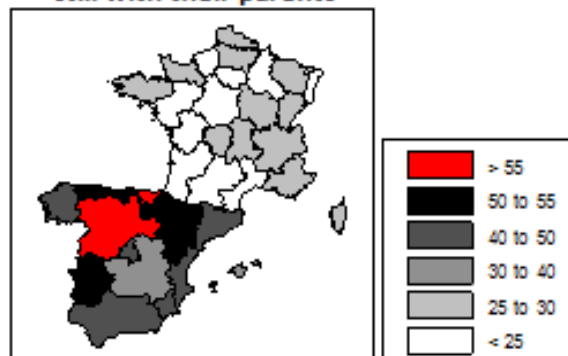
**A parent with child (ren)**



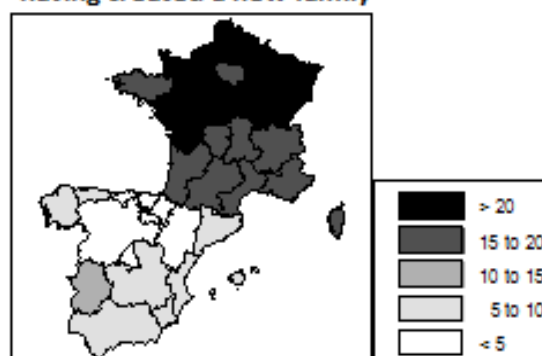
**Couple with child (ren)**



**Couple with child (ren)  
- still with their parents**



**Couple with child (ren)  
- having created a new family**



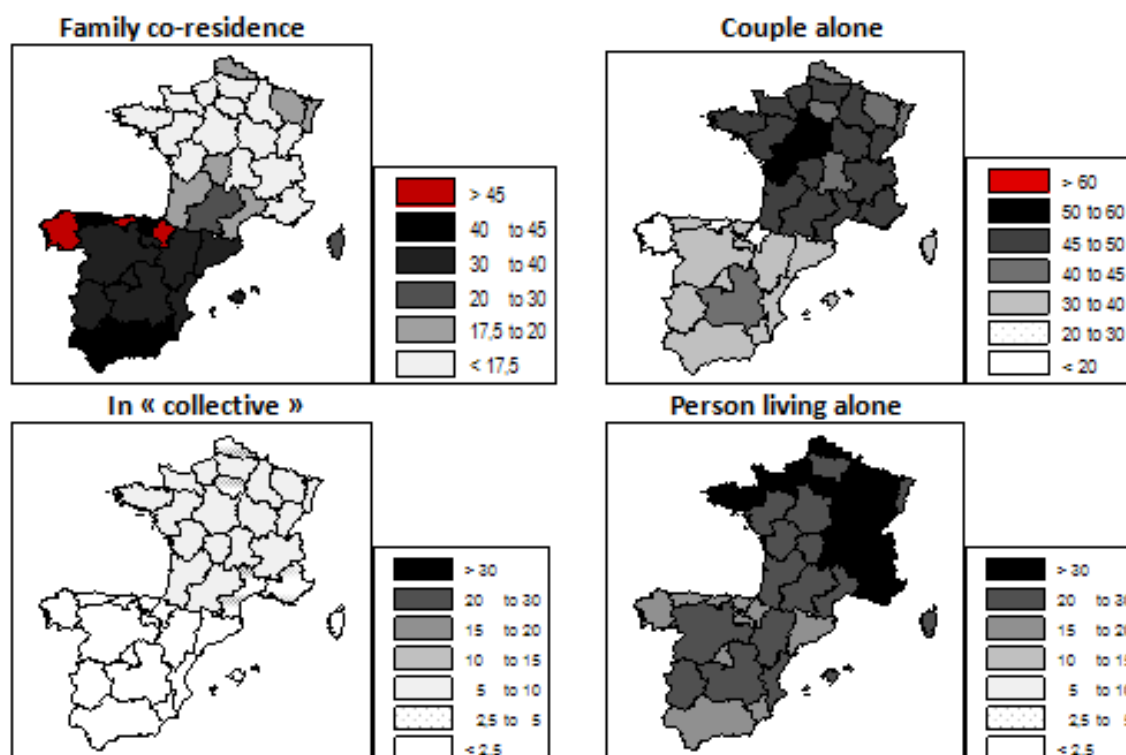
## 1-2) Regional analysis of the coresidence of elderly persons, more than 65 years, from census samples

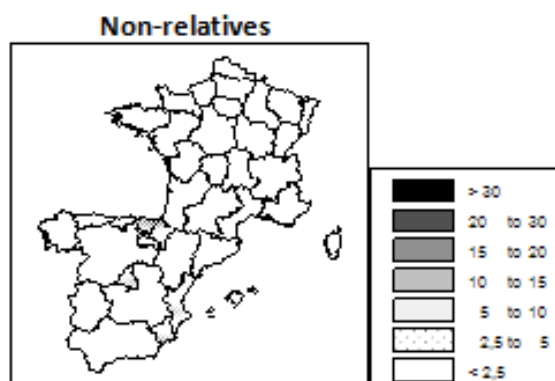
The distribution of people over age 65 by mode of cohabitation differs between France and Spain, but also within each country. Family co-residence for the elderly persons is much higher in Spain, especially in the autonomous communities of the north and Andalusia. In France, the proportion of persons aged over 65 and who lived with their families is significantly lower than in Spain, but we note that co-residence is more common in border regions and Corsica. Thus, we discover a continuity beyond the border for family coresidence of the elderly persons.

In return, the share of people over 65 who live in institutions - here called "collective" - is virtually zero in Spain, and the proportion of people over 65 who live alone is very low - especially in autonomous communities of northern Spain - around 15% in Spain against 30% in France. Finally, the proportion of elderly persons living "couple only" is everywhere higher in France than that observed in the Spanish autonomous communities.

Thus, the distribution of people aged over 65 in Spain is representative of that observed in countries of southern Europe, with a higher cohabitation with their children, and lower living alone or in institutions. Indeed, many authors have mentioned that in the countries of Northern Europe, the elderly persons often live alone or in institutions, while the multigenerational cohabitation is more prevalent in the South.

**Maps 12 to 16: Proportion (%) of elderly, more than 65 years by mode of cohabitation, in the French and Spanish regions**



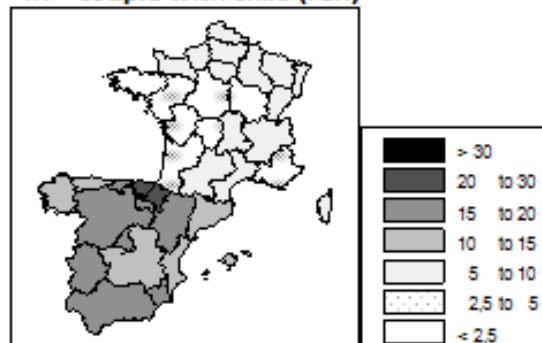


So, co-residence of older people is highest in Spain, and if we go into details we find that:

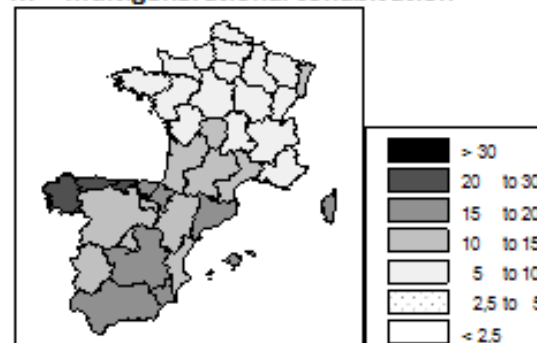
- The share of persons aged over 65 who live in "couple with children is much higher in Spain, especially in the autonomous Basque Country and Navarre;
- and the proportion of people over 65 who live in "multigenerational cohabitation" in Spain is much higher than that recorded in France. In the border regions of southern France, the share of people over 65 in "multigenerational cohabitation" is closer to that observed in the Spanish autonomous communities, than that observed in neighboring French regions. It would seem that there is a continuity beyond the border on "multigenerational cohabitation" of more than 65 years.

**Maps 17 to 19: Proportion (%) of elderly, more than 65 years, by mode of cohabitation, in the French and Spanish regions**

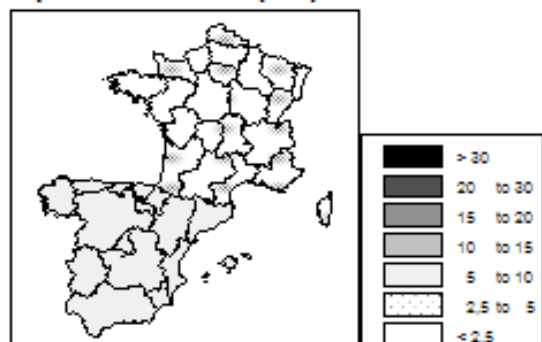
**In « couple with child (ren) »**



**In « multigenerational cohabitation »**



**A parent with child (ren)**



### What to retain:

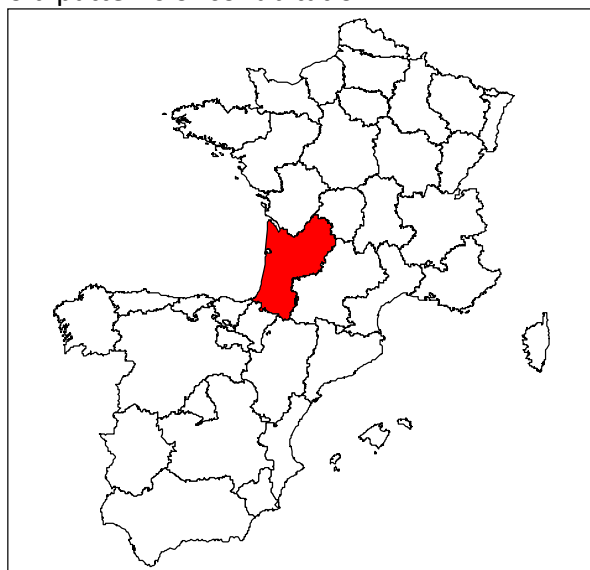
The border is to say, the opposition between France and Spain, is significantly higher with respect to the frequency of cohabitation young family, than for those aged over 65 years. This divergence between France and Spain confirmed the contrast between north and south of Europe referred to by many authors: Northern Europe is characterized by weak family ties, and the Mediterranean countries by strong ties (Reher, 1998). Southern Europeans are not only more committed to the family institution as northern Europeans, but they also adhere more strongly to norms of family obligation. In contrast to the interventionist policy of the countries of northern Europe, the traditions of southern Europe led several generations live under one roof.

Moreover, there are regional disparities in higher co-resident elderly persons than in young adults. Indeed, the variance of family co-residence between regions is much higher among elderly persons (approximately 170) than among youth (approximately 105).

Thus, it appears that there is a persistence of traditional family models. In fact, if the persistence of traditional models is validated for the elderly persons, it is less clear with regard to young adults. Traditional models of family coresidence are respected by the older generations, probably due to a generational effect. People over age 65 belong to older generations, are those who experienced the more the traditions. Whereas cohabitation among young people is a new phenomenon.

## 2) Analysis of spatial differences in modes of cohabitation from exhaustive census data

The I E C M data base is available at the level of the Spanish provinces, but only at the level of the regions of France. However, there is significant heterogeneity within some French regions. We will illustrate this heterogeneity from the example of the cantons in the Aquitaine region. Aquitaine is the region at the extreme south-west France, bordering Spain. The analysis of patterns of cohabitation at the township level of France, is possible only from the complete census data, available on the website of the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). This should enable us to verify the conclusions drawn from the analysis of samples from the census, especially if there are permanences in old patterns of cohabitation.



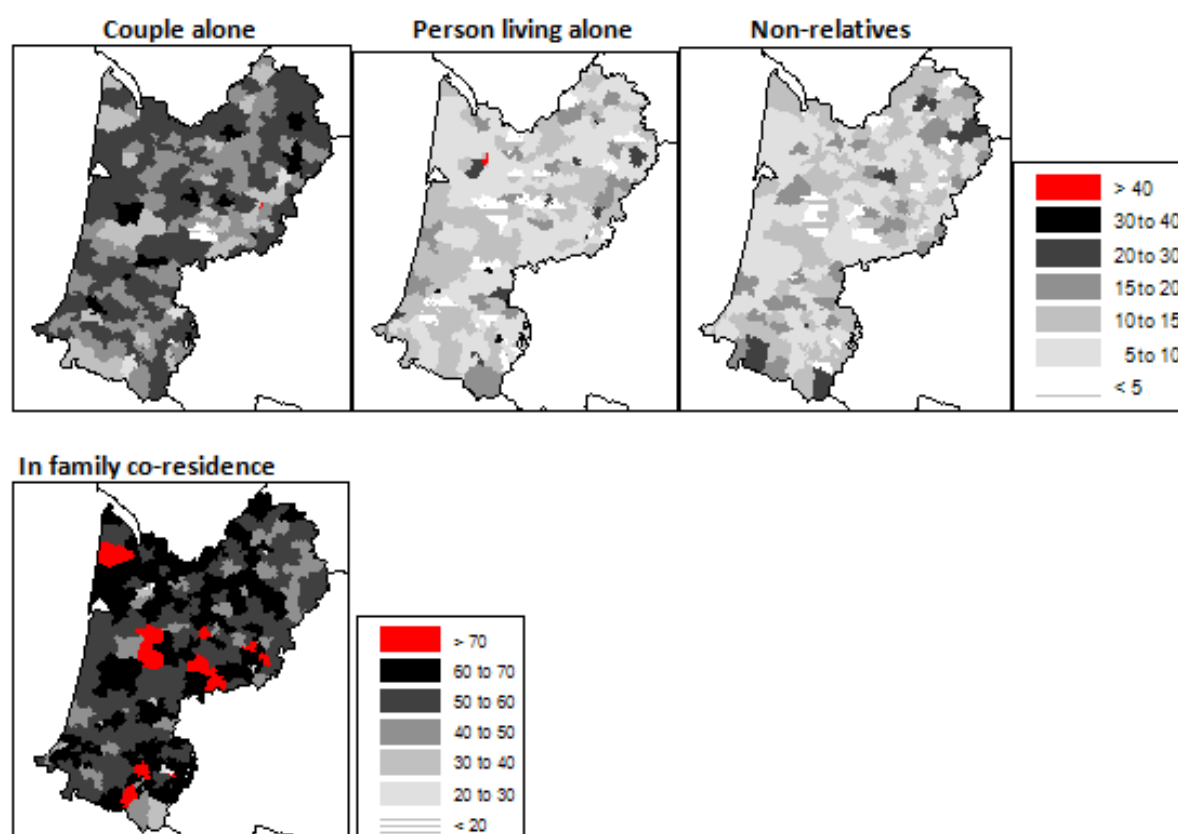


## 2-1) Analysis of cohabitation of young adults in the cantons of Aquitaine, from the complete census data

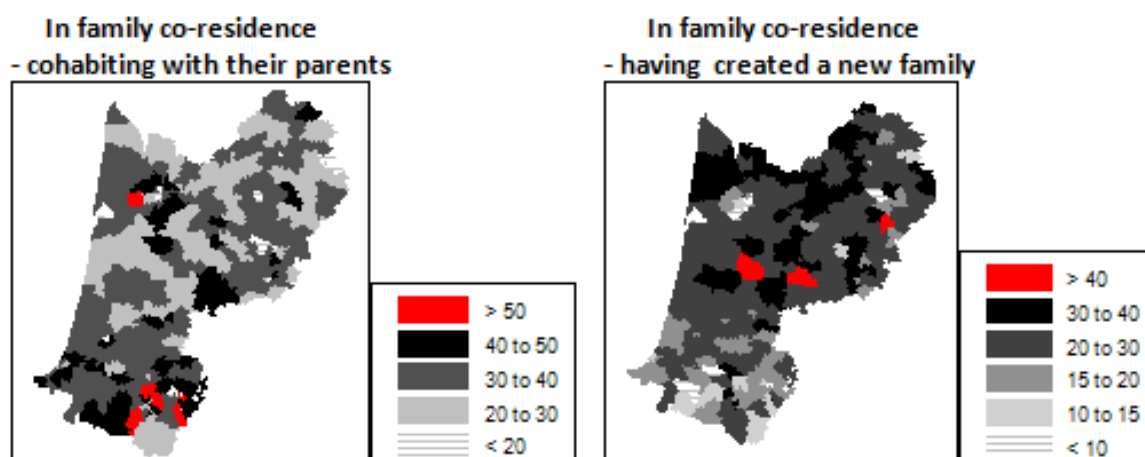
The distribution of young adults aged 20 to under 30, according to their mode of cohabitation is heterogenous in Aquitaine. Indeed, the percentage of each mode of cohabitation varies widely across cantons Aquitaine, with a proportion ranging from single to quadruple from one canton to another for the same mode.

For example, if we are particularly interested in the share of young adults in family co-residence, we find a ratio below 20% in some districts, but over 70% in others. In fact, the family co-residence of young people is lower in rural townships, and conversely higher in urban counties. However, the urban counties are the areas most populated. Finally, the smoothed image of the Aquitaine region that was obtained from census samples results from an overrepresentation of the most populous urban counties, but actually hides large disparities.

Maps 20 to 25: Proportion (%) of young adults, by mode of cohabitation, in the cantons of Aquitaine



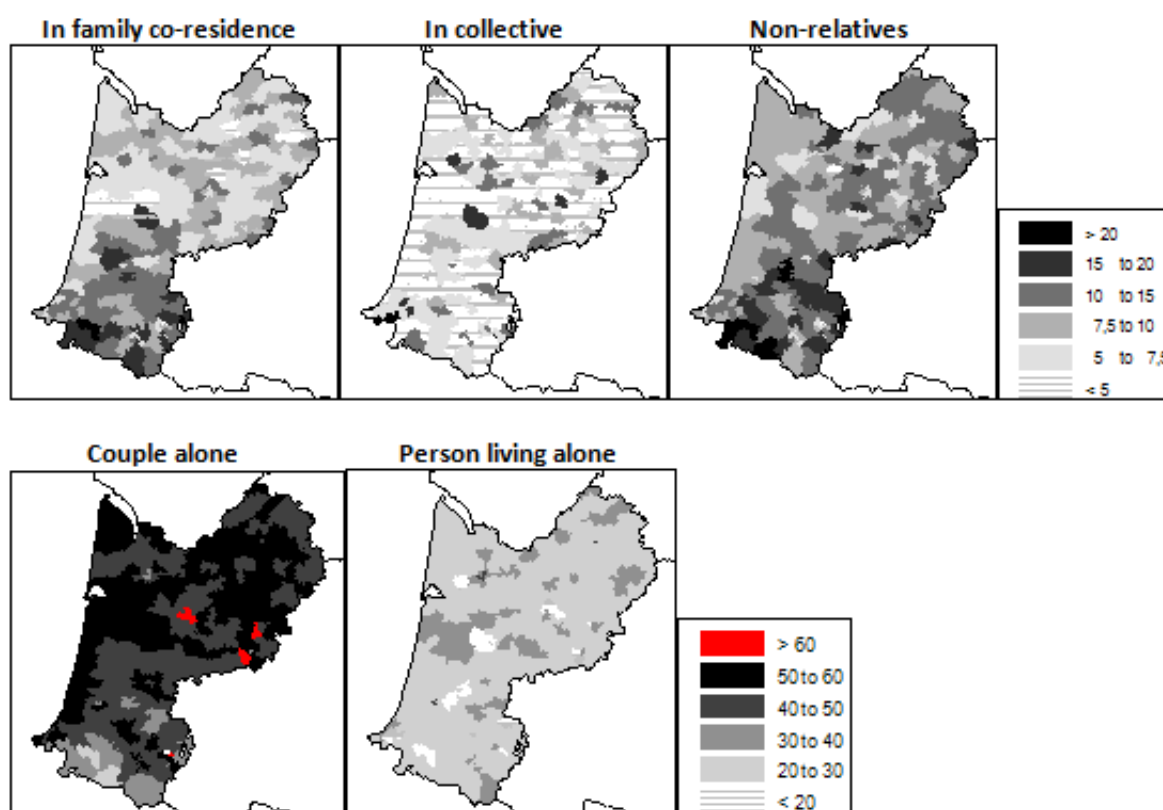
The southern townships of Aquitaine are distinguished by a majority of young adults living together with their parents.



## 2-2) Analysis of cohabitation of the elderly in the cantons of Aquitaine, from complete census data

Analyzing the distribution at the township level Aquitaine, there is a very strong heterogeneity in the Aquitaine region. Family co-residence is significantly higher in the southern districts of Aquitaine.

**Maps 26 to 30: Proportion (%) of the elderly, by mode of cohabitation, in the cantons of Aquitaine**



### What to retain:

Cantonal vision can highlight important subregional differences in coresidence family, but these disparities are less pronounced among younger than older people. However, they are

not of the same kind. The coresidence of young people is a new phenomenon, less heterogeneous, while among those aged over 65, the co-residence is more of a tradition. In fact, we can see clearly a particular concentration of the traditional "stem family" model in the extreme southwest of Aquitaine.

### **Conclusion:**

This study confirms the value of I E C M census samples, provided always first to ensure comparability of data. This work has helped to highlight spatial heterogeneity of family forms, with not only an opposition between France and Spain, but also subnational disparities. It showed a continuity beyond the border patent in cohabitation of people over 65 years, resulting in a permanent traditional patterns of cohabitation in Spain and southern regions of France. Disparities in the incidence of cohabitation of young adults are weaker, and correspond to a new model. These census sample data do not enable us to obtain results at a level smaller than the regional level for France. By comparing these results with those obtained from data cantonal French census of 2006, available on the website of INSEE, we can detect additional heterogeneity of family forms in the Aquitaine region border.