

The Impact of Couple-Related Circumstances on the Continuity of Living Apart Together (LAT) Relationships in Germany.

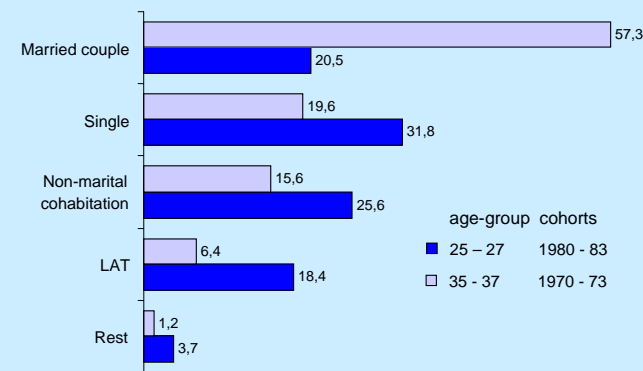
An Analysis of Two Waves from the Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics (PAIRFAM)

Research Question

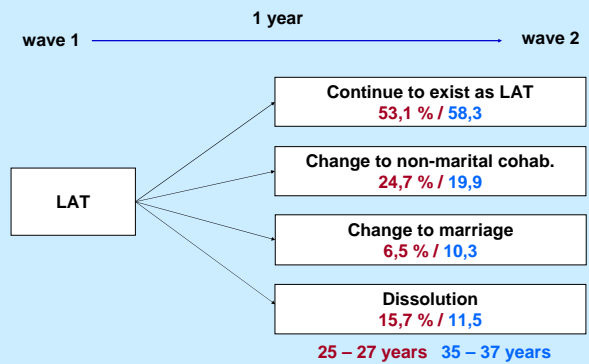
Living apart together (LAT) relationships have lost their status as an exclusive lifestyle. They are found almost as often as cohabiting relationships and are spread over all social classes. They are nonetheless characterized by a number of very special attributes. The reasons for their occurrence are firstly individualisation trends, or the need for greater personal autonomy or the wish to “pursue both the intimacy of being in a couple and at the same time preserve autonomy”, and secondly the increasing demand for occupation-related mobility, which can often be satisfied only by couples living in locally separate households. One of the most striking attributes of LAT relationships is their comparatively high degree of instability. This paper is dedicated to explain this circumstance. The objective is to examine the framework conditions of existing LAT relationships and their influence on their stability using the first and second wave of the pairfam survey. We asked what conditions lead to the continuation, breakup dissolution or the transition to cohabitation of LAT relationships.

Selected Empirical Findings

Structure of living arrangements in Germany (%)

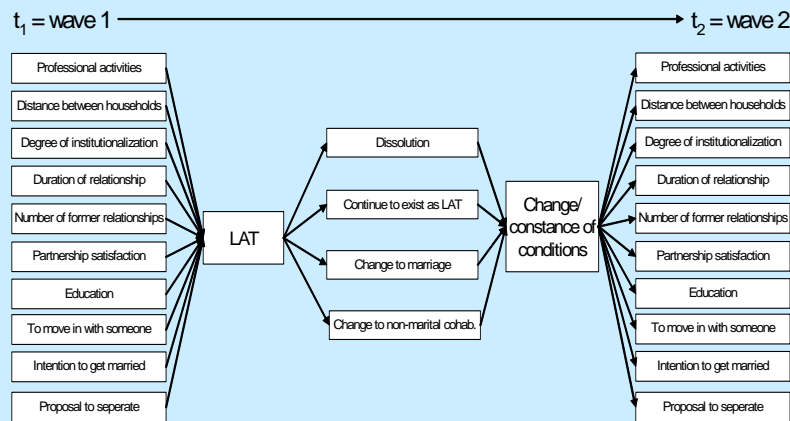


Stability of LAT relationships (first to second wave)



Model and regression analysis

Theoretical model for analyzing status change of LAT



Results of regression analysis (age-group 35 - 37 years)

Variables	Categories	To move in with someone		Dissolution	
		Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Professional activities	Ref.: both partners				
	Only one	1,756	0,316	0,590	0,493
Distance between households	Ref.: Less than 2 hours				
	More than 2 hours	9,714	0,006	0,597	0,722
Degree of institutionalization	Ref.: Not more than 1 night per week				
	2 or more nights per week	8,392	0,015	2,218	0,430
Duration of relationship	Ref.: Two ore more years				
	Less than two years	3,003	0,114	5,895	0,056
Number of former relationships	Ref.: At least one				
	No	1,730	0,341	0,344	0,260
Partnership satisfaction	Ref.: Satisfied				
	Unsatisfied	1,104	0,904	10,297	0,009
Education	Ref.: Educational inequality				
	Educational equality	2,949	0,059	1,469	0,605
Intention to move in with someone	Ref.: No				
	Yes	8,649	0,001	0,580	0,545
Intention to get married	Ref.: No				
	Yes	0,396	0,253	0,735	0,812
Proposal to separate	Ref.: No				
	Yes	2,673	0,248	1,004	0,996
Pseudo R ²		0,408			

Primary Results

- Couples who expressed the intention to move in together in the first wave, did move in together significantly more frequently than couples that did not have this intention.
- Simultaneous vocational commitments of both partners lead to a higher chance of continued living apart together.
- For the age cohorts 1971 - 1973 greater distances between the residences led to increased frequency of cohabitation.
- In the observed age cohorts, nights spent together lead to different effects with regard to cohabitation or separation. Among the younger age groups, the chance of moving in together increases, among the older groups, the chance of separating increases.
- If the partners have little experience in cohabiting, their chance of ensuing cohabitation is increased. Experience with failed relationships increases the probability of entering a LAT relationship.
- Relationship dissatisfaction increases the chance of a breakup of the LAT relationship.
- In the cohort 1981 - 1983 LAT relationships have a fundamentally different character than those of the group born in 1971 - 1973.

Database: Pairfam