

## Cohabitation in a Student Community

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Ann Landers says it's an unacceptable development in American society; on the other hand, Betty Ford says that she wouldn't care if her daughter did it, providing that her daughter confided in her. Both are referring to cohabitation — the practice of a man and a woman living together without being married. Cross-culturally, cohabitation is not at all unusual: it is a socially-approved part of the courtship and marriage process in many non-Western societies. In *The Sexual Life of Savages*, for example, Malinowski (1929) devoted two chapters to a description of the positive role that cohabitation plays among the Trobriand Islanders. Nor is cohabitation really anything new in our own society: there have always been some men and women who have lived together outside marriage. What is new is the increasing prevalence of this practice. The Census Bureau reports that, although they still constitute only about one per cent of all households, the number of unmarried men and women living together has already more than doubled in this decade — from 654,000 in 1970 to 1,320,000 in 1977. (*San Francisco Chronicle* 9 Feb. 77:2).

What do cohabitation and its increasing prevalence in American society mean? Why do people cohabit? Is it a form of rebellion against parental or societal norms? Or is it a new development in our courtship and marriage customs? If it is the latter, is it a positive development? Does it replace or supplement engagement? Does it indicate any fundamental changes in male/female relationships? In order to suggest possible answers to these questions, I put together some questions which I used as a basis for interviewing ten couples who are presently living together.

### Sampling

I wanted to interview unmarried couples who had made the commitment to share a room, apartment, or house together, excluding couples who were simply platonic friends sharing the same accommodations. When I began this project I knew of only two couples who were living together in the manner I just described. This was a problem at first, since I felt that I needed at least ten couples for even a small exploratory study. However, as I talked to friends about my topic, I was given one name that led to another, and I eventually had access to more than ten couples from which to choose. I encountered some of my informants by accident as well. For example, when I went into a copy shop to xerox my questionnaire for the interviews, a fellow working there asked me what the

questions were for. When I told him about my project and mentioned that I was having a hard time finding people who were cohabiting, he replied, "You're looking at one."

This is clearly a sample of convenience. The ten couples that I interviewed are not intended to be an accurate sample of all the cohabiting couples in the United States or in California or even in Berkeley. Sixteen of the twenty individuals that I interviewed are students from the local university, but this is still too small a sample for me to claim representation of Berkeley's heterogeneous population of about 20,000 undergraduates and 10,000 graduate students. Rather, this is an exploratory study, designed to suggest some important questions, what the answers might be for the set of people with whom I came in contact, and what some of the broader implications might be.

### Ten Couples

Before passing to a collective analysis, let me introduce the ten couples with some thumbnail sketches. The names used here and throughout the paper are, of course, pseudonyms.

1 — At 20 and 19, respectively, *Kelley and Dean* were my youngest informants. Kelley studies Art History and Dean is in Political Science, and they've been living together for eight months in a studio apartment. Kelley is uninhibited and talkative, while Dean gave very considered answers in a soft voice.

2 — *Lane and Debby* are also students — in math and genetics, respectively — and have also lived together for eight months in an apartment. They met when Debby was a coxswain for a crew team that Lane rowed with. I met Dan in the copy shop while xeroxing my questionnaire.

3 — *Lisa and Sam* have shared a room in a student co-op for two months now, but Lisa is graduating in June and plans on going to Spain. This is the only couple in which both members plan definitely not to stay together.

4 — *Eva* (an undergraduate) and *Mark* (a grad student) also share a room in a co-op. Like most of my sample, they're in their early twenties, and they've been living together for a year.

5 — *Michael and Libby* are in their early thirties, met overseas, and have been living together off and on for several years, with separations due to work and school. They're the only couple in my sample who have similar religious identifications — both Catholic.

6 — *Tim and Sally* are recent graduates who plan to

continue in medical school and psychology, respectively, this fall. They hadn't originally planned to live together, but Sally's apartment situation didn't work out, so Tim asked her to move in with him. They share a large apartment with three other people.

7 — *Richard* is a business administration student and *Gloria* works. Her parents have never met Richard and don't know that they've been living together for the past two years. Richard has an easy laugh and lots of energy, and suggested some cross statistical methods for my project.

8 — *Elly and Chuck* are both engineering students who met playing volleyball and have been sharing an apartment for a year now.

9 — *Carl and Beth* are both 29, live near Berkeley, and both work. They are planning to be married in the fall. Carl said that he never had thought about what word he used to refer to Beth until he heard about my project, but that now he's going to think of her as his cohabitant. They've been living together for nine months.

10 — *Bill and Pru* will be graduating in June. They were interested in the experiences of other couples who live together and were eager to have a copy of the project. Both told me that their parents were very supportive of their choice to live together, even though they have to sleep in separate beds when they go home to visit.

### Interviewing

The 21 questions I asked fell into about four categories. First is individual background information (age? occupation? where from? class background? housing? political preference? religion? how brought up? previous cohabitation?) Second is couple relationship (how long known? how long lived together? why moved in together? future expectations? division of work and expenses? opinions on engagement?) Third is parental relations (do parents know? approve? let you sleep together when you visit?) And fourth is relationship with the larger society (stigma? terms of reference?) The wording of the questions I asked and a tabulation of the answers that I received are given in the appendix to my paper.

Since the questions I wanted to ask were personal and required some reflective thinking, I felt I should interview everybody personally. I did this instead of distributing questionnaires. The topic interested nearly everybody I interviewed and I spent 45 minutes to 1½ hours interviewing and talking to each person; I could easily have spent longer. Fortunately this topic also interested me because the twenty interviews took quite a bit of time. I decided to interview each person separately because I wanted each person to feel comfortable answering questions about personal expectations of the relationship. I also didn't want anyone to be influenced by his or her partner's opinion or presence when responding to my questions. I interviewed

the couples over a span of two weeks in mutually convenient places — coffee shops, the couples' homes, and on campus. Except for one person who I interviewed over the phone, I interviewed everyone face-to-face.

Initially I was a bit apprehensive about asking some of my questions. They dealt with intimate subjects and I hadn't previously met 15 of the people I talked with. But I discovered in my interviews that these people enjoyed talking about themselves and especially about their relationships with particular men or women. I encountered no problems of uncomfortable feelings with the questions I asked and I didn't sense any tensions or strain in the answers I received. I think it helped that I mixed in a fair number of impersonal, factual questions — particularly toward the beginning of my question list. I added a question, too: after I had interviewed 4 couples, I decided I wanted to ask why the couple decided to live together in the first place. I didn't include it in my original questionnaire but it naturally evolved as a question as I talked with people.

After talking to about half the couples I realized two things concerning interviewing techniques. First, I realized I should be fresh and really ready to listen during the interviews. I found I gained most of my insights when I was interested and able to ask relevant questions. This meant limiting the number of people I interviewed in one day. I feel I could have obtained much more information from the third and fourth couples I interviewed had I talked with them a few hours apart, rather than directly after each other.

The second aspect of interviewing surfaced after my interview with one of the males early in my sample. At the end of our conversation he asked me some of the same personal questions I had asked him. Are you living with someone? Have you ever lived with anyone? What was it like? I realized that for someone — and especially someone I don't know — to be open and honest with me, I had to reveal some of myself and my own changing views on cohabitation. I tried to do this with the rest of the people I talked to, usually after the formal part of the interview was over, because a one-way flow of information is simply not a human encounter.

### Group Profile

As might be expected in a largely student sample, the couples are relatively young: the individuals range from 19 to 33, but half are 21 or 22 and three-quarters are between 20 and 23 (Question 6). All but two of the 20 people interviewed were Californians, but only two of them had parents residing in the nearby East Bay (Question 3). All were White and they described their backgrounds as pretty middle class (Question 8a), 70% were registered Democrats (Question 17), and, interestingly, all but one of the couples were of mixed religious identification (Question 20). Most of the couples (eight out of ten) had known each other for one to four years

(Question 1), and most of the couples (seven out of ten) had been living together for six months to a year (Question 2a). Before moving in together, half had known each other for less than a year and the other half had known each other more than a year (Question 2b). Only one couple owns their own house; half rent, two live in co-ops, and two share a house or apartment with other people (Question 16).

An initial finding is that, at least for the people I spoke with, cohabitation was almost invariably part of a long-term relationship. The fact that only one of the twenty people interviewed had ever cohabited before (Question 10) indicates that these people don't enter repetitively into such relationships, and eight of the ten couples either hoped to or definitely planned to be together in the future (Question 12). Yet the fact that a majority of the couples (60%) were indefinite about their future relationship with each other indicates that cohabitation is a tentative relationship.

#### Age

Cohabitation meant different things to the different people I interviewed, but expectations of the relationship seemed to be related to the variable of age. That is, I found that the older the couple, the longer-term were the expectations they held and the more definite were the future plans for the relationship. One relatively older couple (both 29) told me they were getting married in four months. Another couple, aged 31 and 33, expected to be married within the next year. On the other hand, younger couples gave vague answers to my expectations question. They usually anticipated being together in the future, but they did not have definite plans about it.

Much of this can perhaps be attributed to student status. Many in my sample told me that they thought that they should finish school before adding the responsibility of marriage to their lives. One male told me that he was financially unable to get married yet, even if he wanted to. For a student couple, living together is convenient in many ways. They can have an important relationship without necessarily being committed for the future; they can finish school without foregoing the opportunity for a serious couple relationship which may or may not lead to marriage.

In response to my question on why they initially decided to live together, each person almost without exception said, "because we were spending so much time together anyway that it was silly to have separate places." But living together was invariably more than a sexual or financial convenience arrangement. As one male told me, "We liked each other a lot and we really wanted to live together; we wanted to be with each other."

Living together had led to different relationships for different couples. As the responses to the question on expectations indicate, Lisa and Sam (Couple 3) plan to separate; in two of the couples (7 and 10), one

partner thinks they will "probably not be together;" but four of the couples hope to be together and three of the couples definitely plan to be together. These can be seen as points along a continuum of degree of future commitment.

#### Role Negotiation

There are many models of husband-wife roles that everyone is familiar with — one's own parents and relatives, Dagwood and Blondie, and so on. But there are no clear-cut roles for cohabiting partners. Such roles are in many ways reciprocal, and it is interesting to note how the couple divides expenses and work in the household. There is a general tendency toward egalitarianism though perhaps more in theory than in practice. All but two of the couples divide their expenses equally; in both cases where one partner pays more, the woman has more money than the man, and in both cases I was assured that if the man had more money he'd be paying an equal share.

With regard to household division of work, half of the couples agreed that work was divided equally, while in three cases the woman did more of the work. Interestingly, the remaining two couples held divergent perceptions: in both cases, the man described the work as equally divided while the woman thought she did more. Cohabiting no doubt involves negotiation of roles, and continuance of the relationship is probably contingent on successful negotiation.

#### Terms of Address and Reference

Another area which interested me was how one refers to the person with whom one cohabits when speaking to others. Half said they only refer by name when talking about their partners, and the other half said that they additionally use the terms "boyfriend" and "girlfriend." People said they referred to each other as "roomies" or "roommates," but only jokingly. Other terms which people occasionally used were "my old man," "domestic associate," "cohabitant," "fiancé," and "friend." It appeared that the choice of referent depended partly on the person being addressed. The newness of cohabitation as a widespread social form may be indicated by the fact that most people told me there just isn't a word which correctly describes a cohabiting relationship.

#### Parental Attitudes

What are parents' attitudes on sons' or daughters' living arrangements? Three-quarters of the people told me that their parents know. Of these, most of their parents accept the choice of their son or daughter but are not enthusiastic or positive about the idea. One couple told me that both sets of parents would prefer that they marry. Another woman told me that her parents think the whole idea is "stupid." On the other hand, three people — one woman and two men — told me that their parents not only accept it but are suppor-

tive. In fact, these three said that their parents think it's better that they are living together than married. But even though most of the parents know, very few of these couples sleep together when they visit their parents' homes overnight. Most people told me their parents are "just more comfortable if we stay in separate rooms" (Questions 4-5).

### Stigma

Aside from parental opinion, I was interested to know if anyone had ever felt morally stigmatized by other people. I defined a moral stigma through examples such as perhaps a raised eyebrow from a stranger upon learning about the couples' living arrangement. Answers varied according to sex. Eighty per cent of the women said they felt moral stigmas as compared to only 30% of the men. Men who responded negatively usually didn't elaborate. They simply said "no." Women usually said no and then qualified their answer until they decided that they actually did feel some moral stigma.

Some interesting comments and stories followed as a few women described what they considered moral stigma. Kelley told me she had applied for a job and the woman interviewing her asked for the name of the person to contact in an emergency, then asked who he was and where he lived. When Kelley explained he was her boyfriend and had the same address as she, the woman told her, "Well, we'll call you." Kelley told me she hasn't heard from her. Another woman, Debby, told me that when she was looking for apartments, landlords would increase the rent when they found out her roommate was going to be a male. Still another of my informants, Libby, told me that one of Michael's professors had invited a few graduate students, including Michael, to dinner. The other students' wives and husbands were also invited. Since Libby was quite explicitly *not* invited, she interpreted this as a moral stigma.

One couple, Carl and Beth, recounted an interesting experience in response to this question. First, I should explain that they are both older than the average of couples I interviewed, nor are they students. They live in a suburban community in a house that Carl owns. When they moved to this community all their neighbors assumed they were married. When Carl and a few male neighbors were outside one evening, someone referred to Beth as his wife. Carl said, "She isn't my wife," and a very noticeable silence ensued. Beth had a similar experience with a female neighbor. When Beth told her that Carl and she were not married, this neighbor became very quiet. Beth told me that this neighbor will not talk about Beth and Carl as a couple in front of her 8- and 11-year old daughters. When Beth once brought her into the bedroom to show a new bedspread, the neighbor looked into the room, saw the bed and again became silent. Beth thought it was a confirmation to the woman that

she and Carl actually sleep together without being married. But in spite of their neighbors' initial surprised reactions, they feel that they are being accepted in the neighborhood. Neither of them senses unfriendly feelings from the neighbors. In fact, after only recently moving to the community, they have already been invited for coffee at one neighbor's home.

### Rebellion

As I mentioned earlier, there was a greater tendency on the part of the women than on the part of the men to feel stigma. Women's comments ranged from, "I don't like to make it apparent, especially to older people and relatives," to, "Well, it's certainly nothing to brag about." On the other hand, men said things like, "I haven't allowed myself to feel moral stigmas" and, "I don't really care what other people think," or, "I feel no need to explain my personal situation to anyone." The men seemed to have an explicit attitude of social rebellion — an attitude of rejecting social customs relating to courtship.

The women may have been engaging in rebellion of a different kind — more specifically against family background than against a category of social customs in general. Six of the ten women told me that they were from conservative backgrounds. Three of them were raised as Catholics, had attended Catholic schools for periods of 8 to 16 years, and described their backgrounds as very conservative. ("Conservative" here refers to strict morals.) These women mentioned that their parents had enforced early curfews on their daughters while they were in high school. Their social lives were watched closely by their parents, boyfriends were particularly scrutinized, sex was not discussed, and a woman's virginity at marriage was expected. Finding this proportion of conservative backgrounds among the women surprised me. It may be a chance occurrence in my small sample, but perhaps these women from conservative backgrounds are rebelling against parental and religious notions, albeit unconsciously.

### Male-Female Differences

Among the most interesting results of the interviews were the differences in outlook between men and women. It has been mentioned that 80% of the women had felt stigmatized at some time, as opposed to only 30% of the men (Question 11), and that the men were more openly disdainful of social disapproval. Still another difference was that in at least two cases in which the male partner perceived household work as being divided equally, the woman felt that she was doing more (Question 13), and there were slight but not extreme differences in expectations of future relationship in two of the couples (Question 12). These points would indicate possible differences in male and female viewpoints on cohabitation, and the question

deserves further research.

### Trial Marriage

In many of the cases described, cohabitation is clearly a kind of trial marriage. If the couple are happy with each other and if their future goals coincide, they may get married. If they do marry, cohabitation may well be a period in which roles are negotiated to the mutual satisfaction of the partners. If they do not marry, there is probably not the trauma — and certainly not the legal complication — that the breaking up of a marriage would involve. The experience may even be helpful in determining what kind of a partner to seek and in learning how to live with another person.

### Engagement

In cases where it leads to marriage, is cohabitation replacing engagement? Not for most of those I interviewed. Three-quarters of them told me they would probably become engaged if they ever decided to get married, while one quarter said they never would be engaged. Opinions on it varied. Some descriptions of engagement were: “meaningless,” “archaic,” “functional,” “stupid,” “useless,” “all-right,” “a security blanket,” “necessary before marriage,” “the thing to do if you want to get married,” and “I don’t think about it much.” Some said that engagement was a convenient way to let relatives and friends know about an impending marriage. The fact that 75% said they would become engaged, should they marry, leads me to conclude that cohabitation is not replacing engagement, but something different and with different implications.

### Conclusion

It used to be that for most people marriage was the prerequisite to living together. “Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage,” as Doris Day used to sing. Not anymore. The reasons that this is no longer the case probably have a lot to do with the changes that have taken place in industrial and post-industrial America. Contraceptive technology and availability have an obvious effect. Also people who might once have gotten married are no longer subject to the same constraints. With increasing geographical mobility, the family and community pressures that enforced marriage norms are attenuated. This is particularly true of a student community like Berkeley. Most of these people are quite literally “away” at college. The inference that they might not cohabit so readily in their home towns is suggested by the fact that only two have parents residing in the nearby East Bay.

For the people I interviewed, cohabitation seemed to be a step in male-female relationships. Couples cohabited because they liked each other, and because living together allowed them to spend more time to-

gether. Cohabitation is a relationship in which the two people want to be closer but aren’t sure about their personal futures and aren’t ready to make long-term commitments. During cohabitation they negotiate the relationship and their respective roles. Cohabitation doesn’t represent sexual license or portend the demise of the family. In most — though not all — of the cases I studied, it might better be described as a kind of trial marriage.

I would emphasize again that my study is limited by the necessarily small size of my sample. The results are suggestive of possible trends but not really generalizable, so I end more with hypotheses than conclusions. It would be interesting to study a larger sample to explore the interrelationships of variables such as age, sex, social background, residence, time lived together, expectations, division of labor, and so on. It would also be interesting to interview more couples like Lisa and Sam (couple 3) to whom cohabitation is an alternative to marriage rather than a step toward it. However, my sample indicates that Lisa and Sam are exceptions. Cohabitation might well be a new social form that will strengthen rather than supersede the institution of marriage.

## Interview Questions and Results

### Question 1 - How long have you known each other?

	6 mo. or less	6 mo.-1 yr.	1-2 yrs.	2-3 yrs.	3-4 yrs.	4 or more yrs.
n	1	0	3	3	2	1
%	10%	0	30%	30%	20%	10%

### Question 2a - How long have you actually lived together?

	6 mo. or less	6 mo.-1 yr.	1-2 yrs.	2-3 yrs.	3-4 yrs.	4 or more yrs.
n	1	7	1	0	0	1
%	10%	70%	10%	0	0	10%

### Question 2b - How long had you known each other before living together?

	6 mo. or less	6 mo.-1 yr.	1-2 yrs.	2-3 yrs.	3-4 yrs.	4 or more yrs.
n	3	2	1	2	2	0
%	30%	20%	10%	20%	20%	0

*Question 3 - Where do your parents live?*

Place	n	%
nearby East Bay	2	10%
San Francisco	2	10%
other Bay Area	6	30%
Central California	3	15%
Los Angeles Area	5	25%
Out-of-State	2	10%

*Question 4: Do your parents know? What is their opinion?**Question 5: Do you sleep together when visiting overnight in your parents' home?*

COUPLE #	WOMAN			MAN		
	PARENTS KNOW	PARENTS OPINION	SLEEP TOGETHER	PARENTS KNOW	PARENTS OPINION	SLEEP TOGETHER
1	yes	accept it	no	yes	accept it	no
2	yes	accept it	yes	yes	accept it	yes
3	yes	stupid	no	yes	accept it	no
4	no	--	no	no	--	no
5	yes	accept, prefer marriage	no	yes	accept, prefer marriage	yes
6	yes	accept it	no	yes	accept it	no
7	no	--	no	yes	accept but not thrilled	no
8	no	--	no	no	--	yes
9	yes	accept	no	yes	accept & approve	no
10	yes	accept and supportive	yes	yes	accept and supportive	no
TOTAL	no: 30%		no: 80%	no: 20%		no: 70%
	yes: 70%		yes: 20%	yes: 80%		yes: 30%

## Question 6 - How old are you?

COUPLE #	WOMAN	MAN
1	20	19
2	20	21
3	23	21
4	21	23
5	31	33
6	22	22
7	22	22
8	21	23
9	29	29
10	21	21
AVERAGE	23	23.4

## Question 7 - Are you a student?

	YES	NO
n	16	4
%	80%	20%

## Question 8a - What is your class background?

	LOWER CLASS	LOWER MIDDLE CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	UPPER MIDDLE CLASS	UPPER CLASS
n	0	4	10	5	1
%	0	20%	50%	25%	5%

## Question 8b - What was your upbringing like?

	RADICAL	LIBERAL	MIDDLE of the ROAD	CONSERVATIVE	VERY CONSERVATIVE	
WOMEN	n	0	2	2	3	3
	%	0	20%	20%	30%	30%
MEN	n	1	4	1	4	0
	%	10%	40%	10%	40%	0

## Question 9 - How do you refer to the person with whom you cohabit?

	THEIR NAME	BOYFRIEND/ GIRLFRIEND
n	10	10
%	50%	50%

*Question 10 - Have you ever lived with anyone else?*

	YES	NO
n	1	19
%	5%	95%

*Question 11 - Have you felt any moral stigmas?*

COUPLE #	WOMAN	MAN
1	yes	no
2	yes	no
3	no	no
4	yes	no
5	yes	yes
6	yes	no
7	yes	no
8	yes	no
9	yes	yes
10	no	yes

  

	WOMEN	MEN
YES	80%	30%
NO	20%	70%

*Question 12 - What are your future expectations about your relationship?*

	Indefinite: hope to be together	Indefinite: probably not together	Definite: will be together	Definite: will not be together
n	10	2	6	2
%	50%	10%	30%	10%

COUPLE #	WOMEN	MEN
1	A	A
2	A	A
3	D	D
4	A	A
5	C	C
6	A	A
7	A	B
8	C	C
9	C	C
10	B	A

CODE

- A - future plans indefinite; hope to be together
- B - future plans indefinite; probably not together
- C - future plans definite; will be together
- D - future plans definite; will not be together



*Question 13 - How is work divided in your household?*

		Equally	Woman does more	Man does more
WOMEN	n	7	3	0
	%	70%	30%	0
MEN	n	5	5	0
	%	50%	50%	0

*Question 14 - How are expenses divided?*

		Equally	Woman pays more	Man pays more
WOMEN	n	8	2	0
	%	80%	20%	0
MEN	n	8	2	0
	%	80%	20%	0

*Question 15 - What is your livelihood or means of financial support?*

		Work	Loans, Summer work, savings	Parents	Combination of 3
WOMEN	n	4	2	0	4
	%	40%	20%	0	40%
MEN	n	5	0	1	4
	%	50%	0%	10%	40%

*Question 16 - What type of housing situation do you have?*

	Room in dorm, or co-op	Rented apartment	Owned house	Rented house	Shared house or apt. with other people
n	2	5	1	0	2
%	20%	50%	10%	0%	20%

## Question 17 - What is your political Affiliation?

		Democrat	Republican	Independent	Not registered or decline to state
WOMEN	n	7	2	1	0
	%	70%	20%	10%	0
MEN	n	7	1	0	2
	%	70%	10%	0	20%

Couple #	WOMEN	MEN
1	democrat	independent
2	democrat	democrat
3	democrat	democrat
4	democrat	democrat
5	democrat	democrat
6	democrat	democrat
7	not registered	democrat
8	decline to state	democrat
9	republican	republican
10	democrat	republican

## Question 18 - Would you ever become engaged (not necessarily to the person with whom you are presently living)?

	Would become engaged	Never become engaged
n	15	5
%	75%	25%

## Question 19 - What are your patterns of social relations as a couple?

There was no particular variation in answers to this question. All people told me that they have mutual friends, shared friends and couple friends.

## Question 20 - What religion do you identify with or what religion were you raised with?

		Catholic	Protestant	Judaism	Agnostic or none
WOMEN	n	3	2	2	3
	%	30%	20%	20%	30%
MEN	n	3	2	2	3
	%	30%	20%	20%	30%
TOTAL	n	6	4	4	6
	%	30%	20%	20%	30%

Couple #	WOMEN	MEN
1	Episcopalian	Catholic
2	Christian	none
3	Judaism	Protestant
4	none	Catholic
5	ex-Catholic	none
6	none	Judaism
7	none	Agnostic
8	Catholic	Catholic
9	Catholic	Judaism
10	Judaism	Episcopalian

## Question 21 - Why did you decide to live together?

Answers were in explanation form and difficult to represent statistically but all of the answers included things like, "We were spending so much time together anyway that it was easier to live together and besides we wanted to be with each other and liked each other a lot."