

# Cohabitation or Remarriage? Re-partnering Living Arrangements of Separated People



Xiaoteng Hu (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)  
Lluís Flaquer (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)



## Introduction

Remarriage and stepfamilies represent an increasing proportion of families in European countries (Philips, 1997). But the “post-separation cohabitation” is slowly replacing remarriage. Even though some empirical evidence suggests that cohabitation is becoming increasingly similar to the marital unions, it is merely an incomplete institution with less public commitments (Duncan, Barlow and James, 2005), and with less mutual dependence between couples, especially, in financial terms (Manning and Brown, 2006). Additionally, the probability of separation after a second union may play a more vital role in the prospects of separated people and their children’s well-being. Therefore, more attention should be paid to the second union formation.

## Hypotheses

H1: People who ever divorced will be more apt to cohabit instead of getting married in their second intimate relationship.

After experiencing divorce, separated people have quite a different understanding of marriage from their never married counterparts. They shoulder more social and economic responsibilities before they enter into the next intimate relationships, so they have a hesitancy to reenter marriage.

H2: People who are now living with one or more children from last relationship are with less probability of remarriage than those who is not living with children.

So the presence of children may also affect the living arrangements of their separated parents.

H3: Gender diversity will influence people’s living arrangement in their second intimate relationship.

According to Coleman and Salt (1992), separated males are more likely and with shorter time gap to be involved in new, co-resident relationships than females. That may be because women will become more careful with their next relationship, especially when they live with children born in last relationship.

## Methods

- **Data**  
The fifth round of the European Social Survey (2010)
- **Dependent Variable**  
Living arrangement (cohabitation and marriage)
- **Independent Variables**  
Gender  
Parenthood history  
Partnership history
- **Control Variables**  
Gender ideology  
Female partners’ human capital  
Income gap between couples

## Findings

### Hypothesis 1

Our study indicates that the marital history (ever divorced) is an important factor in re-partnering living arrangements. People who ever divorced are less likely to get remarried than to cohabit.

### Hypothesis 2

The presence of child(ren) also has a significant effect on re-partnering living arrangements in Europe. People who are not living with their children are more likely to get remarried than to cohabit.

### Hypothesis 3

Gender is a significant contributor only to divorcee’s re-partnering living arrangements in Europe. Compared with females, males are more possible to get remarried than to cohabit.

Living arrangement		Beta	Beta
Child	Have one or more children	0.310***	0.417***
	No child as reference		
Partnership history	ever divorced	-1.424***	-1.431***
	Never divorced as reference		
Gender	male	0.017	-0.324
	Female as reference		
Divorce * sex		0.179	0.269*
Constant		1.826	
Female's education level			-0.030***
Female partner has job			-0.548***
Income gap between partners			0.091***
Gender ideology	Women should sacrifice their jobs for family (w)		-0.067*
	Men have more rights on jobs (m)		-0.238***
Gender ideology * Gender	W * sex		-0.075
	M * sex		0.081
Constant			3.285

\* p< 0.05 \*\* p<0.01 \*\*\* p<0.001

## Conclusion

This study is just a primary contribution involved investigating how second intimate relationship formed. By using data from the European Social Survey (2010), we found that divorcees re-partner with a probably stronger preference for cohabitation over remarriage (Wu and Schimmele, 2005). And gender gap is a crucial determinant in re-partnering market (Coleman et al, 2000; Meggiolaro and Ongaro, 2008; Wu and Schimmele, 2005). In addition, the presence of children can also complicate the re-partnering process (Bumpass et al. 1990).

## References

- Bumpass, L., Sweet, J., & Castro Martin, T. (1990). Changing patterns of remarriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52(3), 747–756.
- Coleman, D. and Salt, J. (1992). *The British Population: Patterns, Trends and Process*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Coleman, M., Ganong, L., & Fine, M. (2000). Reinvestigating remarriage: Another decade of progress. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(4), 1288–1307.
- Duncan, S., Barlow, A., & James, G. (2005). Why Don't They Marry-Cohabitation, Commitment and DIY Marriage. *Child & Fam. LQ*, 17, 383.
- Manning, W. D., & Brown, S. (2006). Children’s Economic Well-Being in Married and Cohabiting Parent Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68(2), 345-362.
- Meggiolaro, S., & Ongaro, F. (2008). Repartnering after marital dissolution: Does context play a role? *Demographic Research*, 19, 1913–1933.
- Wu, Z., & Schimmele, C. M. (2005). Repartnering after first union disruption. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(1), 27–36.