The effect of life histories on repartnering in Australia and the United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

In recent years as a result of a rise in divorce rates coupled with an increased prevalence of cohabitation, a growing percentage of the population has or will experience the breakdown of a relationship and also the possibility of forming another new relationship. It has therefore become increasingly important to understand how people repartner after the dissolution of a previous union. Although a large body of literature already exists on the study of remarriage, there is far less research which has investigated repartnering in the form of a cohabiting union. Further, much of this work focuses on those who have been previously married, and less is known about patterns of repartnering after the breakdown of a cohabiting relationship (Wu and Schimmele, 2005). This paper seeks to address the issue of repartnering, both in terms of forming cohabiting and marital unions, from a comparative perspective. Using a longitudinal approach we compare the nature of repartnering behaviour in Australia and the United Kingdom, countries with similar policy and legislative frameworks. We find that within five years of becoming single, an estimated 49 per cent of the United Kingdom sample and 43 per cent of the Australian sample had entered a new relationship, most commonly cohabitation. Multivariate analysis reveals important similarities as well as differences in the demographic and socio-demographic determinants of forming a new union in the two countries.

INTRODUCTION

Repartnering has become increasingly important in recent years as a result of a rise in divorce rates coupled with an increase in rates of cohabitation, a union type which research has demonstrated to be more unstable than marriage. Although a large body of literature exists on the study of remarriage, there is far less research which has investigated repartnering in the form of a cohabiting union. Further, much of this work focuses on those who have been previously married, with relatively little attention paid to repartnering after the breakdown of a cohabiting relationship (Wu and Schimmele, 2005). With a decline in first marriage rates and rising rates of cohabitation for the never-married and for those who have been previously married, it has become important to account for the type of union which was dissolved when analysing partnership formation after the breakdown of a union. This paper aims to contribute to our understanding of repartnering by examining the impact of previous children and relationship histories on the timing and rate of repartnering.

This paper seeks to address the issue of repartnering in comparative perspective. Using a longitudinal approach we conduct parallel analyses to compare Australia and the United Kingdom, two countries with similar legislative frameworks. While there are several studies that have used a comparative perspective to examine first union formation or and/or dissolution patterns between two or more countries (Domínguez-Folgueras and Castro-Martín, 2008; Kiernan, 2000), to our knowledge there are no studies that specifically compare repartnering behaviour in the United Kingdom and Australia. We also expand on previous research which has focused mostly on women, by examining the impact of children and relationship histories on the repartnering patterns of both men and women.

Repartnering is an event which occurs throughout the lifecourse. This paper uses life course theory to investigate repartnering experiences. The life course approach is extremely useful for understanding family change and for making comparative assessments. Life course theory (Elder, 1974; 1983; Harevan, 1982) emphasizes the importance of understanding individual and historical time in measuring life course

events. Individual time refers to the cumulative experiences, or 'histories', that have occurred to an individual over their lifetime: it stresses the importance of understanding individual trajectories. Historical time refers to the time and place in which individuals are situated.

In terms of individual time, there are two important 'histories' which we consider. The first history considers past relationships, while the second history considers childbearing and child residency: these vary across individuals and represent different life course stages. In this paper the meaning of historical time focuses on the comparison of two similar social settings. While the data from both the United Kingdom and Australia are from similar time periods, we are comparing whether there are differences in repartnering patterns in these two countries. Given similar levels of development and legislature we might expect little difference.

BACKGROUND

Previous research has found that the probability of repartnering after the dissolution of a relationship is affected by a range of factors relating to an individual's demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Important demographic characteristics include an individual's age and gender as well as their fertility and relationship history. With respect to socio-economic factors, employment, education, financial situation, health, religion and geography have also been found to influence the formation of a new relationship. These variables may influence repartnering by affecting a person's own behaviour or attitudes towards forming a new union, or by affecting their attractiveness as a potential partner to others.

Existing studies suggest that gender is a key determinant of repartnering behaviour, with women being less likely to repartner after a relationship dissolution than men (Poortman, 2007; Wu and Schimelle, 2005). The reasons behind this gender difference are likely to be complex, but they are hypothesized to be related to the fact that women receive fewer benefits from being in a partnership compared with men (Poortman, 2007). The gender differences in repartnering may also be related to women taking a longer time to recover from the negative mental health consequences of separation, either from a previous

cohabitation or a marriage, compared to men (Willits *et al.* 2004). There are also important gender differences in the way that other individual characteristics such as age, prior fertility and previous relationship history relate to repartnering. For example, whereas increasing age has been consistently identified to be associated with lower repartnering rates for both men and women, the effect of age may be particularly strong for women. Men tend to partner with women younger than themselves, so as they grow older, women's pool of potential available partners diminishes fasters than men's (Dean and Gurak, 1978).

The role of children in repartnering has been examined in many studies, although it is the specific focus of only a few studies (e.g. Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2002; Koo *et al.*, 1984; Lampard and Peggs, 1999; Stewart *et al.*, 2003; Teachman and Heckert, 1985). The experiences of women tend to be the focus of these papers, however there is evidence of a growing focus on men's experiences, with both Bernhardt and Goldscheider (2002) and Stewart *et al*., (2003) also investigating how children affect men's repartnering.[1] Overall findings indicate that the presence of children from a prior relationship has a negative effect on the chance of remarriage or repartnering.[2] The chance of re-forming a union decreases as the number of children increases. Having children from a previous partnership may decrease one's attractiveness as a partner due to its association with various costs, both direct financial costs and indirect costs associated with the complexities of step-families (Bumpass *et al*., 1990). The presence of children has also been hypothesized to lessen the need to repartner, as children may provide company and be a source of emotional support for the parent (Hughes, 2000). Finally the presence of children may also act as a barrier to repartnering by decreasing the chance for social interaction and the possibility of finding a new partner (Ermish *et al.*, 1990; Wallerstein and Blakeslee, 1989).

The effect of prior fertility is also likely to differ by the gender of an individual. Whereas the presence of children is consistently found to be associated with lowering repartnering rates for women, for men the effect is more mixed and not always significant (De Graaf

[1] Lampard and Peggs (1999) examine repartnering of men and women, but are only able to investigate the effect of prior fertility for women since this is not collected for men in the GHS data used in their analysis.
[2] All but one of these studies looks at remarriage as opposed to repartnering.

and Kalmijn, 2003). However, there is a strong interrelationship between the gender of an individual and the presence of children in the household, with dependent children more often residing with their mother. Whether or not the gender difference is largely a result of the higher proportions of women with children present in the household has not been fully determined due to different analytical approaches yielding different results. Racial differences in the effect of numbers of children have been noted by a couple of studies but with contrasting results (Koo *et al.,* 1984; Smock, 1990).

Few studies have considered the age of youngest child (Bumpass *et al.,* 1990; Koo *et al.,* 1984; Poortman, 2007), and results from these are mixed. Both Bumpass *et al.* (1990) and Koo *et al.,* (1984) find no effect of the age of youngest child on repartnering in the US. However Poortman (2007) finds that having children aged 12 or under has a highly significant negative effect on the likelihood of repartnering for women. Moreover, the effect is not confined to women, with children aged between zero and six or between 13 and 18 significantly reducing the chance of repartnering for men.

An important factor, particularly in relation to repartnering for men, is whether or not the children are resident in the household (De Graaf and Kalmijn, 2003; Stewart *et al.,* 2003). Only two studies have been able to control for this, since information on the residence of children is not always available, and findings are again mixed. De Graaf and Kalmijn (2003) find a negative effect for both resident and non-resident children for men, however with respect to women this negative effect is only found for those with resident children. In contrast, while Stewart *et al.,* (2003) find no difference for men in the odds of forming a marriage or a cohabitation relative to staying single (regardless of whether they have resident children or no children at all), they find a positive effect of non-resident children on the chance of forming a cohabiting union.

Related to the prior fertility of an individual is their relationship history. As highlighted by Poortman (2007), there is little research that focuses on individuals previous ‘relationship career’ and how this affects their repartnering prospects. Prior union duration has been the most commonly used measure of relationship history and while studies conducted in the early eighties finding no significant effects of duration (Koo *et*

al. 1984; Mott and Moore, 1983), more recent studies point to a negative effect of longer durations on repartnering (De Graaf and Kalmijn, 2003; Poortman, 2007; Wu and Balakrishnan, 1994; Wu and Schimmele, 2005). The number of previous unions has rarely been considered in the repartnering literature however. Nevertheless, the number of previous unions could have a considerable affect on the chance of repartnering given the fact that these previous relationships are likely to shape an individuals attitude on entering into future unions. The number of previous unions may also be associated with their social networks or affect the networks to which they belong, and may also be used by potential partners in their partnership selection (Poortman, 2007). However, the number of past relationships was not associated with the chance of repartnering in research conducted by Poortman (2007). She found no significant difference between those who had one prior union compared to those who had several prior unions. However a significant difference in the odds of partnering was found between those with one prior union compared to those with none, reflecting that the 'first cut is the deepest' (Poortman, 2007). Furthermore, results indicate that those who have ever married have lower odds of repartnering than those who have only cohabited.

While the demographic variables outlined above are likely to be the strongest determinants of repartnering behaviour, theory suggests that various socio-economic variables such as employment and income might also be important. With regards to such socio-economic variables however, empirical evidence is less conclusive.

When it comes to socio-economic factors such as income, employment and education several possibilities have been suggested regarding their effect on repartnering. Economic theory suggests that factors such as employment which are associated with economic independence would have a negative effect on repartnering for women, but not men. Based on a traditional view of relationships where the man is the breadwinner and the woman the homemaker (Hughes, 2000), it is argued that the more economically independent the woman is, the less need she has to partner (Becker *et al.,* 1977). For men the situation is thought to be more straightforward with employed men on high incomes being more attractive as potential partners and therefore having higher repartnering rates.

Others have argued that in current times changing gender roles and changing labour markets mean that two incomes are increasingly seen as necessary to maintain a good standard of living (Hughes, 2000), and that women with a higher earning potential might in fact be even more attractive in the partner market (Mott and Moore, 1983; Payne and Range, 1998). Furthermore there may also be a positive effect of employment as being employed provides a good opportunity for social interaction and the potential to meet partners through the work environment (De Graaf and Kalmijn, 2003; Hughes, 2000).

The arguments with regard to related socio-economic indicators such as education are closely related to the arguments outlined above relating to employment. Whereas more highly educated women have higher earning potential potentially making them more attractive partners, the more highly educated a woman is the more restricted will be her potential pool of men with similar education levels (Goldman *et al.*, 1984).

Another socio-economic factor which has been found to be associated with repartnering behaviour is religion. Most religions tend to have specific prescriptions regarding appropriate partnering behaviour for example discouraging pre-marital sex and cohabitation (Thornton *et al.*,1992). The social acceptance of repartnering is therefore likely to be lower among those who are religious. On the other hand, religious people who repartner may be more likely to marry than cohabit.

Geography may also affect repartnering because where one lives may affect the size of the available partner market and also the possibility of meeting a new partner. For example, in large cities the higher density and mobility of the population makes it easier to meet people (Payne and Range, 1998). The territorial context could also be associated with repartnering because different areas may have different levels of modernization, social norms and attitudes towards repartnering (Meggiolaro and Ongaro, 2008; Payne and Range, 1998; Wu and Balakrishnan, 1994).

In terms of repartnering and higher order union formation of both marriages and cohabitations, there are no comparable aggregate statistics which would allow us to gage directly how similar or different Australia and the United Kingdom are. Both countries however have undergone similar trends in recent decades, along with many other

Western countries, in terms of declining marriage rates, and increasing divorce and cohabitation rates. In the United Kingdom divorce rates increased rapidly in the 1970s, due in large part to changes in legislation such as the Divorce Reform Act of 1969 and the Matrimonial Cases Act of 1973 (Wilson and Smallwood, 2008). Since the mid 1980s they have remained relatively stable at between 12 to 14 divorces per 1,000 married persons (Office for National Statistics, 2009), while marriage rates have continued to decline. According to a recent projection, assuming that divorce and mortality rates remain unchanged from 2005, around 45 per cent of those marrying in 2005 would see their marriages end due to divorce (Wilson and Smallwood, 2008). Over time there appears to have been an increasing trend to cohabit rather than remarry, after the breakdown of a marriage (Haskey, 1999).

Australia similarly experienced an increase in divorce rates during the 1970s, peaking in 1976 with the introduction of the Family Law Act. Since then divorce rates have fluctuated between 12 to 13.5 divorces per 1,000 married populations (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2008a), a figure that is slightly lower than the United Kingdom average. While the lack of detailed data on cohabitations makes it difficult to estimate transitions in an out of cohabitations, in Australia too cohabitations have become a popular following marital dissolution, as well as prior to or instead of entering into marriage (ABS, 2008b:212). In 2006, 70 per cent of those who were in a cohabitation had never been married, and 27 per cent were either separated or divorced, as shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1 about here.

DATA AND METHOD

Data

The data used in this study is based on waves one to six (2001–2006) of the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA) and waves 9 to 15 (1999–2005) of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). Both surveys are large scale nationally representative surveys which are conducted annually and interview every adult

member. The sample is around 7,000 households for HILDA and 5,000 households for BHPS. This equates to around 13,000 and 10,000 individual interviews respectively.

These data offer specific advantages for the study of repartnering because of their prospective longitudinal nature. This allows individuals to be selected at the point of separation from a co-residential partner and subsequently followed over the waves of the panel. Details on the type of previous relationship are also available: we know whether people were legally married to their partner or whether they were in a cohabiting (*de facto*) relationship.

Individuals are selected by merging successive waves of each panel dataset and transitions into being single and 'at risk' of repartnering are determined by observing a change in partnered status between two consecutive waves. A person-period file is constructed consisting of 924 individuals taken from HILDA and 768 from the BHPS[3] (i.e. those who separated from a partner) for which the maximum number of years at risk of repartnering that can be observed is five years.

A dependent variable is created to indicate whether or not an individual had repartnered in each of the time periods for which they are at risk. The dataset includes a number of time-varying variables as well as standard fixed-time explanatory covariates. In order to understand the lifecourse effect of repartnering we create variables to measure the impact of an individual's family formation history. Specifically, we measure the length of the most recent co-residential partnership, the number of previous partnerships and the type of previous partnership. We expect past relationships to play an important role in an individuals decisions about forming a new relationship. The distinction between past cohabiting and marital relationships allows us to test whether divorce as a process has an impact on future repartnering, over and above the effect of relationship breakdown. It is possible that the legal process associated with divorce, over cohabitation breakdown, might make entering a new relationship less desirable. Past relationships may also inhibit repartnering as people with multiple past relationships may be less attractive as potential partners.

[3] Sample sizes before deletions due to item non-response.

We also measure the impact of past childbearing by accounting for the presence and age of own-children. We distinguish between residential and non-residential children as we consider that this will be important when considering the effect of past childbearing. We would expect that having a young child in the household would be negatively associated with repartnering because people at this stage of the lifecourse may have limited opportunities to meet potential partners or may choose not to form a new relationship while their child is young. Older children and non-resident children are likely to have little or no impact on repartnering.

Standard demographic and socio-economic variables are also included as controls. Fixed-time covariates are measured at the time of becoming single. Time-varying covariates are lagged by one year in order that they reflect an individual's circumstances prior to repartnering.

Method

A life table approach is used to provide descriptive statistics of the median duration spent single after the breakdown of a union in each country. This analysis also allows investigation of the baseline hazard of repartnering, the results of which are used to determine the treatment of time in the multivariate model. For the multivariate analysis a discrete time proportional hazard model is employed to investigate the impact of the key variables on the likelihood of repartnering in the two countries. The discrete-time hazard for a time interval *t* refers to the conditional probability of the event (in this case repartnering) occurring in the interval *t*, given that it has not already occurred in a previous time period. A logistic hazard model is fitted to estimate the response probability. Two models are estimated, the first one contains demographic variables, and the second combines both demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

RESULTS

Life table survival curves

The life-table analysis reveals that nearly half (49 per cent) of the United Kingdom sample have repartnered within five years of becoming single (see Appendix 1). The

corresponding rates for the Australian sample are slightly lower, with only 43 per cent repartnered after five years. For both the United Kingdom and Australia the majority of these repartnerships (over 80%) are in the form of a cohabitation rather than a remarriage.

Examining the rates of repartnering in each country by the type of most recent previous partnership indicates that in both countries the rate of repartnering is slower for those whose previous partnership was a marriage compared to those separating from a cohabitating union. Again, there are slight differences between the two countries, with 36 per cent of previously married Australians repartnering within five years compared with 43 per cent in the United Kingdom. In terms of repartnering for those separated from a cohabiting union the difference in rates between the two countries is slightly larger. We estimate a median duration to repartnering of between four and five years for those separated from a cohabiting union in Australia and between three and four years for individuals in the United Kingdom.

For both countries the hazard of repartnering appears to decline as length of time spent single increases, however the shape of the hazard is different in each country. To fully capture the variation in the hazard over time dummy variables are created for each spell year at risk for inclusion in the discrete-time hazard model for each country.

Multivariate event history analysis

United Kingdom

Table 1 presents the results of the odds of repartnering from the survival analysis of the United Kingdom. Model 1 which contains only the demographic variables indicates that as expected, the probability of repartnering is strongly related to an individual's age. Compared to the reference category of those aged 25 to 34, the odds of repartnering were considerably lower for those aged over 35, 45 or 55. For the other major demographic variable, sex, it is somewhat surprising that there did not appear to be any significant gender differences in repartnering in the United Kingdom.

Prior fertility was not significantly related to the probability of repartnering. In terms of prior relationship history, the duration of the previous relationship or the number of

previous partners were not significant predictors of repartnering. However there was some effect of previous relationship type. Compared to those whose previous relationship was a direct marriage, the odds of repartnering were significantly lower for those whose previous partnership was a marriage preceded by a cohabitation or a cohabitation.

The results of the demographic variables outlined above, remain very similar in Model 2 which also controls for socio-economic characteristics. In line with previous research, the socio-economic variables do not appear as strong predictors of repartnering compared to the demographic variables. There was some indication of possible social class differences with those who were involved in skilled agriculture/fish or craft related work having higher odds of repartnering compared to legislators, senior officials or managers (not significant). Those living in Scotland appear to be less likely to repartner than those living in England. Furthermore, those who were rated their health as good were slightly less likely to repartner compared to those who thought their health was excellent.

Table 1. Odds ratios of repartnering, United Kingdom & Australia ABOUT HERE

Australia

In Australia, as with the United Kingdom, we find that increasing age has a negative effect on the probability of repartnering. Those aged 35 and over had considerably lower odds of repartnering in any one year compared to those aged under 35. Unlike the United Kingom, the effect of sex on repartnering in Australia was in line with much of the previous literature with men being more likely to repartner than women. Prior fertility and the living circumstances of any existing children was also a predictor of new union formations in Australia, though not in the United Kingdom. Compared with the reference category of those without dependent children those with resident children aged less than 5 were less likely to enter a new relationship. However, this result disappears in model 2 when controlling for socioeconomic variables.

The type of relationship individuals had previously was also important. Those whose previous relationship was either a cohabitation, or a marriage which was preceded by

cohabitation, were significantly more likely to repartner compared to those who were coming out of a direct marriage.

In terms of socio-economic variables those in elementary occupations were significantly less likely to repartner compared to legislators, senior officials or managers. There were also some geographic differences with the odds of repartnering being lower in Victoria or Queensland compared to the New South Wales or Australian Capital Territory. Those who moved households were also more likely to repartner, however it is likely that this effect is picking up moving related to the formation of a new relationship. Self-rated health was also related to repartnering, with those who rated their health as fair being less likely to repartner compared to those whose health was rated as excellent.

Comparison: United Kingdom and the Australia

The analysis reported above has highlighted some differences in the repartnering behaviour of British and Australians. Overall the results were very similar for both the United Kingdom and Australia, although there were some differences in the effect of key demographic variables. In both countries there was a negative relationship between age and the probability of repartnering with the chance of repartnering becoming lower after age 35. This is likely to be associated two aspects of relationship formation. Older people may hold different attitudes to forming new relationships, as well as being less attractive as potential partners.

In terms of previous relationship history, the length of the previous union or the number of previous partners was not significant in either the United Kingdom or Australia, but the type of previous union was an important predictor of repartnering in both countries. In Australia, those who were either coming out of a marriage preceded by a cohabitation, or from a straight cohabitation, were more likely to repartner compared to those coming out of a direct marriage. These results indicate that there may be some selection effects, with those who are coming out of a direct marriage perhaps also having more traditional or religious beliefs. Interestingly in the United Kingdom there was also a difference in the repartnering behaviour of those coming from a direct marriage compared to those coming from a marriage which was preceded by a cohabitation, but the effect was in the opposite

direction. If the previous marriage was preceded by a cohabitation individuals were *less* likely to repartner compared to those coming from a marriage with no previous cohabitation.

The demographic characteristics that did show differences between the two countries were gender, and age and presence of children. Gender played an important role in Australia but not in the United Kingdom. In Australia men were more likely to form a new union than were women. The effect of age and residence of any children also appears to be related to repartnering differently in the United Kingdom compared to in Australia. In the United Kingdom we found no effect. In Australia we found some evidence that those with a resident child aged less than five had lower odds of repartnering than did those with no dependent children.

Gender and the presence of children are inextricably linked and the explanation of the differences between Australian and the United Kingdom lies in untangling these relationships. We would expect that resident children would have a greater impact on repartnering than non-resident children, and children under five years of age have a greater impact on repartnering than older children. In both countries the majority of children under five years of age reside with their mothers thus acting to decrease the chance of repartnering for women. We attempted to explore this complex relationship by modelling an interaction between gender and children. However, the numbers of men with young resident children, and women with non resident young children were too small to be modelled.

With respect to the socio-economic characteristics the results were less conclusive. The key employment and education variables appeared not to have any significant effect on the probability of forming a higher order union, but there was some indication of minor social class differences in both the United Kingdom and Australia. In both countries there were some differences by geography, with those living in Scotland having lower odds of repartnering compared to those living in England and similarly those living in Victoria or Queensland having lower odds of repartnering compared to those living in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory. It is possible that these geographical

differences are related to socio-economic differences between these regions that have not been controlled for in the model.

Finally, health was related to repartnering in both countries. Those with good or fair health were less likely to repartner compared to those with excellent health, in the United Kingdom and Australia respectively. Health may be one criterion for choosing a new partner so poor health may make someone a less attractive partner, and being in less than excellent health may also limit opportunities for social interaction and meeting a new partner.

CONCLUSION

Our aim in this paper was to examine the effect of lifecourse experiences on the likelihood of repartnering following relationship dissolution. At the centre of this investigation was the proposition that a substantial amount of repartnering research focuses only on repartnering following marriage. We extend this research by looking at three previous relationship types: people who have been married, people who have been married but cohabited with their partner first, and people who were in a cohabiting relationship. The results were surprising. Previous relationship status does matter, but so does the context. In the United Kingdom, those who previously cohabited are less likely to repartner; in Australia, the opposite is true.

Context is an important part of the lifecourse perspective. Events or outcomes can vary substantially by the time and place in which they occur. While overall we see similar rates of repartnering in the United Kingdom and Australia over the period of investigation, there are differences of which previous relationship status is the most striking. The United Kingdom and Australia have similar legislation regulating social relationships and marriage, yet the social experiences are clearly different.

We expected that the number and length of past relationship would also distinguish between those who formed new unions and those who did not. In both countries relationship histories showed no impact on the propensity to repartner. We hypothesised that multiple past relationships would be a deterrent to repartnering. However we did not

find this to be the case. One explanation for this lack of difference is that people may be choosing to repartner with people with similar histories. Poortman (2007) also found that the number of past relationships was not important. Future research might focus on the homogeneity of repartnered couples' past relationship histories.

The effect of children on repartnering can differ depending on the lifecourse stage. Age and residence of children can have a profound effect on the ability to repartner. Many past studies have found that living with children reduces the likelihood of repartnering but few studies have differentiated the lifecourse stage by age of children. We find that young resident children reduce repartnering in Australia but not in the United Kingdom. When including socioeconomic characteristics in our models the effect of children disappears. We suggest that this is due to the complexity of gender and children's living arrangements. Men are not likely to live with young children and therefore have a greater chance to repartner. Women are more likely to have primary responsibility for young children limiting their chances, and perhaps desire, for a new partnership.

Age, as the crudest measure of lifecourse stage, shows that as we move through the lifecourse the likelihood of repartnering declines. This is consistent with past research on the patterns of relationship formation.

This research has highlighted the complex relationships between past family formation and repartnering. The results highlight the need for further investigation into the differential effect of children on men and women. The research also raises questions about the suitability and desirability of people with multiple partnerships and children from past relationships.

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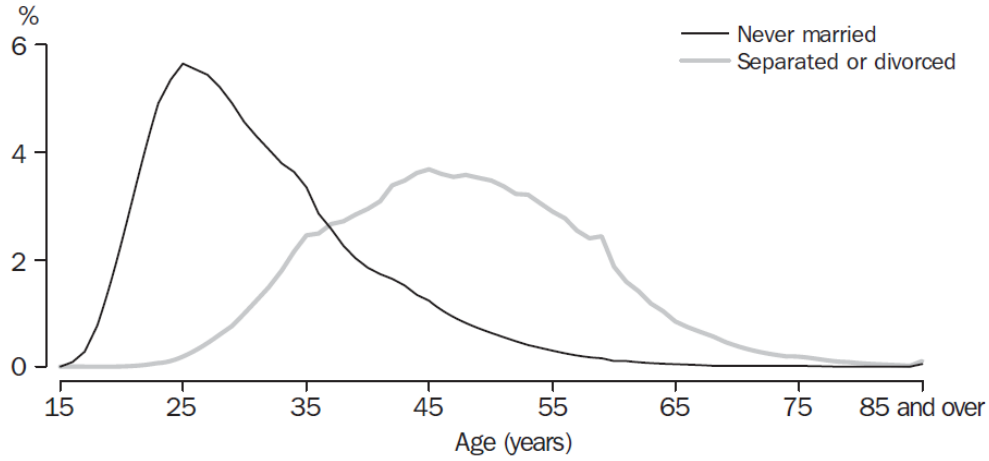
Diagram 1. Australia- Persons in de facto relationships, 2006.



Source: ABS (2008b:213)

Table 1. Odds ratios of repartnering, United Kingdom & Australia

	United Kingdom		Australia	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	Demographic	Demographic & Socio-economic	Demographic	Demographic & Socio-economic
Time				
0-1	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1-2	1.10	1.24	0.93	0.98
2-3	1.03	1.21	0.73	0.80
3-4	0.94	1.19	0.65*	0.74
4-5	0.70	0.86	0.67	0.72
Age				
17-24 years	1.23	1.25	1.08	1.11
25-34 years	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
35-44 years	0.61**	0.54***	0.66**	0.68*
45-54 years	0.46***	0.40***	0.41***	0.44***
55+ years	0.12***	0.13***	0.28***	0.32***
Gender				
Female	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Male	1.06	0.91	1.30*	1.44**
Children				
Resident children age <5 years	0.70	0.64	0.71*	0.71
Resident children age 5+ years	0.81	0.86	1.00	1.05
Non resident children < 16 years	1.31	1.20	0.97	0.90
No dependent children	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Missing	0.67	0.68		
Previous partnership duration				
Less than 5 years	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
5-15 years	1.12	1.28	1.19	1.22
15+ years	0.93	0.94	1.11	1.19
Number of partners				
1 partner	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2 or more partners	1.20	1.13	1.05	1.05
Previous partnership type				
Direct marriage	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Marriage preceded by cohabitation	0.65*	0.52***	1.51*	1.61**
Cohabitation	0.85	0.74	1.49*	1.60*
Year				
2000 (Aus: 2001)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2001 (Aus: 2002)	0.77	0.73	1.03	1.07
2002 (Aus: 2003)	0.98	1.10	1.10	1.11
2003 (Aus: 2004)	1.00	1.04	1.16	1.22
2004 (Aus: 2005)	0.85	1.03	0.77	0.78
Employment				
Employed		1.00		1.00
Unemployed		0.79		1.12
Family care		1.54		
Out of labour force		0.67		1.24

Note: ** p<0.05,* p<0.1

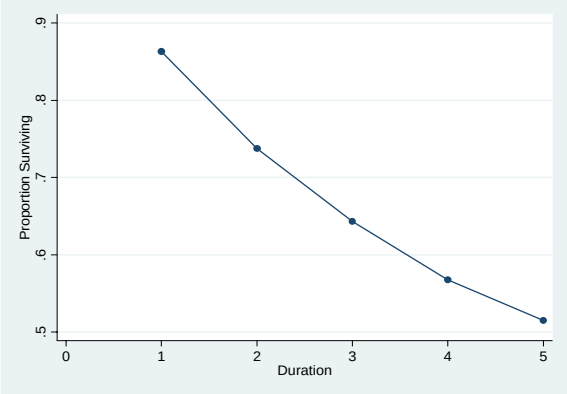
Table 1. Odd ratios of repartnering, United Kingdom & Kingdom *(continued)*

		United Kingdom		Australia	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
		Demographic	Demographic & Socio-economic	Demographic	Demographic & Socio-economic
Education					
Degree/Teaching Qual			1.00		1.00
Other qual (incl diplomas & certificates)			0.69		0.91
A-level	(Aus: Year 12)		0.66		1.19
O-level or below	(Aus: Year 11)		0.95		1.07
Missing			0.81		
Benefit receipt					
Receives a benefit			0.84		1.00
Does not receive a benefit			1.00		0.92
Missing			6.27		
Income quintile					
Bottom			0.74		0.85
2nd			0.85		0.87
3rd			0.64		1.07
4th			1.00		0.74
Top			1.00		1.00
Missing			0.12		
Social class					
Legislators, senior officials & manager			1.00		1.00
Professionals			0.76		0.65
Technicians & associate professionals			0.92		0.91
Clerks			0.83		0.90
Service workers & shop & market sales			1.12		0.77
Skilled agri/fish & craft/related			1.71		0.82
Plant & machine operators & assemblers			1.14		0.75
Elementary occupations			0.98		0.44**
Missing			0.45		0.63
Housing tenure					
Owner occupier			1.00		1.00
L.A./H.A.	(Aus: Rent/rent-buy scheme)		0.75		1.22
Other rented	(Aus: Rent free/life tenure)		1.37		1.24
Missing			1.20		
Region					
England	(Aus: NSW & ACT)		1.00		1.00
Wales	(Aus: VIC)		1.12		0.73*
Scotland	(Aus: QLD)		0.64**		0.73*
Northern Ireland	(Aus: SA & NT)		0.86		0.75
Missing	(Aus: WA)		0.53		0.70
	(Aus: TAS)				0.83
Household move					
Yes			1.27		1.37*
No			1.00		1.00
Missing					1.18
Health					
Excellent			1.00		1.00
Good			0.72*		0.84
Fair			0.94		0.65*
Poor/very poor			0.84		0.67
Missing					1.20

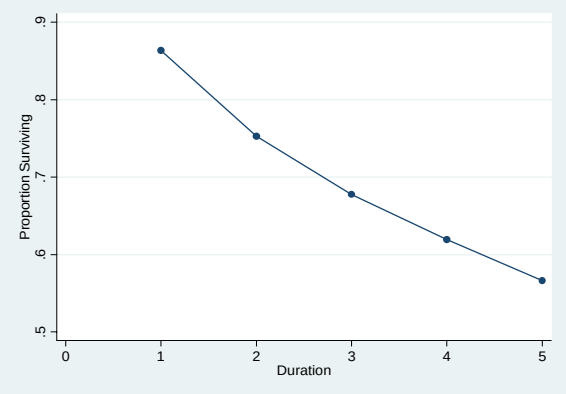
APPENDIX 1

Survival curve

United Kingdom



Australia

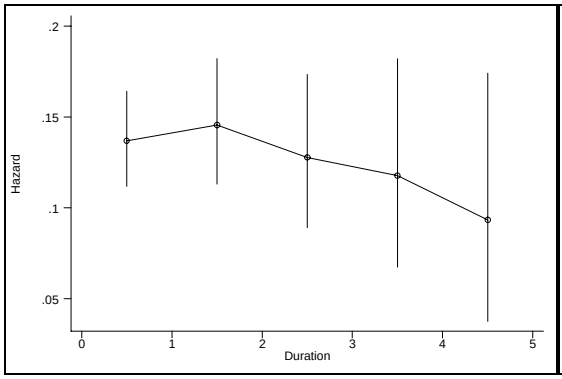


Life-table for repartnering

	United Kingdom				Australia			
Duration	Beginning	Repartner	Lost	Survival	Beginning	Repartner	Lost	Survival
(years)	Total				Total			
0-1	768	105	196	0.8633	924	126	176	0.8636
1-2	467	68	125	0.7376	622	80	131	0.7526
2-3	274	35	103	0.6434	411	41	113	0.6775
3-4	136	16	45	0.5677	257	22	107	0.6195
4-5	75	7	68	0.5147	128	11	117	0.5663

Hazard

United Kingdom



Australia