

Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics

**POST FIRST-UNION REPARTNERING AND  
PARENTHOOD PATTERNS  
IN LATE 20TH CENTURY EUROPE**

Jeroen SPIJKER  
Montserrat SOLSONA  
Carles SIMÓ

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## **Resum**

Espanya va ser un dels darrers països d'Europa a legalitzar el divorci (1981). La seva legalització s'ha d'emmarcar dins el procés de la transició democràtica, els canvis de comportaments demogràfics i les modificacions de les lleis referides a la família. Inicialment, era una llei força restrictiva i, fins a la dècada dels 90, la separació legal i el divorci no eren massa comuns. Posterior, la pressió per accelerar el procediment judicial va portar a la reforma del divorci a través de la Llei 15/2005, llei que va facilitar el procés de divorci, va regular la corresponsabilitat dels pares cap als fills i la custòdia compartida d'aquests.

A través dels butlletins estadístics de sentències de separació, divorci i nul·litat del Consell General del Poder Judicial, aquest document ofereix una descripció de les característiques dels cònjuges, la durada del matrimoni i el procés de separació (1996-2010) i analitza els patrons i característiques dels Acords Legals de Custòdia (2007-2011).

Els resultats mostren que al 2011, la custòdia compartida va ser atorgada en el 12% dels casos, la custòdia exclusiva al pare, en un 5%, i a la mare, en un 82% (al 2005, els percentatges eren 3%, 3% i 94% respectivament). A través d'una regressió logística s'observa que l'edat per a contraure matrimoni, les diferències d'edat entre els cònjuges, la durada de la demanda de divorci, si el sol·licitant del divorci és el marit o si el divorci/separació és consensuat, pot afavorir la custòdia exclusiva al pare i/o compartida, en detriment de la custòdia exclusiva per a la mare.

**Paraules clau.-** Matrimoni, divorci, separació, custòdia exclusiva, sentències, Espanya.

## **Resumen**

España fue uno de los últimos países de Europa en legalizar el divorcio (1981). Su legalización debe enmarcarse dentro del proceso de la transición democrática, los cambios en los comportamientos demográficos y en las modificaciones de las leyes referidas a la familia. Inicialmente, era una ley bastante restrictiva y, hasta la década de los 90, la separación legal y el divorcio no eran demasiado comunes. Posterior, la presión para acelerar el procedimiento judicial, llevó a la reforma del divorcio a través de la Ley 15/2005, que facilitó el proceso de divorcio, reguló la corresponsabilidad de los padres hacia los hijos y la custodia compartida de éstos.

A través de los boletines estadísticos de sentencias de separación, divorcio y nulidad del Consejo General del Poder Judicial, este documento ofrece una descripción de las características de los cónyuges, la duración del matrimonio y el proceso de separación (1996-2010) y analiza los patrones y características de los Acuerdos Legales de Custodia (2007-2011).

Los resultados muestran que en 2011, la custodia compartida fue otorgada en el 12% de los casos, la custodia exclusiva al padre, en un 5% y a la madre, en un 82% (en 2005, los porcentajes eran 3%, 3% y 94% respectivamente). A través de una regresión logística se observa que la edad para contraer matrimonio, las diferencias de edad entre los cónyuges, la duración de la demanda de divorcio, si el solicitante del divorcio es el marido o si el divorcio/separación es consensuado, puede favorecer la custodia exclusiva al padre y/o compartida, en detrimento de la custodia exclusiva para la madre.

**Palabras clave.-** Matrimonio, divorcio, separación, custodia exclusiva, custodia compartida, sentencias, España.

## **Abstract**

In 1981 Spain was one of the last countries in Europe to legalize divorce. Accompanying the transition from dictatorship to democracy were shifts in family laws and demographic behaviours that included the legalisation of divorce. However, the initial Divorce Law was quite restrictive and legal separation and divorce were still relatively uncommon until the 1990s. Subsequent pressure to speed up the legal procedure led to the Spanish Divorce Reform of 2005 that facilitated the divorce process, stressed the co-responsibility of parents towards their children and legally regulating shared custody.

Using the General Council of the Judiciary's data on “Decrees of separations, divorces and annulments”, this working paper provides a description of the characteristics of the spouses, marriage duration and separation process (1996-2010) and analyses the patterns and characteristics of legal custody arrangements (2007-2011).

Results showed that in 2011 (2005) joint custody was awarded in 12% (3%) of cases, father 5% (3%) and mother sole custody 82% (94%). Logistic regression showed that age at marriage, spousal age difference, duration of divorce application, the husband being the divorce claimant and a marital separation with consent favoured either sole father and/or joint custody at the expense of sole custody for the mother.

**Keywords.-** Marriage, divorce, separation, sole custody, joint custody, shared custody, decrees, Spain.

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**POST FIRST-UNION REPARTNERING AND  
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**1.- Introduction**

As we know, since the 1960s in many countries of Western and Northern Europe and about a decade later in the rest of Europe, shifts in values related to family life and children have weakened the ‘traditional’ family, understood as the nuclear family -starting at relative young ages and ending at the death of the partner-. These shifts caused interrelated changes in partnership behaviour, family formation and fertility. Such transformations became characteristic of what later became known as the *second demographic transition* (SDT) an idea postulated by Van de Kaa (1987; 2004) that describes a substantial and unprecedented progress in cohabitation, the postponement of both the timing of marriage and children bearing, childlessness, lone parenthood, having children outside marriage, having fewer children, the parallel retreat from marriage and from traditional norms of sexual restraint, as well as the increase in divorce (see also Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> This research formed part of the following research projects that have been carried out at the Demographic Studies Center and Department of Geography, Autonomous University of Barcelona: “Trajectories family after divorce. Gender, kinship and territory”, funded by the Plan Nacional I+D+I of the former Ministry of Education and Science (now Ministry of Science and Innovation) (Ref. SEJ2005-03764/GEO). Principal Investigator: Montserrat Solsona; “Post-divorcio y vulnerabilidad social en España: Experiencias de hombres y mujeres en el ámbito económico y la salud”, funded by the Plan Nacional I+D+I of the Ministry of Science and Innovation (Ref. CSO2009-09891). Principal Investigator: Montserrat Solsona. Jeroen Spijker is currently employed by the University of Edinburgh.

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While progress in literacy and wealth made the first demographic transition possible, increases in female education, female labour force participation and unemployment, economy uncertainty and technological innovation contributed to the SDT. It was the much improved and highly efficient methods of contraception that played a catalytic role, as did improvements in medical technology and communication. By no longer being constrained by material anxieties and social control, the individual has become more concerned with their higher-order needs centred on self-actualization, individual autonomy and recognition (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2006), thus making 'alternative' forms of family and relationship formation more practical, feasible and eventually socially acceptable (Coleman, 2005). Intimate partnerships and sexuality, but also the relationships between parents and their children, have moved away from the realm of normative control and institutional regulation, giving rise to the new ideal of reflexive 'pure relationships' based on mutual consent and the recognition of individual autonomy (Giddens, 1992).

Indeed, according to Sobotka (2008) there is empirical support for the idea that long-lasting changes in both family-related values and family behaviour actually reinforce each other. For instance, both country-level evidence and research on household positions and value orientations in Europe show that there is a consistent relationship between changes in family behaviour and value orientations as countries that have made greater progress in SDT indicators such as lower first marriage rates, increases in mean age at first marriage, extra-marital births and divorce also exhibit most clearly values and attitudes towards family and children typical of the SDT. Another reason is that while economic uncertainty contributes to demographic change, as occurred in central and Eastern Europe after 1989, it does not provide the full explanation for it. As a study on the Russian Federation showed, the end of the economic crisis and an improvement in living conditions beginning in 1999 did not bring any signs of return to the previous pattern of family behaviour but more as a strengthening of the structural changes in the model of family formation, including persisting low fertility levels, family formation delay, marriage decline, and rise in cohabitation (Zakharov, 2008). What seems to be driven by economic affluence and characterised by secular individualism and by an orientation towards personal self-fulfilment, the transformation in values and attitudes towards family, children and sexuality seem to be most widespread among the young, better-educated, and urban populations. Yet, in terms of actual *behavioural* changes typical of the SDT (e.g. a rapid rise in cohabitation and non-marital childbearing), structural constraints frequently marked

by economic crisis may actually make it more attractive for people with a socially disadvantaged background (as often the case during the transition process in Central and Eastern Europe) that gradually becomes accepted and adopted by other social groups. Hence Sobotka (2008) speaks of two different possible pathways of behavioural and value changes during the second demographic transition.

Literature on Second Demographic Transition outlines the trends toward later marriage and more cohabitation after 1990, and also the expansion of divorce and post-marital relationships, which are channelled into cohabitation or living apart together (LAT)-relationships rather than remarriage (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004). Such transformations have been associated with changes in values. In this respect, compared to married persons single living, divorcees and separated individuals seem to be attached to non-conformist values (*ibid.*). Although the specific 'post-materialist' ideology underlying SDT theory has not been without its critics, numerous empirical studies in western countries support the theory (Coleman 2004; 2005) and is therefore considered a useful framework for the study of recent demographic transformations experienced in Europe.

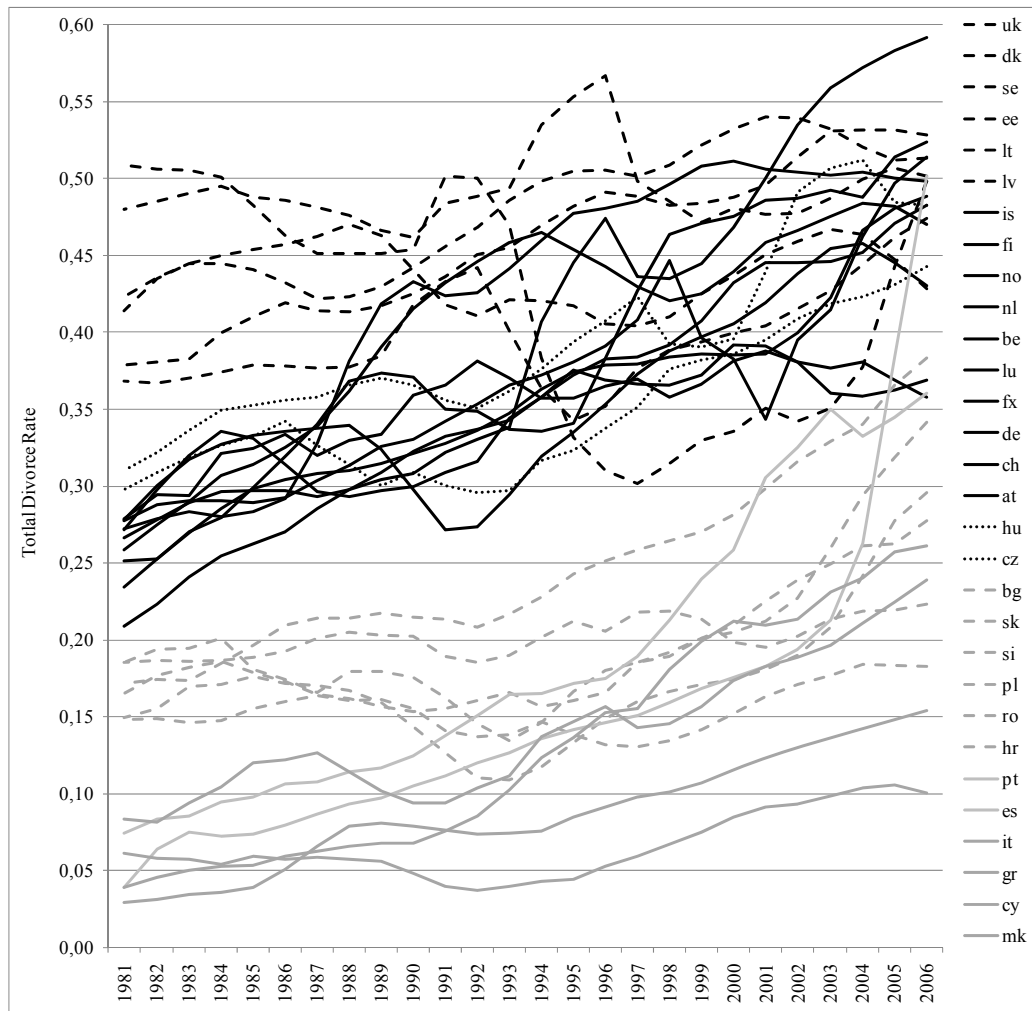
As a follow-up to the results obtained by the cohort analysis of Prskawetz et al. (2003) on stepfamily formation, one of the main contributions of this study is the analysis of family trajectories after the dissolution of a first union, whose rise over the last decades could be considered as characteristic of the SDT, even though this association is usually not made in the literature. The main analysis will look at the role of individual and union characteristics on the propensity to enter into a second union or parenthood after union dissolution. Special focus goes out to gender, cohort and country differences. Data come from the FFS, i.e. it mainly includes data on partnership and childbearing histories for the latter quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the authors consider this a particularly interesting period due to the likely differences between the vanguard countries (northern Europe), the mode family oriented southern European countries and Eastern Europe that were at the time the FFS was held were in the middle of economic, political and social changes.

## **2.- Background**

One trend that is indicative of the Second Demographic Transition and was a prelude to increasing remarriage and stepfamily formation is the increase in divorce rates. Particularly

changes in the legislation led to increases in divorce rates and post-divorce trajectories. In most instances the initial legalisation of divorce only allowed divorce on the basis of ‘fault’ (which typically included adultery and physical violence), whereby under a fault regime, a divorce could only be granted to the innocent party if he/she presents proof of fault in court, although some countries (mostly in Scandinavia) also allowed divorce after a specified period of separation. However, since the 1960s many countries have introduced reforms that facilitated divorce, including abolishing the required proof of fault (i.e. ‘no-fault’ divorce) or mutual consent (i.e. ‘unilateral divorce’) (González and Viitanen 2009). Yet country differences in specific requirements for divorce still exist as in some European countries divorce is still rather difficult to obtain by not even allowing divorce by mutual consent (e.g. Portugal, although a decision can be taken by the civil registrar if both spouses agree to obtain a divorce) or a specified period of legal separation is still stipulated as a precondition or an alternative to full-fledge divorce (e.g. in Ireland and Italy) (Sobotka and Toulemon 2008; González and Viitanen 2009; [http://ec.europa.eu/civiljustice/divorce/divorce\\_gen\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/civiljustice/divorce/divorce_gen_en.htm)).

In the US the move from mutual consent divorce to unilateral divorce between 1968 and 1977 in most states caused a so-called “divorce revolution” (Rasul, 2006; although its effect faded out within a decade; Wolfers, 2006). In Europe divorce started to increase in incidence in northern Europe and most parts of western and eastern Europe in the late 1960s-early 1970s (and even earlier in some countries of the former Soviet Union) (see also Sobotka and Toulemon 2008). By 1980, TDRs were highest in Sweden, Denmark, the UK and the Baltic states (between 37% and 51%), followed by the Czech Republic (31%), Hungary (30%), the remaining northern and western European countries (21%-28%), the other central European countries (15%-19%) and southern Europe and Macedonia (between 3% and 8%). In southern Europe and several other more traditional or socially conservative countries like Macedonia, Poland, and Romania divorce rates did not began to rise substantially until the 1990s. Even as late as the mid-1990s the TDR was still below 0.2 in all Mediterranean countries (Figure 1). In spite of rising divorce rates since the early 1980s, it did not result in a convergence of trends as continued increases were also observed in other countries (with notable exceptions being the Baltic States, Bulgaria and Denmark), although geographical patterns have become less defined.

**Figure 1.- Total divorce rate, 1980-2 to 2005-2007\***

\* 3 year moving average centred on reference year.

Data source: Eurostat for the number of divorces by marriage duration between 1980 and 2007 and marriages by marriage cohort between 1950 and 2007.

Interpretation note: The purpose of this figure was not to show country-specific trends but rather how differences between different parts of Europe have become blurred over time despite maintaining large country differences.

Methodological note: The total divorce rate (TDR) is defined as the number of divorces per marriage in a given year. It is calculated by aggregating the marriage-cohort specific proportions of marriages that are dissolved during the given year. As the required divorce data are from 1980 and marriage data from 1950, for the calculation of the 1980 TDR the maximum marriage duration equals 30 years, increasing to 50 years for the divorce cohorts 2000-2007. In addition, as the data source provided a maximum marriage duration of 35+ years, i.e. an open-ended category in which the divorces could not be linked to their corresponding marriage cohorts, they were re-distributed to single-year duration categories. This was done by applying an exponential function where a 50-year marriage duration was chosen as the upper limit and the sum of divorces after 35, 36, ..., 49 and 50 years of marriage approximated the published total number of divorces after 35+ years of marriage. Estimations were also made when divorce data were missing for certain single-year marriage duration categories, usually by linear interpolation or by applying duration-specific proportions from adjacent years.

The introduction of “no-fault” divorce not only made the breakup of unsatisfied partnerships easier but also reduces the financial costs of obtaining a divorce by removing the requirement of presenting proof of fault in court. Yet, effect of moving from mutual consent divorce to unilateral divorce on the likelihood of divorce is less clear because of two offsetting effects. On the one hand, individuals now know they cannot be stuck in a marriage they would prefer to leave. On the other hand, they may be in a marriage in which they prefer to stay but their spouse prefers to leave. (Rasul, 2006).

### **2.1.- Remarriage and fertility among the divorced**

The relaxation of divorce laws and subsequent rise in divorce rates has had an effect on (re)marriage and (post-divorce) fertility trends. When unilateral divorce laws were introduced in US states marriages rates actually increased and marital fertility remained stable while out-of-wedlock fertility declined as women who planned to have children married with greater ease, perhaps because they knew that the “exit option” from marriage had become a lot simpler (Alesina and Giuliano, 2007).

On the other hand, being a parent affects the likelihood of formerly married women repartnering, with a higher number of children being associated with a lower probability of repartnering. The presence of children can work against repartnering in a variety of ways. Children place demands on their parents and can deter or object to potential partners. Parents may see their parental role as more important than, and a barrier to, new relationships (Lampard and Peggs, 1999). In addition, research has shown that lifetime fertility is lower for women who have experienced a divorce compared to the continually married (Lauriat 1969; Cohen and Sweet 1974; Thornton 1978; Downing and Yaukey 1979; Li 2006). In fact, Thornton (1978) found that fertility declined even in the two years before marital separation. One important reason for the lower fertility among those who have experienced a divorce is because union dissolution leads to periods of little or no sexual activity, thus reducing the risk of pregnancy (Burch 1983). Remarriage or repartnering, however, does not completely restore women’s reduced fertility. While the risk of birth is elevated for couples without shared children or if either partner is childless (Vikat et al. 1999, Buber and Prskawetz 2000, Thomson et al. 2002) the presence of more than one stepchild is what decreases fertility in marriages and cohabitations (Li 2006). According to Li (2006) women who experience a non-traditional family trajectory

involving stepfamily are confronted with a “fertility penalty” as they are projected to have lower completed cohort fertility due to the diminishing pattern at the early stage of fertility schedules for their first marital births as marital stability is lower. However, for stepfamilies that survive and move on to have their second and higher-order shared births in the marriage, levels and timing of fertility are identical to those of intact families. This is in part because child spacing in stepfamilies is about half (one-and-a-half years) than it is in intact families as women may be motivated to compensate for their lost reproductive time in the process of marital disruption and reconstitution (Li 2006) or to minimise the age difference between half siblings (Thomson et al. 2002).

### **3.- Data, method and hypotheses**

#### **3.1.- Data**

The objective of this article is to analyse post-divorce trajectories in Europe. We do this by performing an in-depth study on repartnering (including non-marital unions) and reparenting using individual-level data file from the Fertility and Family Survey (FFS), supported by data from the Statistical Office of the European Communities Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>) for the description of recent trends in remarriage. Despite that Eurostat and national statistical institutes have long time series data for most European countries they are, for a number of reasons, unsuitable for the study of repartnering and parenthood after the dissolution of first unions. Firstly, this is because most data come from national civil registers, implying that, in the case of repartnering, they only pertain to remarriage and excludes consensual unions. By the same token, separated men and women who do not divorce but may repartner are also excluded from the study population as they cannot legally marry. Particularly for countries (or in the past) where one has to separate for a specified period before being able to divorce, repartnering is likely to be underestimated using official registers. Lastly, only very few countries have population register data that permit the documentation of changes in partnership and reproductive behaviour that account for entire individual relationships (including consensual ones), family histories and individual and family characteristics, let alone data which allows for international comparison. One alternative is thus to look at international survey data, of

which the FFS is still one of the most comprehensive in terms of participating countries and data availability.

Most FFS were conducted in the early 1990s in selected Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe-UNECE (<http://www.unece.org/pau/ffs/ffs.htm>). The initiative for this survey came about because of the earlier mentioned shifts in partnership and reproductive behaviour patterns that had taken place over much of Europe and North America since the 1960s. The selected countries in our study are Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia and Spain (Table 1a).

**Table 1a.- FFS general sample characteristics**

Country, year	Women	Men	Age range	Field work	
				Start	End
Austria	4500	1500	20-54	Dec-95	May-96
Belgium	3200	2200	21-40	Mar-91	Dec-92
Estonia	5000	2500	20-69	Jan-94	Aug-94
Finland	4200	1700	22-51	Aug-89	Jan-90
France	2900	1900	20-49	Jan-94	Apr-94
Germany	6000	4000	20-39	Jul-92	Jul-92
Hungary	3600	1900	18-41	Nov-92	Dec-93
Norway	4000	1500	20-43	Oct-88	May-89
Slovenia	2800	1800	15-45	Dec-94	Dec-95
Spain	4000	2000	18-49	Nov-94	Nov-95

Source.- <http://www.unece.org/pau/ffs/ffs.html>

Unfortunately, the FFS also has several drawbacks. One inconvenience is that only adults until the age of about 50 were interviewed, thus preventing a more exhaustive study of how post first-union trajectories may differ across a larger age spectrum. In addition, more women than men were surveyed (in fact, in some countries men were not interviewed at all) and although country-specific sample sizes are acceptable (between 1700 and 6000 depending on the country), for our purposes this is reduced substantially as only respondents that experienced a union dissolution are considered (Table 1b). Finally, as most of the surveys were conducted in the 1990s, results do not fully reflect actual patterns of post-dissolution living arrangements. This may be relevant for Central and Eastern

European countries (see Sobotka and Toulemon 2008). However, even if no information exists on post-divorce trajectories of post-transition cohorts, the data does permit analysing those cohorts who were young adults during the intense political, economic and social changes and those who were beyond childbearing age.

**Table 1b.- FFS sample characteristics of respondents who have experienced a union breakup**

Country, year	Total sample			Type of 1 <sup>st</sup> union (%)				Post-1 <sup>st</sup> union (%)			
	1+ union breakups			Marriage		consensual		Repartnering		Reparenting	
	Total	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
Austria, 1995-96	989	227	762	26	40	74	60	74	57	38	36
Belgium, 1991-92	504	208	296	63	71	37	29	62	60	24	31
Estonia, 1994	782	263	519	28	28	72	72	70	68	50	42
Finland, 1989-90	1130	313	817	27	40	73	60	73	62	36	34
France, 1994	1542	516	1026	25	40	75	60	65	52	32	34
Germany, 1992	1369	471	898	25	38	75	62	66	60	32	34
Hungary, 1992-93	770	232	538	61	69	39	31	67	62	42	42
Norway, 1988-89	935	270	665	41	35	59	65	68	62	36	32
Slovenia, 1994-1995	233	71	162	52	61	48	39	76	67	49	43
Spain, 1994-95	258	74	184	47	67	53	33	57	47	23	27
Total Sample	8512	2645	5867	35	44	65	56	63	55	35	37

**Source:** FFS data.

### 3.2.- Method and hypotheses

One virtue of the FFS data is that it can be employed to calculate family transitions, such as between the moment of union dissolution and events that occur afterwards. This can be done using standard demographic survival analysis like life table analysis (e.g. Andersson and Philipov 2002), hazard models (e.g. Cuppola & Di Cesare 2008) or Kaplan-Meier estimators (e.g. Prskawetz et al. 2003). It should be mentioned, though, that before analysis could begin, some data cleaning had to be done on the raw FFS data, in particular with regard to the timing of union formation and dissolution (details of which are not shown here but can be obtained from the corresponding author).

The present study analyses the likelihood of re-partnering and parenting (or re-parenting) after the break-up of a first union. In the FFS data, a union is defined as a co-residential



partnership. The questions related to union formation and union breakup are situated in the Partnerships section and Partnership Table. A partnership refers to the respondent's experience of having had an intimate relationship with someone and with whom she/he lived for some time in the same household as a married or non-married couple; while the end of the partnership is defined as the moment when co-residence stops. The dates of the beginning and end of each partnership and the start of second unions as well as the births of children are provided in years and months.

For the purpose of this article, two different analyses are conducted. First, linear regression models were produced to calculate the odds of entering a second union and a post-divorce parenthood in order to comment on whether gender, age, cohort and other differences are statistically significant, net of the remaining model variables and the country effects. Second, Kaplan-Meier estimators of the length of time of two the transitions – from the end to the first union to a) the beginning of a second and b) post first-union parenthood – have also been calculated. These are estimated for the 10 European countries for which we had the required data to do so. The survival functions are then calculated to observe the speed with which those transitions were made. These results are then used to derive the median time in months and its standard error it took from the end of the first to the beginning of second union and post first-union parenthood as well as the cumulative proportion after 200 months. We are particularly interested in contrasting characteristics from several key demographic variables known to be important determinants in the timing of the two transitions. To do so, we constructed the following hypotheses:

*Regarding the gender differences our expectations are:*

- 1a. Men are more likely to re-partner than women (e.g. as found by Wu and Schimmele 2005; Baumeister et al. 1996; Clarke-Stewart and Brentano, 2006).

*Concerning the age and birth cohorts we expect that:*

- 1b. Younger persons (defined as those whose first union dissolved before they turned 25) are more likely to enter a new relationship than those who were older.
- 1c. Persons from more recent birth cohorts are more likely to re-partner than those from older cohorts (born 1938-55 vs. 1956-76).

*With respect to unions' characteristics the hypothesis are:*

- 1d. Those whose first partnership was a consensual union are more likely to re-partner than the formally married.

- 1e. Those with shorter first relationships (defined as < 60 months) are more likely to re-partner than those with longer first unions.
- 1f. Those without children are more likely to re-partner than parents.

Given that in the vast majority of cases parenthood follows union entry, we expect the same results for post first-union parenthood (Hypotheses 2a-2f). The Mantel-Cox Log Rank Equality Test was used to test the statistical significance of the differences in the survival distributions for the two sub-groups of each variable. We decided to construct dichotomous categories and not to further break down the analysis due to the limited sample size at the country level.

## **4.- Results**

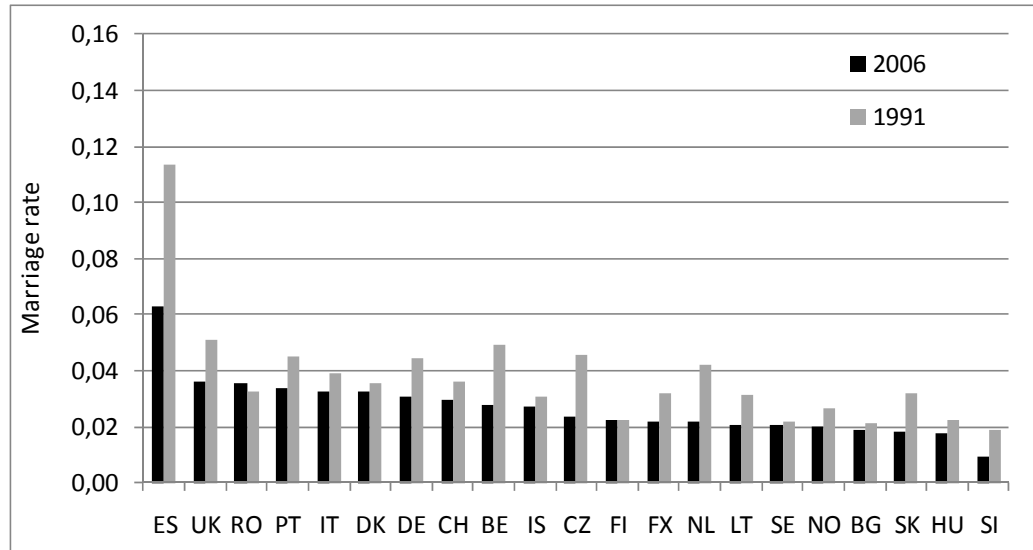
### **4.1.- Remarriage and re-partnering**

As was commented on in the introduction, divorce rates increased almost unilaterally in Europe during the last decades. However, in spite of the fact that more people were divorced, remarriage rates of divorced persons progressively declined in most countries since the early 1980s, and most notably in the 1990s (Figure 2). It would appear from the observed results that the decline was structural as remarriage rates remained higher for men than for women in all countries throughout this period. Similarly, in terms of current geographical differences, highest remarriage rates remain to be observed in predominantly catholic countries as well as in the UK, Germany and Denmark and the lowest rates in Scandinavia and the Baltic countries. It would therefore appear that in countries with traditionally high levels of divorce rates, the divorced population does not necessarily consider remarriage as the preferred repartnering option. However, at the same time that remarriage rates are decreasing, marriages of divorced as a proportion of all marriages and of all second marriages have increased (results not shown).

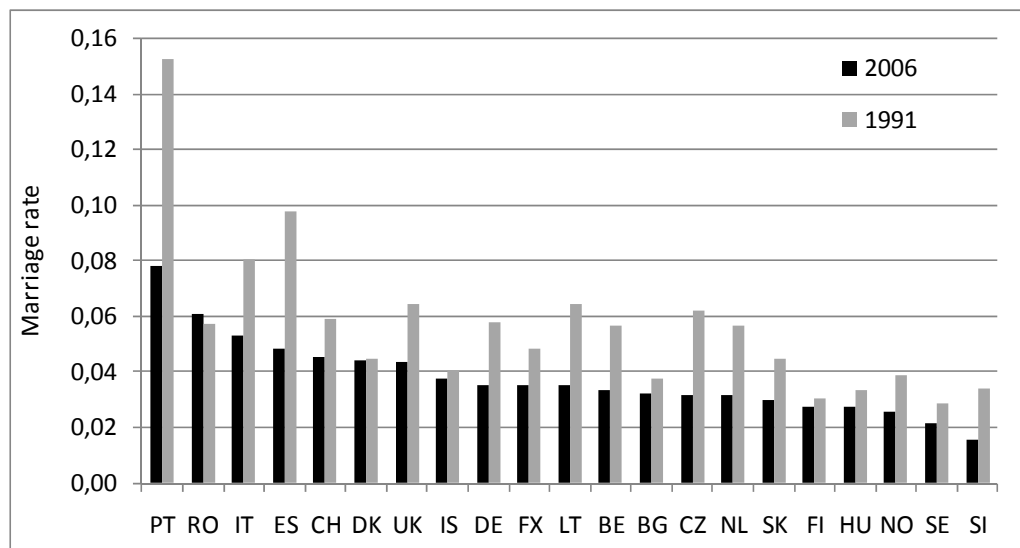
The former can be explained by the fact that overall marriage rates have also declined and the latter because until the 1980s the divorced population was much smaller or almost non-existent in some countries (e.g. Spain).

**Figure 2.- Marriage rates of divorced persons in 1991 and 2006\***

*a. Women*



*b. Men*



Data source: Eurostat and websites of national statistical institutes.

Methodological note: Calculated by dividing the number of remarriages of the divorced in relation to the average divorced population for the same year.

\*Except for Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom (all 2001).

This is also one reason why the proportion of remarriages of divorced men and women in relation to the total number of remarriages (i.e. which also includes those of widowed persons) increased as well as the fact that it has become socially acceptable for divorced persons to remarry. As a result, since the mid-1990s in most Nordic countries as well as in several central and western European countries about 95% of persons who remarry are divorced (although proportions remain slightly higher among men).

Although in a context of the SDT remarriage (and even first marriage) is losing predominance it does not imply that fewer people repartner as marriage is being replaced by cohabitation or other forms of partnerships (e.g. *Living Apart Together*). Given its biographical nature, useful insights can be obtained from FFS as to whether post first-union transition patterns vary according to different demographic characteristics, which this paper aims to analyse. Below we describe the results of both the odds and the survival analysis of the transition from the end of the first union to the beginning of the second in the context of the proposed hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1a: Results from the survival analysis show that men indeed need less time to repartner than women and only in Belgium and Estonia was this difference not significant. Country differences among men are few: the median duration ranges between 27 months in Slovenia and 40 in Belgium, with the only exception being Spain (61 months). Regarding women, Spain is the only country where fewer than 50% of the women repartner, while it takes about 100 months for the first 50% to do so in France. For the rest of the countries the duration ranged between 40 and 63 months. Lastly, also after controlling for the other tested variables did the odds to enter into a second union remain significantly higher for men.

Hypothesis 1b: According to the results of both the odds ratio and survival analysis, those who were under 25 years of age when their first union dissolved were significantly more likely to re-partner after the breakup of their first union than when it occurred after this age in all countries (Table 2 and Table 3). In terms of the time it took for the second union to occur (Table 4), 50% of the younger respondents in the 10 European countries were in a new relationship within 3 years after the dissolution of the first (with 23 months quickest in Germany and with 54 months slowest in Spain). For respondents older than 25, the average was 5 years, although in France and Spain fewer than half did not experience a second union at all.

**Table 2.- Odds ratios (OR) of the entry into a) a second union and b) entry into a parenthood after first-union breakup according to characteristic**

	OR	Second union	Post-first-union parenthood	
		95% C.I	OR	95% C.I
Sex: women/men	0,66	0,59, 0,73	1,21	1,08, 1,36
Age at breakup: <25/25+	2,86	2,52, 3,23	1,96	1,71, 2,25
Birth cohort: 1956-76:/1938-55	2,02	1,81, 2,25	1,74	1,54, 1,97
1 <sup>st</sup> union: consens/marriage.	1,14	1,03, 1,28	1,14	1,01, 1,30
Duration 1 <sup>st</sup> union: < 5 yrs/5+ yrs	1,30	1,15, 1,47	1,80	1,55, 2,07
Parent prior to breakup: no/ yes	1,30	1,16, 1,46	1,32	1,17, 1,50
2 <sup>nd</sup> union: no/yes			14,06	12,06, 16,40
Country effects				
Belgium, 1991-92	1,56	1,28, 1,84	1,30	1,05, 1,61
Estonia, 1994	2,09	1,34, 1,83	1,97	1,67, 2,34
Finland, 1989-90	1,70	1,52, 1,96	1,09	0,95, 1,26
France, 1994	1,30	1,27, 1,58	1,49	1,31, 1,70
Germany, 1992	1,52	1,30, 1,64	1,12	0,98, 1,28
Hungary, 1992-93	1,55	1,24, 1,68	1,70	1,44, 2,02
Norway, 1988-89	1,69	1,38, 1,82	1,05	0,90, 1,23
Slovenia, 1994-1995	2,08	1,59, 2,72	1,62	1,22, 2,16
Spain, 1994-95	1,00	0,79, 1,26	1,00	0,74, 1,35
Austria 1995-96	1,48	1,72, 2,25	1,44	1,24, 1,68

Data source: FFS

Hypothesis 1c: According to the survival curves of the studied countries, cohort differences in the proportion who re-partner are less apparent than what was the case for the aforementioned age differences. The main exception was Hungary where there was a significant difference at the 95% level, although in Austria, Finland, Norway and Spain differences were significant at the 90% level. In terms of the time it took to enter into a second union, 50% of the younger cohort needed less than 45 months (ranging from up to just 32 months in Germany to 87 months in Spain) while the older cohort needed about 10 months more (in Spain less than half repartnered). In the case of Hungary the median time it took for the older cohort was less than for the younger cohort. It appears therefore that post-divorce trajectories are not more likely among younger cohorts than among older ones in the former communist countries. Lastly, after controlling for the other tested variables the odds to enter into a second union was twice as high for those born after 1955 than for the older cohort.

**Table 3.- Mantel-Cox Log Rank Equality Test between age at breakup (<25 vs. 25+), birth cohort (1938-55 vs. 1956-76), sex, 1st union type (married vs. consensual union), first union duration (0-59 vs. 60+ months) and being a parent (no vs. yes) in the survival functions of the end of the first union to the beginning of a second union and post first-union parenthood**

Country	<i>Second union</i>					
	Age	Birth Cohort	Sex	1 <sup>st</sup> union type	1 <sup>st</sup> union duration	Parent
	<b>Chi<sup>2</sup></b>					
Austria 1995-96	57.5 **	2.7 *	19.3 **	11.3 **	24.6 **	36.0 **
Belgium, 1991-92	10.0 **	0.0	0.4	0.0	9.8 **	0.5
Estonia, 1994	17.5 **	0.4	1.7	0.5	8.2 **	0.1
Finland, 1989-90	53.9 **	3.4 *	19.2 **	6.4 **	28.0 **	20.1 **
France, 1994	86.8 **	0.6	29.6 **	11.3 **	62.6 **	96.8 **
Germany, 1992	65.5 **	0.0	7.2 **	2.3	26.8 **	5.3 **
Hungary, 1992-93	35.2 **	4.0 **	3.7 *	0.1	21.3 **	22.3 **
Norway, 1988-89	8.2 **	3.5 *	3.5 *	5.2 **	2.3	1.4
Slovenia, 1994-1995	10.7 **	0.0	5.1 **	0.5	10.1 **	13.0 **
Spain, 1994-95	22.4 **	2.7	3.3 *	0.4	7.5 **	2.9 *

Country	<i>Post first-union parenthood</i>					
	Age	Birth Cohort	Sex	1 <sup>st</sup> union type	1 <sup>st</sup> union duration	Parent
	<b>Chi<sup>2</sup></b>					
Austria 1995-96	85.7 **	3.4 *	0.1	6.7 **	69.4 **	39.0 *
Belgium, 1991-92	30.5 **	0.0	3.3 *	1.7	20.7 **	2.8 *
Estonia, 1994	69.9 **	0.1	3.9 **	0.4	61.6 **	12.4 *
Finland, 1989-90	55.5 **	0.7	0.3	1.5	54.4 **	32.2 *
France, 1994	88.9 **	0.2	1.4	0.7	59.3 **	60.1 *
Germany, 1992	120.2 **	0.0	1.1	2.9 *	52.5 **	3.6 *
Hungary, 1992-93	55.9 **	1.7	0.1	0.1	56.1 **	59.0 *
Norway, 1988-89	35.3 **	2.4	1.5	1.1	40.6 **	15.1 *
Slovenia, 1994-1995	17.4 **	0.6	2.4	1.2	28.9 **	9.9 *
Spain, 1994-95	14.6 **	0.0	0.5	2.3	8.4 **	1.7

Source.- FFS data (own calculations). \* Significant at  $p < 0,05$ .

**Table 4.- Median time and standard error (SE) in months from the end of 1st to the beginning of 2nd union and post first-union parenthood and the cumulative proportion after 200 months (C.F.) by age at breakup, birth cohort, sex, 1<sup>st</sup> union type, first union duration and being a parent**

	Age at dissolution				Birth cohort				Sex				1 <sup>st</sup> union type				Length 1 <sup>st</sup> union (mths)				Parent from 1 <sup>st</sup> unión			
	Under 25		25+		1938-55		1956-76		Males		Females		Married		Consens.		0-59		60+		No		Yes	
	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.	$\bar{x}$ (SE)	C.F.
Second union																								
Austria, 1995-96	28 (3)	0.75	152 (5)	0.51	71 (12)	0.61	42 (7)	0.61	32 (6)	0.74	63 (12)	0.57	87 (23)	0.56	41 (5)	0.64	42 (5)	0.70	108 (-)	0.53	28 (5)	0.71	112 (-)	0.54
Belgium, 1991-92	44 (5)	0.72	64 (-)	0.54	60 (10)	0.63	45 (6)	0.60	40 (6)	0.62	58 (10)	0.60	50 (8)	0.62	50 (13)	0.59	40 (5)	0.69	80 (-)	0.52	46 (7)	0.63	58 (12)	0.58
Estonia, 1994	31 (3)	0.80	42 (6)	0.62	38 (4)	0.71	36 (4)	0.66	30 (5)	0.70	40 (4)	0.68	37 (6)	0.71	37 (4)	0.68	34 (3)	0.75	42 (7)	0.63	39 (7)	0.69	37 (4)	0.69
Finland, 1989-90	33 (2)	0.79	72 (15)	0.56	59 (5)	0.65	35 (3)	0.65	32 (3)	0.73	60 (6)	0.62	67 (8)	0.62	40 (4)	0.67	37 (4)	0.74	81 (18)	0.56	34 (3)	0.72	68 (8)	0.60
France, 1994	30 (3)	0.73	# (#)	0.48	74 (13)	0.57	53 (10)	0.56	36 (5)	0.65	99 (-)	0.52	120 (-)	0.52	50 (6)	0.59	36 (3)	0.68	# (#)	0.47	27 (3)	0.71	# (#)	0.48
Germany, 1992	23 (2)	0.73	82 (#)	0.52	45 (6)	0.65	32 (3)	0.61	29 (3)	0.66	42 (5)	0.60	45 (9)	0.60	32 (3)	0.63	29 (2)	0.67	77 (-)	0.52	31 (3)	0.65	42 (6)	0.59
Hungary, 1992-93	32 (3)	0.77	63 (#)	0.53	39 (4)	0.69	47 (7)	0.60	32 (6)	0.67	48 (5)	0.62	44 (4)	0.64	41 (7)	0.63	35 (3)	0.72	69 (-)	0.52	31 (3)	0.74	52 (11)	0.57
Norway, 1988-89	38 (3)	0.70	53 (8)	0.59	45 (4)	0.69	40 (7)	0.57	37 (6)	0.68	45 (4)	0.62	39 (3)	0.70	47 (6)	0.60	43 (4)	0.67	43 (7)	0.59	42 (4)	0.66	44 (5)	0.62
Slovenia, 1994-95	45 (4)	0.85	56 (28)	0.58	53 (7)	0.70	45 (7)	0.70	27 (12)	0.76	57 (8)	0.67	55 (6)	0.71	33 (9)	0.69	45 (4)	0.82	83 (-)	0.55	24 (3)	0.85	57 (8)	0.66
Spain, 1994-95	54 (12)	0.71	# (#)	0.41	# (#)	0.44	87 (-)	0.53	61 (20)	0.57	# (#)	0.47	# (#)	0.49	118 (-)	0.51	63 (19)	0.59	# (#)	0.42	70 (-)	0.54	# (#)	0.47
Post first-union parenthood																								
Austria, 1995-96	134 (#)	0.54	# (#)	0.25	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.39	# (#)	0.38	# (#)	0.36	# (#)	0.32	# (#)	0.40	199 (-)	0.51	# (#)	0.24	# (#)	0.48	# (#)	0.29
Belgium, 1991-92	# (#)	0.42	# (#)	0.19	# (#)	0.28	# (#)	0.28	# (#)	0.24	# (#)	0.31	# (#)	0.26	# (#)	0.31	# (#)	0.37	# (#)	0.18	# (#)	0.31	# (#)	0.24
Estonia, 1994	71 (9)	0.63	# (#)	0.33	# (#)	0.46	# (#)	0.43	# (#)	0.50	# (#)	0.42	# (#)	0.47	# (#)	0.44	84 (10)	0.59	# (#)	0.32	84 (-)	0.54	# (#)	0.42
Finland, 1989-90	# (#)	0.48	# (#)	0.26	# (#)	0.36	# (#)	0.32	# (#)	0.36	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.32	# (#)	0.36	# (#)	0.45	# (#)	0.23	# (#)	0.44	# (#)	0.28
France, 1994	# (#)	0.49	# (#)	0.25	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.33	# (#)	0.32	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.32	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.45	# (#)	0.25	# (#)	0.45	# (#)	0.26
Germany, 1992	# (#)	0.48	# (#)	0.20	# (#)	0.35	# (#)	0.33	# (#)	0.32	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.30	# (#)	0.35	# (#)	0.40	# (#)	0.20	# (#)	0.36	# (#)	0.31
Hungary, 1992-93	89 (15)	0.57	# (#)	0.30	# (#)	0.45	# (#)	0.40	# (#)	0.42	# (#)	0.42	# (#)	0.42	# (#)	0.42	102 (#)	0.54	# (#)	0.26	81 (11)	0.59	# (#)	0.32
Norway, 1988-89	# (#)	0.43	# (#)	0.25	# (#)	0.36	# (#)	0.29	# (#)	0.36	# (#)	0.32	# (#)	0.31	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.41	# (#)	0.20	# (#)	0.39	# (#)	0.27
Slovenia, 1994-95	73 (12)	0.61	# (#)	0.31	# (#)	0.47	# (#)	0.43	# (#)	0.49	# (#)	0.43	# (#)	0.48	# (#)	0.40	73 (10)	0.62	# (#)	0.23	57 (19)	0.62	# (#)	0.40
Spain, 1994-95	# (#)	0.41	# (#)	0.19	# (#)	0.26	# (#)	0.26	# (#)	0.23	# (#)	0.27	# (#)	0.29	# (#)	0.20	# (#)	0.34	# (#)	0.18	# (#)	0.30	# (#)	0.23

Source.- FFS data. # transition took place in less than half of the cases. – SE could not be calculated.

Hypothesis 1d: Persons whose first union was a marriage were less likely to form a second union than those previously in a consensual union in Austria, Finland, France, and Norway. In the other countries, no statistical differences could be discerned. In all countries 50% of respondents whose first union was consensual were in a new relationship within 3 and 5 years, with the exception of Spain where the median was 10. The median time in entering a second union after marriage was between 37 months in Estonia and 10 years in France, while in Spain this occurred in just under 50% of cases. If we'd control for the other variables, persons from the FFS countries who came from a consensual union were still slightly, though significantly, more likely to enter a second union than those who were married.

Hypothesis 1e: In all but Norway was there a significant difference in re-partnering according to the duration of the first union. Indeed, in the 10 countries as a whole, the overall odds after controlling for the other factors was 1.3 in favour of the first relationships of that lasted less than 5 years. The median time that it took for persons whose first relationship lasted less than 60 months to enter a second union was between 2.5 (Germany) and 5 years (Spain). On the other hand, this ranged between 3.5 years (Estonia) and 11 years (Austria) for longer first unions, while in France and Spain the mean "waiting time" could not be calculated given that only, respectively, 47% and 42% of the respondents entered a second union.

Hypothesis 1f. As a whole, persons who were not yet parents were less likely to enter a second union (odds = 1.30). In terms of the timing of union entry for the individual countries, in all but Belgium, Estonia and Norway those who had no children from their first relationship started a new relationship on average significantly quicker than those who were parents: the median was around 3 years (Belgium 4 years, Spain 6 years) while for those with children from their first relationship half were in a relationship after 3.0-5.5 years in all but Austria (10 years). In France and Spain it actually occurred in less than 50% of the cases.

Summarising the results for post first-union re-partnering: not only the younger, more recent cohorts, men, those coming from a consensual union and those without previous parenthood were more likely to re-partner after the dissolution of the first union, they were also likely to do so earlier than those with opposing characteristics<sup>3</sup>. Appendix Figures 1a-

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<sup>3</sup> Combinations between any of these variables were not extensively tested due to the resulting small sample size.



If show that the survival curves do not converge in those countries where differences between the tested categories were statistically significant.

#### **4.2.- Post first-union parenthood**

In a similar way that entering into new unions was analysed, survival functions of the time from the end of the first union to new parenthood give a view of the intensity and speed. As results in Table 3 and Appendix Figure 2 show, however, these transitions took considerably longer than re-partnering. This is of no surprise as in the vast majority of cases parenthood ensues a relationship. In fact, in most countries less than 50% became parents after a first union separation. This is why Table 4 also shows the cumulative percentage after 200 months.

Hypothesis 2a: According to the survival analysis, sex differences in new parenthood after the dissolution of the first union are only significant in Belgium and Estonia (where in Belgium maternities actually occur faster). As to the timing of new parenthood, only in Estonia and Slovenia did just under half of men and about 43% of women become parents 200 months after the end of the first union. Spain observed the lowest proportions (23% of men and 27% of women, respectively). However, it is interesting to point that controlling for other factors, women have an overall higher odd to become post-divorce parents. An important mediating factor in this is the condition of being in a new relationship, something which we have seen is more likely to occur among men.

Hypothesis 2b: The age at which the first relationship dissolved had a large effect on the timing of subsequent parenthood in each country: even after controlling for the other factors the odds were about twice as high if the break-up occurred before the age of 25. Moreover, about half of them eventually became parents (again) (in Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia about 60%). At the same time, for those who were older the proportion ranged between just one-fifth (in Belgium and Spain) and one-third (Estonia).

Hypothesis 2c: On the other hand, few cohort differences in new parenthood timing could be discerned, only in Austria did the younger cohort experience new parenthood significantly faster. However, this may partly be the result of selection bias as the older cohorts were more likely to have completed their reproductive span. Indeed, after

controlling for the other factors, the overall odds were 1.7 times higher for the younger cohort.

Hypothesis 2d: Only in Austria, and a lesser extent Germany, did individuals coming from a consensual union significantly differ in the timing of post-first union parenthood. In terms of country patterns, Estonia and Slovenia showed (again) the highest proportions (just under 50% experienced parenthood after the breakup of the first union), although against expectations, this was higher among the formerly married. In the FFS countries as a whole, and after controlling for the other factors, were those whose first union was consensual slightly, though significantly, more likely to become parents than the formally married.

Hypothesis 2e: The effect of the duration of the first union on post-divorce parenthood was obvious in all countries: after 200 months since the breakup of the first union, the proportion that became parents was about twice as high among those whose first unions lasted less than 5 years than among those with longer-lasting first unions, with similar results in terms of the odds ratio after controlling for other factors. In Austria, Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia more than 50% of respondents with a first union that lasted less than 5 years became parents after the break-up.

Hypothesis 2f: Only in Spain was there no difference between being a parent or not at the end of the first union and post-first union childbearing, while in Belgium and Germany differences were only significant at the 10% level. The overall odds ratio after controlling for other factors was 1.3. The probability of parenthood after the dissolution of the first union for non-parents was highest in Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia, with more than half becoming parents before the 200th months since the breakup. For those who were parents at the time of the union dissolution, between a quarter and a third became parents again (about 40% in Estonia and Slovenia).

### **4.3.- Gender and country differences explored in more detail**

While the survival analyses allowed us to provide detail on country-specific timing and final proportions of second unions and post break-up parenthood, there were not enough cases to be able to go into much more detail. We therefore decided to also analyse gender differences by pooling the data and produce the same linear regression models as before

but for men and women separately in order to calculate odds ratios for each variable. We again controlled for the other characteristics and the country effects.

As it can be observed in Table 5 female and male odds differ in both the entry into a second union and in the entry into parenthood after first-union breakup. This table shows gender differences in two ways. First according to individual and union characteristics and second, in terms of cross-country differences, and in each case controlling for the other characteristics.

With regard to the odds of entering into a second union, the condition of being younger instead of older, having come from a consensual union rather than a marriage and not being a parent vs. being one were all significantly higher for women than for men. For instance, odds were 3.0 times higher for women who under the age of 25 at the moment the first union dissolved compared to those who were aged 25 or older, but 2.5 times higher for men. Conversely, the male odds ratio that compares the younger with the older birth cohort was higher than for women. Regarding the effect of first union duration on union formation there were no statistically significant gender differences.

As to the odds of becoming parents again after the a first-union break-up, only the effect of being younger than 25 produced higher odds for women than for men, while being in a union produced higher odds for men (although even among women the odds of becoming a post-divorce parent was 11 times higher for those who had been in a second union compared to those who had not). Regarding the other factors, no gender differences could be ascertained.

With regards to cross-country differences between women and men after controlling for all covariates, the odds to enter a second union are lowest in Spain (the reference) for both women and men and highest in Slovenia (the odds for both women and men equalled 2.1), Estonia (women only) and Austria (men only). There was no statistical significance in the gender differences. As to the cross-country differences in becoming post-divorce parents, the lowest odds for women are observed in Norway and Finland and highest in France. These were the only two groups of countries where inter-country differences were statistically significant. Country differences among men were much larger: with Spain as the reference category odds ratios ranged between 3.9 in Estonia to 0.9 in Belgium, although sex differences were only apparent in Estonia and Norway.

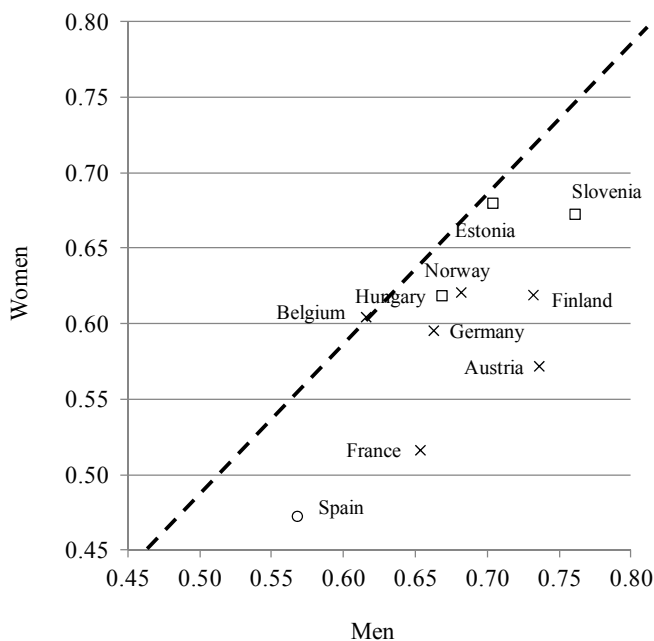
**Table 5.- Total, female and male odds ratios (OR) of the entry into a) a second union and b) entry into a parenthood after first-union breakup according to characteristic**

<i>a) . Second union after a first-union break-up</i>					
	Females		Males		F:M
	OR	95% C.I.	OR	95% C.I.	OR
Sex: women/men					
Age at breakup: <25/25+	2,99	2,77, 3,23	2,46	2,20, 2,77	1,21
Birth cohort: 1956-76:/1938-55	1,77	1,66, 1,89	2,69	2,42, 2,99	0,66
1 <sup>st</sup> union: consensual/marriage.	1,25	1,17, 1,34	0,92	0,83, 1,02	1,36
Duration 1 <sup>st</sup> union: < 5 yrs/5+ yrs	1,23	1,14, 1,33	1,46	1,31, 1,64	0,84
Parent prior to breakup: no/ yes	1,56	1,46, 1,68	1,13	1,02, 1,26	1,38
2 <sup>nd</sup> union: no/yes					
Country					
Belgium, 1991-92	1,56	1,28, 1,90	1,54	1,16, 2,05	1,02
Estonia, 1994	2,31	1,92, 2,78	1,57	1,18, 2,08	1,47
Finland, 1989-90	1,64	1,38, 1,95	1,72	1,30, 2,28	0,95
France, 1994	1,23	1,04, 1,46	1,42	1,09, 1,84	0,87
Germany, 1992	1,53	1,29, 1,82	1,46	1,12, 1,90	1,05
Hungary, 1992-93	1,55	1,29, 1,85	1,45	1,09, 1,92	1,07
Norway, 1988-89	1,64	1,38, 1,96	1,58	1,20, 2,09	1,04
Slovenia, 1994-1995	2,08	1,65, 2,62	2,08	1,42, 3,03	1,00
Spain, 1994-95	1,00	0,79, 1,26	1,00	0,69, 1,46	1,00
Austria 1995-96	1,38	1,16, 1,63	1,97	1,47, 2,63	0,70
<i>b). Parenthood after first-union breakup</i>					
	Females		Males		F:M
	OR	95% C.I.	OR	95% C.I.	OR
Sex: women/ men					
Age at breakup: <25/25+	2,16	1,98, 2,36	1,59	1,40, 1,80	1,36
Birth cohort: 1956-76/1938-55	1,64	1,52, 1,77	1,88	1,67, 2,11	0,87
1st union: consensual/marriage.	1,14	1,06, 1,24	1,14	1,02, 1,29	1,00
Duration 1st union: < 5 yrs/5+ yrs	1,90	1,74, 2,09	1,59	1,40, 1,80	1,20
Parent prior to breakup: no/yes	1,42	1,31, 1,53	1,30	1,15, 1,46	1,09
2nd union: no/yes	10,96	10,06, 11,93	50,55	39,02, 65,50	0,22
Country					
Belgium, 1991-92	1,47	1,15, 1,88	0,95	0,66, 1,37	1,54
Estonia, 1994	1,41	1,12, 1,77	3,87	2,71, 5,53	0,36
Finland, 1989-90	0,94	0,76, 1,17	1,38	0,97, 1,95	0,68
France, 1994	1,50	1,21, 1,86	1,46	1,04, 2,04	1,03
Germany, 1992	1,01	0,82, 1,25	1,34	0,96, 1,88	0,75
Hungary, 1992-93	1,42	1,13, 1,78	2,36	1,65, 3,37	0,60
Norway, 1988-89	0,82	0,66, 1,02	1,64	1,16, 2,32	0,50
Slovenia, 1994-1995	1,32	1,00, 1,73	2,43	1,58, 3,72	0,54
Spain, 1994-95	1,00	0,76, 1,32	1,00	0,65, 1,53	1,00
Austria 1995-96	1,33	1,07, 1,66	1,52	1,07, 2,17	0,87

Source.- FFS data

Regarding gender differences, we have seen that men experience a second union faster and more often than women. However, this gender asymmetry varies substantially among countries (Figure 3a), being almost negligible in Belgium and Estonia, a bit higher in Hungary, Norway and Germany, followed by Slovenia, Spain and Finland and highest in France and Austria.

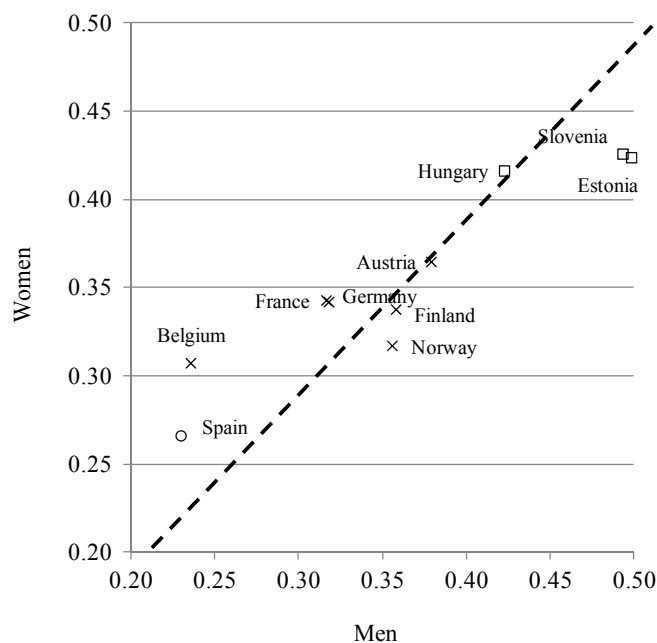
**Figure 3a.- Proportion who experienced a second union (during first 200 months since breakup), men vs. Women**



Data source: FFS.

Concerning the transition into post first-union parenthood (Figure 3b), the gender gap is much smaller than in repartnering. In Belgium, Spain, Germany and France, the proportion of women who experience post-union parenthood is actually higher than for men. In Hungary and Austria, the proportions of both sexes are almost symmetrical, whereas in Finland and Norway slightly less so, and in Slovenia and Estonia are most symmetrical, men reach post first-union fatherhood earlier than women reach motherhood.

**Figure 3b.- Proportion who experienced post first-union parenthood (during first 200 months since breakup)**

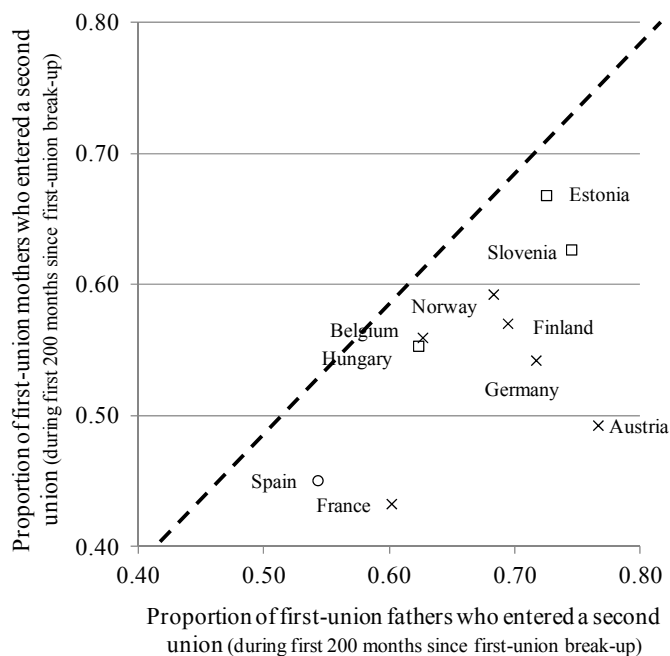


Data source: FFS.

#### 4.4.- The effect of being a parent at the time of first-union dissolution on family formation

When comparing the proportions of those experiencing a second marriage with the proportions of those who have children after the breakup of the first union, the country clusters for women are almost the same as those for men. However, it is quite clear that after the breakup of the first-union mothers do not have the same chances as fathers to enter a second partnership. Indeed, as it can be seen in Figure 4, motherhood penalises women much more than fatherhood penalises men. The country clusters are the same as in Figure 3a (proportion of females and males who entered into a second union), except for Austria, where gender asymmetry was highest, thus suggesting that parenthood is responsible for part of the gender asymmetry in the transition to a second union.

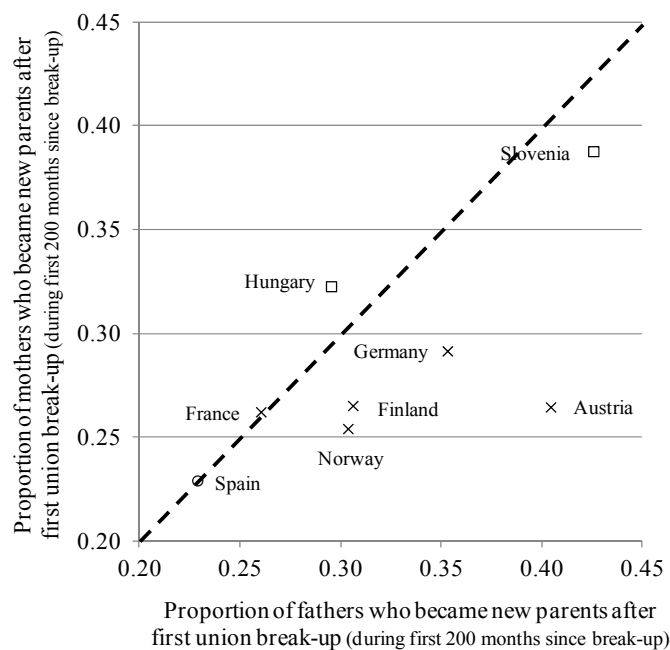
**Figure 4.- Proportion of first-union fathers who entered a second union vs. proportion of first-union mothers who entered a second union**



Data source: FFS

Finally, Figure 5 displays the proportion of fathers and mothers who became new parents after first-union breakup. In this figure the position of the countries differ in comparison with the previous one. Hungarian women who were already mothers at the moment of first-union breakup reached new motherhood faster than fathers. In France and Spain there was no gender asymmetry. On the other hand, Slovenian, German, Finnish and Norwegian men became fathers slightly more often than women mothers, while in Austria the gender gap was largest. A possible explanation for the differences between Figures 5 (proportions of first-union fathers who entered a second union) and 6 (proportions becoming fathers and mothers after the first-union breakup) are the characteristics of the partner of the second union regarding parenthood, something that is not been analyzed here. For instance, the union commitment effect on fertility (when a couple has no shared children, the wish to become parents (again) may increase) and the parenthood effect (the desire of childless partnerships to become parents) are likely to play an important role (see Vikat et. Al. 1999, Buber & Prskawetz 2000, Thomson et al. 2002, and Prskawetz et al. 2003).

**Figure 5.- Proportion of fathers who became new parents after first union breakup vs. proportion of mothers who became new parents after first union breakup**



Data source: FFS

## 5.- Discussion

We started by analysing country and time differences in the total divorce rate, i.e. the mean number of divorces per marriage in a given calendar year, an indicator that is sensitive to economic, social and legislative changes. We particularly saw this for Eastern European countries in the 1990s. Overall, northern and southern Europe are at either end of the divorce spectrum, with western, central and eastern European countries usually taking on a position in the middle. Exceptions to the latter include Poland that shows a similar pattern to southern Europe, and the Baltic States who resemble more to northern Europe.

Our next step was to describe patterns in remarriage rates of divorced persons. These appeared to decline, with sex- and country-specific differences remaining fairly constant. However, in countries with traditionally high levels of divorce rates (e.g. Scandinavia), remarriage is not necessarily the preferred re-partnering option for the divorced population. Moreover, while part of the international differences in re-partnering and re-parenting can



be accredited to differences in divorce legislation (González, Viitanen, 2009), there are also other factors that influence it. As we were able to show with data from the FFS by means of linear regression, that being male, under 25, having had a consensual union as first union that was also childless was often associated with both post first-union trajectories in the countries that were analysed. The results have been summarised in Table 6. The countries where this was almost always the case, i.e. in Austria, Germany, France, Finland and Spain seem to exemplify a more traditional pattern of re-partnering and post first-union parenthood, while in those countries with few significant differences between the dichotomous variables analysed have a more heterogeneous pattern in post first-union trajectories (i.e. Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary and Belgium), with Norway situated somewhere in the middle.

**Table 6.- Statistically significant differences in repartnering and post first-union parenthood according to age at breakup, birth cohort, sex, 1st union type, first union duration and already being a parent. Summary of result**

	<b>Repartnering</b>	<b>New parenthood</b>
<b>1. Sex</b> Men vs. Women	Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia, Spain	Belgium <sup>a</sup> , Estonia
<b>2. Age at breakup</b> Dissolution before age 25 vs. 25+	All countries	All countries
<b>3. Birth cohort</b> Born 1938-55 vs. 1956-76.	Austria, Finland, Hungary, Norway	Austria
<b>4. First union type</b> Consensual unions s. Marriage	Austria, Finland, France, Norway	Austria, Germany
<b>5. Duration first union</b> 0-59 months vs. 60+ months	All countries, except for Norway	All countries
<b>6. First union fertility</b> No vs. yes	Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Spain	All countries, except for Spain

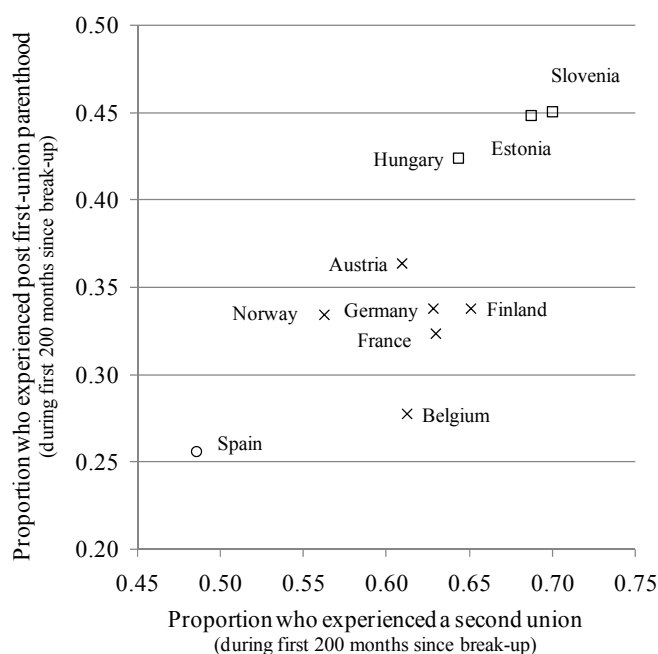
**Source.-** FFS data (own calculations).

**Note:** <sup>a</sup> Motherhood was more likely to occur after separation or divorce than fatherhood.

Finally, survival analysis was performed to estimate final proportions of respondents experiencing post-first-union transitions to re-partnering and (new) parenthood for the 10 European countries (Table 4). Considering both transitions simultaneously, three geographically bound patterns can be distinguished, similar to the one described above:

Eastern European countries where both new unions and post-first-union parenthood occur relatively often (Hungary, Estonia and Slovenia); Western and Northern European countries where new unions may be as frequent as in the first group but where the transition to new parenthood is less likely (Austria, Germany, Finland, France, and Norway); and the Southern European country Spain, where both transitions are least likely to occur (Figure 6). The geographical pattern is similar for men and women (see Appendix 3) and roughly coincides with the three groups of countries signalled by Prskawetz et al. (2003) in their cohort analysis on stepfamily formation: namely i) post-socialist countries, ii) northern and central Europe, and iii) southern Europe<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 6.- Proportion who experienced a second union vs. proportion who experienced post-first union parenthood**



Data source.- FFS

<sup>4</sup> Using female FFS samples Prskawetz et al. (2003) illustrated the following important differences among countries: In former socialist countries 70% of women who entered a second union had already a child, though among those countries, heterogeneity concerning the frequency of union dissolution and re-partnering is high. In addition, Estonia and Hungary were signalled as societies with a high prevalence of children in first unions and relatively high frequency of separation and re-partnering. In contrast, western European countries together with Finland and Norway displayed a relatively low proportion of women with children among those who entered a second union and a lower frequency of second unions compared to former socialist countries. Finally, in southern Europe and Belgium the prevalence of second unions and re-partnering are the lowest.

In the debate on demographic changes in Europe within the theoretical framework of the Second Demographic Transition, this study also provided evidence of gender-specific cross-country differences in individual trajectories following the breakup of a first union/marriage. The next step in this line of research is to look at possible causes for these differences. Factors that are likely to play an important role include: different divorce legislation as mentioned in the article but which could be studied in more detail; different welfare systems (e.g. generous social protection systems, especially for single parents typical of Scandinavian countries vs. more liberal market lead systems); and the gender symmetry/asymmetry in labour opportunities and wages (see for instance, Uhlenberg, 1989; Sweeney, 1997). While our study concentrated on post-first union dissolution patterns during the latter decades of last century, as sets are becoming available from the Gender and Generation Surveys for the same countries that participated in the FFS, time changes in the rate and timing of repartnering and reparenthood among men, women, the younger and older generation, etc will also need to be studied. Finally, the issue of gender asymmetry in post-divorce family trajectories is worth exploring in more detail given its complexity, not only in relation to the public sphere (e.g. in relation to work opportunities), but also the private sphere (e.g. in relation to gender- and country- specific ideational values). This would provide further light on, for instance, reasons why mostly mothers (rather than women in general) are penalized in the transition to a second partnership compared to men.

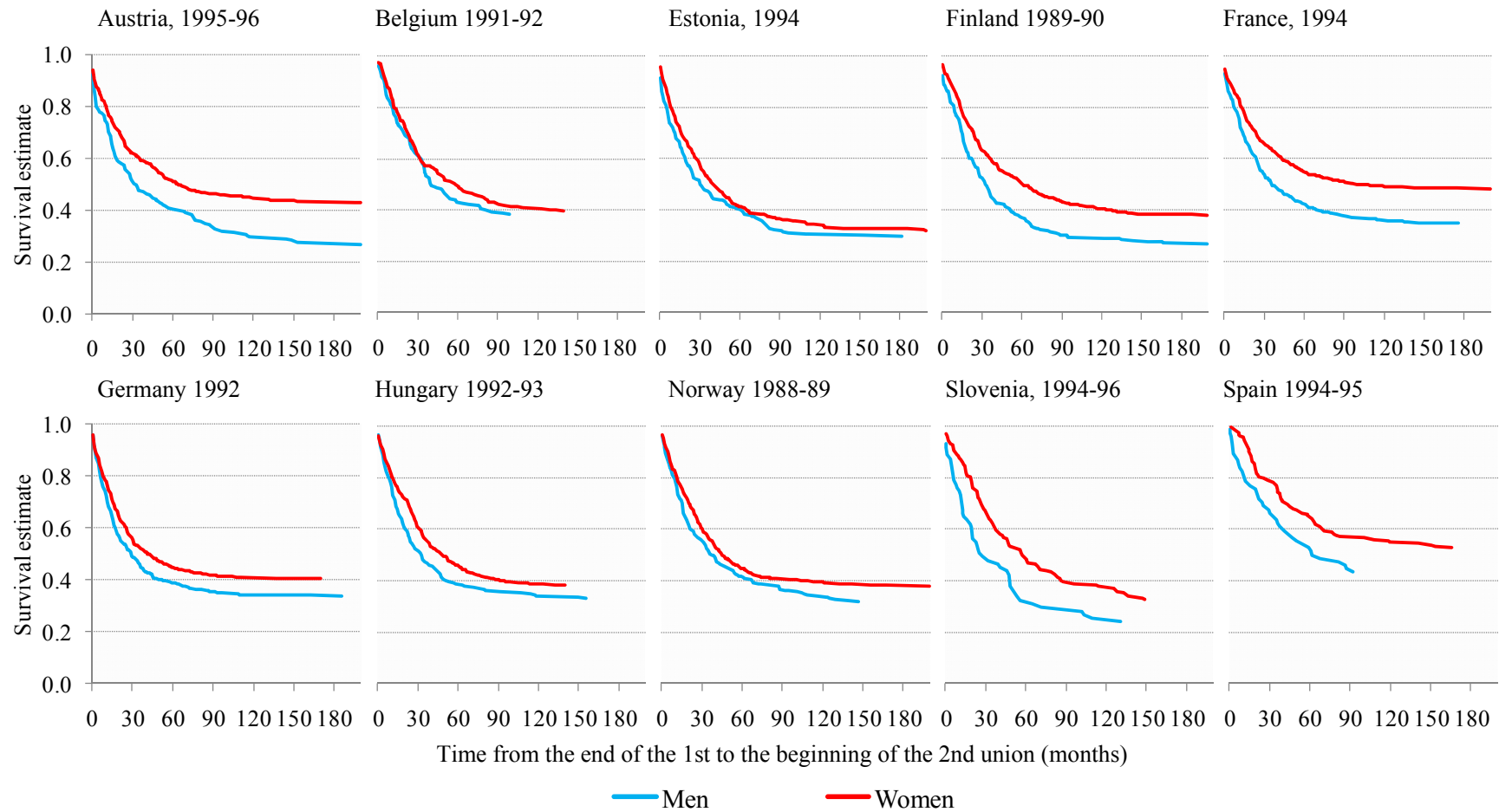
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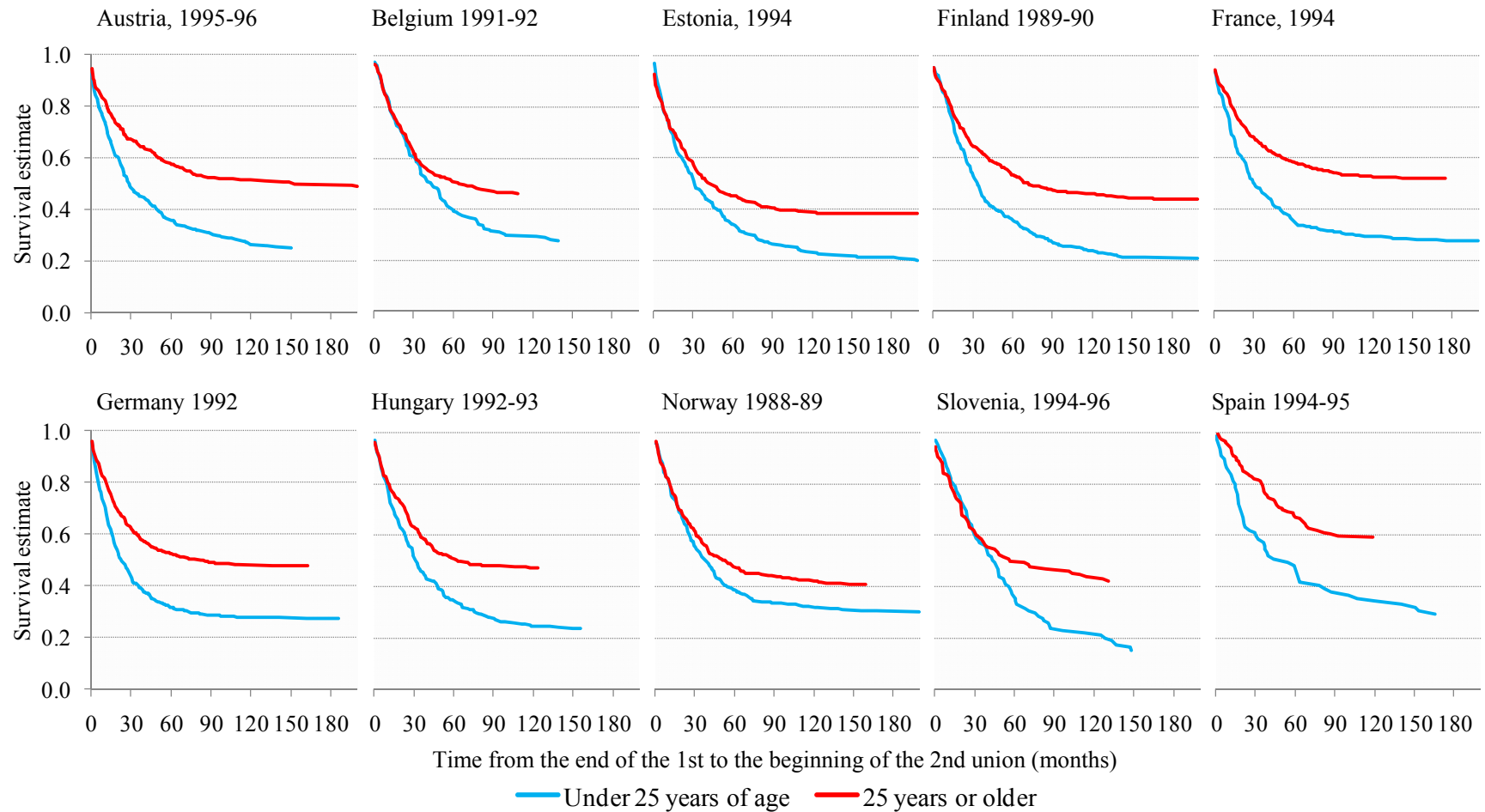
**Appendix:**

**Appendix 1a.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to the beginning of a second by sex**



Source: FFS data

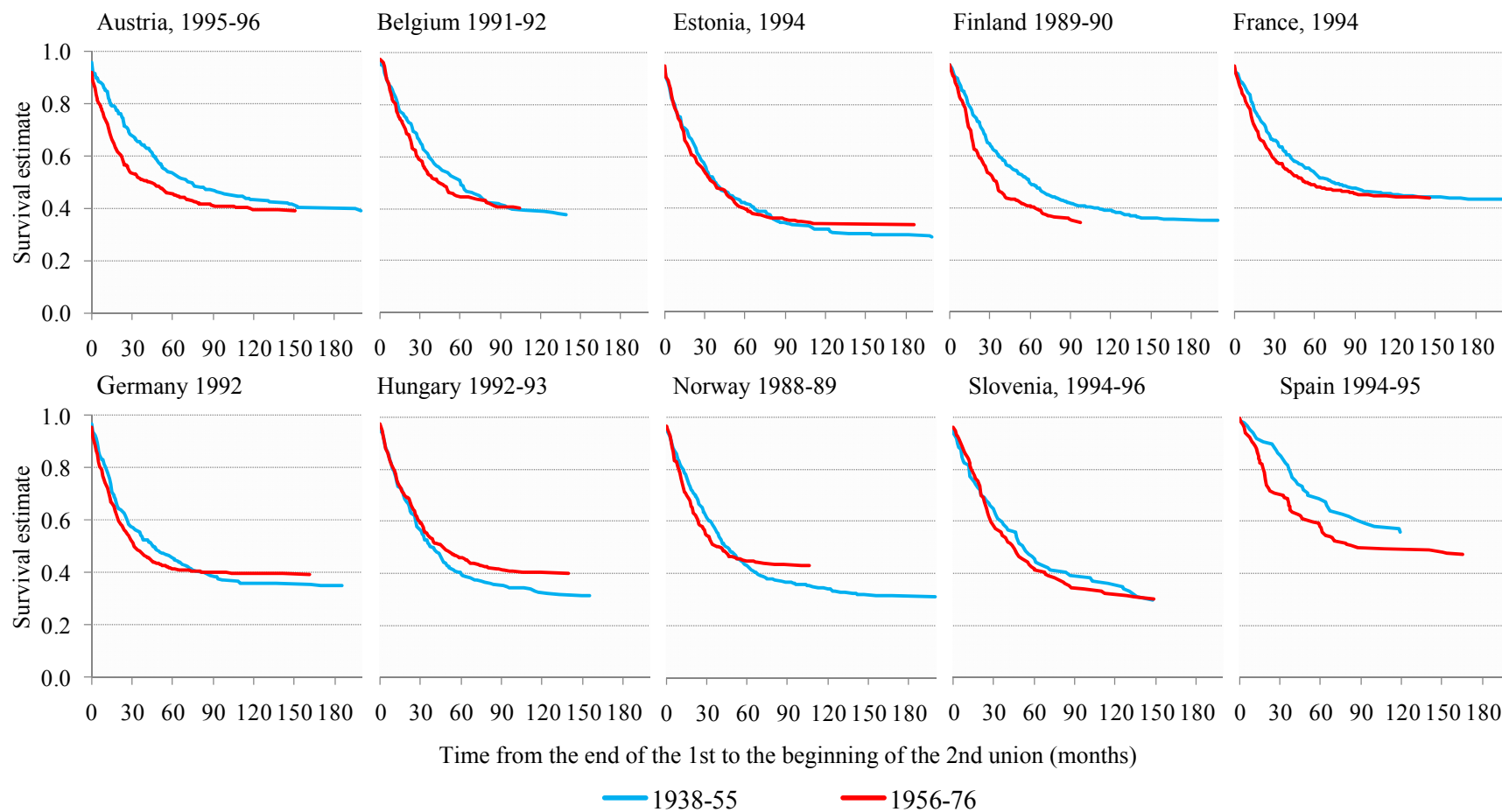
**Appendix 1b.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to the beginning of a second by age**



Source: FFS data

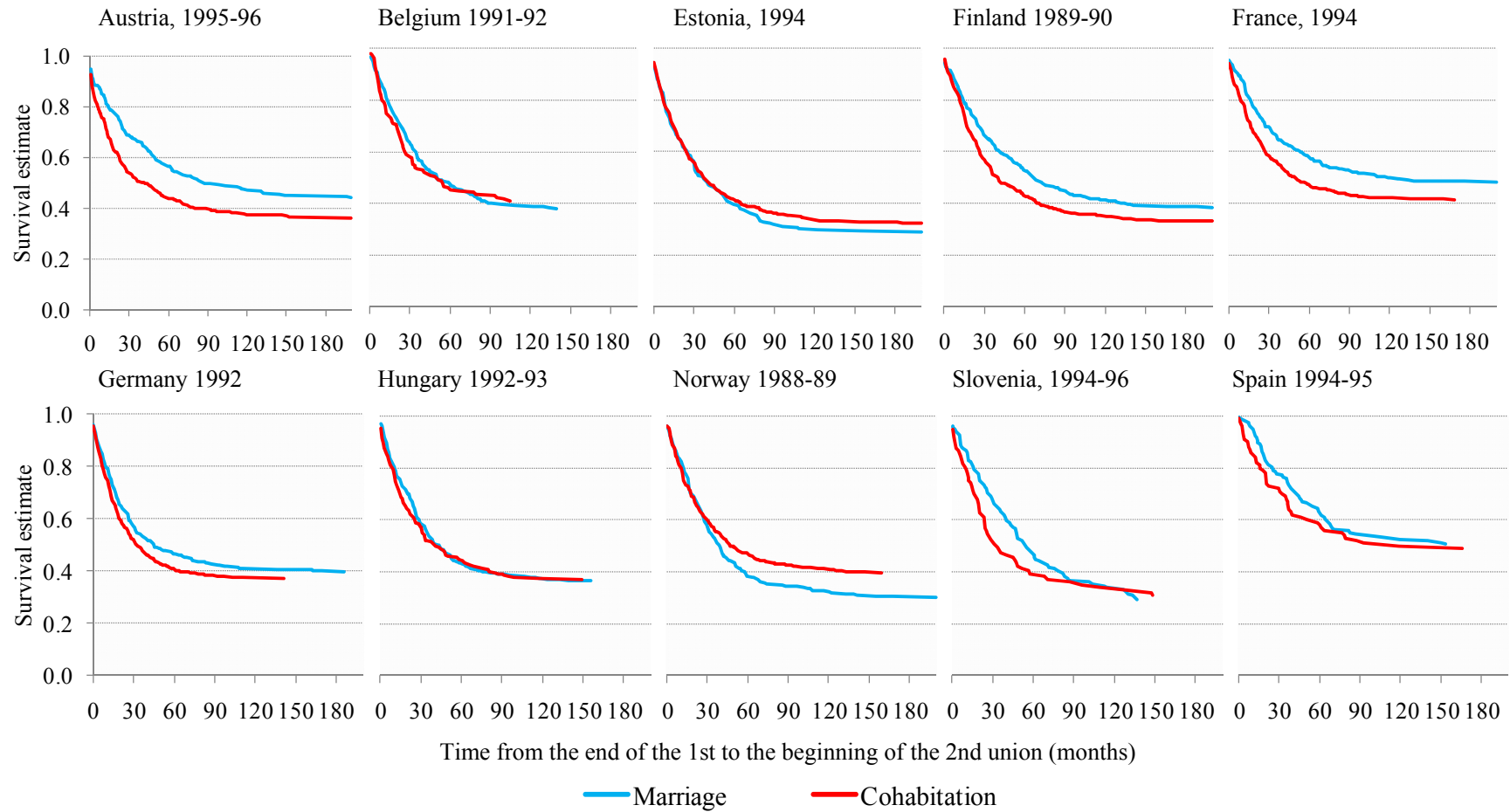


**Appendix 1c.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to the beginning of a second by birth cohort**



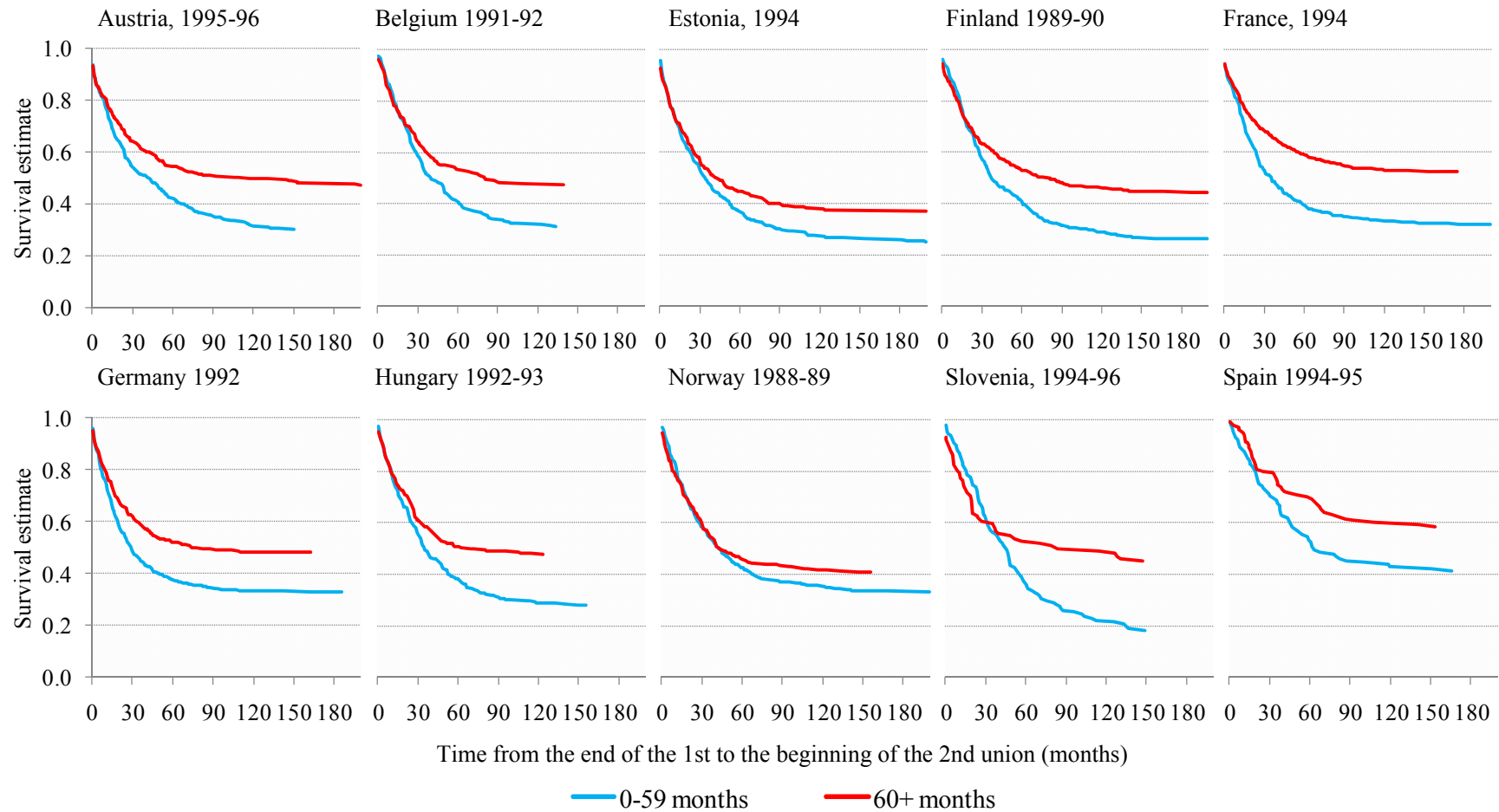
Source: FFS data

**Appendix 1d.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to the beginning of a second by type of first union**



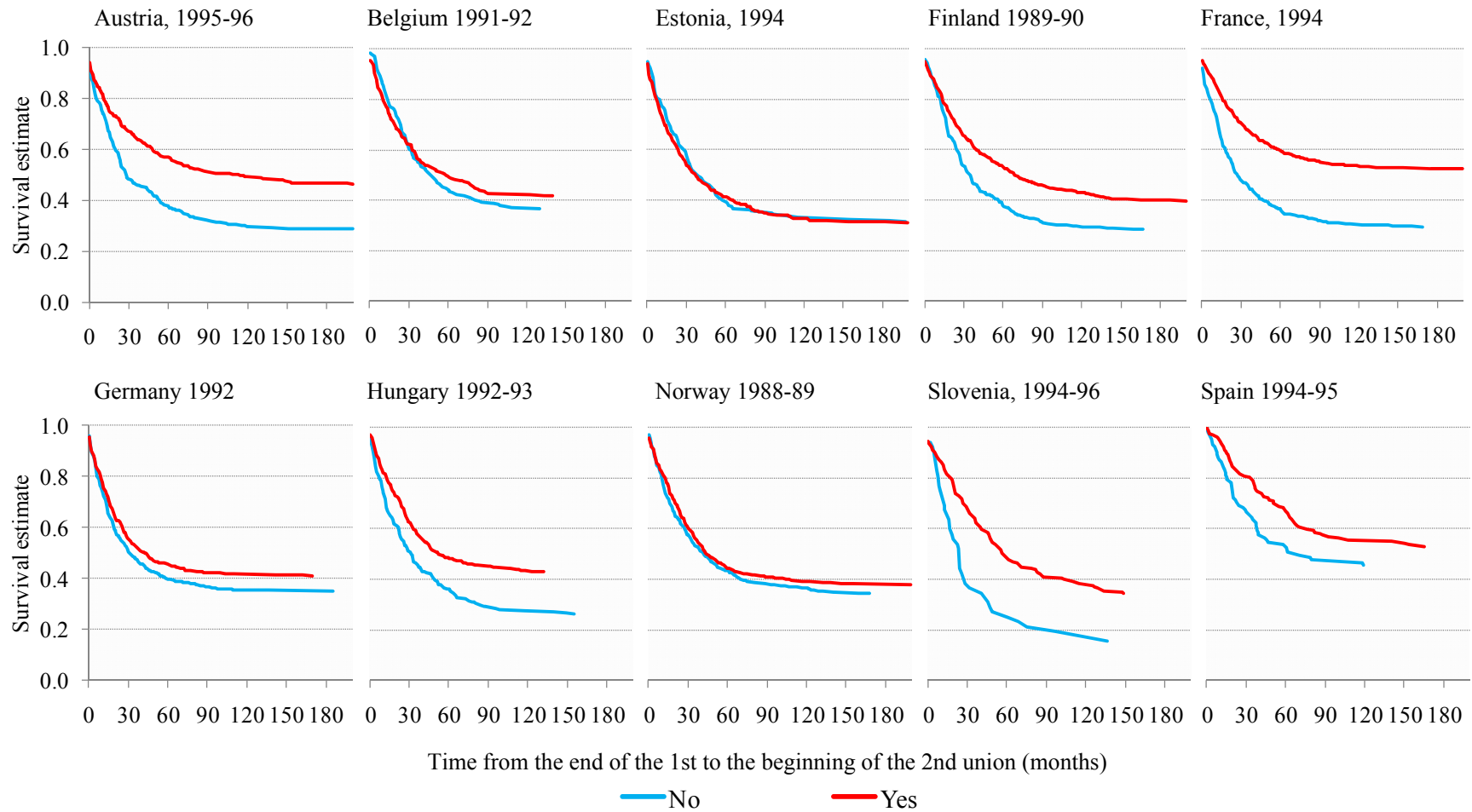
Source: FFS data

**Appendix 1e.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to the beginning of a second by first union duration**



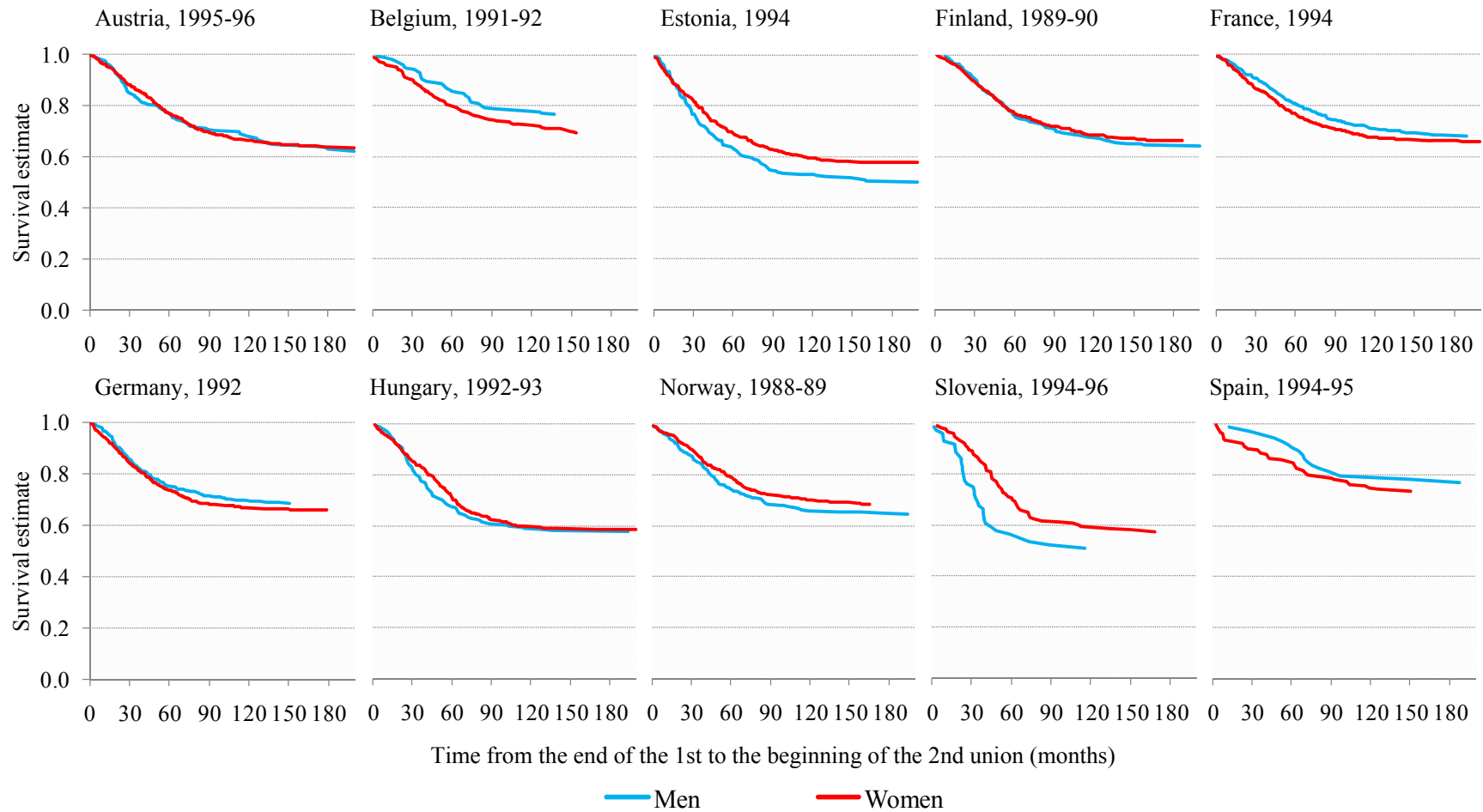
Source: FFS data

**Appendix 1f.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to the beginning of a second by first union parental status**



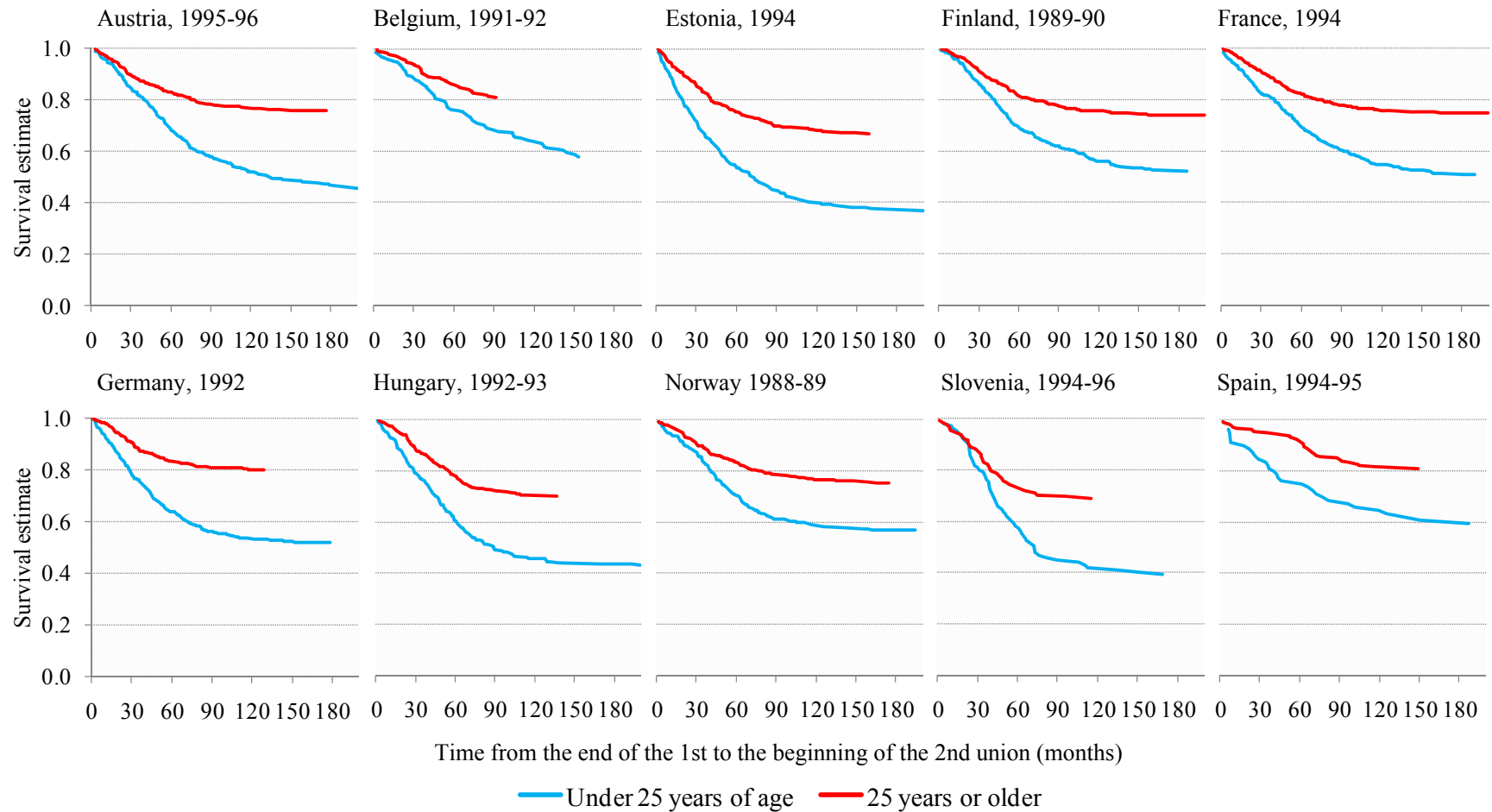
Source: FFS data

**Appendix 2a.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to new parenthood by sex**



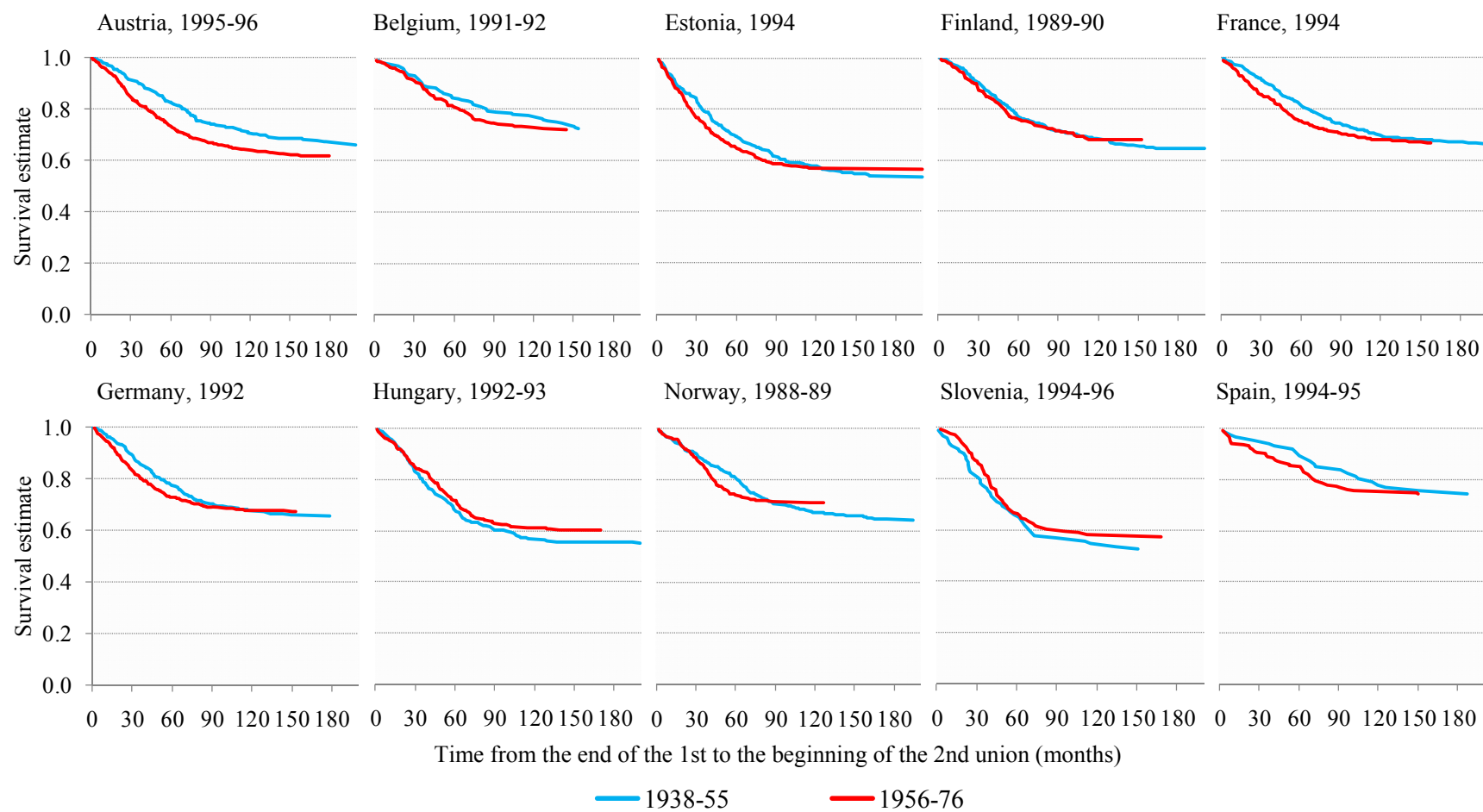
Source: FFS data

**Appendix 2b.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to new parenthood by age**



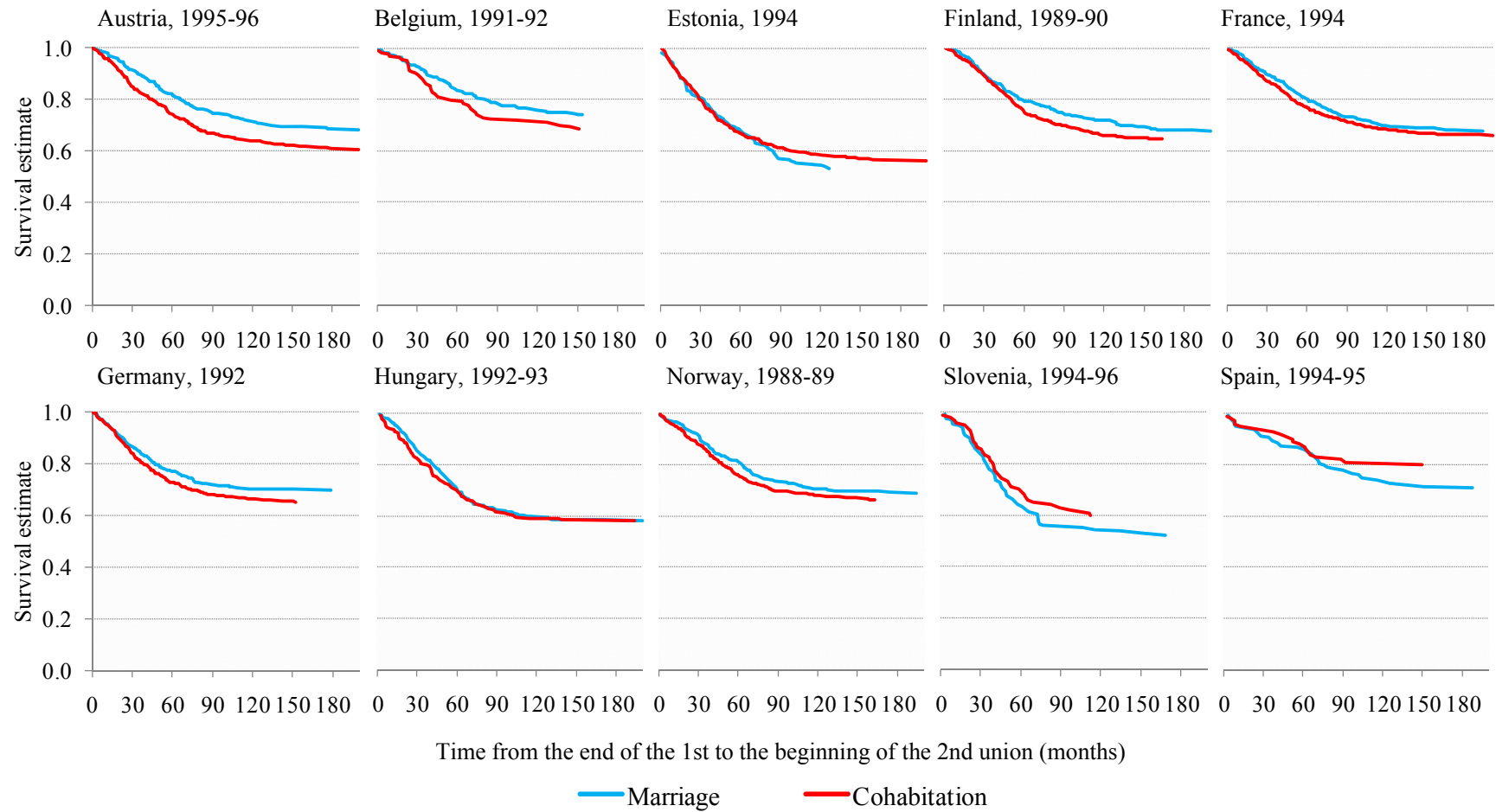
Source: FFS data

**Appendix 2c.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to new parenthood by birth cohort**



Source: FFS data

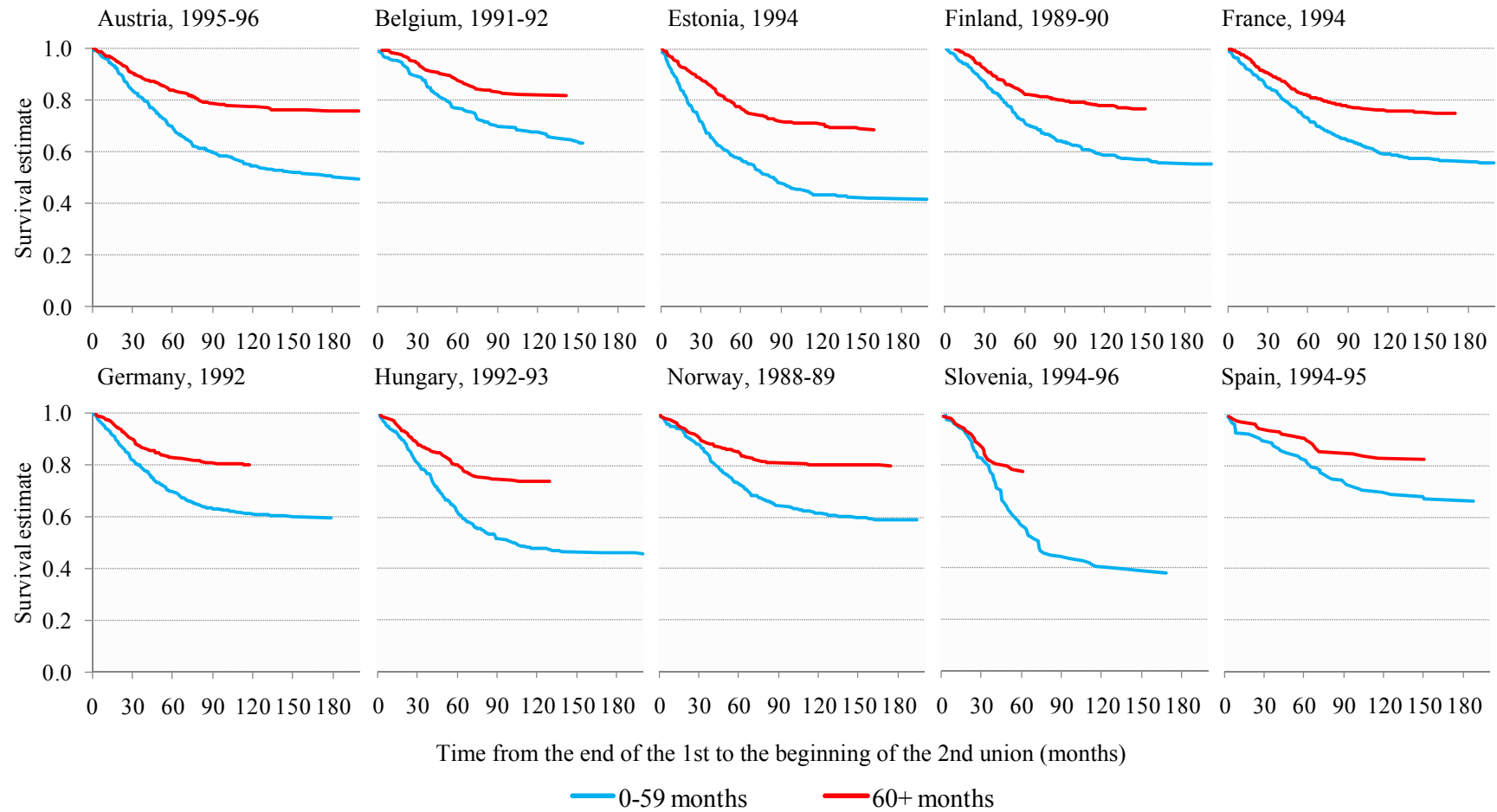
**Appendix 2d.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to new parenthood by type of first union**



Source: FFS data

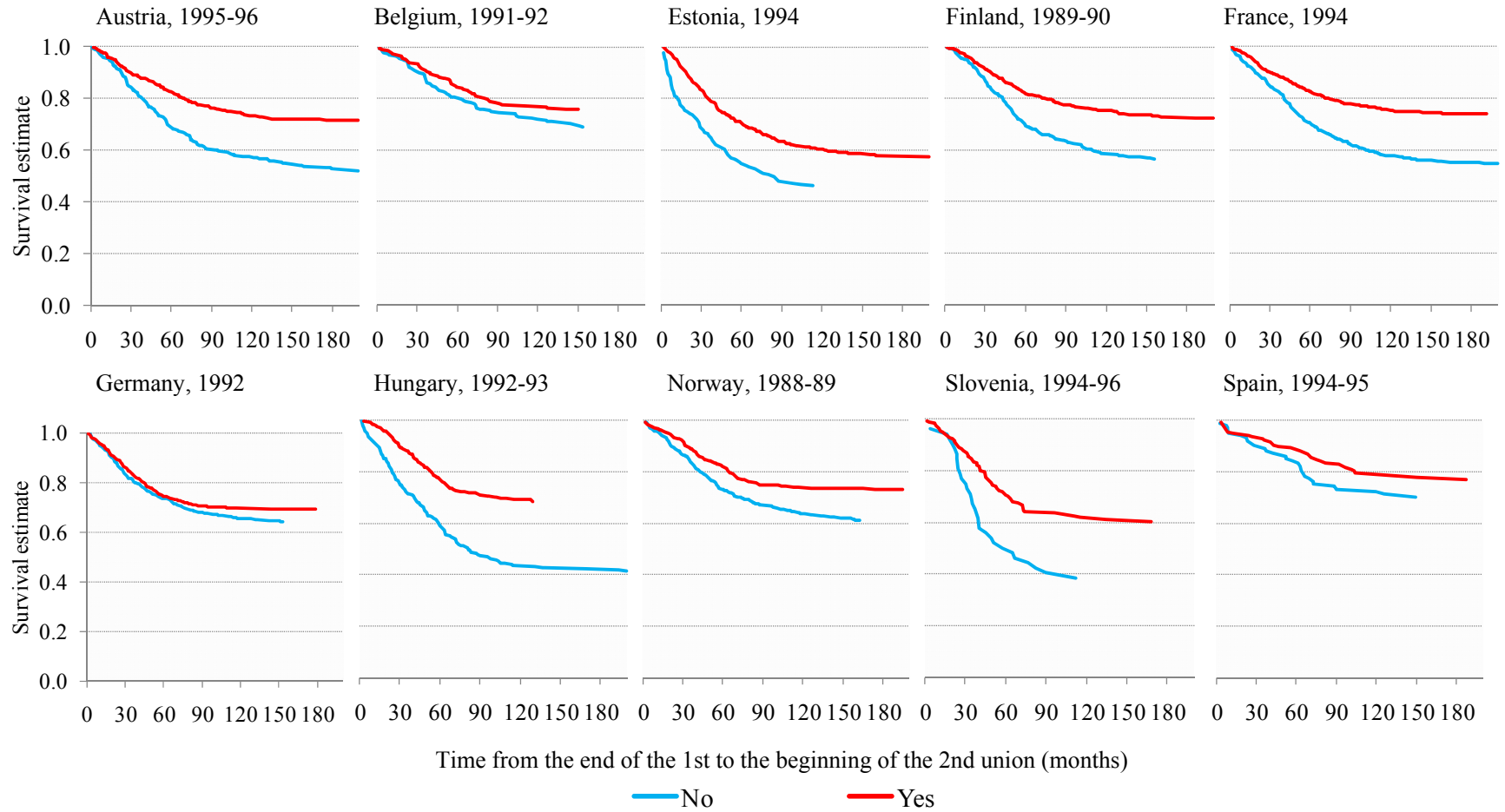


**Appendix 2e.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to new parenthood by first union duration**



Source: FFS data

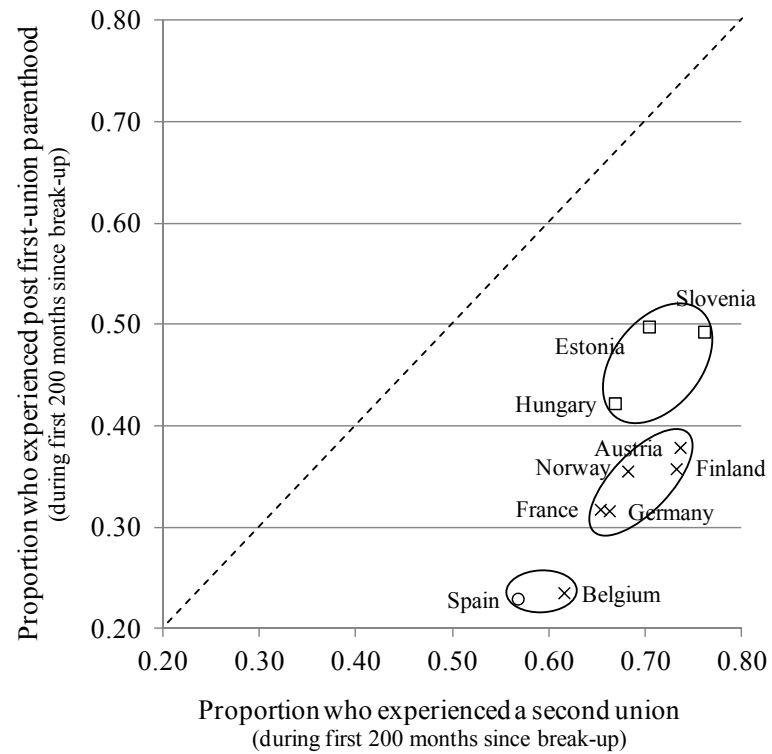
**Appendix 2f.- Survival functions from the end of the first union to new parenthood by first union parental status**



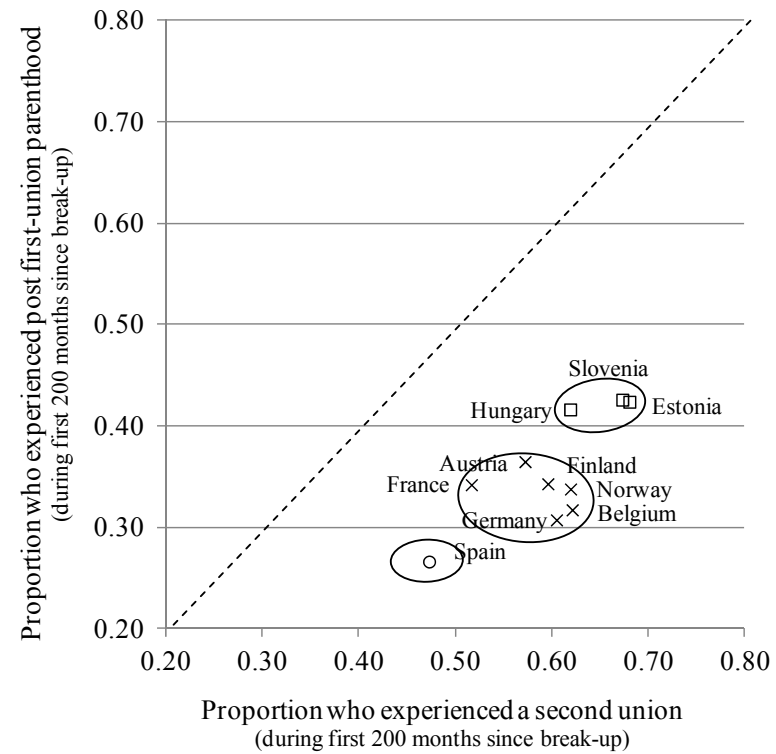
Source: FFS data

**Appendix 3.- Proportion who experienced a second union vs. proportion who experienced post first-union parenthood by sex**

a. Men



b. Females



Source: FFS data