

# Shared Attitudes and Couples' Break-Up Plans

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## Introduction

To decide on that special someone to share one's life with is for many people one of the more essential decisions in life. For a long time, researchers have been occupied with finding out what people are attracted to in a potential partner. One aspect that has been shown to be important is similarity. For instance, partners often share attributes such as education, occupational characteristics, religion and ethnicity (e.g. Kalmijn 1998). It is often assumed that these kinds of similarities will increase the likelihood to stay with a partner, but the evidence for this relationship is mixed (e.g Kraft and Neimann 2009). Perhaps a more important aspect of a relationship than similarities in attributes is whether partners share the notion of what is important in life. Although studies to some extent have addressed this before (see e.g. Levinger and Breedlove 1966; Block et al 1981; Crohan 1992; Gaunt 2006), these studies are often subject to problems such as small samples and methodological problems stemming from difficulties inherent in the most commonly used measures of sharing attitudes. Taking advantage of a fairly large sample as well as partner data in the 2009 YAPS survey, we pose the following specific question: *What effect does sharing notions on the importance of work, family and leisure activities have on couples' break-up plans?* In a later study we will be able to analyze actual partnership break-ups in the years following the 2009 survey, but for this paper we use break-up plans as a proxy of relationship quality.

## Attitude similarity and relationship quality

There is extensive research among psychologists, family therapists etc on the importance of understanding and agreement between spouses for relationship satisfaction and marital 'success' or union stability (Katz 1965, Feng and Baker 1994, Craddock 2007, White and Hatcher 2007, and Luo 2009),

often concluding that marital happiness is related to degree of similarity between the spouses, and that dissimilarity is associated with instability and divorce. Psychologists have also been interested in whether couples increasingly resemble each other over time (Gonzaga et al 2010, Caspi et al 1992, Price and Vandenberg 1979), but results generally show evidence for assortative mating but not for convergence over time. Thus individuals tend to form couples with those who are similar to themselves in personality, interests and values, and there is only a weak effect of adapting to each other when couples have been together for a long time.

Sociologists and demographers have been more interested in individual socio-economic attributes such as education, and homogamy (marriage or union formation between individuals who are, in some culturally important way, similar to each other) has been the focus of considerable research in recent decades ( Kalmijn 1991a, 1991b, and 1998, Smits et al 1998, Blackwell 1998, Raymo and Xie 2000, Henz and Jonsson 2003, Dribe and Nystedt 2011) However, this research is less frequently focused on homogamy as an explanatory factor for relationship quality or partnership break-ups (see however Booth 1980, Heaton 1990, Finnäs 1997, Janssen 2002, Lyngstad 2004, Kraft and Neimann 2009).

Based on research on similarity in attributes, such as education, three theoretical approaches can be distinguished for the relationship between attitude similarity and relationship quality. These are *heterogamy theory*, *micro-economic specialization theory* and what could be called *the 'instrumental' attitudes approach*.

*Heterogamy theory* considers differences to be harmful for relationships, since it implies cultural differences (Eeckhaut et al 2011). Hence, sharing beliefs with a partner would always improve the relationship quality, because it creates a common basis for discussion and to mutual confirmation of behavior and worldviews between the two partners (Lewis and Spanier 1979). Sharing notions on what is important in life could also enlarge the opportunities for the two partners to engage in joint activities, which also might increase the quality of the relation (Kalmijn 1998). From this approach, the more similar a couple is in attitudes, the better their relationship quality would be, regardless of the attitude studied.

*Micro-economic specialization theory* instead suggests that sharing attitudes is positive for relationship quality considering complementary attitudes, but that for attitudes that are substitutes, non-sharing improve relationship satisfaction. (Becker 1981; Eeckhaut et al 2011). The basic principle of the assumption is specialization within the couple, and that partners that complement each other, perhaps

with regard to one partner being career oriented and one being family oriented, could be happier than couples consisting of two career oriented or two family oriented individuals.

This approach can be contrasted to Levinger and Breedlove (1966) who also suggested that the effect of sharing attitudes on relationship quality might depend on the nature of the attitude. But instead of believing in specialization of the partners, they argue that similarities in attitudes mainly is important for attitudes that are 'instrumental' to the relationship, for instance regarding childbearing, childrearing etc. (Levinger and Breedlove 1966). From their approach, similarities in family orientation would hence be more important than similarities in e.g. work orientation that are not as closely connected to the notion of the relationship.

The research on how similarities in attitudes affect relationship satisfaction seems to suggest that attitudes often are important for relationship satisfaction. For example, Gaunt (2006) studied similarity in attitudes and marital satisfaction/positive and negative affect for 248 Jewish-Israeli married couples with children. The attitudes studied incorporated (1) values, (2) gendered personality traits (masculine and feminine (sic.) characteristics), and (3) family role attitudes. Marital satisfaction was measured as an index constructed from 10-items and positive and negative affect was included as indexes measuring whether the respondents had experienced positive or negative feelings during the past two weeks. Gaunt finds positive effects from similarities of partners' general values and personality traits on their marital satisfaction and general wellbeing, but only minor effects from similarities in family role attitudes on marital satisfaction (Gaunt 2006).

Crohan (1992) studied the relationship between marital happiness and spousal consensus of beliefs about marital conflict for 133 black and 149 white couples. From studying correlations between the woman's and the man's answer, she found low levels of agreement between partners. From studying the difference between the man's and the woman's answers (without controls for the answers per se), she found no effect from agreement on marital happiness. This, she however argues could be due to effects from the answers as such (what we from now on will call "**belief effects**", i.e. effects from being positive or negative to a certain statement). She constructed compound measures, combining the man's and the woman's answers and find that couples where both partners believe conflicts can be solved through discussion report higher satisfaction than couples where both partners believe the opposite. It is hence not the similarity per se, but the belief of the couple that affects satisfaction (Crohan 1992).

Block et al (1981) study the effect of parents' agreement on childrearing (measured by the 91 items of the Child-rearing Practices Report) has on the home environment 2.5 years later (measured on a 59 item scale as reported by the interviewers) and on staying together 10 years later. They measure agreement by correlating the 91 items of the mother to the 91 items of the father for each parental dyad, and to use the resulting coefficient (ranging from -6 to +86) as reflecting the degree of parental agreement. The authors find clear positive effects from parental agreement on both home environment and on staying together 10 years later (Block et al 1981).

### **The present study**

Our research question can be formulated as: *What effect does sharing notions on the importance of work, family and leisure activities have on couples' break-up plans?* Although the evidence is mixed, there is theoretical support for an association between sharing attitudes and relationship quality. Although homogeneity in attributes seems rather unimportant for break-ups in the Nordic countries, we expect sharing attitudes to be important for couples in Sweden. Our first hypothesis reads

- (1) Couples who share attitudes are less likely to have break-up plans than couples who are dissimilar

Moreover, we intend to give more emphasis to the importance of the domain of the attitude. The micro-economic specialization theory and the 'instrumental' attitudes approach both suggest the domain of the attitude to be of importance, although they would suggest opposite patterns. From a specialization point of view, being different with regards to domains that suggest complementary roles, such as family and work-life, would increase satisfaction. On the other hand, from an 'instrumental attitudes' point of view, family life would be the domain that is especially important to agree on, because it is likely to be fundamental for a good relationship, whereas for instance agreeing on importance of leisure time might be less important for a good relationship. Because Sweden is a very egalitarian context, we expect the 'instrumental' attitudes approach to be more valid than micro-economic specialization theory. Our second hypothesis hence reads

- (2) Sharing family orientation is more important than sharing work or leisure time orientation

We are also interested in whether this effect differs by whether an individual believe something to be very important in his/her life, compared to if the individual is indifferent. It might for instance be more

important to agree on the fact that having children is very important, compared to agreeing that having children is quite unimportant in one's life. Our third hypothesis therefore reads:

(3) Sharing attitudes is more important for those things that the partners consider most important

Finally, as Crohan (1992) touches upon, some attitudes *themselves* could have implications for relationship quality and stability, above and beyond disagreement, something we here call belief effects. This makes it important to separate belief effects from agreement, something we do throughout the analyses.

## Data

We base our analyses on data from the Young Adult Panel Study ([www.suda.su.se/yaps](http://www.suda.su.se/yaps)). YAPS is a three wave panel data collected in 1999, 2003 and 2009. It consists of one main sample of Swedish born respondents with two Swedish parents and an additional sample of Swedish born respondents with at least one parent born in Poland or Turkey. The sample size in 1999 was 3450 respondents born to two Swedish born parents in 1968, 1972 or 1976 and 1000 respondents born to Polish or Turkish parents in 1972 or 1976. 2816 of the 4450 respondents participated, making the overall response rate 63 percent. In 2003 the participants in the 1999 survey was re-contacted with new questionnaires, and an additional sample of 1200 individuals born in 1980 to two Swedish born parents was added. 2108 of the respondents who participated in the 1999 wave participated in also 2003 as did 708 respondents from the new sample.

In 2009 the 3547 respondents who participated in either 1999 or 2003 were re-contacted a final time, and at this point they were also asked to give a special partner questionnaire to their present co-living partner (if any). In the present study we focus solely on this point of data collection. 1986 respondents answered the full questionnaire, giving a response rate of 56 percent. To reduce the attrition a shorter phone follow up was performed, adding 707 respondents to the data. These respondents will however not be included in the present analysis, because the questions of main interest in this study were not asked of this group. Of the 1986 respondents, 1528 reported living with a partner. Of these we have self-reported information from 1074 partners, giving a partner response rate of 70 percent. We are interested in contrasting the man's view against the woman's which is why we have excluded the few same-sex couples included in the data (<2 percent). This leaves us with an analytic sample of 1055

respondents and their partners of opposite sex. The data is managed so that we separate between the man and woman rather than between respondents and partners. Two main advantages from using the YAPS dataset for the present study is that both partners have reported their own break-up plans and their own attitudes, and that we have this information for so many couples, compared to most other studies on couple attitudinal agreement that only have access to a few hundred couples, at the most.

## Attitudes

We are interested in how attitudes, and especially sharing attitudes, about what is important in life are associated with couples' break-up plans. The measure is included as the answers to the following five questions (see Table 1 below). The responses range from 1 (Unimportant) to 5 (Very important). Principal component factor analysis reveal 3 factors in the 5 questions. These are considered to represent importance of (1) leisure time, (2) work and (3) family.

Table 1: Attitudinal measures

		<i>Importance of...</i>
<b>People have different opinions on what is important in life. Please state how important you believe it is to achieve the following in your life (1-5)</b>	<i>To have a lot of time for leisure activities</i>	<b>Leisure time</b>
	<i>To do well economically</i>	<b>Work</b>
	<i>To be successful at my work</i>	<i>α men= 0.51</i> <i>α women= 0.42</i>
	<i>To live in a good (cohabiting or married) relationship</i>	<b>Family</b>
	<i>To have children</i>	<i>α men= 0.54</i> <i>α women= 0.43</i>

Because of a skewed distribution, we have combined answers 1-3 into one category, making us separate between (1) Unimportant or neutral, (2) Important and (3) Very important. The results however remain virtual identical if keeping the scale 1-5 instead.

## Break-up plans

We measure break-up plans on couple level, as if any of the partners have considered breaking up, or believe the other partner has done so, during the last year.

Table 2: During the last year, have you or your partner thought about breaking up/separate/divorce?  
(Cell percentages, N=1055)

		Man				
		Missing	No	I have, but I don't think my partner has done so	My partner has, but I haven't	We both have
Woman	Missing	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.00
	No	0.19	<b>72.80</b>	2.18	1.80	2.65
	I have, but I don't think my partner has done so	0.00	3.89	0.38	2.18	2.09
	My partner has, but I haven't	0.09	0.47	1.04	0.00	0.47
	We both have	0.19	2.27	0.47	0.76	5.50

The couples that are considered to have had no break-up plans are the 72.8 percent of the 1055 couples where none of the partners have thought about breaking up, or believe the other partner has done so.

One important aspect regarding the structure of the data needs to be emphasized. Because we only have access to cross-sectional data, for the couples with break-up plans we only capture couples who had break-up plans during the last year but decided on staying together anyway, at least until the time of the data collection. The question they have answered could hence instead be read "During the last year, have you or your partner thought about breaking up/separate/divorce, *but decided not to?*" This can of course have a fundamental effect on our results, since the couples that decide to break-up following such considerations might differ from couples that eventually decide to stay together. In a later stage of this analysis we have the possibility of linking register data on separation until 2012 to our couples (if they are married or have common children, 76 percent of the 1055 couples in the analyses). We will then have the possibility to capture the break-ups after measuring agreement, which will improve the strength of our results.

## Method

To be able to separate belief effects from sharing effects we perform stepwise logistic regressions on couples' break-up plans separately for each of the 3 studied attitudes. The main independent variables are the beliefs, i.e. the attitudes as such, and the sharing of attitudes. The stepwise models allows us to examine whether the goodness of fit of the model improves when adding a variable on sharing attitudes to a model only including belief effects (Thomson 1997).

**Belief effects** are measured by whether the man and/or the woman believe leisure time, family and work is (1) Unimportant or neutral, (2) Important or (3) Very important. It is included as one variable for the man and one variable for the woman. The model only including control variables and the belief effects is termed Model A.

**Sharing attitudes** is measured by whether the partners have answered the same thing on a particular question, i.e. are on the diagonal of a cross tabulation of the man's and the woman's answers (grey cells in Graph 1). The model including controls, belief effects and sharing attitudes is termed Model B.

*Graph 1; Model B – sharing attitudes*

		Man		
		Unimportant/neutral	Important	Very important
Woman	Unimportant/neutral			
	Important			
	Very important			

Finally, we want to investigate if sharing attitudes is more important for some combinations of couples. We hypothesized that sharing attitudes is more important for couples that believe something very strongly. We measure this as if there is additional improvement of the model fit if both partners believe a certain area to be very important compared to if they agree but on an area to be less important in their lives. Graph 2 visualizes this. The model including controls, belief effects, sharing attitudes as well as sharing the belief of "Very important" is termed Model C.



Graph 2; Model C – sharing the belief of “Very important”

		Man		
		Unimportant/neutral	Important	Very important
Woman	Unimportant/neutral			
	Important			
	Very important			

The basic principle of our statistical analyses is that we compare the goodness of fit of a model with only belief effects (Model A) to the goodness of fit of a model where a variable measuring sharing of attitudes have been added (Model B). We then study whether there is any additional improvement of the model fit if we separate out the couples where both believe an area to be very important (Model C). We include controls for ethnic background, common children, civil status, post-secondary education, and age differences between the man and woman. The models also include a control for the length of the relationship, to deal with possible adaptation effects (Snyder 1964, Kalmijn 1994).

### Selection into partner attrition

One aspect that might potentially bias our results is selection into partner attrition. Possibly it is the couples that have the most break-up plans that also are those where the partner is least likely to participate in the survey. If this correlates with couple agreement it could potentially be problematic for the interpretation of our results. Unfortunately, we cannot see to what extent partner attrition correlate with couple agreement, because for the respondents whose partner has not answered we naturally have no information on agreement. As an attempt to account for this potential problem we have (1) analyzed how partner attrition differs depending on whether the respondent has had break-up plans or not, and (2) constructed predicted probabilities of partner attrition based on the reports made by the respondent, and include these as coefficients in the analyses. These analyses are included in Appendix A. All the results for our main variables remain virtually identical when adjusting for partner attrition.

### Results

Initially, we take a descriptive look at the frequency of sharing attitudes. Table 3 includes the distribution of answers for the 1055 couples included in the analyses.

Table 3; Distribution of (sharing) attitudes. Sharing attitudes as diagonals in gray and sharing “Very important” in dark gray. N=1055.

		Man			
		Unimportant/neutral	Important	Very important	Missing
Woman	Unimportant/neutral	218	134	109	3
	Important	93	146	98	0
	Very important	68	94	84	1
	Missing	0	1	4	2

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		Man			
		Unimportant/neutral	Important	Very important	Missing
Woman	Unimportant/neutral	25	65	22	0
	Important	95	325	144	2
	Very important	34	180	147	3
	Missing	1	5	4	3

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		Man			
		Unimportant/neutral	Important	Very important	Missing
Woman	Unimportant/neutral	21	37	8	3
	Important	27	109	103	5
	Very important	43	219	454	8
	Missing	4	9	3	2

We see that  $(218+146+84)/1055=42$  percent of all couples share how important they believe it is with enough leisure time, compared to  $(25+325+147)/1055=47$  percent regarding importance of work and  $(21+109+454)/1055=55$  percent regarding the importance of family. Percentage agreement is quite commonly used to study the prevalence of agreement, although measures like this have the drawback that they do not make it possible to take the size of the marriage market into account. For instance, the quite high level of agreement for the measure of family orientation is driven by the fact that 43 percent of all couples consist of two partners believing it is very important with family (both partners having a 5 on the combined index). It could hence be more a sign of people often being family oriented rather than a sign of couple agreement.

Table 4 includes stepwise logistic regressions on each of the three attitudinal measures. In Model A, we test whether the fit of a model only including the control variables improve when we add the belief effects of the man's and the woman's orientation. In Model B we see if the fit improves when adding a measure of sharing attitudes, and in Model C we separate out those who share "Very important", and see if this improves the model fit.

From studying Models A, Table 4, we see whether there are any belief effects, i.e. whether the belief as such has any significant association with couples' break-up plans. The likelihood ratio tests test whether the model fit improves when adding attitudinal measures to a model only including the control variables. This seems to be the case for the importance of leisure time and the importance of family. Couples where the man believes that it is very important to have enough time for leisure activities has a clearly elevated risk of having had break-up plans compared to couples where the man does not believe having enough leisure time is that important. The woman's notion on leisure time is unimportant for the couples' risk of having had break-up plans.

The importance of family has the opposite effect, in the sense that couples where the man or the woman believe having children and/or living in a good relationship is very important less often have had break-up plans during the past year, compared to those who believe it is unimportant or are neutral. The man's attitude regarding family seems to be somewhat more important than the woman's.

If sharing attitudes was important for a couple's break-up plans, the model fit would improve significantly between Models A and Models B. This is however not the case, for none of the three studied attitudes. Neither does it matter more for couples to agree if they believe that specific area is very important; this is shown by the fact that the model fit does not improve between Models B and Model C.

Table 4: Stepwise logistic regressions on break-up plans. Separate models for each attitude.

		Importance of...								
		Leisure time			Work			Family		
		Model A	Model B	Model C	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model A	Model B	Model C
<b>Man's belief</b>	Unimportant/neutral									
	Important	1.69**	1.71**	1.72**	0.92	0.92	0.81	0.79	0.79	0.76
	Very important	1.63*	1.65*	1.78*	1.19	1.19	1.43	0.56*	0.57*	0.75
<b>Woman's belief</b>	Unimportant/neutral									
	Important	1.04	1.03	1.03	0.91	0.91	0.82	0.86	0.86	0.77
	Very important	0.97	0.97	1.05	0.99	0.99	1.2	0.61(*)	0.61(*)	0.72
<b>Share attitude</b>										
<b>Share "Very important"</b>										
<b>Constant</b>		0.50(*)	0.49(*)	0.46(*)	0.74	0.74	0.72	1.43	1.44	1.31
<b>N</b>		1019	1019	1019	1012	1012	1012	997	997	997
<b>Likelihood ratio tests</b>		**						**		
<b>Control variables</b>										
<b>Income, man</b>	<200 000									
	200 000- 400 000	0.76	0.75	0.76	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.75	0.75	0.73
	400 000 +	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.97	0.97	0.95
<b>Income, woman</b>	<200 000									
	200 000- 400 000	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.86	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.86	0.86
	400 000 +	0.46*	0.46*	0.46*	0.45*	0.45*	0.46*	0.44*	0.44*	0.43*
<b>Education, man</b>	No post-secondary education									
	Post-secondary or higher	1.08	1.08	1.09	1.12	1.12	1.13	1.16	1.16	1.17
	No post-secondary education									
<b>Education, woman</b>	Post-secondary or higher	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.05	1.05	1.04	1	1	1
	No post-secondary education									
	Post-secondary or higher	0.50*	0.50*	0.50*	0.51*	0.51*	0.50*	0.50*	0.51*	0.51*
<b>Length of relationship</b>	<3 years									
	3-7 years									
	7-10 years	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.65(*)	0.65(*)	0.65(*)
<b>Prevalence of common children</b>	>10 years									
	No common children									
	No common children	1.04	1.04	1.04	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.95	0.96

<b>Couple mean age</b>	Common children	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.8	0.8	0.79	1.02	1.02	1.02
	0-29									
	30-39	1.02	1.02	1.02	1	1	1	0.89	0.89	0.9
<b>Age difference between man and woman</b>	40+	1.4	1.4	1.41	1.47	1.47	1.46	1.15	1.15	1.17
	No age difference									
	Man >3 years older	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.15	1.15	1.16	1.21	1.21	1.21
<b>Ethnic background</b>	Woman >3 years older	1.53	1.53	1.52	1.58	1.58	1.57	1.56	1.56	1.55
	Swedish									
	Polish	2.11**	2.10**	2.10**	1.90*	1.90*	1.90*	1.61(*)	1.61(*)	1.62(*)
<b>Civil status</b>	Turkish	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.23	1.23	1.25	1.12	1.11	1.1
	Cohabiting									
	Married	0.51***	0.51***	0.51***	0.50***	0.50***	0.50***	0.54***	0.54***	0.54***

\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.5, (\*) p<0.1. See Appendix A for analyses when adjusting for partner attrition.

We thus conclude the following:

1. We don't find any evidence that sharing attitudes on the importance of work, family and leisure time has any association with relationship quality (using break-up plans as a proxy);
2. However, there are some effects of attitudes per se, what we have called belief effects
3. More specifically, couples with leisure oriented men more often have suffered from break-up plans
4. Moreover, family oriented couples less often report having had break-up plans

## **Discussion**

As pointed out by Booth and White (1980), "thinking about divorce is one stage in a process of marital dissolution". They found that although break-up plans and actual divorce shared some determinants, there were also factors, such as marital duration and religiosity that had an effect on thinking about divorce, independent of their effect on marital dissolution. In this paper we had break-up plans as the dependent variable, reported retrospectively (past year) for those couples who were still together at the time of the survey. This probably means that couples with low relationship quality, who may have had break-up plans during the year preceding the survey, are not included in our sample of couples, since they have already broken up. It is therefore preferable to have actual break-ups as the dependent variable, which makes it essential to repeat this study once we have follow-up data on separations in the years following the 2009 survey.

Unfortunately, we have rather crude measures of attitudes, as the attitude scales had a limited range (1 to 5), and moreover were heavily skewed to the right, especially the measurement of the importance of family. Considering that living in a good partnership and having children is very important in life is clearly a majority view, and the partners in a couple also agree on this to a very large extent. Each attitudinal measure (work, family and leisure activities) was also based on a small number of items. It is possible therefore that we do not capture attitudes and the sharing of attitudes in a very satisfactory way. Moreover, studies from other Scandinavian countries (Finnäs 1997, Lyngstad 2004) indicate that homogamy may not be of such great importance for union stability here.

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## Appendix A: Adjusting for partner attrition

Table A1 includes all married or cohabiting respondents in the 2009 wave, by partner participation or attrition, break-up plans and the sex of the respondent.

Table A1; Partner attrition and participation by sex and break-up plans. Percentages.

		Missing	No	I have, but I don't think my partner has done so	My partner has, but I haven't	We both have	Total
<b>Men</b>	Partner attrition	33.33	20.68	36.11	11.54	32.18	22.75
	Partner participation	66.67	79.32	63.89	88.46	67.82	77.25
	<b>N</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>655</b>
<b>Women</b>	Partner attrition	33.33	34.87	41.46	30.00	38.10	35.76
	Partner participation	66.67	65.13	58.54	70	61.9	64.24
	<b>N</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>853</b>

We see that the partner attrition for women is substantially larger than for men, 23 percent of the men's partners have not answered the partner questionnaire, compared to 36 percent of the women's partners. We also see a difference in attrition based on whether the respondent has had any break-up plans during the year or not. Respondents who have not considered breaking up has slightly fewer break-up plans than the average (20.68 vs 22.75 percent for men, 34.87 vs. 35.76 percent for women). The attrition is especially high if the respondent reports both partners have had break-up plans during the year (32.18 percent attrition of men's partners and 38.10 percent attrition for women's partners).

As an attempt to take this into account, we use the respondents' break up plans and the control variables included in Model C (when we have information on couple level) to predict the probability of partner attrition for the full couples we finally include in our analyses. We perform a logistic regression where we model partner attrition as a consequence of break-up plans, sex, and education of both partners. In an initial model we also included ethnic background, civil status, the prevalence of common children, length of relationship, mean age of couple and age difference, but because none of these variables led to a significantly better fit of the model they were excluded from the final model.

We use the coefficients obtained from the analyses to construct a measure of the probability that a couple that eventually end up in the analyses would be included. By this procedure we adjust for the

fact that the couples with the most break-up plans are the ones least likely to be included in the models. The model we base these predicted probabilities on is presented in Table A2. Table A3 include the results for our main variables when adjusting for partner attrition by including predicted probabilities of partner attrition in the analyses.

Table A2: Logistic regression on partner attrition, odds ratios.

		Odds ratios
<b>Break-up plans</b>	Missing	2.14
	No (ref.)	1
	I have, but I don't think my partner has done so	1.41(*)
	My partner has, but I haven't	0.55
	We both have	1.43*
<b>Sex</b>	Man	1
	Woman	1.91***
<b>Man's education</b>	No post-secondary education	1
	Post-secondary education or higher	0.68**
<b>Woman's education</b>	No post-secondary education	1
	Post-secondary education or higher	0.69**
<b>Constant</b>		0.41***
<b>N</b>		1477
<b>Log Likelihood</b>		-870.41

\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, (\*) p<0.1

Table A3; Stepwise logistic regressions on break-up plans. Separate models for each attitude. Adjusted for partner attrition, otherwise identical to Table 4.

	Importance of...								
	Leisure time			Work			Family		
	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model A	Model B	Model C
<b>Man's belief</b>									
<b>Unimportant/neutral</b>									
<b>Important</b>	1.71**	1.72**	1.73**	1.02	1.04	0.91	0.73	0.73	0.70
<b>Very important</b>	1.78**	1.80**	1.92*	1.30	1.31	1.59	0.53*	0.55*	0.73
<b>Woman's belief</b>									
<b>Unimportant/neutral</b>									
<b>Important</b>	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.04	1.06	0.95	0.93	0.93	0.83
<b>Very important</b>	0.92	0.92	0.98	1.14	1.15	1.39	0.67	0.67	0.79
<b>Share attitude</b>		1.04	1.09		0.97	1.29		0.93	1.23
<b>Share "Very important"</b>			0.83			0.49			0.53
<b>Likelihood ratio tests</b>	***						**		

\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.5, (\*) p<0.1.

Virtually all the results for our main variables remain identical when including this variable. The barely significant effect from how important women consider family is to be disappears, but it was earlier only significant on the 10%-level.

## Appendix B: Descriptive statistics of control variables

Table B1: Descriptive statistics on control variables. Percentages

		Percentage
<b>Man's income</b>	<200 000	9.0
	200 000- 400 000	62.1
	400 000 +	28.8
	Missing	0.1
<b>Woman's income</b>	<200 000	31.0
	200 000- 400 000	60.3
	400 000 +	8.6
	Missing	0.1
<b>Man's education</b>	No post-secondary	45.7
	Post-secondary or higher	52.9
	Missing	1.4
<b>Woman's education</b>	No post-secondary	35.2
	Post-secondary or higher	63.8
	Missing	1.0
<b>Length of relationship</b>	Less than 3 years	7.1
	3-6 years	21.7
	7-9 years	19.6
	10 years or longer	51.3
	Missing	0.3
<b>Prevalence of common children</b>	No common children	32.5
	Common children	67.5
<b>Couple mean age</b>	0-29	10.3
	30-39	67.3
	40+	22.3
	Missing	0.1
<b>Age difference between man and woman</b>	No age difference	64.7
	Man >3 years older	28.7
	Woman >3 years oldr	6.4
	Missing	0.1
<b>Ethnic background</b>	Swedish	88.1
	Polish	8.6
	Turkish	3.2
	Missing	0.1
<b>Civil status</b>	Cohabiting	50.3
	Married	49.7
<b>Total</b>		1055