

Occupation and separations in Sweden

This study aims to provide a descriptive picture of separations and divorces among different occupations in Sweden. Couples formed in 1999-2001 were followed up in 2009 to see whether they had separated or not. In this study, to form a relationship means either marriage, persons who entered a registered partnership or cohabitants having a child together. A separation means either by court dissolved marriage/partnership or cohabitants that have moved apart. The occupational groups presented are occupation at the start of the relationship. Data is derived from the Total Population Register, Historical database and STATIV database.

When it comes to divorces and separations is it common to point to correlations between different demographic factors and frequency of divorces. In Sweden, the risk of separation is higher if both are young at the beginning of the relationship. Three out of ten couples with a middle-age under 25 years at the start of the relationship had separated under the studied period. The share of separations is decreasing the higher the middle age was at the start of the relationship.

Another factor that increases the risk of separation is age differences. Four out of ten couples with an age difference greater than ten years between the partners had separated before 2010. If the difference were less than three years, nine out of ten were still a couple.

One further important factor that increases the risk of separation is differences in educational levels. Divorces and separations are more common among couples with a low level of education. For couples where both partners had pre-secondary education, almost three out of ten had went their separate ways while corresponding for couples with high education were 12 percent.

Table 1. Percentage of couples and percentage of separations after family status, average age, age difference, education, origin and occupation. 1999 – 2001 and 2009

	Percentage of couples 1999-2001	Percentage of non- couples 2009
Family status		
Cohabitant	67	17
Married	33	16
Registered partnership	0,3	39
Average age		
< 25 years	3	30
25-29 years	27	18
30-34 years	41	16
35-39 years	19	17

40 years >	11	16
<u>Age difference</u>		
< 3 years	50	15
3-5 years	31	17
6-9 years	14	16
10 years >	6	25
<u>Education</u>		
Both pre-secondary	1	29
Both tertiary	29	12
One tertiary	58	14
Same level of education	62	14
Not the same level of education	38	18
<u>Origin</u>		
Both born in Sweden	93	16
One foreign-born	5	23
Both foreign born	3	23
<u>Occupation</u>		
Same occupation	10	18
Not the same occupation	90	17
Total		17
Number of couples	160 000	27 000

Source: Total Population Register, Historical database and STATIV database

It is most common to separate among couples where at least one of them is working in the occupational group "Protective services". This includes occupations like firemen, security officers and prison officers. Almost every fourth person in these occupations that had formed a relationship in 1999 - 2001 had separated before 2010. A high share of separations is also found among people working as "Helpers in kitchens and restaurants", "Other sales and services elementary occupations", "Labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport" and "Garbage collectors and related labourers". Occupations with the highest rate of separations often don't require any form of higher education.

The occupational group "Life science and health professions" has the lowest share of separations. Only one person out of ten within these groups had separated from its partner during the studied period. Other occupational groups with a high rate of separations are "Engineers and architects and related professions", "Agronomy and forestry technicians". Common for these occupations is that they require some level of higher education.

Table 2. Occupations, number of couples, percentage of non-couples and percentage of men in the profession. 1999 - 2001 and 2009.

Occupations with the highest proportion of separations	Number of couples 1999-2001	Percentage of non-couples 2009	Percentage of men in the profession 1999-2001
Protective services workers	2 400	26	76
Helpers in restaurants	1 900	25	13
Other sales and services elementary occupations	1 600	25	63
Helpers and cleaners	3 000	24	22
Labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport	2 900	24	64
Occupations with the lowest proportion of separations			
Life science and health professionals	400	10	50
Architects, engineers and related professionals	8 000	11	72
Agronomy and forestry technicians	300	11	54
Physicists, mathematicians and statisticians	1 200	11	56
Pre-primary education teaching associate professionals	9 000	11	8

Source: Total Population Register, Historical database and STATIV database

There are also connections between the distribution according to sex in an occupation and the share of separations. Separations are more common among couples where someone is working within a profession where the own sex is in minority. Largest share of separated men is found in occupational groups as “Helpers in restaurants”, “Cleaners” and “Personal care and related workers”. There are considerably more women than men working within these occupations. Among women, the largest share of separations is within occupations dominated by men, for example “Transport and mobile-plant operators”, “Painters and welders” and “Garbage collectors and related labourers”.

Other studies have shown that it is common to start a relationship with someone you are similar to when it comes to values and interests. The risk of separation seems to vary whether you have the same occupation or not. In Sweden, the most common profession to have a relationship with someone of the same profession is doctors and they seem to stay together.