Introduction
The young adult population in Sweden today is the first generation that have grown up with unmarried parents, two working parents and parents who have often both separated and met new partners. This means that young adults today have completely different experiences of family life and gender equality during their childhood compared to their parents. In turn, this may indicate a new set of values and attitudes among young adults today, and perhaps a new power balance in the decision making among couples. This study focuses on the plans and decision making in young couples regarding childbearing plans, as well as the outcomes of such plans. We focus on childbearing as this may be the most life changing decision for both partners, and it will thus indicate negotiating power of both the woman and the man.

We use survey data where we measure the attitudes and plans of both partners in a couple in 2009. Thereafter we follow the same couple with register data to investigate whether their plans actually were realized. We thus investigate the interaction of childbearing plans of the woman and the man to find out whose plans are decisive. We use theories on negotiation power in the couples where it is expected that the stronger part has more influence on decision making. Individual characteristics, such as income indicates power in the couple, but also norms on feminine and masculine spheres may affect who is decisive in various field (Lundberg and Pollak 1996). It may thus be expected that the woman’s plan of childbearing is more important than the man’s. These gender differences would be particularly articulated if the couple adheres to a traditional gender ideology. We consider the attitudes and orientations of both partners, to see whether these influence the actual outcome.

Background
Sweden was among the first countries to enter the second demographic transition, with declining marriage rates, increased childbearing outside marriage, increase in divorces and cohabitation, as well as a value shift towards more individualistic and expressive values rather than traditional (Sobotka och Toulemon 2008, van de Kaa 2002). These trends may also be seen as the start of the gender revolution where women started to take part in traditionally male area of labor market work, and where we now have reached the phase where men take part in traditionally female areas such as household work and childcare (Bernhardt 2004, Goldscheider, Bernhardt, Lappegard 2015). Sweden is in the forefront in this development and we now have a new generation of young adults who have grown up with changed demographic patterns as well as values. This generation is the first for which we can study the consequences from the new family patterns. We have some knowledge about how family
dynamics have changed over time (see for example Andersson och Kolk 2011, Sobotka och Toulemon 2008), but less about what this means for individual attitudes and ideals, as well as family dynamics in the generation of young adults of today.

We will here study how couples’ childbearing plans are related to actually getting a child in the near future. This question is related to a strand of research on the relation between plans and behavior (Ajzen och Fishbein 1980) and our main aim is to increase the knowledge on how decisions are made within the couple. We want to relate this question of decision making in the couple to the development of gender equality in the last decades and therefore ask “Whose plans are most important?”.

Theories on negotiation power suggest that a couple’s behavior is not necessarily the consequence of the same wish of the two partners. Instead the distribution of resources as well as norms of typical female and male areas of decision making affect the actual outcome (Agarwal 1997). The relationship between plans and behavior is thus influenced by what the plans concern and who is planning. In addition earlier studies have found that attitudes clearly influence the individual plans and expectations regarding family and relationship (e.g., Greenglass and Devins 1982, Manning et al. 2007). We are mainly interested in whose plans for children are most important, but also whether the partners’ attitudes influence who have a stronger say. Is for example the plans of a child oriented man more important than a work oriented man? Is child orientation among women more important than child orientation among men? Are the plans of women and men with gender equal attitudes likely to have the same influence on childbearing?

In both Sweden and the US earlier research tells us that both partners have to agree for more children to be born (Thomson 1997, Thomson och Hoem 1998). We therefore expect a similar influence by the woman’s and the man’s child plans, but that a child oriented partner may have a stronger say in the decision. We expect the area of children still to be dominated by female decision making, in that women have more child oriented attitudes and therefore more say on the actual outcome.

**Data and methods**

We use the Young Adult Panel Study (YAPS) which includes individuals born between 1968 and 1980 and is constructed to investigate the interrelationship of attitudes, plans and behaviour regarding work and family, including a large set of questions on attitudes and value orientations. The data for this study is based on the survey in 2009 and includes 1079 individuals and their (cohabiting or marital) partners of opposite sex. The survey-answers are combined with register data on education, income, and events such as childbearing, marriage and divorce.

We can thus consider both partners’ attitudes and plans for children. In addition, and the basis for this study, we can follow all respondents’ actual childbearing with register data from 2009 to 2014, that is, we can investigate whether plans were carried out.

The empirical analysis will be carried out with event history analysis where the main independent variables are plans and attitudinal orientations, specifically attitudes towards children, working life and gender equality. The dependent variable is the occurrence of a birth of a child during the five years following the survey in 2009. We will control for socio-economic characteristics of the partners, such as educational levels, income and age. We can also control for earlier histories of childbearing and earlier unions. As we have information in
the register data on separations, we censor for separation in the models. The analyses will be carried out well before the conference.

**Preliminary descriptive findings**

As expected, we find that in most couples the partners agree on whether they want children or not. In almost a third of our couples both the man and the woman plan to have a child, while in just over a third none have such plans (Table 1). Nevertheless in over 7 percent of all cases the woman plans more children and the man does not or is hesitant. In almost 4 percent of the cases the man clearly plans more children and the woman is hesitant or do not plan more children.

![Table 1. Distribution of women and men planning for more children. Cell percentages.](attachment:table1.png)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The man wants more children</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The woman wants more children</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When examining which couples actually did end up with another child during the following five years (Table 2) it is as expected most common in couples where both planned another child. However also in a considerable share of the couples where only one partner planned a child did the couples get another child, slightly more among couples where the woman was the only one sure of her plans. When we continue with our next analytical step we will probably combine the cells of “No” and “Maybe” to have enough cases in each cell.

![Table 2. Distribution of couples that had a child from interview (2009) until 2014, by whether the man and/or the woman planned for a child in 2009. Percentages.](attachment:table2.png)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The man wants more children</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The woman wants more children</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our focus on the interaction in the couple will give important indications of how gender equality is practised among young adults. We will build on the literature on how intentions and plans are carried out regarding family behaviour (such as childbearing, marriage and separation) and the results will have meaning for how not just gender but also value orientations matter in decision making. As it is assumed that young adults in Sweden today take many aspects of gender equality for granted, such as economic independence and fathers’ participation in childcare, it is important to investigate whether decisions are taken in the same gender equal way. The study will give important insights to the dynamics of couple relations, not least regarding which power relations and gender aspects that matter. We hope that our results will contribute with knowledge of couple interaction within the area of...
childbearing, an area that is on the agenda in most societies today. Sweden may be seen as a forerunner in gender equality, but men’s sharing of the family sphere is still lagging behind. However it is often claimed that gender equality is a major reason to Sweden’s relatively high fertility and it will be important to find out more about how decisions on childbearing are made.

References