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## A gender perspective on preferences for marriage among cohabitating couples

Anne Reneflot

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### Abstract

This paper addresses the sex differences in cohabiters' marriage preferences, which have received very little attention in the family literature. According to Norwegian survey data from 1996, cohabiting men are more hesitant to marry than cohabiting women. For example, childless male cohabiters are more worried than their female partner that another lifestyle will be expected after a marriage, and they voice more doubt about the value of the relationship. This could mean that the men generally are more individualistically oriented and therefore more attracted to single life than the women. In-depth interviews support this, and also suggest that men are less willing to yield to a normative pressure to marry. On the other hand, women were more concerned with the costs of the wedding.

### Author's affiliation

[Anne Reneflot](#)

Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Norway

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