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Abstract

Here we study how unemployment is related to partner relationship happiness in the United Kingdom. We investigate multiple dimensions of unemployment – current unemployment, changes in unemployment, duration of unemployment, and past unemployment – each of which provides unique insights into how economic uncertainty can strain relationships. Not including these aspects potentially leads to an underestimation of the long-term effect of unemployment and times when couples are especially affected. Using British longitudinal data (UKHLS), we employ random and fixed regression analyses. The results highlight the gendered nature of relationships and employment within British couples. As found in previous studies, unemployment, particularly men's unemployment, is associated with unhappier relationships. However, we find that over the long-run, relationship happiness declined and did not always recover. In addition, men's re-employment did not solve problems rising from unemployment, especially for women, who continued to be less happy with the relationship when their male partner was unemployed in the recent past. Overall, the research showed that unemployment is not only related to relationship happiness at the time of unemployment, but had a scarring effect on relationship happiness.

Introduction

A large body of evidence has found that unemployment adversely affects the economic and psychological wellbeing of individuals (e.g. Esche, 2020; Gangl, 2006; Heggebø & Elstad, 2018; Strandh, Hammarström, Nilsson, Nordenmark, & Russel, 2013). However, less research has examined the association between economic adversity and people's happiness with the relationship. Prior studies have found that couples who experience economic hardship have on average lower relationship quality (Blom, Kraaykamp, & Verbakel, 2019; Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010; Hardie, Geist, & Lucas, 2014). In particular, unemployment and the experience of job loss are detrimental to relationships (Doiron & Mendolia, 2012; Hansen, 2005). However, it is unclear to what extent unemployment affects people's happiness with their relationships only as long as the employment spell lasts, or if the effects are enduring. The impact of unemployment may be temporary, and couples may recover from the initial experience of job loss (Luhmann, Hofmann, Eid, & Lucas, 2012), or relationship problems may accumulate the longer employment lasts (Hansen, 2005; Janlert, Winefield, & Hammarström, 2014). Additionally, even though people may reenter the labor force, their past unemployment experience may have scarred the relationship, preventing a full recovery of relationship happiness after re-employment. Each of these dimensions -- current unemployment, changes in unemployment, past experiences of unemployment, and the accumulation of long-term disadvantage -- provide unique insights into how economic uncertainty can strain relationship happiness over time[i].

Prior studies which did not take these temporal dimensions into account may have underestimated the full association between unemployment and relationship happiness. If the experience of unemployment continues to scar relationship happiness after re-employment, the association between unemployment and poor relationship happiness may be larger than previously anticipated. Similarly, if prolonged unemployment continues to degrade relationship functioning, couples could be at greater risk of relationship dissolution. These nuanced views remain hidden when only a simple dichotomous indicator of employment status is used.

Given that both partners can contribute to the household economy, the unemployment of one partner may severely impact household finances and functioning. The loss of income and general strain of one partner's unemployment may worsen the other partner's perception of the relationship. The stress of being unemployed may also spill over to the other partner (Inanc, 2018), resulting in more conflict and less communication (Conger et al., 2010). Thus, it is important to evaluate the effect of partners' unemployment on the respondents' reported relationship happiness. Additionally, the association between unemployment and relationship happiness may differ between men and women (Hardie et al., 2014; Kinnunen & Feldt, 2004; Kinnunen & Pulkkinen,

1998). Traditionally, men have been considered responsible for breadwinning, whereas women were primarily responsible for care-work. Although these norms have declined, many people still adhere to these conceptions in the UK (Scott & Clery, 2013).

Here we investigate the research question: *To what extent is current and past unemployment associated with relationship happiness among British couples and how does this differ by gender?* We examine multiple dimensions of unemployment, namely (a) current employment status, (b) changes in employment status, (c) the duration of the current unemployment, and (d) past experiences with unemployment. The context of our study – the United Kingdom – was particularly affected by economic uncertainty and changes in unemployment during the period under study (2009-2017), although to a lesser extent than other European countries such as Greece, Spain and Ireland. The Great Recession started in mid-2008 and led to a steep decline in GDP (Allen, 2010). This economic slow-down resulted in the unemployment rate rising from 5.5 percent in early 2007 to 8.4 in late 2011, before declining to 4.4 percent in late 2017 (Office for National Statistics, 2019). During the Great Recession, the government also implemented a program of austerity, reducing unemployment benefits and placing greater obligations on the unemployed to search for work (Shahidi, 2015). Thus, in addition to the economic uncertainty created by the Great Recession, the government's austerity measures weakened the economic positions of the unemployed, potentially placing even greater financial strain on couples.

The household longitudinal panel data from the UK (the UK Household Longitudinal Study 2009-2017), is uniquely suited to examine the association between multiple dimensions of employment and relationship happiness from both partners' perspectives. The large dataset includes detailed employment histories, tracking respondents as they experience job loss and recovery and allowing us to calculate the duration of unemployment spells for both partners, often unavailable in smaller datasets.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

We use several theoretical frameworks to guide our hypotheses, most notably the family stress model (Conger et al., 2010). The family stress model posits that negative economic events, such as job loss, leads to more pressures on household finances, creates more stress and distress, erodes couple communication and support, and eventually results in a decline in relationship happiness (Conger et al., 2010). However, the family stress model does not explain how couples are affected by the duration of economic events, potentially leading to cumulative disadvantage, or the scarring of past events, which could leave a long-term strain on couples' perceptions. Below we expand the family stress model to incorporate a concept of time.

Current unemployment

As discussed in the family stress-model, unemployment often creates economic pressures that lead to stress and strain in the household (Conger et al., 2010). Without an income from labor, households can experience a lower standard of living and struggle to make ends meet. These stressors can impact both the individual's perception of the relationship and the way that couples interact and communicate. Aside from the financial difficulties of joblessness, the individual lacks many of the benefits that come with employment, such as structured time, regular activity, purpose in life, social contacts, status and identity (Jahoda, 1982). Both the lack of financial resources and other benefits of employment can impact mental wellbeing, lower self-esteem, and induce the risk of emotional and behavioral problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, anger, and antisocial behavior) (Strandh et al., 2013; Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). Individuals without a job can become withdrawn and uncommunicative, as they struggle to cope with the lack of structured economic activity. The feelings of inadequacy and frustration can spill over to how they perceive their own relationship.

Next to the spillover from one's personal unemployment situation, the unemployment situation of the partner could affect the happiness of the relationship, also known as crossover. Stressful events could affect couples' communication and problem solving processes, inducing social undermining, hostility, and communication (Neff & Karney, 2017). One partner may feel resentment and blame the other for insufficient income and financial instability. This distress could also lead to less supportive behaviors and negative interactions, with emotional withdrawal, conflict and negative responses becoming more recurrent (Merolla, 2017). Individuals under strain are less able to support the partner and communicate less constructively (Bodenmann et al., 2015). Thus we expect that people who are (a) unemployed or (b) whose partner is unemployed are less happy with their partner relationship compared to being employed people (Hypothesis 1).

Changes in unemployment

The prior hypotheses relate to employment status and compare employed and unemployed individuals. However, we are also interested in how a *change* in employment status alters relationship happiness. According to the family stress model, unemployment leads to a deterioration in financial stability and new stressors that impact the relationship (Conger et al., 2010). Becoming unemployed is also associated with a decline in wellbeing (e.g. Esche, 2020; Inanc, 2018; Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004) and worsening of emotional states (Schauss, Howell, & Ellmo, 2019; von Scheve, Esche, & Schupp, 2017), and re-employment is associated with a rise in wellbeing (Strandh et al., 2013). Thus, transitions from being employed to unemployed change financial and

social circumstances, as well as emotional states, which can lower the happiness of partner relationships. Hence, we would expect that people who (a) become unemployed, or (b) whose partner becomes unemployed become less happy with their relationship compared to becoming employed (Hypothesis 2).

Duration of unemployment

Furthermore, people's relationship happiness after becoming unemployed might be dependent on how long they are unemployed. Studies on the association between unemployment and relationship quality have usually only examined a snapshot in time (e.g. Blom et al., 2019). Yet long-term unemployment may be detrimental to the persistence and happiness of the relationship. Couples may either adapt after the initial shock of job loss and return to their original happiness, or their relationship happiness may gradually deteriorate. Set-point theory is a useful framework for positing the return to previous levels of relationship happiness. According to set-point theory, people have an established level of subjective wellbeing, and life events only lead to a temporary change in wellbeing (Headey, 2010). The theory posits that after the initial shock of an event, wellbeing reverts to its pre-event level (Lucas et al., 2004; Suh et al., 1996). This suggests that changes in employment could lead to a temporary change in relationship happiness, but not necessarily to long-term change; leading us to expect that people become less happy with their relationship when (a) they or (b) their partner becomes unemployed, but after an initial decline in relationship happiness, relationship happiness rises again (Hypothesis 3).

However, set-point theory has been critiqued, as many longitudinal studies do not find a quick or full return to former wellbeing after negative life events, such as unemployment (Headey, 2010; Lucas et al., 2004; Luhmann et al., 2012). Even after being unemployed for several years, not having a job can continue to negatively affect one's wellbeing (Janlert et al., 2014; Lucas et al., 2004). The length of men's unemployment negatively impacted men's and women's relationship quality via economic strain and men's psychological distress, but was also directly negatively related to women's relationship quality (Kinnunen & Feldt, 2004). Thus, although the initial shock of unemployment may have passed, couples continue to deal with the negative consequences of unemployment which may accumulate over time. Financially, people may have savings to handle the loss of income following unemployment, but this will generally not be sustainable long-term. The longer someone is unemployed, the less likely they will be hired again (Van Belle, Di Stasio, Caers, De Couck, & Baert, 2018), making their unemployment situation less likely to change. Furthermore, spousal support may decline the longer an individual is exposed to stressful circumstances (Lepore, Evans, & Schneider, 1991). Rao's (2017) qualitative study on American women shows that some

wives increasingly abstained from emotionally supporting their partner when he was long-term unemployed, because it became too emotionally costly for them. Based on cumulative disadvantage, in contrast to the previous expectation, we therefore expect that (a) the longer people are unemployed, or (b) the longer their partner is unemployed the less happy they are with their partner relationship (Hypothesis 4).

Past unemployment

In contrast to the expectation that becoming re-employed negates the negative relationship consequences of unemployment, unemployment may have long-term effects on relationships that last beyond re-employment. Unemployment can scar future prospects, jeopardizing reentry to the labor market (Van Belle et al., 2018), and straining mental health and psychological wellbeing (Mousteri, Daly, & Delaney, 2018). Studies in the UK, US, and Sweden found that even after re-employment, individuals continued to have worse mental health (Daly & Delaney, 2013; Mossakowski, 2009; Strandh, Winefield, Nilsson, & Hammarström, 2014), although this was not found for life satisfaction in the UK (Zhou, Zou, Woods, & Wu, 2019). Past experiences may continue to cast a shadow over the couple, affecting communication and support (Schauss et al., 2019). Schauss et al. (2019) showed that while re-employment decreased depression symptoms among US couples, it was not associated with a rise in supportive behavior or a decline in social undermining between partners, suggesting that the influence of unemployment on relationship happiness is long-lasting. During unemployment, the unemployed seek support from the partner; however these emotional resources get drained, especially when the emotional support is not reciprocated. Consistently seeking support from the partner may ultimately result in negative interactions (Lepore et al., 1991). After people are re-employed, these drained emotional resources may not immediately return to the initial level. Thus the unemployment experience may have scarred the dynamics within the relationship (Schauss et al., 2019), resulting in the expectation that people who are (a) employed but were unemployed or (b) whose partner is employed but was unemployed are less happy with their partner relationship compared to continuously employed people (Hypothesis 5).

Gender

The association between an individual's or their partner's unemployment experiences and relationship happiness could differ by gender. Traditionally men were responsible for the household income, and employment has been more strongly related to being a good partner for men than for women (Scott & Clery, 2013; Townsend, 2002; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Men's unemployment is thus a greater deviation from the gendered ideal of being a good breadwinner than women's

unemployment is from the ideal of caregiver (Inanc, 2018; Strandh et al., 2013; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Men's inability to provide income could diminish their own sense of self-worth and social status, making them less supportive or engaged. Women may lose respect for their unemployed partner, as their expectations about being a good breadwinner may not have been met. The deviation from gendered expectations would result in lower relationship happiness. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the differences by gender for each analysis.

Method

Data

We used the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) to test our hypotheses (www.understandingsociety.ac.uk). The UKHLS is an annual household panel survey which began in 2009 with approximately 40,000 households in the United Kingdom and included an ethnic minority boost sample. Later the UKHLS was expanded with former members of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and another ethnic minority boost sample, but these extensions were not included in the study because the employment histories were only available for wave 1 participants. Household members age 16 or older were interviewed annually. Most interviews were computer aided face-to-face interviews (CAPI) and included a self-completion questionnaire (via paper in Wave 1 and 2, via computer from Wave 3 onward), which included the questions on relationship happiness. The household response rate was 57.3 percent in Wave 1 and the individual response rate was 81.8 percent in Wave 1. Attrition between Wave 1 and 2 was higher among people aged under 30, singles, students, the unemployed, renters, and among those in urban areas (Lynn, Burton, Kaminska, Knies, & Nandi, 2012).

People were asked about their relationship happiness in Wave 1, 3, 5, and 7. These waves correspond to the years 2009-2011 (Wave 1), 2011-2013 (Wave 3), 2013-2015 (Wave5), and 2015-2017 (Wave 7). We selected observations of people in a cohabiting or married different-sex relationship (N= 87,204 observations), since the number of same-sex couples was too small to distinguish from different-sex couples. We selected observations where both partners were of working age (age 20 to 60) and were not retired or in fulltime education. We selected observations with a valid answer on our dependent variables. Some people separated and then repartnered and have valid observations with both partners. For these people we selected the observations with the first partner to ensure changes in partner's employment reflected changes in employment, not having a new partner. After these selections, our main sample consisted of 44,682 observations (23,668 female, 21,014 male observations) for 20,751 respondents (10,897 women, 9,854 men).

The samples for the duration of unemployment and past experiences of unemployment were smaller. People in our sample were interviewed about their unemployment history in Wave 1 and their employment transitions in subsequent waves were added to this history if they continuously participated. For some observations their last employment transition did not match their employment status in that wave; these observations were also considered invalid. Valid employment histories were needed to study the duration of current unemployment spells and past experiences, resulting in a lower sample size for these analyses. Table 1 shows the number of observations and respondents for each sample.

Characteristics of the partner were asked of the partner directly, therefore respondents have missing values on these characteristics if their partner was not interviewed. If the value for the duration of the relationship was missing, we imputed it with the value of the partner. Next, missing values of all independent variables were imputed in Stata with multiple imputation methods (multiple logistic, logistic, linear, and truncated regression) (5 datasets) using the variables described in the measurement section below as well as the age of the partner, using a long format, but not whole-wave missing data.

Although poor relationship happiness can lead to separation, our analyses require a measure of relationship happiness; thus, couples must be together for the duration of the analyses in order to report on their relationship happiness. Some of the couples in our initial sample do eventually separate. Couples who separated were not included after their separation, but previous observations were included. We investigated whether the association between unemployment and relationship happiness differed between people who did and did not eventually separate for the analyses on current unemployment (the number of separations was insufficient for the other analyses). These additional analyses (available upon request) showed no significant differences in relationship happiness by eventual separation.

Measurements

Relationship happiness, our dependent variable, ranged from 1 (“extremely unhappy”) to 7 (“perfect”), and respondents were instructed that the middle point (“happy”) represented the degree of happiness in most relationships. This measurement is the one-item version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Hunsley, Pinsent, Lefebvre, James-Tanner, & Vito, 1995). This and similar questions have been frequently used to investigate relationship happiness (e.g. Brown, Manning, & Payne, 2017). We employ relationship happiness as a continuous variable. Descriptive statistics for all variables in the various samples are shown in Table 1.

Current unemployment is operationalized in different ways depending on the analysis. First, *employment status* consists of three categories: employed, unemployed, and other. The latter category is composed of homemakers, long-term sick or disabled, on maternity leave, doing something else, and other smaller categories. *Changes in unemployment* use the same classification in the fixed-effects model (discussed below).

Unemployment duration captures the number of months an individual was unemployed up to a maximum of five years, ranging from 0, the month they lost their job, to 59, the end of the five year period (similar to e.g. Janlert et al., 2014). We include both the linear and quadratic specification of unemployment duration to investigate possible non-linearity (as has been indicated for wellbeing by for instance Janlert et al., 2014, Luhmann et al., 2012).

To study *past unemployment* experiences we differentiated the employed between those who have been unemployed in the past two years for at least one month (labelled re-employed) and those who have not been unemployed in the past two years (labelled continuously employed). Robustness checks included whether people were employed in the past year and past three years and led to similar conclusions (available upon request). This is similar to studies such as Zhou et al. (2019), but dissimilar from for instance Strandh et al. (2014) and Daly and Delaney (2013) who studied the consequences of early unemployment experiences for wellbeing later in life. In contrast to other studies which often relied on annual observations, we were able to include relatively short unemployment spells even if these happened between waves.

We controlled for *health* of both partners in our analyses. Health was measured by asking both partners to rate their general health from excellent to poor and refers to both physical and mental health. Similar to previous research (e.g. Bambra & Popham, 2010; Janlert et al., 2014) we collapsed these indicators into very good (excellent, very good), good (good) ,and poor (fair, poor) self-rated health. Health is both a cause and a consequence of relationship quality (Robles, Slatcher, Trombello, & McGinn, 2014) and is associated with unemployment (e.g. Heggebø & Elstad, 2018; Janlert et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2019). However, controlling for this variable is important to assess to what extent unemployment is associated with relationship happiness beyond affecting people's health. Excluding health from our analyses led to the same conclusions although associations between unemployment and relationship happiness were often stronger.

We control for a variety of other factors, as the same characteristics which lead to unemployment may also result in lower relationship happiness. The individual characteristics we control for are *age*, *educational attainment* (higher (Degree), middle (A-levels), or lower (GCSE or lower)), *ethnicity* (white native or other ethnic background), and *prior relationship experience* (whether they cohabited or were married to a previous partner). For instance, lower education can

be associated with both the likelihood of long-term unemployment and re-employment (Van Belle, et al., 2018), as well as relationship happiness (Brown et al., 2017). Due to small sample size, in particular for the analyses examining unemployment duration, we had to reduce the categories of ethnicity and education to two and three categories respectively[ii].

The controls of relationship characteristics are *marital status* (cohabiting versus married), *relationship duration* (including squared to take into account the nonlinear relationship), and the *presence of children* (with the categories: did not have a child, had a child living in the home, and had a child but none living in the same household). These are all variables associated with relationship happiness (Brown et al., 2017) and unemployment (Inanc, 2015). Furthermore, we control for region (NUTS-1) and wave. Controlling for region is important because regional contexts differ substantially across the UK, potentially affecting how unemployment affects individuals' health (Bambra & Popham, 2010; Heggebø, & Elstad, 2018) and potentially relationships. Wave controls for macro (economic) trends and the economic uncertainty that could have changed over time[iii].

As explained in the analytical strategy section later, in the final models we control for the level of *household income* to study whether the association between unemployment and relationship happiness goes beyond merely an income effect. The family stress model posits that economic resources are related to relationship happiness (Conger et al., 2010), and low income may help to explain any association between unemployment and relationship happiness. Nonetheless, as discussed above, employment may be important beyond simply contributing to the household income (Jahoda, 1982), for example employment can provide a sense of purpose in life and bolster self-esteem, which may impact relationship happiness. Thus, we include household income to see to what extent unemployment affects couples beyond their income. Income was operationalized as OECD equivalized net household income (Bourquin, Cribb, Waters, & Xu, 2019). Couples were categorized in quartiles per sample per wave to take economic growth into account.

Analytical strategy

We took several approaches to examine the effect of (a) current unemployment; (b) changes in unemployment, (c) unemployment duration; and (d) past unemployment experiences. We used both random and fixed effects models, because each approach addresses different research questions. To analyse (a) current unemployment, (c) the duration of unemployment[iv], and (d) past unemployment, we used linear random effects models with robust standard errors. To investigate (b) how changes in employment status were related to changes in relationship happiness we used linear fixed effects models. Random and fixed effects analyses were employed because of the hierarchical nature of the data where observations were nested within individuals. Random effects models addressed

between-person variation, whereas fixed effects models investigated within-person variation. For instance, the random effects models estimated whether people who were unemployed suffered from lower relationship happiness than people who were employed. This approach allowed us to compare individuals directly and take into account long-term disadvantage. Nonetheless, while we controlled for various factors, random effects models cannot completely take into account unobserved heterogeneity from stable characteristics. Therefore, we turned to fixed effects models to study how individuals reacted to the experience of unemployment. By comparing individuals with themselves, the fixed effect analyses took into account unobserved heterogeneity, but they also suffered from the reduction of statistical power, as changes within individuals were typically less common than differences between persons, which could lead to falsely rejecting hypotheses. As a whole, these strategies complemented each other, providing unique insights into different dimensions of unemployment.

Bivariate models are shown for own unemployed (Models 1a, 2a, 3a, 5a) and partner's unemployment (Models 1b, 2b, 4a, 5b), before including them simultaneously with the controls (Models 1c, 2c, 3b, 4b, 5c). Household income is included in the final models (Models 1d, 2d, 3c, 4c, 5d). We first estimated our analyses separately for men and women, and then tested for significant differences on a pooled sample with interactions between gender and all variables. Significant differences (p<.05) between men and women are indicated by bold coefficients.

Results

Current unemployment

We first examined whether respondents' and their partners' employment status were associated with relationship happiness (H1a and H1b). Table 2 shows random effects models, with results presented separately for men (panel 1) and women (panel 2). Bold coefficients indicate that the differences between men and women were significantly different at the .05 level (estimated from pooled samples). Model 1a and 1b show the bivariate associations between one's own and partner's employment status with relationship happiness. Model 1c includes both partners' employment status and the control variables. Model 1d includes household income in quartiles. Full models are available on request.

In panel 1 for men, the bivariate analyses indicate that men who were unemployed were less happy with their relationship than employed men (B=-0.175, p<.001). When partner's employment status (Model 1b) and the controls were included (Model 1c), this association declined but remained significant (B=-0.098, p<.05). After including the level of household income (Model 1d) this association declined slightly, but remained significant (B=-0.094, p<.05). Partner's

unemployment, on the other hand, seemed to be largely unrelated to men's relationship happiness. Model 1b showed that men whose female partner was unemployed were marginally less happy with their relationship (B=-0.095, p<.1). However, this association became non-significant after including men's employment status and the control variables.

For women in panel 2, the bivariate results in Model 1a showed that women who were unemployed were also less happy with their relationship compared to employed women (B=-0.170, p<0.001). When partner's unemployment status and controls were included in Model 1c, unemployed women still had lower relationship happiness than employed women, but this difference was only marginally significant (B=-0.099, p<.1). After including household income in Model 1d, this association declined further (B=-0.084, p<.1). Own unemployment status was similarly related to own relationship happiness for both men and women. Partner's unemployment was significantly associated with women's relationship happiness. In Model 1b, without including control variables and own employment status, women were less happy with their relationships when their male partner was unemployed compared to women whose partner was employed (B=-0.232, p<.001). This association declined but remained highly significant (B=-0.165, p<.001) when including women's employment status and the controls in Model 1c. When including household income in Model 1d, this association further declined, but remained significant (B=-0.147, p<.001). The partner's unemployment was significantly more associated with women's than men's relationship happiness.

We confirm Hypothesis 1a as both unemployed men and women were less happy with their relationship compared to employed men and women, although evidence is stronger for men than for women. Hypothesis 1b was confirmed only for women; women whose male partner was unemployed were less happy with their relationship compared to women whose partner was employed.

Controls generally confirm prior findings on relationship happiness (e.g. Blom et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2017; Hardie, et al., 2014). People were happier with the relationship when they or their partner reported better levels of health. Note that excluding this variable led to substantively the same conclusions. Older people were less happy with the relationship. Relationship happiness declined the longer people were together, but rose again after about 20 years. Married couples and parents with a child in the household were happier than cohabitors and childless couples respectively. Having had a previous relationship was unrelated to relationship happiness for men and women. White British had higher relationship happiness than people with other ethnic backgrounds; and the higher educated had higher relationship happiness than lower and middle educated people. People in later waves were less happy than people in wave 1. Lastly, women in the

North East and Northern Ireland and men in the East Midlands, West Midlands, South East, and Northern Ireland were happier than people living in London.

[Table 2]

Changes in unemployment

In Table 3 we use fixed effects models to test whether changes in unemployment were associated with changes in relationship happiness (H2a and H2b) separate for men (panel 1) and women (panel 2). The columns show: the bivariate association of changes in one's own employment status (Model 2a); the partner's employment status (Model 2b); controls (Model 2c), and changes in household income (Model 2d). Bold coefficients indicate significant differences in the association for men and women at the .05 level (estimated from pooled samples).

Both the bivariate (Model 2a) and multivariate models (Model 2c and 2d) in panel 1 show that changes in men's own unemployment status are unrelated to changes in their relationship happiness. Similarly, changes in their partner's unemployment status are not significantly related to changes in men's relationship happiness (Model 2b, 2c, nor 2d).

Panel 2 indicates that changes in women's unemployment status seem unrelated to changes in relationship happiness in both the bivariate (Model 2a) and multivariate analyses (Model 2c and 2d). Changes in partner's unemployment status is not significantly related to changes in women's relationship happiness when controls are not included (Model 2b). However, once controls and changes in employment status are included (Model 2c), women become significantly less happy with the relationship when their male partner becomes unemployed compared to becoming employed ($B=-0.125$, $p<.05$). The magnitude of this association remained similar once income was included in Model 2d, but decreases in significance level ($B=-0.122$, $p<.1$). The interaction term from the pooled models (not shown) indicated no significant gender differences in the association between changes in own or partner's unemployment status and changes in relationship happiness.

In total, we reject Hypothesis 2a for both men and women as changes in own unemployment are unrelated to changes in relationship happiness. Hypothesis 2b, concerning changes in partner's unemployment and changes in relationship happiness, is confirmed for women but rejected for men; however this gender difference was not statistically significant.

[Table 3]

Duration of unemployment

In Table 4 we tested Hypothesis 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b, where we expected a linear negative and curvilinear association between unemployment duration and relationship happiness respectively.

The length of one's own unemployment duration was investigated in Models 3a, 3b, and 3c, using random effects models. The partner's unemployment duration was studied in Models 4a, 4b, and 4c. For women these models were estimated as random effects models, but for men with Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) where we selected the first observation because of the limited amount of cases leading the random effects models for men to not converge. Gender differences couldn't be estimated for partner's unemployment duration since different methods were used.

Starting with men's own unemployment duration and their relationship happiness in panel 1 in Table 4, the bivariate analyses (Model 3a) showed that the longer men were unemployed the lower their relationship happiness (B=-0.010, p<.05). However, this was no longer significant once the controls and the partner's employment status were included in Model 3b. Panel 2 shows that in contrast to men's own unemployment duration, their female partner's unemployment duration was marginally negatively related to men's relationship happiness, both in the bivariate analyses and once the controls, men's employment status, and income were included (Model 4a, -0.016, p<.1; Model 4b, -0.017, p<.1; Model 4c, -0.018, p<.1).

Panel 3 and 4 in Table 4 shows that women's relationship happiness is significantly related to her own and her partner's unemployment duration. The bivariate results indicate that the longer she was unemployed, the lower her relationship happiness (in panel 3, Model 3a, B=-0.017, p<.05), which remained significant once the controls and the partner's employment status were included (Model 3b, B=-0.019, p<.05), and income (Model 3c, B=-0.017, p<.05). A curvilinear relationship was only marginally significant once controls were included (B=0.001, p<.1 in Models 3b and 3c), indicating that relationship happiness rose again after 3 years of unemployment. These associations did not significantly differ from the associations for men. Her male partner's unemployment was also significantly related to her relationship happiness in Models 4a, 4b, and 4c (panel 4). A curvilinear relationship was marginally significant (p<.1) before controls were added.

To summarize, we can confirm Hypothesis 3a for women, but not men, whose relationship happiness declined the longer they were unemployed, but rose after several years. Regarding the partner's unemployment duration, we find confirmation for Hypothesis 4b for men and women.

[Table 4]

Past unemployment

Table 5 presents the analysis of re-employment. We tested if employed people who were, or whose partner was, unemployed in the past two years were less happy with their relationship compared to employed people who were not unemployed in the past two years (Hypothesis 5). Random effects models were estimated separately for men (panel 1) and women (panel 2). Bivariate associations

were estimated in Model 5a and 5b, Model 5c included the controls and both partners' employment status, and Model 5d included both partners' health and the household income. Differences in the association for men and women at the .05 level are indicated in bold (estimated from pooled samples).

Panel 1 in Table 5 shows that men's relationship happiness did not differ between currently employed people, regardless of whether they were continuously employed or were re-employed (Models 5a, 5c, and 5d). Nor was their female partners' past unemployment experience related to their relationship happiness (Models 5b, 5c, and 5d).

Panel 2 shows that relationship happiness of currently employed women was also unrelated to her own unemployment experience in the last two years. On the other hand, women whose partner was re-employed were significantly less happy with their relationship compared to women whose partner was continuously employed, both in the bivariate analyses (Model 5b, B=-0.226, p<.01), and once the other variables were included (Model 5c, B=-0.180, p<.05; Model 5d, B=-0.176, p<.05). However, these associations were not statistically different from men's.

Thus, we could not confirm Hypothesis 5a since one's own past unemployment experience among employed people was not significantly related to differences in relationship happiness. However, Hypothesis 5b was confirmed for women: women whose partners experienced unemployment in the past two years were less happy. This was not the case for men, and no significant gender differences were found in these associations.

[Table 5]

Conclusion

Many couples in Britain have experienced precarity due to unemployment, which became particularly acute during the Great Recession (Allen, 2010; Office for National Statistics, 2019). While prior studies have found that unemployment has a detrimental impact on outcomes such as wellbeing (Esche, 2020; Inanc, 2018; Strandh et al., 2014), few studies have investigated relationship happiness. Given the strong association between relationship quality, divorce (Tach & Halpern-Meekin, 2012), and children's outcomes (Harold & Sellers, 2018), it is important to first understand how unemployment is associated with relationship happiness. Our results indicate that unemployment is indeed associated with lower relationship happiness, but that it is not the experience of one's own job loss per se that matters, but instead the general disadvantage that unemployed people face, especially the longer unemployment lasts. We also find what really matters is men's unemployment, which reduces women's happiness with the relationship, providing evidence that the male breadwinner model continues to persist in the UK.

In our basic models, we find that both men and women were less happy with their relationship when they were themselves unemployed, compared to their employed counterparts. However, when we investigated changes over time, this was no longer the case; individuals who were employed and then experienced unemployment did not report a decline in relationship happiness. This suggests that while the unemployed are in general less happy with their relationship, the association may be due to the long-term economic hardship that they experience rather than the shock of losing their jobs. It may also be that the original difference in relationship happiness was caused by unobserved confounders and selection.

Nonetheless, the consequences of unemployment for relationship happiness seemed to become worse the longer people were unemployed, although this was primarily found for women and when their partners were unemployed. This long-term decline in relationship happiness may be due to the emotional (Schauss et al., 2019; von Scheve et al., 2017) or economic consequences (Van Belle et al., 2018) of longer unemployment spells, as posited by the family stress model (Conger et al., 2010). Future research is needed to determine how the stress of unemployment operates and which of these mechanisms is more influential.

The relationship happiness of those who re-entered employment did not differ from those who had continuous employment. Thus, in accordance with the family stress model, current unemployment differentiates unhappy couples from happy couples, but our findings indicate that over the long-term, unemployment does not have enduring effects for the individual. In contrast, men's unemployment did seem to affect the relationship happiness of the female partner long-term. Women whose husbands were unemployed were less happy with their relationship than women whose partners were employed, and when their husbands lost their jobs, women became less happy. Even after gaining employment, women remained less happy when their partner had experienced unemployment in the recent past. Thus, relationship happiness seems to be scarred by men's past unemployment irrespective of their current status.

This study highlights the gendered nature of relationships and employment among British couples. Although attitudes have changed in recent decades, many people continue to regard breadwinning as particularly men's responsibility where mothers are often expected to be non- or part-time employed (Scott & Clery, 2013). This traditional pattern may explain why men's unemployment experiences affect women's relationship happiness but hardly vice versa. The involuntary deviation from gendered expectations, in which men are expected to provide income, appears to impact the happiness in partner relationships, at least with respect to unemployment.

Some limitations of our study must be noted. Our analysis cannot simultaneously model selection into partnerships and relationship happiness, since individuals must be in a partnership to

answer the questions on relationship happiness. In addition, our models do not account for partnership dissolution, which may underestimate associations between unemployment and relationship happiness since the least happy relationships are more likely to dissolve. Similarly, unhappier couples might be more likely to attrite from the survey, resulting in a potential underestimation of the association between unemployment and relationship happiness. Our additional analyses however showed that the association between unemployment and relationship did not differ between couples who separated from those who did not, indicating that the consequences for a potential selection of happy couples largely would not affect our conclusions. Furthermore, although the UKHLS has a large sample size, the number of unemployed was quite small. This was specifically the case when we investigated unemployment duration and re-employment, which potentially could lead to falsely rejecting hypotheses.

Furthermore, the reason for unemployment, whether it was redundancy, the end of a temporary contract, or dismissal, could have a profound impact on relationship happiness, as well as providing a good test for any potential causal relationship between unemployment and relationship happiness (Doiron & Mendolia, 2012). Although this was beyond the scope of this study, comparing different groups of unemployed people with employed people who have similar unemployment risks could be a promising avenue for future research. Similarly, the relationship happiness of the unemployed might be related to the level of financial benefits they receive. This type of research would provide policy insights into how to counter the consequences of unemployment for relationships. However, it must be noted that the level of household income did not explain (a lot) of the association between unemployment and relationship happiness here.

Overall, this research indicates that unemployment is associated with unhappier relationships, particularly when the man is unemployed. For women, relationships are especially at risk during their partner's unemployment, which can have long-term scarring effects and result in the accumulation of problems over time. Solely focussing on the currently unemployed thus overlooks partners' experiences and past experiences. The family stress model has – to our knowledge –not included these temporal dimensions of economic hardship previously; yet identifying time points when couples are especially susceptible to economic hardship is extremely important for informing policies. For example, the British Troubled Families Programme, which aims to reduce the strain faced by vulnerable families, should recognize the impact of unemployment. However, these programmes should not only offer relationship support to the unemployed, but also their partners, guiding them through the period of unemployment and subsequent re-employment.

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Endnotes

[i] Here we investigate relationship happiness, which is a part of the broader concept of relationship quality. We refer to relationship happiness when discussing our study and to relationship quality when we discuss previous literature on other but related aspects of relationship quality.

[ii] Including more detailed indicators of ethnicity and education in the larger samples (Models 1c-d, 5c-d) did not lead to different conclusions.

[iii] In additional analyses we controlled for potential childhood background selection mechanisms namely (highest) parental socioeconomic background (National Statistics Socio-economic Classification plus not employed category), relationship status of the parents when respondent was 14, and age of mother at birth (<20, 20-24, 25<, missing). Including these indicators in the larger samples (Models 1c-d, 5c-d) did not lead to different conclusions.

[iv] The number of men whose partner was unemployed and the duration of her unemployment was known was very low, making random effect analyses impossible. Therefore OLS regression was employed for this group.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the various samples.

	Unemployment Status (Models 1 and 2)		Own Unemployment duration (Model 3)		Partner Unemployment duration (Model 4)		Unemployment history (Models 5)	
	Men Mean/% (SD)	Women Mean/% (SD)	Men Mean/% (SD)	Women Mean/% (SD)	Men Mean/% (SD)	Women Mean/% (SD)	Men Mean/% (SD)	Women Mean/% (SD)
Relationship happiness (1-7)	4.9 (1.3)	4.9 (1.4)	4.7 (1.4)	4.7 (1.5)	4.6 (1.4)	4.6 (1.5)	4.9 (1.3)	4.9 (1.4)
Job status								
Employed	90.2	74.7			72.8	48.7		
Continuously employed							85.1	70.2
Re-employed							2.4	1.3
Unemployed	5.7	3.5			20.5	15.9	7.1	4.2
Other	4.1	21.9			6.6	35.4	5.4	24.3
Own Unemployment duration (months)(0-59)			23.7 (23.0)	21.7 (22.0)				
Partner job status								
Employed	74.4	90.4	48.7	65.4				
Continuously employed							69.4	84
Re-employed							1.3	2.3
Unemployed	3.6	5.5	17.2	24.5			4.3	7.6
Other	22	4.1	34.1	10.1			25	6.1
Partner Unempl.dur. (0-59)					18.1 (19.8)	23.6 (22.9)		
Income								
1st quartile	25.2	24.8	28.1	19.5	14.0	28.2	25.1	24.9
2nd quartile	24.9	25	27.4	19.3	20.0	27.5	25	25
3rd quartile	24.9	25.1	25.9	22.9	23.8	26.3	24.9	25
4th quartile	25.0	25.1	18.6	38.4	42.1	18.1	25.0	25.1
Health								
Excellent/very good	56.9	56.7	39.7	39.9	47.7	38.3	55.8	55.8
Good	28.8	28.5	34.9	32.4	31.8	28.7	29.0	28.3
Poor/Fair	14.3	14.8	25.4	27.7	20.5	33.0	15.2	15.9
Health partner								
Excellent/very good	56.6	57.6	37.8	43.0	41.1	41.5	55.9	55.6
Good	28.4	28.3	28.7	32.0	35.1	34.8	28.3	28.7
Poor/Fair	15.0	14.1	33.5	25.0	23.8	23.7	15.8	15.7
Age (20-60)	42.8 (9.6)	40.6 (9.6)	41.9 (10.7)	38.8 (10.7)	41.1 (10.9)	38.7 (10.7)	43.1(9.4)	40.9(9.5)
Relation. durat. (years) (0-44)	14.4 (9.8)	14.5 (9.8)	13.7 (10.6)	10.7 (10.1)	10.7 (9.8)	13.0 (10.5)	14.6(9.8)	14.7(9.8)
Had prior relationship								
No	69.2	69.5	65.5	52.4	58.1	62.1	68.5	68.7
Yes	30.8	30.5	34.5	47.6	41.9	37.9	31.5	31.3
Marital status								
Cohabiting	22.1	22.2	41.4	41.5	38.4	42.2	21.2	21.5
Married	77.9	77.8	58.6	58.5	61.6	57.8	78.8	78.5
Parental Status								
No child	18.4	17.8	17.9	29.8	25.8	17.8	16.9	17.5
Child in household	70.3	72.3	67.6	54.8	51.7	70.4	71.2	71.9
Child outside household	11.3	9.9	14.5	15.4	22.5	11.8	12	10.6
Education								
Higher	44	48.3	24.2	30.3	33.8	25.4	43.4	48.3
Midlle	21.2	17.8	17.4	18.6	21.2	13.5	21.3	17.6
Lower	34.8	33.8	58.4	51.1	45	61.1	35.3	34.1
Ethnicity								
White British	79	77.5	77.2	75.9	76.0	74.5	81.9	79.9
Other	21	22.5	22.8	24.1	24.0	25.5	18.1	20.1
Region								
North East	4.4	4.4					4.7	4.8
North West	11	10.7					10.9	10.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	8.6	8.7					8.7	8.6
East Midlands	8.1	8.2					8.4	8.2
West Midlands	8.7	8.3					8.8	8.7
East of England	9.6	9.8					9.4	9.5
London	12.6	12.3					11	10.8
South East	13.4	13.7					13.9	14
South West	8.7	8.9					9.3	9.6
Wales	4.3	4.2					4.3	4.4
Scotland	6.8	6.8					7	7.1
Northern Ireland	3.8	3.8					3.5	3.5
Wave								
1	32.1	31.8	35.4	28.2	32.5	36.1	29.8	30.2
3	25.9	26.1	22.0	19.7	18.5	22.7	26.3	26.4
5	21.7	22.1	26.6	33.5	32.5	25.8	25.4	25.3

7	20.3	20	16.0	18.6	16.6	15.4	18.5	18.1
Number of observation	21,014	23,668	413	188	151	415	14,197	14,544
Number of people	9,854	10,897	334	165	151	337	6,115	6,220
Observation per person (1-4)	2.1 (1.1)	2.2 (1.2)	1.2 (0.6)	1.1 (0.5)	1 (0)	1.2 (0.6)	2.3 (1.1)	2.3 (1.2)

Range is shown after variable label between brackets

Table 2. Employment status and Relationship Happiness, Random effects analyses

	Panel 1: Men											
	Model 1a			Model 1b			Model 1c			Model 1d		
	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE
Own Job status												
Employed	Ref.						Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed	-0.175	***	0.043				-0.098	*	0.043	-0.094	*	0.044
Other	**-0.291**	***	**0.057**				-0.068		0.057	-0.062		0.058
Partner job status												
Employed				Ref.			Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed				**-0.095**	#	**0.049**	**-0.025**		**0.049**	**-0.015**		**0.049**
Other				**-0.057**	*	**0.025**	**0.043**	#	**0.025**	**0.047**	#	**0.026**
Household income												
1st quartile										Ref.		
2nd quartile										-0.031		0.028
3rd quartile										-0.006		0.030
4th quartile										0.078	*	0.033
Controls	No			No			Yes			Yes		
	Panel 2: Women											
	Model 1a			Model 1b			Model 1c			Model 1d		
	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE
Own Job status												
Employed	Ref.						Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed	-0.170	***	0.050				-0.099	#	0.051	-0.084	#	0.051
Other	**-0.065**	**	**0.024**				0.039		0.025	0.050	#	0.026
Partner job status												
Employed				Ref.			Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed				**-0.232**	***	**0.043**	**-0.165**	***	**0.043**	**-0.147**	***	**0.044**
Other				**-0.337**	***	**0.053**	**-0.162**	**	**0.054**	**-0.147**	**	**0.055**
Household income												
1st quartile										Ref.		
2nd quartile										0.014		0.027
3rd quartile										0.054	#	0.029
4th quartile										0.065	*	0.031
Controls	No			No			Yes			Yes		

Source: UKHLS, 2009-2017. # p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, bold indicates significant (p<.05) difference between men and women. Controls are presence of children, age, educational attainment, ethnicity, individual health status, prior relationship experience, partner's health status, marital status, relationship duration, region, wave.

Table 3. Changes in Employment status and Relationship Happiness, Fixed effects analyses

	Panel 1: Men											
	Model 2a			Model 2b			Model 2c			Model 2d		
	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE
Own Job status												
Employed	Ref.						Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed	-0.057		0.067				-0.102		0.066	-0.105		0.067
Other	0.001		0.110				0.034		0.105	0.034		0.105
Partner job status												
Employed							Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed				0.046		0.069	0.022		0.069	0.022		0.069
Other				**0.103**	*	**0.040**	0.094	*	0.039	0.093	*	0.040
Household income												
1st quartile										Ref.		
2nd quartile										-0.036		0.038
3rd quartile										-0.032		0.045
4th quartile										0.055		0.052
Controls	No			No			Yes			Yes		
	Panel 2: Women											
	Model 2a			Model 2b			Model 2c			Model 2d		
	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE
Own Job status												
Employed	Ref.						Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed	0.069		0.070				0.044		0.070	0.047		0.070
Other	0.102	**	0.040				0.089	*	0.039	0.091	*	0.040
Partner job status												
Employed				Ref.			Ref.			Ref.		
Unemployed				-0.078		0.063	-0.125	*	0.062	-0.122	#	0.063
Other				**-0.136**		**0.099**	-0.104		0.098	-0.102		0.099
Household income												
1st quartile										Ref.		
2nd quartile										0.000		0.035
3rd quartile										0.003		0.042
4th quartile										0.031		0.049
Controls	No			No			Yes			Yes		

Source: UKHLS, 2009-2017. # p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, bold indicates significant (p<.05) difference between men and women. Controls are presence of children, age, individual health status, partner's health status, marital status, relationship duration, wave.

Table 4. Relationship happiness and duration of current unemployment spell, random effect and OLS models.

	Panel 1: Men, own unemployment durationn					
	Model 3a		Model 3b		Model 3c	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Own unemployment duration	-0.010 *	0.005	-0.003	0.006	-0.003	0.006
Own unemployment duration squared	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Partner job status						
Employed			Ref.		Ref.	
Unemployed			-0.175	0.220	-0.190	0.225
Other			-0.018	0.189	-0.020	0.192
Household income						
1st quartile					Ref.	
2nd quartile					0.155	0.198
3rd quartile					0.013	0.204
4th quartile					-0.047	0.207
Controls	No		Yes		Yes	
	Panel 2: Men, partner's unemployment duration					
	Model 4a		Model 4b		Model 4c	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Partner's unemployment duration	-0.016 #	0.009	-0.017 #	0.009	-0.018 #	0.010
Partner's unemployment duration squared	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Own job status						
Employed			Ref.		Ref.	
Unemployed			-0.344	0.439	-0.344	0.455
Other			-0.865 #	0.448	-0.937 #	0.482
Household income						
1st quartile					Ref.	
2nd quartile					0.524	0.389
3rd quartile					0.106	0.372
4th quartile					0.402	0.335
Controls	No		Yes		Yes	
	Panel 3: Women, own unemployment duration					
	Model 3a		Model 3b		Model 3c	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Own unemployment duration	-0.017 *	0.008	-0.015 #	0.008	-0.016 #	0.008
Own unemployment duration squared	0.000	0.000	0.001 #	0.000	0.001 #	0.000
Partner job status						
Employed			Ref.		Ref.	
Unemployed			0.416	0.303	0.409	0.350
Other			0.305	0.448	0.260	0.445
Household income						
1st quartile					Ref.	
2nd quartile					0.278	0.348
3rd quartile					-0.337	0.328
4th quartile					0.104	0.316
Controls	No		Yes		Yes	
	Panel 4: Women, partner's unemployment duration					
	Model 4a		Model 4b		Model 4c	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Partner's unemployment duration	-0.014 **	0.005	-0.010 #	0.005	-0.010 #	0.005
Partner's unemployment duration squared	0.000 #	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Own job status						
Employed			Ref.		Ref.	
Unemployed			-0.028	0.225	-0.042	0.233
Other			-0.167	0.214	-0.177	0.217
Household income						
1st quartile					Ref.	
2nd quartile					0.115	0.215
3rd quartile					-0.109	0.203
4th quartile					-0.043	0.243
Controls	No		Yes		Yes	

Source: UKHLS, 2009-2017. # p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, bold indicates significant (p<.05) difference between men and women. Controls are presence of children, age, educational attainment, ethnicity, individual health status, prior relationship experience, partner's health status, marital status, relationship duration, wave.

Table 5. Past unemployment experience and Relationship Happiness, Random effects analyses

	Panel 1: Men											
	Model 5a			Model 5b			Model 5c			Model 5d		
	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE
Own Job status												
Continuously employed	Ref.						Ref.			Ref.		
Re-employed	-0.060		0.072				0.014		0.071	0.020		0.071
Unemployed	-0.198	***	0.047				-0.110	*	0.049	-0.101	*	0.051
Other	**-0.334**	****	**0.062**				**-0.110**	**#**	**0.064**	**-0.100**		**0.065**
Partner job status												
Continuously employed				Ref.			Ref.			Ref.		
Re-employed				-0.012		0.089	-0.024		0.088	-0.020		0.087
Unemployed				-0.182	**	0.058	**-0.093**		**0.059**	**-0.080**		**0.059**
Other				**-0.093**	****	**0.030**	**0.013**		**0.031**	**0.020**		**0.032**
Household income												
1st quartile										Ref.		
2nd quartile										-0.026		0.035
3rd quartile										-0.008		0.039
4th quartile										0.110	**	0.042
Controls	No			No			Yes			Yes		
	Panel 2: Women											
	Model 5a			Model 5b			Model 5c			Model 5d		
	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE	B		SE
Own Job status												
Continuously employed	Ref.						Ref.			Ref.		
Re-employed	-0.020		0.092				-0.033		0.088	-0.033		0.088
Unemployed	-0.150	*	0.059				-0.033		0.060	-0.025		0.061
Other	**-0.094**	****	**0.030**				**0.042**		**0.032**	**0.046**		**0.033**
Partner job status												
Continuously employed				Ref.			Ref.			Ref.		
Re-employed				-0.226	**	0.079	-0.180	*	0.078	-0.176	*	0.078
Unemployed				-0.328	***	0.049	**-0.255**	***	**0.051**	**-0.245**	***	**0.053**
Other				**-0.427**	***	**0.057**	**-0.253**	***	**0.061**	**-0.243**	***	**0.062**
Household income												
1st quartile										Ref.		
2nd quartile										0.001		0.034
3rd quartile										0.014		0.038
4th quartile										0.061		0.041
Controls	No			No			Yes			Yes		

Source: UKHLS, 2009-2017. # p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, bold indicates significant (p<.05) difference between men and women. Controls are presence of children, age, educational attainment, ethnicity, individual health status, prior relationship experience, partner's health status, marital status, relationship duration, region, wave.