Childbearing during and after Recessions in the Nordic Countries

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Background – Research Question

- Nordic countries:
  - high employment
  - high fertility
  - income-related parental-leave system

- since Great Recession – dramatic decline of fertility

- fertility decline related to the Great Recession?
Background – Nordic Puzzle

- the Great Recession was not very strong in the Scandinavian countries
- the recent fertility decline in the Nordic countries is not very clearly tied to macroeconomic indicators (Goldstein 2013; Comolli 2017; Vignoli et al. 2017; Matysiak et al. 2018)
- the Great Recession was not the first severe economic crisis in the Nordic countries
Background

Background

Unemployment rate in the Nordic countries (1970-2015)
Background

Our Study – Data and Method

- changes in childbearing risks in all five Nordic countries since 1987
- compare changes after the Great Recession (2008) to earlier recession period (1990)

- event-history models, parity-specific fertility by calendar year
- harmonized population registers, separate model for each country
- women born 1942 – 1999
RESULTS – first and second birth

- Relative risk of first birth in 1989-1999
  - Finland  Denmark  Norway  Sweden  Iceland

- Relative risk of first birth in 2007-2015
  - Finland  Denmark  Norway  Sweden  Iceland

- Relative risk of second birth in 1989-1999
  - Finland  Denmark  Norway  Sweden  Iceland

- Relative risk of second birth in 2007-2015
  - Finland  Denmark  Norway  Sweden  Iceland
RESULTS

- Recent decline driven by **first births** but seems smaller than after 1990 except for Norway

- Norway and Iceland **stronger** first birth risk decline in the 2010s than in the 1990s, Norway no crisis (unemployment); Iceland strongest crisis (GDP) in 2010s

- SE, DK, FL – weaker or no decline, despite some crisis (unemployment)

- For **higher parities** Norway and Denmark stronger decline in the 2010s than in the 1990s

- More **homogeneous developments** across the five countries in birth risk in the 2010s (all parities, all countries)
RESULTS - by age groups (below/above 30)

First birth

Reference point:
First birth risk in 1990 and 2008
RESULTS - by age groups (below/above 30)
Second birth

Second births to 16-29

Second births to 30-45
RESULTS BY AGE GROUPS

- stronger declines among younger women (16-29) and for them, stronger decline in birth risk in the 1990s
- more homogeneity across all age groups in 2010s (also 2nd birth)
- 30+ women increase or stable pattern in 1990s, exc. Sweden, but Finland no decline despite most severe crisis
- 30+ stable development in 2010s (or slight decline, esp. Norway)
CONCLUSION

- 2010s – "similar" pattern, irresp. of crisis strength  
  Norway "strongest" effect, least crisis

- 1990s – different fertility consequences, despite similar crisis  
  (Sweden – Finland)

- 1990s – crisis more national? more causal variation of crisis?
- 1990s – less global market, no EU, more national leaway?
- 1990s – no smartphone for everyone, no google

- 2010s – common cause of crisis? global?
- 2010s – similar uncertainty perception of global crisis?
- 2010s – non-common crisis? e.g. Norway: Oil crisis?
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RESULTS – third and fourth birth
RESULTS BY EDUCATION GROUPS

Reference point: First birth risk among upper secondary educated women in 1990 and 2008

Results not available for Iceland
RESULTS BY EDUCATION GROUPS

Reference point: Second birth risk among upper secondary educated women in 1990 and 2008

Results not available for Iceland
RESULTS by age groups, third birth

Third births to 16-29

Third births to 30-45
RESULTS by age groups, fourth birth
RESULTS BY EDUCATION GROUPS

(a) Third births to Primary or lower secondary educated 1989-1999

(b) Third births to Primary or lower secondary educated 2007-2015

(c) Third births to Upper secondary educated 1989-1999

(d) Third births to Upper secondary educated 2007-2015

(e) Third births to Tertiary educated 1989-1999

(f) Third births to Tertiary educated 2007-2015
RESULTS BY EDUCATION GROUPS

(a) Fourth births to Primary or Lower secondary educated 1980-1999

(b) Fourth births to Primary or Lower secondary educated 2007-2015

(c) Fourth births to Upper secondary educated 1980-1999

(d) Fourth births to Upper secondary educated 2007-2015

(e) Fourth births to Tertiary educated 1980-1999

(f) Fourth births to Tertiary educated 2007-2015
Impacts of Family Policies & Economic Development on Second-birth Risks

Rates relative to Sweden in 1977

Neyer, Andersson, Rønsen, Hoem, Vikat 2006
Background