Employment

Many studies find that fertility tends to be pro-cyclical, rising during good economic times and declining during economic downturns and recessions (Sobotka et al., 2011; Örsal & Goldstein, 2018).

The Great Recession starting in 2008 prompted renewed interest in this topic, with evidence that it led to fertility declines and postponement in many countries (Comolli, 2017; Matysiak et al., 2021).

In the Nordic countries, the impact of the Great Recession on fertility was more modest and short-lived compared to other parts of Europe, likely due to strong social safety nets and family policies in those countries (Comolli et al., 2021; Jónsson, 2018).

The effect also differs by parity, age, gender, and education level. First births tend to be more affected than higher-order births (Goldstein et al., 2013).

Younger and more educated individuals often postpone fertility the most during economic uncertainty (Miettinen & Jalovaara, 2020).

Men's unemployment sometimes has a stronger negative effect than women's unemployment (Örsal & Goldstein, 2018).

Perceived economic uncertainty also plays an important role in depressing fertility (Comolli, 2017).

Vignoli et al. (2020) show that individuals' fertility intentions depend on their level of subjective well-being and perceived economic insecurity, not just unemployment itself.

Andersson (2000) documented pro-cyclical fertility in Sweden, with women's earnings positively related to fertility.

Temporary contracts and unstable jobs are linked to fertility postponement, especially for highly educated women (Alderotti et al., 2021; Cheng & Hsu, 2020).

Strong social safety nets, childcare availability, and gender-egalitarian family leave policies can provide a buffer during economic uncertainty (Comolli et al., 2021).

Alderotti et al. (2021) find that the negative impact of employment instability on fertility has intensified in recent decades and is strongest in Southern European countries with weaker support systems.

Campisi et al. (2023) use geo-spatial models to demonstrate how the fertility response to the Great Recession varied sub-nationally across Nordic regions based on localized economic and social contexts.

In summary, this literature reveals the dynamic, multifaceted connections between economic conditions and fertility. While downturns generally depress fertility, the impacts vary across time, place, and subgroup based on individual characteristics, perceptions, policies, and local contexts.