

Social and demographic research

The general objective of the division is to analyse demographic development and changes in economic and social living conditions of the population. The research activities combine micro- and macro analytic approaches to the analyses of demographic and socioeconomic processes. On-going activities are divided into four areas: (a) Population development, migration and mortality, (b) Fertility, nuptiality and changes in family structure, (c) Immigration and social change and (d) Living conditions and social participation. Research results from demographic analyses also serve as input for revising model structure and parameters of forecasting and simulation models in Statistics Norway. The division is responsible for making population projections, including BEFREG (Statistics Norway's model for national and regional population projections) and LOGG, The Generations and Gender Programme in Norway.

Demographic research

Population development, migration and mortality

The division has a general responsibility for monitoring and analysing trends in population development, both at the national level and in a comparative context, regionally as well as internationally, including the production of population projections. We are also involved in the design of life expectancy adjustments in the new Norwegian pension system. We are cooperating with Eurostat about population forecasts and advice the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the United Nations Commission for Population and Development. A senior researcher is currently chairing the Panel on the Demography of Armed Conflict of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population.

Documentation: Rapp 2008/23, ØA 1/2008, ØA 3/2008, ØA 4/2008, SSP 2/2008, VG 31.1, Dagsavisen 2.22 og 30.11., [22], [23], [56], [59], [103].

Fertility, nuptiality and changes in family structure

In recent years a substantial part of the research has focused on structural changes in central demographic processes, in particular fertility, nuptiality (marriage and cohabitation) and family formation. Analyses of recent fertility trends are based on an extension of earlier analyses of register data for the period 1935-1990. For more complex analyses of fertility trends and new patterns of family formation, population register information is linked to various sources containing possible explanatory variables. The dynamics between gender equality and fertility are being analysed. We analyse the growth, types of, and attitudes to cohabitation during recent history and the family formation process in a gender perspective. One project studies cohabitants' commitment to their partnership, their propensity to marry, and the interrelations between first birth and first union formation. The division is involved in the Generations and Gender Programme coordinated by UNECE in Geneva. We have coordinated the working group on administrative records, planned and implemented the Norwegian Gender and Generation Survey in 2007-2008 (LOGG), and entered Norwegian data into the contextual database. The division also participates in several collaborative networks with other research institutions. We coordinate a Nordic network on register data analyses of family formation and effects of family policies, and participate in a network using interview data to compare family formation in Sweden and Norway. We also take part in a network on same-sex partnerships in Europe and in two consortia that have been given research grants by the European Commission (FP 7), REPRO and INFRA.

Documentation: DP 561, 564, [5], [26], [28], [33], [36], [61], [96], [105], [118].

Social research

The activities concerning social research are based on both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses of surveys as well as administrative registers, including generational changes in the level of living over the life course, differences between various population groups, and gender differences in the outcomes of social processes. The level of living is studied both in terms of material conditions such as income, housing and labour market participation, in terms of social integration, social isolation and crime, and as time use patterns, often with a focus on the effects of social welfare policies on particular population groups. Most of this research is financed as commissioned research.

Immigration and social change

The living conditions and integration process of immigrants and refugees are studied in several projects, including an analysis of people's attitudes to immigrants and immigration, an analysis of factors promoting the integration of immigrants, a project on the naturalization of non-western immigrants, and a project on dual nationality among non-western immigrants. A larger survey on the level of living of 10 different non-western immigrant nationalities has been analysed. The fieldwork started in 2005 and was finished in 2007. A supplementary survey of young people with immigrant background from Pakistan, Turkey and Vietnam was launched in 2006. The analyses of the main survey as well as the supplementary survey started in 2007 and the first reports were published in 2008. Additional analyses are being undertaken.

Documentation: REP 2008/5, REP 2008/14, REP 2008/35, REP 2008/51, REP 2008/57, SA 103, SSP 2/2008.

Living conditions and social participation

A substantial part of the ongoing research focuses on various aspects of the living conditions of parents and children, including parents' working hours and the division of domestic labour. We also investigate women's part-time work and employment interruptions, couples' working hours, and look at actual working hours in various types of occupations. Furthermore, we have been engaged in a project evaluating the new regulations of child maintenance implemented in 2003 by analysing the parents' involvement with their children as well as their economic well being. We have also worked on a project on children who have little contact with their non-resident parents, a project evaluating an activation programme targeted at social security recipients, a project looking at the association between criminal careers and various circumstances of life, a project exploring the living conditions among farmers, as well as a broader project on living conditions and social integration and isolation.

Documentation: REP 2008/12, REP 2008/31, REP 2008/32, REP 2008/45, REP 2008/55, REP 2008/56, SSP 1/2008, SSP 2/2008, SSP 3/2008, Reprints 322, SSP 4/2008, [4], [62]

Main findings

- For the new population projections, published in May 2008, we estimated the effects on net immigration of unemployment level and income level in Norway compared to other OECD countries, and used this as background information for the forecast of net immigration, which was assumed to start declining from a record level in the near future.
- There are different strategies for combining work- and family-life, and families with young children use family policies in different ways. Generous family policies reduce the costs of having children. Most couples having one child also have a second child, and two-child family life seems to be compatible with an active work carrier.

- Gender equality is important for working mothers, and fathers' use of parental leave is positively associated with the chance of having a second child.
- Childlessness and multi-partnered fertility (having children with more than one partner) are increasing among Norwegian men. Men with low education are the most likely to remain childless, but still they are the most likely to have children with more than one woman. The increase in multi-partnered fertility is also highest in this group, whereas the rise in childlessness is highest among men with undergraduate tertiary education.
- Children affect fathers' working hours less than mothers' working hours, but men do curtail their actual working hours somewhat when they have young children (up to two years old), and particularly if there is only one child in the household. However, men with school-aged children work somewhat longer hours than non-fathers.
- Non-resident fathers with low income see their children less than other fathers in holidays as well as on a more daily basis. It is above all those in the lowest income group that have little contact with their children. Irrespective of income, fathers with low educational attainment have slightly less contact with their children than more well-educated fathers. Reduced health for the parents implies less contact between non-resident fathers and children on a daily basis, but not in holidays.
- According to the most recent survey on living conditions among immigrants, the housing standards among immigrants with a background from ten different countries in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin-America have improved since 1996. The share of immigrants who lives in detached houses and the share who lives in owned dwellings have increased. Fewer live in rented accommodation and it is less common to live in cramped conditions than ten years ago. However, immigrant families still have poorer housing standards than average.
- The most recent survey on living conditions among immigrants shows that Norwegian citizenship is generally very popular and that there is widespread interest in obtaining closer ties to Norway through naturalization. The main reason for applying for Norwegian citizenship is the desire to have full rights and obligations in Norway, but other practical reasons also play a part, such as it being easier to visit other countries on a Norwegian passport. Among the few who are not interested in obtaining Norwegian citizenship, more than half state that they would apply if dual nationality was generally permitted. Keeping their original citizenship for practical reasons and ties to the country of origin are the most important reasons for not wanting to become a Norwegian citizen under the principle of single nationality.
- In a survey of youth with immigrant origin from Pakistan, Turkey and Vietnam, almost half says that religion is "extremely important in life". Among the immigrants of Pakistani or Turkish origin, religion is at least as important for young people as it is for the older. Young men of Pakistani origin are even more religiously active than older male Pakistani immigrants.
- A thesis on Changing welfare, living conditions and social integration shows that the pessimistic descriptions of trends in social attachments given by Robert Putnam and others receive limited support in the case of Norway. There has been no general decline of social integration during the last 30 years. The case is rather the opposite for friendship interaction and confiding relationships outside of family circles. More people socialise on an average day. However, trends have generally been less favourable in the 1990s and less favourable for men than for women. Why trends in the Nordic countries seemingly contrast with the US is unclear, but they are consistent with recent research showing that a generous welfare state does not necessarily "crowd out" social support and communal relations.

Staff

Kjeldstad, Randi, Senior Researcher, Head of Research
Barstad, Anders, Researcher
Blom, Svein, Researcher
Brunborg, Helge, Senior Researcher
Dommermuth, Lars, Researcher
Hansen, Liv, Senior Executive Officer
Keilman, Nico, Professor (part time)
Kitterød, Ragni Hege, Senior Researcher
Lappegård, Trude, Researcher
Lyngstad, Jan, Researcher
Lyngstad, Torkild Hovde, Researcher (part time)
Løwe, Torkil, Sociologist
Noack, Turid, Senior Researcher
Nymoene, Erik H., Adviser
Pettersen, Silje Vatne, Demographer (leave of absence 06.15 – 12.31)
Rønsen, Marit, Senior Researcher
Skardhamar, Torbjørn, Criminologist
Skirbekk, Vegard, Senior Researcher (part time)
Skrede, Kari, Senior Researcher
Texmon, Inger, Senior Adviser
Wiik, Kenneth Aarskaug, Sociologist
Østby, Lars, Senior Researcher (Department for Social Statistics, associated with the division)
Aassve, Arnstein, Professor (part time)