

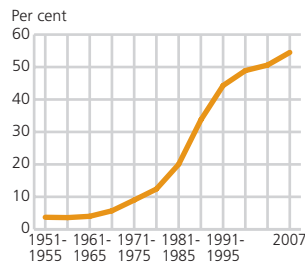
From generation to generation

Total fertility rate in selected countries. 2006

Iceland	2.08
France	2.00
Norway	1.90
Ireland	1.90
Sweden	1.85
United Kingdom	1.84
Finland	1.84
Denmark	1.83
Netherland	1.70
Austria	1.40
Greece	1.39
Spain	1.38
Portugal	1.35
Germany	1.32
Poland	1.27

Source: Eurostat.

Percentage of children born out of wedlock



Percentage of children born out of wedlock in selected countries. 2006

Iceland	65.6
Sweden	55.5
Norway	53.1
France	50.5
Denmark	46.4
United Kingdom	43.7
Finland	40.6
Austria	37.2
Netherland	37.1
Ireland	33.2
Portugal	31.6
Germany	30.0
Spain	28.4
Poland	18.9
Switzerland	15.4
Greece	5.3

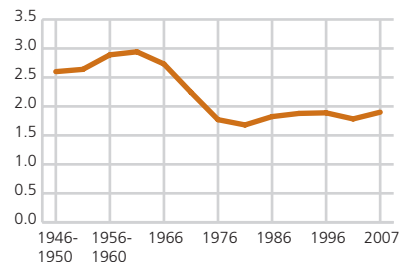
Source: Eurostat.

Low fertility rate...

The post-war baby boom, which lasted until the mid-1960s, was followed by a decline in birth rates that reached its lowest point in the beginning of the 1980s. Fertility then increased somewhat but now appears to be stabilised at a fertility rate of 1.9 children per woman.

If we disregard immigration and emigration, the fertility rate in a country must be approximately 2.1 in order to ensure the long-term natural replacement of the population. Norway has remained below this level since the mid-1970s.

Total fertility rate¹



¹ Average number of live births per woman during her life-time, if the fertility pattern in the period remains the same in the entire fertile period and no death occurs.

...but high compared to other countries

The fall in the fertility rate in the last decade is a general phenomenon in Europe, and Norway is actually one of the countries with the highest fertility rates in recent years. The average fertility rate in the EU, for instance, is now 1.5, with Italy, Spain and Greece down to 1.3. The highest fertility rates in 2006 were in Iceland and France.

More than half born outside marriage

More than 50 per cent of all children are now born out of wedlock, compared with just over 3 per cent in the 1950s. The greatest increase was registered in the 1970s and 1980s, but this increase has now evened out. The vast majority of these births are to parents who live together, while 11 per cent are born to single mothers. However, in the case of the first child, 52 and 16 per cent respectively are born to parents who live together or to single mothers. When the second child comes along, the parents are more likely to be married.

Most up north

Most births outside marriage are found in the three northern counties and the Trøndelag counties, with fewest in Vest-Agder.

A similar north-south divide is also found in Europe: Iceland heads the list, followed by Sweden and the other Nordic countries. Moving down the list we find the countries in Western Europe. In Southern Europe births outside marriage are still a relatively rare phenomenon.

Older mothers

With the growth in educational level and labour force participation, mothers are giving birth increasingly later in life. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the average childbearing age has increased by approximately four years to 30.3. The average age for the first birth is 28.1.

This trend is particularly prevalent among teenagers. Around 1970, teenage births amounted to 20 per cent of those giving birth for the first time, whereas today the figure is less than 5 per cent.

More multiple births

The share of multiple births (mainly twins) remained around 1 per cent for a long time, but started to increase at the end of the 1980s and is now 2 per cent. This development is probably due to the rise in childbearing age and the increase in the use of IVF treatment.

Abortion numbers stable

Abortion rates rose sharply at the beginning of the 1970s. Since the introduction of the Abortion Act in 1978, the numbers have stabilised between 14 000 and 16 000. In 2007, almost 15 200 abortions were carried out, a figure equivalent to about 25 per cent of all live births.

The frequency of abortions is particularly high among young women aged 20 to 24; every year almost 3 per cent in this age group have an abortion. Among those aged 15 to 19, there are now twice as many abortions as births.

Fewer adoptions from abroad

The annual number of adoptions has varied between 800 and 1 000 since the start of the 1970s. However, there has been a decline in recent years due to fewer children being adopted from abroad. The share of adoptions from abroad increased dramatically up to 2005, but has subsequently evened out. Part of the reason for this is that the waiting time to adopt children from China has increased. However, China is still the dominating donor country, followed by Colombia and South Korea. While there is a majority of boys from most countries, nearly all children adopted from China are girls, presumably because of China's one-child policy.

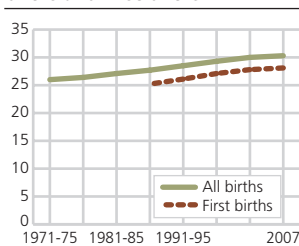
Simultaneous to the fall in the number of adoptions from abroad, the number of step children adoptions has increased. This is due to more registered partners adopting their partner's children.

What's in a name?

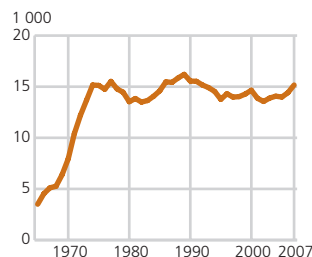
Whether the children are born in or out of wedlock, are twins or adopted, they all require a name. Linnea and Lucas were the most popular baby names in 2008.

Fashions in names change, and many of the names we find today were very popular about 100 years ago. Many of them are international and they head the list in other countries too. (A result of this fact is the disappearance of 'Norwegian' names containing the letters æ, ø and å.) A third trend is that double names and hyphenated names (e.g. Else Marie and Ole-Petter) are losing their popularity.

Average childbearing age. All births and first births

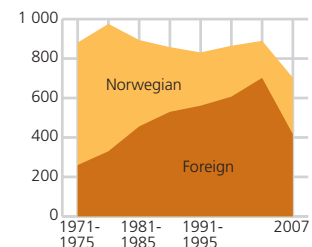


Number of abortions



Source: Statistics Norway and Norwegian Institute of Public Health.

Number of adopted children, Norwegian and foreign



Most popular first names. 2008

	Boys' names	Girls' names
1	Lukas/Lucas	Linnea/Linea
2	Mathias/Matias	Emma
3	Markus/Marcus	Sara/Sarah/Sahra
4	Emil	Thea/Tea
5	Kristian/Christian	Nora/Norah
6	Jonas	Ida
7	Magnus	Sofie/Sophie
8	Oliver	Ingri/Ingerid/Ingri
9	Tobias	Leah/Lea
10	Alexander/Aleksander	Julie