Comments on Mette Gerster’s dissertation

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Paper 1: Education-fertility

Questions:
- Is there a positive relationship between education and second-birth rates in DK (as in other countries), when we compare at a given age at first birth?
- If yes, are these two explanations relevant: better-educated partners, time-squeeze (as suggested in a German study 2002)
- Why do we need to address this once again? Different society? Better data/methods?

It is controlled for age (at birth). Assume e.g. 30 years old, first child 2 years earlier. Why should the better-educated be in more of a time-squeeze? (If age at first birth not given: the better-educated would have less time to have a second child)

Woman high education -> husband high education -> fertility

How and why does husband's education affect fertility? (not obvious)

Woman high education -> chance of being (and remaining) married.

Possible channels that education (and any other factor) may operate through:
- Having a partner, being fecund
- Wanting a child < purchasing power, costs of childbearing, preferences
- Norms
- Knowledge of (access to) acceptability of contraception, abortion
- (selection effect)

Paper 3: Work-fertility

The question: How does employment after first birth affect the chance of having a second birth (and similarly for third births)?

Let us think about: What are the reasons why we may see such an effect, or at least a relationship?
Paper 3: Work-fertility

- Work (W=1) signals factors affecting childbearing costs.
- P=Possible to work after birth (access to child care)

M=Motivation for work
0 W=0 W=0 any circumst.
1* W=0 W=1 Would other-wise work, but impossible after birth
* And assume possible to work if not child

Papers 1 and 3 could benefit from some further theoretical development.
But:
- That is the case also for many papers written by established demographers.
- The papers are based on quite advanced statistical methods.
- Very clearly written.