Family Complexity in Europe

Elizabeth Thomson

The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 2014 654: 245
DOI: 10.1177/0002716214531384

Keywords: family complexity; nonmarital childbearing; union dissolution; repartnering; multiple-partner fertility; Europe

Family Complexity in Europe

By
ELIZABETH THOMSON

Every European country has experienced changes in partnership behavior—increased divorce, delayed and avoided marriage, cohabitation that is even less stable than marriage, and the formation of new partnerships (Sobotka and Toulemon 2008; Perelli-Harris et al. 2010; Thomson et al. 2014). These changes are also experienced by a significant proportion of children, who then live with single parents or alternately with both of their separated parents, become stepchildren, and often acquire half siblings. The transitions that occur in the lives of adults and their children produce families and households that are complex.

Each of the transitions mentioned has been well studied, as have some of the consequences. What may not be appreciated is how the accumulation of events in the life course has produced an increasing complexity in family life for communities, societies, and the families themselves. In this article, I review variation across Europe in the demographic processes that produce family complexity and, to the extent that the data allow, I demonstrate that several processes continue to increase or have leveled off at relatively high levels. Some

Elizabeth Thomson is a professor of demography emerita, Stockholm University; a professor of sociology emerita, University of Wisconsin–Madison; and director of the Linnaeus Center for Social Policy and Family Dynamics in Europe. Most of her recent research focuses on comparative European family demography, especially educational differentials in the family life course and relationships between union stability and fertility.

NOTE: Financial support was provided by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) via the Linnaeus Center for Social Policy and Family Dynamics in Europe (SPaDE), grant registration number 349-2007-8701.

DOI: 10.1177/0002716214531384

special attention is given to Sweden, a forerunner in family change. Comparisons with the United States also identify the ways in which U.S. families are outliers and the ways in which they have parallel experiences to families in Europe.

Four demographic processes combine to produce various forms of family complexity. First are births to lone mothers. Complexity may arise here if the noncoresident parents have a continuing relationship of coparenting, but most lone mothers and their children may be viewed as "simple" families. The event of lone motherhood is important, however, in that it contributes to the pool of persons who are more likely to form complex families through repartnering. Cohabiting parents and their children are also simple family forms, but they have higher dissolution risks than married parents and children. Second, separation and divorce produce complexity in the form of residential arrangements for common children, the relationships between the separated partners, and between each parent and child. Separation and divorce also add to the pool of persons who may transition to even more complex families. The third process, repartnering, increases dramatically the complexity of family relationships and household arrangements. Although children inhibit partnership formation, especially for women, a substantial proportion of separated and divorced parents form new partnerships (Sweeney 2010). The stepparent-stepchild relationship is created, and in many cases, three or four adults take on a parental role with respect to the same child. When stepparents have also had children, stepsibling relationships are formed, complicated by the fact that stepsiblings likely will not live together all of the time, may be shifting back and forth between the households of their two parents, and may be close or far apart in age. Finally, separated and divorced parents' new partnerships provide motives and opportunities for having additional children, more than one would have had in a stable partnership (Thomson et al. 2002). Thus, half siblings are added to the complex family equation. Half siblings may or may not live in the same household, and they are likely to be further apart in age than full siblings, creating additional complexities for family life.

Variation and Change in Pathways to Family Complexity

The most complete data we have on the initial process underlying family complexity is the proportion of births out of marriage. Birth records in almost all countries include the marital status of the mother, and statistics on nonmarital births are reported annually to and published by international agencies. Figure 1 shows the pervasive increase since 1960 in nonmarital childbearing across Europe. Figure 1a shows that the increase started first in the Nordic countries and appears to have leveled off at between 40 percent in Finland and 60-plus percent in Iceland. In Figure 1b, we see that western European countries experienced increases later, which remain spread out between Switzerland's 20 percent and France's 50 percent; the increases were as high as the Nordic countries; and in all of these countries, the trend continues upward. For comparison purposes, I include the United States in this chart; it is in the middle of the western

FIGURE 1A
Percentage of Births out of Marriage, Nordic Countries 1960–2010

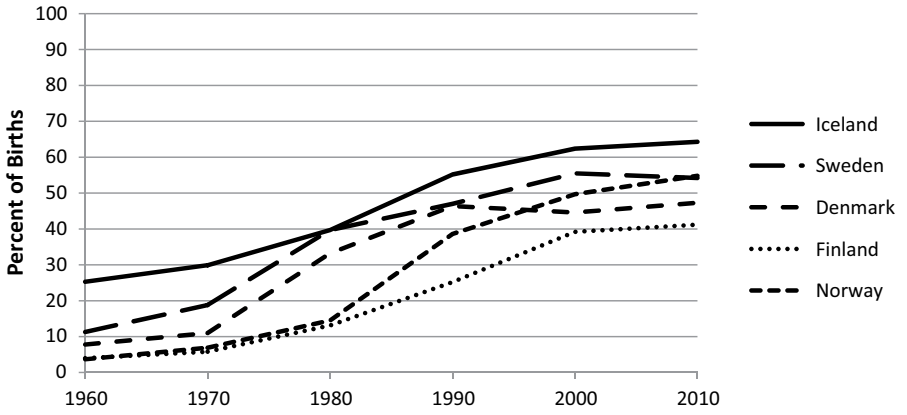
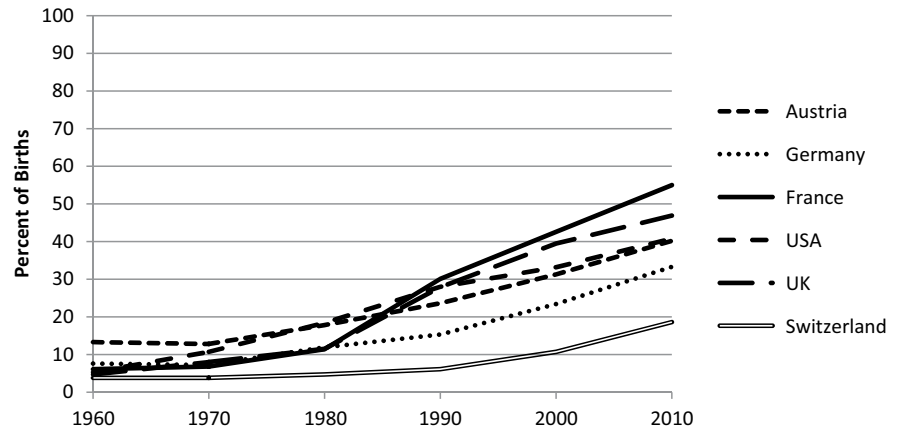


FIGURE 1B
Percentage of Births out of Marriage, Western Europe and United States, 1960–2010



European countries, though with a steadier increase across time to 41 percent of births outside marriage in 2010. Figure 1c shows that the increase in southern European countries started even later than in Western Europe, but Portugal has reached levels like those in Western Europe, and all trends are positive. Finally, from Figure 1d, it is clear that the increase in the former socialist countries of central and eastern Europe is noticeably associated with the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1989–1990, and that in most countries the increase continues.

Almost all of the increases in nonmarital births arise from births in cohabitation rather than from lone-mother births. Because cohabitation is not a registered event,[1] almost all of the information we have about births in cohabitation

FIGURE 1C
Percentage of Births out of Marriage, Southern Europe, 1960–2010

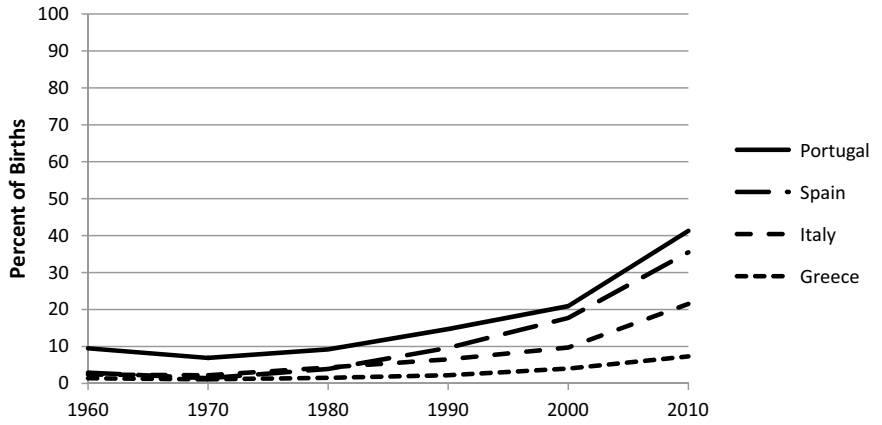
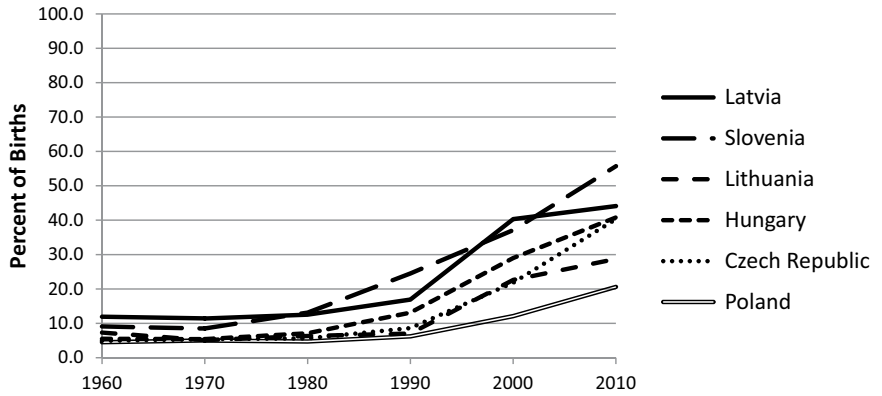


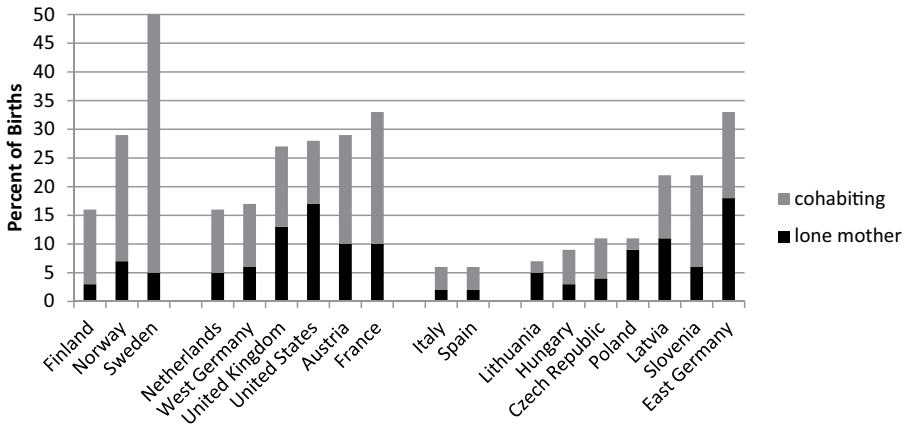
FIGURE 1D
Percentage of Births out of Marriage, Central/Eastern Europe, 1960–2010



SOURCES: Council of Europe, 2000, Recent Demographic Developments in Europe, T 3.2; http://demoscope.ru/weekly/app/app4013.php; Eurostat, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_find&lang=en; CDC, www.cdc.gov/nchs/datawh/statab/unpubd/natality/natab99.htm, Table 1-17 National Vital Statistics Reports, vol. 61, no. 1, August 18, 2012, p. 8.

comes from retrospective birth and union histories in national surveys. The most comprehensive comparative data were produced some time ago, by the Fertility and Family Surveys of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Figure 2 shows the percentage of nonmarital births around 1990, separated into births to lone mothers and to cohabiting couples.[2] From left to right are estimates for countries in northern, western, southern and eastern/central Europe. In these data, the former

FIGURE 2
Percentage Births to Lone Mothers and Cohabiting Couples, around 1990



East and West Germany are placed in different regions because they were not united during the periods covered by the retrospective surveys. As above, the United States is placed in the western European group. In the Nordic countries, lone-mother births were quite rare, while births in cohabitation were quite common.[3] The five western European countries had somewhat higher proportions of lone-mother births, but in most countries the large majority of nonmarital births were to cohabiting couples. However, half of the nonmarital births were to lone mothers in the United Kingdom, and more than half of nonmarital births were to lone mothers in the United States. Italy and Spain represent the southern European countries with low nonmarital childbearing by 1990, but still a higher proportion of births to cohabiters than to lone mothers. In several of the formerly socialist countries of eastern and central Europe, especially the former East Germany, lone-mother births made up a larger proportion of the nonmarital births, but cohabitation still played a significant role.[4]

Perelli-Harris and colleagues (2010) reported updated estimates of childbearing in cohabitation for a smaller number of European countries, using a harmonized dataset that includes several surveys from the Generations and Gender Programme and other more recent national surveys with retrospective birth and union histories. In France and Norway, the percentage of births in cohabitation doubled; in Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, the proportion more than tripled between the 1980s and the 2000s. These increases occurred while the proportion of births to lone mothers remained quite stable.

As noted above, lone-mother and cohabiting-parent families are not necessarily complex. Among lone mothers, complexity depends on the extent to which the nonresident father is engaged and the arrangements for coparenting. The complexity of cohabiting parenthood depends on the context of particular laws and social policies that may or may not offer similar protections as marriage to children and their parents (Perelli-Harris and Sánchez Gassen 2012). What is most

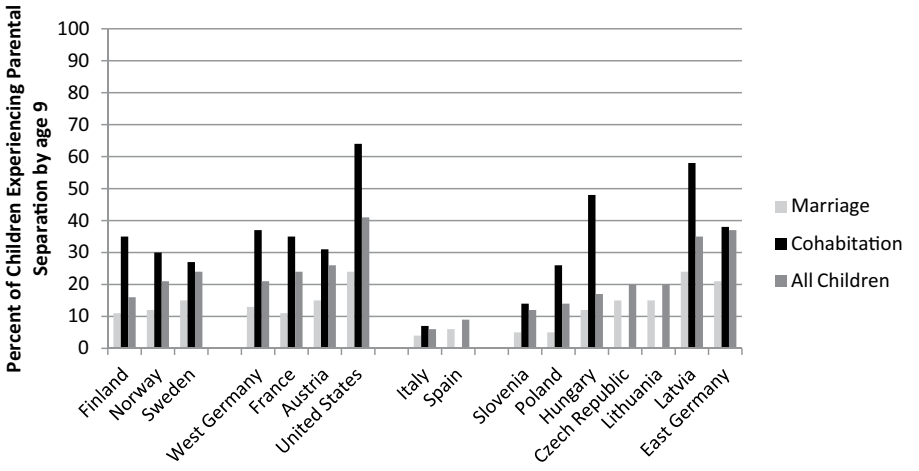
important about these two types of families is their contribution to the pool of mothers, fathers, and children who may form complex families. Lone mothers may repartner after the child's birth, and cohabiting parents' higher risk of separation (compared to married parents' risk of divorce) means that they will on average be more likely to repartner during the period before their children leave home.

Thus, we turn to the second process underlying family complexity: separation and divorce. From 1960 to 2004, a steady increase in divorce was observed in northern, western, and southern Europe (Sobotka and Toulemon 2008). Sweden was the leader, but most northern and western countries had quite high rates of divorce by the turn of the twenty-first century. Even in southern Europe, where divorce remains uncommon, increases were observed over this period. In eastern and central Europe, the pattern was much more varied. Most countries did not see dramatic changes in divorce, but many have had quite high rates of divorce for decades.

Of course, with the rise of cohabitation, divorce is no longer an adequate indicator of union stability. It is well established that cohabitations are less stable than marriages. The total risk of union dissolution (both married and cohabiting couples) is almost twice that of divorce (married couples) in countries with higher levels of cohabitation, and significantly higher even where cohabitation is less common (Andersson 2002b). Only in central/eastern Europe did the separation of cohabiting couples make negligible contributions to union instability, at least through the 1980s. Because cohabitation has increased dramatically in many of these countries since 1990, estimates from more recent survey data can be expected to show considerable increases in union instability due to cohabitation. When it comes to family complexity, however, the critical issue is the stability of partnerships that produce children, whether in marriage or not.

Figure 3 shows the likelihood of parental separation by age nine for children born to cohabiting or married parents (Andersson 2002a).[5] The light gray bars represent the percentage of children born to married parents who will divorce; the dark gray bars the percentage of children born to cohabiting parents who will separate or divorce (if married after the child's birth); and the black bars are the percentage of all children, including those born to lone mothers, whose original parents are not living together by the child's ninth birthday. Again the data are organized by region, with the United States included with Western Europe. Comparisons of the light and dark gray bars show clearly that parents' cohabitation at birth is associated with much higher rates of separation compared to parents who married before the child's birth. This is why the incredible increase in cohabiting births contributes so much to the pool of children and parents who may eventually form complex families. The United States is an outlier in this respect, with 65 percent of children born to cohabiting couples experiencing parental separation by age nine. But when it comes to the overall risk of not living with both parents, that is, being in the pool of children whose parents may repartner and form stepfamilies, the United States is only a bit higher than the former East Germany; this is due in part to the higher proportion of children born in marriage in the United States and the higher proportion of children born to a

FIGURE 3
Percentage of Children Experiencing Parental Separation by Age Nine, by Parental Union Status at Birth

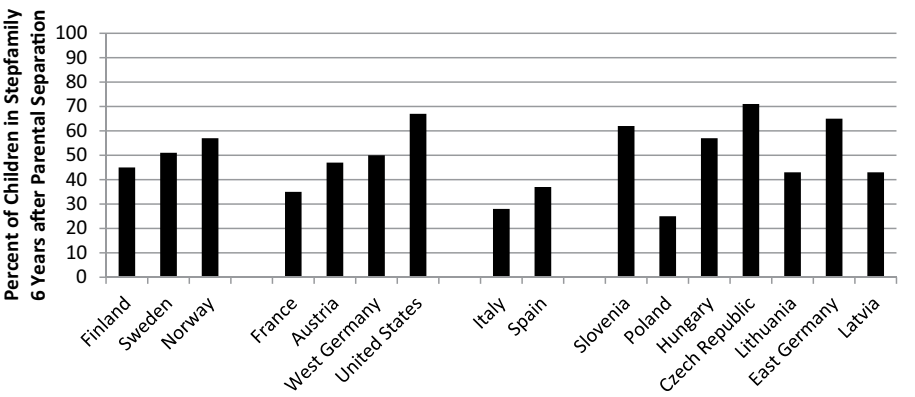


lone mother in East Germany. Even if the relative risk of separation for parents cohabiting or married at birth has remained the same, the dramatic increase in cohabiting births means that more of the children will be exposed to the higher risk levels so that the percentage of children whose parents have separated by age nine (black bars) will surely considerably increase.

The third process underlying the production of complex families, and the first that clearly adds complexities of new parent-child and sibling relationships, is the separated parents' repartnering. Andersson (2002a) also estimated from the Fertility and Family Surveys the liklihood of children entering a stepfamily. Figure 4 shows that in most countries, about half of these children (including those born to lone mothers) would enter a stepfamily within six years of the parents' separation. Here, the United States is not such an outlier because we see high levels of stepfamily formation in many countries. Because these estimates are based on the union history of only the child's mother, they are much lower than could be expected if we also knew about the father's repartnering behavior. No cross-national comparative data suggest an increase in the rate of stepfamily formation over time, but the absolute proportion of children experiencing the complexities of stepfamily life will increase because the pool of parents and children who will potentially form stepfamilies is steadily increasing in almost all countries.

The fourth demographic process that further complicates family relationships is stepfamily childbearing. Estimates from several European countries and the United States demonstrate that large proportions of stepfamilies produce at least one common child (e.g., Henz 2002; Li 2006; Holland and Thomson 2011; Thomson et al. 2002; Vikat, Thomson, and Hoem 1999). In recent research, this phenomenon has been labeled "multiple-partner fertility" (Meyer, Cancian, and

FIGURE 4
Percent of Children in a Stepfamily Six Years after Parental Separation

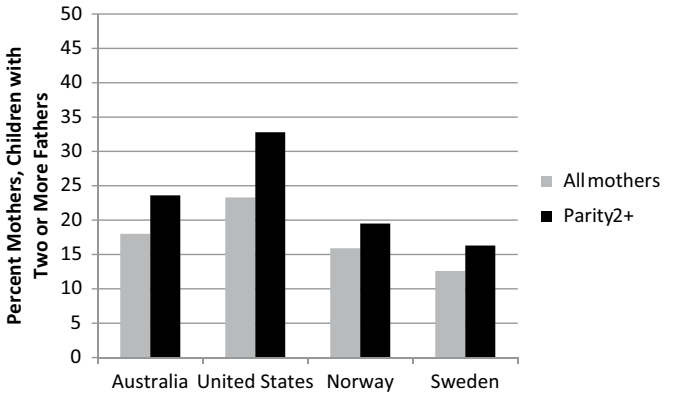


Cook 2005; Carlson and Furstenberg 2006) or "childbearing across partnerships" (Thomson et al. 2014). From the child's point of view, this stage in family complexity can be viewed as the production of half siblings.

As early as 1980, at least 20 percent of U.S. children had acquired a half sibling (Bumpass 1984); because some of their mothers had more than one child in a first fertile partnership, the percentage of mothers who had children with more than one father would have been somewhat less. Estimates of prevalence more than 20 years later were generated from the U.S. Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (Carlson and Furstenberg 2006); in this relatively disadvantaged urban sample, about a quarter of mothers had children with more than one father. Estimates for more representative samples or populations from the United States, Australia, Denmark, and Norway were between 10 and 20 percent of mothers or fathers whose children have half siblings (Gray and Evans 2008; Guzzo and Furstenberg 2007; Lappegård, Rønsen, and Skrede 2011; Sobotka 2008). Among parents with two or more children—the precondition for having a child with more than one partner—percentages are, of course, higher (see Guzzo, this volume). And again, from the child's point of view, a larger percentage would have acquired at least one half sibling, not only because parents may have more than one child in their first fertile partnership but also because children may have half siblings from either the mother's or the father's other partnerships.

A recent study provides comparative data on this dimension of family complexity for Australia, the United States, Norway, and Sweden (Thomson et al. 2014). As shown in Figure 5, mothers are more likely to have children with more than one father in Australia and the United States than in Norway and Sweden. The difference arises almost entirely from the larger proportion of first births to lone mothers in the first two countries.[6] As discussed above, lone mothers may repartner at an earlier age and therefore are also more likely to have children with new partners than are separated or divorced mothers (Thomson et al. 2014).

FIGURE 5
Percentage of Mothers Who Have Children with Two or More Fathers

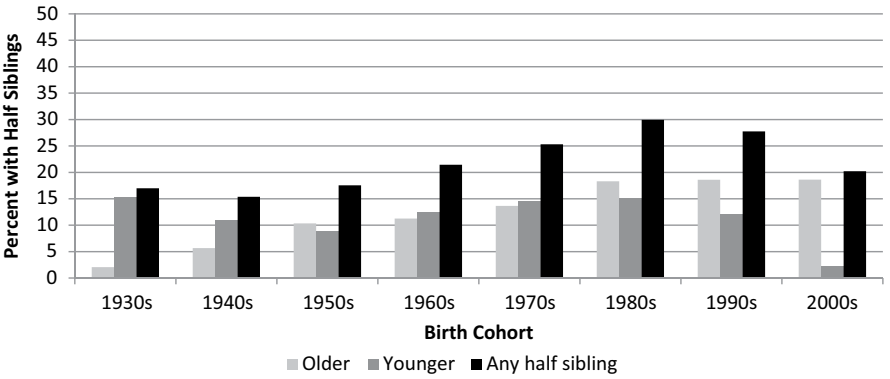


Because stepfamily childbearing stems from unique motivations to have a shared child (Thomson et al. 2002), previous parity does not exert such a strong effect on subsequent childbearing, and stepfamily parents end up with more children than they might otherwise have had. Thus, the likelihood of having children with more than one partner increases with total parity. More than a third of U.S. mothers with three children, and about a quarter of mothers in the other countries, had at least one of their children with a different father from the first (Thomson et al. 2014).

Again, however, these data show only half of the picture from the child's point of view, as they represent only one parent's repartnering and childbearing experience. For more complete data on half siblings, I turn to the Swedish Multigeneration Register that links each person to her or his father and mother by a personal identification number (Statistics Sweden 2008), making it possible, therefore, to determine whether the children of one mother all have the same father, and whether the children of one father all have the same mother. As the register identifies complete sibships for persons born in Sweden as early as 1932, it is possible to examine changes in this form of family complexity over most of the period of increase in parents' separation and divorce. Because parents and siblings of immigrants may never have lived in Sweden, the analysis is limited to Swedish-born persons. Even if children's parents were immigrants, it is highly likely that all of their siblings will also be resident in Sweden and therefore linked in the register.[7]

Figure 6 shows that the percentage of persons who have at least one half sibling was only about 15 percent for those born in the 1930s, and almost all were younger half siblings. The percentage doubled for those born in the 1980s and then remained stable as parents' separation and divorce rates leveled off (Thomson and Eriksson 2013); the apparent decline during the 1990s and 2000s in the percentage of persons with younger half siblings and any half sibling is an artifact of the observation window. The last year for which the register was

FIGURE 6
Percentage of Persons in Sweden with at Least One Half Sibling



available is 2007, when children born in the 1990s were between ages 10 and 17, their parents still young enough to produce a younger half sibling. Note that the percent of children who had an older half sibling did not decline in the last two decades observed. By observing both parents' childbearing before and after a particular birth, the proportion of children with a half sibling is about 75 percent greater than when only the mother's or the father's children are considered (Lappegård and Thomson, forthcoming). Thus, estimates of family complexity based on only the mother's or on only the father's birth and union history vastly underestimate the complexity of children's family lives.

Conclusions and Discussion

The main message of this review is that family complexity is common or increasing in virtually all European countries. Rates of parental separation have been increasing or are very high, fueled in large part by the increasing proportion of couples who have children in cohabitation and the lower stability of such unions compared to marriage. Because the pool is growing, so also grows the likelihood that children will experience stepfamily life when a separated parent repartners and will perhaps acquire a half sibling, either at birth (because one or both parents had children with a previous partner) or after the parents' separation and repartnering.

I have considered only the structural aspects of family complexity—the number and type of family relationships and households that become interconnected through the instability of parents' unions, repartnering and having children with new partners, and the extent to which cohabitation is associated with increases in instability. It is purely a demographic exercise and does not tell us about the complexities of daily life that are produced by the structural complexity. Even when separated parents do not repartner, many if not most will struggle with the

relationships and responsibilities of parents living in different households. Although less than 5 percent of all children divide their time equally between the households of their mother and father (Bjarnason and Arnarsson 2011), the proportion is of course higher for children whose parents have separated, and such arrangements appear to be on the increase. In Sweden, separated parents are now required to demonstrate why their children should not live halftime with each, and the percentage of children who do has increased from 1 percent in 1984–1985 to 28 percent in 2006–2007 (Statistics Sweden 2009).

Stepfamily formation multiplies the number and type of relationships in a given family configuration by at least two (from parent-child to parent-child, parent-stepparent, and child-stepparent)—more if both of the child's separated parents are actively engaged in child-rearing and/or the stepparent also has children. Half siblings generate at least three new relationships (mother-child, father-child, half sibling-child) and likely more when both parents have separate children whose other parents are engaged in child-rearing. And this does not even consider the numerous grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins who may be connected in different ways to a particular child. Even in the United States, where research on the management and consequences of parents' separation and divorce is extensive, and where stepfamily research has produced a substantial body of knowledge, the pace and extent of family complexity has stayed well ahead of our ability to study it. In Europe, most research on these topics comes from the United Kingdom where family processes appear to be most similar to the United States. In other European contexts, especially where family complexity is only beginning to increase, the research gap is greater.

Beyond the sheer increase in family complexity is the extent to which economically disadvantaged families are disproportionately unstable and complex; whether such differences have increased with increasing economic inequality, and whether they are transmitted within families across generations, thus becoming an important factor in the intergenerational transmission of inequality, remains to be seen (McLanahan and Percheski 2008). Education is in almost every European context associated with a greater likelihood of marital births and union stability (Perelli-Harris et al. 2010; Härkönen and Dronkers 2006). The association with repartnering seems to be mixed, as education increases a parent's attractiveness on the marriage market but also reduces her or his economic or social need for a partner (Sweeney 2010). Union stability undoubtedly underlies the fact that the college-educated are less likely to have children with more than one partner (Carlson and Furstenberg 2006; Guzzo and Furstenberg 2007; Lappegård and Rønsen 2013; Manlove et al. 2008; Thomson et al. 2014).

The question of intergenerational transmission is also of considerable importance with respect to the double challenges of economic disadvantage and family complexity. Lappegård and Thomson (forthcoming) provide the first evidence for the intergenerational transmission of complexity (i.e., childbearing with more than one partner), with some of the relationship accounted for by the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status. Whether the process is driven by the association across generations in union stability (Dronkers and Härkönen

2008) or the intergenerational transmission of childbearing behavior (Kolk 2013), or some other intergenerational process, is yet to be seen.

These are issues that deserve much greater scrutiny in light of the changes in demographic processes that increase the pool of parents and children who may form complex families. To understand commonalities in these processes as well as sources of difference, cross-national comparative research is essential. Family complexity is here to stay, at least for a substantial segment of the population, and societal arrangements for the support of parents and care of children in these complex arrangements must be developed to meet their needs.

Notes

1. In France and the Netherlands, it is possible for couples to choose legal partnership rather than marriage; but most cohabiting couples have not registered their partnership.

2. Most data are drawn from Andersson (2002a) based on the six years prior to each Fertility and Family Survey. Data for the Netherlands are averages for 1980–1989 and 1990–1999 from Perelli-Harris et al. (2010). Data for the United Kingdom are from 1991 birth registrations to which addresses of the mother and father were matched (Cooper 1991).

3. The estimates of all nonmarital births and of births is lower in Finland and Norway than official statistics, and register-based estimates of lone-mother births are higher in Norway and Sweden, but both sets of data are consistent in the fact that very few nonmarital births are to lone mothers. See Thomson and Eriksson (2013) for a discussion of register- and survey-based estimates of parents' union status at birth.

4. The very high proportion of lone-mother births in the former East Germany may be the result of housing shortages. The births may have occurred to couples living apart but who could not obtain common housing for some time after the birth of a first child (Henz 2002).

5. Life-table estimates are based on separations occurring during the six years prior to each survey, centered on 1990.

6. Estimates for Australia and the United States are based on a decision to allocate all second births to a new father. This decision may overestimate second births with a new (as opposed to the same) father in the United States but not in Australia (Thomson et al. 2014). A shift of 25 percent of the U.S. two-child mothers from the new-father to the same-father group would produce very similar estimates for the two countries, but still higher than for the Nordic countries.

7. Analyses are based on the register collection, Sweden in Time: Activities and Relations (STAR), supported by Stockholm University's Institute for Social Research (SOFI) and Demography Unit (SUDA) and accessed through Statistics Sweden's Microdata Online Access.

References

Andersson, Gunnar. 2002a. Children's experience of family disruption and family formation: Evidence from 16 FFS countries. *Demographic Research* 7:343–64.

Andersson, Gunnar. 2002b. Dissolution of unions in Europe: A comparative overview. *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 27:493–504.

Bjarnason, Thoroddur, and Arsaell M. Arnarsson. 2011. Joint physical custody and communication with parents: A cross-national study of children in 36 western countries. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 6:871–90.

Bumpass, Larry L. 1984. Demographic aspects of children's second-family experience. *American Journal of Sociology* 90 (3): 608–23.

Carlson, Marcia J., and Frank F. Furstenberg Jr. 2006. The prevalence and correlates of multipartnered fertility among urban U.S. parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 68:718–32.

Cooper, J. 1991. Births outside of marriage: Recent trends and associated demographic and social changes. *Population Trends* 63:8–18.

Dronkers, Jaap, and Juho Härkönen. 2008. The intergenerational transmission of divorce in cross-national perspective: Results from the Fertility and Family Surveys. *Population Studies* 62:273–88.

Gray, Edith, and Ann Evans. 2008. The limitations of understanding multi-partner fertility in Australia. *People and Place* 16 (4): 1–8.

Guzzo, Karen Benjamin. 2014. New partners, more kids: Multiple-partner fertility in the United States. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (this volume).

Guzzo, Karen Benjamin, and Frank F. Furstenberg Jr. 2007. Multipartnered fertility among American men. *Demography* 44 (3): 583–601.

Härkönen, Juho, and Jaap Dronkers. 2006. Stability and change in the educational gradient of divorce. A comparison of seventeen countries. *European Sociological Review* 22 (5): 501–17.

Henz, Ursula. 2002. Childbirth in East and West German stepfamiles: Estimated probabilities from hazard rate models. *Demographic Research* 7:307–42.

Holland, Jennifer A., and Elizabeth Thomson. 2011. Stepfamily childbearing in Sweden: Quantum and tempo effects, 1950–99. *Population Studies* 65:115–28.

Kolk, Martin. 2013. *Understanding transmission of fertility preferences across multiple generations—Socialization or socioeconomics?* Stockholm Research Reports in Demography 2013:4. Stockholm: Stockholm University Demography Unit.

Lappegård, Trude, and Marit Rønsen. 2013. Socioeconomic differentials in multipartner fertility among Norwegian fathers. *Demography* 50:1135–53.

Lappegård, Trude, Marit Rønsen, and Kari Skrede. 2011. Fatherhood and fertility. *Fathering* 9 (1): 103–20.

Lappegård, Trude, and Elizabeth Thomson. Forthcoming. *Intergenerational transmission of multipartner fertility*. Stockholm Research Reports in Demography. Stockholm: Stockholm University Demography Unit.

Li, Jui-Chung Allen. 2006. The institutionalization and pace of fertility in American stepfamilies. *Demographic Research* 14:237–66.

Manlove, Jennifer, Cassandra Logan, Erum Ikramullah, and Emily Holcombe. 2008. Factors associated with multiple-partner fertility among fathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 70 (2): 536–48.

McLanahan, Sara, and Christine Percheski. 2008. Family structure and the reproduction of inequalities. *Annual Review of Sociology* 34:257–76.

Meyer, Daniel R., Maria Cancian, and Steven T. Cook. 2005. Multiple-partner fertility: Incidence and implications for child support policy. *Social Service Review* 79:577–601.

Perelli-Harris, Brienna, and Nora Sánchez Gassen. 2012. How similar are cohabitation and marriage? Legal approaches to cohabitation across Western Europe. *Population and Development Review* 38 (3): 435–67.

Perelli-Harris, Brienna, Wendy Sigle-Rushton, Michaela Kreyenfeld, Trude Lappegård, Renske Keizer, and Caroline Berghammer. 2010. The educational gradient of nonmarital childbearing in Europe. *Population and Development Review* 36:775–801.

Sobotka, Tomáš. 2008. The diverse faces of the second demographic transition in Europe. *Demographic Research* 19:171–224.

Sobotka, Tomáš, and Laurent Toulemon. 2008. Changing family and partnership behaviour: Common trends and persistent diversity across Europe. *Demographic Research* 19 (6): 85–138.

Statistics Sweden. 2008. *Multi-generation register 2007: A description of contents and quality*. Background Facts, Population and Welfare Statistics 2008:2. Stockholm: Statistics Sweden.

Statistics Sweden. 2009. Växelvis boende ökar bland skilsmässobarn [Alternate living increased among children of separated parents]. *Välfärd* 4:1–5.

Sweeney, Megan 2010. Remarriage and stepfamilies: Strategic sites for family scholarship in the 21st century. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72:667–84.

Thomson, Elizabeth, and Helen Eriksson. 2013. Register-based estimates of parental separation in Sweden. *Demographic Research* 29:1153–86.

Thomson, Elizabeth, Jan M. Hoem, Andres Vikat, Isabela Buber, Alexia Fuernkranz-Prskawetz, Laurent Toulemon, Ursula Henz, Amy L. Godecker, and Vladimira Kantorova. 2002. Childbearing in stepfamilies: Whose parity counts? In *Dynamics of fertility and partnership in Europe: Insights and lessons from comparative research*, vol. II, eds. E. Klijzing and M. Corijn, 87–99. New York, NY: United Nations.

Thomson, Elizabeth, Trude Lappegård, Marcia Carlson, Ann Evans, and Edith Gray. 2014. Childbearing across partnerships in Australia, the United States, Norway and Sweden. *Demography*.

Vikat, Andres, Elizabeth Thomson, and Jan M. Hoem. 1999. Stepfamily fertility in contemporary Sweden: The impact of childbearing before the current union. *Population Studies* 53 (2): 211–25.