

Economic uncertainty and fertility intentions: results from an experiment

A seminar by Alessandra Minello

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Live Zoom

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In recent years, fertility rates have declined in most middle-high income countries, and explanations have tended to focus on the rise of economic uncertainty. Under uncertain conditions, shared narratives of the future - i.e. socially constructed imagined futures- play a potent role in directing individuals' decision-making about childbearing.

To assess this role, a controlled laboratory experiment in two contrasting settings was conducted: Florence (Italy, N = 814) and Oslo (Norway, N = 876). Individuals were randomly exposed to a specific positive or negative future economic scenario (treatments) and compared with individuals who were not exposed to any scenario (control group). Then, each respondent was asked whether he/she intended to have a child in the next three years.

The seminar will present the main results of the experiments and the effect of the shared narratives of the future on fertility intentions.