
Plan Overview

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Title: Motivations, Family Instability, and Childless' Emotions: The Subjective Drivers of Young Finns' Childbearing Intentions (MINE)

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Project abstract:

Finland has experienced an unprecedented fertility decline over the past 15 years. Most research has focused on objective indicators, such as employment status and educational attainment, to explain this trend. In contrast, the project "Motivations, Family Instability, and Childless' Emotions: The Subjective Drivers of Young Finns' Childbearing Intentions" (MINE) will combine demographic, sociological, and psychological perspectives to explore how subjective experiences, characterizing young Finns' generations, shape childbearing intentions and their realization. The project is planned to span four years through three working packages, each representing one subjective experience: (1) self-reported motivations; (2) mental health conditions stemming from childhood family instability; and (3) emotions among childless individuals.

Two rich datasets, KiVa RCT, which is linked to Finnish population registers, and Genetics of Sexuality and Aggression (GSA), will be used for the analyses. These datasets provide unique longitudinal insights into individual-level factors such as environmental concerns, mental health during childhood and adulthood, relationship quality, and involuntary singlehood.

The project will be hosted at the INVEST flagship centre at the University of Turku, collaborating with experts from Åbo Academy and the FLUX consortium. MINE seeks funding to support the salary of the applicant, who is the principal investigator, alongside data costs. The findings will inform policymakers on important subjective factors to consider when dealing with fertility postponement and childlessness, ensuring individuals can fulfil their childbearing desires. By uncovering the drivers of fertility decline, MINE contributes to addressing long-term societal challenges, such as population ageing, and sustainability.

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Motivations, Family Instability, and Childless' Emotions: The Subjective Drivers of Young Finns' Childbearing Intentions (MINE)

1. General description of data

1.1 What kinds of data is your research based on? What data will be collected, produced or reused? What file formats will the data be in? Additionally, give a rough estimate of the size of the data produced/collected.

The datasets used in this project are two:

- The first dataset was collected by the University of Turku's Psychology Department, which conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) in Finnish schools to evaluate the KiVa anti-bullying program. Students aged 7–16 were surveyed in 2009 on mental health and other topics, with follow-ups in 2021–2022, including childbearing intentions. The sample entails 4,740 individuals, linked to population registers for additional data (project f11 in the virtual environment FIONA handled by Statistics Finland).
- The GSA dataset is collected by Åbo University psychologists. It involves approximately 10,000 twins and siblings, spans four survey waves (2006, 2012, 2019, 2022) and addresses sexual behavior, relationships, and mental health. A fifth wave collected in 2026 will add questions on childbearing intentions, relationship quality, and singlehood motivations.

1.2 How will the consistency and quality of data be controlled?

The consistency and quality of the KiVa data and the GSA project were ensured by their respective teams through rigorous data cleaning and validation processes tailored to each dataset. For KiVa data, the linkage to population registers was also verified by Statistics Finland to ensure accuracy and consistency.

In preparation for the next wave of GSA data collection in 2026, harmonization of survey waves will be conducted to align variables across different collection periods. Additionally, regular cross-checks, advanced statistical methods, and collaboration with experienced researchers from both projects will further guarantee data reliability and integrity.

2. Ethical and legal compliance

2.1 What legal issues are related to your data management? (For example, GDPR and other legislation affecting data processing.)

Privacy must be protected through anonymisation of data to remove identifiable information, ensuring lawful processing based on consent or other legal grounds, implementing secure storage and restricted access to sensitive data, and providing transparency about how data is used and stored

2.2 How will you manage the rights of the data you use, produce and share?

As both the KiVa data and the GSA data are individual-level data on persons in the population, both teams had to commit to anonymizing data, i.e., by removing names and personal identification numbers, providing inexact dates and concealing sensitive information. This is likely done in the phase of data collection, when address providers, e.g., DVV, already deliver codes instead of names.

Further, by using the KIVA data linked to registers, data are accessible only through Statistics Finland remote environment Fiona. By accessing to Statistics Finland data, I am committed to following strict ethical conduct and observing data protection legislation.

In accessing all the data, I fully commit to the principles of research integrity and responsible conduct outlined by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2023). The data are analyzed using statistical packages such as Stata and reported in ways that do not allow identification of individuals.

3. Documentation & metadata

3.1 How will you document your data in order to make the data findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable for you and others? What kind of metadata standards, README files or other documentation will you use to help others to understand and use your data?

Metadata are not provided for the KiVa or GSA datasets; I only have access to the questionnaire or variable list. However, the papers will include detailed descriptions of the variables used in the analyses to ensure clarity and transparency.

4. Storage and backup during the research project

4.1 Where will your data be stored, and how will the data be backed up?

The KiVa data will be either stored in the Statistics Finland remote environment, which is regularly backed up and updated. The environment can only be accessed by dual identification.

The GSA data will be securely stored in the UTU Seafile on the PI's computer, which will be used exclusively in her University office or home office.

4.2 Who will be responsible for controlling access to your data, and how will secured access be controlled?

Statistics Finland is responsible for controlling my access to KiVa data.

I, myself, will be the person responsible for safely accessing and storing the GSA data.

5. Opening, publishing and archiving the data after the research project

5.1 What part of the data can be made openly available or published? Where and when will the data, or its metadata, be made available?

As I am not the owner of the data, I cannot make them available myself. Further, register data cannot be made available due to legal restrictions. However, I will provide a careful description of the data, and publish the code openly on GitHub (with DOI).

5.2 Where will data with long-term value be archived, and for how long?

They will be stored either in Statistics Finland's servers or in the UTU Seafile Cloud under password protection.

6. Data management responsibilities and resources

6.1 Who (for example role, position, and institution) will be responsible for data management?

University of Turku, INVEST Psychology (KiVa data)

Åbo Academy, Psychology and Logopedics Dept (GSA data)

6.2 What resources will be required for your data management procedures to ensure that the data can be opened and preserved according to FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable)?

1. **Secure Storage and Backup Systems.** Controlled access systems, such as those provided by Statistics Finland (e.g., the Fiona remote environment), will be used to manage data access securely and responsibly.
2. **Data Documentation Tools:** Comprehensive documentation, through careful variable descriptions and open-access codes.
3. **Ethical and Legal Compliance Resources:** Ethical guidelines, e.g., TENK(2023), will be respected.
4. **Persistent Identifiers:** Unique identifiers are assigned to datasets to make them easily findable and citable.
5. **Collaboration with Data Experts:** Support from data management professionals or research data services at the institution will be essential for aligning with FAIR principles and ensuring best practices in data preservation and sharing.

