

Childbearing Dynamics in a Universalistic Welfare State: Gender and Birth-Country Differentials in Sweden?

Gunnar Andersson

Dept of Sociology, Stockholm University

Kirk Scott

Dept of Economic History, Lund University

The Swedish context for childbearing

Clear evidence of a positive association of male and female labor-market attachment with fertility

Reflecting the impact of various institutional factors: welfare-state regime, gender system, etc

⇒ compatibility between childbearing/child-rearing and labor-force participation

The Swedish context

Sweden is also a country of immigration

⇒ Patterns in childbearing of the new inhabitants?

- **immigrant fertility**
- **fertility behavior of population sub-groups in a universalistic welfare-state regime**

Fertility of immigrants in Sweden:

Previous study on entry into motherhood (Andersson and Scott 2005):

Striking similarity across immigrant groups in the association of labor-market status with first-time parenthood

Fertility by time since migration:

Elevated first-birth risks shortly after migration, for all immigrant groups

⇒ migration and family formation as interrelated processes

Fast adaptation of immigrant fertility to the fertility patterns of the Swedish-born population

⇒ necessary to consider time since migration in any study of immigrant fertility

New research questions:

- Similarity – across immigrant groups – also in the association of labor-market status with continued childbearing?
- Does impact of mother's characteristics differ from that of the father's?
- Birth-country differentials? Gender differentials?

Longitudinal data:

Childbearing and migration histories from Swedish register data

- all children living in Sweden linked to their mother and father in Sweden

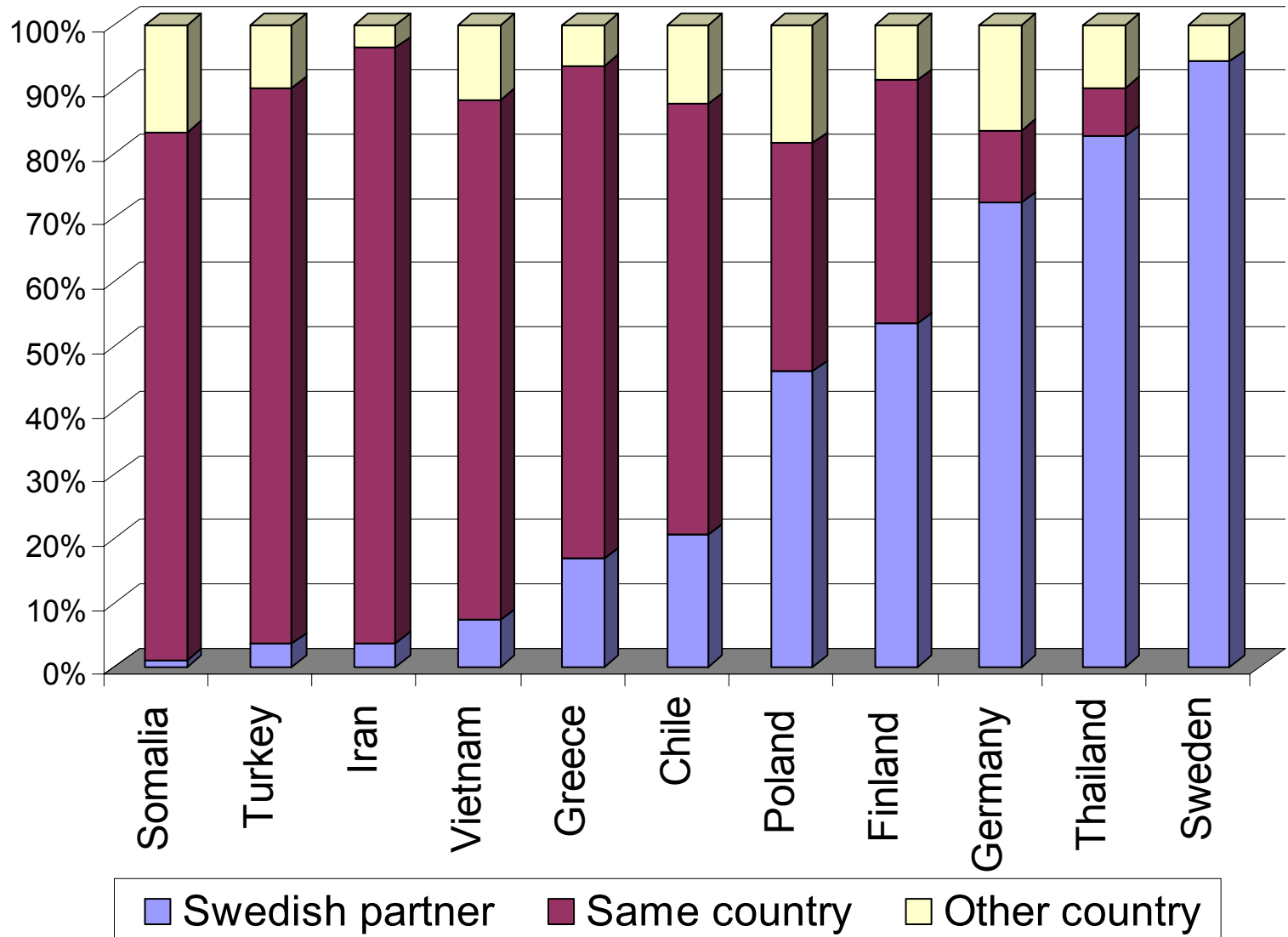
⇒ childbearing of parents in intact unions in 1982-97

- annual income data from tax registers:

⇒ childbearing by both parents' labor-market status:

student, unemployed, welfare, non-participant, own earnings

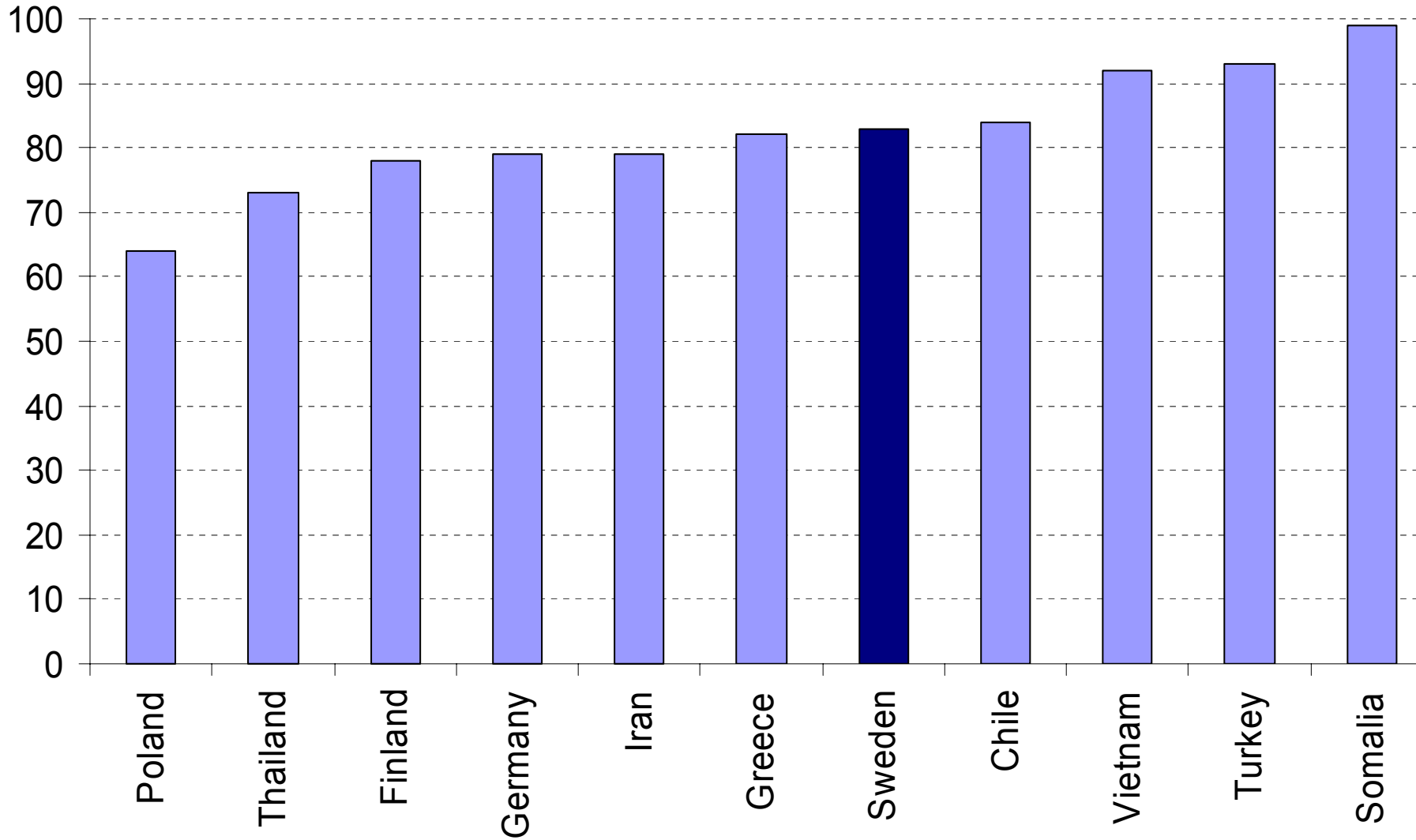
Birth-country homogamy of one- and two-child couples, by mother's birth-country



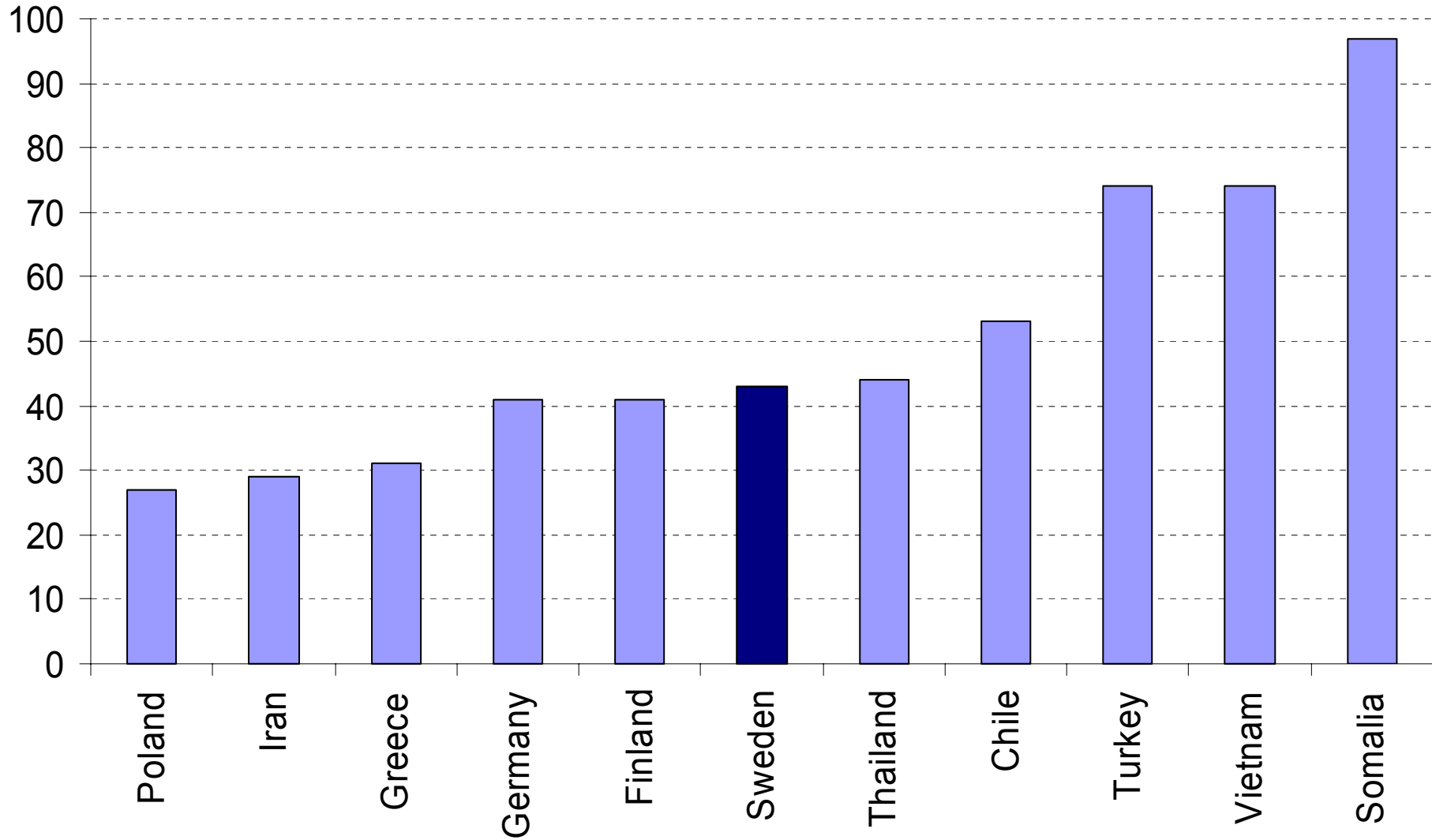
Labor-market attachment:

- Oldest immigrant group (from Finland) with same high level of labor-market attachment as the Swedish-born
- Decreasing degree of attachment for more recently arrived groups
- Very tenuous link to the labor-market for the most recently arrived group (from Somalia)

Second-birth progressions:



Third-birth progressions:



Fertility by labor-market attachment:

- less strong associations of labor-market status with second- and third-birth risks than with first-time parenthood
- largely similar patterns of association for the status of fathers and mothers
- mostly similar patterns of association for Swedish- and foreign-born parents in Sweden

Fertility by labor-market attachment:

- positive effect of earned income on the propensity to have an additional child for most nationalities
- considerably lower second-birth risks for non-participants, students, unemployed, and parents on welfare
- sometimes reversed effects for third-births: for fathers as well as for mothers

Conclusions:

Context matters: welfare state geared towards gender equality; granting largely equal formal rights to residents regardless of country of origin, civil status, etc.

Similarity across gender and birth-country in the association of labor-market status with fertility: support for ***the importance of institutional factors in explaining childbearing behavior***

Thank you – Tack så mycket!