

# Unmet need for childbearing? Low fertility in Poland

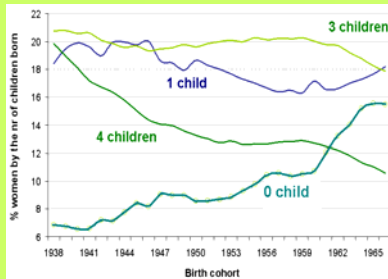
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## Overview

Poland has undergone rapid fertility decline at the end of the 20th century. Nowadays it is one of the lowest-low fertility countries with the average number of children **1.27**. Fertility has fallen below the replacement level in **1989**, the year of the collapse of the communism.

Poles value family a lot and marriage is perceived as important. Though, the meaning of work has changed. This seems to be consistent with the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) ideas of the shift from materialist to postmaterialist life orientation.

The objective is to figure out whether such explanation is allowed in case of Poland.



Changing parity across cohorts of Polish women (CSO data, parity 2 excluded as the major and quite stable one – ca. 40%)

## Research questions

1. Is there a link between modern, more postmaterialistic life orientation and parity?
2. Any characteristics or value-indicators associated with the higher parity?
3. Has the attitude towards childbearing changed?
4. Do Poles prefer to have fewer children or there is an “unmet need” for childbearing?

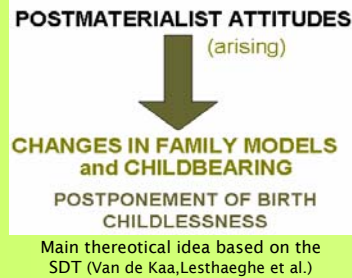
## Data

1. Family and Fertility Survey (FFS) was used for the preliminary analysis for older cohorts.
2. International Population Policy Acceptance Survey (IPPAS) allowed to investigate childbearing behaviour after the collapse of communism as well.

## Method

1. Descriptive analysis – socio-demographics, low fertility, overview of attitudes toward childbearing and family life and life values
2. **Event-history** for past childbearing behaviour, Kaplan-Meier estimates and hazard regression models
3. Logistic regression modelling for attitudes and life values (‘postmodernity’ and ‘traditionalism’ indices built from IPPAS data)

## Main idea



## Results

1. Postponement of birth is a fact, still 2+2 model
2. Education level is associated with it:
  - even among women from older cohorts those with higher education postponed births more than the others
3. ‘Recuperation of fertility decline’ in rural areas, modern attitudes establishing in cities
4. Higher parity likely associated with more traditional attitudes and religiosity BUT:
5. Overall rather traditional culture: familism, religiosity, though attitudes towards gender roles and household tasks division quite egalitarian

## Insight into older cohorts: first births, FFS 1991

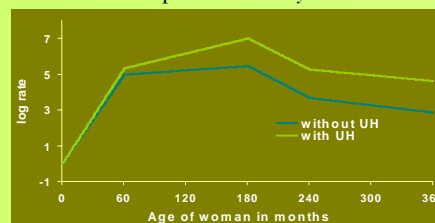


Transition to the 1st birth – proportion of women remaining childless by education levels of females.

For older cohorts **education** plays a role. Overall, these cohorts were very homogenous, showing traditional family life orientation.

The inclusion of **heterogeneity** suggests that a hidden time-constant covariate may play a role in the transition to motherhood and that there may be a selectivity of women who remain childless.

Women with lowest education level were **3.65** times as likely as the most educated ones to be at risk of becoming a mother and more than twice as women who completed secondary education.



Transition from to the 1st birth (total duration pattern rate plotted over time, model with and without unobserved heterogeneity)

## Insight into higher parity and younger cohorts, IPPAS 2005

A model of nuclear family with 2 children is still dominant. For younger cohorts it is possible to observe some appraisal of more SDT-like life orientation and its association with lower parity.

	N	Minimum	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
AGE (in years)	1621	30	66	46,65	9,33
AGE_Squared	1621	900	4356	2263,36	885,066
RESIDENCE (rural)	1621	,00	1,00	,411	,49
EDUCATION (low)	1621	,00	1,00	,865	,34
RELIGIOUS (important)	1621	,00	1,00	,934	,25
MARRIAGE (trad)	1607	4,00	12,00	8,33	2,04
CHILDBEARING (postmodernity)	1604	5,00	23,00	8,68	3,11
GENDER ROLES (postmodernity)	1603	4,00	20,00	11,98	2,47
PARITY 2 & more	1621	,00	1,00	,8	,4

Descriptive statistics used in the logistic regression models (IPPAS, 2005)

	Postmodernity – childbearing		Tradition – marriage		Postmodernity – gender roles	
	Parameter est.	Sig.	Parameter est.	Sig.	Parameter est.	Sig.
age	0.205	**	0.19	**	0.185	**
age_squared	-0.002	**	-0.002	**	-0.002	**
living in village (1=yes)	0.697	***	0.693	***	0.698	***
low education (1=yes)	0.54	**	0.546	**	0.511	**
religion (1=imp)	0.638	**	0.78	***	0.823	**
attitudes (index)	-0.117	***	0.111	**	-0.072	*

Notes: \* p<0.008, \*\* p<0.005, \*\*\* p<0.001

Results of the logistic regression models (IPPAS, 2005)

At the same time, the most popular reason declared for not wanting a child among childless aged 20-40 is the **lack of a partner** (subsequently the future of children and health reasons).

The percentage of one-child families has increased and there are more childless people. Interestingly, the level of **uncertainty** about fertility plans is one of the highest in Europe.

## Conclusion

Traditional **familistic culture** is still strong in the Polish society, though some appraisal of new family forms and postmaterialist life orientation is observed.

Surely, there is an **increasing variety** of family life trajectories and some **de-standardisation** of life course, e.g. growing importance of self-realisation through work and postponement not only of birth, but of transition to adulthood in general.

**Higher parity** can be associated with **more traditional attitudes**. The impact of uncertainty on childbearing shall be investigated further to answer the question about the ‘unmet need’ for childbearing in Poland.

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