

"Attitudes, Values, and Fertility Decisions in Poland: Analyses Based on the Polish Version of the European Survey on Opinions on Population and Welfare"

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This research examines how values and attitudes of Polish women shape their fertility decisions and their subsequent decisions regarding the use of parental leave after childbirth. Specific values and attitudes examined include attitudes toward children, work, labor market opportunities, perceived labor market equality and discrimination, and attitudes towards adult children's responsibilities toward aging parents. The analyses also examine whether the basic premises that form the theory beyond the Second Demographic Transition can be applied within as well as between countries.

The analyses are based on the Polish Survey on Opinions on Population and Welfare, which was conducted in November/December 2001. This survey is the Polish component of the international comparative surveys conducted in 13 of the EU member and candidate countries. The study uses standard multinomial regression and multinomial logit techniques to examine how expected fertility, completed fertility, and choice of labor market status after childbirth are affected by women's attitudes and values as well as by selected demographic characteristics.

The results indicate that fertility decisions in Poland are strongly affected by values and attitudes regarding the meaning and value of children, the role of work in a woman's life, and women's assessment of equal opportunities in the labor market. These effects hold for both for women who have reached their desired fertility and for women who intend to have more children. These variables tend, however, to be less important in predicting women's labor market behavior after a birth. Also important as a predictor in the fertility equations are women's attitudes towards caring for elderly. Although family members continue to be the primary caregivers of the elderly, how this reversal of roles in adulthood affects attitudes towards fertility has rarely been examined. In the Polish case, however, attitudes towards children and attitudes regarding adult children's responsibilities toward caring for elderly parents both are predictors of fertility decisions. Table 1 provides an example of the variables included and the results for one case.

Overall, the results indicate a hierarchical ordering in predicting both desired and completed fertility. (See Table 2.) Women who place the highest value on children both desire and have more children than other women. In the ranking based on three attitudinal variables, women who place the highest positive meaning on children have the highest fertility than other women. When these two groups are sub-divided into reason for working, women who work for pragmatic reasons have higher fertility than those who work for non-pragmatic reasons. The effect of a woman's assessment of equal opportunities in the labor market operates differently depending on whether the woman works for pragmatic or non-pragmatic reasons. If she works for non-pragmatic reasons, fertility is *higher* when she perceives *less* discrimination in the labor market. If she works for pragmatic reasons, fertility is *higher* when she perceives *more* discrimination in the labor market. These results suggest that the theory underlying the Second Demographic Transition can be applied within Poland.

**Table 1. Dependent Variable: Total Expected Number of children  
Selection: Women 50 years and under (N=1881)**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	,626(a)	,392	,381	1,01561		
<b>Dependent Variable: Total Expected Number of children</b>		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		2,108	,361		5,834	,000
AGE		,017	,004	,130	4,227	,000
Marital status						
widowed		,786	,201	,079	3,912	,000
divorced/separated		,669	,139	,102	4,816	,000
Married or co-habiting		1,139	,097	,405	11,751	,000
Excluded: single						
Education						
education highest (wyzsze)		-,490	,101	-,120	-4,843	,000
education high (police & ogolno)		-,410	,085	-,119	-4,797	,000
education middle (zawodowe)		-,457	,079	-,154	-5,799	,000
education low		-,231	,074	-,081	-3,102	,002
Excluded: basic						
Income Group						
income lt 1000		,010	,073	,003	,132	,895
income 1001-1480		-,069	,069	-,024	-1,003	,316
income 2001-4000		-,029	,070	-,010	-,421	,674
Income over 4000		-,315	,173	-,035	-1,823	,068
Excluded: 1481-2000						
Work status of Woman						
parttime employment		,168	,112	,029	1,497	,135
unemployed		-,029	,080	-,007	-,360	,719
not in market		,109	,061	,040	1,806	,071
Excluded: full time						
Full time employment spouse		,030	,069	,012	,435	,663
Size of city						
city more than 100,000		-,326	,065	-,110	-5,029	,000
city 50-99999		-,339	,088	-,078	-3,857	,000
city 20-49999		-,113	,027	-,084	-4,132	,000
town lt 20000		-,256	,076	-,068	-3,367	,001

<b>ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILDREN</b>	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Meaning of children (1) positive to (5) negative	-,155	,045	-,078	-3,464	,001
Affect of mother's work on child (1) neg to (5) positive	-,030	,027	-,022	-1,124	,261
Role of children in fulfillment (1) positive to (5) negative	-,098	,035	-,061	-2,801	,005
<b>ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN AND WORK</b>					
Women in the labor market (1)prag (5)nonpragmatic	-,175	,067	-,051	-2,616	,009
Equal chances in labor market (1>true (3>false	,109	,068	,031	1,608	,108
<b>INTERGENERATIONAL ATTITUDES</b>					
Expect help from child when old (0) no to (6) high	,105	,023	,100	4,589	,000
Responsibility of child to aging parent (1)high to (5) low	-,085	,059	-,029	-1,433	,152
When parent is in need, would ask parent to live together with respondent. (1) s.agree (5) s.disagree	,121	,038	,065	3,173	,002
The presence of children limits the ability to care for elderly parents	-,041	,039	-,032	-1,044	,297
Interaction between presence of children=1,2 and responsibility of child to parents	-,069	,040	-,053	-1,719	,086
<b>OTHER VARIABLES</b>					
Child negative consequences in day to day life (1) s agree (5) s disagree	-,079	,037	-,041	-2,138	,033
Joint involvement of spouse in household work 0 (low) – 5 (high)	-,036	,014	-,055	-2,504	,012
<b>PLANS ABOUT FUTURE CHILDREN</b>					
Uncertain about future children	-,420	,072	-,133	-5,807	,000
Expect to have more children	1,031	,082	,332	12,643	,000

**Table 2. Ranking of total number of planned children (includes children already born plus expected children)  
All women aged 50 and under (N=1881)**

**Classification based on three variables:**

Meaning of children	Reason for working	Assessment of women's equal opportunity in labor market
0 = less positive meaning associated with having children	0 = working more for pragmatic reasons	0= women's chances in market are equal to men's
1 = more positive meaning associated with having children	1 = working more for non-pragmatic reasons	1= women's chances in labor market are not equal to men's chances

Variables were created from three corresponding Likert scale variables. Women were classified into two categories for each Likert scale. Women who were approximately in the top third for each variable were classified with '1'; other women were assigned a '0'. That is, women were ranked according to the positive value they assign to children. Women in the top third of this ranking were assigned a '1'; 0 otherwise. (The 33% ranking is appropriate since the created variables and the corresponding distributions didn't permit a perfect split.)

<b>Fertility</b>	Meaning of children	Reason for working	Assessment of women's equal opportunity in labor market
1,6732	Low	Non-pragmatic	Not equal
1,7913	Low	Non-pragmatic	Equal
1,9431	Low	Pragmatic	Equal
2,0062	Low	Pragmatic	Not equal
2,1800	High	Non-pragmatic	Not equal
2,2278	High	Non-pragmatic	Equal
2,3056	High	Pragmatic	Equal
2,4628	High	Pragmatic	Not equal