

KIN SUPPORT AND CHILDBEARING INTENTIONS

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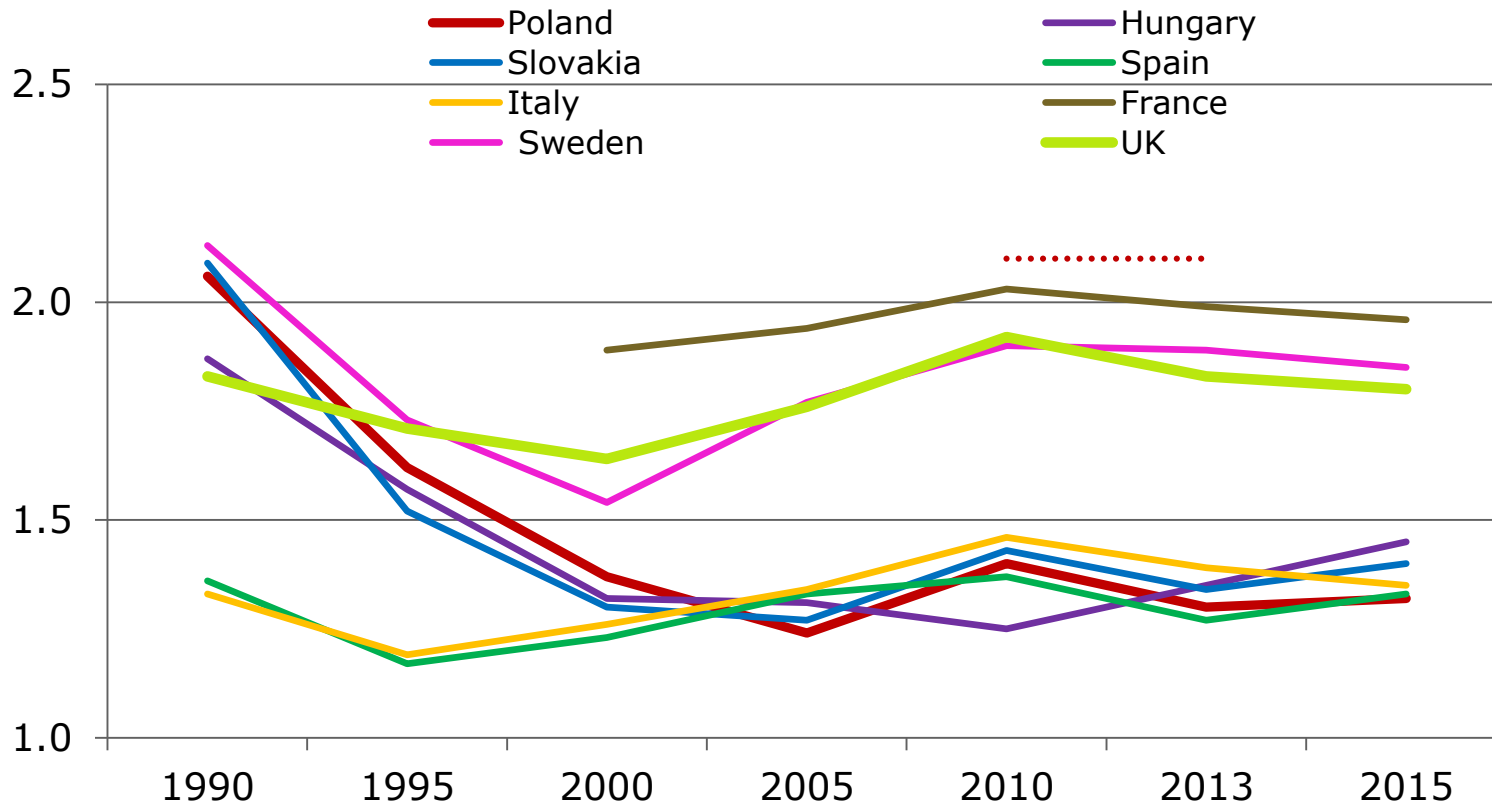
Background

- Kin support is an important factor in reducing childbearing costs and encouraging childbearing-children resource intensive
 - ✓ In resource-poor societies: Child survival and fertility
 - ✓ In industrialised societies: kin provide important resources (e.g. money, childcare) which should reduce childbearing costs and make it easier for parents to rear children although evidence limited and mixed

- Weaker kin ties may lead to lower fertility – less kin assistance and kin priming

□ European countries: TFR at below replacement level

✓ In some countries TFR lower than in others ...



Comparative study design

- ❑ Comparing Poles living in different countries
 - ❑ Similar upbringing but live in different environments
 - ❑ Poles in Poland
 - ✓ Persistent very low TFRs despite strong values attached to family, strong family ties/intergenerational support (e.g. financial transfers)
 - ❑ Polish migrants in UK
 - ✓ High(er) TFR- more difficult to access kin support (geographical distance but also income differences)

Research question

- How Polish migrants and non-migrants' rationalize the importance of kin support in their childbearing intentions?

Methodology

□ In-depth interviews

- ✓ Open to individuals' perspectives, to gather rich data
- ✓ Data collected until a point of saturation was reached

□ Sample selection:

- ✓ Mothers and fathers
- ✓ Various education level
- ✓ Migrants resided in the UK at least 2 years
- ✓ Final sample (n=42)

- ❑ Contacting respondents
- ❑ Nvivo 8
- ❑ Thematic analysis
- ❑ Interviews conducted & analysed in Polish
- ❑ Limitations:
 - ✓ Interviewing individuals rather than couples
 - ✓ Lack of kin/grandparents' perspective

Poland: Kin support vital for childbearing

- Financial & in-kind support (housing, food, clothes, toys, childcare)

...our parents help... we always get a lot of food from them and other things too, this helps a lot... We can always borrow money from my mother... (Mariola 29, Krakow)

... I get help with the child [from mother], but also a bit financially, because mum, for instance buys food. Surely we give her money for bills, some peanuts... (Halina, 34, child 1,5 years old, Krakow)

- Family help: “reliable” in present but also in the future as a “safety net”

JM: Are there any conditions on which your decision about a second child depends?

W: ... there is always help...surely we can borrow money if we need...we can count on money to buy a house [in the future] but every month... we get 1000 [£213] zlotys [from parents]... (Wojciech, 32, Krakow)

- ❑ Kin support can make it easier to start a family
BUT
- ❑ Negative consequences for higher parity intentions?
 - ✓ Expectations to invest heavily in children into adulthood
 - ✓ Children with fewer siblings have better access to parental help as adults

...so we will own two flats, and with three kids, I would give one flat to each of the two children and nothing for the third one? So this would be a bit strange... (Waldek, 23, Krakow)

I would not want him [child] to take a mortgage...to support a child, provide this start for a child... to educate him... to provide him with a flat...you need finances and with two children it would not be easy. (Marta, 29, Krakow)

- One should rely on the market and family help:

...We get benefits but it is a terribly small amount, if one lives at parents' then you can survive, but independently, if one was to live somewhere in a flat there are no chances [to survive]...they [parents] help... (Józef, 28, Krakow)

- Perceptions of living costs & social expectations seem to reinforce idea that parents need to assist adult children:

... if you do not have any financial help from parents then it is very hard even to live anywhere, because flats are so expensive ...One cannot manage, without parents' help you simply cannot even live in Krakow... (Bartłomiej, 30, Krakow)

It is "a matter of honour" to help adult children (Jurek, 25, Krakow)

Poles in London: Little financial/in-kind help

- ❑ Some got help with costs of migrating
- ❑ Rare financial help, some supported their family in Poland:

...we often help them [family in Poland], because one needs to buy coal or something, now the roof needs changing... Because my parents also got ill and they cannot afford medication... (Kuba, 33)

- ❑ Some childcare support in London but:

Mum has been here 4 months... it is too long, she misses, she calls Poland to talk to grandchildren [in PL]... in Poland she can meet with friends for coffee, here it is different...(Beata, 31)

- “Safety net”- state support, independence from family valued:

In England, if you lose a job the state will not let you die, you will get money for food and a place to live. In Poland you will get unemployment for 6 months and then you are on your own or you can rely on family... we could live with in-laws [if lived in Poland]... they would want to bring our son in their own way & tell us what to do...here [in London] nobody helps us, but nobody can interfere either (Krzysiek, 28)

- ❑ London: little or no expectations of supporting children into adulthood:

...I will try to ensure that my child becomes self-sufficient as soon as possible...the quicker he [son] becomes self-sufficient the better he will manage in life, and the smaller burden he will be on his parents...(Ola, 30)

- ❑ Perhaps because:

- ✓ Polish parents in London generally did not rely on parental support themselves –no expectation to support their children?
- ✓ Migration seen as a way to provide children with certain type of “support” in itself (e.g. better career opportunities, languages etc.)

My son has more possibilities of working here, he can learn, whatever he does with his life later, he has much more opportunities here than in Poland (Edyta, 33, London)

Concluding remarks

- ❑ The importance of extensive long-term kin support can lead to lower reproductive intentions, because:
 - ✓ It increases perceived costs of childbearing as parents expect to invest rather heavily in children long into adulthoods
 - ✓ Children are valued and these with fewer siblings have better chances of parental assistance and thus economic success in the future

- ❑ Polish respondents in London did not rely on kin-support & their expectations about the necessity of long-term financial investment in children were overall lower than in Krakow

Arising questions

- ✓ How grandparents perceived their assistance to their adult offspring? Did they encourage or discourage respondents to have more children?
- ✓ Do childbearing intentions at all relate to individuals' (prospective) caring responsibilities towards their own aging parents?

Questions?

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