

Introduction

Gisela Trommsdorff

Bernhard Nauck

Most parts of the world are currently undergoing dramatic socio-demographic changes. A notable aspect of this demographic transition is the declining fertility in many parts of the world while the birth rate remains high in other parts. Several disciplines are describing this demographic transition, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, and – of course – demography. More than 30 years ago, economists, demographers, and psychologists first began an interdisciplinary, international research program investigating the “value of children.”

The “value of children” (VOC) concept is based on the work of Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) and refers to the functions children serve or the needs they fulfill for parents. Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) provided the first and up to now only approach for international and cross-cultural comparisons of variations in fertility decision making by explicitly taking cultural factors into account. They developed an approach comprising objective (economic) and normative factors as well as psychological effects influencing fertility behavior. These aspects were seen as crucial determinants of the births of children. “Value of children” was considered the central mediator variable at the individual level. However, VOC is subject to variation because of changes in society and in socio-cultural context and itself influences fertility and parents’ behavior towards children. Hoffman and Hoffman’s (1973) approach thus focuses on the value of children for their parents. This starting point takes into account the basic asymmetry of the parent-child relationship. This asymmetry is established by the fact that only parents can choose whether or not to enter into such a relationship (to have children or not). It is thus an unconditional decision, whereas the ensuing decisions become more and more conditional (based on mutual influence).

To establish an inventory of the different aspects of value children represent to their parents, Hoffmann and Hoffmann (1973: 46f) categorized inductively empirical results of various sources and came up with the following components:

1. Adult status and social identity
2. Expansion of the self, ties to a larger entity, immortality
3. Morality: religion, altruism, good of the group; norms regarding sexuality, action on impulse, virtue
4. Primary group ties, affection
5. Stimulation, novelty, fun
6. Achievement, competence, creativity

7. Power, influence, effectiveness
8. Social comparison, competition
9. Economic utility

The nine categories of the VOC are an integral part of a model that also takes other influential factors into account: alternative sources of the value of children, costs of children, barriers and incentives. The central assumption is that the value of children varies according to the type of society and has various far-reaching consequences for generative decisions and parent-child relationships. The initial model by Hoffmann and Hoffmann (1973) already includes *alternative sources* of value in people and institutions that produce the same result for the (potential) parents. For example, public social-security systems may make up for the children's economic value. *Costs* emerge for parents directly, in terms of financial and time costs, and indirectly as opportunity costs, when abstaining from other goods or activities because of the children. *Barriers* are defined as factors that make it more difficult to attain the desired value of children, as for example with family poverty, less-than-ideal housing conditions or maternal illness. In contrast, *incentives* are factors that make it easier to reach the desired value of children: wealth, adequate housing conditions, family support, and generally positive attitudes towards children in the social context.

In the 1970s, an empirical analysis of generative behavior in different cultures was carried out on the basis of the VOC-approach. This extensive cross-national comparative study examined the relations between culture, socio-ecological context, the individual value of children for their parents and generative behavior (Arnold et al., 1975). The research program included in the Far East: Taiwan (Wu, 1977), Japan (Iritani, 1977), the Republic of Korea (Lee, 1975), the Philippines (Bulatao, 1975), Thailand (Buripakdi, 1977), Indonesia (Darroch, Meyer, & Singarimbun, 1981), and Singapore (Chen, Kuo, & Chung, 1982). Research was also undertaken in Turkey (Kagitcibasi, 1982), the USA (Arnold & Fawcett, 1975), and Germany (Urdze & Rerrich, 1981). For each country, the opportunity structure and the family resources were controlled for by including participants from both rural and urban areas as well as from all social classes. The surveys for the VOC-studies were conducted in two phases under the supervision of the East-West Population Institute in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The value of children approach was conceptualized in order to develop an instrument for cross-cultural comparisons of the influences on the parents' fertility decisions. Different phenomena in several countries can thus be explained in terms of the variations of the *same* determinants. This should be seen as an attempt to establish an economic model of complex relationships. Assuming differing costs, barriers, incentives, and values of children (VOC) – all of which vary according to conditions in the respective cultures – permits cross-cultural comparisons of fertility levels. The model integrates aspects of explanations of generative behavior from different scientific disciplines (Fawcett, 1976) and anticipates essential elements of explanatory models in modern social science (Coleman, 1990). In particular, it

provides all the necessary elements for a *theoretical model of generative behavior*. Thus, the VOC-approach offers an integrative explanatory concept that combines essential components of approaches from various disciplines. It also offers a conceptual frame from which to develop a coherent, methodologically complete explanation of intercultural differences in generative behavior. The strength of this approach is not only its integrative potential, however, but its combination of individual-actor-based components with structure-based perspectives on fertility behavior. These qualities make it suitable for integration into a comprehensive individualistic structure-theoretic explanation of generative behavior (Huinink, 2000).

However, use of the VOC approach necessitates the resolution of a number of conceptual, object-theoretical, measurement-theoretical and methodological-technical problems that have remained previously unresolved. For example, the VOC-studies often use terminology that does not clarify the concept of value; additionally, these studies have been based on inductive empirical approaches. The basic VOC model can serve as a guideline for future empirical analysis but cannot contribute to an explanation of generative behavior, as the VOC list of the above named 9 categories has emerged from existing empirical research and was not deductively derived from theory (Friedman, Hechter, & Kanazawa, 1994). The theoretical status of the VOC model is unclear because it is uncertain whether the list of the 9 VOC categories is a comprehensive value system (in the sense of theoretical model building) or whether it may be expanded deliberately. Attempts to validate the indicators have been successful, but only to a minor degree and only in intra-cultural studies (especially by Kagitcibasi & Esmer, 1980). In particular, the distinction between the following dimensions has proven to be empirically significant:

- economic-utilitarian VOC (i.e., contributions to the family economy from child labor, household help and additional income; old-age insurance),
- psychological-emotional VOC (i.e., strengthening emotional group ties; expressive stimulation through interaction with children).

This distinction has been used in a number of follow up studies, and has proven its fruitfulness in worldwide cross-national comparisons and in migration research (Nauck, 1987, 1989, 1997). Its empirical content is well in line with earlier theoretical distinctions made by population economists like Becker (1960) and Leibenstein (1957).

After more than three decades, the topic of the value of children has been revisited in order to carry out a large cross-cultural study. Unlike the previous research, this work was not limited to the question of fertility but also included important questions pertaining to childbearing and intergenerational relations and comprises a major theoretical revision of the basic explanatory model (Nauck, 2001, in press; Schwarz, Trommsdorff, Albert, & Mayer, in press; Trommsdorff, 2001, in press; Trommsdorff, Zheng, & Tardif, 2002). This recently revised approach to preconditions and

consequences of the value of children is based on large samples of persons from three biologically related generations (grandmothers, mothers, adolescent children) (300 families in each country) plus a sample of young mothers with a preschool-child (300 in each country). To date, the countries included in this study are Germany, Czech Republic, France, Turkey, Israel and Palestine, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, People's Republic of China, India, South Africa and Ghana. Some of these countries also participated in the original VOC study (Turkey, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, and Germany) and therefore provide data sets which now can be studied with respect to socio-economic and cultural change.

The chapters included in this volume deal with selected aspects of our presently ongoing study on the value of children with each chapter focusing on one country. All chapters first describe some relevant features of the specific country with respect to socio-demographic conditions, family structure, fertility, and education. Also, all chapters deal with issues of the psychological structure of the value of children. Furthermore, contextual factors, including social change, are related more or less explicitly with issues of family and the value of children.

The first chapter by Daniela Klaus, Bernhard Nauck, and Thomas Klein focuses on differences in reproductive behavior between East and West *Germany*, and different age-cohorts. Although highly educated and gainfully employed women show lower instrumental values of children, the overall difference in the value of children is a marginal predictor of child-related decisions in Germany.

The second chapter by Mayer and colleagues introduces aspects of the value-of-children project in *Germany*. The analyses focus mainly on the VOC-construct itself: its dimensionality in Germany, generational and cohort differences on the VOC-dimensions, and on the relevance of VOC for mothers' parenting goals and future expectations of children. Results indicate a shift towards lower traditional VOCs in the younger generations. Furthermore, positive relations between economic-normative VOC and the parenting goal 'obedience' as well as between emotional VOC and the parenting goal 'independence' are observed.

Petr Mareš and Ivo Možný describe the status of women in the *Czech Republic* before and after the transformation process and the consequences of the high percentage of working mothers. They find remarkable changes in family formation over time, especially with regard to extra-marital births. Although a high percentage of Czech women stay unmarried, they view motherhood as a natural part of womanhood and the availability of a suitable partner plays a role in their decisions regarding natality.

The chapter on *Turkey* is co-authored by Cigdem Kagitcibasi, a member of the original VOC study's research team, and Bilge Ataca. The authors take advantage of the fact that Turkey participated in both waves of data collection and compare results from both data sets with regard to changes in the value of children for Turkish mothers. They contextualize their findings in a general model of family change and prove its fruitfulness in the case of Turkey, which is a country of massive social change and extreme social disparities.

Jana Suckow presents data from the 2002 VOC study conducted in *Israel*. Of special interest is the comparison of Jews and Muslims in Israel with respect to their different reproductive behavior. Although they live under similar institutional regulations, their distinct religious affiliations influence the value of children. Data suggest that the Muslims have a higher economic value of children that leads to a higher number of children.

The chapter by Mishra and colleagues presents the value-of children study in *India*. After a general overview of the cultural background of India and traditional and current family situations, a detailed description of the urban and rural sites of data collection and the cultural background of the samples is given. Results indicate that VOC-dimensions in India can be conceptualized broadly as emotional and traditional, and that both dimensions are highly valued across generations and regions, though generational differences occurred in the urban samples. Additionally, fertility-related attitudes differed greatly between rural and urban samples with the exception of the perceived ideal family size: regardless of age or regional origin about two children were seen as ideal for an Indian family.

The chapter by Albert and colleagues on *Indonesia* presents and discusses selected results from the current VOC study in this country. A general introduction to socio-demographic features, anthropological facts, and cultural values is given. Following this, the authors describe their research questions, the sample, the methods used, and their results, including empirical analyses on the value of children and its relations with fertility and parenting goals.

The chapter on the *Republic of Korea* is co-authored by Uichol Kim and Young-Shin Park. They present data from the ongoing VOC study and relate these to the data from the original study carried out in Korea. In spite of the social, economic, and political changes that have occurred in the past 30 years, emphasis on the maintenance of strong relational bonds persists. The psychological benefits associated with children are the most often cited reasons for having a child while personal and financial constraints are the most salient reasons not to have a child. These results challenge the economic and utilitarian models and suggest the importance of understanding the psychological, relational, and cultural factors.

Gang Zheng, Shaohua Shi, and Hong Tang analyze data from the rural, urban, and floating population in *China* to detect differences in their reproductive behavior and values of children. The fact that rural and floating populations are not well covered by the social insurance system leads these parents to rely on their children for old age security.

In summary, this volume brings together studies from different countries on selected aspects of the value of children including theoretical and applied aspects of ongoing processes of socio-demographic change in the international context. The next step of our research program will be to carry out systematic cross-cultural comparisons among these various samples in order to test theoretical models regarding the value of children, parenting, and intergenerational relations.

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Families and the Value of Children in Germany

Daniela Klaus
Bernhard Nauck
Thomas Klein

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1 Introduction

Due to its location in the center of Europe, Germany has always been a country in which various influences have come together, and its institutions have always been culturally diverse. Shifting boundaries, because of various wars during the centuries, have led to the effect that quite different populations have been included in the German society and have helped to shape its social structure. In addition, a considerable amount of migration occurred after World War II: 12.5 million refugees of German nationality from Eastern Europe and from former German territories entered the country. Together with about 3.6 million inhabitants moving from East to West Germany, one out of every four inhabitants of West Germany was a refugee or an expellee (Rudolph, 1996). Presently, Germany consists of about 82 million inhabitants of which some 7 million are foreigners and about 4 million are German repatriates from Eastern European countries (Roloff & Schwarz, 2002). These diverse influences and the vast amount of available empirical research make it quite difficult to report coherently on the situation of families in Germany, leading to unavoidable over-generalizations and over-simplifications.

Before Bismarck's nation-building in the late 19th century, Germany was a rather diverse conglomeration of relatively small and independent states with their own cultural and religious traditions and autonomous institutional structures. This resulted in a rather scattered picture of "traditional" marriage regulations and restrictions, as well as diverse heritage rules. This cultural heterogeneity with regard to marriage and the family is still present due to three different factors. First, the nation building of Germany took place rather late compared to most of the other major societies in Europe, with the foundation of a German state in 1871. The first common legal regulations on marriage and the family are contained in the "Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch" of 1900, with its prescription of the patriarchal bourgeois family. Second, Germany still has a strong federal structure, giving its member states a considerable amount of cultural autonomy, especially in the educational domain, thus preserving the cultural diversity. Third, Germany has undergone several disruptive events during the 20th century including the two World Wars, enormous population movements due to the expulsion of population from the former eastern territories, economic depression in the 1920s, the assumption of the power of the Nazi-regime, and, lately, the split between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) after the second World War until the re-unification in 1989/90. Those events had massive influences on the population structure of Germany such as strong periodic drops in fertility rates and resulting cohort sizes. The two World Wars also led to large differences between cohorts with regard to mortality risks and resulted in massive cohort-specific losses in the age distribution of German society. Moreover, these disruptions, being accompanied by political and constitutional changes, also led to many discontinuities in the legal regulations such as far-reaching differences between the social and family policies of both German states during the more than 40 years of separation, providing totally different incentives for the family formation process. The incentives in the Federal Republic of Germany were primarily targeted towards

marriage, a division of labor between spouses, and giving additional benefits to economically secured families through tax deductions. The German Democratic Republic focused on a model of early, standardized marriages, giving generous marriage credits and providing housing for young couples and, for dual earner families, providing full day care for children from a very early age almost until late adolescence.

However, regional disparities and changes have taken place within a specific cultural framework. The cultural framework to which Germany has adhered during the last thousand years is described as the “Western European Marriage Pattern” by Hajnal (1965). This is a unique combination of (1) an advanced age at marriage and (2) a high proportion of people never marrying at all. Both are the consequence of the institutionalization of neo-local household formation in the medieval society, based on estates. Strong marriage regulations and limitations enforced the rule that a new household could only be established if an existing household was dissolved or if the financial means were proven to justify adding a new entity to the social structure. The idea behind this regulation was that each marriage resulted in a new household and that each household should not contain more than one couple (Laslett, 1976). Neo-local household formation based on marriage makes the couple the primary unit of solidarity, and the household the primary unit of (re-) production. Consequently, remarriages after separation or widowhood were, unlike in most lineage-based kinship systems, very common, and served the principle of immediate, efficient re-completion of the household, and frequently resulted in marriages with marked age differences. Many households contained additional, non-related, unmarried members, like maids and servants (*Gesinde*), waiting – sometimes lifelong – for a marriage opportunity (Mitterauer, 1992). For households the institution of *Gesinde* served as a mean to react flexibly to shifting labor demands in hiring additional household members; for the maids and servants, this provided a moratorium on the flexible length between childhood and full social recognition in adulthood, which was strongly related to marriage.

Accordingly, kinship has never been a major economic unit in German society. Strong rules of exogamy in combination with cognatic (bilinear) descent reduce the control rights of the family of origin to a minimum after marriage. Lineage systems and arranged marriages have always been limited to some noble families, while, for the vast majority of German society, marriage by consent between spouses was predominant and kinship systems in the form of individual kindred played a subordinate role. This reduced non-marital births to a relatively low level, thus resulting – in combination with late marriage age – in a marked fertility restriction. Variations in population size because of nutrition crises, wars and epidemic diseases were responded to by elasticity in the age of marriage (Laslett, 1971), which again resulted in cohort specific variations in marriage age and the proportion of those remaining unmarried their entire lives (Mitterauer, 1990; Mitterauer & Sieder, 1984). This institutional framework was easily transformed during the period of industrialization to the modern privatized nuclear family since bilinear descent, marriage of consent, and neo-localism, had formed the ground for the intimization of family life thereafter.

This intimization resulted from the separation between production and reproduction, which reduced the household size to the family members, and thus led to a sharp boundary between the private family life and the public sphere. The transformation was accompanied by the increasing importance of strong personal emotions in the relationship between the spouses as well as between the generations. Accordingly, “romantic love” became the most salient selection mechanism in the partner selection process and, at least by the second half of the 20th century, the only legitimate reason for marriage and family formation. Strong intergenerational bonds have led to a situation in which practically all children grow up with at least one biological parent, whereas the number of children given up for adoption and those in children’s homes have decreased to near zero.

Finally, the profile of Germans’ family policy is quite unique compared to other European countries. Despite slight regional differences, a conservative model has always prevailed as the German family policy actively supports a traditional bourgeois family model. Relating this issue loosely to the typology of welfare regimes described by Esping-Andersen (1990), Germany is distinct from the Northern-European “social-democratic” model with its strong support of working mothers, the general support of educational achievement of children and the vanishing importance of marriage. But it is also distinct from the “liberal” Anglo-Saxonian model with its emphasis on family being a private matter and not targeted by any social policy and thus, leaving the educational success of the offspring to the (primarily economic) resources of the parents. Finally, Germany is also distinct from the “traditional” Southern European model with its strong emphasis on marriage and its presumption that social policy is subordinate to intergenerational bonds and duties. One of the unintended consequences of the relatively strong German social policy in actively supporting a traditional family model is a polarization of the society into an increasing non-family sector of lifelong childlessness (especially of women with an increasingly better education and a strong professional orientation) and a shrinking family sector, which itself remains traditional in the sense that it consists typically of a married couple with two or more children, whose mother is predominantly not gainfully employed.

This chapter will first review the families in Germany with the focus on the (second half) of the 20th century (Section 2). Beside providing a variety of structural parameters in order to describe the structure of families and family related processes, the family’s place in the historical and cultural context will also be considered. As already suggested, regional differences exist and therefore, it is of interest to constitute grounds for variations not only between east and west but also between the north and the south of Germany. In Section 3, two specific ideas will be traced: According to the first, distinctive patterns of family-behavior are assumed to be the result of regional heterogeneity with respect to diverse alternatives to act mediated by corresponding attitudes and expectations. Individual’s opportunity structure is the result of context-specific family policy, the economic situation in accordance with the characteristics of the labor market, the welfare-level as well as the state of social security, and the distribution of individual resources. The second argument refers to cultural

frames as determinants of individual attitudes, values, and finally, behavior. Cultural frames might be more independent from the prevailing context since they are assumed to be more lasting. The attitudes (potential) parents have towards children are investigated with respect to both ideas. An empirical analysis was performed using the German sample of the Value of Children (VOC) study (Section 3).

2 Families in Germany: A Summary of Basic Structural Characteristics

2.1 Partnership

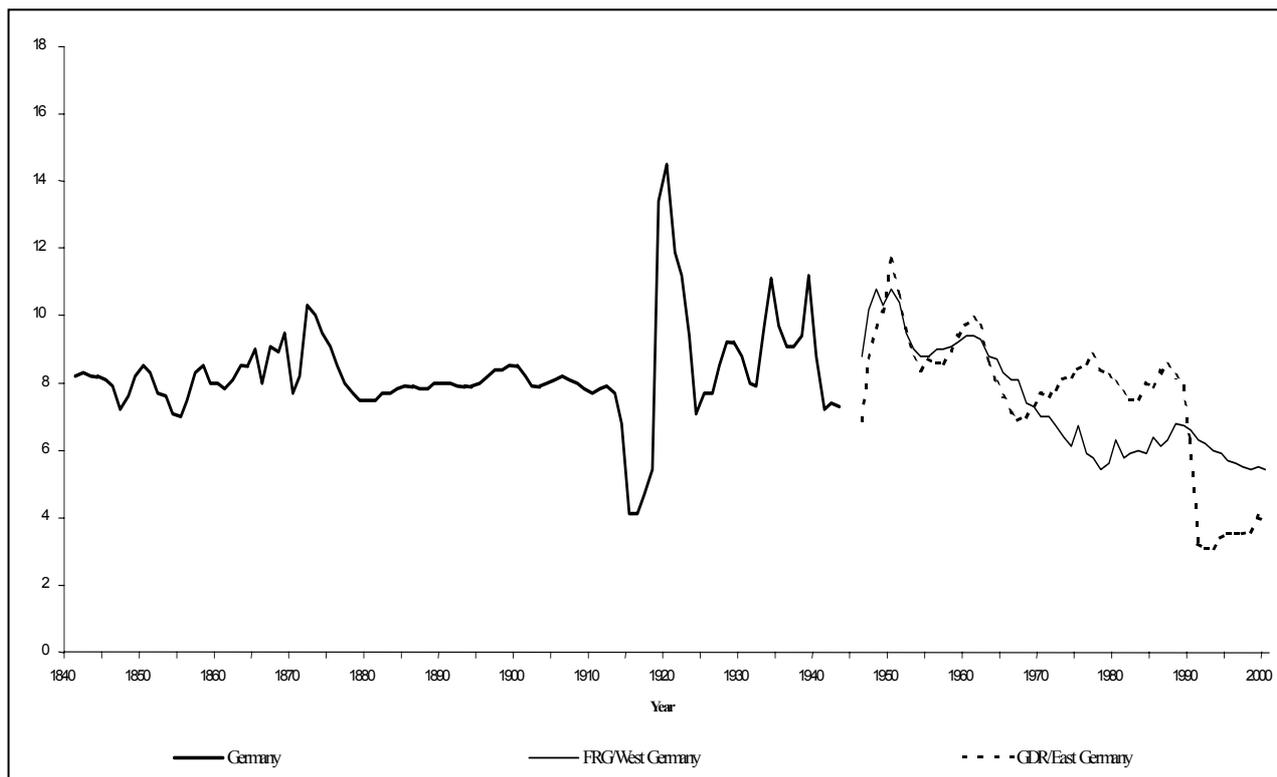
Mate Selection. As in many other affluent societies in the tradition of the Western European Marriage Pattern, the “romantic love” principle has increased marriage endogamy considerably. Since similarities in knowledge, values, tastes, and lifestyles enhance mutual understanding and strong emotional bonds, partners are increasingly selected according to these criteria. Additionally, opportunity structures for meeting possible partners are also increasingly selective according to these criteria, as many of the institutions that adolescents are involved with are stratified according to age and social class, such as schools, sports clubs, or places for leisure activities. This is especially true in Germany, because Germany has a strongly segregating system of school tracks, which separate students by school path at the age of ten. Therefore, chances to meet potential partners of a different family background or of a different educational level are reduced to a minimum. In accordance, empirical results show that marriage homogamy according to education has increased steadily over time (Klein, 1998). Religion, however, has lost its significance for partner selection completely, both with regard to marriages within different Christian denominations and between Christians and atheists or other religions (Klein, 2000; Klein & Wunder, 1996). With respect to age, the mean age difference between spouses is about 3 years and has not changed in the past 5 decades.

Changing Marriage Market. Due to the World Wars, Germany faced severe losses in some cohorts of the male population, which had significant implications for marriage opportunities. This resulted in a considerable marriage squeeze to the disadvantage of the women of those cohorts (or some years younger, respectively). As a consequence of these period effects and in combination with a slightly imbalanced sex-ratio on the marriage market, more women than men remained unmarried for their lifetime until the 1960s. From the 1970s onwards, this imbalance reversed. Due to a sex ratio at birth of 105 males to 100 females, which is rather stable until the marriage age, and due to a fertility rate below the replacement level in combination with the relatively stable age difference between marriage partners, there is an “oversupply” of males on the marriage market. Accordingly, in the last decades, more males than females have remained unmarried. Men with the least educational and financial resources, are in the most unfavorable situation in this competition. This situation has become even more critical within the last decades, since women in Germany do better in average

educational achievement than men and many of the best educated women are increasingly reluctant to enter into the marriage market at all.

Marriage Rate. Figure 1 shows the long-term development of marriages per 1,000 population in Germany (foreigners are included). The readiness to marry was especially high after the two World Wars. This may be explained by the catch up on marrying and, in addition to that, by the re-marriage of war-widows and of several post-war divorced.

Figure 1: Crude Marriage Rate (per 1,000 population)



Source: Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik, 1977; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2000.

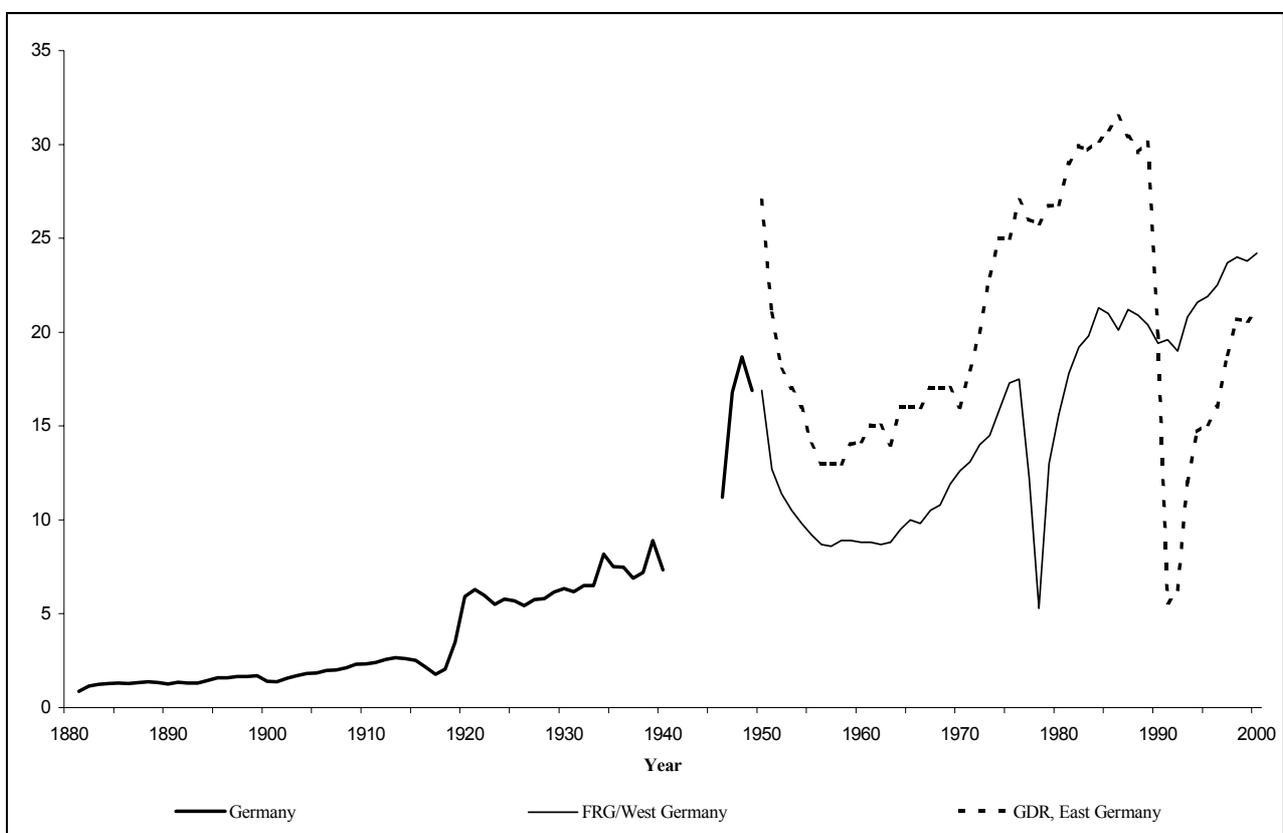
In the middle of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, there was an increase in weddings in Germany, which was a development parallel to an increase in births. After that time, there was a downward tendency, and only in the 1980s was there an occasional (but low) re-increase observable, which has its cause not only in the years of high birthrates, but was likely related to the growing significance of re-marriage after a divorce. Especially between the 1970s and the 1990s the marriage rate in the German Democratic Republic ranked at a higher level than in Federal Republic of Germany. After the German re-unification in East Germany, there was a similar slump of weddings and births. This drastic decline of weddings has its cause – among others – in the institutional and administrative-technical reorganization in East Germany, which mostly produced delays in marriage.

Age at First Marriage. Relating to the age-specific rate of first marriage, there are shifts in marriages over the life course. After a period during which the age at a first marriage decreased, the age at first marriage has continually increased: The average age of men at first marriage was 28 years in 1950, 25 years in 1975 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1992) and then increased to 29 years in 1995 in the former Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2001, p. 83). For women, the average age is about 3 years lower. The development in the German Democratic Republic shows a parallel tendency, but with a lower age at marriage – 23 years for men in 1975 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1992), and 21 for women years (Council of Europe, 1991, p. 31). In 1995 the age at marriage in East Germany converged with that of West Germany.

Everlasting Singles and Cohabitation. The probability of ever marrying in German society has continuously decreased over the last several decades. The reduction began with the cohort of 1940 and is more pronounced for men. The percentage of everlasting singles in the 1960s was 28% of men and 19% of women (Engstler & Menning, 2003, p. 68). In addition to formal marriage, other events, such as starting a union or founding a common household, are not only relevant for partnership formations prior to marriage, but also viewed as an alternative to marriage. Since the end of the 1970s, the decrease in the readiness to marry corresponds with an increase in cohabitation, which happens now more frequently than marriage (Klein, 1999). If we look at the cohabitation frequency by age and birth cohort, for West Germany it is apparent that the delay in marrying within the age category of 20 to 30 corresponds to an increase in cohabitation (Klein, Lengerer, & Uzelac, 2002). From the mid-30s onwards, the increase in cohabitation is low within the sequence of cohorts, in both parts of Germany. Therefore, cohabitation is still best seen as a phase before marriage rather than an alternative to marriage, at least in West Germany. However, young adults show an increasing rate of commitment across the generations. It is true that marriage lost some of its dominance but rates of companionship are not decreasing at all. The change of living arrangements is often interpreted as being an expression of individualization and pluralization. While individualization is hardly true, pluralization of private living arrangements includes the increase of cohabitation, mostly post divorce cohabitation (Beck-Gernsheim, 1983, pp. 329, 333), and a slightly increasing tendency to remain single (Beck-Gernsheim, 1994, p. 131). With regard to other demographic changes, the connection between increasing numbers of divorces and the spread of cohabitation is often discussed. A rather trivial explanation for the phenomenon that an increasing divorce rate encourages the spread of cohabitation is that second marriages are preceded by other forms of partnership, especially cohabitation. Moreover, the spread of cohabitation may be traced back to two developments: the increase of women's labor participation, especially in qualified jobs and the general expansion of the educational system. The opportunity costs of a traditional marital division of labor increase as women experience greater possibilities for gainful employment.

Divorce and Remarriage. The divorce rate is a good indicator for determining the solidity of partnerships. Still, it has to be taken into account that marriages are more often separated by the death of the partner than by divorce. Only one-third of marriages are terminated by divorce in Germany. Figure 2 shows the long-term changes in divorces per 10,000 inhabitants. In Germany, as in other countries, the divorce rate increased considerably over the course of the 20th century. That tendency was only interrupted during a few time periods: Divorce occurred only seldom during the First World War, but increased in frequency again afterwards. Another irregularity has its cause in the decrease of divorces because of re-arrangement of the divorce regulations in the 1970s. However, divorces occurred more often in the German Democratic Republic than in the Federal Republic.

Figure 2: Crude Divorce Rate (per 10,000 population)



Source: Emmerling, 1999; Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik, 1977; Statistisches Amt der DDR, 1990; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2000.

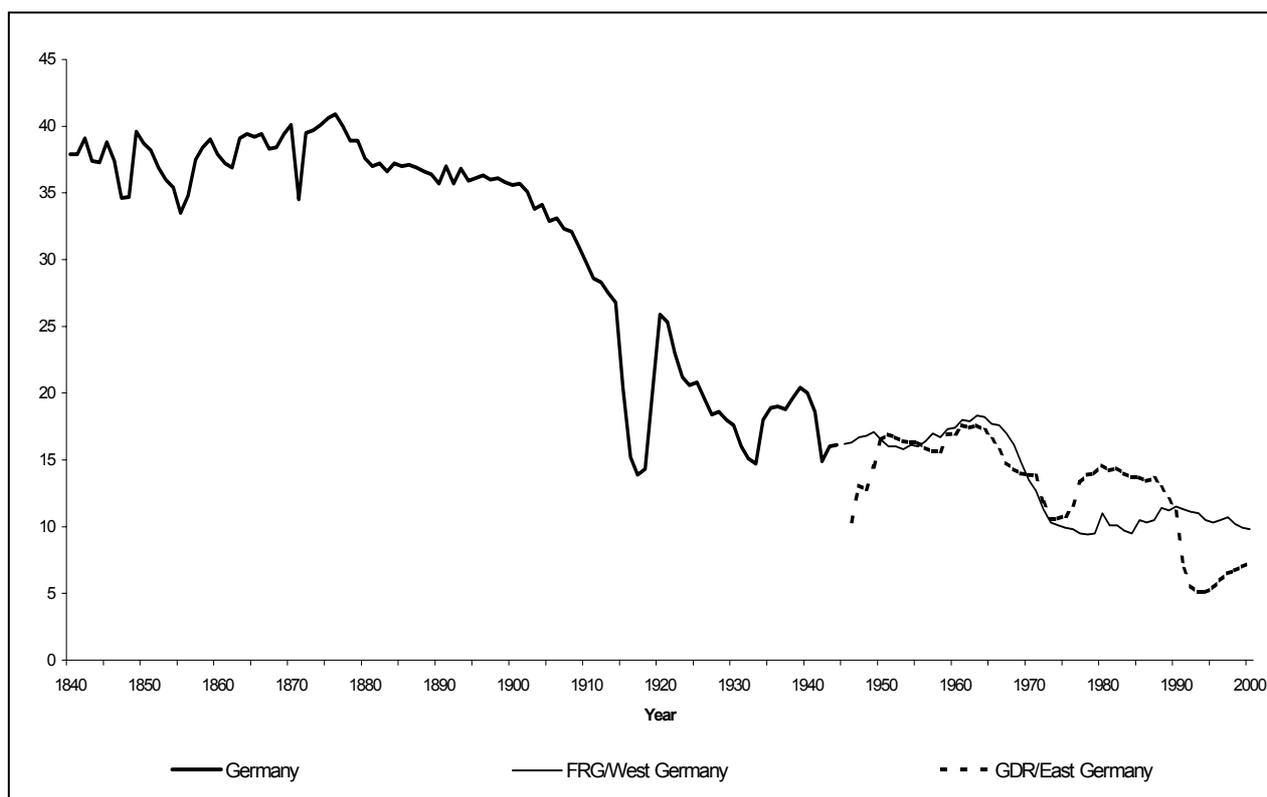
After the German re-unification the divorce rate of the newly-formed German state decreased again. Rates of re-marriage are distributed differently among men and women. Especially within younger cohorts, remarriage after a divorce is more frequent among women (Sommer, 1998, p. 233). In West Germany in 1994 the total rates of remarriage after a divorce were 65% for women and 58% for men, and those percentages have since decreased (Dorbritz & Gärtner, 1995, p. 350). The decreasing rates of remarriage are due to an increase of other living arrangements and an increase of age at divorce which is caused by the increasing age at first marriage. Re-

marriage after being widowed is more seldom than remarriage after divorce for women while the age-specific remarriage rates of divorced and widowed men are similar level (Braun & Proebsting, 1986, p. 110).

2.2 Fertility

Changing Fertility. Figure 3 depicts the crude birthrate (CBR) in Germany since the 19th century. At the beginning of the 20th century the CBR was around 35 children per 1,000 inhabitants. Between 1900 and 1933 there was a continuous decline, which was punctuated by a near-absence of births because of the First World War. A short-term increase in births was limited to the time of the Third Reich and the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, between 1966 and 1973 there was a drastic decrease in births. Until the middle of the 1970s, the CBR was nearly parallel in East and West Germany. But during the mid-1970s, the GDR government changed its population policy, by giving larger families advantages in respect to housing. As a consequence, there was an increase of births in the German Democratic Republic.

Figure 3: Crude Birth Rate (per 1,000 population)

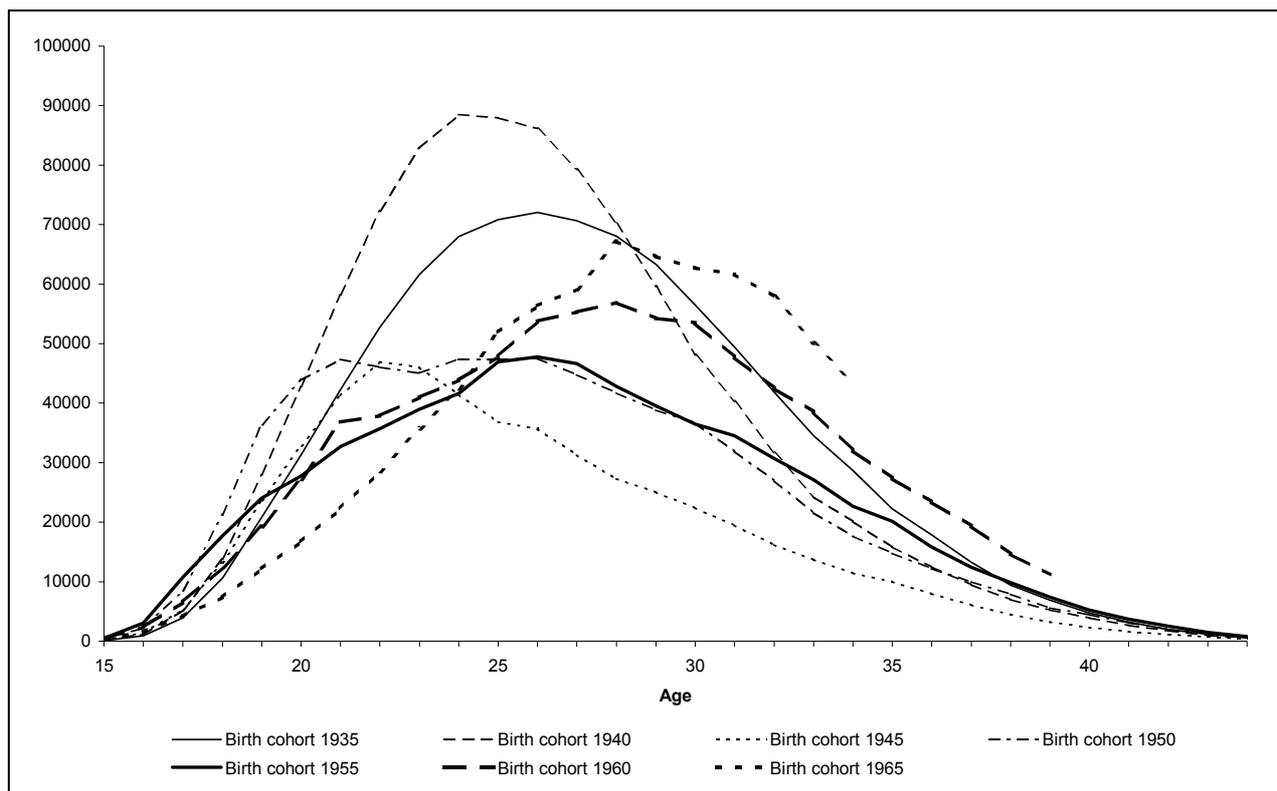


Source: Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik, 1977; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2000.

After 1990 there was a reduction of births in East Germany, which was even more dramatic than that in the 1960s in West Germany: in only two or three years, the CBR decreased by 60%. Several factors contributed to the birth decline after 1990 in East Germany (Klein, et al., 1996). A change in the values of the family was much-discussed. The family, which once held an esteemed position in the socialist system

because it served as a place of retreat from the regimentation of public life (Höhn, Mamme, & Wendt, 1990; Huinink, 1995; Nauck, 1993), lost some of this significance because of the newly gained liberty. In addition, there were changed incentive-structures as a result of changed institutional conditions after the German unification (Kirner, Schulz, & Roloff, 1990; Schulz, Wagner, & Witte, 1993; Strohmeier & Schulze, 1995). The delay in having children is interpreted as a rational reaction to the increased insecurity and uncertainty regarding the consequences of generative behavior (Schulz, Wagner, & Witte, 1993; Zapf & Mau, 1993). Explanations which describe the decline in births as the “aggregate effect of individually experienced shocks” (Mau & Zapf, 1998; Zapf & Mau, 1993, p. 3), are oriented towards a more psychological context. Finally, demographically caused age-structure-effects, especially the selective migration to West Germany by young adults and their families (Dorbritz, 1992; 1993) and the decrease in cohort size, caused by the decreased birth-rate at the end of the 1960s are also important factors in the currently declining birth-rate. For Germany, the total fertility rate (TFR) is 1.4 in 2000 (Council of Europe, 2002). A value around 2 is needed to replace the current population, while values below 2 will result in a declining population size.

Figure 4: Number of births by age and cohort (FRG)



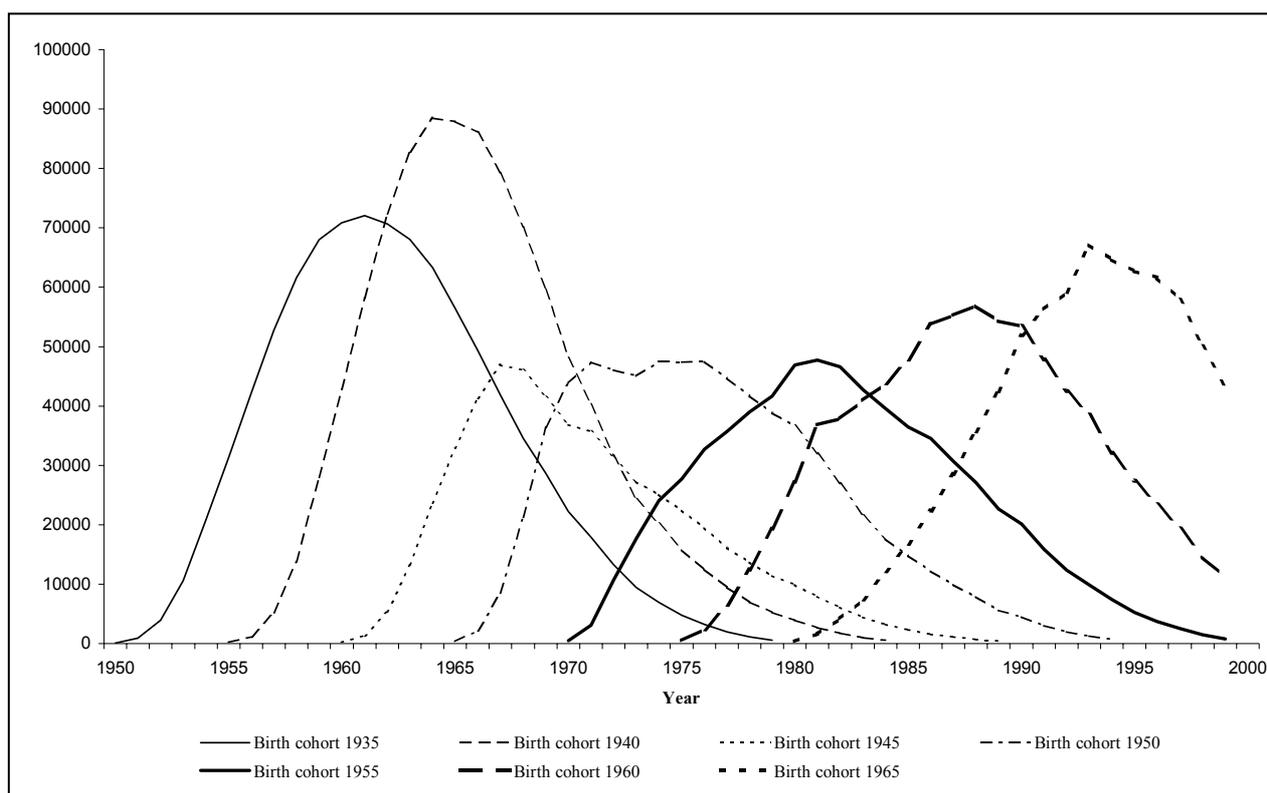
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2000.

Age-Specific Births. A problem in interpreting the described developments of fertility results from the calculation of period data from a calendar year. Calculation of the measured value concerned refers in that case not to the course of life of a specific cohort, but to all age-groups in a calendar year. Figure 4 shows how the age-specific numbers of births changed in the Federal Republic of Germany against the back-

ground of the birthrate increase of the 1960s. The maximum numbers of births to women born in 1935 was reached at the age of 26. With the following cohorts, the maximum number of births shifted toward a younger age. Women born in 1945 had their highest single-year birthrate at the age of 22. Those born in 1950 had it even younger. But the following cohorts delayed reproduction, and the number of births was distributed more evenly through all age levels. Accordingly, the age at first birth varies over time: In the Federal Republic of Germany in 1970, the average age at first birth was 24, in 1985 it was 26 years, and it was 28 years in 1999 (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 75).

The implication of the explained changes in the timing of births and its consequences for the German birth development becomes clear if the age-specific births are represented by calendar time and not by age (Figure 5). The predrawing (e.g., earlier timing) of births in the course of life implies that the younger cohorts will give birth in the same calendar years as earlier cohorts. For instance, the peaks in births for the cohorts of 1935 and 1945, which are 10 years apart, have a gap of only 6 years.

Figure 5: Development of births from cross-sectional and longitudinal views (FRG)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2000.

The increase in births between the middle of the 1950s and the middle of the 1960s goes back to this effect of compression, which is connected with the predrawing. Those cohorts which have a share in the predrawing and are responsible for the increase in births, are not going to have more children than those women who were born in 1935. While the increase in births was accompanied by a predrawing of

births, the decrease in births in the time between 1966 and 1973 was essentially caused by the tendency to delay births until later in life. The delay leads to a decompression of birth frequencies across time. Taking the perspective of those cohorts that had a share in the birth decrease, it is clear that fertility decreased but not nearly as dramatically as the birth pattern time would suggest.

The time period related TFR decreased from 2.5 to 1.5 between 1965 and 1975 (Council of Europe 1999, p. 70), while the cohort related rate (the completed fertility rate, which refers to the number of children to whom a “real” women gave birth during her reproductive age) decreased from 2.0 in cohort 1940 to 1.6 in cohort 1960 (Engstler, 1997, p. 88). Still, having larger numbers of children, which was historically quite common, became less among today’s living generations. An observation separated by the numbering of births shows that the readiness to start a family decreased but if the first child is born the probability of giving birth to a second and a third children is rather high (Huinink, 1989; Klein, 1989). Thus births of higher parity are reduced mainly because it has become more and more seldom to start a family at all.

2.3 Household context and intergenerational relations

Living Arrangements. Changes in household-composition and the spread of private living arrangements are resulting from demographic developments (especially the changes in birthrates) as well as the change of mate selection and partnership stability. Figure 6 shows that living together with a partner and children is often practiced by those in their middle adulthood while living together with only a partner is most likely in the second half of life. Both curves of men are shifted to the right because of the age difference between the partners. In addition, that men in their second half of life live with a partner more often than women is a result of the relative shortage of older men because of the Second World War. The household context of the future elderly is expected to have a lower gender difference as the war generation dies out.

It is also apparent that between the mid-20s and the mid-50s more men than women are living alone. This corresponds with an almost exclusion of men from the group of single parents during young and middle adulthood. While this household form is rarely found among men, 10% of women between the ages between 35 and 44 are single parents. In the year 2000 1.8 million single parents were living in Germany, but only 15% were men (Engstler & Menning, 2003, p. 40). Defining single parents only with respect to the household context is misleading: Many single mothers have a steady partner with his own household, but who slips into the role of a stepfather and possibly participates in educational tasks even more than many fathers in a traditional family setting. According to Teubner (2002, p. 45), at least 245 thousand out of the 1.8 million single parents live in such a partnership without a common household.