

Trends in nonmarital childbearing in Poland

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Nonmarital Childbearing Workshop

University of Southampton, 14-16 September 2011



Increase in % of out-of-wedlock births in Poland - alternative explanations

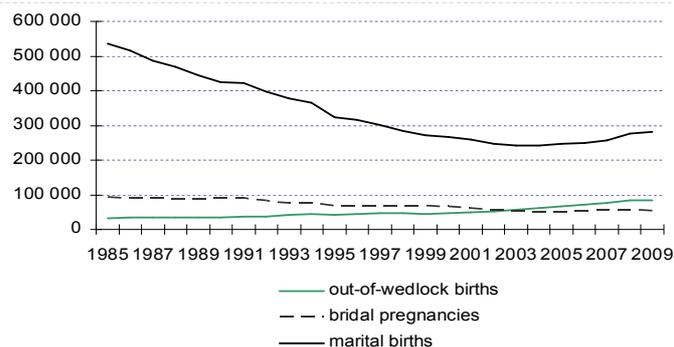
- ▶ The proportion of out-of-wedlock births grew from 5% up to 20% between 1985 – 2009
 - ▶ what was the driving force of this growth ?
- ▶ The role of declining propensity for shotgun weddings
 - ▶ shotgun weddings ~ bridal pregnancies ~ legitimation = marriage in the period between conception and birth
 - ▶ if a women, who conceives while unmarried, decide not to marry, then the birth is classified as nonmarital
 - ▶ shotgun weddings may conceal the genuine nature of relationship between marriage and fertility (Raymo and Iwasawa 2008)
 - ▶ a decline in shotgun weddings may lead to increase in the proportion of out-of-wedlock births

Increase in % of out-of-wedlock births in Poland - background

- ▶ decisions whether to marry or not among unmarried women who are not in any stable relationships and experience pregnancies:
- ▶ the risk of economic hardship among lone parents
 - ▶ limited family policy support for lone parents - but there were pronounced changes between 1985-2009:
 - ▶ at the beginning of 90ies important reforms that reduced the risk of poverty among lone parents
 - ▶ after second half of 90ies there was a period of welfare state retrenchment
- ▶ stigma associated with single motherhood
 - ▶ pronounced in Poland because according to the dominating religion, tradition and customs, it is required that parents should be married
 - ▶ but there is some evidence on social attitudes shows that the acceptance for raising a child outside marriage was increasing (ISSP data 1994 / 2002)

→ fewer people think that children should be raised only by married couples, more people think that lone parents are able to raise well

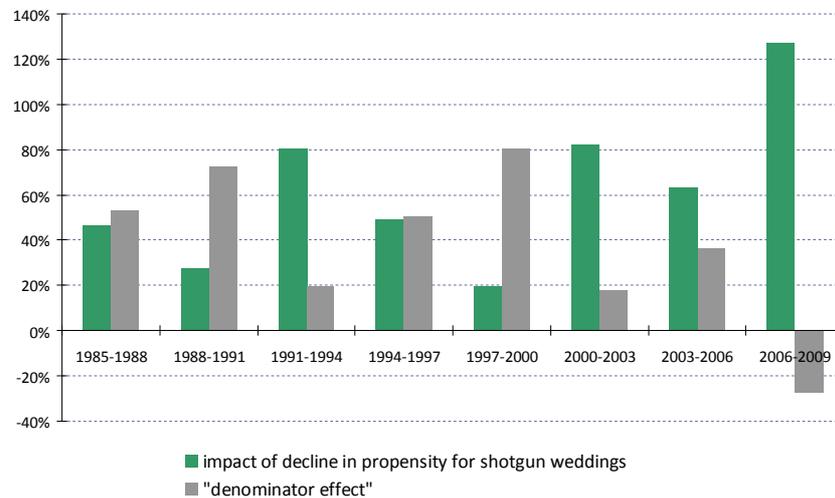
Trends in numbers of births



- ▶ Strong decline in births among married women
- ▶ Among unmarried women who conceived a child, there is a change in propensity to marry in the period between conception and birth
- ▶ Decomposition quantifying the role of shotgun weddings needs to take into account the changes in the structure of births according to the marital status of a woman at the time of conception → method proposed by Akerlof et al. 1996

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Growing share of nonmarital births - fact or artifact? Results from decomposition.



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Conclusions

- ▶ before transition to market economy and in the 90ies it was mainly a matter of dropping births among married women
 - ▶ Legitimation had a strong impact only in 1991- 1994 i.e. after a set of reforms creating welfare state support for lone parents
 - ▶ But apart from that, growing share of nonmarital births resulted from the 'denominator effect'
- ▶ in 2000-2009, the main driving force is declining propensity for shotgun weddings
 - ▶ there were no social policy reforms which encouraged remaining unmarried!
 - ▶ diminishing stigma of single motherhood ?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

