

In developed countries not enough children are born. Consecutive generations are less numerous than the previous, which altering alters the proportion of working and retired individuals. One of the solutions is the retirement age extension. An alternative is to support women and their partners in fertility decisions.

A particularly important aspect of the latter solution is to help parents to reconcile professional and family roles. This support should be present throughout the whole upbringing process, starting at child's birth. Thus, the first in a series of necessary solutions is to provide parental leave opportunities with the explicit aim of protecting the employment of parents and to enable them to spend time with their infants.

Poland has a particularly turbulent story with the parental leaves. Between 2000-and 2011 the parental leave legislation experienced incremental modifications in the duration granted to the parents. These changes could have an impact on the stability perception of potential parents, which might have negative impact on their fertility decisions. Additionally, in 2010 a two-week period to be used only by the fathers was introduced—this change is more important from an ideological perspective than from its economic significance. However, the most important change corresponds to the reform implemented in 2013, when the length of parental leave was doubled and the possibility of splitting the leave among both parents was introduced.

The proposed evaluation will attempt to answer the question whether introduced changes influenced female fertility decisions and their changes on the labor market. We will focus on demographic and labor market short-term effects. The results can contribute to the parental leave policy design which would support parents in their fertility decisions.

In order to explore these issues, we will use first and second wave of a representative retrospective survey "Generations and Families (GGS-PL)". In this survey, respondents aged 18-79 were asked several questions concerning their work and family life. These survey is unique on its design as it includes questions related to the fertility and work plans of the individual. The answers will be based on econometric models, in particular we want to exploit the variation that emerges from the legal framework, as only part of the women are entitled to maternity leave.

Answers to the research questions will be based on econometric models. Over the past 20 years, much research was done on the evaluation methodology of economic interventions (as in the case of the introduction of new legislation in parental leave). Researchers like Angrist or Imbens contributed to the development of tools able to separate the treatment effect and potential confounders on the observed results.

The innovative nature of the project is based on the unique identification strategy provided by the implementation of Polish reforms. Particularly significant is the so-called group of "mothers of first the quarter" that gained entitlement to the extended parental leave in April 2013, thus after their children were born. Therefore they could not take the changes in the policy into account while making fertility decisions. So, we can say that in their case treatment assignment was random. These women were on average no different from those who gave birth in the fourth quarter of 2012. Thus, the differences observed between them ex post can be attributed to the treatment of longer maternity leave. Such design is relatively rare, and this is why proposed study is so important.

Additionally, given the path followed by Polish reforms, it is possible to compare the effectiveness of the two reform methods: the incremental followed in the 2000 to 2011 period, and the discontinuous increase introduced in 2013. This research problem has direct policy implications as recent studies show that well-designed family and labor market policies are able to contribute to reverse the negative relation between fertility and female labor market participation.