

Late parenthood is associated with postponing the moment of having the first child. Studies have shown that the optimal age for a woman to give birth to her first child is between 20 and 35 years. Late parenthood is of interest to many scientists, especially in economically and socially developed countries, as this phenomenon occurs there noticeably often. It is currently an important topic in medical, biological, social, and psychological research. Women postpone reproduction until they complete education and are stabilized professionally. The age of the parents is an important factor influencing the health condition of the offspring. Little is known about the long-term demographic and health costs of advanced parental age in historical populations. There are no studies on the influence of parental age on offspring throughout their lives. Such intergenerational studies have so far been conducted on animal populations in which - due to a shorter life span than in humans - it is easier to observe the life course of an individual or the population until death.

The project aims to investigate whether any long-term demographic and health costs of advanced parental age at the first childbirth in the 19th and early 20th centuries were observed. The project will analyze the consequences of late parenthood in two generations: children and grandchildren. Reconstructed histories of families within three generations (parents-children-grandchildren) will be used to conduct the study. The project's objective is to ask whether there was a relationship between the advanced age of the parents at the first childbirth and the life span of the offspring, their reproductive success, and the probability of survival to a certain age. It will also be examined whether and to what extent the socio-economic factors of parents counterbalanced the impact of late parenthood on the offspring and whether the advanced age of the parents contributed to the weakening of parental investment in the biological standard of living.

The purposes of the project will be achieved through the use of a model population represented by the population of Poznań residents from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. In the proposed period, the society of Poznań was diverse in terms of religion and social and economic development. It is also the period in which women entered the labor market, which could have delayed the decision of starting a family. The project is interdisciplinary, as it uses methods from historical demography and biology of the human population as well as economic and social history. The project will be implemented using population registry cards of the inhabitants of Poznań and other historical sources, such as Polish and Prussian statistics, that will deliver the socio-economic context.

The main purpose of the project is to answer the question of the existence of a relationship between the late reproduction of parents and the health status of their offspring in past societies. The results will be an important step in understanding the multi-faceted effects of late parenthood in a broad cultural and social context in past societies. They will help to further the understanding of the factors influencing the health status of the population in the past, pointing to the role of parental factors acting at the stage of reproduction. The project will also be the first attempt in Polish research to use international standard tools to describe the socio-economic status. Project outcomes will influence the perception of social change by adding a parental biological context. During the implementation of the project aims, articles will be published in peer-reviewed international journals. The research will contribute to broadening the knowledge about factors influencing demographic transition in past societies.