

Descent into a Deeper Demographic Decline

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1. The Present Plight, Complacency with no Alarm Bells

Since the 1970s low and very low birth rates have become normal in developed countries. But in the UK there has been little concern at the continued decline.

In 2019, the past year, the Scottish birth rate has dropped below 1.4 Total Fertility Rate. This can be considered a very low birth rate. It is about one third below replacement level.[1] But this has not attracted great public concern nor led in Scotland for the devolved government to take much notice.

The news that the heralded baby boom, that was anticipated following the lockdown, in response to the virus epidemic in 2020, has not in fact been realised is another indication that the forces at work to prevent a recovery in the birth rate are now quite strong.

The current health emergency might also remind us how dependent we have become on immigrants to staff the Health Service and other basic services. With low birth rates experienced since the 1970s, successive cohorts of young people growing up and reaching working age are consequently depleted. Carers and healthcare workers are mostly immigrants. Fruit and vegetable growers rely largely on immigrants to harvest the crops. Public transport depends on immigrants.

Some might ask Why worry? Any deficiency in the adult population can be made up by immigration. Immigrants are arriving in large numbers and are risking their lives to enter the country. Economists say immigration is good for the economy.

But now the downsides to a continued low birth rate are becoming more apparent. With smaller family sizes we can

expect more older people to be living alone without support from any immediate family and often with immigrants as neighbours. The legendary encounter between the Mrs Duffy of Rochdale and the prime minister at the time Gordon Brown, in the course of the 2010 General Election campaign, served to bring to light a major rift in our democracy that the influential elite prefer not to acknowledge. The elite see a gain from immigration but more humble folk are troubled by immigrants. While our leaders are uncomfortable in discussing immigration today, there is an even greater reluctance to discuss how it has come about that we are so dependent on immigrants to staff basic services and harvest the crops and immigrants have come to be such a large proportion of citizens in our big cities.

The decline in the birth rate comes in the context of other changes in our society. These include a decline in marriage, deterioration in parenting, more abortions and intensive use of fertility control, both contraceptives and abortifacients, while most live births are now to unmarried parents. Christians can recognise some sins are apparent.

Nor can the decline in the birth rate be considered a temporary aberration that will correct itself. The official population forecasters in the UK did for some years assume a recovery in the birth rate to replacement level through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Forecasters in those years considered the current birth rate to be too low to use in forward projections. But by the time of the 1989-based forecast a birth rate of 2.00 was assumed for England & Wales. The birth rate has continued since then below replacement level and the latest forecast that is 2018-based assumes “ 1.78 children per woman by mid-2043, which is lower than the principal assumption for the 2016-based projections (1.84 children per woman).” [ONS web site]

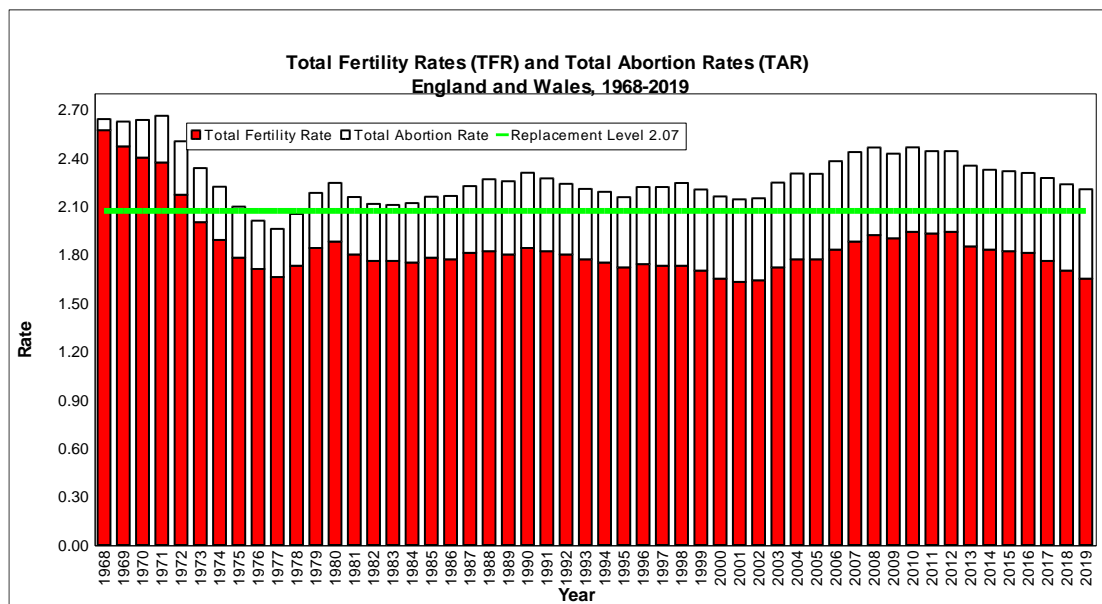
Chapter 2. The Continued Decline in the British and Irish Birth Rates

England & Wales

The government web site of ONS, the Office for National Statistics, reports “ The total fertility rate (TFR) for England and Wales decreased from 1.70 children per woman in 2018 to 1.65 children per woman in 2019; this is lower than all previous years except 2000, 2001 and 2002. The TFR for Wales was the lowest since records began in 1982 at 1.54 children per woman.”

A TFR of 1.65 is around 20% less than the replacement level that is approximately 2.07 children per woman [1]. More baby boys are born than baby girls and not all baby girls live to be adults that can give birth to children. Hence the replacement level is slightly above 2 with the rule-of-thumb figure 2.1 often quoted for developed countries.

Figure 1.



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Figure 1 shows the trend in the birth rate in England & Wales since 1968. Until 1972 this was above replacement level. The fall below replacement level in the 1970s reflects the advent of legally induced abortions following the 1967 Abortion Act and

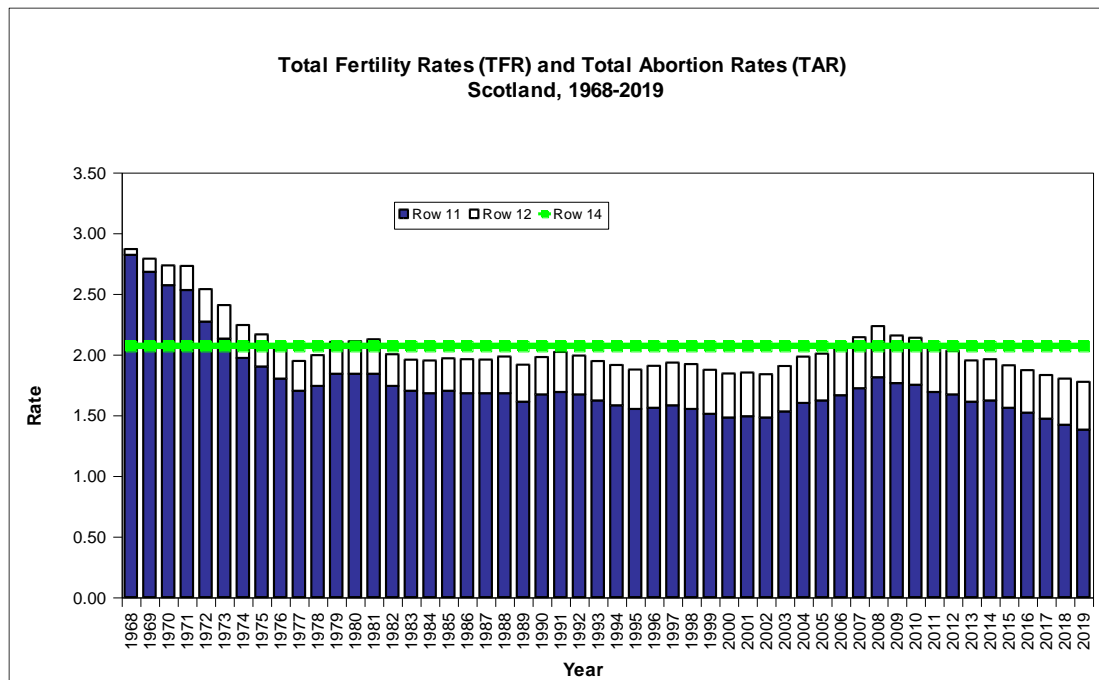
new hormonal contraceptives. The cohort of women, born around 1950, were the first to experience large numbers of legally induced abortions and make extensive use of hormonal contraceptives, that were made freely available through the National Health Service.

Also shown in Figure 1 is the TAR Total Abortion Rate calculated in the same way as the Total Fertility Rate as the sum of the age specific rates in each year. From 1973 up to 2003 there is an approximate match between the shortfall below replacement level of the birth rate and the abortion rate. The effect of the more liberal abortion law that started to take effect in Great Britain in 1968 in lowering the birth rate has impacted the demographic profile and the health of British women. [4]

Immigration also is now a larger influence on British demography. Whereas abortion and contraception lower the birth rate, immigrants are now contributing a larger proportion of live births within Great Britain..

Scotland

Figure 2.



In Scotland the birth rate is now lower than in England. The official web site shows “In 2018 the **total fertility rate** in **Scotland** was 1.42, the lowest it has been since the turn of the century.” That is over 31% below replacement level. The latest news for 2019 is that the number of Scottish live births was less than 50,000 and TFR has fallen again to 1.35 that is 35% below replacement. With the TFR now less than 1.4 Scotland can now be said to have very low fertility.

Figure 2 shows the trend over time of the Scottish birth rates TFRs and Abortion rates TARs. Up to 1973 the Scottish birth rate was higher than the English but then it declined more rapidly. [5] The decline in traditional industries in Scotland such as coal mining and shipbuilding has left Scottish young men less well placed to take on marriage and family formation. On the other hand service industries grew in contrast to provide more attractive employment for young women. Following the Housing Act of 1980 “right to buy” was given to council tenants. This had a big impact in Scotland where a high proportion of housing was low rent social housing of this kind. More young couples as a result were exposed to the financial strain of paying for mortgages. The better council houses suitable for families with several children were attractive for

tenants who could exercise their right to buy. And council tenants were as a result then deterred from having large families by reduced access to family type housing. Such factors, that are having a lasting effect, can explain the greater decline in the Scottish birth rate. [5]

Northern Ireland

For Northern Ireland in contrast, notwithstanding the general UK trend to lower birth rates, we have a markedly higher fertility rate of 1.89 quoted for 2018. This is merely 9% below replacement level. There seems little doubt that the more restrictive law on abortion in Northern Ireland has been a factor supporting live births. For 2019 there were 22,466 live births in Northern Ireland 1.6% less than 22,829 in 2018, which might begin to reflect a new more liberal abortion regime in Northern Ireland while it is also in line with the trend down in the rest of the UK.

Figure 3.

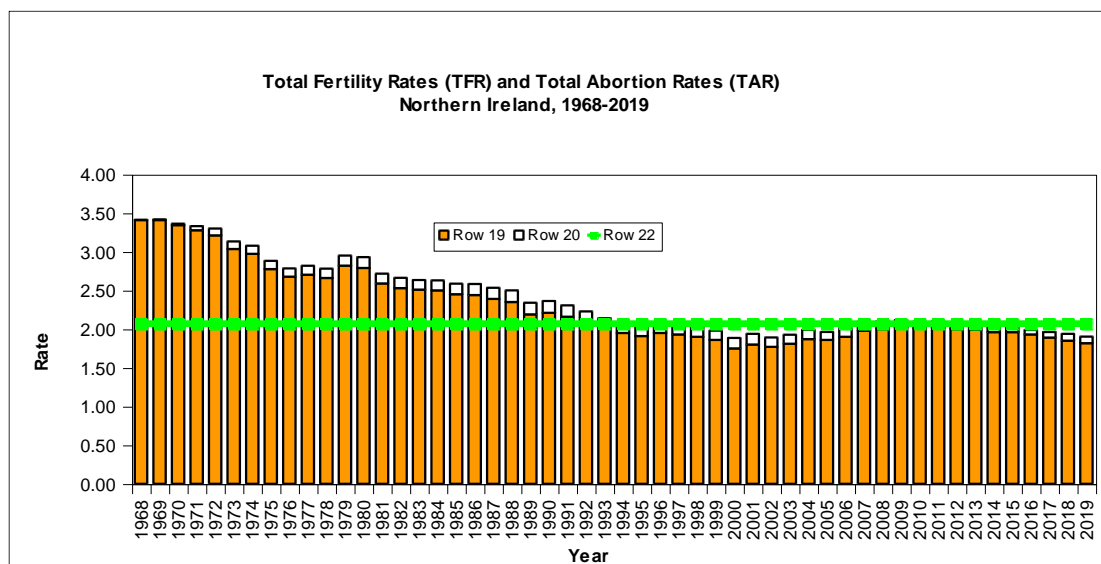


Figure 3 shows the trend since 1968 for Northern Ireland of TFRs and TARs. There is also here a close match between the shortfall below replacement level of the birth rate and he

abortion rate. Abortion rates for Northern Ireland have been computed using data on women resident in Northern Ireland in Abortion Statistics for England & Wales and also allowing for the smaller numbers of abortions reported in Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland the same National Health Service provides healthcare as in Great Britain. This includes provision of free contraceptives. But the 1967 Abortion Act did not apply to Northern Ireland. Even now, when a liberalised law on abortions has been imposed on Northern Ireland, not many abortions take place there. [6]

Traditionally the demographic distinctive of Ireland, giving Ireland what has been called outlier status in Europe, has been of late marriage but nevertheless a high birth rate compared to other European countries. This is still manifest in Northern Ireland and more evident in the Republic of Ireland.[6] It has also been seen historically that Northern Ireland is intermediate between the Republic and Great Britain in respect of its demography. In the Republic in recent years, it is still apparent that the average age of marriage and childbearing is slightly higher in the Republic than in Northern Ireland.

Whereas in Northern Ireland there are the same factors manifest as in Scotland that can explain the decline in the birth rate the birth rate in Northern Ireland has declined much less. Traditional industries such as ship building and linen manufacturing have declined and the “Right to Buy” council houses applies as in Great Britain. The lower Total Abortion Rate around 0.1 stands out as a factor to explain how the birth rate in Northern Ireland has declined less..

Republic of Ireland

Figure 4.

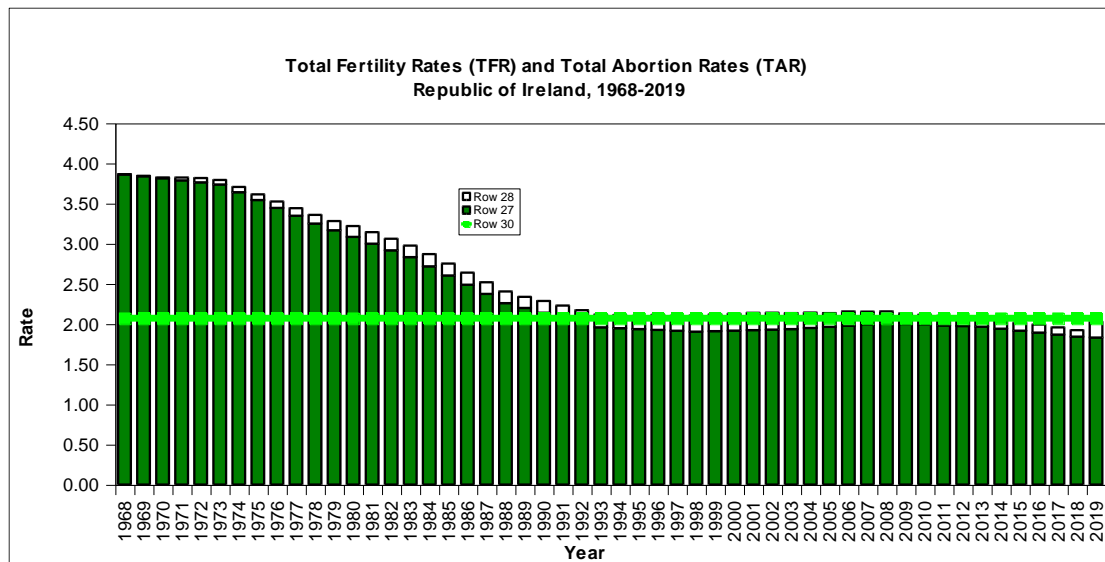


Figure 4 shows the trend since 1968 for the Republic of Ireland of birth rates and abortion rates.

In the Republic of Ireland the healthcare system differs from the National Health Service in the UK. In Ireland contraceptives for most women are not free as they are in Northern Ireland. But the abortion law in the Republic which also different from the UK has been similarly restrictive in its effect as that in Northern Ireland until very recently. Up to 2018 the Abortion rates for the Republic as for Northern Ireland, have been based on the data on abortion numbers for Irish resident women, shown by quinquennial age groups, in Abortion Statistics for England & Wales with some additional allowance for the small numbers of Irish abortions within Ireland and elsewhere such as Scotland and Holland. For 2019 the Irish TAR has been estimated using abortion numbers as reported for 2019 by the Irish Department of Health and the numbers of women resident in Ireland reported in the England & Wales Abortion Statistics for that year. The Irish Department of Health has no information as to the ages of the women having abortions in Ireland. The estimate assumes their age distribution is similar to that of Irish women coming to England for abortions in previous years. This produces an estimate of a TAR for Ireland of around 0.2 for

2019. The officially reported TFR is 1.83 for this year, slightly down from TFR 1.84 in 2018. Again for Ireland there is a remarkably close match between the shortfall of the birth rate below replacement level and the abortion rate as shown in Figure 4. [6] The lower abortion rates in Ireland have led to a higher birth rate that is closer to replacement level than the British. With the liberalisation of abortion laws in Ireland that started to take effect from 2019 some further fall in the Irish birthrate might be anticipated.

Whereas Ireland has been, since the 19th century, a country with high emigration, the recent history has been of more economic success with continued significant emigration more than balanced by high immigration. Many Irish emigrants have also returned to Ireland. In 2019 net immigration officially reported on the web site of the Irish Central Statistics Office www.cso.ie was 34,000 (2018 33,700) resulting from emigration of 56,300 and immigration of 90,300.

Chapter 3. Sweden

Figure 5.

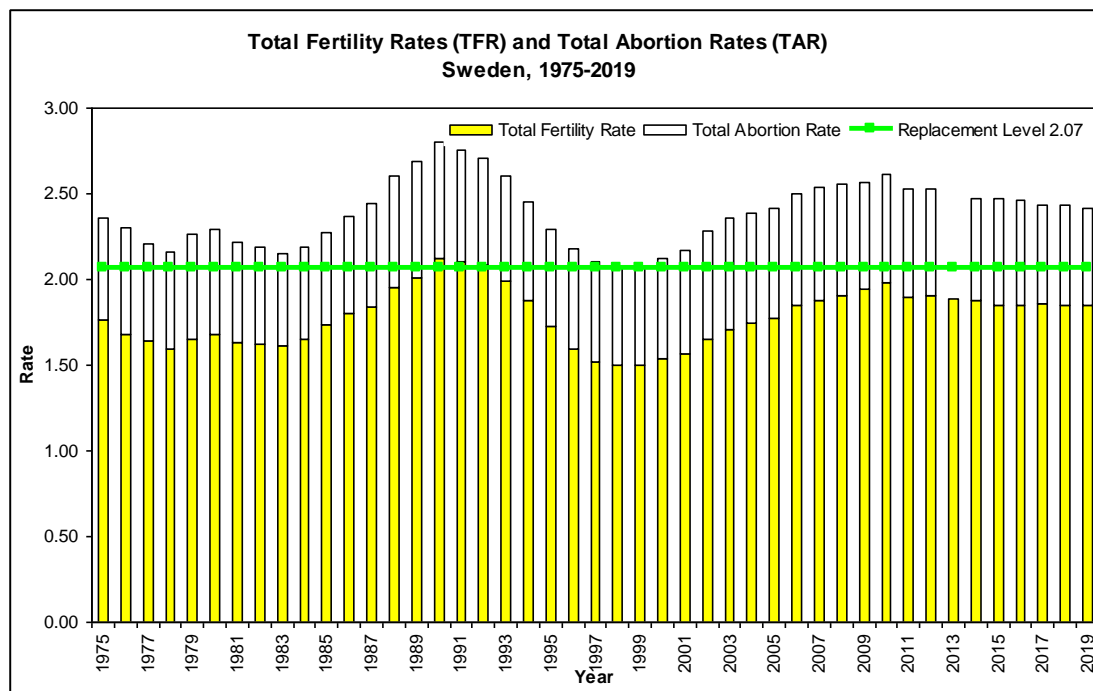


Figure 5 shows the trend in birth rates and abortion rates since 1975 up to 2019 for Sweden. Sweden, alongside England & Wales and Scotland, is one of the comparatively few countries with a reputation for having a complete count of abortions with the ages of women in its officially published statistics. TARs in Figure 5 are computed using this annual data and the corresponding mid year female population. TFRs are as published on the official web site.

Sweden is a model internationally for social policy. Sweden was in the vanguard of sex education and promotion of birth control. In the 1920s and 1930s, when there was a legal ban on contraception in Sweden, Elise Ottesen-Jensen was an active advocate who is now recognised internationally as a pioneer of birth control ranking alongside Margaret Sanger. Today there is an extensive programme of sex education and distribution of contraceptives both to boys and girls in Sweden. Much admired internationally today is the Swedish system of support for parents. There is generous provision of family benefits, parental leave and childcare for mothers. While abortion was legalised in the 1970s and abortion rates have been rather higher than in England since then, birth rates have also tended to be higher

than in England. While sex education has led to fewer teenage abortions in Sweden than in England, Swedish abortion rates are higher in the mid-thirties age range. This corresponds to more unstable relationships in Sweden with a lower proportion of women married in that age range than in England. In the UK the media refer to the low teenage pregnancy rates in Sweden but do not comment on the higher Swedish total abortion rates.

The Swedish birth rate has been following a similar trend to that in England. Around 2010 the Swedish birth rate recovered to near replacement level. This recovery was welcome and good provision for family assistance had contributed to this. It was said at the time that there were some features in the Swedish regime that could be found in that of a pro-natalist country but they were in Sweden put there not for pro-natalist reasons but to improve conditions for women.

Since then as in England the birth rate has fallen back somewhat. There has been a continued decline in marriage with reduced parity progression among single parents. But the Swedish TFR at 1.85 in 2019(1.9 in 2018) is still higher than the English at 1.66 in 2019 (1.7 in 2018).

With a successful economy Sweden has attracted large numbers of immigrants. It is said that it is not the immigrants who are contributing disproportionately to the abortion rate but they are contributing a significant share of the birth rate. The increase in the birth rate shown in Figure 5 in the early years of this century reflects the contribution of immigrants. The precise contribution of immigrants to the Swedish birth rate is variously stated. One web site (www.forbes.com) reports “As of 2018, the total fertility rate in Sweden was 1.76 children per woman. Among native-born Swedes, it was even lower, at 1.67. “ The TFRs quoted here seem to differ from the published official rates. The official Swedish government web site (www.scb.se) says

“During the 1970s, more than 10 percent of the newborn children had a foreign born mother. The proportion has increased and, in 2019, 31 percent of the newborn had a mother born in a country other than Sweden.”

Despite having very good benefits for parents and extensive provision of child care facilities to enable women to combine motherhood with working careers and a sizable immigrant population with a higher birth rate than native born Swedes, the Swedish birth rate remains below replacement level.

Besides the lower birth rate the more intense Swedish programmes of sex education has brought more couples into a life style of unstable relationships with adverse implications for parenting. There are also increased tensions reported in Sweden with respect to immigrant communities.

Chapter 4. Decline in Marriage linked to the Birth Rate

Within marriage abortion rates are much lower and live birth rates much higher. The modern decline in marriage is intimately associated with the modern decline in fertility and the high modern abortion rate.

Parity progression, whereby first born children are followed by later born siblings, is less among single mothers. Some of the difference between the very low fertility in Scotland and the English birth rate is explicable by reference to a greater decline in marriage in Scotland. Whereas the birth rate for first born children to nulliparous women is similar in Scotland and England, parity progression is less in Scotland. And a like observation can be made comparing Wales and England when the lower Welsh birth rate is analysed.

Chapter 5. The Law and Government Policy in the UK: Reproductive Health, Family related Taxes and Benefits

In the 1970s, there took place what might be called a first demographic transition that featured a decline in the birth rate and an increase in the abortion rate following the 1967 Abortion Act and the government promotion of contraception in the 1970s. The legally induced abortions and the new hormonal contraceptives became freely available through our much respected National Health Service.

There followed then what might be called a second demographic transition from the 1980s, and continuing today, that features a decline in marriage. The decline in marriage in its turn is conducive to a further lowering of the birth rate and sustaining a continuing high level of abortions. Indeed we are still seeing a year on year increase in abortions reported by the abortion providing clinics and hospitals notwithstanding the more intensive use of morning-after pills and do-it-yourself abortions, which are not counted by the Department of Health's Abortion Statistics.

Government tax and benefit regimes also have influence on family formation. Whereas the policy of New Labour New Britain implemented by the governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown was fairly generous to large families, the recently introduced Universal Credit is much harsher for large families who are severely impacted by a benefit cap. Noting this makes the most recent drop in the UK birth rate more explicable.

When as now most children are born outside wedlock, and for purposes of claiming benefits women with children find they do better claiming as single parents the marriage prospects of poorer women who are mothers become more remote. The decline in marriage is especially pronounced among the lower socio-economic groups

Immigrant groups, especially Moslems, have exhibited here both higher birth rates and higher abortion rates than the older

established British population. Stricter control of immigration has been promised by the government implementing Brexit. Immigrants are now subject to requirements to maintain a high income to gain admission to the country and also to remain here. They are required not to claim benefits in many cases. Immigrants, with right of abode, with large families can now claim less in benefits when a cap applies in the new Universal Credit system of family support.

The UK, where contraceptives are dispensed free of prescription charges, may be contrasted with the USA in respect government funding for fertility control. American birthrates have been higher than European birth rates in this epoch. The American tradition of earlier marriage and larger families than in Europe is still manifest in today's population statistics, even when the age of marriage and the age of childbearing has risen everywhere. Health care in America is largely provided by employer based insurance schemes that do not necessarily pay for abortions or contraceptives.

Chapter 6. Russia, The Soviet Union and other communist countries in Europe post World War II.

Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Casti Connubii* [8] said in 1930 under the Heading, *Vices Opposed to Christian Marriage*, "First consideration is due to the offspring..." This encyclical is often said to be a response to the Anglican Lambeth conference a few months earlier in 1930, at which the Church of England changed its stance to permit more forms of birth control.[9] But it can also be seen as a response to the radical events in communist Russia where Lenin's government had in 1918 and the 1920s come near to abolishing marriage as a bourgeois institution. Divorce was easily available and even marriage registration was neglected. There were then many orphan children in Russia that were lacking care. Abortions were legalised in 1920 in Russia and free for all women and Russia is said to be the first country in the world to have legalised abortion.

After Lenin's death in 1924, the Russian government changed. Stalin came to power and is now regarded as a cruel dictator who sent many people to their deaths. But Stalin, who got his higher education in a seminary in Georgia, radically reversed Lenin's family policy reverting Russia to a policy that can be recognised as rather more Christian. This is now castigated as pro-natalist.

Stalin's law was pro-family. "The "withering-away" doctrine, once central to socialist understand of the family, law, and the state, was anathematized." "Women were to combine work and motherhood."

The communists had struggled to arrive at a policy on the family. Stalin introduced a new code in 1936. This 1936 code was no hollow gesture. Under Stalin's oversight the Russian press actively promoted the family and his police force was active in enforcement. For the first time, the code outlawed abortion and imposed fines and jail time for any that received or performed the service. The code also enacted laws aimed to encourage pregnancy and child birth. Insurance stipends, pregnancy leave, job security, light duty, child care services and payments for large families. In the late 1930s the Russian birth rate exceeded a TFR of 3, much higher than the birth rate in Russia in the early 1930s. [8] There followed a decline in World War II.

In another significant move, the code made it more difficult to obtain a divorce. Under the code, both parties would need to be present for a divorce and pay a fine. There could be harsh penalties for those who failed to pay alimony and child-support payments.

Today Stalin's ban on abortion is not viewed favourably. The prevailing view is that it was detrimental to the health of women. Today's historians of the subject focus on the significant numbers of women who attempted self-induced abortions in Stalin's day and then required hospital treatment.

Whereas Putin in Russia today is following Stalin with quite substantial benefits to assist women as new mothers and encourage more children, there is not yet any restriction on abortion. Abortion continues to be freely available together now with modern contraceptives.

Figure 6

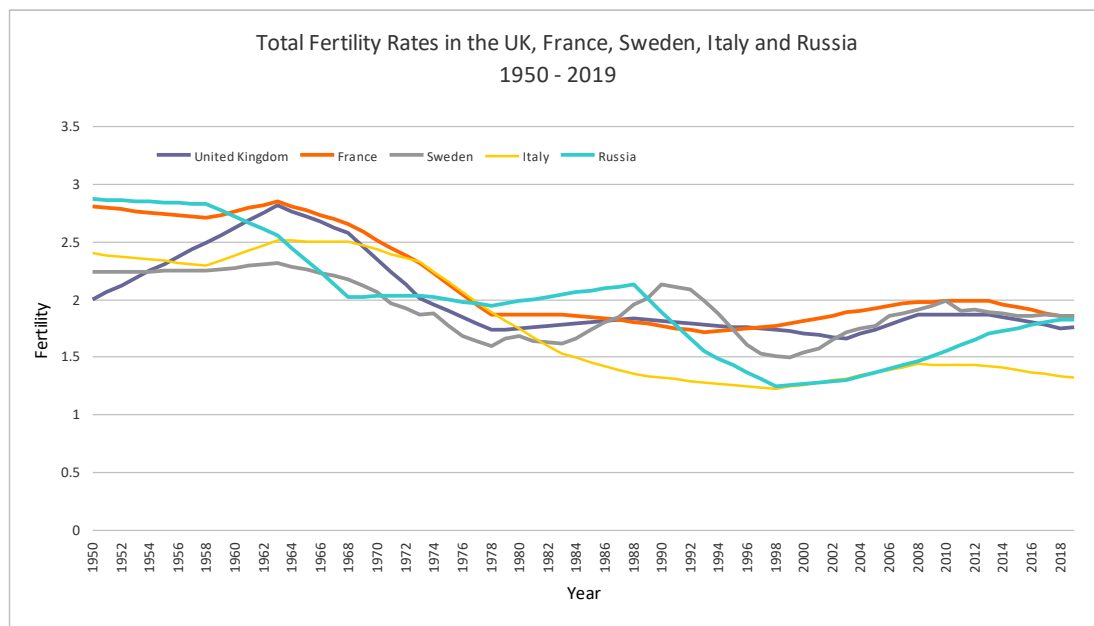


Figure 6 shows the trend in the birth rate in Russia compared with the trend over the same epoch since 1960 in the UK, France, Sweden and Italy. It is to be noted is that estimates of Russian TFRs vary. Conditions in Russia were at times very disturbed over this epoch with world wars, civil wars and the Russian revolution, there was neglect of registration of births and birth statistics. The birth rate in Russia fluctuated over this time period from being near the higher end of the European range to the lower.

But for Russia the decline in the birth rate at the end of the communist era in the 1990s is clear. The incentives in the old pro-natalist regime lost their value.

Putin's new post-communist government recognised the threat posed by a very low birth rate and introduced new family support measures. The new incentives have led to a limited recovery in the Russian birth rate from the low point at 1998. One web site reports "As of 2018, the total *fertility rate* (TFR) across *Russia* was estimated to be 1.58 born per woman, one of the lowest *fertility rates* in the world, below the replacement *rate* of 2.1, and considerably below the high of 7.44 children born per woman in 1908." In fact however a TFR of 1.58 is rather higher than the European average TFR.

Besides having a low birth rate, Russia experienced significant emigration in the 1990s. Many Russian Jews took the opportunity to move to Israel and elsewhere, depleting the population. There has since been more awareness in Russia that the decline in the population is seriously concerning. In 2006, Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) directed his nation's parliament to develop a plan to reduce the country's falling birthrate. In a speech to parliament on May 10, 2006, Putin called the problem of Russia's dramatically declining population, "The most acute problem of contemporary Russia." The president called on parliament to provide incentives for couples to have a second child to increase the birth rate in order to stop the country's plummeting population.

In Russia today there has been some political will in Putin's era to take effective action required to restore the birth rate. There has been some recovery of the birth rate since 2000, when the TFR was very low at 1.25. A TFR of 1.76 in 2017 was near to that in England & Wales. Russia now seems to rank alongside the Northern European countries like England & Wales and France and Sweden that have low rather than very low birth rates. But since then it is estimated to have fallen in 2018 and to around 1.71 in 2019. This again serves to illustrate that financial incentives to reward parents can have a substantial but limited effect that diminishes over time. As in France and in other countries that have adopted a strongly pro-natalist programme to encourage larger families, the recovery

engendered stops some way short of replacement level. With the memory of Stalin's era still alive even Putin is reluctant to restrict abortions or the use of modern contraceptives.

After World War II, several newly communist countries in central and Eastern Europe, following in the path of Russia, liberalised their abortion laws around the 1950s and then, alarmed at their collapsed birthrate, adopted what were termed by western observers "pro-natalist" policies in the 1970s. These included cash incentives (such as in East Germany Kindergeld, Child Benefit) and cash benefits linked for parents to marital status (Ehekredit) as well as privileged access to housing as incentives and benefits to encourage marriage and family formation. These had some effect to bring about some increase in births. There was a time when the East German birth rate was higher than the West German. East German live births grew 35% from 182,000 in 1975 to 245,000 in 1980 while West German births increased 3,4% from 601,000 in 1975 to 621,000 in 1980.

With the end of communism in East Germany and German reunification, the old communist era East German family incentives lost their value and the birth rate in former East Germany fell to very low levels. The former West Germany had attracted many immigrants and post unification this increased further. Immigrants are now a larger sector of the population with a peak of arrivals of several million reached in 2015. Less well educated and more religious immigrants especially Moslems have larger families.

After reunification there was some concern at the low birth rate and evident population decline after a long sequence of years of low birth rates. Incentives were introduced such as generous tax allowances per child and housing related assistance for owner occupiers. Parental leave was improved and it was made easier to combine parenting and working careers. There was then some recovery in the German birth rate. In 2011 there were only 663,000 live births corresponding to a TFR of 1.36. Between 2006 and 2017 the TFR rose from 1.33 to 1.57. Undoubtedly immigrants have made an increased contribution to this recovery

but it is not clear exactly how many of German live births are to the parents of immigrants. 2018 saw a small further increase. But the latest number for the whole of Germany is 778,000 (less than and close to the total for East and West Germany in 1975) as live births in 2019 showed a drop of 1.2% from 2018. This equates to a TFR of 1.54 about 25% below replacement level fertility.

The government of Nicholas Ceaușescu, in Romania banned abortion in 1966. The Romanian TFR almost doubled from 1.90 in 1966 to 3.66 in 1967 before gradually declining to 2.60 in 1976. It was said there were many couples who would accept one more child but not accept two. Like Stalin, Ceaușescu is vilified and his ban on abortions is viewed with abhorrence.

Through the 1970s several of the central European communist countries achieved near replacement level or higher level fertility. For 1979 TFRs were reported for Hungary 2.01, Poland 2.25 and Czechoslovakia 2.27 with Romania at 2.51. It was said that the more generous financial incentives for parents in Czechoslovakia compared with Hungary explained the difference in the TFR.

Chapter 7. Asian countries: India, China, South Korea, Vietnam and Indonesia

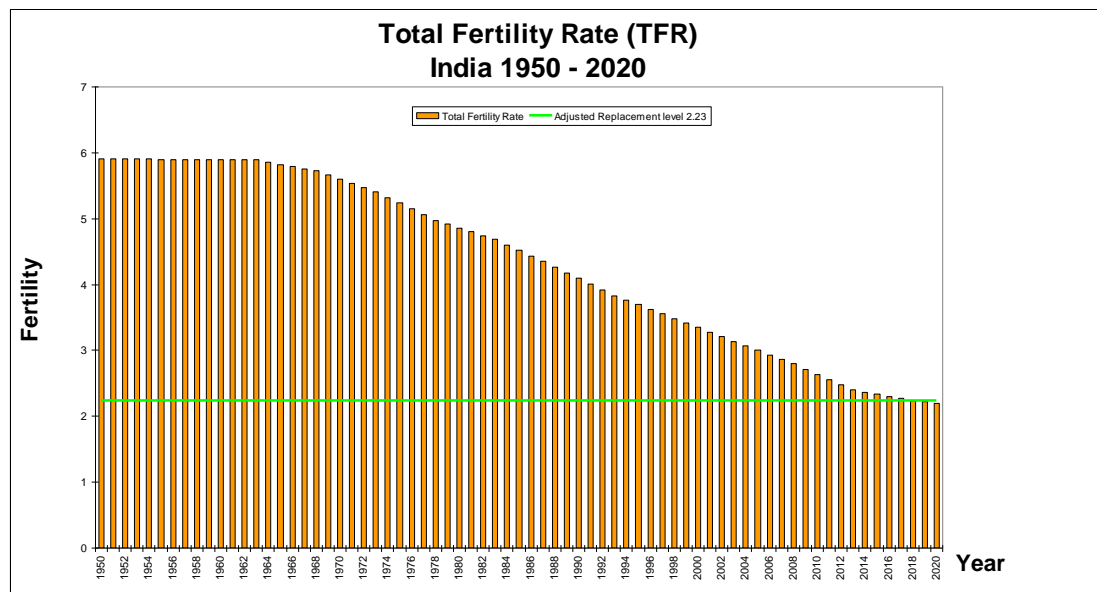
Most of the world's people live in Asia. India and China the two largest Asian countries, each with more than a billion in their population, are especially influential in determining world trends. Asian countries have been developing at spectacular speed so as to provide now strong indications as to how development impacts a country's demographic profile.

In several Asian countries there is encountered what demographers call "son preference". The gender ratio at birth

and for infants less than 1 year old is altered by selective abortions and by infanticide of baby girls. This affects the calculation of replacement level which is a function of the gender ratio at birth and the mortality of young girls before they reach child bearing ages.

India

Figure 6



Source for TFRs: World Bank web site with the TFRs for 2019 and 2020 estimated

In the 1970s and 1980s there was an extensive birth control campaign in India funded initially by private American foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller and then by international agencies.[10] In the USA Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon approved this and funded a large scale active programme of birth control in India aggressively promoted.[10]

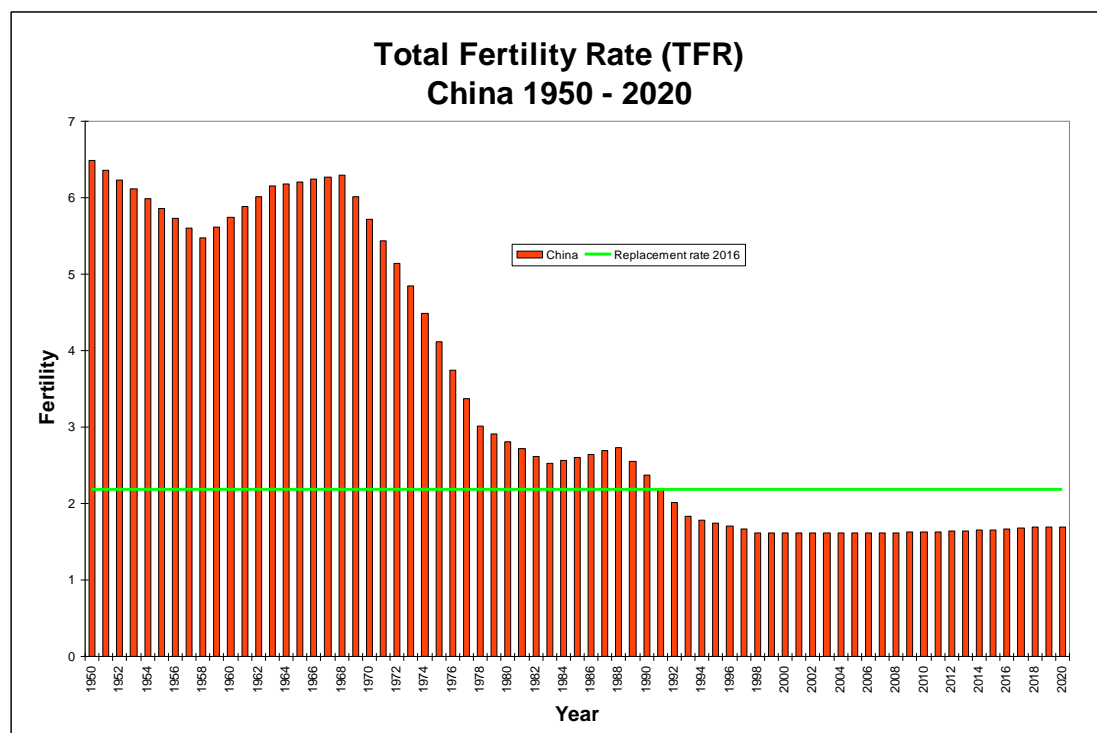
Figure 6 shows that the decline of the Indian birth rate in the 1970s and 1980s has continued to the present time. In recent years sex selective abortions have been facilitated by new digital scanning machines that show the sex of the fetus. The gender ratio at birth in India now reflects the large numbers of sex selective abortions. Using a gender ratio at birth of 111 boys to

100 girls, significantly higher than the 105 to 100 ratio in European and Western countries, reported for 2018 (*source: several web sites*) and WHO Life Tables for India to estimate survival of females to childbearing ages, a replacement level of 2.26 children per woman has been calculated. This is shown in Figure 6. The Indian birth rate has now fallen below this level.

It can be said then that, even in India, current fertility does not suffice to replace the existing population.

China

Figure 7.



Source for TFRs: World Bank web site with the TFRs for 2019 and 2020 estimated

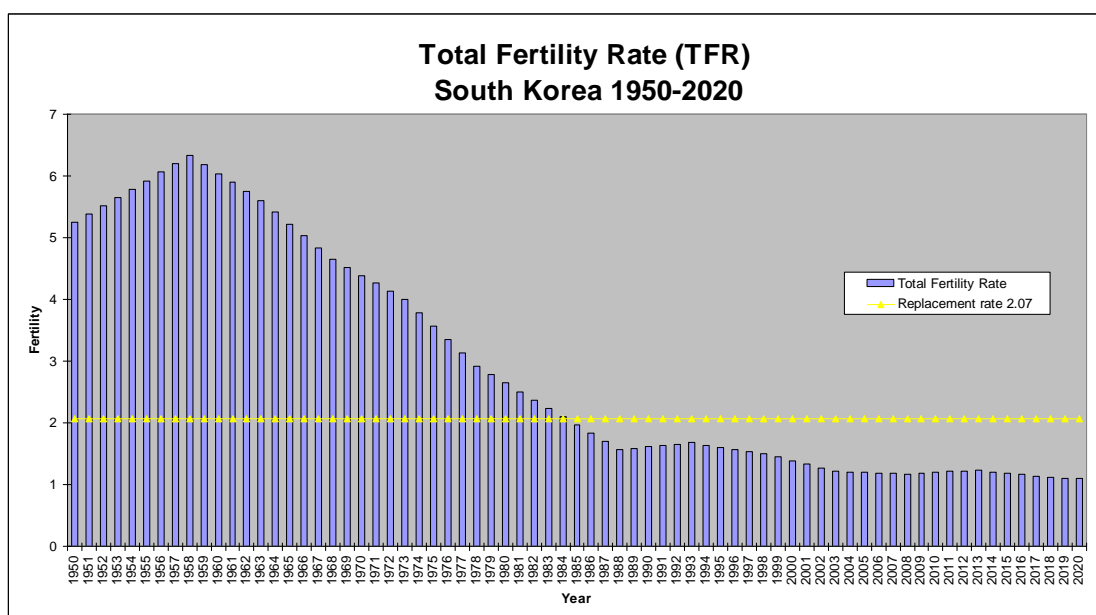
China is known for an especially drastic kind of neoMalthusian birth control – a 1 child policy that has been coercively enforced for a remarkably long time. In China the 1970s saw an even steeper decline in the birth rate than in India, as the 1 child policy took effect. This was coercively enforced and stepped up so there were reported to be 14 million abortions in 1983. A continued steep decline in the TFR followed until it stabilised around the year 2000 at around TFR 1.7/1.8 when there was some attenuation and regional variation in the way the 1 child policy was applied.

Sex selective abortions are also even more common in China than in India with a gender ratio at birth of 114 males to 100females reported on the web sites for 2018. Applying WHO Life Tables a replacement level of 2.18 is calculated and this is shown in Figure 7. A TFR of 1.7 reported for 2019 is 78% of this or 22% below this replacement level.

More recently the 1 child policy has been considerably attenuated but is not yet formally ended.

South Korea

Figure 8

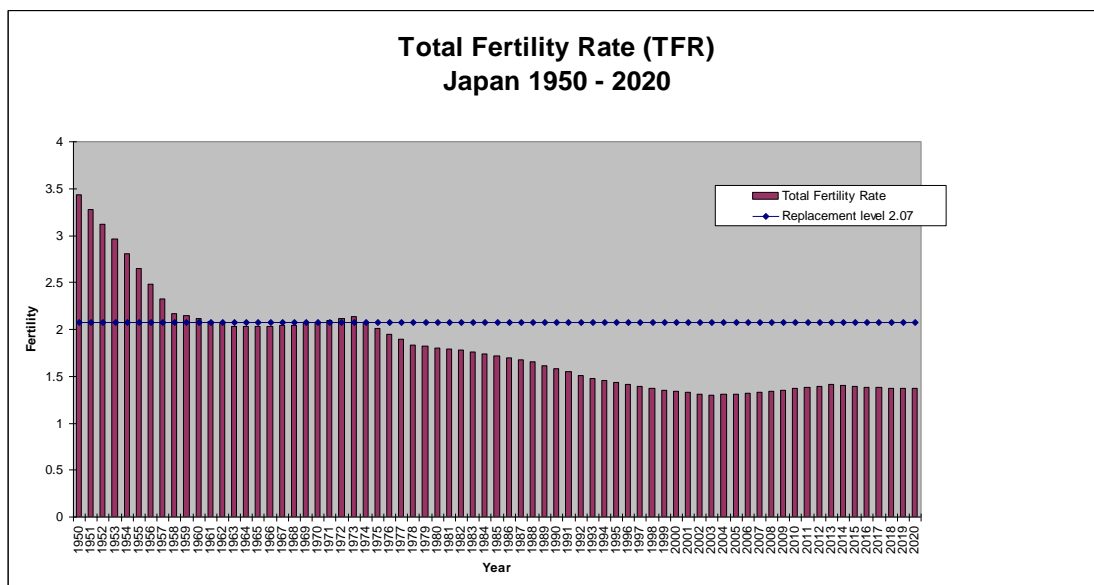


Source for TFRs: World Bank web site with the TFRs for 2019 and 2020 estimated

South Korea has come to have one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The gender ratio at birth is similar to that of European countries and so is mortality with the resulting replacement level close taken as the same as Europe. A Total Fertility Rate of 1.1 for 2019 is little more than half that required to achieve replacement at 2.07. Figure 8 shows the trend since 1950, the time of the Korean war. The post war baby boom peaked in 1958. Since then very rapid industrialisation and development made a high standard of living attainable for Korean women who choose not to have children.

Japan

Figure 9



Source for TFRs: World Bank web site with the TFRs for 2019 and 2020 estimated

Japan industrialised before other Asian countries. Following the post- World War II baby boom the birth rate fell in the 1960s as shown in Figure 9. As in South Korea there little evidence of son preference leading to a gender imbalance and affecting replacement level. For 2015, 106 male live births were reported for 100 female in Japan (*web site*)

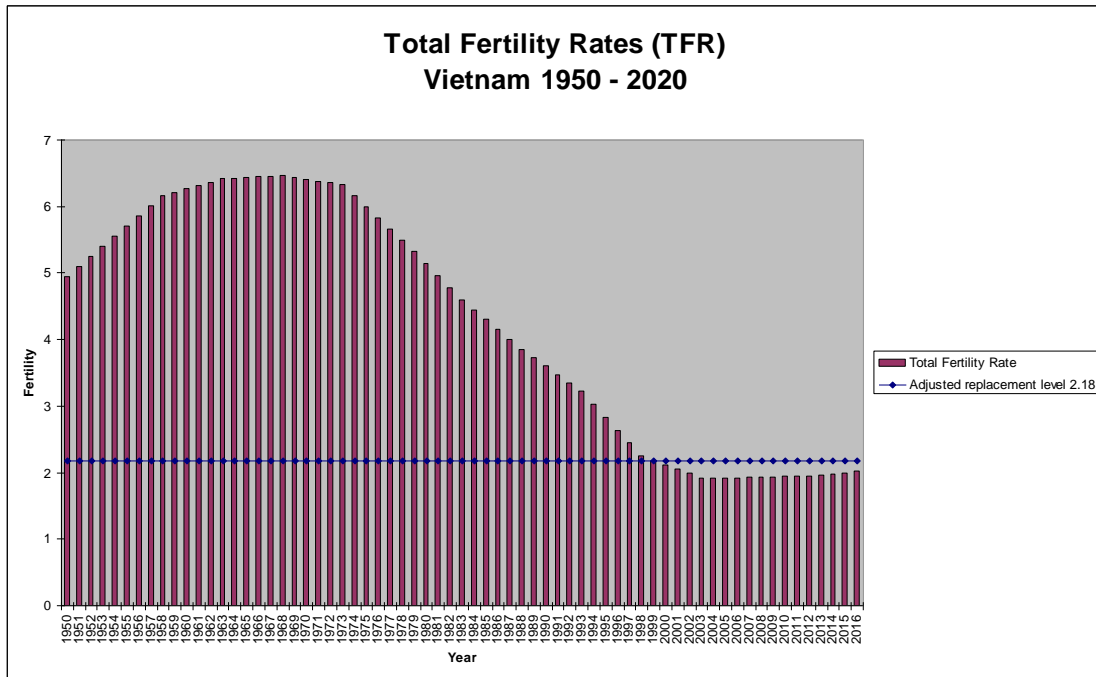
<https://knoema.com/atlas/Japan/topics/Demographics>), similar to Europe. And Japanese mortality among young girls is also good by European standards. For Japan the same replacement level is assumed as for European countries. Since the 1970s Japan's birth rate has been below this replacement level. Japan has had a low birth rate for so long that the population has been visibly ageing and shrinking in the absence of the kind of large scale immigration that has been supporting populations in Europe and there is now recognition in Japan of the adverse impact this is having.

As a country in Asia that has been industrialised for a long time, Japan shows how a low birth rate becomes endemic in an Asian culture. Dwelling in small flats in large cities the Japanese are accustomed to a high standard of living in circumstances that are not conducive to having many children.

Vietnam

Vietnam has been developing rapidly in recent years along similar lines to China. In both countries the communist party leads in a one party state that is now adapted to compete economically in a world market economy. There is some son preference apparent in the gender ratio data for Vietnam (1.12 to 1 male to female ratio at birth in 2018 *World Bank web site*). Allowing for this and mortality for females as in the WHO Life Tables, a replacement level of 2.18 is calculated as shown in Figure 10. Vietnam has not had a one child policy as in China but there has been a similar decline in the birth rate since the 1970s and stabilising this century, that is now running below this replacement level as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10

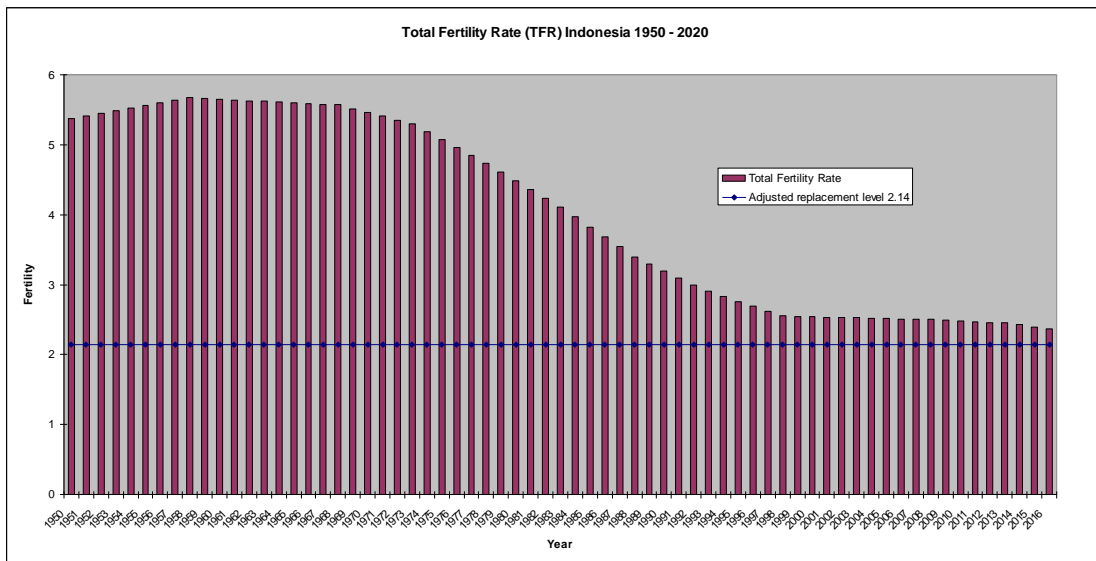


Source for TFRs: World Bank web site with the TFRs for 2019 and 2020 estimated

As shown in Figure 10, the Vietnamese birth rate is now running at around 2 children per woman.

Indonesia

Figure 11.



Source for TFRs: World Bank web site with the TFRs for 2019 and 2020 estimated

Indonesia is an Asian country and also the world's largest Moslem country by size of population. It was prominent as a leading Third World country in the 1960s and 1970s but was more resistant to the agencies then promoting birth control. There is no son preference apparent in the gender ratio at birth for Indonesia (1.05 to 1 male to female ratio, as in Europe *World Bank web site*). With slightly higher female mortality for girls and young women, the computed replacement level for Indonesia is 2.14, slightly higher than in Europe, as shown in Figure 10. The Indonesian birth rate has fallen since the 1970s like that of Vietnam but still remains above the computed replacement level.

Chapter 8. Relevance of Housing, Housing finance, Housing taxes and provision of social housing to family formation and the birth rate.

Experience in the communist epoch in Europe illustrates the relevance of housing to family formation. Housing was predominantly publicly owned. Young couples could marry, receive allocation of a flat and have a child. But having further children did not bring allocation of a larger flat. There came to be what was called an abortion culture whereby married women would have successive abortions. With rising living standards, ever larger incentives became necessary to persuade couples to have more than one child.

In Russia today the continuing predominance of housing in blocks of flats, not conducive to large families is hampering attempts to bring about a recovery in the Russian birthrate in the context of modern living standards.

The UK, where owner occupation is much more the norm, also illustrates the importance of housing in family formation. Here we are blessed with a relatively good supply of family type housing. Through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s the French and British birth rates were closely aligned and tracked what was obviously the same trend. It seemed the much greater incentives,

especially tax reliefs and universal benefits, provided in France to encourage large families were exactly offset by the better British provision of family friendly housing. In the UK in this epoch owner occupiers in the UK did benefit from mortgage interest relief. And in the UK, before the right-to-buy scheme took effect to reduce the supply of family type council housing for lower income families, it was possible for council tenants with larger families to be allocated a larger house.

In the USA, where there are no tax reliefs for parents or child benefits, some assistance is provided to young families by mortgage interest relief. There are also specialist federal housing finance corporations that guarantee and deal in mortgages so that family type housing and the necessary means of financing house purchase is accessible to most Americans. This is a contributing factor maintaining the American birth rate at a level higher than the European average birth rate.

Chapter 8. Family Policy: Taxes, Tax Reliefs and Benefits: Universal, Insured or Contributory and Means Tested or Discretionary Benefits.

Financial Assistance to parents by governments can be by way of tax reliefs, whereby income subject to income tax is reduced per child, which was the practice in the UK one time but not in recent years. Most countries including the UK continue to pay to parents cash benefits such as UK Child Benefits that are universal and paid in the UK to all residents, not only to income tax payers. The UK Child Benefits are now comparatively small by international standards and not increased for larger families. Weekly payments in 2020-21 for an eldest child is £21.05 and for other children £13.95. But in the UK there is also Working Tax Credit, paid to parents on low incomes, that is much higher with a Basic element of £3,040 per annum. Parents on low incomes can also claim childcare costs.

The effect of this current system in the UK is to provide substantial support for single parents with one income and to provide much less support for married parents earning normal salaries. There can be no doubt that this has contributed to the decline in marriage and to the birth rate within marriage and the increase in children born out side wedlock and the numbers of children in single parent families. In this context the prospect of a substantial recovery in the national birth rate has become more remote.

Successive changes to the support given to families through the UK tax and benefit systems can be seen as increasingly to discourage both men and women from marriage and having larger families since the mid-20th century. . After World War II and the publication of the [Beveridge Report](#), the [Family Allowances Act 1945](#) was passed. This provided for a five shilling per week payment for each child, after the first. This was overly designed to support large families. In contrast the new Universal Credit system now being rolled out nationally discriminates against large families by imposing a benefits cap In the 1970s a Labour Government abolished Child Tax allowances effectively confining support for families to Child Benefit and Income Support (means tested). This was in response to feminist demands that payments be made to women directly in cash rather to their husbands' bank accounts as when child tax allowances took effect. These changes made marriage and fatherhood especially less attractive to men And single parents, usually women, were also discouraged from marriage as they could claim more of the means tested benefits than they could if their incomes was aggregated with a husband's.

Indeed low income families, where parents are married, have an incentive to divorce so as to claim more in benefits as single parents. It is difficult to estimate precisely how many have done this but no mistaking the decline in the proportion of adults married so they are now the minority.

Modern benefits with means testing can also discourage working. This is especially apparent, where the benefits system has some resemblance to that in the UK in Australia and where there has been concern at a low birth rate. There it is said “If you have a large family you are better off not working”. The more generous benefits, compared to the UK, in Australia intended to assist large families have this unintended consequence especially apparent.

The countries that now recognise a problem with low birth rates rely on benefits and tax allowances to support and encourage larger families. And as society develops and standards of living rise, these become increasingly expensive and have a diminishing effect with time.

Girls now often achieve better exam results than boys. Women are claiming now a larger share of employment and professional opportunities and the senior posts in large institutions. Ever larger incentives are required to divert women from lucrative careers to child bearing and child caring. In Italy where there has been very low fertility in recent years it is said there is a new mentality among the women. Some observers speak of a “contraceptive mentality” whereby traditional aspirations to marriage and a family no longer hold sway. In formerly communist Europe there was said to be an “abortion culture”. Cultures merged after the fall of communism in Europe. With the reunification of Germany an especially low birth rate was experienced in former East Germany.

Some formerly communist countries in Europe have introduced more restrictive laws on abortion in recent years, without much increase in the birth rate resulting. In Poland in the communist era fertility, with abortion easily accessible from the 1950s, did for some time exceed replacement level with a TFR 2.30 in 1976 and 2.25 in 1979 and then falling to 2.08 near replacement level in 1989. In 1990, a new non communist government, ended easy access to abortion though it was still permitted on grounds of difficult living conditions. The TFR in 1990 was

2.06 increasing slightly to 2.07 in 1991 but falling to 1.95 in 1992. Communist era family benefits lost their value in the post communist era, while modern contraceptives became more available and widely used. In 1993 the law was further strengthened removing the ground of living conditions as a reason for permission. Yet the birth rate continued to decline from TFR 1.87 in 1993 to TFR 1.81 in 1994. A low point of a TFR of 1.23 was reached in 2004 and most recently there has been some recovery to 1.46 in 2018, reflecting some improvements in family benefits. There is said to be a little enforcement of new laws restricting abortions and the same abortionist are still at work as in the communist era even after socially conservative Polish governments have promulgated restrictions on abortions. The reference to Living Conditions as criteria for justifying abortions in Poland points to the influence of housing in family formation.

Likewise in Hungary, where there has been especial concern at a low birth rate, substantial benefits to encourage larger families have assisted a recovery in the birth rate from a low of 1.23 in 2011 to 1.53 in 2017. (still way below replacement) The birth rate remains low and the population is in decline. The latest official update shows a continuation of the same trend . “The population of Hungary declined by 40,400 in 2019 as a result of 89,200 live births and 129,600 deaths during the year, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Tuesday. Hungary's population fell by 41,238 in 2018, when there were 89,807 live births and 131,045 deaths.” The government has seriously tried to encourage more children with a variety of financial and other aids but with meagre results.

In the communist era it was said that Czechoslovakia achieved a higher birth rate than Hungary from having more generous family benefits. Such a pattern seems to be persisting even today when Czechia is compared with Hungary in this respect. . From a low of 1.13 in 1999 the TFR in Czechia recovered to 1.63 in 2017.

As in Poland and Russia, in Czechia there is a predominance of apartments whereby young families live in blocks of flats. The scarcity of family friendly housing in European countries, while living standards and expectations continue to rise, adds to the difficulties in persuading couples to have more children today.

Modern birthrates have fallen across the world and the decline continues in recent years. In Chile the birth rate is reported as TFR 1.68 for 2017, down from 1.75 in 2015 and 1.71 in 2016. There were some changes to the abortion laws in 2017 which was a liberalisation of a long standing law against abortions and in 2018 the TFR was again lower at 1.65. Notwithstanding the long standing Chilean law against abortions the birth rate in Chile is quite similar to that in European countries. In 2018 in Chile the abortion law was again made more restrictive. The birth rate fell again to 1.63 in 2019.

Enforcement of Chilean laws on abortion remains obscure. In 1989 there was a much more restrictive law introduced but the birth rate continued its decline from 2.59 in 1989 to 2.58 in 1990 and to 2.37 in 1995 with the decline continuing in recent years, as already noted. In Chile as in Poland there has been an extended debate on abortion laws that is ideologically driven with traditionalists adhering to the notion of a married couple family, with a man and woman as parents and several children, and inherited Christian and Catholic Values pitched against secular socialists, feminists and sexual libertarians. But in the 21st century any resulting change in abortion laws has of itself now a much smaller effect than what Stalin and Ceaucescu achieved in the 20th century.

Across the world it is only in Africa that birth rates remain much above replacement level. The latest population projections showing forecasts for the world's population up to the mid 21st century are now much reduced.

The richer countries that can afford quite lavish assistance to allerger families with housing related tax reliefs and a variety of

incentives are seeing modest increases in their birth rates follow. Moves against contraception and abortion are not seen as vote winners. As in Mrs Thatcher's day when the government first promoted modern contraceptives it was said "People don't want to pay for other people's children." Tax penalties for the childless and unmarried are not in prospect.

Chapter 9. Modern Ideology

There is a continuing component of eugenic thinking, now covert, in modern ideology. If government support for contraception was curtailed or access to abortion limited, the wrong people would have children. Contraceptives are free of charge in the UK whereas prescription charges have been applied to medicines for the sick. Modern disapproval of teenage pregnancies implies likewise a disapproval of young mothers as a social class. The wrong people are having children. It is a reasonable conjecture that dislike of certain immigrant groups having larger families and claiming more in benefits has been a factor in the introduction of a benefits cap in Universal Credit.

Eugenicists pioneered birth control in a movement that took over the world in the 1960s and 1970s. It has been called the greatest social engineering project of our day [10]. Alongside this, the education of women and the advances they have made in claiming more professional and career opportunities have emerged as key drivers of the decline in fertility. But the births foregone in this way are hardly what the eugenicists had in mind. The educated and upwardly mobile women are the kind of role models that eugenicists might want to reproduce. In Russia and France and other European countries experience shows on the other hand that incentives to reward large families are taken up largely by the Moslem minorities. Demographers struggle if asked to suggest ways of bringing about a recovery in the birth rate. Asking when the moslem minority becomes majority is dismissed as "not a good question". Nor does achieving a moslem majority through modernisation of this kind align with

assumed objectives of the eugenicists that promoted birth control.

Perhaps the eugenicists can claim some limited success in the use of birth control to contain the population growth of Afro-Americans, a particular objective of the birth control pioneers. The 1960 Census reported 20.5 million non whites less that 13% of the total population of 158.8 million. The current estimate is that the black population alone is 13.4% of the current total population. This follows the much higher abortion rate among the black population. Abortion numbers in the USA are not known precisely but studies have reported over 40% of abortions are carried out on black women. With less prevalence of abortion the black American population would be much larger.

Modern ideology is also characterised by the decline in Christianity. Church attendance continues to decline in all the old established Christian churches. Church weddings have declined even more than other weddings. Other faiths now have more prominence on radio and television. The BBC and other broadcasters reflect the enhanced status of LGBTI persons. Fewer couples now embark on a traditional style Christian marriage with the intention of having several children.

When Moslems have large families this is noted with disapproval. But the Christian and Jewish Bible starts with an exhortation to procreate: Genesis 1:28 reads “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over... every living creature...”. Modern environmentalism, a salient component in modern ideology, has a different agenda to this. When there is discussion in the media of the low western birth rates and the challenge of our ageing population, the writers take consolation from possible benefits accruing to the environment from a sparser population.

Environmentalists, represent a strong vocal strand in modern ideology. They stand alongside neo-Malthusian economists in advocating birth control. Fewer people would consume less palm oil and then more tropical forest could be reserved for Orang Utangs. Global warming is attributed to humans burning fossil fuel and fewer people would burn less. Sir David Attenborough, renowned as environmentalist and conservationist, much respected, is quoted as saying “All environmental problems become easier to solve with fewer people, and harder to solve with ever more people.” [5] When environmentalism is now so well entrenched in our governments and increasingly prescribed in our laws we are constrained to follow a family policy that is more anti-natalist than pro-natalist.

Economists are influential in political discussions and are key advisers to governments. Neo Malthusian thinking, whereby birth control is seen as a key to economic advance, predominates among economists who advise governments when they are revising the tax and benefits systems that affect families. It is insisted that developing countries in receipt of economic aid implement birth control policies accept aid channelled through abortion providers such as Marie Stopes.

Birth control in all forms is seen as a remedy for poverty. In contrast Psalm 107(106):41 reads “he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes their families like flocks. The upright see it and are glad...” Modern day economists are not so glad to see poor couples have large families. Yet when forecasts are made of a country’s Gross National Product a standard method is to first project the population and then apply a multiple of anticipated economic output per head to determine the estimate of what the county’s economic output will be in future years. Demographic decline implies economic decline. One reason for complacency on the part of the political elite and their economic advisers in the face of low birth rates in the UK and the USA is that immigrants can always be admitted. That this provokes increasing resentment from those who suffer the adverse impact

of immigration is not recognised by economists as a reason to favour larger families. They insist immigration is good for the economy.....

Lack of Exit Strategy

Whereas the English speaking countries like the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia can open their doors to immigrants; net migration around the world is necessarily zero. Migration is no remedy for a low world wide birth rate. Birth rates in China are already far below replacement level and in India have been falling to near replacement level.

Recovery from a low birth rate is not a topic that attracts academic study. Great corporations and investment banks are not attracted to invest in this field. There are no special institutes to foster studies and there is nothing like the ILC International Longevity Centre which is a forum for discussion of the challenges and opportunities brought by longer life spans.

The components of an effective coordinated plan to bring about a recovery in the birth rate are not seen as vote winners in a modern democracy. This applies both to any discouragement of abortion or contraception, by imposing cost charges that would increase government revenue and save the cost of providing abortions and contraceptives on the National Health, and also to the increased financial aid to assist parents and larger families that is costly to the public purse. Tax penalties for the childless would not be seen as politically popular.

The most advanced and prosperous countries in the world now are in a similar but opposite fix to the legendary old woman: they have too few children and they don't know what to do.

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ANNEX

Christian theology on Fertility control, Abortion and Contraception in the Bible and in History

The Bible story of Onan (Genesis 38:8-10) is cited in the encyclical letter *Casti Connubii* [8] of Pope Pius XI by way of a quotation from St Augustine's *De coniugiis adulterinis*. [11] On adulterous unions. Chapter IV on Vices Opposed to Christian Marriage of this encyclical has "the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious.

Small wonder, therefore, if Holy Writ bears witness that the Divine Majesty regards with greatest detestation this horrible crime and at times has punished it with death. As St. Augustine notes, "Intercourse even with one's legitimate wife is unlawful and wicked where the conception of the offspring is prevented. Onan, the son of Juda, did this and the Lord killed him for it." [8,11]

St Augustine wrote this in a discussion at some length to a correspondent called Pollentius. [11] There seems to have been not much dissent from this interpretation of his of Genesis 38 until the mid 20th century. St Augustine then noted that the imperative to have children was less in his day than it was in the time of Onan. 'There then was a certain necessity for having children which does not exist now, because 'the time to embrace,' (2 Esdras 3:5) as it is written, was in those days, but now is 'the time to refrain from embracing.' Alluding to the present age, the Apostle says: 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remains that those who have wives be as if they had none.' (1Cor) [11]

In his 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* [13] Pope Paul VI reiterated the moral precepts of his predecessor in 1930. "We are obliged once more to declare that the direct interruption of

the generative process already begun and, above all, all direct abortion, even for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as lawful means of regulating the number of children.” [13]

The Lambeth Conference of 1920 (postponed to 1922) of bishops of the Anglican Communion resolved:

“We utter an emphatic warning against the use of unnatural means for the avoidance of conception, together with the grave dangers—physical, moral, and religious—thereby incurred, and against the evils with which the extension of such use threatens the race.

“In opposition to the teaching which in the name of science and religion encourages married people in the deliberate cultivation of sexual union as an end in itself, we steadfastly uphold what must always be regarded as the governing consideration of Christian marriage.” [14]

The 1930 Lambeth Conference modified this to state

“Where there is a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipleship and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles.

The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception-control for motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience” (Resolution 15) [14]. This has come to be interpreted as approval of all other methods.

There is little explicit reference to abortion in the Bible but “Thou shalt not kill” Ex 20:13 has often been applied to infer prohibition of abortion. The Septuagint classical Greek version of the Bible, the version used by St Paul and other New Testament writers, has in Exodus Chapter 21 vv22-25 “And if two men strive and smite a woman with child, and her child be born imperfectly formed, he shall be forced to pay a penalty; as the woman’s husband may lay upon him, he shall pay with a valuation. But if it be perfectly formed, he shall give life for life, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, strife for strife.” [12] Damage to a foetus was a serious offence.

