

# **The increase of definitive childlessness and the reduction of family size in Greece: A longitudinal cohort approach**

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## ***Abstract***

The postponement of births and the adoption of a more mature fertility calendar by women through the continuous increase in mean age at the birth of their first child was the main trend in the evolution of fertility in Europe, during the last three decades of the 20th century, with different starting points for each country. Incomplete attempts to replace these postponed births combined with changing social-cultural norms and values led to the dominance of the family with two children and the simultaneous increase in the rates of definitive childlessness and the percentage of women who had only one child at the end of their reproductive life.

The purpose of this paper is to describe these two emergent phenomena of fertility in Greece (increasing definitive childlessness, reducing family size) through cohort analysis. To achieve this goal the analysis performed by birth order, using fertility data of official registrations between 1960 and 2011, allowing us to calculate total cohort fertility rates by birth order for women born during 1935-1969. As derived from the analysis, the definitive childlessness rates significantly increase for women born after 1960 compared to those of previous generations, while parity progression ratios, in particular those relating to the birth of a third, fourth child or more already declining, for women born after 1950.

**Keywords:** *postponement of births, definitive childlessness, Total Cohort Fertility by birth order, parity progression ratios, Greece.*