

# A Historical Comparative Analysis of the Birth Rate Differences Between East and West Germany: Women's Employment, Maternity Subsidies and Childcare Institutions

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## Abstract

Many countries face the challenge of declining birth rate in their development. This study uses a comparative historical analysis to examine the effects of family policies on birth rate in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). We especially focused on the period around 1974 and analyzed the data of the two Germanies during their development. We explored three main aspects of family policies that influenced birth rate: women's employment policy, maternity subsidy policy, and child care policy. We found that: women's labor participation positively correlated with fertility choices, as it allowed them to choose to have children without sacrificing career prospects; sufficient childcare institutions lowered the cost of childbearing, thus also positively affecting fertility; and subsidies for essential goods that were linked to fertility behavior might also increase the willingness to have children. This will inspire future researchers to pay more attention to the unfriendliness of the market to women, and what measures governments can provide to counter this and ensure equality and sustainability within the family.

**Keywords:** Child care, Family policies, Fertility rate, The German Democratic Republic, Women's employment policy