

SF6: Share of births outside marriage and teenage births

Share of births outside marriage

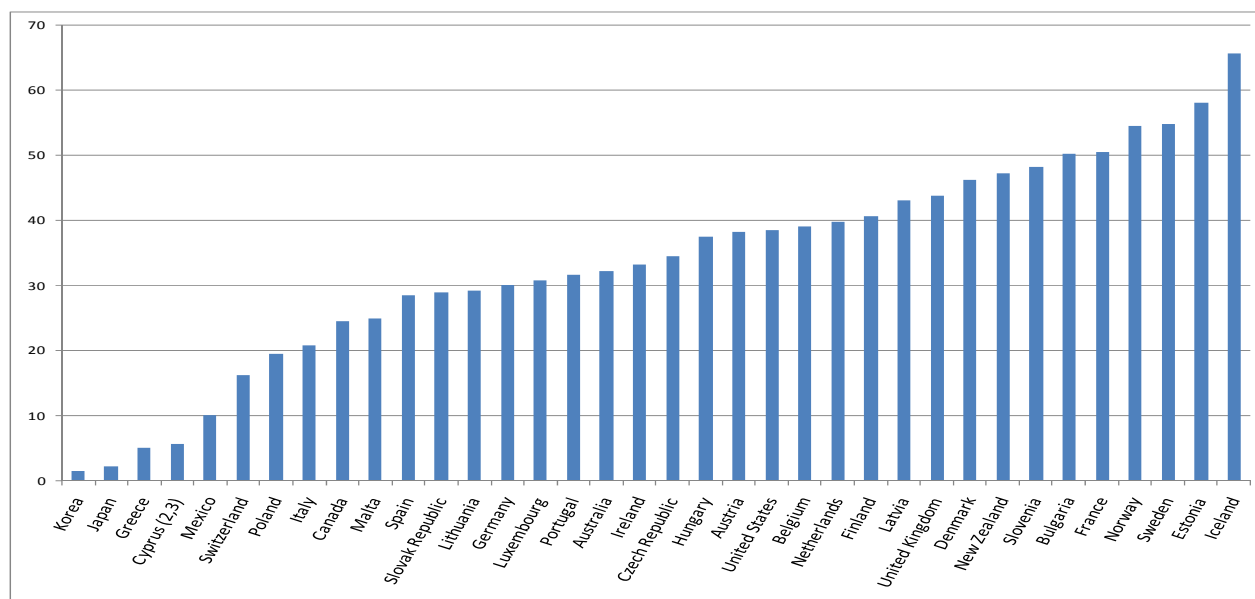
Definitions and methodology

Trends in fertility rates have often been accompanied by changes in the prevailing attitudes towards marriage, family formation and parenthood. In many, but by no means all, OECD countries, the number of parents who were not married at the time of birth of their first child has increased. The definition of marriage includes married couples and those who are living in a legally declared civil partnership; it does **not** include couples who are in “common-law” relationships or “de facto” relationships where by default adults in couples have legal obligations to each other similar to those under a “civil union” after a certain period of time (SF9). The proportion of births outside marriage is calculated as the percentage of all children born to parents who are not married (nor living in a legal partnership), occurring during that year.

Key findings

There are large differences across OECD countries in the proportion of children born outside of marriage: this proportion varies from less than 10% in Greece, Japan and Korea or Mexico to 50% or more in France and most Nordic countries (Chart SF6.1).

Chart SF6.1: Proportion of births outside marriage, 2007 or most recent¹



Countries are ranked in ascending order of the proportion of births out-of-wedlock in 2007.

1 Data refer to 1999 for Mexico; 2005 for Australia and Canada; and, 2006 for Iceland, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.

2 Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to “Cyprus” relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the “Cyprus issue”.

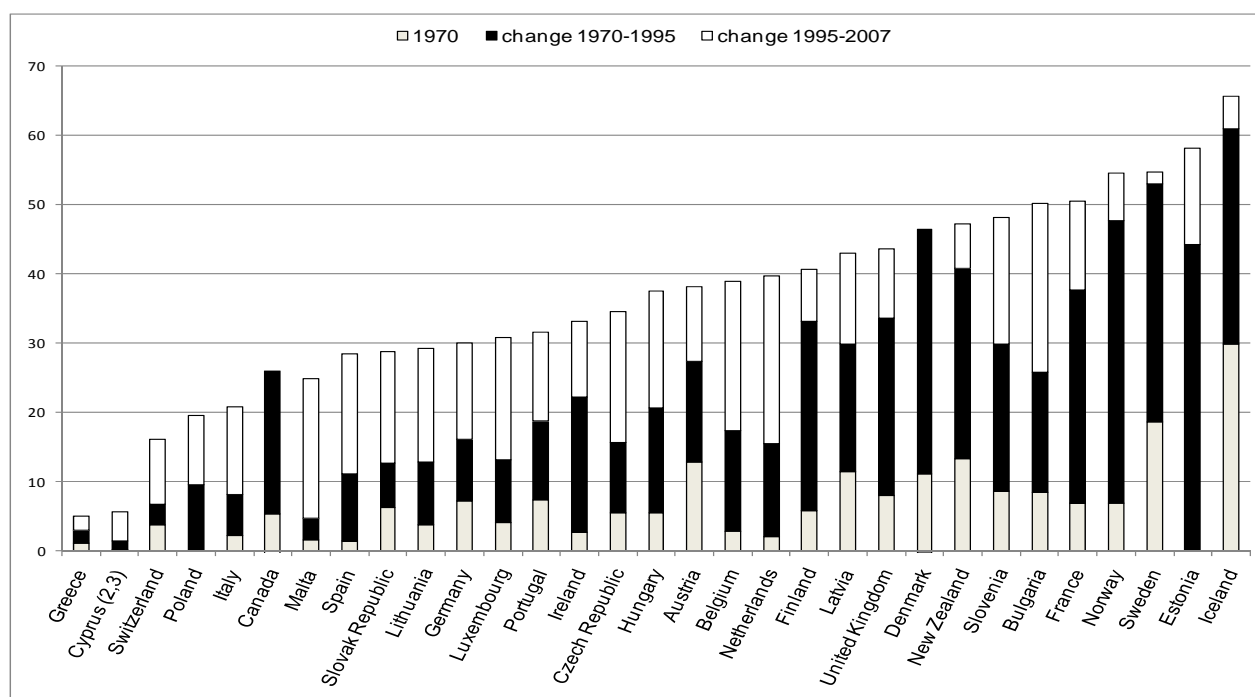
3 Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Sources: National Statistical Offices and Eurostat for EU countries.

Other relevant indicators: Family size and composition (SF1); Fertility rates (SF4); Mean age of mother at first childbirth (SF5); Childlessness (SF8); and, Marriage and divorce rates (SF9).

Chart SF6.2 shows that the proportion of extra-marital births in total births was quite low in all countries in 1970 (less than 1/3 of the total), but has increased significantly since. The increase was particularly pronounced from 1970 to the mid-1990s in Canada, France, Ireland, the Nordic European countries, New Zealand and the United Kingdom; in most Eastern European countries, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, and Spain, the increase was most significant after 1995.

Chart SF6.2: Changes in the proportion of out-of-wedlock births since the 1970s¹



Countries are ranked in ascending order of the proportion of births out-of-wedlock in 2007.

¹ Data refer to 2005 for Canada; and, 2006 for Iceland, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.

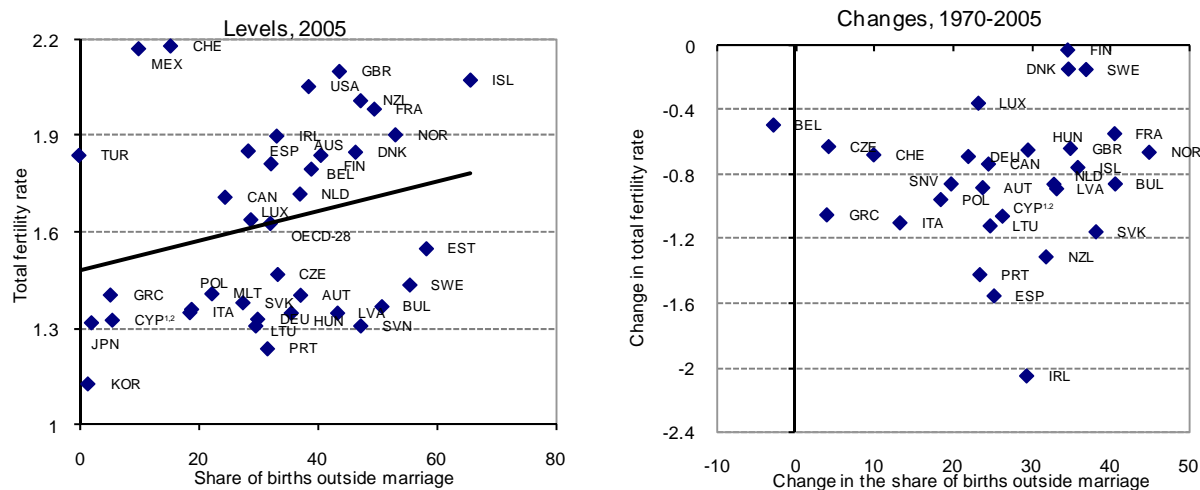
^{2, 3} see notes 2 and 3 to Chart SF6.1

Sources: National Statistical Offices and Eurostat Demographic Statistics for EU countries.

Chart SF6.3 illustrates the relationship between the share of births outside marriage and the total fertility rate. The left-hand panel presents the situation in 2005 whilst the right-hand panel looks at changes in both the share of births outside marriage and the total fertility rate over the period 1970 to 2005. In general, countries with higher fertility rates in 2005 also display higher share of out-of-wedlock births. However, both the proportions of out-of-wedlock births and fertility rates are low in countries like Japan or Korea where having children is still closely associated to being married. Consequently, cross-country variations are very large and the correlation coefficient between fertility and out-of-wedlock births is about 0.25 only.

There is no clear relationship between the increase in out-of wedlock births and changes in fertility (the relevant correlation coefficient is only about 0.09). Trends differ considerably across countries. For example, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden experienced a significant increase in out-of-wedlock births since 1970s with fertility rates changing little; in the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic trends in extra-marital births are comparable, but fertility decline significantly since 1970.

Chart SF6.3: Cross-country relationship between the share of births outside marriage and the fertility rate, 1970, 2005



1, 2 see notes 2 and 3 to Chart SF6.1

Sources: National Statistical Offices and Eurostat Demographic Statistics for EU countries.

Comparability and data issues

Data on marriage are based on administrative data sources and only include those couples who are living in a legally declared civil partnership or union. The children of co-habiting adults who have not entered a legal agreement on their partnership status (even though they have obtained a similar status upon expiration of a certain period of time in some countries, e.g. Australia and New Zealand) are classified here as being borne outside marriage or “out-of-wedlock”. The increase in the share of births outside marriage is largely due to the increase in couples co-habiting outside of a legally declared partnership (SF9).

Data on births are collected through administrative sources based upon head counts, while the marital or partnership status of parents should be recorded for all births. For comparability and data issues surrounding the total fertility rates presented in Figure SF6.3 please refer to indicator SF4.

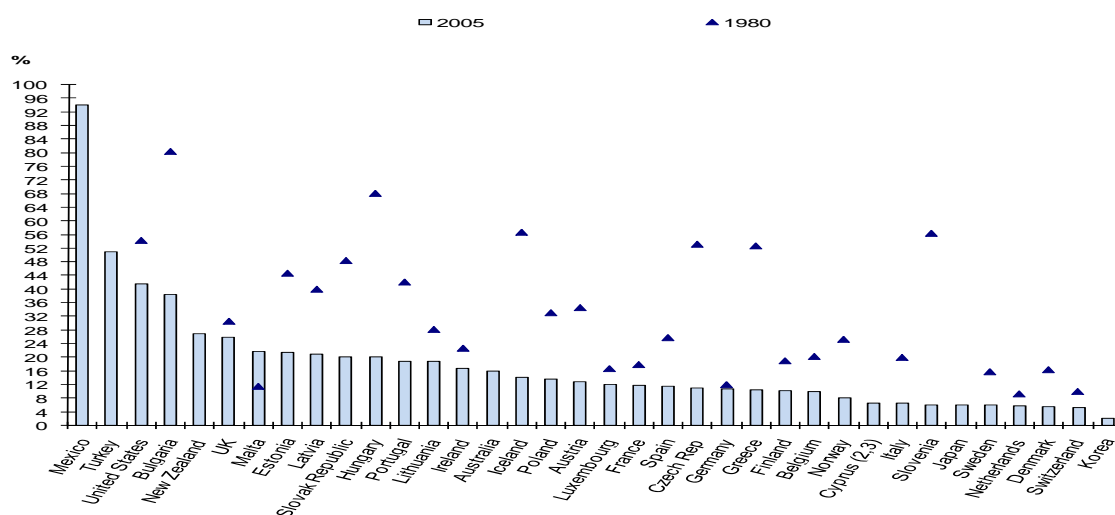
Teenage births

Definitions and methodology

Amongst other things, teenage births are an important indicator of future opportunities for women to pursue education and of career prospects. Young mothers are more likely to drop out of education, work in low-paid jobs and with long-term consequences on family welfare.

The *Adolescent Fertility Rate* or *Teenage Birth Rate* is defined as the number of children born alive to women aged 15-19 per 1000 women of this range of age. In all countries for which data is available the teenage birth rates have decreased over the last twenty five years. At over one-third of the female adolescent population, the rate is especially high in the United States, Turkey and Mexico.

Chart SF6.4: Adolescent fertility rates, 1980 and 2005¹



Countries are ranked in descending order of teenage births in 2005.

¹ Data refer to 2003 for New Zealand.

^{2, 3} see notes 2 and 3 to Chart SF6.1

Sources: Eurostat Demographic Data and United Nations Statistical Division.

Comparability and data issues

Data shown above only refer to the age-cohort of 15 to 19 years and children being borne to those not yet 15 are not captured here. Data are collected from administrative sources and are based upon head counts, so provide an accurate cross-country comparison over time.

Sources and further reading: Calot G., Sardon J.P. (2003), *Methodology for the calculation of Eurostat's demographic indicators*, Population and social conditions 3/2003/F/no 26, Eurostat, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-CC-04-004/EN/KS-CC-04-004-EN.PDF; D'Addio, A.C and M. Mira d'Ercole (2005), "Trends and Determinants of Fertility Rates in OECD Countries: the Role of Policies", OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper, No. 27, Paris; OECD (2009), *Society at a Glance*, Paris; Kamerman S., Neuman M., Waldfogel J., Brooks-Gunn J. (2003), "Social Policies, Family Types, and Child Outcomes in Selected OECD Countries", Social, Employment, and Migration Working Papers no. 6. OECD, Paris.