

Different cohorts means different meaning of parenthood? The case of Portugal.

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In 1984 Lídia was born somewhere in Portugal, and in that year were born, on average, 1.9 children per woman. Portugal was still 2 years far from the E.E.C., 18 years far from the EURO. Lídia's mother, the youngest of seven brothers and sisters, was born in 1965, ten years before the end of the dictatorial regime, and in a year with an average of 2.25 children per woman. The women born in the 1965 cohort had low educational attainment, but already high employment rates. Later in 1989 when Lídia arrived to the school her class had 25 students, from that group only 5 of them, including her, remained today without any siblings. Also from these 25 students in the classroom and born in the cohort of 1984, 10 have a university degree and 3 have today at least one child.

What changed between cohorts that diminish the number of births? Is Portugal a particular situation, is only a transitory moment of postponement, or is a logical consequence from the socio and economical context? Does the fertility decline result of changes in the parenthood definition? Is important to recognize that fertility decline is possible cause-effects between the deep impact of massive education, high female labour market participation and a redefinition of parenthood. The objective of this study is to investigate and explain the transitions to motherhood as well as transitions to the second birth, providing new insights between period and cohort fertility, parenthood, educational attainment and labour market participation.

