

## Outline

Views differ on how migration affects the timing of childbearing. Migration has long been considered a break in the life course which hinders family formation. This view has been challenged recently as new findings indicate an acceleration of childbearing shortly after migration (see below). Examining the childbearing behaviour of Polish women, this study extends previous research by combining information from the origin and destination country. Using retrospective data from Poland (derived from the European Social Survey) and Britain (derived from the Labour Force Survey), discrete-time event history methods are applied to study the transition to first child in relation to the timing of migration. An increased probability of a first child for migrants compared with non-migrants is revealed.

## Motivation

Studies that examine the childbearing behaviour of migrants are rare, because there is a lack of adequate data capturing the migration as well as the fertility process in the life course.

- To study migration from the life-course perspective, namely considering also the time prior migration, data from prior and after migration are necessary. Studies typically compare the fertility of migrants with that of natives in the country of destination, therefore they cannot separate the effect of living in a new country from the effect of the migration process itself.
- To identify the process of migration and its consequences, data from the origin and destination country are necessary.

## Analytic approach – How to study the childbearing behaviour after migration?

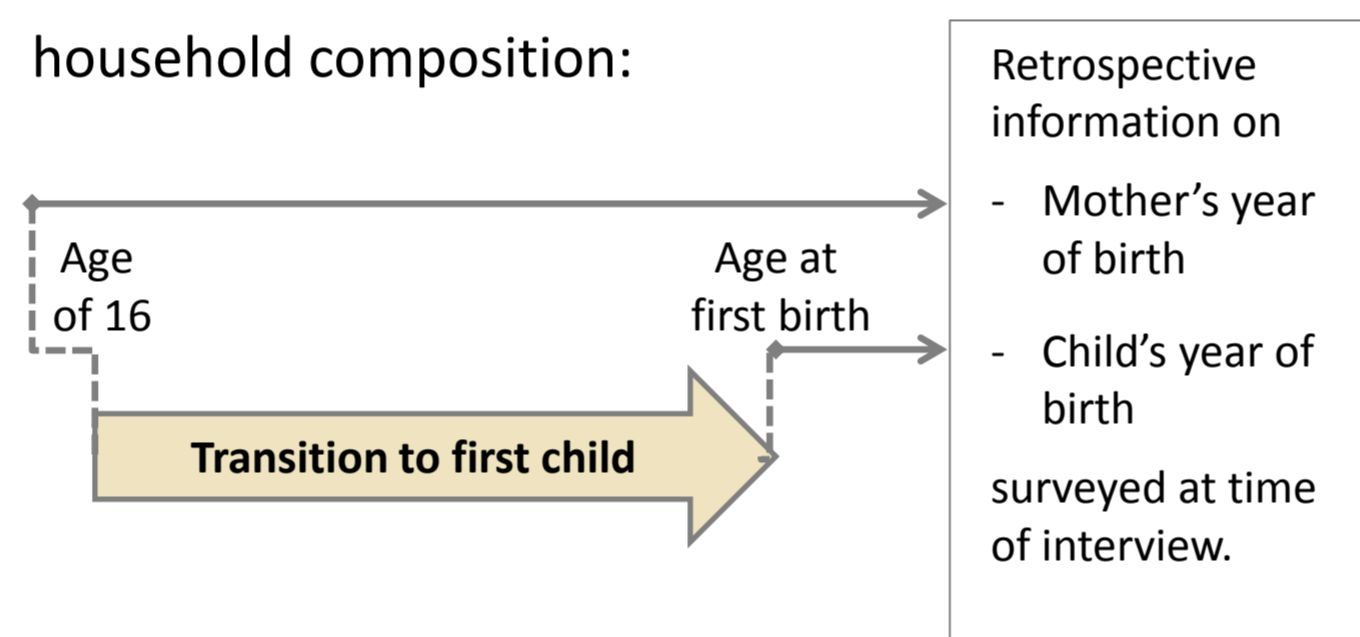
### Data from the origin and destination country

Combining two cross-sectional surveys which both contain comparable information on the household composition:

- The British **Labour Force Survey** (LFS; representing the country of destination, restricted to women born in Poland), and
- The Polish sample of the **European Social Survey** (ESS; representing the country of origin).

### Construction of the transition to first child

Defining the dependent process using dates of birth of mothers and children that are linked due to the household composition:



### Construction of the migration process

Setting up migration as time-varying process using retrospective information on the timing of arrival:

- Migrants** are represented by Polish born women interviewed in Britain (LFS). Before the time of arrival these women belong to the group of non-migrants.
- Non-migrants** are represented by Polish born women interviewed in Poland (ESS).

## Hypotheses

The **disruption hypothesis** postulates a temporarily postponement of childbearing during migration process. This impact of migration is assigned to spousal separation (Lindstrom & Saucedo, 2002) or to the acculturation to the new environment (Goldstein & Goldstein, 1981).

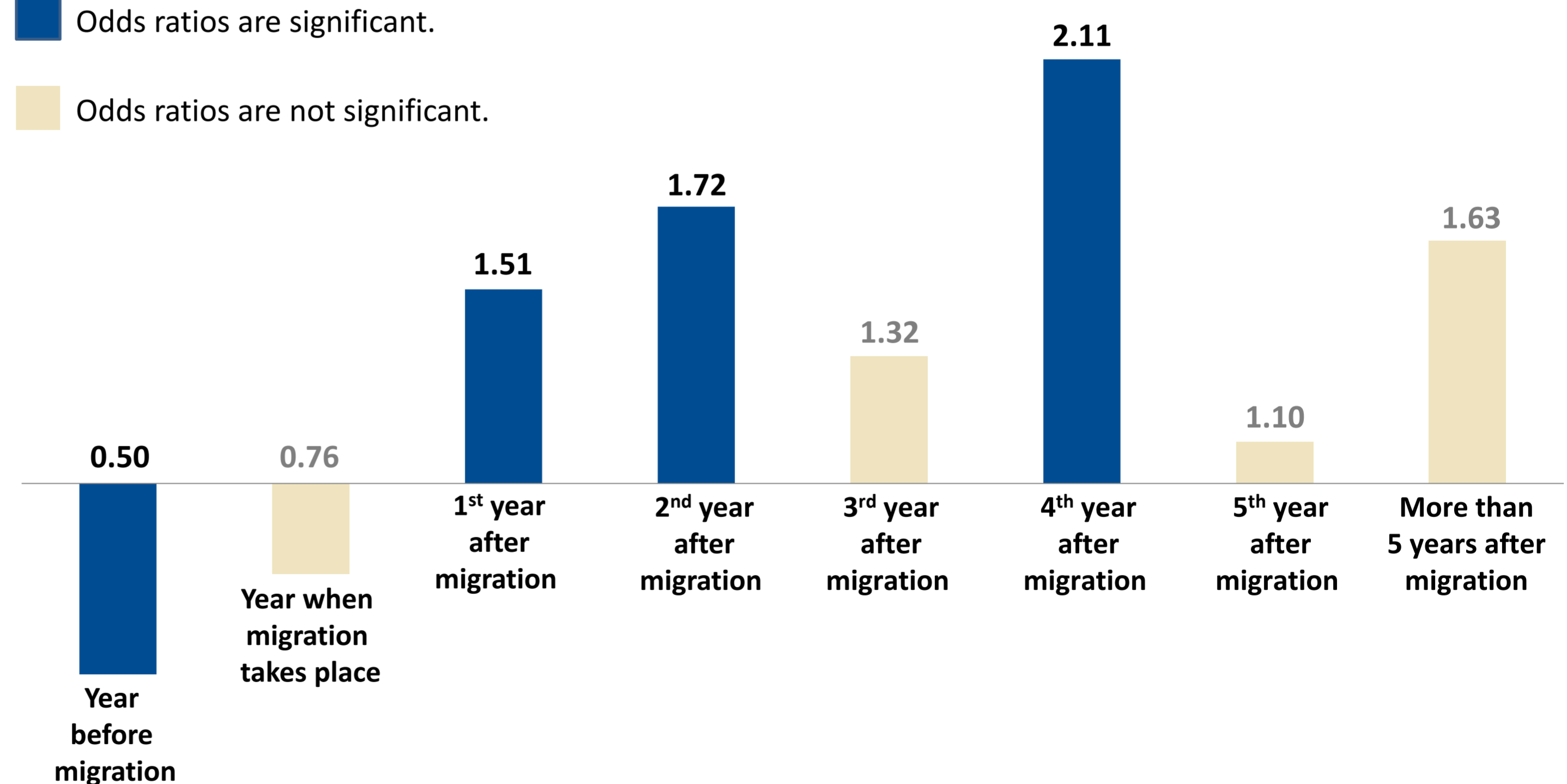
The **interrelation hypothesis** predicts an acceleration of childbearing after migration. Migration triggers an increased transition to first child (Andersson & Scott, 2005; Milewski, 2007). This may be due to the migration motivations or due to postponement of fertility in anticipation of the move.

Reference  
Andersson, G., & Scott, K. (2005). Labour-market status and first-time parenthood: The experience of immigrant women in Sweden, 1981–97. *Population Studies*, 59(1).  
Goldstein, S., & Goldstein, A. (1981). The Impact of Migration on Fertility: an 'Own Children' Analysis for Thailand. *Population Studies*, 35(2).  
Lindstrom, D. P., & Saucedo, S. G. (2002). The Short- and Long-Term Effects of U.S. Migration Experience on Mexican Women's Fertility. *Social Forces*, 80(4).  
Milewski, N. (2007). First child of immigrant workers and their descendants in West Germany: Interrelation of events, disruption, or adaption? *Demographic Research*, 17.

## Findings: Childbearing probabilities during the migration process

■ Odds ratios are significant.

■ Odds ratios are not significant.



Note: Result of a discrete-time logistic regression, model is further controlled for age, age squared, and data source. N = 1.580 Polish born women; non-migrants are the reference group.

Data: Pooled dataset of ESS 2008, 2010; LFS 2008 to 2011; own calculation.

## Conclusion

The study of the relationship between migration and childbearing among Polish women reveals an acceleration of childbearing after migration as predicted by the interrelation hypothesis. There is no postponement of childbearing after migration as the disruption hypothesis assumes. If there is any disruption it takes place before migration. Thus, a catching-up behaviour is a plausible explanation for the close interrelation of migration and childbearing in the life course.