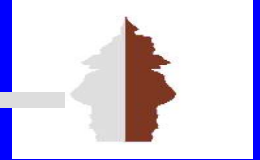


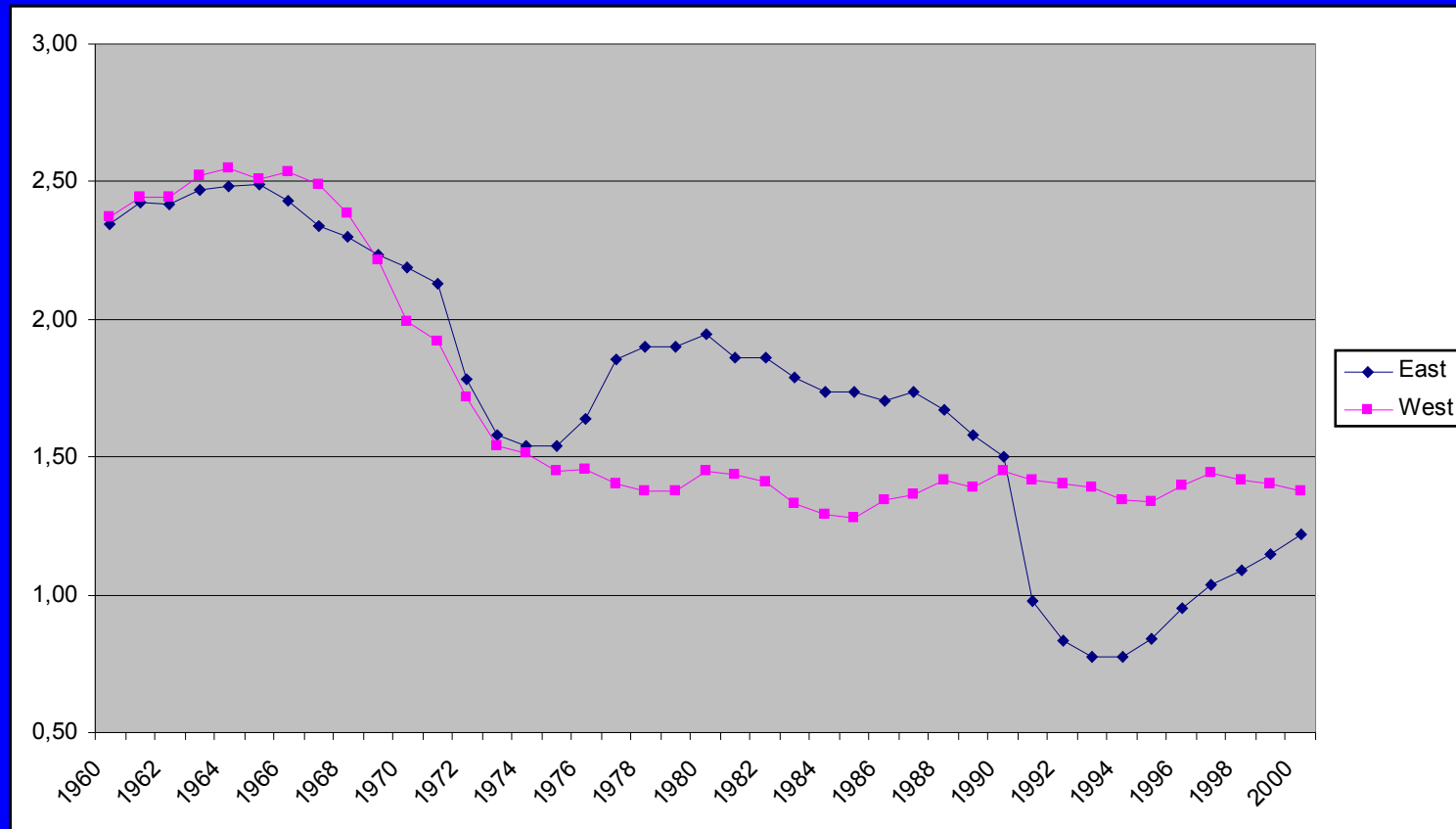
The postponement of changes of living arrangements in Eastern Germany

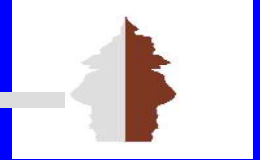
Gert Hullen, Federal Institute for Population
Research (BiB), Wiesbaden, Germany

36th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology,
July, 7-11, 2004, Beijing, China

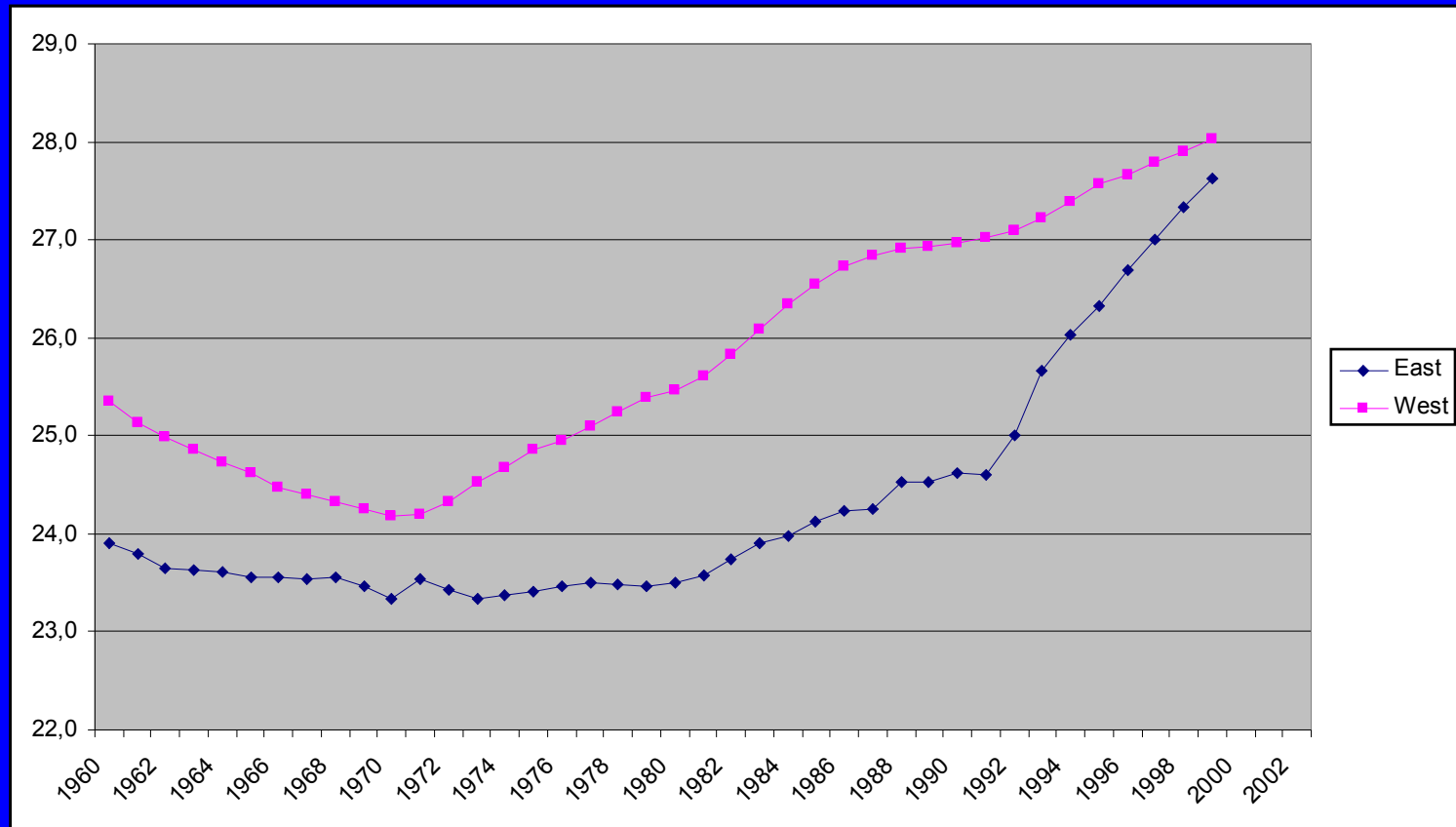


Total fertility rate



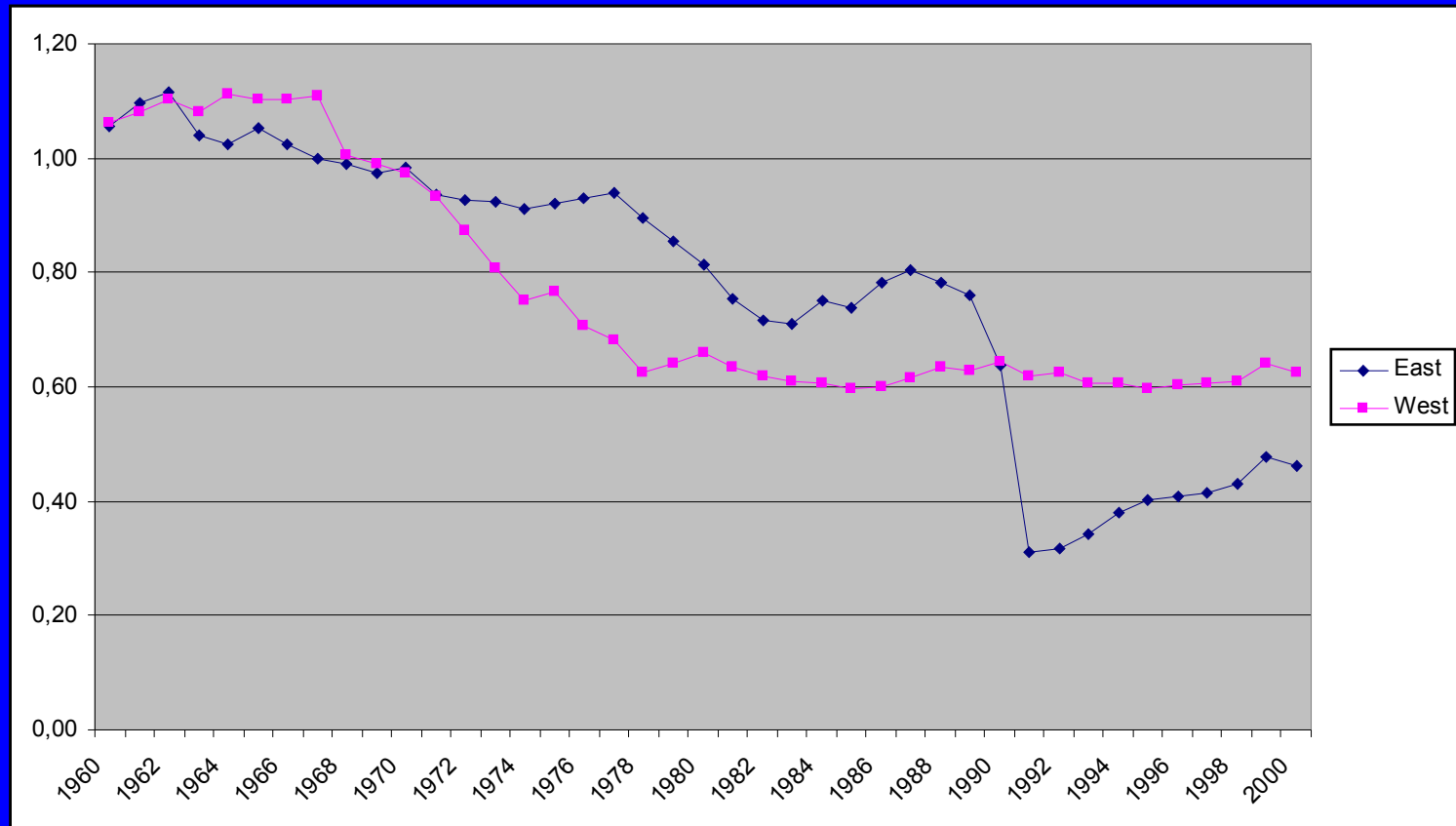


Mean age at first birth



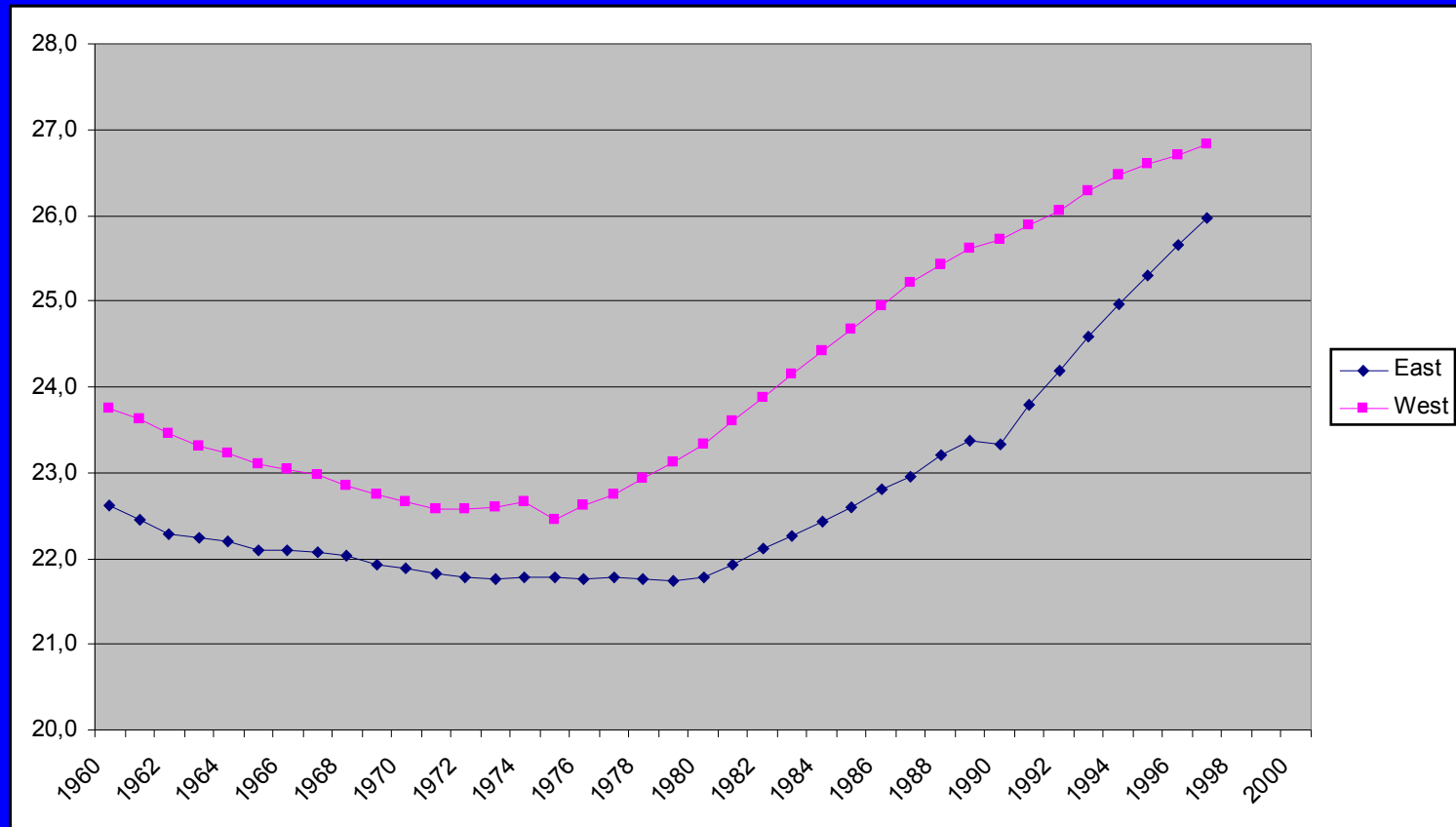


First marriage rate, female



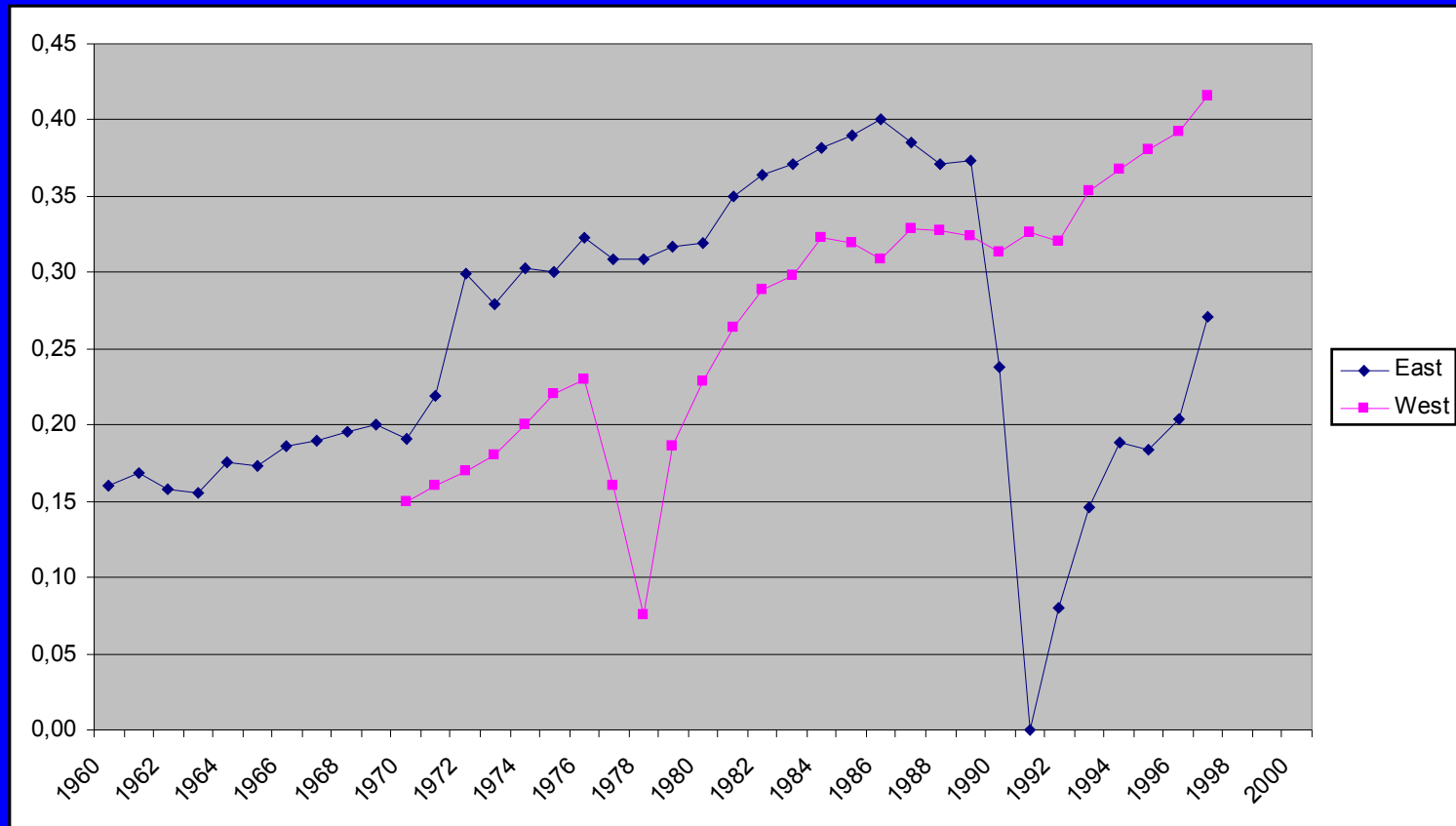


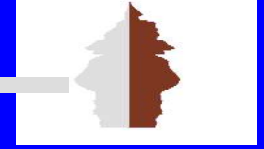
Age at first marriage, female





Divorce rate





Birth decline: theoretical explanations

- "Demographic shocks" (Eberstadt 1994; Mau, Zapf 1998)? \Leftrightarrow This approach is rather distant from the changes at micro level. It remains unconsidered that couples, as agents of social change, doubtlessly took conscious decisions when opting against or in favour of pregnancies, and that they consistently made use of options provided in East Germany by decades of sex education and unhindered access to contraceptives.
- Higher Opportunity Costs (family economy)? \Leftrightarrow The family policy conditions in Eastern Germany are not different from those in the old "Länder" of Germany; the cost of living is even a little lower, the institutions for childcare are comparatively more numerous and better (Hank/Tillmann/Wagner 2001; Hank/Kreyenfeld, 2003). Although unemployment has risen drastically in the last decade, women's labour market participation has remained higher than in Western Germany.
- Altruism (Barro/Becker 1989; Becker/Barro 1988; Cigno/Rosati 1996; critique by Grimm 2003)? \Leftrightarrow Accordingly, parents reduce their labour market participation and consumption in favour of children. Hence, altruism is called to improve also the own utility function, thus the utility function of parents. Investing in children might be led by gratitude and the tendency to continue the behaviour of the parents' generation to provide for the well-being of a larger circle than only the players themselves.



Hypothesis

- People do not have children, even if they definitely are wanting to have children, if women and men consider that they have nothing or too little to offer to the next generation.
- Preliminary assertion of the hypothesis becomes more plausible if one bears in mind that families are rarely founded by persons who are still in education or by persons whose partnerships are in the process of breaking up.



Measurement of parents' assets

- It should be clear that it is not the scale of the donations, inheritance and time available to devote to children that is important, but that what matters is how the goods and standards of living achieved by parents and young couples are evaluated by the partners themselves. Of course this may be influenced by social norms concerning what an individual requires in order to form a family of their own.
- Individual resources might be measured by inquiring as to contentedness, thus directly asking respondents how content they are with certain objects. It can be ignored to what degree contentedness is linked to the object, to the aspirations of the individual, as well as to their general and current valuation standards.



Data base: Childbearing Desire and Growth Study

- The "Childbearing desire and Growth Study" was performed by social scientists and physicians from the University of Rostock (Dr. Manfred Voigt, Dr. Meyerfeldt, and Dr. Sopp) and from the Technical University of Munich (Professor Dr. K.T.M. Schneider). One of the goals was to provide insights which are of interest both for socio-political measures and for medical support.
- The survey targeted German women who just had given birth to a child in a hospital. It was carried out 1998 to 2000, which covered quite a long time,.
- A total of 5,230 women completed the questionnaire. After omitting those 87 questionnaires which did not contain geographic references, 2,081 remained from the new Länder of Germany, 607 from Berlin and 2,455 from the old Länder. There is thus a higher response rate from the new Länder and Berlin (= "East") than from the old Länder ("West").
- The specific situation in which the interviews had taken place (the first days after haven given birth to child) will not be taken into consideration in this analysis.



Sample characteristics

Table 1: Respondents' socio-demographic and attitude variables (Ctd =Contentedness)

	Min	Max	Mean	Std.Dev.
New Länder incl. Berlin (N= 2345)				
Age	15.0000	43.0000	27.5599	4.7645
Partner	0.0000	1.0000	0.9676	0.1771
Live births (N)	1.0000	9.0000	1.6217	0.8883
Standard of living	1.0000	5.0000	3.7765	0.6137
Ctd Overall standard of living	1.0000	5.0000	3.8776	0.8521
Ctd Household income	1.0000	5.0000	3.2486	1.0094
Ctd Housing situation	1.0000	5.0000	4.0188	1.0530
Ctd Childcare available	1.0000	5.0000	3.5680	1.0252
Ctd Partnership	1.0000	5.0000	4.6695	0.8518
Ctd State support for families	1.0000	5.0000	2.4503	1.0320
Negated childbearing desire	0.0000	1.0000	0.4597	0.4985
Old Länder (N= 2007)				
Age	15.0000	44.0000	30.2701	4.3305
Partner	0.0000	1.0000	0.9900	0.0994
Live births_N	1.0000	6.0000	1.7025	0.8274
Standard of living	1.0000	5.0000	3.9263	0.5591
Ctd Overall standard of living	1.0000	5.0000	4.1604	0.8509
Ctd Household income	1.0000	5.0000	3.7005	0.9882
Ctd Housing situation	1.0000	5.0000	4.2397	1.0304
Ctd Childcare available	1.0000	5.0000	3.6104	1.1492
Ctd Partnership	1.0000	5.0000	4.6991	0.7419
Ctd State support for families	1.0000	5.0000	2.5864	1.0560
Negated childbearing desire	0.0000	1.0000	0.3926	0.4885

Source: Childbearing Desire and Growth Study 1998-2000 – BiB II5/~ /kind01.cf



Regression analysis: negated child bearing desires

	Model 1		Model 4	
	East	West	East	West
Constant	0.5500 ***	0.4733 ***	-0.0269	0.3607
Standard of living	-0.0239	-0.0206	0.0140	0.0382
Ctd Overall standard of living			-0.0595 ***	-0.0434 **
Ctd Household income			0.0162	-0.0190
Ctd Housing situation			0.0094	0.0169
Ctd Childcare available			0.0422 ***	0.0160
Ctd Partnership			-0.0208	-0.0148
Ctd State support for families			-0.0227 *	-0.0177
Age1 ln(Age-13)			0.1445 *	0.0987
Age2 ln(50-Age)			-0.0750	-0.2100
Partner			0.0518	0.0034
Live births (N)			0.2338 ***	0.2690 ***
Significance	0.859	0.708	1	1
N	2333	2007	2333	2007



Main results

- The regression analysis can be summed up as follows: The negative influence of contentedness with standard of living on the lack of a wish to have more children is confirmed, even if most influencing variables are controlled, such as the number of births and the age. In Eastern Germany also contentedness with state support correlates significantly – and negatively - with the negated childbearing desire.
- Important findings are also that contentedness with income, with the housing situation, with childcare and with the partnership are weaker by comparison with the other variables. For some of them, even the direction of an influence cannot be determined.
- The new 1998-2000 Childbearing Desire and Growth Survey revealed a strong relationship between contentedness and the wish to have children. Women who were discontented with their standard of living were opposed to having more children. This relationship was even stronger in Eastern Germany, and included discontentedness with state support for families.