To answer the question if a young married woman is a good mother we will examine the relationship between infant mortality (p.m. elaborate the differences between neonatal and post-neonatal) mothers and father age, age difference between parents, birth order, number of siblings alive at every live birth, sex of the child, the birth cohort of the mother. Our intention is profile the characteristic of a good mother.

Family reconstitution data from 6 German villages: Braunsen and Massenhausen from Waldeck area, Kappel and Rust from Baden area, Middles from East Friesland, Olschenbronn from Württemberg.

The population of interest is the married women, that means that the date of marriage has to be known. Building on previous studies (Knodel 1978) the sample is limited to marriages that occurred between 1700 and 1899 with defined birth year for husband and wife. Every couple has to have at least one child, and the final number of cases (children) is 29,870 and the number of marriages is 17,011.

To some the age of the father at birth of the child will examine the relationship between infant mortality (p.m. elaborate the differences between neonatal and post-neonatal) mothers and father age, age difference between parents, birth order, number of siblings alive at every live birth, sex of the child, the birth cohort of the mother. Our intention is profile the characteristic of a good mother.

Recent research has shown important variations in infant mortality within the same population, resulting from differences in social class, race as well as ethnic and cultural groups. In nineteenth century German context John Knodel’s research has showed that the relatively high rates of infant mortality was related to different cultural as well as ecological differences between regions (Knodel 1988).

Longitudinal studies of infant mortality over the course of individual women’s life provides insights to link social, economic and epidemiological processes with household and family components. Research by Nult, Desjadins and Legare (1990) using the French Canadian population establish that very young mothers as well as mothers aged 35 and over suffers a higher risk to loose the child in the first year. Lynch and Greenhouse (1994) presents a different result for the Swedish data, arguing that there is no such clear relationship.

Is the birth order related to the survival of the child? Can the age-difference between the mother and the father explain a part of the survival of the child? Is the birth order related to the survival of the child? Is there a spatial dimension to infant mortality?

Sex matters! It is advantageous to be a girl child.

Age matters! The age of the mother at the birth of the child is an important component in explaining infant mortality. One interesting point to be made here is that the pattern differs between neonatal and post neonatal deaths. In the previous an older mother seems to be more successful, in the latter a young mother is to be preferred. So, the question asked in the first part of this study, if mothers learn with each child, can not be easily answered.

Siblings matter! As known from other studies, being born as a twin or triplet is dangerous for a child in the setting. Our results also imply, in agreement with earlier studies that, being a first child is hazardous, while being a second or third child increases the chances of surviving the first year.

Seasonality matters! The birth month of a child is of great significance. Even so, in this case it is important to remember that the effect seen in birth month might in fact be an effect of wearing practices and the mothers work load.

Space matters! Infant mortality differs significantly between the villages in our sample. Socio-cultural practices that differs between villages might affect the survival of the child. In addition under registration of infant deaths in some congregations might bias the results.

HYPOTHESIS

- Is a young married woman a good mother?
- Will she learn more about infant care with each child that she will have?
- Can the age of the mother and father at birth affect the survival of the child?
- Can the age-difference between the mother and the father explain a part of the survival of the child?
- Is the birth order related to the survival of the child?
- Is there a spatial dimension to infant mortality?

CONCEPTS

NEONATAL MORTALITY

Number of deaths during the first 28 completed days of life per 1,000 live births in a given year or period.

INFANT MORTALITY

Infant mortality encompasses all deaths that occur within the first year of life.

POSTNEONATAL MORTALITY

Number of deaths between the 29 and 364 days of life per 1,000 live births in a given year or period.

CONCLUSIONS

- Sex matters! It is advantageous to be a girl child.
- Age matters! The age of the mother at the birth of the child is an important component in explaining infant mortality. One interesting point to be made here is that the pattern differs between neonatal and post neonatal deaths. In the previous an older mother seems to be more successful, in the latter a young mother is to be preferred. So, the question asked in the first part of this study, if mothers learn with each child, can not be easily answered.
- Siblings matter! As known from other studies, being born as a twin or triplet is dangerous for a child in the setting. Our results also imply, in agreement with earlier studies that, being a first child is hazardous, while being a second or third child increases the chances of surviving the first year.
- Seasonality matters! The birth month of a child is of great significance. Even so, in this case it is important to remember that the effect seen in birth month might in fact be an effect of wearing practices and the mothers work load.
- Space matters! Infant mortality differs significantly between the villages in our sample. Socio-cultural practices that differs between villages might affect the survival of the child. In addition under registration of infant deaths in some congregations might bias the results.

DATA

Number of deaths
during the first 28 completed days of life per 1,000 live births

Survival time

Survival time

Log likelihood  =

Shape parameters for gender and ethnic groups

Hazard ratio

Variables related to parents and children

The population of interest is the married women, that means that the date of marriage has to be known. Building on previous studies (Knodel 1978) the sample is limited to marriages that occurred between 1700 and 1899 with defined birth year for husband and wife. Every couple has to have at least one child, and the final number of cases (children) is 29,870 and the number of marriages is 17,011.

This is a good mother?

A young married woman

Is a young married woman a good mother?

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