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## Overview Chapter 2: Parity distribution and completed family size in Europe Incipient decline of the two-child family model

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### Abstract

By the end of the 20th century the two-child family became the norm throughout Europe. Between 40 and over 50 percent of women in the 1950s and 1960s cohorts had two children. There were some incipient signs that shares of two-child families were declining, especially in Central and Eastern and Southern Europe. An increase in childlessness among recent generations was an almost universal trend. The increase in proportions of one-child families was prominent in CEE and in SE. Wherever shares of childless women and of women with one child continue to grow, the obvious result will be entrenched below replacement fertility. Much depends on progression ratios to first and to second births. In CEE mainly the progression ratios to second births are declining. In the Nordic countries progression ratios to first and to second births were relatively stable and even more so in France. Altogether, most people opt for two children, very few for three or more, the frequency of the one-child family is increasing as are the proportions of people remaining childless. The latter trends were more pronounced in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe and not so much in Northern and Western countries.

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