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REALISING BIRTH INTENTIONS IN EUROPEAN COMPARISON – UNDERSTANDING THE POST-COMMUNIST FERTILITY TRANSITION

by
Zsolt Spéder
Balázs Kapitány

DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE
HUNGARIAN CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

Director:
Zsolt Spéder

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Attila Melegh

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Linden Farrer

Address:
Demographic Research Institute
Hungarian Central Statistical Office
1–3 Buday László utca
1024 Budapest
Hungary

e-mail:
speder@demografia.hu
kapitany@demografia.hu

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Abstract

This paper strives to broaden understanding of fertility transition in post-Communist countries, starting in the early 1990s. The integration of findings from distinct avenues of fertility research and incorporation of results of an empirical analysis of new kinds into the approaches of post-Communist fertility transition leads us to new conclusions. The use of longitudinal panel studies in comparing fertility intentions and realisation in four European countries reveals the very low level of realisation of fertility intentions in post-Communist countries. We find that the distinct manner and pace of social change, the discrepancy between very slow changes in values and very rapid institutional and structural changes, are primarily responsible for the larger gap between intention and realisation in the post-Communist countries, although some compositional effects are not negligible. This understanding could be seen as an extension of the anomie approach to post-Communist transition. The contrast between macro-level postponement and individual action allows us to highlight specific causation during the post-Communist fertility transition: macro-level postponement of fertility seems at least partly to be a result of failure to realise child-bearing intentions.

Keywords:

Fertility intention, fertility, post-communist fertility transition, postponement, longitudinal study in fertility

1 Introduction[1]

Our paper brings together two fields of research. One focuses on understanding realisation of fertility intentions, while the other focuses on fertility transition in post-Communist countries. Our empirical analysis fits well into a research tradition that focuses on the identification of factors and mechanisms contributing to a greater correspondence between intention and behaviour in fertility decisions (Westoff and Ryder 1977; Monier 1989; Schoen *et al*. 1999; Heaton *et al*. 1999; Quesnel-Vallée and Morgan 2003; Testa and Toulemon 2006; Philipov 2009; Liefbroer 2009; Spéder and Kapitány 2009). We study one type of fertility intention, namely time-dependent intention, which according to several studies (Miller and Pasta 1994; Schoen *et al*. 1999) properly predicts real fertility behaviour. Our research is novel, in that it takes a *comparative approach to the use of longitudinal panel survey data*.

In a recent paper we identified how group-specific social and demographic factors determine the fulfilment of short-term intentions *within a country* (Kapitány and Spéder 2011). In this paper we investigate *why country differences exist, why there are significant differences between Western and Eastern countries*, and *why people in Eastern Europe have lower chances of fulfilling their original intentions than those living in Western Europe*. Although availability of suitable data[2] limits the countries we have selected, we have been able to include two Western (Switzerland, the Netherlands) and two Eastern European (Hungary and Bulgaria) countries in our analysis.

Fertility transition in post-Communist countries has been a focus of research since the rapid political changes that took place in 1989/90. As widely discussed, the relatively stable fertility patterns of the Communist era was followed by a period characterised by low fertility, an increase in extra-marital births and postponement of child-bearing.[3] Because the changes observed in post-Communist countries to some extent mirrors those experienced by Western countries in the last third of the twentieth century, the explanations applied were deliberate extensions and adaptations of theories developed for Western countries, though some new ideas have also emerged.

Interpretation of the results of our empirical analysis (intention-realisation), and the search for explanations for failures characteristic of post-Communist countries inspired us to further develop the 'anomie hypothesis' (one of the approaches to the post-Communist fertility transition) and to extend its temporal validity. Furthermore, tackling individual behaviours and macro-level postponement helps shed light on an as yet undiscovered characteristic of the post-Communist transition: macro-

1 This research was carried out within the project **"**Reproductive decision-making in a macro-micro perspective REPRO". Grant Agreement: SSH-2007-3.1.2- 217173. Special thanks to the researchers of the REPRO project and its Advisory Board, who provided us with valuable feedback. This contribution is also supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA No. NN76648).

[2] Since our aim is to compare fertility intention (within a time frame) and related outcomes (within the same time frame), we have to use longitudinal panel surveys which include both kinds of information, and can be harmonised.

[3] For a recent comprehensive review about the new developments and the relevant interpretations see Frejka and Sobotka 2008; Sobotka 2008.

level fertility development may to some extent be the outcome of 'failure' and/or 'modification' of individual fertility intentions.

A review of existing literature concerning the post-Communist fertility transition is inevitable for a study such as this, and we hereby briefly list existing concepts about postponement, and dedicate some time to the introduction of some features of the theory of anomie developed by Robert Merton which we consider useful. Chapter 2 is therefore dedicated to the above-mentioned issues. We do not devote time to studies focusing on differences between fertility intentions and behavioural outcomes in the literature review for three reasons. Firstly, because we have previously reported on it (Spéder and Kapitány 2009). Secondly, as far as we know the literature does not discuss country differences. Thirdly, the literature on the intention-behaviour link will be referred to later on in the discussion (p. 27–28). The theoretical introduction is followed by a short review of the situation of the studied countries, introduction of data and methods utilised in our analysis, and by definition the central variable (Chapter 3). Revealing the basic result, Chapter 4 describes country differences of intention realisation, and in Chapter 5 we discuss the newly revealed characteristics of post-Communist transition using an extended anomie approach. We also explain how compositional effects may to a small degree only contribute to country differences. In the concluding chapter we describe postponement in the midst of post-Communist transition as result of conscious and unconscious individual postponement behaviour.

2 Review of Relevant Literature

Approaches Explaining Fertility Development in the Post-Communist Era

Research on fertility development during the post-Communist era has been at the centre of scholars' attention for almost two decades. Even though the theory of Second Demographic Transition (SDT) has gained in popularity (Rabusic 2001; Sobotka *et al*. 2003; Sobotka 2008; Zaharov 2008; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 2004; Lesthaeghe 2010), there are still analyses of the initial and later phases of transition that return to economic explanations (Kotowska *et al*. 2008), social anomie (Perelli-Harris 2005; Rodin 2011) and to societal transition more generally (Frejka, 2008). Comprehensive description and evaluation of the subject matter is beyond the purposes of our present study, and we only aim to introduce some general features of the most frequently used approaches, which not only inspire further research, but which provide opportunities for drawing conclusions from our empirical study on fertility intentions.

Changes in values are a key characteristic of the theory of *Second Demographic Transition* (Lesthaeghe 1995, 2010). According to the theory there is an "escape" from authorities (parents, communities, church, the state, etc.), which results in real individual autonomy. In the fulfilment of higher order needs, self-realisation becomes an individual's key aim in life. Gender relations alter significantly and unequivocally in favour of women's integration and gender symmetry in most life domains. Reduced emphasis on the importance of marriage is part of this, as is the erosion of exclusive intra-marriage sexuality. Even though Lesthaeghe emphasises that these value changes are enabled by economic growth and the spread of universal well-being within the society and facilitated by the security provided by an

expanded welfare state, *individual choice* still has a decisive impact on family relationships, the spread of common-law marriage (cohabitation), postponement of child-bearing and the increased prevalence of extra-marital births. The new modes of family formation and fertility behaviour are the outcome of individual decisions, which are based on post-material, expressive and self-realising values.

The decline in fertility of post-Communist countries, according to this theory (Leasthaeghe and Surkyn 2004; Leasthaeghe 2010), is a result of the *rapid spread of* the above-described (Western, post-modern) value orientation. Societal and economic transition enabled the diffusion of expressive life purposes (open relationships, joyful life, etc.) and non-prescribed life-styles compete with child-bearing. Consequently, postponement of child-bearing to later on in the life course is observable, which goes hand in hand with sub-replacement fertility.[4]

Studies favouring *economic aspects* (UNECE 2000; Cornia and Paniccia 1995; Kotowska *et al*. 2008), together with followers of the "*crisis hypothesis*" (Rychterikova 2000) and those claiming negative consequences of *economic instability* (Ranjan 1999), explain fertility decline by the increase of direct and indirect costs of child-bearing and by a decrease of accessible economic resources. Economic decline following the democratic transitions, including the emergence and increase of unemployment in general (and in particular for certain social groups) significantly decreased the necessary resources for consumption and child-bearing. Increases of inequalities further narrowed the opportunities of impoverished, 'loser' social groups. The direct costs of child-bearing were primarily increased by the withdrawal of family benefits and child support, and by marketisation of certain community services such as education. Governmental family policies aimed in principle to reduce instabilities associated with emerging market instabilities, and to support the most deprived segments of the population. The continuous devaluation of family benefits, and frequent changes to the general principles of its administrative rules – away from universality to means testing and targeting – did not counterbalance the effects of the economic transition.

Though less popular, the low fertility *hypothesis of social anomie and discontinuity* does still appear in some analyses (Philipov 2003; Perelli-Harris 2005, 2008; Spéder and Kamarás 2008). This approach is based on Durkheim's contention that social crises go hand in hand with a decline in social behaviour which might be characterised as 'conformist', and in its place comes the spread of behaviour which might be characterised as 'deviant'. In this respect, abandonment of child-bearing (whether temporary or permanent) may be interpreted by some people as a rejection of societal norms and a move towards deviancy[5]. Rodin (2011) recently elaborated on this approach, suggesting that "the speed and the relative uniformity" of fertility developments in the post-Communist countries should be interpreted as a form of risk management in the midst of social anomie.

[4] Scholars who view the use the SDT in case of post-Communist transition critically draw attention to the fact that the transition (unfortunately) did not happen in the midst of economic prosperity, and that lack of prosperity (e.g. recession) might make self-realising plans impossible to realise.

[5] The meaninglessness of child-bearing is stated explicitly on the anomie-scale by Srole (developed in the 1950s): "It is hardly fair to bring children into this world with the way things look for the future" (Srole 1956).

Nevertheless, critics claim that after a certain period a new type of social order is formed, social anomie decreases, and behaviour thereafter can no longer be explained by anomie.

In one of the most recent comparative studies of European fertility of the last decade, which takes into consideration the experiences of 19 European countries, Frejka considers Central-Eastern European fertility decline to be the outcome of the transition from state socialism to capitalism. More specifically, Frejka states that *social and economic transition* is the "root cause" of the post-Communist demographic transition: "However obvious and simplistic it may appear, the replacement of the state socialist regimes by market economies and by fledgling democratic institutions of governance is the root cause of the demographic changes and trends during the transition period and beyond" (Frejka 2008: 160). The relatively stable fertility of state socialism was the result of a redistributive economic system, in which 'active and explicit' population policies aimed to achieve a replacement level of fertility (Frejka 1980; Andorka 1978). With the democratic transitions this reproductive order 'dissolved' alongside its governing institutions. The new market economy (including the changed labour and housing markets and redistribution, etc.) created a new context within which fertility intentions could be realised (or not). We have to note that studies by Sobotka a decade earlier about the dissolution of the "socialist greenhouse" (Sobotka 2002) also mark the transition from state socialism to capitalism as the reason behind low fertility in Central and Eastern Europe. In Frejka's view, neither "cultural" nor "economic" factors alone adequately account for the changes in fertility observed during post-Communist times (Frejka 2008: 160) though he nevertheless claims that many of their elements are valid. Even though Frejka does not take a position concerning social anomie, we do not think his final conclusions contradict the concept.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to critically discuss the above-mentioned approaches, and their advantages and disadvantages. We do, however, present some remarks. Firstly, we should note that evaluation of the above approaches is *hindered by lack of suitable data*. While vital statistics are widely available across time and countries and in comparative manner, we lack standardised, time-series data on values and attitudes, and on the characteristics of institutional configurations. Consequently, analyses such as those conducted by Billingsley (2010) are rare. Billingsely showed that in the majority of Eastern and Central European countries fertility decline is related to economic recession in the first period of the transition, while in the later phases fertility decline (and postponement) was characteristic of countries that were economically better off (Billingsely 2010).[6]

Secondly, the relevance of the theoretical approaches mentioned above is difficult to judge, as it is not easy to distinguish whether the arguments and the presentations of correlation refer to individual actors, groups or society as a whole. The focus is often on people's individual fertility behaviour (e.g. postponement, popularity of cohabitation, etc.) though the relevance is usually exhibited by certain vital statistics (such as the mean age of mothers at first childbirth, the proportion of extra-marital childbirths, etc.). A more

[6] This supports the second demographic transition, or "postponement transition" theory (Billingsely 2010).

straightforward dissociation of micro and macro argumentation would help to confine and circumscribe the relevance of the different approaches.

In this paper we would like to demonstrate that through analysis of data collection, even though conducted in a later phase of the post-Communistic transition, we can shed light on some new aspects of the post-Communist fertility transition. Furthermore, new evidence, and a search for understandings helps us to refine our concept about post-Communist transitions and enables us to look into micro-macro relations. Our empirical analysis deals with a well-defined aspect of fertility decision-making, namely realisation of short-term fertility intentions. However, during discussion of our results we further develop our explanations.

A Short Note on the Prevailing Concept(s) on Postponement

Postponement is an essential element in all of the above-described approaches on post-Communist transition, and also unavoidable if we discuss changing child-bearing behaviour in Europe (see Sobotka 2004 for a review of the literature)[7]. According to Billari and colleagues, "postponement has been the major *keyword*" in the study of demographic trends in developed societies. It is therefore surprising to read in the introduction of a volume about a conference on postponement, that the question of how "postponement" should be defined remains unanswered (Billari *et al*. 2006: 1).

Reviewing some of the crucial studies on postponement (e.g. Bongaarts and Feeny 1998; Kohler *et al*. 2002; Lesthaeghe and Moors 2000; Sobotka 2004, 2008; Billari *et al*. 2006; Frejka 2008) we observe that the concept is used for definition and interpretation of several phenomena. Two significantly different interpretations and one self-evident meaning are easy to reveal. We most frequently find the term of postponement used in relation to certain demographic events, such as delay of child-bearing to later age (Bongaarts and Feeny 1998; Sobotka 2008).[8] Lesthaeghe calls it "period-postponement" (Lesthaeghe 2001). Postponement in this case is a *macro-social characteristic* of fertility.

According to *cohort-specific* approaches, postponement describes when a given cohort has its (first) child or children at a later age than earlier-born cohorts (Sobotka 2004). There is no agreement on whether the study of completed fertility belongs to cohort-specific interpretation. In our view Sobotka includes it in his understandings: he talks about cohort-specific postponement – when fertility which started at later points in the life course result in the same number of children born (Sobotka 2004). If, however, we call an increase in fertility in later phases of fertility "recuperation", as Lesthaeghe and Moors (2000) and others do, then postponement only implies that child-bearing occurs at a later age (ageing of fertility).

Finally, it should be noted that even if there is no explicit statement in this regard, texts also implicitly suppose that in general *individual behaviour* can be characterised by postponement (see Kohler *et al*. 2002; Sobotka 2004). The increase of mean age at first birth is a result of individuals postponing child-bearing. Indicators of postponement – without exception – are all macro level, argumentation however concerns individual behaviour. As much as a popular concept postponement is, we still observe its lack of

[7] It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the entire literature on postponement.

[8] Regarding our topic increase of Mean Age at First Birth and Mean Age of Births is mentioned.

precise definition and the question posed above by Billari *et al*. (2006) remains a reasonable one.

The issue of adequate usage of postponement in the French context is addressed in a paper by Ni Bhrolchháin and Toulemon, in which they ask "whether in the case of France, it is correct to interpret the fertility trends of the last few decades as reflecting postponement of childbearing?" (Ni Bhrolchháin and Toulemon 2003: 3). They assume that the concept of postponement implies a downward trend in fertility at younger ages on the one hand, something that should be followed by an upward trend at older ages; whilst on the other hand these two processes have a *common cause*. They argue that the prevailing usage of the concept of postponement is a macro statistical one, one that describes the ageing of fertility, but this ageing could be a result of different kinds of processes. They advocate for a *behavioural understanding of postponement*. Their statistical analysis proves that *there is no clear feedback* (lag) among birth rates in a *t time* and in a *t+x time* that questions the assumed correlation.

Less attention is devoted to understanding the *relationship between individual child-bearing behaviour*[9] *and macro-level postponement*. In some studies we see the implicit assumption that postponement is a result of decisions taken consciously by individuals (Kohler *et al*. 2002; Sobotka 2008). In statements such as "voluntary postponement may lead to involuntary childlessness" (Billari *et al*. 2006: 7), the authors assume that people consciously want to have children at later life phases. This assumption fits well with the macro-social or statistical understandings of postponement. According to this implicit assumption, postponement at the macro level *is a result of an individual's intended childbirth at a later age*. The title of Berrington's article ("Perpetual postponers?") may imply other motivations, though people are constantly shifting and revising their intentions, which results in child-bearing at a later age – if at all (Berrington 2004).

Our research takes advantage of the longitudinal panel design, supports efforts to have a closer look into the postponement 'black-box', and to distinguish more clearly between individual (micro-) level and macro-level understandings. Furthermore, individual behaviours can be differentiated: the results of the analysis of the intention-behaviour relation in the four countries supports the notion that consciously planned later births (postponement) and later births are a result of permanent revision of timing of the first and subsequent births at the micro level.

Robert Merton's Theory of Social Action

In order to understand cross-country differences in realising intentions and the post-Communist fertility transition, it is useful to broaden our perspective utilising some sociological thoughts on social action, namely Merton's theory of social action (Merton 1980).[10] This approach is able to handle the different societal contexts of social action. In addition it is close

[9] Speaking about individuals usually implies the child-bearing practice of partners, but we do not touch on the issue of partnership agreements and disagreements about child-bearing.

[10] Similar attempts have been made by Philipov 2003; Philipov *et al*. 2006: 293; Spéder and Kamarás 2008: 655ff; Rodin 2011.

to some social-psychological approaches (such as Ajzen 1988), which seek to understand the link between fertility intention and behaviour.[11]

Merton's theory of social action describes social life from the perspective of the duality of *cultural system* and *social structure*. Individuals pursue goals embedded in a system of values and norms (cultural system). The cultural system prescribes not only what constitutes legitimate goals of life, but also suggests legitimate means for attaining these goals within the relevant social structure. In other words, social structure can be seen as a factor enabling and/or hindering purposeful social action, since the opportunity structure and the distribution of resources strongly defines what specific types of social action are available and approved of. In a well-functioning society the prescribed societal goals can be (easily) achieved by using freely available and legitimate 'institutionalised' means. Anomie, however, is characterised by a fundamental mismatch of values, prescriptions, and the ways by which life goals can be realised (Merton 1980).

All modern societies are characterised by different kinds of social action, such as conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. However, the prevalence of different social practices depends on accordance of the cultural system with the social structure. Conformist behaviours prevail in cases of higher accordance of the two systems, whereas deviant behaviours are more common in societies where more friction between the two exist. Relevant to Merton's and also to Durkheim's idea, the same may be assumed to be valid in times of distinct/dissimilar social changes: conformity prevails overwhelmingly in times of "social peace", whereas anomic actions (retreatism, ritualism, innovation and rebellion) are characteristic of turbulent periods, when the cultural system and/or the institutional configurations change radically. Non-conformist behaviour is wide-spread during intense societal change, since the majority of people have not yet found and/or accepted the new *modus vivendi* of everyday practice.

From Merton's approach three lessons are salient. First, social action comes into existence in a space that is shaped *jointly* by cultural and structural forces. Second, *accordance of the two* systems determines very strongly what kinds of social actions emerge. Third, there is never full accordance in any modern society and therefore at any one time many different kinds of social action prevail. The societal outcome (mean/median behaviour) is consequently a mixture of different kinds of social action[12].

[11] Of course the correspondence is far from perfect and it is beyond the scope of the study to devote more time to analysing compatibility of sociological and social-psychological approaches.

[12] We earlier suggested understanding cohabitation as innovative social action (Spéder and Kamarás 2008), and we would also characterise postponement (later first birth) as a kind of innovation at the beginning of a societal transformation. Furthermore, it would be easy to understand abandonment of child-bearing as a kind of retreatism. However, societal, political and economic transition from one system (Communism) to another (welfare capitalism) changes the meaning of actions. So while postponement may be considered an innovative social practice at the start, it may become conformity (a norm) later on. Early child-bearing, on the other hand, goes from a norm to being a ritualised social practice with the process of transformation.

3 Countries and Data

This chapter outlines the technicalities of our comparative work. We identified four European longitudinal data sets, which were object to data harmonisation. These data sets satisfied our minimum requirements, which were that they a) included similar questions about fertility behaviour (intention and realisation), and b) had the same time frames as the questionnaire programme and data collection. Before reporting on the technicalities of our harmonisation, we give an overview about fertility development in the four European countries by using vital statistics, though focusing in particular on the turn of the century, the time of the analysed data collection.

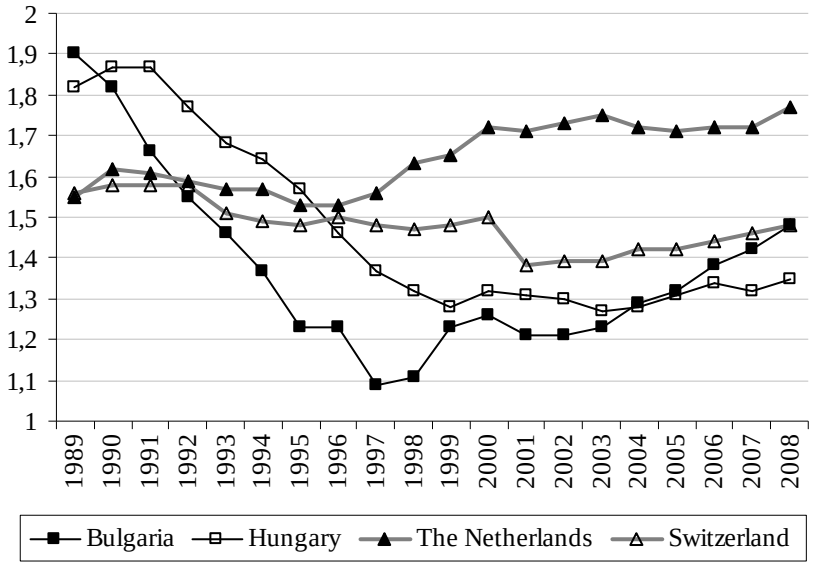
Two Western and Two Post-Communist Countries

Fertility started declining in the Netherlands and in Switzerland at the beginning of the 1970s. In 1970 the TFR was 2.57 in the Netherlands and 2.10 in Switzerland, while a decade later in 1980 it was 1.60 and 1.55 respectively. The nadir was around 1985 in the Netherlands (1.51), whereas in Switzerland it was around 2000. The degree of decline was therefore somewhat faster and greater in Dutch society. In the investigated period (2005) TFR was 1.77 in the Netherlands and 1.42 in Switzerland. In the early years of the new millennium one can observe a gradual increase of fertility in the two countries. Recuperation appears in both countries, though the Netherlands can be considered the classic example in this respect (Lesthaeghe 2001). Switzerland experiences high childlessness by European comparison: 27.9 per cent of women born in 1963 remain childless, whereas in Bulgaria the proportion of childless women of the same cohort is 4.8 per cent (Dorbritz and Rusckdeschl 2005: 64).

In state socialist Hungary and Bulgaria – as an effect of massive and continuous population policy interventions (Andorka 1978: 353ff; Frejka 1980) – TFR was above 2 in the 1970s and 1980s. Its dramatic decrease started after regime change in 1989/90, and this decline was faster in Bulgaria. In eight years it decreased from 1.9 to 1.1, and at this point it reached its nadir. It was then followed by a very slow increase. In Hungary the decrease was somewhat slower: the lowest level (1.3) was reached in 1999, with fertility staying fairly stable since then (Figure 1).

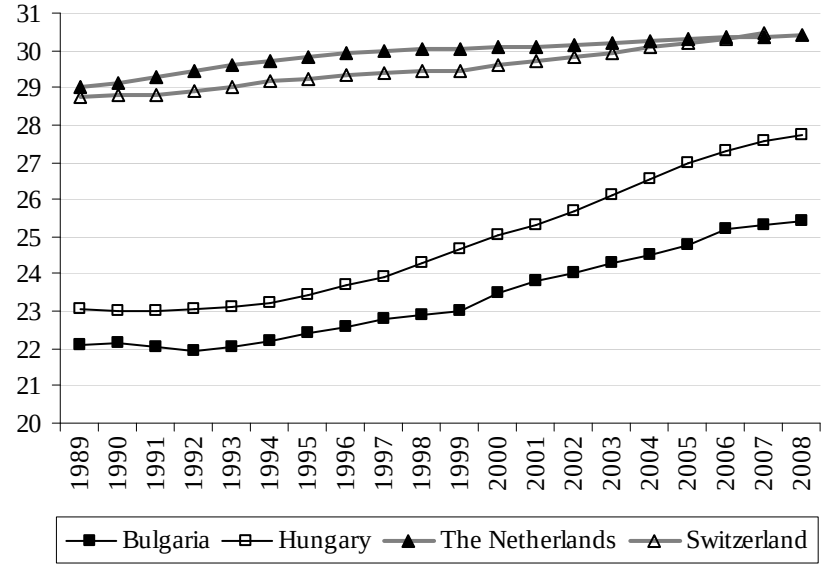
The increasing mean age of mothers at first birth can be seen as a pan-European phenomenon. It appeared in the two Western-European countries from the end of the sixties, and also in the Eastern European countries from the end of the nineties, gaining momentum after the millennium (exactly in the investigated period –2001–2005) (Figure 2). It should be noted that some increase of mean age of mothers at first birth can also be observed during this time in Switzerland.

Figure 1
Total fertility rate in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Hungary and Bulgaria, 1989–2008



Source: vital statistic, EUROSTAT

Figure 2
Mean age of mothers at first birth in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Hungary and Bulgaria, 1989–2008



Source: vital statistic, EUROSTAT

Data and Harmonisation

Data

We use four quite different though nationally representative large-scale longitudinal panel surveys. We use the first two waves of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Survey (Dykstra *et al*. 2007), and the Hungarian Turning Points of the Life Course survey (Kapitány ed. 2003). In both cases the time frame of the follow up was three years. The Hungarian and the Dutch

surveys resemble each other: they focus on changes in demographic behaviour.[13] The Swiss Household Panel survey's follow up was carried out annually; therefore we used the sixth and ninth waves for our analysis (Voorpostel, *et al*. 2009). The Bulgarian Social Capital Survey, in which more than ten thousand women and men aged 18–35 were interviewed between 2002 and 2005, also focuses on changes in demographic behaviour.[14] Selected features of the surveys are described in the appendix, Table A1.

The first waves of the surveys analysed by us were collected between 2002 and 2004 in the four countries, and the subsequent investigated waves took place between 2005 and 2007. The non-adjusted panel attrition between the two investigated waves was highest in Bulgaria (25 per cent) and at a similar level in Hungary and the Netherlands (17 and 18 per cent respectively). We limit our investigation to women aged between 18 and 35 years, and men aged between 18 and 50 years.

Harmonisation

We paid particular attention to time-dependent fertility intentions. Since we utilised four independent surveys, it was not surprising that during harmonisation we faced several problems. Although the questionnaire programmes of the four surveys were rather different, the fertility intention questions were suitable for comparison: all four surveys contained questions on timing of fertility intentions, and provided an accurate account of births between the waves, though in different formats. In this way we were able to construct an intention-behaviour variable suitable for comparison. Obviously we had to make some compliance: the two-year time frame of the Swiss and Bulgarian questions was the reason why we opted for a two-year time period in this comparative study.

In short, we needed to fulfil three criteria: 1) whether a respondent intended to have a child within two years, 2) whether a child was born or not, and 3) if there was no birth, whether intention subsequently changed or was maintained (see next section).

For the sake of our analysis we selected a subsample of the surveys. Only those persons who intended to have a(nother) child within two years and were subsequently interviewed were selected into the subsample. The size of the four investigated subsamples ranged from N = 2196 (in Bulgaria) to N = 385 (in the Switzerland). The investigated subsamples had rather a low size in the Netherlands (N = 458) while in Hungary it contained 1056 individuals.[15]

Because the four surveys handled pregnant women differently, treatment of pregnancy was not easy. In order to have a satisfactory (harmonised) solution we made the following decisions. Concerning the first wave, we excluded those female respondents who were pregnant and those males whose partner was pregnant at the time of the interview, since it was not evident whether the intention question reflected either the conceived child or

[13] Both surveys will be incorporated in the Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS) after harmonisation.

[14] The Bulgarian survey was carried out in the project "The Impact of Social Capital and Coping Strategies on Reproductive and Marital Behavior", organised by the MPDIR Rostock and the Bulgarian Academy of Science (see Bühler and Philipov 2005).

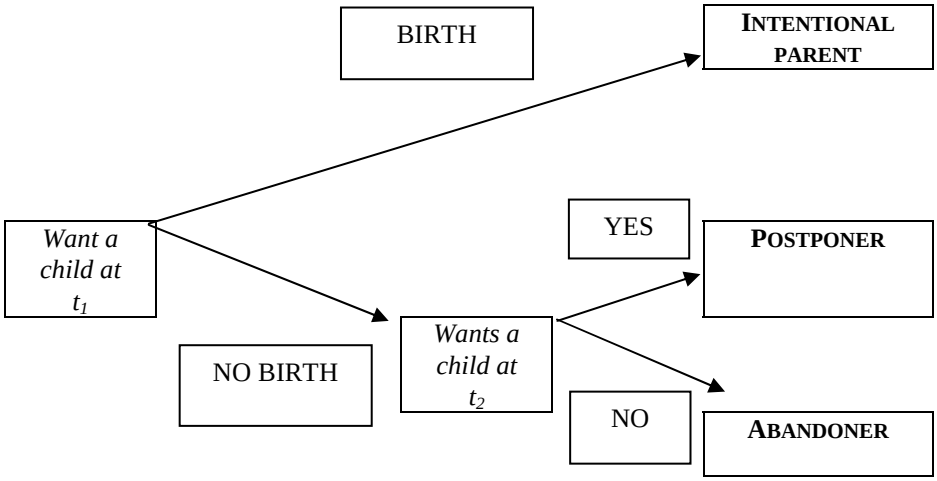
[15] Numbers mean unweighted number of cases.

the subsequent one. Concerning the second wave, and in evaluating success, pregnant women were included as intentional parents.[16]

4 Basic Cross-Country Differences

Our investigation concentrates on timing intentions, and also considers whether failed intentions were maintained or abandoned. We investigate whether the positive fertility intention – the intention to have a(nother) child within two years – succeeded or not within three years.[17] Those who intended to have a child within two years and successfully realised this intention are called "*intentional parents*" (see Figure 3). We are also interested in how "stable" those intentions were which could not be realised. We divide the people who intended to have a child within two years, but failed for some reason, into two groups: one group for those who maintained their intention to have children at the subsequent wave whom we call "*postponers*", and another group who abandoned their plans, whom we call "*abandoners*". These distinctions provide us with an opportunity to understand the reasons for unsuccessful realisation, and allow us a glimpse into the mechanism of postponement.

Figure 3
The Construction the Fertility Intention-outcome Variable



The basic distribution of our dependent variable (the fertility intention-outcome variable) reveals basic differences among the countries (Table 1). The rate of successful realisation is quite high in the Netherlands: four out of five people realised their within-two-year intention within three years. The ratio of realisation surpasses only slightly the 50 per cent level in Switzerland. While in Hungary and Bulgaria around two fifths of the time-dependent fertility intentions were realised. The ratio of successful intentional parents was very low in Hungary and in Bulgaria.

Considering failures, one fifth of the persons intending to have another child abandoned their fertility plans in Switzerland, Hungary and Bulgaria:

[16] The exact wordings of the questions are presented in the appendix, Table A2.

[17] As mentioned earlier, the fact that the length of intention and the time period for realisation do not match is due to the limitations of the different surveys.

that is almost two times higher than in the Netherlands. The ratios of postponers are also quite different: in Hungary and in Bulgaria the ratio of postponers slightly surpasses that of intentional parents. The corresponding figure in Switzerland is also quite high, but between the Dutch and Hungarian-Bulgarian levels.

Table 1
The Distribution of Fertility Intention-outcome Variable

Fertility outcomes	Countries			
	The Netherlands	Switzerland	Hungary	Bulgaria
Intentional parents	75	55	40	38
Postponers	15	27	42	44
Abandoners	11	18	18	18

Source: own calculations, using the data described in Table A1.

5 Explaining Cross-Country Differences in Realisation of Positive Fertility Intentions

We seek to find out the causes of significant differences between the countries in the realisation of child-bearing intentions, and why there is such a considerable discrepancy between Western and post-Communist countries in this regard. The explanation, in our view, can be found in *social features* of the post-Communist countries, in *anomie and discontinuity*, in the *distinct character of social change* of the European countries, and especially *in accelerated pace of change* in the post-Communist countries. Although the extent of measurement problems, the differing resolution of intentions, or compositional effects (over-representation of failure groups) may to some extent contribute to observed differences, the crucial explanation lies in the societal context described immediately below.

Anomie, the Distinct Character and Pace of Social Change

In explaining the higher rates of failure of intention realisation in post-Communist countries, we not only return to the concept of anomie but extend its meaning. Previous explanations of post-Communist fertility transition preferred Durkheim's anomie-concept, emphasising value-crisis and uncertainty amidst political and economic transition (see for example Philipov 2003; Philipov *et al*. 2006; Perelli-Haris 2005, 2008; Balbo 2009; Rodin 2011). As a consequence, people tended to postpone important life decisions, including child-bearing. However, this interpretation of fertility decline following political and societal transformation leaves a question unanswered, namely whether it means only temporal postponement of child-bearing or its complete rejection. Instead, it only emphasises that in the midst of social anomie people are likely to refrain from child-bearing.[18]

As a starting point we propose the following thesis: the low-level of realisation of child-bearing intentions observable in post-Communist countries is to a large extent a result of the *distinct pace of change* in the

[18] Temporal rejection can be considered postponement, while final refusal equals to individual stopping behaviour.

value system, which helps shape child-bearing intentions and behaviour, and that of the *structural circumstances* (objective factors, including family policies, and material situation) enabling and/or hindering child-bearing behaviour. The pace of change in the objective circumstances (structure) is more intensive than that of the value system. We also believe that in the midst of the transition intentions are shaped by *pre-transition (early-) child-bearing patterns*. Different pace of change of the value system and of the structural circumstances increases the discrepancy between anticipated circumstances at the time of emerging intentions and the actual circumstances experienced during realisation. Consequently, it leads to alteration (i.e. postponement or abandonment) of child-bearing intentions concerning the near future (i.e. two years) child-bearing. We elaborate on this thesis in the proceeding sections. Firstly, we describe the content and direction of value changes, and secondly, we provide an overview of the relevant tendencies of child-bearing decisions.

It is challenging to provide a straightforward description of changes to *value systems,* and of values relevant to fertility behaviour. It is broadly accepted that transitions to democracies were followed by major changes of values, often termed 'Westernisation'. This is also one of the key hypotheses of the theory of Second Demographic Transition (SDT)[19]. This approach is in accordance with theories emphasising periodic effects, which are based on the assumption that major historic shifts leave significant marks in the value systems of people and change individual behaviour considerably (Alwin and McCammon 2006: 29ff). Nevertheless, we have found only a very limited number of research results supporting radical value alteration in Central Eastern Europe. In fact, if there was any Westernisation, it occurred very slowly (Hagenaars *et al*. 2004). In relation to beliefs about the family, we are aware of only a single example of empirical research, which reports significant value change. This is a Hungarian empirical study, which focuses on the life goals of young generations before and after the transformation (H. Sas 2003).

In contrast, there are several studies that indicate inertia in values. Schwartz claims that the collapse of Communism left the value system of people almost unchanged (Schwartz *et al*. 2000). Other research on European values, which report on differences of values between people living in Western and Eastern European countries at the turn of the millennium (e.g. concerning general value orientation (Hagenaars *et al*. 2004), social justice (Arts at al. 2004), or gender roles (Lück and Hofäcker 2003)), do not suggest that post-Communist countries can be characterised by the rapid spread of Western values.[20] One study about changing gender roles in Hungary argues that they barely changed at all following the societal transitions, and what is more, that there are certain fields that are actually characterised by re-traditionalisation (Lück and Hofäcker 2003; Blaskó 2005). The well-known item-battery of family attitudes was repeated three times in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), and this enables us to compare attitudinal changes towards the family and children in a 14-year time frame starting in 1988 – just before social and political upheavals.

[19] For its application to post-Communist countries see Lesthaeghe and Surkyn (2004), Rabusic (2001), Sobotka *et al*. (2003).

[20] It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the similarities between people living in Central and Eastern European countries regarding attitudes to numerous issues (Hankiss *et al*. 1982, Sobotka 2002).

The direction of change after the political transition between 1988 and 1994 could be understood as "re-traditionalisation" of gender roles, which is relevant to both genders (c.f. Table 2).[21] But by 2002, attitudes and orientations towards the family had returned to a point characteristic of before the transition. For example, the concept of the housewife – a woman looking after the household and the children – seems to be about as popular in 2002 as it was in the late 1980s (Blaskó 2005). All but one of the seven items below in *Table 3* report a shift in values towards more traditional attitudes at the beginning of the transformation, and thereafter a return towards more modern gender roles, though usually not below the level observed in 1988. We can therefore hardly talk about significant value changes concerning family roles in Hungary between 1988 and 2002.

Table 2
Average Values of Family Related and Gender Role Attitudes in Hungary, Years 1988, 1994, 2002, by Gender of the Respondent[*]

Statements	Gender of the respondent	Year of the fieldwork		
		1988	1994	2002
Married people are generally happier than unmarried people.	Female	3.35	3.61	3.44
	Male	3.62	3.80	3.62
People who have never had children lead empty lives.	Female	4.13	4.37	4.22
	Male	4.08	4.25	3.89
A job is all right, but what most women really want is home and children.	Female	3.85	4.09	3.83
	Male	3.95	4.04	3.67
All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.	Female	3.51	3.86	3.53
	Male	3.67	3.71	3.36
A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.	Female	3.47	3.52	3.81
	Male	3.00	3.44	3.88
A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.	Female	3.72	4.05	3.81
	Male	3.89	4.10	3.74
Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy.	Female	4.42	4.81	4.77
	Male	4.38	4.72	4.57

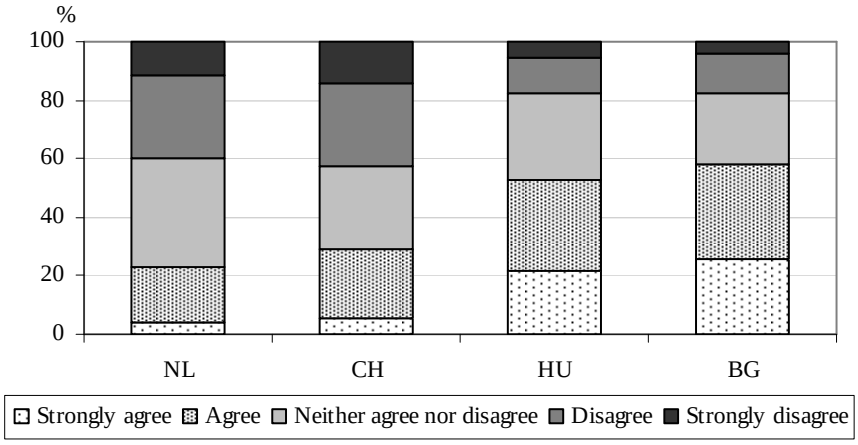
[*] Average values of answers (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) related to the indicated statements.
Source: Blaskó 2005:159–186.

We can observe noteworthy differences between the two Western and the two post-Communist countries if we compare the opinion of the countries' population regarding gender and family roles (cf. Figure 4–6). After comparing the relevant items from the ISSP 2002 data[22], we claim that public opinion in the post-Communist countries predominantly favoured traditional partnership relations and the centrality of children in the individual life-course of adults, together with statements about envisioning women at home/in the family even 12 years following democratic transitions. Therefore, we propose that in the years following the millennium the value system of fertile women still bears signs of the world prior to the democratic transformations.[23]

[21] This is not very surprising if we bear in mind the forced character of the expansion of female employment during real existing socialism, and the collapse of the labour market afterwards. We cannot devote time to this issue here.
[22] This corresponds exactly with the time of our empirical analysis using longitudinal panel surveys.
[23] This supports the results of Inglehart and Baker (2000), who argue in detail that the Communist decades left major marks in the value system of people.

Figure 4

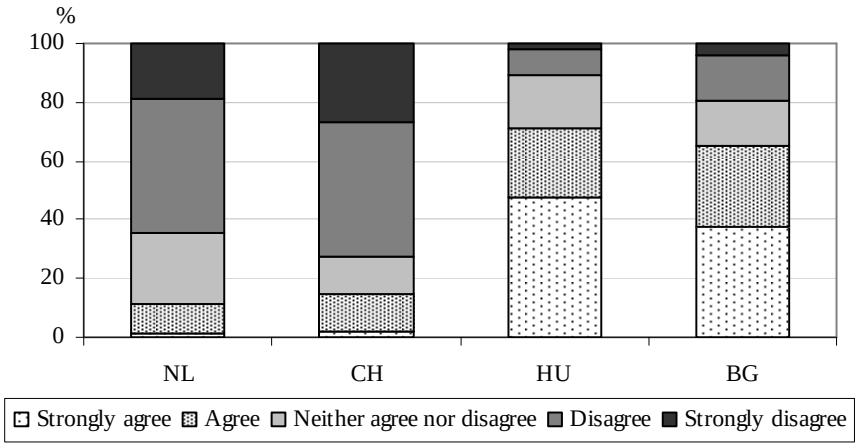
'Married People are generally Happier Than Unmarried People'



Source: ISSP 2002 codebook.

Figure 5

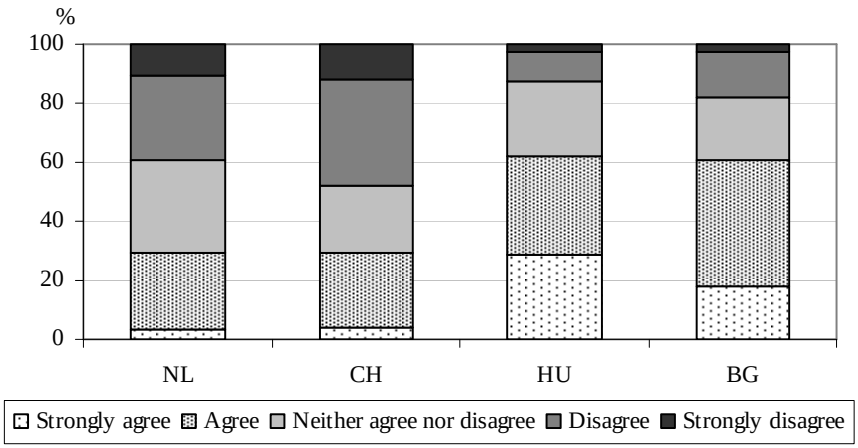
'People Who Have Never Had Children Lead Empty Lives'



Source: ISSP 2002 codebook.

Figure 6

'A Job Is All Right, but What Most Women Really Want Is a Home and Children'



Source: ISSP 2002 codebook.

In our view the slow pace of change is caused by the fact that new generations (cohorts) play a key role in the spread of new value systems. In-line with previous research, we agree that *cohort effect* (cohort replacement)

has a significant influence on value change (Inglehart 1987; Alwin and McCammon 2006). That is, young people form their ideas during their 'impressionable years', and these help shape decisions about their own families. Alwin and McCammon (2006) refer to several studies about related attitudes (such as "sex role beliefs and attitudes", "beliefs about abortion", "child-rearing values", "co-residence beliefs") which demonstrate the key role of cohort replacement. According to this approach, value change could have started only in those individuals/cohorts who were children or youth during the time of democratic transformation. We do not claim that this was the only mechanism in action during the democratic transitions, but we do propose that in describing the post-Communist fertility transition, "period effect" in value change has been emphasised more than it should have been, while "cohort effect" has been unjustifiably neglected.

Based on this reasoning, the emergence and framing of fertility intentions during the post-Communist transition were formed by three specific factors/mechanisms:

- Firstly, *values and beliefs of the pre-transformation era* played a role. The central position of child-bearing within the individual life course was prominent within this value system. Furthermore, values concerning the earlier timing of child-bearing, namely having children while individuals are in their twenties, may also have been influential.
- Secondly, a *pro-traditional family social atmosphere* prevailed, a kind of 'familism', which could be considered an essential element of child-bearing's normative system.
- Thirdly, a significant value shift concerning family roles could reasonably be expected from the *generation* which formed its opinions during their "impressionable years" *which coincided with* the democratic upheavals of 1989/90. This generation, however, could hardly, or only to a very limited degree, put into practice fertility behaviour during the period of our inquiry.[24]

Which *institutional and social structure-related changes* characteristic of the democratic transformation and the years after could have played an influential role in child-bearing behaviour, including the realisation of intentions? Out of the numerous changes described in detail by others (Sobotka 2002; Cornia and Paniccia 1995; Frejka 2008) we focus on those (though somewhat unilaterally) which have particular bearing on our concept.

It is widely accepted (as a central element of the crisis-hypothesis) that costs of child-bearing significantly increased during the societal and economic transition (Sobotka 2002; Zaharov 2008), but at the same time income and economic resources decreased for a large part of the population too. As Billingsley has demonstrated, these economic factors contributed to the shift in fertility behaviour and to a decrease of macro-level fertility (Billingsley 2010). We assume, however, that although the people concerned were aware of the increased costs of child-bearing these costs were consciously 'calculated' into their decision making. However, we also wish to understand *unintended* behaviour, i.e. unplanned postponement.

[24] We do not deny the fact that in adult cohorts there was adaptation, but we think adaptation played a minor role in shaping fertility behaviour.

More specifically, we (have to) focus on those circumstances that are unexpected and hard to foresee. In particular, it is worth reflecting on the rebuilding of the markets together with some key elements of welfare/family policy programmes, and in our opinion changes in the *nature* of *the labour and housing market* and the *dynamics of institutional change* played an influential role in this respect.

The economic transformations turned so-called *shortage markets* (the 'shortage economy') into the *supply markets* characteristic of market economies (Kornai 1972, 1980).[25] They were unknown in the era of Communism but seemed to function well in market economies. Regarding child-bearing, the restructuring of labour markets and housing markets was particularly important (see for example Kreyenfeld 2001; Sobotka 2002; Cornia and Paniccia 1995; Frejka 2008). In the labour market, unprecedented competition emerged between employees, which accompanied increased vulnerability to unemployment, depressed wages but also the possibility of faster career progression. Furthermore, it contributed to intensification of conflicts between family and work. We have to bear in mind that the emergence of the 'new capitalism' had to overcome several barriers: on one hand the renewed production needed to integrate itself into a well-functioning European market, while on the other it had to be able to justify its position *vis à vis* globalisation (Mills and Blossfeld 2005). Integration into the latter one for all new participants, including the post-Communist countries, was mostly of a 'peripheral' nature: while advantages and benefits of market production and of integration emerged in a later phase of the transition, they faced immediate disadvantages. Market fluctuation characterises post-Communist countries to a higher degree even today than Western European countries. Therefore, economic transformation went hand in hand with the so-far unknown *economic dynamism and intense status changes* (e.g. market successes and failures, careers and status loss, and unemployment).

It is easily observable in several country reports that *institutions of welfare and family politics* played a special role in the emergence of fertility behaviour characteristics of post-Communist countries (Sobotka 2002; Cornia and Paniccia 1995; Frejka 2008; Kotowska *et al*. 2008; Potančoková *et al*. 2008; Perelli-Harris 2008; Koycheva and Philipov 2008; Spéder and Kamarás 2008; Stankuniene and Jasilioniene 2008; Zaharov 2008). Devalorisation of family benefits was a general feature, together with the abolition of a large number of *crèches*; the move from universal benefits to income-tested ones and introduction of taxation benefits is also observable. We are of course aware of such modifications as well, right at the long-lasting nadir of fertility, when levels of benefits were increased and new allowances were introduced (Potančoková *et al*. 2008; Zaharov 2008). The decrease in the value of benefits and the significant increase in child-bearing costs played an important part in the decrease in fertility. However, for our discussion it is even more important to note that the ideology behind the allowances and its institutions were *constantly modified*, despite the fact that welfare institutions were expected to play a role in lessening the unexpected

[25] It is not appropriate to go into the question of different types of markets and market disequilibrium in this paper. For our purposes, we highlight only one feature: in state-socialist systems the competition between buyers (demand side) is prevalent, and on the "classical" markets the sellers (supply side) are compete with each other (see Kornai 1972, 1980).

risks characteristic of market economies. Nevertheless, changes to the institutions governing family policies following the democratic transitions were not characterised by predictability. In conclusion: from the perspective of realisation and failure of child-bearing intentions we emphasise that the institutions of family policies were characterised by constant change in the two decades following democratic transformation.

The economic transformations (privatisation, emergence of supply markets, integration into global markets, etc.) and constant alteration of welfare systems (alteration of basic principles of entitlements, devalorisation of family benefits, etc.) occurred within a short time frame from a historical perspective, and consequently individuals' and families' income and status change was intense. A general feature of well-established market economies is income and status mobility. The high degree of status change intensity observable in post-Communist countries results from: a) the move from a relatively stagnant (Communist and redistributive) society to a dynamic market economy, b) the fact that these economies were only able to peripherally integrate into European markets, and c) the profound and rapid restructuring of welfare institutions. Consequently, societal transition in the post-Communist countries was much faster than the constant but 'everyday' social-change characteristic of modern democracies and market economies (see for example Zapf 1995, 1996; Mathwig and Habich. 1996; Müller and Frick 1996; Habich and Spéder 2000). Zapf, representative of the theory of modernisation in his East and West comparison, refers to this phenomenon as the *two distinct paces of social transformation* (see Zapf 1995).

The phenomena described above constitutes the foundation of our thesis – that in the two post-Communist countries the failure of the short-term (within two years) intentions can be traced back mostly to the anomie emerging from asynchronous changes of the value system and the structural circumstances of child-bearing. This is down, in particular, to the fact that the value system significantly reflected the pre-transition world even one decade after democratic transition ('cultural lag'). Moreover, it refers back to the fact that institutional and economic transformations have not only 'run forward', but their pace – even after the turn of the millennium – is still higher than in other modern societies. In sum, it results from constant discrepancy between anticipated and real living conditions, which in turn leads to the modification of short-term child-bearing decisions and postponement of intentions. The weaker relationship between intention and realisation observable in the post-Communist countries is caused by the *social context*, in particular the *distinct pace of social change.* Behind this sustained discrepancy lies the fact that at the turn of the millennium such *generations* were mostly of fertile age, and whose socialisation had been closed well before the democratic transitions.

Optional Explanations: No or Minor Role

Lessons from the Study of the Intention-Behaviour Link

The perception of inconsistency between fertility intentions and behaviour among demographers and sociologists has as a long tradition as longitudinal studies in this field (Westoff and Ryder 1977). Studies have been carried out to pinpoint the reasons for this difference (Rindfuss *et al*. 1988, Quesnel-Vallée and Morgan 2003; Testa and Toulemon 2006)[26], but as far as we know these have tended to focus on a given country or period in time, and their results are therefore only partly suitable for cross-country comparison. There are numerous studies emphasising measurement errors (Miller and Pasta 1995; Testa and Toulemon 2006), which highlight that intentions and their realisation both in their content and timing can be measured differently.

In our analysis we pay particular attention to the measurement of intentions and realisation (of child birth) according to the same criteria. Therefore, our results are unlikely to be a result of measurement errors. We can also exclude influences that could be based on the certainty and intensity of intentions (Westoff and Ryder 1977; Rindfuss *et al*. 1988; Shoen *et al*. 1999; Testa and Toulemon 2006; Philipov 2009), and which are based on differences in time frames (Davidson and Jaccard 1979; Miller and Pasta 1995; Ajzen 1988). We are not inclined to hypothesise that biological factors, such as fecundity (as has been proposed in the models of Miller, Pasta and Ajzen (Miller and Pasta 1995: 534; Ajzen 1988: 129)) play a different role in the four countries. There are several researchers assuming the effect of (unexpected) life-course events on the outcome of intended behaviour (Miller and Pasta 1995; Liefbroer 2009). Provided that variability of the life courses – for example different labour markets or willingness to separate – differ in the four countries, then its effect on 'success' or 'failure' is traceable. Nevertheless, all of this is connected strongly to the social context, which we described in detail in the previous chapter.

Finally, we have to provide a short reply to questions which arise in numerous comparative social scientific studies, namely, whether it is possible that *rationality* of child-bearing intentions differs across countries, and whether intentions in some country contexts more accurately express future behaviour. We cannot provide a definite answer to these questions. However, a recent European comparison of life-course planning by young adults (Hellevick and Settersen 2011) partially helps to resolve this question. This research, which was conducted with the help of the third wave of the ESS (2006) using data from 25 European countries, sought answers to the question of what kind of country or group-specific features influence who plans the most for their life course.[27] The analysis proved that planning of one's life course was more wide-spread in countries with lower levels of material well-being, greater insecurity, and greater governmental insecurity.[28] Nevertheless, these results only indirectly imply that it is worth rejecting the assumption that rationality of child-bearing decisions is higher in Western countries.

[26] We elaborated on this in more detail in our earlier study (Spéder and Kapitány 2009).

[27] The dependent variable was the 11-point scale of life-course planning. We are aware of the fact that it measures individual ideas about life-course planning instead of behaviour.

[28] Nevertheless, within individual countries the more affluent employed groups with higher security have a stronger tendency to plan their life course.

Compositional Effects

The failure and the type of failure in realising positive fertility intention is strongly dependent on the demographic characteristics of the social groups concerned. We identified three factors – age, parity, and partnership – which clearly influenced the realisation of fertility intentions in the four mentioned countries (Kapitány and Spéder 2011). If in one or another country the share of any sub-population that has higher failure is over-represented among those intending to have a(nother) child, then the country differences in the rate of successful realisation could be ascribed to such kind of variations. A systematic cross-country comparison according to the above-mentioned three factors will highlight the role of compositional effects.

The unequal distribution of *partnership forms* is one of the salient differences between Western and Eastern countries regarding the sample of those intending to have a child within two years. The ratio of people living alone and intending to have a child within two years is higher in Hungary and Bulgaria than in Switzerland and in the Netherlands. Although many of the people living alone have stable partner relationships, they have, according to the mentioned analysis, significantly lower chances of realising their fertility intentions. The extent of this influence could be controlled if comparing cohabiting people. Although the distribution changes somewhat, and the share of postponers shrank in all of the studied countries, when comparing cohabiting people the basic feature of intention-behaviour outcomes and features of country-specific differences remain unchanged (Table 3). We can also conclude that among stable cohabiting people the share of intentional parents is less than 50 per cent in Hungary and Bulgaria. In Switzerland three-fifths of the cohabiting people planning to have a child within two years realised their intentions within three years (Table 3). The highest rate, close to four-fifths of the people, could be found in the Netherlands.[29]

Table 3
The Distribution of Different Fertility Intention-Behavioural Outcomes among People Living in Cohabiting Partnership (Marriage and Cohabitation Together)

Fertility outcomes	Countries			
	The Netherlands	Switzerland	Hungary	Bulgaria
Intentional parents	77.2	61.5	46.2	45.0
Postponers	9.8	24.8	33.5	31.5
Abandoners	12.9	14.8	20.5	23.5

Source: own calculations using the data described in Table A1.

Regarding *age*, we find that younger people are relatively more successful (Kapitány and Spéder 2011). Since people intending to have a child in the short run in post-Communist countries are younger than in the Western countries, this factor as compositional effect could not be responsible for a lower rate of successfully realised fertility intentions, since controlling age increases the failure in the two post-Communist countries.

[29] A full account of the three different partnership forms can be found in the Appendix, Table A3.

In addition, if we disaggregate the distribution according to parity, being the third significant identified factor of intention realisation, we find the same cross-country differences concerning all parity levels (cf. appendix, Table A4).[30]

According to these results we can assume that compositional effects are only partly responsible for country differences. Higher prevalence of non-cohabiting people intending to have a child within two years in the post-Communist countries increases, whereas the age of the respondent decreases the rate of failure in these countries. However, clear cross-country differences remain after controlling for compositional differences: compositional effects, considerations concerning the behaviour-outcome links and differing rationalities do not challenge our extended anomie explanation.

6 Discussion: Looking Into the Postponement 'Black Box' of the Post-Communist Fertility Transition

We would now like to turn our attention to a general feature of the post-Communist fertility transition, in particular the question of what kind of understanding can be drawn when comparing the country-specific distribution of intention realisation and macro-level postponement. In the post-Communist countries we detected the coexistence of distribution of individual behaviour and macro-level demographic change. We found a coincidence between a high-level postponement on the macro level, and a high ratio of failed intention realisation, especially that of involuntary postponement of individual's fertility intention (cf. Table 4).

Table 4
The Coincidence of Changes in Mean Age of First Birth (Macro-Level Postponement) and Involuntary Micro-Level Postponement

Countries	Time window of the surveys	Ratio of postponers (%)	Yearly average change in mean age of first birth	Character of the postponement on macro level
The Netherlands	2003–2006	15	0.05	slight
Switzerland	2004–2007	27	0.13	moderate
Hungary	2001–2004	42	0.40	large
Bulgaria	2002–2005	44	0.27	large

Source: own calculations using the data described in Table A1.

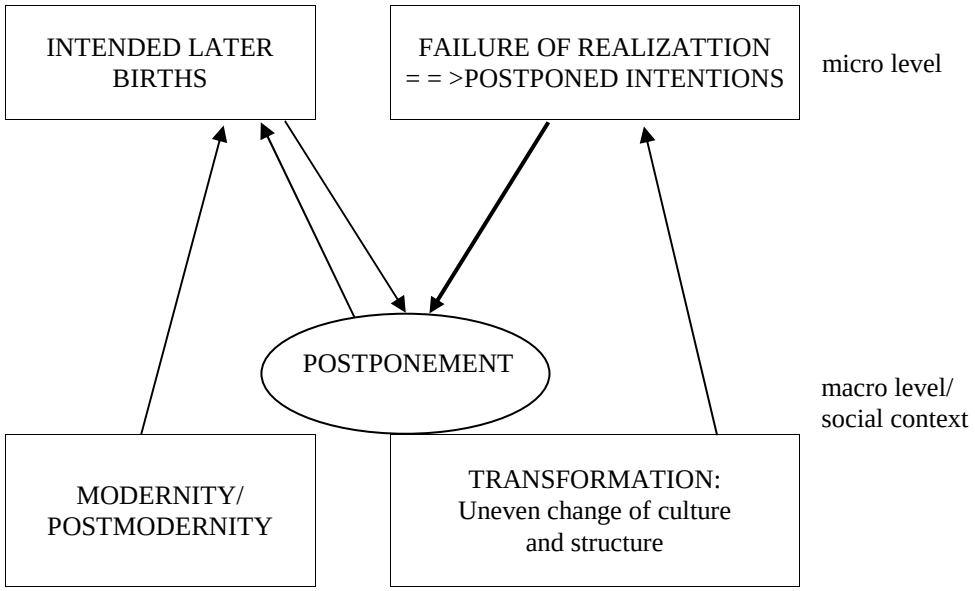
We can pose the question of what kind of relationship might exist among societal (macro-level) reality and prevalence in individual behaviour. Indeed, we could assume that "at the time of postponement" the macro level as a contextual factor facilitated postponement behaviour of individuals. Assuming this nature of the relationship, we also assume that postponement

[30] Differences according to gender also salient. In the Netherlands there are more women in the sample than men. We checked if the higher rate of success rate in the Netherlands could come from this feature of people intending to have a child. There are, however, no significant differences of intention realisation according to gender in the Netherlands.

practised by the individuals is close to conscious: people would voluntarily like to have children later in life, and have their children at a later age.

We'd now like to point out a relation where micro-level behaviour influences macro-level processes. We investigated realisation of fertility intentions within a two-year time frame, and arrived at the conclusion that in post-Communist countries more than half of the people could not realise their intention, but the majority maintained the intention to have a(nother) child at later point in the life course. If this is the case for a significant share of the people, macro-level postponement of births is caused by involuntary behavioural practices at the micro level, such as revisions of the timing of birth (see right side of Figure 7) – involuntary in the sense that the births were originally foreseen at an earlier point of time in the life course. This reveals an unrevealed characteristic of postponement in the post-Communist fertility transition: inability to realise child-bearing intentions goes hand in hand with intention postponement, and probably, if it happens, a later realisation of birth intention. Consequently, in the post-Communist transition, macro-level postponement is to some extent the consequence of involuntary postponement at the individual level.[31]

Figure 7
Schematic Presentation of Micro-Macro Postponement during Post-Communist Fertility Transition



All of this does not mean that intended late birth is not a strong causal factor of macro-level postponement (see left side of Figure 7), though we were not able to measure such a relationship in this paper. We have also omitted consideration of several other factors. In order to have a more accurate account of micro-level behaviour and macro-level postponement we should, of course, also have more information about advanced and unintended births. Nevertheless, involuntary postponement of child-bearing should be included in our understanding of reproductive decision making when discussing the post-Communist fertility transition.

[31] This causation could be an element of the "behavioral understanding of postponement" in the sense as Ni Bhrolchháin and Toulemon 2003 advocated it.

7 Concluding Remarks

We investigated the realisation of short-term fertility intentions in two Western and two former-Communist countries in Europe. The success rate of realisation was different in the four countries, and particularly low in the former-Communist countries. This motivated us to consider the country level/societal context as being responsible for the different distributions. We rejected the argument that country differences can be attributable to different measurement errors, and to distinct rationalities of child-bearing behaviour. We admitted that compositional effects may, to some extent at least, contribute to country differences: we showed that the stronger prevalence of people living alone and intending to have a child within a two-years-period increases the country-level failure of intention realisation in the two post-Communist societies. However, we ascribed anomie, emerging from an asynchronous pace of change as the major cause. We revealed in detail that the profound and high tempo of societal transformation after the collapse of the Communism, *the distinct pace of ideational and structural changes and a specific cohort feature*, played a particular role in the looser relationship between intention and behaviour in the post-Communist countries. Our results also point towards the need to reconsider individual child-bearing behaviour and macro-level fertility postponement in the post-Communist fertility transition. Reviewing the relevant literature, we find that studies implicitly assume that many people intend to have a child, for whatever reason, later in their life course during the time of postponement. That is probably the general mechanism producing macro-level postponement. Concerning the fertility transition after the collapse of Communism, we prefer a different causation: macro-level postponement of fertility seems to be (partly) *a result of failure in realisation of child-bearing intentions*. We also assume that it is perhaps a consequence and feature of behavioural change, resulting from *unexpected social changes* in the former-Communist countries.

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Appendix

Table A1
The Main Characteristics of the Four Surveys Used

	Bulgaria	Hungary	The Netherlands	Switzerland
Name of the survey	Social Capital Survey	'Turning Points of the Life Course' (Hungarian GGS survey)	'Netherlands Kinship Panel Survey' (Netherlands GGS survey)	Schweitzer Household-Panel (SHPSI.-SHPSII.)
Fieldwork first wave	2002	2001/2 (1st wave)	2003/4 (1st wave)	2004 (6th wave)
Fieldwork second wave	2005	2004/5 (2nd wave)	2006/7 (2nd wave)	2007 (9th wave)
Non-adjusted panel attrition (inclusive deaths, emigration etc.) between the two waves	25%	17%	18%	Not applicable
Longitudinal sample size (Unweighted N)	7481	13540	6326	5168*
The number of respondents intending to have a(nother) child within two years (subsample, unweighted – N)	2196	1056	458	385
Weighting variables	No	S2_suly	Bweight0	WP07L1S
Weighted subsample	No	1069	493	409
Description of data, methods, field-work	Bühler and Philipov, 2005	Kapitány, 2003. 2003 (in Hungarian)	Dykstra at al. 2007	Voorpostel at al. 2007
Home page of the surveys	–	www.demografia.hu	www.nkps.nl	www.swisspanel.ch
	The Netherlands	Switzerland	Hungary	Bulgaria
Name of the survey	'Netherlands Kinship Panel Survey' (Netherlands GGS survey)	Schweitzer Household-Panel (SHPSI.-SHPSII.)	'Turning Points of the Life Course' (Hungarian GGS survey)	Social Capital Survey
Fieldwork first wave	2003/4 (1st wave)	2004 (6th wave)	2001/2 (1st wave)	2002
Fieldwork second wave	2006/7 (2nd wave)	2007 (9th wave)	2004/5 (2nd wave)	2005
Non-adjusted panel attrition (inclusive deaths, emigration etc.) between the two waves	N/A	N/A	17%	25%
Longitudinal sample size (Unweighted N)	6326	N/A	13540	7481
The number of people intending to have a(nother) child within two years (subsample, unweighted – N)	458	385	1056	2196
Weighting variables	Bweight0	WP07L1S	S2_suly	No
Weighted subsample	493	409	1069	No
Description of data, methods, field-work	Dykstra et al. 2007	Voorpostel et al. 2007	Kapitány ed. 2003 (in Hungarian)	
Home page of the surveys	www.nkps.nl	www.swisspanel.ch	www.demografia.hu	–

Table A2

The Formulation of the Fertility Intention Questions in the Different Questionnaire Programs

NKPS (The Netherlands)	SHPS (Switzerland)	HGGS (Hungary)	SCS (Bulgaria)
Q.: Do you think you'll have {more} children in the future? A.:Y*es/no/don't know* IF YES Q.:*Within how many years' time would you like to have your {first / next} child?* Int.If pregnant / parter pregnant= 0	*Q.:* Do you intend to have a child in the next 24 months? A.: Yes/no Interviewer: Pregnant women: not counting the child you are currently pregnant with = another child in addition to the one you are expecting?	*Q.:* Would like to have additional child(ren)? A.: Yes /pregnant-partner pregnant /no, does not want/cannot have more children /don't know IF YES *Q.:*At what age would you like to have your next child?	Q.*: Do you intend to have (another) child during the next two years?* A.: Definitely yes/ Probably yes/ Probably No/definitely no Interviewer: if the respondent/partner is pregnant add: *besides the one you are expecting?*

Table A3

The Distribution of Different Fertility Intention-Behavioral Outcome among People Living in Different Partnership-Form at Wave 1

Partnership forms/Fertility outcomes	Countries			
	The Netherlands	Switzerland	Hungary	Bulgaria
Married (N=)	*278*	*278*	*578*	*1176*
Intentional parents	78	61	47	42
Postponers	8	23	31	31
Abandoners	14	15	22	27
Non-marital cohabitation (N=)	*142*	*77*	207	*363*
Intentional parents	73	(60)	45	55
Postponers	15	(29)	41	33
Abandoners	13	(12)	14	12
Living alone (N=)	*38*	*54*	*285*	*657*
Intentional parents	((53))	(15)	21	21
Postponers	((24))	(46)	67	72
Abandoners	((24))	(39)	12	7
All (N=)	*458*	*408*	*1069*	*2196*
Intentional parents	74	55	40	38
Postponers	11	27	42	43
Abandoners	15	18	18	18

Table A4

The Distribution of Different Fertility Intention-Behavioral Outcome According Parities at Wave 1

Parity/Fertility outcomes	Countries			
	The Netherlands	Switzerland	Hungary	Bulgaria
Parity0 (N=)	*210*	*185*	*555*	*923*
Intentional parents	73	39	38	38
Postponers	18	40	56	57
Abandoners	9	21	6	5
Parity1 (N=)	*186*	*150*	*324*	*724*
Intentional parents	78	74	45	39
Postponers	6	14	33	35
Abandoners	16	12	23	26
Parity2+(N=)	*62*	*74*	*190*	*549*
Intentional parents	(65)	(55)	35	31
Postponers	(6)	(23)	18	9
Abandoners	(29)	(22)	47	60
All (N=)	*458*	*408*	*1069*	*2196*
Intentional parents	74	55	40	38
Postponers	11	27	42	44
Abandoners	15	18	18	18

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