

REALISATION OF CHILDBEARING INTENTIONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC¹⁾

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates childbearing intentions and the realisation thereof in the context of the Czech Republic. Czech Generations and Gender Survey panel data from 2005 and 2008 is used to investigate the realisation/non-realisation of short-term fertility intentions. The author studies to what extent the intention of having a child plays a role in real behaviour and what impact might be assigned to other factors such as personal characteristics and socio-economic conditions.

Keywords: fertility, childbearing, intentions, Czech Republic

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1 INTRODUCTION

The most characteristic trend in reproductive patterns during the socialist era in the Czech Republic was a strong orientation towards the two-child family model, the universality of which was apparent from fertility behaviour (*Frejka – Sardon, 2004; Rychtaříková, 2003*), and according to recent sociological surveys the ideal of the two-child family persists (e.g. surveys carried out by the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs, *CVVM, 2003; Fialová et al., 2000; Hamplová, 2000*). Since 1990, two-thirds of all respondents in a wide range of surveys have repeatedly advocated having two children, while only one out of five considers three children to be the ideal (*Šalamounová – Šamanová, 2003: p. 29; 2004: p. 8*).

In the Generation and Gender Survey (GGS) the expected (ultimate) number of children was measured as the sum of the number of children already born plus the additional number of children desired. According to GGS data, the mean expected family size in 2005

declined slightly amongst younger cohorts, among whom women frequently declared a preference for the two-child family and only a small number intended to have a larger family (three or more children). Intentions below replacement level are characteristic for cohorts born after 1980 (and therefore in the year of the interview had reached the 18–24 age group); in this group female respondents often express the intention of remaining childless or of having only one child.

This article investigates short-term childbearing intentions (within the next three years) and the realisation thereof by men and women born between 1960 and 1987 as observed in a longitudinal study that examined fertility intentions over a three-year period and included subsequent follow-up work which monitored actual childbirth as well as respondents' 'new or revised' childbearing intentions at the end of the period.

This study's prospective view is particularly important; the author uses Czech Generations and Gender

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Survey panel data from 2005 and 2008 and focuses on factors explaining the realisation / non-realisation of fertility intentions. A fertility intention is only one of several factors that can play a role in the whole decision-making process. Other factors that have to be taken into account consist of personal characteristics, a respondent's surrounding environment and social ties. Here the author includes the labour-market factor, since parenthood is often, especially for women, perceived as having a negative effect on a person's occupational and therefore financial conditions.

This paper will analyse and discuss four fundamental and closely interrelated research topics:

1. To what extent do different childbearing intentions 'result in' childbirth over a three-year period?
2. What kind of childbearing intentions are more likely to be realised? This leads to another closely related topic that is particularly important for fertility studies in demography: the question of the predictive power of declared intentions.
3. What personal characteristics play a role in the realisation or non-realisation of time-specific fertility intentions?
4. What is the level of stability of such intentions if they are not realised? The author will study the stability of childbearing intentions among those respondents who did not experience childbirth during the time period studied.

Over the period of observation considered in this study (2005–2008) the total fertility rate (TFR) in the Czech Republic increased from 1.28 in 2005 to 1.50 in 2008. Therefore, the realisation of intentions and their predictive power were studied under what might be seen as the relatively favourable conditions in which the populous birth cohorts of the 1970s realised their postponed childbearing, an atmosphere in which the media frequently explained the numbers of newborn babies in terms of a "baby-boom". Moreover, this period of time saw changes in the amount of the birth and parental allowance and the introduction of new parental leave conditions. From April 2006 the birth allowance increased from 8 750 to 17 500 CZK per

child; however in 2008 the allowance was reduced to 13 000 CZK per child. In 2007 the parental allowance was doubled from 3 696 CZK to 7 582 CZK, and this change had been extensively discussed already during the second half of 2006. In January 2008 a more flexible 'multispeed' parental allowance was introduced, which allows parents to choose between receiving the allowance for periods of two, three, or four years, and the monthly amount is based on which of the three options they choose: the high rate (11 400 CZK) can be drawn up until the child's second birthday, the basic rate (7 600 CZK) can be drawn up until the child's third birthday, and in the case of the third option the allowance is paid at a reduced rate (3 800 CZK) for the last 27 months of the four-year leave period.

2 STUDYING CHILDBEARING INTENTIONS IN DEMOGRAPHY

Behind any study of fertility intentions lies the assumption that individuals are able to make rational choices about if and when they would like to have children (Toulemon – Testa, 2006; Philipov *et al.*, 2009). Most theoretical explanations also assume that behaviour reflects the informed decisions of an individual or couple.

The prospective GGS study, which is used as the data source for this article, was inspired by a variation on the theory of 'reasoned action', which provides an insight into the intention formation process. The project was inspired by the most recent version of this theory, namely, the 'theory of planned behaviour' (Ajzen, 1991), so a consistent set of questions on intentions concerning several choices was designed for the questionnaire in order to allow an analysis of such choices as interdependent and competing processes in the life course (Vikat *et al.*, 2007).

The theory of planned behaviour suggests that 'intentions to perform behaviours of different kinds can be predicted with high accuracy from attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control; and these intentions, together with perceptions of behavioural control, account for considerable variance in actual behaviour' (Ajzen, 1991). Thus intentions to behave in a specific way are shaped by three conceptually independent determinants: (1) *attitudes towards behaviour* – a person's individual

evaluation of the positive or negative outcomes of behaving in a particular way, (2) *subjective norms*, which are determined by normative beliefs and is linked to perceived social pressure to behave or not to behave in a certain way and (3) *perceived behavioural control* – i.e. a person's perception of the ease or difficulty of behaving in a certain way (Ajzen, 1991).

This social-psychological model provides a potential framework in which to explain not only the decision-making process but also any potential correspondence with subsequent outcomes, i.e. with real behaviour. According to this theory, behaviour is a joint function of intentions and perceived behavioural control. The relative importance of intentions and perceived behavioural control in the prediction of behaviour is expected to vary in relation to specific situations and across different behaviours (Ajzen, 1991). Possible inconsistencies are explained either by the strength of the attempt at behavioural performance or by the degree of control over behaviour, which includes internal and external constraints. It is supposed that when behaviour affords a person complete control over behavioural performance, intentions alone should be sufficient to predict behaviour.

The attention paid to fertility intentions in demographic research is closely linked with the possibility of predicting fertility, and the realisation or non-realisation of individual childbearing intentions has become an important question for demographers in recent years (Philipov *et al.*, 2009). A major obstacle to research on this issue is the availability of both appropriate and detailed data at the micro-level. At least two waves of longitudinal data are required in order to track the behaviour of individuals and to study the likelihood of the realisation of measured fertility intentions or the stability of those intentions.

Moreover the definition of childbearing intentions differs from survey to survey. In some surveys only the ideal number of children is studied; but the ideal number of children is an abstract notion and refers to social norms rather than to a realistic individual target. Therefore intentions are usually defined with respect to the intended (ultimate) number of children a respondent would like to have by the end of that individual's reproductive life (Philipov – Dorbritz, 2003; Philipov *et al.*, 2009). According to Lee's distinction, used by Philipov *et al.* (2009), the intended number of

children defined in this way is referred to as a 'fixed target'. There are several problems that complicate theorising about and interpreting the intended number of children in a lifetime perspective, in particular the very long time-scale that younger respondents have for the realisation of their intentions and the different factors in play during the life course of the respondent that might considerably modify not only the realisation of the intention, but the intention itself. Analysing a sequence of 21 General Household Surveys carried out in Great Britain from 1979 to 2001, Smallwood and Jefferies (2003) found that average intended family size moves downward over time and thus the intended number of children declines with increasing age. However, they conclude that this should not necessarily be interpreted as what they call an 'unmet need for fertility'. The disparity between intentions collected through surveys and subsequent fertility levels is likely to be a result of both the uncertain nature of many intentions and the modification of those intentions by subsequent life events and circumstances. The case in which individuals can change their fertility intentions according to their life conditions and adjust the intended number of children over the course of time might be termed a 'moving target' (Lee, 1980; cf. Philipov *et al.*, 2009: p. 58).

Another important issue in the study of intentions is the question of 'timing', i.e. whether one studies defined short-term or general, lifelong childbearing intentions. According to recent studies, more 'powerful' fertility intention predictions have been achieved when the timing of the behaviour is specified (Philipov *et al.*, 2006). Thus, studies measuring fertility intentions and the realisation thereof commonly examine the intention of having a child within the next few years (within two years – Philipov – Testa, 2008; within three years – Spéder – Kapitány, 2009; within five years Toulemon – Testa, 2006).

3 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample

In this study, the author intends to focus on short-term intentions within a time-frame of three years following the interview date in order to be consistent with the length of the follow-up period. The author uses data from the Czech Generation and Gender Survey,

which took the form of a longitudinal panel study in 2005 which was repeated in 2008. The second wave thus provides a unique opportunity to compare original opinions and plans with their future realisation. In 2005, both women and men were asked about their future childbearing plans and expectations concerning having a (another) child within the next three years; thus after the second wave in 2008 it was possible to assess whether those expectations had been met and whether and to what extent respondents' original opinions and attitudes with regard to children and their influence on family life were reflected in actual reproductive behaviour.

In this study the author measured intentions with the following basic question: 'Do you intend to have a (another) child during the next three years?' Possible answers included: 'definitely yes', 'probably yes', 'probably not', and 'definitely not'. The question, 'Supposing you do not have a/another child during the next three years, do you intend to have any (more) children at all?', was included to create a variable defining short-term intentions according to declared certainty and longer-term intentions. By combining both questions a new variable was constructed and coded into the following categories: 'definitely yes within three years', 'probably yes within three years', 'yes, but later' and 'no'.

Pregnant women and male respondents with pregnant partners were not asked these questions in the first wave of the survey, so they were omitted from the analysis. In addition, respondents who defined themselves as infertile were excluded from the analytical models; there are however covered in the descriptive findings. The realisation of childbearing intentions within three years was defined as either the birth of a child in the inter-survey period or a pregnancy during the second interview (i.e. potential live births were considered to be 'realized births').

Out of the initial sample of 10 006 respondents consisting of men and women aged 18–79 years in 2005, this focused on men and women aged 18–45 (generations 1960–1987). In 2005 the refined sample consisted of 5 199 respondents and was representative of the Czech population in that year. A total of 1 506 people from the generations selected for the study were re-interviewed in 2008.

Panel attrition in this age group was high, at 71%; this was principally due to refusals, but was also due

to respondents moving, or was simply because the interviewers were unable to contact respondents. Since panel attrition was so high it was necessary to analyse it according to interest variables, since such attrition may be connected with both positive and negative fertility intentions and their certainty, thus rendering the results biased. The test consisted of a comparison of respondents from defined generations who participated in the second interview and those who were not re-interviewed. The research found that there was no bias due to attrition in the sub-sample with regard to declared short-term fertility intentions. In addition, it was found that gender, partnership status, infertility and education parameters were also not biased by attrition. Conversely, attrition was found to be slightly higher for younger respondents (18–29 years in 2005) and childless respondents. The attrition rate, *ceteris paribus*, was lower for women on maternity/parental leave.

3.2 Methodology and variables

Owing to the limitations of the data and the small sample size, the author was to a considerable extent restricted in terms of being able to conduct a more stratified analysis by gender, age or parity. Therefore, binary-logistic regression models were designed to analyse the realization of positive childbearing intentions for both men and women and for all parity, and this characteristic was employed as a covariate in the models. Only those respondents who declared positive short-term or longer-term childbearing intentions and who participated in both waves of the panel survey were included; the response variable was equal to 1 if they had a child during the inter-survey period or declared a pregnancy at the second interview.

Several demographic and socio-economic characteristics collected in 2005 are included in the models as **explanatory variables**. All the following covariates are categorical and were transformed into dummy variables:

- gender;
- age, coded into four groups: 18–24, 25–29 (reference category), 30–34 and 35–45 years;
- number of children that respondents had when declaring their future childbearing intentions

- coded into three groups: no child (reference category), 1 child and 2 and more children. This covariate includes biological children only;²⁾
- education – refers to the highest level of completed study and is coded as: basic, secondary without the school-leaving exam at age 18/19, secondary with the school-leaving exam at age 18/19 (reference category) and tertiary;
- partnership status, coded as: single (reference category), LAT – living apart from the partner irrespective of the respondent's legal marital status, cohabitation, and married (this category implies not only legal marital status but also sharing the same household with the respondent's spouse);
- socio-economic status, coded as: employed (reference category), unemployed, maternity/parental leave, studying, not working (housewife, other).

4 RESULTS – THE REALIZATION OF CHILDBEARING INTENTIONS

4.1 Descriptive findings

Of all the men and women in the panel sample aged 18–45 in 2005 and who (or whose partner) were not pregnant at the time of the first interview, 9.7% gave birth to a child during the period observed or declared a pregnancy at the second interview. Table 1 shows the distribution of men and women according to their childbearing intentions as declared in 2005. One-quarter of both men and women declared that they intended to have a child within the following three years, the difference lies in the level of certainty of the intention, since women declared such an intention more often and with a higher level of certainty than men. The second column of the table presents the figures for the share of those who experienced childbirth during the three-year period or declared

a pregnancy at the second interview according to their initial intentions. For example, 27% of men who definitely wanted a child in 2005 actually had a child during the period, compared to only 5% of those who initially intended not to have a child.

The results show that those who planned to have a child later were very consistent in their subsequent behaviour and only 4% of these men and women gave birth to a child during the period studied. This percentage is even smaller than the percentage of those who did not want to have a child at all in 2005 but ultimately did have one (5% of men and 6% of woman). Conversely, a considerable proportion of those who had a positive intention did not realize their stated birth intentions during the given time period. The level of certainty of the intention also determines its fulfilment, at least when in the case of 'positive' intentions; short-term intentions are more likely to be realized if there is a higher level of certainty (the 'definitely yes' response).

The gender difference in the realization of an intention is evident in the case of planning a birth. Women's intentions to have a child are much more likely to be realized than those of men – 45% of female respondents who definitely intended to have a child in the near future fulfilled their plan (compared to 27% of men) and 22% of those who had a probable intention of having a child did so (compared to 10% of men).

The number of children that an individual currently has is an important factor in both measuring intentions and in predicting the future realization of intentions. When short-term fertility intentions and their realization are compared in relation to the number of biological children a respondent already has, the idea of a two-child family being realized over the short period of time is a distinctive feature and is obvious from the research results (Table 2):

Firstly, when comparing the intentions of respondents according to the number of children they had when first interviewed, those with one child declared a positive intention of having another within three years more frequently (more than one-third of

2) The role of step-children, adopted or foster children living in the respondent's household was ignored, however their role could, in certain cases, be more important than for example the role of biological children who do not live in the same household as the respondent.

Table 1 Childbearing intentions according to certainty and timing: percentage of respondents who had a child within the three-year period, Czech Republic (%)

Childbirth intentions in 2005 (intentions within 3 years)	Men		Women	
	Distribution in 2005	Had a child within 3 years	Distribution in 2005	Had a child within 3 years
Definitely yes within 3 years	6.5	26.7	12.3	44.9
Probably yes within 3 years	17.5	9.9	12.8	21.5
Yes, but later	34.5	3.8	14.5	3.8
No	40.4	4.7	55.8	5.7
Cannot have (more) children	1.0	28.6	4.7	2.9
Total	100.0	7.0	100.0	12.1

Note: N = 690 men and 726 women aged 18–45 in 2005. Current pregnancies included in the % of births (children within three years).
Source: GGS 2005 and 2008, panel data.

Table 2 Childbearing intentions and percentage of respondents who had a child within the three-year period, by number of children in 2005, Czech Republic (%)

Short-term childbearing intention 2005	Distribution 2005	Had a child within 3 years
Intention to have a 1st child		
Definitely yes	11.4	33.3
Probably yes	20.2	11.7
Probably no	27.3	5.2
Definitely no	39.7	4.4
Cannot have (more) children	1.4	0.0
Intention to have a 2nd child		
Definitely yes	17.7	51.0
Probably yes	23.8	22.7
Probably no	19.9	9.1
Definitely no	35.7	6.1
Cannot have (more) children	2.9	25.0
Intention to have a 3rd child		
Definitely yes	3.2	23.1
Probably yes	4.2	5.9
Probably no	13.7	7.1
Definitely no	75.1	2.6
Cannot have (more) children	3.9	6.3

Note: N = 634 childless respondents, N = 277 respondents with 1 child and N = 409 respondents with 2 children in 2005. Men and women aged 18–45 years in 2005. Current pregnancies included in the % of births (realization of positive intention).

Source: GGS 2005 and 2008, panel data.

them) than childless respondents and respondents who already had two children. Families with more than two children make up a minority reproduction group (Rychtaříková, 2003) in the Czech Republic; the probability of the birth of a third child continues to fall from one generation to the next (Pikálková,

2003). Therefore, not surprisingly, respondents overwhelmingly declared zero short-term birth intentions in terms of having a third child.

Secondly, short-term intentions of having a second child are more likely to be realized than short-term intentions of having a first child, particularly when

the intention is certain (half of the respondents who definitely intended to have a second child did so within the three-year period).

4.2 The realization of childbearing intentions and intervening factors

The author has shown that a considerable proportion of men and women who initially declared the intention to have a child in the near future did not do so within the given time period. Several factors could explain why those intentions remained unrealized, for example, the revision of intentions over the course of the time period, highlighted, for instance, by Smallwood and Jefferies (2003) or Monnier (1987), or as a result of changes in an individual's private life, personal experiences or societal changes. Moreover, the same set of factors – demographic and social criteria and life-course events – could lead to a change in timing (non-realized births could be postponed) or total rejection.

Therefore, in the next part of the study, the author proposes analysing to what extent demographic and selected socio-economic criteria influence childbirth and the role played by childbearing intentions and to outline what characteristics have the strongest effect on the realization of intentions. Table 3 shows the odds ratios of having a child as estimated using binary-logistic regression models. The first model includes the fertility intentions variable only. Subsequent models control for the effects of relevant background variables: model 2 controls for selected demographic variables only and model 3 controls for both demographic and socio-economic variables. The final model (model 4) contains all the aforementioned variables.

Partnership status is the main background factors predicting who will actually have a birth in the following three-year period. A single person was shown to have the lowest chance of having a child during the following three years, while married couples had the highest chance. The effect of having a partner but not being married to him/her is slightly lower for respondents living apart (LAT) from the partner than for those cohabiting, but the difference is negligible, and the odds of their having a child is still substantially greater than that of a single person.

Interestingly, employment status, level of education and the number of children do not play a significant role. Contrary to the descriptive findings, the number of children a respondent has does not determine the chances of having a (another) child in the given time period. Only having two or more children seems to lower the chances of realizing the positive intention, but the difference is not significant.

Childbearing intentions appear to be a very significant covariate in terms of explaining the birth of a child during the inter-survey period; the highest coefficients can be seen in the intentions-only model (model 1). Even though coefficients characterising short-term intentions are lower in the full model (model 4), the chances of realizing a declared, certain, positive intention remains very high compared to long-term plans and remains very significant when other explanatory variables are controlled for.

The results of model 4 (Table 3) also indicate that childbearing intentions offer a specific type of information on childbearing behaviour and have their own interpretative potential. This conclusion is based particularly on the results, which demonstrate that the effects of demographic and socio-economic variables do not vary substantially between the model that includes and the model that excludes the intentions covariate. The two distinctive variations in the significance of the gender and age covariates are clearly mediated through different intentions in terms of timing – the youngest age group more frequently contains those who plan to have a child, but later than within three years.

As for gender, women often declared a firm short-term intention, unlike men, who tended to express longer-term intentions. After including the interaction between the fertility intention covariate and gender in model 4 (Table 3a), it is evident that women are more likely to realize their short-term childbearing plans than men no matter how certain their positive short-term intentions were.

4.3 Stability of intentions among those who did not have a child between 2005 and 2008

In the inter-survey period changes may well have occurred in the respondent's personal circumstances, in their life course or within the surrounding environment that will have an impact on his/her original in-

Table 3 Odds ratios concerning having a child between 2005 and 2008 (inter-survey period), Czech Republic

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
		Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)
Childbearing intention (ref. wants a child later)	Definitely wants a child within 3 years	16.10 ***			5.46 ***
	Probably wants a child within 3 years	4.46 ***			2.11
	Wants a child later	1			1
Gender (ref. male)	Male		1	1	1
	Female		2.20 **	2.05 **	1.60
Age of respondent in 2005 (ref. 25–29)	Age 18–24		0.28 ***	0.41 *	0.54
	Age 25–29		1	1	1
	Age 30–34		0.51 *	0.51 *	0.50 *
	Age 35+		0.40 *	0.45	0.45
Number of children (ref. childless)	0		1	1	1
	1		1.08	0.92	1.02
	2 and more		0.45	0.41	0.62
Partnership status (ref. no partner)	No partner		1	1	1
	LAT		2.90 *	3.22 **	3.09 *
	Cohabitation		4.93 ***	4.68 ***	3.45 **
	Married		9.11 ***	8.04 ***	4.94 ***
Education (ref. secondary with school-leaving exam at age 18/19)	Basic			1.23	1.27
	Secondary – without leaving exam at age 18/19			0.71	0.72
	Secondary – leaving exam at age 18/19			1	1
	Tertiary			1.43	1.55
Socio-economic status (ref. employed)	Employed			1	1
	Unemployed			1.33	1.23
	Maternity / parental leave			1.42	1.39
	Student			1.12	2.13
	Not working			0.26	0.18
Constant		0.039 ***	0.060 ***	0.069 ***	0.040 ***
N		691	691	691	691

* $p < 0.5$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Note: N = 691 men and women aged 18–45 in 2005 who declared the positive intention of having a (another) child within the next three years or later. Dependent variable: having a child during the period between the two interviews or pregnancy at the second interview (contrasted with no child born during the inter-survey period).

Source: GGS 2005 and 2008, panel data.

tentions and will lead to a revision of his/her plans. Not only external factors influence the process of changing or redefining childbearing intentions; the individual might well modify his/her previously declared intention after discovering that his/her evaluation of the

factors taken into account in the decision-making process was biased. Therefore, the author provides an overview of the stability of childbearing intentions for those respondents who did not experience childbirth between the two interviews.

Table 3a Odds ratios concerning having a child between 2005 and 2008 – interaction effect of gender and childbearing intention, Czech Republic

		Men	Women
		Exp(B)	Exp(B)
Childbearing intention (ref. Men*wants a child later)	Definitely wants a child within 3 years	3.87 *	6.39 ***
	Probably wants a child within 3 years	1.19	2.81*
	Wants a child later	1	0.67

* p < 0.5; *** p < 0.001

Note: Covariates from Model 4 are controlled.

Source: GGS 2005 and 2008, panel data.

Firstly, if we examine positive short-term childbearing plans from 2005 that were not realized, it is evident that (by 2008) a share of respondents had decided to postpone childbearing until later (16.9%) and a very significant number had abandoned their childbearing plan altogether (35.5%); 45% remained consistent and after three years once again declared the intention of having a child within the next three years.

Those who (in 2005) constructed their childbearing plans over a longer time-frame also remained relatively consistent in their attitudes and after three years once again declared their desire to have a child, but to do so later than within the next three years (43%). Almost one-third of respondents had accelerated their plans (by 2008) and intended to have a child in the short term. However, once again, almost a quarter had abandoned their childbearing intentions.

The most consistent group of respondents were those who had no future fertility plans, only around

12% of whom subsequently considered having a (another) child now or later; more than 80%, however, remained negative in terms of future fertility plans.

The results show the obvious dominance of the confirmation of intentions, both positive (32% of the sub-sample of men and women who did not have a child during the inter-survey period) and negative (no child planned – 44%), the latter of the two intentions being dominant. In terms of redefinition, positive childbearing intentions were more frequently abandoned (14%). Only 6% of respondents who initially rejected having a child in the future subsequently expressed the desire to have a child.

The final part of the study focuses on the so-called “abandoners” – those women and men who initially declared positive childbearing intentions (either short- or longer-term in 2005) but who did not have a child in the inter-survey period and, moreover, declared in 2008 that they no longer planned to have a child.

Table 4 Stability of childbearing intentions among those who did not experience childbirth between 2005 and 2008; Czech Republic (abs. and %)

Childbearing plan in 2005	Childbearing plan in 2008				Total
	Child within next 3 years (definitely + probably)	Child later	No child (neither within 3 years nor later)	Cannot have children	
Child within next 3 years (definitely + probably)	111 44.8	42 16.9	88 35.5	7 2.8	248 100
Child later	91 31.9	123 43.2	68 23.9	3 1.1	285 100
No child (neither within 3 years nor later)	43 7.0	29 4.7	504 82.1	38 6.2	614 100

Note: N = 1147 men and women who did not experience childbirth between the two interviews and who, in 2005, declared they could have (in physiological terms) a child.

Source: GGS 2005 and 2008, panel data.

Table 5 Odds ratios concerning abandoning childbearing intentions between 2005 and 2008, Czech Republic

		Exp(B)
Gender (ref. male)	Male	1
	Female	1.45
Age of respondent in 2005 (ref. 25–29)	Age 18–24	0.83
	Age 25–29	1
	Age 30–34	1.39
	Age 35+	6.98 ***
Number of children (ref. childless)	0	1
	1	2.41 **
	2 and more	6.12 ***
Education (ref. secondary with school-leaving exam at age 18/19)	Basic	2.31 **
	Secondary – without leaving exam at age 18/19	1.81 *
	Secondary – leaving exam at age 18/19	1
	Tertiary	0.47
Constant		0.143 ***
N		523

* $p < 0.5$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Note: N = 523 men and women who declared positive childbearing intentions and who had no child in the inter-survey period.

Source: GGS 2005 and 2008, panel data.

The binary-logistic regression model was employed to analyse this group. Only those respondents who declared positive childbearing intentions and who had no child in the inter-survey period were included; the response variable was equal to 1 if they declared that they did not plan any (additional) children in 2008. A set of demographic and educational characteristics are included in the models as explanatory variables (for the full specification, see part 3).

People who already had children in 2005 and especially those with more than one child were found to be more likely to abandon their childbearing plans. In addition, people aged 35+ were more likely to abandon their fertility plans than younger age groups who are evidently more easily able to postpone childbearing until a later age. Even though the level of education was found not to play a significant role in models which studied the realization of intentions (Table 3), lower educational attainment does appear to result in a significantly higher chance of initial fertility plans being abandoned. It might be supposed that the economic situation of those with lower levels of education influ-

ences such behaviour. Nevertheless, when a subjective evaluation of the material conditions of respondents was included in the model, the chances of fertility intentions being abandoned still remained significantly higher for the lower educated. Therefore it can be assumed that highly educated people construct their life plans in both a more realistic and stable way than the lower educated and that their plans are not easily influenced by either external or internal factors.

5 CONCLUSION

In this paper the author studied to what extent childbearing intentions play a role in real behaviour. The analysis of longitudinal data documents a high level of consistency between zero fertility plans and subsequent behaviour. The highest share of 'consistent' respondents consists of those who did not want and subsequently did not have any children.

The intention to have a child appears to be an important covariate expressing the chances of giving birth during a defined period of time. The highest chances

of realizing positive fertility intentions pertain particularly to those who expressed a declared, certain, positive short-term intention. Even though intentions themselves affect the chances of having a child, mixed results were obtained concerning the predictive power of short-term fertility intentions.

Short-term fertility intentions, as stated by men and women in 2005, tend to overestimate the number of children born in the period of 2005–2008. However, according to the theory of planned behaviour, these intentions have a relevant influence on predicting reproductive behaviour and predicting who will have a child within the three years.

Possible inconsistencies between intentions and real behaviour are explained either by the strength of the attempt at behavioural performance or by the degree of control over behaviour, which includes internal and external constraints. Results shows the importance of the strength of the plan to perform behaviour, since firm fertility intentions show the strongest effect out of all the covariates considered in the regression analysis and indicate the highest odds of having a child in the subsequent three-year period.

This overestimation could be affected both by postponement and by intervening factors that impact a re-

spondent's original plans. Studying the social limits of childbearing, the form of partnership could be seen as one of the constraints. While cohabitation and non-marital childbearing are widespread in the Czech Republic, those living in legal marriages have a higher chance of realizing their fertility intention compared to other types of partnership (both LAT and cohabitation). Fertility plans and their certainties vary according to parity and people who already have children (especially those with more than one child) are more likely not to realize their childbearing intentions. An important constraint on the realization of a positive childbearing plan is age, since the people over the age of 35 who did not fulfil their reproductive plans tended to abandon them after three years.

Since reproductive behaviour does not afford a person's complete control over its performance, fertility intentions alone are not sufficient to predict behaviour. However, the result shows that certain types of intentions have a relevant influence on predicting future fertility, especially when combined with other personal characteristics that track groups of people who are more able to realize their plans and who exhibit greater efficacy in the planning of their life course.

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