

Is Romania going toward the one child family model?

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Abstract. The fall of the socialist regime brought a dramatic drop in fertility levels in our country: from a (period) total fertility rate of 2.2 children/woman in 1989 to that of 1.3 children/woman in 2004. Fertility in Romania decreased not because a significant increase in the proportion of childless women, but because the massive drop in second and higher order births. More and more, the one child family model becomes popular in Romania, especially in urban areas. We may wonder whether the one child family would become the norm in our country, or the two or more children family would survive, especially in rural areas. We take a first step in the attempt to study this issue and analyse fertility intentions of Romanian women, in urban and rural areas. We made our investigation by means of logistic regression on data from two national surveys, both conducted in 2004: *Demography and Lifestyles of Romanian Women* and *Reproductive Health Survey*.

Keywords: fertility intentions, Romania, first and second child, urban and rural areas, logistic regression

1. Evidence for the spread of one child family model

Fertility in our country has undergone the same long-term pattern of decline as in other European societies, but the process was masked by the coercive pronatalist policy of the socialist regime. Before 1990 there were fluctuations in fertility levels, as supplementary coercive measures were applied at times when it fell “too low”, leading to an increase shortly followed by taking its descendent path. Fertility pattern in Romania before 1990, as in other countries in the region, was characterized by almost universal first childbearing, early motherhood, with births concentrated in a small age interval, with the predominance of two-children family model (Philipov 2002).

The fall of the socialist regime brought a dramatic drop in fertility levels: from a (period) total fertility rate of 2.2 children/woman in 1989 to that of 1.3 children/woman in 2004. Fertility in Romania decreased not because a significant increase in the proportion of childless women, but because the massive drop in second and higher order births. More and more, the one child family model becomes popular in Romania, especially in urban areas. Here, the proportions of women with two or more children

declined for the latest cohorts (even if their reproductive life did not finish), while in rural areas we can see a decrease for women with three or more children and an increase for those with two children. Data from the National Institute of Statistics (2002) show that for the cohort 1966 (aged 36 in 2002), the share of women of parity 1 was 37.8% in urban areas and 18.8% in rural areas, while the share of women of parity 2 was 35.8% in urban areas (decreasing) and 40.3% in rural areas (increasing).

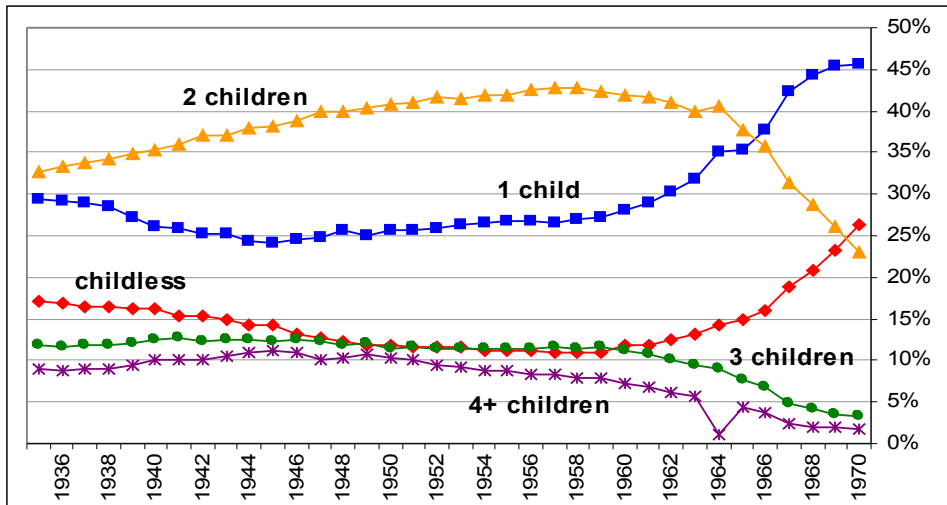


Figure 1a. Women by parity, cohorts 1935-1970, urban areas, at the 2002 Census

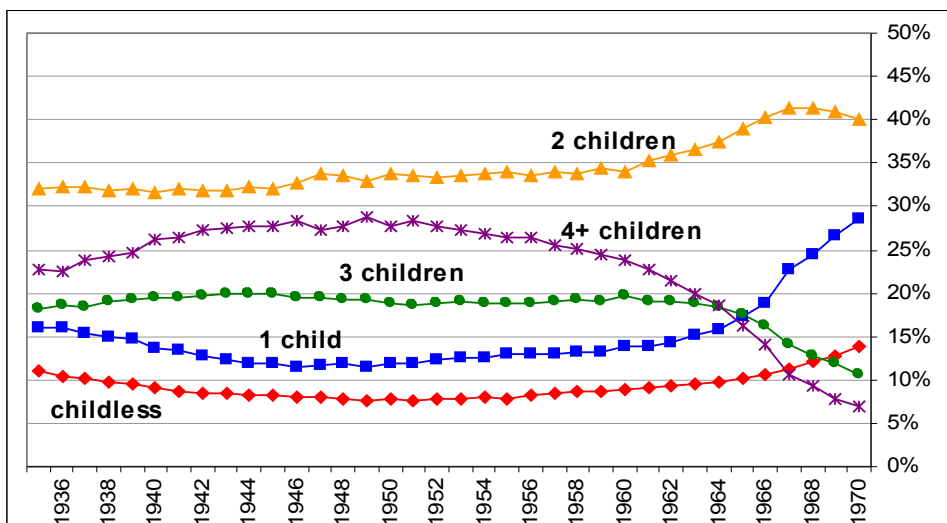


Figure 1b. Women by parity, cohorts 1935-1970, rural areas, at the 2002 Census

For the youngest cohort (1970), only 23.1% of women from urban areas have two children, while the share is 40.1% for rural areas. This difference is linked also with the earlier fertility pattern in rural than in urban areas (in 2004, the mean age at first birth was 22.6 in rural and 26.0 in urban areas).

The above figures make us wonder whether the one child family would become the norm in our country, or the two or more children family would survive, especially in rural areas. We take here a first step in the attempt to study this issue and we analyse fertility intentions of Romanian women.

2. The study of fertility intentions

Authors who studied fertility intentions (Philipov et al. 2005; Speder, Vikat 2005) consider that in contemporary society fertility intentions are proximate determinants of the decision to have a child. The mentioned authors rely on the theory of planned behaviour: intentions are formed through the composed effect of attitudes toward the specific behaviour (first or subsequent birth), through subjective norms connected with and through the perceived control over that particular behaviour. Formed in this way, intentions can be considered proximate determinants of the behaviour, and factors that influence intentions also influence the actual behaviour (Philipov et al. 2005). The reverse statement is not necessarily true, as intermediate factors can be involved between intentions and behaviour – unplanned births and failure in conceiving a child are such examples.

There is still scepticism about using fertility intentions as predictors of actual fertility, especially because a part of these intentions remain unrealised. Actually, fertility levels substantially differ from the declared preferences; from intentions to actual behaviour there is a long way and a series of perturbing elements can intervene, impairing the realisation of intentions, and also intentions can change over time. Both intention and childbearing are the result of a decision process that takes place in a context with varying constraints (Philipov et al. 2005). A time interval passes from the decision to have a child until the actual childbearing. In this interval some of the factors that contributed to taking the decision may change, and individuals may change their intention, by postponing the childbearing or even by foregoing it. Moreover, the initial intentions of not having a(nother) child may transform in positive intentions.

Another issue that is of importance in discussions about fertility intentions is their optimism, especially among the youth, who tend to

underestimate the importance of the restrictive factors that may affect the realisation of their intentions or to overestimate their ability to control these factors. Philipov and collaborators (2005), analysing fertility intentions in Bulgaria and Hungary, state that for the ex-socialist countries, where the transition process involved a considerable increase of social anomie, disorientation and uncertainty, the objection about the optimism of intentions does not hold, being rather pessimism.

There are discussions in the literature (De Santis, Livi Bacci 2001) about the relevance of indicators such as the ideal, the desired and the expected family size, as in most developed countries this size is typically two children, and the actual fertility levels are much lower. These indicators are influenced by both what has already happened and especially by stereotypes, particularly by the two children norm, that is predominant and seems to influence individuals' answers, who typically prefer a boy and a girl. Indicators of this type almost always have values higher than two, are very uniform from one country to another, show very small variations across cohorts and socio-economic groups. Other voices argue that as long as desired family size remains above two children, low fertility observed in contemporary societies may be due to temporary factors, and in the future it may go closer to the desired level (Bongaarts 1998). But, in spite of several shortcomings, the study of fertility intentions gained its place in the demographers' interest, as the big number of studies on this topic indicates.

We use for our investigation data from two national surveys, both conducted in 2004: *Demography and Lifestyles of Romanian Women (DL 2004)* and *Reproductive Health Survey (RHS 2004)*. The first survey has a richer content in connection with our topic, offering information on woman's values and attitudes toward family and children, on her partner (when he exists) and on some socio-economic aspects. The RHS sample is bigger: it contains 3836 women aged 15-49 years who answered the questions on intentions, compared with 1396 women for the other sample. The difference becomes important when we want to study fertility intentions for different subgroups (such as childless women in urban or rural areas).

We focus in this paper on childless women and their intention to have a first child in the near future (in the next two years) and on women who have one child and their intentions to have a second one. We approach separately childless women and those who already have one child as there is shown in the literature that factors of different nature influence their decisions. Regarding childless women, we do not insist here on the intention to have a first child in general, as we shown in previous work (Hărăguș 2006) that a first child is generally desired by women, as reasons for this are rather psychological/emotional. We are rather interested to see how other

aspects, mostly socio-economic, are linked with the decision to have a first child now (in the near future) or later, in other words with postponement of first birth. As we have mentioned at the beginning of the paper, the “one child family” model has been gaining weight in Romania, and therefore we are interested to see which factors are connected with the intention to have a second child.

The questions from *Demography and Lifestyles of Romanian Women* used to identify intentions are “Do you want to have children of your own sometimes?”, “At what age do you want to have your first child, at the latest?” for childless women, “Do you want to have another child sometime?” for women who already have one child. The questions from the *Reproductive Health Survey* are “Thinking about the future, do you intend to have a (another) child?” and “When would you like to have a (another) child?”.

3. Women who wish to have a(nother) child

Table 1 shows intentions to have a first or subsequent child, as the two data sets indicate. We can notice that the shares of women who want a child decrease as women have already one or more children.

Table 1. Intention to have a(nother) child, by the number of previous children

Data set	Intention	Number of previous children						Total
		Childless (cases and %)		1 child (cases and %)		2 or more children (cases and %)		
Demography and Lifestyles of Romanian Women	Yes	238	79.9	120	28.7	44	6.5	402
	No	20	6.7	216	51.7	518	76.2	754
	Don't know	40	13.4	82	19.6	118	17.4	240
	Total	298	100	418	100	680	100	1396
Reproductiv e Health Survey	Yes	773	90.7	493	36.5	121	7.4	1387
	No	64	7.5	764	56.6	1457	89.2	2285
	Don't know	15	1.8	94	7.0	55	3.4	164
	Total	852	100	1351	100	1633	100	3836

The vast majority (80-90%) of childless women wish to have a child, while the proportion drops to less than a third for women with one child,

reaching only 6-7% for those with more than one child. These values are in line with data from Figure 1, indicating a decrease in popularity of families with many children.

The data set from *Demography and Lifestyles of Romanian Women* contains a section with views on having children and we use it here to have an insight on what women declare in connection with reasons for wanting or not a(nother) child.

When asked about the importance of different reasons for wanting a child, there are no differences by the number of children already had. All the mentioned reasons are appreciated as important by the great majority of women: children make it less likely that one will be lonely in his old age, children give a sense of responsibility and help a person to develop, it is a fine thing to see children grow up and develop, it gives satisfaction to see the family carried on, having children imparts a special feeling of joy, having children strengthens the relationship with the partner. This fact is not surprising, as these reasons are rather general and of psychological nature, and such kind of motivations are still strong for the decision to have a(nother) child.

The “two child family” norm still functions in Romania, but only 55.5% of childless women who want children declare they wish to have two children, while 28.6% wish only one. A very small share – 4.4% – wish for more than two and 7.9% wish to have two or three children (data from *DL 2004*). The postponement trend of first childbearing is visible if we consider that 58% say that would like to have the first child between 25 and 30 years at the latest, and 10.5% declare not knowing this age. 82.5% of women with one child who want more children wish to have another one, and 20.5% of women with two or more children who want more do not know how many more children would like to have. We could say that in the case of childless women the planning of childbearing is more visible than in the case of women who already have children (much smaller percentage of those who declare not knowing at which age they would like to have the child).

4. What makes women to desire a(nother) child ?

We investigate intentions to have children by means of binary logistic regression. This is a type of regression used to identify the strength of independent factors on a dichotomist dependent variable that represents the occurrence or non-occurrence of a particular event, having the value 1 for the occurrence of the specified event and 0 for the non-occurrence. In our case, the dependent variable is the intention to have a child, with two

states: yes and no, the occurrence of the intention being our interest. For this reason, we have grouped women who say they do not want a(nother) child and women who say they do not know whether they want or not a(nother) child in the same category, defined as the non-occurrence of the event of interest (which is the intention to have a child). The results are in the form of odds ratios, and therefore we have a reference category for each variable, relative to which we can determine the odds ratio, when controlling for the other variables.

When fertility change in former socialist countries is discussed, two main set of determinants are focused on: the direct effect of socio-economic transition and cultural/value change.

The deterioration of economic context that accompanied the transition from centrally planned to market economy reduced the household incomes and lowered the living standards. In such a context, the costs of childbearing increase and postponing or even renouncement to children are rational behaviours. Based on an analysis of macro level data regarding fertility and socio-economic situation for the transition countries, Macura (2000) argues that for Eastern European and former SSRU countries the decline in fertility is due to the socio-economic crisis, which led to a decrease in household incomes and living standards, which had, in turn, a negative impact on fertility. Economic uncertainty persists throughout the individual's life, having a negative impact not only on entering motherhood, but also on transition to higher order births (Kohler et al. 2002). Under these circumstances, the horizon of personal decisions is limited. We witness the lowering of personal aspirations and, more and more, the personal decisions and orientations are adopted on a day by day basis (Genov 1999), and this situation does not favour the birth of a(nother) child.

Another aspect that is emphasized when speaking about transition period in former socialist countries is discontinuity and disorderliness in political, social and economic domains, and also breaks of traditions, norms and values, in Durkheimian sense of social anomie (Philipov 2002). These phenomena impact fertility especially through the increased uncertainty felt by individuals. In times of uncertainty and lack of trust in the future, individuals may postpone marriage (preferring cohabitation, which is less risky) and childbearing.

Explanations linked with cultural factors emphasize ideational changes – changes of norms, values, and attitudes – that can produce modification of family connected behaviours. This approach is embedded in the “second demographic transition” theory, that was constructed initially for western and northern countries, and that refers to significant changes occurred in family connected behaviours starting with the mid 1960s: drop

of fertility levels below replacement, postponement of motherhood toward later ages, spread of cohabitation and non-marital childbearing. This approach is applied also to central and eastern European countries, in the context of societal changes such as increasing enrolment in education and women's participation into the labour market, the conflict between childbearing and paid work. Nevertheless, there are many voices that reject this explanation of ideational change for the Eastern Europe, one argument being that women autonomy and secularization are not the result of value change during the communist regime, but they were imposed by the regime (Philipov 2002). Although different surveys indicate the adoption of less traditional attitudes and values toward the family and children, especially by younger and better educated women, Rotariu (2006) argue that for Romania these are not behavioural options, but rather elements of tolerance and understanding for various situations in a woman's life (cohabitation, single mother).

Moreover, under discontinuity and disorderliness that we have mentioned earlier, individuals may attach to traditional values, or, on the contrary, sudden change in the attachment to specific norms and values may happen, and such changes differ from the long lasting process of ideational change toward a post-modern society (Philipov 2002).

In our analysis of fertility intentions we have tried to include in the models variables connected with both of the main theoretical approaches of fertility decline in former socialist countries. The independent variables are connected with the economic situation (employment situation, number of income earners in the family, dwelling ownership), partnership status (and partner's involvement in housework and childcare) and attitudes toward family/children, intergenerational and gender relationships, and religion. We also controlled for respondent's age, education and place of residence. Because fertility patterns are not similar in urban and rural areas, we also look at intentions separately in urban and rural areas. Only the RHS 2004 data allow us to do so, the other sample being too small for analysing these subgroups (e.g. childless women in urban, childless women in rural).

Linked with the theory of socio-economic crisis being responsible for the low level of fertility, we expect that persons with the lowest living standard to be least oriented toward wanting children. The actual income of respondent was not registered in either of the two data sets, but for the DL 2004 we can construct a composed variable including the employment situation of respondent and of her partner's (where he exists), in order to have the number of income earners in the family. We assume that where two income earners exist, the living standard is higher than in case of one or none income earner. We have also included the partnership status in this

composed variable, distinguishing between a co-resident couple and other situations. Thus, our variable has the following categories: both respondent and partner work; respondent works and partner not; partner works, respondent not; respondent works (no co-resident partner); respondent does not work (no co-resident partner). We test also the direct effect of respondent's employment situation. We expect that less than two income earners would reduce the intentions to have a first child in the near future and to have a second child sometimes. For the RHS 2004 data set we used the dwelling status (ownership or other situations) and a composed variable for the socio-economic status, based on household facilities.

Dealing with respondent's education, we have controlled for being involved in education in present. Authors (Blossfeld, Huinink 1991) showed that enrolment in education negatively affects transition to motherhood. The explanation is connected with the conflictual time constraints between the roles of student and mother, and with the normative expectations that young women enrolled in education are not under risk of becoming mothers. Finishing education, as one of the most important steps in the transition to adulthood, sharply increase the rates of transition to motherhood. We expect that women enrolled in education are the least prone to have a child in the near future.

For partnership status we have distinguished among three categories: marriage, cohabitation and no co-resident partner. We expect that other situation than marriage decreases the intention to have a child in the near future or to have a second child.

We have included some composed variables concerning respondent's attitudes toward family and childbearing, gender and intergenerational relationship (for the data set DL 2004). We have also constructed two variables that capture partner's involvement (where he exists) in housework and childcare (when children are present). We expect women with less traditional attitudes to be more prone to postpone childbearing (weaker intention to have a first child in the next two years) and less prone to extend their family (weaker intentions to have a second child). We also expect that the higher the partner's involvement in housework and childcare, the higher the intentions for childbearing. For both data sets we have included the frequency of church attendance, expecting a low frequency to be associated with weaker intention to have a child.

5. Results

We further present and discuss the main results of our models concerning the intention of childless women to have a first child in the next two years and intention of women with one child to have a second one ever. We have run our models for both data sets, with a separate look at urban and rural areas for the RHS 2004 data.

Intention to have a first child in the next two years is the strongest in case of married women, and not living with a partner sharply decreases the odds (Table 2).

Table 2. Childless women, odds ratios for wanting the first child in the next two years, DL 2004

Variable	Category	Cases	Model 1	Model 2
Partnership status	Married	97	1	
	Cohabitation	19	0.54 **	
	Not living with a partner	181	0.27 *	
Education	Below secondary	63	1 **	1
	Secondary	74	4.75 *	4.31 ***
	Above secondary	73	1.72	1.58
	Still in education	87	1.53	1.48
Age group	18-24 years	166	1	1
	25-34 years	86	1.72	0.67
	35-49 years	45	1.28	1.20
Activity status	Employed	135	1	
	Not employed	162	0.49 *	
Place of residence	Urban	195	1	1
	Rural	102	1.57	1.54
Church attendance	Often	66	1	1
	Medium	203	1.72	1.70
	Seldom	25	1.69	1.81
Number of income earners	Both work	61		1
	Only one works (R or P)	37		0.63
	Nor R neither P works	15		0.18 **
	R works	66		0.30 ***
	R does not work	115		0.13 ***
Nagelkerke R Square			0.27	0.27

Note: *** for $p < 0.01$, ** for $p < 0.05$, * for $p < 0.1$; R=respondent, P=partner.

Concerning the education level, women with secondary education show much higher odds for wanting a child in the next two years. These are women who finished their education, have a job and consequently, they

wish to extend their family. Women with higher education also show higher odds, but the effect is not statistically significant. We will see that different effect of education is found for the RHS data, which we rely more, given the fact that the DL data set was rather small.

In the second model, when we used the composed variable for the number of income earners in the family, we discover that, when nor the respondent, neither the partner works, the odds for wanting a child in the next two years are strongly reduced. Compared with the reference category “both work”, the two situations when the partner is absent show significant lower odds, especially in the case when the respondent does not work. Age group, place of residence, the frequency of church attendance or the variables connected with attitudes and values toward family and childbearing show no statistically significant effect on the intention to have a first child in the next two years¹. The two models (Table 2) show us that having a co-resident partner (especially in the form of marriage) and the respondent and/or her partner being employed are two important conditions for wishing a child in the near future.

As we have mentioned, we run separate models for urban and rural areas, for RHS 2004 data. Results are shown in Table 3. As this sample is bigger than the DL 2004, the results are more clear, but in the same direction as for the first sample, with the above mentioned exception of education. Thereby, not living with a partner strongly reduces the odds, both in urban and rural areas, while not being employed has a decreasing effect only in urban areas. Being in education sharply lowers the odds, both in urban and rural areas, as was expected. The age group effect becomes visible in this sample: the odds increase as the age increase. Women who wish to have a child but did not have it until this moment do not want to postpone more. The frequency of church attendance shows a significant effect only in urban areas: the intention is weaker as the frequency is lower. The socio-economic level shows no effect, but dwelling status appears important in rural areas: not owning it decreases the odds to a half.

¹ Models including variables connected with attitudes toward family and children have been constructed, but results are not shown here.

Table 3. Childless women, odds ratios for wanting the first child in the next two years, urban and rural areas, RHS 2004

Variable	Categories	Cases	Urban	Cases	Rural
Partnership status	Married	160	1	89	1
	Cohabitation	38	1.18	22	0.72
	Not living with a partner	371	0.19 ***	89	0.22 ***
Education	Below secondary	39	1	79	1
	Secondary	181	1.16	78	0.60
	Above secondary	165	0.57	19	0.88
	Still in education	184	0.38 **	24	0.21 **
Age group	15-24 years	240	1	99	1
	25-34 years	264	3.42 ***	81	1.79
	35-49 years	65	3.85 ***	20	4.00 *
Activity status	Employed	404	1	116	1
	Not employed	165	0.53 **	84	0.57
Socio-economic level	Low	41	1	95	1
	Medium	236	0.86	75	1.13
	High	292	0.67	30	0.67
Church attendance	Often	79	1	23	1
	Medium	255	0.47 **	97	1.05
	Seldom	235	0.54 *	80	0.69
Dwelling status	Ownership	364	1	100	1
	Rent or other situation	205	0.87	100	0.46 **
Nagelkerke R Square		0.42		0.35	

Note: *** for $p < 0.01$, ** for $p < 0.05$, * for $p < 0.1$

In case of women who already have one child, the clearest effects are those of age of first child and place of residence. The odds for wishing a second child slightly decrease as the age of first child increases, and are higher in rural areas. Younger women (18-24 years) have higher odds to wish a second child than older ones (35-49 years), and not being employed reduces the odds. Other variables from the model seem not to have statistically significant effects.

Table 4. Women with one child, odds ratios for wanting the second child ever, DL 2004

Variable	Category	Cases	Model 1	Model 2
Partnership status	Married	343	1	
	Cohabitation	18	1.00	
	Not living with a partner	47	0.66	
Age group	18-24 years	39	2.32 ⁺	2.40 ⁺
	25-34 years	198	1.19	1.27
	35-49 years	171	1	1
Education	Below secondary	149	1	1
	Secondary	173	1.08	1.06
	Above secondary	86	1.04	1.00
Activity status	Employed	245	1	
	Not employed	163	0.63 ⁺	
Place of residence	Urban	258	1	1
	Rural	150	1.75 ^{**}	1.87 ^{**}
Number of income earners	Both work	185		1
	R works. P does not	21		0.46
	P works. R does not	117		0.60 ⁺
	Neither R nor P works	28		0.74
	R works	30		0.66
	R does not work	17		0.51
Partner's involvement in housework (increasing)			0.98	1.00
Partner's involvement in childcare (increasing)			1.04	1.05
Age of first child (increasing)			0.87 ^{***}	0.87 ^{***}
Church attendance	Often	92	1	1
	Medium	269	1.36	1.36
	Seldom	47	1.45	1.30
Attitude toward parents-children relationship	Not-specified	92	1	1
	It is the parents' duty ...	365	1.89	2.60
	Parents have lives of their own ...	24	1	1
Nagelkerke R Square			0.28	0.29

Note: It is the parents' duty ... = It is the parents' duty to do their best for their children, even at the expense of their own well-being

Parents have lives of their own ... = Parents have lives of their own and should not be asked to sacrifice their own well-being for the sake of their children.

*** for $p < 0.01$, ** for $p < 0.05$, * for $p < 0.1$, + for $p < 0.15$.

For RHS 2004 data we, again, separately look at urban and rural areas. Increasing age of first child diminish the intention to have the second one, while younger ages of respondent increase the odds, both in urban and

rural. Not living with the partner reduces the odds only in rural areas, and higher education increases the odds only in urban areas. A lower frequency of church attendance diminishes the intention, while not being employed in urban areas strengthens the intention to have a second child. Here, employed women are confronted with higher opportunity costs than in rural areas.

Table 5. Women with one child, odds ratios for wanting the second child ever, urban and rural areas, RHS 2004

Variables	Categories	Cases	Urban	Cases	Rural
Partnership status	Married	683	1	449	1
	Cohabitation	30	0.98	52	1.10
	Not living with a partner	95	1.19	38	0.24 ***
Education	Below secondary	82	1	214	1
	Secondary	516	2.08 **	325 ²	0.97
	Above secondary	169	2.22 *		
	Still in education	41	2.40 *		
Age group	15-24 years	48	3.68 ***	92	5.41 ***
	25-34 years	382	3.23 ***	314	5.23 ***
	35-49 years	378	1	133	1
Activity status	Employed	685	1	275	1
	Not employed	123	1.77 **	264	0.80
Socio-economic level	Low	75	1	271	1
	Medium	289	1.04	209	0.95
	High	444	1.70	59	0.94
Church attendance	Often	120	1	79	1
	Medium	386	0.52 **	255	0.79
	Seldom	302	0.41 ***	205	0.49 **
Dwelling situation	Ownership	647	1	373	1
	Rent or other situation	161	1.25	166	0.87
Age of first child (increasing)			0.85 ***		0.93 ***
Nagelkerke R Square		0.36		0.25	

Note: *** for $p < 0.01$, ** for $p < 0.05$, * for $p < 0.1$

² Given the small number of women with post-secondary education, we differentiated only between two categories: primary and inferior secondary and upper- and post-secondary.

6. Women who do not wish a(nother) child

We now concentrate on women who do not want to have a(nother) child and on reasons considered important or not for their decision. There are 754 women in the *DL 2004* data set who declare not wanting a(nother) child. Only 20 of them are childless, and we decided to exclude them from the analysis. In this way, we do not analyse the phenomenon of childlessness, but focus on reasons women who already have children declare are important for not wanting another child.

For each reason for not wanting a child, we have calculated odds ratios, in order to see which characteristics of women and partners are associated with the absence of intention to have another child. Figure 2 shows only statistically significant results for each reason, with a reference category for each variable, when controlling for other characteristics.

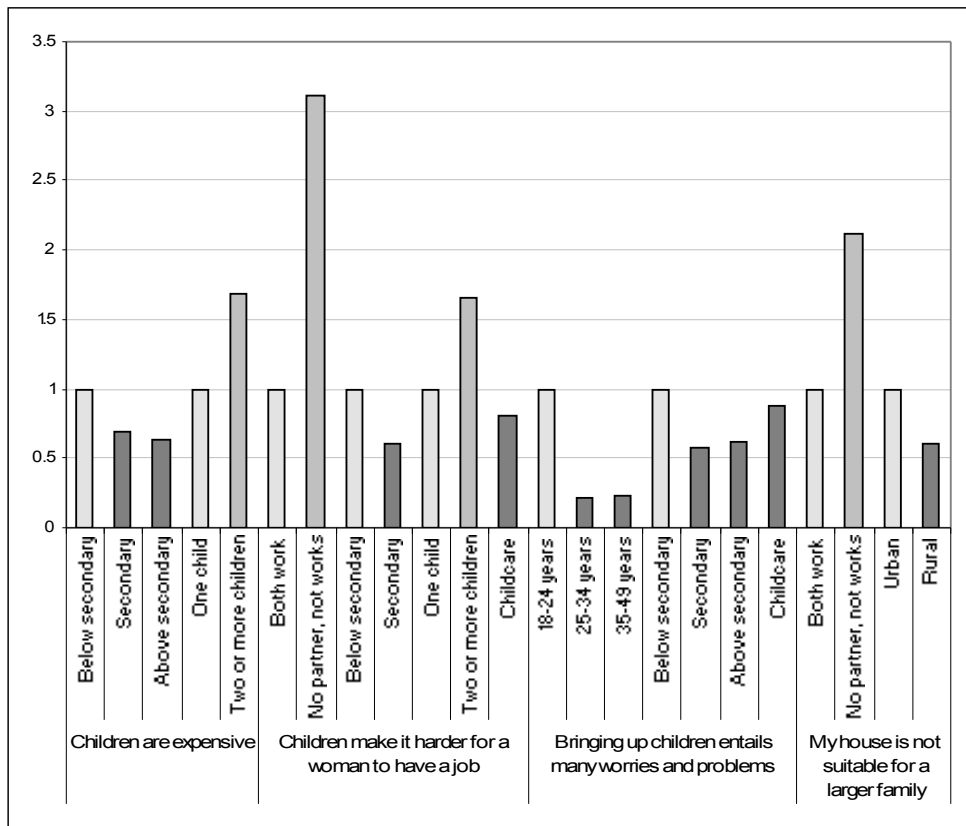


Figure 2. Odds ratios for different reasons for not wanting another child, controlling for age, education, number of income earners, number of children, place of residence, the partner involvement in housework and in childcare, *DL 2004*

Women with secondary and higher education show lower odds to mention the cost of children, the difficulties in finding a job and the worries and problems entailed by bringing up children than women with below secondary education, when all other characteristics are controlled (age, number of income earners, number of children, place of residence, the partner involvement in housework and in childcare). Having more than one child increases the odds for mentioning the cost of children and the worries and problems entailed by bringing up children as reasons for not wanting another one. Worries and problems are more important for younger women, and being a single mother (without co-resident partner) and unemployed sharply increase the odds for mentioning the difficulties to find a job and the lack of house suitability as reasons. The lack of house suitability is a reason more important for women in urban areas. Partner's involvement in housework does not have an influence, but as partner's involvement in childcare increases, the odds for mentioning reasons such as the difficulties in finding a job, the worries and problems entailed by bringing up children, the hardship of the pregnancy, birth and childcare, and the diminishing of time for other important things in life, decrease.

7. Discussion

We have seen that socio-economic situation (women employed or not, number of income earners in the family) has an important impact on fertility intentions, and that women from rural areas are more prone to have a second child than their urban counterparts. Employment status has a greater importance in urban areas, as not being employed diminish the intention to have the first child in the near future, while it increases the intention to have a second child ever.

These findings make us think about the recent and future developments in the number of births in Romania and the effect of policy measures that seem to found behind them. There was a slight increase in the total number of births in the years 2003-2005, due mainly to the increase in urban areas. The fact is doubtless connected with the financial benefit of childcare leave, which in 2003 was linked with mother's income but starting from 2004 has become a flat rate, 85% of the mean wage. Ghetau (2007) shows that the increase in urban areas was due to employed women: the rise in the number of births gave by this category greatly outnumbered the decrease in the case of unemployed women, while in rural areas the rise for employed women was smaller than the decline for unemployed women. Fertility was systematically higher in rural areas; it still is, but is on a

descendent path, while in urban it has an ascendant path since 2003. Women from rural gave birth to more than half of the children born in Romania for the last couple of decades, but for the first time in Romanian demographical history, in the year 2004 the situation inversed. Different socio-economic factors account for the descendent route of fertility in rural areas, of which we remind in this context the unfavourable age structure (62.3% of women in reproductive age were in 2004 in urban areas), the smaller share of employed women (80% of employed women are in urban), to whom the child care leave benefit was addressed, and the massive emigration of young people from rural areas.

More recent data show that the slight redress from 2003-2005 did not continued in 2006, when the number of births was inferior than the previous year, that made Ghetau (2007) to argue that the stimulating potential of the child care benefit has not yet come to its end, but this moment is close.

Our analysis of fertility intentions showed that women in rural areas are less prone to postpone the first child and also more prone to have a second one. We consider that the recent data mentioned above – the increase in the birth rates in urban areas in 2003-2005 – do not represent a change in behaviours, but rather the conjuncture effect of the financial benefits. We believe that fertility in rural areas will continue to decrease because of unfavourable structural factors, but also the increase from urban areas will come to its end, as women realize that the child care benefit is a short-term solution, not being accompanied by other policy measures. Since the beginning of 2007 a new benefit was introduced³, irrespective of the employment status. It is to be seen whether this new measure would lead to a rise in the number of births from unemployed women (the majority of them being in the rural areas), returning to the long established pattern of higher rural birth rates and fertility.

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³ The benefit is a child allowance, directed for all children aged 0-2 years and its quantum is $\frac{1}{4}$ of the previous childcare benefit, and the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ constitutes the childcare leave allowance.

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