

Katrin Fliegenschnee  
The Vienna Institute of Demography (VID)  
Prinz-Eugen-Strasse 8–10, 2nd floor  
1040 Vienna  
Austria  
Katrin.Fliegenschnee@oeaw.ac.at  
Phone: +43-1-515817710

“Children should be a part of my life, but I don’t know how to manage it.”  
A qualitative fertility study of highly educated women in Vienna

Katrin Fliegenschnee<sup>1</sup>  
Vienna Institute of Demography

### Abstract

This article investigates why highly educated women in Vienna postpone the realisation of their wish to have a child and how their social network influences this decision. A great deal of quantitative research has been conducted about these issues. Using a qualitative approach, the paper will present a different view on these problems. The research is based on data obtained in guideline interviews that were conducted in Austria in autumn 2005. They were analysed with the help of grounded theory and objective hermeneutic sequence analysis. Combining these methodological approaches has the advantage of yielding theoretical explanations on the micro level. This article reports on preliminary results. The two main categories presented here are the life concept and fears. It focuses on the questions of what steps people want to take in the future and who induced these ideas. It discusses the concerns and fears connected with the fertility decision and how people deal with it. The article is meant to contribute to and supplement already existing theories.

---

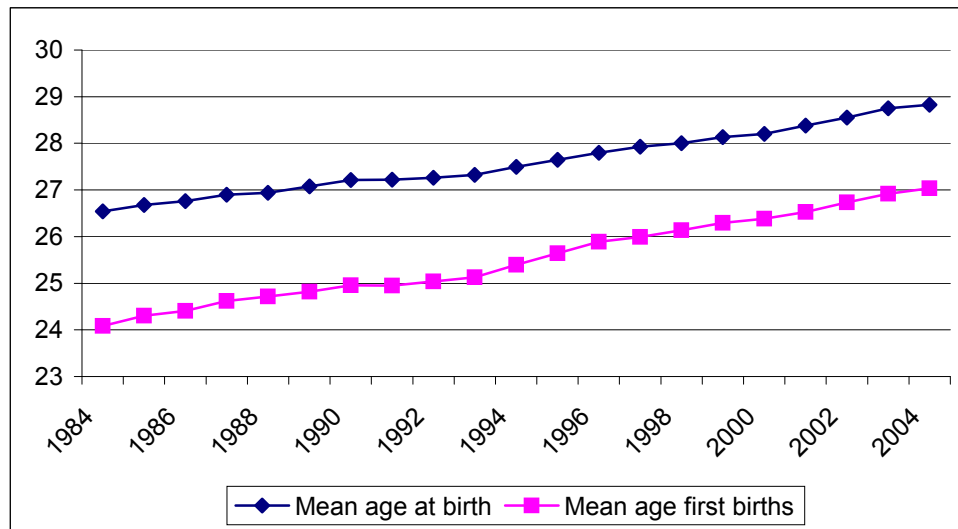
#### <sup>1</sup> Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Rudolf Richter, Henriette Engelhardt, Laura Bernardi, Michaela Potancokova, Silvia Keim for their valuable comments and suggestions. I am also grateful to the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research where the ideas for this project developed during my stay at the International Max Planck Research School for Demography in the winter term of 2004/05 when I was an RTN fellow. I would also like to thank Sylvia Trnka and Werner Richter for editing the paper.

## 1. Introduction

All across the developed world, fertility rates have declined dramatically in the past decades. One explanation is that people postpone their fertility wishes. It is in particular the postponement of the first birth that is a typical feature in current fertility patterns. This also holds true for Austria.

Figure 1: Mean age of mothers at birth and first birth in Austria



Source: Statistics Austria.

As figure 1 shows, the mean age of women at birth has risen constantly over the last decades. In 2004 it was nearly 29 years. The increase in the mean age of women at first birth is even higher, and already reached a level of 27 years in 2004. The pattern is very clear and visible but the reasons for this increase need to be described more closely. This study intends to contribute to a better understanding of how people make their fertility decisions. Especially the topic of postponement of first birth and how the social network influences this decision will be the focus of interest. As the topic of postponement has been analysed with quantitative methods many times (e.g., Sobotka 2004, Lesthaeghe 2001, Spielauer 2004) and as theories do not fully explain this behaviour, I decided to study it using a qualitative approach in order to develop theoretical ideas on the basis of the data. Women with higher education postpone their fertility wishes more than those with a lower education (e.g., Liefbroer and Corijn 1999, Engelhardt and Prskawetz 2004). Therefore, I conducted semi-structured interviews with highly educated women in Vienna. The results will be discussed mainly with the New Home Economics theory and the Second Demographic Transition Theory. This is bound to open up new perspective on the issue. Some hypotheses have already been developed to explain the postponement behaviour of well-educated women in Vienna in a little more detail.

The following part will discuss the theoretical literature. Section three describes the methodological approach and outlines the methods and analysing concepts. The fourth part presents preliminary results, and concludes with a discussion of the findings.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1 Postponement of fertility

Fertility rates across Europe have declined dramatically in the past few decades. One explanation is that "... countries with very low fertility have reached these levels as a result of massive postponement after 1990, occurring at all ages and marriage durations" (Lesthaeghe 2001, p. 2). The pertinent literature offers various explanations for the fact that people delay their wish to have a child. At any rate, this issue is highly dependent on other life course elements such as partnership, education and work or uncertain economic conditions (Spielauer et al. 2003; Sobotka 2004).

Regarding the issue of postponement of the first birth, the behaviour can be explained by different theoretical approaches. The New Home Economics theory and the Second Demographic Transition Theory will be discussed in this paper, along with some ideas of the theory of planned behaviour formulated by Ajzen and Fishbein (1973) and some of Easterlin's theory (1980).

One frequently mentioned reason for postponement addressed by all theories is that people now stay in education for longer periods of time. Especially the rate of female students in education has increased, which has a significant influence on family formation in Europe. Different studies agree on the fact that educational attainment delays entry into parenthood (e.g., Liefbroer and Corijn 1999; Buber 2001; Kreyenfeld 2004; Hotz et al. 1997). Education has a marked impact on postponing childbearing as well as on family formation plans, regardless of gender and country.

Along with education, the labour market is frequently mentioned. Most of the women decide to work for some time after finishing their education. They want to establish themselves on the labour market before having children so it will be easier for them to return to their job after maternal leave. In particular well-educated women tend to postpone parenthood when entering the labour market (e.g., Kreyenfeld 2004).

Kreyenfeld (2004) argues that the welfare states have already responded to the changes in female labour force participation by trying to support the reconciliation of work and family. If we take a look at where in Europe better facilities to combine work and family life are provided, we see higher fertility rates in those countries. Childbearing and career are more compatible in northern Europe and France and this is often an explanation why fertility is higher in those countries (e.g., Lutz 2005; Kreyenfeld 2004).

A theory that shall be discussed here is the New Home Economics approach. The main assumption is that people aim to maximise their lifetime utility. The decision for a child is made by calculating all costs and benefits to maximise the utility. Fertility decisions are understood as a function of individual preferences and costs of children (Becker 1992). An interaction between quantity and quality of children is assumed in this connection. Becker and Lewis (1974) argue that the increased educational level of women has a strong positive effect on the quality and a strong negative effect on the number of children. When talking about fertility, the costs of time should also be considered. When income is rising, the time spent on childcare gets more valuable as well (Becker 1965). For women, opportunity costs influence the decision for or against a child because not only the actual salary but also the "lost" salary is taken into account here. Women who take parental leave, or work part-time when children are older, lose money and this is considered as opportunity costs. One assumption is that women are mainly responsible for childbearing and men provide the household income (e.g., Willis 1973), so it is easily understandable that

the increase in female education and labour force participation is a main reason for the change.

Women with higher educational attainments have higher opportunity costs for raising children. Not only wages as such are taken into account but also the fact that wages are lost when the women take maternity leave or work part-time. Reconciling work and family life has to be a deliberate strategy. If there are no or only few supporting facilities, women mainly have to reduce their working hours. Higher educated women give up more income than lower educated ones if they reduce their working time; hence they have higher opportunity costs.

However, the economic approaches cannot fully explain this behaviour. Some authors suggest including values and norms (e.g., Engelhardt and Prskawetz 2004; Liefbroer and Corijn 1999). The Second Demographic Transition theory focuses more on values to explain demographic behaviour. In particular “individual autonomy” and “female emancipation” are assumed to be the main reasons for delaying family formation (Lesthaeghe 2003). Children are considered important but the hierarchy of the value system has changed. Van de Kaa (1996) argues that people mainly behave in ways that are considered legitimate in a society. McDonald (2000) underlines that gender roles are an important factor when looking at fertility. In any case, when talking about postponement of fertility, values and norms should be regarded as important elements.

Intentions can also explain a great deal of women’s fertility behaviour. According to the theory of planned behaviour, fertility intentions are to be considered expected statements with regard to an individual fertility plan. Ajzen and Fishbein argue that “... a central factor in the theory of planned behaviour is the individual’s intentions to perform a given behavior. Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior” (Ajzen 1991, p. 181). Of course not only intentions and attitudes—which he calls the personal factors—are taken into account, but also normative factors should be considered: “... behavioral intentions are predictable from the theory’s two components; attitude toward the specific act and normative beliefs multiplied by the person’s motivation to comply with the norms” (Ajzen and Fishbein 1973, p. 56). This idea is important when studying well-educated women in Vienna.

Another assumption of Micheli and Bernardi (2003) is that the factors delaying marriage are the feeling of ‘not being ready’ for marriage. Postponement of fertility is, of course, something different but we assume that very similar mechanisms are at work in deciding for or against having a child. It is further assumed that many modern women in Austria face a conflict between career and motherhood. The possibility to work in a part-time job, as well as the availability of childcare or parent-friendly policies are also important factors. Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter (2004) point out that for women it is very difficult to combine mother and worker roles. To decide between career and motherhood is difficult, above all for highly educated women.

Some authors have found that economic uncertainty has a strong impact on fertility decisions (e.g., Kreyenfeld 2005; Bhaumik and Nugent 2005; Kohler and Kohler 2002). Micheli and Bernardi (2003) consider uncertainty from another perspective. Entering into parenthood is a significant change in people’s lives. The fact that it is irreversible can cause a delay or inhibit the decision itself. In this context, uncertainty is connected with fears about the future with a child and not so much with working conditions. Uncertainty should not be reduced to the uncertainty of economic conditions.

## 2.1 Social networks

The behaviour of an individual is dependent on the structural and personal surrounding. Wasserman and Faust (1994) point out that social actors should not be seen as independent since they are embedded in a network of social relationships. Other actors as well as the structures are assumed to have an influence on behaviour and should be considered when observing people's behaviour (Jansen 2003, Marsden and Friedkin 1993). To get an idea of people's social environment, it is interesting to study their social networks. All actions and therefore also all comments during an interview are affected by structures and processes of the 'Lebenswelt' (social world) that surrounds a person (Froschauer and Lueger 1992).

Studies which focus on social influence of network partners and their effect on fertility decisions have recently become more prominent in demography. Individuals belong to, and are embedded in, a social environment. This influences their preferences and shapes their opinions in general but also when we talk about fertility decisions. (Bühler and Philipov 2005; Behrman, Kohler and Watkins 2001) Bongaarts and Watkins (1996) discuss that ideas (e.g., of network partners) which are shared in interactions influence fertility decisions. Considering the surroundings in which people live and reflecting about their networks will help us understand why and how they reach their fertility decisions.

One assumption is that the social influence of network partners is strong, i.e., people adopt opinions from, and orientate their behaviour towards, persons within their network. (Rindfuss et al. 2004) Actions will become more likely if other network members have already taken them as well. A couple living in a network with many babies will be more likely to opt for having a child—or change networks. In the literature, this phenomenon is defined as "homogeneity". Because choosing one's friends is a personal matter, many people have friends who are of the same age, have a similar status and very often also a similar living situation (Hollstein 2001).

In her article, Bernardi noted that "[t]he couple considers childbearing a private matter. However, their reproductive attitudes and behavior are confronted with the attitudes, behavior, and comments of a world of others, kin and non-kin" (Bernardi 2004, p. 527-528). Taking these theoretical ideas as a starting point, the role of social influence will be discussed in this paper.

Social learning is one possible concept of social influence. Micheli and Bernardi (2003) define it as social interaction with members of one's social network. During this interaction, information is exchanged which, in turn, modifies or rebuilds subjective beliefs, social values and norms.

Another aspect is social pressure. Bernardi (2004) says that "[t]he structure of sanctions and rewards associated with behaviors produces social influence when the individual considers these social costs and benefits as relevant and behaves accordingly" (Bernardi 2004, p. 536). Also Van de Kaa (1996) notes that fertility and family formation are strongly influenced by rules for adequate behaviour. Members of a social group share the same symbols. This helps people act and react in ways which are accepted by the community. Sanctions and social pressure are the key explanations why people behave according to standards (Hammel 1990).

We do not know exactly what motivates people to postpone childbearing. How do the mechanisms work together? Are there other reasons to postpone childbearing for women in Vienna? What could those reasons be? This paper intends to answer these and similar questions by using a qualitative approach.

### 3. Methodological approach

Demography and quantitative research are very closely interlinked. Qualitative approaches did not have much impact on research until recently. In the last few years this has slowly changed. The relationship between theory and social reality is very important in qualitative research. In the centre of consideration is the social reality and from this social reality theories are deduced (Froschauer and Lueger 1992). As social reality is very different from region to region, the cultural aspect must be taken into account. A qualitative approach will help to get a different view on the phenomenon and respect, in particular, cultural factors.

One advantage of qualitative research is that people can talk about their behaviour and about their intentions in their own words. They explain it from their personal point of view. In this study the main focus are the individual meanings in the sense of 'sinn-geleitet' (guided by meaning) roles of the use of terms; this can only be researched with the help of interpretative methods (Hollstein 2001).

Concerning the methodological questions, guideline interviews—in particular the problem-centred interview (Witzel 2000)—seemed to be the most useful technique for this research. This kind of interviews has the advantage not to lose track of the topic, and it is also an open form which leaves enough room to allow insights into personal views.

Qualitative research is a circular process: analysing and collecting data are not separated but very closely connected. This is one strong point of this approach because it permits permanent reflection. "The interpretation of texts serves to develop the theory and at the same time is the basis for the decision about which additional data should be collected" (Flick 2002, p. 176). With this concept there will be the chance to test new hypotheses that emerge during analysis, therefore it seems to be the right way to go about interweaving data collection and analysis from the start (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Unlike in quantitative studies, the research question and hypothesis are not fixed at the beginning to be subsequently tested but the structure of research is mainly developed along with the research process (Girtler 1992). Hypotheses are developed during the research and, in turn, influence the data collection. After each analysing phase, the focus may be somewhat changed as some issues appear to be more interesting than others. Categories are verified, falsified, modified or adjusted, first hypotheses are developed and are at the same time tested (Lamnek 1995). After this step, new data are collected and analysed again. It is a circular process with the aim of developing and clarifying categories and hypotheses.

#### 3.1 The guideline

The problem-centred interview starts with a narrative part. The participants are encouraged to speak about their lives. At the beginning a biographical question is asked. The starting point of the narration is the time when people left school. All things that have been important since then—not only the facts one normally tells when asked for a biography—are asked for. In this part the focus is on the subjective view of the past years. After the narration, the next questions concern topics mentioned in the answers to the first questions or statements that need clarification. This stage is followed by topics that were not mentioned but are necessary for the

research (Lamnek 1995, Mayring 1990). Because interviewing and analysing is an interlinked and not a separated process, the centre of interest has changed over time but the main topics have remained the same. The following issues were discussed during the interviews: partnership, family plans and children, families of origin, social networks as well as values and personal aims.

### 3.2 Sampling

The basis for sampling is theoretical sampling. It is not a random sample of persons but based on conscious decisions. Interviewees are chosen because of earlier theoretical considerations. The sampling is guided by theoretical ideas during the whole process (Lamnek 1995). Which persons will fit the study later on is decided during the research process and is not restricted from the beginning.

One of the major factors why people postpone their wish to have a child is their education. Women with higher qualifications need more time to complete their education and also often intend to work for a certain time before having children. However, they not only wait until a higher age to get children—Lutz (2005) also reports that in western Germany around 40 percent of women with tertiary education are expected to end up childless. In Austria around 30% of all highly educated women are childless and this figure has been relatively stable over the years (Spielauer 2004). Looking at highly educated persons and understanding why they have chosen a childless life up to now—and who or what influenced them in this choice—was the starting point of this research.

Because postponement of the first child was of interest for this research, it was decided to interview women and men around age 30. At this age, it is very likely that they have already taken some conscious decisions concerning fertility in one or the other direction. Other prerequisites were that they should have no children and should live in a partnership. It was also decided to start with a very homogeneous group (highly educated, living and/or working in Vienna) and make the group more diverse at a later research stage.

The end of a qualitative research project is defined by theoretical saturation. “The choice and inclusion of more material is completed if the ‘theoretical saturation’ is reached, this means nothing new is found” (Flick 1995, p. 83). This situation has been reached when analysing no longer yields new insights.

In this project, the snowball sampling method was used. I wrote an email message to all people I knew and asked them to forward it to their friends. Attached was a description of what I was looking for, i.e., persons around 30 living in a relationship and not having any children so far; additionally they should not know me personally. 12 persons have replied so far, and 10 interviews have already been conducted with women holding a university degree. The interviews took place in autumn and winter 2005. The women I interviewed were between 27 and 34 years old and had been living in their partnerships for at least three years. It is planned to also interview their partners provided they consent. The interviews took place in the women’s homes, over a coffee at the VID or at my place. I let the interviewees decide where they wanted to be interviewed so as to make the situation as comfortable as possible for them. Each interview lasted between 90 minutes and two hours.

### 3.3 Analysis

In this study, the objective hermeneutic sequence analysis was linked with the coding principles of grounded theory. Froschauer and Lueger (1992) suggest that sequence analysis be used in the beginning if different methods are used. Sequence analysis

supports (next to textual advantage) the sensibility for rough interpretation methods. Combining different methods increases the utility because strengths can be made use of and weaknesses will be reduced.

Therefore at the outset, sequence analysis was used and, hypotheses were developed. In a second step, categories and more hypotheses were produced with the help of grounded theory. With sequence analysis it is possible to study the data very carefully. One of the weaknesses is that it becomes more difficult to build up a theory and to combine great amounts of data with each other. A weakness of grounded theory is the potential infinity of options for coding and comparison (Flick 2002). Starting with sequence analysis had the advantage that a certain number of hypotheses were already developed before starting with grounded theory. Some guidelines were thus produced in advance, but these guidelines are also directly based on the data. The grounded theory helped us to develop theoretical ideas and to connect the data. To combine these two approaches allowed a more analytical view of the issue and facilitated the formulation of theoretical ideas with a deep understanding of these topics.

The main task in the analysing process is to develop hypotheses. These should give us an idea how phenomena might be related with each other. These hypotheses permit assumptions and direct the data collection (Strauss and Corbin 1996). The assumptions show in which direction the research should be developed further and how the categories are interlinked. At the beginning, “fine analysis” was used to break up the data. In a second step, “rough analysis” came into play. To code the data, to build some more hypotheses and to connect already existing ones, the coding principles of grounded theory were made use of. This was not a linear process but rather a more circular one. The hypotheses do not emerge immediately; it takes a long process of searching, comparing, and finding. There is a constant interplay between developing hypotheses and checking them (Strauss and Corbin 1996). Data must be continuously compared and checked to make sure that the findings are stable; otherwise the categories must be changed.

### 3.3.1 Sequence analysis

With the concept of objective hermeneutics and sequence analysis it will be possible to look not only at the obvious meaning of the statements but also at the “‘latent structure of sense’ of an activity” (Flick 2002, p. 204). Linguistic utterances always have their conscious (manifest) and their unconscious (latent) moments and the two need not be compatible (Froschauer and Lueger 1992). Especially the latent aspect is helpful for building a theory. However, it is also necessary to have a broader look at the topic and therefore it is useful to consider structural conditions (Strauss and Crobin 1996). On the one hand, interaction is interpreted, and on the other, the context must be considered as well, in order to take external influences into account (Flick 2002).

Sequence analysing can be used in two different ways. On the one hand, there is “fine analysis” which focuses on the objective structure of a context of meaning. The idea is that people interact because of meanings and using sequence analysis it is likely that we detect structures in these meanings. When doing “fine analysis”, the focus is on very small sequences—as small as they still make sense. The second form is “rough analysis”. This method is used to detect important structural characteristics (Froschauer, Lueger 1992).

Starting with sequence analysis, some hypotheses were developed. In the course of the interpretation hypotheses are developed about the social environment of the



person speaking and of the interview situation. These hypotheses are being checked at other points and reviewed all the time (Froschauer and Lueger 1992).

### 3.3.2 Grounded Theory

When coding on the basis of grounded theory, statement by statement is carefully compared with each other as well as with already existing categories in order to find similarities and differences to build a rich theory (Glaser and Strauss 1996). Coding means to break down the data in an analytical way. Its purpose is to give the analyst new insights by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data (Strauss and Corbin 1996). ‘Open coding’, ‘axial coding’ and ‘selective coding’ were used (Flick 2002).

Open coding is a process for finding the right label for a phenomenon, it helps to ask questions such as “What is it?” and “What does it represent?” about each sequence, comparing the text step by step to label similar phenomena as being equal (Strauss and Corbin 1996). Moreover, a concept is developed around the phenomenon; this is called categorising. While answering the questions, new hypotheses are developed or old ones are compared and modified.

While the aim of open coding “... is to open up the inquiry” (Strauss 1987, p. 29), during the axial coding, data are group in a new way to develop and create the connection between categories and subcategories (Strauss and Corbin 1996). Coding “... is used to facilitate the discovery or establishment of structures of relations between phenomena” (Flick 2002, p. 181). “It consists of intensive analysis done around one category” (Strauss 1987, p. 32). The aim is to develop the context around a phenomenon, action and interaction strategies as well as the consequences of these strategies (Strauss and Corbin 1996). During sequence analysing, some ideas were already developed. In the coding process, the hypotheses and categories were connected. The result is a scheme of categories, while the hypotheses explain how these categories are connected with each other.

Open coding and axial coding are interlinked and circular. Although open and axial coding are separate analytical procedures, the scientist changes back and forth between the two (Strauss and Corbin 1996).

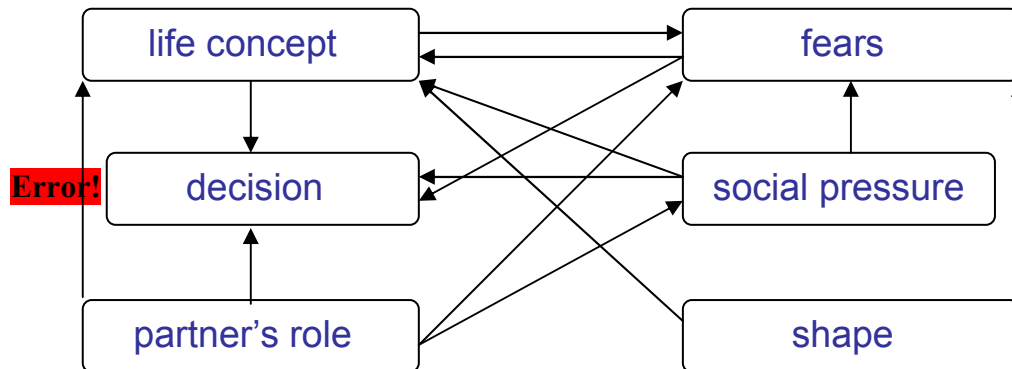
Selective coding is an analysing step on a more abstract level. It is very similar to axial coding, the difference being that the core category is put in relation to the other categories and all the categories are also related to each other. This coding process is used to synchronise the data and to make the concept homogeneous.

## 4. Results

These results can only be taken as initial insights into the topic. When using qualitative methods, the categories keep changing during the analysing process. Hence, these results must be seen as a preliminary version of the theoretical concept. However, first insights are already possible and will show what elements are important for the fertility behaviour of highly educated women in Vienna.

Figure 2 shows the most important main categories developed so far.

Figure 2: **Error!**



So far, it has not been possible to identify any core category. However, two categories seem to be of major importance: “LIFE CONCEPT” and “FEARS”. The category “LIFE CONCEPT” describes the interviewees’ ideas, wishes and perceptions about their fertility behaviour. The other very important category is “FEARS”. Different kinds of concerns and fears are linked with the idea of having a child.

The category “DECISION” explains the factor that deciding for a child can be problematic, especially for highly educated women. Another category is the “PARTNER’S ROLE”. It is obvious that a partner is important for fertility decisions but exactly how does he influence them. Moreover, if the partner is so important in these decisions, why is this fact ignored so often? Another category in this concept is “SOCIAL PRESSURE”. It shows who and what can put pressure on women and how they try to handle it. Finally, there is the category “SHAPE”, which describes experiences or events that happened in people’s lives and influenced their actions in one or several ways. Figure 2 shows how the categories are interconnected. No category is isolated, all of them are influencing each other.

### 4.1 Life concept

To discuss the issue of postponing fertility, we might take a look at the category “LIFE CONCEPT” in somewhat more detail. It covers fantasies, ideas and wishes “how life should be”. The women want to have accomplished certain things, and other conditions should be more developed, before they want to have a child. The interviewees had very precise visions of what the ideal conditions for having a child would look like. This also held true for their life with a child. The emphasis is not on the conditions but on the wish to have ideal conditions.

The first hypothesis is:

People have life concepts. In case there is a great discrepancy between the current circumstances and their ideas of ideal conditions, they will postpone childbearing.

Perceptions of the future can be very different. One wish that is uttered very often is that the surrounding conditions should be organised by the time childbearing is realised to have the best conditions for the child.

“...I even hope that *we* tha-, that Christoph then also will have a job soon and *we* possibly could move into a bigger flat “laugh” hehe where *we* then could start thinking about family planning “laugh” hehehehehe,...” (Karin)

In this example, we can see that to find a job and to earn money so both partners have a good life is a very clear and comprehensible wish. “Building a nest” and preparing everything in advance makes it easier to cope with a child in the future. People are guided through their lives by ideas such as “taking one step after the other”, or “finishing one thing before starting a new one”. The issue of education, which is often mentioned in the literature, is a good example as well: women first want to finish their education, and the next step comes afterwards. People want to have everything in order to somehow minimise the risk of stepping into a new period of life. However, many women also include their own careers in these considerations.

“... well, it should be like that: ... I should be settled in my job to some extent, so that I know when I come back I will still have all the possibilities. And yes, so, financially, because for our apartment, we have a mortgage, and that should be paid off first.” (Michi)

As frequently mentioned in the literature, career is a very important issue with regard to postponement. Here it is not exactly the compatibility of work and childcare that women are thinking about, but rather the fear of forgoing the possibility of finding an interesting, well-paid job after or with a child. So far, nobody in my interviews thought that combining child and job would be an insurmountable problem. They all had the feeling that they would manage somehow. Liefbroer (2005) also notes that women who expect higher costs in terms of their career opportunities postpone their fertility wishes. For highly educated women, these costs are rather high. However, before having a child, they aim to reach some rather undefined point in their career after which they will be “safe”. When this point has been reached is not clear to them though. The financial situation is also a very decisive category. In this respect as well, things should be accomplished or at least “put in order” before thinking of building a family. In this case, it is not the uncertainty about the future financial situation, i.e., with the child—even though this is also an important issue, which will be discussed later. Here, the issue rather is that there is another “thing” that should be finished before having a child, which has a deep impact on behaviour. However, not only conditions should be in order; there is a desire to prepare the surrounding situation as well, to have everything the way one wants it to be.

“... I would like that he also takes parental leave, but we will see ... I mean if it [a child] were to ‘happen’ now surprisingly, this would not be possible so therefore I would like to postpone it for some years “laugh” ...” (Michi)

This statement shows that the woman has clear ideas about her life with a child. In her vision, her partner should take at least some parental leave. Most of the interviewed women said that ideally their partners would also take parental leave. Well-educated women in Vienna consider this an ideal concept. However, for the interviewed woman, this would not be possible at present, so she prefers to wait and hopes that in the future conditions will be different and her ideals can materialise. Here we can see that not conditions as such are the reason for postponing the child, but rather the vision of a person's future life. In this theory of planned behaviour, Ajzen notes that people have intentions of behaving in a certain way (Ajzen 1991, p. 181). This study looks at a slightly different aspect. Intentions are very clear and people know what they want. In this example, the issue is more how the woman would like to lead her life. Even if this wish is quite clear, I would not call it an intention since the future is too dependent on other factors and persons. Having a child is seen as a process, and this process should be shared with the partner from the very first moment.

“... I would like us to experience this together, – the wish for a child and the pregnancy, I would like to enjoy all this, it is a wonderful thing “laugh”...” (Karin)

This statement gives us an idea of how diverse such perceptions can be. Experiencing a child together is a wish that begins with the decision for this child. Well-educated women in Austria want to decide about fertility questions together with their partners. If the partner is not prepared for it, the couple will postpone childbearing. Because the partner is so important for having children, we will come back to this topic once more later on.

Identity is another very important aspect in the “LIFE CONCEPT” category. In some of the interviews, the women explicitly said that they did not know which role they should prefer.

“...I am 34, this means this is exactly the, that peak where you have to say O.K., now I will concentrate with full power on my career or, errrrr, family planning.” (Bettina)

She has to decide between being a mother or being a career person. The interesting point in this statement is that she speaks about her career in very dynamic words. She has the possibility to get on in her career with full power, or to be static and take up family planning. In their study, Borchardt and Stöbel-Richter (2004) also found that deciding between these two options is not at all easy.

Who they are and where they could already be and where they want to go is a complex and important topic when fertility is at stake. The category ‘social pressure’ is strongly interconnected with this category. Society expects women to do their job or get children, but both should be done in a perfect way. For women who do not yet have children it seems almost impossible to have a child and a job and be perfect in both roles. This makes it difficult to decide in favour of the mother role. In any case, pursuing a career makes a person interesting, one has more money at one's disposal, and more prestige; and, after all, “anyone can be a mother”.

“...I am aware I might as well forget about my career if I get a child, I am sure about that, career is over then, we really don't have to mince words about it ...” (Melanie)

The value of being a successful and rich woman seemed higher than that of being a mother—and combining the two seems almost impossible. The “Life concept” is an important category and it is very likely that it will become the core category of this study. In any case, it is connected with all of the following categories.

#### 4.2 FEARS

Fears are one of the biggest issues. The literature mentions them as well, though mainly in the form of economic uncertainty. In this research, the topic of fears is more diverse and not limited to financial aspects. It is a very complex category and must be discussed in more detail.

The issue of having children is connected with many different fears; postponing childbearing means avoiding these fears.

The uncertainty about what will happen in the future and how things will turn out is a very intense state of mind. Well-educated women in Vienna are very uncertain as regards their job and/or financial situation.

“I am aware that it's an illusion to think, O.K. I wait till it is reasonably safe in my job, I mean then you'd wait forever (laugh)...” (Irene)

Women who are well-educated want to be somewhat settled in their job before having a child. The reason is that they want to be able to come back after the baby and in particular to return to a good job. What they are most afraid of is not finding a good job when they re-enter the working world. Therefore they stay in the working process so as to have better opportunities afterwards. This is an important reason for postponing because they never know when their career will be safe enough. According to Liebroer (2005) women expect a child to strongly influence their future career. They think their career opportunities will decline when having a child. Well-educated women usually do not have part-time jobs, and many do not wish to work part-time when the child has been born. They somehow want to reconcile the two roles and still do the work they really like. However, they are quite realistic in appreciating that it is difficult to settle in a job and have the chance to get an equally good job after having a child.

“..There is my panic, I think I will never be settled in my job with what I am doing...” (Jenny)

If women want to do something special and not just an ordinary job in an office, fears are rising. They already know that it is difficult to find and keep a good job, an experience which they have not forgotten and which increases their worries of finding a job with a child.

“Yes I finished my studies and then I was job hopping for one and a half years, and ahh, this was extremely bitter. To be honest, this I do not want to go through again.” (Dani)

Experience has a great impact on people’s perception of the future. Actions or events which people have experienced or witnessed can influence them in a positive or a negative direction. We will return to this topic later on. Fears about the future also concern uncertainty about financial issues, sometimes in a very dramatic way:

“...and you don’t know if you can risk having a child or if you will be unemployed and on welfare at age 40. (Ponders for 3 seconds) This is difficult to judge, can I risk it?”  
(Melanie)

Liefbroer (2005) found that it is more important for women to feel secure than it is for men. For women, uncertainty is a big issue among other things they are mainly responsible for the children. Nobody knows what the future will bring. The concept of how life with a child will be is, to a large extent, connected with worries, because the women have expectations of their own lives and they have wishes and dreams also for their lives with a child. They mention their fears that these dreams and wishes might not come true or that they will not be able to provide as good a future for their children as they expected. One strategy of avoiding such fears, at least for some time, is not to decide and this means to postpone childbearing. These women have all stayed in education for a long time and invested a lot into their future careers. The worry of losing things they have worked for so hard—such as good chances on the labour market—also came up during the interviews. However, their fears were not limited to their dreams and wishes; they were also anxious to fall short of somebody else’s or their own expectations.

I: “Please tell me about your fears”

B: “You can hardly know what the future will bring, and maybe I will not have the possibility to care for my child the way I want to.” (Bettina)

This woman wants to prepare the ground for her child in a specific way. In her vision, her children should have all possibilities and her life should be in a certain way. The idea that her vision will not materialise worries her. Obviously, this issue is connected with the “Life concept category”. On the one hand, ideas of the future can create fears; and these fears can influence wishes about one’s future life. The issue of fears is also interlinked with all the following categories.

#### 4.3 DECISION

Another category is the “DECISION” as such. To decide in favour of something always means at the same time to decide against something else, so the decision by itself seems to be a difficult one.

Career-oriented women find it difficult to decide between a job and a child. They have the feeling that they will lose out in any case, no matter which decision they take.
---

In this connection the rational-choice approach seems interesting. Costs and benefits are calculated to maximise utility. This theory is often criticised in that life is not that rational. Looking at our data, we can see that arguments against a child are rational.

“The nasty thing is that Armin always argues really really rational ... and I think he would also rationally argue away the topic of a child.” (Jenny)

It is difficult to counter rational arguments. It is much easier to find rational arguments against a child because having a child is a rather emotional topic. Intelligent women want to know the situation they are going to be in. To decide for a child knowing all the risks is very difficult because the rational arguments are easier to put up.

“I am more the type who thinks somehow it will work out, if I really want something. But then I think this is really naive, (laugh) because then you ... maybe you are in a stupid situation.” (Bettina)

Coming to a decision is not easy, however. Reasons against a child can be easily supported with rational arguments. What counts in favour of a child, seem to be more emotional issues. Costs and benefits can be more easily calculated and argued against a child. If women have a high education and need to settle in their jobs, they have to wait until a higher age. However, if they finally do settle in their jobs, they risk losing their career possibilities by choosing maternity, and if they decide against the child, they will not ever have a family.

“You see, this is my fix and I don’t know if [my future plans] are realistic, and I don’t know which part of it I should drop to get, let’s say, half of what I want to have.” (Jenny)

Whatever they will decide will mean giving up something, and this makes it very difficult to decide for or against a child. Liefbroer (2005) points out that speaking in terms of costs, children are costly for women when they think about their own autonomy or their career opportunities.

“If you have gone through education – and I have of course sacrificed a lot and invested a lot, then I do not want to say after one year [on the labour market] that now I throw all these efforts away.” (Bettina)

Well-educated women have invested a good deal in their education so as to get an interesting and well-paid job. To calculate the right timing for having a child is therefore hard. Part-time jobs, which are often discussed in the literature, do not seem to be an alluring alternative for these women because of their investment in education. Such part-time jobs should at least be interesting and well-paid—which is even more

unrealistic. This category is strongly interconnected with the categories “fears” and “Life concept”. As people want to lead their life in a certain way, a decision is not easy, because very often you will lose something if you decide for a specific thing. Naturally, this causes fears. This category is also interconnected with that of the “partner’s role” described below.

#### 4.4 Partner’s role

Another important category is the role of the partner. In the literature, men tend to be neglected when the topic of fertility is discussed. However, the partner’s role has considerable impact on fertility decisions and should be discussed carefully. If the partner is supportive, or if he is the main reason for delaying, seems to have a huge impact on women’s actual behaviour.

Having a child is something well-educated women in Vienna want to decide about together with their partner. If one of the partners is not yet prepared to have a child, the couple will postpone childbearing.

All women expressed the view that the decision for a child is a matter of both partners. If both have the same ideas, the topic can be discussed without difficulty and decisions are taken more easily. If both think that now is not the right time, then it is also an easy decision. This seems to hold true mainly for younger women.

J: ... yes he says in any case, errrm more than one [child], we would like to have.

I: You have very similar expectations?

J: Yes, I think so.” (Irene)

The topic can be discussed in a more relaxed way and the pressure is not that high. Still, all these examples came from women who postponed their decision to the future.

“We would like to have [a child] in any case, but not at the moment...” (Michi)

For some women it is difficult because the male partner is at the centre of interest. Sometimes partners want to finish their “things”—like their studies—before thinking about children. This makes it very difficult for the female partner to act because she has to wait until he is ready with his things.

“His studying for me is a very very unfair pressurising medium because this has been like this since I’ve known him: always the studies [were the reason or excuse]” (Jenny)

This situation is difficult to handle because these women would have to prepare everything themselves, and without support they do not want to do it. How the social interaction about this topic is handled has a lot of impact on the well-being of women. Some couples have not really talked at all about these issues, and it seems



that these couples do not share the same time horizon. Nevertheless, since these issues “should be decided together”, people postpone their wishes.

“I: Are children in your partnership a topic?

K: it iss (speaking slowly) not a real topic, it is similar to the marriage topic, from time to time I bring up the topic (laughs) hehe, and then Christoph answers, “Yes, sometime I would like to have children but not yet” (laughs) hehehe and this was the conversation in the most cases. – that is not yet really such a, it is also he, he doesn’t look ahead that much.” (Karin)

As we can see here, this is her topic. She brings it up from time to time, and he tries to avoid it. She would like to plan her future life but he is different and waits until the time is ripe. We can see that for many women fertility is already an issue and they would like to discuss it but they have to wait until their partners are ready for it.

“... every time I address it, “you know I would like to have children and you would be a great father and I want to have at least three”, he laughs like that HAHAHA [contemptuously] and he says YES but, we have to, mmm I wouldn’t like it when you’d turn to housework and children only, first you have to settle in your job.” (Jenny)

Having children is often a women’s topic. For them it is much more difficult because they have to settle many things before having a baby. However, it is not possible to plan the future if the man is not willing to talk about it. It is true that some men were also described as supportive. The problem is, if the partner is not supporting the woman it will be very difficult for her to cope with a child. The role of women has been changing over the last years, but many men have not changed much. Without the partner’s support, well-educated women will think twice about having children. Thus the partner as the most important person of the social network strongly influences the fertility decision.

As the partner decisively shapes the vision of the future life, this may also create fears. The “partner’s role” category is also connected with the “decision” category. Because women want to decide upon the topic of fertility together with their partners, the man plays a major role in this respect. The role of the partner is also interconnected with the “social pressure” category described below.

#### 4.5 Social pressure

As we have seen, the partner’s attitude can be a major reason for increasing the pressure on women. However, social pressure can also be generated by other persons. In particular parents and, especially the women’s mothers, have a great influence. Literature defines social pressure as a reason to behave according to norms (e.g., Bernardi 2004, Hammel 1990). Here it might be defined in a slightly broader sense. The result of social pressure need not necessarily be an expected behaviour.

Pressure is not a pleasant feeling, and one strategy is to simply avoid the topic.
--

Social pressure is not always that obvious to people, but it influences their ideas and wishes of the future and often creates stress.

“K: Well she tells me from time to time you know now the time comes slowly when I would like to become a grandmother [she is nearly singing], so what are the prospects of this [laughs] hehe, my mother is very direct here, hehehe ...

I: But for you this is not a decision criterion?

K: NO, hehe, I think you should, well, you can of course listen to what your mother is saying, but you shouldn't let your life be defined that much by it.” (Karin)

She knows exactly what her mother thinks about the topic, since she is being told that she would like to be a grandmother. The feeling of pressure is an unpleasant feeling, and avoidance is also a strategy to cope with it. All interviewees referred that their mother is the second closest person, after the partner, in their networks. Nevertheless pressure is an unpleasant feeling and people try to escape these situations. However not only family members also close friends can create pressure.

“I: How would your friends react, if you were to have a child?

J: They would die of laughter because they know me.”  
(Jenny)

The expectations of members of the social network can influence the decision for or against a child. Sometimes these expectations can also be contradictory. Not only the pressure to get a child but also pressure to rethink building a family can make the decision for a child difficult. Moreover, society can also raise the pressure.

“B: There are simply always enough good reasons against a child, and I think so much fear is produced from outside. ...

I: From where do you think these fears come?

B: **Well!** From the media, from politics and from what others are saying.” (Bettina)

This woman is afraid to have a child. The pressure from outside tells her to consider this problem very carefully because an intelligent woman should know which risk she is taking. On the other hand the society pressures women to become mothers. The social pressure which is realized from society is sometimes contradicting. This makes it difficult to behave according the social norms. Pressure is a feeling that tells you what you should or shouldn't do, but if it does not fit your ideas or time horizons then you try to cope with it in some other way. So in this case it does not mean that this woman will behave according to the pressure.

Social pressure can influence the ideas of a perfect life and also which role people should take in future. But is also has an influence on the decision and can be a source of fears.

#### 4.6 Shape

The category “SHAPE” is the last category I am going to discuss here. It refers to things that happened in life and have made a person who s/he is today. Easterlin (1980) argues that ideas about such concepts as standard of living and living arrangements are shaped during one’s childhood. In this concept, not only childhood is considered important, but also the life as a young adult can influence ideas and wishes for the future. People will copy some aspects from the past, while they will want to dissociate from others.

People have concepts about which steps they would like to take in the future. How they take or do not take them is influenced by network members.

One interviewee, Karin, was quoted above. She has a very clear idea of what her future shall look like and what should happen before she will have a child. Her partner should first find a job, then she would like to move to a larger apartment, and then they can start thinking about family planning. One friend of her took these steps in a very similar way.

“...this was such an interesting process to witness, at first, they somehow found a flat, then marriage – then slowly the idea shall we have a child or not, hehehe, this slow process was very lovely to watch because the two of us also talked a lot about it, and at one point there was the decision for a child and then everything happened relatively quickly.”  
(Karin)

This is a good example of social learning. People are not isolated, they are integrated in a society and therefore they can learn from other people’s experiences. The exchange of information with the woman’s friend is mentioned here which seems to have had an impact on her view of her own future. Bernardi (2004) says in her article that reproductive ideas and behaviour are mainly shaped by attitudes of peer group members. This also holds true for our example, where the woman shares the experience with one of her closest friends. She saw what course life could take, and she would like to follow in her footsteps. Only her marriage is different, and this is a sensitive topic for her. At any rate, social learning seems to have a great impact on fertility decisions. Another important experience in this category is a person’s own childhood, as suggested by Easterlin (1980).

“I would like ... I enjoyed growing up in a rural area ... I had a super childhood, really, and I would like to offer this to my child, too.” (Dani)

Our own personal experience—not only in the present social network also in the past—is shaping our present lives. Liefbroer (2005) has found that women who had experienced a parental divorce are delaying their one parenthood. When a person witnessed a friend or acquaintance who had difficulties in coping with their children this also was mentioned very often and increased the fears about having a child. As I

mentioned before, job experiences left their signs as well. Many young academic women have the experience of searching for a job for some time, and this also affects their decision for or against a child. This category contains opinions, actions or events which people witnessed and from which they would like to dissociate, i.e. things which had a negative impact where people comment, “this I don’t like”. Negative and positive experiences belong to this category. These experiences are shaping the ideas of a perfect future and can create at the same time fears and sorrows. The category “Life concept” and “fears” are strongly interconnected with this category.

## 5. Discussion

Summing up this paper, we may say that all described categories are interlinked and interdependent. A person’s life concept has a marked influence on the timing of childbearing. People’s expectations of what the future should look like or what tasks they want to have finished before having a child direct their behaviour. In his theory, Ajzen (1991) speaks about planned behaviour. The concept used in this paper is based on dreams or ideas and hence is much more subject to the influence of other things and persons. Planning is more regulated and does not change so easily. A concept is modified and adopted in line with changing conditions. Ideas of the future relate to work and to the financial situation. Well-educated women think that their opportunity costs of having a child are high. However, their behaviour is not only shaped by financial considerations but also by such topics as getting prepared and searching for a nice apartment. What also has an impact is the wish to experience the decision to have a baby together or that the partner can take parental leave as well. The women’s ideas about their identity—how they would like to be and where they should already be—also influence the decision for or against a child. People try to come as close as possible to their desired ideal and this often means waiting and postponing childbearing to a point when all conditions are optimal, or at least better.

Fears and uncertainty were discussed in the second category. The interviewed women worried about becoming poor or unemployed, and these worries are realistic. Uncertainty about the right timing is also an important issue. In fact, one never knows when one is settled enough in a job. In the literature, financial uncertainty is the key issue (Kreyenfeld 2004). As shown in this paper, economic considerations are not the only principle guiding people’s behaviour. Other sources of fears are also important. Anxieties about not meeting one’s own or other people’s expectations were also addressed during the interviews, i.e. the fear of not getting the chance to lead the life one was expected or expecting to lead. This concerns fears about losing already existing things or worries about the future.

The decision as such is another issue. It was shown here that it is always possible to find arguments against having a child, and that these arguments are rational ones—such as an unfavourable job situation, or the prospect that conditions might be better in a few years’ time. Arguing against rational positions is very difficult especially because the issue of having children is an emotional one. Deciding for something is always a decision against something else. The decision for or against a child can be illustrated as a decision on costs of children. For well-educated women in Vienna, the costs of having children are considered as very high. To get everything one wants to have seems difficult, and for some of the interviewees it even seems to be impossible. All this makes the decision complicated.

People see having children as an issue that partners should decide upon together. However, the partner might either be supportive and have similar ideas about the joint future or he might oppose the wish to have children, because he cherishes different dreams or has a different time horizon. Women are, to a great extent, dependent on their partners in this respect because having a child involves the need of getting support from the partner. This can create stress and pressure and makes people postpone their childbearing wishes because they want to enjoy a child together. The role of the partner in fertility decisions is rarely mentioned in the literature. However the partner can be an important reason for the woman to postpone her wish to have a child.

Social pressure influences people's behaviour. Many interviewees report that social pressure causes them stress. Some say that their family is putting pressure on them. In the literature, it is mentioned that people behave in accordance with social pressure (e.g., Hammel 1990, Micheli and Bernardi 2003). This study has shown that people simply tried to avoid the topic and did not react in the way they were expected to act. Another aspect is that analysing social pressure tends to be limited to mounting pressure by network partners to motivate women to get a child. This study showed that network partner can also question the idea of getting a child. However, society pressurises well-educated women as well by asking them to very carefully rethink the idea of having a child, because "intelligent women should know how much they can afford". In this respect, we have to consider cultural rules and norms to understand why people behave the way they do. This may lead to a situation, in which the behavioural norms become contradictory and complying with all of them is sometimes not possible.

Experience shapes life concepts. Experience determines what people would like to attain, what they want to do in their lives. Social learning is part of this concept. Seeing how other people behave is the basis for one's own life concepts. One's own childhood can also be seen as a great source for such expectations. Easterlin (1980) assumes that a person's childhood is shaping his/her ideas of the future life. This is also a key idea in this research. Experience, however, also shows us what we want to avoid in life—thus, the experience of insecure job situations in the past may increase the pressure to take the right decision.

Because this is a qualitative study and not all aspects have been fully developed, the presented findings should be seen as preliminary insights into the topic. Nevertheless, some theoretical ideas have already been developed and certain explanations can be taken to complement the already existing theory. We have seen that the reasons for postponing childbearing are complex. The categories shown in this paper are interlinked and interdependent. What the study tries to show is that the discussed theories are all relevant to explain different dimensions of fertility behaviour. It is necessary to combine and, to some extent, supplement these theories. In any case, more extensive research is needed to come to a better understanding of fertility behaviour.

## References

- Ajzen, Icek. 1991. "The theory of planned behavior." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50, pp.179-211.
- Ajzen, I., and M. Fishbein. 1973. "Attitudinal and normative variables as predictors of specific behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27 (1), pp. 41-57.
- Becker, G. 1965. "A theory of the allocation of time." *The Economic Journal* 75, pp. 493-517.
- Becker, G. and H.G. Lewis 1974. "Interaction between quality and quantity of children." In: W. Schultz. *Economics of the Family, Marriages, Children, and Human Capital*. London, pp. 81-90.
- Becker, G. 1992. "Fertility and the economy" *Journal of Population Economics*, pp. 185-201.
- Behrman, J. R., H.-P. Kohler, S. C. Watkins 2001. "How can we measure the causal effects of social networks using observational data? Evidence from the diffusion of family planning and AIDS worries in south Nyanza district, Kenya." *MPIDR Working Paper WP-2001-022*, Rostock: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.
- Bernardi, L. 2004. "Channels of social influence on reproduction." *Population Research and Policy Review* 22: 527-555.
- Bhaumik, S.K., and J. Nugent. 2005. "Does economic uncertainty have an impact on decisions to bear children? Evidence from eastern Germany." *Discussion paper series*, IZA DP No. 1746.
- Bongaarts, J. and S. C. Watkins. 1996. "Social interactions and contemporary fertility transitions." *Population Research and Policy Review* 22 (4): 639-682.
- Borchardt, A. and Y. Stöbel-Richter. 2004. „Die Genese des Kinderwunsches bei Paaren – eine qualitative Studie.“ *Materialien zur Bevölkerungswissenschaft, Heft 114*, Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung.
- Bruijn, B. 2006. "Fertility: theories, frameworks, models, concepts." In: Caselli, G., J. Vallin and G. Wunsch, *Demography, Analysis and Synthesis, a treatise in population studies*, Volume 1. Burlington: Academic Press.
- Buber, I. 2001. "The effect of the completion of education on entry into motherhood in Austria: or: the "real" educational catch-up effect." Paper presented at *Annual meeting of the European Society for Population Economics*, Athens University of Economic and Business, 14-16 June 2001.
- Bühler, C. and D. Philipov. 2005. "Social capital related to fertility: theoretical foundations and empirical evidence from Bulgaria." *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, pp.53-81.

- Easterlin, R. A. 1980. *“Birth and fortune, the impact of numbers on personal welfare.”* New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.
- Engelhardt, H. and A. Prskawetz. 2004. “On the changing correlation between fertility and female employment over space and time.” *European Journal of Population* 20, pp. 35-62.
- Flick U. 1995. *„Qualitative Sozialforschung, Theorie, Methoden, Anwendung in Psychologie und Sozialwissenschaft.“* Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Flick, U. 2002. *“An introduction to qualitative research.”* Second edition, London: Sage Publications.
- Froschauer, U. and M. Lueger. 1992. *„Das Qualitative Interview: zur Analyse sozialer Systeme.“* Wien: WUV Universitätsverlag.
- Girtler, R. 1992. *„Methoden der qualitativen Sozialforschung: Anleitung zur Feldarbeit.“* Wien: Böhlau-Studien-Bücher.
- Glaser, B. and A. Strauss. 1999 *“The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research.”* New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Hammel E.A., 1990. „A theory of culture for demography.“ *Population and Development Review* 16 (3), pp.455-485.
- Hollstein, B. 2001. *„Grenzen sozialer Interaktion: Zur Konzeption informeller Beziehungen und Netzwerke.“* Opladen: Leske+Budrich.
- Hotz, V. J., J. A. Klerman and R. J. Willis 1997. “The economics of fertility in developed countries”, In: Rosenzweig, M. R. and O. Stark (Eds.) *Handbook of Population and Family Economics, Vol. 1A.* Amsterdam: Elsevier, 275–347.
- Jansen, D. 2003. *Einführung in die Netzwerkanalyse*, Opladen: Leske und Burdich
- Kohler, H-P. and I. Kohler. 2002. „Fertility decline in Russia in the early and mid 1990s: The role of economic uncertainty and labour market crises.“ *European Journal of Population* 18 (3), 233-262.
- Kreyenfeld, M. 2004. “Fertility decisions in the FRG and GDR: An analysis with data from the German fertility and family survey.“ *MPIDR Working Paper WP 2004-008*, Rostock: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.
- Kreyenfeld, M. 2005. “Economic uncertainty and fertility postponement evidence from German panel data.“ *MPIDR Working Paper WP 2005-034*, Rostock: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.
- Lamnek, S. 1995. *„Qualitative Sozialforschung Band 2: Methoden und Techniken.“* Weinheim: Beltz.

- Lesthaeghe, R. 2001. "Postponement and recuperation: Recent fertility trends and forecasts in six West European countries." *IPD-Working Paper 2001-1*. Brussels: Vrije University.
- Lesthaeghe, R. 2003. "The second demographic transition in western countries; an interpretation." In: Oppenheim Mason K. and A-M. Jensen. *Gender and family changes in industrialized countries*. Reprint. Oxforde, Carendon Press, pp. 17-62.
- Liefbroer, A., Corijn, M. 1999. "Who, what and when? Specifying the impact of education attainment and labour force participation on family formation." *European Journal of Population* 15 (1), pp. 45-75, 54.
- Liefbroer, A. 2005. "The impact of perceived costs and rewards of childbearing on entry into parenthood: evidence from a panel study." *European Journal of Population* 21, pp. 367-391.
- Lutz, W. 2005. "Life expectancy still rising and Italians have fewer "bambini"." *Framtider* 2, pp. 19-24.
- Marsden, P. and N. Friedkin. 1993. "Network studies of social influence." *Sociological Methods & Research* 22 (1), pp. 127-151.
- Mayring, P. 1990. "*Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung, Eine Anleitung zum qualitativen Denken*." München: Psychologie Verlags Union.
- McDonald, P. 2000. "Gender equity, social institutions and the future of fertility." *Journal of Population Research* 17 (1), pp. 1-16.
- Micheli, G. A. and L. Bernardi. 2003. "Two theoretical interpretations of the dissonance between fertility intentions and behavior." *MPIDR Working Paper WP 2003-009*, Rostock: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.
- Miles, M. B. and A. M. Huberman. 1994. "*Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*." Second edition, California: Sage Publications.
- Rindfuss, R., M.K. Choe, L.L. Bumpass and N. O. Tsuya. 2004. "Social networks and family change in Japan." *American Sociological Review* 69, pp. 838-861.
- Sobotka, T. 2004. "*Postponement of childbearing and low fertility in Europe*." Doctoral thesis, University of Groningen. Amsterdam: Dutch University Press.
- Spielauer, M., F. Schwarz, K. Städtner, and K. Schmid. 2003. "*Family and education. Intergenerational educational transmission within families and the influence of education on partner choice and fertility. Analysis and micro simulation projection for Austria*." Schriftenreihe 11, Vienna: Austrian Institute for Family Studies.



- Spielauer, M. 2004. „Childlessness and the concentration of reproduction in Austria“. *MPIDR Working Paper WP 2004-028*, Rostock: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.
- Strauss, A. 1987. *“Qualitative analysis for social scientists.”* Cambridge: University Press.
- Strauss, A. and J. Corbin. 1996. *„Grounded Theory: Grundlagen Qualitativer Sozialforschung.“* Weinheim: Beltz, Psychologie Verlags Union.
- Wasserman, S and K. Faust. 1994. *“Social networks analysis: methods and applications. Structural analysis in the social sciences 8.”* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Willis, R.J. 1973. “A new approach to the economic theory of fertility behavior.” *Journal of Political Economy* 81, pp. 14-64.
- Witzel, A. 2000. “Problem-centered interview.” *Forum qualitative social research*. 1 (1).
- Van de Kaa, D.J., 1996. “Anchored narratives: The story and findings of half a century of research into the determinants of fertility.” *Population Studies*, 50, pp. 389-432.