

Are fertility intentions a relevant measure for policy purposes?

Dimiter Philipov

**G
G
P**

Generations & Gender
Programme

*How generations and gender shape demographic change
Geneva, 14-16 May 2008*

Focus of this presentation:

1. The use of fertility intentions to identify needs of policy support for having children
2. Relevance of GGP for this purpose



Starting point:

- *"All couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and to have the information, education, and means to do so"*

Conclusions, UN Regional Population meeting, Budapest, Dec. 1998

The reproductive right is a fundamental human right

- Efficiently fulfilled for:
 - unwanted fertility (family planning)
 - infertility
 - reproductive health
- Significant care taken that people could have reach to adequate information, knowledge, and means.

However, what can we say about fertile healthy couples who want to have children but are prevented by certain obstacles?

(Inverse of unwanted fertility)

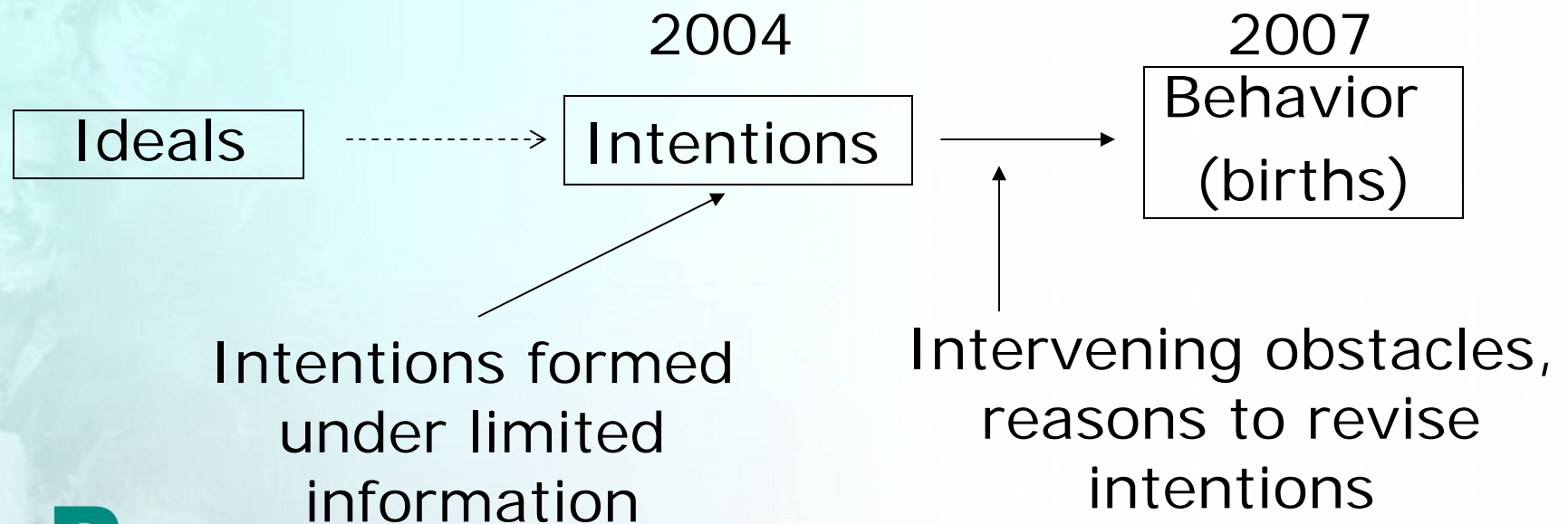
- The problems that people experience may relate to their reproductive right, hence it can be expected that policies may be needed to support this human right
- These policies are not pro-natalistic, although they have a positive effect on fertility

This look to policies raises a large range of questions, ex.:

- *How can we identify these couples?*
i.e. what is the target population?
- *What are the obstacles?*
 - Which obstacles should be addressed by policies?
 - Do government and society have the capacity to overcome them?

The main problem: how to measure unrealized fertility (fertility needs, wanted fertility)? i.e. something not existing?

Viable answer: use a proximate antecedent such as fertility intentions



Contribution of the GGP

- GGS

Wave 1: initial formation of fertility intentions

Wave 2: realization of intentions and revision of intentions

Wave 3: postponement of intended fertility

- **Contextual database:** legislative and other environment in which persons construct and aim to realize their intentions (MPIDR WP)



GGG - Bulgaria, 2004 and 2007: (PRELIMINARY RESULTS, respondents by age 40 in 2004)

- Realized intentions to have a child in 3 years:

Intention:	For a 1 st child		For a 2 nd child	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Certainly not	s.n.	s.n.	s.n.	5 %
Probably not	6 %	11 %	13 %	13 %
Probably yes	15 %	16 %	25 %	22 %
Certainly yes	29 %	36 %	37 %	30 %

s.n. = small number

Factors observed in 2004 which determine the realization of intentions(1)

- *Realization of intentions is less likely for:*
 - Women aged above 30 (but not men)
 - Cohabiting persons, as compared to married; least likely for those who only have a friend
- *Insignificant:*
 - Expected family size
 - Number of siblings

Factors observed in 2004 which determine the realization of intentions (2)

Education (Secondary, lower, higher):

- Significant for intentions to have a 1st child, insignificant for having a 2nd child
 - Men with lower education are more likely to realize their intention
 - Women with secondary education are less likely to realize their intention

Factors observed in 2004 which determine the realization of intentions (3)

- *Being in study* at the time of survey crucially influences realization of intentions for men and women
- *Other factors with no particular influence:*
 - Employment
 - Housing conditions
 - Personal or household income

SUMMARY (1)

- Fertility intentions can be informative for the construction of policies related to needs of children (policies to support reproductive rights)
- GGS and the contextual DB can provide relevant important information
- We can expect important internationally comparable findings during the forthcoming years

SUMMARY (2)

- *(Preliminary) policy-related inference from the Bulgarian data:*
 - Support earlier completion of desired educational level
 - Support parenthood during the process of education
 - This inference is an example of “tempo” policies