

**Realization of fertility intentions in Austria, the Czech Republic
and Hungary: How much do cities matter?
Vienna, Prague and Budapest in comparison**

Bernhard Riederer and Isabella Buber-Ennser

Wittgenstein Centre (IIASA, VID/ÖAW, WU)

Vienna Institute of Demography/Austrian Academy of Sciences

Welthandelsplatz 2/Level 2

1020 Vienna, Austria

bernhard.riederer@oeaw.ac.at

Tel.: 0043-1-31336-7748

Extended Abstract

Submitted to the European Population Conference (EPC) 2016

Please do not cite without authors' permission

Introduction and background

Largely focusing on national aggregates, researchers do not always pay much attention to existing regional differences within countries. However, prior research established that there are often large differences within national entities, especially between urban and rural areas. Using longitudinal data of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) for Austria, Hungary and Czech Republic, the present study addresses this shortcoming by analyzing differences in childbearing intentions and their realization between the capital city and other parts of a country in a comparative perspective. The aim of this study is therefore twofold: First, a comparison between cities and the surrounding countryside will be conducted. The focus on analyzing cities is of great relevance as cities often play a key role in explaining the spread of new trends and changes in social behavior. In addition, urban and rural regions usually differ in several characteristics that are relevant to reproductive behavior and fertility. On the one hand, for instance, career opportunities leading to postponement of childbearing are more frequently found in the cities. On the other hand, however, urban environments usually offer more possibilities of formal childcare enhancing the reconciliation of family and professional life.

Furthermore, the characteristics of the respective populations of cities and the countryside likely differ from each other. In urban areas people are usually higher educated and postpone parenthood more frequently. Compositional effects on fertility may also result from perceptions of urban living environments and corresponding mobility of subgroups. For instance, cities with higher rates of crime and less open green space than rural areas are usually not perceived as ideal places to raise children. Thus, many people move from the cities to rural areas shortly before or after the birth of a child.

Second, we conduct a comparison between three European countries and their capitals – Vienna, Prague and Budapest. These three cities are located in the center of Europe and characterized beyond geographical proximity by their shared history within the former Habsburg monarchy. Nevertheless, location on different sides of the Iron curtain brought also differences in developments of welfare states and societies in general.

This paper builds upon work done in a research project funded by the City of Vienna that will be conducted between November 2015 and March 2016 at the Vienna Institute of Demography at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The project aims at generating ideas for future policies on the regional level. Thus, one purpose of this study is also to derive policy implications for local authorities.

Data and Method

The present research uses data from the first and the second wave of the Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS) for Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Sample sizes of the GGS are sufficient to compare the three capitals with each other and the respective countryside in each country. Our sample includes 951 cases from Vienna, 829 from Budapest and 791 from Prague.

Availability of longitudinal data allows analyzing the realization of childbearing intentions. This is especially important with regard to Austria (and Vienna) where the last time such a study could be done was at the beginning of the 1980s with data restricted at that time on married females below age 30 interviewed in 1978 and 1982. The GGS data allows analyses of both men and women aged between 18 and 45, independent of their marital status.

A further advantage of the GGS data is that we are not only able to study the realization or non-realization of short-time childbearing intentions but also to differentiate between individuals who still want to have a (or another) child and those who gave up (changed their intentions). In the respective capitals and other parts of the three countries chosen, we analyze factors influencing whether people in reproductive age (a) realized their intention to have a child within the four-year period between the two waves of the GGS, (b) postponed the realization or (c) abandoned their child wish. The main explanatory variables include, among others, age, gender, parity, education, employment, economic situation, migration background, partnership status and the division of family work. We will test whether these factors have similar effects in urban as well as rural areas. To do so, in a first step methods of multinomial regression analyses are employed (logit and probit models). In a second step, the `suest`¹ command in Stata will allow combining parameter estimates of separately estimated models to test for differences in coefficients between the subsamples.

Results

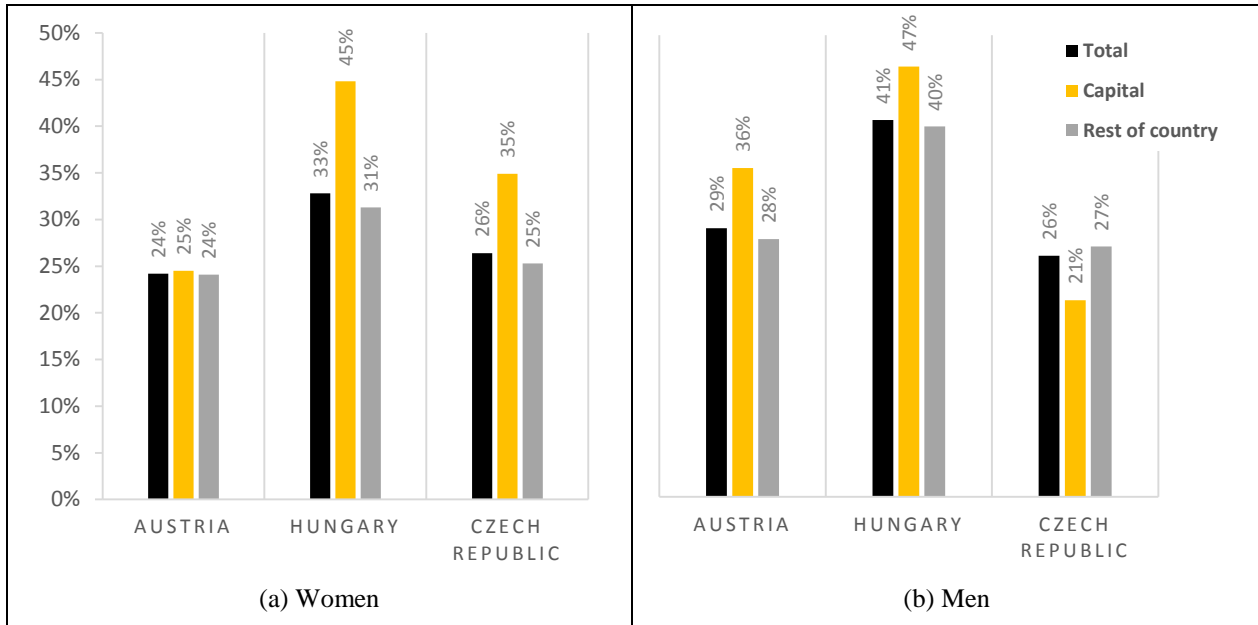
Results are preliminary as the research project is still in an early stage. Descriptive results so far show that fertility intentions are higher in Hungary than in the two other countries.

Moreover, a comparison between women and men shows that men in Austria and Hungary reported higher fertility intentions than women (see Figure 1). In the Czech Republic, however, men reported higher fertility intentions in the countryside, but women intended to

¹ `Suest` stands for seemingly unrelated estimation.

have children more often in the country's capital Prague. Apart from Czech men, childbearing intentions were generally higher in the cities than in the countryside.

Figure 1: Short-term Childbearing Intentions of Women and Men



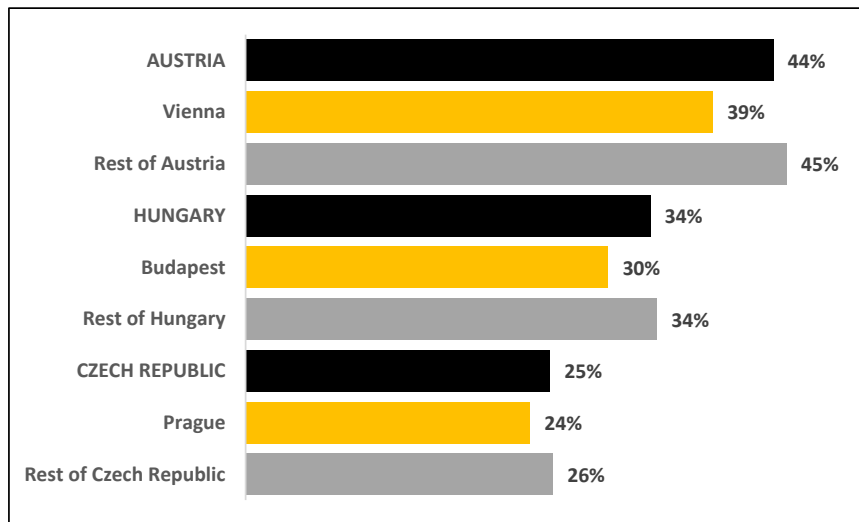
Source: Generations and Gender Survey (first wave). $N_{\text{Austria}} = 3.436$; $N_{\text{Hungary}} = 4.393$; $N_{\text{Czech Republic}} = 1.124$.

With regard to childbearing, results are in line with intentions at first glance. In Hungary, about 18 per cent of the longitudinal sample got a(nother) child between wave 1 and wave 2 of the survey compared to 15 per cent in Austria and 11 per cent in the Czech Republic. In all countries, numbers were slightly lower in the capital than in the rest of the country. Focusing on participants intending to have a child, however, realization seems to be highest in Austria (see Figure 2).² Although childbearing intentions in general are higher in the cities, the realization of intentions is higher in the countryside.

In addition, for both sexes, all regions and countries, the highest realization rates are found with people between the 25 and 34 years (at wave 1). In Austria, for example, more than half of individuals belonging to this age group realized their fertility intention between wave 1 and wave 2.

² In Hungary, 9 per cent of participants not intending to have a(nother) child in wave 1 became one between the two waves. This holds for only 5 per cent of participants in Austria and the Czech Republic.

Figure 2: Realization of Childbearing Intentions



Source: Generations and Gender Survey (first and second wave).
 $N_{\text{Austria}} = 897$; $N_{\text{Hungary}} = 1.603$; $N_{\text{Czech Republic}} = 296$.

Analyses that are more detailed were carried out only with Austrian data so far. These analyses suggest that while most factors that are relevant for realization show similar impact in urban as well as rural environments (e.g. age, employment, financial situation, health), at least some interesting differences do exist. For example, a much higher share of childless individuals abandoned childbearing in Vienna (32 per cent) than in other parts of Austria (16 per cent). Furthermore, especially among participants who are not Austrian citizens, the share of individuals bearing a(nother) child between the two waves of the survey was much higher in rural parts of Austria than in Vienna (28 vs. 15 per cent).