

# Fertility and Reproductive Behavior

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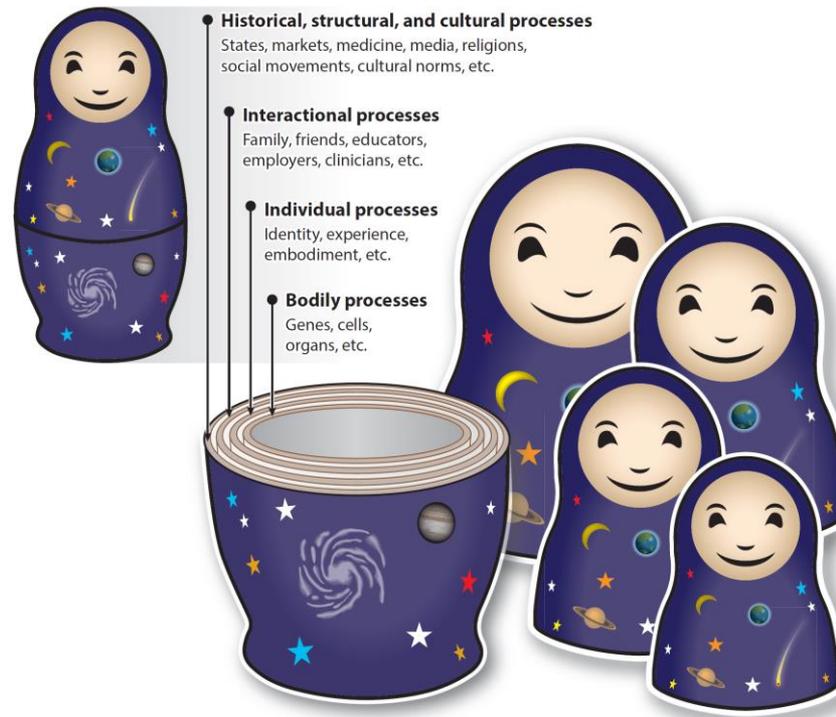
## *pairfam*'s contribution to the study of fertility and reproductive behavior

- Family formation and extension is at the core of *pairfam* data collection and research (Huinink et al. 2011)
- Prolific research outcome is reflected in more than 30 published **articles in refereed journals** (i.a. Advances in Life Course Research, Demographic Research, Demography, European Journal of Population, European Sociological Review, Frontiers in Sociology, Journal of Family Research, Journal of Marriage and Family, Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Population and Development Review, Reproductive Biomedicine & Society Online, Socius, Zeitschrift für Soziologie ...) **and books as well as a large number of student theses**

## Fertility and reproductive behavior in *pairfam*

- *pairfam* provides opportunity to advance our knowledge on a variety of issues related to fertility, reproductive behavior, family formation, children and childlessness
- *pairfam* enables to draw links between different analytical levels

# Fertility and reproductive behavior need to be studied as a social process, taking a complex conceptual framework into account



Almeling, Rene (2015): Reproduction. Annual Review of Sociology. Vol. 41, p. 431.

**Figure 1**  
Conceptual diagram of reproduction as a multilayered biological and social process.

## *pairfam's* contribution to the study of fertility and reproductive behavior

- Modules related to fertility behavior:
- contraception and sexuality
  - desire to have children
  - fertility intentions
  - number of children
  - timing of parenthood
  - requirements and restrictions regarding children
  - reasons for stopping having children
  - ad-hoc topics: e.g. regretting parenthood, co-parenting

For sensitive questions:  
computer-assisted self  
interviewing rather than  
face-to-face interviews

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Fertility intentions

- Selective findings:
  - Uncertainty in fertility intentions is volatile across an individual's life course
  - Uncertainty is most often observed towards the end of the reproductive life span, after partner separation, when already having two or more children
  - For men, also economic insecurity is associated with uncertainty in fertility intention

# Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

## Fertility intentions

- Selective findings:
  - Parental impact on adult children's fertility intentions can be detected in some constellations but it is not pronounced and the association is mostly insignificant
  - Fertility intentions also matter for residential relocation (residential mobility as a by-product of fertility decisions)
  - The intention-behavior link

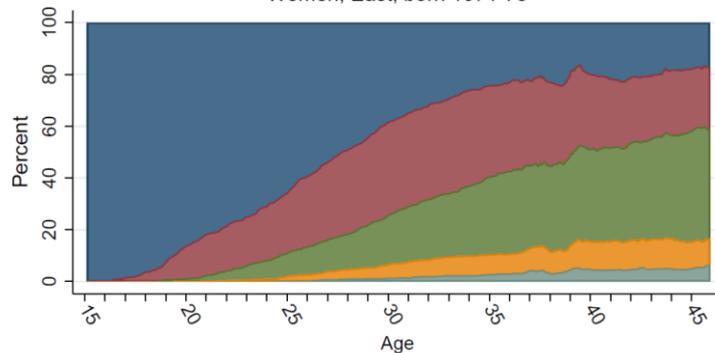
## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Fertility preferences

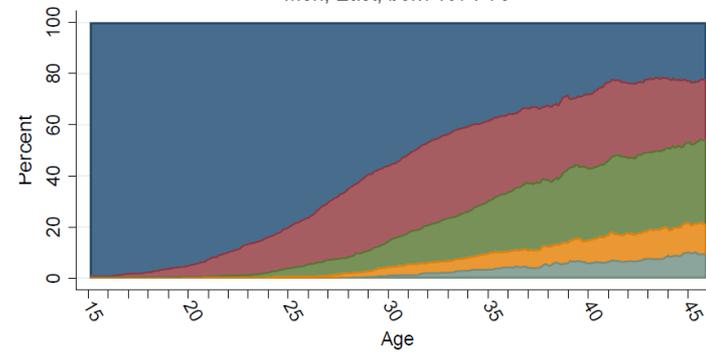
- When we look at fertility preferences/ideal number of children, they are fairly stable at the aggregate level but they do change somewhat over the life course.
- With rising age, this number declines modestly but it increases with the number of own children

# Number of Children over the Life Course

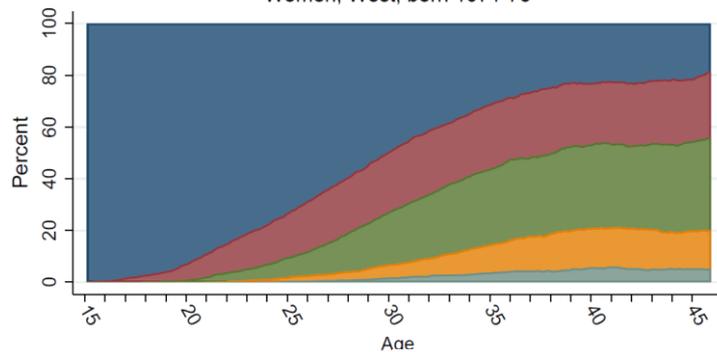
Women, East, born 1971-73



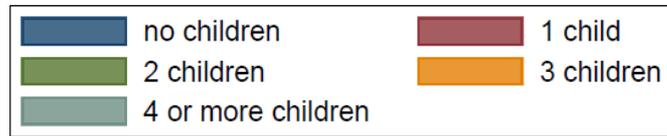
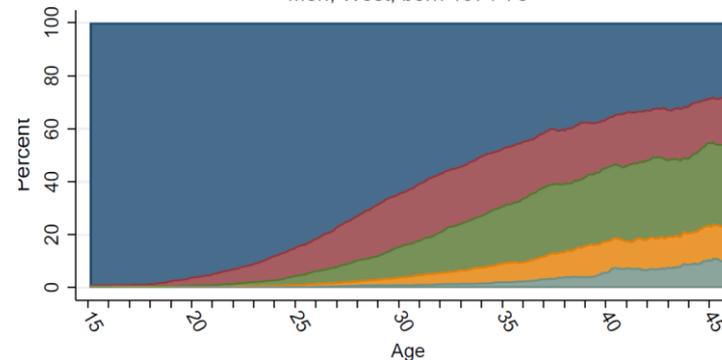
Men, East, born 1971-73



Women, West, born 1971-73



Men, West, born 1971-73



## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### ➤ Fertility intentions

- Geist, Claudia & Sarah Brauner-Otto. 2017. Constrained Intentions: Individual Economic Resources, Regional Context, and Fertility Expectations in Germany. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 3: 1-17.
- Kuhnt, Anne-Kristin, Lara Minkus & Petra Buhr. 2021. Uncertainty in fertility intentions from a life course perspective: Which life course markers matter? *Journal of Family Research* 33 (1): 184–208.
- Kuhnt, Anne-Kristin & Heike Trappe. 2016. Channels of Social Influence on the Realization of Short-Term Fertility Intentions in Germany. *Advances in Life Course Research* 27: 16-29.
- Tanskanen, Antti O. & Mirrka Danielsbacka. 2021. Does Parental Investment Shape Adult Children's Fertility Intentions? Findings From a German Family Panel. *Frontiers in Sociology* 6, 693119.
- Vidal, Sergi, Johannes Huinink & Michael Feldhaus. 2017. Fertility Intentions and Residential Relocations. *Demography* 54: 1305-1330
- Wagner, Michael, Johannes Huinink & Aart C. Liefbroer. 2019. Running out of time? Understanding the consequences of the biological clock for the dynamics of fertility intentions and union formation. *Demographic Research* 40: 1-26.

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Family Formation

- Selective findings:
  - Persisting significant differences between East and West Germany
  - Only small contextual effects on family formation behavior but nevertheless regional economic circumstances matter in determining transition to first marriage and fertility intention
  - Social interaction plays an important role

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Family Formation

- Selective findings:
  - The modelling of both the female and male partner reveals that the individual as well as partner effects are important
  - Neither women nor men clearly dominate fertility decisions
  - One partner will exercise a “veto” power only if the expected loss of utility from a further child is very high

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Family Formation

- Selective findings:
  - In case of disagreement, bargaining power due to advantageous market conditions can play a pivotal role in the decision, so a male partner can have a greater influence
  - The female partner ultimately has a veto power in the couple's final decision

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### ➤ Family formation

- Hank, Karsten & Johannes Huinink. 2015. Regional contexts and family formation: Evidence from the German Family Panel. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 67: 41-58.
- Stein, Petra, Sebastian Willen & Monika Pavetic. 2014. Couples' fertility decision-making. *Demographic Research* 30: 1697-1732.

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### ➤ Dyadic processes in fertility decision

- Bauer, Gerrit & Thorsten Kneip. 2012. Fertility from a Couple Perspective: A Test of Competing Decision Rules on Proceptive Behaviour. *European Sociological Review* 29(3): 535-548.
- Hutteman, Roos, Wiebke Bleidorn, Lars Penke & Jaap J. A. Denissen. 2013. It Takes Two: A Longitudinal Dyadic Study on Predictors of Fertility Outcomes. *Journal of Personality* 81(5): 487-498.

# Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

## Fertility Timing

- Selective findings:
  - There is evidence of intergenerational transmission of fertility timing (mother's age at her daughter's births and daughter's transition to first birth), particularly for “young childbearing”
  - The association is weaker for eastern compared to western parts of Germany
  - Various social contagion mechanisms and their impact on both fertility intentions and behavior were tested and found support using *pairfam* data

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### ➤ Fertility timing

- Lois, Daniel & Lois, Daniel & Oliver Arránz Becker. 2014. Is Fertility Contagious? Using Panel Data to Disentangle Mechanisms of Social Network Influences on Fertility Decisions. *Advances in Life Course Research* 21: 123-134.
- Morosow, Sabrina & Heike Trappe. 2018. Intergenerational transmission of fertility timing in Germany. *Demographic Research* 38: 1389-1422.

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Childlessness

- Selective findings:
  - A turbulent partnership history is associated with a high probability of remaining childless
  - Women with higher education are more likely to remain childless but the differences have narrowed in recent birth cohorts
  - For men, the situation is reversed: less educated men are more likely to be childless

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### ➤ Childlessness

- Boehnke, Mandy. 2013. Hochschulbildung und Kinderlosigkeit. Deutsche Unterschiede. In: *Ein Leben ohne Kinder. Ausmaß, Strukturen und Ursachen von Kinderlosigkeit*. 2th edition, Hrsg. Konietzka, Dirk & Michaela Kreyenfeld, 81-100. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Kreyenfeld, Michaela & Dirk Konietzka. 2017. Childlessness in East and West Germany: Long-Term Trends and Social Disparities. *In Childlessness in Europe: Contexts, Causes, and Consequences*, ed. by Kreyenfeld, Michaela & Dirk Konietzka, 97-114. Dodrecht: SpringerOpen.
- Raab, Marcel 2017. Childhood Family Structure and Early Family Formation in East and West Germany. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79: 110-130.

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Infertility and Medically Assisted Reproduction

- Selective findings:
  - Perception of inability to procreate is not a stable trait; there is a considerable instability in this perception over the life course
  - It is a temporal phenomenon, shaped by life-course contexts and social group differences
  - Medically assisted reproduction (MAR) is most often used by married, childless couples with higher income
  - Social selectivity in the uptake of MAR is based on economic resources and the importance of marriage as the cultural ideal of a „normal“ family

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### ➤ Infertility and Medically Assisted Reproduction

- Passet-Wittig, Jasmin, Martin Bujard, Julia McQuillan & Alfred L. Greil. 2020. Is perception of inability to procreate a temporal phenomenon? A longitudinal exploration of changes and determinants among women and men of reproductive age in Germany. *Advances in Life Course Research* 45.
- Köppen, Katja, Heike Trappe & Christian Schmitt. 2021. Who can take advantage of medically assisted reproduction in Germany? *Reproductive Biomedicine & Society Online*, Volume 13, August 2021, Pages 51-61

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Reasons to stop having children

- Selective findings:
  - Several mechanisms play a role in voluntary decisions of childless persons giving up on having children
  - Being female, not employed, and having low scores on the emotional autonomy scale increases the likelihood of giving up on having children
  - Importance of other life goals beyond parenthood is evidently having a role in giving up on having children

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

- Reasons to stop having children
  - Buhr, Petra & Johannes Huinink. 2017. Why Childless Men and Women Give Up on Having Children. *European Journal of Population* 33: 585-606.

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Abortion

- Selective findings:
- *pairfam* provides a unique opportunity to study induced abortion on a representative population
- It allows to also study men whose partners experienced abortion
- Abortion is framed as a social process in which life circumstances and disruptive life events fundamentally shape the decision to carry a pregnancy to term or to discontinue it
- Particularly teenage or late pregnancy, educational enrollment, previous children, partnership dissolution, and economic uncertainty are associated with induced abortion

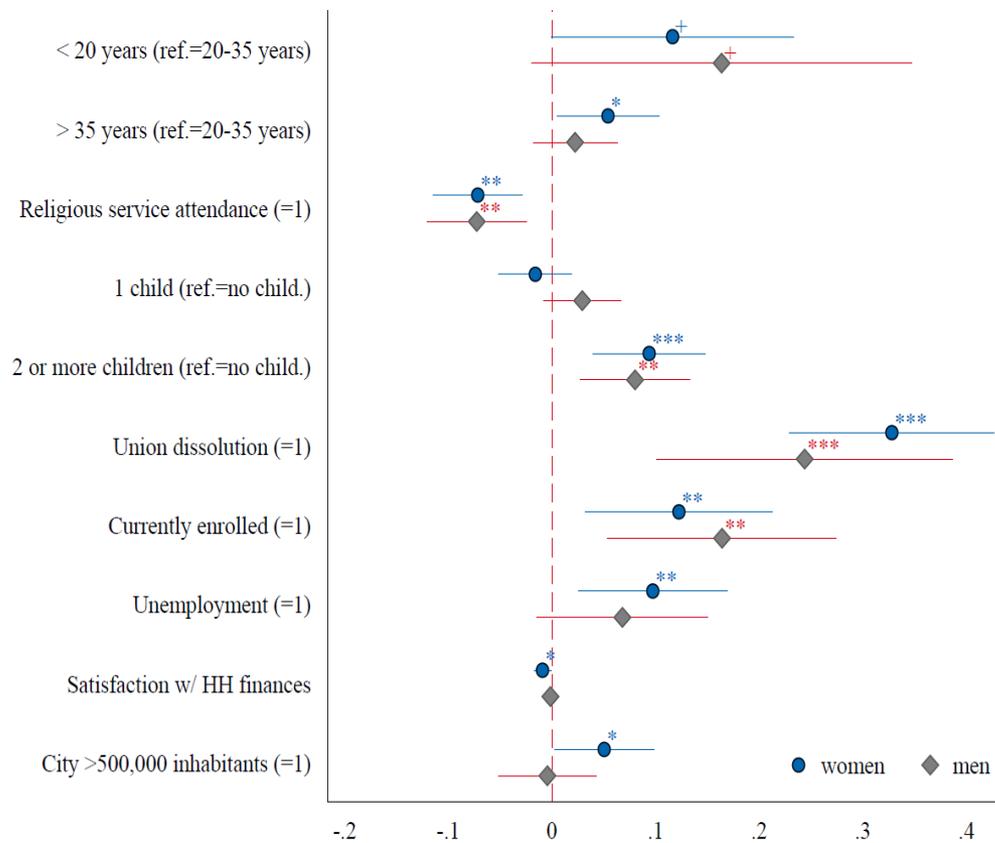


Fig. 1: Estimates of the likelihood of abortion. Linear Probability Models LPM

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Abortion

- Selective findings:
- Abortion has a rather small negative effect on relationship satisfaction but this appears to be only temporary
- In general, relationship satisfaction and union dissolution do not change when comparing pre-abortion values with those after having had an abortion

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### ➤ Abortion

Hajek, Kristin. 2021. The Interplay of Having an Abortion, Relationship Satisfaction, and Union Dissolution. *Comparative Population Studies* 46: 97-122.

Minkus, Lara & Sonja Drobnič. 2021. Abortion: Life-Course Stages and Disruptive Life Events. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 50 (3-4): 259-273

## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

- *pairfam* used in cross-national comparison
- Gröpler, Nicolai, Johannes Huinink & Timo Peter. 2021. Does the birth of a child still prompt a marriage? A comparison of Austria, France, Germany and Hungary. *European Societies* 23(3): 333–359.
- Perelli-Harris, Brienna, Wendy Sigle-Rushton, Michaela Kreyenfeld, Trude Lappegård, Renske Keizer, Caroline Berghammer. 2010. The Educational Gradient of Childbearing within Cohabitation in Europe. *Population and Development Review* 36(4): 775–801.
- Perelli-Harris, Brienna, Michaela Kreyenfeld, Wendy Sigle-Rushton, Renske Keizer, Trude Lappegård, Aiva Jasilioniene, Caroline Berghammer & Paola Di Giulio. 2012. Changes in union status during the transition to parenthood in eleven European countries, 1970s to early 2000s. *Population Studies* 66 (2): 167-182.

# Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

## Co-Parenting

Co-parenting: a new phenomenon in family formation/life form. A man and a woman form a relationship in order to have and raise a child together; a romantic partnership is, however, ruled out. What has been your personal experience with this phenomenon?

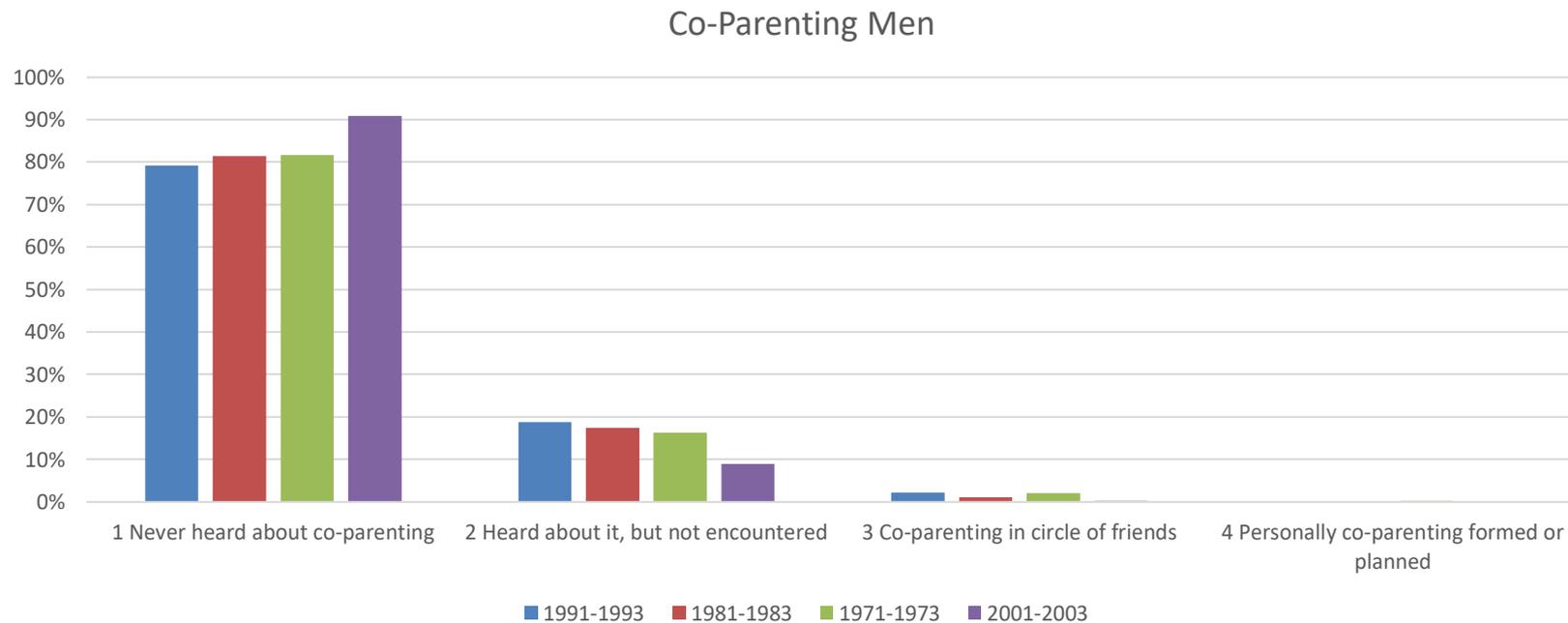
# Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

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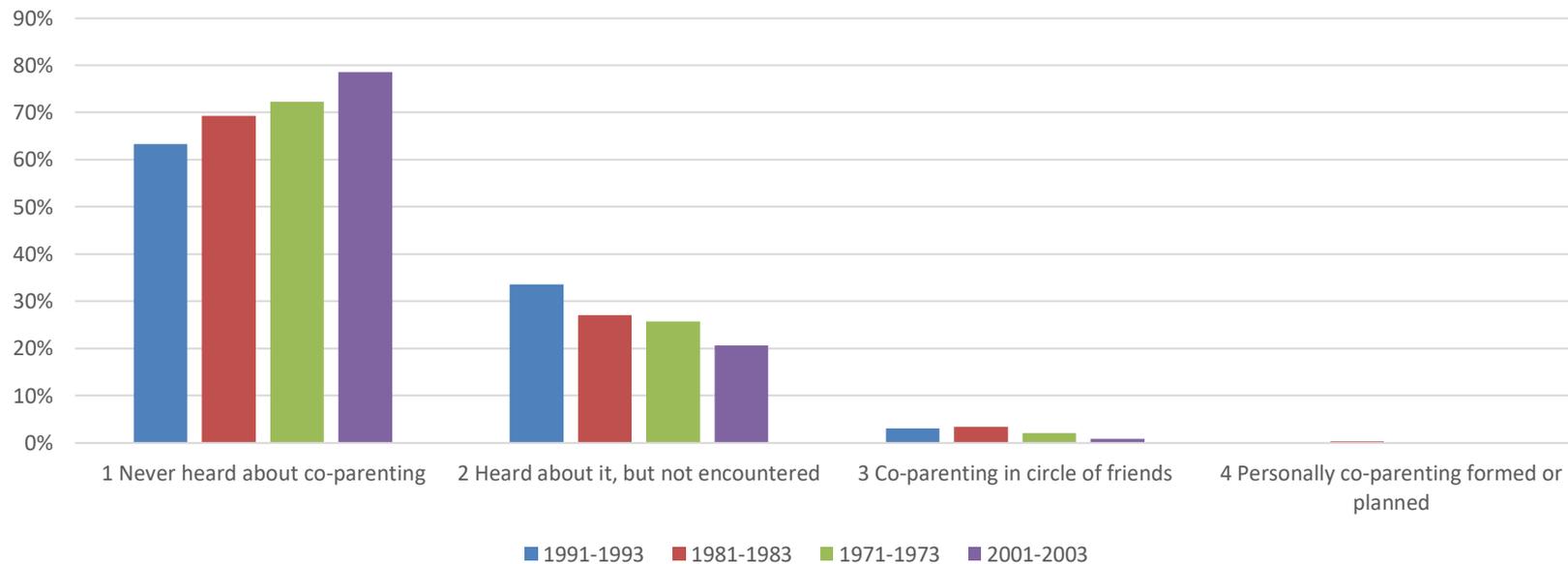
- I have never heard about co-parenting in this sense
- I have heard about it in the media or from acquaintances, but have not encountered it in my personal life
- Individuals from my circle of friends have fulfilled or plan to fulfill their desire to have children through co-parenting
- I personally have formed or plan to form a co-parenting relationship in order to have a child

# Co-Parenting (Men) - Cohorts



# Co-Parenting (Women) - Cohorts

Co-Parenting Women



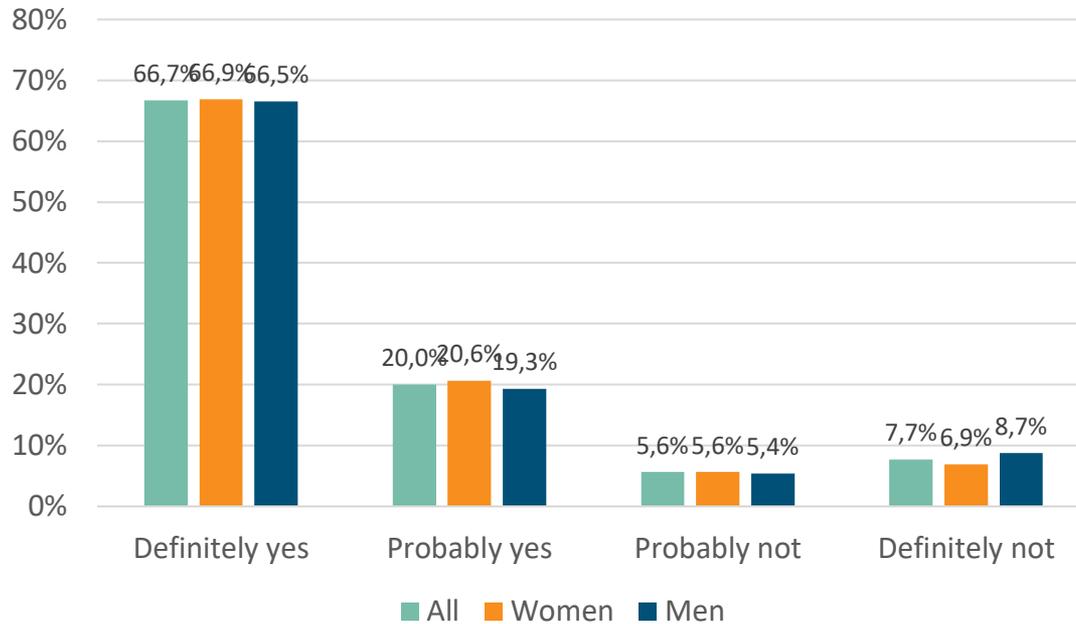
## Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior

### Regretting Parenthood

- “If you were able to revise your decision to become a parent based on your current knowledge and experiences, would you decide again to have children?”
  - Definitely yes
  - Probably yes
  - Probably not
  - Definitely not

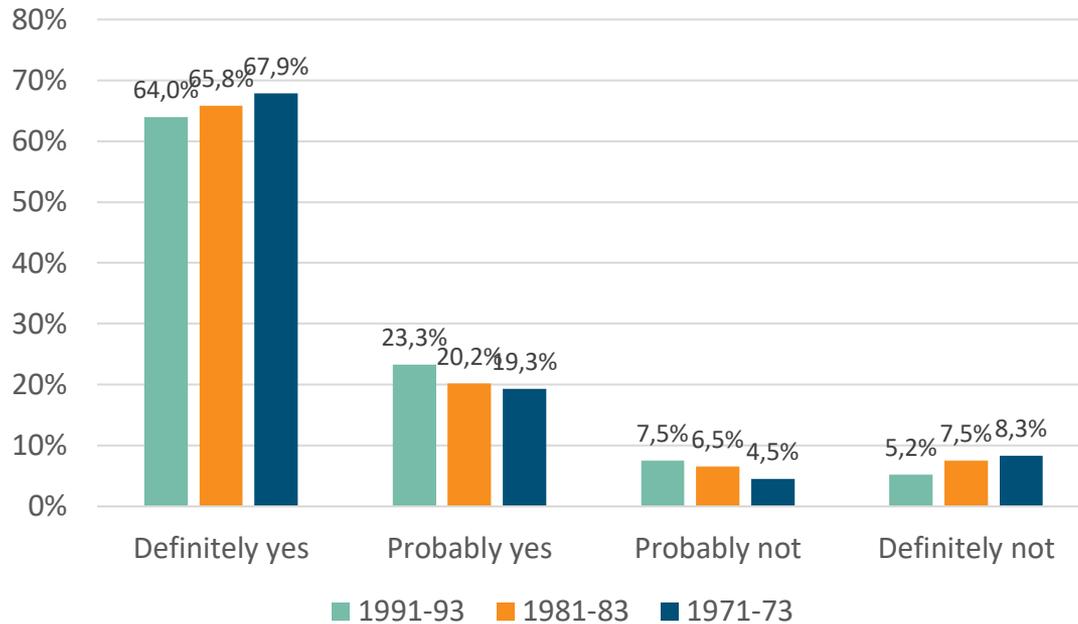
- “If you were able to revise your decision to become a parent based on your current knowledge and experiences, would you decide again to have children?”

## Having children again?



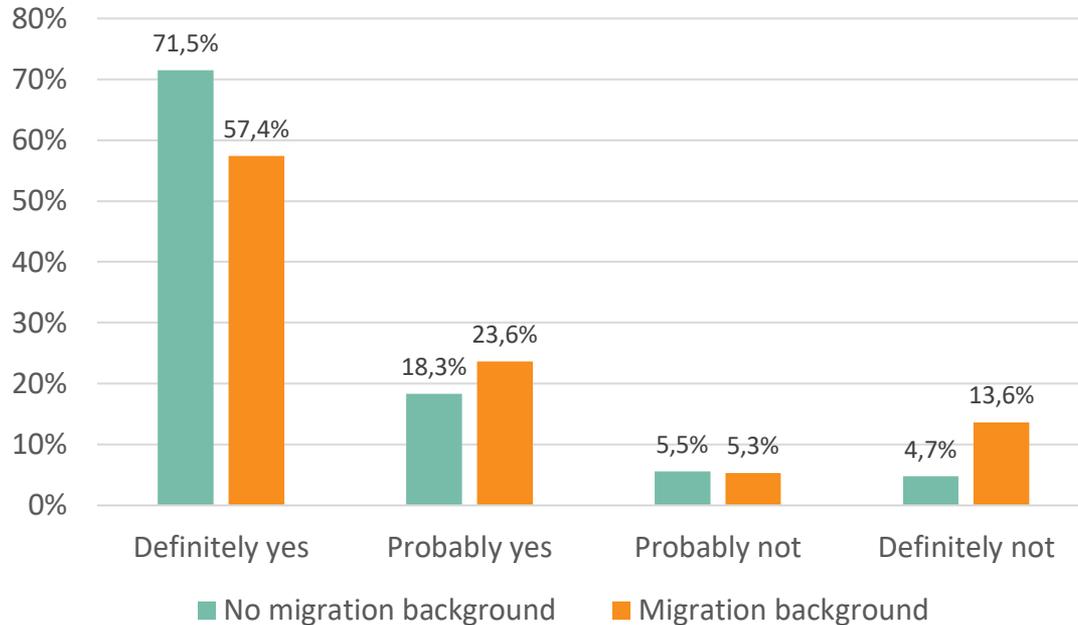
# Birth Cohort

## Having children again?



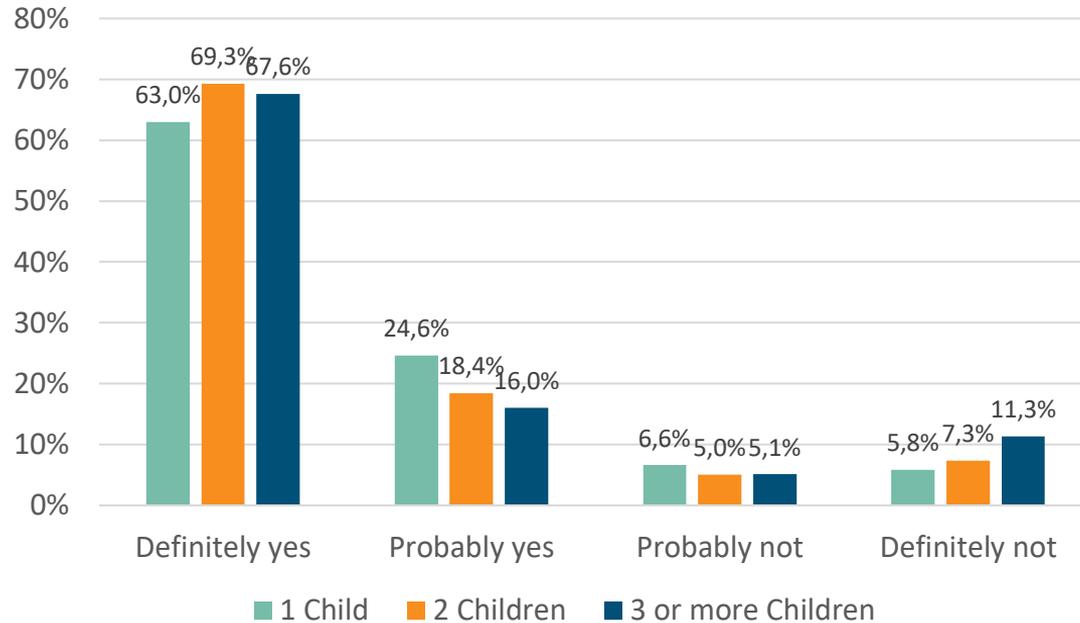
# Migration Background

## Having children again?



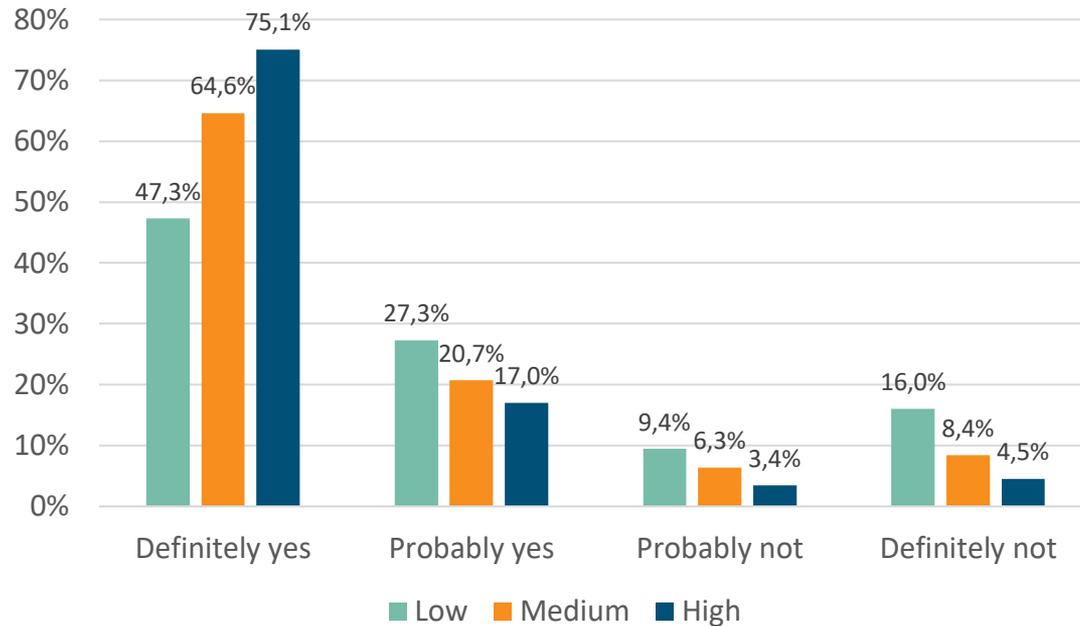
# Number of Kids

## Having children again?

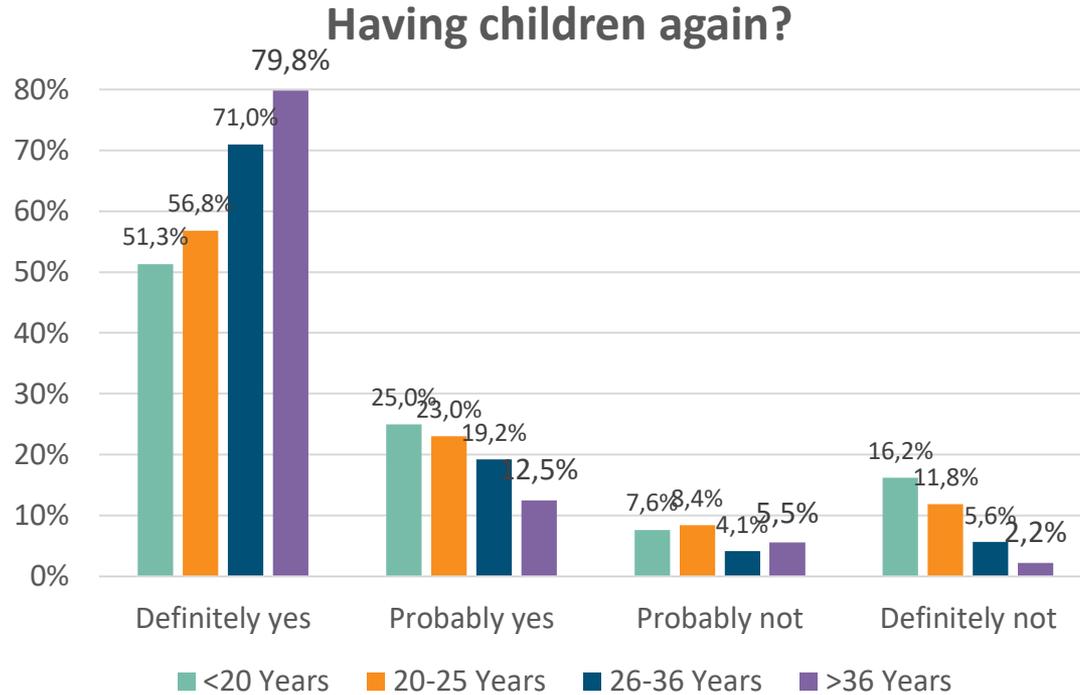


# Education

## Having children again?



# Age at First Birth



# Examples of research on fertility and reproductive behavior



*pairfam* thus provides a fairly comprehensive picture of reproduction as a social process

Adapted from: Almeling, Rene (2015): Reproduction. Annual Review of Sociology. Vol. 41, p. 431.