

# Realization of fertility intentions & The postponement 'black-box'

A cross country comparison of Switzerland, the Netherlands, Hungary and Bulgaria

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# Outline of the presentation

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- The research question
- Short description of the demographic profile of the countries
- Country differences and considerations about postponement
- Theorizing about POSTPONEMENT



# The research questions

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- Is the chance to realize fertility intentions the same in the *European countries*?
- (I) What are the reasons of dissimilar realization in the four countries?
- (II) What kind of theoretical learning/consequences could be drawn? (postponement 'black-box')

# The used intentions-measure for the comparison

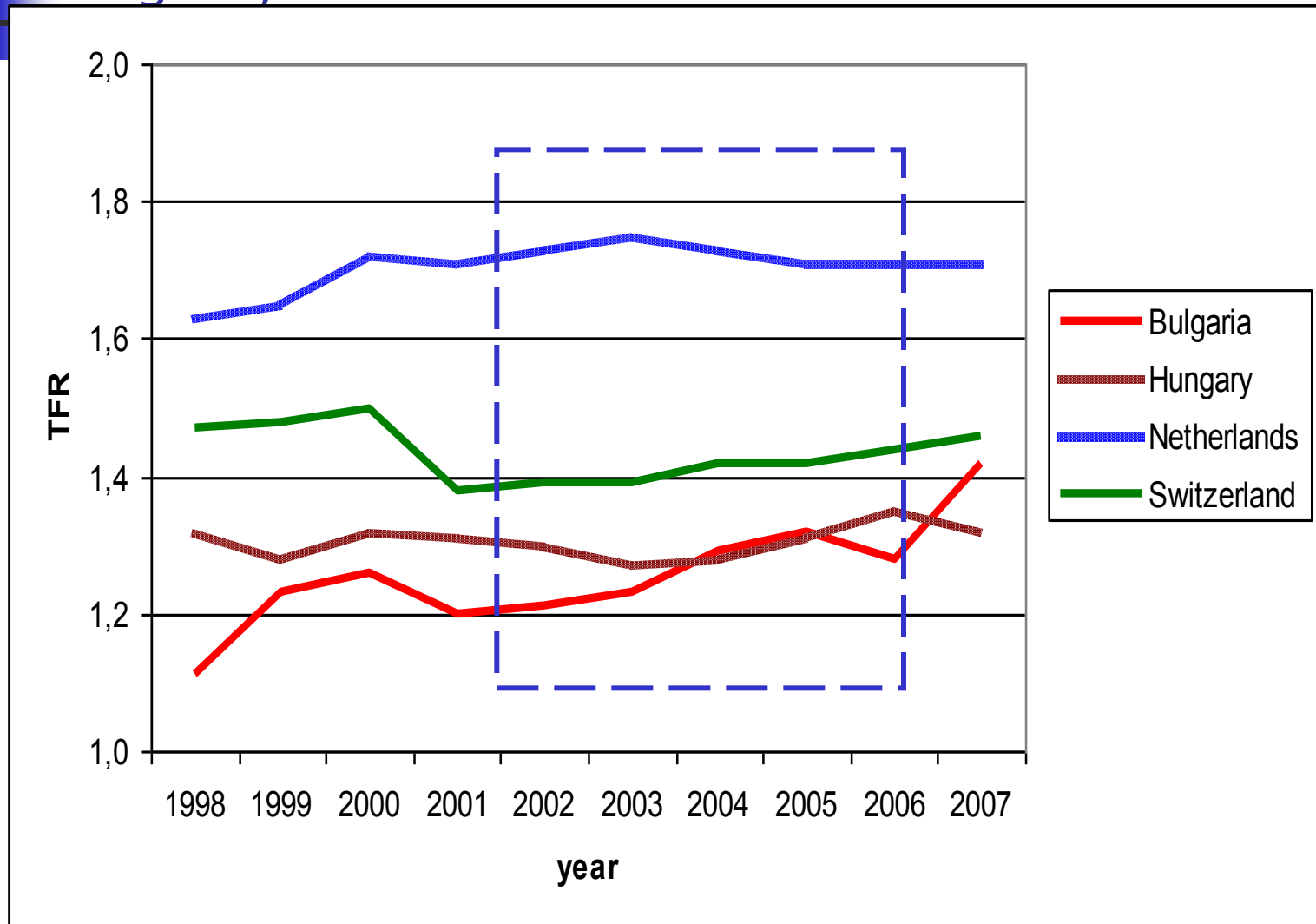
Prerequisites for *comparative research*:

- **Consistency of measures of intention and related behaviour (outcome)**
- **Comparable measures of intentions and related behaviour (outcome)**
- *intended (expected) family size*
  - Quesnel- Vallée, Morgan, 2003; Monier 1989; Liefbroer, 2008
- *intention to have (any more) children at all*
  - Westoff and Ryder, 1977; Schoen et al. 1999; Berrington 2004
- the intention of having a(nother) child *within a given time period*
  - Westoff and Ryder 1977, Toulemon and Testa 2005, Philipov, Testa 2008, Spéder, Kapitány 2009
- the *degree of certainty* of the childbearing intention
  - Westoff and Ryder, 1977; Schoen et al. 1999, Philipov and Testa , 2007
- Coincidence of *the intentions of the partners*
  - Thomson 1977; Schoen et al. 1999

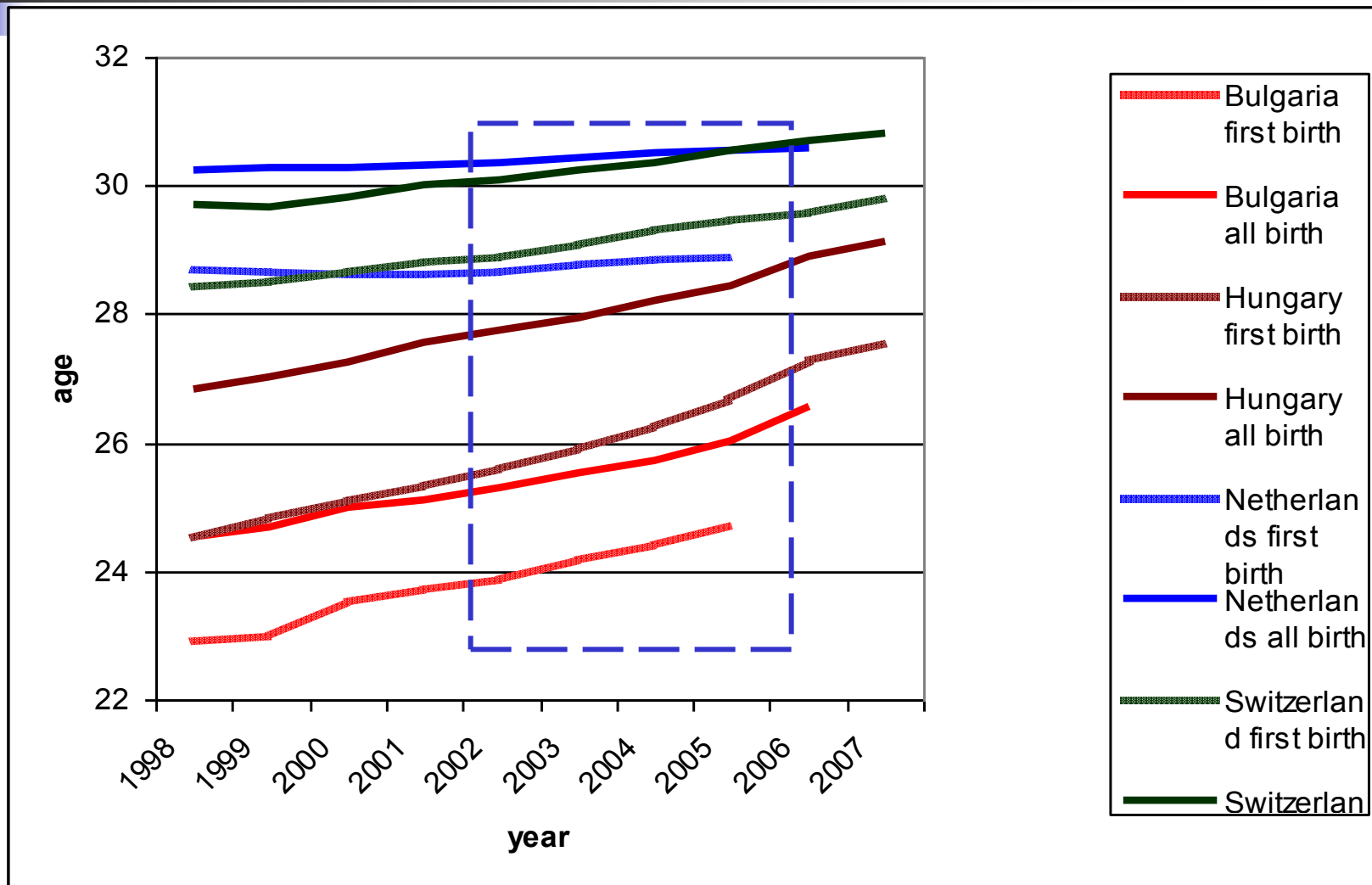
# Countries

- In order to measure accurately success and failure: longitudinal panel data is necessary!
- Country-selection is defined by the availability of the data
- Four countries until now:
  - **Hungary:** 'Turning Points of the Life-Course' (Hungarian GGS survey) 2001/2 - 2004/5
  - **Netherlands:** 'Netherlands Kinship Panel Survey' (Netherlands GGS survey) 2003/4 - 2006/7
  - **Switzerland:** Schweizer Haushalt-Panel (SHPSI.-SHPSII.) 2004 (6th wave) -2007 (9th wave)
  - **Bulgaria:** Social Capital Survey (2002-2005)

# Total fertility rate in the Netherlands, Switzerland, Hungary and Bulgaria, 1998-2007



# Mean age of mothers at first birth, and mean age of mothers at all births in NL, CH, HU and BU, 1998-2007



# Construction of the fertility intention-outcome variable

Fertility intention-outcome types	Fertility intention within <b>two</b> years (wave I.)	Had a birth within <b>three</b> years	Intend to have a child at wave II.
Intentional parents	Yes	Yes	
Postponers	Yes	No	Yes
Abandoner	Yes	No	No



# Distribution of different fertility intention-outcome types

	<b>Netherlands (NL)</b>	<b>Switzerland (CH)</b>	<b>Hungary (HU)</b>	<b>Bulgaria (BU)</b>
<b>Intentional parents</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Postponers</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Abandoners</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>

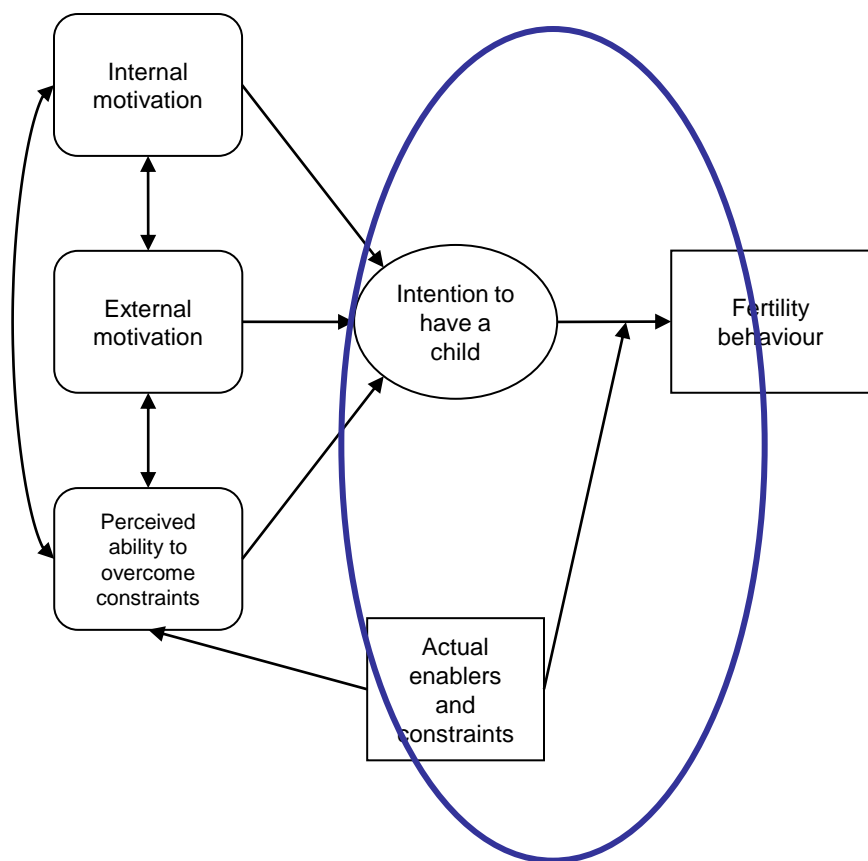


# Intention-behavior failures

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- Concept of intention and operationalization
- Biological factors
- Life course events
- Social and demographic factors
- Macro-social effects
  - Periods
  - Majority rules
  - ....

# (I) Potential reasons



- Compositional effects
  - Country-specific overrepresentation of unsuccessful social groups
- Country-context
  - Different grades of rationality in reproductive decisions
  - Grade of intention-stability differs
  - ???

# Compositional effects

## Variables – descriptive statistics

(R' s who intend a child within three years)

	Bulgaria		Hungary		Netherlands		Switzerland	
			mean	SD	mean	SD	mean	SD
Age	27.4	5.6	29,2	4,9	31,4	4,6	33	5,3
Sex (1-fem)	0.48	0.5	0,49	0,50	0,67	0,47	0,48	0,50
Parity1	0.33	0.47	0,30	0,46	0,41	0,49	0,37	0,48
Parity2+	0.24	0.43	0,17	0,38	0,14	0,34	0,18	0,39
Cohab (w.I.)	0.13	0.34	0,19	0,40	0,31	0,46	0,19	0,39
No part (w.I.)	0.36	0.48	0,27	0,44	0.07	0.26	0,13	0,34
R's had job (I)	0.79	0.41	0.76	0.43	0.85	0.36	0.85	0.35
N of classes	11.6	2.8	11,7	2,5	14,6	2,1	13,2	2,7
Calvinist	-	-	0.15	0.35	0.18	0.38	0.34	0.47
Other rel.	0.14	0.35	0.11	0.31	0.06	0.23	0.08	0.27
No rel.	0.09	0.28	0,21	0,40	0.57	0.50	0.13	0.34

# Compositional effects: Fertility intention-outcome types only of *partnered*

	Netherlands (NL)	Switzerland (CH)	Hungary (HU)	Bulgaria (BU)
Intentional parents	77	60	46	45
Postponers	10	25	34	32
Abandoners	13	15	20	23

- Compositional effects contributes *but only partly* to country differences:  
*country differences prevail!*

# Contextual factors – societal transition in Hungary and Bulgaria

- Societal transition:
  - Changes in institution, structures ==> changing opportunity structures
  - Diffusion of values (individualization, etc.)
- A) Diverse pace of change of structure and culture:
  - speed change of institutions and structures
  - „inertia” of childbearing related values (Dahrendorf about long-term value change)
  - ==> FAILUR
- B) Underestimation the barriers of childbearing
- No answer the Swiss/Dutch differences!!

## (II) What is postponement?

- Experiencing life events later in life
- It is basically a macro concept (?)
- Implicit assumption: the postponement at the macro level is a result of intended birth in later ages
  - If this is right: the rate of realization of time-related birth is independent from the pace of the macro level postponement
- What kind of „story” tell us the micro level analysis about the concept of postponement?

# Coincidence between micro level postponement and postponement at the societal level

	<i>Survey results</i>	<i>Postponement at societal level</i>
Hungary (2002-2005)	<b><i>intended p.: 40%</i></b> <b><i>postponers: 42%</i></b> <b><i>abandoners: 18%</i></b>	0,7 year Very strong
Netherlands (2003-2006)	<b><i>intended p.: 75%</i></b> <b><i>postponers: 15%</i></b> <b><i>abandoners: 11%</i></b>	0,2 year moderate
Switzerland (2004-2007)	<b><i>intended p.: 55%</i></b> <b><i>postponers: 27%</i></b> <b><i>abandoners: 18%</i></b>	0,4 year strong
Bulgaria (2002-2005)	<b><i>intended p.: 38%</i></b> <b><i>postponers: 44%</i></b> <b><i>abandoners: 18%</i></b>	0,7 year Very strong



## (II) Summary:

### Meanings of the results

- Macro-level postponement is result of (at least) two types of micro-level behavior:
    - Intended birth in later ages (planned postponement) *and*
    - Failure of time-related fertility intention (involuntary postponement)
- = macro-level postponement is at a large extent a result of involuntary postponement of the individuals



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Thank you for your attention!