



# The influence of the family network on the realization of fertility intentions

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# Aim

- > Analysis of the influence of the family network on the realization of fertility intentions
- > Time-dependent fertility intentions
- > Focus on family relationships as social capital and cross-sibling effects



# Background

- > Mismatch between intended and actual fertility
  
- > Acknowledged factors influencing the realization of intentions:
  - Demographic (e.g., age, parity)
  - Socio-economic (e.g., education, employment)
  - Ideational (e.g., religion)



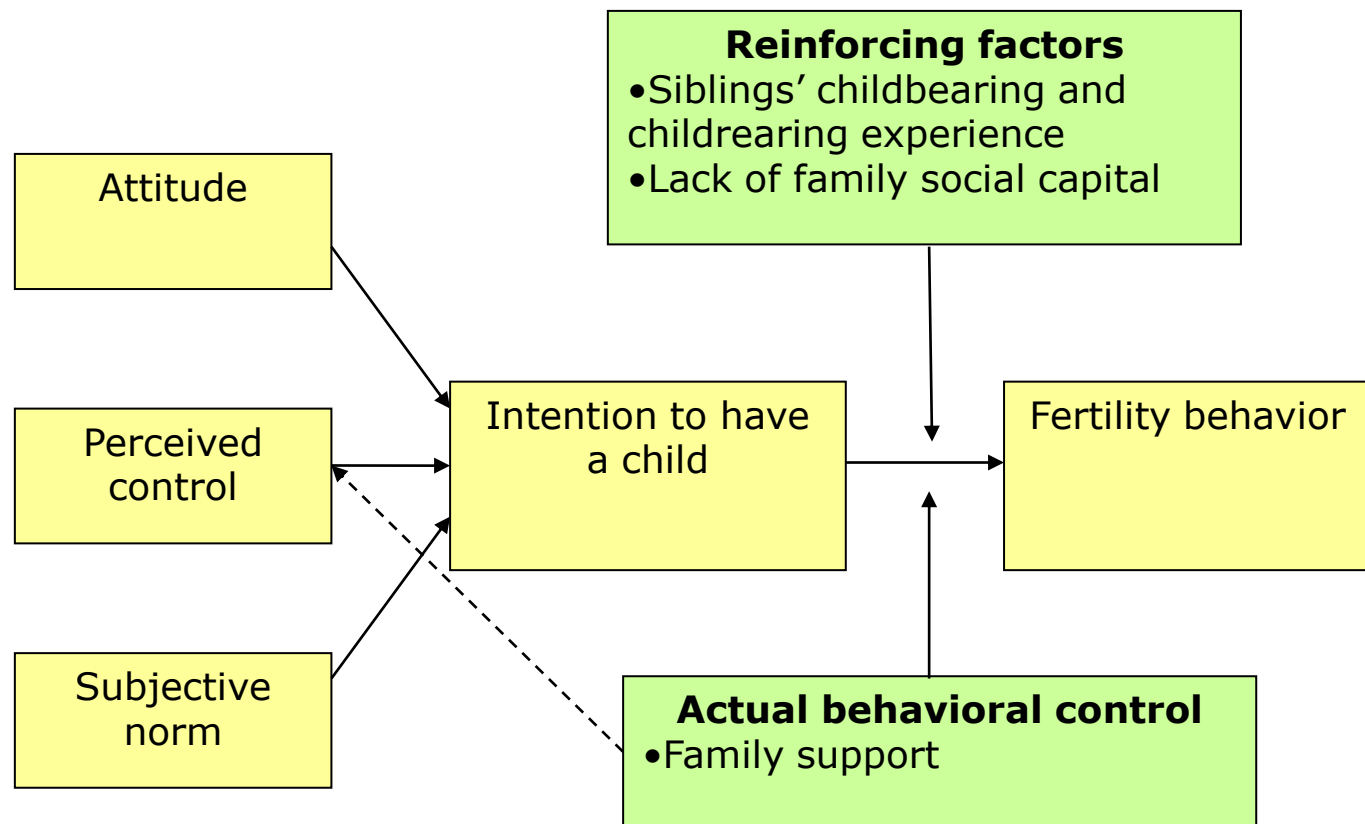
# Research question

**Does the family network also play a role in the realization of fertility intentions?**

- > Family as social capital
- > Cross-sibling effects



# Our conceptual model based on Theory of Planned Behavior





# Family social capital

- > **SOCIAL CAPITAL:** resources bound to an individual's personal network
- > family as provider of support and source of well-being

**H1a:** Greater family social capital leads to a higher likelihood of realizing the intention to have a child

- > child as a social investment

**H1b:** Lower family social capital leads to a higher likelihood of realizing the intention to have a child

- > explore how these two mechanisms work in the transition to parenthood and subsequent transitions



# Cross-sibling effects

- › Siblings' childbearing experience can act as reinforcing factor in realizing fertility intentions:
  - Siblings as role model
  - Source of information, network externalities and cost-sharing
  - Reinforce existent family attitudes

**H2:** Individuals with siblings who have children are more likely to realize their fertility intentions



## Cross-sibling effects (cont.)

- › **H3a)** Individuals who have siblings with young kids might be more likely to realize their intentions
- › **H3b)** Individuals who have siblings with young kids might be likely to postpone their intentions  
→ shared parental support
- › Frequent contact might enhance previous effects:
- › **H4a)** Frequent contact with siblings with young kids has a positive effect on realization
- › **H4b)** Frequent contact with siblings with young kids leads to postponement



# Data, sample and method

- > Netherlands Kinship Panel Study, 2 waves (2003/4-2006/7)
  
- > Sample (N=2629):
  - Divided in childless (N=932) and with children (N=1697)
  - Men and women aged 18-40
  - Not expecting
  
- > Method: multinomial logistic regression



# Dependent variable

Fertility intentions within 3 years (wave 1)	Had a child within 3.5 years	Intend to have a child at wave 2	Types
yes	yes		Intentional parents
yes	no	yes	Postponers
yes	no	no	Abandoners
no	no		Opposed

Among those who intended to have a child within 3 years at the first wave (N=538):

- Intentional parents: 64.3%
- Postponers: 18.6%
- Abandoners: 17.1%



# Measures

- > **Family social capital** (categorical variable: low, medium, high): 1) ties between members of my extended family are tightly knit 2) my extended family is more a collection of individuals rather than a single unit 3) in our extended family we keep each other informed about the most important events 4) the members of my extended family are very close (Cronbach's alpha =0.81)
  
- > 2 randomly-selected siblings:
  - **Presence siblings' children** (dummy): 1 if at least one of the siblings has a child
  - **Presence siblings' children under 12** (dummy): 1 if at least one of the siblings has a child under 12
  - **Weekly contact with siblings who have children under 12** (dummy)



# Control variables

## Demographic:

- > Age
- > Gender
- > Parity
- > Partnership
- > Siblings' age

## Socio-economic:

- > Education
- > Employment

## Family background:

- > Mother's/father's education
- > Parental disruption
- > Number of siblings
- > Number of nephews/nieces

## Ideational:

- > Religiousness



# Results

Ref. Opposed	Intentional parents		Postponers		Abandoners	
	First birth	Higher-order births	First birth	Higher-order births	First birth	Higher-order births
<b>Family social capital</b> (ref: high)						
Medium social capital	1.287	2.165**	1.059	1.253	1.482	2.420
Low social capital	0.963	2.071*	1.259	2.590	1.668	2.893*

Relative risk ratios. \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01 \*\*\* p<0.001

- Higher-order children as a social investment
- Low social capital leads to forgoing fertility intentions



# Results

. Only childless people with at least one sibling (N=878)

Ref. Opposed	Intentional parents		Postponers		Abandoners	
<b>Siblings with children</b>	0.932	0.963	0.608	0.633	0.893	0.900
<b>Siblings with children under age 12</b>	2.368**	1.530	1.782	0.767	1.710	1.408
<b>Weekly contact with siblings with children under 12</b>	-	2.821*	-	5.075*	-	1.476

Relative risk ratios. \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01 \*\*\* p<0.001

- . Recent siblings' childbearing might facilitate realization
- . Frequent contact with siblings with little kids seems to have a double effect: realization and postponement



# Conclusion

- > The family network matters for the realization of fertility intentions
- > Family social capital plays a role only for higher-order children:
  - Low social capital leads to abandonment
  - Children as an investment
- > Frequent contact with siblings who have young children facilitates realization, but also might lead to postponement



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
 ATTENTION**