

**VID CONFERENCE From Intentions to Behaviour:  
Reproductive Decision-Making in a Macro-Micro Perspective**  
Vienna, 2-3 December 2010

**Completing Education and  
Becoming a Mother in Romania**

**Cornelia Mureşan**



Babeş-Bolyai University  
✉ [cornelia.muresan@socasis.ubbcluj.ro](mailto:cornelia.muresan@socasis.ubbcluj.ro)

# Structure

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical considerations
3. Data and methods
4. Effect of educational attainment and educational enrolment on postponing motherhood
5. Effect of time elapsed since end of education
6. Conclusions



# Introduction

## Introduction

## Theoretical considerations

## Data and methods

## Educational attainment and enrolment

## Completion of education

## Conclusions

Motherhood postponement: a significant part of the contemporary very low fertility.

Increasing human capital: a possible explication for delayed entry into motherhood.

Romania:

- mean age at first birth:  
22.5 (until 1990) → 25.0 (2005)

- negative educational gradient for all parities  
(Muresan & Hoem 2010)

This study is an extension of findings concerning childbearing at parity 0.

Focus on:

1) specificity of impact of educational attainment by historical period

2) effect of completing education and of time elapsed since exit the educational system on transition to motherhood

# Theoretical considerations & Research hypotheses

## Introduction

Level of education

⇒ H1: “opportunity cost of childbearing” , in market economy times (Becker 1991)

## Theoretical considerations

⇒ H2: “little differentiation by educational level”, during state-socialism

## Data and methods

## Educational attainment and enrolment

Enrolment in education

⇒ H3: “incompatibility of enrolment in education and motherhood”, during both state-socialism and market economy times

## Completion of education

(Blossfeld & Huinick 1991, Skirbekk et al. 2004)

## Conclusions

Completing education

⇒ H4: “career planning” (Cingo & Ermisch 1989, Cingo 1991, Liefbroer & Corjin 1999) and “catch up” (Kravdal 1994), Liefbroer & Corjin 1999), Blossfeld & Huinink 1991) effects, in market economy times

⇒ H5: completion of education perceived as beginning of family formation irrespective of educational attainment, during state-socialism

# Data and methods

## Sample

- GGS Romania 2005, ( 11.986 respondents)
- women aged 14-35  
(3427 cases exposed to risk during 1975-2005)

## Dependent variable

- exact time of first conception ended in a birth  
(year and month)

## Independent variables (time-varying)

- current educational status: “no qualification”, “baccalaureate or vocational certificate”, “tertiary degree” and “in education”
- current period: state-socialism “1975-1989” and period marked by profound societal transformations “1990-2005”

## Hazard regression models:

$$\text{Model 1:} \quad \ln h_i(t) = y(t) + \sum_k \beta_k x_{ik}(t) \circ p_{ik}(t)$$

$$\text{Model 2:} \quad \ln h_i(t) = y(t) + \sum_e z_e(t - e_i)$$

Introduction

Theoretical considerations

Data and methods

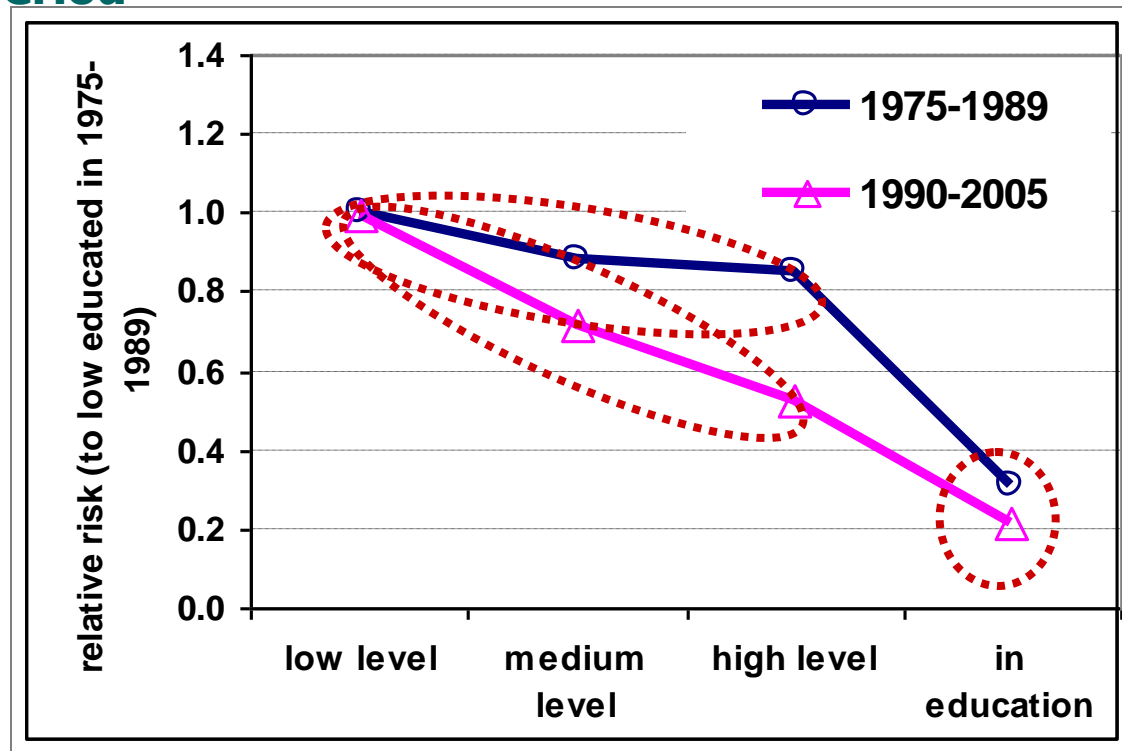
Educational attainment and enrolment

Completion of education

Conclusions

# Effect of educational attainment and enrolment

## Transition to motherhood: Relative risks by educational status and period



- ⇒ Small differentiation by educational level in period 1975-1989
- ⇒ Clear negative gradient by educational level in period 1990-2005
- ⇒ Enrolled women hardly postpone motherhood in both periods

Introduction

Theoretical considerations

Data and methods

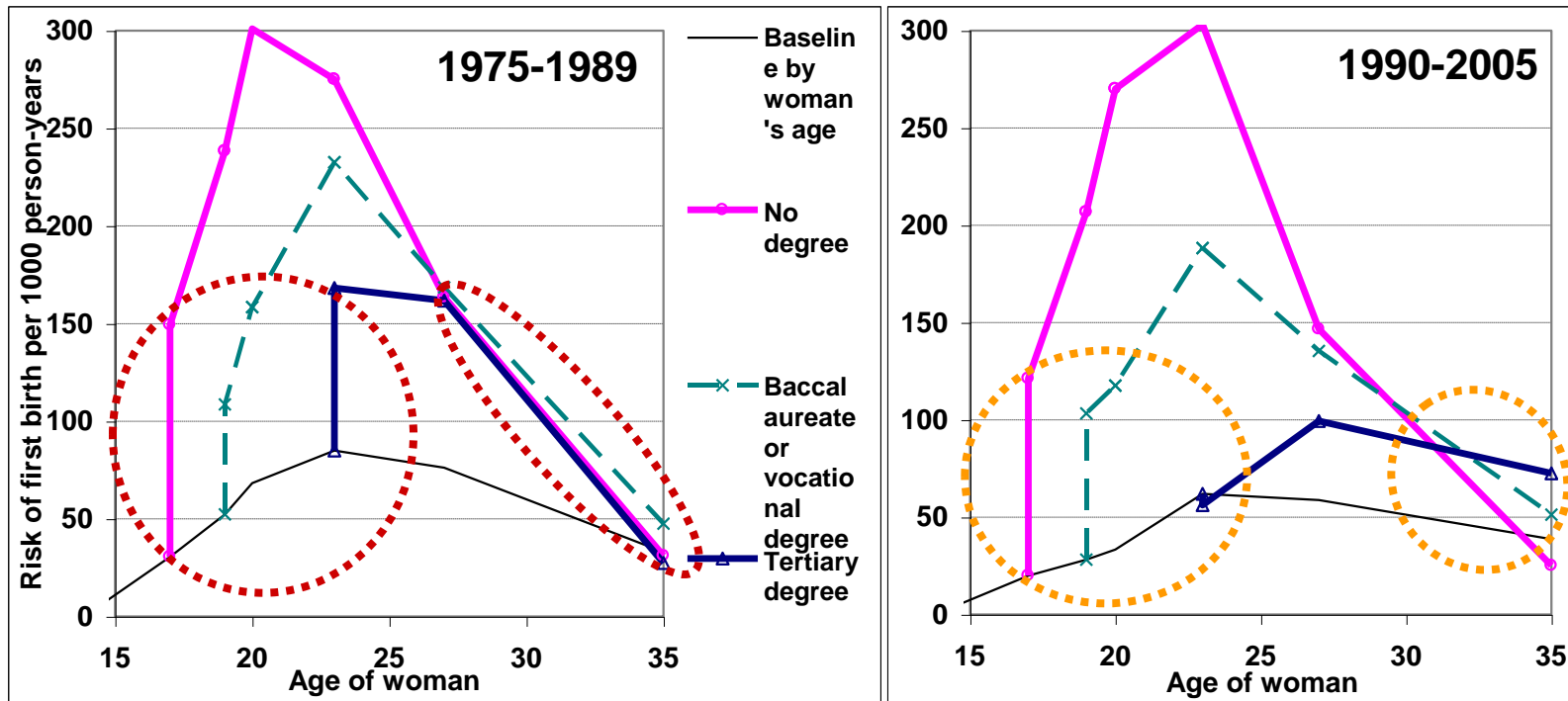
Educational attainment and enrolment

Completion of education

Conclusions

# Effect of time elapsed since end of education

## Transition to motherhood: effects of time elapsed since end of education for the various education levels



⇒ *Left panel:* Education completion strongly associated with start of family formation period. No more differences in 1<sup>st</sup> birth risk after age 27

⇒ *Right panel:* Particularly women with a university degree have low risks of first birth immediately after completion of studies, with a subsequent rise in risks thereafter.

Introduction

Theoretical considerations

Data and methods

Educational attainment and enrolment

Completion of education

Conclusions

# Summary and conclusions

## **During state-socialism (1975-1989) :**

- ⇒ Little differentiation by level of education of entry into motherhood
- ⇒ Strong positive effect of enrolment on postponement motherhood
- ⇒ Entry into motherhood shortly after completion of education
- ⇒ No catch up effect for women with higher levels of education

## **During period marked by profound societal transformations (1990-2005) :**

- ⇒ Negative educational gradient of entry into motherhood
- ⇒ Strong positive effect of enrolment on postponement motherhood
- ⇒ Career building phase for women with high level of education
- ⇒ Positive educational gradient of entry into motherhood during age 30s

Introduction

Theoretical considerations

Data and methods

Educational attainment and enrolment

Completion of education

Conclusions

**Thank you for attention !**