

Done after one child?

The dynamics of childbearing intentions in one-child-families

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Research Question

Slightly increasing childlessness, the decreasing number of women with three and more children along with the persistently high share of women who have one child (24%) throughout the past 25 years are decisive factors for Austria's low fertility rate (TFR ~1.4). **Why does practically one in every four women ultimately have one child, if a mere ten per cent of all 20 to 29-year olds state in the interviews that they want to have exactly one child?** How and when do people downsize their childbearing intentions, when do parents decide not to have more than the one child they already have?

Results

(1) From mothers' age 35 onwards, parents tend to stop at one child

This adjustment process is documented by the childbearing intentions reported by parents of one child in 2009 (Fig. 1): The share of parents with exactly one child decreases with the age of respondent due to parity progression. But, from age 35 onwards, distinctly fewer mothers with one child intend to have a second child. This also holds true for fathers, though with some time lag.

(2) Parents now rather tend to stay with one child

In 2013, the share of mothers not intending to have a second child is higher than it was 4 years ago for the next cohort. It has **markedly risen to 50 per cent for the cohorts that were under 30 in 2009** (Fig. 2). This shows that most of them already revise their childbearing intentions in this early phase of their life course.

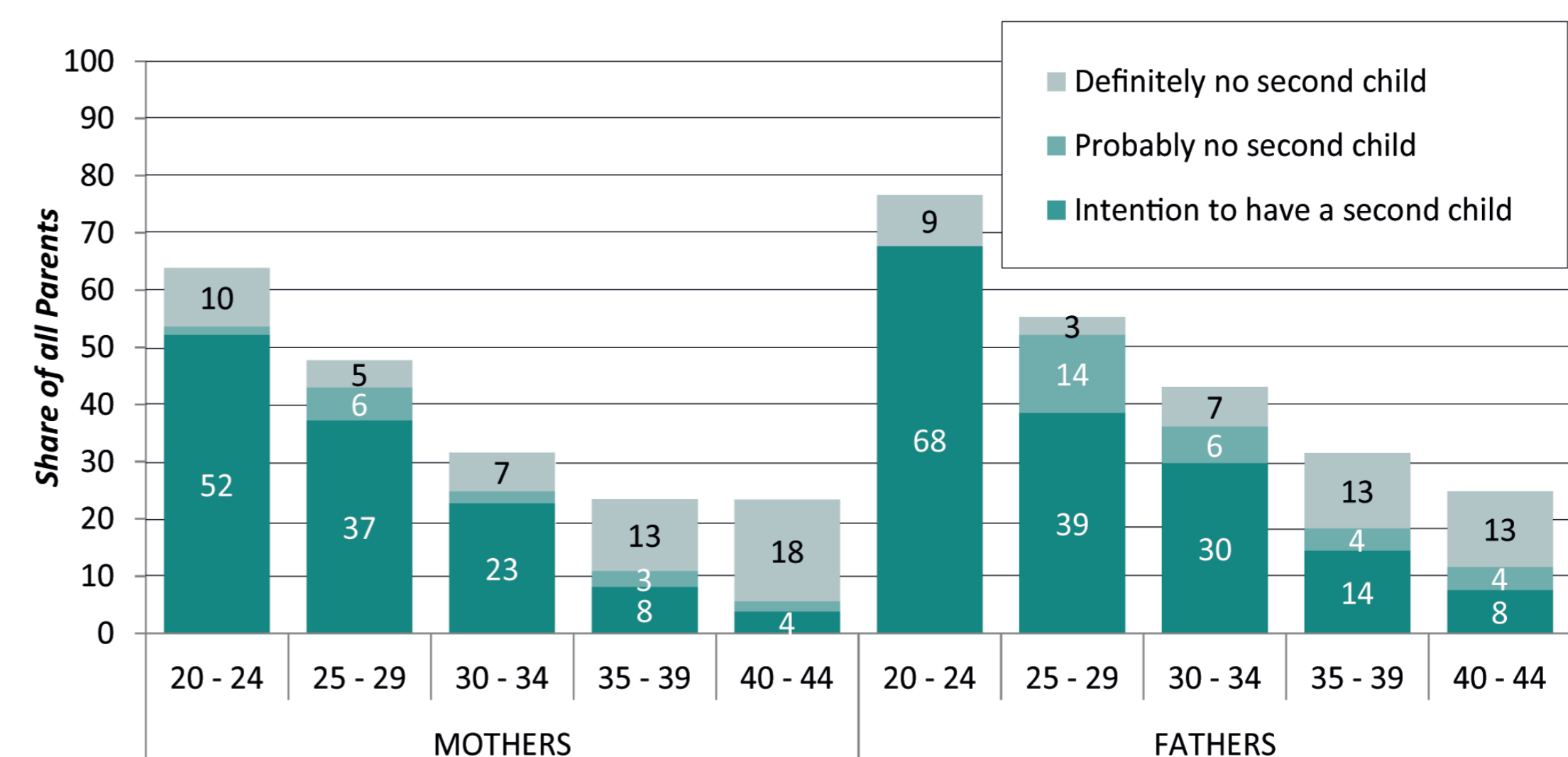
(3) Men only realize later in life that they probably won't have more than one child

Fathers seem to be much slower in this respect. In the age group below 30, roughly the same number of parents with one child revise their childbearing intentions in both directions. It is only after age 30 that they more adamantly oppose the idea of having more children.

Contact

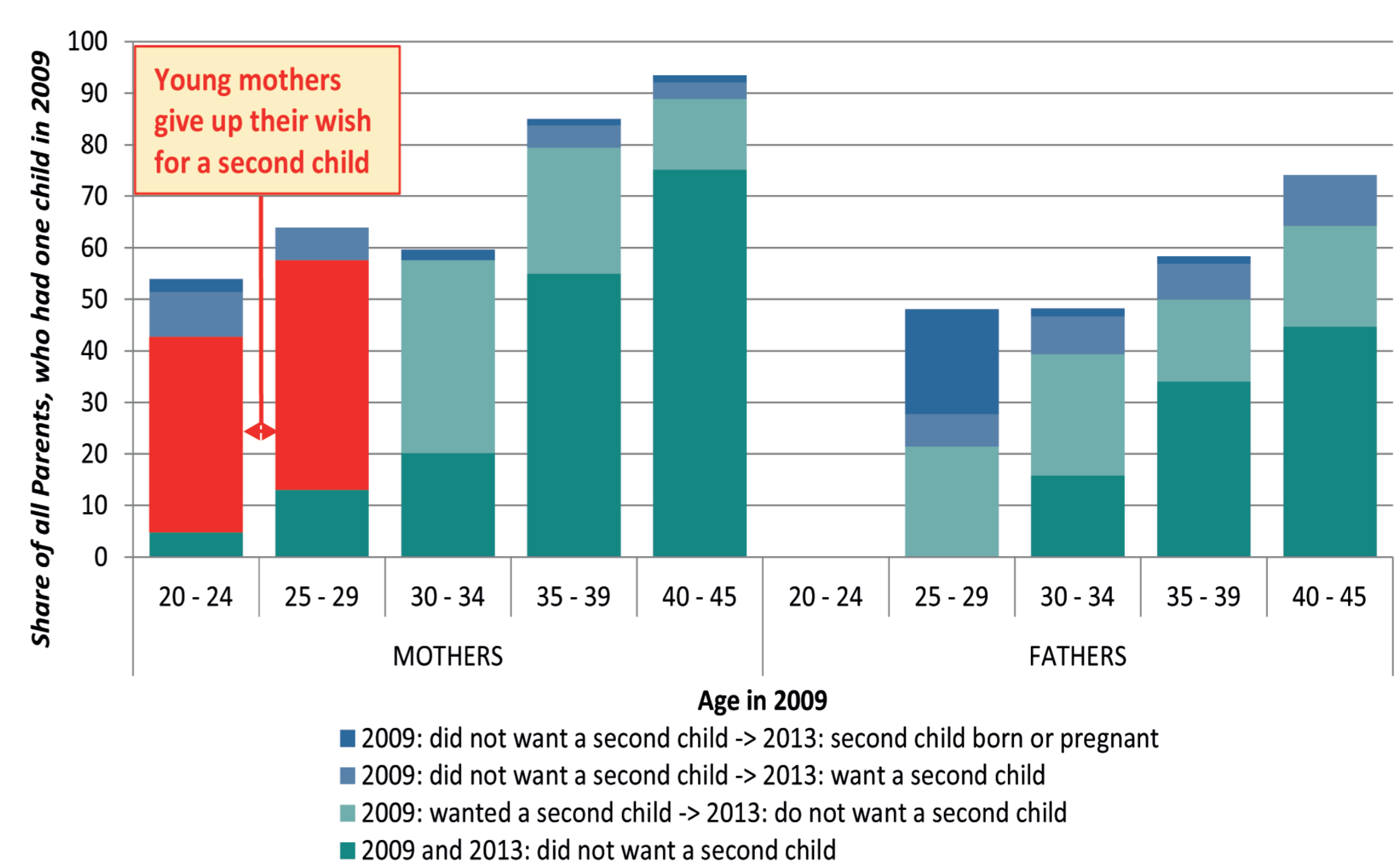
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Fig. 1: Childbearing intentions of parents with one child (share of all parents) in 2009



n=2.108 respondents with exactly one child in 2009 (1.381 females, 727 males)

Fig. 2: Parents with exactly one child in 2009: change of intentions in 2013, by age and sex (in %)



n=709 respondents (436 females, 273 males) who had exactly one child in 2009 and did not want another in at least one of the two GGS waves 2009, 2013

Data

GGS Austria wave#1 (2009) and wave#2 (2013). Panel weights applied

Conclusion

We see a substantially **higher intention to stay with one child**. Younger cohorts of mothers with one child have widely revised their intentions for a second child. This substantial downward shift could be a consequence of the **economic crisis** of 2009ff and is expected to **rise the share of women with finally one child** from its 24% that was quite stable for more than 30 years! **Therefore, the CFR is expected to show an accelerated decline again.**