

# ReCap

Reproductive Decision-Making  
and Human Capital

## About

The ReCap (Reproductive Decision-Making and Human Capital) was a research project that was funded by the Austrian Science Fund ([FWF](#)) in the framework of the [Elise Richter Programme](#).

Holder of the Elise Richter position: [Maria Rita Testa](#)

Acronym: RECAP

Funding Body: FWF

Project Number: V318-Elise Richter Grant

Time Frame: 01.01.2014-30.06.2016

The project was supported by the following partners: the [Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital](#) (WIC), the [Vienna University of Economics and Business](#) (WU) and the [Vienna Institute of Demography](#) (VID).

## The ReCap Project

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# The ReCap Project

The *ReCap* projects examined the dynamics between reproductive decision-making and human capital. Using a cross-country comparative approach, it investigated the conditions under which a positive relationship between women's educational level and childbearing intentions is observed.

## Background

In recent years, increasing shares of women have made large investments in education. Whether and to what extent these investments are in conflict with women's childbearing intentions are issues that have important repercussions for fertility levels and population ageing.

## Main objective

The project's main research question is whether, and to what extent, highly educated women are able to anticipate the negative effects of postponement on their reproductive career by incorporating them into their personal lifetime fertility intentions; and to what extent they still desire and plan—maybe unrealistically—a family with two (or more) children.

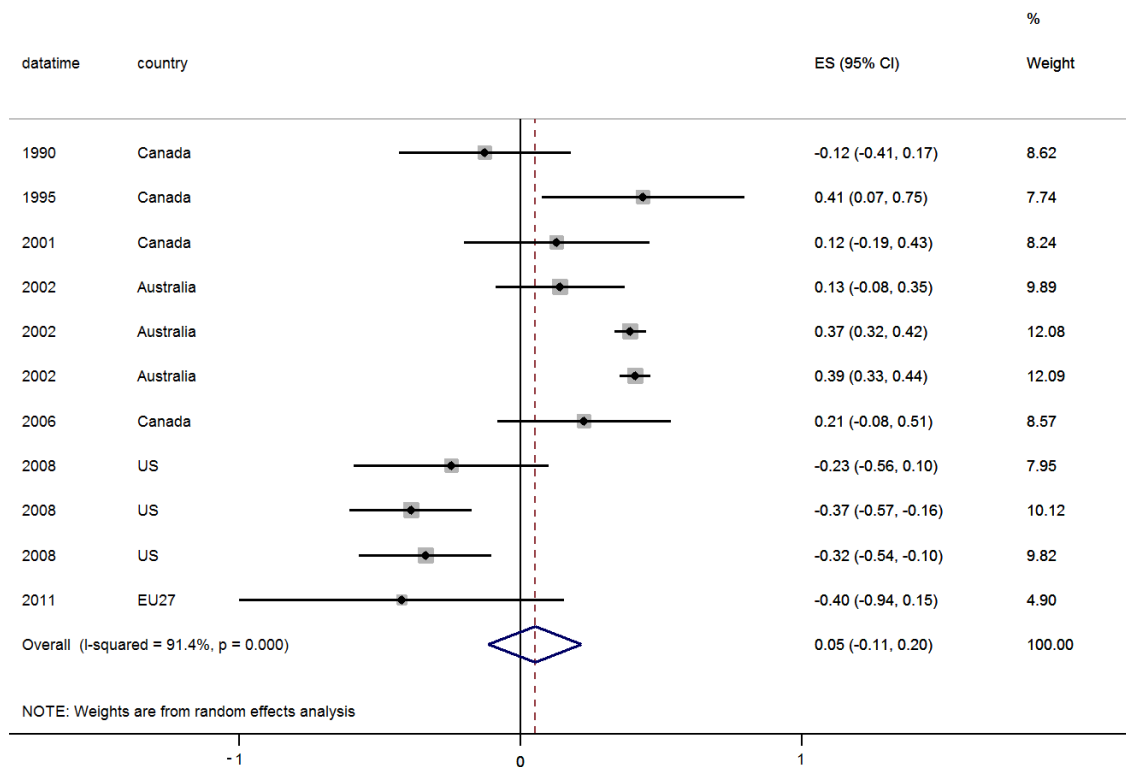
Education increases people's ability to learn later in life and to live healthier lives, therefore, the main emphasis of the project on this specific component of human capital is warranted.

## Method and work plan

The starting point of the ReCap project was a meta-analysis of all relevant available studies addressing the link between fertility intentions and human capital with the following aims:

- to assess the relationship between fertility decisions and education in a quantitative manner,
- to inspect the temporal and cross-country variation in the fertility intention-education link.

The figure below shows the variation in the statistical association between women's level of education and intended family size in selected studies conducted between 1990 and 2011.



Educational gradient on intended family size, own calculations (STATA 13.1)  
ES stands for Effect Size and is the difference in the effect on fertility intentions between the 'high' and the 'low' education group  
Education is measured in three categories: low (ISCED 1-2), medium (ISCED 3-4), and high education (ISCED 5-6)

In a second stage, selected and unresolved issues derived from the meta-analysis were examined with the aim to shed light on the reasons behind the existent contradictory findings.

## Main output

The results obtained within the framework of the project helped to upgrade the scientific knowledge on reproductive decision-making within different social groups and may thus warrant a more diversified and sophisticated policy intervention in the future.

# Team

## **Maria Rita Testa (project leader)**



Maria Rita Testa is senior research scientist at the Vienna Institute of Demography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (since 2001) and guest professor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (since 2016). She earned her degree in Political Science from "Sapienza" University of Rome. She received her PhD in Demography from University of Florence. She has held positions at "Sapienza" University of Rome (1996-1997; lectureship), University of Florence (1997-1999; doctoral student), and University of Milan-Bicocca (2000-2001; assistant professor). Her research findings have been published, inter alia, in *Population and Development Review*, *European Journal of Population*, *Demographic Research*, *Population*, *Population Research and Policy Review*, and *Population & Environment*.

## **Fabian Stephany (project participant)**



Fabian Stephany joined the Vienna University of Economics and Business as a Research Assistant in autumn 2013. He received his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Mannheim and completed his master in economics and social sciences at Bocconi University in Milan in 2013. Before, in 2010 and 2011, Mr. Stephany worked as a Consultant at the OECD in Paris. His research focuses on social capital, trust and inequality.

## **Beata Osiewalska (project participant)**



Beata Osiewalska joined the ReCap project in August 2014. She is a Ph.D. student at Cracow University of Economics, Department of Demography. She is graduated in mathematics at Jagiellonian University in Poland (in 2010) and in econometrics (in 2013) at Cracow University of Economics, Poland. In 2013/2014 she participated in the European Doctoral School of Demography (EDSD). Previously, from November 2012 to June 2013 she worked as the Research Assistant (part time) at International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and for more than two years she has been working as an analyst in the Statistical Office in Cracow, Poland.

## **Fabian Braesemann (project participant)**



Fabian Bräsemann joined the ReCap project in October 2015. He is a PhD student at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Fabian studied at the Humboldt University Berlin where he obtained a master degree in Economics in 2013. He worked for the German Institute of Economic Research in Berlin and for the German Central Bank. His research is focused on the application of data mining methods to social sciences.

## **Heike Barakat**



Scientific administration

# News

- Maria Rita Testa will be appointed guest professor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in January 2017.
- Invited presentation "Intended and realised childbearing in a life course approach". European Society for Health and Medical Sociology (ESHMS) 16th biennial congress on the topic of Healthy life: technologies, policies & experiences. Session on: "Reproductive health through the life course", University of Geneva, 27 June 2016. ([Slides](#))
- Maria Rita Testa held a seminar on "Intentions and Childbearing" at the European Doctoral School of Demography, Sapienza University of Rome, 22 March 2016.
- Maria Rita Testa received the habilitation (venia docendi) in Demography and Social Statistics from the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Habilitation lecture: "Multilevel models in Demography", 21 December 2015 ([Slides](#))
- Conference on "Education and Reproduction in Low-Fertility Settings", Vienna, 2-4 December 2015. Presentations:
  - Testa Maria Rita and Fabian Stephany: "The educational gradient of fertility intentions: regional differences in Europe"([Slides](#))
  - Agnese Vitali and Maria Rita Testa: "Partners' relative incomes and fertility intentions"([Poster](#))
  - Beata Osiewalska and Maria Rita Testa: "Couple's socioeconomic status and fertility intentions"([Poster](#))
  - Emiliano Sironi, Alessandro Rosina and Maria Rita Testa: "Education and the difference between fertility desires and fertility expectations in Italy"([Poster](#))
- Maria Rita Testa at the round table: "Will highly educated women have more children in the future?"([Slides](#)) ([Photo](#))
- 3rd Generations and Gender User Conference, Vienna, 30 November – 1 December 2015. Presentation: "Competing intentions and realization"([Slides](#))([Photo](#))
- Interview in Ö1, "Wie viele Menschen werden in Österreich in Zukunft leben?", 22.11.2015. ([Link](#))
- WU Best Paper Award 2015 for the article "The effects of couple disagreement about child-timing intentions: a parity-specific approach". Population and Development Review. 40(1): 31-53. Talenta, Vienna, 17 November 2015 ([Link](#)) ([Photo](#))
- "Budapest Demographic Forum. Families in the focus". Presentation: "Fertility intentions and realization: a gender perspective across Europe". Budapest, 5-7 November, 2015 ([Link](#))

- Workshop: "The Science of Choice. How to model the Decision-Making Process". Presentation: "Intended family trajectories and education" (co-authored by Dimiter Philipov). Rostock, 28-30 October, 2015.
- Symposium "Demography that matters", Research focus on "Human Reproduction", Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital, Vienna, September 9, 2015 ([Photo](#))
- Annual Meeting of Population Association of America, Poster Presentation (by Fabian Stephany) "The educational gradient of fertility intentions in Europe: a meta-analysis". San Diego, CA, April 30 – May 2, 2015 ([Photo](#))
- Seminar: "Double Postponement. Men and women coping with childbearing intentions in their late 30s and early 40s". Lisbon, 20 March 2015. Video presentation: "Education and fertility decision-making: patterns across Europe" (<https://duploadiamento.wordpress.com/2015/02/09/seminario-final-projeto-o-duplo-adiamento/>)
- DerStandard "Wer in der Partnerschaft in Sachen Kinderwunsch bestimmt" ([Link](#))
- WU Competence Day, Vienna, 17 November 2014. Presentation: Work, earning models and fertility intentions during the 'Great Recession'. Topic: "Work Arrangements", Session: "Sustainable Work" ([Slides](#))
- Chaire Quetelet Seminar: "Fertility, Childlessness and the Family: a Pluri-Disciplinary Approach", Louvain-la-Neuve, 7 November 2014. Presentation (by Fabian Stephany): The educational gradient of fertility intentions in Europe: a meta-analysis ([Slides](#))
- DONDENA Centre for Research on Social Dynamics & Public Policy, Milan, 27 October 2014. Presentation: The effect of couple disagreement about child-timing intentions: a parity-specific approach ([Slides](#))  
Dondena interview ([http://www.dondena.unibocconi.it/wps/wcm/connect/cdr/centro\\_dondena/home/seminars/dondena+interviews/an+interview+with+maria+rita+testa](http://www.dondena.unibocconi.it/wps/wcm/connect/cdr/centro_dondena/home/seminars/dondena+interviews/an+interview+with+maria+rita+testa))
- Conference: "Family dynamics, fertility choices and family policy". Oslo, 9 October 2014. Presentation (by Agnese Vitali): Fertility intentions of women who out-earn their partners ([Slides](#))
- European Population Conference (EPC), Budapest, 25-28 June 2014 ([Photos Gallery](#)). Presentations:
  - Testa, Maria Rita. Correspondence between fertility intentions and behaviour in Austria: a couple analysis ([Abstract](#)) ([Slides](#))
  - De Rose, Alessandra and Maria Rita Testa. Climate change and reproductive intentions in Europe ([Abstract](#)) ([Slides](#))

- Muttarak, Raya and Maria Rita Testa. Trends, patterns, and determinants of interreligious partnerships in Austria (1971-2001) ([Abstract](#)) ([Slides](#))
- Bordone, Valeria, Maria Rita Testa, Beata Osiewalska and Vegard Skirbekk. Intergenerational transmission of fertility: the role of mother's socio economic status ([Abstract](#)) ([Slides](#))
- Stephany, Fabian and Maria Rita Testa. A meta-analysis of the relationship between women's fertility intentions and level of education ([Abstract](#)) ([Slides](#))
- FWF celebration of Elise Richter Grant holders, 22th May 2014





# Publications

- Testa, Maria Rita, Valeria Bordone, Beata Osiewalska and Vegard Skirbekk (2016) *Are daughters' childbearing intentions related to their mothers' socio-economic status?* Demographic Research 35(21): 581-616. ([Download](#))
- Testa, Maria Rita, Valeria Bordone, Beata Osiewalska and Vegard Skirbekk (2016) The relation between mother's socio-economic status and daughter's fertility intentions in Austria, Italy, Bulgaria and Norway, VID Working Paper, No.1 ([Download](#))
- De Rose, Alessandra and Maria Rita Testa (2015), *Climate change and reproductive intentions in Europe. In: Donatella Strangio and Giuseppe Sancetta (eds). Italy in a European Context. Research in Business, Economics and the Environment. (Chapter 9). London: Palgrave Macmillan Publishing House* ([Link](#))
- Muttarak, Raya and Maria Rita Testa (2015), *Trends, patterns and determinants of interreligious partnerships in Austria (1971-2001). Yearbook of International Religious Demography (Chapter 4).* ([Download](#))
- De Rose, Alessandra, and Maria Rita Testa (2015), *The ecological awareness and fear for climate change in Europe.* Annali del Dipartimento di Metodi e Modelli per l'Economia, il Territorio e la Finanza (pp.113-135). Bologna: Pàtron Editore. ([Download](#))
- Liefbroer, Aart C., Eva Maria Merz, and Maria Rita Testa (2015), *Fertility-related norms across Europe: A multi-level analysis.* In: Philipov, Dimiter, Aart C. Liefbroer, and Jane E. Klobas (Eds.), Reproductive decision-making in a macro-micro environment (pp.141-163). New York: Springer ([Preview](#))
- De Rose, Alessandra, and Maria Rita Testa (2014), *Cambiamento climatico ed impatti sulla popolazione.* In: Cagiano de Azevedo, Raimondo, Claudio Cecchi, Angela Magistro, Giorgio Milanetti, Giuseppe Sancetta, and Donatella Strangio (Eds.), Oltre i confini. Studi in onore di Giuseppe Burgio (pp.45-56). Roma: Sapienza Universitaria Editrice. ([View](#))
- Ocello, Cristina, Alessandra Petrucci, Maria Rita Testa & Daniele Vignoli (2014), *Environmental aspects of internal migration in Tanzania.* Population & Environment 36(4). Online first ([Download](#))
- Testa, Maria Rita, and Stuart Basten (2014), *Certainty of meeting fertility intentions declines in Europe during the 'Great Recession'.* Demographic Research 31(23): 687-734 ([Download](#))
- Testa, Maria Rita (2014), *On the positive correlation between education and fertility intentions in Europe: individual- and country-level evidence.* Advances in Life Course Research 21: 28-42 ([Download](#))
- Testa, Maria Rita, Laura Cavalli and Alessandro Rosina (2014), *The effect of couple disagreement about child-timing intentions: a parity-specific approach.* Population and Development Review 40(1):31-53 ([Download](#))

- Buber-Ennsner, Isabella, Norbert Neuwirth and Maria Rita Testa (eds) (2014), Families in Austria: 2009-2013. Descriptive findings on partnerships, fertility intentions, childbearing and child-rearing ([Download](#))
- Buber-Ennsner, Isabella, Norbert Neuwirth and Maria Rita Testa (eds) (2013), Familienentwicklung in Österreich: 2009-2013. Partnerschaft, Kinderwunsch, Kinderbetreuung und ökonomische Situation ([Download](#))
- Osiewalska, Beata (2013), Transmission of Fertility Pattern in Mother-Daughter Relation – Bayesian view (a case study of Austria). Studia Demograficzne (Demographic Studies), 1(163), 3-35. ([Download](#))

