

Population Economics

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Female Labour Market Behaviour and Fertility

A Rational-Choice Approach

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CONTENTS

1. Editors' Introduction <i>Jacques J. Siegers, Jenny de Jong-Gierveld and Evert van Imhoff</i>	1
Part I : THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE	
2. Understanding the Interdependence between Parallel Careers <i>Frans J. Willekens</i>	11
3. Social Approval, Fertility and Female Labour Market <i>Siegwart Lindenberg</i>	32
Part II : PREFERENCES	
4. De Gustibus Confusi Sumus ? <i>Thomas K. Burch</i>	61
5. Shortcuts as Pitfalls ? Ways of Measuring Childbearing Preferences and Intentions <i>Freddy Deven and Sabien Bauwens</i>	74
6. Motivation of Reproductive Behaviour and the Professional Motivation of Women <i>Erika Spieß, Friedemann W. Nerdinger and Lutz von Rosenstiel</i>	87
7. A Purposeful Behaviour Theory of Work and Family Size Decisions <i>Richard P. Bagozzi and M. Frances Van Loo</i>	101
Part III : RESTRICTIONS	
8. A Biographic/Demographic Analysis of the Relationship between Fertility and Occupational Activity of Women and Married Couples <i>Herwig Birg</i>	133
9. Labour Market Restrictions and the Role of Preferences in Family Economics <i>Klaus F. Zimmermann and John P. De New</i>	158

Part IV : CONFRONTATION OF PREFERENCES AND RESTRICTIONS:
THE CONSTRUCTION OF THEORETICAL MODELS

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 10. Economic Models of Women's Employment and Fertility
<i>John F. Ermisch</i> | 175 |
| 11. Models of Female Labour Market Supply, with Special Reference
to the Effects of Children
<i>Alice Nakamura and Masao Nakamura</i> | 191 |
| 12. Children and Female Labour Supply: A Survey of
Econometric Approaches
<i>Alice Nakamura and Masao Nakamura</i> | 213 |
| 13. How Economics, Psychology and Sociology Might Produce a
Unified Theory of Fertility and Labour Market Participation
<i>Boone A. Turchi</i> | 237 |

Part V : TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN FEMALE LABOUR MARKET BEHAVIOUR AND FERTILITY

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 14. Towards a Better Understanding of the Relationship
between Female Labour Market Behaviour and Fertility
<i>Jacques J. Siegers</i> | 265 |
|---|-----|

- | | |
|-----------------|-----|
| References | 275 |
| Author index | 295 |
| Curricula Vitae | 299 |

MOTIVATION OF REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR AND THE PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION OF WOMEN

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6.1. Introduction

The decision by women with children to be active on the labour market is determined, to a large extent, by the preferences of the woman and her partner. This paper pays special attention to professional motivation, on the one hand, and to the desire to have children, on the other hand. Using survey data for young married women, the relation between professional activities and the desire for children is examined further and reported on in this chapter.

6.1.1. Professional motivation of women and fertility : a conflict ?

In the headlines of the West German newspapers, the employment of women has been cited as a cause of the declining birth rate. This, however, only reflects part of the problem. From the population science point of view, it has been demonstrated by Schwarz (1981) that the declining birth rate had its origin 100 years ago, whereas the employment of women has only increased since the 1960s. The participation of women in the work force requires a differentiated point of view, since it is determined by various factors. For example, the salary plays a part: if the husband has a low income, the wife will work even if they have several children, whereas wives whose husbands have a high income are employed to a lesser extent (Tegtmeyer, 1976; Von Rosenstiel *et al.*, 1986).

Although the employment of women has become more and more self-evident, it is still burdened with several specific problems. The income of women is on average lower than that of men. Women are, to an unproportional extent, employed in jobs with little or no qualification or have part-time jobs. These positions are the ones threatened the most by unemployment. There are hardly any women in leadership and top management positions; only in the service sector does one see women in middle management (cf. Stutenbäumer-Hübner, 1985; Spieß, 1988).

There are various explanations for this, which take into account the individual motivation of women as well as the societal causes. Obsolete sex-role stereotypes and socialization effects (Lehr, 1984) are included here, as well as the societal and political causes, which cause the professional motivation of women and fertility to come into conflict. If women feel responsible for the family, the raising of children and the household, then this automatically indicates that there is less willingness and readiness for their profession (Beck-Gernsheim, 1984). In our achievement-oriented professional world, this means that women will have less advancement opportunities. The conflict for women arises from the motives to commit oneself to one's profession and the motives to have children (Scanzoni, 1978; Inglehart, 1979; Kahn-Hut *et al.*, 1982).

6.1.2. Motives for working

Organizational psychologists (Von Rosenstiel, 1987) have described several classifications of work motives. A relatively simple differentiation of the various work motives classifies them into three categories.

First, there is the "normative aspect", which means that we are expected to work. In our society there are still different expectations for men and for women. For men it is a self-evident necessity; for women the work role has also become self-evident, but not to the same degree as with men.

Second, work provides rewards (income) beyond the action itself. This means that work motivation can be extrinsic.

Third, there are also incentives within the work itself. Here the organizational psychologists speak of intrinsic motivation. The change of values which has been taking place in western industrial nations also affects the work motivation (Noelle-Neumann and Strümpel, 1984). An important result of the data analysis of Inglehart's (1977) representative survey (see also Klages and Kmiecik, 1979; Von Rosenstiel and Stengel, 1987) was that younger groups of individuals tended to have post-materialistic values. This indicates that these individuals find values such as self-actualization and environmental protection very important, while the older generation prefers materialistic values such as a high standard of living and security. Inglehart (1989) demonstrated, on the basis of cohort analysis, that the effects, for the most part, are due to differences between generations and not to ageing. However, the changing values caused by the generation change proceed very slowly. But since the post-

materialistic individuals have a better education than those who are materialistic, Inglehart supposes that these people will have a greater amount of influence in the future. They place high expectations on their work, which fits to this value orientation.

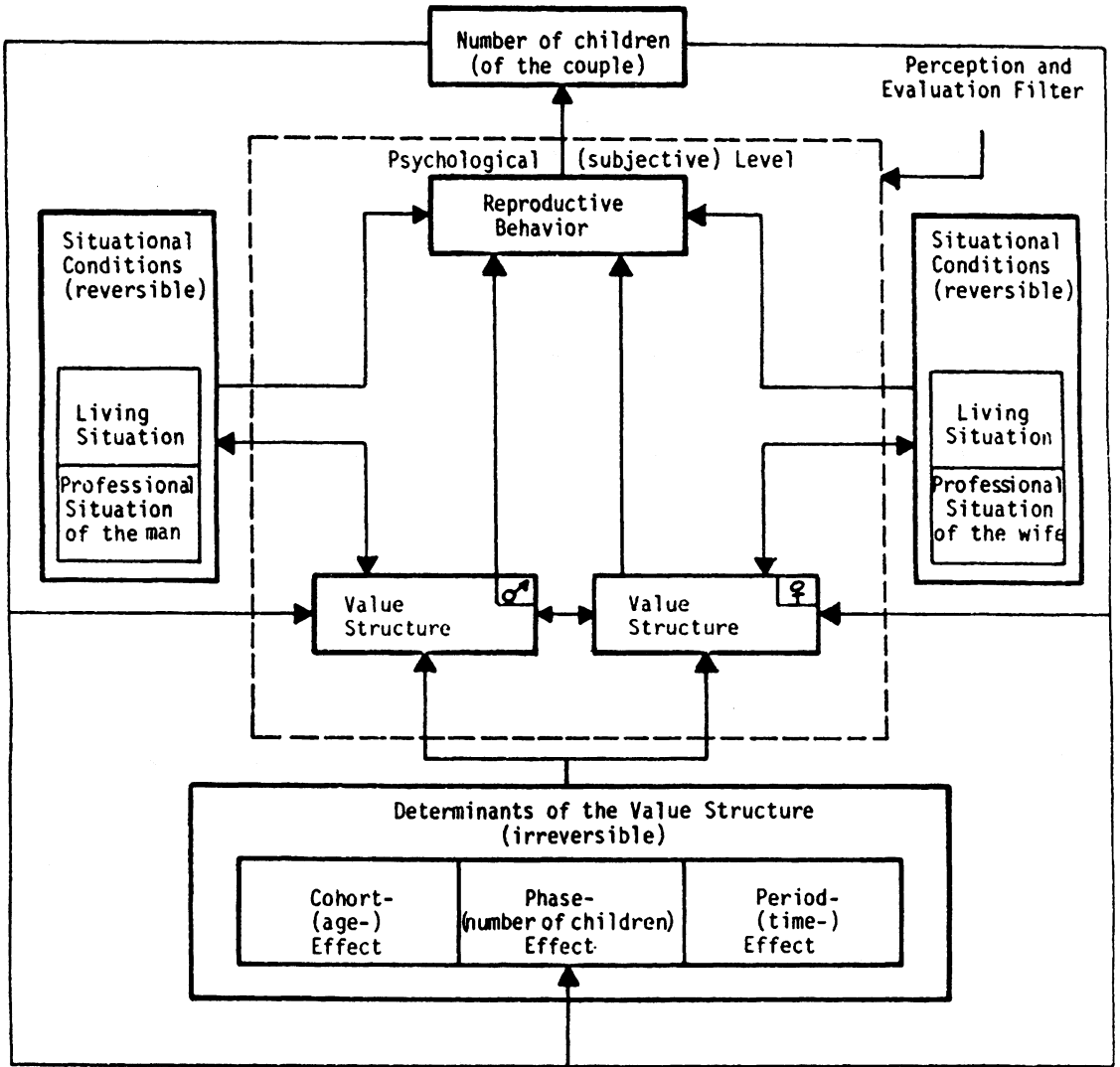
Due to the changing of values, women do not only want to add a financial contribution to the family by working, they also want to fulfill and satisfy their own needs. A survey done by Becker-Schmidt (1981), which covered the work experiences of women in the factory and in the family, showed that the work, even though it was experienced as being monotonous, did more than just fulfill their extrinsic needs (financial), but also served their intrinsic needs, such as maintaining contacts and exchanges. This displacement of motives which arose from the changing of values gains meaning for the motivation of reproductive behaviour.

6.1.3. Motives for having children

There have been many attempts to assess the reasons for wanting to have children: one wants to live on through one's children, one searches for new experiences, one likes to stabilize one's own status as an adult and one's identity. There are, however, also *norms*, based on religion or family tradition, which influence the desire to have children (see Hoffman, 1978). In a small pilot study in Bavaria (Büchl *et al.*, 1979), 50 women with children were asked whether they desired a third child. Those who wanted one more child mentioned "joy in children" as the most important reason for children, while those who did not want anymore children said that children "belong to marriage." One could call the "joy in children" intrinsically motivated, whereas one could describe the attitude that children "belong to marriage" as being steered by norms. Through the change in values, the problem for women can only get worse, since the values for self-actualization could increase the expectations of one's own lifestyle and decrease the desire to have a child.

The study "Changing values and reproductive behaviour", sponsored during the years 1978-1983 by the Volkswagen Foundation, investigated the psychological causes of the declining birthrate in the Federal Republic of Germany under the perspective of changing values. The question concerning the effect of changing values on reproductive behaviour of women was also included.

Figure 1. A couple-interaction model of reproductive behaviour.



Source: Von Rosenstiel et al., 1986.

6.2. The model of the study: changing values and reproductive behaviour

The goals of the study "Changing values and reproductive behaviour" were:

- the observation of the motivation for reproductive behaviour with the changing values in society as the background;
- longitudinal evaluations on a large number of married couples in Germany;
- the inclusion of men and women (husbands and wives) together in the survey.

The model of this study takes as a basis a couple model, which was developed from the study "Motivation of reproductive behaviour" (Von Rosenstiel *et al.*, 1986). Figure 1 clarifies the central themes of the study. The starting point is the individual value structure of the husband and the wife.

The "couple-interaction-model" presupposes that the values to which a person is oriented are tangible on the level of the individual and are meaningful for concrete behaviour. This means that values are transferred to an individual by the socialization process. These values serve as orientation points in different situations and determine one's behaviour and actions. Values, however, are formed and changed via a societal process. At this point the thesis of changing values in society (Inglehart, 1977; Noelle-Neumann, 1978; Klages, 1984) becomes relevant for this study.

Furthermore, the value structure includes the intrinsic values, meaning the love of children and normative aspects. This value structure is affected by irreversible determinants such as the cohort, the phase and the period effect, as well as by reversible conditions such as the living situation and the employment situation of the woman. The value structure further also affects the reversible, situational conditions and the reproductive behaviour. The irreversible conditions will now be further described.

1. *Cohort or age effect.* This means that different cohorts of couples will experience different external conditions. With these, they develop specific values and could become the age-group cohorts and central promoters of the changing of values (Ryder, 1965). For example, individuals who were born in the Federal Republic of Germany during the "building-up phase" - the period following the Second World War (1945-1955) - grew up under completely different economic and social conditions

than those who were born between 1955 and 1965, when the standard of living was higher. This affects those values that are concerned with marriage and family as well. The changing of values explained by Inglehart (1977) can be examined with the analysis of this effect.

2. *Phase or number of children effect.* Human beings go through specific life phases from birth to death, such as starting school, entry into professional life, birth of the first child, retirement. These can be characterized by a typical role constellation. In each of these phases the life situation changes and requires a change in roles, which can also affect the values. In the longitudinal study, we are examining the birth of the first child and the birth of further children in relation to these values.
3. *Period or time effect.* Specific occurrences affect all age groups at the same time and affect the values of all involved. For example, the hypothesis that an economic depression could change and modify values would fit into this category.

6.3. The design of the study

The study "Changing values and reproductive behaviour" was planned as a panel. The first survey took place in 1980 with 667 married couples. The sample was drawn through a multiple step random choice process of selection from the files of the justices of the peace. Subjects were selected from one large, one mid-size and one small city, as well as one rural county. The wedding date of the subjects was between 1972 and 1979. The wives were born between 1949 and 1959 and both partners were German citizens. Most families had either no child or one child at the point of questioning. A few couples had two or three children. In 1982 the second survey took place; 371 of the couples were willing to take part. Simultaneously, a control group sample of 170 couples was questioned in order to determine interview/survey effects. 539 couples participated in the third survey, including 108 couples from the first survey, 125 from the control group, the remaining 296 couples having been interviewed three times. Both partners were questioned separately at first and then together, according to the "Y-Design."

Comparisons with the official statistics indicates that the sample is representative of married couples in the Federal Republic of Germany. The only

deviant factor is religion, where the Bavarian majority clearly dominated: 70% of the subjects are Catholic. This could indicate a bias in our sample. It is assumed (Fürstenberg and Mörth, 1979; Inglehart, 1989), that with the increased secularization of religion in its institutional form, it is not possible to make conclusive statements about basic religiosity. It does not seem to play a role in reproductive behaviour. (Religiosity was assessed as a value in our study. Most respondents rated it as unimportant.) Most of the individuals in the sample rent apartments, have completed secondary school and an apprenticeship. According to the classification scheme of Kleining and Moore (1968), most of the individuals belong to the lower middle class.

6.4. Results of the study

Central to the couple-interaction-model is the individual value structure, which is determined by irreversible and reversible conditions. These will be analysed in greater detail in the following.

6.4.1. Values of reproductive behaviour

In order to assess the individual value structure, 24 value items were developed. These describe concrete life goals and are to be rated on a scale ranging from absolutely unimportant (0) to extremely important (5). Table 1 shows the important values that have been found to be the basic constructs. This value structure was replicated throughout the three periods of measurement, as well as with the control group.

The evaluation of the co-variation of the value orientation with the desire for children resulted (cf. Von Rosenstiel *et al.*, 1986; Spieß *et al.*, 1984; Nerdinger *et al.*, 1984) in values such as "emotional provisions for old age", "leisure" and "religion" as being important for the desire for children, rather than primarily materialistic considerations.

Table 1. The main values in the first and second enquiry.

Values	Example
Affluence	To earn a high salary
Religiosity	To live a religious life
Provisions for old age	Not to be alone in old age
Partnership	To live with one's partner in harmony
Profession	One's own professional advancement
Leisure	Frequently go to the theatre or cinema

6.4.2. Effects of age, number of children and the wish for children

The evaluation of the cohort effect indicated that young women (women who were born between 1953 and 1960) without children or with one child have a stronger wish for children than older women who were born between 1945 and 1952. The younger women also displayed a greater emotional kindness to children. This result was only partially interpreted as a confirmation of Inglehart's theory, since love for children can be interpreted as belonging to the post-materialistic values. However, the values concerning a high standard of living and leisure, which are materialistic values, seem to be important to the subjects as well.

The results of the phase-effect evaluation (defined by the number of children) resulted in a significant negative co-variation for the value area "Profession." These women in our sample clearly represented the traditional role stereotype, which states that it is inappropriate to have a profession if one has several children. Table 2 shows the wish for children of husbands and wives who have had their first child in the meantime (between 1980 and 1982), compared to those who have not had a child. The wish for children decreases in the wives and husbands who have not had a child, whereas it increases in those who have had a child in the meantime. This was evaluated as a contradiction of the so-called "Babyshock-Thesis" of Jürgens and Pohl (1975). Their study determined a decrease in the (further) wish for children in young couples after the birth of their first child.

Table 2. Desire for children 1980 and 1982 of couples childless in 1980.

child born between 1980-1982	women			men		
	1980	1982	sign.	1980	1982	sign.
no child born	1.57	1.36	*	1.53	1.42	
child born	1.89	2.22	*	1.86	2.18	*

* = $p < .05$ (t-test)

The evaluation of the period effect, the changes in the value structure that do not occur due to age or number of children, indicated only for women a decrease in meaning for the values "Profession" and "Leisure", that is, women found these values less important. This was interpreted as an expression of a role conflict for women who are faced with the problem of combining profession with family.

6.4.3. Job-orientation of women and the wish for children

Situation effects could affect the individual value structure (see Figure 1). However, in comparison with the irreversible determinants, the living situation and the employment of women, for example, are reversible. It is possible for women who are not satisfied with their professional situation to find a new purpose in life by fulfilling the housewife and mother role. In the same fashion, a satisfying professional life could reinforce the career preferences.

In our study the perceptions regarding the employment of women (wives) were taken into special consideration (Spieß, 1984). Table 3 displays the differences between the perceptions of the spouses regarding the reasons for the employment of women. The women were to rank these items for their professional work (the housewives their housework) on a scale ranging from 5 (applies) to 0 (does not apply). The men also were to rank the items for the work of their wives.

Table 3. Differences in the evaluation of the reasons for the housework or the professional work of the wife, by sex (survey 1982).

Reasons for the woman being a housewife (N = 162)	Housewife about herself	Housewife's husband about his wife	significant
The woman's wish	3.4 (1.9)	3.1 (2.1)	
The husband's wish	3.0 (2.0)	2.9 (2.1)	
A mutual decision	3.9 (1.7)	4.1 (1.6)	
It was self-evident	3.4 (1.9)	2.9 (2.1)	*
She could not find work	0.5 (1.3)	0.4 (2.1)	
Reasons for the woman being employed (N = 355)	Employed woman about herself	Employed woman's husband about his wife	significant
The woman's wish	4.4 (1.2)	4.1 (1.5)	*
The husband's wish	1.7 (1.9)	1.9 (1.8)	
A mutual decision	2.5 (2.2)	2.4 (2.1)	
It was self-evident	3.7 (1.8)	2.8 (2.1)	*
It was financially necessary	2.7 (2.0)	2.4 (1.9)	*

Standard deviation in brackets

* = $p < .05$ (t-test)

The wives rate their employment as representing the wish of the women themselves slightly higher than the men do. Second place is the item "It is self-evident that women work", ranked much higher by wives than by husbands, followed by the financial necessity. (The results for housewives showed that this status is much less desired by the women.) This was interpreted to state that the employment of women is an important value decision for the wife.

Table 4 shows the differences in the evaluation of the professional work or housework. Housewives and employed wives differ significantly with regard to the evaluation of their work. In all cases the employed women find their work more interesting, more useful in maintaining contacts, more fulfilling and more rewarding than the housewives. The sex-specific perception is interesting here: consistently the men evaluate the employed women's activity as less interesting and fulfilling; instead, strenuousness and over-work are in the foreground. It is possible that a tendential dissatisfaction with the

role of the woman as wife (in the eyes of the woman herself) or high demands or expectations that the husband has of the wife could explain this.

Furthermore, it was possible to determine differences in the value structure of the housewives and the employed wives. The housewives had a stronger religious orientation, while the employed women placed more importance

Table 4. Differences in the evaluation of the professional work or of the housework of wife, by sex (survey 1982).

Evaluation of housework (N = 162)	Housewife about herself	Housewife's husband about his wife	significant
She has interesting work	2.5 (1.6)	2.6 (1.5)	
She has a large amount of contact with people	2.6 (1.6)	2.6 (1.5)	
She is bound to set working hours	1.1 (1.5)	1.4 (1.6)	
She feels overworked	1.2 (1.4)	1.7 (1.5)	*
Her work is strenuous	2.0 (1.6)	3.4 (1.4)	*
During work she can speak to her family	4.2 (1.2)	4.0 (1.2)	
Her work fulfills her	3.1 (1.6)	3.1 (1.6)	
Her work is recognized	3.6 (1.4)	4.0 (1.1)	*
Evaluation of professional work (N = 355)	Employed woman about herself	Employed woman's husband about his wife	significant
She has interesting work	3.9 (1.3)	3.7 (1.3)	*
She has a large amount of contact with people	4.1 (1.3)	4.0 (1.4)	
She is bound to set working hours	3.3 (2.1)	3.4 (1.9)	
She feels overworked	1.4 (1.4)	1.7 (1.5)	*
Her work is strenuous	2.9 (1.6)	3.3 (1.3)	*
During work she can speak to her family	2.6 (1.9)	2.6 (1.8)	
Her work fulfills her	3.7 (1.3)	3.5 (1.3)	*
Her work is recognized	4.1 (1.1)	4.1 (1.1)	

Standard deviation in brackets

* = $p < .05$ (t-test)

on the "Profession" and "Leisure" values. The following question arises: are the value orientations the result of the decision to work solely in the household or to be employed? Are the values adapted to the actual situation or do they determine the decisions?

In order to investigate this issue, new groups were formed: housewives who retained this status in 1982 were compared with housewives who became employed by 1982, as well as employed women in 1980 who then became housewives by 1982 with employed women who retained this status in 1982 (Table 5).

The results indicate that housewives who remained true to their status, as well as employed wives who became housewives, tended to have more conservative values than wives who remained employed or became employed (again). A discriminant analytic examination of the data was able to confirm the importance of the values for the occupational status of the woman: in 70% of the cases it was possible to correctly predict the woman's occupational status according to the value orientation in 1980. If women tended to have more

Table 5. Values according to professional status, 1982.

Value 1980	Employed who remained employed	Employed who became housewives	significant
Affluence	2.9 (0.9)	3.3 (0.9)	*
Religiosity	1.4 (1.5)	1.9 (1.3)	*
Provisions for old age	4.0 (1.0)	4.3 (1.0)	
Partnership	4.7 (0.4)	4.9 (0.2)	*
Profession	3.8 (0.9)	3.4 (1.1)	*
Leisure	2.6 (1.0)	2.4 (0.9)	

Value 1980	Housewives who remained housewives	housewives who became employed	significant
Affluence	2.9 (0.9)	2.6 (1.1)	
Religiosity	1.9 (1.3)	1.7 (1.5)	
Provisions for old age	4.2 (0.8)	4.3 (0.9)	
Partnership	4.8 (0.4)	4.8 (0.5)	
Profession	2.9 (0.9)	3.4 (1.0)	*
Leisure	2.1 (1.0)	2.5 (1.1)	

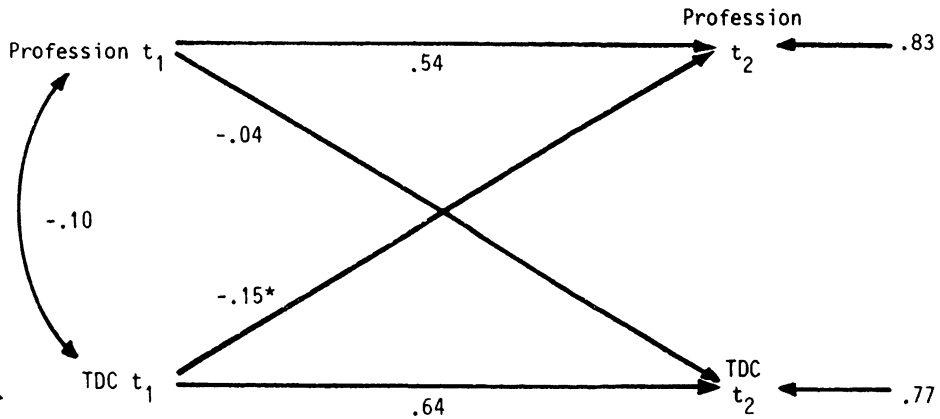
Standard deviation in brackets

* = $p < .05$ (t-test)

religious and emotional values, they were more likely to give up their profession. This group also had significantly more children in 1982.

A path analytic examination of the relationship between professional orientation and the desire to have children (Figure 2) showed that the desire to have children influences the woman's professional orientation: the greater the desire to have children at the first point of questioning, the lower the professional orientation at the second point of questioning (Nerdinger, 1984). The fact that the professional orientation of women is influenced by the desire to have children leads us to consider the specific socialization conditions of women, as well as the restrictive conditions and opportunities of society regarding reproductive behaviour. However, whether a couple decides to have children or not is also a question of their personal lifestyle and their entire value structure. This value structure also includes the concept of female employment.

Figure 2. Causal dependence between profession and total desire for children (TDC)



6.5. Conclusion

The professional life of women and the wish to have children presents a conflict between two motives: the motive to be professionally active and the motive to have children. This conflict has become more extreme under the influence of a societal changing of values: young women, in particular, place higher demands on their lifestyle. However, their expectations of professional life have also increased: women do not only want to earn a little bit extra for the family, but also want to become fulfilled by their work.

The study "Changing values and reproductive behaviour" demonstrates, using a sample of young married women, that values are of great importance for reproductive behaviour. The wish for children is determined by values such as "leisure" and "emotional provisions for old age care", whereas the value "profession" correlates negatively with the number of children. If one interprets the results using the "preferences-restrictions-behaviour scheme", the value "profession" is an obstacle for women who have a high wish for children. The other way round, children hinder a pronounced professional motivation. If women are driven by the preference "profession" or "professional career", then they will most likely decide against having children. Preferences are expressed through values as well: those who place high value on emotional and religious values will tend to give up their profession and dedicate themselves wholly to their family.