Intentions to Have a Child: A Couple-Based Process

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Abstract

Objective: To analyze how the endorsement of motives for and against having children act at a dyadic level to predict childbearing intentions.

Background: Understanding what leads individuals to have children is a topic of interest among family researchers and policymakers given that fertility rates have been decreasing in many countries. Most studies on this topic have not examined intentions about children as a dyadic process, yet most childbearing decisions occur within couple relationships.

Method: Using a convenience sample of heterosexual dual-earner couples with (n = 100 couples) and without children (n = 60 couples), Actor-Partner-Interdependence-Models were fitted to assess the linkages between motives and childbearing intentions.

Results: Different processes occur for parents and nonparents when formulating intentions to have a(nother) child. Compared to nonparents, parents are less concerned about potential changes in lifestyle or to their marital relationship, and worries about child development are subdued; rather, they are more focused on the potential emotional benefits of an additional child. In addition, partner effects were found solely in the parents' group: The more the partner perceived an additional child as enriching, the more the individual intended to have another child. Childless women were also particularly concerned about the costs of parenthood (e.g., household and childcare labor), and childless men were primarily driven by emotional enrichment motives.

Conclusion: Individual attitudes and behaviors with regard to intentions for having a child tend to be affected by their partner's attitudes and behaviors toward the same. Thus, the family systems approach take here provides a more holistic understanding of couple and family decision-making processes on this issue than is possible when only collecting data from individuals.

Implications: For parents, interventions aimed at enhancing communication and negotiation skills between couple members could foster a more shared and informed decision-making process. Improving women's sense of control and mastery over the juggling of multiple roles may help reduce childless women's concerns about the costs of having children.

Key Words: Childbearing intentions, dyadic analyses, fertility intentions, gender, motivations, parental status, parenthood.

Most European Union (EU) countries have witnessed a steady decrease in fertility rates over recent decades. Although 2.1 live births per woman is needed to maintain a steady overall population size (Begall & Mills, 2011; Fahlen, 2013), the fertility rate in the EU-28 has been much lower than this. Portugal, Poland, Spain, Hungary, Slovakia, and Greece have the lowest fertility rates, at around 1.3 births per woman (Eurostat, 2014). These rates are an important societal concern due to population decline, which may disrupt the balance of older retired individuals (i.e., those who tend to consume family and societal resources) and younger individuals (i.e., those who tend to provide those family and societal resources by actively working). Governments have tried to address population decline by providing longer paid parental leave from the workplace following a childbirth, increasing the benefits and tax deductions available to parents, and expanding options for early childcare. Notwithstanding the relevance of addressing macrolevel factors, these pro-child policies have only had a small impact on childbearing decisions (Thévenon & Gauthier, 2011), and fertility rates have remained low (i.e., below the population replacement rate). This suggests that financial factors are not solely responsible for the low birth rates. One factor that might play a role is the meaning that having a child holds for women and men (Adams, 2016; Hutteman, Bleidorn, Penke, & Denissen, 2013). Whether or not individuals decide to have a child may depend in part on what they think having a child will mean for their lives. The present study was designed to examine this supposition.

Although some have argued that low fertility is likely a result of an increased female labor-force participation, the two are not synonymous; some countries (e.g., Finland, Norway, and Sweden) have a high rate of employed women while simultaneously having high fertility rates (Jokinen & Kuronen, 2011). Thus, it is not employment itself but the way reconciliation between work and family is facilitated that might play a role in childbearing considerations

(Kaufman & Bernhardt, 2012). Therefore, the meanings attached to having children and childbearing intentions may be particularly important within dual-earner couples when (a) women's labor-force participation is high, (b) childcare services are scarce, (c) fathers are disengaged from childcare, and (d) policy measures designed to ease the burdens of balancing work and family are scarce or ineffective. This is the case for Portugal, a country where care is conceptualized as the responsibility of families, resulting in underdeveloped family policies and support for childcare facilities (Torres, Silva, Monteiro, & Cabrita, 2005), and where mothers are considered irreplaceable caregivers for children despite women's high labor-force participation (for a review, see Matias, Andrade & Fontaine, 2012; Wall, Aboim, & Cunha, 2010; Wall & Guerreiro, 2005).

Furthermore, although many pregnancies are unplanned, a substantial number of pregnancies are the result of a rational decision-making process by couples after they weigh the pros and cons of parenthood (Bauer & Kneip, 2013; Jansen & Liefbroer, 2006). Men's intentions, preferences, and motives, however, tend to have been neglected by research (Cavalli & Rosina, 2011). This shortcoming is addressed in the present study by examining the interdependences that occur in heterosexual couples during this decision-making process.

The reasons for having a first and then a subsequent child may also be distinct. The transition to parenthood literature clearly suggests that this is one of the most stressful and life-altering events many individuals face (Simpson, Rholes, Campbell, Wilson, & Tran, 2002). Becoming a parent involves a set of demands that dramatically change the daily experience of a formerly child-free couple, and parents who transition to parenthood for the first time may therefore be expected to experience more psychological change than those having an additional child (Katz-Wise, Priess, & Hyde, 2010). When individuals decide to have a second child, major family adaptations have already taken place, and thus, the decision to have the second child seems to reflect a different set of concerns. Parents contemplating

another child also have lived experiences that inform their decision making, and a more enlightened assessment of the costs and benefits of having another child may therefore be expected.

In the present study, we sought to analyze how dual-earner couples' motivations toward parenthood are linked to own and partner intentions to have children. Furthermore, we differentiate these links in couples with and without children.

Motives For and Against Having a Child

Building on the pioneering work of Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) concerning the value of children, Liefbroer (2005) grouped the nine values children were said to potentially fulfill into three categories: (a) social rewards (e.g., obtaining adult status and conformity to social norms); (b) emotional or psychological rewards (e.g., feelings of competence and personal development); and (c) economic (e.g., children can take care of parents in old age and can contribute to the welfare of the family). In a parallel vein but concerning the costs of having a child, Fawcett (1988) distinguished five categories associated with having children: direct economic costs, such as food, clothing, and education; income-related costs (especially for women); opportunity costs with regard to free and leisure time; psychological costs that include the loss of freedom and flexibility; and physical costs stemming from the chores associated with childcare. Following these seminal approaches to the costs and rewards a child may entail, other authors have derived conceptualizations where the core motives both for and against having children can be identified.

Emotional or psychological and social benefits seem to be core motives for having children (Cunha, 2007; Liefbroer, 2005; Matias & Fontaine, 2013; O'Laughlin & Anderson, 2001; Seaver, Kirchner, Straw, & Vegega, 1990). Emotional benefits involve personal fulfillment and growth; social benefits involve status acquisition through parenthood or gender role consolidation. Conversely, considerations such as financial issues, career

aspirations, lifestyle preferences, child development issues, or marital difficulties tend to be core motives for not having children (Cunha, 2007; Fawcett, 1988; Liefbroer, 2005; Matias & Fontaine, 2013; O'Laughlin & Anderson, 2001; Seaver et al., 1990).

Few studies have sought to identify which particular costs or benefits influence the decision to have a child and scarce research has systematically accounted for dyadic interdependences in endorsing these costs and benefits (Liefbroer, 2005; O'Laughlin & Anderson, 2001; Stöbel-Richter, Beutel, Finck, & Brähler, 2005). Treating couple members as independent family actors and not accounting for their place in the family system is a common shortcoming in this body of family research. The decision to have a child or not should be viewed as a couple-based decision, where motives for and against are weighed by and discussed between both partners (Jansen & Liefbroer, 2006). Analyzing the reasons of only one partner does not allow for an understanding of the processes that occur between partners. Furthermore, and according to Testa (2010), asking individuals to report their partner's childbearing intentions is generally inaccurate because they tend to reflect the respondent's point of view.

Crossover Effects Between Partners

From a family systems perspective (Kerr & Bowen, 1998), crossover processes (Westman, 2002) occur in which an individual's attitudes and behaviors are affected by other family members' attitudes and behaviors. For example, in the context of decision making about parenthood, each partner's motivation for or against parenthood is likely linked to the other partner's intentions. This provides a useful framework for understanding the dynamic relationships between parenthood motivations and intentions to have children within couples. To our knowledge, no study has yet taken a dyadic approach to examine crossover processes in couples' motivations and intentions to have children. When a dyadic point of view has been adopted, it mostly focused on (dis)agreement between partners (Bauer & Kneip, 2013; Cavalli

& Rosina, 2011) or on the effects of a partner's work-related obligations on the decision, as reported by individual respondents (Kaufman & Bernhardt, 2012). A recent exception (Hutteman et al., 2013) analyzed dyadic associations between partners' personality and couples' decision making to have children and found that personality traits of both partners were directly associated with the fertility outcome, further validating the importance of psychological factors and dyadic processes in fertility outcomes.

In a study of couples without children, Langdridge, Sheeran, and Connolly (2005) found that partners' intentions were more influential on men than on women, which corresponds with Jansen and Liefbroer's (2005) "sphere of interest rule" that the wife is primarily responsible for the day-to-day functioning and emotional climate of family unit and for childrearing and that the husband is primarily responsible for maintaining paid employment. Although this rule implies that wives' attitudes can be expected to dominate decision making within their sphere of interest (internal family functioning and childrearing), Bauer and Knipe (2013) provided evidence for a caveat to that rule; they found that attitudes of both partners played an equally important role in decision making about the first child, therefore supporting a "golden mean rule." This rule states that the partners perceive each other as having equal influence on decisions, so they try to reach a compromise when they hold diverging opinions (Jansen & Liefbroer, 2006). This may be particularly true when the gendered boundaries of the sphere of influence rule blur, such as when the women had paid employment too (Rosina & Testa, 2009). In this way, contemporary households have become bargaining households, in which partners have shared influence and engage in joint decision making across the traditional spheres of influence (Jansen & Liefbroer, 2006; Testa, 2010). Some studies with dual earners in Portugal have also emphasized a couple-based process to overcome the challenges of balancing multiple roles (Matias & Fontaine, 2012, 2014). In the present study, we attempt to better understand the role of crossover effects on partners'

motivations and intentions, as well as to identify any differences in crossover effects for couples who do not yet have children compared to those who do.

Women continue to incur greater costs than men for having children. After the birth of a child, women are more involved with childcare and are more likely than men to adjust their work commitments to be available for children (Katz-Wise et al., 2010). Not surprisingly, then, the negative impact of having a child (e.g., loss of career opportunities and individual autonomy) is more pronounced for women than men, and the positive impact (e.g., personal growth and increased feeling of security) is more pronounced for men than women (Liefbroer, 2005). Nonetheless, the scarcity of dyadic data to examine these effects remains problematic.

Parental status in the crossover process. Becoming parents for the first time is a challenging life transition that involves couples' renegotiation of roles to accommodate the parent role. Having a child can thus be seen as a demand or challenge to the family's existing homeostatic functioning (Patterson, 1988). McCubbin and Patterson's (1983) family adjustment and adaptation response model posits that families engage in processes to balance family demands with family capabilities to produce family-level adjustment or adaptation. Adjustment refers to a series of interacting components that determine whether established patterns of family functioning will be maintained or whether a crisis requires changes in patterns of functioning; adaptation produces new patterns of functioning that may include rules, boundaries, routines, relationships, and roles to accomplish life tasks.

There is no doubt that having a child taxes the family system, and particularly the couple relationship; following the transition to parenthood, couples spend less time together, engage in fewer joint activities, have more conflict, and report decreased sexual activity (Levy-Shiff, 1994); not surprisingly, then, marital satisfaction declines (Mortensen, Torsheim, Melkevik, & Thuen, 2012; Twenge, Campbell, & Foster, 2003). In addition, after becoming parents, roles and attitudes with regard to family labor tend to become more differentiated

along traditional gender role lines (Katz-Wise et al., 2010); women begin to work less outside the home and perform more housework and childcare than men, whereas men tend to work more hours outside the home (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 2000; Kluwer, Heesink, & Vliert, 2002). These changes seem to suggest adjustment and adaptation processes.

Given that major family adaptations necessary for the transition to parenthood take place with the birth of a first child, the perceived costs of having a first child are higher than the perceived costs of having a subsequent child (Beckman, 1987; Stöbel-Richter et al., 2005). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the considerations that go into deciding to have a second child are different from those that affect decisions about having a first child. For example, although O'Laughlin and Anderson (2001) found that the perceived benefits of a second child were similar to those of a first child, the perceived cost (e.g., financial burden, further loss of freedom) were more salient for parents considering another child than for those considering a first child.

The Present Study

The central aim of this study is to examine how motivations toward parenthood are associated with own and partner's intentions to have children in dual-earner couples (see Figure 1). This study overcomes limitations of past research by assessing within couple linkages, distinguishing processes for parents and nonparents, and focusing on dual-earner families.

In light of family systems theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal influences between individuals in the same microsystem, and the literature suggesting shared decision-making particularly in dual-earner households, we predicted that the association between men's motives and women's intentions is of similar strength as the association between women's motives and men's intentions (partner effects; H1). However, with regard to actor effects, some evidence indicates that women are more prone to be affected by the costs of having children, and we therefore expect women's intentions to be negatively associated with their

own (perceived) costs from having children (e.g., lifestyle interference, anticipation of problems; H2a), and men's intentions to be positively associated with their own perception of benefits to having children (e.g., emotional enrichment and social recognition; H2b).

Given some evidence that parents perceive higher costs associated with having a first child than having a subsequent child, we expect to find differences between those contemplating a first versus a subsequent child. Specifically, among those contemplating a first child and on the basis that obtaining the parental role may convey higher social status, we anticipate that intentions are (a) positively linked with own and spouse social motives for having a child, and (b) negatively linked with own and spouse anticipation of problems associated with having a child (H3a). Among those who already have a child, when controlling for the number of existing children, we anticipate that intentions to have another child are (a) positively linked with both own and spouse emotional enrichment motives, and (b) negatively linked with own and spouse lifestyle interference motives (H3b). With regard to gender differences, we expect that the distinct costs of parenthood for women and men occur when couples are considering their first child, and that partners who already have a child will each perceive similar costs associated with having additional children (H4).

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The sample comprised 161 dual-earner heterosexual couples (322 individuals) recruited in Porto and Braga, the two most populated metropolitan areas in northern Portugal. Inclusion criteria required that partners had lived together for at least 12 months and that both had paid employment. Potential participants were approached through Internet mailing lists, in person at training courses to improve professional skills in several areas of expertise, and in workplaces. When a face-to-face contact occurred, the goals of the study were explained, confidentiality was ensured, and questionnaires were distributed to all who agreed to

participate. The questionnaires were either picked up in person on an assigned date or returned in a sealed envelope to an assigned administrative employee within the participant's place of employment. When recruitment occurred online, participants were first introduced to the study goals and confidentiality was ensured. After informed consent was provided, the questionnaire was both sent and returned via e-mail. The total return rate was around 54%.

Within the sample, men ranged from 21 to 52 years of age (M = 34.5, SD = 6.1) and women ranged from 22 to 44 years of age (M = 32.9, SD = 5.6). The majority of participants (75.0%) were married (25.0% lived in civil union), and the overall relationship duration of the couples ranged from 1 year to 26 years (M = 12.3, SD = 6.3). More than a third (38.5%) of the sample did not have a child, 24.2% had one child, 32.3% had two children, and 5% had three or more children. Couples were well distributed among three levels of socioeconomic status (SES): 32% were classified as low SES, 30% as medium SES, and 38% as high SES. Including overtime, travel time, and commuting, the mean amount of time reported working outside the home per week was 57 hours for men and 55 hours for women. These characteristics suggest that our convenience sample was reasonably similar to the Portuguese dual-earner population described in the most recent national census (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2011).

Measures

Parenthood motives. The Motives Toward Parenthood Scale (Matias & Fontaine, 2013) is composed of two subscales corresponding to motives for having a child (i.e., emotional enrichment and social recognition) and two subscales corresponding with motives to not have a child (i.e., Lifestyle Interference and Anticipation of Problems). Emotional enrichment (in the present study, α = .81 for men and .82 for women) includes eight motives related to manifestations of affection, care, and personal development and challenge (e.g., "To have someone to love unconditionally"). Social recognition (in the present study, α = .69 for

men and .64 for women) includes eight items related to motives for compliance with social expectations and family continuity (e.g., "Because one is fully accepted in society only when one has children"). Lifestyle interference (in the present study, α = .83 for men and .84 for women) encompasses nine items related to personal, family, and professional interference motives (e.g., "I would have to change my lifestyle"), and anticipation of problems (in the present study, α = .73 for men and .70 for women) consisted of five items related to child development difficulties, such as illness, behavioral problems, or fears about a child disrupting the couple's relationship (e.g., "The child might not be healthy"). The 30 Likert-type items each had six response options ranging from *not applicable* (1) to *completely applicable* (6). This scale was developed with members of working couples with and without children and followed rigorous procedures of scale development and validation, resulting in good psychometric properties and stability in its factor structure (see Matias & Fontaine, 2013).

Intention to have a(nother) child. Respondents were asked to specify the extent to which they intended to have a(nother) child in the future. The single item had response options ranging from *not at all* (1) to *definitely* (6).

Socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status was calculated using the average of three indicators: monthly income, education level, and professional occupation. Low SES includes individuals having less than nine years of education, earning less than €1,000 of monthly income, and working in unspecialized or specialized occupations related to the production sector. Medium SES includes individuals having up to 12 years of education, earning income up to €1,500, and occupying professions linked to sales, clerical work, and services. High SES encompasses individuals holding a university degree, having salaries starting from €1,500, and including professional, technical, and related workers as well as workers in high-level administration. First, each indicator was separately classified has low (1), medium (2),

or high (3), then a mean score was calculated for each individual, followed by a mean score for the couple. A score below 1.4 was coded as low SES, a score between 1.5 and 2.5 was coded as medium SES, and a score higher than 2.6 was coded as high SES.

Data Analytic Approach

Given our interest in clarifying the associations of each partner's motivations for parenthood with their own and their partner's intentions to have a(nother) child, we conducted several preliminary analyses. Preliminary analyses included examining bivariate relationships between men's and women's distinct motivations for parenthood and their respective intentions to have children, as well as testing whether there were sex differences across these relationships using paired samples *t*-tests. Moreover, we performed these analyses separately for couples who intended to have their first child and for couples who intended to have a subsequent child.

To test our dyadic hypotheses, we used the actor–partner interdependence model (APIM) with distinguishable dyads (Cook & Kenny, 2005; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006), along with structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation (AMOS 21 software IBM SPSS). SEM allows for simultaneous testing of relationships between sets of variables and comparison of the magnitudes of competing regression paths; APIM is a type of SEM which allows for the estimation of both within individual (actor) and within dyad (partner) effects. In other words, an examination of the influence of one person's predictor variables on his or her own outcomes (actor effects), as well as on the other partner's outcomes (partner effects). In the APIM, actor effects are estimated controlling for partner effects, partner effects are estimated controlling for actor effects, and errors of measurement in observed variables are allowed to covary across dyad members, thereby accounting for dyadic nonindependence by minimizing biases in the estimation of effects (Kenny et al., 2006). Thus, covariances in same variables within dyad (i.e., men's emotional enrichment

correlated with women's emotional enrichment) were estimated to account for dyadic interdependence. Within-person covariances between motives to have children (emotional enrichment and social recognition) and between motives not to have children (lifestyle interference and anticipation of problems) were also modeled.

In the first step of our analyses we tested the fit of a model in which motives toward parenthood of each partner were linked to each member of the couple's intentions to have children (see Figure 1). To evaluate the fit of the model to the data, the χ^2/df, the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used. Good fit is defined as χ^2/df less than 2 and acceptable when χ^2/df is less than 3; CFI values between .95 and 1.00 signify good model fit, and values between .90 and .95 signify acceptable model fit; RMSEA values less than .05 indicate good model fit and below .08 indicate acceptable model fit (Schweizer, 2010). In a second step, gender invariance in the paths included in the model was tested by a series of nested models in which the corresponding paths for men and women were set equal, one pair at a time. Within the APIM framework, these equality constraints allow for testing for statistical differences in the strength of both actor and partner effects, through the examination of chi-square tests (see Gonzalez & Griffins, 2001). Because of the sample size (N = 161 couples) and the number of parameters to be estimated, all variables were modeled as observed variables.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

A correlation matrix showed that there were more statistical links among motivations of men and women in the parent subsample (see Table 1, upper diagonal) than in the nonparent subsample (Table 1, lower diagonal). In the parent subsample, emotional enrichment motives to have a child were positively linked with own and partner intentions to have a child. In addition, all four motives for parenthood were statistically correlated within dyads (e.g., social

recognition motives were linked between partners). Similarly, intentions to have children were highly correlated between partners. For the nonparent subsample, men's intentions were statistically correlated with own motives for having and for not having children; women's intentions were statistically correlated only with own motives for not having children (i.e., lifestyle interference and anticipation of problems). In regard to within-dyad correlations, only women's and men's social recognition motives were statistically associated with each other.

For both parents and nonparents, within-person correlations were also found between social recognition and emotional enrichment and between anticipation of problems and lifestyle interference. In the case of mothers, emotional enrichment was further correlated negatively with lifestyle interference motives. Finally, men's emotional enrichment and women's social recognition motives were also found to be linked.

The results of the paired-sample *t*-tests conducted to assess gender differences in the variable means are also reported in Table 1. No differences were found, either for the parents or for the nonparent subsamples.

Actor and Partner Effects of Motives Toward Parenthood on Intentions to Have a Child

In accordance with these findings, an APIM was fitted, entering the four motivations for parenthood for husbands and wives as predictors of childbearing intentions of childless men and women, and another APIM was fitted for intentions to have another child among those who were already fathers and mothers. In this second APIM (APIM for parents), we also controlled for the existing number of children. Secondly, to test for differences in the strength of actor and partner effects across gender, we tested whether parallel actor and partner paths were gender invariant. For example, the path from men's emotional enrichment to men's intentions to have children (actor effect) was constrained to be equal to the path from women's emotional enrichment to women's intentions, and the path from men's emotional

enrichment to women's intentions (partner effect) was constrained to be equal to the path from women's emotional enrichment to men's intentions. This was repeated for each of the remaining motives. Each of the paths for men and women in the parents subsample were the same, indicating that there were no statistical differences according to gender. The same was largely true among nonparents, but with one exception: the actor effect of women's and men's emotional enrichment on intentions to have children was different between the genders ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 8.12$, $p = .004$).

Thus, for the parents subsample, a final model was fitted with the similar paths between fathers and mothers constrained to be equal, and this model showed good fit ($\chi^2_{(37)} = 45.37$, $p = 162$; $\chi^2/df = 1.226$; CFI = .969; RMSEA = .048). For the nonparents subsample, a final model was fitted including all the equivalent paths between men and women constrained to equality, and the actor path between emotional enrichment and intentions freely estimated, and this model also showed good fit ($\chi^2_{(27)} = 28.19$, $p = .401$; $\chi^2/df = 1.044$; CFI = .994; RMSEA = .027).

As Figure 2 shows, childless women's intentions were linked only by negative motivations: Their intention was higher if they anticipated a child would not have developmental difficulties or would not strain their marital relationship and if they perceived less interference with the current lifestyle. These same motivations are associated with childless men's intentions, but in addition, the degree to which men feel that having a child will be enriching was also related to their higher intentions. For parents, number of existing children was negatively linked to parent's intentions, and own (actor) and partner emotional enrichment motives were linked to father's and mother's intentions to have another child. The model explained 48% of the variance among men in the nonparent group, followed by women in the nonparent group (38%), fathers (33%), and mothers (30%).

DISCUSSION

With this study, we intended to shed light on the links between motives and intentions to have a child, disentangling crossover influences between partners in parents and nonparents. No mean gender differences were found in the endorsement of motives, but the interplay of motives with intentions within the couple is markedly different by parental status. Parents' intentions were linked with partners' motivations, namely with positive motives (emotional enrichment); nonparents' intention showed an actor-only pattern in that intentions were driven only by within-person motivations. Moreover, childless women's intentions were linked only to the endorsement of motives for not having a child (lifestyle interference and anticipation of problems); among childless men, in addition to these motives, the degree of emotional enrichment was also associated with their intention.

Our first hypothesis was that men and women's intentions are similarly linked to partner's motives; that is, that men's motives are associated with women's intentions to the same degree that women's motives are linked to men's intentions (H1). This pattern of equivalent partner effects was found for the parents group. Indeed, partner effects as well as actor effects were of similar magnitude between men and women, and the only statistically significant paths found were the links between own and partner emotional enrichment and intentions to have additional children. These findings were obtained after controlling for existing number of children.

On the one hand, the role of emotional enrichment motives on intention aligns with the findings of classic studies that point to psychological rewards as one of the most important aspects when considering having a child (Fawcett, 1988; Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973). On the other hand, these findings suggest that, in accordance with the family adjustment and adaptation response model, parents have undergone personal and familial changes necessary to adjust and adapt to the demand of the birth of their first child (Patterson, 1989). Therefore, when considering having another child, couples have already accommodated the new parental

role and adapted their family functioning accordingly (Patterson, 1989). Thus, they are more likely to disregard changes in lifestyle and marital relationship given that these changes have already occurred, and they also have experience overcoming any worries they may have had about child problems (Mortensen et al., 2012; Twenge et al., 2003). Parents have also had the experience of emotional rewards with their first child, may have greater appreciation for potential benefits to their own growth and development associated with having children, and may have overcome any insecurity they had about their ability to parent. In short, compared to nonparents, parents rely more heavily on the family context and on partner's emotional gains (e.g., marital satisfaction, marital stability, family satisfaction, family activities) when deciding whether to have another child (Call, Sheffield, Trail, Yoshida, & Hill, 2008). In addition, our results were consistent with the golden mean rule (Jansen & Liefbroer, 2006) that partner effects would be of similar magnitude for both men and women; attitudes of both partners played an equally important role in deciding whether to have another child.

With regard to our prediction that women would be more sensitive to their own perception of costs of having children and men to their own perception of benefits (H2), we found support for these actor effects in the case of childless women, consistent with H4, and partial support for childless men. Childless men's intentions were associated with perceptions of both benefits and costs. In contrast, the finding that childless women's intentions are only driven by the anticipation of costs seems fitting given that mothers are more involved than fathers with house and childcare tasks after the birth of a child (Katz-Wise et al., 2010). The mother's role is still perceived as determinant of child development (Wall et al., 2010), and thus, women may be more prone to feeling the pressure of raising a child and consequently may also be more prone to allowing worries to interfere with their intention. In this regard, and despite women's increased participation in the labor force, cultural expectations regarding maternity and family caregiving roles are still marked by traditional gender views (Matias et

al., 2012; Wall et al., 2010), and this is further substantiated by the fact that the vast majority of Portuguese men and women believe preschool children suffer if their mothers are employed outside of the home (Aboim, 2007). But we also found that childless men's intentions are driven by the same perception of costs. This may be due to increasing expectations for men to become involved as fathers and supportive coparents with their partners (O'Brien & Shemilt, 2003; Wall et al., 2010). This higher involvement of fathers and their willingness to do so (Wall et al., 2010) may leave them more susceptible to concerns that having a child will affect their lifestyle, as well as more anxious about difficulties associated with child rearing.

We also found partial support for our parental status differential hypotheses (H3), in that parents' intentions were linked more with actor and partner emotional enrichment motives and less with lifestyle interference, and nonparents' motives were linked with own and spouse's social recognition motives and with anticipation of problems. Indeed, we found that actor and partner emotional motives for having children mattered more for the intentions of parents than for those of nonparents, but that lifestyle interference and the anticipation of problems were the motives associated with intentions among nonparents. However, nonparents' intentions were not positively linked with social motivations for having children, as we originally predicted, and men without children had their intentions linked with emotional enrichment motives, which we also did not anticipate.

Despite recurring claims that intentions to have children should be assessed using couple data and that the meanings having a child hold for individuals and families are relevant, few studies have approached this topic using a dyadic design. Using couples data, our findings have highlighted a different pattern of motivations and intentions for having a first child or subsequent children, and indicate that crossover between partners' motives only

occurs with regard to the prospect of having another child among those who are already parents.

Implications, Limitations, and Conclusions

The decision to have a child, albeit private, is a focus of major concern for almost all Western societies. This is actually a long-standing concern, although it had different contours in the past. One of the first studies about motivations toward parenthood (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973) addressed the value of children to parents with the aim of identifying alternative ways of satisfying those values as means to reduce the rate of childbirth in response to concerns about rampant population growth. Thus, environmental and economic goals compete against one another with regard to childbirth, but both demonstrate how this private decision can have a remarkable impact—in either direction—on the sustainability of societies.

Today, family-friendly policies on fertility have been developed in many countries where low childbirth rates are an economic concern. Although these policies have an impact on childbearing, the magnitude of that impact seems to be small (Thévenon & Gauthier, 2011). Allied with family-friendly policies, microlevel measures such as counseling for parents and couples intending to have children can help to facilitate decision making regarding childbearing. According to our results, different motivations play a role in different groups of couples: fathers and mothers as well as men without children have higher childbearing intentions because of the benefits they attach to this decision, whereas the intentions of women without children are driven more by their perception of costs associated with parenthood.

Thus, measures that foster greater (perceived) ability among women to deal with the potential costs of parenthood may be a fruitful avenue for policy intended to stimulate a higher childbirth rate. One such example would be improving women's sense of control and

mastery over the juggling of multiple roles; women with higher levels of control in the workplace are more likely to have intentions for a second child (Begall & Mills, 2011). Adjusting childcare facilities to meet needs, such as by increasing their coverage, reducing their cost, and fine-tuning their schedules to better align with worker schedules could also help foster a childbearing decision-making process less bound to external constraints. In addition, men could be addressed with measures designed to raise their awareness of the costs women incur associated with parenthood and how sharing responsibilities may increase their partner's motivations with regard to childbirth. For parents, partner interdependences were more prominent, suggesting that measures aimed at this group should seek ways to enhance communication and negotiation skills that could foster shared and informed decision making.

Although these implications are consistent with our findings and those of previous studies, our study did have some limitations that must be acknowledged and that simultaneously point to future research directions. First, we did not focus on partners' areas of agreement and disagreement concerning intentions to have a child; the congruence or discrepancy between members of the couple about intentions and motivations to become parents remains unknown, but with potentially rich implications. Second, the potential moderating and mediating mechanisms by which motives affect intentions to have a child (e.g., number of siblings of the [potential] parents, religiosity) were not examined in this study but should be considered. Third, we used a purposive sampling method and a cross-sectional design; thus, caution should be exercised when generalizing our findings to other populations and in the establishment of causes. Future research including more diverse samples, as well as longitudinal data to establish the role of these motives and intentions on actual behavior, would add to our understanding of the phenomena.

Although much work remains to be done in this area, the present study advances understanding of couple interplay regarding motives and childbearing intentions. Our

conceptual approach using family systems theory suggested that an individual's attitudes and behaviors are affected by other family members' attitudes and behaviors. Although partner effects were found only for parents, this approach is much needed to holistically understand couple and family decision-making processes.

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Table 1

Pearson Correlations and Paired Sample T- Test between Motivates toward Parenthood and Intentions to Have a Child

	M	*SD*	*t*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Social Recognition (M)	2.30	0.73		__	**.39*** **	.46***	.07	.23*	.02	.29**	.17	.12	.02
			1.03										
2. Social Recognition (W)	2.22	0.68		**.36** **	__	.12	.39***	.26**	.105	.25*	.22*	.04	-.01
3. Emotional Enrichment (M)	4.12	1.06		.76***	.30*	__	**.26** **	.14	.20*	.02	.08	.27**	.26*
			-1.81										
4. Emotional Enrichment (W)	4.34	1.00		.13	.65***	**.13**	__	.09	.12	.00	.03	.26**	.20*
5. Lifestyle Interference (M)	2.49	0.95		.00	-.08	-.14	.03	__	**.25** **	.49***	.10	-.04	-.06
			-0.88										
6. Lifestyle Interference (W)	2.60	1.08		.00	-.31*	.03	-.27*	**.11**	__	.17	.62***	-.13	-.15
7. Anticipation of Problems (M)	1.56	0.71		.09	-.10	-.09	-.05	.48***	-.01	__	**.29** **	-.11	-.05
			1.04										
8. Anticipation of Problems (W)	1.48	0.62		-.11	-.08	-.06	-.10	-.13	.53***	**-.08**	__	-.16	-.12
9. Intentions to have a Child (M)	3.12	2.07		.33*	.20	.57***	.13	-.46***	.06	-.44***	.03	__	**.71*** **
			-0.49										
10. Intentions to have a Child (W)	3.21	2.23		.08	.25	.11	.18	.02	-.46***	-.04	-.62***	**.08**	__
M	__	__	__	2.19	2.04	3.76	2.04	3.18	3.01	1.79	1.74	5.22	5.25
SD	__	__	__	0.69	0.64	1.05	0.64	1.06	1.22	0.77	0.87	1.38	1.20
t	__	__	__	1.55		-0.58		0.86		.360		-0.08	

Note. W = women; M = men. Correlations between men and women on similar variables are given in bold. Intercorrelations for nonparents (n = 61) are presented below the diagonal, and intercorrelations for parents (n = 100) are presented above the diagonal.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

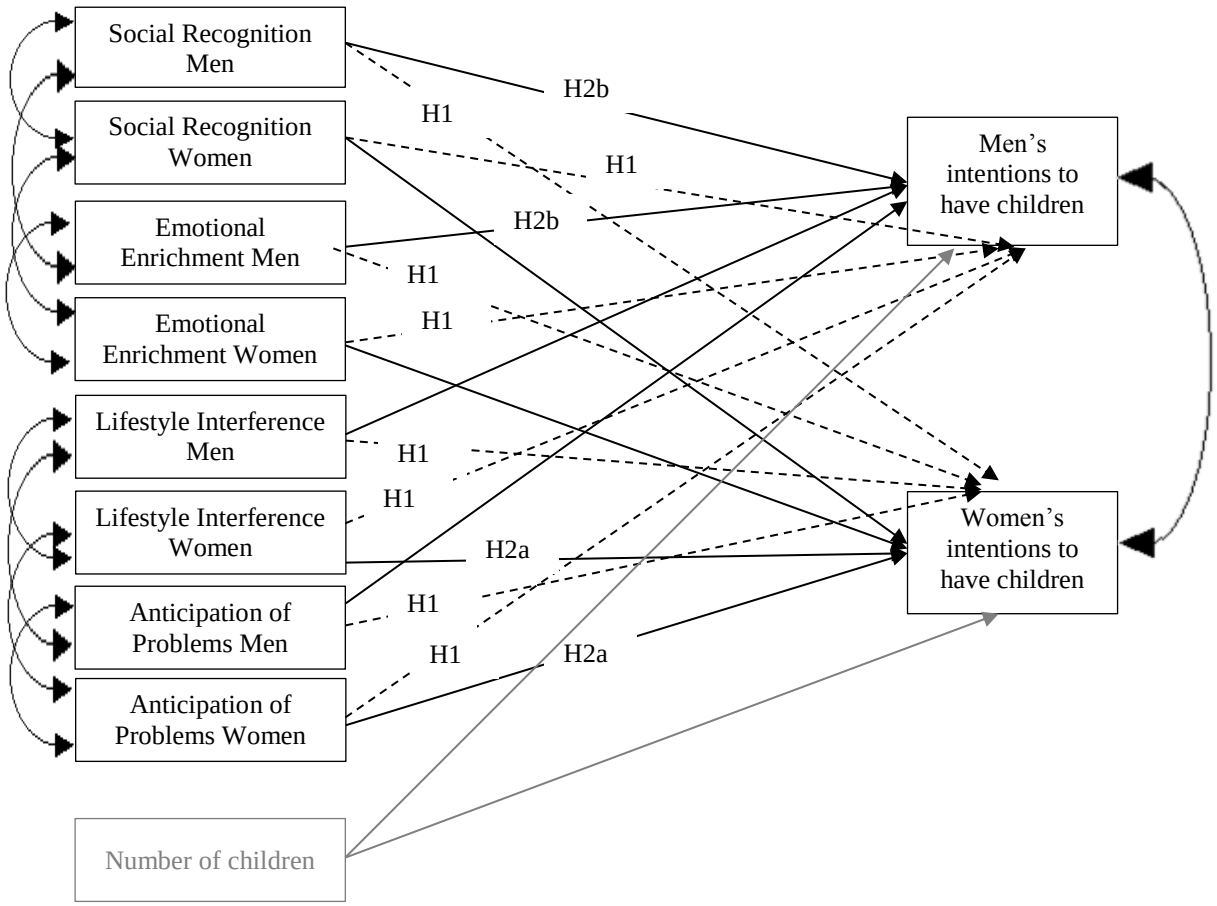

Figure 1. Conceptual APIM of the proposed relations between *motivations to parenthood* and *intentions to have children.*

Note. Solid arrows indicate actor effects; dotted arrows indicate partner effects. Curved arrows depict covariances. Light-colored arrows and boxes depict control variable effects for parents. Hypotheses 3 and 4 are not depicted.

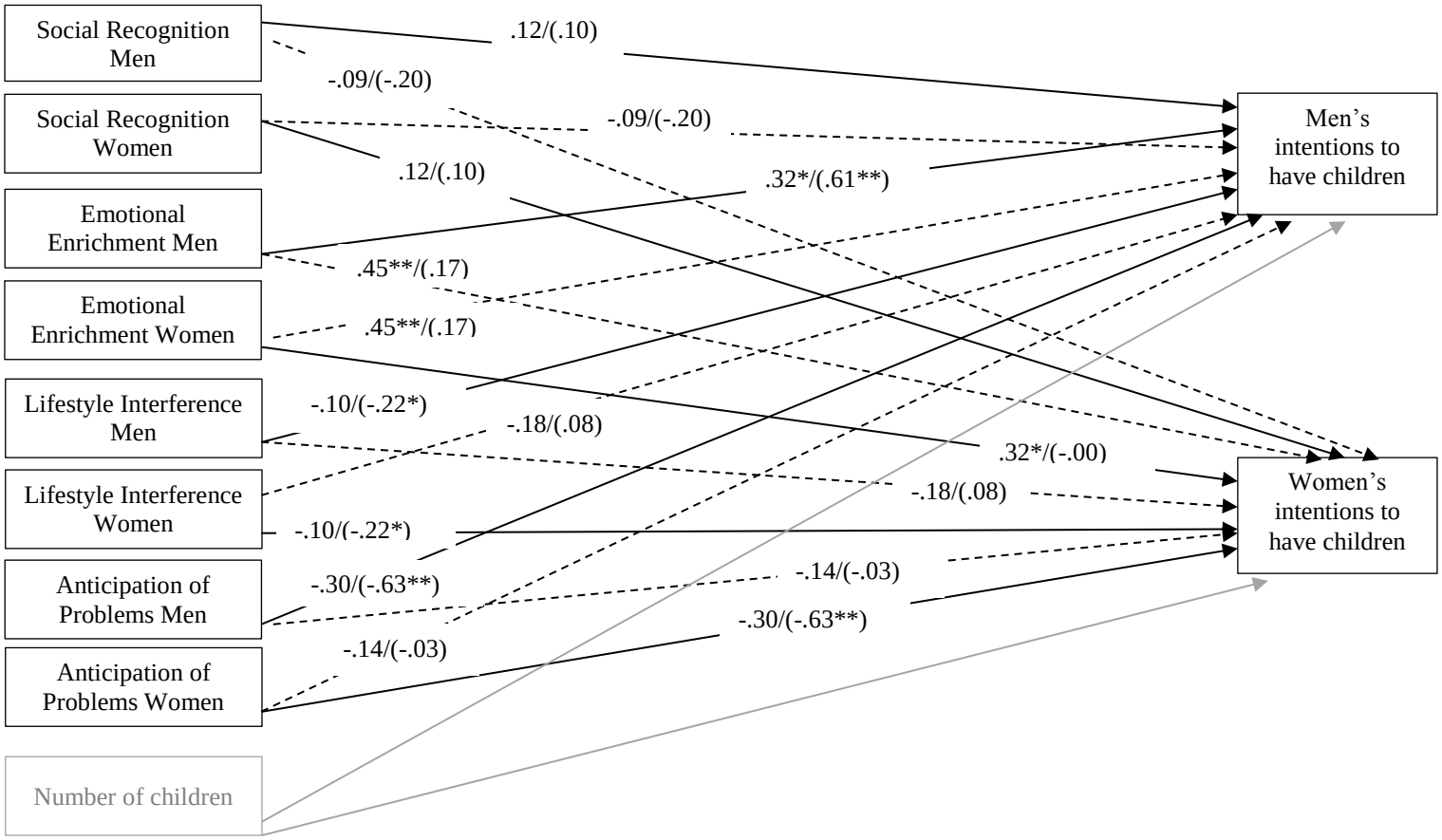

Figure 2. Final APIMs (with unstandardized effect estimates) for parents and nonparents.

Note. Solid arrows indicate actor effects; dashed arrows indicate partner effects. Light colors depict control variables and control effects for parents. Estimates in parentheses refer to the nonparent group. Correlations are not depicted for the sake of clarity.

*p <. 05. **p < .001.