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Czech Republic. Before and after 1989.**

by

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Abstract: The main aim of this paper is to analyze how Czech mothers perceive the consequences for their careers of interruptions in their participation in the labour market due to childcare. In particular, these women's perceptions of the impact of breaks in employment on their further career are examined in light of whether they had their children prior to or after the fall of the socialist regime. The analyses are based on the European Social Survey data from 2004 and were conducted in two steps. In the first step, the paper examines patterns of labour market interruptions due to childcare in different time periods as a function of existing maternity and parental leave legislation. In the second step, the paper analyses how the regime change affected the perceptions of consequences of such career. The analyses reveal that the patterns of career interruptions due to childcare and their perception by women have changed over time depending on the institutional and legal context, and that the fall of the socialist regime had a significant impact on both behaviour and perceptions of Czech mothers.

Keywords: employment interruptions, childcare, regime change

1. Introduction

Empirical studies show that the extent and quality of women's participation in the labour market is largely affected by their family and childbearing responsibilities. The employment rate of women with child/ren is lower than that of childless women. In most European countries, the work activity of women drops as the number of children they have increases (European Commission 2008). Women who interrupt or restrict their careers due to childcare can face various problems such as depreciation of their human capital, loss of work opportunities, and risk of slower career progress (Sainsbury 1996, Román 2006, Rhum 1998, McDonald 2000).

The Czech Republic went through a unique and profound regime change in 1989, i.e. it transitioned from a paternalist socialist regime with a planned economy to a liberal democracy and market economy. That transition affected, among other things, the position of women and in particular mothers in the labour market, and the ways they were able to reconcile work and family life. This paper builds on previous research on the negative impacts of motherhood on women's careers¹, and aims to analyze the consequences of employment interruptions due to childcare for women's careers in the Czech Republic. In particular, it shows how Czech mothers perceive the consequences of these interruptions and whether their perceptions of the impacts of employment breaks were affected by the transition (i.e. whether there are differences between the periods prior to and after the fall of socialism).

The paper is structured as follows. The first chapter describes the nature of the Czech Republic before and after the regime change of 1989, with special attention paid to work-family reconciliation policies, labour market participation of mothers, and statistics regarding career breaks due to childcare. The second chapter concentrates on perceptions of the consequences, and provides information on the used data and methodology. The third chapter presents the outcomes of the analyses focusing on the perceptions of the consequences of interruptions of labour market participation due to childcare on women's career and how this participation has

been affected by the regime change/transition. The final chapter summarized the main findings of the paper.

The main contributions of the paper are, first, that it is the first attempt to analyze career breaks due to childcare in a long-term perspective and to check for the impact of regime change in a post-socialist country. Second, it focuses on the attitudinal (subjective) indication of the impact of career breaks on women's careers while the behavioural (objective) indicators of career interruptions are used only to contextualize the issue and to explain the perceptions.

2. Gender regime prior to and after the fall of socialism

A number of authors (Hofmeister et al. 2006, Plomien 2004, Rostgaard 2004, Crompton and Lyonette 2005) have referred to two shared characteristics of the socialist systems with regard to gender: a high level of support for women's labour market participation due to the fact that socialist regime promoted and required full employment (unemployment officially did not existⁱⁱ), and generous support for maternal employment through provisions of childcare facilities and long paid parental leave policies. It has often been reported that socialist regimes explicitly supported gender equality in terms of labour market participation, while the issue of the gender divisions of domestic labour has remained largely ignored (Pascall and Manning 2000; Manning 2004; Večerník 2007; Crompton et al. 2005). This has been reflected in rather stereotypical/traditional gender role attitudes exhibited by people in Central and Eastern Europe (Crompton et al. 2005). Thus, the socialist regime supported the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work (Rostgaard 2004) while at the same it preserved the traditional domestic division of labour between men and women and did not encourage men to participate in unpaid domestic work or care (Pascall and Kwak 2005).

After the fall of the socialist regime, Central and Eastern European countries underwent profound transformations followed by deep economic crises accompanied by unemployment, poverty and social inequality, and incapacity of national states to support gender equality in the labour market and generous family services (Hamplová 2003; Pascall and Lewis 2004).ⁱⁱⁱ As a result, the existing gender equilibrium has been significantly undermined. Cerami (2005) and Lang (2008) suggest that a general trend across the region has been towards shifting the responsibility of childcare from the government towards family. Saxonberg and Sirovátka (2006) see the adoption of such policies as explicit or implicit encouragement of women to remain at home, especially in the absence of efforts to challenge the traditional division of housework and childcare within families. Rostgaard (2004) has also pointed out a trend among post-socialist governments to encourage mothers to be the primary care providers which has been reflected in the restriction of state support for nurseries in some countries. Duration of parental leave remained relatively long and in some countries like the Czech Republic duration of parental leave have been even prolonged after the fall of socialism. Despite the fact that in the post-socialist countries childcare responsibilities and domestic labour continue to be carried mainly by women (Crompton et al 2005), Pascall and Lewis (2004) argue that the proportion of men, mainly young men, who are involved in raising and caring for children is increasing. In fact, the authors state that the post-socialist countries exhibit a more egalitarian distribution of childcare than do the EU-15 countries on average.

Another very important factor that appeared after 1989 that affected the existing gender balance was privatization. The stronger emphasis on efficiency and competitiveness reduced

employers' tolerance both of the needs of parents and of the hidden unemployment known from the socialist era. Instead, employers stressed the importance of work performance and cost efficiency (Crompton and Lyonette 2005; Hamplová 2003; Pascall and Lewis 2004).

The changes listed here were accompanied by a significant drop in fertility rates in all post-socialist countries. Most of those countries have changed from being high-fertility countries in the early 1990s to very-low-fertility countries within a decade, with the Czech Republic's fertility rate among the world's lowest (Caldwell and Schindlmayer 2003).

2.1. Gender regime in the Czech Republic prior to and after the fall of socialism

As mentioned earlier, the socialist era encouraged and enabled female labour participation by rather generous systems of family benefits and family-work reconciliation policies. In the Czech Republic in the mid-1960s six-month paid maternity leave was introduced; it was extended to 2 years in 1971. After the fall of socialism maternity leave has been transformed into three years of paid parental leave (Hamplová 2003). The three-years parental leave could be prolonged to four years but only when approved by the employer. In 2008 the government introduced a “multi-gear” parental leave scheme whereby the benefits depend on the duration of the leave: the shorter the parental leave, the more generous the parental leave benefits. The main rationale behind this reform was to give parents a chance to choose their own strategy and pace to return to the labour market and motivate mothers to shorten their stay out of employment.

During the transition period the state significantly redefined its approach to formal childcare facilities for the youngest children. At the end of the 1980s, 15 % of children aged 0-2 years were in nurseries, while in 2001 that number was only 1% (Hamplová 2003). The number of nurseries dropped from 1043 in 1991 to 60 in 2003 (<http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/4>). According to Hašková (2007), in 2004 the proportion of children younger than 3 years attending formal childcare was less than 10 %. This places the Czech Republic at the tail of the EU-27 ranking. However, pre-school attendance among children aged 3-5 years before and after 1989 has stayed steady at around 90% (Hamplová 2003).

Regarding participation of women in the labour market, one can observe a continuous increase in the female unemployment rates from 0.8 % in 1990 to 11 % in 2000 (Hamplová 2003). Breaking down female unemployment rates by age shows that younger women are more exposed to the risk of unemployment. The unemployment rate among women peaks for women aged 15-19 years, and starts decreasing steeply at the age of 35 years. This can be explained by the lack of work experience in the case of the youngest cohorts and by family responsibility in the case of women between 20 and 35 years of age (Hamplová 2003). Additionally, Hašková (2007) argues that women with children have a higher risk of being long-term unemployed compared to other social groups. The European Labour Force Survey data from 2005 reveals that the Czech Republic exhibits the largest difference in the whole enlarged EU in employment rates between childless women and women with children aged 0-6 years. The OECD figures from 2005 on employment rates of mothers of children younger than 3 years point in the same direction, showing that the Czech Republic ranks very low in the EU context.^{iv}

Motherhood and family responsibilities of women are also reflected in female labour market inactivity figures^v. More than 50 % of mothers of children younger than 6 years were not engaged in the labour market. The Czech Republic has one of the highest rates of labour market

withdrawal among mothers of preschool children (Hardarson 2006). According to Hašková (2007), only half of Czech mothers rejoin the labour market when their parental leave is finished. This suggests that motherhood has a relatively strong negative effect on women's participation in the labour market.

Szeleva and Polakowski (2008) argue that the Czech Republic belongs to a group of post-socialist countries in which the state explicitly pursues familialistic policies that support the traditional division of labour between men and women: Paid parental leave is long as is the period during which parents may profit from parental leave benefits; public childcare for children aged 3-6 years is of a low quality (measured by the ratio of pupils to teacher); and childcare in the home is extensively supported during the first years of a child's life.

2.1.1. Women's employment breaks due to childcare in the Czech Republic

Although the above general macro-level figures give a general idea about the effect of motherhood on the further careers of women, they fail to show dynamic patterns of labour market interruptions due to childcare at the micro level. Due to the lack of longitudinal micro data which could allow me to analyze frequency and duration of labour market withdrawals due to childcare for different cohorts of mothers, I used the cross-sectional 2004 European Social Survey (ESS) data to retrospectively construct an overview of women's behavior regarding career breaks due to having children. I created a variable that specifies the year the youngest child in a given household^{vi} was born and, using this variable, I was able to identify the period when each woman had to reconcile family and work and to decide whether she will interrupt her career or not.

In analyzing the data, I first distinguished between two main periods: prior to and after 1989. I observed differences in career interruptions due to child care between women who lived in the period before and after the fall of socialism. There is an association between period and duration of career breaks due to childcare (Chi-square = 72.9, df = 4, p = .000). Women who gave birth after 1989 take significantly longer career breaks than women who had their children during socialism.

In the second/next step of the analysis, I divided women into three categories based on when their children were born: women whose children who were born before 1971, i.e. the period when the duration of guaranteed maternity leave was six months; women whose children who were born between 1971 and 1991, i.e. after the extension of the duration of maternity leave to 2 years; and women who had children after 1991, i.e. during the period when parental leave has been granted for 3 (and later even 4) years.

When looking at the relationship between the periods when the youngest child was born and the duration of career interruptions due to childcare it becomes evident that these two phenomena are closely associated (Chi-square = 121.62, df = 12, p = 0.000). A larger than expected proportion of women who had their children before 1971 spent no time or only short periods out of the labour market to take care of their children. By contrast, women who gave birth after 1991 interrupted their careers for four years and even longer

The following table presents outcomes of cross-tabulation of the duration of career interruptions due to childcare by the period when youngest child was born and by the number of children.

Table 1: Duration of career interruptions due to childcare depending on number of children and period when children were born, row percentages.

		No time	Up to 6 months	More than 6 months, up to 12 months	More than 1 year, up to 2 years	More than 2 years, up to 4 years	More than 4 years, up to 10 years	More than 10 years
1 child	before 1971	4.3	23.4	20.2	19.1	21.3	8.5	3.2
	1972-1991	2.3	3.9	22.5	22.5	39.5	9.3	-
	after 1991	1.2	7.1	19.0	8.3	56.0	8.3	-
2 children	before 1971	4.1	7.5	11.6	24.5	28.6	20.4	3.4
	1972-1991	0.5	3.4	4.9	16.7	43.6	29.4	1.5
	after 1991	1.6	0.0	1.6	8.7	26.8	55.9	5.5
3 and more children	before 1971	1.9	7.7	4.8	14.4	25.0	34.6	11.5
	1972-1991	1.3	-	2.6	11.8	23.7	51.3	9.2
	after 1991	-	-	-	2.2	13.3	55.6	28.9

Source: ESS, N=1147, weight applied

Row percentages: The percentages of women who interrupted their careers for given lengths of time are shown as a function of how many children they had and when they had them.

Interpreting only the results concerning women with two children (the shaded row in the table above) the third row of the table, the data show that women that women who had their children before 1971, took shorter breaks from the labour market than did women who had their children later. Only 24 % of women who had their children before 1971 stayed out of the labour market for longer than 4 years due to childcare, compared with 40 % of those who had children between 1972 and 1991 and 60 % of mothers with children born after 1991.

2.1.2. Gender role attitudes in the Czech Republic

The above description shows that motherhood presents a strong disadvantage in the transitional labour market. This can be explained by the regime change and the attendant economic difficulties and labour market insecurity after the fall of socialism. However, it would be rather limiting to argue that structural factors alone have an impact on women's position in the labour market. It is equally important to examine women's attitudes and aspirations regarding the reconciliation of work and family life, for they might affect their acts (Luck 2006; Hakim 2002; Kangas and Rostgaard 2007; Crompton and Clare 2005).

Kalmijn (2003), Crompton et al. (2005) and Luck (2005) point out that the Czech population exhibits a mixed gender ideology and report an ambiguity in the way the Czechs perceive gender roles and female participation in the labour market. On the one hand, they show strong traditional attitudes toward the division of domestic labour where a woman is seen as the main homemaker and a man as the main breadwinner. On the other hand, they very highly value women's participation in the labour market and their capacity to contribute to the household budget. This contradiction in views regarding division of gender roles has survived even after the fall of socialism, while acceptance of the male breadwinner model has temporally steeply increased in the years immediately after 1989.

Despite the traditional attitudes of the Czech population regarding gender roles, one can not ignore that this situation is changing and that the younger generation exhibits less support for the stereotypical division of labour between men and women. The ESS data from 2004 reveal that Czech women 14 - 35 years old are considerably less likely than their older counterparts to agree with the statement that a woman should restrict her activity in the labour market for the benefit of her family. This indicates that younger women consider restriction of their labour market participation due to family responsibilities as less obvious and desirable, which is in agreement with findings in other EU states presented by Esping-Andersen (2002) and Hakim (1992) that suggest that career and self-realization through work is more important to younger women.

3. Data and methodological comments

The main aim of the paper is to analyze the effects of transition from socialist to post-socialist system (main explanatory variable) on negative perception of the consequences of employment breaks due to childcare on women's further career (dependent variable) when other explanatory factors derived from the literature^{vii} are controlled for. Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable (for more details see subchapter 3.1.), binary logistic regression^{viii} was used.

The present study uses data from the 2004 ESS. The information available in the ESS dataset is suitable for incorporating both objective and subjective indicators and, consequently, for measuring patterns, duration, and perception of career breaks due to child care. Thus, it allows for reconstructing retrospective records of career breaks due to childcare for each female respondent, and at the same time it contains information on how these breaks were perceived by the respondents to have impacted their careers. Additionally, the dataset contains enough of information to construct new variables which allow to distinguish the periods during which women gave birth to their children and hence to estimate the period/transition effect^{ix} on perception of consequences of career interruptions. Moreover, it includes information that allows for controlling for some socio-demographic and labour market factors.

The analyses were conducted on a sample of 1147 women who had spent at least some time caring for children full-time, as only this group of women were asked to provide an evaluation of the consequences for their career development. The data was weighted by designweight^x. The sample consists only of women because only women were asked to answer questions on child care and career breaks. Exclusion of male respondents can be justified by the fact that there is a negligible proportion of Czech men who interrupt career for family reasons (Hardarson 2006) or who take parental leave (Math and Meilland 2004).^{xi}

3.1. Dependent variable: Negative consequences of career interruption due to childcare

The variable was constructed from the question: "Do you think that this full-time spent at home caring for children has had negative consequences for your occupational career?" Women's answers included five options. Only the first four categories of responses were included in the analysis, and they were merged into two broader categories (category 1 represents agreement with the statement and category 0 disagreement), so that the variable could be used as dependent dichotomous variable in a binary logistic regression model.

The subjective nature of the dependent variable allows for looking at the issue of career breaks from the point of view of concerned individuals and completes the picture drawn by the objective figures (Pascall and Manning 2000)^{xii}.

It needs to be kept in mind that the formulation of the question which includes all kinds of possible interruptions of career does not allow to discern between women who were inactive in the labour market (i.e. officially out of the labour market) and those who took maternity or parental leave (i.e. officially still employed). The way in which the question was asked mixes the two, even if interrupting a career by taking parental leave where return to the previous job is guaranteed by law may have less negative consequences for woman's further career than a break caused by formal withdrawal from the labour market where there is no assurance regarding labour market re-entry.

3.2. Key explanatory variable - transition

To capture the effect of the political transition, a new variable was constructed using the birth years of the children of women in the analysis. Thus, I distinguish between women who had all their children prior to 1989 and women who had at least one child in the period after 1989. This dichotomization assumes that mothers who gave birth to their children during the socialist era were directly exposed to the existing gender regime reality which was very different from the conditions after 1989. Czech women who took career breaks due to childcare during either of those periods can formulate their opinions regarding the consequences of such breaks based on their personal experience with the existing system/regime.

Using the transition variable as defined above, one has to keep in mind that it is not possible to clearly identify whether the effect of the transition variable on the dependent variable should be attributed to the period during which women had their youngest child (period effect: difference between socialist and post-socialist era) or to the age of surveyed women (generation or age effect: difference between younger and older women). The data used in this paper reveal that there is a strong and statistically significant association between age of women in the analysis and whether their children were born under socialism or not. Not surprisingly, the younger the woman, the more likely she is to have given birth after 1989. Given this strong correlation between the age and the transition variable, age at the time of childbirth is not included in regression models as a control variable.

3.3. Control variables

To arrive at a more precise estimate of the effect of the transition I use a set of control variables in the estimated logistic models. The control variables were derived from the available literature and can be divided into three groups (see Annex for more information on control variables):

1. socio-demographic factors (marital status, number of children),
2. factors related to human capital and the respondent's position in the labour market (educational achievement, duration of career break, labour market status, supervising position in current or last employment, type of work contract in current or last employment, experience with unemployment longer than three months, experience with part-time work),
3. factors related to individuals' attitudes (to what extent a woman should restrict her participation in the labour market for family's sake).

The main shortcoming of the analysis is that some of the control variables refer to the situation of the respondent at the time of the interview, rather than to the time of the career interruption. Thus, variables such as current marital status, supervisory position in current or last employment, and type of work contract in current or last employment are only proxies (or better best guesses) for missing information on marital status and position in the labour market soon after career breaks due to childcare.

The European Commission's Report on equality between women and men (2008) indicates that the female employment rate drops as the number of children per woman rises. The more children a woman has, the more likely it is that she will interrupt her career, and the longer she will stay out of the labour market.

Another factor that plays a role in how respondents perceive the consequences of career breaks due to childcare is their marital status. Single parents, i.e. divorced women, widows, and separated or single mothers, cannot rely on their partners for either breadwinning or childcare (Kilkey and Bradshaw 1996), while women with steady partners have less difficulties reconciling career and childbearing.

With regard to human capital, women with higher educational attainment tend to interrupt their career due to childcare for shorter periods in order to minimize losses concerning career opportunities and income (Chiplin and Sloane 1976). They are therefore less likely to feel restrictions or other negative consequences due to career. In the context of our analysis, one has to keep in mind that this general trend might be affected by the fact that after 1989 more educational opportunities have existed and a higher proportion of young people have obtained higher education (Hamplová 2003). This means that respondents who were born later tend to have achieved a higher level of education. Thus, women who had children after 1989 are significantly more likely to have obtained higher secondary and university education than women who gave birth prior to 1989.

Desai and Waite (1991) claim that the longer women have been active in the labour market and the higher their work position and income potential is, the earlier they return to work after the break caused by childbearing. Thus, to control for position and experience in the labour market in the present study, I use the following variables: main type of labour market activity, supervising position in current or previous job, type of contract in current or previous job, experience with part-time work due to childcare, and experience with unemployment lasting at least three months. Special attention should be paid to unemployment experience. Since official unemployment appeared only after 1989 and it affected most mainly women in reproductive age, thus women who gave birth after 1989 are much more likely to have unemployment experience.

When discussing the impacts of career breaks due to childcare on mothers' further careers, it is necessary to consider the duration of these breaks. There are studies that prove that the longer a person stays out of the labour market, the more competences and opportunities he or she loses, and consequently the more difficult it becomes to reenter the labour market (Ruhm 1998, Math and Meilland 2004). As mentioned earlier, women who had their children after 1989 tend to withdraw from the labour market due to childcare for longer periods than women who gave birth under socialism. Thus, the duration of career breaks and the transition are interrelated.

Various studies confirm that both the way women perceive their roles and position in society and their family-career preferences affect their position in the labour market (Hakim 2002, Kangas and Rostgaard 2007, Crompton and Lyonette 2005), and therefore might influence their

perceptions of the consequences of career breaks due to family responsibilities^{xiii}. In general, younger women tend to value work and their careers more than do their older counterparts. However, bivariate analyses based on the ESS sample of Czech mothers show that this general trend does not apply for mothers who have at least once in their lives interrupted their career to take care of children (thus the sample used in the below analyses). There is no significant association between the period when women had children (i.e. whether women had children before or after the transition) and family attitudes^{xiv}.

From the position of mothers in the labour market prior to and after the fall of the socialist regime, as described above, and from the pieces of information concerning variables in our regression models, we expect that the effect of the transition can be moderated by categories of the control variables^{xv}, such as experience with unemployment (women who had children after the fall of the socialist regime are much more likely to be exposed to the risk of unemployment), duration of career breaks (mothers who had their last child after 1989 are more likely to interrupt their participation in the labour market for longer periods compared to their older counterparts), and education (younger women, i.e. mothers of children who were born after 1989, exhibit higher educational attainment than mothers whose children were born earlier).

Thus, the interaction, i.e. product terms of multiplication of the transition variable and the above-mentioned variables, will be added to the second model, which takes into account the transition and all control variables.

4. Analyses

After having a brief look at the outcome of our analysis we can see that 14% of Czech women report that interruptions in their participation in the labour market due to childcare had negative consequences for their further career.^{xvi} A more detailed analysis reveals that 25 % of women who had at least one child after 1989 state that career interruptions due to childcare had negative consequences for their further career, compared with only 9 % of women who interrupted their career prior to the fall of socialism (Chi-square=39.542, df = 1, p = 0.000). Thus, when not controlling for any other variables there is a significant association between the period during which women experienced their last career break due to childrearing and their evaluation of the consequences of this career break. The post-1989 era seems to bring more obstacles to women who interrupt their career because of childbearing.

Let us now look at the outcomes of the logistic analysis presented in the table below. In the first step we run a base model including all control variables. The results of this model can be found in the third column of table 2. This model explains the 18 % of variance of the dependent variable. In the second step we introduced the transition variable into the model. By adding the transition variable the explained variance increases by 1.4 %. Controlling for other factors, the results of this analysis clearly show that women who had at least one child after 1989 are more likely to see the career break in a negative light than those who had children before 1989.

There are two possible explanations for this significant period effect. The first is that careers matter more and more to later generations of women in all developed countries, who necessarily also decreasingly favour the traditional division of family roles. Women who had children after 1989 (i.e. younger women) see the time spent out of the labour market as risky and disadvantageous to their careers. The second possible explanation, more plausible in the context of the Czech Republic, is that social changes, such as the repeal of many measures of the

welfare state, including the closing down of many childcare facilities, a higher risk of unemployment, and uncertainty in the labour market, make mothers perceive interruptions in their careers more negatively.

As noted in the subchapter dealing with control variables, it is necessary to make certain that the transition variable does not interact with unemployment experience, duration of career break/s, education, and attitudes toward work-family reconciliation. To conduct these tests, an interaction variable between different levels of the transition variable and different categories of the listed variables were constructed the second model has not been identified. The outcome of this analysis revealed that the interaction effects are not significant, which means that the effect of transition is rather uniform across categories of education, duration of career breaks, experience with unemployment, and attitudes toward reconciliation of family and paid labour.

Table 2: Binary logistic regressions - factors affecting perceptions of the labour market interruptions due to childcare on mother's career.

Independent variables	Categories of independent variables	Base model , Exp (Beta) Odds Ratios	Model 2, Exp (Beta) Odds Ratios
Experience with part-time work due to childcare	No (reference)		
	Yes	1.199	1.219
Educational attainment	Basic (reference)		
	Lower secondary	1.459	1.404
	Higher secondary	2.436*	2.232*
	University	2.751*	2.425*
Marital status	Married (reference)		
	Other	2.027**	2.253***
Number of children	1 (reference)		
	2	0.911	0.964
	3 and more	1.062	1.203
Time spent providing full-time childcare	Less than 1 year		
	1 to 2 years	0.623	0.778
	2 to 4 years	0.269***	0.313**
	4 or more years (reference)	0.453**	0.498*
Main type of activity	Employed (reference)		
	Unemployed	0.598	0.547
	Retired	0.497*	0.643
	Inactive due to family responsibilities	1.987**	1.646
	Other (studying, handicapped...)	4.125*	4.692*
Supervising position in current or previous employment	Yes		
	No (reference)	1.275	1.078
Experience with unemployment lasting at least 3 months	Yes (reference)		
	No	1.700*	1.560
Type of contract in current or previous employment	Indeterminate (reference)		
	Fixed	1.760*	1.688*
A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family	Agree (RK)		
	Neither, nor	0.311***	0.290***
	Disagree	1.085	1.085
At least one child born in or after 1989	Children prior 1989 (reference)		
	At least one child after 1989		2.112***
Cox and Snell R Square		0.102	0.111
Nagelkerke R Square		0.180	0.194
- 2 Log likelihood		586.4	578.2
Hosmer and Lemeshow Model Fit Test		Sig. 0.987	Sig. 0.142

Source: ESS 2004, N=805, weight applied

* significance level 0.05, ** significance level 0.01, *** significance level 0.001

Interpretation of Exp (B): odds ratios represent how many times more/less likely it is for a particular category of an independent variable to report negative experiences on career breaks compared to the reference category.

Model characteristics: Chi-squares are statistically significant (the data-based model explains the dependent variable better than the constant-based model), the Hosmer and Lemeshow test is not significant, meaning that model data and real data do not differ.

5. Conclusions

The main purpose of this article was to analyze the impact of employment breaks due to childcare on the further careers of mothers in the Czech Republic. We have analyzed the subjective perception of the impacts in two steps. First, we looked at how Czech women perceive the impacts of career breaks in comparison with how women in certain other European countries perceive such impacts. Second, we tested different hypotheses on how various socio-economic factors influence women's perceptions of the impacts of a career break for childcare.

ESS data for 2004 showed that a large proportion of Czech women interrupt their careers for childcare. Only 2 % respondents had never interrupted their careers due to childcare. The rest of women (98 %) have experience with career breaks (including maternity and parental and formal inactivity in the labour market). The Czech Republic is thus among the EU25 countries with the highest rate of female labour market withdrawals due to childcare. Given the relatively low female inactivity rates, we can infer that the most frequent reason for labour market interruption is maternity or parental leave. A large proportion of Czech mothers use the state-guaranteed maternity and parental leave.

Czech women interrupt their careers for childcare mostly for two to ten years. Of course, the length of the break depends on the number of children a woman has. Further analyses have revealed that mothers of one child most frequently interrupt their careers for two to four years; mothers of two or more children mostly for four to ten years. This confirms that the length of career breaks corresponds roughly to the length of standard parental leave multiplied by the number of children. When looking at the relationship between the periods when the youngest child was born and the duration of career interruptions due to childcare it becomes evident that these two phenomena are closely associated. Women who gave birth after 1989 take significantly longer career breaks than women who had their children during socialism. This holds even if controlled for the number of children.

If we look at the impacts of career breaks, we see that women in the Czech Republic who interrupted their participation in the labour market due to childcare are in general unaware of its negative consequences for their further career path (86 %). 14 % women stated that their work inactivity had had a negative impact for their further career. Compared to other European Union countries (including other post-socialist countries) this percentage is low. One possible explanation is that Czech women do not anticipate negative consequences of work career breaks since the main reason for the interruption is predominantly maternity or parental leave (Hamplová 2008), for which the risk of negative consequences upon re-entering the labour market is smaller compared to formal work inactivity.

Despite the fact that 86% of surveyed women expect no negative consequences which cast a rather positive light on the Czech Republic, we have decided to examine whether having a child after the fall of the socialist regime had an impact on women's perceptions of career break consequences. The outcomes of our analyses show that women who have had at least one child after 1989 are more likely to perceive negative consequences of career break for childcare than women who had children prior to 1989. This holds even if we control for other socio-demographic and labour market characteristics.

Annex

Table 3: Description of independent variables

	Percentages
Transition:	
all children born before 1989	67.7
at least one child born after 1989	32.1
Number of children:	
1 child	31.1
2 children	46.8
3 or more children	22.1
Duration of career interruption:	
less than 1 year	14.3
1-2 years	14.2
2- 4 years	29.4
4-10years	29.7
More than10 years	11.5
Education:	
upper secondary	16.9
up to lower secondary or basic	37.3
postsecondary	35.9
missing values	9.8
Experience with unemployment of more than 3 months:	
no	75.2
yes	23.7
missing	1.1
Supervisory position in current or previous employment:	
yes	13.8
no	86.2
missing values	2.2
A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family:	
agree	57.6
neither, nor	21.1
disagree	19.5
missing values	1.8
Part-time work due to childcare:	
no time spent due to childcare	70.7
at least some time spent working part-time due to child care	18.4
missing values	10.9
Type of contract in current or previous employment:	
indeterminate	71.1
fixed	16.1
missing	12.9
Marital status:	
married	66.0
not married	33.6
missing	0.4

Source: ESS 2004, N=1147, weight applied

Notes

ⁱ Mainly in Zhelyazkova and Valentová (2009)

ⁱⁱ In absence of official unemployment, so called hidden unemployment evolved in the socialist economies. It can be defined as the “proportion of employees who were not at the work place during working hours, those who were at the work place but were not working and those who’s work activity added no value to the economic performance of the country” (Možný 1994: 464-465). That author estimates that in the Czech Republic the hidden unemployment accounted for 25-30 % of the labour force.

ⁱⁱⁱ Despite the above mentioned similarities, post-socialist countries differ with respect to the gravity of consequences of the labour market re-structuralization on women’s employment, i.e. female unemployment rates and inactivity rates of mothers of pre-school children (Zhelyazkova and Valentova 2009). Divergence is observed as well at the level of welfare state efforts to reconcile family and work life (Szeleva and Polakowski 2008).

^{iv} The Czech Republic belongs to a group of countries with low part-time employment rates. Part-time employment accounts for approximately 5 % of total female employment, a figure that has not changed noticeably over the past two decades, although many women with children would welcome the possibility to reduce their working hours (Hamplová 2003).

^v It needs to be said that EUROSTAT assumes that women taking parental leave for longer than 3 months are automatically categorized as long-term out of work and therefore inactive in the labor market. This definition prevents us from distinguishing between the “real” inactivity, i.e. status of being fully out of the labor market without guaranteed re-entry and labor market interruption due to parental leave. http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/LFS_MAIN/LFSUserguide/EULFS_UserGuide_2008_Annex.pdf

^{vi} Including children both currently living and not living in the household.

^{vii} All variables included in the model are specified in the following subchapters.

^{viii} This technique allows to estimate the odds of “negative perception of breaks” against “non-negative one” while all relevant individual characteristics can be included at the same time in the analysis, so that the direct effects of specific characteristics can be investigated while confounding factors are controlled for.

^{ix} Women who had their last child prior to 1989 experienced their career breaks under the socialist regime, while women who gave birth to their youngest child after 1989 have interrupted their career under dramatically different circumstances.

^x Design weight (DWEIGHT) corrects for different probabilities of selection by making the sample more representative of a true sample of individuals in the country.

^{xi} Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that the sample may have become biased, as it is possible that the women who did not spend any time caring for children after birth were not a random group, but rather differed systematically from the rest, for example, by the level of their work-family values. Furthermore, given a sudden and alarmingly steep decline in fertility rates after 1989 (Rostgaard 2004), it is also possible that the women who gave birth after the fall of the socialist regime make up a systematically different group than the ones who chose not to have children and were thus not included in our study.

^{xii} For example, taking only the question of whether a woman re-enters the workforce after having children may not be a good indicator of the extent to which it is possible to reconcile work and family, as the economic necessity is often mentioned as a reason for high female employment rates in post-socialist countries (Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006). Therefore many women, although employed, may actually not have the jobs corresponding to their aspirations and qualifications. Nor would other objective indicators of career promotion after having a child provide a complete picture, for they do not take into account the fact that not all women aspire to climb up the professional ladder. Thus, basing an analysis on such variables may lead to misleading conclusions concerning negative consequences of childcare on the further careers of mothers (Lang 2008). Furthermore, as a self-reported and also retrospective measure, the variable may be influenced by woman’s current situation at the moment of the survey (Veerhoven 2002) and distorted memory.

^{xiii} A similar argument is used in studies on job satisfaction. Clark (1997), for example, argues that job satisfaction depends on women’s expectations which may come from observation of others and one’s own experience in the past.

^{xiv} This finding seems to be in contradiction to the evidence presented earlier showing that work-family attitudes are significantly correlated with age. The explanation of this discrepancy is rather straightforward. When the association is measured across the whole female population in the Czech Republic, the association between age and attitudes

exists. When only mothers are considered, that relationship weakens significantly. However, these findings are based on analysis conducted at the bivariate level and might change in the context of logistic regression.

^{xv} This means that the transition variable may interact with some of the control variables.

^{xvi} The above results should be read with caution. Even though one in six Czech mothers think that there are some disadvantages connected with career break for childcare, they perceive their situation relatively well compared to women in other European countries.

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More than10 years	11.5
Education:	
upper secondary	16.9
up to lower secondary or basic	37.3
postsecondary	35.9
missing values	9.8
Experience with unemployment of more than 3 months:	
no	75.2
yes	23.7
missing	1.1
Supervisory position in current or previous employment:	
yes	13.8
no	86.2
missing values	2.2
A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family:	
agree	57.6
neither, nor	21.1
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Part-time work due to childcare:	
no time spent due to childcare	70.7
at least some time spent working part-time due to child care	18.4
missing values	10.9
Type of contract in current or previous employment:	
indeterminate	71.1
fixed	16.1
missing	12.9

Marital status:	
married	66.0
not married	33.6
missing	0.4

Source: ESS 2004, N=1147, weight applied



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