

Call for Papers

Call 8

Family and Fertility

Demographic processes and their impact on the population structure have always been subjects of politico-economic interest (cf. Kreyenfeld 2016, p. 4). For this reason, demographic change has been a topic of public discussion for many years, both on the national and international level.

Continuously low birth rates in Europe are the key indicator (example: total fertility rate 2014: 1.58 live births per woman according to Eurostat). For many years now, birth rates have been below the replacement level for western industrialised countries of 2.1 children per woman. This leads to changes of population figures and of the relations among age groups within the population. Concrete effects are, for instance, the increased ageing of the population in Europe and a decline of the age group of potentially working persons. Besides, immigration has become an essential factor of population development.

However, this development differs among European countries, because the international comparison shows that while fertility rates are generally below replacement level, they still vary. The different effects of the welfare regimes are evident, with the welfare producers – state, market and family – playing roles of various importance (cf. Schleutker 2014, p. 159).

An empirical value in the area of tension between prognostic indicator and realised number of births is the wish to have children“. It changes depending on the environment and living situation, to be more or less fulfilled by the end of the fertile years (cf. Neuwirth 2011, p. 9).

Demographic change goes along with a change of structures and the view of family. Numerically, this manifests itself in low birth and marriage rates and high divorce numbers. These are the expression of changed norms and values in the transition to parenthood, the design of family life and traditions and attitudes relevant to family and reproduction.

References

- Kreyenfeld, Michaela et al. (2016): Gegenstandsbereich der Bevölkerungssoziologie. In: Yasemin Niephaus et al. (Hg.): Handbuch Bevölkerungssoziologie. 2016. s.l.: Springer VS (Springer NachschlageWissen), S. 3–18.
- Schleutker, Elina (2014): Fertilität, Familienpolitik und Wohlfahrtsregime. In: Comparative Population Studies, 39/1. S. 157–194.
- Neuwirth, Norbert et al. (2011): Der Kinderwunsch in Österreich. Umfang, Struktur und wesentliche Determinanten. Eine Analyse anhand des Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). Wien (ÖIF-Forschungsbericht, 5).