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Gender roles and values of children: Childless Couples in East and West Germany

Ursula Henz

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Abstract

Presuming that not just economic circumstances but also ideational factors influence fertility decisions, the paper examines the values of children of East and West-German childless men and women living with a partner. Based on the survey about 'Change and Development of Family Life Forms', a confirmatory factor analysis identifies an affective, a utility and a cost dimension of the values of children, and for West-German women an additional dimension of opportunity costs. Although East and West-German men and women differed in their values of children, hypotheses about the higher affective value of children for East Germans compared to West Germans or for women compared to men are not supported for the specific sample. The values of children varied with respondent's labour-market position and the division of household work. An analysis of panel data for West Germany shows that for women, first-birth rates depended on the value of children and on the gender roles in the home.

Author's affiliation

[Ursula Henz](#)

London School of Economics, United Kingdom

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