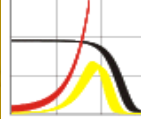




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Robert Bosch Stiftung

## SEMINAR ON FERTILITY AND PUBLIC POLICIES IN LOW FERTILITY COUNTRIES

Held at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain, 7-8 July 2008

### Short Summary

The seminar was organized by the IUSSP Scientific Panel on *Policies in the Context of Low Fertility*, in collaboration with the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona, Spain) and the Max-Planck Institute for Demographic Research (Rostock, Germany). Several institutions provided funding for the meeting: Robert Bosch Foundation, the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain, and Pompeu Fabra University. The seminar brought together 42 eminent researchers in the field of demography, economy, sociology, political science, anthropology, and statistics.

The main goal of the seminar was to gain a deeper understanding of the links between low fertility ( $TFR < 2$ ) and policies by exploring their relationship from an interdisciplinary and global perspective. The 27 papers presented at the seminar addressed issues that included theoretical approaches to the nexus of low fertility, culture, economics, and politics, the assessment of fertility development and its individual and collective consequences, the influence of social institutions such as family systems and gender inequalities on fertility development, the role of contextual factors in shaping fertility outcome, and the impact of policies on fertility. The presentations included country-specific case studies as well as international comparisons and covered countries with very different socio-economic and political contexts in different regions of the world. The seminar revealed surprising similarities and differences in the linkages between low fertility and policies across countries and regions. It demonstrated the need for further comparative research with a global perspective in order to further our understanding of how fertility development, contextual factors, and policies are intertwined.

Seminar programme, papers, and report are available at the IUSSP website.

## Summary of the Sessions

### Session 1. Fertility costs

Chair: Gerda Neyer

Discussant: Baochang Gu

Low fertility has so far been mainly discussed in the European context and is regarded as unique to Europe. This session took a global approach by addressing the situation in Asia (China, South Korea), the Middle East (Iran), and Europe (Spain and The Netherlands). The papers illustrated the variety of contexts in which low fertility occurs and demonstrated the intricate relationship between fertility and policies. A survey by Zhenzhen Zheng on childbearing costs in the province of Jiangsu revealed that if the strict Chinese fertility policy were relaxed and people had the option of having two children, only a tiny minority would in fact have two children. In-depth accounts of the cases of Iran by Amir Mehryar and Shirin Ahmad-Nia and of South Korea by Minja Kim Choe and Nam-Hoon Cho showed that societies and governments tend to recognize and respond to a situation of low fertility slowly and unwillingly. Cecile Wetzels' study of the timing of first birth in two European countries elucidated that employment position and gender equality work differently for men and women and across countries. The session underlined that our understanding of the global trend toward below replacement fertility and of the impact of policies on childbearing behavior is still very limited.

### Session 2. Theoretical perspectives

Chair: Minja Kim Choe

Discussant: Pau Baizán

This session explored some theoretical dimensions of the discourse on low fertility and policies. Gøsta Esping-Andersen examined the role of fathers in fertility decisions by looking at the micro-level effects of preferences, productivities, and relative power on the distribution of housework and childcare within the couple. Comparing Spain and Denmark, he showed that the relative power of women in the couple is (still) the main engine of gender equity in family life. Paul Demeny examined ostensibly fertility-enhancing policies as found in countries with below-replacement fertility. In the main the clearly popular and ideologically well underpinned thrust of these social policies is to make childbearing and female labor-force participation compatible. Yet, the unintended result, the paper argues, is to solidify and even lock-in an eventual completed cohort fertility pattern dominated by parities 2, 1, and 0, with higher parities increasingly evanescent in frequency. According to the author, family policy should be reconfigured to support large families and acknowledge childrearing as equivalent to market work in social security regulations. John MacInnes critically reviewed the works of Kingsley Davis and Alva Myrdal, both of which addressed the issue of low fertility from a global and gender perspective. Viewing their work from today's perspective MacInnes suggested we pay more attention to the assumptions that lie behind applying the term 'low' to any given fertility rate. He furthermore drew attention to the ambiguity of any state intervention into childbearing decisions and the potentially uneven outcome of any such intervention.

### Session 3. Family systems

Chair: Pau Baizán

Discussant: Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna

The papers presented in this session investigated fertility in East Asian and European societies with strong family ties and familistic norms. Giuseppe Gabrielli and Minja Kim Choe compared the role of the proximity of the family of origin in Korean and Italian couples. Preliminary results show that the co-residence of parents has a positive effect on childbearing. Somewhat similar results were obtained by Francesco Billari and Alessandro Rosina. Their paper focused on the residential proximity and the attitudes of wife's mother and her mother in law in Italy. Remarkably, her and his' family have completely different impacts in fertility decisions. Their findings suggest paying closer attention to the role of kin in childbearing issues, in particular in countries where family ties are strong and state support for childrearing mothers is weak. Kim Doo-Sub investigated the effect of being a foreign wife on the level and tempo of fertility. He showed that social disadvantages and insecurities often associated with minority group status lead to lower fertility. Foreign wives in Korea and Taiwan tend to have fewer children compared to native wives, and their intervals between the timing of marriage and first birth are longer than those of native wives. His findings call for a closer exploration of links between international mobility, social status of immigrants, and fertility development.

### Session 4. Context characteristics

Chair: Cecile Wetzels

Discussant: Alessandro Rosina

The purpose of the papers presented in this session was to better understand the role of contextual dimensions on fertility outcomes. Questions addressed were whether pronatalist measures interact with territorial specificities (Australia) and which role structural and cultural variables (Italy, Germany) and the availability of childcare (Spain) play in childbearing decisions. The papers focusing on Australia (Nick Parr), Italy (Ester Lucia Rizzi et al.), and Spain (Pau Baizán) revealed that the recent (small) fertility increase has been larger in areas, a) which previously had the lowest fertility rate, b) which already had late age patterns of fertility, c) which showed better economic performances. However, so far the increase in fertility among women above age 30 has been slow in all countries and has not reversed cohort fertility decline. Comparing France and Germany, two countries with very different family-policy histories, Anne Salles showed that family policies influence women's and men's preferences for familial or institutional childcare and thus establish quite different options and opinions regarding childbearing and childrearing. The papers made clear that while policies seem to be able to shape attitudes towards childbearing behaviour, the effects of such policies may vary considerably on a sub-national level, among women and men, and among different social groups.

### Session 5. Policy evaluation

Chair: Baochang Gu

Discussant: Minja Kim Choe

This session focused on an assessment of the fertility effects of recently introduced policies aimed at increasing fertility in Australia, Italy and Spain. Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna, Giovanna Boccuzzo, and Marcantonio Caltabiano found a significant effect of financial incentives on fertility in an Italian region, but the monetary benefit mainly altered the childbearing behavior of low educated (low income) women with two and more children. Since the number of women with several children is small, the overall effect of the policy is narrow. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the increase in the birth rate reflects a tempo effect only. Peter McDonald and Ann Evans studied the impact of a substantial raise in a range of family benefits in Australia since 2005. They found that the increase in Total Fertility Rate after 2001 could be predicted, implying that the impact of the policy amendments was small or insignificant, or sustained mainly the underlying demographic trends. However, while the introduced baby bonus did not directly affect fertility, it fostered public debate about fertility delay and family matters, reflecting the desire for increased support to families in society.

Ghazala Azmat and Libertad González analyzed the effects of a recent Spanish tax reform, which aims at increasing fertility and women's labor force participation. It consists of a tax credit for working mothers of young children and of sizable increases in the household child deduction. Azmat and González noted that there is a trade-off in trying to pursue both goals. Although the reform increased both fertility and female labor-force participation, the impact was very heterogeneous across different groups of women. Disentangling the policy components and comparing them to earlier reforms they found that policies aiming at employment are more successful than those aimed at increasing fertility, and that policies aimed at participation can be seriously dampened by policies aimed at fertility. Compared across countries and as regards the transferability of policies, the results of these papers stress the need to consider the context of policy measures and their potentially different effects in different institutional, cultural, or economic environments.

### Session 6. Family policies

Chair: María José González

Discussant: Gerda Neyer

This session dealt with policies affecting the interplay between workplace and family. As research presented in Session 5 indicated, in highly industrialized countries, cash benefits to families seem to have only limited overall effects on fertility. Their effects seem to be tied to the degree to which they alleviate financial burdens on families. The current emphasis in industrialized countries is on policies which aim at reconciling work and care. Starting from the fact that fertility rates are higher in countries with high female labor-force participation, Olivier Thévenon showed that it is important to investigate policy packages, differentiate between the components of policy packages (in-kind, cash, time) and include employers' policies as well. Countries with mixed packages of support seem to fare better as regards fertility. This finding was corroborated by Mare Ainsaar's presentation. She argued that while low fertility increases the pronatalist rhetoric, mixed policy packages aimed at child support rather than at fertility increase seem to be relevant in childbearing decisions. Marit Rønsen and Kari Skrede investigated the impact of the Nordic welfare-state policies on fertility and

women's and men's entry into parenthood. The Nordic countries impress through their good recuperation of fertility at the cohort level. Using Norway as an example, Rønsen and Skrede argued that this may be explained by family friendly policies, a gender segregated labor market, and the tendency of women with strong preferences for children to seek occupations in female dominated professions in the public sector. However, this questions the compatibility of high fertility with gender equity, as does the selective entry into fatherhood among men. While a policy aimed at gender equity seems to be a pre-requisite for high fertility, attention needs to be paid to the occupational and other social issues which may undermine equality and thus perhaps affect fertility levels in the future.

### Session 7. Employment policies and wellbeing

Chair: Olivier Thévenon

Discussant: John MacInnes

Gender equality, employment and family policies and their effect on childbearing were at the core of this session. Gayle Kaufman's and Eva Bernhard's study of employers' policies, job characteristics and fertility in Sweden revealed that the partner's job characteristics have a strong impact on fertility, but the effects are opposite according to gender. Men attach importance to partner's ability to take leave and/or work part-time, while women are concerned with the partner's ability to provide. Focusing on Poland, Joanna Mishtal's presentation dealt with the consequences of postsocialist neoliberal restructuring on fertility. Her study pointed to the critical role of gendered employment discrimination directed against pregnant women (and those who might get pregnant) and women with small children in childbearing decision-making. Brienna Perelli-Harris and Theodor Gerber looked at how the uptake of maternity leave in Russia had changed over time and whether it helped women combine employment and fertility. The results show that those who took maternity leave were less likely to lose their jobs, and at the same time, their risk for changing jobs was twice as high as for those who continued their employment or were self-employed. Overall, there seems to be a positive effect of maternity leave on women's attachment to the labor force and on fertility. However, the question of selection into taking maternity leave still remains.

### Session 8. Gender inequalities

Chair: Gayle Kaufman

Discussant: Ghazala Azmat

The similar pattern of gender and fertility regimes in Europe suggests a linkage between the two. Studies on the micro-level presented in this seminar evoke a more ambiguous picture. Letizia Mencarini and her co-authors investigated the impact of gender systems on fertility in two countries with different gender regimes, Italy and the Netherlands. They find that there is no clear-cut answer as to the impact of equality or inequality on fertility. However, welfare state setup and family policies influence both, creating different patterns of constraint and conflict for women in different countries. Maria Stanfors and Martin Dribe analyzed fertility of high achieving dual earning couples in Sweden over the past 15 years. Their study confirms the higher fertility of such couples, and the importance of family-work policies. Status inequalities between the partners do not lead to different fertility outcomes when compared to couples with status equality (except for age). Harriet Presser explored the effects of early and late childbearing on individual advancement in education, changes in marital status and employment status in Hungary. She found that the relationship between childbearing and socio-demographic change is conditional on age and gender, with

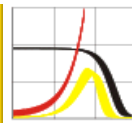
differences by parental status. Therefore, policies should consider relevance of age, gender, and parity. Margharita Perra compared gender systems in Italy and Japan, two countries with lowest-low fertility and strong familialism. She concludes that on the one hand the strong family ties contribute to maintain patriarchal gender systems in the households that influence the present demographic trends and that on the other hand the patriarchal gender systems support strong family ties. The relationship between these systems influences the institutional assets, the welfare state and family policies, which in turn underpin gender systems and familialism. As regards family policies, Perra points out that despite the similarities between Japan and Italy in demographic trends and family and gender systems, both countries differ markedly in their social values and orientations. This implies that the effects of the same policies could be different in Japan and Italy.

#### Outlook:

This seminar was the first to investigate and discuss the linkage between low fertility and policies from a global perspective. The theoretical and empirical studies presented made clear that there is a fine balance between fertility development and policies. Scientists are still far from understanding the linkages between policy regimes, individual policies, social and economic conditions, and fertility, on the macro- as well as on the micro-level. But this seminar brought to the fore some aspects of the interlinkages which seem to be promising to pursue in the future. Among them are: the role of welfare-state configurations and cultural underpinnings in determining long-term developments of fertility; the interaction of policies with other social systems, such as gender and the family; the effects of policies on different social groups and in different social, economic, and national contexts. As this seminar showed, to gain better insight into the links between fertility and family policies, research needs to combine comparative with single-country studies. Only this approach will allow researchers to assess the impact of policies on fertility in a transnational context.



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Robert Bosch Stiftung

## SEMINAR ON FERTILITY AND PUBLIC POLICIES IN LOW FERTILITY COUNTRIES

Organized by the IUSSP Scientific Panel on Policies in the Context of Low Fertility

Held at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain, 7-8 July 2008

### Program

#### Monday, 7 July 2008

- 8:30 - 9:00 Registration
- 9:00 - 9:10 Welcoming address and organizational issues

#### Session 1. **Fertility costs**

Chairperson: Gerda Neyer

Discussant: Baochang Gu

- 9:10 - 9:30 Zheng Zhenzhen, *The cost of childbearing from women's perspective*
- 9:30 - 9:50 Minja Kim Choe and Nam-Hoon Cho, *Fertility enhancing population policy in South Korea: Evolution and prospects of success*
- 9:50 - 10:10 Amir Mehryar and Shirin Ahmad-Nia, *Below replacement fertility in Iran: Evidence and policy implications*
- 10:10 - 10:30 Cecile Wetzels, *Supplements to the economics of first birth timing: A comparison of married men and women in the Netherlands and Spain using a new country comparative data source.*
- 10:30 - 11:00 Discussion
- 11:00 - 11:25 Coffee break

#### Session 2. **Theoretical perspectives**

Chairperson: Minja Kim Choe

Discussant: Pau Baizán

- 11:25 - 11:45 Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Fathers still matter*
- 11:45 - 12:05 Paul Demeny, *Public policies enhancing fertility: What does not work and what might work*
- 12:05 - 12:25 John Maclnnes, *Theorising causal processes in fertility decline*
- 12:25 - 13:00 Discussion
- 13:00 - 14:15 Lunch (UPF Cafeteria)

### Session 3. Family systems

Chairperson: Pau Baizán

Discussant: Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna

- 14:15 - 14:35 Giuseppe Gabrielli and Minja Kim Choe, *Delay of parenthood in the context of tight family system: A comparison of two very faraway countries*
- 14:35 - 14:55 Francesco C. Billari & Alessandro Rosina, *Work and fertility decisions in a familialistic and low compatibility setting*
- 15:55 - 16:15 Kim Doo-Sub, *Status of foreign wife and fertility: A comparative analysis of Korean and Taiwanese data*
- 16:15 - 16:45 Discussion
- 16:45 - 17:10 Coffee break

### Session 4. Context characteristics

Chairperson : Cecile Wetzels

Discussant:Alessandro Rosina

- 17:10 - 17:30 Ester Lucia Rizzi, Michael J. White , Giuseppe Gabrielli, Laura Bernardi, David I. Kertzer, Sabrina Perra. *Regional context and fertility in contemporary Italy*
- 17:30 - 17:50 Pau Baizán, *Regional daycare availability and fertility decisions in Spain*
- 17:50 - 18:10 Anne Salles, *Are different perceptions towards childcare in France and East and West Germany the reflection of individuals' positions towards gender equity or are they due to the different histories of family policies characterizing these countries?*
- 18:10 - 18:30 Nick Parr, *The socioeconomic context and spatial distribution of Australia's early twenty-first century fertility increase*
- 18:30 - 19:00 Discussion
- 20:30 Dinner, *Restaurante Marina Moncho's C/Marina 19-21 08005 Barcelona*



## Tuesday, 8 July 2008

### Session 5. Policy evaluation

Chairperson: Baochang Gu

Discussant: Minja Kim Choe

- 9:00 - 9:20 Gianpiero Dalla Zuanna, *The impact of bonus at birth on reproductive behaviour in a lowest-low fertility context: Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy) in 1993-2003*
- 9:20 - 9:40 Peter McDonald & Ann Evans, *Policy and fertility: The case of Australia, 1996-2006*
- 9:40 - 10:00 Ghazala Azmat, *Targeting fertility and female participation*
- 10:00 - 10:30 Discussion
- 10:30 - 10:55 Coffee break

### Session 6. Family policies

Chairperson: María José González

Discussant: Gerda Neyer

- 10:55 - 11:15 Olivier Thévenon, *Are flexible workplace practices substitutes to public policy to support fertility in Europe?*
- 11:15 - 11:35 Ainsaar Mare, *Effectiveness of family policy on fertility*
- 11:35 - 11:55 Marit Rønsen & Kari Skrede. *Do public policies sustain fertility in the Nordic countries? Lessons from the past and questions for the future*
- 11:55 - 12:25 Discussion
- 12:25 - 14:30 Lunch (UPF Cafeteria)

### Session 7. Employment policies and wellbeing

Chairperson: Olivier Thévenon

Discussant: John MacInnes

- 14:30 - 14:50 Gayle Kaufman and Eva Bernhard, *Employer policies, job characteristics and fertility in Sweden*
- 14:50 - 15:10 Joanna Mishtal, *Understanding low fertility in Poland: Demographic consequences of postsocialist neoliberal restructuring*
- 15:10 - 15:30 Brienna Perelli-Harris, *Maternity leave in Russia 1985-2001: Policies and effects on childbearing and labor market transitions*
- 15:30 - 16:00 Discussion
- 16:00 - 16:25 Coffee break

### Session 8. Gender inequalities

Chairperson: Gayle Kaufman

Discussant: Ghazala Azmat

- 16:25 - 16:45 Letizia Mencarini, Maria Letizia Tanturri, Melinda Mills and Katia Begall, *Gender equity and low fertility in Italy and the Netherlands: Empirical evidence and policy implications*
- 16:45 - 17:05 Maria Stanfors & Martin Dribe, *Fertility of power couples in Sweden: The determinants of fertility among high-achieving women and men in post-war Sweden*
- 17:05 - 17:25 Harriet Presser, *Late childbearing and childlessness in Hungary: Do they improve women's and men's welfare?*
- 17:25 - 17:45 Margherita Sabrina Perra, *Gender system, fertility and welfare in Italy and Japan. A comparative perspective*
- 17:45 - 18:15 Discussion
- 18:15 - 18:40 Closing remarks and publication prospects

## International seminar on Fertility and Public Policies in Low Fertility Countries

*Barcelona, Spain, 7-8 July 2008*

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