

Fatherhood in a New Millennium

Session “Gendering Family Dynamics Network 1”

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Studies on fertility tend to be mainly concerned with examining women's behaviour. In the context of the current low birth-rate, this paper emphasises the fathers' contribution to the family. Starting with two German speaking countries in Central Europe (Austria, Germany) we intend a comparison with three further countries in Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe (Finland, Italy and Hungary) with different political and gender-specific background.

The “Population Policy Acceptance Survey” (PPA II), conducted in 13 European countries (2000-2003), provide representative data about the participation of fathers in child-care and child-raising tasks. We intend to investigate the opinions of respondents on questions of gender identity as well as their ideas about what functions fathers and mothers should take on in the family system. Further, we investigate whether women and men differ in their desired fertility, and what reasons are stated by men and women against having (more) children. Additionally to the descriptive comparative analyses we will test the hypothesis whether an active fatherhood in the partnership has an input on the labour force participation of women.

The various questions categories are checked with respect to certain sociodemographic variables. Within the comparative study an index will be formed that measures the liberal or progressive attitude of respondents. The hypothesis will be tested by means of regression analyses.

Concerning the results it is only partly possible to provide evidence for the theory that the “new father” is marching on. One of the major results of our study is that men tend to be less child- and family-friendly in their attitudes than we expected them to be.