

Call for Papers

Interrogating the Fertility Decline in Europe: Politics, Practices, and Representations of Changing Genders Orders

**International Workshop
of the Chair of Sociology/Social Inequality and Gender
with the Marie Jahoda Visiting Professor Program in International Gender Studies**

Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), 01-03 June 2016

Both social sciences and demographic research pay close attention to the phenomenon of the fertility decline, which followed the post-World War II baby boom since the mid-1960s in most of the so-called 'industrialised' countries. In the Western world, the late 1960s were not only the times when the student movements, the second wave of the women's movement as well as gay and lesbian movements arose and challenged the bourgeois family model, calling for more democracy in politics and everyday life. In the 1960s, women's participation in the labour market and in higher education also started to grow, the welfare state expanded and materialist values were added or replaced by post-materialist values. Furthermore, new contraceptives enabled people to separate sexuality from reproduction and sexuality itself was liberated. Society and demography changed considerably, influencing various lifestyles with or without children, hetero- and/or homosexuality and fertility. Global changes such as the breakdown of socialism in Eastern Europe with the Fall of the Berlin Wall and German Reunification strengthened the fertility decline in former socialist societies. However, low fertility is not only considered a 'problem' in post-socialist states but also in Southern Europe and in Germany. In contrast, Nordic countries and France for example are more or less successful in keeping their total fertility rates proportionally high.

Even though all these developments are allegedly gendered and have implications for gender relations, little explicit attention is paid to the links between changing gender orders and practices of human reproduction, particularly under conditions of increasing individualisation and globalisation in the so-called 'late modernity'. The international and interdisciplinary workshop aims at analysing the causes and consequences of the fertility decline in politics, social practices and cultural representations from a critical perspective which is informed by gender and intersectionality. Special attention is paid to East-West-comparisons since the 1960s.

We welcome offers of both theoretical and empirical academic papers, in particular those concerning the following themes and related questions:

- How do (national and transnational) politics and policies problematise the causes and consequences of the fertility decline? Which roles do pronatalism and/or immigration play in gender, family and population politics? How is pronatalism in the 'late modern

world' linked to nationalist or even postcolonial aspects? Are there any taboos concerning population politics and, if so, why? How does politics address the population in order to stop the fertility decline, and which policies are introduced to support this aim? And what about aspects of gender (in)equality, intersectionality and sexuality in these policies?

- Some feminists have argued that motherhood strengthens female oppression and gender inequality, whereas others have argued that motherhood can also stand for women's emancipation and freedom. What can we learn from social practices in different welfare societies about the contribution of motherhood to women's emancipation? In what respect does family formation and having a family play a role in men's identities and life plans? Which new lifestyles beyond the heterosexual gendered family model are emerging in times of the fertility decline? And what about (in)voluntary childlessness in late modern welfare societies, which are still orientated to the heteronormative model of gender and generational relationships?
- Which constructions of masculinities, femininities, gender and generational relations are sketched in politics, media (e.g. print and social media, internet) and pop culture with respect to the fertility decline? And what about aspects of gender (in)equality, intersectionality and sexuality in these constructions? What future vision(s) of gender and generational orders can be found in cultural representations? What possible ideas of new societal models to divide labour and to organize social reproduction are emerging in public and private spheres, and (how) are the introduced new institutional arrangements gendered?

Both junior and senior scientists are invited to submit an abstract (between 500 and 800 words on the topic, objectives and research questions plus, if applicable, the empirical background of the paper) in form of a word- or pdf-document. Abstracts should also include FULL contact details, including your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address. **Abstracts should be sent until February 8th, 2016 to Heike Kahlert (heike.kahlert@rub.de or <http://www.sowi.rub.de/sozsug/index.html.en>).** Deadline for notice of acceptance/rejection of the paper is March 8th, 2016.

The workshop is an opportunity to discuss 'work in progress' and research results as well as to form networks for further international collaborations. Therefore, admitted papers will be discussed in small working groups which will work together throughout the whole workshop. The papers (with a maximum length of 7.000 words) will be due on April 29th, 2016, and will be delivered to all participants of a working group. All participants are expected to read the papers in advance. During the workshop the authors will introduce their papers briefly, and each participant will comment on one paper. Selected papers will be published.

!Note: We apologise for the fact that no funding, fee waiver, travel or other bursaries can be offered for attending the workshop!