

VID Colloquium

A Meta-analysis of the Relationship between Women's Fertility Intentions and Level of Education

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The complex effect of education on fertility has been widely studied in the literature and is a topic of high relevance in research on reproductive behaviour. Fertility intentions are an important channel through which education affects fertility. However, the relationship between fertility intentions and education is not necessarily the same as the relationship between actual fertility and education. Empirical evidence indicates that more educated women do not intend to have fewer children than less educated women but they end up with fewer children and they revise downwards their intentions more often than their lower-educated counterparts. Aim of this study is to investigate the conditions under which a positive relationship between women's educational level and childbearing intentions is observed. Linkages between fertility intentions and education in the literature are examined by the use of a meta-analysis. The fertility intention gap between low and high educated women appears to be relatively higher in Canada, France and Italy as compared to Germany. Supply of pre-primary childcare and female labour force participation seem to explain some of the regional differences.

About the presenters

Maria Rita Testa is senior researcher at the Vienna Institute of Demography and at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. She is FWF-Stipendiatin (Elise-Richter-Stelle) since 2014. Her research interests include family demography, fertility, reproductive decision-making, climate change and sustainability, religious and religiousness, duration models and multilevel models. Maria Rita Testa earned her degree in Political Science from the University of Rome "La Sapienza", in 1995. She received her PhD in Demography from the University of Florence, in 2000.

Fabian Stephany joined the Vienna University of Economics and Business as a Research Assistant in autumn 2013. He received his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Mannheim and completed his master in economics and social sciences at Bocconi University in Milan in 2013. Before, in 2010 and 2011, Mr. Stephany worked as a Consultant at the OECD in Paris. His present research focuses on human capital and reproductive decision making, and on the linkage between social trust and income inequality in Europe .

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