VID Colloquium
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Vienna Institute of Demography
Welthandelsplatz 2 / Level 2
Nathan Keyfitz Library
1020 Vienna

Rita Brazão de Freitas
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Thursday, 22 September 2016
11:00 - 12:00 am

"Fertility Desires, Intentions and Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis of their Consistency"

Studies on reproductive intentions and behaviour have rarely considered the role of contraceptive behaviour as an important mediator of a fertility outcome. In this study, we consider contraceptive behaviour in conjunction with fertility desires and fertility intentions as an important predictor of fertility behaviours. Using the Miller and Pasta's framework of traits-desires-intentions-behaviour in a couple's perspective (1996), we investigate which of these dimensions is actually closer to a fertility behaviour. We also study if the information on couple's contraceptive behaviour improves the accuracy of the predictions on fertility behaviours. Our analysis is based on the individual-level data from the Generation and Gender Survey, conducted between 2004 and 2013, and takes into account Austrian, Bulgarian and French coupled respondents who were interviewed in both waves of this survey. We resorted to logistic regression models, considered a set of background variables obtained from the first wave and measured the outcome of having a child in the second wave. The findings show that fertility intentions predicts subsequent behaviours better than desires and contraceptive behaviour. Combining contraceptive behaviour with short-term fertility intentions does not better the predictions accuracy but combining it with desires actually improves such predictions in the case of Austrian parent respondents and childless Bulgarian respondents. This paper confirms that short-term fertility intentions are the strongest predictors of fertility behaviours and calls for a collection of data about couple's contraceptive behaviour in which not only the usage but also the timing of the methods used are specified.

About the presenter
Rita Brazão de Freitas joined the Vienna Institute of Demography in February 2016 to participate in the project: "Running against the clock? Realizing Family plans over the life course". She studied Mathematics at the University of Madeira, finished her Master's degree in Statistics from the University of Évora and currently is also a PhD student at this University. Her research interests include family demography, reproductive decision-making and fertility.