Sabine Keller

GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN

Fertility between Desire and Reality
– Differences in childbearing parities of East and West Germans –

Introduction

Starting point: East and West Germans still show differences in childbearing parities (amongst others Dorbritz 2010) → Since cohorts who experienced the process of reunification have not finished their fertility phase yet, the *desire for children* should be considered.

IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN
Assuming ideal circumstances: How many children would you like to have altogether?

	No children		One child		Two children		Three and more children	
REGION (*Ref: west*)	0.727	0.715	2.598 ***	2.432 ***	1.263	1.208	0.454 **	0.492 ***
CONTROL VARIABLES								
Gender (*Ref: male*)		0.886		1.051		1.056		0.948
Migration background (*Ref: without*)		0.971		0.806		0.766 ~		1.484 *
Education (*Ref: 12th/13th grade*)								
No qualification	. a)		5.136 *		1.277		0.312	
9th grade		1.627		1.152		1.562 *		0.432 ***
10th grade		1.099		2.131 ***		1.167		0.566 ***
N	1380	1371 a)	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380
R²	0.002	0.006	0.022	0.042	0.001	0.006	0.012	0.031

a) Dropped due to perfect prediction of failure.
~ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: pairfam (Release 3.0)

REAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN
When you think realistically about having children: How many children do you think you will have?

	No children		One child		Two children		Three and more children	
REGION (*Ref: west*)	0.771	0.716	2.258 ***	2.339 ***	0.765 ~	0.734 *	0.554 *	0.609 ~
CONTROL VARIABLES								
Gender (*Ref: male*)		1.042		1.238		0.895		0.931
Migration background (*Ref: without*)								
Education (*Ref: 12th/13th grade*)		0.624		1.202		0.78 ~		1.648 *
No qualification		4.078 ~		1.554		0.436		0.829
9th grade		2.048 *		0.919		0.835		0.961
10th grade		1.448		1.297		0.795 ~		0.906
N	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380
R²	0.001	0.015	0.018	0.023	0.002	0.006	0.006	0.012

~ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: pairfam (Release 3.0)

Research question: How might the remaining differences of childbearing parities of East and West Germans be explained?

Assumptions: After German reunification, a number of determinants with effects on childbearing parities remain feasible:

- child care availability
- presence of children in giving surroundings
- partnership stability
- religiosity

Data: *pairfam* (Release 3.0), 1145 West and 235 East German childless men and women, who were born between 1981 and 1983 and therefore grew up during the transformation of the two German states.

Methods: Logistic regressions (Odds Ratios) with the ideal and real number of children as dependent variables. Since these statements are no actual transitions and a shift of opinion is possible at any time and in any direction all of the other categories (none, one, two resp. three and more children) constitute the reference. The following models control for the variables of gender, migration background and education as well. For the sake of clarity the coefficients are not displayed.

Child care…

Mechanism: …reduces opportunity costs for combining family life and employment (e.g. Hank et al. 2004, Huinink 2005)

Variable: Mother or mother-in-law lives nearby

	IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		REAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		
	One child	Three and more children	One child	Two children	Three and more children
REGION (*Ref: west*)	2.432 ***	0.490 ***	2.364 ***	0.735 *	0.608 ~
CONTROL VARIABLES	…	…	…	…	…
CHILD CARE					
Mother (-in-law) lives nearby	0.989	0.989	0.838	0.961	1.040
N	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380
R²	0.042	0.031	0.024	0.006	0.012

~ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: pairfam (Release 3.0)

A short distance to a potential grandmother does not change the influence of the regional origin on the desire for having children.

Presence of children…

Mechanism: …as matter of course, as something which causes peer pressure and the positive influence on the perception of parenthood (dis-) advantages of parenthood (e.g. Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2004, Keim et al. 2009)

Variable: Friends or siblings have children under three years of age

	IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		REAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		
	One child	Three and more children	One child	Two children	Three and more children
REGION (*Ref: west*)	2.446 ***	0.492 ***	2.340 ***	0.731 *	0.610 ~
CONTROL VARIABLES	…	…	…	…	…
PRESENCE OF CHILDREN					
Children available (*Ref: not*)	0.726	0.982	0.952	1.332 *	0.819
N	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380
R²	0.044	0.031	0.023	0.009	0.013

~ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: pairfam (Release 3.0)

Having friends and siblings who are parents hardly has any impact on the differences in the desire for children between East and West Germans.

Partnership stability…

Mechanism: …determines the investment in the partnership (e.g. Eggen 2006, Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2004)

Variables: Partnership status (single, living apart together, cohabiting, married)
Number of partnerships (none, one, two to four, five and more)

	IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		REAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		
	One child	Three and more children	One child	Two children	Three and more children
REGION (*Ref: west*)	2.357 ***	0.504 ***	2.274 ***	0.743 *	0.644 ~
CONTROL VARIABLES	…	…	…	…	…
PARTNERSHIP STABILITY					
Partner status (*Ref: single*)					
LAT	0.885	1.297	0.799	1.297	1.325
Cohabiting	1.057	1.093	0.761	1.303 ~	1.360
Married	0.710	1.674 *	0.846	0.785	3.314 ***
Number of partners (*Ref: none*)					
One	0.870	0.775	0.785	1.553 *	0.620
Two to four	0.938	0.661 ~	0.911	1.614 *	0.618
Five and more	0.135 ~	1.449	0.506	1.963 *	0.842
N	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380
R²	0.053	0.042	0.028	0.018	0.034

~ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: pairfam (Release 3.0)

The consideration of the stability of own partnerships reduces the East-West differences only slightly with the regional origin remaining a significant parity predictor.

Religion…

Mechanism: …"Be fruitful and multiply" (1 Moses), determines norms and values (e.g. Bruchholz et al. 2002, Eggen 2006)

Variables: Confession (none, Catholic, Protestant, other)
Church attendance (often, sometimes, never)

	IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		REAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN		
	One child	Three and more children	One child	Two children	Three and more children
REGION (*Ref: west*)	1.866 *	0.575 *	1.919 **	0.790	0.805
CONTROL VARIABLES	…	…	…	…	…
RELIGION					
Confession (*Ref: none*)					
Catholic	0.539	1.103	0.904	0.911	1.217
Protestant	1.186	0.929	1.428	0.706 ~	1.342
Other	1.037	0.863	1.510	0.498 *	1.896
Church attendance (*Ref: often*)					
Never	1.567	0.399 ***	1.644	2.012 **	0.264 ***
More than five	2.262	0.288 ***	3.486 ***	1.101	0.201 ***
N	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380
R²	0.059	0.053	0.047	0.023	0.064

~ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: pairfam (Release 3.0)

Controlling for confession and church attendance, the impact of the regional origin declines remarkably. Only weak correlations can be observed in the categories "ideal desire" for one and three and more children as well as "real desire" for one child.

Conclusion

Considering religiosity the East-West difference declines notably. However, the coefficient of regional origin turns insignificant only for the "real desire" for two as well as for three and more children. In order to explain the remaining variation, further research is necessary. For examining the imprint throughout the surrounding environment, the analyzed determinants (data of the current location) have to be considered on the macro level as well.

Literature
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Contact: Sabine Keller • Georg-August-University Goettingen • Institute of Sociology • Platz der Goettinger Sieben 3 • 37073 Goettingen • +49 551 - 39 17 94 • sabine.keller@sowi.uni-goettingen.de