

The effect of experiences with the first child on higher order parity

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Extended Abstract

Whereas family formation is a relatively common research area, family expansion is not. It is conceivable that different factors affect the decision for a second or third child compared to deciding for the first. One considerable difference between the decision for the first and for second or further children is the completely dissimilar previous experience. Whereas for childless couples, at most the experiences of others can play a role, parents can draw on their own experience of living with a child or children when considering having another one (Miller & Pasta, 1995).

The proposed presentation aims to investigate the factors influencing the transition to the second child. The birth of the first child changes the couple relationship and the organization of everyday life. Our first, general hypothesis is that the situation of living with the first child should be of great importance for decisions on higher order parity: positive experiences will increase the likelihood, negative ones will decrease it. Perceiving the life with the first child as wearing should reduce the readiness to have a second one, while positive experiences should increase childbearing.

Moreover, the division of labor often becomes more unequal after family formation (Baxter, Hewitt, & Haynes, 2008; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003; Yavorsky, Dush, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2015). As mothers usually spend more time for care work, it is plausible to assume that stress due to family formation is different for mothers and fathers. However, whether the traditionalization of the division of homework impacts higher order births positively or negatively should depend on how fair the arrangement is perceived (Chong & Mickelson, 2016; Reichle, 2002; Wilcox & Nock, 2006). Thus, we assume that if one parent (presumably the mother) perceives the division of labor after the first child as unfair, the couple will likely restrain from having a larger family.

Family formation also changes the relationship quality of the partners. Various studies show a decline in relationship satisfaction after the birth of a first child (for a review see Kluwer, 2010). New parents in Germany often report frequent conflicts and disagreements with their partner and less communication and fondness (Fthenakis,

Kalicki, & Peitz, 2002; Reichle, 2002). Our assumption is that a decline in relationship satisfaction after the birth of the first child should make the transition to the second one less likely.

All in all, our analysis extends previous research especially in two ways: First, we go beyond studies which focus on the role of general life satisfaction after the birth of the first child for the decision to have a further child. For example, a recent study by Margolis und Myrskylä (2015) shows that if satisfaction with life is declining, a second birth becomes more unlikely. However, it remains unclear, what influences life satisfaction in this phase. We will more precisely capture the situation of living with the first child and investigate which experiences affect the transition. Second, previous analyses with the German Family Panel (Lutz, Buhr, & Boehnke, 2013) have shown that, among other things, the influence of experiences with the first child on the *intention* to have more children varies between women and men. Whereas mothers did not intend to have a second child if there had been frequent conflicts about parenting, for fathers situational factors did not play a role. Furthermore, the age of the first child played a decisive role for both parents. In the proposed paper we investigate if the same factors can be identified as influencing *actual transitions* from one- to two-child families.

To answer our research questions we use data from waves 1-6 of the German Family Panel (pairfam). Pairfam is a multi-disciplinary, longitudinal study with annual waves for researching partnership and family dynamics in Germany. It started in 2008 with data from a nationwide random sample of (originally) more than 12,000 persons of the three birth cohorts 1971-73, 1981-83, 1991-93 (Brüderl et al., 2015; Huinink et al., 2011). We will apply event-history models, as we are interested in the factors influencing the timing of the second child.

A different contribution on this topic is being submitted by Laura Castiglioni, Claudia Schmiedeberg und Petra Buhr. This focuses on the stability of fertility plans after the birth of a child instead of actual fertility. The authors employ a fixed-effects model and consider unobserved heterogeneity in initial fertility plans. Taken together, both contributions can advance the state of research on the (underlying) reasons for higher order births.

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