Population and Family Policies in the Developed World

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Syllabus

This course is intended for persons interested in policies, programs and issues in population and families in economically advanced countries. It will provide students with an understanding of policy challenges and responses to population trends and family well-being. How policies are designed to respond to key challenges arising from population ageing (consecutive to fertility decline and increases in life-expectancy) and from changes in family life-styles will be presented. We will also overview the main cross-national differences in policies supporting families and regulating migration flows in the OECD; and present the recent changes since the 2008 economic crisis. Then, the effectiveness of policies will be reviewed, considering mainly their capacity to raise fertility, improve reproductive health and to enhance child well-being, to reduce income inequalities across families, to govern migration flows, etc.. The last part will discuss future prospects for population policies in regards to the diversification of family living arrangements, the situation of young people, and for both developed and developing worlds.

Programme des séances (contenu et objectifs pédagogiques):

Pour chacune des 12 séances : présentation du thème général, de la(les) thématique(s), textes de référence, lectures préparatoires, exercices):

Each class will consist of an hour-long lecture by one of the course tutors, followed by a 10-15 minute student presentation, and finally a class discussion on both the lecture and the student presentation. All students are expected to have done some of the class readings and participate in the class discussion.

#1 Introduction

What are Family and Population Policies ? This session will introduce the key objectives of family and population policies and their means. It will especially discuss how changes in family forms, population trends and changes in the economic and working contexts affect population needs; we will also discuss how policies respond to these changes. Variations in policy challenges across the world will be overviewed.

Readings:


#2 Cross-national variations in Family Policies in developed countries
This session will present key cross-national differences in policy design towards families and their relationships with Welfare States backgrounds. Convergence of population and policies in the OECD area will be discussed.

Readings


#3 Family policies in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis

This session will present information on trends in family and child outcomes and policies over the past decades before and after the 2008 economic crisis, in order to assess whether there has been any convergence over time across OECD and EU countries. The impact of the 2008 economic crisis on family and work outcomes, and on policies will also be discussed.


#4 Early Childhood Education and Care Programs : Investing in Children ?

Investing in Children’ education is promoted as a key objective for social policies by academics, international organizations and governments. This session will present the rational of this and key cross-national differences regarding early childhood policies and outcomes in the OECD.

Readings:


#5 Reconciling Work and Family?

Reconciling work and family is also one objective of policies to support family well-being. Leave policies, the development of childcare services and workplace practices are key instruments to help working parents balancing work and family. The session will present cross-national differences regarding these three dimensions. The effect of policies on key family and labour market outcomes will be reviewed. The discussion will emphasize the positive influence of policies on outcomes as well as their possible knock-on effects on gender segregation in the labour market.

Readings:


#6 The effectiveness of policies to improve maternal and child health

This session will broach the issue of effectiveness of policy programs tackling with maternal and child health, with a focus of variations over time and across regions. The role of supra-national programs will be also overviewed.

Readings:


#7 Population ageing: key challenges for population and family policies in developed countries

Population ageing is due to the prolongation of life expectancy and low fertility. The session will discuss the needs of policies to adapt to population ageing, considering its two faces: the growing needs to care for old people, and to raise fertility in low fertility countries.


#8 Migrations flows and outcomes

We will discuss the influence of migrations in balancing population ageing and key outcomes for migrants

Readings:


#9 The effectiveness of immigration policies

The session will discuss key aspects of immigration policies and their effectiveness to control migration flows. Key challenges for family policy to reach migrant families will also be discussed.

Readings


#10 Population policy issues in International negotiations

The role of supra national bodies (UNDP, UNECE, European Commission, OECD, World Bank) is prominent in promoting policy intervention on population and family issues. The session will map the key processes involved and discuss their results.

Readings:


#11 Future prospects for family policies

Changes in family life-styles highlight the needs for family policy to be adapted in order to cover non-standard family forms (non-marital union, sole parenthood, same-sex partnership). The session will discuss some of the key issues raised by the diversification of family pathways.


