

**Anja Oppermann**

## **A new Color in the Picture**

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### **The Impact of Educational Fields on Fertility in Western Germany**

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#### **Abstract**

The extensive research on the impact of educational attainment on fertility behavior has been expanded to a new dimension. According to these recent findings, not only the level, but also the field of education has to be taken into account. The field of education determines a great deal of labor market options and influences the opportunities to combine employment and family life.

The question this paper aims to answer is: How does the educational field influence the transition to a first child of women and men in Western Germany?

The German Socio Economic Panel (1984-2010) provides the data. Discrete Time Event History models are applied to examine the impact of the field of education on the transition to a first child, looking at the time after graduation till a first child is born. Educational fields are grouped according to their most salient characteristic with regard to the share of women, the occupational specificity, the share of public sector employment and the share of part-time employment among people educated in the field. The models take the educational level into account and control for marital status, episodes of educational enrollment as well as migration background.

The results show that educational fields matter for the transition to a first birth only for women. For men the results do not show a significant impact of educational fields on the transition rates to a first child. However, they point at the importance of the educational level for the probability of men to become fathers. High transition rates are found among women educated in female-dominated fields as well as male-dominated fields. The finding of low transition rates among women educated in public-sector fields come as a surprise as they, given the high workplace security in the public sector, were expected to be among the women with high transition rates.

#### *Keywords*

*field of education, level of education, fertility, childlessness, Western Germany*

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