

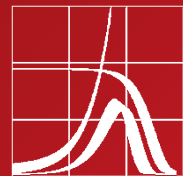
**Demographic
Research
Monographs**

Michaela Kreyenfeld
Dirk Konietzka
Editors



Childlessness in Europe: Contexts, Causes, and Consequences

 Springer Open



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Editors

Michaela Kreyenfeld
Hertie School of Governance
Berlin, Germany

Max Planck Institute for Demographic
Research
Rostock, Germany

Dirk Konietzka
Department of Social Sciences
Braunschweig University of Technology
Braunschweig, Germany



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Preface

In recent decades, levels of childlessness have been increasing rapidly in most European countries. German-speaking countries seem to be at the forefront of this development, as more than 20 % of the women living in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria who are now reaching the end of their reproductive period will remain childless. But other European countries, such as the UK and Finland, also report high levels of childlessness. Eastern and Southern Europe did not have high levels of childlessness a decade ago, but are now seeing steady increases. This book provides an overview of the recent trend toward a “life without children” across Europe. It seeks answers to questions like: What are the determinants of childlessness in the twenty-first century? Is there an unbroken trend in childlessness, or is there evidence of trend reversals? How does the likelihood of remaining childless differ across social strata? To what extent do economic uncertainties affect childlessness? How do fertility desires evolve over the life course? To what extent does the situation of a woman’s partner affect her fertility decisions? How far can we push the biological limits of fertility? What role can assisted reproduction play in reducing childlessness? How many men fail to have children of their own? What impact can family policies have on fertility decisions? Can governments reverse the trend toward childlessness—and, if so, should they?

This book builds on the 2nd edition of the book *Ein Leben ohne Kinder*, published by Springer VS in Germany in 2013. It contains six updated and completely rewritten chapters of its German-language predecessor. Additionally, this volume contains ten new chapters by internationally renowned authors. Scholars from various European countries and the USA have contributed to the completion of this volume. We regret that we were unable to include any country study of a Southern European country. Unfortunately, the planned contribution on Italy was not ready on time for this edition. The “hot phase” of the editing process was in the summer of 2015, when the weather—at least in Berlin—was also very hot. During this phase, the editors exchanged numerous e-mails with the authors. Even though we were bothering our authors during their well-deserved summer vacation, it was always a joy to read and edit the papers. We would like to express our appreciation and thanks to the authors of this book for their diligence, patience, and support.

It is not possible to complete such a complex volume without the support of people who provide a wide range of essential services. The editors want to express their gratitude to Miriam Hils, who greatly helped us with the language editing of the book. We thank Tom Hensel for taking on the nitty-gritty work of ensuring that the text and the figures are properly formatted. We also wish to thank Hannes Laichter, who checked the reference lists. This book project was generously funded by the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock. We would like to thank Frans Willekens and James Vaupel, who greatly supported this endeavor. Last but not least, we thank Evelien Bakker and Bernadette Deelen-Mans from Springer SBM NL, who initially suggested that we publish this book —many thanks for pushing us in the right direction.

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Michaela Kreyenfeld
Dirk Konietzka