

Fertility Trends and Family Policy in French-Speaking Societies

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This article derives from the study conducted by the Study Group on French-Speaking Societies as a part of the research project, "Comparative Study of Fertility Decline and Family Policy in Developed Countries" funded by a scientific grant for policy science research from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. It is mainly a literature review on recent population trends in France, Belgium and Luxembourg, developments of family policy measures in these societies and their interrelationship, effects of family policy measures on fertility in them, and policy implications for Japan based on the previous sections and other literature including the author's theoretical and empirical studies.

In spite of limitations due to the unavailability of literature and data, this comparative study has shown similarities and differences in terms of both fertility trends and family policy among these societies. It has also exhibited the mutual influence on family policies among them. Recent studies based on micro-simulation reveal significant pronatal effects of family policy measures. Since the formulation, implementation and evaluation of family policy measures should be always based on scientific research, we have to encourage policy-oriented studies based on panel data analysis and micro-simulation, that are similar to those conducted in French-speaking societies.