



Call for Papers – International Workshop

**\*\*\* EXTENDED DEADLINE 30 MARCH \*\*\***

## **LargeFam Bringing Large Families Back on the Policy Agenda**

**Date: 2-day workshop, 8-9 June 2022 (TBC)**

**Location: UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy, Dublin, Ireland**

Recent studies show that large families are much more common than assumed in wealthy nations (Curran 2021, Fahey 2017, Bujard et al. 2019), but receive very little research and policy attention. While recent decades have seen a poverty research and policy focus on lone parent families, children in large families face a similar risk of poverty today. In some countries (e.g. Ireland), children in large families experience a higher risk of poverty than those in lone parent households. This international workshop aims to mainstream a renewed research and policy focus on large families, learn from international data and experiences, and bring together an interdisciplinary field of researchers. The goal is to refocus inequality and poverty studies on an important, but often overlooked, aspect of contemporary children's circumstances: children's family size. Policymakers, advocates, and practitioners are also invited to highlight policy problems and discuss solutions.

Historically, family size was a recognised risk for child poverty. Large families received substantial policy attention up through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The benefits and tax systems in most advanced economies recognised the increased cost of childbearing for families with three, four, or more children through child allowances and other public supports. As demographic changes saw declining birth rates and smaller family sizes, the policy focus shifted towards lone parents facing poverty and how they might be supported. Yet, although the relative share of households with large families has declined, a substantive number of children continue to grow up in large families (inter alia Curran 2019, Fahey 2017). And modern social transfer systems tend to neglect this still very relevant child poverty risk. Social policy interventions targeted at large families now range from punitive policies that cap tax and social benefits at a particular family size – such as the UK's two-child limit – or the slow neglect of benefits specifically aimed at children in large families (e.g. Germany and Ireland have eradicated traditionally higher rates of child benefit for the third and subsequent children) to the more pro-natal policies that support children in large families still in place in parts of Eastern Europe.

This workshop aims to revive this under-recognised perspective on inequality and poverty risk for children. We welcome papers that address large families from diverse disciplinary



backgrounds, methodological perspective and across the globe. In particular, we are interested in papers that contribute to our empirical understanding of:

- **What constitutes a large family today?** Some studies draw the line at 3 children (Bujard et al. 2019), while other estimates consider only four and more children (Curran 2019).
- **What is the socio-demographic profile of large families?** In popular – and potentially harmful – discourses, two competing extremes often dominate the debate and media portrayals that the modern large family is either a rich one (purposefully large to show they can afford to be) or a poor one (purposefully to claim child-related benefits). We are seeking papers that detail the profile of contemporary large families as well as contributions that scrutinise these discourses and public perceptions through empirical analysis.
- **How are social policy interventions target large families?** Single-country or comparative policy papers are sought that analyse social policy interventions addressing large families, including changes over time. This includes policy simulations on the distributive effects of how number of siblings are treated in benefit and tax systems.

#### **Confirmed keynote speakers:**

Prof. Tony Fahey (University College Dublin, Ireland)

Dr. Ruth Patrick (University of York, United Kingdom)

Dr. Martin Bujard (Federal Institute for Population Research, Germany)

Submit your abstract by **30 March 2022 (10.00 IST, Dublin)** at the following online form:  
<https://forms.gle/gz7gPxcdNMckcnef6>

The conference is free of charge. Catering is provided throughout the conference for presenters, including a conference dinner. We will be able to cover travel and accommodation, but please indicate in your submission if you would like to be considered for a travel grant.

This conference aims to build a new network of researchers interested in large families, alongside a special issue. Therefore, an in-person workshop will be prioritised, in line with government COVID-19 restrictions as of spring/summer 2022, to facilitate networking and personal exchanges.

#### **Organisers:**

**Dr. Stephan Köppe**, UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice,  
[stephan.koeppe@ucd.ie](mailto:stephan.koeppe@ucd.ie)



UCD School of Social Policy,  
Social Work and Social Justice

UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy

**Dr. Megan Curran**, Center on Poverty & Social Policy at Columbia  
University, [megan.curran@columbia.edu](mailto:megan.curran@columbia.edu)

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