

Religion and Family Values: A Comparative Study of Japan and Germany

ABSTRACT

This paper is an interim report of our comparative and collaborative research on the relationship between religion and family values in Japan and Germany. The report is based upon a secondary analysis of large scale multi-national survey data, i. e. the World Values Survey 1995 and the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) 1998 Religion Module.

This paper examines religion and religiosity on the one hand, and family values and family-related behavior on the other hand, in both countries. We begin with some theoretical and conceptual considerations based upon an extensive literature survey in this research field. We then describe the dependent variables of our analysis, i. e. family values and family-related behavior from a comparative perspective. Then we turn to the independent variables, i. e. religion, religiosity and religious behavior on the same line. Finally the impact of religion on family values is examined.

Religion in Japan and Germany are so different in terms of their history, structure, and nature that we first describe the country specific aspect of German religion, and then discuss it from a comparative perspective of Japanese religion. Our hypothesis is that religion should be a good predictor of many family values and family-related behavior in Germany, but it should be much less so in Japan.

In the appendix to this paper, the master language questionnaire and the target (Japanese) language questionnaire of the 1998 ISSP Religion Module are compared.

Key Word: religion, moral values, family values