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Title: The present and the future of the family: an Italian research study

Abstract

The research study investigates some future-oriented scenarios for the family in Italy in ten years through the point of view of family experts and stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, politicians, family psychotherapists, social workers, teachers). The first stage of the study concerned the selection of some key social issues for the future of the family through seven focus groups that involved forty-five experts and stakeholders. The second stage involved thirty-two experts in a Delphi method (conducted in four subsequent sessions) that investigated those specific social issues (e.g., work-family balance, intergenerational relationships and communication, intergenerational solidarity, kinship networks, housing, policies and services for the family). The Delphi method pointed out the evolution and the relevance of these specific issues in ten years. Findings highlight some configurations of evolution and relevance with regard to these family social issues and offer future-oriented scenario that are interpreted through a social statistical and a sociological approach.

This paper focuses on some findings of the focus groups. In particular, it deepens the evolution in ten years of the intergenerational relationships and communication, the relationships between families with different cultural and ethnic origins and the expectations towards policies and services for the family. These findings are discussed with the Delphi method results and are compared to the recent sociological literature on the family and its future.

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