

Male fertility in the Czech Republic – new empirical evidence

*Beatrice Chromková Manea
Ladislav Rabušic*

In the context of very low to extremely low fertility levels recorded in many developed countries during the past two decades, an ongoing debate about the causes of this trend has been conducted amongst scholars and policy makers. When analyzing the results of various studies of data at either the aggregate or individual level, one important issue is worth noticing: a large number of existing analyses on the reproductive process are based largely, if not entirely, on female fertility data, whilst men are more or less absent from data gathering and analysis. Most of the research dealing with male fertility is conducted in developing countries - especially in Africa and are focused on the use of contraception and family planning. Lately, researchers from developed countries have also turned their attention to this issue and gradually collected data on and about men (e.g. Goldschneider, Kaufman 1996; Sonenstein et al. 1997; Green, Biddlecom 2000; Bledsoe, Lerner, Guyer 2000; Toulemon 2001; Tolk, Diewald 2003, Rotkirch, Basten 2010, Zhang 2011, Rabušic, Chromková Manea 2011).

In our paper *Where Have All the Men Gone? On Missing Men in the Study of Reproduction* (see Rabušic Chromková and Manea 2011) we introduced some contextual attributes of male fertility studies, some of the causes male fertility is still under-studied and the available indicators on male fertility. This work was the first ever in the context of male reproduction in the Czech Republic.

Present paper deals with male reproductive behaviour in the socio-demographic context. The aim is to build on the survey's theoretical papers and present the first empirical results on male fertility in the Czech Republic. For this purpose, we focus on indicators of male fertility, the preferences regarding family size and the ideal number of children from the personal and general view point. All is done by comparing male and female responses. Based on the findings on female fertility we will answer to following questions: (1) What is the level of male fertility in the Czech Republic? (2) What are the age-specific fertility rates for Czech men? (3) What are the preferences of male population with regard to family size? (4) At what age do men enter parenthood? (5) What are the main factors influencing male fertility levels?

Methodology and data

The present paper makes use of quantitative survey data offered by the “Male reproductive behavior” Study. The *Male Reproductive Behavior* (MRB) study is based on a survey whose main purpose is to track people’s reproductive and partnership biography and information on the labor force participation, education, and household, as well as their opinions, norms and attitudes towards having children, gender roles, lifestyle preferences, timing of life events, baby-lasting and values of children. The fieldwork took place in November-December 2011. The MRB survey collected a wide variety of information from 800 couples (N=1,600 respondents), where men were aged 40–55 in 2011, and a supplementary sample of 900 men and women aged 40-55, regardless whether they were found in a relationship¹. The survey was conducted using the face-to-face interview method. Both man and woman were interviewed in those households where the interviewers found a couple living in cohabitation or marriage. The analysis reported here is based on 2,500 respondents (we will use individual data, not the pair-data)².

We will also use the birth registration data available for 1993-2004, which compiles information on the number of children ever born to women. Czech birth register is a collection of data based on birth notification forms completed in the hospitals from mothers at birth. Birth register suffers from undercover age on fathers’ information due to the fact that it is not compulsory for mothers to declare information on fathers when they are not married. When available, the information on fathers includes age of father and his educational level. For these reasons, the data on TFRs, ASFRs and mean age of fathers will be distorted due to the lack of information for children born out of wedlock. In 2004, 96,872 births were registered; in 29,559 of these births (30.5 per cent) paternity was not acknowledged. Birth register provides us with the mean age of fathers, but we cannot calculate the mean age of entering parenthood. Thus, we will use survey data to calculate it.

¹ Our main research unit is man aged 40-55 and their female or male partners/spouses. The age of female population varies and ranges between 20 and 70 y.o. (due to the age heterogamy between partners/spouses in the population).

² Total sample = 1,600 + 900 = 2,500 respondents.