

The potential impact of fertility-related policies on future fertility developments in the Czech Republic: analysis based on surveys conducted in the 1990s

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Abstract: Since 1996 total fertility rate in the Czech Republic has been below 1.2. In contrast to the observed fertility rate the FFS data from 1997 indicated that two children remained the desired number for majority of young people. The gap between the intended and actual number of children could be considered as a latent demand for population policies. Accordingly, population policies would be relevant as they were preferably aimed to help people to perform their fertility intentions. In line with the shift in value preferences of the Czech population – from liberal values to social democratic ones – public support for population policies increased between 1991 and 1997. The highest potential impact of possible new measures has been registered for respondents aged 25–34 years who have one or two children.

Keywords: fertility, population policies, Czech Republic

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Introduction

In analysing determinants of fertility trends, it is often difficult to distinguish possible effects of population policies from impacts of the many factors that are known to shape private reproductive decisions (David, 1982). Research on the causes of fertility change indicates that reproductive behaviour is influenced by a complex set of mutually inter-acting economic, social and cultural circumstances. Whatever the magnitude of the effects of policies on fertility may be, it is beyond doubt that these effects are less important than the substantial and often conflicting influences of the socio-economic forces typical of modern societies (Cliquet, 1995).

When discussing the impact of policy interventions, most authors admit that direct population policies can have some effect on fertility levels. However, even generous measures have only a limited impact and they seldom have a truly important, measurable demographic effect (Stropanik, 1995, Höhn, 1995). Past experience shows that population policies influence fertility levels for only short periods of time. Usually, the impact is greatest immediately after a policy is implemented and then gradually declines as benefits lose their novelty or their value decreases (Klinger, 1987). The problem is when positive short-term effects are followed by a decline in births. This indicates that the measures did not increase the absolute volume of fertility but only caused fluctuations in the numbers of births through provoking changes in the timing of fertility. But because the postponed births might never have occurred, we can nevertheless speak about positive effects of the measures introduced (Pavlík, 1991).

According to various international and national surveys in Europe, a majority of young couples declare that they prefer a two-child family. Chesnais (1999) used the Eurobarometer data to calculate the corresponding average desired family size for the European Union. In contrast to the observed total fertility rate of only 1.4 children per women, the desired number was around two children. This difference between the number of children women have and the number they would like to have needs to be taken into consideration. In countries where family policy is weak or non-existent, the discrepancy can be extremely big.¹ Chesnais argues that appropriate institutional adjustment could lessen the number of missing births. Another international research that made a contribution to understanding the discrepancies between intended and actual fertility of individuals on one hand, and acceptance of policy measures on the other, was the PPA project (Moors, Palomba, 1998). It was expected that the bigger these fertility discrepancies are (i.e. the higher the fertility potential), the stronger the public support for favourable family policies will be. Accordingly, the gap between the desired number of children and their actual number was considered as reflecting a latent demand for public policy.

Impact of pro-natalist population policies in the Czech Republic before 1990

After the Second World War, Czechoslovakia made a relatively rich experience with pro-natalist measures. The most important pro-natalist measures were implemented in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Besides the evident slow-down of the fertility decline population policies significantly contributed towards the formation of a reproductive model typified by early nuptiality, early fertility and two-child family. This model persisted in the Czech Republic until the late 1980s.

The real effect of population policy measures can be assessed only by analysing data about completed fertility. The strong pro-natalist policies of 1968–1973 resulted in a temporary increase of the TFR by 0.6 children. The effect of these measures on completed fertility was much less significant: in the female generations born in 1943–1945 the decline of completed fertility rate stopped on the level of 2 and in the post-war generation born in 1946–1950 the completed fertility rate increased by some 0.1 points (Rychtaříková, 1993). Even so the younger generations experienced a gradual fertility decline, completed fertility in the generation born in 1960 was still above 2 children per woman. A generally higher fertility level can be observed in generations the members of which were 20–24 years old when the pro-natalist measures were introduced, and to a lesser extent the same can be said about those who were 25–29 years old. Birth cohorts whose peak-fertility period (20–29 years) coincided with adverse conditions did not subsequently compensate for their reduced fertility, irrespective of what socio-economic climate they were exposed to after reaching 30 years of age.

A more significant, and also more long-term, was the effect on the structure of female cohorts by the number of children born. The proportion of women with two children continued to increase and exceeded 50 percent for the generations born after 1944

¹ Chesnais (1999) gives Italy as an example of a country where family policies have been badly neglected. This resulted in a discrepancy between the desired number of children and their actual number equal to 1.

(Rychtaříková, 1993). The share of childless women fell to 6 percent for the generation born in 1950 and in younger generations it remained stable. The parity progression ratio for the transition from parity 1 to parity 2 increased within the generations born between 1943 and 1950, and in younger generations it did not decline.

To study the impact of pro-natalist measures, surveys of population climate are often used. Results of these surveys can serve as the basis for formulating new policy measures or for assessing the effects of measures already in place. In 1977 the Fertility Survey took place following the implementation of the comprehensive pro-natalist measures of 1968–1973 (Srb 1979). One of the aims of this survey was to identify which factors contributed to increases in fertility in the early 1970s. Female respondents reported that the main stimuli were the extension of maternity leave from 22 to 26 weeks, the extension of unpaid maternity leave until two years of the child's age, and the introduction of maternity subsidy payable to women with children aged up to two years providing they also took care for another minor.²

Population policy in the Czech Republic during the 1990s

The political upheaval of 1989 brought about fundamental changes in how the role of population policy is understood. One of the basic goals of the post-communist transformation has been to increase individual freedom and to protect individual and human rights. An often-posed question is whether a democratic government can be permitted to influence population developments, and if yes, then what is the acceptable extent of such intervention.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the dominant political opinion was that it is a private matter of individuals to decide about the number of the children they have. The liberal-conservative government abandoned active population policy (Kocourková, 2001). The old system of extensive state support to families was reduced and became an element of social policy. Moreover, within the new system of social assistance, priority was given to new phenomena such as unemployment and poverty resulting from social and economic transformation. There was a tendency to limit the state support only to families considered "most in need".

Beginning in 1992 demographic change in the Czech Republic has become more dynamic. A sharp drop in fertility occurred, which accelerated population ageing. Negative experiences with the transition to market economy resulted in a reinforcement of the Social-Democratic Party. The 1998 national election brought about a change in the governmental view on population developments. The Social-Democratic party won the election and its government declared that a more general concept of family policy was needed. The Republic Committee for Children, Youth and Family was set up in 1999 in order to work on this concept. However, at the beginning of the 2000s the persistence of a very low fertility level came to be seen as alarming. In 2001 the government adopted two measures explicitly aimed at increasing fertility.

² At that time the maternity subsidy corresponded to 40 per cent of the average net salary of women.

Population policies adopted since 1990

1. Abolishment of the state support to families

Abolishment of all subsidies and priorities related to housing

Abolishment of subsidies for goods for children

Abolishment of advantageous loans for newly married couples (1990)

2. Reduction of the pro-natalist function of family benefits

Birth order ceased to be a criterion for assessment of the amount of benefits or for the entitlement for a benefit. The change affected parental benefits (1990) and child allowances (1993).

3. Modification of existing family-related measures within the new social security law (1995)

The transformation of social security system during the first half of the 1990s peaked in 1995 by the adoption of a new law on state social assistance. This law regulates all family benefits provided by the state. The legislation was designed mainly to prevent low-income families from falling into poverty. The new system of social policy is based on the subsistence level. This level has become not only the criterion for acknowledging a claim, but also the basis for the definition of payments of those social benefits that are derived from family income. The relevant benefits are automatically raised in dependence with index linking of the subsistence level. Social benefits that are directly related to families include child allowances, parental benefits, and birth grants.

4. Contraction of state support to low-income families

Child allowances became means-tested in 1996

5. Restrictive measures (1997–1998)

The number of families entitled to child allowances was temporarily reduced

6. Adoption of two pro-natalist measures (2001)

– The increase in the birth grant by 25 per cent

– The increase in the limit of acceptable income of a parent on child-care leave by 60 per cent

Current family-related measures in the Czech Republic

1. Leave arrangements

Maternity leave and financial assistance in maternity

Maternity leave lasts 28 weeks and starts 6–8 weeks before confinement. Financial assistance in maternity represents a sick-leave benefit that replaced the previous work salary payable to an economically active woman during her maternity leave. The benefit is derived from the woman's salary before the birth of her child. It is defined as a percentage of her net daily salary. While the duration of the paid maternity leave has been constant

since 1987, the actual amount of financial assistance was modified and since 1994 it corresponds to 69 per cent of the net salary.

Child-care (parental) leave and parental benefit (child care allowance)

Parental leave with a guarantee of re-employment is available following the end of maternity leave. It can be taken by either parent and offers a flat-rate benefit until the child is four years old. In 2001 the benefit corresponded to about 20 per cent of the average gross wage in the Czech Republic. In addition, a parent on parental leave is entitled to earn additional income to the limit of around 25 per cent of the average gross wage.

As regards child-care leave, two main adjustments occurred during the 1990s. First, in 1990 all parents became entitled to a three-year parental leave. Before 1990 a woman was entitled to a childcare leave until her child was below three years of age, providing that she took care of another child of no more than 15 years of age. By this provision, women were in fact motivated to have their second children as soon as possible after the first ones because otherwise they would have to stay at home without any financial assistance (Kocourková, 1997). Before 1990, a woman with one child was entitled to child-care allowances only for one year while a woman with two or more children for three years. Secondly, in 1995 the duration of the child-care leave has been extended from three to four years of the child's age.

2. Financial incentives (family benefits)

Grant at the childbirth (birth grant)

It is paid to every family following childbirth. In 2001 this grant corresponded to roughly 60 per cent of the average gross wage salary its function was to partially cover the expenses related to the birth of a child.

Child allowance

The child benefit is the basic allowance for families with dependent children to cover the costs associated with the upbringing and maintenance of children. It is paid until the end of the child's school attendance (in specific cases until the age of 26). Until 1993 it was paid according to the number of children in the family.

Given the objectives of the new social policy, the method to calculate the payment was changed in the first half of the 1990s. It was decided to disregard the number of children in the family, but to take into account the growing costs of upbringing and maintenance of children of different ages. Starting on 1 November 1993, the amount of child benefits payable became calculated according to the age of the child.

On 1 January 1996, the child benefit was modified again to become a means-tested family benefit. Both the entitlement and the allowance itself are calculated bearing in mind the subsistence level. According to the State Social Assistance Law mentioned above, only children who live in families whose income does not exceed three times the amount of the subsistence level qualify for this benefit. The amount of the benefit thus depends on family income. Three categories were created: increased category for the lowest income families (the family's income does not exceed the subsistence level by a factor of 1.1), basic category (the family income is between 1.1 and 1.8 of the multiple) and decreased category (the family income is between 1.8 and 3.0 multiple of the subsistence level).

The real value of child allowances declined in the Czech Republic during the 1990s. While before 1989 the child allowance for a two-child family corresponded to about 20 per cent of the average gross salary, by 2000 this proportion declined to 11 per cent.

3. Child-care facilities

The numbers of child-care facilities for pre-school children have declined and fees for their use have risen substantially. This affected particularly nursery schools. There has been a shift from nursery provision to parental leave for children under three years of age. The demand for child-care facilities for very small children seems to be decreasing due to (1) prolongation of parental leave until four years of the child's age, (2) continued decrease in the annual number of births and (3) significant increases of the fees to be paid for child-care facilities.

Fertility trends during the 1990s

Between 1992 and 1996, a sharp drop in the period level of fertility took place. Since 1996 the TFR has been below 1.2. The highest decrease in fertility levels occurred among women aged below 24 years. Consequently, the average age at childbirth increased. The declining TFR primarily reflected a drop in first-birth rates. This suggests that young women have been postponing motherhood. Although fertility rates of women aged above 25 years have risen after 1997, the increase has been relatively small and did not have any compensatory effect. To what extent is the postponement of childbearing planned and to what extent it is forced? Does such a delay also mean that young women will intentionally limit their overall fertility?

Evaluation of changes in reproductive behaviour that have taken place in the Czech Republic during the 1990s should be perceived both in the context of changes in value orientation of individuals together with an acceptance of new life styles typical of democratic societies and in the context of the socio-economic transformation. Some effects of the transformation have been perceived as negative and provoked doubts about the nature of changes in reproductive behaviour of the Czech population. Questions arose regarding the possibility to influence population trends in the Czech Republic by implementing measures that would at least partly lessen the adverse impacts of the restrictions adopted in the area of social policy. Postponement of childbearing seems to have been protracted as favourable socio-economic conditions for childbearing have not yet arrived. This could support the hypothesis about "crisis behaviour" of the Czech population (Rychtaříková, 2000).

Research on population climate during the 1990s

The importance of demographic surveys increases during the periods of rapid changes in fertility indicators (Pavlík, 1977). Survey results can help to predict probable future fertility developments and can indicate whether the observed fertility shifts are due to changes in timing or due to changes in long-term reproductive plans. In addition, surveys provide insights about the opinions of people as regards preferred family-related measures.

Data from two national surveys conducted during the 1990s could be used for an assessment of the impact of possible policy interventions on reproductive behaviour. The

first survey, on population policy acceptance (PPA), was carried out in the former Czechoslovakia in 1991 (Kolorosová, 1995). The PPA survey sample comprised 1,500 men and women aged 20 years and above. The second survey, titled the Fertility and Family Survey (FFS), was conducted in the Czech Republic in 1997 (ČSÚ, 1998). The core of the FFS sample comprised 1,735 women aged 15–44 years. If a woman was living in a partnership, then her partner was interviewed as well (721 men). The two surveys are not fully comparable due to differences in geographic coverage (Czechoslovakia vs. the Czech Republic), sample designs (random sample vs. cluster sample) and differences in the sizes and structures of the respective samples. On the other hand, it is an analytical advantage that a PPA module (based on selected questions from the PPA survey) was included into the FFS questionnaire. The same questions about population-related policies were asked in the same order, which makes it possible to trace the developments in the respondents' opinions regarding a possible state intervention.

What can we learn from the FFS results about future fertility developments?

For the female generations born in the late 1960s and the early 1970s (age group 25–29 at the time of the interview), a tendency to postpone the transition to motherhood was confirmed. However, this concerned only women with higher education (Rychtaříková, Kraus, 2001). As regards the timing of the first childbirth, women with elementary and secondary education who were aged 25–29 years at the time of the interview seem no different when compared to older women. Members of generations born in the late 1960s who continued to high school were the first ones to be influenced by the societal change. They finished their studies at a time when political circumstances changed. Women reacted to the new life opportunities and started to postpone motherhood. However, this postponement manifested itself more among the generations born in the early 1970s (the second Czech baby boom). Early childbearing started to limit the opportunities of young women to pursue higher education and/or professional careers.

For how long are childless women likely to postpone childbearing? Answers to the question about the highest age at which childless women want to become mothers are difficult to evaluate. The ages of 25 years (30 per cent of childless women in the sample) and 30 years (20 per cent) were reported most frequently. Nevertheless, a dependency between the maximum age at childbirth and the educational level was evident: the higher the level of education, the greater the tendency to postpone childbearing. It can be expected that differences in the timing of fertility between educational groups will increase in the future.

While available demographic data suggest a sharp decline in fertility rates, young people do not lack the motivation to become parents. The survey estimates of the future completed fertility rate, conceptualised as the total number of children wanted³, do not differ much from the actual completed cohort fertility rates. Among the female cohorts born during the period 1930–1960, the completed fertility rate was stabilized at the level 2.0–2.1 (Rychtaříková, Kraus, 2001). There was only a small declining tendency in the

³ The average number of wanted children is the sum of the average number of children already born and the average number of children expected in the future.

ultimate fertility level for cohorts born in the 1970s (1.9 wanted children per woman aged 20–24 years, Table 1). The expected family sizes also differ according to educational level.⁴ The average number of children decreases as the level of education goes up. However, these differentials in fertility intentions are not very big. Greater differences by education are expected when looking at realised fertility as more educated people have a greater tendency to postpone childbearing and thus face a greater risk of ultimately not fulfilling their reproductive plans. The model of a two-children family has remained an optimum life perspective (Figure 1).

Table 1. Average number of wanted children (*FFS 1997*)

Level of education	Men	Women
Basic	2.09	2.04
Secondary	2.09	1.97
High	1.90	1.85
Age group		
20–24	1.85	1.91
25–29	1.85	1.96
30–34	2.11	1.98
35–39	2.09	2.15
40–44	2.15	2.08
Total	2.07	2.00

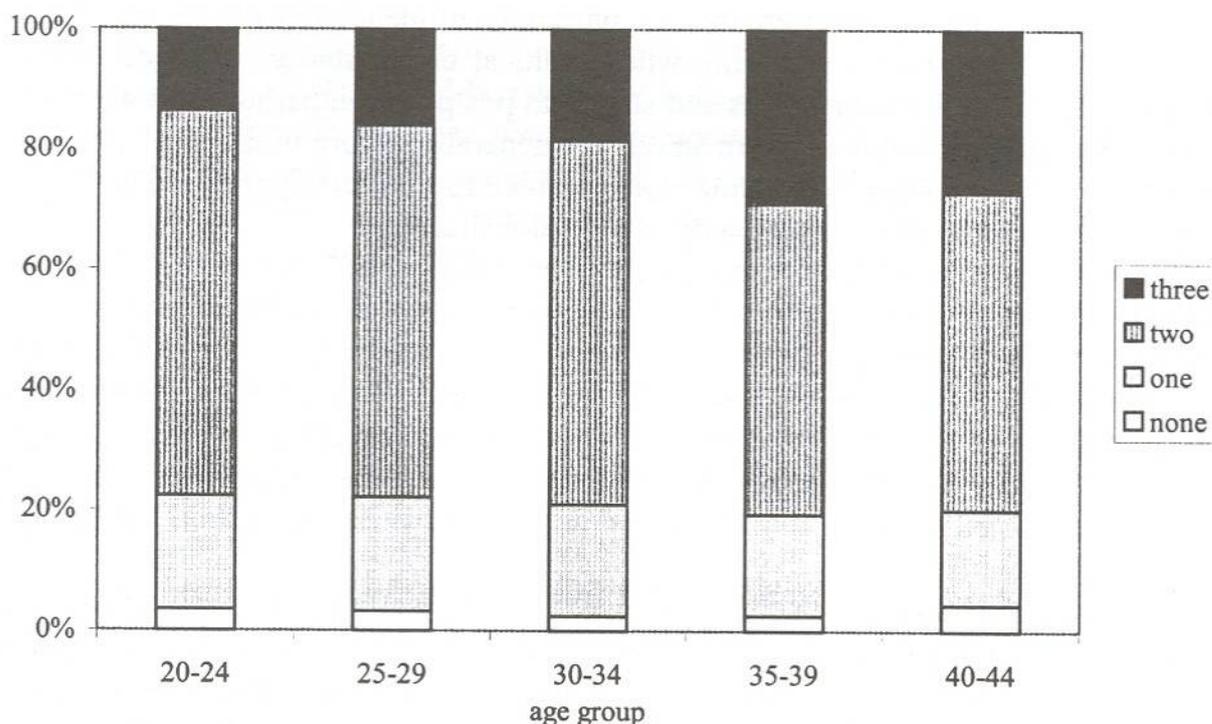


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of women by number of children ultimately wanted

⁴ It needs to be pointed out that the sample sizes of women with basic and with university education were not sufficient enough to calculate the average number of children (ČSÚ 1998). Rychtaříková and Kraus (2001) used weights to calculate the averages.

In spite of the fact that demographic indicators can only reflect a present state and have little to say about long-term behavioural trends, the persistent gap between the proclaimed fertility and the actual period fertility level deserves consideration. Discrepancies between fertility preferences and actual fertility achievements of individual couples suggest that it is not their intention to remain childless or to have only one child. This lends some support to the hypothesis about the crisis behaviour of the Czech population being caused by the negative experience with the socio-economic transformation.

Families have witnessed reductions in the state support on one hand and increases in the costs of raising children on the other. Raising children has become a real economic burden for many families. There seems to be a potential for population policy to help young people to have the number of children they want, rather than to encourage them to have more children than they intend to have. The fact that the state has given up its responsibility to support families and that families have to bear an ever-growing part of the costs related to child-rearing is very negatively perceived. Population policy measures could alleviate some of the obstacles that stop young people from having the number of children they want.

Perception of changes in life circumstances of families in the 1990s

Before 1989 the Czech population was used to an extensive support of the state to families. This comprehensive state support was principally a result of the pro-natalist measures introduced during 1968–1973. Has public opinion on pro-natalist incentives changed? Would the Czech population favour an implementation of measures assisting young people and families to accomplish their fertility intentions? Could we expect some impact on reproductive behaviour? These questions cannot be satisfactorily answered without taking into account the fundamental changes in life circumstances that have taken place since the early 1990s. First, with the implementation of the new socio-economic system, the state's functions and resources have changed tremendously. Secondly, women's earning capacity and their employment opportunities have been weakened by the emergence of the more competitive, less regulated labour market. Balancing work and family responsibilities has become more difficult for women.

Among the factors that contributed to the decline in fertility in the Czech Republic during the early 1990s, changes in social values among the cohorts born in the 1970s are often considered crucial (Rabušic, 2001). However, according to the results of the FFS Survey, the new value orientation of young people did not bring about a decline of the value attached to parenthood. Most young people still want two children, but wish to have them later, preferably after a sufficient level of material security is reached. In both the PPA and the FFS surveys, respondents identified poor housing conditions, financial burden of rearing children, and economic crisis as the main causes of fertility decline in the Czech Republic (Kolorosová, 1995, Čákiová, 1999). This indicates that changes in the conditions for family formation cannot be considered insignificant. How does the Czech population perceive the changes in the social system due to which state support to families, previously universal, was limited to only low-income families? What kinds of measures are required? To what extent have the labour market changes influenced patterns of female economic activity? Answers to these questions could contribute to explaining the acceptability of new measures.

From liberal to social democratic value preferences

Data from available sociological surveys illustrate the gradual shift in value preferences of the Czech population – from liberal values to social democratic ones – that occurred during the 1990s (Rabušic, Sirovátka, 1999). In the early 1990s the Czech public was strikingly liberal, oriented towards individualism and supported the liberal-conservative reform of the social system. At the same time, people began to experience increased social risks, uncertainties, and growing social inequality as a result of the market economy reform. Vlachová and Matějů (1998) argue that at the beginning of the transformation, the acceptance of the liberal economic model was only partial: only a small minority of the society adopted the values of economic liberalism, while the majority continued to favour state paternalism. According to Rabušic, the shift towards social-democratic values happened not because of the people's instinctive paternalism, but rather because of the fact that the new system of social policy is no longer in line with the popular notions of social justice and adequate social policy.

The assessment of the transformed social system

An analysis of results of the relevant survey shows that there is a strong negative trend in the assessment of today's system of the Czech social policy. A significant proportion of citizens sees social benefits as inadequate in relation to their income (Rabušic, Sirovátka, 1999). The insufficient state assistance to young families with children is the most criticised aspect.⁵ According to Rabušic and Sirovátka (1999), this illustrates that the gradual reduction of social benefits available to families with children that happened in the last years, as well as the unwillingness of the state to execute an active pro-family policy, are viewed very negatively by the public.

Economic activity of women

The scenario of the 1990 economic reform assumed that most women with pre-school children would return to family life. (Čermáková et al., 2000). Despite all liberal-conservative ideas about the over-employment of women, female employment rates in the Czech Republic during the 1990s remained among the highest ones. Besides, over 90 per cent of women work full-time. Women have typically a dual role to play – as employees and as mothers. Most families need two incomes to reach a good standard of living, while the absence of one of these incomes (say, because of maternity leave) can mean that the family's basic needs will not be met. At present women with young children face a grater conflict between domestic and professional life than was the case in older generations, who could fully participate in the reproduction process while at the same time relying on full employment guaranteed by the state (Čermáková et al., 2000).

⁵ The third child in a family represents a high risk for falling into poverty (Rabušic, Mareš, 1996). About 67 per cent of families with three children are below the poverty line. From the point of view of subjective poverty, families with two or more children are in the Czech Republic much more likely to be below the poverty line than is the case in Sweden, for instance.

Attitudes towards possible fertility-related population policies

One of the objectives of both the PPA (1991) and the FFS (1997) surveys was to explore the attitudes of the Czech population towards population policies. Moreover, the data from 1991 and 1997 make it possible to trace changes in the population policy acceptance. In 1991, social-economic transformation of the Czech Republic was only starting and had a broad public support. Reductions of the state support to families were in line with the liberal principles that prevailed in the political sphere. While 1991 can be seen as the time of positive expectations, 1997 was the time of disillusionment. In 1997, the transformation problems resulted in an economic deceleration, accompanied by the implementation of several cutback measures. Sociological surveys show that during the 1990s the public opinion did not shift from state support towards individual forms of security; instead, a tendency to increase the role of the state has been evident. Families with children are often considered as the population group that was largely overlooked in the process of social transformation. Assuming that problems that emerged with the transformation had a negative impact on reproductive behaviour, it seems justifiable to explore whether concrete pro-population measures to mitigate these negative factors can have a positive influence on reproductive behaviour.

In both surveys, respondents were asked whether they are in favour of thirteen concrete hypothetical policy measures to make it easier for people to have and raise children (Kolorosová, 1995). Most of these were presented as improvements of the actually existing measures. Two measures were indeed hypothetical: flexible working hours for economically active parents with young children, and an allowance for parents who do not have a job because they prefer to take care of their children while they are young. The thirteen measures were divided into four groups: leave and work arrangements, financial incentives, child-care facilities, and infrastructure (Figure 2).

In general, most of the measures would be highly appreciated. In 1997 more than half of the respondents aged 20–39 years were strongly in favour of an improvement or an introduction of the six measures proposed. Overall, public support for population policies increased between 1991 and 1997. Policies related to maternity leave, the two main family benefits, and income tax for families have emerged as the most desired, like in 1991. This suggests that an improvement in these areas was perceived as urgently needed. Between 1991 and 1997 the most marked increase in public support was registered for “a substantial decrease in the cost of education”. In the first half of the 1990s all state subsidies for school-enrolled children (fare subsidies, subsidies for meals at school, and for child care facilities) that used to be available to all families were either abolished or limited to only low-income families. School fees were introduced in private schools. All this had a profound impact on family budgets.

Leave and work arrangements

The strongest support was given to improvements in maternity leave arrangements for working women with children. In comparison with the results of the PPA survey, the support for this measure increased inconsiderably in the FFS results. As mentioned above, parental leave was extended in 1990, and then again in 1995. Currently, the Czech Republic belongs among countries with the longest maternity and child-care leaves.

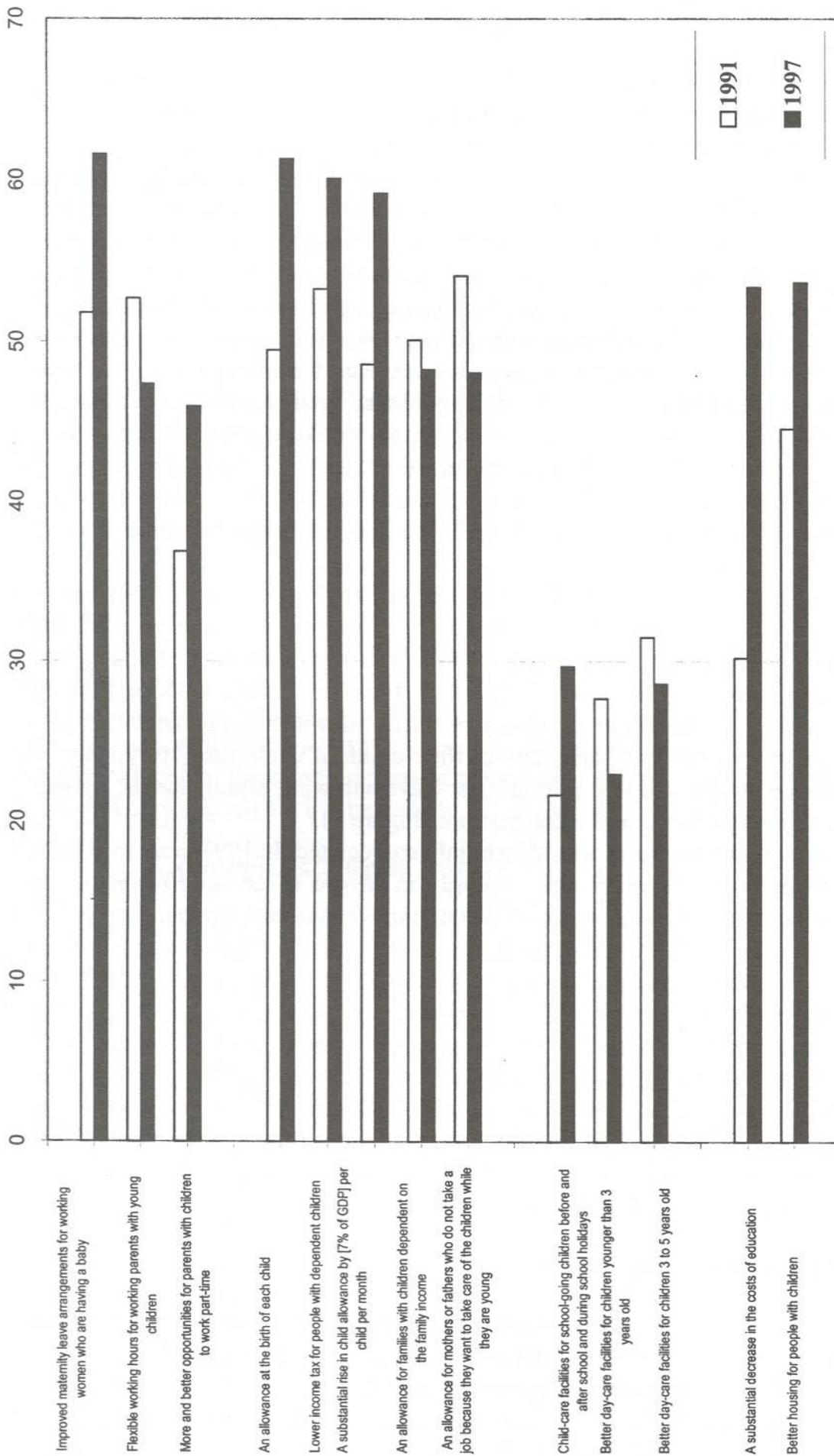


Figure 2. The percentage of those having a positive attitude towards family policy measures, PPA 1991, FFS 1997 (% of respondents aged 20–39 years strongly in favour towards the implementation)

However, financial conditions during both leaves have deteriorated as compared with the situation before 1990. Undoubtedly, financial improvement would be desirable.

A family is dependent on the incomes of both partners; therefore when one partner is on maternity or parental leave, most Czech families face a considerable decline in living standards. The income of most women declines while the expenses related to the child increase. For 28 weeks women are entitled to 69 per cent of their basic salary. However, there is a limit to this benefit due to which starting at a certain income level women receive the same financial contribution. This causes a considerable income-levelling among mothers on maternity leave and also a discrimination of women with higher incomes. In addition, until 1998 the limit of the basis for calculating this benefit did not change even if salaries increased. This only strengthened the discrimination of women with higher salaries. In 1998, the highest possible contribution to women on maternity leave corresponded to only 47 per cent of the average salary. Only since 1999 has this limit been annually increased, as a result of which the gap between the maximum contribution to women on maternity leave and the average salary has narrowed.

The benefit which is payable upon the termination of maternity leave to mothers or fathers who look after a child of no more than 4 years is also problematic. This benefit is fixed for all recipients, irrespective of previous income, and corresponds to only one fifth of the average salary. The law allows for an income from economic activity and a paternity benefit to be received at the same time, providing the income is not higher than the subsistence level. Due to this condition, gainful employment is practically ruled out because reaching the level of a low income enables one to work for just a few hours per week which is not popular among employers and therefore such jobs are in short supply. Both the level of the benefit and the limited possibility to have an extra income discriminate mainly more qualified women. There have been two proposals to solve this situation, but none of them has been implemented so far. First, the Czech Social-Democratic Party pushed for a regulation allowing parents with children aged up to three years to earn whatever amount in addition to the parental benefit. The aim was to harmonize the job market and family life. The only measure approved involved an increase of the income ceiling for parents with children from 1 to 1.5 multiple of the subsistence level. Second, the right-wing Freedom Union supports an increase of the parental benefit in order to make it a true substitute for salary. This benefit would be payable only in the first three years of the child's age. This proposal is justified: most women do not take advantage of the fourth year of maternity leave because employers are obliged to guarantee job to mothers only when their children are up to three years of age.

Lower proportions of the "strongly in favour" answers were registered for proposals referring to "more and better opportunities to work part-time" and "flexible working hours". At the present, part-time jobs or contract-based jobs – arrangements that enable to combine family and professional roles – are less attractive for women than fixed-term or continuing jobs (Hendrichová, Kuchařová, 1998). Part-time jobs are associated with lower salaries, thus potentially jeopardizing a family's economic stability.

Financial incentives

Support for financial incentives is evident: the second highest support was given to birth grant, tax relief and, substantial rise in child allowances. The demand for these

measures increased between 1991 and 1997. As mentioned above, the real value of child allowances declined noticeably during the first half of the 1990s. The proportion of child allowances in family incomes declined markedly, and at the same time the average burden due to taxation increased for most families. Moreover, the concentration of family benefits on low-income groups meant that the middle strata lost some of their benefits. The restriction of benefits thus disproportionately affected the middle-income categories. Those are in fact very often close to the threshold for qualifying for the benefit. The measure “an allowance for families with children dependent on the family income” registered less support than the other financial incentives, and between 1991 and 1997 its popularity even decreased. This may suggest a negative impact of the introduction of means-tested child allowances on middle-income families since 1996. The aim of the social-democratic government was to abolish the dependency of child allowances on the family income and to make this benefit available to all families. However, the government only succeeded in increasing the birth grant by 25 per cent since 2001. As survey results suggest, this pro-natalist measure was in line with the public desire. All families have remained entitled to the birth grant.

Some 60 per cent of respondents were strongly in favour of lower income taxes for people with dependent children. This indicates that the income support to families should be improved. Income tax policies affect family incomes and can influence family decision related to women’s participation in the labour force.⁶ The existing tax arrangements in the Czech Republic are friendly to women’s participation in the labour force and offer concession to families with children. Tax allowances to persons with dependent children reducing the taxable income is provided for each child. However, this tax allowance is insignificant and was not increased since 1998. Moreover, taxpayers are entitled to a tax allowance for a low-income spouses, a measure is similar to the allowance for dependent children. It appears that these concessions benefit middle-income rather than low-income households. That is why the social-democratic government intended to abolish this tax relief and wanted to use the financial resources thus saved to increase child allowances. On the other hand, the liberals and the Christian-democrats in the parliament wanted to enforce the pooling of the income of spouses for tax purposes. No parliamentary party succeeded in enforcing its measure.

Child-care facilities

At the beginning of the 1990s there was a post-communist philosophy to “de-institutionalise” children and support parents who wanted to stay at home with children. It was expected that the transition towards market economy would give women the opportunity to be full-time parents. The high public support for leave arrangements and the decreasing supply of better child-care facilities for pre-school children suggest that women want to stay at home with their small children. Almost all nursery schools were closed down by the late 1990s. At the present, the number of children that can be enrolled

⁶ Personal income tax systems in which the tax unit is the individual rather than the household tend to promote female employment, especially when the pooling of the income of spouses for tax purposes is not allowed. In contrast, tax systems based on family units and pooling create incentives for the lower income earner in the household, most often women, to take other than full time work or withdraw from the labour market entirely.

in nursery schools corresponds to only 5 per cent of the corresponding quantum in 1990 (Čermáková, 2000). Many educated women are thus forced to spend more time looking after their children than they originally planned because they do not have enough funds to pay a private baby-sitter. In such a way they gradually lose their qualifications and find it more difficult to return to their jobs after a three-year hiatus. As far as kindergartens are concerned, their number declined during the 1990s, mainly due to declines in fertility. About 92 per cent of the children aged 3–5 years are still enrolled in kindergartens (Čermáková, 2000). This high rate of attendance reflects women's tendency to resume employment immediately after their children reach three years of age, and thus to secure a second income for the family.

Is it possible to influence the course of fertility through population policies?

The evaluation of fertility-related policies raises the following questions: What would be the overall impact of the measures considered? Which measures are likely to have a pro-natalist impact? On the basis of the survey results, it is possible to quantify how strong an effect a measure is likely to have. It must be emphasized however that such quantifications refer only to intentions and plans regarding future fertility. This means that we cannot be certain whether an actual implementation of such measures would produce corresponding changes in fertility. The expected ultimate fertility has been estimated on the basis of the total number of children that respondents intended to have at the time of the survey. For those who did not want another child or were uncertain, we inquired whether an introduction of new favourable policies would change their opinions and would make them consider having additional children. This fertility effect has been quantified. The results are displayed in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Potential impact of new family policies on future fertility, PPA 1991, FFS 1997 (age group 20–39 years)

		Average number of children intended without policy changes	Average number of children intended after policy changes	Effect in percentages	Percentage of those changing their intentions	
					all persons	no "intention" persons
Czechoslovakia 1991		2.06	2.19	6.6	14	34
Czech Republic 1997		2.00	2.20	10.0	20	32
Czech Republic 1997	women	2.00	2.22	10.8	17	28
	men	2.00	2.17	8.4	22	34

Table 3. Potential impact of new family policies on future fertility, FFS 1997 (*age group 20–39 years*)

		Average number of children intended					
		women			men		
		without policy changes	after policy changes	effect in percentages	without policy changes	after policy changes	effect in percentages
Age group	20-34	1.91	1.99	3.8	1.85	1.94	5.2
	25-29	1.96	2.23	13.5	1.85	2.00	8.1
	30-34	1.98	2.28	15.2	2.11	2.27	7.8
	35-39	2.15	2.35	9.7	2.09	2.31	10.3
Education	low	2.07	2.29	11.0	2.02	2.20	8.9
	medium	1.96	2.17	10.5	2.03	2.21	9.1
	high	1.81	2.02	11.1	1.87	1.95	4.2
Number of children	childless	1.68	1.71	1.6	1.36	1.44	5.2
	one child	1.56	1.80	15.2	1.72	1.86	8.4
	two children	2.09	2.40	14.8	2.14	2.39	11.5
	three children	3.07	3.25	5.8	3.12	3.25	4.3

The survey results suggest that fertility can, to some extent, be influenced by population policy measures. Almost one third of respondents who originally did not intend to have another child would change their plans (Table 2). Comparing the results of the 1991 PPA survey (Kamaras, Kocourková, Moors, 1998) and the 1997 FFS survey, the potential impact of population policies seems similar. The hypothetical completed fertility rate would reach on average 2.2 children per woman. This would generate an increase by 10 percent as suggested by the 1997 data. The effect would be small, but population policies would help to keep completed fertility rate around the replacement level. Some differences between men and women have been detected. Women appear to be slightly more susceptible to family-policy changes than men. There is a slightly higher probability that women would reconsider having another child more often than men would.

The hypothetical impact of population policies has been analysed in relation to the respondent's age, education and the number of children (Table 3). Results show that the impact depends mostly on birth order and the respondent's age. The highest impact of possible new measures has been registered for respondents aged 25–34 years who have one or two children. In accordance with the experience made with the pro-natalist measures of the 1970s, an increase of second and third births could follow. Virtually no effect has been recorded for childless persons. It is easier to induce those who already have a child to have yet another child, than to affect reproductive behaviour of childless persons

who did never plan any children. Population policies may particularly contribute to the achievement of a two-child family – a reproductive model that is preferred by the majority of those who plan a family. Providing that a couple wishes to start a family, it can be assumed that sooner or latter a child will be born. However, the decision to have the second or the third child is more influenced by external conditions. Unfavourable conditions may be perceived as obstacles impeding the fulfilment of such plans. That is why population policies may play a role. The decision to remain childless is more connected with the individuals' value systems. For somebody oriented mainly towards professional carrier, it is unlikely that a population policy would change his/her mind. While the pro-natalist measures of the 1970s increased primarily fertility of those aged 20–24 years, the effect of hypothetical measures would be greatest among those aged 25–34 years. This corresponds to the postponement of childbearing among younger generations observable since the beginning of the 1990s. Surprisingly, no differences have been found in relation to education. The effect would be the same for all educational categories and the differences in completed fertility rates by education would not change.

Another question to be answered is what kind of population-related measures would have the greatest fertility impact. Respondents were asked to set priorities (maximum three measures) regarding the proposed options. Demand for financial support to families has emerged as the strongest one. The most preferred measures would be “a substantial rise in child allowances”. This measure has been chosen by more than one third of respondents. Both women and men have set priorities in the same order. They have given the second preference to “better housing” and the third to “improvement of maternity leave arrangements”. This implies that respondents primarily desire an increased state support to families, both in terms of cash benefits (like child allowances) and subsidies (such as for housing). Furthermore, maternity leave arrangements should be improved as the financial compensation during both maternity and child-care leaves has been decreasing since the beginning of the 1990s.

Preferences vary by family size and educational level (Table 4). Child allowances seem to be most important for families with one or more children, as well as for less educated respondents. Childless people have given a high preference to birth grants. Accordingly, as mentioned above, the increase in birth grants implemented in 2001 might motivate childless people to start a family. “An allowance for parents who take care of children instead of working” is a priority for families with three children. As regards leave/work arrangements and child-care facilities, the differences are not so great as one would expect. The only exception is “flexible working hours for working parents with young children” which was favoured by 42 percent of more educated respondents but only by 22 percent of less educated respondents. This measure, if properly implemented, would make it easier for more educated women to combine family and professional lives.

While only 20 per cent of the respondents who did not plan another child would change their mind should the desirable policies be implemented, many more respondents answered that the hypothetical circumstances would make it easier for them to have the number of children they want (almost 70 per cent). One third of respondents would have the wanted child sooner. Population policies would be more relevant if their main aim is to help people to fulfil their fertility plans. As Table 5 suggests, the hypothetical measures would help especially more educated women to have the intended number of children.

Most educated women, like the others, want to have two children; however, they are more likely than the other educational categories to postpone childbearing into higher age. Thereby, more educated women face a greater risk that the children they postpone will never be born. "To have the next child sooner" has been indicated primarily by childless women and men. Population policies would help them to start a family. Finally, less educated women appear to be slightly more willing than their more educated counterparts to change fertility plans.

Table 4. Policy priorities, a maximum of three measures from possible thirteen could be indicated as priority, FFS 1997 (women aged 20–39 years, percentage of those who indicated the measure as priority)

	by number of children				by education		
	childless	one	two	three	low	medium	high
Leave and work arrangements							
Improved maternity leave arrangements for working women who are having a baby	32	31	28	27	30	29	28
Flexible working hours for working parents with young children	23	26	29	21	22	27	42
More and better opportunities for parents with children to work part-time	10	16	17	11	13	15	16
Financial incentives							
A substantial rise in child allowance by [7% of GDP] per child per month	30	39	39	41	40	36	28
An allowance for families with children dependent on the family income	21	21	15	21	21	18	17
Lower income tax for people with dependent children	17	17	17	18	17	18	18
An allowance for mothers or fathers who do not take a job because they want to take care of the children while they are young	17	17	21	23	19	20	17
An allowance at the birth of each child	16	8	6	7	10	8	7
Better child-care facilities							
Better day-care facilities for children younger than 3 years old	4	3	2	2	3	2	3
Better day-care facilities for children 3 to 5 years old	4	6	4	6	5	4	10
Child-care facilities for school-going children before and after school and during school holidays	3	5	4	4	3	5	5
Infrastructure							
A substantial decrease in the costs of education	23	23	27	31	25	26	22
Better housing for people with children	40	32	23	30	30	31	24

Table 5. Consequences of introduction of desirable measures on personal fertility decision, FFS 1997 (percentage of those aged 20–39 years who answered “yes” within a given category)

Number of children	to have the “intended” number of children		to have the next child sooner		possibly/probably decide to have a child	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
childless	67.4	61.2	30.7	34.1	2.7	7.1
one child	63.1	59.1	24.4	22.0	23.8	14.5
two children	57.2	58.7	10.4	14.5	30.8	24.6
three children	66.1	44.2	13.7	5.8	17.7	13.5
Education	to have the “intended” number of children		to have the next child sooner		possibly/probably decide to have a child	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
low	61.7	58.3	19.3	16.9	22.8	18.0
medium	61.4	55.3	19.0	21.1	20.7	18.4
high	66.7	59.4	18.2	25.0	20.2	7.8

Impact of introduction of desirable measures on fertility decision of respondents

Previous results have indicated that the implementation of certain measures would rather assist individuals in having the number of children they desire than to make them wish another, previously unplanned child. However, population policies are only one part of a set of factors affecting fertility decisions of individuals. Using of a theoretical model of fertility intentions in which these factors are included could help to answer to the question: “To what extent can the desired measures, if implemented, increase the chances that a child (planned or unplanned) would be born?”

The analytical framework developed for the PPA survey (Moors, 1995) has been used to determine the components of the theoretical model. Consequently, a method of multivariate analysis was used to explore the influence of determinants of this model. In the model of reproductive behaviour selected, the relationships between personal characteristics, value patterns, subjective norms, life-styles, family formation, and social policies are hypothesised (see the scheme in Moors, 1995). Given the objective of our analysis, a relatively simple model has been adopted, assuming that fertility intentions are dependent on the following three main components: (1) personal characteristics related to life-cycle, (2) general life values and their perceived relationship with parenthood, (3) social context and political climate in general, including the acceptance of population policy measures.

The effect of the implementation of a hypothetical measure has been modelled separately for two groups of respondents: those who declared that they do not intend to

have another child, and those who declared an intention to have another child (Table 6). Accordingly, two situations have been distinguished for the entry of the dependent variables. First, the probability that an unplanned child would be born was constructed

Table 6. Impact of introduction of desirable measures on respondent's fertility decision, FFS 1997 (women aged 15–39 years)

		Possibly/probably to have a(nother) child	Easier to have the "intended" number of children
Age group	15-19	1.00	1.00
	20-24	1.66	1.76**
	25-29	2.26**	1.27
	30-34	1.59	1.86
	35-39	0.82	2.60
Number of children	0	1.00	1.00
	1	2.06**	2.11**
	2	1.09	1.19
	3	0.49	0.80
Education	low	1.00	1.00
	medium	1.08	1.05
	high	0.94	1.79*
Employment status	active	1.00	1.00
	housewife	1.11	0.87
	unemployed	0.44**	0.59**
Partnership	alone	1.00	1.00
	with a partner	1.11	1.05
Religion	no	1.00	1.00
	yes	1.41**	1.04
Value of children	low	1.00	1.00
	medium	1.69*	1.30
	medium-high	1.72*	1.35
	high	2.13**	2.41***
Maternity leave arrangements		1.54**	1.81***
Flexible working hours		1.63***	1.50**
Opportunities to work part-time		1.82***	2.18***
Lower income tax		1.02	1.93***
Family allowance dependent on income		1.19	2.17***
Allowance for parent taking care of a child		1.77***	1.87***
Substantial rise in child allowances		1.35*	1.55**
Decrease in the cost of education		1.11	1.72***
Better housing		1.40*	2.49***

Notes:

Binary logistic regression method

Regression coefficient are expressed in ods

The excluded category for each variable has an add of 1.00

* significant at the 0.1 level

** significant at the 0.05 level

*** significant at the 0.01 level

Methodological comments:

The translation of the components of the theoretical model into empirical indicators was constrained by the available data. Due to the limited data for men, only data for women were included in analysis. The following independent variables were used: respondent's age (five age groups: 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39); number of children (zero, one, two, three); educational level (three categories: low, medium, high); employment status (economically active, housewife, unemployed); partnership (with and without a partner), religion (plays a role, does not play a role); the value of children indicator (see Palomba 1995); and priorities regarding population policies. Palomba (1995) summarises the various statements about the role of children in the parents' lives with an indicator termed "value of children" (VOC). This is calculated as the sum of the scores obtained in each statement (strongly agree = 5, strongly disagree = 1). The indicator has a minimum value of 5 and a maximum of 35. The four categories of the VOC indicator used in our analysis have the following value ranges: 0–19, 20–24, 25–28, 29–35.

All variables were entered at the same time in the logistic regression, using the "Enter" method. The results are presented in the form of odds in Table 6. Odds are defined as the ratio of two probabilities: that a particular outcome will occur, and that it will not occur. The odds are in essence a different way of expressing regression coefficients. Since all our independent variables are categorical, the odds associated with them can only be interpreted within categories. For example, the odds associated with the variable "age 20–24" can only be interpreted by referring to the odds associated with other age groups. Odds smaller than 1 indicate that the "likelihood" of occurrence is smaller than that of the reference category (everything else being constant).

based on the agreement with the following two statements: "I would reconsider the possibility of having another child or probably decide to have another child". Secondly, the probability that a planned child would be born was constructed based on the agreement with the statement: "It would make it easier for me to have the number of children I intend to have." The binary logistic regression – the multivariate technique selected for this analysis – is commonly used for estimating probabilities of events to occur (Řeháková, 2000). Providing the desired measures would be actually introduced, this model can thus help to predict: (1) whether a child would or would not be born to those who did not plan a child, (2) whether a fertility plan would or would not be achieved.

As Table 6 suggests, most of the desired measures would have more significant effect if their aim would be to facilitate people to have as many children as they wish. The chances that woman would fundamentally change her fertility intentions significantly increase only in case of introduction of a special allowance for parents taking care of children instead of working outside the home or measures that would facilitate a greater compatibility of work-related and parental duties (flexible working hours and opportunities to work part-time). Such outcomes indicate that one of the possibility to increase fertility could be to recognize taking-care of children at home as a paid job. Furthermore, fertility decisions of a woman become increasingly connected with the compatibility of her profession and her maternal duties. Growing professional demands of employers could significantly reduce fertility plan of individuals.

The role of children in the parents' lives appears to be relevant determinant of the acceptance of pro-natalist measures. Chance that a planned child would be born increases significantly for women who obtained the highest scores of hypothetical indicator "value of children" as compared to respondents in the other corresponding categories. Besides,

women who did not intend to have other children and at the same time attribute less importance to children in their life might change their decisions if desired measures were implemented. Thus, results indicate that pro-natalist measures would particularly influence reproductive behaviour of women who consider children to have very positive value in their lives. Nevertheless, those who consider children to have rather minor value in her life could be influenced as well. As regards life-cycle characteristics, age, number of children, employment status, education and religion appear to be significant determinants. On average, respondents aged 25–29 years with one child and those who consider religion to have an important role in their lives tend to decide to have another child more often than their statistical counterparts. As regards the possibility to facilitate women to have as many children as they wish, respondents aged 20–24, high educated and having one child tend to be more susceptible to implementation of desirable measures as compared to respondents in the other corresponding categories. Finally, unemployment significantly decreases the chance that a child (both planned or unplanned) would be born.

Conclusion

A decrease in the level of period fertility together with postponement of childbearing appear to be in line with the shifts in reproductive behaviour known as the second demographic transition. However, evaluation of changes in reproductive behaviour that have taken place in the Czech Republic during the 1990s should be perceived both in the context of changes in value orientation of individuals and in the context of the impacts of socio-economic transformation on families. Postponement of childbearing seems to have been protracted as favourable external conditions for childbearing have not yet arrived. The fact that the state has given up its responsibility to support families and that families have to bear an ever-growing part of the costs related to child-rearing was negatively perceived. Survey results showed that implementation of measures that would partly lessen the adverse impacts of such restrictions would have a positive impact on future fertility development.

In general, most of the pro-natalist measures would be highly appreciated. In line with the shift in value preferences of the Czech population – from liberal values to social democratic ones – public support for population policies increased between 1991 and 1997. The most desired measure would be an improvement of financial incentives like birth grant, tax relief, and child allowance that are intended to compensate parents for the expenditures related to upbringing of children. Because most families need two incomes to reach acceptable standard of living, they feel threatened when women stay on child-care leave with insignificant financial compensation.

In the Czech Republic the previous system of extensive state support to all families was significantly reduced during the 1990s and oriented primarily to low-income families. Measures relating to families only became an element of social policy. Such policy indeed prevent most of the poor families to fall below subsistence level. Nevertheless, governments seem did not pay enough attention to creating sufficient conditions for a reinforcement of own sources of families. This concern mainly the middle-income families that suffer the most from the restrictions in family benefits and increasing tax.

Recent development of family policies in Western European countries has shown a growing tendency to improve the support for working mothers. Reconciliation of work and parental responsibilities together with addressing the gender equity have become dominant issues. By contrast, at present Czech women with young children seem to face a greater conflict between parental duties and professional life than was the case in older generations of women. Abolishment of public child care services for children under 3 years or substantial increase in fees for their use is not favourable to the labour force participation of women with young children. This is negatively perceived in particular by more educated women and thus it may contribute to the protracted postponement of childbearing.

The reason why young people postpone starting a family and giving birth to the desired number of children differ according to their education, career development, economic reasons or life values. Survey results confirmed that demands of respondents as regards the state support vary by age, family size and educational level. This means that family-related policies should include differentiated approach which would provide individuals with different options to choose from.

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POTENCIÁLNÍ VLIV PROPOPULAČNÍ POLITIKY NA VÝVOJ PLODNOSTI V ČESKÉ REPUBLICE: ANALÝZA ZALOŽENÁ NA PRŮZKUMECH PROVEDENÝCH V DEVADESÁTÝCH LETECH

Resumé

V souvislosti s prudkým poklesem úhrnné plodnosti, ke kterému došlo v České republice v 90. letech, nabylo na významu zkoumání účinnosti pro-populačních opatření. Jedním z vhodných nástrojů umožňující odhadnout potenciální dopad hypoteticky přijatých opatření je šetření populačního klimatu. V rámci mezinárodního projektu „Family and Fertility Survey“ (FFS) Český statistický úřad uskutečnil v České republice v roce 1997 „Šetření reprodukce a rodiny“. Dotazník použitý při tomto šetření zahrnoval vybrané otázky z jiného mezinárodního šetření „Population Policy Acceptance“ (PPA), které v Československu zorganizovala katedra demografie a geodemografie v roce 1991. Porovnání výsledků obou šetření umožnilo částečné zachycení vývoje populačního klimatu v 90. letech. V obou šetřeních bylo mimo jiné zjišťováno, do jaké míry by respondenti uvítali zavedení konkrétních opatření usnadňující péči a výchovu dětí, kterým z nabízených opatření by dávali přednost a jak by zavedení preferovaného opatření ovlivnilo jejich reprodukční plány, tj. zda by bylo pro ně snazší mít tolik dětí, kolik zamýšleli, zda by měli další plánované dítě dříve či zda by se pravděpodobně rozhodli mít další neplánované dítě.

Zatímco úhrnná plodnost od roku 1996 zůstává pod hodnotou 1,2 dítěte na jednu ženu, podle dat ze šetření FFS by převážná většina mladých lidí chtěla mít dvě děti. Výsledky týkající se vlivu populační politiky na reprodukční chování naznačují, že opatření mohou být do určité míry efektivní tam, kde pomáhají zmírnit rozdíl mezi plánovaným a dosud realizovaným počtem dětí. Potvrdilo se, že populace by zavádění opatření populační politiky vnímala především jako vytváření podmínek, které by jim umožnilo mít tolik dětí, kolik si přejí. Téměř

70 % respondentů uvedlo, že v případě zavedení jimi preferovaného opatření, by bylo pro ně snazší mít tolik dětí, kolik zamýšleli. Pouze necelých 20 % z dotazovaných by uvažovalo o narození neplánovaného dítěte.

Z výsledků vyplývá, že veřejnost by nejvíce uvítala zvýšení finanční podpory rodinám s dětmi. Mezi preferovanými opatřeními se nejvíce vyskytovalo zvýšení rodinných přídatků a daňové úlevy, a zlepšení podmínek rodičů na mateřské či rodičovské dovolené. Nárůst podpory veřejnosti pro zavádění pro-natalitních opatření mezi roky 1991 a 1997 naznačuje, že omezování státní pomoci rodinám s dětmi v první polovině 90. let bylo negativně pocíťováno a pravděpodobně přispělo k odkladu narození dětí do doby, než budou vytvořeny příznivější podmínky. Zmírnění negativních dopadů transformace prostřednictvím přijetí konkrétních opatření s cílem snížit náklady rodin na péči a výchovu dětí by mohlo do určité míry přispět ke realizaci odkládaného rodičovství. Pro-natalitní opatření by nejvíce ovlivnila rozhodování žen ve věkové skupině 25–34 let a pravděpodobně by přispěla ke zvýšení plodnosti druhého pořadí.