
The Main Features of Population Development in the Czech Republic during the Transformation of Society

LUDMILA FIALOVÁ*

Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague

MILAN KUČERA*

Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, Faculty of Sciences of the Charles University, Prague

Abstract: The behaviour of the population of the Czech Republic has been changing since 1991. The changes have resulted in a considerable decrease in marriages and births, and a slight fall in mortality rates. The decline in the number of newly-weds and new-born children can be attributed to significant structural changes in society connected with the transformation of the reproductive model established in the post-war era. The changes have been initiated most notably by the younger generation, within which certain trends diverge. Some young people continue to enter into marriage at an early age, and half of first children were the product of pre-marital conception. Another part of this generation has been postponing both marriage and childbearing, and this portion has been growing rapidly. The present decline in marriages appears to be due to two factors: the higher age at which people are marrying for the first time, and falling marriage rates in general (the increasing proportion of never-married persons in the population). Similarly, the decline in births was caused not only by an earlier trend towards lower fertility but also a lower proportion of people living in wedlock. Hence the expectation that in the second half of the 1990s a new reproductive model will gradually come into being. This will include a higher age at first marriage and lower fertility in general. This development will result in changes in population structure, and, especially, in the structure of households and families.

Czech Sociological Review, 1997, Vol. 5 (No. 1: 93-111)

In any country changes in the population are the result of complex interrelationships between the bio-social structure of the population, its demographic behaviour and its environment. Demographic research aims to trace not only the main features of population reproduction but also the ways in which it is changing. The primary task is to ascertain the extent to which this is due to internal demographic factors, i.e. primarily the age structure of the population, and to what extent it is due to changes in the environment. The population development in the Czech Republic in the first half of the 1990s shows that people's demographic behaviour has changed decisively under the influence of external factors. This has led to a rapid transformation of the reproductive patterns developed over the previous forty years.

*) Direct all correspondence to: RNDr. Ludmila Fialová, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Jiřská 1, 110 00 Praha 1, phone +420 2 24 22 09 79, ext. 291, fax +420 2 24 22 02 78, resp. ing. Milan Kučera, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, Faculty of Sciences of the Charles University, Albertov 6, 128 43 Praha 2, phone +420 2 24 91 54 72-8, ext. 2197, fax +420 2 24 91 58 17.

1. Before 1989

During the 1950s the Czech Republic attained a relatively stable model of demographic behaviour which lasted until the end of the 1980s. This period was marked by a universally low age of marriage for both men and women, with virtually every man and woman spending at least some years of their life in the married state. The average age of men on their first marriage was 24, while brides were usually under the age of 23. Throughout this period there were fewer than 5% of men and 3% of women aged 45-49 who had never married. Virtually all women married and usually at an early age. Very young marriages, often contracted because the woman was pregnant, were not very stable. In the late 1980s only one-fifth of marriages lasted for ten years. Some of those who divorced soon remarried, and these represented more than one-fifth of all marriages.

The changes in the economic situation of both families as a whole and of their individual members undoubtedly contributed to the loosening of marriage ties. The almost total shift of economic activity into the hands of the state meant that the family ceased to be a production unit. All young people found a job after completing compulsory schooling or professional training. Women kept their jobs after marriage and the birth of their children, with maternity leave and the right to return to the same job in the same place guaranteed by law (in 1972 this was fixed at two years after the birth of the youngest child). Most women, however, worked because their income was necessary to maintain the family's standard of living. Only a very small proportion of women stayed at home with their children: 95% of women aged 25-44 were working, even when they were looking after small children at the same time.

The model of a two-child family prevailed throughout this period: in 1991 almost two-thirds of women in their first marriage had two children after ten years of marriage, 14% had one child, 15% three children, and only 3% were childless. Although there was a slow but steady decrease in the average number of children per family, almost all women did have children, so that the fertility rate stayed at 1.96 children per woman throughout the 1980s. Most children were, however, born shortly after marriage and the average age of mothers at the birth of their first child was under 23 and under 26 for the second. This early child-bearing was also linked with the frequency of pre-marital sex, since due to the low level of use of effective contraceptive measures, up to 55% of first children were conceived outside marriage. The most common means of preventing further children after the last wanted one was abortion, which was legalised in 1958. Abortion was a more frequent outcome of a third pregnancy than was childbirth, and accounted for up to 42% of pregnancies. The percentage of children born outside wedlock remained very low (around 5%) and it was only at the end of the 1980s that it rose as high as 8%. This was a clear sign of the recognition of marriage as an institution and of the infrequency of non-marital cohabitation among young people.

Families with dependent children were privileged by the state. Married people had a better chance of obtaining a flat than single ones, and families with children were given preference over those without. In this respect it was better for those intending to marry in any case to do so early and have children soon, since this meant they became eligible for the low-interest loans intended to help newly wed couples to set up their flats, for cheap family holidays, and so on. [Frejka 1980]. At the end of the 1980s it was already exceptional to find different families sharing a flat unless by choice; young couples, particularly those with one or two children, generally had their own flats, although parents

frequently helped them financially in obtaining these. Early marriage and parenthood led to a smaller age gap between generations.

Another important factor in the population structure was the relatively high mortality rate, which reflected the increasing backwardness of medical care, the worsening environment, unhealthy living and eating habits, and particularly the low level of responsibility that individuals were prepared to take for their own health. As a result, life expectancy at the beginning of the 1960s was around 67 years for men and 74 for women, i.e. 5-6 years less than in developed countries. The rising mortality rate among men meant that considerably more women reached old age and above the age of 70 the majority of these were widows.

The Czech Republic shared these characteristics with the other countries of Eastern Europe [Rychtaříková 1994]. At the same time, up to the early 1960s the growth of the population in the Czech Lands was basically similar to that in a number of other European countries, particularly from the south and west [Kučera 1994, Pavlík et al. 1986].¹ The normal way the family functioned (the nuclear family in which children became independent on marriage, the attempt to provide for one's old age) was similar, as was family size, since the move to planned parenthood came at approximately the same time as in other Western European countries [Horská et al. 1990].

In the immediate post-war period almost all European countries demonstrated a common pattern of population growth, regardless of their political orientation. This was the rise in both marriage and birth rates which became known as the 'baby boom'. The age at first marriage fell throughout Europe, particularly among women, and at the same time the percentage of people marrying increased. The mortality rate fell sharply, leading to a long-term rise in life expectancy. Some countries did however exhibit certain concrete features which were at variance with the trend. In the early 1960s two distinct trends began to emerge on the European continent: one characteristic of the communist countries and the other for the rest. Demographic behaviour in the Czech Republic became typical of that in the communist countries of Eastern Europe [Monier, Rychtaříková 1990].

In the countries of Western Europe the marriage rates began to fall in the mid-1960s, with steadily fewer people, both single and previously married, opting for matrimony. Living together outside marriage did not however preclude children and the number of children born outside wedlock rose. Sociologists and demographers linked the rising number of illegitimate children and the increase in families that were in formal terms incomplete to the overall changes in society. They pointed to the fact that these children were generally raised in families with two parents, even if these families were looser than in the past [Sullerot 1992]. Relations between partners, whether legal or informal, were growing less and less stable. On the advice of the experts most countries simplified divorce procedures and the rate of divorce rose [Haskey 1993].

¹) This includes similar development in earlier periods (particularly in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th) in terms of marriages (older age at marriage with men marrying first at around 27-28 and women at 24-25 years of age, 95% of men and 91% of women ever married), and births (after the end of the demographic wave of the mid-1930s the long-term number of children per women fell to 1.6 and one-fifth to one-quarter of all women remained childless, while 12% of children were born outside matrimony).

These changes led to a permanent long-term fall in the birth rate so that by the mid-1970s in some countries the total fertility rate fell under 1.5, i.e. well under the rate required to keep the population stable. Together with the rising life expectancy this brought about a fundamental change in the age structures of Western European countries. In some countries the percentage of people over the age of 65 rose above 15%, only slightly less than the number of children under the age of 15.

This change in the dynamics of population growth in the majority of western countries has been so persistent, widespread and fundamental that it has come to be called the 'second demographic transition' [Kaa 1987]. It was clear from the start that some of the communist countries of Eastern Europe had a number of features in common with this development [Tabah 1980: 359]. This is based on a change in the style of living, culture and ideas of contemporary society, primarily the new emphasis on the aims and interests of the individual, on the right to set one's own aims and the path to attain them. Economists also point out that marriage and the number of children in a family is more and more often the result of a choice (albeit partly subconscious) between possible gains and necessary costs [Becker 1981], within the context of increasing demands on the standard of living achievable by individuals.

2. Changes in Demographic Behaviour After 1990

2.1 Changing Patterns of Marriage and Divorce

The first noteworthy change in the demographic behaviour of the Czechs was a fall in the number of marriages as early as 1991. There were 19,000 fewer marriages than in 1990 and only a small part of the fall can be explained by anticipated marriages the previous year. Since then the number of marriages has fallen each year, falling below 55,000 (5.3 marriages per 1,000 inhabitants) in 1995, i.e. only two-thirds of the 1989 figure. This was despite a 15% rise in the total number of those aged 17 to 29, with the 17-24 age group up by 21%, as the numerically strong group of those born between 1974 and 1979 reached maturity. The marriage rate, however, fell sharply.

The likelihood that a single person will marry fell by 50% for the age group with the highest rate of marriage (which in 1989-1991 was men aged 22-24 and women aged 19-23). The peak in marriages shifted to the 23-26 age group for men and 22-24 for women. There was however little change in the average age of those marrying for the first time, which rose by 1.6 years for men to 26.2 and for women by 2.1 years to 23.9 years. The sharpest fall was in the number of very young men marrying, but it was the drop among those aged 21 and 22 which was most significant for the overall development. The predicted number of those remaining unmarried at the age of 30 rose to 42% of men and 29% of women [Rychtaříková 1995: 160-162]. A large percentage of young people are postponing marrying and it is this that has caused the sharp drop in the number of marriages and the slight rise in the average age at marriage.

There have been no major changes in patterns of divorce since 1989. The number of marriages being dissolved has remained approximately the same as at the end of the 1980s (around 30,000 per year), when it stood at 1.2% of all existing marriages and 37% of marriage initial. Divorce was highest among people aged 20-24, after two or three years of marriage cohort. This was very similar to the previous period. The number of divorced persons in the population did however rise, reaching 12% of men and 14% of women aged 40-49 in 1995.

The rate of remarriage by divorced or widowed persons fell (by one-third and one-fifth respectively), and so both the number and the percentage of people under the age of thirty in existing marriages declined relatively quickly. The fall was greatest in the 20-24 age group, in which the number of married men fell by 7 percentage points and the number of married women by 13 between 1991 and 1995. The percentage of people in the 25-29 age group was also lower in 1995 (by 6% for men and 4% for women).

It is probable that the number and percentage of people preferring to live together without marrying has risen at the same time as the marriage rate has fallen. Research carried out in December 1995 showed that 8 out of 100 complete families fell into this group² and this is also borne out by the rise in the number of children born outside marriage.

2.2 Changes in Reproductive Patterns

The social transformation began in a period when the birth rate was falling slowly with fewer third or later children, so that the number of children planned by a family settled at around two. The birth rate had already fallen below two children per woman but it was only from 1991 onwards that it fell much below 1.9, and even in 1991 a majority of children (59%) were born to mothers under 25. The change came in 1992, since when there has been an ever-accelerating decline in the number of births, initially only of first children, but since 1994 also of second children, representing a significant drop in the absolute number of children born. Since 1992 the slow decrease in the birth rate has changed into a sharp fall.

The drop in the total fertility rate from 1.86 in 1991 to 1.28 in 1995 was due largely to the reduced fertility of women under the age of 25. It is only since 1994 that the birth rate among women aged 20-25 has been falling, and that of older women has remained virtually unchanged. It is largely young women who have begun to limit their children and the fall in the number of young people marrying has undoubtedly had a marked effect on the number of children being born.

Had the number of children born to married couples remained at the 1990 level for each age group, 102,800 births could have been expected in 1995, i.e. 16,600 fewer than in 1990. This means that the fall in the number of married women from 1990 to 1995 would on its own represent a 14% reduction in the number of children born. In fact only 81,100 children were born to married couples in 1995, i.e. 32% less than in 1990. The second part of this reduction (21,700, 18%) shows the fall in the number of women having children. The drop of 38,300 children born within marriage between 1990 and 1995 was therefore 57% due to the decrease in the number of children born to married women and 43% to the fall in the number of married women. The effect of this reduction in the number of married women is increasing year by year as the generation of women postponing marriage reach the age at which women earlier most often had children.

This fall in the number of births was originally linked with the fall in the number of marriages, particularly among young single people. This postponement of marriage brought the postponement of a couple's first child and in 1994 and 1995 also the second child. In 1995 19,700 fewer first children were born, with 50% of this reduction due to

²) Information from the IVVM survey M95-29 "Marital Status, Parenthood and Cohabitation," 18. 1. 1996.

the general fall in the birth rate. With second children the proportion of the total drop (12,800 fewer children) attributable to the falling birth rate was 64% and among third or later children (5,700 fewer) it was 61%. The fall in the number of married women accounted for 59% of the fall in number of first children, 28% of second children and 13% of third or later children. It is clear that fewer married women have been having children than in the past.

The relatively young women in the 24-29 age group who married at an average age of 22 around the turn of the decade have already had one or two children, but younger women have been postponing marriage and, once married, childbearing. Older women (in 1995 the group aged 28-30) have already basically finished childbearing and when they do have children it is to 'round out' their families. In this case there is no distinction between women in their first marriage who have a second child, or those in a second or later marriage who are more often having a third child with their new partner. While childbearing among this group does play a certain role it is that of the young women which is decisive in the overall pattern of reproduction. It can be supposed that the marked fall in the number of children born within marriage since 1992 is to some extent a contemporary phenomenon of postponing marriage and childbirth to a later age. This is borne out by the current situation in a number of Western European countries where the average age of young women at marriage has risen by 4-6 years, with the age at which they have their first child also correspondingly increasing.

There was however a marked rise in the number of children born outside of marriage during this period. Comparing 1995 with 1990, 70% of this rise was due to the rise in the number of unmarried women and 30% to the rise in the number of these women having children. In 1995 the number of unmarried women giving birth fell again, bringing a fall in the number of non-marital births, and the percentage of such children rose only because of the sizeable fall in the number of children born in wedlock. Up to 1994 the rise in the number of non-marital births affected first, second, and later children, but was most marked among second children. This can be explained by the already mentioned supposition about the higher percentage of people choosing to live together without marrying. As the rise in births to unmarried mothers was highest among the 25-29 age group, it can be presumed that more single women are living in such relationships than in the past.

Since 1990 the number of abortions has fallen significantly: from 108,000 in 1989 and 1990 to 48,000 in 1995. The number of interrupted pregnancies therefore fell by 40%, despite the rise in the number of young women. This is also borne out by the marked fall in the risk of unwanted pregnancies, with a steadily increasing number of women turning to modern contraceptive methods (primarily hormonal contraceptives) and to the use of condoms, partly as a precaution against HIV, instead of more traditional methods. Previously there was always a reciprocal relationship between the birth rate and the number of abortions (a higher number of births meant a lower number of abortions and vice versa) but since 1990 both have come to follow the same pattern. This implies that a steadily increasing number of women are using effective means of preventing unwanted pregnancies rather than relying on the possibility of an abortion.

Between 1990 and 1994 the number of deaths per year also fell. There was a slight rise in 1995 due to the influenza epidemic which hit the Czech Republic at the very end of the year, but up to the end of November 1995 about 3,000 fewer people had died than

in the same period the previous year. The mortality rate, which reflects the overall state of health, has improved across virtually the entire population, with the exception of men aged 15-34. Men's average life expectancy rose by 1.4 years between 1989 and 1994, and that of women by 1.2 years. Because of the formerly high rate of marriage, the reduced risk of death and so of the death of a spouse has led to an increase in the number of middle-aged and elderly people who are still married. This in turn affects the pattern of mortality as married people, particularly men, have a noticeably better survival rate (for example in 1994 7,500 "more" unmarried men died but only 3,300 unmarried women). Infant mortality has also fallen, with fewer than 8 children per 1,000 live births dying before the age of one. This fall in the mortality rate reflects changing behaviour patterns with people paying more attention to their health and to a healthier lifestyle. This is particularly noticeable among those aged 50-70, both men and women, who showed the sharpest fall in the death rate.

This improvement in mortality rates and the fall in the birth rate is speeding up both the absolute and relative ageing of the population. At the beginning of 1996 only 18.3% of the population was under 15 years of age (with an annual fall in the number of children under the age of 15 of almost 56,000). At the same time the proportion of the population over the age of 60 has risen to over 18% as those born in the earlier "baby boom" of the second half of the 1930s reach retirement age. The number and percentage of people in the over-70 and over-80 age groups is also rising relatively fast, with one in twelve Czech citizens now over the age of seventy.

The fall in the net level of reproduction under 0.7 which was recorded in 1994-1995 could mean that the natural population loss will continue to increase in the long term.³

2.3 Probable Reasons for the Changes in Demographic Behaviour

The changes in patterns of marriage and childbearing have arisen out of the immediate environment in which these patterns take shape. There are four basic causes. The first is the fact that during the period from 1940 to 1990 childbearing was concentrated into a very narrow age range, so that only a limited number of people, primarily those aged 17-30, had any real influence on the number of marriages and births. In such a situation even a very slight change in the conditions in which this age group lives and reproduces can have a decisive effect on the overall growth of the population.

The second cause is the close link between patterns of marriage and childbearing, which was greatly strengthened over the last forty years. With the model of a two-child family in which the first child is born soon after marriage, the number of people marrying before the age of 30 or at most 35 is decisive. The factor becomes still more important the moment that there is a rise in the number of married couples choosing to postpone having children. This is what has been happening since 1992, as the number of marriages in the Czech Republic began to fall in 1991 and in the following year parents began to postpone childbearing, so that the combined effects of these factors have been accumulating since 1993.

The third factor is the influence of the social and economic situation, which has a marked influence on young people's decisions to marry and then to have children. Young

³) In 1994 the natural population loss was 10,800 people, while in 1995 it reached 21,800.

people who have just finished their education and have only begun to carve a position for themselves in society and the economy are most at risk from unemployment, even if this is largely temporary. They are more likely than older people to opt for self-employment, which offers higher gains but also greater risks and greater demands on their time. The wider opportunities for attending further and higher education have also extended the period spent in education by a large part of the younger generation and this too is a reason for their postponing marriage to a later age.

The short-term fall in real incomes brought about by the economic reforms begun in 1991-1994 also had a negative effect on rates of marriage and divorce, together with the sharp rise in the prices of flats and furnishings, and of the overall cost of accommodation. While real incomes have been rising again since 1994, the shortage of flats has continued to increase, worsened by the halt in the construction of rented and cooperative accommodation. This is reinforced by the very pragmatic behaviour of the Czechs, who have adjusted rapidly to the changing economic and social conditions. This pragmatism can also be seen in patterns of reproduction. A similar phenomenon has been observed in various other periods since the 1930s when a fall in the standards of living has manifested itself immediately in a drop in the numbers of marriages and births.⁴

Both the fall in the number of people choosing to marry at an early age and the pressure of falling standards of living, which has mostly affected families with children, have contributed to the drop in the birth rate. The removal of many subsidies, including those on food and other consumer items (products for children and babies were heavily subsidised) and the introduction of a value added tax, by which children also in effect became tax payers, were contributing factors.⁵ Children's allowances, now parental allowances, and the tax deductions for children have lost much of their importance and as a microcensus in 1992 showed, are seen as social benefits. The number of children in a family has become much more important in determining differences in household income [Vytlačil, Kuchařová 1992].

The restructuring of the national economy and the increasing importance of the service sector in the gross national product did nothing to reduce the demand for women's labour. As a result, young women, particularly those in well-paid jobs, prefer to concentrate on their careers rather than to start a family, and so are postponing marriage and childbearing. The general pressure to work harder has also limited the possibility of part-time work which primarily interests mothers of young children.

The fourth factor, which should not be underestimated, is the rapid adaptation to the past and, at the same time, the present pattern of demographic behaviour in Western

4) This resulted in the "demographic waves" which can also be observed in the table on the patterns of childbearing.

5) In 1990 the personal consumption of the population including state support and subsidies was 265,874 million crowns, giving a per capita figure of eight times the then average wage. This included not only direct subsidies on food and manufactured goods intended primarily for children, but also subsidies for day-care centres, nursery schools, after-school care, school canteens, transport to and from school, the costs of convalescent care for children, field trips, summer camps, special education campaigns, etc. [Statistická... 1991]. J. Večerník has discussed the compensatory function of social funds in the overall budget of families with children in his article on the influence of the number of children on the income and expenditure patterns of households [Večerník 1992].

Europe. The change in the political system opened up Czech society and brought it into direct contact not only with the culture of Western Europe but also with its lifestyle. Marriage and family are no longer among the foremost interests of young people, who now have different ideas as to how to spend their time, devoting themselves to interests which are sometimes very demanding, such as travel, audio-visual technology, personal computers, luxury cars, an active social life, politics, or participation in various groups or organisations (environmental, charity or others).⁶ This is without taking into consideration the possibility of private business, which has opened up previously unimaginable possibilities for young and talented people, particularly if they do not have to worry about a partner or family. This change in lifestyle is not so much an imitation as a reaction to the social environment being created around it.

As to the improvement in mortality rates, there is a whole set of factors influencing this. The most important is the modernisation of medical technology and the range of new prescription medicines now available. The privatisation of medical facilities has meant an improvement in health care. The eating habits of a large part of the population have also improved (increased consumption of vegetables and citrus fruits throughout the year and a fall in consumption of meat and animal fats) and the number of people who are consciously trying to have a healthier lifestyle is rising. This is despite the fact that the relatively high level of alcohol consumption has not fallen and that the number of smokers and drug addicts has increased.

3. Conclusion

In society today reproductive patterns tend to be conscious. The scope for individual choice is however limited by biological possibilities and by the given cultural norms, which include both moral norms and even more importantly socio-economic factors. The most important among these are the possibilities of earning a living and the parameters of the standard of living. These have also played an important role in the changes in the patterns of demographic behaviour in the Czech Republic in the first years of the transformation from a controlled to a market economy.

The reproductive patterns in the Czech Republic in the 1970s and 1980s only seemed to be stable, as Vereš indicated as early as 1991 [Vereš 1991]. For many years the ruling ideology in the Czech Republic rejected the idea of more decisive factors playing a role in creating contemporary society's patterns of lower rates of marriages and births. These first appeared, more or less obviously, in the 1960s, and sociologists and demographers were well aware of the importance of women's working lives in reducing the number of children, and of the role of individualism in weakening marriage ties and in the growing generation gap. The influence of these factors was steadily reduced by various economic and ideological means but one notable phenomenon did survive: up to the beginning of the 1990s marriage was generally seen as a normal part of life and women in particular saw a two-child family as desirable. This was demonstrated by research findings in 1995. When earnings levels were largely dependent on age and seniority, it was generally considered better for women to have their children early in their working life when their earnings were lowest. This, together with the popularity of mar-

⁶ Information from IVVM survey V95-22 "Představy svobodných o příštím společném soužití a o počtu dětí" (Single People's Views on Future Cohabitation and on the Number of Children) 12. 4. 1995, and "K životním cílům svobodných" (The Life Aims of Single People), 13. 4. 1995.

riage, contributed to early marriage (which indeed could hardly have been earlier in view of the length of schooling). In this respect, the measures taken to increase the population in the late 1960s and early 1970s were successful because they were well calculated, and made it much easier for young families with children to establish themselves (regardless of political events). By the early 1980s, however, they were already less effective.

Once meritocratic factors came to play a greater part in determining personal status [Machonin, Tuček 1994] and the state ceased to provide financial aid for young families so that the time needed to obtain the necessary means for starting a family (primarily a flat) became longer, the motives for early marriage disappeared. These factors are elements in the sharp fall in childbearing. When A. J. Coale considered the preconditions for the falling birth rate in contemporary society, he observed that individual couples must see it as profitable under the given social and economic conditions [Coale 1986].

In most countries of Western Europe, the second demographic transition was largely due to people freely choosing their way of living, also in terms of marriage and children. For this reason it was relatively smooth and gradual. In the post-communist countries the pressure of new economic and social conditions has speeded this process up and so the changes in the demographic patterns in the Czech Republic have been rapid and far-reaching. Even if there were enough affordable dwellings and the standard of living of families with children were to rise faster, a steadily increasing number of young people would reject the previous pattern of demographic behaviour.

The formerly strong link between social and population development has still not entirely disappeared but has taken on a rather different guise. It is becoming a major distinguishing factor among the population as a whole, in terms of income, social and political factors, but also of expectations about future development. On one hand there is an increasing part of the population which has no need of an active social (and indirectly population) policy. On the other hand the percentage of the population which is greatly dependent on state aid, in both material and psychological terms, is not noticeably decreasing. While poverty, as one of the results of greater differences in society, is still rare in comparison with the countries of Western Europe, it is more likely to affect families with children than retired people who used to be its main victims. The society here is as a whole poorer than its Western European counterparts, but the increased direct contact with these countries has meant that standards there have become well known.

The relation between social and population development is not static. A rising standard of living and increasing "needs" bring new demands and young married couples and families with children tend to be left behind in this spiral. This produces a certain frustration, which can be observed in the reduction of the number of children, as they are seen as one obstacle in the way of development both of the individual and of the family. Social policy can compensate for this development only so far and only for a limited part of the population. Population growth is therefore limited not just by the difficult social position of the younger generation but primarily by its growing ambitions and demands for higher standards, principally in material terms.

The analysis of population development shows that the new patterns of reproductive behaviour, characterised by later marriage, postponing or rejecting marriage and the birth of fewer children to older mothers, have as yet only been adopted by a part of the younger population, although their numbers are growing. Their peers are still following the behavioral patterns of the preceding period, with early marriage, often due to preg-

nancy. In 1995 almost 60% of brides up to the age of 35 were pregnant. For this reason age at marriage has still not risen significantly. The number of children per couple is gradually decreasing.

Changes in patterns of demographic behaviour are normally relatively gradual. Even if the Czech Republic has seen rapid change, at least one decade is required for the creation of a new pattern of childbearing. The new model will probably be very close to the current situation in Western Europe.

The consequences of the change in demographic patterns will not become clear for at least another five years. It is already possible to say, however, that the postponement of childbearing will create a marked break in the age composition of the population and contribute to its ageing, as the falling death rate will contribute to a rise in the overall age of the population and lead to its steadily greater natural decrease. For this reason the changes in demographic behaviour will have far-reaching consequences.

Translated by April Retter

LUDMILA FIALOVÁ is a historical demographer. Her main field of research is long-term population trends within the Czech Republic, mainly the questions of change in marriage and reproduction. She has published a number of articles for the reviews *Demografie* and *Historická demografie*. She is a fellow-author of a handbook on the history of the population of the Czech Lands.

MILAN KUČERA is a demographer. His main research field is the demographic development of the population of the Czech Republic as well as family and household demography. He led the organisation of the Czechoslovak population census in 1980 and 1991. At present, he is working at the Department of Demography and Geodemography, Faculty of Science, Charles University, and has published more than 50 articles, mainly in the review *Demografie*. He was fellow-author of the first Czech handbook of demography, and works concerning European population history and the history of the population of the Czech Lands.

References

- Alan, J. 1989. *Etapy života očima sociologie* (Life stages through the eyes of sociology). Praha: Panorama.
- Aleš, M. 1995. "Několik úvah po čtyřech letech (Some reflections after four years)." *Demografie* 37: 77-86.
- Andrle, A. (ed.) 1995. *Koncepce a vyhlídky bydlení, bytová politika a sociální diferenciacce* (Conceptions and outlooks of habitation, flat policy and social differentiation). Praha: Nadace START.
- Becker, G. S. 1981. *A Treatise on the Family*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Burcin, B., T. Kučera 1995. *Aktuální stav a perspektivy populačního vývoje České republiky do roku 2020* (Actual situation and perspectives of the population development of the Czech Republic to 2020). Praha: Katedra demografie a geodemografie PFF UK.
- Coale, A. J. 1986. *The Decline of Fertility in Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Frejka, T. 1980. "Fertility trends and policies: Czechoslovakia in the 1970s." *Population and Development Review* 6: 65-93.
- Haskey, J. C. 1993. "Formation and dissolution of unions in the different countries of Europe." Pp. 211-229 in *European Population II*. Paris: INED.
- Horská, P., E. Maur, M. Kučera, M. Stloukal 1990. *Dětství, rodina, stáří v dějinách Evropy* (Childhood, family, and age in the European history). Praha: Panorama.
- Kaa, D. J. van de 1987. "Europe's Second Demographic Transition." *Population Bulletin* 42: 3-57.

- Keyfitz, N. 1995. "Le remplacement des générations dans une période de transition." *Population* 50: 1639-1657.
- Kučera, M. 1994. *Populace České republiky 1918-1991* (Population of the Czech Republic, 1918-1991). *Acta demographica XII*. Praha: Česká demografická společnost, Sociologický ústav AV ČR.
- Lesthaeghe, R. 1983. "A century of Demographic and Cultural Change in Western Europe: An Exploration of Underlying Dimensions." *Population and Development Review* 9: 411-436.
- Lutz, W. 1994. "The Future of the World Population." *Population Bulletin* 49: 2-45.
- Machonin, P., M. Tuček 1994. "A Historical Comparison of Social Structures in the Czech Republic in 1984 and 1993." *Czech Sociological Review* 2: 149-172.
- Monier, A., J. Rychtaříková 1991. "Comment l'Europe s'est divisée entre l'est et l'ouest." *Population* 41: 1617-1650.
- Pavlík, Z. (ed.) 1994. *Populační vývoj České republiky* (Population development of the Czech Republic). Praha: Katedra demografie a geodemografie PFF UK.
- Pavlík, Z., J. Rychtaříková, A. Šubrtová 1986. *Základy demografie* (Principles of demography). Praha: Academia.
- Rabušic, L. 1995. *Česká společnost stárne* (The Czech society is ageing. On the social and economic implications of demographic ageing). Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Georgetown.
- Recent demographic developments in Europe*. 1995. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Rychtaříková, J. 1994. "Czech and Slovak families in the European context." *Journal of Family History* 19: 131-148.
- Rychtaříková, J. 1995. "Sňatečnost svobodných v České republice dříve a dnes" (Marriage in the Czech Republic Past and Present). *Demografie* 37: 157-172.
- Rychtaříková, J. 1996. "Současné změny charakteru reprodukce v České republice a mezinárodní situace" (Current Changes in Patterns of Childbearing in the Czech Republic). *Demografie* 38: 77-89.
- Statistická ročenka České a Slovenské federativní republiky 1991* (The 1991 Statistical Yearbook of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic) 1991. Praha: Federální statistický úřad.
- Sullerot, E. 1992. "Krise rodiny (The family crisis)." *Historická demografie* 16: 11-40.
- Tabah, L. 1980. "World population trends. A stocktaking." *Population and Development Review* 6: 355-390.
- Tuček, M. 1995. *Zpráva o vývoji sociální struktury společnosti. Česká republika 1945-1993* (Report on trends in social structure. The Czech Republic 1945-1993). Praha: Nadace START.
- Večerník, J. 1992. "Vliv počtu dětí na příjmy a spotřební chování domácností (The influence of the number of children on incomes and consumption behaviour of households)." Pp. 181-193 in *Sňatečnost a rodina*. Praha: Academia 1992.
- Vereš, P. 1991. "Několik úvah o současném a budoucím populačním vývoji (Reflections on recent and future population development)." *Demografie* 33: 97-105.
- Vytlačil, J., Z. Kuchařová 1994. "Mikrocensus 1992." *Statistika* 1994: 346-355.

Appendix

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of Marriage and Divorce in the Czech Republic 1989-1994

Indicator	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
No. of marriages (1000s)	81.3	91.0	72.0	74.1	66.0	58.4	55.0
No. of divorces (1000s)	31.4	32.1	29.5	28.6	30.2	30.9	31.1
Marriages per 1000 inhabitants	7.8	8.8	7.0	7.2	6.4	5.7	5.3
Divorces per 1000 inhabitants	3.03	3.09	2.85	2.77	2.93	2.99	3.01
Divorces per 1000 existing marriages	12.2	12.4	11.5	11.2	11.9	12.2	12.3
Average age at first marriage							
men	24.6	24.0	24.7	24.8	25.4	26.2	.
women	21.8	21.4	22.2	22.5	23.2	23.9	.
Proportions of single people by the age of 50 (according to nuptiality tables)							
men	11	9	15	14	17	24	27
women	5	4	9	8	12	18	20
Total divorce rate (x 100)	37.2	38.0	34.8	33.9	36.2	.	.

Source: ČSÚ, Pohyb obyvatelstva (Population Change)
[Rychtaříková 1995: 160-162].

Table 2. Probability of Marrying for Single Persons and Age-Specific Remarriage Rate of the Divorced and Widowed in the Czech Republic 1989 and 1994

Age	Probability of Marrying for Single Persons (multiplied by 1000)				Remarriages per 1000 Divorced and/or Widowed Persons			
	males		females		males		females	
	1989	1994	1989	1994	1989	1994	1989	1994
15-19	37	17	69	25	.	.	.	.
20-24	159	92	224	126	285	107	314	136
25-29	131	89	130	85	221	119	182	106
30-34	56	45	58	40	126	87	97	66
35-39	26	21	26	20	82	56	59	40
40-44	13	10	13	9	61	41	41	29
45-49	9	7	8	5	49	35	32	22

Source: ČSÚ, Pohyb obyvatelstva (Population Change)

Table 3. Selected Characteristics of Childbearing in the Czech Republic 1989-1994

Indicator	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
No. of live births (in 1000s)	128.4	130.6	129.4	121.7	121.0	106.6	96.1
Extra-marital births, per 100 live births	7.9	8.6	9.8	10.7	12.7	14.6	15.6
Live births per 1000 inhabitants	12.4	12.6	12.5	11.8	11.7	10.3	9.3
Total fertility rate	1.87	1.89	1.86	1.72	1.67	1.44	1.27
Mean age of mother at birth, regardless of marital status							
of any child	24.8	24.8	24.7	24.8	25.0	25.4	.
of first child	22.5	22.5	22.4	22.5	22.6	22.9	.
of second child	25.6	25.6	25.7	25.8	25.9	26.1	.
of third child	29.2	29.2	29.3	29.2	29.3	29.6	.

Source: ČSÚ Pohyb obyvatelstva (Population Change)
[Rychtaříková 1996]

Table 4. Age Specific Fertility Rate in the Czech Republic 1989, 1992 & 1994

Age Group	Live births per 1000 women at specified ages											
	All women				Married women				Unmarried women			
1989	1992	1994	C	1989	1992	1994	C	1989	1992	1994	C	
15-19	44.9	44.7	32.6	-27	540.0	518.1	454.5	-16	7.9	10.0	10.6	+34
20-24	172.9	154.0	121.8	-30	275.6	241.4	210.9	-24	24.5	29.4	29.1	+19
25-29	103.9	94.8	85.5	-18	118.7	108.6	98.7	-17	31.3	36.6	38.7	+24
30-34	36.6	35.1	35.7	-2	43.3	37.1	37.3	-14	24.7	25.0	28.7	+16
35-39	11.2	10.3	10.7	-4	11.3	10.1	10.4	-8	10.4	11.2	12.3	+18
40-44	1.6	1.8	1.8	.	1.6	1.7	1.6	.	1.8	2.3	2.3	+28
45-49	0.1	0.1	0.1	.	0.0	0.1	0.1	.	0.0	0.0	0.0	.

C - change 1989-1994 in percentage

Source: ČSÚ Pohyb obyvatelstva (Population Change)

Table 5. Selected Characteristics of Mortality in the Czech Republic 1950-1995

Characteristic		1950	1960	1989	1995
Life expectancy at birth	men	62.2	67.6*	68.1	70.0
	women	67.0	73.4*	75.4	76.9
Life expectancy at 60	men	15.0	15.1*	14.9	15.9
	women	16.9	18.3*	19.2	20.2
Percentage surviving at age 60 (in 1000s)	men	68.8	77.7*	77.3	79.2
	women	78.0	87.0*	89.4	90.3
Infant mortality (per thousand live births)		64.2	20.0	10.0	7.7

*) 1960-1961

Source: FSÚ, Demografická příručka 1982; ČSÚ, Pohyb obyvatelstva (Population Change)

Table 6. Age Distribution of Population and Proportion of Married Persons in the Czech Republic as of 3. 3. 1991 & 1. 1. 1995

Age Group	Total population				Proportions married			
	in 1000s		in %		Male		Female	
	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995	1991	1995
0-4	643	602	6.2	5.8	.	.	.	.
5-14	1522	1346	14.8	13.0	.	.	.	.
15-24	1556	1709	15.1	16.5	14.9	12.3	31.1	25.4
25-34	1368	1353	13.3	13.1	72.6	68.3	82.7	79.4
35-44	1649	1528	16.0	14.8	80.0	77.7	81.6	80.2
45-54	1210	1452	11.8	14.1	82.8	80.9	78.0	76.9
55-64	1051	988	10.2	9.6	84.2	84.0	65.1	66.4
65 +	1303	1356	12.6	13.1	72.6	74.5	29.5	31.3
Total	10302	10333	100.0	100.0	65.5*	60.1*	62.8*	57.9*

*) Of all persons over the age of 15.

Source: ČSÚ: Sčítání lidu, domů a bytů k 3. 3. 1991 (Population and Housing Census)
Pohyb obyvatelstva (Population Change)

Table 7. Selected Characteristics of Social Development in the Czech Republic 1990-1994

Characteristic	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Index of living costs of employees ¹	109.9	168.1	187.3	226.2	249.8
Index of real earnings of all employed people ¹	94.5	69.6	76.7	79.6	85.8
Rate of unemployment (%) ²	0.7	4.1	2.6	3.5	3.2
No. of unemployed (1000s) ³					
graduates with higher education under 25s	3.5	24.6	17.4	23.9	20.0
other	.	72.6	43.6	57.6	47.0
Completed dwellings (1000s) ⁴					
total	44.6	41.7	36.4	31.5	18.2
privately built	17.2	10.4	12.5	14.3	7.4
other	27.4	31.3	23.9	17.2	10.8

¹) Indexes; 1. 1. 1989 = 100

²) Rate of unemployment as a percentage of total workforce

³) The two groups partially overlap

⁴) Average for 1970-1979: 81,409; for 1980-1990: 58,787

Source: Statistická ročenka České republiky 1995 (1995 Statistical Yearbook of the Czech Republic)

Table 8. Structure of Households according to Relationship between Money Income and Minimum Wage in the Czech Republic, 1992

Type of Household	No. of households in 1000s	in min. wage	Percentage of households with income at x times the minimum wage				
			1.00 -1.24	1.25 -1.49	1.50 -1.99	2.00 -2.99	3.00 +
All households	3 836	2.8	8.7	18.6	36.3	24.6	9.0
Households with dependent children:							
1 child	704	4.1	8.1	14.9	33.2	30.4	9.3
2 children	740	4.4	11.9	20.2	36.9	21.4	5.2
3 children	40	11.4	24.4	24.3	28.9	9.6	1.4
4 or more children	23	20.7	32.4	20.8	18.9	6.2	1.0

Source: [Vytlačil, Kuchařová 1994: 354].

Table 9. International comparison of Selected Demographic Characteristics in 1994 (or most recent published data)

Characteristic	Czech Republic	Germany*	France	Netherlands	Sweden	Great Britain	Italy
Total first marriage rate for women	0.55	0.61 ¹	0.50 ¹	0.60 ¹	0.57 ²	0.50 ²	0.67 ²
Mean age of women at first marriage	23.9	26.9 ¹	26.4 ¹	26.9 ¹	26.2 ¹	28.3 ¹	26.1 ²
Total fertility rate	1.44	1.34	1.65	1.57 ¹	1.76 ¹	1.88 ¹	1.33 ²
Mean age of women at birth of any child	24.4	28.9 ^{1,3}	28.7 ¹	29.8 ¹	28.1 ¹	28.8 ¹	29.3 ²
Mean age of women at first child	22.9	27.6 ^{1,3}	27.4 ²	28.3 ¹	26.2 ¹	27.0 ¹	27.4 ¹
Percentage of illegitimate births	14.6	11.9 ¹	34.9 ¹	13.1 ¹	31.8 ¹	30.4 ¹	7.3 ¹
Legal abortions per 100 live births	50.2	10.4	22.5	9.9	29.0	23.4	26.1
Life expectancy at birth both sexes (average)	72.9	76.1	77.0	77.0	78.2	76.3	76.9
men	69.5	72.9	72.9	74.0	75.5	73.6	73.5
women	76.6	79.3	81.1	80.0	80.8	79.0	80.2

*) West Germany

1) 1993

2) 1992

3) married women only

Figure 1. Probability of Single Persons Marrying by Age

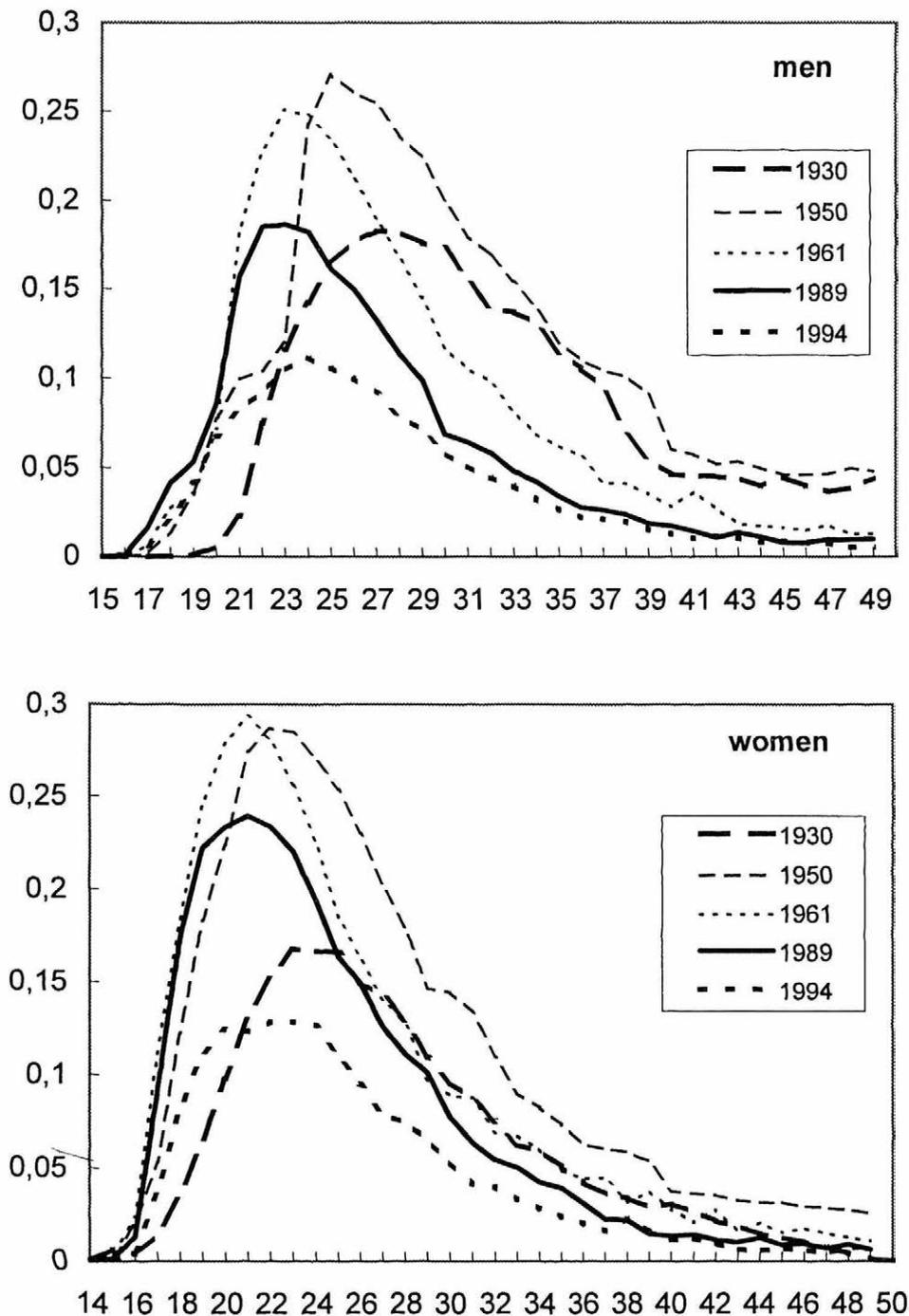


Figure 2. Fertility Rate and Induced Abortion Rate

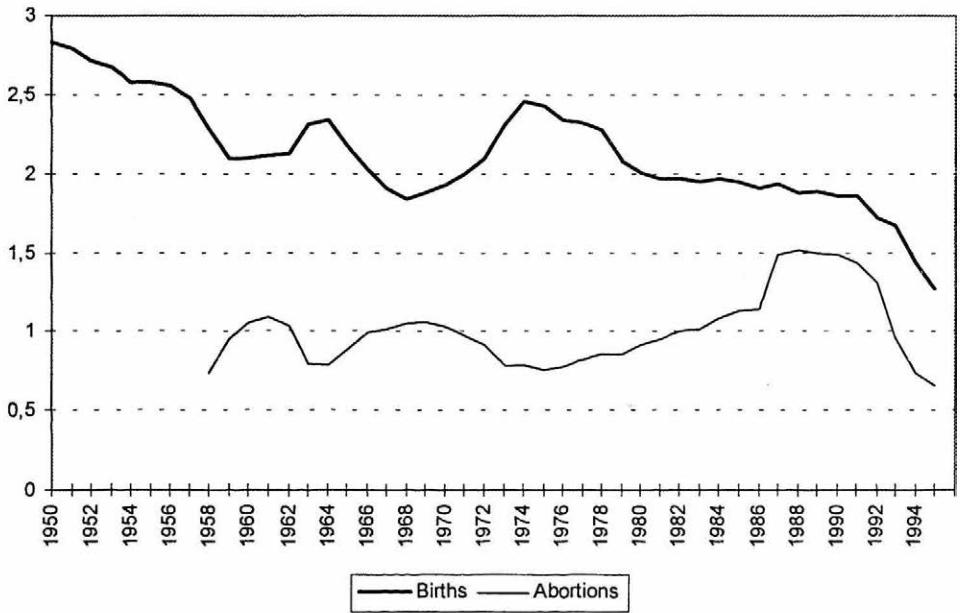


Figure 3a. Age Specific Marital Fertility Rate

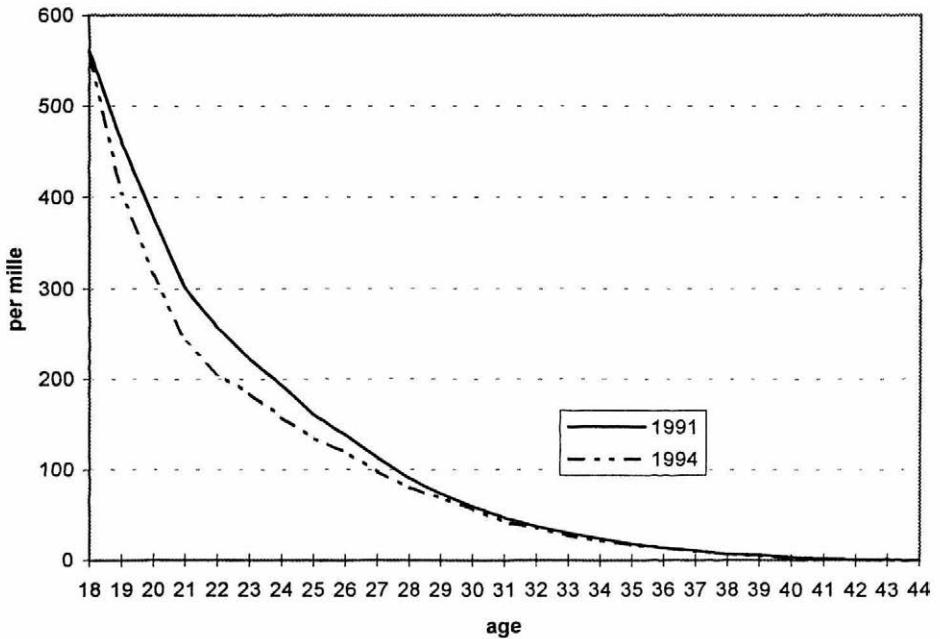
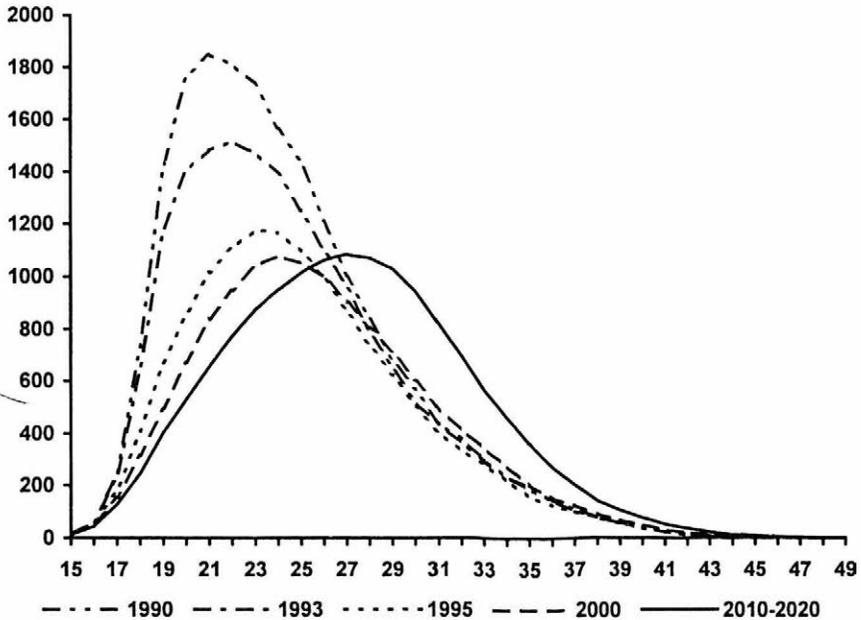


Figure 3b. Age Specific Marital Induced Abortion Rate



Figure 4. Expected Change in the Age Specific Fertility Rate (According to [Burcin, Kučera 1995]).



Political, Organizational and Policy Transformation at the Municipal Level: The Case of Liberec

DANIEL HANŠPACH

Published by the Institute of Sociology,
Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic,
Jilská 1, Praha 1,
fax + 420 2 24 22 02 78,
e-mail sociolog@mbox.cesnet.cz

“Working Papers” WP 97:1

Copies may be ordered from the address below:

Price 69,- Kč (4 USD)

Summary: Local government transformation in the Czech Republic is documented and analysed in a case study of the town of Liberec. Local government transformation, comprising political, economic, administrative and policy dimensions, has meant a profound historical change for the town. The major qualitative changes have been greater local autonomy, more discretion in local decision-making and policy-making, a wider scope of local government activities and the enhanced predictability of local government revenues. The main characteristics of local political culture in Liberec are the technocratic managerialism of local political elites, on the one hand, and the very low participation of the citizens in local politics and their very low confidence in the fair handling of their problems by the municipal office, on the other. The local authority in Liberec has shown a high capacity of adaptation to the rapidly changing political and economic environment. Its policy style has been characterized as active, displaying initiative and open both to regional and international co-operation.