

Childlessness in the Czech Republic, Germany, and Austria

Abstract

The main goal of this thesis is to examine and compare the state of childlessness in the Czech Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria. In Germany particularly, childlessness has become a phenomenon and a society-wide issue. Austria, where childlessness is at a high level in comparison with other European countries is in a similar situation. Data analysis in this thesis showed that childlessness is more widespread in the former West Germany and Austria than in the Czech Republic and former East Germany. This difference is caused, among other things, by the pro-natal policies adopted in the former communist countries which led to a temporary increase in total fertility rate. Further, the thesis deals with the perception of parenthood and childlessness in society on the basis of the *European Values Study 2008* international survey and with the relationship between the ideal and preferred number of children on the basis of the *Eurobarometer 2006* international survey. The results of the surveys show that childlessness cannot be considered as a new kind of lifestyle, and that the preferred family form still involves two children. Considerable part of the study focuses on the causes and consequences of childlessness and its possible solutions. Special attention is paid to the classification of childlessness – it is evident that the partitioning on voluntary and involuntary childlessness can be overly simplistic and it is therefore necessary to add a third category: the childlessness on the boundary of the two types mentioned above.

Keywords: childlessness, voluntary and involuntary childlessness, proportion of childless women, ideal and preferred number of children, stance on parenthood, stance on childlessness, causes of childlessness