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Fertility Survey 2013

FERTILITY SURVEY: FINAL RESULTS

The Fertility Survey 2013, made available today, presents a comprehensive analysis of the results from the Fertility Survey, conducted between January and April 2013, in a partnership between Statistics Portugal and the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation.

The fertility survey had its genesis in the desire to contribute to increase the knowledge of Fertility in Portugal, reporting on the number of children that women and men have, think or wish to have throughout their lives, and about the underlying motives and constraints regarding fertility. The data collected and now published in this volume represents women of childbearing age residing in Portugal aged 18 to 49 years old, and men living in Portugal with ages between 18 and 54 years old, considered to be the ages when men are more likely to have children.

The results of the Fertility Survey call for an in-depth analysis about fertility behavior of women and men, as well as perceptions and social, economical and other sources of constraints that influence the decision to have or not have children.

The Fertility Survey publication (click this [link](#) to the PT version) is divided into three parts. The first part analyses fertility throughout the last decades; in the second part the main results from the fertility survey are presented and explained, regarding aspects related to present and past family contexts, the entering into partnership relationships and parenthood, practices and attitudes towards family life, fertility and parenthood, and opinions concerning political measures to improve fertility; and the third part presents a critical approach to the measures concerning fertility and its characteristics in Portugal.

FERTILITY INDICATORS: MAIN RESULTS

The achieved fertility for women and men is 1.03 children (1.08 for women and 0.98 for men). This value represents the average number of biological children (born alive) women between 18 and 49 years old and men between 18 and 54 years old had until the moment of reference of the survey.

Intentional fertility, measured as the number of children people still intend to have, regardless of being already parents or not, reveals the future plans concerning fertility, thus representing the possible increase in fertility levels in the future, stands at 0.74 children (0.71 children for women and 0.76 children for men).

By adding the number of children people already have with the number of children they still intend to have, we obtain the expected fertility, an overall measure of fertility that is comparable between generations. The expected fertility is, on average, of 1.78 children per person¹, which is slightly higher among women (1.80 children) than among men (1.76 children). These values allow for a more optimistic perspective of future fertility, leading to some expectations for the recovery of fertility in Portugal.

Levels of desired fertility, meaning the intimate desire of every person, free from any constraints, correspond to a higher average number of children for women and for men, and higher than the reference value for the replacement of generations: a person desires, on average, 2.31 children. Women aged 18 to 49 desire to have, on average, 2.29 children, and men aged 18 to 54 years desire to have, on average, 2.32 children.

Economic, social, cultural, geographical contexts, among other aspects, have a decisive impact on past and future fertility choices of every person. Beside the age effect in the number of children people already have or intend to have in the future, the generational effect on the levels of expected and desired fertility is highlighted, and is explained more by the difference in expectations between generations. than by the phase of life people are in.

Considering the expected fertility, defined as the number of children people already have and the number of children they intend to have in the future, the level of expected fertility is lower in older generations than in younger generations. Notwithstanding, men aged 30 to 39 years are those that expect to have more children.

¹ 1.77 children per person in the preliminary results, 1.79 for women and 1.75 for men.
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Another age effect, with impact on both female and male population, can be observed by the progressive deviation between the average number of desired children and the average number of expected children, in line with the age increase. Both for female and male younger population the average number of desired children and the average number of expected children show relatively similar values. For older women and men, the difference between these two measures of fertility is considerably higher. This combined reading of both measures of fertility point out to the gap between desire and possibility, widening as women and men get older.

Among the survey results women and men born outside Portugal desire and expect to have on average a larger number of children than people born in Portugal. Indeed, men that were born in a foreign county desire the highest number of children – 2.58 children on average.

The marital status also shows some differences. Across all age groups, women and men who lived with a partner (not in a formal marital relationship) are those that expect and desire to have more children. Conversely, people who are not in a conjugal relationship show levels of expected and desired fertility below average. As such, those who are in a formalized marital relationship (married) are the ones that have more children.

Segmentation by education level shows, on one hand, that women and men with a lower educational level have, on average, more children, and on the other hand, an average number of desired children higher among more qualified persons. Educational level also has an impact on the postponing of parenthood amongst men and women: people with higher educational levels tend to have their first child later in life – the average age at first childbirth is 29.9 years for women with a university degree or higher educational levels, and it drops to 23.9 years for women with lower educational levels; for men with higher educational levels the average age at first childbirth is 31.5 years, and it is of 27.3 years for men with lower educational levels. Those who have not yet been parents admit having their first child at a higher age limit, being higher among more qualified people – women with higher educational levels admit having their first child at the age of 33.1 years, compared with 29.4 years among less qualified women, and men with higher education consider having their first child, at most, with 35.4 years, which compares with 32.4 years among less qualified men.

Half of the women (49.6%) already have children and do not intend to have more, while for men, this ratio stands at 45.1%. Combining with the stage of life they are in, segmentation by age group shows that younger men and women still do not have children but intend to have in the future (66.6% and 76.7%). In opposition, older women and men already had the number of children they wanted, and do not intend to have more (84.1% and 74.7%, respectively).

As a final note, an emphasis is given to the high proportion of women (93%) and men (92%) who believe that fertility should be promoted and encouraged, indicating the increase of income to families with children as the most relevant policy measure..

Technical note:

The Fertility Survey was made by Statistics Portugal using a sample of population residing in Portugal. The main objective was to collect information that allowed for a characterization of fertility patterns in Portugal, as well as to contribute for a better understanding of attitudes, values and socioeconomic covariates leading to the decision people make of having or not having children. The collected information constitutes a relevant instrument to help establish and evaluate family and fertility related policies. The survey was developed under a protocol signed in 2012 between Statistics Portugal and the Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos.

The information was collected by personal interview at the household of all selected individuals. Data collection took place between January 16th and April 15th 2013. Interviews were made at around 10 thousand households, distributed over all regions from the mainland and Autonomous Regions of Azores and Madeira. A sample of women between 18 and 49 years was selected, representing female population at national and NUTS 2 levels, and of men between 18 and 54 years, representative of the male population at national level. As a result, 7,624 successful interviews were made. Response to the survey was mandatory – Law no. 22/2008, from May 13th.

For a detailed analysis of the applied methodology, the reading of the Fertility Survey methodological document is suggested. It can be found here (only on Portuguese): <http://smi.ine.pt/DocumentacaoMetodologica?clear=True> .

The data collection instrument can be found here: <http://smi.ine.pt/SuporteRecolha/Detalhes/10110> .

Main concepts and notes:

Achieved Fertility – number of biological children (born alive) people had until the moment of reference of the survey.

Expected Fertility – number of biological children (born alive) people had added by the number of children they think of having in the future (including present pregnancies, if applied).

Desired Fertility – number of biological children people wish they had over their lifetime, independently of the number of children they actually have or still think of having.

Desired fertility at 20 – number of biological children people wished to have over their lifetime when they were 20 years old. Desired fertility at 20 is observed for people with or over 25 years of age.

Ideal number of children in a family - number of children (biological, adopted, stepchildren or other) considered by people as the ideal number for a family to have, independently of being their own.

Intentional fertility – number of biological children people think of having in the future (including present pregnancies, if applied).

Intentional fertility for people with no biological children – number of biological children people with no biological children think of having in the future (including present pregnancies, if applied).

Intentional fertility for people with biological children – number of biological children people with biological children think of still having in the future (including present pregnancies, if applied).

Intentional fertility in the short term – intention of having biological children in the next three years (including present pregnancies, if applied).

Information for users:

The publication "Fertility Survey 2013" can be found in <http://www.ine.pt>, as well as all the tables with the final results. From today, the database is also available for researchers.

The preliminary results for "Expected fertility" were revised, changing from 1.77 to 1.78 children per person; from 1.79 to 1.80 children per women; and from 1.75 to 1.76 children per men.