

Why men are missing from Fertility Debates

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Abstract

Perfect couple can accept women performing more educated than men. Wrinkles disparities usually focus on either the rational choice model or the analysis of demographic trends in a society. The rational choice model suggests that people look for partners who can provide for them in their long term, as men traditionally earn more as they get older, women will therefore prefer older men. This factor is diminishing as more women enter the labour force. The demographic trends are concerned with the gender ratio in the society, the marriage squeeze, and migration patterns. Another explanation concerns cultural values the higher the value placed in having children, the higher the age gap will be.

Introduction

Men's exclusion from the reproductive debate contributes to gender inequalities, a study has revealed. Discussions about fertility mostly focus on women, keeping the men out of the debate. And when they are included, it is only married and heterosexual men who make it to the studies and data recovery. According to the researcher, it is vital to explore the gender issue in fertility research. Their study focused on the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), which have been widely-used in low and middle-income countries over the past several decades to understand demographic processes and family building. The study finds these important data engage in unintentional, yet highly consequential practices of designing the surveys differently for men versus women, producing gender inequalities. "First, we wanted to know, across time and place, were men included in the surveys at all? Then, if men were included, which men were included? And how did choices about which men to include lined up to choices about which women to include?" The study then focused on the kind of questions the men were asked and how those questions shaped the survey and the conclusion drawn from it. The researcher identified two processes through which surveys had the potential to render male infertility invisible. Firstly, identifying who to survey in an exclusionary way and secondly, asking survey questions in a way that selects out some groups / issues. By compiling information about survey samples in the DHS, and combining this with a qualitative examination of survey design, they identified areas of men's invisibility across time and place. While the inclusion of men in DHS samples had increased over time, some men (e.g. single, divorced and transgender) remained missing in many survey settings. Researcher from India was problematic from a reproductive justice perspective. Survey results, which both reflected and contributed to men's invisibility, were widely used as an evidence base for family and population policies. Men's invisibil-

ity from data and research, therefore, has the potential to make them invisible in policy discussions about family building too. Reproductive health services are typically only made available to those whose reproductive health needs are recognised. Men's exclusion from the reproductive debate, the authors argue, contributes to gender inequalities in who is supported in the family building within families and societies. "The good news is, the availability of data for men has increased over time, although men in some regions are comparatively neglected," "For example, relative to the availability of surveys for women, there are fewer data available for men in Latin America, North Africa, and parts of South Asia than for sub-Saharan Africa."

Even where men were surveyed, the way questions were asked limited our ability to understand some family building processes -- for example, infertility in the context of polygyny. She also pointed out that there are some negative consequences to being left out of data for men. For example, support for difficulties conceiving is available only to those whose needs are recognised. "In short, this is an issue that impacts men and women alike. It both reflects and creates a specific notion of who should take responsibility for family building and there's great potential for both men and women to be disadvantaged in this process," However, there can also be some benefits to invisibility. Where reproduction is not seen as men's domain, the blame

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for reproductive failure tends to fall on women's shoulders.

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