

FERTILITY DIFFERENTIALS AND DETERMINANTS OF LOWERING FERTILITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



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Introduction

Republic of Macedonia has experienced a substantial decline in fertility since onset of socioeconomic transition. During the one decade total fertility rate decline from 2.2 in 1994 to 1.8 in 2002, and show 1.5 children per women in 2006, and remained the same until today. With regard to the retrospective reproductive performance of the country, fertility levels and natural increase of population, among particular population subgroups (by region and ethnicity) are far beyond the level of fertility in the country.

The main purpose of this paper is to examine differentials of fertility in the country, with regard to demographic and socio-economic factors, and identify the determinants of fertility in the country.

Method

In searching for answers related to the questions and explanations about lowering fertility in the transition countries, there are three points of view, the first being the “economic crisis argument.” The second point of view is the “adjustment schools,” where change in fertility behavior is due to the view of the transformation as a convergence process towards “western” social and economic incentives for childbearing. (e.g. Kreyenfeld, 2002) The third aspect explains that the demographic trends are a reflection of the “second demographic transition.” (e.g. Vishnevsky, 1996; Zakharov and Ivanova, 1996; Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, 1986; Van de Kaa, 2006). Through proper treatment and standard procedure for fertility examination, as well as available information, the hypothetical frame will be tested. The general hypothesis of this paper considers fertility as a biological (demographic) phenomenon, but it is under great influence of the changes in social surroundings. Late home leaving and marriage, low gender equality within the family, incompatibility of work and childbearing, precarious economic situation for young adults, employment insecurity, post-communist social and economic transformation, rising voluntary childlessness, and the spread of the one-child family model have all affected the decreasing fertility rate. Empirical part of this article is supported by the secondary data source. The main sources of the data come from the Census data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia. Additional data source come from the available research and analysis.

Results

More than two-thirds of the total number of born children in each year during the examined period (from 1994–2014) belong to the two age groups of women aged 20–24 and 25–29. From 1994 to 1997, the most common age group at which women gave birth was 20–24 years. After that period, the most common year moved towards the next age group (25–29) that make Macedonian fertility belongs “broad peak” model (Kpedekpo, 1982). Due to the fact that the majority of births occur between married couples, it can be said that later marrying ages is a main factor for the decline of fertility. The age of entering into marital union is also increasing.

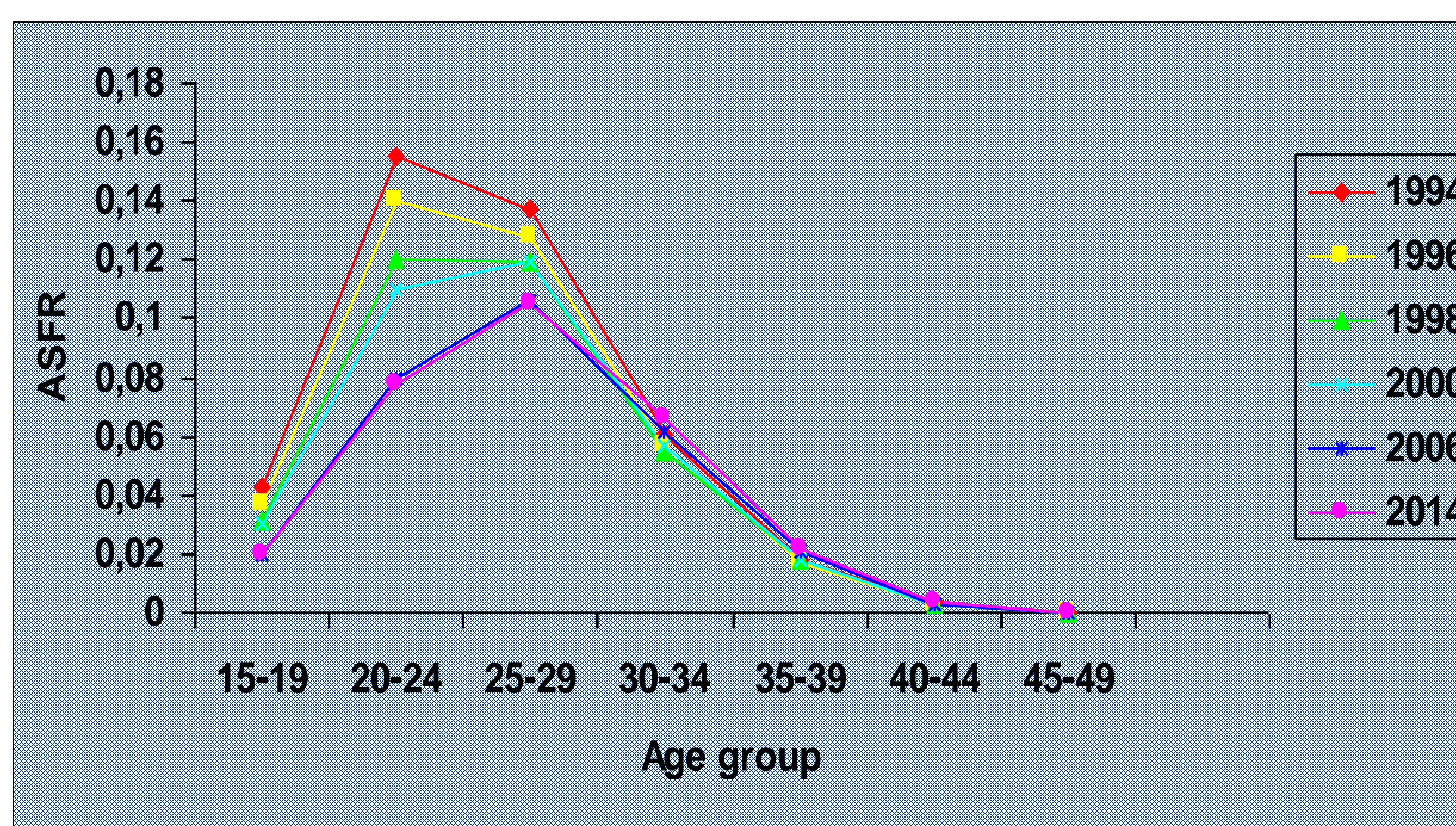


Figure 1. Age Specific Fertility Rates, R.Macedonia

- observed differences between ethnic groups have a basis on various social, economic, and other characteristics. In addition, certain fertility differences among women of different ethnicities are due to divergent views on marriage and birth control method. Among the group with high fertility rates, a smaller number of women are employed, the level of education is lower, and the family and household also tend to be more patriarchal in structure.

Education is also a variable with a great influence on fertility. Much has been written about the relationship between education and fertility. In explanations related to differences in fertility, the behavior according to the educational level (Cochrane, 1979) emphasized the fact that education operates effectively at a certain level of social development. In the Macedonian context, education is found to be an important determinant of fertility in the country and is considered one of the fundamental reasons for the decrease in fertility. In each stage of demographic transition, women with higher education levels had a relatively low fertility rate (Breznik et al., 1980). Such a thesis is persisting.

	Age group of mother						
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Republic of Macedonia	0.04	0.40	1.19	1.83	2.14	2.26	2.31
Ethnicity of woman							
Macedonian	0.03	0.36	1.05	1.59	1.84	1.93	1.97
Albanian	0.02	0.37	1.35	2.20	2.74	3.09	3.40
Turkish	0.09	0.69	1.60	2.21	2.54	2.80	3.01
Roma	1.13	1.19	2.06	2.69	2.88	3.08	3.45
Slovak	0.00	0.13	0.65	1.34	1.69	1.75	1.73
Serbian	0.03	0.33	0.99	1.55	1.80	1.91	2.01
Boschnajk	0.03	0.44	1.10	1.72	2.32	2.56	3.09
Other	0.06	0.52	1.24	1.75	2.04	2.14	2.20

Table 1: Average number of children ever born, 2002, Republic of Macedonia

Educational status	Age of mother						
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Without education	0.37	1.17	1.94	2.43	2.83	3.13	3.51
Uncompleted primary education	0.23	0.98	1.92	2.55	2.94	3.08	3.11
Primary and lower secondary education	0.03	0.61	1.49	2.16	2.47	2.54	2.45
Upper secondary education	0.03	0.25	1.06	1.63	1.87	1.91	1.90
Higher education	0.00	0.18	0.91	1.49	1.79	1.86	1.86
Faculty, Academy	0.00	0.08	0.38	1.04	1.50	1.67	1.70
Master's degree	0.00	0.09	0.29	0.75	1.32	1.36	1.64
Doctorate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.48	1.46	1.50	1.55

Variables	Direct	Indirect	Total
AW	0.602	-0.001	0.601
PR	-0.102	-0.098	-0.199
WE	-0.270	-0.103	-0.374
Wed	-0.169	-0.057	-0.226
AFM	-0.153	0.030	-0.123
DC	-0.104	0.000	-0.104
CCU	0.016	0.025	0.041

Table 3: Summary of direct, indirect, and total effects of selected variables on children ever born, RM, 2002

Conclusion

Reduction in the level of fertility, followed by structural changes:
 - childbearing postponement, postponement to enter into the marital union ;
 - among ethnic groups with high fertility rates a smaller number of women are employed, the level of education is lower and the family and household tend to be more patriarchal in structure.
 - Based on the path model where children ever born is dependent variable the indirect effect on the dependent variable is found to be slightly higher for three variables, namely the woman's ethnicity, the place of residence, and the woman's education. However, the age of the woman keeps the primary role in determining the children ever born. From all the variables included in the path model, the desired number of children shows the least effect. The other variables show greater importance in the following order: women's ethnicity, women's education, place of residence, and current contraceptive use.
 - In general, expectation are Macedonia in the future do not diverge from the general fertility trend in the country. Based on the values of TFR, and in comparison to other countries Macedonia is in so-called “safety zone”.

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