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Session P-2:
Poster Session 2: fertility, family and children

**Some factors of lowering fertility in the
Republic of Macedonia**

Tuesday, September 29
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM
Poster Room
Royal room wings

1. 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 1.59 in 2002, and show 1.47 children per women in 2008. This number indicates Macedonian position in the group of countries where fertility is below the level of replacement. Should be mentioned that to 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.

Natural increasing of population had permanently been decreasing, year by year. For example, from 1994 to 2008, natural increase decline from 15.772 to 3963 inhabitants. Trend of declining live births is permanent until 2006, when number of births in 2007 year increase for 0.5% and for 1.1% in 2008 in comparison to 2007. For the same period death rates increase, and infant mortality rates were declining. (*SSO, Natural populations change, 2008*)

The reasons for such a situation are complex – cultural, demographic, economic and health-related factors. At the same time, it is not possible to ignore current transitional position of the Republic of Macedonia: transit to the market economy and pluralistic political system. The reasons have not been completely clarified yet, but could be mentioned several reasons for the decreasing number of live births. One of them is ageing of the fertile contingent, the insufficient financial security, the small homes, rate of unemployment of women and their position in the family and society. Such a situation has raised the perceived costs of leaving the parental home and having children.

Beside low level of fertility, patterns of family formation and dissolution have changed notably in the recent years. People married latter, marriages become less stable, and women have changed the timing of childbearing over their lives. There are indications that delaying of entering into the marriage union is due to the hard economic and political situation in the country, and maybe that priorities are given to the education and carrier.

At the same time, most probably the subsequent decline in the birth rate has been also due to diminishment in the effectiveness of the state's demographic pro-natal policy, until 2008 year. Namely at the beginning of the 2008 for the first time was conducted Strategy for demographic development of the country. Changes in population

policies and some actions taken by the government to improve demographic situation in the country are present, and expected to present some positive results in the future.

The specific objectives of this research paper are to show and analyze the levels and trends of fertility in the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, to depict one aspect that cover institutional context within which low fertility has started and that is actual population policies with special attention on the family polices in Macedonia.

The research approach is descriptive. Empirical part of this article is supported by the secondary data source. The main sources of the data for this study come from the Census' data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia (Census of population, households and dwelling, 2002) , and Data from the Vital Register of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia Additional data source come from the available research and analysis.

In order to give the reader introduction, first in briefly examines fertility levels and trend during the last decades. Variable such as female labour participation, female education (or status of women) will refer to the institutional context of differential fertility as an specific for Macedonia. Additional will be examines current family policies related to childbearing and the rearing of children in country to illuminate possible relationship between policy intervention and demographic patterns in the Republic of Macedonia.

2. Some theoretical views of changes in fertility

For fertility, as a phenomenon, are interested in many different scientific disciplines. Each of these disciplinary approaches introduced a different perspective, a specific focus, methodology, level of analysis and assumptions about the mechanisms underlying reproductive behavior. The theoretical body, which deals with fertility, is a colorful and mountainous patchwork of ideas and as Leridon (1977) depicted the situation as a “cubist painting”.

In spite of the disciplinary variety in the approaches to fertility and the various orientation shifts over time, explaining the differences and changes in patterns and levels of fertility continues to be a central concern for demographers.

Other approach to explain fertility (beside explanations that are based on theory of demographic transition, or tray to explain changes in fertility using demographic, economic or some other factors) is to focus on the structural level, cultural institutional, social organization of the society or the combinations within it.

The institutional analysis of fertility is a new line of interpretation of fertility. This seeks situational and path-dependent specificity, and is sensitive to cultural interpretations and the interaction between structure and agency. Well-known is Cain's (1981, 1989) analysis of the value of children as a source of risk insurance in villages in India and Bangladesh. It suggests that the differences between the settings can be largely attributed to institutional elements like labour division between the sexes, patriarchy, legal status and social security systems.

McNicoll (1980) conceived the institutional background of fertility and the micro-macro link of fertility explanation. Social institutions may be interpreted as the socially constructed (and sanctioned) rules that provide solutions to recurrent problems of individual action and interaction (McNicoll, 1994). An institutional approach finds the understanding of fertility at least partly in the historical evolution of the specific amalgam of institutions. It views them as evolving processes which not only depend on current circumstances, but also, and crucially, on their history, and, which evolve at every point in time, rather than only during a transition phase (Greenhalgh 1995, McNicoll 1994).

The identification of interpenetrating local, regional and national institutions reflect the multi-level nature of context. Thus, aims of the international community with regard to women's rights and reproductive health as voiced at the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development can be effectuated by supportive legislation at state level and women's organizations at lower levels, but can also be impeded by adverse family and gender systems or local labour market opportunities. Because of the differences in the local economies, overarching institutions like religion or national family-planning programs may be negotiated differently in a rural farming community than in the neighboring fishing community (cf. Niehof 1985).

In searching answers related to the questions and explanation about lowering fertility in the transition countries there are three point of views. First, is "economic crisis argument". The reasons of lowering fertility is related to the economic and labour-market uncertainty, and the disruption of traditional public transfer and support systems induce couples either to postpone having children (which leads temporarily to a low level of fertility) or to reduce their desired number of children (which leads to a permanently low level of fertility).

Second, is “adjustment schools” the changing in fertility behavior is due to the rather view the transformation as a convergence process towards “western” social and economic incentives for childbearing. (e.g. Kreyenfeld, 2002)

The third aspect, explain that the demographic trends are a reflection of the “second demographic Transition”. In this view the recent demographic trends do not constitute a crisis, nor are they directly linked to the economic hardship associated with the transformation towards a market economy. Rather, they occur due to a “second demographic transition”, which transforms family and fertility behaviour towards more secular and individualistic behaviour. (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, hypothetical frame will be tasted. The general hypotheses of this paper consider fertility as biological (demographic) phenomenon, but it is under great influence of the changes of the social surrounding. Late home leaving and union formation, low gender equality within the family, incompatibility of work and childbearing, precarious economic situation of young adults, employment insecurity, post-communist social & economic transformation; rising voluntary childlessness and/or the spread one-child family model have influence on lowering fertility level

Considering the above brief theoretical review of fertility, this study is close to the approach that attempts to reach full understanding of fertility and fertility change in society. To achieve that, it is necessary to encompass both the structural determinants of embedding-context, and the role of individual and intra-individual process, and consequently, the mechanisms that relate macro and micro levels. Fertility is before everything biological event, but its remains as a social phenomenon emerging from the aggregation of individual life events, largely socially determined and with profound social consequences.

3. Fertility levels, trends and differentials of fertility in the Republic of Macedonia

This section begins with a discussion of the levels, trends and patterns of fertility. Fertility levels and trends are portrayed using Crude Birth Rate (CBR), customarily shown per thousand inhabitants. General Fertility Rate (GFR), is obtained by relating the number of births in the given year to the female population in the

reproductive age. Total Fertility Rate (TFR), is a hypothetical (average) woman would have if during her life her childbearing behavior were same. It is average number of children that expect that women will bear during the reproductive period. and fertility pattern with. Age Specific Fertility Rate (ASFR) provides information about the level of fertility of women of the specific ages on an annual basis.

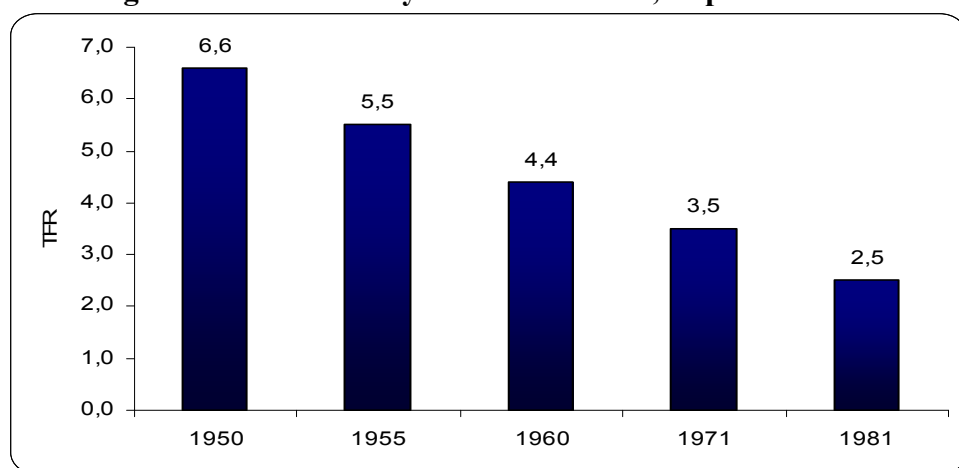
3.1. Fertility level and trend

At the beginning of the last century, the Crude Birth Rate in the Republic of Macedonia was exclusively high (about 40 per thousand inhabitants), and this trend ended in the 1950 when the rates came with constant tendency of decreasing until today. In 1998, it reached only 14.6 per thousand population, and permanently decrease that reach 11.2 in 2008. (See: Appendix Table 1)

The number of births per thousand women (GFR) showed the similar trend. In 1931, GFR was 176 children per 1000 women in the reproductive period. After 30 years (1961) this number dropped to 126 children. A dramatic drop was shown after 10 years. In 1971 the General Fertility Rate was only 89.9 children per thousand women. Then, it decreased to 80 in 1981, to 68 in 1991 and to 67 in 1994, and 43.4 children per thousand woman in 2008. (See: Appendix Table 1.)

As expected, the TFR in the Republic of Macedonia also decreased and from 2.2. in 1988 to only 1.5 (or 1.47) in 2008. (See: Appendix Table 1.)

Figure 1. Total Fertility Rates:1950-1981, Republic of Macedonia

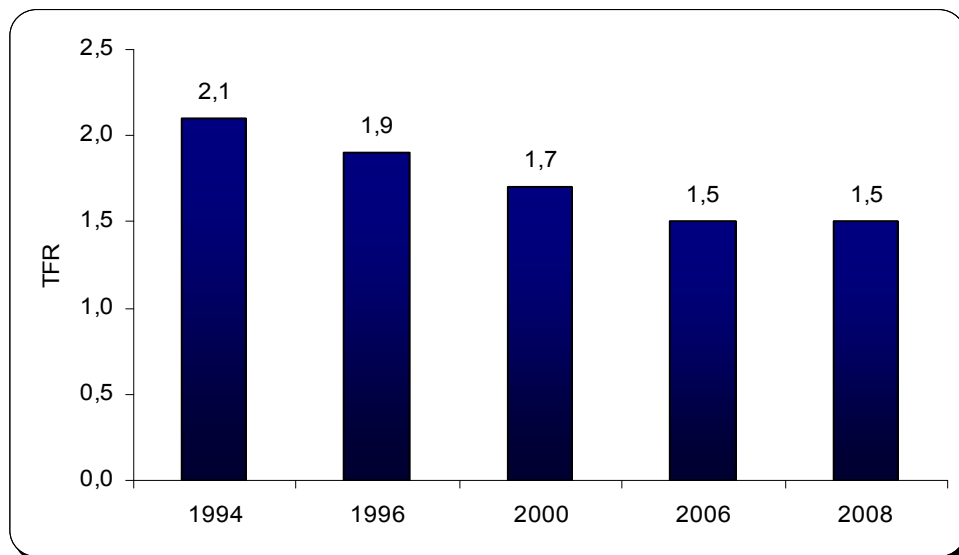


In comparisn to other countires in the region, as well as in Europa that experience low fertility rate, Macedonia is a country where fertility started to decline latter, and proceed with much faster pace.

The value of TFR in 1960 was 4.4 children per woman. After one decade, value of TFR have been decreased and reach in 3.0 live births per woman, in 1971. The TFR continued to decline less rapidly than before and reach 2,5 children per woman, in 1981. (see Figure 1)

In the period of socio-economic transition Republic of Macedonia have experienced a substation decline in fertility level. Today, Macedonia belong to the group of countries where fertility is below the level of replacement. This period started from 1994 year. After that period TFR permanently decrease in 1999 to 1.9, and slowly decreasing in the next year, to reach in 2008 1.47. (See: Figure 2)

Figure 2. Total Fertility Rates: 1994-2008, Republic of Macedonia



In comparison to the countries that have lower fertility longer period Macedonia show variation in terms of timing, level as well as in the rate and duration of the decline. Persistently low-fertility countries as are Austria, Germany (and in particular West Germany), Greece, Spain, and Italy. All of these countries have had a TFR of or below 1.5 since the mid 1980s; in West Germany the period of low fertility even started in the middle of the 1970s. Periods of low fertility also occurred in Denmark and the Netherlands during the 1980s as well as in Sweden at the end of the 1990s. (Neyer, 2003, p.5)

The Age Pattern of Fertility

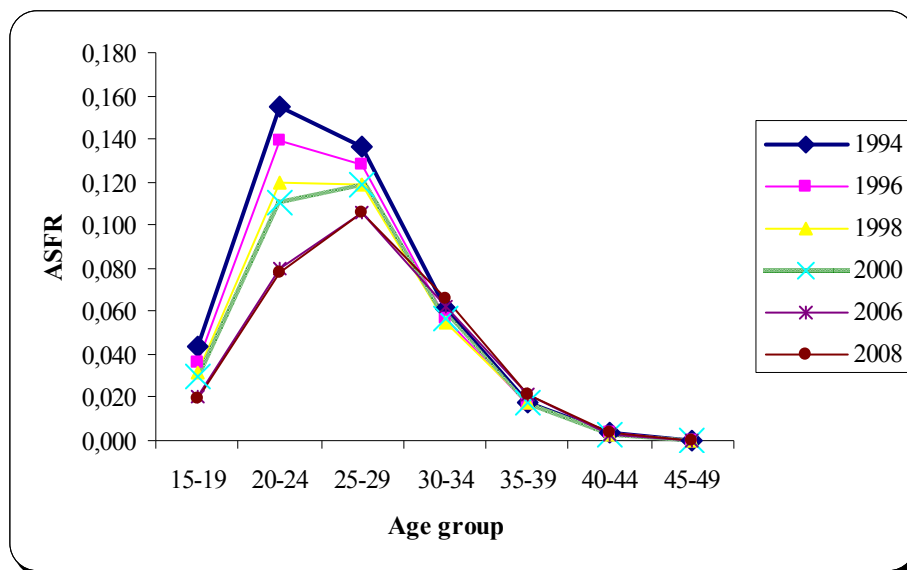
As known, to deliver a child has biological limitation followed by social determinants and causes. Fertility level depend of the woman's age. In that matter, the

ASFR is the best measure to show the age impact on fertility. According to the available data from vital registration, will be present the fertility pattern in the Republic of Macedonia from 1994 to 2008.

More than two-thirds of the total number of born children in each year during the examining period (from 1994 – 2008) belong to the two age groups of women aged 20-24 and 25-29. (See: Appendix, Table 2)

Figure 3, bellow illustrate the transition of bearing child according the age of mother

Figure 3. Age Specific Fertility Rates, Republic of Macedonia



From 1994-1997 the most common age group at which women give birth was 20-24 years. After that period most common year move toward next age group (25-29).

According to the United Nations classification of age-specific fertility distribution, Macedonian fertility belongs to the “early peak” type. For the whole country, the peak of fertility occurs at the age group 20-24 years from 1994-1997. After 1998 year, fertility shift to the “broad peak” model. (Kpedekpo, 1982)

Due to the fact that majority of births occur between married couple¹, could be say that postponing the entering into marriage is main factor that fertility decline.

¹ Despite the fact that number of non-marital births increase, still the biggest number of births occurred in the marital union. Actually, in 1994, out of total number of births 8.8% was non-marital, and this number reaches 12.2% in 2008

In general, number of marriages decline. According the values of Crude Marriage Rates (CMR), that show number of marriages per thousand population, in 1994 was registered 8.1, and in 2008 7.2 marriages per thousand population. (see Appendix, Table 1)

In additional, age that entering in the marital union is also declining. In 1994, mean age at first marriage for man was 26.0 and for woman 22.9 year. After more than decade, groom are older for almost years (in 2008 average age at first marriage for man was 27.7 year), and bride is more than two years (in 2008, for woman 24.7). (SSO, 2008)

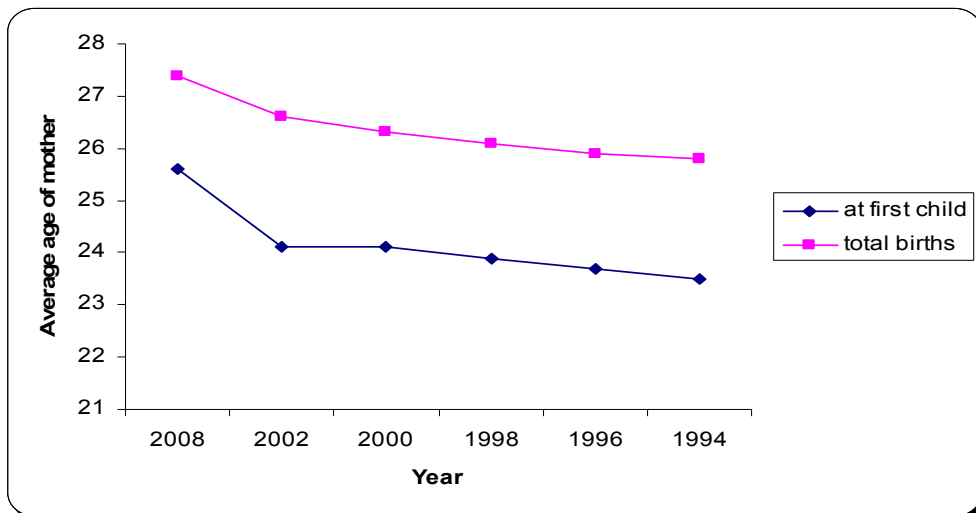
Those differences on the fertility level are mainly due to demographic and socio-economic factors. From the demographic point of view, low fertility is consequence of the so called "time effect". It means postpone the motherhood and bearing first child. It is obviously that mother postpone the decision for having birth, because they postpone to enter in the marital union.

Average age of first birth for women the same period is present in the Figure bellow.

During the period the mean age of mother at the first birth increase from the 23.5 (1994) to 25.6 in 2008. In additional mean age of mother of total births increase also, and it is for 26.8 to 27.4 in 2008.

All mothers that have born first child in 2008 are two years older than mother that had first-born in 1994. Namely, in 1994, when fertility level was at the replacement fertility, mean age of first birth was 23.5 year. From that, time until 2008 mean age rose permanently year-by-year and reaches 25.6 in 2008. Moreover, age of mother for all births increase, also. In the 1994 was 25.8 and in 2008 was 27.4 (see Figure 4)

Figure 4 Average age of mother at the first child and total births:1994-2008, Republic of Macedonia



As can be seen, decreasing of fertility in Macedonia persists among all groups, but the differences between groups are related to timing of decreasing.

Many point to the rising costs of raising children — not just higher costs of living, but also the personal costs to parents of deferred professional advancement and individual fulfillment. Another explanation focuses on related changes in social expectations about marriage and family formation: young Macedonian may not feel the same social pressure to get married and have children, as did their parents and grandparents.

3.2 Fertillity differentials

Macedonia is multiethnic country. Out of total nubmber (2.022,547)of inhabitants 64.2% are Macedonian, 25,2% Albanian, 3.9% Turks, 2,7% Roma, 1.8% Serbs, 0.1%Vlachs, 0,9% Bosniaks, and 1.1% Other. Those ethnicity belong to different language and religion.

To depict fertilty differentilas by ethnicity will be used cumulative fertility, based on the Census data 2002. The mean numbers of children ever born to number of women, obtained from the Census of 2002 ae shown in the table 2.

A woman by the end of her reproductive period at the time of the Census (2008) had an average completed fertility of 2.31, that is lower than in 1994, when the completed fertility was 2.5 children.

Table 1. Average Number of Children Ever Born, 2002, Republic of Macedonia

	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
Vlach	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

Source: Calculated from 2002 Census data

Ethnicity is the most distinctive feature of fertility in Macedonia and discussion of fertility would be incomplete without a brief examination between ethnicity and fertility. The initial assumption is that number of children ever born is bigger among the non-Macedonian women.

As can be seen all ethnic groups shows less number of CEB for each age group. More precisely, Macedonian woman, as majority of population finished her fertility with 1.97 in 2002. Less than that number is Vlach woman with 1.73 children. Little above Macedonian woman, Serbian woman has more children. Those category of women at the end of her reproductive period she reported that have 2.01 children.

The Roma population is characterized by the highest fertility. Roma woman completed her fertility by 3.45 children, Albanian woman 3.40 children. Somewhere in between are Turkish woman with 3.01 children, and category "other" exhibits 2.58 children. (See: Table 1)

The comparison of data from the aspect of particular age group, shows that differences and oscillations are not very significant among women at the younger ages: from 15 to 24 years old, with exception among Roma woman. The magnitude becomes wider in the older ages. (See: Table 1)

The comparison of data on average number of children ever born at the end of reproductive age for the whole country (2.31) indicates different dynamics among different ethnicities to reach this number. The Macedonian woman do not reach this number during her reproductive period, as well as Vlach and Serbian woman. On the other hand, a Roma woman reaches this number between 25 and 39 years old. and

Albanian, as well as Turkish woman reach 2 children or reach the level of cumulative fertility for the whole country between 30 and 39 years old.

It is very important that they reported different demographic behaviour, that could be explained by the structural as well as by the cultural approach.

In Macedonian case, the explanation seems to hold as that the observed differences between ethnic groups have a basis on various social, economic and other characteristics. In addition, certain fertility difference among women of different ethnicities are due to divergent views on marriage, and birth control method.

Among group 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, also.

Education, working status and fertility

No doubt, that education is a variable with a great influence on fertility. Much has been written about the relationship between education and fertility. In explanation related to differences in fertility, 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 as one of the fundamental reasons for decreasing fertility. In each stage of demographic transition, women with higher education had a relatively low fertility rate. (Breznik et al., 1980) Such a thesis is persisting.

Below table 2 present cumulative fertility in Macedonia by educational status of woman. Overall, the completed fertility is higher among women without education, and who did not complete primary education (3.5 and 3.1 children). Those two groups are followed with group of women with primary education, who reported that they have 2.5 children. Other category of women with higher level of education completed their fertility with less than two children: secondary educated women with 1.9, higher educated with 1.9 children, university 1.7 children, and master and PhD by 1.6 children (see Table 2)

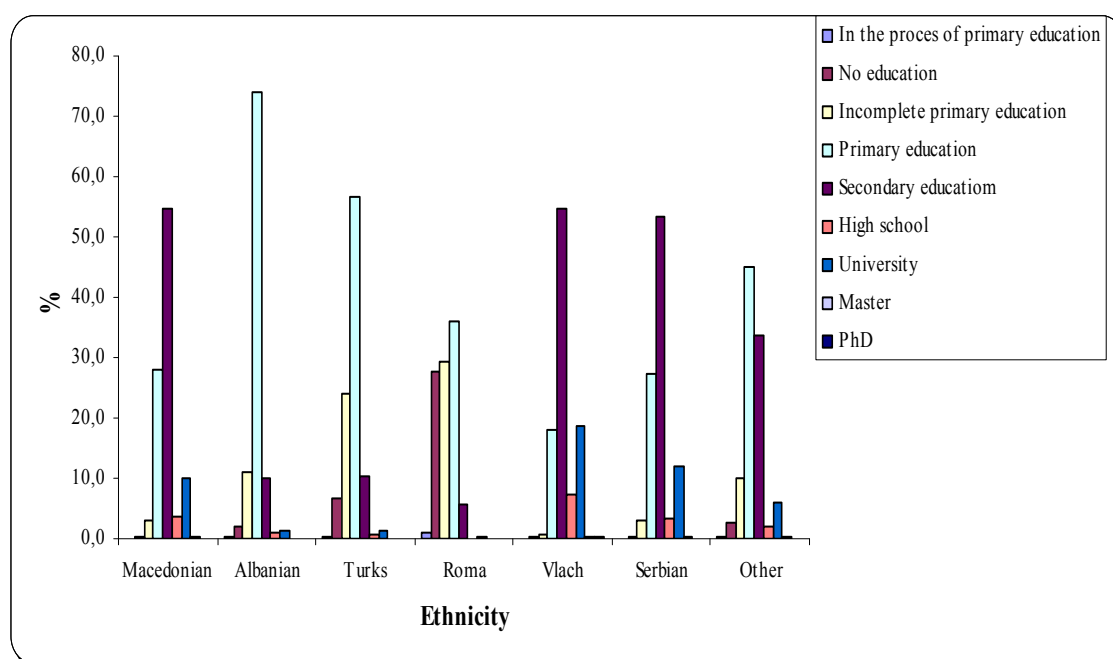
Table 2. Cumulative fertility by education status of woman, republic of Macedonia, 2002

Education status	Age of mother						
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49

In the process of primary education	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
No education	0,4	1,2	1,9	2,4	2,8	3,1	3,5
Incomplete primary education	0,2	1,0	1,9	2,6	2,9	3,1	3,1
Primary education	0,0	0,6	1,5	2,2	2,5	2,5	2,5
Secondary education	0,0	0,3	1,1	1,6	1,9	1,9	1,9
High school	0,0	0,2	0,9	1,5	1,8	1,9	1,9
University	0,0	0,1	0,4	1,0	1,5	1,7	1,7
Master	0,0	0,1	0,3	0,7	1,3	1,4	1,6
PhD	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,5	1,5	1,5	1,6

Comparison between completed fertility and education status of women at the reproductive age give as empirical prove that one of the answers about different reproductive behavior among ethnic groups in the country.

Figure 5. Educational status of women at the reproductive age by ethnicity, Republic of Macedonia, 2002



According the Census data that refer to education status of population Roma woman is at the lowest level of education. Out of total number of Roma women at the reproductive age, 57,1% do not have primary education, and 36,1% have primary school. Only 5,6% finished secondary school.

Second group with high fertility that is Albanian woman. The most frequently level of education for this woman is primary education. Out of total, almost three-quarter of Albanian women at the reproductive age finish only primary school, and

13,4% is without or uncompleted education. Only one tenth of those women finish secondary education. Very few or 2.3% complete higher or university and higher school

More than one half women at the Turkish women at the reproductive age finish only primary school, show that 74.0% finish secondary education, and 31,0% is without or uncompleted education. Only one tenth of those women finish secondary education. Very few or 2,273% complete higher or university and higher school.

In contrary, women who exhibit lower fertility show higher level of education. More than half of the Macedonian women complete secondary school. The same experience exhibit Vlach and Serbian women, as well. Among them, Vlach women has the biggest share (26.6%) complete higher or university and more degree, after that Serbian with 15.8%, and Macedonian woman with 13.8%.

The typical expected relationship that fertility exhibits lower level among working in comparison to non-working women is also applicable to Macedonian experience. Namely, beside education, an economic activity of woman seems that play great role in fertility behavior. According the data of the last census of population, households and dwellings (2002) group of the population that show high level reported the lowest level of unemployed, Out of total number of Roma 84.0% are unemployed. Among Albanian women, it is 72.0% and Turkish women 69.0%. In contrary, level of unemployment among low fertility group is lower. For example, out of total Macedonian women at the reproductive age 34.0% are unemployed, and between Serbian, and Vlach are by 24.0%.

Due to the above presented facts as well as information taken from some other researches, could be say that ethnic factor as an additional important factor in the multiethnic society on the decision to have a child. Namely, influence of the norms and values on fertility behavior it is related to the fact that special characteristics of each subculture affect the development of personality in the deceive years of socialization in childhood. Therefore, their influence remains more or less prevalent in adult life, even if the actual economic and social conditions of the give family chance and induce other fertility goals. In addition, we may be able to be correct to support thesis of Lenski (1961) about power of the cultural norms and values concerns fertility even in the modern society. Other

Relationship between women's working status and fertility has received considerable attention both theoretically and empirically. The involvement of women in the modern sector economy as full-time paid employees has for long been advances as

one way to raise their social status and to decrease their excessive dependence on, an subordination to their male relatives. This in turn is expected to lead to lower fertility performance since they would be under less pro-natalist pressure from their family and kin-groups, and since child bearing and rearing would interfere with their newly acquired personal freedom and choice (McCabe and Rozenweigh, 1976 Oppany, 1983). As Dixon-Miller (1978) explained, women's participation in the formal sector has been shown to reduce women's dependence on alternative sources of social identity and security; increase women's desire to delay age at marriage, motivate women to terminate unsatisfactory relationship, space and limit births.

So, working status and education of women together are considered as factors that show association with fertility. It is accepted that this factor may be negotiated differently in a different place of residence or among different ethnicity, but still their influence on the number of children is remarkable.

5. Institutional context

The important aspect for demographic development is institutional background of the country in the economic as well as in the policy matter. In the case of Macedonia, political as well as economic situation the country is not so much favorable for bearing child and child raising.

Macedonia is faced with a prolonged process of transition from closed to open economy, based on market system. The process of transformation was followed by the many internal and external conflict situations, which repeatedly hindered the initiation of policy reforms. In additional period of transition is accompanied by high rate of inflation, lowering the standard of living, lowering income, and increasing the unemployment.

Further will be present some activities that are taken by the Government toward population development. Despite the fact, that Macedonians' governments recognized the problem of differences in fertility, as an obstacle to the social and economic development of the country, until 2008 was not clear officially launched National Population Policy in the Country.²

²Until that time they were still regulated by the legislation enacted by the Republic when it was still part of Yugoslavia. Namely, the issue of fertility and family planning has been officially considered at the

At the beginning of the 2008 year, Strategy for demographic development of the Republic of Macedonia 2008-2015 was approved by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. That strategy is pro-natal, and is addressing to the positive population growth as well as better quality of life of population.

The main goal for the period 2008 – 2015 of the Strategy is sustainable demographic development of the population in the Republic of Macedonia, through the ensuring high quality of the human capital, decreasing disparities without discrimination based on any differences between people and increasing social cohesion.

Such a comprehensive approach is planned to realize through the three specific objectives. 1. to slow down the rate of decrease of population, and to create conditions for sustainable demographic development of the country; 2. to decrease regional demographic disparities and to create sustainable territorial distribution of the population and quality of the live and 3. to decrease existing difference and inequalities between population and in that way to increase social cohesion. (MTSP, 2008)

The expectation of the first strategic aim is directly related to the fertility in the country. The realization of the first objective are proposed through creating conditions to encouragement natural increasing of population, increasing life expectance, decreasing mortality with special attention to mother and child, and creating conditions to decreasing migration.

In the context of this paper will be extract first specific strategic aim. Expected results are: increasing natural growth of the population and create conditions favorable to child-raising and childbearing. (MTSP, 2008) Specific measures and activities are address in the filed of family policies, and in general is concentrate to improve system of financial assistance (paid maternal leave, allowance for each born child, for each family who have two, three and more children) for encouraging the families to have more children.

In purpose to present institutional context of lowering fertility from the point of view of government's activities further will be short preview family policies in Macedonia. Namely, very often population policies are related to other policies, and fertility is related more deeply to the family policies. Why? Because those polices

federal level of the federal Assembly of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in April 1969. The "Resolution on Population, Development and Family Planning", set out general principles and directions with regard to population matters. Activities included in this Resolution at the level of the Republic of Macedonia, were in details elaborated in the "Family Planning Resolution" in 1987.

reflect the way which states' concept of family, relation between partners, relation between parents and children, as well as other issues related to child upbringing,

In this paper family policies are maternal protection, second is parental leave, after that child care as well as child benefit.³

Maternity protection

Maternity protection is a part of the social protection system. Universal rights to maternal benefit are granted to all mothers who bring a child after January 1, 2008. Until that time, the right to maternity benefit was only for employee women, and who were insured at least 6 months before the start of maternity leave. Women in agriculture could not claim the maternity benefit only if their agricultural activity is registered as an independent economic activity.

All mothers has a right on maternal leave 9 months (28 days before anticipate delivery) or 12 months in case of a multiple births. (Law for working relations, "Official Gazette" no. 62.2005, article 166). A female who are employee may begin her maternity leave 45 days before childbirth if authorized by a competent medical commission. Maternity benefit is continuously paid for the period of maternal leave.

Maternal leave is individual right and mother can break before expire day. Mothers on maternity leave are protected against dismissal and have the right to return to the same workplace.

For all working women the Health Insurance Found (HIF) pays maternity benefits in the amount of 100% of the average monthly net wage paid to the employee (mother) in the six months before the maternity leave (monthly payment). (Law for health insurance, "Official Gazette", no.25.2001, article 14). Amount of the maternal benefits for other categories of women reaches 30% of the average monthly net wage.

To promote earlier return to the labour market, a female employee may return to work 6 months after the birth, during which time (until the end of the 9th month of her maternity leave) she will receive both the maternity benefit and the regular salary.

Maternal leave is optional, and depend on the attitude towards women, only. If the mother for many reason is not able to care for newborn child, and to use maternal

³Those policies constitute the core of welfare-state policies related to childbearing and the rearing of children

leave, father has right for leave for that period. (Law for working relations, “Official Gazette” no. 62.2005, article 167)

Parental leave

Parental leave is among the newest form of family policy and is considered as an important part of family.

Government of the Republic of Macedonia did not introduce parental leave regulations. Leave is still exclusive only for mother. There is some leave that father can use but during the time of child bringing but not more than 7 days. Actually, such a form is extracted from other events that could occur inside the family, and it is regulated by the Law of labor relations. (Law for working relations, “Official Gazette” no. 62.2005, article 136).

Childcare services

Pre-school education is available in different types of pre-school, for children up to seven years of age, until the beginning of primary education. Day nurseries are available for children up to age two; kindergartens for children aged two to seven; and pre-primary education in primary schools for children aged six to seven. Until now, public pre-schools exist only in urban areas, while pre-school classes in primary schools are located in both rural and urban areas.

Pre-school education, even in public facilities, is fee-based. The kindergartens charge their own fees. Usually, this is around €25 euro a month for full-day care (that is, between 8 and 12 hours). This includes childcare, meals and daytime naps. There is an option to have part-time childcare, without meals and naptimes (for example, half a day or four hours).

Kindergartens are also part of the social protection system, and the Child Protection Department within the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) has responsibility for their supervision. Those employed in kindergartens are paid by the MLSP. There are 51 public kindergartens, dispersed in 184 educational buildings/sites. The total capacity of the public kindergartens is 25,000 children, which is 11% of the generation up to age of 7.

The units of local self-government, under the Law on Local Self-government (2002) have gained competencies related to social protection issues. This in practice mainly involves the establishment of child nurseries

To combine service support child-raising, upbringing and the development of children in a family formation Strategy suggest to covering greater part or all costs for children. This measure is guarantee only for children in poor families in preschool institutions, not for all children.

Child benefits

The Law on Child Protection defines four different financial benefits aimed at contributing to child welfare and child well-being. These include: (1) child allowance; (2) special allowance; (3) first born baby allowance and (4) participation.

The child allowance is the major form of child benefit in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and it is granted to children living in families with low incomes. It is dependent on the child's age and household income. However, the means-testing procedure used for assessment of the household income for child allowance is confined to a set of documents, which according to some researchers contributes to a failure in targeting and selection of poor families. The income threshold for exercising the right to child allowance is 16% of the average salary paid per employee in the first half of the previous year for couples and 32% of the same amount for single parents. The total sum for child allowance can amount to a maximum of Denar 1,800 (Euro 29.42) per month.

Special allowance is granted for disabled children and a special commission establishes the disability status for children up to the age of 26. The sum of the special allowance represents 27% of the average salary paid in the first half of the previous year.

First born baby allowance is a universal benefit provided once and only for the first born babies to all mothers.

Participation is a form of public contribution to the costs for caring and education of the children in public institutions. Although this benefit is stipulated in the Law, it is rarely provided in practice.

Child benefits are generally low. Child allowance is Euro 11 per child below the age of 15 and Euro 19 per child between the age of 15 and 18 if in education. Special allowance which is offered to support families caring for disabled children is Euro 59 per month and allowances for new born babies can vary between Euro 16 and Euro 57. These amounts can make a difference only to the poorest among the poor, a target group which is not reached by benefits at present.

In 2006, the average monthly number of child benefits beneficiaries was 22,362 families and 36,649 children.

As a new part of the Strategy parents that will get their second child after January 1, 2008 will receive a monthly allowance of approximately Euro 134 for nine months, while approximately Euro 81 will be given to the parents having a third child in the next ten years. The parents with fourth child will receive around Euro 186 for 15 years. The parental benefit for the child will be given to the mother, or father or the legal guardian of the child.

6. Conclusion

Fertility in Macedonia has undergone important changes. It is sharp reduction in the level of fertility, followed by structural changes. Those changes consist of childbearing postponement, as well as postponement to enter into the marital union in a context of transformation of the socialist regime towards a country with a market economy caused both an economic and a societal crisis.

Observed differences between ethnic groups have a basis on various social, economic and other characteristics. Among group 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, also. In the same time norms and values related to fertility, which are closer to traditional and collective behaviour, among non-Macedonian ethnic group, that belong to the specific subculture characteristics of the ethnic group should not be overlook either.

Namely, influence of the norms and values on fertility behaviour it is related to the fact that special characteristics of each subculture affect the development of personality in the deceive years of socialization in childhood. Therefore, their influence remains more or less prevalent in adult life, even if the actual economic and social conditions of the give family chance and induce other fertility goals. In addition, we may consider ethnic factor as an additional important factor in the multiethnic society on the decision to have a child.

It is right place to put a question is it government able to change fertility behavior in the country. One question is could the government help in preventing

further fertility decline and rehabilitating fertility, among part of the population where fertility level is in the long run, below the level of replacement. Second question is could the government help to accelerate fertility decline in order to slowdown population growth in the part of the population where fertility level is high, above the level of replacement.

Answer is positive but if family policy is consider as a part of the policy of labour force, as well as gender policies, public child care for children at all ages, and child care to be guaranteed as a social right of children. Namely such a concept make parents to be more relax in the sense to care about their child or children, and experience show that there is positive effect on increasing fertility, like is the case in Northern countries in Europe. Actually existing parental leave allow parents to care about their children without impairing their living standard or their employment. And on the whole, the support of families is based on providing social services rather than cash benefits. (Esping-Andersen 2002, 53).

In present situation Macedonia doing some step forwards in the sense to manage those three mentioned aspects (facilitating mothers' employment, alleviating mothers of their care work, and changing gender relations in care and employment) in the concept of promotion family with more children.

Issues of the women position (equality) are moving on the top of the global agenda - more in the policy than in the practice. In Macedonia the existing gap between the ideals proclaimed and the actual condition of women persist. They have won rights, access to education, a career, and cultural life but at the same time, the old inequalities in the relations between men and women, have been persisted. Due to the fact that family policies recognized influence to shaping women's and men's life-course and their position within the family, still there is some kind of discrimination of the women in terms of employment of childbearing and bringing up child.

Should be mentioned again that based on the experience from the country that are longer period faced with the low level of fertility that success in management between low of labor force and family polices could get some positive results in the meaning to increase number of births per women. In those countries, parental leave is social right for mother and father as well, and as it is consider as an very important steps to change something in the traditional family life and in the employment duties. We should mentioned that such a form do not exist in Macedonia.

Parental–leave schemes is social right for both mothers and fathers, and is consider as an important step towards changes in the family and in the employment sphere, but in Macedonia do not exists. There is no supports mothers in their care obligations through a scheme of various benefits, (like a puts the emphasis on job rotation and flexible labor-market) NO.

Until now could be said that the main attempt, or activites that are undertaken by the government is to solve some social problems of families, like unemployment and housing, and give some financial assistance for family who are poor.

Mentioned suggestions in Strategy and activities in the filed of family policies may have modest effect in raising fertility levels, but to provide economically meaningful financial incentives to facilities in the country would require very substantial public expenditure. However, it may be expected that under prevailing social circumstances, towards antinatal, and pronatal targets will not be equally realistic. Namely, setting, and implementing a system of individual incentives with long-term pronatal aims, under transitional characteristics of the country, such as acute economic, political and moral crisis, and chronic housing shortage, unemployment, and apathy may not accelerate solving the population balance in the country. So, accelerating the fertility decline, and in the same time preventing further fertility decline will no doubt be a difficult, but a feasible task that could be pursued through promotion of family planning services and breaking down culturally induced segregation of women.

In general, expectation are Macedonia in the future do not deverge 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”. If we pay attention to the demographic future for Macedonia following the other specific aims in the Strategy for demographic development for the period from 2008 to 2015, that refer: to the increasing social capital, through better quality of education, improving access and quality of health for all ages group, improving social status of the population through the program for employment and reducing poverty, opportunity to make influence on the quality of life on the population are great, especially if they are realized in better economic situation.

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APPENDIX

Table (1) Review of the Movement of the Population in the Republic of Macedonia: 1931-2008

Years	Crude birth rate	General fertility Rate	Crude marriages rate
1931	37.6	165.8	9.8
1948	40.7	175.5	11.9
1953	37.9	158.5	9.0
1961	29.9	126.1	8.4
1971	22.9	89.9	8.9
1981	20.6	80.4	13.6
1990	16.6	-	7.4
1991	17.1	68.0	7.4
1992	16.2	-	7.5
1993	15.4	-	7.3
1994	17.2	67.0	8.1
1995	16.5	-	8.0
1996	15.8	-	7.1
1997	14.7	-	7.0
1998	14.6	-	7.0
1999	13.5	-	7.0
2000	14.5	-	7.0
2001	13.3	-	6.5
2002	13.7	46.2	7.2
2003	13.3	-	7.1
2004	11.5	-	6.9
2005	11.0	42.7	7.1
2006	11.1	42.8	7.3
2007*	11,1	42.9	7.6
2008*	11.2	43.4	7.2

*Source: From 1931-1999 Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Macedonia, 1998. From 1999-2006 Statistical yearbook 2007. *Calculated by the reseearcher based on the vital registration repord from the SSO, RM , (-) is not avialible*

Table (2.3) Age Specific Fertility Rates: 1994 – 2008, Republic of Macedonia

Years	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	TFR
1994	43.2	154.5	136.6	61.2	17.9	3.7	0.3	2.1

1995	41.6	144.1	131.0	57.5	17.0	3.5	0.2	2.0
1996	36.5	139.5	127.6	56.6	16.6	3.4	0.3	1.9
1997	33.9	124.3	116.8	53.4	16.1	3.2	0.3	1.7
1998	31.4	120.1	119.0	54.6	17.7	2.9	0.2	1.7
1999	28.7	111.2	111.4	51.9	16.1	2.7	0.3	1.6
2000	29.6	110.4	119.1	56.6	17.7	3.0	0.2	1.7
2001	24.9	99.4	109.7	55.6	16.8	2.7	0.2	1.5
2002	23.7	101.7	112.4	58.3	17.5	3.7	0.1	1.6
2003	23.4	95.4	111.4	57.4	17.5	3.0	0.2	1.5
2004	22.8	90.2	109.5	58.7	18.7	3.4	0.2	1.5
2005	21.7	82.5	105.1	60.5	18.7	3.4	0.1	1.46
2006	20.2	79.9	105.7	61.9	21.3	3.0	0.1	1.46
2008	19.8	77.7	105.3	66.2	21.8	3.7	0.1	1.47

Source: Republic of Macedonia State Statistical Office (2006) Statistical Review : Population and social statistics Demographic statistics by Regions 1994-2004 2/4/6/04 526 p.49 Calculated from Census data and vital registration for each year.

