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DYNAMICS IN THE SCOPE AND AGE OF FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE POPULATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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ABSTRACT

Managing population policy, especially reproductive female population means long-term investment in population sustainability of the area and it further entails an impact on and shaping other demographic structures and socioeconomic activities in the area. This importance of the female fertility contingent is a starting point in this paper that refers to the dynamics of scopes, the age structure and spatial diversity of the fertility contingent of female population in the Republic of Macedonia. Their features considered in the interaction of the mutual influences of natural and mechanical movements of population, socioeconomic, social and institutional segments in the country.

Studies have shown that the level of this population in the country is still stable in terms of numbers and age. However, problems are visible if we look at the issues in the long term, especially at the regional and municipal level. Disadvantages can be indicated in the fact that optimal female fertile contingent takes up a smaller part and in the increasing average age, which is close to the upper limit of the optimum fertility. This puts a question mark on the possibilities for biological sustainability of certain areas and their overall sustainable development.

Key words: population, women population, fertile contingent, fertility, Macedonia.

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the twentieth century is characterized by significant changes in the development and structural characteristics of the population in the Republic of Macedonia. The main factors for these changes are the dynamics of the natural recovery of the population on one hand, and the migratory movements on the other hand. It is surely crucial to mention the social commitment to strengthening the health and the social segment and their role in the overall population changes. Among these groups of factors there is always the impact of culture through certain social mechanisms in the individual which determine the moral code, beliefs, customs, system of values, religious interpretations which define the approach and the philosophy of life to the progeny and gender roles within the family and outside, especially regarding the upbringing of children. In this way the different reproductive patterns in the Republic of Macedonia are provoked, causing variety in the structural characteristics of the population on a regional and municipal level. More precisely, this is the model of high fertility and expand-

ed reproduction among Albanian, Roma and other Muslim population and the pattern of low fertility and low reproduction among Macedonian and the remaining Christian population. Therefore, as a result, the population imbalances in space, suggesting far-reaching social and political problems.

It is necessary to mention the economic trends in the analyzed period, especially the period of industrialization in the second half of the last century, simply because the industrialization had an impact on the reduced form of the extended family. The overall socioeconomic events influenced the role of women in society that also led to a significant moment in the last century and that is the entry of women in paid employment. In addition, it also evolved the institutional support in the care and upbringing of children, thus contributing to the possibility for a woman to be realized in other social fields, except in the role of mother and housewife. "Of course, we need to take into account that the biological function of women is enduring specific determinant in the family and society, though, by no case it is not incompatible with its economic emancipation and affirmation in society..." (Baletic, 1973).

Namely, the second half of the last century the Republic of Macedonia has seen a constant reduction in the general birth rate starting with 37.9 ‰ in 1953, 22.9 ‰ in 1971, 20.6 ‰ in 1981, to 13.7 ‰ in 2002 and 11.2 ‰ in 2013. The numbers vary greatly within regions and municipalities. Considering the fact that "the birth rate is an important long-term determinant of the age structure" (Madzhevikj, 2004), it shapes the volume of the fertile population.

On the other hand, in the sixties and the seventies of the last century the strong internal migratory flows from the rural areas to the cities had a major role in the structural changes of the population. The same effect was achieved by the dynamics of the external migration, especially in the strongest wave of 1964 in the middle of the seventies of the last century, although the pace of emigration from the rural areas is still continuing. Only from 1989 to 1994, 50 000 people left the country, and in 1990 about 200 000 migrants emigrated (Bornarova, Janeska, 2012). During this period, the emigration of the young population is particularly highlighted.

In the interplay of the above mentioned natural and mechanical demographic processes, in specific temporal transition conditions, the relation between tradition and modern trends, population structures, the age structure especially is experiencing significant changes and regionally followed alarming values indicating that the population of the Republic of Macedonia is getting older. Along with the population, the female reproductive population is getting older too, and it changes in its scope. In a situation of a continued trend of declining fertility, due to the present postponements in giving birth, certain areas of the country are facing serious problems with efforts to sustain the number of the population.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

A fertile female contingent includes female population between 15 and 49 years of age who are in their reproductive years (Kjurchiev et.all, 2011). The female population aged between 20 and 34 years is considered as optimal fertile contingent.

The analysis was based on data from the censuses in 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1994, 2002 and population estimates for 2013, vital statistics and migration statistics published by the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia. Due to the fact that in the Republic of Macedonia, a census of the population has not been conducted since 2002, in the year 2013 estimates of the number of population were used.

Starting from 2004, the vital statistics data cover the vital events occurring only within the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. All indicators related to vital events are calculated on the basis of this methodology.

According to the administrative-territorial organization from 2004, there were a total of 84 municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia, and with the changes in 2013 their number was reduced to 80 municipalities. In the analyzed period from 1971 to 1981, the administrative organization consisted of thirty municipalities. The eight statistical regions of the Republic of Macedonia are according the NUTS3 classification.

At the same time, the program package ARCGIS was used for the preparation of the cartographic figures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DYNAMICS IN THE SCOPE OF REPRODUCTIVE FEMALE POPULATION

From 1953 to 2002 the fertile contingent among women, was growing continuously with an increase of 91%. In the same period, it accounted for about half of the total female population. The largest increase was noticed from 1961 to 1971 when the fertile contingent accounted for approximately 8 600 women a year. Specifically, in this period between the two censuses the largest growth of the fertile contingent among women has been seen, mainly due to the benefits of the baby boom generation and the period of compensation of the population in the post-war period. But this annual growth continued in the period from 1971 to 1981 with an annual inflow of approximately 7 000 people. Specifically, despite the expressed migration of the most vital part of the population in Macedonia in the second half of the sixties and seventies years of the last century, it is the legacy of high birth rate that allowed maintenance of stability in the number of reproductive-capable women. But the consequences were already apparent from 1981 until 1994 when a slight increase of the fertile female population was recorded between two censuses, a reflection of the overall state of the aging of the population in the country. During the same period an absolute reduction in the contingent of young people happened as a result of the outflow of young people, the middle-aged contingent was higher compared to the generations coming in a natural way (Daskalovski, 1998).

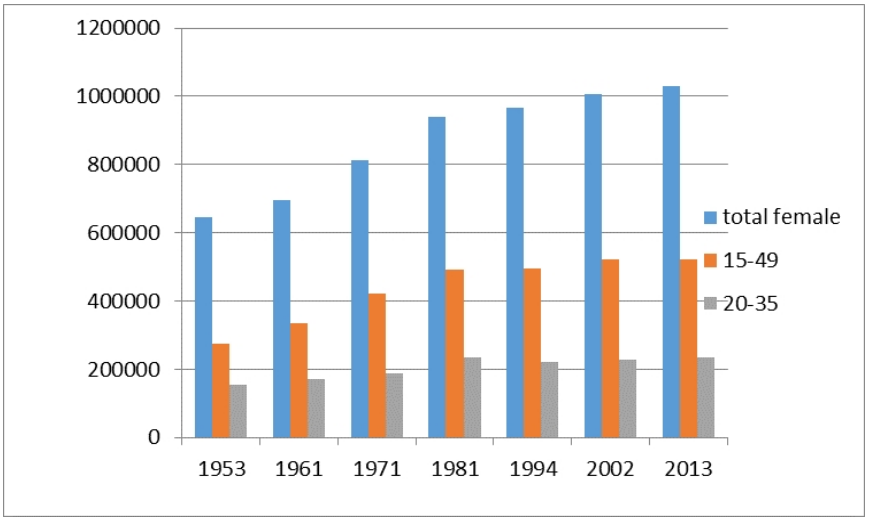
An inflow of approximately 3 300 women in their reproductive age was recorded in the period from 1994 to 2002, and later this same number significantly declined. Certainly, the methodological changes in the implementation of censuses that in one part affect the obtained observations must be emphasized[1].

In 2013, the contingent of female fertile population was 523 099 people. On average, over 45% of the total female reproductive population was in their optimal reproductive age between 20 and 34 years.

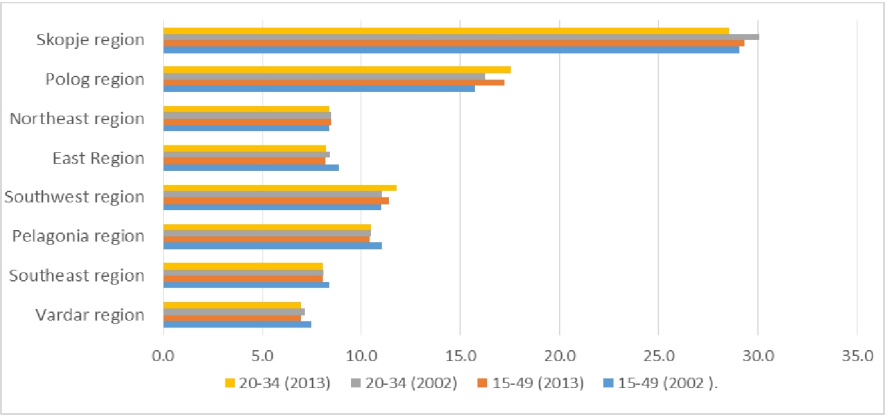
However, although on a global level, the fertile contingent of female population marks an increased and satisfactory level to be able to sustain in the forthcoming period, bearing in mind the data on regional differences in the volume and age of this population. In the past sixty years, the population of the country was included in the highlighted migration flows abroad and

[1] According to the methodology, by which the census in 2002 was conducted, the total number of the population does not include Macedonian residents that had stayed abroad for more than one year at the time of the census.

within its borders, which, of course, has affected the spatial distribution and the displacement of the female fertile population. The attractive force of a comfortable urban life that offers higher living standards and greater alternatives for economic independence are the main reasons for the greater concentration of the female population in urban areas.



Graph 1: Dynamics in the scope of the total female population, female fertile contingent and the optimal fertile contingent 1953-2013.

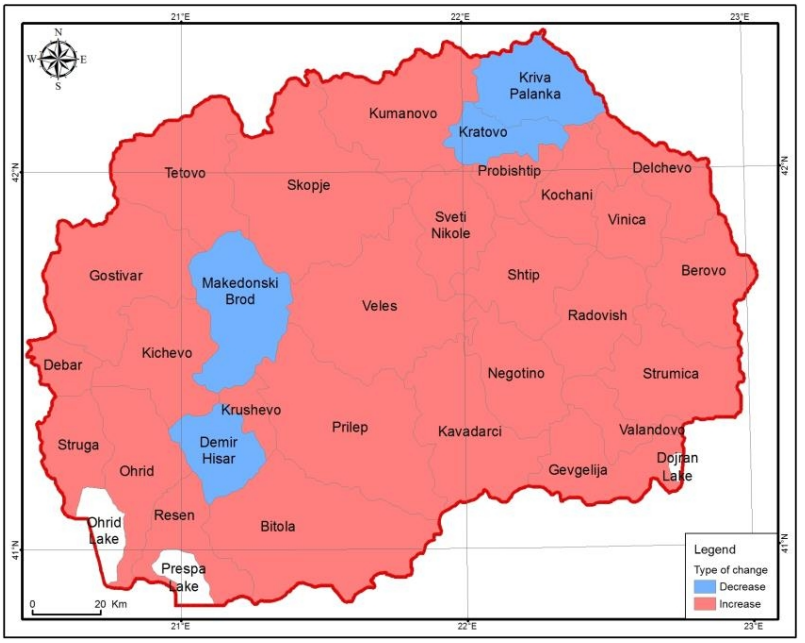


Graph 2: The percentage of the fertile contingent and the optimal fertile contingent in the total female population in 2002 and 2013, by regions.

On the other hand, in a longer period of time, the ethno demographic polarization on the area took place and it is certainly a framework of the natural movement of the population of certain areas in the country and it is provoking different dynamics in the aging of the population, which inevitably leads to the different creation in the scope of the female fertile population. Therefore, for one reason or the other, nearly half of the female fertility contingent in 2002 and

2013 was located in the Skopje and the Polog regions. The South West and Pelagonia region were with relatively greater participation. Other regions were facing reduced scope of the reproductive female population. The situation was even more disturbing within regions.

Even in the Skopje region, there were significant differences in terms of the distribution of the female fertile population. The intensive residential construction in certain parts of the city, as in Aerodrom, Kisela Voda, Karposh and Center, combined with the offered advantages in buying their own home, have contributed to a greater concentration of young reproductive population therein[2]. On the other hand, municipalities such as Chair, Shuto Orizari, Studenichani, Arachinovo and parts of Gazi Baba, recorded increased volume of the female fertile population in large part because of the pattern of extended reproduction.

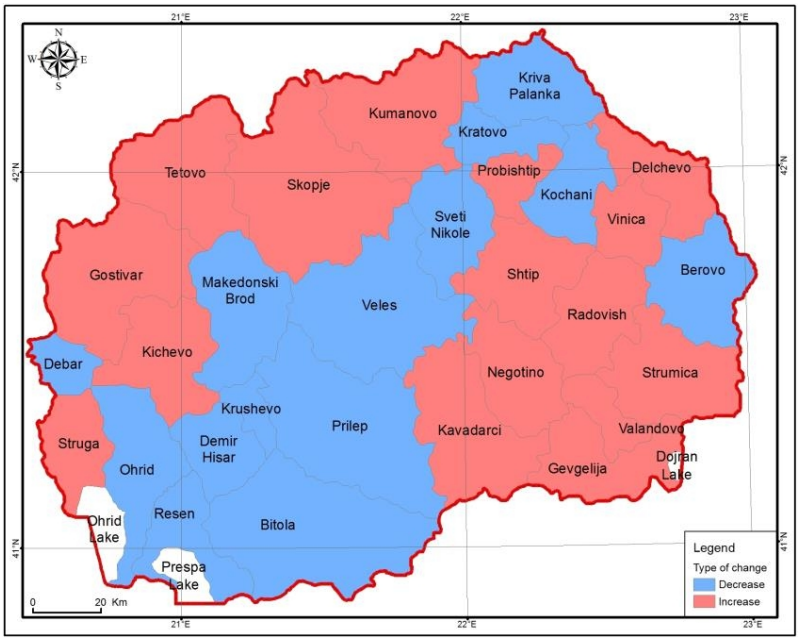


Map 1. Changes in the fertile female contingent, 1971 – 1981.

The reasons for such dynamics in the scope of the female fertile contingent in certain regions can be seen even in the period from 1971 until 1981, and especially after 1981. Despite the difficulties in comparing data due to the changes in the territorial organization, comparisons in the scope of fertile contingent among women between 1971 and 1994 were however made, indicating that in one third of the municipalities in this period a reduction of the female fertility contingent was present, i.e. a total reduction of 19 512 individuals was marked. This is specifically emphasized in the municipalities of Bitola, Resen, Demir Hisar, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, etc. On the other hand, Skopje was still the only exception, which as we pointed out above in

[2] Over the past period the banks in the country presented more favorable crediting conditions for customers when buying a home for themselves. At the same time, there were the measures given of the state, with projects such as "Buy a house, buy an apartment", where young married couples were offered financial assistance, favorable interest rates and generally favorable repayment terms.

the text was experiencing positive values (41 734), mainly due to the immigration, the highest increase is recorded in the municipalities of Tetovo, Gostivar and Kumanovo, primarily due to the characteristics of the model of extended reproduction that even in the later period will contribute to the slower pace of population aging in this region and it will compensate for the emigration outflows of the population.



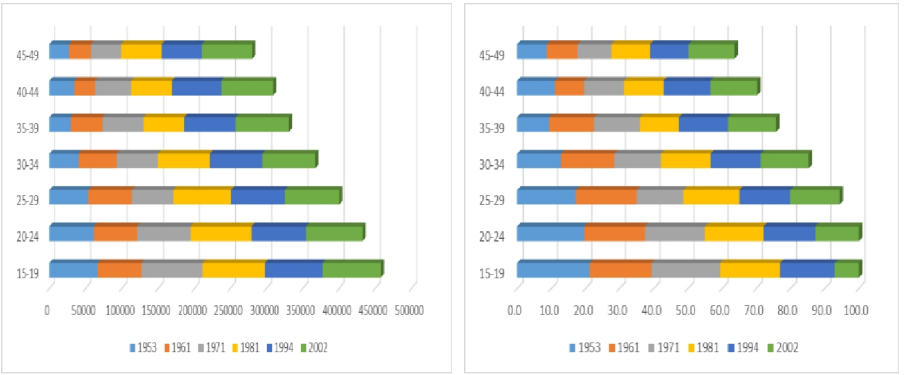
Map 2. Changes in the fertile female contingent, 1981-1994.

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE FERTILE CONTINGENT OF FEMALE POPULATION

Apart from the visible changes in the scope of the reproductive female population, in the same time period, from 1953 to 2002, there were evident changes in the age structure, indicating a higher presence of the older population groups.

The birth rate and migrations had particular significance among the factors, while the impact of mortality and other demographic factors was smaller (Deveić, Mucić, 2011). The birth rate until the seventies of the last century created conditions for solid inflow of female population in their fertile age. Until 1971, one third of the female population accounted for the before-fertility female contingent, and in 2002, its share dropped to 20.5%. Unlike the relatively slower decline in the before-fertility contingent, the post fertility contingent was continually increasing its share from 15.1% in 1953 to 19.2% in 1981 and 27.6% in 2002. Such quantitative data suggest that the female fertile contingent was aging. Indicative for this are the values of its average age, which has been continuously increasing from 29.1 years in 1953 to 30.1 years in 1971, 31.3 years in 1994 and 31.7 years in 2002. According to the estimated data from 2013, this number was set to 32.2 years and taking into account the above mentioned data for the cohorts of inflow and outflow of the fertile contingent, the expectations for the increased values

and the displacement of the average value near the upper limit of the age of optimal fertile contingent are justified.



Graph 3: The representation of the age groups of the female fertile contingent in absolute numbers (left) and in percentages (right), according to the census years.

The differences are obvious in the regions and municipalities, where it is evident that this population, although slowly, is still aging in the areas with a higher birth rate (e.g. Polog region) as a result of immigration and declining birth rates.

Table 1: The percentage ratio between fertile, before-fertile and post-fertile female population in the Republic of Macedonia, by region, 2002 and 2013[3].

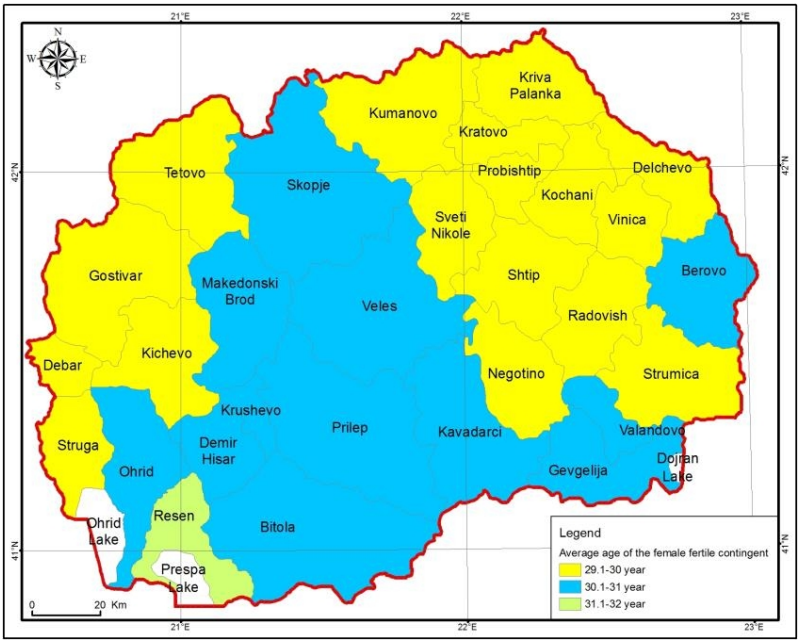
Years	2002	2013	2002	2013	2002	2013
Age groups	0-14		15-49		50+	
Vardar region	18.3	15.7	51.5	48.3	30.2	36.1
Southeast region	19.8	16.5	51.8	49.0	28.3	34.5
Pelagonia region	17.4	15.0	48.7	47.0	34	38.0
Southwest region	22.7	15.4	52.2	54.3	25.7	30.3
East Region	18.3	14.4	51.7	48.6	29.9	37.1
Northeast region	22.1	17.6	51.6	51.3	26.3	31.1
Polog region	25.1	16.9	54.2	57.0	20.8	26.0
Skopje region	19.6	17.4	52.1	49.4	28.3	33.2
Republic of Macedonia	20.5	16.4	51.9	50.8	27.6	32.8

Source: Individual calculations according SSORM data

The values of these indicators differ a lot spatially. The average age of the female fertile contingent from 1971 to 1994 with the exception of the then existing municipalities, Debar and the minimal reduction in Makedonski Brod, was increasing in all other municipalities, especially

[3] Conditions from 30/06/2013

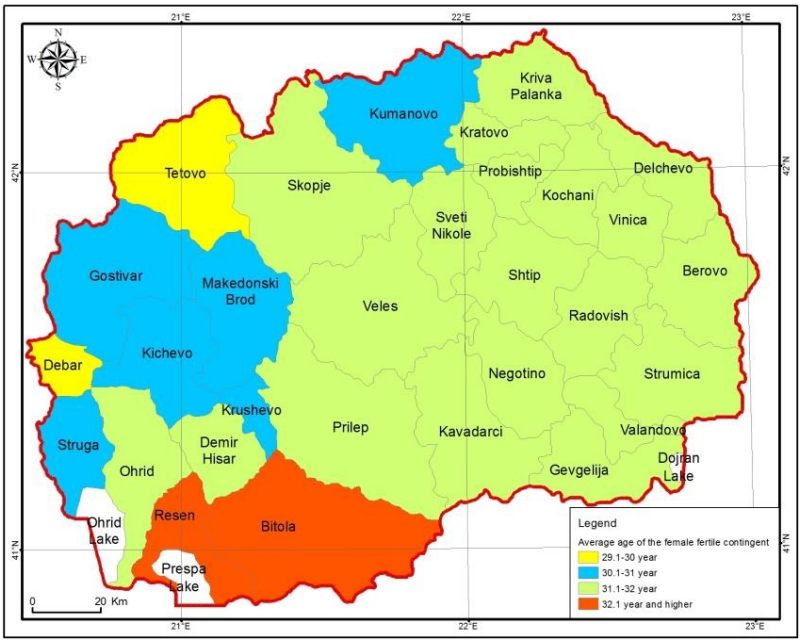
with two and more than two years difference among the municipalities of the eastern part of the country. The trend of the increasing average age moved upwards and in 2002 more than 1/3 of the municipalities had an average age of 32 to 33 years, and together with the municipalities with an average age of female fertile contingent of 31 to 32 years, they accounted for 76%. The values in 2002 were in the range from 29.4 years in Centar Zhupa, in the Southwestern region, to the largest average age of 33.2 years in the municipality of Novaci in the Pelagonia region. Only three municipalities (Arachinovo, Centar Zhupa and Studenichani) stand out with lowest average age (29 to 30) that are typical representatives of the pattern of expanded reproduction. This padded average age, although not a decisive factor in the spatial distribution of the fertile female population, it influences the reduction of the potential fertility. The situation of constant reduction of the total fertility rate, particularly since the last decade of the last century, even below 1.5 children per woman, triggers the question regarding the biological renewal of the population (Dragović, 2008). It can seriously affect the opportunities of demographic sustainability in certain areas that by itself entails difficulties in the overall economic sustainability and is an unfavorable basis for the commitment of balanced regional development. At the same time, modern living conditions and changes in the traditional habits, as well as increasing emancipation of the female population, are altering the conditions under which women are getting married and specify the time for reproduction, the number of children and the time lapse between two births.



Map 3. Municipalities according to the average age of the female fertile population, 1971.

Looking back at the past, the average age of marriage has changed. In 2013, the average age for getting married for the female population was 25.8 years, which means, it was about three years higher compared to 1994, or about four years more than those 22 years that Lori-

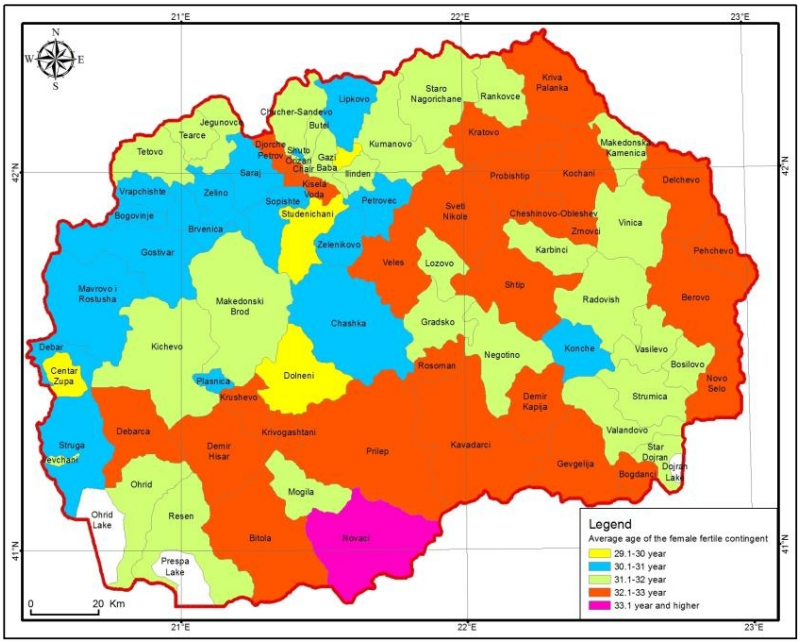
mer highlights as the maximum fecundity (Deveić, Mucić, 2011). The fertility rate decreased from 117 % in the early sixties of the last century to about 75 % in the mid-nineties, and further on to 55.6 % in 2000 and 44.9 % in 2012 (Madzhevikj, 2000). The postponing of marriage towards the more adult years of life, is causing displacement to the age of motherhood and to giving birth of the first child. Fertility by the age of women in their reproductive period increasingly moves to the upper limit of the optimal fertile contingent. The average age of women in the total number of live births was 28.5 years and the average age of mothers who gave birth to their first child in 2013 was 26.8 years, which means that they are more than three years older than they were in the 1994 (23.5 years). From the mid-sixties of the last century until the early 21st century, most of the children were born by mothers aged between 20 and 24 years (Madzhevikj, 2000) but, in 2000 the greatest specific fertility rate noticed among women was already in the cohort of 25 to 29 years (132.9%). In just ten years, the specific fertility rate among women aged between 20 and 24 years declined from 127% to 76.4%, while the value of the specific rates in the group of 30 to 34 years increased, (from 61.5% to 75.2%) and from 35 to 39 (from 19.5% to 27.4%), (Stojmilov, 2005). According to the age of mothers, in 2013, the major part of the 35.5% of live births was by mothers aged between 25 and 29.



Map 4. Municipalities according to the average age of the female fertile population, 1994.

Despite the existence of the attempts to vulgarize the trend of emancipation of women and their role at the time of formation of a family and giving birth, women are aware of their role as mothers. Difficulties exist when there is a discrepancy between their needs and society; when they have been placed in a position to adapt to society and especially to cultural commitments. Basically, society should be flexible and institutions should follow the trend of modern living and the needs of modern mothers. Establishing balance between work responsibilities and

parenting requires a greater commitment from the state in overcoming structural changes; but basically it seems that this imbalance occurs due to the essential misunderstandings of so-called "men" institutions for the needs of women. On the other hand, the strengthened position of women and the inability of man to accept it, place women before the question of whether to bear the entire cost of parenting alone or completely abandon the idea. The most common choice is the birth of only one child. "(Vasich 2009). On the other hand, fertility is closely associated with parenting, which we saw in the everyday production, consumption, culture and so on (Blagojevich, 1997 through Srechkovich, 2004). It is certainly effected by medicine and social conditions.



Map 5. Municipalities according to the average age of the female fertile population, 2002.

CONCLUSION

The demographic development in the Republic of Macedonia in the period after the Second World War, particularly from the seventies onwards is the cause of the current forms and dynamics of the population and all consequences that are concomitantly manifested. Among them, the age framework of the population is a very current topic which by its features has a significant influence on the fertility contingent. Seen at state level, the female reproductive population is still stable in numbers and age. However, what is concerning is the data regarding the inadequate volume in certain regions and municipalities which had far-reaching roots in the past. At the same time, the data regarding the rising average age of this population cannot leave us indifferent due to the fact that this number is closer to the upper limit of the optimal contingent. Thus, in areas in which the abstinence from marriage is absent, and the model of

expanded reproduction is present, the potential biological strength of the female population is stable and will not change significantly in the long term due to the younger age structure.

The spatial differences represent a reason more to discern patterns and ways to improve the age structure of the population, which means a positive effect on the fertile population. The birth rate can still compensate for the consequences of emigration flows that are getting even more intense. On the other hand, the population that deals with postponement of the marriage, delay of birth, the decision to give birth to one or maximum two children and does not use its physiological capacity to the maximum, contributes to aging of the population, and thus, aging of the female fertility contingent. When this happens, in conditions of high migration, the values obtained present worrisome indicators. In the context of the decision to give birth, there seems to be complete freedom of the individual, and "the constitution, the laws, the resolution emphasize free and responsible parenthood as a principle". The populations in the areas with low natality are probably guided by these regulations. They probably believe that such behavior requires great responsibility because it is adapted to the conditions of life. On the other hand, the population that still marks a growing number of births, does not call upon entirely on the constitution, but also on the common law that does not allow individual freedom of decision about childbirth... but in both cases, parenthood that requires responsibility in legal terms is not responsible to the community (Rančić, 1989/1990).

These demographic changes are not always due to the socioeconomic conditions, but also represent a reflection of the socio-cultural changes, mainly understood as a change in the system of values, attitudes and norms that part individuals away from family life and marriage, and direct them toward achieving their personal ambitions.

Government policies and measures to stimulate births are not useless, but do not always lead to the desired results. Money is not always the only obstacle or motivation for having more children, though, we have to emphasize that the rejuvenation of the population depends on the social security of the individual and family. At the same time, it requires long-term efforts through education of young people who will be able to overcome stereotypes about the role of gender of raising children and that will show the real values of the family as a happy stronghold of the individual.

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ДИНАМИКА ВО ОБЕМОТ И СТАРОСТА НА ЖЕНСКОТО РЕПРОДУКТИВНО НАСЕЛЕНИЕ ВО РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

Билјана АПОСТОЛОВСКА ТОШЕВСКА, Свемир ГОРИН

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ИЗВОД

Демографските случувања во Република Македонија во периодот по Втората Светска Војна, а посебно од седумдесетите години наваму се причина за сегашните облици и динамика на популацијата и сите последици кои пропратно се манифестираат. Меѓу нив старосната рамка на популацијата е мошне актуелна тема која со своите карактеристики значајно влијае врз фертилниот контингент. Гледано на ниво на држава оваа женска репродуктивна популација сеуште е популациски и старосно стабилна, но загрижуваат податоците за несоодветен обем во поедини региони и општини што секако има далекусежни корени во минатото. Истовремено не остава рамнодушен податокот за се поголемата просечна старост на оваа популација која е се поблиску до горната граница на оптималниот контингент.

Просторните разлики се причина повеќе да се размислува за моделите и начините за подобрување на старосната структура на населението, што ќе значи позитивен одраз врз фертилната популација. Така во просторите во кои апсиненцијата од бракот е помала, а присутен е модел на проширена репродукција потенцијалната биолошка сила на женската популација е постабилна и во подолг период нема да претрпи поголеми промени поради помладата старосна структура. Стапката на раѓање сеуште може да ги компензира дури и последиците од емиграциските текови кои се сé поинтензивни. Од друга страна населението кое во подолг период се соочува со одлагање на склучување брак, одлагање на раѓањето, одлуката за раѓање едно или максимално две деца, не ја искористува максимално својата физиолошка способност, допринесува кон стареење на популацијата, а со тоа и стареење на фертилниот женски контингент. Кога ова се случува во услови на исто така интензивна миграција, вредностите добиваат загрижувачки показатели. Во контекст на одлуката за раѓање се чини дека постои целосна слобода на поединецот, а „уставот, законите, резулуцијата го нагласуваат слободното и одговорното родителство како принцип. Популацијата во нисконаталитетните подрачја најверојатно се раководи според тие регулативи. Тие најверојатно се убедени дека таквото однесување е истовремено и одговорно бидејќи е прилагодено кон условите на живот. Од друга страна онаа популација која сеуште бележи поголем број на раѓање не се повикуваат во целост на уставното, туку и на обичајното право кое не овозможува индивидуална слобода за одлуката околу раѓањето на децата . . . но во двата случаеви одговорното родителство во правен аспект не е одговорно кон општествената заедница“ (Rančič, 1989/1990).

Ваквите демографски промени не се секогаш како резултат на социо-економските услови, туку се и одраз на социо-културните промени главно разбрани како промена во вредносниот систем, ставови норми кои го оддалечуваат поединецот од семејниот живот и бракот, а го насочуваат кон остварување на лични амбиции.

Владините политики и мерки за стимулирање на раѓањата не се бескорисни, но не доведуваат секогаш до посакуваните резултати. Парите не се секогаш единствената препрека или мотивација за раѓањето иако неизоставно треба да се потенцира дека подмладувањето на популацијата

зависи од социјалната сигурност на поединецот и семејството. Но истовремено потребни се долгорочни напори низ едукација кај младите луѓе кои ќе можат да ги надминат стеротипите за улогата на половите околу одгледувањето на децата и на кои ќе им се прикажат вистинските вредности на семејството како среќно упориште на поединецот.