

CHILDBEARING OUTSIDE MARRIAGE – A CASE STUDY OF MACEDONIA

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ABSTRACT

The wide range of demogeographic changes that the population in the Republic of Macedonia is facing today are mutually conditioned and followed up one with another. These changes can be recognized in the declining number of marriages and births, delayed marriage until the optimal reproductive age of the women, new forms of illegitimate unions, increased number of divorces, childbearing outside marriage and more. The changes are mainly caused because of the individualization, the emancipation of women, personal freedom, rejection of the traditional moral norms and gender roles.

The appearance of childbearing outside marriage in the Republic of Macedonia is not a new phenomenon, but from a geographical point of view it has not been analyzed in details so far. The number of children born outside marriage in the last five decades does not record any significant changes, but when it comes to the percentage share, the values are slightly increasing, especially in the last two decades. Most of the children born outside marriage are born as a first child of the mother, but the share of births of higher order is constantly increasing which shows that childbearing outside marriage is becoming more a matter of choice.

The main aim of this paper is to note the differences in the number of births outside marriage and to analyze the demogeographic and ethnic characteristics of women who have given birth in the period from 1970 to 2017 in order to predict the future trends.

Keywords: childbearing outside marriage, childbearing within marriage, Republic of Macedonia

INTRODUCTION

The intensive processes of de-agrarisation, industrialization and urbanization to some extent have changed the place and role of marriage and family and the understanding of their role in society. Therefore, the marital status, its problems and development tendencies are very important in order to understand the future processes and trends of the population [8].

Marriage ceases to be a framework for the biological reproduction of the population and the creation of legitimate offspring. Over time, the most important function of marriage is gradually disappearing, more and more children are born outside marriage unions, while on the other hand, the number of marriages in which the spouses decide not to have children at all is also increasing. Not getting married or delaying marriage for later in life shortens the fertility period and among other things, affects the index of marital fertility, the index of extramarital fertility, the index and the share of married women, which emphasizes the importance of marriage for the fertility level [2]. The highlighted differences in the fertility level, depending on the level of education, economic activity

or nationality, testifies of the gradual rejection of the traditional moral norms and model of birth.

Among the significant changes in the attitudes about marriage and family behavior, that in the last few decades are taking place in all European countries, significant is the presence of separating marriage and parenthood, which is reflected by an increase in the number of births outside marriage. Most of the births outside marriage are carried out in the context of non-legal unions or popularly called "cohabitations" [15]. This term is defined in the literature as "community in which two people of the opposite sex live together, share a bed and a table," but at the same time are not in a formal, legally sanctioned marriage [4]. However, most "cohabitants", at least in the European countries, experience their union as one of the stages before marriage and marriage still has the primate in most of the European countries, as well as in the Republic of Macedonia.

The aim of this research is to analyze the share of extramarital births in the total number of births and also to determine the trend of the changes in the number of births outside marriage and to explain the possible changes in the socio-economic profile of parents and/or through changes in the values and legal frameworks for the analyzed period.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODS OF WORK

The available data from the census conducted so far and the vital statistics data enables monitoring of the population structures and processes of the population [8]. Followed through the published statistics data from the official statistics, which is related to the natural population change in the country, among other vital events data and processes (number of births, number of deaths, marriages and divorces) can be found data on the number of births according to the mother's marital status, age, ethnicity and the birth order.

For the purposes of this research are used the analytical-statistical, mathematical, statistical and comparative method. During the analysis and data processing was made a comparative analysis of the results from the research and the previous researches that were already being done and treat this issue, i.e., relevant demographic studies [9]. Taking time as one dimension (because it is almost half a century period), this method of analysis allows us to include the reasons that caused these differences over time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Changes in the global economy, lifestyles and social norms are affecting women worldwide. Compared to women 20 years ago, women today are better educated, more independent, more mobile (travel, move and change jobs), they are getting married later in life and start working after completing their education, thus delaying the birth of their first child. They usually live on their own, often not getting married or even become single mothers and all in order to build up their career. This trend, although with a different pace is present in both, urban and rural areas in almost all parts of the world. This phenomenon, where women are choosing to give birth to children outside marriage is more current, but varies depending on the cultural differences, especially if we take into account the fact that in many areas giving birth outside marriage is still considered to be a deviant phenomenon [2].

Since the 1990s, major changes in the percentage share of children born outside marriage in the total number of live births were registered in countries in transition. This process

takes place under the influence of the big changes in the demographic and overall socio-economic development [16].

Decreasing in the number of live births in the Republic of Macedonia, starting from the 80s years of the last century, is one of the basic characteristics of the demographic development in the country. The number of children born within marriage is constantly decreasing from year to year, while the number of children born outside marriage is constant or has increased. In 1970, as in 1980, every 16th child was born outside marriage. In 1990 every 14th child was born outside marriage, while in 2017 almost every 8th child was born outside marriage.

The number of live births decreased for 42.5% in the period from 1970 till 2017, the number of children born within marriage is decreasing also (almost 46%), while the number of children born outside marriage is maintained almost at the same level, even marking a slight increase of 7.3% in the analyzed period, which means that the share of children born outside marriage is increasing.

Table 1. Number of live births, according the mothers marital status

Year	Total	Within marriage	Outside marriage	%			Index 1970=100		
				Total	Within marriage	Outside marriage	Total	Within marriage	Outside marriage
1970	37862	35501	2361	100	93.8	6.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
1975	39579	36972	2607	100	93.4	6.6	104.5	104.1	110.4
1980	39784	37369	2415	100	93.9	6.1	105.1	105.3	102.3
1985	38722	36177	2545	100	93.4	6.6	102.3	101.9	107.8
1990	35401	32883	2518	100	92.9	7.1	93.5	92.6	106.6
1995	32154	29524	2630	100	91.8	8.2	84.9	83.2	111.4
2000	29308	26440	2868	100	90.2	9.8	77.4	74.5	121.5
2005	22482	19687	2795	100	87.6	12.4	59.4	55.5	118.4
2010	24296	21338	2958	100	87.8	12.2	64.2	60.1	125.3
2015	23075	20545	2530	100	89.0	11.0	60.9	57.9	107.2
2017	21754	19220	2534	100	88.4	11.6	57.5	54.1	107.3

Source: SSORM, Natural population change, 1970-2017 and author's calculations [14]

In the last few years, almost 12% of all live births in the country were born outside marriage, which basically means a double increase compared to the beginning of the analyzed period. If we take into account the increase in the share of children born outside marriage, which is a clear indication for the appearance of the new contexts of creating parenting, we can notice the new form of communities and single-parent families, mostly single mothers [5].

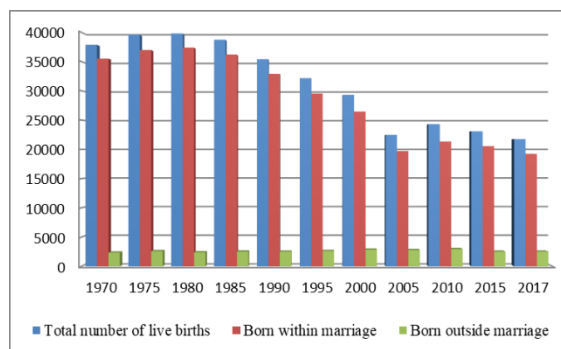


Figure 1. Total number of live births and the number of live births within and outside marriage in the period 1970-2017

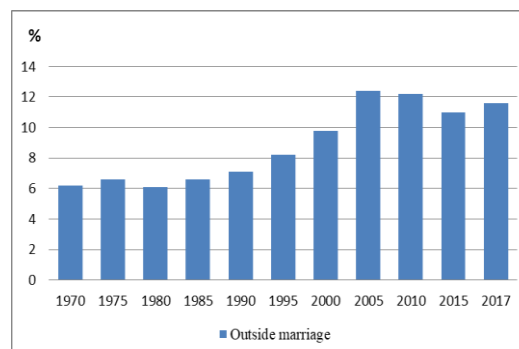


Figure 2. Changes in the percentage share of children born outside marriage in the total number of live births in the period 1970-2017

Despite all the changes in the marital behavior and the acceptance of new forms of unions, the share of children born outside marriage in the Republic of Macedonia is far below the share in the European countries, and even the Balkan countries.

Table 2. Share of live births outside marriage in some of the Balkan countries

Country	2005	2010	2015	2017
Bulgaria	49.0	54.1	58.6	58.9
Greece	5.1	7.3	8.8	10.3
Croatia	10.5	13.3	18.1	19.9
Slovenia	46.7	55.7	57.9	57.5
Republic of Macedonia	12.4	12.2	11.0	11.6
Montenegro	16.8	-	-	-
Serbia	22.2	24.0	25.5	26.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11.2	10.8	-	-
Kosovo	40.9	40.3	42.6	-

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> [3]

Number of births by the age of the mother – When analyzing childbearing outside marriage, it is particularly important to consider the distribution of births by the age of the mother. In that regard, childbearing outside marriage can be observed from several aspects, though the number of live births, according to the age of the mothers, i.e. the average age of mothers, as well as through the participation of children born outside marriage in the total number of live births, according to the age of the mothers [12].

Changes in the number of births by the age of the mother that occurs within marriage and outside marriage are in the same direction. However, among women who are giving birth within marriage, these changes are more intense as in the decrease in the share of young women (under 25 years) as well as in terms of the increase in the share of live births to women older than 30 years [17].

Table 3. Total number of extramarital live births in the Republic of Macedonia, by the age of the mother, in the period 1970-2017

Year	Total	up to 15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50 over
Number of extramarital live births										
1970	2361	19	947	782	296	180	97	30	8	2
1975	2607	38	1197	822	297	150	66	22	5	1
1980	2415	41	1051	784	341	130	55	9	2	2
1985	2545	37	1069	828	363	159	62	19	3	5
1990	2518	37	900	873	465	140	71	17	0	0
1995	2630	26	875	910	527	180	73	23	3	0
2000	2868	29	802	890	731	292	98	14	0	0
2005	2795	21	684	796	713	412	141	22	2	2
2010	2958	26	675	862	712	452	185	40	1	0
2015	2530	13	507	715	648	359	202	60	9	0
2017	2534	20	510	647	676	379	229	59	3	1

Source: SSORM, Natural population change, 1970-2017 and author's calculations [14]

* The difference in the total number is because of the group "unknown".

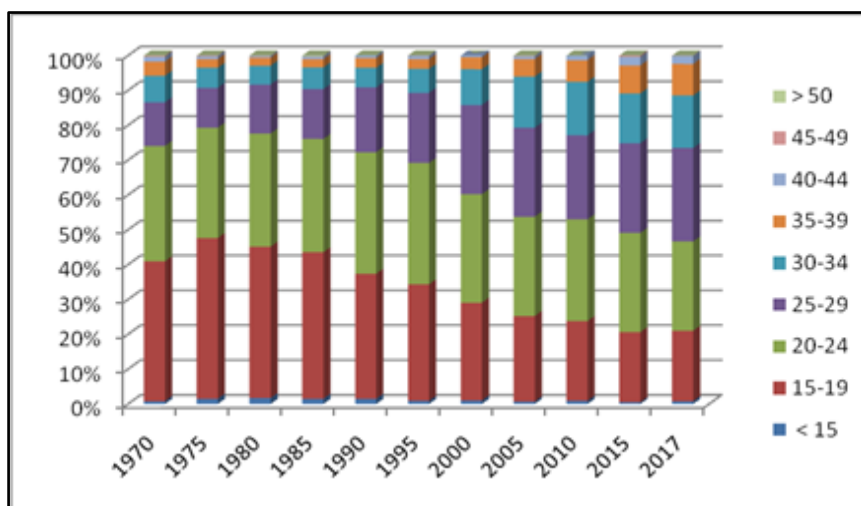


Figure 3. Extramarital live births in the Republic of Macedonia, by the age of the mother, in the period 1970-2017 in %

At the beginning of the analyzed period, most of the women who have given birth to a child outside marriage were in the age group of 15 to 19 years, followed up by the mothers aged between 20 and 24. At the end of this period, the share of mothers aged between 15 and 19 years decreased double, the share of mothers aged between 20 and 24 years decreased also, while the share of mothers of older age groups increased, especially of those in the age groups of 25 to 29 and 30 to 34.

Changes in the percentage share of children born outside marriage, in the total number of live births are characterized by accelerating growth compared to the changes in the number of children born outside marriage, where the annual fluctuations are less pronounced but still, the growing trend is present. The changes in this direction mainly influenced the rapid growth of the percentage share of children born outside marriage than the increase in the total number of children born outside marriage [18]. The increase in the proportion of children born outside marriage in recent decades initiates a strict change that has occurred in the context of giving a birth and raising a child. [20].

Table 4. The percentage share of extramarital births in the total number of live births by the age of the mother in the period 1970-2017

Year	Total	up to 15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	over 50
1970	6.2	90.5	27.3	5.6	2.7	2.9	3.5	3.9	6.1	5.9
1975	6.6	97.4	27.8	5.4	2.6	3.0	2.9	2.9	6.0	16.7
1980	6.1	95.3	24.7	5.0	2.7	2.6	3.4	1.9	3.4	2.7
1985	6.6	100.0	25.8	5.4	3.0	3.1	4.2	5.9	9.1	55.6
1990	7.1	97.4	23.7	6.2	4.1	3.1	4.9	6.4	0.0	0.0
1995	8.2	100.0	24.8	7.6	5.1	3.9	5.5	8.7	20.0	0.0
2000	9.8	100.0	31.3	8.7	7.2	6.4	6.8	5.8	0.0	0.0
2005	12.4	100.0	39.7	12.0	8.9	9.2	10.3	9.0	20.0	66.7
2010	12.2	100.0	46.4	14.3	8.2	7.9	9.2	13.9	7.2	0.0
2015	11.0	100.0	49.3	14.9	8.1	5.6	8.6	15.0	47.4	0.0
2017	11.6	100.0	54.0	15.3	9.0	6.3	9.1	13.6	13.0	20.0

Source: Author's calculations using SSORM data [14]

In table 4 we can notice that the percentage share of children born outside marriage, in all age groups in the analyzed period had increased. It is most pronounced in the age group from 15 to 19 years, if we exclude the group of over 50 years since this category has large fluctuations over the years. The analysis by age says that the participation of children

born outside marriage is highest among the youngest age groups of women (in more than a half of the analyzed period, the share of mothers younger than 15 years is 100%) and declines as the age of the mothers increases.

The highest number of children born outside marriage is among women in their teen years. Young mothers under the age of 19 are more likely to give birth to a child outside marriage that mostly can be explained by the fact that persons of that age tend to have lower knowledge of the contraceptives, and many of them found it difficult to access [11]. This change in the context of conception and giving birth indicates that many pregnancies are unplanned. For women in their 20s and 30s, the number of children born outside marriage is gradually increasing over the years. Among women in the second half of the reproductive period, the percentage share of the total number of children born outside marriage increases also. This is mostly emphasized in the age group of 40 to 44 years. However, the new technologies are not invincible and the postponement of births to the fourth decade of life could have a high demographic, social but also personal price [19]. In terms of the changes and differences in the age structure of mothers that gave birth within a marriage and outside marriage, also indicates the average age of mothers at the time they gave birth. During the period from 1970 to 2017, the women who had a child outside marriage are for at least 2 years younger than the women who had a child within marriage.

In the analyzed period, the average age of mothers who gave birth to a child within marriage increased from 26.4 in 1970 to 28.8 in 2017 years, while the age of women that gave birth outside marriage from 22.3 in 1970 to 25.5 years in 2017.

Table 5. Average age of mothers and the average age of mothers who gave birth to a child outside marriage

Average age of mothers who gave birth in the following years:					
1970	1980	1990	2000	2015	2017
26.4	25.5	25.4	26.0	27.7	28.8
Average age of mothers who gave extramarital birth					
1970	1980	1990	2000	2015	2017
22.3	21.4	22.0	23.3	24.7	25.5

Source: Author's calculations using SSORM data [14]

The fact that the average age of mothers who gave birth outside marriage is also increasing, speaks clearly that childbearing outside marriage is often postponed until later in life, that is, the average age of the mother grows.

The trend of changes in the number of children born outside marriage in our country does not follow the trend of childbearing outside marriage that is progressing in the developed countries, but the fact that many of the extramarital birth occurred at the same age of women, as births in general, leads to the conclusion that births outside marriage are increasingly becoming a matter of own choice [20] as in the case of our country.

Number of births by the birth order - The number of live births by the birth order largely reflects the standards accepted by the reproductive population and among births outside marriage, it is one of the indirect indicators of the social status of mothers [17]. In the period that is the subject of our research, most of the children, regardless if they were born within marriage or outside marriage were born as a first child. The share of first born children within marriage increased over the years, while the share of first born child outside marriage decreased, although more than a half of all children born outside marriage were born as the first child in all of the analyzed years.

Table 6. Total number of marital births in the Republic of Macedonia, according the birth order, in the period 1970-2017

Year	Total	Birth order within marriage						Total	%					
		1	2	3	4	5+	*		1	2	3	4	5+	*
1970	35501	11342	10292	5156	3062	5649	0	100	31,9	29,0	14,5	8,6	15,9	0,0
1975	36972	12654	11414	4838	2585	4682	799	100	34,2	30,9	13,1	7,0	12,7	2,2
1980	37369	13341	12965	5038	2287	3171	567	100	35,7	34,7	13,5	6,1	8,5	1,5
1985	36177	13823	13469	4252	1940	1979	714	100	38,2	37,2	11,8	5,4	5,5	2,0
1990	32883	12919	12286	4470	1487	1212	509	100	39,3	37,4	13,6	4,5	3,7	1,5
1995	29524	11459	10887	3767	1286	898	1227	100	38,8	36,9	12,8	4,4	3,0	4,2
2000	26440	10739	9600	3158	1048	620	1275	100	40,6	36,3	11,9	4,0	2,3	4,8
2005	19687	8519	7510	2449	744	410	55	100	43,3	38,1	12,4	3,8	2,1	0,3
2010	21338	9315	7757	2967	883	303	113	100	43,7	36,4	13,9	4,1	1,4	0,5
2015	20545	8608	7676	3203	699	274	85	100	41,9	37,4	15,6	3,4	1,3	0,4
2017	19220	8068	7096	3015	682	292	67	100	42,0	36,9	15,7	3,5	1,5	0,3

Source: SSORM, Natural population change, 1970-2017 and author's calculations [14]

The percentage share of the first born child outside marriage decreased from 65.2% in 1970 to 52.0% in 2017. The percentage share of children born as second, third, or a child of a higher order, are constantly increasing. This means that the same mother or the same couple, who is not married, had more than one child born outside marriage.

Table 7: Total number of extramarital births in the Republic of Macedonia, according the birth order, in the period 1970-2017

Year	Total	Birth order outside marriage						Total	%					
		1	2	3	4	5+	*		1	2	3	4	5+	*
1970	2361	1539	415	174	88	145	0	100	65,2	17,6	7,4	3,7	6,1	0,0
1975	2607	1797	439	151	79	91	50	100	68,9	16,8	5,8	3,0	3,5	1,9
1980	2415	1701	400	155	57	70	32	100	70,4	16,6	6,4	2,4	2,9	1,3
1985	2545	1855	432	129	66	48	15	100	72,9	17,0	5,1	2,6	1,9	0,6
1990	2518	1709	501	158	44	40	66	100	67,9	19,9	6,3	1,7	1,6	2,6
1995	2630	1698	584	156	60	54	78	100	64,6	22,2	5,9	2,3	2,1	3,0
2000	2868	1694	678	275	104	47	70	100	59,1	23,6	9,6	3,6	1,6	2,4
2005	2795	1457	760	326	139	103	10	100	52,1	27,2	11,7	5,0	3,7	0,4
2010	2958	1522	685	421	186	119	25	100	51,5	23,2	14,2	6,3	4,0	0,8
2015	2530	1317	632	339	118	108	16	100	52,1	25,0	13,4	4,7	4,3	0,6
2017	2534	1317	631	301	134	129	22	100	52,0	24,9	11,9	5,3	5,1	0,9

Source: SSORM, Natural population change, 1970-2017 and author's calculations [14]

The data in Table 7 clearly shows that that most children born outside marriage are first born child, and their share in the total number of first born children is constantly decreasing. But, in the last years, the percentage share of the forth born child is nearly the same or even higher than the one of the first born child. The percentage share of the second and the third child is also increasing.

Table 8. Percentage share of the children born outside marriage in the total number of live births, according the birth order

Year	Total	Birth order					
		1	2	3	4	5+	*
Number of live births							
1970	6.2	11.9	3.9	3.3	2.8	2.5	0.0
1975	6.6	12.4	3.7	3.0	3.0	1.9	5.9
1980	6.1	11.3	3.0	3.0	2.4	2.2	5.3
1985	6.6	11.8	3.1	2.9	3.3	2.4	2.1
1990	7.1	11.7	3.9	3.4	2.9	3.2	11.5

1995	8.2	12.9	5.1	4.0	4.5	5.7	6.0
2000	9.8	13.6	6.6	8.0	9.0	7.0	5.2
2005	12.4	14.6	9.2	11.7	15.7	20.1	15.4
2010	12.2	14.0	8.1	12.4	17.4	28.2	18.1
2015	11.0	13.3	7.6	9.6	14.4	28.3	15.8
2017	11.6	14.0	8.2	9.1	16.4	30.6	24.7

Source: Author's calculations using SSORM data

This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that nowadays, very small number of married couples decide to have more than two children, so the share of births outside marriage among the children of higher birth order is increasing. These numbers also testify to the fact that births outside marriage over the years increasingly become a matter of choice, not an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy.

Number of births, according to the mother ethnic affiliation - In correlation to traditional beliefs, cultural achievement, religious affiliation and other, nationality to some extent affects some attributes such as age at marriage, norms and attitudes about the number of children, family size, etc. [7]. Therefore, when analyzing the ethnicity of the mother in the total number of births as in the number of children born outside marriage, the differences are quite pronounced.

Table 9. Total number of extramarital live births in the Republic of Macedonia, according to the mother ethnic affiliation in the period 1970-2017

Year	Total	Macedonian	Albanian	Turk	Roma	Vlach	Serbian	Bosniak	*
Born outside marriage									
1970	2361	773	602	348	417	0	123	0	98
1975	2607	865	600	405	509	0	0	0	228
1980	2415	722	656	294	562	0	0	0	181
1985	2545	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1990	2518	611	944	203	608	0	0	0	152
1995	2630	552	1138	161	617	0	22	0	140
2000	2868	472	1250	163	827	1	20	0	135
2005	2795	406	1256	164	875	2	8	10	74
2010	2958	491	1120	194	1043	0	10	31	69
2015	2530	484	1109	149	694	1	8	48	37
2017	2534	454	1096	138	734	10	12	45	45
Share in the total number of births according the mothers ethnic affiliation, %									
1970	6.2	3.7	5.5	11.8	38.3	0	10.5	0	12.0
1975	6.6	3.9	5.4	14.0	37.8	0	0	0	10.1
1980	6.1	3.2	5.9	11.9	35.3	0	0	0	9.0
1985	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
1990	7.1	3.3	8.3	10.6	34.7	0	0	0	8.7
1995	8.2	3.5	9.8	10.5	38.2	0	6.6	0	11.8
2000	9.8	3.3	11.6	12.9	44.8	5.9	10.8	0	12.6
2005	12.4	3.4	17.4	16.1	56.3	11.8	6.7	7.1	15.3
2010	12.2	3.9	14.2	18.0	57.8	0	9.2	16.1	12.6
2015	11.0	3.9	14.6	13.6	54.6	4.3	7.1	19.4	9.0
2017	11.6	4.0	14.8	14.7	57.5	25.0	9.3	21.1	9.1

Source: SSORM, Natural population change, 1970-2017 and author's calculations [14]

The high number of births outside marriage can also be explained by the historical and sociological development in some communities [10], especially where marriages according the custom law are still present. Such a marriage in the awareness of the members of that community does not differ from formal marriage and the children born

in such a marriage that is assembled on the basis of custom law are considered as children born within a marriage [18].

The largest numbers of children born outside marriage were born by mothers of Albanian, Roma and Macedonian ethnicity, which is correlated to the number of the total population of these nationalities in the country. Especially interesting is the fact that the percentage share of children born outside marriage by mothers of Roma nationality is over 50% of the total number of children born by Roma mothers. This refers to the years after 2005. The reasons for the large differences in the frequency of extramarital births, according to the ethnic affiliation of the mother are very numerous and complex, and can be found in the custom laws, moral norms, religious affiliation and level of religiosity, at the educational level, in the share of rural population in the total, in the employment rates of women etc.

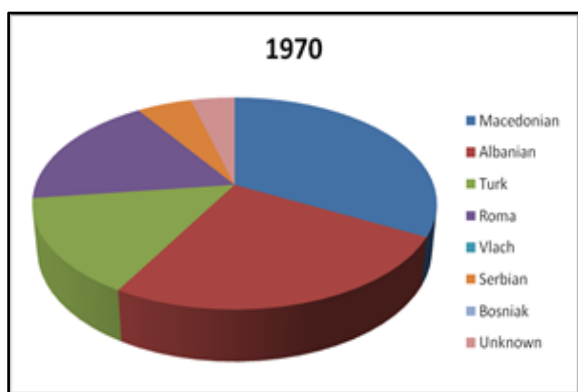


Figure 4. Number of extramarital live births, according to the mothers ethnic affiliation

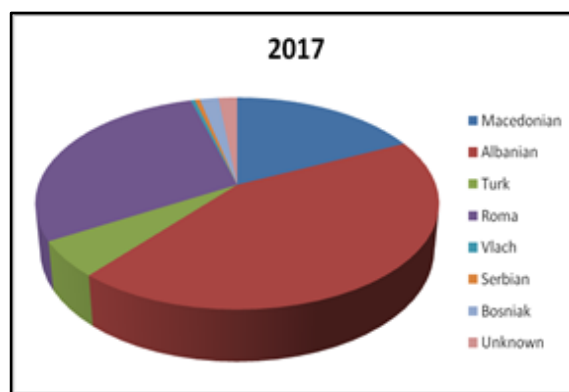


Figure 5. Number of extramarital live births, according to the mothers ethnic affiliation

Number of births, according to the type of municipality - A young person of reproductive age, less often decides to get married, and usually delays it for later in life. This phenomenon of delaying the marriage or celibacy in the Republic of Macedonia is present in both, rural and urban areas. In the urban areas, it is more a matter of choice, but in the rural areas comes as a consequence of the long lasting emigration process and thus, the reduced "marriage market".

Table 10. Total number and percentage share of marital and extramarital births in the Republic of Macedonia, according to the type of settlement in the period 1970-2017

	1970			2017		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Total	37862	17825	20037	21754	17457	4297
Within marriage	35501	16448	19053	19220	15485	3735
Outside marriage	2361	1377	984	2534	1972	562
Share by the mothers marital status, in %						
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Within marriage	93.8	92.3	95.1	88.4	88.7	86.9
Outside marriage	6.2	7.7	4.9	11.6	11.3	13.1
Share by the type of settlement, in %						
Total	100	47.1	52.9	100	80.2	19.8
Within marriage	100	46.3	53.7	100	80.6	19.4
Outside marriage	100	58.3	41.7	100	77.8	22.2

Source: SSORM, Natural population change, 1970-2017 and author's calculations [14]

Despite the fact that traditional marriages are typical of rural areas, the fact that the number of urban population is greater than the number of rural population, and that most of the reproductive aged population lives in urban areas, it is expected that the percentage share of children born outside marriage would be higher in urban areas than in rural. This percentage share increased from 58.3% in 1970 to 77.8% in 2017.

If we compare the number of children born outside marriage in the urban area, we will notice that in 1970, every 77 births outside marriage per 1000 live births were in urban areas. In 2017, the number increased to 113 children born outside marriage per every 1000 live births. In the rural areas, the number of 49 live births outside marriage per every 1000 live births, increased to 131 children born outside marriage per every 1000 live born children. This growth in rural areas is not due to an increased number of children born outside marriage, but due to the significantly decreased number of children born in rural areas.

In the Republic of Macedonia, data on all the population characteristics and processes in every settlement as a smallest territorial unit can be provided only from the censuses. Considering the fact that the last population census in the Republic of Macedonia was conducted in 2002, it is very difficult to precisely separate data for the rural and urban areas. Therefore, we divided municipalities as "rural" and "urban" according to the status that the municipality has and whether the head office of the municipality is settled in urban or rural settlement [6].

Despite the differences in the population structure and the level of development between regions, there are certainly regional differences in the number of children born outside marriage. In 2017, most of the extramarital births were in the Skopje region, followed by the Polog region and the Northeast region. The present situation is largely similar to the one in 1970 when the largest number of children born outside marriage was also registered in the Skopje region, followed by the Polog region, while in the Northeast and Pelagonia region, the number of children born outside marriage was almost equal.

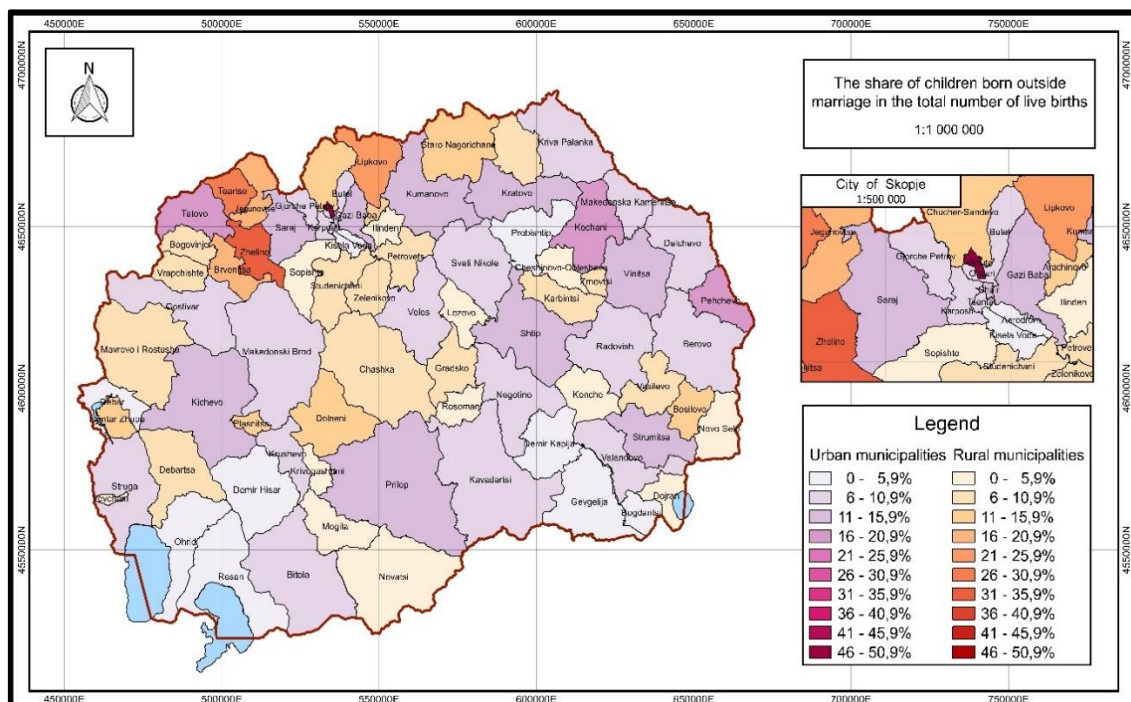


Figure 6. The share of children born outside marriage in the total number of live births in the urban and rural municipalities in 2017

The city of Skopje, as a capital of the Republic of Macedonia, with the largest number of population and also the largest cultural, educational, economic and political center of our country is particularly interesting for analysis because nearly one third of the total number of births (6463 in 2017, or 29.7%), and one third of the total number of children born outside marriage (783 in 2017, or 30.9%) happened in Skopje.

All the changes that occurred when it comes to childbearing outside marriage can be linked to the changes in the total population number and its ethnic structure, spatial distribution of the population, the concentration of minorities in certain regions or dispersion on a greater area, migration, social relations, political development in the country and the immediate surroundings, the changes that occur when the Republic of Macedonia proclaimed its independence, interethnic relations, general trends in marriages, educational and cultural achievements of minorities, attitudes about marriage and more.

CONCLUSION

Children born outside marriage are not a phenomenon that is a characteristic only of present times. Birth outside marriage existed in the past when mostly were treated as a moral problem, but today they are considered as a social phenomenon which records a continuous growth.

The integrated influence of the: social, economic, political, security and other circumstances and conditions caused significant changes and left a strong mark in the past. Considering the traditional marriage role in order to provide the expected level of reproduction that was present in the past, today, we can freely say that marriage has changed its basic function. All of this accompanied by prolonged duration of life expectancy and reduced mortality pushed the boundaries between groups of young, mature and old population, and thus, changed the age limits for marriage. Changing the adult model for entering into marriage, the general pattern of marriage, and the continued reduction in the number of children born within marriage, led to an increase in the percentage share of children born outside marriage. Delayed marriage, extramarital unions or the small number of children born within marriage or out of it, all these major demographic changes that took place in the Republic of Macedonia are part of a deeper social change that fits into the term "second demographic transition" [1].

In terms of marriage, the reduced number of live births is mainly due to the decrease in the marital fertility. In fact, in the period between 1970 and 2017, in general, the number of marital births is in constant declined. At the same time, changes in the share of extramarital births in the total number of live births have a trend of stronger growth. Data on the age structure of mothers that had a child outside marriage, the large number of births of children of higher order, the wide distribution of births outside marriage among Roma women, the number of children born out of marriage in adolescence, draw attention to the necessary policy measures.

All of this change points to the changes that are yet to come, especially in terms of delayed marriage, reduced marital fertility and increased share of childbearing outside marriage. But, despite all of these changes that are coming along with the demographic transition, we can freely say that in our country, family, still ranks among those social categories in which man spends the longest and intense life. It is a category that performs several basic functions in human life, [13] as reproduction. Young people today continue to pay high importance of a good marriage and family life. Most of them, including parents who are not married, value marriage and would like to get married.

This analysis points out the need for building, maintaining and applying appropriate and unique population and family policy which will include measures and activities that will lead to the improvement of the situation of the demo-reproductive processes in the Republic of Macedonia and will meet the population development needs.

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