

# Fertility transition in Syria: an inverse case?

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The impacts and challenges of demographic change



# Syrian context

- ⌘ Several phases of fertility transition in Syria :
  - ❖ The first phase of very high fertility records
  - ❖ The phase of rapid decline in the mid-1980s
  - ❖ The phase of low decrease or the phase of stalling fertility transition
  
- ⌘ Few studies have been devoted to the question of Syrian fertility transition



# Theoretical background

- ⌘ The demographic transition theory can't explain Syrian fertility transition
- ⌘ The crisis led transition hypothesis proposed by Courbage in his analysis of fertility transition in Syria (Courbage 1994, 2007).
- ⌘ Different factors have been suggested as the cause of stalling fertility transition (stability of contraceptive prevalence, decrease of mean age at first marriage for women, preference for male children...)



# Study objective

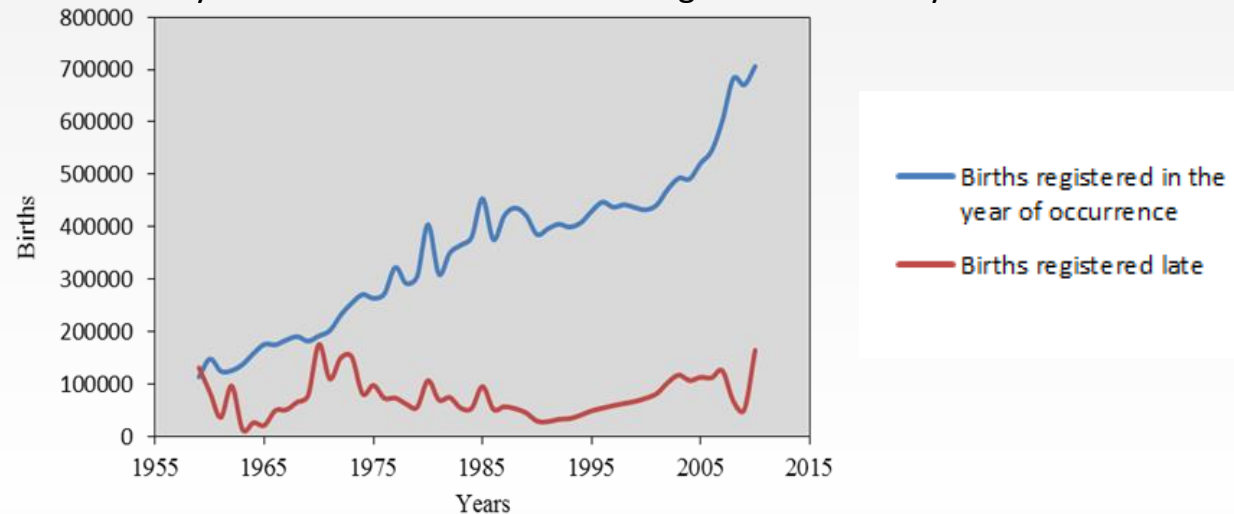
This study aims to review the trends and changes in fertility over the period from 1959 to 2010 and identify the factors underlying them.



# Data

Estimates of fertility in this study are based on birth registration data for the period 1959- 2010.

Figure 1: Births registered in the year of occurrence and births registered late in Syria 1959-2010



**Sources:** Civil registration (Central Bureau of Statistics various years, Statistical Abstracts).



# Data

Table 1: Birth registration coverage in Syria, 1956-2004

Period	Births of Syrians observed from censuses	Births registered at the civil registration	Coverage of birth registration
1956-1960	1004054	573000	57.07
1966-1970	1336425	923017	69.07
1977-1981	1824613	1632044	89.45
1990-1994	2070008	1993298	96.29
2000-2004	2488125	2330575	93.67

**Sources:** Author's calculations based on the 1960, 1970, 1981, 1994 and 2004 census, and civil registration (Central Bureau of Statistics various years, Statistical Abstracts).



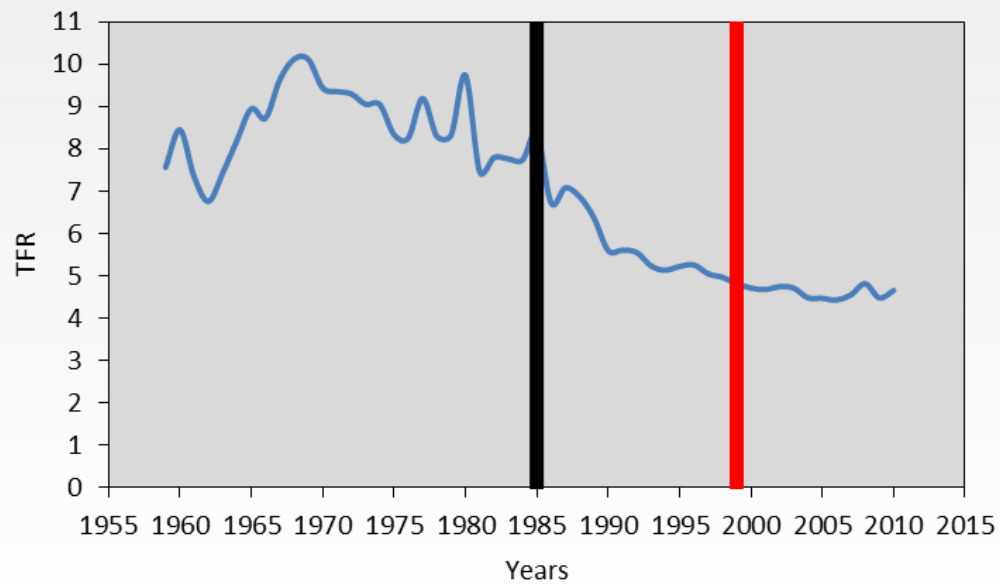
# Fertility estimates

- ⌘ Adjustment of births
  - ❖ Distribution of late registered births
  - ❖ Births correction taking account of mortality
- ⌘ Estimate of women aged 15-49 years
- ⌘ Estimate of fertility rates



# Total fertility rate

Figure 2: Total fertility rate in Syria 1959-2010



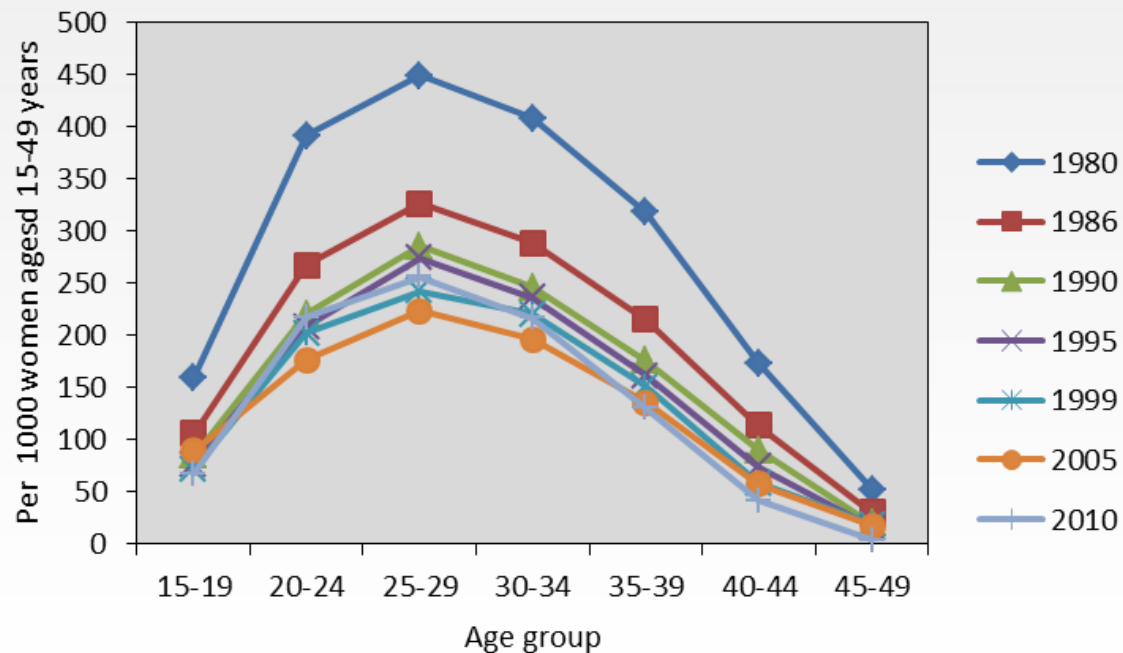
**Sources:** Author's calculations





# Fertility estimates

Figure 3: Age-specific fertility rates in Syria, 1980-2010



Sources: Author's calculations



# Decomposition of fertility changes

⌘ The change in the TFR can be decomposed into two components :

1. Changes in nuptiality
2. Changes in marital fertility

⌘ Each of these components is further broken down by five-year age group between 15 and 49.



# Decomposition of fertility changes

Table 2: Decomposition of the change in total fertility rate, Syria

Period	Age group							Total
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
Between 1980-1985 and 1985-1990								
Nuptiality	-0.07	-0.11	-0.07	-0.03	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.30
Marital fertility	-0.05	-0.16	-0.15	-0.21	-0.22	-0.14	-0.06	-1.01
Total	-0.13	-0.27	-0.23	-0.24	-0.23	-0.14	-0.06	-1.31
	TFR decreased by 1.31 from 8.14 to 6.83							
Between 2000-2005 and 2005-2010								
Nuptiality	-0.04	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.17
Marital fertility	0.02	0.09	0.10	0.02	-0.04	-0.03	-0.05	0.11
Total	-0.02	0.04	0.06	-0.01	-0.05	-0.04	-0.05	-0.07
	TFR decreased by 0.07 from 4.63 to 4.56							

**Sources:** Author's calculations



# Conclusion

- ⌘ A spectacular fertility decline in the second half of the 1980s: the total fertility rate declined by more than 39 % between 1985 and 1994.
- ⌘ An inversing trend; the fertility rate started to increase since 2007 to reach exactly the same level as the early 2000s.
- ⌘ Age-specific fertility rates declined substantially in all age groups during the second half of the 1980s. While during the recent decade, an increase in fertility at younger ages was observed.



# Conclusion

- ⌘ Changes in fertility were mainly attributable to changes in marital fertility during each of the periods examined.
- ⌘ More than 81 % of the decline in fertility was due to the decrease in marital fertility during the period 1985-1995, nuptiality was responsible for only 18.75% of this decline.
- ⌘ During the last decade, the stability of the fertility rate at 4.7 children per women was the result of two countervailing factors trends:
  - ❖ A continuing decline in proportion of married women at younger and central ages
  - ❖ An increase in marital fertility among women of these ages (reduced contraceptive prevalence, stability of desired number of children, low levels of employment)



Thank you