

Fertility Issues in Developing Countries

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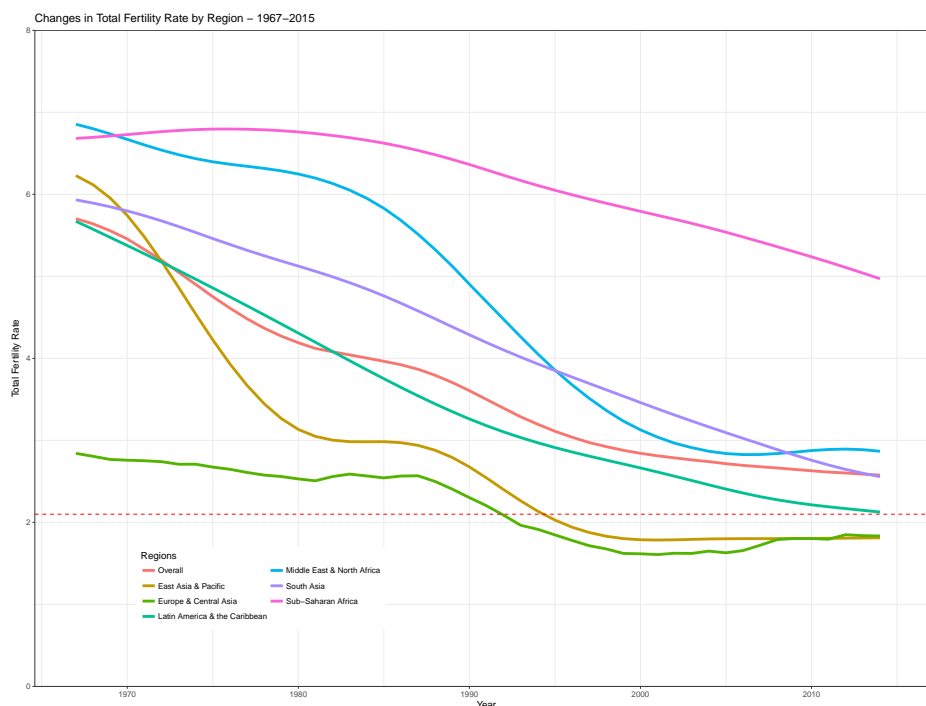
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1 Introduction

Despite a common perception that fertility is very high in developing countries, the truth is substantially more complicated. Figure 1 shows that there has been an astonishing decline in total fertility rate (TFR) in developing countries over the last half century.¹ Half a decade ago, TFR was around 7 children, with the exception of TK. The most recent data show, however, that, with the exception of Sub-Saharan African, TFR is now either below or only slightly above the replacement level of 2.1. Despite this rapid decline in fertility population size is still growing in many of these regions because there are still many more young people than older people and these young people either have not entered reproductive age or are just starting out.

Figure 1: Total Fertility Rates by Region from 1967 to 2015



If fertility levels are close to identical across developing and developed countries and there is rapid urbanization and increasing labor force participation among women do we

¹ TFR is the number of children a women entering her reproductive life would have if she had children following the age-specific fertility rates observed at that point in time. Hence, it is composite or snapshot measure of current fertility behavior.

even need a developing country version of this chapter?² The goal of this chapter is to highlight where and why a separate focus on developing countries is still relevant, what the recent developments in research has been, and most importantly, what I consider to be the main outstanding issues.

The most important issues from a policy standpoint is why the fertility decline in Sub-Saharan Africa have moved at a much slower pace than the other regions. Sub-Saharan Africa now has an average TFR that is about twice as large as the other regions.

2 Sub-Saharan Africa

As the figure above shows

Dupas, Huillery and Seban (2017)

3 Conclusion

References

Dupas, Pascaline, Elise Huillery, and Juliette Seban, "Risk Information, Risk Salience, and Adolescent Sexual Behavior: Experimental Evidence from Cameroon," CEGA Working Paper Series WPS-064, Center for Effective Global Action, University of California, Berkeley February 2017.

² TK references on urbanization and labor force participation.