

Cracking the Uniqueness of Birth Fertility in Israel

Eliran Tchernobilsky

Bar-Ilan University

The preoccupation with demographic aspects and fertility has been in place since the beginning of the development of the science of economics. In previous centuries, the most common demographic trends in the world were of population expansion. Under this background, there were economists and others who have argued that population growth would harm the economy and cause events that would lead to population decline, such as epidemics, wars, food shortages, etc. (Malthus 1798). On the other hand, nowadays, it seems that there is a worldwide trend of fertility reduction, increasing number of countries around the world, especially within Europe and other Western countries (OECD 2020). Beyond the long-term demographic risks, reduction in birth fertility can have a negative impact on a wide range of issues. Thus, the prevailing demographic trends of population reduction on the one hand, alongside the economic theories which point to the risks and negative effects of these trends, underscore the importance of better understanding the causes of the population decline. Against the background of the global trend of declining maternity fertility rate, the fertility characteristics in Israel are particularly unusual. As is well known, Israel is currently characterized by the highest birth rate in the West. Moreover, in recent years and contrary to the trends in most countries around the world, Israel has even experienced an increase in fertility. In light of this, examining the phenomenon in Israel through focusing on the main economic factors that likely influence fertility decisions, will be useful in assessing their validity in the local case and may allow a generalization to a broader set of countries (Western countries and in general). Therefore, my goal in this study is to try to understand the **determinants of birth fertility in Israel, focusing on the influence of social norms and cultural contexts**, which is counter to standard economic models.