

Ethnic Similarities and Differentials of Fertility Transitions, Below-Replacement Reproductions, and Population Policies in Singapore

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This study examines patterns and covariates of fertility differentials among major ethnic groups in Singapore while comparing the timing of implementation and amendment of population policies. We assess the effects of the transformation from anti-natal family programs to pro-natal policies in the 1980s and the following enhancements of socio-family policies. For this, we employ Ryder's indices (1980) for a decomposition of the period's total fertility rates into components of cohort-tempo and cohort-quantum. After reviewing population policy developments, we show historical fertility evolutions both in terms of period measures (for 1947–2020) and of cohorts born from the 1870s to around 1980. Then, we investigate the ethnic differences in the effects of tempo- and quantum- components underlying the fertility transitions and prolonged fertility declines.

We found that cohort-tempo played major roles in the determination of period fertility changes of all ethnicities, both in the eras of promoting the family program, and relaxing and abolishing it. On one hand, the strengths of the tempo effects differ among ethnic groups. On the other hand, the quantum components continue to decline after introducing comprehensive pro-natal measures. We discuss the implications of these results.

Keywords: cohort fertility, tempo-effect, ethnic differentials, fertility, population policy