

conomic reforms played a major role in influencing fertility trends in the 1990s.

Conclusions: Prospects for Fertility Trends after the Year 2000

As mentioned above, over the years, the formulation of the fertility policy in the PRC and academic studies in the area have mostly been based on the country's targeted fertility situation in the year 2000. Now, as we look back, on the year 2000, we find that the economic system and the population policy were the 2 major factors affecting fertility trends in the 1970s and that the economic restructuring and the implementation of a new marriage law resulted in fluctuations in fertility rates in the 1980s. Also, the progress of economic reforms and the establishment of the market economy changed the attitudes of people regarding fertility. However, what will be the PRC's future fertility trends? Will economic reforms continue to improve people's livelihoods and further reduce the fertility rate or stabilize the rate at its level in the 1990s?

According to 2 analytical studies of total fertility rates of 28 regions of the PRC conducted in 1981 and 1989 by the Population Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the influence of the state family planning policy on fertility rates declined in the period from 1981 to 1989 which corresponded to the level of social and economic development.¹⁸ The results of the studies indicate that a market economy can promote economic development, improve people's livelihoods, change people's fertility attitudes, and reduce births.

However, it takes time for economic development to produce changes in attitudes. Before the critical point is reached, when people have just reached the point of meeting their basic daily needs and get their first taste of prosperity, economic development can boost the fertility aspirations of people, which is disadvantageous to population control. The Chinese mainland can be divided into 3 parts: (1) areas where economic growth has already reached the critical point and the shift of fertility emphasis to "having fewer but high-quality children" has basically been realized; (2)

economically underdeveloped areas having relatively low economic, technological, and cultural levels where the marginal benefits of "having more children" are obvious and the people's desire for more children remains strong; and (3) in-between areas where the shift in fertility emphasis from the quantity to the quality of children, i.e., the transition from "having more children" to "having fewer but high-quality children", is in process. Currently, areas belonging to the third category account for the highest ratio, and the ratios of areas in the first and second categories are relatively low.

Because the PRC is vast in area, various localities have different levels of economic development, culture and customs, and capabilities to exercise fertility control. Therefore, although the overall fertility rate of the entire country is declining, there are wide differences among fertility rates of various localities. According to the level of fertility rates, the 30 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities under the jurisdiction of the central government may be divided into the following categories: (1) areas having the lowest fertility rates, including Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai; (2) areas having relatively low fertility rates and comparatively strong population-control capabilities, including Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, Inner Mongolia, and Sichuan; (3) areas having relatively high fertility rates and comparatively weak population-control capabilities, including Hebei, Shansi, Anhui, Fukian, Jiangsi, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Shensi, and Gansu; and (4) high-fertility areas, including such remote and national minority provinces as Guangxi, Hainan, Guizhou, Tibet, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, and Yunnan.

Among those areas in the first category, Shanghai entered into the phase of negative population growth as early as 1993. Most provinces in the second category may enter the same phase in 2030, while most provinces in the third category may realize a negative population growth 10 years after that. Such remote provinces as Xinjiang, Tibet, and Yunnan will continue to experience high-speed population growth before the end of the 2020s, and may enter into a phase of