

Tracing sex imbalances through surveys

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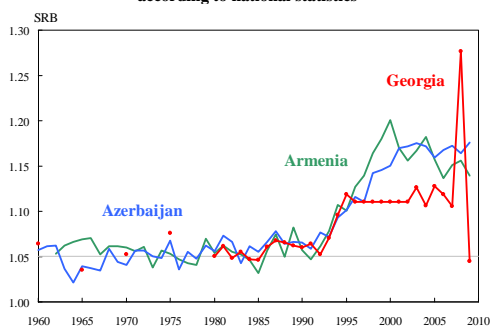


Sex ratio at birth (SRB) in the Caucasus

- ♦ Simultaneous sharp increase in the three countries in the early 1990s
 - ✓ Meslé, Vallin and Badurashvili, 2007
 - Official statistics which may be questionable
 - Evidences from Armenian DHS-2001 and Georgian RHS-1999
- ♦ Official statistics continue to give high SRB for more recent years
 - ✓ New surveys
 - Armenia: DHS-2005
 - Azerbaijan: DHS-2006
 - Georgia: RHS-2005
- ♦ Objective:
 - Looking at most recent trends
 - Confirming the persistence of the phenomenon
 - Finding evidences of sex selective abortion

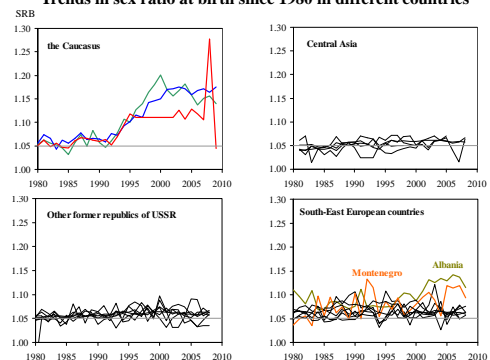
Increase in SRB in the early 1990s

Trends in sex ratio at birth since 1960 in the Caucasus,
according to national statistics



Specificity of the Caucasus

Trends in sex ratio at birth since 1980 in different countries



Specificity of the Caucasus

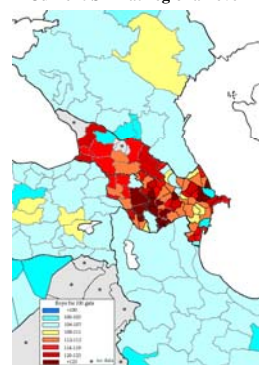
Current SRB in different countries



Period: 2006-2008

Specificity of the Caucasus

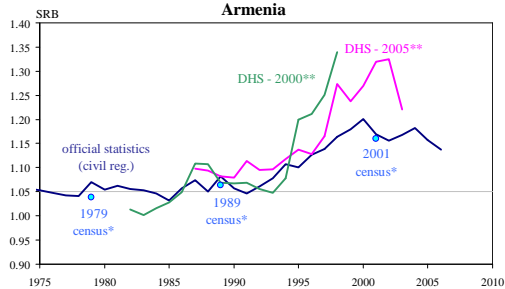
Current SRB at regional level



Period: 2006-2008

SRB through different sources

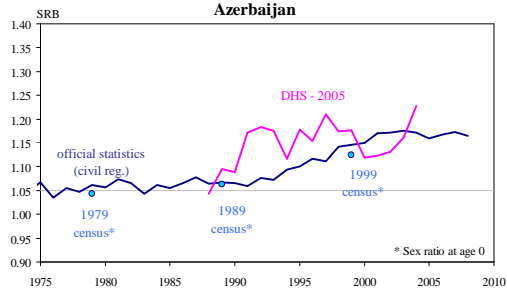
Armenia



*Census: sex ratio at age 0.
**DHS/RHS: 5-year mobile average

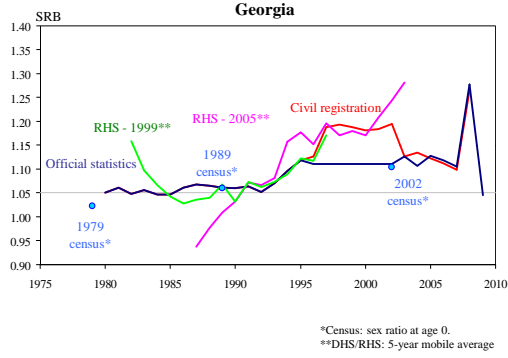
SRB through different sources

Azerbaijan

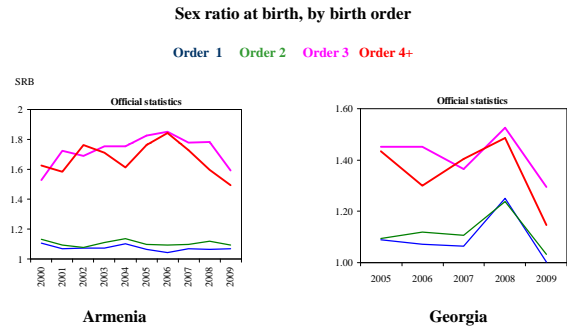


*Census: sex ratio at age 0.
**DHS/RHS: 5-year mobile average

SRB through different sources



SRB by birth order



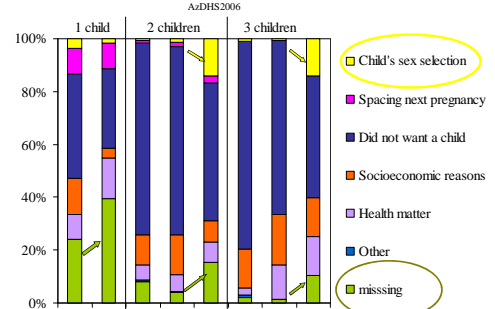
Sex-selective abortion?

Reported reasons for aborting:

- ✓ Question was asked in the Azerbaijanese and Georgian surveys
- ✓ With a specific item "preference for the sex of the child" only in the Azerbaijanese one:
 - only 3% of respondents reported having aborted because of the sex of the child

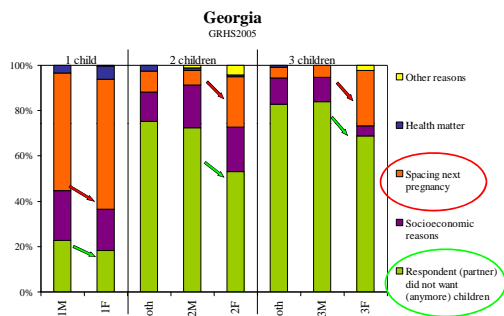
Sex-selective abortion?

Distribution of the reasons for abortion * by parity

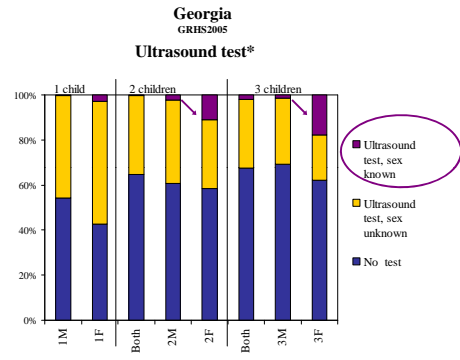


* Abortions occurred in the 5 years before the survey.

Sex-selective abortion?



Sex-selective abortion?



Discussion

- ◆ The sex ratio at birth has apparently stopped rising
 - ✓ but it remains abnormally high, a phenomenon very specific to the Caucasus.
- ◆ There is extensive recourse to abortion for limiting the total number of children in these countries
 - ✓ but for a share of these abortions, especially after the two first children, the purpose of termination is to select the sex of the next child.

Discussion

- ◆ Why the Caucasian countries stand apart from the neighboring countries?
 - ✓ A combination of different features
 - Son preference
 - Fertility squeeze
 - Easy access to abortion
 - ✓ Can be found in other regions
 - Especially in the North Caucasus
 - ✓ There must be another element
 - Easy access to the ultrasound test:
 - Or, at an early stage of the pregnancy
 - Or, the beginning of the pregnancy is not so well reported

References

Meslé France, Vallin Jacques, Badurashvili Irina, 2007. – A sharp increase in sex ratio at birth in the Caucasus. Why? How?, in : Isabelle Attané and Christophe Guilmoto (éd.), Watering the neighbour's garden: the growing demographic female deficit in Asia, p. 73-88. – Paris, CICRED, 425 p.

Duthé Géraldine, Meslé France, Jacques Vallin, Badurashvili Irina et Kuyumjian Karine. 2010. "High level of sex ratio at birth in the Caucasus. A persistent phenomenon?", Asian Population Conference, APA, 16-20 November, New Delhi.