

Education and fertility trends in Serbia at the beginning of the 21st century

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BACKGROUND

Serbia is a low fertility region with sub-replacement fertility (with TFR 1,4) as one of the most prominent characteristics of its demographic development. This paper intends to determine the main features of the overall tendencies in reproductive behavior of women and its relationship with the level of educational attainment.

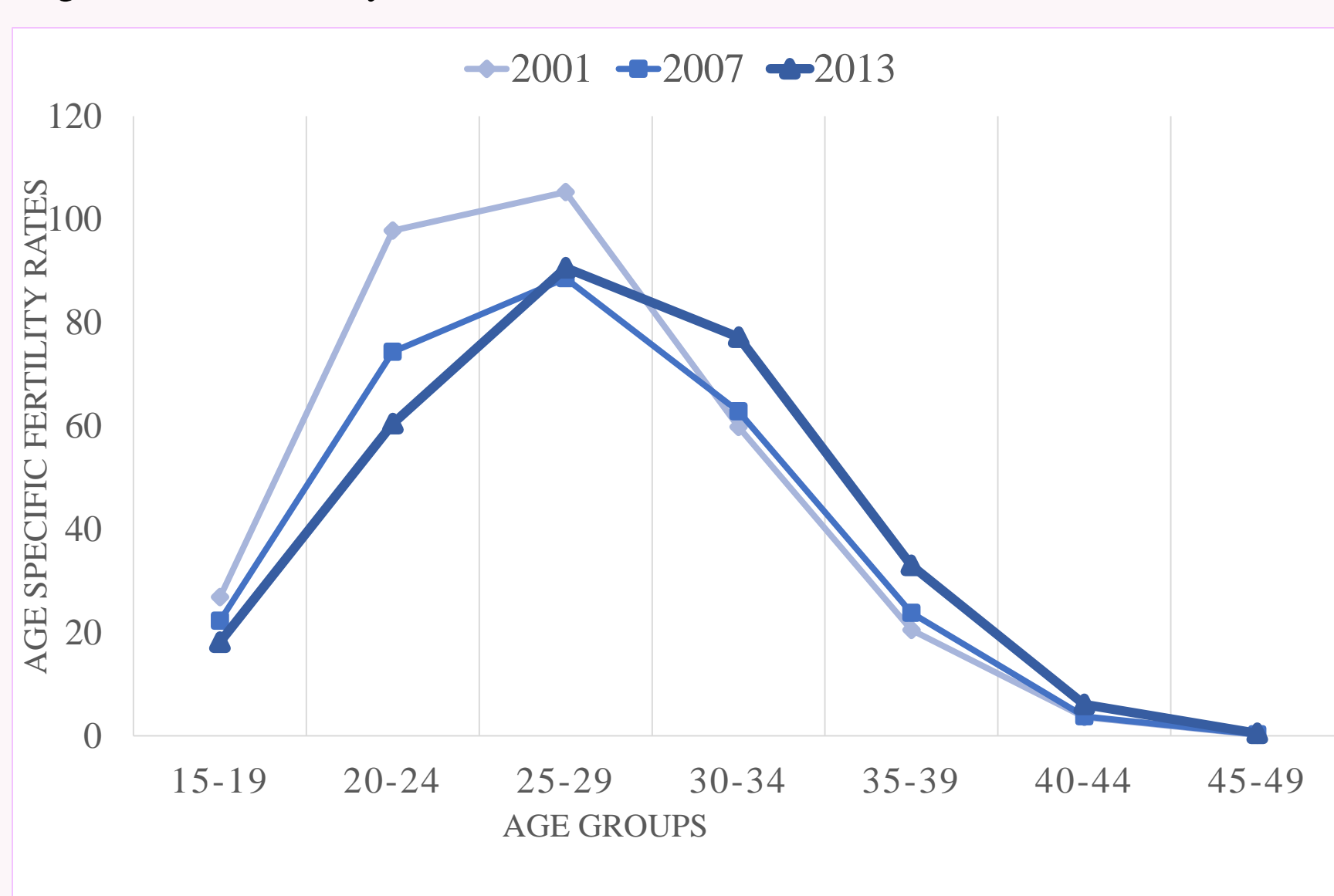
METHOD

The sources of the data used in this research are:

- Census of Population 2002. and 2011.
- Demographic Yearbooks of the corresponding years.

RESEARCH

Age model of fertility in Serbia

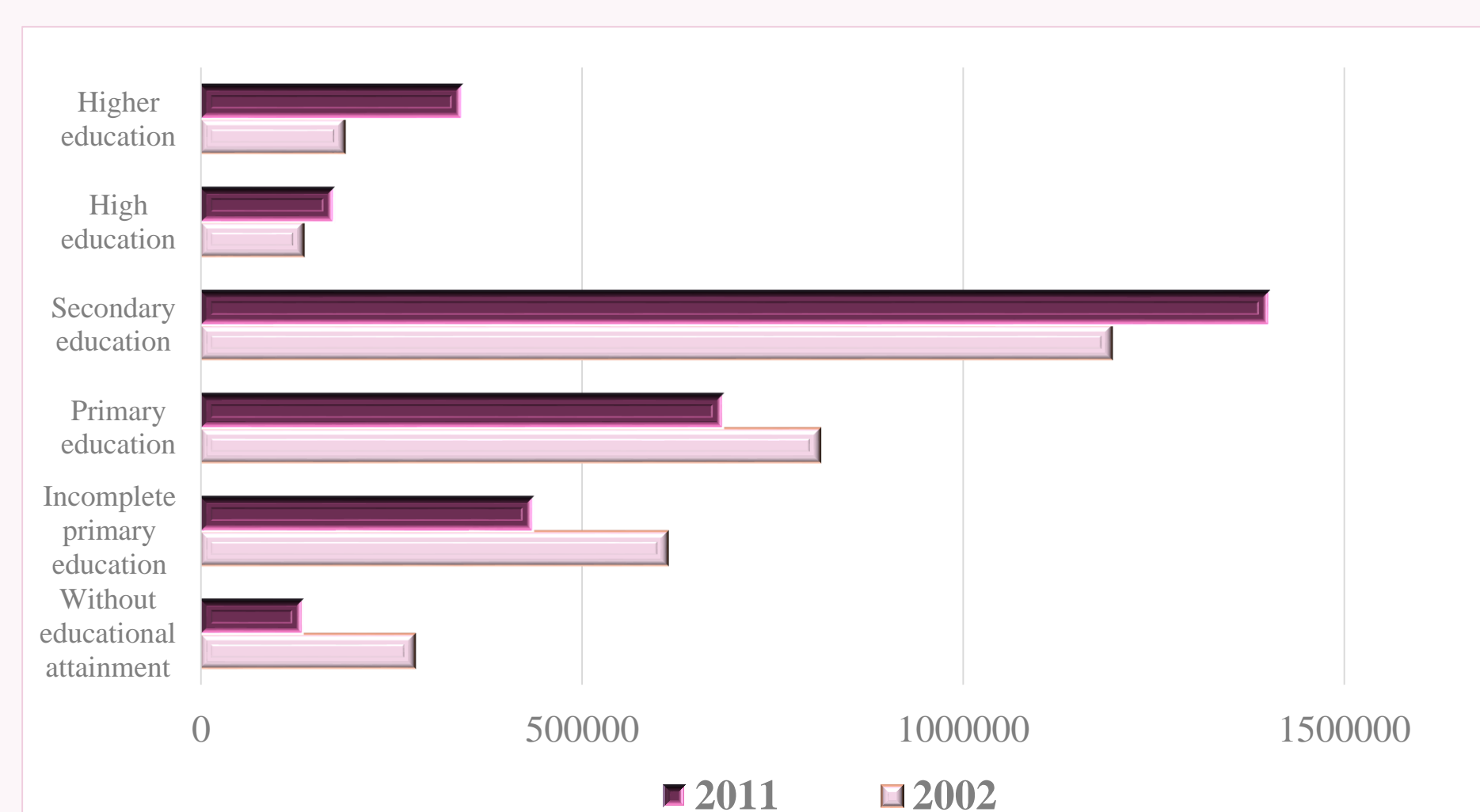


Source: Demographic yearbook 2010, 2013.

The period between the last two Censuses in Serbia is characterised by:

- Significant increase in the level of education of women
- The highest level of their educational attainment has nearly doubled.
- There is a clear tendency of moving reproduction to older cohorts.
- Women realize their fertility intentions later on in their reproductive span, which is a clear indicator of aging fertility.

Women aged 15 and over by educational attainment by Census 2002. and 2011.

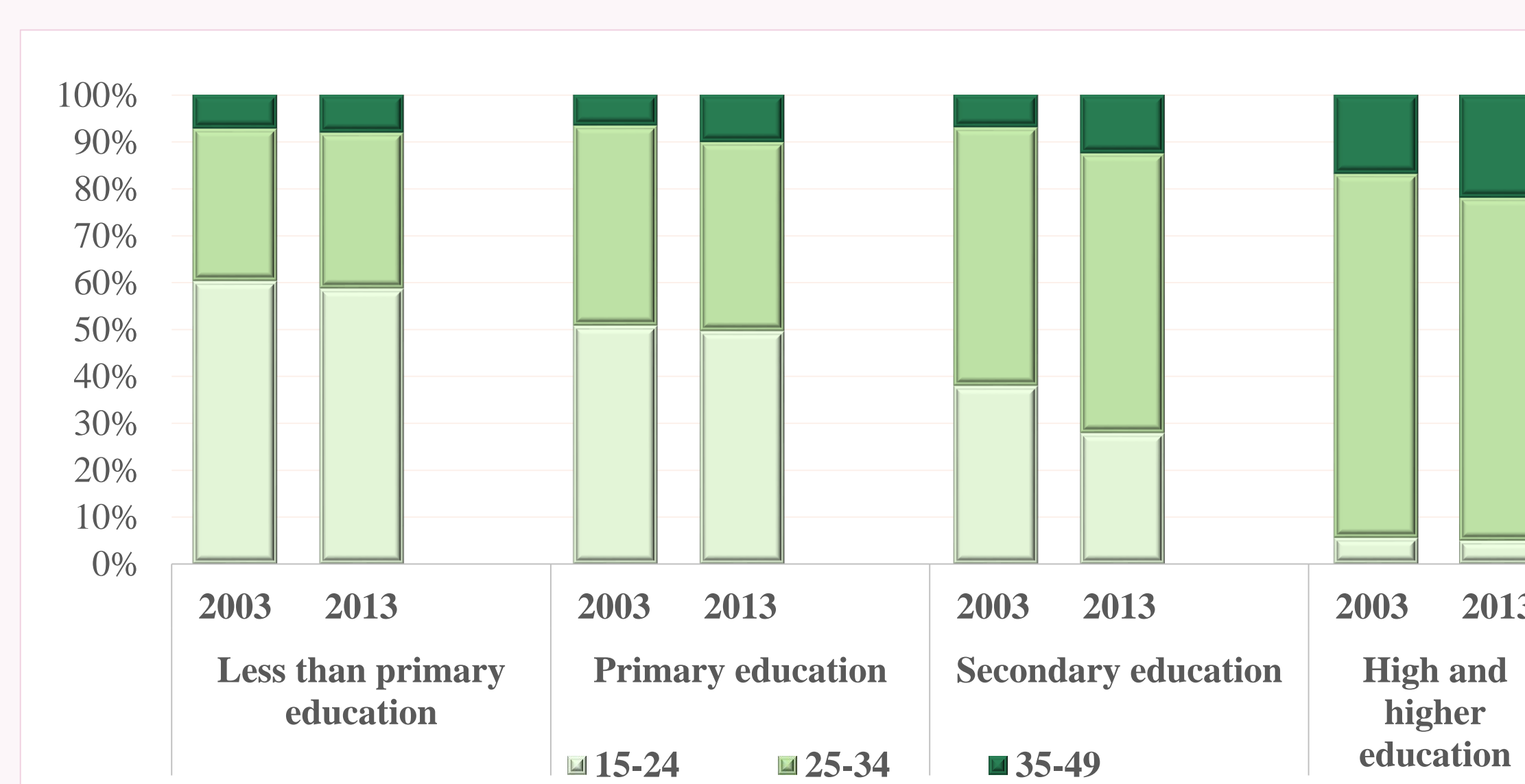


Source: Census 2002.and 2011. Educational attainment, literacy and computer literacy

Educational attainment of women with regards to their age specific birth rates represent:

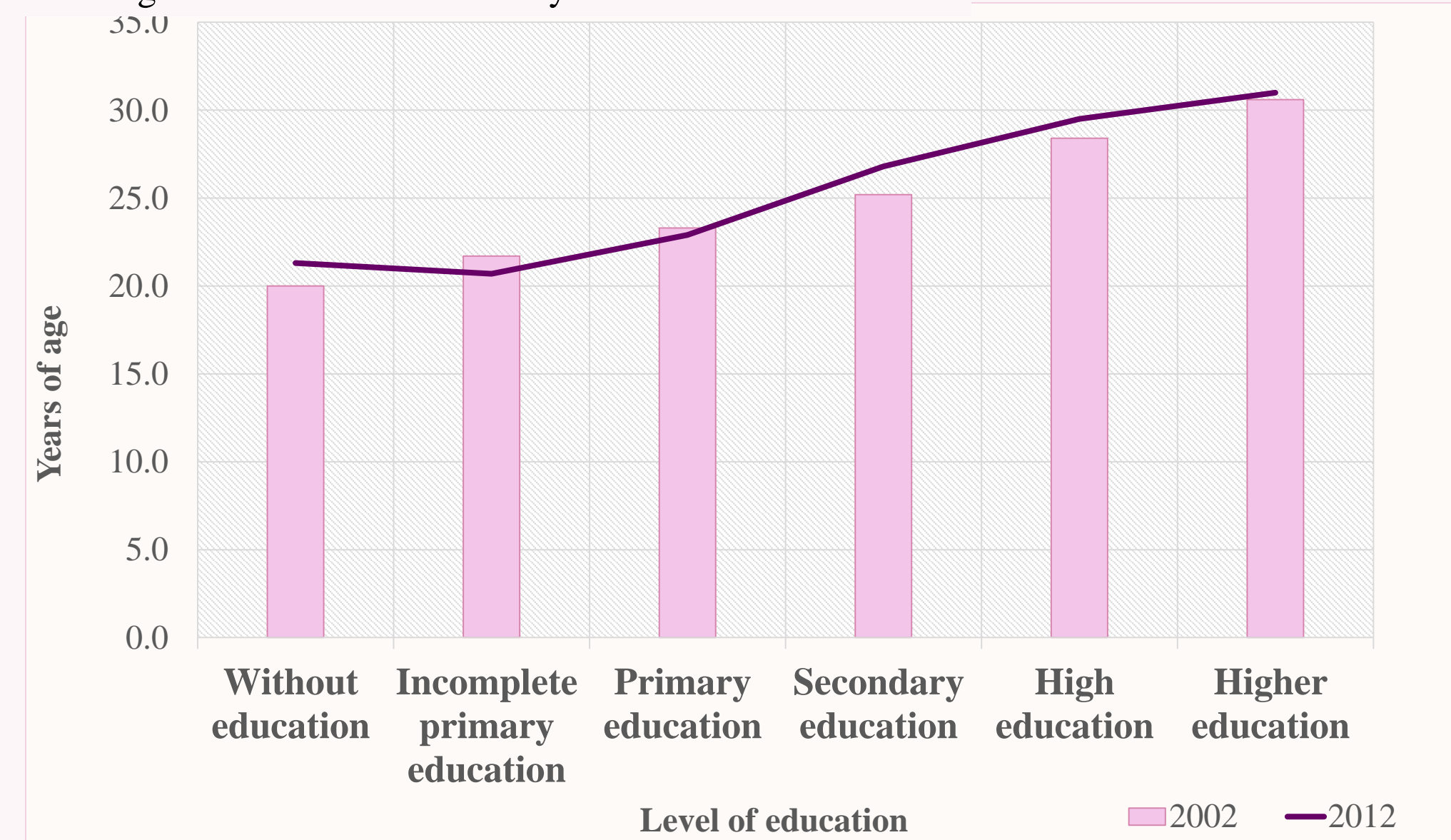
- Older age cohorts, 35- 49 years, display the significant increase in the category Secondary education and High and higher education,
- It means that older women are more educated.
- Along with the prolonged educational process, and pertinent economic crisis as well, childbearing is moving to mature reproductive years.

Share of new mothers in each educational attainment category by age in 2003. and 2013.



Source: Demographic yearbook 2003. and 2013.

Mean age of mother at first birth by educational attainment



According to calculations by Vasić P, Gligorjević V. and Devedzić M*

The mean age at first birth with regards to the highest educational level of mother:

- declining values of the indicator of women with low level of education
- significant increase of the age of women with secondary and high education in 11 years long period.
- it clearly indicates that more educated women postpone their childbearing intentions.

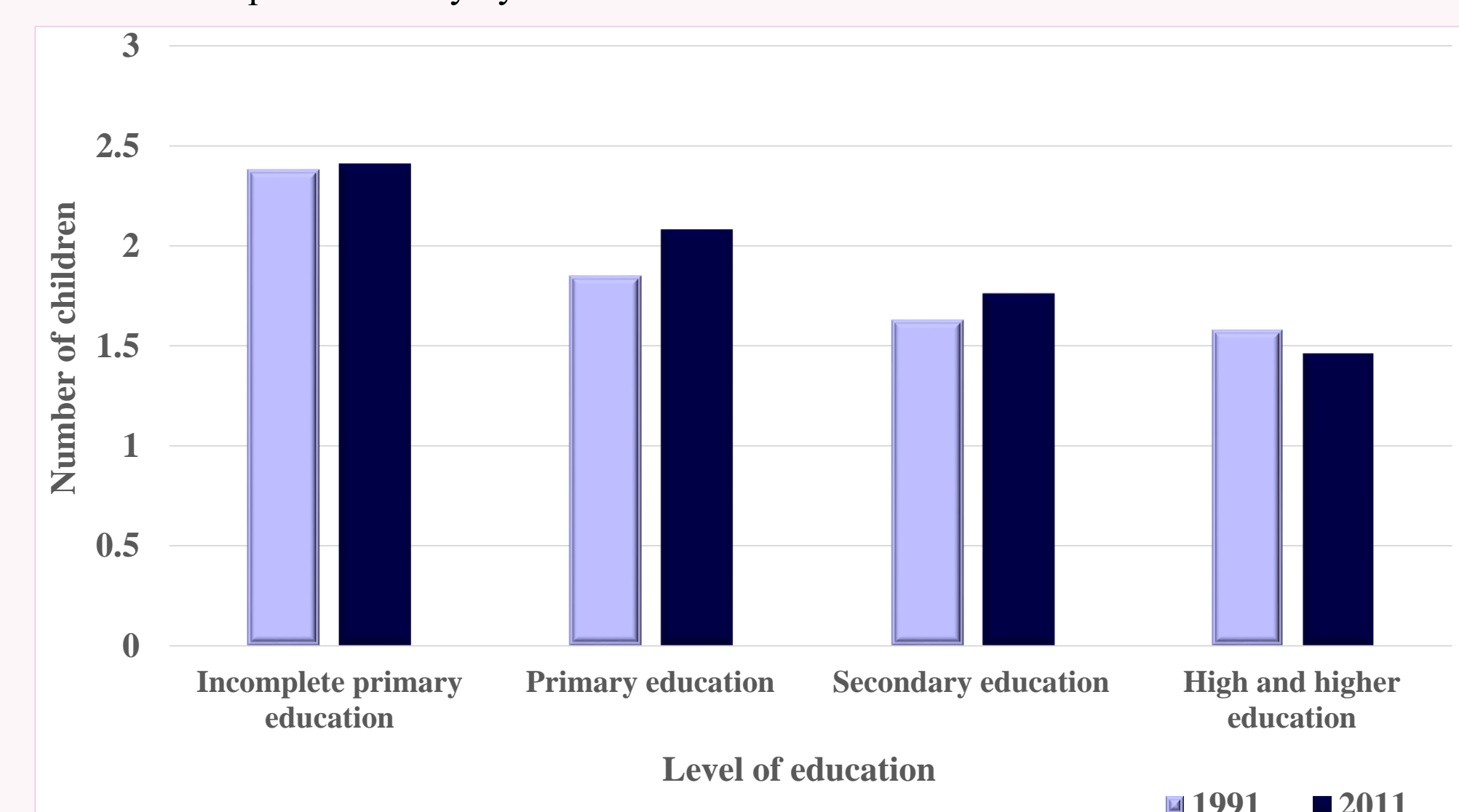
CONCLUSION

The connection between fertility and education is very strong. Along with pertinent economic crisis that reflects in the field of delaying life events, reproduction being one of them.

Prolonged education can lead to later childbearing. This means:

- Education is an important variable in reproductive behavior of women
- Transfer of reproductive behavior to a later date
- Better educated mothers are older

Women's completed fertility by education



Source: Census of Population 1991. Population and dwellings; Census of Population 2011. Population, households and dwellings

The lowest educated women hold the highest completed fertility rates.

Women with primary and secondary education display a significant increase.

Slow, but evident progression/ transition of women's fertility by the level of education.