

# Birth

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*Professor Dr.Pramote Prasartkul and Associate Professor Dr.Patama Vapattanawong  
IPSR, Mahidol University*

**“Thailand’s birth rate dropped to 760,000 births per year from more than a million births thirty years ago. Meanwhile the mortality rate is now at 400,000 deaths per year. The gap between birth rates and death rates has shrunk very quickly.”**

“Fewer babies are born these days.” “People this generation are hesitant to marry. Those who do marry also have fewer children.” “In the past, you hear children crying in the villages. These days you only see old people.”

These sayings reflect the reality of Thailand’s fast declining fertility rate over the past few decades. Every year between 1963 and 1983, Thailand witnessed more than a million births per year. Since then however, the number of babies born each year decreased to only 760,000 in 2010. It is likely the annual birth numbers will drop below 700,000 during the next 20 years.

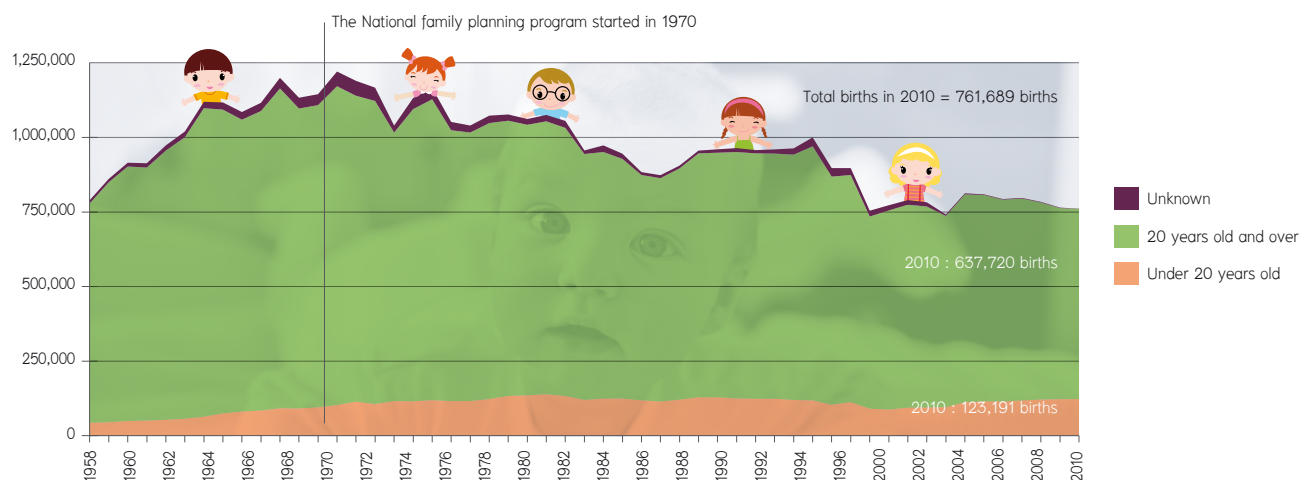
Only 40 to 50 years ago, a Thai woman had on average six children over her reproductive life. This average number of children also has quickly

declined. Today the average number of children is only 1.6 children per Thai woman which is below the two-child “replacement level”. However, despite the below-replacement fertility rates in Thailand, the Thai population continues to increase as the number of births still exceeds the number of deaths.

Important causes of fertility decline include the reluctance of Thais to get married, improved status of Thai women who have their own jobs, lower numbers of desired children among married couples who employ birth control methods and spacing between children. Thailand should now begin to pay more attention to quality rather than quantity in relation to births.

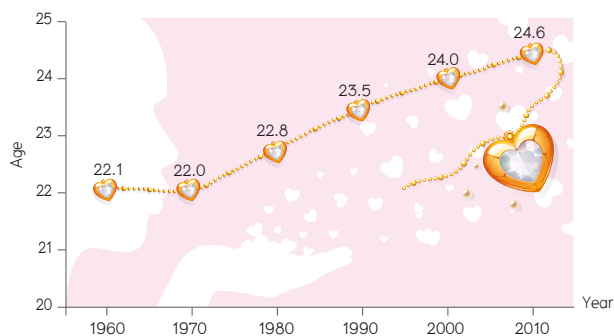


## Number of births by mother's age in 1958-2010



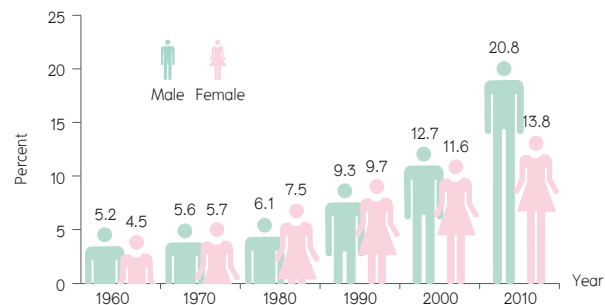
Source: Bureau of Registration Administration, Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior

## Average age at first marriage of Thai women, 1960-2010



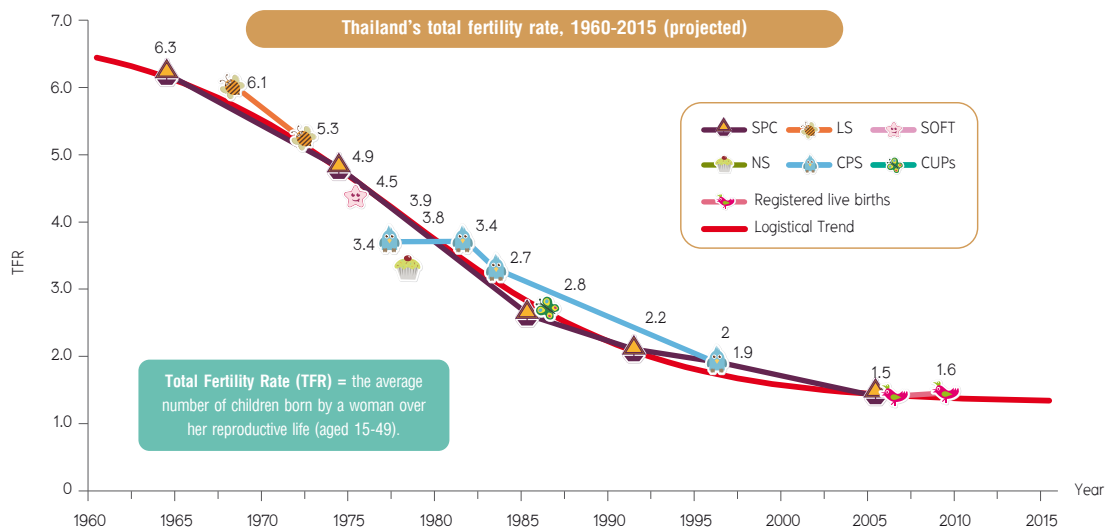
Source: Population and Housing Census 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 (advance report)

## Proportion of unmarried individuals among 30-49 years old



Source: Population and Housing Census 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 (advance report)

## Thailand's total fertility rate, 1960-2015 (projected)



Source: Prasartkul, Vapattanawong, and Thongthai, 2011

## Note:

SPC = Survey of Population Change  
 LS = Longitudinal Survey  
 SOFT = Survey of Fertility in Thailand  
 NS = National Survey  
 CPS = Contraceptive Prevalence Survey  
 CUPS = Contraceptive Use Patterns in Thailand  
 Registered live births is calculated from registered births in 2009