MARRIAGES AND DIVORCES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND PROFESSION IN NORTH MACEDONIA (2010, 2015, 2020, 2023)

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the relationship between the educational level and occupation of individuals with marriage and divorce rates in the Republic of North Macedonia, over four selected periods: 2010, 2015, 2020, and 2023. By analyzing detailed statistical data, which includes information on the education and occupation of spouses at the time of marriage or divorce, this study aims to identify patterns and changes that occur over time, as well as the impact of socio-economic status on marital decisions.

Marriage and divorce are two phenomena that mark the main cycles of family and social life. In recent decades, these processes have undergone major changes, influenced by the socio-economic, cultural, and educational transformations that have occurred in modern societies, including the RNM.

Through the analysis of official sources, such as the reports of the State Statistical Office, the study focuses on the comparison between years of different educational and professional groups, including categories such as: individuals with higher, secondary, primary or no education; as well as different professions such as administrative employees, teachers, manual workers, health professionals, entrepreneurs, etc.

The results of the analysis will help in a deeper understanding of the factors that influence decisions on marriage and divorce, as well as will contribute to the development of social and educational policies aimed at increasing family stability in the country.

Keywords: marriage, divorce, education, profession, RNM.

1.   Introduction

The social, cultural, and economic changes that have occurred in the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM) over the past decades have significantly affected the family structure and marriage norms. Marriage, as a traditional institution, has begun to be perceived and function differently from previous generations, while the phenomenon of divorce has become increasingly frequent. In this context, one of the factors that is often considered a determinant in these changes is the educational level of individuals. This paper aims to examine the impact of education on marriage and divorce rates in the Republic of North Macedonia, by analyzing statistical data according to different educational groups and by exploring the impact that education has on marital stability.

Through the analysis of data published by the State Statistical Office and other relevant sources, the paper aims to provide a clear overview of current and historical trends in marriage and divorce, divided by educational level: no education, primary education, secondary education and higher education. Other factors that may interact with education, such as economic status, ethnicity, gender, and age, will also be examined.

The paper aims to contribute to the academic literature on the relationship between education and marital stability, as well as to assist in the design of targeted policies that can address issues related to divorce, family planning, and education. Finally, recommendations will be presented for educational institutions and state bodies to improve the socio-demographic situation in the country, promoting family stability as a healthy nucleus of society.

Marriages and divorces by educational level

Education plays a key role in shaping personal identity, life expectations, and social relationships. The level of education affects not only the choice of a partner, but also the stability and quality of the marital relationship. [1]

The education system in the Republic of North Macedonia consists of preschool, primary (6-14 years), secondary (15-17/18 years), and higher education.

Regarding the number of marriages and educational level, it can be said that marriages with high school education dominate, whether for women or men, and are followed by marriages with primary school education.

Table 1. Marriages by educational level.

|	2010		2015		2020		2023	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Without education	337	447	296	369	35	67	26	34
Without primary education	103	134	70	97	163	178	307	319
With primary education	4042	4427	2683	2763	1255	1328	930	982
Secondary education	7153	5830	7440	6203	5967	5835	8070	7348
Higher professional education	119	131	185	216	87	91	98	118
Faculty and postgraduate studies	2325	3097	3200	4208	1902	2362	2272	2874
Unknown	76	89	312	330	869	867	969	997

Source ESRNM data (edited by the authors)

What catches our eye as soon as we see the table is that:
- -People with secondary education dominate in numbers in both marriages and divorces, because this category is more widespread in the population;
- -People with higher education make up a lower percentage of divorces compared to their participation in marriages, suggesting greater marital stability;
- -People with no education or with primary education have a higher relative rate of divorce compared to marriages, which may be related to the economic and cultural difficulties faced by these groups.

The highest number of marriages throughout all the years that we have analyzed has been among people with secondary education for both genders, where for the male gender from 2010 to 2023 we have an increase in marriages of 917 more marriages, while for women the number has increased by 1518 marriages.

From this, we conclude that the higher the level of education, the greater the opportunity to be officially crowned.
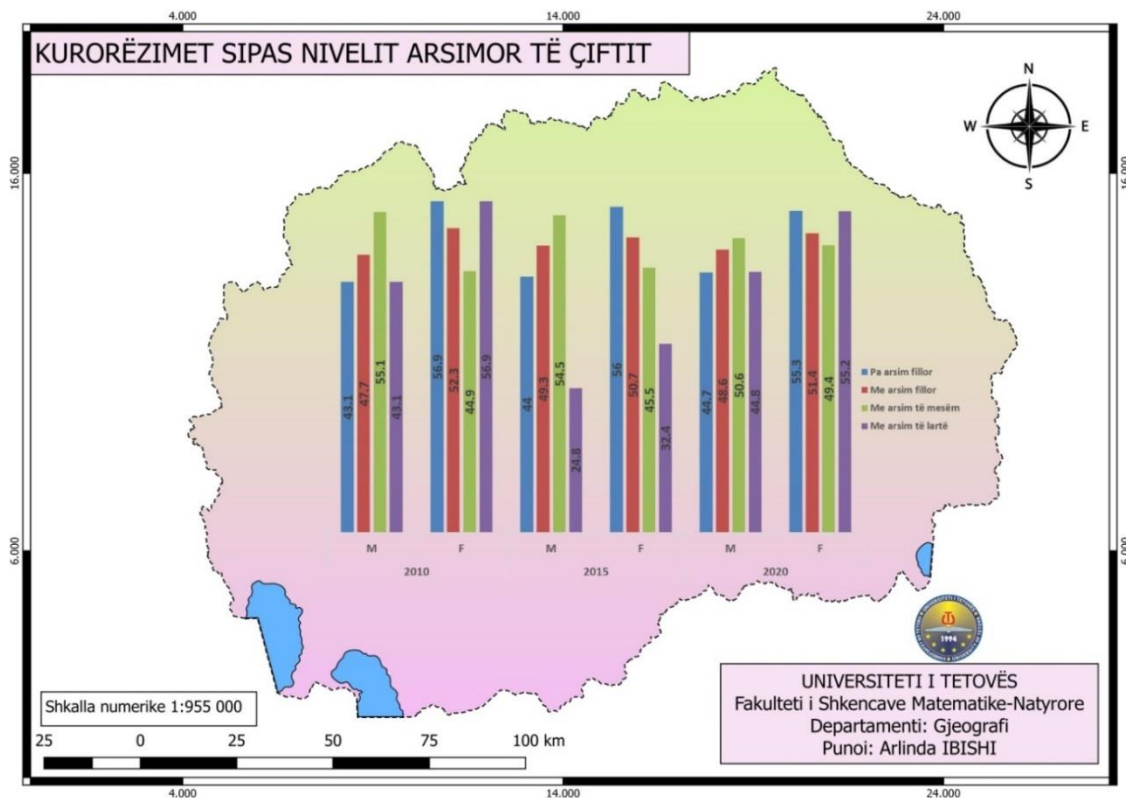
The data obtained from the State Statistics Office of the Republic of North Macedonia show that in 2010, people with secondary education dominated in marriages, in 2015, the numbers of marriages for people with higher and professional education increased significantly, in 2020 we have a general decline in marriages due to the pandemic, while 2023 presents us with an increase in marriages in the category of those with a college education.

Educational level and profession today are the main factors that cause divorce as a process, but in addition to them, there are other factors that may be different, such as: regional customs, women's economic independence, self-confidence, employment, conflicts, non-sharing of responsibilities for children, etc. [6]

Table 2. Divorces by educational level.

	2010		2015		2020		2023	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Without education	43	72	45	69	10	20	11	11
Without primary education	14	16	8	21	31	35	12	12
With primary education	427	428	399	402	163	172	116	120
Secondary education	754	676	933	801	650	569	681	628
Higher professional education	31	27	23	30	20	15	3	/

Faculty and postgraduate studies	146	171	227	297	244	306	167	271
Unknown	305	330	565	580	451	452	775	777

Source ESRNM data (edited by the authors)

Compared to marriages, here we have lower figures, but significant enough to conclude the impact of education on the stability of marriage. Secondary education is the group most affected by divorce, perhaps due to early marriages or without lasting economic stability.

The data from ESMV shows that in 2015 there is a spike in divorces, especially in secondary and postgraduate education, the pandemic in 2020 has had an overall decrease in the number of divorces, with a noticeable effect in all categories, while the last year analyzed has seen an increase in the higher education category, indicating a transformation of the social structure and perhaps a shift towards later and more thoughtful separations.

The highest number of divorces for the period 2010-2023 was recorded in 2015 among people with secondary education, where a total of 933 men and 801 women were divorced.
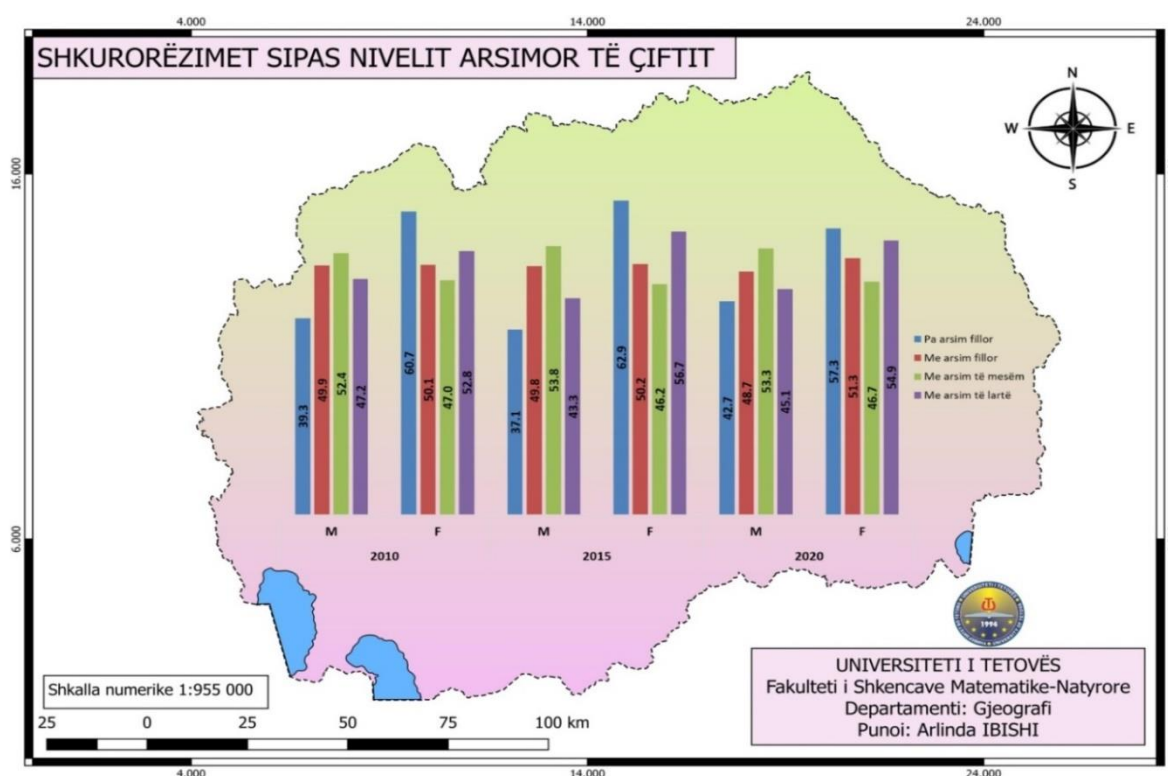
2. Marriages and divorces by profession in the Republic of Macedonia

Individuals with a higher level of education tend to marry later, as they often prioritize pursuing their studies and careers. However, marriages in this group tend to be more stable, due to better communication, economic independence, and a more equal division of gender roles.

On the other hand, individuals with a lower level of education marry earlier, but are more exposed to external stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of conflict resolution skills, which can lead to divorce. [4]

Table 3. Marriages according to the profession.

Profession	2010		2015		2020		2023	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Active people	9152	13633	10279	13799	7776	10093	10764	12556
Lawmakers, senior officials, and managers	86	311	83	225	24	65	27	67
Professionals (doctor, teacher, lawyer)	2144	1548	3033	2278	1385	1231	2060	1662
Technicians and associated professionals	1761	2059	1682	2161	985	1116	1372	1449
Officer	1306	894	1570	1657	1296	1053	1722	1777
Service workers and sales employees of stores and markets	1379	1638	1436	1606	979	1013	716	883
Skilled agricultural and fishing workers	305	696	141	368	37	190	25	219
Handicrafts and similar works	371	2355	349	1930	132	1228	63	902
Plant and machinery operators and assemblers	215	633	195	636	127	571	163	414
Elementary occupations (physical work)	1432	3068	1240	2260	782	1525	779	1561
Armed Forces	15	271	8	113	11	73	10	45
Unknown profession	138	160	542	565	2018	2028	3827	3577
Persons receiving personal income	39	132	43	144	14	124	28	81
Supported persons	4964	390	3864	43	2488	61	1880	35

Source ESRNM data (edited by the authors)

Professions are not only a source of income, but also elements that structure social life, time, economic security, and often affect the way family relationships function. The choice of profession and professional stability are linked to lifestyle, communication style, tendency to responsibility, and the ability to balance professional and private life.

To understand the impact of education level and profession on (marriages/divorces), the data presented in the table above was analyzed. This data shows that men in professions such as doctors, teachers, lawyers, etc., have seen an increase in the number of marriages from 2144 in 2010 to 3033 in 2015. The table also shows that the lowest number of marriages among men belongs to those employed in the armed forces. As for the female gender, we can see that those engaged in craft and similar work are showing a decrease, perhaps due to their employment in various other fields.

During the period 2010–2023, marriages in the Republic of North Macedonia have undergone significant changes in relation to occupation. In all years, the largest number of marriages is made up of people active in the labor market, which means that employment is a major factor influencing the decision to marry.

High-stress jobs, long work hours, or economic insecurity can increase marital conflict and lead to divorce. On the other hand, jobs with stable incomes and flexible schedules tend to contribute to more balanced relationships.

Table 4. Divorces according to the couple's profession.

Profession	2010		2015		2020		2023	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Active people	1656	1320	105	1893	1498	1423	1730	1699
Lawmakers, senior officials, and managers	14	2	14	8	4	3	1	/
Professionals (doctor, teacher, lawyer)	120	32	199	275	52	87	68	104
Technicians and associated professionals	226	144	250	200	101	74	133	96
Officer	101	137	241	250	49	52	37	48
Service workers and sales employees of stores and markets	99	152	66	103	28	37	42	65
Skilled agricultural and fishing workers	30	8	60	22	25	17	8	5
Handicrafts and similar works	219	55	219	50	47	16	22	15
Plant and machinery operators and assemblers	410	39	58	64	48	53	58	36
Elementary occupations (physical work)	422	274	380	298	268	203	243	204
Armed Forces	5	2	5	1	2	/	/	/
Unknown profession	379	375	613	622	874	881	1118	1126
Persons receiving personal income	60	29	94	38	69	40	33	21
Supported persons	4	371	1	269	2	106	2	45

Source ESRNM data (edited by the authors)

The data show that throughout the analyzed period, the largest number of divorces has been among people who are actively working.

Among other professions, the largest number of employees was registered in the category of elementary occupations (physical work), where in 2010 there were 422 men and 274 women. This number has been gradually decreasing, reaching 243 men and 204 women in 2023, which may reflect the trend towards the reduction of physical work due to technological developments and the shift of the workforce towards other professions.

A significant increase was observed in the category of professionals and technicians. For example, female professionals have increased from 32 in 2010 to 275 in 2015 and then to 104 in 2023, while among men the number has fluctuated from 120 in 2010 to 199 in 2015, to fall

to 68 in 2023. Likewise, technicians and associated professionals have fluctuated: in 2010, there were 226 men and 144 women, while in 2023 the numbers are 133 men and 96 women.

Categories such as legislators, senior officials, and managers continue to remain underrepresented, especially among women, where in 2023, only 1 woman and 1 man are registered. Meanwhile, other occupational groups such as service workers, machine operators, and agricultural workers constitute a smaller percentage of the active labor force, with a general trend of decreasing numbers over recent years.

3. Joint analysis by educational level and occupation in RMV

The separate examination of the impact of education and occupation helps to understand general trends, but a joint analysis provides a more accurate picture of the social dynamics that affect marital stability. Many professionals belong to the same educational level, but the impact on marriage varies depending on working conditions.

The most vulnerable group and with the highest divorce rate is those with primary education or no education and who are unemployed, which brings a lack of economic resources, dependence on social assistance, psychological stress, and lack of conflict resolution skills, contributing to the inability to maintain the marital relationship.

The category that has shown the lowest divorce rate during all the years analyzed. is that with higher education and occupations in administration, education, and health. This is because these people have not only the knowledge and skills to manage conflicts, but also economic stability and a more organized pace of life.

By analyzing data over the years, several models have been identified that appear to be more stable marriages based on educational level and profession:
- Marital stability is higher among people who, according to their educational level, have higher education, and are employed in administration and education;
- -Marital stability is much lower among people with no education or with primary and secondary education, and who are unemployed or who work in manual labor.

4. Conclusion

This study has clearly shown that educational level and profession play an important role in the dynamics of marriages and divorces in the Republic of North Macedonia. Education and profession are not only indicators of socio-economic status, but also determinants of family and marital behavior. Increasing levels of education, easier access to the labor market, and cultural changes directly affect decisions to marry or divorce.

Based on the analyses and conclusions of this study on the relationship between educational level, profession, and the dynamics of marriages and divorces in the Republic of Macedonia, the following recommendations are given:
- Promoting family and marriage education in the educational system,
- Institutional support for couples in difficulty,
- Economic support for families with unstable professional status,
- Development of policies in support of stable marriages, taking into account the educational and professional characteristics of the population,
- Creation of counseling centers for married couples or in the process of divorce,
- Awareness campaign on the balance between professional and family life, which would contribute to increasing awareness among professionals and employees on the importance of maintaining family relationships in the conditions of modern life.

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