Although available, because of the limited number of respondents, survey data are not a proper tool for such purpose[14].

On the other hand, the census data alone do not provide any explanation for the changes that are at hand, more particularly the smaller number of wanted children and/or the reasons for postponement (a result of prolonged education of women, increased labour force participation and delayed marriage and/or living with a partner). It is clear that the answers to these questions can only be provided by specific surveys, such as the FFS surveys of the nineties[15].

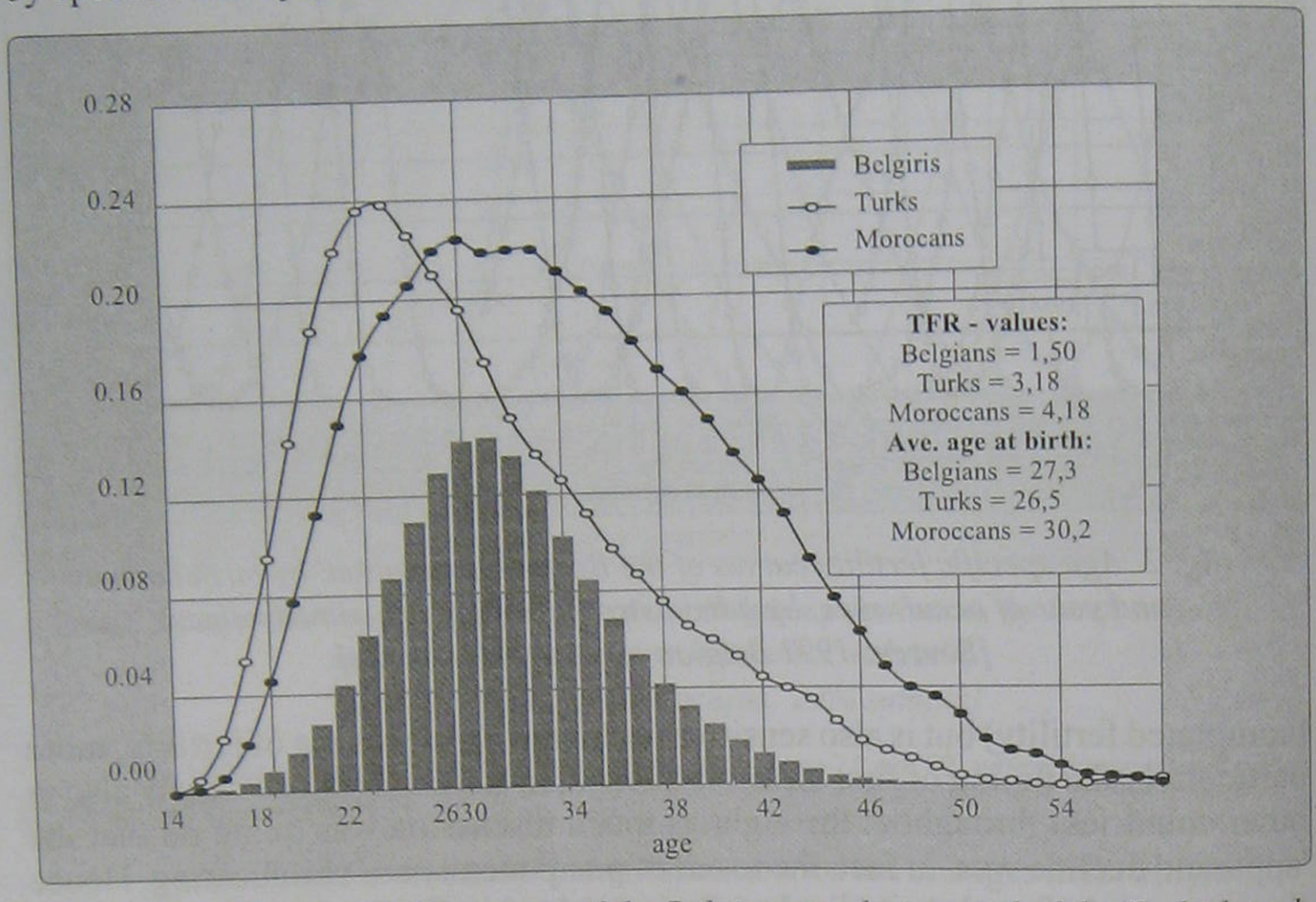

Fig. 3. Age-specific fertility curves of the Belgian population, and of the Turkish and Moroccan immigrant populations, years 1986-1990 (smoothed values) [source:1991 Belgian census]

[14] Indirectly, figure 2 illustrates the need for large data sets for the calculation of rates for demographic events. As indicated in the title, the analysis was not based on the entire census data set but on a 20% sample. One way to eliminate statistical variation for graphical purposes was to use smoothed values (cf. note xx above). However, the irregularities that can be observed in the fertility curves of the Brussels Capital regions by far the smallest regions are indicative that it would be unreasonable to use smaller administrative units for analysis (the total population of Belgium is roughly 10 million inhabitants).

[15] Or Fertility and Family Survey, an international project co-ordinated by the Population Activities Unit of the UNECE in Geneva.