A Vanishing Breed: Women with Large Families: Canada in the 1980s

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine a selection of socio-demographic variables associated with three different parity distributions (no children, two children and four or more children) of women aged 35-39 (N=9,389) in Canada in 1981. Data are primarily from the 1981 Census of Canada, Public Use Sample Tape. The findings are examined within the context of Caldwell's theory of flow of wealth within families. The large family is clearly a "vanishing breed" in Canada, as only 15% of ever-married women aged 35-39 have four or more children. These women are distinguished by early age at marriage and low levels of human capital accumulation. Employing multiple regression, about 20% of the variance in the fertility outcome of women 35-39 is explained. Implications of the findings are discussed in the context of below replacement fertility, the changing role of women in Canada, and the economic compensation necessary to assist in stemming the flow of wealth from parent to child in the raising of children at the end of the 20th century.

Résumé

Le présent article se propose d'examiner une gamme de variables socio-démographiques associées à trois statistiques de familles différentes (sans enfant, deux enfants et quatre enfants ou plus) concernant les femmes âgées de 35 à 39 ans (n=9,389) au Canada en 1981. Les données proviennent principalement de la bande-échantillon à grande diffusion du Recensement du Canada de 1981. Les trouvailles sont examinées dans le contexte de la théorie de Caldwell concernant le flux des richesses au sein des familles. La famille nombreuse est nettement en voie de disparition au Canada, 15 pour cent seulement des femmes mariées âgées de 35 à 39 ans ayant quatre enfants ou plus. Ces femmes se distinguent par le fait qu'elles se sont mariées jeunes et par une faible accumulation de capital humain. La régression multiple explique des écarts d'environ 20 pour cent dans la fertilité des femmes de 35 à 39 ans. Les implications de ces résultats sont examinées dans le contexte d'une fécondité inférieure au taux de remplacement, du rôle changeant des femmes au Canada, et des compensations économiques nécessaires pour aider à réduire le flux des richesses des parents aux enfants en cette fin du 20e siècle.

Key Words: Canada, large families, low fertility, flow of wealth, economics, role of women.

Introduction

In Canada all during this century, and accelerating in the past generation, there has been a major shift in family patterns, particularly relating to the role of women within marriage. For ever-married women who were in the prime childbearing ages at the turn of the century, over 30% had six or more children. Ten percent of these women had 10 or more children (Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961). If we examine some younger cohorts in 1941 and 1961 (women 35-39 years of age), it is clear that there has been a steady reduction in families with six or more children (from 18-12%), and a larger proportion of women having two or three children (34-45%), the beginnings of the small family norm (Henripin, 1972).

	Parity						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Ever-Married Women 35-39							
1941	14.1	16.6	19.6	14.2	10.0	6.9	18.2
1961	9.2	12.4	23.9	20.9	13.7	7.9	11.9

The proportion of families with relatively large numbers of children declined dramatically throughout the 20th century until by the 1980s, fewer than 3% of the ever-married women aged 35-39 gave birth to six or more babies (see Table 1). The downward trend in large family size is clear.

Traditionally, the family was an institution oriented towards reproduction, with average families having more than five children (Gee, 1986). In this context, the rights and duties of the spouses were well defined and their continuing union did not necessarily depend upon factors such as love and affection. In recent years, a fundamental change seems to have taken place. The stability of the institution is not assured by tradition, but by expectations of love, companionship and commitment. This has come to mean that couples, but especially women, are not prepared to enter marriage as easily as in the past unless they are fairly certain of a strong "relationship", and they are ready to leave a union if that commitment is absent (Ryder, 1979; Davis, *et al.*, 1986). One result is a dramatic increase in cohabitation as well as in divorce.

Similarly, reproduction within marriage was taken for granted and even expected in the past, with large numbers of children more the norm than the exception. However, the value and demand for children has substantially changed and the decision to have a child or not is now determined more in subjective and economic terms: whether or not it will make a woman and her relationship with her spouse more fulfilled; whether or not parents feel they can afford children. In some sense, the problem has become: How many children should one have to be happy and satisfied? What are the costs and rewards of having a child, or perhaps several children? This new basis for marriage and family has profoundly affected the life course paths of women relating to changing levels of educational attainment, labour force participation, as well as gender role obligations and expectations.

The major purpose of this paper is to examine some of the socio-demographic factors associated with the number of children that women have in Canadian society. Cross-sectional data are employed in the analysis, and thus no attempt is made at sorting out issues of causal ordering in the variables. Rather, the number of children born is treated as the dependent variable and the socio-demographic factors are incorporated as predictor variables. Clearly in this type of study, fertility could be viewed as an independent variable, and in many cases, there are obviously reciprocal relationships between the variables (e.g., fertility and labour force participation). For presentation purposes, and for the multivariate analysis, fertility is treated as the outcome. Basically, the major question is, controlling for age, how do women with four children compare to those with two, or none? It has been argued (Trovato, 1988) that the increasing individualism in Canada has important implications for the decline in the "centrality of marriage" (and by extension the having of children) and the increasing activity on the part of women in pursuits outside of the family. With these alternative roles more available to women, what are the "individualistic" costs to women who have large families in Canada in the 1980s?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Many theoretical perspectives could be useful here in discussing the changing patterns of fertility evident in North America: Relative Income (Easterlin); Gender Roles and Importance of Children (Bumpass, Ryder); Proximate Determinants (Bongaarts); Change and Response (Davis);

Individualism (Malthus, Lesthaeghe). However, the idea of a "vanishing breed" relating to large families seems to be best represented via the demographic transition arguments developed by John Caldwell (1976), especially the "flow of wealth" hypothesis.

In his important work on the demographic transition, Caldwell (1976) argued that fertility behaviour was economically rational within only two models: "the first where the economically rational response is an indefinitely large number of children and the second where it is to be childless." In the first case, Caldwell argues that the flow of wealth is from child to parent and there is an economic incentive to have as many children as possible. It is also the case in these contexts that geographically close kinship networks would help ease the burden of childrearing on parents by distributing the costs and care among relatives (Turke, 1989). The economic rationality of childbearing would result in large families. In the 19th and early part of the 20th century in Canada, it was not unusual for families to contain six or more children. For example, the cohorts born between 1817-1831 gave birth to 6.6 children per woman (Gee, 1986, p.270). Even among ever-married women 70 years of age or older in Canada in 1981, nearly as many had borne six or more children (130,570) as had a two-child family (139,580). Among this group, over 18% had six or more children (Statistics Canada, 1983).

The second scenario that Caldwell develops relates to the situation of economically rational childlessness. Thus, in the Canada of the 1980s, where the flow of wealth from parent to child is in the neighbourhood of $120,000 over the childrearing period, we would expect no children born. In fact, the number of children ever born per woman is below replacement, as measured by total fertility rates. However, most women still do have children. Obviously, economic factors are not the only impetus to childbearing, and fertility is determined by a host of other reasons including personal, cultural, social, psychological and physiological ones. In our society, the having of a child is a very powerful norm, and the vast majority of women do want and indeed do have at least one child, often two, even in the 1990s. What has changed dramatically is the number of children that women have, and the impact that results from relatively few families having large numbers of children.

During the Depression years, demographers were writing that no population could even reproduce itself unless some 30% of all married women had at least four children which would then counterbalance the

unmarried, the childless and those couples who choose to have one or two children (Stix and Notestein, 1940). However, the 1950s brought early, nearly universal marriage and childbearing, with childlessness rates approaching physiological minimums, and the issue of the "large family" as necessary to population replacement was more or less ignored (Coale, 1973). Now, in the 1990s, high divorce, relatively late marriage, decreasing remarriage and increasing childlessness is causing concern among some demographers about population replacement (Beaujot, 1986; Romaniuc, 1984). Ryder (1979) has written that the modern day family achieves less satisfaction from parenthood, and women have achieved some measure of opportunity to pursue other than familial interests. He goes on to say that encouragement to fertility beyond replacement has to be related to birth orders greater than two. But are we as a society prepared to really take on the costs of actually paying people to have and raise children? Can we expect people (mainly women) to sacrifice other life course alternatives to have large families? What are the costs to women who continue to bear children beyond the average number? This paper examines how women with four or more children compare in some socio-demographic characteristics with women who bear fewer children.

Data Sources and Methodology

Most of the data for this paper are developed from the 1981 Census of Canada Public Use Sample Tape (PUST), 2% individual file. In addition, some comparative data are taken from published census information and from the Canadian Fertility Survey which was conducted in 1984. The PUST is a large data set (N=486,875) containing information on many social, demographic and economic variables, including statistics on number of children ever born. In this analysis, observations have been restricted to ever-married women age 35-39 (N=15,034), and within that group, to parity numbers of no children, two children and four or more children (N=9,389). This group of women has by and large completed their childbearing and they are the most recent group to have done so in Canadian society. Only about 4% of children born in 1981 were to women 35 years of age or older (less than 1% to women 40 and older). By concentrating on these three parity levels, we are able to compare the economically rational model of no children posited by Caldwell, the "typical" small family norm of two children, and the "vanishing breed" women with four or more children. The major thrust of the paper is to compare these three types of childbearers on a series of socio-

demographic, cultural and economic variables in order to ascertain their associations with the three groups of women.

The independent variables can be arranged under three headings: (1) Economic variables — education, personal income, family income, occupation and number of weeks worked; (2) Demographic variables — current marital status, migration and age at marriage; (3) Cultural variables — place of birth, religion, ethnicity and language. First, these variables are examined in a series of bivariate analyses with the dependent variable of no children, two children and four children respectively. Later, an OLS stepwise multiple regression analysis is performed to determine the amount of variance explained in the dependent variable, children ever born. Again, it should be emphasized that certain variables, such as education, are more likely outcomes of fertility behaviour rather than strictly determinants. Thus, in some of the cross-tabular analyses, the number of children in the family is also treated as an independent variable, especially in the analysis of economic and demographic outcomes for women with varying parities. However, the multivariate information is presented with children ever born as the dependent variable and all other factors as predictors.

TABLE 1.   PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED PARITIES OF EVER-MARRIED WOMEN BORN BETWEEN 1912 AND 1946 AND DETAILED PARITIES FOR WOMEN AGED 35-39, CANADA, 1981.

PART A
Ever-Married Women

Age	None	Two	Four+	Mean
65-69	14.0	21.8	33.3	3.13
60-64	11.5	22.0	35.9	3.27
55-59	9.6	21.5	38.4	3.38
50-54	8.4	21.2	40.2	3.40
45-49	7.2	22.9	38.0	3.26
40-44	7.3	29.2	28.2	2.84
35-39	9.3	38.3	15.4	2.33

(*Children Ever Born(%)*)

PART B

Age 35-39 (N=15,034)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+
	9.2	13.2	37.4	24.2	9.7	3.5	1.5	.6	.3	.3

(*Children Ever Born(%)*)

Source: PART A: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-906, Volume 1, Nuptiality and Fertility, Ottawa, Ministry of Supply and Services, 1983, p 2-1.
PART B: Two Percent Public Use Sample Tape, Individual File.

Bivariate Analysis

Table 1 is adapted from the 1981 census publication, *Nuptiality and Fertility* (Statistics Canada, 1983). The data show the childbearing patterns for women in Canada born between 1912 and 1946. Clearly, childlessness has decreased over time but with a slight reversal in the most recent cohort of women, age 35-39. Some of these women may in fact still begin families with children. The two-child family has emerged as the most prominent single parity, with nearly 40% of all ever-married women age 35-39 in 1981 having two children. This is just about double the rates of the two-child family of the recent past. The Canadian Fertility Survey conducted in 1984 showed that for ever-married women 35 - 49, about 32% had two children during their lifetimes (Grindstaff, *et al.*, 1991). Perhaps the most striking difference relates to the proportion of women having four or more children, or what might be thought of in the current fertility structure, as a large family. For women aged 50-54 (having had most of their children during the baby boom) 40% had four or more children, and the mean number of children in the family was 3.4. Among women 40-44, these figures were 28% and 2.8 respectively, and for the women of focus in this study (35-39 years of age), just over 15% had four or more children, with a mean number of 2.3.

Table 1 also provides the total parity distribution for ever-married women age 35-39 from the 2% PUST. Just over 75% have two or more children, with half of that total having exactly two. Nearly 16% of the women have four or more children, with the majority of them having the minimum in that category. Overall, the two data sources have figures that are quite comparable, and together they show the current small family norm quite clearly. At the same time, there are a substantial number of women who are at odds with the trend and have twice as many children as the norm. There has been a substantial decline in the large family, but what are the characteristics of women who continue to give birth during their reproductive lives to relatively large numbers of children?

Economic Factors

Table 2 provides a bivariate analysis between the collapsed dependent variable of none, two, and four plus children with six economic factors. The data indicate that women with large families are significantly deprived in terms of economic achievements relating to educational attainment,

income, work status and type of occupation. Women with two children do less well compared to child-free females, but the major disadvantage is associated with women who have four or more children ever born. In terms of years of formal schooling completed, nearly 30% of women with no children had some level of education beyond secondary school compared to about 20% for women with two children and less than 9% for women with a family size of four or more children. The association is clear and significant; women with large families have little in the way of the basic necessity of industrial society, a high level of educational attainment. There are no causal indications here, only that the two factors are strongly correlated. In fact, it is more likely that level (and timing) of fertility is one of the major predictors of years of education completed (Grindstaff, *et al.*, 1991). Women with four or more children are three times as likely to have completed only Grade 8 or less than either women with no children or women who have the typical family size of the 1980s — two children.

The two income variables presented in Table 2, personal and familial, both show the disadvantage of women with children, but especially among those women with large families. As an illustration, over half of the women with no children earn $10,000 or more compared to less than 20% of the high parity mothers. Family incomes are also significantly lower for this group with about 30% having $30,000 or more a year compared to about 45% for the other two parities. At the other extreme, low (or no) incomes are about twice as likely for the large families. This represents a serious double bind; fewer dollars and more people to share them among.

Occupation is dichotomized into professional occupations (including managers, teachers, health) and all others, including no occupational affiliation. Once more, it is the woman with four or more children who, for likely apparent reasons of other domestic commitments, is not able to achieve a high level of occupational attainment. Women with no children are about three times as likely to be in a professional job. Nearly half of the high-parity mothers worked no weeks in the census year compared to one-third and 20% of the two and zero-parity females respectively. When working, the former women are more likely to have part-time jobs, but not substantially different from women with two children. Having any children is associated with significantly higher level of part-time employment, defined as less than 20 hours per week (Grindstaff and Trovato, 1990).

TABLE 2.   CHI SQUARE AND CORRELATION STATISTICS COMPARING
             EVER-MARRIED WOMEN AGE 35-39 ON SELECTED CHILD
             PARITY AND SIX ECONOMIC VARIABLES, CANADA, 1981.**

Children Ever Born (N)		Years of Education(%)					
		8 or less	9-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18+
None	(1,381)	10.7	29.3	31.0	11.2	10.4	7.4
Two	(5,629)	12.5	35.4	32.6	8.8	7.5	3.2
Four	(2,379)	31.7	39.3	20.5	4.8	2.6	1.1
Total	(9,389)	17.1	35.5	29.3	8.2	6.7	3.3

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Pearson's R: -.247

	Personal Income(%)				
	None	1-4,999	5-9,999	10-19,999	20,000+
None	14.1	15.9	14.4	34.4	21.3
Two	25.0	23.9	18.8	24.2	8.2
Four+	36.0	26.1	19.4	15.4	3.1
Total	26.2	23.3	18.3	23.5	8.8

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Pearson's R: -.250

	Family Income(%)				
	- $10,000	10-19,999	20-29,999	30-39,000	40,000+
None	4.7	29.5	21.1	19.0	25.6
Two	7.8	18.2	28.8	23.7	21.5
Four+	14.9	27.4	25.8	16.6	15.3
Total	9.1	22.2	26.9	21.2	20.5

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Pearson's R: -.121

	Occupation(%)		
	Professional	Other	None
None	33.5	46.7	19.8
Two	21.9	44.8	33.3
Four+	10.1	41.2	46.7
Total	20.6	44.5	34.9

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Eta: 14.2

Table 2 cont'd.

Children Ever Born	Weeks Worked(%)			
	None	1-20	21-40	41-52
None	19.8	.0	11.4	60.8
Two	33.3	12.1	12.9	41.7
Four+	46.7	18.9	11.3	28.2
Total	34.7	12.0	12.2	41.1

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Pearson's R: -.214

	Employment Status(%)	
	Part Time	Full Time
None (1,107)	16.4	83.6
Two (3,754)	37.1	62.9
Four+ (1,269)	40.3	59.7
Total (6,130)	34.0	66.0

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Eta: .144

[**]All data presented in Table 2 and subsequent tables are developed from the 1981 Census of Canada Public Use Sample Tapes, two percent file.

Cultural Factors

Are there elements of ethnic origin and background in Canada which relate to the varying pattern of fertility among women age 35-39? Table 3 presents information on place of birth, religion, ancestry and language. Foreign born women constitute more than 20% of the population, and they are less likely to have relatively large families with four or more children Generally, foreign born females have lower fertility rates than women who are born in Canada (Balakrishnan, *et al.*, 1988; Grindstaff, 1990). Women of the Catholic faith and women who indicate they are "mainline" Protestants are somewhat more likely to have larger families, but the major difference is observed among the 10% of women who are basically of no religious affiliation. About 15% of women who are childless indicated no/other religion, while only 6% of women with four or more children fit into this religious category. Ethnic background defined as British, French and Other show no relationship concerning childbearing patterns. Women with French language have proportionately fewer large families. This finding provides additional data on the change among

TABLE 3.   CHI SQUARE AND CORRELATION STATISTICS COMPARING
EVER-MARRIED WOMEN AGE 35-39 ON SELECTED CHILD
PARITY AND FOUR CULTURAL VARIABLES, CANADA, 1981.

Children	Place of Birth (%)	
Ever Born (N)	Canada	Foreign Born
None (1,381)	76.1	23.9
Two (5,629)	76.5	23.5
Four+ (2,379)	80.4	19.6
Total (9,389)	77.4	22.6

Chi Square Significance: .0003   Eta: .035

	Religion(%)		
	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Other/None
None	47.6	37.7	14.7
Two	46.4	43.1	10.5
Four+	50.4	43.2	6.4
Total	47.6	42.3	10.1

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Eta: .043

	Ethnic Background(%)		
	British	French	Other
None	39.1	29.5	31.4
Two	39.8	27.8	32.4
Four+	39.6	26.8	33.6
Total	39.7	27.8	33.5

Chi Square Significance: .5500   Eta: .001

	Mother Tongue(%)		
	English	French	Other
None	57.0	29.6	13.4
Two	57.6	27.4	15.0
Four+	58.3	24.7	17.0
Total	57.7	27.0	15.3

Chi Square Significance: .0001   Eta: .010

French-speaking women from the group with one of the highest levels of childbearing in Canada in the first half of the century to one of the lowest levels at the end of the 100 years.

The statistics observed in Table 3 indicate that no relationship had as much as a .05 correlation. About 25% of ethnic/religious groups under consideration in this study have a family size of four or more children. No major ethnic, religious or native/foreign born category had greater than 30% or less than 20% within this category of large family size. It would seem that the historically important variables relating to cultural differences in childbearing are no longer of paramount importance in terms of observed differentials. Halli (1990) indicates that fertility differences observable among ethnic groups in Canada are largely attributable to differences in socio-economic factors between the groups.

Demographic Factors

Table 4 examines the associations of current marital status, mobility and age at first marriage with the three childbearing parities. A no child status is associated with a greater risk of marital disruption. For instance, only two-thirds of women with no children are in their first and only marriage, compared to more than 80% for women with two or four plus children. One factor accounting for childlessness among ever-married women may be the relative absence of a permanent marital union. The childless women are significantly more likely to have changed residence in the previous five years. Having children in the home may be a stabilizing force in regard to residential choices. The most important factor in differentiating the dependent variable is age at first marriage (there is no age at first birth given in the census). The Pearsonian correlation is -.36, the highest in the study. Only 18% of the women with no children were married before reaching the age of twenty compared to 61% of the females who had four or more children. Clearly, an early start in marriage is still an important factor in the long-term outcome of completed family size. This same pattern of early marriage (which is highly correlated to early childbearing) is also related to the relative lack of human capital accumulation that was documented in Table 2. Once begun, especially when taking place at a youthful age, marriage and childbearing may restrict other life course alternatives (Grindstaff, 1988).

TABLE 4.   CHI SQUARE AND CORRELATION STATISTICS COMPARING EVER-MARRIED WOMEN AGE 35-39 ON SELECTED CHILD PARITY AND FOUR DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES, CANADA, 1981.

Children Ever Born (N)	Current Marital Status	
	Currently Married	Widow/Divorce/Sep
None (1,381)	83.6	16.4
Two (5,629)	89.8	10.2
Four+ (2,379)	88.2	11.8
Total (9,389)	88.5	22.5

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Eta: .025

	Marital History	
	Married Only Once	Other Union
None	68.9	31.1
Two	85.3	14.7
Four+	80.4	19.6
Total	81.8	18.2

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Eta: .049

	Mobility Past Five Years	
	Same Dwelling	Moved
None	40.8	59.2
Two	52.6	47.4
Four+	55.3	44.7
Total	51.6	48.4

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Eta: .076

	Age at First Marriage				
	-20	-22	23-25	26-29	30+
None	18.0	26.0	21.9	17.3	16.6
Two	26.9	39.7	21.2	9.6	2.6
Four+	60.9	26.2	8.4	3.2	1.3
Total	34.2	34.3	18.1	9.1	4.4

Chi Square Significance: .0000   Pearson's R: -.362

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TABLE 5. STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS ON THE THREE ITEM PARITY DEPENDENT VARIABLE (NO CHILDREN, TWO CHILDREN, FOUR OR MORE CHILDREN) WITH SEVEN SIGNIFICANT INDEPENDENT VARIABLES, EVER-MARRIED WOMEN AGE 35-39, CANADA, 1981.

Variables	Beta	Correlation	Adjusted R2
Age at Marriage	-.32*	-.36	.132
Personal Income	-.12*	-.25	.184
Education	-.10*	-.25	.192
Weeks Worked	-.11*	-.21	.196
Language(Fr/other)	.09*	.04	.200
Religion(Cath/oth)	-.11*	-.02	.201
Mobility(Yes/No)	-.04*	-.08	.203

Multiple R: .451
Adjusted R2: .203
*P < = .001 based on t-test.

Multivariate Analysis

Table 5 shows the multiple regression results of the three item dependent variable regressed on seven independent variables. An earlier equation included all 14 predictors, but only these seven were significant. Age at marriage emerges as the most important factor in distinguishing between women with no children, two children, and four or more children (R2=.132), with the economic variables of income, education and period of time work all making an almost equal contribution to the variance explained (R2=.064). Overall, just over 20% of the variance is explained in the dependent variable, with more than half attributed to age at marriage. However, the economic factors remain important in the overall analysis. Just as the bivariate data indicated, ever-married women 35-39 years of age with a large number of children ever born are women who married at an early age, lack in educational attainment, personal income and regular weekly employment outside of the household. Large numbers of children in the family are associated with a weak economic profile of the women who are generally responsible for the care of their offspring.

Summary and Discussion

As Canada enters the 1990s, women with large numbers of children in their family (four or more) may be considered to represent a "vanishing breed,"

but they have not totally disappeared. In the 19th century, the average family size was more than six children. In the early 20th century less than 20% of ever-married women had six or more children. During the 1980s fewer than 3% of women aged 35-39 gave birth to six or more children (15% with four or more). Thus, the downward trend in large families is certain. Caldwell (1976) argues that this pattern is a clear reflection of the changing flow of wealth from child to parent in the 19th century to one where the flow is from parent to child in the modern industrial world. The cost of raising children is just too high. Beaujot, (1991) quoting other sources, indicates over $110,000 for a medium income family to raise a child to age 17. In addition, there is decreasing assistance from kinship networks due to lack of proximity because of wide scale mobility in the modern context (Young and Nelson, 1973; Turke, 1989).

Women with large numbers of children (four or more) in Canada today also pay for that experience with individual personal sacrifice, including fewer acquired human capital resources such as education and income. In general, the data show that the higher the individualistic costs for the women involved, the larger the number of children in the family. Early marriage is a part of the total picture. It appears that the attention of most of these women is focused on the family and children to the exclusion of other possible life course alternatives. For example, in comparison to childless women (and to a lesser extent to women with two children), mothers with four or more children are twice as likely to have less than a high school education, only about one-third to one-half as probable to have a personal income of $10,000 or higher annually, and more than twice as likely to have been married while still a teenager. In addition, given the flow of wealth from parent to child, it costs more dollars to simply rear more children. These women are a vanishing breed, and one of the factors for this trend is the total and individual economic costs involved. Generally speaking, in Canada of the 1990s, large families and economic advancement are incompatible outcomes.

Norman Ryder (1979) has argued that the historical past was a period where women were "coerced" into having children, and population replacement was "conditional on the discriminatory treatment of women" (p. 366). One of the major revolutions and accomplishments of the modern Western world is the on-going movement toward social, economic and reproductive control and viable life course alternatives outside of the family for women. This happening is a crucial component of the modernization process. At the same time, it is a truism that a substantial

number of women must have substantial numbers of children in order to assure a viable and developing social system. As Moen (1979) states, "no society can allow the individual full freedom of choice regarding reproduction."

In all of this discussion, the really important issue is not one of reproduction per se, but really that of the costs of raising the child, of care giving (Turke, 1989). In a democratic and relatively egalitarian system, what is probably most desirable is that individual freedom be maximized while at the same time develop structures that recognise and reward childrearing in a economic sense, whether done by the mothers or other people. It would seem that, more and more, children are a societal rather than an individual family responsibility (McDaniel, 1989), and if children are necessary for survival, then society must put in place the appropriate economic and social props that help stem the flow of wealth from parent to child, and to make children less expensive, especially for the individuals involved (Eichler, 1988; Hobart, 1991). In the past, the caring for children has been a low paid enterprise, and this type of economic evaluation may need substantial revision.

Over the last generation, some consideration has been given to issues concerning maternity/paternity leaves, day care development, and employment return/equity. Quebec has even instituted bonus payments that reach a high of $7,500 for women who have a third child. This type of application is most likely insufficient in promoting childrearing. What is probably necessary in the long run is for childrearing to be economically compensated for through reasonable pay to the people who in fact do the day-to-day work, be they called mothers or fathers or trained professionals. In the past, this was "women's work" and women were not paid for their labour (McDaniel, 1989). Such "salaries" should not simply be token gestures, but reflect real monies for the important work of raising our children. Such a programme would be expensive and require substantial reordering of priorities, but it may be necessary for population replacement. An economic compensation (say an average salary) coupled with the other already existing positive motivations in Canada to have children, would undoubtedly result in a higher fertility rate, most likely one near the level of replacement.

All indications are that the "vanishing breed" is gone for the foreseeable future. In addition, only low fertility is compatible in the long run with low mortality (Coale, 1987). Having a child is seen as an important part of the

lives of most people, and if the economics of the flow of wealth can be made less onerous, especially for women, then it is likely that reproduction will increase somewhat, as has happened in Sweden recently (Hoem, 1990). However, this can take place only within the context of the changing roles of women and men. Married females now have alternatives outside of the familial domain, and it is necessary to recognise the importance of raising the children (including participation of both parents), not just the biology of the matter. To that end, fertility in the 21st century will be more and more a societal responsibility that is wrapped up both with more economic equality for women and with societal survival.

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