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by  
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Why are Canadians Having Children? An Investigation of the Value Attributed to Children and its Impact on Demand for Children

Melissa Moyser

Abstract:
Previous studies in the value-of-children tradition of fertility research have examined the effect on demand for children of subjective perceptions of a particular value, or category of values, of children to parents. In their explanation of demand for children, they do not consider the possibility of the relevance of multiple or diverse single-handed values of children to parents. By investigating the impact of a non-specific measure of the values of children to parents—the value attributed to children—on demand for children, this study implicitly takes into account all of the values of children to parents that may be implicated in demand for children. The fundamental hypothesis of this study is that the value attributed to children by individuals is one of the foremost determinants of their demand for children. The value attributed to children by individuals is thought to positively affect their demand for children. Based on a sample of respondents to the 2001 Canadian General Social Survey who are heterosexual, aged 20-49 years, fecund, married to or cohabiting with a fecund spouse/partner, and childless, this study finds support for the fundamental hypothesis of this study. Those who attribute value to children have demand for an average of about one more child than those who do not attribute value to children when their demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics are taken into account. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with a sample of respondents to the local survey of Reproduction and Caring over the Life Course who are heterosexual, aged 20-49 years, married, cohabiting or in a conjugal relationship, and childless are analyzed to discern the values of children to parents that give rise to the value attributed to children by individuals and, in that way, contribute to their demand for children. The main finding is of the relevance of multiple or diverse single-handed values of children in the value attributed to children by individuals.

Understanding fertility decline and low levels of fertility has long been the raison d’être of demographic inquiry concerning human reproduction (Schoen et al., 1997). Micro-economic theories of fertility have provided the dominant explanation for the fertility behaviour of individuals (Foster, 2000). Founded on the assumption of rational choice in fertility decisions, micro-economic theories of fertility hold that individuals weigh the economic costs and benefits to themselves of childbearing, giving rise to their desire or “demand” for a certain number of children. In the context of contemporary industrialized countries, the absence of economic benefits to individuals of childbearing, in conjunction with the presence of high direct financial costs associated with having children and, more recently, high indirect opportunity costs imposed on women by children through their hindrance of the full and continuous labour force participation of their mothers, act as disincentives to parenthood. By disproportionately focusing on the economic costs and benefits to individuals of childbearing, micro-economic theories of fertility imply that, in circumstances where children represent a net-positive cost to parents, the ultimate lower limit to fertility is zero (Foster, 2000; Namboodiri and Wei, 1998; Keyfitz, 1986). Yet the majority of individuals in modern developed nations demand and subsequently
bear/father at least one child (Foster, 2000). Therefore, the question of why individuals in industrialized countries, having a great deal of choice in the matter of fertility due to the availability of effective contraceptive methods and access to induced abortion, continue to demand and subsequently bear/father even a limited number of children is attracting increasing attention. The study at hand aims to contribute to the understanding of demand for children in contemporary industrialized countries.

The interpretive framework of the second demographic transition, which was formulated by Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa (1986) to account for the further reduction in fertility to below the replacement level and the increased flexibility and diversity of family arrangements since the 1960s in industrialized countries, implies an explanation for the persistence of the demand for children and, accordingly, of at least some fertility, in these settings. Interrelated economic, social, and ideological changes in society are at the root of the changes in fertility and other aspects of family life that are implicated in the second demographic transition.

Techno-scientific advancements of what has been called post-industrialization facilitated an extensive shift of economic activities from the secondary or manufacturing sector of the economy to the tertiary or service sector (van de Kaa, 2002). The introduction of labour-saving devices into manufacturing industries reduced their needs for manpower by increasing the productivity of labour (Hakim, 2000). Improvements in information and communication technologies made it possible for corporations in the business of manufacturing to look beyond their national borders for new sources of inexpensive raw materials and labour in conjunction with governments that are sympathetic to the goals of capital, further contributing to decline of the secondary sector of the economy in modern developed nations (Naiman, 2000). In the tertiary sector of the economy, on the other hand, where there are often limits to increases in productivity due to the limited physical and mental capabilities of humans, employment swelled as new service industries blossomed and demand for consumer goods, social services, health care, and education and training grew (Hakim, 2000; Lero, 1995).

The main effect of the extensive shift of economic activities from the secondary sector of the economy to the tertiary sector is the changeover from a labour market dominated by blue-collar occupations to one dominated by white-collar occupations and service jobs in which (unmarried) women’s employment has been concentrated historically (Hakim, 2000). As the demand for employees to fill the newly expanded white-collar occupations and service jobs exceeded the supply of appropriately educated men to provide the necessary labour, it required the lasting employment of women, who had previously been employed only as a prelude to marriage or the birth of their first child (Chafetz, 1995; Lero, 1995). The potential for employment to be more than a temporary fixture in the lives of women, which has been aided by their much greater control over reproduction, had an important implication for the social organization of the family.

As women have gained the potential for economic self-sufficiency with the expansion of the tertiary sector of the economy, their roles have become more similar to those of men (i.e. breadwinning), thereby undermining the sex-based division of labour and, with it,
the instrumental function of the family that epitomizes the breadwinner-homemaker family model (Becker, 1991). In the second demographic transition, then, the family is less important instrumentally, but it is more important expressively, which reflects the growth of an individualistic ideology (Beaujot, 2000). Individualism centres on individual freedom of choice directed toward self-fulfillment (van de Kaa, 1987; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 2004). In the context of family life, the growth of an individualistic ideology means that both marriage and parenthood are elective associations that are formed (and, in the case of marriage, disbanded) on the basis of expectations for self-gratification. Therefore, the interpretive framework of the second demographic transition suggests that individuals in contemporary industrialized countries make the transition to parenthood because they anticipate deriving some personal value from the addition of children to their life.

This study examines the impact of the value attributed to children by Canadians, among other (control) independent variables, on their demand for children. It also considers subjective perceptions of the values of children to parents that may contribute to the value attributed to children by Canadians. Demographic literature that explains demand for children in modern developed nations in terms of the value of children to parents can be organized according to four theories of the origin of children’s value to parents. The biosocial model of fertility motivation views the value of children to parents as stemming from their fulfillment of a socially-mediated genetic predisposition of humans to childbearing. The psychological perspective of fertility motivation envisages children’s value to parents as originating from their satisfaction of a variety of psychological needs of individuals. The social capital theory of fertility motivation sees the value of children to parents as arising from their role in securing social capital. Finally, the uncertainty reduction hypothesis views children’s value to parents as stemming from their capacity for reducing uncertainty.

The Biosocial Model of Fertility Motivation: Children as Fulfillers of a Socially-Mediated Genetic Predisposition to Childbearing

Udry (1996) and Kohler and his colleagues (1999) propose that fertility motivation consists of both a biological component that is unrelated to fecundity and a social component. The extent to which genetic variation between individuals in their fertility motivation is expressed depends on the social arrangement of a society; specifically, on its normative structure, which governs its level of social constraints on personal choice, and on its degree of social stratification, as the personal choice of individuals is more or less inhibited by social constraints depending on their place in the social hierarchy. Udry (1996) and Kohler and his colleagues (1999) posit that biological variables, representing innate differences between individuals in their fertility motivation, are of most relevance in explaining fertility outcomes in modern developed nations because personal choice is not overly hampered by social constraints. For this reason, the biological component of fertility motivation that is unrelated to fecundity can be fully expressed in these settings.

While Udry (1996) and Kohler and his colleagues (1999) posit that there is a biological component to fertility motivation that is unrelated to fecundity, neither submits a
hypothesis as to the origin of genetic effects on fertility motivation (Foster, 2000). Morgan and King (2001) and Foster (2000) make similar arguments about the origin of genetic effects on fertility motivation. Morgan and King (2001) and Foster (2000) suggest that genetic effects on fertility motivation originate from the genetic predisposition of humans to altruism toward close kin and from the genetic predisposition of humans to nurture or an innate need to nurture, respectively. Both argue that such a genetic predisposition was favored in natural selection because it improved the likelihood of child survival by encouraging the intensive and long-term care of children, contributing to the perpetuation of the species. They propose that such a genetic predisposition also contributes to the perpetuation of the species by motivating fertility.

For Morgan and King (2001), the genetic predisposition of humans to altruism toward close kin makes parenting a powerful emotional experience. On the basis of this genetic predisposition, then, individuals anticipate rewarding parent-child relations, which motivate their fertility. For Foster (2000), individuals are conscious of their genetic predisposition to nurturing due to their highly developed cerebral capacities, translating them into fertility motivation and, eventually, into fertility. She suggests the expression of an innate need to nurture, and its fulfillment through childbearing, is socially mediated, as it is contingent upon exposure to human infants during development and to pro-natalist social pressure.

The Psychological Perspective on Fertility Motivation: Children as Satisfiers of Psychological Needs

Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) envisage the value of children to parents as rooted in the utility of children in satisfying a variety of psychological needs that are (differentially) possessed by individuals. The authors explain that individuals may not be cognizant of their psychological needs, but they will perceive the existence of certain values of children on their basis, giving rise to their fertility motivation. All told, Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) identify nine values of children in accordance with the psychological needs of individuals that are satisfied by children. Excluding economic utility, the values of children to parents are expansion of the self and achievement of immortality—children expand the selves of their parents in both space and time by reproducing their characteristics and by carrying on the family name, beliefs, and traditions; establishment of adult status and provision of an acceptable social identity—parenthood reflects conformity to pro-natalist norms, indicating that an individual is an well-adjusted participant in society and, by this means, establishing his/her status as an adult and providing him/her with an acceptable social identity; symbol of morality—parenthood is altruistic insofar as parents put the needs, wants, and interests of their children ahead of their own; affiliating and provision of affection—children promote cohesion between their parents because they are a common interest, keep the loneliness of their parents at bay through their companionship, and provide love and affection to their parents; creativity and accomplishment—parents get a sense of creativity and accomplishment from physically producing a child, watching him/her grow and develop in response to their efforts, and facing the trials and tribulations that arise in the course of childrearing; acquisition of power, influence and effectance—childbearing affords individuals a unique
opportunity to exert enormous influence over their own life and the life of another; 
stimulation, novelty and fun—as children are always growing and changing, they 
introduce an element of unpredictability and excitement to the lives of their parents; and, 
finally, competition and prestige—the quantity and quality of children is a site of 
competition between parents and a potential source of prestige (Friedman et al., 1994).

Although Hoffman and Hoffman did not subject their psychological scheme for 
conceptualizing the values of children to parents to empirical scrutiny, their work 
spawned the cross-national Value of Children study. As part of the American installment 
of this study, Hoffman and Manis (1979: 584) classified the responses of a sample of 
married couples in their reproductive years to the question of “What would you say are 
some of the advantages or good things about having children compared with not having 
children at all?” along the lines of Hoffman and Hoffman’s (1973) psychological scheme 
for conceptualizing the values of children to parents. They find that, of the non-economic 
values of children to parents, affiliating and provision of affection is cited with the 
greatest frequency, followed by stimulation, novelty and fun, and expansion of the self 
and achievement of immortality. Parenthood as a symbol of morality is the non-economic 
value of children that is cited with the least frequency, followed by creativity and 
accomplishment, and establishment of adult status and provision of an acceptable social 
identity. The non-economic values of children to parents of competition and prestige and 
acquisition of power, influence, and effectance were not cited with enough frequency to 
warrant their inclusion in the analysis.

The Social Capital Theory of Fertility Motivation: Children as Securers of Social 
Capital

Colman (1988 & 1990) explains that social capital as a particular type of resource 
stemming from the interpersonal relationships of individuals that is available to them for 
use in achieving their interests. The concept of social capital is defined by its function: it 
facilitates certain actions of individuals, in this way making possible the advancement or 
achievement of certain ends that would be impossible in its dearth or only attainable at a 
higher cost. Because of the value that accrues to those for whom social capital is 
available, it is a motivating factor of human behaviour (Astone et al., 1999). That is to 
say that individuals will actively try to secure social capital through purposeful human 
behaviour that promotes the creation, expansion, or preservation of social networks. Such 
human behaviour can be conceptualized as a process of investment in social capital.

Astone and her colleagues (1999) and Schoen and his colleagues (1997) argue that 
childbearing constitutes a major form of investment in social capital. Schoen and his 
colleagues (1997) explain that childbearing represents an investment in social capital 
because children play an important role in expanding and maintaining the social network 
of their parents, which is available to them for use in advancing or achieving their 
interests. Children expand the social network of their parents by being new member of it. 
One type of social capital from which individuals may benefit by expanding their social 
network through childbearing is old-age support (Astone et al., 1999). Children 
contribute to the maintenance of the social network of their parents because they promote
the integration of their parents with their extended family, making available to parents the emotional, functional, and financial assistance of these agents in times of need. Besides the extended family, children promote the integration of their parents with their community by encouraging the establishment of relationships with neighbours and through their educational and extra-curricular activities. Thus, the potential for mutually beneficial exchanges between individuals and other member of the community increase through parenthood.

Schoen and his collaborators (1997) study the effect of the value of children to parents in securing social capital on the fertility intentions of a sample of Americans aged 16 to 39 years. They find that respondents for whom the relationships created by children are significant considerations in their decision to have a/another child are most likely to have a/another child. This finding is consistent across parity, union status, gender, and race.

The Uncertainty Reduction Hypothesis of Fertility Motivation: Children as Reducers of Uncertainty

According to Friedman and her colleagues (1994), individuals are interested in reducing uncertainty because, in order for them to act rationally by selecting a course of action among others that is expected to yield the highest benefit for them, they need to be able to assess the likelihood of failure that is associated with the alternative courses of action. As this is impossible under conditions of uncertainty, in circumstances where it is within the power of individuals to transform an uncertain state into a more certain one, they will do so with the purpose of reducing uncertainty. Friedman and her colleagues (1994) suggest that a means of reducing uncertainty in terms of whole strings of future courses of action is by pursuing global strategies like stable careers, marriage, and parenthood that bring predictability to the life course. The authors explain that the long-term commitments entailed in these global strategies reduce uncertainty for individuals by entrenching them in regular social relations that are essentially independent of future states of the world at large. Although marriage is itself a global strategy for reducing uncertainty, in cases of marital discord, it can also be a source of uncertainty. Friedman and her colleagues (1994) argue that parenthood is an important way by which spouses enhance the solidarity of their marriage, reducing uncertainty about the continuation of their marriage.

The uncertainty reduction hypothesis of fertility motivation proposed by Friedman and her colleagues (1994) focuses on the value of children to parents in reducing uncertainty in the short term; that is, while children are young. However, to the extent that children are expected to provide emotional, functional, and/or financial assistance to their aged should the need arise, they may be considered to be a source of old-age security. As a consequence, children may reduce uncertainty for their parents in the long term as well as in the short term.

A noteworthy finding of the preceding review of demographic literature is that the authors of the theories of the origin of children’s value to parents tend to view their own theory as a unitary explanation for fertility motivation. As indicated by the inadequacy of micro-economic theories of fertility in accounting for the persistence of even a limited
level of fertility in industrialized countries, single-handed theories of fertility motivation cannot capture the complexity of fertility decisions within and between individuals (Myers, 1997). In all likelihood, individuals do not anticipate deriving a single value, or category of values, from childbearing. They may expect to gain more than one value from childbearing, which is not accounted for by a given theory of the value of children to parents. Further, some individuals may not anticipate deriving a particular value from children, but this does not mean that they do not expect to gain any value/s from childbearing. In sum, it is unlikely that a unitary explanation of fertility motivation will be all things to all individuals. A better understanding of fertility motivation is acquired by recognizing the heterogeneity of individuals and, accordingly, by adopting an inclusive explanation for fertility motivation with respect to the value/s of children to parents.

**Hypothesis**

Previous studies in the value-of-children tradition of fertility research have examined the effect on demand for children of subjective perceptions of a particular value, or category of values, of children to parents (e.g. Schoen et al., 1997; Hoffman and Manis, 1979). The conceptualization of theories of the value of children to parents as unitary is problematic. In their explanation of demand for children, they do not consider the possibility of the relevance of multiple or diverse single-handed values of children to parents. By considering the effect on a non-specific measure of the values of children to parents—the value attributed to children—on demand for children, this study improves upon others in the value-of-children tradition of fertility research, as it implicitly takes into account all of the values that children may represent to parents and that may therefore be may be implicated in demand for children. The fundamental hypothesis of this study is that the value attributed to children by Canadians is one of the foremost determinants of their demand for children. It is thought to have a positive effect on demand for children when demographic, economic, and cultural determinants of demand for children are controlled.

**Quantitative Data, Variables, and Methods**

The data employed in this study are taken from Canada’s 2001 General Social Survey (GSS) on Family History. The target population was all Canadians of at least 15 years of age, excluding residents of the Territorial North and full-time residents of institutions (Statistics Canada, 2003). The total size of the sample of respondents to the 2001 GSS is 24,310, reflecting a response rate of 79%. The data are adjusted using (fractional) person weights calculated by Statistics Canada to ensure the consistency of the sample with the population of Canada from which it was selected. I rely only on a sub-sample of the sample—specifically, heterosexual respondents aged 20-49 years who are fecund, married to or cohabiting with a fecund spouse/partner, and childless (including birth, adopted, and step-children)—resulting in a sample size of 1,471.1

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1 For a thorough discussion of the survey, sample and sub-sample, variables and their coding, and the methodology employed for the quantitative data analysis, please refer to Moyser (2005).
Dependent Variable: Demand for Children
Demand for children represents fertility motivation, hence intended fertility—a behavioural predisposition to bear/father a certain number of children—has traditionally been used in demographic research concerning human reproduction as a proxy for demand for children (Thompson and Brandreth, 1995). In this study, then, the dependent variable of demand for children is measured by intended fertility.

Independent Variable: The Value Attributed to Children
Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) recommend personal evaluations of the happiness that children provide to parents as a relevant measure of the value attributed to children. For this reason, the independent variable of value attributed to children is measured by importance for happiness of having at least one child.

Method
Sequential multiple regression is used to examine the effect of the value attributed to children by Canadian women and men on their demand for children when their demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics are taken into account. Four models are used for the prediction of demand for children. In the first model, the demographic characteristics of age and marital status are employed for the prediction of demand for children. The second model adds the economic characteristics of education and current work status to demographic characteristics, and the third model adds the cultural characteristics of nativity and religiosity to demographic characteristics and economic characteristics, for the prediction of demand for children. The value attributed to children is used in conjunction with demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics in the fourth model for the prediction of demand for children.

Qualitative Data, Variables, and Methods
The analysis of data from Canada’s 2001 GSS will reveal the effect (if any) of the value attributed to children by women and men on their demand for children when their demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics are taken into account. However, insight into subjective perceptions of the values of children to parents that give rise to the value attributed to children by Canadians is precluded by quantitative methods of data collection, since the typical survey does not allow for more elaborate responses beyond pre-coded responses (Knodel, 1997). For this reason, qualitative data from the 2000 survey of Reproduction and Caring over the Life Course (RECAL) are analyzed. Qualitative data concerning a variety of facets of family life were collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The sample of this survey involves individuals aged 18 years and over in London, Ontario and the surrounding regions of Oxford and Middlesex. For the purpose of the present analysis, I rely on 15 heterosexual interviewees who are aged 20-49 years, married, cohabiting or in a conjugal relationship, and childless (including birth, adopted, and step-children).²

² For a thorough discussion of the survey, sample and sub-sample, variables and their coding, and the methodology employed for the qualitative data analysis, please refer to Moyser (2005).
Variables

The analysis of qualitative data from the survey of RECAL focuses on four questions in the interview guide that pertain to parenthood and children:

1. “Why do you think people usually decide to have children?”
2. “What do you think the advantages of having children are?”
3. “Have you ever felt pressured to have children?”
4. “What do you think children’s responsibilities are toward their parents as their parents get older?”

The first two questions are viewed as measuring subjective perceptions of the values of children to parents, while the other questions are viewed as measuring support for two values of children to parents—achievement of adult status and provision of old-age security (social capital/uncertainty reduction), respectively.

Method

Transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews with a sub-sample of those interviewed for the survey of RECAL are analyzed by assigning theme-based codes, which represent the values of children to parents identified in the review of demographic literature, to the responses of interviewees to the questions of “Why do people usually decide to have children?” and “What are the advantages of having children?” Responses to the question of “Have you ever felt pressured to have children?” are simply coded as “yes” or “no.” Responses to the question of “What do you think children’s responsibilities are toward their parents as their parents get older?” are assigned two sets of codes. The first set of codes, which consists of “yes” and “no,” classify responses to the question of whether adult children have a responsibility to their aged parents that is implied by the question of what are the responsibilities of children to their aging parents. For interviewees who provide an affirmative response to this implicit question, a second set of codes, which consist of “functional assistance,” “financial assistance,” “emotional support,” “co-residence,” and “whatever is necessary (functional assistance, financial assistance, emotional support, and/or co-residence),” is used to classify their responses regarding the responsibilities of children to their aging parents.

After codes are assigned to the responses of interviewees to the interview questions of interest, the number and proportion of interviewees whose responses to a given question are assigned the same code is calculated. Responses of interviewees to a given question that are assigned the same code are then compared to discern any additional similarities and/or any differences between them.

Quantitative Results: The Importance of the Value Attributed to Children for Demand for Children

Model I for the Prediction of Intended Fertility: Demographic Characteristics

As age increases, the intended fertility of women and men decreases, controlling for marital status (see tables 1 and 2 for the results of models I through IV). Age has a stronger negative effect on the intended fertility of women than men, likely due to the shorter duration of the reproductive period of women (Weeks, 1999). In terms of marital status, cohabiting with expectations for marriage does not have a statistically significant
effect on the intended fertility of women or men, and cohabiting with unknown expectations for marriage does not have a statistically significant effect on the intended fertility of women, when age and the other categories of marital status are controlled. Women and men who are cohabiting with no expectations for marriage intend to have fewer children than their married counterparts. Cohabiting with no expectations for marriage has a stronger negative effect on the intended fertility of women than men relative to being married. It seems, then, that having no expectations for marriage is more of a deterrent to motherhood than fatherhood, suggesting that establishment of the conjugal status that is normatively deemed to be most conducive to childbearing is more of a consideration in the intended fertility of women than men. Men who are cohabiting with unknown expectations for marriage intend to have fewer children than married men. Cohabiting with unknown expectations for marriage has a stronger negative effect on the intended fertility of men relative to being married than cohabiting with no expectations for marriage. This finding challenges the hypothesis of Friedman and her colleagues (1994) that uncertainty regarding prospects for marriage encourages parenthood by indicating that unknown expectations for marriage motivate men to curb their intended fertility.

Model II for the Prediction of Intended Fertility: Demographic and Economic Characteristics

Education positively affects the intended fertility of women and men, controlling for demographic characteristics and work status. This finding, which is contrary to the expected relationship between education and intended fertility, may be related to the typically positive relationship between education and income, implying that individuals with relatively high levels of education are better able to afford to have more of children. Men with at least a Bachelor’s degree, and men with a high school diploma or less, generally intend to have more children than women with equivalent levels of education relative to those with some post-secondary education or a diploma/certificate from college or trade/technical school. This finding may reflect the higher opportunity costs to women than men of childbearing. Current work status does not have a statistically significant effect on the intended fertility of either women or men.

Model III for the Prediction of Intended Fertility: Demographic, Economic, and Cultural Characteristics

Nativity does not have an effect on the intended fertility of women that is statistically significant when their demographic characteristics, economic characteristics, and religiosity are controlled. Foreign-born men intend to have more children than native-born men. This finding suggests that foreign-born men coming to Canada as part of the new immigration since the 1970s, which increasingly brought immigrants from high-fertility regions, have retained, to some extent, the high-fertility norms of their source countries (Massey, 1995; Beaujot and Kerr, 2004).

Regarding religiosity, weekly attendance of religious services does not have a statistically significant effect on the intended fertility of women, and rare or no attendance of religious services do not have statistically significant effects on the intended fertility of women or men, relative to having no religion when demographic and economic
characteristics, nativity, and the other categories of religiosity are controlled. Women who sometimes attend religious services intend to have more birth children than women with no religious affiliation. Both weekly attendance of religious services and occasional attendance of religious services positively affect the intended fertility of men relative to having no religious affiliation. These findings attest to the pro-natalist influence of religious affiliation and religiosity on demand for children that is recognized in the demographic literature on human reproduction.

*Model IV for the Prediction of Intended Fertility: Demographic, Economic, and Cultural Characteristics and the Value attributed to Children*

The value attributed to children by women and men has a strong, positive effect on their demand for children when their demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics are taken into account: those who attribute value to children have demand for an average of about one more child than those who do not attribute value to children. What is more, the value attributed to children by Canadian women and men explains the greatest proportion of the remaining variability in their intended fertility, second only to demographic characteristics, even though demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics are credited by their prior entry into the equation with any of the variability in intended fertility that they share with the value attributed to children. These findings support the fundamental hypothesis of this study that the value attributed to children by individuals is one of the foremost determinants of their demand for children, which positively affects it.

*Qualitative Results: Values of Children to Parents as Expressed by Interviewees*

*Responses to the Questions of “Why do People Usually Decide to Have Children?” and “What are the Advantages of Having Children?”*

When asked why people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of having children, the vast majority (nearly 87%) of interviewees identify more than value of children to parents in response to at least one of these questions (see table 3). This finding can be interpreted as being suggestive of the relevance of multiple values of children to parents in the value that they attribute to children and, correspondingly, in their demand for children. Alternatively, it can be interpreted as being reflective of the desire of interviewees to speak for all individuals with respect to their perceptions of the single-handed values of children to parents. Both interpretations of this finding have an important implication for (unitary) theories of the value of children to parents: a thorough understanding of demand for children requires that the relevance of more than one value of children to parents, or the diversity of single-handed values of children to parents, be taken into account. Accordingly, theories of the value of children to parents should be re-conceptualized as being complementary, rather than competing, in their explanation of the demand for children.

Of the fourteen values of children to parents that are identified from the review of demographic literature, all but provision of an acceptable social identity, outlet for competition and prestige, and uncertainty reduction are overtly represented in the responses of interviewees to the questions of why people usually decide to have children.
and what are the advantages of having children (see table 3). The values of children to parents that are mentioned by the largest proportion of interviewees in response to these questions are *expansion of the self, affiliating/securing social capital, and stimulation, novelty and fun.*

Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) suggest that childbearing is a means by which individuals can satisfy their psychological need for an expansion of the self—a dimension of personality that is composed of an individual’s self-awareness and self-image (Macionis and Gerber, 1999). Some interviewees note that children expand the selves of their parents by reproducing their characteristics, presumably both their physical attributes and their personality traits:

Somebody who is a little bit in your image…
(Male, aged 35-39 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have two children)

It’s a miracle, just to see part of you in somebody else. It’s interesting.
(Female, aged 30-34 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

Another interviewee indicates that children expand the selves of their parents because parents teach and show them things that they were taught and shown by their parents:

For me it’s, I know how my parents were to me and showed me things, took me places, [and] taught me things. And to have a child and be able to do that, it’s an important thing to me. That’s what I’d like to be able to do. It’s not really to create somebody, but [to] have somebody to teach and show things to like that.
(Male, aged 25-29 years, married, expects to have two children)

Some interviewees suggest that children expand the selves of their parents by somehow making them better people:

They allow you to be a different or better person.
(Female, aged 30-34 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

One of the interviewees who notes that individuals become better people by having children suggests that children expand the selves of their parents by bring out a previously untapped dimension of their personalities—selflessness. As a result of the selflessness that children elicit in their parents, they become concerned with the state of the broader context in which they and their children inhabit for the sake of their children, so the selves of individuals are expanded by having children in this way as well.

It improves yourself in a way because of your selflessness, because you will never be able to be that self-centered again. It gets you thinking on a
larger scale because all of a sudden, you have to worry about what kind of world I am leaving behind for your children. You start thinking on a larger, broader scale.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, married, undecided about expected number of children)

Another interviewee indicates that the impression of purpose and responsibility incited by parenthood puts the trials and tribulations of life into perspective, perhaps by making individuals feel that they are bound to the broader society by being an organic component of it and of its life processes. In this way, children expand the selves of their parents. This interviewee also suggests that children make individuals feel better about themselves and increase their vitality. By improving the self-image of individuals, and by enabling them to experience life more fully, then, parenthood expands the selves of individuals.

I feel better, I’m happier, I feel better about myself when I’m around kids. They give you a sense of purpose and responsibility that seems to put things in your life into perspective. Without them, you might take things a little more seriously, but with them you tend to realize that this problem isn’t such a big problem. I’m just in more of a better, positive state of mind. The days are better. I have more energy. I feel better when I’m with kids.
(Male, aged 30-34 years, cohabiting, expects to have three children)

An interviewee indicates that having children makes individuals better people and, in the process, expand their selves because of the self-reflection that children encourage in their parents:

They make you look at yourself a lot. And look at the sort of things that we do, that we consider.
(Male, aged 25-29, married, expects to have four children)

In terms of the value of children to parents in affiliating/securing social capital, Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) focus on this value of children to parents in the context of the nuclear family, while Astone and her colleagues (1999) and Schoen and his colleagues (1997) consider the role of children in establishing and maintaining the social network of their parents both within and beyond the nuclear family. Like Hoffman and Hoffman (1973), interviewees tend to emphasize the value of children to parents in promoting cohesion between their parents, rather than on the role of children in establishing and maintaining the social network of their parents beyond the nuclear family. For interviewees, children promote cohesion between their parents because they are shared:

…children [are] something from both partners. It’s like fifty-fifty. It just brings everybody closer together I think…
(Male, aged 20-24 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have three or four children)
The desire to share something with a bond of love between the two of you, whether it’s adopting or bearing a child. I don’t see any difference in that. It’s a show of love for one another…
(Female, aged 40-44 years, married, expects to adopt six children)

I think either one should want to share a piece of themselves.
(Male, aged 25-29 years, married, expects to have four children)

I think also like a part of, a part of the wife and part of the father are both in that one child, it’s just more…
(Male, aged 20-24 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have three or four children)

It’s just taking the love that you have for your partner and as if each of you took what you had and multiplies it and you have a whole other person to apply that to.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, married, undecided about expected number of children)

Due to the role of children in promoting cohesion between their parents and between their parents’ families of orientation, many interviewees view children as creating families:

…just being a family or some sense of connectedness.
(Female, aged 30-34 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

There is another person to love…being a family, a loving family…I consider [husband’s name] and I a family, but I think it would just be a bonus. I think it would be something that Brandy and I could definitely share in, the responsibility of it. I think it’s just neat to think that someone is part of you. An apple and an orange should join together, wow, what a cool fruit that would be. Wow, [husband’s name] and I, what a neat thing that would be to put those two people together and make something.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, married, expects to have two children)

…it’s that bond…I know sometimes children can really bring families together, whether it’s both parents’ families, or whether it’s the initial family. It can bring them together as well when there’s a child there.
(Female, aged 25-29, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

While the value of children to parents of uncertainty reduction is not overtly represented in the responses of interviewees to the questions of why people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of children, support for this value of children to parents may be inferred from the preceding responses of interviewees. To the extent that cohesion between conjugal partners is related to the stability of their relationships,
children reduce uncertainty for their parents concerning the continuation of their conjugal union through their promotion of cohesion between their parents. Therefore, the values of children to parents in affiliating/securing social capital and in reducing uncertainty may be related, with the former value of children to parents being the mechanism through which the latter value of children to parents is realized.

Hoffman and Hoffman (1973) suggest that having children satisfies a psychological need of individuals for stimulation, novelty and fun in the face of life’s secure, albeit dull, routine. Interviewees imply the children are the spice of life:

I think they bring a lot of pleasure to your life, a lot of joy.
(Female, aged 45-49 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to remain childless)

It makes life a little more interesting. It wouldn’t be routine, that’s for sure.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, married, expects to have two children)

Children may bring stimulation, novelty, and fun to the lives of their parents insofar as they enable their parents to relive their youths through their toys and by learning new things along with their children. In this way, children may keep their parents youthful.

They’re such fun. Gee. They’re a lot of fun. All those toys you didn’t have when you were a kid, you have an excuse to buy now.
(Male, aged 25-29 years, married, expects to have four children)

Well, I think that I’ve definitely shown [my parents] new ways of thinking and I know they have definitely learned a lot more than they thought. As soon as they have kids, it’s a completely different game. You have to learn all this new stuff. I know my Mom says it was a lot of fun taking care of a baby. It wasn’t all fun, but she says it was a lot of fun, and taking care of a small child.
(Female, aged 20-24 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have three children)

The suggestion of some interviewees that children bring stimulation, novelty and fun to the lives of their parents seems to be tempered by awareness that children also introduce less desirable elements to the live of their parents:

They think it’s going to be fun.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

…children are fun, but they’re not all fun and games.
(Male, aged 30-34 years, cohabiting, expects to have two children)
Responses to the Question of “Have You Ever Felt Pressured to Have Children?”

Exactly 40% of interviewees provide responses to the questions of why do people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of having children that are consistent with the value of children to parents in establishing adult status. According to Hoffman and Hoffman (1973), it is because parenthood entails conformity to pro-natalist norms that it indicates that an individual is a well-adjusted participant in society and, as a result, establishes him/her as an adult. As pro-natalist norms are often manifested by social pressure in the direction of childbearing, the responses of interviewees to the question of have you ever felt pressured to have children may provide additional support to the value of children to parents in establishing adult status.

Interviewees who provide responses to the questions of why do people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of having children that are consistent with the value of children to parents in establishing adult status emphasize the norm that parenthood entails parenthood. Conformity to the norm that marriage entails parenthood may be motivated by the psychological need of individuals to establish their status as adults, which seems to be better accomplished through parenthood than marriage.

I think that’s just part of marriage…
(Female, aged 45-49 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to remain childless)

…it just seems right if two people get married to have children. I never really [saw] it any other way.
(Male, aged 20-24 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have three or four children)

I think a lot of women feel pressured. I just know this from my own experience and from my friends once they reach this certain age from mid-20s up. Pressure that if you’re not married, that’s awful, and [also] if you don’t have a kid by then. By the time you’re married [for] a couple of years they’re asking when the kids are coming. So it’s a lot of pressure.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

Sometimes it’s expected of people…Very strong socialization around that with marriages and couples, mostly for women, but surprisingly for a lot of men too. I think that it’s stronger than it used to be…
(Male, aged 35-99 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have two children)

When asked whether they have ever felt pressured to have children, some of the interviewees who mention conformity to the norm that marriage entails parenthood in response to the questions of why people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of having children elaborate upon their response. Further, another 37.5% of interviewees confirm that there is indeed social pressure for childbearing. Again, the
norm that marriage entails parenthood is emphasized by interviewees, conformity to which may contribute to demand for children insofar as parenthood establishes the adult status of individuals in society.

I would say that there is. Especially when you get married and your family automatically thinks the next step is having children.
(Female, aged 40-44 years, married, expects to adopt six children)

Oh yeah. Everybody, as soon as people find put you’re married and you don’t have children, that’s the first question they ask is when. And when you don’t have an answer, it’s pretty hard. Friends, family members, acquaintances, strangers on the street, people I’ve just met, people who’ve known me for years, teachers, students, everybody. As soon as they find out you’re married, they want to know when you’re having a baby. I don’t know, stop asking me!
(Male, aged 25-29 years, married, undecided about expected number of children)

Oh, I feel pressure to get married, not to have kids, because I’m not married. But I’m sure if I was married I’d feel pressure. Because I see my friends that are married, they’re pressured by everyone. But I don’t get pressured. I’m not that far along.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

We’re always being harassed, since we were married especially. Usually the lady down at the convenience store. Mostly though it’s people who know us.
(Male, aged 25-29, married, expects to have four children)

Responses to the Question of “What do you think children’s responsibilities are toward their parents as their parents get older?”
Only about 13% of interviewees provide responses to the questions of why do people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of having children that are consistent with the value of children to parents in providing old-age security:

Somebody to look after you when you grow old.
(Male, aged 25-29, married, expects to have two children)

Well we need the next generation to take care of us…To reap what we’ve sown.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, married, expects to have two children)

However, when asked what the responsibilities of adult children are to their aged parents, all but one interviewee indicated that adult children have at least some responsibility to care for their aged parents physically, emotionally, and financially within the limits
imposed by circumstances in which adult children and their aged parents find themselves. Interviewees view the provision of care by adult children to their aged parents as an obligation because their parents cared for them until they reached adulthood or until they reached self-sufficiency in adulthood. For this reason, children provide social capital to their parents in the form of old-age security and, thereby, reduce uncertainty for their parents with respect to their twilight years.

I think that the children should take care of their parents because their parents took care of them.
(Male, aged 20-24 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have three or four children)

Probably take care of them the way they took care of us when we were young.
(Male, aged 25-29 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have two or three children)

I guess because it’s kind of like full circle. Children do have a responsibility to look after their parents, their parents did look after them for X amount of years. They have to make sure their needs are met…it is your responsibility to look after them to some degree.
(Female, aged 30-34 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

You’ve look[ed] after [your children]. Then it becomes their turn to look after you.
(Female, aged 45-49 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to remain childless)

I think that as your parents get older, your world is reversed, and you’re the parent, the child. And I think your whole responsibility is to do whatever you can to make your parents comfortable, everything. They did that for you. It’s your responsibility to do that, take care of parents.
(Female, aged 25-29 years, in a conjugal relationship, expects to have one or two children)

It is noteworthy that even though few respondents name old-age security as a reason for the decision of people to have children or an advantage of having children, all but one interviewee suggests that adult children have a certain amount of responsibility to care for their aged parents to the best of their ability, and most of these interviewees construed the provision of care by adult children to their aged parents as an obligation since their parents had done the same for them during their time of dependency. These incompatible findings may be related to the association of the old-age security value of children to parents with less-developed nations, which discourages individuals in developed nations from citing old-age security as a reason for the decisions of people to have children or an advantage of having children.
Summary and Implications

This paper addressed, in a Canadian context, the question of why individuals in industrialized countries, having a great deal of choice in the matter of fertility due to the availability of effective contraceptive methods and access to induced abortion, continue to demand and subsequently bear/father even a limited number of children. The fundamental hypothesis of this study was that the value attributed to children by individuals gives rise to their demand for children. Previous studies in the value-of-children tradition of fertility research have focused on the effect of a single value, or category of values, of children to parents on demand for children. I have argued that this approach to understanding demand for children yields an incomplete explanation of demand for children, as it ignores the possibility of the relevance of multiple or diverse single-handed values of children to parents.

Using data from a sub-sample of heterosexual respondents to the 2001 GSS who are aged 20-49 years, fecund, married to or cohabiting with a fecund spouse/partner, and childless, it was found that, after demographic characteristics, the value attributed to children accounts for the greatest proportion of the variability in the demand for children by women and men. Those who attribute value to children have demand for an average of about one more child than those who do not attribute value to children when their demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics are taken into account. These findings support the fundamental hypothesis of this study.

Qualitative data from a sub-sample of those interviewed for the 2000 survey of RECAL who are heterosexual, aged 20-49 years, married, cohabiting or in a conjugal relationship, and childless were analyzed to discern the value/s of children to parents that contribute to the value attributed to children by Canadians and, thereby, to their demand for children. The qualitative data analysis revealed the relevance of multiple values of children to parents, and/or the relevance of a diversity of single-handed values of children to parents. A thorough understanding of fertility, then, requires that (unitary) theories of the value of children to parents be re-conceptualized as being complementary, rather than competing, in their explanation of demand for children.

The qualitative data analysis also revealed that the values of children to parents identified in the demographic literature are reasonably well-specified, in that all of them are overtly represented in the responses of the 15 childless interviewees to the questions of why do people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of having children, with the exception of provision of an acceptable social identity, outlet for competition and prestige, and uncertainty reduction. Even though the value of children to parents of uncertainty reduction was not overtly represented in the responses of interviewees to these questions, it receives implicit support from the responses of interviewees to these questions that are consistent with the value of children to parents of affiliating/securing social capital. A relationship between of the values of children to parents of uncertainty reduction and affiliating/securing social capital may be specified as the latter being the mechanism through which the former is achieved. The values of children to parents that are mentioned by the largest proportion of interviewees in response to the questions of
why do people usually decide to have children and what are the advantages of having children are \textit{expansion of the self}, \textit{affiliating/securing social capital}, and \textit{stimulation, novelty and fun}. The values of children to parents in \textit{establishing adult status} and \textit{providing old-age security} receive additional support from the responses of interviewees to the questions concerning pressure to have children and the responsibilities of children to their aging parents.

While some interesting findings have been extracted from the quantitative and qualitative data, the analyses are not without limitations. For instance, in terms of the quantitative data analysis, intended fertility may not accurately measure demand for children, which Thompson and Brandreth (1995) recommend should be conceptualized as being multidimensional. The importance for happiness of having at least one child may not be a sufficient measure of the value attributed to children, considering that the norm in research involving attitudes is to employ a number of measures, or a composite measure, of an attitude to represent all of its dimensions (Hakim, 2003). These caveats aside, the measurement of demand for children and the value attributed to children is reasonable given the limitations to the variables included in the 2001 GSS dataset, that intended fertility has been used traditionally as a measure of demand for children, and that the selection of importance for happiness of having at least one child as a measure of the value attributed to children is theoretically informed.

In terms of the qualitative data analysis, the major limitation to this study concerns our ability to make reliable inferences about why Canadians attribute value to children from the qualitative data analysis. The 2000 survey of RECAL is a local survey conducted in a particular area within the province of Ontario, which means that the results of the qualitative data analysis regarding subjective perceptions of the value/s of children to parents may not hold for individuals across Canada. Moreover, the small size of the sub-sample of those interviewed for RECAL on which the qualitative data analysis is based may limit the validity of the findings for the target population and the reliability of the findings for the Canadian population as a whole. Nevertheless, valuable insight is acquired from the qualitative data analysis into which of the values of children to parents identified in the demographic literature are likely to contribute to the demand for children by Canadians with the value that they attribute to children.

This study indicates that Canadians anticipate deriving a variety of values from the addition of children to their lives, which contributes to the value that they attribute to children and, correspondingly, to their demand for children. Insofar as subjective perceptions of the value/s of children to parents are realized in parenthood, they may have important implications for the social and psychological well-being of individuals. For example, Nomaguchi and Milkie (2003) use longitudinal data to examine the effects of parental status on the social and psychological well-being of Americans. With respect to social well-being, they find that parents enjoy higher levels of social integration with relatives, friends, and neighbours than non-parents. As social capital is a product of social integration, and as social capital has been found to enhance health-related behaviours, access to services and amenities, and psycho-social processes, parenthood positively affects the physical and psychological well-being of individuals in addition to their social
well-being through its promotion of social integration (Kawachi, 2000; Kawachi and Berkman, 2000; Kawachi, Wilkinson, and Kennedy, 1999).

Most of the research concerning the effects of parental status on the lives of individuals has revealed negative consequences of parenthood for social and psychological well-being of individuals (Nomaguchi and Milkie, 2003). Parents are less happy and satisfied with their marriages in particular and with their lives more generally, and they are more distressed, anxious, worried, angry and depressed than childless individuals (see McLanahan and Adams, 1987 for a review of this literature). Such findings seem to suggest that the social and psychological health of individuals is compromised with the transition to parenthood. McLanahan and Adams (1987 & 1989) document an increase in the negative consequences of parenthood for social and psychological well-being of individuals from the late 1950s and, in light of this finding, dispute the notion that the negative effects of parenthood on the psychological well-being of individuals arises from some feature that is endogenous to the parenting role. They argue the increase in the negative consequences of parenthood for the social and psychological well-being of individuals is at least partially a function of “role strain” arising from the incompatibility of employment and parenthood, especially for women, which, in turn, stems from macro-economic changes since the 1960s. As previously discussed, the expansion of the tertiary sector of the economy has increased the opportunities of women for enduring employment. Yet women have acquired new breadwinning roles in the public sphere without experiencing a comparable reduction in their homemaking roles in the private sphere. Consequently, there has been a decline in the subjective well-being of mothers relative to childless women since the late 1950s (McLanahan and Adams, 1989). McLanahan and Adams (1987: 254) explain that:

“…working has substantial psychological benefits for women without children. Working mothers, on the other hand, do not receive equivalent benefits from work, and therefore their well-being has declined relative to that of non-mothers. Mothers clearly face a dilemma: if they work, they reduce their opportunity costs, but they simultaneously increase the demands on their time.”

The causal link between macro-economic changes and the effects of parental status on the social and psychological well-being of individuals means that they may be amenable to policy solutions, such as those that aim to facilitate the combination of employment and parenthood through the provision of family benefits and child-care services (McLanahan and Adams, 1987 & 1989). Such policy solutions would not only decrease the negative effects of parenthood on the social and psychological well-being of individuals; they would counteract the deterrent to childbearing that is represented by the opportunity costs of childbearing. To the extent that policy solutions directed toward facilitating the combination of employment and parenthood would offset the opportunity costs to individuals of childbearing, they would improve the ability of individuals to have their demanded number of children and, by implication, to realize the values of children to parents in conjunction with the positive consequences for their social and psychological well-being.
Table 1. Sequential Multiple Regression Results for Women: Predicting Intended Fertility from Demographic, Economic, and Cultural Characteristics and the Value Attributed to Children

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<tr>
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<th>MODEL III B</th>
<th>MODEL IV B</th>
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<td>Religiosity (Frequency of Religious Attendance)***</td>
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<td>Weekly</td>
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Value Attributed to Children:

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<td>Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Important (reference)</td>
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</table>

| R Square                                      | 0.346*** | 0.36*** | 0.378*** | 0.534*** |
| Adjusted R Square                              | 0.342     | 0.353    | 0.367     | 0.525     |
| R Square Change                                | 0.346*** | 0.015**  | 0.018***  | 0.156***  |
| Sample Size                                    | 621       | 617      | 614       | 610       |

*** Significant at the 0.01 level.
** Significant at the 0.05 level.
* Significant at the 0.10 level.

NOTE: The sample size is 622 cases; includes heterosexual, childless respondents aged 20-49 years who, although childless, are fecund and are in a co-residential, conjugal union (married or cohabiting) with a spouse/partner who is also fecund; excludes respondents with missing data on at least one of the variables. The data have been adjusted using (fractional) person weights calculated by Statistics Canada to ensure the consistency of the sample with the population of Canada from which it was drawn.

Source of Data: Statistics Canada, 2001 General Social Survey on Family History
Table 2. Sequential Multiple Regression Results for Men: Predicting Intended Fertility from Demographic, Economic, and Cultural Characteristics and the Value Attributed to Children

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<td>Cohabiting with No Expectations for Marriage</td>
<td>-0.287*</td>
<td>-0.277*</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (reference)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Characteristics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Least a Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>0.267**</td>
<td>0.215**</td>
<td>0.228**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Post-Secondary Education or a Diploma/Certificate from College or Trade/Technical School (reference)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A High School Diploma or Less</td>
<td>-0.178*</td>
<td>-0.162</td>
<td>-0.159*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Work Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working (reference)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Working</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Characteristics:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nativity***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-Born</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-Born (reference)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity (Frequency of Religious Attendance)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>0.935***</td>
<td>0.745***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.577***</td>
<td>0.420***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rarely or Never</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>0.143</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Religion (reference)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Value Attributed to Children:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance for Happiness of Having at Least One Child***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important (reference)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>0.268***</td>
<td>0.287***</td>
<td>0.357***</td>
<td>0.447***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>0.279</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square Change</td>
<td>0.268***</td>
<td>0.019***</td>
<td>0.07***</td>
<td>0.090***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Significant at the 0.01 level.
** Significant at the 0.05 level.
* Significant at the 0.10 level.

NOTE: The sample size is 625 cases; includes heterosexual, childless respondents aged 20-49 years who, although childless, are fecund and are in a co-residential, conjugal union (married or cohabiting) with a spouse/partner who is also fecund; excludes respondents with missing data on at least one of the variables. The data have been adjusted using (fractional) person weights calculated by Statistics Canada to ensure the consistency of the sample with the population of Canada from which it was drawn.

Source of Data: Statistics Canada, 2001 General Social Survey on Family History
Table 3. Number and Proportion of Interviewees Identifying Various Values of Children to Parents in their Responses to the Questions of "Why do People Usually Decide to Have Children?" and "What are the Advantages of Having Children?"

| Identify More than One Value of Children to Parents in Response to At Least One Question | 13 | 86.7% |
| Explanations for the Transition to Parenthood: | | |
| *Fulfillment of a (Socially-Mediated) Genetic Predisposition to Childbearing* | 6 | 40.0% |
| *Establishment of Adult Status* | 6 | 40.0% |
| *Provision of an Acceptable Social Identity* | 0 | 0.0% |
| *Expansion of the Self* | 11 | 73.3% |
| *Achievement of Immortality* | 6 | 40.0% |
| *Symbol of Morality* | 1 | 6.7% |
| *Affiliating/Securing Social Capital* | 8 | 53.3% |
| *Provision of Affection* | 2 | 13.3% |
| *Outlet for Creativity and Accomplishment* | 5 | 33.3% |
| *Acquisition of Power, Influence, and Effectance* | 2 | 13.3% |
| *Bringing Stimulation, Novelty, and Fun to Life* | 8 | 53.3% |
| *Outlet for Competition and Prestige* | 0 | 0.0% |
| *Uncertainty Reduction* | 0 | 0.0% |
| *Old-Age Security* | 2 | 13.3% |

Note: The sample consists of heterosexual non-parents aged 20-49 years who are married, cohabiting or in a conjugal union. The sample size is 15 cases, eight of whom are women and seven of whom are men.

*Source of Data: 2000 Survey of Reproduction and Caring over the Life Course (RECAL)*
References:


