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Perspectives on below replacement fertility in Canada: Trends, desires, and accommodations

While the first demographic transition started late in certain parts of Catholic and rural Canada, the second transition has followed the pattern of many other populations. The uniqueness of Canadian fertility is especially noticeable in the sustained baby boom of the period 1946-1966, in effect a period between the two transitions. While this baby boom continues to have a structural influence on the level of childbearing, it has largely lost its relevance to period and cohort rates.

Our first purpose here is to describe the Canadian case in below replacement fertility, including the proximate determinants of union formation and contraception. The largely stable cohort and period rates of the past 20 years will be put into two explanatory contexts: (1) perceived trade-offs in terms of the value and cost of children, and (2) the accommodations between paid and unpaid work. While there is no guarantee, the evidence points to stability of these trade-offs and accommodations. However, early childbearing continues to be undermined, and there is the possibility of further frustrations in achieving anticipated childbearing in the narrowed window of the late 20s and early 30s, especially in the context of unstable marital relationships. In other words, a key unknown is the extent to which there will be recuperation of delayed births. Also uncertain is the extent to which the bifurcation between earlier and later childbearing will be maintained, or give way to one dominant model of late childbearing.

The fertility trend and the second transition

The last twenty years has shown considerable stability in both period and cohort fertility (Figure 1). After passing below 2.0 in 1972, the total fertility rate has been between 1.75 and 1.54 for the period 1977-98. The cohort born in 1948 was the last to have fertility above 2.0, and the cohorts born in 1949 to 1968 have had rates between 1.99 and 1.75. What has changed, partly explaining the difference between period and cohort measures, is the timing of childbearing, from a mean age at first birth of 24.6 in 1977 to 26.8 in 1998. While the cohort rates are uniformly downward, the period rates increased by 8.9 percent between the figure of 1.57 in 1987 and 1.71 in 1990, remaining at these levels until the mid 1990s, then declining by 9.9% to 1.54 in 1998. As will be seen, these variations over the period reflect recuperation at ages 30-39 which has not been maintained in the last two years.

—Figure 1 about here—

It would appear that the concept of the second demographic transition remains the most relevant context for interpreting the trends of the past 20 years. If the first transition, from about 1870 to 1945, brought smaller families, the change from about 1960 to the present

is especially marked by increased flexibility in marital relationships (Lesthaeghe, 1995; Beaujot, 2000: 85-96). The first transition involved a change in the economic costs and benefits of children, along with a cultural environment that made it more appropriate to control family size. These earlier fertility declines especially took place at higher parities and at ages 30 and over.

As others have observed, there is remarkable similarity in the timing of the second transition in a number of Western countries. Given available data, the focus has been on changes with regard to the entry and exit from relationships. This shows greater flexibility as manifest especially through cohabitation and divorce. Lesthaeghe (1995) proposes that it is useful to consider three stages in this second transition. The **first stage**, from about 1960 to 1970 involved the end of the baby boom, the end of the trend toward younger ages at marriage, and the beginning of the rise in divorces. The **second stage** from 1970 to 1985 saw the growth of common law unions and eventually of children in cohabiting unions. The **third stage** since 1985 includes a plateau in divorce, an increase in post-marital cohabitation (and consequently a decline in re-marriage), and a plateau in fertility due in part to higher proportions of births after age thirty.

---Table 1 about here**---**

Table 1 presents some statistics that capture these trends in the Canadian case. In terms of the first stage, the average **births** per woman, as measured by the total fertility rate, had reached a peak of 3.9 in 1957, declined to 2.2 in 1971, and has been relatively stable at about 1.7 to 1.5 births per woman over the whole period 1977 to 1998. The median **age at first marriage** declined over this century to reach a low of just over 21 years for brides and 23 years for grooms in the early 1970s, then increased to ages 26 and 28 for women and men respectively in 1996. The law permitting **divorces** on grounds other than adultery dates only from 1968. Per 100,000 married couples, there were under 200 divorces in each year over the period 1951-1966 compared to 1000 in 1976 and 1130 in 1996. While there had been a long term increase in separation and divorce, we can speak of a substantial jump starting in the 1960s. Although most marriages remain intact until death, there is greater looseness in the definition of relationships so that marriage is no longer forever.

Turning to the second stage, **cohabiting** unions were not specifically enumerated in the 1976 census, although some 0.7 percent of couples indicated that they were living common-law. By 1986, most Statistics Canada data no longer distinguished between married and cohabiting couples. The 1996 census determined that 13.7 percent of couples were cohabiting. The 1995 General Social Survey found that among persons born between 1951 and 1970, two out of five have lived in a cohabiting union, and over half of first unions taking place since 1985 have been cohabitations rather than marriages (Dumas and Bélanger, 1997: 135, 139). The proportion of births occurring to women who are **not married**, and who are largely cohabiting, increased from 9 in 1971 to 37 percent

in 1996. At first cohabitation was seen as mostly affecting pre-marital relationships, but we now see that it has also affected post-marital relationships, along with marital relationships themselves. In effect, along with separation and divorce, it is a key indicator of family change.

For the third stage, we find that by 1990, half of divorced persons aged 30-39, and more than a third of those aged 40-49, were in **cohabiting** relationships (Dumas and Péron, 1992: 50). Besides the stable fertility that has already been noted, the proportion of births occurring to women **aged 30 and over** increased from 19.6 percent in 1976 to 43.7 percent in 1996.

These changes in births, marriage, cohabitation and divorce have brought fewer children, but also a higher proportion of children who are not living with both biological parents. In particular, lone-parent families as a proportion of all families with children increased from 11.4 in 1961 to 22.3 in 1996.

These data also confirm the uniqueness of the 1950s as a period between the two transitions. Various authors have observed that this was a period when life was family centred. Not only was this the peak of the **baby boom**, but it was also a period of **marriage rush**, as marriage occurred at young ages and high proportions of persons married at least once in their lives. It was possibly a "golden age of the family," where many families corresponded to the new ideal of domesticity, especially in the suburbs, and consequently there was less variability (Skolnick, 1987: 6-16).

Subsequent research has made it clear that not all was ideal in this golden age. Isolated housewives in particular experienced the "problem with no name" (Friedan, 1963: 15). Since the task of maintaining the home had been assigned to women, men became less competent at the social skills needed to nourish and maintain relationships (Goldscheider and Waite, 1991: 19). The idealism of the time also introduced blinders regarding some realities of family life, including violence and abuse. Given a general denial that such things could ever occur in families, there was little recourse for the victims of violence. There was also a lack of autonomy, especially for women, to pursue routes other than the accepted path (Veevers, 1980). Childless couples were considered selfish, single persons were seen as deviants, working mothers were considered to be harming their children, single women who became pregnant were required either to marry or to give up the child in order to preserve the integrity of the family. For instance, in the 1950s four out of five Americans described persons who did not marry as neurotic, selfish or immoral (Kersten and Kersten, 1991; Wilson, 1990: 99).

The restriction on alternative life styles did imply few single-parent families, and consequently the pain associated with this variability was limited. In hindsight, we can nonetheless observe that there were pent-up problems that were preparing the way for the second transition starting in the 1960s.

Timing: delay of family events

We can speak of family change in terms of greater looseness in the entry and exit from relationships, and thus the importance of separation and cohabitation as indicators of this change. We can also speak of a shift in the average timing of family events, toward later ages. In terms of childbearing, the first transition saw a reduction of births at older ages, but the second transition has involved a tempo shift or a delay of births to older ages.

There are similar delays in several other family events. Using data from the 1995 General Social Survey, Table 2 presents a summary of the median ages at which various family life course events have occurred for birth cohorts 1916-20 to 1970-75. The patterns are rather uniform. Over the birth cohorts 1916-20 to 1941-45 there as a general **downward** trend in the age at home leaving, first marriage, first birth, last birth and home leaving of the children. Conversely, the subsequent cohorts have experienced an **upward** trend. In the cohorts of the 1920s to 1940s, the tendency was not only to marry early, but over a relatively narrow range of ages (Ravanera and Rajulton, 1996; Ravanera et al., 1998a and 1998b).

—Table 2 about here—

These delays may be interpreted as a longer period of adolescence, which Côté and Allahar (1994) have called a Generation on Hold. But the delays also reflect the needs of both men and women to put off the entry into relationships, and especially childbearing, until they are better able to handle the trade-offs between investing in themselves and investing in reproduction. All species face trade-offs in this regard (Kaplan et al.,1998). A longer period of investment in oneself provides the individual with more resources to then invest in reproduction, but there is the risk that reproduction will not occur. Conversely, early reproduction represents a greater security that reproduction will occur, but the danger of inadequate investment in oneself to have the resources necessary for effective reproduction in quality children.

From the point of view of children, one can observe a bifurcation of models in terms of early and late childbearing. Based on census data, Lochhead (2000) finds that delayed childbearing is more pronounced among women who have university education, and that there are increasing income differentials to the disadvantage of younger first-time mothers, even in two-parent families. Using data from the United States, Martin (2000) finds that delayed childbearers, who tend to have more education, are increasingly likely to raise their children in intact marriages, while early childbearers are more likely to raise children outside of marriage. Canadian data also indicate that women under 30 who are formerly married are much more likely to have children than those who are single, cohabiting or married (Ravanera, 1995: 18). Consequently, Bianchi (2000) speaks of a possible bifurcation of models, with one group taking advantage of parental investment from both mothers and fathers, and the other where fathers are absent and mothers do not have

adequate time and resources to invest in children. Children born from mature parents are more likely to have the advantages of a mother with more human capital, along with the presence of a father in a dual-income family, which contrasts with the greater likelihood of lone parenthood for those who parent early.

Delays: age-specific rates and mean age at childbearing

While the level of fertility changed extensively from 1966 to 1976, bringing the total fertility rate from 2.8 to 1.8, the age patterns remained remarkably constant (Beaujot, 2000: 237). Between 1976 and 1996, the number of births per women only changed from 1.8 to 1.6, but the age patterns changed so that births to women aged 30+ increased from 19.6% of all births in 1976 to 43.7% in 1996 (Table 1). The mean ages by parity can be used to time the beginning of the second transition in the mid-1960s when parity-specific mean ages started to rise, bringing a rise in the mean age of all births as of the mid-1970s (Figure 2).

—Figure 2 about here---

While the level of fertility has been rather constant for 20 years, the underlying dynamics by age have thus seen much change. As in other countries, the trend has been downward at ages under 30 and upward at ages 30-39. In 1969, age group 25-29 replaced age 20-24 as the age of highest fertility. By 1989, age group 30-34 became the second ranking group, after ages 25-29. The period 1976-95 saw a decline of 25 to 30% in age specific rates at 15-19 and 20-24, along with a 11% decline at ages 25-29. In this same period, the rates at ages 30-34 increased by 38%.

The age-specific rates are clearly responsible for much of the short-term variation shown in the total fertility rate (Figure 3). In particular, the rise in rates at ages 30-39 since the late 1970s is responsible for the rather stable total over the last 20 years, in the context of declines at ages 20-29. The increase in the total fertility rate over the period 1988-91 can be seen in the sharper rises at ages 30-34, along with rises at ages under 30. More important, the declines especially in 1996-97 are a function of declines at ages 30-34 after 20 years of increase. The decline between 1995 and 1998 affects all age groups under 35.

—Figure 3 about here—

Extent of recuperation: cohort age-specific rates and parity progression

Even using single years of age, the changing patterns very much focus on age 30 (Figure 4). At ages under 28 or 29, each successive cohort born between 1945 and 1970 has lower age-specific rates. At ages over 30, each successive cohort from 1945 to 1960 has higher rates. This increase at ages 30 and over does not take place between the 1960 and 1965 cohorts, and it is too early to know for the 1970 cohort, which may have already

reached its maximum fertility by age 27, at a level remarkably lower than that of the 1965 cohort.

—Figure 4 about here—

Following Lesthaeghe and Moors (2000), it is also useful to align the cohorts to see if recuperation is occurring in the same cohorts that show delay (Table 3). For other populations in northern Europe, along with United Kingdom, France, USA, Australia and Japan, the cohorts that reached 15-19 around 1960 show declines from cohort to cohort in the fertility at ages 20-24 and 25-29, and the same cohorts show increases at ages 30-34 and 35-39. In the Canadian case, using the years from Table 3, the point of inversion is the cohort that was aged 15-19 in 1958. At given ages, the cohorts following the one that was aged 15-19 in 1963 had lower fertility at ages 15-29 but higher fertility at ages 30-44. From the cohort that was 15-19 in 1963 to the latest cohort, the decline is 32 per 1000 at ages 15-19, 89 per 1000 at ages 20-24 and, 27 per 1000 at ages 25-29. Conversely, the increases were 19 per 1000 at 30-34, 13 per 1000 at 35-39 and 2 per 1000 at 40-44.

—Table 3 about here---

Besides following the age-specific rates of given cohorts, it is useful to cumulate the fertility experience over ages (Table 4). There were rapid declines over the 1947 to 1952 birth cohorts, of 28% by age 25, 18% by age 30, and 12% by age 40 or 50. The declines are more gradual from the 1952 to 1965 cohorts, of 36% by age 25, 20% by age 30, but 9% by age 40 and 6% by age 50. The cohorts from the 1947 to the 1965 birth cohort have therefore shown delay and partial recuperation. There has been stability over cohorts 1965 to 1970 by age 25, and similarly over cohorts 1965 to 1968 by age 30. The birth cohorts since 1965 have seen less changes until the early 20s, but delays in the mid-20s and it is too early to know if these will be followed by recuperation (Figure 4).

—Table 4 about here—

Parity progression ratios can be calculated on the basis of the 1995 General Social Survey (Table 5). There is not a large change in the first and second parity. To age 39, for all women, the proportions with no children increased from 12.5% in the 1941-45 birth cohort, to 17.6% in the 1951-55 cohort. Among those with one child, the progression declined only from 89.5% to 85.8 percent over these cohorts. However, the progression is much lower to third parity, at 46.9% in the 1941-45 cohort and 45.7 in the 1951-55 cohort. In the annual Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada 1996, it is succinctly concluded that “women have been increasingly delaying their first child and forgoing a third child (Dumas and Bélanger, 1997: 46). Nonetheless, by age 39, 31.8% of women in the 1951-55 cohort had at least three children. In addition, between 1986 and 1996, the proportion of births that were third or higher parity remained stable at 21% (Statistics Canada, 1999: 27). It is also noteworthy that the change in parity specific total fertility rate

between 1981 and 1997 is rather uniform, with, for instance a 5.8% decline at first parity and 12.3% decline at third parity (Bélanger, 1999: 106-107).

—Table 5 about here---

As Lesthaeghe and Moors (2000) have observed, there are many reasons for the postponement, but the literature is rather silent on the basis for differential recuperation. Postponement is related to the increased importance of achieved status for both men and women, as a basis for forming reproductive relationships. The open questions are: (1) to what extent and for how long will the tempo shift be maintained, and (2) to what degree will cohorts recuperate after age 30 for fertility forgone in their 20s (Lesthaeghe, 2000b). Before returning to these factors, a few observations on proximate factors are in order.

Proximate factors: unions and contraception

Union formation and dissolution

While union formation is later, and more likely to occur through cohabitation, the predominance of living in marital unions has not changed greatly and there is a strong preference for living in unions. Over the cohorts of women born between 1926-35 and 1956-65, at least 94% had at least one union (Le Bourdais, 2000: 14). For the later cohort, the 1995 General Social Survey shows that 84% of women had at least one marriage, 49% had at least one cohabitation, 43% had at least one separation, and 39% had at least two unions.

The cohabitation experience is found to delay entry into marriage, partly because it prolongs the period of information gathering on the appropriateness of a marital choice, and it reduces the interaction with other potential partners (Wu, 1999, 2000). At the same time, a fifth of cohabitations can be seen as substitutes to marriage in the sense that they last at least six months after a first birth, and another two out of five are stable in the sense that they last for at least three years (Dumas and Bélanger, 1997: 150). Cohabitation also has an impact on the risk of divorce, as is well know, and on the division of household labour, partly because both men and women do less unpaid work when cohabiting compared to married (Wu, 2000: 136).

While there is some substitution of cohabitation for marriage, at ages 25-29, the proportion who were never married and not currently cohabiting increased from 32.0% to 51.7% for men and from 20.0 to 35.5% for women between 1981 and 1996 (Beaujot, 2000: 103). From figures as high as 95% over the lifetime for the male cohort born in 1938, the proportion married by age 40 was 60.5 percent for men and 70.8% for women in

the 1965 cohort (Dumas and Bélanger, 1997). While the proportion living alone is higher at older ages, the percent of women aged 25-44 living alone increased only from 6% to 7% between 1981 and 1996 (Ram, 2000: 20). For men, the change at these ages was from 8% to 11%.

As in other countries, the transition to first union, be it cohabitation or marriage, has become positively related to education and labour force status for women born after 1950. Turcotte and Goldscheider (1998) conclude that union formation increasingly requires earning power of both partners, while Mongeau et al. (2000) observe that economic instability reduces the probability of union formation for both younger men and women.

The lifetime probability of divorce has increased from 37% based on 1981 life table estimates, to 40% based on 1991 and 1995 data (Trovato, 2000). Within 25 years of marriage, the highest divorce rate for completed cohorts is 32.5 percent for the 1972-73 marriage cohort (Bélanger, 1999: 102-103). While there was no change or anticipated change in legislation, all divorce rates by marital duration are down over the period 1995-97, and most had been declining over the previous ten years (Bélanger, 1999: 39). This is probably a function of the increased age at marriage, fewer marriages, and greater selectivity wherein unions that are less stable do not become marriages. Besides being related to type of union, age at union and pre-union conceptions, the probability of separation is typically higher for women who have a longer period of employment (Le Bourdais et al., 2000a).

These changes in entry and exit from relationships have influenced childbearing. At each age group, fertility is higher in married than in cohabiting relationships (Beaujot, 1995: 50; Dumas and Bélanger, 1997: 159). The formerly married also have more children than those in cohabiting unions. In addition, the lowest fertility is among the never married. Fertility intentions are also lower for persons in cohabiting unions, especially if they do not intend to marry (Dupuis, 1998: 3). The 1995 General Social Survey also finds that a higher proportion of married than common-law persons indicate that "having at least one child is very important to be happy in life" (Dumas and Bélanger, 1997: 156). At ages 35 and over, the proportions with no children vary extensively by marital status: 27.5 percent of persons living common-law and 81.9 percent of never married persons have no children, compared to 9.1 percent of married persons and 12.2 percent of formerly married persons (idem p. 158). Re-married persons are more likely to consider having a third child than formerly married persons who are in a new common-law union (Wu and Wang, 1998).

Thus the lower prevalence of marriage, along with the greater prevalence of cohabitation, tend to reduce fertility. The later entry into unions and the greater prevalence of union dissolution have less effect on childbearing. This is because births tend to be compressed into a short part of the life cycle. Nonetheless, later childbearing is associated with lower completed family size (Rao and Balakrishnan, 1988).

Contraception, sterilisation and abortion

For the most part, persons in cohabiting or marital relationships use efficient contraception. This is especially seen in terms of sterilization, which applies to a quarter of couples aged 30-34 and half of couples aged 35-39 (Bélanger and Dumas, 1998: 68-69). This 1995 General Social Survey also shows that a third of couples were sterilized, including 47 percent of persons with two children (Bélanger and Dumas, 1998). Voluntary sterilization for contraceptive purposes is relatively widespread in Canada, compared to other industrialized countries.

In the first transition, learning about contraception could take place slowly over the marriage. But as Lesthaeghe (2000b) has observed, the postponement of parenthood necessitates a steeply rising contraceptive learning curve. It is especially for teenagers that contraception is less secure, probably explaining much of the remaining births at these ages, even though half of pregnancies are aborted (Dryburgh, 2000). There are probably other populations who have a less steep learning curve on contraception. For instance, it is noteworthy that for women aged 20-24 in 1991, those separated or divorced had the highest percentages with at least one child (66.8%), compared to the married at 48.4%, the cohabiting at 28.3%, and never married at 8.9% (Ravanera, 1995: 18). Especially in the context of norms discouraging childbearing unless one is in a secure relationship (see next section), and encouraging the delay of unions until the mid-20s, several of these births might somehow be unwanted. There would consequently be potential for continued decline in fertility at ages under 25, as the orientation spreads further to the effect that births should be planned and at older ages.

Cultural predispositions: value and cost of children

In order to understand the cultural context of childbearing, early results are here provided from a qualitative survey of 122 persons taken in the year 2000 in the region surrounding London, Ontario. The purpose of the survey was to obtain people's basic orientation to various family questions. Thus there were a series of open-ended questions regarding unions, children, and the division of work. The interviews were about an hour and a half. These are all being transcribed and coded; but the results presented here were obtained by de-briefing the eight interviewers and three transcribers. It was suggested that the research assistants were in a position to observe patterns in the culture by having had various "conversations at the well." The initial purpose was mostly to understand the modal categories in responses to given questions.

We are starting with the assumption that people have family strategies, that is, they have an orientation to family that carries a certain logic or makes sense to them. To theorize or make sense of things is part of the human condition, and the survey was seeking to capture this underlying logic. In effect, people often used words that reflected the idea that

their family strategy had an underlying logic; for instance, they would say that some alternate behaviour was “crazy,” that it did not make sense to them, or that they could not understand people who behaved in these ways. Judgmental terms like “fair” and “selfish” were also often used. In effect, part of the objective of the project is also to uncover the behavioural norms, and the perceptions of individuals on the costs and benefits of given behaviours (Kohler, 1997; Hammel, 1990). These perceptions are partly a function of social learning, and the logic that people propose in explaining their rationale may be part of the mechanism through which these norms are diffused. We further assume that values matter for important life choices (Lesthaeghe and Moors, 2000b), and that these can be measured through open-ended questions on these very choices.

It is useful to treat the topic of childbearing within the context of **marriage or relationships**. The survey asked things like “what do you think it means to be married,” how that might differ from living together, reasons for forming a union, the “advantages of having a partner compared to being single,” and the advantages of being single (Box 1). Largely the advantages of being married or in an enduring relationship were seen in terms of companionship and having someone with whom to share life, while the advantages of being single were the freedom to make decisions without taking someone else into account. While some saw these as trade-offs, the vast majority felt that there were more advantages to being in a relationship, and for the most part this was to include marriage. A secure relationship was largely seen as an essential basis for childbearing. The ideal age for beginning this relationship was seen to be in the mid-20s, with questions of maturity and financial security being more important than age. Separation and divorce were also seen as very serious matters, but the majority thought that divorce was legitimate if one had done everything possible to make the relationship work.

—Box 1 about here—

People’s orientations on the **value and cost of children** were sought by asking “why do people have children,” and what are the advantages and disadvantages of having children (Box 2). Some simply saw it as natural to have children, and others were more likely to see it as a choice. The benefits were described in terms of reproducing oneself, the joys of children, and the special relationships with children. The costs were first described in financial terms, but ultimately they involved especially time and energy, something that you have to give from yourself, and being tied down. While respondents could often say more about the disadvantages, the vast majority felt that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

These values and costs were further specified by asking **under what conditions one should not have children**, what was the ideal number of children to have, and why not more or less than this number (Box 2). The conditions for not having children often started with serious things like physical or mental incapacity, but they typically included not being mature or responsible enough, the relationship being unstable, and ultimately most said

that not wanting children was a sufficient basis to not have children. People who did not want to have children were often seen as missing out on something important in life, but if they did not want to have children it was best not to have children. They denied that they would in any way pressure people to have children, and argued that it was in the child's best interest if those who do not want to have children would not have them.

—Box 2 about here—

The **ideal number** was often stated as two children, but many gave a range, especially two-to-three, or two-to-four. In defending this number, people again spoke first of financial questions, but on further reflection they often said that if you wait for the finances you may never have children. When asked if they would have had more children if they had twice the income, most said not and that this was not the right way to make the decision. The reasons for not having more were ultimately described in terms of the time and energy that children take from you, given other things that you also want to do, and given that you want to do the very best for each child. The reasons for not having fewer than two were rather uniformly described in terms of it not being good to be an only child. Without siblings, a child would lack the opportunity to experience close interpersonal relationships with someone of their own age, which was seen as an important life skill. It seemed that there was more prejudice against having one child than against having no children. When asked what couples should do if they disagreed on the number of children to have, most had some difficulty really dealing with the question, some said it should be the one who will mostly look after them who should decide, but ultimately most said that they should not have children that they do not both want. This corresponds to conclusions on the basis of the 1987-88 to 1992-94 National Survey of Families and Households in the United States (Thomson, 1997). The likelihood of having a child was least if both did not want a child, but those who disagreed had lower than average births, and if they disagree each partner's intentions were shifted toward not having a child.

The questions on the **timing of childbearing**, and first births in particular, produced similar answers to that of timing of marriages or relationships. Often people spoke of it being best to wait two-to-three years before having children. Financial stability was even more important than for marriage, but equally important was the emotional maturity to be able to carry the costs, and partnership stability. There were also advantages not to wait too long, and the most common norm was probably to have children before age 30 at least for a first child, or between 25 and 30, or for some between 25 and early 30s. The advantage of earlier ages was seen partly in terms of fecundity questions, but more often in terms of having the necessary energy, and not being too old compared to children in order to be able to play with them when they were young and relate to them when they were older.

Analysis of intended births

There appear to be strong cultural orientations in favour of relationships and childbearing. While not having children is acceptable, most think that at least two is best. This is confirmed with data on intended births from the 1995 General Social Survey (Table 6). At ages 20-29, only 6.6% of men and 4.6% of women indicate that they intend to have no children, although this rises to 17 or 18% at ages 40-49. About half expect two children, and at least a quarter expect three or more. The averages are 2.5 children at age 20-29, 2.2 at 30-39 and 1.9 at 40-49. While intended births are an insecure measure, they have nonetheless remained stable for more recent cohorts. For instance, women aged 25-29 in 1984 expected an average of 2.17 births, and this was only reduced to 2.03 when they were 36-41 in 1995 (Dupuis, 1998: 5).

—Table 6 about here—

There is not a large variation in these average intended births within various sub-populations or characteristics of respondents (Table 7). Those who are married or intend to marry expect more children (Dupuis, 1998: 3). For instance, at ages 20-29, those married expect 2.5, and the single and cohabiting who expect to marry intend to have a similar number, but the figures are1.9 and 1.4 respectively for the cohabiting and single who do not expect to marry. While the numbers are clearly lower for the never married at ages 30-49, those in first unions, second or subsequent unions, and in post-union status have very similar intended births (Table 7).

—Table 7 about here—

The averages are slightly lower for those who had a first child at ages 30 or more, but altogether these people with at least one child expect an average of 2.5 children. There are more expected children if the interval between the first two is shorter, and altogether these persons with at least two children expect an average of 2.7. Those with no siblings expect the fewest children, but this is still 1.5 in the lowest group, that is ages 40-49. At ages 20-39, education does not make much difference, though at ages 40-49 it is inversely related with intended births, which are 1.8 for those with completed post-secondary education. Education operates differently for men and women, with men who have more education expecting more children, while an inverse relation applies to women aged 30-39 (Dupuis, 1998: 4). However, at ages 20-29, women with university degrees also expect the most children. For men, those who worked in the past year expect slightly more children, while it is the opposite for women, nonetheless the lowest group is working women aged 40-49 who expect an average of 1.7 children.

The differences by religious attendance are larger, especially for persons aged 20-39. Those born in Canada have lower intentions, especially in comparison to persons born outside of North America and Europe, but the average differences are only 0.2 children. One of the questions in the survey asked if they would stay married for the sake of the children. Slightly more than 40% of persons under 50 responded positively to this question

which was among a series of questions on orientation to divorce (Frederick and Hamel, 1998: 8). As a measure of individualism, this characteristic operates in the expected direction, but at ages 40-49, the persons who would not stay together still expect 1.8 children. Similar conclusions were reached in the analysis of the childbearing intentions of post-secondary students in three surveys from 1968 to 1988. Besides the decline over the period, the characteristics that made the most difference were related to individualism, suggesting that having fewer children is part of a broader emancipation process (Hobart, 1991). Nonetheless, the averages in 1977 and 1988 for these post-secondary students was 2.5 children. Suwal and Trovato (1998) also appeal to a pronatalist subculture hypothesis in interpreting the specific case of higher fertility in Canadian couples where both are of aboriginal origins, at the time of the 1991 census.

It has been suggested that the second demographic transition has seen **cultural change** wherein people became less interested in living up to external norms and more interested in living up to what they themselves wanted (Roussel, 1989; Giddens, 1991; Hall, 1996; Lapierre-Adamcyk and Charvet, 1999). Marriage has changed from an institution to a "project de couple," or a "pure relationship" where people can follow their own drummer. In many areas of life, it is not possible to increase the freedom from external norms. For instance, workplaces and bureaucracies must set limits on the variability of individual behaviour. On questions like child abuse and environmental protection, we now accept a higher level of social restrictions on behaviour. However, in the areas of family behaviour it has become possible to live with less social constraints. While there are now more potential choices, having children nonetheless remains important for most people. Those expecting fewer than 1.7 children are in rather rare circumstances, including single person who do not intend to marry, along with persons aged 40-49 who have zero or one sibling. In addition, children represent a form of enduring relationship, which may be particularly important when other relationships are less stable. In "Why do Americans want children," Schoen et al. (1997) observe that people are more likely to intend to have another child when they attach importance to the social relationships created by children. These authors conclude that "childbearing is purposive behaviour that creates and reinforces the most important and most enduring social bonds.

Childbearing and the structure of paid and unpaid work

If the perceptions of the values and costs of alternatives are useful for understanding the cultural context of childbearing, the accommodations between paid and unpaid work can be seen as the structural context. When paid work and family work were both full-time jobs necessary to family well-being, the Becker (1981) models of efficiency made sense. However, with less need for unpaid work, the breadwinner model is clearly giving way to the dual-earner strategy for family and work (Beaujot, 2000). But the dual earner model has its own stressors, and women have carried the main burden in terms of the accommodations between production and reproduction (Kempeneers, 1992). Clearly having fewer children becomes one of the ways to handle this stress, and childlessness

might be the easiest route to gender equality. However, other accommodations are possible, and gender equal structures in the public and private spheres may enable the society to avoid particularly low fertility, as long as there also remains a strong desire to have children (Matthews, 1999; McDonald, 1997). In particular, women may have fewer children than they desire because they have been unable to establish a satisfactory division of household labour.

While there are clearly remaining stresses, we can also observe that many people appear to have made accommodations which include having children. In the time series data, the inverse relationship between women's labour force participation and fertility was limited to the period of about 1960 to 1975 (Figure 5). In the 1950s, women's education and labour force participation were rising, as was fertility. Since the mid-1970s, labour force participation has continued to rise, though to a lesser extent in the early 1990s, but fertility has been largely stable.

—Figure 5 about here—

Some of the accommodations have occurred at work, although they are clearly uneven. Starting from a strong norm in mid-century that mothers of young children should be full-time housewives, Rindfuss et al. (1996) propose that the actual behavioural changes have led to attitudinal changes that have undermined this norm and have helped to stabilize fertility. Based on recent university graduates, Ranson (1998) finds that there are much more accommodations in certain professions like teaching, than in others like engineering or business. A key question at work is the potential for leave, with a guarantee of return. For working women who gave birth in 1993 or 1994, the average leave was six months, with 86% having returned within a year and 93% within two years (Marxhall, 1999). In addition, most returned to the same job and the same status with regard to full-time and part-time work. The 1995 General Social Survey also shows that work interruptions of younger women are much shorter, and that the percentage of women working before the birth of their first child increased from 63% in the early 1950s to 85% in the early 1990s (Fast and Da Pont, 1997).

The accommodations at home are more difficult to measure. Nonetheless, certain observations can be made on the basis of time use data from surveys taken in 1986 to 1998 (Table 8). In particular, the total productive time, adding all forms of paid and unpaid work, produce very similar average hours per day for women and men. In addition, men's total time in unpaid work, relative to women's time, has increased from 46% in 1986 to 61% in 1998. Also, controlling for the work status of the husband and wife, be it two working full-time, two working but one full-time, or one working, children and younger children have the same effect on men and women, which is to increase their time in unpaid work, and their total time in productive activities (Beaujot, 2000, 211). Nonetheless, it is also useful to observe that those with more symmetrical division of unpaid work are

persons who are either married with no children, or who have few children (idem, pp. 210, 225).

—Table 8 about here---

The survey questions described in the previous section asked about the division of work in the home: what is best, what are common satisfactions and frustrations (Box 3). While there were clearly cases where women were carrying the heavier burden, and others where women felt that their work was not appreciated, the majority of respondents said that they had established patterns which they found satisfactory. Older women often observed that men, especially younger men, have come to do more of the household work, especially in child care. When asked about accommodations between family and work, respondents mostly explained how they had worked this out, through leaves, part-time work, shifts, day care and help from their own parents, rather than focussing on the frustrations or calling for more accommodations at work. It was women who made most of the accommodations, while men were more likely to see family and work as two separate things. Day care was more often taken as a given than in a similar survey ten years earlier, and there were calls for more availability and better quality. But besides education, health, and children's safety, there were not a lot of calls for programs and services that would facilitate the meshing of family and work. While they largely thought that society should provide a minimum standard of living, especially for children in need, most felt strongly that children were an individual rather than a social responsibility.

—Box 3 about here---

While there are remaining frustrations, it would appear that accommodations both at work and at home largely make it possible to achieve satisfaction in family and work goals in ways that mostly include children; typically this meant two children, sometimes one or three. This produces older ages at childbearing and reproduction at levels somewhat below replacement.

Determinants of second and third births

These structural and cultural questions can be analysed further by considering the factors that influence the relative risk of women having a second and third birth. The 1995 General Social Survey is here used to study the relations between childbearing and various demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of respondents (Table 9). The characteristics used here are similar to the list of key determinants of fertility that Lesthaeghe and Willems (1999) propose: female labour force participation, female education, ideational change, and patterns of union formation and instability.

—Table 9 about here---

The previous fertility history plays a significant role in second and third births, with lower age at first birth increasing the likelihood of both subsequent births, and shorter intervals increasing the likelihood of a third birth. In particular, those with a first birth at ages under 25 had twice the likelihood of a second or third birth, in comparison to women who have the first birth after age 30. After controls for the other variables in the model, cohabitants had a lower risk of second birth, but not a significantly lower risk of third birth. Labour force participation and higher education reduced the risks for each of second and third births, but especially for the third birth. DeWit and Ravanera (1998) also find that education and work status are each negatively related to the likelihood of having a first or second birth. There was a higher likelihood of having a third child if the first two were of the same sex (Table 9). Those who attended religious services weekly were more likely to have a second or third birth. Persons born in Europe and North America had lower likelihood of second and third births, and those born outside of North America and Europe were more likely to have a third birth.

It can be observed that most of the evolution in these characteristics is in the direction of lower fertility. This applies to the demographic evolution toward older ages at first birth, higher likelihood of not being in a relationship or of cohabiting, to the structural change of more labour force participation and higher education, along with the cultural changes associated with more individualism and less religiosity.

Discussion

The future of Canadian fertility can usefully be discussed in relation to two alternatives. The assumption that fertility would remain stable at cohort levels of around 1.7 is supported by the qualitative survey and childbearing intentions. These indicate continued preference for marriage, a considerable desire for children, and an interest in strategies that accommodate children. The family strategies of most people include children, and most are making accommodations that would make two or even three children feasible.

In the Statistics Canada projections following the 1996 census, the low fertility assumption is given first and receives the most attention (Loh et al., 1999). The ultimate level of 1.3 births per women is based on several arguments, including female employment, effective contraception, declining marriage rates, postponement, higher cohabitation and union dissolution. The authors also speak of a pressure for higher standards of living, requiring a maximization of work time. In line with further reductions, it is also noteworthy that rates are declining in 1996-98 at ages 30-35, along with a continuation of the declines under age 30, and that the 1975 cohort appears to be coming out at significantly lower levels, unless there is more recuperation than in other cohorts.

Families of size four or higher are in significant decline. The qualitative survey indicates that some people are not prejudiced toward large families, but others find this irrational, crazy, or they simply ask why you would do that. More important, having large numbers of

children is often seen as impossible if one also wants to ensure that each child has a good start in life, according to the high standards that people want for each child. Besides, parents, and women in particular, want other things as well, and they do not want to be devoting all of their time and energy to children; children represent various life-disrupting costs. Even three children was sometimes seen as rather difficult given these constraints. In addition, there was not a strong prejudice against not having children; for those who did not want children or somehow felt they would not be good parents, it was clearly preferable not to have children. While there was prejudice against having one child, in the sense that this was seen as not good for the child, people still largely felt that it was better than having children that were not wanted.

Equally important, there were significant norms against having children too soon in life, certainly not before age 20, and often not until the mid-20s, or until one is emotionally mature and financially secure. It was also largely seen as unacceptable to have children in insecure relationships. That leaves a small time frame to have children, and the window of opportunity might become closed if at that time one does not have the right setting to have children. For some, as they put off having children, other things may come to have higher priority, or there may be biological limitations.

The normative context provided by many of the respondents suggests having children too young or in an insecure relationship would mean unwanted children. Stated differently, there are strong orientations to the effect that people having children should be in the right context to be able to be responsible for them. This is also supported by research which points to a bifurcation between young and mature parents in terms of the quantity and quality of parental time (Bianchi, 2000). If this bifurcation is reduced in favour of childbearing at more mature ages, and in more secure relationships, it would reduce the numbers of disadvantaged children. More mature childbearers are also more likely to be able to negociate a better sharing of the costs of children with their spouses and workplaces.

Thus fertility could decline even further, if there is a further reduction of childbearing at ages under 25, and in relationships that are not secure. For instance, if births per women at ages 15-24 were to be reduced to levels seen in The Netherlands, this would bring the total fertility rate down to 1.3 (using rates of 6 per 1000 instead of 20 at 15-19, and 35 instead of 63 per 1000 at 20-24, with 1998 Canadian rates in other age groups). This in turn would require a steeper learning curve with regard to contraception and abortion in certain populations. Thus there is a clear basis for further reductions at young ages, with unknown potential for recuperation at ages over thirty. This recuperation will probably depend especially on the stability of relationships, the desire for children, and the willingness to make accommodations for children, by women, men and the broader society.

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Box 1. Orientations to unions, age at entry and dissolution

After enquiring about their own relationships, respondents were asked things like “what do you think it means to be married,” how that might differ from living together, reasons for forming a union, the “**advantages of having a partner compared to being single**,” and the advantages of being single.

Mostly people see the advantages of being in a relationship, or being married, in terms of companionship, to have someone with whom to share life, to do things with, share everyday things, to have someone there for you, to ask you how your day was, to sleep together, sense of physical and emotional support, to have someone to go through the issues that life presents, a sense of closeness that you do not attain from mere friendship, to not be alone in life, or lonely. Some spoke of feeling a sense of responsibility by being in a relationship. The advantages of being single are seen in terms of freedom, independence, being able to do things without taking someone else into account, making your own decisions on use of time and money without thinking of others, less need to be responsible to other people, or reliable to them. Most see that there are trade-offs here, but the vast majority said there were more advantages to being married or in an enduring relationship. Some even said that the advantages of being single were just academic questions. Some others, especially if they had had a bad experience, found it easier to speak of the advantages of being single, at least it was better to have no partner than to have a destructive partner who made life difficult. But the majority see it as better to be in a relationship, at least for themselves. The orientations clearly support marriage or enduring relationships.

When asked about the **best time** to start a lifelong relationship, most spoke in terms of maturity rather than age; one needed to be responsible and ready for a relationship. They spoke of the need to be in a stable relationship with someone before making a commitment. It was important to have done certain things before starting the union, such as finishing education or being established, having lived on one’s own, or having done some things on one’s own, possibly having had other relationships. You should be mature, stable on your own, have financial stability, be an independent person. When pressed for an age, it was not to be before 20, most said the mid-20s, some said 20-25, others about 25, maybe 28, or that there was no negative to 35 or older. Some said “not too young so that you know who you are and what you want,” but

often there was no upper limit, “even 90 is not too old.” Some observed that waiting to long to start a relationship may pose difficulties in terms of being set in one’s ways, not able to compromise. Rather than age, being in a stable relationship and having the finances seemed most important to getting married. Some observed that you cannot necessarily plan to have the right time to get married, things happen in terms of the right person being there for you at the right time. It would appear to be ideal to start the union around the mid-20s.

Respondents were then asked what they thought were the main **reasons for divorce**, the advice they would give to people who are considering separating, and the reasons for staying in a relationship. Clearly, this was taken seriously, especially if there are children. But for most, if the marriage is not working, the lifelong commitment does not apply; it is appropriate to leave a relationship if it is costing more than you are getting out of it over a long period of time. For most, there was no shame in leaving a relationship that was not working, as long as one had done everything that they could do to make it work. As with other surveys, there is much agreement with divorce in cases of abuse, violence, addictions, and infidelity. The 1995 General Social Survey finds that two-fifths would “stay together for the children” (Frederick and Hamel, 1998: 8). However, it matters how serious the situation is. Some say they would never separate, others say that staying in a destructive relationship is unfortunate for the children. Many people complain that “young people these days too easily divorce if things are not working,” but people take the ending of a relationship very seriously, especially if there are children. Nonetheless, there are different views on the extent of the commitment; the majority view was that it is legitimate to end a relationship if it is negative in terms of one’s own costs and benefits. Some said that they would separate but not divorce, for the sake of the children or in order not to have to divide the goods.

Box 2. Why people have children, advantages and disadvantages, best timing and ideal number

Asked “**why people have children**,” many respond that it is somehow natural, a normal part of life, expected, it simply made sense, was the right thing to do, a stage in life, to have another person to love, to create a family; it is a gift, bringing another life, bringing someone into your world. Some see themselves as pro-creating a family, re-developing its nucleus over a lineage. Others speak of somehow leaving someone who is like you in this world, another self, to continue the family and its special characteristics. Many answer in terms of the benefits of having children. These are often stated in terms of the uniqueness of relationships with children, when they are young, as they grow older, and even as they are adults. Respondents may add things concerning the enjoyment of being with children, it is fulfilling, there is nothing like the love a child gives, they bring joy, they remind you of the simple things, enjoying childhood again, watching them experience things, seeing them grow, and become their own personalities, moulding them. Some spoke in terms of the opportunity to be a kid again, play marbles, make things. Many people saw it as natural did not always appear to have made a conscious decision on childbearing, though they often decided on the timing and when to stop having children. Others saw it as a choice and they may have weighted the positives and negatives of having children.

Especially when asked about **advantages and disadvantages**, many respondents also said that there are strong time sacrifices, less time for oneself, being tied down. The negatives were

mostly in terms of time and responsibility, the big work load when they were babies and the longer-term financial expenses, sometimes the difficulty of raising children. Others spoke of the compromises, lack of independence, you “lose your life,” the freedom to do things when you want, need to be responsible, it is a lifelong process, the difficulty of balancing roles such as mother, wife and worker. Life is changed enormously by having children, lack of freedom, expensive, fatigue, but most did not focus on the disadvantages, and almost without exception they were very glad to have had children.

When asked about the best **timing for having a first birth**, most responded in terms of financial stability, to have a job, not necessarily two jobs in the couple but sufficient economic security, the income necessary to be able to support children, having things in place before taking on this additional responsibility. Some noted that money was not everything, because if you waited to have enough you may never have a child. When asked if they would have, or would have had, more children if they had twice the income, most said not. Many spoke in terms of being sufficiently mature to take on the responsibility, to carry the disadvantages, being both financially and emotionally ready. Many also spoke in terms of the importance of first being in a secure and established relationship, financial, emotional and partnership stability, which mostly included marriage; many said after some two years of marriage, or within three to five years of marriage. Respondents were more willing to speak in terms of ages, which they put at around 25, some said 20 to 25, others late 20s, some even said early 30s was fine. Many said that before 30 was best, though some said that after 30 was also acceptable, or even in your 40s, as long as you have the energy. In speaking of a minimum age, some said as long as they can provide for the children. Even if you marry before finishing school, you should certainly finish education before having children. In speaking of a maximum age, this related to having the necessary energy level, to be able to run around with them, enjoy their energy and their youth. They also spoke of biological questions, the odds are shifting after the early 30s. It would appear that one should be old enough to be emotionally and financially stable, to be able to absorb the various costs, but not too old to have the energy and disposition.

Before asking the ideal number of children, the interview asked about the **conditions under which one should not have children**. A number of respondents started with some rather extreme conditions, such as genetic deficiencies, or serious emotional problems, mental deficiencies, or not intellectually able to take care of them. Many also said it was best not to have children if one was not in a stable relationship. Many said that it was not fair to the children if one has children in a relationship that is not stable. It was seen as more acceptable to get married in an unstable relationship than to have children to try to fix the relationship. If someone is in a poor relationship or is not able to parent, it was best not to have children. Many said that financial questions should not be a block, as long as one can afford children, and most people should be able to afford children. But others said that you should have enough money or the conditions to raise children properly. Maturity was more important than finances. But especially on probing further, or asking if it was acceptable not to have children, most said that it was acceptable not to have children simply because one did not want children. Many saw it as selfish not to want to have children, and they should not be so selfish, but if they were selfish, it was best not to have children. Some thought there was no point in getting married if one did not want to have children. Those who saw it as natural to have children gave more extreme conditions under which one should not have children; those who saw it as a choice largely said that it was acceptable not to have children simply because one did not want children.

The **ideal number of children** was largely indicated in terms of a range, most often two-to-three, with some saying two, others two-to-four, with a few saying as many as you want to have. In justifying this ideal, most started by talking about the expenses and costs, the limit on one's time, the desire to give everything that one could to each child. When asked, "why not less," the vast majority expressed disagreement with the idea of having one child, this was seen as not good for the child, or selfish on the part of parents. An only child was seen as spoilt, lonely, not fair to the child, not having siblings to play with, they will have poor socializing skills, not know how to cooperate, not able to deal with someone on a one-on-one basis every day, learning to share, which are life skills that one needs. Some said it was acceptable to have only one child, if that is all they can handle. There seemed to be even more disagreement to the idea of having one child than not having any children. As indicated in the previous paragraph, not having children was seen as acceptable, and people said that they did not pressure people to have children if they did not want children. If someone does not want children, it is best that they not have children. While agreeing with not having children, some said it was unfortunate, a shame, they were missing out on an important life experience. Having three-to-four was seen as a larger family atmosphere, but many said it was not realistic. The idea of having five-or-more was sometimes seen as fine if people could handle it, but most thought it was not realistic, some even thought it was "crazy," and they could not understand why someone might have that many. A 35 year old mother of four children under five spoke of being accosted by an elderly woman while grocery shopping who said "my child ... have you not hear of birth control."

Many found the number of two children to be the easiest to justify, it is financially feasible, reasonable as an infringement on one's time, the children have someone with whom to make friends, it is a real family. More than two involves various trade-offs in terms of time and other things that one wants to do, like holidays. But for some three was also a good number, a safe number, a real family especially in terms of more possible interactions among children. For many, four was rather difficult, given all the emotional and other things one wants to give to each child; there is simply a limit, not enough time and energy to maximize what each child needs to have.

When asked if they would have more children with twice the income, or with more government support, they largely indicated not. Most want some subsidies to help them out, but this would not be a basis for having more or fewer children (Box 3). Many said that the government should not be involved in this sphere of life, it was in infringement on the privacy of personal lives, or people should be responsible for their own decisions, it may even create an incentive not to work so hard.

When asked what people should do if there was **disagreement between husband and wife** regarding the number of children to have, most found it difficult to handle the question, they should talk about it, the decision should be made equally, they should reach a compromise. Some said that the person who bears the child or who will spend the most time looking after the children should decide, and a few said that the person who is most aware of the finances should decide. But a good number said they should not have children that both do not want, and thus they should have the smaller number. Many said that they should have talked about this before getting married, implying that having a common ground in terms of understanding how children will fit into the relationship should be part of establishing relationships. Couples should have a similar logic in this regard, otherwise there are probably other misunderstandings.

Box 3. Division of work, family and work, personal and social responsibilities

The next part of the interview regarded the division of work, how they had worked this out, what is the best way, what are their satisfactions and frustrations in this regard. There were certainly cases where the division was seen as unfair, mostly with wife having an unfair burden, sometimes the husband, sometimes the husband agreed that the wife had an unfair burden and felt guilty. Some wives felt that they were not appreciated for the work that they did at home, taken for granted, isolated at home, or that is was simply not fair and thus had had much difficulties trying to have husbands understand this and change. Some had not discussed these things and felt frustrated. But most indicated that they had worked this out for themselves; the division of total work was not unfair, it was a team thing, we are in this together, it was a significant problem for others but not for themselves. It is what has to be done that counts, not fairness, or it was what you feel is fair that counts, not necessarily 50/50, but others said it was more fair if both contributed. Many saw that men were changing, especially younger men, but even retired men were looking for ways to make their contribution. Most had a traditional or neo-traditional arrangement, where women had more responsibility for things inside, and men for things outside. Some people, even women, felt that each had certain roles to fill, it was simply women's jobs to cook, that should not be taken away. Those who stayed home saw it as their responsibility to do the cooking, child care and housework. When women were working, the husbands helped especially with child care. Others put it in terms of the interests and ability of each person, and the other should be willing to help. Younger women who were not yet in a long-term relationship often said they would want to divide the housework 50/50, but also indicated that this may not be realistic.

When asked about difficulties in **balancing family and work responsibilities**, most explained the process of how they had worked this out, rather than talking about the frustrations. There was a predominant norm to the effect that it was best if the mother was at home with pre-school children, or work part time. Some women complained that all this fell on them, but others said that things had just naturally fallen into place, especially if they took a couple of years off. Some men said that they had not been able to balance things, that they were not the father that they wanted to be, yet felt good about their achievements at work.

In terms of things that would help, most focussed on flex-time, especially for times that children are sick, or there is a school holiday; that way they can make the arrangements needed at the various ages of children. But some said that if you have children, you should deal with it, it was not the employer's responsibility, even to have a longer leave was not fair to the employer. Day care was often as a given, with some demands for more funding and accessibility to day care. For instance, a single mother with two kids was working full-time, but had made arrangements, with day care on the way to work, the company was quite understanding and flexible, the parents were in the city for occasional help. Men spoke in terms of making accommodations like going to the children's games, seeking to ensure that the wife did not have the full burden. But it was clearly the women who made most of the accommodations, with some costs to their work status. Men were more likely to see family and work as two separate things, while women hold both in their minds at the same time, and make much more of the accommodations, as an extension of their larger role when the children were babies. It would appear that the burden is both internally and externally imposed on women.

In introducing the section on programs and services, the respondents were asked what was described as a general question: “Some people take the attitude that having children is a personal choice and the people who choose to have children should take full responsibility for them; others say that society has some responsibility to ensure the well-being of children; overall, where would you stand on this question?” Many reacted rather strongly to the question, often saying that having children was a personal responsibility, people should not have children if they cannot care for them; people need to be aware of what it takes to be a parent, it was your responsibility to make it work. But they also often said that the society has a basic responsibility to ensure that children have an adequate minimum in terms of care, safety, and especially education and health. If the parents are not able, it becomes the society’s responsibility to have a relatively high standard of basic responsibility for the children. Some said that children were not that expensive, and that most should be able to afford the necessities, often thinking of the out-of-pocket costs. Some said that if you have children, you should deal with it, everyday care was to be with parents, it was a personal decision and thus the need to be primarily responsible. But society should help those whose parents cannot care for them, certainly in the case of abuse or neglect. When asked specifically, most took it for granted that the society should provide education and health care, they often asked for more support with education (or they were against the cuts to education and health), and ensuring that the children are safe. Others spoke of making day care more affordable and accessible, more before and after school programs, or more extended leaves.

Table 1: Summary statistics on family change, Canada, 1941-1998

	1941	1951	1961	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	1998
Total fertility rate (average births per women)	2.83	3.49	3.85	2.12	1.78	1.65	1.59	1.71	1.62	1.54
Median age at first marriage										
Brides	23.0	22.0	21.1	21.3	21.6	22.5	23.9	25.1	26.3	
Grooms	26.3	24.8	24.0	23.5	23.7	24.6	25.8	27.0	28.3	
Divorces per 100,00 married couples	- -	180	180	600	990	1180	1302	1235	1130	1050
Common-law couples as a percent of all couples	- -	- -	- -	- -	0.7	6.4	8.2	11.2	13.7	
Births to non-married women as a percent of all births	4.0	3.8	4.5	9.0	10.9	14.2	18.8	28.6	36.8	
Births to women aged 30+ as a percent of all births	35.6	36.2	34.1	21.6	19.6	23.6	29.2	36.0	43.7	44.4
Lone parent families as a percent of all families with children	9.8	9.8	11.4	13.2	14.0	16.6	18.8	20.0	22.3	

Notes: For 1941-71 births to non-married women are "illegitimate births".

Source: Beaujot, 2000:89

Table 2: Ages at various family life transitions, birth cohorts 1916-20 to 1971-75, Canada, 1995

	---Birth Cohorts---											
	1916-20	1921-25	1926-30	1931-35	1936-40	1941-45	1946-50	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75
Median Age at:												
Home Leaving												
Men	22.9	22.0	21.9	21.2	21.8	22.0	21.8	21.5	21.8	22.7	23.2	23.6
Women	21.8	21.6	21.0	20.6	20.1	20.3	21.0	19.9	20.6	20.9	21.2	21.6
First Union												
Men	26.6	25.7	25.2	24.8	25.0	23.6	23.8	24.4	24.5	25.2	25.1	--
Women	23.4	22.9	22.0	21.9	21.7	21.4	22.0	21.5	21.8	22.7	22.7	22.9
First Marriage												
Men	26.6	25.7	25.2	25.0	25.1	23.6	24.0	25.6	26.4	28.7	--	--
Women	23.4	22.9	22.0	21.9	21.8	21.6	22.2	22.1	23.3	25.3	26.1	--
First Birth												
Men	29.6	28.8	28.6	27.3	27.7	26.5	27.5	29.3	29.9	31.2	--	--
Women	26.2	25.0	23.9	23.5	23.5	23.3	25.4	25.6	26.3	27.8	27.8	--
Last Birth												
Men	38.0	35.6	35.8	33.6	33.5	32.5	32.5	33.7	33.2	32.1	--	--
Women	35.6	34.5	33.7	31.8	30.1	29.8	30.6	30.3	31.0	30.6	--	--
First Child's Home-Leaving												
Men	49.4	47.5	48.1	47.0	48.4	47.9	49.3	--	--	--	--	--
Women	45.4	45.0	44.6	43.3	43.7	45.1	48.0	--	--	--	--	--
Last Child's Home-Leaving												
Men	57.6	56.6	59.2	57.1	57.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Women	56.7	57.1	56.3	53.0	54.6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mean Number of Births												
Men	2.9	3.1	2.6	2.9	2.5	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.5	--	--	--
Women	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.0	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.7	--	--	--
Cohabitations as Percentage of First Unions												
Men	1.9	3.2	1.8	4.4	6.3	9.3	16.1	30.3	39.3	49.9	67.1	--
Women	0.3	1.0	2.5	1.6	2.9	9.2	13.5	25.0	35.9	47.5	55.3	76.6
Proportions Separated witin 25 years of First marriage												
Men	0.03	0.05	0.09	0.09	0.17	0.24	0.27	0.39	--	--	--	--
Women	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.13	0.14	0.29	0.30	0.34	--	--	--	--

Source: Special tabulation from Statistics Canada, 1995 General Social Survey.

Table 3. Cohort Age-Specific Fertility Rates, for Cohorts who were 15-19 in 1938 to 1998, Canada

Year*	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
1938	26.6	146.2	196.7	152.6	87.5	25.9	1.4
1943	31.9	180.5	207.5	147.6	75.7	13.8	0.4
1948	42.8	207.4	222.9	140.1	44.8	6.3	0.3
1953	51.5	226.2	210.3	86.2	25.4	3.5	0.2
1958	58.8	225.8	148.7	65.9	18.8	3.0	0.1
1963	52.8	152.6	128.4	65.7	20.3	3.6	0.2
1968	43.0	113.4	123.8	69.3	24.7	4.4	0.2
1973	36.4	99.5	120.5	75.7	29.7	5.3	
1978	29.1	88.7	118.4	86.0	32.9		
1983	24.5	77.4	117.3	84.8			
1988	22.9	74.7	101.8				
1993	25.2	63.4					
1998	20.0						

* Year is when the cohort was aged 15-19.

Source: Based on special tabulation from Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

Table 4. Cumulative Cohort Fertility to Age 25, 30, 40 and 50, by Birth Cohort 1945 to 1970, Canada

Cohort	To Age 25	To Age 30	To Age 40	To Age 50
1945	1.05	1.70	2.11	2.12
1946	1.02	1.69	2.11	2.12
1947	1.05	1.69	2.12	2.14
1948	0.95	1.60	2.03	2.05
1949	0.88	1.52	1.96	1.98
1950	0.83	1.47	1.93	1.95
1951	0.79	1.42	1.88	1.91
1952	0.76	1.38	1.86	1.88
1953	0.73	1.36	1.84	1.87
1954	0.72	1.34	1.84	1.87
1955	0.70	1.31	1.82	1.84
1956	0.68	1.30	1.82	1.85
1957	0.66	1.27	1.81	1.84
1958	0.65	1.26	1.82	1.84
1959	0.62	1.24	1.82	1.85
1960	0.60	1.21	1.80	1.83
1961	0.58	1.18	1.78	1.81
1962	0.56	1.16	1.77	1.80
1963	0.53	1.14	1.74	1.77
1964	0.51	1.12	1.73	1.76
1965	0.49	1.10	1.70	1.73
1966	0.49	1.09		
1967	0.51	1.09		
1968	0.50	1.07		
1969	0.50	1.04		
1970	0.49			

Source: Based on special tabulation from Demography Division, Statistics Canada.

Table 5. Parity Progression Ratios for the First Three Births by Ages 39 and 44, by Birth Cohort of Women Born 1931-1955, Canada, 1995

Age and Parity Progression Ratio	Birth Cohort of Woman				
	1931-35	1936-40	1941-45	1946-50	1951-55
	Year of Reaching Age 20				
	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75
	Year of Completing Age 39				
	1971-75	1976-80	1981-85	1986-90	1991-95
	Year of Completing Age 44				
	1976-80	1981-85	1986-90	1991-95	
	per 1,000 Women				
By Age 39					
a_0	837	886	875	847	824
a_1	842	862	895	845	846
a_2	783	679	469	419	457
By Age 44					
a_0	837	891	875	851	n
a_1	842	857	895	840	n
a_2	783	673	471	412	n

Note: a_0: proportion of women who proceed to have at least a first child;
a1: proportion of women who, having had a first child, proceed to have at least a second;
a2: proportion of women who, having had two children, proceed to have at least a third.

Source: Dumas and Bélanger, 1997: 44.

Table 6. Intended births, by age and sex, Canada, 1995

	0	1	2	3+	Don't Know	Average
Men 20-49						
20-29	6.6	6.3	45.5	32.3	9.4	2.4
30-39	9.8	10.2	38.8	30.3	11.0	2.3
40-49	17.0	13.9	36.3	26.8	5.9	1.9
Women 20-49						
20-29	4.6	7.0	35.5	41.7	11.2	2.6
30-39	9.7	12.2	36.4	29.6	12.1	2.2
40-49	18.1	15.2	37.3	28.2	1.1	1.9

Source: Special tabulation for the 1995 General Social Survey, public use file.

Table 7. Average intended births, by various characteristics or respondents, ages 20-49, Canada, 1995

		20-29	30-39	40-49	20-49
Sex	N=5793				
Men		2.4	2.3	1.9	2.2
Women		2.6	2.2	1.9	2.2
Union Status	N=5790				
Single		2.3	1.6	0.7	1.9
1st union		2.7	2.4	2.1	2.4
2nd+ union		2.7	2.3	2.1	2.3
Post union		2.5	2.2	2.0	2.1
Age at First Birth	N=3753				
Under 25		3.1	2.5	2.4	2.6
25-29		3.2	2.5	2.2	2.5
30+		- -	2.7	2.0	2.3
Interval Between First and Second Birth	N=2785				
Under 30 months		3.6	2.8	2.7	2.8
30-52 months		3.1	2.6	2.3	2.5
53+ months		3.0	2.4	2.0	2.3
Education Completed	N=5716				
No completed secondary		2.5	2.3	2.1	2.3
Secondary complete		2.5	2.2	1.9	2.2
Post-secondary complete		2.5	2.3	1.8	2.2
Other		- -	2.1	1.9	1.9
Work Activity Past 12 Months	N=5715				
Men worked		2.4	2.3	2.0	2.2
Men did not work		2.3	2.2	1.9	2.2
Women worked		2.4	1.9	1.7	2.0
Women did not work		2.9	2.6	2.3	2.6
Number of Siblings	N=5769				
Zero		2.0	2.0	1.5	1.8
One		2.4	2.1	1.6	2.1
Two or more		2.6	2.3	2.0	2.2
Birthplace	N=5793				
Canada		2.5	2.2	1.9	2.2
Europe or North America		2.7	2.5	1.9	2.3
Other		2.7	2.5	2.1	2.4
Religious Attendance*	N=4714				
Weekly		3.0	2.7	2.2	2.6
Other		2.5	2.2	1.9	2.2
Would Stay Married for the Sake of the Children	N=5737				
Yes		2.7	2.5	2.1	2.4
No		2.4	2.1	1.8	2.1
Don't know		2.6	2.1	1.8	2.1

* Only asked for persons who have a religion

Source: same as Table 6.

Table 8: Time use of total population, Canada, 1986, 1992, 1998

	Average Hours per Day in Population Aged 15+					
	1986		1992		1998	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Total productive activity	7.5	7.4	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8
Paid work and education	5.6	3.3	5.1	3.3	5.0	3.4
Unpaid work	1.9	4.1	2.6	4.5	2.7	4.4
Personal Care	10.8	11.2	10.3	10.8	10.2	10.6
Leisure/ free time	5.7	5.3	6.0	5.5	6.0	5.6
Total	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0

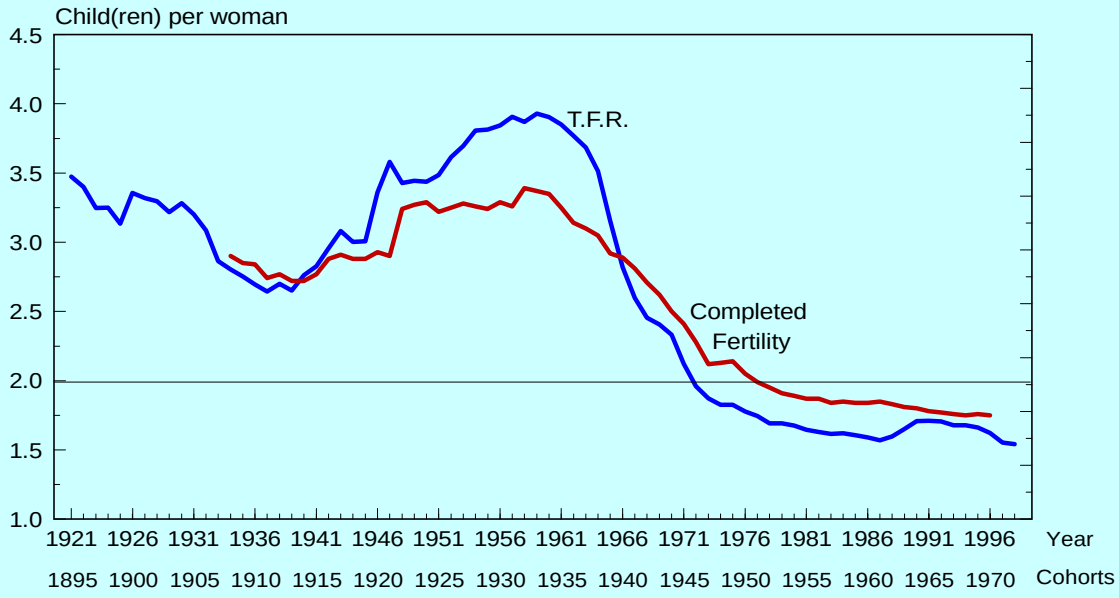
Sources: Beaujot, 2000: 207; Statistics Canada, 1999, No 12F0080XIE, 1999: 5.
General Social Survey, 1986, 1992, 1998.

Table 9. Relative risks of second and third births, by various characteristics of women, Canada, 1995

		Model			
		2nd Birth		3rd Birth	
		Univariate	Multivariate	Univariate	Multivariate
Demographic Variables					
Period of Birth	-Born Before 1945	**1.21**	0.98	**1.76**	**1.77**
	-Born Between 1945 and 1954	1.07	0.96	0.87	1.10
	-Born Between 1955 and 1964	1.07	1.07	0.91	1.08
	-Born After 1965	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Age at First Birth	-Less Than 25	**1.99**	**2.08**	**2.36**	**2.55**
	-Between 25 and 29	**1.60**	**1.59**	1.31	**1.60**
	-30 or More	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Interval Between the First Two Births	-Less Than 30 Months	-	-	1.00	1.00
	-Between 30 and 53 Months	-	-	**0.57**	**0.66**
	-More Than 53 Months	-	-	**0.29**	**0.31**
Marital Status	-Common-Law Union	-	**0.79**	0.93	1.10
	-Not in Union	-	**0.26**	**0.53**	**0.62**
	-Married	-	1.00	1.00	1.00
Socioeconomic Variables					
Employment Status	-Working	**0.69**	**0.76**	**0.49**	**0.64**
	-Not Employed	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Education	-No Secondary Diploma	**1.12**	1.07	**1.64**	**1.30**
	-Secondary Diploma	0.92	1.00	1.00	1.00
	-Post-Secondary	1.00	1.00	0.89	1.00
Cultural Variables					
Region	-High fertility	**1.12**	1.10	**1.20**	**1.16**
	-Others	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Number of Siblings	-No siblings	1.10	1.08	1.05	0.95
	-1 or 2	**1.19**	**1.15**	1.00	1.05
	-3 and more	1.00	1.00	**1.34**	1.00
Sex of First Child	-Boy	0.92	**0.93**	-	-
	-Girl	1.00	1.00	-	-
Sex of First Two Children	-2 boys	-	-	-	**1.30**
	-2 girls	-	-	-	**1.46**
	-One boy and one girl	-	-	-	1.00
Religious Practice	-Weekly	**1.28**	**1.26**	**1.59**	**1.46**
	-Others	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Place of Birth	-Born in Canada	**0.83**	1.00	1.00	1.00
	-Europe and North America	**0.81**	**0.81**	**0.76**	**0.82**
	-Other countries	1.00	0.85	0.98	**1.50**

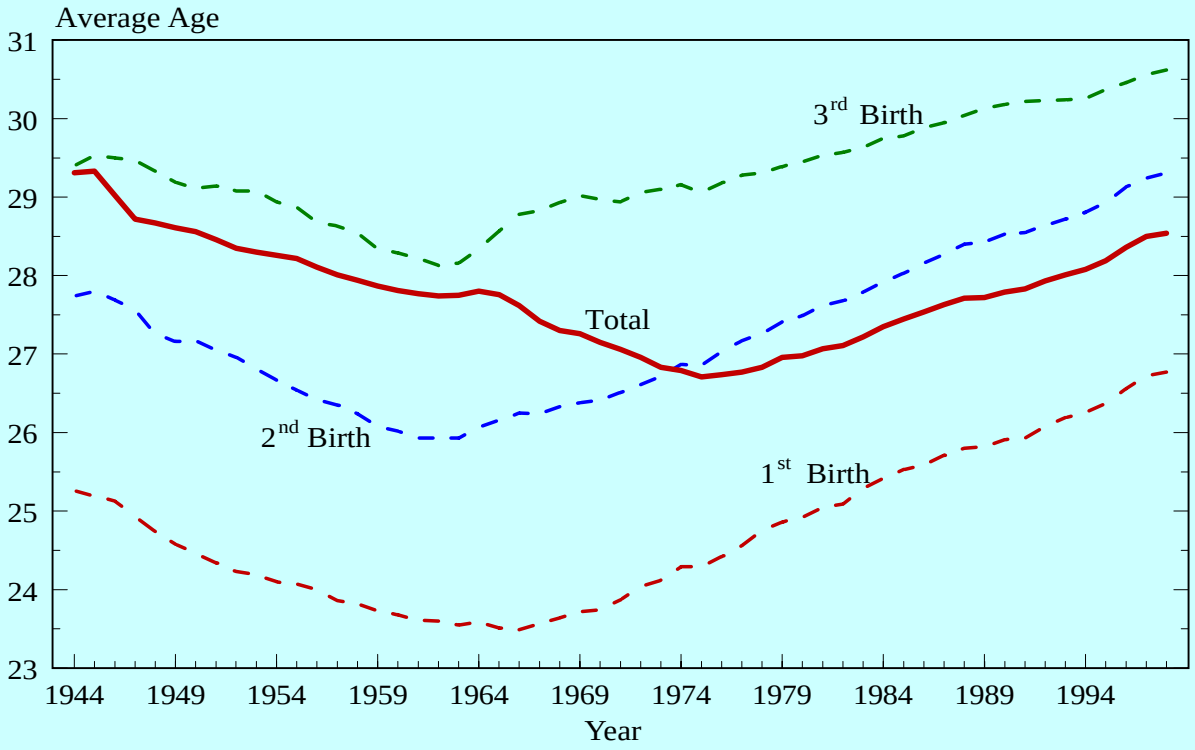
Note: Risk ratios that are statistically significant at .05 level are bolded.
Source: Special tabluation based on Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1995.

Figure 1. Total Fertility Rate 1921-1998 and Completed Cohort Fertility 1895-1970, Canada



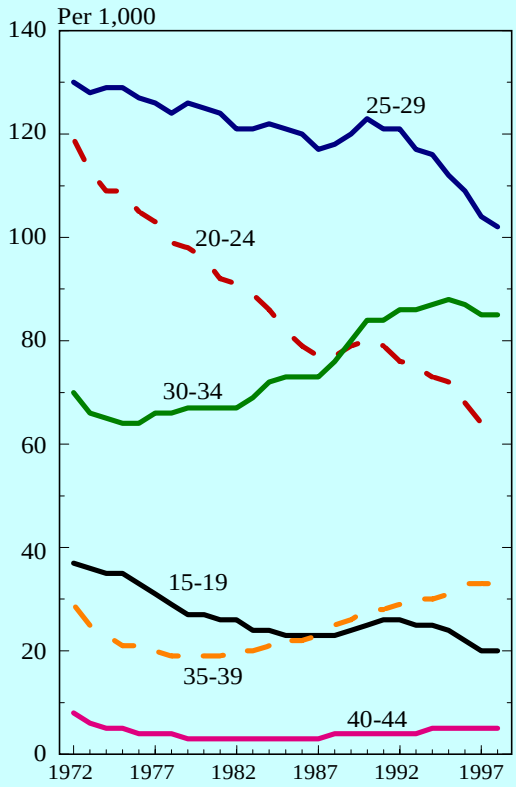
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Health Status and Vital Statistics Section and Demography Division, Population Estimates Section.

Figure 2. Mean Age of Mothers at Birth by Birth Order, Canada, 1944-1998



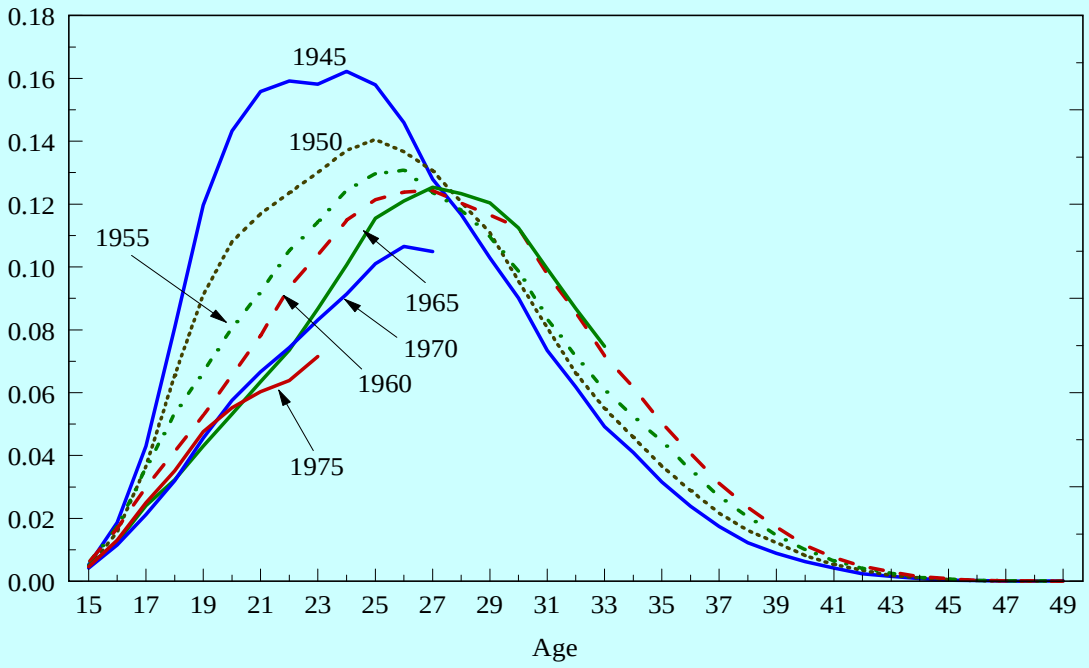
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Health Status and Vital Statistics Section and Demography Division, Population Estimates Section.

Figure 3. Fertility Rate by Age Group, Canada, 1972-1998



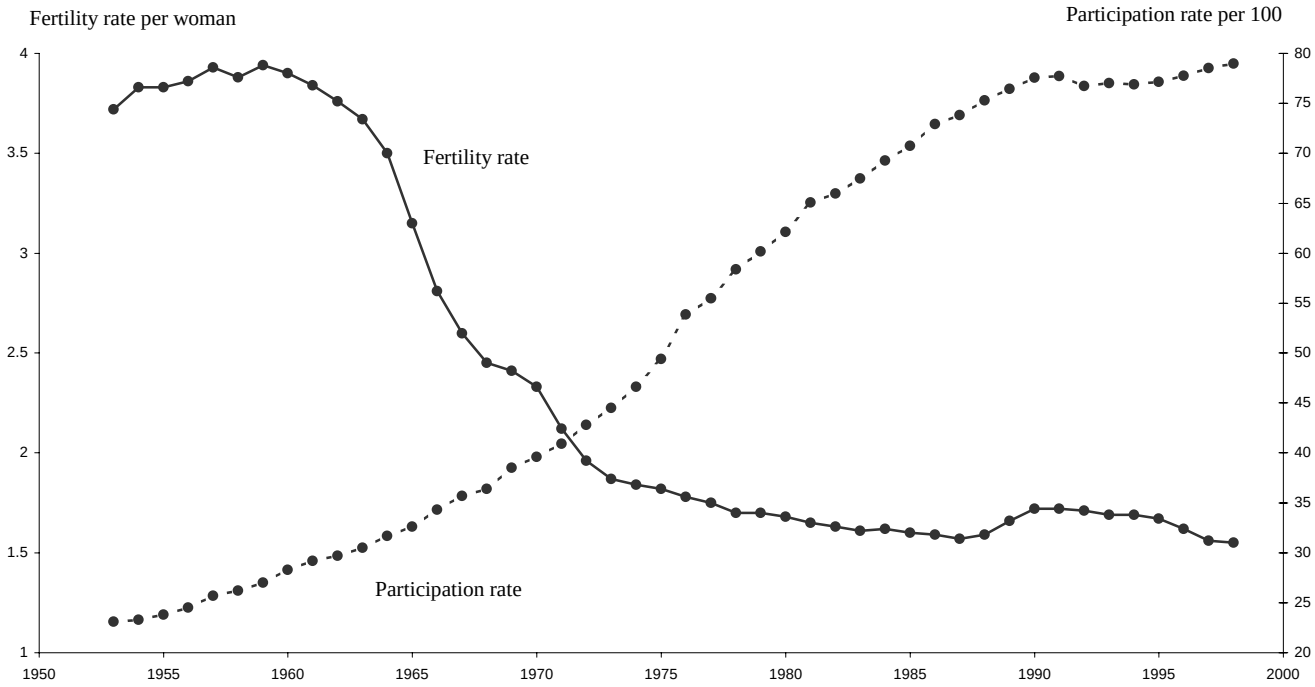
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Health Status and Vital Statistics Section and Demography Division, Population Estimates Section.

Figure 4. Age-Specific Fertility Rates, Selected Birth Cohorts of Mothers, Canada



Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Health Status and Vital Statistics Section and Demography Division, Population Estimates Section.

Figure 5 Total fertility rate and labour force participation rate of women aged 25-44, Canada, 1953-1998



Source: Data for years prior to 1976 obtained from Historical statistics of Canada, labour force statistics, annual data derived from the Labour Force Survey. Data for the years 1976 through 1998 obtained through CANSIM, matrix 3472, annual data, derived from the Labour Force Survey. Source of fertility data is given in Figure 1.