The Sociology of Risk and Social Demographic Change

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Recommended Citation
Hall, David (2001) “The Sociology of Risk and Social Demographic Change,” PSC Discussion Papers Series: Vol. 15 : Iss. 12 , Article 1. Available at: https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/pscpapers/vol15/iss12/1
The Sociology of Risk
And Social Demographic Change

by
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Discussion Paper no. 01-12

May 2001

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- Paper presented for presentation at the annual meetings of the Canadian Population Society, Quebec City, Quebec, May 27-29, 2001. Please direct all correspondence to David Hall, Department of Sociology, Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario P1B 8L7 Canada.
INTRODUCTION:

In recent decades demographers have documented a number of remarkable changes in social-demographic behavior in the more industrialized and democratic societies. Unprecedented shifts in family formation such as increased cohabitation, divorce, and non-marital fertility, a rising age at 1st marriage, and sharply declining fertility, have been described as a “second demographic transition” by Dirk Van de Kaa (1987) and Ron Lesthaeghe (1995).

While demographers have been successful at tracking and modeling various aspects of the second demographic transition, as a discipline it has been less successful at integrating data, models, and theory on the topic. Indeed, this shortcoming is what recently inspired Ron Lesthaeghe to call for a new theoretical approach to the study of family formation…a multicausal and synthetic approach (Lesthaeghe, 1998: 7-8).

In response, the main purpose of this paper is to examine one of the central concepts derived from the social theory of Anthony Giddens, a concept which, along with others developed by Giddens, could materially contribute to the “overarching” theory of family formation advocated by Lesthaeghe. Specifically, my focus is on exploring the connection between the development of “risk” in modern society, and a number of key trends that characterize the second-demographic transition.
THE CONSEQUENCES OF MODERNITY: RISK SOCIETY

Despite the enormous influence on modern sociological theory of Anthony Giddens, demography has been slow to mine his ideas and insights. For instance, in research from Hall (1996), and in the work of Canadian demographer Melinda Mills (2000), only two of Giddens’ theoretical concepts on family formation have been used to analyze demographic phenomenon.

A third concept derived from Giddens’ work, which has yet to be applied in social demography, involves the *sociological* conception of risk. According to Giddens (1990; 1991) one of the major consequences of modernization has been a tremendous intensification of real and perceived risk. Indeed, Giddens (1999) and sociologists such as Ulrich Beck (1992; 1999) have described modern society as a *risk society* or *risk culture*. What Giddens and Beck mean by this term is that risk has become a central organizing principle guiding both individual and institutional behavior in contemporary society. Granting that hazards and danger have always been a factor in human existence, risk society theorists such as Giddens and Beck maintain that a heightened awareness or consciousness of risk, and sustained effort to manage or contain risk, are defining features of modernity.
CAUSES OF THE RISK SOCIETY

While a full discussion of the reasons for the development of modern risk society or risk culture are beyond the scope of this paper, the decline of tradition and religion, and the rise of global capitalism, individualism, and reflexivity are heavily implicated. More directly, Giddens (1990) argues that in pre-modern societies, forces such as tradition and religion served as major ways for both explaining and coping with most threats, catastrophes, and tragedies. As well, in pre-modern societies, most dangers were accepted as things over which humans had little if any control. Instead, these hazards and catastrophes were attributed to fate, God’s will, and so forth.

The erosion of tradition and religion in the west, combined with the acceleration of technological, political and cultural change of globalization, has fundamentally altered our understanding of risk. Instead of viewing most hazards as “givens”, people increasingly see risks as products of human action, and as things over which humans exercise control and responsibility. This is true for even abstract, far-reaching and potentially serious risks such as those associated with global economic and environmental change, overpopulation, or population aging. In short, risks and our responses to them are understood by most people as closely connected to incremental advances in human knowledge and the decision-making that flows from this knowledge (Lupton, 1999:17-33).
Furthermore, Giddens (1991; 1999) attributes our mounting preoccupation with risk as a corollary of our growing emphasis on anticipating and planning the future. Pursuing this notion, it is important to note that we have little alternative other than to adopt this “future-orientation” because modern individualism brings with it a growing requirement for individuals to construct their own lives in the absence of stable, mandatory, and traditional norms and lifestyles. Accordingly, while individualism clearly means more freedom to choose from a range of social options, individualism also means having to deal with the inherent uncertainty of these proliferating choices. This expansion of choice and uncertainty is most apparent in the areas of personal identity, education, careers, and family relations (Lupton, 1999:69-71).

Looked at from a different angle, risk has emerged as a central organizing principle in our society because there few aspects of individual action that follow a socially preordained path. Instead, the individual living in a risk society routinely encounters a world of open social possibilities, uncertainty, and contested knowledge.

In addressing the question of how individuals cope with the contingent and open-ended nature of social life, risk theorists highlight the role of reflexivity. Modern reflexivity involves a more or less continuous monitoring of social action and contexts by individuals. The information and knowledge gained from this monitoring influences subsequent decisions and behaviors by actors. As such, reflexivity is
an ongoing and active response by individuals to systemic uncertainty and risk. The greater the risks associated with a decision, the more reflexively informed the decision is likely to be (Lupton, 1999:58-81).

For example, and as Giddens points out, anyone currently contemplating marriage in western societies will be aware to some extent of the high risk of divorce, and of various other changes affecting family life. This knowledge will be gleaned through monitoring a wide range of sources including personal experience, official data, and the mass media. More important, this reflexive awareness will inform a person’s decision to marry, delay marrying, or forgo marrying in favor of some less risky alternative such as cohabiting or living single (Giddens, 1990-42-43). It follows from this that a reflexive awareness of family-related risks should decisively inform individual decisions involving family formation.

To summarize, risk has steadily shifted, or been downloaded on to the individual over the course of modernization, and as a consequence, individuals must now reflexively assess risks whenever they make important life choices. Indeed, this sociological conception of risk can be seen as a logical extension of Lesthaeghe’s thesis of an ideational shift toward secular individualism in the west, and the link between secular individualism and the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988). In a society where very little can be taken for granted for very long, and where everything from local tap water and beef to nuclear weapons and global climate change has become a popular risk object, we should hardly be surprised at a theoretical connection between transformations in risk and
transformations in family formation. Indeed, it would be reasonable to expect a reciprocal relation between change in risk and demographic change in view of the burgeoning choices, personal salience, and potential for reflexivity in the realm of family formation.

Moving beyond Giddens and Beck, the literature on the sociology of risk has identified six general types of risk: environmental, lifestyle, medical, crime, economic and interpersonal (Lupton, 1999:13-14). While there much overlap in this typology, and, in principle, all of these types could be related to demographic change, this study focussed on the type of risk that seemed to have an obvious connection to recent demographic change….interpersonal risks, or risks associated with intimate relationships such as cohabitation, marriage, and parenting.

Several scholars have theorized on the risks of modern intimacy. For example, employing his ideal type of the “pure relationship”, Giddens (1992) has stressed that the essential feature of contemporary cohabitation and marriage is that these relationships are not socially anchored to kinship networks, religion, tradition, or community. Rather, modern “pure relationships” are reflexively organized by the couple themselves, and serve primarily as “sites” for self-actualization. These features make our intimate relationships inherently unstable and unpredictable.

Likewise, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) have described how growing individualism has rendered cohabitation and marriage “empty social categories” that couples must fill themselves. In particular, individuals who want to live
together today must negotiate, define, and justify the characteristics of their relationship on an ongoing basis. And while this tends to make modern intimate relationships more democratic, it also makes them more chaotic.

Along similar lines, a widely publicized recent book by Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee (2000) detailed the psychosocial risks arising from divorce for the couple and especially for their children. Wallerstein’s study on the risks to children of a parental divorce is part of an emerging body of research that has highlighted various parenting risks. Indeed, as Lupton (1999) argues, the even the earliest stages of parenthood—conception and pregnancy—have become infused with the discourse of risk. For instance, women who are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy are advised to have regular medical examinations and latest tests; to abstain from tobacco and alcohol, to avoid contact with numerous drugs and chemicals, to exercise regularly and appropriately, to maintain a nutritious diet and positive emotional state, and so on. (Lupton, 1999:59-85).

While the discourse of risk has clearly infused pregnancy, if anything, risk anxiety for parents increases once the children actually arrive. Jackson and Scott (1999) have detailed the manifold parenting risks which have become more salient over the years. Among the prominent sources of parental risk anxiety are pedophiles and sexual predators, school violence, illegal drugs, adolescent sexuality and the AIDS,
and a host of educational and career planning issues. The point is that parenting has become an activity that is very much organized around risk awareness, risk anxiety, and efforts to manage risks to children.

On the strength of these theoretical insights on the transformation of risk in modern society, I derived the following hypotheses in order to empirically assess the connection between risk and key trends that define the second demographic transition.

**HYPOTHESES**

1. The more risk that individuals associate with intimate relationships, the more likely they are to support cohabitation. The assumption is that cohabitation represents a tactic for mitigating interpersonal risks.

2. The more risk that individuals associate with intimate relationships, the more likely they are to favor an older age at entry into these relationships. The assumption in this case is that a higher age at cohabitation and marriage is a useful strategy for managing interpersonal risks associated with intimacy.

3. The more risk that individuals associate with intimate relationships, the lower their fertility intentions will be. This hypothesis assumes that minimizing fertility is an effective way of minimizing interpersonal risk.

4. Higher parenting risk will be associated with lower fertility intentions. The assumption is that containing fertility will contain the parenting aspect of interpersonal risk.
DATA AND METHODS

A major problem with empirically assessing new theoretical ideas is the dearth of relevant data from existing sources. One has to begin somewhere, however, so in order to generate some useable data, a survey was developed and administered to a convenience sample of 251 sociology undergraduates at Nipissing University. Clearly, given the small, unrepresentative sample, the goal of the project was not to test a fully-specified and generalizable model. Instead, the goal of the research was to operationalize interpersonal risk in order to determine if risk was empirically associated with key indicators of demographic change.

For analytic purposes, interpersonal risk was designated the independent variable, and a total of 40 questions on the survey were developed in an effort to measure this variable. A total of five dimensions of interpersonal risk emerged from the data, and Table 1 shows the survey questions that were summed to form an index measuring a dimension which was labeled relationship risk or \textit{relrisk}. Presumably, a higher score on this index translates into a higher risk that a current or future intimate relationship will be dissolved.

\textbf{TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE}

The second risk index operationalized the dimension of pregnancy risk, and was formed by adding the responses to the questionnaire items listed in Table 2. These items captured respondent agreement with statements on several pregnancy risks….ranging from the need to abstain from alcohol and tobacco, to the
importance of medical intervention and surveillance to assure the health of the mother and fetus. The summed index was called *pregrisk*.

**TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE**

Looking at Table 3, the questionnaire items in this table measured a dimension that has been termed exogenous parenting risks or *exorisk*. In attempting to put together reliable and content valid indices, two sets of risks associated with parenting emerged from the data...exogenous parenting risks and endogenous parenting risks. The exogenous parenting risk index shown in Table 3 consists of risk indicators that are notable by the extent to which these hazards are culturally or socially mediated. To illustrate, a respondent’s perception of the threat posed from pedophile, drugs and alcohol, or school violence is likely to be heavily influenced by political agendas and consumption of the mass media.

**TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE**

On the other hand, Table 4, lists what were called endogenous parenting risks or *endrisk*. These items deal with risks that appear more intrinsic to the modern parenting role. For instance, the survey questions summed to create this index included statements on the vital role of parents in assuring their children’s
educational achievement, and on parental responsibility for their children’s actions until the latter reach adulthood.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that risk is not only associated with doing something, but risk can also arise from NOT doing something. Accordingly, questionnaire items were developed that measured the obvious risks from NOT having children. The four items in Table 5 combined to form an index that operationalized this dimension of interpersonal risk and the index was called *nonrisk*.

On balance, this initial effort at measuring interpersonal risk was successful. Although 10 of the survey items were not useable, responses to the remaining 30 questions were combined into 5 reasonably reliable, content valid, and normally distributed indices.
Turning to the dependent variables, Table 6a provides the percentage distribution and descriptive statistics for intended fertility, while Table 6b shows the descriptive statistics for other key demographic indicators measured in the survey. The tables require little elaboration other than to review the dependent variables in the study which were: intended fertility, ideal age for a man to cohabit, ideal age for a woman to cohabit, ideal age for a man to marry, ideal age for a woman to marry, respondent approval of common-law unions where the couple have no intention of marrying, and respondent approval of common law couples having children when the couple have no intention of marrying. While not exhaustive, these variables all reflect demographic changes that characterize the second demographic transition.

**TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE**
RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Table 7 summarizes the results of a series of standard multiple regressions which were conducted in order to empirically test the hypotheses. Obviously, given the nature of the sample, and limited aims of the project, the goal was to determine if a real relationship could be uncovered between the indicators of interpersonal risk and demographic change. As an important aside, of the five indices, only pregrisk was substantially skewed. The other four indices were more or less normally distributed. Further, regression diagnostics revealed that multicollinearity was not a serious problem in the independent variables.

To begin with, the multiple correlation coefficients show that interpersonal risk was most successful in accounting for variations in intended fertility, ideal age to marry for men and women, and approval of childbearing within common-law unions. The risk indices explained little variability in the ideal age for cohabiting, and only a small amount of variance in respondent approval of living common-law with no intent to marry.

Focussing on model 1, which regressed intended fertility on the five risk indices, the strongest negative predictor of fertility was relrisk or the index measuring the risk of relationship dissolution. This was followed by exorisk which captured exogenous parenting risks. On the other hand, the nonrisk index that measured the risks to relationships of forgoing childbearing had the strongest positive link to intended fertility. Surprisingly, the pregrisk index was also positively associated with intended fertility. Net of the other risk indices, each unit increase in the pregrisk
index produced an increase of .164 in intended fertility. Because there is so little variation in intended fertility, this is a substantial positive impact. Overall, while the results of model 1 were consistent with hypothesis 3, hypothesis 4 received only qualified support from this regression. Indeed, heightened sensitivity to pregnancy risks is connected to higher rather than lower intended fertility…an unexpected finding that hints at a more complex relationship between risk and intentions than envisioned.

Moving on to model 3 and model 5, which regressed the indices on the ideal age for men and women to marry, there was consistency in the results with \textit{relrisk, pregrisk, and endrisk} having noteworthy effects in both models. As hypothesis 2 stated, a higher risk of relationship dissolution was associated with a higher ideal age at marriage for both sexes…and given the distribution of this variable the impact was not trivial. Meaningful coefficients between the pregnancy and parenting risk indices and ideal age at marriage were not anticipated. Accordingly, the finding that changes in \textit{pregrisk} and \textit{endrisk} do produce changes in age at marriage, but not in age at cohabitation, implies that parenting remains more embedded in marital than in common-law unions. It is worth mentioning that \textit{pregrisk} and \textit{endrisk} produced opposite effects on the dependent variable….with higher \textit{pregrisk} scores producing a lower age at marriage, while higher \textit{endrisk} scores produced a higher ideal marriage age.

Further evidence to support a stronger link between parenting and marriage can be seen in model 7, which regressed the five indices on respondent approval of common
law couples having children when the couple have no intention of marrying.

Consistent with hypothesis 1, a unit increase in the relrisk index produced a moderately large jump in respondent approval. Also, both the nonrisk and pregrisk indices were inversely associated with respondent approval. In the case of the coefficient for nonrisk, there is empirical support for hypothesis 1.

In contrast, model 2 and model 4, that regressed the indices on ideal age at cohabitation provided little evidence in support of hypothesis 1. Not only did the measures of interpersonal risk collectively explain hardly any of the variance in the dependent variable, but the only non-trivial predictor was the exorisk index. The peculiar effect of exogenous parenting risk on age at cohabitation suggests that the former may be capturing a broader risk anxiety than is apparent from looking at the indicators. More important, changes in relationship risk produced no discernable change in age at cohabitation.

In view of the constraints of the sample, the only conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the concept of risk shows both theoretical and empirical promise. Clearly, the conceptual and operational dimensions of risk need to be refined, and representative samples studied, if that promise is to be realized. And while the work of Giddens and other risk theorists has enormous potential value, insights from social psychology and microeconomics will likely have to be incorporated in order to fully understand the connection between modern risk and the second demographic transition.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Table 1, Percentage Distribution of Relationship Risk Indicators, Nipissing University, 2001

The list below covers various reasons that people give for ending a common-law relationship. For each of the reasons listed below, please indicate how important YOU would regard them as reasons for splitting up a common-law relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>VERY IMPORTANT</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT</th>
<th>NOT IMPORTANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and/or drug abuse by partner</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of love by partner</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect by partner</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to agree with partner on household finances</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner refuses to do their fair share of the housework</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner is unfaithful</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual relationship with partner is unsatisfactory</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough common interests with partner</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to get along with partner’s friends and/or relatives</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner does not support you in achieving your own goals</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR RELATIONSHIP RISK (RELRISK) INDEX:

Mean = 24.36/ Median = 25.00/ Mode = 25.00
Variance = 5.28/ SD = 2.29
Cronbach’s Alpha = .7653
N = 235
Table 2, Percentage Distribution of Pregnancy Risk Indicators, Nipissing University, 2001

This section consists of statements regarding various family-related issues. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the most appropriate number. *(For example, circling the number 5 would indicate that you strongly agree with the statement, while circling the number 1 would indicate that you strongly disagree with the statement, and so forth).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a woman becomes pregnant, she should carefully watch her diet to ensure proper nutrition for the fetus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pregnant woman should take care to avoid exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pregnant woman needs to see her doctor regularly throughout the pregnancy to monitor her health as well as the health of the fetus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most pregnant women should have medical tests to ensure the health of the fetus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman should never smoke while pregnant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While pregnant, a woman should not drink alcohol</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR PREGNANCY RISK** *(PREGRISK)* **INDEX:**

- Mean = 27.67
- Median = 28.00
- Mode = 29.00
- Variance = 2.81
- SD = 1.67
- Cronbach’s Alpha = .7438
- N = 239
Table 3, Percentage Distribution of Exogenous Parenting Risk Indicators, Nipissing University, 2001

This section consists of statements regarding various family-related issues. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the most appropriate number. (For example, circling the number 5 would indicate that you strongly agree with the statement, while circling the number 1 would indicate that you strongly disagree with the statement, and so forth).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedophiles and child molesters are more of a threat than ever before.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School violence is getting worse over time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating disorders are a serious and growing problem for children and teenagers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and illegal drug use among young people jeopardizes their lives.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is very important to “streetproof” children in order to protect them from harm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EXOGENOUS PARENTING RISK (*EXORISK*) INDEX:

Mean = 20.72/ Median = 21.00/ Mode = 19.00
Variance = 6.23/ SD = 2.49
Cronbach’s Alpha = .6810
N = 237
Table 4, Percentage Distribution of Endogenous Parenting Risk Indicators, Nipissing University, 2001

This section consists of statements regarding various family-related issues. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the most appropriate number. (For example, circling the number 5 would indicate that you strongly agree with the statement, while circling the number 1 would indicate that you strongly disagree with the statement, and so forth).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents are as important as teachers in ensuring that their children succeed in school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until their children reach adulthood, parents are responsible for their children’s actions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is increasingly difficult for parents to avoid making mistakes when raising their kids</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents always need to monitor what their children are viewing on television.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents must be careful when they discipline their children since it is easy to harm a child’s development.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ENDOGENOUS PARENTING RISK (ENDRISK) INDEX:

Mean = 19.63/ Median = 19.00/ Mode = 19.00
Variance = 5.07/ SD = 2.25
Cronbach’s Alpha = .6756
N = 239
Table 5, Percentage Distribution of Non-Parenting Risk Indicators, Nipissing University, 2001

This section consists of statements regarding various family-related issues. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the most appropriate number. (For example, circling the number 5 would indicate that you strongly agree with the statement, while circling the number 1 would indicate that you strongly disagree with the statement, and so forth).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childless couples have less stable relationships than couples with children.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a child increases the quality of a couple’s relationship.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family law reforms ensure that divorced parents can obtain adequate child-support payments from their ex-spouses</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For most women, having children will have no negative effects on their careers.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR NON-PARENTING RISK (NONRISK) INDEX:

Mean = 11.80/ Median = 12.00/ Mode = 11.00
Variance = 4.49/ SD = 2.12
Cronbach’s Alpha = .6304
N = 238
Table 6a, Fertility Intentions, Nipissing University, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children Respondent Intends to Have</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Open-ended question on survey was “How many children do you intend to have? (Please include any children that you already have)

Table 6b, Descriptive Statistics for Other Demographic Variables, Nipissing University, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal age for a woman to enter a common-law union. ¹</td>
<td>21.88</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal age for a man to enter a common-law union.</td>
<td>22.46</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal age for a woman to marry. ²</td>
<td>24.41</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal age for a man to marry.</td>
<td>25.09</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve of living common-law if couple has no intention of getting married. ³</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve of common-law couple having children if couple has no intention of getting married. ⁴</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Open-ended survey question was “Ideally, how old do you think a woman should be before entering a common-law relationship?”
² Open-ended survey question was “Ideally, how old do you think a woman should be before she gets married?”
³ Response categories ranged from 1 (Completely Disapprove) to 7 (Completely Approve).
⁴ Response categories ranged from 1 (Completely Disapprove) to 7 (Completely Approve).


Table 7, Multiple Regression of Risk Indices on Second Demographic Transition Indicators, Nipissing University, 2001

Regression Coefficients (Unstandardized)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables (Risk Indices)</th>
<th>Model 1&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Model 2&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Model 3&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Model 4&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Model 5&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Model 6&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Model 7&lt;sup&gt;g&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELRISK</strong></td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREGRISK</strong></td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>-.256</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXORISK</strong></td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENDRISK</strong></td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NONRISK</strong></td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-.145</td>
<td>-.289</td>
<td>-.213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
R = \begin{array}{c}
.627 \\
.263 \\
.497 \\
.289 \\
.549 \\
.403 \\
.512
\end{array}
\]

\[
R \text{ Square} = \begin{array}{c}
.393 \\
.069 \\
.247 \\
.084 \\
.301 \\
.162 \\
.262
\end{array}
\]

**NOTES**

<sup>a</sup> Dependent variable is intended fertility.

<sup>b</sup> Dependent variable is ideal age for men to cohabit.

<sup>c</sup> Dependent variable is ideal age for men to marry.

<sup>d</sup> Dependent variable is ideal age for women to cohabit.

<sup>e</sup> Dependent variable is ideal age for women to marry.

<sup>f</sup> Dependent variable is approval of common-law unions with no intent to marry.

<sup>g</sup> Dependent variable is approval of common-law couples having children when the couple have no intent to marry.