

RECONCEPTUALIZING THE NUPTIALITY/FERTILITY RELATIONSHIP IN CANADA IN A NEW AGE

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Résumé — "D'abord vient l'amour; puis vient le mariage; Joanie arrive avec une voiture d'enfant." Il se peut que ce simple ordre temporel pendant si longtemps tenu pour certain en Amérique du Nord ne soit plus valable. Avec le taux de nuptialité qui baisse, le taux de natalité à un niveau bas historique, les naissances qui surviennent en dehors du mariage civil, et des accroissements dramatiques en paternité non mariée après dissolution maritale, il se peut que les hypothèses précédentes au sujet du mariage comme condition préalable à la gestation et au sujet du mariage qui précède la gestation soient contestables. Dans cette étude, nous avons essayé de redéfinir notre concept de la fécondité afin d'expliquer les types qui émergent en Amérique du Nord. Les contributions de la théorie sociologique féministe et de la sociologie familiale y sont examinées en ce qui concerne leur aptitude à améliorer la compréhension du rapport nuptialité/fécondité.

Abstract — "First comes love; then comes marriage; along comes Joanie with a baby carriage." This straightforward temporal sequence so long taken for granted in North America may no longer be valid. With marriage rates declining, birth rates at an historic low, births occurring outside legal marriage, and dramatic increases in single parenthood after marital dissolution, it may be that previous assumptions about marriage as a prerequisite for childbearing and about marriage preceding childbearing must be questioned. In this paper, an attempt is made to reconceptualize fertility

to account for the emerging patterns in North America. Contributions of feminist sociological theory and of family sociology are explored for their capacities to enhance understanding of the nuptiality/fertility relationship.

Key Words — nuptiality, fertility, women

One need not be a professional demographer to know that in Canada in the late 1980s, marriage and childbearing are changing. Whether viewed with alarm or welcomed as overdue, changes in patterns of marriage and childbearing are dramatic, continuing and not likely to be short-lived. The birth rate in Canada is as low as it has ever been. Marriage, although continuing to be popular, is now entered into later in life and competes as never before with both cohabitation and remaining single. It is thus not surprising that the long-standing relationship between nuptiality and fertility is weakening.

In this paper, the traditional demographic conceptualization of the nuptiality/fertility relationship is assessed, followed by a look at contemporary Canadian trends in nuptiality and fertility. In an attempt to work toward a reconceptualization of the relationship, one that may be more reflective of contemporary realities, recent research and theory from family sociology and from feminist sociology are reviewed. The basic parameters of a theoretically reconceptualized nuptiality/fertility relationship are outlined, in the hope that a new model might eventually emerge.

The Traditional Nuptiality/Fertility Link

Traditionally, marriage marked the beginning of the procreative family. Even though births have always occurred outside marriage, the vast majority occurred within marriage. Childbearing often began soon after marriage, hence the historical association between age at first marriage and age at first birth (Balakrishnan, 1986). Marriage, in the past, tended to be so closely associated with childbearing that the childless married couple was seen as deviant, even pitiable (Veivers, 1980; Ramu and Tavuchis, 1986).

The vast majority of people married, as they indeed still do, and tended to stay married until one spouse, typically the husband, died (Gee, 1986; Beaujot, 1987). There was far less "conjugal mobility" (Romaniuc, 1984:59) through divorce and remarriage. Few alternatives to marriage existed. Only exceptional or determined women could opt out of marriage by remaining single or living in "unconventional relationships," often termed "living in sin" (Beaujot, 1987).

It was not simply social and moral pressure on women to marry, but economic pressure. Few jobs were available to women and even fewer at which they could expect to earn a living wage. For men, marriage denoted entry into full adult status and sometimes resulted in parental gifts of property or money. For both women and men, becoming parents signalled their stability and acceptance of responsibility as full adults.

One of the best recognized and most firm relationships in demography is the inverse relationship between age at first marriage and completed fertility (as summarized by Balakrishnan, 1986; Bumpass, 1982; Westoff, 1987). Two explanations are traditionally offered. One is that early marriers tend to have more familial orientations and hence higher family size desires. Another is that early marriers have longer exposure to risk of pregnancy, particularly in their highly fertile years, and thus have larger families (Balakrishnan, 1986). So well recognized is this relationship that in the later American fertility surveys, corrections were made for what became known as the "age at marriage bias" (Ryder and Westoff, 1973). This was also done in some Canadian fertility studies (McDaniel, 1984a).

In short, nuptiality in demographic research has been a proxy for sexual intercourse or exposure to the possibility of pregnancy, at least in the North American context. In Latin America and tropical Africa, nuptiality has been much less often used in this way. Inadequate though nuptiality was recognized to be as a euphemism for sexual intimacy, it provided denominators for rates of exposure to pregnancy. The question now must be raised as to whether, or to what extent, nuptiality can continue to serve this function. To what extent are changing fertility levels and patterns related to changes in nuptiality? The question has been raised by others (Balakrishnan, 1986, 1987; Bumpass, 1982; Burch, 1988; Davis and others, 1987; Westoff, 1987). This paper falls within that literature in offering an assessment of nuptiality/fertility links in this new age.

Contemporary Canadian Trends in Fertility and Nuptiality

Among the most dramatic demographic changes in Canada over the past few decades have been those in nuptiality. The baby bust (the historically low Canadian fertility rate) might be seen as an equally dramatic change, of course. Nuptiality change has occurred along several fronts. One of the more significant changes (Westoff, 1987:155) has been a reversal in the mid-60s of the tendency toward early marriage (Beaujot, 1987:2-3). Postponement of marriage has become increasingly popular, as shown in Table 1. The high mean ages of brides

TABLE 1. MEAN AGE OF MEN AND WOMEN AT FIRST MARRIAGE
CANADA: 1946-1985, SELECTED YEARS

	Women	Men
1946	24.1	27.1
1950	23.8	26.7
1965	22.6	25.3
1970	22.2	24.7
1975	22.5	24.9
1980	23.3	25.5
1985	24.6	26.7

Source: Statistics Canada. Vital Statistics.

TABLE 2. TOTAL DIVORCE INDEX
CANADA: 1969-1985, SELECTED YEARS

	Total Divorce Index	Based on Marriage Marriage Cohort
1969	1,370	1943-44
1972	2,007	1946-47
1975	2,932	1949-50
1977	3,063	1951-52
1980	3,277	1954-55
1982	3,655	1956-57
1985	3,121	1959-60

¹Total divorce index is the sum of age-specific rates during a given period, representing behaviour of a fictitious marriage cohort.

Source: Dumas, Jean. 1987. Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1986 (Current Demographic Analysis). Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Table 9, pp. 26-27.

and grooms recorded in the mid-1980s are unprecedented in Canada since 1940 when data on age at marriage began to be collected (Beaujot, 1987:3). This is also occurring in the United States (Bumpass, 1982; Westoff, 1987).

Parallelling the postponement of marriage is a decline in the proportion of people expecting to marry (Dumas, 1987:18-19; Burch and Madan, 1986). Although most people still expect to marry, the proportions have declined from 95 per cent in 1965 to 86 per cent in 1984 (Adams and Nagnur, 1986). The probability of marriages ending in divorce has also increased, although it has recently stabilized, if not declined (Dumas, 1987:25). It is difficult to estimate the probability of divorce since what the risk population should be is not straightforward. However, it is clear that divorce rates are high in Canada, with between 15 and 28 per cent of marriages likely to end in divorce (Adams and Nagnur, 1986). Table 2, however, reveals a recent slight decline in divorce levels, the first decline in the upward trend since 1969. Given the volatility of divorce rates in the past, it is prudent as Dumas (1987:22) suggests not to conclude yet that Canadians are changing their divorce patterns. The small decline in divorce rates may be a function, in fact, of increased cohabitation and self-selection for marriage.

Among divorced people, remarriage is a rather popular option, although somewhat less so than in the past (Dumas, 1987:21). As shown in Table 3, by

TABLE 3. PERCENTAGE OF MARRIAGES IN WHICH AT LEAST ONE SPOUSE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY MARRIED
CANADA: 1967-1985, SELECTED YEARS

% of Marriages with One Spouse (at least) Previously Married	
1967	12.3
1970	15.9
1973	18.1
1976	23.1
1979	25.7
1982	28.1
1985	29.7

Source: Statistics Canada. 1987. Vital Statistics

1985 in Canada, for almost 30 per cent of couples marrying, one or both partners had previously been married. The old understanding that high divorce rates did not disrupt fertility too much because of the tendency, particularly of men, to remarry quickly, may be increasingly called into question in the future as fewer divorced people, particularly women, choose to remarry.

Remaining single and cohabiting both compete with legal marriage in Canada now as never before. Over the period from 1966 to 1986, for example, the proportion aged 20-24 who are married has declined from 55.4 to 32.1 per cent for women and from 30.0 to 14.8 per cent for men (as reported by Beaujot, 1987:3). Similarly, according to 1981 census estimates, around 6 per cent of

TABLE 4. RATIO OF COMMON-LAW/NOW MARRIED
BY AGE AND SEX, CANADA: 1981

	Males	Females
15-19	56.83	47.83
20-24	27.14	20.77
25-29	12.87	9.80
30-34	7.63	5.81
35-39	5.55	4.46
40-44	4.27	3.37
45-49	3.29	2.65
50-54	2.53	2.14
55-59	1.91	1.62
60-64	1.50	1.38
65-69	1.21	1.11
70+	0.85	0.99
Total	6.28	6.28

²Ratio of numbers of common-law couples in each age group, divided by total now married in each age group, multiplied by 100.

Source: Dumas, Jean. 1987. Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada, 1986 (Current Demographic Analysis). Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Table 10, p. 29.

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Canadian couples enumerated live in common-law unions (Dumas, 1987:25). As shown in Table 4, the percentages living common-law tend to be particularly high among younger people. Since data on cohabitation have only recently been collected and tend to be somewhat unreliable, we can only speculate on trends from the past and for the future. However, it seems likely that cohabitation is increasing both pre-maritally and post-maritally (Burch and Madan, 1986). Whether or to what extent it may be a substitute for marriage is not known. Even if, however, cohabitation is a prelude to legal marriage, it can have fertility consequences since couples tend to postpone childbearing until legal marriage takes place, or seen another way, to enter into legal marriage in order to begin childbearing (Burch and Madan, 1986).

Childbearing has also changed dramatically recently. From a baby-boom high total fertility rate (TFR) of 3.84 in 1961, as shown in Table 5, the TFR hit a low of 1.67 in 1985. As has been suggested by Keyfitz (1987) and others, replacement of the Canadian population is no longer guaranteed. Accompany-

TABLE 5. FERTILITY CHANGE IN CANADA:
1921-1984, SELECTED YEARS:

	Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	Total Fertility Rate Per 1,000 Women	Cohort Completed Fertility Rate per 1,000 Women
1921	29.3	3,536	3,714
1931	23.2	3,200	3,138
1941	22.4	2,832	2,867
1951	27.2	3,503	3,260
1961	26.1	3,840	3,152
1971	16.8	2,187	2,285
1975	15.8	1,852	2,123
1981	15.3	1,704	---
1985	14.8	1,670	---

- Sources: Romaniuc, A. 1984. Fertility: From Baby Boom to Baby Bust (Current Demographic Analysis). Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Appendix Table 1.1
 Dumas, Jean. 1987. Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada 1986 (Current Demographic Analysis). Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Cata. No. 91-209E, pp. 25, 28.

ing the all-time low Canadian fertility rate has been a precipitous decline in large families. Since the baby-boom era, large families have become virtually extinct (Beaujot, 1986). Needleman (1986) argues that the baby boom in Canada, unlike in the U.S.A., resulted largely from an increase, during the post-war period, in the proportion of families with three to five children. Families of this size are unusual today. Data from the Canadian Fertility Survey clearly reveal that the family size intentions of all Canadians have been revised downward (Balakrishnan, 1986).

One of the most impressive changes in childbearing patterns has been the increase in births outside of marriage. As shown in Table 6, the largest increases in non-marital childbearing have occurred not among teenagers, as in the past, but among women aged 30-39. In fact, women from age 25 to 40+ have experienced significant increases in their rates of non-marital fertility since 1977.

Changes in Canadian nuptiality and fertility of late have not only been dramatic, but they have occurred rather suddenly. Analysts have been challenged to explain and interpret them (Beaujot, 1987; Burch, 1987; Lodh, 1987; Preston, 1986; Retherford, 1985; Romaniuc, 1986; Roussel, 1986; Scrimshaw, 1981; Wargon, 1987; Westoff, 1983). Whatever the explanations, it is clear that the traditional link, both temporal and substantive, between nuptiality and fertility is weakening and transforming.

From Family and Feminist Sociology: Hints of Change?

Demography, of course, is not the only discipline which focuses on childbearing and marriage. In different ways, so do family sociology and feminist sociology. Here, a brief overview is provided of some recent research and theory in these two fields in the hope that hints may be gleaned about directions of change in the nuptiality/fertility link, and possible avenues of future exploration as new models are developed.

It seems surprising that family sociology and demography actually rely so little on each other's research, since the areas of overlap are large indeed (DeVos *et al.*, 1987; McDaniel, 1984a). From family sociology, much has been learned about marriage as a social process and social experience (Bernard, 1982), about changing patterns of marriage (Eichler, 1983), about gender aspects of marital and family relations (Burch, 1987; Gerson, 1985; Grindstaff and Trovato, 1987; Pogrebin, 1983), and very importantly, about attitudes toward marriage as a social institution (Greenglass, 1985; Goldscheider and Waite, 1986; among others). Yet, with significant exceptions (Davis, 1985; Burch, 1987; among

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TABLE 6. FERTILITY RATES AMONG UNMARRIED WOMEN BY AGE IN CANADA: 1977-1984

	<15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
1977	1.3	15.8	22.9	23.4	16.8
1978	1.3	15.6	23.7	23.9	17.5
1979	1.3	15.5	25.5	27.3	19.3
1980	1.3	16.0	27.5	29.2	21.2
1981	1.4	16.3	29.6	32.6	24.0
1982	1.4	17.2	31.8	36.4	27.2
1983	1.2	16.4	32.0	40.6	31.3
1984	1.3	16.5	31.7	43.1	34.5
Increase 1977-84	0.0	0.7	8.8	19.7	17.7
Increase in %	0.0	4.4	38.4	84.2	105.4
	35-39		40+		Total
1977	7.8		1.7		17.9
1978	8.5		2.0		18.2
1979	8.4		1.8		18.9
1980	8.6		2.1		20.0
1981	10.4		2.3		21.1
1982	12.4		2.2		22.7
1983	13.6		2.7		24.1
1984	15.1		3.2		25.3
Increase 1977-84	7.3		1.5		7.4
Increase in %	93.6		88.2		41.3

Source: Dumas, Jean. 1987. *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada 1986* (Current Demographic Analysis). Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Cata. No. 91-209E, Appendix B, Table 1, p. 105.

others), demography has not benefitted fully from these findings and insights. Nor has demography incorporated them into its conceptual schemes of the nuptiality/fertility link. What follows is a brief overview of some of the more interesting insights from family sociology which may be relevant to an enhanced understanding of the nuptiality/fertility link.

Bernard, in the 1973 first edition of her book on marriage, was the first to report that marriage for men had a different meaning than for women (Bernard,

1982). The popular belief, of course, is that men are dragged into marriage unwillingly, necessitating a bachelor "farewell to freedom" party just before the wedding, while women look forward to marriage as the pinnacle of their lives. Bernard, much to the surprise of everyone including probably many sociologists, discovered that married men were, on average, healthier and happier than their so-called free bachelor friends. She continued to report that on the basis of the best evidence available, married men are generally happier with marriage than are married women. The happiest, healthiest women are those who are not married. Other subsequent studies, as well as data on life expectancy by marital status, have found support for Bernard's findings (as reported in McDaniel, 1988a).

Greenglass (1985), finds that women tend to regard marriage as security, but paradoxically view the legal commitment as more of a drawback than do men. Women, according to Greenglass, see marriage as something of a "risky venture." A 1986 study by Goldscheider and Waite finds that women with more income tend to opt out of marriage, whereas men with more income opt in. This suggests confirmation of Bernard's findings that marriage has very different meanings for men and for women. A study comparing groups of women in therapy in the 1950s and in the 1970s (Moulton, 1977) reports that in the former group, the central concerns were sexuality, marriage and childrearing, whereas in the 1970s, the central issue was anxiety about role proliferation, with women often regarding marriage as a trap. A popular account of the aspirations of teenage girls in Canada (Kostash, 1987) finds that female teenagers are looking forward to having children someday, but are less convinced that marriage is a necessary accompaniment to having children.

Family sociology research is also instructive in attitudes towards balancing work and family roles. For example, Porter *et al.* (1979) report, on the basis of a survey of female grade 12 students, that having a rewarding relationship with a man was of primary importance (although not necessarily involving marriage) and raising children ranked second, with working outside the home ranked third. Significantly, even in the early 1970s when these data were collected, high school girls wanted their lives to encompass *both* family and careers. A 1978 study by Gibbins *et al.* reports that although most Canadians think that mothers of young children should be home with the children full-time, few have any misgivings about mothers working when the children are older. Only a minority felt that a married woman's priority should be to help advance her husband's career. Working class women are more likely to expect to work throughout their married lives and accept the necessity for daycare for their children (Lindell, 1982). By contrast, professional women more often report that they see childbearing and sometimes marriage too as a trade-off with career expectations

(Grindstaff and Trovato, 1987; Swanson-Kauffman, 1987). Dennis (1983) reports ethnic differences in attitudes toward combining work/family, although most Canadian students she interviewed expressed responsibility to both family and work roles. Quebec students were less in favour of mothers working.

Like family sociology, and overlapping with it, feminist sociology also focuses on marriage, family, childbearing and gender structure. In many ways, feminism, as one of the fundamental social movements of our time, has transformed the way social life is seen, analyzed and conceptualized (Eichler, 1985). One of the basic insights of feminist sociology is that inequality between men and women in society not only exists, but is one of the cornerstones of the social system (Folbre, 1983; Jaggar and McBride, 1985; Smith 1981). Under the assumption that the personal is political, interconnections between the private and the public worlds have become apparent (Hartsock, 1983).

Among the areas in which the contributions of feminist theory have been most clear are the conceptualization and critique of the nuclear family (Pogrebin, 1983; Smith, 1977). The theoretical perspective through which the nuclear family was largely viewed prior to the advent of feminism was the still popular functionalist perspective, in which the propriety of a gender division of labour was unquestioned. Feminists offered an alternative conceptualization of the nuclear family as a place where the gender inequalities and injustices prevalent in the larger society create particular problems for women, but also for children and for men (McDaniel, 1988a; Pogrebin, 1983; Smith, 1977). Women were thought to be the only ones who might experience role conflict if they also worked outside the home. Not surprisingly, a biased picture of work, status and politics was developed based on incorrect assumptions about women's and men's realms, values and behaviours.

Feminist insights into the nuclear family and women's positions have crucial implications for understanding marriage and childcaring (Folbre, 1983; O'Brien, 1981). Most importantly, feminist theory has revealed the absence from conventional explanations of fertility change including demographic explanations, any explicit consideration of the inequalities between men and women (Folbre, 1983; Jaggar and McBride, 1985; Maroney, 1985; McDaniel, 1988a, 1988b). Such inequalities, now well documented, provide the means by which society asks women to bear many of the social costs of childbearing through reduced opportunity in the workplace and lowered economic status. This is a factor overlooked by most traditional demographic analyses of childbearing, with a few exceptions (Mincer, 1963; Grindstaff, 1988; Schultz, 1975; Turchi, 1975). Similarly, changes in the costs and benefits of children are related to differential economic power of men and women both within and outside the home.

Feminist theory has powerfully shown (Folbre, 1983; Nolte, 1987; O'Brien, 1981; Petchesky, 1980) that reproduction is not as private as it was thought to be, because it took place in the family and involved biology, but a social and political process imbued with public meaning (Jaggar and McBride, 1985; Greer, 1984; McDaniel, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c; McLaren and McLaren, 1986). This insight allows for a number of fruitful avenues of analysis and further insights. If childbearing is a political process whereby women's reproduction is, to some extent, harnessed for the good of society, then childbearing resulting from violence, economic incentives or denial of reproductive choice to women become easier to explain (Love, 1982; McLaren and McLaren, 1986; McDaniel, 1984a). Marriage and childbearing, in light of the limited economic opportunities and negative social sanctions faced by single women who work, may be women's best economic and social option (McDaniel, 1988b; LeBourdais and Desrosiers, 1987). It may be, for example, the division of labour by gender under capitalism which motivates childbearing, rather than women's childbearing which creates the division of labour by gender (LeBourdais and Desrosiers, 1987).

Biases and potential biases in the analysis of marriage and fertility have become apparent by means of a feminist perspective. The distinction, for example, between reproduction and production may be artificial and male-biased. The concept of reproduction as primarily biological (and therefore female) may distort the social reality which involves women's social and economic labour in childbearing and childrearing (Hartsock, 1983; Jaggar and McBride, 1985;). It excludes men from significant involvement in the childbearing/rearing process and tends to define reproduction as more biological than social. Further, and importantly, this distinction may ghettoize reproduction in such a way that it is not seen as a purposive and meaningful social activity, like production, changes in which can give rise to societal changes (Jaggar and McBride, 1985;). Reproduction, in the means by which it is conceptualized, is thought to be unchanging and biological — and thus becomes both ahistorical and acultural.

Towards a Reconceptualization of the Fertility/Nuptiality Link

Given the clear weakening of the traditional link between nuptiality and fertility as a consequence of contemporary changes in the patterns of both marriage and childbearing, a new model of the link may be required. Such a new model might build in some greater complexities, as well as give increased

attention to the factors and forces addressed in family and feminist sociology. What follows are six tenets on which a reconceptualized model might build:

1) The development of clearer theoretical links between sexuality and nuptiality seems necessary. It may be misleading to continue to assume that nuptiality is a euphemism for sexuality or that in this contracepting society's sexual activity exposes women to risk of pregnancy (Birdsall and Chester, 1987). Issues of gender inequality and the changing meaning of marriage may be important in elucidating the degree to which nuptiality is a proxy for risk of pregnancy.

2) Hints gleaned from the above overview of research in family and feminist sociology suggest the usefulness of examining links between nuptiality and production. The assumption implicit in demographic approaches traditionally has been that nuptiality is a precondition for reproduction, but that neither has productive value in the same sense, for example, as work. The exception to this is the microeconomic approach to reproduction (Becker, 1981; Schultz, 1975; Turchi, 1975). Given women's attitudes toward and perceptions of marriage, however, as reported above, and persisting gender inequalities which mean that women, except for professionals, find it difficult to live and raise children alone, marriage might indeed have economic rewards and incentives. If this is so, then both marriage and childbearing might be to some extent economically motivated in ways previously unaddressed (Dickinson and Russell, 1986). Women who opt for marriage, then, in these days of alternatives, may be different in terms of their own prospects than those who do not.

3) A need seems to exist for the integration of micro and macro models of nuptiality and fertility. All too often, demographers who specialize in aggregate phenomena, seem to jump too quickly to the level of individual decisionmaking. What exists between these two levels of abstraction may be vitally important. For example, individuals exist in context — class and gender contexts may matter as much as historical, cultural and political contexts. Attention to these crucial social contexts has been better done by family and feminist sociologists than by demographers. Yet, linking micro-level decisions about marriage and having children to macro-level phenomena such as nuptiality and fertility can only be attempted with reference to the social contexts which impinge on people, often in ways they neither see nor understand.

4) What may be suggested by contemporary sociodemographic trends and existing knowledge is that a tension exists between choice and non-choice with respect to marriage and childbearing. This tension has perhaps been given insufficient attention. The idea of choice in childbearing has become a popular one, yet it is acknowledged that unwanted pregnancy continues to occur, that contraceptives fail, that coerced sexuality and reproduction occur, and that

women in situations of gender inequality, may use their sexuality and fertility to economic advantage. That fertility might be used explicitly for economic gain in the future is likely if surrogate motherhood becomes institutionalized. The choice rubric, with respect to both marriage and childbearing, once in place, may blind analysts to the elements of non-choice which persist.

5) Another tension may exist between cultural beliefs about marriage and childbearing and the material or real conditions under which these activities are pursued. For example, both men and women might believe in having children once married, but for women the price paid might be discouraging in terms of lost career time, inadequate daycare options, and diminished status at work, among other concerns.

It seems clear, based on the above brief review of research from family and feminist sociology, that the competition between beliefs and material conditions may take different forms for men and for women. This is revealed in Figure 1, where some aspects of the differences are suggested. Although both men and women may *believe* in having children (a positive value relating belief system

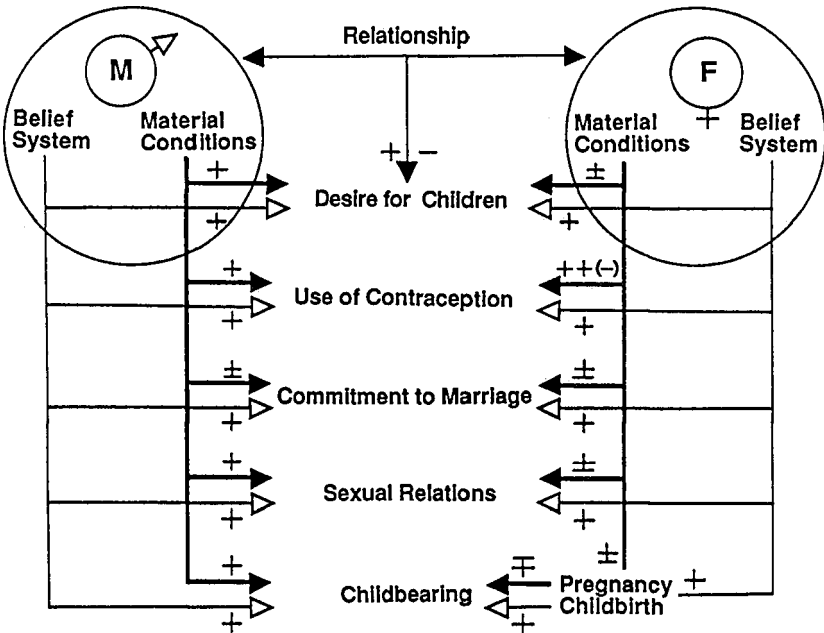


FIGURE 1. MICRO – MODEL OF CHILDBEARING DECISIONS IN GENDER CONTEXT

to desire for children), women's actual circumstances or material conditions — such as lack of maternity leave or inadequate day care, or the possibility of forfeiting a raise or promotion — are such that her desire for children takes on a negative as well as positive aspect. Similarly, both men and women may have positive predispositions to the use of contraception, while material conditions faced by women mean that they, more often than men, "pay the price" for contraceptive failure or non-use in terms of life disruption or workplace or mobility losses. Further, and in contradiction to women's strong positive attraction to contraceptive use, are the health risks associated with contraception.

Belief systems may encourage both men and women to commit to marriage, yet each has material conditions which are worrisome. For men, it may be that marriage is costly in economic terms. For women, marriage can penalize them in the workplace in terms of their promotion prospects and the seriousness with which they are taken. Sexual relations similarly may have a positive attraction for both men and women, but pregnancy risks and potentially detrimental social labels (the old double standard) may be a negative for women. Risks and joys of pregnancy and childbirth, including the limited alternatives to hospital births, may be an inhibitant to women having children.

6) Lastly, more is assumed in the traditional nuptiality/fertility linkage than that nuptiality is a euphemism for sexuality and a precondition for childbearing. Fertility is further assumed, implicitly, to have little to do with sexual politics or gender inequality. A demographer once remarked that if a martian were to visit a room where demographers were discussing fertility trends and research, the martian would have the distinct impression that fertility had nothing to do with sexual acts! Most demographers, however reluctantly, would see at least a grain of truth in this. This is nothing short of astounding in this most gender-specific of all human endeavours. It also tends to be assumed, implicitly, that pronatalism exists, that people want to have children and value children, and that society in general values children. Yet it is recognized that single mothers with dependent children are among the poorest in our society, that mothers of young children are less often seen as dependable workers, and that children are not welcome in many apartment buildings, restaurants and social events. The contradictions between presumed pronatalism and antinatalist structures and attitudes could be usefully explored.

It might be instructive to distinguish between a male model of nuptiality/fertility and a female model. To a large extent, what we have now is a male model, as shown in Figure 2. A sharp separation of work and family is presumed, yet there is an assumed positive functional connection. Work, in the male model, is seen as production of goods or services for pay. It occurs at the macro, public level. It is valued, as evidenced by the fact that it is paid. It is planned and trained

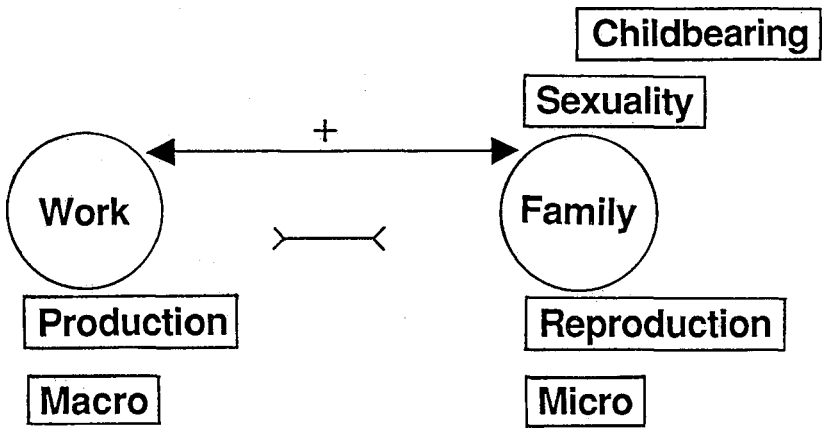


FIGURE 2. MACRO – MODEL OF CHILDBEARING IN GENDER CONTEXT: MEN

for. Work provides an important source of male identity. It is perceived as rational and instrumental and is evaluated on objective criteria.

By contrast to work, family in the male model is private, a retreat from pressures and technology of the work place. A man's home is his castle — he is in charge there even if he is not (or cannot be) in charge at work. Sexuality may be increasingly confined to marriage now (possibly due to fear of AIDS), although in the past it was not so much, and still is less confined for men than for women. Childbearing, similarly, is seen as private, although children are costly and thus provide incentives to men to work harder. A family man is perceived as stable and reliable. The male model sees infant and child care as largely women's domain, although some men today may increasingly recognize the work and commitment involved in shared child care.

A female model, which may be emerging largely from family and feminist sociology, is portrayed in Figure 3. The significant difference between this and the male model is that for females, work and family are linked together in multiple ways (LeBourdais and Desrosiers, 1987). For women, family *is* work, including housework, childcare, caring for the old and sick, emotional labour and intervention. Despite its rewards, childbearing and rearing *is* hard work too, with low pay, limited status, no holidays and no pensions. Home and family are thus not necessarily a retreat for women from work and pressure. For women, reproduction and production are linked, in that reproduction (and childbearing)

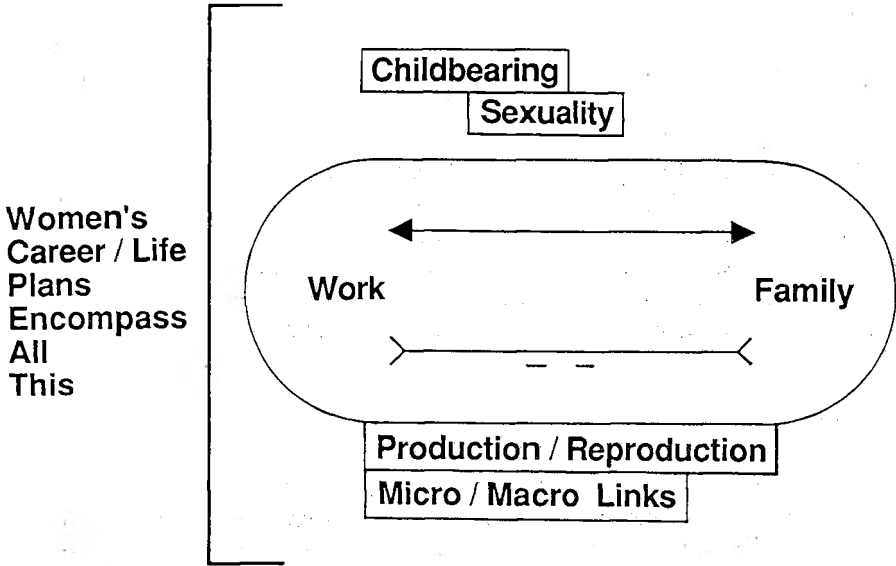


FIGURE 3. MACRO – MODEL OF CHILDBEARING IN GENDER CONTEXT: WOMEN

may be their life's work, no matter what else they also do. It may be work for which they expect rewards, economic and otherwise — a nice house, clothes, labour-saving devices and appreciation. Reproduction itself can be a basis of status for women, a badge of adulthood, of successful femininity. Women's fertility in some places in Africa must be tested pre-nuptially to ensure their marriageability. The new princesses in the Royal family in England had their fertility tested before engagements were announced. Reproduction, and marriage too, at the same time, can be a distinct liability for women in that their work commitments might be questioned, their promotion prospects and their mobility constrained.

Sexuality, too, for women may have a productive aspect. The most attractive and sexually "pure" women may get the "best" husbands in terms of both attractiveness and earning power. The notion that women's time spent on making themselves attractive is frivolous, may be untrue. It may be that women work hard at being attractive as a kind of career planning. Certainly, women's sexual attractiveness within marriage is touted by everyone from marriage

counsellors to Ann Landers as a good way for women to keep their husbands faithful and good breadwinners.

The female model of childbearing and marriage, unlike the male model, reveals that women's career plans may involve *both* work and family and their interconnections. Women may thus be different than men in the ways in which they make career plans, and perhaps should not be evaluated on a male model. The female model reveals ways in which both family and work structures may be inflexible and inadaptably to the necessary trade-offs women must make between them. For example, career paths are male-based and assume that linear paths and promotions are the only way to progress. Work interruptions do not necessarily indicate women's lack of commitment to work or to careers, but only of the need to balance responsibilities in two realms.

Conclusion

Contemporary trends in Canadian nuptiality and fertility reveal significant changes in patterns and timing. As well, a distinct weakening of the traditional nuptiality/fertility link is apparent. These changes pose challenges to analysts who seek to find meaning in current patterns using existing approaches. A need seems to be emerging for a reconceptualization of the nuptiality/fertility link.

In this paper, contemporary trends in Canada together with some recent findings from family and feminist sociology have been reviewed in an attempt to move close to a reconceptualization of nuptiality/fertility. While this is a small step, it seems an important one to make, however tentatively, toward rethinking this fundamental demographic relationship. Demographers still need to heed Yaukey's 1969 advice and work beyond data analysis and toward the development of fertility theories.

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