An Analysis of Intended Parity and Ideal Family Size in the United States, 1970-2002.

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D R A F T

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the fertility rate in the United States has barely changed, with a total fertility rate (TFR) fluctuating between 2.0 and 2.1 children per woman (Downs, 2003). Given contemporary rates of mortality, this approximates the level needed for population replacement. This approximate demographic balance is actually quite unusual in developed countries -- the United States has among the highest fertility levels of contemporary, economically developed countries. In fact, fertility is well below replacement level in many other developed countries, hitting levels as low as 1.16 children per woman in Spain and 1.20 children per woman in Italy (UN Population Division, 2003). In this paper, we examine the correspondence between US women's fertility intentions and actual fertility. Does relatively high and stable fertility result because women have stable preferences that they are able to achieve? Or, is it the case that fertility intentions are shifting but are offset by other changes like contraceptive failure, infecundity, or shifts in fertility timing?

Following Bongaarts (2001,2002), we place fertility intentions at the heart of a model including other factors that condition the extent to which these intentions are realized (see Morgan 2003, Morgan and Hagewen 2004). We do not argue that intentions play a *dynamic* role in contemporary fertility change. We do, however, assert that fertility intentions take on a *central* role in understanding fertility trends. In fact, Bongaarts does not trace developed country fertility differences to dissimilarities in intentions. Rather, he

argues that cross-country and cross-time variation must be explained by timing changes and couples' ability and determination to realize intentions. Like Bongaarts, we argue, and empirically demonstrate, that there is a remarkably pervasive desire (and supporting norms) for a family size of two children. We acknowledge evidence that voluntary childfree couples show greater levels of cohesion, dyadic satisfaction and life satisfaction than do parents (Somers, 1993), and that, while marriage has been found to increase global happiness, the presence of children, particularly within married couples, has been found to significantly decrease global happiness (Campbell, 1975; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Glenn & Weaver, 1979). We also acknowledge substantial gender change over the period of study. Yet, despite these facts and changes, a persistent desire for children remains[a].

THE MODEL

As a conceptual framework, Bongaarts' (2001; 2002) model is able to explain both the decline in fertility over time as well as contemporary cross-sectional differences in observed fertility (also see Morgan 2003; Morgan and Hagewen 2004). Specifically, the framework is as follows:

$$TFR = IP \times F_u \times F_r \times F_g \times F_t \times F_i \times F_c$$

In this conceptualization, the level of current fertility (the *TFR*) equals the intended parity (*IP*) of women increased or decreased by a set of model parameters that reflect forces not incorporated into women's reports of their childbearing intentions. The foundation of this framework is the concept of intended parity. If all women realized their parity intention, then the TFR = IP. But is intended parity a satisfactory predictor for actual fertility? Morgan (2001) reviewed the large theoretical and empirical literature focusing on the predictive validity of reproductive intentions and concluded that intended parity is not a *consistently accurate predictor* of completed fertility for individuals or aggregate fertility for cohorts. However, if intended parity were to be adjusted (as in the framework outlined

[a] Data from other countries suggests recent declines in intended fertility and movement away from strong two child norms (Goldberg et al., 2003). The most recent data for the U.S. may also show the beginning of such a trend. Only future data can answer this question.

above), then it might prove useful for fertility projection and research on fertility decision-making.

The model parameters that can inflate completed parity vis-à-vis intended fertility include: unwanted fertility (F_u), replacement of children that may have died (F_r), and additional children needed to satisfy strong gender preferences (F_g). One would expect these effects to be greater than 1.0 and thus to inflate observed fertility relative to intentions. Other factors represent parameters that (at least in recent periods) would be expected to take on values less than 1.0 and thus to reduce fertility relative to intentions. These factors include changes in the timing of fertility (F_t), subfecundity and infecundity (F_i), and competition with other energy and time intensive activities that may lead persons to revise downward their intentions (F_c), especially at older ages. Here we will not focus on these factors but on the core concept of intentions.

Quesnel-Vallée and Morgan (2004) apply this model to longitudinal data and argue that this model provides a useful analytic framework. Application to cohort experience solves several potential problems with the model. First, in a cohort framework, the effect of fertility postponement is not relevant (which eliminates F_t) making the model simpler. Second, one can take intentions at a given age (we suggest 20-26) as a measure of intended parity and see how other factors impinge on it or on how respondents alter intentions over time. To mimic this life-course process with period data, one must assume that intended parity is not changing and both younger and older women share the same intended parity. This is a very strong assumption, but one testable with the data we will examine here.

FAMILY SIZE NORMS

When developing theories or models of fertility behaviors or outcomes, the demand for children is a fundamental concept of consideration (Thomson & Brandreth, 1995). Midsized families (2 or 3 children) are preferred over both larger families (4 or 5 children) and smaller families (0 children or 1 child), with larger families being preferable to not having children at all (Sensibaugh & Yarab, 1997). Those who have two children perceive higher satisfaction from parents, in-laws, other relatives, friends, and acquaintances with their choice of family size compared to those who have one child or are

childfree (Mueller & Yoder, 1999). The key question here is: do data on ideals and intentions show any evidence that norms and intentions have changed in the past few decades. Bongaarts and others have pointed out that while fertility varies across developed societies, ideal and expected fertility vary little across countries. Here we examine U.S. data more closely for evidence of changes, especially evidence of declines, in ideal and intended family size.

Voluntary Childlessness

In virtually all contexts, being a parent is preferred or more valued than being voluntarily childfree (Ganong, Coleman, & Mapes, 1990; Blake 1979). It is as though we have little choice, biologically, socially, or psychologically, but to have children (Callan, 1986). For many, remaining voluntarily childfree is beyond the realm of rational choice, and would most surely lead to a life of isolation and stigmatization (Orenstein, 2000). Thus, voluntary childlessness is considered by many as a form of deviance, not because these people do not have children, but because they *want* none, and therefore reject the parenting role (Veevers, 1980). This deviance of the intentionally childfree is thought to reflect on their overall personalities (Houseknecht, 1987) and individuals often express a desire for more social distance from them (Polit, 1978).

Those who are voluntarily childless view the costs of childbearing as very high and the benefits as very low (Callan, 1986). Society, however, views having a child, as signifying the transition from childhood to adulthood (May, 1995). For women in particular, motherhood is central to the female identity, and is incorporated into social norms and institutions (Russo, 1979).

Those who remain voluntarily childless feel stigmatized by others (Magarick & Brown, 1981; Park, 2002; Pohlman, 1970; Somers, 1993). Indeed, others describe the voluntarily childless as self-centered, disliking of children, overly career oriented, non-nurturing, and irresponsible (Mueller and Yoder, 1999). The voluntarily childfree are also viewed as abnormal, unnatural, immature, sexually inadequate, and being involved in unhappy or unstable marriages (Veevers, 1972) and as destined to be desolate in old age (Jamison, Franzini, & Kaplan, 1979; Shields & Cooper, 1983).

The One Child Family

Not many people consider a one-child family to be the ideal, and it is generally considered disadvantageous to be an only child (Veenhoven & Verkuyten, 1989; Blake 1981). Despite the argument that only children do not form a singular, homogenous group, but instead are comprised of different types (Rosenberg & Hyde, 1993), there are many studies in existence that have supported the existence of stereotypes against only children (Blake, 1981; Thompson, 1974; and Westoff, 1978 among others). Only children are stereotyped as being socially unskilled, self-centered, dependent, anxious and generally maladjusted (Terhune, 1974; Thompson, 1974). There is also evidence that support these stereotypes[b]. Research suggests that only children are less social (Claudy, 1984) and are unable to make friends (Miller & Maruyama, 1976), more likely to suffer mental distress (Belmont, 1977; Howe & Madgett, 1975), and are self-centered and uncooperative (Jiao, Ji, & Jing, 1986; Thompson, 1974).

Large Families

Some research has indicated that large family sizes (operationalized as families with four or more children) are viewed in a positive light (Mueller & Yoder, 1997; Polit, 1978). In fact, there is almost an implied linear relationship between number of children and perceived happiness (Mueller & Yoder, 1997). It can be argued that the pronatalist twist present in American mass media actually supports large families (Faludi, 1991). Women, however, typically reported pressure to limit their family size after their third or fourth child. Women with four or more children feel that other view them in a negative light and assume they can't give as much to their children, that they are too busy to tend to their house, and that at least some of the pregnancies must have been accidental (Mueller & Yoder, 1999).

[b] While evidence is limited, it has been found that only children are not significantly different from children with siblings on almost all personality factors (Polit & Falbo, 1987). Counter evidence has also been presented (Blake 1981).

DATA AND METHODS

This study uses data from two sources: General Social Surveys and Current Population Surveys. The General Social Survey (GSS) is a national area probability sample of non-institutionalized adults collected annually from 1972 to and biannually beginning in 1994. The survey netted a sample size of about 1,500 in-person interviews for the first 19 surveys and 3,000 in-person interviews when the survey became biannual in 1994. We used several surveys from the past three decades in the present analysis.

The Current Population Survey (CPS) has asked questions on intentions since the 1970s. Small changes across time in mean intentions and general challenges to their usefulness have discouraged recent data collections. Specifically, the CPS asked about fertility intentions with decreasing frequency, since 1990 only in 1992 and 1998. We use selected June Current Population surveys over the past two decades: 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1998. CPS sample sizes are large, ranging from over 30,000 women 18-39 in 1980 and slightly less than 20,000 in 1998.

Substantial numbers of both GSS and CPS respondents do not answer the question on intentions or report uncertainty. Our tabulations include only those answering yes or no to the question on intending an additional child. Only these respondents were asked "how many more children they intended". We return to the issue of nonresponse in a subsequent section of the paper.

TRENDS IN IDEAL FAMILY SIZE

Ideal family size is conceptualized as: the preferred number of children for "some hypothetical family"[c]. The question is problematic because the characteristics of the hypothetical family are not specified. Clearly normative family size varies by circumstance and one can only assume that respondents adopt a "typical" family as the referent. Other criticisms of the question have focused on the answers given. First, answers of "no children" are relatively rare but are essentially illogical since no children cannot be an "ideal number for a typical family." A one-generation population "implosion" is the obvious result. One-child answers provide the same, but less obvious problem. One

might assume given these answers that persons are actually reporting their own "ideal", "expected" or "intended" fertility. Empirical evidence shows that ideal family size is a poor proxy for intended or actual fertility. Finally, ideal fertility is criticized because it is "uninteresting" in the sense that it doesn't seem to change. The last criticism is easiest to dismiss. First of all there are changes, as we will show. Second, the stability that exists may be very real and substantively very important. Despite its flaws, one might consider ideal family size a general indicator of societal pronatalism (Trent, 1980).

Figure 1 shows the trends in ideal family size for the US population aged 18 to 46 over the past 30 years. As can be seen, the popularity of the different family sizes remains roughly the same over time. Two children is always the most popular choice, followed by three children, four or more children, and one child or no children. A chi-squared test of difference, however, indicates a significant difference in the responses over time (χ^2=229.8171, p<.001). This can primarily be seen in the decrease in the popularity of four or more children over time (χ^2=144.5539, p<.001). In the 1970-74 period, 19.72 percent of the sample indicated that four or more children would be ideal. This number plummets to 9.51 percent in the 2000-02 period. This change is consistent with arguments that large family sizes are viewed less positively and perhaps negatively by a large subset of the population.

Figure 1 about here

Figure 2 displays the trends in ideal family size for women aged 20 to 26. We choose young women for special focus because this is the group for whom fertility decisions are most immediate and the normative environment, as they perceive it, of the most immediate consequence. As can be seen in Figure 2, the popularity of the different ideal family sizes remains roughly the same as in Figure 1 with modest evidence of change over time. As for the population as a whole, two children is always the most popular choice, followed by three children, four or more children, and one child or no children. A chi-squared test of difference indicates that there is no significant difference in the responses over time. By looking at the graph, however, overall fluctuations in the popularity of the different family sizes can be seen. It is interesting to note that, in the

[c] GSS question wording: "What do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?"

2000-02 period, the majority of the sample (51.74%) indicated a family size other than two children as being the ideal for the first time. Also, "as many as one wants" is increasing in popularity. Taken together these trends may suggest a weakening of norms regarding family size. There is also significant change in the percent indicating an ideal family size of four or more children (χ^2=12.8969, p<.05). In the 1970-74 period, 16.60 percent of the sample indicated that four or more children would be ideal. This number plummets to 10.64 percent in the 2000-02 period. Again, this change is consistent with arguments that large family sizes are viewed less positively and perhaps negatively by a subset of the population.

Figure 2 about here

TRENDS IN INTENDED PARITY

CPS and GSS respondents were asked; "Do you expect to have any (more) children?' If yes...'How many (more)?" If one adds the number additional expected to the number the woman has (i.e., her current parity), one obtains the variable intended parity. We attach no substantive import to the distinction between intended and expected children. While demographers sometimes distinguish between these terms there is little evidence that respondents do.

Figure 3 about here

Figure 3 shows the intended parity of two birth cohorts (1959-60) measured at four points in time. Specifically, these women were aged 20-21 in 1980, and ages 25-26, 30-31, and 38-39 in subsequent survey years (1985, 1990, and 1998). As can be seen, the mean fertility intentions for these cohorts remain very stable over time. At no point does intended parity fall below two children and at no point does it rise above 2.25 children. Also shown at each time point is current parity. Logically, these two curves must converge as women reach the end of the childbearing years. However, the pattern shown here need not hold. In this figure the intended parity stays largely fixed and actual parity converges to it—i.e., in the aggregate women's stated intentions are met.

At the individual level, we know that these intentions change and that they can change disproportionately upwards or downwards challenging the value of intentions for

projection purposes (see Westoff & Ryder, 1977). But Quesnel-Vallée and Morgan (2004) show for these same cohorts (1957-1961 cohorts followed in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth during the 1980s and 1990s) revisions downward in intentions were approximately compensated by revisions upward. In fact, in the CPS data for 1959-60 cohort (see Figure 3) intentions are realized almost exactly. Specifically, when members of this cohort were 20-21 years old (1980), the average number of children intended was 2.05. By 1998, when members of this cohort were 38-39 years old, the average number of children intended was 2.11. Of course, these data are not longitudinal and compositional changes (e.g., larger numbers of Hispanics and other immigrants) may have increased this value slightly. But the impact of immigration is very minor. With the 1998 CPS data it is possible to exclude immigrants from the tabulations. We show the points in the figure, and while lower, their impact on estimated trends is trivial.

Figure 4 about here

With the series of cross-sectional surveys examined here, we cannot follow all cohorts for the 18-year period shown in Figure 3. However, the data we can examine produces very similar results. For instance, Figure 4 displays in period perspective the current parity, additional children intended, and intended parity of women aged 20 to 26. The top line in the figure shows little change in intended parity, the sum of additional children intended and current parity. In the 1970-74 and 1990-94 periods, the intended parity was 2.18 and 2.10, respectively. Beneath this stability one can see clear declines in current parity, an indicator of fertility delay. We interpret this decline as postponement because of the observed mirror-image increase of additional children intended. At the aggregate level, this postponement did not lead to substantial declines in intended parity for young women (as was shown in Figure 3 as well).

A final way to display these results follows a strategy used by O'Connell (2002) and addresses a criticism of intended parity. Specifically, intended parity combines three variables: current parity, the parity specific intent for another child, and a report of how many more children expected. One could argue that information and understanding is sacrificed by the intended parity measure that we have employed above. Table 1 shows the first two variables: intent for an additional child by current parity. We include here data

presented by O'Connell (2002) as well as the CPS time periods we examine. The repeated numbers for 1998 indicate that we replicate exactly the results of O'Connell (2002).

Table 1 about here

For the youngest age group (18-24), intentions have not varied across the 1978-1992 period for all women in this age group (column 1, "Total") or for groups disaggregated by current parity (columns 2-4). There is evidence of a decline in intent for an additional child between 1992-1998. This decline is pervasive with respect to current parity. Note that this decline is **not** evident for any of the other age groups in Table 1. This result is potentially very important because it may signal that the youngest cohorts do have intentions for children that are significantly lower than preceding ones. We hesitate to interpret this finding substantively based on a result from a single age group in this single survey.

Table 2 shows expected parity by age, current parity, and CPS survey year. This presentation allows one to disaggregate intended parity into current parity and additional children intended components. Note that these data are not independent of that shown in Table 1; all those saying yes in Table 1 intend at least one additional child. The new information added here are reports of *number of additional children intended*. Consistent with estimates in Table 1, there is evidence of a shift in intentions between 1990 and 1998. Specifically, young women with no children and with one child intend fewer children in the later survey. This decline is not visible for those with 2 or more children. This decline is also not visible for other age groups.

Table 2 about here

A weakness of both the GSS and CPS data are the large proportion of women who are "uncertain" of their intention or do not answer the question on fertility intentions (see Appendix Tables A1 through A4). Here we have excluded women who did not give "yes" or "no" answers to the question "Do you intend to have a (another) child?" These uncertain responses and nonresponses may have a substantive interpretation. We have examined these data closely for young women. What we find is additional evidence that the decline in intent is substantial among young women. For instance, between 1990 and 1998 we have showed that the percent of young childless women who want no children has

increased. Additional analyses (not shown here) indicate that the percent uncertain has also declined. Morgan (1981; 1982) has argued that respondents at older ages may reduce intentions by first becoming uncertain and then, at an older age, acknowledge that they will have no more children. The decline in uncertainty among young women here requires a different interpretation. Firm choices to have no children may signal an increasing proportion of women who see the costs of childbearing as too high and an accompanying acknowledgement of declining pronatalism.

In summary, data in Table 1 and 2 suggest a possible crack in the normative foundation supporting 2 or more children. Only additional data can determine whether 1998 CPS data are an aberration or the beginning of a trend that portends sharply lower fertility in the United States. Soon to be released data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth (scheduled for release later this year) will give a more recent reading of trends in intent for additional children. It is also very important for the CPS to again ask questions on fertility intentions in the near future. Constancy in this important social indicator for a substantial period of time does suggest that yearly monitoring is not crucial. But periodic (say on a 5-year cycle) monitoring of this important social indicator should be a high priority.

DISCUSSION

The results above are quite striking. Across a three-decade period, reports of ideal family size have changed little. As noted earlier, this ideal family size question is problematic in several ways. But we interpret evidence of relative constancy of response as consistent with the presence of strong norms that support having two or three children. Figures 1 and 2 show that "two children" is the modal response with "three children" as the clear second choice among respondents. We argue that this stability doesn't mean the item is insensitive to change. Rather, we argue that there has been relatively little change and that broad norms about family size are relatively stable. The modest evidence of change, like the decline in percent saying 4 or more was expected, is consistent with expectation. As Morgan (2003:593) has argued: "(b)eing a good parent is now largely inconsistent with having more than a small number of children."

The only evidence that suggests an erosion of normative support for "at least two children" comes from the most recent data (2000-2002). But the shift is not toward smaller families; it is a small shift toward more diversity. Specifically, all categories increased vis-à-vis "two children". This change was not expected and is confined to one period. We choose to wait for additional data before offering any post-hoc explanations.

The primary result above is replicated in the data on intentions: there is remarkable stability in fertility intentions in this period and across age for the cohort experience that we can observe. In the paper's introduction, we note that the Bongarts model requires a heroic assumption when applied to period data: intentions are/have been stable across age groups that contribute to the current TFR. This would seem to be the case for the United States. Evaluation of this claim for a broad set of countries awaits additional analyses like the one carried out here.

Does the Bongaarts conceptual framework bring any additional insights? Given the approximate equality of fertility (the TFR) and intended parity (IP), one might claim the additional parameters are unneeded. We suggest a different interpretation: the net effect of these factors largely cancel one another in the period under study. Of course, this is not a circumstance that need hold in the next decade and beyond.

Also as in the case with ideal family size, the most recent intention data (1998) suggests a decline in intended parity among the youngest women. We suggest caution in interpreting this result while stressing its potential importance. It is crucial that fertility intentions be monitored. Fertility intentions remain the central concept for understanding contemporary fertility trends and differences.

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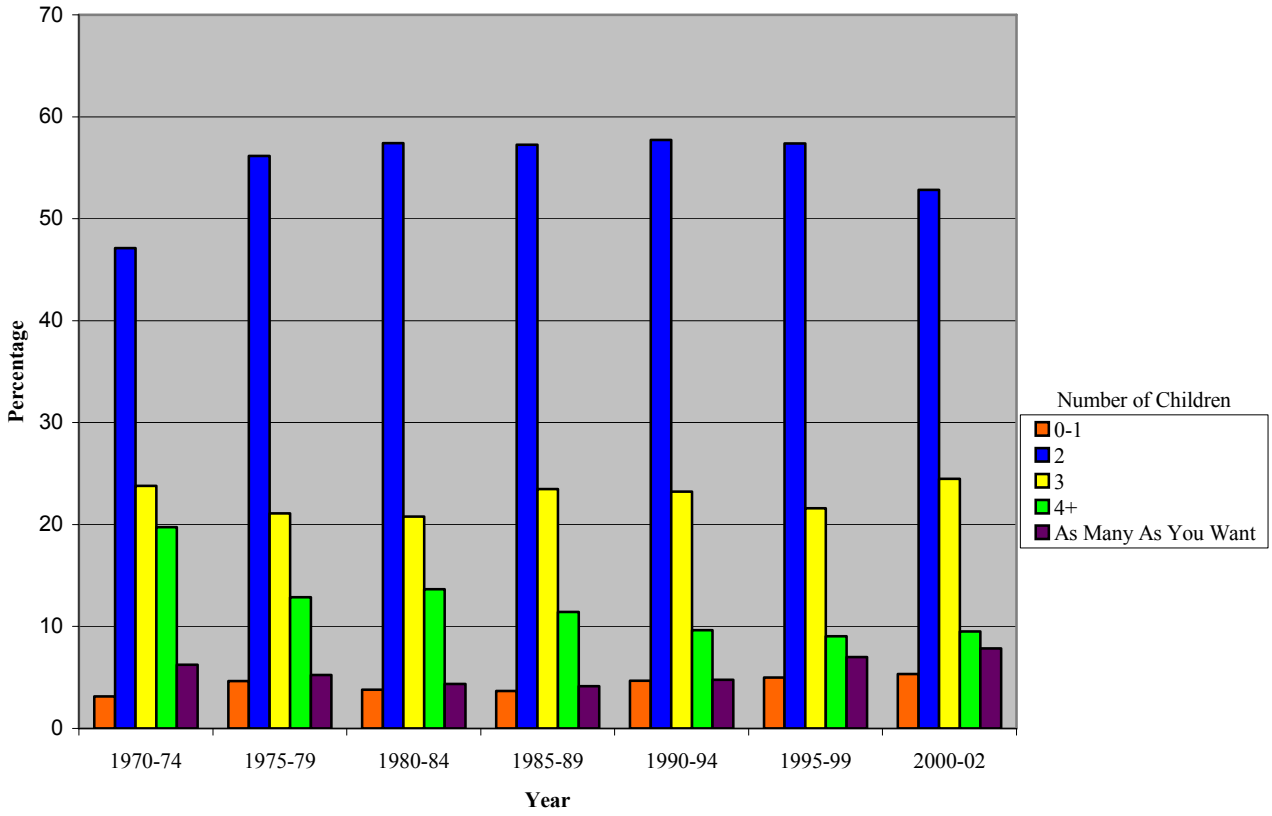
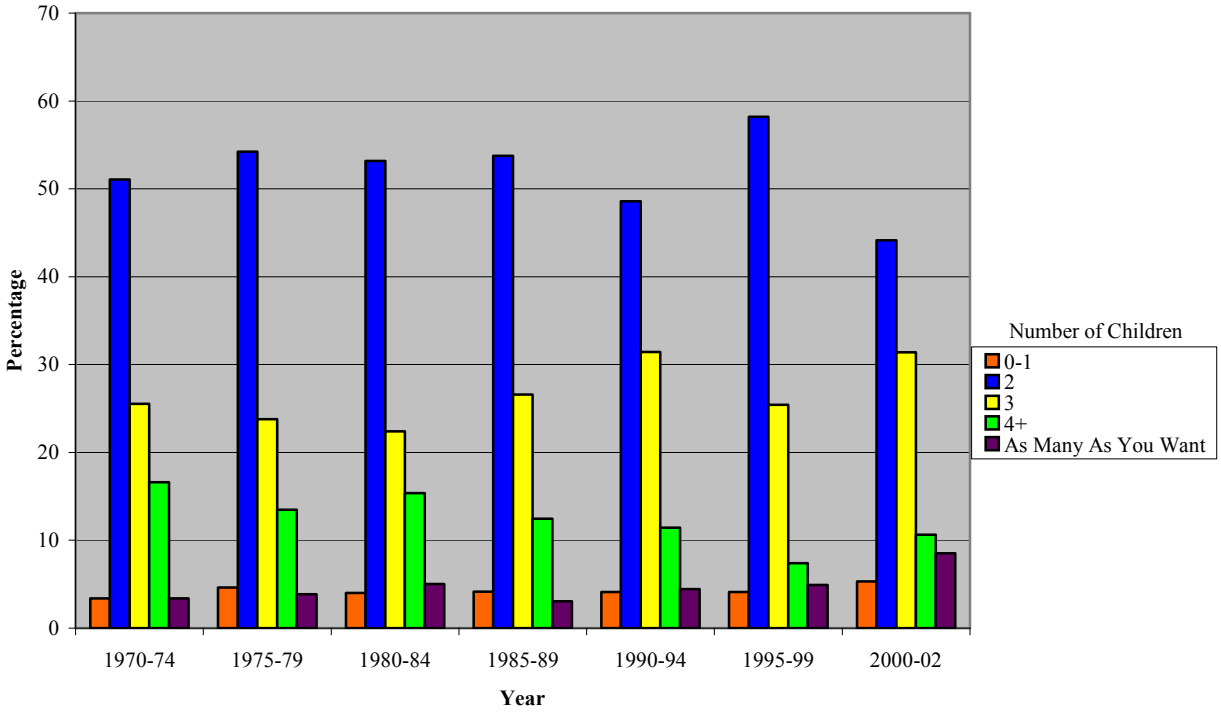
FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURE 1. Ideal Family Size by Survey Year*, Women and Men Aged 18-46: General Social Survey



*The 1970-1974 period includes data from 1972 and 1974, the 1975-1979 period includes data from 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, the 1980-1984 period includes data from 1982 and 1983, the 1985-1989 period includes data from 1985, 1986, 1988, and 1989, the 1990-1994 period includes data from 1990, 1991, 1993, and 1994, the 1995-1999 period includes data from 1996 and 1998, and the 2000-2002 period includes data from 2000 and 2002.

FIGURE 2. Ideal Family Size by Survey Year*, Women Aged 20-26: General Social Survey



*The 1970-1974 period includes data from 1972 and 1974, the 1975-1979 period includes data from 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, the 1980-1984 period includes data from 1982 and 1983, the 1985-1989 period includes data from 1985, 1986, 1988, and 1989, the 1990-1994 period includes data from 1990, 1991, 1993, and 1994, the 1995-1999 period includes data from 1996 and 1998, and the 2000-2002 period includes data from 2000 and 2002.

Figure 3. Current and Expected Parity, Women age 20-21 in 1980 (1960-61 Birth Cohort), Current Population Survey

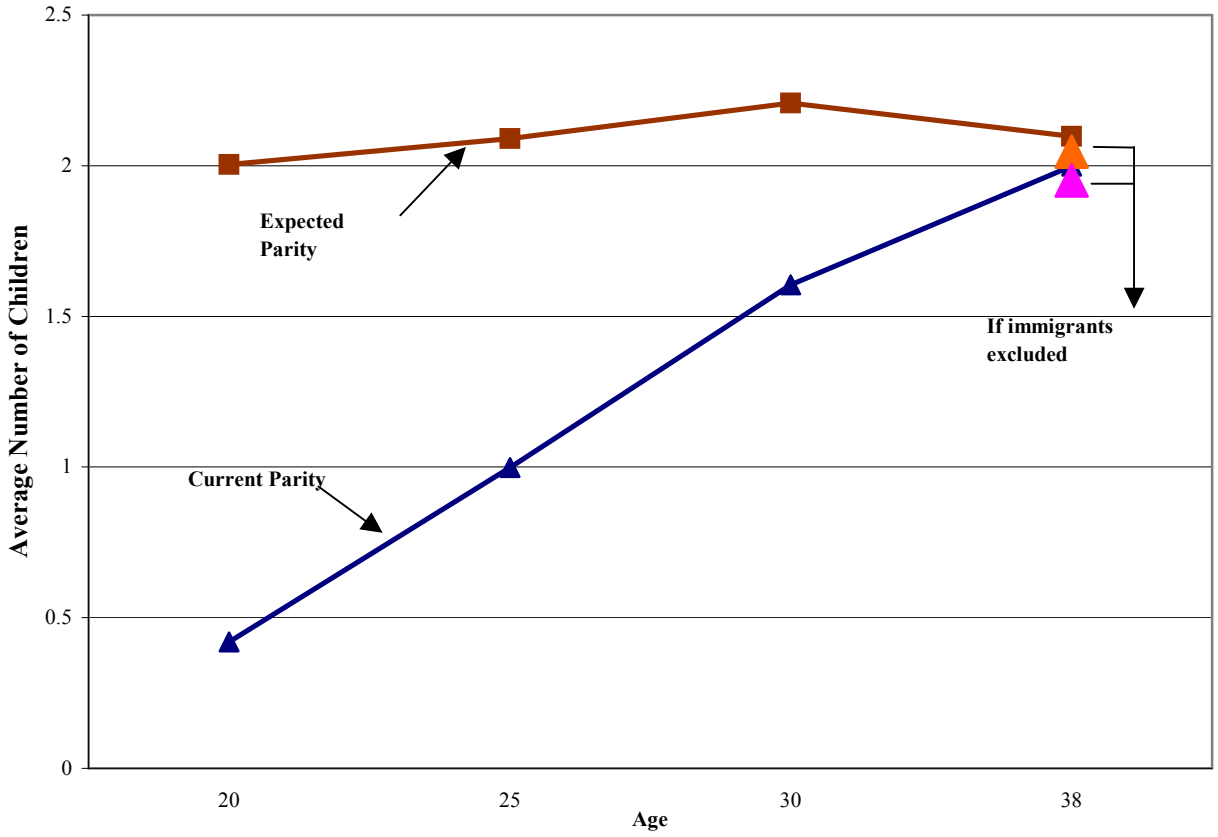
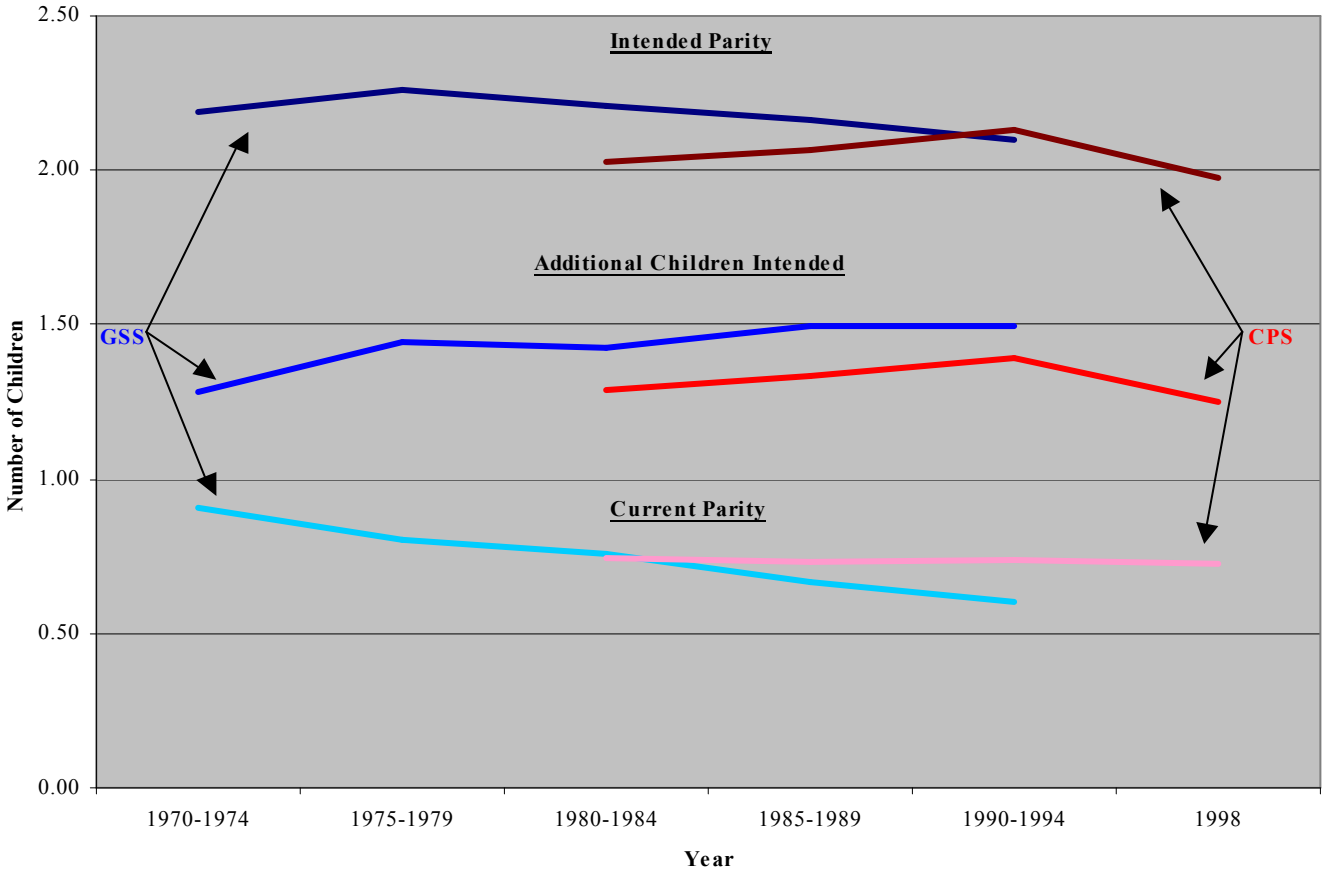


FIGURE 4. Current Parity, Additional Children Intended, and Intended Parity by Survey Year*, Women Aged 20-26, General Social Survey and Current Population Survey



*For the General Social Survey, the 1970-1974 period includes data from 1972 and 1974, the 1975-1979 period includes data from 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, the 1980-1984 period includes data from 1982 and 1983, the 1985-1989 period includes data from 1985, 1986, 1988, and 1989, and the 1990-1994 period includes data from 1990, 1991, 1993, and 1994. For the Current Population Survey, the 1980-1984 period includes data from 1980 only, the 1985-1989 period includes data from 1985 only and the 1990-1994 period includes data from 1990 only.

Table 1. Intent for additional children by parity and year: CPS selected years

Age and Year	*Total*	*Childless*	*One Birth to Date*	*Two Births to Date*
18 to 24 years old				
1978*	72.7	81.6	70.1	33.7
1980	***73.6***	***83.0***	***71.3***	***32.1***
1983*	74.5	84.1	70.6	30.4
1985	***74.4***	***84.8***	***70.4***	***31.0***
1988*	76.0	85.6	72.2	28.9
1990	***74.8***	***85.7***	***69.5***	***33.0***
1992*	75.6	86.3	69.6	35.9
1998*	71.4 (***71.4***)	82.2 (***82.2***)	64.4 (***64.4***)	32.7 (***32.7***)
25 to 29 years old				
1978*	45.5	65.2	61.5	21.9
1980	***47.1***	***68.8***	***60.1***	***21.3***
1983*	49.0	72.7	61.2	22.1
1985	***53.2***	***77.7***	***65.0***	***23.3***
1988*	53.2	76.3	64.2	25.3
1990	***55.8***	***78.4***	***68.9***	***24.9***
1992*	53.6	78.9	65.3	24.0
1998*	54.2 (***54.2***)	79.1 (***79.1***)	64.4 (***64.4***)	23 (***23***)
30 to 34 years old				
1978*	16.7	35.2	33.5	7.7
1980	***17.4***	***37.4***	***32.1***	***8.2***
1983*	20.8	45.2	31.1	9.5
1985	***23.5***	***45.3***	***37.7***	***9.9***
1988*	24.7	51.1	37.8	11.4
1990	***28.9***	***54.7***	***44.8***	***15.9***
1992*	27.2	53.9	44.7	12.3
1998*	30.7 (***30.7***)	59.8 (***59.8***)	49.2 (***49.2***)	14.2 (***14.2***)
35 to 39 years old				
1980	***3.4***	***13.7***	***7.2***	***2.1***
1985	***5.8***	***15.5***	***10.9***	***2.5***
1990	***8.3***	***19.7***	***15.9***	***3.7***
1998	***10.3***	***28.1***	***17.4***	***5.0***

* O'Connell 2002 - Source: Current Population Survey, June supplements, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1998

Bold Italics: Source: Current Population Survey, June supplements, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1998

Weights used

Table 2. Expected parity by current parity and year: CPS selected years

Age and Year	*Mean #*	*No Kids*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4+*
18 to 24 years old						
1980	2.02	1.90	2.04	2.41	3.25	4.29
1985	2.05	1.92	2.05	2.40	3.31	4.22
1990	2.06	1.90	2.04	2.47	3.26	4.66
1998	1.88	1.71	1.89	2.47	3.22	4.81
25 to 29 years old						
1980	2.02	1.40	1.78	2.28	3.20	4.71
1985	2.11	1.60	1.88	2.30	3.20	4.46
1990	2.15	1.65	2.01	2.32	3.21	4.58
1998	2.05	1.55	1.85	2.28	3.15	4.52
30 to 34 years old						
1980	2.15	0.66	1.38	2.10	3.07	4.67
1985	2.03	0.85	1.48	2.11	3.11	4.55
1990	2.14	1.03	1.58	2.20	3.10	4.58
1998	2.11	1.10	1.60	2.17	3.08	4.57
35 to 39 years old						
1980	2.53	0.21	1.08	2.03	3.01	4.74
1985	2.12	0.29	1.12	2.03	3.02	4.72
1990	2.06	0.34	1.19	2.05	3.03	4.63
1998	2.09	0.44	1.19	2.06	3.02	4.58

Source: Current Population Survey, June supplements, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1998

Weights used

APPENDIX

Table A1. Missing Values on Ideal Family Size by Survey Year*, Men and Women Aged 18 to 46 and Women aged 20 to 26, General Social Survey

	MEN & WOMEN 18-46			WOMEN 20-26		
Year	**n**	**# Missing**	**% Missing**	**n**	**# Missing**	**% Missing**
1970-74	1,749	41	2.34%	240	5	2.08%
1975-79	3,438	58	1.69%	548	6	1.09%
1980-84	1,997	43	2.15%	302	3	0.99%
1985-89	2,901	52	1.79%	366	5	1.37%
1990-94	2,870	72	2.51%	317	2	0.63%
1995-99	2,242	73	3.26%	249	5	2.01%
2000-02	1,573	38	2.42%	190	2	1.05%

*The 1970-1974 period includes data from 1972 and 1974, the 1975-1979 period includes data from 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, the 1980-1984 period includes data from 1982 and 1983, the 1985-1989 period includes data from 1985, 1986, 1988, and 1989, the 1990-1994 period includes data from 1990, 1991, 1993, and 1994, the 1995-1999 period includes data from 1996 and 1998, and the 2000-2002 period includes data from 2000 and 2002.

Table A2. Missing Values on Fertility Intentions by Survey Year*, Women Aged 20 to 26, General Social Survey

Year	**n**	**# Don't Know**	**% Don't Know**	**# No Answer**	**% No Answer**
1970-74	202	14	6.93%	6	2.97%
1975-79	448	29	6.47%	13	2.90%
1980-84	238	15	6.30%	0	0.00%
1985-89	316	18	5.70%	1	0.32%
1990-94	202	15	7.43%	1	0.50%

*The 1970-1974 period includes data from 1972 and 1974, the 1975-1979 period includes data from 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, the 1980-1984 period includes data from 1982 and 1983, the 1985-1989 period includes data from 1985, 1986, 1988, and 1989, and the 1990-1994 period includes data from 1990, 1991, 1993, and 1994.

Table A3. Missing Values on Fertility Intentions by Survey Year, Women aged 18 to 39, Current Population Survey

Year	**n**	**# No Answer**	**% No Answer**	**# Don't Know**	**% Don't Know**
1980	31,151	3,591	11.53%	3,433	11.02%
1985	28,002	4,401	15.72%	3,068	10.96%
1990	26,650	3,692	13.85%	3,579	13.43%
1998	19,184	2,958	15.42%	2,095	10.92%

Table A4. Missing Values on Fertility Intentions by Survey Year, Women aged 20 to 26, Current Population Survey

Year	n	# No Answer	% No Answer	# Don't Know	% Don't Know
1980	11,138	1,298	11.65%	1,440	12.93%
1985	9,264	1,609	17.37%	1,255	13.55%
1990	7,685	1,122	14.60%	1,259	16.38%
1998	5,257	963	18.32%	651	12.38%