

Forecasting Families

Demographic, Institutional and
Cultural Change

1

Reading

- *The Futures of the Family*, Chapter 8.
Lives of Their Own, Chapters 6 and 7.
"Future Trends in Women's Labour Force
Behaviour", "Does 'Individualization' Mean
Improvement?"
- In the "Kit of Readings", make sure you
read the paper by Norval Glenn and the
article by Larry Bumpass.

2

Forecasting Families

- * Forecasting Demographic Change
- * Forecasting Change in Other Societal
Institutions
- * Forecasting Change in Expectations of Family
Relationships
- Demographers, Economists and Sociologists have
a rather poor track record as forecasters (though a
good way to make money!)

3

Evaluating outcomes

- Can we extrapolate trends of individualization & globalization?
- Brave New Families: Who's Better Off Than Before?

4

Norval Glenn's view

- "... recent changes in the American family have not been beneficial to children ... In spite of some egalitarian changes that have benefited women, the changes overall are more likely to have hurt women than to have helped them".

5

Larry Bumpass view

- "Family relationships occupy an important, but ever-shrinking space in our lives..
 - ...this is a continuation of a long-term process and is not confined to one country ..
 - ...major causes include the individualizing tendency of participation in our economy and cultural values of individualization ... "
- (Bumpass, 1990: 493)

6

Value judgments creep in

- ... the progressive legitimization of individual self-interest (Bumpass, 1990: 488)
- - this seems to mean a decline in the incidence of people being prepared to sacrifice their own interests in order to advance those of family members .

7

Who are we talking about?

- * Most of these forecasts refer to the majority populations in North America and Europe
- * First nations populations and many recent immigrant groups will likely proceed in the same direction, though from different starting points and at a different pace

8

Demographic Forecasts

- * Fertility likely to stabilize well below replacement level
 - * Age at first childbirth
 - * Infant mortality rates
 - * Life expectancy

9

A second demographic transition?

- Further fertility decline in North America and Europe?
- A "second demographic transition" (van de Kaa) in North America and Europe?
- - could also consider this as completion of the main demographic transition

10

Van de Kaa

- Shift from the golden age of marriage (1950s) to the dawn of cohabitation
 - no longer need to marry before having sexual relations
- Shift from tight link between marriage and childbearing to childbearing as part of parent's project of self-fulfillment.
 - marriage no longer means immediate readiness to bear children

11

Van de Kaa

- Shift to the age of the working-couple with a child
 - both parents feel obliged to become independent income-earners - children unlikely to be economically useful to the family
- Shift from uniform to pluralistic families and households
 - remarriage generates step-parent, step-sibling, half-sibling relationships
 - increased acceptance of "chosen" domestic groups, e.g. same sex adults with dependent children.

12

Africa

- Some countries have not passed through the first demographic transition, let alone Van de Kaa's second demographic transition.
- Demographic transition in high fertility countries of Africa?
- Consequences of HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa

13

Three areas of change

- Change in Union Formation, Stability, Dissolution
 - we used to call this marriage and divorce, but the continuing rise of non-marital cohabitation forces a more general vocabulary on us.
- Change in Other Societal Institutions
 - trends in forms of work; secularization & religiosity ; end of the Cold War in 1991; reduction of trade tariffs; does globalization mean domination by US cultural & legal assumptions?
- Change in Expectations of Family Relationships
 - what we loosely call "cultural expectations"

14

Formation, Stability, Dissolution

- * Age at first marriage or first stable common-law union
- * Percent of people who never marry, never form stable common-law union
- * Percent of first marriages that end in divorce
- * Percent of first common-law unions that break up
- * Percent of divorced people who remarry
- * Percent of children whose parents divorce before children reach age 18

15

Other Societal Institutions

- * Working wives and mothers
 - decline in percent of families with only a single main wage-earner
 - * Percent of mothers of young children who are working outside the home
 - * Degree to which child-care services provided by the state, the educational system or by private business
 - * Degree to which elder-care or chronic sick care services provided by state etc.

16

Normative Expectations(1)

- * Expectations about intergenerational relationships
 - responses to changes in the "script of life" for entry to adulthood
 - expectations regarding the "young old" and the "old old"
 - "sandwich generation" cross-pressures
 - * Expectations about spousal and gender relationships
 - greater or lesser degree of role-specialization?

17

Normative Expectations(2)

- * Legislation, legal practice and role of the state regarding:
 - ease of divorce
 - assessment and enforcement of post-divorce spousal and child support payments
 - * Exercise of power within families
 - abuse of various kinds, physical, sexual, psychological of children, parents, spouses.

18

Individualized model of life

- An increased rate of divorce and remarriage holds in all modern societies.
- "New Family Law" in most modern societies assumes possibility or desirability of a "clean break" between independent adults whereas "Old Family Law" assumed women necessarily dependent.
- In Roman Empire, there could also be a "clean break" between husband & wife but this was because both of them had always remained subject to the head of their own corporate kin group.

19

Gender inequality partly a "cohort effect"

- In all modern societies older cohorts of women earn about 70% of the wages of men and their adult lives show sensitivities to their economic vulnerabilities.
- Note however that when you look at more recent cohorts of university-educated young men and women, the women earn over 90% of the incomes of men, on average, more if you control for extra hours worked by men.

20

Can we move back the clock?

- Some societies have so far resisted many forms of modernization and individualization. (1996-2001 Islamic government in Afghanistan or Ping Hsiung's research in rural Taiwan).
- Even within North America and Europe, some religious communities and/or some recent immigrant groups put much effort into having families control their members' activities and attitudes.

21

Union Dissolution & Lone Parent Families

- Dissolution of marriages (or of common-law unions) has become an accepted practice in the dominant culture of most OECD countries, even when quite young children are present.
- Voters & the governments they elect are no longer prepared to take on primary responsibility for the support of single-parent families and this is the case not only in USA, but also in social democratic countries such as Sweden in the late 1990s or Britain under Blair's "New Labour".

22

Long term contracts desirable

- Women who wish to specialize in the domestic sphere (as in the Gary Becker type of family) would be well advised to sign an appropriate long term contract with their partner, (the standard marriage contract no longer possessing long-term clauses).

23

Keep up that human & social capital

- Others should take care to maintain and increase their level of human capital (education, training and job-experience)
- Also what some call "social capital" in the sense of a functioning network of friends, neighbours, colleagues and kin who can be of assistance in difficult times. In these senses, people are obliged to construct and negotiate their own family arrangements.

24

Conclusions(1)

- What any society considers as "the family" is bound up with that society's birth rates, death rates, life expectancies, but also with the state & other social institutions which assume the existence of families and upon which families in turn depend.
- Forecasting one aspect of families (fertility rates for example) involves assumptions about other societal institutions as well as about the ideas and other cultural baggage people have about how family life is and ought to be.

25

Conclusions(2)

- Family forms in Canada seem to have evolved in response to modernizing and individualizing trends whose ultimate causes are cultural as well as economic.
- Most students in this course will live in family or family-like relationships over the remainder of their lifetimes. Let's hope the course materials have taught you things you didn't know before, some of them actually useful.

26

Final Exam

- This is in LM 158 (same room as we use for class) on Monday June 25th from noon to 2:00 p.m.)
- The format will be similar to the midterm test for this course in the sense that there will be some multiple choice items and one essay.

27

Final Suggestions

- Get a good night's sleep before the final exam. Make the essay into an argument with a beginning, a middle and an end, as well as some evidence.
- Have a great summer!

28
