Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Children

Erikson’s Psychosocial Development Theory

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**Generativity vs. Stagnation**

- **Generativity** is a stage in middle adulthood when people want to be productive by reaching out to other people and doing something that leaves their mark on the world.
- Success leads to feelings of usefulness & accomplishment; failure results in shallow involvement in the world (self-absorbed).

**Parent-Child Relationships**

Crucial to 5/6 *functions of the family!*

- Addition of new members to society
- Providing physical care to children
- Socializing children
- Controlling behaviour / discipline
- Providing love & a sense of belonging
- Teaching children how to become productive members of society
Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Children

1. FERTILITY (assisted reproductive technologies, birth control, religious beliefs, abortion, adoption policies)

2. INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP
   a) Age & health of couple
   b) Financial status
   c) Educational, career, & personal goals
   d) Number & spacing of children

Should we have children? cont.

3. CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

4. INFLUENCE OF FAMILY/FRIENDS

5. GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY
1. Fertility

- **Fertility** (ability to conceive children) decreases with age.
- Couples that delay parenthood may need to use ART.
  - fertility medication,
  - artificial insemination,
  - in vitro fertilization &/or
  - surrogacy

**ART** = assisted reproductive technologies

**fertility medication** = better known as fertility drugs, are drugs which enhance reproductive fertility. For women, fertility medication is used to stimulate follicle development of the ovary.

**artificial insemination** = is the deliberate introduction of sperm into a female’s uterus or cervix for the purpose of achieving a pregnancy through in vivo fertilization by means other than sexual intercourse. The primary beneficiaries of artificial insemination are heterosexual couples suffering from male infertility, lesbian couples and single women. Intracervical insemination (ICI) is the easiest and most common insemination technique and can be used in the home for self-insemination without medical practitioner assistance.

**in vitro fertilization** = (IVF) is a process by which an egg is fertilised by sperm outside the body: in vitro (“in glass”). The process involves monitoring and stimulating a woman’s ovulatory process, removing ovum or ova (egg or eggs) from the woman’s ovaries and letting sperm fertilise them in a fluid medium in a laboratory. The fertilised egg (zygote) is cultured for 2–6 days in a growth medium and is then implanted in the same or another woman’s uterus, with the intention of establishing a successful pregnancy.

**surrogacy** = is the carrying of a pregnancy for intended parents. There are two main types of surrogacy, gestational surrogacy and traditional surrogacy. In gestational surrogacy, the pregnancy results from the transfer of an embryo created by in vitro fertilization (IVF), in a manner so the resulting child is genetically unrelated to the surrogate. Gestational surrogates are also referred to as gestational carriers. In traditional surrogacy, the surrogate is impregnated naturally or artificially, but the resulting child is genetically related to the surrogate.
1. Fertility cont.

- July 1, 1969: Parliament decriminalized contraception by passing amendments to Section 251 of the Criminal Code.
- Infant, child, & maternal **mortality rates** in Canada have been declining due to improved healthcare and planned parenthood.

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**July 1, 1969** Parliament decriminalized contraception by passing amendments to Section 251 of the Criminal Code. The same legislation also **decriminalized some abortions under extremely restricted conditions.**

**1988** The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Canada’s abortion law was unconstitutional. It was found to infringe upon a woman’s right to “life, liberty and security of person” under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This decision decriminalized abortions in Canada, making it a medical procedure governed by national health policy rather than criminal law.

**1999** Plan B was the first product approved by Health Canada to be packaged and marketed specifically as Emergency Contraception in Canada. It became available with a doctor’s prescription.

**2006** Plan B was approved for sale without a doctor’s prescription from pharmacies with a pharmacist’s consultation. This is known as behind-the-counter.

**2008** Plan B was approved for sale from pharmacies over-the-counter, without a consultation.

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**Infant Mortality Rate** = # of children in a country in a given year who die before their 1st birthday compared to the # of live births

**Child Mortality Rate** = the # of children in a country who die in a given year compared to the # that live

**Maternal Mortality Rate** = the # of deaths of mothers while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management compared to the # of mothers who survived pregnancy in a country in a given year.
2a. Age & health of couple

- The avg. 39 woman has $\frac{1}{2}$ the fertility she had at 31. Between 39-42, fertility drop by $\frac{1}{2}$ again. ~ $\frac{1}{4}$ women age 35+ have trouble getting pregnant.
- **Genetic diseases** (e.g. hemophilia, sickle-cell anemia, & cystic fibrosis) can be passed from parent to child.

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**Hemophilia** = is a rare disorder in which your blood doesn’t clot normally because it lacks sufficient blood-clotting proteins.

**Sickle-cell anemia** = Sickle (i.e. sickle/crescent shape) cell disease is a group of disorders that affects hemoglobin, the molecule in red blood cells that delivers oxygen to cells throughout the body. Leads to anemia, jaundice, & cells getting stuck in vessels depriving tissues and organs of oxygen-rich blood and can lead to organ damage, especially in the lungs, kidneys, spleen, and brain.

**Cystic fibrosis** = Cystic fibrosis causes various effects on the body, but mainly affects the digestive system and lungs. The degree of cystic fibrosis involvement differs from person to person. However, the persistence and ongoing infection in the lungs, with destruction of lungs and loss of lung function, eventually causes death in the majority of people who have cystic fibrosis. Typical complications caused by cystic fibrosis are difficulty in digesting fats and proteins; vitamin deficiencies due to loss of pancreatic enzymes; and progressive loss of lung function.
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2b. Financial Status

- A Fraser Institute study (2013) says it costs $3,000 to $4,000 a year — or $72,000 to raise a child to 18.
- Median Canadian annual income per family in 2012:
  - Canada $74,540
  - Ontario $74,890

Mortgage vs. Disposable Income

- Disposable income = income – taxes
- Ontario = $74,890 – 33% = $50,176
- MoneySense = $13,537 / year / child

![CANADIANS' DEBT LOAD HIGH](chart.png)
Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Children

2c. Educational, career, & personal goals

- Remember, the higher your education, the more money you earn.
- Couples are delaying parenthood to complete their education.

- 1970’s 33% families were dual-income
- 2000’s 70% families are dual-income
- Many women have invested time & money in building a career & delay parenthood to continue working.
- Studies in the US show women may earn 10-15% less after maternity leave and have less chance of advancement.
- Personal goals could include travel, physical achievements, or material goods.
2d. Number & Spacing of Children

- In Canada, the average number of children per family decreased from 2.7 in 1961 to 1.9 in 2011.
- Ready for baby #2?
  - Has the mother’s body healed from 1st pregnancy,
  - What are their fertility chances, and
  - Is the family is ready for another baby and its impact on the other child or children.

3. Cultural/Religious Background

- Example: Chinese culture expects children to look after their parents in old age. Chinese students compete for entrance into the best schools in order to attain a high paying job.
- Most religious faiths encourage childbearing, so couples who attend services tend to have more children.
Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Children

4. Influence of Family/Friends

- Did either partner come from a single-parent or divorced family?
- After marriage, parents expect grandchildren.
- Siblings might add pressure if they want to be aunts/uncles.
- Does the couple’s friends have children?

5. Global Sustainability

- World population ~7¼ billion
3 Essential Factors

Canadians agreed these factors must be considered when planning to have children:

1. Having enough time for children.
2. Recognizing the responsibilities involved with having children.

Adjusting to Parenthood
Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Children

Adjusting to Parenthood

Considerations:
1. Primary Caregivers & Care by Others
2. Role Overload
3. Socializing Children
4. Unplanned Pregnancies
5. Teenaged Parents

1. Caregivers

• **Primary caregiver**: the parent who looks after the child’s needs most of the time.
• Parents want grandparents to provide care, but not advice.
• **Custodial grandparents**: children living with grandparents because their parents are too young, suffer drug/alcohol abuse, divorced, in jail, or dead.
Day Care

- **Universal day care**: licenced day care that is available & accessible for all families.
- Quality of the parent-child relationship is more important than the # of hours a child is in day care w.r.t. attachment.
- Good quality day care is a way out of poverty for single-income families.

2. Role Overload

- A lack of time is identified as the most difficult adjustment to parenthood.
- Couples may return to traditional gender roles (male breadwinner, female homemaker).
- Change of role from worker to parent may cause some to feel incompetent.
- Cohabitating couples tend to be more equitable & don’t suffer the same.
Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Children

• New roles for siblings who become aunts/uncles. This changes the relationship between siblings.
• Couples will emphasize family responsibilities and may lose child-free friends while making new friendships with other parents.

3. Socializing Children

• Socialization is a function of the family however, other social institutions like schools & churches also contribute.
• Socialization occurs when children learn their culture and acquire their personality & values.
• Families that live in higher socio-economic areas have less to worry about when children go out to play.
4. Unplanned Pregnancies

- Couples who plan pregnancy are better prepared to deal with role overload.
- Planned or not, couples need to renegotiate their relationship when they become parents.
- Many couples experience a decline in marital satisfaction after childbirth.

5. Teenaged Parents

- Emerging adults are exploring their identity in 3 areas: love, work, & worldviews.
- When teens are catapulted into adulthood, they suffer the challenges more because they are less psychologically developed.
Factors Influencing the Decision to Have Children

Teenaged pregnancies decreasing

- 2.7% of pregnancies in Canada in 2005 were to women under 20 years old, compared to 15.1% in 1995.
- Pregnancies = the sum of live births, fetal loss & induced abortions.
- Most teenaged parents are single-parent mothers. They experience more cohabitations & separations than older mothers.