

Population Change and Public Policy

www.ssc.uwo.ca/sociology/popchange/

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Why a cluster on Population Change & Public Policy?

- To meet challenges posed by demographic change in advanced industrial societies with a focus on the Canadian case.
 - Similarities with other advanced industrial societies:
 - slow population growth
 - gradual aging of populations
 - Differences as well, for example, Canada is more open to immigration.
- Trends have consequences for labour force recruitment and for social programmes such as health care and pension systems.
- Demographic change and its consequences are mediated by other social trends and institutions ranging from family change to the education system and the macro-economy.

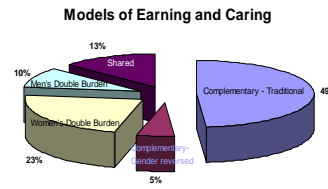
•Policy challenges

- policies that seek to influence the course of demographic events
- policy adjustments that are necessary in various areas because of the implications of population change.

Why fund the cluster?

- In 1986-1992, the Federal Government through Health and Welfare Canada had a Review of Demography and its Implications for Economic and Social Policy
- Currently, no agency is responsible for considering the overall macro situation of population change and its implications
- Current efforts in universities and agencies have been uncoordinated and the academic research has been poorly linked to the policy sector

• Additional funds will mean more research on this area of strategic importance, greater coordination, better links to the policy sector, and a more systematic dissemination to the interested public.



Source: General Social Survey on Time Use, 1998

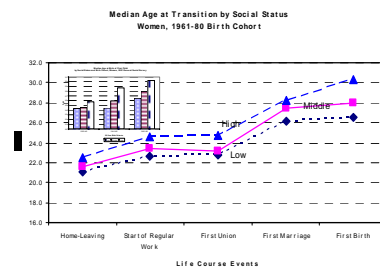
Does a more equitable sharing of household tasks lead to a fertility rate closer to replacement?

Major Areas of Research

1. Low fertility in the context of changing family and work obligations
2. Immigration, internal migration, and distribution of Canada's population
3. Labour force, aging, and life-course flexibility
4. Mortality, morbidity, and the changing nature of the elderly population

Cross-cutting themes:

- Immigration and its impact on the economy and population growth
- Population aging and factors associated with youth, labour force, and retirement
- Equity and cohesion, including impact of population change on equity by gender, over generations and space, and across population groups



Source: General Social Survey of Family History, 2001

How will delayed transition to adulthood affect the state's ability to maintain the pension system?

Nature of the Cluster

- A virtual network that
 - Establishes research priorities with stakeholders' involvement
 - Conducts research
 - Disseminates results to a broader public through
 - face to face workshops and conferences
 - print media (e.g., research briefs, policy issues series, series on facts and fallacies about population change, news releases, and newsletters)
 - electronic media (e.g., website, interactive lectures, e-group)

•People currently associated with the cluster

- 76 researchers from 22 Canadian universities; and
- 9 partner agencies (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Policy Research Initiative, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Social Development Canada, Office of the Chief Actuary, Finance Canada, Statistics Canada, Health Canada, and Vanier Institute of the Family)
- Other partners will be sought from provincial & municipal governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

To promote connectedness and visibility

- First steps
 - Surveys of researchers and partners conducted electronically in January
 - A February 3-4 workshop in London, Ontario with 35 participants: 26 researchers and 9 from ministries of the Federal Government
- Future plans
 - Consultations in establishing areas of priority, collaboration in research, and systematic dissemination of results
 - systematic involvement of graduate students (student exchanges, work-placements, assistantships, and post-doctoral fellowships) to enhance the long-term viability of the cluster.

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