Where is Baby? A Sociological Insight to Fertility Decisions

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Overview

- Healthy environment yields healthy birth rate?
- Government family policies – Do they Work?
- Social & cultural barriers to fertility

Macro Factors & TFR

- Multiple regression model predicting TFR using percentage growth in economy, female labour force participation rate, male labour force participation rate

➢ TFR correlated positively with economic growth + negatively with female labour force participation rate

➢ Adjusted R-square = 56.3%

Awareness of 2004 Pro-Family Government Policies

- 39%   Yes, I have read up on them
- 37.1%   Yes, I heard about them but do not know the details
- 23.9%   No, I have not seen the announcements

(n=1510)

2004 Pro-Family Policies

- 23.9% not aware of policies – concentrated among those with no children or 1 child
- Those with 3 or more children more likely to believe that pro-family policies will help increase the TFR
- Evidence suggests that pro-family policies may encourage those with 1 child to have more children, but not those with no children

Surveying Individuals – Feedback from Married Women

- Why survey women?

Who Makes Fertility Decisions?

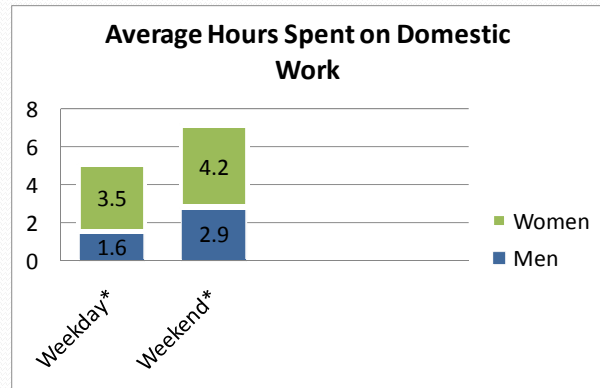- 53.8% actively avoiding pregnancy

% Use
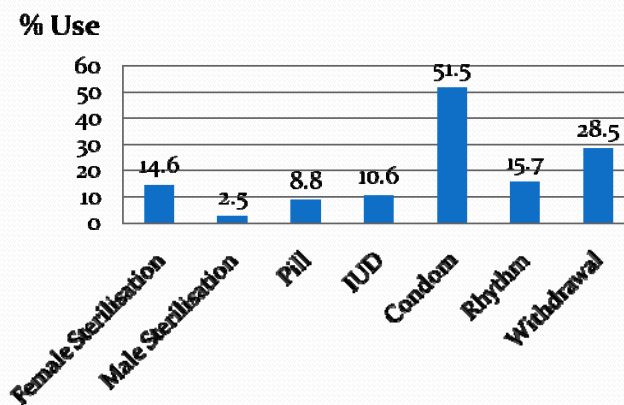
Surveying Individuals – Feedback from Married Women

- 26% indicated positive effect of new pro-family policies on personal fertility decision
- Logistic model to predict likelihood to have child in future
- Nagelkerke R-square = 0.631
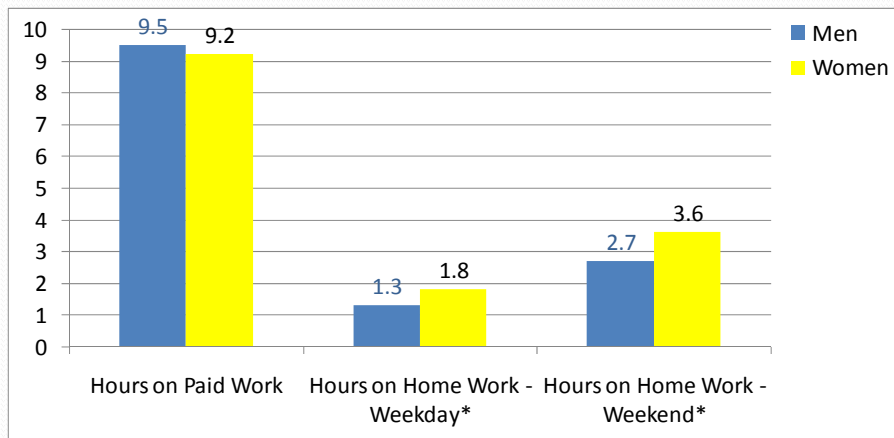- Prediction performance of model = 90% accuracy

Who is Likely to Have Child?

- ✓ Do not embrace intensive mothering
- ✓ Childrearing as extrinsic returns
- ✓ Higher marital satisfaction
- ✓ Worked full-time
- ✓ Had fewer children
- ✓ Younger
- ✓ Not Chinese

The Practice of Family

Average Hours Spent on Domestic Work

Weekday*: Men 1.6, Women 3.5
Weekend*: Men 2.9, Women 4.2

Legend: Women (green), Men (blue)

Doing Family – Doing Work

	Men	Women
Hours on Paid Work	9.5	9.2
Hours on Home Work - Weekday*	1.3	1.8
Hours on Home Work - Weekend*	2.7	3.6

The Practice of Family

		MALE	FEMALE
HOME CARE	Self*	2.2	3.4
	Spouse*	2.9	1.9
	Shared*	2.6	2.2
CHILD CARE	Self*	0.7	3.3
	Spouse*	2.6	0.5
	Shared*	3.3	2.9

11 Home Care Items
10 Child Care Items

In the Dual-Income Home

	Gender	Mean (Domestic Items)
• home care by self*	Male	2.2752
	Female	2.9049
• homecare by spouse*	Male	2.2936
	Female	1.8804
• home care shared*	Male	2.8104
	Female	2.4076
• childcare by self*	Male	.7584
	Female	2.8016
• childcare by spouse*	Male	1.8624
	Female	.4674
• childcare shared	Male	3.1713
	Female	2.9076

Ideologies of the Family

- It is better for the husband to be the breadwinner and the wife to be the homemaker
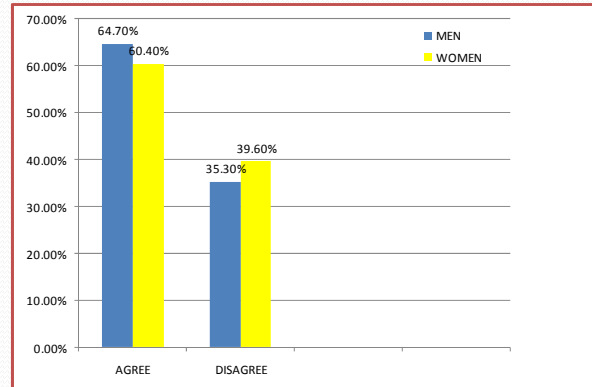
Men's Roles – Cultural Shift in Expectations of Fatherhood

	% Agree
A good mother must be on-call 24 hours a day	53.5
The mother is the best caregiver	87.3
Fathers and mothers are equally important as caregivers	98
If a child behaves badly, it is usually the mother's fault	7.6
A good mother puts her child's needs above her own	84.2*
As long as a man is able to provide financially for his children, he is a good father	30.5*

Moving Ahead

- Identify the root cause of the problem
- Insights from the study:
- ❑ Gender roles differentiation – costs to women higher than to men
- → How to avoid a gender-bias?
- ❑ Work-Family Interface
- → How to achieve a better work-life balance?