

MCDB 150 Global Problems of Population Growth Lecture 20 Notes

Most of this course has been focused on foreign countries.

The next few lectures are on topics of social and political interest primarily in the US. They are teen sexuality, teen pregnancy and abortion.

Today we start the subject is Teen Sexuality and Teen Pregnancy

Hartford Courant November 19, 2008

FRESH TALK: CAROLYN ROOKE

The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which monitors health risk behaviors among ninth- to 12th-grade students in the United States, found that

42.4 percent of Connecticut high school students have had sexual intercourse and 31.8 percent are sexually active.

Of those students, 37.3 percent reported not using a condom during their last sexual encounter.

Probably because of fear of AIDS and the popularization of oral sex by Kenneth Starr, the conservative who prosecuted Bill Clinton for lying about having oral sex w/ Monica Lewinski, Oral Sex is the big thing now.

Here's your story for today.

Oral sex by Freshman in NH Schools.

NH Register: Teens turn to Oral Sex:

10th grade students (HS Sophs): 40% of boys, and girls, reported that they had engaged in oral sex in the last year.

~25% said that they had 3 or more oral sex partners in the previous year.

HARTFORD TEENAGER QUOTE

Comes into PP clinic

I'm pregnant.

Oh, how do you know that.

Boyfriend came twice.

So.

I know that you can't get pregnant

450 Hartford teens gave birth in '99.

332 girls graduated from Hartford City schools in 1999. NHR 6/23/01

35% more girls become mothers than graduated from HS.

Are the schools doing everything they can to prevent this? NO!

A nurse practitioner at a Hartford school clinic said that she is allowed to test and treat students for sexually transmitted diseases, but may not prescribe birth control or even distribute condoms.

A proposal to distribute condoms and other contraceptives at school clinics was killed because some thought that it would encourage teens to have sex.

This is from an advocacy ad, but it is accurate in that

that this is one of the main concerns of people who oppose sex education

SLIDE 0

namely that discussion of sex encourages sex.

When this objection was discussed in Hartford, Maritza Lopez, a Hartford Public HS Jr. and already a mother, dismissed such an idea. She said: "All the girls I know are sexually active. Most started in the 6th or 7th grade. They are going to do it no matter what."

My experience w/ teacher training.

There are a lot of problems with sex education in the schools.

In schools, very often, the teacher may not agree that sex education is a proper topic for schools.

The teacher may be uncomfortable talking about sex,

is not well educated on how to handle questions about sex or contraception,

is afraid of legal or disciplinary actions if she says the wrong thing,

is worried about parental objections,

and in any case the teaching is not coming from her guts,

but she is just fulfilling a curriculum requirement.

These are handicaps that almost guarantee an unsuccessful program.

Remember, in the case of Pakistan and Bangla Desh,

When the traditional birth attendants, the Daiyis, were the agents of the birth control program

They didn't use birth control themselves and they didn't believe in it

The program was a disaster.

When a well trained and respected woman, who was using contraception herself, and was very satisfied with it, went to the young women and talked in her language. The program was a great success.

I think the same is true for sex education.

Here is a letter from a student after a sex ed seminar PPC led in her high school.

6/01

Hello!

My name is Kelly, and I was in your seminar. I would like to thank you for making me aware of some of the consequences of sex. Because of your seminar, I got the courage to ask my mother for birth control before something happened that I would regret for the rest of my life. I also got the courage to ask my boyfriend to use a condom, instead of nothing.

Thank you so much. You have really honestly changed my life. I guess when the info doesn't come from a teacher, it actually hits home. Thank you!

Kelly

?What's the difference?

Kelley certainly she knew about pregnancy and STDs before PPC came to tell them.

In this case the educator was passionately committed to the goal of the program.

The result of atrocious public policy in the US

SLIDE #1

of # of children born to women 15-19:

US 1/2 Meg; France, Germany, Japan, GB 10s of Ks.

What's wrong with this presentation of the data?

This graph is typical SCARE DATA put out by advocacy groups.

So for instance in this graph the number is not a percentage,

but the absolute #. US is a much larger country,

so would expect some increase, but not of this magnitude.

SLIDE #1b

The US is still pretty bad. They didn't really need to fudge in the 1st graph.

The conclusion is that countries that have a liberal policy towards teen sexuality have much lower teen birthrates:

While the US rate is ~54 / 1,000 teens

In the Netherlands, the figure is 7. (8X lower)

Teen sexuality is considered normal and socially acceptable

and boys and girls are allowed to sleep together in the parent's house.

There are several quite different issues.

One is teen pregnancy.

Another is teen childbearing

A third is out of wedlock births

And the combined problems of unmarried teen pregnancy or childbirth.

Discussion in this area often mix these up horribly.

When comparing data cross culturally or cross-nationally or going back in time, one has to also worry about what is meant by marriage.

In the US marriage is a legal statement. A person either has a marriage certificate or they don't. People are either married or unmarried, there is no ambiguity.

In other cultures marriage is a variable and staged thing.

Among the Fulani of West Africa (Nigeria):

At circumcision of a boy, at age 7 to 10, he is betrothed to an infant girl.

When the future husband's father learns that the girl has begun menstruation, she is believed to be capable of childbirth.

The girl then moves into the future husband's compound.

She is treated as a daughter of the husband's father's household.

The boy and the girl sleep together in the open at the boy's post guarding the perimeter of the cattle corral.

But, the two still have the status of unmarried youth and maiden.

When the girl becomes pregnant, she moves back to her father's household.

She stays there for '3 wet seasons' (2 to 2 1/2 years) after which she returns to the boy and ONLY THEN are they considered married.

Hence using the Fulani definition of marriage, and the western definition of illegitimate, ALL first children among the Fulani are illegitimate.

p93-94 in Derrick Stenning in Jack Goody, ed. Developmental Cycles in Domestic Groups, Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology, Cambridge U Press 1962. KSL Anthro GN480 G66

Among the Dogon people's (Mali and Burkina Faso) a girl doesn't move into her spouses home until the birth of the 2nd or even 3^d child. SFP 39:264 Dec 2008

When we talked about China, I described child marriages where a little boy is married to an older girl, who then acts as surrogate mother in bringing the boy up.

Also in traditional China, men could take many wives and their distinction between wife and concubine was not a legal one.

The status of the women was determined by whether a public celebration was held and how formal and expensive it was.

The status of 1st wives was different from later wives.

The status could change during the course of the relationship.

In many poor communities, Brazil, US, formal marriage is replaced by informal unions in which the terms are negotiated between the man and the woman and are subject to constant renegotiation.

Even in the US, marriage is not a uniform legal situation.

Marriage laws are state laws – so there are 50 different ones.

We have pre-nuptial agreements. These can make the financial arrangements in marriage different for different couples.

In other places even more issues are determined by a private contract.

For instance, the rights that a woman has to her children or her rights to travel, are negotiated by the two families before the marriage and set into a formal marriage contract–

My experience in Egypt.

so each marriage means something different.

To accommodate all these differences, the DHS's use the words "in union" instead of marriage.

It is often perceived that teen sex or teen pregnancy or the related social problem of illegitimacy are somehow a uniquely American problem.

That is untrue:

Trends towards later marriage in much of the developing world have lowered incidence of female sexual initiation before age 15.

But, the practice remains common:

SFP 39:Dec 2008 p249

Roughly 1/3 of women in Bangladesh, Chad, Mali and Niger had first intercourse at age 14 or younger.

20-33% were initiated before 14 in India and 13 other sub-Saharan African countries.

From 10 to 25% of girls are initiated before 14 in Brazil, Columbia, most of Central America and the Caribbean and a whole lot of other countries.

SFP 39:Dec 2008 p249

These are poor countries where puberty comes late. That means these girls are often initiated even before menstruation.

In developed countries, pre-marital pregnancy is common

For instance: Japan:

Population Today 7/02 p4

Of women who were teenagers at their 1st birth:

82% became pregnant before marrying

Of women aged 20 to 24 at their 1st birth:

58%% became pregnant before marrying

All women: 26%% became pregnant before marrying

In short Japanese, if a Japanese woman got pregnant before her late 20s, she was probably unmarried.

The Japanese numbers consider only women whose pregnancy was carried to term.

As we'll see in my next lecture, the Japanese have extremely high rates of abortion

So these, numbers must greatly understate the amount of pre-marital pregnancy.

Huge topic, a big variety of perspectives:

I've assigned READING with some of the most interesting.

Sharon Thompson is a white sociologist who interviewed 400 teenage girls from a variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Her focus is not teenage pregnancy, but what goes on in girls' minds as they decide whether or not to engage in sex.

Leon Dash is a black journalist who went into the poorest part of Washington DC to find out about why so many black teenagers were getting pregnant.

He challenges all the preconceptions and comes up with his own theory.

It's a great story - one of my favorites.

Kristin Luker was a Graduate student in Sociology at Yale and is now a Professor at Berkeley. The piece I've assigned discusses the relationship between non-marital pregnancy and poverty.

BIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

I don't have to tell you about this. You are going through it or just recently have.

What happens at puberty:

1. Tremendous Physical and physiological changes
2. Tremendous Emotional changes

Evolution has designed us to have a great eruption of infatuation, love and sexual emotion at puberty.

In addition, males have been designed for a simultaneous eruption of revolt against parental authority, competitiveness, aggressiveness and violence at puberty which are used to establish a place in the dominance hierarchy.

In the western tradition, these overpowering feelings of teenage love have been well recognized.

Romeo and Juliet were supposed to be young teenagers, maybe 13 or 14,

and their love for each other caused them not only to break social norms,

go against their parent's strong proscriptions but,

in the end, their emotions were so overwhelming that they were willing to die for their love.

Possibly, most of the difference in how disruptive adolescent sexuality is in different cultures, depends on whether teenage marriage or other forms of early sexuality are accepted.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

How do societies treat adolescent sexuality:

In the Om Gad reading you learned what sex was like in a traditional society.

Sexuality begins very early, usually before puberty.

For the girls sexuality can be introduced with a fair amount of violence.

The first major experience relating to their sexuality is probably their clitorrectomy

Marriage and first intercourse precede puberty.

A few years ago, Iran raised the legal age of marriage to 9.

Conservatives were opposed to this much too liberal reform.

Muhammad married his favorite wife, Aisha, when she was 9.

Marriage at 9 does not necessarily imply the beginning of sexual relations.

Only that a contract has been decided on.

In the Iranian parliament, there was a bill to raise the marriage age for girls from 9 to 13.

It was blocked by the Guardian Council, the conservative religious body that vets bills to determine if they comply w/ Islamic law.

NYT 7/29/01 p6.

In many parts of the world until very recently,

if a girl got into her late teens without being married ---- it was considered a calamity because she had almost no chance of being married at a later age.

The cultural proscriptions against sex before marriage were intended to ensure the paternity of the young so that they would have someone to support them.

But also the proscriptions of premarital sex were protective of pre-pubescent girls - Marriage and puberty were essentially at the same time.

Post-pubescent girls were all married.

Some languages don't have words to distinguish between 'maiden' and 'virgin'.

So pre-marital and pre-pubescent meant the same thing.

Prohibitions against pre-marital sex protected pre-pubescent girls from sex before they were physiologically ready for it.

In the west also, teenage marriage and teenage childbearing were common until very recently.

Pre-marital pregnancy was also common.

In Colonial Times, in the Chesapeake Bay Colony

about 1/3 of brides were pregnant when they got married.

The rates of Pre-marital pregnancy have gone up and down in history.

With large increases in the late 1600s and around 1725. Luker p17

For instance there was a well documented boom in premarital pregnancy in England in the late 18th century (Stone, s23).

These pregnancies were usually 'fixed-up' by a shotgun marriage.

If the mother did not marry, she was not welcome anywhere.

The problem was that the village in which the mother gave birth was then financially responsible for the mother and child.

This financial burden loomed so large to poor villages that the English in the 1600s would sometimes drive a pregnant women, in the throes of labor,

from village to village to prevent the child from being born in that village. Luker FN4 pg 208

The prevalence of single parent families has always been high:

Kertzer 2001 p245 One of the main characteristics of European urban households in the 18th C was the large proportion that were headed by women. One in four in Rheims during the *ancien regime* (before the French Revolution) and typically from 15 to 25% in other 18th century towns.

In the US, the prevalence of single parent families is about the same as it was at the beginning of the century.

The reasons are different: death vs divorce. Martha Riche Pop Bull 6/00 p4.

Same increase in personal control that we have seen in topic after topic.

People are now single or married by choice - not by fate.

What has changed in the modern west, and is now spreading everywhere,

is that children are no longer supposed to get married as teenagers.

In pre-modern times children could get all the education they needed by working with their parents at home and in the fields.

By the time of puberty, there was very little left to learn.

In modern economies, kids certainly aren't ready to take their place until they finish high school.

Your parents would be horrified if you got married before you graduated from Yale - and very few of you are planning to get married even soon after graduation.

When we get more specific, say talk about Biology Majors - everyone knows that they're not grown up until they've received their MD and have finished a residency.

In addition, the age of menarche has been falling for girls.

Menarche at 6 or 7.

---->Fig. Guttmacher page 7 SLIDE #2

So what has changed is that there is now a long period from the onset of puberty at 11 or 12 until marriage which is supposed to be 22 at a minimum (and the average age of marriage in the US is now over 24) in which you are not supposed to be married.

Yet, although you are not supposed to be married during this period, you are not spared the strong feelings of sexuality during this period. So there is conflict.

So society now wants a long period between puberty and marriage. What society hasn't decided is what to do about sexuality during this 10 or 15 years.

Our cultural and religious norms are totally unprepared to cope with it.

Cultural conservatives and religious elements often want this whole period to be one of chastity.

Other segments of society have accepted teen and premarital sexuality as normal and healthy.

The religious and cultural aspects of this issue are now played out against a background of AIDS.

The huge outpouring of social conflict over sexuality that we are now seeing (especially in the US) has its roots in this dilemma –

what to do about sexuality in this long period between puberty and marriage.

Teen pregnancy only becomes a problem in this context.

% OF TEENAGERS WHO ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE: --→ approx DOUBLED between the late 50s and late 80s

SLIDE #3

THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A HUGE INCREASE IN TEEN BIRTH RATE

In fact the teenage birthrate has fallen in half since 1950.

Graph, Pop Today 1/97 SLIDE #4

Peak in 1957: 10% of all teens got pregnant that year.

Since then the rate has gone steadily down

Teen childbearing declined in all 50 states and across all ethnic groups.

Drop in black teenage childbearing was twice the drop among whites

Pregnancy rates also dropped.

The exception to the steady drop is an up turn for a decade starting in the mid-80s.

From a low of 50-55/K in 1975-1985, the teenage (15-19) birth rate rose to 62.4/K in 1991 NHR 8/4/01 This is a jump of ~25%

Some argue (either lauding or decrying) that the upturn was the result of conservative blocking of sex education programs and the "Just Say No" attitude during Reagan and Bush years. (Reagan 1981-1988. 1st Bush 89-92).

It is very hard to evaluate this claim.

Since then, teen births have resumed their downward trend

Now its about 40 / 1,000.

But, it' still a big problem:

Still ~ 1/2 million teenagers give birth.

Low for America, very high in comparison with other developed countries

THERE WAS MORE THAN A DOUBLING OF TEENS HAVING INTERCOURSE

THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE THAN A DOUBLING OF TEEN CHILDBEARING

IN FACT THERE WAS A DROP OF MORE THAN 50%

SO TEEN BIRTHS ARE ¼ OF WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED.

(We should have expected 400% more than we now see)

Why has childbearing gone down while sexual activity has gone up?

REASON IS CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION

The birth control pill becomes available in the early 60s and the birth rate plummets in all age groups. SLIDE 5

Birthrate drops to less than half in 15 years.

There must have been a huge “unmet demand” to have fewer births

And that demand was met by a technological innovation: the pill.

Note that the drop for teenagers is not nearly as much as for adults.

SLIDE 4

Were teenagers not using contraception.

NO! 3/4 OF SEXUALLY ACTIVE TEENAGERS USED CONTRACEPTION

Teenagers are not dumb. About 3/4 of sexually active teenagers use some form of contraception. In fact they use contraception as effectively as adults, and in some studies - they use contraception MORE effectively than adults.

If the use of contraception hadn't increased enormously - we would really have a massive epidemic of teen pregnancy.

The reason for the smaller decrease – is the increase in teen sex.

(The presumption is that older women were not increasing their sexual activity at that time)

Cross-national studies of developed countries confirm that it is contraceptive use, rather than sexual activity, that determines the extent of teenage pregnancy.

In Canada, the US, Sweden, France and Great Britain, the age of sexual debut varies little: ~40% of 15-17 year olds have had intercourse.

That rises to 70-80-% among 18 and 19 year olds.

The US has a significantly LOWER %age of girls who had intercourse in the past 3 months (e.g. 59% US vs 79% in Sweden).

Nevertheless, in spite of this lower amount of sexual activity in the US,

teen pregnancy, birth, abortion and STD rates are much higher.

The explanation is a comparatively low use of contraception in the US.

Non-use of contraception at most recent intercourse in the US was 5X that of Great Britain and 3X that of Sweden.

This phenomenon is NOT concentrated in lower economic groups:

within developed countries, current contraceptive use does not differ greatly according to economic status.

Sweden, the most socially liberal country had less than 1/3 the pregnancy rate and 1/2 the abortion rate of the US.

FamPlanPersp 33#6 (Dec '01) p 244-250. Pp251-258

In the Netherlands, teen sexuality is considered normal and socially acceptable.

In general, boys and girls are allowed to sleep together in the parent's house.

While the US teen birthrate rate is ~54 / 1,000 teens,

the Dutch figure is 8X lower (7/1,000).

So, if teen pregnancy is dropping steadily, what's the problem?

MAJOR PROBLEM IS DISAPPEARANCE OF TEEN MARRIAGE

The problem is that teen marriage has been going down even faster than teen pregnancy

During the depression and during WWII the age of marriage was rather high.

After WWII (after 1945) the average age of marriage plummeted:

47% of all brides were under 19.

Harvard Magazine 3-4/03 p28D-E

Accordingly, there were very high rates of teenage pregnancy –

In 1950, 9.5% of teens were married.

In 1990, 3.4% of teens were married. 598,000 were married.

In 2000, 891,000 were married.

This is a factor of 3 drop.

There were 891,000 married 15- to 19-year-olds in 2000, up from 598,000 in 1990, when married teens comprised 3.4 percent of all 15- to 19-year-olds. The increase came after a steady decline since 1950, when 9.5 percent of teens were married.

But then marriage dropped drastically:

1998: Marriage rate 8.3/1K people (lowest since 1958). Why lower in '58? NYT 2/15/00 pF8

So, teen marriage disappeared, especially shotgun marriages:

SLIDE 10

Here are shotgun marriages: Starting ~ 1960 there is this enormous fall.

Before the 1960s, premarital sex was common, premarital pregnancy was common

And shotgun marriages were common.

So, while the TOTAL teen birthrate went down,

The UNMARRIED teen birth rate went up

SLIDE 11

By the 1990s, almost all teen births (~80%) were out of wedlock.

Calculated from graph)

SO, THAT WAS THE PROBLEM

NOT TEEN PREGNANCY - BUT UNMARRIED TEEN PREGNANCY.

THE PROBLEM WAS THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TEEN MARRIAGE.

The increase in illegitimate births was not limited to teenagers.

The % of births to unmarried women rose in all age groups

SLIDE 16

Since the peak of the teen-pregnancy crisis, things have turned around.

Births to teenagers has dropped somewhat

SLIDE 17

Births to 20-24 year olds has dropped a little

Births to all other ages has gone up

But births to unmarried teenagers has dropped a lot.

SLIDE 18

But births to unmarried NON-teenagers has dropped a lot.

to 44.4 births / 1,000 unmarried women) Pop Today May/June '01 Also Nat'l Vital Statistics Report 49#1 (Apr '01) www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr49/nvsr49_01.pdf

~1/3 of births in US are to unmarried women.

80% of births to teenagers are to unmarried teenagers.

In short we have been good, obedient children in doing what our parents tell us and not getting married ---

But our hormones have been a little too much for us when it comes to abstinence.

So the summary of this part of the lecture is that:

Marriage patterns have gone one way (DOWN) and sexual patterns have gone in the opposite direction (UP).

The technological fix for the disparity, contraception, is widely, but not universally used,

The result is a rise in non-marital childbearing.

Teenagers have recently been doing better at controlling this than older age groups.

The highest rate of teen births is not the big Northeast cities - but the Southern Bible Belt. ----
>South in Red

The most conservative and most religious states have the highest rates.

Some of this is due to early (teenage) marriage in those states.

Another reason is that rural areas have higher rates than urban.

Connecticut has a large and poor urban minority population.

Yet, even in CT, rural levels higher than urban levels.

WELFARE

We usually believe that the biological, economic and nurturance parts of childbearing should go together. The poor communities in the US and elsewhere are developing an alternative model.

They are splitting the biological and socioeconomic aspects of parenting.

Girls at 18 are biological quite ready for childbearing. However, they are not able to support their children economically or psychologically. Their mother's (the baby's grandmother) is probably 35 and at the peak of her economic and psychological stability. Hence the grandmothers provide these roles.

When one thinks of “welfare moms,” one should be aware that the amount of money provided by the government is miniscule compared to what the grandmother and other family members provide.

It is really the grandmothers, not the government that enables teen childbearing.

International comparisons

I’ve shown you that wrt teen pregnancy, the US has a much higher rate of teen pregnancy than other comparably industrialized countries.

But this is not true for out-of-wedlock births for women of all ages.

One can do comparisons looking at religion:

Ireland is one of the most strictly Catholic countries.

More than half of all babies are born to mothers under 25.

And half of these are born outside of marriage.

So, just from that, illegitimacy is over 25%.

Add in illegitimacy of babies born to mothers over 25,
then the Irish rate is at least equal to the total US rate of 33%.

Certainly the Irish rate of illegitimacy is much higher than for white US women which would be the comparable group (21%).

New Zealand is an old-fashioned Protestant country

38% of all births in New Zealand were out of wedlock (1993 statistic: Pop Today 1/97)

Same in Britain “nearly 40% of births, and rising, are now outside wedlock. CAM

1/3 of marriages end in divorce and ever increasing numbers of people see marriage as irrelevant. Cambridge U Alumni Mag end '99 or begin '00

Japan: 26% of 1st births in 2000 were to women who conceived before marriage.

This is a doubling of the rate since 1980.

Pop Today 7/02

These figures don't include abortions, which are common in Japan.

So the number of pregnancies before marriage would be much higher.

Problem: age at marriage has been rising and now averages 27

82% of births to teens are conceived pre-maritally.

One Japanese demographer says that the traditional reason for getting married was to have children.

But now, young Japanese can't find a good reason to get married.

So they do the reverse.

They use the pregnancy as an excuse to get married. Pop Today 7/02

You can see from these examples that the common perception, that illegitimacy is a uniquely American phenomenon, - is totally false.

When one looks at the issue of teen sex and births in countries outside of the western culture, quite different considerations come into play.

This data is for Sub-Saharan Africa teenagers (15-19). It shows the % that have engaged in sex. One column has consistently higher rates than the other.

Which column is which sex?

SLIDE 45

It is girls that have the higher rate.

SLIDE 47

What is the reason: A great disparity in the age of marriage.

SLIDE 50

Girls marry older men. Older men monopolize the girls.

The younger men are kept out of the marriage market.