

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

Comprehensive Examination in Demography

Special Examination on Fertility and Reproductive Health

Spring Semester 2007

Students: Tricia Ryan and Kristen Adkins

Faculty committee: Tom Pullum, Kristine Hopkins, and Joe Potter (Chair)

Instructions: Please answer two of the following five questions. You have a total of four hours.

1. Maternal mortality continues to be a problem in many developing countries. Please give an overview of the individual-level risk factors and of the role of a country's health care system as influences on maternal mortality, and discuss some of the most pertinent measurement issues for a part of the world with which you are familiar.
2. Many of the papers on your reading list are concerned with the intersection of family planning, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. This intersection came up at a number of sessions at this year's PAA meeting, and in most cases, the tone was decidedly pessimistic. There seemed to be a widespread view that international agencies and governments had failed to deliver on the promise of the Cairo agenda. Write an essay in which you assess the current situation regarding the funding and implementation of reproductive health programs as well as the factors that have led to this situation. Please end your essay with some recommendations as to what needs to be done to move forward on the Cairo agenda, if you think that is a goal worth pursuing. The problem is global in nature, but you may illustrate the issues at the local or regional level with examples familiar to you.
3. Contraceptive choice has often been assumed to be "rational", yet there is a remarkable diversity in the methods to be found in widespread use in different populations around the world. What are some of the explanations for this diversity? Is a concentrated method-mix problematic? Why so? In an essay on this topic, please address the theoretical challenges this issue poses as well as the policy responses that might be required in some particular contexts. Along the way, you might compare and contrast the approaches likely to be taken by an economist (eg. Kohler) and an anthropologist (eg. Johnson-Hanks).

4. Jack Caldwell (2004), never one to shy away from generalizations, has made the claim that social upheavals are an important determinant of fertility decline. How strong is the evidence for this claim? What are its theoretical underpinnings? In particular, how useful are these considerations in explaining the emergence of “lowest-low” fertility in Eastern Europe from the late 1980s? What other perspectives are important for understanding this phenomenon, and how one might expect it to evolve over the next few decades?

5. The literature on HIV status, fertility intentions, and the demand for contraception is full of contradictory findings, and few clear patterns seem to emerge. Please write a short essay in which you review the current state of knowledge on these relationships, explain the difficulties that confront researchers, and suggest ways that we could 1) organize and make sense of research completed to date and 2) design future studies.