

QUESTIONS FROM WEEK 5 READINGS

SocSci200, Spring 2000

MASON

Describe what is meant by a "fertility transition." According to Karen Mason, what are the factors that, in combination, are likely to bring about a fertility transition in a country? Finally, what seems to be the one necessary precondition for such transitions?

MORGAN

1. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has witnessed two major swings in fertility: the "baby boom" (1946-61) and the "baby bust" (1970-1985). Discuss the relative importance of the timing of first births, the number of births per woman, and the spacing of those births for explaining the "baby boom" and the "baby bust."
2. How, according to Morgan, can we reconcile public *perceptions* of a dramatic increase in teenage childbearing over the past 40 years with *evidence* of a general decline since 1960 in teen births? In other words, why do people believe that teenage childbearing has "exploded" when in fact it has declined?
3. Is the teen childbearing rate lower or higher in the U.S. compared to most other Western countries? What seems to explain the difference in teen birth rates for the U.S. versus the rest of the developed world?
4. Discuss key racial/ethnic differences in recent (i.e., postwar) U.S. childbearing patterns, including any differences in the effect of marriage on fertility.

ENGLAND & FARKAS

1. How would you describe the benefits of children? The costs of children? Include both direct and opportunity costs.
2. Think of the post-war baby boom and the baby bust after 1960. Can these be explained by changes in the benefits of children? the costs of children?

You should be able to answer these in 1 to 2 paragraphs or 3 to 10 sentences.