



Australian Population Association

12th Biennial Conference

population and society: issues, research, policy

15-17 September 2004 - Canberra, Australia

Population-related issues in the context of culture: The case of Iranian proverbs (Popular statements)

Yaghoob Foroutan (yaghoob.foroutan@anu.edu.au)
The Australian National University

Abstract

Description and rationale: Culture has played an increasing role in demographic explanations over two past decades. For understanding the motivation of behaviour, it is necessary to have some knowledge of its properties as for understanding the context in which behaviour occurs, having some knowledge of its properties is necessary (Hammel 1990). However, values, norms, symbols (and sometimes, technology) are the key components of culture in which proverbs are attributed to symbols.

Here, it is supposed that paying attention to attitudes towards population-related issues in the society, in particular based on the most common proverbs (as components of culture) also provide some benchmarks for better understanding the context in which tremendous demographic behaviour occurred in Iran during past years.

Method and data: The most famous Iranian proverbs on population-related issues have been collected from the best-known relevant sources in Persian language. Also, in order to have a brief picture on demographic characteristics of Iran and their changes over time, a time series of secondary data based on published data of the Censuses of Population and Housing by Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI) including a time period from 1956 to 1996 is considered.

Expected Findings: Apart from presenting the incredible swings of demographic changes over the time, the main findings of this paper are about the status and orientation of common statements and proverbs towards such population-related issues as marriage, divorce, sex (gender) preference, fertility, ageing, and mortality.

Paper prepared for the 12th Biennial Conference of the Australian Population Association, 15-17 September 2004, Canberra.