The depopulation trend and possible impact on the urban housing choices of young professionals in Taiwan

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Depopulation

Introduction
• How population impact urban development? EX new immigrants, aging population, depopulation

World Trends
• In recent decades, one of the globalization phenomenon
• Almost all developed countries face the problem.

Stress
• The phenomenon of depopulation in Taiwan is very serious. Taiwan became the country having the lowest fertility rate in the world.
• The "depopulation" phenomenon will change population structure
• It will not only impact on national economic performance and competitiveness, but also on the land use and urban development.
• EX: Idle land use in Culture and education District.

Less research in Taiwan
• How population impact urban development? EX new immigrants, aging population, depopulation

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explore how "depopulation" trend affects urban space in Taiwan.

This study assume that intention toward fertility is a relatively important factor for young couples’ housing choices in urban areas.

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The general definition of "depopulation":

- "a trend that the average lifetime fertility rate of women in the general population falls below the population replacement level in the long-term".
- the total fertility rate declines and results in juvenile population are declining constantly.
- When total fertility rate is lower than 1.3 people, the country has entered the lowest-low fertility stage (Kohler, Billari and Ortega, 2002).

In the past three decades

- According to United Nations statistics, the world average fertility rate (AFR) of women decreased by 48%
Developed countries encountered.

Japan is the first country that entered the "depopulation" era in Asia.

Taiwan became the lowest fertility rate country in the world.

- 1951: 7.04 Children
- 1985: <2.1 replacement level
- 2002: the lowest-low fertility stage
- 2009: 1.0 Children
There are two explanations (Sun and Ting 1988):

- **The Adjustment Process**  
  (A change in socio-economic structure)  
  This theory holds that changes in social structures resulting from such things as increases in educational levels, income increases, and other changes in the fabric of the social and economic structure are the main reasons that have led to a declining fertility rate.

- **The innovation diffusion process**  
  (Internal factors: Fertility concept changed)  
  This theory holds that the main reason for the spread of depopulation is a change in attitudes toward fertility. (ex: tempo effect)
03_DEPOPOPULATION : WHY (reasons)

- The Adjustment Process:
  - Social trend and policy
    - Individualism
    - The rise of Feminism
    - Female educational advancements
    - Family Planning
    - Poor parenting environment
  - Economic
    - Large divisions in the social and economic environment
    - Global capitalism has brought about fierce market competition
    - To maintain a standard of living
    - Increase in the female labor ratio
  - Others
    - Religion
    - Legalized abortion
    - The tempo effect
The traditional concept of "raising of children to take care of us in our old age" has declined.

The focus of personal life processes has changed: Traditional social values express a belief that fertility is a process that women must go through in their lives.

The condition of people’s insisting of having at least one boy child has reduced.

People are choosing to marry younger, at an older age or not at all because of extending their education or due to other factors.

Becker (1976, 1981) suggested that couples will choose to reduce the number of children they have in order to improve the quality of life and extend their resources for the children they choose to have.
The "depopulation" trend could derive from a low fertility rate and result in consequences such as labor shortages and the aging population that most developed countries have already encountered. The "depopulation" phenomenon will change population structure and will not only have an impact on national economic performance and competitiveness, but also on land use and urban development (CIA World Factbook, 2007).

- Different types of people have different life style and needs
- Urban planning must be based on changes in population structure, and those engaged in population analysis must consider public facilities, residential needs, schools, and other related needs.
- Urban planners believe that the study of demographic composition helps to estimate space requirements of different housing and also demands for public facilities.
- Therefore, the phenomenon of depopulation will affect the appearance of urban living spaces.
03_Housing choice: Variables

• Internal factors
  – **Family and personal characteristics**
    such as education, home purchase experience, occupation, household size (family structure), and so on.
  – **Major events in the life process**
    including householder’s age, marital situation, fertility situation, residence time, immigration times, future career planning, and so on.
  – **Economic capacity and affordability**
    Including total family income, housing prices, the loan interest rate, amount and duration of loans, government subsidies, the possibility of value-added housing, and so on.

• External factors
  – **Housing types**
    Including building age, community management, building structure, indoor residential density, indoor ventilation, lighting, and so on.
  – **Living environment**
    Including such things as mixed land use or pure residential use, number of floors, noise situation, neighborhood relations situation, building maintenance and management, and so on.
  – **Convenience of location**
    Such as distance or convenience to go to school, work, shop, the quality of the school district, and so on.
We can determine that the factors associated with life course and family structure are a series of depopulation and housing choices and that the factors regarding life course and family structure are affected by fertility intention.

Fertility intention is based on rational choice, and in order to derive the possible face of urban living spaces in the future, factor analysis is conducted to explore whether family fertility intention affects housing preferences and choices.

This assumption must also be based on an assumption that the population is continuing. We hypothesize that depopulation will only be a short term situation in the demographic cycle and that it will not continue.

We investigate the major groups, 20 to 30 year olds with high education levels, who are believed to have led to "depopulation in order to verify "depopulation" in Taiwan and to analyze it.

Research data:
- Sources: 50 questionnaires.
- Subjects: young professionals who attend National Cheng Kung University (master students)
Innovation diffusion process

**Depopulation**

- Social competition
- Division of work
- Standard of living
- Women labor
- Education
- Individualism
- Socioeconomic status
- Religion
- Infertility
- Abortion
- Feminism

Socio-economic structure adjustment Process

- Housing Type
- Location environment
- **Household characteristics** (family structure & family life course)
- Living environment
- Economic

Housing Choice
• We can infer depopulation in Taiwan will not worsen but that this phenomenon will remain for a long time:
  – External factors (such as social competition, standard of living, the rise of feminism, and individualism) could have significant impacts on decision makers’ internal factors (such as the changing concepts about childbearing, marriage and parenting).
    ➢ All of these results could lead to depopulation.
  – Average ideal number of children is 1.95, which is higher than the current total fertility rate of women in Taiwan.
    ➢ This result shows that the trend of depopulation is not significant within young professionals.
  – Shows the gap between the ideal number of children and the actual number of children planned.
• In this context, the family structure of these young professionals will change to nuclear families and families without children, which means a smaller family scale, delays in family lives reflecting the tempo effect (marriage or having children), and results in extensions status of singles and couples without children. All of these changes have an impact on the characteristics of households.
05_Conclusion

• **Household characteristics affect housing choice**:  
  – **Economic burden** was determined to be the most significant factor impacting housing choice, and the second significant factor was found to be **household characteristics** which include family size, living space and future career plans.  
  – The first priority motivation for housing choice was found to “**pursue an independent life and leave the original family**”, the second was a need for a “**better living environment**”, and the third was for “**work convenience**”.  
  – “**Buying houses in order to have space for children**”, “**because family and friends live nearby**”, or “**for good school districts**” were not in the top three motivational factors for young professionals, and this result **shows how household characteristics affect housing choice**.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION