

The Decline of Marriage And Rise of New Families

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A Social & Demographic Trends Report

Survey conducted in association with TIME

Preface

Social institutions that have been around for thousands of years generally change slowly, when they change at all. But that's not the way things have been playing out with marriage and family since the middle of the 20th Century. Some scholars argue that in the past five decades, the basic architecture of these age-old institutions has changed as rapidly as at any time in human history.

This Pew Research Center report, done in association with TIME, sets out to illuminate these changes by using two complementary research methodologies: a nationwide survey of 2,691 adults we conducted from Oct. 1-21, 2010; and our analysis of a half century of demographic and economic data, drawn mainly from the U.S. Census. The trend analysis is designed to show how Americans' behaviors related to marriage and family have changed since 1960. The survey is intended to help explain why these changes have happened and what the public makes of them.

As is the case with all Pew Research Center reports, our research is not designed to promote any cause, ideology or policy. Our mission is to inform the public on important topics that shape their lives and their society. We believe that the research tools at our disposal are particularly well-suited to this topic.

As the reader will discover, the survey reveals a public that is suspended between acceptance and unease – welcoming some changes, disapproving of others. However, this collective society-wide ambivalence is an amalgam of different views by different demographic sub-groups – including those defined by class, age, race, gender, religion and marital and family circumstance.

The report takes on a wide range of intriguing questions. Is marriage becoming obsolete? Why have marriage rates dropped more for some groups than others – and to what extent does the growing marriage gap align with a growing economic gap? How much have gender roles within marriage changed? When it comes to marriage, does love trump money? Are today's marriages closer than those of a generation ago? What does the public think about the decoupling of marriage from parenthood? How does it define family?

We don't always claim to provide definitive answers, but we hope that on these questions and others, our report will leave readers better informed about one of the most important social transformations of our era.

Survey Methodology

Much of the report is based on a new nationwide telephone survey of 2,691 adults ages 18 and older. It was conducted from Oct. 1-21, 2010. A total of 1,520 interviews were completed with respondents contacted by landline telephone and 1,171 with those contacted on their cellular phone. In an effort to capture the experiences and attitudes of those living in both traditional and less traditional family arrangements, the survey included oversamples of three key groups: (1) adults who are divorced or separated and have at least one child younger than age 18; (2) adults who are living with a partner and have at least one child younger than age 18; (3) adults who have never been married and are not currently living with a partner and have at least one child younger than age 18.

The data were weighted in multiple stages to account for the different sample segments as well as the oversampling of certain groups. Weighting also balanced sample demographic distributions to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States. Margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is plus or minus 2.6 percentage points and is larger for subsamples. Interviews were done in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. See detailed Methodology, page 100.

Demographic Methodology

Except as noted, the demographic analyses are derived from the 1960 to 2000 Decennial Censuses, and the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS). These data were obtained from the IPUMS-USA database (www.ipums.org)¹. The 1960 and 2008 data are 1% samples of the population, data from the 1970 Census is from 3% of the population, and data from 1980, 1990, and 2000 include 5% of the population.²

Authorship and Acknowledgements

This report was edited by Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the Pew Research Center and director of its Social & Demographic Trends project (www.pewsocialtrends.org). *Section 1: Overview* was written by Senior Researcher Kim Parker. *Section 2: Marriage* was written by Taylor and Research Associate Wendy Wang. *Section 3: Family* was written by Senior Editor Richard Morin. *Section 4: Children* was written by Senior Researcher Juliana Menasce Horowitz. *Section 5: New Family Types* was written by Senior Writer D’Vera Cohn. Senior Researcher Gretchen Livingston compiled and analyzed the demographic data that appears throughout the report. Led by Parker, the full Social & Demographic Trends staff wrote the survey questionnaire, designed the sampling strategy and conducted the analysis of its findings. Other Center colleagues offered research and editorial guidance, including Rakesh Kochhar, Jeffrey Passel, Richard Fry, Andrew Kohut, Scott Keeter and Donald Kimelman. The report was copy-edited by Marcia Kramer of Kramer Editing Services. It was number checked by Pew Research Center staff members Daniel Dockterman, Gabriel Velasco, Rebecca Hinze-Pifer and Jacob Poushter.

The Pew Research Center thanks four academic experts on the contemporary family and two senior editors at TIME who brainstormed with the project team in Washington, D.C. during the planning phase of this study. The scholars are Sara McLanahan of Princeton University, Andrew Cherlin of The Johns Hopkins University, Frank Furstenberg of the University of Pennsylvania and Stephanie Coontz of Evergreen State University and The Council on Contemporary Families. TIME editors are Executive Editor Nancy Gibbs and Assistant Managing Editor Radhika Jones. The project benefited enormously from their contributions. However, the

¹ Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

² The Decennial Census first collected data regarding the cohabitation status from heads of household in 1990. Evidence suggests that the 1990 data was likely an undercount of cohabitators, particularly same-sex cohabitators (<http://www.census.gov/sdc/chap7pums.txt>). There continues to be debate regarding the accuracy of more recent enumerations of same-sex cohabitators, as well, though the 2008 ACS seems to reflect an improved count, thanks to several design and processing changes implemented by the Census Bureau. See <http://www.urban.org/publications/1000491.html> and <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html> for multiple articles regarding the evolution of the cohabitation data.

Center is solely responsible for drafting the survey questionnaire, as well as for the analysis and interpretation of its findings.

The Center also thanks our parent organization, The Pew Charitable Trusts, its Board of Directors, its President, Rebecca W. Rimel, and its Managing Director for Information Initiatives, Donald Kimelman, for their generous ongoing support.

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The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families

Executive Summary

The transformative trends of the past 50 years that have led to a sharp decline in marriage and a rise of new family forms have been shaped by attitudes and behaviors that differ by class, age and race, according to a new Pew Research Center nationwide survey complemented by an analysis of demographic and economic data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

A new “marriage gap” in the United States is increasingly aligned with a growing income gap. Marriage, while declining among all groups, remains the norm for adults with a college education and good income but is now markedly less prevalent among those on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder. The survey finds that those in this less-advantaged group are as likely as others to want to marry, but they place a higher premium on economic security as a condition for marriage. This is a bar that many may not meet.

The survey also finds striking differences by generation. In 1960, two-thirds (68%) of all twenty-somethings were married. In 2008, just 26% were. How many of today’s youth will eventually marry is an open question. For now, the survey finds that the young are much more inclined than their elders to view cohabitation without marriage and other new family forms — such as same sex marriage and interracial marriage — in a positive light.

Even as marriage shrinks, family— in all its emerging varieties — remains resilient. The survey finds that Americans have an expansive definition of what constitutes a family. And the vast majority of adults consider their own family to be the most important, most satisfying element of their lives.

Here is a summary of the key findings of the report:

- **The Class-Based Decline in Marriage.** About half (52%) of all adults in this country were married in 2008; back in 1960, seven-in-ten (72%) were. This decline has occurred along class lines. In 2008, there was a 16 percentage point gap in marriage rates between college graduates (64%) and those with a high school diploma or less (48%). In 1960, this gap had been just four percentage points (76% vs. 72%). The survey finds that those with a high school diploma or less are just as likely as those with a college degree to say they want to marry. But they place a higher premium than college graduates (38% versus 21%) on financial stability as a very important reason to marry.
- **Is Marriage Becoming Obsolete?** Nearly four-in-ten survey respondents (39%) say that it is; in 1978 when Time magazine posed this question to registered voters, just 28% agreed. Those most likely to agree include those who are a part of the phenomenon (62% of cohabiting parents) as well as those most likely to be troubled by it (42% of self-described conservatives). Despite these growing uncertainties, Americans are more upbeat about the future of marriage and family (67% say they are optimistic) than about the future of the country’s educational system (50% optimistic), its economic system (46% optimistic) or its morals and ethics (41% optimistic).

- **An Ambivalent Public.** The public's response to changing marital norms and family forms reflects a mix of acceptance and unease. On the troubled side of the ledger: Seven-in-ten (69%) say the trend toward more single women having children is bad for society, and 61% say that a child needs both a mother and father to grow up happily. On the more accepting side, only a minority say the trends toward more cohabitation without marriage (43%), more unmarried couples raising children (43%), more gay couples raising children (43%) and more people of different races marrying (14%) are bad for society. Relatively few say any of these trends are good for society, but many say they make little difference.
- **Group Differences.** Where people stand on the various changes in marriage and family life depends to some degree on who they are and how they live. The young are more accepting than the old of the emerging arrangements; the secular are more accepting than the religious; liberals are more accepting than conservatives; the unmarried are more accepting than the married; and, in most cases, blacks are more accepting than whites. The net result of all these group differences is a nearly even three-way split among the full public. A third (34%) say the growing variety of family arrangements is a good thing; 29% say it is a bad thing and 32% say it makes little or no difference.
- **The Resilience of Families.** The decline of marriage has not knocked family life off its pedestal. Three-quarters of all adults (76%) say their family is the most important element of their life; 75% say they are "very satisfied" with their family life, and more than eight-in-ten say the family they live in now is as close as (45%) or closer than (40%) the family in which they grew up. However, on all of these questions, married adults give more positive responses than do unmarried adults.
- **The Definition of Family.** By emphatic margins, the public does not see marriage as the only path to family formation. Fully 86% say a single parent and child constitute a family; nearly as many (80%) say an unmarried couple living together with a child is a family; and 63% say a gay or lesbian couple raising a child is a family. The presence of children clearly matters in these definitions. If a cohabiting couple has no children, a majority of the public says they are not a family. Marriage matters, too. If a childless couple is married, 88% consider them to be a family.
- **The Ties that Bind.** In response to a question about whom they would assist with money or caregiving in a time of need, Americans express a greater sense of obligation toward relatives—including relatives by way of fractured marriages— than toward best friends. The ranking of relatives aligns in a predictable hierarchy. More survey respondents express an obligation to help out a parent (83% would feel very obligated) or grown child (77%) than say the same about a stepparent (55%) or a step or half sibling (43%). But when asked about one's best friend, just 39% say they would feel a similar sense of obligation.
- **Changing Spousal Roles.** In the past 50 years, women have reached near parity with men as a share of the workforce and have begun to outpace men in educational attainment. About six-in-ten wives work today, nearly double the share in 1960. There's an unresolved tension in the public's response to these changes. More than six-in-ten (62%) survey respondents endorse the modern marriage in which the husband and wife both work and both take care of the household and children; this is up from 48% in 1977. Even so, the public hasn't entirely discarded the traditional male breadwinner template for

marriage. Some 67% of survey respondents say that in order to be ready for marriage, it's very important for a man to be able to support his family financially; just 33% say the same about a woman.

- **The Rise of Cohabitation.** As marriage has declined, cohabitation (or living together as unmarried partners) has become more widespread, nearly doubling since 1990, according to the Census Bureau. In the Pew Research survey, 44% of all adults (and more than half of all adults ages 30 to 49) say they have cohabited at some point in their lives. Among those who have done so, about two-thirds (64%) say they thought of this living arrangement as a step toward marriage.
- **The Impact on Children.** The share of births to unmarried women has risen dramatically over the past half century, from 5% in 1960 to 41% in 2008. There are notable differences by race: Among black women giving birth in 2008, 72% were unmarried. This compares with 53% of Hispanic women giving birth and 29% of white women. Overall, the share of children raised by a single parent is not as high as the share born to an unwed mother, but it too has risen sharply — to 25% in 2008, up from 9% in 1960. The public believes children of single parents face more challenges than other children — 38% say “a lot more” challenges and another 40% say “a few more” challenges. Survey respondents see even more challenges for children of gay and lesbian couples (51% say they face a lot more challenges) and children of divorce (42% say they face a lot more challenges).
- **In Marriage, Love Trumps Money.** Far more married adults say that love (93%), making a lifelong commitment (87%) and companionship (81%) are very important reasons to get married than say the same about having children (59%) or financial stability (31%). Unmarried adults order these items the same way. However, when asked if they agree that there is “only one true love” for every person, fewer than three-in-ten (28%) survey respondents say, I do.

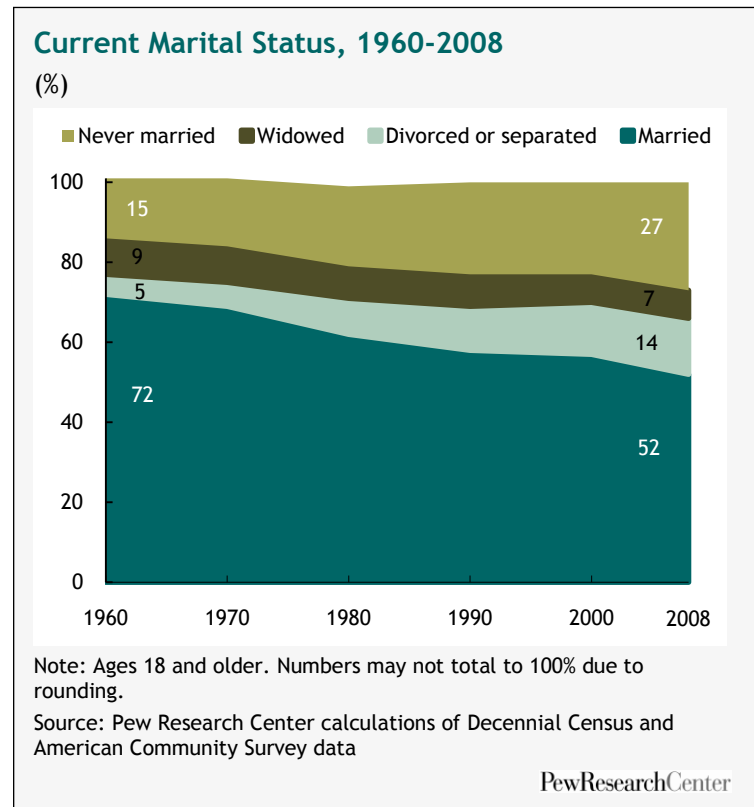
Section 1: Overview

Over the past 50 years, a quiet revolution has taken place in this country. Decades of demographic, economic and social change have transformed the structure and composition of the American family. The pre-eminent family unit of the mid-20th century—mom, dad and the kids—no longer has the stage to itself. A variety of new arrangements have emerged, giving rise to a broader and evolving definition of what constitutes a family.

At the center of this transformation is the shrinking institution of marriage. In 1960, 72% of American adults were married. By 2008, that share had fallen to 52%.

Part of this decline is explained by the fact that the average age at which men and women first marry is now the highest ever recorded, having risen by roughly five years in the past half century.³ And part of the decline is attributable to the near tripling in the share of currently divorced or separated—to 14% in 2008 from 5% in 1960.⁴

Public attitudes toward marriage reflect these dramatic changes. When asked in the new survey if marriage is becoming obsolete, about four-in-ten Americans (39%) say that it is. In a survey of voters conducted by Time magazine in 1978, when the divorce rate in this country was near an all-time high, just 28% agreed that marriage was becoming obsolete.⁵



³ U.S. Census data on the median age at first marriage begins in 1890. In 2010 the estimated median age at first marriage for men was 28, for women it was 26. See U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

⁴ Another way to measure change in marriage rates over time is to look at the share of adults who have *ever* married. Here, too, the trend is down, but not as steeply. In 2008, 73% of adults had ever married. In 1960, that figure was 85%. The gap between the 52% *currently married* and the 73% *ever married* in 2008 is explained by the 21% percent who were widowed (7%) or divorced/separated (14%).

⁵ The 1978 figure is based on registered voters. The comparable number from the current survey is 36% of registered voters.

Changes in marital patterns have had a major impact on the lives of children in this country. Marriage is no longer considered a prerequisite for parenthood. Over the past 50 years, the share of children born to unmarried mothers has risen dramatically—increasing eightfold from 5% in 1960 to 41% in 2008. This trend has contributed to the decrease in the share of children under age 18 living with two married parents – to 64% in 2008 from 87% in 1960.⁶

There are distinctive socio-economic, generational and racial patterns in the trends away from marriage and toward single parenthood and other emerging family forms.

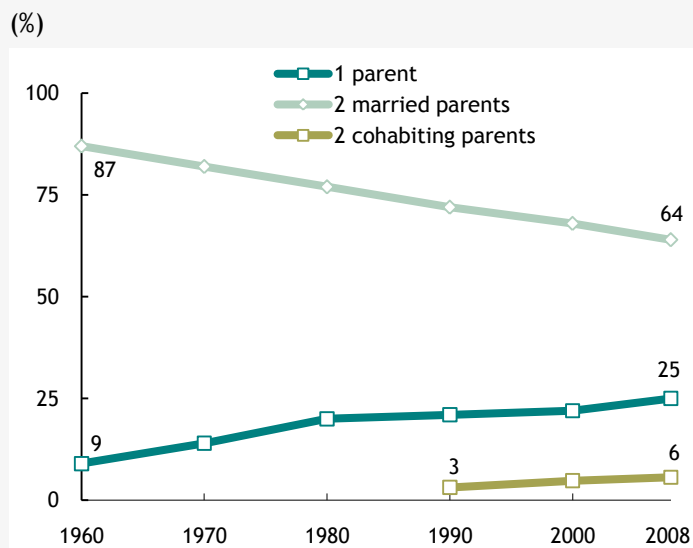
Marriage rates are now more strongly linked to education than they have been in the past, with college graduates (64%) much more likely to be married than those who have never attended college (48%).

The racial differences are even larger. Blacks (32%) are much less likely than whites (56%) to be married, and this gap has increased significantly over time. And black children (52%) are nearly three times as likely as white children (18%) and nearly twice as likely as Hispanic children (27%) to live with one parent.

As the country shifts away from marriage, a smaller proportion of adults are experiencing the economic gains that typically accrue from marriage. In 2008, the median household income of married adults was 41% greater than that of unmarried adults, even after controlling for differences in household size.⁷ In 1960, this gap was only 12%. The widening of the gap is explained partly by the increased share of wives in the workforce (61% in 2008 versus 32% in 1960) and partly by the increased differential in the educational attainment of the married and the unmarried.⁸

The net result is that a marriage gap and a socio-economic gap have been growing side by side for the past half century, and each may be feeding off the other. As will be shown in greater detail in Chapter 2, adults on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder (whether measured by income or education) are just as eager as other

Share of Children, by Number of Parents in Household



Note: Based on persons ages 17 and younger. Parents may be biological, adoptive or stepparents. Children without any parent in the household are included in the base but not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

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⁶ This includes children living with biological, adoptive and stepparents.

⁷ Richard Fry, “The Reversal of the College Marriage Gap,” Pew Research Center, October 2010 (<http://pewsocialtrends.org/pubs/767/reversal-of-the-college-marriage-gap>), page 3.

⁸ Over the same period overall income inequality has increased in the U.S. See for instance “Changes in Income Inequality across the U.S.” Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Sep 21, 2007.

adults to marry. But they place a higher premium on economic security as a prerequisite for marriage than do those with higher levels of income and education. And this is a bar that they—and their pool of prospective spouses—may find increasingly difficult to meet, given the fact that, relative to other groups, they have experienced significant economic declines in recent decades.

The changes in marriage rates are driven in large part by the behavior and attitudes of young adults, who are both delaying marriage and entering into less-traditional family arrangements. In 1960, 68% of adults ages 20-29 were married. By 2008, only 26% were married. The fact that young adults are delaying marriage does not necessarily mean they will never marry. Only time will tell. Meantime, it’s still the case that the vast majority of adults in the U.S. eventually get married. Among those ages 45 and older roughly nine-in-ten have ever married.

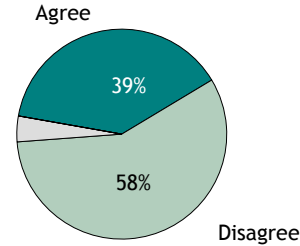
That said, young adults do have much different attitudes toward the trends that are driving family change. Nearly half of those under age 30 (46%) say the growing variety of family arrangements is a good thing, compared with just 30% of those ages 30 and older. In addition, young adults are much more accepting than their older counterparts of a host of societal trends affecting families, from more people living together without getting married to more gay and lesbian couples raising children.

Public Reactions to Decades of Change

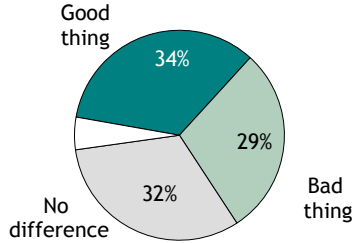
The public is aware of the changes in marriage and family that have taken place over the past 50 years—and accepts some more readily than others. There is no clear consensus on the overall merit of the rise of new family arrangements. When asked whether the growing variety in the types of family arrangements is a good thing, a bad thing or doesn’t make a difference, the public is evenly split. A third (34%) say it’s a good thing, 29% say it’s a bad thing and 32% say it doesn’t make a difference.

Where you stand on this issue depends to some degree on how you live. Adults who are living a more traditional family life—married with children—are among the most resistant to the growing variety of family arrangements: 38% say it is a bad thing. Those who are divorced or separated have more of a live and let live attitude: a 39% plurality say the changes don’t make a difference. Those who are living with a partner are largely supportive of the new arrangements: a 56% majority says the growing variety is a good thing.

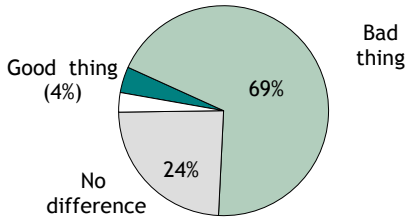
Is Marriage Becoming Obsolete?



Growing Variety of Family Types Is ...



More Single Women Having Children Is ...



Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses are included but not labeled.

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Of all the changes in family structure, the one that draws the strongest negative reaction is single parenthood. An overwhelming majority (69%) say the trend toward more single women having children without a male partner to help raise them is a bad thing for society. And a majority (61%) still believe that a child needs both a mother and a father to grow up happily.

Other changes get a much better reception from the public. For example, more than six-in-ten (62%) now say that the best kind of marriage is one where the husband and wife both work and both take care of the household and children. In 1977, fewer than half (48%) endorsed this egalitarian template for spousal roles.

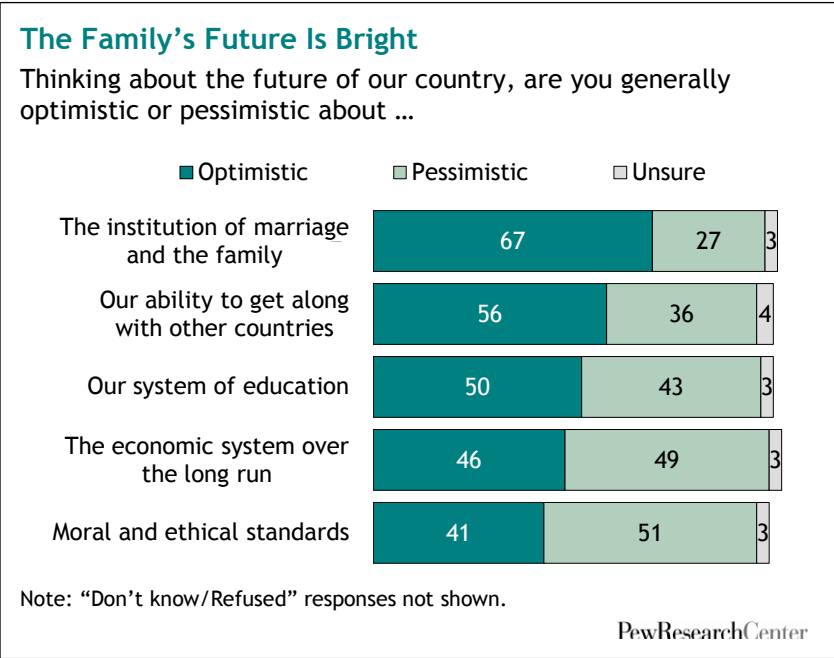
And the public is quite open to the idea that marriage need not be the only path to family formation. An overwhelming majority says a single parent and a child constitute a family (86%), nearly as many (80%) say an unmarried couple living together with a child is a family, and 63% say a gay couple raising a child is a family.

In the midst of all this change, the public maintains a positive outlook about the future of the family. When asked if they feel generally optimistic or pessimistic about the institution of marriage and the family, 67% say they are optimistic, 27% are pessimistic and 6% are unsure.

Respondents were asked about the future of various dimensions of national life, in addition to the family—moral and ethical standards, the long-term soundness of our economic system, our ability to get along

with other nations and our system of education. Family came out on top. A narrow majority expressed optimism about the ability of the United States to get along with other countries (56% optimistic). The public was much more evenly divided over the future prospects of the educational system, the economy, and morals and ethics.

This generally upbeat view of the family can be seen across major demographic groups. Men and women, whites and blacks, young and old, and affluent and lower income adults all express high levels of optimism about the future of marriage and the family. This is notable, because these groups differ sharply in their assessments of the specific trends that have affected the family and in their own family arrangements. Married adults are somewhat more positive than unmarried adults about the future of marriage and the family. Even so, majorities in each group say they are generally optimistic about the family’s future.



Family Remains Central, Satisfying

While the structure and composition of the family have changed, the importance of family has not been diminished in the process. The modern family, in all its forms, is highly valued and remains a source of great satisfaction for the vast majority of Americans. Three-quarters of all adults (76%) say their family is the most important element of their life at this time. An additional 22% say it is one of the most important elements but not the most important. Only 1% say their family is not an important element of their life.

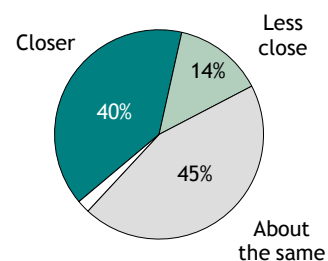
In addition, family life remains highly satisfying for most Americans. Three-quarters are very satisfied with their family life, and 19% are somewhat satisfied. Fewer than one-in-ten (6%) are dissatisfied with this aspect of their life. In general, family life is considered more satisfying than social life, community life or career.

And there doesn't seem to be much yearning for the good ol' days. Survey respondents say their families today are at least as close as the families in which they grew up. When asked to make this comparison, 40% say their family today is closer, 45% say it's about the same and 14% say their family is less close now than when they were growing up.

Similarly, among respondents who are married or living with a partner, half (51%) say they have a closer relationship with their spouse or partner than their parents had with each other. An additional 43% say their relationship is about the same as their parents' relationship. Only 5% describe their relationship with their spouse or partner as less close.

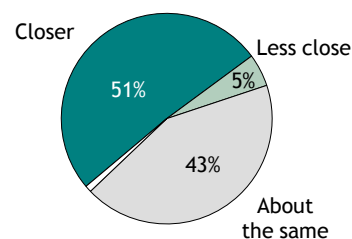
Family Life Today

Compared to when you were growing up, is your family life now ... ?



Married Life Today

Compared to your parents, is your relationship with your spouse/partner ... ?



Note: "Don't Know/Refused" responses are included but not labeled. Second chart is based on those who are currently married or living with a partner (n=1,512).

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Family in the New Economy

Changes in demographics are not the only factor driving family change. Over the past 50 years, the U.S. economy has been transformed on several dimensions. The manufacturing-based economy has been replaced by an information-based economy. And the presence of women in the workplace has increased dramatically. In 1960, women comprised only 33% of the U.S. labor force. By 2009, women had reached near parity with men (47% of the workforce).

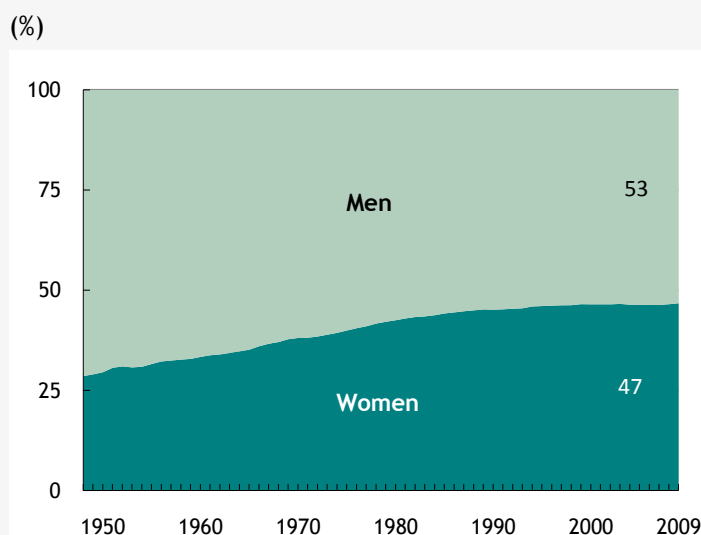
Over that same period, women have made significant gains in educational attainment. In 1960, less than 6% of women had a college degree. By 2008, that share had climbed to 29%.

Furthermore, for the past two decades, women have been the majority of new college graduates. As a result, among adults in their 20s and 30s today, more women than men have graduated from college.

These dramatic changes in the economic status of women have had wide-ranging effects on family structure. In the 1950s and 1960s, most married women did not work outside the home, instead relying on their husbands' income to support the family. In 1960, 32% of wives were in the labor force. By 2008, that share had risen to 61%.⁹

Along with their greater participation in the labor force, women began to delay marriage and have fewer children. In addition, women have been faced with

Distribution of the U.S. Labor Force by Gender, 1948-2009

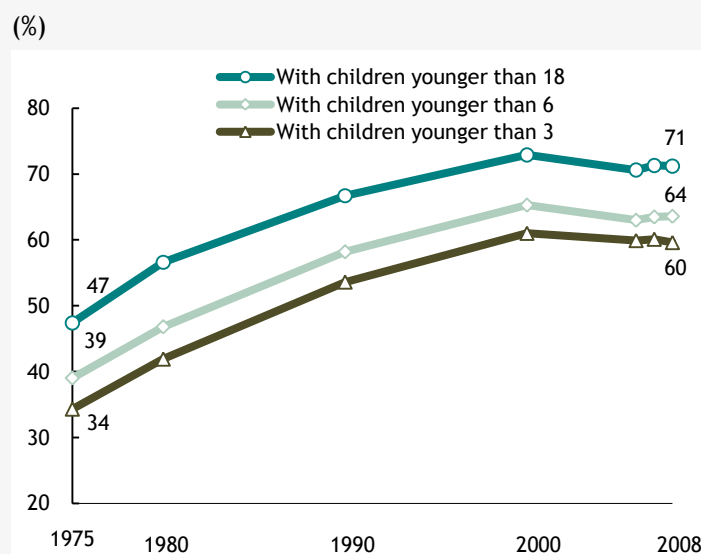


Note: Estimates reflect annual averages.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (Current Population Survey data)

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Share of Mothers Who Are in the Labor Force



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Women in the Labor Force: A Databook (2009 Edition) September 2009, Report 1018 (Current Population Survey data)

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⁹ Data on married women in the labor force are from the 2010 Statistical Abstract, Table 583.

the challenge of balancing marriage, motherhood and work. A large majority of mothers with children younger than 18 (71%) are now in the labor force. In 1975, fewer than half of all mothers were working. Even among mothers of very young children (younger than 3), 60% are in the labor force, up from 34% in 1975.

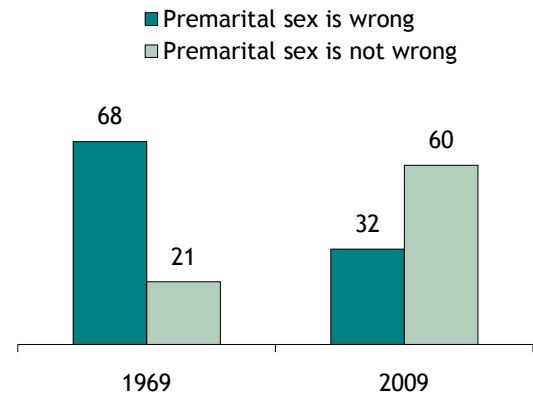
In spite of the gains women have made in the educational arena and in the workplace, most of the public adheres to a fairly traditional view of which spouse should be the primary breadwinner. When asked in the current Pew Research Center survey how important it is that a woman be able to support a family financially in order to be ready for marriage, only 33% say this is very important. When asked a parallel question about men, 67% say it is very important that a man be able to support a family.

Changing Values and Changes in Family

With the arrival of the birth control pill in the early 1960s, American women gained a new measure of control over their reproductive lives. Public attitudes about sex outside of marriage have changed dramatically since that time. According to polling conducted by the Gallup Organization in 1969, more than two-thirds of the public (68%) believed that it was wrong for a man and woman to have sexual relations before marriage; only 21% thought this was not wrong. By 1985, the balance of opinion had shifted significantly: 39% said sex before marriage was wrong, while a narrow majority (52%) said it was not. In a 2009 CBS/New York Times poll, the public more decisively rejected the idea that sex before marriage was wrong—only 32% said it was wrong; 60% said it was not.

The Pew Research Center has been tracking social and political values for more than 20 years. The data show the public's ambivalence about changing gender roles over the past half century. While the public now clearly embraces the changing role of women in society, most Americans still maintain a more traditional orientation toward family and marriage. When asked in 2009 whether they agreed or disagreed that women should return to their traditional roles in society, only 19% of adults agreed

Changing Views on Premarital Sex

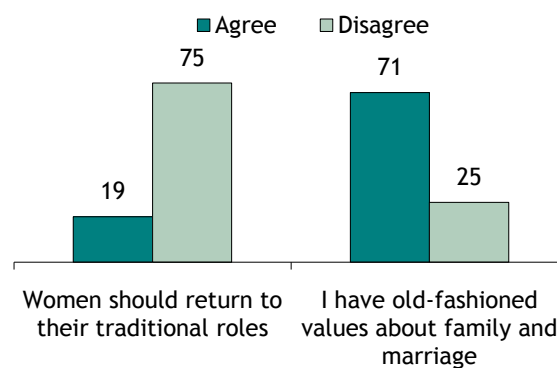


Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

Source: For 1969, Gallup Organization (July 24-29, 1969; N=1,555); for 2009, CBS/New York Times (Jan 11-15, 2009; N=1,112)

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Competing Values



Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press (Mar/Apr 2009; Asked of Form 2, only n=1,521)

Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

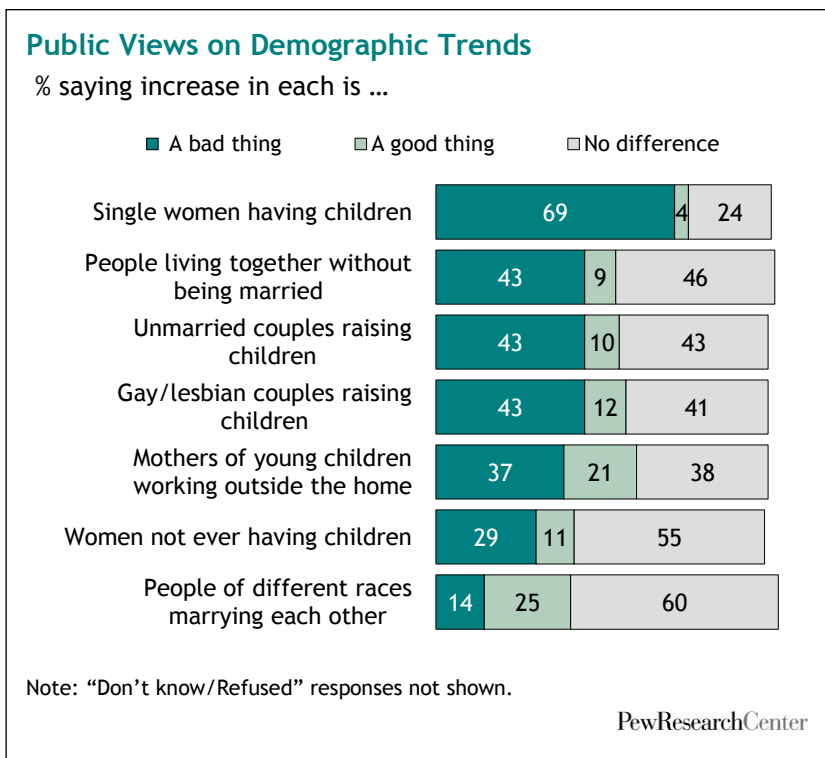
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while 75% disagreed. At the same time, 71% said they have old-fashioned values about family and marriage. Only 25% disagreed with this statement.

There has been some shift in attitudes on these questions over the past 20 years: In 1987, 30% of adults (vs. 19% in 2009) said women should return to their traditional roles in society. Similarly, 87% agreed that they had old-fashioned values about family in 1987 (vs. 71% in 2009).

Within the framework of these competing values, the public has mixed reactions to the major demographic trends that have transformed family life in recent decades. In the current survey, the one trend that elicits the most negative reaction from the public is the increasing number of single women having children without a male partner to help raise them. Roughly seven-in-ten (69%) say this is a bad thing for society. Only 4% say this is a good thing, and 24% say it doesn't make much difference.

Other less traditional family arrangements involving children get mixed reviews from the public, but fall far short of getting an endorsement. More than four-in-ten (43%) say that the trend toward more unmarried couples raising children is bad for society, and an equal percentage say it doesn't make much difference. Only 10% say this is good for society. Similarly, 43% say more gay and lesbian couples raising children is bad for society, 41% say it doesn't make much difference and 12% say it's good for society.



Public attitudes toward gay unions have changed in recent years. In 2007, 50% said more gay and lesbian couples raising children was bad for society (vs. 43% now). The shift in opinion over the past three years has been toward a more neutral stance. In 2007, 34% said this trend didn't make much difference (vs. 41% now).

Recent analysis by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press found that acceptance of same-sex marriage has grown significantly in the past year, and for the first time in 15 years of polling on the issue, less than half of the public opposes allowing gays and lesbians to marry each other.¹⁰

¹⁰ For further analysis of the trend in opinion on gay marriage, see "Support for Same-Sex Marriage Edges Upward," October 6, 2010 (<http://people-press.org/report/662/same-sex-marriage>).

When it comes to trends in marriage, 43% say more people living together without being married is bad for society. Roughly the same proportion (46%) say it doesn't make a difference, and 9% say this is good for society. The public is much less critical of the increase in interracial marriages: 25% say this is good for society, 14% say it is bad and 60% say it doesn't make much difference.

The public is not completely sold on the idea of mothers of young children working outside the home. Only one-in-five (21%) think this is good for society, 37% say it is bad for society and just as many (38%) say it doesn't make much difference. A majority of the public (55%) say the trend toward more women not ever having children doesn't make much difference. Among the rest, more say this is bad for society (29%) than good (11%).

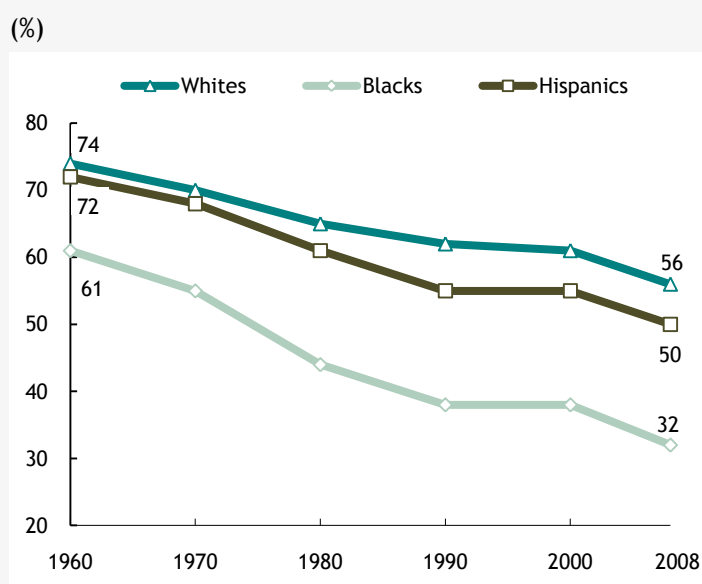
Marriage, Family and Race

There are distinctive racial patterns in the changing attitudes and behaviors related to marriage and family. Marriage rates have fallen among whites, blacks and Hispanics over the past 50 years, but the drop has been most pronounced among blacks. In 1960, 61% of black adults were married. By 2008, that share had dropped to 32%. Among whites, the marriage rate dropped from 74% in 1960 to 56% in 2008. The trend in marriage rates among Hispanics has tracked more closely with that of whites. In 2008, 50% of Hispanic adults were married.

Blacks are more likely than whites to agree that marriage is becoming obsolete (44% vs. 36%). However, unmarried blacks are just as likely as unmarried whites to say they would like to get married in the future.

Race is also strongly linked to family living arrangements. In 2008, 27% of white adults and 33% of Hispanics were living with a spouse and one or more children. This compares with only 17% of black adults. Blacks are more likely to be single parents—living with one or more children but no spouse—than they are to be living with a spouse and raising children. In 2008, 19% of blacks were living in a household with children and no spouse.

Current Marital Status by Race and Ethnicity, 1960-2008



Note: Ages 18 and older. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

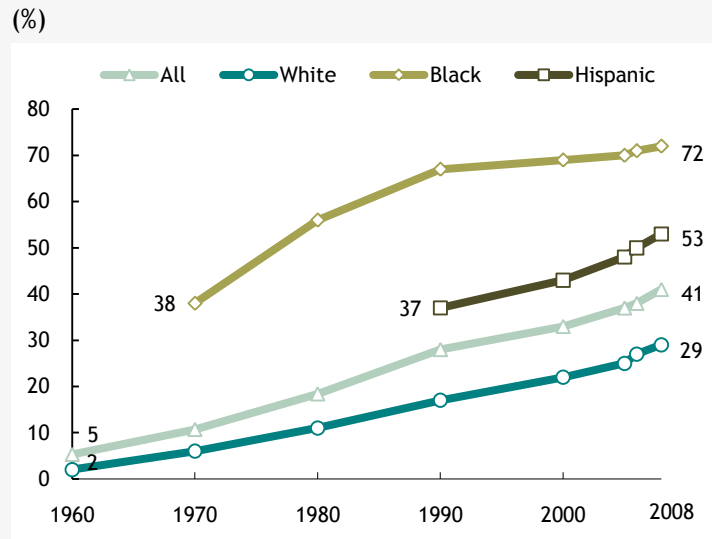
Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

The trend in blacks' living arrangements is driven in large part by the high incidence of out-of-wedlock births among black women. In 2008, seven-in-ten black women giving birth (72%) were unmarried. This compares with 53% of Hispanic women giving birth and 29% of whites.

As a result, black children are much more likely than white or Hispanic children to live in a home with only one parent and to have a parent who has never been married. In 2008, roughly half of all black children under the age of 18 (52%) were living in a household with one parent. A third (32%) were in a household with two married parents. The rest were living in households with cohabiting partners (6%) or no parent at all (10%). By comparison, 74% of white children younger than age 18 lived in households with two married parents in 2008. Fewer than one-in-five (18%) lived in one-parent households, and the remainder lived with cohabiting partners (5%) or no parent (3%). Hispanic children fall in the middle: In 2008, 59% lived with two married parents, 27% lived with one parent, 9% lived with a cohabiting couple and 5% lived without a parent.

Because of the significant decline in marriage rates among blacks and the increase in out-of-wedlock births, the percentage of black children living with a parent who has never been married has grown dramatically over the past 50 years. In 1960, it was very rare for a child of any race or ethnicity to be living in a household with a parent who had never

Share of Births to Unmarried Women, by Race and Ethnicity

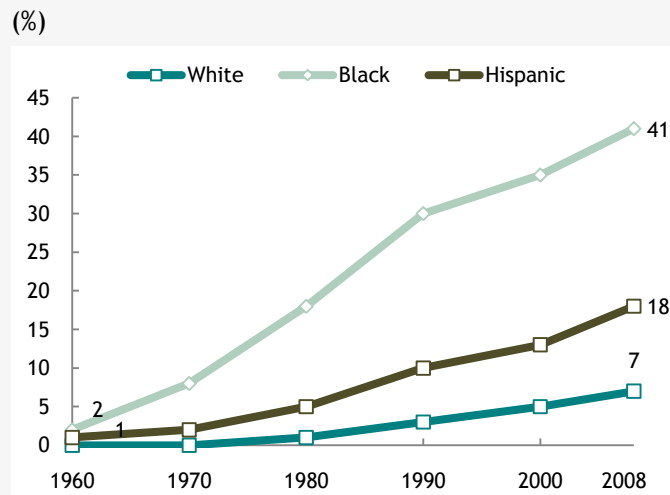


Note: 2008 data are preliminary. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Source: For data from 1990 and later, statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data. For years prior to 1990, data obtained from Ventura, Stephanie J., and Christine A. Bachrach. Nonmarital childbearing in the United States, 1940-1999. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 48 no 16. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics.

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Share of Children with a Never Married Parent, by Race and Ethnicity



Note: Based on persons ages 17 and younger. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

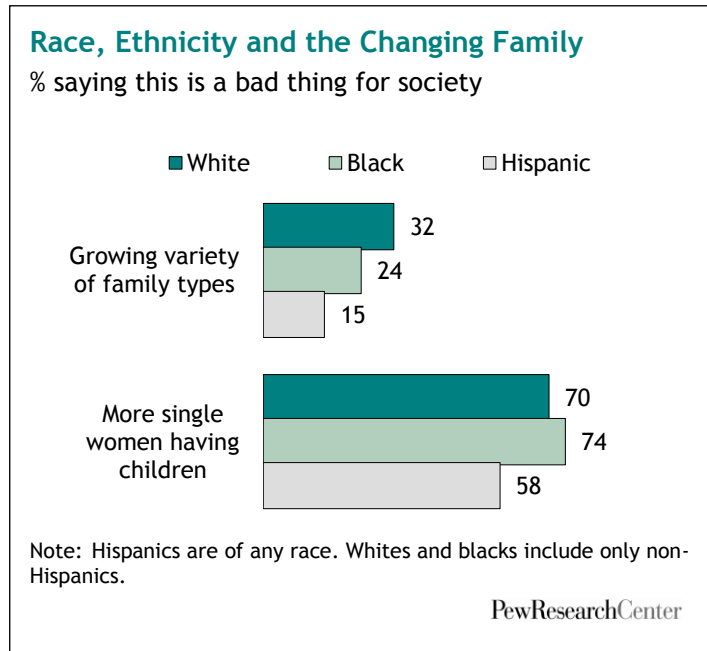
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been married. Less than 1% of white children, 1% of Hispanic children and 2% of black children lived in this type of household. Since that time, the proportion of white and Hispanic children living with a parent who has never been married has risen steadily, reaching 7% among white children and 18% among Hispanic children in 2008. The increase has been much more pronounced among black children. By 2008, 41% of black children were living with a parent who had never been married.

Blacks have mixed views about the changes that have taken place in family structure in recent decades. Only one-in-four blacks (24%) say the growing variety in the types of

family arrangements is a bad thing, compared with a third (32%) of whites. However, blacks are highly critical of the trend toward more single women having children without a male partner to help raise them. Three-quarters of blacks (74%) say this trend is bad for society. Whites are equally disapproving of this trend (70% say it's a bad thing), while Hispanics are somewhat more receptive (58% consider it a bad thing).

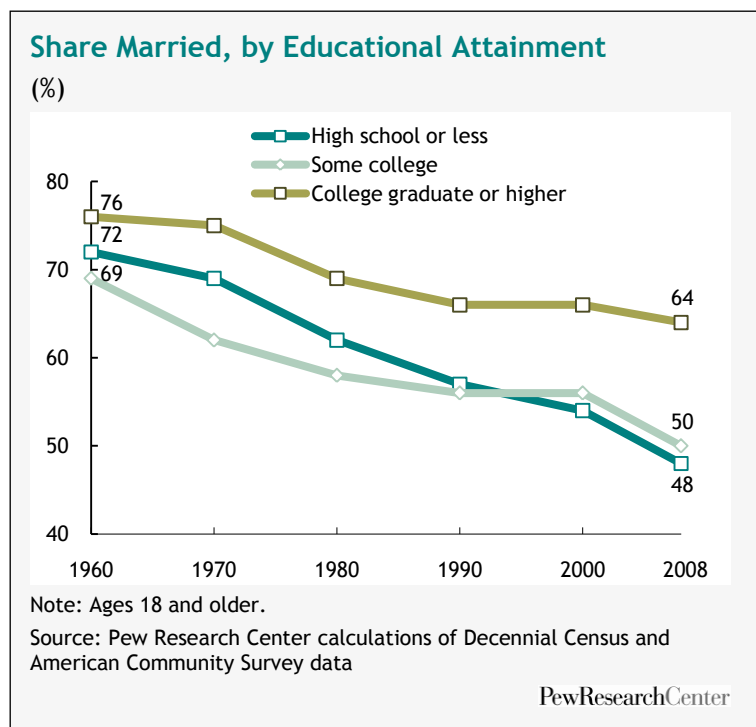
Overall, blacks are less satisfied with their family life than are whites or Hispanics: 64% of blacks, compared with 79% of whites and 73% of Hispanics, say they are very satisfied with their family life.



Marriage, Family and Socio-Economic Status

Socio-economic status can be measured in a variety of ways, but one rough proxy is educational attainment. Using this yardstick, the Pew Research report finds that the growing marriage gap in this country is aligned with a growing socio-economic gap.

In 1960, college graduates (76%) were only slightly more likely than those who never attended college (72%) to marry. By 2008, only 48% of those with a high school diploma or less were married, compared with 64% of college graduates. Recent analysis by the Pew Research



Center showed that 2007 marked the first time that college-educated young adults were more likely than those without a college degree to have married by the age of 30.¹¹

As a result of these changing marriage patterns, college graduates are now much more likely than those without a college degree to live in a traditional, 1950s-style family. In 2008, 35% of college graduates were living with a spouse and one or more children, compared with 23% of those with a high school education. The falloff over time in the percentage living in a more traditional family has been most dramatic among those with a high school education. In 1960, high school graduates (55%) were about as likely as college graduates (53%) to be living in a household with their spouse and children.

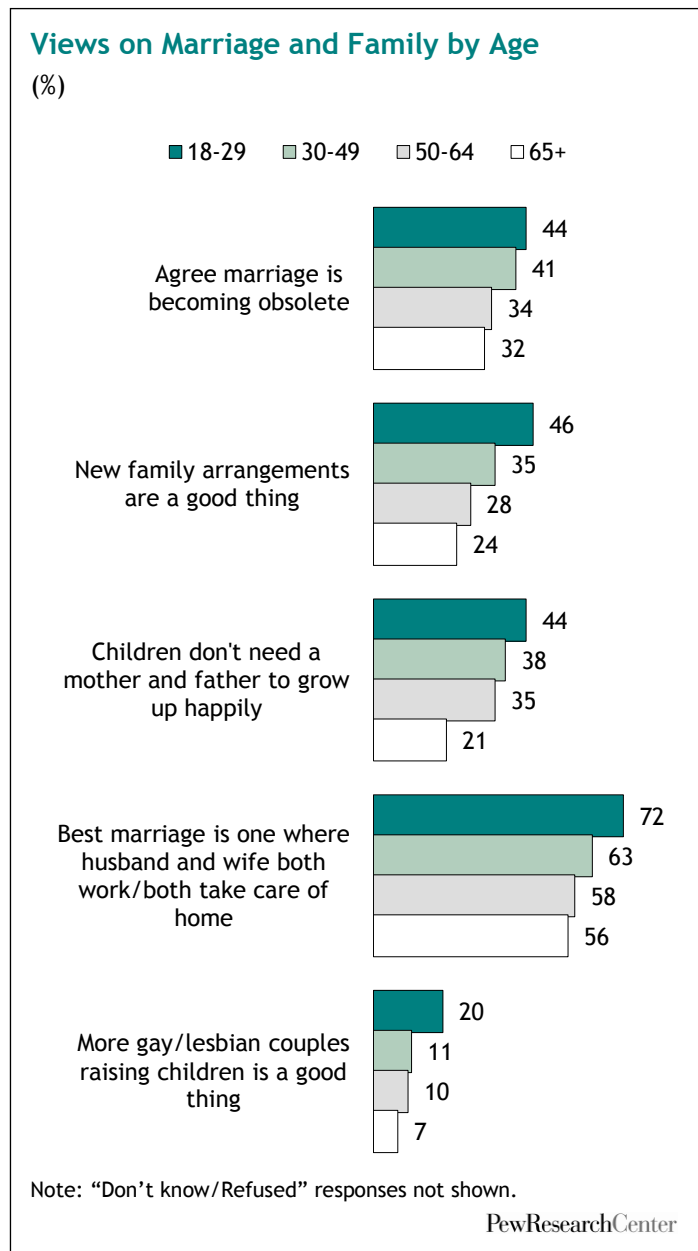
The Pew Research survey finds that college graduates are among the most likely to reject the notion that marriage is becoming obsolete: only 27% agree, while 71% disagree. Among those who have not gone to college, opinion is much more evenly split: 44% agree marriage is becoming obsolete, and 52% disagree.

The Generation Gap and Family Change

Attitudes about changing families also differ significantly by age. Younger Americans are much more open to the changes and more tolerant of alternative arrangements. In some cases, the age divide falls between those who are younger than 50 and those who are 50 and older. In other areas, the youngest generation, sometimes called the Millennials, stands out from all other age groups.

On the question of whether or not marriage is becoming obsolete, those younger than 50 (43%) are more likely than those ages 50 and older (33%) to agree.

The youngest adults—ages 18 to 29—are the



¹¹ For further analysis of trends in marriage and educational attainment, see Richard Fry, "The Reversal of the College Marriage Gap," October 7, 2010 (<http://pewsocialtrends.org/pubs/767/reversal-of-the-college-marriage-gap>).

most likely to favor a modern marriage, where both the husband and wife have jobs and both take care of the household and children, over the male breadwinner/female homemaker model that prevailed in the middle of the last century. More than seven-in-ten (72%) say the former is a more satisfying way of life. Only 22% would favor a marriage where the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the household and children.

Young adults are also much more open to new family arrangements. Nearly half of those younger than 30 (46%) say the growing variety of family arrangements is a good thing. This compares with 35% of those ages 30 to 49 and fewer than three-in-ten of those ages 50 and older.

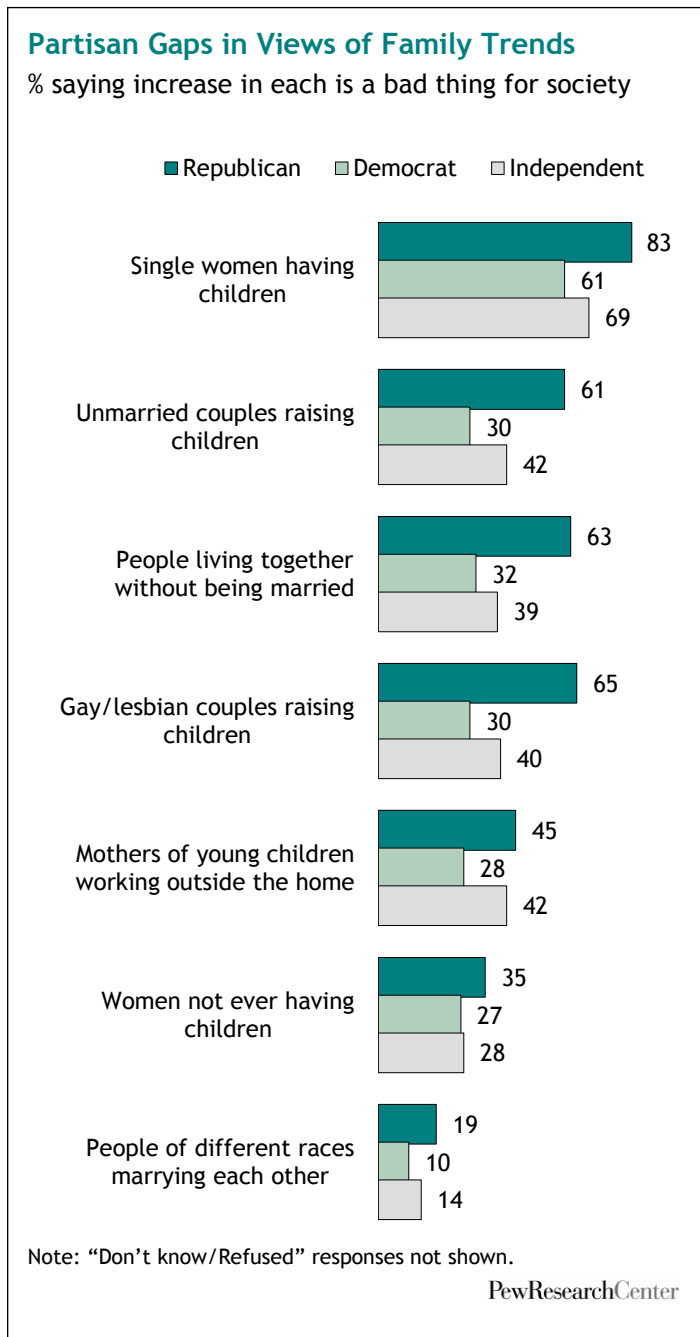
Young adults differ from their elders in their views about the best family arrangements for children. Only about half agree with the idea that a child needs both a mother and a father to grow up happily, while 44% reject this notion. Older age groups tend to believe much more strongly in the two-parent ideal. In addition, young people are among the most supportive of gay and lesbian couples raising children. Of those younger than 30, 20% say this trend is a good thing. Among older age groups, only about half as many agree.

The Politics of Family Change

The growing “red-blue” divide in politics and government is also evident in attitudes and behaviors related to family.

For starters, Republicans and Democrats tend to live in different types of families. Two-thirds of Republicans (67%) are married, and 57% are married with children. Among Democrats, only 45% are married (38% are married with children). Democrats (9%) are twice as likely as Republicans (4%) to be living with a partner without being married. Among independents, 52% are married and 48% are unmarried.

Republicans and Democrats have much different perspectives on the changes that



have taken place in families over the past 50 years. Nearly half of Republicans (48%) say the growing variety of family arrangements is a bad thing, while only 21% see this as a good thing and 26% say it doesn't make a difference. Among Democrats, a 45% plurality say the growing variety of family types is a good thing; only 17% think this is a bad thing. An additional 35% say this doesn't make a difference. Independents are more evenly split: 33% say this is a good thing, 27% say it's a bad thing and 35% say it doesn't make a difference.

When asked about specific trends in society that have affected families, Republicans are consistently more critical than Democrats. The biggest partisan gap is on the trend toward more gay and lesbian couples raising children. By a better than two-to-one margin, more Republicans (65%) than Democrats (30%) say this trend is bad for society. There are similarly large gaps in attitudes about more single women having children (83% of Republicans vs. 61% of Democrats say this is bad for society) and people living together without being married (63% of Republicans vs. 32% of Democrats say this is bad for society).

Republicans also take a much more negative view than do Democrats of the trends toward more single women having children and more mothers of young children working outside the home. The partisan gap is somewhat smaller though still significant on the trends toward more women not ever having children and more interracial marriages.

In most cases, the views of independents are closer to those of Democrats than Republicans. There are two exceptions. Independents are nearly as likely as Republicans to say more mothers of young children working outside the home is a bad thing. And when it comes to views on interracial marriage, independents fall squarely in the middle.

Republicans appear to have a stricter definition of family than do Democrats or independents. Survey respondents were presented with a variety of family arrangements and asked if each was a family or not. A majority of Democrats say each of the arrangements—from a married mother and father with children, to an unmarried couple living together with no children—is a family. Republicans, on the other hand, are reluctant to ascribe family status to certain groups.

For example, when asked whether a gay or lesbian couple living together with one or more children is a family, 46% of Republicans say it is, compared with 73% of Democrats. Similarly, while 32% of Republicans say a gay or lesbian couple living together with no children is a family, 56% of Democrats say the same. And one-in-four Republicans, compared with more than half of Democrats (54%), consider a cohabiting couple with no children to be a family.

Given the concern among Republicans about many of the societal trends affecting families, it is not surprising that they have a less positive outlook than Democrats on the future of the family. Fewer Republicans (63%) than Democrats (71%) say they are optimistic about the institution of marriage and the family.

Religion and the Family

In addition to partisanship, religiosity is strongly linked to views on the family. Adults who attend religious services weekly or more often are much more resistant to the newer arrangements than are those who attend religious services less often or never. For example, among those who attend religious services at least once a week, 72% believe a child needs both a mother and a father to grow up happily. This compares with 62% of those who attend religious services monthly or a few times a year and 44% of those who seldom or never attend.

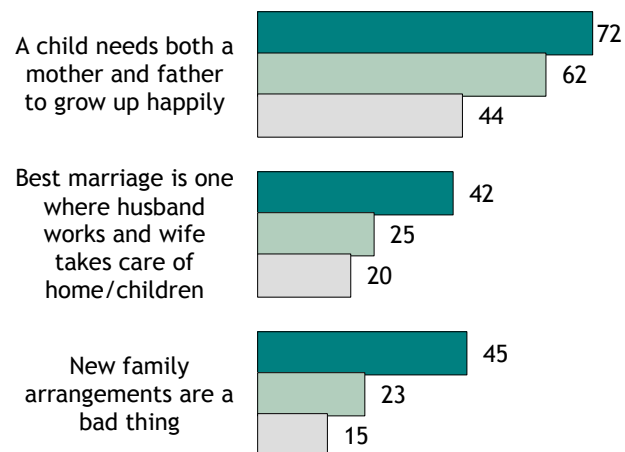
While a strong majority of the public favors a modern marriage where the husband and wife both have jobs and both take care of the household and children, many regular church attendees still favor a more traditional marriage. Among those who attend religious services once a week or more often, 42% say a marriage where the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the home and children is the more satisfying way of life. This compares with 25% of those who attend religious services occasionally and 20% who seldom or never attend.

It follows that those who attend religious services most often are among the most resistant to the growing variety of family arrangements. Nearly half (45%) of those who attend religious services weekly say the new family arrangements are a bad thing. Only one-in-five (19%) of those who attend religious services less frequently share that opinion.

Views on Family Change by Attendance at Religious Services

(%)

■ Weekly or more ■ Monthly or less □ Seldom or never



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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Comparing the U.S. and Europe

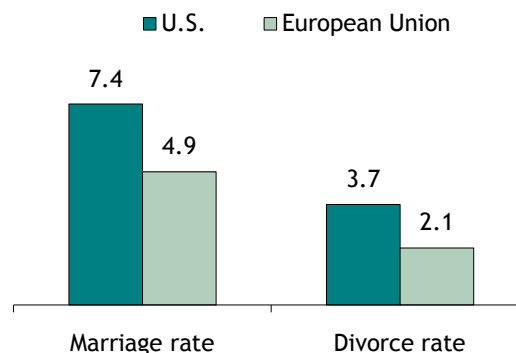
Americans have a unique relationship with marriage. Compared with most other western nations, the U.S. has one of the highest marriage rates as well as one of the highest divorce rates. According to data compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), there were more new marriages per 1,000 people in the U.S. in 2006 (7.4) than in any European Union (EU) country, with the exception of Cyprus, at a comparable time.¹² In France and Italy, for example, just 4.2 new marriages were formed per 1,000 people in 2005, and the rate was even lower in the Eastern European countries of Hungary (4.1), Bulgaria (3.9) and Slovenia (3.2).

Though divorce rates have leveled off in this country, the U.S. continues to lead much of the western world in this area as well. In the mid-2000s, the number of divorces per 1,000 people in the U.S. was considerably higher than the average for EU countries (3.7 vs. 2.1).¹³ The divorce rate was especially low in Italy, where there was fewer than 1 divorce per 1,000 people (0.8). France and Germany fell in the middle of the EU pack, with divorce rates of 2.2 and 2.3, respectively, while former Soviet republics Lithuania (3.4 divorces per 1,000 people) and Latvia (3.3) had the highest divorce rates. (To some degree, of course, lower divorce rates in Europe are a by-product of lower marriage rates).

Cohabitation is less prevalent in the U.S. than in EU countries, especially those in Western Europe. According to data from 2000 compiled by the OECD, 5.5% of American adults ages 20 or older were cohabiting. By comparison, 8.7% of adults ages 20 and older in Great Britain, 9.3% in the Netherlands, and 11.8% in Finland were living with a partner early in the decade. In some parts of Europe, however, particularly in the south and east, cohabiting is much less common. For instance, only 1.3% of adults ages 20 and older in Poland and 1.4% in Slovakia were cohabiting early in the decade. In Italy, only 2% were cohabiting in 2001 as were 3.3% in Spain and 4.1% in Portugal.¹⁴

U.S. a Leader in Marriage and Divorce

Number of new marriages/divorces per 1,000 people: 2005-2006



Note: EU marriage rate average excludes data from Romania; EU divorce rate average excludes data from Romania and Malta.

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Data for the U.S. are from 2006. Data for EU countries are from 2005, with the exception of marriage rates in Denmark and Ireland and divorce rates in France and Germany, which are from 2006.

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¹² OECD data for these years does not include Romania. Comparative data are from 2005 with the exception of Denmark and Ireland which are from 2006.

¹³ Data for most EU countries are from 2005; data for the U.S., France and Germany are from 2006. Divorce rate average for the EU does not include Malta or Romania.

¹⁴ Data for Finland are from 2000; data for Great Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Portugal are from 2001; data from Poland and Slovakia are from 2002.

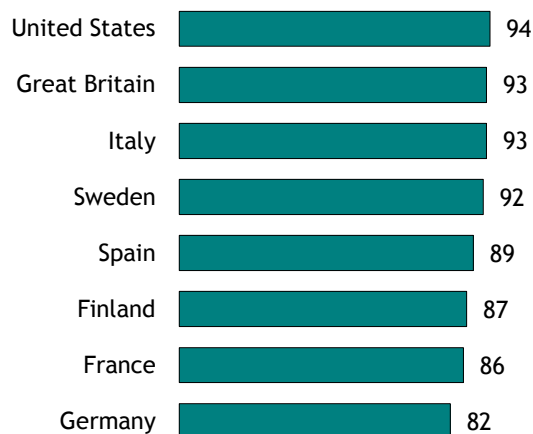
In his book, *The Marriage Go-Round*, Andrew Cherlin argues that Americans' relatively high rates of marriage and divorce as well as the short-term nature of their cohabiting relationships have all contributed to a great deal of instability in family life.¹⁵ For example, children in the U.S. are more likely than children in most western European countries to live in a household with only one parent. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 25% of American children age 14 or younger were living with only one parent in 2008. The percentage of children living with one parent was slightly higher in Great Britain (30%) in 2007, but data compiled by the OECD suggests that the proportion was significantly lower throughout most of Western Europe. In France, 20% of children ages 14 and younger were living with one parent, as were 18% in Germany, 8% in Spain and Italy, and 5% in Finland.

In spite of the turbulent nature of marriage in the U.S., Americans are not willing to give up on the institution. When asked in a 2006 World Values Survey whether they agreed or disagreed that marriage is an out-dated institution, only 13% of Americans agreed. Nearly a third (32%) agreed with this statement in Spain, as did 20% in Germany and 18% in Italy.

When it comes to the importance of family life, Americans value it at least as much as citizens of other western nations. The 2006 World Values Survey asked respondents how important family is in their life – 94% of Americans said family is very important. Comparable proportions of respondents in Great Britain (93%), Italy (93%) and Sweden (92%) said family is very important in their life. The percentages were just slightly lower in Spain (89%), Finland (87%), France (86%), and Germany (82%).

The Global Appeal of Family Life

Percent saying family is very important in their life: 2005-2007



Source: World Values Survey. Data for the U.S., France, Great Britain, Sweden and Germany are from 2006; data for Italy and Finland are from 2005; data for Spain are from 2007.

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¹⁵ Andrew Cherlin, *The Marriage Go-Round*, Knopf, New York, 2009.

Outcomes: Who Has the Most Satisfying Life?

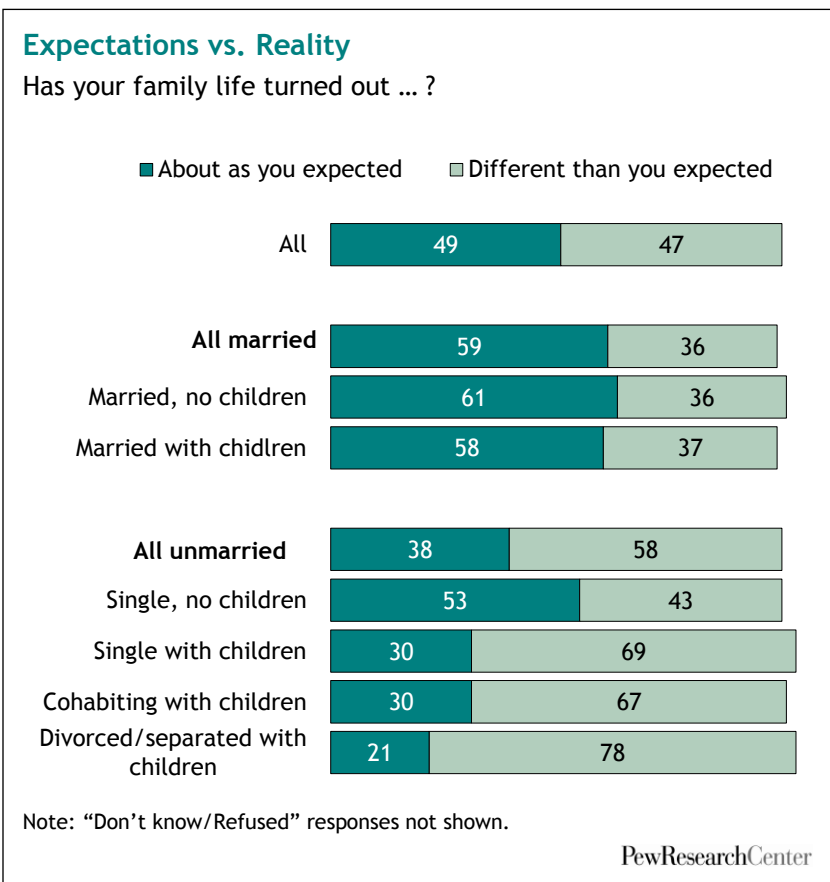
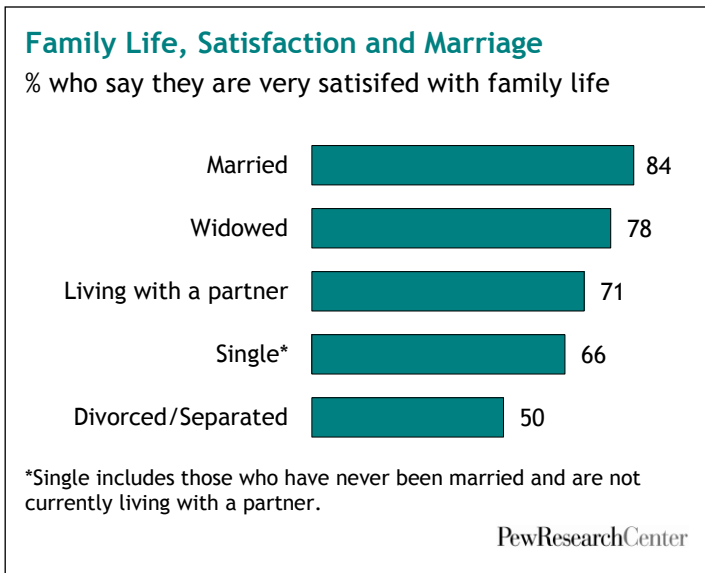
Amid the growing variety of family arrangements these days, one pattern is clear: Married people are more satisfied with their family lives than are unmarried people. Among married adults, 84% say they are very satisfied with their family life. This compares with 78% of those who are widowed, 71% of those who are living with a partner, 66% of those who are single¹⁶ and only half of those who are divorced or separated.

The presence of children in the household doesn't have a significant impact on satisfaction with family life. Married adults with children (85%) are not significantly more satisfied than married adults without children (81%). And among single people who have never been married, those with children (64%) and those without children (67%) are equally likely to say they are very satisfied with their family life.

In addition to family type, race and ethnicity are correlated with family life satisfaction. More whites are highly satisfied with their family life (79% very satisfied) than blacks (64%) or Hispanics (73%).

Expectations

Life is full of surprises— and when it comes to family life, surprise correlates with family



¹⁶ Throughout the report, "single" refers to those who have never been married and are not currently living with a partner. See Glossary for more details.

structure. Most adults living in less-traditional family arrangements say their family life has turned out differently than they expected, while most married adults say their family life has unfolded pretty much as they expected it would.

Among those who are married, whether or not they have children, roughly six-in-ten say their family life has turned out about as they expected. Among single adults with no children (most of whom are younger than 30), 53% say their family life has turned as they expected. It's a much different story for single adults with children. Only 30% of them say their family life has turned out about as they expected. The vast majority (69%) say things have turned out differently than they expected. Similarly, among those who are living with a partner and raising children, only 30% say their family life has turned out as they expected, compared with 67% who say it's been different from what they expected.

Not surprisingly, the end of a marriage is one of life's most unexpected events. Among divorced or separated adults who are raising children, 78% say their family life has turned out differently from what they once envisioned.

Public Knowledge of Demographic Change

Given the pervasive impact of family change on American society, the public cannot help but be aware of the broad trends of the past half century. However, their familiarity with some of the details is limited. As part of our look at the changing American family, the Pew Research Center conducted a separate survey to measure knowledge of some key indicators.

The results were mixed. Roughly half of the respondents (46%) answered correctly that the percentage of American adults who are married has gone down over the past 20 years. One-in-ten said the marriage rate has gone up, 20% said it has stayed the same and 24% weren't sure.

The public was much less knowledgeable about recent trends in divorce rates. Only 5% knew that the divorce rate has actually gone down over the past 20 years. Nearly two-thirds (66%) believed the divorce rate has gone up over the past two decades, 21% thought it has stayed the same, and 8% didn't answer. The divorce rate did rise sharply during the 1960s and 1970s, before leveling off and beginning to decline.

What the Public Knows about Key Demographic Trends

| | Answered correctly |
|---|--------------------|
| Is the percent of women with children younger than 3 who work at least part-time closer to 60%, 40%, 20% or 5%? <i>Correct answer: 60%</i> | 49 |
| Has the percentage of adults who are married gone up, gone down, or stayed the same over the past 20 years? <i>Correct answer: gone down</i> | 46 |
| Is the share of babies born to unmarried mothers closer to 60%, 40%, 20% or 5%? <i>Correct answer: 40%</i> | 27 |
| What is the average age when a man first gets married? <i>Correct answer: 28</i> | 7 |
| Has the divorce rate gone up, gone down, or stayed the same over the past 20 years? <i>Correct answer: gone down</i> | 5 |

The average age of first marriage has gone up gradually for both men and women. Respondents underestimated the average age at which a man gets married these days. The median age offered by respondents was 25; actually, the average is 28.

Answers to these three questions did not differ significantly by gender, race, age or education. However, when it came to questions about trends involving children, there were major differences across some of these demographic groups. Respondents were asked if they knew the share of babies currently born to unmarried mothers. They were offered four potential answers: 60%, 40%, 20% or 5%. Roughly a quarter (27%) correctly answered 40%, and another quarter estimated that it was even higher—60%.

Non-whites (40%) were more than twice as likely as whites (18%) to estimate that 60% of babies are born to unmarried mothers.¹⁷ Among whites, 30% gave the correct answer, compared with 12% of blacks.

Finally, the survey included a question about the percentage of women with children younger than 3 who are working either full time or part time. Roughly half of the public (49%) gave the correct answer—60%. Women (55%) were more likely than men (42%) to get this answer correct. In addition, more whites (52%) than non-whites (43%) correctly answered this question.

¹⁷ In the analysis of the knowledge items, the non-white category includes blacks, Hispanics and other non-whites.

Section 2: Marriage

About four-in-ten Americans think that marriage is on the rocks. No, not their marriage. The institution of marriage. In response to the question, “Some people say that the present institution of marriage is becoming obsolete—do you agree or disagree?” some 39% of survey respondents say they agree, while 58% disagree and 4% say they don’t know.

As family historians¹⁸ have noted, observations about the fragility of marriage are as old and universal as marriage itself—meaning they’ve been around for thousands of years and permeated virtually every culture and corner of the globe.

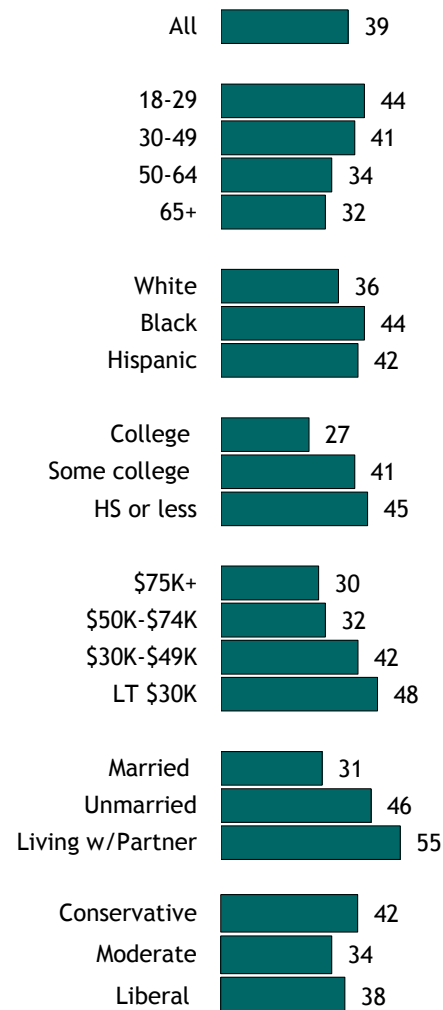
Nevertheless, there’s been a notable rise in recent decades in this country in the perception that marriage’s best days are behind it. When this same question was posed on a 1978 survey, just 28% agreed with the premise.¹⁹

No matter what one thinks about the institution’s future, there’s no getting around its stark contraction during the past half century. Some 72% of all adults in the United States were married in 1960. By 2008, just 52% were.

Does this trend line lead inevitably to obsolescence? The notion that it does attracts some strange bedfellows—those who are contributing to the phenomenon (55% of cohabiters) as well as those who are most likely to be troubled by it (42% of self-described conservatives).

Is Marriage Becoming Obsolete?

% who agree



Note: “Disagree” and “Don’t Know/Refused” responses are not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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¹⁸ See, for example, Coontz, Stephanie, *Marriage, a History*, Penguin Books, 2005. Pages 1-12.

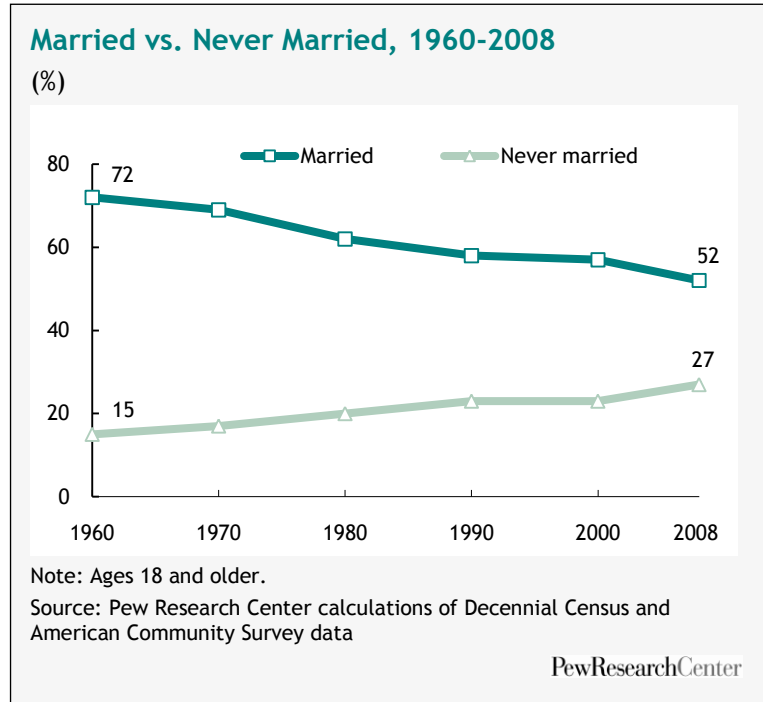
¹⁹ This 1978 Time/Yankelovich, Skelly & White survey was among registered voters only. The “agree” response among registered voters in the 2010 survey was 36%.

The survey reveals other intriguing cross-currents in the public's attitudes about marriage. For example, most Americans now embrace the ideal of gender equality between spouses. The mid-20th century "Ozzie and Harriet" marriage between a breadwinner husband and a homemaker wife is now seen as the preferred model by just 30% of the public; some 62% say that marriages are better when husbands and wives both have jobs and both share responsibility for the household and kids.

Even as public opinion embraces the ideal of spousal equality, however, it still hasn't given up the seemingly contradictory notion that men—far more than women—need to be good providers in order to be good marriage prospects. Two-thirds of survey respondents say this about men, while just one-third say it about women.

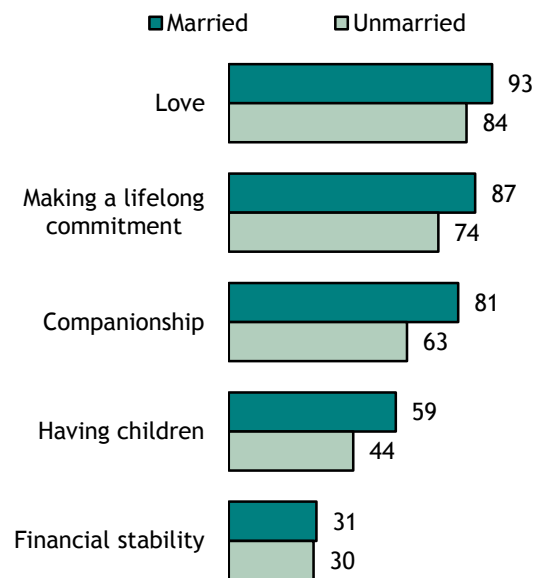
But comes now another wrinkle. To hear the public tell it, financial security isn't all that important to marriage. Asked to evaluate the reasons they got married, married respondents place the greatest value on love (93% say this is a very important reason), followed by making a lifelong commitment (87%), companionship (81%), having children (59%), and, at the bottom of the list, financial stability (31%). Unmarried adults order the reasons the same way when asked to evaluate why they would consider getting married.

The potency of the link between love and marriage is relatively new in the sweep of human history—and, in the view of some historians, a leading cause of the institution's decline.²⁰ For



Why Get Married? By Marital Status

% saying this is a "very important" reason to marry



Note: Asked of married and unmarried separately, n=1,306 for married and 1,385 for unmarried.

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²⁰ Coontz, Stephanie, *Marriage, a History*, Penguin Books, 2005.

several millennia, economic security was the *sine qua non* of marriage. The institution thrived as an efficient way to divide labor, allocate resources, propagate the species and ensure that someone will take care of you when you get old. Only in recent centuries have love and mutual self-fulfillment come to occupy center stage in the grand marital bargain. But as the trends of the past half century attest, it's an open question whether a social institution built on love will prove as durable as one built on economic security.

Less Money, Less Marriage

If economic security is no longer a key reason people marry, the lack of economic security nonetheless appears to be a key reason people *don't* get married. As noted in the overview of this report, 50 years ago there was virtually no difference by socio-economic status in the proclivity to marry: 76% of college graduates and 72% of adults who did not attend college were married in 1960. By 2008, that small gap had widened to a chasm: 64% of college graduates were married, compared with just 48% of those with a high school diploma or less. During this same period, the income gap between the well-educated and the less-educated—and between the rich and poor—also widened substantially.²¹

The 2010 Pew Research survey finds that among the unmarried, there are no significant differences by education or income in the desire to get married; just under half of the college educated (46%) and those who have a high school diploma or less (44%) would like to get married. Likewise, roughly similar shares of the unmarried who earn above and below \$100,000 a year would like to marry.

But the survey also finds that the less education and income people have, the more likely they are to say that in order to be a good marriage prospect, a person must be able to support a family financially. Taken together, these findings suggest that those with less income and education are opting out of marriage not because they don't value the institution or aspire to its benefits, but because they may doubt that they (or a potential spouse) can meet the standards they impose on marriage.

The Upsides of Marriage

Not all of the survey findings are harbingers of gloom and doom for the institution of marriage. Even among those who are not currently married, getting hitched continues to have appeal. A plurality of 46% of those who are not married say they would like to marry, while three-in-ten (29%) say they are not sure. Just one-in-four say they don't want to marry.

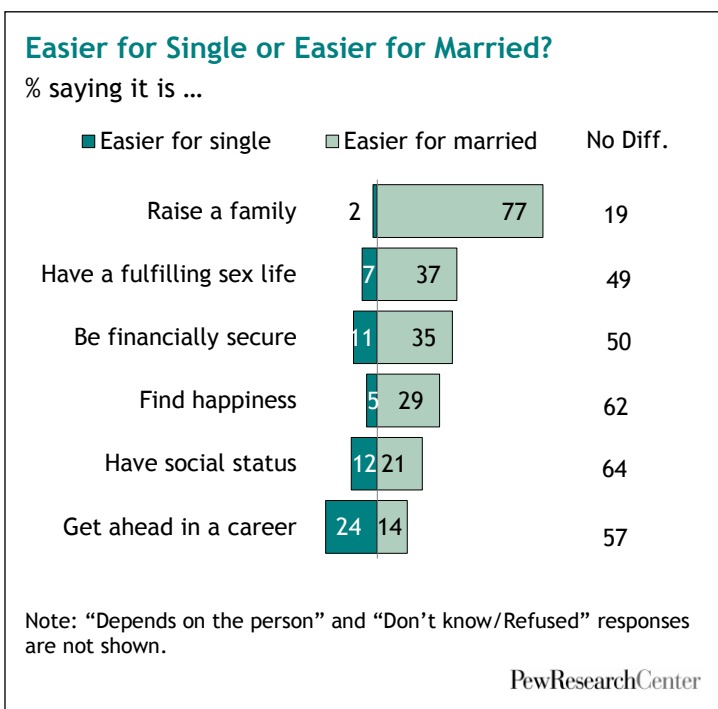
Moreover, marriage may have been more prevalent a generation ago, but most

| Do You Want to Get Married? | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------|---------|------------------|
| % of unmarried saying ... | | | | |
| | All | Living w/partner | Single | Divorced/Widowed |
| Want to marry | 46 | 64 | 58 | 22 |
| Don't want to marry | 25 | 16 | 12 | 46 |
| Not sure if want to marry | 29 | 19 | 29 | 32 |
| DK/Refused (VOL.) | 1 | 1 | * | 1 |
| | (n=1,302) | (n=206) | (n=631) | (n=465) |

²¹ See for instance “Changes in Income Inequality across the U.S.” Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Sep 21, 2007.

married or cohabiting respondents today believe their own relationship compares favorably with their parents'. Some 51% say they have a closer relationship with their spouse or partner than their parents had with each other, while just 5% characterize their own relationship as less close. The remainder—43%—say there is no difference.

A majority of adults believe that in many key realms of life—such as finding happiness, getting ahead in a career or having social status—it doesn't make any difference whether a person is married or single. However, among those who believe it *does* make a difference, most say that being married is better.



For example, when it comes to being financially secure, 35% of respondents believe this is easier to do as a married person, while 11% say it is easier for a single person and half say it makes no difference. Similar patterns emerge for having a fulfilling sexual life, finding happiness and having social status. The two outliers from this pattern are raising a family (fully 77% say this is easier for a married person) and getting ahead in a career (just 14% say this is easier for a married person, compared with 24% who say it is easier for a single person).

Finally, a classic question about love was posed in the survey: Do you agree or disagree that there is only one true love for each person? Nearly three-in-ten (28%) Americans agree, while 69% disagree. Among the minority who believe in just one true love, 79% say—in response to a follow-up question—that they've found theirs. And among those in this group who are married, 96% say they've found theirs—meaning that virtually all are either deeply committed or very careful with their words.

The remainder of this chapter examines all of these questions in depth and explores the demographic patterns in attitudes and behaviors related to marriage.

Is Marriage Becoming Obsolete?

It's no small thing when nearly four-in-ten (39%) Americans agree that the world's most enduring social institution is becoming obsolete.

Nonetheless, this finding needs to be interpreted with caution.

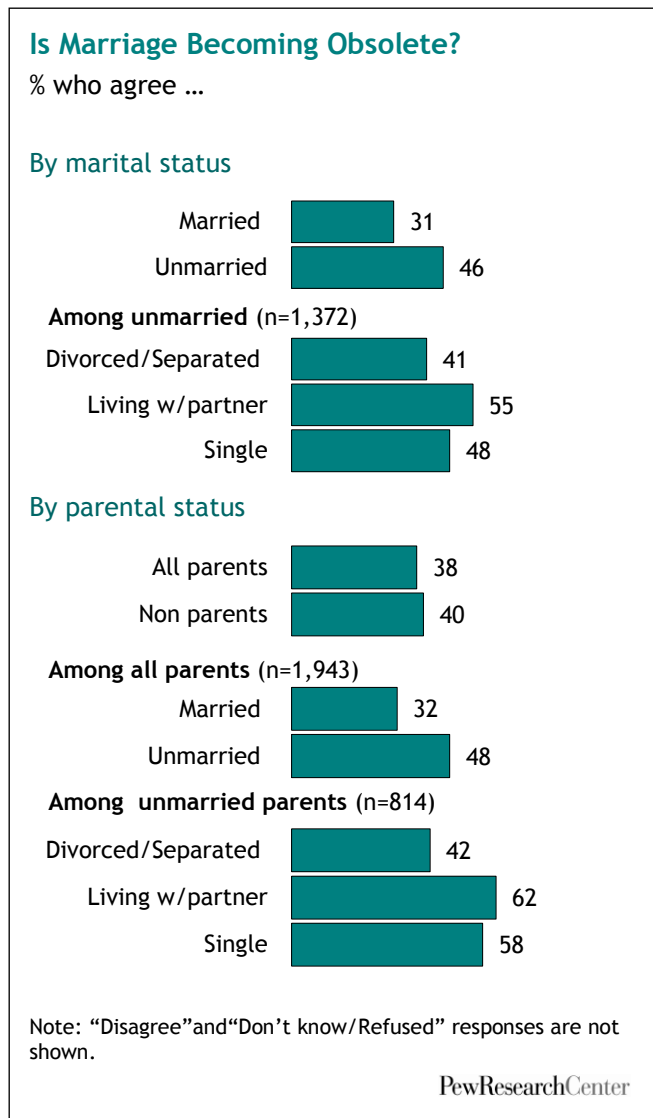
For one thing, "becoming obsolete" is not the same as "obsolete." When the World Values Survey posed a similar question in 2006 that used a more starkly worded formulation ("Marriage is an outdated institution—agree or disagree?"), just 13% of American respondents agreed.

In addition, respondents who doubt the durability of marriage appear to include a mix of those who are comfortable with the change and those who are troubled by it.

Among the demographic groups most likely to agree that marriage is becoming obsolete are the young (44% of 18- to 29-year-olds say this), blacks (44%), those who have a high school diploma or less (45%) and those whose annual income is less than \$30,000 (48%). All of these groups are less likely than their demographic opposites (older, white, college educated, higher income) to be married—and thus their judgments could well be shaped to some degree by their life experiences.

These differences come into sharper focus when one looks specifically at respondents' marital status. Just 31% of married adults agree that marriage is becoming obsolete, compared with 46% of all unmarried adults, 58% of all single parents and 62% of all cohabiting (but unmarried) parents.

But it's not just those who are living out alternative arrangements to marriage who say that the institution is becoming obsolete. Some 42% of self-described conservatives (compared with 38% of liberals and 34% of moderates) say the same— even though conservatives are less likely than moderates or liberals to have ever cohabited. They are also the most likely of the three ideology groups to say that the growing variety in family arrangements is a bad thing.



Gender Roles; Family Finances

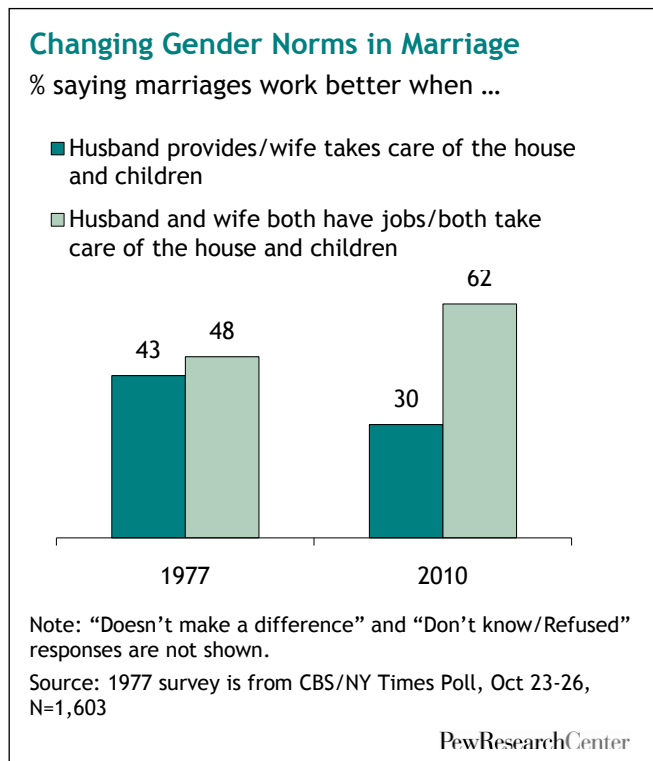
When it comes to attitudes about how spouses should divide responsibilities, social norms have changed. Back in 1977, survey respondents were nearly equally divided between those who said marriages are more satisfying when the husband earns an income and the wife takes care of the household and children (43%) and those who said marriages work best when both spouses have jobs and both take care of the household and children (48%).

By 2010, public opinion shifted heavily in favor of the dual income/shared homemaker model, with survey respondents favoring this template by 62% to 30% over the arrangement that was much more prevalent half a century ago.

No major subgroup of survey respondents favors the older model, but some are more disposed that way than others. For example, 42% of self-described conservatives, 42% of Republicans and 37% of adults ages 65 and older say the traditional arrangement will lead to more satisfying lives.

Also, slightly more men (33%) than women (26%) feel this way. And the married (35%) are more inclined than the unmarried (24%) to say this.

Despite the public's strong preference for the two-earner/shared homemaker marriage, the public hasn't fully abandoned the idea that men and women play different roles in a marriage. Indeed, when it comes to evaluating the earning power of future mates, the public still has one standard for prospective husbands and a different one for future wives.

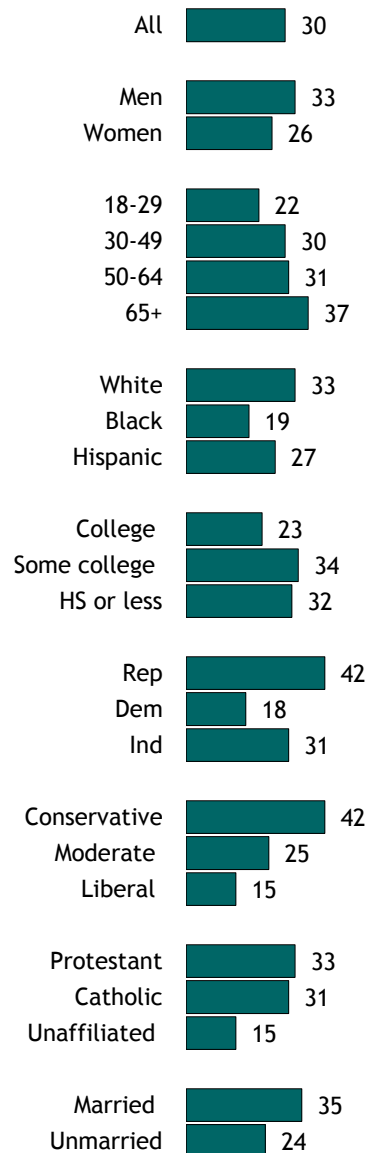


Asked how important it is for a man to be able to support a family financially if he wants to get married, fully 67% of the public say it is “very important.” But when the same question is asked about a woman, just 33% say it is very important.

There are some differences by gender in these responses, but they do not alter the basic pattern. Among male respondents, 70% say a man who is about to marry must be able to support a family, while just 27% say the same about a woman. Among female respondents, 64% say that about a man and 39% about a woman.

What Kind of Marriage Is More Satisfying?

% saying “traditional” marriage



Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Question wording: What kind of marriage do you think is the more satisfying way of life? One where the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the house and children, or one where the husband and wife both have jobs and both take care of the house and children.

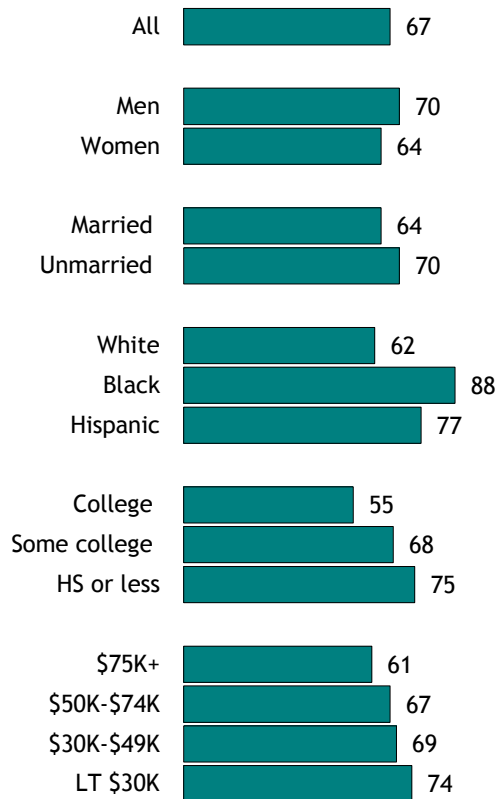
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Race and Marriage

There are larger differences on this question by race. Fully 88% of black respondents (compared with 62% of whites and 77% of Hispanics) say that in order to be ready for marriage, a man must be able to support a family financially. Likewise, 50% of black respondents (compared with 47% of Hispanics and 28% of whites) say that a woman must be able to support a family financially in order to be ready for marriage.

To Be Ready for Marriage, How Important Is It that a Man Be a Good Provider?

% saying "very important"

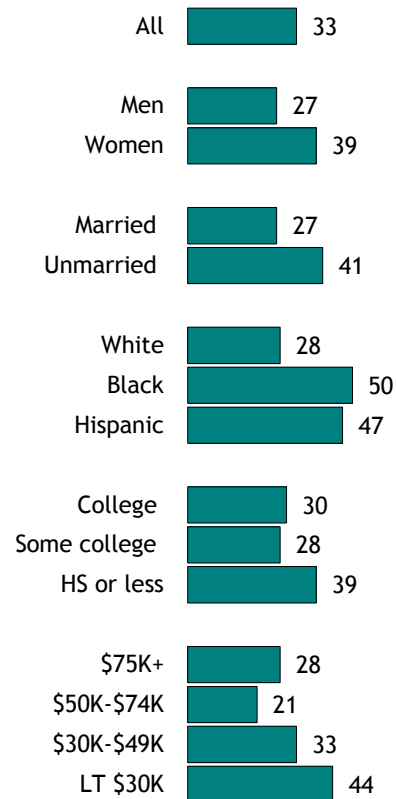


Note: Based on Form2, n=1,364. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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To be Ready for Marriage, How Important is It that a Woman Be a Good Provider?

% saying "very important"



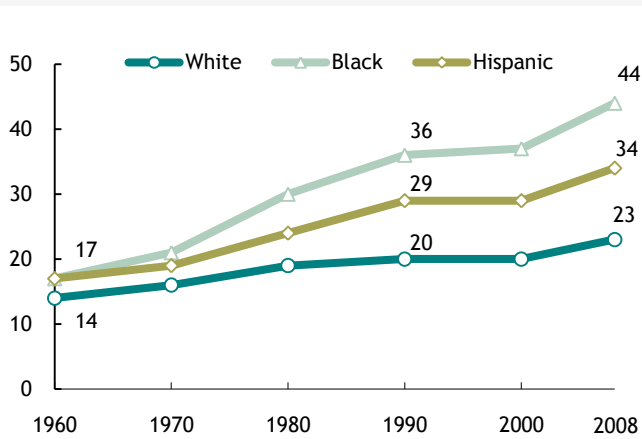
Note: Based on Form1, n=1,327. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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In short, blacks are the racial group most inclined to consider financial security a prerequisite to marriage. But, owing to their relatively low median income, many blacks do not meet that bar.

Share of Never Married, by Race and Ethnicity, 1960-2008

(%)



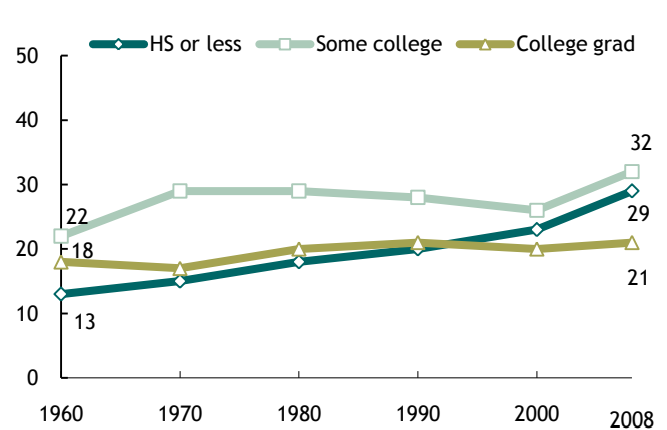
Note: Ages 18 and older. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

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Share of Never Married, by Education, 1960-2008

(%)



Note: Ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

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The rates of marriage in the black community reflect this mismatch. Fewer than one-third of adult blacks (32%) are currently married, compared with half of Hispanics and 56% of whites, according to Census Bureau data. On the flip side, 44% of blacks have never been married, compared with only 23% of whites. The racial marriage gap did not used to be this wide. In 1960, 17% of adult blacks and 14% of adult whites were never married—a gap of just 3 percentage points.

A similar pattern applies to education and marriage. College graduates are more likely than those without a college degree to be married these days (64% vs. around 50%). Looking at the share of those who have never married, about one-third (32%) of adults with some college education and 29% of those with a high school education or less have never married, compared with just 21% of adults with a college education. Half a century ago, the reverse was true: college graduates were more likely than adults with a high school diploma or less to have never been married (18% vs. 13%).

What Makes a Good Partner?

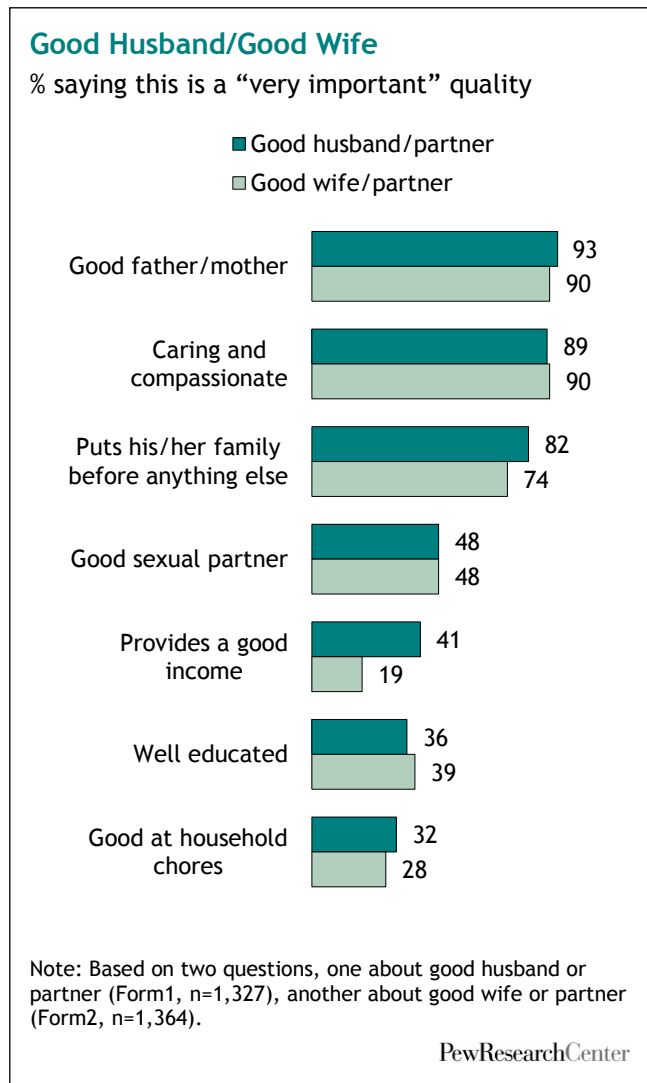
When survey respondents were asked to evaluate a battery of traits that make for a good spouse or partner, “provides a good income” was the only characteristic that generated large differences depending on whether the inquiry was about a husband or a wife.

Overall, these responses are more notable for how closely the public’s evaluations of the two gender roles are aligned. For both husbands (or male partners) and wives (or female partners), the three qualities most widely cited as being “very important” are being a good parent, being caring and compassionate, and putting one’s family before anything else. Nearly three-quarters or more say each of these traits is very important to being a good spouse or partner.

Next comes being a good sexual partner; nearly half of Americans (48%) think this is a very important quality for a good partner, be it a husband or a wife.

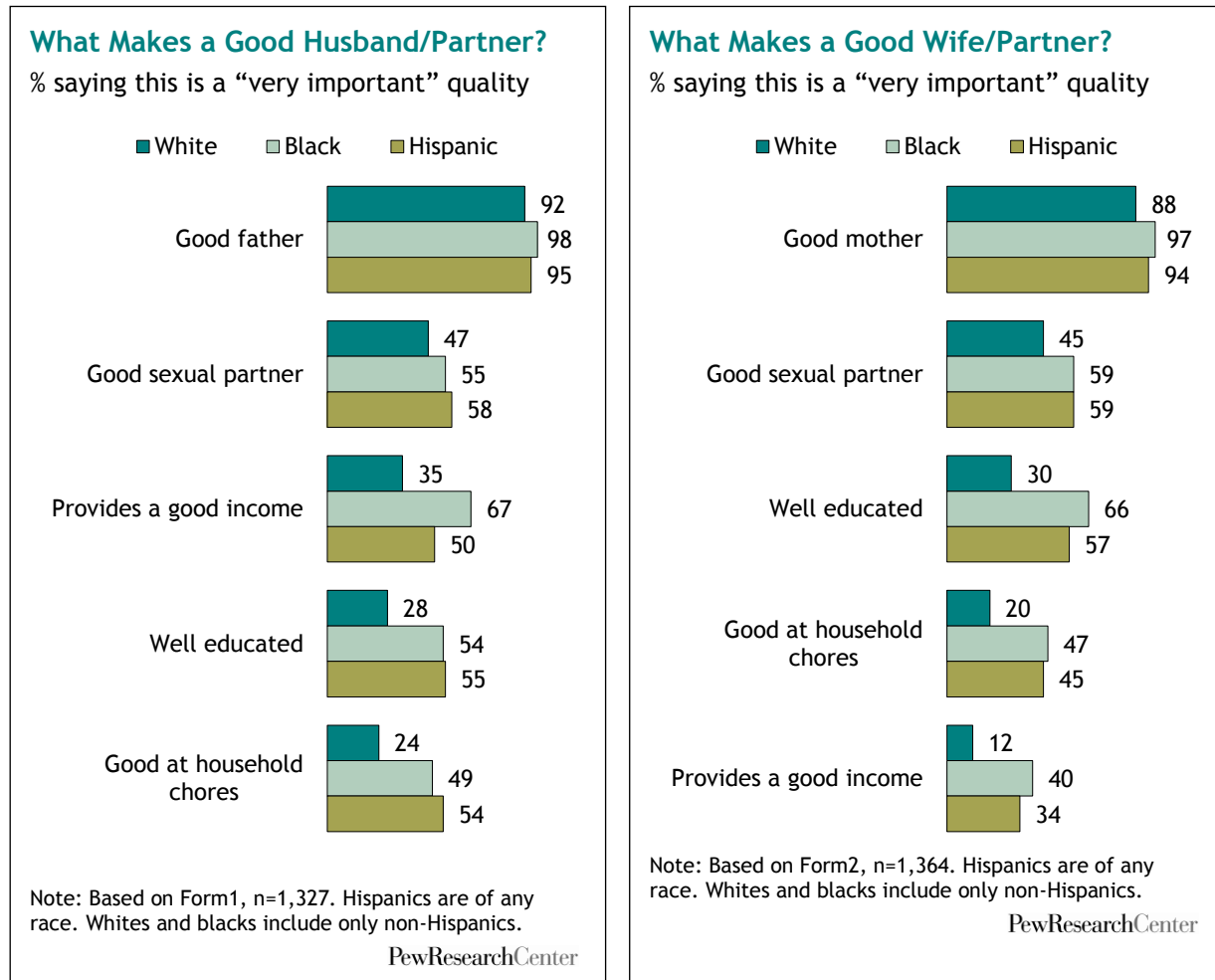
The public has very different evaluations for husbands and wives when it comes to providing a good income. About four-in-ten adults (41%) think this is a very important quality for a good husband or partner, compared with less than half that share (19%) who think this quality is very important for a good wife.

Of all the traits tested, being good at household chores ranks among the lowest in importance. Only about three-in-ten respondents say this is very important for a man (32%) or a woman (28%).



Men and women largely agree on the most important qualities in a spouse, be it male or female. But there are significant differences by race.

On most of the traits tested, blacks and Hispanics are more disposed than whites to say the characteristic is “very



important.” On several traits, these differences are substantial. For example, blacks and Hispanics are roughly twice as likely as whites to say it is very important that a spouse (be it a man or a woman) be well educated, be good at household chores and provide a good income (at least for a woman). Minorities are also more inclined than whites to say it is very important that a spouse be a good sexual partner, and blacks are slightly more likely to say it is very important for a spouse to be a good parent.

Education matters somewhat in people’s views about what makes a good partner, although its impact is different depending on whether the spouse is a husband or a wife. Those with a high school education or less are more likely than college graduates to view “provides a good income” (51% vs. 28%) and “good at household chores” (42% vs. 22%) as very important for a good husband. On the list of qualities for a good wife, people with less education are more likely than others to say it is important that she put her family before anything else, be good at household chores and provide a good income.

Love and Marriage

Love is the leading reason people cite for getting married—and this is true both among those who are married (93% say it is very important) and those who aren't (84% say the same).

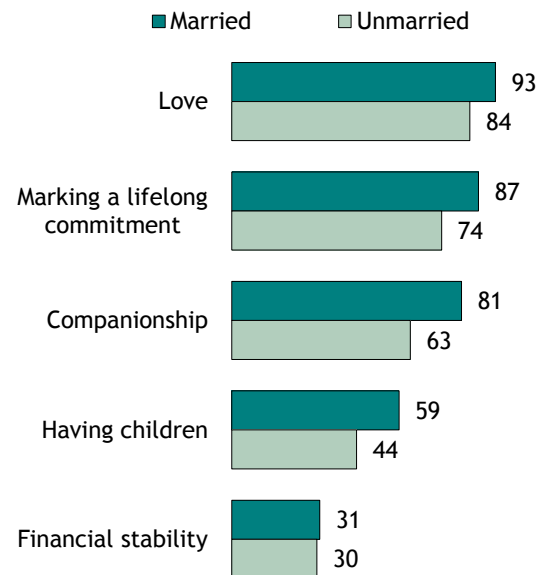
A majority of the public also considers several other traits to be very important, but when respondents who answered “very important” to more than one trait were asked to state the most important reason for marriage, a majority (54%) said love, followed by making a lifelong commitment (21%), companionship (11%), having children (5%) and financial stability (2%).

There are differences by income, education, race, gender and family status in many of these evaluations. For example, people with less education and lower income are more likely to view “financial stability” as a very important reason for getting married or being married. About four-in-ten people (38%) with a high school education or less say financial stability is very important, compared with 21% of college graduates and 29% of those with some college education. Similarly, 41% of those whose family income is less than \$30,000 a year say that financial stability is very important, compared with 32% of whose family income is between \$30,000 and \$49,999, and about one-quarter of those whose family income is \$50,000 a year or higher.

Race and ethnicity also play a role in what people value in a marriage. Whites and Hispanics are somewhat more likely than blacks to say love is a very important reason to get married. Hispanics are more likely than the other two groups to say that having children is very important (62% vs. 51%). And while half of blacks and 46% of Hispanics say that financial stability is a very

Why Get Married? By Marital Status

% saying this is a “very important” reason

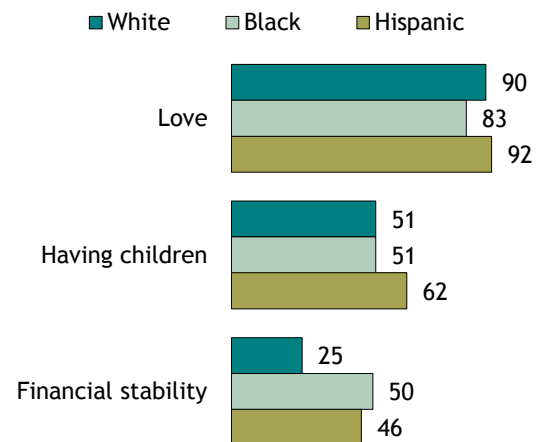


Note: Asked of married and unmarried separately, n=1,306 for married and 1,385 for unmarried.

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Why Marry? Some Racial/Ethnic Differences

% saying this is a “very important” reason



Note: Based on combined responses from both married and unmarried. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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important reason to marry, only a quarter of whites say the same.

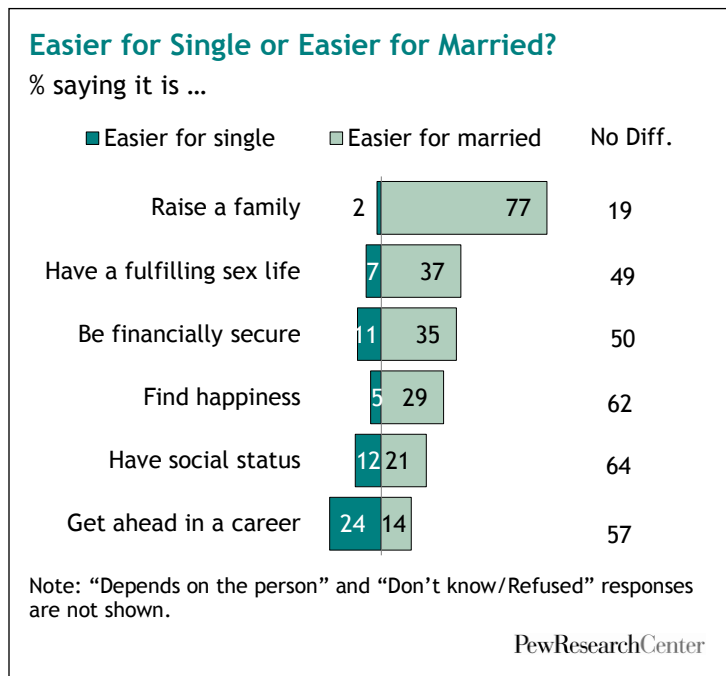
Among the currently unmarried, those who are divorced or separated put more emphasis on “making a lifelong commitment” and “financial stability” than do singles or those who live with a partner. Eight-in-ten divorcees think making a lifelong commitment is a very important reason to get married, compared with about seven-in-ten in the other two groups. In addition, nearly four-in-ten divorcees (37%) view financial stability as a very important reason for getting married, compared with 22% of those who live with a partner and 27% of singles.

Men and women differ only slightly in these evaluations. Men are somewhat more likely than women to view companionship as very important to marriage (76% vs. 69%). They are also more likely than women to say that financial stability is a very important reason to get married (34% vs. 28%).

Married or Single—Which Is Better?

A majority of the public thinks that in many realms of life, it doesn't make any difference if a person is married or single. About six-in-ten say this about having social status (64%), finding happiness (62%) and getting ahead in a career (57%). About half of the public thinks that it doesn't make a difference to being financially secure (50%) or having a fulfilling sex life (49%). The one area where the public finds a big difference is raising a family: 77% think it is easier for a married person to raise a family, while just 2% say it is easier for a single person to do so, and 19% say it doesn't make a difference.

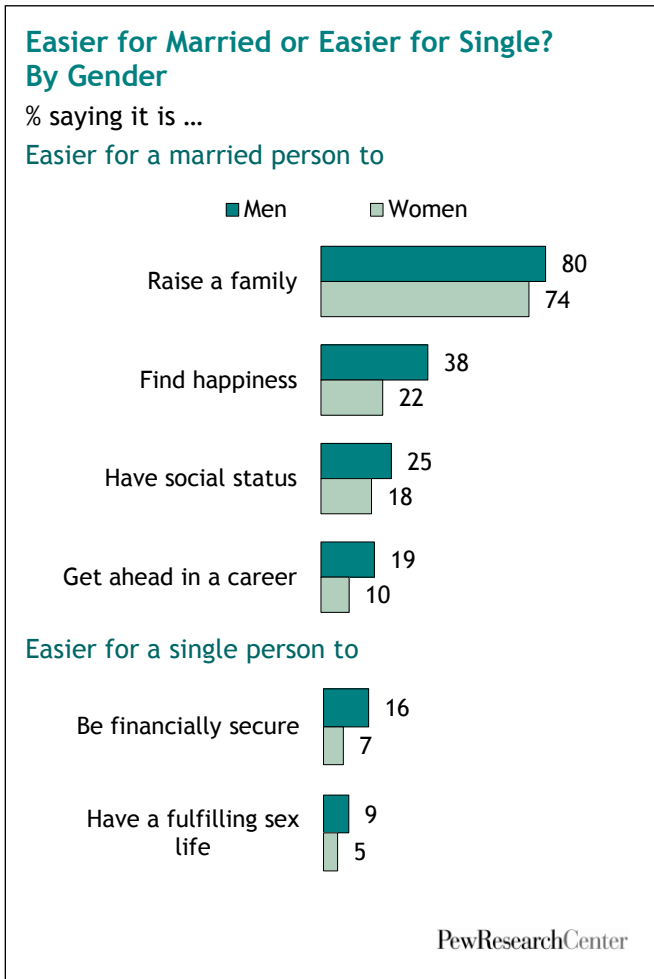
Among the minority who say marital status *does* make a difference, most think being married is preferable for all realms, except for getting ahead in a career. On this question, people say being single is preferable, 24% to 14%.



There are some gender differences in views on these questions. Men are much more likely than women to say that it is easier for a married person to find happiness (38% vs. 22%). Men are also more likely than women to say it is easier for a married person to raise a family (80% vs. 74%), have social status (25% vs. 18%) and get ahead in a career (19% vs. 10%).

Men are also more likely than women to say that it is easier for a single person to be financially secure (16% vs. 7%) and have a fulfilling sex life (9% vs. 5%). Note that except for raising a family, the differences cited here are based on the views held by a minority of each gender. The majority of both men and women say there is no difference between being married or single in most of the realms tested.

Marital experience also makes a difference in these judgments. People who are currently married or who have ever been married say it is easier for a married person in five of the six realms tested.

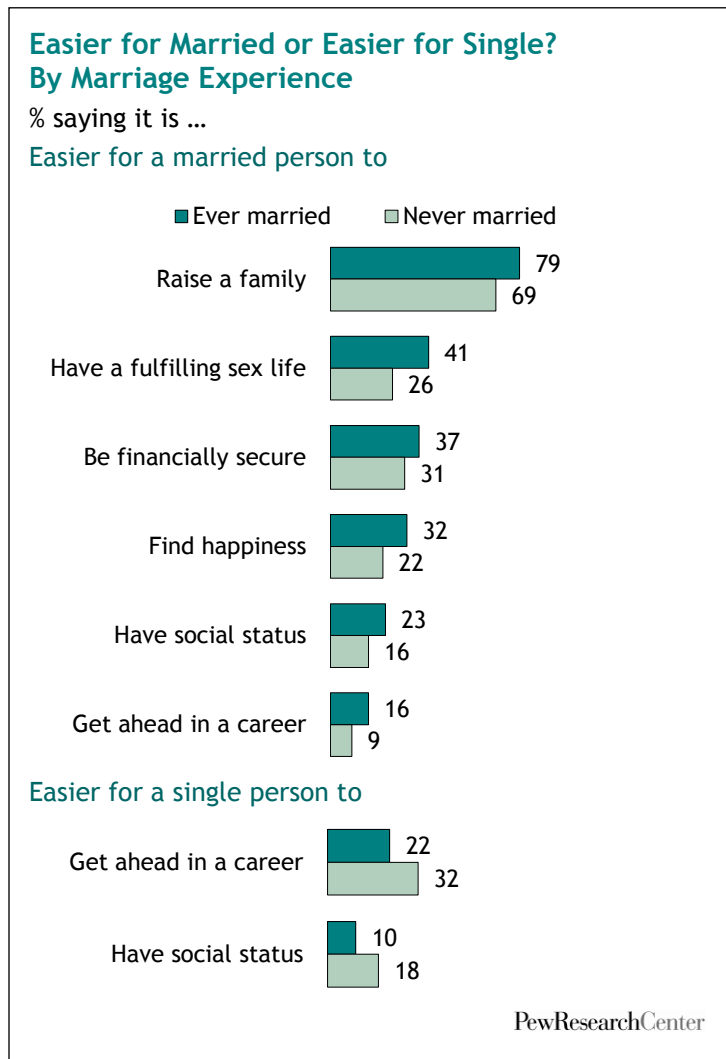


Adults who have never been married say being single is preferable to being married when it comes to getting ahead in a career (32% vs. 9%). Other differences are minimal. In fact, the never married are more likely than the ever married to say that marital status makes no difference to having a fulfilling sexual life (57% vs. 47%) or to finding happiness (69% vs. 59%). They are also more likely than the ever married to say being single or married doesn't make a difference in raising a family (27% vs. 16%).

Race Some 82% of whites say it is easier for a married person to raise a family, compared with 64% of blacks and 68% of Hispanics. The two minority groups are more likely than whites to say that when it comes to raising a family, it doesn't matter if you are single or married.

Whites are more inclined than blacks to say it is easier for a married person to be financially secure (37% vs. 30%), find happiness (32% vs. 21%) and have social status (23% vs. 16%). Though the shares are small, more blacks than whites say it is easier for a single person to find happiness (10% vs. 3%) and have social status (15% vs. 9%). Hispanics are the most likely of any racial or ethnic group to say it is easier for a single person to be financially secure (18%), compared with 9% of whites and 11% of blacks.

Age The advantages of being married versus being single are viewed somewhat differently by people of different ages, especially in three areas: getting ahead in a career, having social status and having a fulfilling sex life. Younger people are more likely to say these aspirations are easier to fulfill for a single person, while older people are more likely to say it is easier for a married person to achieve these goals. For example, about one-third of 18- to 29-year-olds (34%) say it is easier for a single person to get ahead in a career, while just 13% of those ages 65 and older agree.



To Marry or Not to Marry?

Among all currently unmarried adults, about half (46%) want to get married, 29% are not sure and 25% don't want to marry.

But these shares change markedly depending on the circumstances of the unmarried. The desire to marry is much more prevalent among those who are single (58%) and those who are living with a partner (64%) than it is among those who are divorced²² (29%) or widowed (8%).

| Do You Want to Get Married? | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------|---------|------------------|
| % of unmarried saying ... | | | | |
| | All | Living w/partner | Single | Divorced/Widowed |
| Want to marry | 46 | 64 | 58 | 22 |
| Don't want to marry | 25 | 16 | 12 | 46 |
| Not sure if want to marry | 29 | 19 | 29 | 32 |
| DK/Refused (VOL.) | 1 | 1 | * | 1 |
| | (n=1,302) | (n=206) | (n=631) | (n=465) |

Having children makes a difference, too. Unmarried adults who do not have children are more likely than those who have children to say they want to get married (58% vs. 35%). There are also differences among unmarried parents: Only 27% of divorced parents want to get married, compared with nearly six-in-ten of cohabiting parents and 56% of single (never-married) parents.

Regardless of whether they are divorced or widowed, men are more likely than women to say that they want to get married again. About one-third (32%) of divorced or widowed men say this, twice the share of their female counterparts (16%).

The youngest generation has the strongest desire to marry, a reflection of their stage in the life cycle. About seven-in-ten (69%) unmarried 18- to 29-year-olds say that they want to get married, compared with 44% of those who are ages 30 to 49, 31% of those who are 50 to 64 and 6% of those who are 65 or older. There are no significant gender differences in marriage intention among the Millennial generation (18- to 29-year-olds).

Geographic region matters to marriage intention. The unmarried (never married or cohabiters) living in the South are most likely to say they want to get married (71%), compared with people who live in the East (49%), the West (53%) and the Midwest (60%).

After the End of a Marriage, More Men than Women Want to Try Again

% saying...

■ Want to marry □ Don't want to marry □ Not sure



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

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²² Excludes those who are separated in this case.

How Close Are Today's Marriages?

Human beings have been known on occasion to view the past through rose-colored glasses. But this survey found no tendencies of that sort when respondents were asked to compare their own relationship with that of their parents.

About half (51%) of all respondents who are married or cohabiting with a partner say their relationship is closer than that of their parents, while 43% say it is about the same and only 5% say it is less close.

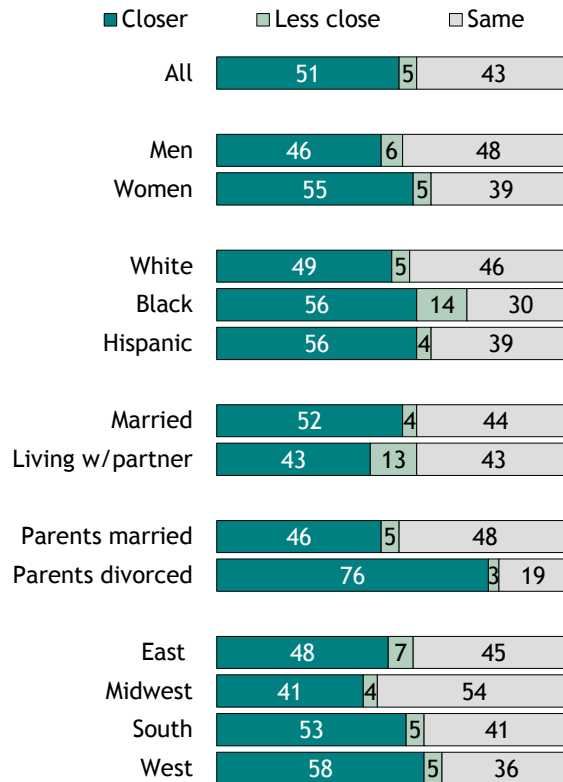
Married respondents compare their relationship somewhat more favorably with that of their parents (52% closer; 4% less close) than do cohabiting respondents (43% closer; 13% less close).

Not surprisingly, even bigger differences emerge when controlling for the marital and divorce history of respondents' parents. Among married or cohabiting respondents whose parents divorced, fully 76% say their relationship is closer than their parents'. Among these same respondents whose parents were married, just 46% say their relationship is closer.

More women than men (55% vs. 46%) describe their marital or cohabiting relationship as closer than that of their parents.

Is Your Marriage Closer than Your Parents'?

% saying it is ...



Note: Based on those who are married or living with a partner, n=1,512. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

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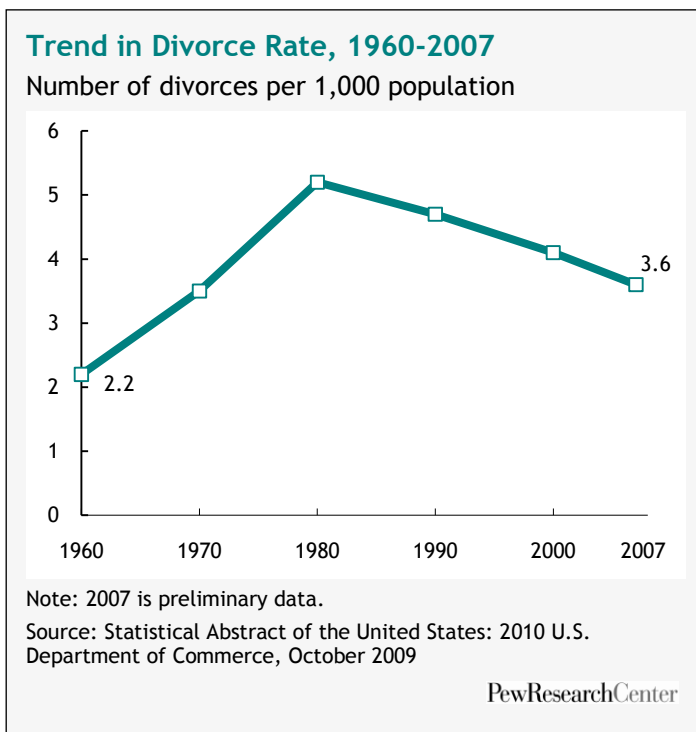
Divorce

The declining share of Americans who are currently married is fueled in large part by two big trends: the rise in the median age of first marriage and the increased prevalence of divorce. While the spike in divorce is commonly associated with the turbulent decades of the 1960s and 1970s, divorce rates in this country rose more or less steadily from 1860 to 1950. This trend was reversed only temporarily during the 1950s. Then after 1960, divorce rates rose sharply.²³ The divorce rate peaked in 1979 and has declined since that time.

The reasons for the sharp increase in the divorce rate in the 1960s and 1970s have been the source of great debate. Some scholars attribute it, at least in part, to the changing role of women (including women's participation in the labor force), the sexual revolution and the rise of no fault divorces.²⁴

There are various ways of measuring the rate of divorce. One standard approach is to look at the number of divorces per 1,000 people. Using this measure, some of the falloff in divorce from 1980 to the present reflects the simultaneous decline in marriage. Another way to look at divorce is as a share of marriages. And yet another way is to look at the likelihood of divorce by age cohort. Using either of these measures, we see an increase in the rate of divorce beginning in 1960 and a decline in the number of divorces from 1980 onward.

Divorce is never a happy option, but most Americans believe it is sometimes the only answer. In a 2007 Pew Research Center survey, 58% of the public said divorce is preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage; 38% said divorce should be avoided except in extreme situations. An even bigger majority said divorce is sometimes the best solution when children are involved. Two-thirds (67%) said in a marriage where the parents are very unhappy with each other, the children are better off if their parents get divorced. Only 19% said the children are better off if the parents stay together.



²³ See Andrew Cherlin, *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

²⁴ See Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, "Marriage and Divorce: Changes and their Driving Forces." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 21, No. 2, Spring 2007.

Only One True Love?

Throughout human history, romantics, poets, balladeers and songwriters have celebrated the idea that there's just one true love for every living soul. Do everyday Americans agree?

Well, 28% do. But 69% do not.

Views about one true love do not correlate with marital status or with age.

However, men (31%) are a bit more likely than women (26%) to say that every person has only one true love; and Hispanics (47%) and blacks (32%) are more likely than whites (24%) to feel this way.

Education matters, too: those with a college degree are only half as likely as those with a high school diploma or less to say everyone has just one true love (19% vs. 37%).

Conservatives (32%) are more likely to say this than moderates (24%). Catholics (38%) are more likely than Protestants (30%) or those who are unaffiliated (17%) to say they believe in just one true love.

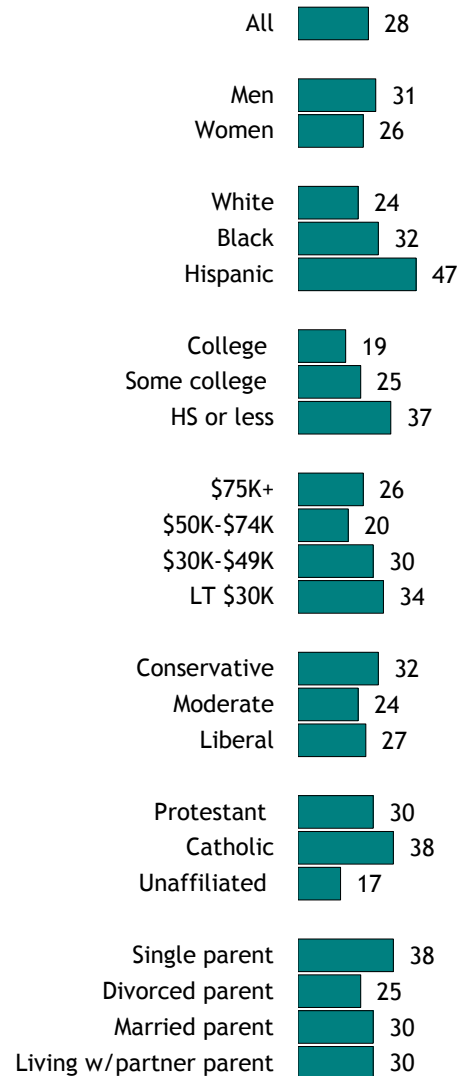
The Pew Research survey posed a follow-up question to the respondents who say they believe in just one true love: "And have you found yours, or not?" Nearly eight-in-ten (79%) say they have. These responses correlate both with age and marriage.

Among those who say there's only one true love for each person, about half of 18- to 29-year-olds say they've found theirs (54%), compared with nine-in-ten adults ages 50 and older.

Meantime, fully 96% of married adults who believe in only one true love say they've found theirs, compared with 61% of all unmarried adults and 79% of cohabiters.

Only One True Love for Each Person?

% who agree



Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Section 3: Family

What defines a family? The portrait of the American family circa 2010 starts where it always has—with mom, pop and the kids. But the family album now also includes other ensembles. For example, most Americans say a single parent raising a child is a family. They also say that parents don't have to be married to be a family, nor do they have to be of the opposite sex.

In an effort to explore these definitional boundaries, the Pew Research survey asked respondents whether they considered each of the following seven living arrangements to be a family: a married couple raising one or more children; a married couple with no children; a single parent raising at least one child; an unmarried man and woman raising at least one child; a gay or lesbian couple with children; a same-sex couple without children; and an unmarried, childless man and woman who are living together.

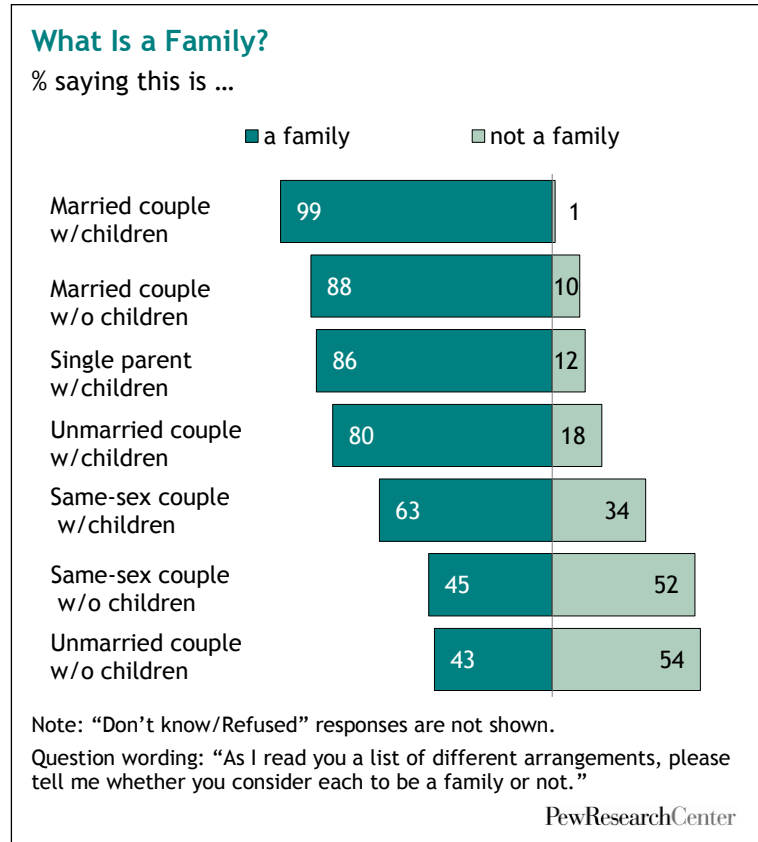
Virtually all respondents (99%) agree that a married couple with children fit in their definition of family.

But other living arrangements have joined the traditional family unit in the

public's conception of a family. Nearly nine-in-ten Americans (88%) say a childless married couple is a family, and nearly as many say a single parent raising at least one child (86%) and an unmarried couple with children (80%) are families. A smaller majority say a gay or lesbian couple raising at least one child is a family (63%).

The public is less willing to say same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples without children are full-fledged families. More than four-in-ten say a gay or lesbian couple living together without children is a family (45%), while a larger proportion (52%) disagrees. The public also tilts negative when asked if a man and woman who live together but don't have children are a "family": 43% say they are, but 54% say they are not.

The survey questionnaire explored the boundaries of family in another way—by asking people how obligated they would feel to help out various relatives in times of need. The responses line up in a predictable hierarchy: People feel much more obligated to help out (with financial assistance or caregiving) a parent or a grown child than a stepparent or half sibling. But despite these differences, the sense of obligation flows more readily to each of the relatives on the list than it does to "your best friend"—suggesting that even as family forms become more varied, family connections bind in ways that friendships do not.



Responses to other survey questions also attest to the overarching importance of family. Three-quarters of all adults say their family is the “most important” element in their lives, and an equal proportion say they are very satisfied with their home lives.

Nearly half of the public say their family life has turned out pretty much like they expected it would be. But almost as many (47%) say their home life has taken an unexpected turn. For some, this means a family life that is even better than they imagined. But for a larger share, their expectations have been undermined by divorce, the premature death of a spouse or other blows.

The remainder of this section will examine these questions in greater detail. Additional questions that measure other views on family life also will be reported and analyzed by family type and other relevant demographic characteristics.

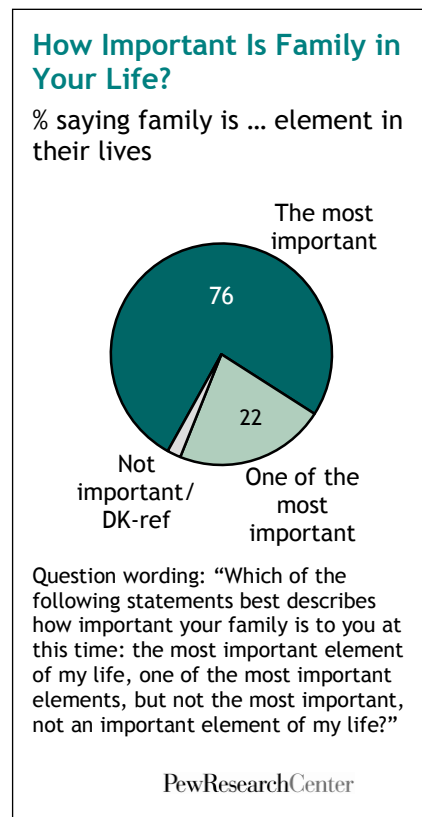
Demographic Differences in Definition of Family

Virtually every major demographic group agrees that a married couple with or without children falls within their definition of family. Demographic differences, particularly by age, begin to emerge when respondents are asked whether a single parent living with at least one child is a family. Even larger gaps open up when the subject turns to other less common living arrangements.

Different generations define families differently. The generation of Americans who came of age in the early 1950s watching Ozzie and Harriet on their black-and-white televisions—adults 65 and older—are consistently more likely to say that non-traditional living arrangements fall short of meeting their definition of family. Even those in the next-oldest generation of adults—those between the ages of 50 and 64, the bulk of the Baby Boom generation—are significantly more likely than this older group to see these arrangements as a family.

The difference between older adults and every other generation is most clearly seen when respondents are asked if a single parent raising a child is a family. Majorities of all age groups say this arrangement is a family. But while two-thirds of adults 65 and older say this arrangement is a family (68%), this share is less than the 88% of adults ages 18 to 29 and the 91% of adults ages 30 to 49 who feel the same way.

Double-digit differences between the views of older Americans and other age groups emerge on every other non-traditional family arrangement tested. The gap swells to 20 percentage points or more when respondents are asked whether same-sex couples raising at least one child are families.



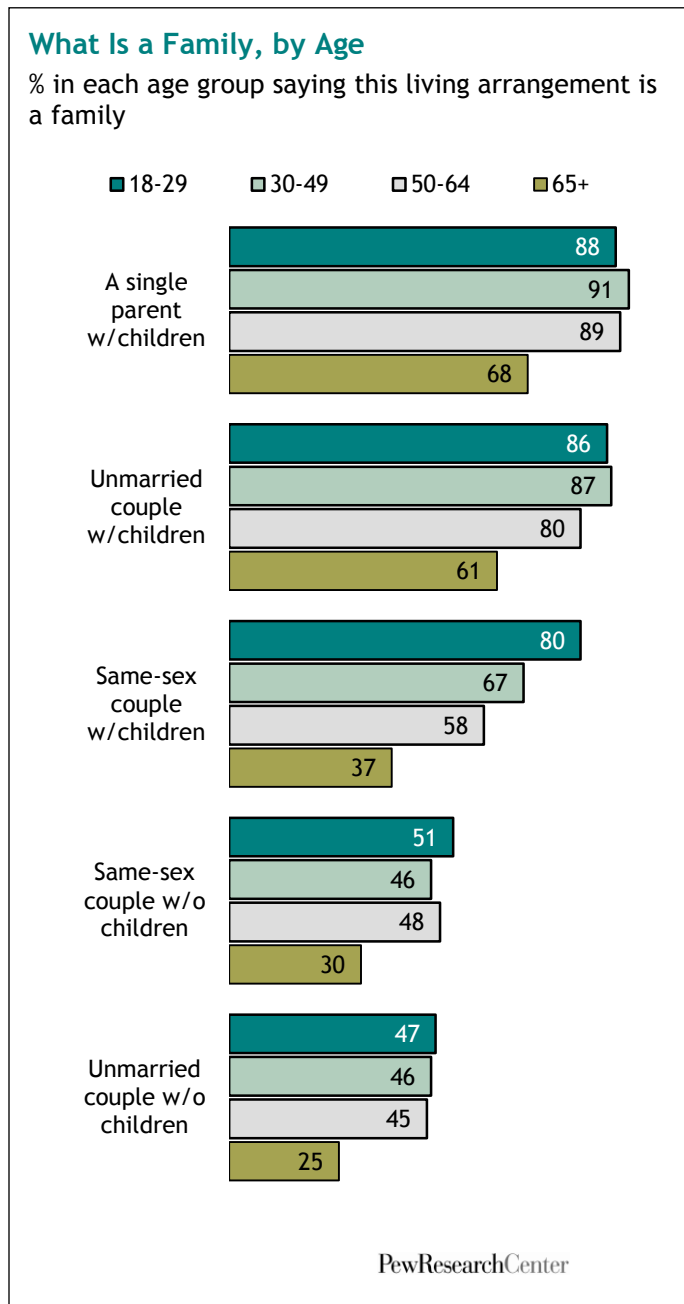
Fully eight-in-ten adults younger than 30 say a same-sex couple with children is a family, more than double the proportion of those 65 and older who share this view (80% vs. 37%). But views on this living arrangement also vary significantly between the other generations. Among those ages 30 to 49, two-thirds (67%) see a same-sex couple with children as a family, compared with 58% of all 50- to 64-year-olds.

Demographic Differences on Other New Family Arrangements

Differences between other demographic groups also emerge when the focus turns to the three living arrangements tested in the survey that are the least likely to be considered a family: same-sex couples with and without children, and unmarried heterosexual couples with no children. These differences include:

Gender Men are significantly less likely than women to say same-sex living arrangements are families. Fewer than six-in-ten men (57%) but 70% of women say a gay or lesbian couple with children is a family. That gender gap opens to 14 percentage points when men and women are asked about same-sex couples without children (37% of men but 51% of women consider them to be families). The sexes do agree about unmarried couples without kids: 42% of men and 44% of women say they are families.

Race Blacks are less likely than whites or Hispanics to say that same-sex couples with children are families (58% for blacks vs. 65% for whites and Hispanics). At the same time, whites are the least likely of the three groups to say an unmarried couple with no children is a family (38% vs. 50% for blacks and 54% for Hispanics).



Education More educated adults are somewhat more accepting of same-sex couples as families than are those with less education. But those who have not earned a high school diploma—a group disproportionately composed of minorities—are more likely than college graduates to say an unmarried couple with no children is a family (52% vs. 43%).

Marital Status Married adults are significantly less likely than unmarried adults to say that a same-sex couple with children is a family (57% vs. 70%). They also disagree about whether a man and woman who live together and don't have children is a family (39% of all married people say yes, compared with 47% of all unmarried adults). But the two groups are equally divided when it comes to same-sex couples without children (43% of married people and 46% of those who are unmarried say they are a family).

Region Americans living in different regions of the country differ on what is a family. In the South, significantly fewer residents say same-sex couples with or without children are families. Still, a majority of residents in the South (56%) say gay or lesbian couples with children are families, compared with 73% in the West, 70% in the East and 60% in the Midwest. Midwesterners are the least likely to say unmarried couples without children are families (34% vs. 40% of southerners, 48% of western residents and 51% of easterners).

Politics, Religion and Definitions of Family

Political partisanship and ideology also are strongly correlated with definitions of what is a family. Religion—or more specifically, religiosity as measured by attendance at religious services—also plays a major role in shaping definitions of family.

According to the survey, Republicans, political conservatives and adults who attend religious services at least once a week are significantly less likely than Democrats, political moderates or liberals, and the less religiously observant to view same-sex or unmarried couples as families.

Different Groups, Different Definitions of Family

% in each demographic group saying this living arrangement is “a family”

| | Same-sex couple w/children % | Same-sex couple w/o children % | Unmarried couple w/o children % |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| All | 63 | 45 | 43 |
| Men | 57 | 37 | 42 |
| Women | 70 | 51 | 44 |
| White | 65 | 47 | 38 |
| Black | 58 | 39 | 50 |
| Hispanic | 65 | 37 | 54 |
| College grad | 72 | 53 | 43 |
| Some college | 62 | 47 | 37 |
| HS grad | 59 | 36 | 42 |
| Less than HS | 56 | 41 | 52 |
| Married | 57 | 43 | 39 |
| Unmarried | 70 | 46 | 47 |
| East | 70 | 58 | 51 |
| Midwest | 60 | 44 | 34 |
| South | 56 | 39 | 40 |
| West | 73 | 44 | 48 |
| Republican | 46 | 32 | 25 |
| Democrat | 73 | 56 | 54 |
| Independent | 69 | 43 | 47 |
| Conservative | 45 | 30 | 29 |
| Moderate | 76 | 53 | 47 |
| Liberal | 81 | 64 | 60 |
| Attendance at Religious Services | | | |
| Attend weekly+ | 46 | 31 | 32 |
| Monthly or less | 66 | 46 | 43 |
| Seldom/never | 80 | 59 | 55 |

Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Overall a majority of Democrats say each of the seven living arrangements fit their conception of a family while Republicans are more likely to say some types are not families. For example, a gap of 27 percentage points exists between the proportion of Republicans (46%) and Democrats (73%) who say a gay or lesbian couple raising at least one child is a family. Among independents, about seven-in-ten share this view. The gap is 34 points in the same direction when partisans are asked about childless same-sex couples and 29 points on unmarried couples with no children. Similarly large differences exist among political liberals, conservatives and moderates.

Even larger gaps emerge when the focus of the analysis switches to religion. More religious adults are less likely than the less observant to see each of the three non-traditional living arrangements as a family.

These differences are among the largest encountered in this survey. For example, slightly under half (46%) of adults who attend religious services at least once a week consider a same-sex couple raising a child to be a family, compared with 80% of those who seldom or never go to services.

The gap narrows when the focus turns to gay couples without children. Here about three-in-ten of the most religiously observant say this arrangement meets their definition of a family, compared with 59% of non-religious adults. A similar-sized gap emerges over unmarried couples without children (32% vs. 55%).

Smaller Political, Religious Differences in Views on Single-Parent Families

Smaller gaps arise in views about single parents raising one or more children. Political conservatives are less likely to say this arrangement is a family (80%) than are moderates or liberals (91% for liberals and 92% for moderates). However, there is virtually no difference between Republicans (88%), Democrats (87%) or independents (87%) on this question.

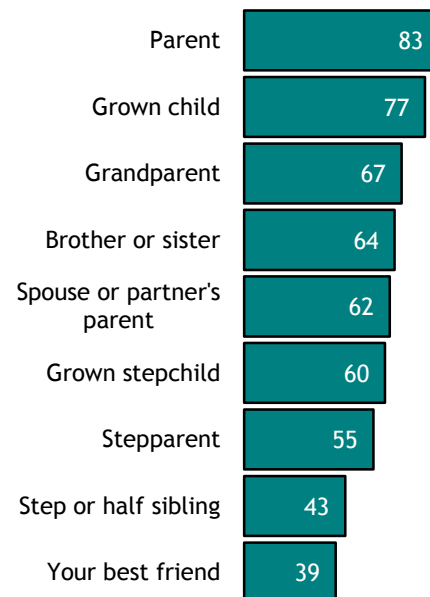
As with political orientation, views on whether a single parent raising a children is a family vary only slightly by religiosity. More than eight-in-ten adults who attend religious services at least once a week (82%) or monthly or less often (86%) say single-parent households are families. In contrast, nine-in-ten (92%) of those who rarely or never go to services say a single parent raising a child is a family.

Family Obligations

The biblical injunction to honor thy father and mother has not been lost on Americans. Mom and dad lead the list when respondents are asked which of eight relatives they feel they have a special obligation to help if that person

Ranking the Relatives

% who say they feel “very obligated” to provide needed financial assistance or caregiving to their ...



Question wording: “Suppose someone you know had a serious problem and needed either financial help or caregiving. How obligated would you feel to provide assistance if that person were your [NAME ON LIST]: Would you feel very obligated, somewhat obligated, not too obligated or not at all obligated?”
Note: Each survey respondent was asked only about relatives he or she has.

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needs financial assistance or caregiving. More than eight-in-ten Americans say they feel “very obligated” to help if their parents needed it. Grown children come next, with 77% feeling obligated to help them get over hard times, while smaller proportions feel a similar responsibility to assist their grandparents (67%), a sibling (64%) or the parent of a spouse or partner (62%). (No question was asked about minor children because it was assumed virtually all parents consider caring for them in times of need to be an obligation.)

Stepchildren, stepparents, and step or half siblings don’t fare quite so well. Parents are 17 percentage points more likely to feel obligated to a grown child than to a grown stepchild (77% vs. 60%). Similarly, adults are more inclined to help a parent than a stepparent (83% vs. 55%) or a brother or sister over a step or half sibling (64% vs. 43%).

Most demographic groups feel similar levels of obligation to each of the relatives tested in the survey. However, adults 65 and older are significantly less likely than other age groups to feel a special sense of obligation to provide financial assistance or caregiving to other family members, perhaps reflecting the fact they have relatively limited financial resources and, in some cases, are in diminished physical condition.

For example, half of all adults 65 and older say they feel obliged to assist a brother or sister. In contrast, three-quarters of adults younger than 30 feel they should help out a sibling, as do 67% of those ages 30 to 49 and 59% of all 50- to 64-year-olds. Similarly, these older adults feel somewhat less of a responsibility toward their grown children (68% for adults 65 and older but 81% for those ages 30 to 64).

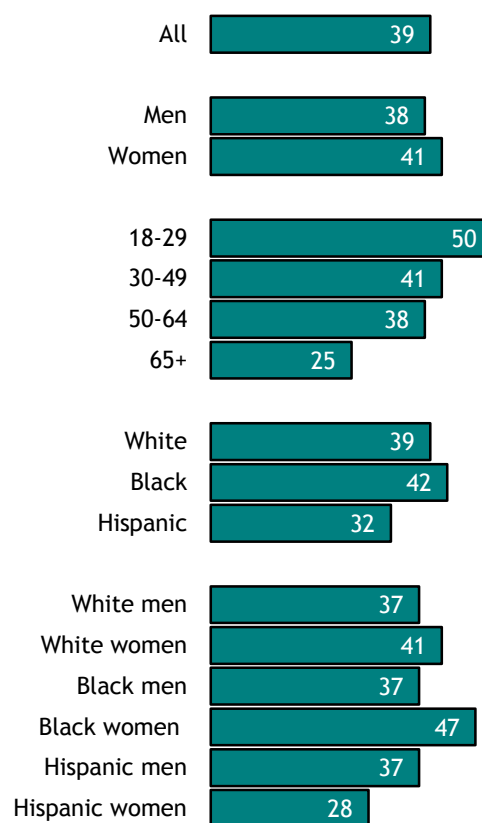
A deeper look inside these data suggests that the typical adult feels very obligated to about three of the relatives tested in the survey. Again, this number varied little by demographic group, with the one exception: Adults 65 or older feel obligations to about one fewer relative than do other adults (median of two obligations vs. three for other age groups).

Sorry, Buddy

Comparatively fewer (39%) feel a compelling need to help their best friend in times of crisis. In fact, best buddies finished at the bottom of the list of types of people that respondents felt “very obligated” to help—more evidence of the value that people place on relationships.

Demographics of Helping a Friend

% in each group who say they feel “very obligated” to provide needed assistance to their best friend



Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Young people and black women are especially likely to add their best friends to the list of people they would assist financially or to whom they would provide caregiving in a crisis. Half of all adults ages 18 to 29 say they feel very obligated to help their best friends, compared with 41% of 30- to 49-year olds, 38% of 50- to 64-year-olds and 25% of those 65 and older.

Nearly half of black women (47%) say they feel compelled to help out a best friend in distress, compared with 37% of black men. Latino women are the least likely to say they would help out their best friend; less than three-in-ten (28%) would, compared with 37% of Hispanic men. Among whites, the gender differences are virtually non-existent: 37% of white men and 41% of white women feel the need to assist their best friend.

Importance of Family

Ask Americans what is most important in their lives, and it's clear that families come first. Fully 76% of adults say that their family is the single most important element of their lives. It is a judgment that varies only moderately across most key demographic characteristics.

Young or old; male or female; married or unmarried; black, white or Hispanic—lopsided majorities of Americans say they are committed above all to their families. While politics and religiosity divide Americans on what constitutes a family, these differences vanish when they are asked to judge the importance of family life. Virtually identical proportions of Republicans (76%) and Democrats (74%) say their family is the most important thing in their lives, as do 74% of those who attend religious services at least once a week and 73% who seldom or never go.

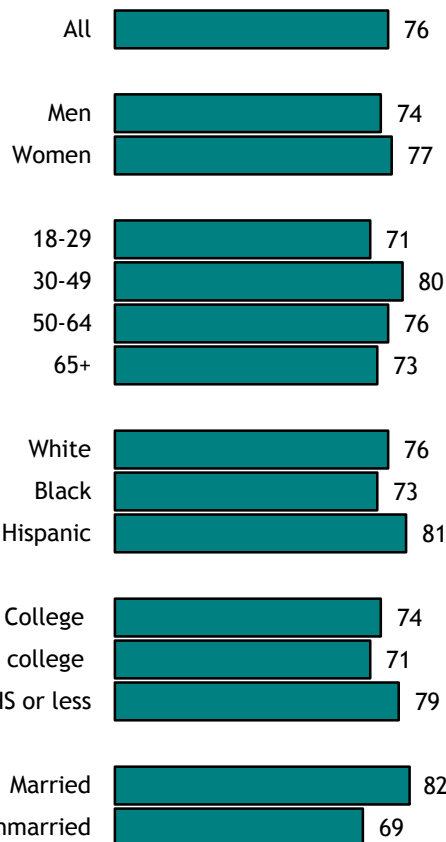
The few differences that do emerge are modest. Eight-in-ten adults ages 30 to 49 put a premium on their family life, compared with slightly more than seven-in-ten 18- to 29-year-olds (71%) or 73% of those 65 and older. That is hardly surprising, because it is in the decades between a person's 20s and later middle age that families are formed and mature.

Hispanics are somewhat likelier to place more value on their family life than are blacks (81% vs. 73%).

Hispanic women in particular place a premium on their family life; nearly nine-in-ten Latino women (87%), compared with 75% of Hispanic men, rate their families as most important.

Family First

% saying their family is "the most important element" of their lives



Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Less-educated adults also put a somewhat higher value on family life than do the more educated; eight-in-ten respondents with a high school diploma or less education but 74% of adults with a college degree say their families are the most important element in their lives.

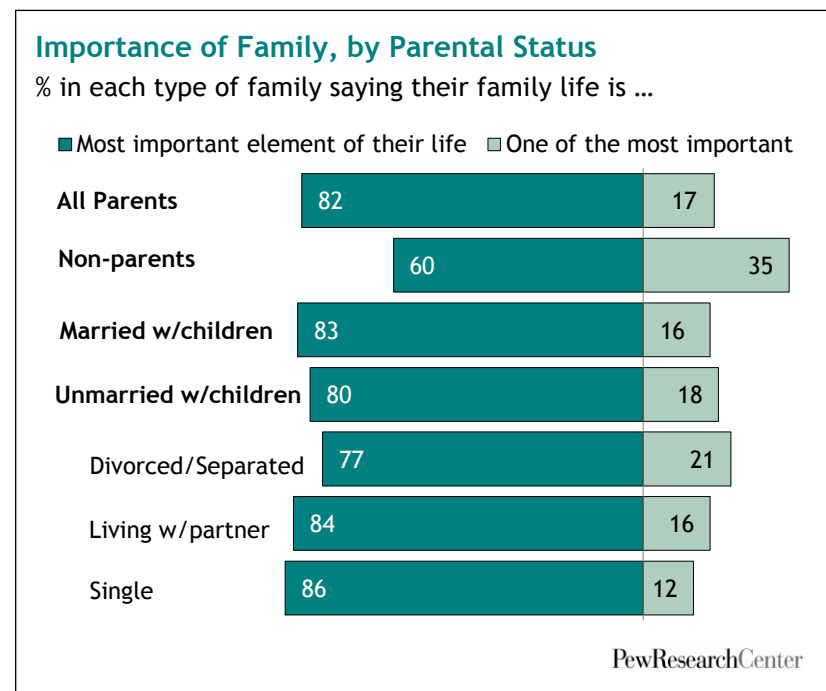
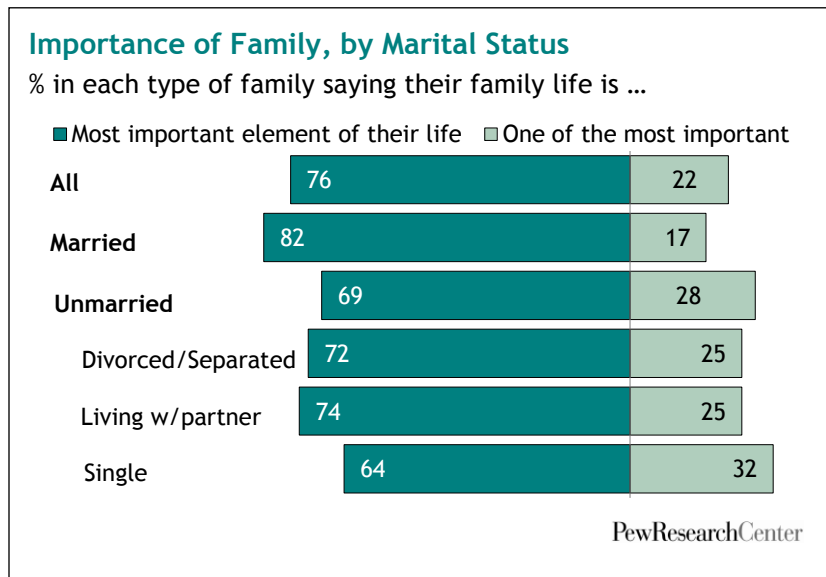
Family Types and the Importance of Family

Married adults place a higher value on family life than do unmarried adults (82% versus 69%), and this holds true whether the unmarried adult is divorced (72% of this group say family is the most important element of their life); single, never married (64%) or cohabiting with a partner (74%) say family is the most important element in their lives.

Parenthood is also correlated with the value people place on family. Some 82% of all parents say family

is the most important part of their lives, compared with 60% of adults who are not parents. Moreover, no matter what the family type, adults in families that include children place a higher value on family than do those in families without children.

Consider this example: Overall, unmarried adults are significantly less likely than married people to say their families are the most important thing in their lives (69% vs. 82%). But when the analysis is limited to adults with children, this large difference vanishes; 86% of single parents versus 83% of married parents say family is the most important thing in their lives. Also, the survey finds that nearly nine-in-ten (86%) single, never-married adults with children and 84% of single parents living with a partner say their family life is the most important element in their lives.



Satisfaction with Family Life

Most Americans are happy at home. Three-quarters of all adults say they are “very satisfied” with their family life, and an additional 19% say they are “somewhat satisfied” with their home lives, according to the survey.

With a few notable exceptions, these upbeat assessments of life on the home front are broadly shared across most major demographic groups. Roughly equal proportions of men (74%) and women (75%) say they are very satisfied with their family life. Three-quarters of young adults ages 18 to 29 are similarly pleased with their family life, a view shared by a similar proportion of adults 65 and older (75% and 77%, respectively).

Whites are somewhat more content with their home lives than are Hispanics (79% vs. 73% say they are “very satisfied”), and both groups express higher levels of family satisfaction than do blacks (64%).

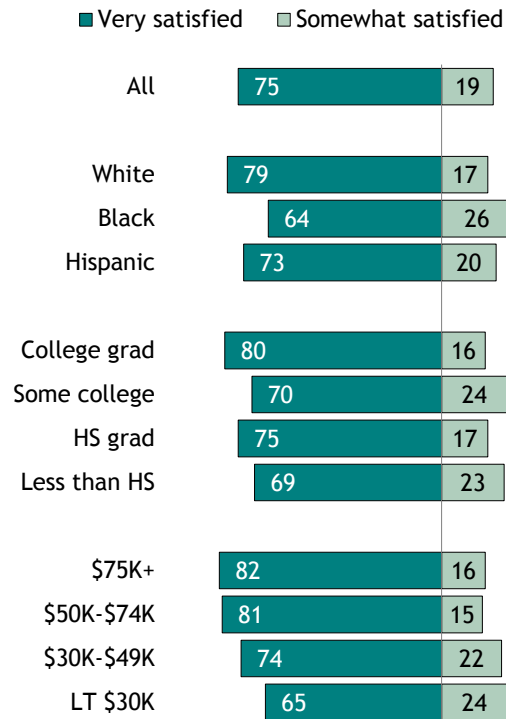
While money might not always buy personal happiness, it may make things easier at home. More than eight-in-ten adults with annual family

incomes of \$75,000 or more are very satisfied with their family lives, compared with 65% of those earning less than \$30,000. Similarly, those with a college degree are more satisfied than those who didn’t complete high school (80% vs. 69%).

Political partisanship and religiosity also are correlated with family satisfaction. Republicans are significantly more satisfied with their family lives than are Democrats (82% vs. 71%) or independents (74%). And adults who attend religious services at least once a week are more satisfied with their

Family Satisfaction, by Demographic Groups

% in each group who say they are ... with their family life

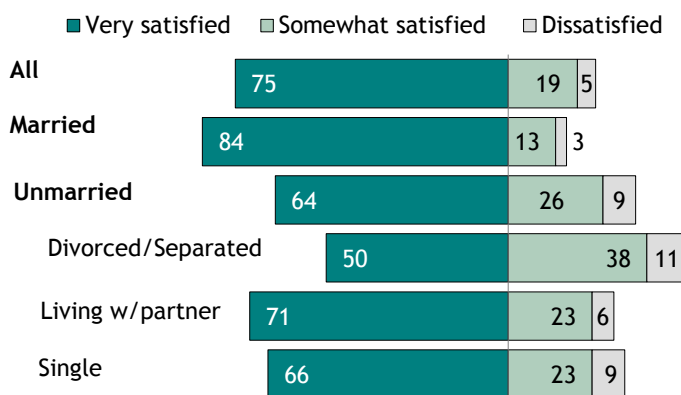


Note: “Dissatisfied” and “Don’t know/Refused” responses are not shown.

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Family Satisfaction, by Marital Status

% in each group who say they are ... with their family life



Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses are not shown.

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family life than are those who seldom or never attend services (79% vs. 71%).

Family Type and Family Satisfaction

Married adults express far more satisfaction with their current family situation than do those who are unmarried (84% vs. 64%).

Perhaps not surprisingly, the biggest satisfaction gap by family type is between married and divorced adults: 84% of all married men and women are “very satisfied” with their family life, compared with 50% of all divorced adults, 71% of those living with a partner and 66% of singles who have never married.

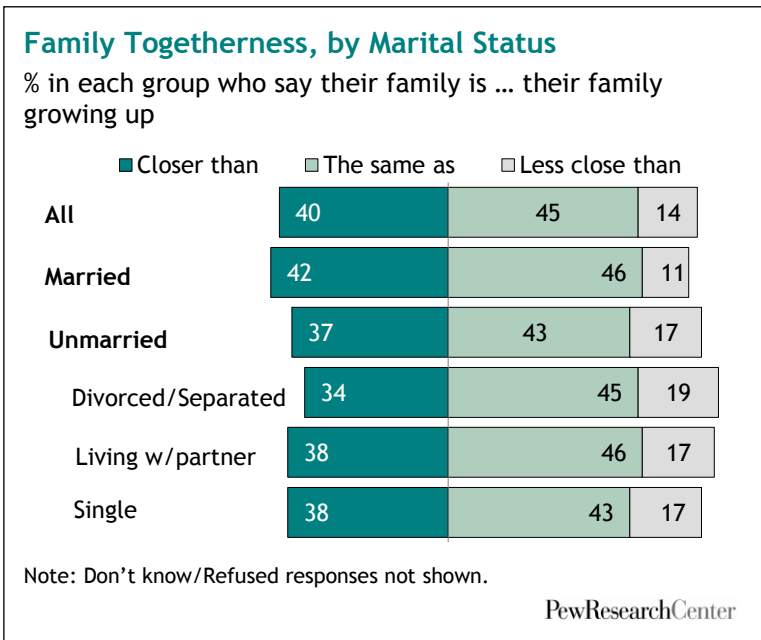
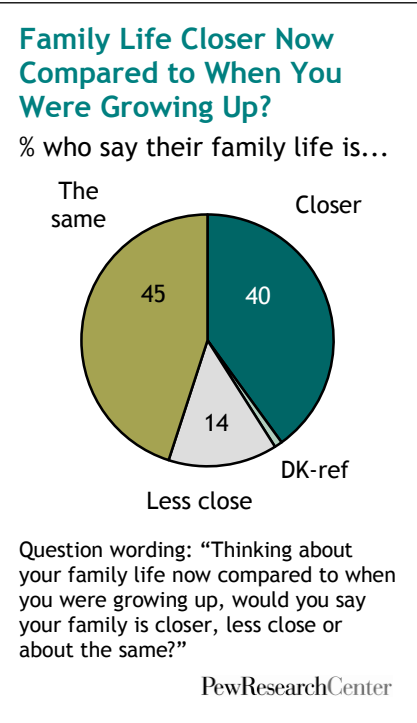
Family satisfaction is somewhat greater among parents than among adults who do not have children. For example, the survey found that 85% of married adults with children are very satisfied with their family lives, compared with 81% of married couples without children.

Togetherness and the Modern Family

An overwhelming majority of Americans say their families are at least as close now as their families were when they were growing up. Four-in-ten (40%) say their family life is closer than it was when they were young and 45% say their families are about as close as when they were growing up. Only 14% say they are less close.

This finding isn’t likely to produce an argument around the kitchen table: These judgments vary little by gender, age, education level, income, and race or ethnicity.

The responses do vary somewhat by marital status. Married adults are significantly more likely than those who are unmarried to say their family is closer now than their family was when they were growing up (42% vs. 37%). In particular, divorced adults are significantly less likely to say their families are closer (34%).



Expectations vs. the Realities of Family Life

Americans divide almost equally when asked whether their family lives have so far turned out the way they expected, views that are strongly shaped by their current marital status and, to a somewhat lesser degree, by whether or not they have children.

Nearly half (49%) of adults say their family life has turned about as they thought it would. But nearly as many (47%) say their family life has taken an unexpected turn. Only 4% say they had no expectations or did not know.

These views are highly correlated with the respondent's current family situation, so much so that most other demographic differences largely disappear when family type and parental status are factored into the analysis.

The survey findings generally suggest that most people expect to marry and anticipated that their marriage would survive until death did them part. About six-in-ten currently married adults say their family life is about as they anticipated it would be, while slightly more than a third say it is different.

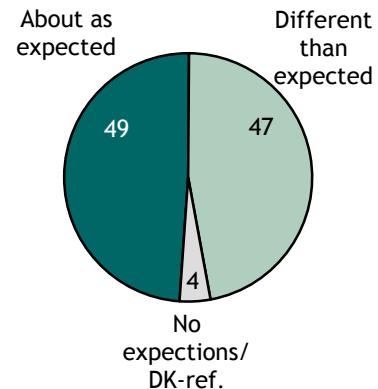
But among all unmarried adults, an equally large majority (58%) say their life has not worked out as they thought it would—including 78% of those who are currently divorced.

Views are more divided among those who are currently living with a partner. About four-in-ten (42%) say they have the family life they expected, while 54% say they do not.

The presence of children in a family complicates the picture. For single, never-married adults, a child clearly changes their lives in unanticipated ways. Among those who are not married, slightly more than half (53%) say their family life is pretty much as they anticipated it would be. But for single, never-married adults with a child, only 30% say their family life is what they expected it would be, and 69% say it is not.

Expectations vs. Reality of Family Life

% who say their family life so far has turned out ...

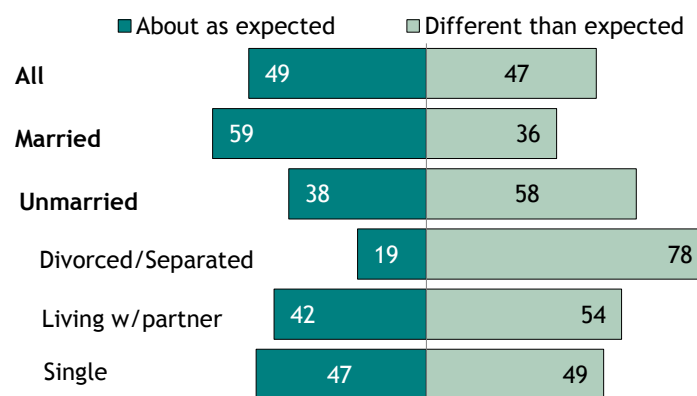


Question wording: "Thinking about your family life so far, would you say it has turned out about as you expected it would, or is it different than you expected it would be?"

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Expectations vs. Reality, by Marital Status

% in each type of family saying their family life is ...



Note: Don't know/Refused responses not shown.

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In contrast, children appear to make little difference for married couples: 58% with children say their family life is pretty much as they expected it to be, an assessment shared by 61% who do not have children.

How old you are or, more precisely, at what stage of life you find yourself, also plays a major role in shaping judgments about how your life has unfolded.

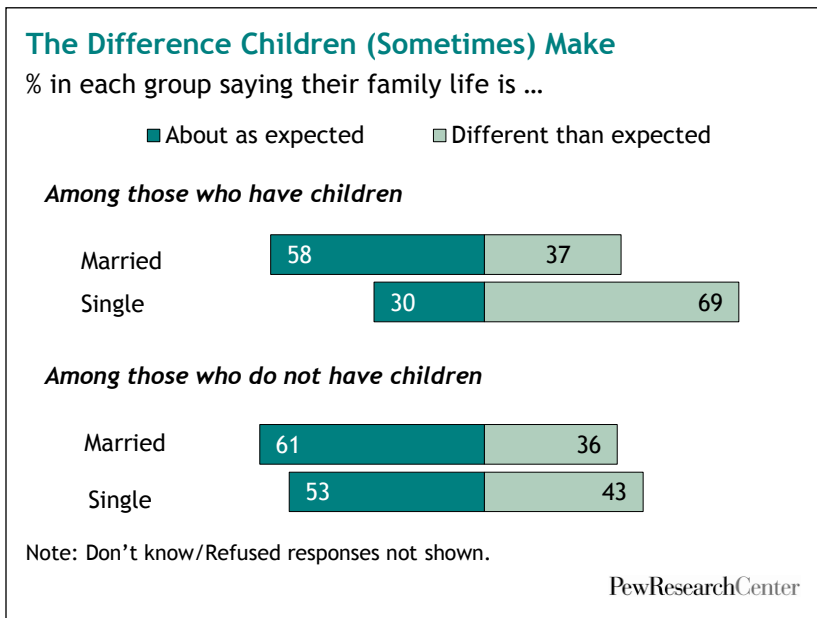
Overall, views on whether an individual's family life is going as expected vary little by age. About half of every age group say their family life has turned out pretty much as they had expected.

But this consistent picture changes when age and family type are analyzed together. Consider younger and older single people who have never been married. Overall, more than four-in-ten (45%) of this group say that their lives have turned out as expected. But the share rises to 49% among never-married singles younger than 40 and drops to 34% among those 40 and older.

A similar, though smaller, age pattern emerges among parents and adults who don't have children. More than half (54%) of adults younger than 40 without children say their life has turned out about as expected, compared with 48% of those 40 and older.

Dissecting "Difference"

Respondents who said their life was different were asked in an open-ended follow-up question to explain in their own words how it did not match their expectations. These verbatim statements were then classified into three groups: those that indicate the respondents' family life has exceeded their expectations; those that indicate their family life has not measured up to what they thought it would be; and those that are neutral or ambiguous.



Roughly one-in-ten say their family life is better than expected.²⁵ Some respondents seemed almost overjoyed by the way their family lives have unfolded. “Never thought I would be a full-time mom and I love it,” one 25-year-old volunteered. Most were less specific, saying their lives had “exceeded expectations” or “it’s great!” while 17 respondents responded with a single word: “better.”

About a third say their family life had fallen short of their expectations. Some respondents described heart-wrenching disruptions in their family life; roughly a third of these statements testified to the devastating impact of divorce, while others noted the painful changes that came with the early death of a spouse or child.

“I thought I would be married with kids. Now I’m divorced with no kids,” said a 39-year-old woman. “I lost three children, and that changed our whole life,” said a 49-year-old married woman.

Others hinted at problems in current family relationships. “We don’t have a lot of communication,” said one 61-year-old married woman. And from one: “[My] fiance is having an affair.”

Some reflect the disappointments that sometimes come with children. “My one son has a child and isn’t married to the lady he had it with. My daughter is divorced. My other son doesn’t have any children at all,” said a 71-year-old widowed man.

In Their Own Words

How their family life compares with expectations

It’s Worse

“No one gets married to get divorced; life throws you curveballs, and you make the best of it.”

— a 44-year-old divorced woman

“I guess it’s not the fairy tale I expected. I guess I didn’t expect to end up by myself.”

— a 72-year-old widowed woman

“Never expected my wife to turn into a dope head and get incarcerated and me get custody of a child.”

— a 33-year-old divorced man

“I’m divorced, my kids live with me and their mom, and I wish I would have known a lot of things back then and saved my marriage and had a marriage like my parents. I have a lot of regrets, other than my three boys.”

— a 44-year-old divorced man

“Being a single father makes it a long road for me.”

— a 34-year-old never-married man

It’s Better

“I love being a mom more than I expected and I love my family, and I have four dogs who bring joy to my life.”

— a 26-year-old married woman

“We find we have lots of good friends, good intellectual life, we travel whenever we like, [we are] very comfortable.”

— a 59-year-old married woman

“My relationship with my parents: They have been a lot more supportive than I expected. And that has been a pleasant surprise.”

— a 24-year-old never-married man

“I am satisfied with my life; I have a beautiful wife and am happily married; I am a graduate student and very happy because I try to avoid stress in my life.”

— a 55-year-old married man

“[It’s] better than I could have imagined.”

— a 63-year-old married woman

It’s Different

“It was when I was young I had an idea of what life would bring, and when I was an adult I had a stronger realization of what reality brings.”

— a 34-year-old married man

“I have my good times and my bad times. It’s life—I just make it work.”

— a 36-year-old married man

“It’s an adventure!”

— a 55-year-old married woman

²⁵ This small percentage should be kept in perspective: remember, it is based only on those who say their family life differed from what they had expected. These data suggest that most people take as a given that they will have a good family life. Among the 49% who say their family life matched their expectations, nearly nine-in-ten say they are “very satisfied” with their family life.

The remaining responses are neutral or are difficult to classify. Many unmarried or childless men and women simply said they expected to be married or have children, statements that could reflect current family status and not necessarily feelings of regret or anxiety.

And others marveled at the surprises life has brought them. “I never expected to have stepchildren,” said one 69-year-old married woman. “Everything is a surprise; life takes you many places,” said a 29-year-old married woman. “Not unhappy but just different” is the way a 47-year-old divorced woman summed it up.

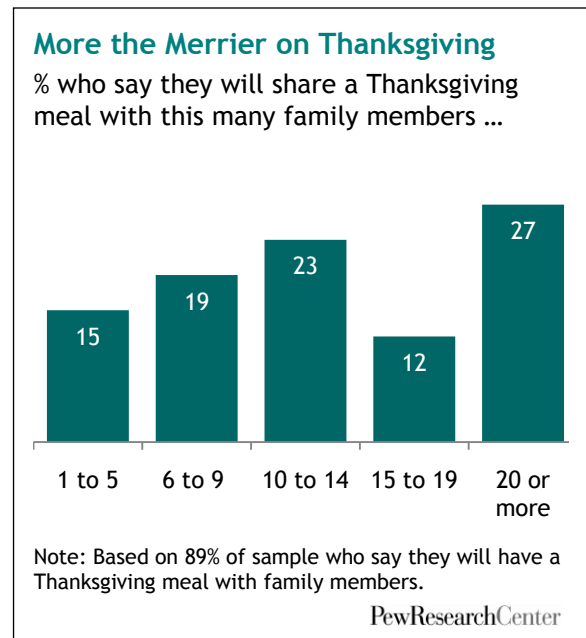
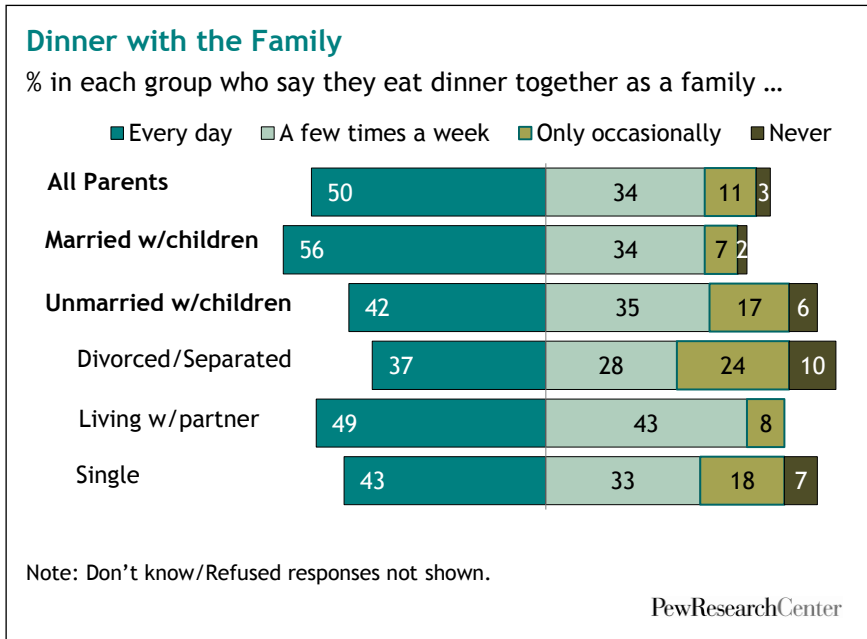
Dinnertime Is Family Time—Especially at Thanksgiving

Parents and children may be busier than ever, but they still make time to gather for a family dinner at least a few times a week. For half of all families with children younger than 18, the family dinner is a daily ritual. An additional 34% say their families eat together “a few times a week.” Only about one-in-seven (14%) say they rarely or never share a meal with their children.

Married parents with children are the most likely to say they eat together as a family every day. In contrast, slightly less than four-in-ten divorced parents (37%) and a slightly larger share of single parents (43%) have dinner with their children as often.

Many dinner tables are going to be crowded with relatives this Thanksgiving, the survey suggests. About nine-in-ten adults (89%) say they will be having a Thanksgiving meal with members of their family—and not just one or two.

Among those who will be sharing a drumstick with family, more than six-in-ten (62%) say that ten or more relatives will be at that Thanksgiving meal—and a quarter (27%) say there will be 20 or more. Overall, the typical host will be setting places for 12 family members, according to the survey.



Section 4: Children

Children in America are growing up in a much more diverse set of living arrangements than they did a half century ago. In 1960, nearly nine-in-ten children under age 18 resided with two married parents (87%); by 2008, that share had dropped to 64%.²⁶ Over the same period, the percentage of children born to unmarried women rose eightfold, from 5% to 41%. Far more children now live with divorced or never-married parents, and the number who live with cohabiting same-sex parents, while still relatively small, has grown over the past two decades.

Americans have embraced these demographic shifts, at least to some extent. Solid majorities say that a single parent, unmarried couple or same-sex couple with children fit their definition of a family, and few express concern about the growing variety in the types of living arrangements.

Yet the survey suggests a tension in people's views. Greater acceptance of the changing nature of the American family coexists with persistent concerns about the effect of non-traditional arrangements on children. More specifically, about six-in-ten (61%) adults believe that a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily; about seven-in-ten (69%), say it is bad for society that more single women are raising children without a male partner and majorities generally say that children in less traditional family arrangements face more challenges than their peers.

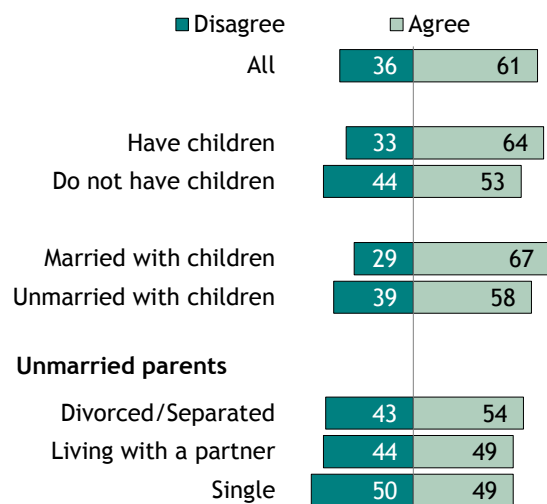
Views on most of these questions vary according to the family circumstances of the respondent. For example, 64% of parents agree that a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily, a view that is shared by just 53% of adults who do not have children.

Parents who are married are especially inclined to believe that a child needs a home with both a father and a mother; 67% say so, compared with 58% of unmarried parents. Among parents who are not married, 54% of those who are divorced or separated and 49% of those who are single or living with a partner agree that children need a home with a mother and a father to grow up happily.²⁷

Not surprisingly, the composition of the families in which respondents grew up is related to their views on this question. A narrow majority (53%) of those who say their parents were divorced or separated during most of the time they were growing up

What Is Best for Children?

% who disagree/agree that a child needs a home with both a mother and a father to grow up happily



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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²⁶ This includes children living with biological, adoptive, and stepparents.

²⁷ Throughout this section, references to divorced parents include those who are separated.

agrees that a child needs a home with both a mother and a father; 44% disagree. Of adults whose parents were married while they were growing up, 63% say children need a home with both parents; 34% say they do not.

Demographic Differences in Views of What Is Best for Children

Men are generally more traditional than women in their views of what is best for children. Two-thirds of men agree that a child needs a home with both a mother and a father to grow up happily; just 29% disagree. Among women, opinions are more evenly divided, with 54% saying this type of arrangement is essential and 42% saying it is not.

Opinions about what is best for children also vary somewhat across racial and ethnic lines. Hispanic and black respondents are the most traditional – 72% of Hispanics and 65% of African Americans say a child needs a home with both a mother and a father to grow up happily, compared with 57% of whites.

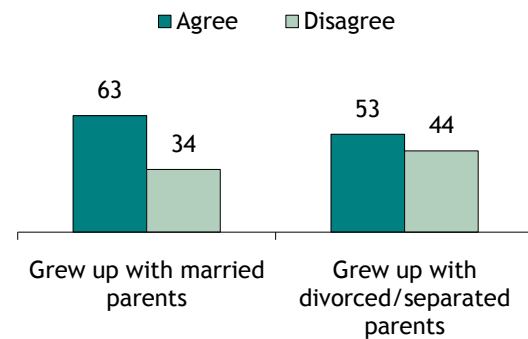
Racial and ethnic differences in opinions of whether a child needs a home with both a father and a mother are driven, at least in part, by the views of white women, who are nearly evenly divided in their opinion of what is best for children; 50% agree that children need a mother and a father, while 46% disagree. In contrast, clear majorities of white men (65%), black men and women (67% and 63%, respectively) and Hispanic men and women (77% and 68%) believe that children need a home with both parents to grow up happily.

Older respondents are also more likely than younger ones to say that children need a home with both a mother and a father. Three-quarters of those ages 65 or older share this opinion, compared with about six-in-ten of those between ages 50 and 64 (61%) and between ages 30 and 49 (58%) and a slim majority (53%) of those younger than 30.

College graduates are more likely than those without a college degree to be in a traditional household with a

Do Children Need a Home with a Mother and a Father?

% who disagree/agree that a child needs a home with both a mother and a father to grow up happily

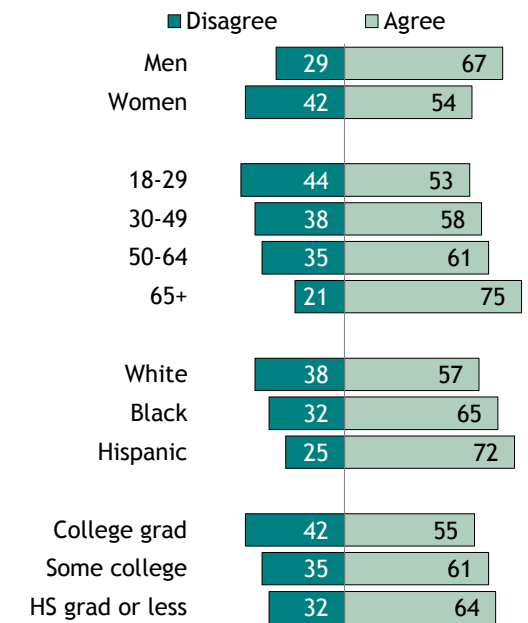


Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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Men, Minorities and the Elderly Among the More Traditional

% who disagree/agree that a child needs a home with both a mother and a father to grow up happily



Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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spouse and children. Nonetheless, college graduates are less likely than those without a college degree to embrace the traditional view of what is best for children. A 55% majority of those with a college degree agree that children need a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily, while 42% disagree. By comparison, those with a high school diploma or less are twice as likely to agree (64%) as they are to disagree (32%) that children need a home with both parents.

Societal Impact of Non-Traditional Arrangements

When asked about some specific trends involving children growing up in non-traditional households, Americans express the most concern about the rise in the number of single women having children without a male partner to help raise them. About seven-in-ten (69%) say it is bad for society that more single women are having children, while just 4% say this is good for society and 24% say it doesn't make much difference.

Americans are far less concerned about the fact that more unmarried couples and more gay and lesbian couples are raising children, although a substantial minority expresses concerns; 43% say each of these trends is bad for society, but about the same number (43% and 41%, respectively) say it is neither good nor bad. About one-in-ten say it is good that more unmarried couples (10%) and more same-sex couples (12%) are raising children. (These trends are analyzed in more detail in Section 5.)

Widespread Concern about Single Motherhood

% saying each of these trends is ...

■ Bad for society ■ Good for society ■ Doesn't matter



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

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Challenges for Children

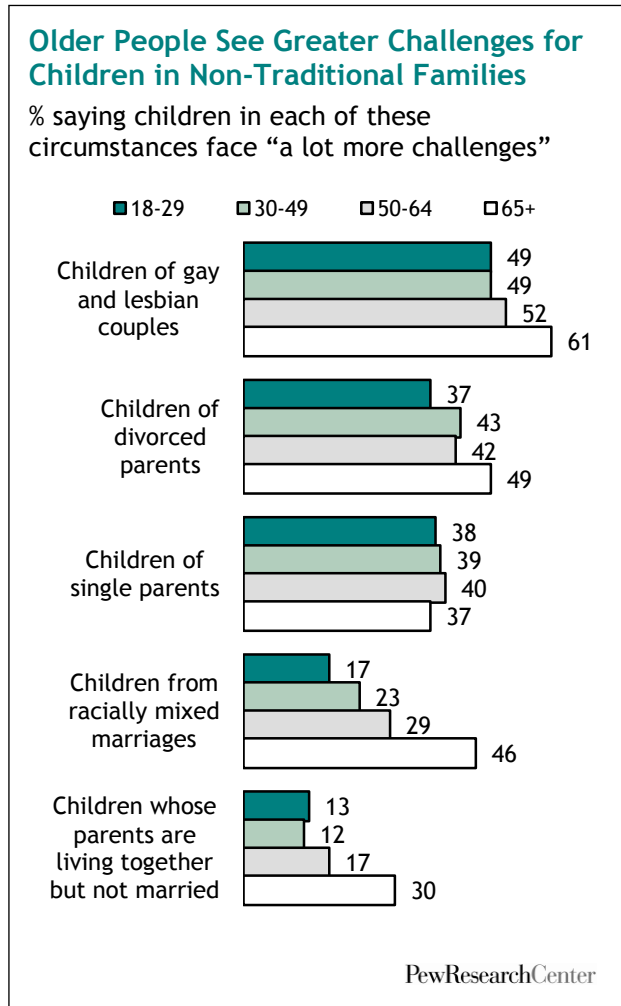
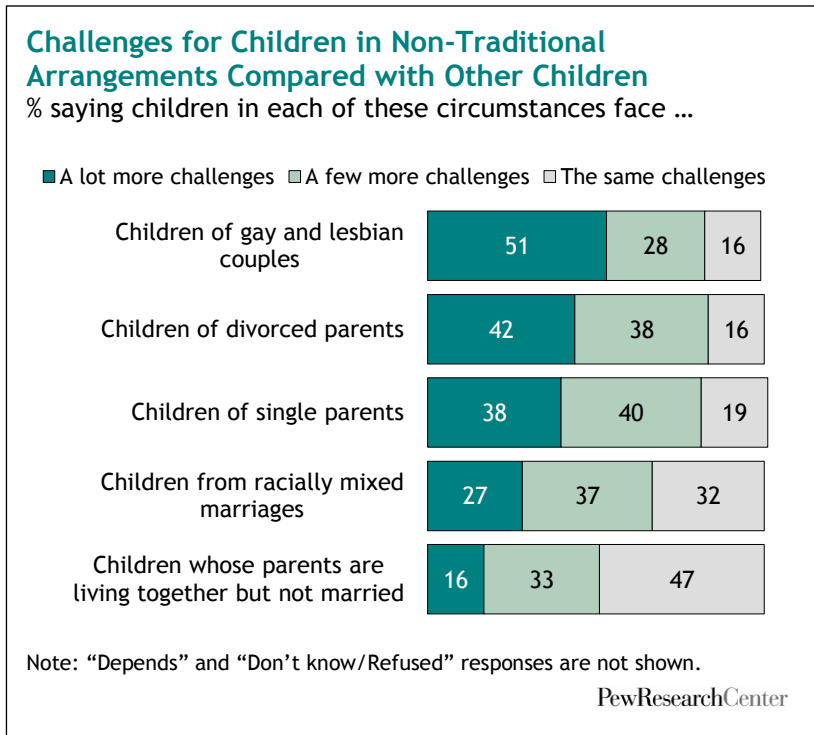
Most of the public believes that children who grow up in less traditional households face more challenges than other children. But not all the non-traditional settings are seen as equally challenging for kids.

Children raised by gay and lesbian couples are seen as facing the most challenges: about half the public (51%) say they face "a lot" more challenges than other children, and an additional 28% say they face "a few" more challenges. Next on the list are children of divorce – 42% say they face a lot more challenges than other children – followed by children of single parents (38% say they face a lot more challenges), children from racially mixed marriages (27%) and children whose parents are living together but not married (16%). Solid majorities say that children in nearly all of these circumstances face at least a few more challenges than other children.

When it comes to children whose parents are living together but not married, however, opinions about whether or not they face more obstacles than their peers are mixed. About half (49%) say children in this circumstance have “a lot more” (16%) or at least “a few more” (33%) challenges to overcome, while 47% say children of cohabiting parents have about the same number of challenges as other children.

For the most part, opinions about the challenges of children in non-traditional living arrangements do not vary significantly across demographic groups. However, people ages 65 and older are generally more inclined than younger people—especially those younger than 30—to say that children in certain circumstances face a lot more challenges than their peers. This is especially the case when it comes to the children of interracial couples; more than four-in-ten respondents who are 65 or older (46%) say children from racially mixed marriages have considerably more challenges, compared with 29% of those between ages 50 and 64, 23% of those ages 30 to 49 and just 17% of adults younger than 30.

Among parents of young children, those who are married are more likely than those who are not married to say the obstacles children of divorced couples and of single parents face are far greater than those of their peers. Nearly half of married parents with children younger than 18 say children who grow up with divorced parents (47%) or single parents (48%) have a lot more challenges; about one-third of unmarried parents of young children say that is the case.



Finally, the view that children of gay and lesbian parents have considerably more challenges than other children is tied to negative opinions about the impact same-sex parents have on society. Three-quarters of those who say it is bad for society that more gay and lesbian couples are raising children say children of same-sex couples face a lot more challenges than their peers; just 27% of those who say gay and lesbian parents have a positive impact and 34% of those who say it does not make much difference that more same-sex couples are raising children share this opinion.

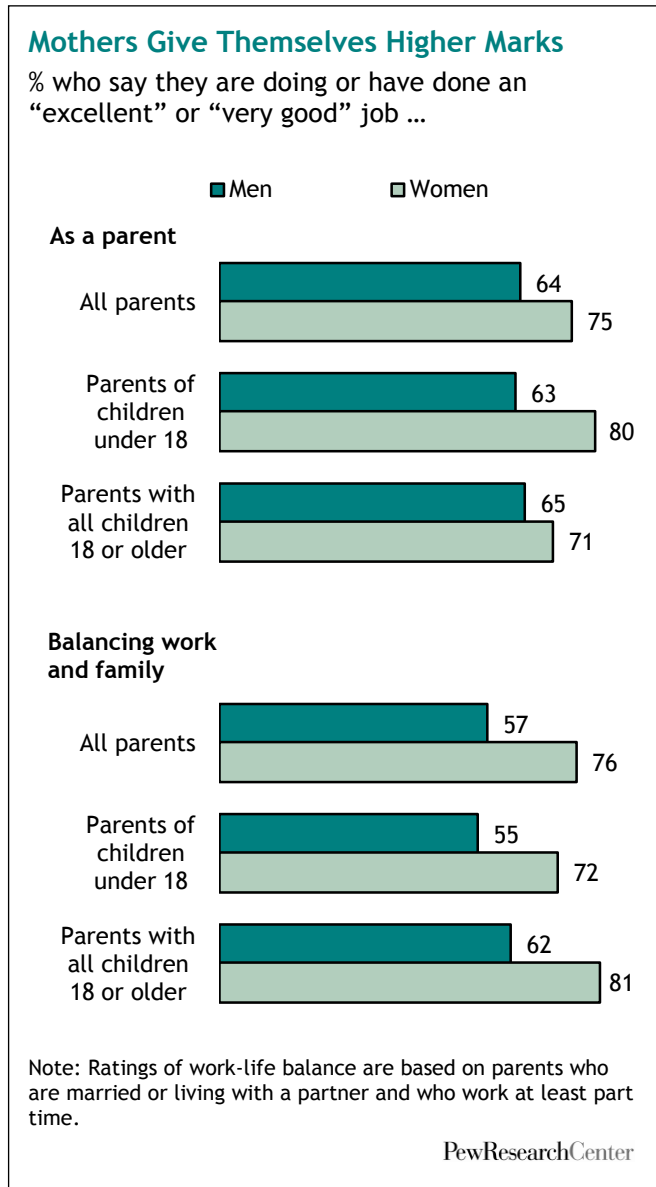
Parents' Self-Evaluations

Seven-in-ten parents say they are doing or have done an “excellent” or “very good” job as parents, and those who are married are somewhat more likely than those who are not to say so. Nearly three-quarters of married parents (73%) give themselves high marks, compared with 65% of unmarried parents.

Women are more likely than men to say they are doing an “excellent” or “very good” job as parents, and this is especially true among parents with children younger than 18. Eight-in-ten mothers of young children rate themselves highly, compared with 63% of fathers. The difference is less pronounced among those whose children are all 18 or older; 71% of mothers and 65% of fathers in this group give themselves a strong evaluation.

Mothers of young children, as well as those with adult children, are also far more likely than fathers to say they have done at least a very good job balancing work and family responsibilities. Overall, 66% of parents who are married or cohabiting and who work at least part time give themselves high marks in this regard. About three-quarters of women (76%) rate the job they have done balancing work, their relationship with their spouse or partner, and being a parent as “excellent” or “very good,” compared with 57% of men.

Among those with young children, 83% of working mothers and 75% of mothers who do not work rate themselves as “excellent” or “very good” parents.



Living Arrangements of Children

An analysis of Census Bureau data shows that the percentage of children under age 18 living with divorced or never-married parents has risen sharply over the past half-century. In 1960, about nine-in-ten children residing with a parent lived with married parents (92%); 5% had parents who were divorced or separated, and less than 1% lived with parents who had never been married. By 2008, seven-in-ten minor children who lived with a parent were residing with married parents, while about three-in-ten had parents who were divorced or separated (15%) or who had never been married (14%).²⁸

Women account for 77% of unmarried parents living with children under the age of 18; 86% of parents who live with their minor children and have never been married and are not living with a partner are mothers, as are 78% of those who are divorced or separated.

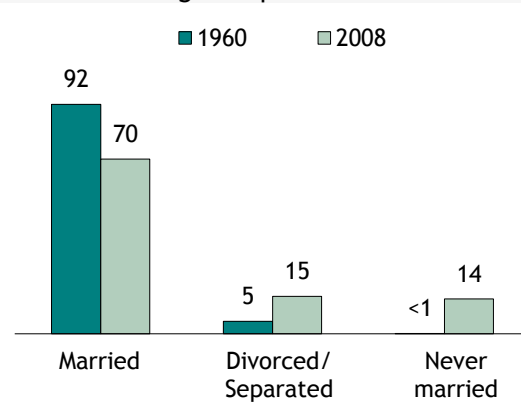
A disproportionate percentage of single parents are black. While 11% of all parents who are living with children under 18 are African American, 41% of those who have never been married and do not have a live-in partner are black; 36% of single parents are white and 19% are Hispanic.

Single parents and those who are living with a partner tend to be younger than divorced or married

parents. About half of parents who have never been married and are not currently living with a partner (52%) and 40% of cohabiting parents are younger than 30. In contrast, just 15% of married parents and 14% of divorced parents are in this age group.

Marital Status of Parents

% of children living with parents who were ...



Note: Based on all children living with a parent.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

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Profile of Parents Living with Children Under 18

| | All parents | Among unmarried parents | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| | | Married | Unmarried | Divorced/ Separated | Living w/ a partner | Never married |
| Men | 45 | 50 | 23 | 22 | 42 | 14 |
| Women | 55 | 50 | 77 | 78 | 58 | 86 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 18-29 | 19 | 15 | 32 | 14 | 40 | 52 |
| 30-49 | 73 | 76 | 61 | 76 | 56 | 46 |
| 50-64 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 2 |
| 65+ | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 |
| Whites | 65 | 68 | 52 | 63 | 59 | 36 |
| Blacks | 11 | 7 | 24 | 16 | 13 | 41 |
| Hispanics | 17 | 16 | 19 | 16 | 24 | 19 |

Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

²⁸ The percentages reported here and in the relevant chart are slightly different from the percentages of all children living with married and unmarried parents reported in previous sections of the report. Among all children in 1960, 87% were living with two married parents. In 2008, 64% lived with two married parents.

Many Had Children before Marriage

To complement Census Bureau data, the survey asks parents who are married or cohabiting whether any of their children were born before they were married to their current spouse or living with their current partner. Nearly a third (29%) say that is the case, including 63% of cohabiting parents who say they had children before they started living with their partner; 25% of married parents had at least one child before they married their current spouse.

Did You Have Children before You Were Married to Your Current Spouse or Living with Current Partner?

| | All | Whites | Blacks | Hispanics |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|--------|-----------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Yes | 29 | 26 | 52 | 25 |
| No | 71 | 74 | 48 | 75 |
| Number of respondents | 1,267 | 849 | 140 | 181 |

Note: Based on those who are married or living with a partner and who have at least one child. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

Black parents who are married or cohabiting are particularly likely to have had children before they were married to their current spouse or living with their current partner; about half (52%) say that is the case, compared with just about a quarter of married or cohabiting white and Hispanic parents (26% and 25%, respectively).

Living Arrangements of Parents and Children

Of the parents surveyed who have children under the age of 18 and who are not married or had children before they were married, about two-thirds (65%) say their children live with them all of the time, 22% say the children live with them part of the time and 13% say the children don't live in their household.

Divorced parents are especially likely to share custody of their young children; fewer than half (45%) say their children under the age of 18 live with them all of the time, while 35% say the children live with them part of the time and 18% say their children don't live in their household. By comparison, 78% of married parents who had children before they were married, 73% of cohabiting parents who had children before they were living with their current partner and 70% of single parents say their children live with them all of the time.

Living Arrangements

% saying their children under 18 live with them ...

| | All parents | Married | Divorced/ Separated | Living w/ a partner | Single |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------|------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| All of the time | 65 | 78 | 45 | 73 | 70 |
| Part of the time | 22 | 15 | 35 | 16 | 16 |
| None of the time | 13 | 6 | 18 | 11 | 14 |
| Other (Vol.) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | * |
| Number of respondents | 604 | 105 | 197 | 117 | 174 |

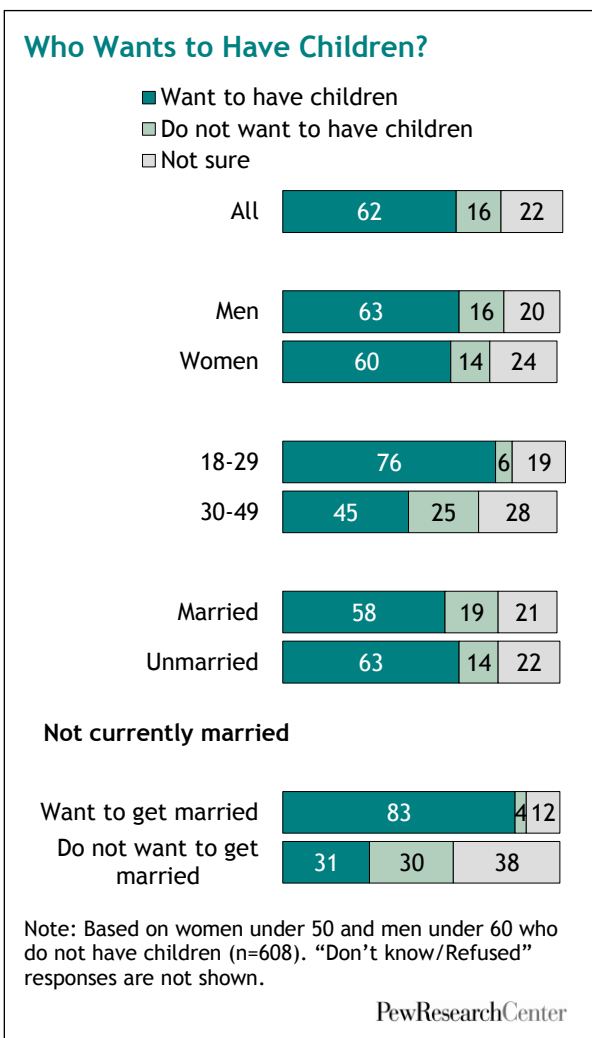
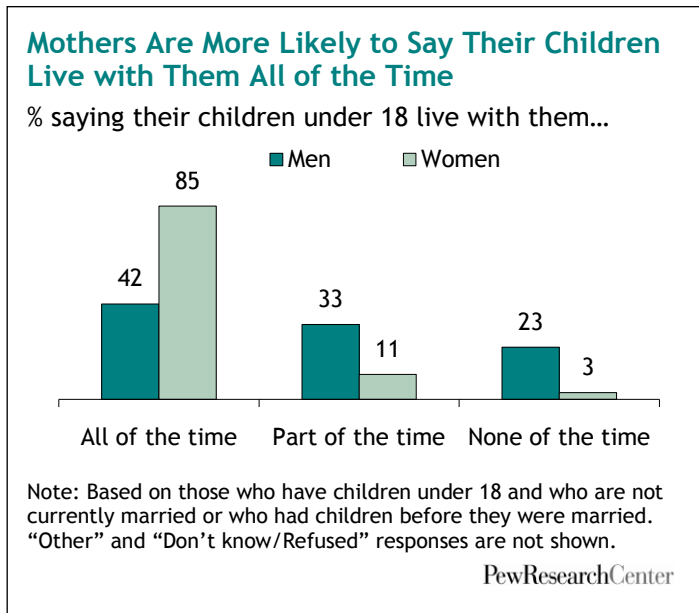
Note: Based on those who have children under 18 and who are not currently married or had children before they were married. Single parents include those who have never been married and are not currently living with a partner. "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

Women are twice as likely as men to have their young children living with them all of the time; more than eight-in-ten mothers of young children who are not married or who had children before they were married say that is the case (85%), compared with 42% of fathers. One-third of fathers who are not currently married or who had children before they were married say their children live with them some of the time, and a considerable percentage (23%) say their children don't ever live in their household.

Most Who Do Not Have Children Want Them

Among women younger than 50 and men younger than 60 who do not have children, most (62%) say they want to have children someday. Those who are younger than 30 are particularly likely to say that is the case; 76% of those in that age group who do not have children hope to have them in the future, compared with fewer than half (45%) of those between the ages of 30 and 49.

Childless respondents who are currently married and those who are not are about equally likely to say they want to have children someday (58% and 63%, respectively). Among people who are not married, however, those who hope to get married are far more likely than those who do not want to get married to say they want kids. About eight-in-ten of those who want to get married want to have kids (83%); among those who do not want to get married, just 31% hope to have children someday, while 30% say they do not want children and 38% are not sure.



Section 5: New Family Types

Americans view the sweeping changes in family arrangements that have occurred over the past half century with a mixture of acceptance and unease.

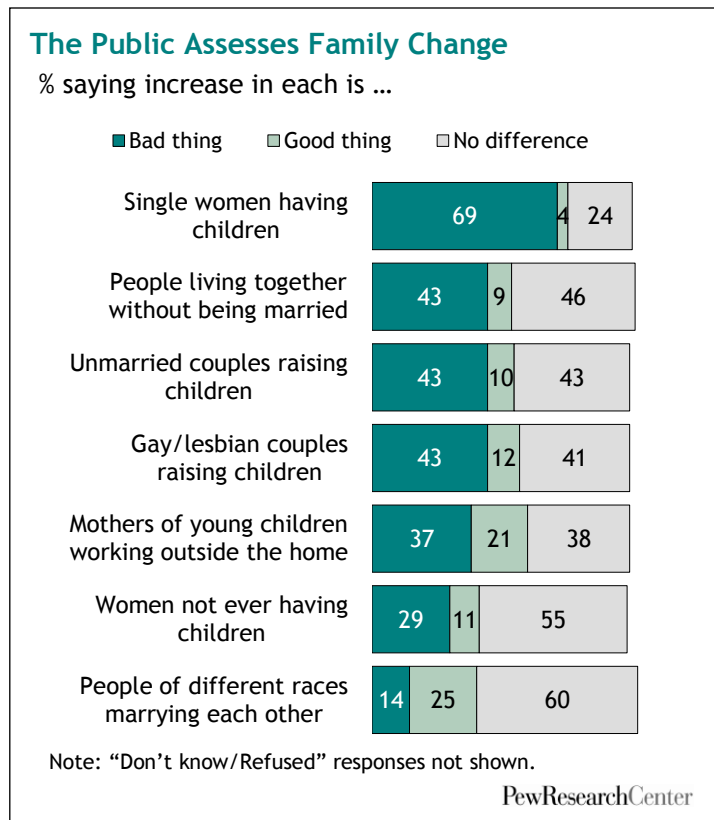
Not surprisingly, the people who are living in new arrangements—cohabiting couples or single parents, for example—are the most accepting of them. So are younger adults, who have grown up amid a world where single parents, same-sex couples and working mothers are more of a fact of life than they were for older generations.

Among the groups most uneasy about the changes are married adults and older adults, especially men. There are some regional variances as well: Americans who live in the Midwest and South are more disapproving than those in the East and West. And as might be expected, attitudes about the new types of living arrangements generally track religiosity, ideology and political party affiliation, with the more conservative camps within all of these groups most likely to be troubled by the changes.

The Pew Research Center survey asked a general question about the growing variety of new living arrangements, and also tested responses to seven specific social trends that bear on family life today.

On the overall survey question about the growing variety of family living arrangements, there is no dominant answer among respondents. As shown later in this chapter, approximately equal shares of American adults say the growing variety is a good thing, bad thing or makes no difference.

Asked about the seven trends, most Americans disapprove of women having children without a man to help raise them. More than four-in-ten are critical of the rising numbers of unmarried couples raising children, of gay and lesbian couples raising children and of people living together without getting married—representing a lower level of concern but still a substantial minority. There is less disapproval of three other increasing trends—mothers of young children working outside the home, childless women and racial intermarriage.



Single Mothers and Others

Among the seven trends tested that affect living arrangements and family life, respondents have the highest level of disapproval (69%) for the growing number of single women who have children without a male partner to help raise them. Only 4% say it's a good thing, and 24% say it doesn't make much difference for society. A majority of men and women, all age groups, and all major race and ethnic groups disapprove of unmarried motherhood. Men, older adults and whites or blacks are particularly likely to disapprove.

Men (74%) are more likely than women (63%) to say that the trend toward single mothers without male partners is bad for society. Whites (70%) and blacks (74%) are more likely than Hispanics (58%) to say so. Americans ages 65 and older (80%) are far more likely than younger age groups (63% of those ages 18 to 29; 67% of those ages 30 to 49; and 70% of those ages 50 to 64) to be critical of these single mothers. Within different age groups, men are more critical than women. For example, 70% of men ages 18 to 49 say the growing number of single women having children without a male partner to help raise them is bad for society, compared with 60% of comparably aged women, and 81% of men ages 50 and older say so, compared with 67% of women in that age group. Among white men, 76% are critical, compared with 65% of white women.

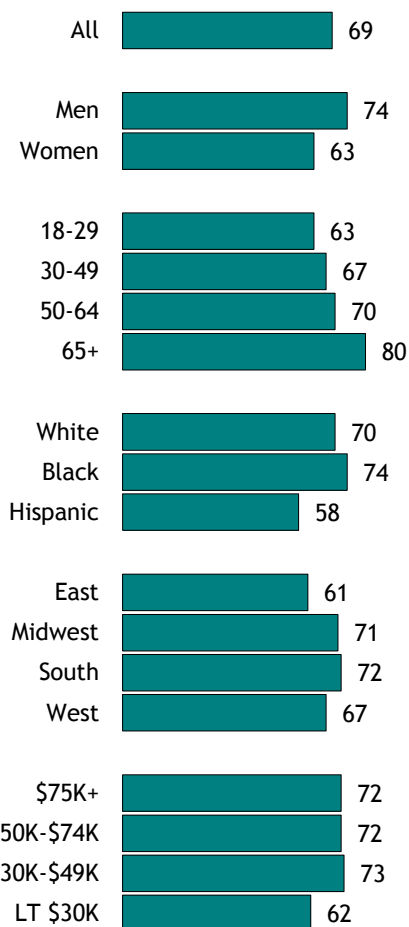
There is some variance by annual income on the question of rising numbers of women having children without a male partner to help raise them. Here, people with annual incomes of \$75,000 or higher (72%) are more likely to be critical than are people with annual incomes of less than \$30,000. People living in the Midwest and South are more critical of the rise in single mothers than are those living in the East.

According to National Center for Health Statistics data analyzed in a recent [Pew Research Center report on motherhood](#)²⁹, the share of births to unmarried women rose to 41% in 2008 from 5% in 1960 and 28% in 1990.

²⁹ Gretchen Livingston and D'Vera Cohn, "The New Demography of American Motherhood," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., May 2010 (<http://pewsocialtrends.org/pubs/754/new-demography-of-american-motherhood>).

Views on More Single Women Having Children on Their Own

% saying this is a bad thing for society



Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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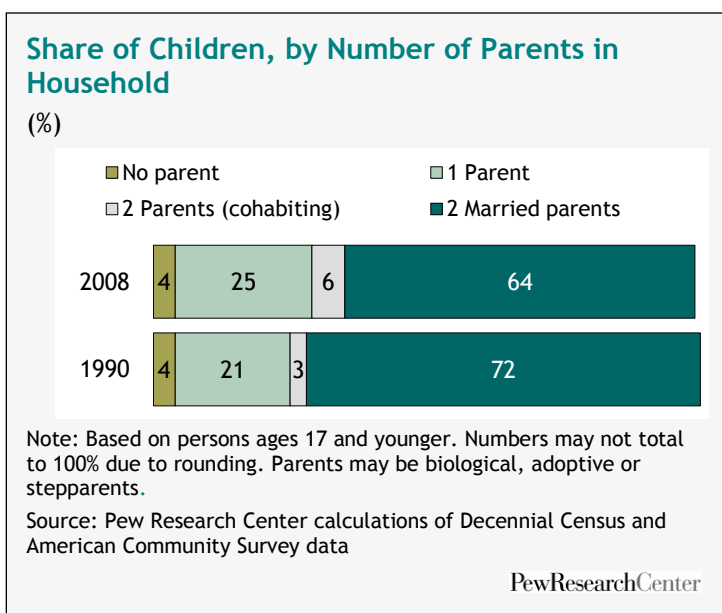
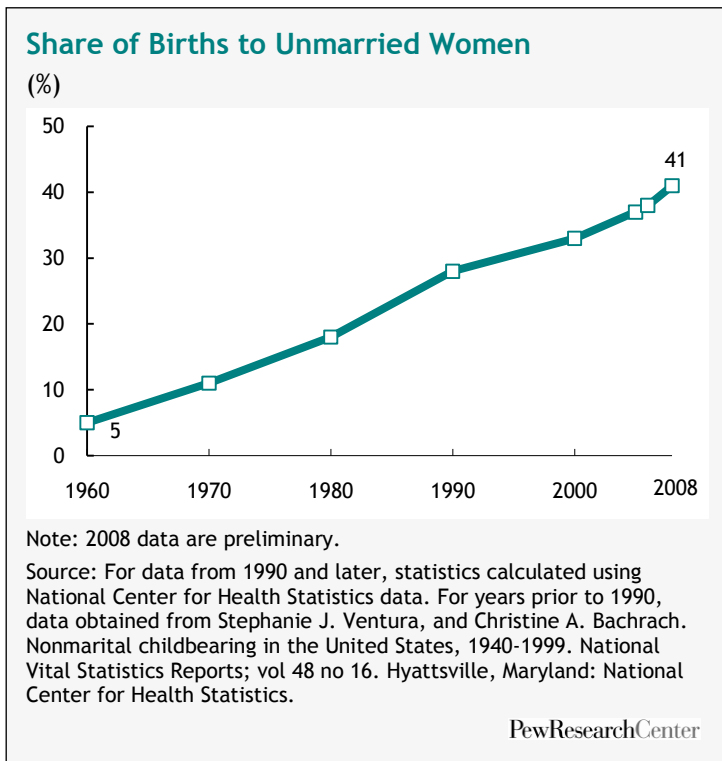
The share of births to women who are unmarried varies widely by race and ethnicity. More than seven-in-ten births to black women are to unmarried mothers, compared with about half of births to Hispanic women and about three-in-ten to white women. However, the share of births to unmarried women has risen most rapidly for whites since 1990.

There also is wide variation by education level among unmarried women who give birth. Most births to college graduates are to married women. Most births to women with less than a high school education are to unmarried women.

Unmarried Couples

Americans overall are equally likely to disapprove of gay and lesbian couples raising children, unmarried couples raising children and unmarried people living together—43% say each of these growing trends is bad for society. There are no notable differences between these trends in the share of adults who say that it is good for society or doesn't make much difference that more gay and lesbian couples are raising children (12% say it's good; 41% say it doesn't make much difference), more unmarried couples are raising children (10% good; 43% little difference) or more unmarried people are living together (9% good; 46% little difference). However, there is wide variation on these questions by age group and—on the question of same-sex couples with children—by gender.

Most adults ages 65 and older are critical of these unmarried couples, whether they are same-sex or opposite-sex couples. Most young adults, ages 18 to 29, are not. Asked about same-sex couples raising children, only 28% of the youngest adults say this rising trend is bad for society, compared with 58% of the oldest adults who say it is. Adults ages 30 to 49 and ages 50 to 64 fall in between, at 44% and 43% critical, respectively.



There also are large gaps in disapproval ratings between the youngest adults (34%) and oldest adults (58%) over unmarried couples raising children. They also disagree about unmarried people living together—only 27% of the youngest adults say this growing trend is bad for society, compared with 64% of the oldest adults who feel that way.

Gender is strongly linked to differing attitudes on same-sex couples raising children, but less so to attitudes about unmarried couples raising children or unmarried couples living together. Men (50%) are markedly more likely than women (35%) to say the rise in gay and lesbian couples raising children is bad for society. This is true even at young ages: 33% of men ages 18 to 29 are critical, compared with 23% of women in that age group.

The gender gap is even wider among adults ages 50 and older: 60% of men in that age group say same-sex couples bringing up children is bad for society, compared with 39% of similarly aged women who say so.

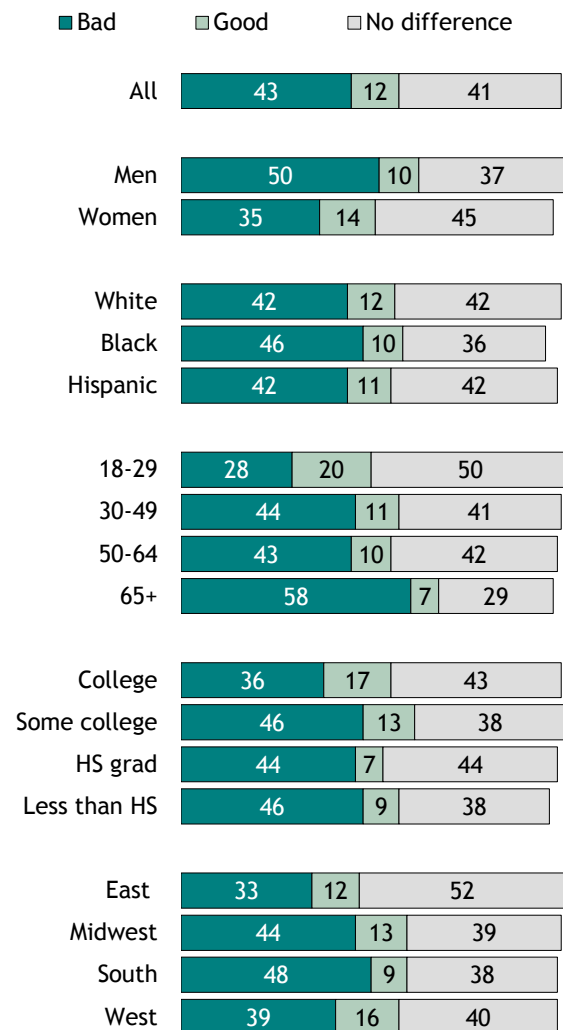
There are no significant differences among Americans of different education levels in views on unmarried couples raising children and on unmarried couples living together overall.

But on the question of same-sex couples raising children, college graduates are least likely to be critical. Among those with a college degree, 36% say this growing trend is bad for society, compared with more than four-in-ten Americans with some college education (46%), adults with a high school diploma but no college (44%) or those without a high school diploma (46%).

By region, people living in the Midwest and South are more critical than those living in the East of all three types of unmarried couples tested—gay and lesbian couples raising children, unmarried couples raising children and unmarried couples living together.

Views on Gay and Lesbian Couples Raising Children

% saying increase is ...



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Public attitudes on same-sex couples have softened in recent years. In a 2007 Pew Research Center survey, 50% of adults said that gay and lesbian couples raising children was bad for society, compared with 43% in the 2010 survey. A growing share—34% in 2007 and 41% in 2010—say this rising trend doesn't make much difference.

Along these lines, a [recent analysis by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press](#) found that for the first time in 15 years of polling, less than half of adults oppose same-sex marriage. In two polls conducted earlier this year, 42% favored allowing gays and lesbians to marry, compared with 48% who were opposed. As recently as 2009, 37% were in favor while 54% were opposed. Age is strongly linked to attitudes about gay marriage. Older adults are less likely than younger ones to favor gay marriage.

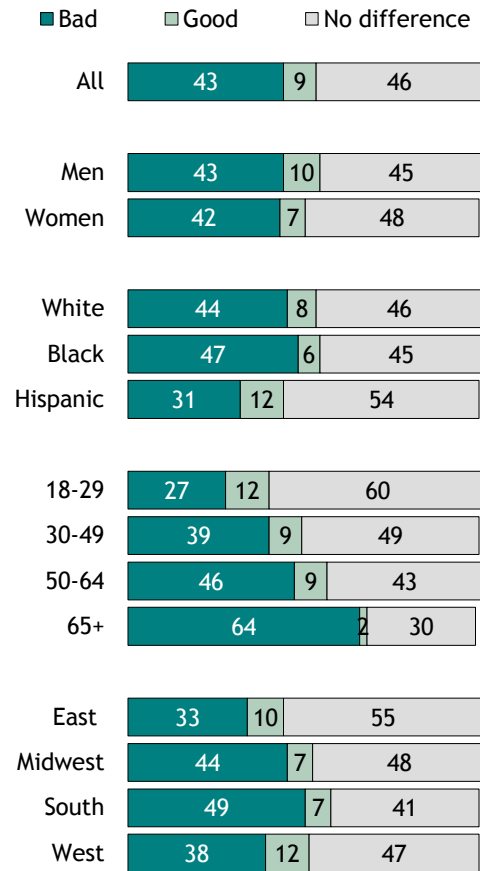
Using a generational framework, more than half of the Millennial generation—adults younger than 30—favor allowing same-sex marriage (53%), compared with 29% of adults ages 65 and older, the so-called Silent Generation. Among adults ages 30 to 45 (Generation X), the analysis found that 48% favor allowing same-sex marriage. Among Baby Boomers, ages 46 to 64, 38% favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry.

As for male-female cohabitation, other survey data offer evidence of rising approval over recent decades. In 1981, an ABC News/Washington Post poll asked whether people approved or disapproved “of men and women living together without being married if they want to, or is that something you haven't formed an opinion on?” At that time, 45% disapproved and 40% approved. The share of adults who approve has risen steadily. In 2007, in response to a similar question in a Gallup/USA Today poll, 55% approved of live-in couples while 27% disapproved.

Cohabitation has grown sharply in the U.S. in recent decades. Since 1990, when the Census Bureau first allowed people to designate themselves on the census form as “unmarried partners,” the number of cohabiting adults has nearly doubled. In 2008, 6.2 million households were headed by people in cohabiting relationships, according to the American Community Survey. They included 565,000 same-sex couples.

Views on Unmarried Couples Living Together

% saying increase is ...



Note: “Don't know/Refused” responses not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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In 2008, 5% of households (one-in-twenty) were headed by a cohabiting couple, up from 3% in 1990. During that same time period, the share of married-couple households fell to 51% in 2008 from 57% in 1990.

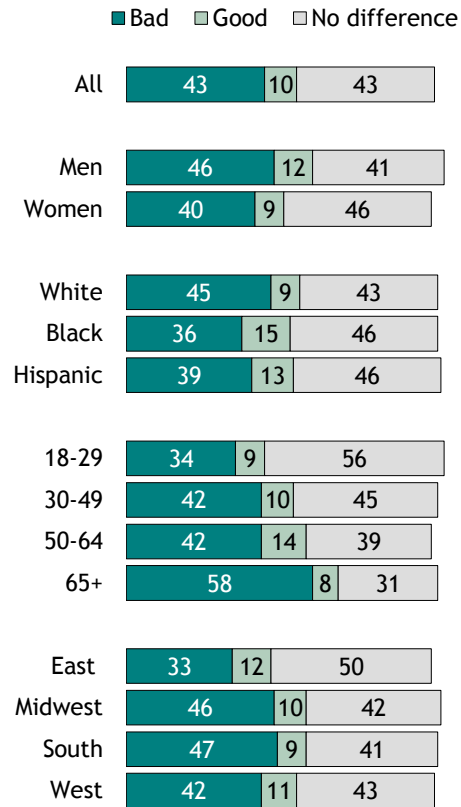
The number of cohabiting households has grown more sharply for Hispanics than for whites and blacks. (The Hispanic population overall is growing more rapidly.) In 2008, cohabiting couples accounted for 8% of Hispanic households, and 5% each of white and black households.

Census Bureau data indicate that 6% of the nation's children younger than 18 lived with cohabiting parents in 2008. That share rose from 3% in 1990. About 4.3 million children lived with opposite-sex cohabiting parents in 2008, and about 204,000 children lived with parents in same-sex cohabiting couples in 2008.

According to other researchers, most of the increase in the percentage of children being born to unmarried women since 1990 is due to births to women who are living with an unmarried partner.³⁰ A [recent Census Bureau report](#), using data from the Current Population Survey, estimated that of 4 million women who gave birth in 2008, 425,000 were living with an unmarried partner.³¹

Views on Unmarried Couples Raising Children

% saying increase is ...



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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³⁰ Andrew Cherlin, *The Marriage Go-Round*, Knopf, New York, 2009.

³¹ Jane L. Dye, "Fertility of American Women: 2008," Current Population Reports, P20-563, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. 2010.

Working Mothers

On the rising trend for mothers of young children working outside the home, 37% of adults disapprove, 21% approve and 38% say it makes little difference. There are fewer strong differences across groups than on questions about unmarried and same-sex couples raising children.

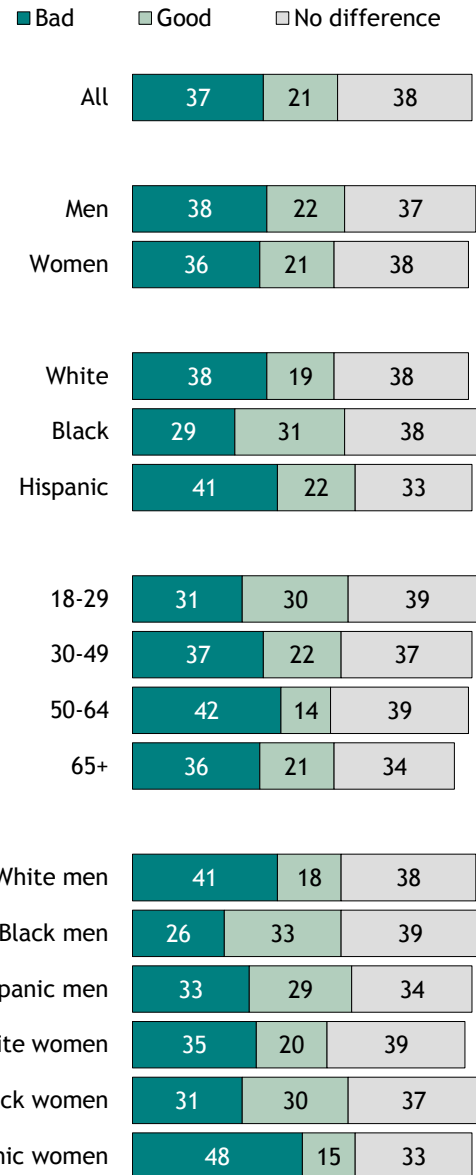
Attitudes are similar for men and women, and among age groups. Men ages 50 and older (45%), however, are somewhat more critical than women in this age group (35%).

By race and ethnicity, whites (38%) and Hispanics (41%) are more critical than blacks (29%). Hispanic women (48%) are notable for their criticism of working mothers of young children, easily surpassing white women (35%), black men (26%), black women (31%) and Hispanic men (33%) in their disapproval.

Most mothers are now in the labor force, including mothers of children younger than 3, but that was not always the case. The share of all mothers in the labor force rose to 71% in 2008 from 47% in 1975. Among mothers of children younger than 3, 60% were in the labor force in 2008, compared with 34% in 1975.

Views on Working Mothers of Young Children

% saying increase is ...



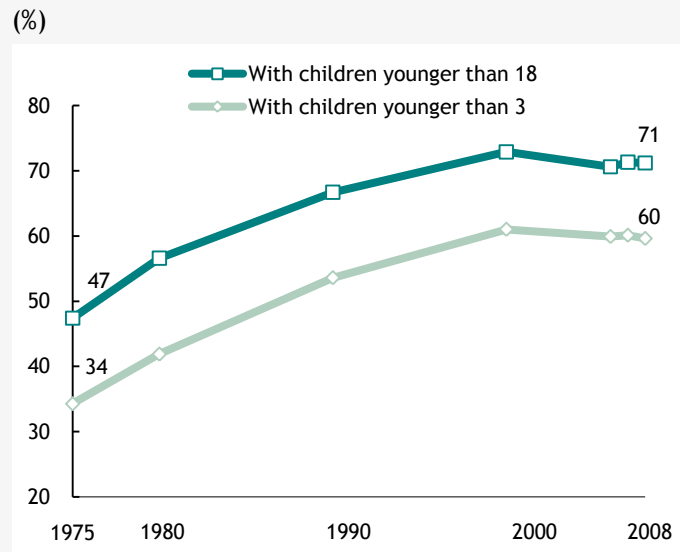
Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Hispanic mothers of young children are less likely](#) than other such mothers to be in the labor force. Among Hispanic mothers of children younger than 3, 47% were in the labor force in 2008. Comparable shares for racial groups are 59% for white mothers and 62% for black mothers.

Other survey data show that over the past several decades, the public has become more inclined to believe that a working mother can do just as good a job with her children as a stay-at-home mother. Answering a General Social Survey question that asked whether a working mother “can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work,” 60% agreed in 1985. In 2008, 72% of respondents agreed.

Share of Mothers who are in the Labor Force, 1975-2008



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Women in the Labor Force: A Databook (2009 Edition) September 2009, Report 1018 (Current Population Survey data)

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Childless Women

As for rising childlessness, 29% of Americans say this trend is bad for society, 11% say it is good and the majority—55%—say it makes little difference. There is little difference in attitudes by gender, but there's a distinctive pattern by age. This trend is the only one tested about which the youngest adults are more concerned than older ones: 37% of 18- to 29-year-olds say it is bad for society that more women do not have children, which is nine or 10 percentage points higher than older age groups.

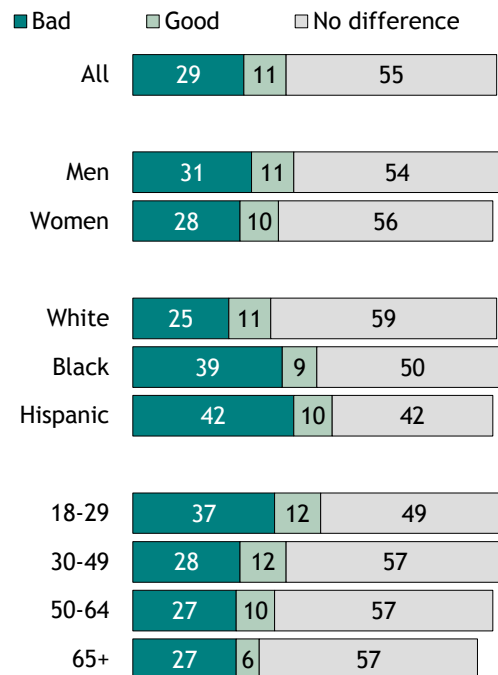
By race and ethnic group, the increase in women without children is of more concern to blacks (39%) and Hispanics (42%) than to whites (25%); whites are more likely to say it does not make much difference.

Childlessness has risen rapidly in recent decades. In 1980, 10% of women ages 40 to 44 had no biological children. In 2008, that share had risen to 18%. Childlessness has risen among all racial and ethnic groups, but white women are the most likely not to have had their own biological children.

Aside from the issue of how Americans characterize the impact of growing childlessness on society, data from another survey indicate that they are less willing to criticize people who do not have children. In 1988, 39% disagreed that “people who have never had children lead empty lives,” according to the General Social Survey. In 2002, 59% disagreed.

Views on Women Not Ever Having Children

% saying increase is ...

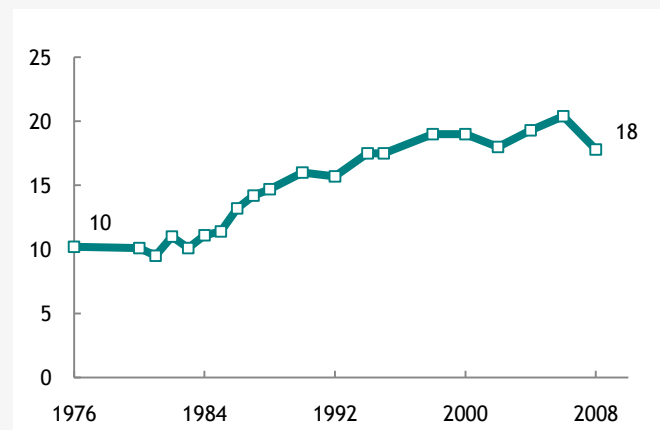


Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Share of Women Ages 40-44 with No Children, 1976-2008

(%)



Note: Percentages reflect women with no biological children.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

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Racial Inter marriage

The increase in people of different races marrying each other is deemed good for society by 25% of all adults and bad for society by 14% of adults. Fully 60% say they think it makes no difference. There are some differences by age and race groups. The intermarriage trend is criticized by 30% of Americans ages 65 and older, but the proportion among younger age groups is less than half of that.

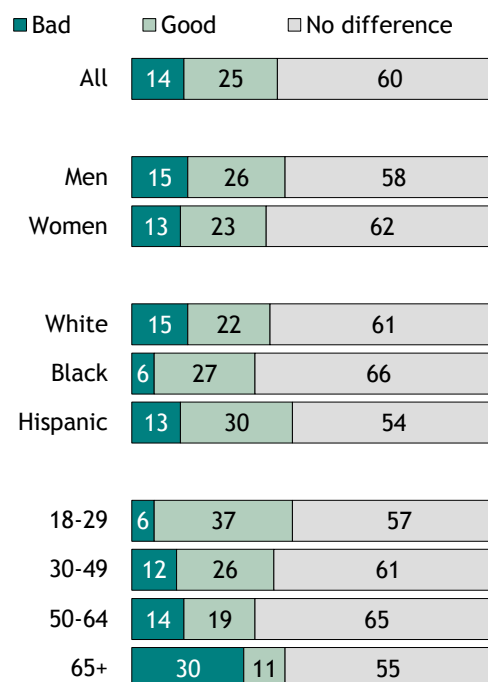
Whites (15%) and Hispanics (13%) are more critical than blacks (6%). There is a gap between the most and least educated Americans on this question. Only 8% of college graduates say rising intermarriage is bad for society, compared with 22% of those without a high school diploma.

Inter marriage—defined as marriage between either people of different races or between Hispanics and non-Hispanics—has risen in recent decades. In 2008, one-in-twelve married couples included spouses of different races or ethnic groups, according to a [recent Pew Research Center report](#). Among newly married couples, about one-in-seven include spouses of different races or ethnic groups. This proportion has risen sharply since 1960, driven in part by changes in cultural norms, the ending of legal prohibitions against interracial marriage and the large influx of immigrants from Latin America and Asia.

In surveys conducted over the past decade, whites have grown more accepting of interracial marriage within their own families. The proportion of whites who said they “would be fine” with a relative’s marriage to someone who is black, Hispanic

Views on People of Different Races Marrying Each Other

% saying increase is ...

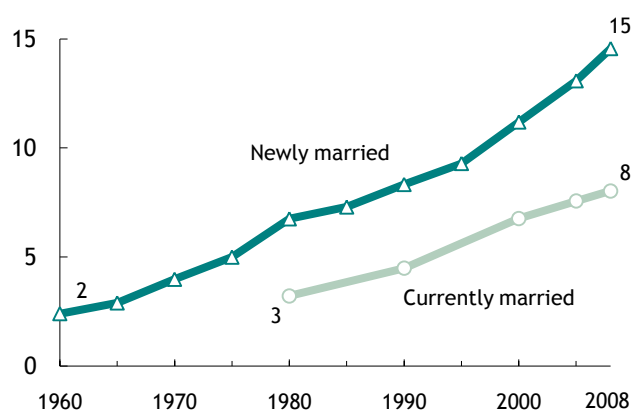


Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Inter marriage Trend, 1960-2008

% married to someone of a different race/ethnicity



Source: Newly married numbers for 1980 and earlier are calculated from the 1980 Census, and other numbers are calculated from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS). Currently married numbers are from 2005 and 2008 ACS and U.S. Decennial Census data, based on Integrated Public-Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) samples.

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or Asian rose to 61% in 2009 from 53% in 2001, according to the Pew Research center's recent report. However, black approval of interracial marriage declined somewhat. In 2009, 72% of blacks said they would be fine if a family member wanted to marry someone from one of the three other groups. In 2001, 81% said so.

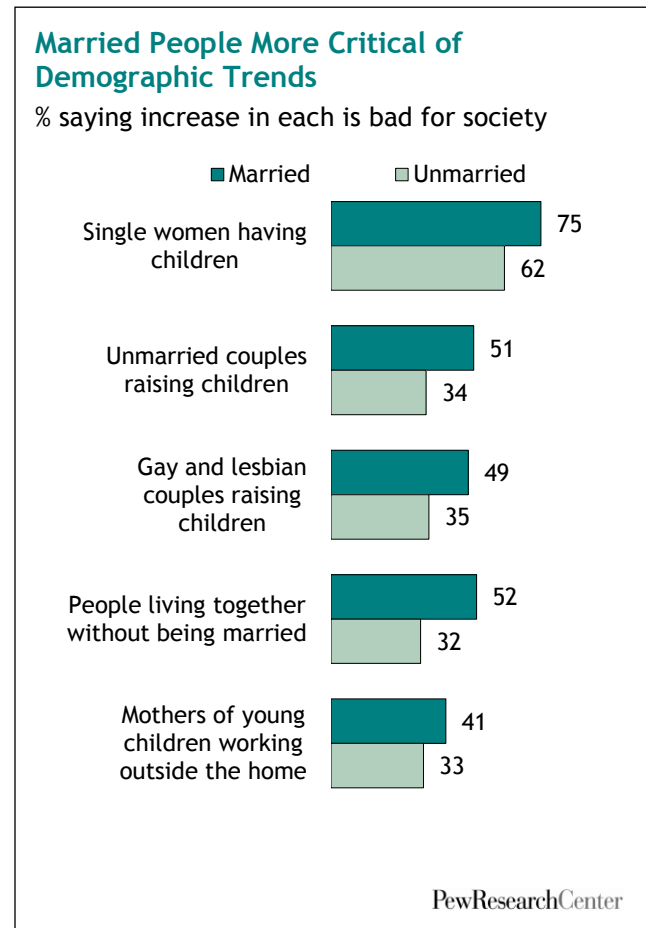
Family Type and Attitudes

There are notable differences by marital status and family type on questions about whether specific types of new living arrangements are bad for society. Married adults are more critical than unmarried adults of single mothers, unmarried live-in couples with and without children, and same-sex couples raising children. Married parents also are more critical of these arrangements than are unmarried parents.

For example, 75% of married adults are critical of single women who have babies without a man to help raise them, compared with 62% of unmarried adults who say this growing trend is bad for society. About half of married adults say it is bad for society that more people live together without being married (52%), more unmarried couples are raising children (51%) and more same-sex couples are raising children (49%). Only about a third of unmarried adults say these trends are bad for society.

(Unmarried adults include those living with a partner, divorced or separated, single and never-married, and widowed. Widowed adults are more conservative on these questions than the other groups of unmarried adults.)

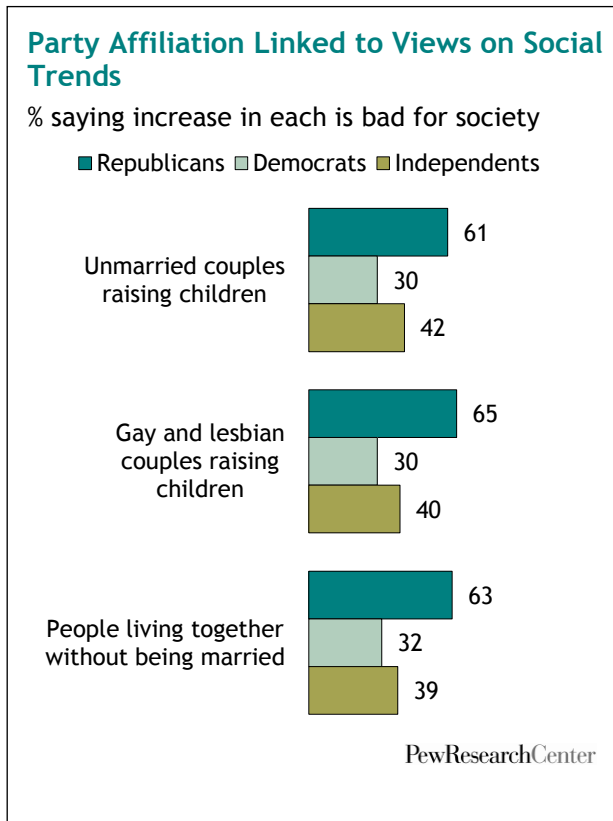
Married adults (41%) are more critical than unmarried adults (33%) of mothers of young children working outside the home. Parental status makes a difference on this question: Married parents (43%) are more critical of working mothers than are married adults without children (31%) and all unmarried parents (33%), especially single, never-married adults with children (21%).



Party and Religiosity

There are notable differences in attitudes toward most of the new living arrangements tested in the survey by political party, ideology and religiosity. Generally, Republicans, political conservatives and adults who attend religious services at least weekly are more critical of these growing trends than are Democrats, moderates and liberals, and less religiously observant adults

On all seven new arrangements tested, Republicans were more critical than Democrats. There are gaps of 30 percentage points or more between the share of Republicans and Democrats critical of the increase in unmarried couples raising children (61% vs. 30%), unmarried couples (63% vs. 32%) and same-sex couples raising children (65% vs. 30%). There also are gaps by ideology, with political conservatives being more critical than moderates or liberals (except for rising childlessness, where conservatives and moderates do not show a statistically significant difference).



The most religious Americans, as defined by attendance at services at least weekly, also are more critical of these non-traditional arrangements (except interracial marriage) than are less religious adults, those who attend services less often. For example, 67% say it is bad for society that more unmarried people are living together, compared with 37% of the moderately religious (those who attend services monthly or less) and 20% of the least religious adults (those who seldom or never attend religious services) who say so.

Links to Other Attitudes

Criticism or acceptance of these new living arrangements is linked to other attitudes about social change. Specifically, adults who are critical of single mothers, same-sex couples raising children and other non-traditional arrangements also are likely to believe that the growing variety of family arrangements is a bad thing, that a child needs both a mother and father at home to be happy, or that marriage is best when spouses have traditional gender roles.

As one example, people who say a child needs both a mother and father at home to be happy are more likely than those who disagree with that statement to say single mothers (83% vs. 45%) or same-sex couples raising children (58% vs. 18%) are bad for society.

Growing Variety of Family Types

On the question of whether the growing variety of family living arrangements is good or bad, most Americans are neutral or accepting: 34% say it is a good thing, 32% say it makes little difference and 29% say it is a bad thing for society.

Age is an important dividing line on this question. The younger the person, the more likely he or she is to say the growing variety is a good thing—46% of 18- to-29-year-olds do, compared with 24% of those ages 65 and older. Similarly, older Americans are more likely than younger ones to say these new arrangements are a bad thing. Fully 41% of Americans ages 65 and older say these changes are bad, compared with 11% of those ages 18 to 29.

There are no overall gender differences on this question, but there is somewhat of a divide among men and women younger than 50. Women ages 18 to 49 (44%) are more likely than similarly aged men (35%) to say the growing variety of family living arrangements is a good thing. Among the youngest adults, ages 18 to 29, there also is a gender difference: Most women in this age group say the new arrangements are a good thing (55%), while half of men (50%) say it makes no difference. Among men and women ages 50 and older, there is no gender difference.

By race and ethnicity, Hispanics (55%) are more likely than whites (29%) or blacks (37%) to say the new arrangements are a good thing. Both whites (32%) and blacks (24%) are more likely than Hispanics (15%) to say these new arrangements are a bad thing.

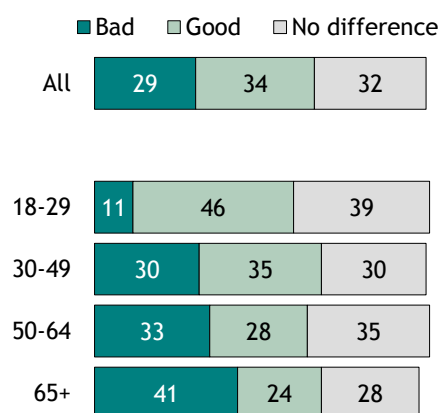
Americans with the lowest levels of education and income (who, according to census data, are the least likely to be married) are more likely to approve of the growing variety of family living arrangements. For example, 49% of those without a high school diploma and 39% of those with annual incomes under \$30,000 say the growing variety is good.

Marital Status Makes a Difference

Marital status makes a difference in attitudes. Married people (37%) are more likely than the currently unmarried (19%) to disapprove of these new arrangements in the Pew Research Center survey. As might be expected, adults who are living with an unmarried partner (56%) are more inclined than married adults (29%) to see these new arrangements as a good thing. Those who are currently cohabiting (56%) are more likely than people who have lived with an unmarried partner in the past (34%) to say the new arrangements are a good thing.

Views on Growing Variety of Family Types, by Age

% saying increase is ...



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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Parental status also makes a difference in how people respond: 33% of parents, compared with 18% of non-parents, say the new arrangements are a bad thing. (Parents tend to be older, which also plays a role.) Among parents, those who are married are more critical than are those who are single or living with a partner.

Religiosity, conservative ideology and Republican Party affiliation also are linked with higher disapproval ratings for the new types of living arrangements. For example, 45% of very religious Americans (those who attend religious services at least weekly) say these new arrangements are a bad thing, compared with only 15% of the non-religious (defined as those who seldom or never go to religious services). Republicans (48%) are more likely than Democrats (17%) or independents (27%) to consider these new arrangements bad.

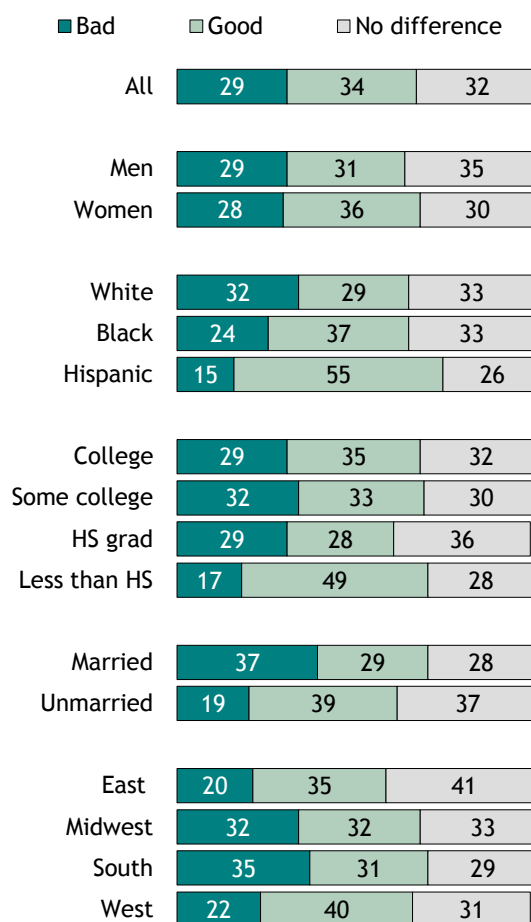
Attitudes about the growing variety of Americans' family living arrangements go hand in hand with other views about social change. People who are optimistic about the future of marriage are more likely than those who are pessimistic or uncertain to say that the variety in living arrangements is good; a 38% share of optimists say so, compared with a 25% share of those pessimistic or uncertain. Those who disagree that a child needs a home with both a mother and father to grow up happily (42%) also are more likely to say the new arrangements are a good thing, compared with those who believe a child needs both parents (30%). Americans who prefer a marriage where husband and wife have traditional gender roles (23%) are less likely to say the new variety is good than are those who prefer a marriage where both spouses have more similar roles (40%). Americans who disapprove of gay and lesbian couples raising children are more likely to be critical of the new arrangements (52%) than are those who approve of those couples (5%).

Attitudes and Definition of Family

People who disapprove of some of the new types of living arrangements also are less willing than those who are approving or neutral to describe unmarried cohabiting couples or parents as a family. As detailed in Section 3,

Growing Variety of Family Types: Good, Bad or Makes No Difference?

% saying increase is ...



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics

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nearly all adults say that they consider a married couple with children to be a family. Nearly nine-in-ten describe a married couple without children or a single parent with children as a family. Eight-in-ten say that an unmarried couple with children is a family. However, only 63% say a same-sex couple with children is a family; 45% say a same-sex couple without children is a family; and 43% say a live-in unmarried couple without children is a family.

On the question of whether a single parent with children fits the definition of family, most adults say yes, no matter whether they approve or disapprove of new living arrangements in general. However, there are gaps in the willingness to define a single parent as a family between those who agree that a child needs a mother and father to be happy (81% of whom say a single parent with children is a family) and those who disagree (93% of whom say a single parent with children is a family). There also are gaps on this question between those who approve and disapprove of same-sex parents.

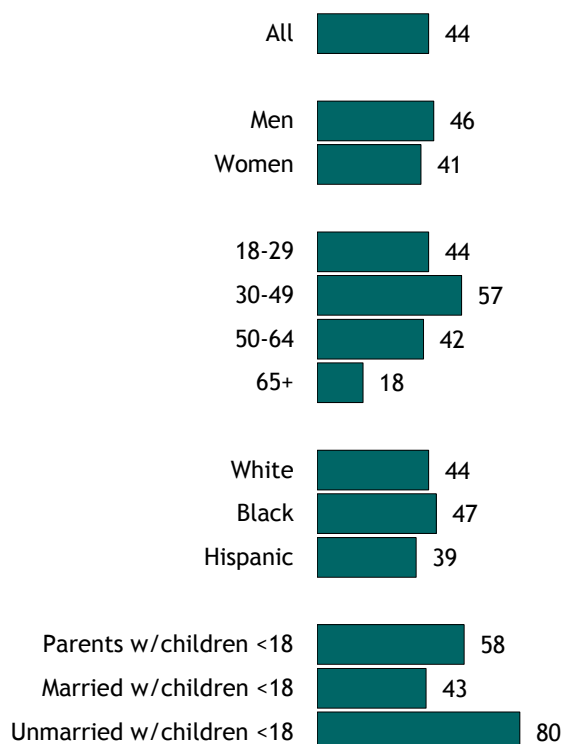
Similar patterns prevail when respondents are asked whether unmarried couples with children constitute a family. Most adults say yes, but there is an approval gap linked to attitudes about same-sex parents, views about changing family arrangements, those who say a child needs a mother and father in order to be happy, and those who have differing opinions about gender roles in marriage.

When it comes to same-sex couples with children, less than half of adults who say new types of living arrangements are generally a bad thing (33%) say this type of household is a family, compared with much higher shares among those who endorse the new arrangements (80%) or say they make no difference (75%). As might be expected, only 30% of those who say same-sex parents are bad for society agree that same-sex couples with children are a family, compared with about nine-in-ten adults among those who endorse (92%) the rising number of same-sex parents or don't think it makes much difference (89%). Half of those who say a child needs a mother and father to be happy (50%) say same-sex couples with children are a family, compared with 89% of those who disagree that a child needs a mother and a father to be happy.

Supporters of traditional gender roles in marriage (45%) are less likely to consider same-sex couples with children to be a family than are supporters of similar gender roles (71%).

Have you Ever Lived with a Partner without Being Married?

% saying yes



Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Cohabiting Adults

This section explores the experiences and attitudes of adults who say they have ever lived with an unmarried partner.

Cohabitation in the U.S. has become so established that most couples who marry these days live together first.³² But as an arrangement, it is quite varied, including couples who live together for differing amounts of time and who may or may not have children.

Among survey respondents, 44% say they have lived with a partner without being married: 36% of whom cohabited in the past and 8% who say they are doing so now.³³

The age group most likely to have lived with an unmarried partner is 30- to-49-year-olds, more than half of whom (57%) say they have done so. Only 18% of adults ages 65 and older say they have lived with an unmarried partner. By gender, men (46%) are somewhat more likely than women (41%) to say they have cohabited.

Some 47% of blacks say they have cohabited, compared with 44% of whites and 39% of Hispanics. Among black men, 58% have cohabited, compared with 38% of black women. There are no differences between people of different levels of education or income on the question of whether they ever have cohabited, but the lowest income adults are more likely than the highest income adults to be currently in an unmarried partnership. Younger parents—those with children younger than 18—are more likely to have cohabited (58%) than those whose children are all ages 18 and older (30%).

Most married parents of children under 18 say they have never cohabited (57%), but most unmarried parents of children under 18 say they have (80%). According to a recent estimate by researchers based on data from the National Survey of Family Growth, [40% of children spend some time in a cohabiting family by age 12](#).³⁴

Those with conservative ideology (35%) are less likely to have cohabited than are moderates (46%) or liberals (55%). By religiosity, the most religious (27% of adults who attend services at least weekly) are least likely to have cohabited, compared with the moderately religious (45% of those who attend services monthly or less) and those who are not religious (63% of those who seldom or never go to services).

Step toward Marriage?

Among Americans who have ever lived with an unmarried partner, nearly two-thirds (64%) say they thought about it as a step toward marriage. That includes 53% of those now living with a partner, compared with 67% of those who cohabited in the past. There are no significant differences by age, race or gender on this question, among people who ever lived with a partner.

Adults with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more (69%) are more likely than those with annual incomes under \$30,000 (59%) to say they saw cohabitation as a step toward marriage. And, as might be expected, a higher

³² Andrew Cherlin, *The Marriage Go-Round*, Knopf, New York, 2009.

³³ Numbers may not add to total because of rounding.

³⁴ Sheela Kennedy and Larry Bumpass. Cohabitation and Children's Living Arrangements: New estimates from the United States. *Demographic Research*. Vol. 19, article 47. Rostock, Germany: 2008.

share of married former cohabiters (74%) say they viewed living together as a step toward marriage, compared with currently unmarried people who have ever cohabited (56%).

Some 70% of self-described conservatives say they thought about cohabiting as a step toward marriage, compared with 59% of liberals and 66% of moderates. The least religious Americans (defined as seldom or never going to services) also are least likely to have thought of cohabiting as a step toward marriage—53%—compared with 72% of the moderately religious (attending services monthly) and 74% of the very religious (attending services at least weekly).

Looking at actual experience, about nine-in-ten married people who have cohabited say they lived with their current spouse before they got married—59% only with their current spouse and 30% with their current spouse and with someone else. Married adults with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more who cohabited in the past are notably more likely to have lived only with their current spouse before they got married (67%) than are married people with annual incomes under \$30,000 (43%). Lower income adults are (48%) are more likely than the higher income adults to have lived both with their spouse and someone else (26%).

As for the marital intentions of people who currently are cohabiting, 69% say they expect they will someday marry that person, 25% say they don't expect to and 6% don't know or would not answer.

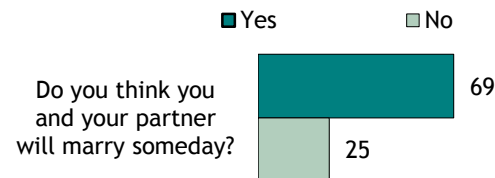
Economic Considerations

About a third of adults (32%) who ever have lived with an unmarried partner say finances were an important consideration in their decision to move in together. Blacks (44%) are more likely than whites (30%) to say so. So are 30- to-49-year-olds (38%), compared with 50- to 64-year-olds (25%).

The Census Bureau recently released [a report](#) noting that the number of male-female cohabiting couples increased to 7.5 million this year from 6.7 million in 2009. Analyzing the characteristics of cohabiting couples, the report found, among other things, that a

Most Cohabitors Expect to Marry Their Partners

% who say ...

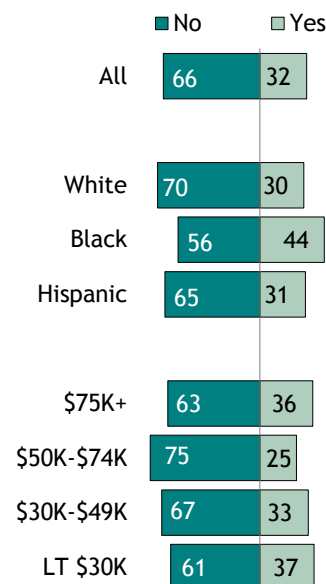


Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown. Based on those who are currently living with a partner; n=206.

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Were Household Finances an Important Reason You Moved In with a Partner?

% who say ...



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown. Based on those who ever have lived with a partner without being married; n=1,228. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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higher share of men did not work in newly formed 2010 couples, compared with newly formed 2009 couples.

The report said, “Taken together, the ways in which newly formed couples in 2010 differed from existing couples suggest that economic situations such as longer-term unemployment may have contributed to the increase in opposite-sex cohabiting couples between 2009 and 2010.”³⁵

³⁵ Rose M. Kreider, “Increase in Opposite-Sex Cohabiting Couples from 2009 to 2010 in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS),” Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division Working Paper, U.S. Census Bureau, September 15, 2010. (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/Inc-Opp-sex-2009-to-2010.pdf>)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

Family: The Census Bureau definition is two or more people related by birth, marriage or adoption. In the Pew Research Center survey, when respondents were asked about their own family or families in general, the word was not defined.

Children: When used in connection with findings from the Pew Research Center survey, “children” refers to children of any age, unless age is specified.

Parents: In analyses of Pew Research Center survey data, “parent” includes respondents who answered yes to having had one or more children, including volunteered step-parents who say they consider themselves the child(ren)’s parent or guardian. In Census Bureau data, this term includes people who are biological parents, step-parents, or adoptive parents. Where noted, an adult who is cohabiting with a child’s parent also is considered a parent to that child.

Married: Pew Research Center respondents were not asked the gender of their spouses; the Pew Research Center survey thus neither excluded from nor specifically included same-sex couples in the universe of married-couple respondents. People who identify themselves as “married” are classified as such in analyses using Census Bureau data, regardless of whether their spouse is present or absent. Users should note that marital status in this report is based on the population ages 18 and older; Census Bureau publications generally report marital status based on the population ages 15 and older.

Divorced, Separated: Unless otherwise noted, divorced and separated adults are included in a single category in both Census Bureau data and Pew Research Center survey data.

Single: A category for analysis of unmarried adults in Pew Research Center survey data, this group includes survey respondents who never married and do not live with a partner. However, in the wording of survey questions, the word “single” refers to all people who are not married. Adults who are described as “single” parents may have been married in the past or may currently live with a partner.

Unmarried: Unless otherwise specified, this includes the following non-overlapping categories in the Pew Research Center survey: adults living with a partner; never-married adults who do not live with a partner (also referred to as “single”); adults who are divorced or separated and do not live with a partner; adults who are widowed and do not live with a partner.

Ever married and never married: In some analyses of survey data, adults are compared based on whether or not they ever have been married.

Cohabiting, living with partner: Same-sex partners and opposite-sex partners are included in both Census Bureau and Pew Research Center survey data on unmarried couples who live together.

Gay: In some cases, “gay” is used as shorthand for “gay and lesbian” when it applies to same-sex couples or parents.

College graduate: Any description of adults with a college education includes adults with additional education beyond a college degree.

Race: “Black” (or “African American”) and “white” refer to non-Hispanic adults of these races. Hispanics can be of any race.

Region: “East,” “West,” “Midwest” and “South” refer to regions as defined by the Census Bureau. A map and listing can be found at http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf.

Appendix 2: Topline Questionnaire

PEW SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
OCTOBER 2010 AMERICAN FAMILY SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
OCT 1-21, 2010
TOTAL N=2,691

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES GREATER THAN ZERO BUT LESS THAN 0.5 % ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS.

ASK ALL:

Q.1 First, please tell me how satisfied you are with your life overall – would you say you are [READ IN ORDER]?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 45 | Very satisfied |
| 47 | Mostly satisfied |
| 4 | Mostly dissatisfied |
| 2 | Very dissatisfied |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

Q.2 Now thinking about the future of our country. Can you tell me whether you feel generally optimistic or generally pessimistic about each of the following. First [READ AND RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY: “Do you feel generally optimistic or generally pessimistic about this?”]

| | <u>Optimistic</u> | <u>Pessimistic</u> | <u>Uncertain</u> <u>(VOL.)</u> | <u>DK/Ref</u> <u>(VOL.)</u> |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. The moral and ethical standards in our country | 41 | 51 | 3 | 4 |
| b. The soundness of our economic system over the long run | 46 | 49 | 3 | 3 |
| c. Our ability to get along with other countries in the world | 56 | 36 | 4 | 4 |
| d. The institution of marriage and the family | 67 | 27 | 3 | 3 |
| e. Our system of education | 50 | 43 | 3 | 3 |

ASK ALL:

Q.3 These days there seems to be a growing variety in the types of family arrangements that people live in. Overall, do you think this is a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you think it makes a difference?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 34 | Good thing |
| 29 | Bad thing |
| 32 | No difference |
| 5 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

Q.3a Some people say that the present institution of marriage is becoming obsolete. Do you agree or disagree?

| Oct 2010 | Oct 2010 (RVs) | | <i>Time/Yankelovich,Skelly&White</i> Mar 1978 (RVs) |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 39 | 36 | Agree | 28 |
| 58 | 61 | Disagree | 72 |
| 4 | 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | * |
| | N=2,021 | | N=1,044 |

MARITAL Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married? (IF RESPONDENT SAYS "SINGLE," PROBE TO DETERMINE WHICH CATEGORY IS APPROPRIATE)

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 53 | Married |
| 8 | Living with a partner |
| 11 | Divorced |
| 3 | Separated |
| 6 | Widowed |
| 20 | Never been married |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF LIVING WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2): [n=206]

M2 Have you ever been married?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 33 | Yes |
| 67 | No |
| 0 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF EVER BEEN MARRIED (MARITAL=1,3,4,5 OR M2=1): [n=1,919]

M3 Have you been married more than once, or not?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 26 | Yes |
| 74 | No |
| * | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF MARRIED MORE THAN ONCE AND NOT CURRENTLY DIVORCED (M3=1 AND MARITAL=1,4,5) OR PAST MARRIED & LIVING WITH A PARTNER (LWP) (M2=1): [n=475]

M4 Have you ever been divorced?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 88 | Yes |
| 12 | No |
| 0 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

M2/M3/M4, BASED ON TOTAL

| Marriage experience | | Divorce experience | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 74 | Ever married (NET) | 74 | Ever married (NET) |
| 55 | Married once | 26 | Ever divorced |
| 19 | Married twice+ | 48 | Never divorced |
| * | Don't know/Refused | * | Don't know/Refused |
| 25 | Never married | 25 | Never married |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL NOT LWP (MARITAL=1,3,4,5,6,9):

LWP2 Have you ever lived together with a partner without being married, or not?

LWP2/MARITAL, BASED ON TOTAL

| | | Feb <u>2007</u> |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 44 | Ever lived with partner (NET) | 36 |
| 8 | Live with partner now | 4 |
| 36 | Ever have | 32 |
| 56 | Never lived with partner | 63 |
| * | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | 1 |

ASK IF YES TO LWP2 & MARRIED (LWP2=1 & MARITAL=1):

LWP3 Did you live with your current spouse before you got married, someone else, or have you done both?

LWP2/LWP3, BASED ON MARRIED [n=1,306]

| | | Feb <u>2007</u> |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 37 | Ever lived with partner (NET) | 32 |
| 22 | Lived with spouse | 22 |
| 11 | Lived with both current spouse and someone else | 7 |
| 3 | Lived with someone else | 2 |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | 1 |
| 63 | Never lived with partner | 68 |
| * | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | * |

KIDS1 Do you have any children UNDER age 18? **(IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT THEY HAVE STEPCHILDREN, ASK: Do you consider yourself (IF MORE THAN ONE: their/IF ONE: his or her) parent or guardian, or not?**

KIDS2 Do you have any ADULT children age 18 or older, including any who live on their own? **(IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT THEY HAVE STEPCHILDREN, ASK: Do you consider yourself (IF MORE THAN ONE: their/IF ONE: his or her) parent or guardian or not?**

KIDS1/KIDS2

| | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 29 | No children |
| 34 | Have children under age 18 |
| 24 | All children under age 18 |
| 10 | Both under 18 and older than 18 |
| 37 | All children ages 18 and older |
| * | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF MARRIED OR LIVING WITH PARTNER AND HAVE KIDS [MARITAL=1,2 AND (KIDS1=1 OR KIDS2=1)]: [n=1,267]

K2 Did you have any of your children before you were (**IF MARRIED:** married to your current spouse / **IF LWP:** living with your current partner)?

29 Yes
71 No
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF KIDS UNDER 18 AND EITHER NOT MARRIED OR HAD KIDS BEFORE THEY WERE MARRIED [(KIDS1=1) AND (MARITAL=2-9 OR K2=1)]: [n=604]

K2a Do your children UNDER age 18 live in your household all of the time, part of the time, or none of the time?

65 All of the time
22 Part of the time
13 None of the time
1 Some part time/some full time (VOL.)
0 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF KIDS UNDER 18 (KIDS1=1): [n=1,043]

K3 How old is your YOUNGEST child?

23 0-2
17 3-5
35 6-12
23 13-17
2 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

7.7 Mean age
7.0 Median age

ASK IF KIDS 18+ (KIDS2=1): [n=1,206]

K4 Are any of your children ages 18 and older living in your household, or not?

32 Yes
68 No
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

E3 Are you now employed full-time, part-time or not employed? [**INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT THEY WORK IN THE HOME, I.E. CARING FOR THEIR KIDS OR BEING A HOMEMAKER, ASK: Are you now employed FOR PAY full-time, part-time, or not employed for pay.**]

58 Employed (NET)
46 Full-time
12 Part-time
41 Not employed (NET)
27 Not employed
1 Retired (VOL.)
12 Student (VOL.)
1 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF MARRIED OR LWP (MARITAL=1,2): [n=1,512]E4 Is your (**IF MARRIED:** spouse/**IF LWP:** partner) now employed full-time, part-time or not employed?

| | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 65 | Employed (NET) |
| 56 | Full-time |
| 9 | Part-time |
| 34 | Not employed (NET) |
| 22 | Not employed |
| 1 | Retired (VOL.) |
| 11 | Student (VOL.) |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

AGE What is your age?

| | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 21 | 18-29 |
| 35 | 30-49 |
| 26 | 50-64 |
| 16 | 65 and older |
| 2 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:Q.4 Next, please tell me whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied, on the whole, with the following aspects of your life: (First/Next) **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]** (are you satisfied or dissatisfied?)**REQUIRED PROBE:** Would you say you are VERY (dis)satisfied or SOMEWHAT (dis)satisfied?

| | | Very <u>satisfied</u> | Somewhat <u>satisfied</u> | Somewhat <u>dissatisfied</u> | Very <u>dissatisfied</u> | Doesn't Apply (VOL.) | DK/Ref (VOL.) |
|----|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | Your family life | 75 | 19 | 4 | 2 | * | 1 |
| | Oct 2005 | 72 | 19 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| | Jan 1999 | 71 | 20 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| | Dec 1996 | 69 | 21 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| b. | Your social life | 59 | 28 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c. | Your personal financial situation | 29 | 40 | 14 | 14 | * | 2 |
| | Feb 2009 | 23 | 43 | 18 | 13 | * | 3 |
| d. | The quality of life in your community | 51 | 35 | 7 | 6 | * | 2 |
| | BASED ON EMPLOYED [n=1,656] | | | | | | |
| e. | Your current job or career | 53 | 32 | 9 | 5 | * | 1 |

ASK ALL:

Q.5 Thinking about your FAMILY life so far, would you say it has turned out about as you expected it would, or is it different than you expected it would be?

| | |
|----|---|
| 49 | About as expected |
| 47 | Different than expected |
| * | Doesn't apply/Don't have a family yet (VOL.) |
| 2 | Didn't have any expectations (VOL.) |
| 2 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

IF “DIFFERENT THAN EXPECTED” (Q.5=2), ASK: [n=1,348]

Q.6 How is it different? (OPEN-END; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL RESPONSES.)

25 (NET) General

- 8 Better/Better than I thought it would be/Exceeded expectations/Easier
- 7 Worse/Less satisfying /More challenges than I expected/Harder
- 5 Just different/Not what I expected
- 2 Neutral philosophical statement
- 1 I’ve changed/Settled down/More traditional
- 1 Can’t predict how things will turn out/Didn’t have expectations

22 (NET) Marriage

- 9 Got divorced, separated/Didn’t expect to get divorced
- 5 Expected to be married/Not married
- 2 Widowed
- 2 Marriage was different than I expected/Unstable relationship with spouse/Infidelity
- 2 Single parent/Single mom
- 1 Got married/Didn’t expect to get married
- 2 Marriage – other

18 (NET) Children

- 5 Had kids/Didn’t expect to have kids or family/Didn’t expect so many kids
- 4 Don’t have kids/Expected to have kids/Wanted more kids
- 3 Grown kids aren’t doing what I expected/Kids are struggling (can’t find job, etc.)
- 1 Kids are challenging/Kids make it difficult/Have a child with special needs
- 1 Grandchildren
- 1 Raising kids that aren’t mine/Have stepchildren
- 3 Kids – other

13 (NET) Finances

- 6 Job situation/Unemployed/Not able to reach career goals/Different career than planned
- 2 Personal finances (general)
- 2 Struggling financially/Not secure financially
- 1 Economy (general)
- 2 Finances – other

- 7 Family not in close touch/Family spread out/Poor family communications
- 3 Housing/Living situation/Location
- 3 Health issues/Disabled/Spouse disabled
- 2 Death in family/Death of children, parents
- 1 Retirement
- 1 Education/Expected to go to or finish college
- 1 Didn’t expected to be living alone
- 7 Other
- 11 Don’t know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

Q.7 Which of the following statements best describes how IMPORTANT your family is to you at this time? **[READ IN ORDER]**

- 76 The most important element of my life
- 22 One of the most important elements, but not the most important
- 1 Not an important element of my life
- * Does not apply **(VOL.)**
- * Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK ALL:

Q.8 I'm going to read you a list of things some people may want out of life. Please tell me whether you think it is easier for **(FORM 1: a single person; FORM 2: a married person)** to achieve this goal or easier for a **(FORM 1: married person; FORM 2: single person)**, or doesn't it make a difference? First is it easier for a **(FORM 1: single person; FORM 2: married person)** or a **(FORM 1: married person; FORM 2: single person)** to **(READ AND RANDOMIZE)**, or doesn't it make a difference?

| | <u>Easier for a single person</u> | <u>Easier for a married person</u> | <u>Doesn't make a difference</u> | <u>Depends on the person (VOL.)</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| a. Be financially secure | 11 | 35 | 50 | 3 | 1 |
| b. Get ahead in a career | 24 | 14 | 57 | 3 | 1 |
| c. Raise a family | 2 | 77 | 19 | 2 | 1 |
| d. Have a fulfilling sex life | 7 | 37 | 49 | 2 | 4 |
| e. Have social status | 12 | 21 | 64 | 2 | 2 |
| f. Find happiness | 5 | 29 | 62 | 3 | 1 |

ASK ALL:

Q.9 Next, please tell me if you think each of the following trends is generally a good thing for our society, a bad thing for our society, or doesn't make much difference? (First/Next) **[READ AND RANDOMIZE] [READ IF NECESSARY: Is this generally a good thing for our society, a bad thing for our society, or doesn't it make much difference?]**

a. More women not ever having children

| | <u>Good thing for society</u> | <u>Bad thing for society</u> | <u>Doesn't make much difference</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u> |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Oct 2010 | 11 | 29 | 55 | 5 |
| Feb 2007 | 13 | 29 | 52 | 6 |

b. More UNmarried couples raising children

| | <u>Good thing for society</u> | <u>Bad thing for society</u> | <u>Doesn't make much difference</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u> |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Oct 2010 | 10 | 43 | 43 | 3 |
| Trend for comparison: Feb 2007 ³⁶ | 6 | 59 | 32 | 3 |

³⁶ The wording in Feb 2007 was "More UNmarried couples deciding to have children."

Q.9 CONTINUED...

c. More single women having children without a male partner to help raise them

| | <u>Good thing for society</u> | <u>Bad thing for society</u> | <u>Doesn't make much difference</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL)</u> |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Oct 2010 | 4 | 69 | 24 | 3 |
| Trend for comparison³⁷: | | | | |
| Jan 2010 | 6 | 62 | 30 | 3 |
| Feb 2007 | 6 | 66 | 25 | 3 |

d. More gay and lesbian couples raising children

| | <u>Good thing for society</u> | <u>Bad thing for society</u> | <u>Doesn't make much difference</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL)</u> |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Oct 2010 | 12 | 43 | 41 | 4 |
| Jan 2010 | 13 | 42 | 40 | 4 |
| Feb 2007 | 11 | 50 | 34 | 5 |

e. More people living together without getting married

| | <u>Good thing for society</u> | <u>Bad thing for society</u> | <u>Doesn't make much difference</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL)</u> |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Oct 2010 | 9 | 43 | 46 | 2 |
| Jan 2010 | 10 | 38 | 50 | 2 |
| Feb 2007 | 10 | 44 | 43 | 3 |

f. More mothers of young children working outside the home

| | <u>Good thing for society</u> | <u>Bad thing for society</u> | <u>Doesn't make much difference</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL)</u> |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Oct 2010 | 21 | 37 | 38 | 4 |
| Jan 2010 | 27 | 32 | 35 | 6 |
| Feb 2007 | 22 | 41 | 32 | 5 |

g. More people of different races marrying each other

| | <u>Good thing for society</u> | <u>Bad thing for society</u> | <u>Doesn't make much difference</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL)</u> |
|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Oct 2010 | 25 | 14 | 60 | 2 |
| Jan 2010 | 24 | 13 | 61 | 3 |

³⁷ The wording in Jan 2010 and Feb 2007 was "More single women deciding to have children without a male partner to help raise them."

ASK ALL:

Q.10 If someone says a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily, would you tend to agree or disagree?

| | | Feb | <i>World Values Survey</i> ³⁸ | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <u>2007</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>1995</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>1982</u> |
| 61 | Tend to agree | 69 | 63 | 71 | 72 | 62 |
| 36 | Tend to disagree | 28 | 35 | 26 | 25 | 35 |
| 4 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

ASK ALL:

Q.11 Thinking about your family life NOW compared to when you were growing up, would you say your family is closer, less close or about the same?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 40 | Closer |
| 14 | Less close |
| 45 | About the same |
| 1 | Does not apply (VOL.) |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF MARRIED OR LIVING WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=1,2): [n=1,512]

Q.12 Compared to your parents, do you think you have a closer relationship with your **(IF MARRIED: spouse/IF LIVING WITH PARTNER: partner)**, a less close relationship, or is it about the same?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 51 | Closer |
| 5 | Less close |
| 43 | About the same |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF RESPONDENT IS MARRIED (MARITAL=1): [n=1,306]

Q.13 I'm going to read you a list of some reasons why people are married. For each one, please tell me if this is a very important reason why YOU are married, a somewhat important reason, or not an important reason why you are married. First, for **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**, **[IF NECESSARY: "Is this a very important reason why you are married, a somewhat important reason, or not an important reason why you are married?"]**

| | | Very important <u>reason</u> | Somewhat important <u>reason</u> | Not an important <u>reason</u> | DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u> |
|----|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | Financial stability | 31 | 36 | 31 | 1 |
| b. | Companionship | 81 | 15 | 4 | * |
| c. | Love | 93 | 6 | 1 | * |
| d. | Having children | 59 | 20 | 20 | 1 |
| e. | Making a lifelong commitment | 87 | 9 | 4 | * |

³⁸ The World Values Surveys were conducted by face-to-face interviews and are based on representative samples of the U.S. adult population.

ASK IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED “VERY” TO MORE THAN ONE ITEM: [n=1,221]

Q.13NEW

Which would you say is the MOST important reason why you are married (**READ BACK RESPONSES THAT WERE RANKED “VERY IMPORTANT”**)?

| | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Financial stability |
| 13 | Companionship |
| 56 | Love |
| 4 | Having children |
| 21 | Making a lifelong commitment |
| 1 | Other (SPECIFY) |
| 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF RESPONDENT IS NOT MARRIED (MARITAL=2,3,4,5,6,9): [n=1,385]

Q.14 I'm going to read you a list of reasons why some people decide to get married. For each one, please tell me if you think this is a very important reason to get married, a somewhat important reason, or not an important reason to get married. First, for **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]** **[IF NECESSARY: “Is this a very important reason to get married, a somewhat important reason, or not an important reason to get married?”]**

| | Very important <u>reason</u> | Somewhat important <u>reason</u> | Not an important <u>reason</u> | DK/Ref (<u>VOL.</u>) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Financial stability | 30 | 38 | 31 | 1 |
| b. Companionship | 63 | 25 | 11 | 1 |
| c. Love | 84 | 10 | 6 | * |
| d. Having children | 44 | 32 | 22 | 2 |
| e. Making a lifelong commitment | 74 | 16 | 9 | 1 |

ASK IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED “VERY” TO MORE THAN ONE ITEM: [n=1,170]

Q.14NEW

Which would you say is the MOST important reason to get married (**READ BACK RESPONSES THAT WERE RANKED “VERY IMPORTANT”**)?

| | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 2 | Financial stability |
| 10 | Companionship |
| 57 | Love |
| 4 | Having children |
| 22 | Making a lifelong commitment |
| 1 | Other (SPECIFY) |
| 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

NO QUESTION 15, 16

ASK ALL:

Q.17 What kind of marriage do you think is the more satisfying way of life **[READ IN ORDER]**?

| | One where the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the <u>house and children</u> | One where the husband and wife both have jobs and both take care of <u>the house and children</u> | DK/Ref (VOL.) |
|---|--|---|---------------|
| Oct 2010 | 30 | 62 | 8 |
| Oct 1977, <i>CBS/NY Times</i> ³⁹ | 43 | 48 | 9 |

ASK IF EVER LIVED WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2 OR LWP2=1): [n=1,228]

Q.18 **[IF EVER LWP AND NOT LWP NOW (LWP2=1 & MARITAL=1,3,4,5,6,9):** Thinking back to the most recent time when you were living together with a partner without being married/ **IF LWP NOW (MARITAL=2):** Thinking back to when you started living together with your partner] did you think about it as a step toward marriage or didn't you think of it this way?

| | |
|----|---|
| 64 | Thought about living together as a step toward marriage |
| 33 | Didn't think of living together as a step toward marriage |
| 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF EVER LIVED WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2 OR LWP2=1): [n=1,228]

Q.19 Were household finances an important consideration in your decision to move in with your partner, or not?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 32 | Yes |
| 66 | No |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF LIVING WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2): [n=206]

Q.20 Do you think you and the partner you are living with will get married someday or don't you think you will get married?

| | | <u>Feb 2007</u> |
|----|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 69 | Will get married someday | 68 |
| 25 | Won't get married | 21 |
| 6 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | 11 |
| | | (n=100) |

ASK IF NEVER MARRIED OR LIVING WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2,6): [n=837]

Q.21 In general, what's your preference? Do you want to get married, don't want to get married, or are you not sure if you want to get married?

| | | | <u>Feb 2007</u> | | |
|------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <u>All</u> | <i>Living with Partner</i> | <i>Never Married</i> | | <i>Living with Partner</i> | <i>Never Married</i> |
| 60 | 64 | 58 | Want to marry | 54 | 56 |
| 13 | 16 | 12 | Don't want to marry | 11 | 12 |
| 26 | 19 | 29 | Not sure if want to marry | 31 | 29 |
| 1 | 1 | * | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | 4 | 3 |
| | (n=206) | (n=631) | | (n=512) | (n=412) |

³⁹ The wording was "Now I'd like to ask about your preference – what kind of marriage do you think is the more satisfying way of life..." Response categories Both (VOL.)/Neither (VOL.) were combined with DK/Ref (VOL.).

ASK IF DIVORCED OR WIDOWED (MARITAL=3,5): [n=465]

Q.22 In general, what's your preference? Do you want to get married again, don't you want to get married again, or are you not sure if you want to get married again?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 22 | Want to marry |
| 46 | Don't want to marry |
| 32 | Not sure if want to marry |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

Q.21/Q.22, BASED ON ALL CURRENTLY NOT MARRIED [n=1,302]

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 46 | Want to marry |
| 25 | Don't want to marry |
| 29 | Not sure if want to marry |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK WOMEN UNDER AGE 50 WITH NO KIDS [SEX=2 AND AGE<50 AND (KIDS1=2 AND KIDS2=2)]**ASK MEN UNDER AGE 60 WITH NO KIDS [SEX=1 AND AGE<60 AND (KIDS1=2 AND KIDS2=2)]: [n=608]**

Q.22a How do you feel about having children? Do you want to have children, don't you want to have children, or are you not sure if you want to have children?

| | |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 62 | Want to have children |
| 16 | Don't want to have children |
| 22 | Not sure if want to have children |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK FORM 1 ONLY: [n=1,327]

Q.23F1 People have different ideas about what makes a man a good husband or partner. For each of the qualities that I read, please tell me if you feel it is very important for a good husband or partner to have, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important. First, he **[READ AND RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY: "Is this very important for a good husband or partner to have, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?"]**

| | <u>Very important</u> | <u>Somewhat important</u> | <u>Not too important</u> | <u>Not at all important</u> | <u>DK/Ref (VOL.)</u> |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Puts his family before anything else | 82 | 15 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| b. Provides a good income | 41 | 49 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| c. Is good at household chores | 32 | 48 | 13 | 5 | 1 |
| d. Is well educated | 36 | 50 | 9 | 4 | 1 |
| e. Is a good father | 93 | 5 | 1 | 1 | * |
| f. Is a good sexual partner | 48 | 40 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| g. Is caring and compassionate | 89 | 10 | * | 1 | * |

ASK FORM 2 ONLY: [n=1,364]

Q.24F2 People have different ideas about what makes a woman a good wife or partner. For each of the qualities that I read, please tell me if you feel it is very important for a wife or partner to have, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important. First, she **[READ AND RANDOMIZE] IF NECESSARY:** "Is this very important for a wife or partner to have, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?"

| | Very <u>important</u> | Somewhat <u>important</u> | Not too <u>important</u> | Not at all <u>important</u> | DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Puts her family before anything else | 74 | 23 | 3 | 1 | * |
| b. Provides a good income | 19 | 44 | 26 | 11 | 1 |
| c. Is good at household chores | 28 | 46 | 17 | 9 | * |
| d. Is well educated | 39 | 44 | 13 | 4 | * |
| e. Is a good mother | 90 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| f. Is a good sexual partner | 48 | 42 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| g. Is caring and compassionate | 90 | 9 | 1 | * | * |

ASK ALL:

Q.25 Next, people have different definitions of what makes a family. As I read you a list of different arrangements, please tell me whether you consider each to be a family or not. First, **[READ AND ROTATE; ITEM g. SHOULD COME LAST FOR EACH FORM]**, do you consider this to be a family or not?

| | Yes, this is <u>a family</u> | No, this is <u>not a family</u> | Depends on the circumstances <u>(VOL.)</u> | DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| ASK FORM 1 ONLY: [n=1,327] | | | | |
| a. An unmarried man and woman who live together with one or more children | 80 | 18 | 1 | 1 |
| b. A gay or lesbian couple living together with no children | 45 | 52 | 1 | 2 |
| c. A single parent living with one or more children | 86 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| ASK FORM 2 ONLY: [n=1,364] | | | | |
| d. A husband and wife with no children | 88 | 11 | 1 | * |
| e. A gay or lesbian couple living together and raising one or more children | 63 | 33 | 1 | 2 |
| f. An unmarried man and woman who live together with no children | 43 | 54 | 2 | 1 |
| ASK ALL: | | | | |
| g. A husband and wife with one or more children | 99 | 1 | * | * |

On another subject,

ASK FORM 1 ONLY:

Q.26F1 In order for a woman to be ready for marriage, how important is it that she can support a family financially? Would you say it is **[READ IN ORDER]**?

ASK FORM 2 ONLY:

Q.26aF2 In order for a man to be ready for marriage, how important is it that he can support a family financially? Would you say it is **[READ IN ORDER]**?

Q26F1/Q26F2

| <u>For a man</u> | <u>For a woman</u> | |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 67 | 33 | Very important |
| 29 | 46 | Somewhat important |
| 3 | 13 | Not too important |
| 1 | 6 | Not at all important |
| 1 | 2 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| (n=1,364) | (n=1,327) | |

Now a few questions about children...

ASK PARENTS ONLY (KIDS1=1 OR KIDS2=1): [n=1,943]

Q.27 Overall, how would you rate the job you have done or are doing as a PARENT – would you say excellent, very good, good, only fair, or poor?

| | | Feb <u>2009</u> |
|----|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 26 | Excellent | 32 |
| 44 | Very good | 36 |
| 25 | Good | 24 |
| 4 | Only fair | 6 |
| 1 | Poor | 1 |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) | 2 |
| | | (n=2,298) |

ASK RESPONDENTS WHO ARE MARRIED OR COHABITING, WORK AT LEAST PART TIME AND HAVE CHILDREN [MARITAL=1,2 AND E3=1,2 AND (KIDS1=1 OR KIDS2=1)]: [n=799]

Q.28 How good a job have you done balancing your job, your **(IF MARITAL=1: marriage/IF MARITAL=2: partnership)** and being a parent? Would you say excellent, very good, good, only fair, or poor?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 17 | Excellent |
| 49 | Very good |
| 27 | Good |
| 5 | Only fair |
| 1 | Poor |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

Q.29 Thinking about the circumstances that children grow up in these days, please tell me whether you think **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]** have A LOT more challenges to overcome, just a FEW more challenges, or about the same number of challenges to overcome as other children? How about **[READ NEXT ITEM]** **[IF NECESSARY: “Do they have A LOT more challenges to overcome, just a FEW more challenges, or about the same number of challenges to overcome as other children?”]**

| | A lot more <u>challenges</u> | A few more <u>challenges</u> | The same <u>challenges</u> | Depends <u>(VOL.)</u> | DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u> |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Children of divorced parents | 42 | 38 | 16 | 2 | 1 |
| b. Children from racially-mixed marriages | 27 | 37 | 32 | 1 | 2 |
| c. Children of gay and lesbian couples | 51 | 28 | 16 | 1 | 4 |
| d. Children of single parents | 38 | 40 | 19 | 1 | 1 |
| e. Children whose parents are living together but not married | 16 | 33 | 47 | 1 | 2 |

ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS ANY CHILDREN AGE 17 OR YOUNGER (KIDS1=1): [n=1,043]

Q.30 Thinking of your own family, how often do you eat dinner together, that is (**IF MARITAL=1**: you and your spouse/**IF MARITAL=2**: you and your partner/**IF MARITAL=3,4,5,6,9**: you) and some or all of your children. Do you do this every day, a few times a week, only occasionally, or never?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 50 | Every day |
| 34 | A few times a week |
| 11 | Only occasionally |
| 3 | Never |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

Q.31 Thinking about the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, do you expect to have a Thanksgiving meal with members of your family, or not?

| | |
|----|---|
| 89 | Yes |
| 8 | No |
| 2 | Haven't made plans yet/Not sure yet (VOL.) |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF YES (Q.31=1), [n=2,365]:

Q.31a About how many family members do you think will be there? **IF RESPONDENT ASKS WHETHER THAT INCLUDES HIM/HER, ADD “INCLUDING YOURSELF.”**

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 15 | 1-5 |
| 19 | 6-9 |
| 23 | 10-14 |
| 12 | 15-19 |
| 27 | 20 or more |
| 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| 14 | Mean number of family members |
| 12 | Median number of family members |

ASK ALL:

FAM2 What was the marital status of your parents during most of the time you were growing up – were they married, divorced, separated, widowed or never married to each other?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 77 | Married |
| 13 | Divorced |
| 2 | Separated |
| 2 | Widowed |
| 5 | Never married |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

Now, just a few more questions about your family...

ASK ALL:

GP Do you have any living grandparents?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 30 | Yes |
| 69 | No |
| * | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

MOM Is your mother living?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 64 | Yes |
| 36 | No |
| * | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

DAD Is your father living?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 51 | Yes |
| 48 | No |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

STEP1 Do you have any living stepparents?

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 18 | Yes |
| 81 | No |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

STEP3 Do you have any step or half siblings?

NOTE: INCLUDE ONLY LIVING STEP OR HALF SIBLINGS

| | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 30 | Yes |
| 69 | No |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK ALL:

SIB How many brothers and sisters do you have, if any?

NOTE: INCLUDE ONLY LIVING SIBLINGS, DO NOT INCLUDE HALF BROTHERS/HALF SISTERS HERE IF VOLUNTEERED.

ENTER NUMBER 0-15

- 10 None
- 22 One
- 23 Two
- 16 Three
- 29 Four or more
- * Don't know/Refused(VOL.)

ASK IF EVER BEEN MARRIED (MARITAL=1,3,4,5 OR M2=1) [n=1,919]:

STEP4 Do you have any stepchildren? **IF YES, ASK:** Are all of these stepchildren under age 18, all ages 18 and older, or are some under 18 and some ages 18 and older?

- 82 No stepchildren
- 4 All stepchildren under age 18
- 12 All stepchildren ages 18 and older
- 2 Both under 18 and older than 18
- * Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

Q.32 Suppose someone you know had a serious problem and needed either financial help or caregiving. How obligated would you feel to provide assistance if that person were [READ AND RANDOMIZE], would you feel very obligated, somewhat obligated, not too obligated or not at all obligated? How about [INSERT NEXT ITEM]? **READ IF NECESSARY:** How obligated would you feel to provide assistance to this person?

NOTE: EXCEPT FOR ITEM A, ITEMS WERE ONLY ASKED FOR RESPONDENTS WHO AT LEAST HAVE ONE LIVING FAMILY MEMBER IN EACH CATEGORY.

| | | Very <u>obligated</u> | Somewhat <u>obligated</u> | Not too <u>obligated</u> | Not at all <u>obligated</u> | Depends <u>(VOL.)</u> | N.A./Not <u>living (VOL)</u> | DK/Ref <u>(VOL.)</u> |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | Your best friend | 39 | 43 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| b. | Your parent [n=1,953] | 83 | 13 | 1 | 2 | * | * | * |
| c. | Spouse/partner's parent [n=1,512] | 62 | 22 | 3 | 3 | * | 7 | 2 |
| d. | Stepparent [n=495] | 55 | 25 | 6 | 13 | * | 1 | 0 |
| e. | Grown child [n=1,206] | 77 | 19 | 2 | 1 | 1 | * | 1 |
| f. | Grown stepchild [n=266] | 60 | 29 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| g. | Brother or sister [n=2,441] | 64 | 26 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| h. | Step or half sibling [n=847] | 43 | 33 | 8 | 12 | 1 | * | 2 |
| i. | Grandparent [n=795] | 67 | 24 | 5 | 3 | * | * | 1 |

ASK ALL:

Now a question about love...

Q.33 Some people say there is only one true love for each person. Do you agree or disagree?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 28 | Agree |
| 69 | Disagree |
| 2 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK IF AGREE (Q.33=1), [n=735]:

Q.33a And have you found yours, or not?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 79 | Yes |
| 17 | No |
| 2 | Not sure (VOL.) |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

Q.33/Q33a. by Marital Status:

| <u>All</u> | <u>Married</u> | <u>Not married (NET)</u> | <u>Living with Partner</u> | <u>Divorced/ Separated</u> | <u>Never Married</u> | |
|------------|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 28 | 28 | 29 | 32 | 26 | 28 | Agree |
| 22 | 27 | 18 | 25 | 16 | 12 | Yes, found the one |
| 5 | 1 | 10 | 3 | 10 | 14 | No |
| 1 | * | 1 | 2 | * | 1 | Not sure(VOL.) |
| * | * | 1 | 1 | * | 1 | DK/Refused(VOL.) |
| 69 | 69 | 70 | 68 | 73 | 72 | Disagree |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | * | 1 | 1 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| | (n=1,306) | (n=1,372) | (n=206) | (n=421) | (n=631) | |

ASK IF LWP (MARITAL=2) [n=206]

SS1 Previously in this interview, you described your marital status as "living with a partner." Is your domestic partner of the same sex, or the opposite sex?

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| 11 | Same sex |
| 89 | Opposite |
| 0 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

PEW SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
OCTOBER 2010 KNOWLEDGE OF FAMILY TRENDS OMNIBUS SURVEY⁴⁰
FINAL TOPLINE
OCT 14-17, 2010
TOTAL N=1,002

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. COLUMNS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

- K.1 First, thinking about marriage, do you happen to know if the percentage of American adults who are married has gone up or down over the past 20 years, or has it stayed about the same?
- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 10 | Gone up |
| 46 | Gone down { <i>correct answer</i> } |
| 20 | Stayed about the same |
| 24 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
- K.2 Do you happen to know if the share of babies born to UNmarried mothers in the U.S. is closer to... **(READ IN ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF SAMPLE; IN REVERSE ORDER FOR OTHER RANDOM HALF)?**
- | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| 24 | 60 percent |
| 27 | 40 percent { <i>correct answer</i> } |
| 23 | 20 percent (OR) |
| 5 | 5 percent |
| 21 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
- K.3 Over the past 20 years or so, do you happen to know if the divorce rate in this country has gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same?
- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 66 | Gone up |
| 5 | Gone down { <i>correct answer</i> } |
| 21 | Stayed about the same |
| 8 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
- K.4 These days, what do you think is the average age when a man first gets married? **[OPEN-END]** {*age 28 correct answer*}
- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 61 | Under age 28 |
| 7 | Age 28 { <i>correct answer</i> } |
| 26 | Older than age 28 |
| 6 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| 25 | <i>Median age</i> |
- K.5 Just your best guess, what percent of women with children under age three are currently working either full-time or part-time? Is it closer to... **(READ IN ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF SAMPLE; IN REVERSE ORDER FOR OTHER RANDOM HALF)?**
- | | |
|----|--|
| 49 | 60 percent { <i>correct answer – 55% in 2009</i> } |
| 28 | 40 percent |
| 14 | 20 percent (OR) |
| 5 | 5 percent |
| 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

⁴⁰Results from this survey were reported on Page 19 in the section “Public Knowledge of Demographic Change.”

Appendix 3: Survey Methodology

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates International
for the Pew Social Trends & Demographics Project

Results for the October 2010 American family survey are based on telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 2,691 adults living in the continental United States. The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews were done in English and Spanish by Princeton Data Source from October 1-21, 2010. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 2.6 percentage points.

Details on the design, execution and analysis of the survey are discussed below.

DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Sample Design

Eight separate sample segments were used for data collection in order to obtain a representative sample while oversampling three key demographic groups – cohabitating parents (COPs), divorced/separated parents (DSPs) and never been married parents (NMPs). Table 1 details the sample segments and how many interviews were conducted in each.

Table 1: Sample Segments

| <u>Segment</u> | <u>Sample Type</u> | <u>Population</u> | <u>n</u> |
|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| 1 | Landline RDD | All adults | 405 |
| 2 | Landline RDD screened | Adults 18-64 | 1,056 |
| 3 | Cell RDD | All adults | 1,010 |
| 4 | Landline callback screened 1 | 3 target groups | 53 |
| 5 | Cell callback screened 1 | 3 target groups | 116 |
| 6 | Landline callback screened 2 | NMP | 6 |
| 7 | Cell callback screened 2 | NMP | 24 |
| 8 | Cell callback screened 3 | COP | 21 |

Sample segments 1 and 2 consisted of landline random-digit dialing (RDD) samples drawn using standard list-assisted methods, where telephone numbers were drawn from all active blocks in the continental US. Cell sample from segment 3 was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers. These RDD samples, both landline and cell, were disproportionately-stratified by county based on estimated incidences of African-American and Hispanic respondents.

The landline and cell callback samples used for segments 4-8 were drawn from recent PSRAI surveys. Callback sample was chosen to maximize the likelihood of reaching target group respondents.

Questionnaire Development and Testing

The questionnaire was developed by the Pew Social Trends & Demographics Project. In order to improve the quality of the data, the questionnaire was pretested twice with a small number of respondents using listed telephone numbers. The monitored pretest interviews were conducted using experienced interviewers who could best judge the quality of the answers given and the degree to which respondents understood the questions. Some final changes were made to the questionnaire based on the monitored pretest interviews.

Contact Procedures

Interviews were conducted from October 1-21, 2010. As many as 7 attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. Sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Each phone number received at least one daytime call.

The introduction and screening procedures differed depending on the sample segment. For each contacted household in sample segment 1, interviewers asked to speak with either the youngest male or youngest female currently at home based on a random rotation. If no male/female was available at the time of the call, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult of the opposite sex. This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender when combined with cell sample. In sample segment 2, interviewers then asked if the person was age 18 to 64. If they were, they proceeded with the main interview. If not, that piece of sample was screened-out as ineligible.

Sample segment 3 included interviews with all adults on cell phones. This segment was administered a standard cell phone screener which simply confirmed that the person was an adult and in a safe place to talk before continuing with the main interview.

For sample segments 4 and 6, interviewers started by asking to talk with the person in the household who had previously completed a telephone interview. The person was identified by age and gender. After the target respondent was on the phone, they were administered a short screener to see if they qualified for any of the target groups. Those who did not were screened out as ineligible.

Callback cell sample segments 5, 7 and 8 were administered the screening interview. Those who qualified in one of the appropriate target groups continued with the main interview. Others were screened out as ineligible.

WEIGHTING AND ANALYSIS

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to adjust for effects of the sample design and to compensate for patterns of nonresponse that might bias results. The weighting was accomplished in multiple stages to account for the different sample segments as well as the oversampling of certain groups. Weighting also balanced sample demographic distributions to match known population parameters.

The first-stage weight is the product of five different adjustments that were made to the different sample segments. These adjustments are summarized in the following table.

Table 2: Adjustments made in the first-stage weight

| <u>Variable name</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Sample Segments</u> |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| SAMPWT | RDD Sample design weight. Corrects for disproportionately-stratified RDD samples. | 1-3 |
| OSADJUST1 | Adjustment to account for oversampling through screening of 18-64 year olds in segment 2. | 1,2 |
| OSADJUST2 | Adjustment to account for oversampling through screening of three target groups in segments 4-8 (CPOs, DSPs and NMPs). | 1,3-8 |
| PSA | Probability of Selection Adjustment. Corrects for different probabilities of within household selection based on the number of eligible household members. | 1,2 |
| PUA | Phone Use Adjustment. Adjusts for the overlapping cell and landline sample frames. | 1-3 |

This first-stage weight (WEIGHT1) was used as an input weight for the demographic raking. The data was raked, by form, to current population parameters for: sex by age; sex by education; sex by marital status; age by education; race/ethnicity; number of adults in the household; number of children in the household; census region; population density, household telephone usage.

The telephone usage parameter was derived from an analysis of recently available National Health Interview Survey data⁴¹. The population density parameter is county-based and was derived from Census 2000 data. All other weighting parameters were derived from the Census Bureau's 2009 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

This stage of weighting, which incorporated each respondent's first-stage weight, was accomplished using Sample Balancing, a special iterative sample weighting program that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using a statistical technique called the Deming Algorithm. The raking corrects for differential non-response that is related to particular demographic characteristics of the sample. This weight ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the population. Table 3 compares weighted and unweighted sample demographics to population parameters.

⁴¹ Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July-December, 2008. National Center for Health Statistics. May 2009.

Table 3: Sample Demographics

| | <u>Parameter</u> | <u>Unweighted</u> | <u>Weighted</u> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <u>Gender</u> | | | |
| | Male | 48.5% | 48.7% |
| | Female | 51.5% | 51.3% |
| <u>Age</u> | | | |
| | 18-24 | 12.6% | 11.9% |
| | 25-34 | 17.8% | 16.3% |
| | 35-44 | 18.2% | 17.4% |
| | 45-54 | 19.6% | 20.3% |
| | 55-64 | 15.1% | 16.5% |
| | 65+ | 16.6% | 15.6% |
| <u>Education</u> | | | |
| | Less than HS Graduate | 14.1% | 11.8% |
| | HS Graduate | 34.7% | 33.1% |
| | Some College | 24.1% | 25.0% |
| | College Graduate | 27.1% | 29.4% |
| <u>Race/Ethnicity</u> | | | |
| | White/not Hispanic | 68.8% | 67.3% |
| | Black/not Hispanic | 11.5% | 11.7% |
| | Hispanic | 13.7% | 13.3% |
| | Other/not Hispanic | 6.0% | 6.3% |
| <u>Region</u> | | | |
| | Northeast | 18.5% | 18.9% |
| | Midwest | 22.0% | 20.9% |
| | South | 36.8% | 38.5% |
| | West | 22.7% | 21.8% |
| <u>County Pop. Density</u> | | | |
| | 1 - Lowest | 20.1% | 19.0% |
| | 2 | 20.0% | 20.1% |
| | 3 | 20.1% | 20.5% |
| | 4 | 20.2% | 20.6% |
| | 5 - Highest | 19.6% | 19.9% |
| <u>Household Phone Use</u> | | | |
| | LLO | 11.0% | 9.2% |
| | Dual - few, some cell | 46.2% | 45.7% |
| | Dual - most cell | 17.4% | 18.2% |
| | CPO | 25.4% | 26.2% |

continued...

Table 3: Sample Demographics (continued)

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <u># of adults in HH</u> | | | |
| One | 16.9% | 24.4% | 18.3% |
| Two | 54.6% | 49.5% | 53.5% |
| Three+ | 28.5% | 26.1% | 28.2% |
| <u># of kids in HH</u> | | | |
| None | 64.2% | 57.6% | 62.6% |
| One | 16.4% | 17.9% | 16.3% |
| Two+ | 19.4% | 23.8% | 20.4% |
| <u>Marital Status</u> | | | |
| Married | 55.0% | 48.5% | 52.9% |
| Widowed | 6.3% | 4.2% | 5.7% |
| Divorced | 10.3% | 13.0% | 10.7% |
| Separated | 2.3% | 2.6% | 2.6% |
| Never married | 26.1% | 31.1% | 27.5% |

Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. PSRAI calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.40.

PSRAI calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size n , with each case having a weight, w_i as:

$$deff = \frac{n \sum_{i=1}^n w_i^2}{\left(\sum_{i=1}^n w_i \right)^2} \quad \text{formula 1}$$

In a wide range of situations, the adjusted standard error of a statistic should be calculated by multiplying the usual formula by the square root of the design effect (\sqrt{deff}). Thus, the formula for computing the 95% confidence interval around a percentage is:

$$\hat{p} \pm \left(\sqrt{deff} \times 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \right) \quad \text{formula 2}$$

where \hat{p} is the sample estimate and n is the unweighted number of sample cases in the group being considered.

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample—the one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is ± 2.6 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 2.6 percentage points away from their true values in the population. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as respondent selection bias, question wording and reporting inaccuracy may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude. Table 4 shows design effects and margins of error for key subgroups.

Table 4: Design Effects and Margins of Sampling Error

| | Sample Size | Design Effect | Margin of Error |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Total Sample | 2,691 | 1.95 | 2.6 percentage points |
| Form 1 | 1,327 | 1.96 | 3.8 percentage points |
| Form 2 | 1,364 | 1.94 | 3.7 percentage points |
| Cohabiting parents | 117 | 1.62 | 11.5 percentage points |
| Divorced/Separated parents | 197 | 1.53 | 8.6 percentage points |
| Never married parents | 174 | 1.53 | 9.2 percentage points |

RESPONSE RATE

Table 5a reports the disposition of all sampled telephone numbers ever dialed from the original telephone number samples. The response rate estimates the fraction of all eligible sample that was ultimately interviewed. At PSRAI it is calculated by taking the product of three component rates:⁴²

- Contact rate – the proportion of working numbers where a request for interview was made⁴³
- Cooperation rate – the proportion of contacted numbers where a consent for interview was at least initially obtained, versus those refused
- Completion rate – the proportion of initially cooperating and eligible interviews that were completed

Table 5b reports the sample disposition in standard Pew format.

⁴² PSRAI's disposition codes and reporting are consistent with the American Association for Public Opinion Research standards.

⁴³ PSRAI assumes that 75 percent of cases that result in a constant disposition of "No answer" or "Busy" are actually not working numbers.

Table 5a: Sample Disposition

| Seg 1 - LL RDD 18+ | Seg 2 - LL RDD 18-64 | Seg 3 - Cell RDD 18+ | Seg 4,6 - LL Callback | Seg 5,7,8 - Cell Callback | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9900 | 58871 | 19975 | 2305 | 2720 | T Total Numbers Dialed |
| 518 | 1994 | 366 | 30 | 26 | OF Non-residential |
| 452 | 3306 | 17 | 16 | 1 | OF Computer/Fax |
| 1 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 2 | OF Cell phone |
| 5088 | 29399 | 7237 | 203 | 279 | OF Other not working |
| 749 | 5983 | 329 | 86 | 18 | UH Additional projected not working |
| 3093 | 18180 | 12027 | 1969 | 2394 | Working numbers |
| 31.2% | 30.9% | 60.2% | 85.4% | 88.0% | Working Rate |
| 250 | 1994 | 110 | 29 | 6 | UH No Answer / Busy |
| 497 | 5742 | 2670 | 676 | 634 | UO _{NC} Voice Mail |
| 5 | 232 | 4 | 2 | 1 | UO _{NC} Other Non-Contact |
| 2341 | 10212 | 9243 | 1262 | 1753 | Contacted numbers |
| 75.7% | 56.2% | 76.9% | 64.1% | 73.2% | Contact Rate |
| 301 | 3260 | 1761 | 316 | 302 | UO _R Callback |
| 1564 | 5021 | 5479 | 417 | 569 | UO _R Refusal |
| 476 | 1931 | 2003 | 529 | 882 | Cooperating numbers |
| 20.3% | 18.9% | 21.7% | 41.9% | 50.3% | Cooperation Rate |
| 37 | 228 | 110 | 2 | 6 | IN1 Language Barrier |
| 0 | 0 | 850 | 0 | 0 | IN2 Child's cell phone |
| 0 | 625 | 0 | 468 | 715 | IN2 Screen out |
| 439 | 1078 | 1043 | 59 | 161 | Eligible numbers |
| 92.2% | 55.8% | 52.1% | 11.2% | 18.3% | Eligibility Rate |
| 34 | 22 | 33 | 0 | 0 | R Break-off |
| 405 | 1056 | 1010 | 59 | 161 | I Completes |
| 92.3% | 98.0% | 96.8% | 100.0% | 100.0% | Completion Rate |
| 14.2% | 10.4% | 16.1% | 26.9% | 36.8% | Response Rate |

Table 5b: Sample Disposition

| Seg 1 - LL RDD 18+ | Seg 2 - LL RDD 18-64 | Seg 3 - Cell RDD 18+ | Seg 4,6 - LL Callback | Seg 5,7,8 - Cell Callback | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 405 | 1056 | 1010 | 59 | 161 | I=Completes |
| 1899 | 8303 | 7273 | 733 | 871 | R=Refusal and breakoff |
| 497 | 5742 | 2670 | 676 | 634 | NC=Non contact |
| 37 | 228 | 110 | 2 | 6 | O=Other |
| 6059 | 34708 | 7620 | 251 | 308 | OF=Business/computer/not working/child's cell phone |
| 1003 | 8209 | 442 | 116 | 25 | UH/UO=Unknown household/Unknown other |
| 0.32 | 0.31 | 0.59 | 0.85 | 0.84 | AAPOR's $e=(I+R+NC+O)/(I+R+NC+O+OF)$ |
| 12.8% | 5.9% | 8.9% | 3.8% | 9.5% | AAPOR $RR3=I/[I+R+NC+O+(e*UH/UO)]$ |

Appendix 4: Additional Demographic Tables

Living Arrangements, Persons Ages 18 and Older

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All | 114,673,823 | 132,914,000 | 162,435,820 | 184,689,375 | 209,299,602 | 230,169,098 |
| Living in group quarters | 4,466,908 | 5,415,367 | 5,479,960 | 6,387,045 | 7,509,281 | 8,061,601 |
| Living alone | 7,024,648 | 11,136,500 | 18,183,180 | 22,348,840 | 27,204,887 | 31,398,591 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 27,007,779 | 32,060,867 | 39,387,740 | 43,159,072 | 48,986,121 | 52,491,326 |
| Living with spouse and child | 53,342,087 | 56,338,533 | 59,766,920 | 61,512,096 | 64,413,775 | 62,066,090 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 6,711,518 | 8,352,400 | 11,288,000 | 14,755,592 | 18,782,600 | 22,591,835 |
| Living with another family member | 13,051,780 | 15,820,700 | 20,247,660 | 23,812,693 | 24,683,858 | 32,714,536 |
| Living with non-family members | 3,069,103 | 3,789,633 | 8,082,360 | 12,714,037 | 17,719,080 | 20,845,119 |
| White | 99,965,689 | 114,328,966 | 133,175,180 | 144,228,332 | 150,488,985 | 157,560,830 |
| Living in group quarters | 3,804,380 | 4,682,167 | 4,358,760 | 4,604,843 | 4,894,449 | 5,019,096 |
| Living alone | 6,153,290 | 9,663,333 | 15,329,880 | 18,650,476 | 21,552,553 | 23,512,015 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 24,312,391 | 29,062,933 | 35,542,540 | 38,373,787 | 41,778,128 | 43,427,541 |
| Living with spouse and child | 47,374,047 | 49,095,533 | 49,459,460 | 48,706,082 | 46,147,599 | 42,132,962 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 5,280,123 | 6,084,067 | 7,220,060 | 8,696,419 | 10,172,656 | 11,862,055 |
| Living with another family member | 10,703,407 | 12,726,033 | 14,885,620 | 15,758,069 | 13,877,964 | 17,730,642 |
| Living with non-family members | 2,338,051 | 3,014,900 | 6,378,860 | 9,438,656 | 12,065,636 | 13,876,519 |
| Black | 10,690,392 | 12,788,566 | 16,784,920 | 19,889,449 | 23,224,335 | 26,525,609 |
| Living in group quarters | 477,202 | 558,300 | 751,140 | 1,142,433 | 1,574,497 | 1,660,887 |
| Living alone | 703,101 | 1,175,567 | 1,976,060 | 2,440,342 | 3,221,637 | 4,245,902 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 2,165,994 | 2,151,433 | 2,118,660 | 2,137,132 | 2,593,570 | 3,020,496 |
| Living with spouse and child | 3,856,627 | 4,386,733 | 4,810,300 | 4,777,233 | 5,024,337 | 4,605,543 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 1,145,390 | 1,767,500 | 2,886,360 | 3,880,649 | 4,627,981 | 5,054,182 |
| Living with another family member | 1,736,733 | 2,175,333 | 3,293,180 | 4,103,776 | 4,258,362 | 5,782,461 |
| Living with non-family members | 605,345 | 573,700 | 949,220 | 1,407,884 | 1,923,951 | 2,156,138 |
| Hispanic | 3,097,331 | 4,294,633 | 8,954,540 | 14,204,428 | 22,956,194 | 30,820,211 |
| Living in group quarters | 121,841 | 92,200 | 244,380 | 441,646 | 663,252 | 872,050 |
| Living alone | 109,383 | 191,133 | 590,600 | 814,597 | 1,288,310 | 2,206,056 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 412,247 | 606,267 | 1,174,980 | 1,695,000 | 2,565,771 | 3,464,195 |
| Living with spouse and child | 1,681,081 | 2,188,967 | 3,968,240 | 5,417,680 | 8,603,410 | 10,132,049 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 225,421 | 395,633 | 918,440 | 1,660,345 | 2,841,716 | 4,226,290 |
| Living with another family member | 466,582 | 702,233 | 1,532,720 | 2,839,114 | 4,484,402 | 6,516,473 |
| Living with non-family members | 80,776 | 118,200 | 525,180 | 1,336,046 | 2,509,333 | 3,403,098 |

(continued)

Living Arrangements, Persons Ages 18 and Older (continued)

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Less than High School | 64,691,490 | 58,618,265 | 51,615,400 | 38,175,734 | 34,259,834 | 30,814,656 |
| Living in group quarters | 2,132,527 | 1,905,967 | 1,761,080 | 1,762,650 | 2,006,720 | 1,910,668 |
| Living alone | 4,571,354 | 6,165,033 | 6,940,240 | 5,657,033 | 4,657,857 | 3,995,000 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 17,158,288 | 16,156,833 | 14,181,940 | 9,373,209 | 6,769,959 | 5,071,218 |
| Living with spouse and child | 27,095,735 | 21,354,933 | 15,405,260 | 9,444,214 | 8,157,604 | 6,824,509 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 5,040,198 | 5,148,333 | 5,077,940 | 4,370,550 | 4,319,865 | 4,469,066 |
| Living with another family member | 6,967,045 | 6,483,033 | 6,514,980 | 5,485,864 | 5,697,661 | 5,822,860 |
| Living with non-family members | 1,726,343 | 1,404,133 | 1,733,960 | 2,082,214 | 2,650,168 | 2,721,335 |
| High School Graduate | 30,619,438 | 44,038,867 | 59,171,180 | 62,925,001 | 83,966,612 | 86,492,566 |
| Living in group quarters | 1,149,634 | 1,696,100 | 1,812,620 | 1,827,714 | 3,198,932 | 3,836,454 |
| Living alone | 1,227,781 | 2,498,133 | 5,009,960 | 6,546,723 | 10,104,767 | 11,239,076 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 5,711,826 | 9,047,000 | 13,322,100 | 15,049,150 | 19,917,577 | 20,047,345 |
| Living with spouse and child | 16,759,195 | 21,875,233 | 24,435,320 | 21,502,164 | 24,683,674 | 20,283,471 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 1,126,139 | 2,215,067 | 3,958,540 | 5,411,538 | 8,406,066 | 9,386,323 |
| Living with another family member | 4,028,064 | 5,760,567 | 8,110,440 | 8,879,724 | 11,057,857 | 14,385,812 |
| Living with non-family members | 616,799 | 946,767 | 2,522,200 | 3,707,988 | 6,597,739 | 7,314,085 |
| Some College | 11,146,963 | 16,998,300 | 28,232,960 | 49,378,348 | 44,519,743 | 54,731,681 |
| Living in group quarters | 867,497 | 1,436,200 | 1,535,780 | 2,344,167 | 1,752,081 | 1,789,705 |
| Living alone | 645,185 | 1,222,567 | 2,966,500 | 5,163,042 | 5,387,159 | 7,162,803 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 2,389,141 | 3,625,100 | 5,874,660 | 9,990,713 | 9,551,832 | 11,337,063 |
| Living with spouse and child | 5,125,073 | 6,624,100 | 10,138,740 | 17,136,817 | 14,301,346 | 14,737,058 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 362,109 | 623,733 | 1,494,500 | 3,610,887 | 3,821,776 | 5,529,342 |
| Living with another family member | 1,380,156 | 2,623,767 | 4,030,840 | 7,003,176 | 5,203,309 | 8,350,241 |
| Living with non-family members | 377,802 | 842,833 | 2,191,940 | 4,129,546 | 4,502,240 | 5,825,469 |
| College Graduate | 8,215,932 | 13,258,567 | 23,416,280 | 34,210,292 | 46,553,413 | 58,130,195 |
| Living in group quarters | 317,250 | 377,100 | 370,480 | 452,514 | 551,548 | 524,774 |
| Living alone | 580,328 | 1,250,767 | 3,266,480 | 4,982,042 | 7,055,104 | 9,001,712 |
| Living with spouse, no child | 1,748,524 | 3,231,933 | 6,009,040 | 8,746,000 | 12,746,753 | 16,035,700 |
| Living with spouse and child | 4,362,084 | 6,484,267 | 9,787,600 | 13,428,901 | 17,271,151 | 20,221,052 |
| Living with child, no spouse | 183,072 | 365,267 | 757,020 | 1,362,617 | 2,234,893 | 3,207,104 |
| Living with another family member | 676,515 | 953,333 | 1,591,400 | 2,443,929 | 2,725,031 | 4,155,623 |
| Living with non-family members | 348,159 | 595,900 | 1,634,260 | 2,794,289 | 3,968,933 | 4,984,230 |

Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Other races are included in the 'All' category. Parents include biological, adoptive and stepparents. People of any age can be classified as 'children'.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

Marital Status, Persons Ages 18 and Older

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All | 114,673,823 | 132,914,000 | 162,435,820 | 184,689,375 | 209,299,602 | 230,169,098 |
| Married | 82,818,413 | 91,161,800 | 101,201,940 | 108,042,926 | 120,028,275 | 120,745,686 |
| Separated or divorced | 5,325,047 | 7,696,200 | 14,702,340 | 20,663,978 | 26,320,631 | 31,112,977 |
| Widowed | 9,882,496 | 11,807,733 | 13,363,180 | 14,376,119 | 14,656,291 | 15,093,308 |
| Never married | 16,647,867 | 22,248,267 | 33,168,360 | 41,606,352 | 48,294,405 | 63,217,127 |
| White | 99,965,689 | 114,328,967 | 133,175,180 | 144,228,332 | 150,488,985 | 157,560,830 |
| Married | 73,525,373 | 80,260,466 | 86,288,340 | 88,930,851 | 91,228,180 | 88,321,017 |
| Separated or divorced | 3,859,646 | 5,610,867 | 10,687,280 | 14,896,562 | 18,296,384 | 21,162,871 |
| Widowed | 8,489,382 | 10,094,967 | 11,150,480 | 11,755,931 | 11,468,686 | 11,438,869 |
| Never married | 14,091,288 | 18,362,667 | 25,049,080 | 28,644,988 | 29,495,735 | 36,638,073 |
| Black | 10,690,392 | 12,788,567 | 16,784,920 | 19,889,449 | 23,224,335 | 26,525,609 |
| Married | 6,476,026 | 6,987,567 | 7,304,700 | 7,495,615 | 8,879,998 | 8,552,392 |
| Separated or divorced | 1,255,992 | 1,701,000 | 2,788,180 | 3,557,825 | 4,114,027 | 4,614,190 |
| Widowed | 1,162,063 | 1,378,100 | 1,595,140 | 1,719,492 | 1,745,813 | 1,747,835 |
| Never married | 1,796,311 | 2,721,900 | 5,096,900 | 7,116,517 | 8,484,497 | 11,611,192 |
| Hispanic | 3,097,331 | 4,294,634 | 8,954,540 | 14,204,428 | 22,956,194 | 30,820,211 |
| Married | 2,215,532 | 2,941,700 | 5,417,940 | 7,794,952 | 12,635,632 | 15,404,415 |
| Separated or divorced | 172,135 | 305,567 | 961,640 | 1,713,755 | 2,716,249 | 3,851,653 |
| Widowed | 172,855 | 241,800 | 422,540 | 591,546 | 840,832 | 1,171,177 |
| Never married | 536,809 | 805,567 | 2,152,420 | 4,104,175 | 6,763,481 | 10,392,966 |
| Less than High School | 64,691,490 | 58,618,266 | 51,615,400 | 38,175,734 | 34,259,834 | 30,814,656 |
| Married | 45,802,863 | 38,869,233 | 30,436,880 | 19,881,946 | 16,968,716 | 13,419,295 |
| Separated or divorced | 3,520,507 | 4,057,933 | 4,943,980 | 4,342,036 | 4,167,860 | 4,170,924 |
| Widowed | 7,771,222 | 8,353,100 | 8,204,400 | 6,643,006 | 5,014,700 | 4,044,081 |
| Never married | 7,596,898 | 7,338,000 | 8,030,140 | 7,308,746 | 8,108,558 | 9,180,356 |
| High School Graduate | 30,619,438 | 44,038,867 | 59,171,180 | 62,925,001 | 83,966,612 | 86,492,566 |
| Married | 23,068,768 | 31,802,267 | 38,416,560 | 37,649,916 | 47,219,031 | 42,679,366 |
| Separated or divorced | 1,165,772 | 2,353,133 | 5,422,440 | 7,341,625 | 11,438,631 | 12,759,446 |
| Widowed | 1,240,741 | 2,128,600 | 3,170,540 | 4,645,195 | 6,256,885 | 6,776,153 |
| Never married | 5,144,157 | 7,754,867 | 12,161,640 | 13,288,265 | 19,052,065 | 24,277,601 |
| Some College | 11,146,963 | 16,998,300 | 28,232,960 | 49,378,348 | 44,519,743 | 54,731,681 |
| Married | 7,710,056 | 10,547,100 | 16,306,820 | 27,852,990 | 24,969,758 | 27,222,031 |
| Separated or divorced | 408,686 | 778,000 | 2,553,220 | 5,877,042 | 6,009,308 | 7,979,013 |
| Widowed | 571,147 | 815,567 | 1,195,400 | 1,985,464 | 1,816,462 | 2,268,581 |
| Never married | 2,457,074 | 4,857,633 | 8,177,520 | 13,662,852 | 11,724,215 | 17,262,056 |
| College Graduate | 8,215,932 | 13,258,567 | 23,416,280 | 34,210,292 | 46,553,413 | 58,130,195 |
| Married | 6,236,726 | 9,943,200 | 16,041,680 | 22,658,074 | 30,870,770 | 37,424,994 |
| Separated or divorced | 230,082 | 507,133 | 1,782,700 | 3,103,275 | 4,704,832 | 6,203,594 |
| Widowed | 299,386 | 510,467 | 792,840 | 1,102,454 | 1,568,244 | 2,004,493 |
| Never married | 1,449,738 | 2,297,767 | 4,799,060 | 7,346,489 | 9,409,567 | 12,497,114 |

Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Other races are included in the 'All' category.
Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

Cohabitation, Household Heads Ages 18 and Older

| | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| All Household Heads | 91,729,234 | 105,519,176 | 113,062,077 |
| Total Cohabiting | 3,155,400 | 5,218,492 | 6,212,762 |
| Race | | | |
| White | 2,317,162 | 3,608,075 | 4,265,440 |
| Black | 439,625 | 689,502 | 673,165 |
| Hispanic | 310,835 | 663,712 | 977,237 |
| Educational Attainment | | | |
| Less than high school | 576,884 | 765,820 | 781,519 |
| High school graduate | 1,093,020 | 2,192,535 | 2,382,418 |
| Some college | 928,901 | 1,203,771 | 1,650,247 |
| College graduate | 556,595 | 1,056,366 | 1,398,578 |

Note: See Methodology for more details about the limitations of cohabitation data. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Other races are included in the 'All' category.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

PewResearchCenter

Household Living Arrangements, Children Ages 17 and Younger

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| All | 64,618,909 | 70,131,866 | 64,426,580 | 63,418,253 | 72,122,304 | 73,890,630 |
| No parent in the household | 2,449,043 | 2,442,967 | 2,328,780 | 2,443,350 | 3,361,365 | 3,315,816 |
| 1 parent in the household | 6,000,087 | 9,864,133 | 12,564,240 | 13,082,004 | 15,959,912 | 18,672,497 |
| 2 married parents in the household | 56,169,779 | 57,824,767 | 49,533,560 | 45,760,620 | 49,021,335 | 47,370,385 |
| 2 cohabiting parents in the household | --- | --- | --- | 2,132,279 | 3,779,692 | 4,531,932 |
| White | 53,169,861 | 56,224,000 | 47,331,020 | 43,785,072 | 44,038,138 | 41,402,829 |
| No parent in the household | 1,327,237 | 1,448,800 | 1,185,560 | 979,241 | 1,139,208 | 1,205,144 |
| 1 parent in the household | 3,732,634 | 5,805,233 | 6,543,060 | 6,282,207 | 6,975,877 | 7,503,891 |
| 2 married parents in the household | 48,109,990 | 48,969,967 | 39,602,400 | 35,316,605 | 33,976,443 | 30,519,138 |
| 2 cohabiting parents in the household | --- | --- | --- | 1,207,019 | 1,946,610 | 2,174,656 |
| Black | 8,074,560 | 9,543,933 | 9,493,120 | 9,299,007 | 10,482,219 | 10,248,728 |
| No parent in the household | 946,721 | 804,133 | 755,020 | 887,104 | 1,129,032 | 979,544 |
| 1 parent in the household | 1,869,379 | 3,312,433 | 4,363,360 | 4,498,348 | 5,060,543 | 5,378,915 |
| 2 married parents in the household | 5,258,460 | 5,427,367 | 4,374,740 | 3,459,444 | 3,591,922 | 3,260,306 |
| 2 cohabiting parents in the household | --- | --- | --- | 454,111 | 700,722 | 629,963 |
| Hispanic | 2,696,378 | 3,494,034 | 5,868,320 | 7,632,423 | 12,248,286 | 16,002,265 |
| No parent in the household | 129,168 | 135,767 | 288,500 | 454,744 | 834,849 | 826,151 |
| 1 parent in the household | 321,452 | 621,567 | 1,376,200 | 1,859,892 | 2,832,489 | 4,365,063 |
| 2 married parents in the household | 2,245,758 | 2,736,700 | 4,203,620 | 4,927,313 | 7,717,954 | 9,407,779 |
| 2 cohabiting parents in the household | --- | --- | --- | 390,474 | 862,994 | 1,403,272 |

Note: See Methodology for more details about the limitations of cohabitation data. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Other races are included in the 'All' category. Parents include biological, adoptive and stepparents. Children with 'no parent in the household' include those living in group quarters.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

Parent's Marital Status, Children Ages 17 and Younger Living with a Parent

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2008 |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| All | 62,169,866 | 67,688,900 | 62,097,800 | 60,974,903 | 68,760,939 | 70,574,814 |
| Married | 57,310,231 | 59,217,400 | 50,170,260 | 46,579,144 | 50,264,771 | 49,137,938 |
| Separated or divorced | 3,082,300 | 5,405,967 | 8,214,160 | 9,033,133 | 10,436,717 | 10,623,856 |
| Widowed | 1,551,044 | 2,023,167 | 1,329,460 | 838,591 | 810,992 | 757,619 |
| Never married | 226,291 | 1,042,367 | 2,383,920 | 4,524,035 | 7,248,459 | 10,055,401 |
| White | 51,842,624 | 54,775,200 | 46,145,460 | 42,805,831 | 42,898,930 | 40,197,685 |
| Married | 48,913,115 | 49,945,733 | 39,932,640 | 35,668,853 | 34,396,807 | 31,140,141 |
| Separated or divorced | 1,791,461 | 3,188,833 | 4,982,560 | 5,568,430 | 6,149,624 | 5,925,821 |
| Widowed | 1,080,271 | 1,379,067 | 764,700 | 450,831 | 409,012 | 406,146 |
| Never married | 57,777 | 261,567 | 465,560 | 1,117,717 | 1,943,487 | 2,725,577 |
| Black | 7,127,839 | 8,739,800 | 8,738,100 | 8,411,903 | 9,353,187 | 9,269,184 |
| Married | 5,520,110 | 5,722,100 | 4,543,320 | 3,671,453 | 3,910,894 | 3,601,780 |
| Separated or divorced | 1,083,969 | 1,800,700 | 2,222,800 | 2,008,008 | 1,977,213 | 1,766,717 |
| Widowed | 373,303 | 518,133 | 401,760 | 212,912 | 177,466 | 138,146 |
| Never married | 150,457 | 698,867 | 1,570,220 | 2,519,530 | 3,287,614 | 3,762,541 |
| Hispanic | 2,567,210 | 3,358,267 | 5,579,820 | 7,177,679 | 11,413,437 | 15,176,114 |
| Married | 2,301,331 | 2,834,367 | 4,307,840 | 5,117,966 | 8,089,802 | 10,022,346 |
| Separated or divorced | 176,173 | 357,233 | 848,220 | 1,191,595 | 1,675,276 | 2,216,338 |
| Widowed | 74,541 | 98,867 | 123,220 | 124,715 | 149,758 | 144,813 |
| Never married | 15,165 | 67,800 | 300,540 | 743,403 | 1,498,601 | 2,792,617 |

Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Other races are included in the 'All' category. Parents include biological, adoptive and stepparents. Married parents include those whose spouse may be absent from the household.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data