The National Marriage Project

The National Marriage Project is a nonpartisan, nonsectarian and interdisciplinary initiative located at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. The project is financially supported by the university in cooperation with private foundations.

The Project’s mission is to provide research and analysis on the state of marriage in America and to educate the public on the social, economic and cultural conditions affecting marital success and wellbeing. The National Marriage Project has five goals: (1) annually publish The State of Our Unions, an index of the health of marriage and marital relationships in America; (2) investigate and report on younger adults' attitudes toward marriage; (3) examine the popular media’s portrait of marriage; (4) serve as a clearinghouse resource of research and expertise on marriage; and (5) bring together marriage and family experts to develop strategies for revitalizing marriage.

Leadership

The project is co-directed by two nationally prominent family experts. David Popenoe, Ph.D., a professor of sociology emeritus and former social and behavioral sciences dean at Rutgers, is the author of Life Without Father, Disturbing the Nest, War Over the Family and many other scholarly and popular publications on marriage and family. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Ph.D., an author and social critic, writes extensively on issues of marriage, family and child wellbeing. She is the author of Why There Are No Good Men Left, The Divorce Culture, and the widely acclaimed Atlantic Monthly article “Dan Quayle Was Right.”

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Figure 18. Percentage of High School Seniors Who Agreed or Mostly Agreed with the Statement: “It Is Usually a Good Idea for a Couple to Live Together Before Getting Married in Order to Find Out Whether They Really Get Along,” by Period, United States
We have used the number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried women age 15 and older, rather than the Crude Marriage Rate of marriages per 1,000 population to help avoid the problem of compositional changes in the population, that is, changes which stem merely from there being more or less people in the marriageable ages. Even this more refined measure is somewhat susceptible to compositional changes.

a We have used the number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried women age 15 and older, rather than the Crude Marriage Rate of marriages per 1,000 population to help avoid the problem of compositional changes in the population, that is, changes which stem merely from there being more or less people in the marriageable ages. Even this more refined measure is somewhat susceptible to compositional changes.

b Per 1,000 unmarried women age 14 and older


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### FIGURE 2

Percentage of All Persons Age 15 and Older Who Were Married, by Sex and Race, 1960-2007, United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MALES Total</th>
<th>MALES Blacks</th>
<th>MALES Whites</th>
<th>FEMALES Total</th>
<th>FEMALES Blacks</th>
<th>FEMALES Whites</th>
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<td>60.9</td>
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<td>38.5</td>
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<td>51.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
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</table>

a Includes races other than Black and White.

b In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau expanded its racial categories to permit respondents to identify themselves as belonging to more than one race. This means that racial data computations beginning in 2004 may not be strictly comparable to those of prior years.

FIGURE 3
Percentage of Persons Age 35 through 44 Who Were Married, by Sex, 1960-2007, United States


FIGURE 4
Percentage of Married Persons Age 18 and Older Who Said Their Marriages Were “Very Happy,” by Period, United States

Source: The General Social Survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago. The number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 2,000 except for 2004-06 with about 1,500.
We have used the number of divorces per 1,000 married women age 15 and older, rather than the Crude Divorce Rate of divorces per 1,000 population to help avoid the problem of compositional changes in the population. Even this more refined measure is somewhat susceptible to compositional changes.


Percentage of All Persons Age 15 and Older Who Were Divorced, by Sex and Race, 1960-2007, United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total MALES</th>
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<th></th>
<th>Total FEMALES</th>
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<td>Blacks</td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>Whites</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau expanded its racial categories to permit respondents to identify themselves as belonging to more than one race. This means that racial data computations beginning in 2004 may not be strictly comparable to those of prior years.

b “Divorced” indicates family status at the time of survey. Divorced respondents who later marry are counted as “married.”

**FIGURE 7**
Number of Cohabiting, Unmarried, Adult Couples of the Opposite Sex, by Year, United States


*Prior to 1996, the U.S. Census estimated unmarried-couple households based on two unmarried adults of the opposite sex living in the same household. After 1996, respondents could identify themselves as unmarried partners.

**FIGURE 8**
Fertility Rates, 1960-2006, Number of Births per 1,000 Women Age 15 through 44, United States

a The number of births that an average woman would have if, at each year of age, she experienced the birth rates occurring in the specified year. A total fertility rate of 2,110 represents "replacement level" fertility under current mortality conditions (assuming no net migration).

FIGURE 9
Percentage of Households with a Child or Children Under Age 18, 1960-2007, United States


FIGURE 10
Percentage of Children Under Age 18 Living With a Single Parent, by Year and Race, United States

FIGURE 11
Percentage of Children Under Age 18 Living with Two Married Parents, by Year and Race, United States


Percentage
88 85 77 73 69 68

TOTAL
BLACKS
WHITES

a Total includes Blacks, Whites and all other racial and ethnic groupings.
b In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau expanded its racial categories to permit respondents to identify themselves as belonging to more than one race. This means that racial data computations beginning in 2004 may not be strictly comparable to those of prior years.
c "Married Parents" may be step or natural parents of children in the household.

FIGURE 12
Percentage of Live Births that Were to Unmarried Women, by Year and Race, United States


Percentage
5.3 7.7 10.7 14.2 18.4 22.0 28.0 33.2 38.5

TOTAL
BLACKS
WHITES

Total includes Whites, Blacks and all other racial and ethnic groupings.
**FIGURE 13**
Number of Cohabiting, Unmarried, Adult Couples of the Opposite Sex Living with One Child or More Under Age 15, by Year, United States

* Prior to 1996, the U.S. Census estimated unmarried-couple households based on two unmarried adults of the opposite sex living in the same household. After 1996, respondents could identify themselves as unmarried partners. The Census also identified households with children under 15 until 1996 when they began identifying children under 18.


**FIGURE 14**
Percentage of High School Seniors Who Said Having a Good Marriage and Family Life is “Extremely Important,” by Period, United States

Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000.

Source: Monitoring the Future surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.
FIGURE 15
Percentage of High School Seniors Who Expected to Marry, or Were Married, Who Said It Is “Very Likely” They Will Stay Married to the Same Person for Life, by Period, United States

Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000. From 1976-1980 to 1986-1990, the trend is significantly downward for both girls and boys (p < .01 on a two-tailed test), but after 1986-1990, the trend is significantly upward for boys (p < .01 on a two-tailed test).

Source: Monitoring the Future surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.

FIGURE 16
Percentage of High School Seniors Who Said They Agreed or Mostly Agreed That Most People Will Have Fuller and Happier Lives If They Choose Legal Marriage Rather Than Staying Single or Just Living With Someone, by Period, United States

Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000. The trend for girls is statistically significant (p < .01 on a two-tailed test).

Source: Monitoring the Future surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.
FIGURE 17
Percentage of High School Seniors Who Said Having a Child Without Being Married is Experimenting with a Worthwhile Lifestyle or Not Affecting Anyone Else, by Period, United States

Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000 except for 2001-2004, for which it is about 4,500. The trend for both boys and girls is statistically significant (p < .01 on a two-tailed test).
Source: Monitoring the Future surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.

FIGURE 18
Percentage of High School Seniors Who “Agreed” or “Mostly Agreed” With the Statement That “It Is Usually a Good Idea for a Couple to Live Together Before Getting Married in Order to Find Out Whether They Really Get Along,” by Period, United States

Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000. The overall trend is significantly upward for both girls and boys (p < .01 on a two-tailed test).
Source: Monitoring the Future surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.