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Generation Gap in Values, Behaviors
As Marriage and Parenthood Drift Apart,
Public Is Concerned about Social Impact

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE SUNDAY JULY 1, 2007 12:01AM EDT

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A Social & Demographic Trends Report

Executive Summary

- **A Generation Gap in Behaviors and Values.** Younger adults attach far less moral stigma than do their elders to out-of-wedlock births and cohabitation without marriage. They engage in these behaviors at rates unprecedented in U.S. history. Nearly four-in-ten (36.8%) births in this country are to an unmarried woman. Nearly half (47%) of adults in their 30s and 40s have spent a portion of their lives in a cohabiting relationship.
- **Public Concern over the Delinking of Marriage and Parenthood.** Adults of all ages consider unwed parenting to be a big problem for society. At the same time, however, just four-in-ten (41%) say that children are very important to a successful marriage, compared with 65% of the public who felt this way as recently as 1990.
- **Marriage Remains an Ideal, Albeit a More Elusive One.** Even though a decreasing percentage of the adult population is married, most unmarried adults say they want to marry. Married adults are more satisfied with their lives than are unmarried adults.
- **Children Still Vital to Adult Happiness.** Children may be perceived as less central to marriage, but they are as important as ever to their parents. As a source of adult happiness and fulfillment, children occupy a pedestal matched only by spouses and situated well above that of jobs, career, friends, hobbies and other relatives.
- **Cohabitation Becomes More Prevalent.** With marriage exerting less influence over how adults organize their lives and bear their children, cohabitation is filling some of the vacuum. Today about a half of all nonmarital births are to a cohabiting couple; 15 years ago, only about a third were. Cohabitors are ambivalent about marriage – just under half (44%) say they to want marry; a nearly equal portion (41%) say they aren't sure.
- **Divorce Seen as Preferable to an Unhappy Marriage.** Americans by lopsided margins endorse the mom-and-dad home as the best setting in which to raise children. But by equally lopsided margins, they believe that if married parents are very unhappy with one another, divorce is the best option, both for them and for their children.
- **Racial Patterns are Complex.** Blacks are much less likely than whites to marry and much more likely to have children outside of marriage. However, an equal percentage of both whites and blacks (46% and 44%, respectively) consider it morally wrong to have a child out of wedlock. Hispanics, meantime, place greater importance than either whites or blacks do on children as a key to a successful marriage – even though they have a higher nonmarital birth rate than do whites.
- **Survey Sample and Methods.** These findings are from a telephone survey conducted from February 16 through March 14, 2007 among a randomly-selected, nationally representative sample of 2,020 adults.

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As Marriage and Parenthood Drift Apart, Public Is Concerned about Social Impact

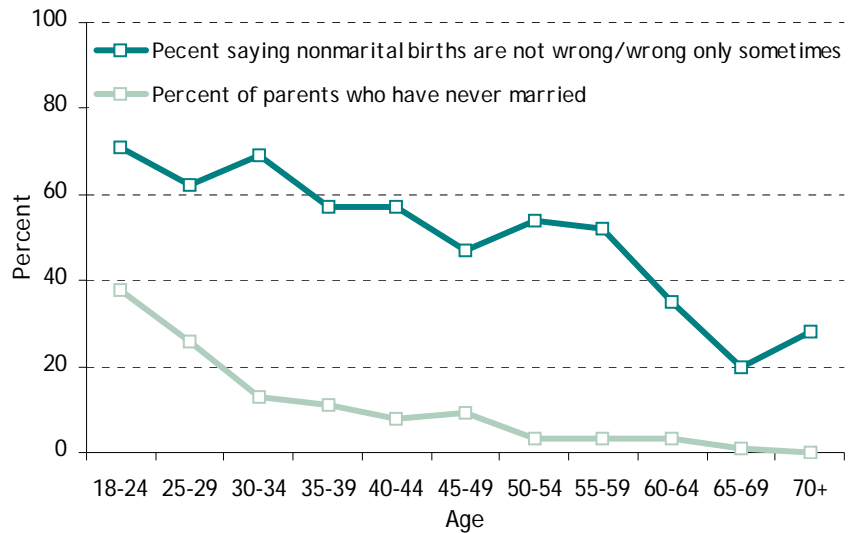
Overview

Americans believe that births to unwed women are a big problem for society, and they take a mixed view at best of cohabitation without marriage. Yet these two nontraditional behaviors have become commonplace among younger adults, who have a different set of moral values from their elders about sex, marriage and parenthood, a new Pew Research Center Survey finds.

This generational values gap helps to explain the decades-long surge in births to unmarried women – which now comprise nearly four-in-ten (37%) births in the United States – as well as the sharp rise in living together without getting married, which, the Pew survey finds, is something that nearly half of all adults in their 30s and 40s have done for at least a portion of their lives.

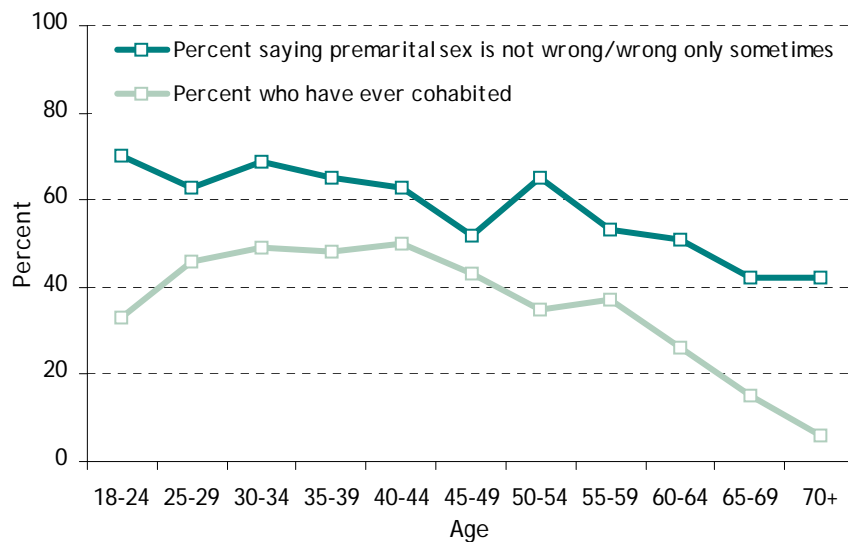
But this generational divide is only part of a

A Generation Gap in Values and Behaviors: Unwed Childbearing



Notes: Percent of never-married parents is based on all parents. Percent saying unwed childbearing is not wrong at all/wrong only sometimes is based on all respondents.

Premarital Sex and Cohabitation



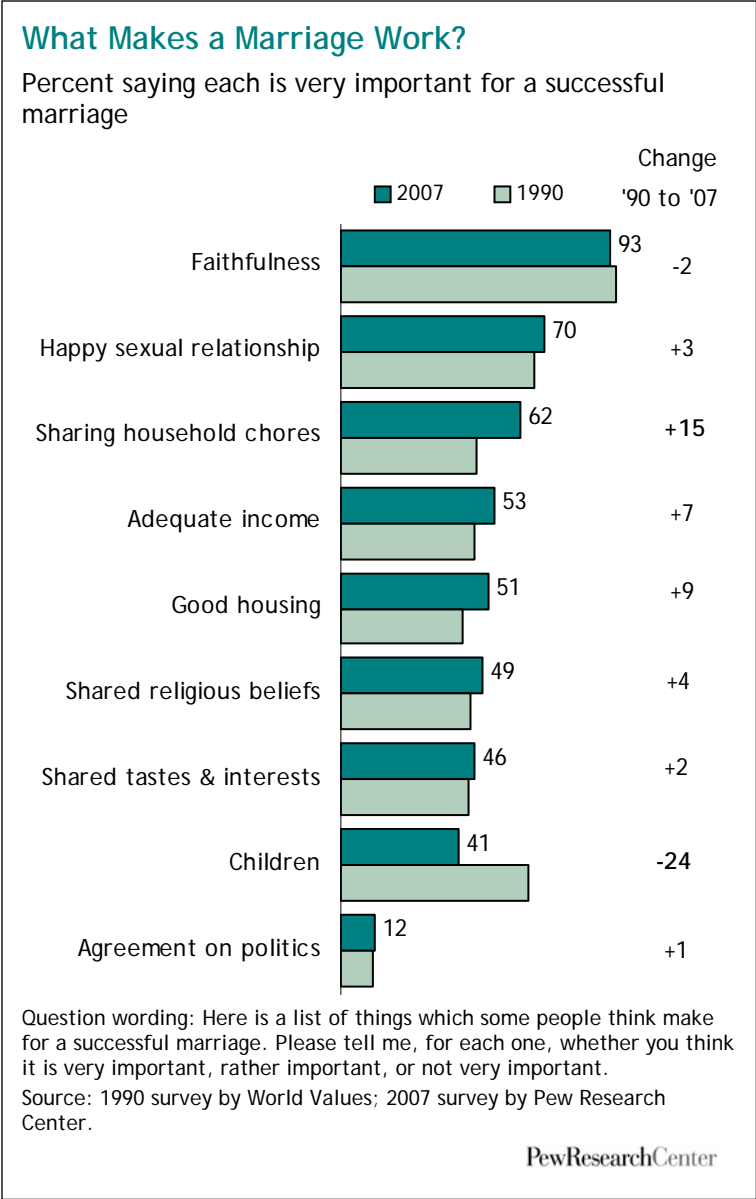
more complex story. Americans of all ages, this survey finds, acknowledge that there has been a distinct weakening of the link between marriage and parenthood. In perhaps the single most striking finding from the survey, just 41% of Americans now say that children are “very important” to a successful marriage, down sharply from the 65% who said this in a 1990 survey.

Indeed, children have fallen to eighth out of nine on a list of items that people associate with successful marriages – well behind “sharing household chores,” “good housing,” “adequate income,” “happy sexual relationship,” and “faithfulness.” Back in 1990, when the American public was given this same list on a World Values Survey, children ranked third in importance.

The new Pew survey also finds that, by a margin of nearly three-to-one, Americans say that the main purpose of marriage is the “mutual happiness and fulfillment” of adults rather than the “bearing and raising of children.”

In downgrading the importance of children to marriage, public opinion both reflects and facilitates the upheavals in marital and parenting patterns that have taken place over the past several decades.

In the United States today, marriage exerts less influence over how adults organize their lives and how children are born and raised than at any time in the nation’s history. Only about half of all adults (ages 18 and older) in the U.S. are married; only about seven-in-ten children live with two parents; and nearly four-in-ten births are to unwed mothers, according to U.S. Census figures. As recently as the early 1970s, more than six-in-ten adults in this country were married; some 85% of children were living with two parents; and just one-birth-in-ten was to an unwed mother.



Americans take a dim view of these trends, the Pew survey finds. More than seven-in-ten (71%) say the growth in births to unwed mothers is a “big problem.” About the same proportion – 69% – says that a child needs both a mother and a father to grow up happily.

Not surprisingly, however, attitudes are much different among those adults who have themselves engaged in these nontraditional behaviors. For example, respondents in the survey who are never-married parents (about 8% of all parents) are less inclined than ever-married parents to see unmarried childbearing as bad for society or morally wrong. They’re also less inclined to say a child needs both a mother and father to grow up happily. Demographically, this group is more likely than ever-married parents to be young, black or Hispanic,¹ less educated, and to have been raised by an unwed parent themselves.

There is another fast-growing group – cohabiters – that has a distinctive set of attitudes and moral codes about these matters. According to the Pew survey, about a third of all adults (and more than four-in-ten adults under age 50) have, at some point in their lives, been in a cohabiting relationship with a person to whom they were not married. This group is less likely than the rest of the adult population to believe that premarital sex is wrong. They’re less prone to say that it’s bad for society that more people are living together without getting married. Demographically, this group is more likely than the rest of the adult population to be younger, black, and secular rather than religious.

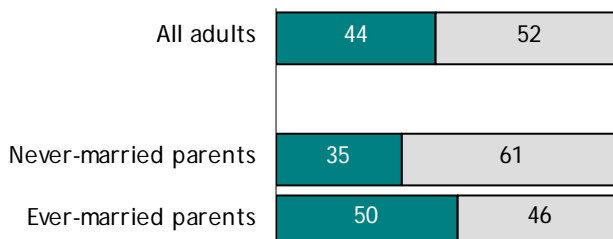
Marriage

But while this survey finds that people in nontraditional marital and parenting situations tend to have attitudes that track with their behaviors, it does *not* show that they place less value than others on marriage as a pathway to personal happiness.

Are Out-of-Wedlock Births Wrong?

Do you think unmarried women having children is ...

■ Always/almost always wrong □ Sometimes/not at all wrong



Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Is Premarital Sex Wrong?

Do you think a man and woman having sexual relations before marriage is...

■ Always/almost always wrong □ Sometimes/not at all wrong



Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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¹ Throughout this report, the term blacks or whites refers to non-Hispanic blacks or whites, respectively. Hispanics are of any race. The survey included an oversample of blacks and Hispanics. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To the contrary, both the never-married parents as well as the cohabiters in our survey tend to be more skeptical than others in the adult population that a person can lead a complete and fulfilled life if he or she remains single. This may reflect the fact that never-married parents as well as cohabiters tend to be less satisfied with their current lives than is the rest of the population. For many of them, marriage appears to represent an ideal – albeit an elusive, unrealized one.

Along these same lines, the survey finds that low income adults are more likely than middle income or affluent adults to cite the ability to meet basic economic needs (in the form of adequate income and good housing) as a key to a successful marriage. Adults with lower socioeconomic status – reflected by either education or income levels – also are less likely than others to marry, perhaps in part because they can't meet this economic bar.

And it's this decline in marriage that is at the heart of the sharp growth in nonmarital childbearing. This trend has not been primarily driven – as some popular wisdom has it – on an increase in births to teenage mothers. To the contrary, those rates have been falling for several decades. Rather the sharp increase in nonmarital births is being driven by the fact that an ever greater percentage of women in their 20s, 30s and older are delaying or forgoing marriage but having children.

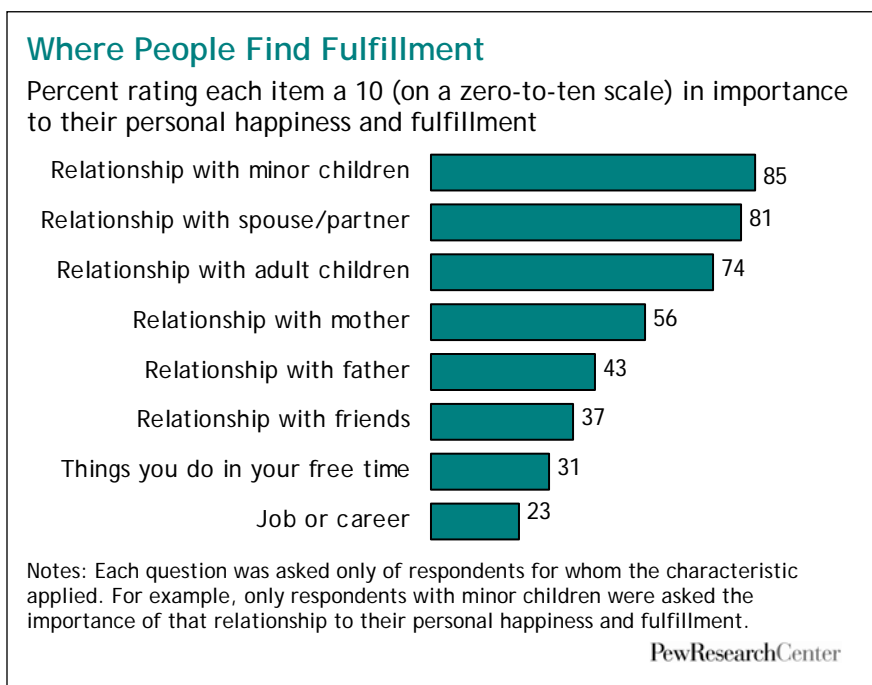
The Pew survey was conducted by telephone from February 16 through March 14, 2007 among a randomly selected, nationally-representative sample of 2,020 adults. It has a margin of sampling error of 3 percentage points.

Children

The survey finds that while children may have become less central to marriage, they are as important as ever to their parents. Asked to weigh how important various aspects of their lives are to their personal happiness and fulfillment, parents in this survey place their relationships with their children on a pedestal rivaled only by their relationships with their spouses – and far above their relationships with their parents, friends, or their

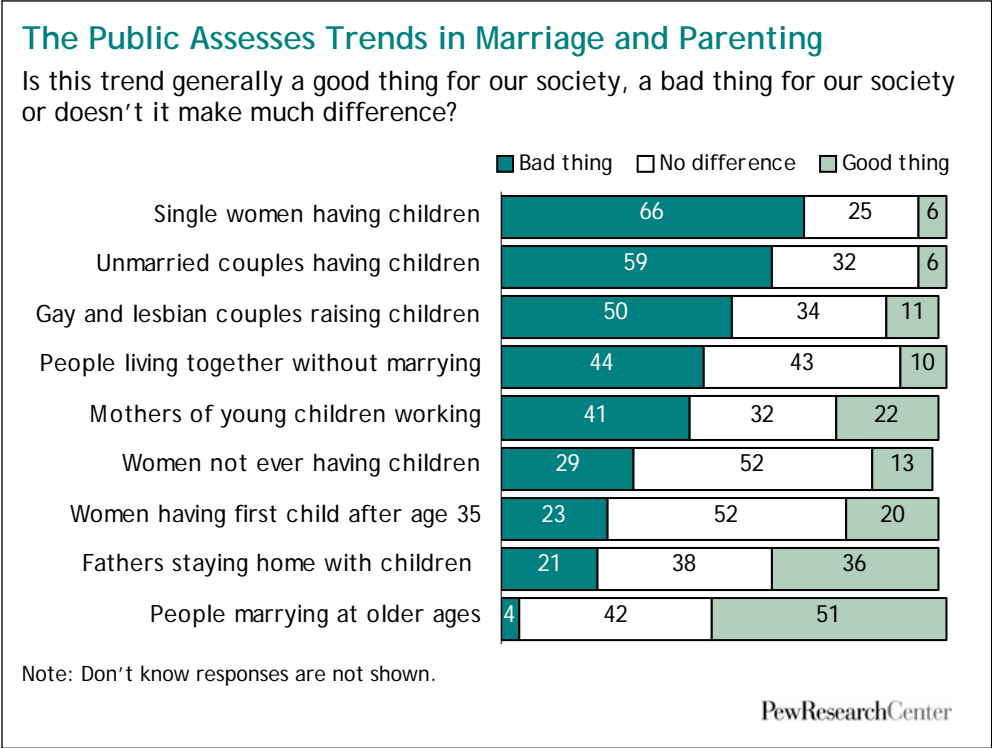
jobs or career. This is true both for married and unmarried parents. In fact, relatively speaking, children are most pre-eminent in the lives of unwed parents.

The survey also finds that Americans retain traditional views about the best family structure in which to raise children. More than two-thirds (69%) say that a child needs both a mother and father to grow up happily. This



question has been posed periodically over the past quarter century,² and – even as the percentage of children who live with both a mother and father has dropped steadily during this time period – public opinion has remained steadfastly in favor of a home with a mom and a dad.

In keeping with these traditional views, the public strongly disapproves of single women having children. Among the various demographic changes that have affected marriage and parenting patterns in recent decades – including more women working outside the home; more people living together without



getting married; more first marriages at a later age; and more unmarried women having children – it's the latter trend that draws the most negative assessments by far.

Two-thirds (66%) of all respondents say that single women having children is bad for society, and nearly as many (59%) say the same about unmarried couples having children. No other social change we asked about in this particular battery drew a thumbs-down from more than half of respondents.

² See the World Values Surveys conducted in the U.S. in 1982, 1990, 1995 and 1999.

Divorce

While the public strongly prefers the traditional mother-and-father home, this endorsement has some clear limits. By a margin of 67% to 19%, Americans say that when there is a marriage in which the parents are very unhappy with one another, their children are better off if the parents get divorced. Similarly, by a margin of 58% to 38%, more Americans agree with the statement that “divorce is painful, but preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage” than agree with the statement that “divorce should be avoided except in an extreme situation.”

Thus, public attitudes toward divorce and single parenting have taken different paths over the past generation. When it comes to divorce, public opinion has become more accepting.³ When it comes to single parenting, public opinion has remained quite negative.

The oddity is that rates of divorce, after more than doubling from 1960 to 1980, have declined by about a third in recent decades, despite this greater public acceptance. On the other hand, the rates of births to unwed mothers have continued to rise, despite the steadfast public disapproval. Some 37% of all births in the U.S. in 2005 were to an unwed mother, up from just 5% in 1960. This rapid growth is not confined to the U.S. Rates of births to unwed mothers also have risen sharply in the United Kingdom and Canada, where they are at about the same levels as they are in the U.S. And they’ve reached even higher levels in Western and Northern European countries such as France, Denmark and Sweden.

When to Untie the Knot?

Which comes closer to your views about divorce?

- Preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage
- Should be avoided except in an extreme situation



What’s Best for the Children?

If you have a marriage where the parents are very unhappy with each other, are the children better off if their parents remain married or if their parents get divorced?

- Get divorced
- Remain married
- Depends (Vol.)



Note: Don’t know responses are not shown.

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³ See for example, Thornton, Arland and Linda Young-DeMarco. 2001. “Four Decades of Trends in Attitudes Toward Family Issues in the United States: The 1960s Through the 1990s.” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63: 1009-1037.

Public Opinion by Demographic Groups

The group differences in public opinion on these matters tend to be correlated with age, religion, race and ethnicity, as well as with the choices that people have made in their own marital and parenting lives. There are some, but not many, differences by gender. Here is a rundown of the key differences by group.

Age, Religiosity and Political Conservatism

As noted above, the Pew survey finds that older adults – who came of age prior to the social and cultural upheavals of the 1960s – are more conservative than younger and middle-aged adults in their views on virtually all of these matters of marriage and parenting. Thus, some of the overall change in public opinion is the result of what scholars call “generational replacement.” That is, as older generations die off and are replaced by younger generations, public opinion shifts to reflect the attitudes of the age cohorts that now make up the bulk of the adult population.

Even among the younger generations (ages 18 to 64), however, our survey finds substantial differences in attitudes that fall along the fault lines of religion and ideology rather than age.

White evangelical Protestants and people of all faiths who attend religious services at least weekly hold more conservative viewpoints on pretty much the whole gamut of questions asked on the Pew survey. This is true across all age groups. For example, white evangelical Protestants are more likely than other religious groups to consider premarital sex morally

	Adults 18-64	Adults 65+	---Adults 18-64--- Attend weekly+	Attend less often
	%	%	%	%
Living together is...				
Bad for society	41	61	65	26
Doesn't make much difference	46	28	29	57
Good for society	11	6	5	14
Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100
Unmarried couples having children is...				
Bad for society	57	73	73	46
Doesn't make much difference	34	18	20	43
Good for society	6	4	5	8
Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100
Main purpose of marriage				
For mutual happiness	68	50	58	74
For raising children	21	33	25	18
Both/neither (vol.)	9	9	14	6
Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100
Child needs mother and father to be happy				
Tend to agree	67	79	74	62
Tend to disagree	30	17	22	35
Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	1634	368	649	973

wrong. They are more likely to consider the rise in unmarried childbearing and cohabitation bad for society and more likely to agree that a child needs both a mother and father to be happy. They also are more likely to say legal marriage is very important when a couple plans to have children together or plans to spend the rest of their lives together. Further, white evangelical Protestants are more likely than white mainline Protestants to say that divorce should be avoided except in extreme circumstances and to consider it better for the children when parents remain married, though very unhappy with each other. In sum, white evangelical Protestants have a strong belief in the importance of marriage and strong moral prescriptions against premarital sex and childbearing outside of marriage.

The pattern is the same among those of any faith who attend religious services more frequently, compared with less frequent attendees. And it is the same for political conservatives compared with their more moderate or liberal counterparts.

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic patterns in public opinion on these matters are more complex. Blacks and Hispanic are more likely than whites to bear children out of wedlock. And yet these minority groups, our survey finds, also are more inclined than whites to place a high value on the importance of children to a successful marriage. Indeed, they place higher value than whites do on the importance of most of the ingredients of a successful marriage that this survey asked about – especially the economic components. But blacks and Hispanics are less likely than whites to be married. One possible explanation to emerge from this survey is that many members of these minority groups may be setting a high bar for marriage that they themselves cannot reach, whether for economic or other reasons.

As noted above, there are sharp generational differences in views about the morality of unwed parenting. However, there is no significant difference on this

Views on Marriage and Parenting, by Race and Ethnicity

	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
	%	%	%
Importance of children for successful marriage			
Very important	35	49	69
Rather important	33	30	12
Not too important	29	18	17
Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
Main purpose of marriage			
For mutual happiness	67	63	51
For raising children	21	23	38
Both/neither (vol.)	9	10	8
Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100
Unmarried couples having children is...			
Bad for society	63	58	45
Doesn't make much difference	30	32	35
Good for society	5	7	12
Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100
Unmarried women having children is...			
Always/almost always wrong	46	44	40
Wrong only sometimes/not at all wrong	50	51	56
Don't know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100
Number of respondents	1146	365	405

Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

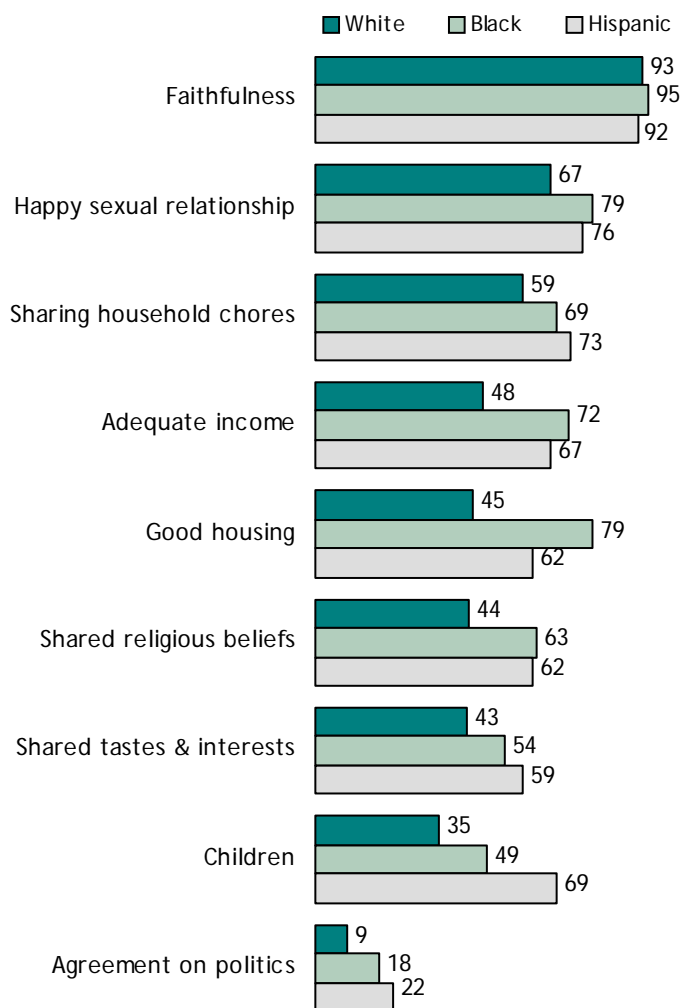
front by race or ethnicity; blacks, Hispanics and whites are about equally likely to say it is wrong for unmarried women to have children. There are small differences along racial and ethnic lines when it comes to evaluating the impact on society of the growing numbers of children born out of wedlock. Hispanics are somewhat less negative about this phenomenon than are whites and blacks, between whom there is no statistically significant difference.

When it comes to the relationship between marriage and children, Hispanics again stand out. They are more inclined than either whites or blacks to consider having and raising children to be the main purpose of marriage (even so, however, a majority of Hispanics say that adult happiness and fulfillment is the main purpose of a marriage). Also, Hispanics – more so than either blacks or whites – consider children “very important” for a successful marriage.

But when considering a broader range of characteristics of a successful marriage, it is whites who stand apart. They are much less likely than either blacks or Hispanics to consider adequate income, good housing and children to be “very important” to a successful marriage. And they are somewhat less likely to rate various measures of compatibility (see chart) as being important as well. To some degree all these racial and ethnic differences reflect the differing socioeconomic circumstances of whites, blacks and Hispanics. People with higher incomes and education levels – regardless of their race and ethnicity – tend to rate these various characteristics as less important to marriage than do people with a lower socio-economic status.

Rating Components of Marital Success, by Race and Ethnicity

Percent saying each is very important for a successful marriage



Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

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When it comes to views about divorce, whites and, especially, Hispanics are more likely than blacks to say that divorce is preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage. However, about two-thirds of all three groups say that it is better for the children if their very unhappy parents divorce rather than stay together.

Views about cohabitation are similar for blacks and whites, while Hispanics are a bit less negative about the impact of cohabitation on society. But the similarities between blacks and whites masks divisions of opinion within each group. Among whites, the difference of opinion between generations is particularly sharp – with 55% of whites ages 50 and older saying that living together is bad for society, compared with 38% among younger whites, a difference of 17 percentage points. The comparable difference between older and younger blacks is just 9 percentage points.

Among older blacks and whites, the balance of opinion is tilted in the negative direction. For younger whites (ages 18 to 49), a plurality hold a neutral assessment of the impact on society of couples living together without marrying. Among younger blacks, opinion about cohabitation is more divided; 48% of this group considers living together bad for society while 45% take a neutral position and 5% say it is good for society.

To some degree, views about cohabitation reflect differing moral assessments of premarital sex. Blacks are more likely than whites and Hispanics to say that premarital sex is always or almost always morally wrong – and this is true even after group differences in age are taken into account. Those who consider premarital sex wrong also tend to consider cohabitation bad for society, while those who say premarital sex is not wrong or is only wrong in some circumstances are more likely to say the cohabitation trend makes no difference for society.

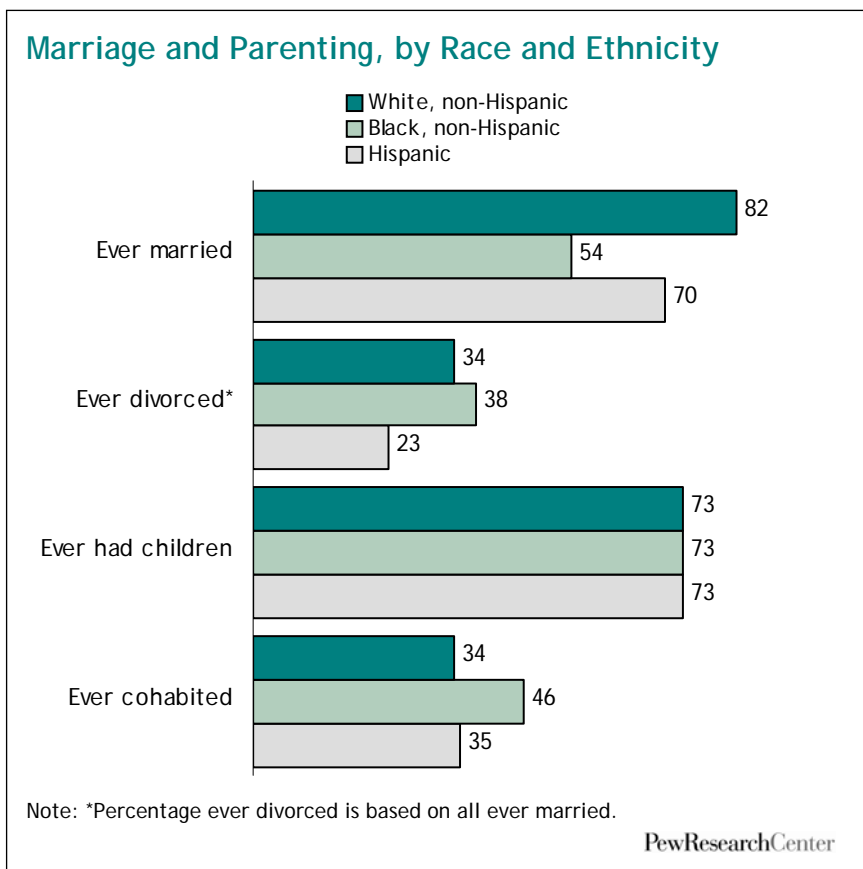
When it comes to marital and parenting behaviors (as opposed to attitudes), a number of racial and ethnic patterns stand out.

More than eight-in-ten white adults in this country have been married, compared with just seven-in-ten Hispanic adults and slightly more than half (54%) of all black adults. Among blacks, there is a strong correlation between frequent church attendance, moral disapproval of premarital sex and the tendency to marry. Among whites (who marry at much higher rates) this relationship is not as strong.

Views on Divorce and Premarital Sex, by Race and Ethnicity			
	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
	%	%	%
Views about divorce			
Should be avoided except in extreme circumstances	38	50	28
Preferable to maintaining unhappy marriage	58	46	69
Don't know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100
Premarital sex is...			
Always/almost always wrong	37	48	38
Wrong only sometimes/ not at all wrong	59	49	58
Don't know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100
Number of respondents	1146	365	405
Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.			
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Among those who have ever been married, blacks (38%) and whites (34%) are more likely than Hispanics (23%) to have been divorced. Blacks also are somewhat more likely than whites or Hispanics to have cohabited without marriage. But all three groups, this survey finds, are equally likely to have had children.

Blacks and Hispanics are more likely than whites to have children out of wedlock. For all groups, this behavior also is strongly correlated with lower educational attainment. For blacks and Hispanics (more so than for whites), frequent church attendance correlates negatively with the likelihood of being an unwed parent.



Gender

The Pew survey finds a great deal of common ground between men and women on issues surrounding marriage and parenting. There are some small differences, however. While men and women are about equally likely to see unmarried parenting as a problem for society, men are a bit more negative than women about unmarried parenting when no male partner is involved in raising the children. Similarly, men are a little more likely than women to believe that children need both a mother and father to be happy. Women, on the other hand, are a bit more likely than men to consider divorce preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage; they also believe more strongly than men that divorce is the better option for children when the marriage is very unhappy. On other matters – such as the main purpose of marriage or the characteristics of a successful marriage – there are few differences.

Education and Income

College-educated adults and high-income adults marry at higher rates and divorce at lower rates than do those with less education and income. They are also less likely to have children outside of marriage.⁴

However, despite the sharp differences by socio-economic status in marital and parenting *behaviors*, there are only minor differences by socio-economic status in *values* and *attitudes* about marriage and parenting. Adults with

⁴ Bianchi, Suzanne M. and Lynne M. Casper. 2000. "American Families." *Population Bulletin* 55(4). Population Reference Bureau.

higher incomes and more education tend to be slightly less inclined than others to say that premarital sex and nonmarital births are always morally wrong. The college educated also are slightly less inclined than the less educated to say it is very important for couples to legally marry if they plan to spend their lives together. Similarly, those with a college education are a little more likely to say that a man or woman can lead a complete and happy life if he or she remains single.

There are no more than minimal differences by education or income when it comes to views about the impact on society of unmarried childbirths and of cohabitation.

Family Background

The Pew survey finds some strong correlations between the kinds of family arrangements that respondents experienced growing up and their own behaviors in adulthood. For example, among respondents who are themselves products of parents who never married, about a third (32%) are themselves never-married parents. By comparison, just 5% of the general adult population are products of never-married parents.

Family background in childhood plays a smaller role, however, in predicting adult attitudes (as opposed to behaviors) about whether unmarried parenting is bad for society and morally wrong. Once age differences are taken into account, those whose parents never married are just a bit less negative than those whose parents married and never divorced about the impact of unmarried childbearing on society.

Respondents with parents who divorced are just as likely as other respondents to take the position that divorce is painful but preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage. Similarly, among people ages 18 to 49, the now grown children of divorce hold about the same views as those who grew up in a traditional-married-parent arrangement on whether divorce is better for children than parents staying in an unhappy marriage. On the other hand, those respondents whose parents divorced are less likely than other respondents to believe that a child needs a home with both a mother and a father to grow up happily.

Moral Beliefs, Attitudes and Behaviors

There are close relationships between behaviors, attitudes and moral beliefs when it comes to the subjects of unwed parenting and cohabitation, the Pew survey finds. For example, those who have fewer moral reservations about premarital sex and are positive or neutral about the impact of living together on society also are more likely to have lived with a partner themselves. Similarly, those who are positive or neutral about the social impact of unmarried parenting and less likely to consider it morally wrong are also more likely to be in this situation themselves. It is not possible from this survey to disentangle which came first—the moral beliefs, the attitudes, or the behaviors—but it is clear they tend to go hand-in-hand.

Statistical analysis of these survey findings shows that having less education and being black or Hispanic are traits associated with being a never-married parent. Attending religious services less often also is associated with being an unmarried parent, particularly among blacks and Hispanics.

On the other side of the coin, those who believe that having children without being married is wrong are less likely to be a never-married parent. Also, those who consider the rise in unmarried parents bad for society are less likely to be unmarried parents.

A statistical analysis of factors correlated with ever having lived with a partner outside of marriage shows that cohabiters are younger, more likely to be black, and, after controlling for other demographic factors, less likely to be Hispanic. They are also less likely to attend religious services frequently. There is a strong relationship between moral beliefs about premarital sex and cohabitation history; those who consider premarital sex always wrong are less likely to have cohabited than others. They are also less likely to have cohabited than those who say living together is bad for society – suggesting that the more powerful stigma against cohabitation comes from concerns about morality rather than from concerns about social consequences.

Views about Cohabitation Track with Behaviors		
	--Ever Cohabited?--	
	Yes, have	No, never
	%	%
Living together without getting married		
Bad for society	24	56
Makes no difference	57	35
Good for society	16	6
Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100
Number of respondents	736	1271
	PewResearchCenter	

Views about Unmarried Parenting Track with Behaviors		
	---All Parents--	
	Never-married parents	Ever-married parents
	%	%
Unmarried couples having children		
Bad for society	43	66
Makes no difference	44	26
Good for society	10	5
Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100
Single women having children w/o partner to help raise them		
Bad for society	54	69
Makes no difference	26	23
Good for society	15	5
Don't know/Refused	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100
Number of respondents	157	1330
	PewResearchCenter	

A different pattern emerges when looking at differences between married people who have – and haven’t – been divorced. Here, the demographic and attitudinal factors do little to predict the probability of experience with divorce.

There are a few exceptions, however. Catholics are bit less likely than members of other religious groups to have been divorced. And there is a modest correlation between having been divorced and believing that divorce is better for the children than maintaining a very unhappy marriage.

But in the main, experience with divorce cuts across all demographic subgroups more evenly than does experience either with unmarried parenting or with cohabitation. The belief that divorce is preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage is widely shared by both those who have and have not been divorced.

The body of this report provides a deeper analysis of attitudes and behaviors on all these matters. It is presented in five sections:

- I. Nonmarital Childbearing
- II. Modern Marriage
- III. Cohabitation
- IV. Divorce
- V. Gay Marriage, Civil Unions and Same-Sex Couples Raising Children

	---Ever Married--	
	Ever divorced	Never divorced
	%	%
Divorce...		
Should be avoided except in extreme situation	35	39
Preferable to maintaining unhappy marriage	61	57
Don't know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100
Children better off if...		
Parents remain married	14	21
Parents get divorced	76	63
Depends (vol.)	8	10
Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100
Number of respondents	518	1007
	PewResearchCenter	

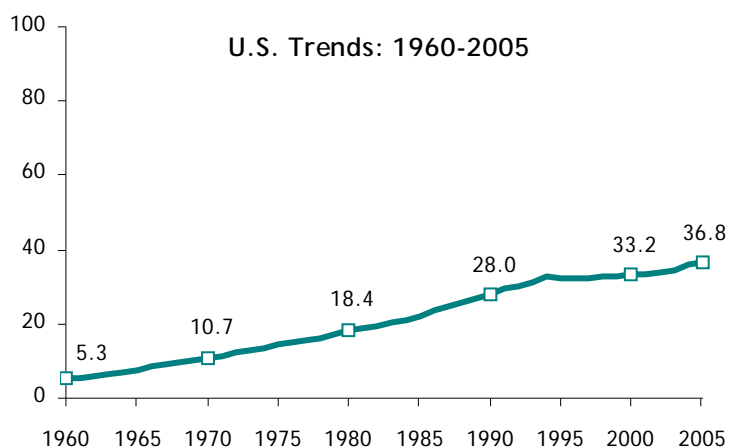
I. Nonmarital Childbearing

The rate of nonmarital childbearing in the United States has grown seven-fold in the past half century – from 5.3% of all births in 1960 to 36.8% in 2005, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.⁵ As this practice has become more common, unmarried mothers have become increasingly diverse. Today, the typical woman who gives birth outside of marriage is more likely to be white than black, and more likely to be an adult than a teenager. That wasn't true a generation ago. Also, she's now about as likely as not to be living with a male partner at the time of the birth. This, too, represents a change. In the early 1990s, only about a third of nonmarital births were to women who were cohabiting with a man.⁶

This dramatic rise in births to unwed mothers as a percentage of all births is the result of the combined effect of two separate demographic trends – a drop in fertility rates *within* marriage (these rates have fallen roughly in half since 1960) coupled with an increase in the fertility rates

Trends in Births to Unmarried Women

Census figures as percent of total births



Percent of

nonmarital births...	1970	1980	1990	1995	1999
	%	%	%	%	%
Sweden	18	40	47	53	55
Denmark	11	33	46	46	45
France***	7	11	30	37	40
United Kingdom	8	12	28	34	39
Canada*	10	13	24	26	35
United States	11	18	28	32	33
Netherlands	2	4	11	16	23
Germany**	6	8	11	16	20
Italy	2	4	6	8	9
Japan	1	1	1	1	n/a

Notes: *The 1980 and 1990 figures for Canada exclude Newfoundland and after 1990 a number of births were not allocated according to marital status, resulting in an understatement of the proportion of births to unmarried women.

**Prior to 1990, the data are for former West Germany only; 1999 figures are based on 1998 rates.

***These 1999 figures are based on 1997 rates.

Source: U.S. Bureau Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1998. Council of Europe, Recent Demographic Developments in Europe, 2000. Statistics Canada, Canada Year Book 2001. S.J. Ventura and C.A. Bachrach, 2000. "Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States, 1940-1999." National Vital Statistics Reports, 48(16).

⁵ Analysis of National Vital Statistics Reports. See Child Trends Data Bank, "Percentage of Births to Unmarried Women." www.childtrendsdatabank.org. Also see Terry-Humen, Elizabeth, Jennifer Manlove, and Kristin A. Moore. April 2001. "Births Outside of Marriage: Perceptions vs. Reality." Child Trends Research Brief.

⁶ Bumpass, Larry and Hsien-Hen Lu. 2000. "Trends in Cohabitation and Implications for Children's Family Contexts in the U.S." *Population Studies* 54: 29-41. Mincieli, Lisa, Jennifer Manlove, Molly McGarrett, Kristin Moore and Suzanne Ryan. May 2007. "The Relationship Context of Births Outside of Marriage: The Rise of Cohabitation." Child Trends Research Brief. Also see Bianchi, Suzanne M. and Lynne M. Casper. 2000. "American Families." *Population Bulletin* 55(4). Population Reference Bureau.

for unmarried women (these have roughly doubled since 1960).⁷

In the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, it was the former trend that accounted for most of the overall change. But in the past two decades – as births to couples in cohabiting relationships have become more commonplace – the latter trend has become increasingly important in explaining the overall change.

The United States is not alone in seeing such a sharp rise in nonmarital childbearing. In Sweden and Denmark, half or more of all births are to unmarried women. In Canada and the United Kingdom, rates are about the same as those in the U.S. Even conservative, mostly Catholic, countries in southern Europe, such as Italy and Spain, have seen their rates rise, albeit from a lower base.

A Profile of Never-Married Parents

Adults move in and out of different marital and parenting arrangements over the course of their lives. Many single parents eventually marry. Many married parents eventually become single. Many divorced parents eventually remarry. There also are some “never married parents.” We identified 6% of all adults and 8% of the parents in our survey as belonging to this group.⁸ Note that this figure omits those who gave birth while unmarried but married at a later point.

Who are the never-married parents? For starters, they are, at least to some degree, repeating the patterns of the families they grew up in. Among respondents who are themselves products of parents who never married, about a third (32%) are themselves never-married parents. Just 5% of the general adult population are products of never-married parents.

	<i>Marital History of Respondent's Parents</i>		
	<i>Were married</i>	<i>Were divorced</i>	<i>Never married</i>
	%	%	%
Respondent is...			
Never-married parent	4	5	32
Ever-married parent	69	64	48
Not a parent	27	30	20
Don't know/Refused	*	1	0
	100	100	100
Number of respondents	1369	465	132

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⁷ Ventura, Stephanie J. and Christine A. Bachrach. 2000. “Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States, 1940-1999.” National Vital Statistics Reports, 48(16). Also see Bianchi and Casper. 2000. *op. cit.*

⁸ These include all parents (with children of any age, either adult or under age 18) who identify their current marital status as never married and some who are currently living with a partner and also report that they never married.

The never-married parents in our survey are younger, on average, than the married (or previously married) parents; they also have lower levels of income and education than does the general population.

Never-married parents in our survey are more likely to be black or Hispanic than white. About a quarter (24%) of all blacks and 11% of Hispanics in our survey are never-married parents. This compares with 2% of non-Hispanic whites. This racial and ethnic profile is not the same as the racial and ethnic profile of mothers who are unwed at the time they give birth; an estimated four-in-ten of whom are white.⁹ The reason for the difference is unwed white mothers are more likely to eventually marry than are unwed black or Hispanic mothers.

A Profile of Never-Married Parents					
	Never-married parents	Ever-married parents	Not a parent	DK/Refused	N
All adults	6%	67%	27%	*=100%	2020
Gender					
Men	5%	63%	32%	*=100%	892
Women	7%	70%	22%	1=100%	1128
Race / Ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	2%	70%	27%	1=100%	1146
Black, non-Hispanic	24%	49%	26%	1=100%	365
Hispanic	11%	62%	26%	1=100%	405
Age					
18-29	11%	26%	62%	1=100%	365
30-49	8%	69%	22%	1=100%	824
50-64	2%	77%	20%	1=100%	445
65 and older	*	93%	7%	*=100%	368
Education					
College graduate	2%	70%	28%	*=100%	573
Some college	7%	63%	29%	1=100%	524
High school or less	8%	66%	26%	*=100%	914
Income					
\$100,000+	2%	74%	24%	0=100%	227
\$50K-\$99K	3%	70%	27%	*=100%	506
\$30K-\$49K	7%	69%	23%	1=100%	408
Less than \$30K	11%	60%	29%	*=100%	599

Note: Parents have children of either minor or adult age.

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⁹ Ventura and Bachrach. 2000. *op. cit.*

Just as they have distinctive demographic characteristics, never-married parents also have a distinctive set of opinions about the institutions of marriage and parenting – and these attitudes, for the most part, track with their behaviors.

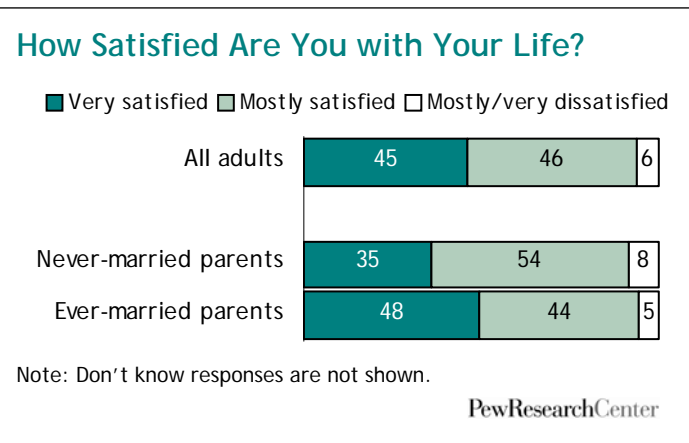
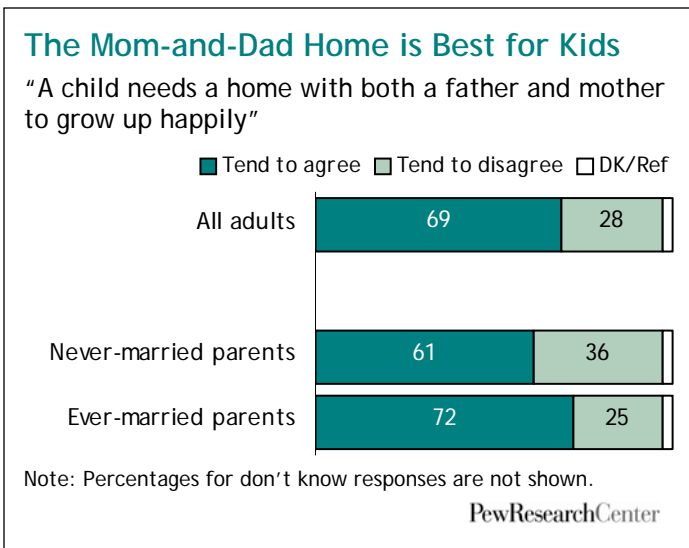
For example, never-married parents are less inclined than other adults to render a negative moral judgment about women bearing children out of wedlock. Some 31% say that this behavior is “not wrong at all” – a view shared by just 19% of the full adult population. Another third of never-married parents says this behavior is always or almost always wrong, and another three-in-ten say it is sometimes wrong.

A majority (54%) of never-married parents says that it’s bad for society that more single women are having children. However, two-thirds of the full population holds this view. A slight variant of that survey question asks whether it’s good or bad for society that more unmarried couples are deciding to have kids. About four-in-ten never-married parents say it’s bad, another four-in-ten say it makes no difference, while one-in-ten says it’s good. But, once again, the judgments of the full adult population are more negative: six-in-ten says this trend is bad for society.

On other questions about parenting, differences are more muted. For example, both the never-married parents and the full population agree with the statement that “a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily,” but a somewhat larger percentage of the total population (69%) than the never-married parents (61%) feels this way.

As they assess their personal situation, never-married parents are not among society’s happier groups. Just over a third (35%) describe themselves as “very satisfied” with their life overall. By comparison, 45% of all adults – and 54% of all married parents – say they are “very satisfied.”

To never-married parents – just as to married parents – children are a key to personal happiness and fulfillment. Nearly all members of both groups rate their children as a “10” on a zero-to-ten scale when asked to state how important various aspects of their lives are to their personal happiness and fulfillment.



The difference is that the overwhelming majority of married parents also give the same rating of “10” to their relationship with their spouse, whereas never-married parents rate no other aspect of their lives as being nearly as important as their children. However, perhaps because they have no spouses to occupy their emotional universe, never-married parents place their relationships with their own parents, as well as their jobs or careers, on a somewhat higher plane of importance than do married parents.

Most never-married parents – just as most adults – believe that it is possible for men and women to live complete and happy lives if they remain single. However, never-married parents are a bit more skeptical about this. Some 35% of never-married parents say that it’s not possible for a person¹⁰ to be completely happy if he/she remains single, compared with just 21% of the full population who say the same thing.

As for their own personal expectations about marriage, a slight majority of never-married parents (51%) say they expect to marry one day, while 35% say they don’t expect to. The remainder either say they aren’t sure or decline to answer.

¹⁰ Half the sample was asked whether it is possible for a man to have a complete and happy life if he remains single; the other half was asked whether it is possible for a woman to have a complete and happy life if she remains single. These percentages refer to responses after combining the two versions of the question.

How the Public Views Births to Unmarried Mothers

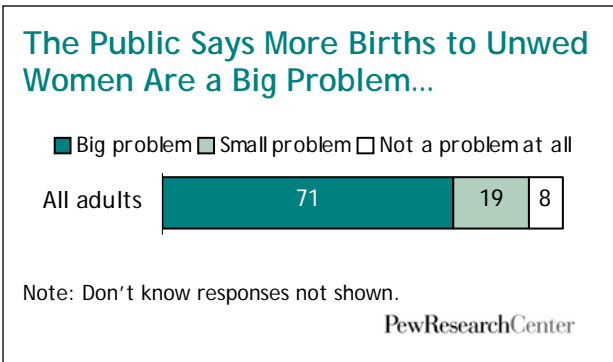
More than seven-in-ten adults say it’s a “big problem” that a growing number of children in this country are born to unmarried mothers, and another two-in-ten (19%) say this is a “small problem.” Just 8% say it is not a problem at all, and the remaining 2% have no opinion.

But despite the broad public consensus about the problem’s magnitude, there is little agreement about its main cause. Respondents were scattered all over the map when asked in an open-ended question to give the main reason they think that births to unwed mothers have grown more prevalent.

Some 15% cited a decay in moral values as the main reason; 13% cited a breakdown in family structure and discipline; 11% said too much sex, especially among teenagers and young adults; 10% said a lack of information, especially about birth control; 10% cited more permissive cultural norms, such as a decline in the social pressure to marry when a woman becomes pregnant; 5% said it is mainly the result of the growing independence of women; and 5% said it is mainly the result of men not taking enough responsibility for fatherhood.

From this broad range of responses, several interesting patterns emerge. Blacks are more likely than Hispanics to cite too much sex at a young age as a main cause of the increase in births to unwed mothers. Blacks also are more likely than whites and Hispanics to cite men not taking enough responsibility. Hispanics, meantime, are more likely than whites or blacks to cite a breakdown in family structure and lack of parental discipline.

White evangelical Protestants and frequent churchgoers of any faith are more likely than any other religious group to cite a decay in moral values. Conservative Republicans also are more disposed toward citing a decay in



...But There Is Little Consensus about the Cause

	All adults
	%
Bad morals / Not raised right	15
Breakdown in family structure	13
Too much sex / Sex at young age	11
Lack of information	10
Societal changes	10
Irresponsible / Careless	9
Women’s role changed	5
Men not taking responsibility	5
Lack of commitment	2
Media / Technology / TV / Movies	2
To get support / Welfare	2
Bad relationships / Not getting along	2
Hard to find a good man	1
Drugs	1
Have children for something to love	1
No self respect	1
Economy / Money (General)	1
Entrapment /To keep a man	*
Other (Miscellaneous)	12
Don't know	12

Note: Responses total to more than 100% because respondents could offer more than one answer to this open-ended question.

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moral values, as are middle-aged and older adults regardless of political persuasion. Seculars and liberal Democrats are more likely than other groups to cite the growing independence of women.

There are minimal differences in response to this question by age, gender, education and income.

The Public Rates Trends in Marriage and Parenting

Our survey also asked respondents to assess the impact on society of nine different changes in patterns of behavior related to marriage or parenting. Of these nine, “more single women having children” is judged the most negatively – with two-thirds of respondents saying this change has been bad for society, while another quarter say it hasn’t made much difference.

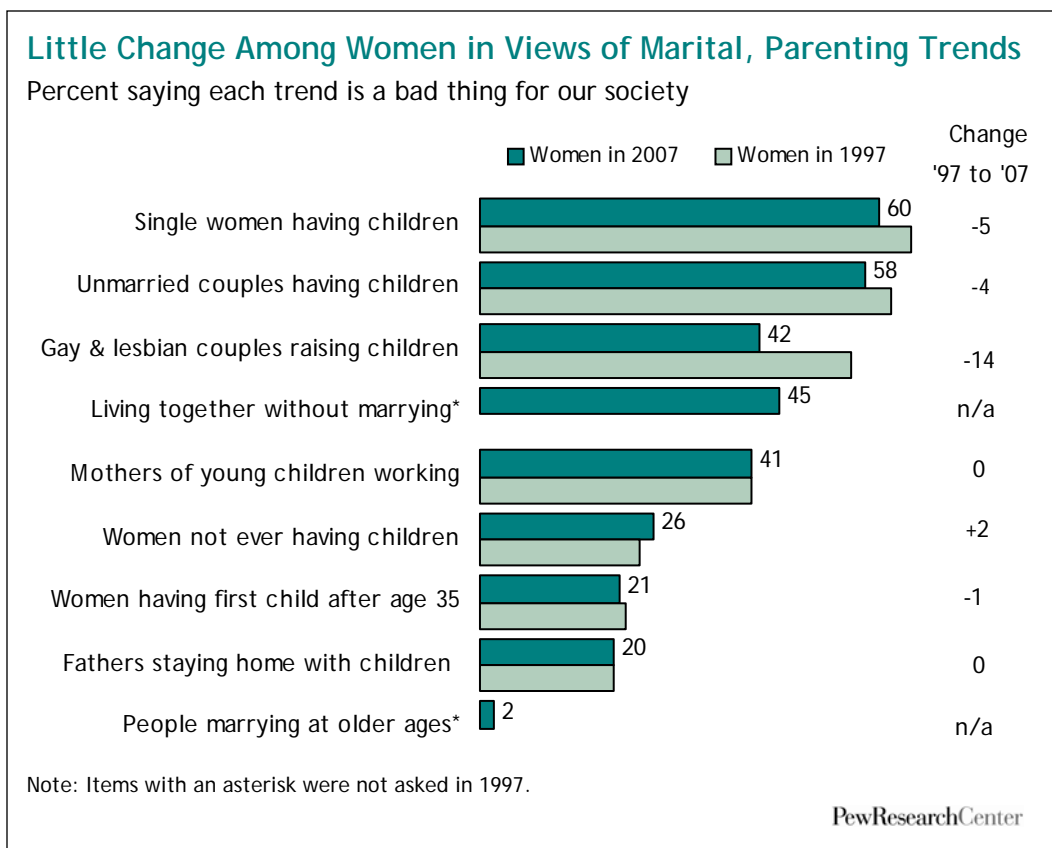
Next on the public’s thumbs-down list is an item that’s also related to unwed parenting: “more unmarried couples having children.” Some 59% of respondents say this behavior is bad for society, while one-third say it doesn’t make a difference. Next came “more gay and lesbian couples raising children.” Half the respondents said this is bad for society; one-third said it doesn’t make a difference and 11% said it is good for society.

No other item on this list of nine drew “bad for society” responses from a majority of the public. Sizable pluralities, however, did say it was bad for society that “more people are living together without getting married” (a 44% plurality); and that “more mothers of young children are working outside the home” (a 41% plurality).

At the other end of the spectrum of public opinion about various changes in marital and parenting behaviors, some 51% of

the public said it is a good thing for society that more people are marrying for the first time at older ages, while just 4% say this is a bad thing, and four-in-ten say it makes no difference.

These same questions were posed



to a survey of women only in 1997, and there has been very little change in attitudes over the past decade. The lone exception comes on views about more gays and lesbians raising children. In 1997, a majority of women said that trend was bad for society; today only about four-and-ten (42%) say this.

Behaviors and Attitudes

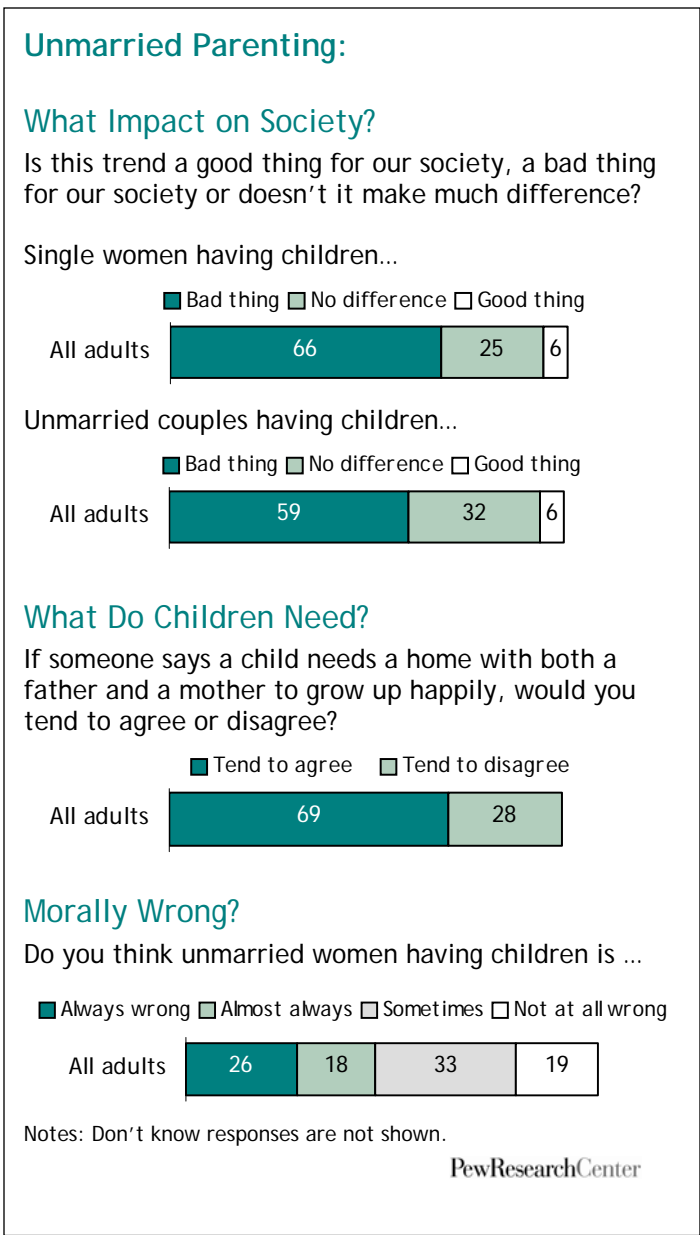
This survey and others like it have found that the public has grown more accepting over the years in its views of many of the newer variants on traditional marriage and parenting behaviors – including divorce, cohabitation, premarital sex and gay parenting. But public opinion about unmarried childbearing has barely budged. It remains strongly negative, even as births to single mothers have grown so much more common. What explains this disconnect between changing behaviors and unchanging norms?

The Pew survey finds that public disapproval is built on three pillars. People say that unmarried women having children is bad for society, bad for the children, and morally wrong. However, public opinion is more mixed about the third pillar than it is about the first two, the survey finds.

As noted above, 66% of all respondents say it’s “bad for society” that more single women are having children. In 1997, a nearly identical percentage (65%) said the same thing when the same question was posed on a Pew survey (that survey, however, was given only to women).

In this year’s survey, more men (73%) than women (60%) say this trend is bad for society. There also are differences in attitudes by age, religion, church attendance, ideology and ethnicity. Among the groups most likely to see this trend as bad for society are white evangelical Protestants; frequent churchgoers of any religion; people ages 65 and older;

Republicans; and conservatives. Among the groups least likely to see this trend as bad for society are Hispanics; seculars; never-married parents, and people whose parents never married. There are no significant differences in



attitudes on this question by education or income level. Also, blacks and whites do not have significantly different views on this question.

One explanation for why so many Americans are troubled by the trend toward unwed parenting comes from the responses to another survey question: “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?” Nearly seven-in-ten respondents (69%) agree. This same question has been posed four other times on other surveys taken over the past 25 years, and somewhere between 62% and 72% of the public has always been in agreement.¹¹

While majorities of virtually all groups in society share this sentiment, there are nonetheless some notable differences in the sizes of the majorities among different groups.

For example, nearly eight-in-ten (78%) men in our survey agree with the statement, compared with just six-in-ten (61%) women. A similar gender difference emerged in previous surveys. In light of the fact that the overwhelming majority of children who are raised by single parents are raised by their mothers, this finding suggests that concerns about the negative impact of fatherlessness on children are more prevalent among men than among women.

Older adults are more likely than younger adults to agree that a child needs both a mother and a father (however, even among adults under age 30, nearly two-thirds agree). Other groups most disposed to agree include white evangelical Protestants; frequent churchgoers; married people; Republicans; conservatives; and those with a high school education or less. There are no significant differences among groups by income.

When people are asked to assess unmarried childbearing by the norms of morality rather than by the social consequences, their judgments are more mixed. Some 26% of respondents say this behavior is always wrong; 18% say it is almost always wrong; 33% say it is wrong only sometimes; and 19% say it is not wrong at all.

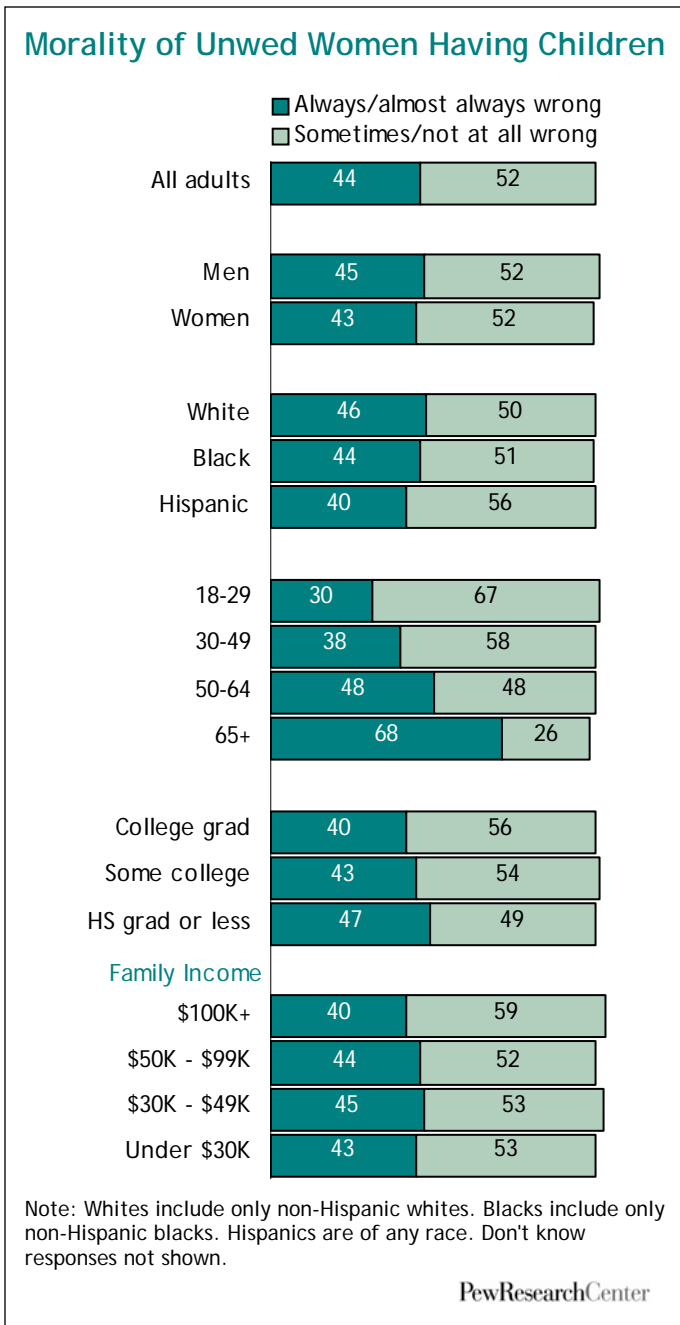
¹¹ World Values Surveys conducted in the U.S. See topline for details.

The biggest group differences on this question correlate with the age and the religiosity of the respondent – older adults as well as frequent churchgoers and white evangelical Protestants are the most inclined to make negative judgments. There are minimal differences on this question between men and women, and among blacks, whites and Hispanics.

People with higher incomes and education levels also are a bit less inclined to make these negative judgments, as are never-married parents, and seculars.

Another question from the survey noted that “there’s a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country” and asked respondents whether or not they felt that it is wrong for a man and a woman to have sexual relations before marriage. Here again, responses were mixed, but a somewhat higher percentage (32%) said that this behavior was “not wrong at all” than said the same thing about unmarried mothers having children (19% not wrong at all). In short, attitudes are somewhat more permissive about premarital sex than they are about nonmarital birth.

The same group patterns that emerge on the question of births to unmarried mothers also surface on the question of premarital sex, albeit with a few exceptions. While men and women have the same basic view of the morality of unmarried births, women are more inclined than men to characterize premarital sex as wrong. Likewise, blacks are somewhat more likely than whites to say premarital sex is wrong, but both racial groups are equally likely to say that it is wrong for unmarried women to have children.



II. Modern Marriage

Marriage holds much less sway in the lives of adults and children than it did a half century ago. There are many reasons for this change. Since the 1960s, adults are waiting longer to marry; they are more likely to divorce; more likely to cohabit; more likely to bear and raise children out of wedlock; less likely to disapprove of premarital or nonmarital sex; and more likely to spend a greater portion of their elderly years living as widows or widowers.¹²

But marriage hasn't gone away – not by a long stretch. Even with all these changes, roughly nine-in-ten adults in this country will eventually marry.¹³ However, the overall portion of their lives that adults spend in a marriage has declined sharply, as has the portion of households that are made up of married, mother-and-father couples. A generation ago, more than six-in-ten adults were married. Today, roughly half are. A generation ago, four-in-ten households in this country consisted of a married couple with children. Today, about two-in-ten (23%) households are made up of married couples with children.¹⁴

The Traditionalists

One way to understand how both attitudes and behaviors toward marriage have changed is to take a close look at married, never-divorced parents – America's "Ozzies and Harriets." Who are these traditional married couples, and how do they differ from the rest of the population?

In the Pew survey, just over a third of respondents (35%) fall into this group.¹⁵ Compared with other parents, they're more likely to be white, well-educated and well-off economically. They also have a distinctive religious profile. They are more likely to be Catholic (32% vs. 21%) than other parents. They also are more observant; some 47% attend church weekly or more often compared with 38% of other parents. Politically, they're more inclined to be Republican than other parents, and, ideologically, they're more inclined to be conservative.

A majority are happy with their lives – some 55% report being "very satisfied" with their lives overall, compared with just 40% of the rest of the population.

Not surprisingly, when it comes to questions about marriage and parenting, this group's attitudes are more traditional than those of the rest of the population. Some of these differences are sharp, others more modest. For example, a majority of this group (55%) says it is bad for society that more people are living together without getting married, while just 39% percent of the rest of the population agrees. Likewise, this group is more inclined than the rest of the population to say that it is bad for society that more unmarried couples are having children. They're also more inclined than others to agree that a child needs a home with both a mother and a

¹² Smith, Tom W. 1999. "The Emerging 21st Century American Family." GSS Social Change Report, No. 42. National Opinion Research Center.

¹³ Kreider, Rose M. February 2005. "Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2001." Current Population Reports.

¹⁴ Fields, Jason. November 2004. "America's Families and Living Arrangements:2003." Current Population Reports.

¹⁵ These are parents (with children of either minor or adult age) who are currently married and have been married one time only.

father to grow up happily, but here the difference is smaller – just nine percentage points. And by the same difference of nine percentage points, they are more inclined than the rest of the population to say that children are important to a successful marriage.

Even as they emerge from this survey as strong defenders of traditional family arrangements, this group does not consider marriage the be-all and end-all of a happy life. Along with the rest of the population, a large majority of them believe that a man or a woman can lead a complete and happy life if he or she remains single.

In short, America’s traditional “Ozzie and Harriet” married couples have distinctive demographic traits – especially their race, income, education and religion – as well as distinctive views about marriage and parenting. But the gap in attitudes between them and the rest of the public is not terribly wide; and on some questions, it disappears entirely.

A Profile of “Traditionalist” Parents

	Married once	Other parents
	%	%
Gender		
Male	50	39
Female	<u>50</u>	<u>61</u>
	100	100
Race / Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	74	67
Black, non-Hispanic	6	17
Hispanic	14	12
Other/Refused	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100
Age		
18-29	12	8
30-49	49	35
50-64	26	29
65+	12	27
Don’t know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100
Mean age	46.4	53.5
Education		
College grad	35	19
Some college	21	25
High school or less	43	56
Don’t know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
	100	100
Income		
\$100,000+	18	9
\$50K-\$99K	35	19
\$30K-\$49K	20	21
Less than \$30K	13	38
Don’t know/Refused	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100
Religion		
Protestant	49	63
Catholic	32	21
Other	9	5
Secular	9	9
Don’t know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100
Number of respondents	667	820

Note: Based on those with children of either minor or adult age.

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Public Opinion about Marriage and Parenting

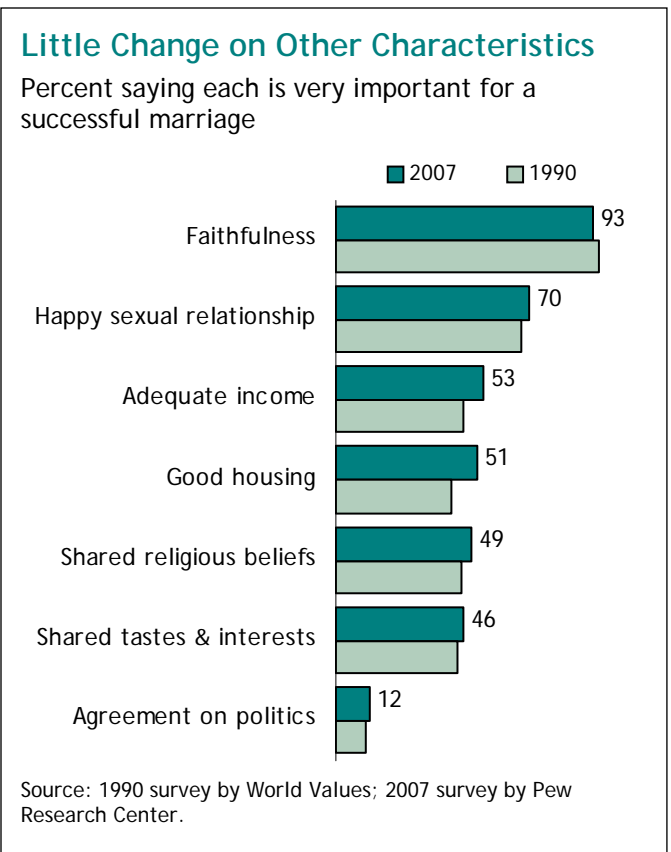
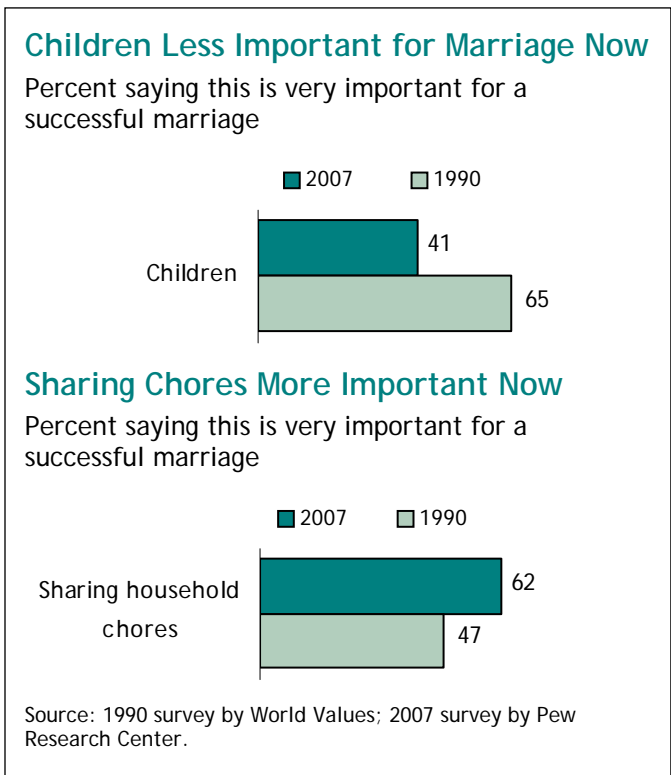
But what of public opinion as a whole? How are attitudes toward marriage and parenting changing?

The most striking finding from our survey is that, in the public’s mind, there has been a substantial weakening of the link between marriage and parenting. Just four-in-ten respondents (41%) now say that children are very important to a successful marriage, compared with 65% who said this back in 1990.

Our survey listed nine different ingredients that “some people think make for a successful marriage” and asked respondents to rate the importance of each. A high of 93% said “faithfulness” is very important and a low of 12% said “agreement on politics” is very important. About half of all respondents said adequate income, good housing, shared religious beliefs, and tastes and interests in common are very important to a successful marriage.

The only item that has declined significantly in importance in the public’s estimation since 1990 is children. Just one item – “sharing household chores” – has risen sharply, from 47% in 1990 to 62% this year. For the other seven items, there was little or no change in the public’s assessments of importance between this year’s survey and the last time this battery of questions was asked – in 1990.

Men and women have nearly identical takes on all nine items on this list. But there are big differences by race, ethnicity, education and income. Blacks and Hispanics are more likely than whites to say that virtually every one of these items is “very important” to a successful marriage. These differences are especially large with respect to the standard-of-living items



(income and housing) on the list, but they also pertain to the “compatibility” items as well, such as shared religious beliefs, agreement on politics, happy sexual relationship, sharing household chores and tastes and interests in common.

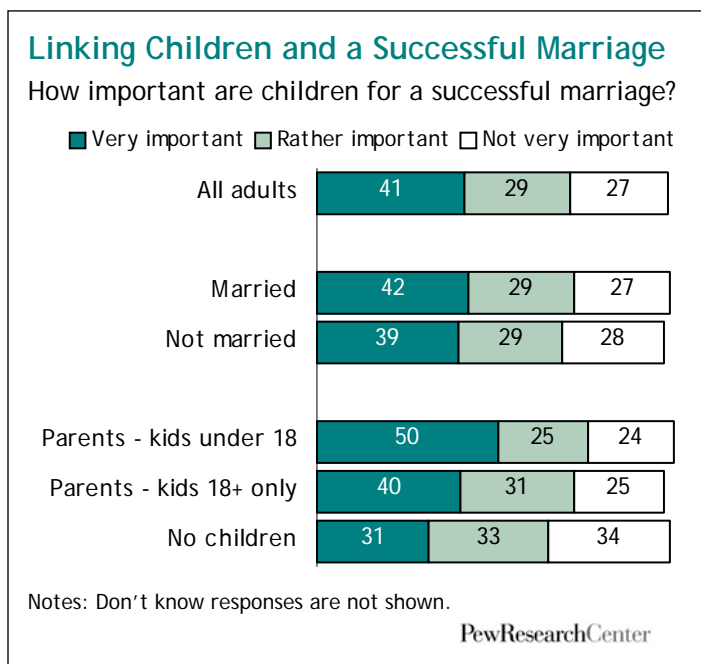
And on the question of children, there are big racial and ethnic gaps as well. Hispanics (69%) are much more likely than blacks (49%), who in turn are much more likely than whites (35%), to say that children are very important to a successful marriage.

In view of the fact that blacks and Hispanics bear children out of wedlock at higher rates than do whites, and that they tend to have lower economic standards of living, these findings suggest that many members of minority groups may be setting a standard for marriage that they themselves cannot meet. For them, the ideal of a traditional marriage with children, a good house and a decent income appears to represent both a powerful attraction and a bridge too far, given their economic circumstances.

By contrast, whites tend to face fewer economic barriers to entry into the marketplace of traditional marriage and parenting. But, perhaps as a result, they appear more prone to take for granted – or, in the taxonomy of this survey, less likely to rate as “very important” – children, adequate income and good housing as key components of a successful marriage.

Their attitude also may reflect the across-the-board weakening of the link between marriage and parenting that they observe throughout mainstream society. Nearly a half century ago, nonmarital childbearing was largely confined to minority communities. No longer. The percentage of births to unmarried mothers among whites has risen from 2.3% in 1960 to 35.8% in 2004.¹⁶ Out-of-wedlock birth rates are still much higher in the black community (68.8% in 2004) than in the white community, but the rate of growth has been higher in the white community.

Differences in attitudes about marriage and parenting do not have only a racial and ethnic hue. Our survey also finds that the less education and lower incomes that people (of any race or ethnicity) have, the more likely they are to describe good housing, adequate income and children as all being very important to a successful marriage.



¹⁶ Ventura and Bachrach. 2000. *op. cit.* and Table 10 “Nonmarital childbearing by detailed race and Hispanic origin of mother, and maternal age: United States, selected years 1970-2004” in Health, United States, 2006. National Center for Health Statistics.

Religion also makes a difference in the responses to several of these questions about marriage. For example, some 75% of white evangelical Protestants say that shared religious beliefs are very important to a successful marriage, compared with 33% of non-evangelical Protestants, 43% of all Catholics and 23% of all seculars.

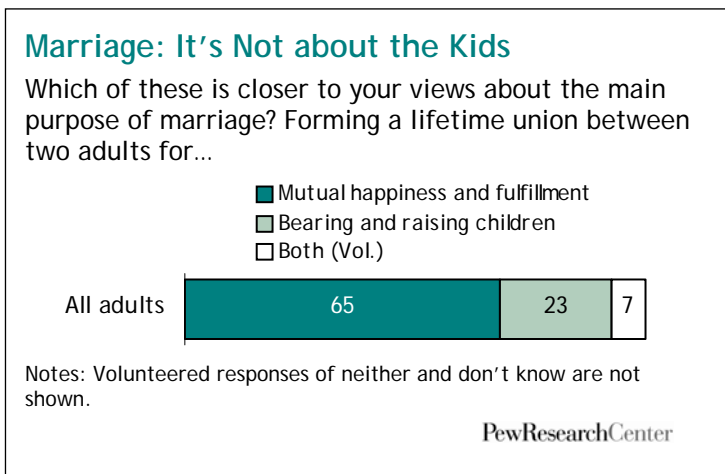
But the religious pattern shifts when it comes to the question of the importance of children to a successful marriage. Here, it's the Catholics – and, especially, Hispanic Catholics – who feel most strongly about the importance of children. Some 48% of the former and 68% of the latter say children are “very important” to a successful marriage, while just 38% of white evangelical Protestants agree.

Finally, being a parent makes a big difference in how respondents weigh the importance of children to marriage. Parents of either minor age or adult age children are more likely than non-parents to say that children are very important to a successful marriage. This holds true whether or not they are married.

Main Purpose of Marriage

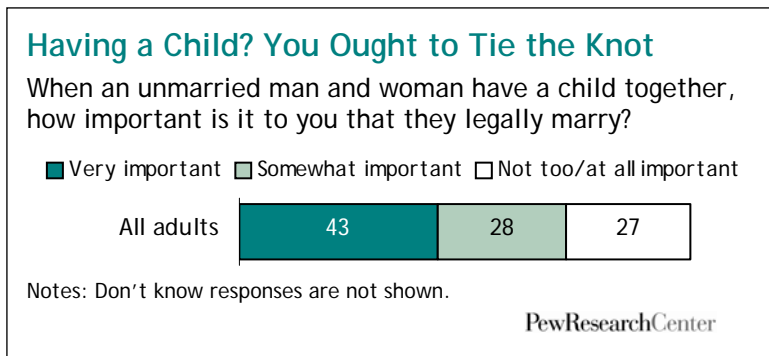
By a ratio of nearly three-to-one, more Americans say that the main purpose of marriage is “forming a lifetime union between two adults for their mutual happiness and fulfillment” (65%) than say its main purpose is “forming a lifetime union between two adults for the purpose of bearing and raising children” (23%). The remainder volunteer both, neither or they don't know.

All major demographic groups share in this assessment, though for some groups, the margins are not as lopsided. Among frequent churchgoers, for example, the ratio drops to two-to-one. Among Hispanics, just half (51%) say marriage is mainly about the adults, while nearly four-in-ten (38%) say it's mainly about the kids. And among people with a high school degree or less, some 44% say it's mainly about the adults while 38% say it's mainly about the kids. Meanwhile, at the other end of the education scale, people with college degrees are nearly four times more likely to say marriage is mainly about adult happiness rather than to say it is mainly about bearing and raising children (69% vs. 19%).



Importance of Marriage

Despite the findings from this survey that show a decline over time in the connection that people draw between marriage and children, most Americans still believe that couples should tie the knot if they want to have a baby. In short, the public makes a distinction between the way things are and the



way they would prefer them to be.

Some seven-in-ten respondents say it is either “very important” (43%) or “somewhat important” (28%) for a couple to legally marry when they have a child together. Older adults, white evangelical Protestants and frequent churchgoers of any faith all feel particularly strongly on this point. On the other hand, secular Americans are the most divided; indeed, a modest majority of them say it is either “not too important” or “not important at all” for the couple to marry when they have a child.

The response patterns are nearly identical to a question about the importance of marriage when a couple plans to spend the rest of their lives together. Some seven-in-ten say it is either very or somewhat important for such a couple to legally marry, and this view is held most firmly by those who are older; frequent churchgoers; and white evangelical Protestants.

Spending Your Life Together? Then Tie the Knot

When a man and woman plan to spend the rest of their lives together as a couple, how important is it to you that they legally marry?

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important □ Not too/at all important



Notes: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Children and Single Parent Families

The public’s concern about the negative impact on children of being raised in single parent families is supported by decades of economic and social research that shows a correlation – if not necessarily a causal relationship – between single parenting and negative outcomes for children. In 1964, when President Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty, about three-in-ten poor families with children were headed by single mothers. Today, about six-in-ten poor families with children are headed by single mothers.¹⁷ Children raised in single parent families not only experience very high levels of poverty, they also experience relatively high rates of emotional and behavioral problems, and academic failure.¹⁸

In 2003, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, some 32% of all families were headed by a single parent, up from 9% in 1960. During the 1960s and 1970s, a rising divorce rate was the biggest reason for the growth in single parent families. In the past two decades, however, the big driver of this trend has been out-of-wedlock childbearing. As a result, the pathway to single parenthood now increasingly bypasses marriage altogether.¹⁹ As of 2003, about two-fifths of all single mothers had never been married.

¹⁷ Ellwood, David. T. and Christopher Jencks. 2004. “The Spread of Single-Parent Families in the United States since 1960.” Kennedy School of Government Research Working Paper Series. RWP04-008. Harvard University.

¹⁸ Glenn, Norval and Thomas Sylvester. 2005. “Trends in Scholarly Writing on Family Structure Since 1977 in the Journal of Marriage and Family.” Report for the National Fatherhood Initiative and the Institute for American Values.

¹⁹ Bianchi and Casper. 2000. *op cit*.

Why Marry?

When the ever-married respondents in the survey were asked to state in their own words why they chose to marry rather than live together, about half of all responses (49%) had to do with moral or religious views and/or social norms about the primacy of the institution of marriage. Another one-in-four said it was because of love for a partner and a desire to make a long-term commitment. One-in-ten cited a desire to have children (or the fact that a child was on the way).

On this question, the biggest difference in the pattern of responses comes with the age of the respondent. Nearly three-in-ten (27%) of ever-married adults ages 65 and older cite social norms as the reason they decided to marry rather than live together; by contrast, just 2% of ever-married respondents ages 18 to 29 cited this as a main reason.

When to Marry?

When we asked survey respondents to state the ideal age they believe a woman or a man should marry, the mean responses were 25.6 years of age for women and 27.1 for men. Perceptions of the ideal time of life to marry track closely with the median age of marriage. According to the Census Bureau, the median age in 2005 at first marriage was 25.3 years for women and 27.1 years for men. These ages have been rising steadily since 1970 when the median age at first marriage was 20.8 for women and 23.2 for men.

Why Did You Get Married?

Why did you decide to get married rather than just live together?

	Ever married
	%
Beliefs that living together was wrong/Religion/Upbringing/Social norms	49
Love and commitment	24
Had children/Expecting/Wanted children	10
It was time/Easier/Just wanted to	10
Make a legal commitment	2
Young and stupid/Young/Dumb	2
Financial reasons/Health benefits	1
Other (Miscellaneous)	8
Don't know	5

Notes: Based on respondents who have ever married. Responses total to more than 100% because respondents could offer more than one answer to this open-ended question.

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Marriage and Personal Fulfillment

Despite the value that most Americans continue to place on marriage, and despite the fact that married adults are significantly more satisfied with their lives than are unmarried adults, the survey also finds that nearly eight-in-ten Americans (79%) say that it is possible for a woman to lead a complete and happy life if she remains single. Some two-thirds (67%) say the same thing about a man. Both of these percentages are up compared with a 1985 survey.

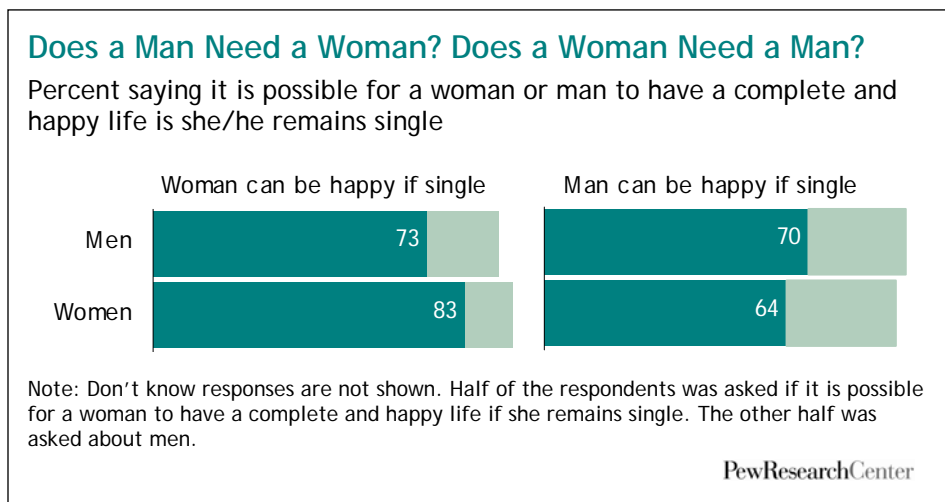
There's some evidence of gender solidarity in these responses.

Women are bit more likely than men to say that women can be happy and fulfilled if they remain single. Meantime, men are slightly more likely than women to say that men can be happy and fulfilled if they remain

single. Both genders agree, however, that it's somewhat more difficult for unmarried men than for unmarried women to lead a happy and fulfilled life.

Hispanics are the one demographic group that has a very distinctive view on these questions. A majority of them (52%) say that a man cannot lead a complete and happy life if he remains single, and a substantial minority (38%) says the same thing about a woman. More so than whites or blacks, Hispanics tend to see marriage as essential to adult fulfillment.

At the other end of the spectrum are seculars. Nearly all of them (94%) say a woman can be happy and fulfilled if she remains single. However, just 75% of seculars say the same thing about men – meaning that seculars make a bigger distinction between men and woman on this question than does the rest of the adult population.



III. Cohabitation

As marriage loses some of its central role in modern society, cohabitation is occupying some of the vacuum. One estimate based on the Current Population Survey puts the percentage of cohabiting households at 4.8% in 1997, more than double the level of 1.5% in 1977.²⁰ And, as a percentage of all couples (as opposed to all households), another estimate puts the 1999 rate at 7.4%, up from just 1.1% in 1970.²¹

While cohabitation and marriage have some traits in common – shared physical space; emotional and sexual intimacy; a division of assets and labor – they are also quite different. Marriage is a legal, social and religious institution with a set of rules, formal and informal, that stretch back some 5000 years. Cohabitation, at least as practiced in the United States, is a much looser, more transitory and more varied arrangement.²² It is a precursor to marriage for some; a trial marriage for others; and an alternative to marriage for still others. But whatever the expectations and motivations of cohabiters, their relationships tend to be short-lived (at least in comparison to marriages). About half of all cohabiting relationships in this country end within five years.²³ On the other hand, if a cohabiting relationship does last for five years, there is a high probability that it will eventually lead to a marriage.

Given the transitory nature of cohabitation, figures about current prevalence of cohabitation don't fully illustrate the magnitude of changes in behaviors on this front in recent decades. These trends are better demonstrated by the growing proportion of the population, especially among the younger generations, who have ever cohabited. One estimate based on the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) finds that, as of 2002, about 56% of women ages 19 to 44 had cohabited for a portion of

Who's Living Together?		
	Living with partner	All others
	%	%
Marital History		
Ever married	36	79
Married once	23	57
Married 2 or more times	13	22
Never married	64	21
Don't know/Refused	0	*
	100	100
Parental Status		
Not a parent	33	27
Have children	67	73
Have children under 18	46	36
Have children 18+ only	21	37
Don't know/Refused	0	0
	100	100
Age		
18-49	82	57
50 and older	17	42
Don't know/Refused	1	1
	100	100
Mean age	36.5	46.6
Number of respondents	100	1907
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²⁰ Lynne M. Casper, Philip N. Cohen and Tavia Simmons. 1999. "How Does POSSLQ Measure Up?: Historical Estimates of Cohabitation." Population Division Working Paper, No. 36. U.S. Census Bureau.

²¹ Smith, Tom W. 2006. American Sexual Behavior: Trends, Socio-Demographic Differences, and Risk Behavior. GSS Topical Report, No. 25. National Opinion Research Center.

²² In Scandinavian countries, cohabitation more closely resembles marriage; the relationships tend to be longstanding and enjoy many of the same legal protections as marriage. (Ellwood and Jencks. 2004. *op cit.*)

²³ Bramlett, Matthew D. and William D. Mosher. 2002. "Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the United States." Vital and Health Statistics, Series 23 (No. 22). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics.

their lives, up from 45% among this age group in 1995 and 33% in 1987.²⁴

Who's Living Together Now?

The Pew survey finds that about 5% of the total population say that they are currently living with a partner. As expected, this group is considerably younger than the rest of the population. About a third (36%) of those currently cohabiting have been married in the past, while two-thirds (64%) have never married. Some 46% of this group have minor age children, one-third have no children, and the remainder (21%) have only adult age children. In other respects – such as education levels—this group looks about like the rest of the population.

About two-thirds (68%) of those cohabiting say they think they will marry their current partner someday. But there is clearly some ambivalence about marriage among this group. When asked whether or not they want to marry (apart from any expectations for marriage with their current partner), those cohabiting are almost evenly divided between expressing a desire to marry and expressing uncertainty about marriage.

By contrast, those who have never married and are *not* living with a partner are more likely than those cohabiting to express a preference for marriage; 56% among this group report wanting to marry, 29% are not sure if they want to marry and 12% say they don't want to marry.

In short, by providing an alternative to marriage, cohabitation for some appears to diminish rather than strengthen the impulse to marry.

Wedding Bells in Your Future?

	<i>Current situation</i>	
	<i>Living with partner</i>	<i>Single, never married⁺</i>
	%	%
Will you and your partner marry someday?		
Yes, will	68	
No, won't	21	
Don't know/Refused	<u>11</u>	
	100	
Expect to marry someday?		
Yes, will		62
No, will remain single		26
Don't know/Refused		<u>12</u>
		100
Do you want to marry?		
Want to marry	44	56
Don't want to marry	7	12
Not sure if want to	41	29
Don't know/Refused	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100
Number of respondents	100	412

Note: Living with partner includes all those currently cohabiting; some of this group has married in the past. Never married includes all those who identify their current marital status as never married; none of this group is currently living with a partner.

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²⁴ Sheela Kennedy and Larry Bumpass. "Cohabitation and Children's Living Arrangements: New Estimates from the United States" Paper presented at the 2007 Annual Meetings of the Population Association of America. Washington, DC. March 29-31, 2007. Also see Bumpass and Lu. 2000. *op cit.*

Who's Ever Cohabited?

The Pew survey finds 36% of all adults have lived with a partner without being married at some point in their lives, and this figure rises to more than four-in-ten among adults ages 18 to 49. Among adults ages 65 and older, the figure drops to 9%.

In addition to their relative youth, those who have ever cohabited have some distinctive demographic characteristics. Blacks are more likely to report having lived with a partner than are either Hispanics or non-Hispanic whites. Religiosity and religious preferences are also related to cohabitation. About a fifth (22%) of those who attend religious services at least weekly report ever living with a partner. This compares with about 45% among those who attend services less regularly.

A statistical analysis of these findings shows that the likelihood of ever having cohabited versus never having cohabited is most strongly correlated with being younger, with being black, and with attending religious services only infrequently or not at all. After controlling for other demographic factors, Hispanics are less likely than whites or blacks to have ever cohabited. There is a slight tendency for more men than women to report having lived with a partner. Among those under age 50, however, there is no significant

Living Together Without Marriage

	All adults	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%
Ever lived together?					
Yes, have cohabited	36	39	47	33	9
Living together now	4	7	6	2	1
Ever have	32	32	41	31	8
No, never cohabited	63	61	52	67	90
Don't know/Refused	1	0	1	*	1
	100	100	100	100	100

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Portrait of Those Ever Cohabiting

	Yes, have	No, never	DK/Refused	N
	%	%	%	
All adults	36	64	1=100	2020
Gender				
Men	39	60	1=100	892
Women	33	66	1=100	1128
Race/Ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	34	65	1=100	1146
Black, non-Hispanic	46	53	1=100	365
Hispanic	35	65	*=100	404
Education				
College graduate	34	66	*=100	573
Some college	43	56	1=100	524
High school or less	34	66	*=100	914
Religion				
White Protestant	30	69	1=100	703
White evangelical	27	73	*=100	346
White mainline	34	65	1=100	339
Black Protestant	45	55	*=100	312
Catholic	31	69	*=100	550
White, non-Hispanic	33	67	*=100	256
Hispanic	27	73	0=100	262
Secular	56	44	*=100	195
Attend Church				
Weekly or more	22	77	1=100	840
Monthly or less	45	55	*=100	634
Seldom or never	46	53	1=100	523

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difference between men and women in their likelihood of having lived with a partner.

Profile of Cohabitors by Marital History

Experience with cohabitation is, of course, related to both age and marital history. Some who are younger have not yet formed a union with a partner – marital or otherwise. Among those currently married, the proportion who’ve ever cohabited is similar to that for the nation overall; 32% of the currently married have ever cohabited while 68% have not. Where there has been a marital disruption, the picture changes. More than half (53%) of those who have ever divorced have lived with a partner at some point in their lives, while 46% have not. Among those who have been married but never divorced, about a quarter (26%) have lived with a partner while 74% have not.

	--Ever cohabited?--		
	Yes, have	No, never	DK/Ref
	%	%	%
All adults	36	63	1=100
Among those who are...			
Married	32	68	*=100
Among those who ever married and have...			
Ever been divorced	53	46	1=100
Never been divorced	26	74	*=100

How to read this table: Nationwide 36% of adults have ever lived with a partner. Among those who are currently married 32% have done so while 68% have not.

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Is Cohabitation a Trial Marriage?

While there is a common refrain in public discourse that living together is a testing ground for and stepping stone to marriage, those who have ever lived with a partner reject the notion that their cohabitation was (or is) a trial marriage by about a 2 to 1 margin. Those currently living with a partner and those who have done so in the past hold about the same views on this point.

Notions of testing the waters play a role in some people's decisions about living together, however. When asked in an open-ended question why respondents chose to live together *rather than get married*, the most common responses reflect uncertainty about the durability of the relationship (21% of responses) or concerns about the timing of marriage (15% of responses). For others, living together is explicitly intended as a precursor to marriage (8%). Other responses reflect the more practical side of decision-making – with 12% mentioning convenience, ease or a simple desire to live together; and 10% of responses reflecting financial considerations. Another 10% of responses raise specific concerns about marriage (9%), per se, or issues related to dissolving marriages (1%).

Did You Think of Living Together as a Trial Marriage?

	Ever cohabited
	%
Trial marriage	32
Not trial marriage	64
Don't know	4
	100

Notes: Question wording: When you started living together did you think about it as a trial marriage or didn't you think of it this way?

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Why Did You Decide to Live Together Rather than Marry?

	Ever cohabited
	%
Wanted to be sure/Trial	21
Timing not right/Too young	15
Convenience/Easier/ Just wanted to	12
Financial reasons/Cut costs/ No money or time for wedding	10
Misgivings about marriage	9
Thought would/Planned to marry	8
Love and compatibility	5
Had children/Expecting	3
Wrong/Dumb/"Not saved" then	2
Legally can't marry	1
Easier to change/No legal battles	1
Other (Miscellaneous)	16
Don't know	6

Notes: Based on respondents who have ever cohabited. Responses total to more than 100% because respondents could offer more than one answer to this open-ended question.

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Those who ever married were also asked to explain why they decided to marry rather than live together at that time. The results to this open-ended question suggest a strong role for beliefs about the morality and acceptability of cohabitation. Among those who married and never cohabited, fully 61% of responses touched on social norms and personal, moral or religious beliefs. By contrast, among those who have cohabited (and also been married) at some point in their lives, just 28% of responses mentioned beliefs about cohabitation. Those who had cohabited were a bit more likely to cite having, wanting or expecting children as a reason they married (16% among those ever cohabiting and 6% among those who never cohabited). Both groups were about equally likely to mention love and commitment as a reason for marrying.

Why Did You Get Married Rather than Live Together?

	-----Been Married-----		
	All asked	Ever cohabited	Never cohabited
	%	%	%
Beliefs that living together was wrong/Religion/Upbringing/Social norms were different	49	28	61
Love and commitment	24	28	22
Had children/Expecting/Wanted children	10	16	6
It was time/Easier/Just wanted to	10	14	7
Make a legal commitment	2	2	2
Young and stupid/Young/Dumb	2	3	1
Financial reasons/Health benefits	1	3	*
Other (Miscellaneous)	8	13	5
Don't know	5	7	4

Notes: Based on respondents who have ever married. Responses total to more than 100% because respondents could offer more than one answer to this open-ended question.

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Attitudes about Living Together

For the most part, attitudes related to cohabitation track with personal experience.

For example, there is a strong relationship between one's cohabitation history and beliefs that premarital sex is wrong. Half of those who have ever lived with a partner reject the notion that premarital sex is wrong and another 26% consider it "wrong only sometimes." Just 21% of this group considers premarital sex always or almost always wrong.

By contrast, those who have never lived with a partner are about evenly split between the two most negative and two most positive responses; 47% consider premarital sex always or almost always

Strong Link between Beliefs about Sex and Cohabitation Behaviors

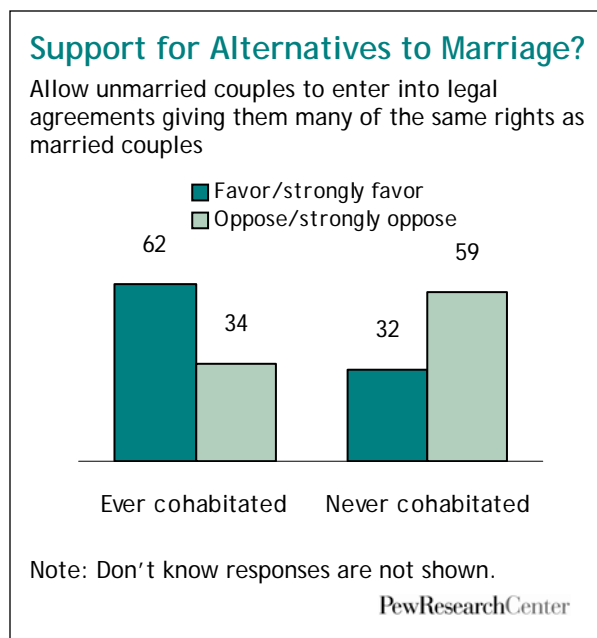
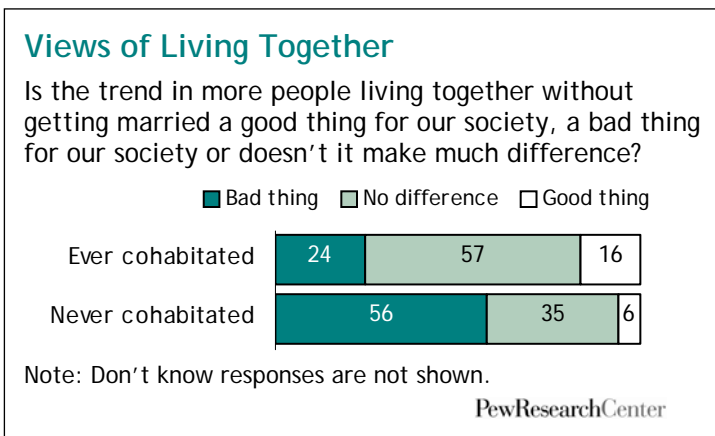
	--Ever Cohabited?--	
	Yes, have	No, never
	%	%
Premarital sex is...		
Always wrong	14	34
Almost always wrong	7	13
Wrong only sometimes	26	28
Not wrong at all	50	22
Don't know	3	3
	100	100

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wrong while half take the less negative stance that premarital sex is wrong only sometimes or not wrong at all.

A similar pattern occurs on judgments about the effect on society of the cohabitation trend. More than half (56%) of those who have never lived with a partner consider the growth in cohabitation a “bad thing for society” compared with 24% among those who have ever cohabited.

When asked about their support for a proposal to allow unmarried couples to enter into civil unions (without any reference to the sexual preference of the couple), there were equally stark differences between those who have and have not cohabited. About six-in-ten (62%) of those who have ever lived with a partner express support for civil unions compared with about half as many (32%) among those who have never cohabited.



Public Opinion About Cohabitation

About equal portions of Americans say the trend toward cohabitation is a “bad thing for society” as say it “doesn’t make much difference” (44% and 43%, respectively), while just one-in-ten say it is a “good thing for society.”

Not surprisingly, opinion about cohabitation is strongly related to beliefs about the morality of premarital sex. About three-quarters (76%) of those who consider premarital sex to be always or almost always wrong say that the trend in cohabitation is a bad thing for society. This compares with 25% among those who hold a less negative assessment of the morality of premarital sex.

The demographic groups most likely to consider premarital sex morally wrong are also the

ones most likely to consider the growing trend in cohabitation to be a bad thing for society. Older adults (ages 65 and older) are more likely to say the trend in cohabitation is a bad thing for society. More frequent churchgoers, as well as white evangelical Protestants, are more likely to think of cohabitation as bad for society. Similarly, those holding more politically conservative views are more likely than those holding moderate or liberal political leanings to call the cohabitation trend bad for society.

There are no differences in viewpoint on this issue between men and women; between the more and less educated; or between those with higher and lower family incomes. Hispanics are a bit less likely to consider the cohabitation trend bad for society and more likely to consider this trend good for society than either non-Hispanic blacks or whites. But about equal portions of each racial or ethnic group say this trend doesn’t make much difference.

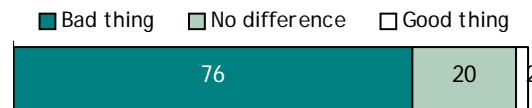
How Important is Legal Marriage?

One way to assess public sentiment related to cohabitation is to look at attitudes about legal marriage. The Pew survey asked respondents to rate the importance of legal marriage “when a man and woman plan to spend the rest of their lives together as a couple.” A plurality (47%) consider marriage in this situation to be very important, another 23% say it is somewhat important and 27% say either it is not too or not at all important.

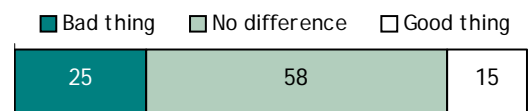
Opinion about the importance of legal marriage differs by race and ethnicity, age, and religious practice and affiliation. Blacks (57%) and Hispanics (53%) are more likely than whites (44%) to consider it very important for couples to legally marry in this context. Older adults, especially those at least 65 years of age, are more likely than younger adults to say it is very important to legally marry.

Views of Living Together and Morality of Premarital Sex Closely Aligned

Among those saying premarital sex is always/almost always wrong 76% say living together is a bad thing for society.



Among those saying premarital sex is sometimes/not at all wrong 25% say living together is a bad thing for society.



Note: Don’t know responses are not shown.

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Better than seven-in-ten (73%) white evangelical Protestants consider it very important for a couple to legally marry; this compares with 35% among white mainline Protestants, 43% among Catholics, and 20% among seculars. Regardless of religious affiliation, those who attend religious services more frequently are more likely than less frequent attendees to say it is very important for a couple to legally marry; 69% of those attending services at least weekly say it is very important, compared with 36% among more sporadic attendees and 27% among those who seldom or never attend services.

There are not many differences in opinion on this question among other socio-demographic groups. Those with less education are more likely those with more education to say it is very important for a couple to legally marry in this context. There are few differences in opinion on this question between men and women or among those with higher and lower family incomes.

What About Other Legal Agreements?

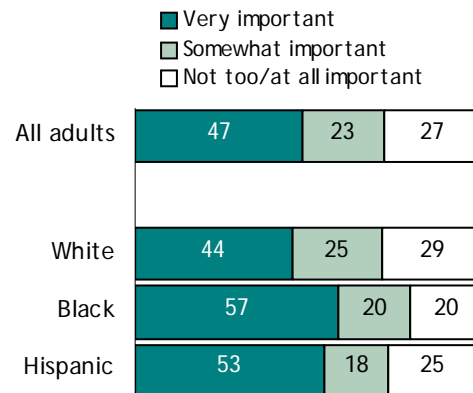
The Pew survey also asked about other alternatives to legal marriage – such as civil unions. Respondents were asked whether they favor or oppose “allowing unmarried couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples.” Note that this question does not reference homosexual couples; instead, in the context of this survey it evokes the notion of civil unions for heterosexual couples.

Opinion about this kind of legal alternative to marriage is tilted narrowly in the negative direction; 49% of adults oppose or strongly oppose, compared with 43% who favor allowing civil unions. As expected, older adults (ages 65 and above) are less likely to favor civil unions; a fifth of those ages 65 and older favor civil unions compared with 54% among those ages 18-29, for example. Men are a bit more negative than women about civil unions – but this gender difference is evident only among the younger age groups (ages 18 to 49). There are no differences in opinion between men and women ages 50 and older.

There are sharp differences in opinion about civil unions among religious groups. About three-quarters (76%) of white evangelical Protestants oppose civil unions; this compares with 43% among white mainline Protestants and 47% among Catholics. Seculars (people who profess no religious affiliation) favor civil unions by a 62% to 34% margin. Similarly, there is an association between church attendance and opinion about civil unions, with those attending services more frequently being more likely than less frequent attendees to oppose civil unions.

How Important is Legal Marriage?

When a man and woman plan to spend the rest of their lives together as a couple, how important is it to you that they legally marry?



Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses are not shown.

PewResearchCenter

Whites and blacks are about equally likely to oppose civil unions; both groups express more opposition to civil unions than do Hispanics. There are few differences in opinion about civil unions among education or income groups.

IV. Divorce

The divorce rate in this country more than doubled between 1960 and 1980, but since then has fallen by about a third – albeit to a plateau that is still extremely high by historical standards.

Marriage scholars note that this sharp rise in the social acceptability of divorce coincides with a long-term change in social norms about marriage.

Throughout most of human history, marriage was seen mostly in economic and practical terms – as a social institution that rationed the allocation of labor and resources by gender and by generation.

Only in the past century or so have the ideals of intimacy, companionship, romantic love and individual self-fulfillment come to the fore as the principal rationale for marriage. But these new norms, scholars note, have made marriage more fragile and divorce more acceptable – for when modern marriage partners find they are not getting personal fulfillment from the union, there's no longer a compelling reason to stay in the relationship.²⁵

Some 77% of all respondents to the Pew survey have been married and, among these, a third report having been divorced at least once in their lifetime. Many of these divorcees – more than four-in-ten (45%) – report that they are currently married.

Who is most likely to experience

Who's Been Divorced: A Profile

	(NET) Ever Married	-Among those ever married- Ever divorced	Never divorced	DK/ Ref
	%	%	%	%
All adults	77	33	67	*=100
Gender				
Male	75	32	68	*=100
Female	79	33	67	*=100
Race / Ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	82	34	66	*=100
Black, non-Hispanic	54	38	62	0=100
Hispanic	70	23	77	*=100
Age				
18-29	37	5	95	0=100
30-49	81	32	68	*=100
50-64	88	45	55	0=100
65+	98	29	71	*=100
Education				
College grad	85	25	75	*=100
Some college	72	38	62	0=100
High school or less	75	35	65	*=100
Income				
\$100,000+	88	26	74	0=100
\$50K-\$99K	82	28	72	0=100
\$30K-\$49K	79	36	64	*=100
Less than \$30K	69	41	59	*=100

How to read this table: Among all adults, 77% have ever married. Among all who ever married, 33% have been divorced and 67% have never divorced. Similarly, among all men who ever married, 32% have divorced while 68% have never divorced.

PewResearchCenter

²⁵ Coontz, Stephanie. 2004. The World Historical Transformation of Marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 66: 974-979.

divorce? Nearly anyone. In the main, there are fewer demographic differences in divorce rates than there are in marriage rates.

For example, blacks are much less likely to marry than whites or Hispanics; the Pew survey find 54% of blacks have ever married compared with 70% among Hispanics and 82% among whites. However, while blacks are less likely than other racial and ethnic groups to marry, the percentage ever divorced is on par with whites (38% vs. 34% among ever-married whites). In contrast, Hispanics are the least likely to report ever having divorced (23%).

To some degree these racial and ethnic group differences reflect differences in religious identification. In particular, Hispanics are more likely to be Catholic (60%) than are either whites (24%) or blacks (4%). Catholics, especially those attending services at least weekly, are less likely than either Protestants or seculars to have been divorced.

Marriage and divorce patterns are, of course, related to age – with the percent ever married increasing with each age group. However, unlike the linear association between age and marriage, a much larger percentage of middle-aged adults (ages 50-64) report ever having been divorced. Almost half (45%) of this group has divorced as compared to roughly a third saying this among the age groups just below (ages 30-49) and above (65 and older).

Those with lower family incomes are a bit more likely than those with higher incomes to have experienced divorce.

About four-in-ten of those earning less than \$30,000 have been divorced, compared with

26% of those in the highest income bracket - \$100,000 or more. The association between income and experience with divorce may, in part, reflect a downward change in financial circumstances that often accompanies divorce.

Who's Been Divorced, by Religion

	(NET) Ever Married	--Among those ever married-- Ever divorced	Never divorced	DK/ Ref
	%	%	%	%
All adults	77	33	67	*=100
Religion				
Protestant	80	37	63	*=100
Catholic	78	25	75	*=100
Secular	64	35	65	*=100
Attend Church				
Weekly or more	81	27	73	*=100
Monthly or less	73	34	66	*=100
Seldom or never	74	39	61	*=100
Religion by Church Attendance				
Catholics, weekly+	81	14	85	1=100
Catholics, less often	77	32	68	*=100
White Protest., weekly+	88	30	70	0=100
White Protest., less often	82	41	58	1=100

How to read this table: Among all adults, 77% have ever married. Among all who ever married, 33% have been divorced and 67% have never divorced.

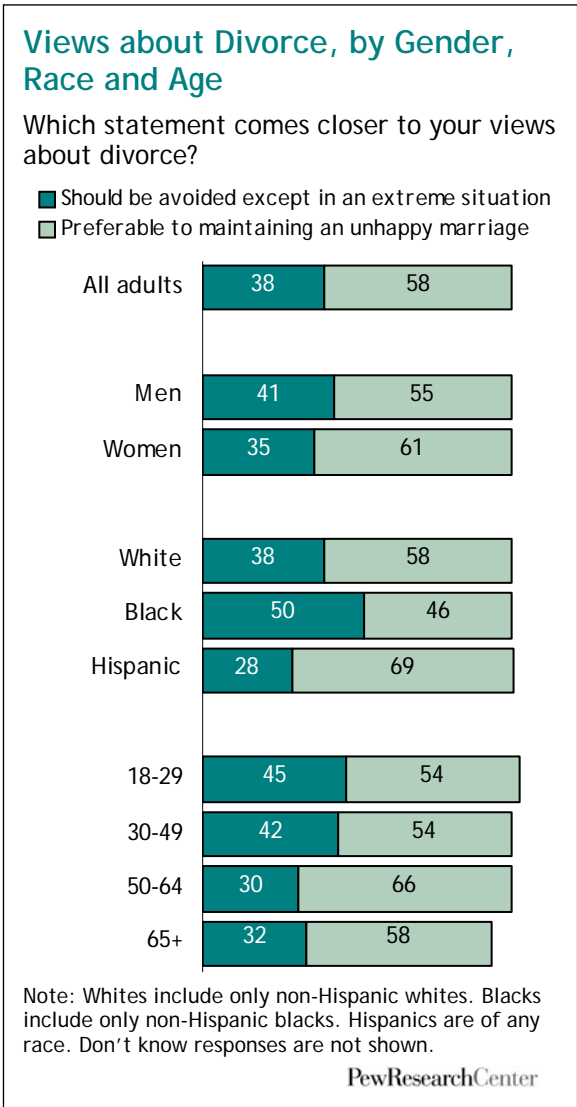
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How the Public Views Divorce

When a married couple is very unhappy, a majority of Americans believe divorce is preferable to staying together, both for the couple and for the children. Asked to consider two views about divorce, a majority of the general public chooses “divorce is painful, but preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage” over the view that “divorce should be avoided except in an extreme situation” (58% to 38%).

The groups a bit more likely to take the view that divorce should be avoided except in an extreme situation include blacks, men, younger adults (ages 18-49), white evangelical Protestants and frequent churchgoers. White evangelicals and black Protestants are more likely than both white mainline Protestants and Catholics to favor married couples staying together except under extreme circumstances.

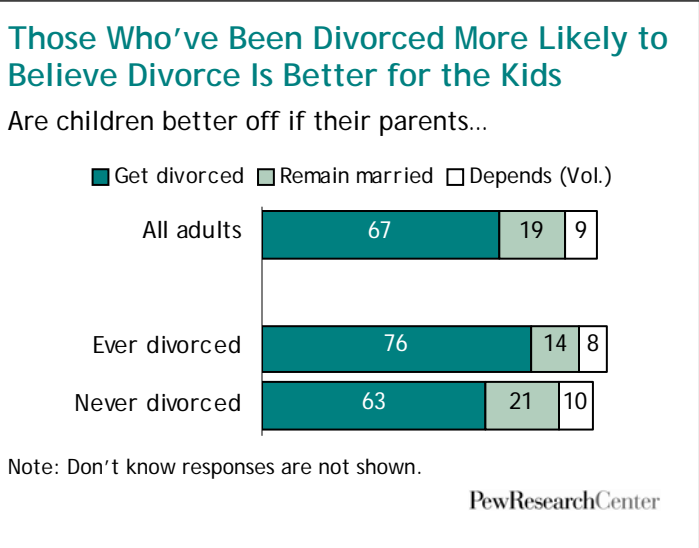
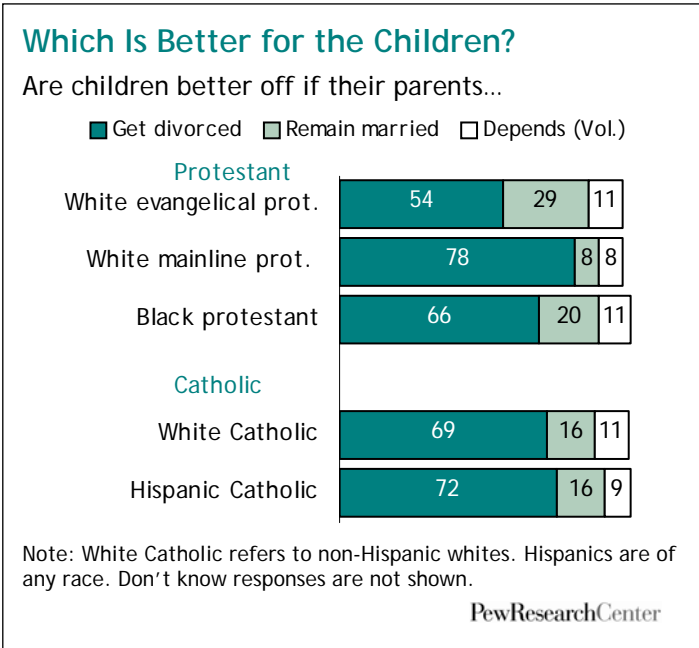
Those whose own parents divorced are just as likely as other respondents to take the position that divorce is painful but preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage. The now grown children of divorce are a little less likely than the rest of the population to say that children are better off if their parents stay unhappily married.



There is broad public consensus on what is best for children with two-thirds of the public saying that children are better off if their parents get divorced (67%) rather than remain in an unhappy marriage (19%).

There are few significant demographic differences on this question. However, white evangelical Protestants are more likely than other religious groups to consider parents staying together in an unhappy marriage as being better for the children; whereas males are about twice as likely as females to say this (26% versus 14%, respectively).

The survey also finds that a somewhat larger percentage of individuals who have been divorced at least once (76%) think that children are better off when parents get a divorce rather than maintaining a very unhappy marriage. By contrast, two-thirds (67%) of the general population and 63% of those who have never been divorced feel this way.



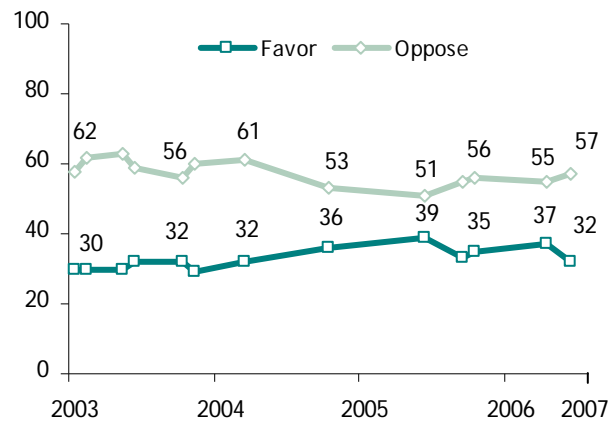
V. Gay Marriage, Civil Unions and Same-Sex Couples Raising Children

The question of whether same-sex couples should have a right to marry has been a divisive issue in U.S. politics since 1993, when the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that there must be a "compelling state interest" in order to continue to deny gay couples the right to marry.²⁶ That ruling, along with a 2004 decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Court which made that state the first and only one in the nation to legalize gay marriage, have placed the issue in the center of the family-policy debate. Since 1993 more than 40 states and the federal government have enacted statutes defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman; and more than half of all states have enacted constitutional bans on gay marriage.

Currently, a clear majority (57%) of the public opposes allowing gays and lesbians to marry, up from 51% in March of 2006, but roughly similar to the levels of opposition registered in 2003 and 2004. The groups most likely to take issue with gay marriage include men, older adults (ages 50 and above), the less educated (high school or less), Protestants (particularly white evangelicals), and regular church attendees (weekly or more).

Significant partisan differences also emerge on this issue. Democrats are divided, with slightly more opposing gay marriage (48% vs. 42%). Republicans, by a margin of better than five-to-one, oppose gay

Little Change in Views on Gay Marriage

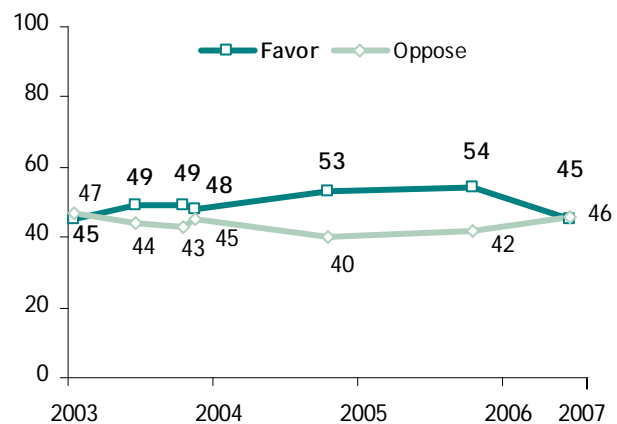


Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

Source: 2003 to 2006 surveys from the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

PewResearchCenter

Little Change in Views on Gay Civil Unions



Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

Source: 2003 to 2006 surveys from the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

PewResearchCenter

²⁶ See backgrounder on gay marriage from Stateline.org at <http://www.stateline.org/live/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=136&languageId=1&contentId=20695>

marriage (78% vs. 14%).

The public is more closely divided on whether gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form legally recognized civil unions that would give them many of the same rights as married couples, with slightly more people opposing it than supporting it (46% vs. 45%). Public support of civil unions has not been this low since October of 2003. As with gay marriage, white evangelical Protestants (71%), frequent church attendees (64%) and Republicans (60%) stand out for their opposition to civil unions.

When asked about the trend of more gay and lesbian couples raising children, exactly half (50%) of the public says this is bad for society, compared with 34% who say it doesn't make much difference and 11% who say it is good for society.

More men (59%) than women (42%) say gay parenting is bad for society. Among women, opposition to gay and lesbian couples raising children has declined in the past decade. In a 1997 survey of women only, a majority (56%) said this was a bad thing for society, compared with 42% saying this today. The negative reaction has fallen across the board among women, regardless of age, education and marital status.

Gay Parenting

Women have become less concerned about gay and lesbian couples raising children

	1997 Bad for society	2007 Bad for society	Change '97 to '07
All women	56	42	-14
Age			
18-29	46	35	-11
30-39	55	32	-23
40-49	54	42	-12
50-64	65	44	-21
65+	61	55	-6
Education			
College graduate	44	34	-10
Some college	53	42	-11
High school or less	62	45	-17
Marital Status			
Married	61	44	-17
Not Married	49	39	-10

Note: All figures are based on women.

Question wording: Is more gay and lesbian couples raising children generally a good thing for our society, a bad thing for our society, or doesn't it make much difference?

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About the Pew Social and Demographic Trends Project

The Social and Demographic Trends Project explores the behaviors and attitudes of Americans in key realms of their lives – family, community, health, finance, work and leisure. Reports analyze changes over time in social behaviors and probe for differences and similarities between key sub-groups in the population.

The project is part of the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Social and Demographic Trends staff:

Paul Taylor, Project Director
Cary Funk, Senior Researcher
April Clark, Research Associate

About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of adults, ages 18 years and older, living in continental U.S. telephone households. The sample design included an oversample of African-American and Hispanic respondents, as well as an oversample of 18 to 49 year olds. The oversample of African-American and Hispanic respondents was created by contacting a disproportionate number of area code-exchange combinations with higher than average densities of African-American and Hispanic households. The oversample of 18 to 49 year olds was achieved by screening additional replicates for age appropriate respondents. The data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States.

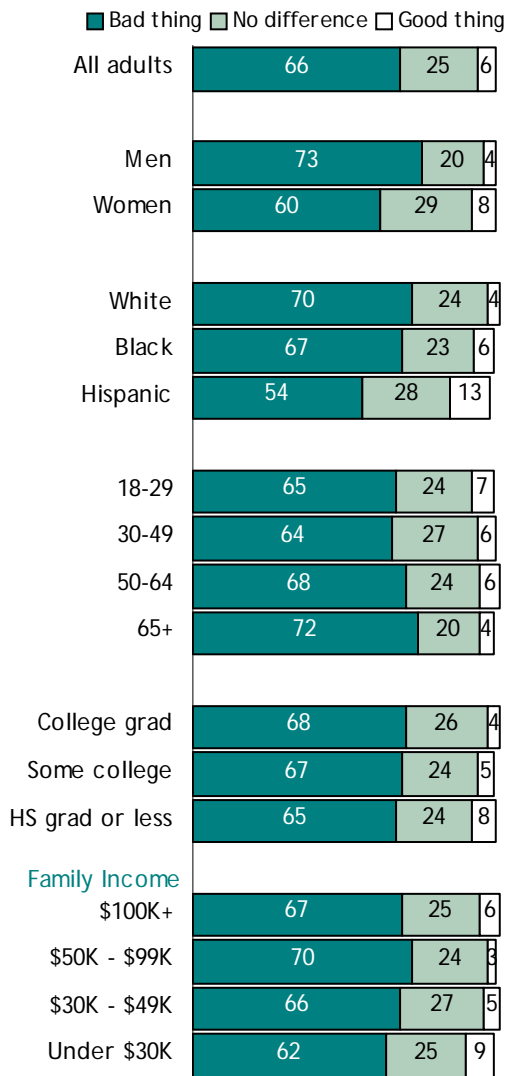
- Interviews conducted Feb. 16 – Mar. 14, 2007
- 2,020 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level.
- The margin of sampling error is higher for results based on subgroups of respondents. The margin of error for the following subgroups is:
 - Whites, non-Hispanic +/- 3.5 percentage points
 - Blacks, non-Hispanic +/- 7 percentage points
 - Hispanics +/- 7 percentage points
 - 18-49 year olds +/- 4 percentage points
 - Form 1 +/- 4 percentage points
 - Form 2 +/- 4 percentage points

Survey interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

Bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias in the findings of opinion polls.

Single Women Having Children

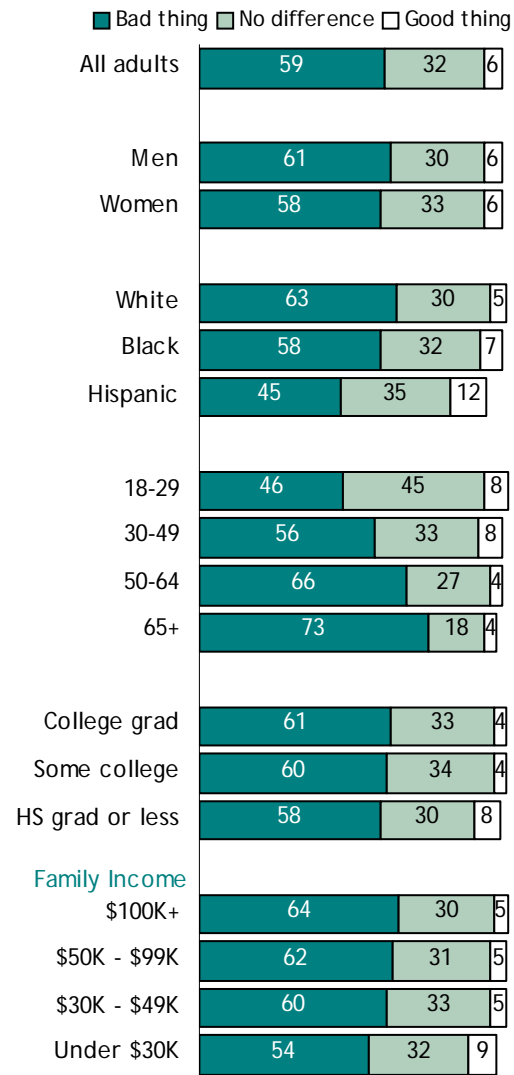
Is this trend a good thing for society, a bad thing for society or doesn't it make much difference?



Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses are not shown.

Unmarried Couples Having Children

Is this trend a good thing for society, a bad thing for society or doesn't it make much difference?

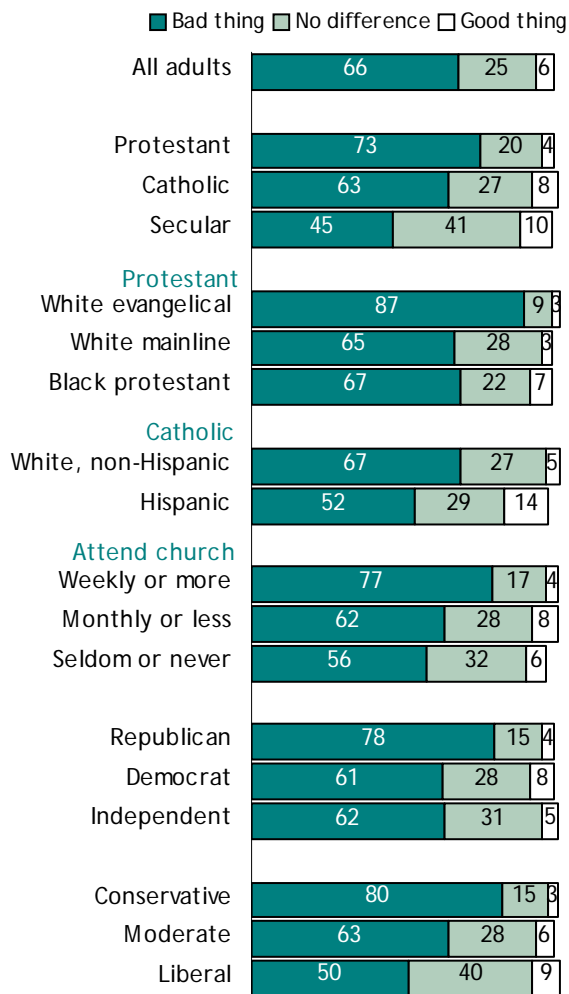


Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses are not shown.

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Single Women Having Children

Is this trend a good thing for society, a bad thing for society or doesn't it make much difference?



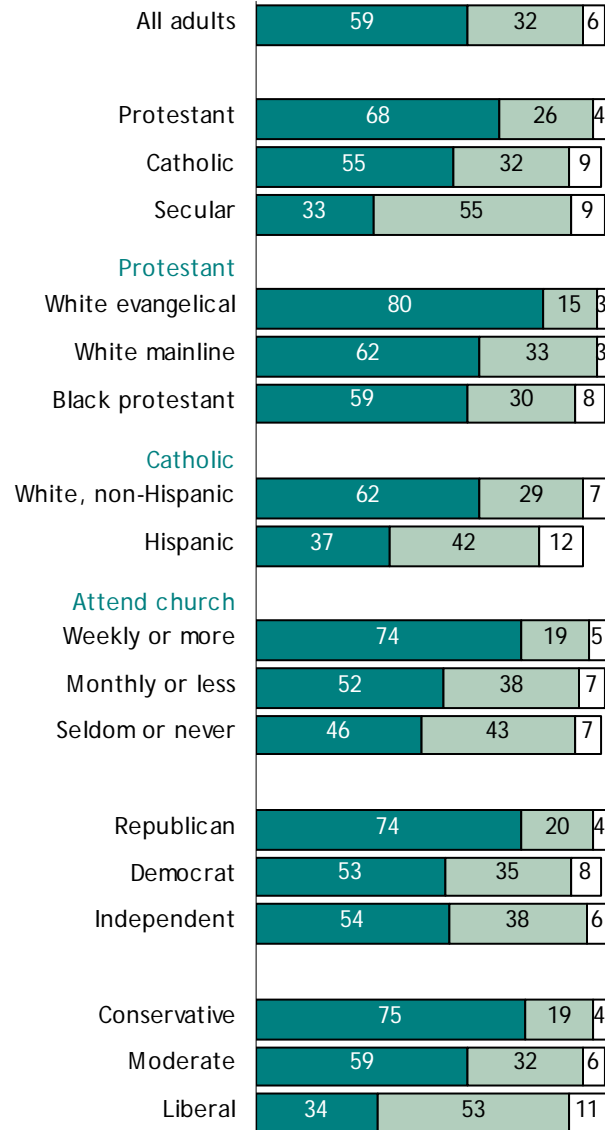
Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Unmarried Couples Having Children

Is this trend a good thing for society, a bad thing for society or doesn't it make much difference?

■ Bad thing ■ No difference □ Good thing

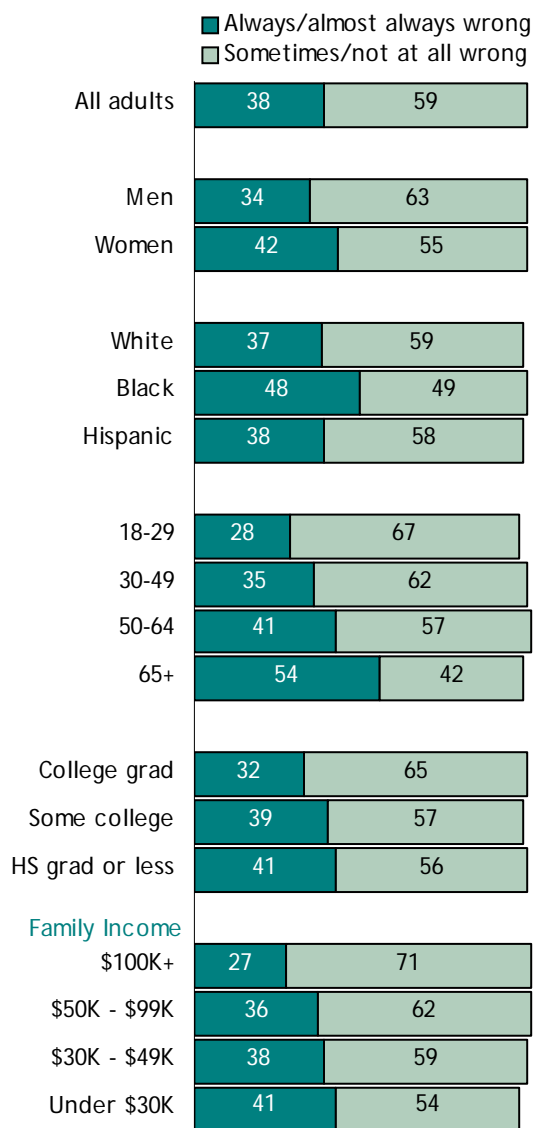


Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Morality of Premarital Sex

If a man and woman have sexual relations before marriage do you think it is ...

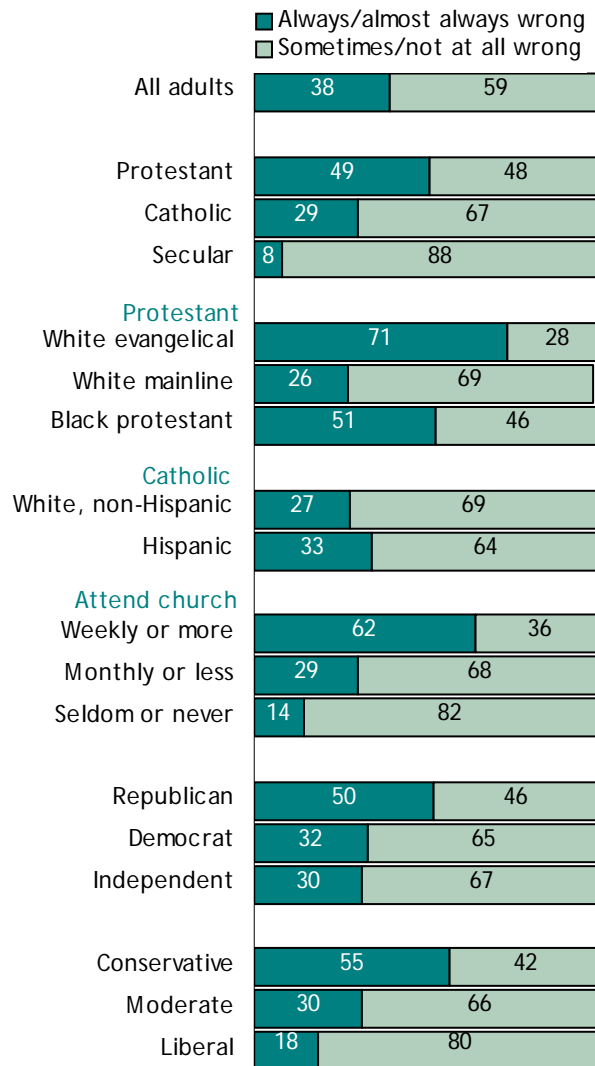


Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses are not shown.

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Morality of Premarital Sex

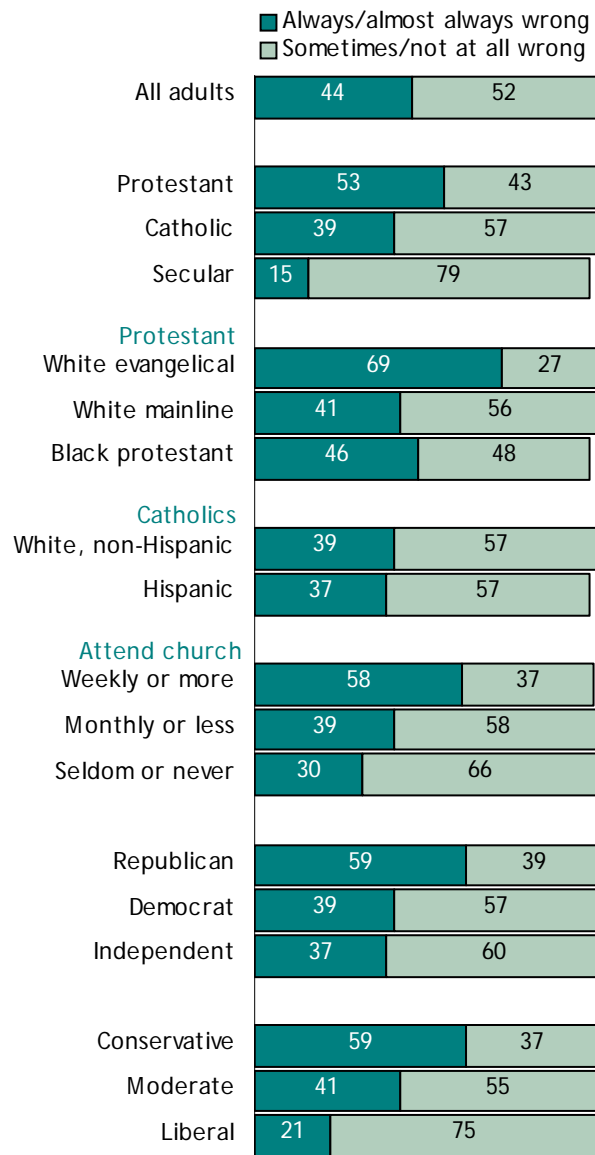
If a man and woman have sexual relations before marriage do you think it is ...



Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Morality of Unwed Women Having Children

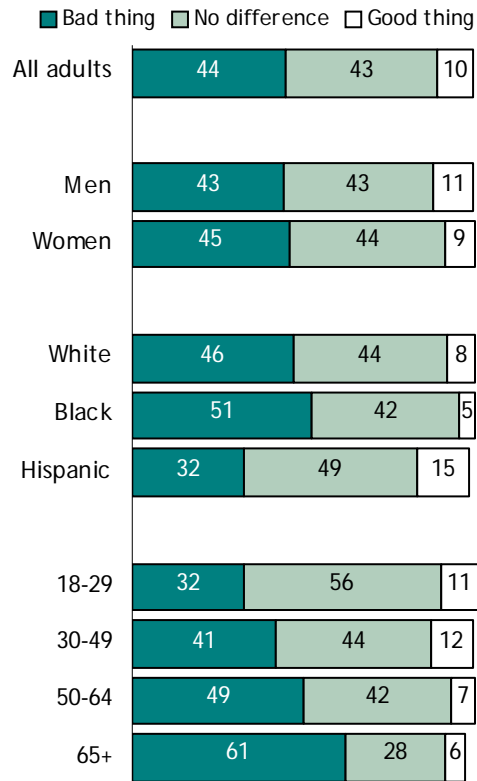


Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Living Together Without Getting Married

Is this trend a good thing for society, a bad thing for society or doesn't it make much difference?

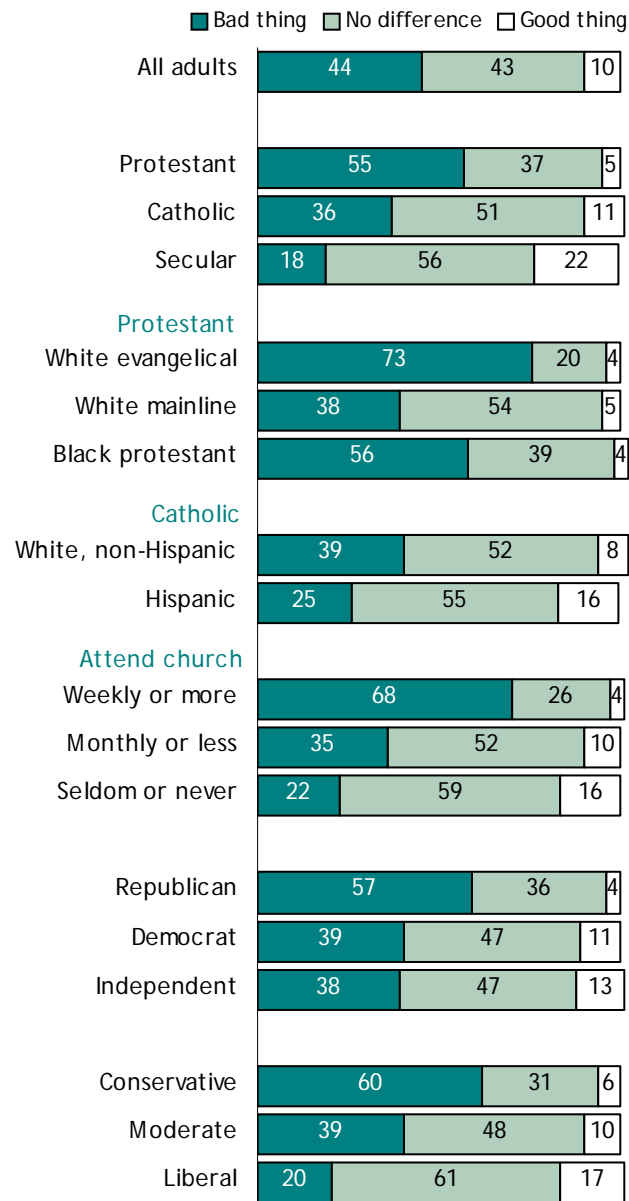


Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses are not shown.

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Living Together Without Getting Married

Is this trend a good thing for society, a bad thing for society or doesn't it make much difference?

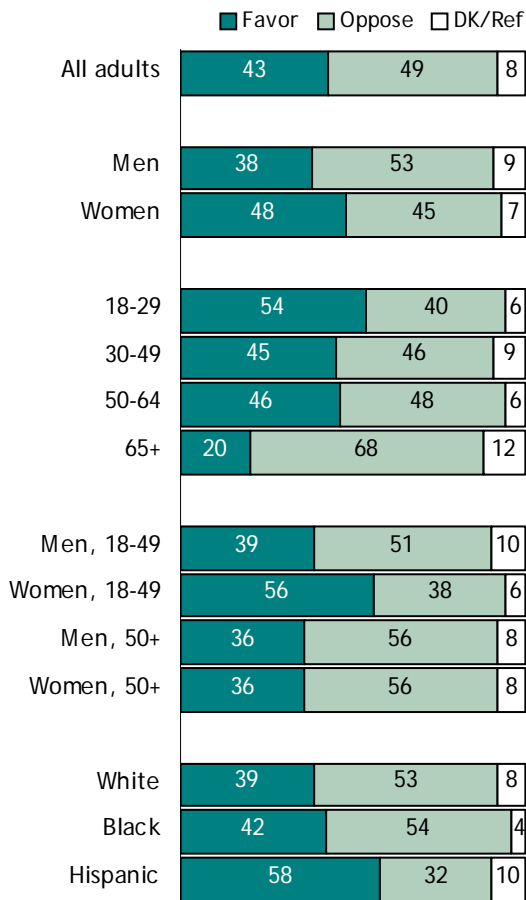


Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Civil Unions: An Alternative to Marriage?

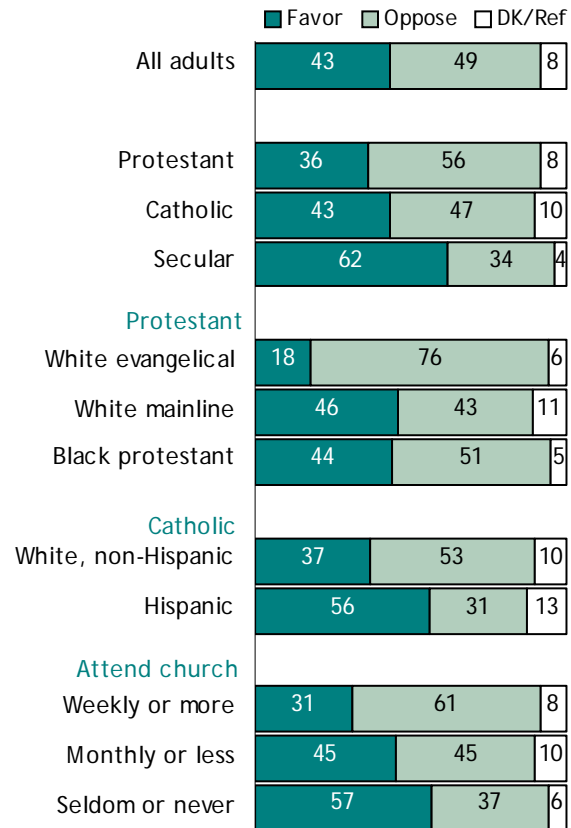
Do you favor or oppose allowing unmarried couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples?



Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

Civil Unions: An Alternative to Marriage?

Do you favor or oppose allowing unmarried couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples?

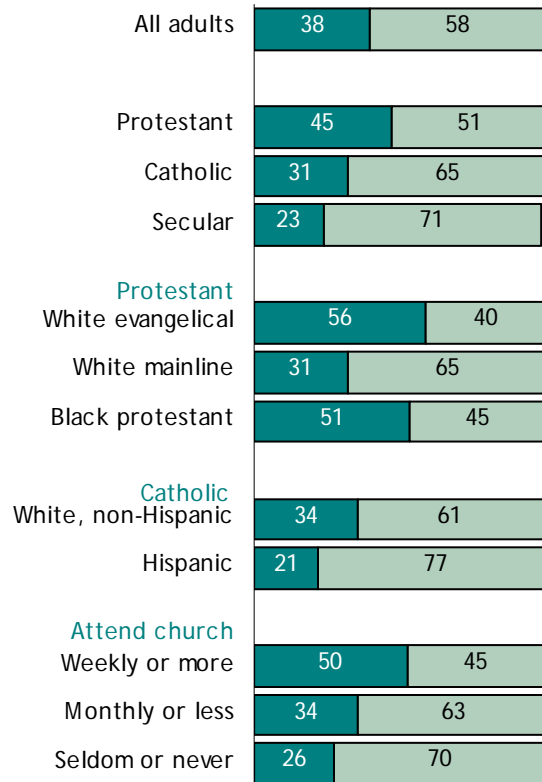


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Views about Divorce

Which statement comes closer to your views about divorce?

- Should be avoided except in an extreme situation
- Preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage

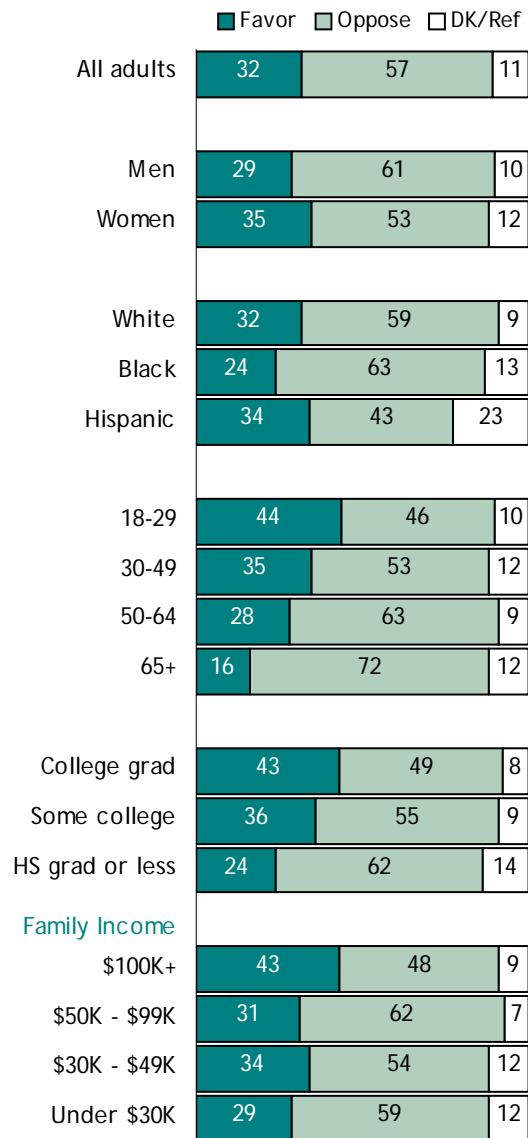


Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Gay Marriage

Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?

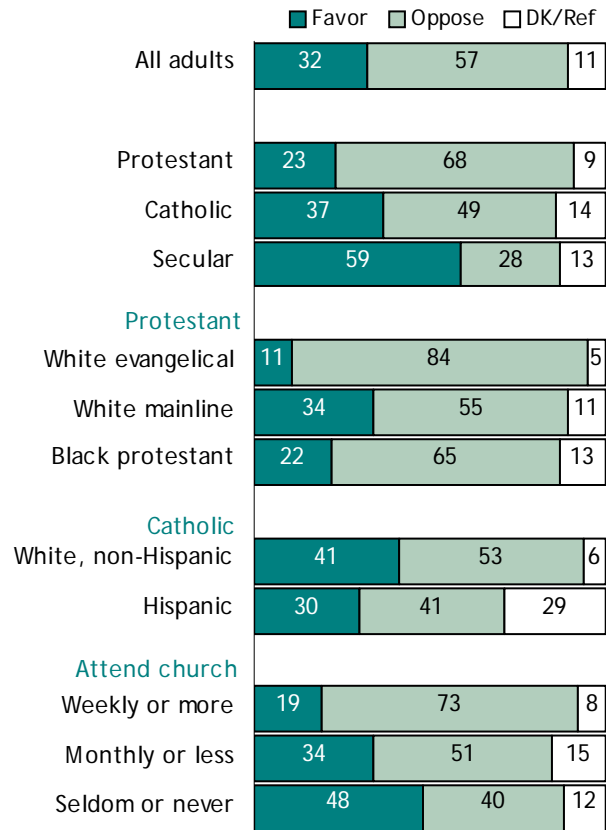


Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

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Gay Marriage

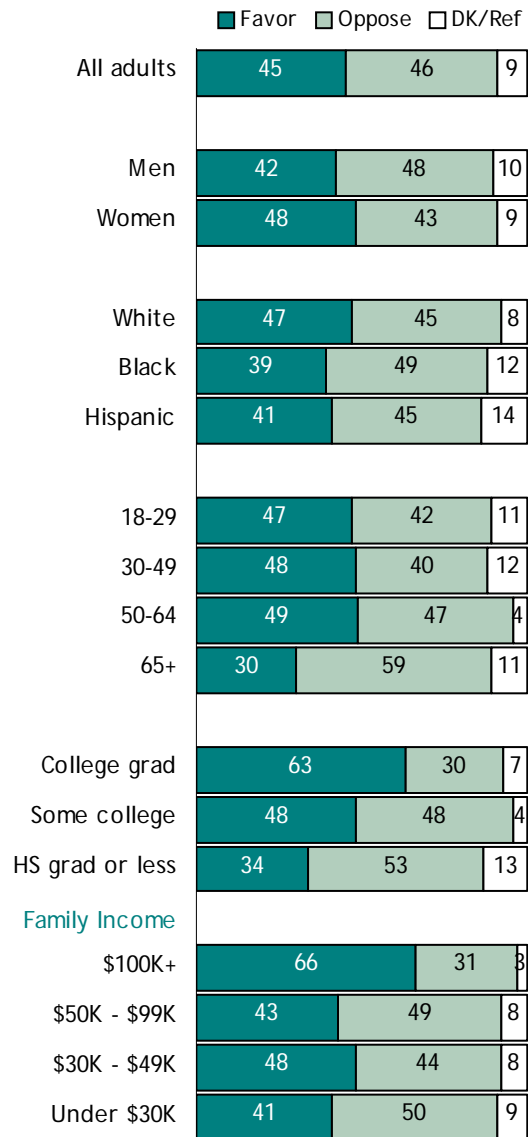
Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?



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Gay Civil Unions

Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples?

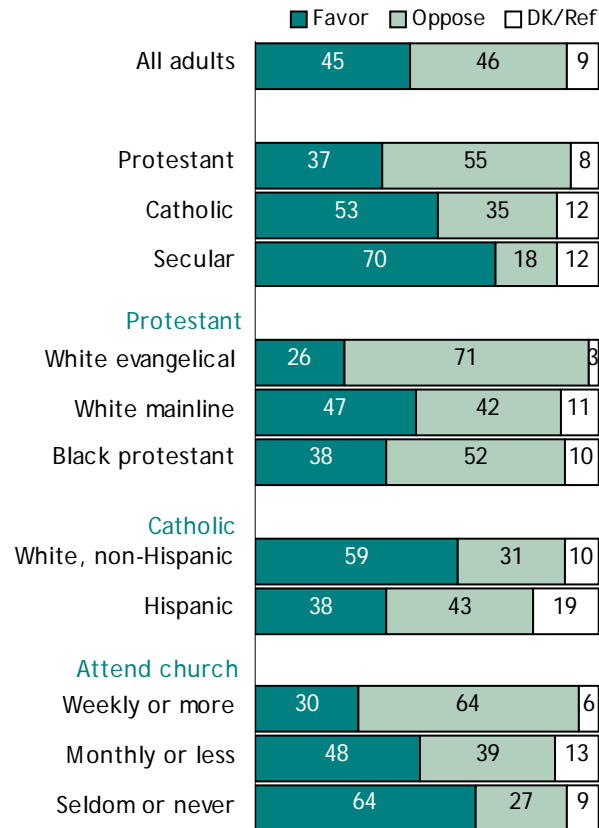


Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

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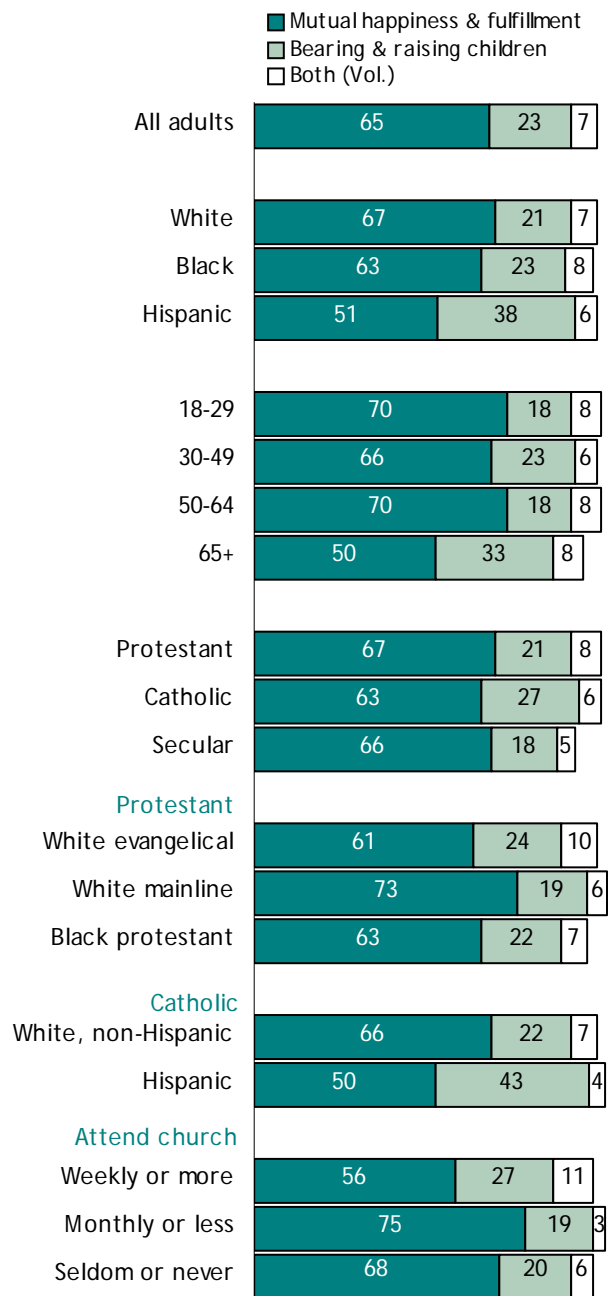
Gay Civil Unions

Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples?



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Main Purpose of Marriage

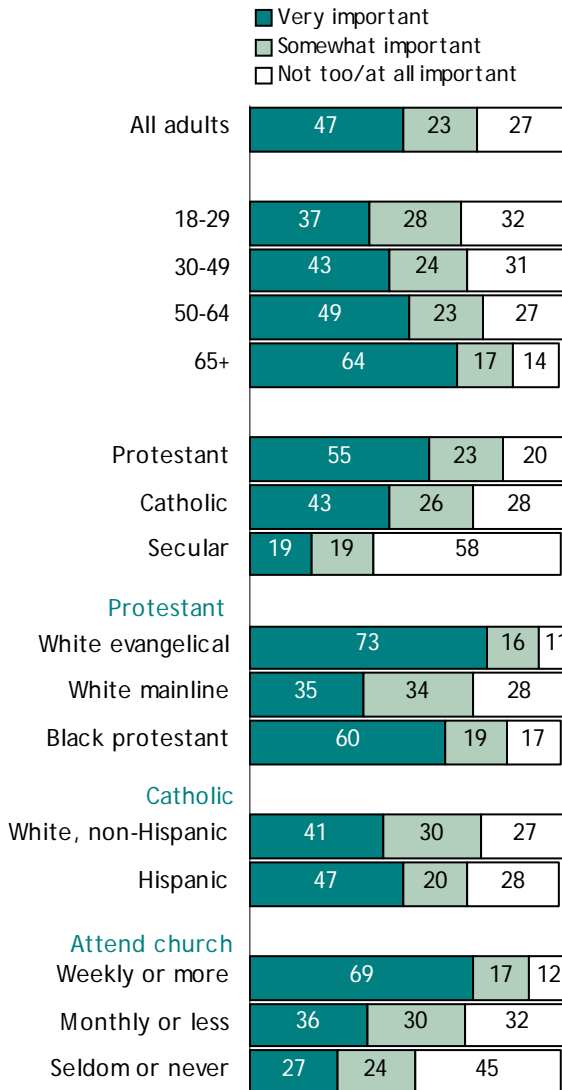


Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Volunteered responses of neither and don't know are not shown.

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How Important is Legal Marriage?

When a man and woman plan to spend the rest of their lives together as a couple, how important is it to you that they legally marry?

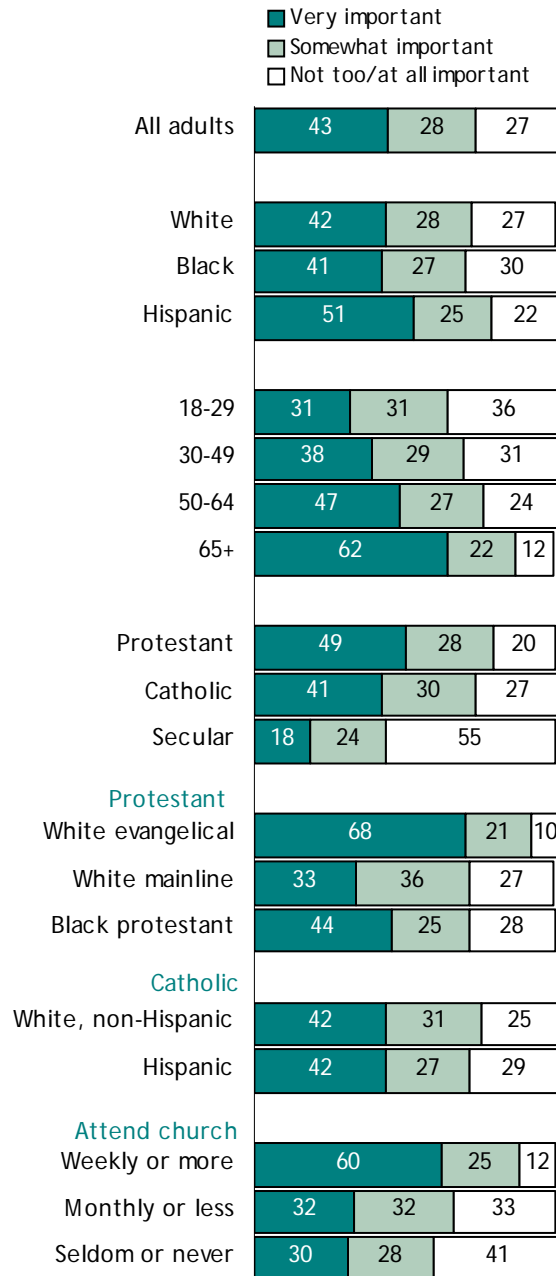


Note: Don't know responses are not shown.

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Having a Child? You Ought to Tie the Knot

When an unmarried man and woman have a child together, how important is it to you that they legally marry?



Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Don't know responses are not shown.

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PEW SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
 FINAL TOPLINE
 FEBRUARY 16 - MARCH 14, 2007
 N=2,020²⁷

SOME DEMOGRAPHICS WERE ASKED EARLIER IN THE INTERVIEW FOR SCREENING PURPOSES; THESE QUESTIONS ARE DISPLAYED IN THE BACK OF THIS TOPLINE.

Q.1 Next, please tell me how satisfied you are with your life overall -- would you say you are **(READ)**

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 ²⁸ <u>Women</u>
45	48	43	Very satisfied	48
46	42	50	Mostly satisfied	46
4	4	4	Mostly dissatisfied	4
2	3	1	Very dissatisfied	1
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

Q.2 Next, I'd like to ask you about some different aspects of your life. As I read the following list, please tell me how important each aspect is to YOUR PERSONAL HAPPINESS AND FULFILLMENT using a scale from zero to 10, where 10 MEANS VERY IMPORTANT and ZERO MEANS NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL. (First/Next) **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]** -- how important is this to your personal happiness? **(MUST READ FIRST TIME THROUGH, THEN READ IF NECESSARY: You can use any number between zero and ten.)**

ASK IF MARITAL=1 OR ASK IF MARITAL=2

Based on those who are married or currently living with a partner [N=1113]:

a. Your relationship with your (wife/husband)/b. Your relationship with your partner

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 ²⁹ <u>Women</u>
81	81	81	10 Very important	82
15	16	15	7-9	13
3	2	3	5-6	3
1	*	1	0-4	1
<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=1113)	(N=543)	(N=570)		(N=695)
9.6	9.6	9.5	Mean	9.5
10	10	10	Median	

²⁷ The sample design included an oversample of blacks, Hispanics and adults ages 18-49. The data are weighted to produce results from a representative sample of the population.

²⁸ Based on a survey of women conducted March 14-26, 1997 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

²⁹ In March 1997, the screener question was worded: "Are you now married, LIVING as married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?" In the current survey, the question was worded: "Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?"

Q.2 CONTINUED...

ASK IF KIDS=2,4**Based on those with children under 18 [N=757]:**

c. Your relationship with your children under 18

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 ³⁰ <u>Women</u>
85	80	90	10 Very important	86
12	16	9	7-9	12
1	1	*	5-6	1
1	1	1	0-4	1
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>0</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=757)	(N=343)	(N=414)		(N=457)
9.7	9.6	9.8	Mean	9.6
10	10	10	Median	

ASK IF KIDS=3,4**Based on those with adult children [N=908]:**

d. Your relationship with your adult children

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
74	68	79	10 Very important	77
22	27	18	7-9	17
2	3	2	5-6	3
1	2	*	0-4	2
<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=908)	(N=344)	(N=564)		(N=483)
9.4	9.2	9.6	Mean	9.5
10	10	10	Median	

ASK IF E3=1,2**Based on those employed full or part-time [N=1196]:**

e. Your job or career

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
23	21	26	10 Very important	30
54	54	53	7-9	46
17	20	14	5-6	18
6	5	7	0-4	6
<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>*</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=1196)	(N=618)	(N=578)		(N=661)
7.6	7.6	7.8	Mean	7.8
8	8	8	Median	

³⁰ In March 1997, "child" or "children" was read to respondents based on their responses to screener questions. In the current survey, respondents were read "children."

Q.2 CONTINUED...

ASK IF MOM=1**Based on those with mother still living [N=1203]:**

f. Your relationship with your mother

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
56	49	63	10 Very important	58
32	37	27	7-9	29
7	8	6	5-6	8
5	6	4	0-4	4
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=1203)	(N=566)	(N=637)		(N=732)
8.7	8.5	8.8	Mean	8.8
10	9	10	Median	

ASK IF DAD=1**Based on those with father still living [N=939]:**

g. Your relationship with your father

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
43	37	49	10 Very important	46
35	40	30	7-9	31
10	11	9	5-6	10
11	11	12	0-4	12
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=939)	(N=453)	(N=486)		(N=525)
7.9	7.8	8.0	Mean	7.9
9	8	9	Median	

ASK ALL:

h. Your relationships with friends

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
37	29	43	10 Very important	41
46	49	44	7-9	42
12	15	9	5-6	14
4	5	3	0-4	2
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)
8.2	7.9	8.5	Mean	8.3
9	8	9	Median	

Q.2 CONTINUED...

i. The things you do in your free time

<i>All</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>		March 1997 <i>Women</i>
31	30	33	10 Very important	37
48	49	47	7-9	43
15	15	15	5-6	15
4	5	3	0-4	3
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>2</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)
8.0	7.9	8.1	<i>Mean</i>	8.1
8	8	8	<i>Median</i>	

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE ELEMENT RATED NINE OR TEN IN Q.2A THROUGH Q.2I [N=2020]:

Q.3 Which of these is MOST important to your personal happiness and fulfillment?

**PROGRAMMING NOTE: LIST ALL THOSE RATED NINE AND TEN
INTERVIEWER: READ LIST IF NECESSARY**

Q2/Q3 COMBINED – MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP

PLEASE SEE REPORT FOR ANALYSIS. NO SINGLE PERCENTAGE SUMMARIZES THE RESPONSES FOR THE SAMPLE BECAUSE EACH RESPONDENT HAD A UNIQUE SET OF CHOICES.

(IF MARRIED OR LWP) Your relationship with your (husband/wife/partner)

(IF KIDS UNDER 18) Your relationship with your children under 18

(IF KIDS 18+) Your relationship with your adult children

(IF EMPLOYED) Your job or career

(IF MOTHER LIVING) Your relationship with your mother

(IF FATHER LIVING) Your relationship with your father

The things you do in your free time

Your relationships with friends

None rated 9 or 10 in question 2

Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

Q.4 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) **[INSERT ITEM; 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 mothers of young children working outside the home

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
22	22	22	Good thing for society	17
32	31	33	Doesn't make much difference	37
41	42	41	Bad thing for society	41
<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>5</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

b. More women not ever having children

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
13	12	13	Good thing for society	19
52	50	55	Doesn't make much difference	48
29	32	26	Bad thing for society	24
<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>9</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

c. More women having their first child after age 35

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
20	17	23	Good thing for society	29
52	52	51	Doesn't make much difference	45
23	25	21	Bad thing for society	22
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>4</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

d. More single women deciding to have children without a male partner to help raise them

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
6	4	8	Good thing for society	7
25	20	29	Doesn't make much difference	25
66	73	60	Bad thing for society	65
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>3</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

e. More UNmarried couples deciding to have children

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
6	6	6	Good thing for society	9
32	30	33	Doesn't make much difference	26
59	61	58	Bad thing for society	62
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>3</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

Q.4 CONTINUED...

f. More gay and lesbian couples raising children

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
11	9	13	Good thing for society	6
34	28	39	Doesn't make much difference	31
50	59	42	Bad thing for society	56
<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

g. More fathers staying home with children so their wives can work full-time

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		March 1997 <u>Women</u>
36	32	39	Good thing for society	39
38	41	36	Doesn't make much difference	38
21	23	20	Bad thing for society	20
<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>3</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)		(N=1101)

h. More people marrying for the first time at older ages

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
51	51	52	Good thing for society
42	41	43	Doesn't make much difference
4	5	2	Bad thing for society
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)	

i. More people living together without getting married

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
10	11	9	Good thing for society
43	43	44	Doesn't make much difference
44	43	45	Bad thing for society
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	
(N=2020)	(N=892)	(N=1128)	

NO QUESTION 5

ASK ALL:

Q.6 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?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		<i>World Values Survey</i> ³¹			
				<u>1999</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1982</u>
69	78	61	Tend to agree	63	71	72	62
28	20	35	Tend to disagree	35	26	25	35
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
100	100	100		100	100	100	100

ASK FORM 1 [N=1010]:

Q.7F1 Do you think it is possible for a woman to have a complete and happy life if she remains single?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		<i>Virginia Slims</i> ³² March, 1985	
				<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
79	73	83	Yes	63	72
15	19	13	No	30	23
<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
100	100	100		100	100
(N=1010)	(N=450)	(N=560)			

ASK FORM 2 [N=1010]:

Q.8F2 Do you think it is possible for a man to have a complete and happy life if he remains single?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		<i>Virginia Slims</i> March, 1985	
				<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
67	70	64	Yes	63	57
27	26	29	No	33	35
<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>
100	100	100		100	100
(N=1010)	(N=442)	(N=568)			

NO QUESTIONS 9 THROUGH 10

³¹ The World Values Surveys were conducted by face-to-face interviews and are based on representative samples of the U.S. adult population.

³² Virginia Slims surveys are based on face-to-face interviews with separate national samples of 1000 adult men and 3000 adult women.

ASK ALL:**[ROTATE Q.11 and Q.12]**

Q.11 When a man and woman plan to spend the rest of their lives together as a couple, how important is it to you that they legally marry? **(READ)**

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		Gallup June 2006
47	47	47	Very important	54
23	23	23	Somewhat important	19
12	13	12	Not too important	13
15	15	15	Not at all important ³³	12
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100

Q.12 When an unmarried man and woman have a child together, how important is it to you that they legally marry? **(READ)**

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		Gallup June 2006
43	45	40	Very important	49
28	27	29	Somewhat important	27
14	13	14	Not too important	12
13	12	15	Not at all important	11
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100	100	100		100

NO QUESTION 13**ASK ALL:**

Q.14 Which of these statements is closer to your views about the MAIN PURPOSE of marriage? **(READ; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS)**
PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS BOTH/NEITHER

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
65	62	67	Forming a lifetime union between two adults for their mutual happiness and fulfillment.
23	24	21	Forming a lifetime union between two adults for the purpose of bearing and raising children.
7	8	7	Both (VOL.)
2	2	2	Neither (VOL.)
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	

³³ For questions 11 and 12, the response category in the Gallup polls was worded as "Not important at all."

- Q.15 Here is a list of things which some people think make for a successful marriage. Please tell me, for each one, whether you think it is very important, rather important, or not very important. First, ... **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**
READ IF NECESSARY: How important is this for a successful marriage—very important, rather important, or not very important?

	Very <u>important</u>	Rather <u>important</u>	Not very <u>important</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
a. Faithfulness	93	5	1	1=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	95	4	1	*=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	93	6	*	1=100
b. An adequate income	53	38	7	2=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	46	48	6	*=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	45	45	9	1=100
c. Shared religious beliefs	49	30	20	1=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	45	36	19	*=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	43	32	24	1=100
d. Good housing	51	38	9	2=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	42	48	10	*=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	42	46	11	1=100
e. Agreement on politics	12	31	55	2=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	11	32	57	*=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	11	27	60	2=100
f. Happy sexual relationship	70	27	2	1=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	67	29	3	1=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	75	22	2	1=100
g. Sharing household chores	62	30	7	1=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	47	42	11	*=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	45	37	17	1=100
h. Children	41	29	27	3=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	65	25	10	*=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	60	25	14	1=100
i. Tastes and interests in common	46	44	9	1=100
1990 <i>World Values Survey</i>	44	51	4	1=100
1982 <i>World Values Survey</i>	52	38	8	2=100

- Q.16 Which of these statements is closer to your views about divorce? (**READ**)

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
38	41	35	Divorce should be avoided except in an extreme situation
58	55	61	Divorce is painful, but preferable to maintaining an unhappy marriage
±	±	±	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	

Q.17 If you have a marriage where the parents are very unhappy with each other, all things considered, are the children better off if their parents remain married OR are the children better off if their parents get divorced?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
19	26	13	Children better off if parents remain married
67	59	75	Children better off if parents get divorced
9	10	8	Depends (VOL.)
<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	

NO QUESTION 18 THROUGH 19

ASK IF EVER MARRIED (MARITAL=1,3,4,5 OR M2=1):

Thinking back to when you got married.

Q.20 Why did you decide to get married RATHER THAN JUST LIVE TOGETHER? [OPEN END; RECORD ANSWER; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES]
(INTERVIEWER NOTE: If respondent married more than once, ask about the most recent marriage.)

BASED ON THOSE WHO HAVE EVER BEEN MARRIED [N=1527]:

- 49 Beliefs about living together / Religion / Upbringing / Differences in social norms (NET)
- 17 Religious / Moral reasons
- 16 Just my beliefs/Right thing to do / Thought it was important/Way I was raised / Upbringing
- 10 Thing to do, people didn't live together then / Back in the day didn't have the option / In my time you didn't live together
- 4 Living together is wrong / Don't believe in living together / Not an option / Never considered it
- 3 Father /mother wouldn't approve / Parents preferred it /Parents pressured me
- 3 You are supposed to / That's what you do / Expected/Pressure / Social views
- 24 Love and commitment (NET)
- 15 Love / The one /Only person for me / Found life partner
- 10 Commitment / Wanted to spend the rest of our lives together / Lifetime commitment
- 10 Children-related (NET)
- 4 Wanted to have children / have a family
- 3 Children/Family (General)
- 2 Baby coming / Got pregnant and wanted to make it right
- 1 We had children / Better for the kids / Future of my children / Set example for kids
- 10 It was time / Just wanted to/Thought I would be happier / It was easier, better
- 2 Make a legal commitment / It's legal / Legal grounds
- 2 Young and stupid / Young
- 1 Financial reasons / Health and other benefits
- 8 Other (Miscellaneous)
- 5 Don't know / Refused

Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

NO QUESTION 21 THROUGH 22

ASK IF EVER LIVED WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2 OR LWP2=1):

Q.23 **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) why did you decide to live together RATHER THAN GET MARRIED? [OPEN END; RECORD ANSWER; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES]
(INTERVIEWER NOTE: If respondent lived with more than one partner, ask about the most recent partner.)

BASED ON THOSE WHO HAVE EVER LIVED WITH A PARTNER [N=736]:

21	Wanted to be sure / Trial / Get to know each other
15	Timing not right / Too young (NET)
5	Too young
5	Married before / Nasty divorce / 1st marriage didn't work / Wasn't ready to get married again
5	Wasn't ready / Not the right time
12	Convenience / Easier / Just wanted to/ It just happened / Seemed like a good idea
10	Financial reasons / Cut costs / Didn't have the money or time to get married
9	Beliefs or Misgivings about Marriage / Marriage with that person (NET)
4	Didn't want to marry this person/Didn't think it would work out /Wasn't right or serious/Knew it wasn't going to last
3	Marriage not as important as being together / Rather live together than marry / Didn't want to spoil the relationship
1	Didn't want to get married
1	Don't believe in marriage
8	Thought would marry / Already planned to marry
5	Love and compatibility (NET)
4	Love
1	Compatible
3	We had a baby , children / Expecting a baby
2	Wrong / Dumb / Not saved then / At the time I didn't believe in God
1	Legally can't marry – already married, gay
1	Because one is a lot easier to change than the other / Don't have to deal with legal battles
16	Other (Miscellaneous)
6	Don't know / Refused

Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

ASK IF EVER LIVED WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2 OR LWP2=1):

Q.24 When you started living together did you think about it as a trial marriage or didn't you think of it this way?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
36	39	33	Ever lived with partner (NET)
12	13	10	Thought about living together as a trial marriage
23	25	21	Didn't think of living together as a trial marriage
1	1	2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
63	60	66	Never lived with partner
1	1	1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	

NO QUESTION 25 THROUGH 26

ASK IF NEVER MARRIED (MARITAL=6):

Q.27 Do you think you will get married someday or do you think you will remain single?

BASED ON THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN MARRIED [N=412]:

<i>---Never Married---</i>				<i>Gallup</i>
<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		<i>May</i>
				<u>2006</u>
62	68	57	Will get married	66
26	21	30	Will remain single	27
<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=412)	(N=205)	(N=207)		(N=116)

ASK IF LIVING WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2):

Q.28 Do you think you and the partner you are living with will get married someday or don't you think you will get married?

BASED ON THOSE LIVING WITH A PARTNER [N=100]:

68	Will get married someday
21	Won't get married
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

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

Q.29 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?

BASED ON THOSE LIVING WITH A PARTNER/NEVER BEEN MARRIED:

<i>Living</i>	<i>Never</i>	
<i>with</i>	<i>Married</i>	
<u>Partner</u>	<u>Married</u>	
44	56	Want to marry
7	12	Don't want to marry
41	29	Not sure if want to marry
<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	
(N=100)	(N=412)	

ASK FORM 1 [N=1010]:

Q.30F1 What do you think is the ideal age for a WOMAN to get married?

[OPEN END; ENTER AGE]

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		Gallup May 2006
12	12	11	Age 21 or under	<u>All</u> 20
42	45	39	Age 22-25	42
18	15	20	Age 26-29	16
14	12	17	Age 30 or older	12
<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>10</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=1010)	(N=450)	(N=560)		
25.6	25.3	25.9	Mean	24.9
25	25	25	Median	25

ASK FORM 2 [N=1010]:

Q.31F2 What do you think is the ideal age for a MAN to get married?

[OPEN END; ENTER AGE]

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>		Gallup May 2006 ³⁴
7	9	6	Age 21 or under	<u>All</u> 11
35	37	32	Age 22-25	33
16	15	17	Age 26-29	20
27	24	30	Age 30 or older	30
<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>
100	100	100		100
(N=1010)	(N=442)	(N=568)		
27.1	26.8	27.4	Mean	27.4
26	25	26	Median	26

QUESTIONS 32 THROUGH 36 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE**QUESTIONS 37 THROUGH 39 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

Q.40 The number of children born to unmarried mothers in this country has been growing steadily. Would you say this is a big problem, a small problem or not a problem at all?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
71	71	71	Big problem
19	20	18	Small problem
8	7	10	Not a problem at all
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	

³⁴ Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Q.41 What's the MAIN REASON you think this is happening? [OPEN END; RECORD ANSWER; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES]

READ IF NECESSARY: What's the main reason you think the number of children born to unmarried mothers in this country has been growing steadily.

- 11 Too much sex / Sex at young age (NET)
- 5 Sex / Too much sex / promiscuity
- 6 Young / Having sex at young age
- 9 Irresponsible / Careless / Poor choices (NET)
- 5 Stupidity / Not making wise decisions / Bad choices / Being careless / Not stopping and thinking
- 4 Irresponsibility (General) / Lack of responsibility
- 10 Lack of information (NET)
- 5 Lack of education / knowledge / information
- 5 Birth control / Unprotected sex / Don't know about birth control
- 10 Societal changes (NET)
- 6 Society more accepting / Changes in society / Culture changed
- 4 Marriage not important / Don't want to get married / No pressure to marry if pregnant / Have kids without getting married
- 15 Bad morals / Not raised right / Breakdown in values / Decay of moral values/Lack of family values / Lack of morals / Morals
- 13 Breakdown in family structure / upbringing (NET)
- 1 Divorce rate
- 9 Lack of parenting / discipline / supervision / guidance
- * Role models / No examples
- 1 Because both parents working outside home / Because women are working more
- 3 Family unit breakdown / Kids grow up with one parent / Broken homes / Lack of family support system
- 5 Women's role changed (NET)
- 4 Women more independent
- 1 Women's liberation / Sexual revolution
- 5 Men not taking responsibility
- 2 Lack of commitment / People don't want to commit
- 1 Hard to find a good man / No good men
- 2 Media/Technology / TV / Movies
- * Entrapment / To keep a man / To make someone love them
- 2 To get support / Welfare / Government keeps writing too many checks
- 1 Drugs
- 1 They have children for something to love / Females having babies because they don't want to be alone
- 1 No self respect / Don't take care of themselves
- 2 Bad relationships / People not getting along / Not in love with person they have child with
- 1 Economy / Money (General)
- 12 Other (Miscellaneous)
- 12 Don't know / Refused

Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

Q.42 There's been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country. If a man and woman have sexual relations before marriage do you think it is ...**(READ)**?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
27	24	30	Always wrong
11	10	12	Almost always wrong
27	25	29	Wrong only sometimes
32	38	26	Not wrong at all
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	

Q.43 How about unmarried women having children? Do you think this is ...**(READ)**?

<u>All</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
26	28	24	Always wrong
18	17	19	Almost always wrong
33	33	33	Wrong only sometimes
19	19	19	Not wrong at all
<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	100	100	

On a different subject.

ASK FORM 1 [N=1010]:

Q.44F1 Do you favor or oppose allowing unmarried couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples--strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose?

14	Strongly favor
29	Favor
26	Oppose
23	Strongly oppose
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

ASK ALL:

Q.45 Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally—strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose?³⁵

	<u>Net</u>	<i>Strongly</i> <u>Favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Net</u>	<i>Strongly</i> <u>Oppose</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
March 2007	32	12	20	57	38	19	11=100
January 2007	37	13	24	55	33	22	8=100
July 2006	35	12	23	56	31	25	9=100
June 2006	33	13	20	55	32	23	12=100
March 2006	39	10	29	51	28	23	10=100
July 2005	36	13	23	53	31	22	11=100
December 2004	32	14	18	61	38	23	7=100
August 2004	29	8	21	60	35	25	11=100
July 2004	32	10	22	56	33	23	12=100
Mid-March 2004	32	10	22	59	35	24	9=100
Early February 2004	30	9	21	63	42	21	7=100
November 2003	30	10	20	62	41	21	8=100
October 2003 ³⁶	30	9	21	58	33	25	12=100
Mid-July 2003	38	10	28	53	30	23	9=100
March 2001	35	8	27	57	34	23	8=100
June 1996	27	6	21	65	41	24	8=100

ASK FORM2 [N=1010]:

Q.46F2 Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples--strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose?³⁷

	<u>Net</u>	<i>Strongly</i> <u>Favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Net</u>	<i>Strongly</i> <u>Oppose</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
March 2007	45	19	26	46	30	16	9=100
July 2006	54	19	35	42	24	18	4=100
July 2005	53	22	31	40	24	16	7=100
August 2004	48	15	33	45	24	21	7=100
July 2004	49	18	31	43	25	18	8=100
Mid-March 2004	49	16	33	44	26	18	7=100
October 2003 ³⁸	45	14	31	47	27	20	8=100

³⁵ All trends were worded: “Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?” This question was sometimes asked as part of a list of items.

³⁶ The October 2003 trend questions about gay marriage and civil unions are based on Form 1 respondents only (N=735). In an experiment, Form 2 respondents were asked the questions in reverse order. The experiment found that the order of the questions has a significant impact on responses to the civil union question.

³⁷ All trends were worded: “Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into legal agreements with each other that would give them many of the same rights as married couples?”

³⁸ See footnote 23 above

ASK ALL:

Q.47 Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, or illegal in all cases?

	<u>Legal in all cases</u>	<u>Legal in most cases</u>	<u>Illegal in most cases</u>	<u>Illegal in all cases</u>	<u>DK/ Ref</u>
March 2007	15	30	30	20	5=100
February 2006 <i>Associated Press/Ispos-Poll</i>	19	32	27	16	6=100
December 2005 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i> ³⁹	17	40	27	13	3=100
April 2005 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	20	36	27	14	3=100
December 2004 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	21	34	25	17	3=100
May 2004 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	23	31	23	20	2=100
January 2003 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	23	34	25	17	2=100
August 2001 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	22	27	28	20	3=100
June 2001 <i>ABC/BeliefNet Poll</i>	22	31	23	20	4=100
January 2001 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	21	38	25	14	1=100
September 2000 (RVs) <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	20	35	25	16	3=100
July 2000 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	20	33	26	17	4=100
September 1999 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	20	37	26	15	2=100
March 1999 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	21	34	27	15	3=100
July 1998 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	19	35	29	13	4=100
August 1996 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	22	34	27	14	3=100
June 1996 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	24	34	25	14	2=100
October 1995 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	26	35	25	12	3=100
September 1995 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	24	36	25	11	4=100
July 1995 <i>ABC/Washington Post</i>	27	32	26	14	1=100

QUESTION I HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ASK ALL:**

FAM1 During the time you were growing up, who did you live with MOST of the time? Did you live with ... **(READ)**

74	Both parents
19	Your mother, but not your father
2	Your father, but not your mother
5	Neither parent
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

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

78	Married
12	Divorced
3	Separated
2	Widowed
5	Never been married
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

³⁹ Percentages from *ABC/Washington Post* surveys may not add to 100% due to rounding.

ASK IF PARENTS MARRIED/SEPARATED (FAM2=1,3):

FAM3 What about later on in life? Did your parents ever divorce each other, or not?

SUMMARY OF FAM2 AND FAM3 COMBINED

24	Parents divorced
75	Parents not divorced (NET)
68	Parents, married never divorced
2	Parent widowed
5	Parents never married
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

ASK IF LIVED WITH BOTH PARENTS/MOTHER (FAM1=1,2):FAM4 During the time you were growing up, did your mother work full-time, part-time, or was she not employed? **IF NECESSARY PROBE: Which was it MOSTLY?**

93	Lived with mother most of the time (NET)
36	Mother worked full-time
22	Mother worked part-time
34	Mother was not employed
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
7	Didn't live with mother most of the time
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

THE REMAINING QUESTIONS WERE ASKED AT BEGINNING OF SURVEY INTERVIEW.**ASK ALL:**MARITAL Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married? (**IF R SAYS "SINGLE," PROBE TO DETERMINE WHICH CATEGORY IS APPROPRIATE**)

	<u>Oct 2006</u>	<u>June 2006</u>	<u>Feb 2006</u>	<u>Oct 2005</u>	
53	Married	53	51	52	55
5	Living with a partner	6	7	8	6
10	Divorced	10	11	10	9
3	Separated	3	2	3	2
9	Widowed	9	9	8	8
20	Never been married	19	20	18	18
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
100		100	100	100	100

ASK IF LIVING WITH PARTNER (MARITAL=2):

M2 Have you ever been married?

ASK IF EVER BEEN MARRIED (M1=1,3,4,5 OR M2=1):

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

ASK IF MARRIED MORE THAN ONCE AND NOT CURRENTLY DIVORCED (M3=1 AND MARITAL=1,4,5) OR PAST MARRIED & LWP/SINGLE (M2=1):

M4 Have you ever been divorced?

		<u>Oct 2005</u>			<u>Oct 2005</u>
77	Ever married (NET)	77	77	Ever married (NET)	77
56	Married once	58	25	Ever divorced	24
21	Married twice+	19	52	Never divorced	53
*	Don't know/Refused	*	*	Don't know/Refused	*
23	Never married	22	23	Never married	22
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>
100		100	100		100

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?

36	Ever lived with partner (NET)
4	Live with partner now
32	Ever have
63	Never lived with partner
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

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?

BASED ON THOSE WHO ARE MARRIED [N=1013]

32	Ever lived with partner (NET)
22	Lived with spouse
7	Lived with both current spouse and someone else
2	Lived with someone else
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
68	Never lived with partner
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

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

		<u>Oct 2006</u>	<u>June 2006</u>	<u>Oct 2005</u>
27	No children	26	28	27
37	Have children under age 18	38	37	37
29	All children under age 18	30	30	28
8	Both under 18 and older than 18	8	7	9
36	All children ages 18 and older	36	35	36
<u>0</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100

ASK IF KIDS UNDER 18 (KIDS=2,4):

K2 Are any of your children under age 18 living in your household, or not?

37	Have children under age 18 (NET)
33	Children under age 18 in household
4	None in household
0	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
63	No children under age 18
0	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

ASK IF KIDS 18+ (KIDS=3,4):

K3 Are any of your children ages 18 and older living in your household, or not?

44	Have children ages 18 and older (NET)
10	Children ages 18 and older in household
34	None in household
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
56	No children ages 18 and older
0	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

ASK ALL:

MOM Is your mother living?

DAD Is your father living?

			Oct 2005	Oct 2005	
	<i>Mother Living</i>	<i>Father Living</i>	<i>Mother Living</i>	<i>Father Living</i>	
	61	50	Yes	62	47
	39	49	No	38	52
	*	1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	*	1
	100	100		100	100

E3 Are you now employed full-time, part-time or not employed?

		Oct	June	Feb ⁴⁰	Oct
		<u>2006</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
48	Full-time	53	48	49	52
13	Part-time	12	12	15	12
38	Not employed	35	39	35	36
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.--DO NOT READ)	*	1	1	*
100		100	100	100	100

⁴⁰ The employment question in February 2006 and October 2005 was preceded by questions about retirement and school enrollment. If respondent was retired, the question was asked: "Some people who have retired do some type of work for pay..." If respondent was a student, the question was asked: "Some students also do some type of work for pay..."