

Changes in Family Structure, Family Values, and Politics, 1972-2006

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Abstract

Family structure and family values have undergone tremendous changes over the last generation. The basic structure of the family has been reshaped and family values and related attitudes have also undergone paradigmatic shifts. Families are smaller and less stable, marriage is less central and cohabitation more common, the value of children and values for children have altered, and within marriages gender roles have become less traditional and more egalitarian in both word and practice. Collectively the alterations mark the replacement of traditional family types and family values with the emerging, modern family types and a new set of family values.

Moreover, as important as the changes in family structure and family values are on their own, they take on added significance because they are tied to political attitudes and behaviors. First, family structure relates to political participation. The married and the widowed, for example, are more likely to vote in presidential elections. Second, those living in traditional families structures and those holding traditional family values are more likely to vote for Republican presidential candidates and to identify as Republican and conservative rather than Democratic and liberal. In general, the currently married and parents lean to the right and most non-married groups (the never married, separated, and divorced), those never having had children, and single parents tilt to the left.

The political role of family structure has increased over time in part because class and family type have come into closer alignment. Traditional family structure have become more associated with the middle class, while non-traditionally organized families have become more closely tied to the working class and poor.

It is likely that non-traditional family structures will continue to grow in the future and that family values will further liberalize. The smaller segment of the population living in traditional, family structure naturally means fewer voters from such families. The family values of the 21st century are not our parents' family values. These changes may undermine static, political appeals to traditional, family values and the changing nature of the family will mean that appeals to family values will also have to evolve to remain effective.

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Introduction

Over the last three decades the American family has been undergoing a profound and far-reaching transformation. Both family structure and family values have been changing and as a result of these changes, the American family is a much-altered institution. As the core institution of society, the family affects all other aspects of society. This is especially true of politics. Political leanings are notably influenced by both family structure and family values. Moreover, the relationship is dynamic with the connection between the family and politics changing over the last generation.

First, this paper traces these recent developments and examines how household and family composition, family-related roles, and attitudes and beliefs about the family have changed. Second, it examines how family structure and family values relate to political leanings (presidential voting, party identification, and political ideology). Finally, it considers what the future prospects are for the political impact of family structure and values.

Most of the data in this report come from the 1972-2006 General Social Surveys (GSSs) of the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. Details about the GSS and ISSP are provided in Appendix 1.

Overall Trends

Structural Changes

Marriage:

While still a central institution in American society, marriage plays a less dominant role than it once did. As Table 1 shows, the proportion of adults who have never been married rose from 15% to 24% between 1972 and 2006. When the divorced, separated, and widowed are added in, three quarters of adults were married in the early 1970s, but only 56% were by the 2000s. The decline in marriage comes from three main sources.

First, people are delaying marriage. Between 1960 and 2003 the median age at first marriage rose from 22.8 to 27.1 years for men and from 20.3 to 25.3 years for women.

Second, divorces have increased. The divorce rate more than doubled from 9.2 divorces per year per 1,000 married women in 1960 to a divorce rate of 22.6 in 1980. This rise was at least in part caused by increases in female, labor-force participation and decreases in fertility mentioned below¹. The divorce rate then slowly declined to 17.7 in 2005. The drop in the divorce rate in the 1980s and 1990s has been smaller than the large rise from the 1960s to the early 1980s and, as a result, the divorce rate in the 2000s is still almost twice as high as it was in 1960. Even

¹Michael (1988, pp. 367-399).

with the recent moderation in the divorce rate, the proportion of ever-married adults who have been divorced more than doubled from 17% in 1972 to 37% in 2006.²

Third, people are slower to remarry than previously. While most people divorced or widowed before the age of 50 remarry, the length of time between marriages has grown³.

Fourth, both the delay in age at first marriage and in remarriage is facilitated by an increase in cohabitation. As Table 2 shows, cohabitators represented only 1.1% of couples in 1960 and 9.0% in 2004. The cohabitation rate is still fairly low overall because most cohabitations are short term, typically leading to either a marriage or a break-up within a year⁴. But cohabitation has become the norm for both men and women both as their first form of union and after divorces. Table 2 indicates that for women born in 1933-1942 only 7% first lived with someone in a cohabitation rather than in a marriage, but for women born in 1963-1974, 64% starting off cohabiting rather than marrying. The trend for men is similar. Among the currently divorced 16% are cohabiting and of those who have remarried 50% report cohabiting with their new spouse before their remarriage⁵.

Children:

Along with the decline of marriage has come a decline in childbearing. The fertility rate peaked at 3.65 children per woman at the height of the Baby Boom in 1957 and then declined rapidly to a rate of 1.75 children in 1975. This is below the "replacement level" of about 2.11 children that is needed for a population to hold its own through natural increase. The rate then slowly gained ground to 2.0-2.1 children in the early 1990s and stayed around that level to the present.

The results of the changes in the fertility rate are shown in Table 3. In 1972 the average adult had had 2.4 children and this number slipped to a low of 1.8 children in the mid-1990s and has remained around the level to the present. This decline has resulted mostly from the decline in people having 4+ children (from 25% to 13% from 1972 to the 2000s) with only a small increase in the childless (from 24% in 1972 to 28% in the 2000s). Likewise, while only 45% of households had no children under 18 living at home in 1972, this climbed to 65-70% in the 2000s.

²The 37% level is lower than the commonly cited figure that "half of all marriages end in divorce." The latter is a projection of how many married people will eventually divorce. In effect, these projections indicate that of the about 63% of ever-married people who haven't yet been divorced at least a fifth of them will end their marriages with divorces (i.e. $37\% + (63\% * .20) = 49.6\%$).

³Cherlin (1996).

⁴Goldscheider and Waite (1991); Waite and Bachrach (2000).

⁵Smith (2006a).

Thus, the typical American household currently has no minor children living in it.⁶

Accompanying this decline in childbearing and childrearing, was a drop in preferences for larger families (Table 3). In 1972 56% thought that the ideal number of children was 3 or more. By 1996-98 only 39% thought that 3 or more represented the ideal number of children. But then in the 2000s larger families gained in popularity with 47% favoring 3+ in 2006. Despite the net decline in a preference for large families, there was little or no increase in a preference for small families. Over the last three decades just 3-5% have favored families with 0-1 children.

Moreover, during the last generation, childbearing increasingly became disconnected from marriage. In 1960 only 5.3% of births were to unmarried mothers while by 2005 over 36% of all births were outside of marriage (Table 4).⁷ Similarly, the birth rate for unmarried mothers is more than twice as high in the 2000s than in 1960.

The rise in divorce and the decline in fertility and marital births have in turn had a major impact on the type of household in which children are raised. As Table 5 indicates, there has been a decline in the proportion of adults who are married and have children living at home (from 45% in 1972 to 23% in 2006) and a rise in the percent of adults not married and with no children (from 16% in 1972 to 32% in 2006). By 1996 households with a married couple and children, the predominant living arrangement in the 1970s and earlier, had fallen to third place behind both households with no children and no married couple and those with married couples with no children.

As Table 6 shows, the switch has largely consisted to a rise in empty nesters (those with 1+ children ever born, but no children under 18 in the household) from 27% in 1972 to 41-44% in the 2000s and a decline in parents of minors from 49% in 1972 to 28-31% in the 2000s.

Changes are even more striking from the perspective of the children and who heads the households. As Table 7A shows, in 1972 less than 5% of children under age 18 were living in a household with only one adult present. By 2002 this had increased to 22.5%. Similarly, the % of children in the care of two adults who are not currently married, but had been previously married, rose from less than 4% in 1972 to 8% in the 2000s. Also, the % being raised by two parents with at least one having been divorced has tended upwards, starting at 10% in 1972, reaching a high of 18% in 1990,

⁶Children will sometimes refer to those ever born and sometimes to those living in the household. For those in the household, it refers to children under 18.

⁷Dramatic as this trend is, it is similar to that experienced by other advanced, industrial nations. While the percent of births to unmarried women climbed from 5% in 1960 to 32% in 1995 in the US, it rose from 5% to 34% in Great Britain, from 4% to 26% in Canada, and from 6% to 37% in France - Smith (2006a).

and standing at 14-15% in 2004-2006.

Conversely, while in 1972 73% of children were being reared by two parents in an uninterrupted marriage, this fell to 48% in 2002 and was a 50% in 2006. Thus, the norm of the stable, two-parent family was close to becoming the exception for American children rather than the rule.

Similarly, Table 7B shows that from 1980 to 2006 the percent of children being raised by two married parents (including step families) fell from 77% to 67%.

But within some of these major restructurings, some consistency does appear. While single-parent households rose appreciably, the gender of the custodial parent changed little. Across years about 90% of children in single-parent households were being raised by women and about 85-90% of single-parents were women (Table 8).

Labor-Force Participation:

Nor has the declining share of families involving an intact marriage avoided notable transformations. The biggest of these are the alterations in traditional gender roles in general and in the division of responsibility between husbands and wives in particular. Women have greatly increased their participation in the paid labor force outside of the home. In 1960 42% of women in the prime working ages (25-64) were employed. This grew to 49% in 1970, 59.5% in 1980, 69% in 1990, and 72% in 2005. Most of this growth came from mothers of children under 18 entering the labor force⁸. Table 9 shows that among all married couples, the traditional home with an employed husband and a wife keeping house declined from 53% in 1972 to 21% in 1998-2002. Also, gaining ground, but still remaining relatively rare were married couples in which the wife worked and the husband did not (rising from 3% in 1972 to 7.5% in 2006). Conversely, the modern pattern of both spouses being employed grew from 32% to 58-59% in 1996-2002. Showing little change were "retired" households in which neither spouse worked.

Table 10 indicates that this shift was even slightly greater among married couples with children. The traditional arrangement dropped from 60% to 26% in 2004 and the modern arrangement doubled from 33% to 67.5%.

Table 10 also seems to indicate a doubling from 2% to 4-4.5% in "Mr. Mom" arrangements. However, Table 11 focuses on the activity of "keeping house" and it indicates that instances in which a husband is "keeping house" and the wife is not represent only 1% of married households in 2006. Similarly, even if one examines married couples with children, only 2% have a husband keeping house and a wife otherwise engaged (Table 12). Thus, some much trumpeted shifts in family structure still represent

⁸Goldscheider and Waite (1991).

relatively rare situations⁹

In brief, over the last two decades America has shifted from a society in which having a full-time homemaker was the norm to one in which both spouses (and both parents for those with children at home) worked outside the home.

Moreover, not only have wives contributed more to family income through their increased labor-force participation, among dual-earner couples women are also bringing in an increasing share of the family's joint income. In 1970 wives and husbands in dual-earner couples contributed about equally to the household income 21% of the time and contributed 60%+ of the income less than 4% of the time. By 2001 husbands and wives were about equal contributors for 35% and wives were the predominate earner for 10%¹⁰.

In brief, the American family has undergone a series of fundamental changes over the last generation. Many of the changes have undermined the traditional family, as Sociologist Norval Glenn (1992) notes, "if you watch what Americans do, traditional family relationships are in trouble." Marriage has declined as the central institution under which households are organized and children are raised. People marry later and divorce and cohabitate more. In terms of childbearing, America has shifted from the Baby Boom of the 1950s and early 1960s to the Birth Dearth of the 1970s and a growing proportion of children has been born outside of marriage. Even within marriage the changes have been profound as more and more women have entered the labor force and gender roles have become more homogeneous between husbands and wives.

Changes in Attitudes and Values

Partly in response to and partly as a cause of these structural changes, attitudes towards the family have also shifted¹¹. Many important family values regarding marriage and divorce, childbearing and childrearing, and the duties and responsibilities of husbands and wives have changed. In addition, values closely related to the family have also been transformed. For example, views on and practices relating to sexual behavior are different now than during the last generation.

Marriage and Divorce:

Marriage is the core institution of the American family, but because of the structural changes described above it no longer occupies as prominent a role in either people's adult lives or in

⁹Cullen, Lisa Takeuchi and Grossman, Lev, "Fatherhood 2.0," Time, October 15, 2007, 63-66.

¹⁰Raley, Mattingly, and Bianchi (2006, pp. 11-28); Exter (1996); Winkler (1998, pp. 42-48).

¹¹Thornton and Young-DeMarco (2001, pp. 1009-1037).

childbearing and childrearing. Moreover, its impact on the quality of people's lives is changing. On the one hand, married people are much happier with life in general than the unmarried are. While 40% of the currently married rate their lives as very happy, the unmarried are much less happy (% very happy: widowed - 23%, divorced - 19%, separated - 16%, never married 23%). In addition, married people are happier in their marriages (62% very happy) than they are about life as a whole (40% very happy). On the other hand, there has been a small, but real, decline in how happy people are with their marriages, from about 68% very happy in the early 1970s to a low of 60% very happy in the 1994 and 2002 (Table 13). Also, people are less likely to rate marriages in general as happy and are more likely to say there are few good marriages¹².

The importance that people accord marriage is also shown by a reluctance to make divorce easier. Only a quarter to a third have favored liberalizing divorce laws over the last three decades, while on average 52% have advocated tougher laws and 21% keeping laws unchanged (Table 13). This opposition to easier divorce probably contributed to the leveling-off of and then the dip in the divorce rate starting in the early 1980s noted above, but has not led to a general tightening of divorce laws. In addition, favoring divorce as the "best solution" for couples with unresolved marital problems, declined from 47% in 1994 to 41% in 2002 (Table 13).

However, people also do not favor trapping couples in failed marriages. A plurality has consistently considered divorce to be the "best solution" for marriages that are not working (Table 13). Additionally, in 1994 82% agreed that married, childless couples who "don't get along" should divorce and 67% thought that even when there were children, couples that "don't get along" should not stay together.

Cohabitation:

Not only has cohabitation become more common, but it has also become more acceptable¹⁴ (Table 14). From 1994 to 2002 the proportion favoring a couple living together before they married rose from a third to almost a half and almost a half also thought cohabitation was alright even when a couple did not plan to eventually marry.

¹²Thornton (1989, pp. 87-93).

¹³Some research indicates that decline in marital happiness and satisfaction may result from the increased labor-force participation of women and the difficulty of families adjusting to the changes in gender roles and the division of domestic work - Glenn (1990, pp. 818-831); Glenn (1991, pp. 261-270); Stegelin and Frankel (1997); Wilkie, Deree, and Ratcliff (1998, pp. 577-594).

¹⁴Booth and Crouter (2002); Loomis and Landale (1994, pp. 949-962); Thornton and Young-DeMarco (2001, pp. 1009-1037).

Children:

While most people want to and eventually do have children, the desire for larger families has declined both in terms of the actual level of childbearing and preferences towards family size (Table 3)¹⁵. The ambivalence towards children is also shown by a question in 1993 on the things that people value and that are important to them. 24% said that having children was one of the most important things in life, 38% that it was very important, 19% somewhat important, 11% not too important, and 8% not at all important. While clearly most people saw having children as personally important, overall it was fourth on the list behind having faith in God (46% one of the most important), being self-sufficient and not having to depend on others (44%), and being financially secure (27%). Similarly, surveys in 1988, 1994, and 2002 generally showed that people were pro-children, but that some traditional attitudes towards children were declining (Table 15).

In terms, of what children should be taught and how they should be raised, people have become less traditional over time with a shift from emphasizing obedience and parent-center families to valuing autonomy for children¹⁶. From 1986 to 2006 a majority (or near majority) of Americans selected thinking for oneself as the most important trait for a child to learn and the proportion mentioning obedience was less than half as popular and was declining further (from about 23% in 1986 to about 12-17% in the 2002-2006) (Table 16). Likewise in line with the weakening of support for obedience, approval for the corporal punishment of children declined during the last two decades from 83.5% to 72%¹⁷ (Table 17).

But another traditional value, hard work, gained ground, up from 11% in 1986 to 20-22.5% in 2002-2006. This indicates the previously noted switch from parental authority to juvenile autonomy only describes part of the evolving process. Some traditional values, like hard work, may be gaining ground while some, like obedience, are losing popularity. Thus, the shift from traditional to modern may not be as simple as depicted in previous research. While strictness and discipline have given way to a more liberal approach to raising and guiding children, hard work and perhaps other traditional values appear to be gaining ground.

Gender Roles:

¹⁵Bryant and Zick (1996, pp. 365-392); ChildTrends (2007).

¹⁶Alwin (1990, pp. 65-86); Ellison and Sherkat (1993b, pp. 313-329).

¹⁷Ellison and Sherkat (1993a, pp. 131-144).

Among the most fundamental changes affecting American society over the last generation has been the redefinition the roles of men and women and husbands and wives¹⁸. A traditional perspective in which women were occupied in the private sphere of life centering around running a home and raising a family while men engaged in the public sphere of earning a living and participating in civic and political events has rapidly been replaced by a modern perspective in which there is much less gender-role specialization and women have increasingly been entering the labor force as well as other areas of public life.

First, the acceptance of women in politics has grown substantially over the last quarter century (Table 18). In 1972 74% said they would be willing to vote for a woman for president and in 1998 94% accepted female candidates.¹⁹ Similarly, disagreement with the statement that "most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women" climbed from about 50% in the early 1970s to 77-79% in the mid-1990s and while in the early 1970s 64% opposed the idea that "women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men," about 85% in 1998 disagreed with this sentiment.

Of course the increased female representation in high elected office and Hillary Clinton's campaign for the presidency are concrete manifestations of this societal change.²⁰

Second, people have re-evaluated the participation of women in the labor force. In 1972 67% approved of a wife working even if her husband could support her and in the 1990s 82-83.5% agreed (Table 19). Similarly, while 43% in 1977 disagreed that a wife should help her husband's career rather than have one of her own, 81% disagreed by 1998 and while only 34% in 1977 opposed the idea that "it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family" 60%+ have disagreed since 1989. In fact, people increasingly think that both the husband and wife should earn money (68% - Table 20).

In addition, work is increasingly seen as important to women. In 1988 only 39% disagreed with the idea that what women really want is a home and children, but by 2002 52% rejected this idea (Table 20). Likewise, agreement that a job is "the best way for a woman to be an independent person" climbed from 42% in 1988 to 53% in 2002 (Table 20).

Third, people have become more convinced that having a working mother does not negatively affect her children. In 1977

¹⁸Bolzendahl and Myers (2004, pp. 759-790); Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004, pp. 106-133); Firebaugh (1993); Mason and Lu (1988, pp. 39-57); Thornton (1989, pp. 87-93).

¹⁹The item was then dropped from the GSS line-up due to this skew, but will be brought back on the 2008 GSS due to Hilary Clinton candidacy.

²⁰But research at the time of Ferraro's vice-presidential nomination in 1984 indicates that the embodiment of the abstraction of women in politics by a particular candidate of one party can also lead to a reaction - Smith (1985a).

49% felt that a working mother can have just as "warm and secure a relationship with her children" as a mother who does not work and in 2006 67% agreed (Table 19). Similarly, disagreement with the idea that children suffer when a mother works rose from 32% in 1977 to 59% in 2006 (Table 19).

However, at the same time most people are still not convinced that mothers of young children should have full-time jobs. In 2002 81% felt that a wife should work before having children and 75% favored her being employed after her youngest child left home (Table 21). But only 41% endorsed a full-time job after the youngest had started school and just 14% were for such employment when there was a child under school age.

But while the shift towards accepting non-traditional roles for women has grown notably over the last generation, over the last decade the increase has plateaued. Political, work-related, and child-related trends basically leveled off in the mid-1990s and have been stable since then (Tables 18, 21).

Sexual Mores and Practices:

America is commonly seen as having undergone a sexual revolution over the last generation in which attitudes and behavior became more permissive. But in fact trends in sexual morality are more complex²¹. First, there was a notable growth in permissiveness towards premarital sex. The % saying sex between an unmarried man and woman is always wrong dropped from 36% in 1972 to 24% in 1996 (Table 22). However, most of the decline was in the 1970s and the trend has not continued since the mid-1990s. Reflecting the more permissive attitudes towards premarital sex, sexual activity among the young increased from the 1970s to the early 1990s before at least leveling-off and probably retreating slightly from its peak in the early 1990s²², the rate of cohabitation grew steadily (Table 2), and the level of non-marital births climbed appreciably (Table 3).

But over two-thirds say that pre-marital sex between teenagers 14-16 years old is always wrong and since 1986 there has been a slight increase in disapproval to 71-73% in 2002-2006. When it comes to teenagers, people prefer that they postpone the initiation of sexual intercourse, but first and foremost they want the young to be well-informed about sex in general and safe sex in particular. Support for sex education in the schools has been high throughout the last 30 years (Table 23). It grew from the 1970s to the early 1990s and has been at or near 90% approval since then. Birth control is also strongly supported. Since the mid-1980s a majority has consistently favored making contraception available to sexually active teens even without their parents' approval (Table 23).

Second, attitudes toward homosexuality first became less

²¹Harding and Jencks (2003, pp. 211-226); Laumann et al. (1994); Smith (1990, pp. 415-435); Smith (1994); Smith (2006a); Thornton (1989, pp. 87-93).
²² Smith (2006a).

tolerant and then reversed to becoming more accepting²³. Approval of homosexual activity has never been high. In the mid-1970s 69-70% said it was always wrong and this moved upwards to 76-77% during the mid-1980s to early 1990s (Table 22). Then after 1991 disapproval began falling. By 2006 only 56% considered that homosexuality was always wrong. Likewise, objection to gay marriage fell from 73% in 1988 to 51% in 2006 (with 35% accepting it and 14% neither approving nor disapproving) (Table 24). Also, discrimination against homosexuals has declined. In the 1970s 53% opposed a homosexual teaching at a college, but opposition fell to 20% in the 2000s. Likewise, opposition to having a book favoring homosexuality in a public library decreased from 43% in the 1970s to 25% in the 2000s.

But while opposition to homosexuality has appreciably decreased in recent decades, it is one of the issues on which Americans are sharply divided. Nearly unique among family values, views on homosexuality are highly polarized. In 2006 while 56% said it was "always wrong" another 32% said it was "not wrong at all" and only 12% were in the two middle categories ("almost always wrong" and "wrong only sometimes").

Third, disapproval of extra-marital sex has always been high and has increased over the last generation. In the early 1970s about 70-71% thought infidelity was always wrong. This increased to about 79-82% considering it always wrong from the late 1980s to the present.

While not the sweeping sexual revolution that has commonly been depicted in the popular media, sexual attitudes and practices regarding premarital sex and cohabitation became more permissive over the last three decades. Attitudes towards homosexual behavior also became more accepting (but only since the 1990s). Counter to these trends extra-marital relations are even more opposed today than in the 1970s.

Neighborhoods:

Another hallmark of the traditional family is its rootedness in local communities and neighborhoods. This attachment has been weakening over the last three decades. Socializing with relatives and friends outside ones neighborhood have changed little, but social contacts with neighbors has plummeted from 30% reporting spending a social evening with neighbors at least several times a week in 1974 and only 20% doing so in 1998 (Table 25). This decline however has now leveled-off. There was also some decline in socializing in a bar from about 11% in the 1970s and early 1980s to 7% in 2006. It is likely, but there is no available evidence, that work-related contacts have grown over this period.

Over the last three decades modern family values have gained ground over traditional values. But the changes have not been uniform across topics or decades.

²³Loftus (2001, pp. 762-782).

In one area, gender equality, the switch over has been both massive and comprehensive. The social role of men and women and husbands and wives has been redefined to accept women in the public spheres of employment and political life.

In other areas, the changes have been more limited with a continuing balancing between old and new values. First, in terms of marriage and divorce, ending marriage has been accepted as preferable over enduring bad marriages, but people are reluctant to endorse quick-and-easy divorces especially when children are involved. Second, regarding children, people favor smaller families. However, the switch has only been from favoring 3+ children to wanting 2 children, with little change in those wanting less than 2 children. Third, there is also a decreasing emphasis on obedience and corporal punishment, but hard work has gained ground as a top value for children. Fourth, people have become more sexually tolerant of premarital and homosexual sex, but less approving of extramarital sex. The ambivalence shows clearly in terms of adolescent sexual activity. Most oppose teenage sex, but both want teenagers to be sexually educated and to have access to birth control even if their parents do not approve. Finally, families are not as grounded in their local neighborhoods. This is probably largely a function of the increased labor-force participation of women.

Some family values showed early and rapid shifts and then have plateaued (e.g. gender roles). Others only began changing recently (e.g. acceptance of homosexuality). And a few have not undergone a liberalizing trend (e.g. approval of extra-marital sex). But overall, the family values have become notably less traditional over the last generation.

Family Structure and Family Values

Family values are in part shaped by the types of families that people live in (Table 26). On marital status the widowed uniformly hold the most traditional values regarding all family values (e.g. divorce, cohabitation, gender roles, sexual morality) followed closely by the currently married. The never married almost always hold the most modern viewpoints with the separated and divorced always less traditional than the married, but usually not as non-traditional as the never married (Table 26A).

Traditional family values are also increase with family size (Table 26B). Those who have never had children are consistently the least traditional, while in almost every instance those with four or more children are the most traditional.

When marital status and the presence of children in the household are examined, one again sees the impact of family structure on family values (Table 26C). On most items the married with no children present are the most traditional (due to many older, empty nesters in this category). The not married are the least traditional and the presence of children does not consistently affect traditionalism. For about half of the items

the unmarried with children present are the least traditional and for the other half those without children are the most traditional. In most cases the differences are small between these two groups.

Family Structure and Politics

People living in different types of families experience different lives and fulfill varied social roles. These experiential differences shape their personal expectations and political preferences. Moreover, the connection between family situations and politics has grown over time and the two are linked more closely than in the past.

Marital status influences both political participation and orientation.²⁴ As Table 27 shows, married people have been more likely to vote in every presidential election from 1968 to 2004 than the divorced, separated, and never married. Early in this period the married were also outvoted the widowed, but since the 1992 election, the widowed have voted at a higher level than the married.²⁶

In each presidential election from 1968 to 2004 the married have been the most likely to vote Republican (Table 28). Up until the 2000 election those in first marriages voted Republican more than the remarried, but by a narrow margin the remarried were the most Republican in the 2000 and 2004 elections. Usually, the separated voted the most Democratic, but occasionally the never married or the divorced voted more Democratic.

The marriage gap has become quite large. For example, in 2004 presidential vote, Democrats lost by 12.3 points among the married, while winning by 25.2 points among the never married (Table 28). In addition, the marriage gap is larger than the more frequently-cited gender gap.

Similarly, from the 1970s to the 2000s, the married have been the most likely to identify as Republican (Table 29). The separated have consistently had the highest Democratic identification. All marital groups became more Republican, but even in the 1990s and 2000s only among the married did Republicans edge out Democrats.

In terms of political ideology, from the 1970s to the 2000s the married and widowed have always tilted towards the right (Table 30). The widowed were the most conservative in the 1970s, but since then the married have been the most conservative. Except for the divorced in the 2000s, the other unmarried groups

²⁴Kingston and Finkel (1987, pp. 57-64); Kulalowski and Nawojczyk (2007); Plutzer and McBurnett (1991, pp. 113-127); Weisberg (1987, pp. 335-343).

²⁵The "marriage gap" also appears to be a major cause of the "gender gap" in presidential voting (Edlund and Pande, 2002). On the gender gap in general see Box-Steffensmeier, de Boef, and Lin, 2004.

²⁶On the impact of changes in marital status on political participation see Stoker and Jennings, 1995.

have been more liberal than conservative. Usually the never married have been the most liberal, followed by the separated, and then the divorced. Over time all groups except the widowed have become more conservative in their expressed political ideology.

Table 31 shows the political differences for the married vs. the not married. Looking at the 2000s the figures indicate that among the married, Republican presidential voters, Republican-party identifiers, and conservatives predominant, while among the not married Democrats and liberals lead. For example, in the 2004 presidential election 40% of the married voted Democratic and 58% Republican, but among the unmarried 56.5% were Democratic voters and 41% were Republican.

Political leaning also varies by other family characteristics. In the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections those who have never had children were most likely to have voted Democratic while those with 2+ children in 2000 or 3+ children in 2004 were mostly likely to vote Republican (Table 32A). This pattern exists for political ideology as well with those with no children ever being the most liberal and those with 3+ children the most conservative (Table 32C)²⁷. But in terms of party identification the relationship is curvilinear with those having had two children being the most Republican and those no children or 4+ children being the most Democratic (Table 32B).

In terms of marital status and the presence of children, in the 2000 and 2004 elections the married with children were the most likely to vote Republican followed by the married without children present. The unmarried with children were the top Democratic voters due in large part to single parents in this category (Table 32A). The same pattern prevails for party identification (Table 32B). On political ideology the married are much more conservative than the unmarried, but the presence of children makes little difference (Table 32C).

The connection between traditional, family structures and values and political conservatism and Republicanism is not surprising given the natural association between traditionalism and conservatism and the explicit "family-values" appeals that conservatives and Republicans have made. But there is also a socio-economic dimension. Married couples and those with low-child dependency ratios have fewer problems, while the unmarried and especially single-parents and others with high, child dependency ratios have notably more problems²⁸. This means that non-traditional families are in greater need for governmental assistance and more likely to lean to the left.

Family Structure and Socio-economic Status

Over the last generation socio-economic status and family

²⁷Teixeira (2002).

²⁸Smith (2006b).

structure have become increasingly related. In the 1970s marital status varied little by class identification, but by the 2000s the middle class has more likely to be married than the working class while the later was more likely to be divorced, separated, or never married (Table 33A). In terms of education, in the 1970s those with more than a high school education were the least likely to be married and the most likely to never have been married. But by the 2000s the college-educated were the most likely to be married with 59% of them vs. only 46% of those without a high-school degree being married.

In terms of number of children ever had, there have been no appreciable class differences from the 1970s to the present (Table 33B). Educational differences however have been large and consistent in direction across time. The college-educated have been the most likely to have no children and the least likely to have 4+ children. However, the childless gap between the least and best educated has narrowed from 18 percentage point in the 1970s to 11 points in the 2000s.

On marital status and the presence of children, the middle class has increasingly predominated among the married with no children present (from + 2.8 points in the 1970s to +9.3 points in the 2000s). Conversely, the working class has expanded its lead over the middle class among the unmarried with children from +1.1 points in the 1970s to +6.6 points in the 2000s) (Table 33C). In terms of education, the college-educated have always been the least likely to be unmarried and to have children in the household, but the difference grew from -2.5 points in the 1970s to 9.9 points in the 2000s. Moreover, the educational difference shifted from the college-educated being less likely than those without a high-school degree to be married with children in the 1970s to being more likely than the least educated to be married with children in the home in the 2000s (from -9.9 points to +3.8 points).

Finally, the association of socio-economic status and family structure is also related to family income. As Table 34 shows, among households with children, those with two, married parents or step-parents are the least likely to be below the poverty line (9-10%). At the other extreme are single, female-headed households with 37% below poverty. In between are two-parent, cohabitating households with 27-32% below the poverty line.

Overall, family life has become more socially differentiated and stratified over time. Socio-economic status and family structure are more linked than previously and middle class households increasingly likely to be married households while the unmarried in general and single parents in particular are prone to be working class and/or poor.

Future Trends

In general, both family structure and family values have been changing in non-traditional directions for a generation. Since the extended duration and appreciable magnitude of these

trends and the fact that they re-enforce each other, it is unlikely that these trends will reverse themselves. Moreover, the probable, continued, non-traditional shift of family values is also predicted by the often large cohort differences that exist. As Table 35 indicates, on most items the youngest cohort holds the most non-traditional views and the oldest cohort has the most traditional values. For example, while 20% of the pre-1930 birth cohort supports gay marriage, 49% of those born since 1980 do so. Likewise, 50.5% of the oldest cohort believes that children are not harmed if their mothers work, while 74.5% of the youngest cohort thinks no harm occurs. Of course, over time older cohorts die out and are steadily replaced by younger cohorts, so these differences should continue to push most family values in the non-traditional direction for the foreseeable future.

However, while this non-traditional shift is widespread, it is not universal. There are two main exceptions: 1) approval of extra-marital sex has not increased over time and younger cohorts are not more supportive of adultery than older generations and 2) while from the 1960s to the 1980s there was a trend towards more support for abortion rights and younger cohorts used to be more supportive of abortion rights in the 1970s and 1980s than older cohorts were, this is no longer the case. As Table 35 shows, support for abortion rights peaks in the baby-boom generation and falls off appreciably among the post-boomers²⁹. While the abortion-rights pattern is clearly the exception rather than the rule, it does indicate that social trends and cohort differences can reverse themselves.

Still, the main expectation is that traditional, family values will in general continue to decline and that as a result the political appeal of such positions will also diminish.

A likely further non-traditional shift is also suggested by cross-national comparisons. Other economically advanced nations in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, generally hold less traditional family values than Americans do³⁰. While convergence between the United States and other first-world societies is not necessarily to be expected, America and other advanced countries have shown similar trends on a range of family changes such as increases in cohabitation, more extra-marital births, and a rise in divorce. Thus, forces of modernization may be at work cross-nationally and the less traditional, family values of other advanced countries do suggest that the evolving, American attitudes have not hit a ceiling.

Conclusion

Major changes in family structure and values feed off of each other. Structural changes lead to the reassessment of traditional values and the growth of values more in tune with

²⁹Jelen and Wilcox (2003, pp. 489-500); Mouw (2001, pp. 913-943).

³⁰O'Sullivan (2007); Smith (1999); Yodanis (2005, pp. 644-659).

current conditions. Likewise, changes in values facilitate the development of new forms of social organization and the growth of those forms most consistent with the emerging values. The structural and value changes reinforce one another so that social transformations are sped along and replace older forms and viewpoints. Several prime examples of this mutual process of societal change apply to the contemporary, American family.

First, the decline in the birth rate and family size parallels a decrease in the ideal family size. Second, the rise in female, labor-force participation follows along with increased acceptance of women being involved in the public sphere in general and of combining employment with rising children in particular. In turn, the growth in dual-earner families (and the decline in single-earner couples) was accompanied by first acceptance of and then even a preference for families with both parents employed. Third, the climb in divorce and the liberalization of divorce laws went along with public support for the idea that divorce was preferable to continuing failed marriages. Finally, greater tolerance of premarital sex coincided with gains in teenage sexual activity, cohabitation, and non-marital birth. In brief, changes in structure and values have gone hand-in-hand over the last generation to transform the American family in both forms and norms.

Second, comparing the trends in attitudes towards the family to how attitudes differ by family type shows society is moving away from the values favored by traditional family types to those more endorsed by modern family types³¹. Attitudes held by single-earner families are those attitudes that are losing ground, while the attitudes favored by single-parent and/or dual-earner families, those attitudes that are growing in popularity. In some cases, both types of modern families, single-parent and dual-earner families differ from the traditional, single-earner family. For example, support for gender equality in general and the employment of women in particular are gaining ground and these positions are more supported by both single-parent and dual-earner families, while single-earner couples are less in favor of these positions. In other cases, only the single-parent families differ from families with couples (both dual- and single earners). For example, single-parent families are more accepting of non-marital births and idea that children interfere with parental freedom than couples of either ilk. However, in those frequent cases when dual- and single-earner families differ, trends are away from the single earners' point-of-views and towards the position of the dual-earners.

Finally, comparing across birth cohorts indicates further advance of modern family types and values since those in more recent cohorts are more modern on most family values than earlier generations are³². Moreover, the shift in family type is likely

³¹Smith (1999).

³²Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004, pp. 106-133); Firebaugh (1993); Mason and Lu (1988, pp. 39-57); Thornton and Young-DeMarco (2001, 1009-1037).

to create even more modern attitudes in future generations since children raised by employed mothers are more supportive of gender equality and other modern viewpoints and more and more children are being raised in such circumstances³³.

Overall, the shift from traditional to modern family structures and values is likely to continue. The basic trends have shown little sign of subsiding, cohort turnover will continue to push things along, and cross-national differences indicate that ample room for further movement. This is especially true of the shift to dual-earner couples and egalitarian gender roles. The impetus towards single-parent families is less certain. The divorce rate has stopped rising and come down some although still at a high level, non-marital births have slowed their increase, and pre-marital sexual activity has apparently peaked and may be falling. These factors will tend to curb the continued growth of single-parent families, although they are not likely to lead to their decline.

As important as the changes in family structure and family values are on their own, they take on added significance because they are tied to political attitudes and behaviors³⁴. First, family structure is related to political participation. The married and the widowed, for example, are more likely to vote in presidential elections. Second, those living in traditional families structures and those holding traditional family values are more likely to vote for Republican presidential candidates and to identify as Republican and conservative rather than Democratic and liberal³⁵. In general, the currently married and parents lean to the right and most non-married groups (the never married, separated, and divorced), those never having had children, and single parents tilt to the left.

The political role of family structure has increased over time in part because class and family type have come into closer alignment. Traditional family structure have become more associated with the middle class, while non-traditionally organized families have become more closely tied to the working class and poor.

The changes in family structure and values have been large and enduring. Moreover, it is likely that non-traditional family structures will continue to grow in the future and that family values will further liberalizing. The smaller segment of the population living in traditional, family structure naturally means fewer voters from such families³⁶. The family values of the 21st century are not our parents' family values. These changes may undermine static, political appeals to traditional, family

³³Smith (1985b, pp. 501-508); Wright and Young (1998, pp. 300-314).

³⁴Judis and Teixeira (2002).

³⁵Guth et al. (2005); Hammond, Shibley, and Solow (1994, pp. 277-290).

³⁶Teixeira (2002).

values and the changing nature of the family will mean that appeals to family values will also have to evolve to remain effective³⁷.

One is tempted to think that the prevalence of divorce among three of the 2008 Republican presidential contenders might be both a symbol and harbinger of a diminished role of family values in 2008 and beyond, until one recalls that Reagan was both America's first divorced president and estranged from some of his children. Personal biography is thus not a good predictor of the political appeal of family values.

Of course, there are public-policy implications of the family changes as well as the political repercussions. The non-traditional families have different needs than the traditional families. Policies to assist them might accept the reality of the new family structure and promote such measures as a) quality, affordable daycare, b) after school programs for those who would otherwise be "latchkey" children, c) financial and other assistance for single parents, and d) workplace non-discrimination on the basis of gender, marital/cohabitation, and parental status. Or policies might try to slow or even reverse the changes by such steps as a) tax breaks for stay-at-home parents, b) pro-marriage incentives, especially for unmarried mothers, c) divorce-avoidance programs, and d) various faith-based initiatives.

Few areas of society have changed as much as the family has over the last generation. The basic structure of the family has been reshaped and family values and related attitudes have also undergone paradigmatic shifts. Families are smaller and less stable, marriage is less central and cohabitation more common, the value of children and values for children have altered, and within marriages gender roles have become less traditional and more egalitarian in both word and practice. Collectively the alterations mark the replacement of traditional family types and family values with the emerging, modern family types and a new set of family values.

The changes that the family has been experiencing have in turn transformed society. As Meng-tzu has noted "the root of the state is the family" and the transplanting that the family has been undergoing has uprooted society in general. Some changes have been good, others bad, and still others both good and bad. But given the breadth and depth of changes in family life, the changes both for the better and the worse have been disruptive. Society has had to readjust to continually evolving structures and related, new attitudes. It is through this process of structural and value change and adaptation to these changes that the modern, 21st-century family is emerging.

³⁷Judis and Teixeira (2002).

Table 1

Changes in Marital Status

	% Never Married	% Not Now Married	% Ever Divorced (All)	% Ever Divorced (Ever Married)
1972	15	26	14	17
1973	15	26	13	15
1974	14	25	15	17
1975	16	28	15	19
1976	16	30	15	18
1977	16.5	31	16	19
1978	15	30	18	21
1980	17	33	18	21
1982	19	35	19.5	24
1983	17	33	19	23
1984	20	36	20	25
1985	18	35	20	25
1986	19	37	21	26
1987	20	39	21	26
1988	22	40	22	28
1989	21	38	21	26
1990	20	39	25	31
1991	21	39	22.5	29
1993	19	39	24.5	30
1994	20	40	26	32
1996	22	43	26.5	34
1998	23	44	26	33
2000	24	46	25	34
2002	24	46	27	35
2004	24	40	26	33
2006	24	44	28	37

Source: GSS

Table 2

Trends in Cohabitation

Cohabitators as % of ...

	All Couples	All Households	All Adults
1960	1.1	0.8	
1970	1.1	0.8	
1975	1.8	1.2	
1977	2.0	1.3	
1978	2.3	1.5	
1980	3.1	2.0	
1981	3.5	2.2	
1982	3.6	2.2	
1983	3.6	2.3	
1984	3.8	2.3	
1985	3.7	2.3	
1986	4.1	2.5	3.5
1987	4.3	2.6	4.0
1988	4.7	2.8	---
1989	5.0	3.0	---
1990	5.1	3.1	---
1991	5.4	3.2	---
1992	5.8	3.5	---
1993	6.1	3.6	4.2
1994	6.3	3.8	4.3
1995	6.3	3.7	---
1996	6.8	4.0	6.0
1997	7.0	4.1	---
1998	7.1	4.1	---
1999	7.4	4.1	---
2000	8.8	4.3	10.8
2001	---	---	---
2002	---	---	---
2003	8.7	5.0	---
2004	9.0	5.2	8.7
2005	---	---	---
2006	---	---	9.2

Sources: Glick and Spanier, 1980; Spanier, 1983; Thornton, 1988;
 Current Population Surveys, 1987-1997; GSS

Table 2 (continued)

% cohabited with present spouse before marriage

1988	23.4
1994	28.0

Source: GSS, 1994

	% Currently Cohabiting	% Ever Cohabited	% Cohabited prior to First Marriage
Women, 15-44			
1988	5	34	25
1995	7	41	24

Source: Abma, et al., 1997 and Smith, 2006a

% for whom first union was cohabitation: Ever in union

Birth Cohorts	Men	Women
1933-42	16.4	6.9
1943-52	30.3	21.8
1953-62	53.1	42.4
1963-74	65.7	64.0

Source: Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels, 1994

Table 3

Trends in Children

	% with No Children Under 18 in House	Mean # of Children Born	% Ideal Number of Children for a Family To Have		
			0-1	2	3+
1972	45	2.4	3	41	56
1973	48	2.3			
1974	47	2.2	3	45	52
1975	49	2.1	3	49	48
1976	50	2.1	5	51	44
1977	52	2.1	3	49	48
1978	50	2.1	3	51	46
1980	54.5	2.1			
1982	58	2.0	3	55	42
1983	53	2.1	3	51	46
1984	57.5	2.0			
1985	58	2.1	4	55.5	40.5
1986	56.5	2.1	3	51.5	45.5
1987	58.5	2.0			
1988	59	2.0	3	51	46
1989	57.5	1.9	4	54	42
1990	63	1.9	3	55	42
1991	61	1.9	4	54	42
1993	60	1.8	4	58	38
1994	60	1.9	4	54	42
1996	61	1.8	4	57	39
1998	62	1.8	4	57	39
2000	59	1.8	5	52	43
2002	70	1.8	4	50	46
2004	68	1.8	3	50	47
2006	65	1.9	3	50	47

Source: GSS

Question Wordings: How many children have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive at any time (including any you had from a previous marriage).
What do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?

Table 4

Trends in Out-of-Marriage Births

	% of All Births to Unmarried Mothers	Birth Rates for Unmarried Mothers
1960	5.3	21.6 ^a
1965	7.7	23.5
1970	10.7	26.5
1975	14.2	24.5
1980	18.4	29.4
1985	22.0	32.8
1986	23.4	34.3
1987	24.5	36.1
1988	25.7	38.6
1989	27.1	41.8
1990	28.0	43.8
1991	29.5	45.2
1992	30.1	45.2
1993	31.0	45.3
1994	32.6	46.9
1995	32.2	45.1
1996	32.4	44.6
1997	32.4	42.9
1998	32.8	43.3
1999	33.0	43.3
2000	33.2	44.1
2001	33.5	43.8
2002	34.0	43.7
2003	34.2	44.9
2004	35.8	47.1
2005	36.8	47.6

^aNumber to births to unmarried women per 1,000 unmarried women age 15-44.

^bIn 1960 and 1965 figures are for non-Whites. This slightly underestimates the rate for Blacks only.

Source: Statistical Abstracts

Table 5

Trends in the Living Arrangements of Households

	Married No Children	Married Children	Not Married No Children	Not Married Children
1972	29	45	16	10
1973	32	42	16	10
1974	31	44	16	9
1975	31	41	18	11
1976	32	38	19	12
1977	33	37	19.5	11
1978	31	39.5	19	11
1980	32	35	22	10.5
1982	33	32	25.5	10
1983	31	35.5	22	11.5
1984	31	32	26	10
1985	33	32	25	10
1986	30	33	27	10
1987	30	31	28	10.5
1988	31	28	28	13
1989	30.5	31	27	11
1990	33	28	30	10
1991	31	30	29	10
1993	32	29	29	10
1994	31	29	29	11
1996	30	26	30	13
1998	30	26	32	12
2000	26	27.5	33	14
2002	35	19	35	11
2004	38	23	30	10
2006	33	23	32	12

Source: GSS

Table 6

Trends in Child Bearing and Rearing

	Empty Nest	Childless	Parent	Step- parent
1972	27	18	49	6
1973	28	20	46	6
1974	29	18	48	5
1975	29	20	45	6
1976	31	19	43	7
1977	32	20	42	6
1978	29	21	44	6
1980	33	22	41	5
1982	35	23.5	37	5
1983	32.5	21	41	6
1984	32	25	38	5
1985	36	22	36	5
1986	34	23	39	5
1987	34	24	38	4
1988	35	24	37	4
1989	35	23	37	6
1990	38	25	33	4
1991	36	25	36	3
1993	36	24	35.5	4
1994	36	24	36	4
1996	36.5	24	35	4
1998	38	24	35	3
2000	34	25	37	4
2002	44	26	27.5	3
2004	43	25	29	3
2006	41	24	31	4

Source: GSS

Empty Nest - Parent of 1+ children; none under 18 in household

Childless - No children ever; no one under 18 in household

Parent - Parent of 1+ children; 1+ under 18 in household

Step-Parent - No children ever; 1+ under 18 in household (many in this group are step-parents, but also includes partners and other adults living in households with children under 18)

Table 7A

% of Children in Various Types of Families

	Single Parent	Two Parent, Continuing	Two Parent, Remarried	Two Adults Ex-married	Two Adults Never Married
1972	4.9	73.0	9.9	3.8	8.6
1973	6.4	71.8	9.2	6.4	6.2
1974	6.0	71.4	12.0	4.1	6.6
1975	8.3	65.1	14.8	4.8	7.0
1976	10.8	63.8	11.0	3.8	10.6
1977	12.5	63.4	13.1	3.2	7.9
1978	10.3	65.3	13.6	4.0	6.9
1980	13.2	61.7	12.7	5.8	6.8
1982	14.3	59.3	13.7	5.2	7.3
1983	13.6	61.8	12.2	4.6	7.8
1984	15.0	58.4	14.2	6.5	5.9
1985	14.1	61.4	12.2	4.6	7.7
1986	11.4	61.0	13.6	6.6	7.4
1987	10.3	60.4	14.9	8.3	6.1
1988	18.6	54.7	13.0	5.0	8.7
1989	15.9	56.5	12.2	7.3	8.1
1990	15.0	56.1	17.9	5.1	6.0
1991	18.7	53.6	15.5	5.2	7.0
1993	15.9	57.7	13.2	6.6	6.7
1994	18.5	52.8	14.7	7.1	7.0
1996	19.7	48.8	14.4	8.5	8.7
1998	18.2	51.7	12.3	8.6	9.2
2000	20.7	48.9	13.6	7.8	9.0
2002	22.5	48.1	11.2	8.5	9.8
2004	17.4	51.0	14.7	8.2	8.6
2006	16.2	50.0	14.4	7.5	12.0

Source: GSS

Single Parent - only one adult in household

Two Parents, Continuing - married couple, never divorced

Two Parents, Remarried - married couple, at least one remarried
(unknown if remarriage came before or after children born)Two adults, Ex-married - two or more adults; previously, but not
currently marriedTwo adults, Never Married - two or more adults; never married (This
category also includes some complex family structures.)

Table 7B (continued)

	Two Married Parents	One Parent	No Parent
1980	77%	20	4
1985	74%	23	3
1990	73%	25	3
1995	69%	27	4
2000	69%	26	4
2001	69%	26	4
2002	69%	28	4
2003	68%	28	4
2004	68%	28	4
2005	67%	28	4
2006	67%	28	5

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics,
2007

Two Parents = includes parents and step-parents

One Parent = includes married parents not living with spouse

No Parent = no parent in household with child

Table 8

Gender of Single Parents in Households with
Children under 18 and One Adult

	% of adults with female	% of children with female
1972 ^a	98	98
1973	86	91
1974	89	89
1975	90	92
1976	89	92.5
1977	82	89
1978	87	86
1980	89	93.5
1982	92	94
1983	93	93
1984	89	91
1985	82	86
1986	90	92
1987	88	89
1988	87.5	89
1989	89	91
1990	91	93
1991	89	92
1993	89.5	90
1994	89	90.5
1996	89	90
1998	85	87
2000	87	90
2002	88	87.5
2004	85	87
2006	84.5	86.5

Source: GSS

^a1972 appears to be an outlier.

Table 9

Trends in Labor Force Participation of Married Couples

	Traditional: Husband Works Wife at Home	Modern: Both Work Outside Home	Non-Trad.: Wife Works Husband Home	"Retired": Neither Works ^a
1972	53	32	3	11.5
1973	48.5	34	4.5	13
1974	47	35	3	14
1975	45	37	4.5	14
1976	46	35	3	16
1977	41	40	5	14
1978	45	40	3.5	12
1980	37	44	4	14.5
1982	35	45	5	15.5
1983	35	47	4	13.5
1984	34	48	4	14
1985	30	49	4	16
1986	29	49	4	18
1987	25.5	55	6	14
1988	25	52	4	18.5
1989	26	53	4	17
1990	25	55	4	15
1991	26	51	5	18
1993	22.5	56	5	16
1994	23	56	5	15
1996	24	59	5	12
1998	21	58.5	6	14
2000	23	58	6	14
2002	21	58.5	5.5	15
2004	23	57	7	13
2006	26	52	7.5	15

Source: GSS

^aHouseholds in which neither spouse is in the labor force. While retired couples are the largest group, category includes any combination of retired, disabled, students, and keeping house.

Table 10

Trends in Labor Force Participation of Married Couples
with Children Under 18 in Household

	Traditional: Husband Works Wife at Home	Modern: Both Work Outside Home	Non-Trad.: Wife Works Husband Home	"Retired": Neither Works ^a
1972	60	33	2	4
1973	58	34.5	2	5
1974	57	39	0.5	4
1975	54	40	2	3.5
1976	54.5	48	3	5
1977	52	41.5	2	4
1978	54.5	42	1	2.5
1980	46	49	2.5	2
1982	43	50	3	4.5
1983	45	52	1	2
1984	40	54	3	3
1985	37	58	4	1.5
1986	34	60	2	5
1987	31	63	2.5	4
1988	33	64	2	1.5
1989	32	63	3	2
1990	33	62	2	3
1991	33	61	2	4
1993	27	67	3	2
1994	28	66	4	2
1996	29	66	3	2
1998	27	67	4	2
2000	28	65	5	2
2002	29	66	3	2
2004	26	67.5	4.5	2
2006	32	62	4	2

^aHouseholds in which neither spouse is in the labor force. While retired couples are the largest group, category includes any combination of retired, disabled, students, and keeping house.

Table 11

Trends in Keeping House for Married Couples by Gender

	Wife Keeps House, Husband Other	Neither Keeps House	Husband Keeps House, Wife Other	Both Keep House
1972	61	38	0	0
1973	58	42	0	0
1974	58	41.5	0	0
1975	55	45	0	0
1976	58	42	0	0
1977	52	47	0	0
1978	51	48	0	0
1980	47	52	1	0
1982	45.5	54	0	0
1983	42.5	57	1	0
1984	42	57	2	0
1985	39	61	0.5	0
1986	39	60	1.0	0
1987	33	66	0.5	0
1988	33	66	1	0.5
1989	33.5	66	1	0
1990	31	68	1	0
1991	32	67	0	0.5
1993	27	72	1	0
1994	28	72	1	0
1996	26.5	72	1	0
1998	24	75	1	0
2000	25	73	1	0
2002	23	75	1	0.5
2004	22	77	1	0.4
2006	26	72	1	0.2

Source: GSS

This typology focuses on whether a person is "keeping house" and not other labor force statuses.

Table 12

Trends in Keeping House for Married Couples by Gender
for Households with Children under 18

	Wife Keeps House, Husband Other	Neither Keeps House	Husband Keeps House, Wife Other	Both Keep House
1972	63	37	0	0
1973	61	38.5	0	0
1974	59	41	0	0
1975	56	44	0	0
1976	58	42	0	0
1977	56	44	0	0
1978	55	45	0	0
1980	46	53	1	0
1982	45	54	1	0
1983	44	55	0.5	0
1984	40.5	57	2	0
1985	36	63	1	0
1986	37	63	0	0
1987	33	66	1	0
1988	32	67	1	0
1989	32	67	1	0
1990	34	65	1	0
1991	34	65	0.5	0.5
1993	26	72.5	1.5	0
1994	28	71	1	0
1996	28	71	1	0
1998	26	72	1	1
2000	26	71	2	1
2002	27	71	1	0
2004	22	76	1	0
2006	30	68	2	0

Source: GSS

This typology focuses on whether a person is "keeping house" and not other labor force statuses.

Table 13

Trends Regarding Marriage and Divorce

	% Very Happy with Marriage	% Divorces Should be Easier	% Divorce Best if Can't Work Out Problems
1973	67	--	
1974	69	33.5	
1975	67	29	
1976	66	29	
1977	65	29	
1978	65.5	28	
1980	67.5	--	
1982	66	23.5	
1983	62.5	25	
1984	66	--	
1985	56	24	
1986	63	28	
1987	65	--	
1988	62	25	
1989	60	27	
1990	65	25	
1991	64	29.5	
1993	61	27	
1994	60	27	47
1996	62	28	
1998	64	25	
2000	62	25	
2002	60	26	41
2004	62	26	
2006	61	25	

Source: GSS

Question Wordings: Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage? Would you say that your marriage is very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?

Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain than it is now?

Divorce is usually the best solution when a couple can't work out their marital problems.

Table 14

Trends in Attitudes towards Cohabitation

	Agree Should Live Together Before Marriage	Living Together Is Alright
1994	33%	41%
1998	40	44
2002	48	47

Source: GSS

Question Wording:
Do you agree or disagree?

It's a good idea for a couple who intent to marry to live together first.

It is alright for a couple to live together without intending to get married.

Table 15

Trends in Attitudes about Children

	% Disagree that Those Wanting Children Should Get Married	% Disagree that Children Are Life's Greatest Joy	% Agree that Children Inter- fer with Par- ent's Freedom	% Disagree That People w/o Children Lead Empty Lives
1988	14.8	4.1	10.7	44.8
1994	17.2	4.1	8.9	52.9
2002	20.2	3.2	---	59.0

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you agree or disagree...

People who want children ought to get married.

Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy.

Having children interferes too much with the freedom of the parents.

People who have never had children lead empty lives.

Table 16

Importance of Traits in Children

% Most Important

	To think for Ones Self	To Obey	To Work Hard	To Help Others	To be Well Liked and Popular
1986	51	23	11	14	0
1987	54	20	12	13	1
1988	50	23	14.5	12	1
1989	53	19	14	12	1
1990	51	18	16	14	1
1991	51	20	15	14	0
1993	53	19	14	13	1
1994	53	18	16	13	0
1996	51	18.5	18	13	1
1998	49	18.5	18	13	1
2000	47	21	18	13.5	1
2002	48	14	22.5	15	0
2004	47	12	22	17	1
2006	46.5	17	20	16	1

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

If you had to chose, which thing on this list would you pick as the most important for a child to learn to prepare him or her for life?

- A. To obey
- B. To be well-liked or popular
- C. To think for himself or herself
- D. To work hard
- E. To help others when they need help

Table 17

Trends in Approval of Spanking Children

	% Approving of Spanking
1986	83.5
1988	80
1989	77
1990	79
1991	75
1993	74
1994	74
1996	73
1998	75
2000	74
2002	74
2004	72
2006	72

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that it is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard spanking?

Table 18

Trends in Attitudes towards Women and Politics

	% Willing to Vote for Women for President	% Women Emotionally Suited for Politics	% Women Help Run Country as Well as Homes
1972	74		
1974	80	53	64.5
1975	80	50	64
1977	80	50	62
1978	83	57	69
1982	86.5	62	74.5
1983	86.5	64	77
1985	83	61	74
1986	86.5	63	77
1988	88	68	79
1989	86.5	69	80
1990	91	74	82
1991	91	74	81
1993	90	78	85
1994	92.5	79	87
1996	93	79	84
1998	94	77	85
2000	--	76	--
2002	--	77	--
2004	--	74.5	--
2006	--	76	--

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

If your party nominated a woman for President, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?

Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men.

Table 19

Trends in Attitudes towards Women, Work, and the Family

	% for Wife Working if Husband Can Support Her	% Agree Mom who Works Can be as Close to Children	% Disagree Wife Should Help Husband's Career First	% Disagree Better if Man Works Woman at Home	% Disagree Children Suffer if Mon Works
1972	67				
1974	70				
1975	75				
1977	67	49	43	34	32
1978	74				
1982	75				
1983	77.5				
1985	--	61	63	52	46
1986	79	62.5	64	53	48
1988	81	62.5	69	59	52
1989	79	64.5	72	60	52
1990	83	63.5	71.5	61	51
1991	80	66	71	59	52
1993	81	68	77	65	57
1994	82	70	79	66	59
1996	83.5	66	80	62	53
1998	82	68	81	66	58
2000	--	62	--	60	53
2002	--	63	--	61	54
2004	--	65	--	63	57
2006	--	67	--	65	59

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her?

Now I'm going to read several more statements. As I read each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it. For example, here is the statement:

Table 19 (continued)

A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself.

It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.

Table 20

Trends on Gender Roles

	% Disagree Women Really Want Home and Kids	% Disagree Housework as Fulfilling as Job	% Agree Job is Best for Woman to be Indpdnt.	% Agree Both Spouses Should Earn Incomes
1988	38.9	23.0	42.5	49.3
1994	43.6	21.9	45.0	57.6
1996	--	--	--	67.0
2002	52.0	16.1	53.0	68.2

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you agree or disagree...

A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children.

Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.

Both the husband and the wife should contribute to the household income.

Table 21

Trends on Mothers Working

Wife Should Work Full-Time...

	Before First Child	When Has Preschooler	After Young- est in School	After Children Leave Home
1988	76.8	10.7	36.0	73.8
1994	84.5	11.6	38.0	80.2
2002	80.6	14.1	41.3	75.3

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all under these circumstances...

- a. After marrying and before there are children
- b. When there is a child under school age
- c. After the youngest child starts school
- d. After the children leave home

Table 22

Trends in Sexual Permissiveness

	% Always Wrong			
	Extramarital Sex	Homosexual Sex	Premarital Sex	Teenage Premarital Sex
1972			36	
1973	70	72.5	--	
1974	73	69	33	
1975	--	--	31	
1976	69	70	--	
1977	74	73	31	
1978	--	--	29	
1980	71	74	--	
1982	74	74	28	
1983	--	--	28	
1984	71.5	75	--	
1985	75	76	28	
1986	--	--	28	67
1987	74	77.5	--	
1988	81	77	26	68.5
1989	78.5	74	28	70
1990	79	76	25	69
1991	77	77	28	68
1993	78.5	66	27	68.5
1994	80	68	26	70
1996	78.5	61	24	70
1998	81	58.5	27	72
2000	79	59	28	72
2002	81	56	28	73
2004	82	58	27	71
2006	82	56	26	73

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

There's been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes towards sex are changing in this country. If a man and woman have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong,

Table 22 (continued)

almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

What if they are in their early teens, say 14 to 16 years old? In that case, do you think sex relations before marriage are always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

What is your opinion about a married person having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner --is it always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex -- do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

Table 23

Trends in Sexual Attitudes

	% for Sex Educa- tion in Schools	% for Birth Control for Teenagers
1974	82	
1975	80	
1977	78.5	
1982	85	
1983	86	
1985	85	
1986	85	57
1988	88	59
1989	88	56
1990	90	61
1991	87.5	61
1993	86	58
1994	88	57
1996	87	60
1998	87	58
2000	87	59
2002	88	57
2004	89.5	53
2006	89	54

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

Would you be for or against sex education in the public schools?

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that methods of birth control should be available to teenagers between the ages of 14 and 16 if their parents do not approve?

Table 24

% Disagreeing with Gay Marriage

1988	73
2004	55
2006	51

Source: GSS

Agree/Disagree: Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another.

Table 25

Trends on Socializing

% Spending Social Evening at Least Several
Times a Week ...

	With Relatives	With Neighbor	With Other Friend	At Bar
1974	38	30	22	11
1975	39	26.5	21	9
1977	37.5	27	22	11
1978	36	28.5	21	10
1982	37	24	22	12.5
1983	33	25	21	12
1985	36	23	21	9
1986	37	28	21	9.5
1988	37	25	20	10
1989	34	22	22	8
1990	35	22	20	8
1991	36	23	24	9
1993	33	21	24	8
1994	34	21	23	8
1996	36	20	24	8.5
1998	37	20	22	8
2000	37.5	22	23	9
2002	38.0	23	25	10
2004	40.5	21	21	8
2006	40.5	21	23.5	7

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

How often do you do the following things? A. Spend a social evening with relatives B. Spend a social evening with someone who lives in your neighborhood C. Spend a social evening with friends who live outside the neighborhood D. Go to a bar or tavern

Table 26

Family Values by Family Structure

A. Marital Status

	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separ- ated	Never Married
Easier Divorces	22.1	20.2	35.0	53.2	36.9
Cohabitation Acceptable	35.6	16.1	53.4	51.3	65.8
Cohabit First, Agree	32.3	15.4	49.1	51.1	59.0
Children Joy, Disagree	12.0	10.3	17.2	6.0	22.7
No Child Empty, Disagree	48.3	44.6	52.9	50.4	63.5
Disapprove of Spanking	24.2	23.4	24.5	23.9	26.9
Obedience, Not Top Value	81.0	70.5	82.9	79.5	86.9
Teen Contraception, Agree	52.8	44.6	65.5	67.1	69.6
Teen Sex, Not Always Wrong	24.1	15.0	33.9	33.0	46.5
Premarital Sex, Not Wrong	68.3	53.1	81.6	80.1	84.0
Infidelity, Not Al. Wrong	20.3	15.6	29.6	33.4	32.2
Gay Sex, Not Always Wrong	27.3	17.5	38.5	39.1	45.8
For Gay Marriage	21.8	20.5	31.8	32.2	50.1
Women Suitable Politics	66.4	56.7	74.6	69.6	75.5
Vote Woman President	85.5	72.9	90.1	89.3	91.4
Women Run Home, Not Nation	63.2	56.7	82.0	73.9	85.0
Housewife Fulfilling, Dis.	19.4	13.6	21.7	24.5	24.9
Women Work, Family OK	45.1	36.3	49.2	51.6	57.4
Wife Not First Help Hus.	68.2	46.1	79.5	74.2	82.5
Mom Work, Preschooler OK	49.4	42.0	58.6	57.2	60.8
Man Work, Woman Home, Dis.	56.2	33.5	63.1	61.8	73.8
Women Work, Children OK	61.4	53.5	69.0	68.1	72.4
Visit Rel. LT Weekly	65.0	61.6	62.0	60.3	59.9
Visit Bar, GT Never	45.2	19.5	60.9	56.6	65.6
Visit Neighbor LT Weekly	81.8	71.1	75.5	72.6	62.6

B. Children Ever Born

	None	1	2	3	4+
Easier Divorces	31.3	30.3	24.4	23.3	23.1
Cohabitation Acceptable	61.0	44.1	40.2	31.6	28.7
Cohabit First, Agree	52.5	46.7	35.5	29.0	26.2
Children Joy, Disagree	37.8	11.5	9.5	9.5	9.1
No Child Empty, Disagree	67.6	48.3	47.4	46.6	40.0
Disapprove of Spanking	26.4	26.4	25.5	23.0	20.5

Table 26 (continued)

	None	1	2	3	4+
Obedience, Not Top Value	85.4	81.4	82.9	80.0	72.1
Teen Contraception, Agree	67.5	61.4	56.2	49.1	47.0
Teen Sex, Not Always Wrong	43.7	31.4	25.0	21.0	18.5
Premarital Sex, Not Wrong	81.5	75.1	71.8	66.9	58.6
Infidelity, Not Al. Wrong	29.4	25.1	21.2	20.4	17.2
Gay Sex, Not Always Wrong	44.0	37.9	30.0	25.7	18.0
For Gay Marriage	38.1	30.5	25.5	18.4	15.6
Women Suitable Politics	73.4	69.1	68.4	67.1	61.1
Vote Woman President	89.6	86.8	86.8	86.0	80.3
Women Run Home, Not Nation	82.8	77.4	78.0	74.6	65.5
Housewife Fulfilling, Dis.	22.6	22.6	20.3	17.0	19.0
Women Work, Family OK	54.7	51.6	46.3	42.1	40.7
Wife Not First Help Hus.	79.2	73.6	72.3	66.2	56.5
Mom Work, Preschooler OK	56.4	59.3	53.3	47.0	42.9
Man Work, Woman Home, Dis.	70.8	63.6	58.2	53.1	42.4
Women Work, Children OK	69.0	67.7	64.4	59.9	55.6
Visit Rel. LT Weekly	64.0	60.3	64.4	66.1	61.3
Visit Bar, GT Never	63.4	50.7	47.2	42.6	34.1
Visit Neighbor LT Weekly	68.6	76.9	80.6	80.5	79.4

C. Marriage/Children

	Married No Children	Married Children	Not Married No Chldrn	Not Married Children
Easier Divorces	20.1	24.0	31.4	42.6
Cohabitation Acceptable	32.2	39.3	53.8	46.8
Cohabit First, Agree	29.9	34.8	47.0	56.8
Children Joy, Disagree	15.3	8.1	22.0	10.8
No Child Empty, Disagree	50.2	46.4	58.0	54.9
Disapprove of Spanking	22.3	25.9	26.5	22.9
Obedience, Not Top Value	78.1	84.2	82.1	80.6
Teen Contraception, Agree	61.2	54.6	63.9	66.2
Teen Sex, Not Always Wrong	22.7	25.5	38.1	35.7
Premarital Sex, Not Wrong	65.4	71.0	76.5	81.1

Table 26 (continued)

	Married No Children	Married Children	Not Married No Chldrn	Not Married Children
Infidelity, Not Al. Wrong	18.6	22.0	29.0	28.3
Gay Sex, Not Always Wrong	25.8	28.7	39.8	35.4
For Gay Marriage	27.2	21.6	36.1	31.3
Women Suitable Politics	64.3	68.7	70.5	74.6
Vote Woman President	83.5	87.3	86.4	90.4
Women Run Home, Not Nation	72.2	78.4	77.0	81.6
Housewife Fulfilling, Dis.	18.3	20.9	19.8	28.0
Women Work, Family OK	42.2	48.5	50.3	55.4
Wife Not First Help Hus.	62.7	73.9	72.5	81.0
Mom Work, Preschooler OK	45.0	54.0	54.2	63.8
Man Work, Woman Home, Dis.	50.8	61.7	61.6	69.2
Women Work, Children OK	58.2	64.7	65.9	73.9
Visit Rel. LT Weekly	65.0	65.0	63.5	54.2
Visit Bar, GT Never	38.8	51.6	55.7	56.2
Visit Neighbor LT Weekly	81.6	81.8	67.8	67.5

Source: GSS

Table 27

Presidential Voting by Marital Status

% Voted among Married - % Voted for other Groups

Election	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never Married
1968	+1.6	+11.3	+11.9	+50.3
1972	+2.1	+ 8.9	+21.2	+28.0
1976	+2.4	+10.1	+14.3	+23.0
1980	-2.8	+ 5.4	+11.4	+21.0
1984	+1.8	+12.3	+14.4	+28.5
1988	+1.6	+12.6	+18.4	+24.1
1992	-1.5	+ 6.6	+14.7	+25.3
1996	-5.3	+ 6.8	+14.1	+30.0
2000	-6.9	+ 9.9	+19.8	+33.8
2004	-2.0	+ 4.5	+23.9	+21.6

Source: GSS

Table 28

% Voted for Democratic for President -
% Voted for Republican by Marital Status, 1968-2004

Election	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never Married	Remarried
1968	- 6.4	+ 5.8	+17.4	+23.1	+ 2.3	+ 3.1
1972	-27.1	-22.1	- 6.5	-16.0	- 9.4	-18.9
1976	+ 9.1	+24.3	+16.6	+44.4	+13.7	+15.6
1980	- 7.9	+22.2	+19.8	+45.2	+ 5.8	- 4.0
1984	-31.1	- 8.7	- 9.7	+ 0.2	-20.7	-26.4
1988	-28.6	-16.2	-23.9	-13.7	- 8.1	-24.3
1992	- 0.7	+17.2	+20.9	+42.1	+28.2	+ 5.1
1996	+12.3	+34.1	+32.0	+56.5	+43.5	+14.5
2000	-21.0	+ 2.9	- 1.5	+29.3	+22.2	-24.7
2004	-12.3	+ 0.9	+ 3.1	+35.4	+25.2	-15.0

Source: GSS

Table 29

Political Party Identification

% Democratic - % Republican by Marital Status by Decade

Decade	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never Married
1970s	+19.4	+24.3	+24.8	+40.4	+20.6
1980s	+ 9.1	+22.1	+20.6	+28.8	+ 8.5
1990s	- 0.2	+17.9	+13.0	+26.5	+ 9.6
2000s	- 3.7	+19.9	+11.9	+23.4	+15.5

Source: GSS

Table 30

% Liberal - Conservative by Marital Status by Decade

Decade	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never Married
1970s	- 8.2	-13.4	+ 7.0	+11.3	+24.2
1980s	-15.6	-11.3	+ 3.7	+ 8.7	+ 6.4
1990s	-17.3	-15.5	+ 1.3	+ 5.5	+ 8.0
2000s	-18.4	-14.5	- 3.1	+ 1.9	+ 9.3

Source: GSS

Table 31

Politics by Marital Status by Year

A. President Vote

	Married Democrat	Married Republican	Not Married Democrat	Not Married Republican
1968	39.8	46.2	48.9	40.0
1972	34.5	61.6	47.5	49.0
1976	53.6	44.5	59.2	38.9
1980	42.8	50.1	54.0	37.0
1984	33.8	64.1	42.2	55.7
1988	35.0	63.6	42.0	56.3
1992	41.2	41.9	54.5	30.0
1996	49.6	36.8	62.3	23.5
2000	38.4	59.4	52.8	41.7
2004	40.4	57.7	56.5	41.4

B. Party ID

1970s	42.6	23.2	42.6	18.9
1980s	37.5	28.4	29.6	24.4
1990s	32.4	32.6	36.8	24.0
2000s	29.2	32.9	35.8	20.1

C. Political Ideology

	Married Liberal	Married Conservative	Not Married Liberal	Not Married Conservative
1970s	25.3	33.5	38.4	26.1
1980s	22.5	38.1	31.3	28.6
1990s	22.8	40.1	32.4	30.0
2000s	21.5	39.9	31.5	29.1

Source: GSS

Table 32

Political Differences by Family Structure, 2000-2006

A. % Voted for Democratic for President - % Voted for Republican

Number of Children Ever Born to	2000	2004
0	+ 5.5	+12.6
1	- 8.5	- 8.2
2	-16.1	- 7.7
3	-17.3	-16.9
4+	-12.6	-12.1

Marriage/Children

Married No Children	-18.9	-13.1
Married Children	-24.4	-24.2
Not Married No Children	+ 8.6	+13.5
Not Married Children	+21.9	+21.3

B. Party Identification: % Democratic - % Republican

Number of Children Ever Born to	2000-2006
0	+ 9.4
1	+ 2.9
2	+ 0.9
3	+ 2.1
4+	+ 7.9

Table 32 (continued)

2000-2006

Marriage/Children

Married No Children	- 2.5
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Married Children	- 5.6
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Not Married No Children	+14.7
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Not Married Children	+18.4
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C. % Liberal - % Conservative

Number of Children
Ever Born to

0	+ 8.5
1	-13.4
2	-14.6
3	-18.8
4+	-19.4

Marriage/Children

Married No Children	-18.1
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Married Children	-18.6
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Not Married No Children	+ 2.7
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Not Married Children	+ 1.2
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Source: GSS 2000-2006

Table 33

Family Structure by SES, 1970s-2000s

A. Marital Status

	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never Married
1970s					
Working Class	73.5	5.2	4.5	2.5	14.4
Middle Class	72.4	6.7	3.5	1.5	15.9
1980s					
Working Class	64.7	5.8	8.9	2.8	17.9
Middle Class	64.3	7.9	6.3	1.8	19.7
1990s					
Working Class	55.9	5.4	13.0	2.9	22.8
Middle Class	63.1	7.8	8.2	1.7	19.2
2000s					
Working Class	51.6	4.6	13.1	3.7	27.0
Middle Class	62.1	5.5	7.0	1.0	21.7
1970s					
LT High School	72.2	10.9	3.8	3.7	9.3
High School	74.4	3.8	4.5	1.8	15.5
GT High School	69.2	3.5	3.9	1.4	22.0
1980s					
LT High School	59.5	14.7	7.3	3.9	14.5
High School	67.9	5.0	7.5	2.0	17.5
GT High School	62.9	3.4	8.1	2.1	23.6
1990s					
LT High School	53.1	14.2	10.9	3.1	18.7
High School	60.3	7.4	10.8	2.6	18.9
GT High School	60.0	4.1	10.7	2.0	23.2
2000s					
LT High School	45.7	11.6	10.5	5.4	26.8
High School	56.9	7.2	12.3	2.6	21.0
GT High School	58.9	3.4	11.6	2.2	23.9

Table 33 (continued)

B. Children Ever Born

	0	1	2	3	4+
1970s					
Working Class	24.5	15.3	20.4	16.1	23.7
Middle Class	26.8	14.3	23.5	16.2	19.2
1980s					
Working Class	26.1	16.2	23.2	14.8	19.2
Middle Class	30.0	13.8	23.5	15.7	16.9
1990s					
Working Class	27.7	16.2	25.3	15.7	15.2
Middle Class	29.1	14.9	27.6	14.5	13.9
2000s					
Working Class	28.2	18.0	24.0	16.4	13.4
Middle Class	28.7	14.0	27.6	16.8	12.8
1970s					
LT High School	17.4	13.9	19.7	16.4	32.5
High School	25.3	15.2	24.1	16.4	19.1
GT High School	35.4	14.5	21.5	14.7	14.0
1980s					
LT High School	19.4	13.5	20.6	16.0	30.5
High School	25.4	16.1	25.6	15.8	17.0
GT High School	36.1	14.8	22.9	14.4	11.8
1990s					
LT High School	19.8	13.8	22.1	17.2	27.1
High School	23.1	16.2	28.4	16.6	15.6
GT High School	33.7	15.6	27.1	13.7	10.0
2000s					
LT High School	21.3	15.7	18.9	17.9	26.2
High School	23.2	16.4	28.0	18.1	14.2
GT High School	32.4	15.6	26.6	15.5	9.9

Table 33 (continued)

C. Marriage and Children

	Married No Children	Married Children	Not Married No Chldrn	Not Married Children
1970s				
Working Class	30.0	43.5	16.1	10.5
Middle Class	32.8	39.6	18.2	9.4
1980s				
Working Class	28.6	36.1	24.0	11.3
Middle Class	34.6	29.5	26.9	9.0
1990s				
Working Class	27.1	28.7	30.0	14.2
Middle Class	35.2	27.9	29.1	7.8
2000s				
Working Class	28.2	23.2	33.9	14.6
Middle Class	37.5	24.3	30.1	8.0
1970s				
LT High School	37.0	35.2	16.9	10.9
High School	27.4	46.9	13.9	11.7
GT High School	28.5	40.7	22.3	8.5
1980s				
LT High School	34.7	24.8	26.8	13.7
High School	32.2	35.8	20.6	11.5
GT High School	28.2	34.5	29.3	8.0
1990s				
LT High School	33.9	19.1	32.1	15.0
High School	32.3	27.9	27.0	12.8
GT High School	29.1	30.8	31.1	8.9
2000s				
LT High School	29.1	16.3	35.8	18.8
High School	34.5	22.3	30.5	12.7
GT High School	32.9	25.6	32.5	8.9

Source: GSS

Table 34

Poverty Level of Children by Household Type

(2004)

	Two Parents, Married	Two Parents, Cohab	Two/Step Parents, Married	Two/Step Parents Cohab	One Parent Female	One Parent Male
Below Poverty Line	10%	32%	9%	27%	37%	16%
100-199% of Poverty	19	30.5	22	32.5	29	23
200%+ of Poverty	70	28	69	33.5	32.5	61
Income Missing	0.5	9	0	7	2	1

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2007

Table 35

Cohort Differences on Family Values, 2000-2006

	Born				
	Pre-1930	1930- 1945	1946- 1964	1965- 1979	1980+
For Gay Marriage	20.3	21.8	30.5	38.9	48.8
Homosexual Sex Not Always Wrong	21.0	33.4	43.0	49.8	52.1
Against Spanking	24.1	28.3	28.1	25.1	38.1
For Teen Birth Control	39.4	44.8	54.4	64.0	68.5
For Sex Education	75.7	86.3	87.9	91.1	94.4
Teen Sex Not Always Wrong	14.2	20.7	24.4	34.1	41.6
Premarital Sex Not Always Wrong	54.2	65.0	74.5	73.9	81.7
Extra-marital Sex Not Always Wrong	14.6	20.0	19.1	19.0	16.8
Women Suited for Politics	63.7	68.5	79.4	78.1	76.0
Family doesn't Suffer If Mother Works	31.3	27.7	37.8	40.1	55.3
Preschoolers don't Suf- fer if Mother Works	43.6	46.9	54.1	63.4	66.6
Mother Working Doesn't Hurt Children	50.5	56.5	64.8	67.2	74.5
Not Better if Man Works Woman at Home	28.8	47.0	66.5	68.7	78.7
For Easier Divorces	13.5	17.5	24.3	30.1	32.4
Cohabitation OK	18.8	19.2	49.1	57.7	77.6
Legal Abortion for Any Reason	33.9	35.3	43.9	39.6	32.6
Legal All Reasons	24.4	27.7	34.6	29.9	22.5

Source: GSS 2000-2006

Appendix 1: Data Sources

The National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey

The National Data Program for the Social Sciences has been monitoring trends in American society since 1972. It is the largest and longest-running research effort supported by the Sociology Program of the National Science Foundation. Regularly since 1972 the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago has conducted the General Social Survey (GSS) to examine how American society works and what societal changes are occurring. The GSSs are full-probability, in-person samples of adults (18+) living in households in the United States. The annual response rates have ranged from 70.0% to 82.4%. From 1972 to 1993 each GSS interviewed about 1,500 respondents. Since a switch to a biennial design in 1994, nearly 3,000 have been interviewed each time. Across the 26 surveys from 1972 to 2006 51,020 people have been interviewed. For more details on sampling and survey design see James A. Davis, Tom W. Smith, and Peter V. Marsden, General Social Surveys: 1972-2006 Cumulative Codebook. Chicago: NORC, 2007 or visit www.gss.norc.org

The GSSs are directed by James A. Davis (NORC, University of Chicago), Tom W. Smith (NORC, University of Chicago), and Peter V. Marsden (Harvard University).

Other Sources

Data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), Census, and other sources are cited in the text and tables and documented in the references. Demographic analysis from the CPS and Census produced results consistent with those reported herein based on the GSS.

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