



# THE STATE OF OUR UNIONS 2008

THE SOCIAL HEALTH OF MARRIAGE IN AMERICA

UPDATES OF SOCIAL INDICATORS:  
TABLES AND GRAPHS

THE NATIONAL MARRIAGE PROJECT



## The National Marriage Project

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

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

## Leadership

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

Special thanks are extended to Theresa Kirby for collecting the data and preparing the tables in this report.

Design: Bruce Hanson / EGADS, Hightstown, NJ

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For more information:

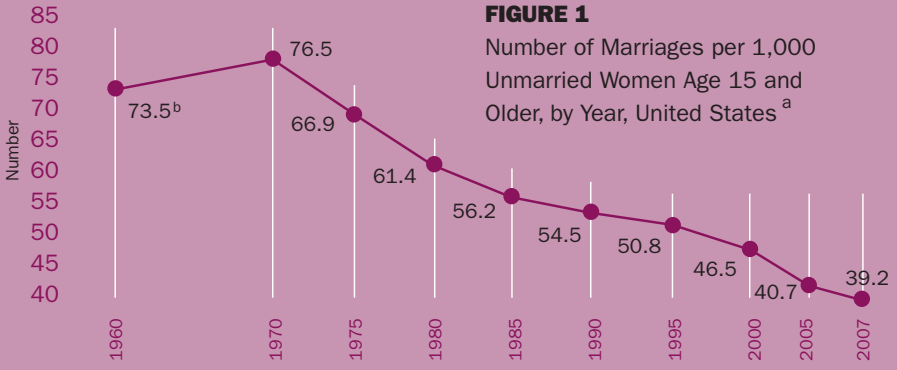
**RUTGERS**  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW JERSEY

The National Marriage Project  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Lucy Stone Hall B217  
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045  
(732) 445-7922  
marriage@rci.rutgers.edu  
<http://marriage.rutgers.edu>

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# Contents

- Figure 1.** Number of Marriages per 1,000 Unmarried Women Age 15 and Older, by Year, United States
- Figure 2.** Percentage of All Persons Age 15 and Older Who Were Married, by Sex and Race, 1960-2007 United States
- Figure 3.** Percentage of Persons Age 35 through 44 Who Were Married by Sex, 1960-2007, United States
- Figure 4.** Percentage of Married Persons Age 18 and Older Who Said Their Marriages Were “Very Happy,” by Period, United States
- Figure 5.** Number of Divorces per 1,000 Married Women Age 15 and Older, by Year, United States
- Figure 6.** Percentage of All Persons Age 15 and Older Who Were Divorced b, by Sex and Race, 1960-2007 United States
- Figure 7.** Number of Cohabiting, Unmarried, Adult Couples of the Opposite Sex, by Year, United States
- Figure 8.** Fertility Rates, 1960-2006, Number of Births per 1,000 Women Age 15 through 44, United States
- Figure 9.** Percentage of Households with a Child or Children Under Age 18, 1960-2007, United States
- Figure 10.** Percentage of Children Under Age 18 Living with A Single Parent, by Year and Race, United States
- Figure 11.** Percentage of Children Under Age 18 Living with Two Married Parents, by Year and Race, United States
- Figure 12.** Percentage of Live Births that Were to Unmarried Women, by Year, United States
- Figure 13.** Number of Cohabiting, Unmarried, Adult Couples of the Opposite Sex Living with One Child or More, by Year,
- Figure 14.** Percentage of High School Seniors Who Said Having A Good Marriage and Family Life Is “Extremely Important,” by Period, United States
- Figure 15.** Percentage of High School Seniors, Who Said It Is Very Likely They Will Stay Married to the Same Person for Life, by Period, United States
- Figure 16.** Percentage of High School Seniors Who Said They Agreed or Mostly Agreed That Most People Will Have Fuller and Happier Lives If They Choose Legal Marriage Rather Than Staying Single or Just Living With Someone, by Period, United States
- Figure 17.** Percentage of High School Seniors Who Said Having a Child Without Being Married Is Experimenting with a Worthwhile Lifestyle or Not Affecting Anyone Else, by Period, United States
- Figure 18.** Percentage of High School Seniors Who Agreed or Mostly Agreed with the Statement: “It Is Usually a Good Idea for a Couple to Live Together Before Getting Married in Order to Find Out Whether They Really Get Along,” by Period, United States



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

<sup>b</sup> Per 1,000 unmarried women age 14 and older

Source: U.S. Department of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2001*, Page 87, Table 117; and *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1986*, Page 79, Table 124; and *Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths: Provisional Data for 2007*, National Vital Statistics Report 56:21, July 14, 2008, Table 2. ([http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr56\\_21.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr56_21.pdf)) and Current Population Surveys March 2007 data. The CPS, March Supplement, is based on a sample of the U.S. population, rather than an actual count such as those available from the decennial census. See sampling and weighting notes at <http://www.bls.census.gov:80/cps/ads/2002/ssampwgt.htm>

**FIGURE 2**

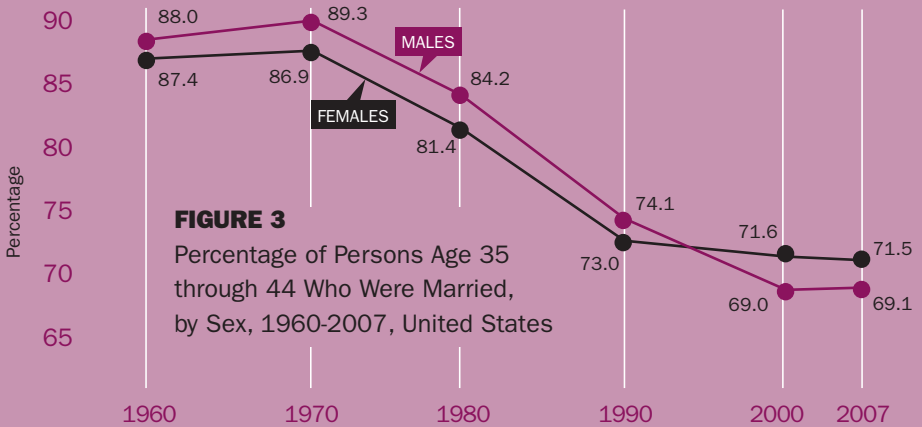
Percentage of All Persons Age 15 and Older Who Were Married, by Sex and Race, 1960-2007, United States<sup>a</sup>

Year	Total	MALES		FEMALES		
		Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites
1960	69.3	60.9	70.2	65.9	59.8	66.6
1970	66.7	56.9	68.0	61.9	54.1	62.8
1980	63.2	48.8	65.0	58.9	44.6	60.7
1990	60.7	45.1	62.8	56.9	40.2	59.1
2000	57.9	42.8	60.0	54.7	36.2	57.4
2007 <sup>b</sup>	54.7	38.5	56.9	51.2	30.0	54.3

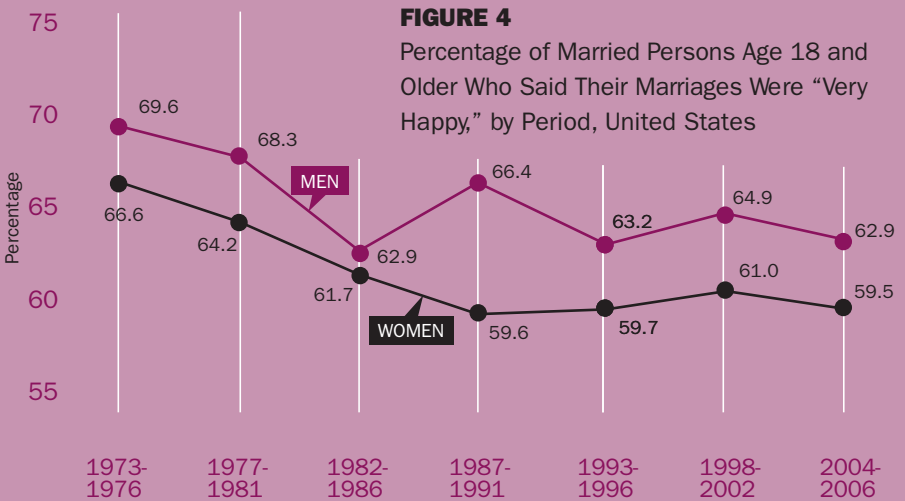
<sup>a</sup> Includes races other than Black and White.

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

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-506; *America's Families and Living Arrangements* ([www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007/tabA1-all.pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007/tabA1-all.pdf)).



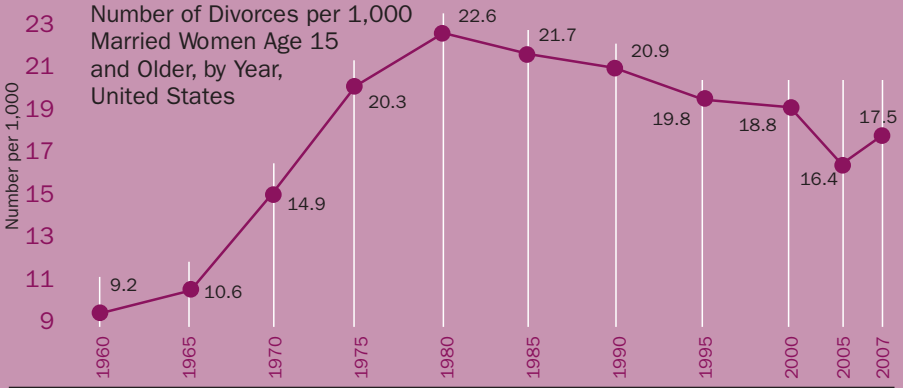
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1961, Page 34, Table 27; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1971, Page 32, Table 38; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1981, Page 38, Table 49; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, *General Population Characteristics*, 1990, Page 45, Table 34; and *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 2001, Page 48, Table 51; Internet tables (<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007/tabA1-all.pdf>) Figure for 2007 was obtained using data from the Current Population Surveys rather than data from the census. The CPS, March Supplement, is based on a sample of the U.S. population, rather than an actual count such as those available from the decennial census. See sampling and weighting notes at <http://www.bls.census.gov:80/cps/ads/2002/ssampwgt.htm>



Source: The General Social Survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago. The number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 2,000 except for 2004-06 with about 1,500.

**25 FIGURE 5**

Number of Divorces per 1,000 Married Women Age 15 and Older, by Year, United States



We have used the number of divorces per 1,000 married women age 15 and older, rather than the Crude Divorce Rate of divorces per 1,000 population to help avoid the problem of compositional changes in the population. Even this more refined measure is somewhat susceptible to compositional changes.

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2001*, Page 87, Table 117; National Vital Statistics Reports, August 22, 2001; California Current Population Survey Report: 2000, Table 3, March 2001; *Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths: Provisional Data for 2007*, National Vital Statistics Report 56:21, July 14, 2008, Table 2. ([http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr56\\_21.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr56_21.pdf)) and calculations by the National Marriage Project for the U.S. less California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana and Minnesota using the Current Population Surveys, 2007.

**FIGURE 6**

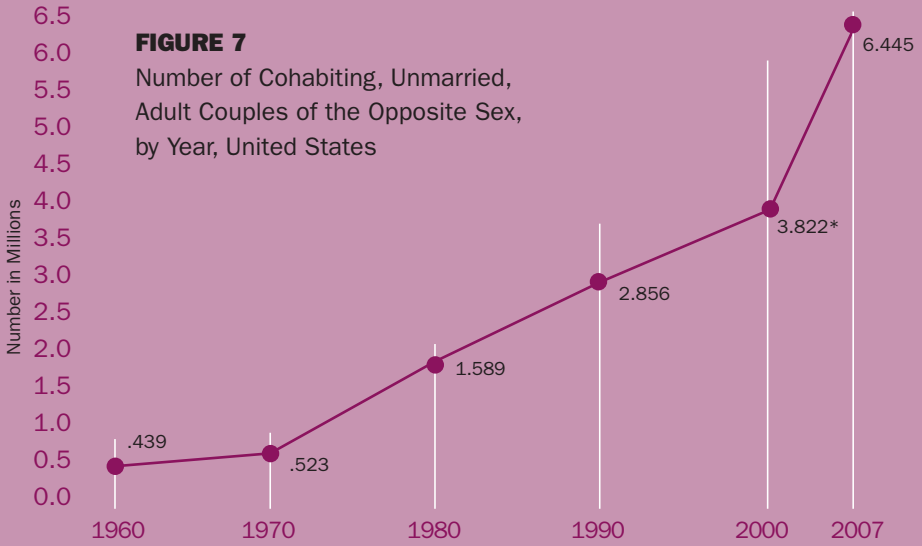
Percentage of All Persons Age 15 and Older Who Were Divorced,<sup>b</sup> by Sex and Race, 1960-2007, United States

Year	MALES			FEMALES		
	Total	Blacks	Whites	Total	Blacks	Whites
1960	1.8	2.0	1.8	2.6	4.3	2.5
1970	2.2	3.1	2.1	3.5	4.4	3.4
1980	4.8	6.3	4.7	6.6	8.7	6.4
1990	6.8	8.1	6.8	8.9	11.2	8.6
2000	8.3	9.5	8.4	10.2	11.8	10.2
2007 <sup>a</sup>	8.6	8.9	8.6	11.0	12.1	11.0

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

<sup>b</sup> "Divorced" indicates family status at the time of survey. Divorced respondents who later marry are counted as "married."

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-537; *America's Families and Living Arrangements* ([www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007/tabA1-all.pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007/tabA1-all.pdf)).

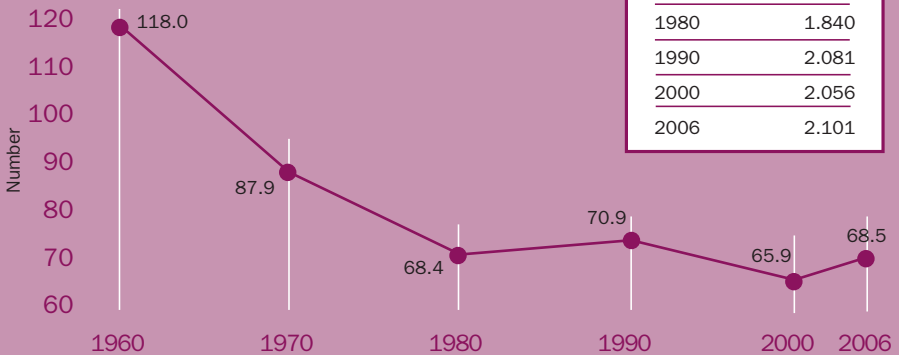


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-537; *America's Families and Living Arrangements: March 2000*; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007.html>).

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

**FIGURE 8**

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

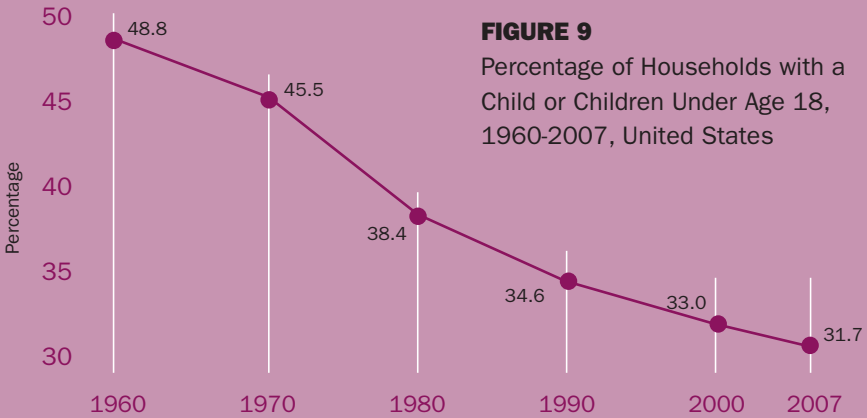


Total Fertility Rate<sup>a</sup>

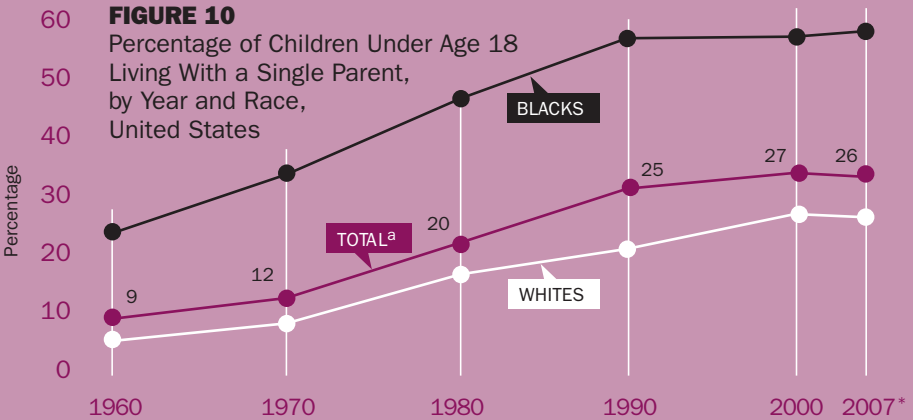
1960	3.654
1970	2.480
1980	1.840
1990	2.081
2000	2.056
2006	2.101

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

Source: National Vital Statistics Report, 1993, Pages 1, 2, 10 and 11; National Vital Statistics Report, 2001, 49:1; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1999*, Pages 75, 76 and 78, Tables 91, 93 and 96. Martin, J., et al. *Births: Final Data for 2006*, National Vital Statistics Report, 57:7, Jan. 7, 2009, p. 29, Table 1, and p. 33, Table 4.



Source: Calculated from data in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1964*, Tables 36 and 54; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1980*, Tables 62 and 67; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1985*, Tables 54 and 63; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1994*, Table 67; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2004-05*, Table 56; and *America's Families and Households, 2007*, Tables F1 and H1 ([www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fman/cps2007.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fman/cps2007.html)).

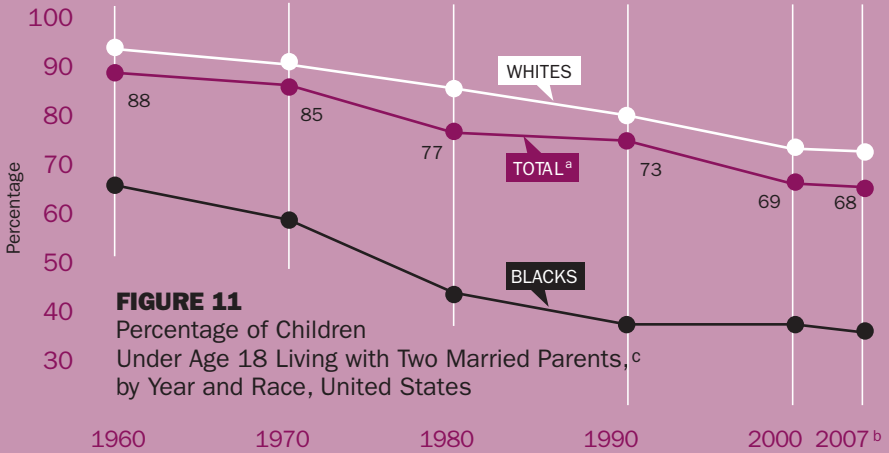


<sup>a</sup> Total includes Blacks, Whites and all other racial and ethnic groupings. Over these decades an additional 3 to 4 percent of children, not indicated in the above figure, were classified as living with no parent.

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

\* Prior to 2007, the U.S. Census counted children living with two cohabiting parents as children in single parent households. See "Improvements to Data Collection about Families in CPS 2007," ([www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html)).

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-537; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007>).

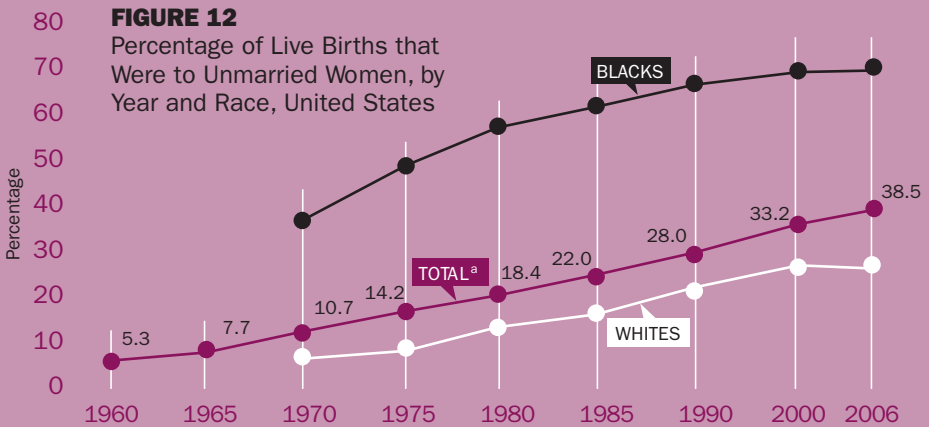


<sup>a</sup> Total includes Blacks, Whites and all other racial and ethnic groupings.

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

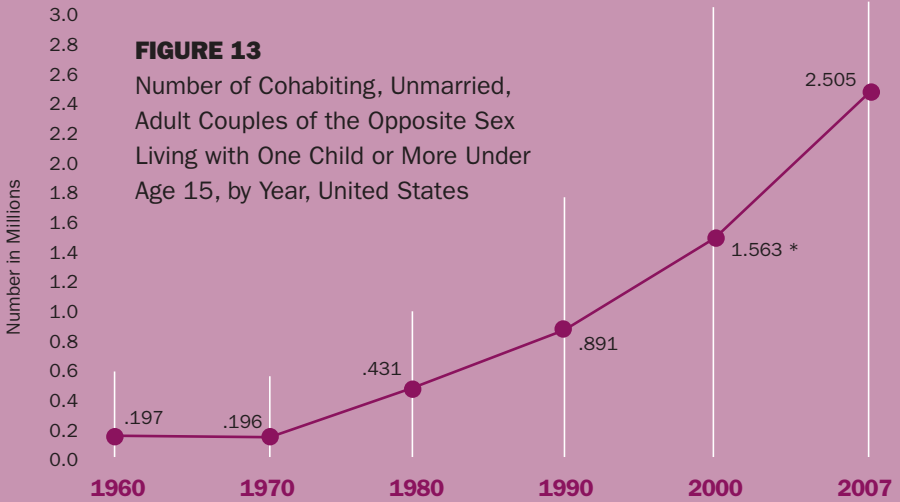
<sup>c</sup> "Married Parents" may be step or natural parents of children in the household.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-537; *America's Families and Living Arrangements, March 2000*; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007>).



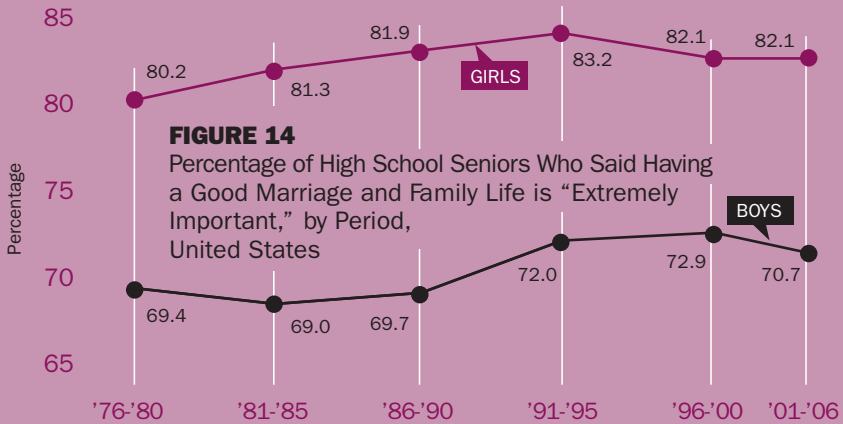
Total includes Whites, Blacks and all other racial and ethnic groupings.

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1995*, Page 77, Table 94; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1999*, Page 79, Table 99; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2000*, Page 69, Table 85; and *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2001*, Page 63, Table 76; National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 50, 5, Martin, J., et al. *Births: Preliminary Data for 2006*, National Vital Statistics Report, 57:7, Jan. 7, 2009, p. 54, Table 18.



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

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-537; *America's Families and Living Arrangements, March, 2000*, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table H3 and (<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007>).



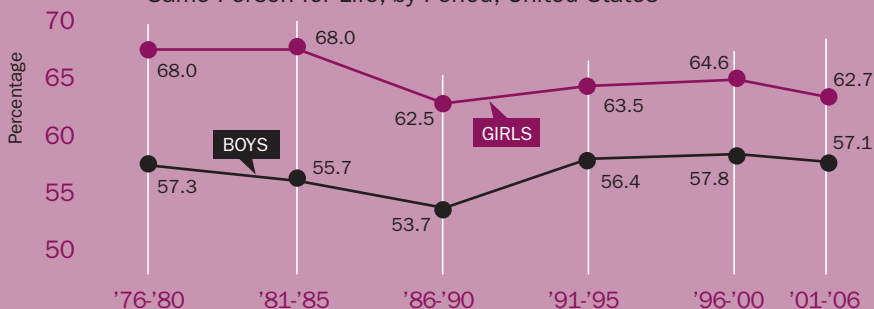
Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000.

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

80

**FIGURE 15**

Percentage of High School Seniors Who Expected to Marry, or Were Married, Who Said It Is "Very Likely" They Will Stay Married to the Same Person for Life, by Period, United States



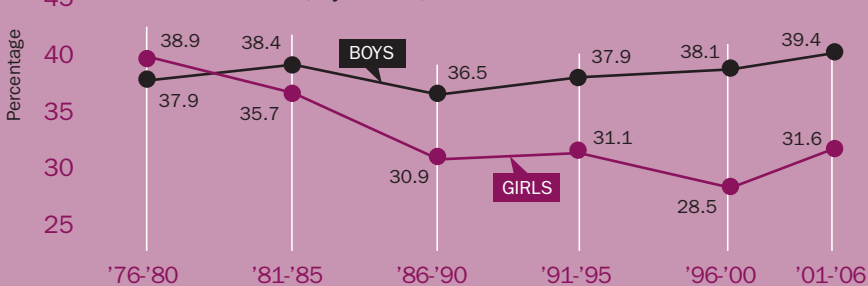
Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000. From 1976-1980 to 1986-1990, the trend is significantly downward for both girls and boys ( $p < .01$  on a two-tailed test), but after 1986-1990, the trend is significantly upward for boys ( $p < .01$  on a two-tailed test).

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

55

**FIGURE 16**

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

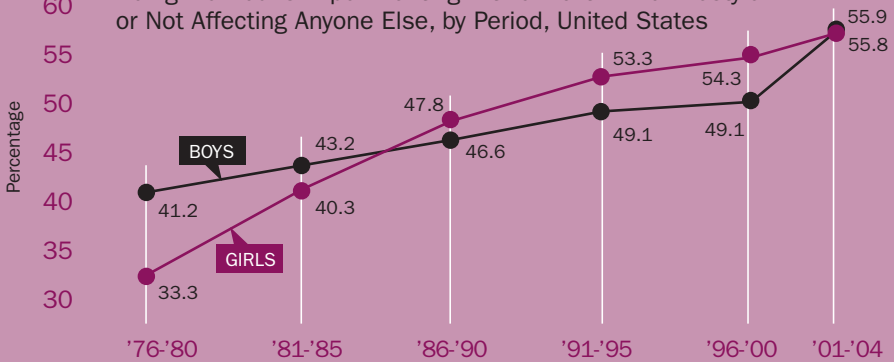


Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000. The trend for girls is statistically significant ( $p < .01$  on a two-tailed test).

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

**FIGURE 17**

Percentage of High School Seniors Who Said Having a Child Without Being Married is Experimenting with a Worthwhile Lifestyle or Not Affecting Anyone Else, by Period, United States

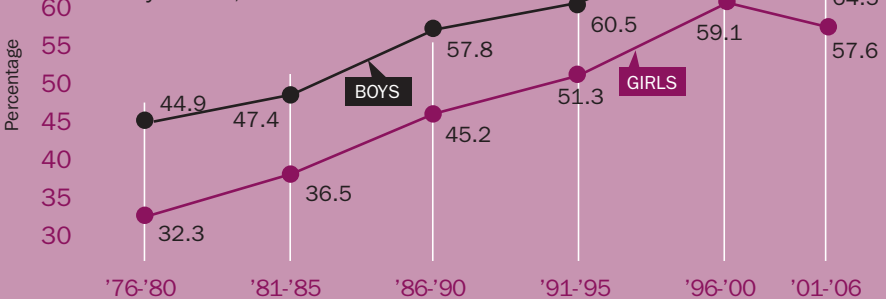


Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000 except for 2001-2004, for which it is about 4,500. The trend for both boys and girls is statistically significant ( $p < .01$  on a two-tailed test).

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

**FIGURE 18**

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



Number of respondents for each sex for each period is about 6,000. The overall trend is significantly upward for both girls and boys ( $p < .01$  on a two-tailed test).

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