Family Utopias

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Why Interested?

How can we best improve and sustain a high level of well-being of children and adults?
Models of the Utopian Family

• Lake Woebeegon

• Autonomy

• Experiments: Communal Living

• Contemporary
Family Change “Revolution”

- 1950s nuclear family
  - Two biological parents
  - Different sex parents
  - Married parents
  - Male breadwinner
  - Only full siblings
  - No other adults
  - Two generation

- 2012 contemporary family
  - Sustained Diversity
Family Change
Age at First Marriage, 1890-2010

Figure 1. Median Age at First Marriage by Sex: 1890 to 2010

Source: Elliott, Krivickas, Brault, Kreider 2012
Family Change
Ever Cohabit 30-34 year olds

Source: Manning 2010
Family Change
Marital Dissolution Trends

Figure 2: Cumulative Divorce Probabilities, 2004 SIPP

First Marriages Ending in Divorce, by Year of Marriage

Source: Stevenson and Wolfers 2011
Family Change
Unmarried Births 1960-2010

Source: National Center for Health Statistics
Family Change
Teen Births 1940-2009

Figure 1. Number of births and birth rate for teenagers aged 15–19: United States, 1940–2009

Source: Ventura and Hamilton 2011
Family Change
Proportion of Births Unintended

Source: Mosher, Jones and Abma 2012 NSFG
Family Change

Figure 3.
Family Households With Children Under 18 by Type: 1950 to 2007

Source: Kreider and Elliot 2009 CPS
Family Change
Stay at Home Mothers in Married Couple Households with Children

Source: Krieder and Elliott 2010  CPS
Is the U.S. family similar to other industrialized societies?

- **U.S.**
  - Age at marriage earlier
  - Divorce higher
  - Single motherhood higher
  - Teen childbearing higher
  - Unintended childbearing higher
  - Gay marriage not legal national level
- **Socioeconomic Divide – greater in U.S.**
  - High per capita and high poverty rate
  - Growing gap between wealthiest and poorest
Diverging Destinies

• Family change is not the same for all Americans

• Not all Americans have access to the same family experiences

• Low and moderate level of education less able to adopt new economic circumstances
SES
Family Households with Children

High Education

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Low Education

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<td>SS Cohab</td>
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SES
Single Mothers

Figure 2.7
Percent of Children in Single Mother Homes
By Education of the Mother

- Less Than High School: 30% in 2009
- High School Grad Only: 28% in 2009
- Some post-secondary: 26% in 2009
- Bachelors Degree or More: 11% in 2009

Source: Ellwood and Jencks 2004
SES
Age at First Birth

Median Age at First Birth by Educational Attainment, 1978-2010

Source: Manning, Brown, and Payne 2012
SES
Unintended Birth Rate 1994-2006

Unintended Birth Rate per 1000

Source: Finer and Henshaw 2006; Finer and Zolna 2011
SES
Currently Married 30-44 year olds

Marriage Declines Most among Those Without a College Degree

% currently married

Women
Not a college graduate: 1970 = 83, 2007 = 56
College graduate: 1970 = 82, 2007 = 69

Source: Fry and Cohn 2010
SES
Cohabitation

Figure 5: Two Decades of Trends by Education in the Percentage of Women (19-44) Ever Cohabited

Source: Manning 2010
Socioeconomic Divide

• Education Divide Persists
  BIRTHS
  • Age at First Birth
  • Unplanned Births
  • Nonmarital Births
  • Number of Children
  MARRIAGE/UNIONS
  • Marriage Rate
  • Age at Marriage
  • Ever Cohabit
Figure 4. Percentage of All Births to Cohabiting and Single Women by Educational Attainment, 2005-2010

Source: NSFG 2006-2010

Source: Payne, Manning and Brown 2012
SES
Child Ever Live in Cohabiting Mother

2002-2007

Source: Kennedy and Bumpass 2011
**SES**

Age at First Birth

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### Figure 3. Age at first birth for women aged 22–44 years, by education: United States, 2006–2010

**Source:** Mosher, Jones, and Abma 2012
Figure 3. Percentage of births that were intended at conception, by education of mother: United States, 2002 and 2006–2010

Source: Mosher, Jones and Abma 2012
SES
Marriage Rate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010

Source: Payne and Gibbs 2011
Figure 3. Median Age at First Marriage by Educational Attainment, 2010

Source: Payne 2012
DISCUSSION

• Shifting landscape of American family

• No one single family experience in the U.S.
  – Sustained Diversity

• Subgroup differentials:
  “one size does not fit all”
The choices made by millions of individual families have an enormous impact throughout our society and economy. One of the most important kinds of choices families make today concerns the number of children they will have and when they will have them. Choices in these matters of family growth determine the style of life of individual families. They also determine the rate of growth and the composition of our national population.
DISCUSSION

Planned Families
Goal Healthy People 2020: Improve pregnancy planning and spacing and prevent unintended pregnancy

“Women who can plan the number and timing of their births enjoy improved health, experience fewer unwanted pregnancies and births, and have lower rates of induced, and often unsafe, abortion. In addition, women who have control over their fertility have a chance to get more schooling and find paid employment—achievements that enhance their social and economic status and improve the well-being of their families.”

*Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health 2002*
Thank you!

Family Profiles:  
National Center for Family and Marriage Research  
http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/

Comments & Queries:  
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References


