Beyond the picket fence: The impact of traditional laws on changing families

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March 30, 2012
Q: What is a family?

Notions about who exactly is protected by the term “family” vary widely.
Q: What happens in the absence of marriage?

Historically, marriage has served as an organizing tool to categorize individuals, distribute societal benefits, and impose mutual obligations of care.
Q: Who may be most affected by our distribution of benefits and obligations via marriage?
Q: What about the kids?

Some of the greatest demographic differences between racial categories exist in the context of out of wedlock births.
Q: What about the kids?

Looking at this phenomenon with a finer lens, we observe significant differences between racial groups with respect to births to never married parents.
Q: What are the trends in relation to kids being reared by same sex couples?

Q: What do we have to say about these trends?

Interestingly, we observe some differences in attitudes about moving beyond the picket fence related to race.
Q: Might there be a relationship between formal recognition and privilege under the law and family life satisfaction?
Q: In what ways do you see race as influencing the manner in which the state interacts with families?
Q: How might tax policy influence the decisions of same sex couples to formalize their relationships? How might tax policy actually serve to stigmatize same sex couples?
Q: How does immigration influence our conception of the American family and how does it intersect with family life and policy regarding family formation and functioning?