



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

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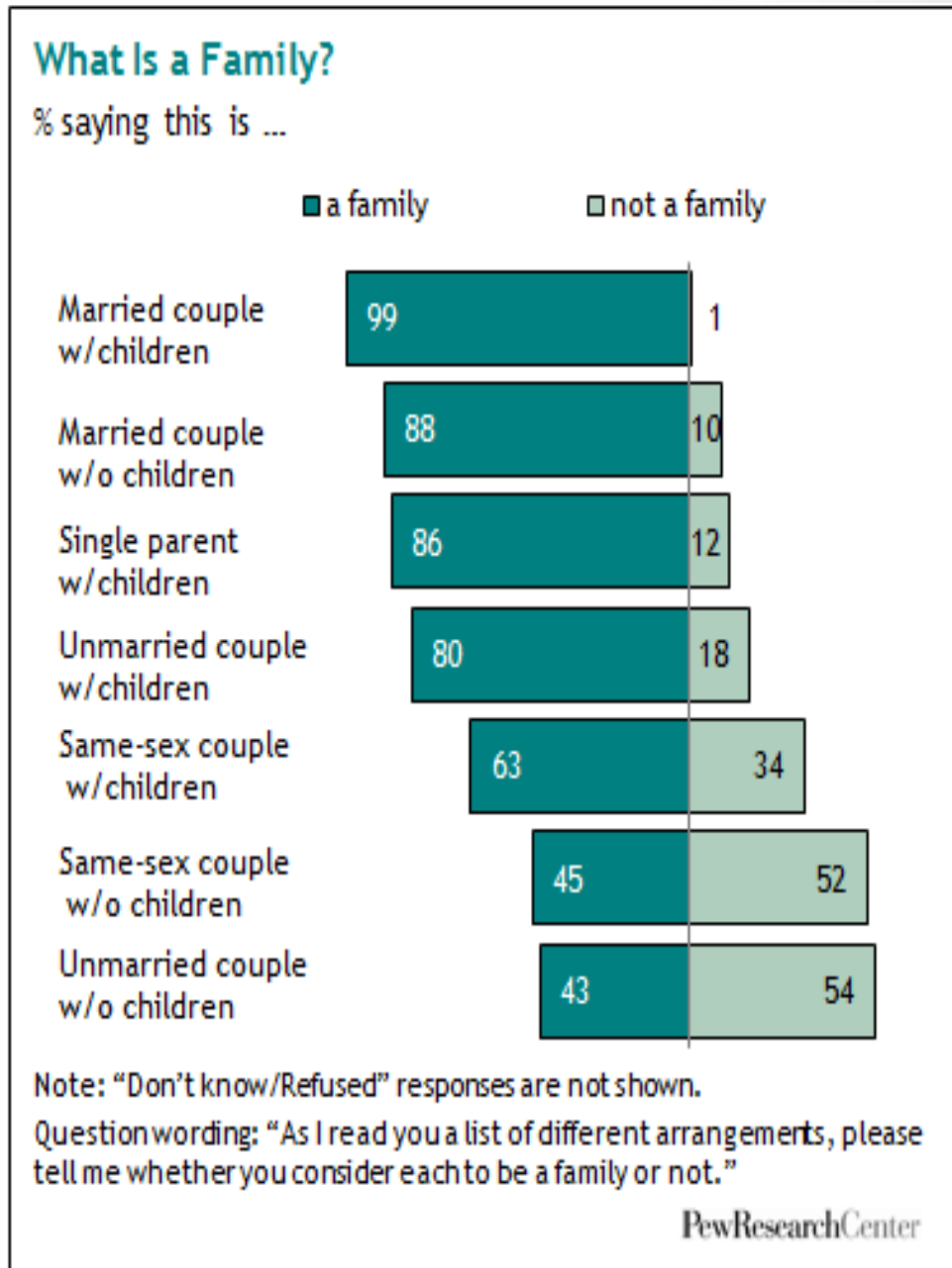
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Q: What is a family?

Notions about who exactly is protected by the term “family” vary widely.

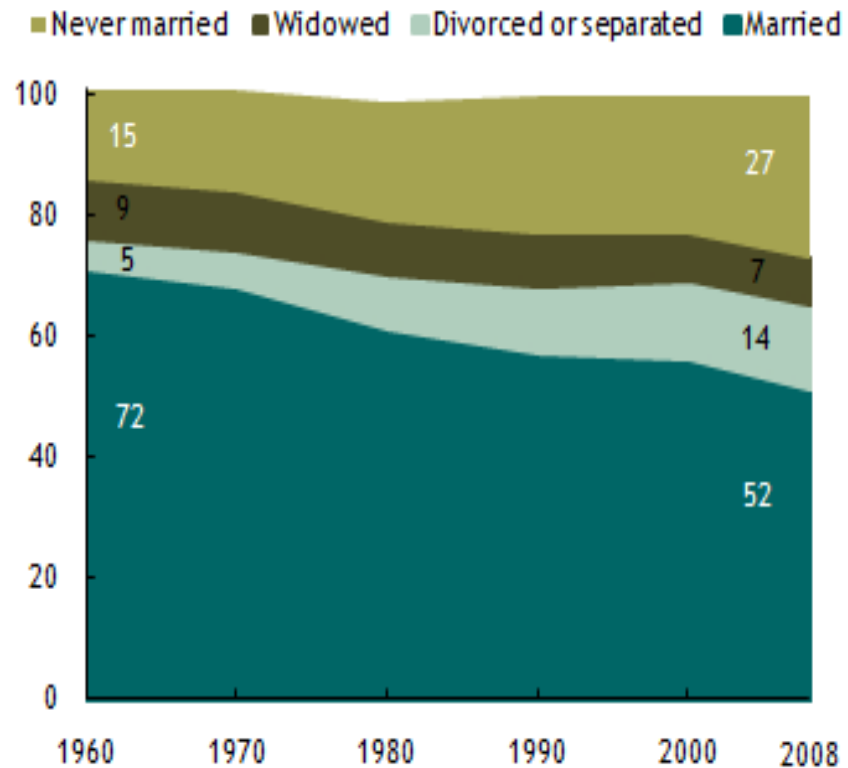


Q: What happens in the absence of marriage?

Historically, marriage has served as an organizing tool to categorize individuals, distribute societal benefits, and impose mutual obligations of care.

Current Marital Status, 1960-2008

(%)



Note: Ages 18 and older. Numbers may not total to 100% due to rounding.

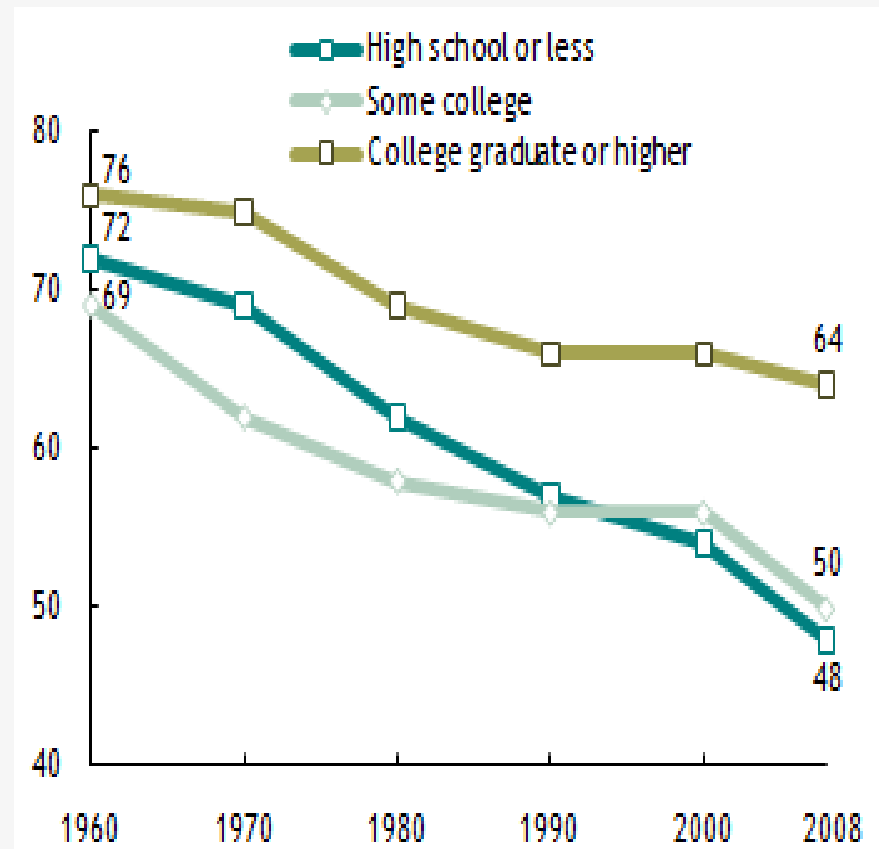
Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

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Q: Who may be most affected by our distribution of benefits and obligations via marriage?

Share Married, by Educational Attainment

(%)



Note: Ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

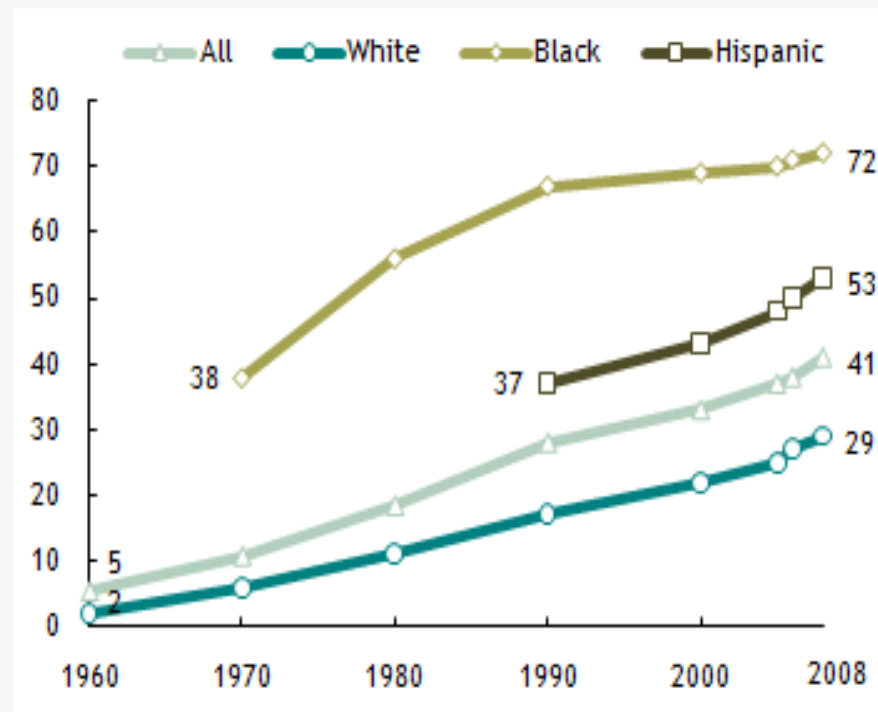
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Q: What about the kids?

Some of the greatest demographic differences between racial categories exist in the context of out of wedlock births.

Share of Births to Unmarried Women, by Race and Ethnicity

(%)



Note: 2008 data are preliminary. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Source: For data from 1990 and later, statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data. For years prior to 1990, data obtained from Ventura, Stephanie J., and Christine A. Bachrach. Nonmarital childbearing in the United States, 1940-1999. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 48 no 16. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics.

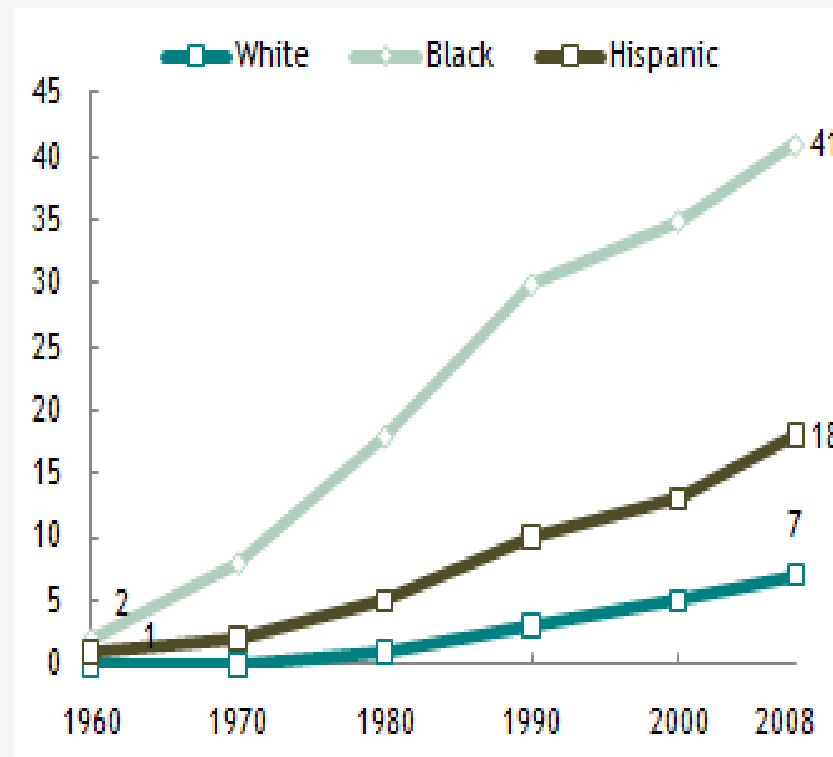
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Q: What about the kids?

Looking at this phenomenon with a finer lens, we observe significant differences between racial groups with respect to births to *never* married parents.

Share of Children with a Never Married Parent, by Race and Ethnicity

(%)

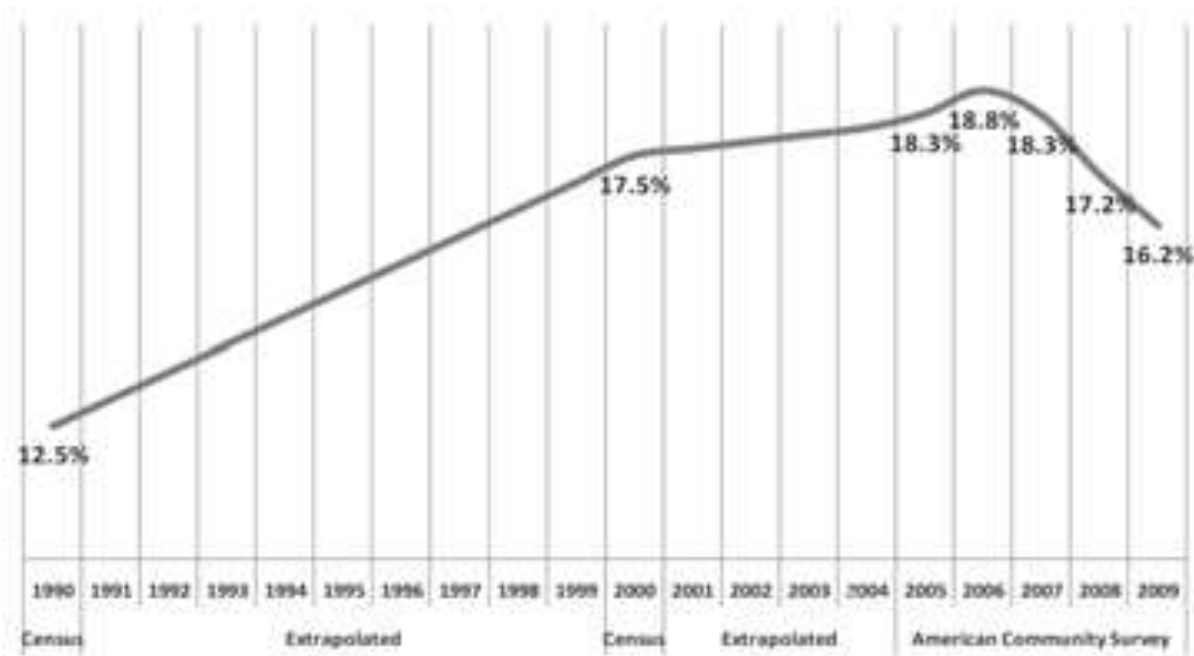


Note: Based on persons ages 17 and younger. Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

Source: Pew Research Center calculations of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data

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Figure 1. % of same-sex unmarried partner couples with children under the age of 18 in the home*



*Author analyses of Public Use Microdate Files: 1990 Census, 2000 Census, 2005-2009 American Community Survey. For comparability purposes, analyses only include same-sex couples who identified one partner as an “unmarried partner.” Couples who designated a partner as a “husband” or “wife” are not included.

Q: What are the trends in relation to kids being reared by same sex couples?

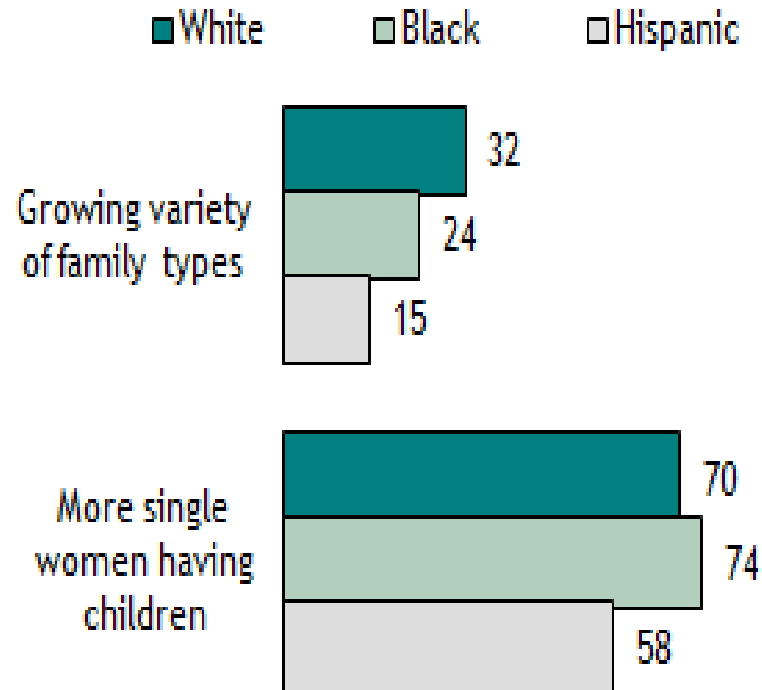
<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gates-Badgett-NCFR-LGBT-Families-December-2011.pdf>

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.

Race, Ethnicity and the Changing Family

% saying this is a bad thing for society

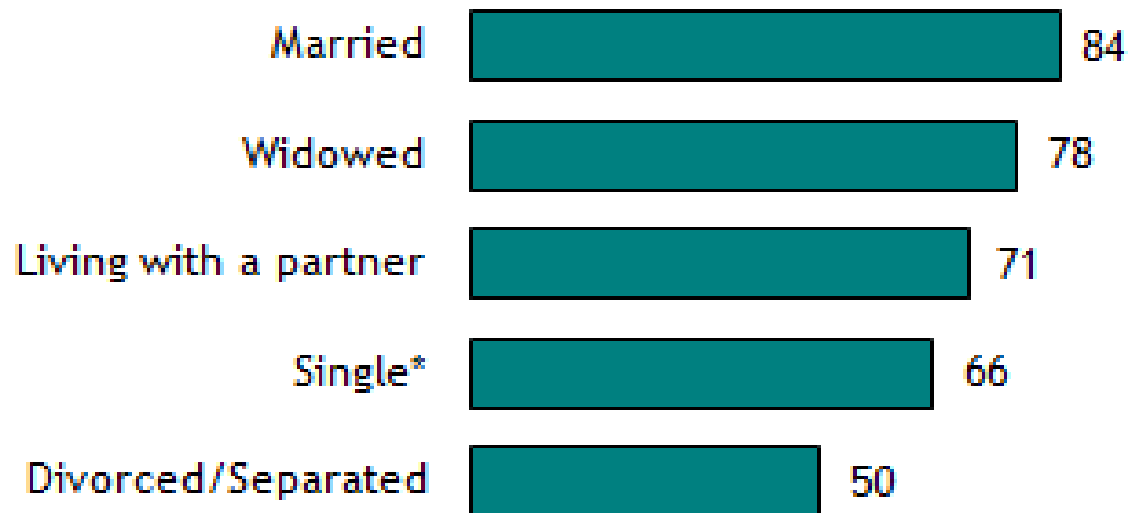


Note: Hispanics are of any race. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Family Life, Satisfaction and Marriage

% who say they are very satisfied with family life



*Single includes those who have never been married and are not currently living with a partner.

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Q: Might there be a relationship between formal recognition and privilege under the law and family life satisfaction?

"Passionate, meticulously researched...
not afraid to spark controversy." —MS.

SHATTERED BONDS

The
Color
of
Child
Welfare

DOROTHY ROBERTS

Author of **KILLING THE BLACK BODY**

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?

