



NEW INEQUALITIES: How Education, Income and Aging Affect Divorce and Family Stability

Council on Contemporary Families
Online Symposium

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CCF New Inequalities Symposium Table of Contents

Overview: Family Trends You Might Not Have Expected

Stephanie Coontz

A Class Act? Stability and Instability in Children's Lives

June Carbone and Naomi Cahn

Gray Divorce: A Growing Risk Regardless of Class or Education

Susan L. Brown and I-Fen Lin

Divorce and the Recession

Philip Cohen

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Overview: Family Trends You Might Not Have Expected

Stephanie Coontz
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October 12 marks the fourth anniversary of when the United States became a “no-fault nation.” On that date in 2010, New York, the last holdout, finally joined the 49 other states in eliminating the need for divorcing couples to state that the dissolution of their marriage was the “fault” of one or the other. Today, every state offers the possibility of a no-fault divorce.

Three years later, the co-chair of The Coalition for Divorce Reform claims that “no-fault divorce has been a [disaster](#),” leading to record numbers of divorces and plummeting rates of marriage. Sociologist Philip Cohen confirms that New York had a big spike in divorce in 2010, from 2.6 to 2.9, as measured by the crude divorce rate. But many researchers have found that although every state that adopted no-fault divorce saw a burst of pent-up divorces in the first few years after passage, divorce rates leveled off thereafter and have actually fallen since no-fault became the norm.

Figuring out divorce and marriage trends is further complicated by the recent foreclosure crisis and the ensuing deep recession. Many studies have shown that job loss and financial strain raise the risk of divorce. But divorce rates fell during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and some observers have claimed that “the silver lining” of this more recent economic crisis has been a similar dip in divorce.

To sort through these conflicting claims, the Council on Contemporary Families asked five researchers to explore recent trends in divorce and marriage for the *CCF Symposium on New Inequalities*. Their findings paint a complex picture.

For children of educated parents, family life has actually become more stable in the past 30 years, law professors June Carbone and Naomi Cahn argue. *For both white and African-American college graduates – but only for college graduates -- the likelihood that a fourteen year-old-girl would still be living with both parents increased between the 1970s and the first decade of the twentieth century*, they point out in their paper, [“A Class Act? Stability and Instability in Children’s Family Lives.”](#) Poorly-educated and low-income Americans, by contrast, have experienced an increase in family instability, with continued high divorce rates and growing rates of unwed childbearing.

Carbone and Cahn argue that the increased family instability of less-educated Americans stems primarily from growing economic inequality in the U.S. rather than from a reduction in their commitment to their children’s well-being. Between the mid-1970s and the second half of the 2000s, during the very years when divorce and unwed motherhood were becoming more acceptable, mothers with a high school diploma doubled the time they spent with their children. But affluent college graduate mothers were able to increase their time with children even more

substantially -- by a factor of four to five – and also to ratchet up their spending on enrichment programs, thereby contributing to a widening cycle of inequality in child outcomes.

Researchers Susan L. Brown and I-Fen Lin add another wrinkle to the story in their paper, [“Gray Divorce: A Growing Risk Regardless of Class or Education.”](#) Like Carbone and Cahn, they note that *college educated Americans have dramatically lower divorce rates than their less-educated counterparts – but only up to a certain age.*

Among couples aged 25-49, the divorce rate for college graduates is about 50 percent lower than the rate for those with a high school diploma. However, the protective effects of education do not seem to last once the children have left home.

Regardless of educational attainment, the divorce rate for couples aged 50 and older has doubled since 1990, and it has more than doubled for married individuals aged 65 and older. *An older college graduate, even one in a first marriage, faces essentially the same risk of divorce as the older high school graduate. And, Brown and Lin point out, more than 55 percent of gray divorces involve couples who were married for more than 20 years.*

The recent recession and (very modest) recovery complicate the picture even more. In [“Divorce and the Recession,”](#) Sociologist Philip Cohen points out that although states with higher home foreclosure rates did see an uptick in divorce, *overall, the recession inhibited many couples from divorcing, leading to about 150,000 fewer divorces between 2009 and 2011 than might have been expected in view of previous trends. However, the divorce rate has ticked up again since then.*

Marriage rates also continued to fall during the recession, but it is possible, though far less certain, that some postponed marriages may be taking place during the recovery. American Community Survey figures show an increase in the absolute number of marriages in 2012, as well as in the marriage rate per 1,000 unmarried women.

The recession had a dramatic impact on the birth rate, which fell for both married and unmarried women and especially sharply for unmarried women under age 35. Black and Hispanic women experienced the largest declines in non-marital birth rates. Nevertheless, the non-marital birth rate of women aged 35 and older continued to increase during both the recession and the recent recovery.

Assessing the impact of these trends on the adults and children involved is also complicated. In earlier research, CCF members Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers found that states that adopted no-fault divorce experienced, on average, an [8–16 percent decline](#) in female suicides and a 30 percent decline in domestic violence in the next five years. But Brown and Lin point out that late life divorce can have adverse financial and emotional effects on the individuals involved who often do not have time to recoup their social support networks or financial losses.

In fact, *older divorced people have only 20 percent of the wealth as older married couples. And on average an individual who was divorced after age 50 has only half the net wealth as a person who was widowed after that age.*

Divorce is disruptive and painful for children, who benefit from continuous residence with two collaborative parents. Yet children also benefit from being removed from high-conflict or cold, contemptuous marriages. Previous CCF research has pointed out the difficulty of making hard-and-fast statements about [“the” impact of divorce on children](#), because many family problems predate the divorce, and may even be its cause rather than its consequence. And given the chronic stress in low-income communities, sociologist Kristi Williams has shown that trying to get impoverished [single mothers to marry](#) may not be an effective way to improve their children’s well-being.

Taken together, research is showing that “it depends” is often a more accurate answer to questions about trends, causes, and consequences of marriage and divorce rates than the sound bites favored in so much public discourse. But many CCF researchers have been exploring ways to improve people’s marital relationships and their parenting skills, in or out of marriage. Brown and Lin suggest that the next frontier in such research is to address the distinctive issues facing couples in later years, a field of research that has been relatively neglected until now.

A Class Act? Stability and Instability in Children's Lives

By June Carbone, University of Minnesota and
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October 8, 2014

Contrary to popular opinion, growing instability in American families, reflected not just in divorce rates but falling rates of marriage and high rates of unwed motherhood, is not caused by people abandoning traditional concerns for children's well-being. It is a class issue caused by the growing gap between the job options, resources, economic stability, and personal safety nets available to college-educated Americans and less-educated workers. The authors explain.

For the past two decades, countless media reports have claimed that we face a crisis in Americans' commitment to their children, as falling rates of marriage, high divorce rates, and soaring numbers of non-marital births have affected millions of children. Contrary to popular opinion, this crisis is not caused by people abandoning traditional concerns for children's well-being. It is a class crisis caused by the growing gap between the job options, resources, economic stability, and personal safety nets available to college-educated Americans and less-educated workers.

College-educated parents, who generally subscribe to fewer traditional family views than most other Americans (for example, more education is associated with a more positive attitude towards abortionⁱ), have adopted a new family strategy that pays off handsomely for their children. In the meantime, the *less-educated families of middle and low income America have fallen behind, not only in income but in the time and attention they are able to devote to their children* – and this in an era when children's success requires ever more investment of time and money than in the past, over a longer period of their lives.

In youth achievement, the still-persistent race gap declined as the social class gap increased

In 1950, the biggest gaps in children's well-being and achievement were those of race. On standardized reading scores, for example, whites did one-and-a-half times better than African-Americans. While high income conferred many advantages in life, being white outweighed being wealthy in children's test scores: The difference in reading scores between the ninetieth and tenth percentiles of the population (measured by income) was less than half as large as the difference by race.

Over the last half century, racial disparities have shrunk significantly. By contrast, income-based differences within racial groups have increased substantially. *Today, the achievement gap tied to income is 30 to 40 percent higher than it was twenty-five years ago.* It is now nearly twice as large as the black-white achievement gap. In all racial groups, children whose parents' incomes are in the ninetieth percentile of the income ladder dramatically outperform not only the bottom group, but also the middle of the income distribution. Our children experience a far more unequal world than we did, and our grandchildren will have even more of their futures determined by the circumstances of their birth.ⁱⁱ

A large part of the story lies with the socioeconomic status of their parents. Class has become tied to family structure.ⁱⁱⁱ The best educated and highest earning women used to be among the least likely to marry. Today, they are the most likely. Indeed, the top 5 percent of female earners are the only significant social group whose marriage rates have increased.^{iv}

Even more significantly, divorce rates for college graduates in their prime child-rearing years have fallen back to the level of the sixties – before no fault divorce. For everyone else, divorce rates, after a brief hiatus, resumed their upward climb. *The net result: for college graduates – but only for college graduates -- the likelihood that a fourteen year-old-daughter would be living with both parents increased between the seventies and the first decade of the twentieth century.* This was true for both white and African-American college graduates. For everyone else, the combination of rising divorce and non-marital birth rates produced much less stable families.^v

Why are the children of college-educated parents now more likely to grow up in stable, married families? At a time of increased competition for the remaining good jobs in the American economy, college graduates have been able to adopt a new family strategy. In the seventies, as premarital sex increased, shotgun marriages plummeted, and divorce became easier to get, both college-educated and working-class Americans experienced more sex, higher divorce rates, and increasing numbers of intimate partners. College-educated individuals rejected traditional marital norms especially quickly, embracing the sexual revolution, adopting new gender roles and values, expressing skepticism about the sanctity of marriage, and rejecting the 1950s blanket condemnation of cohabitation and divorce.

By the middle of the nineties, however, college-educated couples were rediscovering the benefits of marriage, now that it had been stripped of at least some of its 1950s rigidity. *With the official end of “head and master” laws, the increased protections against domestic violence and sexual coercion within marriage, and new professional opportunities, accompanied by dramatic gains in real wages, educated women began to find marriage a better deal.* And men began to appreciate the advantage of having a wife who could pull her own weight economically and intellectually.

Today, college-educated women postpone marriage and childbearing until their education and training are complete, both by using contraception more consistently and by resorting to abortion more often when contraception fails. Those who wait until their late twenties and early thirties to begin family life find that they have a clearer read on prospective partners. College-educated men and women have also become more likely than in the 1950s and 1960s to marry a similarly educated mate, and college-educated workers have experienced dramatic wage gains in relation to less-educated workers.

Marriage and education trends help explain the gaps

In direct contradiction to periodic media scare stories about how educated and high-earning women face a shortage of men, *female college graduates have access to a much larger pool of men who are “good catches” than other women.* College-educated women have made dramatic absolute wage gains, increasing their own attractiveness as partners. At the same time, the wage gap between men and women’s incomes, which has shrunk for the country as a whole, has grown

at the top. More men than women have benefitted from the bonuses on Wall Street and in the executive ranks. And elite competition, with winner-take-all rewards, takes the form of longer hours, which often disadvantages women compared to males in similar jobs.^{vi} In this college-educated and elite “marriage market,” high-earning men outnumber high-earning women just enough to reinforce women’s incentives to marry.

Once married, college-educated couples have the income and savings necessary to invest ever more time and attention in their children. Some researchers find that the happiest couples are those where *neither* spouse does the housework: *While time spent on childcare has increased, time spent on cooking, cleaning and laundry has ironing has declined, and those who can hire someone else to do the remaining chores experience much less stress.*^{vii} College graduates have also been spared many of the destabilizing effects associated with the declining real wages and job security experienced by less-educated workers over the past 30 years.

The real wages and job prospects of female high school graduates have increased over the past 40 years, but those of male high school graduates have fallen sharply.^{viii} The result is that the wage gap between men and women has shrunk. Yet the working class holds more traditional attitudes about the importance of male breadwinning than do college graduates.^{ix} Male high school graduates used to be able to support a family on their wages. Today, their inability to do so is a major factor in family instability.

Women who do not go on to college live in neighborhoods and work in sectors of the economy where they meet a much less attractive group of potential marriage partners than their college-educated counterparts. Many of the men in these communities cycle in and out of dead end jobs. They face long periods of unemployment or underemployment. They have become more likely than a half century ago to experience brushes with the criminal justice system, and these are much more likely than in the past to result in jail time.^x It only takes a few bad experiences for women to decide to invest in themselves.

Whatever their marriage prospects, most women still want children. If they become jaded about the men in their communities, they see little reason to wait for marriage to have a child because they do not expect that delaying pregnancy will increase the likelihood of finding a man who can or will pull his own weight in a relationship.

In spite of stagnant wages, unstable families, and greater parental stress, those on the losing end of societal changes do not invest less in their children than they have done in the past. But they have been unable to increase their investment of time and resources as quickly as their more educated counterparts. In the mid-seventies, high school graduate mothers spent four minutes *more* each day with their children than mothers who were college graduates. By the second half of the 2000s, they had doubled their time with children. But college graduate mothers had increased their time with children even more substantially -- by a factor of four to five. The net result: college graduate mothers now spend 50 minutes a day more with their children than mothers who only graduated from high school. Taking fathers into account further increases the time gap to almost an hour a day.^{xi}

As the top invest even more in their children, the payoffs are not only in terms of test scores or college completion rates but also athletic participation, participation in religious and/or civic organizations, community involvement – and marriage rates. In the meantime, families who enjoy neither stability nor community and workplace support struggle to stay even or make modest progress. Even when they succeed in achieving stable families, they fall further behind in our winner-take-all economy.

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ⁱ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/154946/non-christians-postgrads-highly-pro-choice.aspx>

ⁱⁱ Sean F. Reardon, *The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations* (July 2011), <http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/reardon%20whither%20opportunity%20-%20chapter%205.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ June Carbone and Naomi Cahn, *Marriage Markets: How Inequality is Remaking the American Family* (2014).

^{iv} <https://contemporaryfamilies.org/top-20-percent-against-bottom-80/>; Adam Looney and Michael Greenstone, *The Marriage Gap: The Impact of Economic and Technical Change on Marriage Rates* (2012), http://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/the_marriage_gap_the_impact_of_economic_and_technological_change_on_ma/.

^v <http://stateofunions.org/2010/SOOU2010.pdf>, fig. S3.; <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/article/marriage-and-divorce-patterns-by-gender-race-and-educational-attainment.htm>

^{vi} <http://scholar.harvard.edu/goldin/publications/grand-gender-convergence-its-last-chapter>

^{vii} Steven L. Nock & Margaret F. Brinig, *Weak Men and Disorderly Women: Divorce and the Division of Labor*, in *The Law and Economics of Marriage & Divorce* 185, 186 (Antony W. Dnes & Robert Rowthorn eds., 2002); Paul Amato, Alan Booth, David R. Johnson & Stacy J. Rogers, *Alone Together: How Marriage in America is Changing* 123-24 (Harvard University Press 2007).

^{viii} Stephanie Coontz, *The New Instability*, N.Y. Times, July 26, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/27/opinion/sunday/the-new-instability.html?_r=0; Carbone and Cahn, *Marriage Markets*.

^{ix} *Marriage Markets*, at 98-101.

^x Donald Braman, *Doing Time on the Outside: Incarceration and Family Life in Urban America* 84-91 (2007); Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Inequality Makes Societies Stronger* (New York: Bloomsberg Press 2009).

^{xi} http://www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/research/SaguaroReport_DivergingSocialConnectedness_20120808.pdf, p. 13.

Gray Divorce: A Growing Risk Regardless of Class or Education

By Susan L. Brown and I-Fen Lin
Bowling Green State University

In contrast to the seeming stabilization of divorce rates for the general population over the past two decades, the gray divorce rate has doubled: Married individuals aged 50 and older, including the college-educated, are twice as likely to experience a divorce today as they were in 1990. For married individuals aged 65 and older, the risk of divorce has more than doubled since 1990. Researchers explain why.

Contrary to the popular notion that divorce is increasing in the United States, the divorce rate has changed relatively little in recent decades. Marriages are not much more likely to end through divorce these days than they were 30 years ago. Yet this overall pattern of stability obscures important variations by class and age.

Generally, education tends to be protective against divorce. In fact, the marriages of college-educated couples seem to be lasting longer than they were 30 years ago. Among couples aged 40-49, the divorce rate for those with a college degree is about 50 percent lower than the rate for those with a high school diploma. This differential holds for younger adults ages 25-39, too.

But in contrast to the seeming stabilization of divorce rates for the general population over the past two decades, the gray divorce rate has doubled: Married individuals aged 50 and older, *including the college-educated*, are twice as likely to experience a divorce today as they were in 1990. For married individuals aged 65 and older, the risk of divorce has more than doubled since 1990.

Higher standards, more opportunities, longer lives, women at work help explain the trend

One reason for this is what we might call the *divorce echo effect*. Older individuals are more often in remarriages, not first marriages, and remarriages have long been more likely than first marriages to end through divorce. People who have been divorced in the past are more willing to divorce again in the event a marriage becomes unsatisfying. In contrast, some proportion of those in first marriages are unwilling to divorce even if they have an unsatisfying marriage.

But we are also seeing an increase in the breakup rate of older people in their first marriages. More than half of gray divorces are to couples in first marriages. Long-term marriages are not immune to divorce—*more than 55 percent of gray divorces involved a split for couples who had been married more than 20 years*. Many of these marriages have not been marked by severe discord. Rather, the partners have simply grown apart. There is no evidence that there are more such “empty shell” marriages than in the past, but fewer older adults seem willing to remain in them.

In part, this reflects the shifting meaning of marriage in contemporary America. Today, most *people hold marriage to a higher standard than in the past*. Being a good provider or a good homemaker is not enough. Spouses are supposed to be best friends and confidantes. Marriage should be a source of personal happiness and fulfillment. If spouses no longer derive satisfaction from their marriage, divorce is seen as a viable solution and carries far less social stigma than the past.

It may also be that the barriers to divorce at an older age have fallen markedly because Americans are living longer and healthier lives. For one thing, couples in their 60s can expect to live another 20 or more years, which is a long time to spend with someone you don't have much in common with anymore. For another, disability rates have been declining. Additionally, because of longer life spans and larger numbers of divorced people in the population, *the opportunities for people in their 50s, 60s, and 70s to meet new partners are much greater than in earlier eras*. Online dating is surging among this demographic.

Finally, the rise in female labor force participation over the past several decades offers women in particular a way out of marriage that was not as widely available in the past. This is another reason why gray divorce is increasing. At all ages, women are more likely than men to express dissatisfaction with their marriages and to initiate divorce. It is unlikely that women over 50 are more unhappy than in the past, but *these women are less likely to be financially dependent on their husbands and more likely to have the resources to call it quits*.

Education doesn't protect for gray divorce

Gray divorce is a recent phenomenon and scholars are just beginning to investigate its antecedents and consequences. For the most part, factors traditionally associated with divorce also appear to be predictive of gray divorce. But there is one notable exception: education. As noted above, on average, education tends to be protective against divorce. As a proxy for socioeconomic status, it is indicative of financial security. Education facilitates economic security, which helps to stabilize marriages. Not surprisingly, many couples who get divorced point to disputes over money as the reason why they broke up. Having plenty of money means one less thing for couples to fight about.

But this linkage only holds for younger and middle aged adults. For older adults, the risk of divorce does not differ much by education level. *A college degree does not provide protection against later life divorce*. The older college graduate, even one in a first marriage, faces essentially the same divorce rate as the older high school graduate.

Perhaps the *economic advantages that stabilized college graduates' marriages in the child-raising years now work in the opposite direction*, making it financially possible for dissatisfied couples to split up, whereas those with fewer resources (i.e., the high school educated) feel compelled to stay together for financial reasons. Their careers are winding down, and they would not have time to recoup the economic losses often associated with divorce. Nor may they be as likely to have the savings cushion to minimize the financial shock.

Alternatively, this pattern simply may reflect the fact that for older adults, the level of financial resources one has is less tied to education level. It is younger cohorts for whom education level is closely linked to earnings (which is why so many young people are pursuing a college degree). *The role of education for economic security differs across cohorts, and this has ramifications for how education is linked to the risk of divorce across the life course.*

Consequences of gray divorce related to financial security and health

The consequences of a gray divorce are also likely to be different than those of early divorce. For individuals in their prime, people who are healthy and financially secure, divorce can bring a new lease on life. Spouses who felt tied down and constrained are now able to pursue their own goals, reinventing themselves in their third age.

At the other end of the spectrum, those without adequate economic resources or who are in poor health face a tremendous struggle following divorce. Now they must go it alone without the buffer of social and economic support that spouses provide. *Older adults are unlikely to recoup financial losses associated with divorce, and this is particularly true for women who were out of the labor force for decades.* A woman who divorces in her 20s and 30s may experience a financial loss, but she has time to improve her earnings power, often through increased education or longer work hours, and she also has a better chance of remarrying someone with higher income than her first husband. For older women, the time horizon is simply too short—they can't spend 20 years in the labor force building up their savings.

Our research shows that, on average, gray divorcees have only 20 percent as much wealth as older married couples. *Older divorcees are also disadvantaged relative to widowed.* The net wealth of those who were widowed after age 50 is more than twice as high as the net wealth of gray divorcees. In short, individuals who divorce later in life and remain single typically do not enjoy the economic cushion that marrieds and even widowed experience. And Social Security payments do not close the gap—on average, gray divorcees can count on less than \$14,000 per year from Social Security.

Today, one out of every four people experiencing divorce is over age 50. Nearly one in ten is 65 or older. This raises critical questions about how gray divorce is reshaping the aging experience in the U.S. *Although for some older adults a gray divorce may be liberating, for others who are less advantaged it is a devastating experience with long-term negative consequences for their own lives and for society as a whole.* It is essential that we investigate in more detail the distinctive dynamics of late life divorce, along with the factors that allow some adults, but not others, to successfully steer their marriages through the new terrain of aging in contemporary America.

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Divorce and the Recession

By Philip Cohen
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It is quite likely that the economic crisis both caused some divorces and prevented some divorces. However, the balance of the evidence suggests it prevented more than it caused. I would not read this as good news for marriage and families, however, because there may be negative consequences for people who want to part but cannot divorce because of economic constraints. The enforced wait could simply prolong or exacerbate marital stress and family conflict, rather than saving or restoring a happy marriage.

In the wake of several news reports claiming that a falling divorce rate was the “silver lining” around the clouds of the Great Recession, I analyzed divorce patterns using the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2008 to 2011 to look for evidence of whether the economic crisis had increased or decreased the divorce rate. On the one hand, economic stress, job loss, and home foreclosure tend to be associated with marital tension and thus might be expected to increase the number of divorces. On the other hand, divorce is expensive, especially the cost of establishing a new household, and people who can’t sell their homes, or who have suffered a job loss, might not be able to manage a divorce and thus end up postponing or foregoing it.

My research shows that the divorce rate fell from 20.9 per 1,000 married women in 2008 to 19.5 in 2009, before rebounding to 19.8 in 2010 and 2011. It is not immediately clear that this was a response to the recession, because divorce rates had been falling for several years prior to the economic crisis. By looking at demographic predictors of divorce, however – age, duration of marriage, number of times married, education, race/ethnicity, and nativity – I was able to determine how many divorces would have been expected in 2009-2011 absent the crisis. From this, I calculated that the crisis had indeed provoked a drop in total divorces, resulting in about four percent -- or about 150,000 – fewer divorces than would have been expected to occur in those three years. On the other hand, I found some evidence of a partial counter-trend, with divorce rates increasing in states with higher home foreclosure rates.

Since my original analysis was published, the 2012 ACS has been released, showing a continued increase in the divorce rate, up to 20.0 per 1,000 married women. This supports the idea that the 2009 drop was a one-time event tied to the recession.

In summary, it is quite likely that the economic crisis both caused some divorces and prevented some divorces. However, the balance of the evidence suggests it prevented more than it caused. I would not read this as good news for marriage and families, however, because there may be negative consequences for people who want to part but cannot divorce because of economic constraints. The enforced wait could simply prolong or exacerbate marital stress and family conflict, rather than saving or restoring a happy marriage.

Assessing the impact of the recession on the marriage rate is more complicated. The American Community Survey shows an increase in the number of marriages in 2012, and also an increase in the marriage rate per 1,000 unmarried women. That's just a one year uptick, but it's consistent

with the possibility that the recession held down marriages just as it held down divorces, and that some postponed marriages may now take place. However, we don't have the NCHS vital statistics numbers for 2012 yet, and as of 2011 they still show a decline.

For births, the big story is the drop in birth rates during the recession for almost all women. On average, the drop in birth rates has been steeper for single women, and their birth rates haven't bottomed out yet, while married women's birth rates started edging back up in 2011 and 2012. As a result, unmarried births peaked at 41.0 percent of all births in 2009, and have since slipped to 40.7 percent. It's a tiny drop, but after increasing for several decades, three straight years of no increase in the share of births to unmarried women is certainly interesting news.

Just as interesting is the difference in birth trends for unmarried women under 35 and unmarried women aged 35-44. The birth rate for unmarried women under age 35 has now fallen every year since 2007. But the non-marital birth rate for women aged 35-39 was seven percent higher in 2012 than in 2007, while the non-marital birth rate for women aged 40-44 was 29 percent higher.

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For the source of my calculations, see Philip N. Cohen. "Recession and Divorce in the United States, 2008-2011." *Population Research and Policy Review* 33(5):615-628. And it is available here: <http://www.terpconnect.umd.edu/~pnc/PRPR14.pdf>. The 2012 update is posted here: <https://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2014/01/03/divorce-recession-drop-rebound-with-the-2012-rate/>

About CCF

The Council on Contemporary Families, based at the University of Miami, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of family researchers and practitioners that seeks to further a national understanding of how America's families are changing and what is known about the strengths and weaknesses of different family forms and various family interventions.

The Council helps keep journalists informed of notable work on family-related issues via the CCF Network. To join the CCF Network, or for further media assistance, please contact Stephanie Coontz, Co-Chair and Director of Research and Public Education, at coontzs@msn.com, cell 360-556-9223.

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