

The Emerging 21st Century American Family

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## Introduction

Over the last three decades the American family has been undergoing a profound and far-reaching transformation. Both family structure and family values have been changing and as a result of these changes, the American family is a much-altered institution. First, this paper traces these recent developments and examines how household and family composition, family-related roles, and attitudes and beliefs about the family have changed. Second, the American family is placed in perspective by comparing family values in America to those in other countries. Third, differences in family values are inspected across different family types and social classes. In particular, the attitudes of two-parent families with one or both parents in the labor force are compared and class differences within such families are analyzed.

Most of the data in this report come from the 1972-1998 General Social Surveys (GSSs) of the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, and its cross-national component, the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). Details about the GSS and ISSP are provided in Appendix 1.

## Overall Trends

### Structural Changes

#### Marriage:

While still a central institution in American society, marriage plays a less dominant role than it once did. As Table 1 shows, the proportion of adults who have never been married rose from 15% to 23% between 1972 and 1998. When the divorced, separated, and widowed are added in, three quarters of adults were married in the early 1970s, but only 56% were by the late-1990s. The decline in marriage comes from three main sources.

First, people are delaying marriage. Between 1960 and 1997 the median age at first marriage rose from 22.8 to 26.8 years for men and from 20.3 to 25.0 years for women (Smith, 1998).

Second, divorces have increased. The divorce rate more than doubled from 9.2 divorces per year per 1,000 married women in 1960 to a divorce rate of 22.6 in 1980. This rise was at least in part caused by increases in female, labor-force participation and decreases in fertility mentioned below (Michael, 1988). The divorce rate then slowly declined to 19.8 in 1995 (Table 1). The drop in the divorce rate in the 1980s and 1990s has been much slower than the rapid rise from the 1960s to the early 1980s and, as a result, the divorce rate in the 1990s is still more than twice as high as it was in 1960. Even with the slight recent moderation in the divorce rate, the proportion of ever-married adults who have been

divorced doubled from 17% in 1972 to 33-34% in 1996/98.<sup>1</sup>

Third, people are slower to remarry than previously. While most people divorced or widowed before the age of 50 remarry, the length of time between marriages has grown (Cherlin, 1996).

Fourth, both the delay in age at first marriage and in remarriage is facilitated by an increase in cohabitation. As Table 2 shows, cohabitators represented only 1.1% of couples in 1960 and 7.0% in 1997. The cohabitation rate is still fairly low overall because most cohabitations are short term, typically leading to either a marriage or a break-up within a year (Goldscheider and Waite, 1991). But cohabitation has become the norm for both men and women both as their first form of union and after divorces. Table 2 indicates that for women born in 1933-1942 only 7% first lived with someone in a cohabitation rather than in a marriage, but for women born in 1963-1974, 64% starting off cohabiting rather than marrying. The trend for men is similar. Among the currently divorced 16% are cohabiting and of those who have remarried 50% report cohabiting with their new spouse before their remarriage (Smith, 1998).

#### Children:

Along with the decline of marriage has come a decline in childbearing. The fertility rate peaked at 3.65 children per woman at the height of the Baby Boom in 1957 and then declined rapidly to a rate of 1.75 children in 1975. This is below the "replacement level" of about 2.11 children that is needed for a population to hold its own through natural increase. The rate then slowly gained ground to 2.0-2.1 children in the early 1990s. The results of the changes in the fertility rate are shown in Table 3. In 1972 the average adult had had 2.4 children and this number slipped to a low of 1.8 children in the mid-1990s. Likewise, while only 45% of households had no children under 18 living at home in 1972, this climbed to 62% in 1998. Thus, the typical American household currently has no minor children living in it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The 33-34% level is lower than the commonly cited figure that "half of all marriages end in divorce." The latter is a projection of how many married people will eventually divorce. In effect, these projections indicate that of the about 66% of ever-married people who haven't yet been divorced at least a quarter of them will end their marriages with divorces (i.e.  $34\% + (66\% * .25) = 50.5\%$ ). In a 1991 survey 39% said that "my spouse divorcing me" was a very important concern about the future (American Board of Family Practice, 1992).

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise indicated references to children in families means children under 18.

Accompanying this decline in childbearing and childrearing, was a drop in preferences for larger families (Table 3). In 1972 56% thought that the ideal number of children was 3 or more. By 1996-98 only 39% thought that 3 or more represented the ideal number of children. However, there was also little or no increase in a preference for small families. Over the last three decades just 3-5% have favored families with 0-1 children.

Moreover, during the last generation, childbearing increasingly became disconnected from marriage. In 1960 only 5.3% of births were to unmarried mothers while by 1996 over 32% of all births were outside of marriage (Table 4).<sup>3</sup> The rate of increase has been much greater for Whites than for Blacks. For Whites the percentage of unmarried births has expanded more than ten-fold from 2.3% of all births in 1960 to 25.7% in 1996, while the Black level grew by over three-fold from 21.6% in 1960 to 70.4% in 1994 (Loomis and Landale, 1994).

There is tentative evidence that the long-term rise in non-marital births may have ended. For Whites the % of births outside of marriage has been hovering at the 25-26% level in 1994-96 and for Blacks the % of births to unmarried women even marginally declined from 1994 to 1996.

The rise in divorce and the decline in fertility and marital births have in turn had a major impact on the type of household in which children are raised. As Table 5 indicates, there has been a decline in the proportion of adults who are married and have children living at home (from 45% in 1972 to 26% in 1998) and a rise in the percent of adults not married and with no children (from 16% in 1972 to 32% in 1998). By 1998 households with children, the predominate living arrangement in the 1970s and earlier, had fallen to third place behind both households with no children and no married couple and those with married couples with no children.

Changes are even more striking from the perspective of the children and who heads the households. As Table 6 shows, in 1972 less than 5% of children under age 18 were living in a household with only one adult present. By the mid-1990s this had increased to 18-20%. Similarly, the % of children in the care of two adults who are not currently married, but had been previously married, rose from less than 4% in 1972 to 9% in 1998. Also, the % being raised by two parents with at least one having been divorced has tended upwards, starting at 10% in 1972, reaching a high of 18% in 1990,

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<sup>3</sup>Dramatic as this trend is, it is similar to that experienced by other advanced, industrial nations. While the percent of births to unmarried women climbed from 5% in 1960 to 32% in 1995 in the US, it rose from 5% to 34% in Great Britain, from 4% to 26% in Canada, and from 6% to 37% in France (Smith, 1998).

and standing at 12% in 1998.

Conversely, while in 1972 73% of children were being reared by two parents in an uninterrupted marriage, this fell to 49% in 1996 and was a 52% in 1998. Thus, the norm of the stable, two-parent family was close to becoming the exception for American children rather than the rule.

#### Labor Force Participation:

Nor has the declining share of families involving an intact marriage avoided notable transformations. The biggest of these are the alterations in traditional gender roles in general and in the division of responsibility between husbands and wives in particular. Women have greatly increased their participation in the paid labor force outside of the home. In 1960 42% of women in the prime working ages (25-64) were employed. This grew to 49% in 1970, 59.5% in 1980, 69% in 1990, and 71.5% in 1995. Most of this growth came from mothers of children under 18 entering the labor force (Goldscheider and Waite, 1991). Table 7 shows that among all married couples, the traditional home with an employed husband and a wife keeping house declined from 53% in 1972 to 21% in 1998. Conversely, the modern pattern of both spouses being employed grew from 32% to 59%. Showing little change were households in which only the wife was employed and in which neither spouse worked.

Table 8 indicates that this shift was even slightly greater among married couples with children. The traditional arrangement dropped from 60% to 27% and the modern arrangement doubled from 33% to 67%. "Mr. Mom" households remained a rarity and showed no clear increase<sup>4</sup> and the equally rare households with no employed spouse slightly decreased. Thus, over the last two decades America has shifted from a society in which having a full-time homemaker was the norm to one in which both spouses (and both parents for those with children at home) worked outside the home.

Moreover, not only have wives contributed more to family income through their increased labor-force participation, among dual-earner couples women are also bringing in an increasing share of the family's joint income. In fact, by 1994 in 22.5% of dual-earners families women had a higher income than their husbands did (Exter, 1996).

In brief, the American family has undergone a series of fundamental changes over the last generation. Many of the changes have undermined the traditional family, as Sociologist Norval Glenn

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<sup>4</sup>Moreover, only some of these "Mr. Mom" families actually involve cases in which the man is keeping house and acting as the primary caregiver and the wife is the regular breadwinner. Besides this circumstance they involve cases in which the husband is retired, disabled, or in school.

(1992) notes, "if you watch what Americans do, traditional family relationships are in trouble." Marriage has declined as the central institution under which households are organized and children are raised. People marry later and divorce and cohabitate more. In terms of childbearing, American has shifted from the Baby Boom of the 1950s and early 1960s to the Birth Dearth of the 1970s and a growing proportion of children has been born outside of marriage. Even within marriage the changes have been profound as more and more women have entered the labor force and gender roles have become more homogeneous between husbands and wives.

### Changes in Attitudes and Values

Partly in response to and partly as a cause of these structural changes, attitudes towards the family have also shifted. Many important family values regarding marriage and divorce, childbearing and childrearing, and the duties and responsibilities of husbands and wives have changed. In addition, values closely related to the family have also been transformed. For example, views on and practices relating to sexual behavior are different now than during the last generation.

#### Marriage and Divorce:

Marriage is the core institution of the American family, but because of the structural changes described above it no longer occupies as prominent a role in either people's adult lives or in childbearing and childrearing. Moreover, its impact on the quality of people's lives is changing. On the one hand, married people are much happier with life in general than the unmarried are. While 40% of the currently married rate their lives as very happy, the unmarried are much less happy (% very happy: widowed - 23%, divorced - 19%, separated - 16%, never married 23%). In addition, married people are happier in their marriages (62% very happy) than they are about life as a whole (40% very happy). On the other hand, there has been a small, but real, decline in how happy people are with their marriages, from about 68% very happy in the early 1970s to a low of 60% very happy in the 1994 (Table 9). Since then there may be a slight rebound in marital happiness (up to 63.5% in 1998). Also, people are less likely to rate marriages in general as happy and are more likely to say there are few good marriages (Thornton, 1989).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Some research indicates that decline in marital happiness and satisfaction may result from the increased labor-force participation of women and the difficulty of families adjusting to the changes in gender roles and the division of domestic work (Glenn, 1990; 1991; Stegelin and Frankel, 1997; Wilkie, Deree,

The importance that people accord marriage is also shown by a reluctance to make divorce easier. Only a quarter to a third have favored liberalizing divorce laws over the last three decades, while on average 52% have advocated tougher laws and 21% keeping laws unchanged (Table 9). This opposition to easier divorce probably contributed to the levelling-off of the divorce rate in the early 1980s noted above, but has not led to a general tightening of divorce laws or a notable drop in the divorce rate.

However, people also do not favor trapping couples in failed marriages. In 1994 47% agreed that "divorce is usually the best solution when a couple can't seem to work out their marriage problems," 33% disagreed, and 20% neither agreed nor disagreed. Additionally, in 1994 82% agreed that married, childless couples who "don't get along" should divorce and 67% that even parents who "don't get along" should not stay together.

#### Children:

While most people want to and eventually do have children, the desire for larger families has declined both in terms of the actual level of childbearing and preferences towards family size (Table 5). The ambivalence towards children is also shown by a question in 1993 on the things that people value and that are important to them. 24% said that having children was one of the most important things in life, 38% that it was very important, 19% somewhat important, 11% not too important, and 8% not at all important. While clearly most people saw having children as personally important, overall it was fourth on the list behind having faith in God (46% one of the most important), being self-sufficient and not having to depend on others (44%), and being financially secure (27%). Similarly, surveys in 1988 and 1994 generally showed that people were pro-children, but that traditional attitudes towards children were somewhat declining (Table 10).

In terms, of what children should be taught and how they should be raised, people have become less traditional over time with a shift from emphasizing obedience and parent-center families to valuing autonomy for children (Alwin, 1990 and Ellison and Sherkat, 1993b). From 1986 to 1998 a majority (or near majority) of Americans selected thinking for oneself as the most important trait for a child to learn and the proportion mentioning obedience was less than half as popular and was declining further (from about 23% in 1986 to about 18-19% in the 1990s)(Table 11). Likewise in line with the weakening of support for obedience, approval for the corporal punishment of children declined during the last decade (Table 12; see also Ellison and Sherkat, 1993a).

But another traditional value, hard work, gained ground, up

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and Ratcliff, 1998).

from 11% in 1986 to 18% in the 1990s. This indicates the previously noted switch from parental authority to juvenile autonomy only describes part of the evolving process. Some traditional values, like hard work, may be gaining ground while some, like obedience, are losing popularity. Thus, the shift from traditional to modern may not be as simple as depicted in previous research. While strictness and discipline have given way to a more liberal approach to raising and guiding children, hard work and perhaps other traditional values appear to be gaining ground.

#### Gender Roles:

Among the most fundamental changes affecting American society over the last generation has been the redefinition the roles of men and women and husbands and wives (Firebaugh, 1993; Mason and Lu, 1988; Thornton, 1989). A traditional perspective in which women were occupied in the private sphere of life centering around running a home and raising a family while men engaged in the public sphere of earning a living and participating in civic and political events has rapidly been replaced by a modern perspective in which there is much less gender-role specialization and women have increasingly been entering the labor force as well as other areas of public life.

First, the acceptance of women in politics has grown substantially over the last quarter century (Table 13). In 1972 74% said they would be willing to vote for a woman for president and in 1998 94% accepted female candidates. Similarly, disagreement with the statement that "most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women" climbed from about 50% in the early 1970s to 77-79% in the mid-1990s and while in the early 1970s 64% opposed the idea that "women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men," about 85% now disagree with this sentiment.

Second, people have re-evaluated the participation of women in the labor force. In 1972 67% approved of a wife working even if her husband could support her and in the 1990s 82-83.5% agreed (Table 14). Similarly, while 43% in 1977 disagreed that a wife should help her husband's career rather than have one of her own, 81% disagreed by 1998 and while only 34% in 1977 opposed the idea that "it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family" 62-66% disagreed in the 1990s. In fact, people increasingly think that both the husband and wife should earn money (67% in 1996 - Table 15).

Third, people have become more convinced that having a working mother does not negatively affect her children. In 1977 49% felt that a working mother can have just as "warm and secure a relationship with her children" as a mother who does not work and in 1998 68% agreed (Table 14). But at the same time most people are

still not convinced that mothers of young children should have full-time jobs. In 1994 85% felt that a wife should work before having children and 80% favored her being employed after her youngest child left home (Table 16). But only 38% endorsed a full-time job after the youngest had started school and just 12% were for such employment when there was a child under school age. However, under each condition, approval of a mother working was increasing.

#### Sexual Mores and Practices:

America is commonly seen as having undergone a sexual revolution over the last generation in which attitudes and behavior became more permissive. But in fact trends in sexual morality are more complex (Smith, 1990; 1994; 1998; Thornton, 1989). First, there was a notable growth in permissiveness towards premarital sex. The % saying sex between an unmarried man and woman is always wrong dropped from 36% in 1972 to 24% in 1996 (Table 17). However, most of the decline was in the 1970s. Reflecting the more permissive attitudes towards premarital sex, sexual activity among the young increased from the 1970s to the early 1990s before at least levelling-off and probably retreating slightly from its peak in the early 1990s (Smith, 1998), the rate of cohabitation grew steadily (Table 2), and the level of non-marital births climbed appreciably (Table 3).

But over two-thirds say that pre-marital sex between teenagers 14-16 years old is always wrong and since 1986 there has been no lowering of disapproval. When it comes to teenagers, people prefer that they postpone the initiation of sexual intercourse, but first and foremost they want the young to be well-informed about sex in general and safe sex in particular. Support for sex education in the schools is high (87% in favor of it in 1996-98) and it has grown over the years (Table 18). Birth control is also strongly supported. Since the mid-1980s about three-fifths have favored making contraception available to sexually active teens even without their parents' approval (Table 18).

Second, attitudes toward homosexuality first became less tolerant and then reversed to becoming more accepting. Approval of homosexual activity has never been high. In the mid-1970s 69-70% said it was always wrong and this moved upwards to 76-77% during the mid-1980s to early 1990s (Table 18). Then after 1991 disapproval began falling. By 1998 only 58.5% considered that homosexuality was always wrong. Also, discrimination against homosexuals has declined. In 1973 50% opposed a homosexual teaching at a college, but opposition fell to 22% by 1998. However, most remain opposed to homosexuality as a life style in general and to same-sex marriages in particular.

Third, disapproval of extra-marital sex has always been high and has increased over the last generation. In the early 1970s

about 70-71% thought infidelity was always wrong. This increased to about 79-81% considering it always wrong from the late 1980s to the present.

While not the sweeping sexual revolution that has commonly been depicted in the popular media, sexual attitudes and practices regarding premarital sex and cohabitation became more permissive over the last three decades. Attitudes towards homosexual behavior also became more accepting (but only in the 1990s). Counter to these trends extra-marital relations are even more opposed today than in the 1970s.

#### Neighborhoods:

Another hallmark of the traditional family is its rootedness in local communities and neighborhoods. This attachment has been weakening over the last three decades. Socializing with relatives and friends outside ones neighborhood have changed little, but social contacts with neighbors has plummeted from 30% reporting spending a social evening with neighbors at least several times a week in 1974 and only 20% doing so in 1998 (Table 19). There was also some decline in socializing in a bar from about 11% in the 1970s and early 1980s to about 8% in the 1990s. It is likely, but there is no available evidence, that work-related contacts have grown over this period.

Over the last three decades modern family values have gained ground over traditional values. In one area, gender equality, the switch over has been both massive and comprehensive. The social role of men and women and husbands and wives has been redefined to accept women in the public spheres of employment and political life.

In other areas, the changes have been more limited with a continuing balancing between old and new values. First, in terms of marriage and divorce, ending marriage has been accepted as preferable over enduring bad marriages, but people are reluctant to endorse quick-and-easy divorces especially when children are involved. Second, regarding children, people favor smaller families. However, the switch has only been from favoring 3+ children to wanting 2 children, with little change in those wanting less than 2 children. Third, there is also an decreasing emphasis on obedience and corporal punishment, but hard work has gained ground as a top value for children. Fourth, people have become more sexually tolerant of premarital and homosexual sex, but less approving of extramarital sex. The ambivalence shows clearly in terms of adolescent sexual activity. Most oppose teenage sex, but both want teenagers to be sexually educated and to have access to birth control even if their parents do not approve. Finally, families are not as grounded in their local neighborhoods. This is probably largely a function of the increased labor-force participation of women.

## Cross-National Comparisons

Across countries views about the family are both highly variable and complex (Braun, Scott, and Alwin, 1993; Scott and Duncombe, 1992; Frankel, 1997).<sup>6</sup> First, on many attitudes the values held by one society are dramatically different from those shared by other societies. For example, while 69% of East Germans disagree that being a housewife can be fulfilling, only 38% in West Germans share this point of view and just 5% of fellow ex-Socialists in Russia concur (Table 20). Second, the inter-country differences vary from indicator-to-indicator. Both the absolute level of support for particular values and a country's rank differs appreciably across measures. For example, only 21% of Americans disagree that being a housewife can be fulfilling and they rank 20th out of 24 countries (i.e. very much towards the traditional pole), but 59% of Americans disagree that a husband should work and a wife stay home and this places the US in 8th place.<sup>7</sup>

On gender roles Americans tend to want the best of both the traditional and modern family. First, Americans are more optimistic than those in most countries that children and the family need not suffer if the mother is employed. Americans are 6th in agreeing that a working mother can have as warm a relationship with her children (71%), 5th in disagreeing that a child will suffer in the other works (46%), and 4th in disagreeing that the family will suffer (51%). But Americans also are less likely than those in other countries to see work as a boon for women and staying at home as a detriment. American ranks 20th in disagreeing that being a housewife is fulfilling (22%), 15th in agreeing that having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent (56%), and 20th in agreeing that both spouses should work (58%).

In all countries approval of a woman working varies by the presence and age of the children in her family. Approval for a woman working is highest when there are no children and after the youngest has left home, lowest when there are pre-schoolers, and intermediate when the youngest child is in school. In the US 97% approve of a woman without children working (84% full time and 13% part time) and 98% do so after the children are gone (81% full time

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<sup>6</sup>Data are from the 1994 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) module on gender, work, and family. See Appendix 1 for information on the ISSP.

<sup>7</sup>In Table 21 countries are organized from high to low according to their level of support for modern vs. traditional attitudes towards the family. That is, a higher number indicates more support for gender equality in general and female involvement in the labor force in particular, a de-emphasis on children, having children outside of marriage, and divorce.

and 17% part time). Approval is lowest when there is a pre-schooler (45% - 11% full time and 34% part time) and intermediate when the youngest child is school age (92% - 38% full time and 54% part time). Compared to other countries American approval of women working is in the middle range for there being no children (12th) and when there is a pre-schooler (10th), but relatively high when the youngest is in school (3rd).

In all countries covered, few disagree that children are life's greatest joy. US is in the middle at 10th place with 4% disagreeing. But on other attributes of children there is considerable variation across countries. Few Americans agree that children interfere with the freedom of their parents (9%) and the US ranks near the bottom (20th) in this assessment. Americans also tend to disagree that people without children lead empty lives (53%), but ranks fairly high (7th) among countries in this judgment.

More than most other countries the US tends to reject the idea that childbearing should be separated from marriage. Only 16% disagree that people who want children should marry (ranking 20th). Americans are also skeptical that a single parent can raise a child as well as two parents can (36% agreeing), but this puts the US right in the middle compared to other countries (12th). At the same time Americans do not see marriage as mainly devoted to having children. The US is 2nd overall with 69.5% disagreeing that the main purpose of marriage is to have children. Thus, Americans are distinctive in believing that children should be born and raised within a marriage, while rejecting the notion that marriage is an institution whose prime purpose is the having of children. As members of most other Anglo cultures (e.g. New Zealand, Canada), Americans mainly see marriage an institution for romantic love and companionship.

In most countries 80% or more disagree that people should remain married if "they don't get along" and there are no children. In the US 82% disagree with continuing unsuccessful marriage when there are no children. Countries are uniformly less supportive of divorce when there are children. In the US the presence of children drops support for a divorce to 67%. This places the US 6th overall.

The US is also less inclined than most countries to support government assistance to working parents. While 76% of Americans favor paid maternity leave, in most countries 90%+ back this measure and the US ranks 21st in support. Also, 46% of Americans support child care benefits for working parents which places the US in 19th place.

Overall, the US show a distinctive pattern in its views on the family. Americans seem to want the best of both the old and the new. They are relatively optimistic that children and the family do not suffer if a wife and mother works, but are also less likely than those in most other countries to assert that a woman needs to work. Most Americans (59% - 8th place) disagree that people should

follow the traditional pattern of a husband working and a wife staying home, but only 43.5% disagree that what most women really want is a home and children (8th place). Similarly, while most Americans have positive absolute and relative opinions of children (4% disagree that they are life's greatest joy and 9% agree that they interfere too much with parental freedom), they also are opposed to the notion that people without children lead empty lives (53% disagree, 7th place). Likewise, Americans both reject the idea that people should marry if they want to have children (16% disagree, 20th) and the idea that marriage is mainly for the purpose of having children (69%, 2nd place). Finally, while supporting paid maternity leave, Americans are less in favor of government assistance to working parents than citizens in most other countries. Thus, American views are very nuanced, blending together both traditional and modern perspectives on the family.

### **Households, Labor Force Participation, and Class**

#### Structure

As noted above, the structure of American households and families have changed notably over the last three decades. Table 21 characterizes households into 10 types according to marital status, labor-force participation, and the presence of children. The biggest changes have been the off-setting drop in married couples with children and one parent working (from 28% in 1972 to 8% in 1998) and rise of married couples with children and both parents working (from 8% in 1972 to 21.5% in 1998). A similar, but more modest, switch over has occurred for households with a married couple and no children and one spouse working falling from 14% in 1972 to 8% in 1998, while married couples with no children and both spouses working climbed from 8% in 1972 to 14.5% in 1998. Also increasing have been households with a single parent who is employed and has children (from 5% in 1972 to 8% in 1998) and households with an unmarried, not employed adult and no children (from 8% in 1972 to 11% in 1998). Also, the rarest form of household, married couples with children and neither working, declined from 3% in 1972 to 1% in 1998.

Looking at families (i.e. households with children under 18 present) shows a similar pattern (Table 22). The typical family switched from involving a married couple, children, and one spouse employed to a couple with children and both spouses employed. Single-earner couples with children fell from 51% in 1972 to 21% in 1998 and dual-earner couples with children rose from 26% in 1972 to 45% in 1998. Also, showing major gains were single-parent families with the parent employed, rising from 9% in 1972 to 22% in 1998. These switches have in turn led to major changes in childcare (Bryant and Zick, 1996). Thus, the Ozzie-and-Harriet family has

been replaced by both modern, dual-earner families and single-parent families.

Table 23 shows these changes by social class.<sup>8</sup> In general, the changes in family structure described above have affected both classes. However, there is more class differentiation in the 1990s than in the early 1970s. In 1972-77 the composition of families was very similar for the two classes. By the 1990s they were more distinctive. Single-parent families with an employed parent more than doubled their proportion among the working class (from 12% to 27%), but only grew by 50% among the middle class (10% to 15%). Both dual-earner couples and single-earner couples became more common among the middle class than among the working class. Thus, the working-class now is much more likely to consist of single-parent families than previously (21% in the 1970s vs. 37.5% in the 1990s), while the middle class has shown only very modest growth in single-parent families (20% in the 1970s to 22% in the 1990s). Marriage has begun to become a characteristic of class.

### Attitudes

Attitudes about the family and family-related matters vary by family type and class. First, views on gender roles differ consistently by family type. Single-earner families are much more traditional in their values than are dual-earner or single-parent families (Table 24A). For example, 26% of husbands and wives from single-earner families believe that a job is the best way for a woman to be independent compared to 42.5% of dual-earner couples, and 55-56.5% of single parents. Likewise, 58.5% of single-earner couples think a working mother can establish a warm relationship with her children compared to 75.5-77% of dual-earners and single parents. The traditional points of view regarding gender roles of traditional families probably results both from self-selection (i.e. people with traditional values opt to form and maintain traditional family types) and adaptation (i.e. people in a traditional family arrangement adopt values that reflect that form).

Those families with a married couple and no one working are also more traditional in their views, usually more traditional than even the single-earner families. This results largely from the fact that this group has many older couples and people from earlier

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<sup>8</sup>Social class is measured by people's personal labelling as lower class, working class, middle class, and upper class. These designations have been very stable across time. Since 1972 5% have classified themselves as lower class, 46% as working class, 46% as middle class, and 3% as upper class. The lower class has been combined with the working class and the upper class with the middle class in this analysis.

cohorts tend to hold more traditional attitudes on gender issues (Mason and Lu, 1988; Firebaugh, 1993).<sup>9</sup>

Next, for the two largest family types, dual-earner and single-earner families, differences by social class are examined. Among dual-earner families the middle class holds more modern positions on 9 of the 10 gender items (Table 24B). Most of the differences are small and not statistically significant, but the middle class is more likely to disagree that women can be fulfilled as housewives, that what women really want is a home and a family, and that a husband should work and a wife should stay home. The one reversal is that 64% of the working class, but only 54% of the middle class agree that both spouses should work. The class difference within dual-earner couples appears to be that the working class is more likely to see a wife's employment as an economic necessity while the middle class sees a wife's career as a liberating experience.

For single-earner families the pattern is less clear. The middle class holds more modern viewpoints on only four issues and none are statistically significant. The working class however is significantly more likely to disagree that children and the family both suffer if a mother works and to agree that both spouses should work. The later is consistent with the one attitude on which the working class was more modern among dual-earner families, but the first two represent reversed patterns. It appears that middle class, single-earner families are especially likely to believe that having a working mother will harm the family and many wives in such families may intentionally opt not to work to avoid such perceived harm.

Approval of when a woman should work according to the presence and ages of children shows a similar pattern across family types (Table 25A). Single-earner families are the least approving. Only 4.5% approve of a woman working full time when there is a preschooler compared to 18% of dual-earners and 19% of employed single parents. Even when the youngest is in school only 22% of the single earners favor full-time employment for women compared to 48% of dual earners and 55.5% of employed, single parents.

Among the dual-earner couples there are no major differences in approving of a woman working by class (Table 25B). For single-earner families the middle class is much less likely than the working class to approve of a woman's full-time employment when the youngest is in school or after the children have left home and somewhat less supportive when the youngest is under school age. This is consistent with the pattern shown on several gender role

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<sup>9</sup>This is the rarest of family types and in many instances there are too few cases for reliable figures to be reported. For example, for gender roles no figures are reported for five of the ten attitudes because of small sample sizes.

items discussed above.

Attitudes toward children show less differentiation by family type and class than attitudes towards gender roles and female employment (Table 26A). Dual- and single-earner families do not differ greatly in their view of children. Few Americans disagree that children are life's greatest joy and single-earner families are the least likely of all to disagree. About 6-7% of both dual- and single-earner couples think children interfere too much with parental freedom, but single-parent households are more likely to agree with this idea (14-17%). On disagreeing that people without children live empty lives, single-earners are least likely to think such (41%), followed by dual-earners (47%), single parents not in the labor force (49.5%), and single parents who are employed (58%). In terms of the both the number of children ever had and the ideal number of children that a family should have, single-earner families both have and favor somewhat larger families than dual-earner families do (actual number of children: 2.4 vs. 2.2; ideal number of children: 2.6 vs. 2.4).

Similarly, there are few notable class differences on attitudes about children (Tables 26B). The only significant difference is that among single-earners the middle class is more likely than the working class to disagree that people without children lead empty lives (48% to 32%).

Regarding attitudes towards having children and getting married and getting divorced there are notable differences by family type for some, but not all, issues (Table 27A). First, about three-quarters of all groups disagree with the idea that the main purpose of marriage is having children. This indicates that the norm of romantic love penetrates all segments. Second, there is almost as much consensus that couples need not stay together when there are no children. On the matters of having children within marriage, children being raised by one parent, and staying married when there are children, both dual- and single-earner couples are in close agreement. Single parents (whether employed or not) are much more likely than couples to have a modern view on childbearing and childrearing. For example, while 13-18% of couples disagree that people should get married if they want children, 30% of single parents take this position. The difference is even larger on whether a single parent can raise a child as well as a couple. Only 29-31% of couples agree, but 55% of single parents who are employed and 69% of those who are not employed agree.

There are no major and consistent class difference on these attitudes about having and raising children, but among both dual- and single-earner couples the middle class is more traditional than the working class in doubting that one parent can raise a child as well as two can and in feeling that people should marry if they want to have children (Table 27B). This is opposite the pattern observed on some gender items.

Future generations are formed by the values parents instil in

their children. Table 28A shows that dual-earner and single-earner couples stress similar values for children, with dual-earner families being only slightly more likely to stress less traditional values (thinking for self + helping others = 68%) than single-earner families are (64%). In addition, counter to the differences on obedience, dual-earners are also slightly more likely to favor spanking children than single-earners are. More distinctive are single parents who are not employed. They are by far the most traditional being most likely to mention both obedience and hard work as top values and married couples with no one employed who are the least likely to emphasize hard work and the most likely to value helping others.

Class differences on child values are small, but among both dual- and single-earner families the working class is more likely to endorse obedience and the spanking of children and less likely to value children thinking for themselves (Table 28B).

Support for government social welfare programs in general (e.g. spending on welfare, the poor, and health care and helping poor people and the jobless) and policies to help working parents in particular (paid maternity leave and subsidized child care for working parents) is greater among families that lack employment, followed by single parents who are employed, and then employed couples (Table 29A). Among dual- and single-earner couples the former are more supportive of specific government assistance to working parents and the latter is slightly more for general, social-welfare measures. For example, 81% of dual earners favor paid maternity leave vs. 72% of single earners and 23% of dual-earner couples want the government to help the poor compared to 30% of single-earner couples.

Counter to the general pattern, dual-earner couples are the most likely to favor more government spending for education. However, the differences between family types on educational spending are small.

Among both dual- and single-earner families there are consistent and moderate-to-large class differences for both general social welfare policies and programs aimed at working parents. The working class favors more government assistance than does the middle class (Table 29B). The class differences are generally smaller among dual-earner couples than among single earners. For example, among dual earners 42% of the working class favors government-guaranteed jobs for all vs. 34% of the middle class (+8 percentage points), while among single earners the difference is +25 percentage points (52 - 27). The one exception is on education. Among both dual- and single-earners the middle class is marginally more likely to favor more spending. Thus, while the middle class is generally less supportive of government spending and assistance programs, education is the exception. Middle-class parents (who of course tend to be better educated) probably both value education more and see it as the avenue that their children must follow to

reach and sustain middle-class status.

Next, the impact of class, gender, and family structure on attitudes were examined in more detail. First, dual-earner families were examined by the relative occupational prestige and financial contributions of the male and female earners. It was hypothesized that more traditional family values would be supported by dual-earning couples in which men held more prestigious occupations and in which the men earned more income since such households were closer to the traditional families in which males were the sole rather than merely the predominant breadwinners. However, in a dozen different comparisons of items on gender role, child values, governmental assistance programs, and other family-related variables there were few statistically significant and no consistent differences by either the occupational prestige or the earnings of the partners.<sup>10</sup> Thus, differences in economic position within dual-earner households does not appear to influence family values.

Second, the occupational prestige of both partners in dual-earner families were examined. Four types were distinguished: 1) both working class (occupational prestige less than 42 for both partners), 2) mixed class - husband working class and wife middle class, 3) mixed class - husband middle class and wife working class, and 4) both middle class (occupational prestige of 42 or more for both partners). As the dual-earner columns 3-6 in Table 30 show, there are class differences on most family values with the consistent pairs (i.e. both working class or both middle class) at the extremes and the occupationally mixed couples typically in between. The double, middle-class couples are the most modern on gender roles, child values, and disciplining children and the double, working class couples are most liberal on divorce and on government assistance to the poor and unemployed.

This general pattern prevails for both men and women. Men and women do show some differences however. Women are generally more supportive of modern, egalitarian gender roles than men are and the gap on gender issues is greatest among the double, working-class couples. Women are also more modern in their view on children. In

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<sup>10</sup>The occupational prestige of the male and female partners were compared. In 33.0% of couples the wife's occupation prestige was higher than her partner's by at more than 5 points. In 31.5% of couples occupational prestige was the same (+ or - 5 points). In 35.5% of couples the husband's prestige exceeded his partner's by more than 5 points. On the calculation of occupational prestige see Davis and Smith, 1998.

Earning differences were based on a direct question whether the earnings of the husband and wife were about the same, the husband's earnings were higher or the wife's earnings were higher.

terms of what the top values should be for children, class affects the view of men more than it does the attitudes of women. Also, women are generally more supportive of government assistance programs than men are.

Among the generally intermediate, mixed-class couples there are few large or regular differences based on which partner is middle class and which is working class. This is consistent with the lack of differences reported above.

Comparing the single-earner families to the dual-earners (Table 30, columns 1 & 2 vs. 3-6), indicates that single earners are more traditional than dual earners of the same class and gender on gender and child issues. In fact, in some cases the single-earner, middle-class respondents are more traditional than even dual-earner, working-class respondents. For example, 52% of the former disagree that things are better when the man works and the women stays home compared to 57% of the latter. Differences between the single and dual earners on government assistance programs are generally small however.

The structure of family life has changed appreciably over the last generation with large shifts in the distribution of family types. Both dual-earner and single-parents families have become much more common, while single-earner families have appreciably declined.

The family attitudes held by members of these different types of families are quite distinctive. Single-earner couples are the most traditional overall. This traditionalism is especially pronounced regarding gender roles and approving of women working. They are also slightly more traditional on the value of children. Additionally, while tending to be more in favor of general, social-welfare measures, they are relatively less supportive of policies to assist working parents. Dual-earner couples are more modern in their overall orientation. On gender matters they are more like single-parents than single-earner couples. They are most modern in their disagreement that the ideal family involves a working father and a stay-at-home mother. They agree with single-earners (and disagree with single parents) about the negative consequences of divorce and of one parent raising children, but tend to agree with single earners and disagree with single parents on many child issues. Single parents tend to take modern positions on gender, divorce, single parents raising children, and having the government help families. Those who are employed tend to share the viewpoint of couples and differ from single parents who are not employed on child values.

Among couples, class differences are mostly modest. Especially among dual earners the working class is more traditional on gender roles. Single earners are less distinctive by class on gender matters, but the working class is more approving of women working. Among both dual- and single-earners the working class is more traditional on child values, but more modern on raising children by

one parent and divorce. Within dual-earner families the relative income contribution or occupational prestige of the man and the woman has little impact on family values.

### **Discussion**

Major changes in family structure and values feed off of each other. Structural changes lead to the reassessment of traditional values and the growth of values more in tune with current conditions. Likewise, changes in values facilitate the development of new forms of social organization and the growth of those forms most consistent with the emerging values. The structural and value changes reenforce one another so that social transformations are sped along and replace older forms and viewpoints. Several prime examples of this mutual process of social change apply to the contemporary, American family. First, the decline in the birth rate and family size parallels a decrease in the ideal family size. Second, the rise in female, labor-force participation follows along with increased acceptance of women being involved in the public sphere in general and of combining employment with rising children in particular. In turn, the growth in dual-earner families (and the decline in single-earner couples) was accompanied by first acceptance of and then even a preference for families with both parents employed. Third, the climb in divorce and the liberalization of divorce laws went along with public support for the idea that divorce was preferable to continuing failed marriages. Finally, greater tolerance of premarital sex coincided with gains in teenage sexual activity, cohabitation, and non-marital birth. In brief, changes in structure and values have gone hand-in-hand over the last generation to transform the American family in both forms and norms.

An understanding of these changes and their likely future direction can be gained by looking across countries, family types, and cohorts. First, comparing the US to other countries shows that there are many complex, alternative views of the family that exist in the world. For example, the most modern society is the former-East Germany which places in the most modern third on 18 of 22 measures and in particular ranks first or second on all 8 gender-role measures. Among the more traditional is Russia which places in the middle or most traditional third on 17 of 22 issues and which is especially disapproving of women working. As indicated above, the US views are quite varied with 9 in the modern third, 6 in the middle, and 7 among the most traditional third. This means that American attitudes could continue to evolve in a modern direction and still be less modern than many countries already are on many issues. From the cross-national perspective, the US has not reached a peak of modernity. American attitudes tend to be mostly middle-of-the-road to traditional compared to those of other countries.

Second, comparing the trends in attitudes towards the family to how attitudes differ by family type shows society is moving away from the values favored by traditional family types to those more endorsed by modern family types. Attitudes held by single-earner families are those attitudes that are losing ground, while the attitudes favored by single-parent and/or dual-earner families, those attitudes that are growing in popularity. In some cases, both types of modern families, single-parent and dual-earner families differ from the traditional, single-earner family. For example, support for gender equality in general and the employment of women in particular are gaining ground and these positions are more supported by both single-parent and dual-earner families, while single-earner couples are less in favor of these positions. In other cases, only the single-parent families differ from families with couples (both dual- and single earners). For example, single-parent families are more accepting of non-marital births and idea that children interfere with parental freedom than couples of either ilk. However, in those frequent cases when dual- and single-earner families differ, trends are away from the single earners' point-of-views and towards the position of the dual-earners.

Finally, comparing across birth cohorts indicates further advance of modern family types and values since those in more recent cohorts are more modern on most family values than earlier generations are (Mason and Lu, 1988; Firebaugh, 1993). Moreover, the shift in family type is likely to create even more modern attitudes in future generations since children raised by employed mothers are more supportive of gender equality and other modern viewpoints and more and more children are being raised in such circumstances (Smith, 1985; Wright and Young, 1998).

Overall, the shift from traditional to modern family structures and values is likely to continue. The basic trends have shown little sign of subsiding, cohort turnover will continue to push things along, and cross-national differences indicate that ample room for further movement. This is especially true of the shift to dual-earner couples and egalitarian gender roles. The impetus towards single-parent families is less certain. The divorce rate has stabilized, albeit at a high level, and both non-marital births and pre-marital sexual activity have stopped raising and may be falling. These factors will tend to curb the continued growth of single-parent families, although they are not likely to lead to their decline.

### **Conclusion**

Few areas of society have changed as much as the family has over the last generation. The basic structure of the family has been reshaped and family values and related attitudes have also undergone paradigmatic shifts. Families are smaller and less

stable, marriage is less central and cohabitation more common, the value of children and values for children have altered, and within marriages gender roles have become less traditional and more egalitarian in both word and practice. Collectively the alterations mark the replacement of traditional family types and family values with the emerging, modern family types and a new set of family values.

The changes that the family has been experiencing have in turn transformed society. As Meng-tzu has noted "the root of the state is the family" and the transplanting that the family has been undergoing has uprooted society in general. Some changes have been good, others bad, and still others both good and bad. But given the breadth and depth of changes in family life, the changes both for the better and the worse have been disruptive. Society has had to readjust to continually evolving structures and new attitudes. It is through this process of structural and value change and adaptation to these changes that the modern, 21st-century family is emerging.

Table 1

## Changes in Marital Status

	% Never Married	% Not Now Married	% Ever Divorced (All)	% Ever Divorced (Ever Married)	Divorce Rate <sup>a</sup>
1960					9.2
1965					10.6
1970					14.9
1972	15	26	14	17	
1973	15	26	13	15	
1974	14	25	15	17	
1975	16	28	15	19	20.3
1976	16	30	15	18	
1977	16.5	31	16	19	
1978	15	30	18	21	
1980	17	33	18	21	22.6
1982	19	35	19.5	24	
1983	17	33	19	23	
1984	20	36	20	25	
1985	18	35	20	25	21.7
1986	19	37	21	26	
1987	20	39	21	26	
1988	22	40	22	28	
1989	21	38	21	26	
1990	20	39	25	31	20.9
1991	21	39	22.5	29	
1993	19	39	24.5	30	
1994	20	40	26	32	
1995					19.8
1996	22	43	26.5	34	
1998	23	44	26	33	

Source: GSS and Vital Statistics

<sup>a</sup>Divorces per year per 1,000 married women 15 years and older. Data from Statistical Abstracts.

Table 2

## Trends in Cohabitation

% for whom first union was cohabitation: Ever in union

Birth Cohorts	Men	Women
1933-42	16.4	6.9
1943-52	30.3	21.8
1953-62	53.1	42.4
1963-74	65.7	64.0

Source: Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels, 1994

Cohabitators as % of ...

	All Couples	All Households	All Adults
1960	1.1	0.8	
1970	1.1	0.8	
1975	1.8	1.2	
1977	2.0	1.3	
1978	2.3	1.5	
1980	3.1	2.0	
1981	3.5	2.2	
1982	3.6	2.2	
1983	3.6	2.3	
1984	3.8	2.3	
1985	3.7	2.3	
1986	4.1	2.5	3.5
1987	4.3	2.6	4.0
1988	4.7	2.8	
1989	5.0	3.0	
1990	5.1	3.1	
1991	5.4	3.2	
1992	5.8	3.5	
1993	6.1	3.6	4.2
1994	6.3	3.8	4.3
1995	6.3	3.7	---
1996	6.8	4.0	6.0
1997	7.0	4.1	---
1998	---	---	6.4

Sources: Glick and Spanier, 1980; Spanier, 1983; Thornton, 1988; Current Population Surveys, 1987-1997; GSS, 1998

Table 2 (continued)

% cohabited with present spouse before marriage

1988	23.4
1994	28.0

Source: GSS, 1994<sup>a</sup>

	% Currently Cohabiting	% Ever Cohabited	% Cohabited prior to First Marriage
Women, 15-44			
1988	5	34	25
1995	7	41	24

Source: Abma, et al., 1997 and Smith, 1998

Table 3

Trends in Children

	% with No Children Under 18 in House	Mean # of Children Born	% Ideal Number of Children for a Family To Have		
			0-1	2	3+
1972	45	2.4	3	41	56
1973	48	2.3			
1974	47	2.2	3	45	52
1975	49	2.1	3	49	48
1976	50	2.1	5	51	44
1977	52	2.1	3	49	48
1978	50	2.1	3	51	46
1980	54.5	2.1			
1982	58	2.0	3	55	42
1983	53	2.1	3	51	46
1984	57.5	2.0			
1985	58	2.1	4	55.5	40.5
1986	56.5	2.1	3	51.5	45.5
1987	58.5	2.0			
1988	59	2.0	3	51	46
1989	57.5	1.9	4	54	42
1990	63	1.9	3	55	42
1991	61	1.9	4	54	42
1993	60	1.8	4	58	38
1994	60	1.9	4	54	42
1996	61	1.8	4	57	39
1998	62	1.9	4	57	39

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

How many children have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive at any time (including any you had from a previous marriage).

What do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?

Table 4

## Trends in Out-of-Marriage Births

	% of All Births to Unmarried Mothers	Birth Rates for Unmarried Mothers
1960	5.3	21.6 <sup>a</sup>
1965	7.7	23.5
1970	10.7	26.5
1975	14.2	24.5
1980	18.4	29.4
1985	22.0	32.8
1986	23.4	34.3
1987	24.5	36.1
1988	25.7	38.6
1989	27.1	41.8
1990	28.0	43.8
1991	29.5	45.2
1992	30.1	45.2
1993	31.0	45.3
1994	32.6	46.9
1995	32.2	45.1
1996	32.4	44.6

	Whites	Blacks	Whites	Blacks
1960	2.3	21.6 <sup>b</sup>	9.2	98.3 <sup>b</sup>
1965	4.0	26.3	11.6	97.6
1970	5.7	37.6	13.9	95.5
1975	7.3	48.8	12.4	84.2
1980	11.0	55.2	17.6	81.4
1985	14.5	60.1	21.8	78.8
1986	15.7	61.2	23.2	80.9
1987	16.7	62.2	24.6	84.7
1988	17.7	63.5	26.6	88.9
1989	19.0	64.5	29.9	93.1
1990	20.1	65.2	31.8	93.9
1991	21.8	67.9	34.6	89.5
1992	22.6	68.1	35.2	86.5
1993	23.6	68.7	35.9	84.0
1994	25.4	70.4	38.3	82.1
1995	25.3	69.9	37.5	75.9
1996	25.7	69.8	----	----

<sup>a</sup>Number to births to unmarried women per 1,000 unmarried women age 15-44.

<sup>b</sup>In 1960 and 1965 figures are for non-Whites. This slightly underestimates the rate for Blacks only.

Source: Statistical Abstracts

Table 5

## Trends in the Living Arrangements of Households

	Married No Children	Married Children	Not Married No Children	Not Married Children
1972	29	45	16	10
1973	32	42	16	10
1974	31	44	16	9
1975	31	41	18	11
1976	32	38	19	12
1977	33	37	19.5	11
1978	31	39.5	19	11
1980	32	35	22	10.5
1982	33	32	25.5	10
1983	31	35.5	22	11.5
1984	31	32	26	10
1985	33	32	25	10
1986	30	33	27	10
1987	30	31	28	10.5
1988	31	28	28	13
1989	30.5	31	27	11
1990	33	28	30	10
1991	31	30	29	10
1993	32	29	29	10
1994	31	29	29	11
1996	30	26	30	13
1998	30	26	32	12

Source: GSS

Table 6

## % of Children in Various Types of Families

	Single Parent	Two Parent, Continuing	Two Parent, Remarried	Two Adults Ex-married	Two Adults Never Married
1972	4.7	73.0	9.9	3.8	8.6
1973	6.4	71.8	9.2	6.4	6.2
1974	5.9	71.4	12.0	4.1	6.6
1975	8.3	65.1	14.8	4.8	7.0
1976	10.7	63.8	11.0	3.8	10.6
1977	12.4	63.4	13.1	3.2	7.9
1978	10.2	65.3	13.6	4.0	6.9
1980	13.1	61.7	12.7	5.8	6.8
1982	14.3	59.3	13.7	5.2	7.3
1983	13.5	61.8	12.2	4.6	7.8
1984	14.9	58.4	14.2	6.5	5.9
1985	14.0	61.4	12.2	4.6	7.7
1986	11.3	61.0	13.6	6.6	7.4
1987	10.3	60.4	14.9	8.3	6.1
1988	18.6	54.7	13.0	5.0	8.7
1989	15.9	56.5	12.2	7.3	8.1
1990	14.9	56.1	17.9	5.1	6.0
1991	18.7	53.6	15.5	5.2	7.0
1993	15.9	57.7	13.2	6.6	6.7
1994	18.4	52.8	14.7	7.1	7.0
1996	19.6	48.8	14.4	8.5	8.7
1998	18.2	51.7	12.3	8.6	9.2

Source: GSS

Single Parent - only one adult in household

Two Parents, Continuing - married couple, never divorced

Two Parents, Remarried - married couple, at least one remarried  
(unknown if remarriage came before or after children born)Two adults, Ex-married - two or more adults; previously, but not  
currently marriedTwo adults, Never Married - two or more adults; never married (This  
category also includes some complex family structures.)

Table 7

## Trends in Labor Force Participation of Married Couples

	Traditional: Husband Works Wife at Home	Modern: Both Work Outside Home	Non-Trad.: Wife Works Husband Home	"Retired": Neither Works <sup>a</sup>
1972	53	32	3	11.5
1973	48.5	34	4.5	13
1974	47	35	3	14
1975	45	37	4.5	14
1976	46	35	3	16
1977	41	40	5	14
1978	45	40	3.5	12
1980	37	44	4	14.5
1982	35	45	5	15.5
1983	35	47	4	13.5
1984	34	48	4	14
1985	30	49	4	16
1986	29	49	4	18
1987	25.5	55	6	14
1988	25	52	4	18.5
1989	26	53	4	17
1990	25	55	4	15
1991	26	51	5	18
1993	22.5	56	5	16
1994	23	56	5	15
1996	24	59	5	12
1998	21	58.5	6	14

Source: GSS

<sup>a</sup>Households in which neither spouse is in the labor force. While retired couples are the largest group, category includes any combination of retired, disabled, students, and keeping house.

Table 8

Trends in Labor Force Participation of Married Couples  
with Children Under 18 in Household

	Traditional: Husband Works Wife at Home	Modern: Both Work Outside Home	Non-Trad.: Wife Works Husband Home	"Retired": Neither Works <sup>a</sup>
1972	60	33	2	4
1973	58	34.5	2	5
1974	57	39	0.5	4
1975	54	40	2	3.5
1976	54.5	48	3	5
1977	52	41.5	2	4
1978	54.5	42	1	2.5
1980	46	49	2.5	2
1982	43	50	3	4.5
1983	45	52	1	2
1984	40	54	3	3
1985	37	58	4	1.5
1986	34	60	2	5
1987	31	63	2.5	4
1988	33	64	2	1.5
1989	32	63	3	2
1990	33	62	2	3
1991	33	61	2	4
1993	27	67	3	2
1994	28	66	4	2
1996	29	66	3	2
1998	27	67	4	2

<sup>a</sup>Households in which neither spouse is in the labor force. While retired couples are the largest group, category includes any combination of retired, disabled, students, and keeping house.

Table 9

Trends Regarding Marriage and Divorce

	% Very Happy with Marriage	% Divorces Should be Easier
1973	67	
1974	69	33.5
1975	67	29
1976	66	29
1977	65	29
1978	65.5	28
1980	67.5	--
1982	66	23.5
1983	62.5	25
1984	66	--
1985	56	24
1986	63	28
1987	65	--
1988	62	25
1989	60	27
1990	65	25
1991	64	29.5
1993	61	27
1994	60	27
1996	62	28
1998	63.5	24.5

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage?  
Would you say that your marriage is very happy, pretty happy, or  
not too happy?

Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to  
obtain than it is now?

Table 10

Trends in Attitudes about Children

	% Disagree that Those Wanting Children Should Get Married	% Disagree that Children Are Life's Greatest Joy	% Agree that Children Inter- fer with Par- ent's Freedom	% Disagree That People w/o Children Lead Empty Lives
1988	14.8	4.1	10.7	44.8
1994	17.2	4.1	8.9	52.9

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you agree or disagree...

People who want children ought to get married.

Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy.

Having children interferes too much with the freedom of the parents.

People who have never had children lead empty lives.

Table 11

Importance of Traits in Children

% Most Important

	To think for Ones Self	To Obey	To Work Hard	To Help Others	To be Well Liked and Popular
1986	51	23	11	14	0
1987	54	20	12	13	1
1988	50	23	14.5	12	1
1989	53	19	14	12	1
1990	51	18	16	14	1
1991	51	20	15	14	0
1993	53	19	14	13	1
1994	53	18	16	13	0
1996	51	18.5	18	13	1
1998	49	18.5	18	13	1

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

If you had to chose, which thing on this list would you pick as the most important for a child to learn to prepare him or her for life?  
 A. To obey B. To be well-liked or popular C. To think for himself or herself D. To work hard E. To help others when they need help

Table 12

Trends in Approval of Spanking Children

	% Approving of Spanking
1986	83.5
1988	80
1989	77
1990	79
1991	75
1993	74
1994	74
1996	73
1998	75

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that it is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard spanking?

Table 13

Trends in Attitudes Towards Women and Politics

	% Willing to Vote for Women for President	% Women Emotionally Suited for Politics	% Women Help Run Country as Well as Homes
1972	74		
1974	80	53	64.5
1975	80	50	64
1977	80	50	62
1978	83	57	69
1982	86.5	62	74.5
1983	86.5	64	77
1985	83	61	74
1986	86.5	63	77
1988	88	68	79
1989	86.5	69	80
1990	91	74	82
1991	91	74	81
1993	90	78	85
1994	92.5	79	87
1996	93	79	84
1998	94	77	85

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

If your party nominated a woman for President, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?

Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men.

Table 14

Trends in Attitudes towards Women, Work, and the Family

	% for Wife Working if Husband Can Support Her	% Agree Mom who Works Can be as Close to Children	% Disagree Wife Should Help Husband's Career First	% Disagree Better if Man Works Woman at Home
1972	67			
1974	70			
1975	75			
1977	67	49	43	34
1978	74			
1982	75			
1983	77.5			
1985	--	61	63	52
1986	79	62.5	64	53
1988	81	62.5	69	59
1989	79	64.5	72	60
1990	83	63.5	71.5	61
1991	80	66	71	59
1993	81	68	77	65
1994	82	70	79	66
1996	83.5	66	80	62
1998	82	68	81	66

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her?

Now I'm going to read several more statements. As I read each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it. For example, here is the statement:

A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself.

It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

Table 15

Trends on Gender Roles

	% Disagree Women Really Want Home and Kids	% Disagree Housework as Fulfilling as Job	% Agree Job is Best for Woman to be Indpdnt.	% Agree Both Spouses Should Earn Incomes
1988	38.9	23.0	42.5	49.3
1994	43.6	21.9	45.0	57.6
1996	--	--	--	67.0

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you agree or disagree...

A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children.

Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person.

Both the husband and the wife should contribute to the household income.

Table 16

Trends on Mothers Working

Wife Should Work Full-Time...

	Before First Child	When Has Preschooler	After Young- est in School	After Children Leave Home
1988	76.8	10.7	36.0	73.8
1994	84.5	11.6	38.0	80.2

Source: GSS

Question Wording:

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all under these circumstances...

- a. After marrying and before there are children
- b. When there is a child under school age
- c. After the youngest child starts school
- d. After the children leave home

Table 17

Trends in Sexual Permissiveness

	% Always Wrong			
	Extramarital Sex	Homosexual Sex	Premarital Sex	Teenage Premarital Sex
1972			36	
1973	70	72.5	--	
1974	73	69	33	
1975	--	--	31	
1976	69	70	--	
1977	74	73	31	
1978	--	--	29	
1980	71	74	--	
1982	74	74	28	
1983	--	--	28	
1984	71.5	75	--	
1985	75	76	28	
1986	--	--	28	67
1987	74	77.5	--	
1988	81	77	26	68.5
1989	78.5	74	28	70
1990	79	76	25	69
1991	77	77	28	68
1993	78.5	66	27	68.5
1994	80	68	26	70
1996	78.5	61	24	70
1998	81	58.5	27	72

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

There's been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes towards sex are changing in this country. If a man and woman have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

What if they are in their early teens, say 14 to 16 years old? In that case, do you think sex relations before marriage are always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

What is your opinion about a married person having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner --is it always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex -- do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

Table 18

Trends in Sexual Attitudes

	% for Sex Educa- tion in Schools	% for Birth Control for Teenagers
1974	82	
1975	80	
1977	78.5	
1982	85	
1983	86	
1985	85	
1986	85	57
1988	88	59
1989	88	56
1990	90	61
1991	87.5	61
1993	86	58
1994	88	57
1996	87	60
1998	87	58

Source: GSS

Question Wordings:

Would you be for or against sex education in the public schools?

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that methods of birth control should be available to teenagers between the ages of 14 and 16 if their parents do not approve?

Table 19

## Trends on Socializing

% Spending Social Evening at Least Several  
Times a Week ...

	With Relatives	With Neighbor	With Other Friend	At Bar
1974	38	30	22	11
1975	39	26.5	21	9
1977	37.5	27	22	11
1978	36	28.5	21	10
1982	37	24	22	12.5
1983	33	25	21	12
1985	36	23	21	9
1986	37	28	21	9.5
1988	37	25	20	10
1989	34	22	22	8
1990	35	22	20	8
1991	36	23	24	9
1993	33	21	24	8
1994	34	21	23	8
1996	36	20	24	8.5
1998	37	20	22	8

Source: GSS

## Question Wordings:

How often do you do the following things? A. Spend a social evening with relatives B. Spend a social evening with someone who lives in your neighborhood C. Spend a social evening with friends who live outside the neighborhood D. Go to a bar or tavern

Table 20

Attitudes toward Children, Family, Work, and Gender  
in Cross-National Perspective<sup>a</sup>

Being a House- wife is Ful- filling		Job Best Way for Women to be Indepen- dent		Both Spouses Should Work		The Husband Should Work and the Wife Stay Home	
% Disagreeing		% Agreeing		% Agreeing		% Disagreeing	
EG	68.6	EG	80.3	EG	93.5	EG	78.6
ISRL	62.8	PHIL	77.0	BUL	92.9	CAN	75.5
IT	56.8	WG	75.8	SLVN	92.6	SWE	70.7
CZ	47.6	SP	74.9	PHIL	89.7	NOR	69.7
NOR	42.4	IT	72.7	ISRL	86.7	NL	63.8
SP	42.0	BUL	71.1	SP	84.4	ISRL	60.9
WG	37.7	POL	69.2	SWE	82.2	NZ	59.5
SLVN	37.4	IRE	67.9	CZ	81.0	<b>USA</b>	<b>59.4</b>
AUS	37.2	SLVN	65.2	IT	81.0	GB	59.1
CAN	35.5	ISRL	65.1	IRE	77.3	NOIRE	57.0
SWE	35.4	RUS	64.3	RUS	73.7	AUSTL	55.0
GB	34.4	SWE	63.0	HUN	72.6	SP	53.6
NL	33.0	NOIRE	60.0	NOIRE	71.3	IRE	53.2
NZ	31.1	GB	60.7	WG	66.9	IT	48.3
AUSTL	29.3	<b>USA</b>	<b>56.4</b>	AUS	63.4	WG	47.7
NOIRE	26.9	JAPN	53.5	GB	61.8	SLVN	43.0
BUL	25.5	NOR	51.7	NOR	60.4	JAPN	39.9
IRE	25.3	CZ	51.3	POL	57.9	AUS	38.9
POL	25.2	NL	50.9	<b>USA</b>	<b>57.7</b>	CZ	24.7
<b>USA</b>	<b>21.8</b>	AUSTL	49.5	CAN	55.8	POL	20.8
HUN	17.1	CAN	46.9	JAPN	54.4	BUL	20.5
PHIL	15.9	NZ	44.8	AUSTL	44.9	RUS	18.1
JAPN	14.6	HUN	36.8	NZ	39.1	HUN	18.1
RUS	5.2	AUS	36.7	NL	28.6	PHIL	9.4

SOURCE: 1994 ISSP

Table 20 (continued)

Working Mother Having as Warm a Relationship with Children % Agreeing	Children Suffers if Mother Works % Disagreeing	Family Suffers if Mother Works % Disagreeing	Women Really Want a Home and Children % Disagreeing				
EG	92.2	EG	50.7	CAN	58.9	EG	71.2
AUS	77.1	CAN	50.0	EG	55.3	CAN	57.2
WG	75.3	SWE	48.7	GB	51.2	NZ	54.1
NL	71.5	NOIRE	46.7	<b>USA</b>	<b>51.1</b>	GB	50.4
CAN	71.4	<b>USA</b>	<b>46.2</b>	NOIRE	50.8	WG	48.1
<b>USA</b>	<b>70.8</b>	NOR	44.0	SWE	47.7	NOIRE	45.6
JAPN	69.4	GB	43.2	NOR	42.4	NOR	45.3
RUS	68.5	IRE	42.4	JAPN	40.9	<b>USA</b>	<b>43.5</b>
ISRL	67.2	JAPN	40.4	NZ	39.1	NL	43.3
SWE	66.7	ISRL	38.1	IRE	39.0	AUS	40.8
NOIRE	65.7	SP	36.3	NL	37.4	ISRL	39.7
GB	64.6	AUSTL	35.6	AUSTL	37.2	SP	39.6
IT	62.2	NL	34.4	ISRL	36.5	AUSTL	37.9
IRE	62.2	NZ	32.9	POL	33.9	SWE	36.4
PHIL	62.2	CZ	32.2	SP	33.9	IT	35.8
POL	61.6	PHIL	28.9	CZ	30.3	IRE	33.5
SLVN	61.0	SLVN	24.6	PHIL	28.5	JAPN	28.0
SP	56.2	POL	24.3	AUS	25.4	RUS	23.8
NZ	55.2	IT	18.3	BUL	25.4	SLVN	20.1
NOR	55.1	WG	18.2	WG	24.0	CZ	19.8
BUL	55.0	AUS	17.3	IT	21.2	POL	19.7
HUN	53.7	RUS	15.8	SLVN	20.5	BUL	13.4
AUSTL	53.6	BUL	15.4	HUN	16.9	PHIL	11.7
CZ	47.8	HUN	11.5	RUS	11.8	HUN	6.9

Table 20 (continued)

## Approving of Woman Working Full Time/Part Time If...

	No Children		Pre-schooler		Youngest in School		Youngest Grown				
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part			
CAN	93.5	4.3	PHIL	25.2	34.6	CAN	46.4	43.1	SWE	88.9	10.8
SWE	92.9	6.8	ISRL	18.4	63.0	ISRL	38.2	54.2	BUL	86.2	8.1
NZ	90.8	7.7	CAN	17.5	37.0	<b>USA</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>53.8</b>	CZ	83.9	14.2
EG	90.0	9.1	NL	15.1	44.8	SLVN	34.4	43.2	NOR	82.3	16.4
NOIRE	89.6	7.6	EG	14.8	64.5	SP	32.6	44.7	SLVN	82.3	7.8
NL	88.9	10.1	SP	14.0	39.3	POL	30.0	29.8	CAN	82.2	15.8
NOR	88.4	10.2	BUL	13.9	25.3	NL	28.6	63.9	EG	81.5	17.5
GB	87.8	9.6	IRE	11.8	38.9	BUL	28.5	39.7	<b>USA</b>	<b>80.9</b>	<b>16.7</b>
AUSTL	84.5	13.4	POL	11.2	14.4	EG	27.0	67.0	POL	80.4	10.7
IRE	84.4	11.5	<b>USA</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>34.2</b>	IRE	26.1	49.5	NL	80.3	18.5
AUS	84.1	14.0	JAPN	11.1	25.7	SWE	25.8	70.7	NOIRE	74.5	23.3
<b>USA</b>	<b>84.1</b>	<b>13.2</b>	SLVN	9.4	36.5	NOR	25.2	64.2	IRE	74.2	20.3
HUN	80.0	12.9	SWE	8.4	62.2	CZ	22.6	57.9	NZ	74.1	23.7
CZ	79.8	13.6	NOIRE	8.4	34.0	NOIRE	22.1	65.8	GB	73.7	24.6
BUL	79.2	14.3	NOR	7.7	47.5	PHIL	21.4	36.9	HUN	72.0	18.2
WG	77.7	18.8	CZ	6.6	39.4	HUN	19.9	50.0	ISRL	71.2	23.1
SLVN	77.2	11.3	GB	5.9	31.9	GB	18.2	72.9	AUS	66.7	28.7
JAPN	71.2	21.7	IT	4.8	56.0	JAPN	17.1	56.5	SP	64.4	17.8
ISRL	70.7	25.9	HUN	4.8	31.3	IT	16.7	66.3	RUS	61.9	26.3
POL	68.6	10.6	RUS	4.1	35.6	AUSTL	16.1	72.8	AUSTL	60.6	34.6
SP	62.6	22.6	AUSTL	3.9	30.7	NZ	12.7	79.7	WG	58.4	37.2
RUS	61.4	28.0	AUS	2.7	36.7	RUS	10.2	58.2	IT	55.4	29.5
IT	58.9	33.3	NZ	2.6	29.0	AUS	9.3	70.3	JAPN	54.0	37.4
PHIL	35.9	31.6	WG	1.3	30.2	WG	4.9	67.1	PHIL	42.1	28.6

Table 20 (continued)

Children are Life's Great- est Joy		Children in- terfer with Freedom of Parents		People with- out Children Lead Empty Lives		People Who Want Children Should Marry	
% Disagreeing		% Agreeing		% Disagreeing		% Disagreeing	
NZ	6.4	RUS	61.9	NL	64.8	NL	53.8
AUSTL	6.3	BUL	56.6	IRE	64.3	SLVN	45.9
JAPN	6.2	SP	56.4	NZ	59.7	EG	43.7
NL	6.0	JAPN	43.8	CAN	59.3	SP	40.9
GB	5.8	POL	37.7	GB	59.0	SWE	38.5
CZ	5.3	AUS	35.2	NOIRE	54.0	RUS	37.4
CAN	5.2	IT	31.9	<b>USA</b>	<b>53.1</b>	CAN	34.6
IRE	4.7	WG	31.0	NOR	50.4	AUS	31.5
ISRL	4.5	ISRL	28.7	AUSTL	48.1	NOR	30.7
<b>USA</b>	<b>4.2</b>	PHIL	23.4	SP	47.7	HUN	28.9
NOIRE	4.1	HUN	23.3	POL	36.6	IT	28.6
WG	3.7	CZ	22.5	CZ	32.9	GB	27.4
PHIL	3.1	SLVN	18.9	SWE	32.5	WG	26.8
SP	2.6	EG	18.5	WG	32.2	JAPN	26.2
NOR	2.4	NL	13.9	PHIL	30.2	NZ	25.6
POL	2.1	CAN	11.7	AUS	28.4	IRE	19.3
AUS	1.8	AUSTL	10.7	IT	27.7	NOIRE	19.0
RUS	1.5	GB	10.4	RUS	26.5	AUSTL	17.4
SLVN	1.5	IRE	9.5	ISRL	21.4	BUL	16.5
SWE	1.4	<b>USA</b>	<b>8.7</b>	JAPN	19.8	<b>USA</b>	<b>16.3</b>
BUL	1.0	NZ	8.3	EG	19.4	ISRL	15.4
IT	1.0	NOIRE	7.9	SLVN	16.9	POL	14.7
EG	1.0	NOR	7.4	BUL	12.8	CZ	14.3
HUN	0.3	SWE	5.6	HUN	6.9	PHIL	9.4

Table 20 (continued)

Main Purpose of Marriage Having Child- ren % Disagreeing	One Parent Can Raise a Child as Well Two Can % Agreeing	Parents Ought to Stay Toget- her If They Have Children % Disagreeing	Couple Ought to Stay Toget- her Even If No Children % Disagreeing	Paid Maternity Leave % Agreeing	Child Care Benefits If Parents Work % Agreeing						
NZ	70.2	PHIL	62.4	NL	74.4	EG	90.4	BUL	99.8	CZ	94.8
<b>USA</b>	<b>69.5</b>	JAPN	59.4	CAN	71.8	NL	89.9	EG	99.1	BUL	84.2
CAN	69.4	EG	53.4	AUS	71.8	NZ	87.9	SLVN	98.9	HUN	82.8
NL	68.5	POL	52.0	EG	71.6	WG	87.2	HUN	98.3	EG	82.4
NOIRE	64.5	AUS	51.0	NZ	70.1	SLVN	87.2	RUS	98.1	PHIL	80.5
GB	64.4	IRE	47.0	<b>USA</b>	<b>67.4</b>	CZ	86.4	ISRL	98.1	RUS	79.5
EG	63.5	NL	43.8	WG	64.2	AUS	85.1	CZ	96.8	SLVN	76.4
SWE	63.4	SP	39.3	SLVN	58.3	GB	84.4	JAPN	96.1	JAPN	71.4
JAPN	63.2	WG	38.2	ISRL	58.1	ISRL	84.4	IRE	95.1	NOR	65.2
IRE	62.1	NOIRE	37.5	GB	57.9	AUSTL	84.1	POL	94.8	ISRL	64.1
AUSTL	59.0	BUL	36.7	SP	57.9	CAN	84.0	NOIRE	94.6	WG	58.2
SP	56.5	<b>USA</b>	<b>36.1</b>	AUSTL	57.2	RUS	83.0	WG	93.9	SP	55.9
WG	56.2	GB	35.8	RUS	54.6	NOR	82.8	SP	93.9	IRE	52.0
AUS	54.1	NOR	35.7	NOIRE	54.5	HUN	82.5	PHIL	92.8	POL	51.8
NOR	50.7	RUS	34.9	NOR	52.2	SWE	82.5	IT	91.4	NOIRE	51.7
IT	45.5	SWE	34.9	IRE	51.2	<b>USA</b>	<b>82.1</b>	NOR	90.9	CAN	48.6
ISRL	37.8	CAN	33.2	SWE	51.0	SP	80.7	SWE	90.7	AUS	48.3
SLVN	36.2	IT	30.7	HUN	45.1	IRE	80.4	AUS	84.1	SWE	47.7
POL	33.2	ISRL	28.4	CZ	44.7	IT	79.0	GB	83.4	<b>USA</b>	<b>45.9</b>
RUS	28.0	SLVN	28.2	IT	42.1	NOIRE	77.6	CAN	79.6	GB	44.1
CZ	26.8	CZ	26.8	PHIL	37.7	BUL	71.0	<b>USA</b>	<b>75.8</b>	IT	35.3
PHIL	16.1	HUN	25.8	JAPN	21.2	POL	57.7	NL	69.8	AUSTL	32.8
HUN	16.0	NZ	24.3	POL	19.1	PHIL	48.8	NZ	50.7	NZ	27.5
BUL	14.3	AUSTL	24.3			JAPN	46.0	AUSTL	41.7	NL	19.3

Note: Questions about divorce with children not asked in Bulgaria.

Table 20 (continued)

<sup>a</sup>Abbreviations used for countries:

AUS	Austria
AUSTL	Australia
BUL	Bulgaria
CAN	Canada
CZ	Czech Republic
EG	East German
GB	Great Britain
HUN	Hungary
IRE	Ireland
ISRL	Israel
IT	Italy
JAPN	Japan
NL	The Netherlands
NOIRE	Northern Ireland
NOR	Norway
NZ	New Zealand
PHIL	The Philippines
POL	Poland
RUS	Russia
SLVN	Slovenia
SP	Spain
SWE	Sweden
USA	United States
WG	West Germany

Question Wordings:

For wordings of questions previously introduced see Tables 10 and 15.

Do you agree or disagree...

- a. Working women should receive paid maternity leave when they have a baby.

Table 20 (continued)

- b. Families should receive financial benefits for child care when both parents work.

Do you agree or disagree...

- a. One parent can bring up a child as well as two parents together.

Do you agree or disagree...

- a. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
- b. A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
- c. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
- e. A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children.
- g. A husband's job is to earn money; a wife's job is to look after the home and family.

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time, not at all under these circumstances:

- a. After marrying and before there are children.
- b. When there is a child under school age.
- c. After the youngest child starts school.
- d. After the children leave home.

Do you agree or disagree...

- a. The main purpose of marriage these days is to have children.

Table 21

## Changes in Household Composition

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1980</u>
Not Married, Child Working	4.9	5.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	6.8	6.6	5.8
Not Married, Children, Not working	4.9	5.3	4.7	4.8	5.6	4.3	3.9	4.8
Married, Children, Both working	14.4	13.9	16.4	15.4	13.2	14.6	16.0	16.2
Married, Children, One working	27.8	25.3	24.4	22.1	21.8	20.1	22.0	16.9
Married, Children No One working	2.8	2.6	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.0	1.6	2.0
Not Married, No Children, Working	7.9	7.8	8.1	9.0	9.7	10.9	10.5	13.7
Not Married, No Children, Not working	8.4	8.0	7.5	8.7	8.9	8.6	8.7	8.6
Married, No Children, Both working	8.2	10.7	9.0	9.4	9.1	12.0	10.9	12.2
Married, No Children, One working	14.0	13.7	12.5	12.9	13.1	12.4	11.6	10.5
Married, No Children No One working	6.8	7.7	9.5	8.8	9.6	8.4	8.2	9.4

Table 21 (continued)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>
Not Married, Children, Working	6.0	5.7	6.2	6.8	6.1	6.7	8.0	7.2
Not Married, Children, Not working	3.9	5.8	3.9	3.2	4.3	3.8	4.6	4.2
Married, Children, Both working	15.1	16.5	16.3	17.7	19.1	18.8	17.4	18.5
Married, Children, One working	14.1	16.5	14.0	13.3	11.9	10.5	10.1	11.2
Married, Children No One working	2.7	2.5	2.0	0.9	2.1	1.6	0.9	1.3
Not Married, No Children, Working	14.4	13.3	16.3	14.1	15.6	17.5	17.1	16.4
Not Married, No Children, Not working	11.1	8.3	9.9	11.3	11.3	10.9	10.6	10.7
Married, No Children, Both working	12.0	12.0	13.2	12.6	10.7	13.2	12.1	12.5
Married, No Children, One working	11.7	10.2	10.2	9.6	9.0	9.5	8.3	8.1
Married, No Children No One working	8.9	9.2	7.9	10.6	10.0	7.4	10.9	9.9

Table 21 (continued)

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1998</u>
Not Married, Children, Working	6.8	6.1	6.2	7.4	9.4	8.4
Not Married, Children, Not working	2.7	3.9	4.1	3.4	3.7	3.4
Married, Children, Both working	16.2	16.9	18.4	18.4	16.9	17.3
Married, Children, One working	10.1	11.2	10.1	9.6	8.8	8.1
Married, Children No One working	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.8
Not Married, No Children, Working	17.2	17.7	17.2	18.4	20.3	21.5
Not Married, No Children, Not working	12.7	11.6	11.5	10.3	10.0	10.6
Married, No Children, Both working	15.3	12.6	13.8	14.3	15.4	14.5
Married, No Children, One working	8.9	8.8	8.5	8.1	8.7	8.0
Married, No Children No One working	8.8	9.8	9.3	9.0	6.2	7.3

Source: GSS

Table 22

## Changes in Family Composition (Households with Children)

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1980</u>
Not Married, Children, Working	8.9	9.6	8.8	11.2	12.2	14.2	13.2	12.7
Not Married, Children, Not working	8.9	10.2	8.9	9.4	11.3	9.0	7.9	10.4
Married, Children, Both working	26.3	26.7	30.8	30.1	26.7	30.6	31.9	35.5
Married, Children, One working	50.8	48.5	45.7	43.2	44.0	42.0	43.9	37.0
Married, Children No One working	5.1	5.0	5.8	6.0	5.8	4.2	3.1	4.3
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>
Not Married, Children, Working	14.3	12.0	14.7	16.2	14.0	16.2	19.6	17.0
Not Married, Children, Not working	9.2	12.4	9.3	7.6	9.8	9.2	11.2	9.8
Married, Children, Both working	36.2	35.0	38.4	42.2	44.0	45.4	42.4	43.5
Married, Children, One working	33.7	35.2	33.0	31.7	27.5	25.4	24.5	26.4
Married, Children No One working	6.5	5.4	4.7	2.3	4.8	3.8	2.3	3.2

Table 22 (continued)

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1998</u>
Not Married, Children, Working	18.5	15.4	15.6	18.7	23.7	22.2
Not Married, Children, Not working	7.4	9.8	10.3	8.6	9.3	8.9
Married, Children, Both working	43.6	42.8	46.3	46.1	42.8	45.4
Married, Children, One working	27.2	28.4	25.5	24.1	22.3	21.3
Married, Children No One working	3.3	3.6	2.4	2.5	1.9	2.2

Source: GSS

Table 23

Changes in Family Composition (Households with Children)  
by Social Class

	<u>1972-77</u>	<u>1978-82</u>	<u>1983-88</u>	<u>1989-93</u>	<u>1994-98</u>
Not Married, Children, Working					
Working Class	11.7	14.0	17.4	21.3	27.3
Middle Class	9.9	12.6	13.5	10.8	14.6
Not Married, Children, Not working					
Working Class	8.9	8.9	9.3	8.0	10.2
Middle Class	9.7	9.4	9.7	11.2	7.3
Married, Children, Both working					
Working Class	28.4	32.1	40.2	39.5	40.8
Middle Class	28.6	37.3	43.7	49.5	49.5
Married, Children, One working					
Working Class	44.5	39.4	28.6	27.8	19.5
Middle Class	47.8	37.4	30.1	25.7	26.4
Married, Children No One working					
Working Class	6.5	5.5	4.4	3.4	2.2
Middle Class	4.0	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.2

Source: GSS

Table 24

Gender Roles by Family Composition and Social Class

	% Agree Working Mother Warm	% Disagree Children Suffer If Mother Works	% Disagree Women as Fulfilled by House- work	% Agree Job is Best Way for Woman be Indep.
A. All Families with Children				
Not Married, Children, Working	75.5	59.4	33.4	55.4
Not Married, Children, Not working	76.3	48.7	32.1	56.5
Married, Children, Both working	76.7	55.8	26.5	42.5
Married, Children, One working	58.5	34.4	17.0	26.3
Married, Children No One working	----	----	----	----
B. By Social Class				
Married, Children, Both working				
Working Class	72.7	54.6	20.6	41.7
Middle Class	80.4	56.8	30.5	43.6
Married, Children, One working				
Working Class	58.2	41.9	19.7	32.0
Middle Class	58.7	28.0	14.8	21.3

Table 24 (continued)

	% Agree Both Spouses Should Work	%Disagree Husband Work Wife Stay Home	%Disagree Family Suffers If Mother Works	%Disagree Women Want Home and Children
A. All Families with Children				
Not Married, Children, Working	73.9	56.9	59.8	48.5
Not Married, Children, Not working	70.0	54.8	57.2	39.5
Married, Children, Both working	58.8	66.5	61.5	46.5
Married, Children, One working	37.2	44.8	46.0	40.5
Married, Children No One working	50.1	30.7	35.4	----
B. By Social Class				
Married, Children, Both working				
Working Class	63.7	61.9	61.0	38.0
Middle Class	54.0	71.1	62.1	54.6
Married, Children, One working				
Working Class	46.2	42.5	41.5	40.8
Middle Class	28.8	48.4	30.0	40.2

Table 24 (continued)

	% Disagree Better for Man to Work and Woman Stay Home	%Disagree Wife Should Help Hus- band's Career
A. All Families with Children		
Not Married, Children, Working	75.2	88.3
Not Married, Children, Not working	69.4	81.3
Married, Children, Both working	72.0	86.9
Married, Children, One working	55.9	76.3
Married, Children No One working	50.5	70.1
B. By Social Class		
Married, Children, Both working		
Working Class	70.9	86.1
Middle Class	73.4	87.6
Married, Children, One working		
Working Class	53.6	75.0
Middle Class	57.9	77.5

Source: GSS

Table 25

## Woman and Employment Issues by Family Composition and Social Class

## Approving of Woman Working Full Time/Part Time If...

## A. All Families with Children

	No Children		Pre-schooler		Youngest in School		Youngest Grown	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
Not Married, Children, Working	85.5	12.4	19.2	38.2	55.5	39.9	80.4	13.6
Not Married, Children, Not working	76.4	19.3	13.4	34.8	47.2	47.6	83.3	11.3
Married, Children, Both working	85.9	11.7	17.9	37.9	47.6	46.9	78.8	19.3
Married, Children, One working	79.7	16.1	4.5	23.1	21.9	62.9	66.0	28.5
Married, Children No One working	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

## B. By Social Class

Married, Children,  
Both working

Working Class	84.3	12.8	17.9	35.5	47.1	44.2	79.6	17.2
Middle Class	87.5	10.7	18.0	40.6	47.9	50.0	77.9	21.6

Married, Children,  
One working

Working Class	77.7	15.0	7.0	25.7	31.5	56.8	74.8	18.0
Middle Class	81.4	17.0	2.4	20.8	13.5	68.3	58.2	37.6

Source: GSS

Table 26

## Child-Related Issues by Family Composition and Social Class

	Children are Life's Great- est Joy	Children in- terfer with Freedom of Parents	People with- out Children Lead Empty Lives	Ideal Number of Children	Number of Children Born
	% Disagreeing	% Agreeing	% Disagreeing	Mean	Mean
A. All Families with Children					
Not Married, Children, Working	4.9	17.4	57.6	2.5	1.6
Not Married, Children, Not working	2.3	14.0	49.5	2.6	2.1
Married, Children, Both working	3.1	6.4	46.7	2.4	2.2
Married, Children, One working	0.8	6.9	40.7	2.6	2.4
Married, Children No One working	----	----	----	2.7	3.6
B. By Social Class					
Married, Children, Both working					
Working Class	2.0	7.1	48.2	2.5	2.3
Middle Class	4.2	5.7	45.2	2.4	2.1

Married, Children,

One working

Working Class

Middle Class

0.8

9.8

32.3

2.6

2.5

0.7

4.4

47.9

2.5

2.4

Source: GSS

Table 27

## Children, Marriage, and Divorce by Family Composition and Social Class

	Main Purpose of Marriage Having Child- ren % Disagreeing	One Parent Can Raise a Child as Well Two Can % Agreeing	Parents Ought to Stay Toget- her If They Have Children % Disagreeing	Couple Ought to Stay Toget- her Even If No Children % Disagreeing	People Who Want Child- ren Should Marry %Disagreeing
A. All Families with Children					
Not Married, Children, Working	72.7	54.8	70.5	81.2	29.8
Not Married, Children, Not working	74.7	69.1	70.2	87.1	30.2
Married, Children, Both working	72.6	30.6	65.3	81.6	18.1
Married, Children, One working	74.7	29.1	64.4	79.5	13.4
Married, Children No One working	----	----	----	----	----
B. By Social Class					
Married, Children Both working					
Working Class	74.0	35.2	68.3	81.3	21.2
Middle Class	70.9	26.2	63.5	82.5	15.0
Married, Children, One working					
Working Class	71.5	39.2	67.9	77.8	18.6
Middle Class	77.5	23.3	62.5	80.3	9.0

Source: GSS

Table 28

Attitudes towards Children Values  
by Family Composition and Social Class

Children	Rated as Most Important				To be Well Liked and Popular	Spank %
	To think for Ones Self	To Obey	To Work Hard	To Help Others		
Agree						
A. All Households with Children						
Not Married, Children, Working	51.2	16.7	18.9	12.7	0.5	74.0
Not Married, Children, Not working	36.4	25.7	24.5	12.8	0.6	69.9
Married, Children, Both working	53.0	13.9	17.3	14.6	1.2	72.4
Married, Children, One working	50.7	18.6	17.5	12.9	0.2	69.1
Married, Children No One working	49.5	20.0	5.2	25.3	0.0	65.1
B. By Social Class						
Married, Children, Both working Working Class	48.4	16.1	17.1	16.7	1.6	77.0

Middle Class	57.8	11.6	17.7	12.3	0.7	68.2
Married, Children, One working						
Working Class	47.5	21.0	16.5	14.6	0.5	75.6
Middle Class	53.4	16.6	18.6	11.4	0.0	62.7

Source: GSS

Table 29

## Social Welfare Policies by Family Composition and Social Class

	Paid Maternity Leave % Agreeing	Child Care Benefits If Parents Work % Agreeing	Jobs for Everyone % For	Government Welfare % Too Little	Spending on Poverty % Too Little	Health Care % Too Little	Education % Too Little	Govt. & Poor % Help
A. All Families with Children								
Not Married, Children, Working	88.2	57.9	50.3	21.3	76.0	71.1	76.6	27.7
Not Married, Children, Not working	95.7	63.4	69.2	42.0	75.8	70.9	73.5	41.2
Married, Children, Both working	81.0	56.6	38.2	14.2	58.9	68.4	77.9	23.4
Married, Children, One working	71.9	52.2	41.3	16.4	59.4	67.7	76.4	29.9
Married, Children No One working	----	----	57.3	32.2	77.2	78.7	71.6	54.2
B. By Social Class								
Married, Children, Both working								
Working Class	88.8	66.2	42.1	14.6	65.7	71.7	77.6	25.3
Middle Class	73.1	46.4	33.7	14.1	52.0	65.0	78.1	21.0
Married, Children, One working								
Working Class	76.4	75.3	52.4	20.3	68.9	72.2	76.3	38.5
Middle Class	69.4	39.5	27.3	12.1	49.8	62.8	76.8	20.6

Source: GSS

Table 29 (continued)

Question Wordings:

Other question wordings in previous questions.

We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems and for each I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount.

- a. welfare
- b. education/improving the nation's education system
- c. assistance to the poor
- d. health/improving and protecting the nation's health

I'd like to talk to you about some issues people tell us are important. Please look at Card X. Some people think that the government in Washington should do everything possible to improve the standard of living of all poor Americans; they are at point 1 on this card. Other people think it is not the government's responsibility, and that each person should take care of himself; they are at point 5. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you made up your mind on this?

Table 30

Family Values By Family Type, Gender, and Occupational Prestige  
(WC=Working Class; MC=Middle Class)

	One-Earners		Dual-Earners				
	WC	MC	Both WC	Hus. Wife	WC MC	Hus. Wife	MC WC
A. Men							
Pre-schooler suffers if Mother Works % Disagree	42.5	37.9	53.2	58.1	55.9	55.1	
Family better if Father Works & Mother at Home % Disagree	47.6	51.6	57.1	68.0	73.8	75.0	
Wife Should Help Husband's Career % Disagree	66.8	77.6	72.6	85.1	85.5	86.7	
Wife Work even if Husband About to Support % Approve	73.0	82.8	79.2	77.2	83.7	87.5	
Obedience % Top Value	29.0	16.0	27.2	20.6	12.1	10.4	
Think for Self % Top Value	39.5	53.9	37.0	41.9	55.0	58.2	
Spank Children % Disagree	19.1	25.2	18.1	17.5	17.8	25.3	
Divorces % Easier to get	26.1	14.0	29.8	23.1	24.9	17.7	
Spending for Poor % Too Little	70.0	48.2	65.8	62.3	56.7	48.6	
Guaranteed Jobs for All % Favor	40.2	22.8	45.7	38.4	29.4	26.4	
Government Assist							

Poor  
% For

28.2 21.4 29.6 24.0 20.9 18.4

Table 30 (continued)

	One-Earners		Dual-Earners				
	WC	MC	Both WC	Hus. Wife	WC MC	Hus. Wife	MC WC
B. Women							
Pre-schooler suffers if Mother Works % Disagree	56.9	47.9	66.5	66.3	72.1	68.7	
Family better if Father Works & Mother at Home % Disagree	59.7	60.9	75.1	74.0	75.6	79.9	
Wife Should Help Husband's Career % Disagree	73.0	78.9	72.6	85.1	85.5	86.7	
Wife Work even if Husband About to Support % Approve	78.7	84.9	77.7	81.8	81.7	87.8	
Obedience % Top Value	18.7	17.8	14.8	11.3	9.9	8.8	
Think for Self % Top Value	46.7	60.1	50.0	63.1	58.1	64.5	
Spank Children % Disagree	28.0	36.8	20.1	21.9	29.2	33.3	
Divorces % Easier to get	27.0	16.3	25.0	18.3	20.4	15.5	
Spending for Poor % Too Little	69.4	66.0	63.5	59.6	68.7	57.9	
Guaranteed Jobs for All % Favor	61.8	36.0	53.8	43.9	42.5	28.5	
Government Assist Poor % For	43.7	28.1	34.4	28.1	29.4	19.3	

Source: GSS

## Appendix 1: Data Sources

### **A. The National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey**

The National Data Program for the Social Sciences has been monitoring trends in American society since 1972. It is the largest and longest-running research effort supported by the Sociology Program of the National Science Foundation. Nearly each year since 1972 the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago has conducted the General Social Survey (GSS) to examine how American society works and what social changes are occurring. The GSSs are full-probability samples of adults (18+) living in households in the United States. Interviews are conducted in person. The annual response rates have ranged from 73.5% to 79.4% and have averaged over 76%. From 1972 to 1993 each GSS interviewed about 1,500 respondents. Since a switch to a biennial design in 1994, nearly 3,000 have been interviewed each time. Across the 22 surveys from 1972 to 1998 38,116 people have been interviewed. For more details on sampling and survey design see James A. Davis, Tom W. Smith, and Peter V. Marsden, General Social Surveys: 1972-1998: Cumulative Codebook. Chicago: NORC, 1998.

The GSSs are directed by James A. Davis (NORC, University of Chicago), Tom W. Smith (NORC, University of Chicago), and Peter V. Marsden (Harvard University).

### **B. The International Social Survey Program (ISSP)**

Started in 1985 the ISSP is the cross-national extension of the GSS. It started out as a collaboration between the USA, Great Britain, Germany, and Australia and now covers 31 countries. The ISSP designs an annual module and each participating members fields it in their country.

All countries use probability samples and sample sizes average about 1200-1400 per country. The USA is currently serving as the group's secretariat and Tom W. Smith is Secretary General. More information on the ISSP is available at the following Web sites:

[www.issp.org](http://www.issp.org)

[www.za.uni-koeln.de/en/issp](http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/en/issp)

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