Family Change, Poverty and Inequality

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June 5, 2013

Teaching Poverty 101 Workshop
Institute for Research on Poverty, UW-Madison
Key Family Topics Related to Poverty/Inequality

1) Major changes in U.S. family demography in recent decades
2) Growing differences by socioeconomic status (SES) in family patterns
3) Family behaviors/trends influence poverty and inequality
   ▫ Individual level
   ▫ Aggregate level
4) Families’ role in the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantage
1) Major Changes in U.S. Family Demography

- Marriage and cohabitation
- Divorce
- Nonmarital childbearing
- Single motherhood
- Growing instability and complexity
Median Age at First Marriage
U.S., 1890 to 2010

Source: Cohen tabulation of U.S. Census data
25-49 year-old women married, spouse present
1980-2011

Source: Cohen tabulation of U.S. Census data from IPUMS
Figure 2. Two Decades of Trends in Percentage of Women (19-44) Cohabiting Prior to First Marriage

Sources: Bumpass and Sweet, 1989; Bumpass and Lu, 2000; Kennedy and Bumpass, 2008
(from National Center for Family and Marriage Research)
Sources: Statistical Abstract and UVA ‘State of Our Unions’ report
Birth Rates, 1920-2010

Births per 1,000 women ages 15-44

Source: Statistics calculated using data obtained from the National Center for Health Statistics and Heuser (1976), available here

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Unmarried Births as a Percent of All U.S. Births

Source: National Center for Health Statistics
Figure 1.
Historical Living Arrangements of Children: Selected Years, 1880 to 2009

Source: Krieder & Ellis 2011
Figure 6. Percentage of Children Aged 0–17 Living in Various Family Arrangements: 2009

Two parents 69%

Two biological/adoptive married parents 84.9
One bio/adoptive parent and stepparent 10.4
Two biological/adoptive cohabiting parents 4.7

One parent 27%

Single mother, no partner 77.2
Single mother with partner 8.4
Single father, no partner 11.1
Single father with partner 1.9
Single step parent 1.4

Neither parent 4%

Grandparent 59.4
Other Relatives 18.1
Nonrelatives 8.7
Other Relatives and Nonrelatives 4.3
Foster Parent(s) 8.9
Own Household or Partner of Householder 0.6

1 Child points to two parents, who are married to each other—either two biological, two adoptive, or one biological and one adoptive.
2 Child points to two parents, either married or cohabiting—one is a biological or adoptive parent, one is a stepparent, or both are stepparents.
3 Child points to two parents, who are not married to each other—either two biological, two adoptive, or one biological and one adoptive.
4 Child points to one parent, biological or adoptive.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&Al-12).pdf>.
Family Instability and Complexity

- Decoupling of marriage and childbearing, as individuals have and rear children outside of marriage
- Greater instability in unions and families (more transitions)
- Greater complexity with more and different types of actors (i.e., step/social parents, half-siblings, etc.)
## Estimates of U.S. Prevalence of Multi-Partnered Fertility

<table>
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<th>Data</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980 CPS</td>
<td>Children &lt; 18 living w/ their mother</td>
<td>Bumpass 1984</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore teen mothers</td>
<td>Low-income teen mothers giving birth 1960s (n=221)</td>
<td>Furstenberg &amp; King 1999 (unpublished)</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
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<td>Fragile Families Study</td>
<td>Mothers w/ urban nonmarital birth</td>
<td>Mincy 2002 (unpublished)</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fathers w/ urban nonmarital birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare mothers</td>
<td>WI mothers receiving TANF 1997-98 Matched to fathers w/ CSE records</td>
<td>Meyer, Cancian &amp; Cook 2005</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fragile Families Study</td>
<td>Mothers with urban birth 1998-2000</td>
<td>Carlson &amp; Furstenberg 2006</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mothers w/ urban nonmarital birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fathers with urban birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.7%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fathers w/ urban nonmarital birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>42.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002 NSFG</td>
<td>Men ages 15-44</td>
<td>Guzzo &amp; Furstenberg 2007a</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fathers ages 15-44</td>
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<td>17.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>AddHealth, 2001-2002</td>
<td>Women ages 19-25</td>
<td>Guzzo &amp; Furstenberg 2007b</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mothers 19-25 w/ nonmarital first birth</td>
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<td>13.5%</td>
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2) Growing Differences by SES in Family Patterns

- Union formation and dissolution
- Fertility
- Family structure
- Parental behaviors and investments
Figure 5: Two Decades of Trends by Education in the Percentage of Women (19-44) Ever Cohabited


SOURCE: National Center for Family and Marriage Research
Change in Share of Women Married, By Earnings
1970-2011

Sample includes non-institutionalized women, ages 30-50. The first income category on the x-axis includes all women with no earnings in 1970. Source: IPUMS-CPS 1971, 2011.
Divorce within 10 Years of First Marriage

Source: Martin 2006
Percentage of births occurring outside of marriage
1990-2009, among adult women

**KEY**

- Mother’s education
  - Less than high school
  - High school or GED
  - Some college/associate’s degree
  - Bachelor’s degree or more

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<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td></td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>81</td>
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*The Atlantic*
### Table 1: Observed Completed Fertility by Education

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>&lt; High School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>College</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intended births</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mistimed births</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>2.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unwanted births</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>3.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total births</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2,029</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>597</td>
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<td><strong>Blacks</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intended births</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mistimed births</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unwanted births</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>6.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total births</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,197</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>186</td>
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</table>

Source: Musick et al. 2010

- Presidential address at demography annual meetings
- ‘Diverging destinies’ – one of first papers to directly consider demographic/family patterns as linked to rise in inequality for children
- Observed growing gap in demographic behavior by education
Figure 1. Trends in Mothers’ Median Age, 1960 to 2000

Note: Low education includes mothers in the bottom education quartile, middle education includes mothers in the middle two education quartiles, and high education includes mothers in the top education quartile.
Percent of Children in Single Mother Homes by Education of Mother

Source: Ellwood & Jencks 2004
Percent of Mothers Who are Never Married by Level of Education

Source: Ellwood & Jencks 2004
3) Family Behaviors Influence Poverty and Economic Well-Being

At the Individual Level

• Early/teen childbearing disrupts socioeconomic attainment (Fletcher & Wolfe 2009)

• Divorce diminishes both men’s and women’s economic well-being (Amato 2000; McManus & DiPrete 2001)

• Marriage increases (men’s) economic well-being (Ahituv and Lerman 2007), and marital fatherhood increases men’s wages (Killewald 2012)

• Single-parent families much more likely to be poor
The economic toll of single parenthood

The poverty rate for single moms and dads is much higher than for married couples. The chart shows families with children under 18 whose incomes fall below the poverty level.

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau
3) Family Behaviors Influence Poverty and Inequality (cont.)

At the Aggregate Level

- Studies in 1990s of how growth in SPFs can explain rise in inequality (Burtless 1999; Gottschalk & Danziger 1993; Lerman 1996, etc.)
- Martin 2006: Changes in FS can explain 41% of the increase in inequality, 1976-2000
- McLanahan & Percheski 2008: “...family structure has become an important mechanism for the reproduction of class, race, and gender inequalities.”
- Cancian & Reed 2009: All else equal, FS changes have increased poverty, but “complex set of interrelated factors.”
4) Families’ Role in the Intergenerational Transmission of (Dis)Advantage

• Family as a fundamental social institution:
  ▫ Primary responsibility for care and socialization of children (mostly private in U.S.)

• Families/parents provide:
  ▫ Economic and material resources (quantity/quality)
  ▫ Parental engagement, role modeling, monitoring, emotional support, etc.
  ▫ Connections to communities, neighborhoods, schools, etc.
4) Families’ Role in the Intergenerational Transmission of (Dis)Advantage

• Inequality starts early/young:
  ▫ Heckman (2006): “...families and not schools are the major sources of inequality in student performance.” (p. 1901)

• Differential parental investment throughout childhood and early adulthood (see Ermisch, Jäntti & Smeeding 2012)
Simple Model: Intergenerational Transmission

Gen. 1 Characteristics, capabilities, genes, etc. 

Parental resources and investments in childrearing

Gen. 2 Characteristics, capabilities, genes, etc.

Gen. 3 Characteristics, capabilities, genes, etc.

Prenatal period BIRTH CHILDHOOD YOUTH TRANS. TO ADULTHOOD

Prenatal period BIRTH
Suggested Readings

*Family Demography*

- Good summaries but are quickly dated: family textbooks (e.g., Casper & Bianchi 2001; Cherlin 2012)
- Various newspaper articles to bring current issues into class
- Keep up with websites w/ current data/trends:
  - National Center for Marriage and Family Research
  - Population Reference Bureau
  - Child Trends
  - Census Bureau
  - Pew Social and Demographic Trends
Family Patterns by Socioeconomic Status

Suggested Readings (cont.)

*Family Behaviors and Poverty – Individual [a few examples, as there are many articles out there!]*

Suggested Readings (cont.)

*Family Behaviors/Trends and Poverty – Aggregate*

Suggested Readings (cont.)

Families and the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantage

Good Luck!

- Please feel free to be in touch if I can be helpful:

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