

2012

# FP-12-09 Fatherhood in the U.S.: The Decoupling of Marriage and Childbearing

Krista Payne

*Bowling Green State University - Main Campus*, [kristaw@bgsu.edu](mailto:kristaw@bgsu.edu)

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## Repository Citation

Payne, Krista, "FP-12-09 Fatherhood in the U.S.: The Decoupling of Marriage and Childbearing" (2012). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 7.

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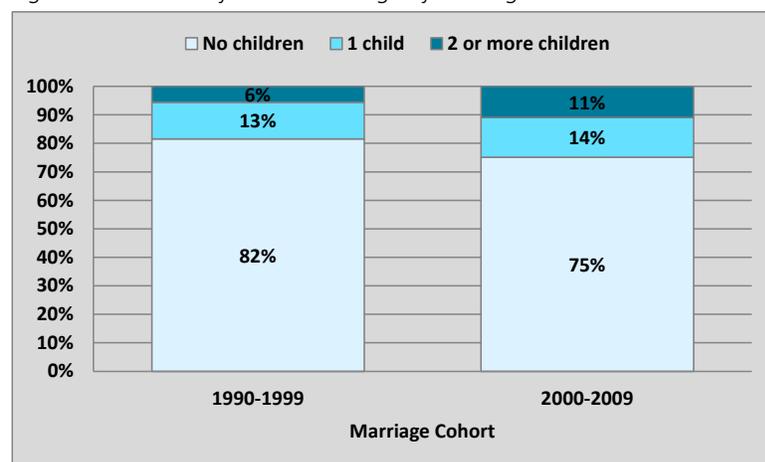
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# Fatherhood in the U.S.: The Decoupling of Marriage and Childbearing

Building on previous Family Profiles exploring men's fertility (e.g., their age at first birth (FP-11-04) and total number of children (FP-11-10)), this profile examines the number of biological children men have at the time of their first marriage (child(ren) may or may not be the biological child(ren) of new wife). Using two cycles of the National Survey of Family Growth (2002 and 2006-10), two marriage cohorts of men are compared—men who first married from 1990 through the end of 1999 and men who married from 2000 through the end of 2009. Variation by race/ethnicity and educational attainment are also examined.

- The majority of men who have married within the past twenty years enter their first marriage with no children. However, men who recently married (2000-2010) were less likely to do so, 75% versus 82%.
  - There is little difference between marriage cohorts in the percentage of men who begin a first marriage with one child (13% vs. 14%).
  - Comparing men who married in the 90's to those who did in the early 2000's, the proportion entering a first marriage with two or more children nearly doubled.

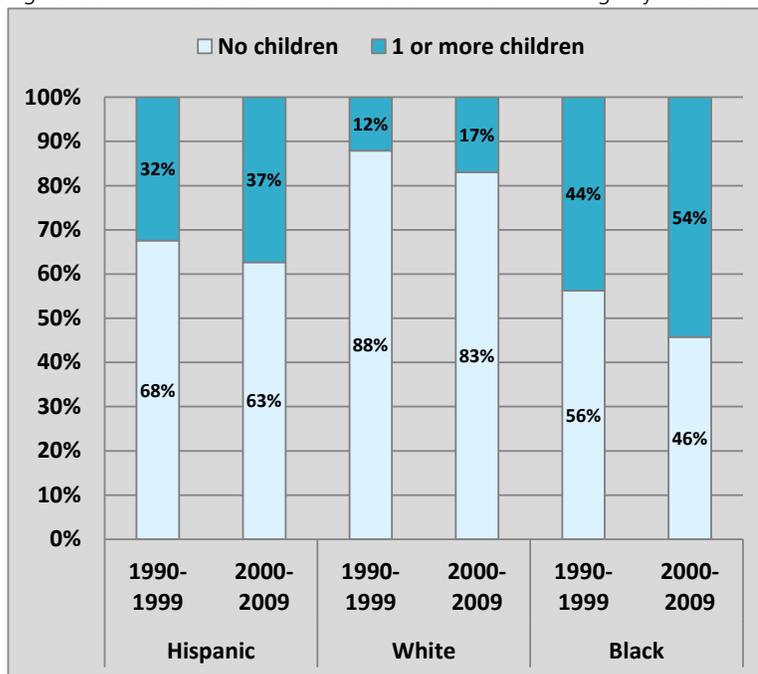
Figure 1. Men's Parity at First Marriage by Marriage Cohort



Source: NSFG 2002 & 2006-10 Male Data Files

Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR's core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.

Figure 2. Prevalence of Children Prior to Men's First Marriage by Race/Ethnicity



Source: NSFG 2002 & 2006-10 Male Data Files

## Race and Ethnicity

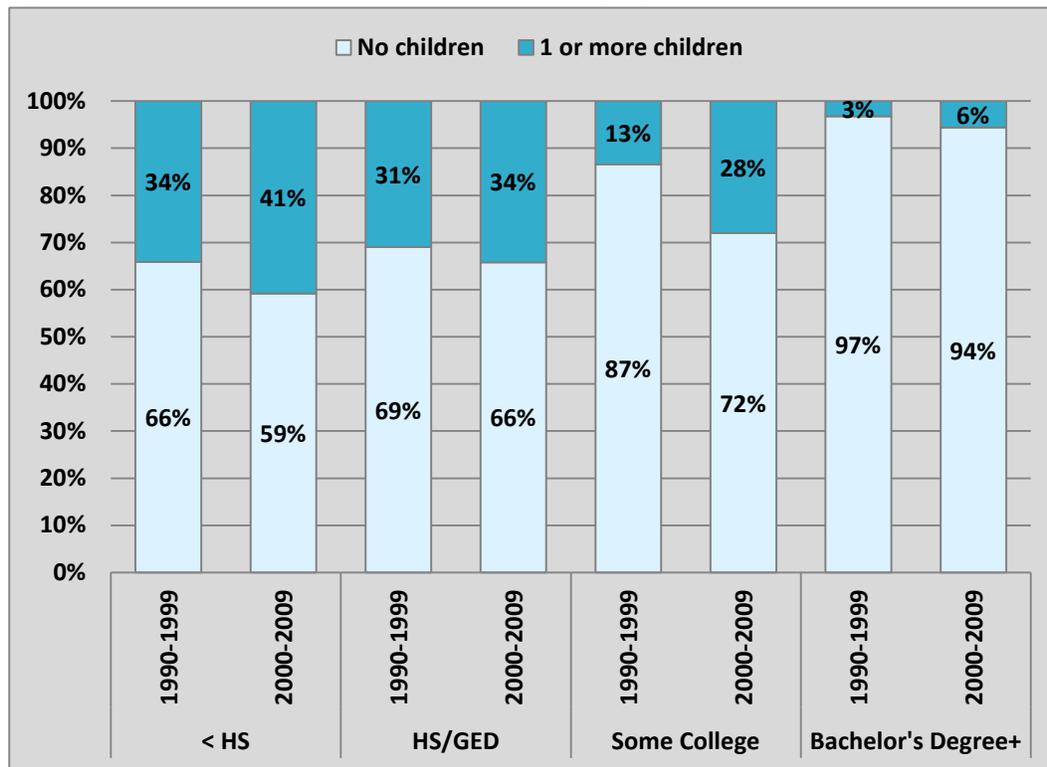
- The percentage of men who enter a first marriage with children varies by race and ethnicity, and this variation is similar regardless of marriage cohort.
  - Regardless of when men married, White men are the least likely to marry with children.
  - Black men are most likely, with over half (54%) of the recently married already having had a child.
- Men who married recently were more likely to enter marriage with children regardless of race and ethnicity.
  - Among all groups examined, Blacks had the largest change—44% who married in the 1990's already had a child compared to 54% among those married in the 2000's.
  - Whites and Hispanics have similar cohort differences in the percentage entering marriage without a child (5% difference).

### Educational Attainment

- The percentage of men who enter a first marriage with children declines with increased levels of educational attainment. This pattern holds among men in both marriage cohorts.
  - Two-fifths (41%) of recently married men without a high school degree married with children and one-third (34%) of men with only a high school degree did so.
  - Just over one-quarter (28%) of men with some college (some post high school education but have not earned a Bachelor's degree) had a child before marriage in contrast to only 6% of college educated men.
- The greatest change occurred among men with some college.
  - There was a doubling in the percentage of men who entered marriage with children, 13% of men with some college who married in the 1990's did so with children compared to 28% married in the 2000's. Men with a college degree were twice as likely to enter marriage with a child.

**Suggested Citation:**  
Payne, Krista (2012). Fatherhood in the U.S.: The Decoupling of Marriage and Childbearing (FP-12-09). National Center for Family & Marriage Research. Retrieved from [http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/pdf/family\\_profiles/file112105.pdf](http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/pdf/family_profiles/file112105.pdf)

Figure 3. Prevalence of Children Prior to Men's First Marriage by Educational Attainment



Source: NSFG 2002 & 2006-10 Male Data Files

This project was supported with a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, grant number 5 UOI AEOOOO01-05. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the federal government.