The Social Organization of Sex/Decline of the Family?

Feb. 25, 2005

http://www.iastate.edu/~soc.134
Frequency of sex in past 12 months

Men
- 4 or more times a week (8%)
- Not at all (14%)
- A few times per year (16%)
- A few times per month (37%)
- 2 or 3 times a week (26%)

Women
- 4 or more times a week (7%)
- Not at all (10%)
- A few times per year (18%)
- A few times per month (36%)
- 2 or 3 times a week (30%)

Frequency of sex by type of union

- Noncohabitating: 52% Men, 44% Women
- Cohabitating: 92% Men, 91% Women
- Married: 86% Men, 86% Women

Frequency of sex by age

Have sex at least a few times or more per month

18-24  25-29  30-39  40-49  50-59

Men  Women

Sexual satisfaction by type of union

Percent "extremely" or "very" satisfied with sexual relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Union</th>
<th>Physical Pleasure</th>
<th>Emotional Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noncohabitating</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitating</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
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Measuring homosexuality

✔ Kinsey emphasized continuum of sexuality
  ✔ Lifetime male-male sexual contact (37%)
  ✔ 10% had only homosexual experience during any three-year period between 16-55
  ✔ 4% reported sex only with men since adolescence

✔ NHSLS studied three aspects of homosexuality
  ✔ Desire: same-sex sexual attraction
  ✔ Behavior: having same-sex sex
  ✔ Identification

Different measures of homosexuality

Interrelations of components of homosexuality

Women (8.6%)
- Desire: 59%
- Behavior: 13%
- Identity: 13%

Men (10.1%)
- Desire: 44%
- Behavior: 22%
- Identity: 2%

Is the American family declining?

✔ Evidence of decline: divorce, single-parent families, unsupervised children

✔ However, there has been no golden age of the American family. Each generation has believed the family was declining.
  • Children in the 19th Century were more likely to live in single-parent families than today
  • In 1900, 20% of children lived in orphanages
  • In 1900, rates of alcohol & drug abuse, school dropouts and domestic violence were higher
  • Extended family rates have never risen above 20%

What about the 1950s?

✓ 1950s weren’t as we remember them
  • < 60% of children lived in “traditional” family
  • Many women were unhappy with non-work role
  • Blacks faced worse discrimination than later decades

✓ 1950s family was “experimental,” not “traditional”
  • Dad-works, mom-stays-home model began in 19th century
  • Women began entering office jobs in 1920s
  • After WWII many women left factories for home
  • But female labor market participation began rising again in 1950s

What about the 1950s?

What was different about the 1950s?

- Divorce rate, high during Depression & WWII, dropped
- Age of marriage fell to 100-year low
- Birth rate soared (Baby Boom)

What led to the 1950s family experiment?

- Women were forced out of jobs after WWII
- Economic growth and government programs allowed for prosperity with one wage earner
- Ideal of dad-works, mom-stays-home family established
- New ideal was supported by experts and media