Council on Contemporary Families Civil Rights Symposium

February 4-6, 2014

Convened and edited by Stephanie Coontz
Co-Chair and Director of Research
and Public Education
Council on Contemporary Families
CCF Civil Right Online Symposium
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Co-Chair and Director of Research and Public Education
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**Then.** On February 10, 1964, the House of Representatives passed the Civil Rights Act, which made it illegal to discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, national origin, religion, or gender, and sent the bill on to the Senate. Today, few politicians would explicitly defend people’s right to discriminate in hiring and pay, but 50 years ago opposition to the bill was fierce.

Segregationists in the House tried for almost three months to keep the bill bottled up in committee, and when the bill was finally sent on to the Senate, Senator Richard Russell spoke for many Americans when he vowed to “resist to the bitter end any measure or any movement which would have a tendency to bring about social equality” or the “intermingling” of the races. For 54 days the bill was blocked in the Senate by a filibuster. A vote to override the filibuster narrowly passed only after Senate leaders introduced a compromise that weakened the bill.

On July 2, 1964, the bill was finally signed into law. An Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was set up to implement the measure.

**Now.** The [Council on Contemporary Families](https://www.contemporaryfamilies.org) asked a dozen researchers to discuss what has changed in the past half century for each of the populations affected by the law – religious groups, racial and ethnic minorities, and women. On, February 4, the Council released an update on the changing religious landscape of America. On February 5, researchers described the rearrangements of racial and ethnic relations since 1964. And on Thursday, February 6, we reported on the progress of women since passage of the Civil Rights Act.

**CCF’s Symposium on Civil Rights.** Three themes emerge from the papers in this symposium. The first is that American men and women now live in much more diverse racial, religious, and occupational settings than 50 years ago. The second theme is the dramatic increase in cultural approval of “intermingling” between men and women of different races, ethnic origins, and religions. The third theme is that many groups continue to face serious disadvantages and inequalities, even as their more educated and privileged members have found a significant measure of acceptance into the upper echelons of economic and political life.

For more detailed information including figures and graphs that illustrate fifty years of changes in civil rights, we invite you to read the [CCF Online Symposium on Civil Rights](https://www.contemporaryfamilies.org/symposium/civil-rights).
DAY ONE

Religion and Relationships: Introduction

Opening Remarks from Stephanie Coontz
Tuesday, February 4, 2014

In 1964 the provisions outlawing discrimination on the basis of religion were less controversial than those against discrimination on the basis of race and sex, even though blatant bigotry and outright violence against Catholics and Jews had been pervasive in American history right up through World War II. Prejudices had begun to ease by the early 1960s, but the Civil Rights Act remains an important safeguard for religious (and non-religious) minorities, according to Jerry Z. Park, Joshua Tom and Brita Andercheck, of Baylor University.

In their paper, “Fifty Years of Religious Change: 1964-2014,” these authors find marked changes in the distribution of religious groups in America. In the 1960s, only 3 percent of Americans said that they did not identify with any religious tradition. Nearly 70 percent of the population was Protestant, and most were members of “mainline” Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Methodist denominations. Catholics, most of them native-born descendants of Irish and other Western European immigrants, accounted for about 25 percent of the population. Religious Jews were about 3 percent.

Since then the percentage of mainline Protestants has been halved. Evangelicals rapidly increased their share until the early 1990s, but have experienced some decline since then. The percentage of Catholics has remained steady, but their ethnic make-up has changed dramatically due to steady Latino immigration. While absolute numbers of non-Christian religious groups are small, in 20 states Islam is now the largest non-Christian religion, while Buddhism is the largest in 13 states.

One of the most striking changes has been the rise in the proportion of Americans who do not identify with any religious tradition. This group has grown from 3 to 20 percent of the population, despite the fact that 90 percent of Americans profess a belief in God or a higher power.

Park, Tom, and Andercheck also discuss the differing socioeconomic and educational attainments of the various religious groups, along with their family practices, indicating which religious groups have the highest rates of religious switching, which have the highest fertility, and which have the highest and lowest divorce rates. Despite strong pro-family values, for example, evangelical Christians have higher than average divorce rates. In fact, they are more likely to be divorced than Americans who claim no religion. But the fertility rate of evangelicals is higher than average.

A second paper, “Interfaith Marriage And Romantic Unions In The United States,” by David McClendon from the University of Texas-Austin, traces the increase in the proportion of marriages contracted between couples from different religious traditions. Even more dramatic
has been the increase in the number of marriages where both partners maintain their separate beliefs and practices, rather than one or both changing so that their religions match. The proportion of mixed-religion marriages has doubled since the 1960s. McClendon argues that the growth of such marriages may plausibly be taken as a sign of increased tolerance of religious diversity. And such growth appears likely to continue. Today, 80 percent of young adults age 18-23 -- an all-time high -- reject the idea that shared religious beliefs are essential to a successful relationship.

The couples most likely to put these untraditional ideas about religion and relationships into practice are untraditional in other ways as well. While 40 percent of married heterosexual couples maintain different religious affiliations, 55 percent of heterosexual cohabiters do so. Forty-nine percent of female same-sex couples and almost three-fourths of male same-sex couples subscribe to different religious beliefs.
Interfaith Marriage and Romantic Unions in the United States

By David McClendon, University of Texas at Austin

Over the past half century, the proportion of individuals who marry a partner from a different religious tradition (including ones with no religious upbringing) has risen steadily, from just over 40 percent in the 1960s to 55 percent by the early 2000s. Like interracial marriage, marriage across religious boundaries may be seen as reflecting a growing tolerance of diversity and a loosening of social boundaries.

Often the marriage of two such individuals acts as a catalyst for religious change. One partner (usually the husband, in heterosexual unions) switches to match the spouse’s religion. Alternatively, both spouses may convert to a new religion or disaffiliate altogether.

But there has been an especially dramatic increase in the proportion of couples where both partners maintain their own separate religious beliefs and practices. The proportion of marriages that remain interfaith has almost doubled, from a little more than 20 percent in the 1960s to around 40 percent by the first decade of this century. This suggests that traditional norms regarding religious homogamy—like marrying like—have been weakening and that acceptance of differing beliefs, even in the most intimate unions, has been growing.

Although religious intermarriage has become more common among all religious groups, it remains relatively rare among Mormons (about 10 percent currently interfaith) and those groups that share a common racial/ethnic background, such as Hispanic Catholics and Black Protestants (10-15 percent currently interfaith), as well as among Asian-American Hindus (6 percent).

Substantial numbers of adults in many religious communities still believe it is important for their own children to marry within their religious tradition (e.g. 55-60 percent of Evangelical Protestant, Mormon, and Jewish parents), but young adults across America are increasingly likely to approve of religious intermarriage and to reject the idea that shared religious beliefs are essential to a successful marriage. In 2008, 80 percent of young adults aged 18 to 23 approved of religious intermarriage, compared to just 60 percent of those that age in the 1960s.

Family Diversity and Interfaith Couples

Interestingly, these trends are especially pronounced among non-traditional couples. Figure 1 compares contemporary rates of interfaith coupling by current and raised religious affiliation among different-sex married couples, different-sex cohabiters, male same-sex couples (including those that are married, cohabiting, or in a domestic partnership or civil union), and female same-sex couples. Forming a partnership with someone raised in a different religion is fairly common in all these groups. Among all couple types, somewhere between 50 and 60 percent are matches in which partners had different religious upbringings. But there are substantial differences in the percentages of various couple types where partners continue to hold on to distinct religious affiliations after getting together. Only 40 percent of married heterosexual couples maintain
separate religious affiliations, compared to 49 percent of female same-sex couples, 55 percent of different-sex cohabiters, and a whopping 74 percent of male same-sex couples.

Figure 1. Interfaith couples by relationship type-2009


This difference may partly reflect the shorter duration of many non-marital cohabiting relationships in the United States; we would expect all couples to become more similar in their religious beliefs and affiliations the longer they are together. In addition, same-sex couples tend to face tighter dating markets and, as a result, are marked by greater social diversity in general. But it also suggests that these family forms—especially male same-sex couples—may be more accepting of religious differences between partners, allowing for greater religious diversity and change within romantic relationships.

Whatever the explanation for these differences, the overall trends highlight the potential for family relationships to foster greater religious tolerance as more Americans share intimate, familial contact with people who have different beliefs and practices than themselves.

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References


Fifty Years of Religious Change: 1964-2014

By Jerry Z. Park, Joshua Tom and Brita Andercheck, Baylor University

Greater Acceptance, Persisting Antipathy: Catholic and Jewish Americans Since The Civil Rights Era

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 not only ushered in stronger federal protections for racial and ethnic minorities and women, but also for religious minorities. Antipathy toward Catholics and Jews in the US was a persistent and prevalent theme through much of American history. It was common for these groups to be labeled “un-American” and even categorized as “non-white.” Members of these religions were often discriminated against in hiring and in admission to institutions of higher learning (this was especially common for Jewish applicants) and excluded from many neighborhoods, clubs, and political positions. From the late 19th through the mid-20th century, organized hate groups, most notably the Ku Klux Klan, used the threat of violence to intimidate not only African-Americans but Jews and Catholics as well.

After World War II, these restrictions and prejudices eased somewhat. By 1955 the now-classic essay Protestant Catholic Jew could proclaim that although these three religions were the primary sources of identity in America, they were now “alternative ways of being an American” rather than two of them being seen as Un-American.

Still, anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism persisted. In the 1960s, some commentators worried that President Kennedy, a Catholic, would take orders from the Pope. In the 1970s, President Richard Nixon was recorded making several anti-Semitic comments. And even today nativist hate groups continue to perpetuate centuries-old hostilities against Catholic and Jewish Americans. But the Civil Rights Act did give these minorities protection against outright exclusion and discrimination, and other religious minorities have also looked to it for security as the American religious landscape has diversified.

American Religious Belonging Today

Religion scholars consider the United States to be an anomaly on the modern religious scene. Compared to other nations at similar levels of modernization, the United States stands out as highly religious. For example, in Western Europe about three-quarters of the population profess a belief in a God or higher power (with this proportion significantly lower in some individual nations). In America, by contrast, 90 percent of adults profess such a belief. These American numbers have remained fairly stable, with only small long-term declines, over the past fifty years.

However, one major measure of religiosity has changed significantly over that time period: religious belonging, or identifying with a particular religion rather than simply holding religious beliefs.

Currently 80 percent of the U.S. adult population identifies as belonging to one of the 3,500 groups that make up the American religious landscape. Religion scholars categorize these groups
in different ways, but one of the most popular classifications divides them into six major American religious traditions: Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Other Religions. Twenty percent of Americans fall into a seventh category, which sociologists call the ‘religious Nones’ – those who identify with no religious tradition even if they do believe in God or a higher being.

The distribution of Americans among these various groups has fluctuated and changed over the past 50 years. Figure 1 shows these trends in affiliation from 1957-1971 using Gallup polling data and from 1972-2012 using data from the General Social Survey (GSS).

Figure 1. Trends in American Religious Affiliation, 1957-1971 (Gallup)

Figure 2. Trends in American Religious Affiliation, 1972-2012 (General Social Survey)
We draw attention to six specific trends:

1) The **Protestant** share of the American population has **shrunk** from more than 70 percent of the population in the late 1950s to less than 50 percent today. This is primarily due to the precipitous decline of Mainline Protestants (e.g. Methodists, Lutheran and Episcopalians), from more than 30 percent of the U.S. population in the 1970’s to around 15 percent today.

2) **Evangelical** Protestants (e.g. Baptists, Pentecostals) have **increased** their representation in the population from less than a quarter of the population in the 1960s to 31 percent in the early 1990s. However, this was the period of their peak membership. Contrary to popular impression, their share of the religious market has since declined to 24 percent.

3) **Catholics** have **sustained** their share of the religious market, remaining at approximately 25 percent throughout the latter half of the 20th century. But this is primarily due to the influx of Latino immigrants to the United States. The share of native born (primarily white) Catholics has declined.

4) Despite the large percentage of Americans who profess a belief in a higher power, there has been a recent meteoric rise of the **religious Nones**, from about 3 percent of the population in the mid-20th century, to 10 percent in 2000, to 20 percent today. One in every 5 Americans does **not** identify with a particular religious tradition.

5) The proportion of Americans who identify with **“Other”** religious traditions has doubled, an increase that is closely tied to the increased **immigration** of Asian populations who brought non-western religions (e.g. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam) with them. While still a small proportion of the overall population, they contribute greatly to the increased religious diversity of the American religious landscape. In 20 states, scattered in the Midwest and South, Islam is the largest non-Christian religion. Judaism is the largest non-Christian religion in 15 states, mostly in the Northeast, and Buddhism is the largest religion in 13 western states. In Delaware and Arizona, Hinduism is the largest non-Christian religion, while in South Carolina it is the Baha’i. For more details visit here.

6) According to the **Pew Research Centers**, “the percentage of US adults who say they are **Jewish** when asked about their religion has declined by about half since the late 1950s.” It is currently is a little less than **two percent**.

**Religion and Socio Economic Status**

Religious groups differ not only in their beliefs but in their place in the socioeconomic and educational hierarchy. Some groups have been upwardly mobile during this time period while others have experienced more limited progress.
In the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, white Catholics, especially Irish immigrants, were over-represented among the poor. But in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, especially since the 1960s, white Catholics have experienced \textit{unprecedented upward mobility}. They now closely resemble Mainline Protestants on socioeconomic measures, with a median net worth of $156,000 compared to Mainline Protestant’s $146,000. Latino Catholics, by contrast, have a net worth of $51,500, substantially below their white Catholic counterparts. White Catholics have also spent more time in school (14 years on average) than their Latino counterparts (12.5 years).

\textbf{Jews} have the highest median \textit{net worth} of any U.S. religious tradition, at $423,500, Black Protestants have the lowest, at around $22,800. On average, Jews have 16 years of education while Black Protestants have 12.7 years of education.

\textbf{Evangelical} Protestants remain \textit{near the bottom} of the economic ladder with a median net worth of $82,400. They average 13.2 years of education, above Latino Catholics but below the national average.

The Non-Affiliated (or religious \textbf{Nones}) are also \textit{below} the U.S. median net worth and median education level, with a median of only 12.7 years of education. Less than 10 percent of this group holds an advanced degree. Only Black Protestants and Hispanic Catholics have lower levels of educational attainment than “Nones.”

\textit{Religion and Union Formation and Dissolution}

Religion is popularly thought of as a social institution that encourages marriage and family growth, and conservative religious traditions are especially supportive of “traditional” family forms and values. But there are some interesting and not always predictable variations among and within different religious groups.

\textbf{Cohabitation} is now the most common path toward marriage, and it is on the rise among religious groups as well. But non–affiliated young people are the most likely group to cohabit. Overall Catholics are the least likely to cohabit. Across all religious traditions, teens who attend religious worship services more often and say that religion is more important to them are less likely to cohabit than less observant teens.

Overall, couples who have higher levels of religious service attendance, especially if the couple attends together, have lower rates of \textit{divorce}. But there are big variations among religious groups. White Catholics and Mainline Protestants are less likely than the average American to be divorced, with 12.4 percent and 12.5 percent of their populations being currently divorced, respectively, compared to an overall average of 14.2 of Americans currently divorced.

But white Conservative Protestants and Black Protestants are \textit{more} likely than the average American to be \textit{divorced}, with 17.2 percent and 15.7 percent of their populations being currently divorced, respectively. Indeed, Evangelical Protestants are more likely to be divorced than Americans who claim no religion.
Thus the common conservative argument that strong religion leads to strong families does not hold up. Some have argued that evangelical Protestantism (the typical example of “strong religion”) is correlated with low socioeconomic status, and that this explains the increased risk of divorce. However, new research by Jennifer Glass and Philip Levchak suggests that evangelical Protestants’ cultural encouragement of early marriage and discouragement of birth control and higher education attainment explain the higher divorce rate in counties with a larger proportion of evangelical Protestants. In fact, living in such counties increases the likelihood of divorce for all couples, regardless of whether they themselves are evangelicals.

Religion and Fertility

The most dependable way for religious groups to maintain or grow their membership is through sexual reproduction. Differences in fertility rates among religious groups are a large part of this story.

- On average, women from Evangelical Protestant traditions have one more child over their lifetime than their mainline Protestant counterparts. In fact, it is estimated that the fertility practices of evangelical women explain more than 75 percent of the growth these groups have experienced over time.

- Fertility rates among religious groups vary considerably, generally correlating with their social fortunes over time. Lower SES religious groups (who also more highly value and encourage childbearing) tend to have higher fertility rates. As groups become upwardly mobile, increasing in educational and income attainment, fertility tends to decline. For example, fertility among American White Catholics has dropped slightly below replacement rates (approximately 2.1 children per woman is considered replacement fertility) as they became upwardly mobile. But the rapid growth of new immigrant (post 1964) Latino Catholics has offset this decline. Today, Latino Catholics have fertility rates above replacement, upholding the Catholic share of the American adult population at a steady twenty-five percent. It is possible that these fertility rates will fall as immigrants live longer in the U.S.

Religious Switching

The ability of religions to retain the affiliation of individuals as they age is another key to maintaining or growing their share of the United States population. Nearly three-quarters of American adults have the same religious affiliation as their parents, but this means that more than a quarter of American adults have left the religious tradition in which they were raised.

- The most common path for young adults leading away from the religion of their childhood is non-affiliation. This is starkly illustrated by the divergent fortunes of the Mainline Protestants and religious Nones, whose trend lines pass each other somewhere around 2004 (see Figure 1). Overall, Catholics and Evangelical Protestants are somewhat better at retention than Mainline Protestants, who see a third of each generation leave the tradition.
• Latino Catholics are twice as likely as White Catholics to remain Catholic as they age, another way in which this subpopulation has upheld the Catholic share of the American religious market.

• In the past it was common for young people who grew up with no religious affiliation to join a religious tradition as they transitioned into adulthood. Today, by contrast, most youths raised as religious Nones remain so as they age.

• No matter what the religious tradition, the greatest predictor of whether a person switches at some point in the life is whether or not their parents match each other religiously. This leads to another dimension of religion and family: the marriage of individuals of different religious faiths, described in “Interfaith Marriage and Romantic Unions in the United States” by David McClendon in this Council on Contemporary Families Symposium on the Civil Rights Act.

Conclusion

Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, religious minorities, particularly Catholic and Jewish Americans, have gained greater acceptance as part of the American religious mainstream. At the same time, America’s religious landscape, like its racial-ethnic one, has diversified over the past half century. The many varieties of Protestants are part of an ever-expanding religious mosaic that includes Jews, Catholics and a growing presence of Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Mormons, Muslims and Sikhs, along with increasing numbers of individuals whose spiritual beliefs are not anchored in any particular religious affiliation. Americans have certainly become more tolerant of a wide range of beliefs, but in this diverse environment the Civil Rights Act remains an important source of protection for religious (and non-religious) minorities.

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References


DAY TWO

Changing Racial-Ethnic Realities since the Civil Rights Act: Introduction

Remarks from Stephanie Coontz

Today’s four papers discuss the changes in racial-ethnic relations, including the emergence of Latinos as the largest “minority” in the United States, the approaching eclipse of the white majority, the increase in interracial marriage and multiracial families, and the progress that has and has not been made in lessening the inequities historically associated with non-white status.

New Demographic Realities

In 1964, race relations, like television shows, were still largely viewed in black and white. As author Raha Forooz Sabet notes in “Changes in America’s Racial and Ethnic Composition Since 1964,” at that time, 85 percent of the population was white and 11 percent black. Latinos were less than four percent of the population, and fewer than six percent of U.S. residents were foreign-born.

Today half of all children under the age of one are ethnic and racial “minorities,” and within 40 years, non-Hispanic whites will account for just 47 percent of the population. There are now as many foreign-born as black Americans.

By 2060, according to University of Texas-San Antonio researcher Rogelio Sáenz, the single largest component of the child population of the U.S. will be Latino. In his paper, “The State of Latino Children,” Sáenz discusses the characteristics of these Americans, who will soon become the most numerous single group of students, voters, workers, and consumers. Latinos overall have below-average levels of educational attainment, in part because of low levels of preschool enrollment. However, it is a myth that Latino youth are not learning English. Three-fifths of Latinos aged three to 17 are bilingual, speaking Spanish at home but also fluent in English. Only four percent of all Latino children and less than 12 percent of those who are foreign-born are unable to carry on a conversation in English.

More than one-third of Latino children live in poverty. Having two married parents is less protective for Latino children, in terms of income, than it is for white and black families. Nearly one-quarter of children in Latino married-couple families are poor.

But Sáenz highlights an “epidemiological paradox” in the Latino community. Despite higher than average poverty rates, Latino children are healthier than average and have a longer life expectancy at birth than either white or black babies. Sáenz argues that determining the source of this cultural advantage is as important as finding ways to help Latino children overcome their educational and income disadvantages.
The Good News: Old Prejudices are Lessening and Many Old Boundaries Have Been Broken Down

Discussing the changing prospects of African Americans (“Are African Americans Living the Dream 50 Years after Passage of the Civil Rights Act?”), Velma McBride Murry and Na Liu of Vanderbilt University note real breakthroughs for a significant portion of that population. The number of elected black officials in the country has skyrocketed, from about 100 in 1964 to 10,000 in 1990, and today we have an African-American president in his second term. There is now a substantial African-American middle class. Indeed, one in ten black households earns $100,000 or more a year.

One dramatic change, Kimberlyn Fong points out in “Changes in Interracial Marriage,” is the revolution in attitudes toward interracial marriage. When the Civil Rights Act was enacted, less than five percent of Americans approved of interracial marriage. Today 77 percent approve of such marriages, an all-time high. Since the early 1960s the number of new marriages contracted each year between spouses of a different race or ethnicity has increased sixfold.

Fong documents interesting differences among racial-ethnic groups in the extent of interracial marriage and in its gender makeup. Among recent marriages, the most common interracial matches are white/Hispanic couples. The second most common is between whites and Asians. However, Asian women are more than twice as likely as Asian men to marry outside their race.

The sex ratio skews in the opposite direction in marriages between blacks and whites. But black-white marriages remain the least common interracial marriage, accounting for 12 percent of new marriages in 2010. And that brings us to the bad news.

Despite the Movement of Some Blacks into the Upper Echelon of Political and Economic Life, the Majority Still Bear a Heavy Legacy of Disadvantage

African Americans have experienced significant declines in poverty and increases in access to middle-class jobs. Yet through almost the entire half century since passage of the Civil Rights Act the black unemployment rate has consistently remained twice as high as that of whites, and the poverty rate has been more than twice as high.

After declining in the 1970s, school segregation has increased again. Residential and economic segregation also remain strong. Among Americans born between 1985 and 2000, 31 percent of blacks, versus only one percent of whites, live in neighborhoods where 30 percent of the residents are poor.

African Americans have greatly increased their educational achievement over the past 50 years. But at every educational level, blacks earn less than whites with the same educational credentials.

And racial discrimination remains widespread. African-American men are far more likely to be arrested and to receive longer sentences than whites who commit the same offenses. A study of the low-wage job market in New York City found that white applicants were twice as likely as
equally qualified blacks to receive a callback or job offer. White applicants who had just been released from prison were as likely to get a callback or job as black and Latino applicants with *no* criminal record!

These examples suggest a growing class polarization within the African-American community, alongside the continuing gap between the average fortunes of blacks and whites, with an elite group pulling away from the larger number of blacks who continue to experience racial profiling and deeper levels of poverty than whites. *This raises the troubling possibility that the progress of one sector of the African-American community provides many Americans with an excuse to ignore the historical legacy of segregation and the persistence of racial discrimination for the black population as a whole.*
Changes in America’s Racial and Ethnic Composition Since 1964

By Raha Forooz Sabet, University of Miami

When the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, racial differences in the United States were almost literally black and white. In the early 1960s, 85 percent of the population was white and 11 percent was black. Less than four percent of the population was Latino and less than six percent was foreign-born.

The biggest change since 1964 has been the growing diversification in America’s racial-ethnic makeup. The growth rate of the black or African-Americans has been slow, rising just two percentage points, from 11 to 13 percent. By contrast, the percentage of foreign-born Americans has more than doubled, so that they too represent 13 percent of the population.

Latinos now comprise 17 percent of the population and are the second largest racial and ethnic group after whites, with a population of about 51 million. This group is projected to triple in size by 2050, accounting for 60 percent of total population growth over a 45-year period.

Asians currently comprise just five percent of the population, but as of 2012 the Asian population was the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group. In 2050, they are projected to comprise nine percent of the total U.S. population.

There are about three million people who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native, while only 0.2 percent of the population identities as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Almost 20 million people identify as “some other race.” And in the first decade of the 21st century alone, the multiracial population grew by 33 percent, from 6.8 million in 2000 to 9 million in 2010.

Non-Hispanic whites are the largest racial and ethnic group in the U.S. However, this group is growing at the slowest rate, and the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2050 – in less than 40 years -- non-Hispanic whites will be a minority, accounting for just 47 percent of the population. Already, 50 percent of children below age one are ethnic and racial minorities, and there are 14 states including New York, New Jersey and Florida, where the majority of births are to minorities.

For further information contact Raha Sabet (graduate student), Department of Educational and Psychological Studies, University of Miami; r.sabet@umiami.edu.

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The State of Latino Children

By Rogelio Sáenz, University of Texas at San Antonio

Latinos are increasingly driving the demographic fortunes of the United States. Between 2000 and 2011, the number of white children in the country declined by 4.9 million, a decrease of 11 percent. Blacks and American Indians and Alaska Natives also saw their child populations decline. The nation’s total child population, however, increased by 1.7 million in the same period, largely due to the growth in the Latino child population. The number of Latino children rose by 5.1 million during this period (Figure 1), an increase of 42 percent. The number of multiracial and Asian and Pacific Islander children also expanded, but much less than the increase of Latino youth.

By 2060 it is projected that the proportion of white children will fall from 53 percent in 2012 to barely a third -- just 33 percent (Figure 2). Latinos will have replaced whites as the nation’s largest child population, comprising almost 40 percent of the total. The black share of children is expected to decrease slightly from 14 percent to 13 percent during the period. The remaining 16 percent of children in 2060 will be largely Asian and multiracial youth.
Who are these Latino children? *From Different Strands, But Deeply Rooted in the United States*

Approximately 70 percent of Latino children, 12.1 million, are of Mexican origin (Table 1). Next in order are Puerto Ricans (1.6 million), Salvadorans (587,000), Dominicans (448,000), Cubans (394,000), Guatemalans (363,000), and Colombians (236,000).

Table 1. Latino Children by Ethnic Group, 2011.

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<td>Spaniard</td>
<td>175,036</td>
<td>Paraguayan</td>
<td>6,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>163,054</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>562,733</td>
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<td>Peruvian</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Despite the multitude of their countries of origin, more than 90 percent of Latino children were born in the United States or born abroad to U.S. citizens. Although the overwhelming majority...
are U.S. citizens, many Latino children have strong connections to the immigrant experience. Almost 54 percent of U.S.-born Latino children have at least one parent who was born outside of the United States. In addition, many Latino children live in mixed-status families and households, where some members are U.S.-born, others are naturalized U.S. citizens, and still others are undocumented immigrants. In this living arrangement some family members have access to resources—such as food stamps, healthcare, and so forth—while others do not.

The language patterns of Latino children reflect their deep roots in the United States but also the strong ties of many to their ancestral roots. Latino youth three to 17 years of age tend to be bilingual, with three-fifths speaking Spanish at home and being fluent in English, and slightly more than one-third speaking English at home (Figure 3). Only a small fraction (four percent of all Latino children and less than 12 percent even of foreign-born ones) cannot converse adequately in English.

Family and Household Arrangements of Latino Children

The majority of Latino children (54 percent) live in married-couple family households (Figure 4). Nearly a quarter live in family households headed by a single female and about one-sixth live either with a grandparent or with a single father.
One of the household strategies that families utilize to deal with limited financial resources is *doubling up in the homes* of relatives and friends. One-tenth of Latino children live as part of subfamilies in the home of another family.

**Educational Challenges**

*Latinos have consistently lagged behind other racial and ethnic groups in educational achievement, in part because of their low pre-school enrollment*, which means they often enter kindergarten behind other students. Only about one-fourth of Latino three-year-olds and a little more than half of four-year-olds are enrolled in school (Figure 5). Their white and black counterparts are much more likely to be enrolled in school at these ages, with nearly two-fifths and close to two-thirds of three- and four-year-olds, respectively, attending school.
Although high school completion rates have been improving for Latinos in the past decade, nearly 15 percent of Latinos 16 to 24 years of age do not have a high school diploma or GED and are not currently enrolled in school. Not all of these are high school dropouts, because some of these individuals may have come to the United States to work and never did “drop in” to school. But both U.S.-born Latinos and blacks 16 to 24 are twice as likely as their white counterparts to be dropouts, and Latinos overall are still three times more likely than whites to lack a high school diploma.

**Work and Latino Youth**

Historically, youth from minority and poor families were much more likely than whites, especially middle-class whites, to hold jobs. Over the past half century, that pattern has been reversed. Among Latino and black youngsters 16 and 17 years of age, only one-sixth are in the labor force, compared to more than a quarter of white youth. And among white youth, those from more economically secure families are more likely to be employed or actively seeking employment than those from poor families. It appears that today the high labor force participation rate of white youth may be part of constructing an extracurricular profile, the lack of which may add to the disadvantages of poorer youth.

However, once in the labor force, youth of color have much higher rates of unemployment than whites. Here Latinos are in the middle, with 45 percent unemployment rates compared to 55 percent for blacks and 27 percent for whites (Figure 6). These figures partly reflect different levels of poverty in these different racial-ethnic groups. Poor white youngsters also have a high unemployment rate (46 percent). Nevertheless, youth of color who are poor have particularly high unemployment rates (blacks, 66 percent; Latinos, 56 percent).

Thus, youth of color, especially the poor, are at a disadvantage in gaining employment experience, especially during the recent economic crisis. The lower labor participation rates of
youth of color may reflect a higher prevalence of discouraged workers who exit the labor force after numerous attempts to secure employment.

**Economic and Family Matters**

*More than one-third of Latino children are living in poverty*, a rate that is slightly lower than the poverty rate of blacks and significantly higher than that of whites (Figure 7).

![Figure 7. Percent of Children in Poverty for Total and Selected Family Types for Selected Groups, 2011.](image)

In general, children in female-headed family households are much more likely to be poor than children in married-couple households. Interestingly, however, the gap by household type is not as great among Latinos as among whites or blacks. Nearly a quarter of Latino children in married-couple families are poor, which suggests that marriage is not the solution to poverty issues in Latino communities. Latino families do not appear to receive the same degree of premium for having both parents at home that black and, especially, white families receive.

**The Mortality Paradox of Latino Children**

Latino children have many characteristics that are typically associated with problematic health and mortality outcomes. They tend to have low levels of educational attainment and high levels of poverty. In addition, Latino children are less than half as likely as white and black children to have health insurance. Approximately one in eight Latino youngsters lacks insurance (Figure 8). These indicators should predict significant health problems and relatively high levels of mortality among Latino children.
In fact, however, *Latino children are quite healthy*. Regardless of age, Latino children are less likely to die than white children and considerably less likely to die than black children (Table 2). Black infants, for example, are 2.3 times more likely than Latino children to die before reaching their first birthday. White youth between the ages of five and nine are 30 percent more likely to die than their Latino counterparts. Among both boys and girls, the life expectancy at birth of Latinos is higher than for their black or white counterparts.

![Figure 8. Percent of Children Without Health Insurance for Selected Groups, 2011.](source)

Table 2. Death Rates by Age for Selected Groups, 2010.

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<th>Age Group</th>
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<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
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<tr>
<td>[Deaths Per 100,000 Persons]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1</td>
<td>510.7</td>
<td>529.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 to 4</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9</td>
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<td>11.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Latino baby boys born in 2010 are estimated to live, on average, 2.1 more years than white baby boys and 7.1 more years than black baby boys (Figure 9). Latina baby girls born in 2010 are
expected to live an average of 2.7 more years than white baby girls and 6.1 more years than black baby girls.

These favorable mortality patterns of Latino children exemplify the epidemiological paradox (also referred to as the Latino paradox) that was first observed approximately three decades ago. Despite having higher levels of poverty and lower access to health insurance, Latino infants and children tend to die at relatively low levels even compared to more advantaged white children.

The epidemiological paradox involving infant mortality is due primarily to foreign-born Latinas who, in particular, tend to give birth to healthy babies. Why do foreign-Latinas, despite their low socioeconomic status, have healthy babies? Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain this epidemiological paradox. For example, Alberto Palloni and Jeffrey Morenoff (2001) suggest that women who migrate to the United States tend to be healthy and therefore have healthy babies. In addition, Dolores Acevedo-Garcia and her colleagues (2007) argue that Latina immigrant women hold on to more traditional and healthy cultural practices—e.g., high levels of family support, low levels of smoking and drinking, and so forth—leading to healthier babies. Alternatively, Palloni and Morenoff (2001) suggest that the paradox may be a statistical artifact: If immigrant women give birth along the border and return to Mexico after the baby is born, any deaths of such infants are recorded in Mexico, resulting in an undercounting of the actual death rate in the United States. While the verdict is still out on the explanation of the epidemiological paradox, I suspect that while these all hypotheses carry some weight, cultural practices associated with low levels of smoking and drinking are especially important in producing healthy babies. Yet the health advantage of immigrants, including Latinos, diminishes with increasing time in the United States, as they adopt American lifestyles and diets.

Conclusion

By 2020, nonwhite children as a whole will outnumber white children, with Latinos replacing whites as the nation’s single largest child population sometime between 2050 and 2060. It is
already clear that Latinos are become an increasingly larger share of American students, workers, consumers, and voters. For this reason, it is crucial that policymakers develop policies and programmatic initiatives to ensure that Latino children succeed educationally and reach their full potential. While this report points to a need to improve access to education, health insurance, and jobs for Latinos, it also suggests that Latinos may offer a model for other Americans in protecting children from premature death. It is essential that Latino children be viewed as an asset rather than a liability, as children who are our children and our future. An investment in the future of these children—upwards of 90 percent born in the United States—will yield major returns in the form of an educated and competitive workforce and engaged citizenry.

For further information, contact Rogelio Sáenz, Dean for the College of Public Policy, University of Texas-San Antonio; Rogelio.Saenz@utsa.edu.

References


Are African Americans Living the Dream 50 Years After Passage of the Civil Rights Act?

By Velma McBride Murry and Na Liu, Vanderbilt University

**Introduction.** In 1963, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his famous “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington, the momentous demonstration that helped spur passage of the Civil Rights Act the following year. He described African Americans as living “on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity.” A half-century after the Civil Rights Act we can assess how much progress African-Americans have made in key areas such as education, employment, income, health, and longevity.

Certainly, many African Americans have moved into positions of power that were scarcely imaginable when Dr. King gave his speech. In 1964 there were only 100 Black elected officials in the country. By 1990 there were 10,000. Since then there have been two Black Secretaries of State, and America’s first African-American president is now in his second term.

The number of **Black households earning $100,000 a year** or more has increased by 500 percent in the past 50 years, to about one-in-ten of Black households. African Americans have even headed several Fortune 500 companies. Examples include Dr. Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., former Chairman and CEO of TIAA-CREF, Ursula M. Burns, Chairman and CEO of Xerox Corp., Kenneth I. Chenault, Chairman and CEO at American Express, and Kenneth C. Frazier, President and CEO of Merck & Co. Inc. Many African Americans have also attained unprecedented wealth, status, and respect in the news, entertainment, and sports industries.

Yet despite these individual attainments, African Americans remain heavily underrepresented in the highest ranks of the business world, comprising barely one percent of the CEOs of the Fortune 500. Oprah Winfrey is the only African American on the Forbes 400 richest Americans list. And in the lower echelons of the income ladder, racial economic disparities have been remarkably persistent and gotten worse in a few respects.

**Education.** Over the past 50 years, there has been considerable progress in the educational attainments of African Americans, although they still lag behind the levels of Whites. In 1966, the high school completion rate of African Americans was just a little more than half that of White Americans. By 2012 it was almost 95 percent that of Whites. In 1966, fewer than four percent of African Americans, compared to more than ten percent of Whites, had college degrees. By 2012, the percentage of African Americans with college degrees had risen to 21.2, compared to 31.3 percent for Whites (U.S. Census, Education and Social Stratification Branch, 2013). See Figure 1.
Figure 1. People 25 or older who have completed four year of high school or more, and who have completed four year of college or more.


But after declines in school segregation during the 1970s and 1980s, progress leveled off and even reversed in some areas. In 1968, 76.6 percent of African American children attended segregated schools. In 2012, 74 percent of African American children were in segregated schools, 15 percent of them in schools where less than one percent of the student body was
White (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Majority Black schools are generally characterized by lower funding, lower teacher quality, and higher drop-out rates than majority White schools (The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, 2013).

**Employment and Income.** There have been significant improvements in employment opportunities for African Americans over the past half century. In 1960, only 6.7 percent of African Americans in the labor market were in professional and managerial positions, compared to 26 percent of Whites (Smith & Welch, 1977). By contrast, in 2012, 30 percent of employed African Americans were in professional and managerial positions, compared to 39 percent of employed Whites (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). African American women have made especially significant gains and are now more likely than their male counterparts to occupy professional and managerial positions.

However, African Americans professionals earn significantly less than their White peers, and African American women in such occupations earn less than their male counterparts. In 2012, the median weekly earnings for African American women who worked in “management, professional, and related occupations” were $838, compared to $958 for White women, $1,021 for African American men, and $1,339 for White men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). See Appendix A for charts on median household income in historically and recently by race.

Overall, despite absolute progress in Black earnings, the income gap between Blacks and Whites remains large. In 1963, African American workers earned 55 cents for every dollar earned by Whites. By 2012, that had risen to 78.4 cents, leaving Blacks still more than 20 percent behind (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

The wealth gap is even higher, due to the lower value of homes in predominantly black communities and the much smaller access of African Americans to any accumulated wealth of parents and grandparents. The median wealth of White households is ten times as large as that of Black households.

Educational disparities may explain some of the remaining gap in pay equity. We have come some distance from the 1960s, when African Americans with a four-year college degree earned less than White men with only a high school diploma (Katz & Stern, 2006; Taylor, 1981). Today, by contrast, being college graduate counts for more than being a White man in determining earnings.

Yet as late as 2012, African American men and women still earned less than their White peers with the same level of education. For male college graduates over age 25, Whites’ weekly earnings were $1,399, compared to $1,086 for African Americans. College-graduated Black women, aged 25 years and older, had weekly earnings of $913, compared to $1,012 for White women with similar educational attainment. White men with a high school diploma earned over $150 more a week than similarly-educated African American men -- $760 vs. $604 per week. In fact, a Black man with an associate’s degree earns, on average, $15 per week less than a White man with only a high-school diploma (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).
**Unemployment and Poverty.** African Americans are also more likely to lose their jobs during economic downturns (see Figure 2). Despite ups and downs in unemployment for all racial and ethnic groups, the Black unemployment rate has consistently been twice as high as that of Whites since the 1950s.

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**Figure 2.** Employment-population ratios and unemployment rates

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table B-35 & Table B-37. Data related to persons 16 years of age and over.

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**Unemployment rates by race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 1973–2012 annual averages**

And since 1964, the poverty rate of African Americans has consistently been more than twice that of Whites. Worse, Blacks are far more likely to live in areas of concentrated poverty. Among Americans born between 1985 and 2000, 31 percent of Blacks, versus only one percent of Whites, live in neighborhoods where 30 percent of the residents are poor (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Poverty rate by race and ethnicity

Social and Institutional Disparities. African American children are at greater risk than their White counterparts for numerous problems associated with growing up in poverty, (e.g., poor prenatal health care, malnutrition, poor quality housing, and exposure to environmental toxins). This helps explain why African Americans are disproportionately affected by chronic illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, and, because of lack of access to quality health care, are more likely to die from these illnesses and diseases (Mead, Cartwright-Smith, Jones, Ramos, Woods, & Siegel, 2008). Blacks are three times as likely to die from asthma as Whites. Black women are less likely than White women to develop breast cancer, but more likely to die from it (Mead et al, 2008). And Black maternal mortality rates are three to four times higher than rates for Whites. See Appendix B for charts of racial and ethnic health disparities by race.

While life expectancies for all Americans have greatly improved over time, African Americans continue to have a shorter life expectancy than Whites. In 2008, there was a 5.5 year gap between African American and White men, and a 3.8 year gap between African American and White women (U.S. Census, 2010). African American men have the shortest life expectancy at birth of all Americans across racial and ethnic groups (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Life expectancy at birth from 1960 to 2007

**Incarceration.** The rate of imprisonment is one area where there has been significant deterioration for African Americans in the past half-century. Incarceration rates among African American men are three times higher than 50 years ago and the disparity between incarceration rates for African Americans and Whites has continued to grow. African American men are more likely to be arrested and receive longer sentences for nonviolent drug crimes than Whites committing similar or more serious offenses. In consequence, African Americans, who are just ten percent of the overall U.S. population, represent 35.4 percent of the prison population, with an incarceration rate more than six times higher than Whites. One in three African American men can expect to go to prison at some point in his life time, compared to one in 17 White men. (Pettit & Western, 2004).

**Conclusion.** As we reflect on the state of African Americans 50 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, it is clear that despite the progress made in many arenas of life, African Americans are still burdened by the legacy of slavery, segregation, and discrimination. In fact, it may be that the dramatic successes of a minority of Blacks have made it harder for Americans to recognize the continuing disparities and injustices facing the remainder.

For further information, contact Velma McBride Murry, Professor and Betts Chair, Human and Organizational Development Dept., Vanderbilt University; velma.m.murry@vanderbilt.edu.

**References**


Appendix A: Charts of Median Household Income, Historically and Recently, by Race


Appendix B: Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Charts

Chart 3-12. Minority women have lower rates of breast cancer than white women, but black women are more likely to die from the disease.

**Incidence**

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<th>Total</th>
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<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
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**Mortality**

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AIAN = American Indian/Alaska Native.
Note: Data are age adjusted.

Chart 3-14. Black men are 50 percent more likely to have prostate cancer than whites but are more than twice as likely to die from it.

**Incidence**

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**Mortality**

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<td>64</td>
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AIAN = American Indian/Alaska Native.
Note: Data are age adjusted.
Chart 3-19. Blacks are three times more likely to die from asthma than whites.

Number of asthma deaths per 100,000 people, 2003

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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native.
Note: Data are age adjusted to the 2000 United States standard population.
Changes in Interracial Marriage

By Kimberlyn Fong, Mount Holyoke College

In the past 50 years there has been a true revolution in American attitudes toward interracial marriage. In the years when the Civil Rights Act was being debated, only four percent of Americans said they approved of marriages between white and blacks. Today 77 percent of the public approves, an all-time high.

During slavery and Reconstruction, interracial marriage between whites and free blacks, while less common than today, was not as rare as might be expected. In fact, actual rates of intermarriage were higher in the mid 19th century than they were in the mid-20th. After emancipation freed African American slaves in 1863, intermarriage rates declined, in part because the larger size of the black population made it easier for blacks to find black marriage partners of the opposite sex, in part because of new laws forbidding “miscegenation” and intensified vigilante action by whites trying to re-impose racial boundaries.

Between 1913 and 1964, more than half the states in the country had anti-miscegenation laws, prohibiting intermarriage not just between whites and blacks, but also between white and Asians or Native Americans. Some prohibited African-Americans from marrying anyone other than another black person. In the postwar period, many states repealed these laws, but in 1967, three years after passage of the Civil Rights Act, 16 states still retained and enforced anti-miscegenation laws.

As late as 1980, less than 7 percent of new marriages in the United States were between spouses of a different race or ethnicity from one another. By 2010, that had more than doubled, to 15 percent.

Today, among the four major racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., Asians and Hispanics have the highest level of intermarriage rates. Interestingly, however, recent increases in Latino immigration have enlarged the pool of Hispanic partners and actually led to a decline in intermarriage between Hispanics and other groups. Between 1990 and 2000, intermarriage among all young couples with at least one Hispanic partner decreased from 33 percent to 23 percent.

Nevertheless, of approximately 275,500 new interracial or interethnic marriages in 2010, white/Hispanic couples were the most common, accounting for more than four-in-ten (43 percent.) Fourteen percent of new marriages were between whites and Asians, making these the second most common interracial marriage. White/black couples were the least common, at 12 percent.

There are interesting gender differences in interracial marriage, and these have changed over time. From 1850 until 1920, unions between black men and white women were more common than those between white men and black women. Between 1940 and 1960, by contrast, almost equal numbers of white men married black women and black men married white women. After 1960, however the sex ratio turned in favor of black men and white female unions again,
reaching a high of 80 percent in 1980. Today, black men are twice as likely to marry interracially than black women.

Among Asians, the gender pattern runs the other way. About 36 percent of Asian female newlyweds married outside their race, compared with just 17 percent of Asian male newlyweds.

As intermarriage has become more common, public opinion has become more accepting. As late as 1986, nearly three-in-ten Americans (28 percent) said marriage between people of different races was not acceptable for anyone, while an additional 37 percent said that it might be acceptable for others, but not for themselves. Today 63 percent of Americans say it “would be fine” with them if a member of their own family were to marry someone outside their own racial or ethnic group.

And this acceptance is not just an abstract value. A 1997 Gallup national survey of people ages 13 to 19 found that 64 percent of black, Hispanic, or Asian teens who had ever dated and who attended schools with students of more than one race reported dating someone who was white. On the other hand, daters from different races are still less likely to end up tying the knot than same-race daters. The odds of going from dating to living together or getting married are on-in-four for same-race daters and about one-in-five for interracial daters. Nevertheless, these trends suggest that interracial marriages will continue to become more common in the U.S., and much more acceptable than 50 years ago.

For more information, contact Kimberlyn Fong, Mount Holyoke College (Psychology and Journalism); fong22k@mtholyoke.edu

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DAY THREE

Women’s Changing Social Status since the Civil Rights Act: Introduction

Remarks from Stephanie Coontz

It’s appropriate that we turn last to how women have fared since passage of the Civil Rights Act, because the addition of the word “sex” was a last minute addition to the bill. Opponents hoped -- and supporters feared -- that threatening to make discrimination on the basis of sex illegal would kill the bill, and when it passed anyway, few policymakers took the sex provision seriously. Although the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission immediately moved to ban job ads that specified a particular race, it refused to do the same for the sex-segregated want ads that were the norm in 1964.

Not until 1968 did the New York Times eliminate its “Help Wanted: Male” and “Help Wanted: Female” sections of the newspaper, and not until 1973, in Pittsburgh Press Co. v. Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, did the Supreme Court rule that printing separate job listings for men and women was illegal. Since then, however, the changes in women’s social status, legal options, and economic opportunities have been dramatic, as Max Coleman of Oberlin College describes in his report, “Civil Rights for Women, 1964-2014.”

As the Civil Rights Act was being debated, a Gallup poll found that only 55 percent of Americans would vote for a qualified woman for president. At that time, women made up just two percent of the U.S. Senate and less than four percent of the House of Representatives. Since then female representation has grown tenfold in the Senate and fivefold in the House. Today 95 percent of Americans now say they could support a female presidential candidate.

Things have changed in the home as well as the House. In 1970, one survey found that 80 percent of wives felt it was “much better” when “the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.” Today 62 percent of all Americans, and 78 percent of young women, prefer a marriage where husband and wife share breadwinning and homemaking.

Women’s wages as a proportion of men’s have climbed steadily since outright wage discrimination was made illegal. In 1963, full-time working women earned only 59 cents for every dollar men earned. Today, women earn 84 percent of men’s hourly wages. Among workers ages 25 to 34, women’s hourly earnings are 93 percent of men’s. Nearly 40 percent of working wives outearn their husbands.

Women have also made impressive progress in entering high-status fields formerly dominated by men. In 1963, less than three percent of all attorneys and just six percent of physicians were women. Women held less than one percent of all engineering jobs. Today, almost one-third of
attorneys and more than one-third of physicians and surgeons are women, and women occupy almost 30 percent percent of science and engineering jobs.

In 1964, not a single woman had served as CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Today, women run 23 Fortune 500 Companies.

*But women have not shattered the glass ceiling.* In law firms, only 15 percent of equity partners and five percent of managing partners are women, and women comprise less than five percent of Fortune 500 CEOs. In her contribution to the symposium, “Dilemmas Facing High-Achieving Career Women,” Joan Williams (University of California, Hastings College of the Law) calculates that at the current hiring rate, “it would take 278 years for equal numbers of men and women to be CEOs.” Williams describes four distinct patterns of gender bias that high-achieving career women encounter.

Up until 1980, the average female college graduate, working fulltime, earned less than the average male high school graduate. That is no longer true, yet at every educational level, Coleman reports, women earn less than men with the same credentials.

Women in low-wage jobs and women who lack a college degree experience a lower gender wage gap than their more educated and affluent counterparts, but they are much more economically vulnerable, and they have been losing ground in relation to high earners of both sexes. Most women still work in traditionally female occupations, which pay less than traditionally male jobs requiring comparable skills. In fact, working-class jobs today are as segregated today as they were in 1964. Women are more likely to live in poverty than men, and they constitute 62 percent of all minimum wage workers.

*A key source of wage disparities and discrimination against women today is motherhood.* In 1978 the Civil Rights Act was amended to make it illegal for employers to exclude pregnancy and childbirth from sick leave and health benefits. But the United States is still the only industrialized country that does not guarantee subsidized, job-protected leave for new mothers. As a result, many women are forced to quit or cut back on work when they give birth, creating a lifetime earnings penalty. Even mothers who do not cut back are regarded with suspicion by employers, who are less likely to hire such women, and, if they do, offer them lower wages than other employees.

Men do not face the same automatic discrimination when they become fathers -- and some actually receive a fatherhood bonus -- because employers assume that men, unlike women, will work even harder after they become parents. But new research shows that men face similar penalties to women when they request leave or flex time in order to meet their family obligations. This suggests that a future goal for equal rights advocates and pro-family activists might be eliminating discrimination on the basis of caregiving status as well as continuing the battle against racial, ethnic, religious, and gender bias.
Civil Rights for Women, 1964-2014

By Max Coleman, Research Intern, Council on Contemporary Families

Fifty years ago, the United States adopted the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic origin, religion, and gender. Women were a last-minute addition to the bill, and some legislators actually hoped that adding women would mobilize enough opposition to kill the entire act. But the court cases and public demonstrations that the Civil Rights Act enabled women to organize dramatically changed their status in the United States. We can assess the tremendous progress that has been made by comparing current figures to those collected the year before the passage of the act and published in the 1963 report of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women.

Leadership and occupations. In the 87th Congress, elected in 1960, women’s place was not in the House—or the Senate—but in the home. There were only two female senators and 17 female representatives, which meant that women constituted only two percent of the Senate and less than four percent of the House. Today, in the 113th Congress, women hold almost 20 percent of the total positions, including 20 seats in the Senate and 78 in the House of Representatives. This represents a tenfold increase in the Senate and a nearly fivefold increase in the House. And while we have not yet had a female president, attitudes have improved significantly: in 1963, a Gallup poll found that only 55 percent of Americans would vote for a woman for president. By 2011, that number had jumped to 95 percent.

In 1963, less than three percent of all attorneys were women, and out of 422 federal judges in the country, just three (0.7 percent) were women (Coontz 2011: 14). By 2010, women held almost a quarter of all federal judgeships and more than a quarter of state judgeships.

The law itself was grossly unfair to women 50 years ago. Sexual harassment was not forbidden anywhere. In only eight states did a female homemaker have any claim on the income earned by her husband (Mead & Kaplan 1965: 152). It was also perfectly legal for a man to force his wife to have sex against her will. According to the 1962 United States Model Penal Code, “A man who has sexual intercourse with a female not his wife is guilty of rape if . . . he compels her to submit by force or threat of force or threat of imminent death, serious bodily injury, extreme pain, or kidnapping.” Before the Civil Rights Act it was also legal to exclude women from many occupations, pay them less for doing the same work as men, and give men raises and promotions that were denied to equally qualified women. In the 1960s the Harvard Business Review was forced to cancel a report on female managers because “In the case of women the barriers are so great that there is scarcely anything to study” (Collins 2009: 22). Today, women occupy the majority (51.5 percent) of managerial, professional, and related positions. In 1963, not a single woman had served as CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Today, women run 23 of the Fortune 500 (4.6 percent) and almost 20 percent of Financial Post 500 Senior/Corporate officers are women.

In 1960, women constituted less than one percent of all engineers in the country. Only six percent of physicians were women (Collins 2009: 20). By 2007, women held 27 percent of science and engineering jobs, and by 2012, more than a third of physicians and surgeons were women.
Income. All this occupational upward mobility has improved women’s financial status relative to men. In 1963, full-time working women earned only 59 cents for every dollar men earned. In 2012, such women earned 77 cents on the dollar, a 30 percent increase. When we count part-time workers and control for hours worked, the progress looks even better. According to a recent Pew report on all working men and women ages 16 and older, women’s hourly wages are now 84 percent of men’s. The gains have been especially dramatic for younger women. Among workers aged 25 to 34, women’s hourly earnings are 93 percent of men’s.

A majority of wives now earn income of their own, something that has been shown to increase equality of decision-making in the family (Coontz 2011: 132). And growing numbers of women make as much or more than their male partners. In 1960, only 3.5 percent of all households with children had a mother who earned more than her husband. By 2011, over four times as many households (15 percent) belonged to this group. And as of 2009, more than 20 percent of all wives—and nearly 40 percent of working wives—earned more than their husbands.

Education. If educational trends continue, we can expect to see more breadwinner wives in the future. In 1962, only 42 percent of female high school graduates went on to college, compared to 58 percent of male graduates, and a larger percentage of female than male college students dropped out before completing their degrees (Mead & Kaplan: 1965). Today, not only do women enroll in college at a higher rate than men, but once enrolled they are less likely to drop out.

A 1970 survey of women under 45 who had been or were currently married found that 80 percent felt “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” (Collins 2009: 17). As late as 1977, two-thirds of all Americans believed that it was the woman’s job to take care of the home. Today, that opinion has reversed: a 2007 study found that 62 percent of Americans believe sharing household chores is “very important” to marital success.

Among the recommendations of the 1963 President’s Commission were access to continuing education, better employment opportunities, and “equal pay for comparable work” (Mead & Kaplan 1965: 212). The gains made in each of these spheres have been tremendous. But there is, as ever, still work to be done.

Women have now outpaced men in educational attainment, and today—unlike 50 years ago—a woman with a college degree earns more than a man without one. Yet at every educational level, women still earn less than men with the same credentials.

Gender gaps in more detail. Overall, women still earn only 84 cents for every dollar a man earns. (This Pew estimate is based on hourly earnings; the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which uses weekly earnings, reports 81 cents.) Part of this inequity is due to gendered employment differences: women are more likely to work in lower-paying occupations and to leave the workforce when they have children. But even controlling for these and other factors, women still earn only 91 cents for every dollar earned by men. In other words, nine cents are entirely unaccounted for, and likely due to discriminatory pay practices.
According to research prepared for The Shriver Report, released in January 2014, women remain more likely to be poor than men, and much more likely to experience extreme poverty—living on incomes less than 50 percent of the poverty level. And when gender interacts with race, women’s economic disadvantages mount, even though there is a lower gender pay gap among African Americans and Hispanics than among whites. On average, black women earn 90 percent of what black men earn, while Latinas net 88 percent of Latinos’ earnings. But black and Hispanic men earn so much less than white men that the lower gender gap for black woman and Latinas does not produce economic security. African-American women earn just 64 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men. And Hispanic women earn just 55 cents.

Conclusions. Many of the gains that women have made are not as impressive as they seem at first sight. More than a quarter of women’s progress in catching up with men is a result of men’s wage losses over the past three decades rather than women’s wage gains, notes Heidi Shierholz of the Economic Policy Institute. This is especially true for black Americans, as low-income black men in impoverished communities have not only experienced dramatic losses in real wages and job security but tremendous increases in incarceration rates. Between 1970 and 2005 the U.S. prison population rose 700 percent, and much of that increase was accounted for by growing disparities in the sentencing of black men.

Gender segregation in employment also continues to be a problem. After lessening in the 1970s and 1980s, some working-class occupations have become more segregated since 1990. Segregation has also worsened in STEM fields: in 1985, 37 percent of computer and information science degrees were earned by women, but by 2008, that had dropped to 18 percent.

In government, academia, finances, medicine, law, and many other realms, issues of access and unequal treatment still prevail. And pay inequities increase after women become parents, largely because the lack of parental-leave policies and affordable child care forces many women to leave jobs or cut back on work hours, even when they want or need to continue working. The Civil Rights Act has helped women make many impressive gains, but further changes in policy and attitudes are needed to address these remaining inequalities.

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References


Dilemmas Facing High-Achieving Career Women

By Joan C. Williams, University of California, Hastings College of the Law

Fifty years after discrimination on the basis of sex was outlawed, women have made tremendous progress moving into high-level careers, but the glass ceiling still exists, only it rests on different support mechanisms than the past.

Prior to 1964, newspapers listed men’s and women’s jobs separately, and it was legal to exclude women from high-paying jobs, promotions, and pay raises. Since then, women have increased their representation in high-level jobs, yet relatively few women make it to the very top. Women comprise only 15 percent of law firm equity partners and 23 percent of full professors. At the current rate of hiring, it would take 278 years for equal numbers of men and women to be CEOs.

While outright discrimination is illegal, office politics are still shaped by subtle biases, forcing women to be more accomplished—and savvier—than men to survive and thrive in high-level jobs. A new collection of interviews published last month with highly successful women in business, science and law confirm the large body of research suggesting that getting ahead involves more than “leaning in.” It requires women to navigate four distinct patterns of bias.

- Prove-It-Again! The default image of a hard-driving banker, litigator or engineer is of a man. To be rated as equally capable, women need to show more evidence of competence than men. Nearly two-thirds of the 127 female leaders we interviewed reported seeing this pattern, with men hired on their “potential” and women required to have a much more extensive track record.

- The Tightrope. Women in high status jobs can be penalized either for being too feminine or too masculine. Even in powerful and responsible positions, women reported feeling pressure to take notes, bake cupcakes, and fill helpmeet roles (e.g. servicing other partners’ clients instead of developing their own). When they engaged in such activities, this not only took up valuable time. They also undercut their credibility. Yet women who refused were often regarded as hostile or were seen as “not team players.” This pattern was reported more than any other—nearly all of those interviewed experienced it.

- The Maternal Wall. Motherhood triggers the strongest form of gender bias, with both supervisors and co-workers assuming that women’s commitment and productivity falls off when they become mothers. Said one lawyer, “I traveled all the time, I was in the court all the time. [But] I missed one meeting because I had to take my child to the emergency room, and that kept getting highlighted in my evaluations…year after year.”

- Tug of War Loyalty Conflicts. Some observers deny that these problems are real issues of gender discrimination since female business leaders may be even tougher on their own sex than their male colleagues. This is often attributed to the personality problems of “Queen Bees.” But new studies and our interviews show that tugs of war originate in workplaces where aligning with men against other women represents the best – and
sometimes the only – chance for one individual woman to move up. Here are some of the ways this works:

- **Zero Sum Tugs of War.** When women receive the message that there’s room for only one woman at the top, this breeds a destructive competition where some women target other women to ensure that they receive the one “woman’s” position.

- **Pass-It-Along Tugs of War.** Some women who have made sacrifices to prove themselves resent the idea that other women may not have to work as hard. “I’m going 900 mph, and if you can’t keep up with me, the hell with you,” remarked one highly accomplished woman, describing her harsh judgment of women who could not solve the prove-it-again problem by continuously exceeding expectations.

- **Tightrope Tugs of War.** Women who embrace their feminine side often criticize women who fit in by being “one of the boys.” But other colleagues sometimes feel that women who emphasize their femininity are perpetuating stereotypes that should be challenged. These differences often fuel conflict among women.

Our research included 71 interviews with women of color, and their answers revealed some of the ways the experience of gender bias differs by race.

- Some black women interviewed reported they could not afford to make a single mistake, a fear validated by a lab study documenting that black women are penalized more harshly for failure than are white women, white men, and black men. Yet others found that stereotypes about angry black women could work in their favor, giving them more space to behave in dominant ways than white women are allowed—another finding confirmed by a lab study.

- Latinas faced both strong negative assumptions about their competence along with pressure to play subordinate mothering roles.

- Asian-American women’s situation was complicated. “I’m more acceptable as an Asian woman scientist than as a woman scientist,” one woman observed, suggesting that Asian-Americans may have an easier time proving their intellectual competence than other women. Yet Asian-American women who contradict the stereotypes of pliability and submissiveness often encounter virulent stereotypes of Asians as crafty or become seen as “dragon ladies.”

For further information on these patterns and accounts of the strategies successful women use to navigate through them, see What Works for Women at Work: Four Patterns Working Women Need to Know, which Williams co-wrote with her daughter Rachel Dempsey. Contact: Joan C. Williams, Distinguished Professor, Hastings Foundation Chair, Director, Center for WorkLife Law, University of California, Hastings College of the Law; Williams@uchastings.edu; cell: 202-365-8013 or Rachel Dempsey, Yale Law Student; Rachel.W.Dempsey@gmail.com; cell: 202-250-1053.
For Further Information

Stephanie Coontz was convener and editor of this symposium and is available for further information.

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