

# Fertility of Women in the United States: 2012

## Population Characteristics

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### INTRODUCTION

This report describes the fertility patterns of women in the United States, patterns which have changed significantly over time. The average number of children ever born has dropped from more than three children per woman in 1976 to about two children per woman in 2012 (see Figure 1). Recent years have also seen

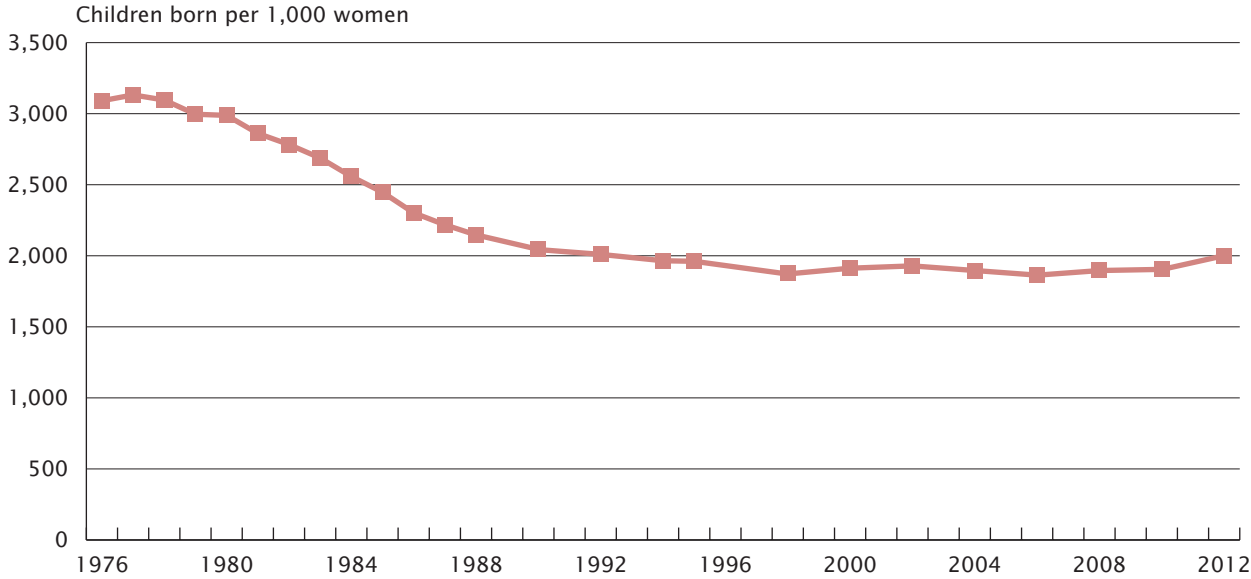
drops in adolescent childbearing and increases in non-marital births.<sup>1, 2</sup>

These changes in fertility are important because recent research suggests that women’s childbearing is related

<sup>1</sup> J.A. Martin, B.E. Hamilton, J.K. Osterman, et al., “Births: Final Data for 2012,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 2013, Vol. 62, No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> S.J. Ventura, “Changing Patterns of Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States,” *NCHS data brief*, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 2009, No. 18.

Figure 1.  
**Children Ever Born Per 1,000 Women Aged 40 to 44: 1976–2012**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1976–2012.

to their rates of employment, their educational attainment, and their economic well-being.<sup>3, 4, 5</sup> Furthermore, other research connects the circumstances into which a child is born to that child's later outcomes, including their likelihood of living in a single-parent household and their academic achievement.<sup>6, 7</sup> This report utilizes fertility data collected in the June 2012 Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), as well as the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS), to discuss these and other trends.<sup>8</sup>

This report has three sections: cumulative fertility, births in the last year, and relationship status at first birth. Fertility patterns are shown by women's race, ethnicity, age, citizenship, and employment status, as well as their state of residence. This report also examines new topics, such as women's marital status at the time of their first births, the completed fertility of women up to age 50, and the fertility patterns of young women.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Some highlights of the report are:

- Births to adolescents continued to decline.
- More than one in five women with a birth in the past 12

<sup>3</sup> A.R. Miller, "The Effects of Motherhood Timing on Career Path," *Journal of Population Economics*, 2009, 24: 1071-1100.

<sup>4</sup> M.M. Marni, "Women's Educational Attainment and the Timing of Entry Into Parenthood," *American Sociological Review*, 49(4), 1984, pp. 491-511.

<sup>5</sup> A. Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued*, Henry Hold and Company, LLC, New York, NY, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Z. Redd, T.S. Karver, D. Murphy, et al., "Two Generations in Poverty: Status and Trends Among Parents and Children in the United States, 2000-2010," *Child Trends Research Brief*, Washington, DC, 2011, Publication #2011-25.

<sup>7</sup> K.A. Moore, Z. Redd, M. Burkhauser, et al., "Children in Poverty: Trends, Consequences, and Policy Options," *Child Trends Research Brief*, Washington, DC, 2009, Publication #2009-11.

<sup>8</sup> For more information about these data sources, see "About the Data."

months reported at the time of the survey that they were living in someone else's home.

- The majority of first births occur in marriage, as they have for decades, but the most recent cohort of young mothers is much more likely to have had their first birth in a cohabiting relationship than in marriage.

## CUMULATIVE FERTILITY

Using data from the CPS's June 2012 interview, we can examine the total number of children born to women aged 15 to 50 and how the number of children ever born varies between groups.

In June 2012, 75.4 million women in the United States were aged 15 to 50, and 59 percent of them were mothers (see Table 1). Of all women aged 15 to 50, 17.2 percent had one child, 23.1 percent had two children, and 18.5 percent had three or more children.

The prevalence of both large families and childlessness (defined as not having given birth to any children) are not uniform across racial groups or by Hispanic origin (see Table 1).<sup>9</sup> Hispanic women aged 15 to 50 have lower rates of childlessness (35.3 percent) than do women in any other group, while Asian women of the same age have the highest rates of childlessness (46.1 percent). Forty-three percent of non-Hispanic White women and 39 percent of Black women are childless. Hispanic women aged 15 to 50 have the highest percentages of women with three or more children (25.2 percent), followed by Black women (21.3 percent).

<sup>9</sup> This report will refer to the White-alone population as White, the Black-alone population as Black, the Asian-alone population as Asian, and the White-alone, non-Hispanic population as non-Hispanic White unless otherwise noted.

## Definitions

**Birth rate:** Number of children born per 1,000 women over a given year (birth rates allow for comparisons of the number of births across populations of different sizes).

**Childlessness:** Not having given birth to any children.

**Children ever born:** Number of children a woman has given birth to.

**Cohabitation, cohabiting:** Defined as living with a romantic partner to whom the person is not married (i.e., a boyfriend, girlfriend, or unmarried partner).

**Cohort:** A group of people who experience the same life event at roughly the same time (for example, in this report, women who had their first child at roughly the same time).

**Completed fertility:** Number of children a woman has given birth to when she completes childbearing.

**Cumulative fertility:** Total number of children ever born to a woman at the time of the survey, regardless of whether she will have more children in the future.

**Replacement-level fertility:** The number of children each woman would need to give birth to in order to keep the national population the same size in the subsequent generation.

Table 1.

### Children Ever Born Per 1,000 Women 15 to 50 Years Old by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: June 2012

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number of women	Children ever born per 1,000 women	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Percent distribution of women by number of children ever born <sup>2</sup>				
				Total	None	One child	Two children	Three or more children
<b>AGE</b>								
15 to 50 years . . . . .	75,392	1,297	12	100.0	41.3	17.2	23.1	18.5
15 to 19 years . . . . .	10,351	68	4	100.0	94.9	4.0	0.8	0.4
20 to 24 years . . . . .	10,909	421	12	100.0	71.4	18.0	8.5	2.2
25 to 29 years . . . . .	10,437	955	24	100.0	49.4	21.6	18.1	11.0
30 to 34 years . . . . .	10,324	1,563	36	100.0	28.2	21.6	28.4	21.9
35 to 39 years . . . . .	9,709	1,990	46	100.0	17.2	17.7	33.8	31.3
40 to 44 years . . . . .	10,516	1,998	44	100.0	15.1	18.9	34.9	31.1
45 to 50 years . . . . .	13,145	1,982	39	100.0	16.8	18.1	35.1	30.0
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>								
<b>White alone</b>								
15 to 50 years . . . . .	56,951	1,291	13	100.0	41.4	16.6	23.7	18.4
15 to 19 years . . . . .	7,673	60	4	100.0	95.5	3.3	0.9	0.3
20 to 24 years . . . . .	8,078	387	13	100.0	73.3	17.2	7.5	2.0
25 to 29 years . . . . .	7,825	944	27	100.0	50.5	19.7	19.1	10.7
30 to 34 years . . . . .	7,719	1,553	41	100.0	27.7	21.4	29.4	21.5
35 to 39 years . . . . .	7,280	1,965	52	100.0	16.9	17.8	34.8	30.5
40 to 44 years . . . . .	8,055	1,987	50	100.0	15.3	18.5	34.9	31.3
45 to 50 years . . . . .	10,319	1,963	44	100.0	17.0	17.5	35.8	29.7
<b>White alone, non-Hispanic</b>								
15 to 50 years . . . . .	44,445	1,216	14	100.0	43.0	16.6	24.0	16.4
15 to 19 years . . . . .	5,728	41	4	100.0	96.9	2.3	0.7	0.1
20 to 24 years . . . . .	6,157	328	14	100.0	77.4	14.7	6.1	1.8
25 to 29 years . . . . .	5,984	803	27	100.0	55.5	19.6	16.9	8.1
30 to 34 years . . . . .	5,899	1,424	44	100.0	31.3	21.7	29.1	18.0
35 to 39 years . . . . .	5,571	1,831	56	100.0	19.1	19.1	35.5	26.3
40 to 44 years . . . . .	6,472	1,884	53	100.0	16.4	19.2	36.6	27.8
45 to 50 years . . . . .	8,633	1,878	46	100.0	17.6	18.2	36.6	27.6
<b>Black alone</b>								
15 to 50 years . . . . .	10,949	1,408	32	100.0	38.6	19.9	20.2	21.3
15 to 19 years . . . . .	1,634	90	12	100.0	92.4	6.5	0.8	0.3
20 to 24 years . . . . .	1,739	645	42	100.0	57.6	24.1	14.9	3.4
25 to 29 years . . . . .	1,507	1,163	73	100.0	38.5	29.7	17.1	14.7
30 to 34 years . . . . .	1,485	1,846	109	100.0	25.1	21.3	24.5	29.1
35 to 39 years . . . . .	1,374	2,199	133	100.0	19.5	15.4	25.2	40.0
40 to 44 years . . . . .	1,447	2,072	123	100.0	15.4	20.8	30.0	33.9
45 to 50 years . . . . .	1,763	2,064	111	100.0	15.5	21.3	30.6	32.6
<b>Asian alone</b>								
15 to 50 years . . . . .	4,549	1,091	40	100.0	46.1	17.6	24.9	11.5
15 to 19 years . . . . .	464	53	16	100.0	98.4	Z	0.9	0.7
20 to 24 years . . . . .	591	176	29	100.0	89.9	5.2	3.5	1.5
25 to 29 years . . . . .	689	477	53	100.0	65.9	23.5	8.1	2.5
30 to 34 years . . . . .	728	1,040	95	100.0	42.1	23.7	24.9	9.3
35 to 39 years . . . . .	670	1,566	141	100.0	20.4	25.3	40.2	14.1
40 to 44 years . . . . .	708	1,935	165	100.0	13.3	19.5	43.9	23.4
45 to 50 years . . . . .	701	1,901	163	100.0	16.8	18.2	41.4	23.6

See notes at end of table.

Table 1.

**Children Ever Born Per 1,000 Women 15 to 50 Years Old by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: June 2012—Con.**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number of women	Children ever born per 1,000 women	Margin of Error <sup>1</sup>	Percent distribution of women by number of children ever born <sup>2</sup>				
				Total	None	One child	Two children	Three or more children
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN—Con.</b>								
<b>Hispanic (any race)</b>								
15 to 50 years .....	14,068	1,546	30	100.0	35.3	17.2	22.2	25.2
15 to 19 years .....	2,205	128	13	100.0	90.4	7.5	1.3	0.8
20 to 24 years .....	2,158	589	35	100.0	60.2	25.0	12.0	2.8
25 to 29 years .....	2,040	1,384	72	100.0	34.1	22.1	25.0	18.9
30 to 34 years .....	2,045	1,947	98	100.0	16.2	21.4	30.0	32.4
35 to 39 years .....	1,936	2,404	121	100.0	9.4	13.8	32.2	44.7
40 to 44 years .....	1,790	2,389	125	100.0	10.9	15.5	28.7	44.9
45 to 50 years .....	1,894	2,356	120	100.0	14.3	15.3	30.7	39.7

Z Represents or rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90 percent confidence interval around the estimate.<sup>2</sup> The denominator for each of these percentages is the total number of women in the given age and race/ethnicity category. The numerator is the number of women in that age and race/ethnicity category who have the given number of children. These percentages describe the fertility patterns of a given group of women. Across the line, the percentages will sum to 100 percent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2012.

## ABOUT THE DATA

The data in this report are from the 2012 ACS and the Fertility Supplement to the June 2012 CPS. The population represented by the ACS (the population universe) is the household and group quarters population living in the United States or Puerto Rico. The population represented by the CPS is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. This report focuses on the female population aged 15 to 50 as represented by these two surveys.

The ACS fertility data are from a single survey question asked of women 15 to 50 years old: “Has (this person) given birth to any children in the past 12 months?” From this nationally representative sample, we are able to approximate birth rates by a number of key demographic characteristics. The large sample size of the ACS (3 million households) also makes it possible to analyze fertility characteristics on a state-by-state basis. For more details about the ACS, including its sample size and questions, see <[www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/methodology\\_main/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/methodology_main/)>.

The CPS data are from a four-question fertility series, asked in June of women 15 to 50 years old. These questions ask about the total number of children a woman has given birth to, the year of their first birth, and whether the respondent was married or cohabiting at the time of that first birth. Notably, in 2012, the sample of women who received the questions was expanded from all women aged 15 to 44 to all women aged 15 to 50, in order to match the age range of the ACS. The questions about the respondent’s relationship status at first birth were also new to the survey in 2012. For more details about the CPS, including its sample size and questions, see <[www.census.gov/cps/methodology/](http://www.census.gov/cps/methodology/)>.

Please note that although this report includes fertility rates, these estimates do not duplicate rates from administrative birth records due to differences in sampling and data collection methods. However, while survey data do not precisely replicate administrative birth rates, they do provide characteristics of mothers and their children that are not available in birth records. For more detail on the differences between the survey data and administrative birth records, please see the Source and Accuracy statement, as well as the Comparison to Other Data Sources, both of which are located at the end of this report.

The 2012 data are also affected by a change in the weights applied to respondents. Both the CPS and the ACS datasets were reweighted in 2012 to reflect the population changes seen in the 2010 Census. Of particular relevance for this report, the reweighting increased the estimate of the size of the Hispanic population in the United States. Given that Hispanic women have more children (see Tables 1 and 2) and are less likely to be childless (see Table 2), the changes in estimates for total childbearing and for childlessness from 2010 to 2012 in the CPS, and from 2011 to 2012 in the ACS, are larger than the changes seen over previous years, in part due to the change in weights. Realistically, any change in childbearing has occurred more gradually, but the weighting adjustment makes it appear as though all the change happened in a very short time.

### Completed Fertility

Completed fertility refers to the number of children that a woman has given birth to when she reaches the end of her childbearing years. This information is used to examine trends in family size and patterns of childbearing. Many of the women in the CPS sample are still in their childbearing years and may have more children in the future. However, women over 40 are unlikely to have more children, and so their data are used to

measure completed fertility.<sup>10</sup> Table 2 shows key fertility indicators for the 23.7 million women aged 40 to 50. On average, women aged 40 to 50 have had about two children each, and 16.1 percent are childless. Of those who are mothers, 8.2 percent have never been married.

<sup>10</sup> According to the 2012 ACS data, only 7.1 percent of births in the past year were to women over 40 (see Table 3; this number is obtained by adding the percentage of all births for women 40 to 44 years old and the percentage of all births for women 45 to 50 years old). Given this, we presume that the data about these women in the CPS represent completed fertility.

Looking at completed fertility over time for women aged 40 to 44 shows how women’s childbearing has changed (see Figure 1).<sup>11</sup> For example, the average total number of children born fell from about three children per woman (3,091 children per 1,000 women) in 1976 to about two children per woman (2,045 children per 1,000 women,

<sup>11</sup> Prior to 2012, the CPS only collected fertility information for women up to age 44, so historical trends are examined using the population of women aged 40 to 44 in each survey.

roughly replacement-level fertility) in 1990.<sup>12, 13</sup> However, completed fertility in 2012 is higher than has been recorded in any CPS Fertility Supplement since 1995.<sup>14</sup>

These statistics vary by demographic characteristics. For

<sup>12</sup> The number of children born per 1,000 women is used in order to compare fertility patterns between populations of different sizes.

<sup>13</sup> The CPS surveys from 1976 to 1980 are not significantly different from each other.

<sup>14</sup> The estimates from the CPS surveys in 1995 and 2012 are not significantly different from each other. 2010, 2008, 2000, and 1998 are not significantly different from any year except 2012. 2006 is significantly different from 2012, 2002, and 1995, but not significantly different from all other years. The estimate from 2004 is not significantly different from any years except 2012 and 1995.

example, Hispanic women aged 40 to 50 have had an average of 2.4 children, more than any other race or origin group shown, and only 12.7 percent are childless (see Table 2). Foreign-born women aged 40 to 50 have also given birth to more children (2.2 births, on average) than have native-born women (1.9 births, on average). This is particularly true for noncitizens (2.3 births, on average). Among women aged 40 to 50, women with lower education have had more children than have women with higher education, and the percentage of women with a graduate degree who are childless is twice that of

women with less than a high school degree.<sup>15</sup> Table 2 also shows that women in the labor force at the time of the survey have had fewer children overall than women not in the labor force: 1.9 children and 2.3 children, respectively.

### Childlessness Over Time

As seen in Figure 2, we observe a drop in childlessness (measured as never having given birth to a child) from 2010 to 2012 for women

<sup>15</sup> The number of children born to women with a bachelor's degree is not significantly different from the number born to women with a graduate degree.

Table 2.

## Completed Fertility for Women 40 to 50 Years Old by Selected Characteristics: June 2012

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	Children ever born per 1,000 women	Percentage of mothers who are never married <sup>1</sup>	Percent childless <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total women 40 to 50</b> . . . . .	<b>23,662</b>	<b>1,989</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>16.1</b>
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>				
White alone . . . . .	18,375	1,974	5.0	16.3
White alone, non-Hispanic. . . . .	15,105	1,880	3.6	17.1
Black alone . . . . .	3,210	2,068	27.6	15.5
Asian alone . . . . .	1,409	1,918	3.3	15.0
All other races, race combinations . . . . .	669	2,172	12.1	16.1
Hispanic (any race) . . . . .	3,684	2,372	11.1	12.7
<b>NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP</b>				
Native . . . . .	19,196	1,930	8.3	17.2
Foreign born . . . . .	4,466	2,241	7.7	11.4
Naturalized citizen . . . . .	2,217	2,134	4.9	10.8
Not a citizen. . . . .	2,248	2,347	10.6	12.0
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>				
Not a high school graduate . . . . .	2,257	2,621	17.4	11.6
High school graduate. . . . .	6,446	2,074	10.1	13.0
Some college, no degree. . . . .	4,005	1,962	8.8	15.1
Associate's degree . . . . .	2,836	1,934	7.0	14.4
Bachelor's degree . . . . .	5,357	1,805	3.6	19.9
Graduate or professional degree. . . . .	2,762	1,725	4.0	22.7
<b>LABOR FORCE STATUS</b>				
In labor force . . . . .	17,913	1,903	7.9	17.1
Employed. . . . .	16,787	1,899	7.3	17.1
Unemployed. . . . .	1,126	1,951	16.7	16.3
Not in labor force . . . . .	5,749	2,258	9.2	13.0

<sup>1</sup> The denominator for each of these percentages is the total number of women who are mothers in the given race/ethnicity, nativity, educational attainment, or labor force category. The numerator is then number of mothers in that category who have never been married. These percentages show the percentage of mothers in each category who have never been married.

<sup>2</sup> The denominator for each of these percentages is the total number of women in the given race/ethnicity, nativity, educational attainment, or labor force category. The numerator is then number of women in that category who have never given birth. These percentages show the percentage of women in each category who have never given birth.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2012.

35 to 44 years old.<sup>16</sup> The drop for women 35 to 39 years old is 2.5 percentage points and for women 40 to 44 years old it is 3.7 percentage points.<sup>17</sup> Women aged 40 to 44 in 2012 had rates of childlessness that were not significantly different from those observed in 1992. These data suggest that the population of women aged 40 to 44 in 2012 were more likely to have had at least one child than were similar populations between 1994 and 2010. Furthermore, childlessness among women aged 35 to 39,

which largely plateaued between 1994 and 2010, returned to 1992 levels in 2012.<sup>18</sup>

The percentage of women 30 to 34 years old in 2012 who were childless is not statistically different from the percent childless for this age group in any other CPS fertility supplement since 1994, with the exception of 2006 (see Figure 2).<sup>19</sup> These data suggest that although older women are less likely to be childless in 2012 than they were in recent years, childlessness among women in their early 30s has

been relatively stable for almost 2 decades.

Some of the apparent drop in childlessness is due to the move to 2010-based weights for the 2012 CPS estimates. The CPS data are drawn from a sample of the population, and the data are then weighted to be representative at a national level. Following each decennial census, the weights for the CPS data are revised to more accurately reflect the current population of the United States. This means that the CPS Fertility Supplement weights between 2002 and 2010 were based on the 2000 Census counts (adjusted throughout the decade), while the 2012 CPS Fertility Supplement weights were based on the 2010 Census counts. The 2010 Decennial Census revealed a larger Hispanic population in the United States than was

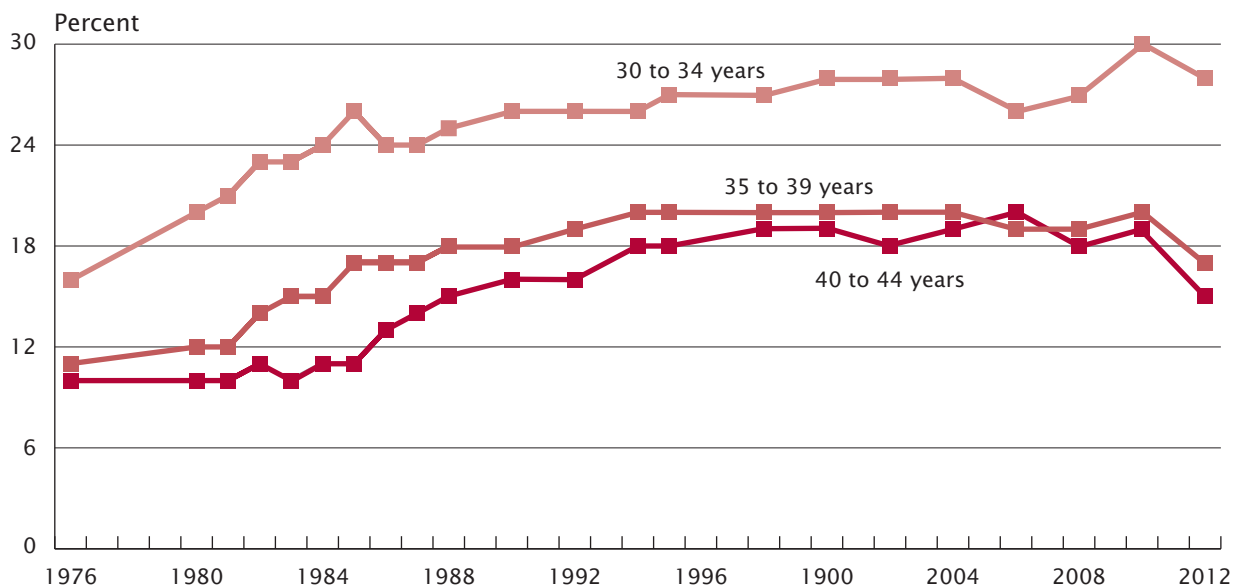
<sup>16</sup> A drop in childlessness means that more women have ever given birth to a child. However, as seen in the trends in completed fertility, the number of children each woman has is lower now than it was in the 1970s. Therefore, a drop in childlessness reflects an increase in the number of biological mothers, not necessarily an increase in the number of children.

<sup>17</sup> There is no significant difference in the drop in childlessness from 2010 to 2012 between women aged 35 to 39 and women aged 40 to 44.

<sup>18</sup> Childlessness for women aged 35 to 39 in 2006 is not significantly different from the percent childless for the same age group in 2012; however, the 2012 estimate is significantly lower than all other estimates between 1994 and 2010, while the 2006 estimate is not significantly different from those estimates.

<sup>19</sup> Childlessness for women aged 30 to 34 in 2012 is 2 percentage points higher than it was for the same group in 2006, a significant difference.

Figure 2.  
**Childlessness for Women Aged 30 to 44: 1976–2012**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 1976–2012.

estimated for 2010 using the 2000-based weights. As Hispanic women are more likely to be mothers than are non-Hispanic women (see Tables 1 and 2), the new 2010-based weights are likely responsible for at least some of the decline in the percentage of childless women. However, when White, non-Hispanic women (who make up the majority of women aged 15 to 50) are considered by themselves, we still see a significant decline in childlessness between 2010 and 2012 for women aged 35 to 44.<sup>20</sup> This suggests that the drop in childlessness between 2010 and 2012 is not due solely to the switch to 2010-based weights.<sup>21</sup>

### **BIRTHS IN THE PAST YEAR**

We use the ACS question about births in the past 12 months to examine characteristics of women who have had a birth in the prior year, as well as national- and state-level patterns for the same.

Table 3 shows that, of the more than 76 million women<sup>22</sup> in the United States who were aged 15 to 50 in 2012, 4.1 million (5.4 percent) reported experiencing a birth in the previous 12 months. Proportionally, the fewest births were to women aged 45 to 50 (2.3 percent).

Births per 1,000 women in a given year represent a crude birth rate.<sup>23</sup> We observe the highest birth rates

for women in their late 20s and early 30s—103.3 and 103.2 births per 1,000 women, respectively (see Table 3).<sup>24</sup> The next highest birth rate is for women in their early 20s, at 79.1 births per 1,000 women. The lowest birth rates are observed for adolescent women and for women 40 and older.

More than 60 percent of women who reported a birth in the prior year were married at the time of the survey,<sup>25</sup> while about 30 percent of the women with a birth in the previous 12 months reported that they had never been married (see Table 3). However, relative to their respective populations, married women were significantly more likely to report a birth in the prior year than were women who had never been married.

Fertility levels also differed for women of different racial backgrounds (see Table 3). The lowest fertility rate in 2012 was for non-Hispanic White women (49 births per 1,000 women). The rate for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders was 79 births per 1,000 women. Black and Asian women both had a birth rate of 57 births per 1,000 women. American Indian or Alaska Native women had a birth rate of 66 births per 1,000 women.<sup>26</sup>

### **Nativity, Citizenship Status, and Hispanic Origin**

Population growth is accomplished through immigration and fertility. In this section, fertility indicators are presented in terms of nativity, citizenship status, and Hispanic origin.

Based on ACS data in 2012, 21 percent of women 15 to 50 years old living in the United States who experienced a birth in the previous 12 months were born in another country (see Table 3). Approximately two-thirds of foreign-born women with a birth in the past year were not citizens of the United States (14.5 percent of all women with a birth in the 12 months prior to the survey). Overall, foreign-born women had birth rates of 68 births per 1,000 women, 17 births per 1,000 higher than that of native-born women (51 births per 1,000 women).

Hispanics are one of the fastest growing groups in the United States.<sup>27, 28</sup> According to the 2012 ACS data, Hispanic women aged 15 to 50 had 66 births per 1,000 women (see Table 3). Notably, more than half (52 percent) of the births to women of Hispanic descent were to women who were native-born citizens, while another 9 percent of the births to Hispanic women were to women who were naturalized citizens.<sup>29</sup>

### **Educational Attainment**

Existing research suggests that women's fertility decisions and educational attainment are inter-related. Research suggests that, for some women, early entry into motherhood may force them to leave school or prevent them from obtaining further education.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, other research has shown that some women may delay childbearing in order to complete

<sup>20</sup> This is a special calculation not shown in the figure.

<sup>21</sup> We plan to investigate this further by applying 2010-based weights to the 2010 CPS Fertility Supplement data, which is currently weighted using 2000-based weights. We will compare the difference in estimates depending on the weights used, which will allow us to quantify the magnitude of the observed change in childlessness that is simply due to the revised weights.

<sup>22</sup> This number is slightly higher than the population reported based on CPS data because it includes the group quarters population, as well as differences in weighting. For more information, see "Accuracy of the Estimates."

<sup>23</sup> As stated in the section "Comparison to Other Data Sources," these data will not match NCHS's birth rates due to differences in sampling and data collection.

<sup>24</sup> Birth rates for women aged 25 to 29 and women aged 30 to 34 are not significantly different.

<sup>25</sup> We do not know if the marriage preceded the birth, however, so we cannot say whether the births were to married women.

<sup>26</sup> The fertility rate for American Indian or Alaska Native women is not significantly different from the rate for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders.

<sup>27</sup> Census Bureau Press Release, "Asians Fastest-Growing Race or Ethnic Group in 2012, Census Bureau Reports," released June 13, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> S.R. Ennis, M. Rios-Vargas, and N.C. Albert, "The Hispanic Population: 2010," *2010 Census Briefs*, C2010BR-04, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2011.

<sup>29</sup> This is a special calculation not shown in the table.

<sup>30</sup> Marni, 1984.



Table 3.

### Women Who Had a Birth in the Past 12 Months Per 1,000 Women 15 to 50 Years Old by Selected Characteristics: 2012

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Characteristic	Number of women		Women who had a birth in the past 12 months					
			Total		Percent distribution <sup>2</sup>		Births per 1,000 women	
	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup> (±)
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>76,187,270</b>	<b>33,162</b>	<b>4,125,353</b>	<b>34,597</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>AGE</b>								
15 to 19 years .....	10,504,417	25,569	224,867	7,746	5.5	0.2	21.4	0.7
20 to 24 years .....	10,964,399	19,784	867,363	17,615	21.0	0.4	79.1	1.6
25 to 29 years .....	10,487,164	13,555	1,083,239	17,055	26.3	0.4	103.3	1.6
30 to 34 years .....	10,401,742	11,091	1,073,091	18,163	26.0	0.4	103.2	1.7
35 to 39 years .....	9,813,118	35,792	584,180	12,139	14.2	0.3	59.5	1.2
40 to 44 years .....	10,616,865	35,444	199,729	7,036	4.8	0.2	18.8	0.7
45 to 50 years .....	13,399,565	26,447	92,884	4,924	2.3	0.1	6.9	0.4
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>								
Ever married .....	41,771,205	71,671	2,835,170	27,346	68.7	0.4	67.9	0.6
Currently married .....	32,044,246	90,893	2,547,653	25,875	61.8	0.4	79.5	0.7
Not currently married .....	9,726,959	51,330	287,517	9,565	7.0	0.2	29.6	1.0
Widowed .....	596,637	12,082	11,476	1,769	0.3	0.0	19.2	2.9
Divorced .....	6,982,428	40,613	182,317	7,944	4.4	0.2	26.1	1.1
Separated .....	2,147,894	25,159	93,724	4,942	2.3	0.1	43.6	2.3
Never married .....	34,416,065	73,944	1,290,183	19,645	31.3	0.4	37.5	0.6
<b>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</b>								
Living in own household .....	48,809,085	88,289	3,153,869	28,955	76.5	0.4	64.6	0.6
Householder or spouse of householder ..	32,529,124	99,326	2,268,106	24,972	55.0	0.4	69.7	0.7
Householder or unmarried partner of householder ..	6,845,270	39,137	474,170	10,613	11.5	0.3	69.3	1.6
Householder with no spouse or partner present .....	9,434,691	39,594	411,593	10,467	10.0	0.2	43.6	1.1
Not living in own household .....	27,378,185	93,080	971,484	20,564	23.5	0.4	35.5	0.7
Living in a household unit .....	25,463,623	94,898	944,390	20,662	22.9	0.4	37.1	0.8
Living in group quarters .....	1,914,562	20,335	27,094	2,487	0.7	0.1	14.2	1.2
<b>NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP</b>								
Native .....	63,536,562	56,445	3,266,229	30,573	79.2	0.3	51.4	0.5
Foreign born .....	12,650,708	46,698	859,124	15,633	20.8	0.3	67.9	1.2
Naturalized citizen .....	4,946,264	33,893	261,869	8,848	6.3	0.2	52.9	1.8
Not a citizen .....	7,704,444	48,516	597,255	13,272	14.5	0.3	77.5	1.6
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>								
White alone .....	53,990,506	47,910	2,812,286	26,094	68.2	0.4	52.1	0.5
White alone, non-Hispanic .....	44,790,429	19,435	2,206,855	22,673	53.5	0.4	49.3	0.5
Black alone .....	10,704,263	24,058	612,819	14,077	14.9	0.3	57.3	1.3
American Indian or Alaska Native alone .....	662,889	9,581	43,599	2,451	1.1	0.1	65.8	3.6
Asian alone .....	4,544,112	15,964	259,018	8,987	6.3	0.2	57.0	2.0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone .....	153,665	5,327	12,107	2,070	0.3	0.0	78.8	13.1
Some other race alone .....	4,037,343	40,302	272,804	8,651	6.6	0.2	67.6	2.2
Two or more races .....	2,094,492	27,111	112,720	5,179	2.7	0.1	53.8	2.4
Hispanic (any race) .....	14,102,302	13,446	931,798	15,379	22.6	0.3	66.1	1.1
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>								
Not a high school graduate .....	13,559,177	50,560	634,956	15,781	15.4	0.4	46.8	1.1
High school degree .....	16,491,867	62,775	951,327	19,313	23.1	0.4	57.7	1.1
Some college or associate's degree .....	25,635,902	76,836	1,322,329	18,531	32.1	0.3	51.6	0.7
Bachelor's degree .....	13,863,148	57,137	778,838	14,858	18.9	0.3	56.2	1.1
Graduate or professional degree .....	6,637,176	42,371	437,903	11,030	10.6	0.3	66.0	1.6

See notes at end of table.

Table 3.

### Women Who Had a Birth in the Past 12 Months Per 1,000 Women 15 to 50 Years Old by Selected Characteristics: 2012—Con.

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Characteristic	Number of women		Women who had a birth in the past 12 months					
			Total		Percent distribution <sup>2</sup>		Births per 1,000 women	
	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>
<b>LABOR FORCE STATUS<sup>3</sup></b>								
In labor force . . . . .	53,117,217	62,718	2,554,489	27,138	62.1	0.4	48.1	0.5
Employed . . . . .	47,641,568	62,373	2,193,400	24,007	53.3	0.4	46.0	0.5
Unemployed . . . . .	5,475,649	36,479	361,089	9,754	8.8	0.2	65.9	1.7
Not in labor force . . . . .	21,048,842	63,105	1,560,459	19,685	37.9	0.4	74.1	0.9
<b>POVERTY STATUS<sup>4</sup></b>								
Below 100 percent of poverty in the past 12 months . . . . .	14,048,306	73,226	1,147,296	18,656	27.9	0.4	81.7	1.3
Below 50 percent of poverty in the past 12 months . . . . .	7,042,190	52,892	623,076	12,342	15.1	0.3	88.5	1.7
100 percent to 199 percent of poverty in the past 12 months . . . . .	14,250,924	67,769	895,366	13,902	21.8	0.3	62.8	0.9
200 percent or more above poverty in the past 12 months . . . . .	46,204,874	95,274	2,070,233	24,818	50.3	0.4	44.8	0.5
<b>PUBLIC ASSISTANCE</b>								
Receiving public assistance . . . . .	1,996,163	25,042	263,254	8,896	6.4	0.2	131.9	4.2
Not receiving public assistance . . . . .	74,191,107	40,237	3,862,099	34,143	93.6	0.2	52.1	0.5

X Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90 percent confidence interval around the estimate.

<sup>2</sup> The denominator for each of these percentages is the total number of women who had a birth in the past year. The numerator is the number of women in that specific age, marital status, living arrangement, nativity, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, labor force, poverty, or public assistance category who had a birth in the past year. These percentages describe the composition of the population of women who had births in the past year.

<sup>3</sup> Labor force data are only shown for the population 16 years old and over for which labor force status is determined. Excluded are the 2,021,211 women 15 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> Poverty is calculated at a family level for those living in families, and at an individual level for those not living in families. Data are only shown for women for whom poverty status can be determined, and therefore excludes those in institutional group quarters (such as prisons or nursing homes), college dormitories, military barracks, and those without conventional housing (and who are not in shelters). See [www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html) for more details.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey.

more education.<sup>31, 32</sup> Table 3 shows that about 32 percent of births in the prior year were to women with some college or an associate's degree, more than any other group. Fifteen percent of births in the prior year were to women who did not have a high school degree.

Figure 3 shows births by current age and education in more detail. Adolescent birth rates were highest among those with a high school diploma or GED.<sup>33</sup> Some of this may be due to the fact that 71 percent of

births to women in this age group were to women aged 18 or 19, who may have had a chance to finish high school prior to the birth.<sup>34</sup>

Among nonadolescent women, birth rates for women with less than a high school education peak in the early 20s and then fall across older ages (see Figure 3). In contrast, women with a bachelor's degree have the highest birth rate in their early 30s, reflecting the later entrance into motherhood among highly educated women.<sup>35</sup>

### Economic Portrait of Women With Recent Births

Looking at the economic circumstances of women with recent births is important because research suggests that new mothers' economic well-being and labor force attachment have long-term implications. For example, some have argued that time out of the labor force following childbirth puts mothers at a lifelong economic disadvantage when compared to nonmothers.<sup>36</sup> From a different perspective, others have argued that the lack of universal maternity leave has meant that many women in the United States return to work soon after a birth, to the detriment of themselves and their newborns.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Z. Wu and L. Macneill, "Education, Work, and Childbearing After Age 30," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 2002, 33(2): 191–213.

<sup>32</sup> C. Amuedo-Dorantes and J. Kimmel, "The Motherhood Wage Gap for Women in the United States: The Importance of College and Fertility Delay," *Review of Economics of the Household*, 2005, 3(1): 17–48.

<sup>33</sup> Birth rates are not significantly different between 15 to 19 year olds with less than a high school degree, some college, or a bachelor's degree or more.

<sup>34</sup> This is a special calculation not shown in the table.

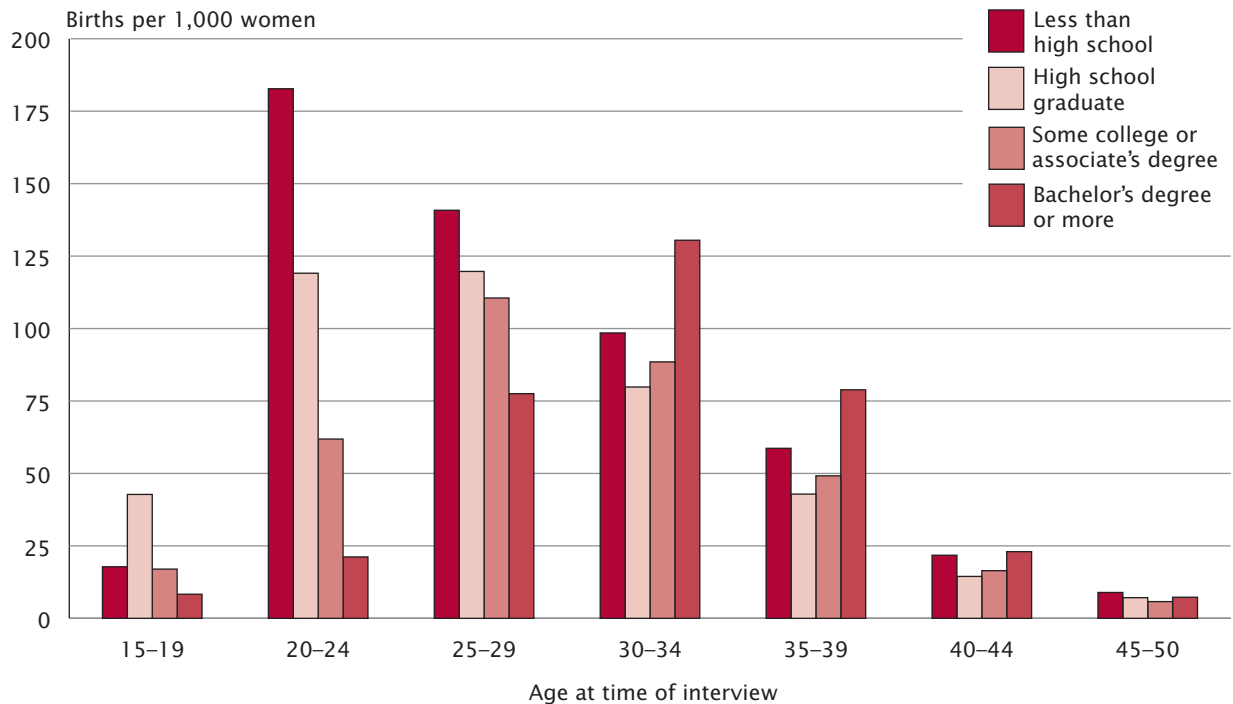
<sup>35</sup> For a review of the literature, see: M. Mills, R.R. Rindfuss, P. McDonald, et al., "Why do people postpone parenthood? Reasons and social policy incentives," *Human Reproduction Update*, 2011, 17(6): 848–860.

<sup>36</sup> Crittenden, 2001.

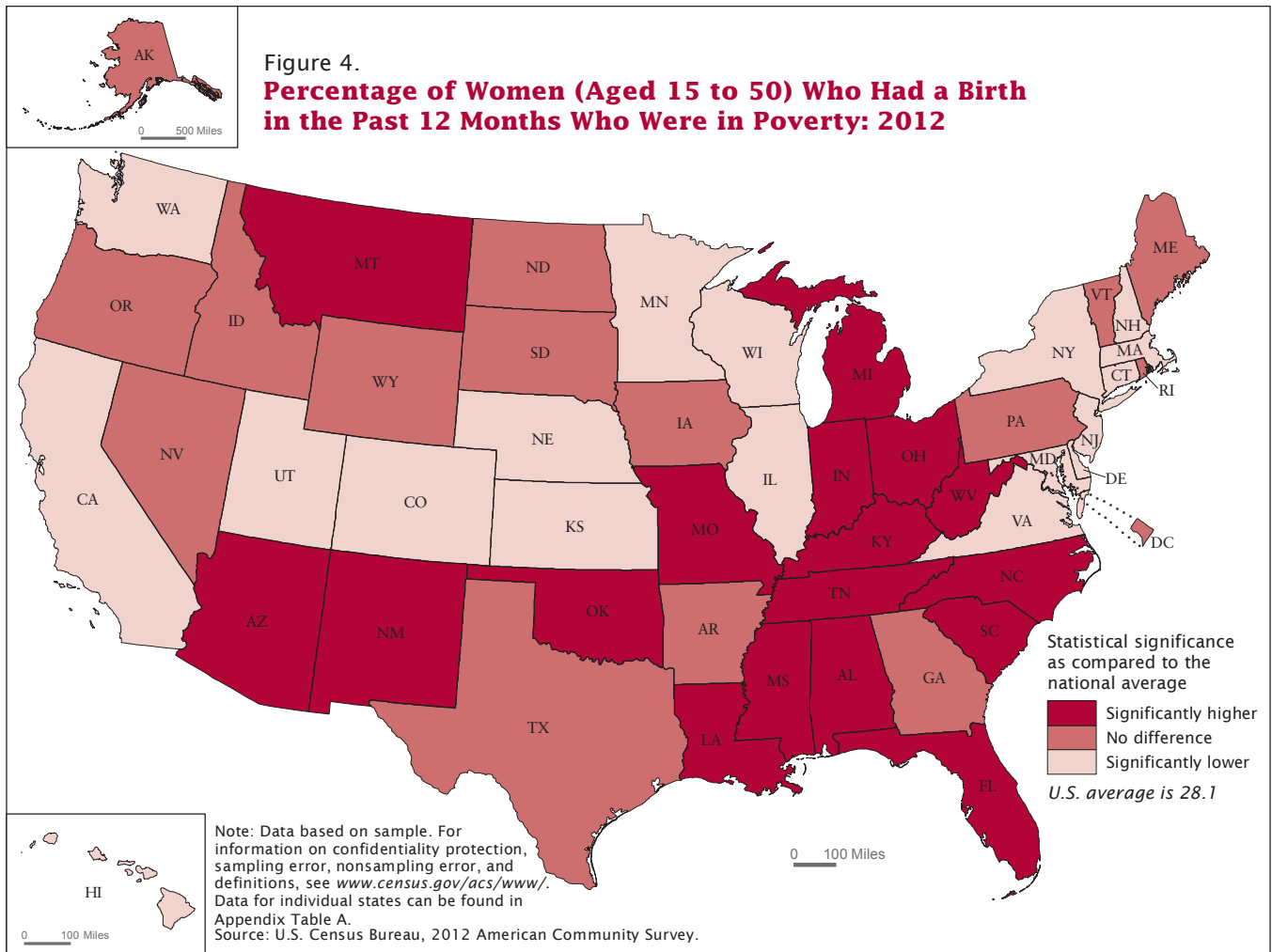
<sup>37</sup> J.C. Gornick and M.K. Meyers, *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY, 2005.

Figure 3.  
**Births in the Past 12 Months Per 1,000 Women 15 to 50 Years Old by Educational Attainment and Age: 2012**

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey.



Still others have noted that the economic circumstances into which a child is born influence that child's cognitive development and future education and employment outcomes.<sup>38, 39</sup> The following section details the economic circumstances of mothers who had a birth in the past year, including their rates of labor force participation, poverty, and public assistance receipt.

In 2012, more than half of women with a birth in the previous 12 months (62 percent) were in the labor force (see Table 3), unchanged from 2008, the year the Census Bureau last released

a report on women's fertility.<sup>40</sup> Fertility rates for women not in the labor force (74 births per 1,000 women) were considerably higher than those of employed women (46 births per 1,000).

Twenty eight percent of women with a birth in the prior year were living in poverty in 2012 (see Table 3), up from 25 percent in 2008. The fertility rate for women in poverty was 82 births per 1,000—higher than the fertility rate of those with incomes at 100 to 199 percent of poverty (63 births per 1,000) and almost twice as high as those with incomes at or above 200 percent of poverty (45 births per 1,000). In

2012, about 6 percent of women with a birth in the prior year were receiving public assistance, unchanged from 2008.

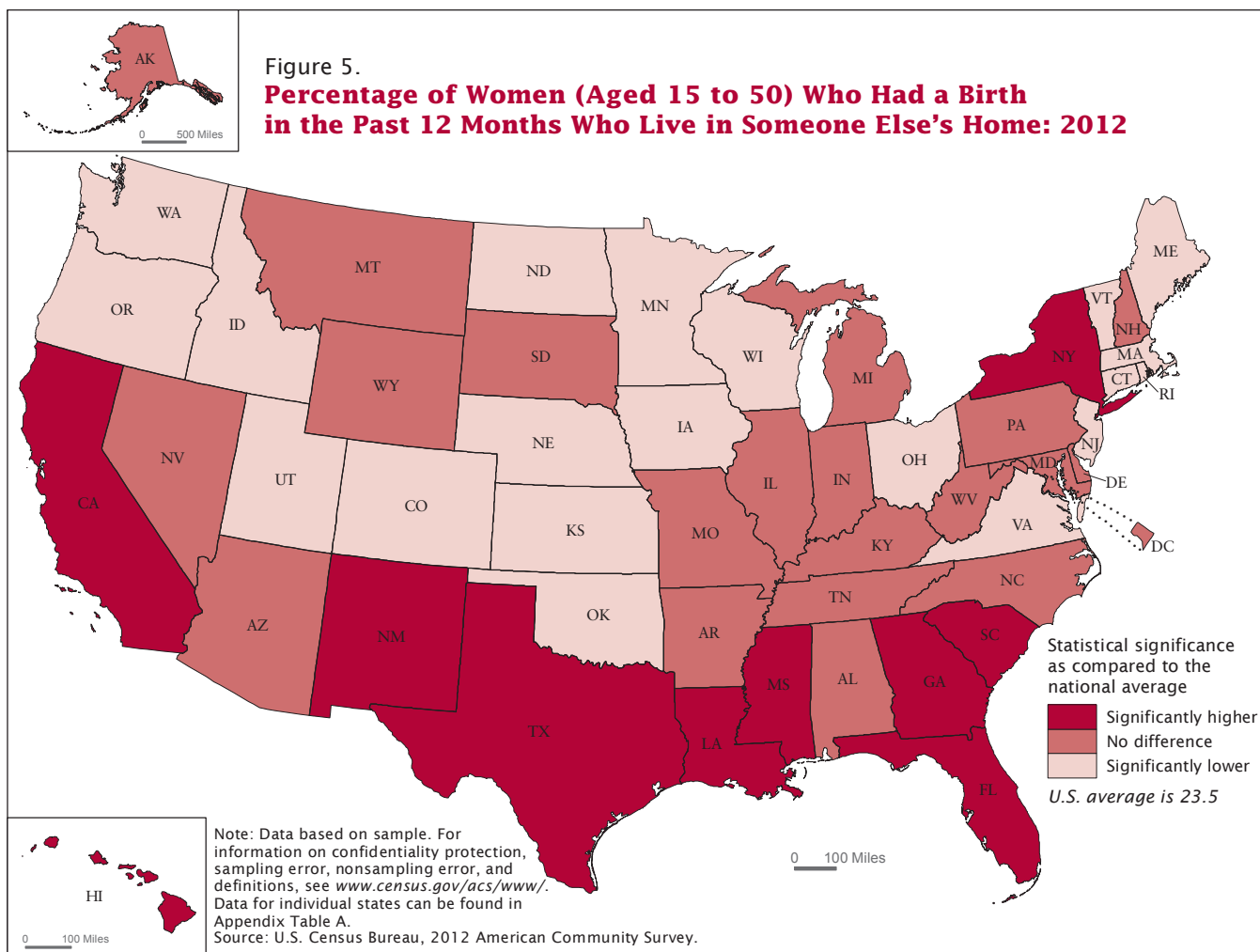
Figure 4 shows the percentage of women with a birth in the prior year who were in poverty by state. Generally speaking, states with higher poverty levels had higher percentages of births to poor women, while states with lower poverty had rates of births to poor women that were below the national average.<sup>41</sup> Mississippi and

<sup>41</sup> For additional information on poverty in U.S. states, see the following: A. Bishaw, "Areas With Concentrated Poverty: 2006–2010," *American Community Survey Briefs*, ACSBR/10-17, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2011, and A. Bishaw, "Poverty: 2000–2012," *American Community Survey Briefs*, ACSBR/12-01, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Redd, Karver, Murphy, et al., 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Moore, Redd, Burkhauser, et al., 2009.

<sup>40</sup> J.L. Dye, "Fertility of American Women: 2008," *Current Population Reports*, P20-563, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2010.



Montana were among the states with the highest percentages of births to women in poverty, both around 40 percent. Connecticut and Utah were among the states with the lowest rates; 18 percent of women with a birth in the prior year in both of these states were in poverty (see Appendix Table A for the numbers for each state).

### Residential Portrait of Women With Recent Births

The characteristics of families and households have become more diverse in recent years. For example, many have noted an increase in the number of Americans living in combined households since 2007, and within that, others have noted an increase in multigenerational

households.<sup>42, 43</sup> Additionally, recent research suggests that nonmarital births are increasingly occurring to women in cohabiting relationships.<sup>44</sup> The following section details the living arrangements of women who gave birth in the year prior to the survey.

<sup>42</sup> Combined households are defined as households that include at least one additional adult (over 18 and not in school) who is neither the householder nor the spouse or cohabiting partner of the householder; see L. Mykita and S. Macartney, "The Effects of Recession on Household Composition: Doubling Up and Economic Well-Being," *SEHSD Working Paper #2011-4*, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> D.A. Lofquist, "Multigenerational Households: 2009–2011," *American Community Survey Brief, ACSBR/11-03*, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> A. Chandra, G.M. Martinez, W.D. Mosher, et al., "Fertility, Family Planning, and Reproductive Health of U.S. Women: Data From the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth," National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Health Statistics, 2005, 23(25).

In 2012, more than three-quarters of women with a birth in the previous 12 months reported that they were living in their own home; 55 percent were either a married householder or the spouse of the householder (see Table 3).<sup>45</sup> Twelve percent were in a cohabiting relationship, and 10 percent did not have a spouse or partner present.

Notably, more than one in five women with a birth in the previous 12 months reported that they were living in someone else's home at the time of the survey (see Table 3). Most (70 percent) of the women with recent births who lived in someone else's home were the child of the householder; that is, the

<sup>45</sup> The "householder" is the person in whose name the home is owned or rented.

daughter of the person who owns or rents the home.<sup>46</sup>

Figure 5 shows the states in which women with a recent birth were more or less likely to live in someone else's home. It shows a concentration of higher than average numbers of new mothers living in someone else's home in states in the South, as well as higher than average levels of shared households in California and New York, states with high costs of housing.<sup>47</sup> When Figure 5 is compared to a map of multigenerational households (households in which at least three generations live together), many of the same states stand out, suggesting that these two trends have significant geographic overlap.<sup>48</sup>

### Births to Young Women

Vital Statistics data show that births to adolescents are currently at historic lows, having been more than halved since 1991.<sup>49</sup> CPS data reflect this decline since 2008, as demonstrated by the rise in childlessness among women aged 15 to 19 from 93.7 percent in 2008 to 94.9 percent in 2012 (see Table 1).<sup>50</sup>

However, recent research shows that adolescent parenthood continues to be linked to poverty, low academic achievement, and familial instability.<sup>51, 52</sup> Additional evidence suggests that many of the negative

repercussions of adolescent pregnancy are also present for women who become mothers in their early 20s.<sup>53</sup> The reasons offered for the persistence of poor outcomes, even for young mothers who are not adolescents, are varied, including high rates of unintended pregnancy among young women, as well as lower educational attainment, high rates of nonmarital births, and lower levels of workforce attachment on the part of young mothers.<sup>54, 55, 56, 57</sup>

Neither the ACS nor the CPS can be used to examine the long-term effects of women giving birth when they are young. However, in light of concerns about early entry into motherhood, these data can offer more information about the population of young women (women aged 15 to 22) who have experienced a recent birth.

Out of the roughly 17 million women aged 15 to 22 in 2012, about 727 thousand (4 percent) reported a birth in the past year (see Table 4), constituting 18 percent of all births in the previous 12 months. The vast majority of women aged 15 to 22 who experienced a birth in the prior year were never married (73 percent). Of the 27 percent who reported being ever married, most were married at the time of the survey. Forty

percent of the women aged 15 to 22 who had a birth in the prior year reported living in their own households; 16 percent were living with a spouse, another 14 percent were cohabiting, and 9 percent did not have a spouse or partner in the household. However, 60 percent of young women with a birth in the prior year lived in someone else's home, three out of four of whom were living with their own parent or parents.<sup>58</sup>

Ninety percent of women aged 15 to 22 who had a birth in the prior year were native born, while another 2 percent were naturalized citizens (see Table 4). White women comprise the largest group of young women with a birth in the past year (61 percent); 29 percent of young women with a birth in the past year were Hispanic (regardless of race), while 23 percent were Black, and one percent were Asian.

Although not all women in this age group who had a birth in the prior year were old enough to have completed a college degree or, in some cases, even high school, the majority (91 percent) were 18 years old or older.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, given the age distribution, it is not surprising that 69 percent had a high school degree or more and one-third reported some college (see Table 4). Fifty-four percent of young women with a birth in the past year were in the labor force,<sup>60</sup> while 37 percent were employed at the time of the survey.

While only 10 percent of young mothers who gave birth in the prior year received public assistance,

<sup>46</sup> This is a special calculation not shown in the table.

<sup>47</sup> Calculated from table S2506 ACS 2012 1-year estimates on American FactFinder.

<sup>48</sup> For a map of the prevalence of shared households, see Figure 3 of S. Macartney and L. Mykita, "Poverty and Shared Households by State: 2011," *American Community Survey Brief, ACSBR/11-05*: U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Martin, et al., 2013.

<sup>50</sup> See Table 1 of Dye, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> S.D. Hoffman and R.A. Maynard, (eds.), *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy*, 2nd Edition, Urban Institute Press, Washington, DC, 2008.

<sup>52</sup> E. Terry-Humen, J. Manlove, and K.A. Moore, "Playing Catch-Up: How Children Born to Teen Mothers Fare," National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Washington, DC, 2005.

<sup>53</sup> J. Manlove, E. Terry-Humen, L. Mincielli, et al., "Outcomes Among Children of Teen Mothers at Kindergarten Entry and Through Adolescence: Analyses of Recent Data," Invited chapter in R. Maynard, and S. Hoffman, (eds.), *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy*, 2nd edition, Urban Institute Press, Washington, DC, 2009.

<sup>54</sup> L.B. Finer and S.K. Henshaw, "Disparities in Rates of Unintended Pregnancy in the United States, 1994 and 2001," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2006, 38(2): 90-96.

<sup>55</sup> K. Perper, K. Peterson, and J. Manlove, "Child Trends Fact Sheet: Diploma Attainment Among Teen Mothers," *Child Trends*, Washington, DC, 2010.

<sup>56</sup> S.J. Ventura and C.A. Bachrach, "Non-marital Childbearing in the United States, 1940-99," *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 48(16), National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 2000.

<sup>57</sup> Miller, 2009.

<sup>58</sup> The proportion living with parents is a special calculation using the population of young women who were not living in their own household but were living in a household unit.

<sup>59</sup> This is a special calculation not shown in the table.

<sup>60</sup> This estimate includes those employed and working, employed but on maternity leave, and those who are not employed but are looking for work.

Table 4.

## Young Women (Aged 15 to 22) Who Had a Birth in the Past 12 Months by Selected Characteristics: 2012

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Characteristic	Number of women		Women 15 to 22 who had a birth in the past 12 months			
			Total		Percent distribution <sup>2</sup>	
	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>17,362,834</b>	<b>45,889</b>	<b>727,069</b>	<b>16,639</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>						
Ever married .....	888,944	15,402	193,407	7,671	26.6	0.9
Currently married .....	779,763	13,603	175,153	7,409	24.1	0.9
Not currently married .....	109,181	6,305	18,254	2,259	2.5	0.3
Never married .....	16,473,890	48,676	533,662	13,848	73.4	0.9
<b>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</b>						
Living in own household .....	1,998,209	23,806	288,053	10,098	39.6	1.0
Householder or spouse of householder .....	716,385	15,447	116,554	5,934	16.0	0.7
Householder or unmarried partner of householder .....	646,822	14,650	105,035	6,055	14.4	0.7
Householder with no spouse or partner present .....	635,002	11,331	66,464	4,453	9.1	0.6
Not living in own household .....	15,364,625	49,442	439,016	11,922	60.4	1.0
Living in a household unit .....	13,887,405	47,776	429,089	11,782	59.0	1.0
Living in group quarters .....	1,477,220	15,139	9,927	1,594	1.4	0.2
<b>NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP</b>						
Native .....	15,981,513	44,156	654,490	15,675	90.0	0.6
Foreign born .....	1,381,321	21,190	72,579	4,943	10.0	0.6
Naturalized citizen .....	367,998	10,393	10,971	2,070	1.5	0.3
Not a citizen .....	1,013,323	19,169	61,608	4,484	8.5	0.6
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>						
White alone .....	11,953,843	32,534	443,859	11,987	61.0	1.0
White alone, non-Hispanic .....	9,651,172	24,350	309,352	9,736	42.5	0.9
Black alone .....	2,652,621	19,055	166,317	8,161	22.9	1.0
Asian alone .....	818,125	10,554	9,614	1,449	1.3	0.2
All other races, race combinations .....	1,938,245	23,191	107,279	5,626	14.8	0.7
Hispanic (any race) .....	3,590,221	17,088	213,004	7,739	29.3	0.8
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Not a high school graduate .....	7,470,791	26,446	225,579	8,434	31.0	1.0
High school graduate .....	3,295,535	27,406	259,302	10,182	35.7	1.1
Some college or associate's degree .....	6,083,986	37,552	234,808	8,588	32.3	0.9
Bachelor's degree or higher .....	512,522	10,790	7,380	1,490	1.0	0.2
<b>LABOR FORCE<sup>3</sup></b>						
In labor force .....	7,987,398	40,576	387,077	11,143	54.0	0.8
Employed .....	6,422,713	36,081	264,631	9,986	36.9	1.0
Unemployed .....	1,564,685	23,427	122,446	5,600	17.1	0.7
Not in labor force .....	7,354,225	36,010	329,587	9,576	46.0	0.8
<b>POVERTY STATUS<sup>4</sup></b>						
Below 100 percent of poverty in the past 12 months .....	4,169,445	40,705	344,351	10,574	47.7	0.9
Below 50 percent of poverty in the past 12 months .....	2,287,596	30,059	202,532	7,595	28.1	0.8
100 to 199 percent of poverty in the past 12 months .....	3,438,315	34,530	193,677	7,020	26.8	0.8
200 percent or more of poverty in the past 12 months .....	8,332,610	41,762	183,432	8,090	25.4	0.9
<b>PUBLIC ASSISTANCE</b>						
Receiving public assistance .....	246,389	7,721	72,858	5,024	10.0	0.7
Not receiving public assistance .....	17,116,445	46,127	654,211	16,742	90.0	0.7

X Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90 percent confidence interval around the estimate.

<sup>2</sup> The denominator for each of these percentages is the total number of young women who had a birth in the past year. The numerator is the number of young women in that specific marital status, living arrangement, nativity, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, labor force, poverty, or public assistance category who had a birth in the past year. These percentages describe the composition of the population of young women who had births in the past year.

<sup>3</sup> Labor force data are only shown for the population 16 years old and over for which labor force status is determined. Excluded are the 2,021,211 women 15 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> Poverty is calculated at a family level for those living in families, and at an individual level for those not living in families. Data are only shown for women for whom poverty status can be determined, and therefore excludes those in institutional group quarters (such as prisons or nursing homes), college dormitories, military barracks, and those without conventional housing (and who are not in shelters). See <[www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html)> for more details.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey.

they had comparatively high rates of poverty (see Table 4). The nation's official poverty rate was 15 percent in 2012,<sup>61</sup> but 48 percent of young women with a birth in the prior year lived in households that were in poverty, and 28 percent were in extreme poverty (below 50 percent of the Federal Poverty Line).

Figure 6 shows states that had higher or lower proportions of young women with a recent birth than the nation overall. Births to young mothers (less than 23 years old at the time of the survey) are generally most prevalent in the states with the highest levels of

poverty.<sup>62</sup> However, the prevalence of births to young mothers is also likely linked to the age distribution of the populations in these states. The low percentage of births to young women in Florida is likely due to the fact that Florida has a higher than average median age, while the higher than average percentage of births to young women in Texas likely reflects the fact that Texas has a lower than average median age.<sup>63</sup>

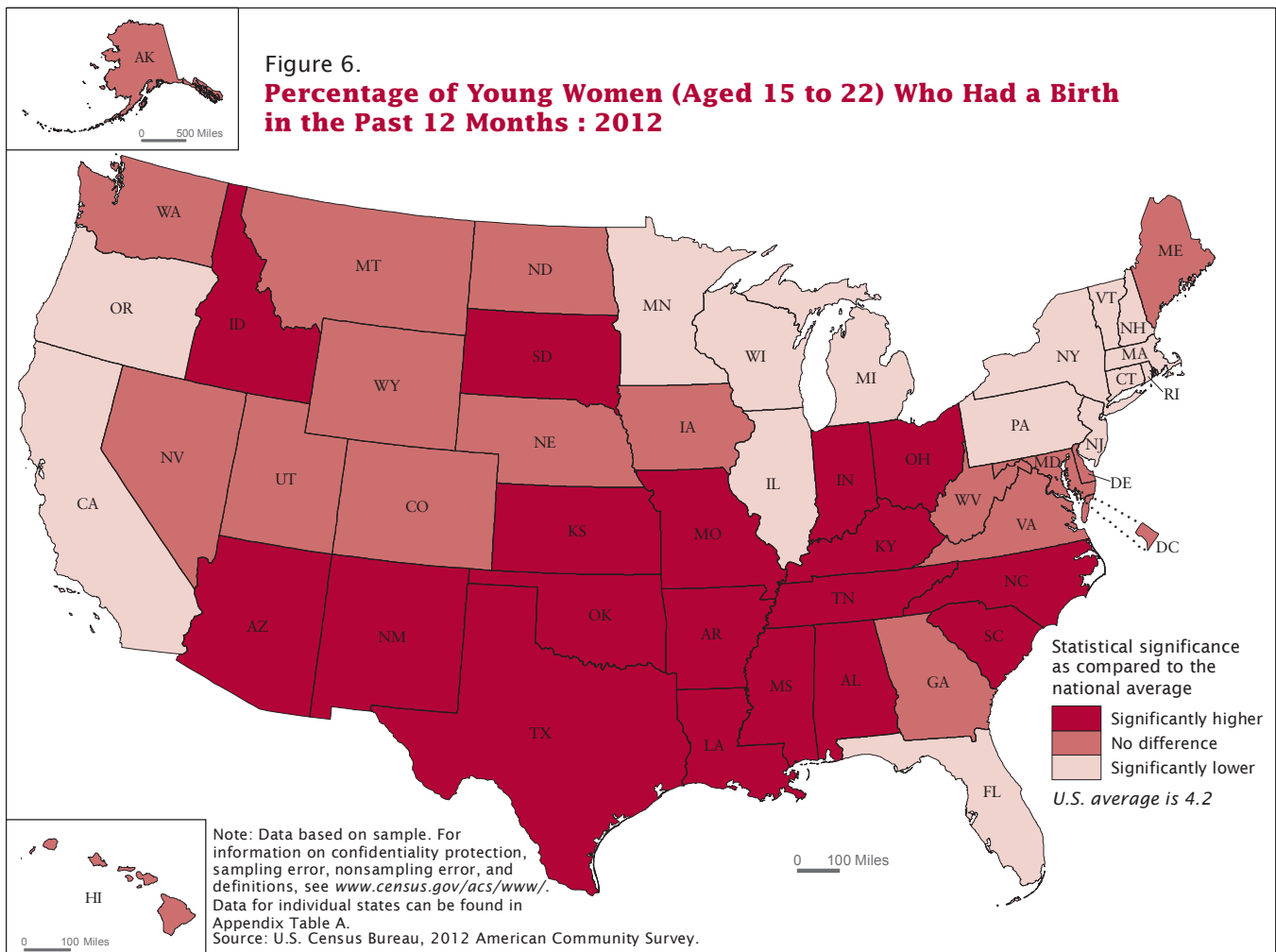
## RELATIONSHIP STATUS AT FIRST BIRTH OVER TIME

In addition to total fertility, we examine changes over time in women's relationship status at first birth. This information comes from newly available CPS data on marriage and cohabitation at the time of entry into motherhood. As in years past, the CPS Fertility Supplement asks women how many children they have ever had. However, in an effort to reduce redundancy with the ACS, the focus of the remaining questions is now on the first birth, rather than the most recent birth. For women 15 to 50 years old who report having given birth, the CPS now asks about the year of their first birth and whether they were married or cohabiting at that birth.

<sup>61</sup> C. DeNavas-Walt, B.D. Proctor, J.C. Smith, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2012," *Current Population Reports*, P60-245, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> See Bishaw, 2013 and Bishaw, 2011.

<sup>63</sup> For a map of relative median age by state, see Figure 5 of L. Howden and J. Meyer, "Age and Sex Composition: 2010," *2010 Census Briefs*, C2010BR-03, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2011.





Women's relationship contexts at the time of the first birth are related to later circumstances for both mothers and their children. Research shows that women with a nonmarital first birth are both less likely to ever marry and less likely to remain married if they do marry.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, researchers have found that women with a nonmarital birth are more likely to be poor, and their children are more likely to spend time in a single-parent family.<sup>65, 66</sup> However, research has demonstrated that nonmarital births are not necessarily births to unpartnered mothers; other data have shown that increasing numbers of unmarried mothers live with a cohabiting partner at the time of the birth.<sup>67, 68, 69</sup> The new CPS questions allow us to examine relationship status at first birth, as well as changes in relationship status over time for different groups of women.

Figure 7 shows that, although the majority of first births continue to occur in marital relationships, there is a clear decline in marital first births since the early 1990s, from 70 percent for women whose first birth was between 1990 and 1994, to 55 percent for women whose first birth was in 2005 or later.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup> D.M. Upchurch, L.A. Lillard, and C. Panis, "The Impact of Nonmarital Childbearing on Subsequent Marital Formation and Dissolution," In *Out of Wedlock: Causes and Consequences of Nonmarital Fertility*, edited by L.L. Wu and B. Wolfe, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY, 2001.

<sup>65</sup> L.L. Wu and B. Wolfe, (eds.), *Out of Wedlock: Causes and Consequences of Nonmarital Fertility*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY, 2001.

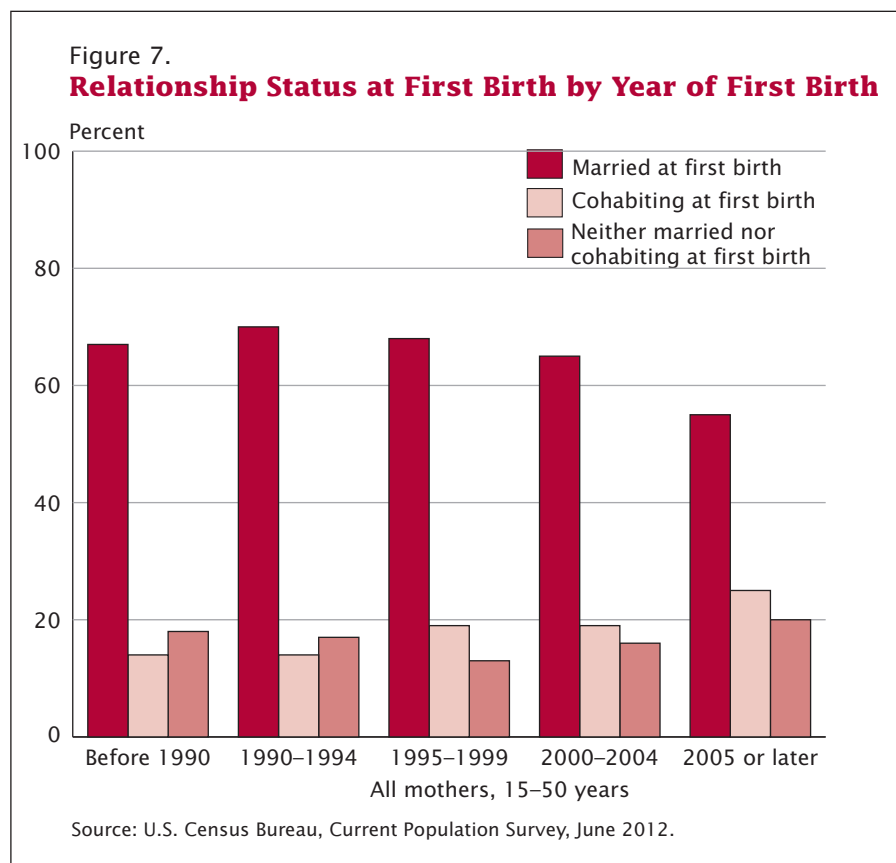
<sup>66</sup> Upchurch, Lillard, and Panis, 2001.

<sup>67</sup> L.L. Bumpass and H. Lu, "Trends in Cohabitation and Implications for Children's Family Contexts in the United States," *Population Studies*, 2000, 54(1).

<sup>68</sup> L.L. Bumpass and R.K. Raley, "Redefining Single Parent Families: Cohabitation and Changing Family Reality," *Demography*, 1995, 32(1).

<sup>69</sup> Chandra, Martinez, Mosher, et al., 2005.

<sup>70</sup> The percent married at first birth between 1995 and 1999 is not significantly different from the percent married at first birth in the groups either before (1990 to 1994) or after (2000 to 2004).



Additionally, prior to the mid 1990s, more first births occurred to women who were neither married nor cohabiting than to women who were cohabiting. However, since 1995, first births to cohabiting couples have consistently surpassed those to women who were neither married nor cohabiting. These data reinforce others' findings about the rise in cohabitation as a family form.<sup>71</sup>

The drop in marital births over time is especially striking among women who became mothers at a young age; the percentage of women who were both younger than 23 years old and married at the time their first child was born

declines significantly in each cohort observed (see Figure 8).<sup>72</sup>

As noted above, although adolescent pregnancy is at record lows,<sup>73</sup> research shows that later circumstances are related to age at first birth.<sup>74</sup> Some researchers have noted that the implications of early entry into motherhood likely relate to young women's circumstances at the time that they became mothers.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, it is important to look at the relationships that young women have at the time of their first births, and how those relationship patterns have changed over time.

We find that although at least half of all first births to young mothers

<sup>72</sup> This group includes women whose first birth occurred when they were aged 12 to 22.

<sup>73</sup> Martin, Hamilton, Osterman, et al., 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Hoffman and Maynard, 2008; Terry-Humen, Manlove, and Moore, 2005.

<sup>75</sup> S.D. Hoffman, "Teenage Childbearing Is Not So Bad After All Or Is It? A Review of the New Literature," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1998, 30(5): 236-43.

occurred in marriage prior to 1994, one-quarter of first births to young mothers since 2005 were in the context of a marital relationship (see Figure 8). The growth in cohabitation as a context for first birth has roughly paralleled the decline in marriage; of this same group of recent young mothers (since 2005), more mothers were cohabiting (38 percent) than were married (24 percent) at the time of their first birth.<sup>76</sup>

In comparison with all mothers (see Figure 7), young mothers are more likely to have had their first birth when they were neither married nor cohabiting (see Figure 8). Among young mothers who had their first birth between 2005 and June of 2012, 38 percent were neither married nor cohabiting at the time of the first birth.<sup>77</sup> Although some research suggests that many women who are not living with a partner at the time of the birth are still romantically involved with the father of their child, other research also suggests that when parents do not live together, they are less likely to stay together as a couple.<sup>78, 79</sup>

Table 5 presents relationship patterns for groups of women who had their first births around the same time (referred to as “cohorts”), and it shows significant changes over time. While at least half of all women were married at their first birth in all cohorts, 68 percent of women who gave birth 20 or more years prior to the survey were married at the time of their first birth,

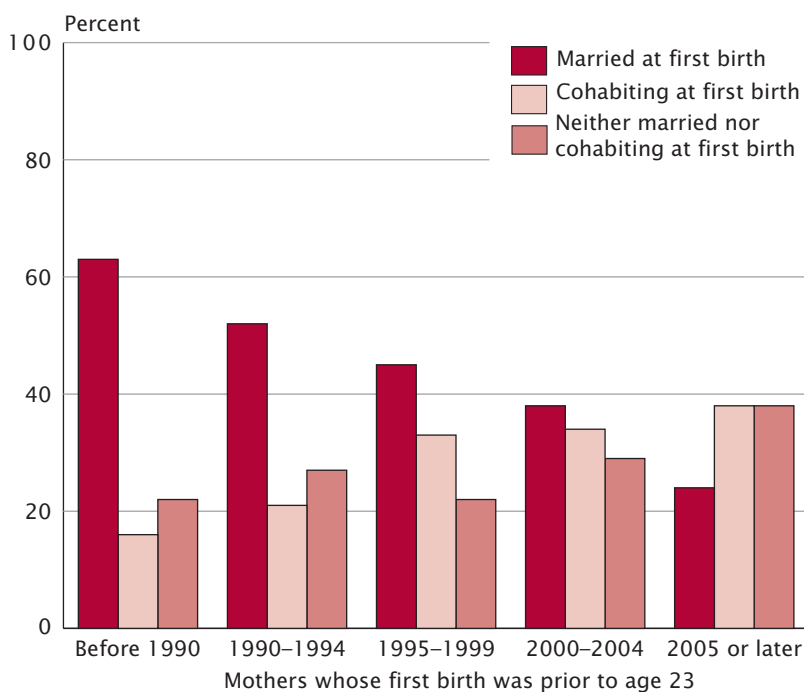
<sup>76</sup> The years of 1995 to 1999 and 2000 to 2004 are not significantly different from each other.

<sup>77</sup> The percent cohabiting was not significantly different from the percent who were neither married nor cohabiting.

<sup>78</sup> Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, “Parents’ Relationship Status Five Years After a Nonmarital Birth,” *Fragile Families Research Brief* #39, Princeton University, 2007.

<sup>79</sup> Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, “Diversity Among Unmarried Parents,” *Fragile Families Research Brief* #10, Princeton University, 2002.

Figure 8.  
**Relationship Status at First Birth for Young Mothers by Year of First Birth**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2012.

but only 52 percent of women in the most recent cohort were married.<sup>80</sup> As first births to married mothers have declined, births to cohabiting mothers have increased.<sup>81</sup> About 14 percent of mothers who gave birth more than 20 years prior to the survey were cohabiting, compared with 25 percent of mothers who had a first birth in the 5 years prior to the survey.

There is also a great deal of variation by women’s age at first birth (see Table 5). For example, the majority of adolescent births 20 or more years prior to the survey occurred to women who were married, while the majority of adolescent births fewer than 5 years prior

<sup>80</sup> The most recent cohort of women consists of women who had their first birth in the 5 years prior to the survey.

<sup>81</sup> Cohabitation at first birth was not significantly different between the cohort of women who gave birth 10 to 14 years prior to the survey and the cohort who gave birth 15 to 19 years prior to the survey.

to the survey occurred to women who were neither married nor cohabiting.<sup>82</sup> However, across all cohorts, women who had a first birth before age 25 were less likely to be married than women who were 25 or older. Additionally, at least three-quarters of all first births to mothers 25 or older have consistently occurred in marriage.

We also observe changes over time by race and Hispanic origin (see Table 5). For example, roughly four out of five Asian women were married at first birth in all cohorts.<sup>83</sup> In contrast, at least three out of four first births to non-Hispanic White women occurred in marriage

<sup>82</sup> The percentage of women who were married at first birth more than 20 years prior to the survey and the percentage of women who were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth fewer than 5 years before the survey were not significantly different from each other.

<sup>83</sup> Marriage at first birth was not significantly different between any cohorts of Asian mothers.

**Table 5. Relationship Status at First Birth by Selected Characteristics Over Time: June 2012**  
(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	20 or more years since first birth		15 to 19 years since first birth		10 to 14 years since first birth		5 to 9 years since first birth		Less than 5 years since first birth			
	Married at first birth	Living unmarried partner at first birth	Married at first birth	Living unmarried partner at first birth	Married at first birth	Living unmarried partner at first birth	Married at first birth	Living unmarried partner at first birth	Married at first birth	Living unmarried partner at first birth		
<b>ALL WOMEN</b>												
Total	8,091	1,640	5,581	1,397	1,151	1,584	5,262	1,939	1,357	1,822	3,691	1,636
Percent <sup>1</sup>	68.1	13.8	68.7	17.2	14.2	18.6	61.5	22.7	15.9	25.5	51.6	22.9
<b>AGE AT FIRST BIRTH<sup>2</sup></b>												
Younger than 20 years	51.1	19.7	39.8	33.2	27.1	34.1	20.0	40.9	39.2	35.3	13.9	50.9
20 to 24 years	71.6	13.1	65.7	18.9	15.4	26.9	45.6	36.1	18.3	31.2	31.2	36.9
25 to 29 years	86.9	6.5	85.0	8.3	6.7	9.9	79.4	12.5	8.2	70.4	70.4	10.4
30 to 34 years	92.7	1.9	85.1	7.5	7.4	4.2	89.3	6.5	4.2	79.7	79.7	14.2
35 to 39 years	N	N	87.6	12.4	0.0	4.3	82.6	8.3	9.2	81.1	81.1	10.4
40 years or older <sup>3</sup>	N	N	N	N	N	0.0	81.5	7.5	11.0	79.9	79.9	8.5
<b>RACE<sup>1</sup></b>												
White alone	76.0	11.7	73.8	15.9	10.3	17.1	65.6	23.2	11.1	56.4	56.4	17.5
White alone, non-Hispanic	79.4	9.6	78.0	12.5	9.5	15.5	71.8	19.3	8.9	60.7	60.7	14.3
Black alone	34.4	21.3	40.7	25.2	34.1	27.6	30.5	23.4	46.2	21.0	21.0	54.1
Asian alone	81.9	8.2	88.8	3.8	7.4	5.7	88.7	8.0	3.3	86.3	86.3	4.9
All other races, race combinations	49.8	28.7	46.7	31.0	22.3	24.0	46.1	31.6	22.3	30.2	30.2	27.2
<b>HISPANIC ORIGIN<sup>1</sup></b>												
Hispanic (any race)	64.1	18.9	60.4	26.5	13.2	26.3	47.3	35.3	17.4	40.8	40.8	28.6
Non-Hispanic	69.2	12.5	70.7	14.9	14.4	16.5	65.3	19.2	15.4	54.4	54.4	21.4
<b>NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP<sup>1</sup></b>												
Native born	66.9	13.2	67.3	17.7	15.0	19.1	58.9	23.6	17.6	48.8	48.8	24.3
Foreign born	72.9	16.3	73.7	15.3	11.0	16.6	71.8	19.1	9.1	66.1	66.1	15.6
Naturalized citizen	75.8	13.2	80.1	13.1	6.9	11.5	84.5	10.3	5.3	79.2	79.2	8.7
Not a citizen	70.5	18.8	68.7	17.1	14.2	20.0	64.8	24.0	11.2	60.7	60.7	18.6

N Not available. There are no women in sample eligible to meet this criteria.  
<sup>1</sup> The denominator for each of these percentages is the total number of women in the given childbearing cohort and age at first birth, race, ethnic origin, or nativity/citizenship category. The numerator is the number of women in that same group who had each relationship status at first birth. Across the line within any given cohort, the percentages will sum to 100 percent, and show how women's relationships at first birth have changed over time.  
<sup>2</sup> Includes women aged 12 to 19 at first birth.  
<sup>3</sup> Includes women aged 40 to 50 at first birth.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2012.

until the most recent two cohorts, when the percent married at first birth fell to 72 percent for those whose first birth was 5 to 9 years prior to the survey, and 61 percent for those in the most recent cohort.<sup>84</sup> Black women had the lowest percentages of women married at first birth in all cohorts. Sixty-four percent of Hispanic women who gave birth more than 20 years prior to the survey were married at first birth, while 41 percent of the Hispanic women who gave birth in the 5 years prior to the survey were married at first birth.<sup>85</sup>

One quarter of both Black and non-Hispanic White women whose first birth was in the 5 years prior to the survey were cohabiting at the time of the first birth (see Table 5).<sup>86</sup> Across all but the most recent cohort, cohabitation at first birth was more common among Hispanic women than it was among non-Hispanics.<sup>87</sup> Among first births within the 9 years prior to the survey, native-born women were more likely than foreign-born women to have been cohabiting at the time of the birth.

Between 9 and 11 percent of non-Hispanic White women were neither married nor cohabiting at the time of their first birth up until the most recent cohort, but for those whose

<sup>84</sup> The percent married at first birth was not significantly different between the cohort that gave birth 10 to 14 years prior to the survey and the cohort that gave birth 15 to 19 years prior to the survey for non-Hispanic, White mothers.

<sup>85</sup> The percent married at first birth was not significantly different between the cohorts that gave birth 10 or more years prior to the survey for Hispanic mothers. The percent married at first birth was also not significantly different between the cohort that gave birth 5 to 10 years prior to the survey and the cohort that gave birth less than 5 years before the survey for Hispanic mothers.

<sup>86</sup> Cohabitation at first birth was not significantly different between Black and non-Hispanic White mothers in the cohort that gave birth within 5 years of the survey.

<sup>87</sup> Cohabitation at first birth was not significantly different between Hispanic and non-Hispanic mothers in the cohort that gave birth 5 or less years prior to the survey.

first birth was fewer than 5 years prior to the survey, the number rose to 14 percent (see Table 5).<sup>88</sup> Although at least a third of Black women were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth in all cohorts, half of Black women in the most recent cohort were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth. The percentage of Hispanic women who had a first birth while neither married nor cohabiting did not vary significantly among earlier cohorts; however, 29 percent of Hispanic women who had their first birth in the 5 years prior to the survey were neither married nor cohabiting.

Foreign-born women consistently had a higher percentage of their first births in marriage than did native-born women, as well as a lower percentage of first births to women who were neither married nor cohabiting (see Table 5).

### **Relationship Status at First Birth and Later Life Circumstances**

Research shows that women's relationship status at their first birth is correlated with later life circumstances. Some of this is probably related to women's other circumstances at the time of their first birth. For example, researchers have found that nonmarital births tend to be concentrated among women facing disadvantages, such as lower education and higher poverty.<sup>89, 90</sup> However, additional

<sup>88</sup> There were no significant differences between any of the cohorts of women who were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth in the cohorts 5 or more years prior to the survey. However, all cohorts of women who were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth in the cohorts 5 or more years prior to the survey are significantly different from the most recent cohort of women who were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth.

<sup>89</sup> S.D. Hoffman and E.M. Foster, "Economic Correlates of Nonmarital Childbearing Among Adult Women," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1997, 29(3).

<sup>90</sup> D.M. Upchurch, L.A. Lillard, and C.W.A. Panis, "Nonmarital Childbearing; Influences of Education, Marriage, and Fertility," *Demography*, 2002, 39(2).

evidence suggests that nonmarital births also contribute to continued poverty and disadvantage later.<sup>91</sup> The CPS data allow us to examine this relationship in more depth.

Statistical models were run to examine the association between women's relationship status at first birth and their circumstances at the time of the survey. These models generate predictions of the chance that someone with a given history will experience a given event while accounting for other characteristics that are also related to women's circumstances (such as their age and number of children).

Four logistic regression models (see About Regression Analysis) were used to predict four different outcomes in two areas that are important for the well-being of children and families: economic well-being and family stability. A large body of research demonstrates that poverty is associated with negative outcomes for children, adults, and families, affecting children's academic performance, women's health, and family stability.<sup>92, 93, 94</sup> However, because the CPS fertility data do not include a direct measure of poverty, educational attainment and labor force attachment were used as approximations of economic well-being. To measure the importance of first-birth circumstances for later economic well-being, we predicted the likelihood that a woman had a high school diploma, as well as whether

<sup>91</sup> For a review of recent literature on the topic, see S. McLanahan and C. Percheski, "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequalities," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2008, 34: 257-276.

<sup>92</sup> Moore, Redd, Burkhauser, et al., 2009.

<sup>93</sup> M. Cohen, "Impact of poverty on women's health," *Canadian Family Physician*, 1994, 40: 949-958.

<sup>94</sup> A. Lewen, "The effect of economic stability on familial stability among welfare recipients," *Evaluation Review*, 2005, 29(30): 223-240.

## ABOUT REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to estimate the relationships between a dependent variable, or outcome, and one or more independent, or predictor, variables. For example, a person's level of education likely predicts their income, but other factors, such as years of work experience, also matter. Regression models allow researchers to identify the size of the relationship between education and income, while also taking years of experience and other factors into account.

Logistic regression is a specific type of regression model used to predict a dichotomous, or two-way, categorical outcome (for example, "employed" vs. "not employed"). Because the model is predicting a binary outcome (either true or not true), logistic regression produces a measure of the natural logarithm of the odds of the outcome being true, given the other variables being accounted for.

a woman was unemployed at the time of the survey.<sup>95</sup>

Family instability is defined as changes in the composition of a family that are not caused by either birth or death and, like poverty, it is negatively associated with the well-being of both children and adults. Other research has linked parents' relationship instability to higher levels of problem behavior, lower levels of high school completion, and decreased emotional well-being in their children.<sup>96, 97, 98, 99</sup> For adults, relationship instability has been linked to economic insecurity,

<sup>95</sup> In this context, the formal definition of unemployment is used, meaning that women who are unemployed are those who do not have employment, but who are trying to become employed. Women who do not have jobs but are not looking to get jobs are classified as not in the labor force and are not included in the population of women who are unemployed.

<sup>96</sup> S.E. Cavanaugh and A.C. Huston, "Family Instability and Children's Early Problem Behavior," *Social Forces*, 2006, 85: 551–581.

<sup>97</sup> C.R. Martinez and M.S. Forgatch, "Adjusting to Change: Linking Family Structure Transitions With Parenting and Boys' Adjustment," *Journal of Family Psychology*, 2002, 16: 107–117.

<sup>98</sup> P. Suet-Ling and J. Dong-Beom, "The Effects of Change in Family Structure and Income on Dropping Out of Middle and High School," *Journal of Family Issues*, 2000, 21: 147–169.

<sup>99</sup> L.L. Wu and E. Thomson, "Race Differences in Family Experience and Early Sexual Initiation: Dynamic Models of Family Structure and Family Change," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 2001, 63: 682–696.

increased stress, and lower levels of parental involvement.<sup>100, 101, 102</sup>

To examine the implications of first birth circumstances for later familial stability, we predict the likelihood that a woman is married at the time of the survey, as well as the likelihood that she lives in a blended or stepfamily.

The benefit to using regression models to predict these outcomes is that we can account for other factors that are also known to affect a woman's later circumstances. For example, research has shown that both economic well-being and family instability vary by race, ethnicity, and nativity.<sup>103</sup> Other research has shown that a woman's age at first birth also matters for later outcomes, as does her number of children ever born and the time elapsed since that first

<sup>100</sup> C. Osbourne, L.M. Berger, and K. Magnuson, "Family Structure Transitions and Changes in Maternal Resources and Well-being," *Demography*, 2012, 49:23–47.

<sup>101</sup> Cavanaugh and Huston, 2006.

<sup>102</sup> Martinez and Forgatch, 2002.

<sup>103</sup> D. Lichter, Z. Qian, and M. Crowley, "Race and poverty: Divergent fortunes of America's children?" *Focus*, 2006, 24(3): 8–16.

birth.<sup>104, 105, 106</sup> Therefore, all models take into account the mother's race, Hispanic origin, nativity, age at first birth, years since first birth, and number of children ever born, and estimate the relationship between first-birth circumstances and later outcomes while controlling for these other influences.

After taking these other factors into account, women who were unmarried at their first birth were less likely to have a high school degree at the time of the survey than were mothers who were married at the time of their first birth, and this was particularly true for women who were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth (see Figure 9).<sup>107, 108</sup> Although other data suggest that women with a nonmarital first birth are likely to have lower educational attainment to begin with, these data suggest that, even over the course of many years, women with a nonmarital first birth do not catch up to their counterparts whose first birth was in marriage.<sup>109, 110</sup> Perhaps related to their lower educational attainment, we further find that women

<sup>104</sup> Miller, 2009.

<sup>105</sup> S.E. Kirmeyer and B.E. Hamilton, "Child-bearing Differences Among Three Generations of U.S. Women," *NCHS Data Brief*, Number 68, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 2011.

<sup>106</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Characteristics of Families—2012," *Bureau of Labor Statistics News Release*, 2013, USDL-13-0730.

<sup>107</sup> Net of controls, women who were cohabiting at their first birth have 0.7 times the odds of having a high school degree at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth, and women who were neither married nor cohabiting at their first birth have 0.5 times the odds of having a high school degree at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth.

<sup>108</sup> Net of controls, women who were neither married nor cohabiting at their first birth have 0.8 times the odds of having a high school degree at the time of the survey as women who were cohabiting at their first birth.

<sup>109</sup> R.R. Rindfuss, S.P. Morgan, and K. Offutt, "Education and the Changing Age Pattern of American Fertility: 1969–1989," *Demography*: 1996, 33(3).

<sup>110</sup> Upchurch, Lillard, and Panis, 2002.

with a nonmarital first birth were more likely to report being unemployed at the time of the survey than were women with a marital first birth.<sup>111,112</sup>

Moreover, after accounting for the demographic characteristics of the sample, women with a nonmarital first birth were significantly less likely than women who were married at the time of their first birth to be married at the time of the

survey (see Figure 9).<sup>113</sup> Further, women who were neither married nor cohabiting at first birth were less likely than women who were cohabiting at first birth to be married at the time of the survey.<sup>114</sup> Other research has found nonmarital births to be associated with family instability.<sup>115, 116</sup> The CPS data suggest either that women with a nonmarital first birth were less likely to ever marry or that their marriages did not last, and

that this is particularly true for women who were neither married nor cohabiting at the time of their first birth.

We further find that among women who were living with a child,<sup>117</sup> women with a nonmarital first birth were more likely to live in a blended family (i.e., to have a stepchild in the home or to have a spouse or partner who is a stepfather to at least one of their children) than were women who were married at

<sup>111</sup> Note that this is not restricted to women who report themselves as “in the labor market;” however, the substantive findings do not change when we exclude mothers who are not in the labor force.

<sup>112</sup> Net of controls, women who were cohabiting at their first birth have 1.6 times the odds of being unemployed at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth, and women who were neither married nor cohabiting at their first birth have 1.9 times the odds of being unemployed at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth.

<sup>113</sup> Net of controls, women who were cohabiting at their first birth have 0.2 times the odds of being married at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth, and women who were neither married nor cohabiting at their first birth have 0.1 times the odds of being married at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth.

<sup>114</sup> Net of controls, women who were neither married nor cohabiting at their first birth have 0.6 times the odds of being married at the time of the survey as women who were cohabiting at their first birth.

<sup>115</sup> A. Cherlin, “Demographic Trends in the United States: A Review of Research in the 2000s,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 2010, 72: 403–19.

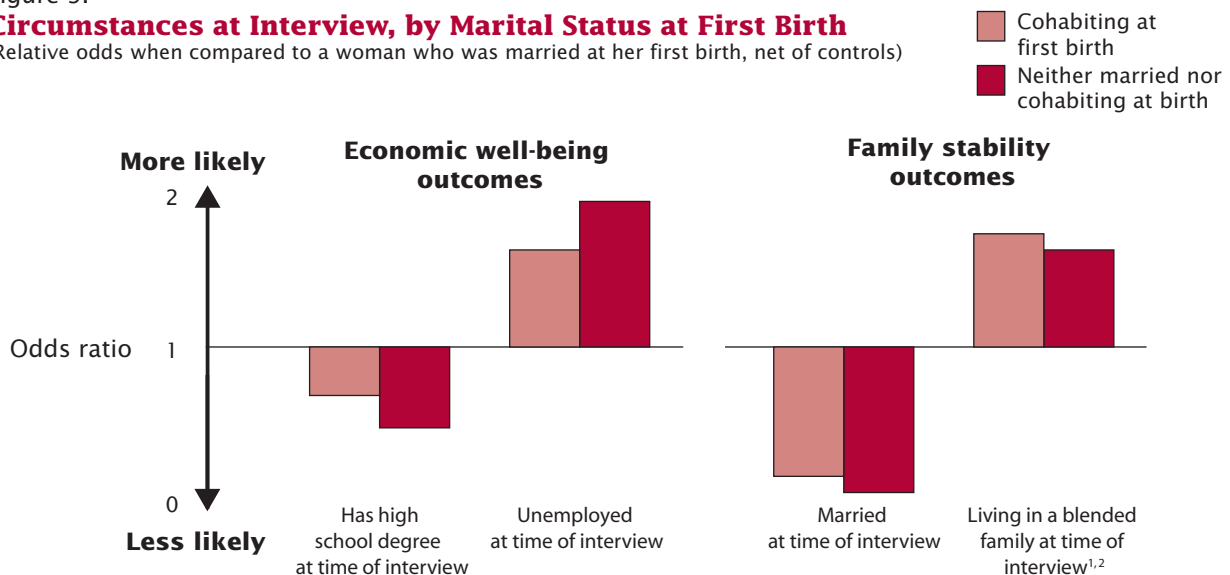
<sup>116</sup> Ventura and Bachrach, 2000.

<sup>117</sup> In this final model, the sample was limited to women who were identified as the mother of at least one child in the home at the time of the survey (37,689 women).

Figure 9.

**Circumstances at Interview, by Marital Status at First Birth**

(Relative odds when compared to a woman who was married at her first birth, net of controls)



<sup>1</sup> A step or blended family is defined as living with a stepchild, or living with a man who is not the biological father of at least one of the mother’s children in the household.

<sup>2</sup> This estimate is run using only the sample of women who are living with someone who is identified as the child of the respondent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2012.

first birth (see Figure 9).<sup>118</sup> This suggests that women with nonmarital first births experience higher family turbulence than women whose first birth was in marriage. Taken together, all of these data suggest that women with nonmarital first births may face continued disadvantage over their lives compared with women with marital first births.

## SOURCE OF THE DATA

Some estimates in this report come from data obtained in the June 2012 CPS and from the CPS in earlier years. The Census Bureau conducts this survey every month, although this report uses only data from the every-other-year June surveys for its estimates.

The population represented (the population universe) in the Fertility Supplement to the June 2012 CPS is the female, civilian, noninstitutionalized population, 15 to 50 years old, living in the United States. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes.

This report also presents data from the 2012 ACS. The population represented (the population universe) in the ACS includes the population living in households, plus the population living in group quarters. According to the 2010 Census, 8 million people, or 2.6 percent of the total population, lived in group

<sup>118</sup> Net of controls, women who were cohabiting at their first birth have 1.7 times the odds of living in a blended family at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth, and women who were neither married nor cohabiting at their first birth have 1.6 times the odds of living in a blended family at the time of the survey as women who were married at their first birth. However, although both categories of women with nonmarital first births are significantly different from women with marital first births, within nonmarital births, women who were cohabiting at first birth are not significantly different from women who were neither married nor cohabiting in terms of their odds of living in a blended family at interview.

quarters. Of this number, roughly 4 million were institutionalized—primarily in correctional institutions and nursing homes, while roughly 4 million were noninstitutionalized (such as in college dormitories or other types of group quarters).

## COMPARISON WITH OTHER DATA SOURCES

Comparative estimates on annual births are made between the ACS and data collected in the Vital Statistics Registration system and published by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS); see Appendix Table B for these estimates.

The ACS birth rate is slightly different from the NCHS birth rate for a calendar year because the ACS asks whether a woman had a birth in the past 12 months, extending back from the date of the interview. In this way, the 2012 ACS data captures births occurring between January of 2011 and December of 2012. In contrast, vital statistics data (as collected by NCHS) are administrative records of births that occurred during the calendar year of January to December of 2012. Additionally, NCHS birth data record the geographic location in which the birth took place, while ACS collects the area where the woman lives at the time of the survey. Moreover, birth rates by age will be slightly different from age-specific birth rates published by NCHS since the women's age in the ACS data is at the time of the survey interview date, while her age in the NCHS data is at the time she gave birth.<sup>119</sup>

Due to these differences in data collection, the ACS tends to underestimate the number of women 15 to 19 years old with a birth in the

<sup>119</sup> For more information, see T. Johnson and J.L. Dye, "Indicators of Marriage and Fertility in the United States," from the *American Community Survey: 2000 to 2003*, U.S. Census Bureau, presentation released May 2005.

last year because about half of the 19 year olds will be 20 years old by the time of the survey. Similarly, the ACS tends to gain births from women 39 years old who turn 40 before the survey date. This produces more births to women 40 to 44 years old in the ACS than reported by Vital Statistics. For this reason, and the fact that women are having births at older ages, the ACS includes women aged 45 to 50 in the survey questionnaire.

## ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level. This means that the 90 percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports to minimize these errors.

The CPS weighting procedure uses ratio estimation whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from

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those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors for the CPS, go to <[www.census.gov/prod/techdoc/cps/cpsjun12.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/techdoc/cps/cpsjun12.pdf)> or contact the Census Bureau Demographic Statistical Methods Division on the Internet at <[dsmd.source.and.accuracy@census.gov](mailto:dsmd.source.and.accuracy@census.gov)>.

The final ACS population estimates are adjusted in the weighting procedure for coverage errors by controlling specific survey estimates to independent population controls by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin. The final ACS estimates of housing units are controlled to independent estimates of total housing. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to over or undercoverage, but biases may still be present, for example, when people missed differ from those interviewed in ways other than sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting

procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on the ACS sample, weighting procedures, sampling error, nonsampling error, and quality measures from the ACS, see <[http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/datanotes/exp\\_acs2012.html](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/datanotes/exp_acs2012.html)>.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Detailed tables showing the characteristics of women aged 15 to 50 by fertility indicators are available on the Internet at <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>.

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### **USER COMMENTS**

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of its data and reports. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

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Appendix Table A.

**Data for Map Figures**

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Area	Figure 4		Figure 5		Figure 6	
	Percentage of women aged 15 to 50 with a birth in the past 12 months who were in poverty		Percentage of women aged 15 to 50 with a birth in the past 12 months who were living in someone else's home		Percentage of young women aged 15 to 22 who had a birth in the past 12 months	
	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error <sup>1</sup>
<b>United States (US) . . . . .</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Alabama (AL) . . . . .	32.4	3.6	26.2	2.9	5.9	0.7
Alaska (AK) . . . . .	23.0	5.6	22.0	5.6	4.8	1.7
Arizona (AZ) . . . . .	31.3	2.8	23.2	2.1	5.0	0.7
Arkansas (AR) . . . . .	30.8	3.7	21.5	3.4	5.5	0.9
California (CA) . . . . .	26.6	1.1	27.9	1.0	3.4	0.2
Colorado (CO) . . . . .	24.1	2.9	16.6	2.4	3.7	0.6
Connecticut (CT) . . . . .	17.8	2.8	14.9	2.8	2.3	0.6
Delaware (DE) . . . . .	19.5	6.6	22.8	6.2	3.8	1.5
District of Columbia (DC) . . . . .	22.0	6.9	23.4	8.6	3.6	1.3
Florida (FL) . . . . .	30.9	1.9	29.3	2.4	3.6	0.4
Georgia (GA) . . . . .	30.3	2.1	25.8	1.9	4.6	0.5
Hawaii (HI) . . . . .	21.8	4.5	31.3	5.6	4.8	1.4
Idaho (ID) . . . . .	28.4	5.0	14.7	3.9	5.7	1.4
Illinois (IL) . . . . .	24.5	1.6	22.9	1.9	3.5	0.4
Indiana (IN) . . . . .	32.5	2.8	21.4	2.3	5.1	0.6
Iowa (IA) . . . . .	27.5	3.2	13.5	2.5	4.0	0.6
Kansas (KS) . . . . .	24.6	3.4	19.1	2.9	5.5	1.1
Kentucky (KY) . . . . .	32.9	3.0	23.9	2.7	5.6	0.8
Louisiana (LA) . . . . .	33.2	3.4	30.8	3.3	5.4	0.9
Maine (ME) . . . . .	33.2	6.1	14.4	5.0	4.1	1.3
Maryland (MD) . . . . .	20.1	2.6	25.6	2.4	3.8	0.6
Massachusetts . . . . .	19.9	2.6	15.7	2.0	1.4	0.3
Michigan (MI) . . . . .	32.4	2.0	22.1	1.9	3.7	0.4
Minnesota (MN) . . . . .	21.0	2.3	11.6	1.5	2.7	0.4
Mississippi (MS) . . . . .	42.0	5.0	35.3	4.5	6.0	0.9
Missouri (MO) . . . . .	34.1	2.9	22.2	2.7	5.9	0.8
Montana (MT) . . . . .	41.3	5.7	22.9	6.5	3.8	1.3
Nebraska (NE) . . . . .	22.9	4.0	13.1	2.9	4.2	0.9
Nevada (NV) . . . . .	32.5	4.8	24.3	4.1	4.8	1.1
New Hampshire (NH) . . . . .	21.0	6.1	20.0	5.7	2.8	1.1
New Jersey (NJ) . . . . .	21.6	2.1	20.4	2.3	2.9	0.5
New Mexico (NM) . . . . .	35.9	4.8	32.7	5.0	6.0	1.3
New York (NY) . . . . .	26.1	1.4	25.1	1.5	2.8	0.3
North Carolina (NC) . . . . .	33.3	2.1	23.9	2.0	5.2	0.5
North Dakota (ND) . . . . .	24.5	6.1	7.1	2.7	4.6	1.4
Ohio (OH) . . . . .	33.6	2.2	21.0	1.8	4.9	0.4
Oklahoma (OK) . . . . .	33.9	2.8	20.2	2.6	6.3	0.7
Oregon (OR) . . . . .	31.7	4.3	19.3	2.9	3.1	0.7
Pennsylvania (PA) . . . . .	26.5	1.7	23.1	1.8	3.6	0.3
Rhode Island (RI) . . . . .	22.6	7.4	15.9	5.7	2.7	1.0
South Carolina (SC) . . . . .	38.7	3.3	29.1	3.9	6.1	0.8
South Dakota (SD) . . . . .	31.5	5.4	20.6	5.9	6.0	1.6
Tennessee (TN) . . . . .	32.6	2.8	23.1	2.8	5.0	0.6
Texas (TX) . . . . .	28.7	1.5	27.6	1.4	5.9	0.3
Utah (UT) . . . . .	18.0	2.7	16.9	2.6	4.1	0.8
Vermont (VT) . . . . .	27.5	8.7	15.1	5.5	2.5	1.1
Virginia (VA) . . . . .	22.4	2.1	19.9	2.1	4.0	0.5
Washington (WA) . . . . .	22.7	2.4	16.9	2.1	3.7	0.6
West Virginia (WV) . . . . .	36.9	5.5	22.1	5.3	4.5	1.3
Wisconsin (WI) . . . . .	23.1	2.3	13.2	1.8	3.0	0.5
Wyoming (WY) . . . . .	23.4	6.1	21.2	7.4	4.8	1.9

<sup>1</sup> When the margin of error is added to or subtracted from the point estimate, it produces a 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey.

Appendix Table B.

### Comparison of Fertility Indicators for Women Aged 15 to 44 Years From the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) and Birth Record Data From Vital Statistics

Characteristic	2012 Vital Statistics			ACS 2012 <sup>1, 2</sup>					
	Number	Percent <sup>3</sup>	Rate	Number	Margin of error <sup>4</sup>	Percent	Margin of error <sup>4</sup>	Rate	Margin of error <sup>4</sup>
<b>Total women aged 15 to 44 . . .</b>	<b>62,744,930</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>62,787,705</b>	<b>25,504</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Births last year . . . . .	3,952,841	6.3	63.0	4,032,469	33,769	6.4	0.1	64.2	0.5
<b>BIRTHS BY AGE</b>									
15 to 19 years . . . . .	305,388	7.7	29.4	224,867	7,746	5.6	0.2	21.4	0.7
20 to 24 years . . . . .	916,811	23.2	83.1	867,363	17,615	21.5	0.4	79.1	1.6
25 to 29 years . . . . .	1,123,900	28.4	106.5	1,083,239	17,055	26.9	0.4	103.3	1.6
30 to 34 years . . . . .	1,013,416	25.6	97.3	1,073,091	18,163	26.6	0.4	103.2	1.7
35 to 39 years . . . . .	472,318	11.9	48.3	584,180	12,139	14.5	0.3	59.5	1.2
40 to 44 years . . . . .	109,579	2.8	10.4	199,729	7,036	5.0	0.2	18.8	0.7
<b>BIRTHS BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN<sup>5</sup></b>									
White . . . . .	2,999,820	75.9	63.0	2,750,047	25,561	68.2	0.4	62.6	0.6
White, non-Hispanic . . . . .	2,134,044	54.0	58.6	2,155,842	22,371	53.5	0.4	59.8	0.6
Black . . . . .	634,126	16.0	65.1	597,364	13,884	14.8	0.3	66.8	1.5
American Indian or Alaska Native . . . . .	46,093	1.2	47.0	42,905	2,473	1.1	0.1	77.6	4.4
Asian or Pacific Islander . . . . .	272,802	6.9	62.2	262,765	9,264	6.5	0.2	66.5	2.3
Hispanic (any race) <sup>6</sup> . . . . .	907,677	23.0	74.4	915,549	15,252	22.7	0.3	75.0	1.2
<b>BIRTHS BY MARITAL STATUS</b>									
Married . . . . .	2,343,222	59.3	86.0	2,485,071	25,137	61.6	0.4	104.5	0.9
Unmarried . . . . .	1,609,619	40.7	45.3	1,547,398	21,301	38.4	0.4	39.7	0.5

X Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www.census.gov/acs/www/>.<sup>2</sup> The universe for the ACS is women 15 to 50 years old when the survey was taken in each month in the calendar year 2012. To match Vital Statistics data, we used only the sample of women aged 15 to 44. The number of women who reported having had a birth in the 12 months prior (to each interview) represents the estimates of births to those women over the course of the interview year.<sup>3</sup> Birth record percentages calculated from counts.<sup>4</sup> When the margin of error is added to or subtracted from the point estimate, it produces a 90 percent confidence interval.<sup>5</sup> Race of mother. ACS data refer to White alone; White, not Hispanic alone; Black alone; American Indian or Alaska Native alone; Asian alone; and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone. In contrast, Vital Statistics data categorize women as White, Non-Hispanic White, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Asian or Pacific Islander; for details on the coding of race and ethnicity in the Vital Statistics data, see the User Guide <www.cdc.gov/nchs/data\_access/Vitalstatsonline.htm>. For comparability between estimates, the Current Population Survey data for 'Asian alone' and 'Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone' have been combined.<sup>6</sup> Origin of mother.Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey; J.A. Martin, B.E. Hamilton, J.K. Osterman, et al., "Births: Final Data for 2012," *National Vital Statistics Reports*, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 2013, Vol. 62, No. 9.