

Module

Title: Changing Family Forms in the U.S. from 1970 to 2010

Course: SOCI 169gm: Changing Family Forms

Summer 2015

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Description: This module introduces students to recent trends in households and family forms, and provides data to examine how family types differ by class and race/ethnicity.

Objectives

Substantive

1. Learn how to describe households and families using demographic and socioeconomic terms.
2. Examine trends in changes in family forms of Americans from 1970 to 2010.
3. Profiling own family in demographic and socioeconomic terms and compare it with U.S. averages.
4. Use sociological perspective and sociological research to provide relevant explanations for these events and characteristics.
5. Make some predictions for future families in the U.S. and for own family members using sociological theories and empirical findings from lecture and class readings.

Methodology/Skills

1. Using data to tell a story: Learn how to read and interpret graphs and tables displaying frequencies and percentages.
2. Use charts and tables to identify patterns.
3. Improve student's confidence in reading and discussing data from tables and graphs.

Day 1

Definitions

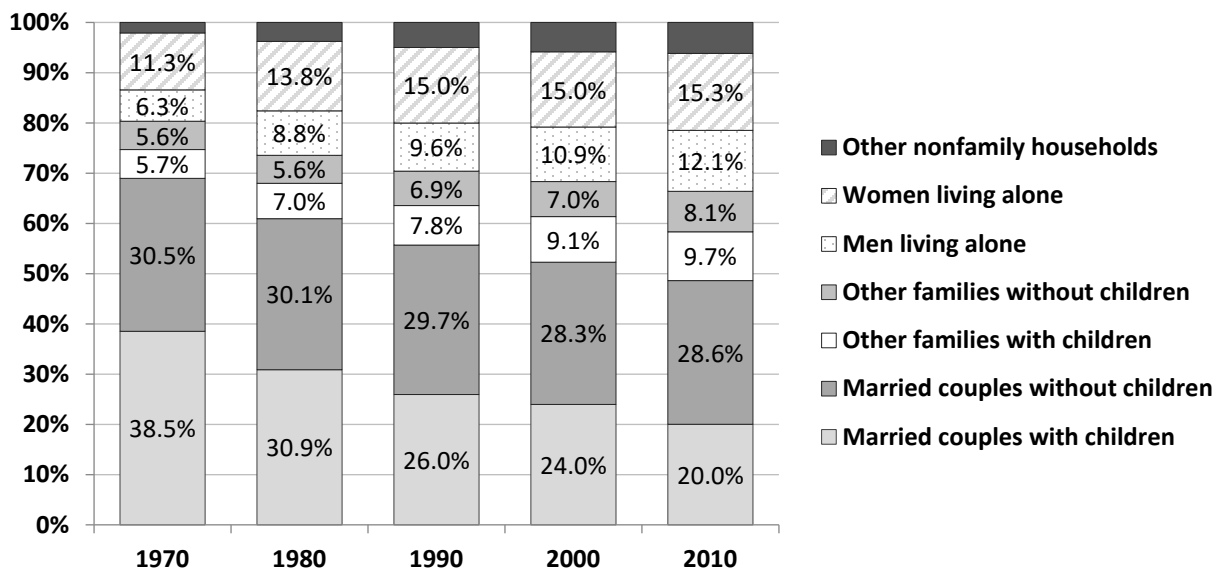
- **Household:** a group of people that lives and eats separately from other groups.
- **Family:** 3 definitions (Cohen (2015), *The Family*, pp. 6-11)
 - a) **Personal family:** People to whom we feel related and who we expect to consider us members of their families.
 - b) **Legal family:** a group of individuals related by birth, marriage or adoption (Census)
 - c) **Institutional family:** institutional arena where people practice intimacy, childbearing, socialization, and caring work.
- **Breadwinner-homemaker family** (sometimes called "traditional family"): An employed father, a nonemployed mother, and their children.

For discussion: Yes or No questions

- Do people living alone constitute a household? _____ a family? _____
- Do unrelated students living together constitute a family? _____ a household? _____
- Does a mother living with her child constitute a family? _____ a household? _____
- Are all households families? _____ Are all families households? _____
- A girl living with her aunt constitute a family? _____

[Take pre-assessment before examining Figure 1]

Figure 1. Households by Type: U.S. 1970 – 2010



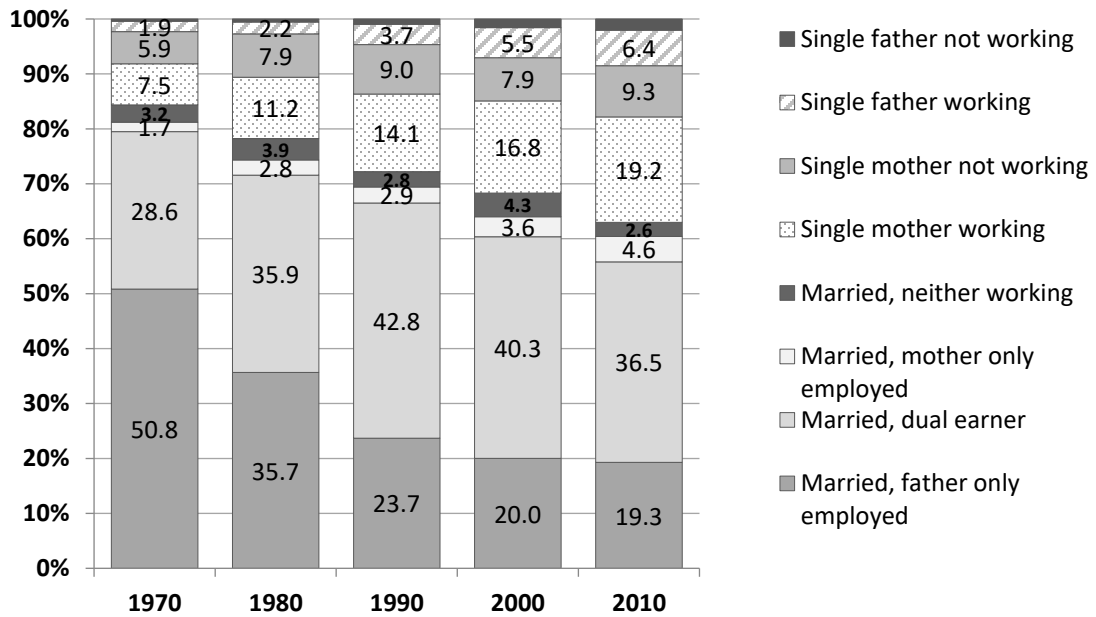
Source: U.S. decennial census 1970-2000 and American Community Survey (ACS) 2010.

Exercise 1: Describe trends in households using Figure 1

- What percent of households were married couples with children in 1970? _____ In 2010? _____
- Approximately what percent of households were families in 1970? _____ In 2010? _____
- What percent of households were married couples in 1970? _____ (69%) In 2010? _____

Describe the trends in household types in the U.S. from 1970 to 2010

**Figure 2. Families with own Children by Type and Employment Status of Parents:
U.S. 1970 – 2010**



Source: U.S. decennial census 1970-2000 and American Community Survey (ACS) 2010.

- How would you describe your own family type?

Exercise 2: Families with own children

Describe the trends in families with own children in the U.S. from 1970 to 2010 using Figure 2:

- What was the most common type of family with own children in 1970?

- What was the most common type of family with own children in 2010?

- Approximately, what percent of families with own children were single mother families in 1970? _____ In 2010? _____

Day 2

Exercise 3: Describe families by race/ethnicity and class. Examine frequencies and percentages.

Dataset: Family.dat, ACS 2010.

Universe: Families in the USA.

Source: <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>

Table 1. Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Families

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other Race
%	69.0	11.5	4.6	12.9	2.0
Freq.	52,566,312	8,733,232	3,497,406	9,866,106	1,546,783

Note: Racial groups in this dataset are mutually exclusive categories, thus White means Non-Hispanic White, Black is Non-Hispanic Black, etc. Thus, in the U.S. 52,566,312 families in the US in 2010 were Non-Hispanic white, which represents 69.0% of all families. Generally, for comparison purposes, we talk about percentages, rather than raw numbers.

Description: We see that 69% of U.S. families in 2010 were White, nearly 12% were Black, about 5% were Asian, 13% were Hispanic, and 2% were other race.

Now describe the following tables:

Table 2. Poverty Level Distribution of Families

	Poverty	Near Poor	Middle	Comfortable
%	10.6	7.7	49.9	31.8
Freq.	8,061,026	5,859,272	38,049,728	24,239,792

Table 3. Distribution of Family Types

	Married Couples	Female Families	Male Families
%	73.9	19.2	6.9
Freq.	56,326,264	14,622,836	5,260,724

Answer the following questions:

- What percent of families were poor? _____
- What percent of families were poor or nearly poor? _____
- What percent of families were married couples? _____ Female-headed families? _____

Exercise 4: Explaining racial/ethnic differences in family types using bivariate analysis (crosstabs).

Table 4: Family Type by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other Race	TOTAL
Married Couples	80.6%	44.4%	81.0%	63.7%	62.6%	73.9%
Female Families	13.8%	46.3%	12.6%	25.0%	27.8%	19.2%
Male Families	5.6%	9.3%	6.4%	11.3%	9.6%	6.9%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

True or false?

- 46.3% of female-headed families are black? True____ False__ (F)
- 46.3% of black families are female-headed families? True____ False__ (T)
- Married couple families are more common among Asians? True____ False__ (T)

Describe the patterns you see in Table 4:

What factors may explain racial/ethnic differences in family type?

Table 5: Family Type by Poverty Level

	Poverty	Near Poor	Middle	Comfortable	TOTAL
Married Couples	36.3%	54.2%	74.5%	90.2%	73.9%
Female Family	53.5%	35.4%	17.8%	6.0%	19.2%
Male Family	10.1%	10.4%	7.7%	3.8%	6.9%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Table 6: Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other Race	TOTAL
Poverty	6.6%	22.1%	8.8%	21.0%	17.0%	10.6%
Near Poor	5.6%	12.0%	7.3%	14.9%	10.6%	7.7%
Middle	50.2%	49.0%	45.1%	51.1%	50.2%	49.9%
Comfortable	37.6%	16.9%	38.9%	13.0%	22.2%	31.8%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Describe the patterns you see in Table 5. From lecture and readings why low-income people are less likely to be married?

Describe the patterns you see in the Table 6. What can you infer from the relationship between race/ethnicity and poverty and the variations in family types?

Now analyze the relationship between age and family type:

Table 7: Family Type by Age

	16-25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	TOTAL
Married Couples	41.1%	65.3%	70.9%	74.9%	82.7%	81.0%	73.9%
Male Fam	17.8%	9.4%	7.4%	7.0%	4.7%	4.1%	6.9%
Female Fam	41.1%	25.3%	21.7%	18.1%	12.6%	14.9%	19.2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Table 8: Age by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other Race	TOTAL
16-25	2.2%	4.7%	1.9%	5.5%	5.0%	3.0%
25-34	13.5%	19.2%	17.4%	24.7%	20.8%	15.9%
35-44	20.2%	25.1%	28.7%	29.1%	25.2%	22.4%
45-54	24.0%	23.3%	24.9%	21.3%	23.1%	23.6%
55-64	19.7%	15.2%	16.2%	11.3%	15.2%	17.9%
65+	20.3%	12.5%	11.0%	8.1%	10.6%	17.2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Which age groups are more likely to be married? Which racial/ethnic group is more represented in those age categories? Can you add another explanation for why we observe large racial variations in family forms?

Conclusion:

Feedback:

What is the most useful thing you have learned from this assignment?

Do you have any suggestions to improve this assignment? Would you change anything?

Instructions on how to get data for exercises 3 and 4.

Dataset: Family.dat, ACS 2010.

Universe: Families in the USA.

Variables:

- **RaceEth:** NHWhite (Non-Hispanic White), Black, Asian, Hispanic, OtherRace.
- **Kid:** None, Kids6 (Has kids under age 6), KidsOther (Has kids 6+)
- **AgeAll4:** 25 (age16-25), 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+
- **PovLevel:** Poverty (below poverty threshold), NearPoor (100-150% of poverty threshold), Middle (151-400%), Comf (comfortable: 401+%).
- **FamType:** MrrdCpl (Married couple), MaleFam (Male-headed family), FemFam (Female-headed family)

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. On the “Home” tab, scroll down and click on “Datasets”.
3. On the “Choose a Collection or Dataset” box, find “acs2010” in the drop-down box, select it, and click “submit.”
4. Scroll down through the list, select “Family.dat” and click “submit.”
5. Click on “[WebCHIP 3.0](#)” (Note: need to have java installed)

Exploring the dataset:

6. Go to “Modify” tab, select “Combine”. Select (Control+click) “AmIndian”, “NHOther”, “NHMulti”, OK, name it “OtherRace”
7. Go to the “Command” tab, click on “marginals.” It will give you frequency distribution tables for all the variables in the dataset.

Bivariate analysis using crosstabs

1. Go to the “Command” tab, click on “crosstab”. For Row, scroll down and select “FamType”. For column, select “PovLevel” (or other variable).
2. To obtain frequencies for the crosstab you just created go to the “Table” tab and select “Frequencies”.
3. To obtain percentages go to the “Table” tab and select “Percent Down”