

# Family Decline and Lifestyle Change

Shiwei Wang

University of California, San Diego, CA 92093-0021, USA

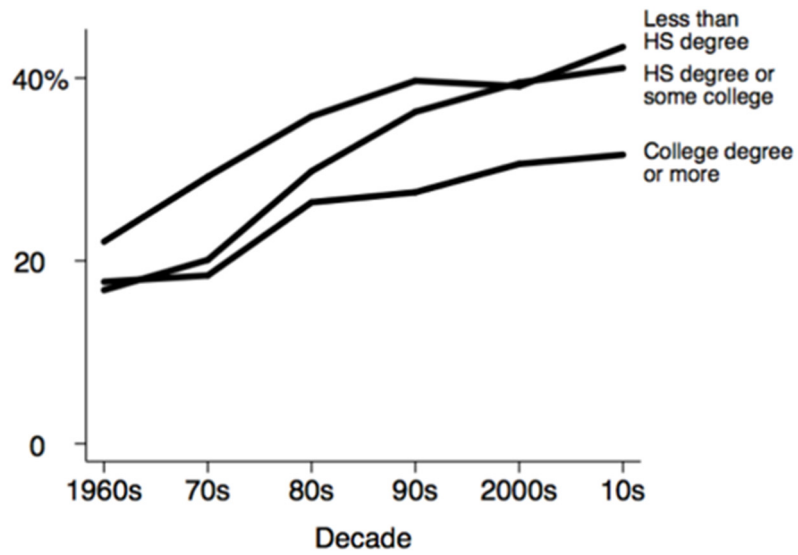
**Abstract.** Family lifestyle is an important part of social lifestyle an important component of society's way of life, throughout history, social change has always been linked to lifestyles, and changes in family lifestyles have reflected socio-economic development. Economic progression changed notions toward marriage in the recent years, and this has resulted in less fertility rate, and more children not living with both parents. Decline in marriage or split by parents can be treated as a shrinkage in family that can impose negative effect on overall level of education attainment and financial pressures.

**Keywords:** Family Decline; Economic Progression; Lifestyle Change.

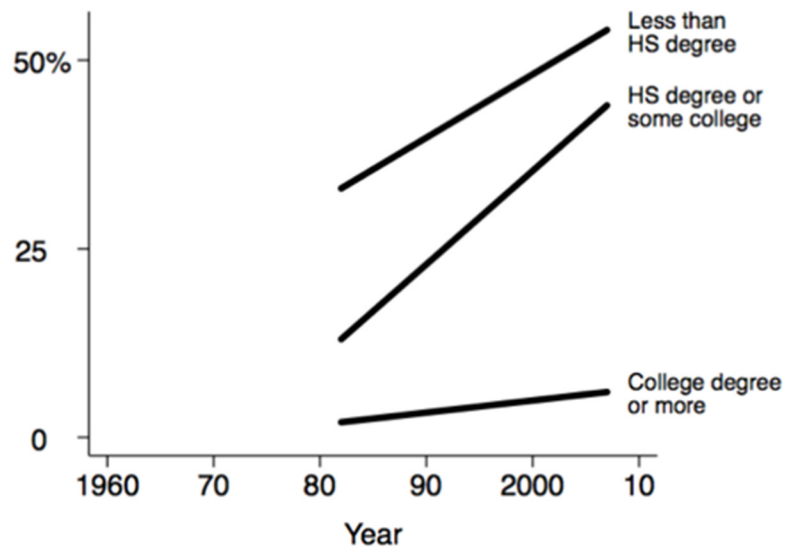
## 1. Children's Education Affected by Marriage

The marriage relationship is complex and is influenced by objective and subjective factors. Couples nowadays do not only satisfy their sexual, child-rearing and financial needs, but also seek psychological needs - the need for companionship, emotional support and equal rights and obligations. One of the most fundamental changes is the increase in out-of-wedlock childbirth and more children not living with both biological parents. The origin is from increase in long-term affluence has led to "norms discouraging divorce, nonmarital cohabitation, and out-of-wedlock childbearing begin to weaken", children not living with both biological parents are increased by 20%. Concrete data shows that out-of-wedlock born number spiked from a near 0 percentage to over 40%. The increase is mostly the increase of non-marriage population, and women who wants a marriage increases their wait time [1].

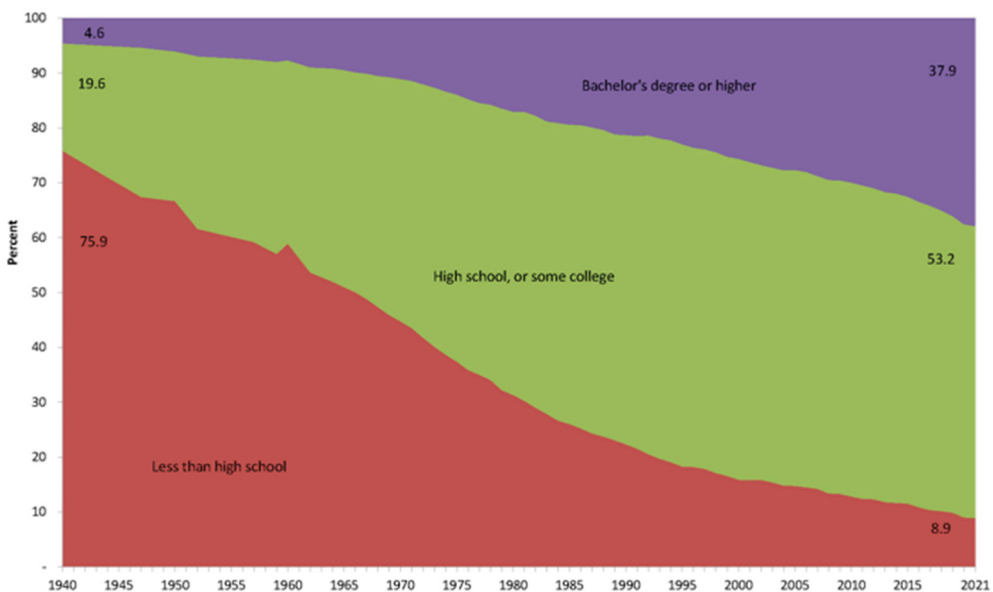
Family is an important environment for children to grow up, so family education affects the growth of children and future people. With the development and progress of the times, the proportion of child rearing in the life of couples has been decreasing, parents' concept of education has changed, and more and more families no longer focus on child rearing, which has made the family environment for child rearing to also. This has led to changes in the family environment for child-rearing. With a more tolerant social norm, non-marriage population increase, and women tends to wait longer, out-of-wedlock childbearing increased. Since "American cohabitators are more likely to split up than their counterparts elsewhere" (ibid.), there are less chance for a child to live with both biological parents. Children living with a single biological parent or was born without parents' marriage seizes education earlier. Extensive research results show a robust positive correlation between 5-year-old children's development and stability of family in terms of cognitive, behavioral, and health outcomes. Being in a single parent or born without parents' marriage can give a child an unstable childhood and this contributes to their academic instability [2]. Using education as a factor to measure career success, lower education will put one's view on career "so dim that they are eager to move quickly to what they perceive as the other key source of fulfillment", which is childbearing. As shown in Figure 1 and 2, academic attainment on both groups of children is self-evident. (ibid.) Among the US, the portion having less than a high school degree is only 8.9%, and all other education status are considerably higher in figure 3 [3]. Such a view on career and having a child wouldn't be conducive for long-term labor market growth in terms of motivations.



**Figure 1.** Academic attainment of children whose parents are non-marriage.



**Figure 2.** Academic attainment among out-of-wedlock children.

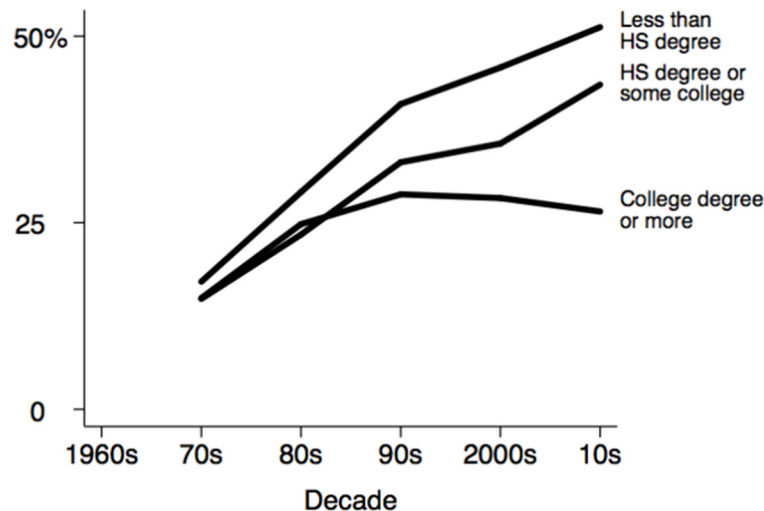


**Figure 3.** US percent of population age 25+ educational attainment.

## 2. Pressure of Short-term Personal Economics Standing

In the long term we grow in economic productivity thanks to technologies, but in the short-run and individually speaking, living by one's own with a kid increases economic pressure. Data shows median income for single family stayed flat, [4] leaving greater pressure on personal finance management.

Changes we can see is divorce is easier legally and morally, and cohabitation is easier for split – US partners are more likely to split than their counterparts. If we step further, marriage is related to education as well. More than 50% people with less than a high school degree is non-marriage as shown in figure 4 [5].



**Figure 4.** Non-marriage rate by education attainment.

This trend is indicative of an even worse pressure. With a lower education, one tends to stay single. If lower education transfers to a lower position at work, one's wages can be affected. Seth Allan Williams found out the characteristics of single parent families is that they are 20% - 28% more likely to live in poverty [6]. Indeed, women's wages are already lower, no economic support from men, and children's great need for income on education, food, and activities are three factors increasing women's economic pressures, and study proves that single mother households in the US have a high rate of poverty [7]. According to Statista, there are 15.31 million children living in a single mother's family in 2020, this is about 5% of the population [8]. All these evidence points to splitting up or divorce while having a children can put a family in a greater financial crisis.

## 3. Potential Objections

One may say family decline has reached to the end, since the divorce rate has fallen, out-of-wedlock born and children living with single biological parent also been flat [9]. However, non-marriage rate among women aged 44-45 has increased sharply, average age at first marriage is increasing (ibid.). When childbearing numbers are flat or decreased, family decline persists that less people are considering marriage, and this will lead to the pressure of population ageing.

Government transfers and programs should help single mothers ease economic pressures. We can see there is a big total amount of input to programs, but the number of single families and out-of-wedlock child is still high. Children living with a single mother takes 5% of the US population, and 40% children are born out-of-wedlock. With a large population base, the program can't guarantee a sufficient fund for every family. A typical financial aid can grant \$5300 per year per single mother [10], while median US household annual income is at \$31133 [11].

#### 4. Conclusion

The evolve of family concepts, improve in women education level and financial status consist of family decline, is the reason why more than 50% of out-of-wedlock children has a less than high school degree, over 40% children not living with both biological parents getting less than a high school degree, and less than 20% of mothers with less than high school degree give birth before 20-year-old. The psychological need for a greater fulfillment in one's life leads to one having more economic problems. With existing solutions, they are not effective enough for single parent families – especially single mother families – to get out of material difficulties and help children develop better than data suggests now.

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