

# Fertility of American Women

## Population Characteristics

## Current Population Reports

By Amara Bachu and  
Martin O'Connell

### INTRODUCTION

The stability in fertility rates among American women at the close of the century is in sharp contrast to the wide swings in fertility rates that occurred in preceding decades. Annual total fertility rates fell from almost 4.0 births per woman at the turn of the century to 2.2 births per woman during the Great Depression. They subsequently rose to a postwar peak of 3.7 births per woman in 1957, but fell again by half to 1.8 births per woman in the mid-1980s. With minor

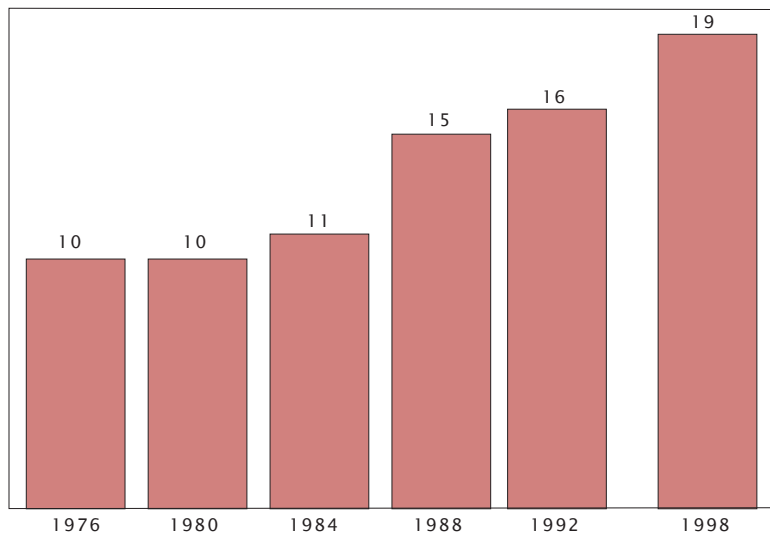
fluctuations, the rates have remained at approximately 2.0 births per woman over the last 20 years (the level required for the natural replacement of the population is about 2.1 births per woman).<sup>1</sup>

This report profiles current fertility patterns of American woman and is based on data collected in the June 1998 supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Unlike annual fertility statistics compiled from birth certificates by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), data collected in the CPS

are from two questions asked of women 15 to 44 years old: (1) the number of children they have ever had, and (2) the date of birth of their last child. Historical data from previous surveys are also used in this report to illustrate how women completing their childbearing today differ from an earlier generation of women who had their principal childbearing years during the peak of the Baby Boom in the 1950s (the Baby Boom era was from 1946 to 1964).

Figure 1.  
**Childlessness Among Women 40 to 44 Years  
Old: Selected Years, June 1976 to June 1998**

(Percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Surveys, 1976 to 1998.

<sup>1</sup> The total fertility rate for a given year is a hypothetical estimate of completed fertility. It indicates how many births a woman would have by the end of her reproductive life, if, for all of her childbearing years, she was to experience the age-specific birth rates for that given year. Historical data on the total fertility rate are found in Ansley J. Coale and Melvin Zelnik.

*New Estimates of Fertility and Population in the United States.* Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1963, Table 2, and Robert L. Heuser. *Fertility Tables for Birth Cohorts by Color: United States, 1917-73.* DHEW Publication (HRA)76-1152. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1976, Table 1A.

Table A.  
**Fertility Indicators for Women 15 to 44 Years Old by Age and Race and Hispanic Origin: June 1998**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number of women	Percent child-less	Women who had a child in the last year			Children ever born per 1,000 women
			Number with a birth	Births per 1,000 women	First births per 1,000 women	
<b>AGE</b>						
Total	60,519	42.2	3,671	60.7	24.6	1,227
15 to 19 years	9,575	90.1	460	48.0	29.3	138
20 to 24 years	8,800	64.0	864	98.2	50.4	555
25 to 29 years	9,451	43.5	950	100.5	41.8	1,063
30 to 34 years	10,229	27.4	843	82.4	23.8	1,546
35 to 39 years	11,351	19.8	437	38.5	8.7	1,877
40 to 44 years	11,113	19.0	117	10.5	2.6	1,877
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>						
<b>White</b>						
Total	48,487	43.1	2,947	60.8	24.2	1,196
15 to 19 years	7,557	91.5	325	43.0	25.9	123
20 to 24 years	6,962	66.3	651	93.5	48.4	513
25 to 29 years	7,512	45.6	765	101.9	44.2	990
30 to 34 years	8,151	28.2	729	89.4	25.7	1,509
35 to 39 years	9,250	20.2	384	41.5	8.7	1,852
40 to 44 years	9,056	19.5	93	10.3	2.3	1,838
<b>White non-Hispanic</b>						
Total	41,525	44.5	2,374	57.2	22.3	1,142
15 to 19 years	6,320	93.3	232	36.7	20.0	104
20 to 24 years	5,700	71.0	433	75.9	39.2	431
25 to 29 years	6,390	47.9	665	104.0	46.8	922
30 to 34 years	6,949	30.2	616	88.6	26.7	1,406
35 to 39 years	8,126	21.5	342	42.1	9.1	1,772
40 to 44 years	8,040	20.1	88	10.9	2.5	1,769
<b>Black</b>						
Total	8,809	36.0	554	62.9	27.8	1,412
15 to 19 years	1,554	82.5	118	75.7	50.1	220
20 to 24 years	1,376	47.8	170	123.9	57.9	838
25 to 29 years	1,422	29.4	141	99.3	29.2	1,531
30 to 34 years	1,467	21.0	66	44.8	17.0	1,788
35 to 39 years	1,547	17.2	40	25.9	8.0	2,065
40 to 44 years	1,443	17.0	19	13.5	5.8	2,042
<b>Asian and Pacific Islander</b>						
Total	2,635	47.3	138	52.4	22.6	1,105
15 to 19 years	364	94.3	14	37.4	13.2	100
20 to 24 years	377	81.5	30	80.0	56.9	305
25 to 29 years	435	55.9	39	90.6	44.8	749
30 to 34 years	496	33.9	38	76.8	17.2	1,275
35 to 39 years	446	21.7	13	28.4	11.9	1,665
40 to 44 years	518	17.0	4	8.1	-	2,047
<b>Hispanic (of any race)</b>						
Total	7,359	34.8	618	84.0	36.1	1,521
15 to 19 years	1,314	82.4	102	77.2	59.2	227
20 to 24 years	1,324	43.7	239	180.7	91.3	908
25 to 29 years	1,184	31.9	109	92.4	27.5	1,377
30 to 34 years	1,269	17.3	116	91.4	21.4	2,096
35 to 39 years	1,184	12.1	47	39.5	6.0	2,393
40 to 44 years	1,085	14.5	5	4.8	-	2,373

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Survey, 1998.

## CURRENT FERTILITY

### Overall patterns of fertility

Table A shows fertility indicators for women in June 1998 by their age and race and Hispanic origin. The fertility rate in this report is defined as the number of women who reported having a child in the 12-month period prior to the June 1998 survey per 1,000 women in the specified age and/or characteristic group at the time of the survey. Of the estimated 60.5 million women who were 15 to 44 years old in June 1998, 3.7 million gave birth in the preceding 12 months.<sup>2</sup> This produced an estimated fertility rate of 60.7 births per 1,000 women 15 to 44 years old and a corresponding first birth rate of 24.6 births per 1,000 women (1.5 million births or 41 percent of all births).

### Fertility differences by race and ethnicity

Hispanic<sup>3</sup> women had the highest fertility rate among all race and origin groups shown in Table A (84.0 births per 1,000 women 15 to 44 years old). Overall, 618,000 Hispanic women had a birth in the year prior to the survey, representing 17 percent of all births in 1998. The fertility rate for White non-Hispanic women was considerably lower (57.2 births per 1,000 women).

<sup>2</sup> Vital statistics estimates for this same time period indicate that there were 3.9 million births. Taking into account the incomplete data from the CPS for June 1998 (the survey misses the last 10 days of the month) and twin deliveries (women with twin births are only counted once in the CPS), comparable Vital statistics estimates would be about 3,725,000 births (Betty Smith, et al. *Births and Deaths: Preliminary Data for July 1997-June 1998*. National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 47, No. 22. National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 1999, Table 1).

<sup>3</sup> Hispanics may be of any race.

Table B.  
**Fertility Indicators Among Different Generations,  
 Women 40 to 44 Years Old: June 1976 and June 1998**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	1976	1998
<b>ALL WOMEN</b> .....	5,684	11,113
Children ever born (percent) .....	100.0	100.0
None .....	10.2	19.0
One .....	9.6	17.3
Two .....	21.7	35.8
Three .....	22.7	18.2
Four or more .....	35.9	9.6
Children ever born per 1,000 women .....	3,091	1,877
<b>NEVER-MARRIED WOMEN</b> .....	228	1,118
Children ever born (percent) .....	100.0	100.0
None .....	75.5	66.8
One .....	8.7	10.9
Two or more .....	15.8	22.3
Children ever born per 1,000 women .....	724	758

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Surveys, 1976 and 1998.

Nearly all women end their childbearing by age 45. Among women 40 to 44 years old in 1998, only Hispanic women, with an average of 2.4 births each, had exceeded the level required for the natural replacement of the population (about 2.1 births per woman).<sup>4</sup> Black women and Asian and Pacific Islander women had fertility levels not different from the replacement level, while White non-Hispanic women were significantly below replacement level and averaged only 1.8 births each. These fertility patterns will have a significant impact on the growth of the population—the most recent series of population projections indicates that by 2005, Hispanics may become the second largest race/ethnic group in the United States.<sup>5</sup> Corresponding

<sup>4</sup> The level required for the natural replacement of the population is the average number of children a woman must have to replace herself with a female living to the average age of childbearing. Taking into account that slightly more boy than girl babies are born and that not all children survive to the childbearing ages, this level is about 2.1 births per woman.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Projections of the Total Resident Population by 5-Year Age Groups, Race, and Hispanic Origin with Special Age Categories: Middle Series, 2001 to 2005" published 13 January 2000; <<http://www.census.gov/population/projections/nation/summary/np-t4-b.txt>>.

to their relatively high levels of completed fertility, only 15 percent of Hispanic women 40 to 44 years old were childless compared with 20 percent of White non-Hispanic women.

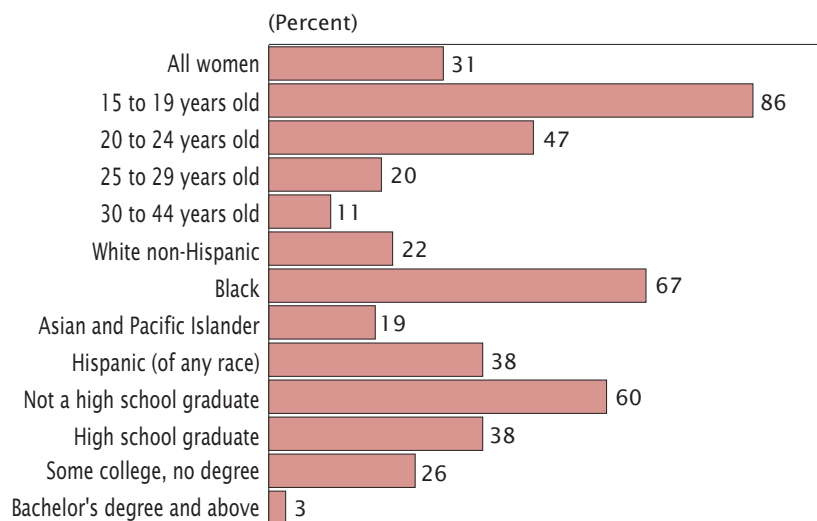
### FERTILITY BETWEEN GENERATIONS

The fertility characteristics of women 40 to 44 years old provide

an accurate demographic summary of women at the completion of their childbearing years (see Table B). Women in this age group in June 1998 were born during the peak of the Baby Boom in the mid-1950s and will end their childbearing years with an average of 1.9 children. This contrasts sharply with their mothers who were born during the Great Depression of the 1930s—when they were 40 to 44 years old in 1976, they averaged 3.1 births.

Accompanying this decline in completed fertility since 1976 has been an increase in the proportion of women 40 to 44 years old who will end their reproductive life childless (see Figure 1). Currently, 19 percent of women in their early forties are childless. By comparison, the earlier generation of women 40 to 44 years old in 1976 completed their childbearing years with about 10 percent never having a child. While the current level of childlessness is high compared with the generation of women 40 to 44 years old in 1976, it is not different from the level for

Figure 2.  
**Births Out of Wedlock: June 1998**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Survey, 1998.

women born in 1900 (about 20 percent).<sup>6</sup> While childless levels are approximately the same now as they were a century ago, in contrast, a higher percentage of women who were born at the turn of the century had four or more children (26 percent) compared with women today (about 10 percent).

Smaller size families are also more typical today than in the previous generation (see Table B). Only 10 percent of women 40 to 44 years old in 1998 will have four or more children compared with 36 percent of women in this same age group in 1976. In addition to smaller families, a higher proportion of Baby Boom children will not marry by the end of their childbearing years—10 percent have never been married by age 40 to 44 years compared with 4 percent for the earlier generation of women.

## OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILDBEARING

### Annual estimates for 1998

Estimates from the June 1998 Current Population Survey indicate that approximately 1.1 million women gave birth out of wedlock in the 12-month period preceding the survey, which represented 31 percent of all births during this period. One million births were to never-married women, while 143,000 were to women widowed or divorced at the time of the survey (see Table C). These estimates may vary slightly from those reported by the National Center for Health Statistics, because marital status in the CPS is recorded at the time of the survey

<sup>6</sup> Robert L. Heuser. *Fertility Tables for Birth Cohorts by Color: United States, 1917-73*. DHEW Publication (HRA)76-1152. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1976, Table 6A.

Table C.  
**Fertility Indicators for Women 15 to 44 Years Old by Selected Characteristics: June 1998**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number of women	Percent childless	Women who had a child in the last year			Children ever born per 1,000 women
			Number with a birth	Births per 1,000 women	First births per 1,000 women	
<b>Total</b> .....	60,519	42.2	3,671	60.7	24.6	1,227
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>						
Currently married .....	30,904	18.4	2,528	81.8	29.8	1,782
Married, husband present .....	28,344	18.4	2,424	85.5	31.4	1,770
Married, husband absent <sup>1</sup> .....	2,559	18.7	104	40.7	11.8	1,910
Divorced or widowed .....	5,430	20.4	143	26.4	6.4	1,701
Never married .....	24,185	77.5	1,000	41.3	22.1	410
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Not a high school graduate .....	13,048	56.6	793	60.8	23.5	1,076
High school graduate .....	17,536	28.5	1,034	59.0	21.9	1,514
College, 1 or more years .....	29,935	44.0	1,844	61.6	26.7	1,123
No degree .....	12,626	44.4	690	54.6	21.7	1,138
Associate degree .....	4,413	33.1	288	65.3	28.6	1,339
Bachelor's degree .....	9,762	47.4	627	64.2	29.1	1,048
Graduate or professional degree .....	3,134	47.1	239	76.2	36.6	998
<b>LABOR FORCE STATUS</b>						
In labor force .....	43,765	43.0	2,155	49.2	20.7	1,177
Employed .....	40,957	42.6	1,948	47.6	19.8	1,183
Unemployed .....	2,808	48.4	207	73.6	33.5	1,091
Not in labor force .....	16,754	40.1	1,516	90.5	34.8	1,356
<b>FAMILY INCOME</b>						
Under \$10,000 .....	5,631	36.2	413	73.3	29.5	1,504
\$10,000 to \$19,999 .....	6,917	38.2	514	74.3	30.6	1,378
\$20,000 to \$24,999 .....	3,902	40.4	301	77.3	36.4	1,228
\$25,000 to \$29,999 .....	3,848	41.6	236	61.4	20.8	1,195
\$30,000 to \$34,999 .....	3,928	43.1	230	58.6	21.6	1,210
\$35,000 to \$49,999 .....	9,478	40.9	522	55.1	21.9	1,250
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	11,003	42.8	663	60.3	24.4	1,174
\$75,000 and over .....	9,627	48.0	484	50.2	21.7	1,056
Income not reported .....	6,187	45.3	308	49.7	20.0	1,158
<b>REGION OF RESIDENCE</b>						
Northeast .....	11,397	44.7	667	58.5	23.8	1,161
Midwest .....	13,857	42.0	833	60.1	24.2	1,245
South .....	21,564	40.1	1,325	61.4	25.1	1,239
West .....	13,702	43.7	847	61.8	25.0	1,243
<b>METROPOLITAN RESIDENCE</b>						
Metropolitan .....	49,815	43.4	2,968	59.6	25.0	1,194
In central cities .....	18,860	44.1	1,148	60.9	27.9	1,209
Outside central cities .....	30,955	43.0	1,821	58.8	23.2	1,184
Nonmetropolitan .....	10,704	36.4	703	65.6	22.9	1,379

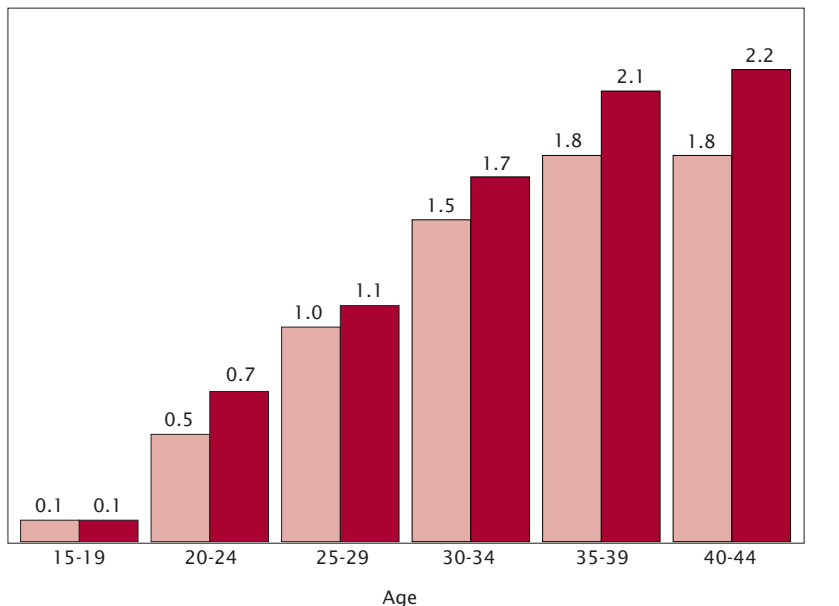
<sup>1</sup>Includes separated women.

Note: Since the number of women who have had a birth during the 12-month period was tabulated and not the actual numbers of births themselves, a small underestimation of fertility for this period may exist because of the omission of: (1) Multiple births; (2) more than one live birth occurring to a woman in a 12-month period (the woman is counted only once); (3) women who had births in the period and who died by the survey date; (4) women who were in institutions and therefore not in the survey universe; and (5) 2 percent of births in a 12-month period (only 51 weeks of data are tabulated in the CPS due to the interview schedule). These losses may be somewhat offset by the inclusion in the CPS of births to immigrants who did not have their children born in the United States and births to nonresident women who had their children born in the United States. These births would have not been recorded in the vital registration system. The ages of the women in this table and similar tables in this report refer to the age of women at the time of the survey and not at the birth of child.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Survey, 1998.

Figure 3.  
**Children Ever Born by Age and Nativity:**  
**June 1998**

(Births per woman)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Survey, 1998.

and not at the time of the actual birth.<sup>7</sup> Hence, the CPS estimates of out-of-wedlock births may differ from NCHS estimates by the degree that some women who had a birth in the last year may have subsequently married or divorced by the time of the survey.

Out-of-wedlock childbearing predominantly occurs among younger women—86 percent of births to teenagers in 1998 were out-of-wedlock (see Figure 2). Forty-seven percent of births to women in their early twenties were out of wedlock, with the proportion declining to 11 percent for women 30 years and over. The majority (67 percent) of births to Black women in 1998 were

out of wedlock, compared with 38 percent for Hispanic women and 22 percent for White non-Hispanic women.

Figure 2 also shows that women who had not graduated from high school had the highest level of out-of-wedlock childbearing in 1998 (60 percent). About 38 percent of mothers who had graduated from high school who had a birth in 1998 had their children born out of wedlock, compared with 26 percent of mothers with some college education and only 3 percent of women who had a bachelor's degree or more education. The above statistics illustrate that, while sharp differences occur among different educational groups, out-of-wedlock childbearing occurs throughout the population regardless of their level of education.

<sup>7</sup>Vital statistics estimates for calendar year 1998 indicate that there were 1.3 million births to unmarried women (all ages) or 32.8 percent of all births. (Stephanie J. Ventura, et al. *Decline in Teenage Birth Rates, 1991-98: Update of National and State Trends*. National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 47, No. 26. National Center for Health Statistics: Hyattsville, MD, 1999, Table A).

### Fertility of never-married women

The out-of-wedlock childbearing indicators previously discussed present a demographic portrait of women who gave birth in 1998. Those statistics included births to women who were unmarried (women never married, divorced and widowed) in June 1998. Table D looks more selectively at women who have entered motherhood but have yet to marry. This group is especially important as never-married women are much younger and are less likely to be able to support themselves financially.

Overall, there were 24.2 million women 15 to 44 years old in June 1998 who had never married. The large majority were childless, but 5.5 million (23 percent) had borne a child at some time before the survey date. Among never-married teenage women in 1998, 8 percent had borne a child, compared with 40 percent of never-married women in their thirties. One-third of women 40 to 44 years old in 1998 who had never married had borne at least one child. In comparison, among never-married women 40 to 44 years old in 1976, 25 percent had a child out of wedlock (see Table B).

Among never-married women in 1998, 48 percent of Black women had borne a child, compared with 13 percent of White non-Hispanic women and 11 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander women. About one third of never-married Hispanic women had borne a child.

Sharp differences also exist by educational attainment levels. Since many teenagers have not yet graduated from high school, the statistics in Table D by educational attainment are limited to women



Table D.  
**Fertility Indicators for Never-Married Women 15 to 44 Years Old by Selected Characteristics: June 1998**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Women who had a child in the last year					
	Number of women	Percent with 1 or more children	Number with a birth	Births per 1,000 women	First births per 1,000 women	Children ever born per 1,000 women
<b>Total</b> .....	24,185	22.5	1,000	41.3	22.1	410
<b>AGE</b>						
15 to 19 years.....	9,204	8.2	392	42.5	26.4	116
20 to 24 years.....	6,315	24.3	369	58.4	33.1	366
25 to 29 years.....	3,606	33.9	159	44.0	16.1	642
30 to 34 years.....	2,277	39.8	49	21.7	10.2	848
35 to 39 years.....	1,666	39.5	26	15.7	1.2	871
40 to 44 years.....	1,118	33.2	5	4.8	-	758
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>						
White.....	17,823	15.9	605	33.9	19.3	266
White non-Hispanic .....	15,131	13.3	422	27.9	15.3	207
Black.....	5,099	47.6	358	70.3	34.1	948
Asian and Pacific Islander ..	998	10.5	26	25.8	13.5	181
Hispanic (of any race).....	2,877	31.4	209	72.8	43.6	611
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT<sup>1</sup></b>						
Not a high school graduate .	1,592	66.0	115	72.2	18.9	1,625
High school graduate.....	3,553	50.4	212	59.6	21.2	953
Some college, no degree ...	4,416	27.7	148	33.5	17.9	444
Bachelor's degree and above .....	3,830	8.8	23	6.0	5.3	133

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.  
<sup>1</sup>Limited to women 21 to 44 years old.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Survey, 1998.

21 to 44 years of age in 1998 to present a more reasonable representation of out-of-wedlock fertility differences. About 66 percent of women who had not completed high school had a birth out of wedlock, compared with 28 percent of women with some college education—lower levels of out-of-wedlock childbearing were found for never-married women who had graduated college (9 percent). These differences in fertility may reflect both differential knowledge and access to contraceptive services, but educational outcomes are probably also the consequences of the temporary or even

permanent disruptions resulting from an out-of-wedlock birth.

### FERTILITY OF FOREIGN-BORN WOMEN

#### Differences by nativity status

Beginning in June 1994, information on place of birth and citizenship status was collected in the Current Population Survey in recognition of the growing proportion of the population of the United States who are foreign born. In June 1998, there were 7.2 million foreign-born<sup>8</sup> women 15 to 44 years

old in the United States, representing 12 percent of women in the childbearing ages (see Table E). About 527,000 foreign-born women gave birth in the year prior to the survey, resulting in a fertility rate of 73 births per 1,000 women. Overall, 41 percent of births to foreign-born women were first births. The fertility rate for native women was 59 births per 1,000 women although a similar proportion of births to these women were first births.

Higher fertility rates for foreign-born women are due to higher age-specific fertility rates for women under age 30. Table E shows that while fertility rates are higher for foreign-born than native women under age 30 by 29 births per 1,000 women, there are no significant differences in the fertility rates for women 30 to 44 years old by nativity.

Among women completing their childbearing years, native women 40 to 44 years old will complete their reproductive years with an average of 1.8 children each, which is below replacement level fertility (see Figure 3). On the other hand, foreign-born women will complete their childbearing years with an average of 2.2 children each, not different from replacement level fertility. In addition, levels of childlessness were lower for foreign-born women in their early forties (13 percent) than for native women (20 percent).

<sup>8</sup> In this report, "native" is used to designate people born in the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands or the outlying areas or territories of the United States, or who were born abroad to parents, at least one of whom was a U.S. citizen. "Foreign born" refers to all other people.

Table E.  
**Fertility Indicators for Women 15 to 44 Years Old by  
 Place of Birth, Age, and Citizenship Status: June 1998**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number of women	Percent childless	Women who had a child in the last year			Children ever born per 1,000
			Number with a birth	Births per 1,000 women	First births per 1,000 women	
<b>Total</b> .....	60,519	42.2	3,671	60.7	24.6	1,227
<b>NATIVE</b>						
Total .....	53,274	43.4	3,144	59.0	23.9	1,184
15 to 29 years .....	24,963	67.3	1,966	78.7	38.1	561
15 to 19 years .....	8,978	90.2	440	49.0	29.5	139
20 to 24 years .....	7,836	65.0	718	91.6	46.0	539
25 to 29 years .....	8,150	44.3	808	99.2	39.9	1,047
30 to 44 years .....	28,311	22.4	1,178	41.6	11.4	1,734
30 to 34 years .....	8,750	27.5	718	82.1	24.4	1,517
35 to 39 years .....	9,850	20.3	363	36.9	8.4	1,836
40 to 44 years .....	9,711	19.9	97	10.0	2.7	1,827
<b>FOREIGN BORN</b>						
Total .....	7,245	33.3	527	72.8	30.0	1,536
15 to 29 years .....	2,864	55.1	308	107.7	59.2	788
15 to 19 years .....	597	89.9	20	33.8	26.1	131
20 to 24 years .....	965	55.6	146	151.8	86.5	691
25 to 29 years .....	1,302	38.9	142	108.9	54.2	1,162
30 to 44 years .....	4,382	19.0	219	49.9	11.0	2,025
30 to 34 years .....	1,478	26.7	125	84.4	20.0	1,713
35 to 39 years .....	1,501	16.8	74	49.1	10.5	2,148
40 to 44 years .....	1,402	13.2	20	14.4	2.0	2,222
<b>Place of birth<sup>1</sup></b>						
Latin America .....	3,916	28.1	304	77.6	31.6	1,772
Mexico .....	2,102	24.0	187	88.8	28.1	2,023
Remainder of Latin America .....	1,814	32.9	117	64.6	35.6	1,482
Asia .....	1,713	38.5	97	56.6	20.9	1,299
Europe <sup>2</sup> .....	721	38.1	60	82.9	30.8	1,268
Canada .....	143	42.7	14	94.9	47.2	1,180
<b>Citizenship status</b>						
Naturalized citizen .....	2,273	30.0	134	58.8	27.5	1,552
Not a citizen .....	4,972	34.8	393	79.1	31.2	1,529

<sup>1</sup>Shown for selected areas for women who are foreign born.

<sup>2</sup>Includes Russia and all former republics of the Soviet Union.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Survey, 1998.

### Variations by world regions of birth and citizenship status

Estimates from the June 1998 CPS show that the majority of foreign-born women 15 to 44 years old were from Latin America (about 3.9 million or 54 percent).<sup>9</sup> The estimated 304,000 births to these

women in 1998 produced a fertility rate of 78 births per 1,000 women. The majority of the women from Latin America were born in Mexico (2.1 million).

Women from Asia, who made up 24 percent of all foreign-born women, had a fertility rate of 57 births per 1,000. The average

number of children born to date to these women was 1.3 births per woman compared to 1.8 births per woman from Latin America. Asian-born women also had childlessness levels 10 percentage points higher than women from Latin America. These statistics reflect actual differences in fertility and are not caused by differences in the age distribution of women from the two regions—about one-half of women from both regions who are 15 to 44 years old are in the principal childbearing ages of 20 to 34 years. European-born women also had levels of childlessness (38 percent) and births to date (1.3 births per woman) that were similar to those of Asian-born women.

Table E also shows fertility differences by citizenship status. Thirty-one percent of foreign-born women in the childbearing ages in 1998 were naturalized citizens. The annual fertility rate in 1998 for naturalized citizens was no different from that for native women (59 births per 1,000) although two other fertility indicators were different. Naturalized citizens, relative to native women, had higher average numbers of children born to date (1.6 births per woman compared with 1.2 births) and lower proportions who were childless (30 percent compared with 43 percent). These statistics, which measure cumulative childbearing experience, reflect the relatively older age distribution of naturalized citizens compared with native women—52 percent of women in the childbearing ages who were naturalized citizens were 35 to

<sup>9</sup>Fertility rates by place of birth are based on relatively small population bases and can be subject to considerable variation on an annual basis as population controls by region of birth were not made in this survey. These estimates should be treated with caution.

44 years old compared with only 37 percent of native women.

Foreign-born women who were not citizens had a more youthful distribution of women in the principal childbearing ages (55 percent were 20 to 34 years old) compared with foreign-born women who had become citizens (44 percent). However, no differences are noted in 1998 in the average number of children ever born between these two groups of women (1.5 births each) despite their different age distributions. Previous research on immigrant fertility suggests that differences caused by disruptions to childbearing related to migration and settlement eventually diminish by the end of the childbearing years.<sup>10</sup>

### LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTHERS WITH INFANTS

Labor force participation rates for women with infants<sup>11</sup> reached an all-time high of 59 percent in 1998, almost double the rate of 31 percent in 1976 (see Figure 4).<sup>12</sup> In June 1998, there were 2,155,000 women with infants were in the labor force—90 percent were employed at the time of the survey. The large increase in labor force participation rates since 1976 is an important reason why child care issues have

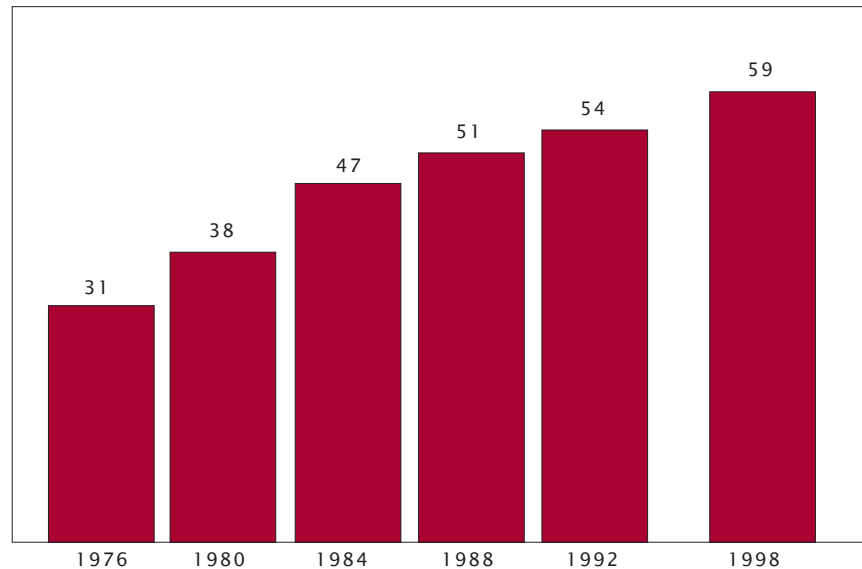
<sup>10</sup> Amara Bachu. *Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States*. Current Population Reports. P23-176. U.S. Census Bureau. Washington, DC, 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Labor force participation rates are defined as the number of persons who are either employed or looking for work per 100 persons in specified population groups. Infants are defined as children under 1 year or 12 months old.

<sup>12</sup> The Census Bureau first began to publish this indicator in 1976. For a time series of annual births to women in the labor force from CPS surveys since 1976, see Amara Bachu, *Fertility of American Women: June 1995 (Update)*. PPL-74. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1997, Table H-4.

Figure 4.  
**Labor Force Participation Among Women With Infants:  
Selected Years, June 1976 to June 1998**

(Percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Surveys, 1976 to 1998.

been a key component of family policy legislation in recent years. From changes to the federal tax code in 1976 which permitted working parents to take a tax credit for child care expenses to the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, there has been an increased recognition of the importance of making it easier for women to combine child rearing and employment activities.

For comparative purposes, Table F shows the degree of labor force participation of *mothers* (women with children) who were 15 to 44 years old by whether they have had a child in the last year. Labor force participation rates of mothers rather than all women were used in this comparison as children require attention and daily supervision, time constraints which are not shared by childless women. These family activities, in turn, influence the likelihood of being employed. On

average, mothers who had a child in the last year recorded lower labor force participation rates (59 percent) than did other mothers (73 percent).

Women who seek to return to work shortly after giving birth may face medical and maternal responsibilities that are not shared by women with older children. Mothers with infants may want to return to work, but at lower levels of activity, to devote as much time as possible to providing care in the critical months after childbirth. These employment tendencies are evident in Table F—lower proportions of mothers with infants were employed full-time<sup>13</sup> than were mothers without infant children. Among mothers with infants, about twice as many were employed full-time (36 percent) as were employed part-time (17 percent) compared with mothers without infant children where full-time

<sup>13</sup> Full-time workers are employed people who work 35 or more hours per week.



workers were three times as common (52 percent) as part-time workers (17 percent).

### **Full-time and part-time employment**

Which women are more likely to be employed full-time rather than part-time? Labor force participation among women with infants is appreciably higher for college-educated women than for women with a high school education or less. Data from the June 1998 CPS indicate that 68 percent of women with 1 or more years of college who had a child in the previous year were in the labor force, compared with 58 percent for high school graduates and only 38 percent for women who were not high school graduates. For women with 1 or more years of college or who had graduated high school, a larger percentage of women worked at full-time rather than at part-time jobs. Among women who were not high school graduates, no difference was found in the percentage working at full-time or part-time jobs.

This pattern suggests that women with more time invested in their educational careers' return to work more rapidly and are more likely to return as full-time workers than do women with fewer years of schooling. Many factors could account for these differences, insofar as educational attainment is related to work experience and salary levels. Studies have shown that the likelihood of returning to work after a child's birth is highly associated with work experience prior to and during pregnancy (for example, hours worked per week and when the woman stopped working).<sup>14</sup> In

<sup>14</sup> Martin O'Connell. *Maternity Leave Arrangements: 1961-85*. Current Population Reports, P23-165. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1990.

addition to higher initial levels of labor force activity during pregnancy, greater job commitment or available resources to purchase child care services may account for the higher post-childbirth levels of labor force participation levels among mothers with more years of schooling.

What other factors influence the decision to return to work after childbirth? The marital status of the mother is a strong determinant of labor force participation but can act as a double-edged sword as a predictor. Women who are unmarried and who lack a spouse's income may be in relatively poorer economic circumstances than married women, and more dependent on their own employment to support their family. However, the absence of a husband may restrict their ability to obtain child care services due to fewer family economic resources to pay for child care and the lack of a spouse to serve as a child care provider. Table F shows that 50 percent of separated, divorced, and widowed women with infants are employed full time—more than women who are married (39 percent), and also twice as high a proportion as women who have never married (24 percent). Among mothers in the labor force with infants, never-married women also are most likely to be unemployed and possibly in need of child care services or job training assistance.

An important trend appearing in the last few years has been the narrowing of differences in labor force participation rates among women by the number of children they have. Table F indicates that in 1998 the labor force participation rate for mothers with infants was not different between mothers with only one birth (61 percent) or with two or more births (57 percent). In the June

1995 survey, the difference was about 10 percentage points (59 percent and 49 percent, respectively) while in 1976 the difference was about 13 percentage points (39 percent and 26 percent, respectively).<sup>15</sup> This convergence suggests that families today are better able to provide child care services when additional births occur. Recent childcare data indicate that if a family uses the same provider for more than one child, the cost of child care is about 25 percent less per child than if different arrangements are made for the children.<sup>16</sup>

### **DUAL-EMPLOYED FAMILIES**

The increase in the labor force participation of women has significantly altered the structure of family life, especially the need for child care providers. The traditional family portrayed as one with an employed husband whose wife stayed home to look after the children has changed to a family with both parents employed outside the home and with children cared for by someone other than a family member.

Table G shows selected socioeconomic characteristics of married couples (where the wife is 15 to 44 years old) by the spouses' employment status and whether the wife was childless or had ever had a child. Of the 28.3 million married-couple families in 1998 with wives who were in the childbearing ages, 14.3 million (51 percent) were dual-employed

<sup>15</sup> Amara Bachu. *Fertility of American Women: June 1995 (Update)*. PPL-74. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1997, Table H-3 (for the 1995 data); Amara Bachu. *Fertility of American Women: June 1987*. Current Population Reports, P20-427. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1988, Table D (for the 1976 data).

<sup>16</sup> Lynne M. Casper. *What Does It Cost to Mind Our Preschoolers?* Current Population Reports, P70-52. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1995 (Table 2).

Table F.  
**Labor Force Participation Among Mothers 15 to 44 Years Old by Fertility Status and Selected Characteristics: June 1998**

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to women with at least one child ever born)

Characteristic	Mothers who had a child in the last year					Mothers who did not have a child in the last year				
	Number of mothers	Percent in labor force				Number of mothers	Percent in labor force			
		Total	Full-time	Part-time	Unemployed		Total	Full-time	Part-time	Unemployed
Total .....	3,671	58.7	35.8	17.3	5.6	31,303	72.8	51.8	17.0	4.0
<b>Age</b>										
15 to 19 years .....	460	43.2	9.0	21.9	12.3	483	57.4	24.4	20.8	12.3
20 to 24 years .....	864	56.4	31.9	15.3	9.3	2,306	66.1	38.8	17.9	9.5
25 to 29 years .....	950	61.9	40.5	17.2	4.2	4,387	69.3	50.3	14.8	4.1
30 to 44 years .....	1,397	63.0	43.7	17.1	2.2	24,127	74.4	53.8	17.3	3.2
<b>Births to Date and Age of Woman</b>										
First birth .....	1,490	60.8	38.3	16.2	6.3	9,188	76.9	57.3	14.9	4.6
15 to 19 years .....	280	48.4	12.6	22.9	12.9	360	58.3	23.9	20.9	13.5
20 to 24 years .....	444	54.8	30.8	16.1	7.9	1,443	68.9	44.4	16.6	8.0
25 to 29 years .....	395	68.5	49.3	14.8	4.4	1,824	75.8	58.6	13.8	3.4
30 to 44 years .....	370	69.3	54.9	12.9	1.4	5,562	80.5	62.5	14.4	3.6
Second or higher order birth .....	2,181	57.3	34.0	18.0	5.2	22,115	71.1	49.5	17.9	3.7
15 to 19 years .....	180	35.2	3.4	20.5	11.3	124	54.9	25.8	20.4	8.7
20 to 24 years .....	420	58.2	33.0	14.5	10.7	863	61.5	29.6	20.0	11.9
25 to 29 years .....	555	57.3	34.3	18.9	4.0	2,563	64.6	44.4	15.5	4.7
30 to 44 years .....	1,026	60.7	39.7	18.6	2.4	18,565	72.5	51.2	18.2	3.1
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>										
White .....	2,947	58.4	36.3	17.5	4.6	24,647	72.1	50.4	18.6	3.1
White non-Hispanic .....	2,374	61.6	38.9	19.2	3.5	20,690	73.7	51.3	19.7	2.6
Black .....	554	63.0	33.5	17.9	11.6	5,079	77.5	58.4	10.8	8.4
Asian and Pacific Islander .....	138	49.9	34.7	11.0	4.2	1,250	67.6	50.3	14.4	2.9
Hispanic (of any race) .....	618	45.7	26.1	11.2	8.4	4,182	64.5	46.3	12.7	5.5
<b>Marital Status</b>										
Married, husband present .....	2,469	60.0	39.3	17.4	3.3	21,121	70.7	49.1	19.1	2.5
Separated <sup>1</sup> , divorced or widowed .....	202	64.5	50.2	9.3	5.0	5,731	82.1	65.2	12.0	4.9
Never married .....	1,000	54.4	24.2	18.6	11.6	4,451	70.8	46.9	14.0	9.9
<b>Educational Attainment</b>										
Not a high school graduate .....	793	37.7	13.6	13.5	10.6	4,871	56.3	35.4	12.9	7.9
High school graduate .....	1,034	58.4	33.5	17.0	7.9	11,511	73.8	52.8	16.5	4.5
College, 1 or more years .....	1,844	67.9	46.6	19.1	2.2	14,920	77.4	56.3	18.8	2.2
No degree .....	690	66.4	39.8	22.1	4.4	6,329	75.8	56.4	16.7	2.6
Associate degree .....	288	69.7	50.4	17.3	2.0	2,664	81.5	57.5	21.1	2.9
Bachelor's degree .....	627	66.5	45.8	19.9	0.8	4,509	76.3	54.0	20.8	1.4
Graduate or professional degree .....	239	73.6	63.2	10.4	-	1,418	80.6	61.1	17.5	2.1
<b>Family Income</b>										
Under \$10,000 .....	413	41.8	14.4	13.8	13.6	3,179	56.7	26.0	16.8	13.8
\$10,000 to \$19,999 .....	514	49.5	26.4	15.2	7.8	3,763	69.8	48.5	15.7	5.6
\$20,000 to \$24,999 .....	301	58.8	35.4	12.9	10.5	2,024	71.2	52.5	14.5	4.2
\$25,000 to \$29,999 .....	236	57.2	36.6	12.0	8.5	2,013	75.2	55.7	14.8	4.7
\$30,000 to \$34,999 .....	230	54.8	26.0	24.7	4.1	2,006	76.2	56.7	16.1	3.4
\$35,000 to \$49,999 .....	522	67.3	41.1	24.3	1.8	5,080	76.7	58.0	16.3	2.5
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	663	69.6	46.7	21.2	1.7	5,634	80.1	58.4	20.0	1.6
\$75,000 and over .....	484	66.9	48.3	16.2	2.4	4,526	75.1	53.0	20.9	1.2
Income not reported .....	308	49.9	34.7	9.8	5.5	3,078	66.9	51.9	12.7	2.4

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup>Includes married, husband absent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Survey, 1998.

Table G.

**Married Couples by Employment and Fertility Status: Selected Years, 1976 to 1998**

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to married-couple families)

Characteristic and survey year	Number of couples	Husband and wife employed			Husband employed, wife not employed			All other couples
		Total	Wife childless	Wife with one or more children	Total	Wife childless	Wife with one or more children	
<b>1998 SURVEY</b>								
Total .....	28,344	18,262	3,946	14,316	7,612	796	6,817	2,470
<b>Age of Wife</b>								
15 to 19 years .....	256	112	52	59	110	52	58	34
20 to 24 years .....	2,005	1,068	480	588	677	120	556	261
25 to 29 years .....	4,655	2,995	1,167	1,828	1,279	173	1,106	381
30 to 34 years .....	6,365	4,103	860	3,243	1,767	163	1,604	494
35 to 39 years .....	7,472	4,786	643	4,143	2,094	140	1,953	592
40 to 44 years .....	7,592	5,199	743	4,455	1,686	147	1,539	708
<b>Race and Ethnicity of Wife</b>								
White .....	24,522	15,847	3,516	12,331	6,730	648	6,082	1,945
White non-Hispanic .....	21,221	14,198	3,252	10,946	5,416	512	4,904	1,607
Black .....	2,152	1,478	231	1,247	365	49	317	309
Asian and Pacific Islander .....	1,451	815	183	632	446	88	358	191
Hispanic (of any race) .....	3,440	1,727	275	1,452	1,354	139	1,215	360
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Both college graduates .....	5,372	3,705	1,224	2,481	1,372	189	1,183	295
All other .....	22,972	14,557	2,721	11,835	6,240	607	5,633	2,175
<b>Occupation</b>								
Both professional-managerial .....	6,558	3,311	948	2,362	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
All other .....	21,786	14,951	2,998	11,954	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
<b>Family Income</b>								
Under \$10,000 .....	945	301	62	239	342	56	286	302
\$10,000 to \$19,999 .....	2,031	737	127	610	839	93	745	455
\$20,000 to \$24,999 .....	1,528	742	144	599	569	46	522	217
\$25,000 to \$29,999 .....	1,697	987	178	809	498	42	456	212
\$30,000 to \$34,999 .....	1,789	1,114	262	852	501	45	456	174
\$35,000 to \$49,999 .....	5,277	3,567	686	2,881	1,372	139	1,233	338
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	6,693	5,050	1,040	4,010	1,372	163	1,208	272
\$75,000 and over .....	5,724	4,230	1,126	3,104	1,325	134	1,192	169
Income not reported .....	2,661	1,534	321	1,213	795	78	717	331
<b>Tenure</b>								
Own home .....	20,783	14,359	2,667	11,692	5,176	447	4,730	1,247
Rent .....	7,061	3,679	1,219	2,460	2,321	345	1,977	1,062
No cash rent .....	500	224	60	164	115	5	110	161
<b>SURVEY YEAR</b>								
1992 .....	29,531	17,834	3,910	13,924	7,835	758	7,077	3,861
1987 .....	29,413	17,596	4,150	13,466	8,941	844	8,097	2,876
1982 .....	26,777	14,113	3,672	10,441	10,073	1,114	8,959	2,591
1976 .....	25,420	11,379	3,048	8,331	12,200	1,221	10,979	1,841

X Not applicable.

Note: Data for 1992 and 1998 are for families where the wife was 15 to 44 years old; for previous surveys, the data are for women 18 to 44 years old.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, June Current Population Surveys, 1976, 1982, 1987, 1992 and 1998.

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families with children. This is the first year since the Census Bureau began presenting these data that dual-employed families with children made up the majority of married-couple families. In 1976, there were only 8.3 million of these families, or one-third of all married couple families.

The modal family type in the 1970s was one which had children but where only the husband worked, frequently referred to as the “traditional family.” In 1976, 43 percent of married couples (11 million) were in this family situation. By 1998, the number of married couples with children where only the husband worked declined to 6.8 million and represented only 24 percent of married couples.

Dual-employed couples who are childless increased from about 3 million couples in 1976 to 4.2 million couples in 1987—no significant change was noted by 1998. The major change for the past two decades in family and economic life has not been the growth of dual-employed couples without children, but an increase in the number and proportion of couples where both child rearing and working lives are the norms for both spouses.

### **Socioeconomic characteristics of dual-employed families**

Among dual-employed families, what characteristics differentiate those families with and without children? In general, wives of childless couples tend to be younger and hence at an earlier stage of family formation. About 43 percent of childless dual-employed couples had wives who were under age 30 compared with only 17 percent of couples with children.

One distinguishing characteristic which makes childless dual-employed couples different from the other family groupings is their higher joint level of educational attainment. In 1998, 31 percent of childless dual-employed couples had both spouses graduating from college compared with only 17 percent of dual-employed couples with children. The traditional family, where only the husband was employed and the wife stayed home with the children, also had levels of joint college education (17 percent) similar to dual-employed couples with children.

Consistent with their higher levels of education, childless dual-employed couples were more likely to have both husbands and wives working in either professional or managerial occupations. Twenty-four percent of childless couples were jointly employed in these occupational categories compared with 16 percent of couples with children. Despite these differences in education and occupation, relatively small differences in family income were found among dual-employed couples by the wife’s fertility status. Among those reporting on their family income, 60 percent of childless couples had incomes of \$50,000 and over compared with 54 percent of families with children. Dual-employed couples, as expected, had distinctly higher incomes than families where only the husband worked. Among couples reporting on their family income, 55 percent of dual-employed couples had incomes of \$50,000 and over compared with only 40 percent of husband-only employed couples.

Despite their lower income levels, home ownership levels were significantly higher for dual-employed

couples with children (82 percent) than for childless couples (68 percent). A similar pattern was found for husband-only working couples, with home ownership rates higher for couples with children (69 percent) than without children (56 percent). These results suggest that decisions to purchase a home may not solely depend on the family’s income, but may also be influenced by the need for larger and more private spaces when families begin to grow.

### **SOURCE OF THE DATA**

Most estimates in this report come from data obtained in the June 1998 Current Population Survey (CPS). Some estimates are based on data obtained by the CPS in earlier years. The Census Bureau conducts the CPS every month, although this report uses only data from the June surveys.

### **ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA**

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau’s standards for statistical significance. 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 answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process—including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

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The CPS employs 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 how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). 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, contact Marti Jones, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, on the Internet at [dsm�\\_S&A@ccmail.census.gov](mailto:dsm�_S&A@ccmail.census.gov).

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Detailed tables with characteristics of women in the childbearing ages by fertility indicators are available on the Internet (<http://www.census.gov>); search by clicking on "F" for "Fertility" under the "Subjects A-Z" heading on the Census Bureau home page.

To receive a paper copy of these tables, send your request for "PPL-116, Fertility of American Women: June 1998" along with a check or money order in the amount of \$25.00 payable to "Commerce-Census-88-00-9010," to U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, P.O. Box 277943, Atlanta, GA 30384-7943, or call our Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422. A copy of these tabulations will be made available to any existing CPR P20 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report. Contact our Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422.

### **CONTACTS**

Statistical Information Staff  
[pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov)  
301-457-2422

Amara Bachu  
[Amara.Bachu@census.gov](mailto:Amara.Bachu@census.gov)  
301-457-2499

Martin O'Connell  
[moconnel@census.gov](mailto:moconnel@census.gov)  
301-457-2416

### **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:

Chief, Population Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, DC 20233

or send an e-mail inquiry to:  
[pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov)

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