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Four in ten babies are born outside marriage in the U.S.

By [Mail Foreign Service](#)

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Waiting game: Women in the U.S. are waiting until they are older to have a baby - but they are not waiting to get married

The number of children born outside marriage in the United States has increased dramatically to four out of ten of all births.

Figures show that 41 per cent of children born in 2008 did not have married parents - up from 28 per cent in 1990.

Researchers have concluded that although Christian values still play an important role in American society, public attitudes have changed.

Having a child out of wedlock does not carry the stigma and shame it once did, they say.

The study also found that in America there is a declining number of teenage mothers and rising numbers of older parents.

By comparison, Britain has the worst teenage pregnancy rate in Europe with 45 per cent of children born outside of wedlock in 2008.

When Labour came to power in 1997, 36 per cent of children were born outside marriage.

The U.S. research, taken from census reports and health statistics by the Pew Research Centre, also outlines a trend of couples in western societies marrying later in life and delaying parenthood until they can afford it.

In 1990 only 9 per cent of births were to women 35 years and older and 13 per cent were to teenagers, but by 2008 10 per cent of births were to teenagers and 14 per cent were to older women.

'The demography of motherhood in the U.S. has shifted strikingly in the past two decades,' the report said.

The share of births to unmarried mothers had increased most among white and traditionally Catholic Hispanic women.

Mothers are also better educated than they were two decades ago. In 2006 more than half of mothers of newborns had some college education, an increase from 41 per cent in 1990.

The percentage was even higher among mothers 35 years and older, with 71 per cent.

'The higher share of college-educated mothers stems both from their rising birth rates and from women's increasing educational attainment,' the report explained.

Attitudes have also altered in the past 20 years as the stigma of unmarried parenthood has softened and Americans marry later in life.

But two is still the ideal number of children in a family for many Americans, which hasn't changed since the 1970s - and many couples cited 'the joy of having children' as the reason for starting a family.

However, a half century after the Food and Drug Administration approved the sale of birth control pills, nearly half of parents said 'there wasn't a reason; it just happened.'

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"Figures show that 41 per cent of children born in 2008 did not have married parents - up from 28 per cent in 1990."

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Looks to me like an increased correlation between being educated and shunning religious dogma.

Wonder why that is. Hmmm?

- Dr Robin Guthrie, York, 07/5/2010 19:40

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From an economic perspective, declining birth rates spells disaster for socialist countries. Aging populations and below replacement rate births, mean that "cradle to grave" government programs are under increasing pressure. Ironically, those generations that don't have children will be stuck with the consequences later.

Frankly, those that don't have children yet expect lots of benefits and big gov. pensions are just plain selfish. Just where is the money going to come from? How much can you tax the poor working stiff to pay into a failing system? At the same time, those that have large families including those that don't receive benefits are made fun of and viciously attacked. Why? They are future taxpayers!

- Kim, God's Green Earth, 07/5/2010 19:13

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So women are waiting longer to have fewer kids without dads in an increasing welfare-state world. Anyone see the impending disaster this is fueling?

- gina101, USA, 07/5/2010 18:40

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Failure to maintain the standard, does not invalidate the standard.
The standard: Marriage BEFORE children.

- SRMK99, Chesterfield, MO, 07/5/2010 17:38

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No surprise, Sherlock. As there are more career women who earn more, heterosexual women find it more difficult to satisfy their sexist cravings for 1950's breadwinning men even as they are less feminine than their grandmothers.

It's greed plain and simple. If someone can't handle responsibility for finding an acceptable mate and have children in their 40's due to procrastination, what kind of mother will they turn out to be?

- PK, Northern Virginia, USA, 07/5/2010 16:44

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No surprise, Sherlock. As heterosexual women earn more they find it more difficult to satisfy their cravings for 1950's breadwinners even as they are less feminine than women 60 years ago.

It's simple greed. If someone can't find a mate at all or winds up in their 40's putting their unborn children at risk, what kind of mother are going they going to be? Don't forget to set your car alarm! Chirp!

- PK, Northern Virginia, USA, 07/5/2010 16:35

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