



The Fifth Annual Index of Family Belonging and Rejection

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Marriage and Religion Research Institute

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The Fifth Annual Index of Family Belonging and Rejection

Index Highlights

- The Index of Family Belonging—the percentage of U.S. teenagers aged 15 to 17 who have grown up with both biological parents always married—is 46 percent. The biological parents of the remaining 54 percent are either no longer married, or never did marry.
- Since 1950, the Index of Belonging for U.S. teenagers has decreased by 17 percent (from 63 percent to 46 percent).
- The Index of Belonging is 17 percent for Black teenagers compared to 54 percent for White teenagers. This marks a 21 percent decrease in family belongingness for Black teenagers since 1950, and a 13 percent decrease for White teenagers.
- Family belonging has decreased for children of every age, both White and Black, between 1950 and 2012.

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Introduction

The Index of Family Belonging and Rejection compares the rate of 15- to 17-year-old children who have grown up in always-intact families with those who have grown up in broken families. Based on 2008-2012 data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey¹, the U.S. Belonging Index is 46 percent and the corresponding Rejection Index is 54 percent. This means that 46 percent of teenagers aged 15 to 17 have lived with both biological² parents always married since their birth, whereas 54 percent of teenagers aged 15 to 17 have lived in broken families with biological parents who either never married or are no longer married.³

Family structure profoundly impacts the lives of children. Seventeen-year-old adolescents on the brink of adulthood are particularly vulnerable as they are forming habits and making decisions that will last a lifetime. Whereas family intactness fosters an environment of belonging among youth that increases their likelihood of exceling in education, health, economic security, and religious practice, family brokenness creates a sense of rejection that can thwart proper growth.⁴

The Fifth Index of Belonging and Rejection measures family intactness across the race⁵ and age⁶ of children. In addition, the report compares the 1950 Index with the 2012 Index to capture the trajectory on which our nation heads.

The Black Family Index of Belonging is 17 percent, while the White Family Index of Belonging is 54 percent. Among both Black and White adolescents, the likelihood of facing rejection increases with each year of age.

Since 1950, the United States has experienced a decrease in intact families and a rise in broken families. Between 1950 and 2012, the U.S. Index of Belonging⁷ dropped from 63

¹Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]," (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010)

² There may be a certain percentage of mothers who marry a man that is not her child's biological father within two years of her child's birth. Although the American Community Survey does not differentiate these cases, their infrequency renders them a relatively small fraction of intact families.

³ Due to the method of data categorization in the American Community Survey, it is difficult to obtain an exact Index value. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction> for a technical explanation.

⁴ marri.us/effects-divorce-children

⁵ In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action", the Fifth Index compares Whites, Blacks, and the total population. For a more detailed analysis of the state of the Black family, see marri.us/state-of-black-family. For trendlines on all races and ethnicities, see marri.us/publications/family-trends

⁶ The Index statistic was calculated for each age, 2-to 17-years old. The statistics for 0-and 1-year-old are different in that they give the percent of children whose parents were married in the year of the child's birth.

⁷ The 2012 U.S. Index has a precision of somewhat better than a half a percentage point. The 1950 Index has a precision around three percentage points, plus or minus. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

percent to 46 percent, the White Index of Belonging⁸ decreased from 67 percent to 54 percent, and the Black Index of Belonging⁹ fell from 38 percent to 17 percent. This decline in family intactness has affected children of every age.

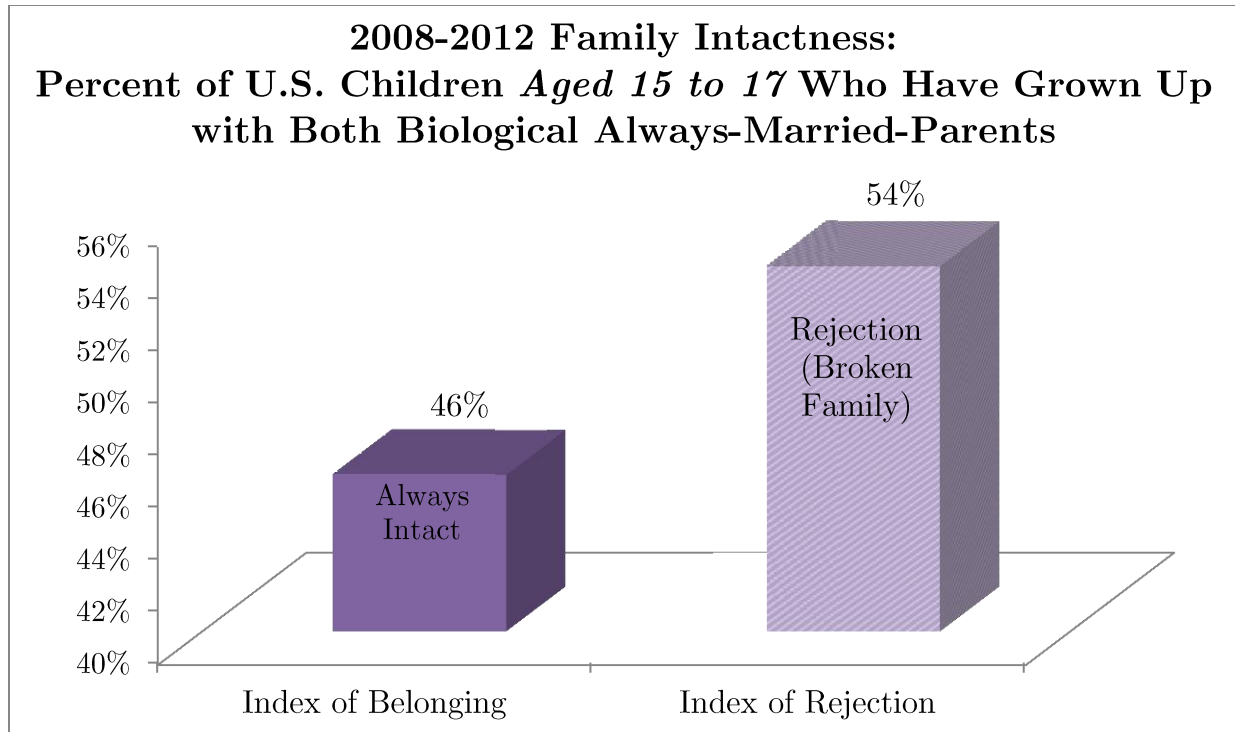
The American family is in a crisis. Our nation's children, especially our Black children, are being robbed of their married biological parents. "The State of the Black Family in America,"¹⁰ a complementary report to the Fifth Index, coalesces the personal and societal repercussions of brokenness in the Black community. Rectifying these ills will first and foremost require a restoration of the intact married family.

⁸ The white population Index has a precision of somewhat worse than a half a percentage point. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

⁹ The black population Index has a precision of just better than a percentage point. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

¹⁰ marri.us/state-of-black-family

2012
Index of Family Belonging and
Rejection

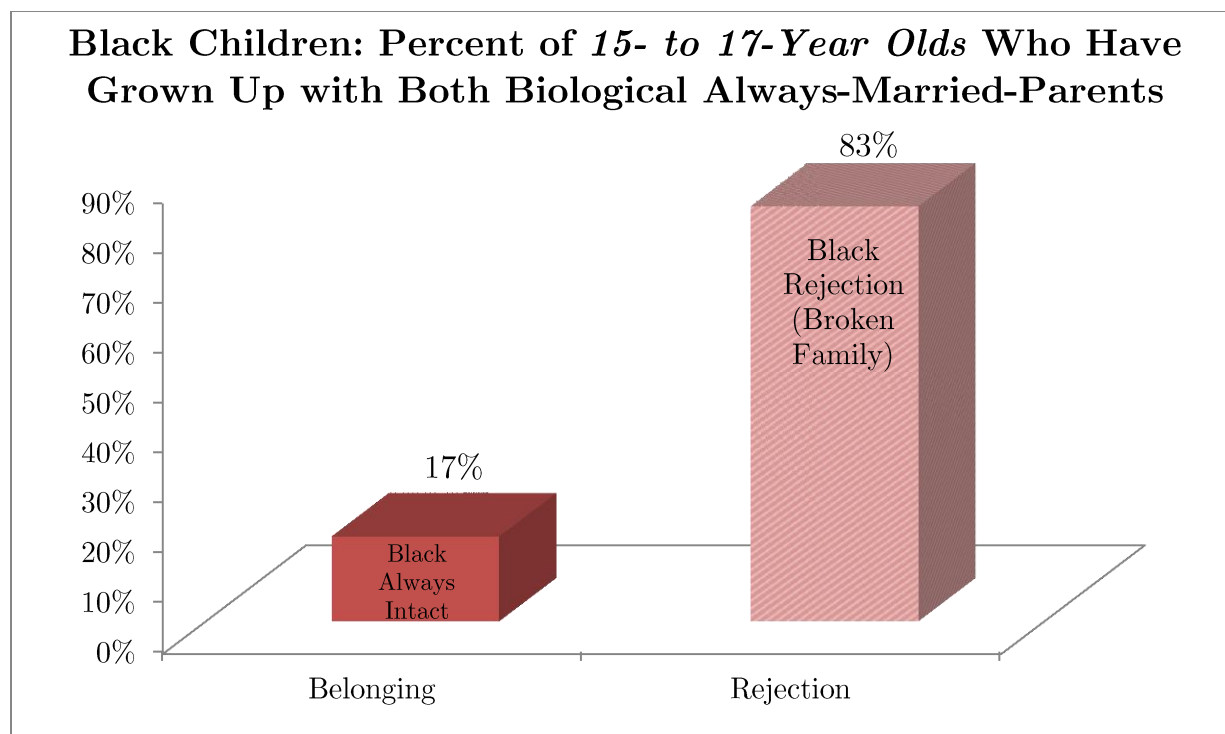


Less than half of all 15- to 17-year-old American teenagers have grown up with both biological parents always married. The annual Index presents the percentage of 15- to 17-year-old children who have grown up with both biological parents married since before or around the time of their child's birth. The total U.S. Index of Belonging for 2008-2012 is 46 percent, and the corresponding U.S. Index of Rejection is 54 percent.^{11,12}

Practically speaking, these figures indicate that 46 percent of American teenagers about to enter adulthood have grown up with their biological mother and biological father present.

¹¹ The U.S. Index has a precision of somewhat better than a half a percentage point. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

¹² The Fifth Index does not report any statistically significant difference from the Third or Fourth Indices.

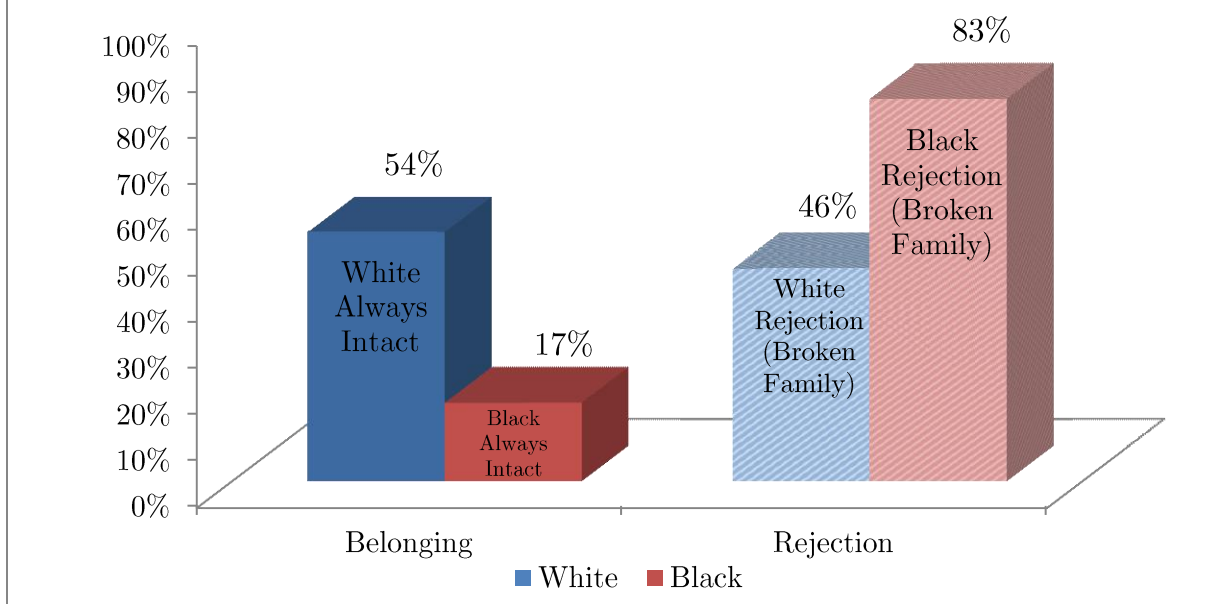


Less than one fifth of all 15- to 17-year-old Black teenagers have grown up with both biological parents always married. The Index of Belonging for Black teenagers 15 to 17 years old is 17 percent, while the Black Index of Rejection is 83 percent.

The implications of the broken Black family are evident in “The State of the Black Family in America.” Black men and women who were raised by their married biological parents fare better in terms of education, health, and economic status.¹³

¹³ marri.us/state-of-black-family

U.S. Children by Race: Percent of 15- to 17-Year Olds Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents

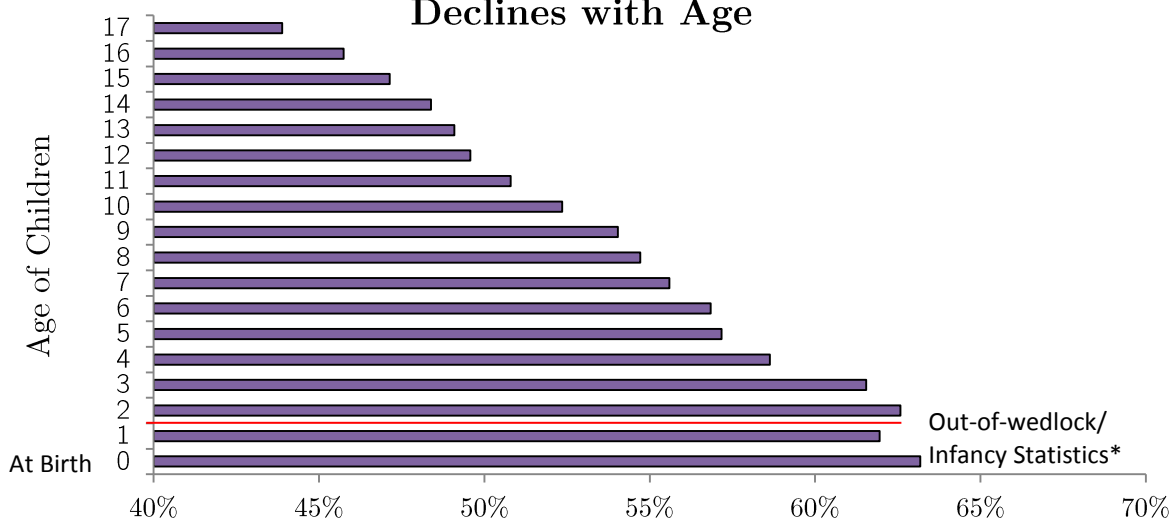


The rate of belonging among White teens more than triples the rate of belonging among Black teens. White and Black adolescents have strikingly different family structures. The Index of Belonging for White teenagers¹⁴ 15 to 17 years old is 54 percent, while the Index of Belonging for Black teenagers 15 to 17 years old is 17 percent.¹⁵

¹⁴ The white population Index has a precision of somewhat worse than a half a percentage point. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

¹⁵ The black population Index has a precision of just better than a percentage point. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

U.S. Children by Age in 2012: Percent Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents Declines with Age



*Refer to the technical appendix for how the Index is derived. These statistics are different from those in the Index in that these give the percent of children whose parents were married in the year of the child's birth, whereas the Index provides the percent of children whose parents married before or around the time of their birth.

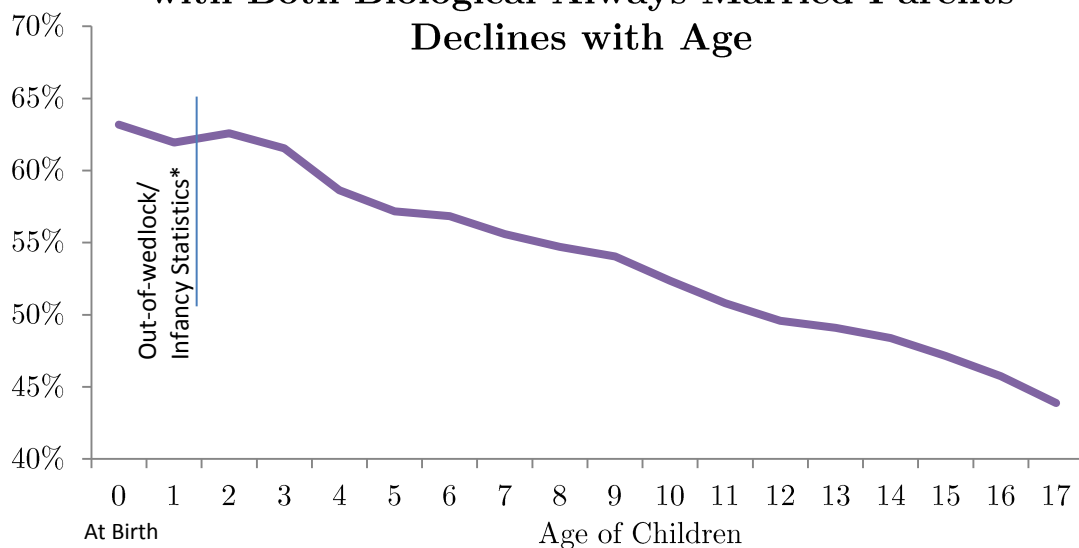
In 2012, the Index of Belonging for U.S. children declined with each additional year of age. The percent of children who lived with both biological parents since birth decreased as the children's ages increased.

Family intactness for U.S. children measured¹⁶: 63 percent at age 2, 62 percent at age 3, 59 percent at age 4, 57 percent at age 5, 57 percent at age 6, 56 percent at age 7, 55 percent at age 8, 54 percent at age 9, 52 percent at age 10, 51 percent at age 11, 50 percent at age 12, 49 percent at age 13, 48 percent at age 14, 47 percent at age 15, 46 percent at age 16, and 44 percent at age 17.

Note that children are of the specified age in 2012. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, 16-year-olds in 1996, 15-year-olds in 1997, and so on.

¹⁶The statistics presented for children age 2 to 17 measure family intactness (percent of children who have been raised by their married mother and father since before or around the time of their birth), whereas the statistics for children age 0 and 1 measure the percentage of children who *will* see their parents marry.

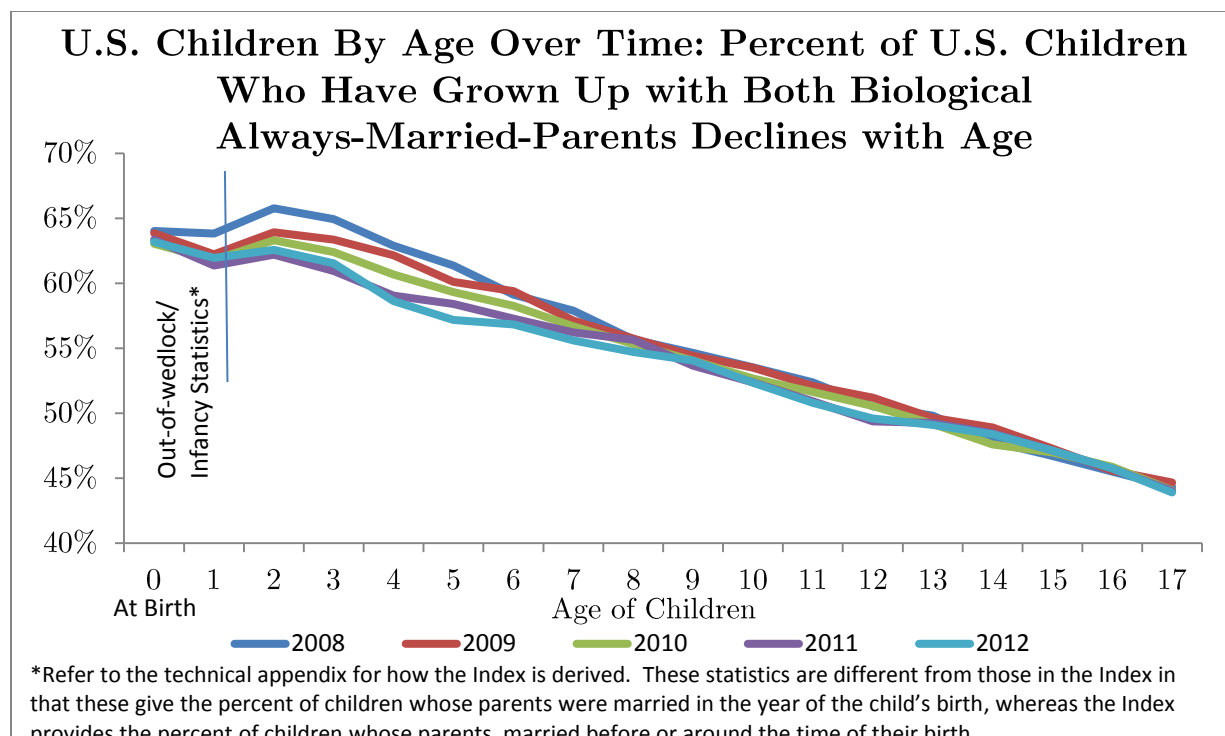
U.S. Children by Age in 2012: Percent Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents Declines with Age



*Refer to the technical appendix for how the Index is derived. These statistics are different from those in the Index in that these give the percent of children whose parents were married in the year of the child's birth, whereas the Index provides the percent of children whose parents married before or around the time of their birth.

Fewer children live in intact families as they age due to their parents' break-up. The percent of children who lived with both biological parents since birth decreases with each additional year of age. This diminution captures the number of married, biological parents who divorce during their child's youth.¹⁷

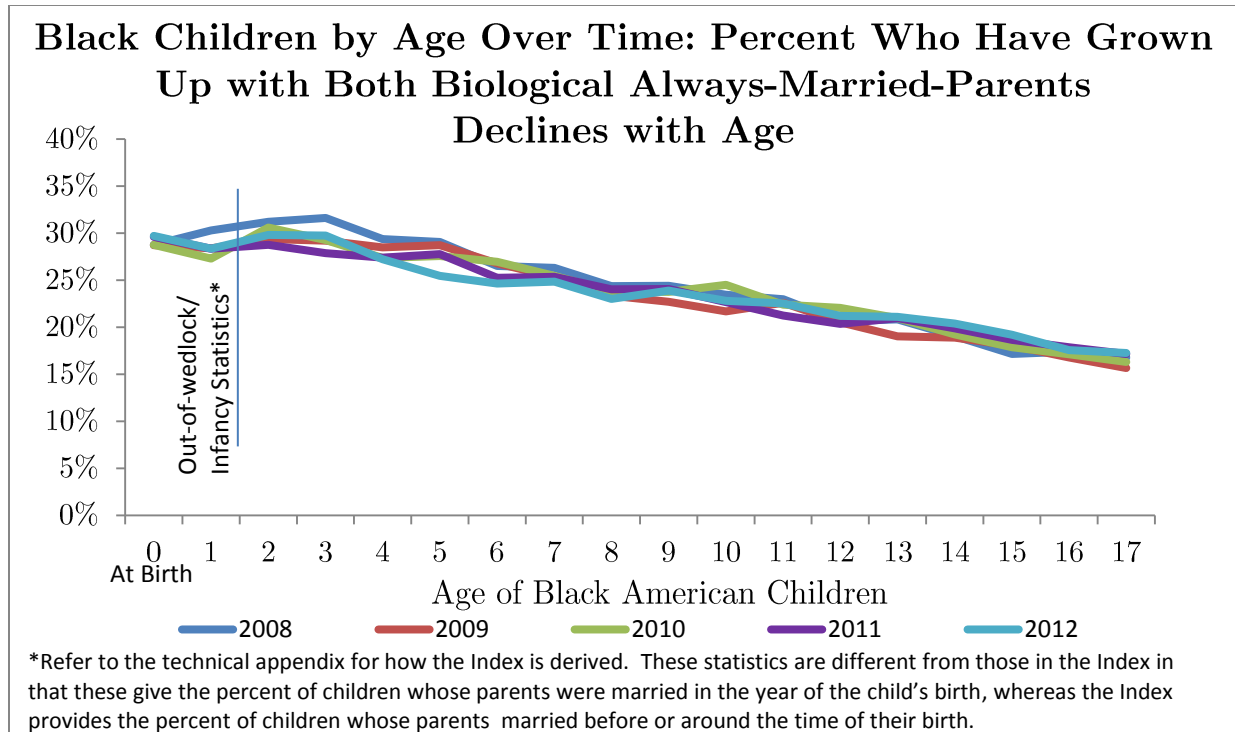
¹⁷ Note that children are of the specified age in 2012. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so on and so forth.



Over the years, an increasing fraction of U.S. children face rejection at an early age. The Index of Belonging and Rejection for adolescents aged 15 to 17 has not changed in any statistically meaningful sense since 2008. However, that is not the case for children in their primary years (see Table 1 in the Appendix). A growing number of two-year-olds have never lived with their married, biological parents: between 2008 and 2012, the percentage of two-year-olds that lived with both married parents since the time of their birth decreased from 66 percent to 63 percent. Because family intactness during children's early years has declined, more children face rejection for longer periods of their lives.

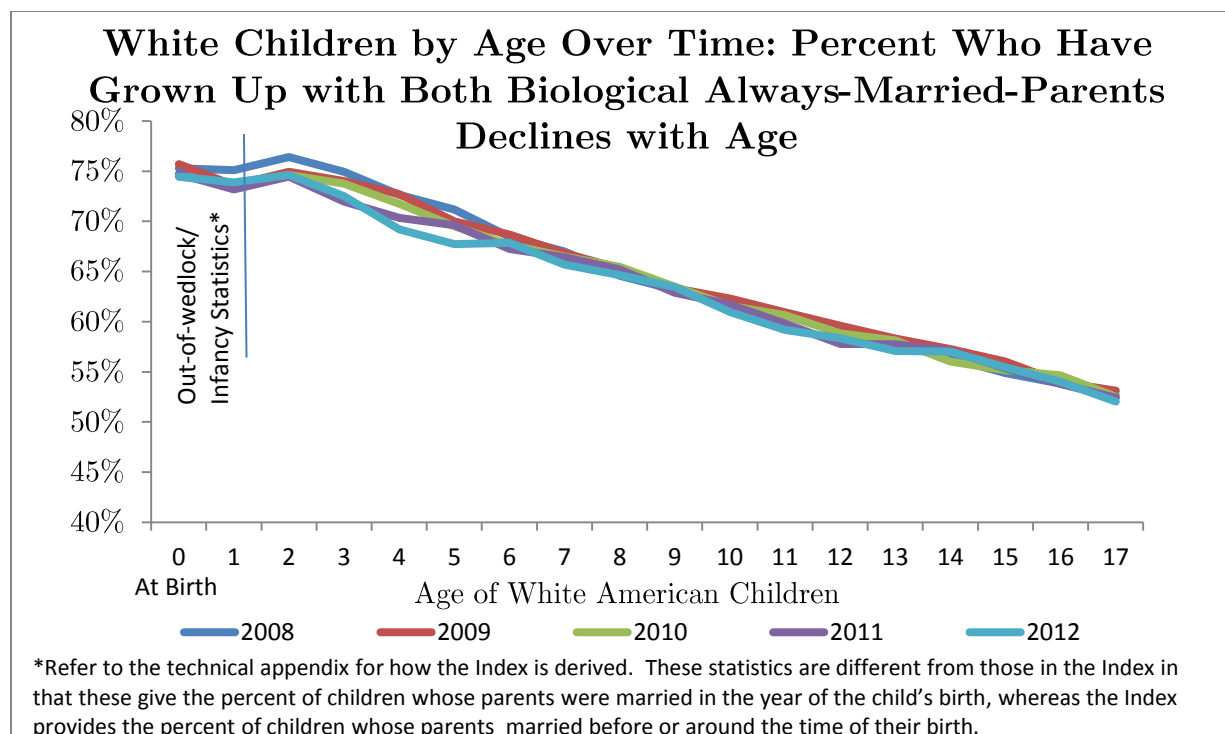
By approximately age 8, the difference in family intactness across the years (2008-2012) was less conspicuous. Therefore, in 2012 more children were born into broken families, but fewer children experienced their parents' break-up.¹⁸

¹⁸ Note that children are of the specified age in 2012. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so on and so forth.



Between 2008 and 2012, family belonging has remained consistently low for Black children of every age. Like the total population of U.S. children, the number of Black children in always-intact families has decreased as the children age (see Table 2 in the Appendix). Black children face exceptionally low levels of family intactness at all ages: In 2012, 30 percent of two-year-olds were born to their biological, married mother and father, and 17 percent of seventeen-year-olds grew up with their always-married parents.¹⁹

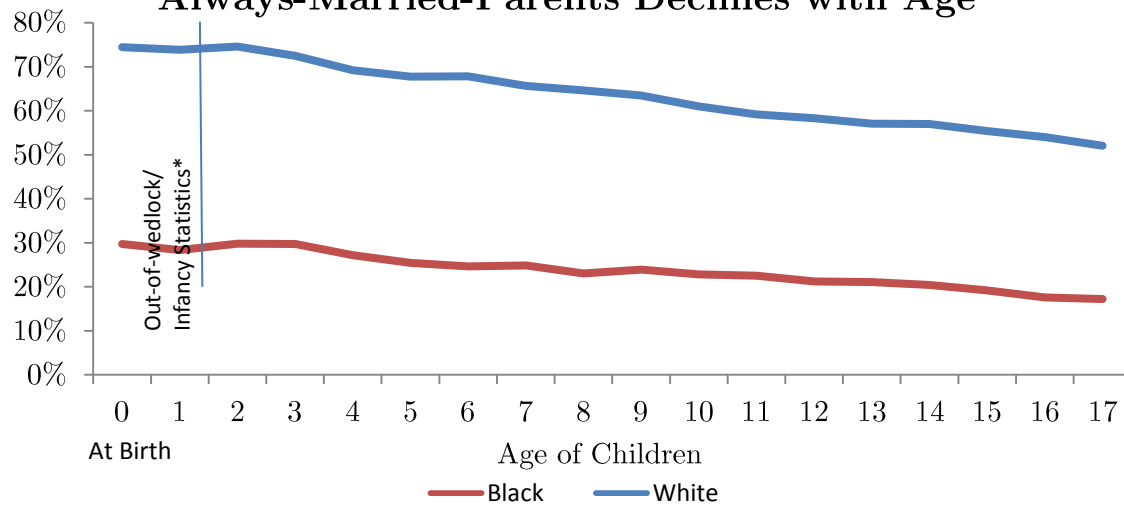
¹⁹ Note that children are of the specified age in 2012. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so on and so forth.



Levels of family belonging have remained fairly consistent for White children. Like the total U.S. population of children, the number of White children who have lived with married parents has decreased as the children age (see Table 3 in the Appendix). In 2008, 76 percent of two-year-olds were born to their biological, married mother and father, and 53 percent of seventeen-year-olds grew up with their always-married parents. In 2012, 75 percent of two-year-olds experienced belonging, and 52 percent faced rejection.²⁰

²⁰ Note that children are of the specified age in 2012. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so on and so forth.

U.S. Children by Race and Age in 2012: Percent of Children Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents Declines with Age



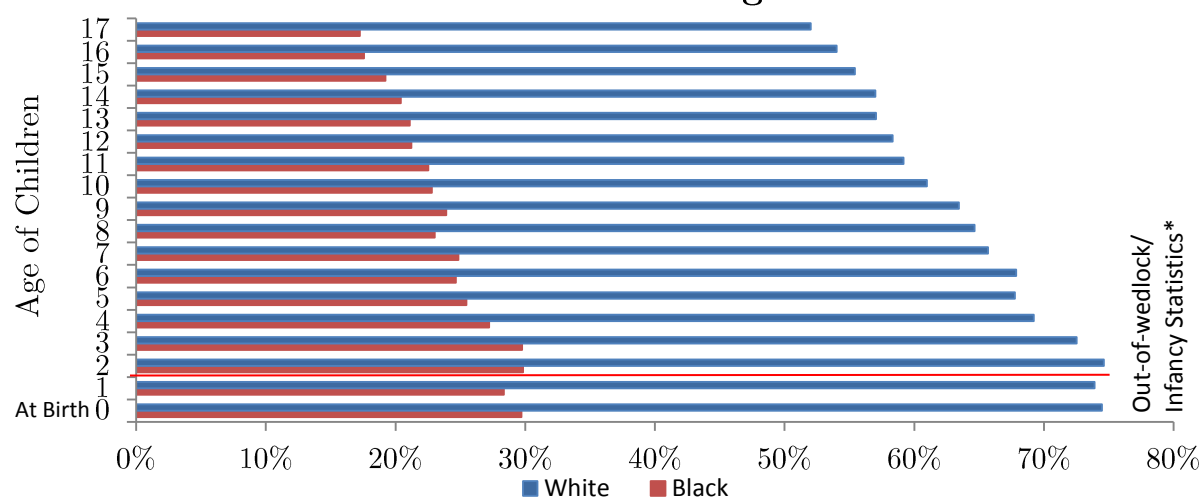
*Refer to the technical appendix for how the Index is derived. These statistics are different from those in the Index in that these give the percent of children whose parents were married in the year of the child's birth, whereas the Index provides the percent of children whose parents married before or around the time of their birth.

More Black children than White children never grew up with their biological married parents, but more White children than Black children experience their parents' separation. In 2012, 75 percent of White two-year-olds and 30 percent of Black two-year-olds lived in always-intact families. The level of family belonging declined for both Whites and Blacks as the children aged and as their parents divorced. By age 17, only 52 percent of Whites and 17 percent of Blacks had always lived with their married mother and father. Therefore, by age 17, more than three times as many Whites as Blacks lived in an intact family.

However, more White children endured their parents' break-up during these years. Between ages 2 and 17, the number of White children in intact families decreased by 23 percentage points, while the number of Black children in always-married families decreased by 13 percentage points. Therefore, although more White children suffered the pains of their parents' separation and its subsequent rejection, more Black children underwent a lifetime of trials and rejection.²¹

²¹ Note that children are of the specified age in 2012. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so on and so forth.

U.S. Children by Race and Age in 2012: Percent Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents Declines with Age



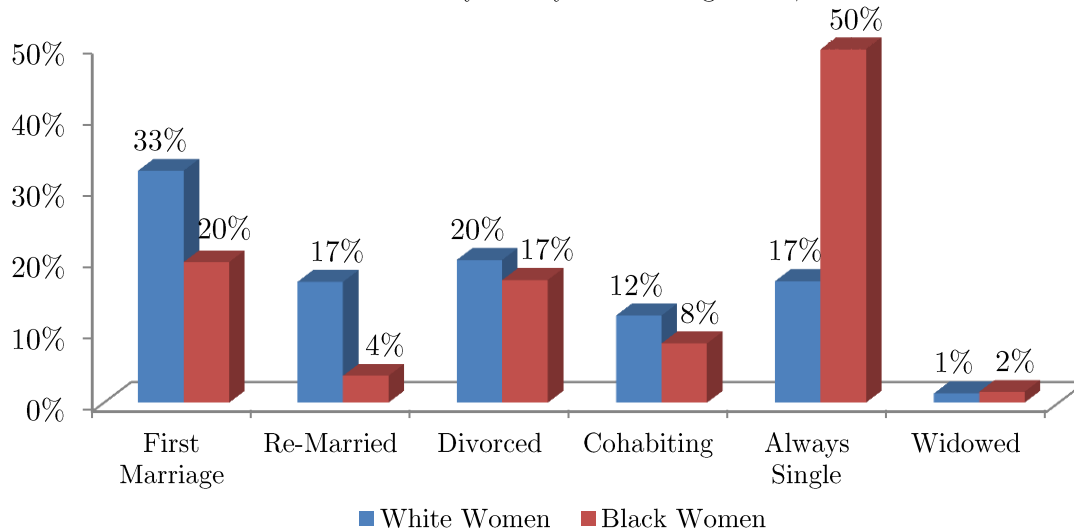
*Refer to the technical appendix for how the Index is derived. These statistics are different from those in the Index in that these give the percent of children whose parents were married in the year of the child's birth, whereas the Index provides the percent of children whose parents married before or around the time of their birth.

For both White and Black adolescents 2 to 17 years of age, family intactness decreases with age. In 2012, both White and Black youth experienced a decline in the number of children in intact families as the children grew older. Black youth, however, fared worse than Whites in every age group because more Black children than White children began life in non-intact families.²²

²² Note that children are of the specified age in 2012. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so on and so forth.

By Race: Present Family Structure of Female High School Drop-Outs Aged 35 to 40*

American Community Survey 2008 through 2011; MARRI

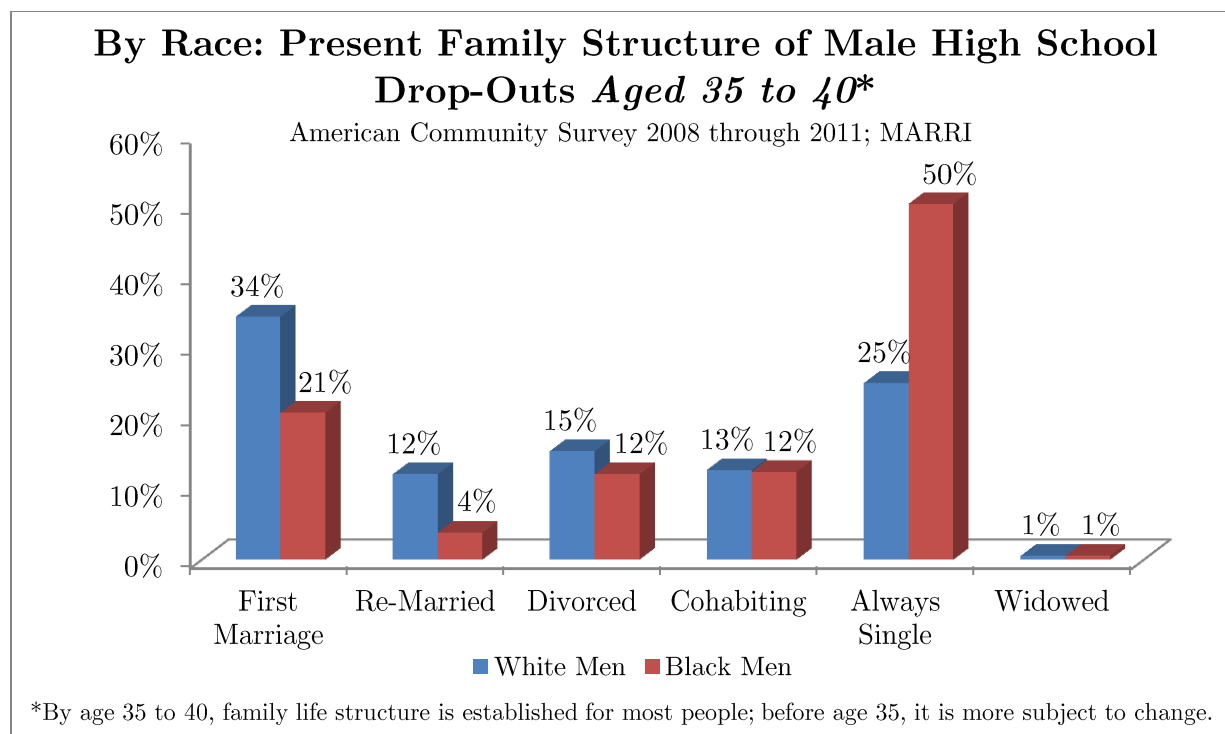


*By age 35 to 40, family life structure is established for most people; before age 35, it is more subject to change.

Always-single Black women aged 35 to 40 were most likely to be high school drop-outs.

Of those 35- to 40-year-old Black females surveyed who were high school dropouts, most were always-single (50 percent). They were followed by those in their first marriage (20 percent), those who were divorced (17 percent), those who were cohabiting (8 percent), those who were re-married (4 percent), and those who were widowed (2 percent).

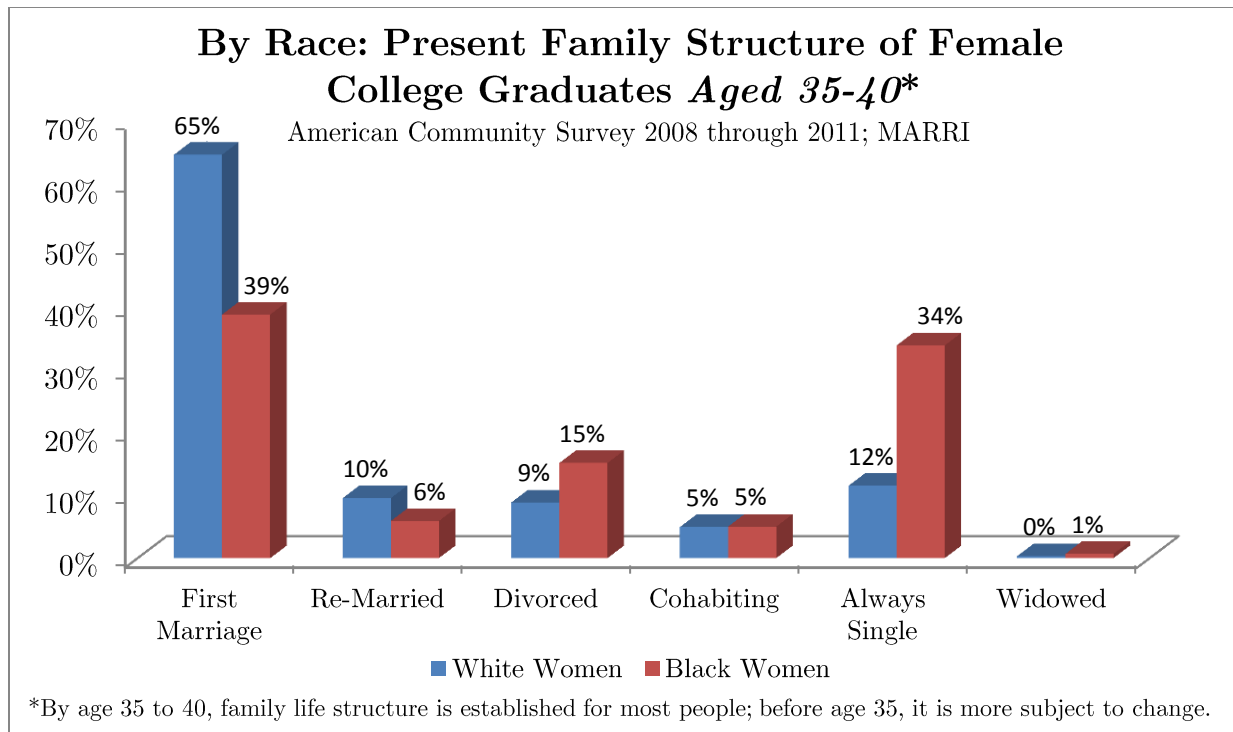
Of those 35- to 40-year-old White females surveyed who were high school dropouts, most were in their first marriage (33 percent). They were followed by those who were divorced (20 percent), those who were re-married (17 percent), those who were always single (17 percent), those who were cohabiting (12 percent), and those who were widowed (1 percent).



Always-single Black men aged 35 to 40 were most likely to be high school drop-outs.

Of those 35- to 40-year-old Black males surveyed who were high school dropouts, most were always-single (50 percent). They were followed by those in their first marriage (21 percent), those who were divorced (12 percent), those who were cohabiting (12 percent), those who were re-married (4 percent), and those who were widowed (1 percent).

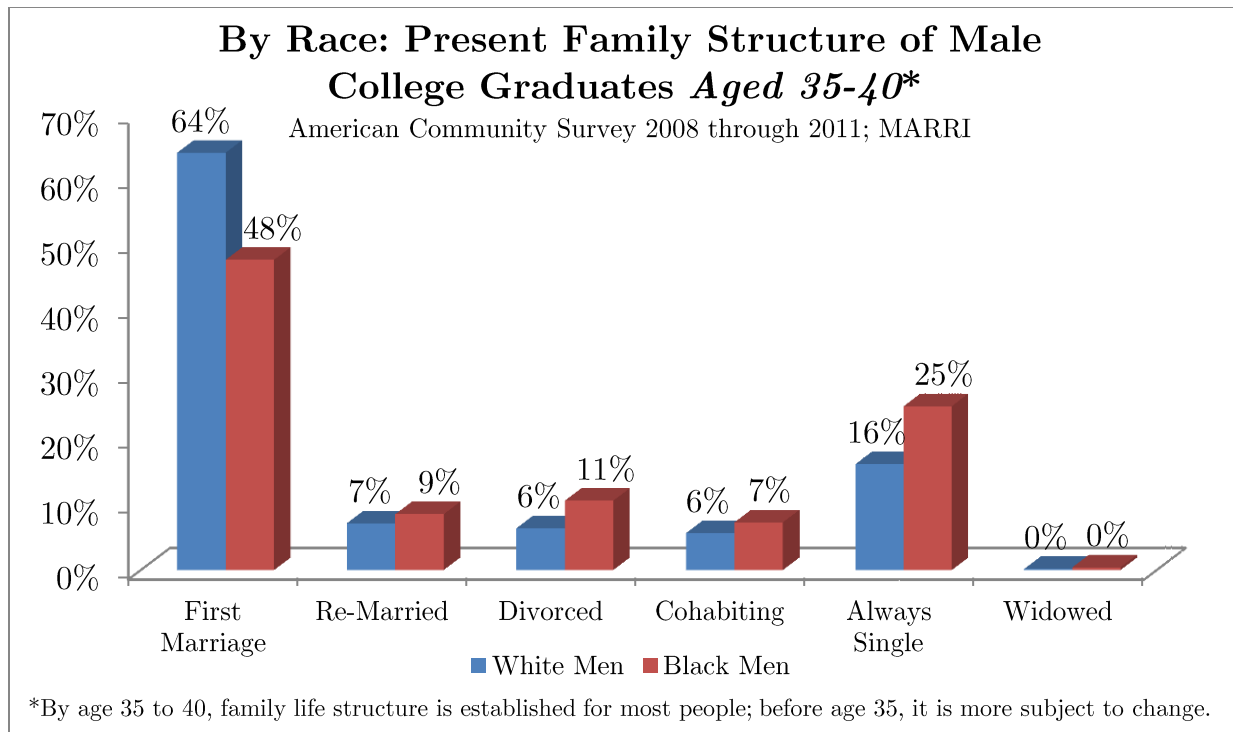
Of those 35- to 40-year-old White males surveyed who were high school dropouts, most were in their first marriage (34 percent). They were followed by those who were always single (25 percent), those who were divorced (15 percent), those who were cohabiting (13 percent), those who were re-married (12 percent), and those who were widowed (1 percent).



White women aged 35 to 40 who were in their first marriage were most likely to graduate college.

Of those 35- to 40-year-old Black females surveyed who were college graduates, most were in their first marriage (39 percent). They were followed by those who were always single (34 percent), those who were divorced (15 percent), those who were re-married (6 percent), those who were cohabiting (5 percent), and those who were widowed (1 percent).

Of those 35- to 40-year-old White females surveyed who were college graduates, most were in their first marriage (65 percent). They were followed by those who were always single (12 percent), those who were re-married (10 percent), those who were divorced (9 percent), those who were cohabiting (5 percent), and those who were widowed (less than 1 percent).

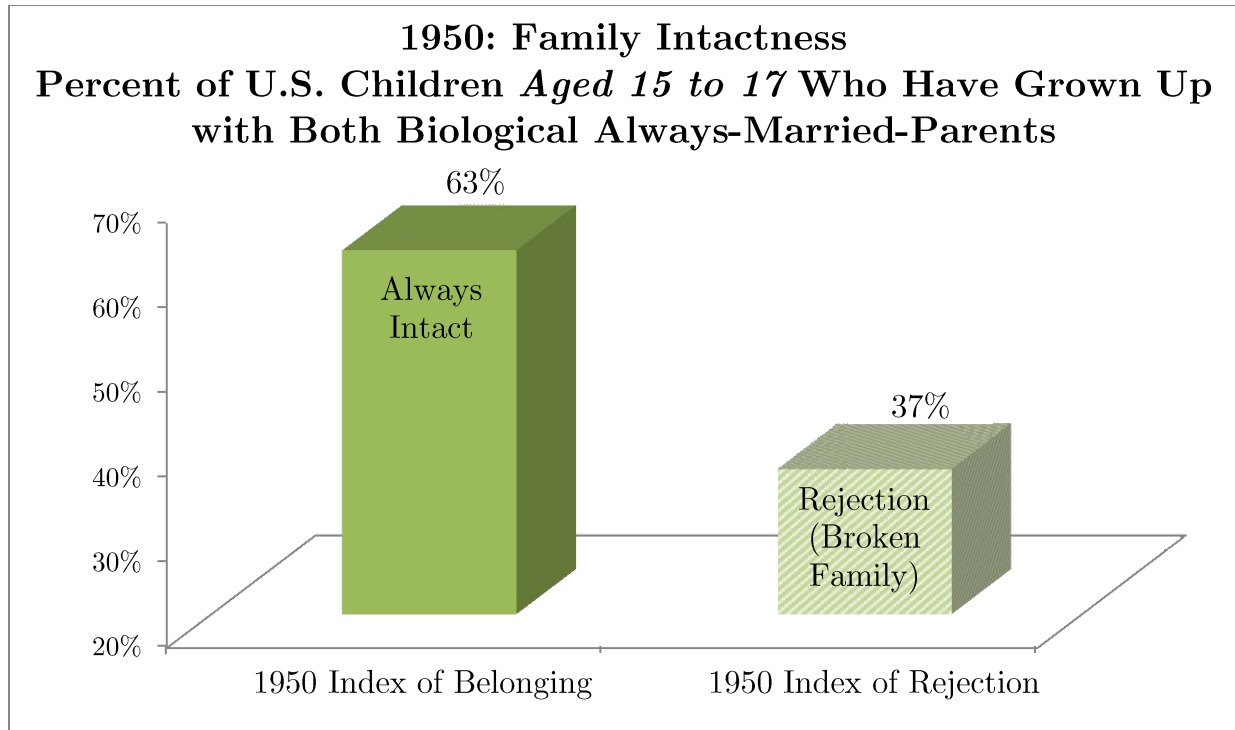


White men aged 35 to 40 who were in their first marriage were most likely to graduate college.

Of those 35- to 40-year-old Black males surveyed who were college graduates, most were in their first marriage (48 percent). They were followed by those who were always single (25 percent), those who were divorced (11 percent), those who were re-married (9 percent), those who were cohabiting (7 percent), and those who were widowed (less than 1 percent).

Of those 35- to 40-year-old White males surveyed who were college graduates, most were in their first marriage (64 percent). They were followed by those who were always single (16 percent), those who were re-married (7 percent), those who were divorced (6 percent), those who were cohabiting (6 percent), and those who were widowed (less than 1 percent).

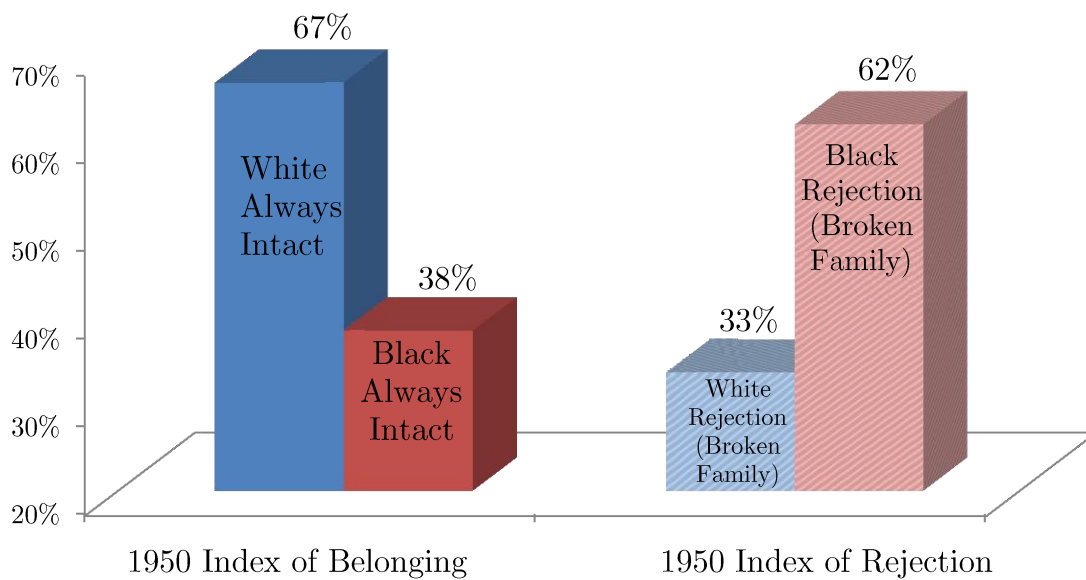
1950 versus 2012
Index of Family Belonging and
Rejection



In 1950, more than half of 15- to 17-year-old American teenagers grew up with both biological parents always married. The total U.S. Index of Belonging for 1950 was 63 percent, and the corresponding U.S. Index of Rejection was 37 percent.²³

²³ The 1950 Index has a precision around three percentage points, plus or minus. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

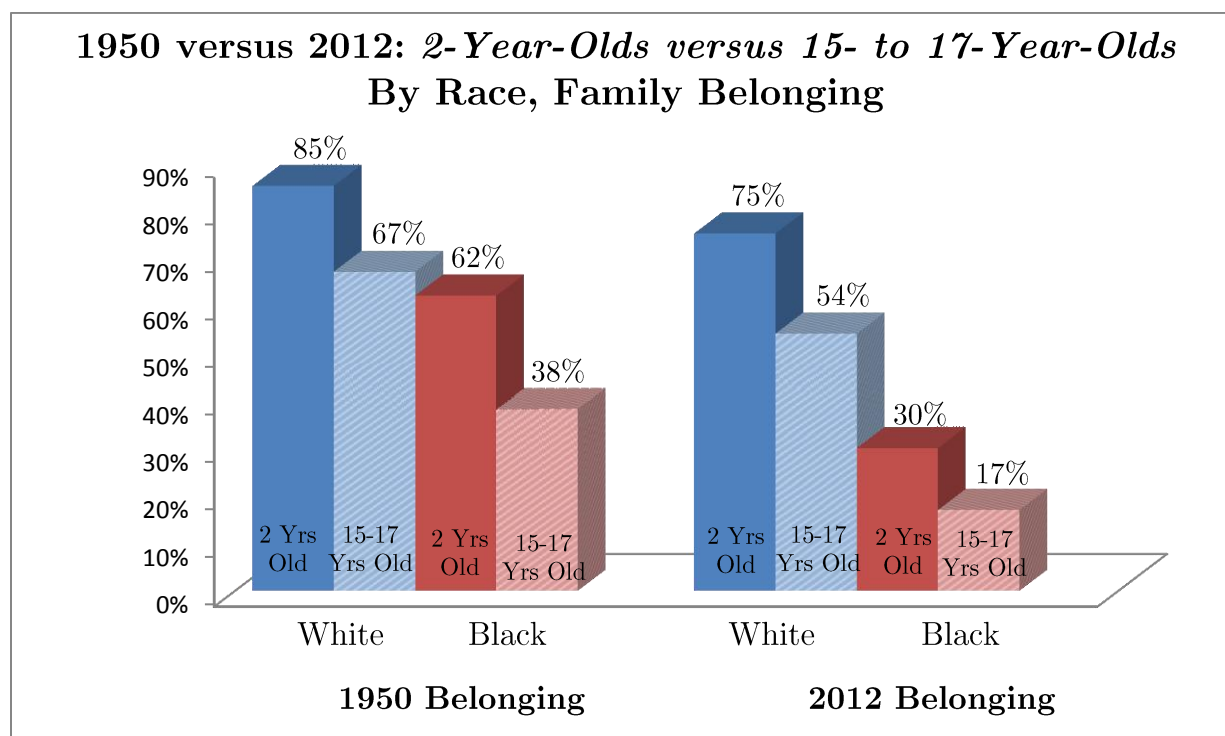
1950: By Race, Percent of Children Aged 15 to 17 Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents



In 1950, the rate of belonging among White teens far surpassed the rate of belonging among Black teens. Already in 1950, White and Black adolescents had markedly different family structures. White teens aged 15 to 17 had a Belonging Index of 67 percent, and a Rejection Index of 33 percent. In contrast, Black adolescents aged 15 to 17 had a Belonging Index of 38 percent and a Rejection Index of 62 percent.

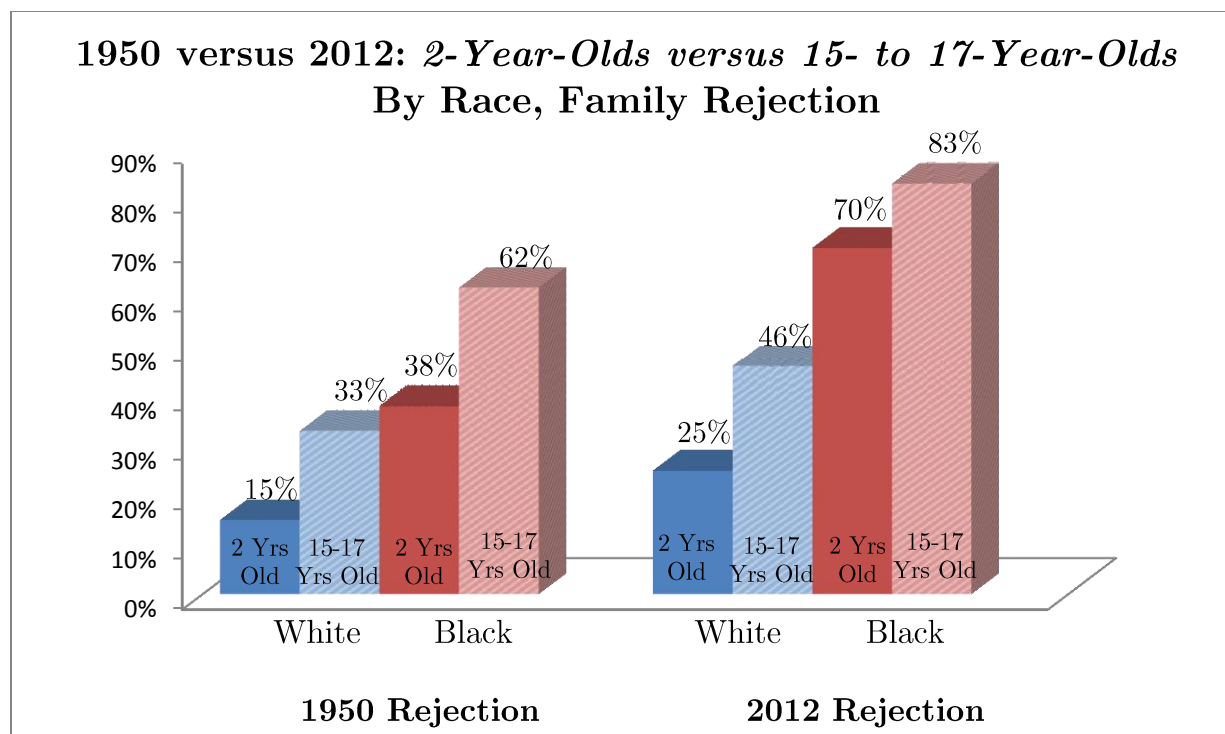
The disparity between White and Black family intactness must not be ignored as a contributor to today's racial inequalities.²⁴ It is imperative that discussions on race relations consider the insurmountable role of family structure.

²⁴ marri.us/state-of-black-family



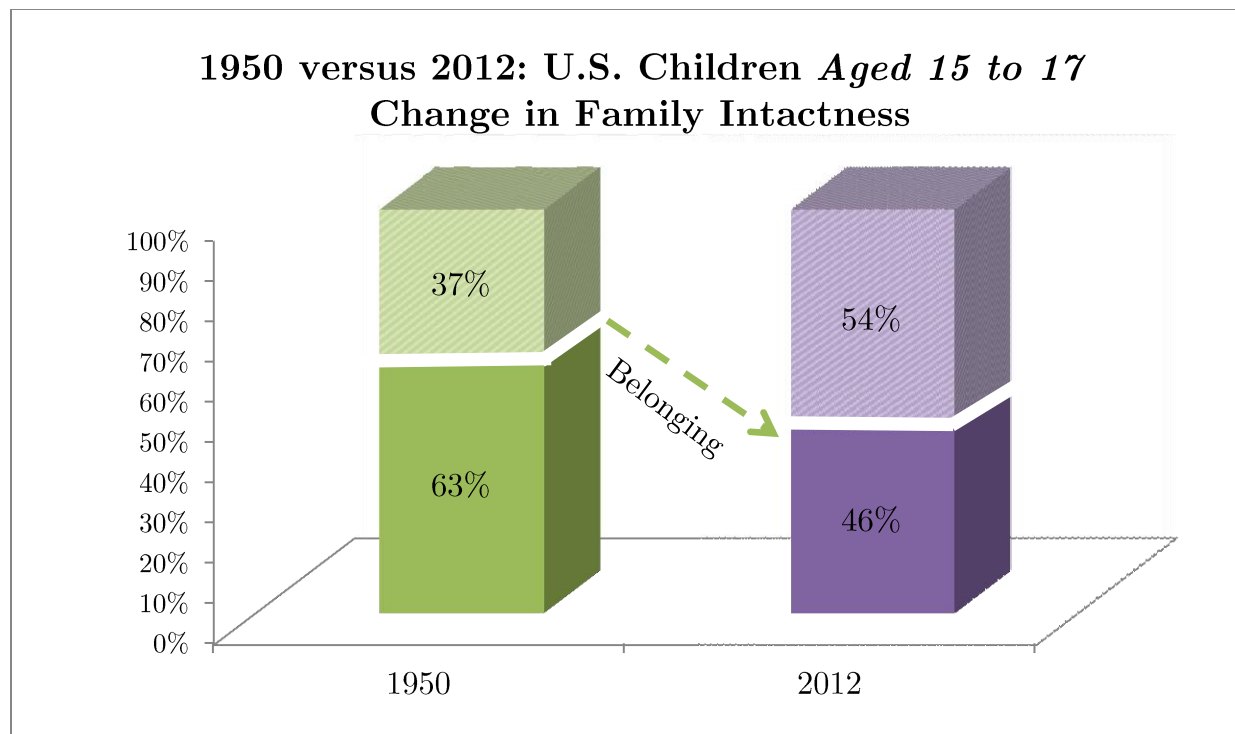
More children experienced belonging at an early age and for a longer period of their lives in 1950 than in 2012. In 1950, 85 percent of White two-year-olds and 67 percent of White 15- to 17-year-olds were in an always-married family, and 62 percent of Black two-year-olds and 38 percent of Black 15- to 17-year-olds were in an always-married family. In 2012, 75 percent of White two-year-olds and 54 percent of White 15- to 17-year-olds grew up with their married biological parents, and 30 percent of Black two-year-olds and 17 percent of Black 15- to 17-year-olds lived with their always-married parents.

Between 1950 and 2012, family demise occurred within races and across races. For both Whites and Blacks, the gap between two-year-old and 15- to 17-year-old belongingness increased. Today, more White and Black children experience their parents' separation, and less 15- to 17-year-olds entering adulthood have the benefits of an always-married-parent household. Second, between 1950 and 2012, the difference between White and Black belongingness increased. This has exacerbated racial divides because fewer and fewer Black children begin their lives with the security of married biological parents.



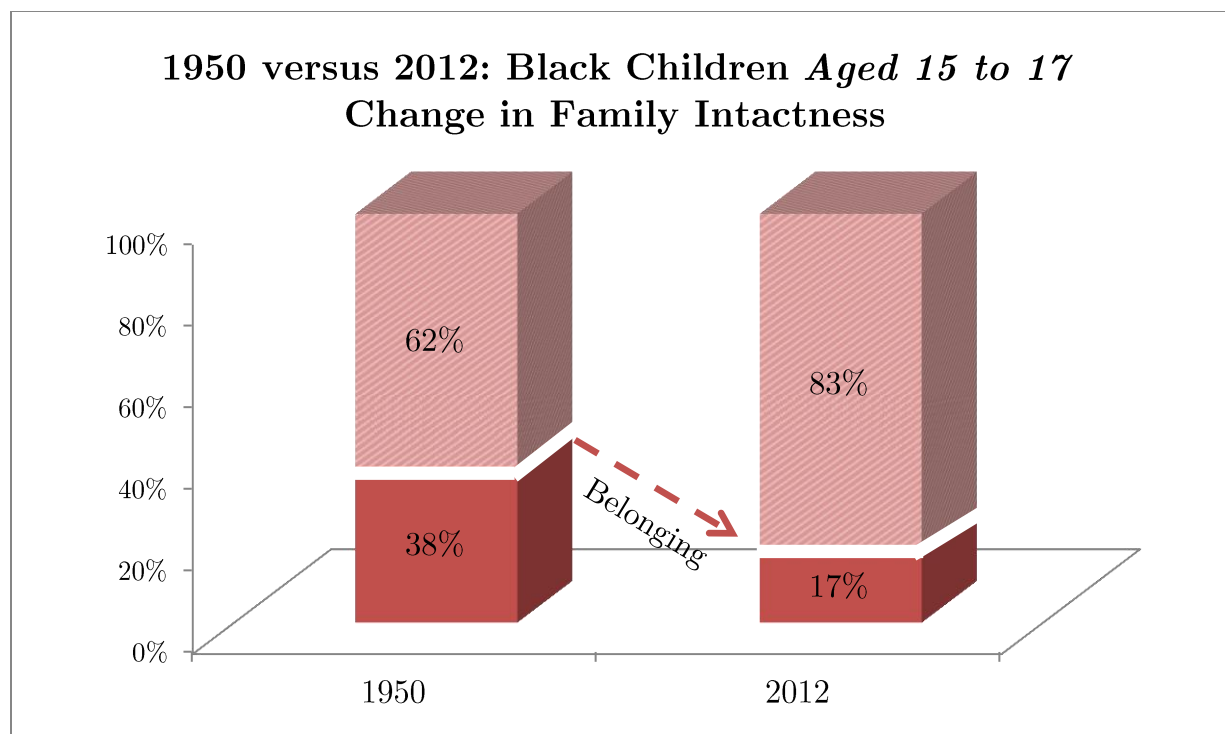
Between 1950 and 2012, rejection has increased for children of every age of both races. In 1950, 15 percent of White two-year-olds and 33 percent of White 15- to 17-year olds experienced rejection, while 38 percent of Black two-year-olds and 62 percent of Black 15- to 17-year olds faced rejection. In 2012, 25 percent of White two-year-olds and 46 percent of White 15- to 17-year olds grew up in a broken family, while 70 percent of Black two-year-olds and 83 percent of Black 15- to 17-year olds lived in a broken family.

The increasing rates of rejection—captured in the right-to-left movement from whites to blacks, and from 1950 to 2012—encapsulate the crisis that the American family faces. Rejection and brokenness, especially within the intimate realm of family life, inflicts irreparable harm on impressionable youth and the community in which they live.



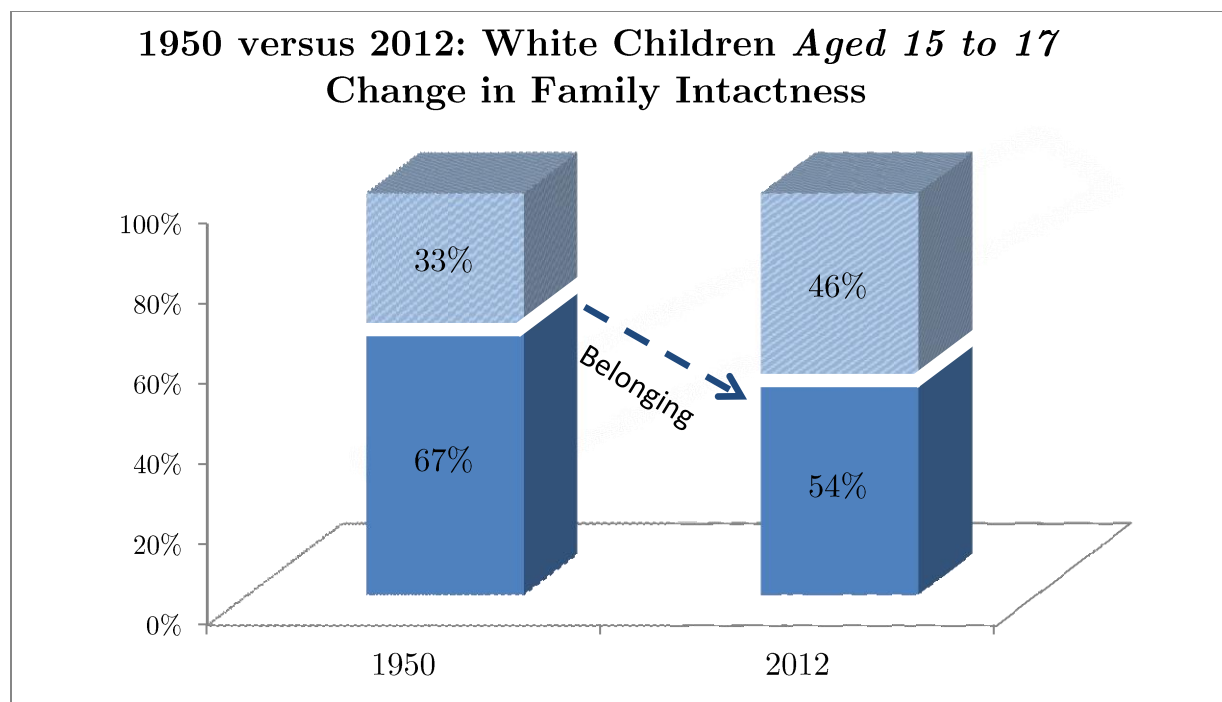
Between 1950 and 2012, the Index of Belonging for U.S. teens aged 15 to 17 dropped by 17 percent. In 1950, 63 percent of American teenagers grew up in an always-married household with their biological mother and father present; however, by 2012 less than half of the total population (46 percent) lived with their biological parents. Correspondingly, the percentage of U.S. children who faced rejection in a broken family increased from 37 percent in 1950 to 54 percent in 2012.

Although American society has made many strides since 1950, its family life has decayed. Many of the social ills that America now faces could have been avoided if family intactness increased rather than decreased.



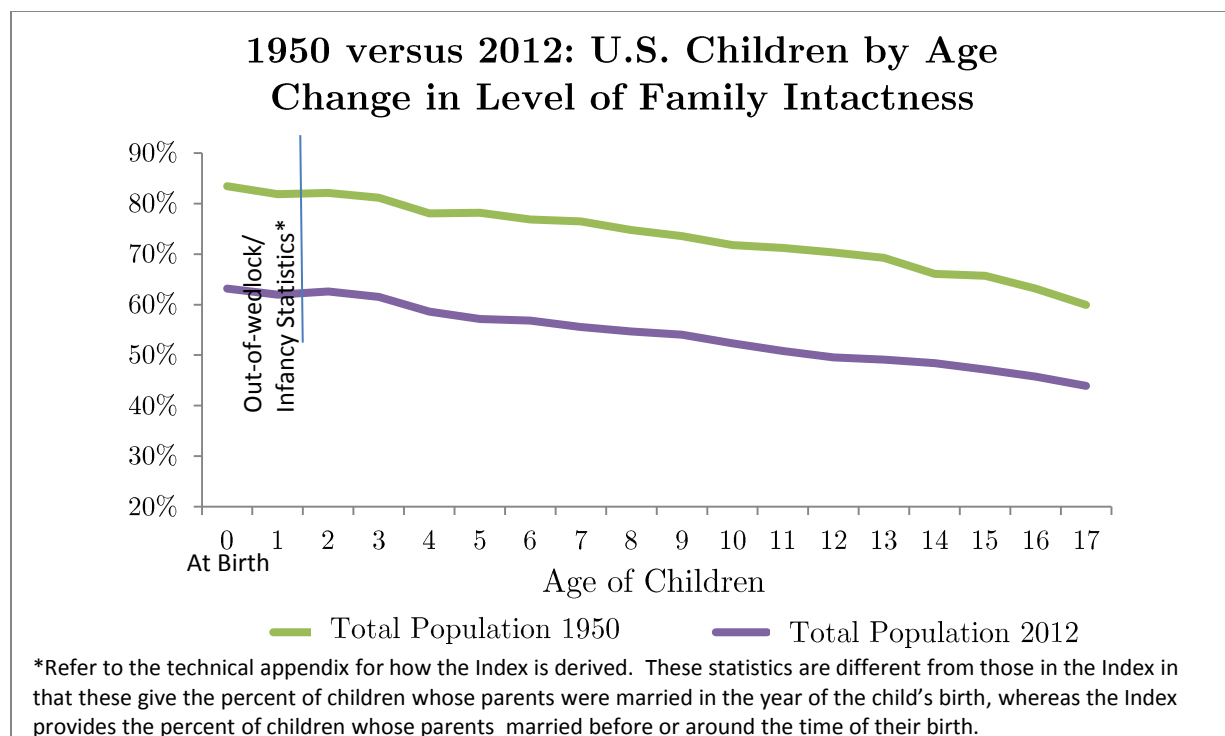
Between 1950 and 2012, the number of Black teens that grew up in an intact family dropped by 21 percent. In 1950, 38 percent of Black adolescents grew up in an always-married household with their biological mother and father, but by 2012 only 17 percent lived with their biological parents. During this period, the percentage of Black children who faced rejection increased from 62 percent to 83 percent.

Already in 1950, the Black family suffered from overwhelming brokenness; today, the intact Black family is a rarity. Black youth are being deprived of the many benefits associated with growing up in intact families, and they should demand the basic right to a married mother and father.



Fewer White teens grew up in an always-married household in 2012 than in 1950. Between 1950 and 2012, the White Belonging Index for teens aged 15 to 17 dropped by 13 percent (from 67 percent to 54 percent), and the corresponding White Rejection Index rose by 13 percent (from 33 percent to 46 percent).

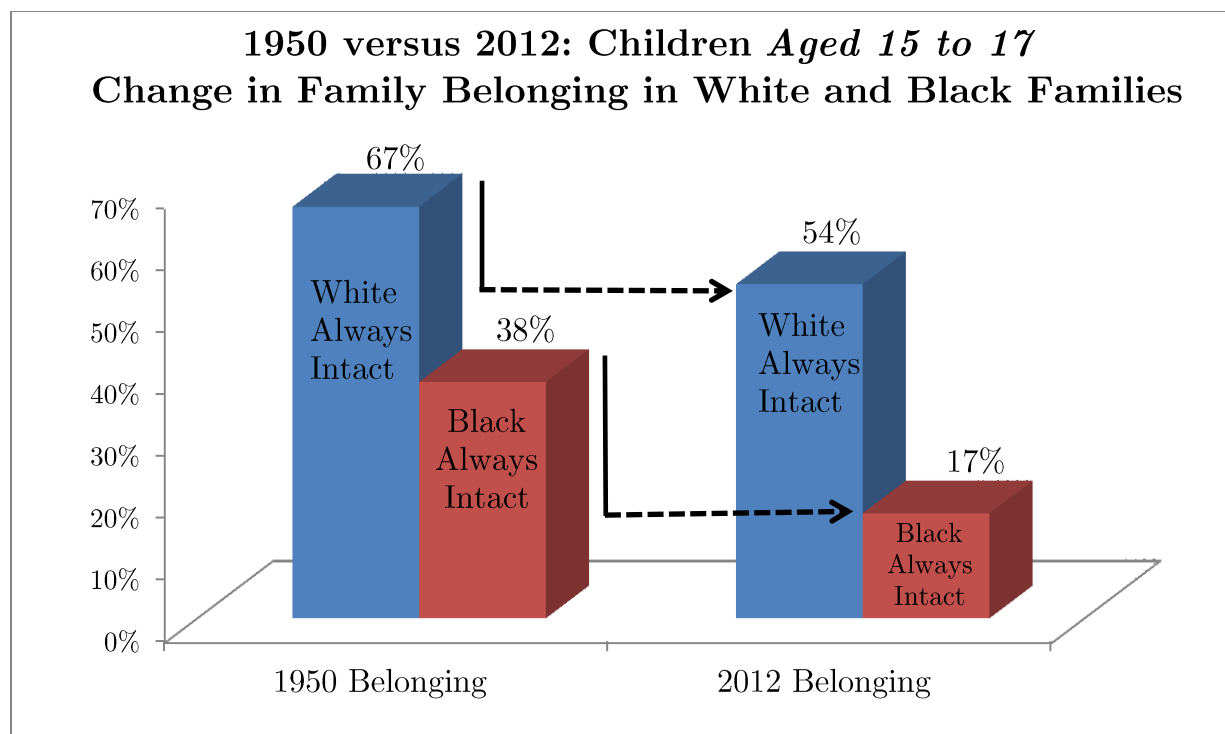
Although White children do not, as of yet, experience the rejection rates of Black youth, White families are following suit. Family intactness is deteriorating as more and more children find themselves in broken families.



In both 1950 and 2012, the percentage of children that grew up with a married mother and father decreased as the child's age increased. Fewer children experienced belonging in 2012 than in 1950 across every age group. This gap is primarily due to an increase in the number of out-of-wedlock births.²⁵ In 1950, 82 percent of two-year-olds lived with their married mother and father; in 2012, 62 percent of two year olds lived with their married parents. The rate of parental break-up between the ages of 2 and 17, however, remained fairly consistent between 1950 and 2012.

Note that children are of the specified age in 1950. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1933, the 16-year-olds in 1934, the 15-year-olds in 1935, and so on. Likewise, in 2012, the 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so forth.

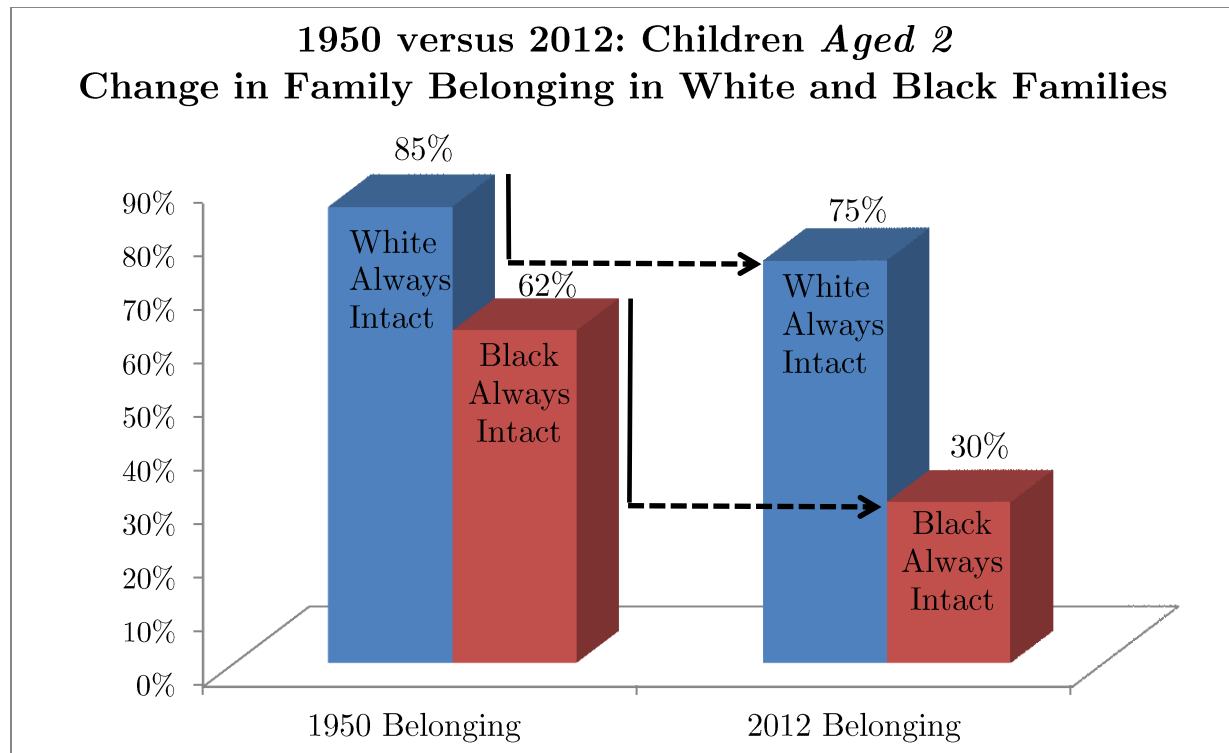
²⁵ More precisely, this is the number of two-year-olds who have never lived with their biological mother and father. Although the majority of these cases are out-of-wedlock births, other scenarios are possible (ie. married parents divorce before their child turns two years old).



Although the Index of Belonging has declined for both White and Black teens since 1950, it has decreased more for Blacks. For White children aged 15 to 17, the Index of Belonging dropped by 13 percent between 1950 and 2012 (from 67 percent to 54 percent). For Black youth aged 15 to 17, the Index of Belonging declined by 21 percent during this period (from 38 percent to 17 percent).

Although both White and Black adolescents experience high rates of family brokenness and its associated consequences, the ramifications are far more prevalent and evident in the Black community.²⁶

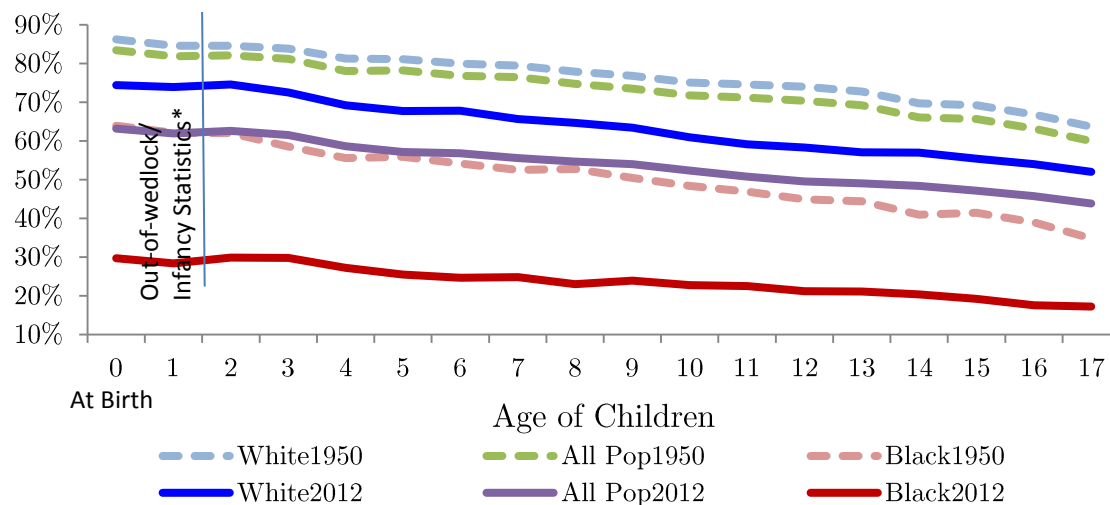
²⁶ marri.us/state-of-black-family



Between 1950 and 2012, Family Belonging was cut in half for Black two-year-olds. For White children aged 2, the Index of Belonging dropped by 10 percent between 1950 and 2012 (from 85 percent to 75 percent). For Black two-year-olds, the Index of Belonging declined by 32 percent (from 62 percent to 30 percent).

The significant decrease in the number of Black two-year-olds in intact married families indicates that more and more Black children experience rejection from an early age. If these trends do not reverse course, the Black community will collapse from within. It is crucial that the black community re-define matters sexual as a good within the context of marriage.

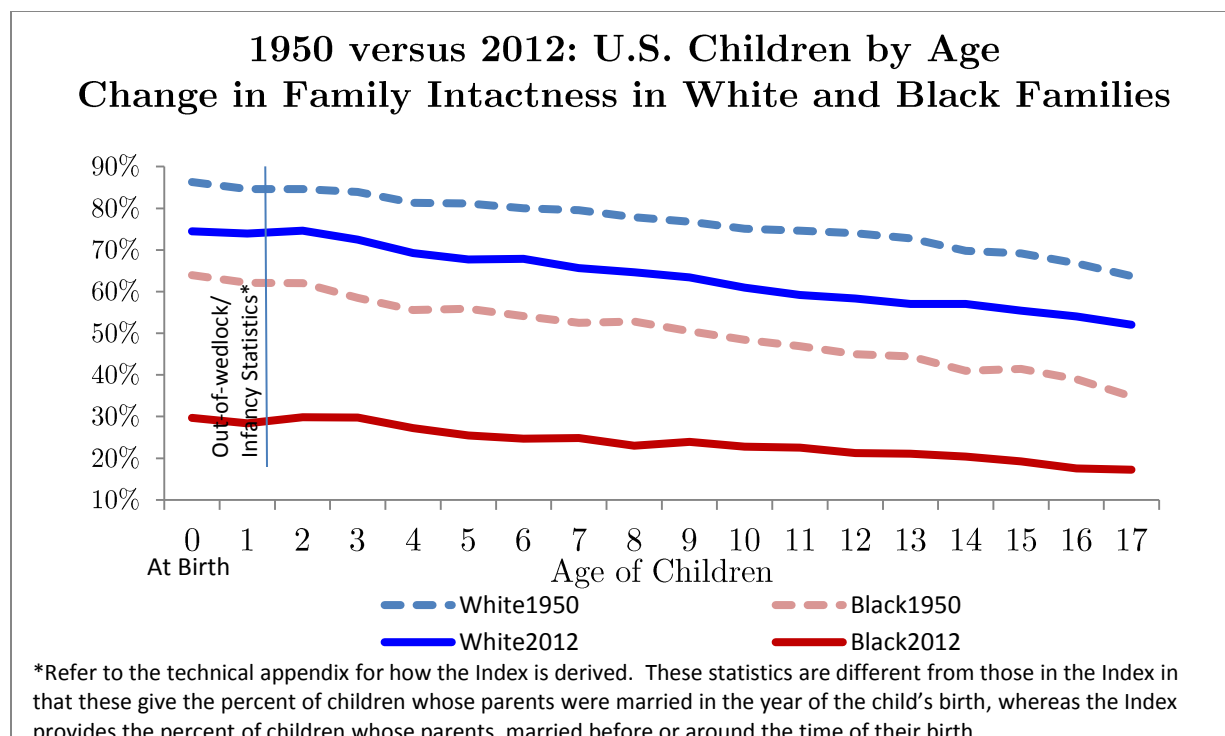
1950 versus 2012: U.S. Children by Age Change in Family Intactness in White and Black Families



*Refer to the technical appendix for how the Index is derived. These statistics are different from those in the Index in that these give the percent of children whose parents were married in the year of the child's birth, whereas the Index provides the percent of children whose parents married before or around the time of their birth.

In both 1950 and 2012, the percentages of total U.S. children, Black children, and White children in an intact family have decreased for children of every age. Across every age group, the Index of Belonging was highest among White children in 1950 (64 percent). They are followed by the total population of U.S. children in 1950 (60 percent), White children in 2012 (52 percent), the total population of U.S. children in 2012 (44 percent), Black children in 1950 (35 percent), and lastly Black children in 2012 (17 percent).²⁷

²⁷ Note that children are of the specified age in 1950. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1933, the 16-year-olds in 1934, the 15-year-olds in 1935, and so on. Likewise, in 2012, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so forth.



The rate of family intactness of White adolescents in 2012 surpasses that of Black adolescents in 1950, across every age category. Both White and Black youth continue to face increasing rates of rejection, but black youth have fared much worse. More White children were in intact families in 2012 (52 percent) than were Black children in 1950 (35 percent). Still, both races continue to progress on a downward trend of family intactness, and must reverse course in order to strengthen individuals and society.²⁸

²⁸ Note that children are of the specified age in 1950. Therefore, these 17-year-olds were born in 1933, the 16-year-olds in 1934, the 15-year-olds in 1935, and so on. Likewise, in 2012, these 17-year-olds were born in 1995, the 16-year-olds in 1996, the 15-year-olds in 1997, and so forth.

Appendix

Methodological Considerations

2012 Index

The procedure used to estimate the percentage of U.S. adolescents aged 2 to 17 living with both of their married biological parents in the 2008-2011 American Community Survey PUMS file²⁹ began by locating all persons in the public use data file who were in the target age range. We then checked the relationship of the adolescent to the reference person of the household. (The reference person was the adult in the household in whose name the house or apartment was owned or rented.) If the adolescent was coded as the biological son or daughter of the reference person, we checked to see if the parent was coded as being currently married. If so, we checked the date of the parent's most recent marriage. Was the marriage date before the year of the adolescent's birth, or within two years of the birth year? If so, he or she was deemed to be living with both parents, who were continuously married throughout the adolescent's childhood.

If the adolescent was described as the grandchild of the reference person, we checked to see if he or she was coded as "child in married-couple subfamily." If so, the adolescent was deemed to be living with both married parents in a multigenerational family. We followed a similar procedure if the adolescent was described as the brother or sister or "other relative" of the reference person, or as a roomer or boarder, housemate or roommate, or "other non-relative." So long as the adolescent was also coded as "child in married-couple subfamily," he or she was deemed to be living with both married parents.

Adolescents who were the biological child of the reference person, but whose parent was divorced, separated, or never-married, were classified as not living with both married parents. Likewise, if the adolescent's birth antedated the year of the reference person's latest marriage by more than two years, the adolescent was classified as not living with both parents, but, rather, in a bioparent-stepparent family. If the parents were not married but cohabiting, the adolescent was classified as not living with both married parents.

Adolescents who were described as the adopted son or daughter, stepson or stepdaughter, or foster son or foster daughter of the reference person were classified as not living with both married parents. Adolescents living in group quarters (e.g., correctional institution, halfway house) were classified as not living with both married parents. The number of adolescents living with both married bio-parents was divided by the total number of adolescents aged 2 to 17 in order to derive the percentage living with both parents.

²⁹ Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]," (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010)

The statistics for 0- and-1-year-olds are different from those described above in that these give the percent of children whose parents were married in the year of the child's birth.

This rather complicated procedure is necessary because, from 2008 on, the ACS questionnaire only asks about an adolescent's detailed relationship to the reference person, and not to the reference person's spouse or partner. Thus, we must infer that relationship by looking at the reference person's marital history information. We know this procedure is not 100 percent accurate. It may be, for example, that even though the parents were married throughout the teenager's childhood, one of the partners in the marriage is not, in fact, the biological parent of the adolescent. It is these possible problems that we attempt to mitigate in "Correction of Bias in the Index of Family Belonging and Rejection."

1950 Index

In addition to the above procedure, the 1950 Index required a correction to the frequency in which individuals are sampled. Households are not surveyed on marriage characteristics used in the procedure at the same frequency in which they occur in the population. The 1950 sample line persons asked those detailed marriage characteristics were picked at a rate of one person sampled per household (chosen uniformly across that household). Some households with 15- to 17-year-olds then do not have marriage characteristics of the parents of those children. (Another household member was asked those detailed questions.) A household-by-household weight was applied to reflect this potential for undersampling.

Last, in 1950 adulthood was apparently reckoned earlier. Among the general population, somewhat more than 2 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds were already heads of households or spouses. This adds some uncertainty to the 1950 Index as the intactness of these individuals' families of origin is undeterminable, and ambiguous (as of the age of measurement).

Correction of Bias in the Index of Family Belonging and Rejection

The American Community Survey, from which our Index is derived, necessarily tracks the biological relationship of a child to only one of his or her parents. To attempt to determine family intactness, the Index thus must compare the year of a given child's birth with the year of his or her parent's marriage.

This is useful but entails a shortcoming: A child's biological parents may marry long after he or she is born, and thereby miss inclusion in our Index value. This would result in a lower Index. Conversely, a child's biological parent may choose to marry someone other than the child's biological parent soon after his or her birth, and

thereby be incorrectly included in our Index value. This would result in a too-high Index.

Furthermore, the Index includes children aged 2 to 17. This skews downward the percentage of children whose parents have divorced (by the age for which the Index is measured). This may wrongly raise our Index value.

The Index as it is designed is thus biased in that it assumes too few biological parents eventually marry and assumes too few parents get divorced.

A correction of this Index, using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, permits us to add to our estimate of the Index those biological parents who marry long after their child is born. This correction shows the percentage of children who reach age 15 to 17 in a biologically intact—though not necessarily intact *married*—household to be about 49 percent, rather than 46 percent.

For a full explanation of our correction of bias in the Index of Family Belonging and rejection, see the accompanying document “Correction of Bias in the Index of Family Belonging and Rejection.”³⁰

Tables³¹

Table 1: U.S. Children By Age Over Time: Percent of U.S. Children Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
2 Years	66%	64%	63%	62%	63%
3 Years	65%	63%	62%	61%	62%
4 Years	63%	62%	61%	59%	59%
5 Years	61%	60%	59%	58%	57%
6 Years	59%	59%	58%	57%	57%
7 Years	58%	57%	57%	56%	56%
8 Years	56%	56%	55%	56%	55%
9 Years	55%	54%	54%	54%	54%
10 Years	54%	54%	53%	52%	52%
11 Years	52%	52%	52%	51%	51%
12 Years	51%	51%	51%	49%	50%
13 Years	50%	50%	49%	49%	49%
14 Years	50%	49%	48%	48%	48%
15 Years	47%	47%	47%	47%	47%
16 Years	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%
17 Years	44%	45%	44%	44%	44%

³⁰ marri.us/index-correction

³¹ Isolated cases in which family intactness appears to increase from one year to the next should be attributed to rounding within the error bounds previously listed. Refer to <http://marri.us/index-correction>.

Table 2: Black Children By Age Over Time: Percent of Black Children Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
2 Years	31%	29%	31%	29%	30%
3 Years	32%	29%	29%	28%	30%
4 Years	29%	28%	27%	27%	27%
5 Years	29%	29%	28%	28%	25%
6 Years	27%	27%	27%	25%	25%
7 Years	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%
8 Years	24%	23%	24%	24%	23%
9 Years	24%	23%	24%	24%	24%
10 Years	23%	22%	24%	23%	23%
11 Years	23%	23%	22%	21%	23%
12 Years	21%	21%	22%	20%	21%
13 Years	21%	19%	21%	21%	21%
14 Years	19%	19%	19%	20%	20%
15 Years	17%	18%	18%	19%	19%
16 Years	17%	17%	17%	18%	18%
17 Years	17%	16%	16%	17%	17%

Table 3: White Children By Age Over Time: Percent of White Children Who Have Grown Up with Both Biological Always-Married-Parents

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
2 Years	76%	75%	75%	74%	75%
3 Years	75%	74%	74%	72%	73%
4 Years	73%	73%	72%	70%	69%
5 Years	71%	70%	70%	70%	68%
6 Years	68%	69%	68%	67%	68%
7 Years	67%	67%	66%	66%	66%
8 Years	65%	65%	65%	65%	65%
9 Years	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%
10 Years	62%	62%	62%	62%	61%
11 Years	61%	61%	61%	60%	59%
12 Years	59%	60%	59%	58%	58%
13 Years	58%	58%	58%	58%	57%
14 Years	56%	57%	56%	57%	57%
15 Years	55%	56%	55%	55%	55%
16 Years	54%	54%	55%	54%	54%
17 Years	53%	53%	53%	52%	52%

