

Counting the Casualties of the Sexual Revolution

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The Catholic University of America



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Types of casualties of the sexual revolution

We are going to see three types of casualties of the sexual revolution.

1. **The Cheated.** First, there are those seduced by the prospect of irresponsible pleasure and self-gratification, which turns out to be false. Free love is never free.
 2. **The Abandoned.** Second are the ones who, through no fault of their own, are denied the means of a fulfilling life which they by right should have received.
 3. **The Diminished.** Third, after the cheating and abandonment many give up hope or can no longer see the ideal of fulfillment and meaning in their intimate relationships. They become inured to great evil and/or realize they have made casualties of others. Their humanity becomes diminished. But then can come ...
1. **The Awakened.** Eventually some of the above can discover they've been made a casualty, refuse to be seduced again, find support and community to rise above abandonment, and recover their ideals. They turn against the seductive lies and set about repairing their lives and their culture.



Source: National Right to Life Committee and the author's own analysis of CDC annual abortion surveillance data 1973–2020.

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1. Children lost to legal abortion: 62,502,904

Since 1973 an average of over 1.3 million unborn children per year have been reported killed in the womb in the United States. The true number is probably higher, since many women conceal the fact that they have had an abortion.

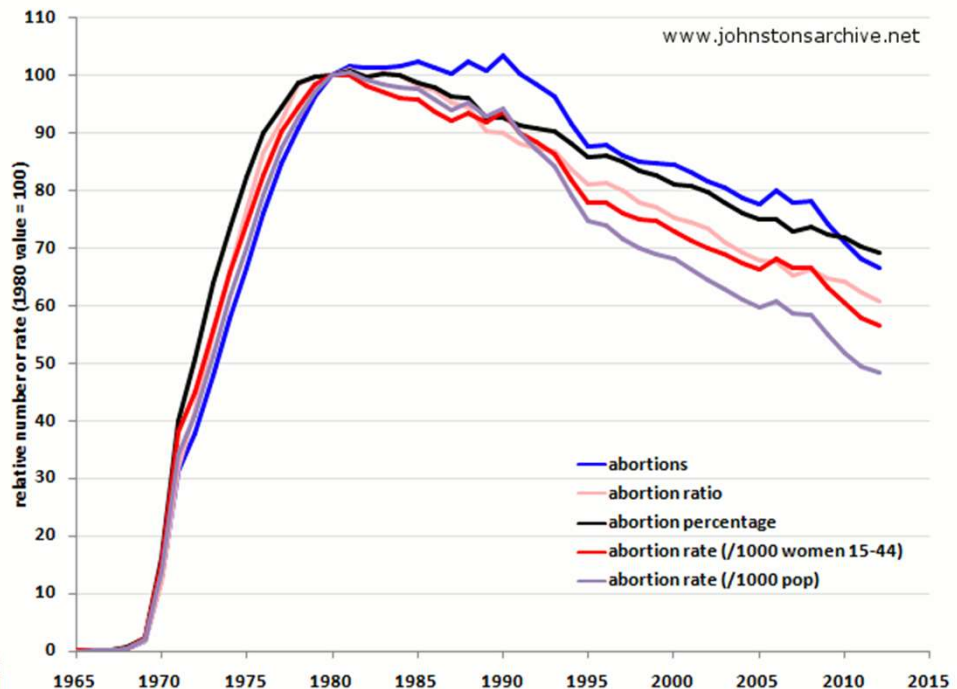
What type of casualties are these? We will meet other types later in this presentation.



Source: National Right to Life Committee and the author's own analysis of CDC annual abortion surveillance data 1973–2020.

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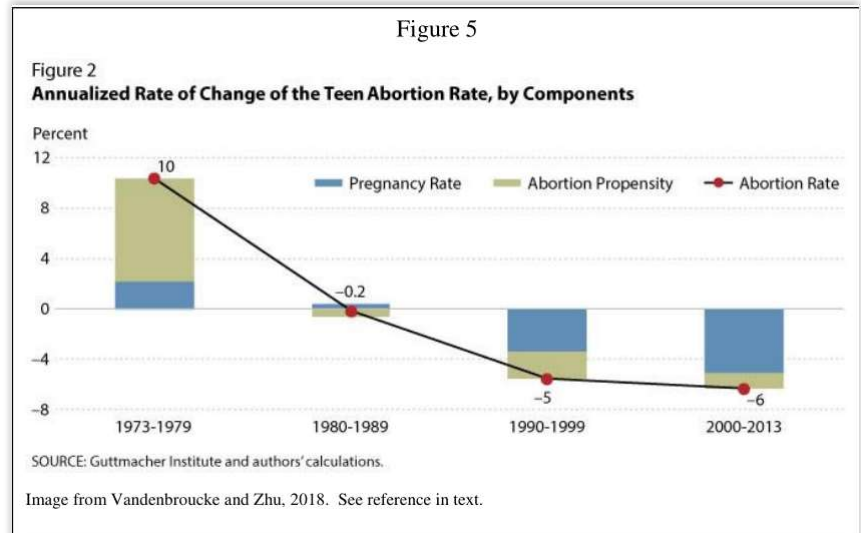
But abortion also brought great awakening. Since 1980, every indicator of abortion has been in steady, long-term decline.



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The youngest sexually capable have turned against abortion the most, rejecting not only abortion but also against the prospect of sex without responsibility that it promotes.

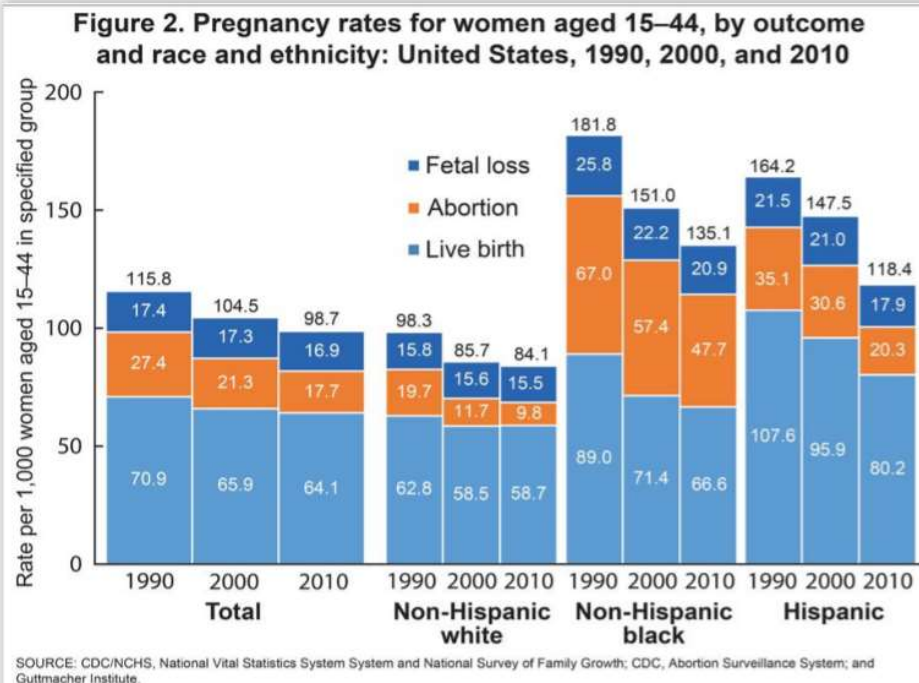
Today young Americans are more likely to oppose abortion and to advocate against its legality.



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Over a third of aborted children, about 22 million, have been African-American.

416 = The black abortion ratio (the number of abortions per 1,000 births, for pregnancies ending in either abortion or birth) in 2010 is almost three times that of whites, at 156; Hispanic is 202.



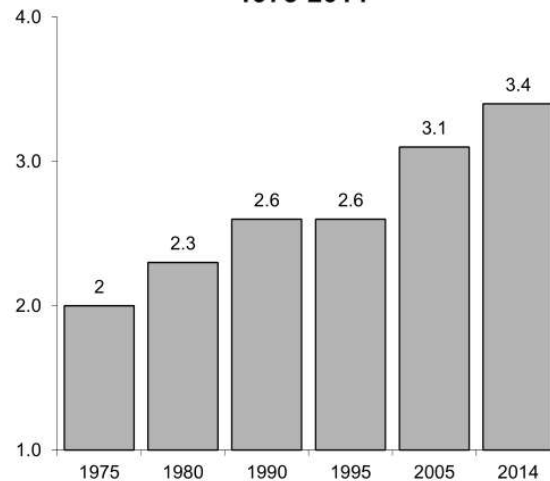
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The racial disparity has been growing. By 2050 there will be more Hispanics and asians than blacks in America, due to black children lost to abortion.

Source: Sullins, 2018, The Rise and Fall of Legal Abortion in the US.



Figure 13
Ratio of Black to White abortion rate
1975-2014



Source: CDC, Guttmacher Institute, IOM. See reference in text at first mention of the figure.

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2. Divorced Persons: 55,900,000

Over one in five American adults (21.5%) have experienced a divorce at some point in their lives. About 60% of them have remarried, but then 60% of these people get divorced again, meaning that just over twenty million Americans (20,124,000) have been divorced two or more times.

Surveys have found that at least 22% of divorced persons regret the divorce five years later, which computes to at least 12.3 million unwanted divorced persons in the United States.



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~~Divorce makes people happier.~~

74 – percent of divorces to persons who had been in happy, low-conflict marriages.¹

75 – percent of persons who were unhappy with their marriage whose spouse was happy with it.

67 – percent of unhappily married persons who avoided divorce who reported being happily married five years later.



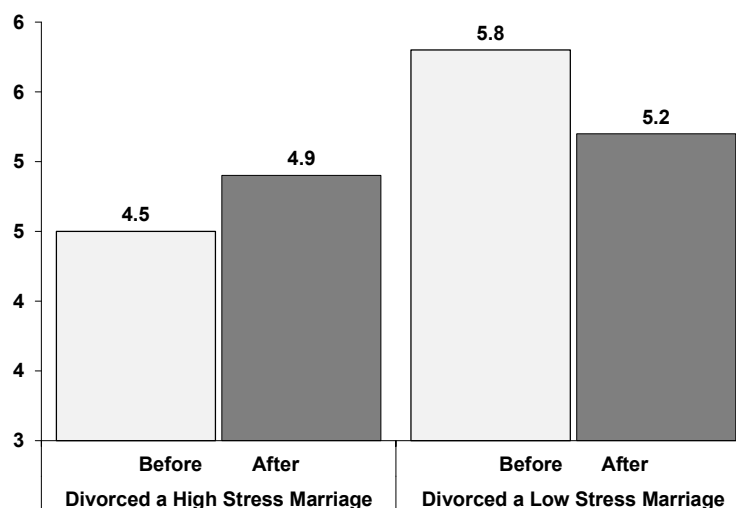
¹Waite et al. 2002. Does divorce make people happy? IAV.

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~~Divorce makes people happier.~~

The majority of partners, mostly women, who initiated the divorce of a low stress marriage overestimated the happiness that would result.

Women's Happiness after divorce from a high stress or low stress marriage: NSFH



Source: Amato 2007, based on the National Survey of Family Households. Happiness was measured on a 7 point scale from very unhappy to very happy.

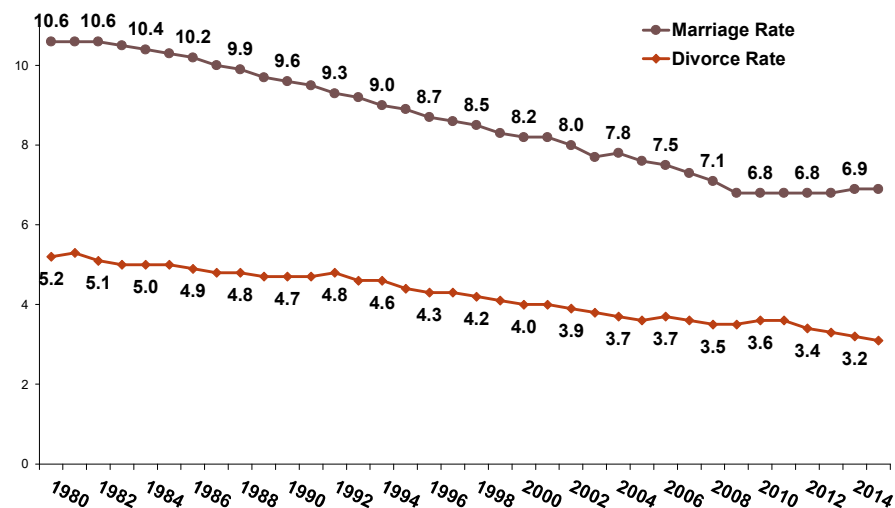


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Divorce

Divorce rates have been trending downward, but that is mostly because marriage rates have also been dropping. This is an example of diminishment, not awakening.

Marriage and Divorce Rates 1980-2019



Source: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics 2020. Rates show the number of marriages or divorces per 1,000 population.

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2A. Divorced Persons: 55,900,000 but

12,300,000 – Regret the divorce

Surveys have found that at least 22% of divorced persons regret the divorce five years later, which computes to at least 12.3 million unwanted divorced persons in the United States.

Second Chances Legislation

“No fault” laws and the removal of waiting periods are correlated with higher divorce rates. Draft model legislation and policies (civil and canonical) to encourage or require waiting periods and reconciliation counseling hold promise to reduce the flood of divorces.

Standers

Some heroic spouses honor their marriage even after their spouse divorces them. They believe that if you’re married by God you can’t be divorced by the state, and seek a higher way to live out their faith and their marriage.

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3. Children of divorce: 50 million

At least 50 million Americans have experienced the divorce of their parents. A fifth of these, of 10 million Americans, have lived through two or more parental divorces.

The separation of their parents deeply and permanently wounds their children. Divorcees may move on to form new lives, but their children cannot. Every event in their life—birthdays, holidays, plays, graduations, weddings, births of their own children—remind them anew of the loss created by divorce as well as the family relationship conflicts that come with the 'extended family' celebrating any event.



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The number of children involved in divorces shot up during the 1960s and 1970s. Just after the sexual revolution started. It leveled off in the 1980s, but remains above a million children a year.

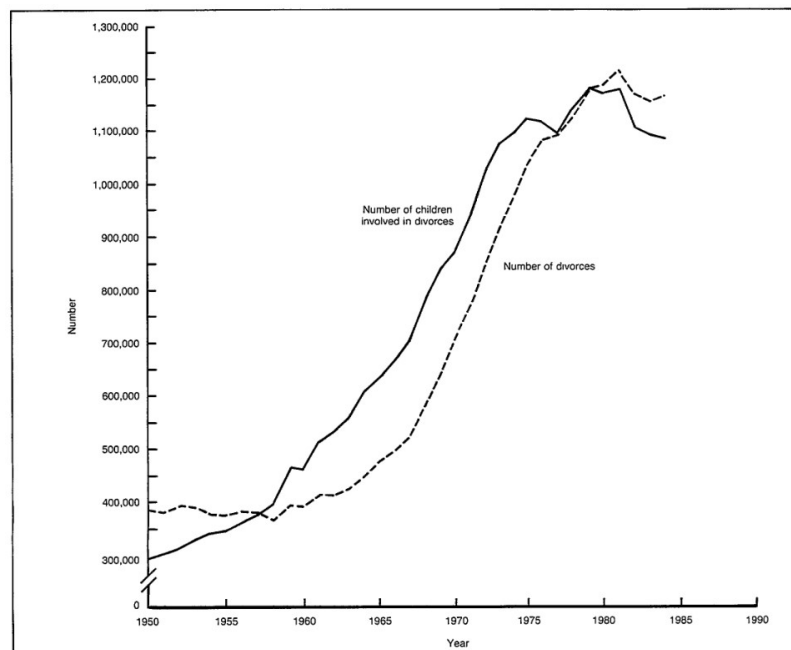


Figure 1. Divorces and children involved: United States, 1950-84

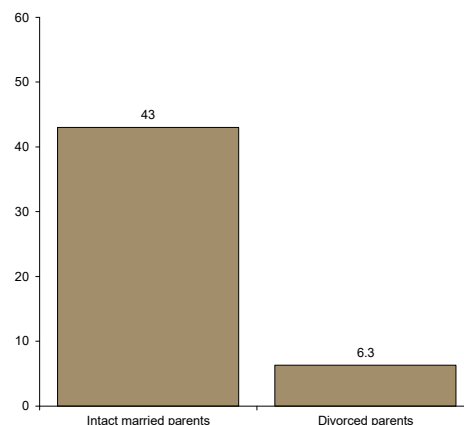


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Divorce, even an amicable one, destroys a child's relationship with one of his or her parents, usually the father.

Judith Wallerstein studied divorced children for decades. She put it, "The kids [in my study] had a hard time remembering the pre-divorce family ... but what they remembered about the post-divorce years was their sense that they had indeed been abandoned by both parents, that their nightmare [of abandonment] had come true." (Jane Meredith Adams, "Judith Wallerstein: Forget the Notion Divorce Won't Hurt Kids. It Will." *Biography* 1 (1997): 79-81.)

Adolescents' (age 12-17) ratings of father warmth
"My father is warm, loving and cares for me"
- percent yes

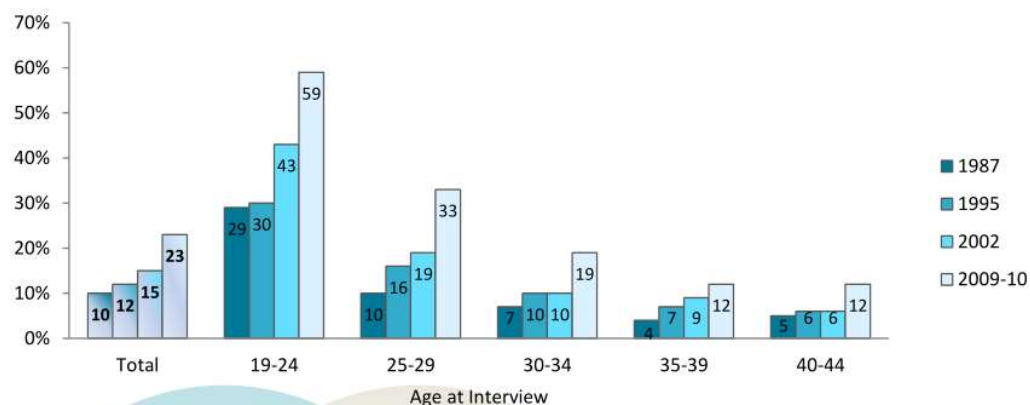


Source: Add Health 1996

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Prevalent divorce has not only harmed individuals, it has begun to degrade the institution of marriage itself. Younger generations have responded by avoiding marriage in the first place. Cohabitation without marrying has more than doubled since the 1980s. Today the majority of women in their early 20s are in cohabiting relationships. Cohabitation is seen by them as a trial marriage, although it more often turns out to be a pre-emptive divorce. Cohabitations usually either dissolve or upgrade to marriage, but increasingly they are doing neither, as the partners settle in to lifelong unmarried cohabitation.

Figure 3. Two Decades of Trends in Percentage of Women (19-44) Cohabiting in Current Unions



Sources: Bumpass and Sweet, 1989; Bumpass and Lu, 2000; Kennedy and Bumpass, 2008

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4. Children born to an unmarried mother: 53,293,871

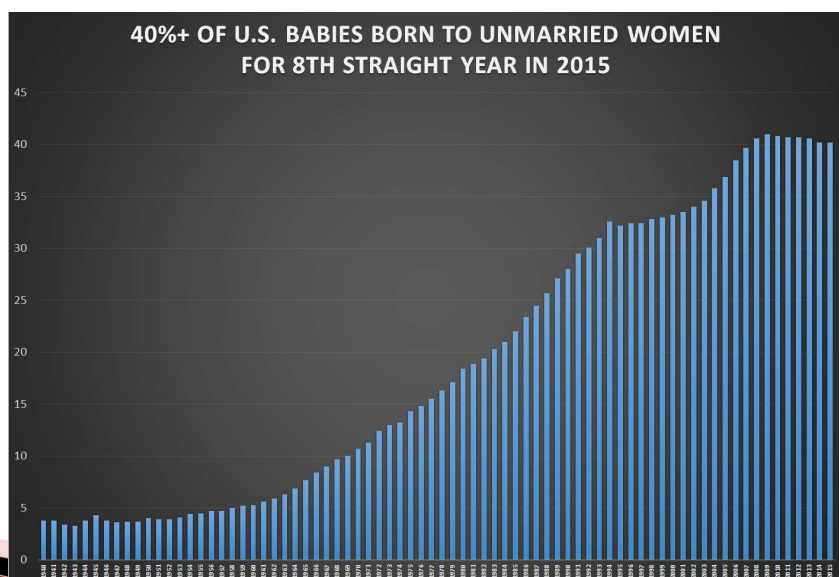
Robust research documents that children who grow up in the absence of two married, biological parents experience worse cognitive, academic, and behavioral outcomes relative (Parke, 2004; Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004; Sullins 2021). Children born to a single mother face greater poverty and lower parental involvement in their lives. They are twice as likely to drop out of school and have lower outcomes on almost every measure of young adult well-being.



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In the age of the sexual revolution the number of births that take place outside of marriage has skyrocketed.

Today four in ten (41%) of births are to unmarried women, up from under 5% in 1940, and The *share* of nonmarital births has remained steady for the past 15 years, at about 41%. Among younger women nonmarital births are the majority. 57% of millennial moms are unmarried moms.



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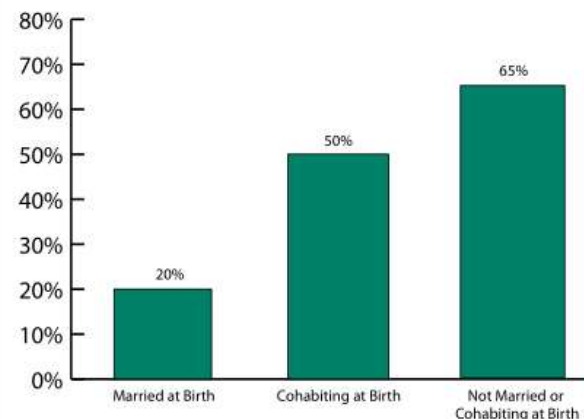
Today about 60% of children born outside marriage are born to cohabiting mothers, up from about half that percentage in 1990.

Children born to an unmarried mother are two to three times as likely to be unintended by their parents; another sort of casualty of the sexual revolution.



Figure 7

Percent of Women who Report that Their Pregnancy was Unintended by Relationship Status at Birth

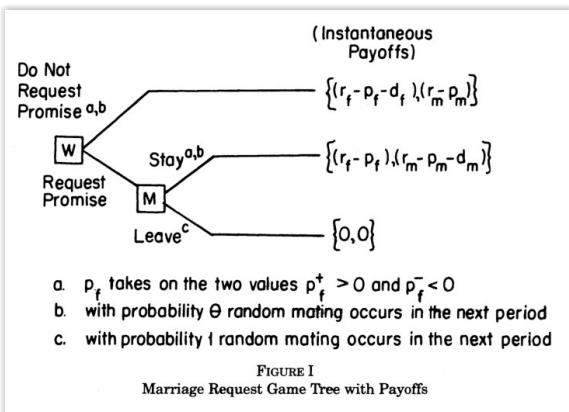


Source: Child Trends' analyses of Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), 2001-02

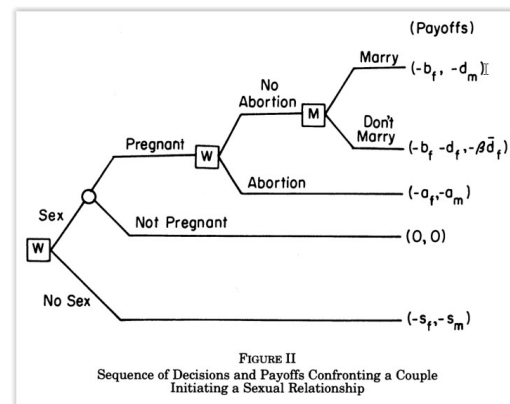
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The sexual revolution undermined marriage after unintended pregnancy.

Before abortion, unintended pregnancy often led to marriage



Now unintended pregnancy more often leads to abortion, and less often to marriage.



Source: Akerlof, Yellen and Katz, 1996, An Analysis of Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing in the United States. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 111, No. 2, pp. 277-317

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5. Post-abortion women: 39,615,974

Almost one in four U.S. women have had an abortion at some point in their lives. Over half of these (20 million women) have aborted more than one pregnancy. Just under a fifth (7.3 million women) have aborted a pregnancy they wanted to keep, usually due to pressure from others.

Much research, including my own, documents that such women suffer higher rates of mental distress than comparable women who have not had abortions.



Source: Guttmacher Institute 2017; U.S. Census.

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RESULTS

- ▶ In my research I found that women who had had one or more abortions were at higher risk for seven major mental health disorders.
- ▶ They were half again (45%) more likely to suffer one or more mental health problems than were women who had not had an abortion.
- ▶ Having had an abortion accounted for almost 9% of all of the measured mental health disorders for women in the U.S.

Table 2. Adjusted relative risk (OR) (95% CI) of mental health disorders for ever-pregnant women by pregnancy history, controlling for covariates and other pregnancy outcomes: Add Health Waves I, III and IV (n = 3152).

	Abortion OR (95% CI)	Live birth OR (95% CI)	Pregnancy loss OR (95% CI)	Significant covariates (p < 0.05)	PAF for abortion
Depression	1.54 (1.17 to 2.03)	1.04 (0.79 to 1.37)	1.50 (1.19 to 1.89)	3 to 6, 15 to 17	5.8 (2.0 to 9.5)
Anxiety disorder	1.49 (1.07 to 2.08)	1.14 (0.84 to 1.56)	1.39 (1.04 to 1.86)	1, 4, 5, 15, 16	6.6 (0.7 to 12.2)
Suicidal ideation	1.40 (0.89 to 2.19)	0.52 (0.35 to 0.79)	1.64 (1.14 to 2.35)	1, 6, 15, 16	7.2 (-3.0 to 16.4)
Alcohol abuse/dependence	1.51 (1.13 to 2.00)	0.61 (0.45 to 0.82)	0.85 (0.65 to 1.10)	1, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19	7.7 (2.3 to 12.7)
Illicit drug abuse/dependence	3.02 (2.07 to 4.39)	0.46 (0.30 to 0.70)	1.38 (0.94 to 2.02)	8, 10, 11, 14, 16 to 18, 20	25.6 (16.2 to 34.0)
Nicotine dependence	1.58 (1.13 to 2.22)	1.06 (0.78 to 1.46)	1.32 (0.98 to 1.77)	9, 15 to 18, 20	5.6 (1.3 to 9.7)
Cannabis abuse/dependence	2.30 (1.62 to 3.26)	0.88 (0.62 to 1.25)	1.29 (0.93 to 1.80)	10, 13, 16, 19, 20	17.9 (10.0 to 25.2)
Number of mental health problems	1.45 (1.30 to 1.62)***	0.86 (0.76 to 0.96)***	1.24 (1.13 to 1.37)***	1 to 5, 8, 9, 11 to 17, 19, 20	8.7 (6.0 to 11.3)

OR: odds ratio; CI: confidence interval; Add Health: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health; PAF: population attributable fraction. Shown are population-weighted and population-averaged ~~odds ratio~~ regression estimates, derived from Poisson models for number of mental health outcomes and from logistic models for all other outcomes. All models are adjusted for sociodemographic variables: age (within panels), race, parent education, childhood poverty status, and region of origin. Numbers in parentheses report the 95% CI. All models are adjusted for the following demographic variables: age (within panel), race, parent education, childhood poverty status, and region of origin. Covariates fitted—childhood conditions: 1 = childhood physical abuse, 2 = childhood sexual abuse, 3 = childhood verbal abuse; at Wave I (average age 15): 4 = depression, 5 = anxiety, 6 = suicidal ideation, 7 = alcohol abuse, 8 = drug abuse, 9 = nicotine dependence, 10 = cannabis abuse, 11 = conduct problems in school, 12 = neuroticism, 13 = neighborhood integration, 14 = grade point average (gpa); at Wave IV (average age 28): 15 = ever raped, 16 = relationship satisfaction, 17 = educational attainment; time-dynamic: 18 = respondent poverty income, 19 = marital status, 20 = intimate partner violence.

*p < 0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01; ****p < 0.001.

Table 2. Adjusted relative risk (OR) (95% CI) of mental health disorders for ever-pregnant women by pregnancy history, controlling for covariates and other pregnancy outcomes: Add Health Waves I, III and IV (n = 3152).

DOI: (10.1177/2050312116665997)

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6. Men who have sex with men (MSM; Sodomites): 4,791,262

The real problem with “gay identity” or “same-sex attraction” is that it is an attraction to death and destruction. But the hard-to-find health studies of men who do what homosexual men do find that: the HIV infection rate (per 100,000) is 672 (all other men: 10); syphilis infection rate is 154 (all other men: 2.2). HIV case rate: MSM 7,942, all other men 187. The spread of anti-retroviral HIV medicines, which reduce AIDS deaths by up to 80%, have led to *higher* population death rates as MSMs have responded by engaging in even more risky sex than before.

But: 1,556,543 men have left homosexual practice and identity.

These “ex-gay” survivors may have awakened and are recovering from being a casualty. They need support to persist in their recovery and encouragement to share their story.

Source: For MSMs: Purcell (2012). For ex-gays: Cameron (2002) estimates from 6 urban surveys that about 1–2% of current heterosexual persons are ex-homosexuals, with the rate higher for men than for women. The above estimate consists, conservatively, of 1% of heterosexual U.S. males and .5% of heterosexual U.S. females. This number is also consistent with rates of desistance from gay identity from age 18 to age 40 reported on general population surveys.



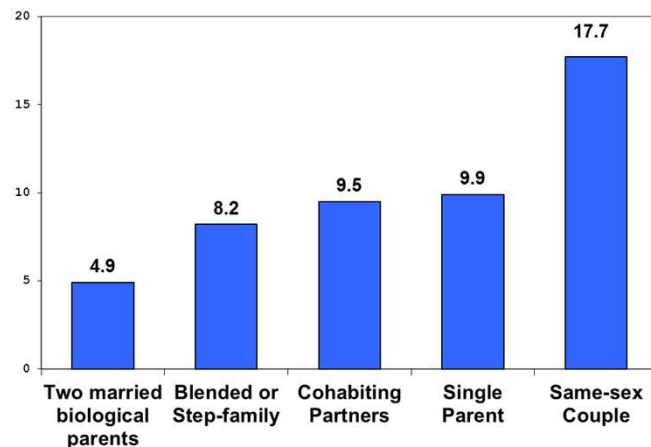
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7. Grown-up children raised by same-sex parents: 3,500,000

Since no same-sex couple can conceive a child, every set of gay parents necessarily excludes one or more of the child’s natural parents. Gay “parents” thus consist of two non-parents or at most one natural parent and one non-parent. Their children are much more likely to suffer emotional problems than in any other kind of family.

I produced this estimate by multiplying the percent of children that are with same-sex parents on the American Community Survey (.004) by the number of U.S. children (73.5 million), then multiplying the result by 18. To ensure a conservative estimate, this result was then reduced by a third.

Child Emotional Problems (in percent)
Comparing Opposite-Sex and Same-Sex Parent Families



Source: National Health Interview Survey (CDC-NCHS) 1997-2013. (N=207,007). Data are a representative sample of all U.S. children. Contrasts are adjusted for child sex, age, race, and parent education and income. All contrasts shown are statistically

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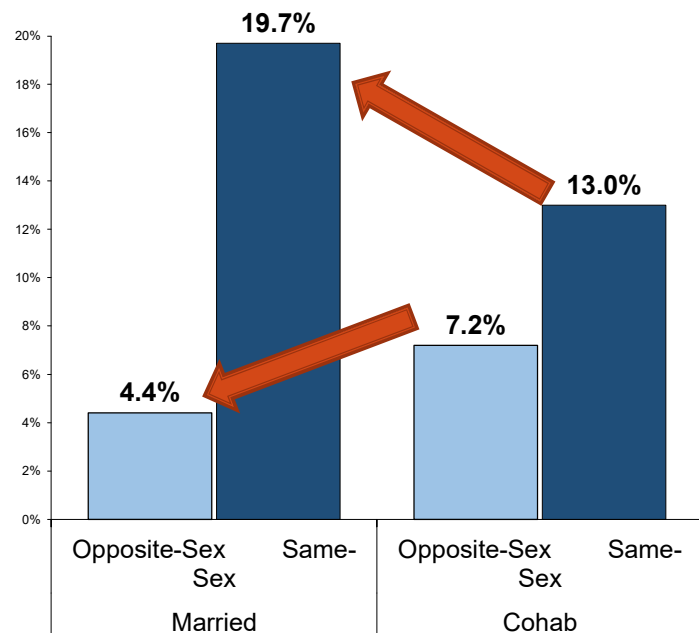
Gay marriage makes things worse for children.

The opposite effect from man–woman marriage.

This fact (surprising to many) confirms the falsehood of the sexual revolution in this area.



Child Severe Emotional Problems by Parent Type and Marriage: NHIS 2001-2017



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8. Childless career women over 40: 3,664,159

“At midlife, between a third and a half of all successful career women in the United States do not have children”, reports author Sylvia Hewlett in the book *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*.

Many of these women bought the false promise of feminism that they did not need a man, should not depend on a man, and of capitalism that they could find fulfillment in a productive career. The sexual revolution told them that a woman could be happy living just like a man (only better). They traded the means of reproduction for the means of production, and at middle age are financially secure and successful at work but childless and alone and full of regret.

Source: CDC reports that 18% of women over 40 remain childless today, up from the natural rate of 2.5%. This estimate comprises the added childless, i.e., 15.5% of U.S. women over 40. This is consistent with survey reports that 41% of female corporate executives over 40 are childless, almost none of them by design.



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9. Mother's lives lost to legal abortion: 51,940

Since many women conceal abortion and several U.S. states do not report them, the U.S. mortality rate for abortion cannot be directly estimated, but careful records-linked estimates from Finland put abortion maternal mortality at 83.1 per 100,000 (Gissler, 2004, American Journal of Ob/Gyn). Abortion is likely safer in Finland, where the procedure must be performed in hospital by a medical doctor, neither of which is the case for most U.S. abortions. Applying the Finnish rate to U.S. abortions computes to 51,940 maternal deaths due to abortion since 1973.



Source: National Right to Life Committee and the author's own analysis of CDC annual abortion surveillance data 1973–2020.

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10. Persons who have used artificial contraception to prevent natural pregnancy: 321,138,760

This is the most common casualty of the sexual revolution today, but I have saved it for last because many do not think of it as a serious casualty. Those who think this way illustrate how serious a casualty widespread contraceptive use really is.

In 1999 the CDC celebrated the “modern birth control movement” by the work of Margaret Sanger as one of the “ten great public health achievements” of the 20th century. Among its “health benefits” was “the use of barrier contraceptives to prevent pregnancy” beginning in the 1920s, superseded in 1960 by the introduction of the oral birth control pill and the intra-uterine device (IUD), which propelled a dramatic reduction in the average number of children per married couple from 3.7 in 1957 (just before the pill) to only 2 per couple by 1972.

Married couples could now have sex without having to worry about having more children. Why is this a casualty?

The CDC (NSFG) reports that by age 45 99.7% of Americans report having had sex relations, and 98% of women report having used artificial contraception at some point. I produced this estimate by multiplying the current American population by .997 and the result by .98.



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A Cultural Pandemic

The transition from a society in which contraception in marriage was rare and looked down upon to one where it is considered normal and almost universal may be the greatest casualty of the sexual revolution. In such a world you don't need marriage at all, nor even men and women.

The sexual revolution is not just about sex but about liberation from nature. Abortion, gay sex, and contraception all promise to contravene the natural operation of the body in order to conform human sexuality to the ideals of modernity—including unconditioned personal expression, availability to industrial capitalism, and reduced uncertainty in the life course.

The birth control pill is the ultimate seduction that promises pleasure without responsibility. It is the gateway drug of the sexual revolution. By contraception, a woman (and her partner) can enjoy sexual relations without the complication of pregnancy; by abortion, she can enjoy sexual relations assured to be without the complication of a child; by homosexuality, she can enjoy sexual relations without even the complication of a man.

When we are cheated into thinking this way about our bodies and our children, the different epidemics of the sexual revolution, that produce groups of casualties, metastasizes into one large cultural pandemic that makes a casualty of us all.



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- ▶ Resources and infrastructure are graciously provided by the Catholic University of America.
- ▶ For a copy of this presentation or to share any comments or suggestions, contact me via sullins@cua.edu or psullins@ruthinstitute.org, or just put your email address (clearly) on the signup sheet.

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