

Paul Volcker's war against American family formation

The existence of stable family units is a prerequisite for having children and educating those children into citizens and adults. The family is the unit that nurtures and feeds the child, provides him with toys and other objects of the world to explore, provides the child with adequate room and discipline to study and play, gives the child an allowance to enjoy entertainment or culture, pays for the child's expenses through the child's school days, which in an advanced economy, where functional literacy is defined by the ability to become a skilled craftsman, engineer or physicist, may mean paying bills for the first 18 to 25 years of a child's life.

But the family does more: it teaches the child, increases the child's concentration span and broadens his horizons, loves the child, and thereby imparts to him the capability to judge what is right and what is wrong—a sense of morality.

Because of the family's irreplaceable functions, the health of a nation's families can be considered the barometer of that nation's current and future well-being. In the case of the United States, all the leading statistical indicators of the future of the family—rates of family formation, divorce, illegitimate births, fertility rates, and youth unemployment and crime—are heading in the wrong direction.



The destruction of family formation

In 1960, 74.1 percent of all households—defined as one or more people living in a single dwelling—were headed by married couples. In 1970, 70.6 percent of all households were headed by married couples, a decline of 3.5 percentage points. But in 1980, only 60.9 percent of all households were headed by couples, a decline of nearly 10 percentage points during the 1970s and three times the rate of decline in the preceding decade.

What took the place of the family?

From 1970 to 1980 the percentage of households that were headed by non-married individuals living either singly or together as “live-in lovers,” in communes, homosexual “marriages,” and so forth, rose from 29.5 percent to 39.1 percent of all households.

It is clear that if this trend continues at the rates exhibited during the decade of the 1970s, then by the year 2000, 42.5 percent of all households will be headed by married couples and 57.5 percent will be headed by non-married couples. By this point the notion of the family will long since have been obliterated. The United States will have been subjugated to a combination of hedonism, poverty, and ignorance in which only an elite retains the option of the freedom to have children and raise them adequately.



Fertility

The U.S. fertility rate has been below the level necessary to replace existing population—a rate of 2.1 live births per woman during her child-bearing years—for nearly a decade since 1972. Currently the total fertility rate is 1.8 to 1.9 live births per woman.

This is the lowest fertility rate in the 200-year existence of the United States as a nation. It is only one-half the rate that prevailed as late as 1957, and well below the rate at which the nation can replace its current population. U.S. population growth is not negative only because of the approximately 1 million immigrants who enter the country legally and illegally each year.

At the height of the so-called baby boom in 1957, the fertility rate was 3.767. In fact, the baby boom is a demographic hoax. Even during the depths of the 1930s depression, the fertility rate never fell below the replacement level of 2.1 live births per woman. Prior to the depression, the U.S. fertility rate was always higher than 3.0 and at least at 1950s “baby-boom” levels throughout the 19th century.

Other measures of fertility make the same point. In 1957, 122.9 children were born per 1,000 women of child-bearing age (the general as opposed to the total fertility rate). In 1980 only 68.5 children were born per every 1,000 women of child-bearing age.

Why the decline in fertility rates?

The comparison in outlook between the baby-boom years of the 1950s and today is striking. Then soldiers newly home from a victorious war and entering an

American economy that was still relatively vibrant, felt more confident about the future, and began either marrying for the first time and building a family or enlarging an existing family. Even as late as 1962, when the fertility rate was 3.423, this mood tended to prevail.

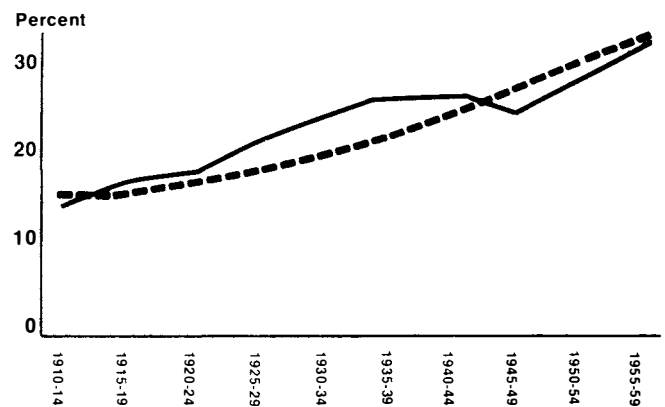
The decline in fertility is also matched by the later age at which people are getting married. In the 1950s, about three-fourths of all women between the ages of 20 and 24 were married; currently only one-half of all women in that group have married. Other factors include the huge influx of women into the labor force, the increased use of contraceptives, and most important, the inability to afford children.

But there has also been a “value shift” among Americans, confirms Thomas Smith, a senior study director for the National Opinion Research Center.

“People just are not putting the value on children they used to,” says Smith. “Today, many people may not prefer to make expenditures on children. Children aren’t seen as valuable as a Ferrari sports car or getting a \$100 ticket to see the Broadway show *Nicholas Nickleby*.”

The fertility rate need not stay this low. There are now more women of child-bearing age than at any time in the last 40 years; the damage of the recent years can be reversed.

Figure 1
The trend in divorce



The solid line shows the percentage of marriage ending in divorce for couples first married in the period shown at the bottom of the chart. The broken line shows the average trend in divorce rate during the period. Preston and McDonald, “The Incidence of Divorce within cohorts of American Marriages Contracted since the Civil War,” *Demography*, February 1979.

Divorce

Figure 1 shows how many first marriages formed in specific years will end in divorce. Of first marriages occurring in 1910-14, it is estimated about 15 percent

will eventually end in divorce. But for first marriages occurring at the end of the period covered by the chart, 1955-59, it is estimated that one-third will eventually end in divorce.

Other estimates of all first marriages occurring in 1980 predict that from 35 to 45 percent will eventually end in divorce.

In 1920 there were 7.45 marriages for each divorce. But in 1980 there were only 1.41 marriages for each divorce.

The tendency of divorcees to remarry does not reverse the trend of growing divorce. According to Census Bureau data, of those who remarry after divorce, 50 percent wind up in divorce court for a second time.

Illegitimate births

In 1979, an estimated 597,800 babies were born throughout the United States to unwed mothers, accounting for about 1 out of every 6 children born. The total in 1970 was only 399,000 babies, or 10 percent of all births.

A more shocking set of figures shows the destruction of the family in the inner cities. In the year 1979, in Seattle, 18.8 percent of all children were born out of wedlock; in Denver 25.7 percent; in Los Angeles 25.8 percent; in Boston 36.6 percent; in New York, 36.7 percent; in Chicago 44.4 percent; and in Washington, D.C. 55.6 percent, or more than one out of every two babies, were born out of wedlock.

Children with fewer than two parents

In 1979, one-parent families constituted 20 percent of all families with children present, compared with only 11.4 percent in 1970. In 1960, 23 percent of all black children were in one-parent families; in 1979, 45 percent of all black children were in one-parent families, and another 11 percent of all black children were living with neither parent. The majority of black children do not grow up with both parents in the home.

Women in the labor force

Volcker's collapse of the U.S. economy is making itself felt on the stability of even two-parent traditional families, as more and more American women are forced into the job market as wage-earners to make ends meet. In 1944, of the 18.45 million women in the workforce, 6.23 million, or 34 percent, were married women whose husbands were present in the home. By 1980, of the 44.46 million women in the workforce, this figure had risen to 24.44 million, or 55 percent.

The quadrupling of the number of married women in the workforce, accounting for more than one out of every two working women, points to the most important

fact about women at work: most of the married women who work do so because the income of one person is no longer enough to support a family.

The notion that women are primarily working to be "upwardly mobile" or "liberated" is a myth. Women are largely working at the same jobs they held 25 years ago: teacher, nurse, secretary, social worker, practical nurse, typist, bookkeeper, and so forth.

As for wages, in 1977 women earned on the average only 58.5 percent as much as men—slightly below the long-term trend.

The impact on child-bearing of the working woman trying to make ends meet is pronounced. Whereas in 1960 two out of five women in the prime child-bearing years (20 to 34) were in the labor market, by 1976 that proportion had grown to three in five.

If women had stable, long-term employment this would pose no great threat to normal child-bearing. But according to a November 1975 article in the U.S. Department of Labor's *Monthly Labor Review*, "Women, especially married women, move in and out of the labor force more frequently than men . . . have considerably fewer years of continuous service with the same employer."



Incidence of homosexuality

According to the Hite Report, a 1976 survey of the sexual preferences and behavior of 3,000 women ages 14 to 78, 144 women in a sample of 1800—8 percent—said they "preferred sex with women." Another 73 women—4 percent—identified themselves as bisexual; and another 85 women—5 percent—said they had had sexual experiences with both men and women.

Drug and alcohol abuse

Youth are becoming "recreational users" of drugs and alcohol in greater numbers than ever before, and are becoming more addicted than ever before.

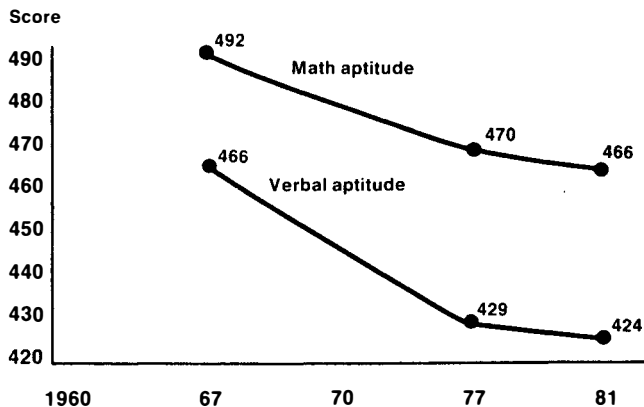
According to figures supplied by the U.S. National Institute of Drug Abuse, in 1976, 53 percent of all young adults ages 18 to 25 had used marijuana; by 1979 that figure was up to 68 percent. In 1971, 14 percent of all youth ages 12 to 17 had used marijuana; by 1979 that figure was 31 percent. In 1976 25 percent of all 18- to 25-year-olds were active current users of marijuana; that figure rose to 35 percent by 1979. Among those 12 to 17 years old, in 1971, 6 percent were active current users; this rose to 17 percent by 1979.

Marijuana has indisputably led to increased usage of other drugs. Among youth 18 to 25 years old, 16.5 percent had used inhalants; 25.1 percent had used hallucinogens; 27.5 percent had used cocaine; 18.2 had used stimulants; 15.8 percent had used tranquilizers. Among youth 12 to 17, 9.8 percent had used inhalants, 7.1 percent had used hallucinogens, and 5.4 percent had used cocaine. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, in 1979, 9.3 percent of all young adults 18 to 25 years old were active "current users" of cocaine.

As for alcohol, in 1974 according to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 40 percent of male and 21 percent of female high school seniors had problems involving drinking, as compared to 5 percent or fewer in 1960.

Figure 2

National average of scores on Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), U.S. high school students



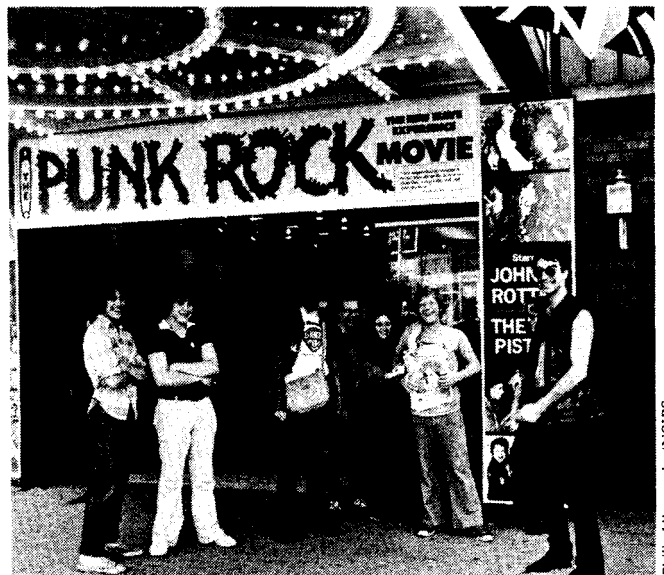
Source: College Entrance Examination Board, New York, New York

Education

The illiterate youth, barely able to form a complete English sentence ("Yo, how much be dis apple?") is

only sketchily captured in statistics produced by the U.S. Department of Education, which claim that 99 percent of all Americans were literate in 1980. Yet between 1975 and 1979, the nationwide drop-out rate for high school students increased by nearly 10 percent. The New York State Department of Education reported that in 1979, 50 percent of all entrants into high school did not graduate. In 1975, only 53 percent of our 17-year-olds knew that each state had two U.S. Senators and that the President did not appoint the Congress.

Test scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for college-bound senior high school students have been falling. In 1967, the average scores were 466 on the verbal test component and 492 on the mathematics components. By 1977, the average verbal score had fallen to 429 and the math score had dropped to 466. At top-ranking American universities, from 25 to 50 percent of entering college students are given remedial English classes.



Philip Ulanovsky/NSIPS

The rock-counterculture

Today's children and adolescents are largely addicted to the mind-destroying "alternative lifestyles" of the so-called counterculture, conducted through rock and roll and television. According to a recent survey, by the time a child reaches the age of 20, he has watched the equivalent of 14 straight months of television—6 percent of his entire life has been spent in front of the TV set. Since the 1950s, television watching has markedly increased among both children and adults; today, the average daily dose of television for all individuals is between three and six hours. A child on that schedule will spend between 20 and 40 percent of his waking life watching TV.

Rock music is an almost equally omnipresent fact of life for youth, who spend between one and five hours per day listening to rock on the radio, phonograph records, or tapes, sometimes even in the classroom. A couple of hours devoted to the "top 40 hits" and three more spent in front of the TV set constitute by no means an unusual "entertainment day" for the American adolescent.

Youth unemployment

The unemployment rate for the young is leaping skyward as a result of the collapse of job opportunities. In 1955, the official unemployment rate published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for all those 16 to 19 years old was 11.0 percent; in 1970, it had risen to 15.2 percent; and as of September 1981, it is 19.3 percent and rising. The 16-to-19-year-old unemployment rate is nearly double what it was 25 years ago.

The official unemployment rate for the 20-to-24-year-old age group is also at post World War II record rates. In late 1981, it had risen to nearly 12 percent.

Black youth have been written out of the labor force. Official unemployment for 16-to-19-year-old black males is 36.3 percent, and for 20-to-24-year-old black males, it is 24.6 percent.

Figure 3

Death rate per 1,000 due to homicide and suicide

Males aged 15 to 24

Year	Homicide	Suicide
1955	8.5	6.3
1965	10.7	9.4
1975	21.2	18.9
1976	19.1	18.5
1977	19.4	21.8

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Resources; Richard Eusterlin, "Birth & Fortune"

Youth crime and suicide

The American homicide rate is higher than that of any other industrialized nation—10 times higher than that of Japan and West Germany!—and the number of young people that have become victims of homicide or taken their own lives has increased dramatically in the post-war period (see Figure 3).

During the 1950s and into the 1960s, homicide deaths of male youths ages 16 to 24 were occurring at the rate of nine out of every 100,000 persons in this age group. By 1977, this had doubled, to a 19.4 level.

The rate for suicides is equally startling. The U.S. suicide rate for young male adults rose from 6.0 in 1955 to 21.8 by 1977; the suicide rate for young male Americans is now higher than that of Sweden.



'High interest rates cut population'

Rita Ricardo Campbell, leading supporter of Paul Volcker's policies and a member of the Hoover Institution for War, Revolution and Peace, confirmed in a recent interview that depopulation is the core of the Fed Charman's policy. Mrs. Campbell, whose husband Glenn Campbell heads this ostensibly conservative think tank, and who is herself a descendant of British economist David Ricardo, told a reporter on Feb. 25, 1981:

"We're only cutting \$50 billion from the fiscal year 1982 federal budget and that won't by itself help stop population growth much, but high interest rates will. The replacement rate for population is 2.1 births per female. Now, the U.S. is down to 1.8, and we won't be getting back to replacement rate. That's good; I don't want to see any increase in our birth rate, because the U.S. is absorbing too much energy per capita and that cannot continue.

"Some of my Social Security proposals would limit tax breaks to two or fewer children, for example. I don't think we'll ever see five- or six-kid families again. With these interest rates, and this inflation, the entire postwar baby boom generation has no prospects for jobs, and can't buy houses. So as a result, they aren't going to have any kids. They can't afford it."