

Black Demographic Trends in the 1980s

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IN THE EARLY 1980s, FOLLOWING THE RELEASE of data from the 1980 Census of Population and Housing, several analysts reported changes in the black population during the 1970s (see, for example, Reid 1982; O'Hare et al. 1982; Farley 1984). These studies revealed many important population changes experienced by the black population in the 1970s in areas such as interregional migration, suburbanization, family structure, and teenage childbearing.

There has been little systematic effort, however, to document post-1980 demographic trends among blacks. This article attempts to fill that gap and provide an important background for the other articles in these supplements. Using a variety of demographic data sources, the major population trends of the 1970s are examined to ascertain which have continued during the first half of the 1980s. This demographic portrait of black Americans in the mid-1980s will provide the context within which health status, health-related behavior, health care delivery, and health care planning can be analyzed more effectively.

While many of the black demographic trends examined here invite socioeconomic explanation, that is not my purpose; the focus will be on description and documentation rather than on analysis and explanation. Furthermore, the breadth of topics covered does not allow me to provide much detail for the major trends identified.

Let me emphasize that the focus is on "blacks," not the broader

group of nonwhites or minorities. In some sections figures for blacks are compared to the corresponding figures for whites and in other sections they are compared to the figures for the total population depending on data availability and the topic under consideration.

While the number of potential subject areas is broad, I have limited my examination to major demographic areas: population growth and distribution, age structure, fertility and mortality, and family composition. A summary section provides a sentence on each of nine major demographic trends in the black population during the first half of the 1980s identified in this study.

Black Population Growth

Throughout the 1970 to 1986 period, the black population increased more rapidly than the total population, as it had for several prior decades. This has resulted in blacks comprising an ever larger portion of the total population.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the size of the black population in 1986 at 29.4 million, or 12.2 percent of the total population; the 26.8 million blacks counted in the 1980 Decennial Census comprised only 11.8 percent of the total population, up from 22.5 million and 11.1 percent in 1970. The black population is likely to continue to grow more rapidly than the white population, and by the year 2050 the Census Bureau middle series projection indicates that blacks will number 52.3 million and comprise 16.9 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1984).

Even though the black population was growing at a more rapid rate than the white population there was an overall slowing of population growth in recent years and the *rate* of black population growth slowed in the first half of the 1980s compared with the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1980 the black population grew at an average rate of 1.7 percent per year, but the annual average growth rate between 1980 and 1985 was 1.5 percent. This decline in the growth rate is a product of falling birth rates, which are discussed later, not quite offset by declines in mortality. Unlike other prominent minority groups such as Hispanics and Asian Americans, most of the recent increase in the black population is due to natural increase (number of births minus the number of deaths) rather than immigration.

The national rate of growth, however, masks important differences among regions. In the early 1980s, the South replaced the West as the region with the highest rate of black population growth. In the first half of the 1980s, the average annual rate of growth of the black population in the South was 2.0 percent compared with 1.7 percent during the 1970s, but the average annual rate of growth in the black population of the West fell from 3.3 percent in the 1970s to 1.4 percent in the first half of the 1980s. The rate of black population growth slowed in both the Northeast and Midwest regions between the 1970s and the early 1980s (see table 1).

Geographic Distribution of Blacks

Despite regional differences in the rate of black population growth, the distribution of blacks across the regions has changed little since 1970. Today, 54.2 percent of all blacks live in the South, with 17.7 percent in the Northeast, 19.7 percent in the Midwest, and 8.5 percent in the West. This is only slightly different from 1970 when 53.0 percent of blacks lived in the South, 19.2 percent in the Northeast, 20.2 percent in the Midwest, and 7.5 percent in the West.

Much of the regional differences in recent black population growth can be traced to patterns of black interregional migration (see table

TABLE 1
U.S. Black Population by Region: 1970, 1980, and 1985
(numbers in 1,000s)

| Region | 1970 | 1980 | 1985 | Average annual percentage change | |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------------|---------|
| | | | | 1970-80 | 1980-85 |
| Northeast | 4,344 | 4,849 | 5,035 | 1.2% | 0.8% |
| Midwest* | 4,572 | 5,337 | 5,607 | 1.7 | 1.0 |
| South | 11,970 | 14,041 | 15,428 | 1.7 | 2.0 |
| West | 1,695 | 2,262 | 2,415 | 3.3 | 1.4 |
| Total | 22,581 | 26,489 | 28,485 | 1.7 | 1.5 |

Sources: 1970 and 1980 data from O'Hare et al. 1982, table 2.1; 1985 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986b, table 8.

* Prior to 1985 this region was referred to as the north central region.

TABLE 2
 Net Migration of Blacks, by Region: 1910–1920 to 1980–1985
 (numbers in 1,000s)

| Period | South | Northeast | Midwest* | West |
|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------|
| 1910–1920 | – 454 | + 182 | + 244 | + 28 |
| 1920–1930 | – 749 | + 349 | + 364 | + 36 |
| 1930–1940 | – 347 | + 171 | + 128 | + 49 |
| 1940–1950 | – 1,599 | + 463 | + 618 | + 339 |
| 1950–1960 | – 1,473 | + 496 | + 541 | + 293 |
| 1960–1970 | – 1,380 | + 612 | + 382 | + 301 |
| 1970–1975 | + 14 | – 64 | – 52 | + 102 |
| 1975–1980 | + 195 | – 175 | – 51 | + 30 |
| 1980–1985 | + 85 | – 50 | – 70 | + 36 |

Sources: 1910–1970 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1979, table 8; 1970–1975 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975, table 28; 1975–1980 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1981, table 42; unpublished 1980–1985 data from the Population Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

* Formerly called the north central region.

2). For several decades prior to the 1970s, black interregional migration was dominated by the movement of blacks out of the South. Starting in the early 1970s, however, the net loss of black migrants from the South to the North stopped and blacks joined a pattern established among whites in the 1950s of net migration from the Northeast and Midwest to the South.

During the first half of the 1980s, the annual geographic mobility rates and black migration rates were lower than rates observed in the 1970s. Most of the patterns of black population movement that were evident during the 1970s, however, continued during the first part of the 1980s.

Between 1980 and 1985, the South continued to experience a net in-migration of blacks but the pace appears slower than that seen in the last half of the 1970s. Both the Northeast and the Midwest continued to experience net out-migration of blacks during the first half of the 1980s, but the rate of out-migration fell significantly in the Northeast and increased only slightly in the Midwest from what was seen in the last half of the 1970s. The West continued to have a net in-migration of blacks in the early 1980s, but at a lower rate

than that of the early 1970s, and at a much lower rate than the thirty years following the end of World War II.

The Nonmetropolitan Turnaround and Black Population Change

One of the demographic trends of the 1970s that received a lot of media attention was the resurgence of population growth in nonmetropolitan areas of the country. These areas grew more rapidly, in large part due to net in-migration. This trend, however, was not observed in the black population. Rather, during the 1970s there was a small net migration of blacks out of nonmetropolitan areas. Between 1970 and 1975 there was a net migration of 138,000 blacks from nonmetropolitan to metropolitan areas, and the comparable figure for the 1975 to 1980 period was 116,000 (see top panel of table 3).

During the first half of the 1980s, it appears that the yearly net movement of blacks between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas is so small that it is impossible to measure reliably with the Current Population Survey sample. In any case, it is clear that the movement between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan locations has not been a major factor in black population change in recent years.

Redistribution of Blacks in Central Cities and Suburbs

One of the big stories of the 1970s was the dramatic increase in black suburbanization and the corollary trend of blacks moving out of central cities. The trickle of black suburbanization of the 1960s became a steady stream during the 1970s as the black population in the suburbs grew by nearly 2.5 million, compared with an increase of just over 2 million in central cities (O'Hare et al. 1982). While the black suburban population (i.e., those living inside metropolitan areas but outside central cities) grew by 70 percent during the 1970s, blacks made up only 6 percent of the suburban population in 1980.

The net movement of blacks out of central cities, which increased from 243,000 in the first half of the 1970s to 439,000 between 1975 and 1980, appears to be sustained through 1984; the pace of this migration stream may well have increased. Data in table 3 show an annual net migration of about 200,000 blacks out of central cities for each year between 1980 and 1984.

TABLE 3
The Movement of Blacks among Nonmetropolitan Areas, Central Cities, and Suburbs: 1970-1984 (figures in 1,000s)

| | 1970-1975 | 1975-1980 | 1980-1981 | 1981-1982 | 1982-1983 | 1983-1984 |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS | | | | | | |
| In-migrants | 325 | 353 | 232 | 117 | 177 | 107 |
| Out-migrants | 463 | 469 | 168 | 135 | 188 | 144 |
| Net-migrants | -138 | -116 | 64 | -18 | -11 | -37 |
| CENTRAL CITIES | | | | | | |
| In-migrants | 737 | 724 | 344 | 311 | 395 | 407 |
| Out-migrants | 980 | 1,163 | 561 | 532 | 573 | 562 |
| Net-migrants | -243 | -439 | -217 | -221 | -178 | -155 |
| SUBURBS | | | | | | |
| In-migrants | 827 | 1,123 | 524 | 539 | 544 | 561 |
| Out-migrants | 446 | 567 | 279 | 196 | 280 | 272 |
| Net-migrants | 381 | 556 | 245 | 343 | 264 | 289 |

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports* series P-20, various years.
Note: Periods refer to the period from March of the first year to March of the last year.

Although blacks were moving out of central cities, whites were moving out at a faster rate and central city populations have become increasingly black since 1970. In 1986, 22.7 percent of the aggregate population of all central cities was black, compared to 22.5 percent in 1980 and 20.6 percent in 1970.

The 1986 figures, however, reflect the populations in central cities and suburbs of many areas that have been classified as metropolitan areas only since 1980, and the 1980 figure includes standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs) that were not included in the 1970 figures. In 1970 there were 243 SMSAs but by 1980 there were 318. Following the implementation of a new metropolitan classification scheme in the early 1980s, there were 280 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) and consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSAs) in 1984 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1987a, table 20), but these 280 areas included more territory than the 318 SMSAs of 1980. These changes in the definition of metropolitan areas confound interpretation of changes in population over time.

Not surprisingly, given these demographic trends, the number of central cities with a black population majority has climbed rapidly, from 2 in 1960, to 4 in 1970, to 13 in 1980. Nine of these 13 black majority central cities are located in the South. Unless there is a dramatic change in urban migration trends during the latter half of the 1980s, the number of black majority cities will double again by 1990.

The net migration of blacks to the suburban ring of metropolitan areas that increased during the 1970s appears to have been sustained if not accelerated during the period of 1980 to 1984. Data from the early 1980s suggest that there was a net in-migration of at least a quarter-million blacks to suburbs every year. Needless to say, most blacks moving to suburbs come from central cities and most blacks who leave central cities move to suburbs. While there is some movement of blacks from nonmetropolitan areas to the suburbs this flow is much smaller than the flow from central cities to the suburbs.

While the rate of white in-migration to suburbs has been high, the rate of out-migration has also been high, and the result is that blacks comprise a growing share of the suburban population. In the suburbs, 6.3 percent of the population was black in 1986, compared with 6.1 percent in 1980 and 4.8 percent in 1970. Interpretation of

these figures, however, is also confounded by the additional metropolitan areas added since 1970.

Notably, one of the fastest-growing groups of blacks are those who are poor and live in census-defined poverty areas of central cities. Poverty areas are census tracts with poverty rates above 20 percent in 1980. While not all the people who live in a poverty area are poor, Census Bureau data show that the number of *poor blacks* living in poverty areas grew by 1.5 million or 59 percent between 1980 and 1986.

Since areas with high rates of poverty often have associated problems such as high rates of criminal activity, out-of-wedlock births, and school dropouts, the rapidly growing number of blacks in such neighborhoods has helped fuel concern about a growing black "underclass" in our major cities.

Black Age Structure

The aging of the population and the echo of the baby boom are responsible for important changes in black age structure since 1970. Over the 1970 to 1984 period, the black population aged, as reflected in a steady rise in median age from 22.4 years in 1970, to 24.9 years in 1980, to 26.3 years in 1984. The major reason for the rise in median age is the aging of the baby boom cohort born between 1946 and 1964. At each point in time, the median age for blacks was about six years lower than the median age for whites, reflecting the higher fertility and shorter life expectancy of blacks relative to whites.

Because of the differential age structure of blacks and whites, blacks comprise a relatively large share of young cohorts and a relatively small share of older cohorts. For example, blacks constitute 15 percent of the population under age 5, but only 7.6 percent of those aged 85 plus.

During the 1970s, three age groups in the black population grew dramatically: young adults (age 18 to 24) grew by 52.4 percent; young working-age persons (age 25 to 44) grew by 38.8 percent; and the elderly (age 65 plus) grew by 31.9 percent. On the other hand, the school-age population (age 5 to 17) actually declined by 1.6 percent between 1970 and 1980 (see table 4).

During the first half of the 1980s, however, a somewhat different

TABLE 4
Changes in the Numbers of Blacks in Selected Age Groups between 1970 and 1986

| Age Group | Population size in 1,000s | | Change 1970 to 1980 | | Change 1980 to 1986 | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|------------|
| | 1970 | 1980 | 1986 | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Preschool (0-4) | 2,411 | 2,459 | 2,721 | 48 | 2.0% | 262 | 10.7% |
| School age (5-17) | 7,126 | 7,009 | 6,958 | -117 | -1.6 | -51 | -0.7 |
| Young adults (18-24) | 2,638 | 4,019 | 3,956 | 1,381 | 52.4 | -63 | -1.6 |
| Young families (25-44) | 5,061 | 7,023 | 8,852 | 1,962 | 38.8 | 1,829 | 26.0 |
| Older families (45-64) | 3,728 | 4,202 | 4,546 | 474 | 12.7 | 344 | 8.2 |
| Elderly (65 and older) | 1,586 | 2,092 | 2,394 | 506 | 31.9 | 302 | 14.4 |
| Total | 22,550 | 26,803 | 29,427 | 4,253 | 18.9 | 2,624 | 9.8 |

Source: 1980 and 1986 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1987b; 1970 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972, table 85.

set of age groups experienced growth or decline. Between 1980 and 1986, the number of blacks under age 5 began growing at a more rapid pace (10.7 percent), and the young working-age group and the elderly continued to grow at above average rates. On the other hand, school age and young adult blacks (age 5 to 24) declined in total number. Obviously, this is due to the decline in births between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s.

The number of blacks aged 85 plus (not shown in the table) grew by an astonishing 33.9 percent between 1980 and 1986 (a gain 10 percentage points higher than that for similar-aged whites) and very similar to the 35.9 percent gain observed between 1970 and 1980.

Fertility and Mortality

Since many aspects of fertility and mortality are covered in Manton, Patrick, and Johnson (1987) and Furstenberg (1987), I will be relatively brief in my treatment of those topics here.

Fertility

In the 1960s and 1970s, the fertility levels of both black and whites declined significantly and there was some convergence of black and white fertility levels. The fertility rate (number of live births per 1,000 population) of whites fell by 26 percent during the 1960s and by 23 percent during the 1970s, while the black fertility rate fell by 25 percent during the 1960s and 24 percent during the 1970s (see table 5).

Between 1980 and 1984, the fertility levels of both blacks and whites continued the decline witnessed in the 1960s and 1970s, and the gap between black and white fertility levels continued to close. In 1980 the total fertility rate (TFR) of blacks was 2.30 compared to 1.75 for whites, but by 1984 the TFR for blacks was 2.15 compared with 1.72 for whites. In other words, the black TFR was 31 percent higher than the white TFR in 1980, but only 25 percent higher in 1984. The total fertility rate measures the number of births a woman would have if she were exposed to the age-specific fertility rates observed at a given date.

The fertility differential between blacks and whites is largely due

TABLE 5
Number of Births and Total Fertility Rates by Race: 1960-1984

| Year | Registered births | | | Fertility rates* | | |
|------|-------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|--------|--------|
| | Total | Whites | Blacks | Total | Whites | Blacks |
| 1984 | 3,669,141 | 2,923,502 | 592,745 | 65.4 | 62.2 | 81.4 |
| 1980 | 3,612,258 | 2,898,732 | 589,616 | 68.4 | 64.7 | 88.1 |
| 1970 | 3,731,386 | 3,091,264 | 572,362 | 87.9 | 84.1 | 115.4 |
| 1960 | 4,257,850 | 3,600,744 | 602,264 | 118.0 | 113.2 | 153.5 |

Source: National Center for Health Statistics 1986a, 13 (table 1).

* Fertility rates reflect the number of live births per 1,000 population.

TABLE 6
Births per 1,000 Teenagers Aged 15 to 19, by Race: 1970 to 1984

| Year | All teenagers | | | Unmarried teenagers | | |
|------|---------------|-------|-------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| | Total | White | Black | Total | White | Black |
| 1970 | 68.3 | 57.4 | 147.7 | 22.4 | 10.9 | 96.9 |
| 1980 | 53.0 | 44.7 | 100.0 | 27.6 | 16.2 | 89.2 |
| 1984 | 50.9 | 42.5 | 95.7 | 30.2 | 19.0 | 87.1 |

Source: U.S. Center for Health Statistics 1986b, 17 (table 4), 32 (table 19).

to socioeconomic differences between these two groups. For example, among women of similar socioeconomic status whites are more likely than blacks to have had a child in the past year. For women in families with yearly incomes under \$10,000 in 1985, there were 93.8 births per 1,000 women aged 18 to 44 among whites compared with only 87.4 for blacks (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986a, table 4).

Even though young (aged 18 to 24) black women have had a much higher number of births to date than their white counterparts (817 per 1,000 blacks compared to 463 per 1,000 whites) young black women expect to have fewer births over their lifetime than young white women. Black women aged 18 to 24 in 1985 expect to have 1.848 lifetime births compared with 2.079 for similar-aged white women (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986a, table 5).

Even though fertility rates fell, the number of births for blacks and whites were slightly higher in 1984 than in 1980 because the pool of potential mothers in the prime childbearing years increased due to the aging of the baby boom cohort.

Births to teenagers is another demographic topic that continues to receive a lot of attention (see Furstenberg 1987). The birthrate for black teenagers dropped significantly between 1970 and 1980, going from 147.7 births per 1,000 teenagers aged 15 to 19 in 1970 to 100.0 in 1980. This rate continued to decline between 1980 and 1984, but the rate of decrease slowed significantly. By 1984, the birthrate for black teens had dropped to 95.7 per 1,000 women (see table 6).

TABLE 7
Life Expectancy at Birth, by Race and Sex: 1970 to 1984

| Year | White | | Black | |
|--|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 1985 | 71.8 | 78.7 | 65.3 | 73.7 |
| 1984 | 71.8 | 78.7 | 65.6 | 73.7 |
| 1983 | 71.7 | 78.7 | 65.4 | 73.6 |
| 1982 | 71.5 | 78.7 | 65.1 | 73.7 |
| 1981 | 71.1 | 78.4 | 64.5 | 73.2 |
| 1980 | 70.7 | 78.1 | 63.8 | 72.5 |
| 1970 | 68.0 | 75.6 | 60.0 | 68.3 |
| Average annual increase in years of life expectancy at birth | | | | |
| 1970-1980 | .27 | .25 | .38 | .42 |
| 1980-1985 | .22 | .12 | .30 | .24 |

Source: National Center for Health Statistics 1986b, 12 (table 4).

Mortality

Life expectancy at birth continued to increase during the first half of the 1980s for both blacks and whites, but the pace of increase slowed. Between 1970 and 1980, the average annual increase in life expectancy at birth was .38 years for black males and .42 years for black females. Between 1980 and 1985, the average annual increase was .30 years for black males and .24 years for black females. Life expectancy at birth actually decreased between 1984 and 1985 for black males (see table 7).

Heart disease was the leading cause of death for blacks in 1984, as it has been since at least 1950. While heart disease is also the leading cause of death for whites, this cause of death is more prevalent among blacks than among whites (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1985).

Family Structure and Living Arrangements

Table 8 illustrates several post-1960 changes in the family status of black cohorts at various points in the life cycle. In most cases these

TABLE 8
 Marital Status of Blacks and All Races in Selected Age Groups, by Sex: 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1985

| Marital Status, age, and race | Men | | | | Women | | | |
|---|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| | 1960* | 1970 | 1980 | 1985 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1985 |
| Percentage never married (age 20-24) | | | | | | | | |
| Blacks | 56% | 57% | 79% | 86% | 36% | 43% | 69% | 76% |
| All races | 53 | 56 | 69 | 76 | 29 | 36 | 50 | 59 |
| Percentage separated or divorced (age 25-34) | | | | | | | | |
| Blacks | 8 | 9 | 13 | 13 | 17 | 20 | 28 | 21 |
| All races | 4 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 14 |
| Percentage in intact marriages (age 35-44) | | | | | | | | |
| Blacks | 71 | 69 | 61 | 57 | 62 | 58 | 49 | 46 |
| All races | 84 | 84 | 81 | 76 | 80 | 79 | 84 | 72 |
| Percentage of those aged 55 and over who are widowed | | | | | | | | |
| Blacks | 16 | 16 | 14 | 16 | 47 | 44 | 45 | 46 |
| All races | 12 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 38 | 38 | 37 | 36 |

Sources: Glick 1981; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986c.

figures highlight differences in levels of marriage and divorce between blacks and whites, but similarities in the direction of trends continue over time.

The first horizontal panel in table 8 shows that the trend away from early marriage that was evident in the 1970s continued into the first half of the 1980s. By 1985, 86 percent of black men aged 20 to 24 had never been married, which is up from 79 percent in 1980 and 57 percent in 1970. The figures for black women are about 10 percentage points lower at each time period, reflecting their earlier mean age at first marriage. The rise in the share of young adults who are not married, of course, has enlarged the pool of women at risk of becoming pregnant and bearing a child out of wedlock.

The second panel in table 8 records that the share of black men in the group aged 25 to 34 that were divorced or separated remained constant at 13 percent between 1980 and 1985 and the figure for black women fell from 28 to 21 percent during this period. The fact that a smaller and smaller share of those aged 20 to 24 is getting married is one important reason why the share of those aged 25 to 34 who are divorced or separated is not growing. If people don't get married, they can't get divorced or separated.

One consequence of the falling marriage rates of those aged 20 to 24 and level rates of divorce and separation among those 25 to 34 years old is shown in the third panel of table 8. The share of blacks aged 35 to 44 living in intact marriages continued to fall during the first half of the 1980s. In 1980, 61 percent of black males in this age group were living in intact marriages, but that figure fell to 57 percent in 1985, and for black women the figure fell from 49 percent to 46 percent during the same time period.

The share of blacks aged 55 and over who are widowed remained fairly constant. About 15 percent of all black males in this age group reported being widowed, compared with about 45 percent of black females. These proportions have remained relatively constant since 1960 but it remains to be seen if the recent decline in the share of blacks in intact marriages at younger ages will change the share of older blacks who are widows or widowers.

Single Parent Families

One of the major trends in family demography, since at least the end of World War II, has been the increase in single parent families. The

shift to single parent families has been observed among both whites and blacks, but the level is significantly higher for blacks. This trend not only continued during the first half of the 1980s, but also the rate of growth of black single parent families increased over that of the 1970s. As of 1986, over half of all black children lived in single parent families (see table 9).

Between 1970 and 1980, the number of black children living in single parent families increased by an average of 130,000 a year compared with an annual increase of 163,200 between 1980 and 1985. It should be noted that a portion of this increase in black children living in single parent families shown in census data is a product of some procedural changes made in the way the Census Bureau collects this data, which resulted in identification of single parent families that were missed in earlier surveys. This means figures prior to 1983 are likely to underestimate the number of single parent families, and therefore the changes between 1980 and 1985 are likely to be over-estimated using this data series (for additional details on this change, see U.S. Bureau of the Census 1985a, 4).

This trend has a number of implications, not the least of which is the economic status of black children. The poverty rate for children in black female-headed families (66.9 percent) is three times the poverty rate for children in black male-headed families (18.8 percent), and six times that of children living in white male-headed families (10.4 percent) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986b, table 16). Of course, economic status has a good deal to do with health status and health resources available.

At the same time that the proportion of families headed by a woman has grown steadily, the predominant marital status of black single parents has changed. Table 9 shows that in 1960 only 10 percent of black children living in single parent households were residing with a parent who had never married, but by 1985 that figure had risen to 48 percent. The increase in the share of children living with a never-married parent was also evident in the total population where only 4.2 percent of children living in single parent families resided with a never-married parent in 1960 compared to 18.4 percent in 1985.

Racial differences in the association between childbearing and marriage are highlighted by noting that among never-married women aged 35

to 44 in 1984, 89.7 percent of whites were childless compared with only 29.4 percent of blacks (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1985b).

This shift in marital status of single parents is significant for several reasons. First, never-married single parents are much less likely to be awarded or to be receiving child support payments, which makes them more reliant on public welfare. Second, a large share of never-married parents are teenage mothers, who often cut short their education to have a child. About two-thirds of all teenage mothers eventually spend some time on welfare. Third, children who have spent at least part of their childhood in a single parent family are more likely than children who spend their entire childhood in a two parent family to become single parents themselves.

Summary

Most of the black demographic trends witnessed in the 1970s have continued during the first half of the 1980s, but the pace of demographic change has slowed in some areas and quickened in others. A short summarization of the major trends is provided below;

1. The black population is growing faster than the white population and blacks are becoming a larger share of the total population.
2. Blacks continue to move out of the North and into the South and West.
3. Blacks continue to move out of central cities into suburbs, but blacks are not moving out of central cities as fast as whites and central city populations are becoming increasingly black.
4. The growth rates of preschool-age blacks increased in the 1980s, but the growth rates of the school age and young adult populations declined.
5. The fertility rates of blacks continued to fall and to approach convergence with those of whites, although there still is a significant gap between black and white fertility rates.
6. Teen birthrates for unmarried blacks continued to fall during the first half of the 1980s.
7. Life expectancy for blacks continued to increase during the 1980s, but at a somewhat slower pace than seen during the 1970s.
8. The share of black children living in single parent families

TABLE 9
Living Arrangements of Children under the Age of 18: 1960-1985 (numbers in 1,000s).

| | All children | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|
| | 1960 | | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1985 | |
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| TOTAL | 63,727 | 100% | 69,162 | 100% | 63,427 | 100% | 62,475 | 100% |
| Living with: | | | | | | | | |
| Two parents | 55,877 | 87.7 | 58,939 | 85.2 | 48,624 | 76.7 | 46,149 | 73.9 |
| One parent | | | | | | | | |
| Formerly married | 5,586 | 8.8 | 7,642 | 11.0 | 10,647 | 16.8 | 10,879 | 17.4 |
| One parent | | | | | | | | |
| Never married | 243 | 0.4 | 557 | 0.8 | 1,820 | 2.9 | 3,756 | 6.0 |
| (Single parent subtotal) | | (9.2) | | (11.8) | | (19.7) | | (23.4) |
| Other relatives | 1,601 | 2.5 | 1,547 | 2.2 | 1,929 | 3.0 | 1,303 | 2.1 |
| Nonrelatives | 420 | 0.7 | 477 | 0.7 | 407 | 0.6 | 388 | 0.6 |

Black children

| | 1960 | | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1985 | |
|--------------------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Total | 8,650 | 100% | 9,422 | 100% | 9,375 | 100% | 9,479 | 100% |
| Living with: | | | | | | | | |
| Two parents | 5,795 | 67.0 | 5,508 | 58.5 | 3,956 | 42.2 | 3,741 | 39.5 |
| One parent | 1,714 | 19.8 | 2,574 | 27.3 | 3,062 | 32.7 | 2,657 | 28.0 |
| Formerly married | | | | | | | | |
| One parent | 182 | 2.1 | 423 | 4.5 | 1,235 | 13.2 | 2,456 | 25.9 |
| Never married | | | | | | | | |
| (Single parent subtotal) | | (21.9) | | (31.8) | | (45.9) | | (53.9) |
| Other relatives | 827 | 9.6 | 820 | 8.7 | 998 | 10.6 | 538 | 5.7 |
| Nonrelatives | 132 | 1.5 | 97 | 1.0 | 124 | 1.3 | 87 | 0.9 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986c.

continued to grow during the 1980s at a faster rate than seen during the 1970s.

9. The share of black children living with a never-married parent grew much more rapidly in the 1980s than in the 1970s.

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