



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 24, 2010

New Study Chronicles Crisis of Traditional Families

A new study from the Family Research Council (FRC) reveals that over half of children in the United States are being raised in single-parent homes decimated by divorce, separation, and parental conflict. In the U.S Index of Belonging and Rejection, Dr. Patrick Fagan, director of the FRC's Marriage and Religion Institute, found that the American family model has become one of rejection, with only 45 percent of American teens raised in families with both a mother and father legally married to one another.



By contrast, 55 percent of teens in the U.S. have been raised in families marred by rejection, including “single-parent families, stepfamilies, and children who no longer live with either birth parent but with adoptive or foster parents.”

Fagan's research, based on data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, found that increased divorce rates and more children born outside of marriage “have turned growing up in a stable, two-parent family into an exception, rather than the rule, for young Americans.” Especially relevant, he found, were statistics showing that while 62 percent of Asian-American teens and 54 percent of Caucasian teens live with both married parents, only 17 percent of African-American youth — less than one in five — live in intact homes with both married parents.

Fagan found that the age, education, employment, and income levels of parents were important determining factors in stable two-parent homes, with educated parents typically better employed, earning a higher income, and waiting until later to have children. His research confirmed the well-documented truth that “children in intact families are significantly less likely to be poor or dependent on government welfare, show better academic achievement and more positive social development, have fewer accidents or injuries, exhibit better mental health and fewer behavioral problems, and have better relationships with their parents.”

However, Fagan's study moved on to focus on a root cause of the problem of deteriorating traditional families that most studies ignore: the issue of rejection between parents which destroys the harmony that is essential to raising stable children. “This rejection is now the dominant feature of American family life,” writes Fagan, adding that the cost of this tragedy has been a generation and more of dysfunctional individuals and groups increasingly dependent upon government social programs that are collapsing under a weight they are totally unable to bear.

“The decrease of strong families in the United States has major implications for the nation, and by extension, the rest of the world,” he writes. “A nation is only as strong as its citizens, and a lack of strong families weakens human, social, and moral capital, which in turn directly affects the financial (and thus indirectly the military and foreign policy strength) of the United States. A great nation depends on great families, but weak families will build a weak nation.” If the U.S. is to continue to be a positive influence on the rest of the world, “pursuing what is good for itself and other nations,” he



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challenges, “its parents must first be leaders of their own homes and children.”

While the study documents the extent to which families have been decimated across geographic, ethnic, and racial boundaries, Fagan emphasizes the particularly dramatic impact upon black families, advising that the problem offers a distinct opportunity for African-American families to take the lead in helping to re-establish an American culture based on belonging and acceptance. “If Black communities and churches are able to re-establish successful families, and raise children that are capable to marry and raise their children of their own well, the rest of America will be able to look to them as an example for restoration and follow their lead,” he predicts.

“The culture of rejection burdens communities with higher levels of poverty, unemployment, welfare dependency, domestic abuse, child neglect, delinquency, crime and crime victimization, drug abuse, academic failure and school dropout, and unmarried teen pregnancy and childbearing,” he notes, with the nation facing ever burgeoning costs for education, healthcare, mental health, law enforcement, and justice.

Concludes Fagan, “Our future as a country depends on the strength of our families. Such strength is waning, which should give every American pause for concern and motivation for action.”



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