Harvard / Radcliffe Class of 1977 Longitudinal Study

40th Reunion Report

Jason Weeden, JD, PhD
How many participate?
Demographics of the 2017 sample

- 66% men; 34% women
- 90% non-Hispanic White; 4% Black; 3% Asian; 1% Hispanic; 2% other
  - Degreed U.S. cohort:
    - 80% white; 11% black; 4% Asian; 3% Hispanic; 2% other
  - Non-degreed U.S. cohort:
    - 69% white; 16% black; 1% Asian; 12% Hispanic; 2% other
- 95% heterosexual; 2% bisexual; 3% gay/lesbian
- 0% transgender
## Family background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-degreed U.S. cohort</th>
<th>Degreed U.S. cohort</th>
<th>H/R Class of 1977</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lived with both biological parents in teen years</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more siblings</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degreed father</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degreed mother</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marriage and divorce

Currently married

Ever divorced

Non-degreed cohort
Degreed cohort
H/R 1977
Near-divorce experiences

• For people currently married, did you ever go through a situation in which you or your spouse seriously considered ending the marriage (or a situation in which you think many people would have seriously considered it)?
  • 36% of those currently married say “yes”

• Full sample
  • 8% never married
  • 23% divorced at some point
  • 27% married and had a near-divorce experience
  • 42% married and no near-divorce experience
Near-divorce experiences

- How did it get resolved?
  - Books 17%
  - Friends 18%
  - On own 46%
  - Counseling 54%
  - Currently unresolved 17%

- How did it affect your marriage?
  - We'll probably end the marriage in the near future 1%
  - It left residual negative effects on the marriage 19%
  - The marriage is about the same as before 27%
  - It strengthened the marriage 53%
Health

• Relatively stable subjective health from 2007 to 2012 to 2017
  • Poor/fair: 4% to 6% to 6%
• Relatively stable incidence of serious or chronic illness
  • ~20% in each 5-year period
• More individuals managing medical conditions
  • 42% to 51% to 55%
  • E.g.: cholesterol, blood pressure, depression
Subjective health comparison

1 = poor  2 = fair  3 = good  4 = excellent

2007

Non-degreed U.S. cohort
Degreed U.S. cohort
H/R Class of '77
In general, how satisfied are you with your life at present?
Life Satisfaction:
Some big correlations from last time
Times per month

- USPop75
- USPop50
- USPop25
- HR75
- HR50
- HR25

Graph showing the decrease in USPop75, USPop50, USPop25, HR75, HR50, and HR25 over the years from 1987 to 2017.
Parents

2007 2012 2017

Neither alive | One alive | Both alive

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Parents’ living situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You or a sibling</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You or a sibling</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You or a sibling</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Your involvement

• Your involvement (from 1 to 7)
  • Mothers: 2.9 in 2007; 3.4 in 2012; 3.7 in 2017
  • Fathers: 2.3 in 2007; 2.6 in 2012; 3.0 in 2017

• More than 5 hours a week
  • Mothers: 9% in 2007; 17% in 2012; 14% in 2017
  • Fathers: 7% in 2007; 7% in 2012; 14% in 2017

• More than $4,000 a year
  • Mothers: 12% in 2007; 15% in 2012; 21% in 2017
  • Fathers: 8% in 2007; 15% in 2012; 13% in 2017
Enjoyment and stress

• Enjoyment (from 1 to 7)
  • Mothers: 4.7 in 2007; 4.9 in 2012; 4.8 in 2017
  • Fathers: 4.7 in 2007; 5.0 in 2012; 5.0 in 2017

• Stress (from 1 to 7)
  • Mothers: 3.1 in 2007; 3.4 in 2012; 3.6 in 2017
  • Fathers: 2.8 in 2007; 3.2 in 2012; 3.3 in 2017
Getting older

- Living will, advanced directives, etc.
  - 65% have them in place
  - 30% thought about it but haven’t fully set them up
  - 5% haven’t thought much about it
Getting older

- Age in place
- Downsize
- Staffed community
- With family
- Haven't thought
Are you saving enough for retirement?

Median net worth

$0, $1,000,000, $2,000,000, $3,000,000, $4,000,000, $5,000,000, $6,000,000, $7,000,000, $8,000,000, $9,000,000

No  1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Yes

2007
2012
2017
Categories of charitable donations

- Educational institutions: $8,970
  - $2,860 to Harvard/Radcliffe
  - $6,110 to others
- Social wellbeing: $3,410
- Religious groups: $3,030
- Health: $2,670
- Politics: $1,910
- Art: $1,870
- Environment: $1,770
- Other: $5,470
Employed outside the home: Women

- Not employed
- Part time
- Full time

Employed outside the home: Men

- 1987
- 1992
- 1997
- 2002
- 2007
- 2012
- 2017
- Near future

- Not employed
- Part time
- Full time
Median hours per week

- Job
- Relax
- With partner
- Exercise
- Hobbies

- 2007
- 2012
- 2017
Media/culture consumption

- Read online news/commentary
- Listen to news on the radio
- Read non-fiction books
- Read local newspapers
- Read fiction books
- Listen to music on the radio
- Read national newspapers
- Watch fictional TV or movies
- Watch national news

- Almost never
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- Most days
Media/culture consumption

• Some common examples
  • Types of non-fiction books
    • 49% history, 27% biography, 15% science, 8% politics
  • Types of fiction books
    • 18% mystery, 17% historical, 16% sci fi, 9% literary, 6% classics
  • TV shows
    • 11% Game of Thrones
    • 5% House of Cards, Homeland, Law & Order or NCIS, The Americans
  • Live performances
    • 43% theater or plays
    • 24% concerts or music, 23% symphony or orchestra or classical
    • 13% musicals, 10% opera, 8% jazz
Online news

Drudge
Fox News
Wall Street Journal
Politico
Huffington Post
CNN
Washington Post
New York Times

Republican
Democrat
Liberal shift in self-placement

![Bar chart showing changes in self-placement from 2002 to 2017. The chart indicates a liberal shift with a decrease in Right-wing and Conservative categories and an increase in Middle category.](chart)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political issues</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Support</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abortion rights</td>
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<td>Tougher environmental regs</td>
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<td>Increased public education</td>
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<td>Same-sex marriage</td>
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<td>Higher taxes for the rich</td>
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<td>No-fault divorce</td>
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<td>Public-funded healthcare</td>
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<td>Right to die</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal marijuana</td>
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Political activities

- Give money
- Sign petition
- Boycott
- Contact media

Graph showing the number of political activities over time: Public 2004, Public 2014, HR 2004, HR 2014, HR 2017.
Grandchildren

- Percent with grandchildren
  - 2007: 2%
  - 2012: 6%
  - 2017: 18%

- 2017
  - 17% No kids
  - 65% Kids but no grandkids
  - 18% Kids + grandkids
Grandchildren

• Trust or educational fund for grandchildren?
  • 28% a little; 13% a lot

• Pay current educational expenses?
  • Oldest is 5 or younger
    • 11% a little; 4% a lot
  • Oldest is 6 or older
    • 38% a little; 14% a lot

• Other financial assistance?
  • 21% a little; 5% a lot

• Taken guardianship?
  • None
When your kids were born
Last time:
What kinds of factors predict college admittance?

- The Big Four
  - Spouse went to highly ranked school
  - Regular family meals in middle school
  - Academic clubs in high school
  - Standardized test prep
- Median outcomes
  - 0 or 1 factor
    - National universities ranked in 40s and 50s
    - E.g.: U Wisconsin; U Texas; Boston U; U Maryland
  - 2 factors
    - National universities ranked from teens to low 30s
    - E.g.: Cornell; Emory; Boston C; Brandeis
  - 3 or 4 factors
    - National universities ranked in top 20
    - E.g.: U Chicago; U Penn; Duke; Dartmouth
This time:

- How does their transition to adulthood compare to yours?
- How does it compare to their own cohort?
- Question areas
  - Education
  - Marriage
  - Living with parents
  - Financial support from parents
  - Work
Education level at age 27

- U.S. mid-1950s cohort
- U.S. mid-1980s cohort
- HR Class of '77
- Kids of HR77

- No 4-year degree
- 4-year degree
- Grad degree
Highest degree

HR Class of '77 now
HR Class of '77 at age 27
Kids of HR77 at age 27

- No deg.
- Bach.
- Some grad.
- Masters
- JD
- PhD
- MD
Married at age 27
Living with parent(s) at age 27

- HR Class of '77
- Kids of HR77
Assistance from parents at age 27

[Bar chart showing assistance from parents at age 27 for HR Class of '77 and Kids of HR77. The chart displays the proportion of individuals who received 'A little' or 'A lot' assistance.]
Inheritance or family trust at age 27

HR Class of '77

A little

Kids of HR77

A little  A lot
Kids’ career prospects compared to yours

A lot harder  A little harder  About the same  A little easier  A lot easier
Work at age 27

- U.S. mid-1950s cohort
- U.S. mid-1980s cohort
- HR Class of '77
- Kids of HR77

- Full-time
- Part-time
- School
- Neither
The kids are alright?

- The big themes nationally
  - Lengthened educations delay adult markers
    - Work, marriage, children
  - Plus a general decline in marriage
  - Plus some reduction in gender differentiation
  - Plus the Great Recession

- You can pick out themes that look troubling
  - Video-gamer living in mom’s basement!

- Or you can pick out themes that look positive
  - Increased education; reduced teen childbearing; etc.

- Your kids, specifically
  - They’re mostly among the high-education wing of their generation
The recurring theme

• It’s a complex group with lots of stories
• But, on average, education is associated with really positive outcomes
  • Wealth
  • Relationships
  • Health
  • Civic engagement
  • Charity
  • Resources to help parents, children, and grandchildren
Special Thanks

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