



Who are They?

"We believe that women are useful, not only to sweep houses, wash dishes, make beds and raise babies, but that they should stand behind the counter, study law or physics, or become good book-keepers and be able to do the business in any counting house, and all this to enlarge their sphere of usefulness for the benefit of society at large."

Brigham Young
First Governor of Utah
1869

The Demographics of Utah's Women

Recent changes in the labor force experience of Utah women cannot be fully understood without examining the state's demographics. Variations in population, marital status, and fertility all affect or are affected by the migration of women into the labor force. A woman's marital status, whether or not she has children, and her educational level all shape her labor force experience.

Surprise! Surprise! More Guys than Gals

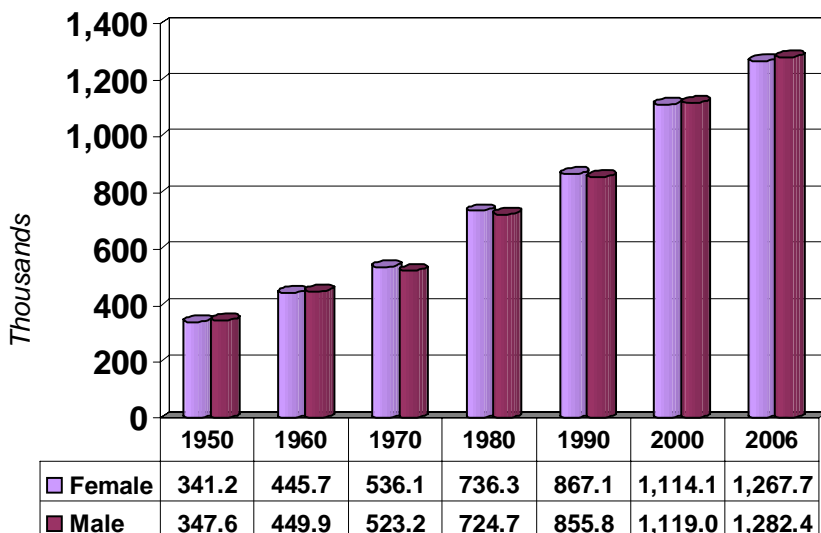
It's "tradition." Women typically outnumber men in the population. The 2000 Census tallied only 96 men for every 100 women in the U.S. After all, even though more boy babies are born each year, women outlive men by an average of six years.

This "rule of thumb" generally holds true in Utah, too. In 1990, Utah showed 99 men per 100 women. However, when the 2000 Census was taken, males actually outnumbered females in the Beehive state—100.4 men for every 100 women.

What happened? An influx of Hispanic or "Latino" men bolstered the male ranks. From 1990 to 2000, Utah's Hispanic population increased by 138 percent—doubling its share of the total population. The male/female ratio for the non-Hispanic population measured 99.9. The male/female ratio for the Hispanic population registered 125.7. In other words, an influx of Hispanic men—particularly in the "working" ages—pushed the number of males above the number of females in Utah.

Estimates from the 2006 American Community Survey suggest that men in Utah still hold the numerical edge with 101.2 men for every 100 women. Another way to look at this number? Roughly 50.3 percent of the Utah population is male.

Utah Population by Gender

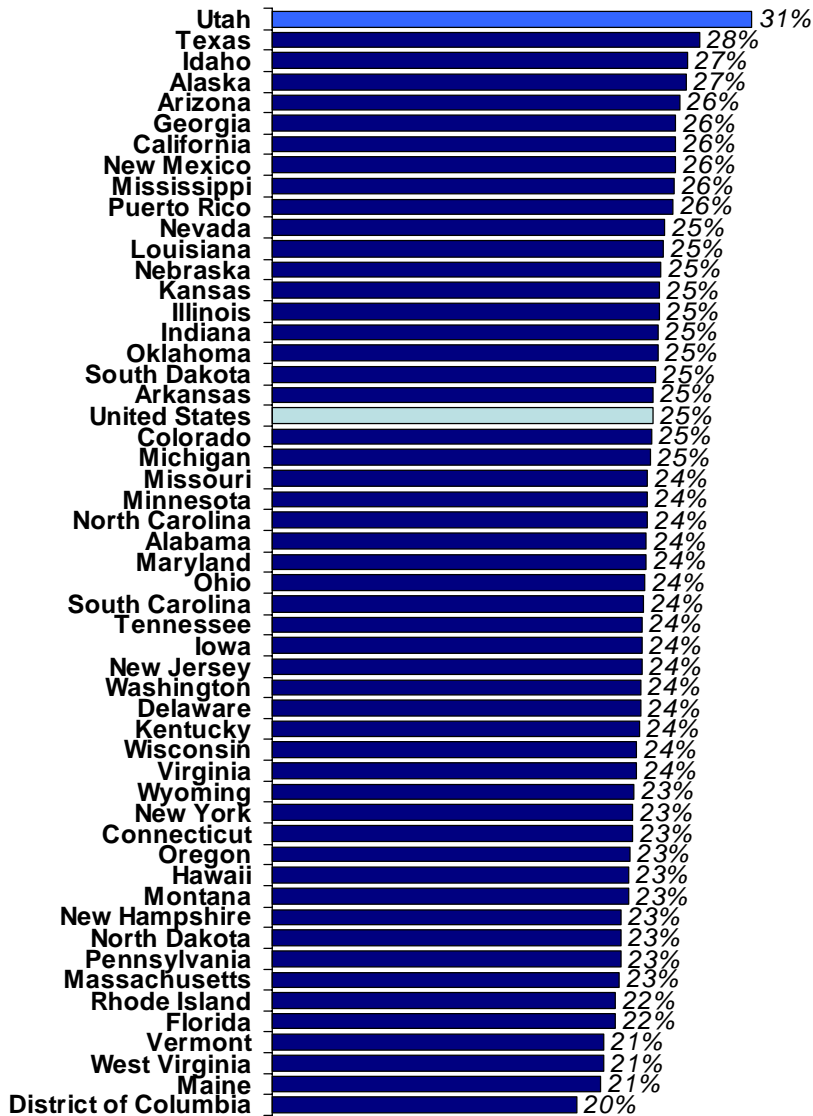


*Includes only household population.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The Baby of the Country

Unless you've been living in a media vacuum, you've probably heard that Utah has the youngest population in the nation. According to the American Community Survey, 31 percent of Utah's population was under the age of 18 in 2006—the highest rate of any state in the nation. Yes, there are lots of kids in Utah. (Someone once said that in Utah you have a greater chance of

Share of Population Under 18—2006



*Includes only household population.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

being run over by a stroller than anywhere else in the country.) Of course, lots of kids translates into lots of moms or moms with lots of kids.

You might suppose that with such a young population, Utah has a hefty birth rate. Good guess. In 2006, Utah's birth rate measured roughly 20 births per 1,000 population compared to a U.S. birth rate of only 14 births per 1,000.

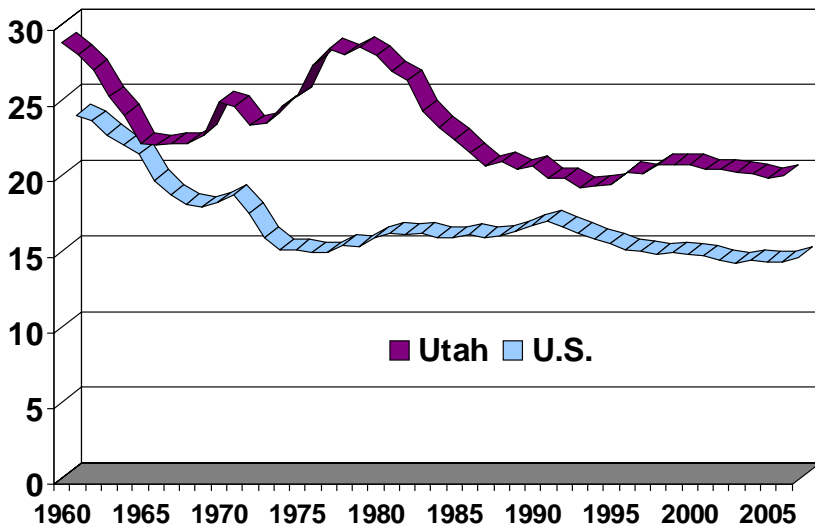
Since 1950, Utah's birth rate has continually surpassed the national average. The gap stretched widest in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. In recent years, the gap has closed somewhat. Yes, even in Utah, birth rates have dropped substantially from their 1950 levels. However, since 1990 rates have remained relatively flat on a state and national basis.

A Family Affair

Not surprisingly, Utah's family size is larger than the average U.S. family. In 2006, the average Utah family (two or more persons living together related by birth, marriage, or adoption) measured 3.56 persons. That's down about half a person since 1960. Nationally, the average family size measures just 3.20 persons.

Yes, Utahns have large families. In 2006, 25 percent of Utah families had five or more members compared to only 14 percent nationally.

Births Per 1,000 Population



Source: Utah Department of Health.

the adult population had never been married contrasted to 25 percent in 2006.

After hitting their peak in the early 80s, divorce rates have moderated. In 1950, Utah displayed a divorce rate (divorces per 1,000 population) of 3.0. By 1981, the rate peaked at 5.5 only to taper off to 3.8 by 2006.

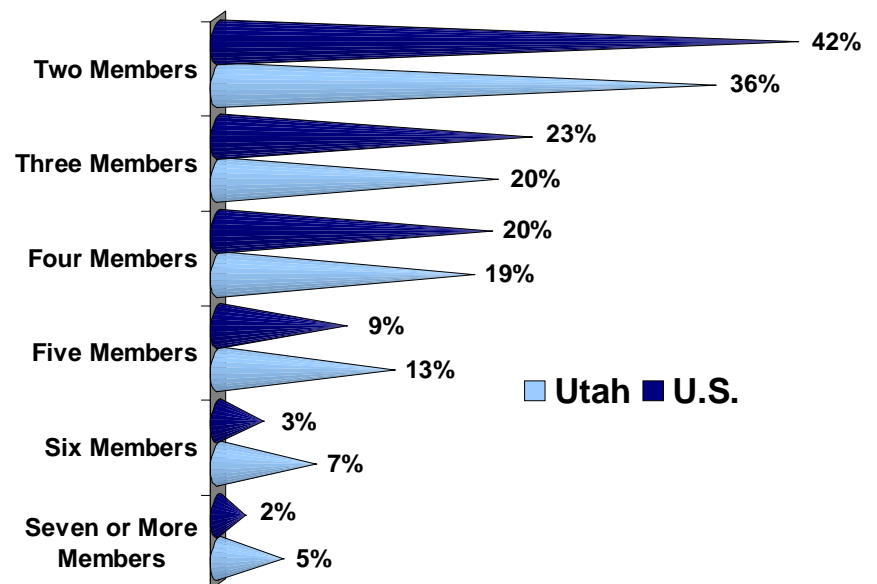
Incidentally, Utah almost always shows a higher divorce rate than the national average—even back in 1950. In addition, the rate understates Utah’s divorce rate because of its large under-marriageable-age population.

Here Comes and There Goes the Bride

In 1950, 69 percent of Utah’s marriageable-age population were joined in the bonds of wedlock. By the 2006, the share of the married population had dropped to 58 percent. Nevertheless, Utahns are still much more likely than their U.S. counterparts to be married. Only 48 percent of the U.S. population is married.

Common sense and a little observation suggest that a larger share of the Utah population is now divorced—or just hasn’t gotten around to getting married. In 1950, only 2 percent of the population was divorced compared to 10 percent in 2006. In addition, women and men are postponing or foregoing marriage. In 1950, only 19 percent of

Members Per Family—2006



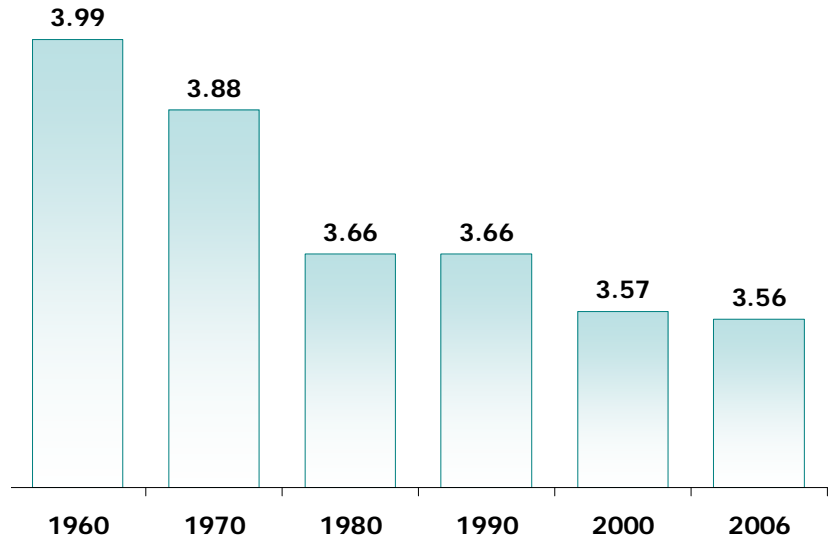
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey.

Utah's higher-than-average divorce rate may be connected to its young marriages. In 2006, only Idaho showed a lower female age at first marriage than did Utah.

A Strong Influence

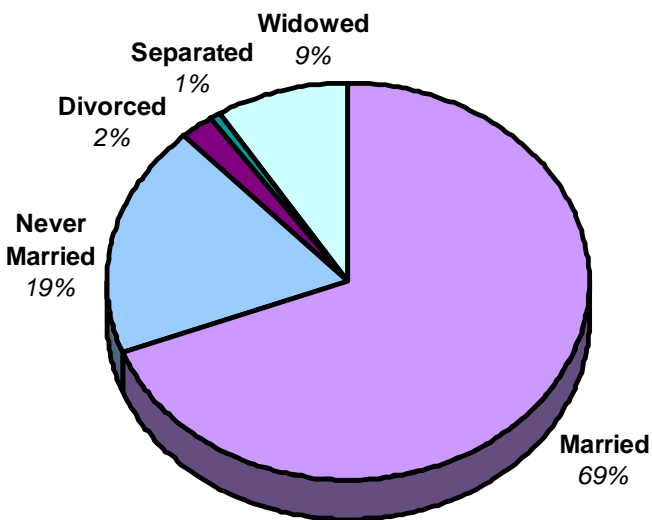
Many of Utah's atypical demographic statistics—high birth rates, larger families, more and younger marriages—reflect the culture of Utah's dominant religion. Approximately 61 percent of Utah's population belongs to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Cultural and religious beliefs about marriage, family, and working mothers have a strong influence on Utah's demographics.

Average Members Per Utah Family

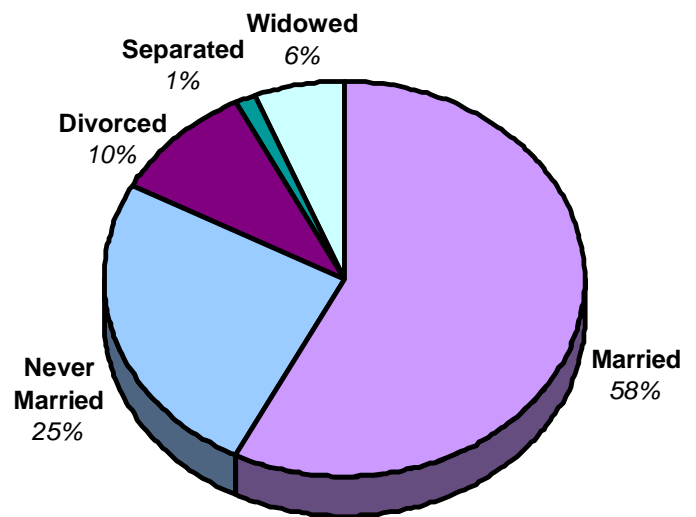


Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Marital Status of Utah Women, 15 Years and Older



1950



2006

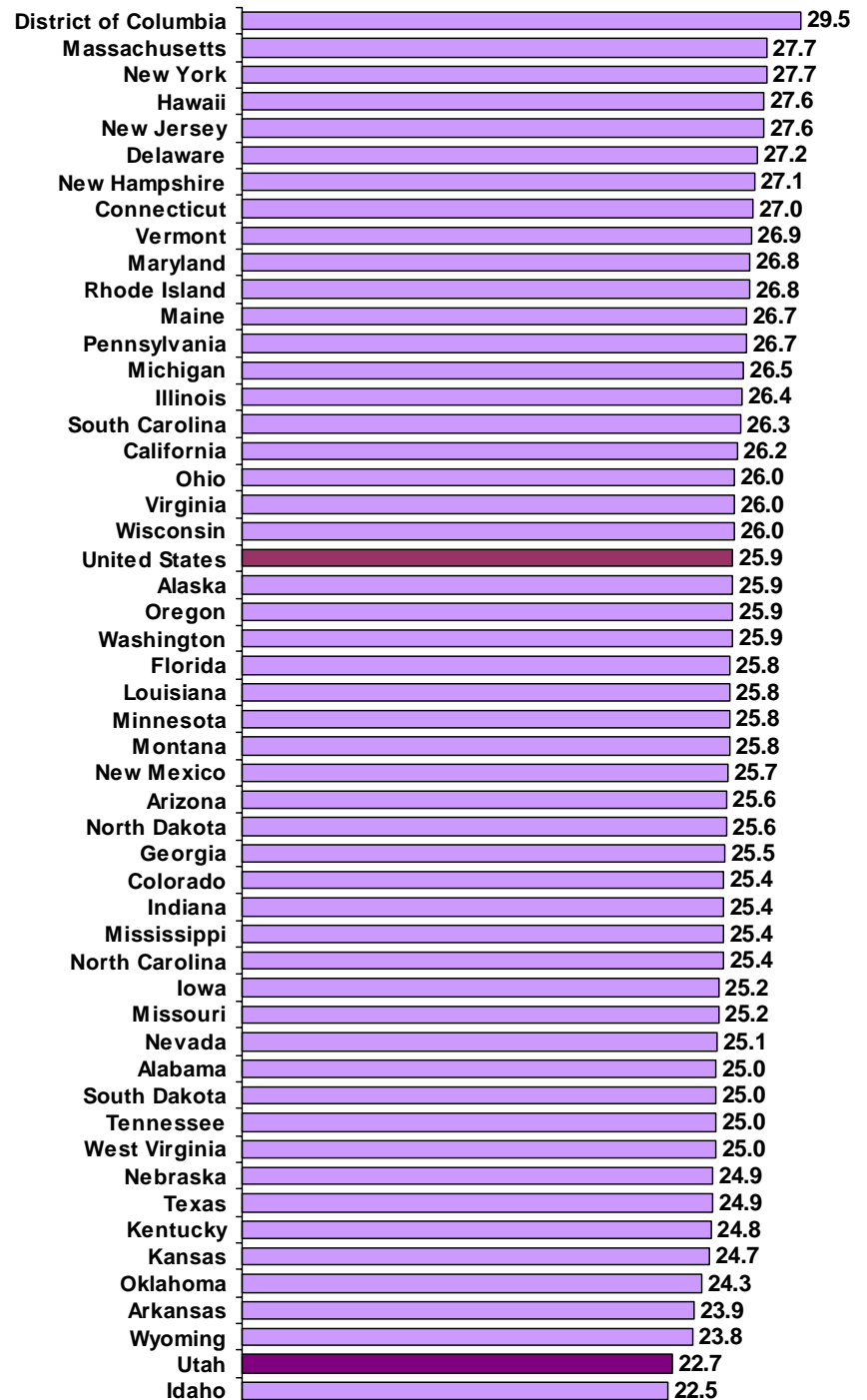
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The Working Connection

Why are these demographic numbers important in a report about Utah women's labor market experience? Here are some relationships that can explain certain labor market trends.

- *Unmarried women are more likely to be labor force participants.*
- *Marriage postponement provides more time for women to get an education.*
- *Women are less likely to continue their education after marriage than are men.*
- *Women with employment and income have the financial independence to leave bad marriages.*
- *The fewer children a woman has, the more likely she is to work outside the home.*
- *Women who have children tend to earn less than childless women.*
- *The higher a woman's educational attainment, the fewer births she has or expects to have.*
- *The closer a wife's earnings are to her husband's, the more likely she is to delay having children.*

Female Median Age at First Marriage, 2006



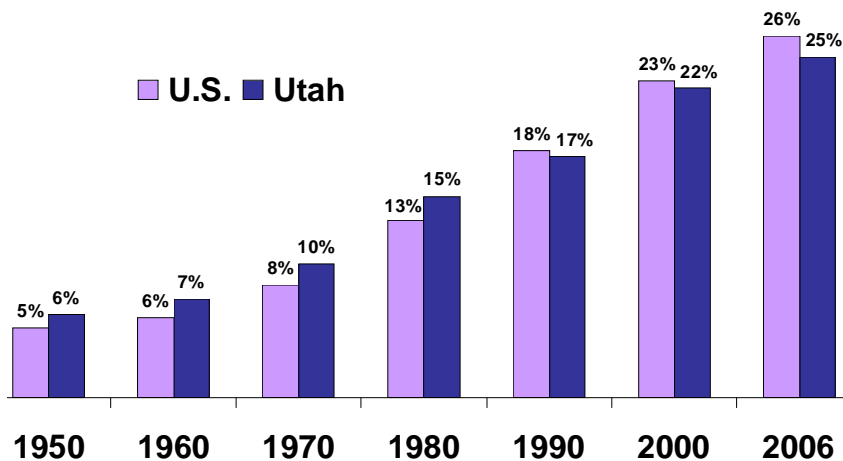
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Educating Emily

We Utahns like to give ourselves a pat on the back because of our well-educated workforce—particularly given the monetary restraints of our public and higher education systems. Perhaps, rightly so. Back in 1990, Utah had the second highest percentage of adults with a high school education in the nation. Our ranking slipped somewhat when the 2000 Census was taken (to fourth), but we're still head-and-shoulders above most of the nation. By 2006, Utah had regained its number two status—behind only Minnesota.

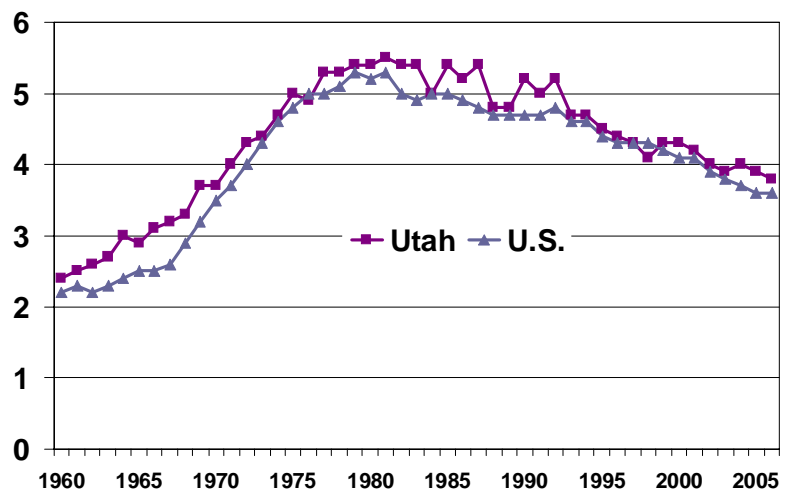
We can boast of a high percentage of college graduates, too. In 2006, 29 percent of the Utah population over the

Share of Women 25 Years and Older With At Least a Bachelor's Degree



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Divorces Per 1,000 Population



Source: Utah Dept. of Health.

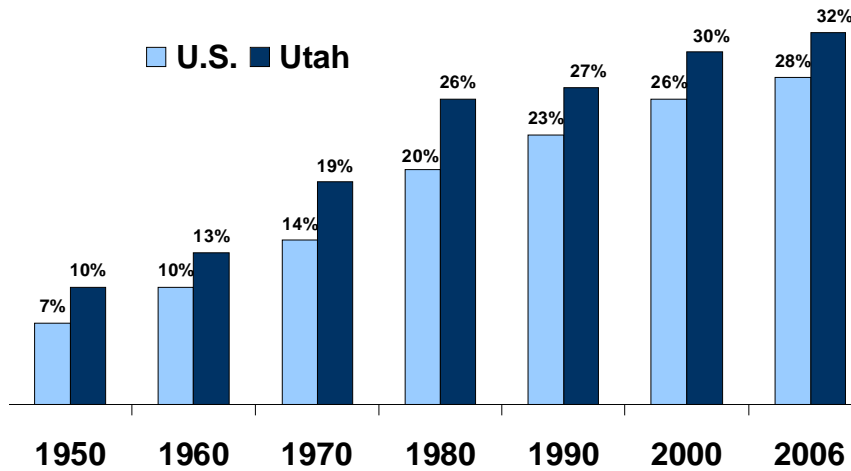
age of 25 had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 27 percent of the U.S. population.

But, Utah used to significantly outstrip the U.S. average when it came to the college-educated. In 1980, instead of a 2-percentage point gap for college graduates, Utah could claim a 4-percentage point lead over the nation. Why is Utah losing its educational edge?

Somebody's Just Not Keeping Up

Of course, more and more of Utah's population continues to receive a four-year degree. It's just that one group isn't expanding its share of college graduates as rapidly as the nation. Who's that group? Utah women.

Share of Men 25 Years and Older With At Least a Bachelor's Degree



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

As you can see on the graph that plots the share of Utah and U.S. men with at least a bachelor's degree, Utah men have sustained an educational lead over the past 50 years. In 2006, roughly 32 percent of Utah adult men had obtained at least a bachelor's degree compared to 28 percent of U.S. men.

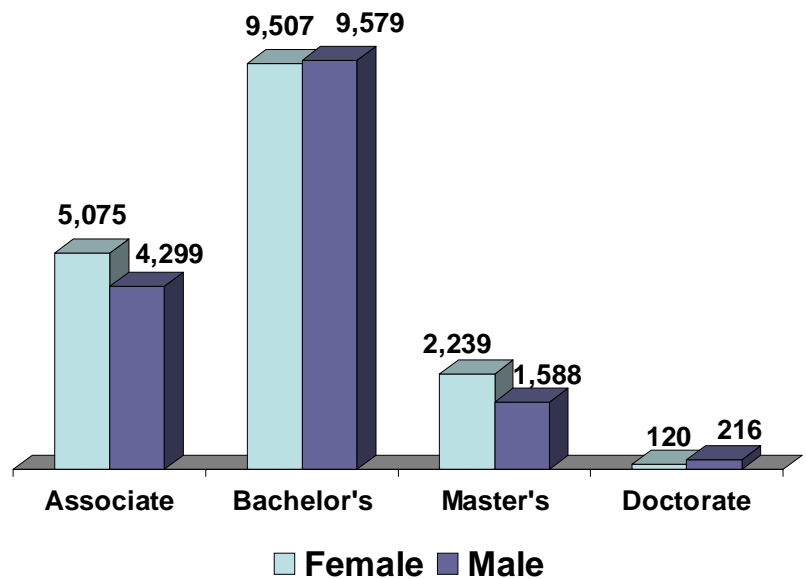
On the other hand, while Utah women started out with a lead in 1950, they lost the high ground in 1990. By 2000, they lost even a little more ground. At last count in 2006, 25 percent of Utah women over age 25 had at least a bachelor's degree—slightly below the comparable 26 percent of U.S. women.

The difference in Utah women and men's comparative educational levels also shows up dramatically when they

are ranked against other states. In 2000, Utah's overall ranking for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher was 15. However, for men, Utah ranked number nine. Women slipped down halfway to number 25 in the nation.

In addition, this large difference in education must surely factor into Utah's large male-female wage gap. Typically, depending on the data series, Utah shows one of the largest wage gaps in the nation.

Utah Degrees Conferred by Title IV Institutions, 2003-2004 Academic Year



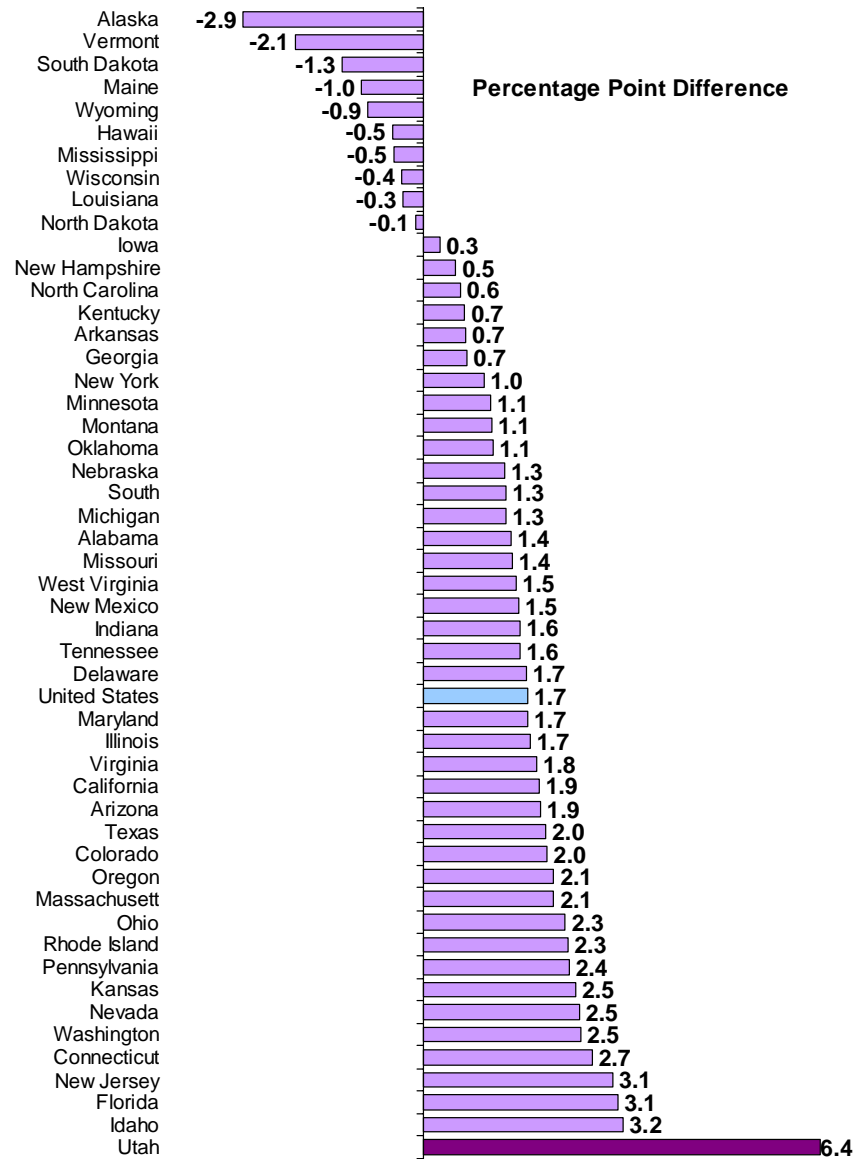
Source: U.S. Department of Education

Perhaps the most troubling ranking is this: At more than 6 percentage points, Utah has the largest college-degree gap for women and men of any state in the nation—next closest ranks New Jersey with a 3-percentage-point gap. In other words, in Utah, women are farther behind Utah men in obtaining a college education than in any other state.

The Issues

Of course, this widening education gap has many policy implications. It bears mentioning that as education increases, so do wages—especially for women. In Utah, where most mothers and wives work, less education for women means less income for families.

Difference in the Share of Adult Males and Females with at Least a Bachelor’s Degree



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.