

45-0568 HQ536 2006-897 CIP
Social & Behavioral Sciences \ Sociology by Hertz, Rosanna.

Single by chance, mothers by choice: how women are choosing parenthood without marriage and creating the new American family.

Oxford, 2006. 273p bibl index afp I
Outstanding Title! Reviewed in 2007 sep CHOICE.

Hertz (Wellesley College) leads readers through the experiences of single-mother families from the initial decision to form a family to the looming empty nest. Her sophisticated sociological analysis is based on 65 in-depth interviews with middle-class women who became single mothers. The women took different pathways to single motherhood, yet all made the conscious decision to separate romance and parenting to fulfill their aspirations to become mothers. Whereas the paths to single motherhood are stories of choice and control, the story of their family lives is one of conforming to traditional family ideals. Although there is some literature on low-income single mothers, little is known about middle-class single mothers. This book is a great addition to the existing literature, providing deep insights into the complexities of single-mother families and much needed information about middle-class single mothers and the role of fathers in those families. The study also informs the debate about the importance of blood ties versus social ties. Very well written and a pleasure to read, the book is a page-turner. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels, readers, and libraries. *G. K. Hearn, Idaho State University*