

Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2009

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Household Economic Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage and divorce are central to the study of living arrangements and family composition. Social and economic events as well as changes in cultural attitudes shape marital behavior, which then affect family life and other interactions. The study of the evolving patterns of marriage and divorce requires basic measures of the incidence of these events.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is one of few data sources that can provide a comprehensive look at both current and historical marital patterns in the United States. SIPP data contain a detailed marital history for men and women aged 15 and over, as well as extensive information about the characteristics of adults, their households, and the people with whom they live. In addition, information about both husbands and wives is available for people who are currently married.¹

¹ Since 2008, the American Community Survey (ACS) has been asking adults whether they had married, divorced, separated, or been widowed in the year before the survey, as well as the number of times married and the year the latest marriage began. Estimates of indicators such as the characteristics of people who had a recent marital event, the percentage of men and women who have ever divorced, and the percentage of recent marriages in which both the bride and groom were marrying for the first time are now available in both the SIPP and the ACS. See the following paper for more information: Elliott, Diana B, Tavia Simmons, and Jamie M. Lewis, *Evaluation of the Marital Events Items on the ACS, 2010*, available at <www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/marriage/data/acs/Evaluation_paper.pdf>. While ACS adds valuable information about recent U.S. marital patterns, especially state-level data, SIPP still contains the most detailed, comprehensive data available at the national level. A forthcoming report will showcase the new ACS marital events data.

The marital history data have been collected in SIPP since 1986 and reports were published starting with the 1996 data. Before that time, marital history reports used Current Population Survey data, which included a marital history from 1975 through 1995. The SIPP marital history topical module is a nationally representative survey which is fielded approximately every 5 years, with the most recent data collection prior to this survey occurring in 2004.² This report updates some of the tables shown in the previous reports and tables with data collected in the second interview of the SIPP 2008 Panel, collected in January through April of 2009, and adds several tables covering other topics.³

In 2009, marital history data were collected from men and women 15 years and over in approximately 39,000 households. In the sample, 55,497 ever-married adults were asked questions about the number of times they had been married and the month and year of marital events (including marriage, separation, divorce, and widowhood) for their first, second, and most recent marriages. Since fewer than 1 percent of adults have been married four or more

² The tables for 2004 are available on the Census Bureau Web site at <www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/marriage/data/sipp/2004/tables.html>.

The most recent report in this series was written using SIPP 2001 Panel data and is available at <www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p70-97.pdf>.

The earlier 1996 report is also available at <www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p70-80.pdf>.

³ The population represented in this report (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized adult (15 years and over) population living in the United States. The items asked in the marital history topical module are available at <www.census.gov/sipp/core_content/2008/quests/wave2/2008w2core.pdf>.

Current Population Reports

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times, few events are missed by using this approach.

The first section of this report examines changes in marital patterns during the period that SIPP data were collected, 1986 to 2009. Additionally, this section describes changes in the age at marriage, divorce, and remarriage across different cohorts of men and women born since 1940 to 1944. The second section provides current indicators of the percentage of the population who have married more than once, who have ever divorced, or who experienced other marital events. This section also answers questions about how long first marriages last, the median age at which people marry or divorce, and what percentage of currently married couples involve spouses who are both in their first marriage. The third section profiles the characteristics of people who experienced a marital event in the year prior to the survey.

HISTORICAL MARITAL PATTERNS

Changes From 1986 to 2009

One of the most noticeable changes in marital patterns has been the increase in the age at first marriage.⁴ This is reflected in an increasing proportion of younger adults who are never married. Table 1 shows the percentage of women never married, by 5-year age groups, from 25 to 29 to 55 and over. While the proportion of all women who are never married at age 25 to 29 has increased substantially from 1986 to 2009 (27 percent to 47 percent), it did not differ statistically for women

⁴ See "Estimated Median Age at First Marriage, by Sex: 1890 to the Present," Table MS-2 at <www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/ms2.xls>.

Marital status. The marital status classification refers to the status at the time of interview. "Married, spouse present" applies to husband and wife if both were living in the same household, even though one may be temporarily absent, for example, on business, vacation, a visit, or in a hospital. "Married, spouse absent" relates to people who are living apart for reasons other than marital problems, for example, spouses living apart because one or the other was employed elsewhere, on duty with the Armed Forces, or incarcerated. "Separated" refers to couples who are living apart due to marital problems. "Divorced" indicates people who report that they have received a legal divorce decree and have not remarried. "Widowed" indicates that a person's last marriage ended in the death of their spouse. The term "never married" applies to those who have never been legally married, as well as to those whose marriages were annulled.

Marital history. A marital history was collected from each person in the household aged 15 and over. There were 55,497 people in the sample from approximately 39,000 households. Respondents answered questions about when they had been married, separated, divorced, and widowed, if they had experienced these events. Dates for the beginning and end of up to three marriages were collected: first marriage, second marriage, and most recent marriage, regardless of whether this was the third or later marriage. Since very few people marry more than three times, few events are missed by using this approach to data collection. Although questions were asked only of people aged 15 and over, some people reported marital events as occurring before age 15.

Marital event. Refers to a change in marital status—getting married, getting divorced, or being widowed.

Birth or marriage cohort. A cohort signifies a group of people born or married in a specified time period—for example, people born from 1945 through 1949.

Current age. Age at reference month, which is the month preceding the interview.

Median. The median is the value which divides a distribution into two equal parts; half of the cases fall below this value and half exceed it.

aged 55 and over (5 percent to 6 percent).⁵

⁵ The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values because of sampling variation and other factors. All comparisons made in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

This pattern varied by race and ethnicity, with a higher percentage of Black women than non-Hispanic White women never married in each age group in 2009 (Table 1,

Table 1.

**Percent Never Married for Women by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin,¹
for Selected Years: 1986 to 2009**

Year	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 44 years	45 to 49 years	50 to 54 years	55 and over
TOTAL							
1986.....	26.9	14.0	10.0	5.3	4.9	3.5	4.8
1996.....	35.3	18.7	14.1	9.8	7.3	5.5	4.1
2001.....	37.3	21.7	15.6	12.1	8.9	7.3	4.0
2004.....	41.3	22.3	16.2	13.0	10.8	8.5	5.1
2009.....	46.8	26.7	17.3	14.1	12.0	10.1	5.8
WHITE							
1986.....	23.8	11.2	8.2	4.3	4.1	3.0	4.9
1996.....	30.8	14.8	11.2	7.7	6.0	4.6	3.8
2001.....	33.1	16.6	12.7	9.1	6.9	6.3	3.4
2004.....	36.7	18.2	12.5	10.4	8.3	7.3	4.5
2009.....	41.6	22.6	13.8	11.2	9.7	8.2	5.0
WHITE, NON-HISPANIC							
1986.....	24.0	11.3	8.2	3.8	4.2	2.6	4.8
1996.....	31.1	14.3	10.9	7.7	5.9	4.6	3.6
2001.....	34.1	17.1	12.3	9.0	7.1	5.9	3.1
2004.....	38.3	18.6	12.3	9.9	8.4	7.4	4.4
2009.....	43.3	22.0	13.5	10.3	9.4	7.8	4.7
BLACK							
1986.....	44.3	34.8	23.9	13.3	12.7	6.3	3.5
1996.....	57.7	39.4	33.6	25.0	15.9	11.7	6.6
2001.....	59.4	49.5	34.0	31.3	23.9	16.3	9.4
2004.....	66.3	47.0	39.0	30.3	28.5	18.0	10.9
2009.....	70.5	53.6	39.2	33.1	28.5	24.5	13.0
ASIAN							
1986.....	29.3	16.4	3.9	—	—	5.6	9.7
1996.....	41.5	18.4	4.6	3.1	7.8	7.9	5.7
2001.....	38.6	17.4	7.9	10.3	5.6	2.8	5.0
2004.....	39.0	25.7	19.7	16.2	8.4	9.8	4.4
2009.....	51.6	11.8	10.2	5.9	7.5	5.8	4.8
HISPANIC							
1986.....	23.8	14.8	8.7	12.8	1.5	8.1	8.9
1996.....	30.5	19.5	13.3	9.0	8.9	7.5	7.2
2001.....	28.0	15.9	15.1	11.8	4.8	11.7	8.0
2004.....	32.0	16.7	14.7	16.3	8.6	6.6	6.7
2009.....	36.8	27.2	15.1	15.2	12.9	11.8	8.9

— Represents or rounds to zero.

¹ Race and Hispanic origin were collected differently in earlier years compared with 2004 and 2009. In 2004 and later, respondents could mark all race groups they chose, while in earlier years they had to choose just one group. In 1986, 1996, and 2001, Asian includes Pacific Islanders, while in 2004 and 2009 it does not. In 2004 and 2009, Black, White, and Asian include those who marked only the category indicated.

Note: A small percentage of all women in 1986 were missing on marital status (.07 percent of all women).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1986, 1996, 2001, 2004, and 2008 Panels, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/source.html>.

Figures 1a and 1b).⁶ For example, 71 percent of Black women aged

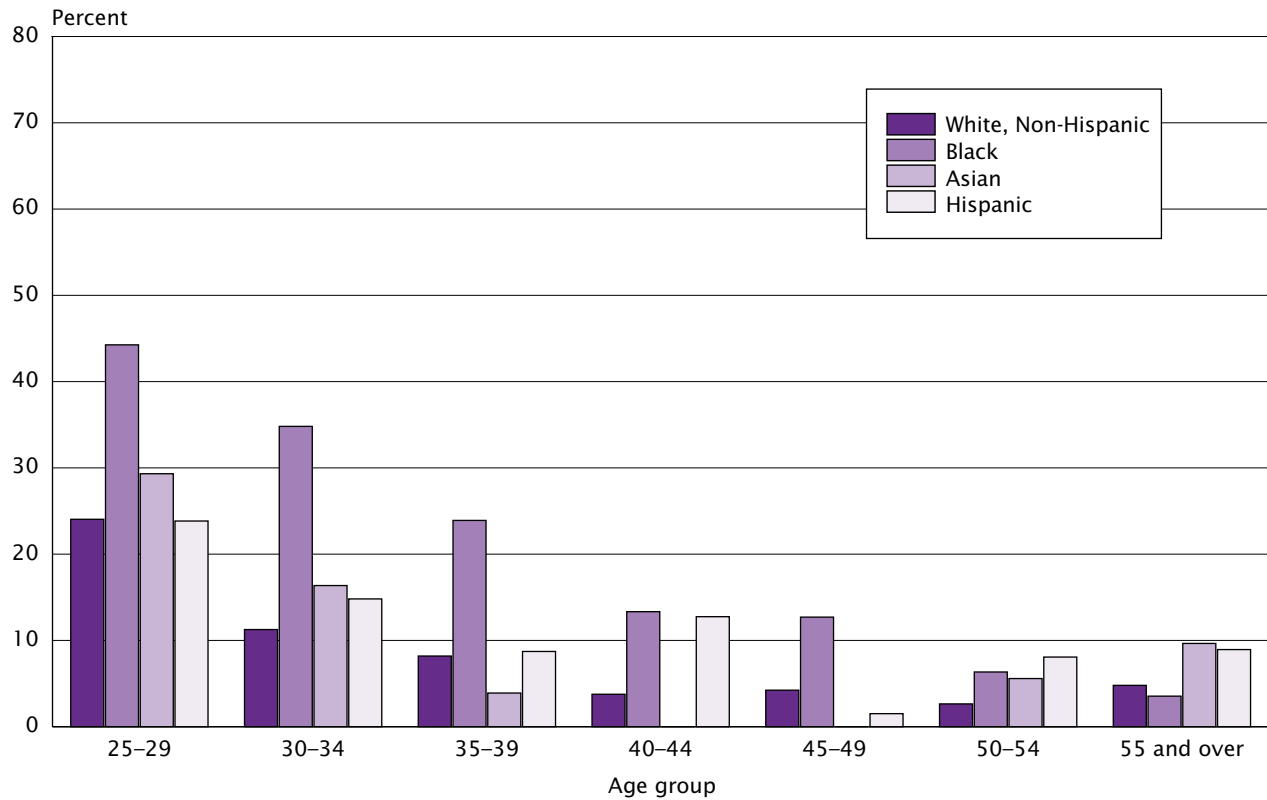
⁶ Because Hispanics may be any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap with data for the White, Black, Asian, and all remaining races and combinations populations. Based on the population 15 years and over in SIPP 2008 Wave 2, 16 percent of the White population, 6 percent of the Black population, 2 percent of the Asian population, and 16 percent of all remaining races and combinations were of Hispanic origin.

25 to 29 had never married, compared with 43 percent of non-Hispanic White women in 2009. Corresponding percentages for never-married women aged 55 and over in 2009 were 5 percent for non-Hispanic White women and 13 percent for Black women. Similar to 2009, a higher proportion of

Black women had never married than non-Hispanic White women at all age groups in 1986 except the proportion never married for those aged 55 and over.

While the percentage of Black women who had never married was considerably higher than for

Figure 1a.
Percentage of Women Never Married by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1986



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

non-Hispanic White women in many age groups, the magnitude of the increase between 1986 and 2009 in the percentage never married was higher for Black women than non-Hispanic White women in just two age groups—50 to 54 years and 55 and over. While the percentage of non-Hispanic White women aged 50 to 54 who had never married in 2009 was 3 times what it was in 1986, the increase was 4 times for Black women of the same age group. For women aged 55 and over, there was no increase for non-Hispanic White women, but the percentage for Black women

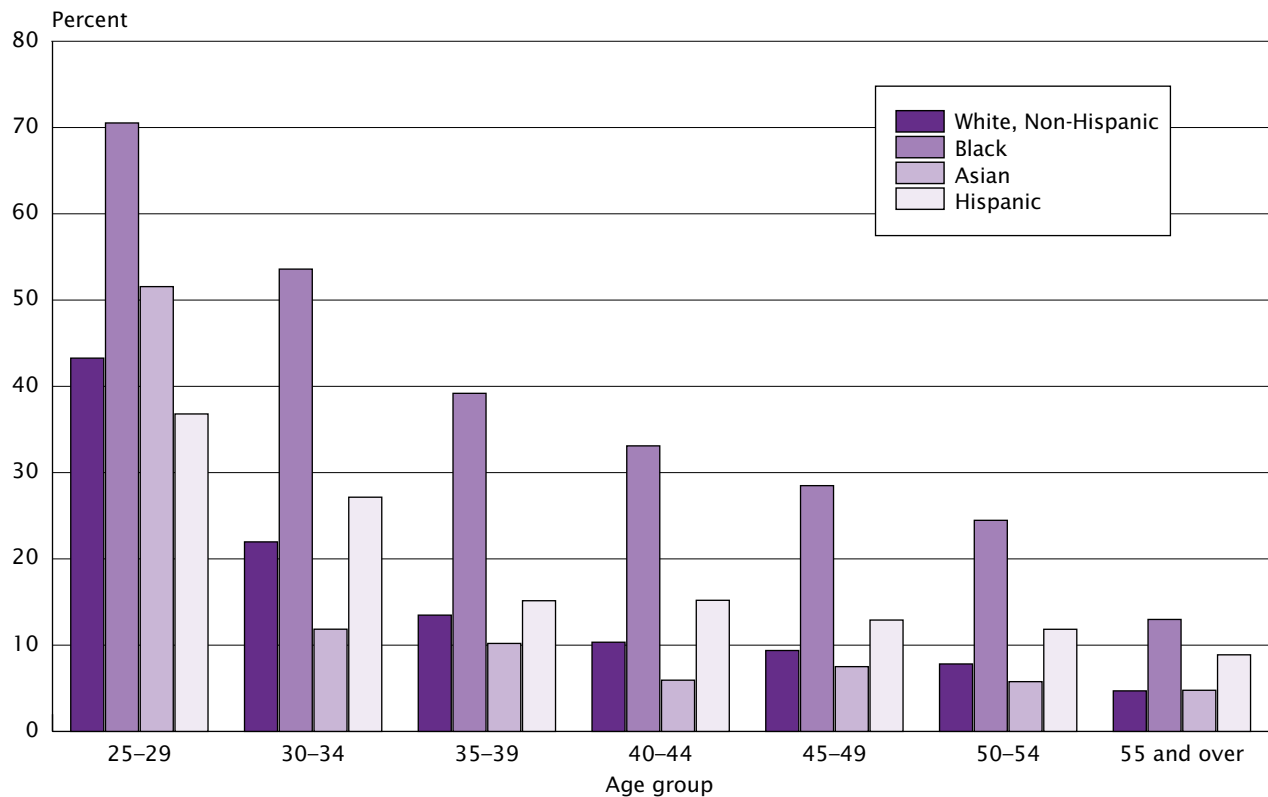
was 3.7 times as high in 2009 as in 1986. The difference in the magnitude of the increase suggests that a higher percentage of Black women than non-Hispanic White women may never marry.

Another change in marital patterns during 1996 through 2009 was the leveling of the divorce rate, after it had decreased from a high around 1980. Percentages of ever-married women shown in Table 2 who had ever divorced, shown grouped by age, reflect this leveling. The table also shows that while percentages for ever divorced

generally increased between 1996 and 2009 for older age groups (50 to 59, 60 to 69, and 70 and over), the percentage ever divorced decreased for younger groups of women over the same time period. This is because women in the older age groups in 2009 were the ones who were married during the time when divorce rates were increasing to their height at the end of the 1970s.

As marriage rates have decreased and cohabitation has become more common, marriage has become more selective of adults who are

Figure 1b.
Percentage of Women Never Married by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

better off socioeconomically and have more education, and divorce rates have leveled.⁷ These changes are reflected here in decreasing proportions ever divorced for ever-married women at younger ages. While 19 percent of ever-married women aged 25 to 29 had divorced in 1996, 14 percent had divorced in 2009—a decrease of about 30 percent. The percentage ever divorced decreased about 20 percent for women aged 30 to 34, from 26 percent to 21 percent

⁷ Cherlin, Andrew, *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today*, Random House, New York, 2009.

ever divorced over the same time period. Despite these decreases, the prevalence of divorce in the United States remains higher than in most European countries.⁸

Age at First Marriage

Since the 1950s, the median age at first marriage has risen for both men and women, increasing from 23 for men and 20 for women in 1950, to 28 for men and 26 for

⁸ See Table 25 in the *Demographic Yearbook* published by the United Nations, available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/2000_round.htm>.

women in 2009.⁹ Table 3 shows the percentages of men and women who were ever married, ever divorced, or married two or more times by selected ages. Data are shown for 5-year birth cohorts, from 1940 to 1944 through 1980 to 1984. Reflecting the rise in the median age at first marriage, the percentages of men and women born in 1980 to 1984 who were married by age 20 (7 percent and 16 percent, respectively) were

⁹ Estimates of the median age at first marriage can be found on the Census Bureau Web site. See "Families and Living Arrangements," Table MS-2 at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>.

Table 2.

Percent Ever Divorced for Ever-Married Women by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin,¹ for Selected Years: 1996 to 2009

Year	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 49 years	50 to 59 years	60 to 69 years	70 and over
TOTAL							
1996.....	18.8	25.6	32.4	40.5	36.4	27.1	17.5
2001.....	18.9	23.7	33.3	39.6	41.5	29.6	18.3
2004.....	11.9	22.0	30.6	38.5	44.1	33.7	18.7
2009.....	13.8	21.3	27.4	35.6	41.1	36.7	22.3
WHITE							
1996.....	19.7	26.1	32.2	40.8	36.1	26.6	17.2
2001.....	19.9	24.4	33.5	40.6	41.8	29.6	18.0
2004.....	12.4	23.2	30.5	39.1	44.3	33.9	18.1
2009.....	14.2	22.1	27.6	36.3	41.1	36.9	21.9
WHITE, NON-HISPANIC							
1996.....	20.5	27.4	33.2	41.6	36.6	26.8	17.0
2001.....	22.1	26.4	34.7	42.3	42.5	29.9	17.9
2004.....	13.9	24.9	32.1	41.0	45.6	34.7	18.0
2009.....	15.2	23.5	30.3	38.6	42.4	38.1	21.7
BLACK							
1996.....	14.7	28.0	40.7	44.5	42.0	35.6	21.9
2001.....	20.6	24.5	37.3	42.2	44.7	33.8	25.4
2004.....	11.0	20.1	37.1	39.0	47.8	37.2	26.7
2009.....	14.6	23.9	32.7	35.0	48.2	40.3	27.8
ASIAN							
1996.....	9.3	12.0	14.3	22.8	23.2	4.9	8.5
2001.....	4.1	10.7	18.1	17.5	22.7	9.9	5.0
2004.....	1.9	6.1	11.4	20.1	19.9	9.6	9.1
2009.....	1.3	7.8	13.2	20.6	18.5	16.0	11.3
HISPANIC							
1996.....	15.5	17.4	24.0	33.2	31.7	25.6	20.3
2001.....	12.5	15.5	26.5	28.5	34.0	26.5	21.5
2004.....	8.8	16.3	24.7	24.4	33.1	23.9	19.5
2009.....	10.5	16.3	18.1	23.7	30.2	25.0	24.2

¹ Race and Hispanic origin were collected differently in earlier years compared with 2004 and 2009. In 2004 and later, respondents could mark all race groups they chose, while in earlier years they had to choose just one group. In 1996 and 2001, Asian includes Pacific Islanders, while in 2004 and 2009 it does not. In 2004 and 2009, Black, White, and Asian include those who marked only the category indicated.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1996, 2001, 2004, and 2008 Panels, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/source.html>.

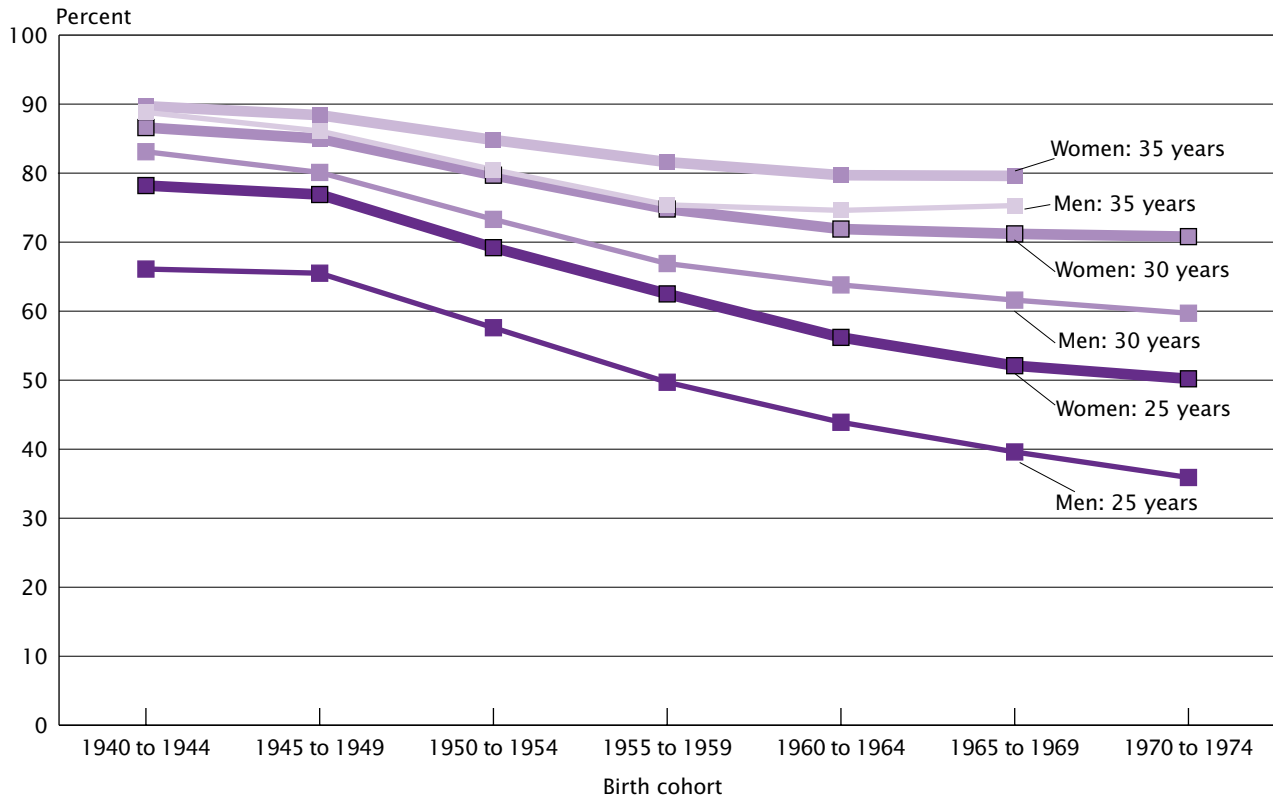
about one third the percentages of those born in 1940 to 1944 (22 percent and 48 percent, respectively).

Figure 2 shows the historical decline in the percentages of men and women ever married by age and birth cohort. The percentage of men ever married by age 35

declined 14 percentage points between the 1940 to 1944 birth cohort and the 1965 to 1969 birth cohort. The corresponding decline for women was 10 percentage points. While some people marry for the first time when they are over 35, the current level of these proportions for men and women

born in the late 1960s (75 percent and 80 percent, respectively) suggests that it may be unlikely they will reach the same 90 percent plus level achieved by the first baby boom cohorts of the 1940s (Table 3).

Figure 2.
Percentage of Men and Women Ever Married by Selected Ages and Birth Cohorts: 2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

Changes in the Percentage Ever Divorced

An examination of the trends in the proportions of people ever divorced is more complicated because this indicator is a function of the proportions of both people getting married and those getting divorced. Data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) indicate that the annual divorce rate for married women increased sharply from 15 to 20 divorces per 1,000 between 1970 and 1975, a period

when divorce laws were changing. However, subsequent estimates indicate that the divorce rate per 1,000 married women leveled off at about 20 per 1,000 women in the mid-1970s and stayed at about that level through the mid-1990s.¹⁰

Table 3 shows the proportion of men ever divorced by age 40 was not statistically different among

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2001* (121st edition), Table 117, Washington, DC, 2002, available at <www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/01statab/vitstat.pdf>.

those born from 1940 to 1944 (25 percent) through 1960 to 1964 (26 percent). A similar pattern exists for women, although the percentage divorced for women born in 1940 to 1944 is lower than for later birth cohorts.

Figures 3a and 3b show the proportion ever divorced among those ever married. The increase in the proportion of people who had divorced by age 30 in the 1945 to 1949 cohort compared with the later cohorts is noticeable in both

Table 3.

Marital History by Sex for Selected Birth Cohorts, 1940–1944 to 1980–1984: 2009

(Numbers in thousands)

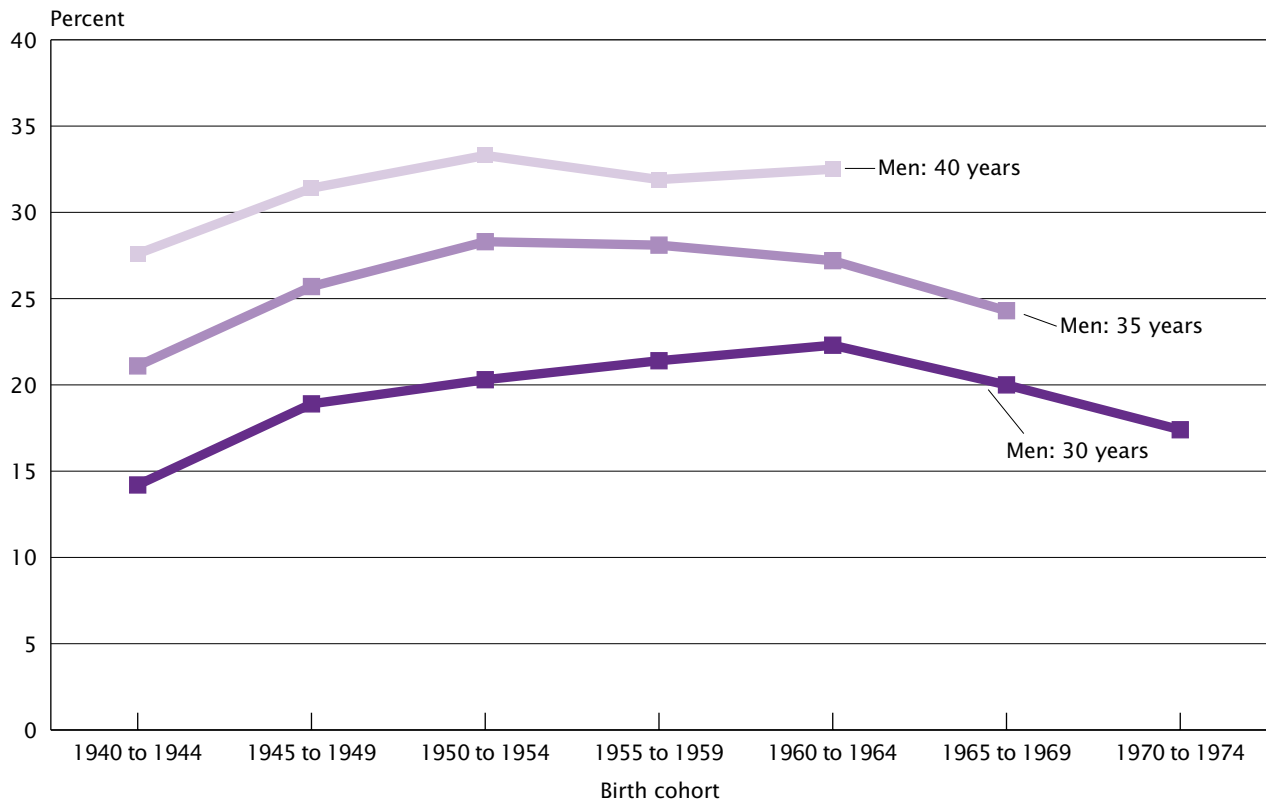
Characteristic	1940 to 1944	1945 to 1949	1950 to 1954	1955 to 1959	1960 to 1964	1965 to 1969	1970 to 1974	1975 to 1979	1980 to 1984
Men.....	5,620	7,848	9,410	10,414	11,261	10,175	9,867	9,653	10,516
Percent ever married by age:									
20 years.....	21.9	22.3	21.9	17.8	14.2	12.2	10.1	8.7	6.9
25 years.....	66.1	65.5	57.6	49.7	43.9	39.6	35.9	34.3	(X)
30 years.....	83.1	80.1	73.3	66.9	63.8	61.6	59.7	(X)	(X)
35 years.....	88.8	86.1	80.5	75.4	74.6	75.3	(X)	(X)	(X)
40 years.....	91.2	89.3	84.2	81.2	80.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
45 years.....	92.7	91.3	86.8	84.5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
50 years.....	94.0	92.5	88.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Percent ever divorced by age:									
20 years.....	1.1	0.7	1.6	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.3
25 years.....	4.8	6.4	7.8	7.3	5.8	5.5	4.8	3.5	(X)
30 years.....	11.8	15.1	14.9	14.3	14.2	12.3	10.4	(X)	(X)
35 years.....	18.7	22.1	22.8	21.2	20.3	18.3	(X)	(X)	(X)
40 years.....	25.2	28.0	28.0	25.9	26.2	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
45 years.....	29.1	31.7	31.8	31.2	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
50 years.....	31.9	34.7	34.5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
55 years.....	33.8	36.8	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Percent married two times or more by age:									
25 years.....	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.4	1.6	1.4	0.7	(X)
30 years.....	6.3	7.6	7.8	6.6	5.5	5.8	4.7	3.1	(X)
35 years.....	12.0	13.6	13.4	11.4	11.8	10.3	(X)	(X)	(X)
40 years.....	18.0	18.5	18.9	16.2	15.4	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
45 years.....	21.8	22.7	22.5	20.2	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
50 years.....	25.2	25.6	25.5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
55 years.....	27.5	28.3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Women.....	6,399	8,524	9,810	11,331	11,366	10,587	9,991	9,853	10,491
Percent ever married by age:									
20 years.....	48.1	43.1	38.9	33.4	28.5	22.9	20.2	18.5	15.7
25 years.....	78.2	76.9	69.2	62.5	56.2	52.1	50.2	47.3	(X)
30 years.....	86.6	85.0	79.7	74.8	71.9	71.2	70.8	(X)	(X)
35 years.....	89.7	88.4	84.8	81.6	79.7	79.6	(X)	(X)	(X)
40 years.....	91.4	90.2	87.5	85.3	83.7	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
45 years.....	92.5	91.5	89.2	87.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
50 years.....	93.2	92.2	90.3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Percent ever divorced by age:									
20 years.....	1.8	1.8	2.1	2.5	1.8	2.2	1.4	1.3	1.0
25 years.....	7.2	9.3	10.0	10.6	8.9	8.6	7.9	6.7	(X)
30 years.....	13.7	16.8	18.8	17.9	17.6	16.2	15.1	(X)	(X)
35 years.....	19.5	23.6	25.2	25.1	23.6	21.7	(X)	(X)	(X)
40 years.....	24.5	28.3	30.0	30.1	28.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
45 years.....	28.3	32.1	33.5	33.5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
50 years.....	30.5	34.7	36.0	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
55 years.....	31.9	36.2	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Percent married two times or more by age:									
25 years.....	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.5	(X)
30 years.....	8.5	9.1	9.8	8.8	8.3	8.3	7.4	6.2	(X)
35 years.....	13.2	14.4	15.2	13.5	14.2	13.6	(X)	(X)	(X)
40 years.....	16.4	18.1	19.1	17.5	18.3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
45 years.....	19.8	21.9	22.4	21.1	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
50 years.....	22.8	24.3	24.8	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
55 years.....	24.3	25.5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)

X Not applicable. Cohort had not lived to stated age at the time of the survey.

Note: Age includes the year stated. For example, for the percent ever married by 20 years, the person must have been married by age 251 months.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

Figure 3a.
Percentage of Ever-Married Men Ever Divorced by Selected Ages and Birth Cohorts¹: 2009



¹ Percentages are based on men who have ever married.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

figures. The cohort born in 1970 to 1974 had a lower proportion divorced than those born in 1960 to 1964. Those born in 1970 to 1974 have not yet all reached ages 35 or 40, so it remains to be seen whether their lower proportion divorced compared with those born in 1960 to 1964 will persist.

Frequency of Remarriage

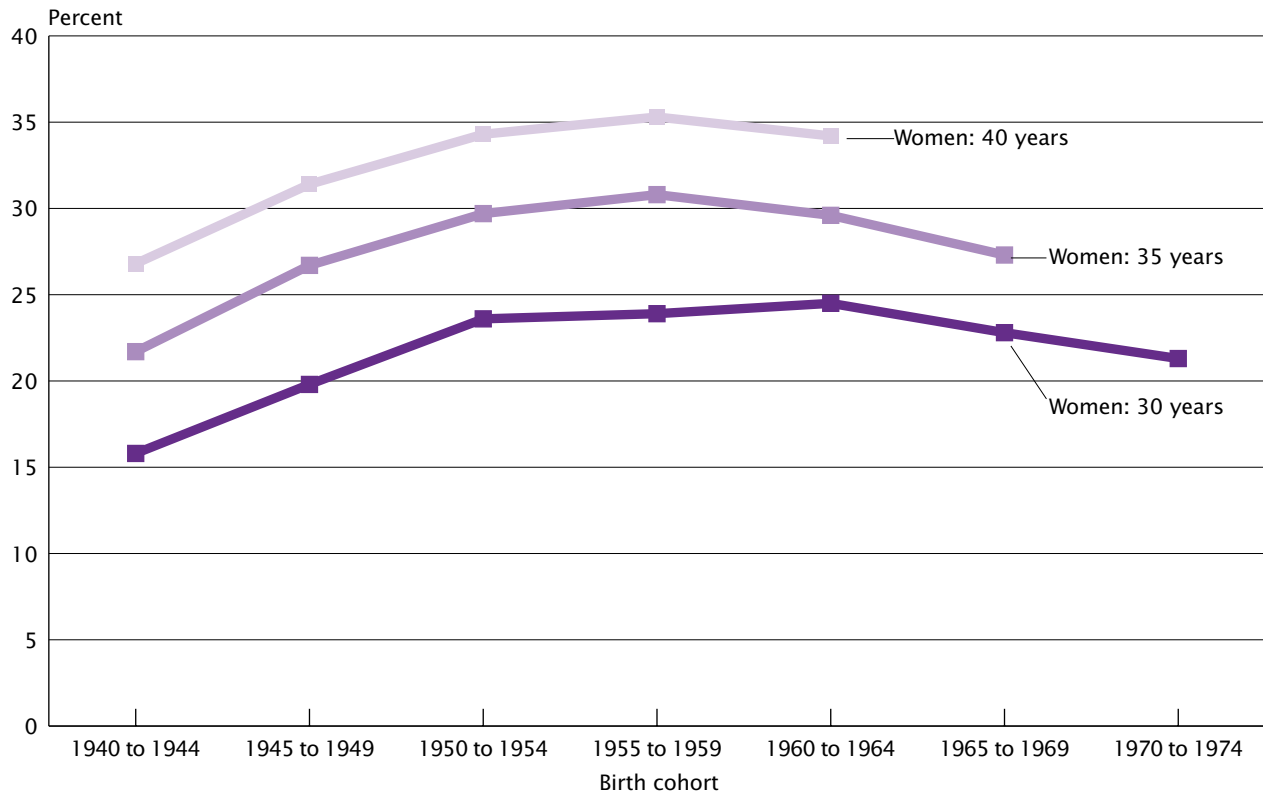
For people born since the 1940s, what has been the trend in the proportion of people who have married two or more times? By age 40, 18 percent of men and 16 percent of women who were born from 1940 to 1944 had been married two or more times. Comparing this birth cohort to those born in 1960 to 1964, the

percentage of those aged 40 who had been married two or more times was not statistically different for either men or women.

Duration of Marriages

How long do marriages last? Table 4 and Figures 4a and 4b show that first marriages occurring in the early 1960s lasted longer than those occurring after enactment of new divorce laws (1975 to 1979).

Figure 3b.
Percentage of Ever-Married Women Ever Divorced by Selected Ages and Birth Cohorts¹: 2009



¹ Percentages are based on women who have ever married.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

That is to say, a lower percentage of those in this later marriage cohort reached subsequent anniversaries. The proportion who reach a given anniversary is also affected by the age at marriage, as well as differential death rates by age, since survey data only gather information from those who are still alive. The effect of the increasing age at first marriage is controlled for in the table by only showing estimates for marriage durations which the specified marriage cohort has had ample time to reach. Since the highest

anniversary shown is the fortieth, the fact that death rates are higher for older adults should have a minimal effect on the estimates because many of those who married in the early 1960s married in their early 20s and were in their 60s when interviewed.

While 70 percent of men who married between 1960 to 1964 stayed married for at least 20 years, only about 60 percent of men who married between 1980 to 1984 stayed married as long. Declines in marital longevity

occurred also for men at even earlier anniversaries of 5, 10, or 15 years. Similarly, marital longevity also fell for women married between 1980 to 1984 compared with those married between 1960 and 1964. Looking at shorter marriage durations, for example, the apparent increase in the proportions reaching their tenth anniversary between the 1980 to 1984 cohort and the 1990 to 1994 cohort is statistically significant for women but not for men.

Table 4.

Percent Reaching Stated Anniversary by Marriage Cohort and Sex, for First Marriages: 2009

(Numbers in thousands)

Sex and year of marriage	Number of marriages	Anniversary ¹							
		5th	10th	15th	20th	25th	30th	35th	40th
MEN									
1960 to 1964	4,150	94.6	83.4	74.7	70.2	66.9	64.5	62.1	60.1
1965 to 1969	5,658	91.7	80.0	69.9	65.8	62.7	60.5	57.9	(X)
1970 to 1974	7,036	88.0	75.0	65.7	60.2	56.8	53.8	(X)	(X)
1975 to 1979	6,901	88.2	73.4	63.7	58.7	54.4	(X)	(X)	(X)
1980 to 1984	7,144	90.6	74.3	65.2	60.0	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
1985 to 1989	7,670	87.7	75.4	66.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
1990 to 1994	7,569	89.7	77.3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
1995 to 1999	8,088	89.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
WOMEN									
1960 to 1964	5,495	93.0	82.8	73.5	67.0	60.8	57.2	53.6	49.7
1965 to 1969	6,705	90.7	79.3	69.6	64.0	59.1	55.8	52.1	(X)
1970 to 1974	7,667	89.2	74.5	66.1	61.3	56.2	52.6	(X)	(X)
1975 to 1979	7,619	86.9	72.8	63.2	57.4	53.2	(X)	(X)	(X)
1980 to 1984	8,051	87.8	71.1	62.9	56.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
1985 to 1989	8,027	87.9	74.5	66.4	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
1990 to 1994	8,164	87.1	74.5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
1995 to 1999	8,229	89.5	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)

X Marriage cohort had not all had sufficient time to reach the stated anniversary at the time of the survey.

¹ People reaching stated anniversary.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

Interracial and Hispanic/Non-Hispanic Marriages

Another aspect of the diversity of American family life is the frequency of interracial and Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriage. Because the SIPP does not collect information on the racial/ethnic identities of previous spouses, or spouses not currently living together, the data are only shown for those couples who are currently married and living together. Research has shown that interracial couples have higher rates of divorce than other couples, so the percentage interracial for currently married couples shown in the table may be lower than the

percentage at the time the couples got married.¹¹

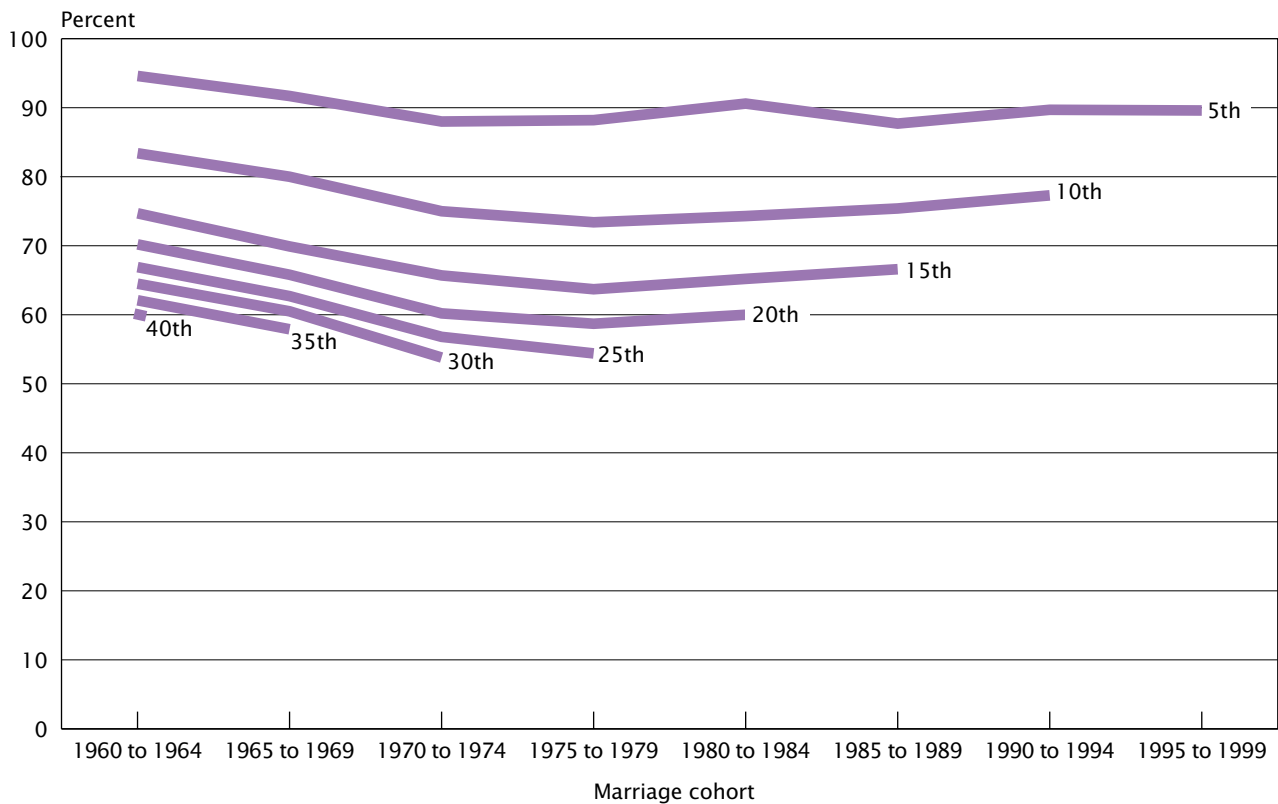
Table 5 shows currently married women in their first marriage. Eight percent were in interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriages—defined as the husband and wife belonging to different groups, where the groups are non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian, non-Hispanic other, and Hispanic. Asian women had the highest proportion of interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriage (23 percent), both White and Black women had the lowest proportion

¹¹ Bratter, Jenifer L. and Rosalind B. King, "But Will It Last? Marital Instability Among Interracial and Same-Race Couples," *Family Relations*, Vol. 57, April 2008, pp. 160–171.

(5 percent and 7 percent, respectively, which do not differ statistically). Eleven percent of Hispanic women of any race in their first marriage are currently in an interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriage.

Younger women have a higher proportion of interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriages. Of currently married women in their first marriage who are under age 45, about 1 in 10 are in an interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriage. Women 55 or older had the lowest proportion of currently married women in interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic marriages (4 percent).

Figure 4a.
Percent Reaching Stated Anniversary by Marriage Cohort for Men's First Marriages: 2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

Only 4 percent of first marriages for currently married women with less than a high school diploma were interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic. About 8 percent of women who had a high school diploma or more were intermarried.

MARITAL INDICATORS: 2009

This section provides basic information about the marital situation of adults in 2009, including the number of times married and the occurrence of divorce or widowhood.

Other indicators include the median age at which marital events happen, how long marriages last, and characteristics of adults with a recent marital event.

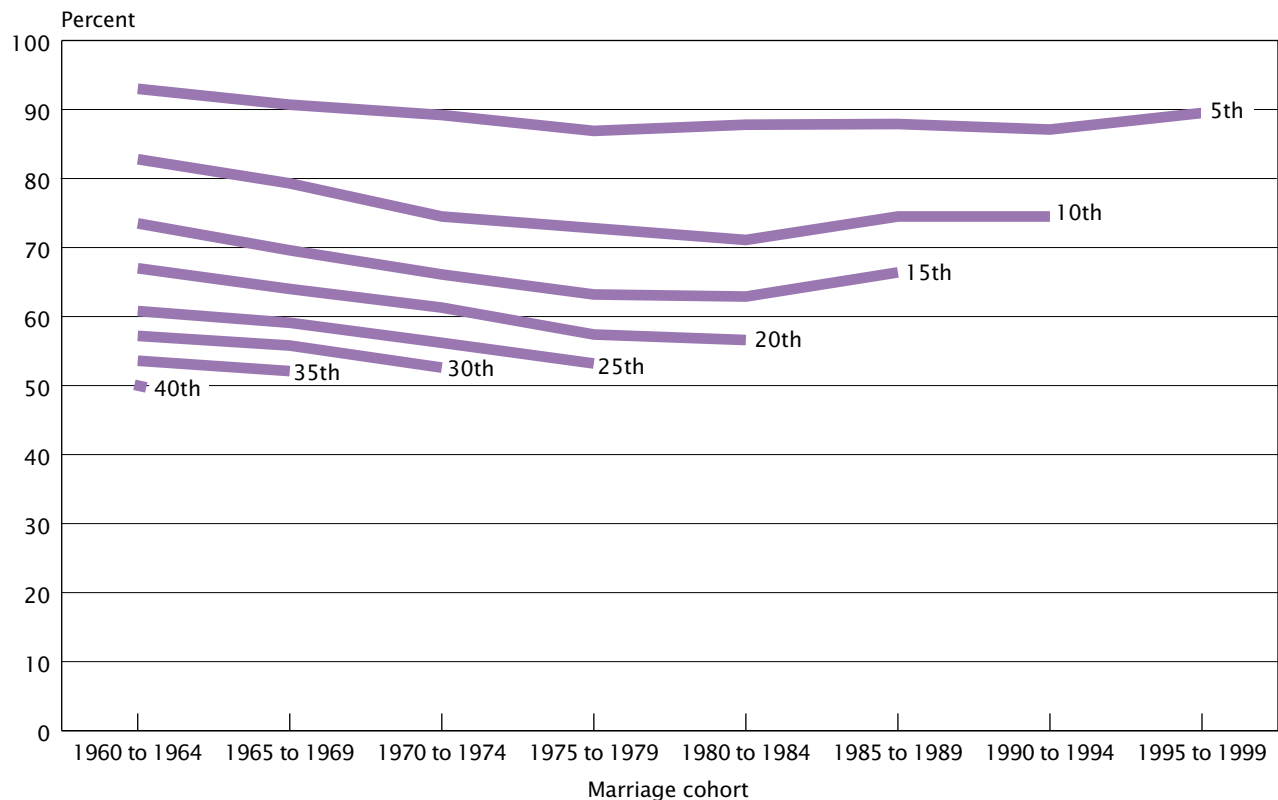
Proportion of Adults Ever Married, Divorced, or Widowed

Most adults had married only once—52 percent of men and 58 percent of women (Table 6). Age groups are shown on the table since marital status varies throughout the life course. For example, not many teens are expected to be married.

For all age groups of women 25 to 29 and over, the majority had married, as had the majority of men 30 to 34 and over. Twelve percent of men and women had married twice, while 3 percent had married three or more times. The proportion of men and women married twice was about 20 percent or higher for men and women aged 50 to 69.

While overall, 21 percent of men and 22 percent of women had ever been divorced, the percentage ever divorced was highest for adults

Figure 4b.
Percent Reaching Stated Anniversary by Marriage Cohort for Women's First Marriages: 2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

aged 50 to 69 (about 36 percent).¹² These proportions fall sharply by age 70 because widowhood becomes more prevalent among aging spouses. Overall, 4 percent of men had been widowed compared with 10 percent of women (Table 6). Among people 70 years and over, 23 percent of men and 51 percent of women had ever been widowed and most were still widowed at the time of the survey. The large difference in the

¹² Estimates for men and women are not statistically different. Estimates for women aged 50 to 59 differ from that for women aged 60 to 69.

percentages of men and women aged 70 and over who had been widowed is because women have a longer life expectancy than men and usually are younger than their husbands, so they are more likely to experience the death of their spouse.¹³

Figure 5 illustrates the difference in cumulative divorce from first marriage, for women, by race and ethnicity. The graph shows the result of combining all first

¹³ Arias, Elizabeth, United States Life Tables, 2006, *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 58, No. 21, National Center for Health Statistics: Hyattsville, MD, 2010.

marriages, regardless of when they occurred, and so represents the average experience of all ever-married women as of 2009.

Marriages are most susceptible to divorce in the early years. While after 5 years, approximately 10 percent of first marriages overall had ended in divorce, proportions ending in divorce were lower for Asian (3 percent) and Hispanic women (7 percent). The percentages divorced from a first marriage by 2009 for Black non-Hispanic and non-Hispanic White women were not statistically

Table 5.
Percent Intermarried for Currently Married Women in Their First Marriage: 2009

Characteristic	Number of marriages (in thousands)	Percent interracial or Hispanic/non-Hispanic	Margin of error ¹
Total	48,779	8	0.5
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN			
White alone	41,251	5	0.5
Non-Hispanic	34,808	5	0.5
Black alone	3,614	7	1.8
Asian alone	2,706	23	3.4
Hispanic (any race)	6,988	11	1.6
AGE			
15 to 24 years	2,060	13	3.1
25 to 34 years	9,440	11	1.3
35 to 44 years	11,150	10	1.2
45 to 54 years	10,821	7	1.0
55 years and over	15,308	4	0.7
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Less than high school	4,646	4	1.2
High school graduate	12,736	7	1.0
Some college	15,150	9	1.0
Bachelor's degree or more	16,247	8	0.9

¹ This number, when added to and subtracted from the estimate, provides the 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

different—until about the seventh year of marriage, after which Black non-Hispanic women had higher percentages divorced, leading to their eventual level of 49 percent of first marriages ending in divorce compared with about 41 percent for non-Hispanic White women. Corresponding percentages ever divorced from first marriage were lower for Asian (22 percent) and Hispanic (34 percent) women.

Median Age at Marriage and Divorce

Table 7 shows the median age for marital events associated with first and second marriages for people who had ever experienced these events by 2009. These medians reflect the cumulative marital experience of the population as of 2009 and do not represent the ages of people who married or divorced in 2009. Estimates of that type will be discussed in the section on marital events that occurred during 2008. These medians represent only a portrait of the population

at a given point in time and are influenced not only by the current age structure of the population, but also by past marital patterns, which may not reflect current behavior.¹⁴

Among people in 2009 who had ever been married, the median age at first marriage was about 22 for non-Hispanic White women and 23 for Black and Hispanic women.¹⁵ The median age at separation from first marriage for these groups was 29, and the median age at divorce from first marriage was 30 for non-Hispanic White and Hispanic women and 31 for Black women. Comparing within race or Hispanic origin group, men were about 2 to 3 years older than women when they married, separated, and divorced from their first marriage. Asian men and women had a higher age at first marriage than other population groups—25 for women and 28 for men.

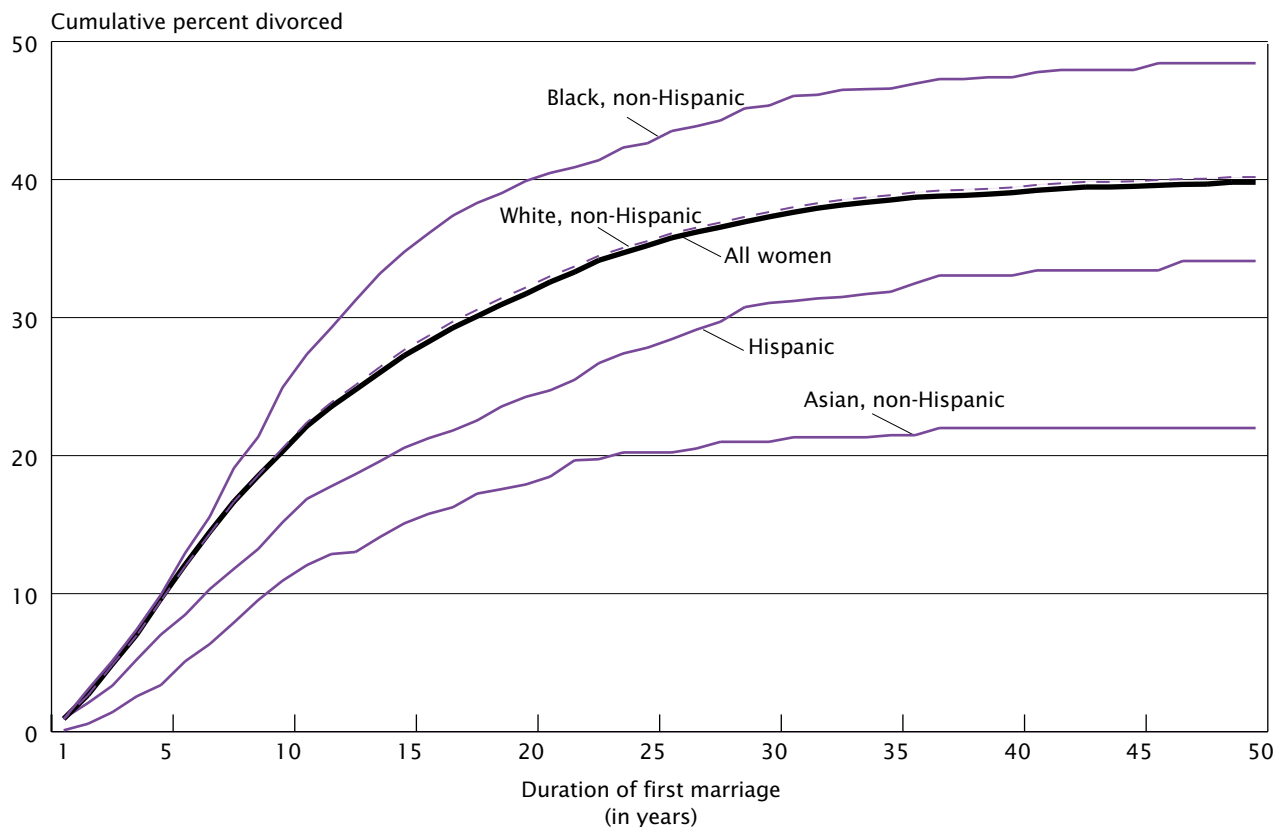
Half of those who remarried following a divorce from a first marriage had done so by their mid-thirties. Among those who had remarried by 2009, the median age at second marriage was 36 for men and 33 for women.

The median age at widowhood from first marriage was lower for Black men and women (54 years) than for non-Hispanic White men

¹⁴ State-level estimates of the median age at first marriage, as well as estimates by race, are available from the 2008 ACS and later, accessible through American Fact Finder at <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en>. The median is estimated since there is no question about age at first marriage—unlike in SIPP, where this is asked directly.

¹⁵ Median age at first marriage differs significantly for Black and Hispanic women.

Figure 5.
Cumulative Percentage of Ever-Married Women Divorced From First Marriage by Race and Ethnicity and Duration of First Marriage: 2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

and women (61 years).¹⁶ This difference reflects higher mortality rates for Black men and women compared with non-Hispanic White men and women.¹⁷

¹⁶ Estimates for men and women are not statistically different.

¹⁷ Arias, Elizabeth, *United States Life Tables, 2006, National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 58, No. 21, National Center for Health Statistics: Hyattsville, MD, 2010.

Duration of Terminated Marriages and Median Time to Remarriage Following Divorce

How long do marriages last and how quickly do people remarry? Table 8, profiling the marital experience of the population as of 2009, shows that first marriages which ended in divorce lasted a median of 8 years for men and women overall. The median time from marriage to separation was shorter—about 7 years.

Table 8 also shows the median duration of time between the divorce from a first marriage and a second marriage. Half of the men and women in all of the race and Hispanic-origin groups who remarried after divorcing from their first marriage did so within about 4 years. The median duration of second marriages that ended in divorce did not differ from that for first marriages.

Table 6.

Marital History for People 15 Years Old and Over by Age and Sex: 2009

Characteristic	Total, 15 years and over		15 to 17 years	18 to 19 years	20 to 24 years	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 49 years	50 to 59 years	60 to 69 years	70 years and over
	Estimate	Margin of error ¹										
MALE												
Total (in thousands)	115,797	1,024	6,559	4,311	10,152	10,567	9,518	9,995	21,504	19,568	12,774	10,849
Percent												
Never married	33.0	0.6	98.3	97.5	87.5	59.7	35.6	23.5	16.4	10.8	4.6	3.4
Ever married	67.0	0.6	1.7	2.5	12.5	40.3	64.4	76.5	83.6	89.2	95.4	96.6
Married once	52.3	0.6	1.5	2.5	12.5	38.8	59.4	66.9	65.8	63.4	64.8	72.3
Still married ²	42.5	0.6	1.0	1.8	11.2	34.2	52.2	56.1	52.2	50.4	53.5	54.0
Married twice	11.6	0.4	0.2	–	–	1.5	4.8	8.7	14.8	20.0	22.1	18.9
Still married ²	9.0	0.4	0.1	–	–	1.3	4.0	7.4	11.3	15.5	17.5	13.2
Married 3 or more times	3.1	0.2	–	–	–	0.1	0.2	1.0	3.0	5.8	8.5	5.4
Still married ²	2.3	0.2	–	–	–	0.1	0.2	0.8	2.2	4.3	6.5	3.8
Ever divorced	20.5	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.8	5.0	10.5	17.9	28.5	35.7	36.5	23.4
Currently divorced	9.1	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.7	3.7	6.2	9.5	14.2	15.5	12.4	7.2
Ever widowed	3.6	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.3	2.5	6.4	22.6
Currently widowed	2.6	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.9	1.6	3.9	17.4
FEMALE												
Total (in thousands)	123,272	1,022	6,259	4,219	10,158	10,408	9,645	10,267	22,119	20,702	14,288	15,207
Percent												
Never married	27.2	0.5	98.9	95.5	77.3	46.8	26.7	17.3	13.0	9.1	6.0	4.3
Ever married	72.8	0.5	1.1	4.5	22.7	53.2	73.3	82.7	87.0	90.9	94.0	95.7
Married once	57.5	0.6	1.1	4.5	22.4	50.8	64.5	69.3	67.4	65.5	67.7	76.1
Still married ²	40.6	0.6	0.5	3.9	19.7	43.2	54.5	55.8	51.6	47.5	45.7	30.1
Married twice	12.1	0.4	0.1	–	0.3	2.3	8.0	11.6	15.8	19.5	20.1	15.2
Still married ²	7.9	0.3	1.0	–	0.2	2.0	6.9	9.1	11.3	13.4	13.2	5.2
Married 3 or more times	3.2	0.2	–	–	–	–	0.8	1.9	3.8	5.9	6.2	4.4
Still married ²	1.9	0.2	–	–	–	–	0.7	1.4	2.5	4.1	3.6	1.4
Ever divorced	22.4	0.5	0.2	0.2	1.8	7.3	15.6	22.7	31.0	37.3	34.5	21.4
Currently divorced	11.3	0.4	0.1	0.2	1.5	5.3	8.1	11.8	16.4	18.6	16.0	9.9
Ever widowed	10.0	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	1.4	2.6	6.5	17.0	51.2
Currently widowed	8.9	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.8	1.8	4.9	13.9	48.3

– Represents or rounds to zero.

¹ This number, when added to and subtracted from the estimate, provides the 90 percent confidence interval.² Includes those currently separated.Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

Table 7.

Median Age at Marital Event for People 15 Years and Over by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2009

(Median age in years for those who experienced the specified event. Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	White alone		Black alone	Asian alone	All remaining races and combinations	Hispanic (any race)
		Total	Non-Hispanic				
MEN							
Total	43.3	44.2	46.0	39.3	40.3	37.3	35.6
First Marriage							
Age when married.....	24.5	24.3	24.2	26.1	27.8	23.9	24.6
Age when separated ¹	30.8	30.6	30.6	32.4	34.6	30.4	30.3
Age when divorced.....	32.0	31.8	31.8	33.9	35.4	31.3	31.8
Age when widowed.....	61.1	62.1	62.7	54.3	58.8	61.9	49.4
Second Marriage							
Age when married.....	35.8	35.6	35.6	37.6	37.6	35.1	35.3
Age when separated ¹	39.0	39.0	38.9	40.3	(B)	37.4	39.5
Age when divorced.....	42.0	42.1	42.2	41.9	(B)	41.8	40.3
Age when widowed.....	61.4	61.4	61.3	63.2	(B)	(B)	(B)
WOMEN							
Total	45.0	45.9	47.5	41.2	41.0	39.5	37.3
First Marriage							
Age when married.....	22.3	22.1	22.0	23.3	25.3	21.6	22.5
Age when separated ¹	28.8	28.7	28.7	29.5	30.9	27.6	28.6
Age when divorced.....	30.1	29.8	29.8	31.3	32.2	28.9	29.9
Age when widowed.....	59.4	60.7	61.2	54.1	57.5	46.6	53.8
Second Marriage							
Age when married.....	33.3	33.0	33.0	35.5	36.3	32.2	32.8
Age when separated ¹	36.4	36.1	36.2	39.3	(B)	35.5	36.3
Age when divorced.....	39.3	39.1	39.1	41.2	(B)	37.8	40.2
Age when widowed.....	60.3	60.9	61.1	59.2	(B)	52.5	58.6

B Base less than 75,000. Median not calculated.

¹ For those who divorced.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

Duration of Current Marriages: 2009

While previous sections examined the intervals between different marital events among people who had experienced a marital disruption by 2009, this section looks at the duration of the most recent marriage for couples who were currently married at the time of the survey in 2009.

Table 9 shows the number and percentage of married couples in 2009 who had reached various anniversaries. In 2009, 83 percent of all currently married couples had achieved at least their fifth anniversary, 55 percent had been married at least 15 years, and 35 percent had reached their twenty-fifth anniversary. A small percentage of currently married

couples had passed their golden (fiftieth) wedding anniversary—6 percent. These percentages are only 1 to 2 percentage points higher than they were in 1996, reflecting both the leveling of divorce rates and the increases in life expectancy.¹⁸

¹⁸ See Table 7 in the P70-80 report for 1996 estimates. The report is available on the Census Bureau Web site at <www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p70-80.pdf>.

Table 8.

Median Duration of Marriages for People 15 Years and Over by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2009

(Duration in years)

Duration	Total	White alone		Black alone	Asian alone	All remaining races and combinations	Hispanic (any race)
		Total	Non-Hispanic				
Duration of first marriage for those whose first marriage ended in divorce							
Men	8.0	7.8	7.8	8.6	8.2	8.6	8.1
Women	8.0	7.9	7.9	8.3	8.3	7.2	8.0
Duration between first marriage and first separation for those who divorced							
Men	6.7	6.6	6.6	7.0	6.6	7.4	6.5
Women	6.6	6.7	6.7	6.4	7.1	5.8	6.3
Duration between first separation and first divorce for those who divorced							
Men	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.9
Women	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.9
Duration between first divorce and remarriage for those whose first marriages ended in divorce and who had remarried							
Men	3.8	3.8	3.7	4.3	4.1	3.6	4.0
Women	3.7	3.6	3.6	4.7	4.4	3.5	4.1
Duration of second marriage for those whose second marriage ended in divorce							
Men	8.5	8.7	8.7	7.9	(B)	6.4	7.4
Women	8.0	7.9	7.8	8.7	(B)	8.1	9.0

B Base less than 75,000. Median duration not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf>.

Table 9.

Currently Married Women Who Had Reached Stated Anniversaries by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2009

Anniversary of current marriage	Total	White alone		Black alone	Asian alone	Hispanic (any race)
		Total	Non-Hispanic			
NUMBER (in thousands)						
Total currently married	62,140	52,704	45,220	4,721	3,086	8,137
5th	51,233	43,802	38,036	3,638	2,499	6,227
10th	42,102	36,416	32,034	2,794	1,937	4,724
15th	34,100	29,697	26,486	2,166	1,483	3,456
25th	21,912	19,300	17,627	1,298	874	1,812
35th	13,141	11,686	10,804	750	457	935
50th	3,851	3,549	3,429	157	97	125
PERCENT						
Total currently married	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5th	82.5	83.1	84.1	77.0	81.0	76.5
10th	67.8	69.1	70.8	59.2	62.8	58.1
15th	54.9	56.3	58.6	45.9	48.0	42.5
25th	35.3	36.6	39.0	27.5	28.3	22.3
35th	21.2	22.2	23.9	15.9	14.8	11.5
50th	6.2	6.7	7.6	3.3	3.1	1.5

Note: Currently married includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent, excluding separated.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf>.

Table 10.

Number of Times Married for Currently Married Wives and Their Husbands: 2009

(Numbers in thousands)

Number of times wife has been married	Number of times husband has been married							
	All current marriages				Married within the last year ¹			
	Total	Married 1 time	Married 2 times	Married 3 or more times	Total	Married 1 time	Married 2 times	Married 3 or more times
Total	60,607	47,699	10,271	2,637	2,232	1,648	440	144
Married 1 time	48,779	43,340	4,705	734	1,696	1,447	224	24
Married 2 times	9,551	3,814	4,533	1,205	422	163	167	92
Married 3 or more times	2,276	545	1,034	698	114	37	50	27
PERCENT OF MARRIAGES								
Total	100.0	78.7	16.9	4.4	100.0	73.8	19.7	6.4
Married 1 time	80.5	71.5	7.8	1.2	76.0	64.9	10.0	1.1
Married 2 times	15.8	6.3	7.5	2.0	18.9	7.3	7.5	4.1
Married 3 or more times	3.8	0.9	1.7	1.2	5.1	1.7	2.2	1.2

¹ Includes marriages that occurred during calendar year 2008.

Note: This table includes only people who are married, spouse present.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf>.

The percentage reaching particular anniversaries was generally lower for Black and Hispanic women than for non-Hispanic White women.¹⁹ Higher rates of divorce for Blacks and the more youthful age distribution for Hispanics contribute to this difference.

Number of Times Married for Those Currently Married

Not all newlyweds begin married life with the same marital history. One or both spouses may have been married previously, which means some couples enter the marriage with children and commitments from previous marital unions. Table 10 takes a more detailed look at the number of times wives and husbands had

¹⁹ The percentages of non-Hispanic White women and Black women reaching their fiftieth anniversary do not differ significantly.

been married when surveyed in 2009. While both spouses were in their first marriage in 72 percent of all currently married couples in 2009, this situation occurred for just 65 percent of the couples who had married within the previous year.²⁰

Six percent of all currently married couples involved a wife who was in her second marriage and a husband who was in his first marriage, while another 8 percent of all currently married couples involved a husband who was in his second marriage and a wife who was in her first marriage. Eight percent of currently married couples and couples married within the previous year involved spouses

²⁰ Estimates labeled "within the last year" in Table 10 were reported as having occurred during calendar year 2008.

who were both in their second marriage.²¹ A very small percentage of all currently married couples (1 percent) consisted of a husband and wife who had both been married 3 or more times.

Because the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) no longer publishes detailed marriage statistics by marriage order, it is difficult to determine recent trends in these indicators. Based on the SIPP data in Table 10, the percentage of couples married in the previous year in which both were entering their first marriage

²¹ The percentage of couples involving a wife who was in her second marriage and a husband who was in his first marriage did not differ statistically from either the percentage of couples involving a husband who was in his second marriage and a wife who was in her first marriage or the percentage of couples involving spouses who were both in their second marriage.

Table 11.

Characteristics of People 15 Years and Over With a Marital Event During 2008

(Data include first and higher order events. Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic at time of interview	Men					Women				
	Total	With a marital event during 2008				Total	With a marital event during 2008			
		Marriage	Separation	Divorce	Widowhood		Marriage	Separation	Divorce	Widowhood
Total	115,797	2,398	815	792	401	123,272	2,392	870	942	694
PERCENT	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN										
White alone	81.8	82.1	81.2	82.9	82.6	80.1	82.4	79.4	82.7	83.9
Non-Hispanic	68.4	64.0	68.3	69.3	74.7	68.2	65.7	67.4	68.9	77.1
Black alone	11.2	11.2	14.2	13.1	13.3	12.8	9.2	14.9	12.7	10.2
Asian alone	3.8	3.0	1.3	1.2	3.2	4.0	3.8	1.0	1.5	3.7
Hispanic (any race)	14.8	20.9	14.2	14.0	7.9	13.1	19.1	13.7	14.6	6.7
AGE										
15 to 24 years	18.2	18.6	7.6	5.8	4.5	16.7	25.3	14.6	9.9	1.7
25 to 34 years	17.3	43.2	22.5	23.6	2.1	16.3	41.7	29.3	30.7	1.3
35 to 44 years	17.6	18.5	32.9	31.0	4.1	16.9	16.1	28.9	29.0	4.2
45 to 54 years	18.7	11.1	24.7	27.5	8.9	18.3	10.1	19.0	20.5	8.8
55 to 64 years	14.2	5.4	8.4	7.1	15.0	14.4	4.8	7.9	9.1	19.2
65 years and over	14.0	3.3	3.8	5.0	65.4	17.4	1.9	0.4	0.8	64.8
Median age (in years)	43.3	31.4	41.5	41.8	71.8	45.0	29.5	37.0	37.4	72.0
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT										
Less than high school	17.1	13.4	12.9	9.3	19.0	15.5	10.3	10.8	8.3	18.3
High school graduate	26.2	27.8	32.2	28.7	31.2	25.7	21.8	27.9	25.7	38.9
Some college	31.7	31.2	30.5	36.7	25.5	33.9	36.9	38.1	40.4	28.7
Bachelor's degree or more	25.0	27.6	24.4	25.3	24.2	24.9	31.0	23.3	25.6	14.1
EMPLOYMENT STATUS¹										
Worked full-time last month	53.9	72.4	70.2	74.1	19.2	39.3	50.5	56.4	57.2	12.7
Worked part-time last month	11.2	9.3	5.5	6.3	5.4	16.1	16.0	12.4	15.1	8.8
Did not work last month	34.8	18.3	24.4	19.6	75.4	44.6	33.5	31.2	27.7	78.5
POVERTY LEVEL										
Below poverty level	10.5	10.4	12.7	12.0	10.7	12.5	11.0	25.5	24.3	14.0
100–199 percent of poverty level	17.3	18.0	17.9	16.2	22.6	19.6	17.0	24.1	22.1	36.0
200+ percent of poverty level	70.3	70.8	63.2	66.1	66.1	65.9	71.2	46.7	50.4	49.4
Income not reported	1.9	0.8	6.2	5.7	0.5	2.0	0.8	3.8	3.2	0.6
HOUSEHOLD RECEIVES PUBLIC ASSISTANCE										
Cash assistance	7.0	5.6	5.7	6.7	7.3	7.9	5.8	9.6	10.0	7.5
Noncash assistance ²	25.2	29.8	30.3	26.0	19.2	29.3	30.6	45.5	49.6	20.5
TENURE										
Owns home	70.5	51.3	55.5	55.0	82.3	69.9	50.4	48.4	53.3	78.3
Rents home ³	29.5	48.7	44.6	45.0	17.7	30.2	49.6	51.6	46.7	21.7
FAMILY STATUS⁴										
Not living with own children under 18	75.6	69.8	78.8	75.5	96.3	69.9	60.6	45.9	47.8	96.8
Currently living with own children under 18	24.4	30.2	21.2	24.5	3.7	30.1	39.4	54.1	52.2	3.2
Currently living with own children 1–17	23.3	25.1	20.8	23.7	3.7	28.8	34.6	52.3	49.0	3.2
Currently living with own children under 1	2.5	8.0	0.8	1.3	–	2.8	8.8	4.6	5.7	–

– Represents or rounds to zero.

¹ Full-time includes those who usually work 35 or more hours per week; part-time includes those who usually work 1–34 hours per week; those who did not work last month include individuals who were unemployed or were not in the labor force.² Noncash benefits include food stamps, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Medicaid, rent for public housing, lower rent due to government subsidy, energy assistance, and free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts.³ Those who occupy without cash payment are included with renters.⁴ For the purposes of this table only, “own children” refers to biological or adopted children. The table excludes stepchildren.Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module. For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>.

was 65 percent—higher than the 54 percent for couples who married in 1990, based on the last data published by the NCHS.²² These percentages are both lower than the 69 percent reported by NCHS in 1970. The SIPP figure of 65 percent for 2009, however, is not statistically different from the percentage of first-time marriages in 1973 (65 percent) and 1974 (63 percent).²³ The SIPP data also show that 15 percent of couples married in the previous year involved both spouses marrying for at least the second time, compared with the NCHS estimate of 24 percent in 1990. The SIPP 2009 estimates are again not statistically different from those for 1970, in which 16 percent of marriages involved both previously married spouses.²⁴ Although difficult to consistently determine, it appears that the proportion of first-time marriages of both spouses declined from 1970 to 1990 but subsequently increased in more recent years.

²² Clarke, Sally C., "Advance Report of Final Marriage Statistics, 1989 and 1990," *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Vol. 43, No. 12(S), Table 7, July 14, 1995, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD. See <www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/mvsvr/supp/mv43_12s.pdf>.

²³ The SIPP estimate for 2009 does not differ statistically from the NCHS statistics for 1973 and 1975.

²⁴ Clarke, Sally C., "Advance Report of Final Marriage Statistics, 1989 and 1990," *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Vol. 43, No. 12(S), Table 7, July 14, 1995, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD.

MARITAL EVENTS WITHIN THE PREVIOUS YEAR

This section of the report provides basic information about people who have had marital events in the year before the interview, updating data published in the previous report (P70-97) which analyzed the 2001 SIPP marital history data and the tables published from the SIPP 2004 marital history data.²⁵ This section shows characteristics of men and women who had a marriage, separation, divorce, or were widowed in calendar year 2008.

National estimates of the total number of marriages in the 2008 calendar year from the SIPP were higher than estimates shown in the vital statistics reports published by NCHS. For the year ending April 2009, NCHS estimated the total number of marriages at 2,156,000.²⁶ SIPP data yielded 2.4 million marriages for men and women, about 11 percent higher than the NCHS estimates.²⁷ SIPP estimated 792,000 divorces for men and 942,000 divorces for women during 2008.

²⁵ The 2004 tables can be accessed on the Census Bureau Web site at <www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/marriage/data/sipp/2004/tables.html>, and the 2001 report at <www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p70-97.pdf>.

²⁶ For additional explanation, see the NCHS Web site at <www.cdc.gov/nchs>, or "Births, Marriages, Divorces and Deaths: Provisional Data for 2009," *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 58, Number 9, December 2009, <www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58_09.pdf>.

²⁷ NCHS no longer publishes an estimate of the number of divorces, since it no longer receives data from enough states.

SIPP is one of few sources that can provide a look at changes in the characteristics of those with a recent marital event over recent decades. The following discussion of Table 11 includes some comparisons back to similar tables in the earlier reports which analyzed 1996 and 2001 SIPP Panel marital history data.²⁸

Compared with men and women who had recently married in 1996, the recently married in 2009 were more likely to be Hispanic and less likely to be non-Hispanic White. While about 75 percent of recently married men and women in 1996 were non-Hispanic White, this decreased to about 65 percent in 2009. Conversely, the proportion of the recently married who were Hispanic rose from about 1 in 10 in 1996 to about 1 in 5 in 2009.

The majority of men and women recently widowed are older than most of the men and women who had other marital events. While the median age of men and women who recently married, divorced, or separated was under 50 years, the median age of the men and women who were widowed in the last year was 72 years (Table 11).²⁹

Age is also especially important when looking at employment status, housing tenure, and family

²⁸ Both of the earlier reports are available on the Census Bureau Web site. See Table 8 in the 1996 report, <www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p70-80.pdf>. See Table 9 in the 2001 report, <www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p70-97.pdf>.

²⁹ The median age of men and women widowed in the last year does not differ statistically.

status. The majority of recently married men and women were under age 35 (62 percent of men and 67 percent of women), with a median age of 31 for men and 30 for women. Half or more had at least some college. The percentage of recently married women who had at least a bachelor's degree was higher in 2009 (31 percent) than in 1996 (21 percent). About half of recently married men and women owned their homes. While 30 percent of recently married men lived with their children under 18, about 40 percent of recently married women did. A higher percentage of recently married men lived with their children under 18 in 2009 than in 1996 (25 percent), although the corresponding percentage for women was not different (36 percent in 1996).

The majority of recently separated and divorced men were aged 35 to 54 and the majority of separated and divorced women were aged 25 to 44. While half of these women lived with their own children under 18 (54 percent of separated women and 52 percent of divorced women), one-quarter of recently separated or divorced men (21 percent of those separated and 25 percent of those divorced) lived with their own children under 18.

The data show that marital disruption results in much poorer economic circumstances for women than for men. Thirteen percent of recently separated men were below the poverty level, compared with 26 percent of recently separated women. While 26 percent of recently divorced men or someone in their household received noncash public assistance, 50 percent of recently divorced women or someone in their

household received noncash public assistance.

SOURCE OF THE DATA

The population represented (the population universe) in the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals. The data in this report were collected from January through April 2009 in the second wave (interview) of the 2008 SIPP. The data highlighted in this report primarily come from the core and the marital history topical module. Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs, information on other topics is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the people in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized people in Census 2000).

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. This means the 90 percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions,

how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports to minimize these errors.

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) weighting procedure uses ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on the statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, go to <[www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3\(S&A-12\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/sourceac/S&A08_W1toW3(S&A-12).pdf)>, or contact Benjamin Reist of the Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division at <Benjamin.M.Reist@census.gov>.

Additional information on the SIPP can be found at the following: <www.census.gov/sipp> (main SIPP Web site), <www.census.gov/sipp/workpapr/wp230.pdf> (SIPP Quality Profile), and <www.census.gov/sipp/usrguide.html> (SIPP User's Guide).

MORE INFORMATION

Detailed tables for this report are also available online at <www.census.gov>. Search by clicking on the letter “M” in the “Subjects A–Z” section of the Web page and select “Marriage and Divorce.”

CONTACTS

Contact the Census Bureau’s Customer Services Center at 1-800-923-8282 (toll-free) or visit <ask.census.gov> for further information.

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