

Change in Proportion of Childless Women, 1995-2010

Esther Lamidi & Krista K. Payne



National Center for
Family & Marriage Research
Bowling Green State University

The U.S. stands out among other industrialized nations for having above-replacement level fertility. Nonetheless, the proportion of childless women aged 40-44 almost doubled between 1976 and 2008 (Dye 2010; Lundquist et al. 2009). This profile documents changes in the proportion of childless women in the U.S. between 1995 and 2010 by educational attainment, race/ethnicity, and marital status.

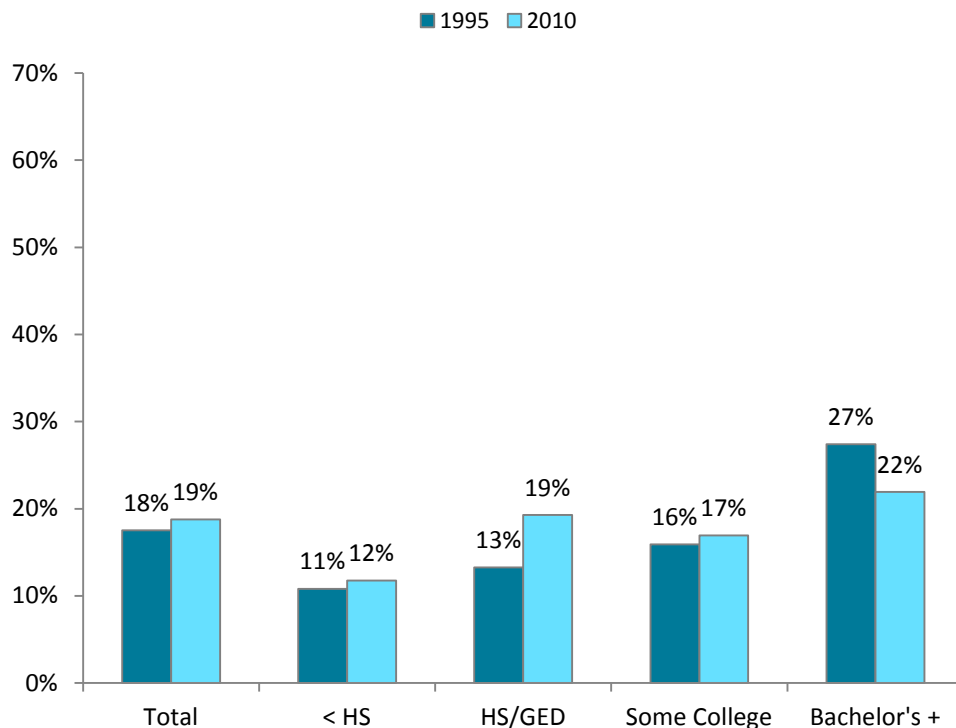
- The proportion of American women who remain childless through their early-to-mid 40s increased by at least 7% between 1995 and 2010.
- In 1995, 18% of all women aged 40-44 had no child of their own; by 2010, about 19% reported being childless (Figure 1).

Change in Proportion of Childless Women Aged 40-44 by Educational Attainment (1995-2010)

- Between 1995 and 2010, childlessness increased across educational levels except among women earning a bachelor's degrees or higher (Figure 1).
- Although college educated women are the most likely to approach the end of their reproductive years without having borne a child, childlessness decreased by as much as 20% among these highly educated women between 1995 and 2010.
- An increase in childlessness between 1995 and 2010 was most pronounced among women with high school degrees (Figure 1).

Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR's core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.

Figure 1. Proportion of Childless Women Aged 40-44 by Educational Attainment (1995-2010)

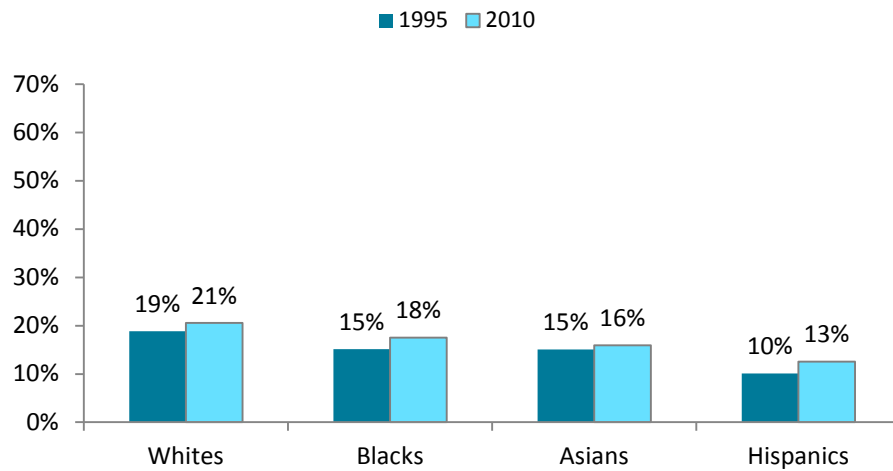


Source: Current Population Survey, 1995 & 2010 (IPUMS)

Change in Proportion of Childless Women Aged 40-44 by Race/Ethnicity (1995-2010)

- Childlessness increased across race/ethnicity between 1995 and 2010 (Figure 2). White women had the highest level and Hispanic women the lowest level of childlessness.
- Hispanic women had the greatest increase in childlessness (24%) followed by Blacks (16%) and then Whites (9%). Asian women had the lowest increase (6%) in childlessness between 1995 and 2010.

Figure 2. Proportion of Childless Women Aged 40-44 by Race/Ethnicity (1995-2010)

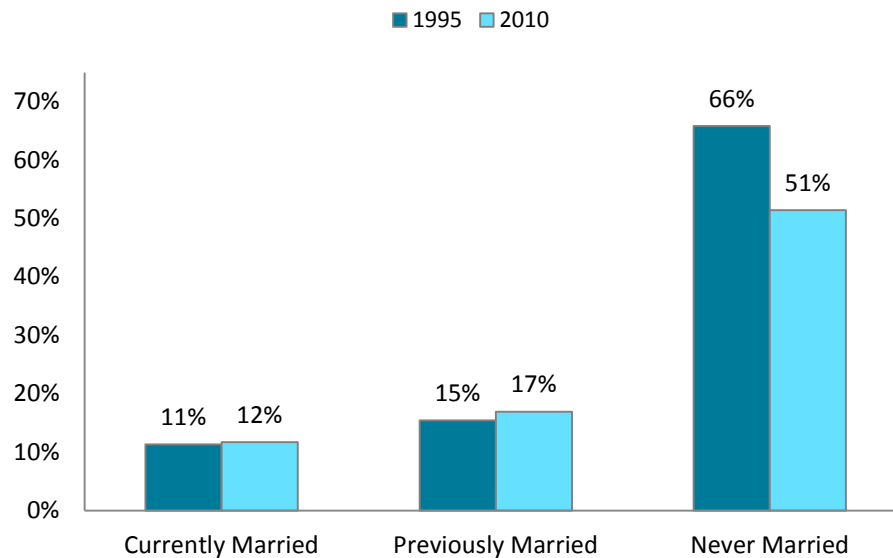


Source: Current Population Survey, 1995 & 2010 (IPUMS)

Change in Proportion of Childless Women Aged 40-44 by Marital Status (1995-2010)

- Half of never-married women in their early 40s have never had a child, whereas 15 years ago, nearly two-thirds were childless. Even though childlessness declined among never-married women, they represent a growing share of women 40-44 years old.
- About 1 in 8 married women has not had a child. Childlessness increased by about 4% among married women and by 10% among previously married women between 1995 and 2010 (Figure 3).
- Contrary to the increase in childlessness among ever-married women, fewer never-married women (51%) were childless in 2010 than in 1995 (66%).

Figure 3. Proportion of Childless Women Aged 40-44 by Marital Status (1995-2010)



Source: Current Population Survey, 1995 & 2010 (IPUMS)

Note: Previously married includes separated, widowed, and divorced categories

References

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