

Marriage in the U.S.: Twenty-five Years of Change, 1995-2020

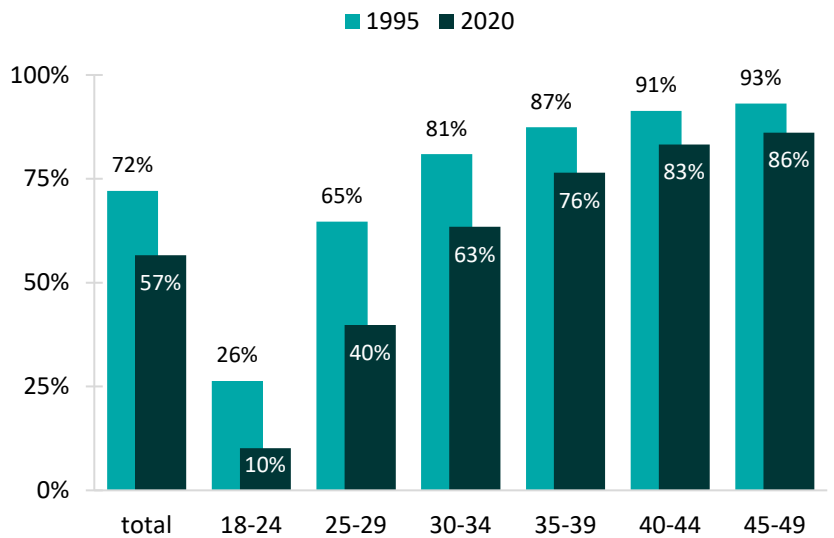
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The marriage rate in the U.S. has fallen over the last 25 years, while the rate of premarital cohabitation has increased (Cherlin 2020; FP-17-05). In 1995, the marriage rate was about 45 per 1,000 women, falling to about 31 per 1,000 women by 2020 (FP-20-21). Using data from the 1995 and 2020 Current Population Survey, this family profile investigates 25 years of change in marriage among women aged 18-49. Updating FP-15-17, the profile also examines variation in the share of women ever married by age, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment.

Age Variation

- Between 1995 and 2020, the share of women ever married decreased by 15 percentage points (from 72% to 57%).
- The proportion of women between 18-49 who ever married decreased for all age groups.
 - The relative size of the decrease between 1995 and 2020 was largest for women aged 18-24 and smallest for women aged 45-49.
 - For women aged 18-24, the proportion of women ever married was about 60% smaller in 2020 compared with 1995 (26% to 10%, respectively).
 - For women aged 45-49, the share of women ever married decreased by 7 percentage points between 1995 and 2020 (about 8% smaller).

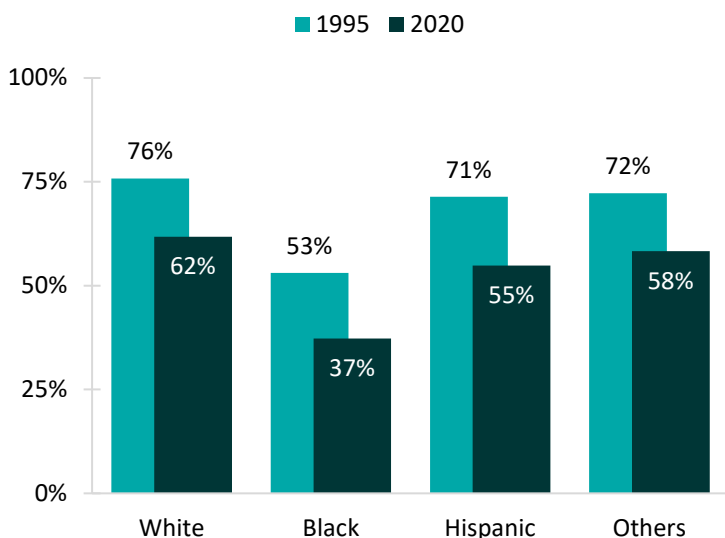
Figure 1. Twenty-five Years of Change in the Share of Women (18-49) Who Ever Married by Age at Interview



Source: NCFMR analyses of Current Population Survey (IPUMS) 1995 and 2020 March Supplements

Race & Ethnicity

Figure 2: Twenty-five Years of Change in the Share of Women (18-49) Who Ever Married by Racial/Ethnic Status



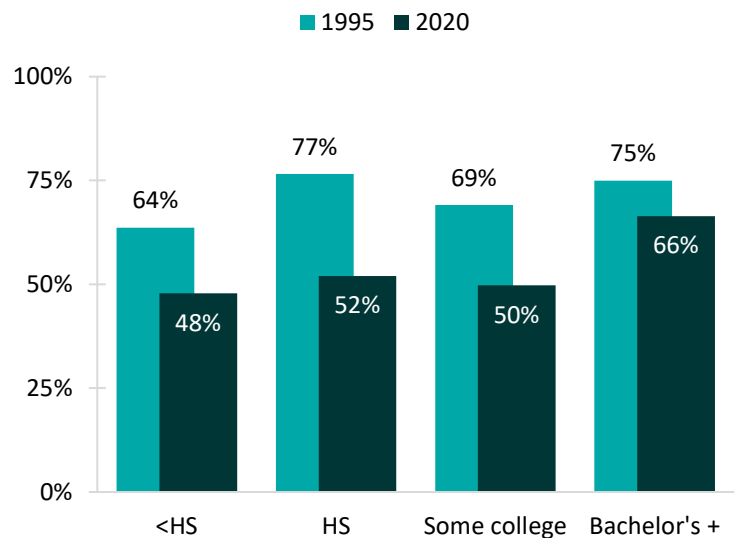
Source: NCFMR analyses of Current Population Survey (IPUMS) 1995 and 2020 March Supplements

- The share of women ever married decreased between 1995 and 2020 for all racial and ethnic groups.
- The change in the proportions of women ever married between 1995 and 2020 differed across racial/ethnic groups.
 - The shares of White women, Hispanic women and women in the 'Other' racial/ethnic group were all around one-fifth smaller in 2020 compared to 1995, with the greatest decline in the share for Hispanic women (22.5% compared to 18.4% for White women and 19.4% for women of Other races/ethnicities).
 - The proportion of women ever married declined the most among Black women for whom the proportion was 30% smaller in 2020 than in 1995 (37% versus 53%).

Educational Attainment

- The proportion of women ever married declined from 1995 to 2020 for all levels of educational attainment.
- The decline in the share of women ever married differed across education levels.
 - The largest decrease in the proportion ever married was among women with a high school degree. In 2020, the proportion was about two-thirds of the proportion in 1995 (52% versus 77%).
 - The decline in the share ever married for those with less than a high school diploma and those who had some college education were about a quarter smaller in 2020 compared to 1995 (decreased by 25% and 27%, respectively).
 - Among women with at least a bachelor's degree, the decline between 1995 and 2020 was about one-third as large as the decline among women with a high school degree (declines of 12% and 32%, respectively).

Figure 3: Twenty-five Years of Change in the Share of Women (18-49) Who Ever Married by Educational Attainment



Source: NCFMR analyses of Current Population Survey (IPUMS) 1995 and 2020 March Supplements

Between 1995 and 2020, the share of women ever married decreased by 15 percentage points (from 72% to 57%).

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