

Characteristics of Early Marriages

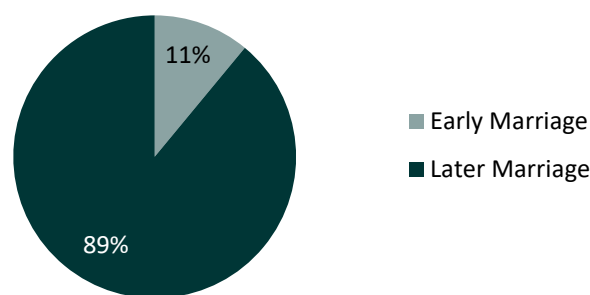
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The age at first marriage has risen steadily since the 1950s (FP-16-07). In 2015, about half of all women married by age 28, and half of men did so by 30 (FP-16-07). In this profile, we compare the characteristics of men and women in early marriages (marriages in which both members were younger than twenty-five) to those in later marriages (marriages in which at least one partner was twenty-five or older). Using the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 2011-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), we focus on the educational attainment, race and ethnicity, premarital cohabitation, and fertility behaviors of recently married individuals in different-sex marriages. The ACS represents marriages in the last year, and the NSFG data represents marriages since 2010.

- Among marriages formed in the past year (as measured in 2015), for the first time (i.e., neither was previously married), early marriages constituted about 17% of recent marriages.
- Among marriages in which both the bride and groom were married 11 % were early marriages (Figure 1) a slight decline from 14% in 2008 (not shown).

11% of recent marriages were early marriages

Figure 1. Percentage of Early and Later Marriages Among Those Who Married in the Past 12 Months

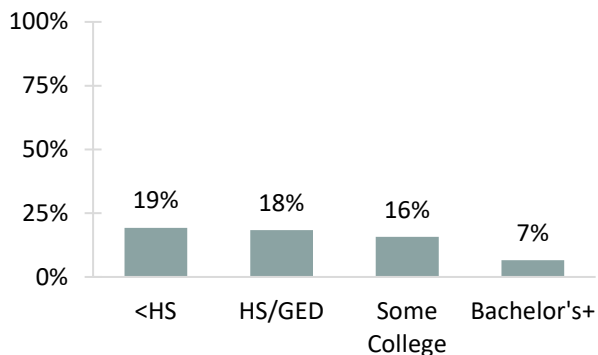


Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 1-yr est

Educational Attainment

- Nearly 1 out of 5 marriages among those with less than a high school degree was an early marriage, whereas only 7% of marriages occurring among individuals with a Bachelor's degree or more were early marriages.
 - The share of early marriages among those with less than a high school degree was over twice as large as those with a Bachelor's degree or more.

Figure 2. Percentage of Early Marriages Among Those Who Married in the Past 12 Months by Educational Attainment, 2015

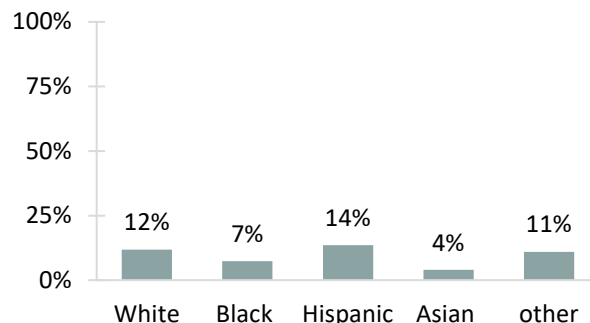


Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-yr est.

Race and Ethnicity

- Hispanics had the largest share (14%) marrying early, followed by 12% of Whites.
- Asians had the smallest share in an early marriage—only 1 in 25 newlywed Asians were young adults under age twenty-five.

Figure 3. Percentage of Early Marriages Among Those Who Married in the Past 12 Months by Race/Ethnicity, 2015

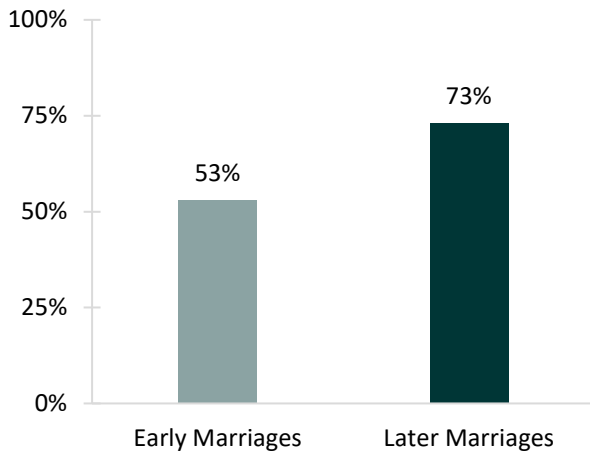


Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-yr est.

Premarital Cohabitation

- Among men and women who recently married, a majority had cohabited prior to marriage. However, a greater share of those in later marriages had cohabited (73%) compared to those in early marriages (53%).

Figure 4. Premarital Cohabitation Among Those Who Recently Married by Early vs. Later Marriages

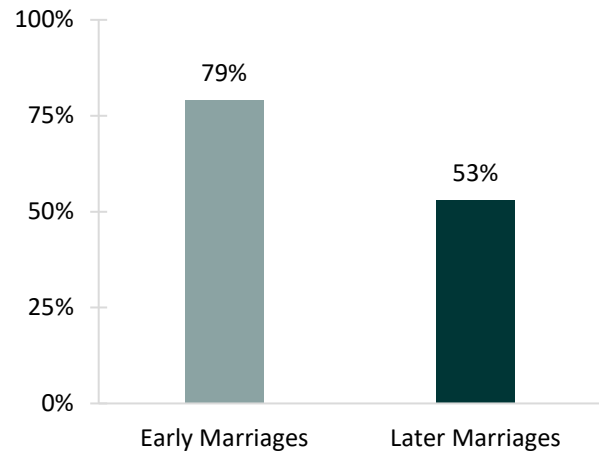


Source: NCFMR analyses of National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2015 continuous data

Fertility Behaviors

- The share of newlywed women aged 15-44 in 2015 who had given birth within the past 12 months was nearly twice as large for those in early marriages (21 %) than later marriages (11 %) (ACS data not shown).
- A majority of women who recently married intended to have children. More women in early marriages (79%) had intentions to have children than did women in later marriages (53%).

Figure 5. Respondent "Intends to have (more) children" Among Those Who Recently Married by Early vs. Later Marriages



Source: NCFMR analyses of National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2015 continuous data

Data Sources:

Ruggles, S., Genadek, K., Goeken, R., Grover, J., and Sobek, M. (2017). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 7.0 [dataset].

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References:

Anderson, L. & Payne, K. K. (2016). Median age at first marriage, 2014. *Family Profiles*, FP-16-07. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/anderson-payne-median-age-first-marriage-fp-16-07.html>

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