



Family Profile No. 07, 2023

A Decade of Change in Shares of Single, Cohabiting, and Married Individuals, 2012-2022

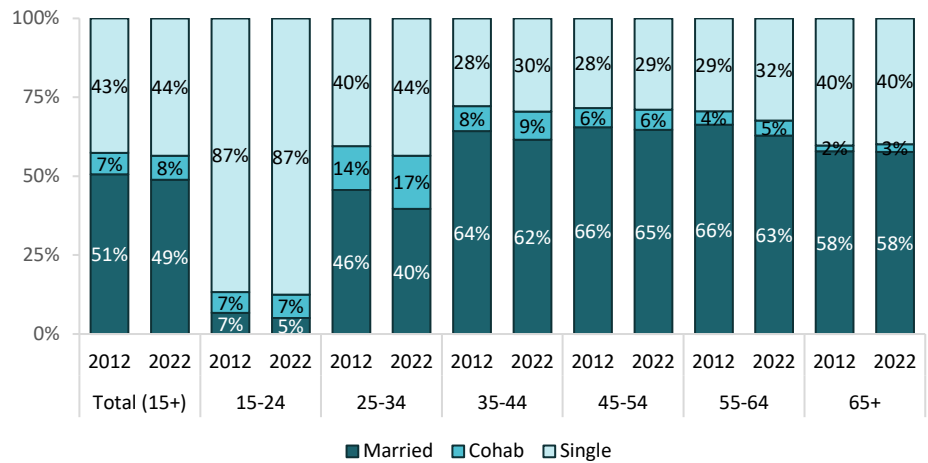
Author: Christopher A. Julian

In 2022, nearly 131 million individuals over the age of 15 in the U.S. were married. Meanwhile, slightly over 20 million were cohabiting, and more than 116 million were single. Using the 2012 and 2022 Current Population Survey (CPS), we contrast the share of individuals who are married, cohabiting, and single in the U.S. to examine a decade of change between 2012 to 2022. We compare whether and how the composition of single, cohabiting, and married individuals has shifted over time across key demographic characteristics, including age, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. This profile is an update of FP-14-01, which compared single, married, and cohabiting households ([Lamidi, 2014](#)). By using the cohabitation pointers in the CPS (available in the 2012 and 2022 data), we can detect the relationship status of the respondent regardless of household head status, allowing us to conduct an individual-level analysis (versus household-level).

Changes in the Shares of Single, Cohabiting, and Married Individuals by Age

- In 2012 slightly more than half of individuals over age 15 were married (51%), a little less than half were single (43%), and slightly less than one-tenth were cohabiting (7%). Ten years later the distribution was remarkably similar.
- As with the total change from 2012 to 2022, the share married, cohabiting, and single remained relatively similar for each age group examined. A notable exception was those aged 25-34—the share married decreased to 40%, cohabiting grew to 17%, and single increased to 44%.
- In 2022, the age group with the greatest share in a cohabiting relationship was those aged 25-34 (17%). Meanwhile, the share of individuals who were single was highest among those aged 15-24 (87%). The share married was generally higher at older ages, starting with those aged 35-44, but among those aged 65 and older the share married began to dip.

Figure 1. Shares of Single, Cohabiting, and Married Individuals in the U.S. by Age, 2012 & 2022

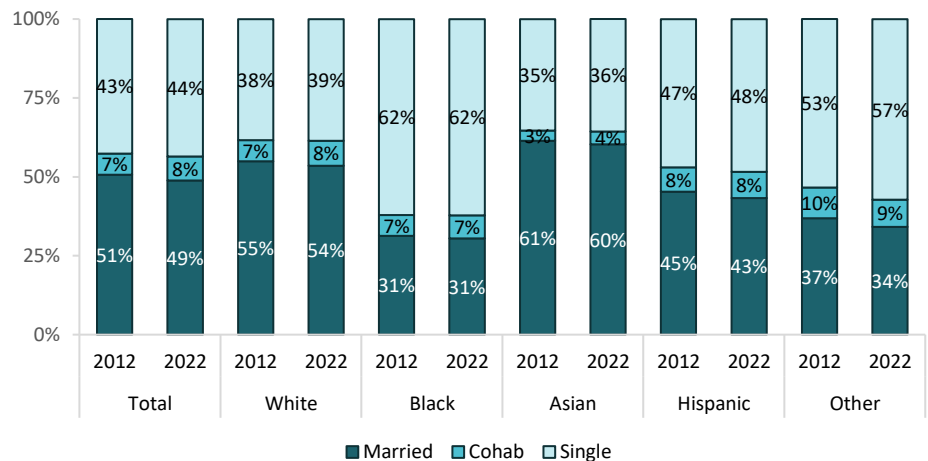


Source: NCFMR analyses of IPUMS-CPS, 2012 & 2022

Changes in the Shares of Single, Cohabiting, and Married Individuals by Race/Ethnicity

- In general, like age, the distribution of change in the shares of single, cohabiting, and married individuals by race/ethnicity is stable, with most changes hovering around only one percentage point.
- The exception is Other race individuals—there were slightly larger changes—the share married, and cohabiting decreased and the share single increased.
- The share cohabiting was generally highest among Other race individuals, the share married was highest among Asian individuals and the share single highest among Black individuals.

Figure 2. Shares of Single, Cohabiting, and Married by Race/Ethnicity, 2012 & 2022

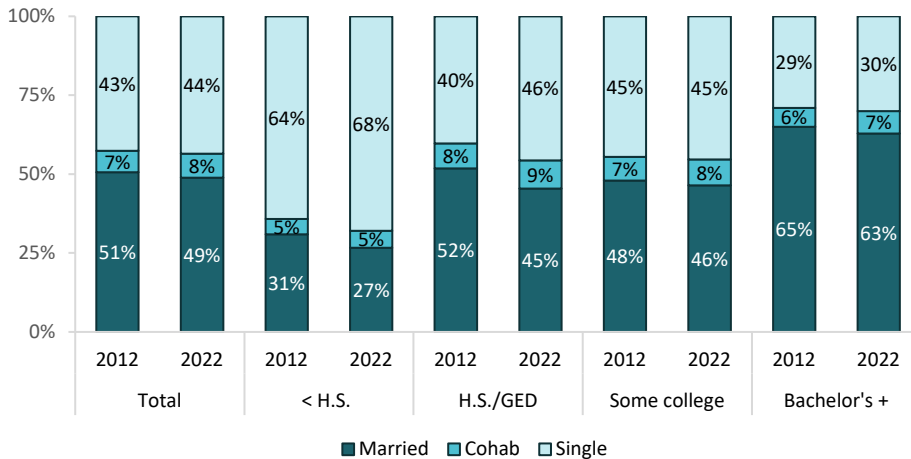


Source: NCFMR analyses of IPUMS-CPS, 2012 & 2022

Changes in the Shares of Single, Cohabiting, and Married Individuals by Educational Attainment

- There were noticeable shifts in union among those who had not earned a high school diploma and those with a H.S. diploma/GED, but no college experience.
 - Among those who had not earned an H.S. diploma, the share single increased while the share of married decreased. Over the last decade those without a H.S. diploma had the largest share currently single (68% in 2022).
 - Among individuals with a H.S. diploma/GED, the share married decreased, the share cohabiting and the share single increased over the decade. Individuals with a H.S. diploma had the largest share in a cohabiting relationship (9%).
- In 2022, the distributions of relationship status of those with a H. S. diploma/ GED and those with some college was similar.
 - In 2022, about equal shares of those with some college education were either married (46%) or single (45%). Eight percent (8%) were in a cohabiting relationship.
 - Those with at least a bachelor's degree had the largest share married in 2022 at 63%. Among those with bachelor's degree fewer than one-third were single (30%) and 7% were cohabiting.

Figure 3. Shares of Single, Cohabiting, and Married by Educational Attainment, 2012 & 2022



Source: NCFMR analyses of IPUMS-CPS, 2012 & 2022

Data Source:

Flood, S., King, M., Rodgers R., Ruggles, R., Warren, R., & Westberry, M. (2022). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 10.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V10.0>

References:

Lamidi, E. (2014). Single, Cohabiting, and Married Households, 1995-2012. (FP-14-1). National Center for Family & Marriage Research. Retrieved from <https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/FP/FP-14-01.pdf>

Suggested Citation:

Julian, C. A. (2023). Geographic variation in percentage of unions including same-sex and different-sex couples unions. *Family Profiles, FP-23-07*. National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-23-07>

This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the state or federal government.