



Family Profile No. 31, 2022

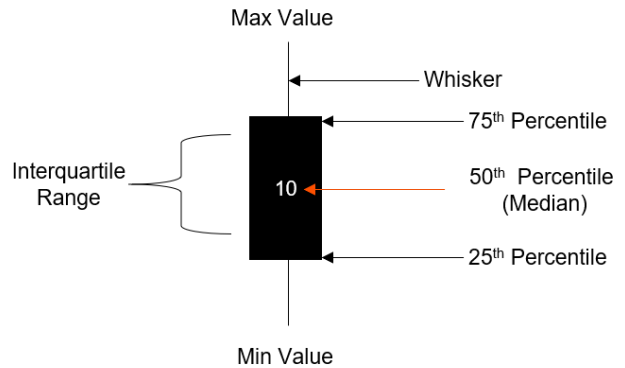
Duration of Marriage at First Divorce, 2020

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The median age at first divorce in the United States has increased steadily since 1970 (Julian, 2022a). This increase is not necessarily indicative of marriages lasting longer. Rather, the increase in the median age at first divorce corresponds with a rising median age at first marriage (Julian, 2022b). In 2010, the median duration of marriage at first divorce was approximately 11 years, and based on our new analysis, it rose to 13 years in 2020 (not shown). In this profile, we use the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Experimental IPUMS data to examine differences in the duration of marriage at first divorce as well as the interquartile ranges (IQR) by gender, race/ ethnicity, and educational attainment as of 2020.¹ The interquartile range is indicative of the spread between a group's middle values, specifically, the 25th through the 75th percentiles (see Figure 1 for an example of this). The longer the boxes in the figures below, the wider the range of marital durations at divorce. The whiskers provide

information on whether the distribution is skewed as well as the minimum and maximum values of the duration of marriage among all divorces reported in 2020. This is an update to our previous profiles on the topic for 2012 (Spangler & Payne, 2014) and 2010 (Payne & Gibbs, 2011).

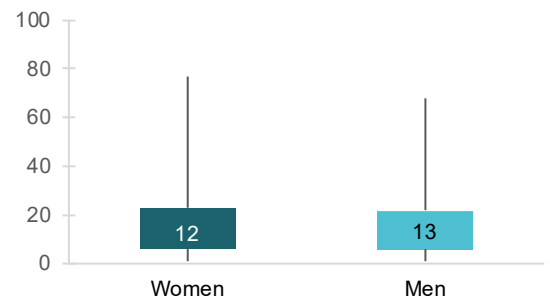
Figure 1. Example of Interquartile Range (IQR)



Duration of Marriage at First Divorce by Gender

- The median duration of marriage at first divorce was slightly longer for men (13 years) compared with women (12 years). Among women experiencing a first divorce in 2020, half had been married for 12 years. Among men, half had been married for 13 years before their first divorce.
- The spread in the distribution (the interquartile range, or IQR) of marriage duration at first divorce was slightly greater for women at 17 years (ranging from 6 to 23 years) compared with men at 16 years (ranging 6 to 22 years).
- Both men and women's duration of marriage at first divorce were clustered at shorter durations, indicating those with very long durations prior to divorce were relatively rare.

Figure 2. Duration of Marriage at First Divorce by Gender, 2020



Source: NCFMR analyses of American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2020 from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

Data Source:

Ruggles, S. Flood, S., Foster, S., Goeken, R., Pacas, J., Schouweiler, M., & Sobek, M. (2021). IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V11.0>

References:

- Julian, C. A. (2022a). Median age at first divorce, 2020. Family Profiles, FP-22-23. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-22-23>
- Julian, C. A. (2022b). Median age at first marriage, 2021. Family Profiles, FP-22-15. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-22-15>
- Payne, K. K., & Gibbs, L. (2011). Marital Duration at Divorce (FP-11-13). National Center for Family & Marriage Research. Retrieved from <https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/FP/FP-11-13.pdf>
- Spangler, A., & Payne, K. K. (2014). Marital Duration at Divorce, 2012. (FP-14-11). National Center for Family & Marriage Research. Retrieved from <https://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resource/data/family-profiles/spangler-payne-marital-duration-divorce-fp-14-11.html>

Suggested Citation:

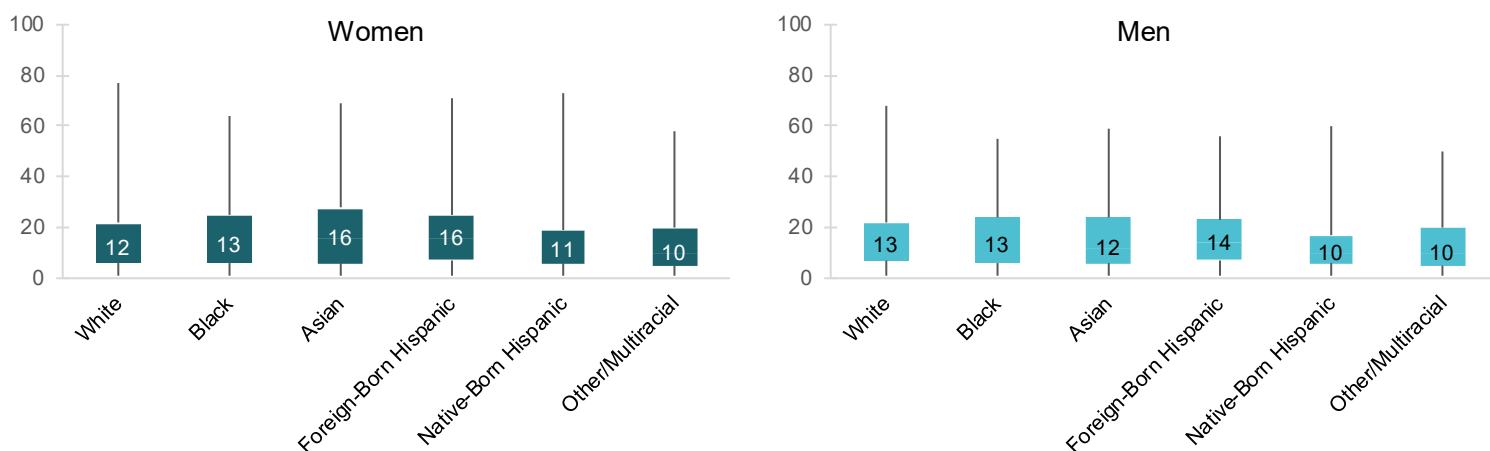
Julian, C.A. (2022). Duration of marriage at first divorce, 2020. *Family Profile, FP-22-31*. National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-22-31>

¹ The standard 2020 ACS 1-year data products will not be released due to the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection and data quality (for more information click [here](#)).

Duration of Marriage at First Divorce by Race/Ethnicity

- Among women, Asians and Native-born Hispanics had the longest median duration at first divorce (16 years). The shortest median duration was among those who identified as Other/ Multiracial (10 years).
- For women, the racial/ ethnic group with the greatest variability in duration of marriage was Asians with an IQR of 22 years. Native-born Hispanics had the least variability with an IQR of only 13 years.
- Among men, Foreign-born Hispanics had the longest median duration at first divorce (14 years) and those who identified as Other/ Multiracial had the shortest median duration (10 years).
- Among men, the racial/ ethnic groups with the greatest variability were Blacks and Asians with IQR's of 18 years. The least variability was amongst Native-born Hispanics with an IQR of 9 years.
- Both men and women's duration of marriage at first divorce were skewed across all racial/ ethnic groups, indicating those with very long durations prior to divorce were relatively rare.

Figure 3. Duration of Marriage at First Divorce by Race and Ethnicity, 2020

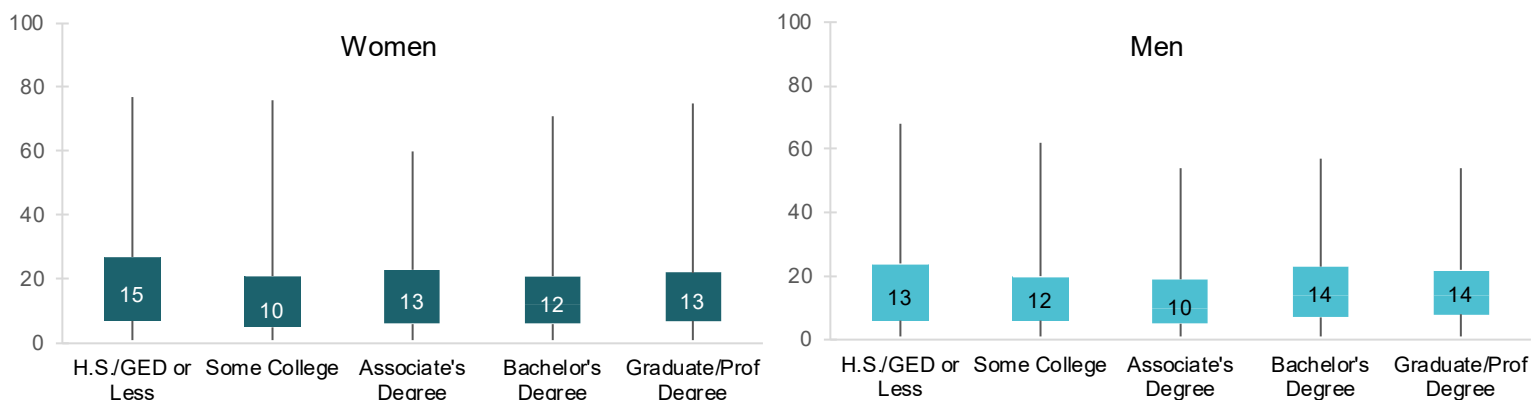


Source: NCFMR analyses of American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2020 from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org

Duration of Marriage at First Divorce by Educational attainment

- Among women, those with a H.S./GED or less had the longest median duration at first divorce (15 years), and those with a bachelor's degree had the shortest (12 years).
- Among women, those with a H.S./GED or less also had the greatest variability in duration with an IQR of 19 years whereas those with a bachelor's degree had the least with an IQR of 15 years.
- Among men, those with the most educational attainment (Bachelor's degree or Graduate/ Professional degree) had the longest median duration at first (14 years).
- For men, the greatest variability in duration was among those with a H.S./GED or less with an IQR of 18 years. The variability was the same for some college (ranging from 6 to 20 years), associate degree (ranging from 5 to 19 years), and graduate/professional degree (ranging from 8 to 22 years).
- Both men and women's duration of marriage at first divorce were skewed across all educational groups, indicating that those with very long durations prior to divorce were relatively rare.

Figure 4 Duration of Marriage at First Divorce by Educational attainment, 2020



Source: NCFMR analyses of American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2020 from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org