

# Cross Border Marriages in the United States: The Intersection of Marriage, Migration and Spousal Citizenship

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## Introduction

Cross border marriage – intermarriage between partners of different nationalities or citizenships— has received increased public attention.

Prior studies concerning patterns of intermarriage among immigrants have primarily focused on marriages occurring within the US.

This study examines the timing of marriage and migration with respect to spousal citizenship among immigrant marriages in the United States.

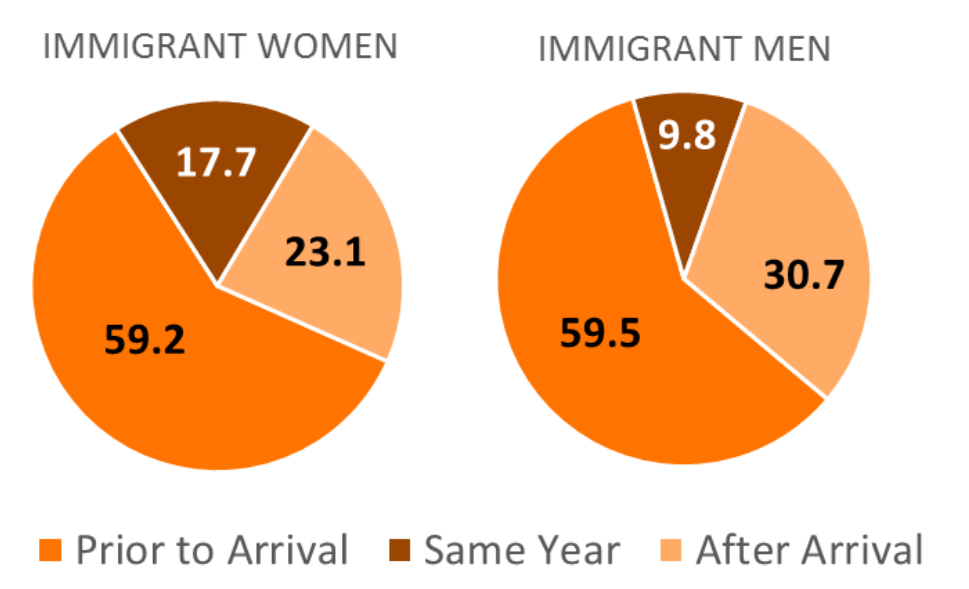
A large fraction of marriages between citizens and non-citizens occurred before or upon arrival to the US.

For some, marriage may not be the final but the first step in the process of obtaining full citizenship in American society.

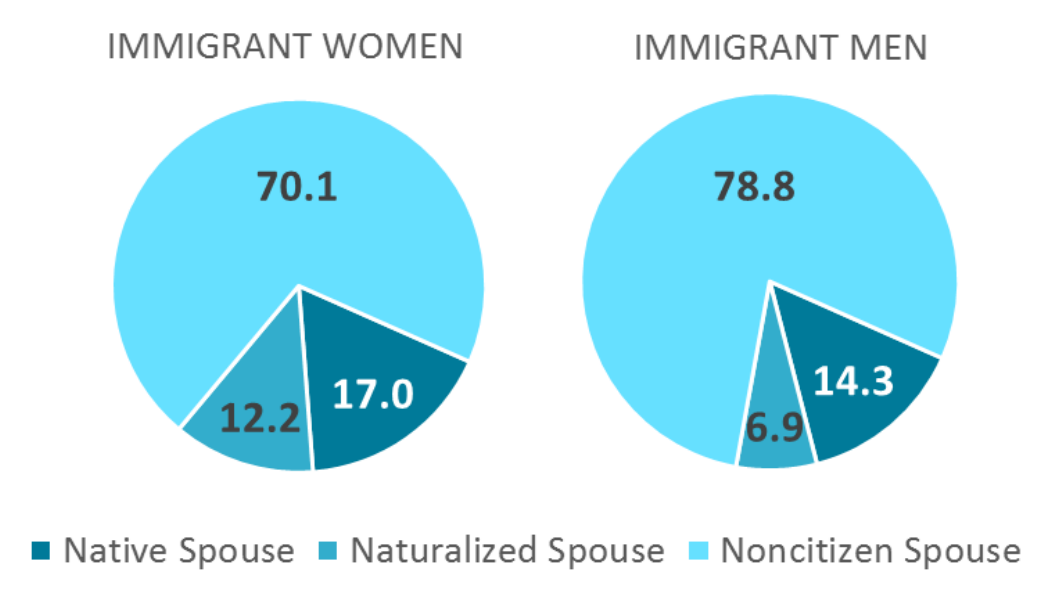
## Data

- IPUMS, American Community Survey 2010-2015
- Immigrant men and women
  - ✓ Currently married (spouse present)
  - ✓ Arrived in the US since 2000
  - ✓ Ages 18 and older at arrival
  - ✓ Non-citizen at marriage
- ✓ N= 145,641 female immigrant respondents
- ✓ Mean age at arrival= 32.6 years
- ✓ Mean age at marriage= 26.6 years
- ✓ 29.2% married to a citizen
- ✓ N= 110,950 male immigrant respondents
- ✓ Mean age at arrival= 34.7 years
- ✓ Mean age at marriage= 28.5 years
- ✓ 21.2% married to a citizen

## Timing of Marriage

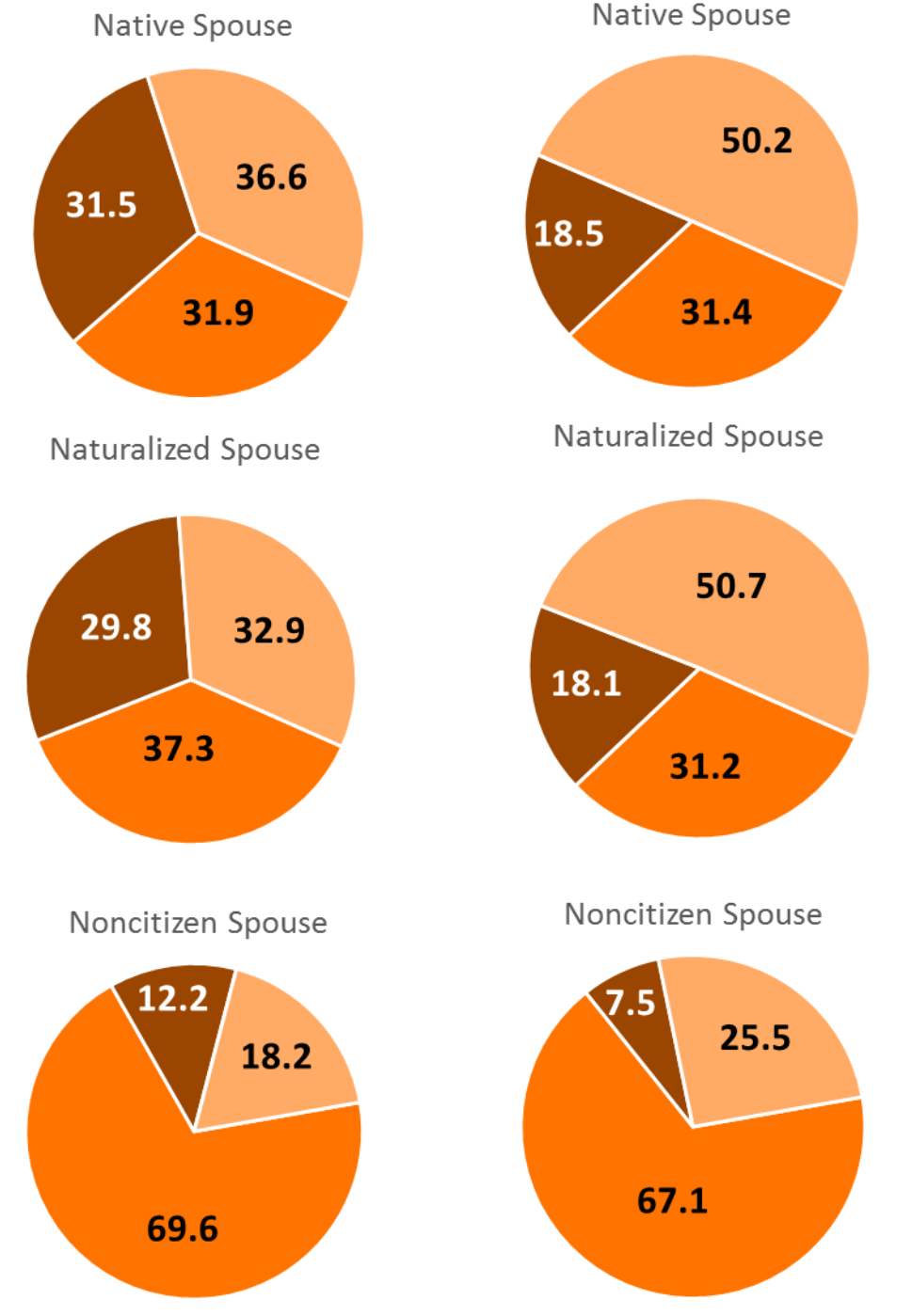


## Spousal Citizenship

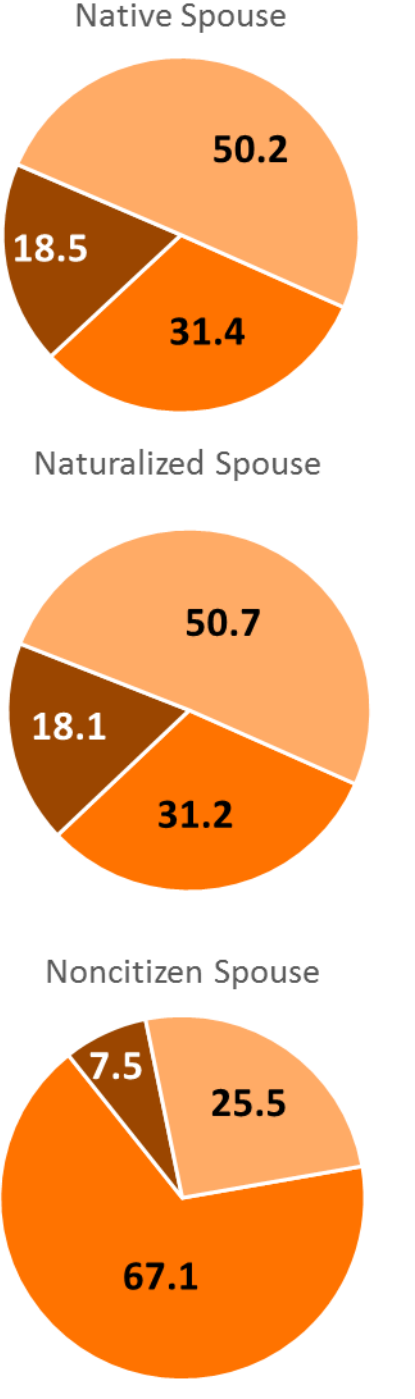


## The Timing of Marriage, Migration, and Spousal Citizenship

### Immigrant Women



### Immigrant Men



- Most immigrants in the sample arrived married.
- Women were almost twice as likely as men to migrate to the US and marry in the same year.
- More women than men marry US citizens.
- Large differences in the timing of marriage and migration emerge when also considering the citizenship status of the spouse.

Legend: Prior to Arrival (orange), Same Year (dark orange), After Arrival (light orange)

## NONCITIZEN WOMEN WHOSE SPOUSE IS...

A US CITIZEN	A NONCITIZEN
6.2	3.1
32.1%	23.8%
30.0%	1.9%
18.6%	6.6%
36.2%	8.1%

## NONCITIZEN MEN WHOSE SPOUSE IS...

A US CITIZEN	A NONCITIZEN
1.0	2.8
41.5%	23.0%
20.2%	1.9%
17.0%	6.7%
24.1%	6.9%

- Cross Border marriages are characterized by a large spousal age gap.

## Patterns by Sending Region

- Wide variation in marriage/migration patterns by gender.
- Women from Southeast Asia (38%) and men from Canada (31%) are the most likely to be married to a US citizen prior to or upon arrival.

