

2014

FP-14-18 The Marriage Rate and the Great Recession

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Payne, Krista K., "FP-14-18 The Marriage Rate and the Great Recession" (2014). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 104.

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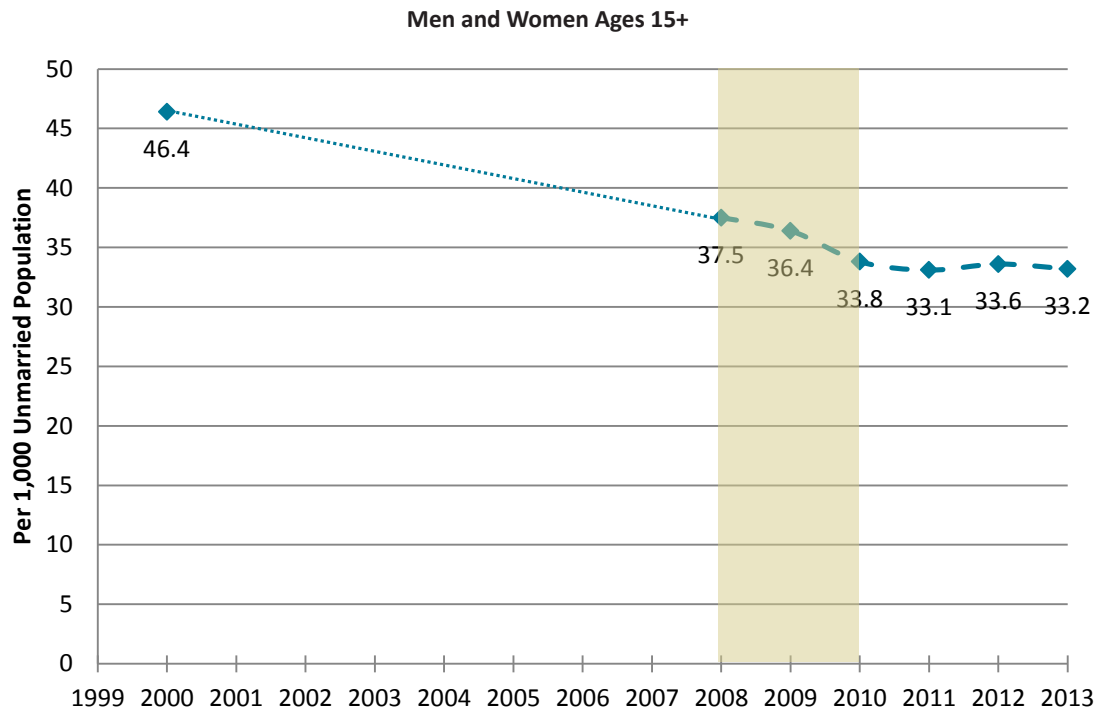
The Marriage Rate and the Great Recession

Krista K. Payne

Economic conditions are linked to marriage patterns—increases in the unemployment rate are associated with reduced odds of marriage (Schaller, 2012). Conversely, better labor markets are found to reduce differences in marriage among certain subpopulations within the U.S. (Harknett & Kuperberg, 2012). Using data from the American Community Surveys, 2008-2013, this profile examines changes in marriage rates among men and women ages 15 and older during and immediately following the Great Recession. Rates for 2008-2012 are also examined by race/ethnicity and educational attainment (information on marriages in the last year by race/ethnicity or educational attainment are not available on American Factfinder for 2013).

- During the Recession, the marriage rate continued its precipitous decline. After hitting a 120+ year low in 2011 at 33.1 marriages per 1,000 unmarried persons, there has been no substantial change in the marriage rate. In 2013, there were 33.2 marriages per 1,000 unmarried persons.

Figure 1. Marriage Rate, 2000 - 2013



Sources: 2000 data - NVS; 2008-2013 - ACS, 1-Year Estimates

References:

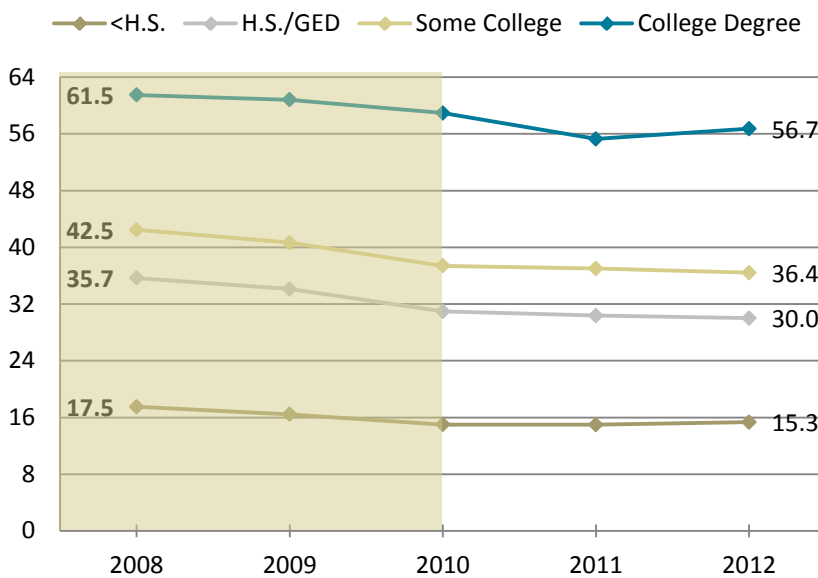
- Schaller, J. (2012). For richer, if not for poorer? Marriage and divorce over the business cycle. *Journal of Population Economics*, 26, 1007-1033. doi: 10.1007/s00148-012-0413-0
- Harknett, K. & Kuperberg, A. (2012). Education, labor markets and the retreat from marriage. *Social Forces*, 90(1), 41-64.

Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR's core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.

Educational Attainment

- There is a positive relationship between educational attainment and the marriage rate—those with higher levels of education have higher rates of marriage.
- The observed 2012 uptick in the marriage rate is being driven by the highest educated who went from a five-year-low of 55.3 marriages per 1,000 unmarried men and women in 2011 to 56.7 in 2012. For those with moderate education (HS/GED or Some College), the marriage rate continued to decline, with 2012 marking a low since the recession. Among the least educated, there has been minimal change since a low of 15.0 marriages per 1,000 unmarried in 2010.

Figure 2. Marriage Rate by Educational Attainment, 2008 - 2012

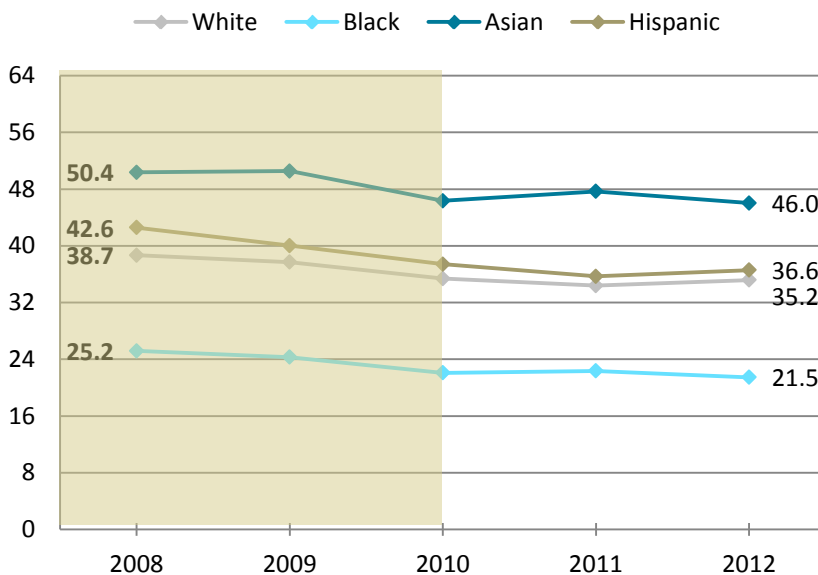


Sources: 2008-2012 - ACS, 1-Year Estimates

Race & Ethnicity

- The marriage rate declined from 2008 to 2011 for the White and Hispanic single population. However, in 2012 the marriage rate increased slightly for both of these groups.
- A similar pattern occurred for the single Black population, but a year sooner (2011).

Figure 3. Marriage Rate by Race & Ethnicity, 2008 - 2012



Sources: 2008-2012 - ACS, 1-Year Estimates

Suggested Citation:
Payne, K. K. (2014).
*The Marriage Rate
and the Great
Recession*
(FP-14-18).

National Center for
Family & Marriage
Research.

Retrieved from
<http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/FP/FP-14-18-marriage-rate-recession.pdf>



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.