

2014

FP-14-20 Median Duration of 1st Marriage and the Great Recession

Krista K. Payne
Bowling Green State University, kristaw@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles



Part of the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#)

Repository Citation

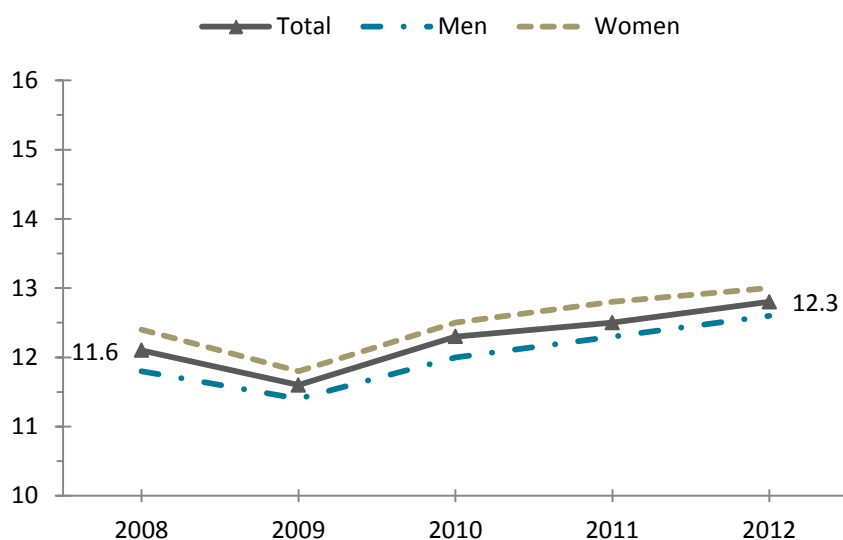
Payne, Krista K., "FP-14-20 Median Duration of 1st Marriage and the Great Recession" (2014). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 106.
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/106

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

The Great Recession (2007-2009) was marked by a decline in the odds of divorce and an increase in the unemployment rate, which contributed to lower marriage rates (Cohen, 2014; Schaller, 2012). The role of unfavorable economic conditions in divorce is evidenced in divorce timing rather than divorce per se (Schoen & Canudas-Romo, 2006). Using data from the American Community Surveys, 2008-2012, this profile examines changes in median duration of first marriages ending in divorce among men and women ages 15 and older during and immediately following the Great Recession. Further, marital duration is examined by race/ethnicity and educational attainment.

- From 2008-2012, the median duration of first marriage at divorce was shortest in 2009 at 11.1 years. Since then, duration has increased to a five-year high of 12.3 years in 2012, a 10.8% increase.
- Duration is similar for men and women, with women having slightly longer median marital durations at time of divorce.

Figure 1. Median Duration of First Marriage at Divorce by Sex, 2008 - 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2012

References:

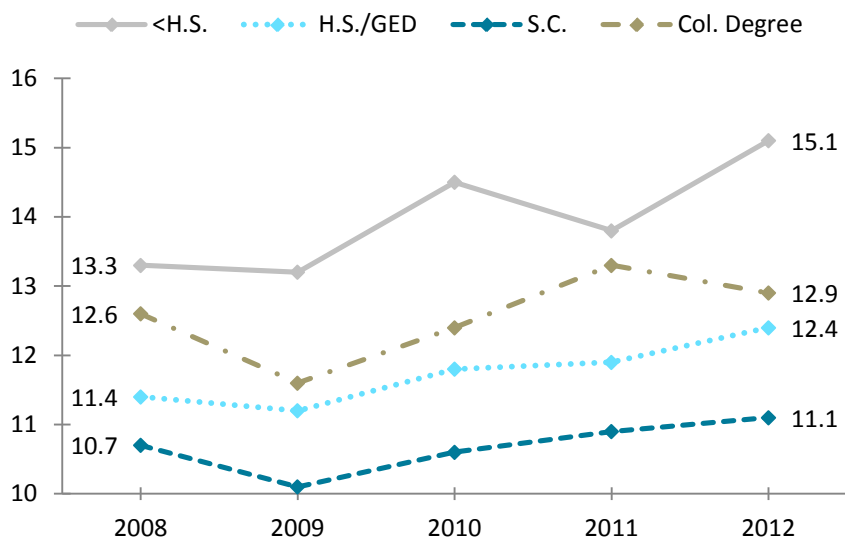
- Cohen, P. N. (2014). Recession and divorce in the United States, 2008-2011. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 33(5), 615-628, doi:10.1007/s11113-014-9323-z
- Schaller, J. (2012). For richer, if not for poorer? Marriage and divorce over the business cycle. *Journal of Population Economics*, 26(3), 1007-1033, doi:10.1007/s00148-012-0413-0
- Schoen, R. & Canudas-Romo, V. (2006). Timing effects on divorce: 20th Century experience in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68(3), 749-758, doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00287.x

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.

Median Duration of First Marriage at Divorce by Educational Attainment, 2008 - 2012

- The longest marital durations at time of divorce are consistently experienced by the lowest and highest educated. Individuals with less than a H.S. education have the longest duration at time of divorce across all time points.
- Since the recession ended (2009), duration of first marriages at divorce has increased for all education levels, but none as dramatically as among those with less than a H.S. diploma. On average, those with less than a H.S. diploma were married about 15 years before divorcing in 2012, a 14.4% increase since 2009.

Figure 2. Median Duration of First Marriage at Divorce by Educational Attainment, 2008 - 2012

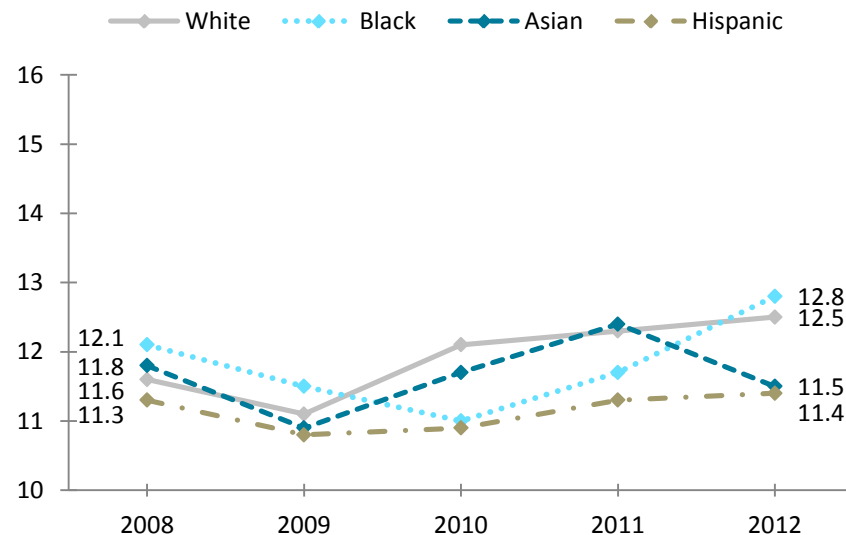


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2012

Median Duration of First Marriage at Divorce by Race & Ethnicity, 2008 - 2012

- Relatively small differentials in the duration of first marriages exist according to race and ethnicity. The time to divorce ranges from 11.4 among Hispanics to 12.8 among Blacks.
- For Whites, Asians, and Hispanics, the shortest median duration at divorce occurred at the end of the recession in 2009. Blacks experienced their shortest duration just one year later in 2010.
- After the median duration lows experienced in 2009 and 2010, all but Asians have witnessed steady increases in their median duration at time of divorce.

Figure 3. Median Duration of First Marriage at Divorce by Race & Ethnicity, 2008 - 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2012

Suggested Citation:
Payne, K. K. (2014). Median Duration of First Marriage at Divorce and the Great Recession (FP-14-20). National Center for Family & Marriage Research. Retrieved from <http://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/FP/FP-14-20-median-duration-first-marriage.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.