

2012

## FP-12-11 Timing of First Marital Birth

Krista K. Payne

*Bowling Green State University*, [kristaw@bgsu.edu](mailto:kristaw@bgsu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr\\_family\\_profiles](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles)



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

---

### Repository Citation

Payne, Krista K., "FP-12-11 Timing of First Marital Birth" (2012). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 126.

[https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr\\_family\\_profiles/126](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/126)

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.

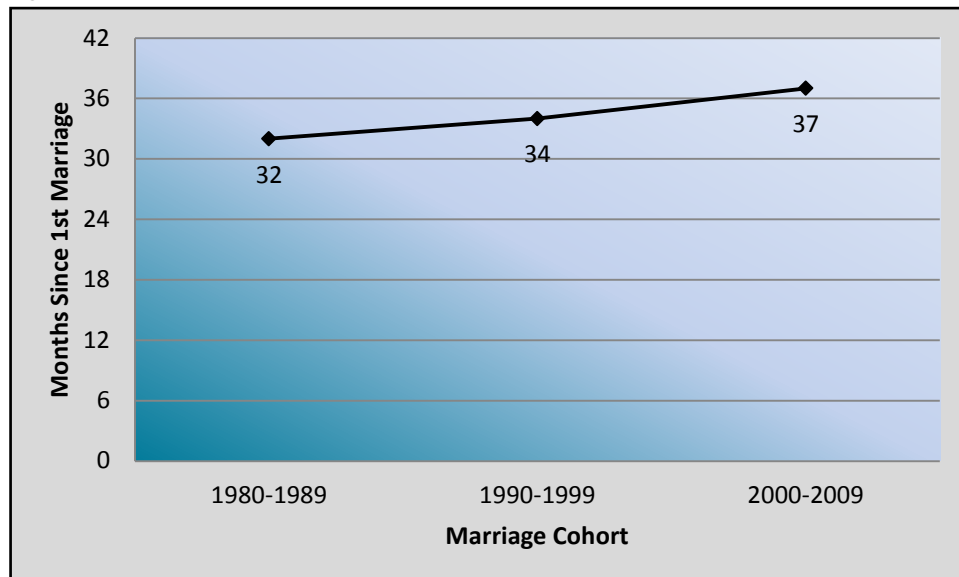
# Timing of First Marital Birth

The median ages at first marriage and first birth have increased over the past several decades, indicating Americans are increasingly delaying family formation (FP-12-03). Marrying at later ages reduces the number of remaining years in which women can have a first marital birth. Additionally, the median ages at first marriage and first birth differ by race and ethnicity and educational attainment resulting in varying fertility windows for subpopulations of American women. Thus it is important to understand the timing of first marital birth after first marriage. Data from Cycle 5 (1995) of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) are employed to estimate the time to first marital birth among women who first married in the 1980s, and data from Cycle 6 (2002) of the NSFG are used to estimate the time to first marital birth among women who first married in the 1990s. Data from the continuous NSFG 2006-2010 are used to examine the average time to first marital birth among women who have experienced a first marriage since the year 2000 according to race and ethnicity and educational attainment.

## Trends in Time to First Marital Birth, 1980-2010

- Consistent with the rising median ages at first marriage and first birth, the average time to a first marital birth has increased over the past 30 years.
  - A majority of women who married in the 1980s had a first marital birth within 32 months of their wedding day.
  - Among the most recent marriage cohort, on average, women experienced a first marital birth in just over 3 years (37 months)—5 months later than women who married in the 1980s.
  - Nearly 9% of women who married in the 2000s had a premarital conception resulting in a marital birth<sup>1</sup> compared to 11% of women in the earlier marriage cohorts.
- The proportion of women experiencing a first marital birth within 5 years of first nuptials has declined over time—from 72% among those married in the 1980s to 65% among women who married in the 2000s.

Figure 1. Median Time to First Marital Birth, 1980-2010



Source: NSFG 1995, 2002 & 2006-10 Female Data Files

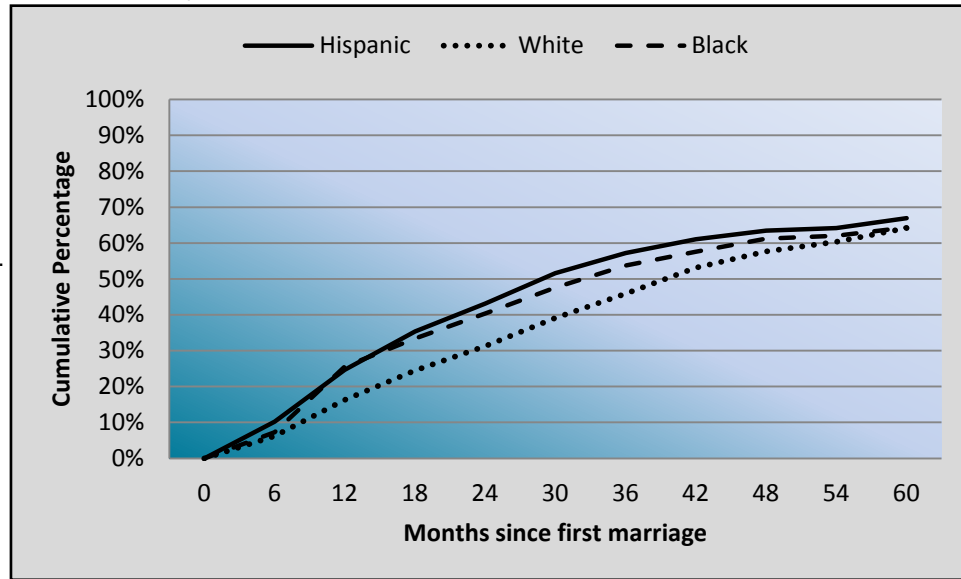
<sup>1</sup>Consistent with Hayford, Guzzo, & Smock (PAA 2011), a premarital conception is determined as births that occurred within the first seven months of marriage.

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.

## Race and Ethnicity

- Hispanic women experienced a first marital birth sooner than Black or White women. The median time to first marital birth among Hispanic women is 2.5 years after their wedding day.
- On average, Black women experienced a first marital birth about 1 month later than Hispanic women, waiting slightly more than 2.5 years.
- White women waited about 10-11 months longer than Hispanic and Black women. The median time to first marital birth among White women is 3.3 years after their wedding.
- Hispanic women were the most likely to experience a birth as a result of a premarital conception (13%). Similar proportions of White and Black women experienced a premarital conception—8% and 7%, respectively.

Figure 2. Time to First Marital Birth Among Women Married Since 2000 According to Race and Ethnicity

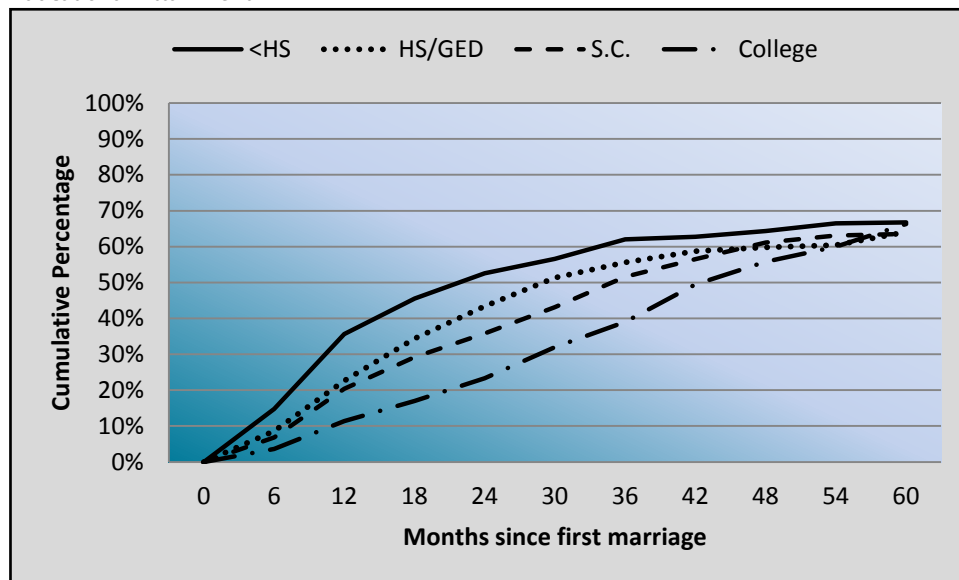


Source: NSFG 2006-10 Female Data Files

## Educational Attainment

The time between a women's wedding day and the day her first child is born is related to educational attainment—those with lower levels of education experienced a first birth sooner, on average, than those with higher levels.

Figure 3. Time to First Marital Birth Among Women Married Since 2000 According to Educational Attainment



Source: NSFG 2006-10 Female Data Files

to women with at least a Bachelor's degree (5%). Similar proportions of women with a high school diploma/GED and some college had a premarital conception, 10% and 9%, respectively.

### Suggested Citation:

Payne, Krista K. (2012).

Timing of First Marital Birth (FP-12-11). National Center for Family & Marriage Research.

Retrieved from [http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/pdf/family\\_profiles/file114148.pdf](http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/pdf/family_profiles/file114148.pdf)

This project was supported with a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, grant number 5 UOI AEO00001-05.

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 federal government.

- The median time to first marital birth among women with less than a high school education is less than 2 years after their first marriage (22 months). In comparison, college educated women waited nearly twice as long (42 months—3.5 years) before a first marital birth.
- Over 3 times the proportion of women with less than a high school education experienced a premarital conception (17%) compared