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## FP-19-17 The Retreat from Remarriage, 1950-2017

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# The Retreat from Remarriage, 1950-2017

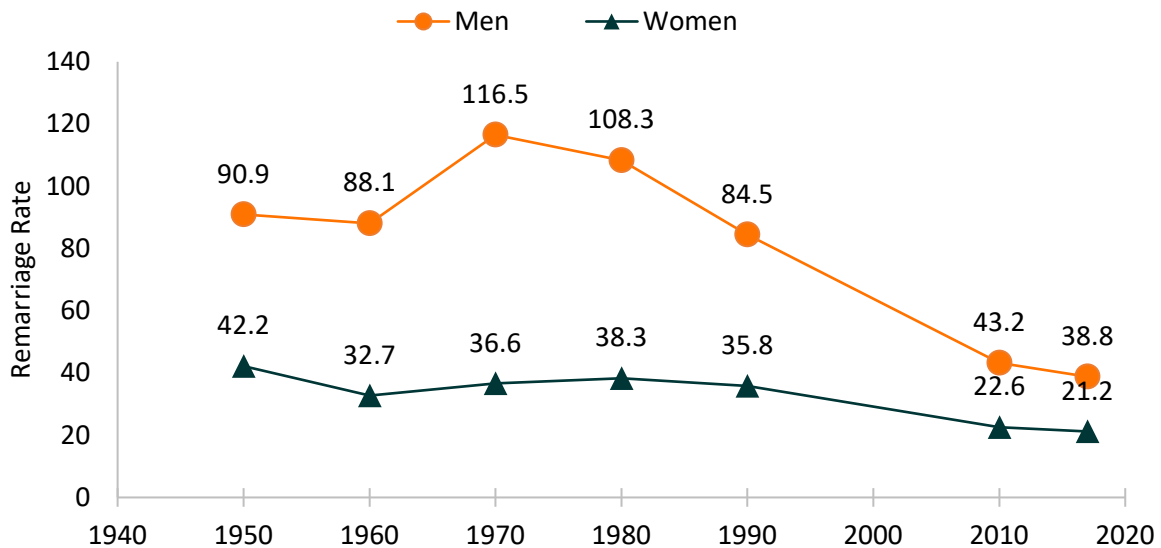
Author: Valerie Schweizer

The precipitous decline in remarriage since the 1980s is well documented (Sweeney, 2010; Payne, 2018). Less is known about the “retreat from remarriage” prior to the 1980s. Using data from the Vital Statistics of the United States and the American Community Survey, we examine the remarriage rate for men and women aged 15 and older from 1950 to 2017. For more information on recent change in the remarriage rate, see Change in the U.S. Remarriage Rate, 2008 and 2016 (FP-18-16).

## Remarriage Rate, 1950-2017

- Over nearly six decades, the remarriage rate for both men and women has decreased.
  - Remarriage rates for men have dropped by more than half, from 90.9 remarriages in 1950 to 38.8 remarriages per 1,000 previously married men in 2017.
  - Men’s remarriage rate peaked at 116.5 remarriages per 1,000 previously married men in 1970.
  - Remarriage rates for women have fallen by about half, from 42.2 remarriages per 1,000 previously married women to 21.2 remarriages in 2017.
  - In both 1950 and 2017, the remarriage rate for men was about twice that of the rate for women.

Figure 1. The Remarriage Rates of Men and Women Aged 15 and Older, 1950-2017



Source: NCFMR analyses of Vital Statistics of the United States, 1950; Monthly Vital Statistics Reports 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2017

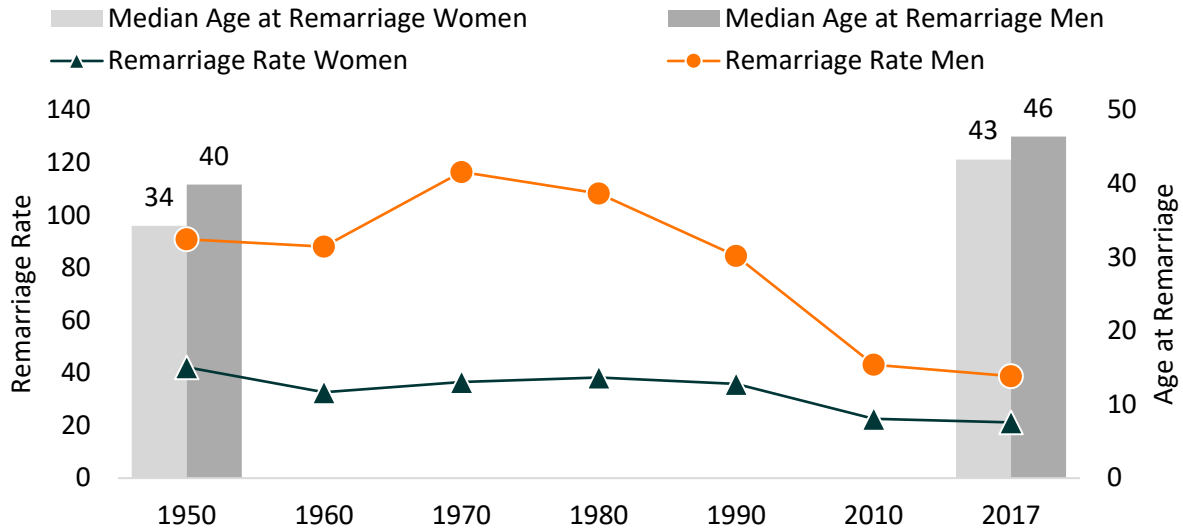
**REMARRIAGE RATES...** for men have dropped by more than half and by about half for women.



## Median Age at Remarriage, 1950-2017

- Decreasing remarriage rates for men and women coincide with rising ages at remarriage.
- Women’s median age at remarriage has increased by 9 years since 1950, from 34 to 43 years old. Men’s median age at remarriage has risen by 6 years, from 40 to 46 years old.
  - At both time points, women’s median age at remarriage was younger than men’s.
  - The age gap between women and men has decreased over time from a difference of 6 years in 1950 to only 3 years in 2017.

Figure 2. The Remarriage Rate and Median Age at Remarriage by Gender, 1950-2017

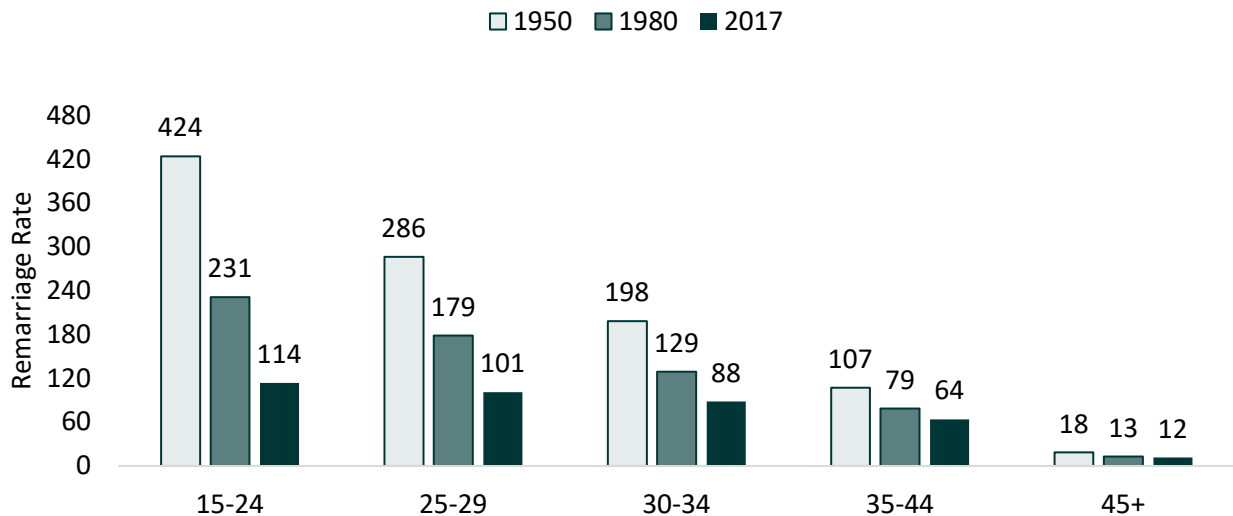


Sources: NCFMR analyses of Vital Statistics of the United States, 1950; Monthly Vital Statistics Reports 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2017

## Remarriage Rate by Age Distribution, 1950-2017

- Women’s remarriage rate steadily declined for every age group.
- A consistent age gradient in remarriage rates exists. Women aged 15 to 24 had the highest remarriage rates, and those aged 45 and older had the lowest.

Figure 3. Women’s Remarriage Rate by Age Group, 1950-2017

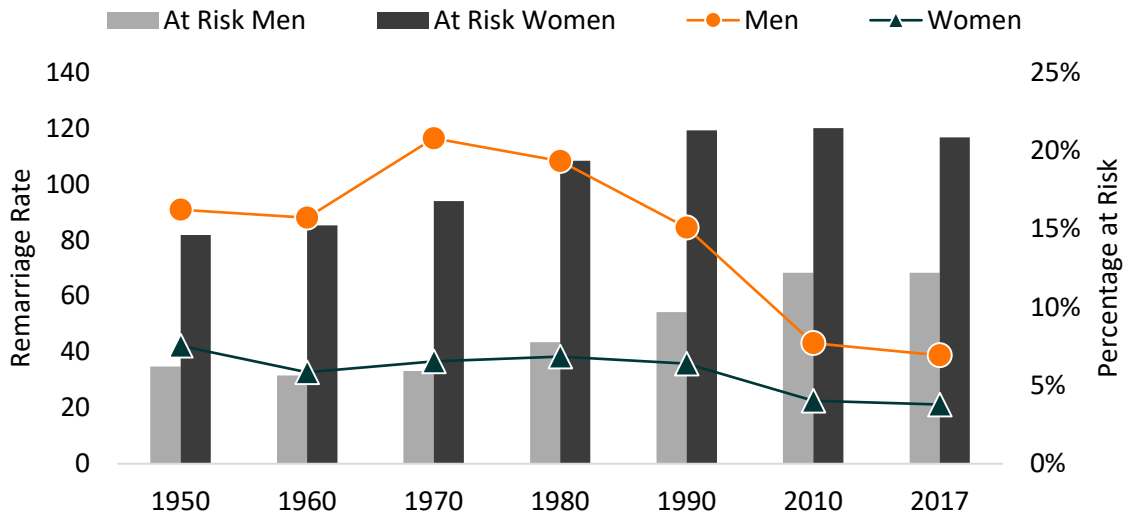


Sources: NCFMR analyses of Vital Statistics of the United States, 1950; Monthly Vital Statistics Report, 1980; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017

## Remarriage Rate and At-Risk Population, 1950-2017

- Although the population eligible for remarriage (divorced or widowed) has increased from 1950 to 2017, remarriage rates for both men and women have continued to decline.
  - Since 1950, the share of men eligible to remarry doubled from 6% to 12%.
  - A growing share of women were eligible to remarry, rising from 15% to 21%.
- Although a larger share of women than men are eligible to remarry, the rate of remarriage among men continues to outpace that of women.

Figure 4. The Remarriage Rate and At-Risk Population by Gender, 1950-2017



Sources: NCFMR analyses of Vital Statistics of the United States, 1950; Monthly Vital Statistics Reports 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-2017

### Data Sources:

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