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FP-16-08 Long Term Marriage Among Older Adults, 2014

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Long-term Marriage among Older Adults, 2014



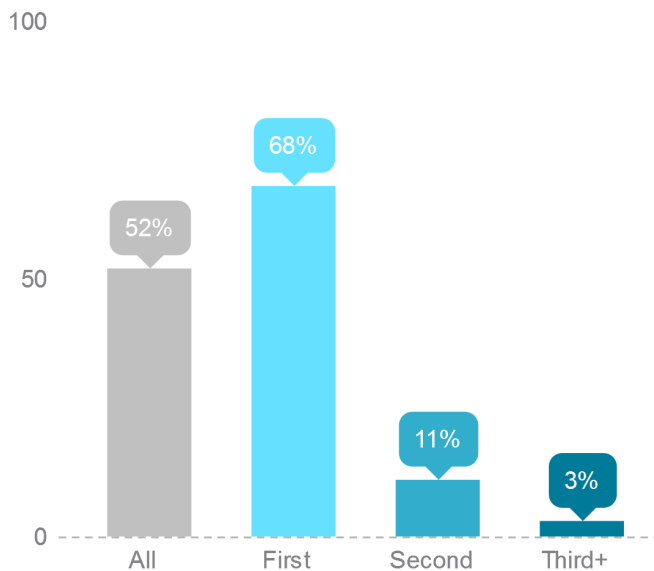
Huijing Wu & Susan L. Brown

The declining marriage rate (FP-15-20) and rising age at first marriage (FP-15-05; FP-15-17) are key markers of the retreat from marriage. Marriages that persist for five or more decades are unusual. In 2014, only 7% of current marriages have a duration of 50 years or more. Because most married individuals have not lived long enough to be married for 50 years, we focus on adults aged 70 and older. Among older individuals, roughly 26% have been married for at least 50 years. The remainder are either in marriages of shorter duration (24%) or are currently unmarried (49%). Using data from the 2014 ACS, this Family Profile examines the shares of older, married individuals who have reached their golden anniversary (i.e., 50 years) by number of marriages, race/ethnicity, education, and state of residence.

Long-term Marriages

- Among currently married adults 70 or older, half have a marital duration of 50 years or more.
- Among those in a first marriage, 68% have been married at least 50 years. This is in sharp contrast to 11% of second and 3% of third (or higher) marriages.

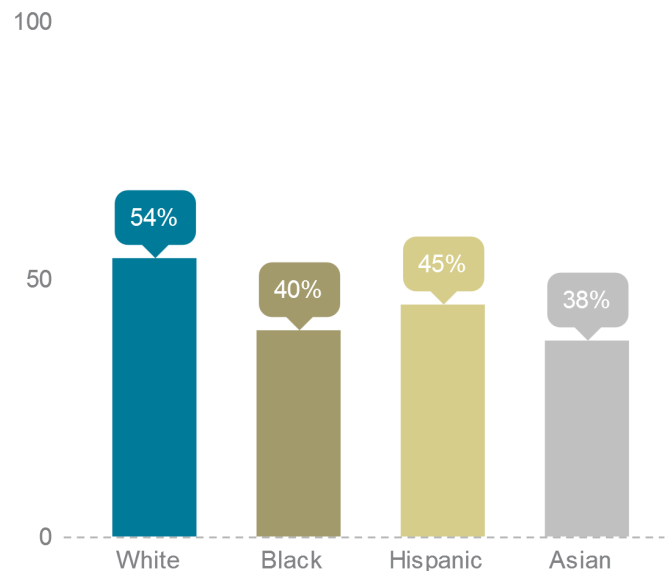
Figure 1. % of Currently Married Older Individuals with Marriages of ≥50 Years by Marriage Order



Long-term Marriages by Race/Ethnicity

- More than one-half (54%) of older, currently married Whites have been married at least 50 years.
- Forty-five percent of older, currently married Hispanics have a marital duration of 50 years or more.
- Older, currently married Blacks and Asians have the lowest proportions with a marital duration of at least 50 years (40% and 38%, respectively), perhaps reflecting the tendency of Blacks and Asians to marry at later ages than Whites or Hispanics (FP-15-05).

Figure 2. % of Currently Married Older Individuals with Marriages of ≥50 Years by Race/Ethnicity

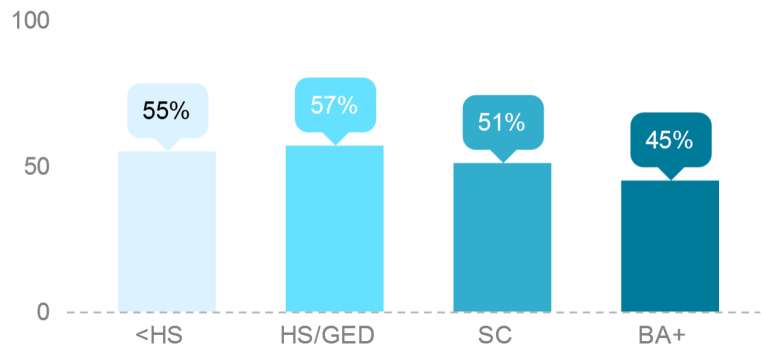


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr estimates, 2014

Long-term Marriages by Education

- Similar proportions of older, currently married individuals without a high school education and with a high school diploma/GED are in a long-term marriage (55% and 57%, respectively).
- Those older, married individuals with at least a Bachelor's degree have the lowest percentage in a 50+ year marriage (45%).
- Pursuing higher educational attainment may delay age at marriage and lead to a shorter duration of marriage.

Figure 3. % of Currently Married Older Individuals with Marriages of ≥50 Years by Education



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr estimates, 2014

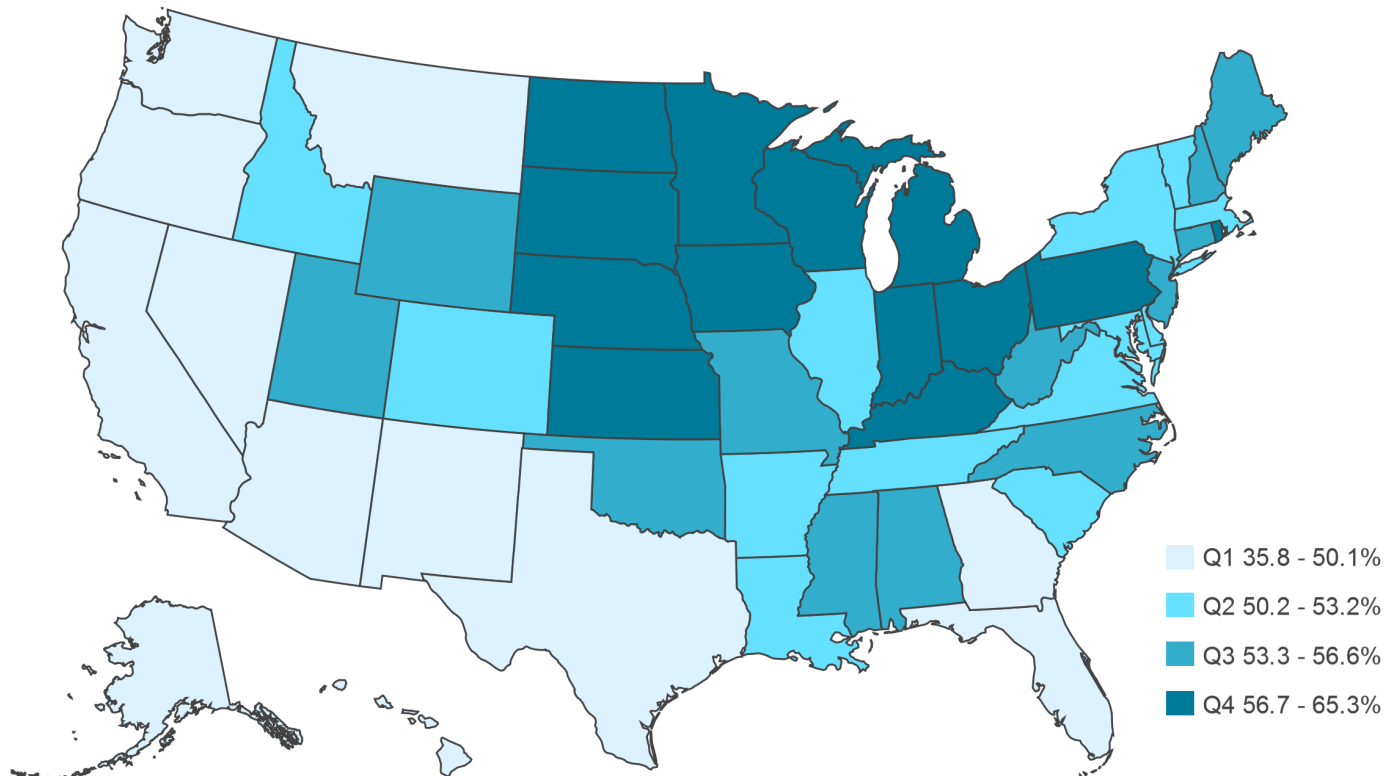
Geographic Variation of Long-term Marriages

- The share of currently married individuals aged 70 or older in long-term marriages varies considerably by state.
- The highest proportion is 65.3% in Nebraska, followed by Iowa (63.2%), South Dakota (62.4%), North Dakota (61.8%), and Minnesota (59.7%).
- The lowest proportion is Alaska (35.8%), followed by Nevada (40.0%), Washington D.C. (43.2%), Hawaii (45.2%), and California (45.2%).

Highest and Lowest % of Older Married Adults in Marriages of 50+ Years Duration

1. Nebraska	65.3%
2. Iowa	63.2%
3. South Dakota	62.4%
4. North Dakota	61.8%
5. Minnesota	59.7%
U. S.	52.0%
47. California	45.2%
48. Hawaii	45.2%
49. Wash, D.C.	43.2%
50. Nevada	40.0%
51. Alaska	35.8%

Figure 4. Geographic Variation in % of Older Married Adults in Marriages of 50+ Duration



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr estimates, 2014

**Ranking Table
Organized
by
Quartile**

Rank	State	% Older Married Adults in Marriages 50+ Years Duration
1	Nebraska	65.3%
2	Iowa	63.2%
3	South Dakota	62.4%
4	North Dakota	61.8%
5	Minnesota	59.7%
6	Wisconsin	58.1%
7	Kansas	57.6%
8	Pennsylvania	57.4%
9	Indiana	57.2%
10	Rhode Island	57.1%
10	Kentucky	57.1%
12	Michigan	56.7%
12	Ohio	56.7%
14	West Virginia	56.5%
15	Missouri	56.2%
16	Utah	55.8%
17	Maine	55.4%
18	Oklahoma	55.0%
19	Connecticut	54.3%
20	Wyoming	54.2%
21	New Jersey	53.6%
21	Mississippi	53.6%
23	North Carolina	53.5%
23	Alabama	53.5%
25	New Hampshire	53.4%
26	Illinois	53.2%
26	Idaho	53.2%
28	Delaware	53.1%
29	Massachusetts	53.0%
30	Louisiana	52.6%
31	Arkansas	52.4%
31	Vermont	52.4%
33	Colorado	52.2%
	U.S.	52.0%
34	Tennessee	51.5%
35	Virginia	51.2%
36	Maryland	51.1%
37	South Carolina	50.5%
37	New York	50.5%
39	Georgia	49.7%
40	Texas	49.4%
41	Oregon	49.1%
42	Washington	48.8%
43	New Mexico	48.6%
44	Florida	48.3%
45	Montana	48.2%
46	Arizona	47.9%
47	California	45.2%
47	Hawaii	45.2%
49	Wash, D.C.	43.2%
50	Nevada	40.0%
51	Alaska	35.8%

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