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FP-18-22 Young Adulthood: Cohabitation, Birth, and Marriage Experiences

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FP-18-22

Young Adulthood: Cohabitation, Birth, and Marriage Experiences

Paul Hemez

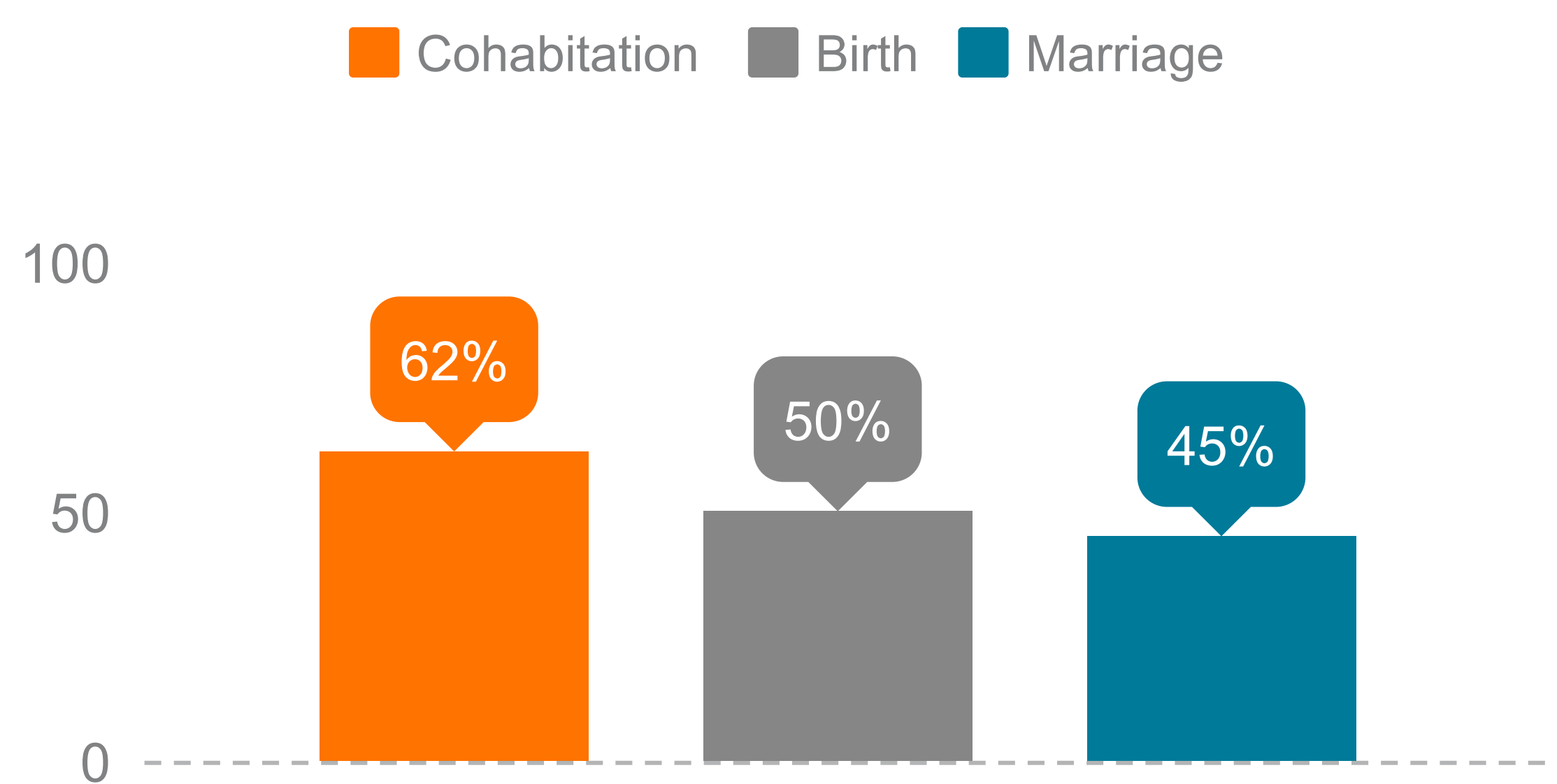


Forming a family by having a child or living with a romantic partner (especially in marriage) is considered a marker of adulthood. However, young adults' experiences of family formation behaviors have shifted over time. As young men and women wait longer to have children or get married (FP-16-07; FP-17-22), and cohabitation has become a more common experience in recent decades (FP-17-02). Using rounds 1-17 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, this Family Profile examines the share of young adults who had a child, got married, and/or cohabited before their 30th birthday for the cohort of men and women who were born between 1980 and 1984.

Cohabitation, Parenthood, and Marriage Experience in Young Adulthood

- Among the three family formation experiences considered, cohabitation was the most common – over six in ten young adults had cohabited prior to their 30th birthday.
- Overall, half of young adults had become a parent by their 30th birthday.
- Marriage was the least common family formation experience, as only 45% of young adults had married by age 30.

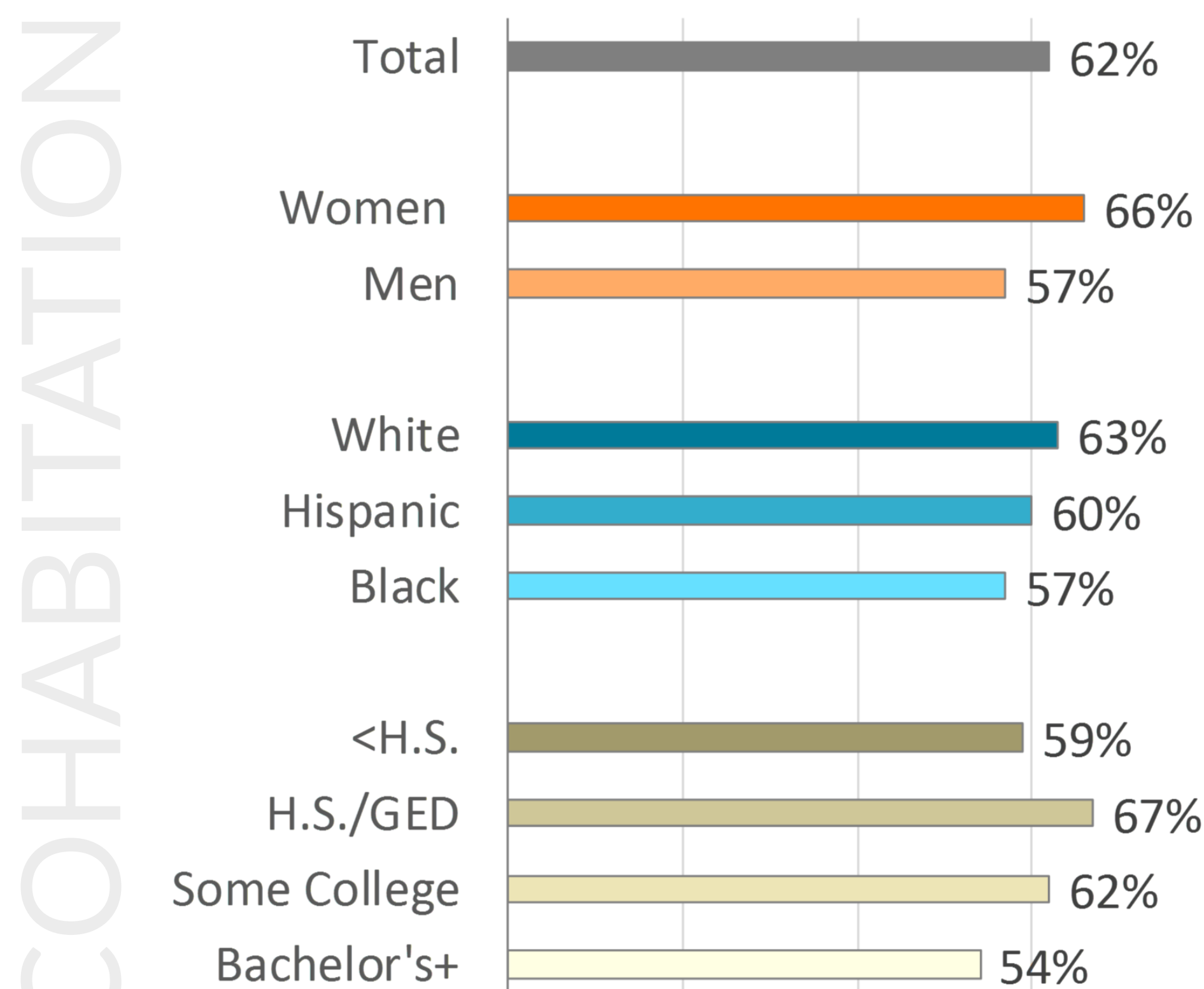
Figure 1. Percentage of Young Adults Who Experienced Cohabitation, Parenthood, and Marriage Before Age 30



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, rounds 1-17

Cohabitation Experience in Young Adulthood

Figure 2. Percentage of Young Adults Who Cohabited Before Age 30, by Select Demographic Characteristics



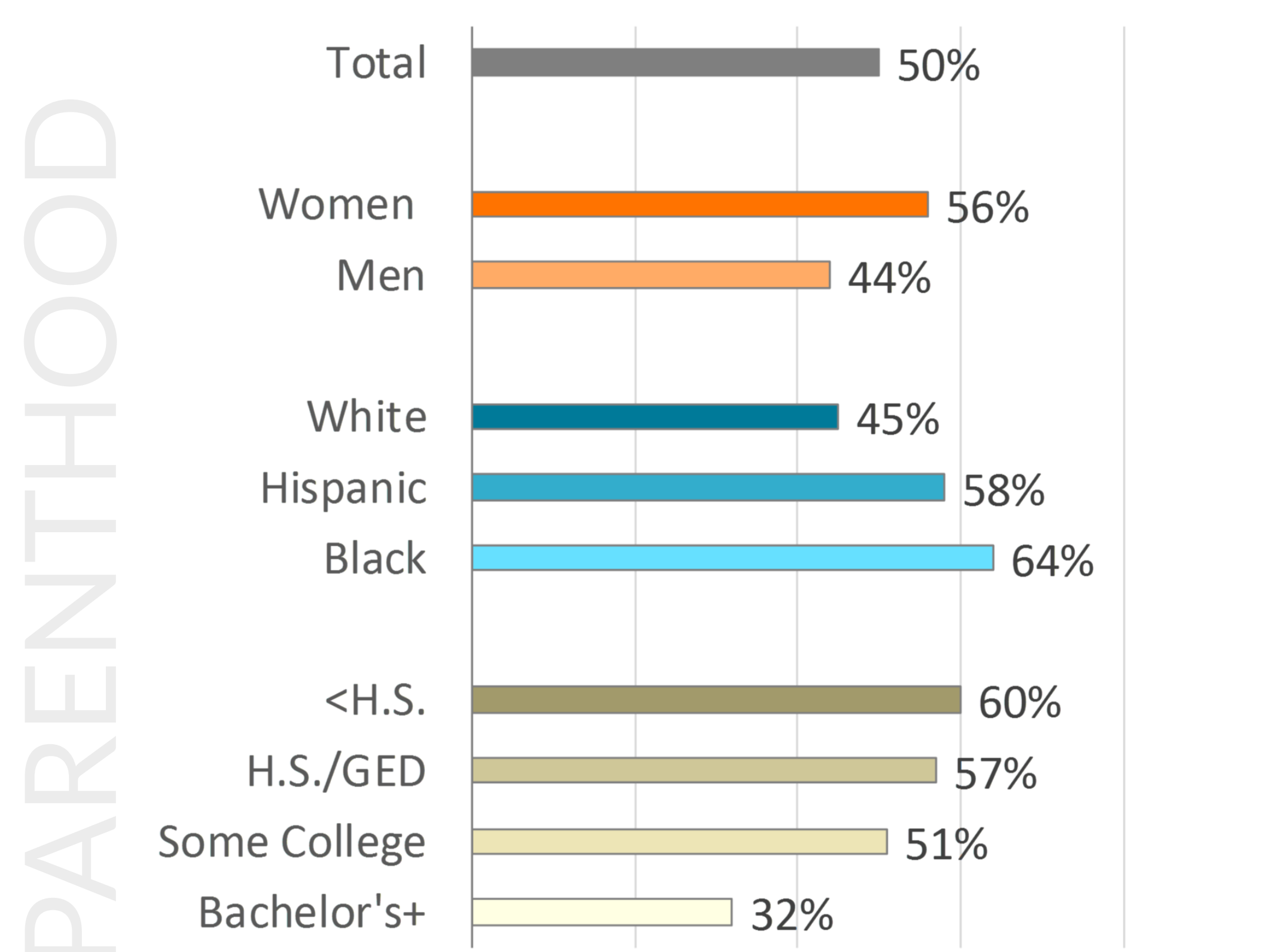
- A larger share of women (66%) cohabited during young adulthood than their male counterparts (57%).
- Having cohabited prior to age 30 was most common for Whites (63%) followed by Hispanics (60%) and Blacks (57%).
- Men and women with a high school degree or GED experienced cohabitation more often (67%) relative to other educational attainment groups, whereas those with a Bachelor's degree or more had the lowest share of cohabitation experience (54%).

Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, rounds 1-17

Parenthood Experience in Young Adulthood

- A larger share of women (56%) became parents during young adulthood than men (44%).
- More than half of Hispanics (58%) and nearly two-thirds of Blacks had a child before their 30th birthday compared to 45% of Whites.
- About six in ten of those with less than a high school education became parents during young adulthood. On the other hand, among men and women holding a Bachelor's degree or more, slightly over three in ten became a parent by age 30.

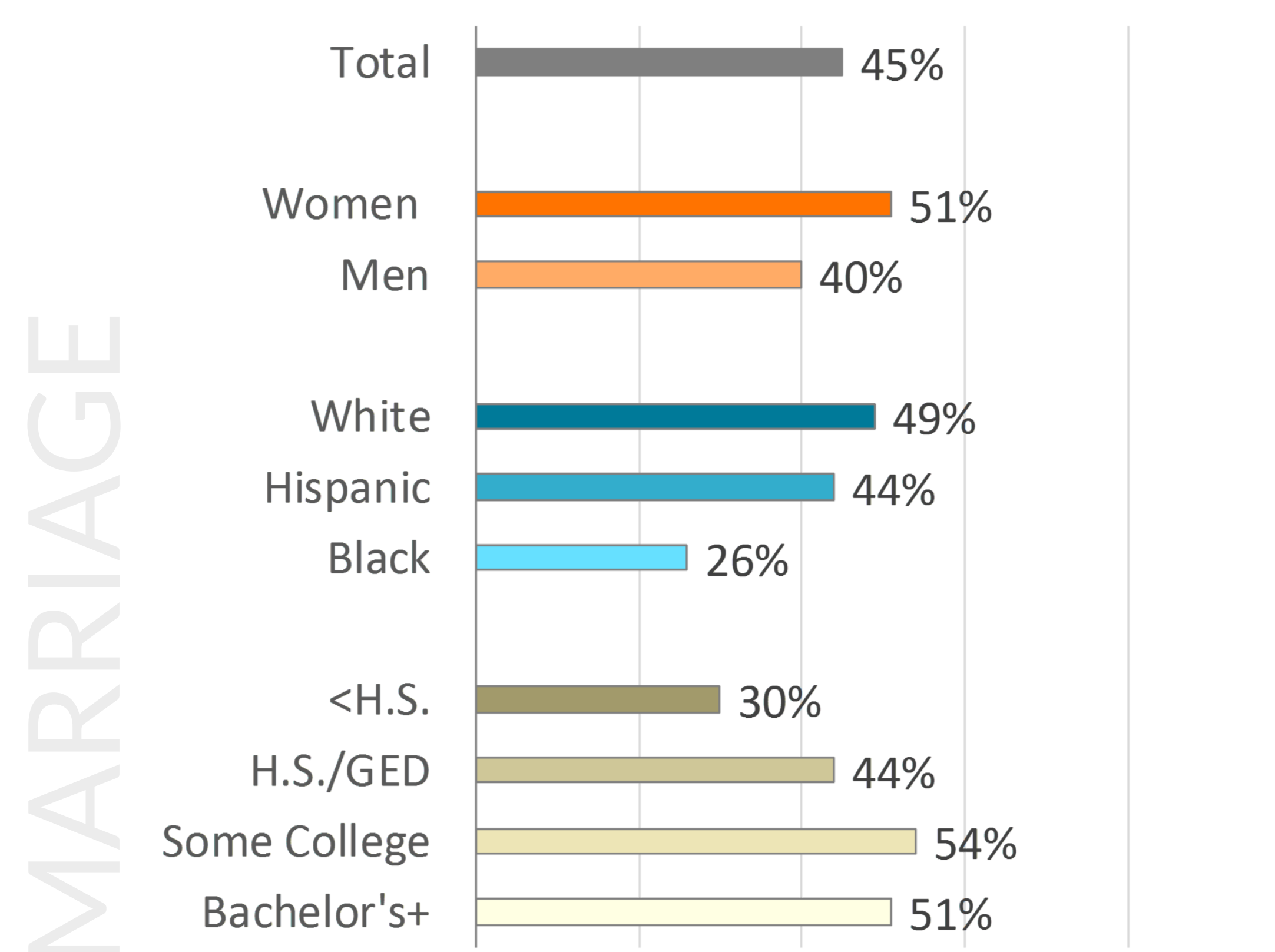
Figure 3. Percentage of Young Adults Who Experienced Parenthood Before Age 30, by Select Demographic Characteristics



Marriage in Young Adulthood

- More than half (51%) of women born between 1980 and 1984 married prior to their 30th birthday. Among men who were born between these years, about 40% had married by age 30.
- Marriage experience during young adulthood was almost twice as common for Whites (49%) than it was for Blacks (26%). Hispanic young adults had a slightly lower share of marriage experience (44%) than Whites.
- Over half of those with an Associate's or Bachelor's degree married before the age of 30, whereas less than one-third of those with less than a high school degree had married.

Figure 4. Percentage of Young Adults Who Married Before Age 30, by Select Demographic Characteristics



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, rounds 1-17

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