FP-16-07

Median Age at First Marriage, 2014

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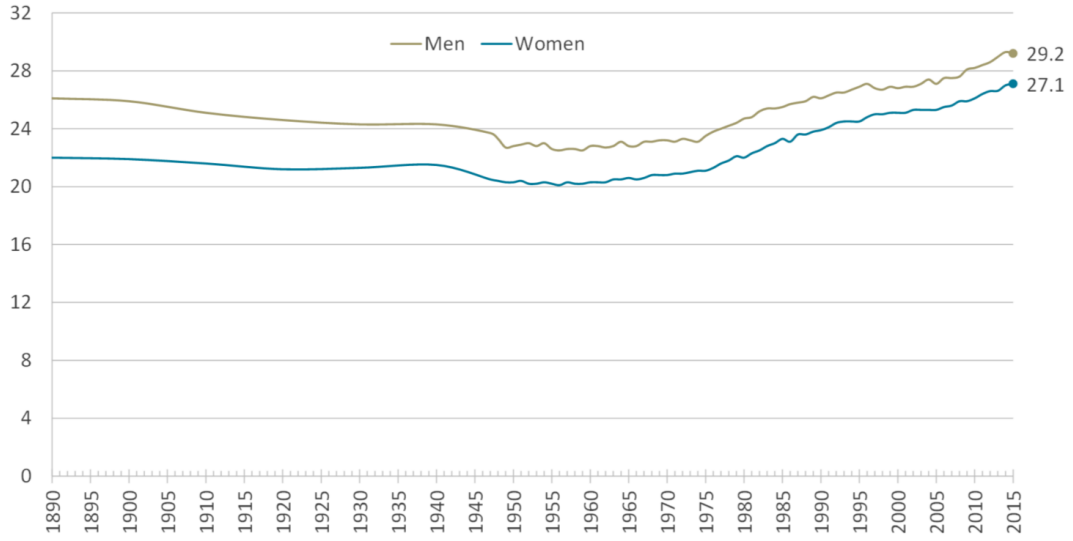
The median age at first marriage in the United States has increased steadily since the mid-20th century. In the mid-1950s, the median age was at a record low of just over 20 for women and 22 for men, but by 2014 (the most recent year available), the median age is over 27 for women and nearing 30 for men. This is, in part, due to a declining share of women ever married. In 2014, 40% of women aged 18-49 were never married, compared to 29% in 1989 (FP-15-17) and 20% of all women over 15 in 1950 (U.S. Census Bureau). Because the median age at first marriage has increased for both men and women, the gender gap – or age difference between median age at first marriage for males and females – has persisted, fluctuating between 1.6 and 2.7 years. This profile uses data from the 2014 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates to update our previous profiles on the topic for the years 2013 (FP-15-05), 2010 (FP-12-07), and 2008 (FP-09-03).

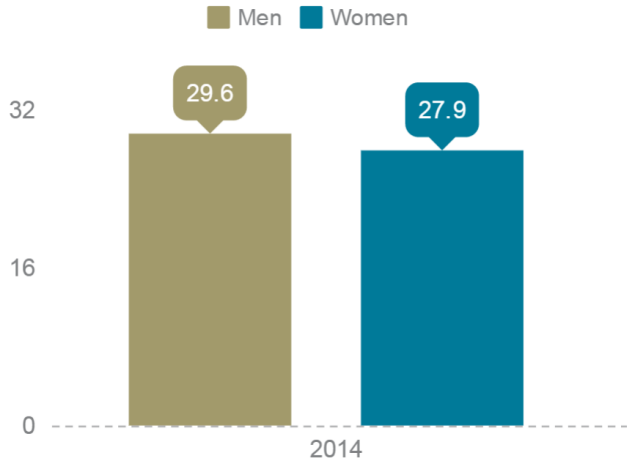
Figure 1. Median Age at First Marriage in the U.S., 1890-2015



Source: Current Population Survey - Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1995, 2005, & 2015

- The median age at first marriage – or the age at which half of men were married – for 2014 was 29.6.
- For women, the median age at first marriage was 27.9.
- The gender gap was 1.7 years in 2014.

Figure 2. Median Age at First Marriage by Sex, 2014



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

Race and Ethnicity

- Black men and women have the highest median ages at first marriage, at 31.1 for men and 30.3 for women.
  - They have the smallest gender gap, at a little less than a year.
- White and Hispanic men and women have the lowest median ages at first marriage, with White and Hispanic men at 29.3-29.4, while White and Hispanic women have a median age at first marriage of 27.6.
- Asian men and women have the largest gender gap, at almost 2 years.

Educational Attainment

- Among men, those without a college degree have a median age at first marriage of 28.5-28.6 years.
- Women show a similar pattern – those without a college degree have a median age at first marriage between 26.2-26.5.
- Men and women with a college degree or higher have the highest median age at first marriage, 30.8 and 29.3, respectively.
  - They also have the smallest gender gap, a year and six months.

Figure 3. Median Age at First Marriage by Race and Ethnicity, 2014

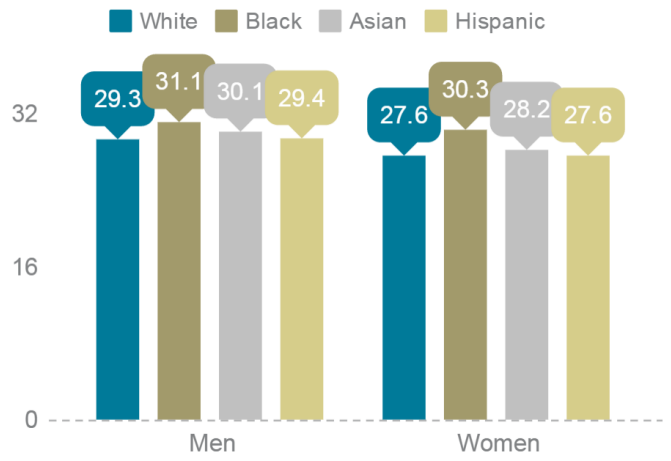
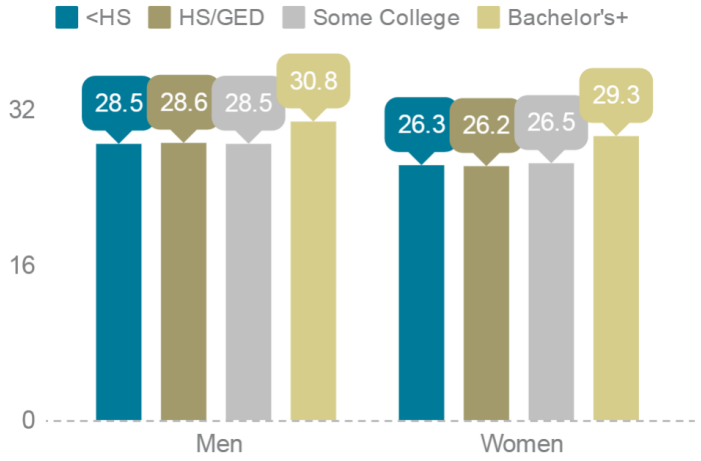


Figure 4.Median Age at First Marriage by Educational Attainment, 2014



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

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