

Marital Status

By Race/Ethnicity, Sex and Age

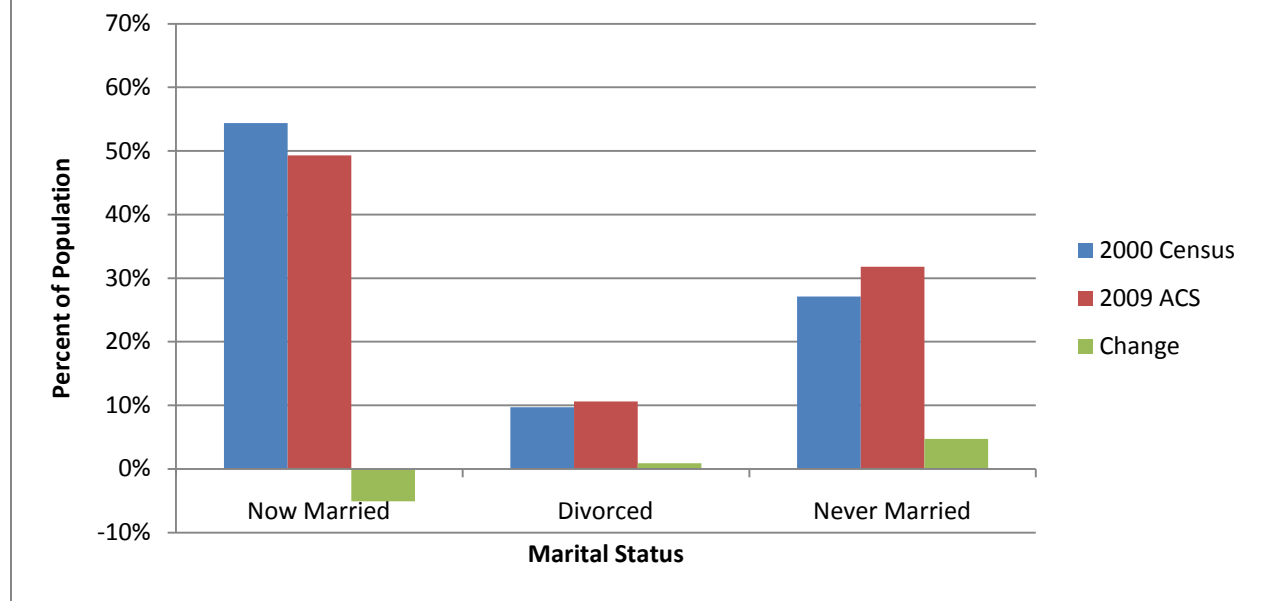
Sources: 2000 Decennial Census and American Community Survey (ACS)
2009 1-year estimates

Entire Population (U.S.)

Between 2000 and 2009, the percentage of Americans over 15 years of age currently married—excluding married couples presently separated—decreased 5.1%, from 54.4% in 2000 to 49.3% in 2009. During that same period, a slightly higher percentage of Americans were divorced, up 0.9 % from 9.7% in 2000 to 10.6% in 2009.

And as might be expected, as the percentage of Americans currently married decreased between 2000 and 2009, the percentage of those never married increased during the same period. While 27.1% of Americans had never been married in 2000, that figure had increased to 31.8%, a change of 4.7%, in 2009.

Marital Status Distribution, U.S. Population (Age>15) 2000, 2009



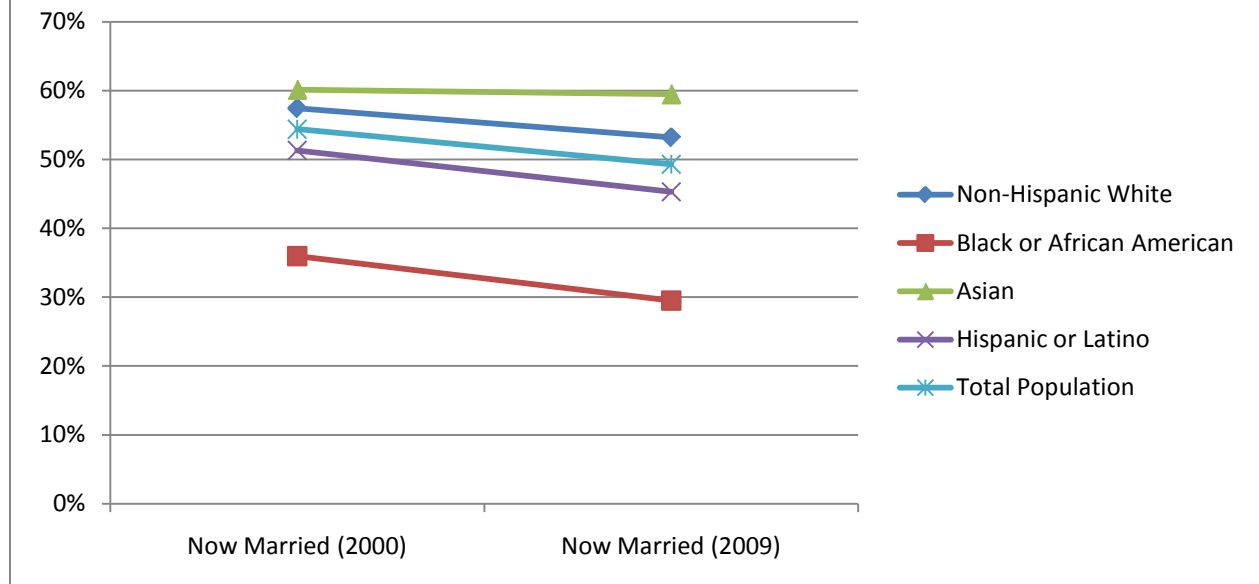
By Race/Ethnicity

Currently Married

Between 2000 and 2009, the percentage of Americans within all four selected race/ethnic groups (non-Hispanic white, black or African American, Asian and Hispanic or Latino) currently married declined. But the decline was more steep for blacks (-6.5%), Hispanics (-6.0%) and non-Hispanic whites (-4.2%) than it was for Asians (-0.7%).

In both 2000 and 2009, the percentage of blacks currently married significantly trailed figures for the other racial groups. While only 29.5% of blacks were currently married in 2009, 45.3% of Hispanics; 53.2% of non-Hispanic whites; and 59.5% of Asians in 2009 were currently married.

Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Americans Currently Married, 2000 and 2009

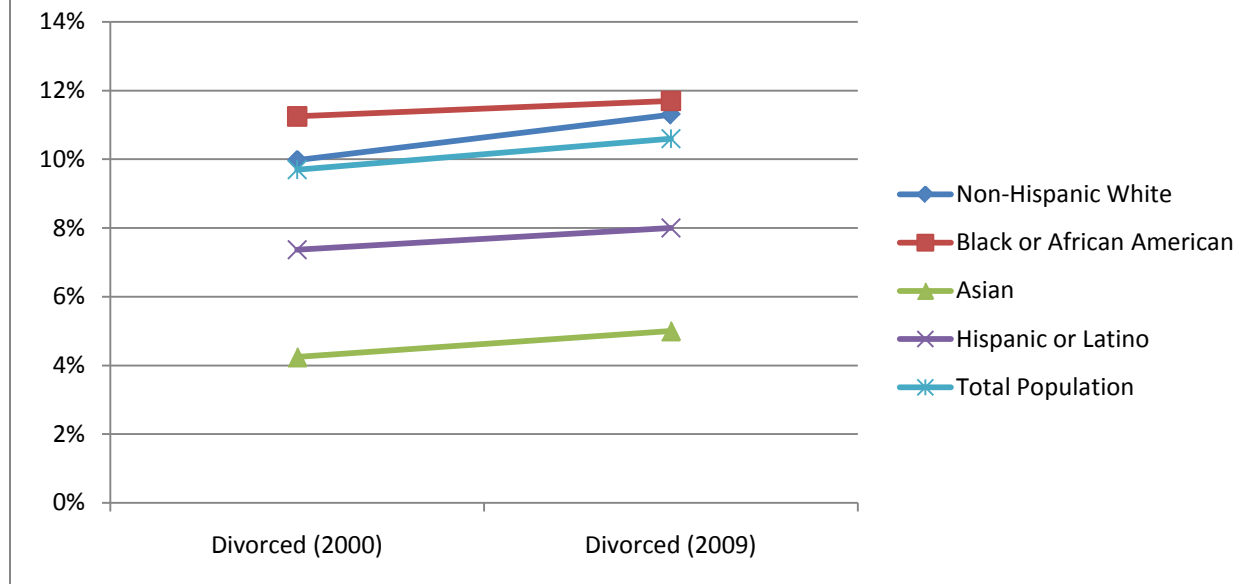


Divorced

In contrast with the trending of Americans currently married, between 2000 and 2009, the percentage of Americans within all four selected race/ethnic groups who were divorced increased. Though the increase was relatively small for each group, it was most extreme for non-Hispanic whites (+1.3%), followed by Asians (+0.8%); Hispanics (+0.6%); and blacks (+0.5%).

Consistent with 2000, the 2009 percentage of blacks who were divorced was highest among race/ethnic groups, at 11.7%. Non-Hispanic whites were next (11.3%), followed by Hispanics (8.0%), and Asians (5.0%).

Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Divorced Americans, 2000 and 2009

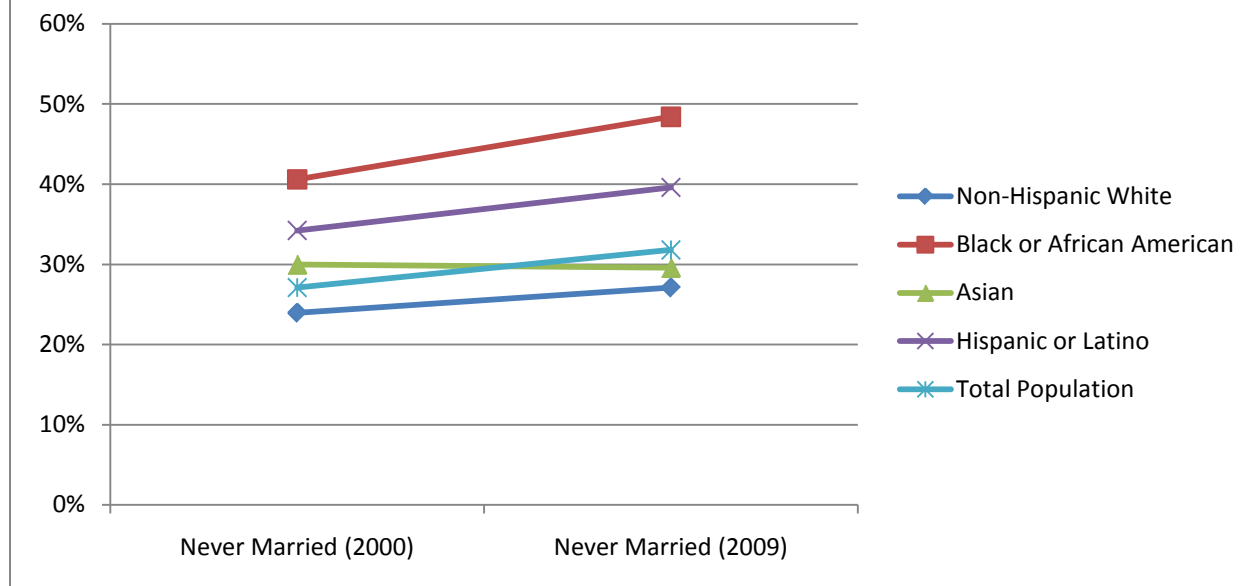


Never Married

As the percentage of Americans currently married decreased among all racial groups between 2000 and 2009, one might expect the percentage never married to increase over the same period, and this was true among three of the four groups. Blacks led the way, with an increase of 7.8%, followed by Hispanics (+5.4%) and non-Hispanic whites (+3.1%). But the percentage of Asians never married decreased between 2000 and 2009 by 0.4%, not a large amount but different from the other groups nevertheless.

As in 2000, in 2009 blacks had the highest percentage never married, at 48.4%. Next were Hispanics (39.6%), and then Asians (29.6%) and non-Hispanic whites (27.1%).

Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Americans Never Married, 2000 and 2009

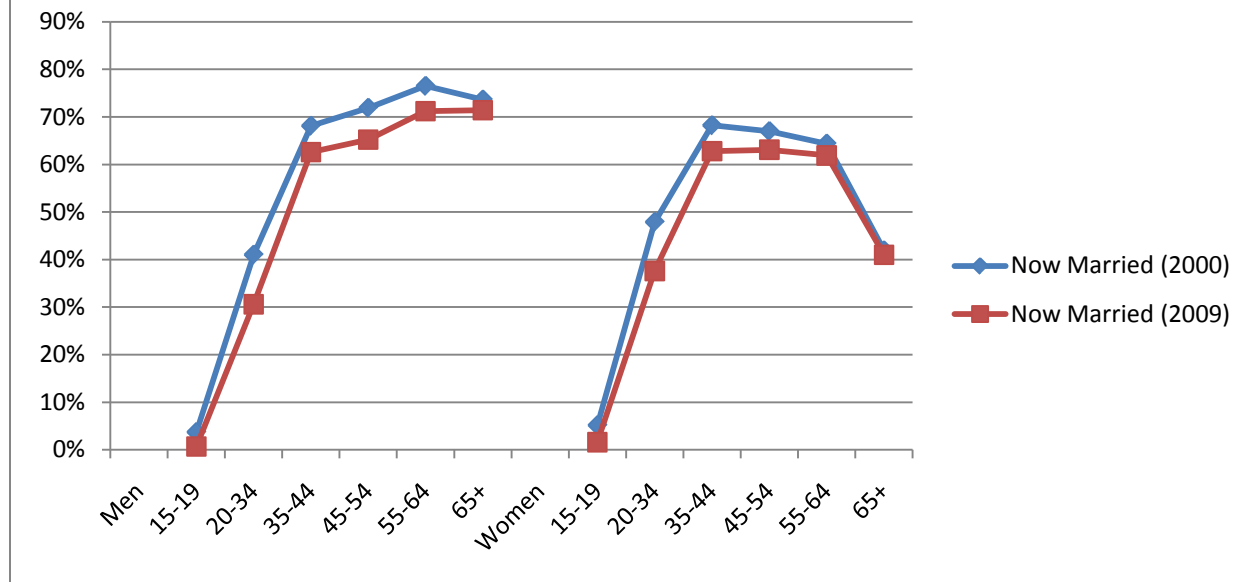


By Age/Sex

Currently Married

The percentage of men and women currently married decreased at similar rates from 2000 to 2009. For men, it dropped 5.5%, and for women it decreased 4.7%. This similarity is clear from the graph, as the line takes a similar shape for both men and women. Among both men and women, the age group 20-34 changed most drastically; among men aged 20-34, the percentage currently married fell by 10.4% between 2000 and 2009, and among women it decreased 10.3% during the same period. The heavy drop-off for women at 65+ years of age likely reflects their higher widow rate, as compared with men.

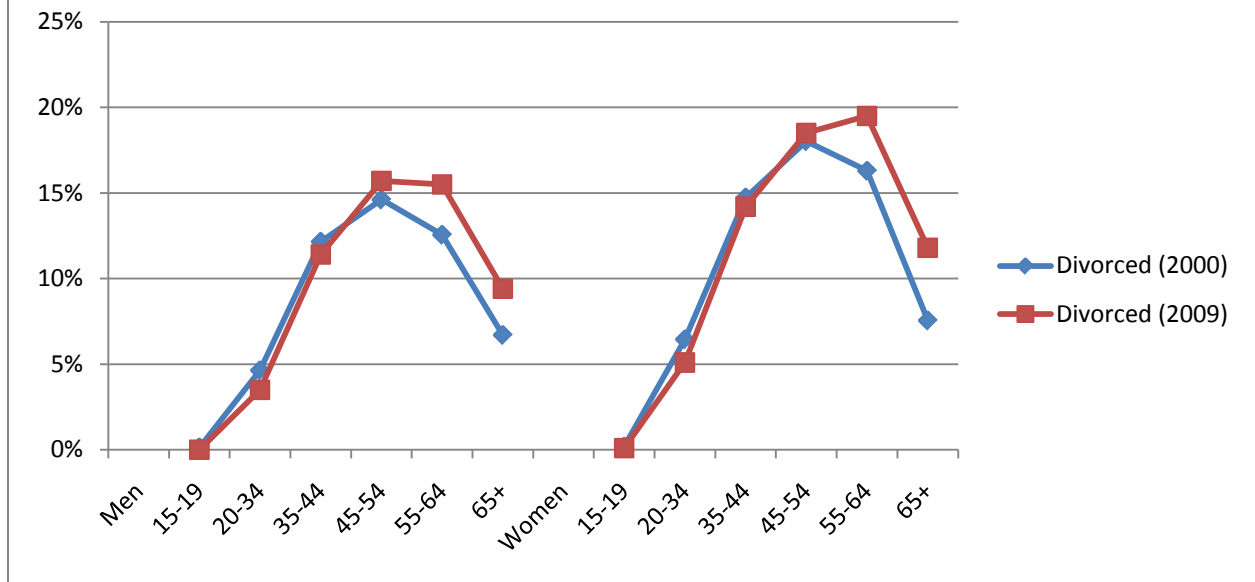
Age/Sex Distribution of Americans Currently Married, 2000 and 2009



Divorced

Divorce rates increased among both men and women between 2000 and 2009, 1.1% for women and 0.7% for men. The highest increase among women for any one age group was for those aged 65 years and older, as 4.3% more women in that group were divorced in 2009 than in 2000. A 2.9% increase among men aged 55-64 was the largest for any male age group.

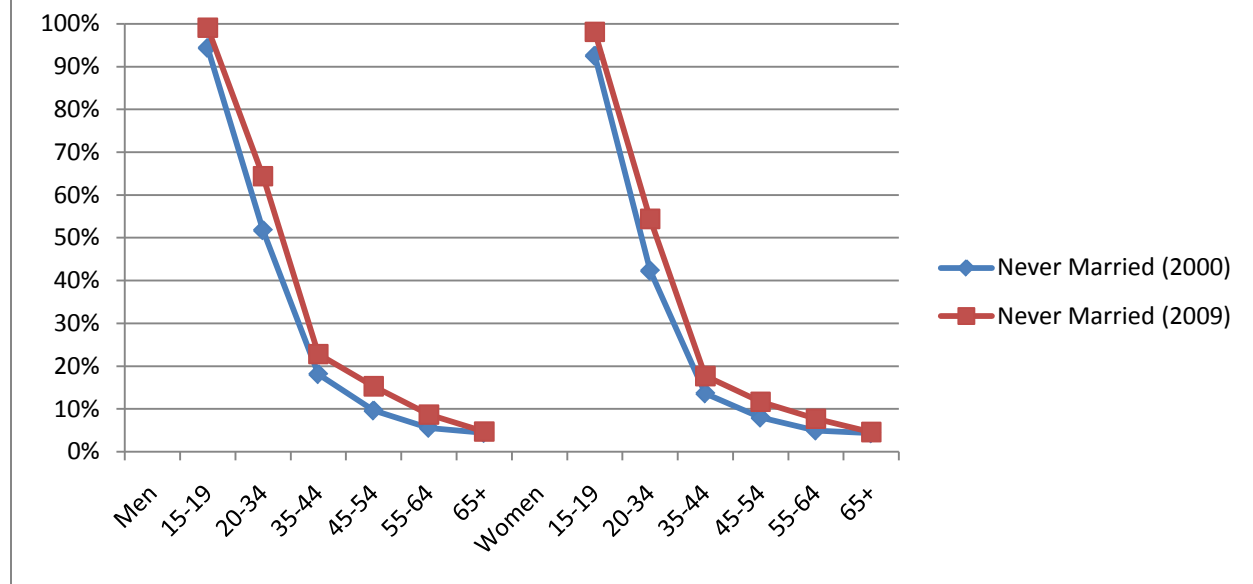
Age/Sex Distribution of Divorced Americans, 2000 and 2009



Never Married

As the percentage of men and women currently married decreased from 2000 to 2009, the percentage never married among both sexes increased during the same period. Among men, it increased 4.9%, among women 4.5%. For both men and women, the 20-34 age group was most impacted by this change. Among men, it saw an increase of 12.6% of those never married; among women, there was an increase of 12.1%.

Age/Sex Distribution of Americans Never Married, 2000 and 2009



Why is this Important?

Changes in marital status trends reflect changes in greater society, whether they be economic, social, cultural, or legal. Of recent interest to journalists and social scientists is the advent of so-called “starter marriages.” In “The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony,” author Pamela Paul defines starter marriages as “first-time marriages that last five years or less and do not yield children.”¹ The consensus appears to be that these marriages are among people under 30 years of age, and that the demographic is “mostly white, middle class and college educated.”²

According to this report’s data, however, this “starter marriages” trend has either reversed course, or is of little consequence: as we have seen, between 2000 and 2009 fewer men and women between 20-34 years of age were currently married—and more reported never having been married. In addition, among the 20-34 age group, the divorce rate decreased between 2000 and 2009, falling 1.1% for men and 1.3% for women. It does not

appear that more men and women under 30 are getting married and divorced; in fact, the opposite seems true.

¹ http://www.askmen.com/dating/heidi_60/96_dating_girl.html

² <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/US/story?id=2978751&page=1>