

Components of Race Differences in Men's First Marriage Rates in the United States, 1960-2019

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Abstract

Wilson argued that race differences in the frequency of marriage in the 1970s and 1980s resulted from a shortage of marriageable men in the African American community. Most assessments of this hypothesis conclude that only part of the race difference in marriage can be ascribed to differences in marriageable men. I assess the impact of male income, occupation, employment status, and institutional residence on race differences in first marriage rates among men in the period from 1960 to 2019. I develop new measures of first marriage rates and apply them to U.S. Census microdata for the 1960-1980 period. I construct closely comparable measures from American Community Survey data for the period 2008 through 2019. I apply classic components analysis to assess the impact of population composition on race differences in male first marriage rates over the entire 1960-2019 period. The analysis shows that in the mid-to-late 20th century, race differences in economic composition fully explain race differences in first marriage rates; among men in similar circumstances in 1960 and 1970, Blacks married more often than did Whites. With the decline of the male-breadwinner family in the 21st century, the effects of male economic circumstances on race differences in marriage rates has diminished but remains substantial. Based on novel measures of first marriage rates, the components analysis provides strong support for Wilson's argument in the 1960-1980 period. The results also document a substantial decline in the effects of male economic circumstances on first marriage rates over the past six decades.

Introduction

Black marriage rates have been lower than White marriage rates for the past 60 years. Wilson (1987) argued that the lower marriage rates in the Black community resulted from a shortage of employed men relative to the number of unmarried women. To quantify the mismatch, Wilson and Neckerman (1986) proposed the Male Marriageability Pool Index (MMPI), which they defined as the number of employed men in a marriage market per 100 women. They showed that MMPI ratios fell sharply in the 1970s and early 1980s for Blacks below age 35 as Black marriage rates declined and the Black-White marriage gap grew.

The most common strategy for evaluating the Wilson hypothesis is to develop measures of the availability of marriageable men across geographic areas—defined as neighborhoods, cities, metropolitan areas, or states—and to use those measures in a model predicting the marital status of women. Availability is generally defined as the number of employed and unmarried men per unmarried woman, although there are many variations that account for earnings and other factors (e.g. Lichter et al. 1992; South and Lloyd 1992; Fossett and Kiecolt 1992; Testa and Krough 1995; Wood 1995). Virtually all studies find that the availability of employed men has a significant impact on marriage rates of women (Cragie, Darity, and Myers 2018). At the same time, most studies suggest that only a fraction of the marriage differential between Whites and Blacks can be ascribed to differences in the availability of marriageable men (e.g., Brien 1997; Cohen and Pepin 2018; Darity, Myers and Bowman 1995; Lichter et al. 1992; Lichter, LeClere, and McLaughlin 1991; Lloyd and South 1996; McLaughlin and Lichter 1997; Raley 1996; Wood 1995).

Other analysts use longitudinal data to assess the impact of economic circumstances or parental economic circumstances on the race differential in marriage (Bloome and Ang 2020;

Lichter, McLaughlin, Kephart, and Landry 1992; Oppenheimer Kalmijn, and Lim 1997; Sweeney 2002; Testa and Krogh 1995). Like the cross-sectional contextual studies, these analyses generally find that men's economic circumstances have a powerful impact on race differences in marriage but cannot explain the full differential. The emerging consensus is that "something more than class status is at play" in the low marriage rates of Blacks compared with Whites (Raley, Sweeney and Wondra 2015: 100).

Two economic analyses reach a different conclusion. Keane and Wolpin (2010) develop a model that synthetically equalizes wages of young Black and White men and find that the predicted race gap in marriage virtually disappears. Similarly, Nakosteen and Zimmer (2019) use a model of latent earnings to argue that disparities in unobserved earning capacities between Black men and White men can explain the entire race difference in marriage rates.

In sum, many studies stimulated by Wilson's marriageability thesis have demonstrated that men's employment and earnings are strongly associated with marriage rates, but with just a few exceptions they argue that this is insufficient to explain most of the race difference in marriage. This article uses a new approach for measuring first marriage rates consistently over the 1960-2019 period to allow generalizations about the changing race differential in marriage over a sixty-year period. I then apply classic demographic decomposition methods to directly assess the changing impact of men's own economic circumstances on entry into marriage.

I find that the differing economic circumstances of Blacks and Whites has had profound implications for the difference in first marriage rates. The results show that from 1960 to 1980, race differences in economic composition can account for race differences in marriage rates. Indeed, in 1960 and 1970, marriage rates are substantially higher among Black men than among White men once compositional factors are controlled. In the 21st century the effects of male

economic circumstances on race differences in marriage rates have diminished but remain substantial. The long-run decline in the impact of male economic characteristics on marriage rates probably reflects the decline of male-breadwinner family and the rising importance of women's economic resources.

Historical Context

Before 1960, Black men married younger and more frequently than did Whites, and since 1960, Black men have married later than Whites and have become less likely to ever marry. Figure 1 shows the mean years single (MYS) under age 50 for Black and White men from 1900 to 2019.¹

Historical demographers argue that early marriage among Blacks before the mid-20th century was an adaptation to the post-reconstruction labor system, and the demise of that labor system sharply reduced the incentives for early marriage. In 1920, almost half of Blacks in the United States resided on farms, the great majority of which were Southern tenant or sharecropping farms. From the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, tenant farming and family sharecropping were strongly associated with early marriage. Early marriage

¹ Mean years single (MYS) is an age-independent period measure of marriage intensity analogous to a total fertility rate, calculated as

$$MYS = \sum_{i=1}^{49} s_i$$

where s_i is the proportion of persons never married at age i . Unlike cross-sectional measures of marriage timing such as the Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) or the Indirect Median Age at Marriage, MYS captures non-marriage as well as delayed marriage. It is appropriate for measuring marriage trends in periods of rapid change because it does not require assumptions about the proportion of the population that will ever marry (see Ruggles 2016). The analysis excludes multi-race respondents.

was essential for many Blacks, because in many cases only married couples could obtain a contract for a farm (Tolnay 1984, 1999; Bloom and Muller 2015; Landale and Tolnay 1991).

Black farm operators in the South virtually disappeared during the four middle decades of the twentieth century. In the mid-1930s, the New Deal Agricultural Adjustment Act together with technological change resulted in the eviction of perhaps a hundred thousand Black farm tenants and sharecroppers (Depew, Fishback, and Rhode 2013). Mechanization of cotton and corn production accelerated after the war, and hundreds of thousands of additional farm tenants and sharecroppers were displaced (Day 1967). With the demise of Black sharecropping and tenant farming, the incentives for early Black marriage diminished greatly. Fitch and Ruggles (2000) argue that the sharp decline in Black agricultural employment in the mid-twentieth century severely attenuated marriage rates among the Black population in the post-war period.

Since 1960, Black MYS has exceeded that of Whites, and the gap has grown from about one year in 1960 to 4.7 years in 2019. Even more striking than the growing race difference in years single over the past 60 years is the extraordinary change over time. Black MYS increased by 12.1 years from 1960 to 2019, and White MYS rose 8.4 years.

Measures and Data

Measuring First Marriage Rates

This analysis is based on a new measure of marriage rates in the decennial censuses of 1960, 1970, and 1980 together with a comparable measure the American Community Surveys (ACS) of 2008-2010 and 2017-2019. First marriage rates are defined as the number of persons marrying for the first time during a 12-month period per thousand persons who had never married at the start of the period. This measure is appropriate for assessing the relationship of

economic circumstances to marriage, since the available economic measures refer to the period immediately preceding or approximately contemporaneous with the marriage.

In 2008 the ACS added two questions that make it simple to calculate first marriage rates: “(1) In the PAST 12 MONTHS did this person get married? (2) How many times has this person been married?” (Elliott, Simmons, and Lewis 2010). We calculate the first marriage rate as the number of persons married once and married within the past 12 months per thousand people who had never married at the beginning of the 12-month period.

We can construct the a comparable measure for the censuses of 1960, 1970, and 1980 by combining responses to four variables: age, age at first marriage, birth quarter, and marriage quarter. All persons whose current age is the same as their age at first marriage married within the past 12 months, since we know that they had a birthday within 12 months of the census, and if the marriage had occurred prior to the birthday the marriage age would not match the current age.

In addition, persons whose age at first marriage is one year younger than their current age married within the past year if their marriage date preceded their birth date. Consider, for example, a man listed in the 1960 census at age 26 who was married at age 25. The census reference date was April 1, 1960, so we need to determine whether he was married between April 1959 and March 1960. Assume he married in May and turned 26 in October. We can infer that he was 25 in May 1959, and therefore married within the past year. Conversely, if his 26th birthday was in May 1959 and his marriage date was October, we can infer that the marriage had to have taken place in October of 1958, and he was not married in the 12 months preceding the census.

Unfortunately, the census does not give exact dates of birth and marriage; rather, we only have information on quarter of marriage and quarter of birth. In most cases, this allows us to establish whether the marriage preceded the birthday, but if the marriage quarter is the same as the birth quarter, it does not reveal which event came first. In these cases, we can turn to spousal information. The great majority of newlyweds reside with their spouse, and in cases of uncertainty we can use the spouse's information to resolve the ambiguity. Assuming the spouse was also getting married for the first time, her marriage within the last year applies to her husband as well.

By combining information on both spouses, it is possible to unambiguously determine whether the marriage occurred within the past year in approximately 90% of cases. For the remaining 10% of cases, I assume that the marriage preceded the birthday half the time. Accordingly, I randomly assigned marriage to 50% of the remaining ambiguous cases. The rules for constructing first marriage rates from the census are summarized in Table 1.

To evaluate the plausibility of marriage rates derived from the Census I compared them with age-specific marriage rates derived from vital records for 1960, 1970, and 1980. These are available only for persons in the "Marriage-Registration Area" (MRA), which was established in 1957 by the National Office of Vital Statistics to provide detailed statistics on marriage—including age at marriage and previous marital status—for a subset of states that had agreed to cooperate. In 1960, the system was still being developed; it covered just 62% of first marriages, and analysts expressed concern about under-reporting of marriages and about the high percentage of characteristics "not stated" (National Center for Health Statistics 1964). By 1970, 90% of first marriages were covered by the MRA system.

Figure 2 compares age-specific first marriage rates for the MRA derived from census microdata with those derived from vital records. Cases with allocated values for age at first marriage or number of times married are excluded. In most cases the age-specific first marriage rates derived from the census reasonably approximate the rates calculated from marriage certificates, but there are some exceptions. Most notably, in 1960 the rates derived from the census for persons aged 25 or older are somewhat higher than the rates from vital statistics.

It is unclear whether the differences between the two sources reflect errors in the census or errors in the vital statistics. The census might overstate marriage rates at older ages if respondents misreported remarriages as first marriages, although there is no obvious reason to suspect that this problem would be worse in 1960 than in later years. In 1960, the vital statistics likely had some underreporting of first marriages under the newly-formed MRA system. Moreover, the vital registration system did not count marriages conducted without a legal marriage certificate, and such marriages may have been more common in 1960 than in later census years. The convergence between estimates from the census and from vital records between 1960 and 1980 may reflect improvements in the quality of both sources.

The National Center for Health Statistics discontinued the collection of detailed marriage statistics from vital records in 1996, so it is not possible to use the same approach to evaluate the quality of marriage rates derived from the ACS. The Census Bureau did, however, compare crude marriage rates from the ACS to rates estimated from vital records, and concluded that the two sources yield similar results (Elliott, Simmons, and Lewis 2010).

Data Sources and Study Population

In 1990, the census dropped the questions on marital history. Accordingly, this analysis is limited to the earlier period (1960 through 1980) along with the period since 2008 when

marriage questions were added to the American Community Survey. The study population consists of US-born non-Hispanic men aged 18-49 who are identified in the census as Black or White.² I use 11 samples from IPUMS (Ruggles et al. 2021). For the earlier period, I used the new 5% sample of the 1960 census, the three 1% “Form 1” samples of the 1970 census, and the 5% “State” sample of the 1980 census. For the ACS, I combine three years of microdata to obtain sufficient cases for the decomposition analysis, comparing 2008-2010 (the earliest three-year period available) and 2017-2019 (the most recent three year period available).

The age-specific first marriage rates for each race and period appear in Figure 3. At every age in every period, Black men married substantially less frequently than did White men. Among both Blacks and Whites, marriage rates declined precipitously between 1960 and 2017-2019, especially among young adults.

Measures of Marriageability

To assess how much of the race differential in marriage rates between 1960 and 2019 can be attributed to differing circumstances, I measure the effect of race differences in population composition with respect to several economic characteristics. I treat marriageability as a continuum rather than a dichotomy. As Wood (1995) noted, marriage is more sensitive to income level than to employment, so studies that focus exclusively on the availability of employed men for marriage may understate the impact of economic circumstances on marriage. Moreover,

² The censuses of 1960 through 1980 report a single race for each respondent. The ACS allows for multiple-race responses; I used the “Black alone” and “White alone” categories. I also tested Black alone or in combination with other races and White alone or in combination. The results were virtually unaffected, probably because multiple-race responses are comparatively infrequent.

combinations of socioeconomic characteristics—such as income, job type, employment, and incarceration—have greater explanatory power than any single characteristic.

Table 2 describes the three economic factors included in the analysis: Income, occupational group, and employment/institutionalization.

- Total income is divided as closely as possible into deciles calculated separately for each period.³ In all periods, Black men are overrepresented in the bottom decile and underrepresented in the upper deciles.
- Occupation is divided into four groups. Professional, managerial, and skilled workers (1950 census codes 0-299, 500-599) are dominated by Whites in all census years; clerical, sales, and operatives (codes 300-499; 600-699) are mixed; and service workers and laborers (codes 700-899) are overrepresented among Blacks. The IPUMS variable YRLASTWK is used to make the “no occupation” category consistently mean no occupation within the past five years.
- Employment/Institutionalization combines information from the IPUMS variables EMPSTAT, WORKEDYR, and GQ to make a consistent variable covering both employment status and institutionalization. Whites are overrepresented among the currently employed, and Blacks are overrepresented among persons who have not worked in the past year or who reside in institutions.

Although these three measures overlap, they also capture subtly different aspects of employment rather than Wilson’s simple dichotomy. Because my analysis applies classic

³ Heaping at round numbers makes it impossible to divide the population into exact deciles; moreover, in 2008-2010 and 2017-2019 men with zero income comprised over 14% of the population, so the bottom decile is large and the second decile correspondingly small.

decomposition methods and does not use regression, collinearity is not a concern. Each factor makes a substantial net contribution to the effect of population composition on the race difference in marriage rates.

In addition to these variables, I experimented with a variety of other socioeconomic factors, including educational attainment, educational enrollment, hours worked last week, weeks worked last year, and class of worker. I also experimented with controls for region, metropolitan residence, interstate migration, and migration from the South. None of these indicators contributed appreciably to explaining the race differences in marriage rates once the three economic measures described above are controlled.

First marriage rates for each factor appear in Table 3. Each of the factors has a profound relationship to marriage rates for both Black men and White men. Men in the top income decile married between five and ten times as frequently as men in the bottom decile. Employment and occupation also have striking effects on first marriage rates. The overall race difference in first marriage rates ranges from 15.6 per thousand in 1960 to 28.0 per thousand in 1980. Compared with the massive difference in first marriage rates between economic subgroups and across time, the differences between Black men and White men are comparatively small.

Analysis

Following Kitagawa (1955), we can divide the difference between two rates into a composition component and a rate component. The composition component is the part of the difference attributable to differences in population composition. The rate component is the difference between the populations that would remain even if their population composition was identical. In addition to the three marriageability measures defined above, it is important to

control for age, so my analysis includes four factors. The rate component with four factors can be calculated as

$$Rate\ component = \sum_i \sum_j \sum_k \sum_l (R_{ijkl} - r_{ijkl}) P_{ijkl}$$

where R_{ijkl} is the marriage rate for persons with characteristics i,j,k,and l in the first population being compared, r_{ijkl} is the corresponding rate for the other population, and P_{ijkl} is the proportion of the standard population with characteristics i,j,k, and l. The composition component can be calculated as the difference between the two populations that remains once the rate component is removed.

This provides a simple approach for evaluating the impact of differing economic composition of the Black and White populations on first marriage rates controlling for all interactions and avoiding assumptions of additivity or linearity. The analysis is based on cross classifications of rates and population distributions of the four independent variables with time and race, creating a matrix of 16,000 cells.

The choice of the standard population can have a significant impact on the result. We can ask two distinct questions:

- (1) What is the race difference in marriage if Whites are weighted to have the economic circumstances of Blacks?
- (2) What is the race difference if Blacks are weighted to conform to the economic circumstances of Whites?

Panel A of Table 4 shows the composition component and the rate component in each period, using the Black population as the standard.⁴ The left panel of the table shows the race

⁴ The analysis was conducted with DECOMP version 2.0, an open-source software available at <https://users.pop.umn.edu/~ruggles/DECOMP.html>.

difference expressed as first marriages per 1000 never married people, and the right panel shows the same information expressed as a percentage of the total race difference. The composition component shows how much of the race difference disappears if the White population is weighted to have identical economic characteristics and age composition as the Black population.

In 1960 and 1970, the composition component is substantially greater than the total population difference in first marriage rates. In 1960, the composition component is over three times the actual population difference, and in 1970 it is 1.4 times as great. This means that Whites with the same economic circumstances as Blacks married much less frequently than did Blacks. The impact of population composition diminished over time, but can still account for over 90% of the race difference in 1980 and a majority of the race difference in both periods since 2008.

Panel B is the same as Panel A, except that Whites are the standard population. The composition component shows how much of the race difference would disappear if Blacks had the same distribution of economic circumstances and age composition as did Whites. The general patterns are the same as in Panel A, but the composition component is consistently smaller. Moreover, if we use Whites as the standard the components effect shrinks even more rapidly over time, falling below 50% in 2008-2010 and down just 28.3% in 2017-2019.

The reason the two standards differ is that race differentials in marriage rates are generally smaller for men at the lower end of the economic spectrum than for those at the higher end. As can be seen in Table 3, this pattern became more pronounced over time. In the early period, low income and unemployed Black men actually married more frequently than did Whites facing the same circumstances. In the more recent period, Black first marriage rates were

lower than those of Whites in almost every economic category, but the disparity is especially large among the most marriageable groups.

We can subdivide the component effects into the effect of each factor, following Das Gupta's (1978, 1992) refinement of Kitagawa's approach. For this analysis, the standard population is the average of the Black and White populations. Table 5 allocates the composition component into the effect of each of the three economic factors and the effect of age. Interactions between factors are distributed in proportion to the main effects.

Panel A is expressed in absolute first marriage rates; Panel B is expressed as a percentage of the total race difference in marriage rates; and Panel C shows the effect of each factor as a percentage of the composition component. In all periods, income decile is the most important factor by a wide margin, on average contributing almost half of the composition component. Occupational category is the second most important factor, accounting on average for almost a third of the composition component. Employment status and institutionalization—the measure closest to Wilson's original marriageability index—is ironically the weakest of the economic factors. The effect of age is generally negative, because in most periods the Black population was slightly younger and more highly represented in the peak ages for first marriage.

Discussion

Compared with White men, Black men have disproportionately low income, low skilled jobs, low employment, and high levels of incarceration. These factors can account for most of the disproportionately low marriage rates of Black men in all but the most recent period. This analysis strongly supports Wilson's central argument. As Wilson stressed, declining opportunities in manufacturing since the 1960s had devastating consequences for young Black men's earnings and employment, and this was compounded by mass incarceration. During the

period Wilson examined—the 1970s and 1980s—Black men with similar economic and demographic characteristics as White men, measured by income, employment, and incarceration, had similar or higher marriage rates as Whites.

The impact of male economic circumstances on race differences in first marriage rates has waned in the 21st century. With the decline of the male-breadwinner family, the relative effect of male economic circumstances on marriage prospects has diminished (Ruggles 2015). Women's economic resources play an increasingly important role in marriage decisions, and higher earnings for women are now associated with higher marriage rates (Kuo and Raley 2014; Sweeney 2016). Women with independent resources face less pressure to marry, and some choose to delay marriage or forgo it entirely.

This analysis probably understates the importance of material circumstances, both because it does not account for any of the circumstances of women and because it does not account for all the circumstances of men. As noted, the analysis includes institutionalization, but not the impact of a prison record, which is much more common among Blacks than among Whites. Job insecurity is doubtless greater for Blacks than for Whites, but the components analysis cannot capture that. We have information about current income and occupation, but nothing about the perceived future prospects of workers, which must on average be less bright for young Blacks than for young Whites. The census also has no information about wealth (or perceived prospects of future wealth), and wealth is substantially lower among Blacks than among Whites. Nor can we measure parental resources and debt, which have been shown to influence marriage rates (Bloome and Ang 2020).

Because of these omissions, the true impact of material circumstances on the race differential in first marriage is probably substantially greater than this analysis reveals. Even in

the most recent period, were it possible to control for all the effects of economic influences on the marriageability of men, we might find little or no race difference in first marriage rates.

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Table 1. Rules for assigning marriage within year in the 1960, 1970, and 1980 censuses

AGE: Age at last birthday
AGEMARR: Age at first marriage
BIRTHQTR: Quarter of birth
MARRQTR: Quarter of marriage

Persons are married within the past year if:

- a) AGEMARR=AGE
- b) AGEMARR=AGE-1 and MARRQTR precedes BIRTHQTR
Census day is April 1, the first day of Quarter 2, so the marriage preceded the birthday if any of the following conditions are met:
 - MARRQTR=2 and BIRTHQTR= 3, 4, or 1
 - MARRQTR=3 and BIRTHQTR=4 or 1
 - MARRQTR=4 and BIRTHQTR=1

If AGEMARR=AGE-1 and MARRQTR=BIRTHQTR the case is ambiguous

- c) Search for spouse and apply rules a and b to spouse's information
- d) If it is still ambiguous randomly assign first marriage to 50% of cases

Table 2. Percentage distribution of selected characteristics:
Never-married non-Hispanic US-born Black men and White men, 1960-2019

	1960		1970		1980		2008-2010		2017-2019	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
Decile of Income										
1	21.0	10.7	21.2	9.6	23.5	7.6	26.8	10.9	22.2	11.6
2	12.7	7.5	11.9	8.9	13.4	9.8	6.4	5.6	6.6	5.8
3	11.1	9.8	10.4	10.5	9.8	9.6	9.7	10.7	9.7	10.3
4	11.7	11.3	7.9	11.0	8.6	10.2	10.4	9.5	11.4	9.5
5	8.3	8.8	7.5	9.4	8.9	10.2	9.6	10.1	10.5	9.8
6	11.0	9.7	9.5	9.9	9.9	10.4	9.2	10.0	10.5	10.3
7	9.7	10.4	9.8	9.7	9.6	11.6	8.6	10.5	9.3	9.9
8	6.9	10.1	11.4	11.6	5.3	8.9	7.8	10.5	8.3	10.7
9	5.0	10.8	6.6	9.0	6.1	10.8	6.6	10.9	6.5	10.5
10	2.6	10.9	3.9	10.3	4.8	10.9	5.0	11.2	5.0	11.5
Employment and Institutionalization										
Currently employed	60.2	72.1	55.4	66.9	51.0	70.7	48.0	67.9	58.2	72.8
Not employed but worked in past year	14.7	15.8	16.7	20.6	17.7	18.6	12.0	14.3	9.0	9.6
No work in past year	18.0	9.4	20.9	10.4	25.5	9.1	29.0	15.7	23.9	15.6
Institutional residence	7.1	2.8	7.0	2.2	5.8	1.6	11.0	2.0	8.9	1.9
Occupation										
Professional, managerial, skilled	14.2	35.5	22.0	37.8	23.0	39.2	19.9	38.1	21.0	39.3
Clerical, sales, operatives	21.9	32.7	31.1	32.8	28.7	31.2	27.9	27.0	28.7	25.6
Service and laborers	37.5	17.2	29.2	21.7	29.4	23.8	28.0	24.8	27.2	23.5
No occupation in past five years	26.4	14.5	17.7	7.7	18.9	5.9	24.2	10.0	23.1	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases (unweighted)	389,724	54,153	295,113	42,315	683,114	121,767	481,550	108,274	538,531	115,523

Note: Includes men marrying within 12 months of census date

Table 3. First marriages per thousand never-married population by selected characteristics:
Never-married non-Hispanic US-born Black men and White men, 1960-2019

	1960		1970		1980		2008-2010		2017-2019	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
Decile of Income										
1	41.7	31.9	34.9	32.2	22.6	27.2	8.4	11.8	7.4	10.0
2	72.2	49.1	57.8	40.6	33.8	33.0	11.4	10.5	10.1	10.8
3	116.0	62.5	63.4	54.9	39.8	35.1	16.1	13.6	16.3	14.1
4	151.8	102.8	86.4	74.7	50.9	49.6	16.7	19.5	12.6	18.3
5	203.7	150.3	113.4	105.5	69.7	70.6	21.4	31.2	18.9	26.6
6	231.7	197.1	142.1	144.3	102.4	103.7	36.8	44.6	28.0	41.4
7	260.6	244.1	175.5	188.8	116.5	130.5	47.9	59.9	34.3	55.3
8	250.4	271.6	202.2	227.6	118.5	146.9	54.6	76.3	43.7	71.4
9	253.9	278.1	227.6	243.0	131.3	163.2	61.5	91.3	47.8	89.2
10	237.1	255.1	193.5	208.9	133.1	155.6	65.8	95.3	59.5	104.3
Employment and Institutionalization										
Currently employed	207.8	208.7	165.0	174.1	99.7	116.7	42.7	62.0	32.6	58.5
Not employed but worked in past year	107.0	85.0	63.3	59.0	44.1	48.4	24.4	23.6	13.4	18.8
No work in past year	46.4	34.8	36.9	37.5	23.4	26.6	8.6	12.3	7.7	10.8
Institutional residence	45.0	28.7	37.8	30.2	32.6	28.9	13.7	17.4	12.0	8.5
Occupation										
Professional, managerial, skilled	203.7	208.1	145.1	176.8	102.0	122.0	49.9	72.1	42.5	70.4
Clerical, sales, operatives	214.4	191.6	149.9	141.4	81.4	98.3	31.3	43.9	24.7	41.3
Service and laborers	149.5	121.4	100.6	85.2	56.4	64.1	25.3	31.2	20.8	30.4
No occupation in past five years	77.5	71.3	25.5	18.8	16.2	12.7	7.1	7.1	6.3	8.1
Total	152.3	167.9	112.4	133.1	66.5	94.4	27.4	47.8	23.1	46.3

Table 4. Components of race difference in first marriage rates**A. Standard population=Blacks**

Year	Components of race difference			Components as % of race difference		
	Composition component	Rate component	Total difference	Composition component	Rate component	Total difference
1960	48.9	-33.3	15.6	313.3	-213.3	100.0
1970	30.0	-9.2	20.8	144.4	-44.4	100.0
1980	25.6	2.3	28.0	91.6	8.4	100.0
2008-2010	14.1	6.2	20.3	69.4	30.6	100.0
2017-2019	12.6	10.6	23.2	54.3	45.7	100.0

B. Standard population=Whites

Year	Components of race difference			Components as % of race difference		
	Composition component	Rate component	Total difference	Composition component	Rate component	Total difference
1960	44.3	-28.7	15.6	283.7	-183.7	100.0
1970	24.3	-3.5	20.8	116.8	-16.8	100.0
1980	19.4	8.6	28.0	69.2	30.8	100.0
2008-2010	9.4	10.9	20.3	46.2	53.8	100.0
2017-2019	6.6	16.6	23.2	28.3	71.7	100.0

Table 5. Effect of individual factors on the race difference in first marriage rates**A. Absolute difference in marriage rates**

	1960	1970	1980	2008-2010	2017-2019
Total population difference	15.6	20.8	28.0	20.3	23.2
Effect of factors					
Income decile	24.7	10.3	10.6	4.9	4.7
Occupational category	15.0	7.7	6.5	4.1	3.6
Employment/Institution	7.6	5.9	6.6	3.3	2.0
Age	-0.7	3.3	-1.2	-0.5	-0.7
Total composition component	46.6	27.2	22.5	11.8	9.6
Rate component	-31.0	-6.4	5.5	8.6	13.6

B. Percentage difference in marriage rates

	1960	1970	1980	2008-2010	2017-2019
Total population difference	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Effect of factors					
Income decile	158.2	49.4	37.8	23.9	20.1
Occupational category	96.0	37.1	23.2	20.0	15.4
Employment/Institution	48.7	28.2	23.6	16.1	8.8
Age	-4.4	15.8	-4.2	-2.2	-3.0
Total composition component	298.5	130.6	80.4	57.8	41.3
Rate component	-198.5	-30.6	19.6	42.2	58.7

C. Effect of factors as a percentage of composition component

	1960	1970	1980	2008-2010	2017-2019
Effect of factors					
Income decile	53.0	37.8	47.0	41.3	48.7
Occupational category	32.2	28.4	28.9	34.6	37.3
Employment/Institution	16.3	21.6	29.4	27.9	21.3
Age	-1.5	12.1	-5.2	-3.8	-7.3
Total composition component	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

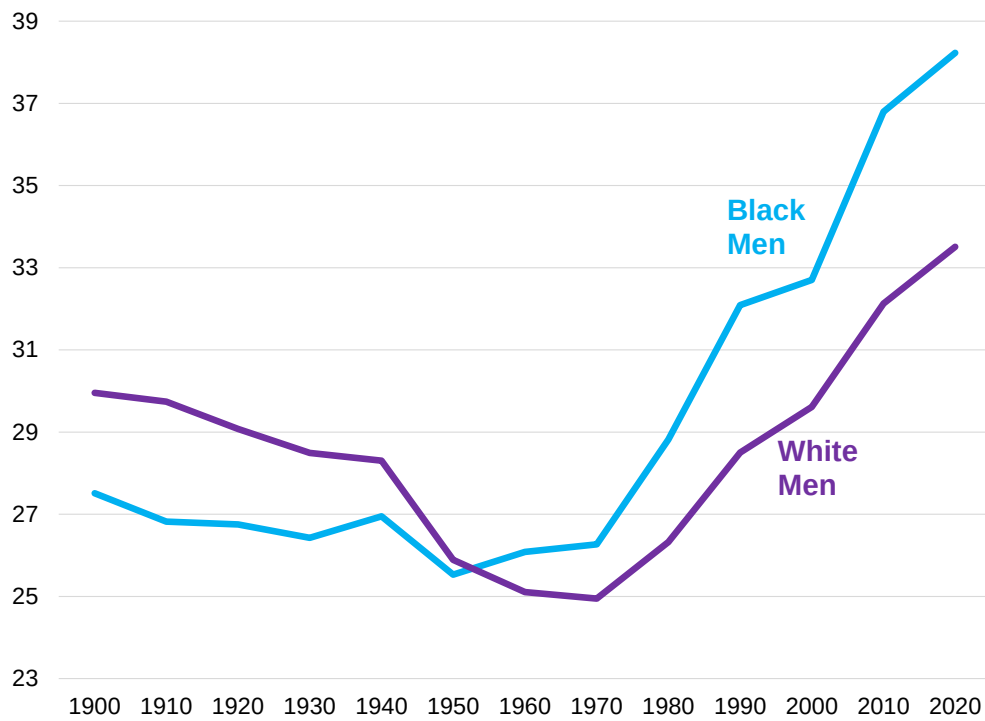


Fig. 1. Mean years single for non-Hispanic Black Men and White Men, 1900-2019

Source: Ruggles et al. (2021)

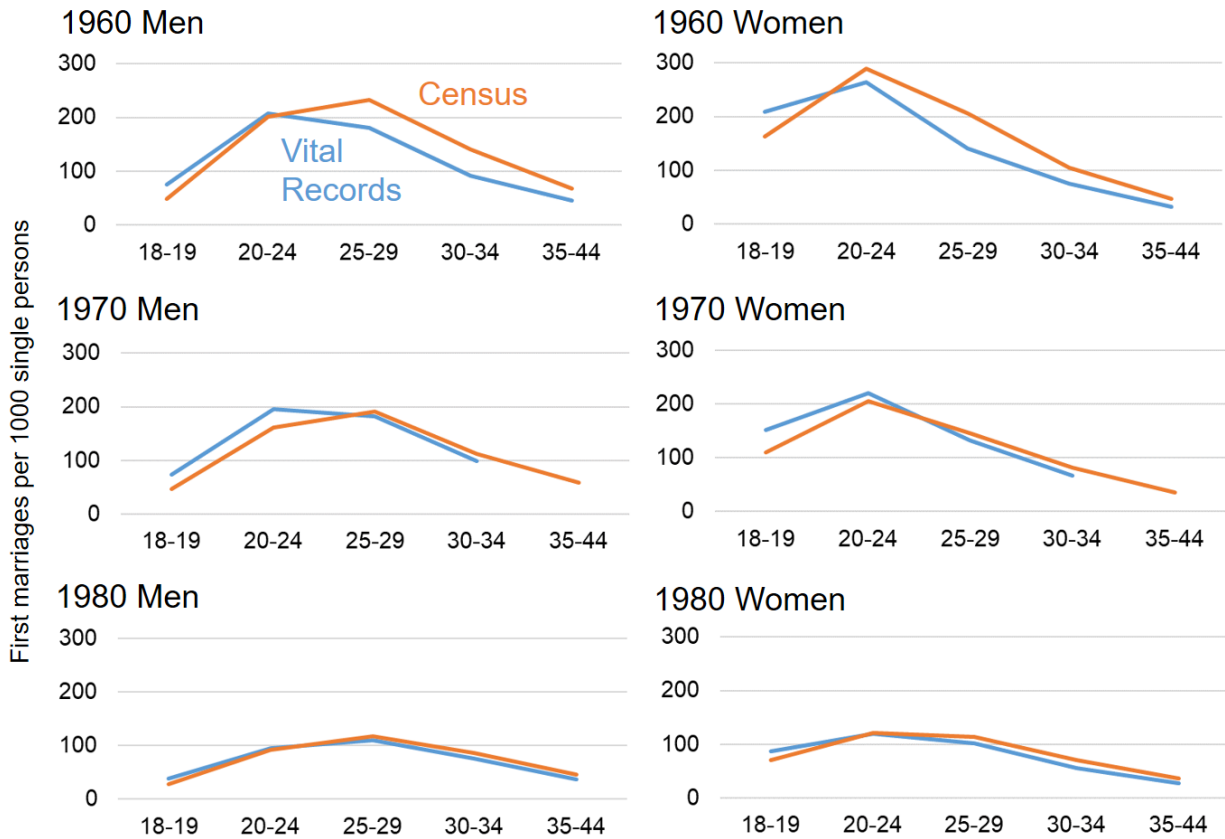
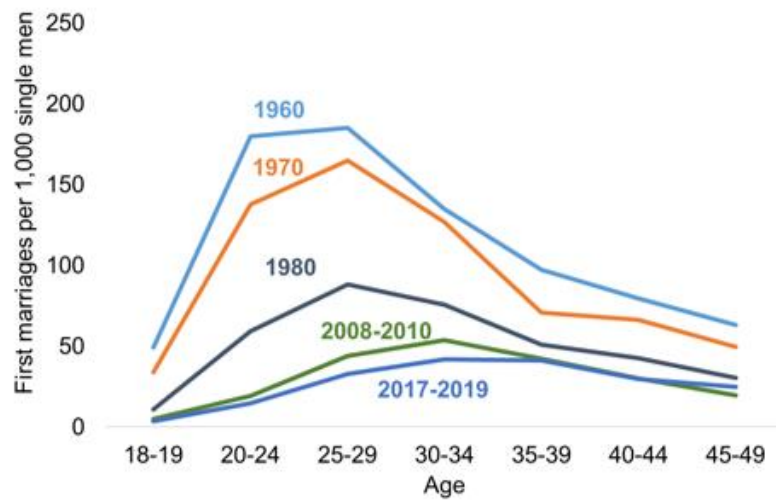


Fig. 2. Comparison of age-specific first marriage rates from the census and vital records: Marriage-registration area, 1960-1980

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics 1964, 1974, 1985 and Ruggles et al. (2021)

Blacks



Whites

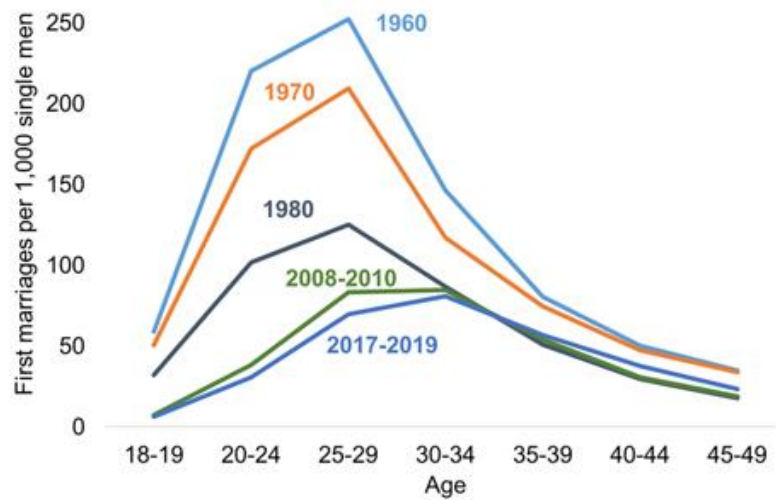


Fig. 3. Age-specific first marriage rates by census year:
U.S.-born non-Hispanic Black and White men

Source: Ruggles et al. (2021)