

# The family and sexuality

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**Extra reading  
Population and Society (SOCI 312)**

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# Outline

- The family
  - Brief historical review
  - Marriage and family today
- Sexuality
  - Three dimensions of sexuality
  - 2006–2008 NSFG sexuality data
  - Empirical analyses of sexuality
- Family partnering



# The family

- The family is one of the most important foundations and agents of socialization
  - The family is the first place we learn culture, norms, values, and gender roles
  - Usually where fertility occurs (production of children)



# Family constitution

- Family constitution varies across cultures and over time
  - The Western world traditionally regarded a family as consisting of a husband, wife, and children
  - Increasing number of one-parent families, gay and lesbian families, blended families, childless families
  - Descent system: bilineal (U.S.), patrilineal (China)

# Brief historical review

- Polygyny was banned around the 12th century, and extended families declined in number
- Up to around the 17th century, marriages were used mainly to
  - Gain ancestral legitimacy
  - Establish military, political, commercial, and economic alliances



# Love match

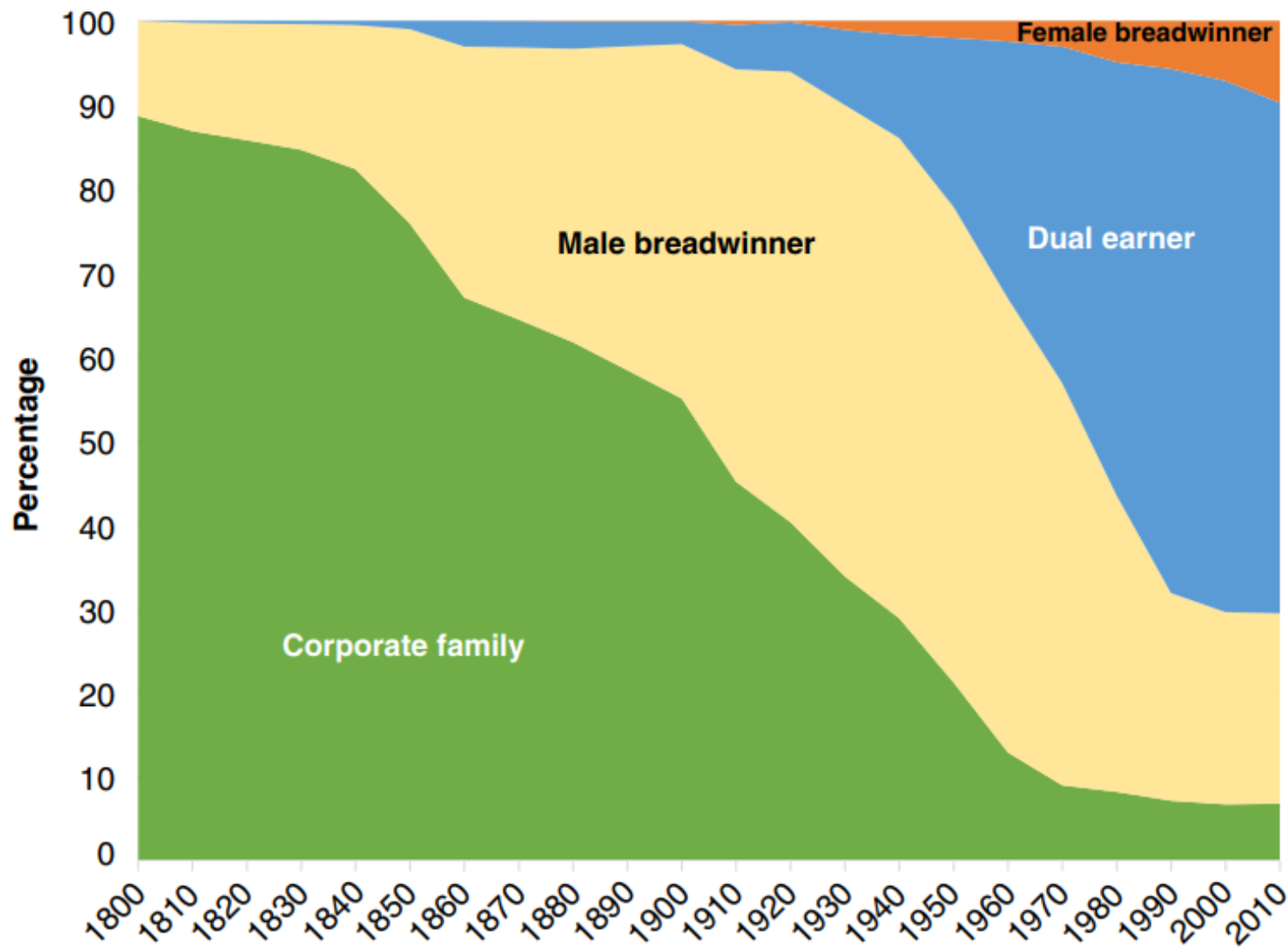
- By the end of 18th century in Western Europe, the “love match” became normative
  - Husband providing for the family
  - Wife focusing on the family life
- In the U.S. during the colonial era, there were no sharply divided roles of the husband and the wife
  - The husband, wife, and children all worked together



# Extended to nuclear families

- Societal and structural changes in Europe and the U.S.
  - Industrialization, urbanization, productivity, market economy, and individualization
  - Rural-urban migration: more adults working in factories and other non-familial settings
- Control and decision making moved from extended families to nuclear families
  - Decision-making became less based on familial connections





**Fig. 4** Family economies of U.S. couples aged 18–64: United States, 1800–2010. *Source:* Ruggles (forthcoming)



# Demographic changes in the U.S.

- Life expectancy at birth
- Age when women have last child
- Marriage and childbearing no longer defining events

# Life expectancy at birth

- Life expectancy at birth in the U.S. increased
  - From 74 in the 19th century
  - To around 83 as of 2012



# Age when women have last child

- The age when a woman would have her last child does not greatly impact her any more like it did in the 19th century
  - Women in the 19th century had 14 years of life remaining after they have raised their last child to age 15
  - Women today have 33 years of life remaining by the time they have raised their last child to age 15

# Marriage and childbearing

- Marriage and childbearing are no longer defining events and activities of our lives
  - In earlier times, they were our identity
  - Today, they are a less central part of our life



# Marriage and family today

- Focus on the United States
  1. How old are people today when they marry for the first time?
  2. How many people get married?
  3. How many people cohabit before marriage?
  4. How many babies are born to unmarried women?
  5. What are the trends of interracial marriage?

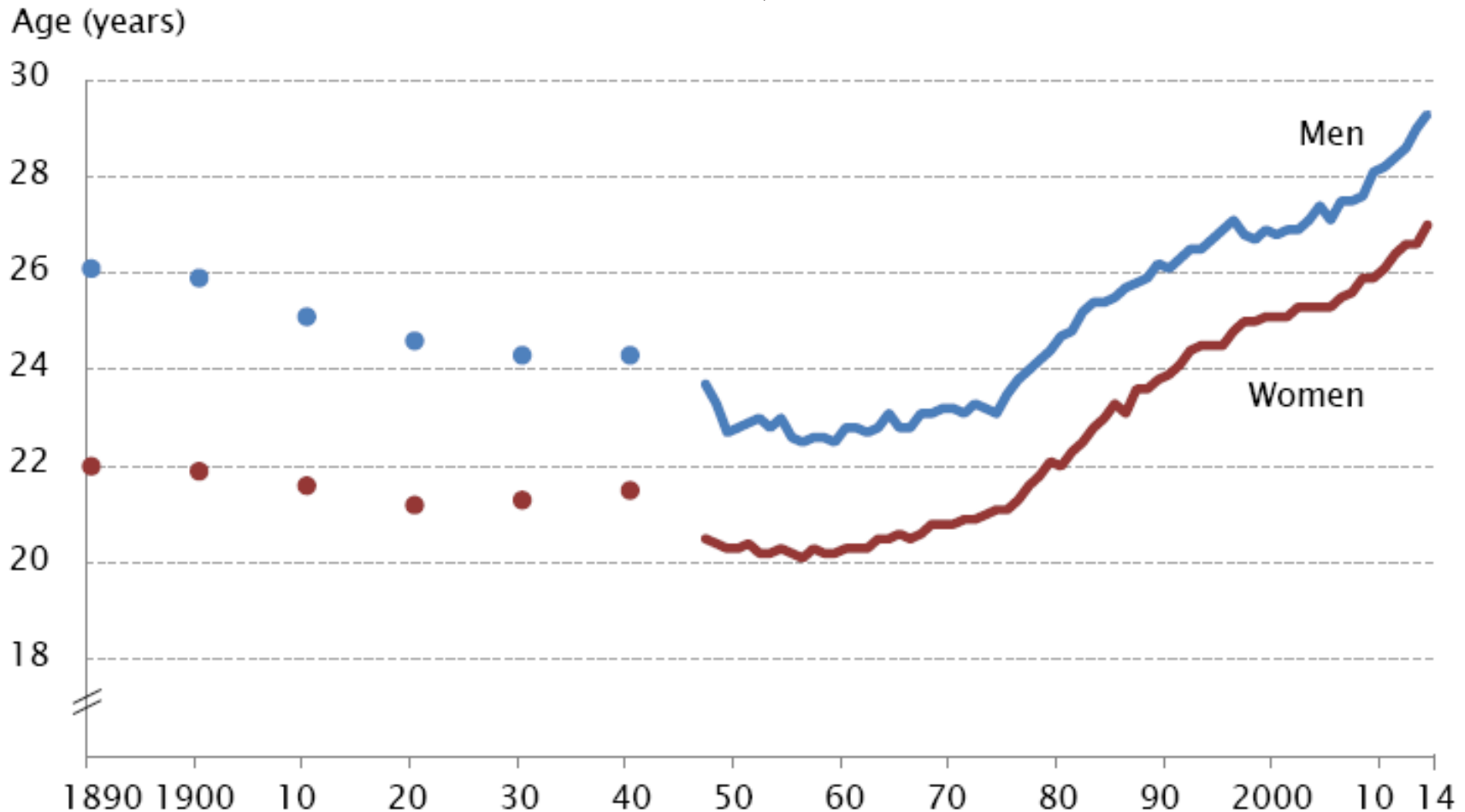


# 1. Age at first marriage

- Males at 26 years of age and females at 22 at the end of 19th century
- Males at 22.8 and females at 20.3 in about the year of 1960
  - Along with the growth of well-paid jobs under industrialization
- Increase in age at first marriage since 1960
- Males at 29 and females at 27 in 2014



# Median age at first marriage, United States, 1890–2014



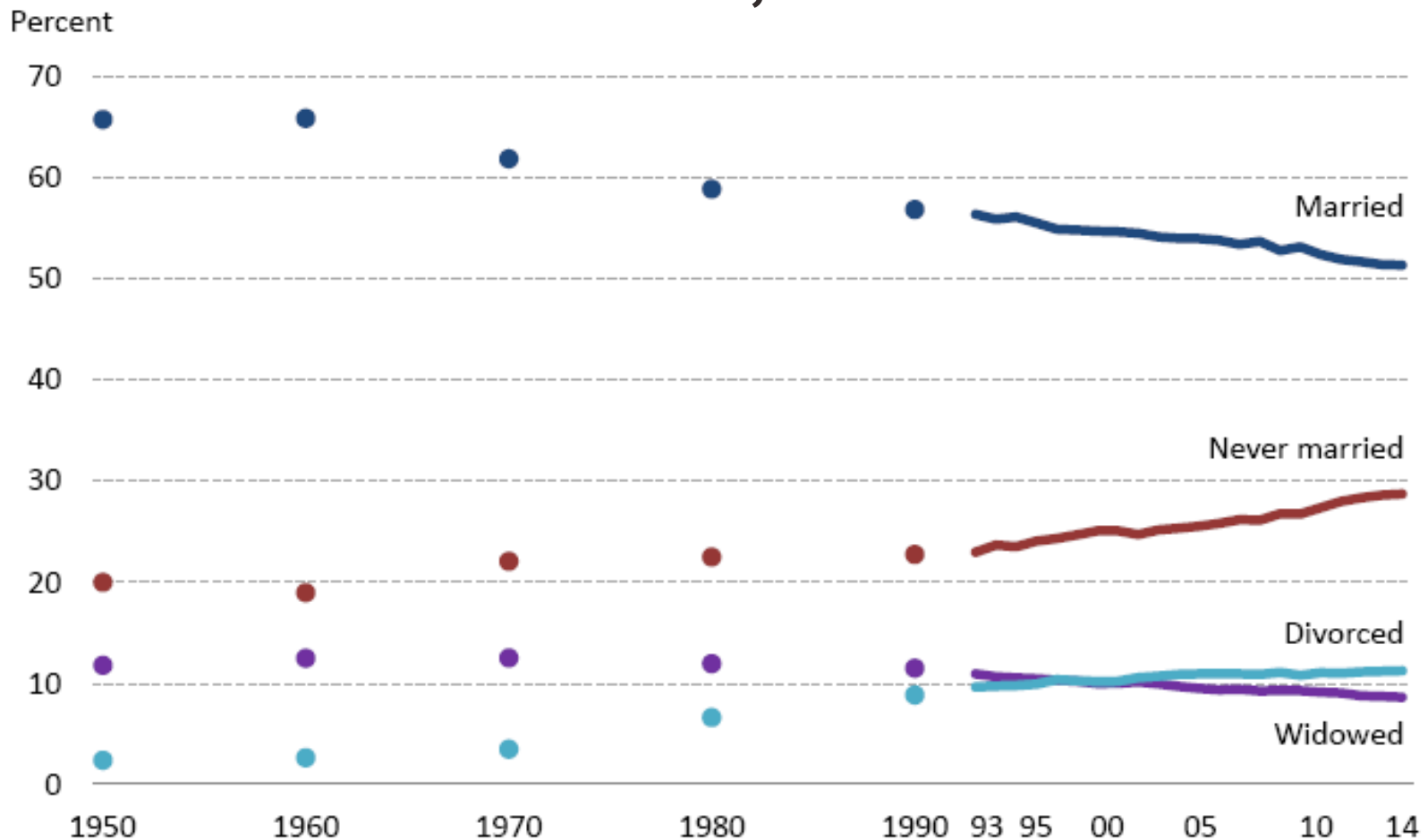
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/hhes/families/files/graphics/MS-2.pdf>

## 2. Marital status

- In 1950, among people of age 15+
  - 66% of women were married, 20% never married
  - 68% of men were married, 28% never married
- In 2014
  - ~50% of women were married, 39% never married
  - 52% of men were married, 35% never married
- Trends of age group 45–54
  - In 1980, 5% of women were never married
  - In 2010, 14% of women were never married
  - In 2030, 25% of women are projected to not be married (Pew Research Center)



# Marital status of women 15+, United States, 1950–2014



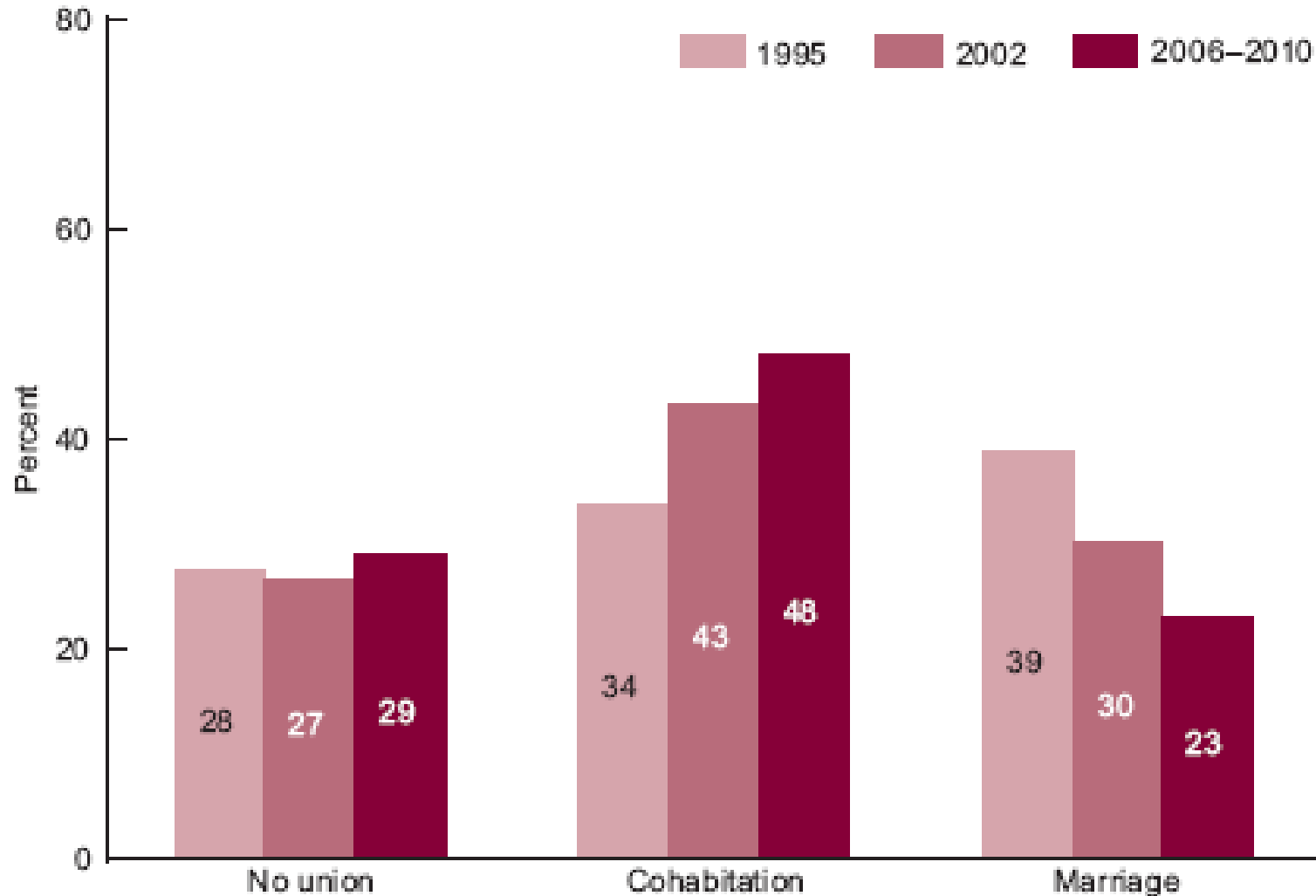
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/hhes/families/files/graphics/MS-1b.pdf>

# 3. Cohabiting before marriage

- First unions: cohabitation and marriage
  - Very little change between 1995 and 2010 (NSFG) in the percentages of women aged 15–44 not in a union: 28%
- Changes of women marrying and cohabiting
  - Cohabitation: 30% in 1995; 50% in 2006–2010
  - Marriage: 39% in 1995; 23% in 2006–2010
- Of the 50% of women cohabiting
  - 40% transitioned to marry, 32% remained cohabiting, and 27% dissolved the relationships
- Cohabiting without being married is becoming more acceptable



# Type of first unions among women 15–44, United States, 1995, 2002, 2006–2010



Source: Copen, Daniels, and Mosher, 2013: 4.

# Cohabiting through time

- Women aged 19–44 reported cohabiting prior to their first marriage (Manning, 2013)
  - 11% in 1965–1974
  - 46% in 1985–1989
  - 59% in 1995–1999
  - 66% in 2005–2010
- Cohabitation is the “new normal” these days

# Percentages of women 19–44 who cohabited before their first marriage by marriage cohort, United States, 1965–1974 to 2005–2010

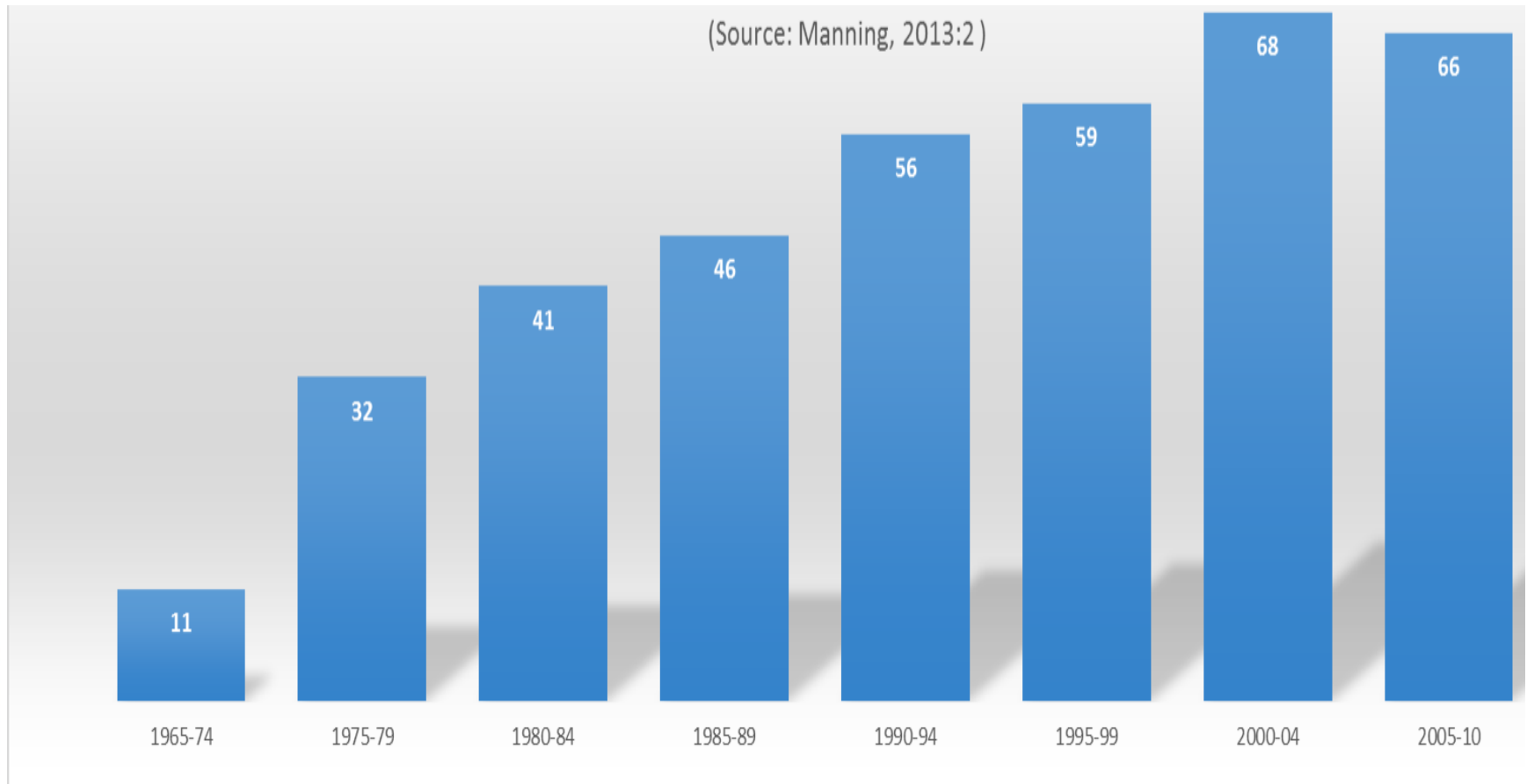


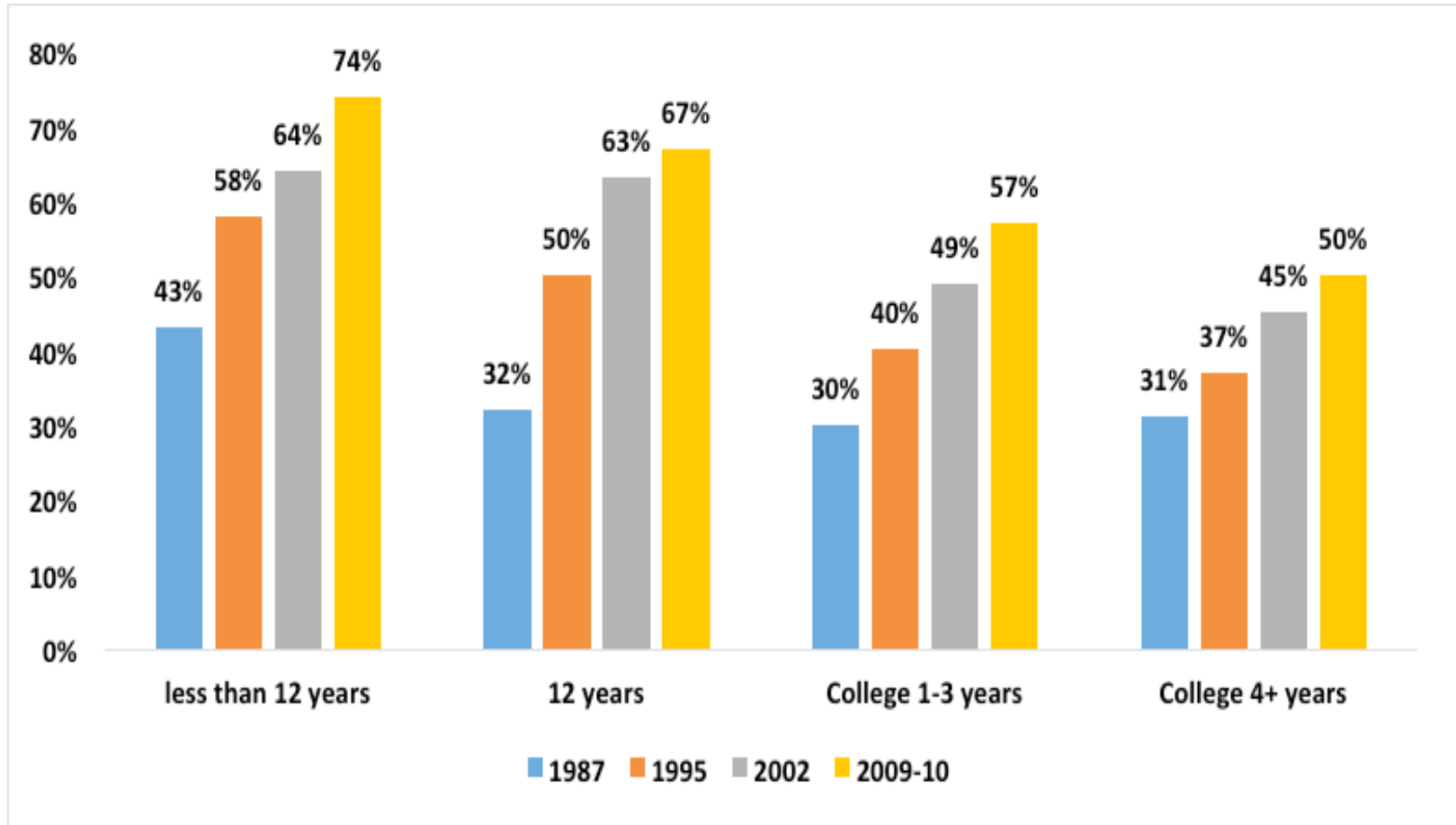
Figure prepared by Huanjun Zhang and DLP.

# Cohabitation and education

- Different cohabiting rates by levels of education
- More educated women are less likely to cohabit
- In 2009–2010
  - 74% with less than a high school degree have ever cohabited
  - 67% with high school degree
  - 57% with one to three years of college
  - 50% with four or more years of college



# Percentages of women 19–44 who have ever cohabited by level of education, United States, 1987 to 2009–2010



Source of data: Manning, 2013: 3.

Figure prepared by Huanjun Zhang and DLP.

# Cohabitation and marital expectations

- “Stalled” second demographic transition
  - 18–24 single women have stronger expectations to marry than cohabit (2011–2015 NSFG)
- Among young women expecting to marry
  - 68% expect to cohabit with their future spouse
  - 32% expect to marry without cohabiting first
- Women from disadvantaged backgrounds report the lowest expectations to marry
- Variation by education
  - No education variation in cohabitation expectations
  - Marriage expectations do vary by education





# 4. Babies born out-of-wedlock

- Percentage of babies born to unmarried mothers
  - 5% in the late 1950s
  - 14% in the mid-1970s
  - 30% in the mid-1980s
  - 41% in 2013
- Homes for unwed mothers reduced in number
  - The legalization of abortion
  - Contraception widely available and effective
  - Increased percentages of single mothers
  - Changing societal attitudes toward single parenthood

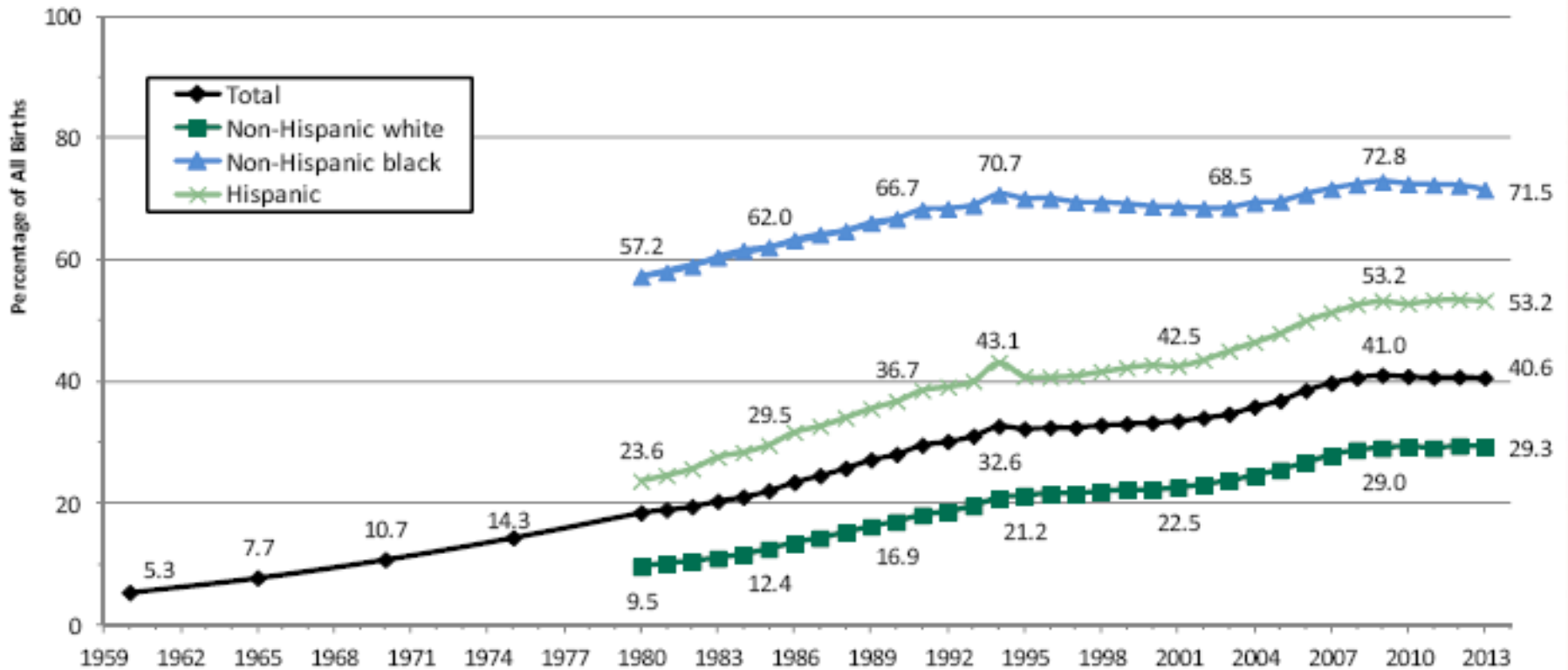


# Race/ethnicity

- Births to unmarried mothers by race/ethnicity
- Non-Hispanic White women
  - 10% in 1980
  - 29% in 2013
- Non-Hispanic Black women
  - 57% in 1980
  - 72% in 2013
- Hispanic women
  - 24% in 1980
  - 53% in 2013



# Births to unmarried women by race/ethnicity, United States, 1959–2013



Source: Child Trends, 2015: 3 (reprinted with permission of Child Trends).

# Unmarried Black women

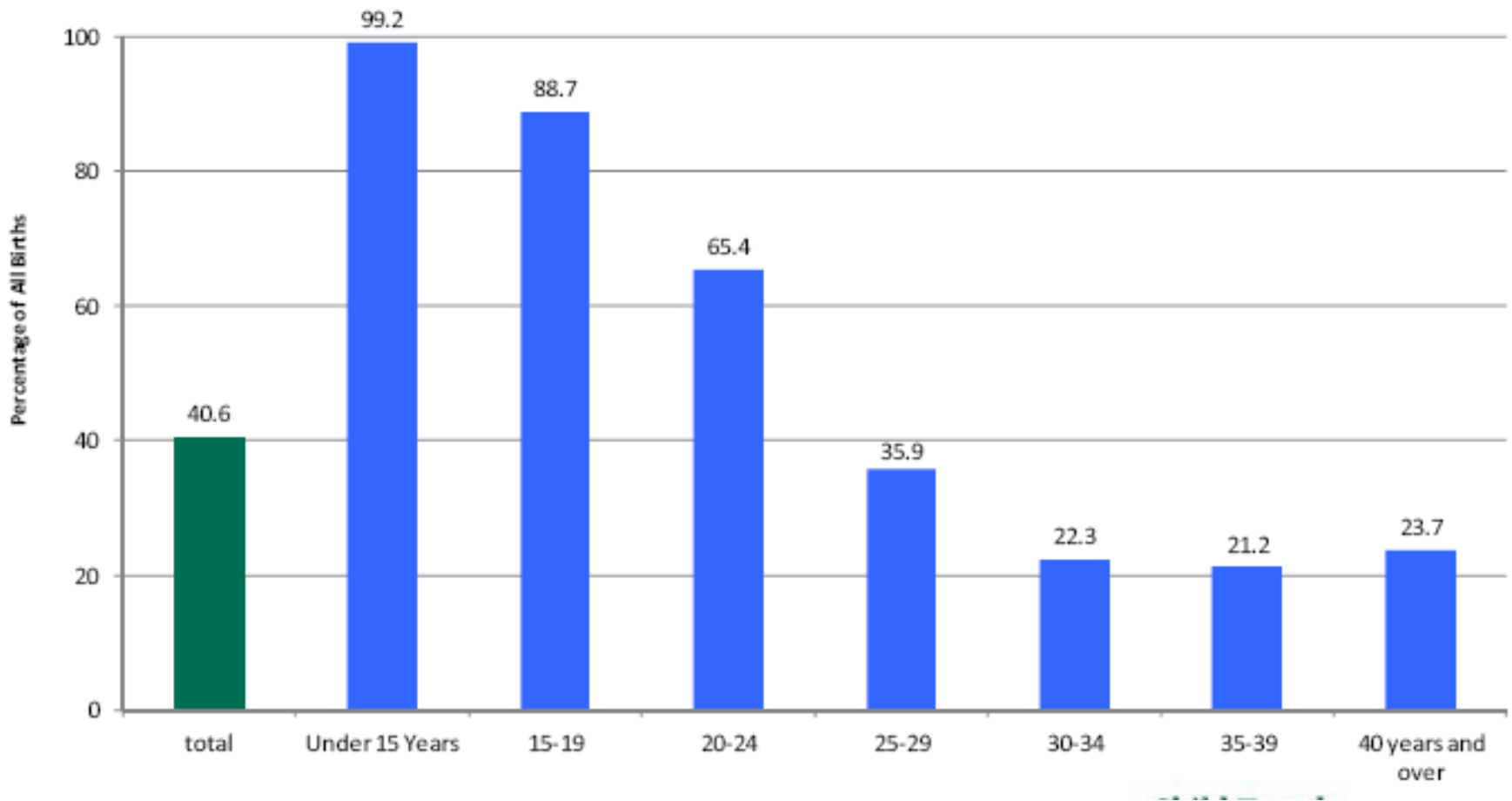
- Some reasons why percentages of births to unmarried Black mothers are so much higher than White percentages
- Of the 72% of the births to unmarried Black women, 30% of the women are cohabiting
  - There is a father helping to raise the child along with the mother
- The availability of black men is low
  - 1.5 million of the 8 million black men in the ages 25–54 are not available for the black women, due to incarceration and high mortality



# Age of mother

- The older the woman, the more likely she has married
- The older the woman, the less likely she is not married when she gives birth
- Percentage of births to unmarried women by age of mother when children were born...

# Births to unmarried women by age of mother, United States, 2013

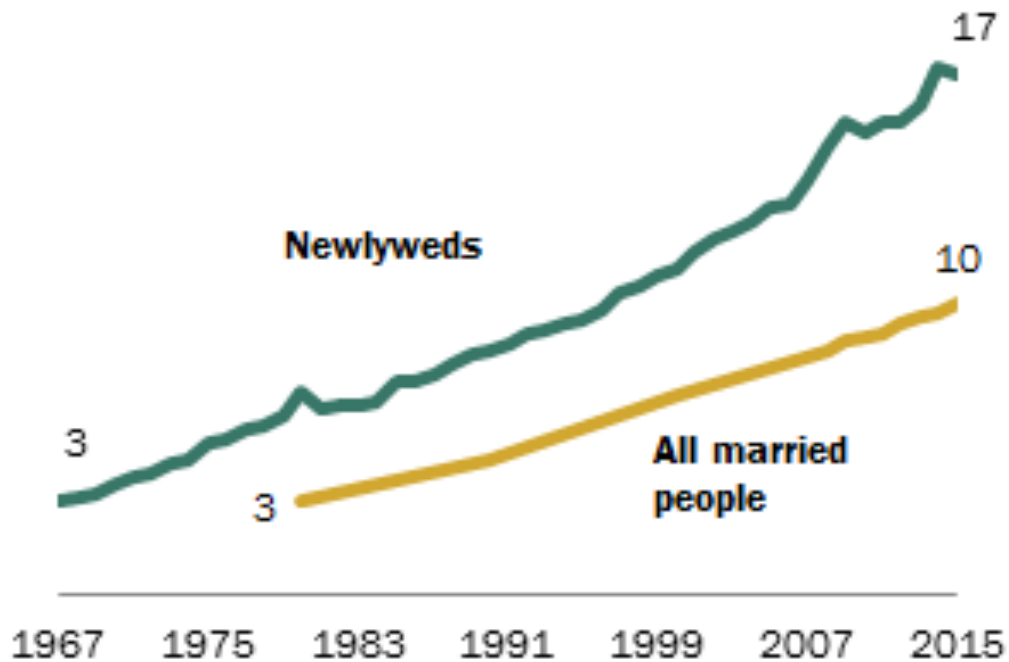


Source: Child Trends, 2015: 4 (reprinted with permission of Child Trends).

# 5. Interracial marriage

**Since 1967, a steady rise in intermarriage in the U.S.**

*% who are intermarried among ...*



Note: Data prior to 1980 are estimates. See Methodology for more details. For "all married people," 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2008-2015 data points are shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2008-2015 American Community Survey and 1980, 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses (IPUMS).

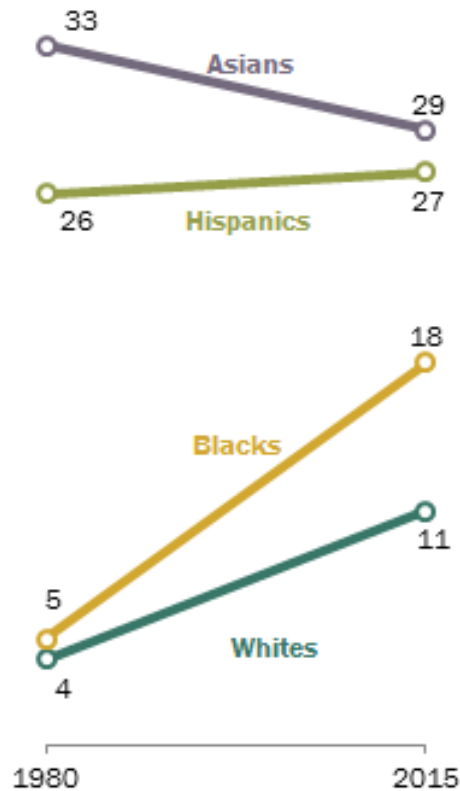
"Interracial marriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

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# Intermarriage by race/ethnicity

## Dramatic increases in intermarriage for blacks, whites

*% of U.S. newlyweds who are intermarried*



Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders. The 2015 time point is based on combined 2014 and 2015 data.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014-2015 American Community Survey and 1980 decennial census (IPUMS). "Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

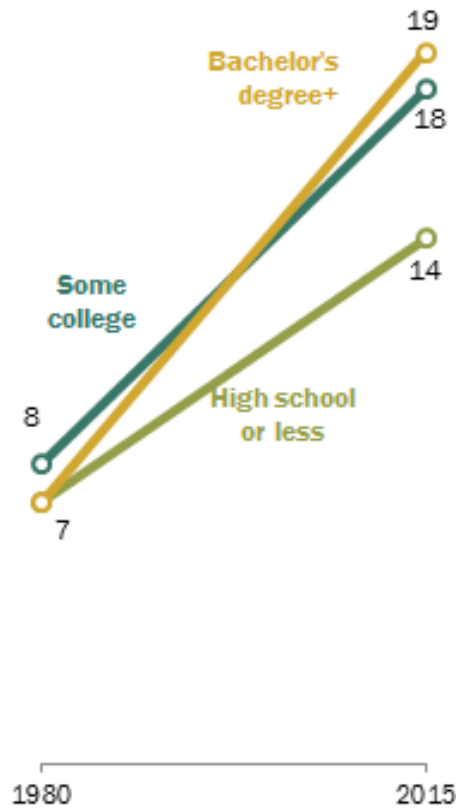
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# Intermarriage by education

**Intermarriage rises more  
for those with at least  
some college experience**

*% of U.S. newlyweds ages 25 and  
older who are intermarried*



Note: "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree. The 2015 time point is based on combined 2014 and 2015 data.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014-2015 American Community Survey and 1980 decennial census (IPUMS). "Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

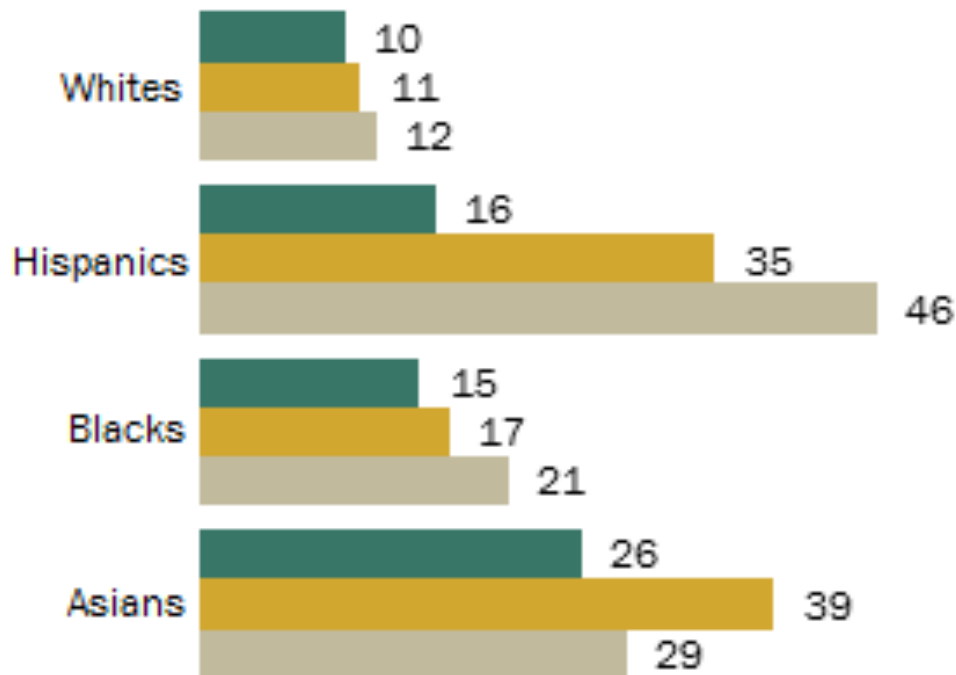
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# Intermarriage by race/ethnicity and education

## Among blacks and Hispanics, college graduates are most likely to intermarry

*% of newlyweds in the U.S. ages 25 and older who are intermarried*

■ High school or less ■ Some college ■ Bachelor's degree+



Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014-2015 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

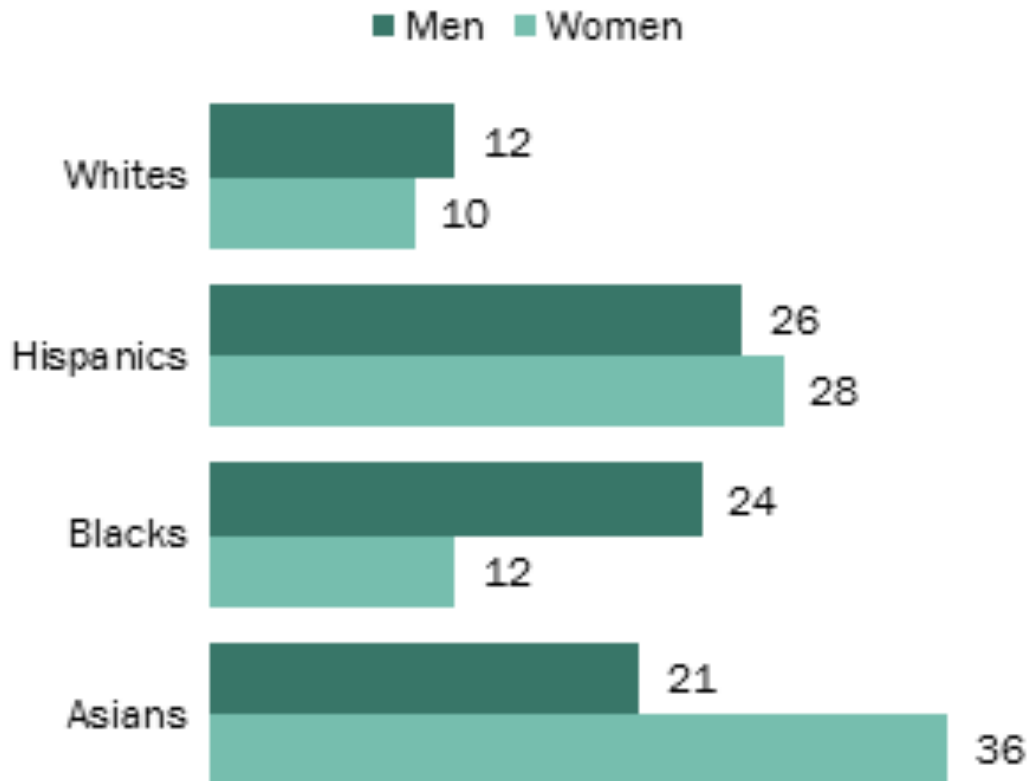
"Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

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# Intermarriage by race/ethnicity and sex

## Black men are twice as likely as black women to intermarry

*% of U.S. newlyweds who are intermarried*



Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2014-2015 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

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# Sexuality

- Essentialism (based in biology)
  - Dimorphism: an “essential” biological or psychological characteristic common to all persons and distinguishes them as either of one sexuality or not
  - A fundamental drive for one’s inclusion into, or not into, heterosexual or homosexual
- Social constructionism
  - Against the notion of binary categories: varying degrees of sexuality
  - Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues moved sexuality research away from essentialism
  - “The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States” (Laumann et al., 1994)
    - The fluidity of sexual orientation



# Three dimensions of sexuality

- Self-identification
  - Self-identification of sexuality
- Sexual behavior
  - The actual sexual behavior
- Sexual preference
  - Sexual desire
- All of the dimensions do not necessarily agree with each other





# 2006–2008 NSFG sexuality data

- Intersectionality between the three dimensions
  - The NSFG uses ACASI (audio computer-assisted self-interviewing) for more complete and reliable data
- Self-identification dimension
- Behavioral dimension
  - Heterosexual: having only opposite-sex partners and no same-sex partners
  - Homosexual: having only same-sex partners and no opposite-sex partners
- Sexual preference: desire dimension
  - Heterosexual: those who are only attracted or who are mostly attracted to the opposite sex
  - Homosexual: those who are only attracted or who are mostly attracted to the same sex



# Outcomes based on NSFG data

1. A homosexual (or a heterosexual) response only to identification
2. Only to desire
3. Only to behavior
4. To both identification and desire
5. To both identification and behavior
6. To both desire and behavior
7. To identification, desire, and behavior





# Empirical analyses of sexuality

- 2.43% (179 out of 7,356) of the females gave a “homosexual” response to at least one of the three dimensions
  - Self-identifying as homosexual
  - Having same-sex sex in their lifetimes
  - Desiring or being attracted to same-sex persons
  - For males it was 2.87% (176 out of 6,139)
- 17.62% of the female homosexual sample reported all three dimensions
  - For males it was 28.69%

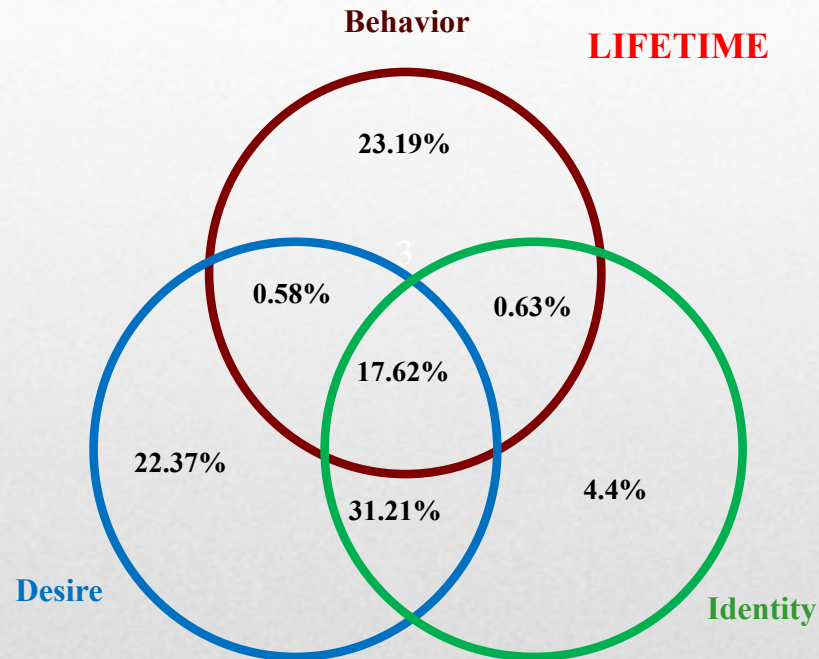


# Homosexual females



## Interrelations of Components of Homosexuality, females, U.S., 2006-2008

Categories	(%)
Behavior	23.19
Desire	22.37
Identity	4.40
Behave & Desire	0.58
Behave & ID	0.63
Desire & ID	31.21
Beh. & Des. & ID	17.62
Sample Size	179
% of total sample (unweighted)	2.43



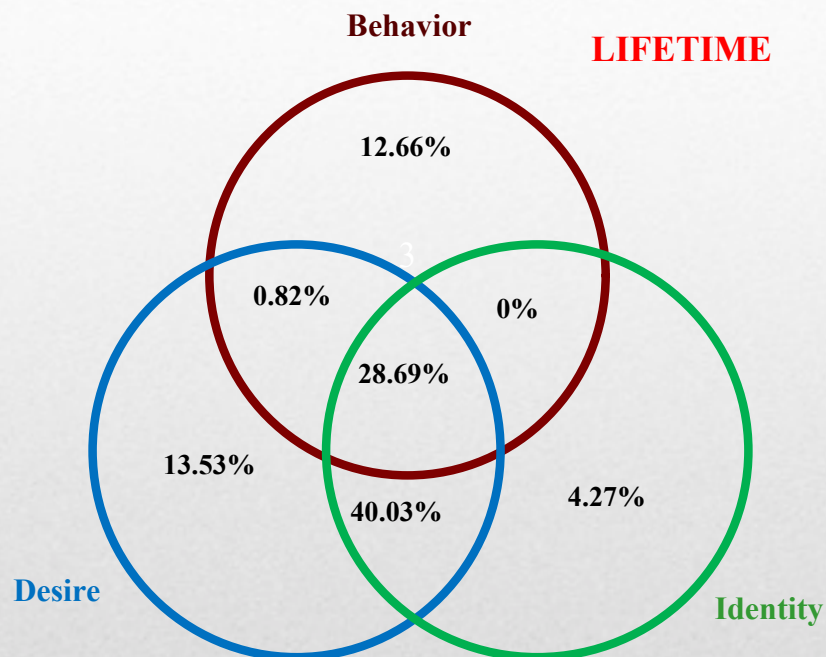
Source: Poston and Chang, 2015. Figure prepared by Yuting Chang.

# Homosexual males



## Interrelations of Components of Homosexuality, males, U.S., 2006-2008

Categories	(%)
Behavior	12.66
Desire	13.53
Identity	4.27
Behave & Desire	0.82
Behave & ID	0.00
Desire & ID	40.03
Beh. & Des. & ID	28.69
Sample Size	176
% of total sample (unweighted)	2.87



Source: Poston and Chang, 2015. Figure prepared by Yuting Chang.

# Essentialist vs. Social constructionist

- Essentialist approach works for heterosexuals
  - 71.54% of females, 79.09% of males are heterosexual on all three questions
- Essentialist approach not working well for homosexuals
  - Homosexuality is much more fluid than heterosexuality
  - An essentialist interpretation places the percentage levels of homosexuality much lower
  - Social constructionist orientation provides a much more encompassing understanding of sexuality



# U.S. prevalence rates, 2006–2008

- Heterosexuality

- Females

- 95.43% of woman aged 15–44 gave a heterosexual answer to at least one dimension
    - 71.54% gave heterosexual response to all three questions

- Males

- Corresponding percentages were 95.77% and 79.09%

- Homosexuality

- Females

- 1.86% of woman aged 15–44 gave a homosexual answer to at least one dimension
    - 0.33% gave homosexual response to all three questions

- Males

- Corresponding percentages were 2.24% and 0.64%



# Female and male heterosexuality, United States, 2006–2008

Heterosexuality	Females		Males	
	%	Margin of error	%	Margin of error
Behavior	0.41	+/-0.17	0.11	+/-0.11
Desire	1.38	+/-0.41	0.39	+/-0.18
Identity	0.54	+/-0.25	0.21	+/-0.16
Behavior & Desire	0.48	+/-0.21	0.27	+/-0.15
Behavior & Identity	0.84	+/-0.31	0.22	+/-0.14
Desire & Identity	20.25	+/-2.53	15.47	+/-2.48
Behavior & Desire & Identity	71.54	+/-2.33	79.09	+/-2.45
Sample ( <i>n</i> )	6,878		5,768	
Total sample ( <i>N</i> )	7,356		6,139	
Weighted Percentage	95.43	+/-0.83	95.77	+/-0.88

# Female and male homosexuality, United States, 2006–2008

Homosexuality	Females		Males	
	%	Margin of error	%	Margin of error
Behavior	0.43	+/-0.18	0.28	+/-0.20
Desire	0.42	+/-0.19	0.30	+/-0.22
Identity	0.08	+/-0.09	0.10	+/-0.09
Behavior & Desire	0.01	+/-0.02	0.02	+/-0.02
Behavior & Identity	0.01	+/-0.02	0.00	N/A
Desire & Identity	0.58	+/-0.24	0.89	+/-0.29
Behavior & Desire & Identity	0.33	+/-0.16	0.64	+/-0.22
Sample ( <i>n</i> )	179		176	
Total sample ( <i>N</i> )	7,356		6,139	
Weighted Percentage	1.86	+/-0.45	2.24	+/-0.48





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# Family partnering

- Four types of family partnering
  - A married or cohabiting male and male
    - Gay partners
  - A married or cohabiting female and female
    - Lesbian partners
  - Two persons living together as a married male and female
    - Opposite-sex married partners
  - A cohabiting male and female
    - Opposite-sex cohabiting partners



# 2010 Census questionnaire

## 1. Print name of **Person 2**

Last Name

First Name

MI

## 2. How is this person related to Person 1? Mark ONE box.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter    | <input type="checkbox"/> Roomer or boarder             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister          | <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate or roommate         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative             |

## 3. What is this person's sex? Mark ONE box.

- Male    Female



# 2020 Census questionnaire

1. Print name of

**Person 2**

First Name

MI

Last Name(s)

3. How is this person related to Person 1? Mark  ONE box.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex husband/wife/spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex unmarried partner   | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex husband/wife/spouse     | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex unmarried partner       | <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter          | <input type="checkbox"/> Roommate or housemate         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter          | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative             |

4. What is this person's sex? Mark  ONE box.

- Male  Female



# Analysis of 2010 Census

- 366 metropolitan areas in the U.S.
- Estimate prevalence indexes for each type of partnering (Gates and Ost, 2004; Poston and Chang, 2013)
  - Ratio of the proportion of each type living in a metropolitan area to the proportion of all households that are located in a metropolitan area
  - They measure over- or underrepresentation of each type of partnering in a geographic area relative to the population



# Interpretation of indexes

- Index equal to 1.0
  - Partnering type is as likely as a randomly selected household to locate in the metro area
- Index above 1.0
  - Partnering type is more likely to live in the metro area than a random couple household
- Index below 1.0
  - Partnering type is less likely to live in the metro area than a random couple household
- Percentage interpretation:  $(\text{index} - 1) * 100$



# Prevalence ratio

- Prevalence ratio index for gay partners: 0.69
  - In the “average” metropolitan area, gay couples are 31% less likely to live there than would be a couple from a randomly selected metropolitan household
- Lesbian partners: 0.86
  - 14% less likely to live there
- Opposite-sex married partners: 1.02
  - 2% more likely to live there
- Opposite-sex cohabiting partners: 1.03
  - 3% more likely to live there



# Means, standard deviations, maximum, minimum values for several indexes, U.S., 2010

Rate	Mean	Standard deviation	Maximum value	Minimum value
<b>Gay Male Couples Index</b>	0.69	0.31	2.78 San Francisco, CA	0.26 Grand Forks, ND-MN
<b>Lesbian Couples Index</b>	0.86	0.37	2.97 Ithaca, NY	0.32 Wausau, WI
<b>Opposite-sex Married Couples Index</b>	1.02	0.09	1.46 Provo-Orem, UT	0.78 Gainesville, FL
<b>Opposite-sex Cohabiting Couples Index</b>	1.03	0.17	1.63 Lewiston-Auburn, ME	0.34 Provo-Orem, UT





# Geographic distribution

- Same-sex couples have uneven distribution in the U.S.
- Gay male couples are much more likely to be in some areas than in other areas
- Lesbian couples are more concentrated in metropolitan areas in general than gay male couples
  - But they don't prefer particular cities as gay men
- Opposite-sex couples are the majority of couples in any metropolitan area
  - They are just about as likely to reside in any of the areas: ratio around 1.0
  - Especially married couples: min. & max. values are closer to 1.0





# Support of same-sex marriage by age

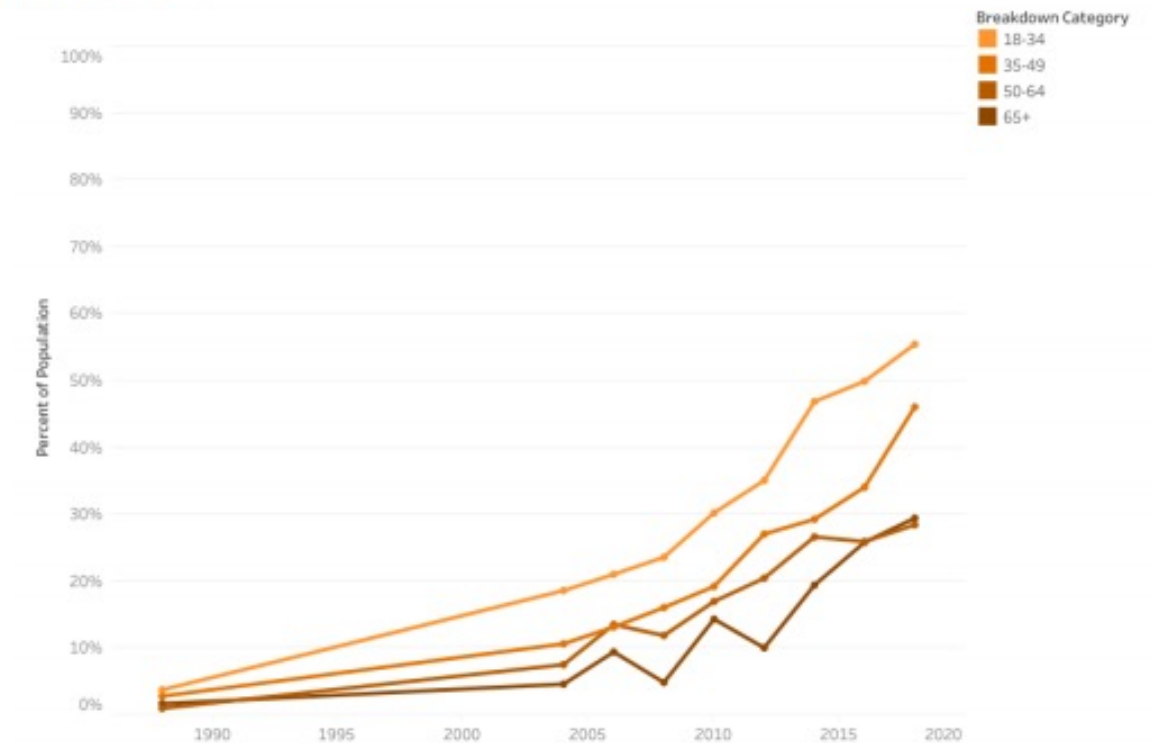
GSS Data Explorer

NORC  
at the UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO

Gender & Marriage: Homosexuals should have right to marry (agree/disagree)

Response: Strongly agree

Breakdown: Age<sup>a</sup>



## Citation

Smith, Tom W., Davern, Michael, Freese, Jeremy, and Hout, Michael, General Social Surveys, 1972-2016 [machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, Smith, Tom W.; Co-Principal Investigators, Peter V. Marsden and Michael Hout; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC, 2018: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer and distributor]. Data accessed from the GSS Data Explorer website at [gssdataexplorer.norc.org](https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org).



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