

FOR RELEASE November 14, 2014

# Four-in-Ten Couples are Saying “I Do,” Again

*Growing Number of Adults Have Remarried*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ON THIS REPORT:**

Gretchen Livingston, Senior Researcher  
Kim Parker, Director of Social Trends Research  
Molly Rohal, Communications Associate

202.419.4372

[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

## About This Report

This report describes the rise in remarriage from 1960 to 2013 in the U.S., focusing in particular on the share of divorced and widowed adults who have ever remarried. It is based upon data from the Decennial Census, as well as the American Community Survey, and examines the likelihood of remarriage for different groups. Furthermore, the analysis compares the characteristics of people in a first marriage, with those who are presently in a remarriage, and those who are presently divorced.

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Kim Parker, director of social trends research; Claudia Deane, director of research practices; Michael Dimock, the president of Pew Research Center; and D’Vera Cohn, senior writer, provided editorial guidance. Gretchen Livingston, senior researcher, analyzed the data and wrote the report. Charts and tables were finalized by Anna Brown, research assistant. Michael Keegan provided additional graphic support. Number-checking was done by Eileen Patten, research analyst. The report was copy edited by Molly Rohal. Michael Suh provided web support. Find related reports online at [pewresearch.org/socialtrends](http://pewresearch.org/socialtrends).

Kim Parker, *Director of Social Trends Research*

Gretchen Livingston, *Senior Researcher*

Eileen Patten, *Research Analyst*

Anna Brown, *Research Assistant*

## About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does not take policy positions. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social science research. The center studies U.S. politics and policy views; media and journalism; internet and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and U.S. social and demographic trends. All of the center’s reports are available at [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org). Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Michael Dimock, *President*

Elizabeth Mueller Gross, *Vice President*

Robyn Tomlin, *Chief Digital Officer*

Andrew Kohut, *Founding Director*

© Pew Research Center 2014

## A Note on Terminology

Any person who reports having been married at least twice is classified as “remarried.”

“Previously married” individuals are those who have either divorced or been widowed at least once, who were then available for remarriage. They are also referred to as “divorced or widowed” people in the text.

The small share of adults who report they are separated are included in the “presently married” category.

“Newlyweds” are those who married within 12 months of being surveyed.

Any couple with at least one spouse who is 18 years of age or older is included in the couple-level analyses. Only couples in which both spouses are residing together—whether in a first marriage or a remarriage—are included. Data regarding the characteristics of the small share of spouses who are not cohabiting are not available.

References to respondents who are high school graduates, or who have a high school diploma also include those who have earned an equivalent degree, such as a GED (General Educational Development) certificate.

All references to whites, blacks and Asians are to the non-Hispanic components of those populations. Asians also include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race. All race analyses are based upon 2012 data, because the RACESING variable used in the analysis has yet to be released in the 2013 IPUMS.

People born outside of the United States, including those born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories are classified as “foreign born.” “U.S. born” refers to persons born in the United States.

Poverty is based on the U.S. Census Bureau measure. It is defined by an income threshold that is dependent on family composition and income, adjusted for inflation. In 2013, the [official poverty threshold](#) for a family of four was \$23,550.

## Table of Contents

<b>About This Report</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>About Pew Research Center</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A Note on Terminology</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>4</b>
Other key findings	7
<b>Chapter 1: Trends in Remarriage in the U.S.</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter 2: The Demographics of Remarriage</b>	<b>10</b>
Age	10
Gender Gap in Remarriage	11
Race and Ethnicity	12
Nativity	14
Serial Remarriage: Who Has Married Three Times or More?	15
<b>Chapter 3: The Differing Demographic Profiles of First-Time Married, Remarried and Divorced Adults</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Marriage and Remarriage Among Newlywed Couples</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix A: Additional Table</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix B: Methodology</b>	<b>22</b>

# Four-in-Ten Couples are Saying “I Do,” Again

## *Growing Number of Adults Have Remarried*

BY *Gretchen Livingston*

### Overview

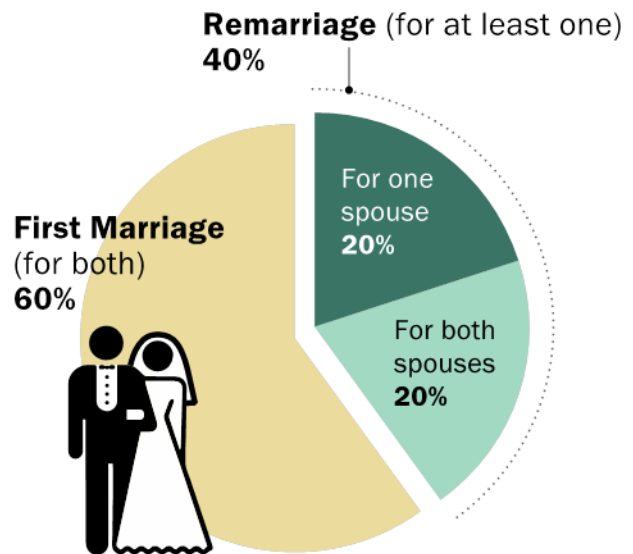
In 2013, fully four-in-ten new marriages included at least one partner who had been married before, and two-in-ten new marriages were between people who had both previously stepped down the aisle, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of newly released data from the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>1</sup>

This snapshot is only the latest manifestation of a decades-long rise in the number of Americans who have ever remarried. All told, almost 42 million adults in the U.S. have been married more than once, up from 22 million in 1980. The number of remarried adults has tripled since 1960, when there were 14 million.

This increase has been fueled by several demographic trends, beginning with the rise in divorce, which has made more Americans available for remarriage. It has also been fueled by the overall aging of the population, which not only increases the number of widows and widowers available to remarry, but means people quite simply have more years in which to make, dissolve and remake unions.<sup>2</sup> Combined, these two trends have created a larger pool of people who can potentially remarry. The result? Among adults who are presently married, roughly a quarter (23%) have been married before, compared with 13% in 1960.

### Four-in-Ten New Marriages Involve Remarriage

% of new marriages in 2013



Note: “New marriages” are marriages that began in the past 12 months. A first marriage is one in which neither spouse has been previously married. A remarriage includes at least one spouse who has been married before. Based on couples, not individuals, where at least one spouse is age 18 or older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>1</sup> A new marriage is one that began in the 12 months prior to the survey date. Depending upon which month they were interviewed for the American Community Survey, some newlyweds were wed in 2012 and others were wed in 2013.

<sup>2</sup> For more on these long-term trends, see the work of [Andrew Cherlin](#), [Stephanie Coontz](#), or [Susan Brown and I-Fen Lin](#).

A close look at the census data suggests another important trend: Even as marriage itself is in decline in the U.S., previously married people are as willing as ever to jump back into wedlock. Divorced or widowed adults are about as likely to remarry today (57% have done so) as they were more than 50 years ago. By contrast, the share of all adults who have entered into marriage even once has fallen markedly, from 85% in 1960 to 70% in 2013.

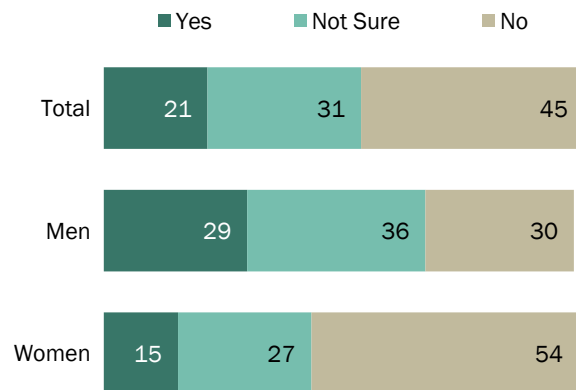
Many previously married adults have already said “I do” again. But among those who haven’t yet remarried, about half report they would like to try again or at least are not ready to rule the option out. Overall, about two-in-ten among those who are currently divorced or widowed say they want to remarry (21%) and another three-in-ten are not sure (31%), according to a recent Pew Research Center survey.<sup>3</sup> Some 45% say they do not want to marry again.

There are definite gender differences on this question: Most currently divorced or widowed men are open to the idea of remarriage, but women in the same circumstances are less likely to be open to the idea. Among previously married men, 65% either want to remarry or are not sure; 30% say that they don’t want to remarry. Among women who are currently divorced or widowed, only 43% say they may want to remarry, while 54% say they are not interested.

The gender gap in attitudes mirrors a gap in remarriage patterns: Among previously married adults, men are more likely than women to have remarried. Fully 64% of divorced or widowed men have remarried, compared with 52% of previously married women. However, this gender gap has narrowed over time because men are now less likely to remarry than in the past, while women are more likely to do so. In 1960, 70% of previously married men had remarried, compared with 48% of previously married women.

### Women More Likely to Say “No Thanks” When it Comes to Remarriage

Q: “In general, what’s your preference? Do you want to get married again, don’t you want to get married again, or are you not sure if you want to get married again?” (%)



Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses not shown. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center survey, May 22-25 and May 29-June 1, 2014 (n=1,361 currently divorced or widowed adults)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center survey, May 22-25 and May 29-June 1, 2014 (N=2,003). For more information, see [“Record Share of Americans Have Never Married.”](#)

Over this 50-year period, older adults have consistently been more likely to have remarried than their younger counterparts. And as the older population has grown in size with the aging of the Baby Boomers, these age differences in remarriage have widened. Older adults have become ever more likely to remarry, perhaps due in part to a desire to have a fulfilling relationship in their lengthening golden years, as life expectancies have increased. Fully half (50%) of previously married seniors had remarried in 2013, up from 34% in 1960.

The trend is moving the other way, however, for younger Americans, with remarriage becoming less prevalent. Among those ages 25 to 34, 43% had remarried in 2013, compared with 75% in 1960.

Earlier research has documented the strong correlation between marriage and financial well-being<sup>4</sup>, and this pattern holds for remarried adults as well as for adults in their first marriage. On key economic measures, remarried adults fare better than their currently divorced counterparts and about as well as those in their first marriage. Some 7% of currently remarried adults are living in poverty, compared with 19% of divorced adults. The median annual personal income of remarried adults is about \$30,000; this is roughly \$5,000 higher than that of divorced adults. Homeownership, which often reflects wealth, is also much higher for the remarried than the divorced—79% versus 58%. Remarried adults also fare much better than those who are widowed in terms of financial well-being.

These findings are based on a Pew Research Center analysis of data from the 2013 American Community Survey, as well as the 1960 and 1980 censuses. These datasets are nationally representative of the U.S. population. The report is divided into four sections: The first focuses on overall changes in the likelihood of remarrying since 1960; the second section examines how the likelihood of remarriage varies for different demographic groups; the third section discusses the demographic and economic profile of remarried adults, compared with adults in their first marriage and presently divorced adults; and the fourth section includes an analysis of newlywed couples that are in a first marriage, compared with newlywed couples that are in a remarriage.

---

<sup>4</sup> It's not clear how much of this link between marriage and financial well-being is attributable to marriage itself, and how much of it might relate to the fact that people who marry are more likely to fare well financially regardless of their marital status. For instance, married men typically make higher wages than unmarried men. This may occur because married men have additional support at home that may in turn help them be more productive at work. Or it may be the case that characteristics such as responsibility that make someone a more productive worker might also make that person more likely to get married. See [here](#) for more on this.

## Other key findings

- Fully 8% of newly married adults have been married three times or more. This share is 10% among whites, compared with 6% of blacks, 4% of Hispanics and just 2% of Asian Americans. And 9% of newlyweds with just a high school diploma have been married at least three times. Among those who lack a high school diploma the share is 8%, and among newlyweds with a bachelor's degree or more, 5% have been married three times or more.
- On average, the age gap between spouses in new marriages in which at least one of the spouses has been married before is wider than the age gap between those in a first marriage. Some 16% of newly remarried couples include a husband who is at least 10 years older than his wife. Among first-time newlywed couples, this share is 4%. Overall, 39% of first-time newlywed couples are within a year of each other's ages, compared with 21% of remarried newlywed couples.
- Remarriage is more common among whites than among non-whites or Hispanics. Fully six-in-ten previously married whites have remarried, compared with 51% of Hispanics, 48% of blacks and 46% of Asian Americans.
- Previously married adults who were born in the U.S. are more likely than the foreign born to remarry (58% vs. 51%, respectively). Across time this gap has narrowed, as remarriage has risen dramatically among the foreign born, up from 40% in 1960.



## Chapter 1: Trends in Remarriage in the U.S.

Remarriage has been on the rise for decades. Among all adults who are presently married, about one-fourth (23%) have been married before. This marks a dramatic increase from 1960, when only 13% of married adults had previously been married, and from 1980, when 17% had been. Among those married in the past 12 months, the share rises to 29%.

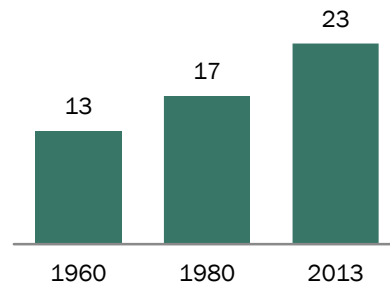
The trends in remarriage that are explored in this report have taken place against a backdrop of striking changes in the prevalence and stability of marriage itself.

Overall, marriage has been on the decline in the U.S. for several decades.<sup>5</sup> In 1960, 85% of adults had been married at some point in their lives. That share dropped to 80% in 1980 and to 70% in 2013. This so-called ‘retreat from marriage’ has been driven largely by delays in marriage, and by the rise in couples living together without first tying the knot.

Over the same time period, there has been a rise in the share of marriages ending in divorce or widowhood, due in

### Prevalence of Remarriage

*% of currently married adults who are remarried*

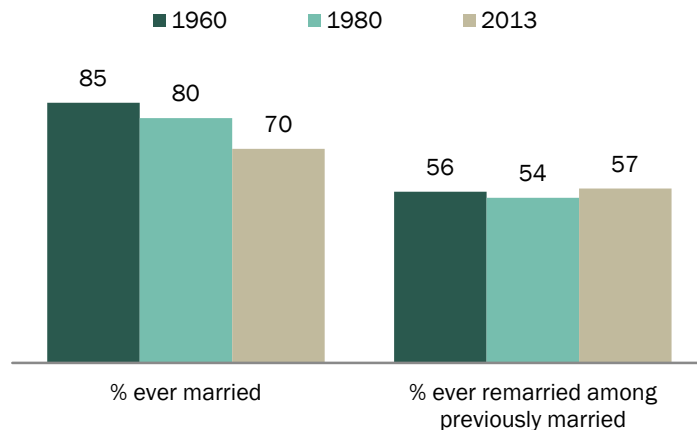


Note: Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Amid Declines in Marriage, Remarriage Remains Steady



Note: Previously married people are those eligible for remarriage. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>5</sup> See Pew Research Center, [“Record Share of Americans Have Never Married,”](#) [“Barely Half of U.S. Adults Are Married—A Record Low,”](#) and [“The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families.”](#)

part to the aging of the population.<sup>6</sup> In 1960, 25% of ever-married adults had divorced or become widowed. By 2013 that share was 43%.

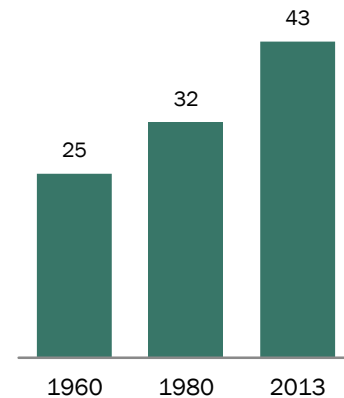
These dramatic changes in marriage and divorce ultimately led to an increase in the pool of adults who could potentially remarry. In 1960, 21% of all adults had previously been married; by 1980, the share stood at 26%; and in 2013, 30% of adults had been married previously. Among this group, the share who has remarried has been quite stable for the past 50 years, in contrast to the declining share of adults who have ever married. In 2013, 57% of previously married adults had remarried, compared with 56% in 1960.

Despite the overall stability in the likelihood to remarry, there are notable differences by age, gender, race and other factors in the share of previously married adults who marry again.

---

## Rise in Divorce and Widowhood

*% of the ever married who were ever divorced or widowed*



Note: "Ever divorced or widowed" includes those who are still divorced or widowed as well as those who are currently remarried. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

---



---

<sup>6</sup> This analysis measures divorce in terms of the share of ever married adults who have ever divorced. Along with widows, these people comprise the group that may remarry. Much research on divorce has used a different measure—the per capita number of new divorces in a year. This divorce rate has undoubtedly risen since 1960. However, what is less clear is how this measure of divorce has changed since the 1980s. [Stevenson and Wolfers](#) maintain that divorce rates have declined since that time, while [Kennedy and Ruggles](#) find that the divorce rate has continued its rise.

## Chapter 2: The Demographics of Remarriage

### Age

Remarriage is on the rise for Americans ages 55 and older, even as younger generations who have taken the plunge once are becoming less likely to have remarried. What has not changed is that older adults remain more likely to have remarried than their younger counterparts.

Remarriage generally becomes more common with age—not surprising, given that it takes some time to enter into one marriage, exit that marriage and then enter into a subsequent one.<sup>7</sup> Only 29% of previously married adults ages 18 to 24 (admittedly a small group) had remarried in 2013, compared with 67% of those ages 55 to 64.

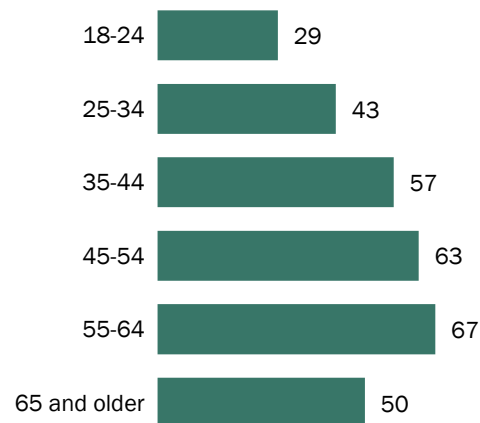
But the likelihood of having remarried has dropped sharply for those younger than 35. Among the small group of young adults who had already exited their first marriage, fully 72% had remarried by 1960. In 2013, only 42% of young adults who had been divorced or widowed had remarried.

Over that same time period, the share of previously married adults ages 35 to 44 who had remarried dropped substantially (from 76% to 57%), and the share who had remarried among those ages 45 to 54 declined modestly (from 69% to 63%).

The trend in remarriage among adults ages 55 and older has gone in the opposite direction. In 2013, two-thirds (67%) of previously married adults ages 55 to 64 had remarried, up from 55% in 1960. And 50% of adults ages 65 and older had remarried, up from just 34% in 1960. These

### Remarriage by Age

*% of the previously married who ever remarried*



Note: Previously married are those eligible for remarriage.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>7</sup> Researchers examining [marriage patterns](#) among young Baby Boomers (born between 1957 and 1964) found that on average the length of a first marriage for those who divorced was about nine years, and the time between divorce and remarriage was about four years for those who remarried. This analysis only considered marital histories up to age 46.

increases may in part be fueled by rising life expectancies. Some suggest that longer lifespans have contributed to increasing divorce at older ages as people realize they have many more years to live and [want to find fulfillment in that extra time](#). The same factor may be contributing to increases in remarriage among older adults.<sup>8</sup>

## Gender Gap in Remarriage

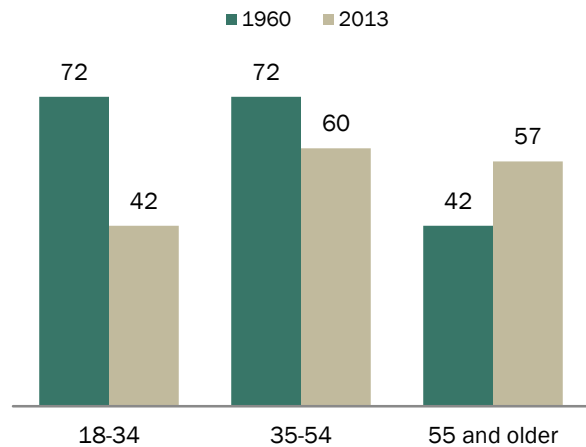
Among those eligible to remarry—adults whose first marriage ended in divorce or widowhood—men are much more likely than women to have taken the plunge again. In 2013, some 64% of eligible men had remarried, compared with 52% of women.<sup>9</sup>

This may reflect, in part, the fact that men who have been divorced or widowed are more likely to want to remarry than are similarly situated women. Some 29% of eligible men say they want to remarry, and 36% are not sure, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey; only 30% say they do not want to marry again. In contrast, just 15% of previously married women want to remarry, and 27% are not sure; about half of these women (54%) report that they do not want to remarry.

While the gender gap in the likelihood to marry again is notable, it has narrowed over time, as men have become somewhat less likely to remarry, and women have become somewhat more likely to do so. Today's 12-point gap was a 20-point gap in 1980, when 66% of eligible men and 46% of women had remarried. In 1960, the gap was even larger—70% of eligible men had remarried, compared with 48% of women.

## Remarriage is Rising for Those Ages 55 and Older

*% of the previously married who ever remarried*



Note: Previously married are those eligible for remarriage.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>8</sup> For more on this, see [“The Gray Divorce Revolution: Rising Divorce Among Middle-Aged and Older Adults, 1990-2010.”](#)

<sup>9</sup> Pew Research Center survey, May 22-25 and May 29-June 1, 2014 (N=2,003). For more information, see Pew Research Center, [“Record Share of Americans Have Never Married.”](#)

The gender gap has closed mainly among younger and middle-aged adults who are eligible to remarry. Divorced or widowed women ages 25 to 54 are now about as likely as men in that age range to have remarried. Among those ages 55 and older, the gap remains substantial.

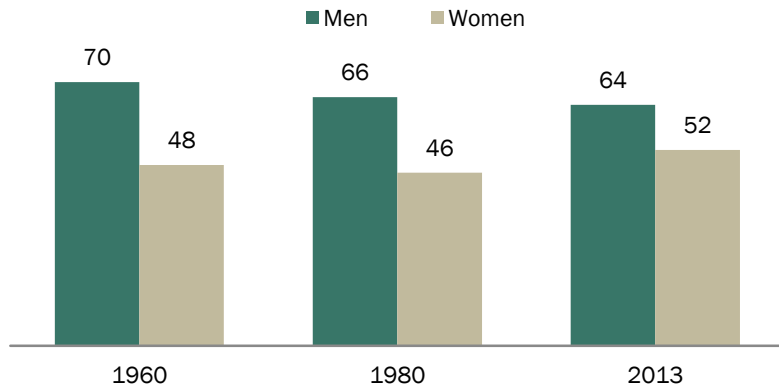
Looking at educational attainment, the gender gap persists across groups but has narrowed most dramatically among those with a bachelor's degree. In 1960, among college graduates, only 40% of divorced or widowed women had remarried, compared with 75% of men. By 2013, that share had risen to 52% among women, but had fallen to 67% among men. In less-educated groups, remarriage among women has remained stable during this time period, while it has declined markedly among men.

## Race and Ethnicity

Among adults who have been divorced or widowed and are thus eligible to remarry,

## Remarriage More Common Among Divorced and Widowed Men, but Gap is Narrowing

*% of the previously married who ever remarried*



Note: Previously married are those eligible for remarriage. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Gender Gap in Remarriage Persists at Oldest Ages

*% of the previously married who ever remarried*

	-----1960-----			-----2013-----		
	Men	Women	Gap (M-W)	Men	Women	Gap (M-W)
18-24	52	61	-8	27	29	-2
25-34	76	74	+1	41	45	-4
35-44	81	73	+9	57	57	0
45-54	80	61	+18	64	62	+2
55-64	73	44	+29	71	63	+8
65 and older	53	25	+28	66	40	+26

Note: Gap is percent remarried among men minus percent remarried among women. Gap is calculated prior to rounding. Previously married are those eligible for remarriage.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

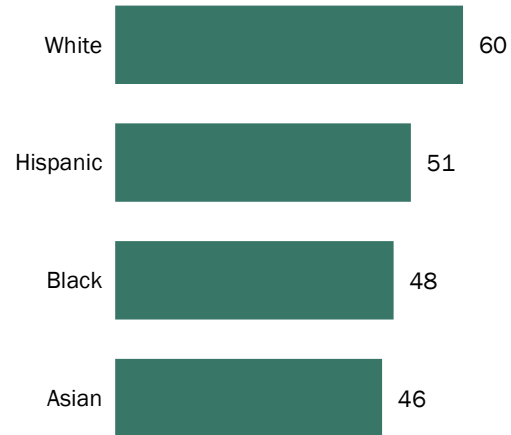
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

whites are the most likely to have married again, and this likelihood has increased somewhat in recent decades.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, previously married Hispanic, black and Asian adults are less likely to have remarried than in the past. These patterns mirror those seen in rates of first marriage, where whites are more likely than blacks or Hispanics to enter into marriage for the first time.<sup>11</sup>

In 2012, six-in-ten whites who had been married before had remarried, compared with 51% of Hispanics, 48% of blacks, and 46% of Asians. Age composition is playing a role in these patterns—the fact that whites tend to be older may contribute to their higher likelihood of remarriage, for instance. However, some racial and ethnic differences persist, even controlling for age.

### Whites Most Likely to Remarry

*% of the previously married who ever remarried*



Note: Blacks, Asians and whites include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Previously married are those eligible for remarriage. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2012 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Over time, the share of previously married whites who remarry has increased somewhat, up from 55% in 1960. In contrast, remarriage has declined since 1960 for non-whites and Hispanics. At that time, 63% of blacks, 62% of Hispanics and 49% of Asians had remarried.

The increasing prevalence of remarriage among whites is driven entirely by increases among white women. In 1960, 47% of divorced or widowed white women had remarried, and this share rose to 55% by 2012. By contrast, the share of previously married white men who remarried declined from 69% to 66% over that same time period. For all other racial and ethnic groups, both men and women were less likely to remarry in 2012 compared with 1960.

Looking at all currently married adults, one-fourth of whites (26%) and blacks (25%) had been married previously in 2012. This share was lower among married Hispanics (16%) and Asians (10%).

<sup>10</sup> For all race analysis, 2012 data are used in lieu of 2013 data, which are not yet readily available from the IPUMS 2013 American Community Survey.

<sup>11</sup> See Pew Research Center, "[Record Share of Americans Have Never Married](#)" or "[The Decline of Marriage and Rise of New Families](#)" for more on racial differences in marriage patterns.

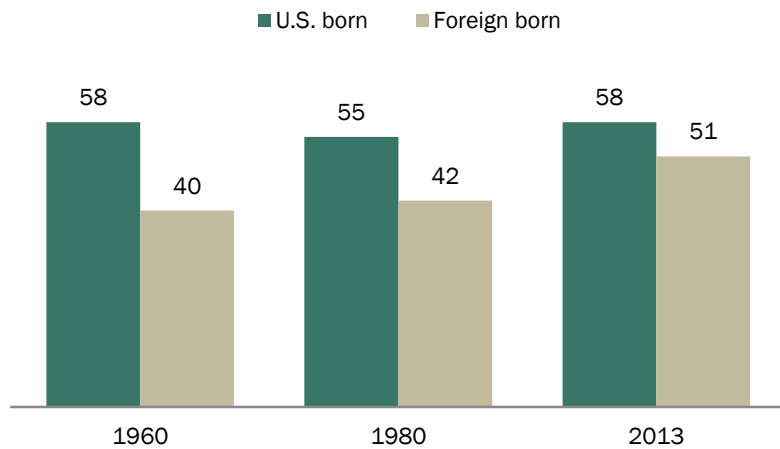
## Nativity

Among adults who are eligible to remarry, those born in the U.S. are more likely to do so than those born outside of the U.S., but the gap has narrowed over time as immigrants have become more likely to remarry.<sup>12</sup> In 2013, 58% of divorced or widowed U.S.-born adults had remarried, compared with 51% among the foreign born. In 1960, those shares were 58% and 40%, respectively, and in 1980, the shares were 55% among the U.S. born and 42% among the foreign born.

Among all married adults, about a quarter (26%) of those born in the U.S. are remarried, compared with 14% of foreign-born adults.

### U.S. Born More Likely to Remarry, but Gap is Narrowing

*% of the previously married who ever remarried*



Note: Puerto Ricans are classified as foreign born. Previously married are those eligible for remarriage. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>12</sup> The racial and ethnic profile of immigrants has changed dramatically since 1960, when immigrants were mostly non-Hispanic whites.

## Serial Remarriage: Who Has Married Three Times or More?

Among newly married adults in 2013 (those who had wed in the past 12 months), 29% had been married at least once before, and 8% had been married two or more times previously. Older newlyweds are among those most likely to be entering their third marriage. Fully 33% of those ages 55 and older fall into this category, as do 25% of those ages 45 to 54.

Not surprising, newly married adults younger than 45 were much less likely to be entering into (at least) their third marriage.

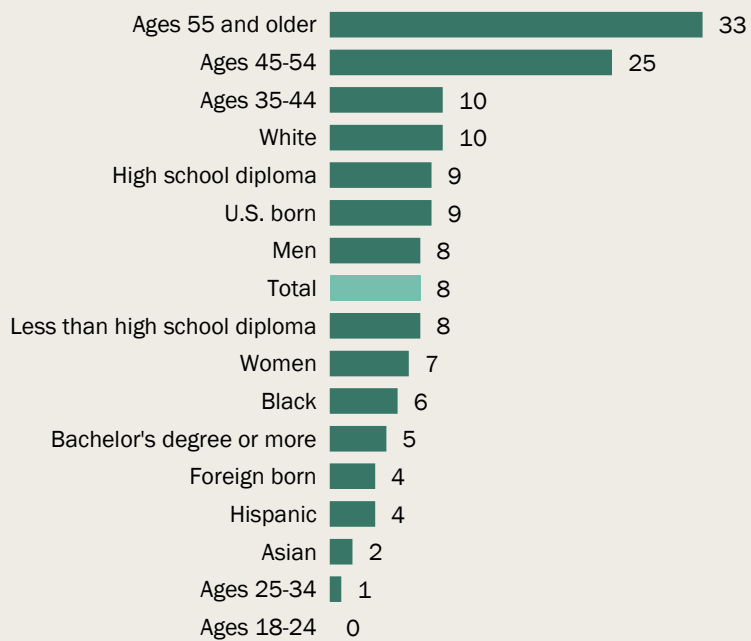
Newlyweds with just a high school diploma are almost twice as likely as those with a bachelor's degree to be entering their third marriage (9% vs. 5%, respectively). Some 8% of newlyweds without a high school diploma have been married at least twice before.

Ten percent of white newlyweds have been married at least twice before, compared with 6% of blacks, 4% of Hispanics and just 2% of Asians.

Native-born newlyweds are twice as likely as foreign-born newlyweds to be entering a third (or higher order) marriage. Nine percent are doing so, compared with just 4% among the foreign born.

### Third Time's the Charm?

*% of newlyweds who have married three or more times*



Note: Figures ranked prior to rounding. Newlyweds are those whose marriage began in the last 12 months. Blacks, Asians and whites include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Puerto Ricans are classified as foreign born. "High school diploma" includes those with its equivalent, such as a GED (General Educational Development) certificate. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS), except for race and ethnicity data, which are based on analysis of 2012 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



## Chapter 3: The Differing Demographic Profiles of First-Time Married, Remarried and Divorced Adults

In this section, the adult population is divided into three groups, based on their marital status and marital history: those in their first marriage, those who are currently remarried<sup>13</sup>, and those who are divorced but not currently remarried.<sup>14</sup>

Looking first at gender patterns, women are overrepresented among divorced adults<sup>15</sup>—57% of divorced adults in 2013 were women and 43% were men. This partially reflects the fact that previously married men are more likely to remarry than previously married women.

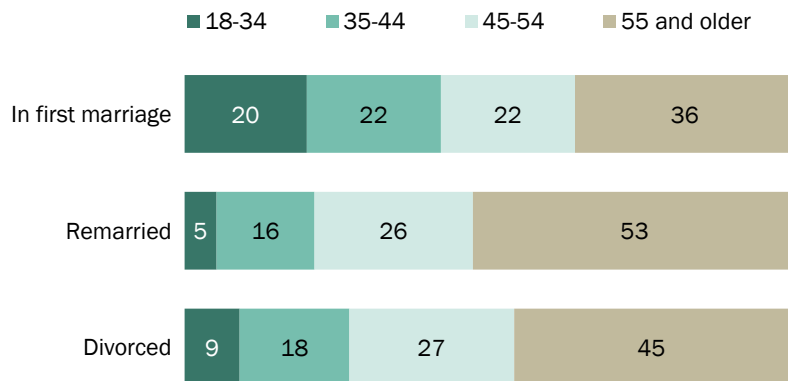
Not surprisingly, adults who are in their first marriage are quite a bit younger than those who have already entered a marriage, exited that marriage and entered into another.

Divorced adults fall in the middle—older than those in their first marriage, but slightly younger than remarried adults.

Two-in-ten adults in their first marriage are younger than 35, compared with 5% of remarried adults and 9% of those who are divorced. And while about half (53%) of remarried adults are ages 55 or older, this share is 45% among divorced adults and just 36% among those in their first marriage.

### Age Composition, by Present Marital Status

%



Note: "Remarried" includes only those who are currently in a second or higher order marriage. "Divorced" includes all currently divorced adults, including those who had been in a remarriage. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>13</sup> "Remarried" includes those who are currently in a second or higher order marriage. "Divorced" includes all currently divorced adults, including those who had been in a remarriage.

<sup>14</sup> For information on the demographic characteristics of adults who have never been married, see Pew Research Center, "[Record Share of Americans Have Never Married.](#)"

<sup>15</sup> Given their extremely different demographic profile—fully three-fourths are ages 65 or older—widows are not included in this comparison. Generally, though, they are less educated and less financially well-off than their married counterparts.

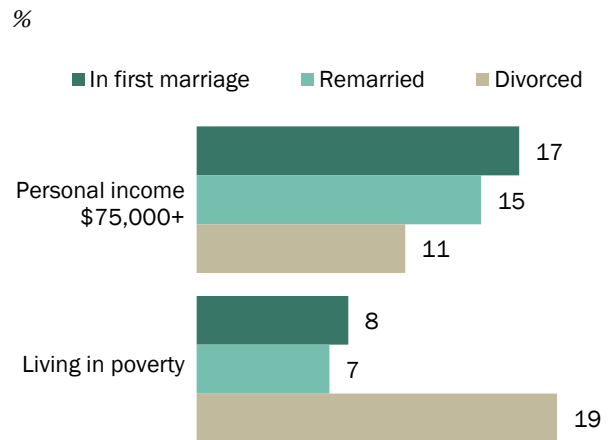
These age patterns may be contributing to differences by education, race and ethnicity across marital groups.

Adults in their first marriage are more highly educated than either those in a subsequent marriage or those who are divorced. More than one-third (35%) of adults in their first marriage have a college degree, compared with 25% of remarried adults and 23% of those who are presently divorced. And while about two-thirds of remarried and divorced adults have earned a high school diploma only, this share is 53% for adults in their first marriage.

When it comes to financial well-being, married adults—whether in their first marriage, or a subsequent marriage—have similar profiles, and are somewhat better off than their divorced counterparts.<sup>16</sup> Median annual personal income is \$30,000 for those in their first marriage and \$30,000 for remarried adults. Among adults who are presently divorced, annual income is substantially less: \$25,100. And while 8% of adults in their first marriage and 7% of those who are remarried are living in poverty, the share is more than twice as high for divorced adults, 19% of whom are living below the poverty line.

There are also stark differences across these groups in rates of homeownership. Divorced adults are much less likely than their married counterparts to own a home.<sup>17</sup> Three-fourths of adults in their first marriage own their home, as do 79% of remarried adults. In contrast, just 58% of those who are currently divorced are homeowners.

### Remarried Are as Well Off as Those in First Marriage, Better Off Than Divorced



Note: Based on present marital status. "Remarried" includes those who are currently in a second or higher order marriage. "Divorced" includes all currently divorced adults, including those who had been in a remarriage. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>16</sup> Other research has also shown that married people typically are better off financially than unmarried ones, but it is difficult to determine how much these differences are driven by something about marriage itself, and how much they are due to the fact that the types of people who marry are somehow different than those who don't. For instance, married men typically make higher wages than unmarried men. This may occur because married men have additional support at home that may in turn help them be more productive at work. Or it may be the case that characteristics such as responsibility that make someone a more productive worker might also make that person more likely to get married. See [here](#) for more on this 'wage premium to marriage'.

<sup>17</sup> The American Community Survey does not include a direct measure of wealth, but homeownership serves as a good proxy.

Remarried adults are disproportionately white. While 79% of the remarried are white, this number is 69% among adults in their first marriage and 71% among the divorced. By the same token, adults in their first marriage are slightly more likely to be Hispanic (15%) than adults who are remarried (9%). Divorced adults include a relatively large share of blacks (14%), compared with each married group (8% among first-time marrieds, 9% among remarrieds). Asians, on the other hand, are particularly prevalent among adults married for the first time. Some 7% of this group is Asian, compared with 3% of remarried and divorced adults.

## Chapter 4: Marriage and Remarriage Among Newlywed Couples

While the focus of this analysis so far has been on marriage and remarriage among *individuals*, it's interesting to look at the dynamics of *couples*, based on whether both members are in their first marriage, or whether one or both have been married previously.

Among new marriages in 2013, fully 40% included at least one person who had been married before. In 20% of these cases, it was a remarriage for just one of the newlyweds, and in the other 20% of new marriages, both partners had been married at least once before. In 13% of these new marriages, at least one person had been married two or more times previously.

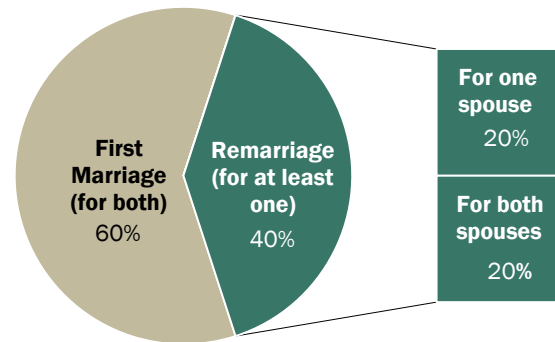
What proves most striking when comparing the profile of couples in a first marriage versus a remarriage are the age differences of the spouses. Age differences are far more prevalent among remarried couples than among those who are marrying for the first time.

At the extremes, there is a 10-year age gap in just 5% of new first-time marriages, while this is the case for 20% of new remarriages. It's more common for the husband to be older than the wife in both first-time marriages and remarriages. In about one-third (32%) of remarriages, the husband is at least six years older than his wife, and in 16% of remarriages, the husband is at least 10 years older. Just 14% of new first-time marriages involve a husband who is at least six years older than his wife, and just 4% involve cases where the husband is 10 or more years older. Among newly married first-time couples in 2013, 39% included spouses who were within a year of each other's ages. Among remarried couples, this share drops to just 21%.

It's far more common for first-time couples to include two adults with college degrees than it is for remarried couples. While about three-in-ten first-time married couples fall into this category, only half as many remarried couples do (29% vs. 13%). The likelihood of the husband having more

### Marriage and Remarriage Among Newlyweds

% of new marriages



Note: "New marriages" are marriages that began in the past 12 months. A first marriage is one in which neither spouse has been previously married. A remarriage includes at least one spouse who has been married before. Based on couples, not individuals, where at least one spouse is age 18 or older.

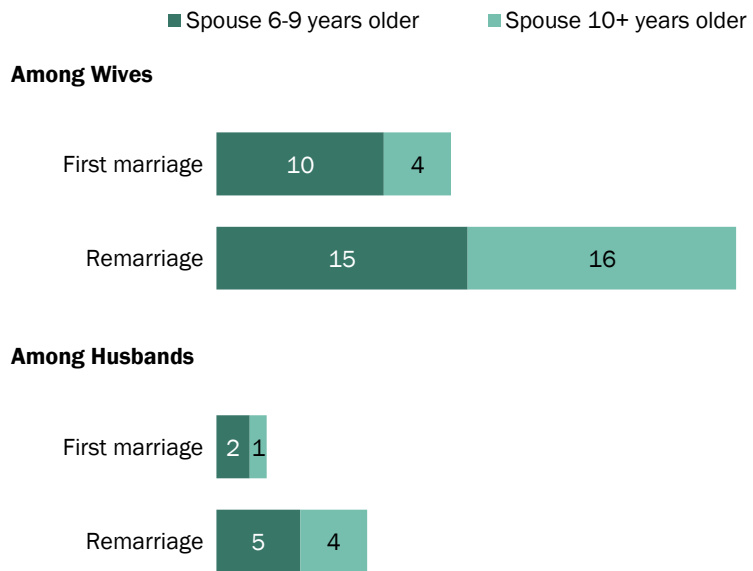
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

education than his wife is also lower among first-time couples than among remarried couples (11% vs. 15%).<sup>18</sup> Put another way, remarried couples are more likely than those marrying for the first time to include partners with different educational levels (36% vs. 30%, respectively).

### Among Remarried Adults, More Age Differences

*% of new marriages, by age difference of spouses*



Note: Couples with age differences of five years or less not shown. A first marriage is one in which neither spouse has been previously married. A remarriage includes at least one spouse who has been married before. Based on marriages that began in the past 12 months. Based on couples, not individuals, where at least one spouse is age 18 or older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>18</sup> In 2012 marriages where the wife was more educated than the husband surpassed those where the husband was more educated. For more details, see Pew Research Center, "[Record Share of Wives are More Educated than their Husbands.](#)"

## Appendix A: Additional Table

### Prevalence of Remarriage, by Demographic Characteristics

	% Remarried Among the Presently -----Married -----			% Ever Remarried Among the Previously -----Married -----		
	2013	1980	1960	2013	1980	1960
<b>All individuals</b>	23	17	13	57	54	56
<b>Gender</b>						
Men	24	17	14	64	66	70
Women	23	16	13	52	46	48
<b>Age</b>						
18-24	3	5	4	29	40	58
25-34	8	14	9	43	59	75
35-44	18	19	13	57	68	76
45-54	27	18	16	63	67	69
55-64	33	18	18	67	58	55
65 and older	29	21	21	50	36	34
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
White	26	17	13	60	55	55
Black	25	18	21	48	48	63
Hispanic	16	12	13	51	51	62
Asian	10	7	7	46	44	49
<b>Nativity</b>						
U.S. born	26	17	14	58	55	58
Foreign born	14	12	12	51	42	40
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Less than high school diploma	21	20	16	50	50	55
High school diploma	27	16	10	58	57	60
Bachelor's degree or more	18	11	8	59	54	57

Note: Blacks, Asians and whites include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Puerto Ricans are classified as foreign born. "High school diploma" includes those with its equivalent, such as a GED (General Educational Development) certificate. Previously married are those eligible for remarriage. Based on people ages 18 and older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census (1% IPUMS) and 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Appendix B: Methodology

Analyses of the trends and characteristics of adults based upon their marital status and marital history are derived from the 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), as well as the 1960 and 1980 Decennial Censuses. All of these data sources produce nationally representative samples of the U.S. population, and are conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The data used in these analyses were obtained from the Integrated Public Use Microdata database (IPUMS), provided by the University of Minnesota. Further information about the IPUMS is available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

Analyses begin with 1960, because that is the first year that the Decennial Census collected data on remarriages. 1980 data are included as well, to serve as an approximate mid-point between 1960 and 2013. (Data regarding remarriages were not collected on the 1990 or 2000 Decennial Censuses.)

The Pew Research Center individual-level analyses include all people ages 18 and older. The majority of analyses are based upon two measures of remarriage:

- One measure considers the share of the population that ever remarried, compared with the share of the population that ever divorced or was widowed. This indicates what proportion of people available to remarry have done so.
- The other examines the share of presently married adults who are remarried, meaning they are in at least their second marriage.

Analysis based on newlyweds refers to individuals who report having married within 12 months of being surveyed. Because data regarding whether a respondent married in the past 12 months are not available in the Decennial Census, newlywed analyses are limited to 2013.

The couple-level analysis is based upon newlyweds who are living together, where at least one of the spouses is at least 18 years old. Data regarding the characteristics of spouses living apart are not available in the ACS.