Marital Status: 2000

Census 2000 Brief

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INTRODUCTION

Among the 221.1 million people aged 15 and over in the United States in 2000:

- 120.2 million, or 54.4 percent, were now married;
- 41.0 million, or 18.5 percent, were widowed, divorced or separated; and
- 59.9 million, or 27.1 percent, were never married.

Figure 1.
Reproduction of the Question on Marital Status From Census 2000

7 What is this person's marital status?

- ☐ Now married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Never married

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

This report, part of a series that presents population and housing data collected by Census 2000, presents data on the marital status of people aged 15 and over. It describes marital status distributions for the United States, including regions, states, counties, and places with populations of 100,000 or more.[1] Highlights include marital status patterns by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin, ratios of unmarried men to unmarried women, and changes in marital status distributions observed since the 1950 census.

The data on marital status were derived from answers to question 7 on the Census 2000 long form, "What is this person's marital status?" (Figure 1). The resulting classification refers to the person's status at the time of enumeration. Marital status was reported for each person as either "now married," "widowed," "divorced," "separated," or "never married." Individuals who were living together (unmarried people, people in common-law marriages) reported the marital status which they considered most appropriate. Data on marital status were tabulated only for people aged 15 and over.

The decennial census has asked about the marital status of the population since 1880. From 1880 through 1940, marital status was categorized as "single," "married," "widowed," or "divorced." "Separated" was added as a category in 1950. In various years, additional related questions were asked, including age at first marriage, whether the person was married in the last year, whether

[1] The text of this report discusses data for the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are shown in Table 2. The states in each region are shown in Figure 4.

The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values because of sampling variation or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence interval unless otherwise noted.

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United States Census 2000

ever-married people had married more than once, and the dates of current and first marriages, but these detailed questions were not asked in Census 2000. While in previous censuses, the marital status item appeared on the short-form questionnaire and was asked of the entire population; in Census 2000, the marital-status item appeared only on the long form, which was given to approximately 1 in every 6 households.[2]

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTIONS

Over half of all people aged 15 and over were now married.

Marital patterns vary by age, as shown in Table 1. While the majority of both men and women in the age groups 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years were never married in 2000, the majority of men aged 25 and over were now married, as were the majority of women aged 25 to 74. The percentage never married was lowest for men aged 75 and over (4 percent) and for women 65 to 84 years (also about 4 percent). These individuals likely married for the first time in the late 1940s and 1950s when people generally married very young and nearly everyone married. Since men have higher mortality rates, a lower percentage of women aged 85 and over in 2000 were now married (19 percent) than were men of that age (56 percent). The percentage of men and women aged 85 and over who were "married, spouse absent" was the same — 11 percent. It is likely that many of the absent spouses were in nursing homes.

Marital status: The marital status classification refers to the status on the census date, April 1, 2000. The "now married" category includes those who were "married, spouse present" and those who were "married, spouse absent." These latter two subcategories were determined in the processing and editing steps by the presence or absence of a spouse in the household as ascertained from the relationship-to-householder question on the long form and the assignment of people to related subfamilies. "Married, spouse present" applies to husbands and wives if both were living in the same household. "Married, spouse absent" applies to husbands and wives who answered that they were "Now married" on the census form but no spouse could be found who could be linked to them in the editing stages. Since people in group quarters housing (for example, institutions or shelters) were not asked the relationship item, all people in group quarters housing who reported that they were "Now married" were subsequently assigned to the "Married, spouse absent" category in the recoding steps.

"**Separated**" refers to people who were not living with their spouse due to marital discord. "**Divorced**" indicates people who reported being divorced and had not remarried. "**Widowed**" indicates people whose last marriage ended with the death of their spouse and they had not remarried. The term "**Never married**" applies to those who had never been legally married or people whose only marriage ended in an annulment. All of the statistics in this report refer to the total population aged 15 and over living in both households and groups quarters.

The 45-to-54 age group had the highest percentage divorced for both men (15 percent) and women (18 percent). The percentage is slightly higher for women, which may be because women tend to remarry somewhat less often than men.[3] (As this item relates only to the marital status of the respondent at the time of the interview, information on the relative proportion of men and women who have ever been divorced is not available from Census 2000.) People aged 45 to 54 in 2000 were born from 1946 to 1955 and likely married for the first time in the 1970s, when divorce rates were climbing steadily (before leveling off in the late 1980s and 1990s), many divorce laws were liberalized, and no-fault divorce legislation was enacted in many states.

Asians had the lowest proportion separated or divorced.

Marital patterns often differ by race and Hispanic origin (Table 1). Census 2000 allowed respondents to choose more than one race. With the exception of the Two or more races group, all race groups discussed in this report refer to people who indicated *only one* racial identity among the six major categories: White, Black or African American,

[2] In 1990, data on marital status and relationship to reference person were edited simultaneously. Since information on marital status was only available in the sample data in 2000, data on marital status were edited independently, after the relationship item was edited. Small differences in marital status data between 1990 and 2000 should be treated with caution given these differences in editing procedures.

[3] Rose M. Kreider and Jason M. Fields, *Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 1996*, Current Population Reports, P70-80, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2002.

Table 1.

Marital Status of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Characteristic	Population aged 15 and over	Percent distribution						
		Total	Now married		Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never married
			Spouse present	Spouse absent				
Total	**221,148,671**	**100.0**	**51.1**	**3.2**	**6.6**	**9.7**	**2.2**	**27.1**
Men	**107,027,405**	**100.0**	**52.9**	**3.9**	**2.5**	**8.6**	**1.8**	**30.3**
15 to 19 years	10,243,740	100.0	0.7	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	95.8
20 to 24 years	9,705,979	100.0	12.9	6.0	0.2	1.2	0.9	78.8
25 to 29 years	9,682,926	100.0	38.6	5.5	0.2	4.6	1.9	49.2
30 to 34 years	10,219,811	100.0	55.0	4.9	0.3	8.0	2.3	29.6
35 to 44 years	22,797,615	100.0	63.3	3.8	0.5	12.0	2.6	17.9
45 to 54 years	18,425,577	100.0	69.4	2.8	1.0	14.7	2.4	9.7
55 to 64 years	11,569,387	100.0	74.6	2.4	2.8	12.6	1.9	5.6
65 to 74 years	8,355,575	100.0	74.9	2.5	8.3	8.3	1.4	4.6
75 to 84 years	4,823,419	100.0	67.3	4.6	18.2	4.9	0.9	4.1
85 years and over	1,203,376	100.0	45.4	10.9	35.3	3.3	0.8	4.3
Women	**114,121,266**	**100.0**	**49.5**	**2.7**	**10.5**	**10.8**	**2.5**	**24.1**
15 to 19 years	9,667,312	100.0	2.4	2.9	0.2	0.2	0.3	94.1
20 to 24 years	9,320,001	100.0	22.5	4.2	0.2	2.2	1.8	69.1
25 to 29 years	9,529,318	100.0	49.1	3.0	0.3	6.6	3.0	38.1
30 to 34 years	10,145,302	100.0	61.4	2.4	0.6	10.3	3.6	21.9
35 to 44 years	23,107,856	100.0	65.1	2.0	1.3	14.5	3.8	13.4
45 to 54 years	19,153,032	100.0	65.4	1.7	3.7	18.0	3.1	8.0
55 to 64 years	12,601,843	100.0	62.7	1.8	11.9	16.3	2.3	5.0
65 to 74 years	10,145,574	100.0	51.7	2.0	30.8	10.1	1.3	4.1
75 to 84 years	7,493,843	100.0	30.5	4.3	54.6	5.8	0.7	4.3
85 years and over	2,957,185	100.0	8.5	10.9	71.6	3.3	0.5	5.2
Men	**107,027,405**	**100.0**	**52.9**	**3.9**	**2.5**	**8.6**	**1.8**	**30.3**
White alone	82,527,456	100.0	56.8	2.8	2.6	9.0	1.4	27.3
Black or African American alone	11,691,001	100.0	34.2	7.3	3.0	9.5	4.4	41.6
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	870,020	100.0	40.1	5.3	2.2	11.3	2.7	38.5
Asian alone	3,862,972	100.0	53.3	6.4	1.3	3.3	1.1	34.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	140,583	100.0	44.0	7.5	1.7	6.8	2.0	38.0
Some other race alone	5,607,344	100.0	40.6	9.8	1.1	5.2	2.8	40.5
Two or more races	2,328,029	100.0	41.0	5.4	1.7	8.5	2.4	41.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	12,682,318	100.0	42.7	9.0	1.3	6.0	2.7	38.3
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	76,405,470	100.0	57.7	2.4	2.7	9.2	1.3	26.7
Women	**114,121,266**	**100.0**	**49.5**	**2.7**	**10.5**	**10.8**	**2.5**	**24.1**
White alone	87,653,093	100.0	53.2	2.2	11.2	10.9	1.8	20.8
Black or African American alone	13,626,532	100.0	27.5	3.7	10.4	12.8	5.9	39.7
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	901,416	100.0	40.0	3.5	7.4	13.7	3.7	31.7
Asian alone	4,293,154	100.0	55.8	4.8	7.0	5.1	1.5	25.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	138,302	100.0	45.1	5.8	6.1	8.4	3.0	31.7
Some other race alone	5,131,029	100.0	45.0	5.3	4.4	7.7	5.0	32.6
Two or more races	2,377,740	100.0	41.2	3.5	6.6	11.1	3.7	33.8
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	12,068,400	100.0	46.2	4.7	5.6	8.8	4.6	30.0
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	81,665,080	100.0	53.5	2.0	11.5	11.0	1.6	20.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation.

American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some other race.[4] The use of the single-race population in this report does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches.[5]

Asians had one of the highest percentages now married (60 percent for men; 61 percent for women) and the lowest proportion separated or divorced (4 percent for men; 7 percent for women), reflecting the lower incidence of divorce among Asians.[6]

Black men and women had the lowest percentages now married, and this percentage differed by sex. While 42 percent of Black men were now married, just 31 percent of Black women were married when Census 2000 was taken, the lowest proportion for women of any of the race or origin groups. The 10 percentage-point difference in the percentage of Black men and Black women who were now married was the largest difference between men and women in any of the groups. Factors which might contribute to this difference include higher mortality among men than women, as well as differences in the incidence of intermarriage with other race/origin groups. Black men tend to marry non-Blacks more often than Black women do, resulting in a larger population of potential spouses for Black men. While 10 percent of married Black men had a spouse who was of a different race or origin than themselves, this was true for only 5 percent of married Black women.[7]

Overall, about 4 out of every 10 Black men and Black women had never been married, the highest proportion of any racial category. However, the difference between the percentage of Black men and Black women who had never been married was the smallest within any of the race/origin groups (2 percentage points). A slightly higher percentage of Black men than Black women were never married, mainly because these men marry later and, on average, marry women who are 2 to 3 years younger than they are.[8]

American Indians and Alaska Natives had the highest percentage divorced (11 percent for men; 14 percent for women). Among women, Blacks and Hispanics had the highest percentages separated: 6 percent and 5 percent, respectively.[9] Research has shown that Black and Hispanic women are more likely to remain separated without getting a legal divorce than are women of other groups.[10]

REGIONAL AND STATE PATTERNS

The Northeast had the lowest percentage now married and the highest percentage never married.

Regional variations in the marital status distribution for the adult population aged 15 and over are relatively small; the estimates were no more than a few percentage points from the national averages (Table 2). People in the Northeast had the highest percentage never married (29 percent) and, correspondingly, had the lowest proportions who were now married (53 percent) and divorced (8 percent). People in the South had the lowest percentage never married (25 percent). The Midwest had the lowest percentage separated (2 percent), while the West had the lowest percentage widowed (6 percent). The Northeast, which had an older age structure than the West, had the highest proportion widowed (7 percent).

Geographic differences in marital status are related to many factors,

[4] Hereafter this report uses the term Black to refer to people who are Black or African American, the term Pacific Islander to refer to people who are Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and the term Hispanic to refer to people who are Hispanic or Latino. For further information on each of the six major race groups and the Two or more races population, see reports from the Census 2000 Brief series (C2KBR/01), available on the Census 2000 Web site at *www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html*.

[5] This report draws heavily on Summary File 3, a Census 2000 product that can be accessed through American FactFinder, available from the Census Bureau's Web site, *www.census.gov*. Information on people who reported more than one race, such as "White ***and*** American Indian and Alaska Native" or Asian ***and*** Black or African American," is available on Summary File 4, which can also be accessed through American FactFinder. About 2.6 percent of people reported more than one race.

[6] Rose M. Kreider and Jason M. Fields, *Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 1996*, Current Population Reports, P70-80, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2002.

[7] Tavia Simmons and Martin O'Connell, *Table 1, Hispanic Origin and Race of Wife and Husband for Married-Couple Households in the United States: 2000*, PHC-T-19, U.S. Census Bureau, *www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t19.html*

[8] Rose M. Kreider and Jason M. Fields, *Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 1996*, Current Population Reports, P70-80, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2002.

[9] Because Hispanics may be of any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap with data for racial groups. Based on Census 2000 sample data, the proportion Hispanic was 8.0 percent for Whites, 1.9 percent for Blacks, 14.6 percent for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 1.0 percent for Asians, 9.5 percent for Pacific Islanders, 97.1 percent for those reporting Some other race, and 31.1 percent for those reporting Two or more races.

Note that the percentage of Some other race women who were separated (5.0 percent) is greater than that for Hispanic women (4.6 percent).

[10] Matthew D. Bramlett and William D. Mosher, "Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the United States," *Vital Health Statistics* 23:22, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, Maryland, 2002.

Table 2.

Marital Status of the Population Aged 15 and Over for the United States, Regions, and States and for Puerto Rico: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling and nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Area	Population aged 15 and over	Precent distribution						
		Total	Now married		Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never married
			Spouse present	Spouse absent				
United States	**221,148,671**	**100.0**	**51.1**	**3.2**	**6.6**	**9.7**	**2.2**	**27.1**
Region								
Northeast	42,697,789	100.0	49.3	3.4	7.4	8.2	2.5	29.3
Midwest	50,588,742	100.0	52.7	2.5	6.7	9.8	1.5	26.8
South	78,924,732	100.0	51.8	3.3	6.9	10.2	2.5	25.3
West	48,937,408	100.0	50.0	3.8	5.5	10.3	2.1	28.3
State								
Alabama	3,514,199	100.0	53.0	2.5	7.8	10.6	2.2	23.9
Alaska	468,861	100.0	51.3	3.2	3.4	11.7	2.0	28.4
Arizona	3,979,336	100.0	51.6	3.4	6.0	11.1	1.8	26.1
Arkansas	2,111,663	100.0	55.1	3.2	7.6	11.0	1.9	21.2
California	26,076,163	100.0	47.8	4.5	5.6	9.5	2.5	30.1
Colorado	3,385,369	100.0	52.5	3.1	4.7	11.0	1.6	27.0
Connecticut	2,696,250	100.0	51.9	3.1	7.0	9.3	1.6	27.2
Delaware	620,661	100.0	51.0	3.0	6.9	9.8	2.0	27.2
District of Columbia	474,417	100.0	24.9	5.0	7.8	9.7	4.2	48.4
Florida	12,946,990	100.0	51.1	3.2	7.9	11.6	2.4	23.8
Georgia	6,366,625	100.0	50.5	3.5	6.1	10.3	2.3	27.3
Hawaii	965,875	100.0	48.9	4.2	6.0	9.0	1.6	30.3
Idaho	991,624	100.0	57.3	2.7	5.3	10.6	1.2	22.8
Illinois	9,707,837	100.0	50.3	3.3	6.7	8.9	1.8	28.9
Indiana	4,771,040	100.0	53.9	2.5	6.6	10.9	1.3	24.8
Iowa	2,324,863	100.0	55.6	2.2	7.2	9.1	1.0	24.9
Kansas	2,100,656	100.0	55.5	2.6	6.6	10.1	1.2	24.1
Kentucky	3,217,167	100.0	54.8	2.6	7.2	11.0	1.8	22.7
Louisiana	3,466,380	100.0	48.1	3.1	7.4	10.2	2.6	28.6
Maine	1,028,823	100.0	54.2	2.1	7.1	11.5	1.2	23.9
Maryland	4,159,636	100.0	49.8	3.1	6.5	8.8	3.1	28.8
Massachusetts	5,091,369	100.0	48.9	2.8	7.0	8.3	2.0	31.1
Michigan	7,775,603	100.0	51.5	2.3	6.6	10.3	1.4	27.8
Minnesota	3,857,755	100.0	54.1	2.2	5.8	8.7	1.0	28.1
Mississippi	2,203,615	100.0	48.8	2.7	7.9	10.1	2.9	27.7
Missouri	4,414,391	100.0	53.0	2.4	7.1	10.8	1.8	24.8
Montana	715,915	100.0	54.7	2.6	6.5	10.9	1.3	24.0
Nebraska	1,342,422	100.0	54.9	2.5	6.7	9.0	1.1	25.8
Nevada	1,563,580	100.0	49.9	3.5	5.5	13.8	2.3	24.9
New Hampshire	978,641	100.0	55.2	2.1	5.9	10.5	1.4	24.9
New Jersey	6,655,333	100.0	51.4	3.3	7.4	7.5	2.4	28.1
New Mexico	1,398,496	100.0	50.5	2.5	6.1	11.6	1.8	27.5
New York	15,055,876	100.0	45.8	4.2	7.2	7.8	3.2	31.7
North Carolina	6,393,707	100.0	53.0	3.3	6.8	9.0	3.0	25.0
North Dakota	512,281	100.0	54.5	2.3	7.2	7.8	0.7	27.6
Ohio	8,952,721	100.0	52.4	2.0	7.1	10.6	1.6	26.2
Oklahoma	2,717,552	100.0	54.4	2.9	7.0	11.6	1.7	22.4
Oregon	2,722,134	100.0	52.9	2.6	6.1	11.6	1.7	25.1
Pennsylvania	9,861,713	100.0	51.4	2.9	8.2	8.1	2.2	27.2
Rhode Island	841,503	100.0	48.6	2.9	7.5	9.4	1.9	29.7
South Carolina	3,168,918	100.0	50.9	3.3	7.3	9.2	3.3	26.0
South Dakota	589,612	100.0	54.5	2.6	7.0	8.8	1.0	26.1
Tennessee	4,522,630	100.0	53.5	2.6	7.0	11.3	2.0	23.5
Texas	15,937,643	100.0	52.3	4.2	5.7	9.8	2.5	25.6
Utah	1,639,688	100.0	56.3	2.4	4.1	8.1	1.2	27.9
Vermont	488,281	100.0	53.2	2.0	6.3	10.6	1.3	26.7
Virginia	5,623,628	100.0	52.4	3.3	6.2	9.0	2.9	26.2
Washington	4,639,522	100.0	52.6	2.7	5.4	11.4	1.6	26.3
West Virginia	1,479,301	100.0	55.1	2.1	8.8	10.4	1.5	22.1
Wisconsin	4,239,561	100.0	53.6	2.6	6.4	9.0	1.2	27.2
Wyoming	390,845	100.0	55.6	2.5	5.7	11.6	1.2	23.3
Puerto Rico	**2,903,329**	**100.0**	**49.4**	**2.6**	**6.8**	**9.6**	**3.6**	**28.0**

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

ranging from religious, cultural, and ethnic patterns to current social and economic circumstances. For example, some areas may attract younger single people because of jobs or educational opportunities, while other areas may attract older people because of climate and amenities for the retired population.

As was true for regional variation, marital status by state showed relatively little variation. The largest variations were observed among the now married and the never married categories. Idaho had the highest percentage of people now married (60 percent), followed by Utah (59 percent). Excluding the District of Columbia with 30 percent, New York had the lowest proportion now married (50 percent). Corresponding with the lower percentage now married, the percentage of people in the District of Columbia who were never married was 48 percent. The state with the highest percentage never married was New York (32 percent), followed by Massachusetts (31 percent). In contrast, 21 percent of the adult population in Arkansas in 2000 had never been married.

State estimates of the percentages widowed, divorced, and separated deviated only a few percentage points from the national averages. West Virginia had the highest percentage of people who were widowed (9 percent), followed by Pennsylvania (8 percent). Alaska (3 percent) had the lowest proportion widowed, followed by Utah (4 percent), reflecting the younger age structure in these states. Nevada had the highest proportion of divorced adults (14 percent). New Jersey (7.5 percent) had the lowest proportion of divorced adults. No state differed more than 2 percentage points from the national average of 2 percent of adults who were separated.

The overall distributions shown in Table 2, however, mask some important differences among the states in the timing of marriage if the data are examined by age. For example, Table 2 shows that only 1 percentage point separated Arkansas and New Hampshire in the proportion of adults in each state who were now married (58 percent and 57 percent, respectively). However, among young adults aged 15 to 24 years, more than twice the percentage in Arkansas were now married (20 percent) compared with young adults in New Hampshire (8 percent).[11]

COUNTY PATTERNS

In the United States, there were 86 unmarried men per 100 unmarried women.

While no single indicator can capture the marital status profile of an area, a frequently used index, the ratio of unmarried men to unmarried women aged 15 and over, shown in Figure 2, summarizes the potential numbers of men and women available for marriage. This measure indicates how many widowed, divorced, and never married men live in an area per 100 women of the same age range and marital status.[12] A ratio of 100 means the numbers of unmarried men and women are equal.

Nationally, there were 86 unmarried men for every 100 unmarried women in 2000. The ratio of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women by state shows a general pattern of higher ratios in the West than in other regions (see Figure 3). Of the states, Alaska had the highest ratio (114).[13] However, the county-level map shows that high-ratio areas are sprinkled throughout the United States. Many of these counties contain or are near Armed Forces installations, or other institutions that affect the characteristics of the area (for example, correctional facilities, retirement communities, or colleges). Alaska is an exception to this generalization: most of its counties have higher ratios than are found in most of the lower 48 states, but it does not have large military installations or prisons throughout the state. More likely, the forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, and construction industries, which involve a higher percentage of the workforce in Alaska than in the United States as a whole, attract young men as workers, creating unusually high ratios of unmarried men to unmarried women. Lower ratios appear more prevalent in the southern part of the United States. However, areas of New England also appear to have clusters of relatively lower-than-average ratios.

Suburbs of larger cities tend to have the highest percentage of people now married.

Table 3 shows differences in marital status among places of 100,000 or more population,[14] using three indicators for the population aged 15 and over: the ratio of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women, the percentage now married, and the

[11] See Table 1 in PHC-T-27, "Marital Status for the Population 15 Years and Over for the United States, Regions, States, Puerto Rico, and Metropolitan Areas: 2000."

[12] For this particular index, separated people are not included in the unmarried population since they are currently married and not available legally to be married to someone else.

[13] See Table 4 in PHC-T-27, "Marital Status..."

[14] Census 2000 shows 245 places in the United States with 100,000 or more population. They include 238 incorporated places (including 4 city-county consolidations) and 7 census designated places that are not legally incorporated. For a list of these places by state, see *www.census.gov /population/www/cen2000/phc-t6.html.*

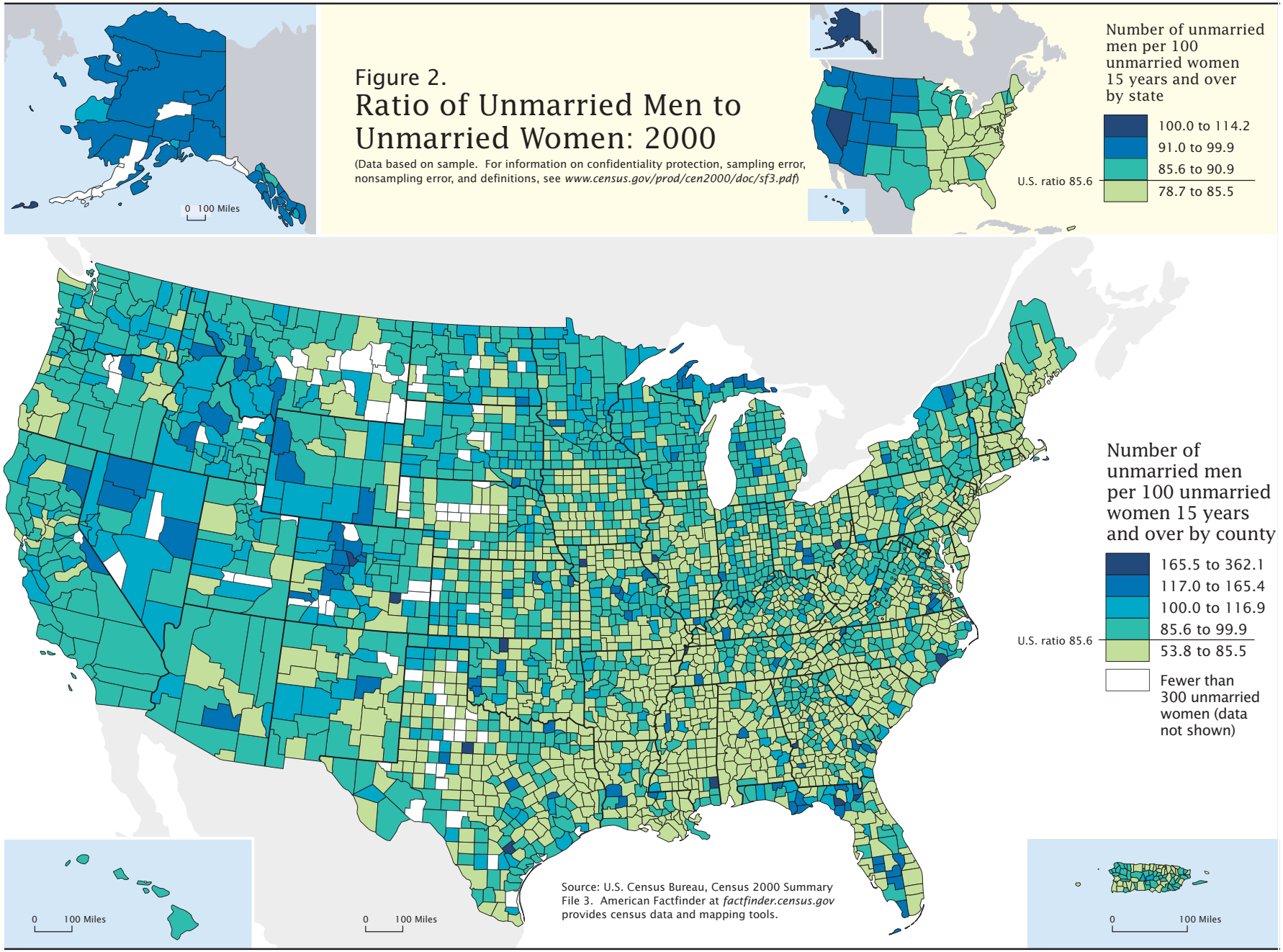


Figure 2.
Ratio of Unmarried Men to Unmarried Women: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3. American Factfinder at *factfinder.census.gov* provides census data and mapping tools.

Table 3.
Top Places of 100,000 or More Population for Selected Marital Status Indicators: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling and nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Place	Population aged 15 and over	Indicator	90-percent confidence interval
Ratio of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women[1]			
Paradise, NV*	152,439	118	115 - 121
Fort Lauderdale, FL	127,704	115	112 - 118
Tempe, AZ	132,180	114	111 - 117
Sunnyvale, CA	108,569	113	109 - 117
Santa Ana, CA	238,293	113	110 - 116
Salinas, CA	109,822	111	107 - 114
Oxnard, CA	125,006	109	106 - 113
Costa Mesa, CA	87,017	106	103 - 110
North Las Vegas, NV	81,204	106	102 - 110
Austin, TX	530,599	104	103 - 106
Percent now married[2]			
Naperville, IL	93,332	67.7	67.3 - 68.2
Gilbert, AZ	77,383	66.7	66.0 - 67.4
Plano, TX	168,437	66.5	66.0 - 67.0
Cape Coral, FL	83,133	63.2	62.5 - 63.9
Carrollton, TX	83,329	61.4	60.7 - 62.1
Overland Park, KS	116,721	61.2	60.7 - 61.7
Thousand Oaks, CA	91,562	61.2	60.6 - 61.9
Livonia, MI	80,932	61.1	60.5 - 61.7
Fremont, CA	158,764	61.1	60.6 - 61.6
Corona, CA	88,878	60.3	59.6 - 61.0
Percent formerly married[3]			
Gary, IN	77,131	27.2	26.6 - 27.9
Clearwater, FL	90,616	26.8	26.2 - 27.4
Birmingham, AL	192,220	26.8	26.4 - 27.2
St. Petersburg, FL	202,979	26.7	26.3 - 27.1
Hollywood, FL	114,192	26.6	26.1 - 27.1
Louisville, KY	205,336	26.3	26.0 - 26.6
Cleveland, OH	361,237	26.2	25.9 - 26.5
St. Louis, MO	272,873	25.9	25.6 - 26.2
Miami, FL	297,081	25.7	25.4 - 26.0
Chattanooga, TN	126,215	25.6	25.2 - 26.1

* Paradise, NV, is a census designated place and is not legally incorporated.

[1] Unmarried includes widowed, divorced and never married.
[2] Now married includes married spouse present and married spouse absent.
[3] Formerly married includes widowed, divorced, and separated.

Note: Because of sampling error, the estimates in this table may not be significantly different from one another or from rates for other geographic areas not listed in this table.

Note: In Census 2000, there were 245 places in the United States with 100,000 or more population. They included 238 incorporated places (including 4 city-county consolidations) and 7 census designated places (CDPs) that were not legally incorporated. For a list of these places by state, see the footnote in the table at *www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t6/tab04.pdf*.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3.

percentage formerly married. Paradise, Nevada (an unincorporated suburb of Las Vegas); Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Tempe, Arizona; Sunnyvale and Santa Ana, California, had ratios of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women which were above the national average.

Naperville, Illinois; Gilbert, Arizona; and Plano, Texas, had the highest percentages of married people (above 65 percent). Some of the top places for the percentage married are suburbs of larger cities, which may attract married-couple families with children.

Places with a high percentage of formerly married people (those widowed, separated, or divorced) included Gary, Indiana; Clearwater, Florida; Birmingham, Alabama; St. Petersburg, Florida; and Hollywood, Florida (27 percent). The high rates in Clearwater, Hollywood, and St. Petersburg probably reflect the older age structure in these cities, which means a higher proportion of people likely to have been divorced and widowed. Meanwhile, the high percentage of formerly married people in Gary, Indiana, and Birmingham, Alabama, is partly the result of a relatively high proportion of Blacks in these places (over

Table 4.
Percent of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex and Age in Specified Marital Status: 1950 to 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling and nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)

Sex and year	15 to 24 years, never married	25 to 34 years			35 to 59 years		60 years and over		
		Never married	Divorced	Separated	Divorced	Separated	Married	Divorced or separated	Widowed
Men									
1950	77.4	18.7	1.9	1.6	2.7	2.0	68.6	3.8	19.1
1960	77.2	16.2	2.0	1.6	2.9	1.8	73.1	4.1	15.1
1970	77.9	15.5	3.1	1.9	3.7	1.9	74.8	4.8	13.2
1980	82.8	23.9	7.6	2.7	7.4	2.4	79.1	5.5	11.4
1990	88.0	36.1	7.3	2.5	11.8	2.7	76.3	7.1	11.4
2000	87.5	39.1	6.4	2.1	13.2	2.5	74.9	9.3	11.2
Women									
1950	56.4	11.3	2.8	2.5	3.4	2.5	42.2	2.7	46.5
1960	58.6	8.6	2.9	2.8	4.0	2.5	43.3	3.6	44.8
1970	63.8	10.0	4.6	3.4	5.4	2.9	42.7	4.9	44.5
1980	70.9	16.3	10.1	3.9	10.0	3.3	44.9	6.0	44.1
1990	78.9	25.0	9.8	3.8	15.0	3.5	44.5	7.7	42.5
2000	81.8	29.7	8.5	3.3	16.3	3.4	46.4	10.3	38.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population, *General Population Characteristics,* United States (1990 CP-1-1); 1980 Census of Population, *Characteristics of the Population,* United States Summary (PC80-1-D1-A); U.S. Census of Population: 1970, Detailed Characteristics Final Report PC(1)-D1, United States Summary; U.S. Census of Population: 1960, Vol. I. Characteristics of the Population, Part 1, United States Summary; U.S. Census of Population: 1950, Vol. II. Characteristics of the Population, Part 2, United States Summary.

70 percent of the total population), since nationally, of all races, Blacks had the highest proportion formerly married (Table 1).

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

This section discusses several topics related to changes in the distribution of marital status from 1950 to 2000 for different age groups (see Table 4), and the connection between the ratio of unmarried men to women and the different life expectancies of men and women.

A smaller gap in life expectancy between men and women is associated with a higher ratio of unmarried men to unmarried women.

While sharp differences in the ratio of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women from area to area may be explained by place characteristics or migration patterns, at the national level, the ratio is affected by changes in the gap between men and women in life expectancy.[15] During periods when women live significantly longer than men, the ratio of unmarried men to women tends to be lower than when the gap in life expectancy narrows. Then the ratio tends to be higher as more men survive throughout the life span of their wives, resulting in fewer widowed spouses. For example, in 1950 and in 2000, the gap in years between men's and women's average remaining life expectancy at age 15 was 5.0 years and 5.3 years, respectively, that is, women were expected to live about 5 years longer than men once they attained age 15.[16] The ratio of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women was 91 in 1950 and 86 in 2000.[17] But in 1970 and 1980, when the gap between men and women's life expectancy was 7.3 years, the ratio was lower, at 81 unmarried men per 100 women.

Have people increasingly delayed marriage since 1950?

In both 1950 and 2000, the majority of men and women aged 15 to 24 had never married, but the percentage increased during this time period by 11 percentage points for men (from 77 percent to 88 percent) and by 25 percentage points for women (from 56 percent to 82 percent). Most of the change occurred between 1970 and 1990 for both men and women.

[15] The ratio of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women may also be affected by the sex ratio at birth, the proportion ever married, and international migration.

[16] The life expectancy at age 15 for the years 1949-1951, 1959-1961, 1969-1971, 1979-1981, 1990, and 2000 is from: Elizabeth Arias, United States Life Tables, 2000, *National Vital Statistics Reports;* Vol. 51, No. 3, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, Maryland, 2002.

[17] The ratios of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women were calculated using decennial census data tabulated by age, sex, and marital status for 1950 through 2000.

The percentage of people aged 25 to 34 who were never married also increased from 1950 to 2000, from 19 percent to 39 percent for men and from 11 percent to 30 percent for women. Most of these increases occurred in the 1970s and 1980s.

The percentage of both men and women aged 25 to 34 who were never married declined during the 1950s (the peak of the 1946 - 1964 Baby Boom), meaning that on average, people married earlier in 1960 than in 1950. Indeed, the median age at first marriage had been higher prior to the 1950s: for 1890, it was calculated at 26 years for men and 22 years for women, whereas in 1950, it was 23 years for men and 20 years for women.[18]

Were higher percentages of men and women aged 25 to 59 separated and divorced in 2000 than in 1950?

From 1950 to 2000, the percentage of people aged 25 to 34 who were divorced increased from 2 percent to 6 percent for men and from 3 percent to 9 percent for women. The corresponding increases for people aged 35 to 59 were from 3 percent to 13 percent for men and from 3 percent to 16 percent for women.

For those aged 25 to 34, the percentage divorced increased from 1950 to 1980, but subsequently decreased by several percentage points between 1980 and 2000 for both men and women. However, for both men and women aged 35 to 59, the percentages divorced increased by about 6 percentage points during the later period.

The small percentage-point decline in the percentage divorced among those aged 25 to 34 from 1980 to 2000 reflects the fact that people now marry later, thus reducing the possibility of a divorce during this age span. The increase in the median age at first marriage since 1980 has pushed the married population who might experience a first divorce into older age groups, resulting in an increased percentage of those aged 35 to 59 years who were divorced. The percentage of adults who are currently divorced is related also to recent declines in the likelihood of remarriage.[19]

Changes in the percentage of adults by age group who were separated show a similar pattern. The percentage of adults aged 25 to 34 who were separated declined slightly from 1980 to 2000, while the percentage of separated adults aged 35 to 59 remained roughly the same.

How has the percentage of people in various marital statuses changed among people aged 60 and over?

The percentage of men aged 60 and over who were widowed declined steadily from 19 percent in 1950 to 11 percent in 1980 and has remained at this level. The corresponding percentage of women also declined, from 47 percent in 1950 to 39 percent in 2000. Men's increased life expectancy may help explain both the decrease in the percentage of women aged 60 and over who were widowed (since their husbands were living longer) and the increase since 1970 in the percentage who were married.

In this same age group, the percentage of men who were married increased from 69 percent in 1950 to a high of 79 percent in 1980, before decreasing to 75 percent in 2000, the same level as in 1970. In contrast, for women aged 60 and over, the percentage who were married increased from 42 percent in 1950 to 46 percent in 2000.

What is the ratio of wives to partners among women aged 15 to 24?

Cohabitation is often a precursor to marriage, but on other occasions it is a short-term living arrangement. As the age at first marriage has risen, the likelihood that a woman will live with a partner before she marries also has increased. Survey data in 1995 indicated that a higher percentage of women aged 15 to 24 had ever cohabited than had ever married.[20]

In order to portray the current marital status of young people living together as couples who are maintaining their own households, Figure 3 shows, by state, the ratio of wives to unmarried partners for women aged 15 to 24.[21] The data are limited to couples maintaining their own households, and thus do not include married or unmarried couples living in other people's households.[22] Ratios greater than 1.0 indicate more women are living with men as wives than as their unmarried partners. However,

[18] This median is estimated based on ever married men and women. See Table MS-2, Estimated Median Age at First Marriage, by Sex, 1890 to the Present at *www.census.gov /population/socdemo/hh-fam/tabMS-2.txt.*

[19] Analysis of the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 2 (1976) compared with Cycle 5 (1995) indicates a decreasing probability that a woman will remarry within 5 years of divorce. Matthew D. Bramlett and William D. Mosher, "Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the United States," *Vital Health Statistics* 23:22, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, Maryland, 2002.

[20] Matthew D. Bramlett and William D. Mosher, "Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the United States," *Vital Health Statistics* 23:22, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, Maryland, 2002.

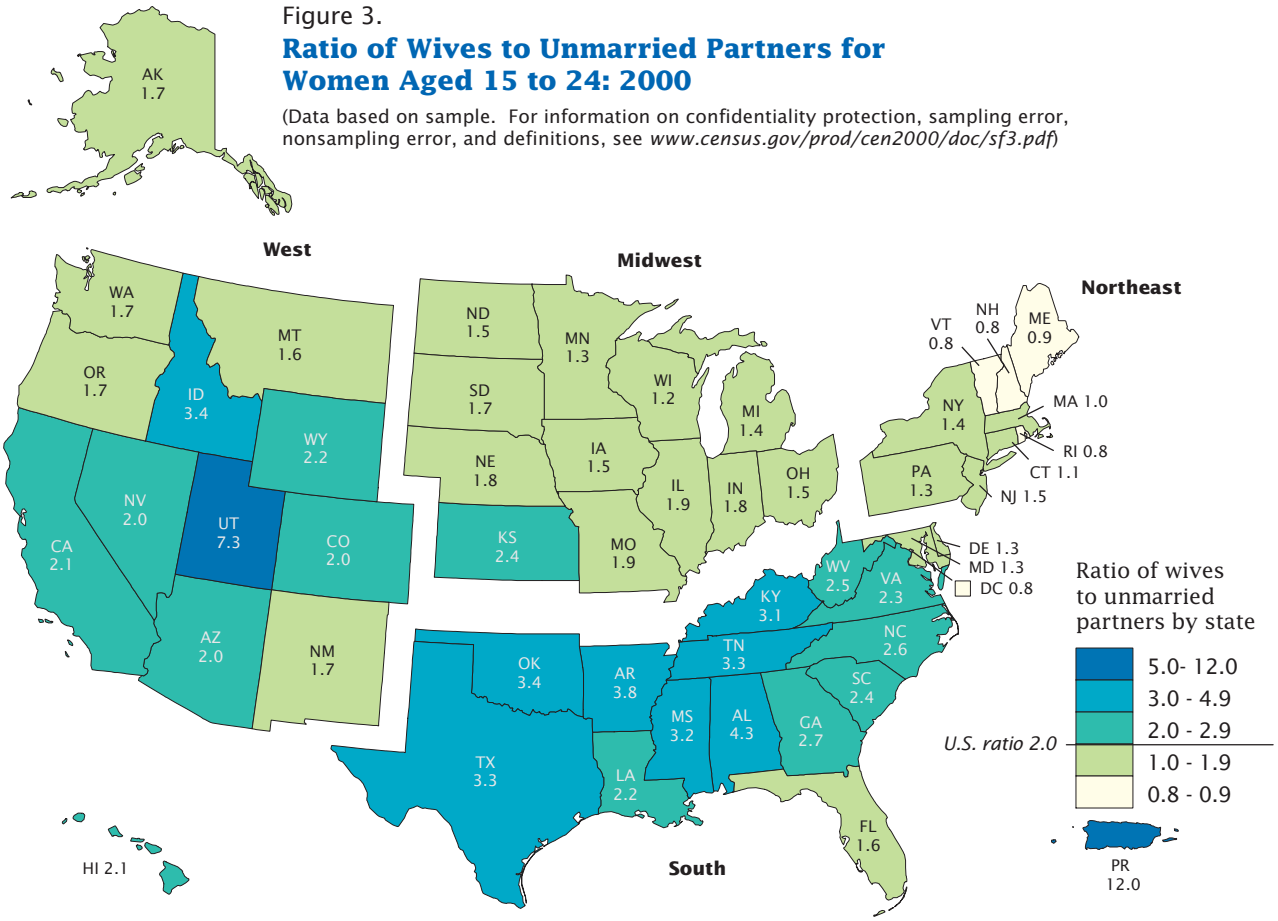
[21] Unmarried partners may have a marital status of widowed, divorced, separated, or never married.

[22] Although Census 2000 data permit the identification of "wives" in related subfamilies, it is not possible to estimate, in a similar fashion, the number of unmarried partners in a household unless one partner is the householder. For comparability reasons, only spouses and partners of the householder or the female householders themselves are used in this measure.

Figure 3.

Ratio of Wives to Unmarried Partners for Women Aged 15 to 24: 2000

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3. American FactFinder at *factfinder.census.gov* provides census data and mapping tools.

since the duration of cohabitations is shorter on average than that of marriages, and because many cohabitations become marriages, the point in time estimates shown in Census 2000 are likely to count more wives than unmarried partners since women who have been partners may have already married their partners, or may have ended the partnerships.

Overall, the national average ratio of wives to unmarried partners for women aged 15 to 24 was 2.0 in 2000. Only four states had ratios under 1.0: Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. A ratio under 1.0 was also recorded for the District of Columbia. Utah recorded the highest ratio, with more than 7 times as many wives as partners in this age group. Utah also had the highest proportion of people aged 15 to 24 who were married. The regional pattern is also consistent with marital patterns which indicate that women 15 to 24 years in the South and the West had higher proportions who were now married (20 percent and 18 percent, respectively) than did women in the Northeast and the Midwest (11 percent and 14 percent, respectively).[23]

[23] See Table 3 in PHC-T-27, "Marital Status...," *www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t27.html.*

ABOUT CENSUS 2000

Why Census 2000 asked about marital status.

Planning and implementing many government programs calls for accurate information on marital status, including the numbers of employed married women, elderly widows living alone, and single young people who may soon establish homes of their own. Data about marital status are used for budget and resource planning to identify the number of children needing special services, such as children in single-parent households. Local governments need data about marital status to assess the need for housing and services

under Community Development Block Grant Evaluation. Other examples of statutory applications include the Public Health Service Act, Child Welfare Act, Adolescent Family Life Projects, and Low-Income Tax Credits.

Accuracy of the Estimates

The data contained in this report are based on the sample of households who responded to the Census 2000 long form. Nationally, approximately 1 out of every 6 housing units was included in this sample. As a result, the sample estimates may differ somewhat from the 100- percent figures that would have been obtained if all housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in group quarters had been enumerated using the same questionnaires, instructions, enumerators, and so forth. The sample estimates also differ from the values that would have been obtained from different samples of housing units, people within those housing units, and people living in group quarters. The deviation of a sample estimate from the average of all possible samples is called the sampling error.

In addition to the variability that arises from the sampling procedures, both sample data and 100-percent data are subject to nonsampling error. Nonsampling error may be introduced during any of the various complex operations used to collect and process data. Such errors may include: not enumerating every household or every person in the population, failing to obtain all required information from the respondents, obtaining incorrect or inconsistent information, and recording information incorrectly. In addition, errors can occur during the field review of the enumerators' work, during clerical handling of the census questionnaires, or during the electronic processing of the questionnaires.

Nonsampling error may affect the data in two ways: (1) errors that are introduced randomly will increase the variability of the data and, therefore, should be reflected in the standard errors; and (2) errors that tend to be consistent in one direction will bias both sample and 100-percent data in that direction. For example, if respondents consistently tend to underreport their incomes, then the resulting estimates of households or families by income category will tend to be understated for the higher income categories and overstated for the lower income categories. Such biases are not reflected in the standard errors.

While it is impossible to completely eliminate error from an operation as large and complex as the decennial census, the Census Bureau attempts to control the sources of such error during the data collection and processing operations. The primary sources of error and the programs instituted to control error in Census 2000 are described in detail in *Summary File 3 Technical Documentation* under Chapter 8, "Accuracy of the Data," located at *www.census.gov /prod/cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf.*

All statements in this Census 2000 Brief have undergone statistical testing and all comparisons are significant at the 90-percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. The estimates in tables, maps, and other figures may vary from actual values due to sampling and nonsampling errors. As a result, estimates in one category may not be significantly different from estimates assigned to a different category. Further information on the accuracy of the data is located at *www.census.gov/prod /cen2000/doc/sf3.pdf*. For further information on the computation and use of standard errors, contact the Decennial Statistical Studies Division at 301-763-4242.

For More Information

The Census 2000 Summary File 3 data are available from the American FactFinder on the Internet (*factfinder.census.gov).* They were released on a state-by-state basis during 2002. For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, sampling error, and definitions, also see *www.census.gov/prod/cen2000 /doc/sf3.pdf* or contact the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636).

Information on population and housing topics is presented in the Census 2000 Brief series, located on the Census Bureau's Web site at *www.census.gov/population/www /cen2000/briefs.html*. This series presents information on race, Hispanic origin, age, sex, household type, housing tenure, and social, economic, and housing characteristics, such as ancestry, income, and housing costs.

For additional information on marital status, including reports and survey data, visit the Census Bureau's Internet site at *www.census.gov/population /www/socdemo/ms-la.html* or *www.census.gov/population/www /socdemo/marr-div.html*. To find information about the availability of data products, including reports, CD-ROMs, and DVDs, call the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636), or e-mail *webmaster@census.gov.*