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Remarriage in the United States
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Although interest in marital patterns in the United States has been high in recent times, there has been very little published about remarriage. Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation's (SIPP) marital history (collected in the second interview of the longitudinal study) can provide a broad look at remarriage following divorce during the last part of the 20th century. This poster presentation uses pooled data from three SIPP panels, 1996, 2001 and 2004, in order to look at the following questions: What proportion of recent marriages are remarriages? What percent remarry within 5 years after divorce? Who is more likely to remarry? How long do people wait until they remarry? What are the characteristics of the remarried households that are formed?

The sample contains 150,754 (unweighted) men and women who have ever been married, 33,891 of whom have been married 2 or more times. When the three panels are pooled, the statistics shown in this poster are weighted, but the weights are normalized to represent the unweighted number of people in the sample. Data are also shown for couples who married within the year prior to the interview date, and which contain at least one partner who was divorced from their previous marriage (856 unweighted couples). This sample is used for a few charts at the end of the presentation, and it is weighted using the woman's person weight.

In 1996, 43 percent of marriages in the year prior to the survey involved at least one spouse who was remarrying. The corresponding percentages for the 2001 and 2004 panels are lower, at 38 and 36 percent, respectively. According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, in 1990, 46 percent of the couples who married involved at least one spouse who was

remarrying, while about 31 percent of the couples who married in 1970 involved at least one spouse who was remarrying. The higher percentages of marriages involving people who were remarrying during the 1990s corresponds with the rise in divorce rates prior to that, during the early 1980s. Of men and women who married for the second or third time in the year prior to the interview, 91 percent were remarrying after being divorced, and 9 percent were remarrying after being widowed. Tables showing number of times married for the wife by number of times married for the husband are attached.

The next section of the poster looks at people who remarried following a divorce—the percentage who remarried within 5 years, by sex and race, and the median duration between first marriages which ended in divorce, and remarriage.

The percentage of men and women who remarried within 5 years following a divorce from their first marriage fluctuates somewhat by divorce cohort, with men generally having a slightly higher percentage remarried within 5 years than women. The percentage remarried within 5 years is usually about 5-9 percentage points higher for men than women, for the divorce cohorts shown. There is not a lot of variation over time. The most recent cohorts may show a slightly lower percentage remarried than the earliest cohorts, but these data cannot tell us whether this is because a lower percentage will eventually remarry, or whether recent cohorts may take a bit longer to remarry.

Lower percentages of Black men and women remarried within 5 years than Whites. For men, the gap ranges from roughly 10 percentage points to 20 percentage points, for the divorce cohorts shown. The gap between the percentages of White and Black women who remarried within 5 years, except for those who divorced in 1950-1954, was roughly 20 percentage points.

The median length of time to remarriage after divorcing from a first marriage until people

remarry is quite consistent over time. For men and women who divorced in 1950-1954, the median duration to remarriage was 4 years, and since then it has remained between 3 and 4 years. The median length of time to remarriage after being widowed from a first marriage is similar, at 3.0 years for men, and 4.4 years for women.

The last section of the poster focuses on the household composition of couples who married within the year prior to their interview, in which at least one spouse was remarrying following divorce. While roughly 60 percent of the men and women in recent remarriages are 25-44 years old, one third of the men and one quarter of the woman involved were age 45 and over. The percentage of women in the recently remarried couples who were age 15-24 was higher (9 percent) than the corresponding percentage for men (5 percent), perhaps reflecting the greater likelihood that women are younger than their spouse. Twenty six percent of these women were marrying for the first time, while their new spouse was remarrying.

Half of these recently remarried couples had children under 18 in their households. These households are most likely to have only the wife's children present (24 percent). Roughly equal proportions (8-9 percent) of the households have the husband's and the wife's children only (no joint children), or only joint children. These data reflect only coresidential biological children under 18—the spouses may have children 18 and over, or other children who do not live with them, as well as non-biological children.

In terms of fertility, most of the spouses in recently remarried couples had biological children (of any age), even if these children did not live with the couple. Half of the women (50 percent), and roughly half of the men (47 percent) had 1 or 2 children ever born to them, while about one fifth (21 percent) of the men and one quarter (24 percent) of the women had 3 or more children. Thirty-two percent of the men, and 27 percent of the women had no biological

children.

CONCLUSION

Most people remarry following a divorce from a first marriage. This differs by race, with a lower percentage of Blacks remarrying than Whites. The median duration to remarriage following divorce from a first marriage is about 3 to 4 years, and has remained relatively stable. The majority of couples who remarried following a divorce for at least one of the spouses were aged 25-44, and half of the households formed included children under 18. Most of those who were recently remarried had biological children, although not all were living in the household.