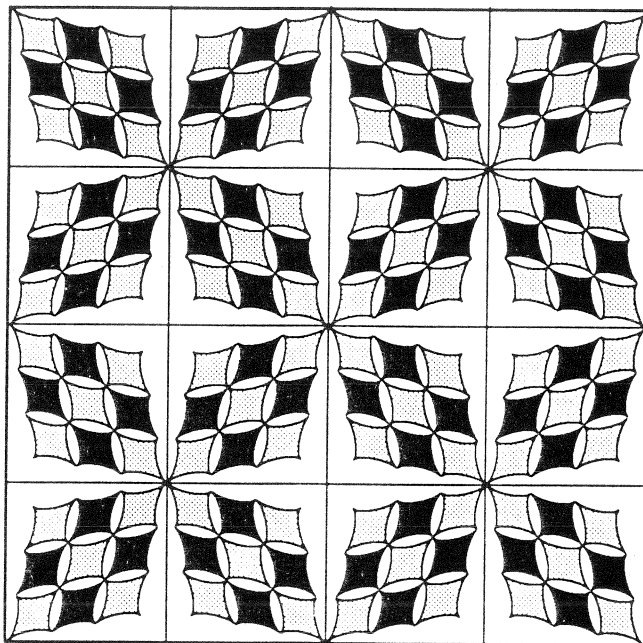


Studies in Household and Family Formation



Remarriage Among Women
in the United States: 1985
Living Arrangements of Young Adults Living
Independently: Evidence From the Luxembourg
Income Study

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Preface

Social scientists have been concerned with understanding the complexities of modern living arrangements for the purpose of guiding plans and policies designed to create housing, social, and economic assistance programs. As a consequence, a notable body of research on the dynamics of household and family formation has evolved over the last quarter century.

Among several factors that have been identified as contributing to changing lifestyles are social and economic events and circumstances. This report contains two papers that explore these relationships. In "Remarriage Among Women in the United States: 1985," Arthur Norton and Louisa Miller present information about women in the United States and their likelihood of remarriage after divorce or widowhood. Kathleen Short and Thesia Garner in their paper "Living Arrangements of Young Adults Living Independently: Evidence From the Luxembourg Income Study" offer an international comparison of the influence of income on independent household formation among young adults in the United States and several foreign countries.

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by Arthur J. Norton and Louisa F. Miller

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by Kathleen S. Short, Bureau of the Census, and
Thesia I. Garner, Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Remarriage Among Women in the United States: 1985

Arthur J. Norton and Louisa F. Miller, Bureau of the Census

Introduction

Remarriage is in many respects as important to modern society as are its antecedents, first marriage, divorce and/or widowhood. This particular type of formal union (remarriage) brings with it complexities not found in other statuses. Partners in remarriage have the benefits and/or burdens of experiences both from a previous marriage and from the termination of a previous marriage. As the frequency of remarriages has grown (about 46 percent of the 2.4 million marriages in 1987 were remarriages for at least one of the partners) (U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, 1990), interest in the effects of widespread remarriage on society in general and on remarried couples and their families in particular has increased.

Remarriage influences all aspects of family life as well as the social and economic institutions with broad responsibilities for serving families and their members. It affects the lives of children, parents, grandparents, siblings, and other kin by introducing the complexities associated with the blending of blood, marital, and step relationships. Research into the implications of extensive remarriage for policies and services reflects a variety of concerns. Miller and Moorman (1989) focus on the growth in the prevalence of stepfamilies. They estimate that 15 percent of all children living with two parents in 1985 were living with one stepparent. Zill (1988) suggests that about one-fourth of today's young children will live as a stepchild before reaching age 16. The majority of those step situations come about because of remarriage. Other researchers have concentrated on remarriage and kinship extension and/or dilution (Whiteside, 1989), preparation for remarriage (Ganong and Coleman, 1989), marital satisfaction in remarriage (Vemer, Coleman, Ganong and Cooper, 1989), impact on children relative to contact with an absent parent (Seltzer and Bianchi, 1988), and the changing roles of family members involved in a remarriage (Guisinger, Cowan, Schuldberg, 1989).

This paper presents a profile of women who remarry after divorce or widowhood

and discusses the relative likelihood of remarriage among women with different social and demographic characteristics. The paper focuses on remarriage after the first marriage has ended in divorce or widowhood. No analysis of third or higher order marriages is included. The incidence of the latter is increasing but still represents a relatively small part of the remarriage experience of women in the United States. (Only 3 percent of women ever married in 1985 had experienced more than two marriages.)

Data

The data are from the June 1985 marriage and fertility history supplement to the Current Population Survey. This set of data is from the latest in a series of quinquennial surveys conducted by the Bureau of the Census and sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. These data give the most recent comprehensive national information on marriage, divorce, widowhood, and remarriage in the United States. Information from the June 1990 survey will become available during 1991. In the 1985 survey, detailed marriage history questions were asked only of women.

Overall Trends in Remarriage

Nearly 4 of every 10 ever-married women in 1985 had had a first marriage end in divorce or widowhood (table A). Remarriage is more common after divorce than after widowhood. Among the 17 million women divorced after first marriage, about two-thirds (65 \pm 1 percent) had remarried by June 1985.¹ Slightly more than one-fifth (23 \pm 1 percent) of the 11 million women widowed after first marriage had remarried by June 1985.

Data viewed across age groups (youngest to oldest) indicate that the proportion remarrying (before 1985) among previously divorced women increases with age while among women widowed after first marriage, the opposite appears to be true.² The data in table A show that among women who had been divorced after first marriage, 43 (\pm 6) percent of women under 25 at the survey date had remarried but that fully 80

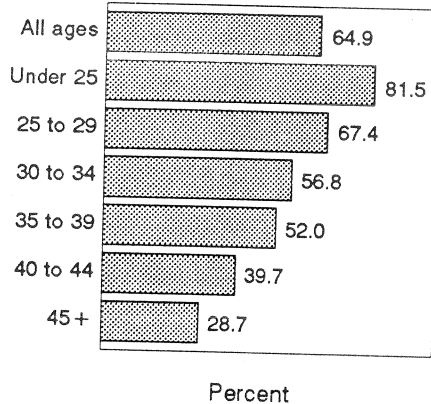
(\pm 5) percent of women 75 years and over in June 1985 had remarried. Among women whose first marriage ended in widowhood, 42 (\pm 10) percent who were under 35 at the survey date had remarried, compared with only 15 (\pm 2) percent of women 75 and over in 1985. Thus, age appears to be associated with likelihood of remarriage. However, in a generalized sense, "age" represents several components linked to remarriage including the chronological age of women, the age at dissolution of first marriage, the duration of the first marriage, the duration in the divorced or widowed status, and the age at remarriage. Looking at the different dimensions of age separately gives a clearer picture of the dynamics of the "age"/remarriage relationship.

The association between age at divorce and likelihood of remarriage is clearly inverse in nature. The younger a woman is at the time her first marriage ends in divorce, the more likely she is to eventually remarry. Among women who were under 25 at the time of divorce, 81 (\pm 2) percent had remarried by 1985, compared to 67 (\pm 2) percent of women 25 to 29 at divorce, 57 (\pm 3) percent of women 30 to 34 at divorce, 52 (\pm 4) percent of women 35 to 39 at divorce, 40 (\pm 5) percent of women 40 to 44 at divorce, and 29 (\pm 4) percent of women whose first divorce occurred at age 45 or older (figure 1 and table B). This same pattern holds when time since divorce is controlled for. Among women who had been divorced from their first husbands at least 5 years, 89 (\pm 1) percent of those divorced when they were under 25 years old had remarried by 1985, while only 37 (\pm 5) percent of those divorced at ages 45 and older had remarried by 1985.

¹ Figures following the \pm notation in this section represent the 90-percent confidence interval of the estimate.

² The apparent increase between the proportion of widows under age 35 who have remarried (41.9 percent) and the comparable proportion for widows ages 35 to 44 (42.2 percent) is not statistically significant.

Figure 1.
Percentage of Women Divorced
From Their First Husbands, Who
Had Remarried by the Survey Date,
by Age at Divorce From First
Marriage: June 1985



A similar relationship exists between age at widowhood and likelihood of remarriage. Among women whose first marriage ended in widowhood, 54 (± 3) percent of those who were widowed at ages under 45 years had remarried, 21 (± 3) percent of those who were widowed at ages 45 to 54 had remarried, 8 (± 2) percent of those who were widowed at ages 55 to 64 had remarried, and only 2 (± 1) percent of women who were widowed at ages 65 or older had remarried by June 1985 (figure 2). As was the case for women divorced from their first husbands, the relationship between age at widowhood and likelihood of remarriage holds even when time since first marriage ended in widowhood is controlled for. Among women widowed from their first husbands at least 5 years before the survey date, 58 (± 3) percent of those under age 45 at widowhood had remarried by 1985, but only 3 (± 1) percent of their counterparts widowed at ages 65 and older had remarried by 1985.

The inverse relationship between age at termination of first marriage (either through divorce or widowhood) and likelihood of remarriage is due, in part, to the direct relationship between age and the availability of potential spouses. In March of 1985, there were 119 unmar-

Table A.
Marital History of Women 15 Years and Over, by Age: June 1985
(Numbers in thousands)

Marital history	All women 15 and over	Age at survey date						
		15 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	75 years and over
Total	95,413	19,300	20,824	16,085	11,561	11,753	9,370	6,520
Ever married	73,971	5,059	16,604	14,955	10,956	11,311	8,931	6,155
Known to have ever been divorced	17,418	654	4,211	4,844	3,043	2,424	1,475	767
Known to have ever been widowed	12,735	31	215	535	996	2,465	3,900	4,594
Divorced after first marriage	17,142	651	4,201	4,790	2,999	2,366	1,404	729
Never remarried	6,025	372	1,724	1,736	960	716	371	146
Remarried	11,117	279	2,477	3,054	2,039	1,650	1,033	583
Widowed after first marriage	11,367	25	197	469	873	2,127	3,481	4,197
Never remarried	8,794	14	115	271	566	1,511	2,763	3,554
Remarried	2,573	11	82	198	307	616	718	643
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION								
Ever married	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Known to have ever been divorced	23.5	12.9	25.4	32.4	27.8	21.4	16.5	12.5
Known to have ever been widowed	17.2	0.6	1.3	3.6	9.1	21.8	43.7	74.6
Divorced after first marriage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Never remarried	35.1	57.1	41.0	36.2	32.0	30.3	26.4	20.0
Remarried	64.9	42.9	59.0	63.8	68.0	69.7	73.6	80.0
Widowed after first marriage	100.0	(B)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Never remarried	77.4	(B)	58.4	57.8	64.8	71.0	79.4	84.7
Remarried	22.6	(B)	41.6	42.2	35.2	29.0	20.6	15.3
Ever married	100.0	6.8	22.4	20.2	14.8	15.3	12.1	8.3
Known to have ever been divorced	100.0	3.8	24.2	27.8	17.5	13.9	8.5	4.4
Known to have ever been widowed	100.0	0.2	1.7	4.2	7.8	19.4	30.6	36.1
Divorced after first marriage	100.0	3.8	24.5	27.9	17.5	13.8	8.2	4.3
Never remarried	100.0	6.2	28.6	28.8	15.9	11.9	6.2	2.4
Remarried	100.0	2.5	22.3	27.5	18.3	14.8	9.3	5.2
Widowed after first marriage	100.0	0.2	1.7	4.1	7.7	18.7	30.6	36.9
Never remarried	100.0	0.2	1.3	3.1	6.4	17.2	31.4	40.4
Remarried	100.0	0.4	3.2	7.7	11.9	23.9	27.9	25.0

B Base less than 75,000.

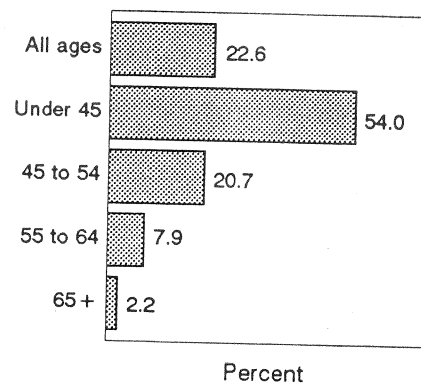
Table B.
Percentage of Women 15 Years and Over Divorced From Their First Husbands, Who Had Remarried by the Survey Date, by Age at Divorce, Time Since Divorce, and Selected Characteristics: June 1985

(Universe is all women whose first marriage ended in divorce)

Characteristic and time since divorce	All ages	Age at divorce after first marriage						Median
		Under 25 years	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 44 years	45 years and over	
TOTAL								
Total	64.9	81.5	67.4	56.8	52.0	39.7	28.7	27.7
Race and Hispanic origin:								
White	66.4	82.7	69.4	59.5	52.5	43.8	28.8	27.6
Black	53.5	71.5	52.7	42.1	46.4	25.7	28.7	28.4
Hispanic ¹	54.5	71.8	54.4	50.8	36.8	(B)	(B)	27.6
With children ever-born under 18 at divorce:								
None	50.6	65.6	55.3	59.7	52.2	45.6	27.8	29.9
One or more	68.5	84.6	70.1	58.4	52.0	37.8	30.4	27.2
Years of school completed:								
Less than 12 years	72.7	85.1	76.7	69.4	62.0	52.9	34.8	27.2
12 years	65.1	80.4	66.0	59.0	53.6	38.7	26.4	27.3
13 to 15 years	59.7	77.4	64.1	47.3	42.3	34.9	27.8	27.6
16 or more years	54.6	83.3	61.5	43.5	39.9	23.8	22.1	29.6
AT LEAST 3 YEARS SINCE FIRST MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE								
Total	71.5	87.1	74.2	63.4	59.1	44.2	33.6	27.4
Race and Hispanic origin:								
White	73.1	88.5	76.1	66.1	60.2	46.1	33.8	27.3
Black	59.6	75.9	59.0	48.3	51.0	30.8	33.7	28.0
Hispanic ¹	61.2	80.8	61.1	55.4	(B)	(B)	(B)	27.7
With children ever-born under 18 at divorce:								
None	59.2	77.5	63.8	58.7	61.6	48.4	33.4	30.1
One or more	74.3	88.7	76.2	64.2	58.8	42.9	33.7	26.9
Years of school completed:								
Less than 12 years	78.0	90.2	81.3	74.1	67.8	57.3	40.4	27.1
12 years	72.0	86.8	73.5	65.6	59.4	43.7	31.5	27.1
13 to 15 years	66.9	83.1	72.1	55.9	48.9	37.9	31.4	27.3
16 or more years	61.0	86.2	66.7	48.8	50.9	25.7	26.2	28.9
AT LEAST 5 YEARS SINCE FIRST MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE								
Total	74.8	89.3	77.2	67.8	62.7	46.9	36.9	27.1
Race and Hispanic origin:								
White	76.3	91.0	78.9	70.5	63.6	48.0	37.0	27.1
Black	64.1	77.3	63.5	52.6	55.9	(B)	(B)	27.5
Hispanic ¹	65.3	82.3	66.0	65.9	(B)	(B)	(B)	27.5
With children ever-born under 18 at divorce:								
None	63.2	80.9	67.8	64.9	65.2	53.3	36.8	30.0
One or more	77.3	90.6	78.9	68.4	62.2	45.0	37.0	26.7
Years of school completed:								
Less than 12 years	80.2	91.7	83.9	77.3	70.1	58.4	43.0	27.1
12 years	75.5	89.3	76.5	70.3	64.0	45.5	33.7	26.8
13 to 15 years	70.3	85.3	75.2	61.3	48.4	40.7	36.9	27.0
16 or more years	65.3	88.7	69.4	51.5	55.9	29.9	31.6	28.4

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
 B Base less than 75,000.

Figure 2.
Percentage of Women Widowed From Their First Marriage, Who Had Remarried by the Survey Date, by Age at Widowhood From First Marriage: June 1985



ried 25- to 34-year-old males for every 100 unmarried females in that age group (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986).³ For 45- to 64-year-olds, the ratio was only 54 males per 100 unmarried females and for the population 65 and over, there were only 26 unmarried males per 100 unmarried females.

Divorce and Remarriage

In addition to the strong association between age at divorce and likelihood of remarriage, there are other variables that appear to influence the prospects of remarriage after a first marriage has ended in divorce. Table B shows that for all women who divorced after first marriage, remarriage was more frequent among women who were White, women who had at least one child who was less than 18 years old when the mother divorced, and women who had lower educational attainment.

Even taking into account differences according to race or Hispanic origin, presence of children under 18 at the time of divorce, or education, women were still much more likely to remarry if

³ Unmarried includes never married, widowed, and divorced.

they divorced at a young age.⁴ For example, among women who divorced when they were under 25, about 83 percent of White women had remarried, compared with 71 percent of Black women and 72 percent of Hispanic women.⁵ Among women who were in their mid- to late thirties when they divorced, only 52 percent of Whites, 46 percent of Blacks, and 37 percent of Hispanics had remarried.⁶

Data for women by presence of children under age 18 at divorce show that among women who divorced at ages under 25, 66 percent of women with no children and 85 percent of women with children had remarried, while among women who divorced at ages 45 or older only 28 percent of women without children and 30 percent of women with children had remarried. The proportions remarried for women who divorced at ages 45 and older are virtually identical. This undoubtedly is related to the ages of and actual presence of children at the time of divorce and remarriage. It may well be that women with very young children have a greater need to remarry than other women.

Education, as measured by years of school completed, appears to have little effect on likelihood of remarriage for those women who divorced at ages below 25. As age at divorce increases, the percentage remarried decreases across education categories. Thus, while there is virtually no difference in the percent remarried between the lowest and highest level of education (both close to 85 percent) among women who divorced at ages below 25 years, among women who divorced at ages 45 or older, 35 percent of women with less than 12 years of school completed had remarried, compared with only 22 percent of women with 16 or more years of school completed.⁷

The age of the woman at the June 1985 survey date also appears to be related to her likelihood of remarriage after divorce. Table C shows data for two age groups of women by the same characteristics shown for all women 15 years old and older in table B. As one would expect, the older women have higher proportions remarried overall largely be-

cause of increased exposure to the "risk" of remarriage.

The median age at divorce after first marriage for all women was 27.7 years (table B). The median age at divorce varied by less than 1 year by race and Hispanic origin and was quite similar (slightly above 27 years) for education categories reflecting less than 16 years of school completed. For women who completed 16 or more years of school, the median was 29.6 years. Better educated women tend generally to marry, divorce, and remarry later than women with fewer years of school completed but do not necessarily spend a longer time between marital events than other women (Norton and Miller, 1990).

Women with one or more children present at the time of divorce divorced at an earlier age than women with no children at the time of divorce (27.2 years versus 29.9 years) also reflecting a generally later pattern of marrying, divorcing, and remarrying among childless women (Norton and Miller, 1990). Table C indicates an older median age at divorce (32.0 years) for women who were 45 to 54 years old in 1985 than for women 35 to 44 (28.6 years). These data reflect more complete divorce experience for the older women. As the younger women attain more experience, their median age at divorce will more closely approximate that of their older counterparts.

The data on duration between divorce after first marriage and remarriage shown in figure 3 imply little or no variation according to age at divorce. Women who remarry do so relatively soon after divorce. For women who remarried at ages under 40, the median number of months spent in a divorced status was similar: 26.0 to 27.7. Thus, more than half of all remarriages to these women occurred within 2 to 2 1/2 years after divorce. The frequency of remarriage after divorce declines as age at divorce increases and the number of women who remarried after divorcing at ages 40 to 44 and 45 years and over is relatively small. Thus, the median number of months between divorce and remarriage for these women (30.9 months for women aged 40 to 44 at divorce and 23.6 months for women aged 45 and

over at divorce) should be interpreted cautiously.⁸

Among women who remarried after their first marriage ended in divorce, Black women had a longer interval between the two events than White women (table D). The median interval between divorce and remarriage for Black women was 38.3 months, compared with 26.5 months for White women.⁹

⁴ The apparent increases in the proportion of Blacks remarried between those divorced at ages 30 to 34 and 35 to 39 (42.1 percent versus 46.4 percent) and also those divorced at ages 40 to 44 and 45 to 49 (25.7 percent versus 28.7 percent) are not statistically significant. The apparent increase in the proportion with no children who had remarried between those divorced at ages 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 (55.3 percent versus 59.7 percent) is also not statistically significant.

⁵ Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. There is no statistically significant difference between the proportions of Black (71 percent) and Hispanic (72 percent) women. The difference between the proportions of White (83 percent) and Hispanic (72 percent) women is significant at the 83-percent level of confidence. The usual minimum level of confidence accepted by the Bureau of the Census is 90 percent.

⁶ The proportions of White (52 percent), Black (46 percent), and Hispanic origin (37 percent) women are not statistically different from each other.

⁷ The difference in the proportion remarried for those with less than 12 years of school completed (35 percent) versus those with 16 or more years of school completed (22 percent) is significant at the 87-percent level of confidence. The usual minimum level of confidence accepted by the Bureau of the Census is 90 percent.

⁸ The difference between the median intervals to remarriage for 40 to 44 year olds (30.9 months) and those 45 years and over (23.6 months) is significant at the 83-percent level of confidence. The usual minimum level of confidence accepted by the Bureau of the Census is 90 percent. Neither of these intervals is significantly different from any of the intervals for the under 40 population.

⁹ The interval for Hispanic women (29.9 months) is not statistically different from the intervals for White and Black women.

Table C.
Percentage of Women 35 to 54 Years Old Divorced From Their First Husbands, Who Had Remarried by the Survey Date, by Age at Divorce, Time Since Divorce, and Selected Characteristics: June 1985

(Universe is all women whose first marriage ended in divorce)

Characteristic	All ages	Age at divorce after first marriage						45 years and over	Median
		Under 25 years	25 to 29 years	30 to 34 years	35 to 39 years	40 to 44 years	45 years and over		
35 to 44 years	63.8	91.3	72.2	48.9	30.7	13.5	(NA)	28.6	
At least 3 years since first marriage ended in divorce	69.4	91.3	72.2	51.1	42.1	(B)	(NA)	27.8	
At least 5 years since first marriage ended in divorce	73.9	91.3	72.2	56.7	48.3	(B)	(NA)	27.1	
Race and Hispanic origin:									
White	66.2	92.7	75.4	52.0	30.9	16.0	(NA)	28.5	
Black	44.9	77.9	47.4	30.6	25.3	(B)	(NA)	29.2	
Hispanic ¹	55.0	(B)	(B)	45.5	(B)	(B)	(NA)	29.1	
With children ever-born under 18 at divorce:									
None	52.1	87.2	59.4	39.9	30.4	(B)	(NA)	30.2	
One or more	65.4	91.7	73.8	50.5	30.8	11.2	(NA)	28.4	
Years of school completed:									
Less than 12 years	66.7	89.0	71.4	53.6	24.3	(B)	(NA)	27.4	
12 years	65.8	92.3	72.3	52.3	34.0	(B)	(NA)	28.5	
13 to 15 years	63.3	91.2	74.9	45.7	32.4	(B)	(NA)	28.9	
16 or more years	55.7	91.6	68.8	41.3	26.0	(B)	(NA)	30.0	
45 to 54 years	68.0	95.5	85.5	71.1	59.5	34.9	20.2	32.0	
At least 3 years since first marriage ended in divorce	71.2	95.5	85.5	71.1	59.5	35.9	33.8	31.3	
At least 5 years since first marriage ended in divorce	74.0	95.5	85.5	71.1	59.5	38.4	(B)	30.7	
Race and Hispanic origin:									
White	69.1	96.6	86.3	71.6	60.3	37.6	22.7	32.0	
Black	59.4	88.1	(B)	64.1	(B)	(B)	(B)	31.6	
Hispanic ¹	73.2	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	29.6	
With children ever-born under 18 at divorce:									
None	45.3	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	30.8	21.8	41.9	
One or more	72.4	95.8	86.8	71.7	60.3	36.3	17.3	30.9	
Years of school completed:									
Less than 12 years	77.1	96.5	87.9	74.3	70.8	43.5	(B)	29.2	
12 years	69.1	96.1	84.8	76.9	57.4	36.1	20.6	32.0	
13 to 15 years	61.2	90.4	(B)	62.5	50.0	36.5	(B)	34.1	
16 or more years	52.6	(B)	(B)	60.5	(B)	(B)	(B)	34.8	

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
 NA Not applicable.
 B Base less than 75,000.

Women with no children present at the time of divorce spent more time in the divorced state before remarriage than women with children present (31.0 months and 26.7 months, respectively). Education appears to have had little significant influence on the interval between divorce and remarriage, at least

for all women 15 years and older who had remarried after a first marriage ended in divorce.

Comparative analysis of data on remarriage by age of women at the survey date is confounded by the incomplete marriage, divorce, and remarriage expe-

rience of younger women. However, the data shown in table D for women 45 to 54 years old and 55 years and older (two age groups wherein most divorces and subsequent remarriages have taken place) indicate a movement toward more rapid remarriage for those women who do remarry. The median interval between divorce and remarriage for women 45 to 54 years old was about 26.6 months, compared with a median interval of 35.6 months for women 55 years old and over in 1985.

Widowhood and Remarriage

Remarriage after widowhood is much less frequent than remarriage after divorce. Reasons for the differences in propensity to remarry are associated with emotional attachment to the previous spouse, the number of eligible potential partners available for remarriage, and the ages at which widowhood and divorce occur—most divorces occur to young women and most incidences of widowhood occur to comparatively much older women. The median age at divorce for women was 27.7 years according to the June 1985 survey while the median age at widowhood was 55.1 years.

As with the relationship between age at divorce and likelihood of remarriage, age at widowhood is inversely related to the likelihood of remarriage. Table E shows that among women who were widowed at ages under 45 years, 54 percent had remarried. The proportions remarried among women who were widowed at ages 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 years and older were 21 percent, 8 percent, and 2 percent, respectively. This association between age at widowhood and likelihood of remarriage exists for each set of characteristics presented in table E. (For simplicity's sake, the discussion here has been limited to the TOTAL section of table E.)

White women, regardless of age at widowhood, are more likely to remarry than Black women. The apparent differences between the likelihood of Hispanic women remarrying and both White and Black women remarrying are not statistically significant. Twenty-three percent

of White widows (from their first marriage) had remarried by June 1985 while 18 percent of Black widows and 20 percent of Hispanic-origin widows had done so. Among all women whose first marriage ended in widowhood, about 45 percent of those with a child under age 18 at the time of widowhood had remarried, compared with only 12 percent of those who had no children under age 18. This difference is largely a function of the age of the woman at the time of her husband's death and not primarily to the presence or absence of children. The proportion remarried among women who were widowed at ages under 45 or 45 to 54 years, ages during which widows would be likely to have children under 18, are quite similar for both women who had children and those who did not.

Differences according to years of school completed in the proportion of widows who remarried are minimal. There is some indication that level of education is associated with likelihood of remarriage for women who were widowed at ages under 45 years old. Within this group, women with 16 or more years of school completed may be somewhat less likely to have remarried than women of other educational attainment levels (47 percent remarried versus 55 percent remarried). The apparent difference is not statistically significant, however.

Figure 4 shows that White women usually become widowed at an older age than Black or Hispanic women. The median age at widowhood for White women was about 56 years, compared with a median of around 49 years for Black women and 48 years for women of Hispanic origin (the latter ages are not statistically different from each other).

Women who remarried after their first marriage ended in widowhood had a much younger median age at widowhood than all women widowed after first marriage, 36 years as compared with 55 years. Among widows who remarried, Whites still had an older median age at widowhood (36 years) than Blacks (33 years).¹⁰ The median age at widowhood

Figure 3.

Median Number of Months Between Divorce From First Marriage and Remarriage, by Age at Divorce: June 1985

(Universe is women married two or more times whose first marriage ended in divorce)

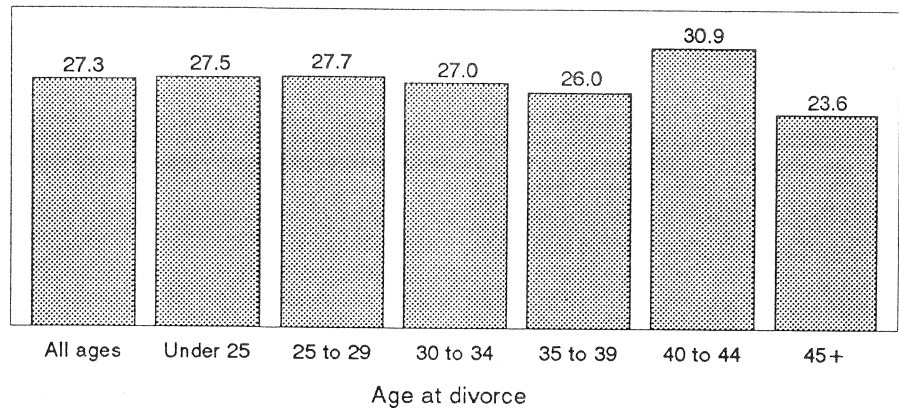


Table D.

Median Interval (in Months) Between Divorce and Remarriage for Women Whose First Marriage Ended in Divorce, by Selected Characteristics: June 1985

(Universe is women married two or more times whose first marriage ended in divorce)

Characteristic	All ages	Age at survey date			
		Under 35 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 years and over
Total	27.3	20.8	27.4	26.6	35.6
Race and Hispanic origin:					
White	26.5	20.2	27.0	26.0	34.4
Black	38.3	26.1	33.5	29.7	51.7
Hispanic ¹	29.9	23.5	36.7	35.4	47.5
With children ever-born under 18 at divorce:					
None	31.0	23.5	34.8	24.7	38.4
One or more	26.7	20.2	26.7	27.4	34.6
Years of school completed:					
Less than 12 years	28.3	15.9	24.0	28.6	35.0
12 years	25.7	19.6	25.4	27.3	35.9
13 to 15 years	28.3	23.9	29.1	23.3	38.3
16 or more years	28.8	24.4	30.4	28.0	32.2

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

¹⁰ The difference in the median ages at widowhood for White (35.9 years) and Black (32.7 years) remarried widows is significant at the 83-percent level of confidence. The usual minimum level of confidence accepted by the Bureau of the Census is 90 percent.

Table E.
Percentage of Women 15 Years and Over Widowed From Their First Husbands, Who Had Remarried by the Survey Date, by Age at Widowhood, Time Since First Widowed, and Selected Characteristics: June 1985

(Universe is all women whose first marriage ended in widowhood)

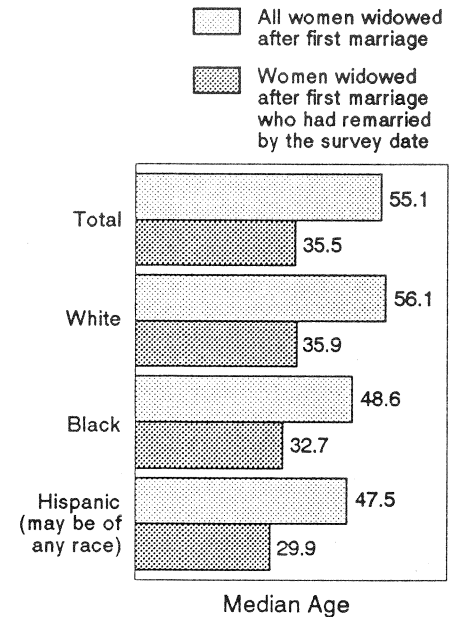
Characteristic and time since first widowhood	All ages	Age at widowhood after first marriage				Median
		Under 45 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over	
TOTAL						
Total	22.6	54.0	20.7	7.9	2.2	55.1
Race and Hispanic origin:						
White	23.3	58.2	22.5	8.6	2.4	56.1
Black	17.7	35.1	10.8	2.7	-	48.6
Hispanic ¹	20.3	37.9	9.6	4.8	(B)	47.5
With children ever-born under 18 at widowhood:						
None	11.5	50.4	20.3	8.0	2.2	61.7
One or more	44.6	54.8	21.3	5.9	(B)	37.5
Years of school completed:						
Less than 12 years	21.2	54.6	20.2	7.6	2.3	56.8
12 years	24.4	53.6	20.8	8.6	1.9	52.9
13 to 15 years	25.0	57.9	22.0	5.9	3.9	53.8
16 or more years	21.2	47.0	21.3	9.9	0.8	54.4
AT LEAST 3 YEARS SINCE FIRST MARRIAGE ENDED IN WIDOWHOOD						
Total	25.7	56.8	22.4	9.0	2.8	53.5
Race and Hispanic origin:						
White	26.5	60.8	24.2	9.7	2.9	54.7
Black	20.2	37.7	11.8	3.2	-	47.2
Hispanic ¹	23.2	42.7	(B)	5.4	(B)	47.2
With children ever-born under 18 at widowhood:						
None	13.4	52.9	21.9	9.1	2.8	60.7
One or more	47.4	57.6	23.2	6.6	(B)	37.0
Years of school completed:						
Less than 12 years	23.8	56.5	21.1	8.5	2.8	55.1
12 years	28.2	56.9	23.3	9.9	2.4	51.9
13 to 15 years	28.6	62.2	24.2	7.0	4.9	51.9
16 or more years	25.1	51.0	24.5	11.2	1.2	53.3
AT LEAST 5 YEARS SINCE FIRST MARRIAGE ENDED IN WIDOWHOOD						
Total	28.2	58.5	23.5	10.0	3.2	52.5
Race and Hispanic origin:						
White	29.1	62.5	25.4	10.9	3.3	53.3
Black	22.0	39.3	12.9	3.5	-	46.5
Hispanic ¹	26.5	43.5	(B)	(B)	(B)	44.8
With children ever-born under 18 at widowhood:						
None	15.1	53.7	23.2	10.2	3.2	59.9
One or more	49.3	59.5	24.0	7.7	(B)	36.8
Years of school completed:						
Less than 12 years	25.6	57.5	21.6	9.2	3.1	54.0
12 years	31.3	58.9	25.0	11.6	2.9	50.5
13 to 15 years	32.3	66.2	25.6	8.3	5.9	50.7
16 or more years	28.7	53.0	26.9	13.4	1.6	50.6

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

- Rounds to zero.

B Base less than 75,000.

Figure 4.
Median Age at Widowhood for Women Whose First Marriage Ended in Widowhood, by Whether Remarried by Survey Date, Race, and Hispanic Origin: June 1985



of Hispanic widows who remarried (30 years) was not statistically different from the comparable medians for White and Black women. This is most probably due to the small number of Hispanic widows who remarried (98,000) rather than to a true lack of difference.

Approximately one-half of the widows who remarried did so within about 47 months of becoming widowed (table F). The variation in the length of widowhood before remarriage, according to age at widowhood was not particularly striking, and, in fact, was not statistically significant.

Redivorce

About 1 of every 4 women who divorced and remarried had experienced a second divorce by June 1985. Redivorce is relatively rare among ever-married women. However, as the growing frequency of divorce and subsequent remarriage expands the "at risk" population, redivorce is likely to increase in

future years. Data in table G show that according to the results of the June 1985 survey, 26 percent of women eligible to redi-vorce had done so by age 75. Among eligible women aged 35 to 44 in 1985, 30 percent had redi-vorced by age 45. These women have not yet completed their redi-vorce experience but have completed most of their first divorce and remarriage experience.

These women also are expected to have the highest first divorce rates ever recorded (Norton and Moorman, 1987) and will to some as yet unknown degree establish a benchmark for stability of remarriage after divorce that may influence the redi-vorce behavior of younger cohorts of women. We will know more about the trend in redi-vorce and will be able to make more refined judgments of future redi-vorce behavior when the results of the 1990 marital history survey become available.

Summary

This paper has presented a description of recent trends in remarriage for women in the United States. The results reported here are intended to illuminate some of the dynamics associated with an increasingly common marital event that profoundly affects the form and nature of a dramatically rising number of families. The focus has been on who is most likely to remarry among women whose first marriage ends in divorce or widowhood. A brief section on the stability of remarriage after divorce described redi-vorce as being generally infrequent among all women ever-married but of growing importance among women who remarry after divorce.

The major findings in the paper indicate that remarriage is much more likely after divorce than after widowhood and that while characteristics like age, race, Hispanic origin, education, and presence of children have some role in determining remarriage prospects, age at divorce or widowhood exerts an overriding influence on the likelihood of remarriage.

Table F.
Women 15 Years and Over Whose First Marriage Ended in Widowhood by Interval Between Widowhood (After First Marriage) and Remarriage, and Age at Widowhood: June 1985

(Numbers in thousands. Universe is women married two or more times whose first marriage ended in widowhood)

Interval	All ages	Age at widowhood after first marriage				Median age
		Under 45 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over	
Total, all intervals	2,574	1,815	471	223	65	35.5
Less than 12 months	210	159	35	8	8	30.6
12-23 months	392	291	54	38	10	33.9
24-35 months	413	292	76	34	12	35.7
36-59 months	507	342	92	60	13	35.9
60-119 months	624	409	134	58	23	37.8
120-179 months	247	179	53	15	-	37.8
180 or more months	181	141	28	11	-	33.4
Median interval (in months)	46.5	44.3	53.1	48.8	(B)	(NA)

NA Not applicable.

- represents zero.

B Base less than 75,000.

Note: All numbers are rounded independently so parts may not sum to total.

Table G.
Distribution of Women Married Two or More Times Whose First Two Marriages Ended in Divorce by Selected Ages at Redi-vorce and Age at Survey Date: June 1985

(Numbers in thousands)

Age at redi-vorce	All ages	Age at survey date						75 years and over
		15 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	
Women married two or more times whose first marriage ended in divorce	11,117	279	2,477	3,054	2,039	1,650	1,033	583
Percentage of women whose second marriage ended in redi-vorce by age—								
25 years	2.6	8.6	5.0	2.4	1.3	1.6	0.5	1.0
35 years	13.5	(NA)	19.3	17.3	11.0	10.0	6.1	3.1
45 years	22.0	(NA)	(NA)	29.7	26.0	20.4	13.0	6.3
55 years	24.9	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	30.8	28.4	17.1	14.8
65 years	25.8	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	31.8	20.6	16.6
75 years	26.0	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	20.9	19.0
Over 75 years	26.0	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	19.0

NA Not applicable.

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