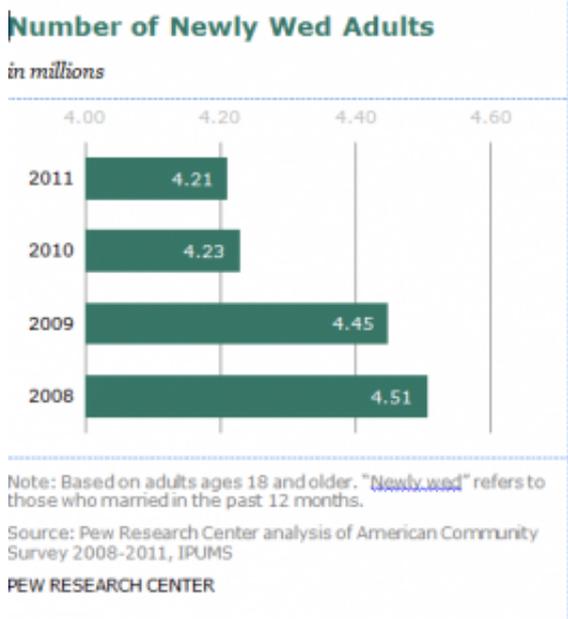


No Reversal in Decline of Marriage

Released: November 20, 2012

by *Richard Fry*

The recent decline in the number of Americans getting married shows no signs of reversing. In 2011, 4.2 million adults were newly married, about the same number as in 2010 and sharply lower than the 4.5 million newlyweds estimated in 2008.



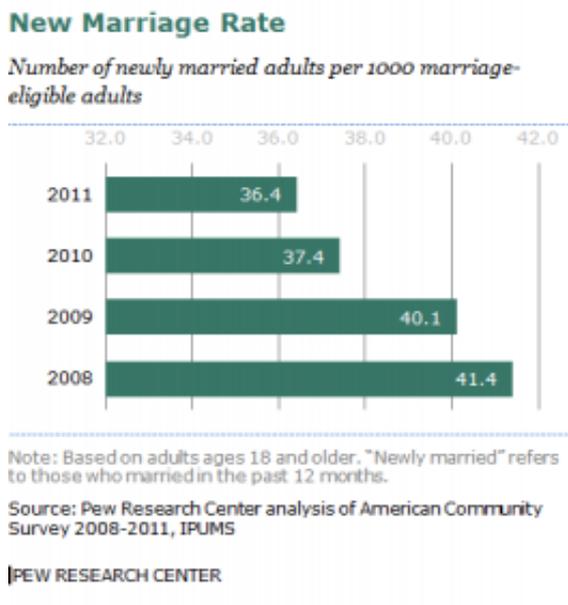
These estimates come from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, which began asking respondents in 2008 whether they had been married, divorced or widowed in the previous 12 months.

The decline in nuptials from 2008 to 2011 is in keeping with a [general trend away from marriage in the U.S.](#) Barely half of adults (51%) were married in 2011, according to ACS data, compared with 72% in 1960. Marriage increasingly is being replaced by cohabitation, single-person households and other adult living arrangements.

The decrease in the number of newly married adults was apparent among nearly all education levels and ages. The only exception was among adults age 65 and older, where the number of newlyweds were roughly similar in 2011 (89,000) and 2008 (91,000).

newlyweds were roughly similar in 2011 (89,000) and 2008 (91,000).

The decline in newlyweds from 2008 to 2011 could reflect population changes such as declines in the number of adults eligible to get married, but even when these factors are taken into account, the downward trend remains. Population change is factored in by creating a new-marriage rate in which the number of newlyweds is divided by the number of those eligible to marry (unmarried adults plus newly married adults).



In 2011, there were an estimated 36.4 newlyweds per thousand unmarried or newly married adults ages 18 and older. This compares with an estimated new-marriage rate of 37.4 in 2010 and 41.4 in 2008.

The new-marriage rate fell from 2008 to 2011 among all age and education groups, but was larger for less-educated Americans. Among adults who had not completed high school, an estimated 23.1 entered into marriage per thousand eligible in 2011, a 14% decline from the rate of 26.8 in 2008.

Among adults who had completed at least a bachelor's degree, an estimated 55.3 got married per thousand eligible in 2011, a 10% decline down from 61.5 in 2008.