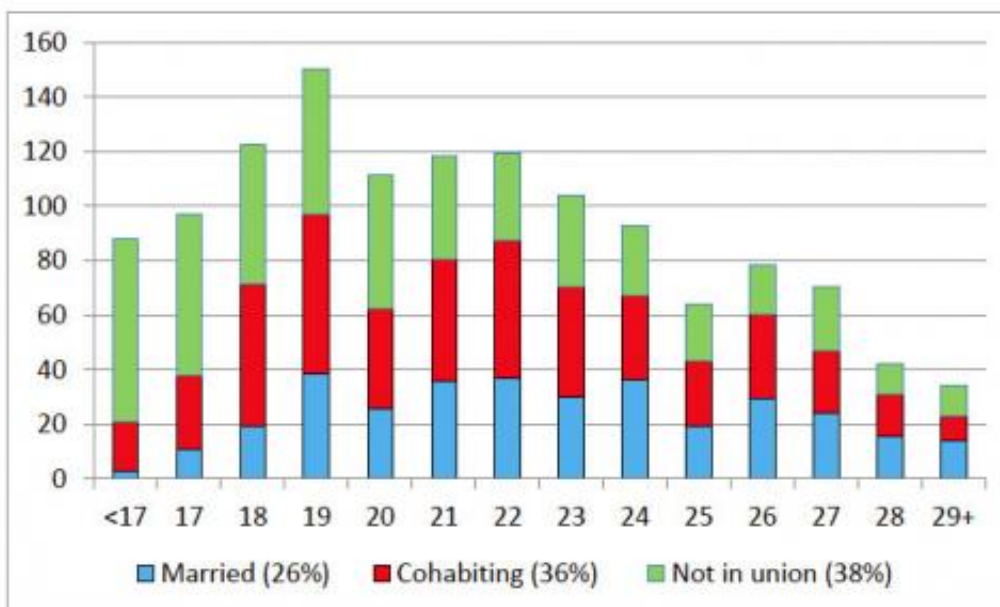


Most millennial moms who skip college also skip marriage

June 16 2014

A. Women with less than 12 grades of school completed (28% of all births)



Credit: Johns Hopkins University

Waiting until marriage to have babies is now "unusual" among less-educated adults close to 30 years old, Johns Hopkins University researchers found.

"Clearly the role of [marriage](#) in fertility and family formation is now modest in early adulthood and the lofty place that marriage once held among the markers of adulthood is in serious question," sociologist

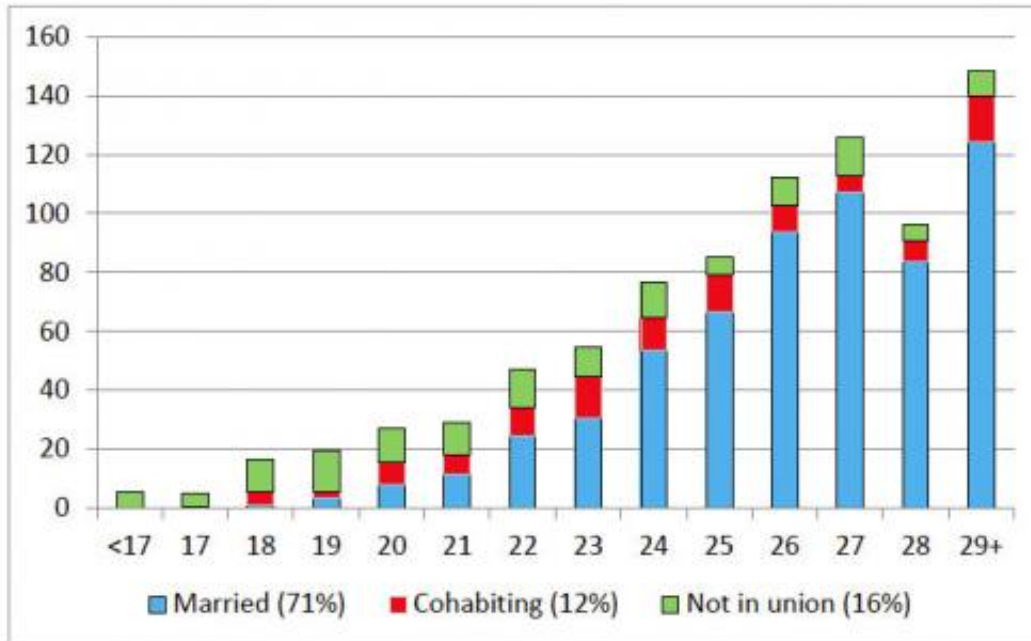
Andrew J. Cherlin said. "It is now unusual for non-[college](#) graduates who have children in their teens and 20s to have all of them within marriage."

Among parents aged 26 to 31 who didn't graduate from college, 74 percent of the [mothers](#) and 70 percent of the fathers had at least one child outside of marriage, Cherlin found. And, 81 percent of births reported by women and 87 percent of births reported by men had occurred to non-college graduates.

"If marriage retains its place anywhere," Cherlin said, "it would be among the college graduates, because most of them do not begin to have children until after they are married. The difference between them and the non-college-educated with regard to the percentage of births within marriage is so striking as to suggest a very different experience of early adulthood."

The study is detailed in "Changing Fertility Regimes and the Transition to Adulthood: Evidence from a Recent Cohort," a paper by Cherlin, Elizabeth Talbert and Suzumi Yasutake that was presented recently to the Population Association of America.

D. Women with four or more years of college completed (19% of all births)



Credit: Johns Hopkins University

The researchers mined data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, focusing on a sample of 9,000 "early adults" who reached ages 26 to 31 in 2011. They are the oldest members of the generation commonly known as millennials.

By that age, 53 percent of the women had given birth to at least one child and 64 percent of the mothers had at least one baby when they weren't married. (Forty-seven percent of the mothers had all of their babies out of wedlock.) The percentage of unwed pregnancies goes up as the mothers' education level declines. The numbers are roughly the same for men.

Of mothers with four or more years of college, 32 percent had at least one baby while unmarried.

Of mothers with only one to three years of college, 67 percent had at least one baby while unmarried.

Of mothers with only a [high school diploma](#), 71 percent had at least one baby while unmarried.

Lastly, among mothers with no high school diploma, 87 percent had at least one baby while unmarried.

Only 36 percent of the mothers had all of their babies while married—that's 46 percent of whites, 10 percent of blacks and 28 percent of Hispanics. Those numbers are roughly the same for men.

"The literature on [early adulthood](#) often suggests that this period can be a valuable time of self-exploration free of adult responsibilities," said Cherlin, the Benjamin H. Griswold Professor of Public Policy at Johns Hopkins. "But this characterization would seem to better apply to well-educated middle-class early adults with their typically long period of college attendance, perhaps followed by graduate school, and their postponement of childbearing until after marriage."

More information: Paper available at krieger.jhu.edu/sociology/wp-c.../2/02/Read-Online.pdf

Provided by Johns Hopkins University

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