

# Overlapping and Independent Influences:

## Marital and Fertility Histories' Association With Financial Resources in Mid-to-Later Life

Presented at the 2023 annual meeting of the Population Association of America  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
April 12-15, 2023

Brittany M. King, Ph.D.  
Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division  
Demographic Directorate  
U.S. Census Bureau

### BACKGROUND

- Family formation and net worth have a bidirectional relationship.<sup>1</sup>
- Financial resources, or lack thereof, have been found to be a key reason for delaying marriage.<sup>2,3,4</sup>
- Delays to childbearing can also be attributed to pursuit of financial resources, but only among advantaged adults.<sup>3,5</sup>

### HYPOTHESES

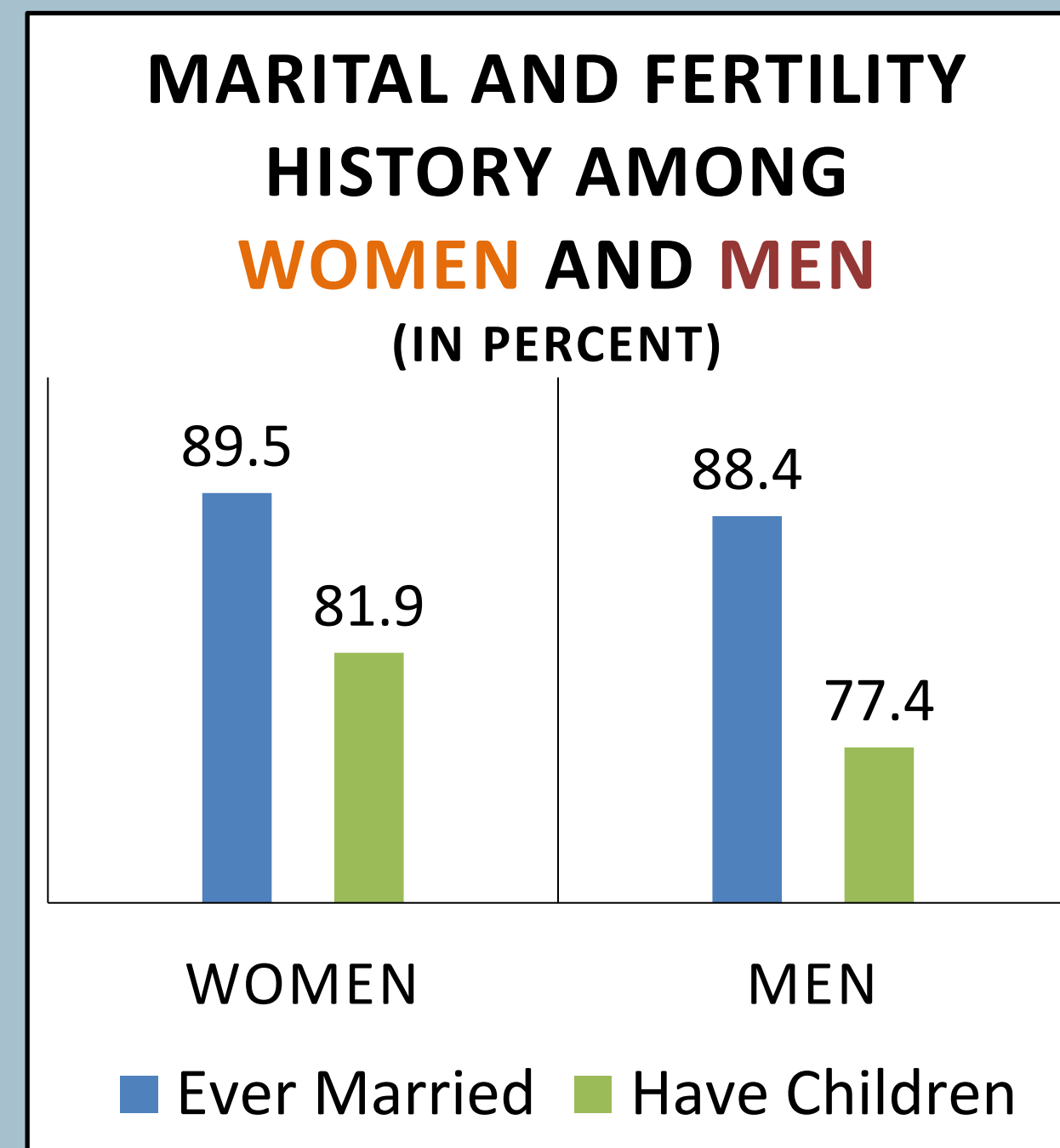
- A larger percentage of women and men who have never married and have child(ren) will have negative to zero net worth compared to their counterparts with other initial family formations.
- Fewer women and men who had child(ren) then married will have a net worth of \$600,000 or more compared to the women and men who married before they had child(ren).
- A smaller percentage of women who married then had child(ren) will have \$600,000 or more in net worth than women who ever married and do not have children.

### DATA & METHODS

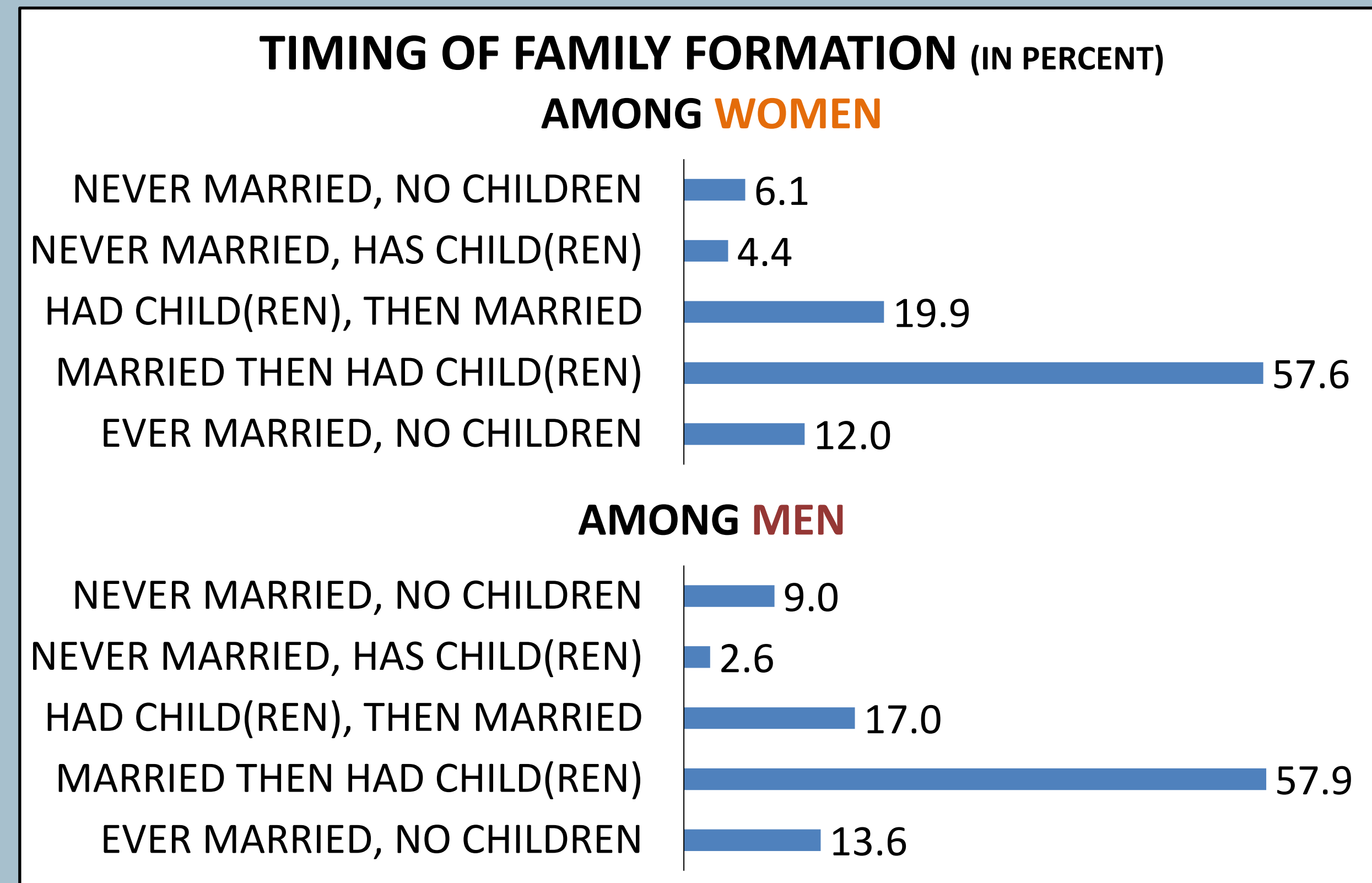
- The 2021 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).
- Women and men aged 45 or older.

### REFERENCES

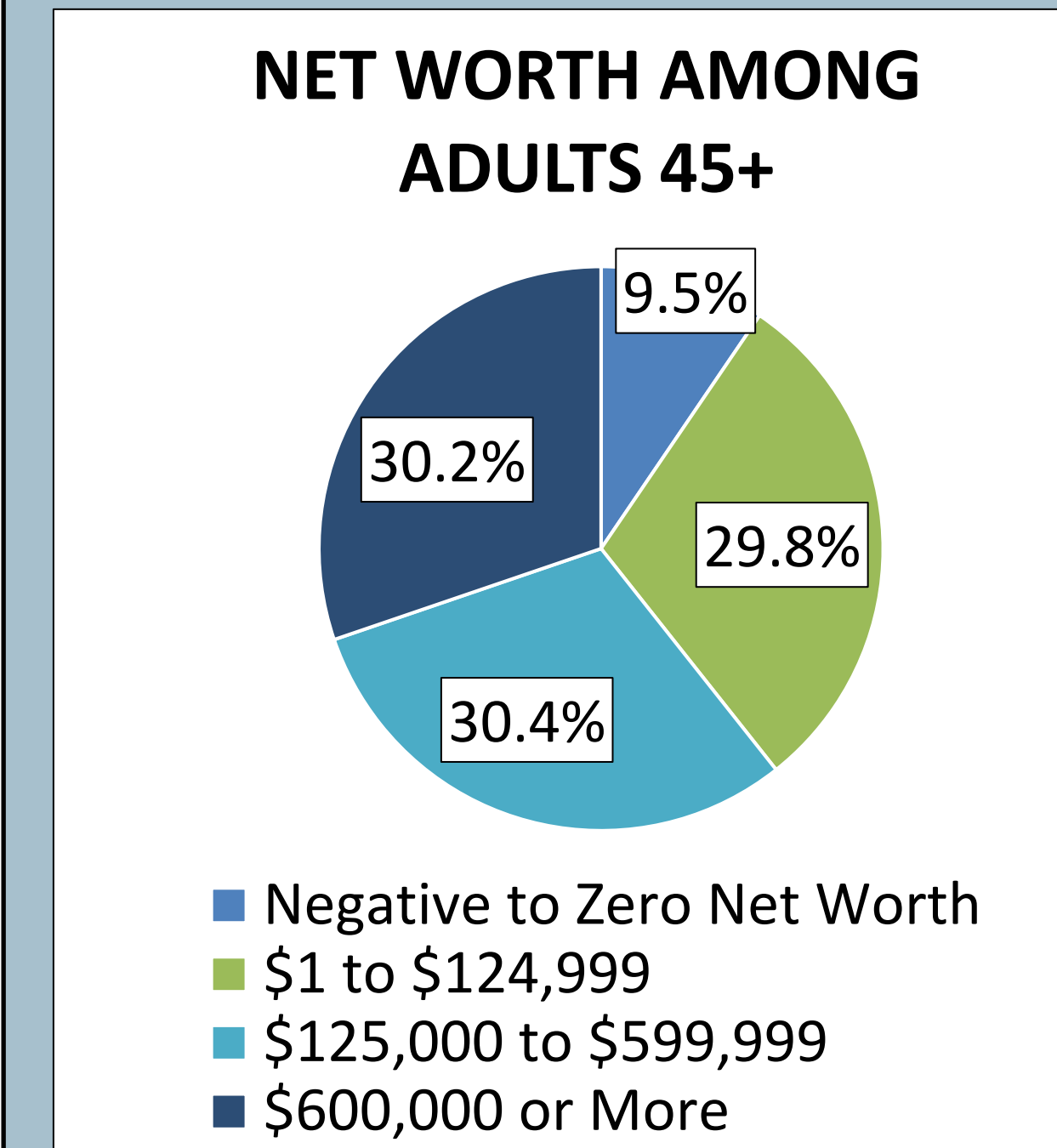
- Killewald, A., Pfeffer, F. T., & Schachner, J. N. (2017). "Wealth Inequality and Accumulation." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43, 379–404. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053331>.
- Gibson-Davis, C., Gassman-Pines, A., & Lehrman, R. (2018). "His' and 'Hers': Meeting the Economic Bar to Marriage." *Demography*, 55(6), 2321–2343. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0726-z>.
- McLanahan, S., & Percheski, C. (2008). "Family Structure and the Reproduction of Inequalities." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34(1), 257–276. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134549>.
- Lundberg, S., Pollak, R. A., & Stearns, J. (2016). "Family Inequality: Diverging Patterns in Marriage, Cohabitation, and Childbearing." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(2), 79–102. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.30.2.79>
- Edin, K., & Reed, J. M. (2005). "Why Don't They Just Get Married? Barriers to Marriage Among the Disadvantaged." *The Future of Children*, 15(2), 117–137. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3556566>.



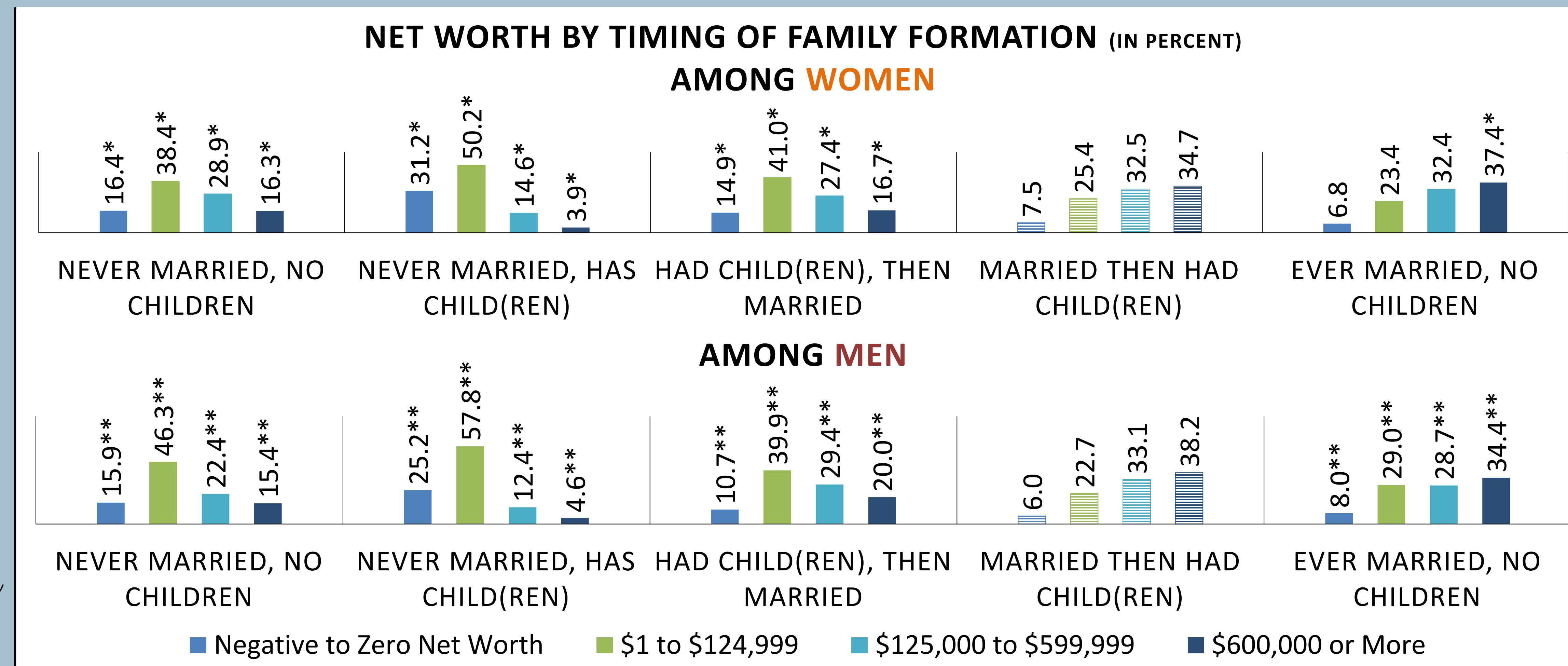
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Survey of Income and Program Participation



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Survey of Income and Program Participation



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Survey of Income and Program Participation



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Survey of Income and Program Participation

\*: indicates statistical difference between women who married before children and women with other marital and fertility histories at a 90% confidence interval

\*\* indicates statistical difference between men who married before children and men with other marital and fertility histories at a 90% confidence interval

### FOCAL VARIABLES

- Timing of family formation:
  - Adults are included as having children if they have had at least one biological child.
  - Timing is captured by using age in months at first birth and at first marriage.
  - Had child(ren), then married includes those whose first child was born prior to the month before marriage.
  - Married then had child(ren) includes those whose first child was born the month before or the month of marriage.
- Net worth:
  - Net worth is split into four categories; those who have positive net worth are split into three comparable size categories.
  - If married during December of the reference year (2020), the net worth shown is a combined measure of both spouses' net worth.

### FINDINGS AND SUMMARY

- Most women and men aged 45 and older married, then had child(ren).
- Being never married and having children is the least common type of family formation among women and men.
- Never-married women and men who have child(ren) are more likely to have negative to zero net worth than their counterparts with other initial family formations.
- A larger percentage of ever-married women who do not have children have \$600,000 or more in net worth than the women who married, then had child(ren).
- Men who married, then had child(ren) are more likely to have \$125,000 to \$599,999 and \$600,000 or more in net worth than men with other initial family formations.



This poster is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion. Any views expressed are those of the author and not those of the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release. DRB #CBDRB-FY22-SEHSD003-043. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level, unless otherwise indicated.

