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**Differentials in Precision of Reporting of Dates of Marital
Events in the National Survey of Families and Households**

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Differentials in Precision of Reporting of Dates of Marital Events in the National Survey of Families and Households

It has become common in social surveys to retrospectively collect detailed marital histories, as well as work, education, and fertility histories. These histories are then analyzed by methods which allow the estimation of true rates of incidence of events. This paper reports an analysis of the precision with which dates were reported by respondents in the NSFH marital and cohabitation histories.

Marriage and cohabitation histories were collected in the National Survey of Families and Households by asking questions in the form, "In what month and year were you married (for the first time)?" When a respondent was unable to give the month that an event occurred, interviewers were instructed to probe for the season of the year. If the respondent could not give the season, the interviewer asked whether it was the first or last half of the year.

In this paper we will examine differentials in the precision with which respondents were able to date events in their marital histories - i.e., differentials in the extent to which they were able to report the specific month that an event occurred. We are not examining the accuracy of their reports since we have no independent source with which to compare the respondents' reports. The respondent may have told the interviewer that he married in January of 1967 when he actually married in March of 1962. Even though incorrect, this would be regarded as a precise dating of the marriage. The histories were collected by asking the date of first marriage, followed by the dates of divorce, separation, or widowhood from first marriage. This was followed by similar questions concerning

subsequent marriages. Then followed a series of questions concerning cohabitation experience before first marriage, between subsequent marriages, and since the last marriage ended. Never married persons were asked questions on cohabitation experience. This strategy resulted in 37 different questions concerning dates of marriage, separation, divorce, widowhood, and beginning and ending of cohabitation. Respondents reported an average of 2.4 dates of marital events.

Table 1 lists each of the various possible dates, and the distribution of the precision of responses for each date. Precision is classified into four categories.

1. Month and year given by respondent
2. Year and season or portion of year given
3. Year given, but no month or portion of year
4. No year given

Table 1 suggests:

1. There is wide variation in the precision with which different types of marital and cohabitation events are dated by respondents. The major differences are hardly surprising. Dates of marriages, particularly first marriage, are dated quite precisely. It is common for couples to annually celebrate the anniversary of their marriage. This is not normally true of the other events.

2. Dates of beginning of current cohabitation and of beginning of cohabitation with partners who subsequently became spouses also seem to be precisely reported. 3. Date of widowhood, particularly widowhood from first marriage, tends to be precisely

reported.

4. Dates of separation and divorce are not as precisely reported as dates of marriage, although for both separation and divorce, about three-quarters of events were dated with both a month and a year.

5. Prior episodes of cohabitation that did not result in marriage are less precisely reported. However, between two-thirds and four-fifths of these events are reported with both a month and a year.

The dates of marital separation and the beginning and ending of episodes of cohabitation are quite distinct from marriage, widowhood, and divorce in one important way. The latter are marked by a clearly-defined event which can, in principle, be unambiguously dated. Separation and cohabitation, however, are often more of a process that may occur gradually over a period of time. A couple experiencing conflict may slowly "separate" by spending less and less time with each other. The precise date when one of the spouses establishes a separate residence is often ambiguous, as he/she may stay part of the time with friends or relatives and part of the time with the spouse. There may be a series of separations before the relationship is clearly dissolved. The partners may define the situation at a particular point in time quite differently. Similarly, an unmarried couple with separate residences often gradually begins spending more and more time together. At some point one of the partners may be staying with the other for a majority of the time, and finally may give up his/her separate residence. Just when they become a cohabiting couple is often not clear.

6. It appears that it was useful to use the "season" probe in cases where the respondent was not able to give a month. Overall, 1.4 percent of all dates were given with a season or portion of the year. However, for some events such as the separation or divorce dates or beginning and ending of cohabitation episodes, over 10 percent of the responses were in terms of season, rather than month.

There was, however, a problem with some seasonal responses. We discovered that "Winter" responses are sometimes ambiguous with respect to year. When someone says something occurred in the winter of 1985, they may mean December of 1985 or January or February of 1985, or even January or February of 1986. (We should have had the foresight to train the interviewers to be sensitive to this issue and to probe for the correct year.)

7. The events for which respondents were able to give only a year or were unable to give even a year tend also to be separations, divorces, and prior cohabitations not resulting in marriage. This tends to be more common for events associated with second and higher order marriages than for events associated with the first marriage.

8. Some events, including dates of marriage, separation, and divorce for higher order marriages and cohabitation dates before higher order marriages have over 10 percent of reports which do not include even a year.

The analyses that follow examine what characteristics of individuals and of the event being dated are associated with the precision of the report of the date. The individual characteristics considered include age, race/ethnicity, sex, education, and region of residence. We will address two types of questions:

1. What characteristics of respondents (age, education, race, etc.) are associated with higher or lower precision in reporting of marital and cohabitation events, and
2. To what extent is there variation in the precision of reporting dates of particular types of events associated with individual characteristics of persons who tend to experience the event - e.g., widowhood is usually experienced at older ages and thus to be reported primarily by older respondents. To what extent is the precision of reporting widowhood lower than it might otherwise be because older respondents tend to give imprecise reports?

Table 2 reports the results of a multiple classification analysis in which the probability (expressed as a percent) that a particular date is reported precisely. The differentials are expressed as the category-specific mean, or the percent giving the month and year adjusted for the confounding effects of other characteristics of the respondent and the type of date.

Age

Older persons were less likely to be able to report the month and year of marital events than younger persons. Both month and year were given by over ninety percent of dates reported by persons under age 35. The proportion gradually drops off to around 80 percent of dates reported by persons age 55 to 69, and to 76 percent for persons age 80 and older. There is variation in the precision of reporting by type of date, with dates of marriage and widowhood being more precisely reported than dates of separation, divorce, and cohabitation. When date type and other characteristics are controlled, the relationship with age is considerably stronger and more regular.

Age is related to at least three things that may affect the ability to precisely report dates - the dates that older people are reporting tend to be longer ago than the dates which younger people are reporting. A person under age 30 is almost always reporting on events which occurred in the past ten years. A person in their seventies may be reporting on an event that occurred 50 or more years ago. It would be desirable to include how long ago the event occurred in the regression model. This was not, however, possible for events for which the respondent could not report the year. In a later section we will examine this issue as best we can with the data.

Precision of dating marital events may be inversely related to the complexity of the marital/cohabitation history. Because of the recent increase in cohabitation and divorce, persons under age 45 are likely to have more complex marital/cohabitation histories than older persons. Similarly, persons in their twenties have had less of an opportunity to have yet had as complex histories than persons in their thirties and forties.

People may be more able to precisely date the beginning of their current status than the beginning or ending of a status which they have left. For reasons discussed in the previous paragraph, age is probably related to the probability that a date being reported is the beginning of the person's current status, with middle aged persons being more likely than older or younger persons to be reporting on the beginning or ending of a prior status.

Race/ethnicity

Blacks are 11 percentage points less likely than majority whites to be able to report month and year of occurrence of dates of marital events. This differential is only slightly

attenuated (8 point differential) after education and other characteristics of the person and the type of date are controlled. There is virtually no difference between Mexican Americans and majority whites, either before or after controls.

Sex

Men are about four points less likely than women to be able to report month and year of marital events, and this differential is only slightly attenuated when other characteristics are controlled.

Education

Precision of reporting dates is positively related to education. Net of age, race/ethnicity, and other characteristics, persons who did not complete high school were 8 percentage points less likely than high school graduates to be able report month and year of marital events. There is only a small difference between high school graduates and persons who began, but did not complete college. College graduates are about 4 points more likely than high school graduates to fully report dates of marital events.

Region of Residence

There are only small regional differences; net of other characteristics, persons living in the South are slight less likely than persons living in other regions to be able to report month and year of marital events.

Differentials in Proportion Able to Report At Least a Year

We can also look at differentials in the proportion of persons who, while

unable to report the month or season of an event, were able to report the year in which it occurred. Overall a year was given for 96.6 percent of the dates of marital and cohabitation events reported in the NSFH. The last column of Table 2 shows the unadjusted percent who were able to report at least the year that an event occurred. (For a variety of reasons we did not analyze the reporting of year with multivariate procedures. Adjusting for other characteristics make little difference.)

The same general patterns observed for ability to report month are found for ability to report the year. There is a slight decrease in the proportion of missing dates (i.e., the respondent was unable to report the year of the event) with increasing age. About 98 percent of events reported by persons under age 40 included the year, and even for respondents aged 65-69 a year was given for 95 percent of the marital events. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents age 80 and over were able to report a year. This is somewhat deceiving, however. By age 80 a significant proportion of respondents are not covered in the survey because they are not living in households or, if in households, are too ill to be interviewed.

Blacks are 3.6 points less likely to report year than majority whites, and again Mexican Americans have a proportion that is identical to that of whites. Persons who have not completed high school have a slightly lower percentage than those with more education, but there is no difference among the three higher education categories. There is virtually no difference between men and women, and again persons living in the South are slightly less likely to be able to report the year.

Differentials in Precision by Type of Event

The percent of respondents able to report month and year varies from 96.1 percent for first marriage date to between 60 and 65 percent for some of the dates of separation, divorce, and cohabitation.

As a way of summarizing these patterns, we have separately analyzed the precision of reporting marital events (marriage, divorce, separation, and widowhood) and cohabitation events, and then classified the events by type. First we consider only marital events (marriage, separation, divorce, and widowhood). Marital events can be classified by marriage order, type of event, and whether or not the date was the transition into the current status. Table 3 shows differentials in the percent of responses giving both month and year by type of event, net of the same characteristics of the respondent that were examined above.

Precision of date reporting is inversely related to marriage order. Eighty-nine percent of dates associated with first marriages are reported precisely; this compares to 85 percent of dates associated with second marriages, and only 72 percent of dates associated with fourth or fifth marriages. This differential is diminished when characteristics of the respondent and event type and whether or not it is a current status are controlled. Dates of marriages are more precisely reported than dates of other events. Widowhood is more precisely reported than separation or divorce. When individual characteristics, most notably age, are controlled, the difference between widowhood and marriage is eliminated. Marriage and widowhood can be precisely reported; separation and divorce,

much less precisely.

We also included a binary variable as to whether the event being dated is the event that marked the beginning of the respondent's current marital status, or whether it was the beginning of a status that the respondent subsequently has left. This classification involves only marital statuses, and is not affected by cohabitation experience since the end of the last marriage. That is, if a person divorced and then cohabited, we count the date of divorce as the beginning of the current marital status. In the case of divorced persons, we included both their dates of separation and of divorce as the beginning of their current marital status.

Respondents are about ten points more likely to be able to precisely date their entry into their current status than they are earlier marital transitions. This differential persists when other personal characteristics and characteristics of the event are controlled. They are about 2.5 percentage points more likely to be able to report the year of entry into a current status than the year of entry into a previous status.

Similarly we can distinguish different types of cohabitation dates (See Table 4.) Not surprisingly, respondents are most likely to be able to give a precise date for the beginning of a current cohabitation than for cohabitation experience in the past. They are also very likely to be able to give a precise date for the beginning of cohabitation with someone that they later married. They are least likely to be able to precisely report the dates of cohabitation experience before marriages if they did not marry the partner and for first cohabitation experience of never married persons.

Net of other characteristics of the individual and the type of cohabitation experience being reported, there is not a difference by whether the date was the beginning or the ending of an episode.

Table 5 shows the differentials in the precision of reporting dates of marital events by respondent characteristics. Table 6 shows the same for dates of cohabitation events. We will not discuss these tables.

Respondents, Rather than Events, as Unit of Analysis

An alternative way of representing differentials in the precision of reporting dates is to use persons, rather than events as the unit of analysis. That is what is done in Table 7. Here we are predicting, in effect, the proportion of dates reported by the respondent that included both month and year. This is accomplished by running the same analysis (excluding type of date), weighting each report by the $1/n$, where n is the number of dates which were reported by the case. There were 11,554 respondents who had one or more marital or cohabitation events to report on. The average respondent was able to report a month and year for 91.2 percent of the applicable dates. That this number is higher than the 86.2 percent of dates for which we obtained a month and year, indicates that persons with more complex marital/cohabitation histories are less likely to be able to precisely report the dates of the events.

Differentials in Precision of Dating Marital Events by How Long Ago the Event Occurred

It is possible to examine variation in the ability to precisely report dates by how long ago the event occurred. In this analysis we consider only those events for which the respondent was able to give the year of occurrence. Thus, the most serious inability to report the time of event is excluded from consideration. Table 8 shows the effect of when the event occurred on ability to report the month of marital and cohabitation events. Model 1 also includes age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, and region, the same variables used in the earlier analysis. Model 2 adds detailed type of event.

There is little difference in the ability of respondents to report the month of events by when the event occurred, except that event occurring since 1980 were reported more precisely. After controlling on type of event and characteristics of the respondent (Model 2), the positive relationship between year and precision begins in 1965-1969.

Model 1 was run to see the degree to which differences in the mix of event types affected the relationship between precision and date of the event. More recent events are more likely to be cohabitation events and higher order marital events, which tend to be less precisely dated. It is clear that the composition of dates by type is affecting the relationship. The relationship is considerably steeper when date type is controlled than when it is not.

Finally, we can examine the degree to which the effect of age on precision of reporting is due to the relationship of age and recency of occurrence of events and the distribution by type of event. Younger respondents are likely to be reporting on events

that occurred very recently, increasing the precision with which they can be reported. On the other hand, younger respondents are more likely to be reporting on cohabitation events not followed by marriage to the partner, which tend to be imprecisely reported. Because of the trend in marital disruption, respondents who are middle aged are more likely than younger or older persons to be reporting on events associated with higher order marriages which tend to be less precisely reported.

Table 9 shows the effect of age with and without event type and when the event occurred. The comparison between models 1 and 3 shows that variation among age groups in the distribution of when events occurred makes a considerable difference in the effect of age on precision of dating marital events. The comparison between models 2 and 3 shows that different distributions by date type only slightly attenuates the age effect.

When both date type and when the event occurred are controlled, the effect of age is quite modest. Persons over age 65 are slightly less likely than younger persons to be able to date marital events precisely. Beyond age 65 there is a further modest deterioration in the precision of dating of events with age. Again we would emphasize that beyond age 75, the least able respondents, those who are institutionalized or "too ill to interview," constitute a fairly large proportion of the total population. Hence the deterioration of precision of reports with age is understated at the highest ages.

Table 1
Distribution of Precision of Report of Date of Marital and Cohabitation
Events, by Type of Event

| | <u>Respondent Reported</u> | | | | Total | N |
|--|----------------------------|--------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| | Month | Season | Year | No Year | | |
| Marriage Date | | | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 96.1 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 1.0 | 100.0 | 10605 |
| 2nd Marriage | 91.9 | 1.9 | 3.5 | 2.8 | 100.0 | 2484 |
| 3rd Marriage | 86.2 | 2.2 | 7.3 | 4.3 | 100.0 | 465 |
| 4th Marriage | 76.7 | 0.0 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 100.0 | 86 |
| 5th Marriage | 78.9 | 0.0 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 100.0 | 19 |
| Divorce Date | | | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 77.7 | 5.9 | 11.9 | 4.5 | 100.0 | 3426 |
| 2nd Marriage | 74.8 | 7.5 | 12.0 | 5.7 | 100.0 | 774 |
| 3rd Marriage | 69.6 | 3.8 | 15.8 | 10.8 | 100.0 | 158 |
| 4th Marriage | 65.6 | 3.1 | 18.8 | 12.5 | 100.0 | 32 |
| Separation Date | | | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 79.2 | 6.0 | 9.7 | 5.1 | 100.0 | 3941 |
| 2nd Marriage | 76.4 | 6.3 | 9.4 | 7.9 | 100.0 | 908 |
| 3rd Marriage | 69.7 | 2.6 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 100.0 | 195 |
| 4th Marriage | 64.1 | 7.7 | 10.3 | 17.9 | 100.0 | 39 |
| Widowhood Date | | | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 88.9 | 1.7 | 5.3 | 4.1 | 100.0 | 1355 |
| 2nd Marriage | 86.9 | 1.3 | 5.2 | 6.5 | 100.0 | 306 |
| 3rd Marriage | 77.8 | 0.0 | 5.6 | 16.7 | 100.0 | 36 |
| 4th Marriage | - | -- | - | - | 100.0 | 19 |
| Cohabitation with First Spouse - beginning | | | | | | |
| | 87.0 | 5.5 | 5.4 | 2.2 | 100.0 | 1663 |
| Cohabitation with Other Partner - before 1st Marriage | | | | | | |
| beginning | 66.3 | 14.0 | 14.4 | 5.3 | 100.0 | 430 |
| ending | 67.2 | 11.2 | 15.1 | 6.5 | 100.0 | 430 |
| Cohabitation with Second Spouse - beginning | | | | | | |
| | 86.2 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 3.3 | 100.0 | 933 |
| Cohabitation with Other Partner - before 2nd Marriage | | | | | | |
| beginning | 67.3 | 9.1 | 10.1 | 13.5 | 100.0 | 208 |
| ending | 63.5 | 11.1 | 10.6 | 14.9 | 100.0 | 208 |
| Cohabitation with 3rd/last Spouse - beginning | | | | | | |
| | 81.8 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 4.8 | 100.0 | 187 |

Table 1. (continued)

| | <u>Respondent Reported</u> | | | | Total | N |
|--|----------------------------|--------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| | Month | Season | Year | No Year | | |
| Cohabitation with Other | | | | | | |
| Partner - bef 3rd/last Marriage | | | | | | |
| beginning | 76.5 | 8.3 | 11.5 | 3.7 | 100.0 | 375 |
| ending | 78.6 | 6.9 | 10.2 | 4.4 | 100.0 | 364 |
| Ever-Married Current Cohabitor | | | | | | |
| beginning with | | | | | | |
| current partner | 91.0 | 1.9 | 2.6 | 4.5 | 100.0 | 311 |
| Other partner since last marriage | | | | | | |
| beginning | 78.3 | 8.3 | 10.0 | 3.3 | 100.0 | 60 |
| end | 80.0 | 8.3 | 5.0 | 6.7 | 100.0 | 60 |
| Never Married, Not Currently | | | | | | |
| Cohabiting - First Partner | | | | | | |
| beginning | 78.6 | 10.1 | 9.2 | 2.2 | 100.0 | 597 |
| ending | 78.7 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 3.1 | 100.0 | 588 |
| Never Married Current Cohabitor | | | | | | |
| beginning with | | | | | | |
| current partner | 92.3 | 4.8 | 2.0 | 0.9 | 100.0 | 352 |
| first partner | | | | | | |
| beginning | 77.6 | 10.2 | 12.2 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 98 |
| end | 76.5 | 11.2 | 10.2 | 2.0 | 100.0 | 98 |
| Total | 86.2 | 4.0 | 6.3 | 3.4 | 100.0 | 31822 |
| Marital Events: All Orders | | | | | | |
| Marriage | 92.9 | 1.8 | 3.2 | 2.1 | 100.0 | 15077 |
| Divorce | 78.0 | 5.2 | 11.6 | 5.3 | 100.0 | 4280 |
| Separation | 78.9 | 5.9 | 9.8 | 5.4 | 100.0 | 4107 |
| Widowhood | 88.4 | 1.7 | 5.5 | 4.4 | 100.0 | 1396 |
| Current Status | | | | | | |
| Yes | 93.5 | 1.7 | 3.0 | 1.8 | 100.0 | 12845 |
| No | 81.3 | 5.6 | 8.6 | 4.6 | 100.0 | 18977 |
| Cohabitation Events: | | | | | | |
| Type of Cohabitation | | | | | | |
| with person R married | 86.3 | 5.3 | 5.6 | 2.7 | 100.0 | 2783 |
| other partner- | | | | | | |
| before marriage | 70.4 | 10.2 | 12.4 | 6.9 | 100.0 | 2015 |
| current partner | 91.7 | 3.5 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 100.0 | 663 |
| since last marriage | 79.2 | 8.3 | 7.5 | 5.0 | 100.0 | 120 |
| Never married - 1st partner | 78.4 | 9.8 | 9.4 | 2.4 | 100.0 | 1381 |
| Beginning/Ending Date | | | | | | |
| Beginning Date | 82.8 | 6.8 | 7.1 | 3.3 | 100.0 | 5214 |
| Ending Date | 74.0 | 9.5 | 10.9 | 5.7 | 100.0 | 1748 |

Table 2
Differentials in the Precision of Reporting Marriage and Cohabitation Dates
N = 31,822

| | N | Reported Month and Year | | Reported at Least Year |
|-----------------------|-------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | Mean = 86.2% Unadjusted Mean | Adjusted Mean | Mean = 96.6% Unadjusted Mean |
| Age | | | | |
| <25 | 1876 | 93.7 | 94.9 | 98.7 |
| 25-29 | 3637 | 93.3 | 94.1 | 98.8 |
| 30-34 | 5089 | 90.2 | 91.3 | 98.3 |
| 35-39 | 4808 | 88.1 | 88.1 | 97.6 |
| 40-44 | 3646 | 86.5 | 86.7 | 96.6 |
| 45-49 | 2506 | 84.4 | 84.9 | 96.4 |
| 50-54 | 2051 | 82.6 | 83.5 | 95.7 |
| 55-59 | 1772 | 78.0 | 79.0 | 94.6 |
| 60-64 | 1688 | 80.1 | 78.8 | 95.0 |
| 65-69 | 1587 | 82.2 | 80.8 | 94.6 |
| 70-79 | 1587 | 82.2 | 80.8 | 94.6 |
| 80+ | 873 | 76.1 | 71.1 | 89.7 |
| Race/ethnicity | | | | |
| Black | 5543 | 76.8 | 79.4 | 93.6 |
| Non-Hispanic White | 23756 | 88.5 | 87.9 | 97.2 |
| Mexican | 1242 | 86.9 | 87.1 | 97.9 |
| Other | 1281 | 84.0 | 84.0 | 95.9 |
| Education | | | | |
| <12 | 8201 | 76.7 | 79.4 | 93.5 |
| 12 | 12118 | 88.4 | 87.4 | 97.4 |
| 13-15 | 6884 | 89.4 | 88.7 | 95.4 |
| 16+ | 4619 | 92.6 | 91.4 | 97.7 |
| Sex | | | | |
| male | 12154 | 83.9 | 84.0 | 96.3 |
| female | 19668 | 87.7 | 87.6 | 96.8 |
| Region | | | | |
| Northeast | 5485 | 86.8 | 86.3 | 96.8 |
| Midwest | 8425 | 87.8 | 86.9 | 97.7 |
| South | 11660 | 84.0 | 85.3 | 95.4 |
| West | 6252 | 87.7 | 86.9 | 97.0 |

Table 2 (continued)

| | N | Reported Month and Year | | Reported at Least Year |
|--|-------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | Mean = 86.2% Unadjusted Mean | Adjusted Mean | Mean = 96.6% Unadjusted Mean |
| Marriage Date | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 10605 | 96.1 | 96.3 | 99.0 |
| 2nd Marriage | 2484 | 91.9 | 93.4 | 97.2 |
| 3rd Marriage | 465 | 86.2 | 89.2 | 95.7 |
| 4th Marriage | 86 | 76.7 | 81.5 | 88.4 |
| Divorce Date | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 3426 | 77.7 | 77.1 | 95.5 |
| 2nd Marriage | 774 | 74.8 | 75.4 | 94.3 |
| 3rd Marriage | 158 | 69.6 | 72.6 | 89.2 |
| 4th Marriage | 32 | 65.6 | 71.2 | 89.2 |
| Separation Date | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 3941 | 79.2 | 79.1 | 94.9 |
| 2nd Marriage | 908 | 76.4 | 77.6 | 92.1 |
| 3rd Marriage | 195 | 69.7 | 73.0 | 86.2 |
| 4th Marriage | 39 | 64.1 | 70.1 | 82.0 |
| Widowhood Date | | | | |
| 1st Marriage | 1355 | 88.8 | 98.9 | 95.9 |
| 2nd Marriage | 306 | 86.9 | 97.9 | 93.5 |
| 3rd Marriage | 36 | 77.8 | 89.6 | 83.3 |
| 4th Marriage | 9 | 88.9 | 7.2 | 88.9 |
| Cohabitation with First Spouse - beginning | | | | |
| | 1663 | 86.9 | 81.4 | 97.8 |
| Cohabitation with Other Partner - before 1st Marriage | | | | |
| beginning | 430 | 66.3 | 62.0 | 94.6 |
| ending | 430 | 67.2 | 62.9 | 93.5 |
| Cohabitation with Second Spouse - beginning | | | | |
| | 933 | 86.2 | 84.0 | 96.7 |
| Cohabitation with Other Partner - before 2nd Marriage | | | | |
| beginning | 208 | 67.3 | 64.4 | 86.5 |
| ending | 208 | 63.5 | 60.5 | 85.1 |

Table 2 (continued)

| | N | Reported Month and Year | | Reported at Least Year |
|---|-----|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Unadjusted Mean | Adjusted Mean | Unadjusted Mean |
| Cohabitation with 3rd/last Spouse - beginning | 187 | 81.8 | 81.6 | 95.2 |
| Cohabitation with Other Partner - before 3rd/last Marriage | | | | |
| beginning | 375 | 76.5 | 75.2 | 96.3 |
| ending | 364 | 78.6 | 77.2 | 95.6 |
| Ever Married Current Cohabitor | | | | |
| begin w/current partner | 311 | 91.0 | 88.7 | 95.5 |
| other partner since last mar. | | | | |
| beginning | 60 | 78.3 | 76.0 | 96.7 |
| end | 60 | 80.0 | 77.7 | 93.3 |
| Never Married, Not Currently Cohabiting -First Partner | | | | |
| beginning | 597 | 78.6 | 74.9 | 97.8 |
| ending | 588 | 78.7 | 75.2 | 96.9 |
| Never Married Current Cohabitor | | | | |
| beginning w/ cur partner | 352 | 92.3 | 85.2 | 99.1 |
| first partner | | | | |
| beginning | 98 | 77.6 | 71.2 | 100.0 |
| end | 98 | 76.5 | 70.1 | 98.0 |

Table 3

Differentials in the Probability that the Respondent Reported Month and Year of Marital Events by Marriage Order, Type of Event, and Whether it was the Beginning of the Current Marital Status (Marriages, Divorces, Separations, and Widowhoods only: Cohabitation Events Excluded)

N = 24860

| | N | Unadj. % | Adj. % | | Unadj. % |
|--------------------|-------|----------|--------|------|----------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Marriage Order | | | | | |
| 1 | 19327 | 88.9 | 88.6 | 88.8 | 97.3 |
| 2 | 4472 | 85.4 | 85.9 | 85.4 | 95.4 |
| 3 | 854 | 79.0 | 81.5 | 80.6 | 91.8 |
| 4 | 166 | 72.3 | 76.8 | 76.1 | 86.8 |
| 5 | 41 | 73.2 | 81.5 | 80.0 | 87.8 |
| Event | | | | | |
| marriage | 13659 | 94.9 | 94.5 | 94.5 | 98.5 |
| divorce | 4400 | 76.8 | 75.5 | 76.4 | 95.0 |
| separation | 5094 | 78.2 | 77.4 | 77.7 | 94.0 |
| widowhood | 1707 | 88.3 | 96.7 | 93.6 | 95.1 |
| Current Status | | | | | |
| not current status | 12675 | 82.2 | | 83.7 | 95.2 |
| current status | 12185 | 93.6 | | 92.1 | 98.2 |
| <hr/> | | | | | |

Table 4

Differentials in the Precision of Cohabitation Dates
by Type of Cohabitation

N = 6962

| | N | Reported Month and Year | | Reported at Least Year |
|---------------------------------|------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| | | Unadj Mean | Adj Mean | Unadj Mean |
| | | ----- | | ----- |
| | | Mean = 80.6% | | Mean = 96.1% |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Type of Cohabitation | | | | |
| with person R married | 2783 | 86.3 | 86.6 | 97.3 |
| other partner - before marriage | 2015 | 70.4 | 72.0 | 93.0 |
| current partner | 663 | 91.7 | 89.7 | 97.4 |
| since last marriage | 120 | 79.2 | 81.0 | 95.0 |
| never married - 1st partner | 1381 | 78.4 | 76.5 | 97.6 |
| | | | | |
| Beginning/Ending Date | | | | |
| beginning date | 5214 | 82.8 | 80.5 | 96.4 |
| ending date | 1748 | 74.0 | 80.7 | 95.2 |

Table 5
Differentials in the Precision of Reporting Dates of Marital Events
(Marriage, Divorce, Separation, and Widowhood)

N = 24,860

| | N | Reported Month and Year | | Reported at Least Year |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Unadj Mean Mean = 87.8% | Adj Mean | Unadj Mean Mean = 96.7% |
| Age | | | | |
| <25 | 945 | 97.5 | 93.9 | 98.6 |
| 25-29 | 2199 | 96.9 | 94.7 | 99.0 |
| 30-34 | 3379 | 93.8 | 93.4 | 98.9 |
| 35-39 | 3638 | 91.1 | 91.1 | 97.9 |
| 40-44 | 2951 | 89.2 | 90.0 | 97.3 |
| 45-49 | 2158 | 86.5 | 88.1 | 96.8 |
| 50-54 | 1834 | 84.7 | 86.9 | 96.1 |
| 55-59 | 1601 | 79.7 | 82.0 | 85.6 |
| 60-64 | 1569 | 81.8 | 82.2 | 95.2 |
| 65-69 | 1505 | 84.0 | 84.3 | 95.6 |
| 70-79 | 2219 | 79.3 | 77.8 | 93.3 |
| 80+ | 862 | 76.3 | 73.6 | 89.8 |
| Race/ethnicity | | | | |
| Black | 4137 | 78.5 | 80.7 | 93.6 |
| Non-Hispanic white | 18837 | 89.9 | 89.5 | 97.4 |
| Mexican | 963 | 89.2 | 88.8 | 98.4 |
| Other | 923 | 85.9 | 85.0 | 95.5 |
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 8982 | 86.0 | 85.4 | 96.7 |
| Female | 15878 | 88.9 | 89.1 | 96.7 |
| Education | | | | |
| <12 | 6724 | 78.5 | 81.8 | 93.7 |
| 12 | 9524 | 89.9 | 88.9 | 97.5 |
| 13-15 | 5137 | 81.6 | 90.6 | 98.4 |
| 16+ | 3474 | 94.4 | 95.2 | 97.8 |
| Region | | | | |
| Northeast | 4130 | 88.6 | 87.7 | 96.8 |
| Midwest | 6607 | 89.7 | 88.9 | 98.0 |
| South | 9520 | 85.5 | 87.1 | 95.6 |
| West | 4603 | 89.1 | 87.9 | 97.0 |

Date type is also included in this analysis.

Table 6
Differentials in the Precision of Reporting Cohabitation Dates
N = 6,962

| | N | Reported Month and Year | | Reported at Least Year |
|-----------------------|------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Unadj Mean Mean = 80.6% | Adj Mean | Unadj Mean Mean = 96.1% |
| Age | | | | |
| <25 | 931 | 89.8 | 91.3 | 98.7 |
| 25-29 | 1438 | 87.9 | 88.5 | 98.5 |
| 30-34 | 1710 | 83.1 | 82.9 | 97.2 |
| 35-39 | 1170 | 79.0 | 76.7 | 96.5 |
| 40-44 | 695 | 75.3 | 73.7 | 94.1 |
| 45-49 | 348 | 71.6 | 70.7 | 94.3 |
| 50-54 | 217 | 65.0 | 67.4 | 91.7 |
| 55-59 | 171 | 62.0 | 65.6 | 86.0 |
| 60-64 | 119 | 57.1 | 59.3 | 92.4 |
| 65-69 | 82 | 50.0 | 53.5 | 76.8 |
| 70-79 | 70 | 41.4 | 48.1 | 75.7 |
| 80+ | 11 | 54.5 | 51.7 | 81.8 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | |
| Black | 1406 | 71.8 | 75.9 | 93.8 |
| Non-Hispanic White | 4919 | 83.3 | 81.8 | 96.7 |
| Mexican | 279 | 78.9 | 82.1 | 96.0 |
| Other | 358 | 79.1 | 81.2 | 97.2 |
| Sex | | | | |
| Male | 3172 | 78.0 | 79.3 | 95.1 |
| Female | 3790 | 82.7 | 81.6 | 96.9 |
| Education | | | | |
| <12 | 1477 | 68.5 | 70.9 | 93.0 |
| 12 | 2594 | 83.0 | 81.6 | 96.9 |
| 13-15 | 1746 | 82.9 | 82.1 | 96.6 |
| 16+ | 1145 | 87.0 | 88.2 | 97.5 |
| Region | | | | |
| Northeast | 1355 | 81.3 | 81.5 | 96.8 |
| Midwest | 1818 | 80.7 | 79.9 | 96.4 |
| South | 2140 | 77.2 | 78.9 | 94.6 |
| West | 1649 | 84.1 | 82.7 | 97.1 |

Date type is also included in this analysis.

Table 7
 Differentials in the Percent of Marital and Cohabitation
 Dates Reported Precisely by Respondents, by Characteristics
 of Respondent

(Note: In this analysis respondents, rather than dates
 are the unit of analysis.)

N = 11554

| | N | Unadjusted Mean (Mean = 91.2 %) | Adjusted Mean |
|-----------------------|------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Age | | | |
| <25 | 977 | 94.9 | 94.4 |
| 25-29 | 1505 | 95.0 | 94.2 |
| 30-34 | 1729 | 92.8 | 92.1 |
| 35-39 | 1497 | 91.8 | 90.9 |
| 40-44 | 1111 | 91.2 | 90.3 |
| 45-49 | 781 | 90.8 | 90.7 |
| 50-54 | 694 | 89.4 | 90.5 |
| 55-59 | 653 | 88.8 | 90.0 |
| 60-64 | 672 | 89.5 | 90.4 |
| 65-69 | 633 | 89.2 | 90.5 |
| 70-79 | 949 | 86.6 | 88.5 |
| 80+ | 353 | 82.7 | 84.7 |
| Race/ethnicity | | | |
| Black | 1969 | 82.0 | 82.9 |
| Non-Hispanic White | 8544 | 93.4 | 93.0 |
| Mexican | 551 | 92.6 | 94.8 |
| Other | 490 | 89.2 | 89.3 |
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 4517 | 90.4 | 90.0 |
| Female | 7037 | 91.8 | 92.0 |
| Education | | | |
| <12 | 2845 | 84.0 | 85.5 |
| 12 | 4430 | 93.0 | 92.4 |
| 13-15 | 2314 | 93.2 | 92.7 |
| 16+ | 1965 | 95.3 | 94.9 |
| Region | | | |
| Northeast | 2182 | 91.1 | 91.1 |
| Midwest | 3091 | 92.7 | 91.9 |
| South | 4195 | 89.6 | 90.9 |
| West | 2086 | 92.4 | 90.8 |

Table 8

Differentials in Ability to Report Month of Marital and
Cohabitation Events by Date of Event

| Year of Event | N | Unadj Mean | Adj Mean | |
|---------------|------|---------------|----------|------|
| | | | (1) | (2) |
| Before 1930 | 413 | 86.9 | 92.9 | 84.4 |
| 1930-1934 | 357 | 82.6 | 88.4 | 80.7 |
| 1935-1939 | 625 | 88.0 | 92.6 | 84.1 |
| 1940-1944 | 835 | 86.1 | 89.9 | 82.2 |
| 1945-1949 | 1132 | 85.1 | 89.1 | 82.3 |
| 1950-1954 | 1165 | 83.7 | 87.3 | 81.5 |
| 1955-1959 | 1375 | 83.2 | 85.7 | 80.8 |
| 1960-1964 | 1702 | 84.4 | 85.7 | 81.9 |
| 1965-1969 | 2559 | 85.7 | 86.1 | 83.4 |
| 1970-1974 | 4093 | 87.3 | 86.8 | 86.8 |
| 1975-1979 | 5433 | 88.6 | 87.3 | 89.8 |
| 1980-1984 | 6965 | 92.9 | 91.4 | 94.5 |
| 1985-1988 | 4071 | 96.8 | 95.4 | 99.6 |

(1) Model includes age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and sex.

(2) Adds type of event to model 1.

Table 9

Age Differences in the Ability to Report Month of Occurrence of
Marital and Cohabitation Events With and Without Controls for
Event Type and When Event Occurred

(Mean = 89.29)

| Year of Event | N | Unadj Mean | Adjusted Mean | | |
|---------------|------|---------------|---------------|------|------|
| | | | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Age | | | | | |
| <25 | 1851 | 94.9 | 97.0 | 90.6 | 89.7 |
| 25-29 | 3592 | 94.5 | 95.8 | 91.8 | 89.8 |
| 30-34 | 5001 | 91.8 | 93.0 | 90.6 | 89.9 |
| 35-39 | 4691 | 90.3 | 90.4 | 89.6 | 89.7 |
| 40-44 | 3524 | 89.5 | 89.5 | 89.8 | 90.8 |
| 45-49 | 2416 | 87.6 | 87.8 | 89.3 | 90.8 |
| 50-54 | 1962 | 86.4 | 86.8 | 89.3 | 90.9 |
| 55-59 | 1677 | 82.4 | 82.7 | 85.7 | 87.4 |
| 60-64 | 1603 | 84.3 | 82.9 | 86.5 | 87.8 |
| 65-69 | 1502 | 86.9 | 85.0 | 88.7 | 90.0 |
| 70-79 | 2123 | 84.2 | 80.6 | 86.0 | 84.5 |
| 80+ | 783 | 84.8 | 79.9 | 86.1 | 84.5 |

Model 1 includes sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, and detailed type of date.

Model 2 includes sex, race/ethnicity, education, and region, and when the event occurred.

Model 3 includes all variables including both detailed event type and when the event occurred.

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