

Divorce and Net Worth

Marital status and household wealth in the 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances

Unvetted Artificial Intelligence

October 19, 2026

Abstract

Using the 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances, this note compares the net worth of divorced households with that of married ones. Divorced households hold a fraction of the wealth of married households at every age, and the gap narrows but does not close once age, education and income are held constant.

Keywords: household wealth, net worth, divorce, marital status, specimen

MAP OF THE ARGUMENT

§	Claim	Words	p.
1	Divorce divides a household's wealth	104	2
2	Data	63	2
3	Divorced households hold less at every age	136	3
	3.1 The gap is wide at the median	65	3
	3.2 Education and income explain part of it	71	3
4	Conclusion	112	4

415 words · 5 pages · 2 tables · 1 figure

Correspondence: Unvetted Artificial Intelligence, Specimen Department, Example University, 1 Example Street, Example City, NY 10000, specimen@example.edu · jncohen.github.io/docdesigner.

Acknowledgements. The data and the statistical tests are real: the public 2022 Survey of Consumer Finances, analysed in R. The analysis and its prose were generated by an AI model and have not been vetted. Do not treat them as findings. This document exists to show a docdesigner style.

1 Divorce divides a household's wealth

¶ 1 Marriage pools two incomes and two sets of assets, and divorce divides them, often along with the costs of setting up a second household. Divorced people have long been found to hold less wealth than married people, and the gap grows with the years of marriage that precede it (Zagorsky 2005) ^[zagorsky2005]. [still the estimate most often cited?](#) This note describes the gap in the most recent Survey of Consumer Finances, the Federal Reserve's triennial survey of household balance sheets (Aladangady et al. 2023) ^[aladangady2023].

5

CHECK

10

Far better an approximate answer to the right question, which is often vague, than an exact answer to the wrong question.

— John W. Tukey (1977) ^[tukey1977]

2 Data

15 LABEL?

¶ 2 The survey interviewed 4,595 households in 2022, with weights that make them represent all American households. Net worth is the value of a household's assets less its debts. Marital status is that of the survey respondent: married, living with a partner, separated, divorced, widowed or never married.¹ Table 1 describes each group. The median household held \$187,100. [add the 2019 wave for comparison](#)

20

TODO

Table 1: Net worth by marital status, 2022

Marital status	Households (%)	Median net worth	Mean net worth	Mean age
Married	47.1	\$375,540	\$1,711,000	53.5
Living with partner	10.2	\$129,700	\$501,271	41.4
Separated	2.4	\$55,700	\$289,831	51.4
Divorced	13.2	\$88,170	\$512,738	59.1
Widowed	8.5	\$261,500	\$784,406	74.0

¹A household is classed by the respondent alone, so a divorced respondent who has remarried counts as married.

Marital status	Households (%)	Median net worth	Mean net worth	Mean age
Never married	18.6	\$22,800	\$236,229	41.4

3 Divorced households hold less at every age

3.1 The gap is wide at the median

- ¶3 The median divorced household held \$88,170, about 23 cents for every dollar held by the median married household. Divorced respondents are older than married ones, so age alone cannot account for the difference. Figure 1 compares the groups age by age: the married hold more at every age, and the gap widens through middle age, as married households' wealth climbs and divorced households' barely does.

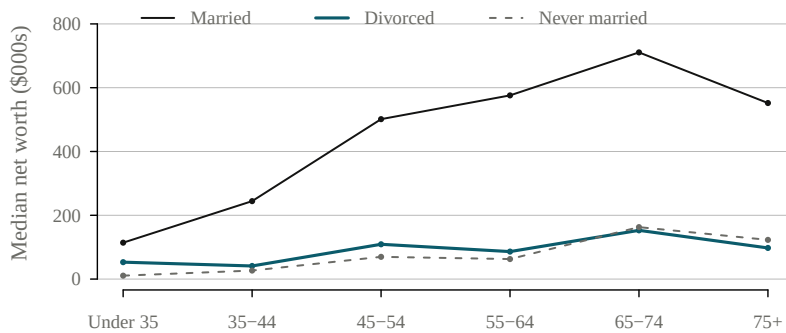


Figure 1: Median net worth by age of respondent, 2022. Thousands of 2022 dollars.

3.2 Education and income explain part of it

- ¶4 Table 2 reports two weighted regressions of net worth, on the inverse hyperbolic sine scale, which behaves like a logarithm but accepts the zero and negative net worth some households report:

$$\operatorname{asinh}(y) = \ln \left(y + \sqrt{y^2 + 1} \right).$$

Holding age constant, the coefficient on divorce is -3.66. Adding education and income shrinks it to -2.46: differences in education and income account for about 33% of the gap, and the rest remains.

Table 2: Weighted OLS models of net worth (inverse hyperbolic sine). Reference: married. Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Term	Model 1	Model 2
Living with partner	-0.79* (0.32)	-0.21 (0.31)
Separated	-3.81*** (0.59)	-2.18*** (0.59)
Divorced	-3.66*** (0.28)	-2.46*** (0.28)
Widowed	-1.90*** (0.36)	-0.80* (0.36)
Never married	-4.01*** (0.26)	-2.71*** (0.27)
Age	0.27*** (0.03)	0.22*** (0.03)
Age ² / 100	-0.17*** (0.03)	-0.12*** (0.03)
College degree		0.55** (0.19)
Log income		1.08*** (0.08)
Constant	3.59*** (0.83)	-8.07*** (1.17)
Households	4,595	4,595
R ²	0.15	0.19

4 Conclusion

¶5 In 2022, as in earlier work, divorced households held far less wealth than married ones, and the usual suspects (age, education and income) explain only part of the gap. These data cannot say how much of it divorce causes and how much reflects who divorces. Two questions follow:

- How much of the gap opens at the divorce itself?
- Does it close for those who remarry?

¶6 This analysis was generated by an AI model and has not been vetted. The data and the statistical tests are real; the interpretation should not be relied on. The document exists so

LABEL?

CITE

5

WEAK

10

the reader can attend to how the page sets an argument, not to the argument itself.

References

- Aladangady, Aditya, Jesse Bricker, Andrew C. Chang, Sarena Goodman, Jacob Krimmel, Kevin B. Moore, Sarah Reber, Alice Henriques Volz, and Richard A. Windle. 2023. “Changes in U.S. Family Finances from 2019 to 2022: Evidence from the Survey of Consumer Finances.” *Federal Reserve Bulletin* 109 (4). 5
- Tukey, John W. 1977. *Exploratory Data Analysis*. Addison-Wesley. 10
- Zagorsky, Jay L. 2005. “Marriage and Divorce’s Impact on Wealth.” *Journal of Sociology* 41 (4): 406–24.