

Younger women tend to marry older men in the US. That's finally changing

[Dan Kopf](#) October 17, 2018



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The actress Priyanka Chopra is older than her future husband.

In August 2018, the Indian actress Priyanka Chopra announced she was engaged to the American pop singer Nick Jonas. The 36-year-old Chopra is more than 10 years older than Jonas, who just turned 26. According to friends, Jonas likes it that way, as he [prefers older women](#). Increasingly, he is not alone.

The number of opposite-sex marriages in which the woman is older or the same age as the man is rising rapidly in the US, according to [an analysis](#) by the University of Maryland sociologist Philip Cohen. From 2010 to 2016, the estimated share of never-before-married women who wedded a man

their age or younger rose from less than 34% to over 37%.

It is an astonishingly rapid change for such a short period. Unfortunately, since the US Census did not collect data on when newly married couples prior to 2008, it's difficult to know past trends. A Quartz analysis of longer-term data suggests that while the age difference between married couples has long been declining, the fall in the 2010s has been unusually quick.

Not only is the share of marriages in which the woman is older rising, the number in which the man is significantly older is falling. In 2008, about 8.2% of never-before-married women tied the knot with a man at least 10 years older. In 2016, that number was down to 7.3%. As a result of these changes, the average difference in age between newlyweds fell from about 2.6 years in 2008 to less than 2.3 years in 2016.

This trend is probably a good thing for healthy marriages. There is compelling evidence that marrying someone closer to your own age makes you less likely to [get divorced](#).

In a 2017 article for the New York Times, the data journalist Mona Chalabi protested the “[bonus years](#)” men get from marrying later and coupling with younger women. Why should men get to extend their youth and improve their financial standing before having marrying and having kids? Chalabi is in luck: Those “bonus years” appear to be disappearing.