

JANUARY 26, 2010, 12:40 A.M. ET

College Linked to Marriage

By [JUSTIN LAHART](#)

Maybe education can lead to marital bliss, too. College-educated women were more likely to be married at age 40 than women without a college education, new research showed.

And college-educated women were more likely to say they were happy in their marriages, said economists Betsey Stevenson and Adam Isen of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. The study, to be released Tuesday, was conducted for the research group Council on Contemporary Families. It was based on several data sets and surveys on men and women.

For men, the better marital prospects that come with a college education are longstanding, but for women, this hasn't always been the case.

In 1950, 74% of 40-year-old white female college graduates had married at some point, compared with 90% of white women with just a high-school degree. By 2008, the figure for white women with college degrees had risen to 86%, and it had fallen to 88% for women with only high-school diplomas.

But white women with college degrees who had gotten married by age 40 were much more likely not to have divorced. As a result, at age 40, 76% of college-educated white women were married, compared with 63% of high-school graduates. Among blacks, 70% of college-educated women have gotten married by age 40, compared with 60% of high-school graduates. They, too, were less likely to divorce.

Having a college education also appeared to make women happier in their marriage. That's perhaps because both college-educated men and women were less likely to see marriage as a source of financial stability, Ms. Stevenson said, approaching it instead as "a source of personal fulfillment." That could also be a reason divorce rates among the college-educated were lower than for groups with less education.

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