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Desire and Opportunity to Marry Among Black South African Women

Colleen R. Johnson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

Desire and Opportunity to Marry Among Black South African Women

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This study examines how demographic and attitudinal variables are associated with Black South African women's desire to marry. Data from the South African Social Attitudes Survey are used to measure the impact of age, education, living standard, religiosity, urbanicity, cohabitation, and attitudes towards woman's careers, the acceptability of cohabitation, gender roles, unwed childbearing, and the financial and emotional security marriage provides on the desire to marry. Analyses indicate the following are associated with the desire to marry among Black South African women: age, cohabitation, attitudes towards cohabitation, and attitudes towards the financial and emotional security marriage provides. Secondly, data from in-depth interviews with 13 young, college-attending, Black South African women are used to give further insight into the impact of these variables on the desire to marry. Analyses of the interview data suggest that young Black South African women desire to marry but feel constrained in choice of eligible partners by the prevalence of infidelity, AIDS, domestic violence, and economic uncertainty. Additionally, educated, young, Black South African women feel less pressure to marry than older generations due to their emerging economic power and society's increasing acceptance of cohabitation, unwed childbirth, and postponement of marriage.

Keywords: South Africa, desire to marry, attitudes towards marriage, women, infidelity, AIDS, domestic violence, education, cohabitation, attitudes towards cohabitation

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Desire and Opportunity to Marry Among Black South African Women

INTRODUCTION

The desire to marry is driven by a complex set of factors that work together to make marriage more or less appealing. As worldwide marriage rates have decreased and ages at first marriage have increased substantially over the past forty years, researchers have been interested in what variables are associated with the desire to marry. However, a proclaimed desire to marry does not always lead to the outcome of actually getting married (Lichter, Batson, and Brown 2004). Many factors prevent a person from being able to find a suitable partner and form a family. Many women in the world have a strong desire to marry but lack the opportunity to marry well. Paralleling marriage rates in the industrialized world, the marriage rate has drastically declined for Blacks in South Africa. While there are many theories about the causes of the decline in marriage among women worldwide, there is less such research on Black South African women specifically, and the existing theories lack key components. The causes for the decline in marriage are not clear, but by examining South African women's desire to marry and perceived availability of suitable marriage partners, social scientists may begin to shed light on one aspect of this paradox.

The South African Social Attitudes Survey conducted in 2005 by the Human Science Research Counsel, which has a sample of 2,850 cases for Questionnaire 1, can be used to determine some of the current predictors of the desire to marry. However, this survey does not contain every possible predictor of the desire to marry, or questions about the perceived availability of suitable marriage partners, a critical second half of the puzzle of the declining marriage rate. More detailed individual data from the sample of individual interviews conducted in 2005 with Black South African women supplements survey data to address why Black South

African women are postponing or foregoing marriage. Research that goes beyond quantitative data to capture the experiences of women individually helps to clarify the underlying motivational factors given by Black women in South Africa for remaining single. In this study, my main research questions are: “What variables are associated with never married Black South African women’s desire to marry?” and “What are never married Black South African women’s perceptions of mate availability?” I answer these questions through a mixed methods approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

South African Trends in Marriage

Marriage trends in South Africa are difficult to determine because censuses mostly document official civil marriages while a large number of Blacks marry only traditionally, off the records (Hosegoo, McGrath and Moultrie 2009). The problems involving accurate census information “are particularly acute in South Africa as a result of the wide diversity in marriage forms, cultures, religions and languages. Inadequacies in coverage of large segments of the population during the apartheid years add to the difficulties” (Budlender et. al. 2004). However, available evidence confirms that marriage trends are changing (Makiwane 2004). Current research on marriage in South Africa indicates that marriage rates appear to be changing similarly to marriage rates in the United States, with a continuous decline in marriage and an increasing age at first marriage (Harwood-Lejeune 2001; Hosegood, McGrath, and Moultrie 2009). Marriage rates in South Africa mirror those of Western countries more closely than they mirror rates of other African nations. Compared to other African countries, Black South African women are getting married less and later (Makiwane 2004). According to one study, in South Africa only 50% of women were married by age 24, whereas 95% of women in Ghana were married by age 25 (Amoateng 2004). In the 1980s, with a mean age at first marriage of 28 for

men and 23 for women, the age at first marriage was already much higher in South Africa than in other African nations. Like slavery's effect on the marriage rates of African Americans, this is often attributed to the effects of apartheid on the family, but once apartheid was over the decline in marriage did not reverse.

The marriage rate has continued to decline in recent years, especially in urban areas. As of 2010, 62% of South Africa was considered urban (Central Intelligence Agency 2012). In a 2006 estimation, 98.78% of women residing in urban areas ages 18-24 were never married, 93.04% of women ages 25-29 were never married, and 56.97% of women ages 30-34 were never married (Hosegood, McGrath, and Moultrie 2009). The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' data shows that in South Africa the percentage of married females ages 20-24 was 28.7% in 1980, 26.5% in 1985, 20% in 1991, 15.3% in 1996, and 8.3% in 2003. For ages 25-29 the percentage of married females was 52.9% in 1980, 49.7% in 1985, 43.2% in 1991, 36.5% in 1996, and 25.3% in 2003 (World 2008). In 1999, according to registered marriages, the median age at first marriage was 33.7 for males and 29.5 for females (Makiwane 2004). While these figures are not race or ethnicity specific, similar to Blacks in America, the proportions of Blacks in South Africa who are married is much lower than in other population groups. A 1999 household survey found that only 37% of Black South Africans ages 30-34 and 51% of Black South Africans ages 35-39 were married compared to 82% and 83% of white South Africans in these age ranges (Makiwane 2004). It is clear from these statistics that the majority of Black South Africans are experiencing similarly low and declining marriage rates and increasing age at first marriage rates as disadvantaged minorities in industrialized nations. Theories about the causes of the decline in Black South African marriage are similar to theories about the causes of the decline in marriage worldwide, with some key cultural differences.

General Predictors of the Desire to Marry

Theories about the cause of change in marriage-related statistics for ethnic groups in the United States may be useful in shedding light on the causes of change in Black South African marriage-related statistics. A review of the research finds that there are key indicators that are often used as predictors of marriage rates. Researchers have found that gender, race, age, education, standard of living, religiosity, urbanicity, and cohabitation are all key factors of the desire to marry, age at first marriage, and the marriage rate. I will discuss each separately.

Studies conducted in the United States have found gender to be a key determinant of the desire to marry, with young women typically having a stronger desire and expectation to marry than young men, especially those women who ascribe to traditional gender roles (Blakemore, Lawton, and Vartanian 2005; Gassanov, Nicholson, and Koch-Turner 2008). Race is another important predictor of the desire to marry. One study found that African American men and women overall are less likely to desire marriage than their White and Hispanic counterparts, with African American men being the least likely to desire marriage of any group (South 1993). Age also has an effect on the desire to marry, whether because of a cohort affect or an age effect. Mahay and Lewin (2007) found that in the United States desire to marry is negatively correlated with age, with single participants ages 55 to 69 years old having less of a desire to marry than younger single participants. Gender, race, and age intersect to affect the desire to marry. Black women in America have a stronger desire to get married than Black men until the age of 32, and White women have a stronger desire than White men to marry until the age of 26 at which time these desires reverse (South 1993). Several studies report that women with more education and more economic independence are now actually more likely to get married than women with less education and income, albeit at a later age (Bracher and Santow 1998; Goldstein and Kenney

2001). Religiosity is also positively associated with the desire to marry because most religions encourage traditional marriage and family formation (Bearman and Bruckner 2001; Laumann et al. 1994; Thornton 1985). Urbanicity also plays a role in family formation, with rural women marrying younger than urban women (Singh and Samara 1995). Cohabitation is also often explored as a predictor of the desire to marry. One study in the United States found that youths' expectations to one day cohabit do not substitute or decrease their expectations to one day marry. According to this study, cohabitation is often viewed as one more step in the process towards marriage rather than replacing marriage (Manning, Longmore, and Giordano 2007).

While many of the general predictors of marriage rates are relevant to Black women in South Africa, most current research, which is based on studies in Western countries, lacks some critical components that reflect the unique social and cultural situation of Black South African women. Family ideology, cohabitation, gender ideology, the education and economic power of women, desirability of marriage, unwed childbearing, domestic violence, and infidelity and STDs must all be taken into account when studying the desire and opportunity to marry in South Africa.

Family Ideology

While empirical research on the reasons for the decline in marriage among Black South Africans is lacking, there are several theories that attempt to describe them. A significant factor may be the shift in family ideology. A few generations ago in South Africa, women were expected to marry young and quickly bear children (Mathabane 1994). The worth of a woman to her family was based on her ability to get married and produce posterity. Therefore, it was very difficult for a woman to refuse or postpone marriage (Holden 1963). As South Africa becomes more involved in the world economy, "indigenous knowledge and skills are giving way to

Western knowledge and skills” (Chepyator-Thomas 2005). While most African women still expect to marry at some point, societal pressure to marry early has lessened (Gyimah 2009). Apartheid and colonization created a migrant labor system in which fathers were often separated from their families and mothers were left to support their children singlehandedly. In some cases fathers abandoned the families completely, setting precedence for the acceptance of female-headed households and single motherhood (Hosegood, McGrath, and Moultrie 2009; Makiwane 2004). Cultural expectations to get married have also evolved. As Western thought and norms spread, non-Western women begin to see themselves as individuals who don’t need to comply with the expectations of society. While to Western society “individuality is the ideal of life; to the African, the ideal is the right relations and behavior to other people” (Kenyatta as cited in Chepyator-Thomas 2005). This community-oriented ideal that emphasizes the importance of marriage and family has evolved into a much more individual-oriented ideology. Many African women who once entered into marriage to please their family and society no longer feel the need to conform.

Cohabitation

Another phenomenon that reflects the shift in family ideology is the increase in cohabitation among Black South Africans. The cohabitation rate among Black South Africans is higher than among White South Africans. The 2001 South African Census shows an increase in the cohabitation rate with a simultaneous decrease in the marriage rate from the 1996 South African census to the 2001 South African Census. In 1996, 3.7% of the Black female population reported that they were cohabiting, while in 2001, 6.7% of the Black female population reported that they were cohabiting. At the same time, Black women who reported that they were married

either civilly or customarily dropped from 18.6% in 1996 to 16% in 2001 (Gustafsson and Worku 2007).

Gender Ideology

Another reason for the decline in marriage among Black South Africans may be the change in gender ideology and roles. “For women, expectations of a ‘traditional’ wife are at odds with modern female identity as empowered, income earner, educated, and able to control their own fertility” (van der Vliet 1984). Some researchers attribute the decline in marriage to Black South African women’s employment outside the home (Hosegood, McGrath and Moultrie 2009). The migrant labor system and limited job opportunities of apartheid often meant that Black South African women were forced to obtain menial jobs, such as factory work and domestic service, to be the primary breadwinner for their families. This shift in gender roles often led to marital conflict. In one of Larsen’s 1986 interviews, one woman described her struggle managing her family and home without the support of her husband:

When he comes home he sleeps—because he’s got no children to watch....He doesn’t help at home. No! (laughs) Because you know they say a husband is a big man. He shouldn’t do anything at home—the woman must work. We both work at night but he can’t help me with anything.

Some South African men still have difficulty accepting the independence of women. “Despite their education and modernity, many males still hold to traditional ideas regarding male dominance over their wife”(Anderson 1997). When paired with liberal attitudes, education and career opportunities further contribute to the changes in family formation as women become better able to provide without the help of men (Hosegoo, McGrath and Moultrie 2009).

Education and Economic Power

Unlike the positive association between education and income and desire to marry that researchers have found in the United States, researchers in South Africa often cite the increase in Black South African women's education and economic power as a reason for the decline in marriage (Gyimah 2009; Hosegood, McGrath, and Moultrie 2009). In former times, despite a woman's dissatisfaction with marriage practices she was also unable to refuse it due to a lack of education and the economic independence it provides. For many uneducated women, "the economic dependence of wives on husbands limits wives' influence and leaves them vulnerable to the wants and needs of their husbands" (Stets and Hammons 2002). A higher level of education and a greater number of career opportunities in turn contribute to an ideational change in regard to family formation (Gyimah 2009). Before apartheid ended, most Black women were denied access to higher education. Legally the education system of apartheid limited what women could learn and, therefore, limited what occupations they could hold and what earnings they could make (Ross 1999). Now that women have greater access to education they are able to delay or forego marriage. Researchers postulate that the more rural and uneducated a woman is, the more likely she is to marry, and to marry younger, while women with higher educational attainment make a longer transition to marriage (Gyimah 2009). Modernizing forces, which raise the levels of education and urbanization of women, have contributed to the declining marriage rate (Amoateng 2004). With an increase in education and financial freedom women no longer need men to provide for them. Thus, because marriage has become less important as an economic asset, fewer women feel the need to get married (Makiwane 2004; Gyimah 2009). This economic freedom directly translates into freedom of choice in regards to marriage. "As a result of economic independence, women can now choose from a variety of lifestyles, including

marriage, marriage and motherhood, single hood, unmarried single motherhood, or a career-oriented lifestyle” (Rhoden 2003).

Desirability of Marriage

Some researchers postulate that the decline in marriage is due to the lack of incentives for women to get married. As with African American women, it seems as though many Black South African women judge marriage by a cost/benefit analysis and find it lacking (Hosegoo, McGrath and Moultrie 2009). They do not believe that those who are married are better off financially or emotionally. Lawson’s interviews in 1984 confirm that to these women the cost of a marital relationship far exceeded the benefit. For many of her respondents, having a husband often resulted in insufficient amounts of money due to the husband’s alcoholism and gambling, abandonment due to the migrant labor system, lack of support in parenting and housekeeping, and extreme physical and emotional abuse (Lawson 1986). Many South African women find that marriage “undermines women’s security, rather than improving it” (Moore 2007). Zieh (1994) found that lower class South African women cited men’s domineering attitudes, infidelity, economic incompetence, and physical violence, not their rejection of marriage itself, as reasons for wishing to remain unmarried. Even women of higher social class found fewer eligible men who can provide well economically for highly educated South African women (Zieh 1994). This may be attributed to the fact that 57.1% of students enrolled in public higher education institutions (478,175) were female in 2009 (South African Department of Basic Education 2010). Many Black South African women may not have a desire to get married because they believe that marriage may actually make them less economically and emotionally secure.

Unwed Childbearing

Another determinant of desire to marry may be a woman's approval of having a child out of wedlock. As a result of a lack of eligible men paired with a strong desire for children, many Black South African women choose to have children despite being unwed (Ziehl 1994). The number of children with absent living fathers, particularly among Black South Africans, is increasing instead of decreasing since the end of apartheid in South Africa. The majority of children in South Africa now grow up in a single parent household (Holborn 2011). These out of wedlock births are often not looked down on by family or society in general. "For a large proportion of young couples, the perceived costs of marriage appear to outweigh the benefits, and the limited sanctions against extra-marital childbearing in many families reduce marriage as a necessary entry to parenting" (Hosegoo, McGrath, and Moultrie 2009). In an interview Lawson conducted in 1984, a South African woman said, "I don't want my daughters to get married. If they are educated it's better that they earn a living wage. Marriage, I don't care for it. I'd like them to stay with me. They can have children and support them. They will have a better life" (Lawson 1986). According to the literature, South African women often become single mothers out of necessity rather than choice (Ziehl 1994). This is reflected in the incongruity between the desire to marry and the actual marriage rate.

Two additional factors that are relevant include domestic violence and infidelity and the risk of STDs. Although recent survey data do not include measures that allow analysis of these factors, the following sections indicate more about their importance and provide the rationale for including data from another source in this study. My interviews address these topics in further depth.

Domestic Violence

Another reason for the decline in marriage is the risk of domestic violence and abuse (Ziehl 1994). For many South African women abuse is associated with marriage. South Africa has the highest rate of domestic abuse in the world as “one in four women in South Africa is in an abusive relationship—while one woman is killed every six days by a male partner” (Ndura 2005). This abuse is thought to stem from the tradition of violence as a means of conflict resolution during apartheid, the emasculation of Black South African men by the apartheid regime, widespread poverty and unemployment, and tribal practices in which women are subordinate to male dominion (Malley-Morrison 2004). Due to societal expectations and cultural practices, such as lobola, the payment for brides, some women are forced to remain in abusive relationships they did not necessarily choose. Once their parents receive the money, the bride’s rights are transferred from her family to her husband’s family (Mathabane 1994). The majority of domestic abuse goes unreported in South Africa because many women are afraid of the social and economic consequences. The subject of domestic abuse is taboo and complaints to the family often fall on unsympathetic ears (Malley-Morrison 2004). Due to tradition, women are often told by other women to keep silent. According to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Report on South Africa, “Wife battery is considered normal behavior by an alarmingly high proportion of the population. Violent behavior between spouses is still perceived by many as a private matter in which police and the legal system should not interfere” (CEDAW 1998).

Infidelity and STDs

Another relevant factor contributing to the desire to marry is the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as HIV AIDS. The severe AIDS epidemic in South

Africa is another possible reason for the decline in marriage (Hosegoo, McGrath, and Moultrie 2009). It is estimated that one-fifth of South African women of reproductive ages are HIV positive (Statistics South Africa 2011). There is often a fear of contracting AIDS and STDs in the context of marriage in which partners are expected to practice unprotected sex. A recent study shows that a large and growing number of AIDS cases are contracted from spouses as a result of infidelity (Maharaj and Cleland 2004). This may contribute to a decline in the desire to marry.

In sum, while researchers attempt to explain the historical and current issues that are affecting the marriage trends in South Africa, “consensus on the reason for such changes is yet to be reached” (Makiwane 2004). Thus, my first overall question is, “What variables are associated with Black South African women’s desire to marry?” Specifically I ask, “Are age, education, living standard, religiosity, urbanicity and cohabitation associated with the desire to marry?”, “Are variables relating to family ideology, gender ideology, the desirability of marriage, and attitudes towards unwed childbearing and cohabitation associated with the desire to marry?”, and “What are the effects of Infidelity, STDs, and Domestic violence on the desire to marry?” I will conduct a statistical analysis of the South African Social Attitudes Survey completed in 2005 to answer these questions. Based on previous studies that I have reviewed above, I hypothesize that age, education, economic standing, religiosity, urbanicity, and cohabitation variables are correlated with the desire to marry. Additionally, in accordance with theories specific to Black South Africans, I hypothesize that family ideology, gender ideology, the desirability of marriage, and attitudes towards unwed childbearing and cohabitation are correlated with the desire to marry.

Hypotheses

I expected to find the following:

1. Increased age, education, and economic standing negatively affect the desire to marry.
2. A positive effect of religiosity on the desire to marry.
3. Those who subscribe to liberal family and gender ideologies have less of a desire to marry than those who subscribe to conservative family and gender ideologies.
4. Those who have more negative attitudes towards the benefits of marriage have less of a desire to marry than those who have more positive attitudes towards the benefits of marriage.
5. Those who have a higher acceptance of unwed child bearing and cohabitation have less of a desire to marry than those who have a lower acceptance of unwed child bearing and cohabitation.
6. Those who currently cohabit have less of a desire to marry than those who do not currently cohabit.
7. Those who live in urban areas have less of a desire to marry than those who reside in rural areas.

As indicated above, additional factors not included in the survey data may affect the desire to marry. My second research question is, “What are South African women’s perceptions of mate availability?” Specifically I ask, “What social, economic, and cultural factors are affecting the availability of suitable mates?” and “How do these factors compare to the general literature on mate availability?” To answer this question, I conducted a qualitative analysis of interviews I conducted with Black South African women about their attitudes towards marriage and the opportunity to marry. Although the available survey data neglected questions about the

opportunity to marry, qualitative data included a wide variety of factors related to this topic. The survey data also do not cover questions relating to the effects of infidelity and STDs and domestic violence on desire to marry. However, these topics were covered in the interviews conducted for my exploratory research. Through analyses of the qualitative research, current attitudes towards marriage and the availability of marriage partners were analyzed, which gave a more descriptive account of why the rate is changing.

DATA AND MEASURES

Quantitative Data

The South African Social Attitudes Survey conducted in 2005 by the Human Science Research Council uncovers some of the current attitudes South Africans have towards marriage and gender roles. According to its mission statement, “The HSRC is a non-partisan, public-purpose organization that generates scientific knowledge through its research and analytical work in the social and human sciences.” Their purpose is to inform the government, academia, and the media on issues of social advocacy (Human 2012). The goal of the survey was to conduct a longitudinal “study of changing social attitudes and values in South Africa.” It utilized a stratified design to give a representative sample of South African adults ages 16 and older. The survey includes core demographic questions such as gender, race, age, religion, and indicators of education and employment, as well as a question on the desire to marry. Questionnaire 1 of the survey focuses on questions about attitudes towards family life. It asks questions of a representative sample of 2,850 participants that reflect their attitudes towards marriage. Because the question asking participants about their desire to marry is phrased, “Not married: I would like to get married someday,” I limited my sample to never married Black South African women, which consisted of 557 respondents.

Outcome Variable

My outcome variable is the desire to marry. This study investigates answers to the statement, “Not married: I would like to get married someday,” as an outcome variable that represents the desire to marry. The response categories for this question were Strongly Agree (coded 5), Agree (coded 4), Neither Nor (coded 3), Disagree (coded 2), or Strongly Disagree (coded 1).

Explanatory Variables

As demonstrated in previous research, demographic variables, such as race, gender, age, education, living standard, religiosity, urbanicity and cohabitation are strong explanatory variables when predicting attitudes towards marriage and marriage rates. This study is limited to never married, Black South African women. In it, I analyze age (by year from low to high), education (divided into 5 categories of No Schooling, Primary, Grade 8-11 or equivalent, Matriculated or equivalent, and Tertiary, and ranked), living standard (ranked low to high), frequency of religious attendance (ranked 1 through 8), urbanicity (coded as a dummy variable), and cohabitation (coded as a dummy variable) as explanatory variables for the desire to marry.

Along with these demographic explanatory variables, several attitudinal variables reflecting existing theories about the decline in Black South African marriage are used as indicators of the desire to marry:

1. Family Ideology:

a) “Women in SA should feel free to remain unmarried & get interesting jobs.”

2. Cohabitation:

a) “It is all right for a couple to live together without intending to get married.”

3. Gender Ideology:

a) “The only satisfying role for a woman is as wife and mother.”

4. Financial Benefits of Marriage:

a) “Married people: more financial security than unmarried people.”

b) “Married people: better standard of living than unmarried people.”

5. Emotional Benefits of Marriage:

a) “Married people: more emotionally secure than unmarried.”

6. Unwed Child Bearing:

a) “A person should be married before having a child.”

The response categories for all attitudinal variable questions are Strongly Agree (coded 5), Agree (coded 4), Neither Nor (coded 3), Disagree (coded 2), and Strongly Disagree (coded 1) and Don’t Know (coded 3). The two indicators used for the financial benefits of marriage were found to be highly correlated, so they were combined into one variable for the purposes of this analysis. After listwise deletion was used to remove missing values from the analysis, 453 cases remained out of 557. Missing data was not concentrated in any particular groups of participants or variables. Descriptive statistics of all variables used in the model are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Sample Characteristics

The survey sample consists of 557 never married, Black South African women. The desire to marry is strong for this demographic, with the mean being 3.87 out of a range from 1 to 5. The sample represents a good range in age with the mean being 30.67 out of a range from 16 to 87 years old. The education level is on the low side with the mean being 2.05 out of a range of 0 to 5. Religiosity is on the high side with the mean being 6.13 out of a range of 1 to 8. The living standard is normally distributed with a mean of 1.48 out of a range of 1 to 3. The sample

includes a good mix of urban and rural women with a mean of 0.55 out to 0 to 1. This sample has a low level of participants who are currently cohabiting with the mean being 0.16 out of a range of 0 to 1. Agreement that women in South Africa should feel free to remain unmarried and get interesting jobs is on the high side with a mean of 3.54 out of a range from 1 to 5. Agreement that it is all right for a couple to live together without intending to get married is on the low side with a mean of 2.19 out of a range of 1 to 5. Agreement that the only satisfying role for a woman is as wife and mother is close to normally distributed with a mean of 2.75 out of a range of 1 to 5. Agreement that those who are married are more financially secure and have a higher standard of living is on the high side with a mean of 3.18 out of a range of 1 to 5. Agreement that those who are married are more emotionally secure is on the high side with a mean of 3.06 out a range of 1 to 5. Finally, agreement that a person should be married before having a child is on the high side with a mean of 3.55 out of a range of 1 to 5.

METHOD

Quantitative Analyses

Ordered logistic regression models are appropriate statistical tools when analyzing an ordinal outcome variable that has a natural order to its response categories, as is the case with the desire to marry variable whose response is measured on a five-level Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Hoffmann 2004). I first ran an ordered logistic regression model in STATA on the entire sample of never married Black South African women in order to determine which of the predicted demographic and attitudinal variables are significant in determining the desire to marry for Black South African women. Next, I created models comparing the significance of the explanatory variables on desire to marry among women ages 16-25 versus women 25 years and older, women residing in urban areas versus women residing in rural areas,

and highly educated women versus women with less education to determine how age, urbanicity, and education interact to effect Black South African women's desire to marry. As mentioned in the literature review, research suggests that women who are older have less of a desire to marry than women who are younger (Mahay and Lewin 2007). Research also suggests that women residing in rural areas and women with less education have different family formation patterns than women residing in urban areas and women with more education (Bracher and Santow 1998; Goldstein and Kenney 2001; Singh and Samara 1995). I attempt to examine which of these factors are significantly associated with never married, Black South African women's desire to marry by running these four regression models in the quantitative portion of this study.

Qualitative Data and Analyses

I conducted qualitative research in 2005 to help researchers understand the causes of the declining marriage rate, increasing age at first marriage rate, and increasing single mother rate of young, never married Black South African women. The overall question of my interviews in the field was, "What are the current attitudes of Black South African towards the marriage?" An interview schedule was used to ask open-ended questions that gauged their attitudes towards marriage (see Appendix).

I conducted my interviews in the urban city of East London, South Africa. According to the 2007 census, the city of East London has a population approximately 205,000 with an additional population of approximately 168,000 residing in the adjoining township of Mdantsane. As of 2007, approximately 20,000 of these residents had achieved a higher education degree. East London lies in the Eastern Cape Province, which is composed of approximately 83% Xhosa people (Buffalo City Metro 2007). Because most of the women in East London are Xhosa, this naturally limited my study to that particular cultural group.

I selected my subjects through snowball sampling from among unmarried, female, Xhosa students at Border Technikon University and Rhodes College. Table 2 shows characteristics of the respondent sample.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

College educated, young, urban, Black South African women are at the crossroads of a nation that is experiencing rapid social and cultural changes as it modernizes. Because they have the greatest access to technology and communication, their attitudes towards marriage are influenced by western ideology. Thus, this sample provides an interesting and important look at the evolution of marriage in South Africa. After obtaining IRB approval, I conducted interviews by asking groups of two to three women to participate in one hour long guided discussions about marriage. I did this with 5 groups for a total of 13 college age women. Interviews were conducted on campus and in their homes. I conducted the interviews in English and am a native English speaker. Participants were eager to discuss the topic of marriage and felt comfortable discussing it with me because I was also a college student of the same age. Most participants freely shared their opinions, even when they differed from their fellow focus group participants. Because these were highly educated women, some of them approached the topic of marriage from a somewhat theoretical standpoint as well as from a personal, emotional standpoint. I recorded these interviews with an audio recorder and later transcribed the interviews. Throughout the interviewing process, I noted common themes and patterns that I had not anticipated in the planning phase of my project that prompted me to expand some of my initial research questions. Because of the small size of this sample it is not meant to be representative; rather it is meant to be an exploratory study that uncovers common themes in greater depth. Resulting data provide background information and preliminary insights into the attitudes of

these women towards marriage so that further investigation may be conducted in the future. Findings from this study may be used to formulate future survey questions about perceived opportunity to marry that are more generalizable.

In my analysis of the interview data, I identified patterns in the participants' attitudes and experiences. Qualitative research is often analyzed by coding the data to organize it on a conceptual level so that it may be condensed into themes which give a meaningful representation of a group's attitudes and experiences (Corbin and Strauss 2008; Creswell 2007). I used NVIVO software to code the interview transcripts for cultural, social, and economic themes associated with women's attitudes towards marriage. Codes included: woman's participation in the workforce, cohabitation, bearing children outside of wedlock, the financial security marriage provides, the emotional security marriage provides, effects of infidelity and STDs, education, parental expectations, societal expectations, domestic violence and abuse, expectations of marriage, and availability of suitable mate. My conceptualization of these themes was based on the existing literature surrounding potential causes of the decline in marriage among Black South African women. The analysis of the data is incorporated into the discussion of the survey results, employing quotes from the interviews as examples of patterns and themes. The addition of these data to the quantitative findings of the survey data gives a more comprehensive picture of Black South African women's desire to marry and opportunity to marry. These findings contribute to the understanding of how the decline in the marriage rate is not solely the product of people's desire to marry, but is also the result of constraints that limit the ability to marry.

RESULTS FROM REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Table 3 shows the results of the ordered logistic regression models of the association of the desire to marry variable with the age, education level, religiosity, living standard, urbanicity,

cohabitation, career, approval of cohabitation, gender role, financial security, emotional security, and unwed childbearing variables. Four models were analyzed separately to control for the interaction variables of age, urbanicity, and education. The table shows the results from the logistic regression model for the whole sample of never married, Black South African women, then for women who are 16-24 as compared to women who are over 25, for women who are urban as compared to women who are rural, and for women with a high level of education as compared to women with a low level of education.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

In the first model, which includes the whole sample of never married, Black South African women, the only explanatory variables that are significantly associated with the desire to marry are age, currently cohabiting, approval of cohabitation without intending to get married, and the belief that people who are married are more financially secure and have a higher standard of living. For the whole sample of never married, Black South African women, when controlling for all other variables, a one year increase in age is associated with a 6% decrease in the odds that a woman will desire to marry. Those who currently cohabit are 2.56 times more likely to agree that they would like to get married someday than those who do not currently cohabit. A one unit increase in agreeing that it is ok for a couple to cohabit without intending to get married is associated with a 19% decrease in the odds that a woman will agree that they would like to get married someday. Finally, a one unit increase in the belief that married people are more financially secure is associated with a 34% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married.

Age

For never married, Black South African women ages 16-24, the only variable significantly associated with the desire to marry is the belief that married people are more emotionally secure. When controlling for all other variables, a one unit increase in the belief that married people are more emotionally secure is associated with a 62% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married someday.

In comparison, significant variables associated with the desire to marry for women ages 25 years old and older include education level, currently cohabiting, attitude towards cohabitation, and the belief that married people are more financially secure. For never married, Black South African women ages 25 years old and older, when controlling for all other variables, a one unit increase in the category of education is associated with a 34% increase in the odds that a woman will desire to marry. Those who currently cohabit are 3.32 times more likely to agree that they would like to get married someday than those who do not currently cohabit. A one unit increase in agreeing that it is ok for a couple to cohabit without intending to get married is associated with a 18% decrease in the odds that a woman will agree that they would like to get married someday. Finally, for women 25 years old and older, a one unit increase in the belief that married people are more financially secure is associated with a 52% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married.

Urbanicity

For never married, Black South African women residing in urban areas, age, currently cohabiting, and approval of cohabitation, and the belief that people who are married are more financially secure and have a higher standard of living are significantly associated with the desire to marry. When controlling for all other variables, a one year increase in age is associated with a

6% decrease in the odds that a woman residing in an urban area will desire to marry. Those urban women who currently cohabit are 4.08 times more likely to agree that they would like to get married someday than those who do not currently cohabit. A one unit increase in agreeing that it is ok for a couple to cohabit without intending to get married is associated with a 21% decrease in the odds that a woman will agree that they would like to get married someday. Finally, a one unit increase in the belief that married people are more financially secure is associated with a 28% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married.

In comparison, only age, religiosity, and the belief that people who are married are more financially secure and have a higher standard of living are significantly associated with the desire to marry for rural women. For never married, Black South African women residing in rural areas, when controlling for all other variables, a one year increase in age is associated with a 5% decrease in the odds that a woman will desire to marry. A one unit increase in the category of religiosity is associated with a 17% increase in the odds that a woman will desire to marry. Finally, a one unit increase in the belief that married people are more financially secure is associated with a 36% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married.

Education

Among women with high levels of education there are significant associations between age, urbanicity, currently cohabiting, and financial security and the desire to marry. For never married, Black South African women with the equivalent of a high school education or higher, when controlling for all other variables, a one year increase in age is associated with a 5% decrease in the odds that a woman will desire to marry. Those who reside in urban areas have a

64% decrease in the odds that they will desire to marry. Those who currently cohabit are 5.4 times more likely to agree that they would like to get married someday than those who do not currently cohabit. Finally, a one unit increase in the belief that married people are more financially secure is associated with a 51% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married.

In comparison, women with lower levels of education were found to have a significant association between age, currently cohabiting, the approval of cohabitation, the financial and emotional security marriage provides and the desire to marry. For never married, Black South African women with less than the equivalent of a high school degree, when controlling for all other variables, a one year increase in age is associated with a 6% decrease in the odds that a women will desire to marry. Those who currently cohabit are 2.20 times more likely to agree that they would like to get married someday than those who do not currently cohabit. Additionally, a one unit increase in agreeing that it is ok for a couple to cohabit without intending to get married is associated with a 18% decrease in the odds that a woman will agree that they would like to get married someday. A one unit increase in the belief that married people are more financially secure is associated with a 29% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married. Finally, a one unit increase in the belief that married people are more emotionally secure is associated with a 23% increase in the likelihood that a woman agrees that she would like to get married someday.

RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Several major themes emerged during an analysis of the interview results. The main patterns that emerged, which are added to the discussion of the regression results, are:

- 1) Societal and personal attitudes towards cohabitation,

- 2) The desire to marry for emotional security,
- 3) Society's and relative's expectations of women to marry,
- 4) The freedom of choice in regards to marriage that education, economic power, and a change in gender ideology provides women,
- 5) Attitudes towards unwed childbearing,
- 6) The risk of domestic violence and abuse that marriage may bring,
- 7) The risk of contracting AIDS and STDs from marriage,
- 8) Women's individual desires to marry, and
- 9) Women's perceived opportunities to marry and find a suitable mate.

The interviews were conducted with young women who were currently attending college and resided in urban areas. This sample provides the perspectives of women who are experiencing a transition into modernization that reflects wider global changes in family formation and women's roles.

SURVEY AND INTERVIEW RESULTS

In the following section, I discuss the central survey results, using the interview results to illustrate and provide details on this data. Additionally, I discuss the results of the interview data on the additional factors that were not measured in the survey, domestic violence, infidelity and STD's, and opportunity to marry.

Age

Age was found to be a consistently significant variable associated with the desire to marry. The reason for the relationship between these two variables is unclear because it may be due to an aging effect, a cohort effect, or a selection effect. Women's desire to marry may decrease as they age because they see less and less economic or emotional benefits as they move

into older life stages. Conversely, women from older cohorts may have more negative attitudes towards marriage due to historical or social events in their lifetime. Older women may also have self-selected into not desiring to marry because those who did desire to marry in their cohort already did so. Future qualitative research may prove to be useful in determining why older women have less of a desire to marry than younger women.

Cohabitation

This analysis found a very strong association between cohabitation and the desire to marry. Interestingly, those who were currently cohabiting with a partner were much more likely to agree that they would like to get married someday than those who were not, particularly among urban, highly educated, and older women. Conversely, those who believed that it was acceptable to live with a partner without intending to get married were significantly less likely to agree that they would like to get married someday, particularly among urban, less educated, and older women. These relationships demonstrate the current attitudes towards cohabitation among Black South Africans. When asked whether or not they agree that it is acceptable to cohabit with a partner without intending to get married, only 22.78% of the whole survey sample agreed, and only 12.22% of the whole survey sample was currently cohabiting with a partner. During interviews, several women mentioned the prevalent disapproval of cohabitation, or *vat n sit*, especially among women of middle and upper class. One woman, Respondent 2, stated that by participating in cohabitation, “You’re losing your pride. You’re losing your tradition. You’re losing everything because *vat n sit* (cohabitation)...is usually done by people of um, lower standards.” Another woman, Respondent 5, asserted,

In terms of moving in with boyfriends, you are not allowed doing that culturally. You are forced to get married now. If you want to live with a boyfriend, I think it’s a good thing,

but culturally you are supposed to be a good girl and find a good guy and marry him. But for me I'll never get married. It's like there's this stigma... I have a lot of negativity when it comes to the word marriage. My idea is not accepted in my tradition, if I were to live with someone and just not have a ceremony, so I don't know.

Another woman, Respondent 6, agreed with her statement by adding,

Yeah, I agree. It's not culturally acceptable, especially with the middle class or working class it's not really acceptable. Maybe people of the lower class, maybe if you are poor, it tends to be more common there, you know? Otherwise it's not really that common yet.

Cohabitation is still socially stigmatized in South Africa, and this may be why those who are currently cohabiting have even more of a desire to marry than those who are not. Conversely, those who believe that cohabitation is acceptable may be more likely to choose cohabitation as an alternative to marriage and, therefore, may have less of a desire to marry than those who do not.

Financial Security

The desire to marry was also found to be significantly associated with the belief that marriage provides more financial stability and a better standard of living. This relationship was particularly true for older women as compared to younger women. Older women have less education and economic prospects than younger women, and therefore they may value the economic resources a husband can provide more than younger women who have the opportunity to be more self-sufficient. Older women may also be experiencing a cohort effect in which, historically, financial stability was a greater focus than emotional security in marriage when they came of age. Younger women may not place as great an emphasis on the financial security they

can gain from marriage because they are better able to provide for themselves than in prior generations.

Emotional Security

The statistical analysis results show that the only significant variable associated with the desire to marry for those who are 16-25 years old is how strongly they agree that marriage provides emotional security. It appears that compared to women in older age categories, the desirability of marriage for young women in South Africa depends on the emotional benefits they perceive as a gain from a partner, rather than the financial benefits. Younger women may have greater opportunity to provide for themselves financially than older women, and therefore they may not be as concerned about the financial benefits that marriage can provide. They may also be influenced by the documented shift in Western attitudes towards the purpose of marriage. Industrialized nations have undergone a shift over the last century towards valuing marriage based on romantic love rather than marriage founded on economic or familial ties (Coontz 2005). As South Africa industrializes and is exposed to Western thought, South African women may be following suite.

In interviews with college attending, young women in South Africa, when asked whether they expected to marry for love or economic stability, most young women mentioned that they wanted to marry someone who was economically stable, but more strongly emphasized the importance of emotional attachment. Respondent 8 said,

I want someone...that you can have as a friend, as a lover, and a father. You know, all those roles....When you get married you get someone who has a different kind of view in life, a different kind of way of doing things, and stuff like that, so you will grow with each other. It's just like having a friend, you know? You learn new stuff and you get to

experience new things, explore. You get to learn, you know, and you get to a point whereby you grow old together, and you will learn so much from each other, and you will develop from each other, and you will have children, to point out and say, “Wow that’s ours,” type of thing. We made it! And those are the benefits of getting married.

Another woman, Respondent 6, reported,

Um I think the benefits really would be to find someone to share the rest of your life with, because the thing with me, I feel like I’m passionate about marriage, if it’s right you know? But it’s so difficult to get it right, so if that would happen... You have someone to share the rest of your life with.

When asked what was important in choosing someone to marry, Respondent 9 reported,

It’s a combination of a lot of things, but I think being this age you would want to marry for love. That would be first priority. It’s a bonus if your husband is your best friend, and are financially well off...that your parents approve, or whatever. But when you are in love, you are not looking at wealth or the other people approving of my husband, or if he is well off. I would marry someone that I love, that preferably these would be benefits.

In contrast, according to both the survey data and interview data, women who did not believe that marriage provides emotional security did not have a desire to get married. This lack of emotional security often resulted from issues of infidelity. Respondent 5 spoke of her fear of the emotional turmoil that marriage might cause, saying,

With my view point in marriage, I can tell you one thing. Before marriage you can have a guy cheat on you and you’ll be fine after a year, but when you are married it kills you, your whole complete self. You have given yourself to this one person. You can never go

back to the same person you were before you got married, that person will kill you from here to the end.

Another woman, Respondent 7 said about the emotional results of rampant infidelity, “You are so in love with someone, and you get hurt every time.” Many young South African women desire to fall in love and get married, but this desire is often paralyzed by the fear that their husband will cheat on them and they will contract AIDS or another STD.

Family and Gender Ideology

While the statistical models did not show a significant association between the measure for gender ideology and the desire to marry, interview data demonstrates that a decrease in the desire to marry may be attributed to the liberalization of family and gender ideology. Cultural pressure to get married has subsided due to ideological shifts that may be the result of globalization and westernization (Anderson 1997). The Western movement towards greater women’s rights appeals to educated young South African women, which alters their attitudes toward marriage. One informant, Respondent 12, spoke of her appreciation for Westernization because of this change, saying,

It’s good that we have our independence, or whatever, because if you look at prior to the whole Westernized culture women didn’t really have any rights, you know what I mean. In our days women are, women have, everything. They want to prove to men that “We can do whatever you can do.” There’s nothing special. There’s nothing new that men can do that woman can’t do, so they think, “I can live my life the way I want. I don’t want any man in my life.” If it’s a man it must be a boyfriend, not a husband.

As women begin to believe that they have greater rights, they begin to demand greater rights, including the right to delay or forego marriage. As Western gender ideology spreads, non-

Western women begin to see themselves as individuals who don't need to give into the expectations of society. Many African women formerly entered into marriage to please their family, but this is less often the case. Now women are being encouraged by Western media to assert their individuality. Respondent 10 shared,

I think it's influenced women to be more independent...on TV you see white people in America. They seem to be, like, independent. They have their own lives, like they are not really married, you know....I'd say that other cultures have influenced what we do and what we can get without marriage.

This individualistic attitude has caused many women to believe that they can be happy without society's approval and without marriage.

Some young South African women view the structure of marriage and men's and women's household duties as unfair. The shift in gender ideology is often not congruent between men and women in South Africa, which can cause marital discord. This trend mirrors what has been found in other westernized nations, such as the United States. According to one scholar,

A cultural lag exists between the changing domestic roles of women and men in U.S. society. Specifically, women are positively embracing their new work and family roles, while men are resisting the increasing independence of women in the workplace and the greater demands placed on men in the home. (Hunt & Hunt, Gerson, and Hochschild as cited in Ferguson, 2000: 140).

Many young South African women feel that this cultural lag applies to them as well. These women are tired of the lack of support in caring for the home and children and would like roles to change. One participant, Respondent 8, said that, for example,

If you [women] get off late, then you [men] can take the child so that you can watch him in the night, diaper change and everything. Maybe make supper or buy supper, or whatever, and try and make things be equal....Not just the man works and that's the only thing he does, and going to bed.

Women are now eager to work outside the home and expect greater help from their husbands with familial duties. This expectation is often not met, however, due to men's more traditional ideals as illustrated by Respondent 12, who explained,

The expectations [of men] are always old-fashioned...The husband will be like "When I get married my wife will stay at home with the kids and I'm going to come home with the bear and I'm going to kill the bull." The woman will be like, "I'm a working woman and I'm independent. I'm making my own money."

While women are becoming more "progressive" in gender ideology, South African men still have difficulty accepting the independence of women. This disparity caused by Westernization is yet another reason many women choose to forego marriage. An increase in education has made it possible for such women to delay or refuse marriage.

Education and Economic Power

While the statistical models only found a significant association between education and the desire to marry among older women, the interview data demonstrates that the desire to marry among young, urban women is often affected by their education and economic power. These women are using the freedom that an increase in education and economic power has provided them to delay or forgo marriage. One participant, Respondent 7, suggested, "I don't think I'm ready for a relationship right now, and like, the focus is on my career and what I want to do. I've got the freedom. I'm not looking to a guy for support and money and stuff like that." Whereas

former generations felt pressure to marry young, this generation feels empowered to practice marriage formation as they choose. Young women are now seeking new alternative opportunities in life. Respondent 10 said,

They are getting to see that there is life even if you are not married. You don't have to succumb to this sort of lifestyle. You don't have to accept this....Because they were always, in the past, living in the shadow of men or their husband. But now we are getting all these opportunities. Women are able to do things....I think with the younger generation they will be more educated. That's the thing. The minute they become more educated about themselves and they know their rights.

Education has allowed women more freedom of choice not only due to its economic implications, but also due to the cultural transition it has instigated. Whereas in former times most parents wanted their daughters to get married and have children at a young age, now their expectations for their daughters are that they postpone marriage for their education. Respondent 11 shared,

My dad wants me to be studying and be independent and be off with my studies, and then on to getting married. But the priority right now is the studying. I wouldn't say it's [marriage] expected. We don't really discuss it that much. It's not an issue...as long as you study, get higher education, learn to be independent and then get onto marriage.

Because of this lack of cultural pressure from their parents, many young women are now free to prioritize adult goals of completing education and establishing careers before getting married.

Other women feel like education has allowed them to be choosier in whom they want to marry.

Respondent 8 asked,

We are in varsity [college] right? We know we are going to work when we finish, so if he is not working then you won't chase after them. You know that you are making yourself something while you are studying, so you would rather not settle for anything less than what you will be.

To young Black South African women enrolled in college, education is the key to the economic freedom that allows them to be independent and less vulnerable. They feel that because of education, women are economically and socially empowered to have opinions regarding their own lives known. When women aren't economically tied to men, they also are safeguarded against abuse. One interviewee, Respondent 6 , made this clear when she stated,

A woman is no longer expected to stay at home. You can go and do whatever you want.

You can own a car and you can buy a house if you want to, instead of your husband.

I think most women should work because these guys like taking advantage. If you stay at home they will tell you what to do.

Education and its economic implications are the means by which women are able to resist the social problems they associate with marriage. Women who are educated are more aware of their rights and more confident in their abilities and are, therefore, are more able to act on a personal decision to marry or not marry. Whereas their mothers' generation was not as able to take a stand against such problems as infidelity and abuse, this generation feels empowered. Respondent 10 stated,

I think that this acceptance of infidelity is more with the older generation. The emerging [generation] is beginning to be like, "Hang on, this is not acceptable! I don't have to do this."

Education and economic power has become the means through which young Black South African women are enabled to delay or forego marriage when they do not view it as beneficial.

Unwed Childbearing

The statistical models did not indicate that there is an association between the approval of unwed childbearing and the desire to marry. Most young women interviewed reported that bearing children outside of marriage is still not seen as socially acceptable by the majority of people. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed that a person should be married before having a child, 64.34% of the survey sample included in this study answered that they agreed. Most of the interviewees claimed that one of the big benefits of getting married was to be able to have children and raise them with the father in the home. They did not want to raise children alone, but they recognized that many women in South Africa do not have a choice, and will often choose to have children outside of wedlock rather than not have children at all. Other women make a conscious choice to have children without getting married because they do not believe that marriage is beneficial but still desire children. Respondent 11 shared,

I don't want to be a single mom, but if it happens then I'll have to accept that and go on with my life. There are some people I've spoken to that actually prefer that kind of lifestyle. They don't want the whole marriage thing, but they want children. If they get married, fine, if they don't, it's okay, but the children they have to have. I think it's the fear of marriage... They want to have something to hold on to, you know. The child is like your blood, and it's something that's yours, so they want that. At the same time it's expected that you have children. It's weird if you are old and you don't have a child. So maybe they are in fear that, "I might never find someone," but they are in love with a

person at that time, so they have a child with them, and if it doesn't work out at least they have the child.

Some South African women still place great value on children, and desire to be married, but because of constraints against marriage some women view single motherhood as “the only game in town.” As a result of the desire for children but the lack of an eligible marriage partner, many black South African children are born to unwed mothers.

Domestic Violence

No survey data were available to assess the association between domestic violence and the desire to marry, but interview data suggested that for many young Black South African women abuse is one of the associated outcomes of marriage. Previous research indicates that South Africa has the highest rate of domestic abuse in the world, and this abuse often goes unreported or disregarded. In confirmation of these findings, one Respondent 4 reported,

... abuse will happen. It is high, but people are keeping quiet about it... The older women come and tell you the behavior you have to show in the family, and you find that now when your husband is abusing you, you'll think of the iziyalo—when you are telling the women when she's getting married how she must behave in the new family she's in—and now you will remind yourself of all those things they told you, and you'll keep quiet when your husband is abusing you.

As a result of this potential abuse and subordination, many young women are afraid to get married. One informant, Respondent 2, recalled that,

During the old days, they tell you, “You have to tolerate. You have to bow down to your in-laws and to your husband. You have to do whatever they tell you to do whether you like it or not.” Whether it's something very bad or not, you have to because you're

married....Looking at what is happening right now I don't think I'll ever get married; it might happen to me.

Another informant, Respondent 9, told of her disgust with traditional subordination:

This one time I was hiding behind the kraal, because that's where they give them all the rules and stuff, like on how to live like a man, and I was just hiding and I was listening to what they were telling them. They were telling them, "From now on you are a man. You never ever listen to a woman. Whatever you say goes in the house. You are the one who makes the rules. A woman doesn't tell you what to do. You are the man; you can have as many women as you want." And they were telling them all these things, and I was saying to myself, Oh my word, so that's why they become so ignorant in everything they do!

Many young, Black South African women feel that the risk of domestic violence has made marriage a less desirable option. They feel distanced from traditional ideologies, which often perpetuate violence against women and create an aversion to marriage.

Infidelity and STDs

Again, although there was also no survey data available to assess the association between infidelity and the risk of STDs with the desire to marry, interview data provides insights about the issues. When asked about the disadvantages of marriage, the most common ones mentioned were the high occurrence of infidelity and the resulting risk of contracting AIDS from your husband. This, more than anything else, makes marriage undesirable for young Black South African women. As one woman, Respondent 5, put it,

There is HIV, so if you get married before you are even infected by that, then it's like "Wow, thank God! At least now she's got someone she can be stable with and chances of her getting HIV are very slim," you know? But that's not the case because husbands

cheat sometimes. It's the norm. So that's the other thing that makes me not want to get married.

According to the participants, infidelity has become a way of life for the majority of South African men and this has dangerous consequences that deter them from marriage. Respondent 3 stated,

I have a negative attitude towards marriage because you see a lot of married people are committing adultery out there, and how am I supposed to get married if there's stuff like that out there?

When asked about her desire to marry, Respondent 8 replied,

I think with me, as a woman, a South African woman, with AIDS as rife as it is, it's your own choice you have to make, you know? But you have to do it with eyes wide open...What I see in front of me is nothing compared to what I know about how people cheat on their wives...It's still rife with them because so many are infected, so we are being deceived so much more than any man could ever be. So with marriage, is not for me.

Another interviewee, Respondent 6, stated the distrust she had that men could be being faithful marriage partners, saying,

In any relationship you know you can jump from one relationship to another without a problem, but when you are married you realize that you promised to stick to this person forever. So now that one person you trusted and gave your whole life to cheats on you, then you think to yourself, what's the point of ever giving yourself to anyone if that's what's going to happen?

Even though many wives are sexually inactive until married and remain faithful to their husbands, they still run the risk of contracting AIDS due to their husbands' promiscuity.

Respondent 5 claimed that marriage is the highest risk factor for AIDS because women think,

“This is your husband, what chance are you going to have [to contract AIDS]?” and you're never going to think about it....Long relationships are the one relationship that are good for you in terms of contracting AIDS...because you feel so trustworthy and you trust that person. So that's why I'm saying if I were to get married—which won't happen first of all—I don't know. I can't put my life in jeopardy with someone else.

The fear of infidelity and AIDS has led many South African women to demand change or else refuse marriage. Respondent 12 explained, “I'm to a certain extent anti-marriage....I know the infidelity issue is bigAnd women here in South Africa, they keep quiet about it. They have accepted it and I think they need to start a revolution of some sort.” This issue, combined with the problem of abuse, is enough to convince many women to avoid marriage, or cause despair that they will never find a suitable marriage partner.

Desirability and Opportunity

Currently, many South African women believe that the institution of marriage was originally good for women and society. According to Respondent 7, marriage is beneficial “spiritually as well, because it's a God-ordained institution and if you are doing it you get a blessing from God.” The vast majority of the women interviewed had very positive attitudes towards marriage when practiced correctly: respectfully and lovingly, without infidelity and abuse. But most of the women interviewed believed that marriage has become distorted and therefore, they are unwilling to participate in it. For example, Respondent 4 stated,

Marriage was a very good thing, a beautiful thing, but today it's no longer. You would like to get married, but as you see the world outside you look at the married people. Sometimes you see people get married this year and next year they're divorced, and you wonder what's happening. What is it that's special about me that will make me reach goal point? It's either my husband will commit adultery, or I will commit adultery. Or if not, my husband will abuse me. If not, he won't be responsible.

Despite the belief that marriage can be beneficial, many young Black South African women do not believe that they will be able to find someone to enter into a healthy union with. When asked what Respondent 10 believed the chances were of finding a respectable South African man, she responded, "I believe that really there are like 44 million people living in South Africa, so, like, 1 in 44 million." The desirability of marriage decreases when women's perception of good potential partners decreases.

More and more women are rejecting marriage, not because they believe it is a negative institution, but because they are tired of the social problems associated with it. In the words of Respondent 12, "I think women are waking and saying, "Sorry, I can't take this crap no more." Added to the risk of abuse, neglect, and infidelity that was also rampant during their mothers' generation is now an even greater threat, AIDS. This life threatening danger is enough to make women break with tradition. As one participant, Respondent 3, put it, "Again in my tradition you're supposed to get married. Today I'm not considering tradition, in the life I'm living in today. Today, in the life we're living now, there's viruses..."

Unlike previous generations, young women are now empowered to forego marriage through education and an increase in women's rights. According to Respondent 9,

On face value my mother's generation was more accepting of marriage. But I believe that underneath it all, it's always been unstable. It's only now that we are talking about it.

Women now are becoming more educated; they are able to learn about what their rights are. Before, they just had to accept.

Even though women are now able to forego marriage, this is the last resort, not their primary choice. Respondent 10 explained,

I think most people would love to get married; it's just the things that have happened which make them think "No." It's not to say they hate marriage...They would love to be in there, but they are sick and tired of those things....I should think it's nice being with someone, sharing your life with someone, the ideal, you know, the picture that one thinks of marriage. But things are happening and people change their minds about it.

If South African women believed that a marriage without abuse and infidelity were possible, they would gladly accept it, because they believe that it is a positive institution. But rather than entering into a harmful relationship, many young Black South African women are employing their newfound independence to call for reform. Respondent 12 commented,

I think it's up to the women to demand change, but at the same time the men need to realize that what they are doing is not [right], to change their attitudes...I think as a whole, society needs to just change.

With an increase in women's rights due to westernization and an increase in women's empowerment through education, more and more South African women are willing and able to hold out for something better than the social problems they associate so closely with marriage.

DISCUSSION

This study benefits from a mixed methods approach whose results present a more comprehensive and nuanced portrait of the desire and opportunity to marry among Black South African women than might be gained from the use of a single data source. Interview data confirmed the results of statistical analysis of the survey data, and added more detailed clarifications of the patterns, particularly in relation to attitudes towards the emotional and financial security marriage is perceived as providing, attitudes towards cohabitation, and the effects of education, domestic violence, infidelity, and the risk of STDs on the desire and opportunity to marry. My main research questions of “What variables are associated with never married Black South African women’s desire to marry?” and “What are never married Black South African women’s perceptions of mate availability?” were successfully answered through a mixed methods approach.

My hypothesis that increased age would negatively affect the desire to marry was correct. My hypothesis that an increase in education would be associated with a decrease in the desire to marry was incorrect, with education only being a significant factor for older women. For these women, the higher level of education they completed, the higher the likelihood of desiring to marry. I expected to find that the higher the living standard a woman had, the less likely that she would be to desire to marry, but this was not found to be a significant indicator. I also expected to find a positive effect of religiosity on the desire to marry, but this was significant only for women residing in rural areas. I expected to find that those who subscribe to liberal family and gender ideologies would have less of a desire to marry than those who subscribe to conservative family and gender ideologies, but these indicators were not found to be significant either. My hypothesis that those who have more negative attitudes towards the financial benefits of

marriage would have less of a desire to marry than those who have more positive attitudes towards the financial benefits of marriage was significantly true for everyone but younger women. My hypothesis that those who have more negative attitudes towards the emotional benefits of marriage would have less of a desire to marry than those who have more positive attitudes towards the emotional benefits of marriage was significantly true only for women ages 16-24 year old and women with a lower level of education. I expected to find that those who have a higher acceptance of unwed child bearing would have less of a desire to marry than those who have a lower acceptance of unwed child bearing, but this relationship was not found to be significant. I expected that those who have a higher acceptance of cohabitation would have less of a desire to marry than those who have a lower acceptance of cohabitation, and this was true for the whole sample, and specifically for older women, urban women, and women with lower levels of education. I expected to find that those who currently cohabit would have less of a desire to marry than those who do not currently cohabit, but the opposite was true. Those who currently cohabit were much more likely to desire to get married than those who did not for all but the youngest age category of women and rural women. Lastly, I expected to find that and those who live in urban areas would have less of a desire to marry than those who reside in rural areas, and this was true among women with higher levels of education.

Unlike older women who place emphasis on the economic benefits marriage can provide when determining their desire to marry, young women place particular emphasis on the emotional security marriage can provide. This is likely due to the increase in young women's personal economic power and the influence of Western ideologies on the purpose of marriage. There is also a strong association between Black South African women's desire to marry and cohabitation, with those who are currently cohabiting having a stronger desire to marry than

those who are not, and those who believe that cohabitation without the intention to marry is acceptable having less of a desire to marry than those who do not find it acceptable. This reflects the stigma associated with cohabitation in South African society today.

The evidence presented also showed that young women were overwhelmingly concerned with the problem of infidelity and the risk of STDs, particularly AIDS, when questioned about their desire and opportunity to marry. Young women were also concerned with domestic violence, which made them doubt the benefits of marrying. However, the qualitative portion of the study confirmed that despite the rise in education and economic power and changing gender ideologies, young, college-educated, Black South African women still have a desire to marry, but their opportunities to marry are constrained by negative social problems.

This study was limited in its ability to clarify the significant effect of age on the desire to marry. It remains unclear as to whether older women have less of a desire to marry than younger women due to an aging effect, a cohort effect, or a selection effect. Further research should obtain more detailed data that would help in assessing this relationship. The qualitative portion of this study provided important insights related to the research questions. Limited by the small and narrowly defined sample size, the interview findings nevertheless are very useful in portraying the perspectives of more educated young Black women who are currently experiencing some of the most dramatic changes in South African society related to family formation and women's roles. Results of the exploratory sample could be used to inform future research involving a larger sample that includes a wider variety of women and men. Additionally, based on the results of this study, future South Africa Social Attitude Surveys should include questions about the perceived opportunity to marry.

The results of this research have distinct parallels to the results of studies on African American women's desire and opportunity to marry. For African Americans in general, the rate of marriage is the lowest, the age at first marriage the highest, and the number of single mothers the greatest for any racial or ethnic group in the United States. This applies as well to more highly-educated, African American women. These two groups have experienced similar structural constraints, such as a history of group conflict and segregation, a high level of group identity, initial concentration in rural areas and subsequent movement to more diverse urban areas, and exposure to Western ideology. Additionally, each group is experiencing increasing levels in education and income achieved by women coinciding with a similar trajectory of declining marriage and fertility rates. Research on Black South African women and African American women could provide an interesting cross-national study on the changing desire and opportunity to marry among women. Cross-national research attempts to test theory by studying the same phenomenon in different contexts. By comparing the causes of the decline in the marriage rates of African American women with Black South African women, social scientists would gain even greater insight into the conditions associated with the change in the marriage rate worldwide.

Previous research examines the relationships between age, gender, race, religiosity, urbanicity, education, standard of living, gender ideology, cohabitation, unwed childbearing, and marriage patterns, primarily for women residing in the United States and European countries. The regression results of this study confirm that age, currently cohabiting, and attitudes towards cohabitation all are associated with the desire to marry in South Africa as well. This study also expands on research on the effect of cohabitation on marriage patterns. It finds that for Black South African women, unlike women in other contexts, approval of cohabitation without

intending to marry is very low, therefore, those who are currently cohabiting have a much stronger desire to marry than those who are not. For most South African women who do cohabit before marriage, cohabitation is not replacing marriage, but is another step in the process of marriage. Additionally, the regression results of this study add that attitudes towards the financial and emotional benefits that marriage can provide are associated with the desire to marry. The interview data confirms previous research that claims that the purpose of marriage has evolved from a primarily economic institution to a romance based institution, and extends this to a context outside of Western culture. This study makes an important contribution to the literature by examining the effects that infidelity, sexually transmitted diseases, and domestic violence have on marriage patterns. It finds that the risk of these social problems lessens women's desire to marry in the Black South African context. It also expands on the literature by examining not just women's desire to marry, but also their opportunity to marry in a non-Western context. It finds that, for many Black South African women, the opportunity to marry seems unattainable despite the desire to marry because of modern social problems.

APPENDIX

Interview Schedule

1. What is your definition of marriage? Does it require a civil ceremony, traditional ceremony, both or neither?
2. Does marriage require the payment of labola? How do you feel about labola? Would you want your husband to pay labola for you? Do you think the tradition of labola will continue as South Africa modernizes?
3. What are your family's expectations for you concerning marriage? What are your culture's expectations concerning you for marriage? What are your expectations for yourself concerning marriage?
4. What are the benefits of marriage economically, culturally, religiously, etc?
5. What your perceived disadvantages of marriage?
6. What are the advantages of cohabitation versus marriage? What are the disadvantages of cohabitation versus marriage?
7. Do you expect your husband to be monogamous? Do you expect to be monogamous?
8. How has the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other STDs affected your perception of marriage?
9. What do you believe is the role of a wife and mother? What are your culture's expectations of wives and mothers? Do you agree with them?
10. What do you believe is the role of a husband and father? What are your culture's expectations of husbands and fathers? Do you agree with them?
11. Do you expect to marry for love, economic stability, religious or cultural reasons, etc? Do you expect to marry someone for romantic reasons, someone who is your best friend, someone who is financially stable and a good provider, someone your family approves of, or

a combination of all? Which aspect is most important to you? Would you settle for someone who lacked one of these aspects?

12. How do your attitudes towards marriage differ from your mother's generation's attitudes?

Your grandmother's?

13. How do you think modernization and globalization has affected the marriage rate?

14. What do you think is the future of marriage in South Africa? Do you think the marriage rate will drop, rise or stay the same? Why?

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, South African Social Attitudes Survey, 2005

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Desire to Marry	3.87	1.25	1-5
Age	30.67	12.0	16-87
Education	2.05	0.89	0-5
Religiosity	6.13	1.82	1-8
Living Standard	1.48	0.63	1-3
Urbanicity	0.55	0.50	0- 1
Cohabiting	0.16	0.37	0- 1
Career	3.54	1.23	1-5
Cohabitation Ok	2.19	1.17	1-5
Gender Role	2.75	1.39	1-5
Financial	3.18	1.08	1-5
Emotional	3.06	1.21	1-5
Unwed Child	3.55	1.26	1-5
Sample Size	557		

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Education</i>
Respondent 1	19	Urban	Xhosa	1 st year college
Respondent 2	21	Urban	Xhosa	3 rd year college
Respondent 3	18	Urban	Xhosa	1 st year college
Respondent 4	21	Urban	Xhosa	3 rd year college
Respondent 5	20	Urban	Xhosa	2 nd year college
Respondent 6	22	Urban	Xhosa	4 th year college
Respondent 7	19	Urban	Xhosa	1 st year college
Respondent 8	20	Urban	Xhosa	3 rd year college
Respondent 9	21	Urban	Xhosa	3 rd year college
Respondent 10	18	Urban	Xhosa	1 st year college
Respondent 11	22	Urban	Xhosa	4 th year college
Respondent 12	19	Urban	Xhosa	1 st year college
Respondent 13	20	Urban	Xhosa	2 nd year college

Table 3. Ordered logistic regression model of demographic and attitudinal effects on desire to marry, South African Social Attitudes Survey, 2005

Variables	Age			Urbanicity		Education	
	Total	16-24	25+	Urban	Rural	High	Low
Age	0.94**	-	-	0.94**	0.95**	0.95*	0.94**
Education	1.01	1.12	1.34*	0.89	1.24	-	-
Religiosity	1.09	1.01	1.09	1.04	1.17*	1.17	1.09
Living Stand.	0.84	0.60	0.86	0.95	0.60	1.08	0.82
Urbanicity ^a	0.97	1.36	0.81	-	-	0.36**	1.40
Cohabiting ^b	2.56**	1.50	3.32**	4.08**	1.68	5.40**	2.20**
Career	1.12	1.12	1.20	1.07	1.18	1.21	1.10
Cohab. Ok	0.81**	0.80	0.82*	0.79*	0.81	0.76	0.82*
Gender Role	1.04	1.08	1.01	1.14	0.95	1.29	0.98
Financial	1.34**	1.01	1.52**	1.28*	1.36*	1.51*	1.29*
Emotional	1.09	1.62**	0.90	1.04	1.20	0.83	1.23*
Unwed Child	1.00	1.14	0.90	1.03	0.98	1.02	1.00
N=	453	156	297	258	195	154	299
Pseudo R ²	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.09

^aRural comprises the reference category.

^bNot cohabiting comprises the reference category.

*p<.05; **p<.01